

Mediterranean Urbanism: Migration, Tourism and Public Space in the Mediterranean City

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Abstract : Classic studies of the Mediterranean as a cultural and geographic unit of analysis have emphasized the theme of cosmopolitan urbanism as a key feature of the Mediterranean city. This paper explores the Mediterranean city today, considering continuities and ruptures from images of the Mediterranean of the past. The paper seeks to address the following questions: What are some defining characteristics of Mediterranean cities today? What are some of the shared challenges? The paper focuses on two interrelated themes: public space and tourism management. Several examples of protest and contestation in Mediterranean cities will be analyzed. These examples include cities where tourism presents opportunities and challenges to city planning and management; and where new private and public developments threaten the management of public space. The paper draws on ethnographic research in the city of Saranda, Albania, a small attractive tourist destination on the border with Greece, and Barcelona, Spain, a leading example of urban transformation and tourism massification. While different in size and popularity, both cities share some similar developments and contestations. In both cities, authorities have taken up different strategies to manage tourism and restore public space. The comparison will focus on social movements in the respective cities that target tourism and urban development in the name of preserving their Mediterraneanness. These examples are used to reflect more broadly on what are some features of the Mediterranean city today and how they can be preserved in the current climate of tourism expansion of urban development boom.

Keywords : mediterranean, urbanism, tourism, public space, anthropology, human geography, sustainability

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