

32nd International Geographical Congress 2012

Key Topic:

Urbanisation & Demographic Change

List of Session Abstracts

Session: Conviviality and/or confrontation? Ethnic, cultural and political diversity in public space

Chairs: Thomas Schmitt & Daniel Hiebert

Abstracts:

In recent decades, the role of public spaces has been a controversial theme in the social sciences in general, and specifically in social, cultural and urban geography. Some scholars might argue that the significance of public spaces for social life is diminishing, being widely replaced by virtual public arenas such as Facebook. On the other hand, the political function of public squares like Tahrir Square in Cairo is evident in the context of the current transformations taking place in the Arab World. The ongoing privatization of former public arenas, and the regulation or governance of public spaces, is a much debated topic in social geography. Furthermore, the importance of public spaces like squares, markets, pedestrian zones, bus or train stations, or even playgrounds, for everyday encounters, intergroup contact, mutual exchange, and the transformation of intergroup attitudes, is one of the key issues in the social sciences. Do public places offer space for conviviality or for intergroup confrontation? Does the “disappearance” of public places, in combination with the ongoing “diversification” of societies, lead to an erosion of social stability and integration? This session will highlight the different functions of public space in respect of its physical, social and symbolic aspects. Our aim is to link various debates related to public space which are normally strictly separated in the social sciences. We want to encourage both basic reflections on the role of public spaces, and detailed case studies which allow rethinking of the role of public spaces in different parts of the world.

Session: Do borders make regions learn?

Chairs: H. Peter Dörrenbächer & Tobias Chilla

Abstract:

Cross-border regions are characterised by their diversity and heterogeneity with regard to the distribution of social, economic and cultural resources, and with regard to constraints and opportunities on either side(s) of the border(s). This is particular true for cross-border metropolitan regions (e.g. Upper Rhine Region, El Paso-Juárez Metropolitan Area). These differentials can be driving forces of integration processes: cross-border labour markets and commuting, economic linkages and growing mobility are just some keywords of the debate. At the same time, institutional differences and ‘multi-level-mismatches’ are a major challenge in regional governance. Interregional and transnational cooperation strategies attempt to bridge the institutional gaps (Euroregions, EGTCs etc.).

Against this backdrop, this session focuses on the question, to what extent these differences and differentials are initiating learning (in) regions. Learning, in this context, means observing the border effects, interaction and exchange with the other side of the borders. In the long run, these processes can lead both to assimilation and/or specialisation.

The focus of the session’s papers can be on division of labour in economic value chains across borders, on political multi-level coalitions, on spill over effects in demographic terms etc. The session is interested both in the characteristics of the learning processes in cross-border regions as in cross-border regionalisation as the outcome of learning.

Session: Global winners and local losers? - Regeneration strategies in shrinking cities

Chairs: Thorsten Wiechmann & Sylvie Fol

Abstract:

Since the 1980s many studies have been dedicated to patterns of urban change. Scholars like Hall (1984) and Van den Berg (1982) proposed evolutionary models of urban growth and decline that reflect the slow down of post-war growth rates in advanced industrial countries since the mid-1970s, both in demographic and economic terms. In particular in Europe, the decline of big cities was sharp, the number of growing cities is decreasing steadily since the 1960s (Turok / Mykhnenko 2007). Correspondingly the shrinking cities phenomenon is widespread in Europe, but also in parts of East Asia and Northern America, at the beginning of the 21st century. There are more declining than

growing cities in Europe. While cities are now growing more slowly than their national population, they experience a decrease in the share of population that they host (ibid.).

After being stigmatized as a topic in urban planning and policy for a long time, the discourse in Europe actively takes on shrinking cities since the early 2000s. The starting point was the sharp decrease in fertility rates, sometimes described as a “demographic shock”, combined with dramatic processes of out migration and suburbanisation in the central and eastern part of Europe that led to a rapid decline of cities. Since then, the discussion on shrinking cities has been emerging in many countries. Today, dealing with the results of demographic, economic and physical contraction processes and planning for the future of considerably smaller but never the less livable cities seems to be one of the most challenging tasks for urban areas in the northern hemisphere.

This session, featured by the Shrinking Cities International Research Network (SCiRN), focuses on the tension between global winners and local losers in a globalized world where growth and shrinkage, wealth and decline increasingly occur in close proximity to each other. It highlights selected examples of shrinking places and corresponding regeneration strategies.

Session: Health and sustainability in the cities of the future – the impacts of urban environments, urban green and urban blue elements

Chairs: Thomas Claßen & Richard Mitchell

Abstracts:

In 2007 a COST strategic workshop entitled “Health and the Natural Outdoors” claimed in its final report that there is “a growing awareness of the multiple linkages between health and its various determinants, at individual as well as population level.” One important concept forming part of a multi-disciplinary approach is the concept of therapeutic landscapes, which has been broadened since its invention in the 1990s. To date the therapeutic landscape model focuses on health promotion and everyday landscapes moving towards landscapes of health, like the home and urban environments.

The urban environment has an impact on the health, well-being and quality of life of humans in various ways. In recent years, many research projects have investigated the (health) impacts of nature and landscape in urban contexts. In this regard, the importance of urban green spaces (urban green) and urban waters (urban blue) for health has been raised. Urban green has been identified in international research, in the sense of salutogenetic health, as a health-promoting structure. Such structures have high health-ecological benefits for cities in ways such as the climate-ecological compensation function. Furthermore, they are favourite places for city dwellers and act as a motivating factor for exercise, social contact and recreation e.g. in the summer time, and enhance urban spaces aesthetically. Against the background of the positive health effects of urban green and urban blue, it has to be noted that these can also be potential habitats for pathogens, places of anxiety and natural hazards. Nonetheless the creation and enhancement of green and blue spaces has already been claimed to support health-promoting, integrated urban development.

The target of the session will be to illuminate recent international approaches in research in the geography of health dealing with associations between urban environments and health and focusing on the specific contributions of urban green and blue.

Session: How European towns deal with peripheralization – different action strategies and comparable structural baselines

Chairs: Thomas Bürk & Hanna Sommer

Abstract:

The session planned focuses on planning strategies in European towns, which are characterized by similar peripheralized structural contexts. Those towns are located in European regions which are shaped by negative population development, disconnection and dependency on economic and political decisions. While economic weakness restricts the possibilities of towns to take action, the integration of local policies in a multilevel state system opens up scope, on the one hand, without which urgent problems could not be tackled at all on the spot while, on the other hand, also making the peripheralized towns susceptible to changes in that system. The rivalry between towns in the

inter-municipal location competition is intensifying within European regions. At the same time, inter-municipal cooperation arrangements open up new options for action in peripheralized areas. This structural context has a substantial impact on local action dynamics, with the municipalities particularly dependent on partners. Parallel to this, both public and private actors in peripheralized regions are often characterised by a pronounced lack of resources. The chances of compensating for declining resources through greater involvement of entrepreneurial and civil society players are thus limited. The consequence of this is greater dependence of the local coalition-building on extra-local resource allocations. The interests and restrictions of potential resource providers therefore become increasingly important to local politicians. This results in a high degree of instability, which can find expression in short-term, changeable modes of governance and incoherent development strategies. The session should respond to the question of how differently or comparably European towns deal with peripheralization processes within the framework of the national possibilities for strategic planning against the background of their uniform structural context. A comparative description and analysis of towns is to be given.

