

Title:

New values of Post-industrial heritage and the urban transformation of Poblenou, (Barcelona, Spain)

Abstract:

The increasing recognition of the social dimension of heritage in the late 70s derived into a more democratic theoretical extended meaning of heritage and the range of values it encompasses. However, this shift also resulted into a crisis in the modes of conservation practices and policies that opened the gates to capital forces to manipulate the urban legacy and the citizens right to its transfer. In this context, some scholars argue for the need for the revision of the value based-approach (Mason 2019, Fredheim 2016) at the operational level while others propose its complete abandonment (Rudolff 2006; Poullos 2010, 2014; Walter 2013). But, as suggested by Fredheim and Kalhaf (2016) in their re-examination of the heritage value significance and the value-based approach, the act of identifying something as Heritage, involves a previous appreciation of existing values -valuing process- which leads to considering that 'thing' is worth preserving. Therefore, independently from its origin, this paper argues, the concept of value is intertwined with the fact of valorising something as Heritage and, therefore, from the need for its preservation.

Since the collapse of the building industry in 2008, the real state promotion as the driving force for the urban growth and development of the city of Barcelona started to be questioned not only by citizenship but also by public institutions in the search for economically sustainable urban strategies. This new scenario has brought opportunities for local community groups to re-claim disused sites and alternative models of 'bottom-up' regeneration seeking synergies with the public sector.

From an ontological approach to understanding heritage, this paper argues how an alternative perspective on the heritage values of post-industrial sites within the city could offer innovative insights for developing planning and urban design. To that aim, this investigation firstly analyses the reactivation processes of two industrial complexes, Can Picó and Puigcerdà 127, located in Poblenou, the most industrialised area of Spain in the 19thC. The focus has been to confront them with the concept of heritage values. Secondly, it explores how this relationship has impacted the urban scale. Finally, this paper intends to critically questions the use of heritage values as a tool for designing urban conservation policies.