

De- or Re-institutionalisation of Contemporary Cities

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In contemporary cities institutions are dismantled and recreated at an unseen pace. The deregulatory neoliberal economy and the “neoliberal habitus” that it creates (Harvey, 2021), various political-ideological influences, the fall of public man and space (Sennett, 1977/1996) or “diminishing of the public” (Türk, 2022) are only some factors behind this trend. As the central institutions in cities are degenerating through emptying out—institutionalised corruption (Bourdieu, 2012/2015: 336)—or complete dismantlement, the importance to read and evaluate de-institutionalisation out of its historical context arises. Today this context is provided by various factors, such as the neoliberal economy, fake news, autocratic leaders or brain drain.

At a much earlier date, Mills (1956) determined a similar development, where old balances relegated towards middle level along with centralisation in the 1950’s USA in his theory of the power elite. However, as part of an opposite viewpoint that focuses on over-institutionalisation or bureaucratisation, Merrifield (2017) criticised modernism’s over-rationalisation,

professionalisation, and specialisation. The postmodern thought that carried this second line of thought to a radical and meaningless end is a complete negation of the modern mind. Yet this study takes a different position that emphasises the significance of credible and well-functioning institutions for the urban society, arguing that the current de-institutionalisation condition comes out as a regression in all fields of social life—politics, government, economics, research and knowledge production, culture, daily life, and ethics.

In this book, the topic of de-institutionalisation in today's cities is approached through the above-mentioned general framework. In cities, this de-institutionalisation process can emerge in the form of suburbanisation that replaces people and institutions; a shift from production to consumption; forced closures, displacement or expropriation of historical institutions and places; privatisation of land; a neglect of "ordinary cities" versus global cities (Robinson, 2002), and power struggles between different levels of administration over cities' resources and places. All these developments also prioritise a predominantly spatial change-based analytical framework in urban studies. On the other hand, there are institutionalisation efforts of urban social movements to fill in the functions of a de-institutionalising and retreating state. These movements usually struggle with the issues of institutionalisation, such as leadership, organisation, financing, and sustainability.

This call for papers seeks for theoretical and empirical contributions that discuss de- or re-institutionalisation in Turkish and other cities around the world, and it aims to understand related structural changes and actions of various agents in urban space. The language of the book—Turkish or bilingual—will be decided later; so, English submissions are also welcome. Please send your paper abstracts of 500-550 words until September 15, 2022 to merickirmizi@gmail.com and editor@idealkentdergisi.com by writing "De-institutionalisation Book Project—Abstract Submission" in the subject line.

Sources

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