

The Image Redefinition of Urban Destinations: The Case of Madrid and Barcelona

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Abstract : Globalization impacts on cities and especially on their centers, especially on those spaces more visible and coveted. Changes are involved in processes such as touristification, gentrification or studentification, in addition of shop trendiness. The city becomes a good of interchange rather than a communal good for its inhabitants and consequently, its value is monetized. So, these different tendencies are analyzed: on one hand, the presence of tourists, the home rental increase, the explosion of businesses related to tourism; on the other hand; the return of middle classes or gentries to the center in a socio-spatial model that has changed highlighting the centers by their culture and their opportunities as well as by the value of public space and centrality; then, the interest of students (national and international) to be part of these city centers as dynamic groups and emerging classes with a higher purchasing power and better cultural capital than in the past; and finally, the conversion of old stores into modern ones, where vintage trend and the renewal of antiquity is the essence. All these transforming processes impact the European cities and redefine their image. All these trends reinforce the impression and brand of the urban center as an attractive space for investment, keeping such nonsense meaningful. These four tendencies have been spreading correlatively impacting the centers and transforming them involving the displacement of former residents of these spaces and revitalizing the center that is financed and commercialized in parallel. The cases of Madrid and Barcelona as spaces of greater evidence in Spain of these tendencies serve to illustrate these processes and represent the spearhead. Useful recommendations are presented to urban planners to find the conciliation of communal and commercialized spaces.

Keywords : gentrification, shop trendiness, studentification, touristification

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