Group-focused Enmity in the Locality: Perspectives on Conflicts in a Changing Neighborhood

Manuela Freiheit & Kristina Seidelsohn

1. Introduction

The social and cultural transformations of European Cities and their negative effects on neighborhoods and the processes of residential segregation are widely discussed within current scientific and political debates. In particular, the spatial concentration of socially weak households is named as a key problem. Accordingly, municipal strategies focus on social mixing of different residents in the neighborhood. Critics though point out the abstinence of city-wide strategies and the fading-out of economical and societal causes of social inequality. Policies of 'Social Mixing' conventionalize the middle class as an ideal by simultaneous devaluation and stigmatization of socially weaker sections of the population. Hereby the danger of reproduction of social inequality as well as stigmatization and homogenization exists (Lees 2008). Based on the fact that social and cultural capital is decreasing in the Berlin borough Neukölln through increasing migration of its residents to other Berlin districts, political debates expect a high potential of the recent influx of status-high groups in parts of the borough.This shift could counteract residential segregation and therefore avoid 'unequal dissemination of housing locations of different social groups in the city' (Häußermann/Siebel 2002: 19). What is praised as revitalization on the one hand is seen as dislocation of social problems and displacement of long-established residents on the other.

In contrast, the present article assumes that the scope of these perceptions is too narrow due to the fact that they show less attention to the relationships of different resident groups and their constitution of space in the neighborhood. Changes in population structure, lifestyle, and socio-cultural infrastructure currently observed in the northern part of the Berlin borough of Neukölln offer the potential to counteract segregation in a neighborhood characterized by disintegration and ethnic/cultural diversity. On the other hand, accustomed local power constellations could be challenged, potential for new conflicts could arise, and existing conflicts could be intensified, leading to ideologies of unequal worth and mechanisms of devaluation.

Results of the project 'Group-focused Enmity' (GFE) show that social divisions and crisis outcomes in various social conditions are connected with group focused enmity as an expression of social disintegration. GFE means that people – independent of their individual behavior – become targets only because of their attributed or real belonging to certain groups. Until now the moderation of this connection between GFE and social disintegration by specific social environments could not be explained. Although many studies have addressed the importance of the residential environment for various social phenomena, the

importance of local transformation has not yet been properly investigated from the perspective of *group-focused enmity* (GFE). The epistemological interest of this research project is thus the relationship between *group-focused enmity* and structural change in the local area. How do spatial structures and their transformation bring forth social conflicts and evoke negative attributions and mechanisms of exclusion of particular groups? Where do they arise and what do they mean for the various residents of the changing neighborhood?

The present article attempts to show theoretical lights on these questions by means of the example *Neukölln-Reuterkiez* to formulate a research perspective for analyzing the changing neighborhood.

2. Changing Neighborhood

Urban governance

Cities operate more and more like enterprises as they are confronted with an increasing global competition for investments, business locations, fairs and tourism as well as scientific and creative excellence. Hence the promotion of social integration stands mostly in the shadow of an urban policy whose main focus is to strengthen the economic power and the competitiveness of cities as an economic base (Dangschat 1998: 69). The 'Neo-liberal city' is 'a city that is typically characterized by the declining significance of public housing and public spaces, and the rise of entrepreneurial privatized landscapes of gentrification, downtown redevelopment, mega projects and other forms of uneven development' (Hackworth, 2007, cited by Rosen/Razin 2009, p. 1703).

On the other hand and besides these trends, the German federal government as well as its *Länder* recognized the increasing social polarization and segregation in German cities and implemented the Federal-*Länder*-programme 'Socially Integrative City' in 1999 and therefore '[...] extended urban development support by adopting the 'Districts With Special Development Needs' (...). Its goal was to counteract the widening socio-spatial rifts in the cities. The programme fosters participation and cooperation and represents a new integrative political approach to urban district development' (http://www.sozialestadt.de/en/programm/, 20.03.2012). The programme is corporately financed by the German federal government, its *Länder* and the affected German municipalities.

The neighborhood *Neukölln-Reuterkiez*, an area with approximately 20,000 residents in the northern part of Neukölln, was classified as one of this 'Districts with Special Development Needs'. With a population of approximately 306,000 residents, Neukölln is home to about 9% of all Berliners and people from more than 160 different nationalities. The actual rate of the inhabitants with migration background is 38.7%, and within some neighborhoods 50 to 60% (Häußermann2008). Besides the ethnic/cultural diversity, Neukölln is characterized by

social marginality and spatial disadvantage which suggests precarious living conditions and experiences of disintegration. In 2006, in the densely populated northern part of Neukölln with 160,000 residents, one in two people received social security benefits, 60% of the persons under the age of 25 claimed social welfare (Hartz IV), and compared to other boroughs of Berlin the voter turnout was consistently low (40%).

