URBAN AUSTERITY

IMPACTS OF THE GLOBAL FINANCIAL CRISIS ON CITIES IN EUROPE

10. HERMANN HENSELMANN KOLLOQUIUM

DECEMBER 4TH—5TH 2014
BAUHAUS-UNIVERSITÄT WEIMAR · GERMANY
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organized by the Institute for European Urban Studies, Bauhaus-Universität Weimar and the Hermann-Henselmann-Foundation
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OPENING PLENARY: OBERLICHTSAAL

PANEL: IMPACTS OF THE GLOBAL FINANCIAL CRISIS ON CITIES IN GREECE

OBERLICHTSAAL — MODERATION: SEBASTIAN SCHIPPER BAUHAUS-UNIVERSITÄT WEIMAR

1 MARIA ZIFOU University of Thessaly, Volos

GREEK CITIES IN CRISIS: GOVERNING FOR THE MARKET

Besides the implementation of austerity policies which by now have created conditions of humanitarian crisis in major cities in Greece, the management of the sovereign debt crisis in Greece, since its inception in 2010, has also involved an extensive regulatory restructuring process focusing on the reform of the state. The enhancing, by the crisis regime, of neoliberal governance has led to the re-definition of the operational framework of urban politics by consolidating a new relationship between the state, the market and civil society which has drastically changed the capacities and power of local governments. The presentation will examine this emergent institutional landscape affecting urban governance in Greece, focusing particularly on planning. The argument developed here is that urban politics are now primarily defined by the creation of «spaces of delivery» that facilitate capital investment and growth which are promoted by the newly instituted statutory as well as «soft space forms» of spatial governance. Although these developments reflect dominant processes of neoliberal urbanism, the emerging forms of urban governance in Greece present significant particularities which this presentation will attempt to reveal with a particular focus on some of its spatial and social aspects.

2 DIMITRA SIATITSA INURA, Athens

CHANGES IN HOUSING AND PROPERTY UNDER A MULTIPLE CRISIS REGIME IN GREECE: CHALLENGES FOR MOVEMENTS AND THE LEFT

In the case of Greece, housing has not been at the root of the current crisis; rather housing problems have emerged as a consequence of the severe austerity measures implemented and their subsequent spiral of recession. The adopted neoliberal austerity model is leading to a restructing of property patterns and housing market through a process of rapid devaluation and dispossession, using debt as a mighty mechanism of control and subordination. These change are supported by a disciplinary mainstream discourse incriminating past lifestyles, moralising debt, and promoting a new framing of the housing problem that is «naturalising» the causes of the crisis and its destructive social effects. As remedy, a new policy framework for poverty management based on philanthropy and dependence is developed. Given the widespread social pervasiveness of homeownership (based on very material realities of housing as the «last stronghold and refuge») and limited social imaginary for alternative mechanisms of access to housing, recent housing movements are oscillating between the «right to housing» and the «right to ownership» (also reflecting an implicit expectation that things will become as they used to be). Against the swift concentration of capital and resources in the hands of the few and against the devaluation of human life, a radical framing of the housing issue is needed; a framing which is taking into account the diverse housing realities and the geographical differentiation of housing problems, and which will initiate a broad-based social process of transforming the housing sector towards collective housing schemes and alternative forms of public intervention.

3 COSTIS HADJIMICHALIS Harokopio University, Athens

RESISTING AUSTERTY AT MULTIPLE SCALES

Since the Syntagma Square occupation in 2011, several urban social movements resisting austerity at different scales emerge across Greece. Despite major differences in terms of target, organization and methods, they have two common characteristics; first, they highlight the fact that many people in Greece are active radical agents in social movements of resistance and solidarity, not passive victims of crude ultra neoliberal policies applied across Southern Europe (SE). Second, they highlight that the prime field of struggle is everyday life in particular socio-spatial settings, demanding social, spatial and environmental justice and defending public space and the commons, both materially and symbolically. And third, they have built dense networks of political collaboration and solidarity both inside Greece as well as internationally.

