

Vidéo transcription

Policies at the margin of cities

My name is Thomas Aguilera. I have a PhD in political science. I did my thesis at Sciences Po's Centre for European Studies, focusing on public policies towards squats and slums in Paris and Madrid. All sociological research shows that housing evictions, be they from rentals, slums or squats, do little more than sap ambitions and undermine social aspirations, roughly speaking, be they in the form of residential, family, educational or health goals. Thus, any eviction destroys life plans and destroys the community efforts of NGOs to support people. Somewhat self-managed initiatives that do not necessarily require much money or public funding can achieve a lot. My work shows that the city of Paris has recognized this and has opened pretty large spaces to collectives over the past ten years. In Paris, collectives of squatter-artists mostly populate these neighborhoods. Places like Madrid have very activist collectives and it would be worth giving their initiatives some space rather than dismantle them, since these types of collectives actually provide services – or, to use a political science term, they provide public service functions – that are generally adequate or even better than many public policies.

Sciences Po, a launch pad for young researchers

Sciences Po's urban team - Cities are back in town - headed by Patrick Le Galès and Marco Oberti, allowed me to meet many international researchers and gave me the opportunity to teach, a key experience for me. I cannot conceive of teaching and research being disconnected. And of course I must mention the funding that allowed me to do this work. In Madrid I also received support from Complutense University and the Casa de Velázquez. All of these institutions enable the development of international comparative research.