The struggle to belong. Dealing with diversity in 21ˢᵗ century urban settings.

The RC-21 2011 Conference will analyze how globalization and individualization have given rise to new forms of diversity—ethnic, religious, gender, sexual, class and otherwise—, and new deliberations and conflicts over citizenship and belonging in urban settings in both the Global South and North. We want to know how people with diverse backgrounds locate themselves and others in new social hierarchies, how they struggle to create meaningful places, in what ways they develop strategies to belong, and with what consequences. Moreover, we aim to understand better what types of (new) policy responses and forms of governance have developed to manage diversity in urban settings.

The struggle to feel at home can be understood as a response to the process of *globalization*. On the one hand, there are indications that traditional loyalties evaporate, which seems to hold particularly for those who operate in what Castells has called the 'space of flows', for example for people involved in the tier of internationally oriented knowledge workers. On the other hand, there are also indications that traditional or local orientations and loyalties become more significant, and corresponding groups are strengthened. This is especially the case for those people who are, for Castells, in the 'space of place', and who often comprise the less privileged groups in society. In this way, globalization goes hand in hand with localization, i.e. a greater stress on the meaning of local traditions and practices. This process of 'glocalization' results in new societal cleavages to which new notions of citizenship have been viewed as a possible response. Some of the research questions orienting the meeting are: how do social, political, economic and cultural processes at the international or transnational level influence new forms of diversity and, consequently, new forms of belonging? What type of (new) policy responses and governance forms have developed to manage diversity in urban settings? How can we understand the recent culturalization and emotionalization of citizenship, e.g. by way of rising demands on feelings of loyalty, national or local pride and on the need to 'feel at home'? How do these homogenizing tendencies relate to the development of transnational citizenship and multiple and hybrid identities?

Secondly, the struggle to belong can be understood as a response to *individualization*. There is considerable debate on the meaning and extent of individualization. Individualization is often understood as a socio-cultural phenomenon: the duty to behave as autonomous and 'free' as possible. While individualization processes are rooted in long term historical forces, neoliberal pressures have accelerate these processes by privatizing risk, making individuals financially independent, and requiring people to become calculating citizens. During the conference, we want to discuss how individualization influences identities, chances and tasks for individuals living in urban settings. How do citizens experience these changes? What new duties, rights and communities come into existence in response to (which kind of) individualization? Which emotions does individualization evoke or demand, e.g. joys or pains that come with autonomy and 'freedom of choice'? What new forms of mutual help and solidarity are created or expected in local communities? How does individualization give rise to new social and political communities and to new notions of publicness?

In sum, the central concern of the 2011 RC-21 annual conference is the ways in which individuals and communities in an urban context respond to the major social processes of globalization and individualization: how do they articulate various forms of diversity and develop inclusive or exclusive strategies to 'belong'?