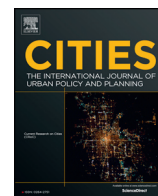




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Cross-local ties to migrant neighborhoods: The resource transfers of out-migrating Turkish middle-class households

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ABSTRACT

Our research looks into the cross-local ties of Turkish middle-class households who have moved out of inner-city migrant neighborhoods. Whereas previous research has predominantly focused on social networks *within* migrant neighborhoods, less attention has been paid to the ties of leaver households *back* to their migrant neighborhoods. When middle-class households move away from a migrant neighborhood, do they cut all ties with the old neighborhood and do their social, cultural and economic resources really become lost to it? The paper draws on research conducted in two big cities in Germany. Findings are based on qualitative interviews with Turkish-origin second-generation households and social network analysis. In analyzing cross-local ties back to the old neighborhood, we focus on the role of social ties, co-ethnic infrastructures, public familiarity and social participation. Research findings illustrate cross-local social and institutional ties maintained over years and challenging place-based perspectives on residential segregation.

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1. Introduction

Urban segregation research has focused on intra- and inter-group networks within disadvantaged neighborhoods and how certain residents are isolated from various networks and opportunity structures. Research is often based on the premise that everyday opportunities and constraints are predominantly shaped by one's place of residence (van Kempen & Wissink, 2014, p. 96; Watt & Smets, 2014, p. 7). Such a place-based perspective is particularly prevalent in debates on migrant neighborhoods. While we see a continuing relevance of 'neighborhoods' for people's daily lives, in line with other authors (Lewicka, 2011; Wissink & Hazelzet, 2012), we argue that greater attention must be devoted to cross-local networks and relationships. The starting point for our research is empirical evidence specific to the US context on middle-class migrant households that have moved out of ethnic enclaves but retain close contact with their former neighborhoods (Zhou, 2009). In Europe, such forms of cross-local ties have been largely ignored in research to date. Focusing on second-generation Turkish middle-class households in two German cities, our explorative study sets out to provide further evidence, examining cross-neighborhood contacts and resource transfers to and from migrant neighborhoods.

The following literature review section expands on the relationship between neighborhood and community and the limits of an overly

place-based perception in neighborhood and community studies, before discussing empirical findings and theoretical perspectives on cross-local social ties. Section 3 outlines the sample and methodology used in our study, while Section 4 details the empirical findings of our qualitative research, analyzing the motives of Turkish middle-class households for relocating out of migrant neighborhoods and their social embeddedness in their new, predominantly German, middle-class neighborhoods. In analyzing cross-local ties back to the old neighborhood, we focus on the role of social ties, co-ethnic infrastructures, public familiarity and social participation. Section 5 summarizes the main research conclusions and issues in need of further investigation.

2. Migrant neighborhoods, communities and cross-local ties

A large body of literature has emerged in recent decades on neighborhoods of ethnic concentration and ethnic enclaves. While previously focused almost exclusively on the United States, it now increasingly covers the entire world (Tasan-Kok, van Kempen, Raco, & Bolt, 2013, p. 22). The main theoretical concept explaining ethnic concentrations is social capital, i.e., access to localized (and ethnically demarcated) cultural and social capital. The underlying perception is one in which community and neighborhood are intrinsically linked, with the neighborhood playing a dominant role in residents' relationships, networks and sense of belonging. Specific emphasis has been placed on the importance of ethnic networks for employment and income and on whether individual economic success and integration are hindered or promoted by living in an ethnic enclave (Zhou, 2009; for the German context see: Sager, 2012; Danzer & Ulku, 2011). In contrast to this rich

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and significant body of literature on specific local opportunity structures or constraints in migrant neighborhoods and neighborhood effects in general (see Van Ham, Manley, Bailey, Simpson, & MacLennan, 2013, or Chetty, Hendren, & Katz, 2015, on the 'Moving to Opportunity' experiment), our focus is on cross-local ties and the perspectives of those who have since moved out of migrant neighborhoods. We investigate the social ties and the resource transfer of outmoving social climbers back to and from migrant neighborhoods in the German context, inspired by empirical evidence on such cross-local backward linkages in countries with a longer immigration history, and the US in particular (Zhou, 2009; Lacy, 2004; Flanagan, 2010, p. 104).

In our study, we call for greater research attention on flows and mobilities, multiple belonging and location-spanning social worlds in migrant neighborhoods and community research. The theoretical basis for such a focus is to be found in the longstanding and controversial discussions in urban theory on the role of place for community building in times of increased geographic mobility, multi-local belonging and networked life, when "interactivity between places breaks up spatial patterns of behavior into a fluid network of exchanges" (Castells, 1996, p. 398; see also Wellman, 2001; Urry, 2000). Urban geographers have thus been calling for neighborhoods to be reinterpreted "as the locations of various nodes that are part of diverse mobilities with different scales and timings" (van Kempen & Wissink, 2014, p. 102; see also Watt & Smets, 2014, p. 5). In migration research, the effort to overcome an overly place-based or static perspective is most visible in research on backward linkages (e.g., through remittances) and transnational social practices linking places and social groups in sending and receiving states (Glick Schiller & Çağlar, 2011). Such a focus on individuals' multiple belonging and locality-spanning networks is less visible in European urban segregation research, where the predominant focus is often on a place and neighborhood scale (van Kempen & Wissink, 2014).

