

EUROPEAN SCIENCE FOUNDATION (SCSS)  
EXPLORATORY WORKSHOP

COHESIVE NEIGHBOURHOODS AND CONNECTED  
CITIZENS IN EUROPEAN SOCIETIES  
(17-18 June 2004)

SCIENTIFIC REPORT

Co-ordinators:  
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## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1. On 17 and 18 June 2004 seventeen participants representing eight European countries attended the ESF Exploratory Workshop. Three participants (from Spain and Hungary) were unable to make the Workshop. However, they are maintaining their involvement with the longer term aspirations of the Workshop and will be contributing to the forthcoming Special Issue of Urban Studies on the theme of Cohesive Neighbourhoods and Connected Citizens in European Societies, as well as participating in the preparation of a European Collaborative Research Project in the Social Sciences (ECRPSS).
2. The key concerns of this ESF Exploratory Workshop were to make a distinctive contribution to European debates concerning the shifting role and nature of social, political and economic activity at the local level and to develop a linked and integrated cross-national research programme. The focus was on the neighbourhood as it was perceived as one of the most appropriate sites for understanding broader social processes both nationally and cross-nationally and was considered to be a concept that could be utilized in such a way as to provide a vehicle for integrated and comparative research.
3. A total of nine presentations were made. The proceedings began with an exploration of the importance of the neighbourhood and neighbourhood change across a range of European societies, drawing on data from the European Social Survey. The remaining eight presentations were organised around three themes: The importance of neighbourhood in everyday life; Governance, participation and citizenship; Urban renaissance and Regeneration. The presentations introduced research from specific national and local contexts and provided the impetus for discussion.
4. The discussion highlighted the continuing importance of the neighbourhood as an area centrally involved in the shaping of everyday life, political engagement, social identity, social cohesion and division, and as the object of an array of policy initiatives introduced by governments across a wide range of European societies.
5. The Workshop focused on the necessity of reconceptualising the concept of neighbourhood. Traditionally neighbourhoods have been constructed as relatively bounded and inward looking entities and part of the relatively stable and regulated conditions of the modern economy and city. More recently the effects of globalization, a more mobile, networked and liquid social structure, and increasing heterogeneity and multiculturalism require a more nuanced and complex interpretation of the neighbourhood. There is a need to explore 'locale' as an arena integrating a multiplicity of spatial scales, to emphasize interconnectedness, interaction and porosity within, across and beyond the neighbourhood. Thus the neighbourhood is not

a bounded but an interactive space involving different meanings for different people, particularly in relation to variables such as ethnicity, gender and age.

6. It was also recognised that despite the policy interest and the plethora of neighbourhood studies which it has generated we lack the research tools for exploring neighbourhood cross-nationally and comparatively. There is a lack of conceptual consistency which is in part driven by the different institutional and policy contexts in which studies are undertaken. Whilst the range and quality of European comparative data have increased in recent years, it was felt that currently it failed to capture the 'lived experience' at the level of the neighbourhood.
7. The Workshop highlighted the necessity for further research and participants discussed various options for pursuing this goal. The decision was taken to submit a proposal for a European Collaborative Research Project in the Social Sciences (ECRPSS) on the theme of 'Governance, Citizenship and Cohesion in European Cities'. The co-ordinators of the proposal are Dr Patricia Kennett and Professor Ray Forrest, University of Bristol. A follow-up meeting is planned for November 2004 at Humboldt University, Berlin.
8. A publication schedule was planned and agreed for the Special Issue of Urban Studies, which draws on the contributions to the ESF Exploratory Workshop. The planned publication date for the Special Issue is December 2005.
9. The Workshop concluded with an expression of thanks to the organisers for a successful and productive meeting, and to the ESF for enabling the Workshop to take place creating the opportunity for participants to move towards an integrated, comparative framework through which the dynamics of social change in European cities can be better understood.

## **SCIENTIFIC CONTENT**

The Exploratory Workshop was organised around the following key themes: The importance of neighbourhood in every day life; Governance, participation and citizenship; Urban renaissance and Regeneration. Presentations were designed to facilitate discussion around these themes and ultimately to contribute to developing a research agenda for European cities. The paper abstracts are listed below.

