



Culture as a Catalyst for Urban Change: A Case Study of "Revitalisation" of Neukölln-District in West Berlin

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A Case Study of “Revitalisation” of Neukölln-District in West Berlin

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The presentation describes how artistic and cultural uses, e.g., retail stores and new types of services, could be a cause for the process of gentrification in urban areas by analysing the Reuter Quarter in the borough of Neukölln in Berlin. In the early 2000s, the Reuter Quarter has been identified as an area in economic decline, with high unemployment, and a high percentage of immigrants. However, since the mid-2000s, promoted by the publicly financed ‘Quarter Management’ and ‘Temporary-Use Agency’, artists and eventually other creative workers started to move into the many vacant spaces, creating a positive image for the area, and turning it into a trendy and hip quarter. It’s new appeal has led to the influx of new inhabitants and to the upgrading of buildings and the boosting of rent prices in and around the area. In the early stages, the process resembled a positive revitalization, but over the years the area turned more and more into a popular ‘scene district’ and nightlife destination and its buildings gained value in the housing market, leading to rapid urban transformations since 2010: gentrification and touristification. In conclusion, this presentation shows the significant role of artists within the gentrification process, especially in attracting new retail capital, new types of services, and cafes, bars and restaurants, all of which stimulate touristification.