

(New) Urban Tourism as a Matter of Urban Development

Christoph Sommer

In terms of visitor numbers, “post-COVID” Berlin is nearly back on track as a thriving tourist city. This is a good moment to reflect on what can be learned from the media-hyped “overtourism”-debate and its connection with the idea of ‘New Tourism Areas’ (Maitland/Newman 2009). Using Berlin as a case, the lecture initially introduces both phenomena as an expression of a – historically – unique tourism intensity.

It is claimed that it is not surprising that tourism critique primarily results from steadily growing urban tourism taking place off the beaten track in inner-city neighbourhoods. In a second step the lecture shows that the academic discussion of this ‘New Urban Tourism’ is doubtlessly instructive; it helps to explore basic aspects of living together in the ‘Tourist Age’ (d’Eramo 2021): Which performances of tourism are approved as acceptable? Why does almost nobody want to be a tourist? Which moments of conflict and conviviality result from the presumption of places by tourists and residents?

However, taking into account these more general questions as well as the growth perspecti-

ve of urban tourism, it is argued to analytically break away from “new” tourism areas or “old” tourist bubbles. Thus, the lecture finally outlines some more general aspects of growing tourism as matter of urban development.

Dr. Christoph Sommer is working at the Leibniz Institute for Research on Society and Space (IRS) where he is carrying out the DFG-funded research project “Arenas of Conflict: Planning and Participation in Plural Democracy”. In his PhD-thesis (HU Berlin, 2021) he explored how conflictive urban tourism phenomena are (de-)problematized by governmental actors in Berlin. Christoph Sommer also worked as employed scientific advisor in the field of urban/tourism development (CIMA Consulting, Hamburg Chamber of Commerce), in 2018 he contributed to the creation of Berlin’s new Tourism Strategy (Tourismuskonzept 2018+), currently he comments on tourism issues as columnist (Tages-spiegel).

The lecture is organized by Christian Haid and is part of the Urban Design Studio “Amorgos Flux - Water, Tourism, Climate Change”.

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floating university

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Habitat Unit