➤ **The Neighbourhood in a European Context**

**Ade Kearns and Ray Forrest**

This paper will explore aspects of neighbourhood change and factors affecting the importance of neighbourhood across a range of European societies. Issues such as ethnic mix, length of residence, participation and involvement in local organisations and activities will be explored at the local level drawing on data from the European Social Survey. What can we infer about the role and significance of neighbourhood from evident variations and similarities in responses in the national samples? What might be the implications for how we conceptualise neighbourhood in cross-national studies and for policy assumptions?

➤ **Civil Society and Social Innovation: Integration of the Resettlers from the Former Soviet Union in Berlin-Marzahn North West**

**Julia Gerometta, Humboldt University Berlin**

In the course of research within the SINGOCOM<sup>1</sup> network, a case study on social innovation has been undertaken in a locality on the North Eastern border of East Berlin. This neighbourhood within the large housing estate of Berlin-Marzahn is classified a distressed neighbourhood and is subject to an integrated area development policy *Quartiersmanagement* [neighbourhood management] in the course of the state-federal state funded programme *Soziale Stadt – Stadtteile mit besonderem Erneuerungsbedarf* [Social City – Neighbourhoods With Special Needs for Development]. The migrant community of the German resettlers from the former Soviet Union are a large group here. They are confronted by barriers to integration into the labour market, social relations with the “host” society, and state institutions. At the same time, the local (urban as well as neighbourhood) level produces an institutional effort towards social innovation in the course of *Quartiersmanagement* although located within a hostile local social

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<sup>1</sup> Social innovation is a new approach which is developed (among others using the same notion) in the research group at the basis of this presentation, in SINGOCOM. SINGOCOM is an acronym for a research project called “Social Innovation, Governance and Community Building”, funded by the European Commission under Framework V, Targeted Socio-Economic Research Programme. Website: <http://users.skynet.be/bk368453/singocom/>

environment, severe fiscal restrictions and consequent financial shortages of the formerly largely publicly founded social infrastructure, and an increasingly restricted labour market in the recession shaken Berlin. In this paper we will look at how this new policy in combination with an activated local resettlers community changes local governance and results in a local civil society which works socially innovatively in the content (basic needs satisfaction), empowerment (mobilisation) as well as process (changes in governance relations) dimension, and how these achievements are in tension with processes on larger spatial scales (labour market, fiscal crisis).

First, I will present the concept of social innovation (SINGOCOM) embedded in social exclusion/ social inclusion dynamics. Then I will present the empirical findings: how do the various spheres of agency (legal and labour market frame, local state agencies, civil society and the self-organisation structure and community dynamics) alter governance processes? At the end, an overarching picture of the local governance dynamics with respect to social innovation will be sketched.

**References:**

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- Häußermann, H. and W. Siebel (1987) *Neue Urbanität*, Suhrkamp, Frankfurt a. M.
- Kronauer, M. (1999) *Die Innen-Außen-Spaltung der Gesellschaft. Eine Verteidigung des Exklusionsbegriffs gegen seinen mystifizierenden Gebrauch*, in S. Herkommer, *Soziale Ausgrenzungen. Gesichter des neuen Kapitalismus*, VSA, Hamburg, pp. 60-72
- Moulaert, F. (2000). *Globalization and integrated area development in European cities*. Oxford, Oxford Univ. Press.

➤ **Women, Neighbourhoods and Everyday Life**  
**Dina Vaiou and Rouli Lykoyanni**

The paper discusses everyday life in urban neighbourhoods from a feminist perspective. It aims to engage theoretically and through reference to research in progress with everyday life as a concept which brings to the foreground of enquiry the richness and variety of everyday experience and helps approach urban life and urban development as “peopled and gendered” processes. Everyday life is connected to places where women and men live, work, consume, relate to others, forge identities, cope with or challenge routine, habit, established codes of conduct. This brings to the second concern of the paper, i.e. neighbourhoods, understood as one important, among many, urban spatialities.

In the context of geographical debate on space/place, the paper approaches neighbourhoods not as bounded places (although this is not absent from the urban experience), but rather as particular

constellations of social relations, with local and supra-local determinants, meeting and weaving together at a particular locus. In such constellations of relations, the intersecting patterns of everyday life of different women determine individual and collective identities and contribute to develop strategies which organize the everyday both as adaptation and recurrent small decisions and as particular practices and general priorities. In turn, adaptations and challenges are determined by urban spatialities and temporalities.

