



Spatial tensions: urban microgeographies for changing cities

Co-chairs

Marco Cremaschi (Science PO Paris – France)

Ianira Vassallo (Politecnico di Torino – Italy)

Michele Cerruti But (Politecnico di Torino – Italy)

Agim Kercuku (Politecnico di Milano – Italy)

Giulia Setti (Politecnico di Milano – Italy)

Even though violent conflicts have transformed cities during the whole XX century, it's nowadays possible to identify the softer phenomenon of "Tensions" as the specific contemporary both social and spatial urban changes catalyst. From one hand, the power of Economy and the crisis of societies are disruptively intertwining with the territories and this intensification is also softening and sharpening strong Conflicts.

Contemporary tensions are often hidden, sometimes implicit or explicit.

Urban and social tensions rise in between opposing models, visions and scenarios, but also between different populations and generations. Tensions can be recognised due to different uses of public spaces, in different productive models overlapping, in gentrification processes ambivalence but also in the rights claimed by some urban practices. From the other hand, unless Urbanism and Geography defined urban conflicts phenomena through a vast literature since the last 50 years, words and definitions inherited from those relevant studies seem no longer be appropriate for contemporary cities.

The actual urban changes are questioning the concept of Public Space, Specialized or Industrial district, Heritage, Periphery, Gates communities and so on. Contemporary cities are much more heterogeneous than labels and categories coming from our vocabularies. A microgeography of urban tensions can re-define this lexicon, developing new categories for giving us a better understanding of contemporary urban changes.

Facing urban tensions is also an opportunity for urban planning and design practices to regenerate the city itself.

Open questions are:

- How tensions could describe a new season of urban transformations, of policy and design strategies?
- How urban and spatial tensions could become an instrument for urban and architectural design?
- Which tools could we use to define hidden phenomena in changing cities?

The session will discuss: Spatial and social tensions case-studies
Projects facing urban tensions
Essays and studies focusing on language adequacy for contemporary urban tension