Session: International migration and 'glocal' spaces of vulnerability

Chairs: Benjamin Etzold & Tabea Bork

Abstract:

International migration patterns are characterized by tensions between the different interests and needs of nation states, economic interest groups, home communities and the migrants themselves. While many states have to weigh between nurturing the (expected) benefits and fighting the (proclaimed) disadvantages of labor migration, they face dilemmas of legitimacy and control. An increasing securitization of migration policies as well as growing fragmentations between the lifeworlds of migrants and the citizens of the receiving states are two aspects that contribute to the production of 'glocal' spaces of vulnerability. Moreover, natural hazards and other sudden disturbances influence the decision to migrate (or flee). Generally speaking, migration can be understood as an adaptation strategy in times of crises. However, communities and individual migrants have different capacities to anticipate, cope with and recover from stresses and disturbances, and are thus differently vulnerable to perturbations. The same migration patterns might thus play different roles in different contexts and lead to a variety of vulnerability outcomes. Despite an abundance of scientific knowledge in both fields of research, the interconnections between vulnerability and international labour migration are not yet sufficiently understood. Therefore, we seek contributions that highlight the spaces of vulnerability at different 'locations' in the migratory process: (i) the causes and social effects of international migration and how they relate to vulnerability in the regions of origin; (ii) the actual migratory process and the production of insecurity and vulnerability at the 'in-between spaces', i.e. in the transit countries or border spaces; (iii) the processes of exclusion, discrimination and disillusionment and related vulnerabilities that many international migrants experience at the places of destination.

Session: Learning beyond borders: Exploring the spatialities of international student mobility

Chairs: Maggi Leung & Johanna Waters

Abstract:

In the context of our increasingly connected global knowledge economy, more and more students move internationally to seek better education opportunities. The number of international students is expected to increase to 7.2 million in 2025, as compared to 1.68 million in 1999. This group of mobile persons, despite its volume and rising strategic importance as human resource for development, has been under-studied in geographical research. Existing literature on the subject has mainly adopted the transnational education (TNE) perspective, which has been fruitful but can be limiting especially when we consider the importance of other spatialities beyond the (trans)nation in this mobility field. As these transnational mobility trajectories touch ground at multiple and inter-connected localities, a trans-local perspective can be constructive; a stronger focus on regions as spatial category is also called for considering the highly regional characteristics of TNE (e.g. within Europe or East and Southeast Asia). The continuing dominance of 'methodological nationalism' in accounts of student

migration should also be re-examined. This session is aimed at extending our understanding of international student mobility by making theoretical, empirical and methodological contributions. It provides a forum to discuss how space matters in our knowledge on this subset of mobilities and its consequences. We call for participation from researchers whose work advances our knowledge on the power of spatialities, such as (a combination of) scale, place and networks in the increasingly globalised education sector and knowledge economy. Session members will present their cutting-edge research in different geographical contexts that is marked with a distinct focus on spatialities. Together, we shall consider and debate issues including but not limited to the following:

1. The emergence of new regional dynamics around international/transnational education (e.g. within East and Southeast Asia)
2. Students\' trans-local affiliations and allegiances
3. Within-country competition for international students
4. Competition for international students between and across education sectors (primary/secondary/tertiary/higher/ and post-university education)

Session: Local camps for global migrants: EU\'s geographies of detention and deportation

Chair: Corey Johnson & Ulrich Ermann

Abstract:

Globalization involves both increasing mobility of humans and enhanced attempts by privileged states to regulate migration. Few areas of the world have experienced more profound shifts in the methods and sites of migration control than the European Union (EU), and the EU is increasingly acting as a sovereign state in matters of border control. Humans attempting to enter European space are subject to a variety of procedures designed to regulate, monitor, and even prevent their movements. The geography of this control reflects the changed and ever-changing external border of the EU. This session seeks to bring together scholars working on the topic detention and deportation as it relates to human migration and the EU. Possible topics include: the geography of detention facilities; the role of Frontex and/or national border enforcement agencies; the technologization of border enforcement in the EU; asylum and refugee geographies; illicit geographies of smuggling and human trafficking; and the impacts on political transitions (i.e. in the Middle East) on migration to the EU.

Session: Managing changes in cultural heritage cities of South-East Asia

Chairs: MOHAMMAD GAMAL RINDARJONO & Thean Siew Tan

Abstract:

Cities are dynamic and go through various stages and forms of changes in their history of growth. The pursuit of a better life and of riches had attracted settlers and traders from surrounding rural areas and from other regions and countries to cities. This has brought different peoples and cultures together, and many old cities in S.E. Asia have evolved into living entities rich in the various aspects of the cultures of local, surrounding and far regions. The heritage assets and values manifested in the townscapes, streetscapes and buildings, and as well as in the ways of life, beliefs, practices, trades, customs, foods and dressings have been recognized locally, nationally and globally as worthy of being conserved and preserved. A few of these cities have been inscribed by UNESCO as World Cultural Heritage Sites. These and other historic cultural cities in the developing countries of S.E. Asia continue to undergo changes in their vital quest for economic growth and development. Tourist and visitors are attracted to these cities, which welcome them for their money. Changes in these cities to accommodate them have a tendency to destroy the very tangible and intangible cultural heritage assets that attracted the tourists in the first place. Concerned governments and the people of these cultural heritage cities as well as of the world are hence confronted by such challenges as on how to preserve for future generations the essential components of cultural, spiritual and built heritage together with the traditional arts and cultural practices, on how to promote cultural heritage in a sustainable way, on how to ensure that the residents become the primary beneficiaries of tourism development, on how to control growth and development so as to ensure the protection of heritage

resources, and on how to maintain the traditional social and economic patterns which created the heritage resources and have kept them alive.

