

The renegotiation of identity and alterity in an economical and spatial changing: the case of a former industrial and miner district of Saint-Etienne (France).

With this paper, we suggest to present how connection between economy and society is translated in urban spaces, urban practices, urban imagination and so, in representation of local identity and alterity. The case study is Le Soleil, a former metallurgist and miner district of Saint-Etienne, the biggest industrial French town during the industrial revolution. Transformations of capitalism, modes of production, evolutions of energies, etc. lead to the end of the mine and the gold age of the industry began in the 70's and finished in the 80's. In this post-industrial context, the municipality tries to improve the image of the city offered to the outside, supposed to appeal new investors and new comers, and to reflect a best image to the inhabitants. But Le Soleil, became a poor district with a lot of unemployed persons, is not included in this requalification policy. So, for its inhabitants, the feeling not to be worthy of a rehabilitation, not to be notable, is mixed to the feeling of being abandoned, neglected, and isolated. In this context, they suspect the municipality being in an "erasing policy" of their worker past, which, as they say, they don't have to be ashamed of. That's why they invent themselves new way of appropriation of their story and identity which are transforming, through a work about memory of the district (exhibitions, book writing). Indeed, their relation with inheritance and memory are a way to protect the group from a social and spatial change and *in fine* from signification changes. In this dynamic, the figure of the alterity, carrying on its stereotypes, is changing. The figure of the stranger isn't anymore the similar as a miner, but the strange young (implied the young North African), target of the urban renewal and who doesn't share the same history and memory.