

The Post-Crash City

Theories, policies, and prospects for urban communities in the wake of the global financial crisis

Chancellors Hotel & Conference Centre, University of Manchester.

Programme

Friday 24 September

12.30pm Registration

1.00pm Buffet Lunch

2pm Welcome: Prof. Mike Savage, Director of CRESC and Dr Simon Parker, Hallsworth Visiting Professor, University of Manchester.

Session I: The North-West urban region in the aftermath of the crisis.

England's Mezzogiorno? The North-West region after the crash.

Karel Williams

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[awaiting abstract]

Discussant Professor Alan Harding, IPEG, University of Manchester.

3.30pm Break

3.45pm Session II: Inclusions, Exclusions and Patterns of Segregation

Rising damp: Financial exclusion in a second-tier English city

Karl Dayson and Pål Vik, University of Salford.

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Surveys over many years have shown a continuous process of financial inclusion, although the extent has differed depending on a person's social class and a number of other variables. Yet, at the same time there was evidence of over-inclusion and more recently sharp reductions in credit availability. By examining comparative surveys of low and modest income neighbourhoods in Leeds in 2004 (410 respondents) and 2010 (602 and an extra 300 respondents in slightly wealthier communities) we argue that by using a broader range of indicators financial inclusion appears to have stalled and may even be in reverse in one specific second-tier city. Significantly, Leeds has Beacon status for its financial inclusion work and probably has the most sophisticated approach in England, which could mean that other second-tier cities may have greater financial exclusion or perhaps that the scale of the Credit Crunch and subsequent recession has overwhelmed city-based interventions.

The good enclave: Neighbourhood segregation and household privacy in unequal social systems

Rowland Atkinson, Department of Sociology, University of York.

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What are the prospects for urban socio-spatial divisions within the current crisis? The internationalisation and deepening of patterns of socio-spatial segregation and sealing of urban spaces (segregation and gating) and homes (domestic fortresses) provide the backdrop to this paper, highlighting residential choices made by fearful and affluent groups. In this presentation I want to discuss the sociological impulses and emergent nature of segregation and to consider why a growing social withdrawal of the affluent is problematic. Within these patterns of household choices I want to distinguish between legitimate social desires for safety and development of the household, on the one hand, with more problematic and enclosed circuits of consumption and exclusion, on the other. I suggest that these intersecting forces are more or less problematic depending on prevailing levels of social inequality. Following this analysis I discuss the social and policy implications of deepening patterns of segregation, micro-fortification and secession as these combine with policing functions and technologies. These shifts will be played-out within a set of geographically and socially uneven costs, burdens and risks that will be amplified by austerity measures that will inevitably be focused on re-polarising urban centres.

5.15pm **Closing remarks**

6.30pm **Symposium Dinner**

Saturday 25 September

10.00am **Session III: The Fate of Labour During and After the Financial Crisis.**

'People start keeping to themselves'? Apathy and individualism amongst American hypermarket workers.

Laura Jordan, University of Manchester.

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The cumulative blows dealt by the Second Red Scare's purge of leftists from the labour movement, the union-busting of the Reagan years, and the ongoing relocation of union jobs overseas have left American trade unions with little vigour to fight concessions or inspire their members. At the same time, deindustrialization has progressively pushed workers in Flint, Michigan out of the auto factories and into workplaces like Meijer, a regional hypermarket chain. In response to recent economic pressures, Meijer has slashed formerly adequate wages to sub-poverty levels, eliminated once-plentiful avenues to full-time status, and introduced elements of scientific management. These changes have reduced the jobs' quality and viability, while a deeply depressed job market has left workers with few alternatives. Drawing on three months of participant-observation and approximately 50 interviews, this presentation will reflect on the disillusionment, alienation, and atomisation that have come to characterize these workers' experience of union and company alike.

Are ICTs becoming a socio-economic development factor in their own right?

