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a.a. 2021-2022

Seminario Interclasse

EQUALITY AND INEQUALITY IN CITIES

Prof. Avner de-Shalit

The Hebrew University of Jerusalem

2nd and 3rd March 2022

Dear students,

I am looking forward to our meeting and studying together in early March. Below please find a short description of the course, and a recommended reading, which I'd like you to read before the course.

With best wishes,
Avner

ABSTRACT

More than 80% of the OECD citizens live in cities. Naturally, as cities take on ever greater political, economic and cultural importance, inequality in cities is an increasing concern. And yet, while there are many tools to measure inequality in states, and while we more or less know what we mean by equality in the state, researchers and philosophers have not paid enough attention to inequality in the city, what it means and how to measure it. Prima facie, one of the main differences is that people associate equality on the state level with material (income, capital) equality, whereas on the city level people refer to other parameters. But what other parameters? And why do people think differently about equality in the city, compared to equality in the state?

The course consists of several steps:

1. First, we shall start by talking a bit about different reasons to care for equality: sufficiency, priority, and equality per se, as well as material equality vs relational (social) equality.



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2. We shall then discuss relevant differences between the city and the state as institutions, and contemplate about the implications of these differences to why we should discuss equality in the city separately from equality in the state, and to how we should think about equality in the city.

3. To examine our intuitions and thoughts we shall want to discuss the issue with city-zens of Macerata. Before doing so we shall learn a certain technique of interviews for such research, design the interviews and the questions we want to ask, and then we shall leave the classroom and go to the city streets and devote some time to discuss the questions with the city-zens.

4. Coming back to the classroom, we shall analyze the results, and then try to theorize about what all this means. While doing this I shall share with you the results of a similar project of 180 interviews in eight cities (London, Oxford, Hamburg, Berlin, Jerusalem, Tel Aviv, New York, Rio de Janeiro) which were conducted in recent years.

Preparatory reading

1. Please read an essay by Richard Arneson, which contains explanations of many of the concepts that we'll be using in our course. The essay can be read online: [Egalitarianism \(Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy\)](https://plato.stanford.edu/entries/egalitarianism/) Or <https://plato.stanford.edu/entries/egalitarianism/>
2. Please watch a short lecture that I gave in Brussels. It gives a good background about recent developments in the political and cultural status of cities and why it is important to study inequality in *cities* as well. The lecture can be found here: [Full Circle & Avner de Shalit: The Spirit of Cities – YouTube](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=aZntHCf9hOk) Or <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=aZntHCf9hOk>

Essential reading for the course

1. Glaeser, Edward, Matt Resseger and Kristina Tobio. 20089. Inequality in the city. *Journal of Regional Science*. Vol 49, 617-646. <https://scholar.harvard.edu/files/resseger/files/glaeserressegeretobiojrs.pdf>

This text is probably the most important paper by economists about how they understand equality and inequality in the city. If you are not an economist, you might feel uneasy about the statistics and the tables. Just ignore them.



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It is important that you understand how economists perceive inequality and equality in the city, and not that you will follow all the mathematical calculations.

2. Nijman, Jan and Yehua Dennis Wei. 2020. Urban inequality in the 21st century economy. *Applied Geography*, 117: 102188, <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC7124478/>

This text is an introduction to a special issue of the journal *Applied Geography*. It will give you a good idea of how geographers and urban scientists perceive inequality, and especially about their spatial approach to the issue.

3. Simoni, Marco. 2020. Poverty and inequality. The role of cities in a post-Covid19 scenario. Italian Institute for International Political Studies. <https://www.ispionline.it/en/publicazione/poverty-and-inequality-role-cities-post-covid-19-scenario-25810>

This text is a very short essay about poverty and inequality in the city (and what is the difference between them) and also about a few ideas what can be done to reduce inequality in the city. While it is very short, it consists of some very interesting thoughts.

4. We shall probably discuss gentrification. There is a short video which explains what it is <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=V0zAvImzDFc> and a good one which explains how it creates social tensions <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YiMGlyIepYA> and this is a good documentary of 15 minutes <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tJha0BL5P8U>

5. Barberis Eduardo and Alberto Violante. 2017. School segregation in four Italian metropolitan areas. *Belgian Journal of Geography*. <https://journals.openedition.org/belgeo/19018>

This text is an interesting analysis of what is school segregation in the city and how it develops, with a focus on Italy. We shall not discuss this particular paper in the course but you may find it relevant to how Italians experience inequality in the city.

