

Magdalena Czarnecka

“My district - our city. The socio-cultural practices of Warsaw’s NGOs and informal groups”

Since 2010, I have been following the development of the city movements and protests around the world which have formed the background of my research. What was really of great interest to me was urban nature and the idea of space occupation (also in metaphorical way) as a way of regaining political power. On one hand, the district groups are initiating changes in the local environment and are looking for solutions to the contemporary urban issues; on the other hand, they are contributing to the place identity in addition to taking care of preservation of historical and cultural. In my thesis, the idea of social participation is strongly connected with the sense of individual agency which influences the decision making process as well as the way of thinking about authorities by Warsaw’s inhabitants. The main goal of the research was to construct a map of groups that are active in their districts and answer two key research questions: Is there enough evidence to suggest the existence of the metropolitan district groups?; Are they creating a district’s network movement? I have conducted my research in the constructivist paradigm, with the grounded theory as the research design. I used ethnographic, non-standardised interviews as a research method with the local leaders who are active in their districts and define their mission as action in, with, and for the well being of their living place and a promotion of local history.