

Valparaiso on the World Heritage List: the touristification of an urban landscape

Dr. Sébastien Jacquot

Maître de conférences
Université Paris 1 Panthéon Sorbonne
sebastien.jacquot@univ-paris1.fr

Abstract

Valparaiso has been inscribed in 2003 on the World Heritage List, after years of debates about the meaning of its heritage. Whereas the first proposal of inscription on the WHS relied on the notion of a traditional urban landscape, the final inscription was justified by the urban pattern of the city as a testimony of the first stage of globalisation. Nevertheless, this idea of Valparaiso as an urban landscape remained and became the main justification to various urbanistic rules. So Valparaiso becomes an interesting case study of a site that has been ruled as an urban landscape, although it wasn't the official justification of its heritage, until a new version of the Outstanding Universal Value. Besides, tourism development took advantage of this promotion of the city as a peculiar urban landscape, through the various possibilities of sightseeing the whole city, but in the same time in sharp contrast with the promotion of Valparaiso as a cultural city within UNESCO boundaries. Actually, the heritage and tourism controversies can be understood through the debates around this idea of urban landscape. So this article is aimed at analyzing the issues and consequences of the notion of historic urban landscape, through the example of Valparaiso and the issues that such a conception arose, in terms of heritage management but also tourism development, putting the emphasis on intangible aspects of urban development.