Since 2011, the Paris Urban Institute is organising a cycle of annual colloquiums on “Urban renewal projects” in Europe from a comparative perspective. Northern and Western European cities face the same kind of economic, social and urban changes: de-industrialisation, globalisation, demographic decline and ageing, increasing poverty, unemployment and segregation as well as urban sprawl and environmental problems... These are also new challenges for urban design and planning leading to what is called in France “Urban renewal” and elsewhere, “urban restructuring” and/or “regeneration” projects and policies, aiming at increasing density in the city centres, dealing with old industrial sites, improving housing and rebuilding the city on its own ground. Brown-fields, unfit housing, large housing estates, waterfronts (docklands) are being redeveloped in many cities. The projects operate on diverse scales and in areas located on private or public land that may or may not be inhabited.

In 2012, the colloquium will try to highlight two issues about urban renewal projects, shared by all European countries. Who’s benefiting from urban projects? How is it possible to renew in a context of crisis? The first day will inquire both the place left to or/and taken by the citizens in urban projects, the targets of these projects and their social impacts. The second day will assess both the financial crisis impacts on governance, especially on the place of private and public sectors, and the environmental constraints to be taken into account in urban renewal.
Thursday 2nd of February:

Urban renewal, for whom? Citizens participation and social impacts

The first question is twofold: the way the inhabitants and other citizens are involved (or not) in urban projects and the social impacts of urban changes and new design. What is the place left to or taken by the inhabitants and users of these renewed parts of the cities in decision-making and design: diverse degrees of participation, people involved, workshops and other devices, innovation, resistance...

Lots of urban renewal projects are focusing on poor neighbourhoods or and old parts of the cities with derelict housing. Diversification of the stock, social mix policies, new housing and activities usually increase land values and housing prices, enhance territorial attractivity but also produce negative effects in terms of displacement, gentrification, waterbed and spill-over effects, segmentation ... What are the benefits for the local people and who is benefiting from urban changes in Europe?

9:00am Welcome
9:15am Introduction: C. Lelévrier, IUP, University of Paris-Est-Créteil

Citizens participation

9:30am Italia: The evolution of the participation in Rome: conflicts in the North-Eastern periphery - Carlo Cellamare, Sapienza University of Rome
10:45am break
11:00am Italia: Urban regions, changing places in the 'open city' and lack of innovation in imagining forms of public debate and decision-making - Valeria Fedeli, Polytechnico di Milano
Discussant: Aurélien Delpirou, IUP, University of Paris-Est-Créteil

Social impacts of urban renewal projects

2:30pm Germany: Participation in urban processes: a right always to be claimed! German examples - Christiane Droste, Urban+, Berlin
15:45pm break
16:00pm United Kingdom: Restructuring, relocation and the issue of displacement: the experience in Glasgow and implications for neo-liberal interpretations of “state-led gentrification” - Ade Kearns, University of Glasgow
Discussant: Ana Fernandes, University of Bahia, Brazil
Friday 3rd of February:

Urban renewal in the context of crisis

Urban development is most difficult and risky in the context of crisis, regarding financial restrictions and real estate market gap. Public sector subsidies are shrinking while private investors are looking for guarantees and profit. Cities are also facing a crisis because of land shortage and urgent housing needs. Urban renewal solves the land issue but makes balance conditions weaker. What kind of solutions is proposed in European cities? What about the projects?

The second day of the seminar will look through the engineering of urban renewal projects and possible partnerships. It will also focus on places and objects: How do they address the issues of density, preservation of resources, social mix? What time scale and what kind of sustainability are considered?

9:00am Welcome
9:15am Introduction: Vincent Renard, CNRS

Metropolitan projects

9:30am Amsterdam: private sector in metropolitan projects - H. van der Made, Municipality of Amsterdam and Patrick van Bereven
10:45am break
11:00am Hamburg: Paradigm Shifts from "bulldozer approach" to social inclusion - Dirk Schubert, Hafencity, Hamburg
Discussant: Julie Clark, University of Glasgow

Challenges in central European countries

2:30pm Budapest: Changing conditions for urban renewal in east central european countries: the case of Budapest - Ivan Tosics, Metropolitan Research Institute
3:45pm break
4:00pm Slovenia: Urban renewal in Slovenia - between aspirations and reality Matec Niksi, Urban Planning Institute of the Republic of Slovenia
Discussant: Florine Ballif, IUP, University of Paris-Est-Crèteil
5:15pm Synthesis: Sonia Guéton, IUP, University of Paris-Est-Crèteil

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