

## 17. Residential Segregation and the Study of Social Structure of Towns and Metropolises. Empirical and Methodological Advancements in Urban Sociology

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Session format: Traditional (call for abstracts and individual presentations of around 15 minutes)

The study of residential segregation is a fundamental research topic in the field of Urban Sociology. Research has flourished over the last century due to the interest of scholars and policy-makers in understanding the causes, forms, and effects of segregation (Oberti & Préteceille, 2016). American cities were the first to be analysed extensively, and a huge body of research subsequently developed on residential segregation mainly by ethnicity (Massey & Denton, 1989) and income (Bischoff & Reardon, 2014). In European countries, the studies on urban segregation focused mainly on the socio-professional dimension (for instance in France), on foreigners (for instance in Italy) or on other individual characteristics according to the priorities of the political agenda and depending on available data. Due in part to the difficulties involved in obtaining small area data on income and/or professional position, segregation by social status has not received enough attention in many national contexts. Another aspect that has been neglected is the relationship between urban segregation and housing prices. Recently, with the spread of Covid-19, the importance of relating epidemiological data to the structural characteristics of residential areas has also become more evident (Morelli & Sampson, 2020).

Broadly speaking, house prices have profound direct and indirect effects on the reproduction of inequalities and can exert a powerful impact on the distribution of life chances (Pierson, Le Galès, 2019). While housing prices have consequences in sorting individuals in the urban space, urban segregation also influences the differentiation of housing prices within the metropolis. Similarly, characteristics such as the reputation of the neighbourhood, of nearby schools, and crime levels, are sometimes studied in relation to the dynamics of housing prices but are rarely triangulated with social segregation (Seo, Simons, 2009). Moreover, ethnicity and socioeconomic position are not the only variables that are involved in processes of residential segregation and other dimensions require attention (Barbot, Percoco, 2019). Most scholars agree that the economic crisis of 2008, set against the backdrop of longer-term trends, has led to an increase in multidimensional inequalities with a pronounced spatial dimension (Leal et al., 2016). The study of these spatial inequalities has become more urgent in the last decade, a period dominated by the strong effect of financial and public debt crises. In fact, since the 2008-09 and 2011-13 crises the rapid growth of financial capital and low growth in the real economy, combined with low interest rates, have created asset bubbles in housing in many cities, not only in

the most attractive and booming urban areas. This is also related to the unwillingness or inability of local and national government to tackle segregation through public policies. In both Europe and the US, commentators have drawn links between social inequalities, residential segregation, social cohesion, and political instability. This panel invites empirical investigations with the potential to advance our understanding of spatial relations between segregation dynamics and the social structure of neighbourhoods in metropolitan areas, as well as in middle-size cities and small towns. It will also seek to include research on relatively unexplored dimensions such as generational segregation or the relationship between segregation, valorisation processes, real estate prices. Abstracts must be sufficiently detailed to allow the organisers to assess the characteristics of each paper, including its theoretical framework, use of empirical data, time frame and research methods, and should highlight original findings and implications for Urban Sociology.