Session: Megacities: Informal dynamics of global change

Chairs: Peter Herrle & Kraas Frauke

Abstracts:

Many of the complex and interrelated processes underlying the global phenomenon of mega-urban development are largely unregulated by statutory authority and formal planning procedures. Instead, they rather follow informal arrangements bringing together various actors including the state, private sector investors and the civil society. While on the one hand a certain level and different forms of informality are inherent in contemporary urban growth processes, informality is also seen as an obstacle for consistent urban planning, good governance and the sustainable management of basic resources and urban services. Especially developing countries and emerging economies suffer from a lack of effective urban planning and policy. The increasingly important connection between highly complex and self-regulated informal mega-urban processes and the form and effect of global change upon the re-organisation of spatial, social, and institutional relationships in the megacities has only recently been subjected to systematic research (such as in the research programme "Megacities – Megachallenge: Informal Dynamics of Global Change", funded by the German Research Council since 2006 for Dhaka/Bangladesh and the Pearl River Delta/China).

The proposed key topic session is aiming at (1) a deeper understanding of the theoretical concepts of informality as an important component of mega-urban dynamics, (2) an improved understanding of relevant informal structures and processes in megacities, (3) enhancing the interdisciplinary exchange and discourse between researchers from different societal and regional backgrounds, and (4) approaching towards a consistent reference framework allowing for contextualization of the different project and policy approaches.

Session: Megacity research for government action

Chairs: Eckart Ehlers & Andrea Koch-Kraft

Abstract:

This session presents findings and implemented pilot projects from the three major German research programmes on megacities. From the programme by the German Federal Ministry of Education and Research "Future Megacities - energy- and climate-efficient structures in urban growth centres" smart urban technical solutions as well as non-technical innovations for the establishment of energy- and climate-efficient structures will be presented. It covers water- and waste-management as well as urban agriculture, environmental planning, the building and housing sector etc.

From the programme "Megacities - Megachallenge: Informal dynamics of Global Change", funded by the German Research Foundation (DFG), findings on informal processes dealing with the complexity and dynamics of material and resource flows as well as informal arrangements of socio-economic developments are brought to surface. From the "ClimateAdaptationSantiago" project that builds on the work on urban sustainable development of the "Risk Habitat Megacity" research initiative (both coordinated at the Hemholtz Centre for Environmental research - UFZ), insights will be given on urban adaptation to climate change based on risks, vulnerabilities and participatory processes.

This session will demonstrate the importance of megacities as strategic starting points for transformation of governance in informal and formal arrangements, sustainable development, climate change mitigation and adaptation strategies as well as energy and resource efficiency. The session will further show that sustainable urban development, climate protection and resource-efficiency are no contradiction to economic development.

Session: Mega events, globalization and urban development

Chairs: Mark Wilson & Laura Huntoon

Abstract:

Mega Events, such as the Olympics, World Cup and world's fairs, play a significant role as expressions of national identity, manifestations of global business, in the shaping of attitudes and values, and the remaking of urban space. The global focus on one city for a specific event prompts use of the event for political, social, business, and urban redevelopment ends. As commodities drawing global attention and representing global economic and political forces, these events are vehicles of change, and analysis of these events reveals in microcosm all elements of a society. The excitement, prestige, and glamour of the event brings together many interests that wish to use the event to achieve goals of profit, social change, urban development and city branding. The Olympics and world's fairs are often seen as ephemeral events, yet the changes associated with them leave a legacy in ideas and places. The sessions on mega events will explore the global significance of these phenomena, with emphasis on the spatial, economic, political, and social contexts they represent and their long-term impacts.

Session: (Mega)urban health in South Asia

Chairs: Mareike Kroll & Carsten Butsch

Abstract:

South Asia is currently witnessing a rapid urbanisation process. Therefore urban environments, urban lifestyles and urban health systems are shaping human health for an ever increasing population. In this session we would like to discuss influences on human health in the specific setting of South Asia's megacities. We are interested in case papers on health status of megaurban populations, health determinants in a megaurban setting and the performance of megaurban health systems. Megacities in emerging economies are a new phenomenon of the global urbanisation process. In South Asia they are growing at an enormous pace giving shelter to a rapidly increasing population. These megacities are complex systems, growing mostly uncontrolled and unregulated. Their effects on human health – an important prerequisite for human development – are manifold: changing physical environments lead to an increasing incidence of respiratory and vector borne diseases; shortfalls in infrastructure provision result in water washed diseases; changing social environments affect mental health. Furthermore the existing public health infrastructure is not able to cope with the growing population, especially when they face budget cuts.

This session aims at opening up new perspectives on human health in the fast growing South Asian agglomerations. Papers in this session should address for example differences in health status of different population groups (user perspective), connections between different social groups or different pathways in which diseases are spreading. Furthermore we would like to discuss intraurban differences in access to health care services, the issue of privatisation and the possibility to establish health monitoring systems (system perspective). Finally we would like to invite presentations discussing the megaurban environmental health crisis (agent perspective). In this way the session points at geographical approaches to understand South Asia's "new urban penalty."

Session: Migration trends of the baby boomer generation.

Chair: Caroline Kramer & Carmella Pfaffenbach

Abstract:

In the middle of the 20th century, many nations experienced a baby boom. This was as a result of the political and economic circumstances of that time (e.g. end of World War II, global economic boom). However, this development did not last for an equally long time in each country. In most northern and western European states the birth rates increased in 1946, but had largely declined again by the beginning of the 1950's. In Germany the birth rates first started to grow significantly at the end of the 1950's and this continued on until the end of the 1960's. Today the majority of baby boomers in the US and Sweden, for example, have now reached retirement age, while those in Germany are still part of the work force.

Because job commitments mostly end on retirement, time for new possibilities regarding lifestyle and residence choices open up. Relocating entirely or living temporarily in other places becomes an option for the newly retired. Throughout the world, migration researchers are now looking at where this growing group of elderly adults chooses to live. Will they continue residing in their current locations or will they return to where they once used to live? In Sweden the elderly have been found to “return home”, i.e. a process of counter-urban-migration is taking place. In Germany, different developments are being discussed: Baby boomers, who used to be classic suburbanites, are now opting to return to the city as they age. Other phenomena see the elderly as “Snow Birds”, migrating towards the Sunny South of the US and Europe, or the so-called “guest workers” returning to their home countries.

This panel intends to highlight and discuss the wide range of developments in this area.

Possible speakers:

Lundholm, Emma (University of Umeå, Sweden)

Cribier, Françoise (Centre Maurice Halbwachs, Paris, France)

Friedrich, Klaus. (University of Halle, Germany),

Warnes, Anthony (University of Sheffield, UK)

Blöndal, Sveinbjörn (OECD),

Scarpetta, Stefano (OECD)

Session: Multi-local living arrangements on national, inter- and transnational levels: a new old phenomenon?

