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Invitation
to the 13th IRS International Lecture
on Society and Space

Immigrant Origin Communities and Urban Politics

Prof. John Mollenkopf, The City University of New York (CUNY)

As the dynamic of immigration becomes increasingly politicized in the U.S. and West Europe, with positive as well as negative effects, the question of how and why governments respond to immigrant-origin constituencies has become ever more pressing. Drawing on a comparative study of political responses within and across metropolitan areas of the U.S. to the rapid growth of immigrant-origin communities and an in-depth study of the rise of immigrant-origin political candidates in New York City, this presentation analyzes the conditions under which pro-immigrant integration responses develop in different situations.

Looking across metropolitan areas, the interplay of demographic differences between the native born majorities and the new immigrant minorities and the political dynamics of partisanship and governing coalitions shapes the outcomes across metropolitan areas. The size and importance of the immigrant-origin electorate is a key factor, however. Variations in city size and position in the metropolitan area also matters. As the typical “first receivers” and “first responders” to the rise of new immigrant communities, the large, old central cities have developed the greatest capacity – and incentive – to integrate them. Smaller and more outlying cities often lack this capacity and incentive, and may have more hostile reactions. In this context, the ability of smaller and more suburban cities to tap into the capacities of central city organizations, as well as the realization of those organizations that they must extend their field of work out into the suburban periphery, are key factors. Also important are the formation of metropolitan-wide regional collaborations or individual state level frameworks. Smaller cities may “free ride” on central city capacities, but will learn from this experience to develop their own. The strength of regional collaborative leadership networks can also be important.

While it is dangerous to transfer policy lessons from one national setting to another, the studies that I will present during the lecture, do have implications for Germany and Europe. Heightening the representation of immigrant-origin elected officials on city councils, regional legislatures, and the national parliament will give voice to their community concerns and enable a policy dialogue. Germany already has many local and regional immigrant integration plans and associated bureaucracies, and creating links between cities with longer experience in this regard to smaller cities that lack that experience could be useful.

Discussant: Prof. Dr. Gökce Yurdakul | Humboldt-Universität zu Berlin



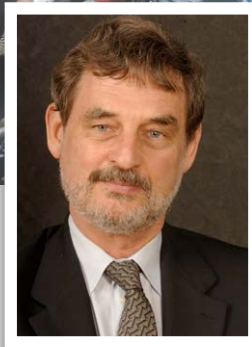
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Vita

Prof. John Mollenkopf is a Distinguished Professor teaching Political Science and Sociology at the CUNY Graduate Center. He directs its Center for Urban Research and chairs the public policy subfield in political science. His teaching and research interests focus on urban politics and public policy, using New York City as a case study in comparison with similar large cities in the U.S. and Europe to understand urban political mobilization, immigrant political incorporation, and the formation of governing coalitions. This work seeks to understand how urban policy decisions are made and their consequences for different groups and interests, particularly new immigrant groups. He has authored or edited eighteen books on these subjects, most recently *Unsettled Americans: Metropolitan Context and Civic Leadership for Immigrant Integration* (Cornell University Press, 2016), co-edited with Manuel Pastor.

He earned his M.A. and Ph.D. from Harvard University's Department of Government and has been a Visiting Professor at the Institute d'Etudes Politique in Paris, Wibaut Chair Distinguished Visiting Professor at the University of Amsterdam, a Visiting Scholar at the Russell Sage Foundation, and a Fellow of the Center for Advanced Studies in the Behavioral Sciences at Stanford. He has also been a member of the MacArthur Foundation Research Network on Building Resilient Regions and the international advisory board of the Netherlands Institute for City Innovation Studies and has served as a consultant to many public agencies in New York City.

We kindly ask all participants to register [here](#). Thank you very much.