



Special Session Proposal

Networks, Interaction, and Inequalities in Cities

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Abstract

The global population is increasingly concentrated in urban areas. Despite old and new issues of urban living, mixing in cities creates opportunities for economic, scientific and technological progress. Social networks are fundamental tools to understand interactions and communication and can enhance economic development by fostering sharing, matching and learning in cities and by speeding up information flow and strengthening trust. It is also recognized, that network externalities intensify unequal distribution of wealth if social groups are formed on the bases of diverging prosperity. The recent pandemic has created a situation, in which network externalities have probably widened inequalities between those who could work remotely and those who must work on-site. However, surprisingly little is known about social networks formation in urban areas; about learning through social ties in cities; and about the role of digital platforms on social interaction in urban agglomerations.

The Special Session aims to establish a platform for interdisciplinary discussions focusing on networks, economic development and inequalities in cities and regions. We intend to bring together scholars who are working on the intersection of social networks or network science and regional science, economic geography, urban economics or related fields.

Conceptual or methodological developments in the above domains are both welcome. Topics of interest include but are not limited to:

- Networks within and across company borders
- Social networks and economic growth in regions
- Networks and inequalities
- Online networks during social distancing times
- Kinship networks and individual outcomes
- Communication networks in urban areas
- Network formation and network dynamics in urban areas and clusters
- Spatial diffusion on social networks
- Interaction between multinationals and domestic companies
- Urban mobility networks
- Automation, remote work, and labor division