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**Tagungsbericht: Arrival Neighbourhoods in European Cities from
the late 19th to the early 21st Century**

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Tagungsbericht: Arrival Neighbourhoods from the late 19th to the early 21st Century

am IMIS, Universität Osnabrück vom 25. Bis 26 Februar 2021

The concept of ‘arrival neighborhoods’ gained a lot of attention within different scientific communities in the last few years. First described by the journalist Doug Saunders (2011), the concept focuses on the integrating momentum of neighborhoods characterized by a high fluctuation of immigrants and arrival infrastructures. Although the concept became quite popular, especially among geographers and historians, it still lacks sufficient scientific validity. Historian David Templin (IMIS, Universität Osnabrück) tackled the conceptual flaws of the concept by hosting an interdisciplinary and international two-day online workshop. He gathered different scientific approaches to ‘thematize the nexus of migration und neighborhood’, as he mentioned in his introduction. In particular, Templin asked about the analytical benefits, the role of the neighborhoods for multi-scalar networks of immigrants, the distinction of arrival neighborhoods from other urban spaces, and how the concept is able to address ethnicity, class or gender. Furthermore, he emphasized the critical reflection of established discursive constructions and knowledge production of arrival neighborhoods and their residents.

The keynote was given by Heike Hanhörster (ILS Dortmund), who generally agreed with Templin, drew attention to the concept’s shortcomings, and even expressed doubts about whether the spatial container concept is adequate to meet the challenges of ongoing superdiversity and transnationalism. ‘Which are the common characteristics’, she asked further, because the character of these neighborhoods could differ a lot. Is it the high proportion of new arrivals from abroad, the share of people with migration background or the short period of residence? To answer these questions, Hanhörster presented several research dimensions. The ‘compositional dimension’ refers to the distribution of attributes such as migration background or gender. The ‘collective dimension’ emphasizes the history of the norms and values of the neighborhood. The ‘contextual dimension’ considers the material conditions and the accessibility to the housing market. Finally, she recommended to concentrate on the interplay of human agency, structures and power relations in order to understand informal ways of brokering capital and inner routines of organizations that have a tremendous impact on the neighborhoods.

The first session was led by Antonie Schmiz (Freie Universität Berlin) and addressed the evidence of the concept within a historic perspective. The first speaker, historian Garbi Schmidt (Roskilde Universitet), presented her case study on the multicultural and 'typical chic and hip' neighborhood of Nørrebro in Copenhagen. Based on historic and ethnographic data, she backed up her critique of methodological presentism by pointing out that ethnic diversity was not a new phenomenon in Nørrebro. Due to the mixture of cheap housing, immigrant networks, religious institutions, tolerance of diversity and political decisions, Nørrebro became an arrival neighborhood and was strongly influenced by immigrants.

The second speaker, David Templin, also emphasized the history of arrival neighborhoods, while his research does not focus on the history of a single neighborhood but on the changing distributions of arrival infrastructures throughout Hamburg between 1890-1923 and 1960-1985. Templin was able to identify different districts such as Wilhelmsburg, Altona or Harburg as arrival neighborhoods and analyzed their functions for migrants of different origin in different periods. Because of their different spatial orientation, both lectures complemented each other quite well: it became apparent that there are historic examples of both mobile and stable arrival neighborhoods. Hence, the concept can be used in historic perspective. However, this seems to increase the complexity of conceptual questions.

The second session was directed by Jens Schneider (IMIS, Universität Osnabrück) and thematized contested spaces of 'foreigners' in the first half of the 20th century. First, Hannah Ewance (University of Chester) held a lecture about Jewish immigrants in the London East End. She analyzed the stigmatization of the immigrants and the neighborhood within historic sources, in which the Jews were mainly portrayed as aliens and the East End as a closed ghettoish world that 'forms a solid and permanent distinct block'. Ewance revealed how the demonization merged to a 'spatial identity' of the immigrants, which was constructed outside of the national sphere.

The second lecture was given by Marina Chernykh (Universität Freiburg) and lighted up the 'Russian Berlin', a district of refugees of the former Russian Empire under the National Socialist regime (1933-1945). Decreasing during the war, 'Russian Berlin' was able to ensure its political activities as well as delis, bookstores and churches and was still highly visible in Charlottenburg and Schöneberg. The majority of the immigrants wanted to liberate Russia from the bolshevism and therefore supported the NS-regime. But even their antisemitic views could not prevent their final imprisonment. 'Russian Berlin' is a special case of an arrival neighborhood with a unique mixture of affiliations among its residents.

In the third session, chaired by Marcel Berlinghoff (IMIS, Universität Osnabrück), Hakan Forsell (Stockholm University / Humboldt Universität zu Berlin) compared two 'transit zones', Klara in Stockholm and Christiania in Oslo, concentrating on their fate in welfare state societies from 1920-1960. Due to a relocation of the city center and other general planning strategies during an economically prosperous era, Klara turned into a central business district with 95% of office space. In contrast, Oslo was one of the least regulated European capitals in the late 19th century, which resulted in Christiania developing individually and gradually, retaining a bad reputation. In sum, Forsell identified four factors for the different development of the neighborhoods: the relocation of the city center, the function and reputation, the general planning as well as the postwar economy.

The last session focused on arrival spaces in peripheral areas in the 1970s and was hosted by Sophie Hinger (IMIS, University of Osnabrück). Lecturer Jens Gründler (LWL-Institut für Regionalgeschichte, Münster) presented his research on the notorious neighborhood Dammershof in the rural city of Harsewinkel. Originally built for the three-year stay of the British air force servicemen and their families, Dammershof was shaped by a high fluctuation from the beginning. The British eventually left by 1986, making room for the so-called 'Gastarbeiter' and refugees. Gründler showed that the arrival of the 'Spätaussiedler' suggests that there are rural spaces that function similarly to classic arrival neighborhoods. However, Dammershof was neither a closed neighborhood nor were the social networks of the residents limited to the neighborhood. Hence, rural arrival spaces also seem to have different dynamics.

Finally, Christiane Reinecke (FGZ, Leipzig) framed the workshop with a remarkable round up. 'What stories do we tell, when we put "arrival neighborhood" at the center?' she asked, directly emphasizing the construction of the concept and the need to theorize it throughout the research. While the popular discourse about these neighborhoods usually focuses on problems, risks and barriers to integration, the concept of 'arrival neighborhoods' accentuates the opposing dynamics within these neighborhoods. But, as Reinecke stated, 'these stories are still stories of immigration in a classic sense', and the focus on ethnic migrants reproduces the historically constructed norm of staying. Furthermore, she referred to the lack of empirical evidence: it is still unclear whether these neighborhoods truly reach beyond their space and enhance the situation of their residents. Reinecke also recommended focusing more on the bias between perception and reality, because it is not certain that the neighborhoods which are most densely researched are to be considered as arrival neighborhoods and vice versa. Despite existing ambiguity, she also identified a stable

indicator within the presentations: the availability of affordable housing as a factor for arrival.

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