A migrant's place of residence, as seen in studies on socio-economic neighborhood sorting and neighborhood effects, often serves as a proxy for assuming ghettoization or assimilation. This perspective, however, ignores an individual's activity spaces and social ties beyond his or her area of residence (Flanagan, 2010, p. 109; Savage, Bagnall, & Longhurst, 2005; Wang, Li, & Chai, 2012). Place of residence is not automatically an indicator of local belonging and local social ties (Atkinson, 2006; Bridge, Butler, & Lees, 2012; Savage et al., 2005). This also raises doubts about assumptions based on classical assimilation theory. When middle-class households demonstrate upward social mobility and successful economic incorporation and move away from a migrant neighborhood, do they cut all ties with the old neighborhood, and do their social, cultural and economic resources really become lost to it (Andersson, 2007, p. 84)? Similarly, what relevance do resources located in the old neighborhood have for outmovers?

In this respect, empirical (mostly US) evidence is interesting because it suggests that middle-class outmovers may have strong backward ties to their old neighborhood (Zelinsky & Lee, 1998, p. 286). In the case of the Asian-American community, there is empirical evidence that middle-class households who have moved out of migrant neighborhoods still maintain ties with them, continuing to use ethnic networks and institutions beyond the first phase of settling into a new neighborhood (Zhou, 2009, p. 11, 227). Contacts with family members are maintained, local institutions such as social clubs and religious associations visited and local shops in the 'former' neighborhood frequented. In the same vein, Lacy (2004) observed in her research that black middle-class households in American cities that had moved out of poor black neighborhoods still maintained close contact with their former communities. Pattillo (2005, p. 314) notes that affluent black neighborhoods in Chicago tend to cluster around poor black ones by choice but also due to residential mobility constraints.

There is little research on these cross-neighborhood contacts in Europe (with a few exceptions, such as McGarrigle, 2010, p. 168 on Pakistanis in Glasgow), and more specifically in the German context. This may have to do with lower ethnic concentrations and a more recent

immigration history compared to Canada or the US, as seen by the fact that levels of residential segregation in German cities are generally moderate (Musterd, 2005). In line with other authors (Drever, 2004, p. 1437), we would argue that 'enclaves' characterized by institutional completeness (i.e., a high level of formal and informal institutions) and a high level of within-group interpersonal relationships (as defined by Zhou, 2009, p. 9ff) do not exist in the German context, leading us to speak of 'migrant neighborhoods' (i.e., neighborhoods with a high concentration of migrants) instead. For studying backward linkages and networks, a focus on people with a Turkish background would seem to be a good choice because they have a comparatively long migration history (dating back to the 1960s) and are subject to greater residential segregation than other migrant groups in Germany (Sager, 2012). Research shows, however, that living in Turkish migrant neighborhoods cannot automatically be associated with low levels of integration (Drever, 2004; Hanhörster, 2015), and local ethnic networks seem to be economically beneficial for less well-endowed migrants (Danzer & Ulku, 2011). Nevertheless, in the German public discourse, Turkish migrant neighborhoods are predominantly perceived as places of disadvantage or social mobility traps.

Research into cross-neighborhood ties can build on the significance of 'strong ties' (i.e., promoting bonding) and 'weak ties' (i.e., allowing bridging) as important channels through which emotional support, valuable knowledge and information are passed on and accessed (Granovetter, 1973). For the aim of our study, Blokland's (2003), p. 213 is similarly helpful. She argues that social ties "encompass all aspects: transactions, interdependencies, attachments and bonds" (ibid, emphasis in the original text). These defined aspects span a wide field, ranging from those with a more instrumental orientation (transactions and interdependencies) to those based on affection and affinity, or shared values (ibid, p. 67). Cross-local relationships are obviously encouraged by the continuing residence of family members and friends in the 'former' neighborhood because the above-mentioned empirical studies and our own findings show. These "bonds" to family and friends sometimes take the form of instrumental (functional) or emotional support, and work in both ways between stayers and movers. In addition to these 'bonds' with family and friends, co-ethnic infrastructures in the former migrant neighborhood are also a possible trigger for cross-local ties (Zelinsky & Lee, 1998). Research has shown the relevance of specific neighborhood settings, such as shops, community centers, public places, mosques, etc., for transactions such as shopping for food as well as for connecting to people and sharing joint activities (Small, 2009). For movers, these settings offer the potential for casual encounters.

Public familiarity, as "recognizing and being recognized in local spaces" (Blokland & Nast, 2014, p. 1155), turns out to be a salient issue in our empirical study in a twofold sense: social climbers often want to escape the suffocating social control exercised by migrant neighborhood, while at the same time wanting to – selectively – tap into the neighborhood's resources in the form of familiarity, well-being and security through backward linkages. In the European context, Turkish-origin populations in general belong to the groups most affected by social distance and discrimination, a characteristic also reported for second-generation Turks (Drever, 2004, p. 1436; Sürig & Wilmes, 2011, p. 11). Familiar spaces in the old neighborhood can thus be of particular importance for those households that, due to the social distance experienced when living in a predominantly 'German' environment, develop few locally based social networks in their new neighborhood and thus only a weak sense of belonging. The old neighborhood may even take on a special (symbolic) meaning for migrants (Hinze, 2013, p. 152; Portes & Zhou, 1993, p. 96; Flanagan, 2010, p. 104), prompting outmovers to maintain their relationships with their former neighborhoods.

3. Sample and methodology

In our empirical research, we analyze the relationship between neighborhood and community, focusing on second-generation Turkish

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