INURA CONFERENCES 1991 - 2007

2007 Transformation, survival and emancipation in a world city: regeneration or business as usual?
17th INURA Conference_London_June 25 to July 1, 2007

2006 Global City Regions – Towards a Shareholder City
16th INURA Conference_Bochum / Metropolitan Area Rhine-Ruhr_June 23 to July 5, 2006

2005 Contested/ing Rights. Planning Rights and the Right to the City
15th INURA Conference_Rome / Collevecchio_June 24 to 30, 2005

2005 INURA Seminar and Workshop at the World Social Forum WSF
_INURA Seminar and WSF Workshop_Ponto Alegre, Brazil_January 23 to 25 / 29, 2004

2004 CREATIVE CITY
14th INURA Conference_Amsterdam / Egmond_June 13 to 19, 2004

2003 DIVIDED CITY
13th INURA Conference_Berlin / Trebnitz_June 22 to 28, 2003

2002 SOLIDARICITE
12th INURA Conference_Caen / Paris / Clinchamps sur Orne_June 17 to 22, 2002

2001 RIGHTS AND FIGHTS
11th INURA Conference_Pisa / La Chiara di Piumiano, Italy_September 24 to 29, 2001

2000 URBAN CONTRASTS
10th INURA Conference_Brussels / Durboy, Belgium_May 21 to 26, 2000

1999 REGENERATION AND RENEWAL
9th INURA Conference_Glasgow / Durham, UK_July 24 to 30, 1999

1998 DIVERSE CITY - Sustaining and Governing the Multicultural City
8th INURA Conference_Toronto / Huntsville, Canada_September 14 - 20, 1998

Special event Tue, Sept. 15: Olympic Dreams - Urban Nightmares?
Public event about Toronto’s bid for the Summer Olympics 2008
organised by INURA Toronto and ‘Bread not Circuses’

1997 POSSIBLE URBAN WORLDS
7th INURA Conference_Zurich / Amgen, Switzerland_June 16 - 21, 1997

1996 MAKING URBAN ENVIRONMENTS: SELF-HELP AND UTOPIAS
6th INURA Conference_Luton / Letchworth, UK_May 8 - 14, 1996

1995 GROWTH OR NO-GROWTH POLICIES IN THE REGIONAL STATE: SCOPE FOR LOCAL ACTION
5th INURA Conference_Amsterdam / Benelux Leeuwen, Netherlands_June 4 - 8, 1995

1994 CITY TERRITORY ENVIRONMENT - Research and Action for a Socio-ecological Transformation
4th INURA Conference_Firenze / Villa Cennina, Italy_May 21 - 29, 1994

1993 DE-INDUSTRIALISATION
3rd INURA Conference_London / Durham, UK_May 23 - 27

1992 CITIES IN TRANSFORMATION IN TRANSFORMING SOCIETIES
2nd INURA conference_Rostock / Perrow, Germany_May 25 - 31, 1992

1991 INURA - Foundation of the International Network for Urban Research and Action
1st INURA Conference_Zurich / Saclera, Switzerland_May 12 - 18, 1991
As it was decided in the London assembly, the next INURA annual conference will be hosted in Athens, scheduled for 3 - 10 October 2008 (Friday to Friday).

For this purpose an enthusiastic organising team has been holding intensive meetings since July 2007. We are very motivated to work out an "alternative" approach for Athens, combining theoretical analysis and research with social and environmental urban movements, the main INURA concept after all. This intention can be summed in the phrase: "Athens: another experience" - if only with a purpose to paraphrase (and twist) the official advertising campaign of the Ministry for tourism: "Greece: the real experience"!

A few words about the main theme of the conference:

We are approaching this year's INURA as an opportunity to reflect upon different experiences and viewpoints that relate to our specific Athenian (Greek, Southern European, Balkan, Mediterranean etc.) context. We are working on various focused approaches that will give light to different aspects of this reality. Approaches that could be organised as sub-themes, to function as informative "entry-points" for the texts and the field trips: City and nature/ Identity and space/ Culture and cultures / Capital transformations - real estate development - Governance/ Control and security.

Athens, as other cities of Southern Europe, has developed through different forms of urban regulation and informal mechanisms of production of space.

Those processes have been evaluated as, on the one hand, providing a democratic redistribution of urbanised land-rent, providing access to self-owned housing for a wide range of population, and contributing for many years to social integration and social cohesion, providing space for survival strategies until today.