Therefore, a 'district management' as a main component of the whole 'Socially Integrative City' – programme was implemented in 2003 by a private developer agency who was introduced by *the Senate Department of Urban Develop*ment and the *District Office Neukölln*. The 'district management' subsequently launched the *Zwischennutzungsagentur* ('agency for interim use'). According to the 'district management' the main reason for involving this private developer agency was the obvious ‚broken-windows'-situation within the neighborhood. Thus vacant shops should be replaced and rented out temporarily or at best permanently to stabilize the district in the long term. Since 2004 favorable conditions for renting and a free realtor service between real estate businesses, landlords and people looking for affordable space has revitalized formerly abandoned retail stores (District Management Reuterplatz 2010).

At the same time, changes in population structure and neighborhood character could be observed. Comparable to similar processes in other inner cities, well-educated and young middle class people, often with a German or another Western background, have recently moved to the *Reuterkiez* area which is a predominantly Turkish, Arabic and German neighborhood. Most of them are students, academics, artists and designers, who generally have rather a low or precarious income, but are characterized in contrast to the long-term residents by factors such as having a high formal education and a high level of professional prestige. This influx comes along with the opening of new stores and cafés, art galleries and studios, as well as cultural events, mainly supported and favored by location marketing and the work of the *Zwischennutzungsagentur* (District Management Reuterplatz 2010).

The *Zwischennutzungsagentur* provides (local) networking possibilities and selects room-seekers and landlords beforehand. While the 'district management' recognized the increasing gentrification of the neighborhood and complaints about rising rents got more intense, the agency was not funded anymore. Since then, the agency is working city-wide and in other districts of Berlin-Neukölln on similar projects of interim use. But still it is located in the *Reuterquartier*, holds substantial contacts and therefore acts independently and without democratic legitimation or control. Thereby, a former public-private partnership has changed into a decoupled one.

On the one hand this development represents the 'global trends in privatisation'. On the other hand 'assertions on weakening state intervention and strengthening influence of the market, oversimplify the complex interplay of private developers, public planning institutions and third-sector organizations. Neo-liberal urban governance does not imply the demise of regulation, but rather its changing nature' (Rosen/Razin 2009, p.1702). A variety

networks arised through projects in public-private partnership funded by the 'Socially Integrative City'- programme and administered by the 'district management'. Moreover, third sector organizations are involved in many cases and observe the decision-making process of local politicians and private actors. Therefore, 'dynamic interactions and partnerships of multiple stakeholders' are observable as 'urban regimes' and 'horizontal networks of governance' which show the 'decreasing role of formal hierarchical administrative-territorial structures' (Rosen/Razin 2009, p.1703).

Against the background of extensive cuts of 70% of the funding for the 'Socially Integrative City' programme since 2010 (from 95 Mio. to 28,5 Mio. EUR in 2011) independent horizontal networks become particularly noticeable. Although the influx was a top-down initiative, the public authorities move back from neglected districts and leave horizontal networks which to some extend act with contrary interests and inconsistent strategies.

According to the 'district management' 'the attractiveness of the neighborhood' for artists, designer, graphic designers and other creative's still exists and a number of jobs – mostly start-ups – have been created. Since 2005, 80 of the 120 or so vacant shops have been 'reactivated' by new users (District Management Reuterplatz 2010). Despite this trend, the unemployment rate among young people and residents with a migration background is still increasing (Häußermann 2008) – completely independent of this development (District Management Reuterplatz 2010). The spatial monitoring of Berlin still classifies the neighborhood as an area with a 'very low social status'and 'exclusion tendencies' due to the high unemployment rates among young people, the lack of vocational trainings and the lowschool-leaving qualifications compared to Berlin's average (Häußermann 2008). Instead of specific and well-directed financial aids the state is taking a passive side becoming a non-interventionist.

With regard to the changing neighborhood *Reuterkiez* is therefore to ask on the structural level to what extent economic and location promotion have priority, what (normative) expectations are associated with the N*ewcomers*, and how these expectations as potential role models overlap with the self and social perceptions of the *Newcomers* and the *Long-term residents*. But neither the institutions alone nor solely the preferences of the various residents taking positions and synthesizing produce inclusion and exclusion, 'the complexity lies in simultaneity' (Löw 2008, p.47).

