

Resisting gentrification. Socio-spatial dynamics of three work places in Brussels

Original

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VENICE

AESOP ANNUAL CONGRESS

9-13
JULY
2019



PLANNING FOR TRANSITION

Book of Abstracts

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Planning for Transition

Contemporary cities and territories face significant challenges – natural disasters due to climate change impacts, ecological crises, growing socio-economic unrest, global migration, political rifts including a rise of right wing factions, ambitious public works and mega-projects – all of which require new capacities in dealing with such individual and multiple groupings of such challenging and profound changes.

It is a matter of fact that at international level a discourse if not a condition of transition is pervading sectors and societies. This discourse points to alternative patterns and solutions to many of the challenges faced. A quickly changing scenario requires forms of planning, both locally and globally, which bear the capacity to support and manage mutable urban and environmental conditions. In fact, although cities do incessantly change, policy-makers and institutions are never fully prepared to respond to complex and risky situations, as well as relying on planning and policy tools which are often outdated; in addition, also existing theoretical frameworks, concepts, cognitive abilities and approaches become ineffective or outmoded.

Each unintended or unanticipated change comes as a break to existing social, political, and administrative routines and yet it may be anticipated that mechanisms of collective reflection and action will be generated. The congress invites scholars and practitioners to present and discuss case-studies of cities and projects that have engaged in meeting challenging situations – supporting transitions in urban contexts.

Specifically, it is aimed at offering an understanding of the forms of knowledge, concepts, tools, and skills needed to plan and address transition. Furthermore, it seeks to explore whether (and how) managing such changes has brought any overall reconsideration of the city design model and towards more general institutional reconfigurations.

The book collects all the abstracts presented at the Aesop Venice 2019 conference. It is articulated in chapters that correspond to the tracks (16) and special sessions proposed (23/24).

Tracks

1. Transforming built heritage and landscapes
2. Urban design for multilevel planning
3. Teaching planning for the transition
4. Institutional change and regional transition
5. Methods and technologies for transformative planning
6. Community-based planning and social innovation
7. Theorizing urban change: complexity and ethics
8. Transition paths and urban futures
9. Climate proof cities and resilient societies
10. Urban metabolism and circular economy
11. Housing, gentrification and socio-spatial dynamics
12. Food, planning and healthy cities
13. Planning for accessibility and sustainable mobility
14. Planning, Law and Property Right: facing urban transitions
15. Tourism, spaces and urban cultures
16. Urban and Regional economics for transition

Special Session

1. Transition Histories
2. Urban Tourism, Neighborhood Change and Social Conflicts
3. Innovative Agriculture for Healthy Cities
4. Towards Post-Growth Planning Theory and Practice
5. Planning and Designing Green Infrastructures
6. Land Development and Management in Post-Socialist Countries
7. Home Sharing. Short-Term Rentals Affecting Local Housing Markets
8. Dynamic Change, Uncertainty and Planning for Adaptivity
9. Space, Citizenship and Identity: The Eu-Mena Region
10. The Role of The Local in Improving Cohesion and Spatial Justice
11. Friendly Spaces and Mobility for Ageing
12. Emerging Spatialities and Eu Policy Instruments: Cases and Perspectives
13. Facing Migrants Exclusionary Urban Policies
14. Learning Loops in The Public Realm. Enabling Social Learning in Communities to Tackle the Challenges of Cities in Transition
15. Planning and Biodiversity
16. Acsp-Aesop Special Session: Morsels of Hope: Migration and Urban Planning
17. Spatial Tensions: Urban Microgeographies for Changing Cities
18. Affordable Housing in Developing Countries: a Comparative Perspective
19. Acsp-Aesop Special Session: Learning from Arnstein's Ladder: from Citizen Participation to Public Engagement
20. Smart Cities and Regions Informing the Energy Transition
21. Maritime Spatial Planning (Msp) In Europe: Challenges in Transition
22. Shrinking Cities and Sustainability
23. Regional Design: Impacts on Territorial Governance and Planning Practice

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SP34 Spatial tensions: urban microgeographies for changing cities

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Michele Cerruti But
Ianira Vassallo
Agim Kercuku

Even though violent conflicts have transformed cities during the whole XX century, it's nowadays possible to identify the softer phenomenon of "Tensions" as the specific contemporary both social and spatial urban changes catalyst. From one hand, the power of Economy and the crisis of societies are disruptively intertwining with the territories and this intensification is also softening and sharpening strong Conflicts. Contemporary tensions are often hidden, sometimes implicit or explicit. Urban and social tensions rise in between opposing models, visions and scenarios, but also between different populations and generations. Tensions can be recognised due to different uses of public spaces, in different productive models overlapping, in gentrification processes ambivalence but also in the rights claimed by some urban practices. From the other hand, unless Urbanism and Geography defined urban conflicts phenomena through a vast literature since the last 50 years, words and definitions inherited from those relevant studies seem no longer be appropriate for contemporary cities. The actual urban changes are questioning the concept of Public Space, Specialized or Industrial district, Heritage, Periphery, Gates communities and so on. Contemporary cities are much more heterogeneous than labels and categories coming from our vocabularies. A microgeography of urban tensions can re-define this lexicon, developing new categories for giving us a better understanding of contemporary urban changes. Facing urban tensions is also an opportunity for urban planning and design practices to regenerate the city itself. Open questions are: How tensions could describe a new season of urban transformations, of policy and design strategies? How urban and spatial tensions could become an instrument for urban and architectural design? Which tools could we use to define hidden phenomena in changing cities? The session will discuss: Spatial and social tensions case-studies Projects facing urban tensions Essays and studies focusing on language adequacy for contemporary urban tension

RESISTING GENTRIFICATION. THE SPATIAL DYNAMICS OF THREE PLACES OF WORK IN BRUSSELS

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An association working around the production of a biannual parade. A cultural centre established in an abandoned imprimerie. A co-working space. The three of them being situated in some of the poorest neighbourhoods of Brussels and implying the renovation of ex-industrial buildings. While in the long term they may engender a gentrification process, the three of them are aware of this risk. Despite not defining themselves as social operators, they nevertheless try to resist it by establishing some relationship with the neighbourhood, although in very different ways and as part of very different strategies, mostly centred on reshaping the relationship between work and life. At the same time their contribution looks crucial to bring back manual work in the city and in those neighbourhoods that have been mostly affected by the deindustrialisation processes started by the end of the 60s. The paper will question the capacity of new ways of working and the related spatial dynamics to counterbalance potential gentrifying effects related to the improvement of decaying and problematic parts of the city.