## ➤ **Social Cohesion in New Neighbourhoods**

Tineke Lupi & Sako Musterd

In the academic debates on neighbourhoods and social cohesion, for example in the segregation, integration and participation debates, there has been ample attention for processes in types of urban residential districts, which are either old and deprived or characterised by somewhat newer but massive post-war housing estates, built in the seventies and eighties. For a long period of time, there was a suggestion that problems with social cohesion were particularly associated with these areas.

Recently, however, a debate seems to have started which focuses on newly developed, often suburban districts. According to some these areas are experiencing the crisis of community even stronger than the older city districts; private life would be extremely dominant in the new (sub) urban neighbourhoods; according to Robert Putnam suburbanisation must be regarded as one of the main contributors to the loss of social capital. This perception has found its way into politics and government. Since the last municipal elections in the Netherlands some new towns even got their own alderman of social cohesion.

But what actually do we know about social cohesion and social ties in newly built, (frequently suburban) neighbourhoods? Is the situation really that different from the longer established urban areas? And if so, should we really be worried about the – lack of – strength of local social ties, because they disappeared; or did new social links develop at a higher geographical level? In this paper we will address these questions, based on a research project we recently carried out. In the first part of the paper we will draw upon the knowledge, which is available in the literature. First we will discuss a few international studies that focus on social cohesion in new neighbourhoods. Secondly, this paper will focus on existing research, which focused on social cohesion in somewhat older Dutch New Towns. In the third part of the paper we will shift the attention to the first results of new and detailed empirical research in a brand new residential district that is built on an artificial island nearby Amsterdam, called IJburg. The first inhabitants settled from 2002 onwards. In our project we followed these new settlers and registered their first attempts to establish some form of social cohesion and to develop some social ties.

➤ **Governance and Citizenship Practices in European Cities**  
Marisol García

The European context is providing a public sphere that articulates urban with national issues. Moreover the Europeanisation of some social policies, such as those directed to combat social exclusion provide plenty of room for the combination of practices in which traditional and new actors combine their efforts together in the elaboration and implementation of local policies. European multi-level governance has its more obvious crystallisation in cities, where the specific problems of social exclusion emerge. The paper examines the frame in which some of the practices are being developed as well as concrete examples in different urban contexts. It argues that the emerging patterns of urban governance involve two contradictory processes. On the one hand the method of participation and the heterogeneity of actors renders accountability more difficult, on the other hand it expands the principle of citizenship beyond the traditional definition based on rights and obligations by widening the public sphere.

➤ **Evaluation of the German National Programme 'Social City' (Caring for Deprived Neighbourhoods)**  
Hartmut Haeussermann

➤ **Some Reflections on the Metropolitan Development Initiatives in Sweden in a European Context**  
Roger Andersson

➤ **Integrated Sustainable Development Policies in Europe: From 'Making Cities' to 'Making the Best (or the most) of Cities'**  
Claude Jacquier

In western industrialised countries the rapid urbanisation of the post-war decades has given way to a period of slower city growth within longstanding built-up areas. Housing construction provides us with a good measure of this change. In most European countries the annual rate of construction per 1000 inhabitants fell by almost half between 1970 and 2000.

Within European cities as such this slow down has been evermore marked (decline in construction rates, smaller-scale projects). The traditional process of urbanisation, i.e. the process of concentrating people who have come from somewhere else (the country or abroad) in a certain area has come to an end. Over the past two decades we have seen a reversal of this process (depopulation of city centres, urban sprawl, recycling of old built-up areas, internally driven

population renewal). This has led to a change in the way cities develop. We have thus moved on from a period characterised by what we might call *making the city* to one better typified by *making the best of cities*.

*Making cities* was based on productivist urbanisation processes. These were relatively simple and took place on “undeveloped” sites whose original features were just bulldozed out of existence (urbanisation of adjacent agricultural land on a massive scale, demolition and renewal of old neighbourhoods). Such operations were implemented by central public authorities using linear procedures, ones with precious little overlap between political and technical responsibilities. *Making the best of cities*, on the other hand, which has come to the fore over the last twenty years, consists of redeveloping long-urbanised areas (renovation, reclassification, urban renewal and urban regeneration). This means that planners have to live with already pre-existing zones, the people and organisations located therein, and all the various actors who inhabit them or who go there to work.

We have in fact moved from heavy-handed takeovers of areas for urban purposes to more cooperative forms of urban development. Urban planning now assumes that currently existing components of cities (their social capital, their atmosphere) are taken into account; greater complementarity and parallelism in the workings of the various urban actors are also sought, implying the planning of projects in common and their implementation within structures characterised by partnership and co-production.