KEYNOTE OBERLICHTSAAL

JAMIE PECK UBC, Vancouver

NORMALIZED AUSTERITY, AMERICAN STYLE

The presentation will explore the emergent geographies of «austerity urbanism» in the United States, with particular reference to the recent wave of municipal bankruptcies. Generalized conditions of fiscal restraint and politically amplified «austerity» represent an historic opportunity to press for smaller-state settlements at the urban scale, defining government downsizing and rolling privatization as fiscal (indeed moral) necessities. This is an opportunity which conservative forces have quickly seized, and which they have been exploiting to some effect. Municipal bankruptcies—most notably in Detroit—are being closely monitored for their demonstration effects; public-sector unions have been targeted for strategic assaults on pay and conditions; systems of municipal service delivery and urban governance are being financialized in ever more profound ways. Detroit’s bankruptcy represents the epicenter of these intensifying processes. In one sense, the city’s bankruptcy can be seen as a crisis of crisis management itself, in another, it represents an «ordinary crisis» of a degrading system of devolved, neoliberal governance. Either way, it is much more than a local event. Dominant narrations of the Detroit bankruptcy, however, tell a different story—and never innocently. They localize and endogenize the causes of the crisis; they displace both the blame for and the burdens of adjustment; and they redistribute the associated costs «downwards,» onto poor neighborhoods and onto the socioeconomically marginalized. Such «localizations» of the crisis have been instrumental in the wider ideological project of translating what began, manifestly, as a banking crisis first into a state crisis, and then into an urban and social crisis.
The contribution aims to present how the economic crisis affects neoliberal policy-making and particularly urban policy. Based on the Greek case, we will portray how under conditions of extreme fiscal measures and deepening austerity policies neoliberal urbanism transforms towards a new model. Although at a first glance, the neoliberal prescription in the urban environment seems to be hegemonic (Aalbers, 2013; Smith, 2009) and unchallenged with a continuity in the existing trajectories of urban restructuring (Sager, 2011), we argue that what appears to be business as usual for neoliberalism, it never is (Peck et al., 2013). During Crisis, always something changes and it is the task of critical urban scholarship to identify, what and in which direction.

In this concept, we will study how local policy pathways (Greek case) evolve through the crisis and link to wider, supralocal regulatory patterns. This process, we claim that leads towards a new urban policy paradigm in Greece that is characterized from the following: (a) a shift into the regulatory ideology towards the unobstructed help of private investments in the city with severe implications in urban policy (b) a transformation in the politics of scale, with changes in the existing networks of governance and the concentration of power in supranational institutions (EU-IMF). Furthermore, it is very interesting how the dominant discourse on urban policy is structured around the notion of «exception» of Greek capitalism and the need for integration. We will try to challenge this narrative based on the concept of variegated neoliberalization.

These changes, we strongly support that also transform our view of how policy is implemented, transfers and mutates (Kunkel and Mayer, 2011) forming new «hybrids» (Brenner et al., 2010a) in the ongoing process of neoliberalization (Brenner et al., 2010b; Peck and Theodore, 2007).

**PARALLEL SESSION 1: IMPACTS OF THE GLOBAL FINANCIAL CRISIS ON CITIES IN EUROPE**

**PANEL 1: URBAN AUSTERITY**

**OBERLICHTSAAL — MODERATION: ARVID KRÜGER BAUHAUS-UNIVERSITÄT WEIMAR**

1 **DIMITRIS POULIOS** NTUA, Athens

2 **JOE PENNY** The Bartlett School of Planning, UCL

**DOWNLOADING AUSTERITY: THE POST-POLITICS OF AUSTERITY URBANISM AND LOCALISM IN LONDON**

From May 2010, when the Coalition Government formed, the UK has been an early adopter of austerity, implementing a set of swift and severe measures to reduce the public sector deficit in response to the 2008 financial crisis. Local government has been hit especially hard by this budgetary disciplining, as austerity has been downloaded onto cities across the country. Drawing on Jacques Rancière’s aesthetics of politics and Michel Foucault’s notion of governmentality, this paper will address the post-politics of austerity urbanism in London. First, this paper will explore how austerity is being pushed discursively and materially by the Coalition government through a close analysis of the rationalities of austerity, as articulated through policy papers and in ministerial speeches, and technologies of austerity, namely fiscal retrenchment and localism. Following from this, the paper will then examine the emergent features of austerity urbanism in London, asking how central government cuts and policies — including the Localism Bill — are being implemented on the ground by local councillors and officers. In such a context, this paper asks whether local authorities and communities in London are being liberated and empowered, or whether this downloaded austerity straight-jackets local government; narrowing the imaginable and possible responses to central government policies.
DIETER RINK, ANNEGRET HAASE
Helmholtz-Zentrum für Umweltforschung, Leipzig

MUNICIPAL AUSTERITY REGIMES AND PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

Although Germany was not as hard hit by the financial crisis as other European countries, austerity regimes have been introduced at various levels – the federal, the state and the municipal level. Many municipalities have high debt levels and are dependent on and controlled by the German states in order to tackle the impacts of encumbrance and austerity. They only have a small number of possibilities to overcome the debt trap: cuts of public expenses, uprating of public revenues, generation of growth with higher tax earnings, privatization of public assets and additional gains by financial deals (Cross Boarder Leasing, speculation etc.). Some of these strategies have raised growing opposition from the public and are difficult to establish, in particular cuts, uprating and privatization. Politicians need to create acceptance to these unpopular measures and therefore must organize public participation. By using the case of Leipzig, the paper aims to introduce the views of the public to general decisions about the municipal debt relief. What could public participation look like and what are suitable forms? To answer these questions the results from a survey about municipal financial policy will be used which was conducted in 2012. In addition, results from the public participation process, «Leipzig Thinking Ahead», will be drawn on.

