

Social distance, social identity and social cohesion: Investigating the ‘diversity decline’ thesis in two cities.

Urban Studies Seminar Series

Tues 10 March 2015

3:00 pm - 4:30 pm

Yudowitz Seminar
Rm, Wolfson Medical
School Building

Increased ethnic diversity is associated with decreases in social cohesion and increases in social withdrawal. We argue that two mechanisms may explain these relationships: social distance and social identity orientations. This paper investigates these associations by using census data and the Australian Community Capacity Study survey data from 10,000 residents living in 298 neighborhoods in Melbourne and Brisbane, Australia. We consider the extent to which increases in immigration, ancestry, language and religion influence social distance and if this, in turn, enhances residents’ social identities. We then assess the independent effects of social distance and social identity orientations on residents’ reports of social cohesion and interactions with fellow neighbors.



Dr. Rebecca Wickes, University of Queensland

Dr. Rebecca Wickes is an ARC Research Fellow and a Senior Lecturer in criminology at the School of Social Science, The University of Queensland in Brisbane, Australia. Dr Wickes is also an Associate of the Institute for Social Science Research, a Research Fellow with the ARC Center of Excellence in Life Course Research and an Associate Investigator with the ARC Centre of Excellence in Policing and Security (CEPS). Using quantitative and qualitative methods, Dr. Wickes focusses on demographic changes in urban communities and their influence on social relationships, community regulation, crime and disorder over time. She is the director of the Australian Community Capacity Study, a multi-million, multisite, longitudinal study of place. She has published substantive works in *Criminology*, *Journal for Research in Crime and Delinquency*, *Plos One*, the *Sociological Review* and the *Journal for Urban Affairs*.