Chairs: Caroline Kramer & Gerald Wood

Abstract:

Habitation is pivotal to any human existence. Just as much as human beings cannot NOT communicate they cannot NOT dwell (even if they are regarded as “homeless”). Furthermore, the place of residence is central for the chances people and households have in fulfilling their aspirations and expectations. The vast majority of people usually lives in one place of residence. However, there is a growing number who resides in more than one location for various reasons and with varying degrees of necessity and/or voluntariness. Periodical and circular mobility has always existed, be it in the form of transhumance which to this very day is actively pursued in many countries of the South, or in the form of migrant labour in all regions of the world. In the recent past multi-local living arrangements have received more attention mainly because a growing number of people/households choose to or are forced to organise their lives in such a way. All this is happening against the backdrop of a growing internationalisation of labour markets and a growing general mobility of people/households both in terms of their working and private lives. Compared to households and individuals living in one location only this means, inter alia, a greater demand on resources and a more comprehensive need for adaptation. This session focuses on the phenomena of multi-locality on a national, inter- and transnational level and addresses central issues for a research agenda which is still in its infancy.

Possible participants:

Bryceson Deborah (University of Glasgow, UK)

Crang, Philp (University of London, UK)

Duchêne-Lacroix, Cédric (Universität Basel, Schweiz)

Faret, Laurent (Univ. Paris-Diderot-SEDET)

Hilti, Nicola (ETH Zürich, Schweiz)

Hondagneu-Sotelo, Pierrette (University of Southern California, USA)

Jackson, Peter (University of Sheffield, UK)

Rolshoven, Johanna (Karl-Franzens Universität Graz, Österreich)

Schad, Helmut (Hochschule Luzern - Wirtschaft, Luzern, Schweiz)

Stock, Mathis (Institut Universitaire Kurt Bösch, Sion, Schweiz)

Urry, John (Lancaster University, UK)

Vuorela, Ulla (Helsinki, Academie of Finland)

Weichhart, Peter (Wien, Österreich)

Winkler, Justin (Universität Basel, Schweiz)

Session: Natururbanisation: Urbanisation in nature and environment conflicts

Chairs: MARÍA-JOSÉ PRADOS & Julia Lourenço

Abstract:

Research in contra-urbanisation and rural immigration has been aimed at analysing the nature of changes to settlements, demographic changes and the motivations behind these processes. This has given rise to a theoretical debate on reasons to explain these processes resulting in concepts being formulated such as the rural idyll, the return to the country, neorurals, etc. The transformation of the rural population and the economic activities that accompany the arrival of new populators are having evident repercussions on rural areas. However, sufficient research has not been carried out into spatial transformations, new economic initiatives, the new urban models and the environmental conflicts that arise as a result. Natururbanisation describes these urbanisation processes in relation to the existence of protected areas of great value. Natururbanisation understood as the expansion and transferral of urbanisation to areas that are far from urban network hubs is linked to the existence of natural resources and cultural landscapes of great value. This session focuses on the debate being opened up to include new urban models in the areas of influence of national and natural parks. In particular, our proposal addresses the formulation of hypotheses and theoretical principles that identify similar patterns of urbanisation in nature and analyse the repercussions that they might have on the environment. The so-called “good experiences” of sustainable local development in the vicinity of areas with great landscape value could contribute to a better understanding of natururbanisation. The results of the communications will contribute to an understanding of the conflicts, incorporating them into planning and leading to a proper understanding of the expansion of urbanisation and environmental management being reached.

The session would like to put special stress on the presentation of natururbanisation case studies in Europe and America, although any papers connected with national parks and other protected natural spaces will be welcome. Innovative methodological proposals and international comparisons that go into comparative analyses in detail will be especially appreciated. Papers that tackle local case studies where conflicts have been resolved through actions in planning and governance will also be considered.

Session: Neighborhood governance under conditions of globalization – An international perspective

Chairs: Matthias Drilling & Olaf Schnur

Abstracts:

The debates on the question of the governance of states through their political systems have increased not only in number but also in their intensity. They extend, for example, from the crisis in or structuring of state social security systems to the transformation of states following system breakdowns, to the disintegration processes triggered by those breakdowns, to democratic deficits, and to bloated or even undersized civil services in contexts of urban growth and shrinking. On the one hand, these discussions make clear the high expectations of governance systems, but on the other they also reveal serious contradictions within systems. One strategy to deal with this contradictions is the partial withdrawal of the state from tasks in almost all policy areas – an approach accompanied in the theoretical discourse by the conceptual clarification of ‘government to governance’. The governance discourse is usually conducted at the state or urban level, less often at the neighborhood level. Neighborhoods, however, in the wake of new forms of governance are considered an important nucleus of the “glocalized” society in which challenges of modern societies are dealt with under quasi-laboratory conditions and possible solutions are to some extent found in terms of small-scale, participatory-oriented local governance. Under these assumptions there have been developed in recent years models and concepts that focus on different levels and that have already been partially applied to neighborhood development, for example the Urban Regime Theory, network theories, Regulation Theory, social area analysis or even concepts such as Public Private Partnerships (PPP) or Neighborhood Branding. International academic linkages in neighborhood

research are relatively sparse. The aim of the meeting is to establish linkages between active but hitherto rather solitary research spheres and to discuss and compare at the international level concepts, tools and models of neighborhood governance.

Session: Neoliberal urban transformation processes in the Arab World

Chairs: Ala Al-Hamarneh & Leila Vignal

Abstract:

An interdisciplinary working group around F. Moulaert and E. Swyngedouw that analyzed the urban policy in Europe suggests the existence of a new type of urban planning based on “Large-Scale Urban Development Projects (LSUDP)”. The main aim of such urban planning is to generate rent from real estate developments and to decouple the urban planning from social urban development.

Additionally, the assumptions of D. Harvey on “urban design” and of E. Soja on “spatial capital” and “spatial justice” enrich the theoretical and methodological approaches to analyze recent urban transformation processes worldwide.

In the last 10 to 15 years similar phenomena have also been observed in the Arab urban Metropolitan areas that have been undergoing huge re-structuring and re-planning processes, mainly based on LSUDP, often accompanied by “visionary” urban master plans. Most of these developments have established new alliances between local political decision makers, investors, urban planners and international consultants. Other cities in the region were, for all practical purposes, copying these pioneer experiences, adopting various forms of New Economic Policies (NEP), New Urban Policy (NUP) alliances and urban master plans. For instance, Dubai is usually portrayed as a prime example of a unique interpretation of neoliberal urbanization policies that have resulted in a fragmented and polarized urban environment and set new standards to urbanization.

However, only recently several major developments have challenged these new constellations: On the one hand, the economic crises in the financial sector and real estate market have affected the implementation schemes of these plans in scale, shape and time. Nevertheless, the parts of plans already in operation have by all means changed the urban spaces. On the other hand, the “Arab spring” revolutions have exposed the corrupted character of the alliances between political decision makers and real estate developers.

The thematic discussion aims to address four topics:

the theory and methodology of research, the governance level of urban planning, the specific forms of spatial modifications and the political economy of the NEP-NUP alliances.

