

Evolution of Economic Urban Spaces: Barcelona's Trafalgar Garment District, 1940-2017

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Abstract : Cities are steadily transforming their productive systems based on value-adding strategies, with the aim of becoming more competitive in a globalized economy. This fact is reflected in inner urban spaces which are increasingly accommodating new economic activities related to knowledge, culture, creativity, and tourism, to the detriment of traditional activities. This is the case of the Trafalgar Garment District (TGD), located in Barcelona's Eixample Dret neighborhood, an economic urban space historically devoted to the garment wholesale trade. This district is currently experiencing the transformation of its traditional economic specialization. In the last 50 years, external and internal factors have caused, firstly, the disintegration of the Catalonian garment regional cluster. This has resulted in the closure of the majority of metropolitan garment workshops. Secondly, this has also caused either the disappearance of wholesale firms or their relocation to more suitable spaces in the metropolitan area. Specifically, the TGD's economic restructuring is related to the attraction of firms related to the lodging industry and the new economy. In addition, some of the wholesale businesses are adopting new management strategies in order to remain in the TGD. These initiatives are thought to allow them, on one hand, to upgrade their products and, on the other, to reconfigure their internal organization in order to be more competitive.

Keywords : Barcelona, garment district, new economy, tourism, garment wholesale trade

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