Gentrification or Vitalization?

The influx of status-high groups in several neglected neighborhoods in Germany attracted attention and criticism by the public as well as by the scientific community. The regional and national media picked up the topic 'Gentrification and North-Neukölln' with heightened interest since 2007. The new media-agenda slightly improved the public perception of the neighborhood although the stereotype of the 'Ghetto North-Neukölln' is still virulent. As a

result of the new development some of the inhabitants fear gentrification and the displacement of the poor. Gentrification is usually associated with the influx of status-high groups which are characterized by high formal education and a high societal prestige of profession. Furthermore, the Newcomers are able to resort to high economical resources, boost the rents, and therefore banish the poorer population. The least core in gentrification-research can be found in the definition of gentrification as the exchange of a status-low population through a status-high population in the neighborhood (cf. e.g. Glass 1964; Sassen 1991, p.255; Friedrichs 1996; Smith 1982, 2000). Shortcoming is the difficulty to capture the process and therefore the predictability of gentrification because there are still less longitudinal or panel analysis (Holm 2006: 63ff.). The majority of empirical research projects focus on economical, social, political and cultural factors of gentrification. Up to now research is paying less attention to patterns of perception and evaluation of the process as well as their specifications in different groups. In the centre of interest of scattered studies are the long-established residents which are threatened or affected by displacement as well as the displacement of social problems in bordering regions (Alisch/zumFelde 1990, p.277-300; Freeman 2006). The examination of reciprocal perceptions of long-established inhabitants and incoming 'gentrifiers' is still missing, although

> neither the extent of rising rents nor the number of affected households or of transformed apartments are crucial for uncertainty but the perception and evaluation of the upgrading processes. (Alisch/zumFelde 1990, p.298).

The small-scale social analyses of the 2010 spatial monitoring in Berlin have shown little shifts in the population structure of the *Reuterkiez* area so far. Statistically significant, however, is the increased influx of people in the age of 18 to 35 from the redevelopment areas of the neighboring districts (e.g. Kreuzberg-Friedrichshain)[1], growing rents for re-lettings and thus a gradual increase in the rent index in general.[2] As a consequence poorer households have to save money on other expenses or reduce their living-standards if they do not want to leave their neighborhood; those affected by unemployment additionally have to deal with a maximal allowed rent amount if receiving welfare. Besides these effects, which can be described as a displacement of one's lifestyle (Holm 2010, p.18), the quarter has gained new jobs through the usage of the formerly abandoned retail outlets, which could be interpreted as revitalization of the local neighborhood. In contrast to this, the unemployment rate remains high. According to the 'district management' the unemployment rate particularly among the residents with a migration background has increased and the upgrading of the neighborhood does not open up new job perspectives for them (District Management Reuterplatz 2010).

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[1]Here, the city-wide dimension of neighborhood change reflects the movements within the city. At the same global processes become apparent by the influx of residents from Western Europe or other Western industrialized states (e.g. USA, Canada), but also from South America. This is noticeable by languages such as English, French, Spanish, etc., which are increasingly heard in the neighborhood.

[2] In 2007, the *Berliner Mietergemeinschaft e.V.* (the Berlin Tenants' Association) characterized in an evaluation of the rental rates, the population structure and the local economy the changes and the influx to the Reuterkiez as 'gentrification in-waiting'.

3. Social Disintegration, Conflicts and GFE

Among others, mainly two basal categories are hereby at risk for social integration: the access to housing and to the labor market. Social inequality is thus reflected spatially in the city quarter. In line with Anhut and Heitmeyer (2000) it is assumed that social integration takes place by the participation in a society's material and cultural goods, by ensuring that conflicting interest are balanced out socially acceptable and in accordance with democratic principles, and by creating meaning and self-fulfillment in emotional relationships (Anhut/Heitmeyer2000, p.47). If we understand the modern social structure in reference to Bourdieu (1982) furthermore as a space of flexible positions, two mutually referring processes could be identified in which the hierarchy of social status is be negotiated.

> In such societies, hierarchies of economic and cultural capital that are based on the availability of both material resources and utilizable knowledge are not entirely self-perpetuating. Rather, the value of status positions must be constantly re-negotiated. This is the source of evaluative social struggles in which the symbolic capital of social (Neckel/Sutterlüty 2006, p.803)

is generated, denied, accumulated or transferred.