2

LECTURE HALL B — MODERATION: ACHIM SCHRÖER
BAUHAUS-UNIVERSITÄT WEIMAR

MARIA KARAGIANNI, MATINA KAPSALI
Department of Urban and Regional Planning, Aristotle University of Thessaloniki

A NEW SOCIO-SPATIAL ORDER IN CRISIS-STRICKEN GREECE: THE LEGITIMIZATION OF THE HOUSING CRISIS AND THE (IN)VISIBILITY OF THE NEW MARGINALS

During the last years, many Southern European countries came at the forefront of international interest. Social and economic conditions are deteriorating and a vicious cycle of «austerity-recession-austerity» is created. The high percentages of homeownership and the significance of houses as assets in the Mediterranean cities render the housing crisis a critical aspect of the broader socio-economic turbulence. — In this research, we explore the new socio-spatial order that emerged in Greece as part of the austerity urbanism implemented since the 2008 financial crisis and we examine Athens and Thessaloniki as living laboratories. We elaborate on the economic evictions and the consequent increase in homelessness and marginalization of the urban population. In doing so, we provide a critical evaluation of the current housing-related policies and unearth the new landscapes of inequality. Throughout our analysis, we follow postcolonial theory, moving beyond North/South dichotomies. Furthermore, we adopt a comparative urbanism approach and employ the mixed-method triangulation for the collection and analysis of data. — We argue that the housing crisis should be understood as a process embedded within the context of a new socio-spatial order in the neoliberal city, which results in the formation of two distinct groups of population, those that desire their presence in the city, as they are linked to economic growth, and those that do not, and stay marginalised. In parallel, the present policies seeking to address homelessness are more reactive than proactive in their aims and principles, bearing a higher resemblance to philanthropic practices than to concrete housing policies.

2

LECTURE HALL B — MODERATION: ACHIM SCHRÖER
BAUHAUS-UNIVERSITÄT WEIMAR

LAURA CALBET
CMS, TU Berlin

MAKING SENSE OF HOUSING CRISSES: THE RHETORIC OF AUSTERITY AND GROWTH IN FINANCIALIZED BERLIN

In Berlin, the housing prices began to increase in 2009, at the time when the real estate boom in the U.S. and in many European countries came to a (temporary) halt and the financial crisis spread. As in other countries before, rising housing prices are depicted as the imbalance between «supply» and «demand», as consequence of the economic and population growth. Since growing population is interpreted as economic success in the context of urban competition, the housing price developments can be deemed as an unavoidable side effect of a desirable development. Thereby, the official explanation model for the housing problem overlooks at least two important questions: the role of preceding housing policies and the financialization of the housing provision system. Indeed, both the dismantling of social policies and the liberalization of the financial system created the necessary conditions for real estate to become a coveted investment asset and fostered the increasing real estate speculation. The paper discusses the developments in the housing market as form of spatial temporal fixity (related to a structural accumulation crisis as well as to previous real estate crises) and as commodification mechanism that creates liquidity at the expense of a higher level of household indebtedness (dispossession). «Housing crisis» is thereby defined as the paradox according to what although residential construction has become a driving force of urban transformation, the access to housing has declined for large segments of the population. The paper analyzes the local specific form of the financialized production of housing in Berlin and questions the terms «austerity» and «growth» in its role legitimating the financialization of housing.

3

STEFANIA ANIMENTO
University of Milano Bicocca

MOVING TO BERLIN FROM THE EUROPEAN SOUTH: PUSH AND PULL FACTORS IN THE CONTEXT OF INTER-URBAN UNEVEN DEVELOPMENT

In my contribution I present some results from my PhD research, which explores the relationship between migration processes from South-European cities to Berlin and urban development dynamics related to the housing market in this city. Berlin has attracted thousands of young people from all over the world and in particular from EU countries in the last decade (Holm 2013). Now gentrifying neighbourhoods such as Kreuzberg and Neukölln hosted also migrants of previous flows, the conditions under which the contemporary migratory fluxes are occurring, however, are profoundly different. First of all, although Berlin remains a «city of tenants», since the 1990s rent prices have increased enormously as well as unevenly in the city. Nevertheless, the rent price level is still lower than in other Southern European cities like Milan or Madrid. Secondly, the new wave of young migrants, if not much wealthier than long-time residents, is largely composed by students and knowledge workers. While their migration does not follow the classic path of economic gentrification, a form of polarization based on cultural capital is nonetheless taking place (TOPOS, 2011). Thirdly, European migrants often move back and forth, taking advantage of the European economic and social integration. Can we consider the easier and faster circulation of people within the EU as part of the process of annihilation of space by time related to the expansion of contemporary capitalism (Harvey 2001)? What kind of relationship is to be found between the circulation of people demanding for housing space and the circulation
of capital between the housing markets of European cities? Finally, in my contribution I will investigate whether the economic situation in the home-countries played a big role in the decision to move. How relevant are push-factors, i.e. searching for a job, rather than pull-ones, such as Berlin’s appeal, in the decision to move? Through the analysis of flat-hunting websites and in-depth interviews with migrants I will draw some observations about the simultaneous but different impact of the economic crisis on urban development in Southern and Northern European cities. New impulses will be given to the theory of uneven development elaborated by Neil Smith (2002; 2008) on a larger scale than the urban one.