Session: Old and new mobilities in Asia: challenges for geographical development research

Chair: Matthias Schmidt & Basabi Khan Banerjee

Abstract:

Mobilities research is flourishing and increasingly focuses on issues of late modernity in industrialised societies. This trend is captured in the so-called ‘new mobilities paradigm’ attempting to address the increasing importance that movement across territories of people, things, images, ideas and information assume in a globalising world. In Development Geography, however, mobilities research has focused largely on the different forms of mobile animal husbandry or more recently on various patterns of labour migration as a livelihood strategy. However, mobility is more than just movement between places; it has meaning, involves social practice and reshapes society in a multitude of ways. The juxtaposition of research on ‘old’ and ‘new’ mobilities is one of theorising mobility e.g. in terms of “death of distance”, “time-space compression”, “de-territorialisation” or “transnationality” (new mobilities) and the empirical rigour involved when looking at spatial mobility as a livelihood strategy under conditions of insecurity (old mobilities). Recent political transitions, socio-economic changes and communication revolutions in Asia are connected with adjusting old forms of mobility and creating various new mobility patterns. In the panel, it is attempted to bridge these approaches and combine new theoretical insights stirred by the cultural turn in the social sciences with the empirical rigour of research on spatial mobility as a livelihood strategy in order to address mobility as a social and economic practice through which spaces are produced and which is ascribed with meaning.

Session: Re-ordering the city - Neoliberalization, travelling policies and local context

Chairs: Kevin Ward & Iris Dzudzek

Abstract:

Current urban transformation processes, which we summarize as the "re-ordering of cities", are shaped both by larger processes of socio-economic restructuring as well as by local contexts. Under conditions of intensified interurban competition local political elites try to shape their cities to meet global standards. At the same time they increasingly look for international points of reference to solve local problems. In a globalizing world, knowledge about urban problems and ideas about how to address them travel with increasing speed. However, far from simply being implemented like a blue print, globally circulating policy models are selectively chosen and transformed through existing local discourses, actor constellations and socio-spatial configurations.

In this session, we would like to discuss how globally circulating discourses and policy models are fed into urban restructuring discourse and practice and how, conversely, different urban contexts shape the adoption of global discourses and policy models at the local level. Contributions should moreover analyze the role of intermediaries between global discourses and local practices as well as the transformative potential of policy transfer. They could address questions like the following:

- How are globally circulating models selectively chosen, transformed and locally re-imagined?
- How do new actors and institutions of interurban policy transfer interact globally?
- How do urban social movements respond with „glocal“ forms of contestation?
- Which urban problems are constructed and addressed with reference to which places in the Global North, South, West or East?
- Which local discourses render globally circulating policy models plausible?
- How do they re-order the city and rearticulate new urban forms of governance?
- How do these local adaptations contest, complement or advance a (hegemonic) neoliberal project?

Session: Revolution or transformation? The rise of supermarkets and malls in developing countries and their urban and social impact

Chairs: Ulrich Juergens & Ronnie Donaldson

Abstract:

Worldwide we can observe the expansion and convergence of retail structures which are also more and more familiar in developing countries or "countries of the south". Supermarkets and shopping centers push away traditional retail and food systems, change urban structures and commuter patterns of potential customers. Moreover they reflect the dynamics of a rising globalized and modernized urban middle class, their rising purchasing power and their adaptation of westernized life-style elements. How do the new retail structures reflect social change and upheavals? How can traditional retail systems compete and which importance do they still have for survival in systems of urban poverty? Are there any government or governance structures which can regulate the expansion of supermarkets and malls? Is there any form of urban planning? Which forms and elements of grassroots-protest exist? How much is this development controlled by foreign/global capital? Which new urban dynamics like suburbanization or inner city-gentrification emerge from the diffusion of supermarkets? Malls and supermarkets therefore first reflect the deep change of retail landscapes in developing countries, second they symbolize dynamics like social polarization, globalized shopping behavior and urban change which can be more and more observed in Latin America as well as in Africa and Asia. Theoretically and empirically based papers should analyze the impact of new retail forms for urban development, identify actor-groups and gatekeepers and search for "applied solutions" between tradition and modernization.

Session: Spatial analysis and modeling of the human-environment interface of urban areas

Chairs: Tobia Lakes & Lex Comber

Abstract:

Spatial analysis and modeling of the human-environment interface of urban areas Urban areas provide the living environment for more than half of the world population. From a system's perspective they are highly dynamic, multi-dimensional characterized by interlinkages, feedbacks,

embedded in a multi-scale framework. To explore the spatio-temporal dynamics of the human-environment interface spatial analysis and modeling techniques are of major benefit. In this session we focus on new methodical developments in geostatistical and spatio-temporal analysis and on recent challenges in modeling techniques. Having a strong methodical focus papers are invited dealing with urban land use modeling, environmental justice, vulnerability and risk analysis of urban health to address the challenge of the human-environment interface within urban areas from a spatial analysis and modeling perspective to support future decision-making.

Session: Spatial justice in cities in the South: what can spatializing information tools contribute to urban governance networks?

Chairs: Isa Baud & Yola Georgiadou

Abstract:

The growth of urban poverty and deprivations across cities in the global South has gained recognition in urban research and policy agendas. The extent of social inequalities is not only linked to households' vulnerability in dealing with deprivations (agency), but also to the ways urban governments structure provisions unequally across city areas, creating structural socio-spatial inequalities (informal settlements versus standardized areas). Currently, local governments and civic organizations often lack sufficient current information on deprivations, informal economic activities, and local 'politics' to tackle socio-spatial inequalities effectively.

The question raised in this panel is how a variety of (new) knowledge/information tools which recognize and analyze such socio-spatial inequalities can form a strategic resource for researchers and policy makers to (1) understand how urban inequalities are geographically fragmented, (2) make visible community-based knowledge by developing participatory tools, and (3) empower marginalized groups through counter-mapping of needs and priorities (civic organizations, slum dwellers). This panel contributes to the main topic of urbanization and demographics – inclusion and exclusion – by focusing on spatial knowledge tools which address such issues from the global South perspective.

The papers included in this session are drawn from two international research programmes: the first by Dutch and Indian research groups carried out in four Indian cities in two states, the second a comparative programme on fast-growing cities in several BRIC countries by a network of eight research groups.