Against the backdrop that the 'social age' as the length of residence suffices to trigger (social) conflicts (Elias/Scotson 1993), it seems likely that there are not only conflicts over social positions, differing rules and scare resources such as work and living space between the *Newcomers* and the *Long-term residents*, but also conflicts that stem from different backgrounds like social classes and/or different ethnicities (cf. e.g. Freeman 2006).

> As with most social conflicts, in gentrification processes not only the assertion of class-specific, economic and political interests play a crucial role, but also to achieve a hegemonic status as expressed, for instance, in the dominance of one's own way of thinking (Holm 2010, p.51).

According to Bourdieu 'the redefinition of marginalized neighborhoods as attractive and centrally located urban areas are hereby considered as objectified manifestation of incorporated cultural capital', whereby the appropriation of space fulfills an additional role in the process of distinction of other groups in the neighborhood with whom the *Newcomers* compete (Huber 2011, p.176).

The most common initial situation in Germany as well as in scientific studies is the influx of migrants into a quarter of autochthonous Germans. As mentioned above, this situation is largely reserved for some areas of the *Reuterkiez*. Overall, 43.2% of the residents in the neighborhood have a migration background and most of them live in third generation on site.

In the late 1950s, Elias/Scotson (1993) investigated the interdependency between structures and behavior triggered by the influx of foreigners to a district dominated by long-established residents. They impressed the configuration of 'Established and Outsiders' and illustrate

> why especially the low status classes of the Established are against the influx – and it is more than competition about employment and apartments: it all comes down to cultural hegemony, to power of

definition concerning values, and to the blatant feeling of relief to find a scapegoat for their own failure in social advancement. (Dangschat 1998, p.52)

The *Newcomers* were excluded especially by the *Established* of low status classes, although there were no differences between ethnicity, nationality, profession, income and education; merely the occupancy as the 'social age' was crucial. The *Established* of low status classes felt threatened in their way of living and were frightened about their social descent.

In relation to the German society as a whole there are different patterns of social closure between *Established* and/or *Migrants* observable which do not only run the line of the length of duration but especially the line of social inequality. Compared to the well known configuration of 'Established and Outsiders' and in accordance with Dangschat the German situation is characterized by a greater differentiation (cf. Dangschat 2000, p.201).

In Berlin-Neukölln this constellation can be observed but in a different composition. Basically, there has to be a differentiation between spatial and/or social establishment. We assume with Dangschat that the 'Established' on the society level (Germans and EU-citizens, ambitious middle-class) and 'voluntary Outsiders' (Germans, alternative-milieu) are the *Newcomers* to a district in which the socially 'non-established Outsiders' (formerly incoming Non-Germans) are already spatially established whereas the originally 'established Outsiders' (old-established Germans, low status classes) increasingly fall behind.

If the spatial borders like streets, blocks, and public open spaces were not exceeded by the *Newcomers* coexistence seems to be possible in the first view. A basis builds the influx of the educated middle class which shows solidarity with migrants on the one hand but avoids extensive contacts with them on the other because they cannot be classified as less xenophobic than other milieus:

> The manner of Xenophobia is just more subtle and is shown by a course of action which is not categorized as illegal. (Dangschat 1998, p.57)

At the same time, the 'new Established' (formerly incoming Non-Germans, middle class) and the 're-establishing Outsiders' (formerly incoming Non-Germans and/or ambitious middle class) leave the neighborhood and move to less problematic boroughs of Berlin.

Additionally, if we assume with Dangschat that the 'Established' mark the lower social classes as a shame but there are also inevitable contacts between both, the assumption is close that there are not only possible conflicts between the two German classes but this conflicts could also be carried out at the expense of migrants or weak groups in society (for the patterns of social enclosure in Germany cf. Dangschat 1998, p.56) (e.g. advertisement for apartments with the note 'no foreigners' or 'no migrants'). There is no simple solidarity of 'the Germans' expected because of the differences in social class but new lifestyles are taking place in the neighborhood which can be interpreted as foreign and which are activating feelings of uncertainty and threat concerning their social positions.

The mutual entanglement of minority and majority shows however that the problems of the members of one group are related to the problems of the members of other groups. Therefore, the chances of integration are depending on the quality of integration in the society as a whole (cf. Anhut/Heitmeyer 2000, p.32). This requires an analytical approach which focuses on the mutual perceptions and valuations of the other group (ibid., p.14), and this is linked to the assumption that similar individual behavior patterns (e.g. the devaluation of others) consist in the minority and in the majority, but differ in their chances of articulation and implementation, not only in terms of power differences, but also in terms of socio-spatial context (ibid., p.39).