4 KNUST UNGER, Witten Tenants Association

THE FINANCIALISATION OF RENTAL HOUSING IN GERMANY

The role of financialisation in the housing sector and in the crisis has mainly been discussed in regard to the securitisation of mortgage for private home owners (U.S., Spain, Portugal, Ireland etc.). The housing markets in Germany do hardly play a role in this perspective. However, there is another stage in housing, where a «creation of liquidity» [GOTHAM 2009] out of «spatially fixed» real estate values takes place in Germany. — In Germany, since 1999 more than 2.5 million rental housing units have been traded (primary and secondary sales). Normally, these housing units had been built before 1989 under conditions of public or regulated ownership and finance, mainly produced and maintained as use values for the labor force needs of industrial mass production. — Since about 2000 transnational financial capital started to play a major role in buy-outs of German mass housing. When during the years 2004-2006 private equity funds could use the liquidity of the global financial markets for high leverage the number of transactions of German housing companies reached its peak. Acquisitions were refinanced through huge and specific securitisations, which were based on the properties and expected cash flows from rents in future. After 2006 the financialized housing platforms were not able to achieve expected growth rates in sales, rents and acquisitions. The financial crashes since 2007 also stopped the creation of new ficticious capital through the «fair value» measurement of the existing property. Under these conditions it became unlikely that all companies would be able to refinance the securitized loans at the end of the loan period, mostly in 2013. One reaction was the reduction of expenditure into maintenance and repair of the aged housing stocks. Another strategy was industrial reengineering, which radically reduced employment and standards in the facility services. The most «progressive» platforms tried to manage the complex «spatial fixity» of rental housing through centralized IT systems. Such business strategies had a lot of bad implications for tenants, neighborhoods and employees. At the same time loans of a couple of less «professional» companies defaulted while transnational structures of the securitization arrangements did not allow regulated insolvencies. The liquidation of these companies became an endless business causing much trouble for tenants and municipalities. — However, in 2013 most large companies after complex negotiations surprisingly managed to refinance major securitisations. The new arrangements became possible because of the changed role of Germany and its property markets as a haven for «secure» financial investments within the international crisis processes. Immediately after that «rescue» private equity funds started their exits from the investment through IPOs, ...

PARALLEL SESSION 2: IMPACTS OF THE GLOBAL FINANCIAL CRISIS ON CITIES IN EUROPE

2 PHILIPP KATSINAS King’s College London

CRISIS AND NEOLIBERAL HEGEMONY: URBAN POLICIES IN THERSSALONIKI

Recent research on urban transformations in Greece has focused on the impacts of the global economic crisis and the subsequent structural adjustment program from the standpoint of austerity measures, disinvestment and depreciation, the privatization of public assets and the dismantling of public services. Only scant attention has been paid to the ways in which Greek cities are attempting to promote competitiveness-oriented development strategies during this period of severe recession. Taking the example of the city of Thessaloniki, local-state led urban regeneration projects and development agenda
**PROGRAMME**

**THURSDAY, DECEMBER 4TH, 2014**

14:00-14:30 OPENING PLENARY: OBERLICHTSAAL

14:30-16:30 IMPACTS OF THE GLOBAL FINANCIAL CRISIS ON CITIES IN GREECE

- Maria Zifou (University of Thessaly, Volos): Greek cities in crisis: governing for the market
- Dimitra Siatitsa (INURA, Athens): Changes in housing and property under a crisis regime in Greece: challenges for movements and the left

16:30-17:00 SHORT BREAK

17:00-18:00 Costis Hadjimichalis (Harokopio University, Athens): Resisting austerity at multiple scales

19:00-20:30 KEYNOTE OBERLICHTSAAL

- Jamie Peck (UCL, Vancouver): Normalized austerity, American style

**FRIDAY, DECEMBER 5TH, 2014**

09:15-11:15 PARALLEL SESSION 1

1. PANEL 1: URBAN AUSTERITY OBERLICHTSAAL

- Dimitris Poulios (NTUA, Athens) & Thanos Andritsos (Harokopio University, Athens): Between «exception» and «business as usual». Greek urban policy towards a new paradigm?
- Felix Wiegand (Goethe University, Frankfurt): Austerity urbanism in Germany: A multiscalar view on debt brakes, emergency managers and the struggles over (local) democracy
- Dieter Rink & Annegret Haase (Helmholtz-Zentrum für Umweltforschung, Leipzig): Municipal austerity regimes and public participation