On the other hand, those mechanisms have been criticised for creating an "anti-urban" petty-bourgeois, small ownership class and a widespread ideology of land valorisation and speculation. Moreover it has produced a degraded - or even 'chaotic' - urban environment, in terms of green areas, public transport, conflicting land uses etc.

This process has continued to evolve through a number of "interesting regulatory" devices, "loose" planning policy etc. - although such mechanisms are today mediated / reformed in a neoliberal political context. The absence of established planning system has evolved so to favour uncontrolled big capital speculation without democratic control and endless city-expansion to the Attika countryside.

Some of the issues occurring for INURA to reflect upon are: Coming to the recent years, how do globalised wider transformations (international capital, migration dynamics etc) take form in such a context. How can a radical approach of democratic planning be pursued?

We hope that during the 18th INURA meeting, we will have the opportunity to debate upon these and more questions.

See you in Athens!!!

Dimitra Siatista Katerina Polychroniadi

With thanks to Ben Tranchell/ Design: Hammersmith Community Trust & Alan Rowden
VISIT TO ISTANBUL 14th-17th March 2008
Organised by Oran

Friday 14th March
Workshop planned to start late afternoon, after the introductory tour of the first party arrivals. This is a meeting with various official actors, where they will brief on their ‘Visions of Urban Transformation in the Historical Peninsula’. The members joining the second party are expected to arrive in Istanbul at the latest early Friday afternoon, so they can join this meeting. After dinner, group will continue to discuss the presentations, and the taskforce coordinators will brief on their agendas.

Saturday 15th March
All groups will spend Saturday AM in the Sulukule area for a general orientation.
Saturday PM is planned for groups’ contacts and visits outside the area. Some contacts may be shared by more than one group.
On Saturday evening there will be a traditional meze dinner in Kumkapi area, where many Sulukule residents make their living as street musicians and entertainers. Observations on site.

Sunday 16th March
Mainly to be spent with local actors inside the area. However, the agendas of different groups may vary, due to the type of work they foresee. Sunday late is time for groups’ internal evaluations.

Monday 17th March
Early morning presents a last chance for contacts in the public sector, which might not be inclined ‘to cooperate outside office hours’.
Late AM and noon is reserved for the presentations of the 5 taskforces, internal discussion and evaluation.
Afternoon is time for a public discussion. General public from Istanbul will be invited. Night will be the closing party, with the performances of Sulukule artists and musicians.

INURA LONDON 2007

London was one of the cradles of capitalism and - as the base of the British Government and with a host of consultants and financial institutions - has played a leading role in the intensified renewal of the capitalist project in Europe and the world since the 1980s. In 2007 the UK was reflecting on the legacy of slavery and on the campaigns here to end the Atlantic slave trade 200 years ago - a trade which contributed massively to wealth accumulation in Britain and thus to some extent underpins whatever prosperity we all have now. Dealing with that legacy may help in dealing with racism today. The idea of emancipation from oppression is thus in people’s thoughts.
The 17th Inura meeting focussed less on the big global processes and more on the experience of citizens in a “World City” experiencing rapid economic growth distributed very unequally. The economy is partly driven by the continuing inflation of asset values, including the values of housing and urban space. Citizens are all subject to the resulting pressures and many of our visits and discussions in London were to groups and localities fighting for survival and for decent conditions in the face of intensifying gentrification and continuing low salaries for working class people or welfare benefits which trap people in poverty or near-poverty.
A common theme is the transfer of social housing to (or towards) private ownership, either individual or corporate. Tenants are manipulated into these schemes because government money for housing improvement is conditional on their consent.
A secondary or background theme - more prominent at the retreat in Brighton - was the contradictory story of London government which combines radical and emancipatory measures for transport, global warming and some other topics with an uncritical endorsement of real-estate investment disguised as ‘regeneration’ and ‘sustainability’. Post script: By September the effect of the USA Sub-Prime lending crisis crossed to UK. One bank in the North East – the Northern Rock – was the first to show signs of the Financial Turmoil that by January 2008 required the UK Government to shore it up with over £50 billion public funds. By 17 February 08 the decision is to nationalize Northern Rock with an increased commitment to over £100 billion.

Michael Edwards
Claire Colomb
Mark Saunders
Claudia d’Alligna
Louanne & Chris Tranchell
Massimo Allamandola
Bob Colenutt
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Programme London 2007
Monday 25 June
arrival: lunchtime Rendezvous at UCL and/or at The Square pub in Tolmers Sq
1400h at The Square: intro to conference programme
1600h Inura Public Seminar in Wilkins Garden Room of UCL
evening in London.