Session: Strategic urban planning for sustainable development: Methods and experiences

Chairs: Jonathan Barton & Volker Stelzer

Abstract:

The dynamics and complexities of current societal development and global change processes, as well as the complex guiding vision of sustainable development call for political and societal steering that suitably takes into account future development and its associated uncertainties. This is particularly the case for complex systems such as megacities or metropolitan regions, where multiple risks and opportunities for more sustainable development are generated. With more city and regional administrations returning to longer-term planning, and sustainable development as an orientation for this planning, diverse methods are being employed and diverse experiences are documented. These methods include the systematic use and monitoring of indicators, development of scenarios, visioning, forecasting and backcasting, strategic environmental assessment, sustainability assessment, and diverse participatory arrangements, among others. All of these methods seek to understand and consider future trends and project urban and regional transformations over time. In terms of climate change, demographic, land use or economic development scenarios, social integration, quality of life perceptions, and other factors, these more integrated forms of urban planning that take into account longer-term considerations rather than shorter-term interests and demands are central to more strategic planning processes. They are increasingly important in terms of the science-policy interface and decision-making processes. This session aims at providing a forum to present and discuss scientific research and policy initiatives in the field of strategic urban planning

and how these feed into decision-making and planning processes for more sustainable urban development.

Session: Sustainable urban environments for the future

Chairs: Martin Sauerwein & Juergen Breuste

Abstract:

Urban landscapes are supposed to be actually and in the future focal points of landscape transformation. More than 50% of the world population lives in cities and this number will increase. Urban landscapes undergo dramatic changes from which the majority of the world's population will be affected. For the session the following challenges are seen as important:

1. To develop models for sustainable cities,
2. Management of urban growth and urban structural changes,
3. Climate change,
4. Increasing risks by natural processes,
5. Planning for urban sustainable environment,
6. To secure and improve urban nature conditions,
7. To stabilize and develop urban ecosystem services,
8. Demographic and social changes,
9. Weakening of administrative influences and drastic shortages in public finances,
10. Interactions of urban environment and urban culture (experiences, conflicts and management).

For each of these challenges valuable contribution from urban ecology can be expected to present the state of the art, case studies and methodological approaches in the respective field. Empirical evidence, research but also practice experiences with these subjects of different countries worldwide are will be presented, are welcome and will be discussed. The discussion should be targeted to identify the ecosystem-related impacts of these challenges, to discuss how to define targets for future sustainable development/improvement of urban ecosystems' functionality and quality of life as well as to evaluate the methods, steering instruments and best practice examples how to deal with these challenges.

The following subjects are identified as sub-topics of the session in research, planning and management aspects:

1. Climate change and sustainable urban environment
2. Modeling of sustainable urban environment
3. Urban ecosystem services – processes, pattern and planning
4. Urban nature
5. Sustainable urban environment in different urban cultures

Session: The 'migration & development-hype' and its implications for geographical research

Chairs: Martin Geiger & Malte Steinbrink

Abstract:

In recent years the link between migration and development has increasingly been discussed among academics, experts and politicians alike. 'Migration & development' has become one of the buzz words of today. And so it is not astonishing that geographers are fascinated by the increased interest in this heavily politicized mega theme. The strength and advantage of geography owes to the fact that geographers have long done research on issues of migration and development and have all along questioned the link between those two fields of inquiries. Compared with other disciplines, particularly development geographers were prominent among those researchers who analysed migration-related questions and pointed out the significance and implications of mobility and migration for social and economic development. Following the end of 'grand theories', however, what can be noted is a growing disorientation over adequate conceptualisations of the 'migration & development-nexus' in social theory. Quite the contrary in the field of geographical migration research: Since this sub-discipline is still somewhat embryonic and under development it draws its recent dynamic precisely from the creative involvement with new interdisciplinary theoretical approaches. Yet so far, the topic of 'development in the global south' remains neglected. Altogether,

it is quite astounding that geographical development research and geographical migration research contextually stand side by side rather unconnectedly. This session starts exactly at this point. We welcome contributions that analyze different aspects within the 'migration & development-nexus'. The aim lies in sounding out potentials of mutual theoretical cross-fertilization. Hence more conceptual contributions are encouraged that discuss empirical findings in both research fields with the aim to add to a stronger bond between geographical development research and geographical migration research.

Session: The mobility of human capital and knowledge

Chairs: Harald Bauder & Stefanie Foebker

Abstract:

The mobility of human capital and knowledge is a key aspect of contemporary urbanization and demographic change. This session examines a particular core segment of migration, consisting, for example, of highly skilled workers, privileged labour, and academic university staff, that has been of critical importance to knowledge-driven societies. It assumes different perspectives on highly skilled migration. On the one hand, the perspective of the receiving societies can be discussed: How do they benefit from the highly skilled? How does migration affect development in the receiving societies? On the other hand, the migrants' perspective can be examined: Why do they participate in international mobility? How do they settle in their new environment? The individual presentations will link the mobility of this core segment to the literature of urban change, transnationalism, global cities, labour segmentation, creativity and talent, and other relevant concepts and contemporary discussions. The session brings together researchers from various countries in Europe and North-America; tentative presenters include Heike Jöns (Loughborough University, UK); Harald Bauder (Ryerson University, Canada), Stefanie Föbker (University of Bonn, Germany); N.N.

Session: The non-/viability of "informality" – Taking critical stock of a contested concept

Chairs: Markus Keck & Harald Sterly

Abstract:

Ever since its coining by the International Labour Organization (ILO), the notion of informality has evolved in many directions. Traditionally, scientists focussed on the "informal sector", i.e. small-scale survival economies with precarious labour conditions beyond statutory control (ILO 1972, Castells and Portes 1989, de Soto 1989). In the 1990s, Douglass North framed the debate of informal institutions that were seen as rather implicit "rules of the game" beyond official regularizations, such as social norms, values, habits, and conventions. After 2000, it was especially Ananya Roy and Nezar AlSayyad (2004) who again re-framed the notion and analyzed it as an organizing logic of current urbanization processes. In addition to that, other authors used the notion rather intuitively to describe a casual, unstrained situation of social interaction (Miztal 2000). It is the aim of this panel to critically take stock of these manifold definitions and conceptualizations of "informality" with regard to urban and development geography, and to discuss the viability and/or nonviability of the notion against the background of empirical research. In order to provoke a profound and fruitful discussion it is explicitly favoured to have both supporters and opponents of this concept in the panel.

Session: The Socio-spatial reconfiguration in Gulf Arab cities

Chairs: Belgacem Mokhtar & Montasser Abdelghani

Abstract:

The rentier economies of oil producing countries in the Gulf are closely linked to the global economy. The returns from the exported raw energy products in these countries are not limited to the abundance of capital and equipment. They also lead to the transformation of ideas, structures and relationships.

The combined effects of these changes have characterized the decades after 1970 with an unconditional, hasty and uncontrolled opening to the western world. This introduces new patterns in consumption, urbanization and social relations. "Nowhere, has the movement of development been

conducted in such an impressive way, nor the society been faced so abruptly to the Western consumerist model" (Scholz, 2002, 197) and "the adoption of the western urban pattern in Arab countries stems from the feeling of backwardness and from an aspiration to progress" (Ben Hamouche, 2003, 528). Hence, lifestyles and values associated with the American model influenced the residential location. This confirms the UNFPA assessment that, "The American dream recurs in most social and economic contexts" (UNFPA, 2008, 47).