2. PANEL 2: HOUSING CRISIS I LECTURE HALL B

- Maria Karagianni & Matina Kapsali (Aristotle University of Thessaloniki): A new socio-spatial order in crisis-stricken Greece: the legitimization of the housing crisis and the invisibility of the new marginals
- Stefania Animento (University of Milano Bicocca): Moving to Berlin from the European South: Push and pull factors in the context of inter-urban uneven development
- Knut Unger (Tenants Association Witten): The financialization of rental housing in Germany

11:15-11:45 COFFEE BREAK - MAIN BUILDING, GESCHWISTER-SCHOLL-STRASSE 8

11:45-13:45 PARALLEL SESSION 2

3. PANEL 3: URBAN GOVERNANCE AND PLANNING OBERLICHTSAAL

- Athanasios Papaioannou (Leuphana Univ. Lüneburg) & Simone Tulumello (Universidade de Lisboa): Cities in crisis. Socio-political and socio-spatial implications for territorial governance and spatial planning

13:45-14:45 LUNCH BREAK - IHEU, BELVEDERER ALLEE 5

14:45-16:45 PARALLEL SESSION 3

4. PANEL 4: HOUSING CRISIS II LECTURE HALL B

- Icaro Obeso Muñiz (Universidad de Oviedo): Geographical analysis of evictions in Spain
- Elodie Vittu (Bauhaus-Universität Weimar): Does the concept «Right to the city» fit to the situation in Budapest?
- Silvia Aru & Matteo Puttilli (University of Cagliari): Shades of (in)justice. Right to the city and right to the housing in Sant’Elia – Cagliari
- Iva Marčetić (Zagreb): From producing to owning the city: Housing and the urbanism of transition in ex-Yugoslavia

16:45-17:15 COFFEE BREAK - MAIN BUILDING, GESCHWISTER-SCHOLL-STRASSE 8

17:15-18:15 KEYNOTE OBERLICHTSAAL

- Margit Mayer (CMS, TU Berlin): Urban social movements in times of austerity politics

18:15-18:30 CLOSING PLENARY
BLENDING SOCIAL AND FINANCIAL RETURNS: SOCIAL IMPACT BONDS AS CRISIS GOVERNANCE STRATEGY

Since 2008, crisis governance strategies have been dominated by forms of economic and political retrenchment, seen in the policies of fiscal austerity (Peck 2012) and through the insulation of policy decisions from popular power in a «post-democracy» (Crouch 2011; Jessop 2013a). However, this has exacerbated the crisis of social reproduction and further eroded political legitimacy. As a result, we’re witnessing the growth of «active» state policy focused on «social impact», implemented through the «inclusive» practices of cross-sector collaboration with civil society. This presentation focuses on a critical example of this development, that of the «Social Impact Bond» (SIB). — Introduced in the U.K.’s «Big Society» programme in 2009, more than 40 SIBs now exist throughout the E.U., the U.S., and in both the global North and South. These promise to «blend fiscal and social returns» through a financial product based on the performance of targeted social policy interventions. In times of austerity, these claim to leverage private capital for public good, by offering private returns to investors when programs effectively lower levels of recidivism, unemployment, homelessness, and hence lower government expenditures. — This presentation will both describe the structure of this policy instrument, and consider its broader political significance as a crisis governance strategy. I will situate SIBs within a specific «hegemony project» (Kannankulam and Georgi 2014) that explicitly responds to the social crises of «trickle-down economics», yet which simultaneously rejects a politics of redistribution. My presentation will therefore focus on how SIBs discursively construct the crisis and an «imagined recovery» (Jessop 2013b), and also shape and limit the institutional «corridors» for political action (Brand 2014).

CRISIS—AUSTERITY—SMALL CITY... URBAN GOVERNANCE AND POLICY-MAKING IN SOUTHERN EUROPE

Austerity has become one of the key terms for describing, criticizing and dealing with the on-going financial, economic and social crisis in the European Union. Beyond its narrative character austerity has already become a highly influential political tool that has been implemented at different scales especially in the crisis-ridden countries in Southern Europe [Greece, Italy, Portugal, Spain etc.]. Besides being used as a multi-scalar political strategy that strives for fiscal discipline and budget balancing it can be interpreted as an element of a wider neoliberal and post-political rationale. — One of the most proliferated discourses within this rationale at the urban scale is the so-called smart city discourse. In fact the smart city has become a new buzzword that is frequently used by policy-makers, entrepreneurs as well as multi-national companies. It is predominantly used as an entrepreneurial response to the crisis and as a technological way to create economic growth (Laimer 2014: 5 ff.). Furthermore the smart city has become an intensively subsidized vision for future urban policy-making which is mainly supported by the smart city industry (especially the ICT sector) and by European funds (Raho 2014: 28). This has recently triggered a boom of smart city projects and initiatives in Southern European cities in particular (Vanolo 2014: 889). Taking into account the outlined setting, its different actors and relational connectivities this paper will have a look at different smart city initiatives and policies in Southern European (Italian) cities in order to highlight motifs and multi-scalar practices and also to get an understanding of the austerity-growth dialectic of the smart city rationale (Rossi 2014).