Begoña Ballesteros, University of Manchester

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The recent financial crisis is an example of how macroeconomic re-adjustments are turning information and communication technologies into a wage adjustment tool in some European industrial cities, in which public policies and local governance face a challenge in order to regulate and shape their working and economic uses.

11.15am **Break**

11.30am **Cohesion, Capital & Communities**

Community cohesion policies and Romani immigrants in Manchester

Yaron Matras, University of Manchester.

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Measures taken by authorities in reaction to recent immigration of Roma from Romania and Bulgaria have been the subject of controversy especially in Italy and lately in France, where expulsion policies and the use of force have been condemned as contravening EU treaties as well as human rights conventions. In Manchester, where a small community of Romanian Roms has settled over the past years, policy has been mixed: On the one hand, 'soft' pressure is being applied against the community at various levels, while on the other hand local agencies and private initiatives are

engaged in supporting integration efforts. The paper outlines potential sources of conflict, focusing on the question whether Romani immigration is in any way 'exceptional' or 'unique'.

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Capital Space

Lucy Britton and Elizabeth DuBois, geographies, www.capitalspace.org

In this current moment, the landscape of the modern city bears the imprint of successive cycles of the ebb and flow of capital investment in the built environment. New waves of construction leave their mark through characteristic architectural styles or morphological arrangements of different elements, a complex layering of forms and structures. The finance economy is now so complex and abstracted, yet it intersects with the world in surprisingly human and material ways.

Focusing on the Canary Wharf development in London's Docklands, our research project 'Capital Space' began with the premise that a space is not simply a physical entity or named location, but the ongoing product of intermingling human and material relationships and agendas. Whilst the contemporary city privileges things of use or exchange value, which is reflected in the aesthetic and function of the architecture it perpetuates, in reality this is not the extent of what is taking place.

With this in mind, and in the context of the unravelling financial crisis of the past 2 years, it has been intriguing to approach Canary Wharf - the highest, the richest, the newest, the strongest - and see what other economies and spaces might be in operation. Furthermore, what new economies has the crisis brought about? Our starting point was to question and to listen, to allow the voices and stories that weren't embodied in or defined by stainless steel and glass surfaces of vast skyscrapers to make themselves heard. How do social yet unconscious flows mingle with the material reality of Canary Wharf, and the city that surrounds it, to produce this so-called "Capital Space"? Can this moment of financial 'crisis' be read through other economies? Ultimately, our question is: What is invested in Capital Space?

1.00pm Buffet Lunch

2.00pm Session V: Assessing the implications of the crisis for the political economy of cities.

New Dark Age or Urban Renaissance? Opportunities and threats for the political economy of cities after the global financial crisis.

Simon Parker, Department of Politics, University of York and CRESC, University of Manchester.

Discussant: TBC

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The fiscal crisis of 2007-2009 represents the most significant failure of the world's leading financial institutions since the Wall Street Crash of 1929 and the ensuing Great Depression. But as the bailed out banking sector begins to recover its profitability, the shock waves of the crisis on millions of jobs

and thousands of businesses—the majority concentrated in the world’s cities and towns—are only now beginning to be felt. This presentation aims to prospect the effects of the fiscal crisis on the political economy of cities and regions by asking whether in the advent of ‘a return to regulation’ in the financial sector we may be witnessing an emerging ‘post’ neo-liberal conjuncture in urban government. What policy instruments are available for those charged with managing an increasingly ageing urban population where jobs are scarce and direct subsidies from national governments heavily reduced? Can the ‘big society’ of urban residents and employees be expected to ‘take up the slack’ left by a hollowed out state and dysfunctional markets? In short, what new forms of governmentality are likely to emerge in an urban world where the welfare Keynesian models of the 1960s and 1970s and the neo-liberalist projects of the 1980s and 1990s appear to be no longer ‘fit for purpose?’

3.00pm Final remarks: Professor Alan Harding

3.15pm Symposium ends