Conflicts within socio-spatial contexts, whether based on the relationship of minority and majority or on social or physical issues, are defined according to Simmel and with reference to Coser (1965) as a possible consensus and thus as a necessary condition of an inclusive urban society. The crucial aspect is, however, how conflicts may be resolved and in which way – productive and therefore integral, or in a destructive way. According to Coser, conflicts are only integrating if they are regulated by a legal system and a constitution, and run on the basis of a common consensus, and intersect with other cleavages within the urban society and hence do not foster homologous enmities (Coser 1965).

Also, the *Disintegration approach* of Anhut and Heitmeyer (2000) is based on these conflict-theoretical assumptions, the core thesis of their approach is, however, that with the degree of disintegration of members of the majority and of the minority on the structural, institutional and personal level conflicts arise and are increasingly ethnicized.

On the level of social structures (individual/functional system integration), the problem that subsequently arises is that of participation in a society's material and cultural goods. In general, this problem is objectively solved through adequate access to the job, housing, and consumer markets; however, it also requires a corresponding subjective degree of satisfaction on the part of the individual with his or her vocational and social status. On the institutional or socio-normative level (communicative/interactive social integration) the issue is that of ensuring that conflicting interests are balanced without violating the integrity of individuals. From the perspective of disintegration theory, this calls for adherence to basic democratic principles that guarantee the moral equality of (political) opponents and which can be regarded as fair and just by all parties involved. Negotiating and defining these principles in individual cases, however, gives rise in turn to opportunities and motives for participation. Finally, the personal level (cultural/expressive social integration) involves the creation of emotional or expressive relationships between people for the purpose of creating meaning and self-fulfillment. A considerable amount of care and attention as well as personal space and the balancing of emotional support and normative demands is needed here to avoid crises of meaning, lack of orientation, reduced self-esteem, the erosion of values, and identity crises (Heitmeyer/Anhut 2000, p.48).

If the influx of *Newcomers* hold the latent potential for conflicts than it is susceptible for emotional mobilization. This is especially the case in ethnizised social conflicts as confrontation between social groups which mobilize supporters by ethnically defined criteria. By this, the following types of conflicts are expected: 'hierarchy-conflicts' about social positions, 'distribution-conflicts' about rare goods, employment, apartments, taxes etc., as well as 'rule-conflicts' about norms and values. In reality, mixed types are usually observable. We assume that the different dimensions of disintegration generate specific conflicts which again ignite specific group-focused devaluations like anti-Semitism, homophobia, devaluation of disabled, homeless and unemployed persons, xenophobia, sexism, priority of established persons and islamophobia as *group-focused enmity*.

Conflicts are understood as processes of interaction or rather mutual perceptions of individuals and groups. These are latent potentials for conflicts if tensions and identifications of opponents are observable but no open playing out of the conflict is taking place. Social conflicts have to be characterized as manifest if clashes of interests already arrived in the public interest. Social conflicts are defined as clashes of interests between different social groups. Distinguishing marks are the exertion of power and impact as well as the extension of intergroup-conflicts into the societal macro- and the social micro-level (Heitmeyer/Anhut 2000).

On the basis of this approach several studies have empirically shown,

> that the conflicts mentioned above become broader, more intense and less resolvable in proportion to the level of experience and fear of disintegration. […] Disintegration theory thus explains violence, right-wing extremism, and denigration and rejection of people with different ethnic backgrounds and of socially disadvantaged groups in terms of insufficient integrative efforts on the part of modern society. (ibid., p.53)

Thereby, the theory does not assume a direct, determined relationship on the level of the individual. Rather, there is a layer of milieu-specific 'refraction factors' and mobilizations between the individual and society, such as individual social situations, economic trends by regions, social climate, and local contexts (Heitmeyer 2008b, p. 20; for the dimensions of the approach cf. Heitmeyer/Anhut 2000, p.48).

The local space can be understood as one of these 'refraction factors'. This represents not only a distribution of goods and services but also the positioning of individuals and groups. The local space is therefore social space by stringing together social positions, which in turn express social hierarchies and distances. The valuation of spaces has consequences for the residents and generates the social structure of urban spaces. The structures of the appropriated space play therefore a crucial role as mediator through which social structures gradually transform into cognitive structures and predispositions (Bourdieu 1997, p.160). Hereby, the space or region can define who belongs to the in- or out-group, and thus provides reference points for social closure (Bourdieu 1997).