Does the Concept «Right to the City» Fit to the Situation in Budapest?

In Hungary, only 8% of the overall population are tenants, and only 3% live in social housing. However, the word «social housing» does not even exist; the common term is instead «self-administrated housing.» These buildings belong to the local municipalities within whose competence social issues fall. Hungary holds a top position in terms of its overcrowding rate (…). Given this housing situation and policy, which are in stark contrast to the situation in Western Europe and do not arise from the economic crisis as in the Southern European countries, I would like to discuss what the concept «right to the city» means for the urban social movements in post-socialist Hungary and especially in its capital.
Budapest. In so doing, my presentation will focus on a group of activists named «The city is for all», fighting to end homelessness and urban poverty. I will cover both the organization of the movement itself [i.e. distinction between «confederated» and «concerned» activists], and the several forms of protest they employ, such as protest within the institutional promotion of critical studies.

3

SILVIA ARU, MATTEO PUTTILLI University of Cagliari

SHADES OF (IN)JUSTICE RIGHT TO THE CITY AND RIGHT TO THE HOUSING IN SANT’ELIA – CAGLIARI

The suburb of Sant’Elia was founded in the mid-50s in the borderlands of the urban area of Cagliari, the main city in the island of Sardinia (Italy). Initially conceived as a temporary solution to answer the housing emergency subsequent WWII, Sant’Elia was progressively expanded and nowadays it hosts about 9,000 residents, almost all located into large social housing buildings, part of which stand in a strongly degraded condition. Because of its origins and its popular profile, Sant’Elia has always been strongly stigmatized by the other residents within the city as a place of ill repute at the point that it is lived and experienced, by its own inhabitants, as an urban ghetto at the margins of the city. In its recent history, Sant’Elia saw the emergence of movements of people struggling for their right to the housing as well as phenomena of housing occupations and squatting. Wherever in the district, it is diffused a general sense of injustice connected to living conditions that are considered as indecent and humiliating. Anyway, even if it is commonly perceived as — a unitary block, Sant’Elia is internally stratified and differentiated, and situations of relative wellbeing coexist with conditions of strong marginality and degradation. Moving from the narration of a recent case of eviction that caused a strong reaction of contestation by the residents of Sant’Elia, the paper illustrates the results of a fieldwork based on a campaign of interviews and questionnaires. The main objective is threefold: (i) to understand how the notion of spatial (in)justice is perceived and declined by the inhabitants of the district and in which measure it is connected to the right to the housing; (ii) to figure out if and how the recent economic crisis has changed the perception of injustice within the district and in which measure it has affected the living conditions in an already marginal district; (iii) which responses to the new housing crisis are set at different geographical scales, from the informal ones originated within the district to the formal policies of the municipality, the regional authority and national government and how these different responses may dialogue (or clash) the one with the others.

4

IVA MARCETIC Zagreb

FROM PRODUCING TO OWNING THE CITY: HOUSING AND THE URBANISM OF TRANSITION IN EX-YUGOSLAVIA

Building on a number of insightful recent case studies on anti-austerity protests in various cities across Europe, this paper engages in a theoretical exploration of the role of cities for contentious politics. Reflecting on the diversity of experiences, the necessity of a differentiated correlation between cities and contentious politics is advanced. Contextualizing urban-based anti-austerity protests in a cross-European comparative and historical perspective in relation to earlier waves of urban contention, the paper argues that it is not the urban context as such that triggers contention, but the specific position of certain cities in the world system of neoliberal capitalism. Not only macro-contextual factors, but also the local history of contentious action influence this position. Therefore, this paper suggests to understand urban-based anti-austerity protests in Europe as a historically specific expression of the political articulation of the periphery within the hegemonic EU. This constellation has produced a number of contradictions that are manifest in the relative stagnation of the current urban resistances against neoliberal austerity.

5

CHRISTIAN SCHOLL UC Louvain, Belgium

AUSTERITY PROTESTS IN WORLD-SYSTEMIC PERSPECTIVE. TOWARDS A DIFFERENTIATED THEORY OF URBAN CONTESTATION

How can we analyze and interpret the (re)emergence of squatting in relation to the economic crisis that is featuring many Italian and Spanish cities? This paper proposes a theoretical reflection framing the return of squatting practices through a bridge between political economy-oriented literature on neoliberal/austerity urbanism [e.g. Peck, 2012] and the more post-Marxist approach of Lazzarato [2012, 2013]. According to Lazzarato, debt represents the archetype of social relations, implying the shaping and control of subjectivities, making the «work on yourself» essential to the reproduction of (indebted) society. On the same time, those power and control relations implied in indebtedness can be generative of new processes of subjectification aimed at subverting this same power. — The paper discusses the (re)emergence of squatting in Italian and Spanish cities as the result process of subjectification of «indebted men» under a neoliberal/austerity urban agenda. In this respect, I propose to apply Peck’s concept of «austerity urbanism» [2012] to the case of Italian and Spanish cities, taking the example of Rome and Barcelona, I explore Peck’s idea of austerity urbanism as a continuum of the neoliberal agenda, not a new breaking phase. This can be shown by considering the urban policies in the housing sector, i.e. the collapse of socially-oriented housing consequent to the adoption of austerity measures represents just the last step of a long-term project that has shaped the urban geography of the city through favouring private [and financialized] informal, illegal, abusive and speculative housing instead of socially-oriented one led by institutions.
THE CRISIS IS OVER – TIME TO RETHINK ATHENS?

