



City, Urban Transformation and the Right to the City

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ABSTRACT

This article investigates the relationship between transformation of cities and the right to the city. To be able to do this, the problems that are created by contemporary urbanization such as social exclusion, poverty and environmental degradation are discussed in the first part. After that, with a special focus on the period starting with industrial revolution up until today, the article explains economic and political motivations behind urban transformation. This part emphasizes how urban change under different forms of capitalism creates and deepens social inequalities in cities. Final part of this article will be a discussion on the right to the city, and its relation to these urban issues.

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1. Introduction

We are living in an age of planetary urbanization (Brenner and Schmid, 2011), and some of the problems that today's cities encounter are unprecedented in history of urbanization. According to Brenner and Schmid, what we understood as city and urban has shifted in scale and function within the last 30 years. New mega-urban regions in several parts of the world started to emerge, swallowing their peripheries, rearticulating both geographically and functionally what used to be former city centers and hinterlands and eradicating nature and wildlife (Brenner and Schmid, 2011). The number of megacities with a population of ten million or more inhabitants has shifted from 10 to 28 between the years 1990 and 2014, and it is expected to rise up to 41 in 2030 (United Nations, Department of Economic and Social Affairs, Population Division, 2015). According to the

World Urbanization Prospects report of United Nations, one of the most important problems of this fast urban growth and expansion is the increase in world urban population. The percentage of the world's population living in urban areas increased from 30% in 1950s to 54% in 2014. The same report predicts that the world urban population will rise up to 66% of the whole world population by 2050 (United Nations, Department of Economic and Social Affairs, Population Division, 2015). Increase in urban population also means a decrease in rural population, which also means less people to work in small agriculture farms. Consequently to

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