The reason for the defense of the integration of strangers into one's living quarter is the associated dilemma to have to share the 'own' territory with strangers, which threaten the (undisturbed) identification with the local space – this metaphor coming from Simmel and has been taken over by Park; herewith the micro-level is addressed and linked insofar with the meso-level as attitudes and reservations towards ethnics groups that are reflected in socio-spatial closure and exclusion. (Löw 2001, p.23)

4. Spaces and Social Inequality

Simmel stresses in his essay *Die Großstädte und das Geistesleben (,*The Metropolis and Mental Life'), that, 'the border [...] is not a spatial fact with sociological effects, but rather a sociological fact that is forming in space' (Simmel 1902, p.467). According to the German sociologist Martina Löw we assume

> if space is regarded not any longer as space on the one hand, and as the ordering of social goods, people and their action on the other, but instead space is regarded as the relational ordering of social good and human beings, only then changes in the spatial phenomena can be described adequately. (Löw 2001, p.264)

According to this, two basic processes of space construction are to be distinguished. First, space is constituted by 'erection, building, or positioning' (*spacing*). Second, 'the constitution of space also requires *synthesis*, that is to say, goods and people are connected to form spaces through processes of perceptions, ideation, or recall' (Löw 2008, p.35; Löw 2001, p.265, 158f.). If we further assume with reference to Löw that spaces are constituted through action,

> it can be concluded that this action, organized in the routines of day-to-day life, reproduces societal structures, and does so in a recursive process. Hence, societal structures enable space constitutive action which reproduces the very structures that enable it (and constrain other action). This reproduction is organized societal via institutions. Societal structures are anchored in institutions. (Löw 2008, p.39)

In short it can be said that the constitution of spaces takes place through (structured) orderings of social goods and people in places. Spaces are created in performative action by synthesizing and relationally ordering objects and people. Action and structures are thereby affected by the structural principles gender and class (Löw 2001, p.272).

Social and spatial inequalities are therefore connected. The chances of access to material and social goods are distributed unequally, and thus the potential to create space. In addition, the knowledge of material resources is necessary to create space that is more easily accessible than the knowledge of symbolic attributions; as such processes of interpretation are dependent on gender- and class-specific manners as well as habitus (Bourdieu 1997). This interplay shall now be adopted exemplarily on the two superordinate perspectives in the study area, *Long-term residents* and *Newcomers*, and be discussed in theoretical terms.

As mentioned above, the *Newcomers* are often precarious employed and therefore have rather less economic capital, therefore they hardly differ from the majority of the

Established residents. However, as most of them are students or academics, it can be assumed with reference to Bourdieu's 'Forms of Capital' that they possess social capital, which can be translated into economic capital. This means that they can acquire, for example, small personal loans for business start-ups from friends, acquaintances or family. At the same time, they have the skills and the knowledge to access important information and local institutions. Furthermore, lacking economic capital can be compensated by existing cultural capital, particularly in the form of a high level of education and professional prestige, as well as artistic and cultural taste that brings new lifestyles in the local neighborhood. The hype in the media about North Neukölln as Berlin's Lower East Side, or as 'NoHo' indicates this. However, lifestyles as a resource are only of importance and interest for whom, who possesses the necessary cultural competence and the appropriate code (Bourdieu 1982). Which means that the 'revitalization' or 'enhancement' of the *Reuterkiez* by bringing social and cultural capital into the 'hood' hardly benefit the indigenous residents as the poverty deconcentration thesis would suggest. On the contrary, if space is regarded as the relational ordering of social goods, and human beings are thus excluded, who or what is not involved relationally. By synthesizing and relationally ordering objects and people, social positions and senses of belonging can be reproduced whereby not only institutionalized orderings but also atmosphere, social prestige and self-staging play a crucial role in processes of exclusion and inclusion. Not only prohibition and violence lead to exclusion, but also self-exclusion by habitus, gender- and class-specific preferences (Löw 2001). This leads us to the question, how these differentiations are related to each other and if patterns of social closure can be observed among the different residents in the *Reuterkiez*.

In the context of increasing unemployment and a high proportion of recipients of social security benefits (Hartz IV) among well-educated and high qualified people, we assume moreover that the securing of their own social positions become more and more important for some of the *Newcomers* for fear of being pushed to the margins of society or to fall through the increasingly gaping holes in the so-called social safety net. At the same time traditional and structural ties are getting progressively weaker in the course of individualization processes, and the diverse ways of life and socio-cultural milieus results in variable and mixed urban identities, thereby creating new values and needs. According to Elias (1976) lifestyles replace permanent structures which have lost their depth and liabilities and are often accompanied by a search for localization.

