



XVI N-AERUS CONFERENCE:

WHO WINS AND WHO LOSES?

Exploring and learning from transformations and actors in the cities of the South.

19th-21st November 2015 in Dortmund Germany.

Background:

With current developments around the world exhibiting increasing urban challenges, such as new urban forms and patterns of development, the expectations and responsibilities of politicians, policy-makers, urban researchers and the consultancy industry have arguably never been greater. The academic world appears inert while still struggling to disentangle disciplinary epistemologies and the attempt to overcome the exclusivity of established frameworks of knowledge production. Similarly, the policy-makers and politicians act within their own logic and schedules, and developers, donors, banks, NGOs and consultants have their internal agendas, scopes and working methods. Obviously, all these sectors produce significant knowledge on urban development; however their knowledge and action is often disconnected from each other and, even worse, it is often not transferable. The N-AERUS Conference will address these challenges by focusing on three issues:

Offering a platform to discuss such issues, the XVith N-AERUS conference will consist of three thematic roundtable sessions following individual paper presentations to question and reshape academic, institutional and community-based agendas for the identification of innovative research frameworks, practices and the pedagogy related with built environment disciplines. It will bring different sectoral actors together, including academics, practitioners and consultants.

The roundtables are centred around the above stated questions on going beyond major strands of discussion and lenses of analyses as the common approach of best practices and puts an emphasis on actors whose voices are not yet recognised by raising the following questions:

- What are the different spatial forms of urban development and their respective challenges and pitfalls?
- How do planners, officials, politicians, consultants and other actors affect changes in urban development and disseminate the results?
- How is knowledge produced and how does the engagement between universities, policy makers and urban communities work to achieve the best results in education, research and community services?

Roundtable 1 provides the ground for discussion focussing on new spatial arrangements, Roundtable 2 calls for going beyond the common approach of best practices and puts an emphasis on actors whose voices are not yet recognised, Roundtable 3 addresses the three spheres of knowledge production in academia, consultancy/development agents and policy-makers.

1-Urbanization beyond megacities: new urban patterns – new constellations of actors

Discourses related to urban development tend to focus on major strands of discussion and lenses of analyses. However, beyond the dominating discussion on megacities, new forms of urbanisation are emerging: e.g. revitalisation of the inner-cities, development corridors, secondary cities, an urban-rural continuum, trans-locational and multi-locational households to name only a few. These new forms of urbanity come with a new set of actors

beyond those institutionally and officially established. Not all of these new actors are involved in decision-making processes. While some actors will benefit from the emerging urban patterns, others will obviously lose, e.g. through displacement or even forced evictions and gentrification.

2-Learning from diverse experiences beyond 'best-practice'

A predominant lens of how we understand and narrate urban development tends to focus on case studies, mainly 'best practices'. The bases of these studies are analyses based on a single specific context with its individual connotations of conflicts and patterns of social spatial development. However, developing debates based on various experiences and understanding the complexity of comparison and the non-transferability of urban practices seem crucial in order to deepen the understanding of processes shaping urbanisation across the globe (Brenner 2012; Guarneros-Meza & Geddes 2011; Robinson 2011). This has become key in the understanding of specific contexts and plays an important role in the creation of knowledge in research and in the search for tangible solutions, as well as for monitoring and evaluation or improving living conditions.

3-The politics of knowledge in research and education

Consequently, assessing what forms of urban production are emerging, whose experiences are actually being expressed and in which ways knowledge is produced and disseminated has become a challenge in itself. To address these issues there is a need for more diversity in the major strands of knowledge production, including the plurality of research frameworks (de Sousa Santos, Arriscado Nunes, Meneses 2006; Roy 2009). There is also a need to consider various contemporary restructuring processes in the analyses of urban phenomena. It is inevitable to raise questions on how we understand, narrate and theorize urban practices in their relation to the urban change and actors involved.

Conference set-up:

The conference is organized around different conference formats e.g. roundtable, open space and panel to enhance the formal and informal dialogue between all participants. Following individual presentations (10-15 minutes each) in each roundtable, an informal discussion will be kicked-off by presenters on a number of participant-led topic choices. Subsequently, the roundtable chair will extend the discussion either on a broad question put to the session as a whole, or specific questions related to the session's thematic orientation. Through introducing open conference formats such as an Open Space all participants are encouraged to participate and the formal as well as informal dialogue should be enhanced. For details see programme.

Venue:

The conference will take place from 19th-21st November 2015 in Dortmund (Germany) and will be jointly organized by N-AERUS, the Habitat Unit at the Technical University Berlin and the Department of International Planning Studies at the TU Dortmund University.

Registration until October 25th 2015 via Email to naerus2015.rp@tu-dortmund.de with the registration form.