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PUBLIC SPACE RESEARCH GROUP
welcomes

Dr. Lucía Argüelles, Fellow at the Urban Transformation and Global Change Laboratory, Universitat Oberta de Catalunya (UOC), presents:

Rail-to-park transformations in 21st century modern cities: Green gentrification on track

With urban greening projects increasingly sparking conflicts with environmental and social activists, rail-to-park transformations reveal how ideas of modernity in urban planning enable the perfect “green growth machine”. Here, trains and connectivity – powerful symbols of Modernity in the 19th and 20th centuries – are interlaced with greening and sustainability, motives of the current progress paradigm and planning orthodoxy. Through a political economy and political ecology lens, we analyze the material and symbolic assembly of two recent railway transformations -- Valencia Parc Central and the Atlanta Beltline. We examine the actual process under which parks are created (parks as a tangible, material object, as infrastructure) and how such a process is entangled in social, political and economic dynamics that also shape adjacent gentrification. We argue that gentrification is implicit, yet necessary, in the process of park making. Such process and its embedded politics shape the role that parks have in their neighborhoods and their cities, and what it is expected from them socially, politically, and financially. The conflicts arising from the park making illustrate the two speeds working on 21st century cities: the fast, modern, outward-looking competitive model and the inward-looking, caring more for the local revitalization and welfare.

Dec. 10, 2020
via ZOOM 
12:00-1:30p ET



Dr. Lucía Argüelles is a Juan de la Cierva fellow at the Urban Transformations and Global Change Laboratory (TURBA) and the faculty of Economy and Business at the Universitat Oberta de Catalunya, in Barcelona. Lucía is an environmental social scientist working at the intersection of social theory and environmental politics. She obtained her PhD in Environmental Science and Technology at the Institute of Science and Technology (ICTA) in 2018. In her dissertation she analyzed issues of power and privilege in the alterity quest of community initiatives such as alternative food networks or community economies. Two of the studies derived from this thesis obtained prizes: the 2017 Geoforum Best Student Paper and the 2018 Local Economic Policy award for young researchers awarded by the Universidad Pompeu Fabra and City of Barcelona. In the context of the project GreenLULUs, in which she participated from 2016 to 2018, she studied the role of greening interventions and cities' sustainability discourse in (re)producing environmental, socio-economic, and political inequalities. In her current position, she turned back to agri-food systems, in order to untangle the role of weeds and weeding in the advance of current agri-food paradigm, bringing together cultural, ecological, economic and political angles.

ZOOM Registration info:
https://gc-cuny.zoom.us/meeting/register/tJMqf--pqjkiHt369F02uH_MptkwcU9tuU5