> Since traditional ties are less, changes and 'patchwork biographies' are possible and necessary, but at the prize of uncertainty of the own societal position, which have to be renewed and confirmed every day. (Dangschat 1998, p.85)

This situation can lead to a greater distinction from lower social classes and/or to ethnicization of social problems. Simultaneously, the *Newcomers* are not well established, which can cause insecurity and reinforce distinction. Differentiation may also occur as an unintended consequence of action: patchwork biographies require other networks as a

result of increasing mobility and new information and communication technologies, which not replace milieus, but rather lose their 'grip' (Schulze, cited by Frey 2009: 103).

The *Outsiders* may appear from the perspective of the *Established* as less tangible, since they are not visible as a stable local group and by being highly mobile. In literature they are often characterized as urban nomads, always on the move and in search of vibrant communities in which they will eventually lay roots:

> Like urban nomads the creatives are buzzing around in the city, seeking and discovering new places and recorded them temporary. While the binding force of specific locations decreases, new and flexible relationship patterns to other places emerge. (Frey 2009 p.107)

At the same time networks differ in size and scope, in various stages of life, and according to one's social position. 'Structure, intensity, and benefit of social networks refer to a new dimension of social inequality' (Häußermann/Siebel 2004, p.113), since they can be transformed in socially or economically useful information. This is particularly the case with nation- or world-wide networks that go beyond kinship and neighborhood.

In contrast to the *Newcomers* the networks of the *Long-term residents* consist, besides family members and relatives who live in the direct neighborhood, transnational contacts to their country of origin, and are mainly marked by a high level of homogeneity. Hence, the local neighborhood represents their life center, especially if they are excluded from working life and their mobility is limited due to the lack of economic capital. This creates a situation in which the neighborhood with its highly local social networks becomes a significant resource, which essentially influences their life opportunities, particularly for the residents of socially-weak households. The level of socio-economic, political and legal integration (access to the labor market, housing, education, political participation, etc.) determines whether one has access to desirable people and goods or not. At the same time the extent of disintegration binds to a place and strengthens the (spatial) experience of limitation. So the assumption seems likely that in addition to the ethnic-cultural identity that derives from group membership, also the identification with the neighborhood will increase, as well as the local integration. Although without being integrated in the society as a whole, long-term residents can be established spatially different in a place and thus be well integrated in the neighborhood.

To ward off a potential threat to the neighborhood and/or to the present social position in the 'hood' with the use of foreign symbols, lifestyles and physical changes, substitute objects can be searched and misused as a vent to compensate experiences and fears of disintegration. In the event of different ethnicity this leads often in mutual negative attribution and ethnicization of social conflicts at the expense of disadvantaged groups.

> Ethnic-cultural and racial conflicts arise, where the desired level of integration into society is denied by the majority or at least is not wanted and where the identification with the neighborhood is cut or hindered. (Dangschat 1998 p.22)

In line with Dangschat and according to Elias/Scotson we assume for the autochthonous 'established outsiders' that the sense of 'where you live, not to be home anymore' is accompanied with the perception of an alleged 'foreign infiltration' which evoke an increase of xenophobic attitudes and behaviors. Minorities of non-German origin are hereby blamed for their own integration problems – economic and social distortions like social decline, unemployment and pauperization are associated with the presence of migrants, although they are equally affected. Simultaneously, there could be observed differentiation, negative attributions and hierarchizations between and within the various migrant groups analog to the 'established'.

5. Social and Spatial Conflicts: Main Assumptions

If we start from the two mentioned analytical categories, *Long-term residents* and *Newcomers*, the deficit of the so-called gentrification-research should be filled to analyze the reciprocal perceptions of both groups of inhabitants. Hereby, the two analytical categories represent social groups which are positioned differently in relation to social good and people in one place (here: Neukölln), differentiate internally and in so doing constitute space in diverse ways. Therefore, various spaces in one locality have to be conceivable (to the relational concept of space in contrast to container theories cf. Löw 2008; 2001, p.264; Läpple 1991). These spaces exist side-by-side, in competition or interwoven with each other. If the analysis starts with the constitution of spaces the two analytical categories, which are unquestioned presupposed and analyzed separately in many studies, can be related to each other. On the one hand, the analytical distinction between *Longterm-residents* and *Newcomers* is necessary because the length of residence is representing a crucial factor. On the other hand, the length of residence shows next to nothing about internal differentiations and their quality. Classification has to be carried out through the reconstruction of the self-perception of the inhabitants because temporal borders are fluent. Due to the fact that just the connection between social goods and inhabitants constitute spaces the relation of both by the inhabitants is significant.

