

INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE ANNOUNCEMENT

FROM CONTESTED_CITIES TO GLOBAL URBAN JUSTICE
CRITICAL DIALOGUES

The **CONTESTED_CITIES** conference will be a forum of radical academics, practitioners and activists from different theoretical, disciplinary and geographical backgrounds coming together to probe the multiple forms of urban injustice that shape cities across the world. Cities have always been contested spaces in which struggles over different political visions of urban development, planning and life take place; yet urban contestation is increasing. In recent years this has been manifested through austerity urbanism, crisis politics and processes of financialisation. Millions of urban citizens are experiencing dispossession, displacement and expulsion on a daily basis; their 'right to the city' has been denied by diverse forms of neoliberal and authoritarian urban governance. At the same time there is growing global resistance and counter-strategies to these injustices, varying in form, scale and approach. The conference will develop counter-dialogues and perspectives, fighting against these injustices, in an attempt to go beyond neoliberalism.

Madrid is at the heart of radical urban struggles in Spain; the centre of the 15-M movement. 15-M's urban and anti-capitalist demands shook the obsolete Spanish party-political system, creating a laboratory of contestation. Such new urban initiatives challenge the established order, and provide radical insights into alternative practices of everyday life. The conference will hear from first-hand experiences of this and other struggles for urban justice.

Conference dates: 4-7 July 2016

Main languages: Spanish and English

Contact: ccc2016@contested-cities.net

CONTESTED_CITIES is a network of researchers from Europe and Latin America that researches and analyses the processes of neoliberalisation of space, gentrification and social contestation. Our research has involved methodological innovation in particular through audio-visual methodologies. At this conference we will present our findings and open up a dialogue with colleagues, practitioners and activists from across all continents. The conference will be structured around the following **five streams**:

1. **CONCEPTS FOR CRITICAL URBANISMS – BEYOND THE NEW GLOBAL URBAN QUESTION**
2. **THE GLOBAL URBAN HOUSING QUESTION**
3. **NEW REGIMES OF EXPULSION – SHEDDING LIGHT ON THE VIOLENCE OF DISPLACEMENT**
4. **NEW FORMS AND LIMITS OF GENTRIFICATION**
5. **THE NEW URBAN ALTERNATIVES – SOCIAL MOVEMENTS, THEIR SOCIO SPATIAL PRACTICES, AND THE USE OF VISUAL METHODOLOGIES**

Abstract submission:

4th January - 5th March, 2016

Letters of acceptance:

March 20th, 2016

Early-bird registration:

April 1st to April 30th, 2016

Regular registration:

May 1st to May 31st, 2016

Full paper submission:

April 1st to May 31st, 2016

Publication of the conference programme:

June 20th, 2016

Info: <http://www.contested-cities.net/congreso2016>

INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE ANNOUNCEMENT**FROM CONTESTED_CITIES TO GLOBAL URBAN JUSTICE
CRITICAL DIALOGUES****STREAM 1****CONCEPTS FOR CRITICAL URBANISMS – BEYOND THE NEW GLOBAL URBAN QUESTION**

Contemporary academic debates have brought into the spotlight the profound interconnection between global processes and local urban conditions. Debates about the variegation of neoliberal urbanism, the intensity of policy motilities, assemblage urbanism and new post-colonial comparativist approaches within global urban studies, have identified different notions and actions of planetary power relations. This stream seeks to engage in these debates, as well as going beyond, them through critical reflection on theories and practices in urban studies.

We are seeking novel theoretical discussions which reflect the complexity of societal embrace and/or rejection of neoliberal policies and imaginations. Urban grassroots have offered alternative modes of acting; constructing contested spaces in cities, and posing vital urban questions across Europe, Latin America and beyond. Yet, academic discussions have hitherto failed to entirely reflect the current social ruptures taking place in many cities. We therefore need a broader conceptual vocabulary to effectively engage with these many radical approaches. Theorisations about social and spatial injustice, the right to the city, and dispossession might only be a starting point for the debates we are seeking to develop in this stream.

Contributions should focus around one or several of these questions:

- 1) How can we move beyond and deepen existing debates in urban theory?
- 2) In what ways can our theoretical lexicon be updated in order to address the current political moment?
- 3) How can theoretical discussions inform practice, providing meaningful knowledge for urban struggles and transformations?

