

The heritage of rent: On conservation regulation and class-monopoly rent in Majorca

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In the chapter entitled «The Art of Rent» in his 2012 book *Rebel Cities: From the Right to the City to the Urban Revolution*, David Harvey revisits the topic of monopoly rent he had examined elsewhere throughout his career. He there argues on how capital seeks to appropriate monopoly rent from the non-replicable cultural differences cultural commons exude, by means of a panoply of strategies that encompasses co-optation, subsumption, commodification, and monetization.

These practices of extraction of surpluses may be reduced to two specific modes of monopoly rent: those that are based on gate-keeping the uses of the resource at stake, and those related to its direct trade (including withhold and speculation on future values). Both variants not only share the fact that the resource they count upon is unique, but also that the control of the means of extraction are exclusive to particular groups. Hence, how these groups get to harness both the singularity of the resource and their exclusive access to its monopoly-rent extraction becomes a crucial factor in order to understand the social relations we encounter in a particular society.

This paper addresses these questions by focusing on the UNESCO World Heritage Site of the Serra de Tramuntana, Majorca (a major tourism destination). By drawing on both a review on its conservation regulations and ethnographic sketches I look into the production of this Cultural Landscape. While the Serra is popularly portrayed as the outcome of collective struggles aimed at saving it from development, it is nevertheless institutionalised via the regulation of its uses and the definition of its resources and its final result is after appropriated by the global tourism industry and the building activities that accompany it. I conclude with a set of suggestions geared towards the redistribution of wealth and based on the primacy of use values over exchange values.