Thus we see that we have switched from an approach focusing on the city’s “hardware” to one centred increasingly on the city’s “social software” and on the regeneration of urban areas. This is borne out by the fact that most of the new integrated, sustainable, urban development policies to be found in Europe have composite names in which, either the adjective *social* figures explicitly (e.g. the “Social City” in Germany, “Social Impulse” in Flanders, “Social Development” in France, and “Social Renewal” in the Netherlands), or the urban regeneration process is specifically alluded to, e.g., the Major City Programme in Belgium and the Netherlands, the Urban Renewal Programme in Denmark, the Policy for the City and Urban Renewal in France, and the Urban Regeneration and Sustainable Development Programmes in Italy.

This shift from *making the cities* to *making the best of cities* presupposes a mutation in urban development and one that must be accompanied by a root-and-branch change in professional organisations and their procedures. Now a shift from one mode of production and organisation to another, one which is almost diametrically opposed, cannot simply take place at the wave of a political wand. We are not merely substituting one urban product for another, we are actually transforming the processes of production themselves. It is impossible to go from sectorial, relatively



standardised, production, based on linear procedures involving a succession of clearly identified operations, to one involving simultaneous actions by a whole set of participants, possessing widely varying savoir-faire, but cooperating under the guidance of the powers that be to reach a goal that has been defined and worked out together.

To summarise, “integrated sustainable urban development policies” stem from complex constructive processes within which political authorities have an essential role to play.

➤ **Social Capital and Grass-Roots Participation: Urban Regeneration in Three European Cities**

**Anna Bull, Bryn Jones and Susan Milner**

The paper compares public policy and urban regeneration in three European cities, Bristol (UK), Lille (France) and Naples (Italy). It focuses on the relationship and reciprocal influence between local grass-roots associations and initiatives and public policies and it addresses three main questions:

- 1) Is it possible and desirable to 'institutionalise' social capital, by giving institutional representation to grass-roots associations and initiatives (where they exist on the ground) or, alternatively, by promoting active citizens' participation 'from above'?
- 2) To what extent are powers being transferred to 'networks of governance' at local level in order to achieve urban and social regeneration and whose interests do these networks represent?
- 3) How does the practice of governmental promotion of regeneration policies vary between different levels of government and between different European countries?

The first two issues turned out to be highly controversial and no convergence seemed to be emerging. At one extreme, the Bristol council was a strong believer in participative democracy and public-private partnership at local level, partly out of conviction, partly because it had to follow national government guidelines. In their scheme for regenerating the area south of the river Avon, local voluntary and neighborhood associations were regularly consulted and their representatives sat on local committees together with representatives of the local council, regional development bodies and the private sector. Government and EU- sponsored projects of social regeneration were administered by the Regional Development Agency which deliberately sought to promote the formation of wide community partnerships involving the third sector. At the other extreme, the Naples local council did not believe that it was either possible or desirable to institutionalise social capital in their scheme for regenerating the Bagnoli area (ex-steelworks). They were mainly concerned to keep private interests at bay (especially the building speculation lobby) and

judged local associations and the third sector in the city to be too weak vis-à-vis the powerful private sector. They considered themselves as the only democratically elected body and therefore the only body which should take decisions in the interests of all residents and citizens. In Lille, regeneration focused on the high-speed rail infrastructure and the creation of a European commercial centre. The projects were led by the high-profile socialist mayor who typified the French 'multipositional' strategy of resource maximisation, with municipal socialism acting as a resource base for national politicians. Grass-roots activism has thus been dominated, and to some extent coopted, by party networks.

Our research threw up both advantages and disadvantages of the participative model, particularly in those cases, as in Bristol, where it included the voluntary sector to counterbalance the influence of the private sector. The advantages are clearly a sense of motivation on the part of local residents, a less paternalistic or distant approach on the part of the local authority ('we know best'), and the promotion of social inclusion. Among the perceived disadvantages are a depoliticising agenda, unequal distribution of power among partners and weakly representative associations being chosen as partners. However, there is also a serious risk of apathy and 'anomie' replacing traditional working-class and trade-union forms of association if participation from below is not actively encouraged. This was the case in Naples, where governance was rejected by the local administration in favour of a 'statist' approach.

