



Residential areas come in many forms; not only do they differ architecturally but especially the composition of their inhabitants makes different areas distinct. This composition is influenced by many factors and shaped by patterns of inclusion and exclusion. Inhabitants themselves and professionals 'from outside' have an important role in shaping the (urban) landscape. One can observe remarkable variation in the ways public space is used in upscale neighbourhoods and poverty-ridden suburbs, for example. In this, the impact of physical forms of inclusion and exclusion should not be ignored. Architecture and landscape can literally include and exclude categories of people; gated-communities, of course, being the obvious example.

Housing and urban planners are important in shaping residential areas, yet unique (social and cultural) dynamics in these neighbourhoods often lead to unintended outcomes. This seminar will explore how inhabitants' potentials and choices in processes of inclusion and exclusion, physical barriers and external interventions interact. From a multi-disciplinary perspective and on the basis of a number of case studies (the Netherlands, the US, Norway, Mauritius and South Africa), the seminar will compare differences and similarities between residential areas of elite and non-elite signatures. Questions central to the seminar are: How are patterns of in- and exclusion shaped by symbolic and real fences and boundaries? How do ground-level processes of belonging (ethnic and socio-economic) and status seeking affect the composition and 'use' of residential spaces? And finally, how do policy interventions such mortgage loans, social housing, and mixing strategies influence processes of inclusion and exclusion?

Time: Thursday 4 March 2010

13:10-13:30 – arrival
13:30-13:40 – opening
13:40-14:10 – Thomas Eriksen
14:10-14:40 – Manuel Aalbers
14:40-15:10 – Vinesh Hookoomsing
15:10-15:30 – break
15:30-16:00 – Marja Spierenburg and Harry Wels
16:00-16:30 – Peer Smets
16:30-17:00 – plenary discussion

17:00 – Drinks

During the drinks after this seminar, the launch of the book *A World of Insecurity: Anthropological perspectives on human security*, Pluto Books, London (edited by Thomas Hylland Eriksen, Ellen Bal and Oscar Salemink) will be celebrated in the presence of Thomas Eriksen. This collection of essays authored by researchers at the VU University's Department of Social and Cultural Anthropology is a flagship publication of the department's research programme.

Location: VU University Amsterdam, Metropolitan building, room Z-009 (Buitenveldertselaan 3, Amsterdam)

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Speakers:

Thomas Eriksen, University of Oslo

Notes from a satellite town: With a population of about 10,000, the east Oslo suburb of Furuset is the size of a small town, connected with the city centre about ten kilometres away by bus and metro. The presentation focuses on the peculiarities of this kind of place, compared with local communities of similar size elsewhere. The emphasis will be on mobility, residential segregation and local identity.

Vinesh Hookoomsing, University of Mauritius

Shifting ethnoscaples and Changing Identities in Plural Mauritius: The process of settlement and identity formation in Mauritius may be briefly summarized as being rooted in the following historical and post-independence processes: land grants to the eighteenth century colonial settlers of Ile de France; land 'morcellements' to the nineteenth century Indian settlers of British Mauritius; and low budget state housing schemes (the suburban 'cités') for the twentieth century landless Creoles of Independent Mauritius. With the help of few contrasting examples, this presentation will illustrate that modern plural Mauritius is as much a product of these past processes, as of contemporary social, economic and political change engineered by control of state power on the one hand, and unleashed by the forces of liberalism and globalisation on the other hand.

Marja Spierenburg and Harry Wels, VU University Amsterdam

Sanitizing landscapes, removing the poor to create wilderness experiences for the elite: This presentation addresses the initiative by a group of farmers in KwaZulu-Natal (South Africa) to merge their farms and create a vast private nature reserve. A large part of this reserve will be used for a 'lifestyle activity project', involving the construction of luxury lodges to be sold as (second) homes to wealthy South Africans and foreigners. Various measures are taken to shield the new owners as much as possible from contacts with those less well-off, to ensure that '...owners, and guests, will believe they are the only people in the universe', as it is stated on the project's website. To create this idea, the former farm labourers and labour tenants, to whom the farms that will be converted to wilderness not only provided jobs, but also a home, will be displaced. These labourers and tenants often have a long history on the farms, where they have buried their ancestors whose graves they will have to leave behind in the new wilderness.

Manuel Aalbers, University of Amsterdam

How do financial elites see urban neighbourhoods? Financial institutions can provide the essential underpinning for positive social development, but they also have destructive power – the power to deny credit loans. Financial elites have many ideas about what constitutes a good borrower, but they also have many ideas about what constitutes a good neighbourhood. After discussing how the ideas of financial institutions influence urban form and development, I will look at two concrete examples from the mortgage markets in the US and the Netherlands: (1) the redlining of neighbourhoods and (2) the development of subprime and predatory lending. How are patterns of exclusion and overinclusion shaped by the mental urban landscapes of financial elites? Who gets excluded and (over-) included?

Peer Smets, VU University Amsterdam

Social mixing, a matter of selective belonging. Owner-occupiers and tenants in a disadvantaged neighbourhood in the Netherlands. Owner-occupiers residing in disadvantaged neighbourhoods are believed to improve the liveability of the neighbourhood and the living conditions of tenants. This article will focus on different patterns of inclusion and exclusion among tenants and owner-occupiers in a street in a Dutch disadvantaged neighbourhood. For this purpose the street is divided in clusters with only tenants or owner-occupiers, but also mixed ones. This offers insight in how different ideal typical types of tenants and owner-occupiers occur in homogeneous and mixed clusters and its impact on the liveability of the street or the neighbourhood. Moreover, it will be shown that mixing rental and owner-occupied housing will not always bring the expected results, but that some differentiation of target groups, the related space and senses of selective belonging play an important role.