The recent changes have accentuated the traditional concentration of population in urban areas, and it is in cities that the spatial manifestation of changes (economic, social, cultural and even psychological) has occurred most.

Now it seems that all spatial structures were disrupted in a very short period. However, although the economic situation and the conditions were almost similar in all countries of the "Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC), the repercussions and the spatial manifestations differ greatly. In some cities, the spatial changes seem to respond to exogenous factors such as globalization. However, in others, the endogenous specific factors continue to determine the urban patterns and structures. This workshop aims to study the spatial and social repercussions of recent changes in the Gulf Arab cities. Possible topics may include:

- Modern economy and the fate of traditional activities.
- Urbanization, urban planning, architectural forms
- Spatial distribution of socio-professional categories
- Urban Structures: Homogeneity / Heterogeneity. Harmony/conflict
- Configuration and reconfiguration of urban spaces: forms, factors and impacts

Session: Towards a new centrality of world society: Future faces and functions of urban centres in the 21st Century

Chairs: Ilse Helbrecht & Peter Dirksmeier

Abstract:

In the 21st century, the world is getting more connected and more differentiated at the same time. Centralizing tendencies in economy, politics, and culture grow stronger on one hand and lead to new centres and new urban formations in most regions of the world. Yet, on the other hand new potentials for decentralisation gain strength at the same time due to the increasing communication powers and mobility options of modern technology. A new spatial formation of world society is, thus, in the making. New functional and spatial divisions of labour between centre and periphery, cities and rural areas occur.

In this session we take the theoretical perspective of world society as a starting point in order to reflect upon a specific momentum of the new spatial formation: that is the high dynamic of contemporary processes of centralization and centre-building. We are interested in new forms of centrality and urbanity, which proceed on the basis of communication of social systems across national borders, from the public realm to the economic and political system to world literature or to the lifestyle of global milieus. One response concerning the imperative of creating centrality in world society are New Downtowns like Hamburg Hafen City or Copenhagen Oerestad close to the traditional urban core. Here planned centrality and urbanity is established on further waste land by huge developments embracing habitation, economics, leisure, or lifestyle facilities.

We appreciate empirical and theoretical papers, which deal with e.g. these New Downtowns as well as presentations which conceptualise the emergence and planning of a new centrality and/or urbanity in a broader context in world society. The session is open to empirical as well as theoretical reflections upon this globally observable process of new centre-building.

Session: Towards a process-based understanding of spatiality: new perspectives on dissolving the rural-urban divide

Chairs: Annett Steinführer & Thilo Lang

Abstract:

In spite of long-lasting scholarly attempts to overcome the rigid distinction between cityscape and countryside, metropolis and village, the rural-urban divide continues to be a strong border. Research and entire disciplines are often organised around these classic categories. A large part of rural research still legitimates itself with an agrarian background while urban studies often come along without any reference to the wider socio-spatial or political context of the subjects under investigation. Any clear distinction between rural and urban modes of life started to fade away in urbanising parts of the world already in the early 20th century. Yet, 'urban' and 'rural' remain strong and distinct attributes to what is perceived as separate modes of spatiality. On the other hand, ideas like 'rurbanity' or Zwischenstadt (in the scientific realm) or commuters between rural residential areas and urban workplaces or 'urban farming' (that is, in daily life) question the very idea of such a clear divide. Globalisation leads to ambiguous consequences of both further vanishing existing differences (e.g. with regard to life styles and mobility behaviour) and deepening them (e.g. by endeavours to maintain at least a non-urban image of certain places). Further, process-based understandings of spatiality also lead to new research questions about in-between spaces and phenomena which are not clearly linked to categories such as 'urban', 'rural', 'metropolitan' or 'peripheral'.

In the proposed session we are interested in research dealing with questions beyond a classic rural-urban distinction opening new perspectives in theoretical and/or empirical terms. We particularly welcome papers that focus on (a) concepts that bridge different modes of spatiality and/or (b) approaches that leave the static notion of 'the urban' or 'the rural' behind and rather take into account the process character of the production of space as well as the continuous nature of this production.

Session: Un pont sur le fossé ? Le rôle des villes moyennes comme intermédiaire entre déprise rurale et mégapoles.

Session: Andreas Obersteg & Christophe Demazière

Abstract:

Les discours sur l'urbanisation et le développement démographique se concentrent souvent, d'une part, sur l'attractivité des très grandes villes ou aires mégapolitaines, d'autre part sur la décroissance, surtout dans les zones rurales et parfois dans les anciennes zones industrielles.

Par contre, les évolutions démographiques (souvent liées à des phénomènes économiques) dans les villes de taille moyenne sont peu documentées. Bien que la définition et la taille d'une ville moyenne varie considérablement, une analyse comparée s'annonce fructueuse. La session traitera spécifiquement des tendances socio-économiques récentes dans des villes de second rang. Il s'agit de discuter de situations variées (croissance, recul, stagnation) sur divers continents, dans différents pays, et dans différents contextes spatiaux.

A partir des études de cas ou synthèses qui seront présentées, on souhaite discuter les questions suivantes : quels types de croissance ou recul démographique spécifiques à des villes moyennes existent ? Comment les tendances constatées peuvent-elles être expliquées ? Quelles sont les bases économiques des villes intermédiaires ? Les évolutions relevées confirment-elles ou non les thèses des global cities, ou les concepts de villes créatives, selon lesquels l'économie devrait privilégier les très grandes villes ?

Envisageant leur rôle dans le système spatial, est-ce que les villes moyennes fonctionnent comme une charnière entre les zones rurales se vidant et les mégapoles hyper dynamiques ? Quel rôle jouent ces villes dans des pays avec des réseaux urbains divers (monocentriques, polycentriques), notamment par rapports aux très grandes villes ?

La session souhaite ajouter de nouvelles facettes aux travaux sur les villes moyennes et contribuer ainsi à une liaison entre les discours souvent séparés sur les métropoles et le monde rural.

Session: Uneven geography of power: The production of 'dominant spaces' in urban environments

Chairs: Kirsten Hackenbroch & Shahadat Hossain

Abstract:

Cities today are increasingly characterised by an uneven geography of power, translating into growing fragmentation and polarisation, despite the principal commitment of modern nation states to ensure equal access to basic goods. Unevenness often seems to be created purposefully, both by state and non-state actors, in order to claim and control specific urban spaces, at least temporarily, and to maintain a certain social order. Where power imbalance becomes the logic of access to contested urban resources the theoretical construct of 'othering' helps to explain discrimination and privilegisation in this process. These practices involve the state and people, the global and the local, the recognised and the non-recognised, or the centre and the periphery, however not in a dichotomous but rather in a complex hybrid relationship of dependency and informal control. Looking at such processes we can identify exclusionary practices and a differentiated notion of citizenship which seriously question the issue of spatial justice in the current modes of the production of space.