As regards the third issue, in all three examples, the state has explicitly sought to encourage grass-roots participation in its partnerships with cities within the context of urban regeneration projects, and this undoubtedly shapes the way that cities respond, even though local governments enjoy greater autonomy in some cities than in others (lowest in Bristol, highest in Naples). The role of regions is also of relevance but varies substantially, ranging from a state-dependent Regional Development Agency in Britain to a fairly autonomous regional government in Italy. The extent and character of social capital formation therefore tends to be neither an outcome of spontaneous and independent local associations, nor an offshoot of dynamic political institutions; but to depend on the interplay and influence of different levels of government and their definitions of the role of local networks.

## **ASSESSMENT OF RESULTS, CONTRIBUTION TO THE FIELD AND OUTCOMES**

The Exploratory Workshop provided the opportunity for intense and sustained discussion on the role of the neighbourhood in contemporary European societies. It brought together experts in the field, as well as those at the beginning of their academic career. Discussion highlighted the continuing

importance of the neighbourhood as a vehicle for understanding and analysing contemporary social change in comparative perspective, and the need for further research. Thus, the Exploratory Workshop provided the impetus for further networking and the development of a research programme. Participants laid the foundations for the development of a proposal for a European Collaborative Research Project in the Social Science (ECRPSS) on the theme of Governance, Citizenship and Cohesion in European Cities, co-ordinated by Dr Patricia Kennett and Professor Ray Forrest, University of Bristol. A follow-up meeting of Workshop participants has been scheduled for November 2004.

In addition, a Special Issue of Urban Studies on the theme of Cohesive Neighbourhoods and Connected Citizens in Contemporary European Societies, has been accepted for publication date and will be available towards the end of June 2005. The Special Issue draws on the contributions made by participants and the ESF Exploratory Workshop.

### **STATISTICAL INFORMATION ON WORKSHOP PARTICIPANTS**

A total of 17 participants attended the Workshop, 9 of whom were male and 8 were female. Of the 17 participants 4 were aged between 20 and 30 years, 1 was aged between 31 and 40, 9 were aged between 41 and 50, and 3 were over 50 years of age.

There were representatives from a total of eight European countries, one each from France and Sweden, two from Germany, Greece and the Netherlands, four from Italy and five from the United Kingdom (four from England and one from Scotland).

## **FINAL PROGRAMME:**

### **Day One: 17 June 2004**

**10.00 –10.15:** Welcome (Patricia Kennett, Workshop Organiser)  
Introduction to the role of the ESF.

**10.15-11.00** *The Meaning of Neighbourhood in Contemporary European Societies'*  
Ray Forrest and Ade Kearns  
General discussion

**11.00-11.15:** **Coffee**

**11.15-1.00:** **Theme A: The Importance of Neighbourhood in Everyday Life**

**Women, neighbourhoods and everyday life**  
Dina Vaiou and Rouli Lykoyanni

**Social cohesion in new neighbourhoods**  
Tineke Lupi & Sako Musterd

**Local Embeddedness and the restructuring of urban social policies in comparative perspective**  
Enzo Mingione

Discussion

**1.00-2.15:** **Lunch**

**2.15-3.30:** **Theme B: Governance, Participation and Citizenship**

**The role of civil society in neighbourhood strategies**  
Julia Gerometta

**Social capital and grass-roots participation: urban regeneration in three European cities**  
Anna Bull

**Theme C: Urban Renaissance and  
Regeneration**

Discussion

**3.30-3.45:**

**Coffee**

**3.45-5.30:**

**Theme C: Urban Renaissance and  
Regeneration (continued)**

**Evaluation of the German National Programme  
‘Social City’ (Caring for Deprived  
Neighbourhoods)**

Hartmut Haeussermann

**Some reflections on the Metropolitan  
Development Initiative in Sweden in European  
Context**

Roger Andersson

**Integrated Sustainable Development Policies in  
Europe: From “Making Cities” to “Making the  
Best (or the most of Cities)**

Claude Jacquier

Discussion

**Day Two: 18 June 2004**

**9.30- 11.00:**

a) Developing a European research agenda:  
Connected Citizens and Cohesive Neighbourhoods

b) Comparative concepts and analytical framework

**11.00-11.30:**

**Coffee**

**11.30-1.00:**

a) Preparation for ESF Collaborative Research  
Project grant

b) Special Issue of Urban Studies

c) Next steps

**1.00-2.00:**

**Lunch and Close**

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