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Laura Burocco has born in Italy, moved to Brasil and is currently based in Johannesburg. She has a degree in law from the University of Milano, and a specialisation in International Policies and Development from the University of Roma. She worked in Rio de Janeiro from 2004 to 2012, coordinating a project around community empowerment and participation with a special focus on gender and housing rights. She also has a post graduate degree in Urban Sociology from the State University of Rio de Janeiro – UERJ and an MBE Housing Master degree from the University of the Witwatersrand – WITS Johannesburg. She consulted different artists in Rio de Janeiro and Italy involved in interventions in public spaces and urban/social issues. She took part in the Brazilian collectives In.Sur and the Epistomancia Art Agencies, through 2011 and 2012 and has participating of several interventionist actions. Her special interest is developed around some keywords as political insurgency in art, social mix and insurgent citizenship.

People's place in "Braamopoly" an urban regeneration project in the inner city of Joburg

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abstract:

While it is undeniable that the Braamfontein Regeneration Project has been able to bring back people to a previously semi-abandoned area, it is important to analyse who and which kind of changes are attracted and dismissed as a result of this project. The study examines neighbourhood regeneration in Braamfontein in order to test the extent to which it is an example of similar regeneration developments across global cities, and especially in emerging economies.

In the Braamfontein case – situated here through detailed documentary, mapping and image research – the study finds that the border between private and public is very ambiguous. Public agencies, private businesses and developers pursue similar and different goals with varying methods. A ‘profitable vision of the city’, which is clear for public authorities and private developers, is not necessarily perceived or shared by most of the users (residents, business owners, consumers from other zones). The overall conclusion is that Braamfontein is a contradictory example of urban neighbourhood change which partly fits with and partly contradicts the global model, but which seems to reinforce the creation of a segregated consumption space in Johannesburg.

The article describes the transference of the findings of this research to the art exhibition titled Braamopoly realized in Braamfontein, Johannesburg at Room Art Gallery in July 2013. The aim of the exhibition was make the results of the research easily accessible, easily understandable and personally interpretable by everyone, to familiarise people with the project of renewal, and to develop a relationship with the neighbourhood that could lead to physical and personal experimentation, encouraging visitors to interact with Braamfontein and consider the area in its complex territoriality. The exhibition is the starting point for a long-term comparative research project on the transformations of the inner cities of two world class cities in the south: Johannesburg and Rio de Janeiro.