Tuesday 26 June: visits 10.00h
Silwood estate and Deptford Mark Saunders organising
Clays Lane/ Hackney Wick/ Olympic area Newham Community Transport
Martin Slavin & Massimo Allamandola
King's Cross and surrounding areas Michael Edwards
1800h King's Cross: “Social development or business as usual?” discussion
Location: Cooper's Lane Tenants Hall, Purchase Street, North of British Library.
2030h Dinner at The Far Side, opposite King's Cross Thameslink station.

Wednesday 27 June
Elephant and Castle Patrick Anderson / Richard Lee organising
Kennington Park walk by Stefan Szczeluk
Vauxhall bus station / Battersea + Power Station Mark Saunders / Brian Barnes
7.00h Everyone end up at Stockwell Studios: Inura social event.
some movies / screenings of urban materials; delicious food.
Tube (or bus) to Stockwell (Victoria Line).

Thursday 28 June
1100h 17th INURA AGM at UCL Bartlett School of Architecture
1400h Depart to Brighton, by coach; visit the sea front.

Brighton 28 June until 1 July
University of Sussex campus at Falmer, Brighton Sussex UK
East Slope and Lloyd residence.
Seminars, presentations, discussions, report-back from London tours and walks.
Dinner at The George vegetarian pub in Trafalgar Street Brighton

Friday
Breakfast: Brighthelm Centre near Brighton station from 10.00h to 18.00h
presentations and discussions

Saturday
10.00h to 18.00h: Popular anarchist centre Cowley Club in London Rd,
presentations and plans for Athens 2008 and Istanbul visit

Sunday
Departures
INURA AGM 2006-07

The INURA annual general meeting 2007 was held in a seminar room at the UCL Bartlett School. Who would have thought we were in a leading global city? For some of us the room's appearance and atmosphere generated memories of meetings in abandoned industrial sites in the 1980s, when we felt as urban pioneers - activists and constructive. This applied of course also to the AGM 07.

The accounts 2006 and the budget 2007 were accepted. Some uncertainty had been caused over whether INURA would continue to obtain contributions from the PONTE Foundation (which has supported INURA since its launch in 1991). Nevertheless, Richard and Philipp affirmed that they would continue to run the INURA Common Office (ICO) for another year in Zurich. Some months later, we are now happy to announce that the PONTE Foundation will continue to fund us for three more years, with Sfr. 5000.- per annum.

Nevertheless, support from members is needed in order to continue the INURA project. From 2003 to 2005 we had good results with members paying their contributions (2003: 98 members; 2004: 135; 2005: 105) However 2006 brought a significant reduction. Even though we remind all belated members in a big membership drive at the end of each year, we only had 81 paying members in 2006, which is not a good result at all. (We still aim at having 200 paying members.) In respect to the significance and high profile of INURA world wide, we are still an amazingly small group.

The ICO spends approximately 180 hours on average per year, most of it on administrative matters.

BULLETINS

There was an extended discussion about the future form of this publication, and whether to publish the bulletins electronically, or not. There was not really full agreement at the end, but it was decided to publish the first Bulletin of the year electronically with the announcement of the conference, and information about the city to be visited. The second Bulletin would be printed and sent out to all members with reports from the conference, findings, results and actions.

WEBSITE

The proposal of a blog was raised. ICO will install this interesting form of communication. No decision was taken as to whether the website should have a password protected section for members.

ATTENDANCE LIST

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Jorge Pena

This presentation described the results of the workshops held within the framework of the SeDUT project (2005-07) - a collaboration between Cuba and Switzerland in which the ETH-Zurich, the University of Applied Sciences at Rapperswil (HSR) and other Swiss institutions worked with more than eleven institutions in Havana lead by the Centre for Urban Studies of Havana at the Faculty of Architecture of CUJAE. The aim was to understand the urban structure of Havana, to develop an alternative view of the city and to reveal the embedded urban potential of Havana, by including features that had not previously been considered as relevant.

Mapping was the main tool applied in these workshops. A similar approach had been used in Switzerland: “An Urban Portrait”. In Havana the same method proved to be an important tool to deal with the lack of statistical data and scarcity of information. This greatly increased the knowledge base for the Cuban experts and as a result, the character of the applied method changed: it served as a tool for knowledge integration and collective work. The method allowed for combining detailed and precise, with qualitative imprecise information.

The seminars of the SeDUT project produced a total of 14 maps on different issues and themes. The source of the information for the analysis was in most cases the individual experience of the participants; the resulting hand-drawn maps were discussed collectively.