This session invites papers that contribute to the understanding of practices and processes of the production of 'dominant spaces' in urban environments. Who are the actors and which relationships and coalitions do they build to claim and secure their influence on the production of space? How do they legitimate their power? How do these new forms of regularisation translate into a new urban geography?

The session aims at a transnational and transtemporal perspective instead of narrowing down to one world region at a specific moment in time.

Session: Urban health services in megacities

Chairs: Jürgen Schweikart & Christoph Höser

Abstract:

Health services face challenges all over the world. These are concentrated in urban areas due to rapidly growing mega-cities, local and non-local disasters, refugees, demographic changes, deterioration of infrastructures etc. Furthermore, specific diseases develop and adapt to urban areas and their special environmental conditions. Some regions engage with effort to maintain governability in this respect and to fulfil the needs of the inhabitants. Some regions are overstrained, while the population reacts and develops alternative solutions for health services that are needed. The session intends to present special aspects about the spectrum of challenges under the different economic, social and demographic circumstances in megacities. The focus of interest is described by spatial aspects and GIS-supported research about:

- emerging challenges for health services in urban areas due to demographic change, climate change, industrialization, deterioration, rapid growth of population
- strategies and options for action which have been applied to support health services by urban governments
- alternative activities, which have been developed and applied by the non-governmental/private sector to establish complementary medicine and alternative health services

The thematic focus concentrates on rapidly growing megacities, which are developing in planned or unplanned ways. The lectures will reflect the variety of challenges in different parts of the world due to different social settings.

The audience is encouraged to be inspired by geographic methods and the advanced utilisation of GIS applications, which go beyond the pure description of a situation and rather describe processes. The GIS-based methods presented are expected to offer support for governments to fulfil their obligations for health services. Monitoring the development of alternative health services using geographical methods helps us understand the changing needs, possibly in contrast to governmental services.

Session: Urban informality as post-socialist routine?

Chairs: Daniel Goeler & Bernhard Köppen

Abstract:

The appearance and shapes of informal housing, trade locations and infrastructures are among the key issues of post-socialist urban developments on different spatial levels. Indeed, they are amongst the most visible, tangible features of transformation. Symptomatic in this context are more or less informal (sometimes illegal; Becker et al. 2005) housing areas, informal markets and kiosk-agglomerations, wherever they promise some profit, but also singular kiosks or just architectural “add-ons”, such as balconies, as well as unconventional extensions in private housing (Bouzarovski et al. 2011) e.g. Those phenomena are wide-spread all over the post-socialist space and seem to be particularly characteristic for cities in transition. At first impression they might they appear quaint and directly linked to the individual taste or spontaneity of the respective proprietor. However, more detailed analysis reveals parallels and similarities. The kiosk phenomenon e.g. is ubiquitous in Eastern and Southeastern Europe and even path dependencies can be proved, as studies on former Yugoslavia show (Göler/Lehmeier 2011). The proposed panel points out the relevance and variety of informality, is looking on common characteristics of (urban) informality and should also link rather “straightforward” empirical knowledge, typically based on observation in place, to theories of urban development and social change.

We expect contributions

- dealing with informality in post-socialist transition economies,
- pointing out the variety of informality,
- with reference to local and individual level as well as large-scale or comparative studies, - with strong empirical evidence,
- including conceptualizations and theoretical reflections.

Relevant input from ‘neighboring’ subjects as urban and spatial planning, architecture, anthropology, sociology is very welcome.

Session: Urban poverty – Conceptions of everyday life under persistent conditions of inequality

Chairs: Ulrike Gerhard & Eberhard Rothfuss

Abstract:

Research on urban poverty is nothing new. Several studies have analyzed economic and structural changes, ethnicity and also – more recently – the role of the neoliberal state in producing advanced marginality within cities (i.e., Wacquant 2007, Wilson 2007). However, research is often bound to specific regional contexts and thus stuck into epistemological pathways like “developmentalism” on the Global South or the phantasmagoria of “theory” on the Global North (see McFarlane 2010, Robinson 2010).

We would like to add two more aspects to this urgent but often traditional discussion on urban poverty. First of all, we pledge for a comparative perspective on urban inequality that takes into account qualitative and structural approaches rather than statistical indices. Only then, horizontal and invisible forms of marginalization and discrimination can be understood (see Kreckel 2004, Souza 2008) while questions of power differentials, social exclusion and stigmatization will be asked.

Secondly, we would like to focus on concepts of everyday life (i.e., De Certeau 1984, Lefebvre 1974, Maffesoli 1986) as well as genealogies of citizenship (i.e., Bookchin 1992, Isin 1999) in order to grasp the multidimensional perspective of urban disproportions. With this we can show that inequality can be experienced, strengthened and reproduced through every day negotiation. Thus, a so-called “geography of the possible” (Winter 2007) can be portrayed that takes into account the “creativity of action” (Joas 1994) of the marginalized groups in their heterodox daily lives.

With this session we are aiming at pooling together researchers from different parts of the world in order to take one further step in the intellectual and engaged search for the just city (Marcuse et al. 2009).

Session: Urban utopias and heterotopias: Theorizing, analyzing, and evaluating urban spaces

Chairs: Christina West & Thomas Doerfler

Many recent discourses in urban research focus on 'urbanity' or rather on the production of 'The Urban' as a negotiation process between urban planning, private investors and developers, frequently referring to newly developed 'urbanities' or reformulated urban spaces. At the same time, other stakeholders appear who conceive urbanity beyond neoliberal reasoning and confrontationally claim a 'right to the city'. New forms of urban resistance are changing the concepts of urbanity, it is still unknown how these forms operate in time and space. This complexity of society with its power relations and strong linkage to the physical and material space is drawn up by Lefebvre's comprehensive work. He conceptualises the urban as 'oeuvre' - as an expression of human creativity. The urban appears in his philosophy of practice as an experimental utopia, a scenario for the situation right now and here but yet to come, but especially open-ended.

His concept can be contrasted to Foucault's *dispositif* as a discursive relation of power, knowledge and space, without strong notions on materiality, albeit they are conceivable in his works.

Particularly his fragmental thoughts about 'Heterotopias' as localized utopias open discursive ties.

Our session seeks to link these concepts to the discussion on 'The Urban' for a better understanding of urban complexity at a theoretical and empirical level. The theoretical approaches of Lefebvre and Foucault to utopias and heterotopias not only promise an observation and description of the processes of production of space within different functional systems and power groups, but also to elucidate how individual and collective comprehensions of social and spatial interrelations are created. Discussed will be the capabilities of the concepts for an analysis of the relation of social discourses and materiality as well as of different types of power in negotiation processes, and thus for an identification of new forms and processes of urban governance.