



Alicante, Spain & Virtual event

Urban Challenges and Sustainable Technological Revolution



Special Session Proposal

Defining and measuring inequality across social and spatial scales: limits, thresholds, realities and perceptions.

Special Session Organizers

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Abstract

The rapidly changing environment during the first two decades of the new century has been marked by the emergence of new drivers or dynamics that have exercised multiple pressures on welfare and socio-spatial cohesion in Europe and elsewhere and have raised new challenges for policy and collective action. The EU integration processes, the financial crisis, the pandemic, the digitalization of the economy, the unbalanced patterns of globalization, the refugee and migration crisis, and the climate change-related disasters and threats have increased vulnerability of significant social groups and places, triggered discontent and populism, and raised new challenges to development and social policy.

These global mega-trends – each one and in combination with each other – are expected to have “creative destruction” type of effects that may lead to a paradigm shift in many aspects of economic and social life and may leave an asymmetric spatial and social footprint. They may blend a cocktail of welfare uncertainty, social turbulence and political instability that may challenge (or even threaten) basic institutional arrangements and democracy in Europe. A complex set of theoretical propositions, ideological preoccupations, and institutional arrangements are confronted with the hard evidence of frequent market and policy failures. Understanding the nature of – and the interdependencies among – the drivers and the outcomes they configure, is apparently, a task of extreme importance that may provide valuable insight to both academic theory and policy-making.

The Special Session deals with the important issue of defining and measuring inequality. To this end, the Special Session examines the relation between diversity and inequality and highlights the limits of existing methods of measuring inequality. Overall, the Special Session consolidates existing knowledge in different disciplines, and provides a state-of-the-art understanding of the economic, social and spatial dimensions of inequality.