In June 2010 the Greek government launched the plans to reconstruct the Panepistimiou-Street in Athens, the main axis connecting Syntagma- and Omonia-Square. At the same time the city was heavily hit by the crisis which affected it in multiple and over the years deepening ways. In the political establishment the discontent about so called illegal immigrants and anarchist rioters which were blamed for the urban blight grew, leading to the call for the «reclaiming of the cities» in early 2012. In addition to the militarization of the city-center, the government launched a massive campaign against immigrants, prostitutes and activists of the social movements. In this context the 2010–plans for the urban regeneration were pushed forward under the label Rethink Athens and the conservative Onassis-Foundation took on the organization of an international planning-competition, which was completed in 2013. The winning project, including the construction of a pedestrian zone and the planting of hundreds of trees, wishes to «make citizens engage [...] with the city and form it anew [...]. As the next decade will be an era of massive changes.» In the paper I want to argue that Rethink Athens is not only a large-scale urban regeneration project, but should be regarded as a hegemonial project to spread the idea that the crisis is over and that the time for protesting has passed. The protests during the 2 last years shall fall into oblivion and people shall realize that the government has taken back the political lead.

AUSTERITY URBANISM AND INSURGENT CREATIVITY TALES OF CRISIS FROM THE WALLS OF ATHENS

Cities, if they were key sites for the production of crisis, have since become key targets for a punitive politics of austerity. Given downturns in speculative investment on the one hand, and the turning screws of government austerity on the other, many cities are bearing the physical scars of disinvestment, dispose and decline [...] spatial cracks. In what had been a fairly unbroken field of accelerated development (Tonkiss 2012) — Since the onset of the most recent crisis of the capitalist system in 2008, a number of critical urban scholars have explored the impacts of the implementation of harsh austerity regimes on the cities most afflicted by the crisis (Peck 2012, Harvey 2012, Mayer 2013, Tonkiss 2013, Panayotakis 2014). In my paper I want to examine these dynamics as well as some of their political implications through the empirical micro-perspective of the street art that has emerged on the walls of Athens in the past years. While the aforementioned disinvestment and deregulation have lead to some disastrous social effects1 the crisis simultaneously ruptures the neoliberal organization of urban space thus opening up new possibilities for appropriation. At the same time enormous creative and political potentials have been set free by the severe un- and underemployment of a majority of the productive population. In the case of Athens this has incited a revival of insurgent urban creativity in the spirit of the Lefebvrian Right to the City that is visibly inscribed in its material and mental landscape. Based on materials from an ethnographic fieldwork on this dynamic conducted in 2013 I will outline some of the contentious narratives and iconographies of crisis and austerity that have been mobilized on the walls of Athens, the critical attitudes of the artists and activists behind them, and their potential for transforming and politicizing urban space.

WHO GOVERS? PROPERTY POLICY IN BERLIN. AN ANALYSIS OF THE POLITICAL FIELD AND ITS POWER RELATIONS

The presentation will deal with the role of municipal land for the production and provision of social life and the guarantee of social justice in the cities, which is one of the fundamental questions of urban research. The dynamics of urbanization and migration increase the pressure on land, especially in urban areas where space is already limited. This pressure leads to conflicts in terms of use and access. In this regard also the Berlin real estate policy plays a decisive role for the development of the city. Being uncriticised for many years, the discourse about property policy of the Berlin real estate fund seems to change nowadays. Currently real estate policy is rediscovered by urban social movements and politicians to discuss the ongoing process of commodification of former creative and cultural commons and the consequences for the local urban development. Using the example of property policy in Berlin the lecture will discuss «the regulatory restructurings under a new regime of austerity urbanism, and reflects on the role of urban social movements struggling», like the Conference-Call supposed. The presentation is based on a research
responses to the housing crisis, spaces of culture and education, such as cinemas, theatres or schools and libraries have been equally taken over by self-organised communities, addressing to the lack of community services sustained by the city administration. Similarly, community organisations elaborated policies and mechanisms for the reuse of underused agricultural land and neighborhood markets.

In the proposed paper, we will analyse the process in which bottom-up community services have gained an increasingly important role in Rome, focusing on subjects including the connection between services and infrastructures organised by the administration and those initiated in a bottom-up framework; the management of the city’s real estate stock; or the question of transparency and participation in accessing spaces.

