

Critical Geographies of Urbanism

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As the primary form of contemporary cultural production in western capitalist society, consumption is the means in which an individual constructs self-identity and place within a social group and society as a whole. It is possible to read both urban space, most typically in the branding of places, as a geography systematically arranged through marketing analysis assembled through new information based technologies, GIS software and UPC coding. Similarly, this same technique of information assemblage and processing is used to *recreate* and *re-image* a "real" city itself as a marketing strategy. It is posited here that urban space emerges out of collective social interaction within these mechanisms, whose physical manifestation can be demonstrated as an assemblage of geographies produced through numerous attributes and spatial flows; demographics, distances of travel, income and purchasing power, and divisions of consumer groups qualified through representational "values and lifestyles" and other market segmentation systems. Accepting that these geographies reflect the self-consuming aspect of modernity that entails a perpetual disruption of temporal and spatial rhythms and practices, it is posited here that a constructive process of consumption as geographic assemblage, used in other than exclusively market driven purposes, can become a transformative rather than reductive urban process.