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CRITICAL DIALOGUES****STREAM 2****THE GLOBAL URBAN HOUSING QUESTION – ACTORS, EXPERIENCES AND STRUGGLES**

For many across the world, housing is an unfulfilled human right. Under capitalism, housing has been turned into a real estate asset. The use value of housing has been undermined by increasing exchange values, while homeownership and property rights are secured under legislative frameworks which emphasise the freedom to own and invest. Contemporary housing production and re-production is dominated by: processes of financialisation, privatisation of public housing, securitization of private housing and transnational investors and global landlords in local housing markets. Housing policies are designed to encourage capital circulation, producing multiple forms of deprivation, exclusion and urban enclosure. The state has a contradictory role in these processes, in some cases accelerating the means of dispossession and in others attempting to provide patchy solutions to the growing housing issue. Thus, urban dwellers experience precarious housing conditions, and have in many cases organised themselves to denounce the injustices and find alternative solutions to housing-for-profit.

We encourage paper proposals confronting the housing question by addressing one or several of the following questions:

- 1) How is the global urban housing question manifested in everyday experience, and what are its primary causes?
- 2) What is the relation between housing policies, real estate markets and the right to housing?
- 3) What processes of transnationalisation and financialisation of housing markets are taking place in different local contexts? How can we calculate and measure their impacts, and who are global landlords and how do they act? What can we learn from processes of financialisation, dispossession and privatisation?
- 4) What challenges to the housing question are being posed by contemporary housing movements, and what demands are they making on housing? Who is engaging in housing movements and how are they organising? What is the alternative right to housing that arises out of collective action?

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CRITICAL DIALOGUES****STREAM 3****NEW REGIMES OF EXPULSION – SHEDDING LIGHT ON THE VIOLENCE OF DISPLACEMENT**

Displacement is a notion which characterises the deep transformations in contemporary cities; an acute form of socio-spatial injustice. Displacement increases as urban policies are evermore aligned toward the land economy, seeking rent gaps, promoting gentrification, dispossession and social control. Displacement needs to be deconstructed, specified and politicised in order to better relate it to processes of dispossession.

This stream will debate processes of urban displacement. From large scale displacement through mega projects in the cities of Brazil, India and China, to extensive housing evictions in Southern Europe, and transnational takeover of public housing in Berlin, cities across the globe are expelling the poor. We are interested in bringing together critical urban theories which challenge this reality, and consider the roles of political conflict, migration, mobility, and the anthropology of violence in attempting to explain and overcome these injustices.

In this stream we encourage debates which link theory to empirical evidence of urban displacement by engaging with the following questions:

- 1) Which policies and discourses promote and naturalise displacement?
- 2) What we can learn from local case studies that address processes of displacement via accumulation by dispossession?
- 3) How is displacement accomplished in different places? What new regimes of displacement can be identified?
- 4) What are the emerging means of social control and violence in public and private space? How can displacement be conceived as another instrument of social and spatial control?
- 5) How can the mainstream discourses, which legitimise processes and practices of aggression and deprivation, be challenged?

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Gentrification is an established academic concept, and has penetrated activist and policy debates in many corners of the world. As a result, we have now accumulated a great deal of knowledge about its manifestation, particularly in large cities and especially with regard to housing. But gentrification is not only related to the expulsion of deprived and unwanted social groups from traditional inner city neighbourhoods. Urban restructuring in peri-urban areas, such as new-build and brownfield developments equally exhibit a class based re-modelling of urban landscapes. Retail gentrification, a growing phenomenon, is transforming the commercial landscape of our cities, with the domination of international retail giants, the incursion of boutiques and high end independent shops, and the redevelopment of markets, contributing to the displacement of traditional businesses and low income shoppers. The change of use values into exchange values, through the displacement of the previous actors, the eradication of everyday rhythms and the imposition of new lifestyles and cityscapes is dictated by capital, the state and real estate markets. The variegated geographies of gentrification reveal new forms of vengeful urbanism where the enforcement of the new urban order is achieved by socio-spatial cleansing and displacement.