Margit Mayer
CMS, Berlin

Urban Social Movements in Times of Austerity Politics

The enduring economic crisis of 2008 and the austerity measures imposed in the following years have affected urban regions dramatically. However, cities have also become sites where social movements mobilize to contest the politics of austerity, the gentrification or degeneration of their neighborhoods, the private concentration of profits and assets, and the part and parcel of everyday capitalism. Against this background, Margit Mayer will reflect on the role of urban social movements struggling for progressive alternatives.

Value Capture as a Tool to Finance Urban Transportation Infrastructure in the Era of Crisis

Cities have become extremely popular as places for residence and work; more than half of the world’s population lives in urban areas. The need for transportation infrastructure and services continuously increases but at the same time the availability of public resources is shrinking and therefore governments, in the middle of the financial crisis, are struggling to cover the associated high costs. The role of accessibility is thus becoming more and more important in creating sustainable financing mechanisms to enhance urban development. This paper is part of a wider research still in progress and refers to an in depth analysis of the potential use of alternative financing strategies for transportation infrastructure, which are based on the concept of land value capture. The research objectives are multiple: it attempts to examine best practices on this topic internationally, recognize the strengths as well as the weaknesses of existing value capture strategies and finally propose an evaluation framework for decision-makers focusing on Greece, a country in which this alternative solution for financing transportation infrastructure is still a relatively unexplored scientific field. No method based on the value capture concept has yet been applied, not even on a limited scale, to any urban project developed or currently under construction in the country. It is suggested that, if implemented carefully, value capture models can indeed be a robust alternative potential which could effectively support sustainable urban development in Greece and contribute in recovering from the severe consequences of urban austerity, in the era of global financial crisis.

Informal Infrastructures: Bottom-Up Community Services and Social Solidarity in Rome

In the past decade, as a consequence of various waves of economic and political crises, the public sector in many European cities has gradually withdrawn from maintaining certain infrastructures and services. In some cities, particularly in Southern Europe, citizen organisations and activist groups engaged in replacing the services dissolving from their communities. In parallel, many professionals also recognized that traditional funding and organisational models lost their capacity to feed small-scale, community-oriented urban projects, and started elaborating alternative formats to help citizens access services. This process was particularly spectacular in the case of the city of Rome, where the incoherent policies of successive city administrations led to unequal urban development patterns, and where one-sided, developer-friendly crisis measures failed to provide solutions for social needs or help balance the city budget. Besides activist
### Thursday, December 4th, 2014

**Opening Plenary**

**Oberlichtsaal**

**Impacts of the Global Financial Crisis on Cities in Greece**

1. Maria Zifou
   - Volos, Greece
2. Dimitra Stiatsa
   - Athens, Greece
3. Costis Hadjimichalis
   - Athens, Greece

**Keynote**

Jamie Peck
- Vancouver, Canada

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### Friday, December 5th, 2014

#### Parallel Session 1: Impacts of the Global Financial Crisis on Cities in Europe

**Oberlichtsaal**

**Urban Austerity**

1. Dimitris Poulios / Thanos Andritsos
   - Athens, Greece
2. Joe Penny
   - London, UK
3. Felix Wiegand
   - Frankfurt, Germany
4. Dieter Rink / Annegret Haase
   - Leipzig, Germany

**Housing Crisis I**

1. Maria Karagianni / Matina Kapsali
   - Thessaloniki, Greece
2. Laura Calbet
   - Berlin, Germany
3. Stefania Animento
   - Milano, Italy
4. Knut Unger
   - Witten, Germany

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#### Parallel Session 2: Impacts of the Global Financial Crisis on Cities in Europe

**Oberlichtsaal**

**Urban Governance and Planning**

1. Athanasios Papaioannou / Simone Tulumello
   - Lüneburg, Germany / Lisboa, Portugal
2. Philipp Katsinas
   - London, UK
3. Robert Ogmian
   - Leicester, UK
4. Christian Smigiel
   - Leipzig, Germany

**Housing Crisis II**

1. Ícaro Obeso Muñiz
   - Oviedo, Spain
2. Elodie Vittu
   - Weimar, Germany
3. Silvia Aru / Matteo Puttilli
   - Cagliari, Italy
4. Iva Marcetic
   - Zagreb, Croatia

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#### Parallel Session 3: Impacts of the Global Financial Crisis on Cities in Europe

**Oberlichtsaal**

**Urban Conflicts and Contestations**

1. Christian Scholl
   - Louvain, Belgium
2. Cesare Di Felicianonio
   - Roma, Italy
3. Daniel Mullis
   - Frankfurt, Germany
4. Julia Tulke
   - Berlin, Germany

**Urban Conflicts and Public Services**

1. Elena Besussi
   - London, UK
2. Katja Thiele
   - Berlin, Germany
3. Anastasia Roukouni / Basil Stefanis
   - Thessaloniki / Thrace, Greece
4. Daniela Patti / Levente Polyak
   - Vienna, Austria / Budapest, Hungary

**Keynote**

Margit Mayer
- Berlin, Germany