

**“Diverse neighborhoods as sites of encounter?  
Revisiting Methodologies in Conviviality Studies”**

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With neo-liberal flows of capital reshaping cities in Europe and beyond, a large number of current urban research focuses on newly built social housing projects or gated communities that reinforce spatialized social segregation (Bartu-Candan and Kolluoğlu 2008 et al.). While the relevance of this research is unquestionable, my presentation highlights the often neglected fact that in the urban sphere, social and cultural diversification persists alongside segregation. This appears to be especially true for neighborhoods which are currently subject to rapid transformation. My paper shows how these neighborhoods rather than undergoing processes of fragmentation, become increasingly diversified, thereby yielding new constellations of “super-diversity”, that is, new arrangements of living together at the intersection of gender, class, age, ethnicity, sexual orientation and lifestyle (Vertovec 2007). With the settlement and/or entrepreneurial engagement of higher income groups in these neighborhoods, the question of how to live with cultural and social differences is gaining in importance: The convivial life of these newly configured neighborhoods in question becomes even more precarious in the light of processes of urban transformation as socio-economic inequalities accelerate. My paper intersects with the current academic evaluation of the notion of conviviality, understood as the very fragile process of negotiating minimal consensus in the domain of everyday life (Heil 2015), in order to refashion the understanding of how to study the engagement with diversity on a neighborhood level.

For this purpose, my paper evolves around two axes. It firstly problematizes the methodology underlying a vast majority of conviviality studies and secondly argues for a theorization of the neighborhood itself.

Over the past decade, conviviality has emerged as a key concept for studying the highly complex diversity in urban space (Amin 2002; Gilroy 2004; Heil 2014; Wessendorf, 2013 et. al.). Being a research framework which has been employed to analyze new forms of diversity in primarily but not exclusively Western European cities, I want to critically test the applicability of this concept to Non-Western contexts (Robinson, 2011). This includes a discussion on whether the analysis of both face-to-face and mediated interactions are a prerequisite for a study on conviviality. While

interaction is very often studied in the visible encounters on the street as well as semi-public spaces, I argue that the interactions between 'old' and 'new' residents of a neighborhood likewise takes other forms, occupying other times and more intimate spaces. Transgressing the repeatedly reproduced idea of intercultural encounters in studies on conviviality, my methodological inquiry not only tackles the question of how to develop tools for an inherently intersectional analysis of the un/doing of differences in encounters. It furthermore queries the possibility of research *beyond* interaction, by 1. Analyzing conflict as an inherent part of conviviality, 2. Acknowledging long-durational processes of translation and negotiation of norms, and 3. Exploring the absence or non-simultaneity of interaction, with avoidance being not only a possible result but also a strategy (Goofman 2008 [1967]).

My paper then scrutinizes the notion of the neighborhood as an often taken-for-granted site of conviviality. Tending to build upon some imaginary of a community, neighborhood studies have frequently reproduced the idea of common cultural and social norms of the community. In a similar vein, the 'loss of community' has often been paraphrased as a 'loss of the neighborhood'. In this paper, I argue for a study of neighborhood-based conviviality by theorizing the neighborhood itself. Acknowledging it as an ideological formation (Madden 2013), my paper examines whether and how the neighborhood as moral territory shapes the convivial life of its residents. Picking up on Lefebvre's understanding of social relations "project[ing] themselves into a space, becoming inscribed there" (1991 [1974]: 129), this leads to the reverse question of the impact of the residents' every-day practices on the formation of a spatialized set of norms and values. Drawing on examples from 'immigrant neighborhoods' in Berlin and 'post-Ottoman diversity' in Istanbul neighborhoods, my paper concludes with an exploration of the extent to which political contestations can be directly mapped onto the urban space of the neighborhood.

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