Through deconstructing the current transformations of gentrification, this stream aims to fortify anti-gentrification and anti-displacement struggles with new arguments and tools. In this stream we encourage discussion of the new forms, practices and spaces of gentrification, by focusing on the following questions:

- 1) What are the new spaces of gentrification, and at what scale(s) can they be understood?
- 2) What new mechanisms of gentrification have emerged? How is space being re-invented in the current era?
- 3) Which new practices (affective, symbolic, resistant) foster or challenge gentrification?
- 4) How have processes of gentrification been successfully overcome? What can we learn from activists and grassroots movements about the building of a more just city?

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CRITICAL DIALOGUES****STREAM 5****THE NEW URBAN ALTERNATIVES – SOCIAL MOVEMENTS, THEIR SOCIO SPATIAL PRACTICES,
AND THE USE OF VISUAL METHODOLOGIES**

Cities are contested spaces where actors in asymmetric power relations struggle over different conceptions of urban development, justice, planning and politics. The enforcement of austerity urbanism has led to the denial of many social and spatial rights, depriving people of their 'rights to the city'. By overtly rejecting the neoliberal rationale, grassroots movements aim to re-establish direct democracy through commoning, social solidarity and alternative values, creating 'cracks in capitalism'. In many cities of Latin America, and currently in Spain, social movements have become key actors for and in local governments, producing ruptures with neoliberal regimes. However, such organisation may create obstacles to, or even foreclose, urban alternatives.

Seeking to shed light on the dynamics of radical urban transformations, this stream invites papers on socio-spatial justice and the new urban alternatives which address the questions below. In addition, in this panel, we seek to explore the potential of audio-visual methodologies in these contexts.

- 1) What does the right to the city, as well as social and spatial justice, mean in different socio-economic and political contexts?
- 2) How have collaborations between social movements and local governments brought about new urban policies and politics? And what are the obstacles to the transformational potential of these collaborations?
- 3) What is the emerging role for social movements in relation to local, regional and central governments in places of political transition?
- 4) How do anti-capitalist movements construct urban social spatial relationships?
- 5) What potential is there for the use of visual methodologies in reflective inquiry into the practices of resistance and transformation in cities, and what challenges do they pose?

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ORGANISATION & LOGISTICS

ABSTRACT SUBMISSION

Abstracts should be submitted in Spanish or English summarising the objectives of the paper, the theoretical discourse, methodology, analysis and findings. Abstracts must be between 800 and 1,200 words, and followed by **five keywords** which support the paper proposal.

SUBMISSION DEADLINES

- Abstracts should be submitted by **February 20th, 2016**.
- Submissions should be made online at: <http://www.contested-cities.net/congreso2016>
- Notifications of acceptance or rejection will be sent on **March 20th, 2016**.
- Presenters should submit their full papers by **May 31st, 2016**. Full papers submitted should be around 3.000 to 5.000 words including references.
- After the submission deadline, all papers in each stream will be distributed to other presenters to ensure a constructive and critical dialogue.
- Authors of the papers have the option to publish in a Special Issue of the CONTESTED_CITIES Working Paper Series (ISSN 2341- 2755): <http://contested-cities.net/working-papers/>
- After the conference, selected papers will be considered for contribution to edited volumes and thematic issues in specialised journals (of high IF).

REGISTRATION AND FEES

Registration opens on **April 1st 2016**. Before submitting full papers, registration and payment are required. In case of multi-authorship, co-authors should register for the conference only if they wish to participate. The closing date for registration of presenters is **May 31st 2016**. Early Bird fees are available until **April 30th 2016**. Registration includes lunch during the four days of the conference.

	Early Bird <i>(payment up until April 30th, 2016)</i>	Registration <i>(payment after April 30th, 2016)</i>
Group 1	185,- €	240,- €
Group 2	120,- €	150,- €
Group 3	75,- €	95,- €
Group 4	40,- €	50,- €

- Group 1:** Established academics (tenured researchers, postdoctoral researchers with contracted employment)
- Group 2:** Early-stage researchers from Europe, North America and other high-income countries (PhD students and those post-docs without a full-time equivalent contract or scholarship)
- Group 3:** Early-stage researchers from Southern and Eastern Europe, Latin America, Africa and Asia
- Group 4:** non presenting attendees and the low/ un-waged (contact organisation team prior to registration through email) This fee does not cover lunch vouchers.

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