From this analysis a new image of the city appears with at least two relevant urban configurations in an alternative structure for Havana: “The Blue Strip” and “Deep Havana”.

“The Blue Strip” is the area with the high value urban space and heritage with the main components of a “city brand” for Havana:

The second, “Deep Havana”, is a huge area situated in the middle of the so called Zona Intermedia. Erratic maintenance policies privilege the development of new areas to the detriment of older districts.

Despite its peripheral social status “Deep Havana” can be seen as the mainland of Havana. Geographically it is situated in the very centre. It is the living space of a large part of the population of the Capital. It forms an integral part of the cultural and urban heritage of the city with its richness in urban typologies and identities. So within this logic “Deep Havana” is essentially the heart of Havana. The value of this area has to be seen as an important resource, as a reservoir of Havana’s authenticity and a platform for future development.
La Città Bambina (The Child City)

Anna Lisa Pecoriello and Giancarlo Paba (Firenze)

In Brighton Anna Lisa presented her book: "La Città Bambina" (edited by Giancarlo Paba and Anna Lisa Pecoriello published 2006).

It is divided into three parts:
The first contains two theoretical essays about children and the city: different interpretations of childhood in time and space; children and public space; autonomy and competence of children; play practices.
The second part is a report on some participation workshops with children and self-build sites, which were held in schools on the outskirts of Florence.
The third part is a collection of different materials produced during the work: a handbook on the self-management of an ecological courtyard; a project for the "casa sul fiume", an environmental centre; an adventure and self-build playground on the river Arno.
This book is a "manifesto" for the child-friendly city.

Reading the City, Appreciating the Neighbourhood: The case of Linkeroever, Antwerp

Daniela Wullers, (Amsterdam)

We often talk about "disadvantaged neighbourhoods" in association with problems of poverty, crime and racism. We do not ignore or underestimate these problems, but we can supplement them with a more human, and less policy oriented approach and we can note the personal experiences and tacit survival skills of the residents. This includes the numerous behaviours that people learn to deal with their neighbourhood and with each other. This "urban wisdom" is not only extremely reliable, since it comes from people that have real daily experiences, it is also invaluable if spatial interventions are necessary. Institutional and spatial complexity results in a growing fragmentation and separation between different policy fields, levels and the actual reality. Our approach explores this from a neighbourhood level.

Our case study deals with the Linkeroever area in Antwerp, Belgium. During a six month's study in the first half of 2007, a small international team of researchers explored the work of the network of professionals based in Linkeroever. Historic and morphological data on the neighbourhood was supplemented by a series of interviews with residents and professionals involved in the 'professional structure' of the area: teachers, pastors, community workers etc. By confronting them with their narratives on the neighbourhood we reconstructed patterns in their stories and created a better insight and appreciation of the 'pure' functioning of the neighbourhood. With this knowledge, they can better analyse their own workbehaviours and adjust their contribution to the area. The last phase of this research and training is the confrontation of the results with the municipality of Antwerp where policies for Linkeroever are made.

In my paper I explore both the scientific rationale behind our methods and the results from the ongoing Linkeroever research and training program. I also make some recommendations on the applicability of our method for other cities.

Intro to London walks

Mark Saunders lead walks around “A tale of two estates: Silwood Estate is the "heartbreaking and shocking" one of "top-down" regeneration; the Pepys Estate is a "bottom-up" success story. These two estates are part of the one government SRB scheme (Single Regeneration Budget). Residents and community leaders helped to present and discuss the contrasting results.

The Battersea Power Station tour included the local history of 1870s co-operative homes; with 1980s first privatisations of social housing and the political scandal of changing the demographics, plus the equally scandalous vandalism and delays to the refurbishment and re-use of the iconic power station.

Massimo took a group around Clays Lane, Hackney Wick. 2012 Olympic area, Newham Community Transport: (see LINK "gamesmonitor")

Claire Colomb lead a group around Brick Lane and the fast changing Spitalfields Market on the east fringe of the City of London. Michael Edwards brought a group around the long delayed development sites of the Kings Cross area, now dominated by St Pancras Eurostar terminal and the Stratford/Olympics link.

Paul Francis introduced the bicentenary of the Abolition of the Slave Trade; and current changes linked to the race relations acts and agencies.

£2,700,000,000,000
That's how much was wiped off share prices worldwide in January

MONTH OF MISERY

Turkey down 23%
China down 21%
Russia down 16%
India down 26%
Paris down 19%
London down 9%
New York down 11%
Jordan up 3%
Morocco up 8%

Market Man: a stock dealer in New York takes a breather from the turmoil