

19. Urban Practices and Urban Institutions: Thoughts on Segregation and the Spatiality of Everyday Resource Organization, Social Networks and Social Capital

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

Spatial residential inequalities are becoming more and more complex. While we observe overall rising socio-economic inequalities, combined with rising socio-economic segregation, spatial disparities by race and/or ethnicity seem to converge. At the same time, more research challenges assumptions about the importance of where people are actually registered, most often the main criteria to measure segregation developments. Residents in cities both in the Global South and North have, overall, increased access to better mobility structures and digital means of communication to connect with others and to manage their daily routines. Does this change the way *where* urban residents organize their everyday lives? And if so, how? Does spatial segregation and the local neighbourhood still matter at all today? Studies investigating neighbourhood effects argued, most often, along a line of spatial determinism (van Ham and Manley 2012). Explicitly, or implicitly, researchers often underline that the neighbourhood becomes relevant through place-specific social networks and social capital. However, we do not know enough to what extent the organization of resources is spatially mediated. Some emphasize that disadvantaged residents depend on the local scale while the cosmopolite urban middle- and upper-class accesses their social support more and more independently from physical proximity. In contrast, others find that the urban poor are significantly more mobile within cities than affluent counterparts. What is more, studies on social mix of neighbourhoods showed that residential mix *might* converge with social mix. Physical proximity does, however, not automatically produce social exchanges. Neighbourhood institutions may feature interactions among neighbourhood residents, but when and why an encounter builds up to be a resourceful exchange, and whether this necessarily has to be a *neighbourhood* institution is rarely discussed or empirically shown. Questions remain open, where people actually use urban institutions and if the neighbourhood level is actually that crucial to organize people's everyday lives. To sum up, where residents organize their everyday lives might be related to the study of practices and urban institutions.

For this session, we invite scholars to engage with perspectives that advance the study of social network and social capital theory to complement the research agenda of neighbourhood effects and spatial segregation. We think that urban sociology might gain explanatory depth in the study of urban inequalities by studying practices and daily routines of people, and we suggest to rather follow the *routes* instead of *roots* of urban residents

(Blokland, 2018). Submissions discussing the role of urban institutions, (local, city-wide or even trans-local) spatial routines as well as the role of belonging and/or public familiarity (e.g. Blokland and Nast, 2014) are especially welcomed. We invite quantitative, qualitative as well as mixed-methods approaches.

References

- Van Ham, Maarten and David Manley. 2012. "Neighbourhood Effects Research at a Crossroads. Ten Challenges for Future Research Introduction." *Environment and Planning A: Economy and Space* 44(12): 2787-2893.
- Blokland, Talja. 2018. "On Roots and Routes." In *Moving Cities – Contested Views on Urban Life*, edited by Lúgia Ferro, Marta Smagacz-Poziemska, M. Victoria Gómez, Sebastian Kurtenbach, Patrícia Pereira and Juan José Villalón, 29-42. Wiesbaden: Springer.
- Blokland, Talja, and Julia Nast. 2014. "From Public Familiarity to Comfort Zone: The Relevance of Absent Ties for Belonging in Berlin's Mixed Neighbourhoods." *International Journal of Urban and Regional Research* 38(4): 1142-1159.