

10. Care Theory Meets the City: Exploring Implications for the Study of Urban Inequality

Chairs: Mare Knibbe (Maastricht University, M.knibbe@maastrichtuniversity.nl), Daniela Krüger (Humboldt University of Berlin, daniela.krueger@hu-berlin.de), Hannah Schilling (Technical University of Berlin, Hannah_Schilling@gmx.de)

Format: Workshop with selected participants, introduced and moderated by the organizers. If you are interested in participating, please contact one of the organizers with a short description of your research interests, pointing to your engagement with care theory and the urban. Two months before the conference, each participant prepares a 1-page discussion note which will be shared with all participants.

Residents in many European cities find themselves in a transforming welfare landscape. While there are local variations, many cities deal with a similar set of developments that have relocated caring responsibilities. The persons and institutions involved in care changed under the influence of neoliberal governance, shifting from state actors to private actors and reinforcing inequalities in the distribution of burdens and benefits of care. While these developments have given rise to a wide array of new care practices moving along with or against the tides, consolidating social boundaries or crossing them in new caring figurations, it raises questions about how to empirically study or theorize care practices and the city. Moreover, the concept of care or care theory have rarely been used in urban sociology.

The aim of this session therefore is to discuss how care theory and urban sociology can be conceptually and empirically brought together, i.e. how to relate care practices and different urban spaces and institutions. From this methodological and theoretical discussion, we hope to explore the implications for studying urban inequalities. Inequalities in city life have been conceptualized in a variety of ways: e.g. in the form of residential segregation, different cultural repertoires for performing in the 'theater' of public life or the socially differentiated uses of urban opportunity structures. Ideas of social class as categories people 'have' or 'come to own' have been a central perspective in urban sociology. To these static approaches of social categories in the city, 'care' adds a relational sociological perspective to the analysis of urban inequalities. While 'care' practices aim to "satisfy socially recognized needs" (Thelen 2015: 508), the actual access to care and resources are embedded in social relations and norms of deservingness. Further conceptual and empirical work on care practices in the city might help to better grasp the (re)production of relations and social categories or the negotiation of boundaries of the public or private sphere (Thelen 2015 & Tronto 2013).

We aim to facilitate an intimate discussion on these questions. Each participant prepares a 1-page discussion note which presents their standpoint (empirical and/or analytical) in the debate on care and the urban. The notes will be shared amongst all participants in the month before the workshop. We (as organizers) will circulate 1-2 core readings in before hand with the participants, as a starting point for discussion. At the workshop, we will moderate a focused discussion based on the statements and readings.

References

Thelen, Tatjana. 2015. "Care as Social Organization: Creating, Maintaining and Dissolving Significant Relations." *Anthropological Theory* 15 (4):497-515.

Tronto, Joan C. 2013. *Caring Democracy: Markets Equality, and Justice*. New York: New York University Press.