Beyond that, the following assumptions are relevant for analyzing the changing neighborhood:

1. SPACE

On this basis, it could be assumed that the beginning of new spaces with their exclusive and inclusive nature constrains accustomed day-to-day activities. If this trend remains in the long run, spatial constraints may weaken social positions systematically and thereby solidify attitudes and opinions that devalue and discriminate other groups. Spatial inequality is closely connected to social inequality and beyond that with ideologies of unequal worth within the struggle about distinction and power.

2. CONFLICTS

The main categories *Longterm-residents* and *Newcomers* provide a wide view on a variety of possible conflicts which are not even related to *Migrants* or to the proportion of majority and minority on the societal macro-level. We assume that potentials for conflicts between *Longterm-residents* and *Newcomers* are represented through subjective perceptions about the locality. Hereby, the development of homologue enmities is possible which run the line of spatial, social and/or ethnical criteria. At the same time, these spatial, social and ethnic criteria could be interwoven and therefore convey disintegrative conflict-developing and complicate possible strategies for conflict resolution.

3. GROUP-FOCUSED ENMITY

It is further assumed that experiences and fears of disintegration lie behind conflictual attitudes, which could promote mechanisms of devaluation like guilt attribution to ethnic or social groups (cf. Heitmeyer 2001-2011). Negative attributions are back-tracing to characteristics of social inequality (education/income/social status) and-/or characteristics of horizontal inequality (gender/generation/ethnicity) (cf. e.g. Neckel/Sutterlüty 2008). As already said at the beginning we assume in line with Heitmeyer that this is actually a whole syndrome, encompassing many different elements: xenophobia, racism, anti-Semitism, Islamophobia, homophobia, prejudices toward the homeless and the disabled, the defense of established privileges, and sexism. The common ground at the heart of the *Group-Focused Enmity* syndrome is a generalized *ideology of inequality*.

6. Conclusions and Future Prospects

Ethnic-cultural diversity and therefore cultural mixing is not a strong reason alone for generating conflicts per se. Rather, societal faulting is mirrored into the social space, encountering specific contexts in the locality, and carry out the ethnicizing of social problems as a crucial outcome. Moreover, if social and ethnical discrimination as a hostile climate exists this could be a matrix for intensification of existing conflicts. The spatial identification functions in an ambivalent manner as on the one hand it is a footing within the social proximity and stabilize in a climate of uncertainty. On the other hand, perceived threat could intensify existing conflicts or rather generate further conflicts. Hence, it seems to be reasonable to protect existing social spaces to defend further experience of disintegration. Attenuating disintegration is possible not only through socio-spatial strategies but societal changes have to come along. Socio-spatial interventions though offer the opportunity to provide a tolerant climate in the locality and therefore contribute the absorption of disintegrative tendencies. This is essentially depending on the development of strategies for solidarity which include also foreign ethnicities and weak groups to bear down subtle and hostile attitudes. For this purpose the reflection of one's own position as well as the keeping of grown spatial borders and existing social networks is decisively important. Against the

background that the length of residence as the 'social age' already causes conflicts solutions have to place stepwise and through a slowly rapprochement. The principle of the 'watering can' seems to be more convenient to defuse social problems than a systematical recruitment of the middle-class within coherent streets of houses. However, this principle collides with the short-term nature of municipal programmes for urban development and the public discussion about intercultural conflicts is normatively framed.

> Until the social function of strangeness is not comprehended different cultural practices and value systems cannot be understood and integrated. (Dangschat 1998, p.50)

Scientific research can contribute to the clarification of the correlations through the intern differentiation and reciprocal reference of groups due to the fact that not only material factors are causing insecurity during upgrading-processes within neighborhoods but also their perception and evaluation. Against the background of structural factors and through this reciprocity also unintended outcomes get into focus. If differentiated research results and several studies are available it will be possible to suggest from situativ analysis to possible general patterns.

These and other conditions of social disintegration are reflected in conflicts over resources, positions, values and norms that run along ethnic and cultural boundaries and not seldom play a crucial role in the ethnicization of social questions, both in the mainstream society and among the minorities. In the public discourse, controversial issues such as parallel societies, honor killings, forced marriages, juvenile delinquency are mainly discussed, and often overshadow anti-Semitic and sexist attitudes or assaults, homo- and transphobic violence, bullying and graffiti, which dominate the cityscape in Neukölln as well (ZDK 2005).

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