

Call for Papers

„The City: Analyzing Contemporary Transformations and Structures“

workshop at the University of Bielefeld, Germany

9th – 10th March 2012

Today, we focus on different aspects of urbanity when we talk about characteristics of and challenges for contemporary societies and their built environment. Depending on the respective point of view, demographic changes, the anticipated climate change potentially altering human behavior, the different appreciation of knowledge and information or transformations in production patterns are taken as factors affecting the appearance, the characteristics and the functions of the places of societies – and therewith also of cities.

Social sciences dealing with urban phenomena generally ask for the interrelations of the social and the physical/spatial. Urban structures, understood as results of social processes, are in focus. But there are different thematic traditions: In Germany, social inequality in cities, resulting in social and spatial segregation, has long been a topic of great importance. In the Anglo-American context, housing and racial differences have been major research areas for several decades. In addition to these specific traditions of studying the city, phenomena themselves show regionally differing characteristics, greatly visible in the cases of *shrinking cities* and *mega cities*. And processes of urban transformation have always had transnational, maybe even global facets, too, as it can be seen in the case of *global cities*.

The workshop asks for both urban transformations and urban structures that can be analyzed by social scientists. What are recent developments and transformations of cities? What are the specific challenges researchers are confronted with in these cities? How can we adequately analyze and analytically formulate contemporary urban phenomena? In what respect do cities possess features that are specific for the late 20th and beginning 21st century, i.e. what are typical structures? What kind of social transformations influence the character of cities and in how far do cities in turn influence social developments? In what respect can cities be understood as specific physical-spatial structures resulting of (social) developments?

This workshop aims at bringing the social scientist's perspective on contemporary urban transformations and structures into focus. What specific challenges are inhabitants, city planners, but also we as researchers confronted with? What is life like in (post)modern cities, how can these cities be characterized? What kind of relation exists between cities and the societies they are embedded in?

Therewith, questions arise concerning both the adequate theoretical framework for urban transformations and structures and their thorough empirical analysis. Additionally, the workshop asks for methodological reflections on adequate forms of researching these developments.

The workshop consists of two parts: (1) We invite PhD candidates in an advanced state and PostDocs in an early state to send proposals for presentations dealing with the questions mentioned above from a sociological or closely related perspective. (2) Master students from all fields who work on the topics named are encouraged to apply for a poster session to present their work.

With this, the discussion on contemporary urban phenomena shall be deepened and the discipline of (urban) sociology reflected during the workshop.

Character of workshop:

The workshop is designed to be a discussion-intensive platform for exchanging research results and ideas. The participants are encouraged to allow extra time in advance for preparing the discussion of participants' full papers and presentations. To facilitate the circulation of papers, data, and other useful material, a Wiki will be set up in the beginning of 2012.

The workshop will be opened by a keynote lecture that will introduce into the topic. Workshop language is English. Selected papers will later be published in the journal *InterDisciplines. Journal of History and Sociology*.

Abstracts:

Please send an abstract of app. 500 words until 1st Oct 2011 to cities@uni-bielefeld.de, indicating whether you apply for a presentation or a poster, and include a short CV of yours (max. 2 pages).

Time schedule:

1 st Oct 2011	deadline for submitting abstracts for presentations: app. 500 words, language: English for posters: app. 500 words, language: English or German
1 st Nov 2011	announcement of acceptance
15 th Jan 2012	deadline for submitting full papers applies only for presentations; 5-7000 words, language: English
30 th Jan 2012	circulation of full papers among participants
9 th -10 th March 2012	workshop

Further information:

The workshop will take place at the University of Bielefeld, Germany, and is funded by the Bielefeld Graduate School in History and Sociology. The workshop organizers will compensate for the participants' accommodation in Bielefeld (1 night). In addition, Master students who have successfully applied for the poster session will be issued a small grant for participation.

Inquiries can be send to Anna-Lisa Müller at cities@uni-bielefeld.de.