

## **Proposal for the 3<sup>rd</sup> Conference of the Association for Urban Creativity**

**Title:** creativity agglomeration in times of crisis: the case of Barcelona

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**Abstract:**

This paper wants to analyse the transformation of Barcelona's strategy and approaches to culture and creativity since the start of the crisis in 2008, focusing on the evolution of one of its flagship projects: the 22@ knowledge district. This project was thought as a way to redevelop the industrial east side of the city and to ground the basis for the next economic transformation of Barcelona based on knowledge-based economy, avoiding real estate sector developing a simple residential area. In order to attract companies into the area, public administrations started to move public companies related to communications and knowledge to the district, and promoting agreements with large transnational companies. The objective of the plan was to attract large companies of knowledge-intensive sectors in order to create agglomeration economies, and public administration took measures as the creation of a network of companies in order to facilitate exchange amongst them. Finally, with the arrival of conservative party in the local government in 2011 there was a change towards a more liberal approach on economic development policies. That has meant the dismantlement of the public office for the economic development of 22@ district and the merging of the strategy with the whole city. Despite all these changes, in the 22@ area we can find different patterns of agglomeration of knowledge-intensive and creative companies that have established networks through time. Apart from the official [22@network](#), which includes more than 100 large and medium-sized companies in different knowledge-intensive sectors, we can find the network of artists of Poblenou or Poblenou Urban District, an association of small and medium-sized creative companies and individuals. The paper aims to analyse these dynamics of agglomeration and relating them with different policy approaches in the city during the period 2007-2014.