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Title of the work: They live there and we live here: spatial proximity of different socio-economic groups and opportunities for social integration in Santiago de Chile

Overall project: Risk Habitat Megacity

Supervisors: Prof. Dr. Sigrun Kabisch, Prof. Dr. Christof Parnreiter

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Intensive socio-spatial differentiations are a characteristic trait of Latin American societies and have a powerful impact on land use patterns. In Chile, Santiago is a city that has been residentially segregated for a long time. Nevertheless, in the past two decades these patterns have been undergoing transformations on a geographical and a sociological scale showing ambivalent directions: On the one hand, forced segregation of economically disadvantaged residents, who remain concentrated on the urban fringe. On the other hand, 'new spatial proximity' due to voluntary segregation of well-off residents not located in their traditional areas of residence but rather closely to lower income neighbourhoods.

In particular, the latter aspect is the focus of the ongoing research. The issue that new social and physical borderlines have emerged plays not only an important role for the social mixing of otherwise evenly poor areas, but also for new opportunities of socio-spatial integration processes as well. According to some Latin-American researchers, the reduction of the geographical extent of segregation has introduced a process of integration which might bring about new possibilities and opportunities for the poor, both in 'objective' terms (employment, services, urban facilities) and in 'subjective' terms (the perceptions of one another).

Against this background, the PhD thesis discusses the processes of desegregation in Santiago de Chile from the perspective of the contact hypothesis that is related to the 'subjective' terms of social integration. This hypothesis suggests that even deep-seated antipathies toward another group may be improved by regular interactions helping to reduce prejudice which is seen as a precondition for a more tolerant society.

In this spirit, the main hypothesis of my PhD thesis is that intra-urban migration have led, in some cases, to a new spatial proximity of different socio-economic groups changing socio-spatial segregation patterns on a smaller spatial scale. The new social mix of some neighbourhoods may therefore lead to social integration on a longer period by specific participation, sociability and identification. Based on this assumption, the thesis discusses three related questions:

- (1) How did the socio-spatial segregation pattern change and at which scales does this affect the socio-economic composition of neighbourhoods?
- (2) Does the new social mix enhance social and / or spatial contacts between different socio-economic groups?
- (3) What implications do the social and spatial contacts have for processes of social integration?

These questions will be addressed on the basis of (a) discussion of related publications; (b) analysis of census data for the period of 1992 - 2002; (c) presentation of selected results of a household survey which was carried out in Huechuraba, Lo Barnechea and Peñalolén in November 2008 and (d) interpretations of qualitative interviews with experts and neighbours.

Regarding the presentation, I would like to discuss my theoretical approach as well as obtained research results.