Living together, learning apart? Socially mixed neighbourhoods, school segregation and residential mobility in Finnish cities

The Finnish education system is known for its high PISA scores in education and small attainment gaps between pupils. However, the differences in outcomes between Finnish-speaking and non-Finnish-speaking pupils are among the largest in the world, and both neighbourhood and school segregation have been increasing in throughout the 21st century. The effects of residential segregation on school segregation have been well documented, but in my presentation, I focus particularly on the role of schools in further shaping urban ethnic and socio-economic segregation patterns. Schools are strongly connected to residential decision of middle-class (Finnish-speaking) families, which feeds into growing neighbourhood and school segregation. On the other hand, in socially mixed neighbourhoods, which still represent the majority of urban neighbourhoods, there are also avoidance patterns, which isolate many of the disadvantaged or non-Finnish speaking students. Selective classes, free-time hobbies and social networks create "domains of segregation" within these neighbourhoods, and school choices to other parts of the city tend to exacerbate the differences between schools. Schools have a key role in mediating these patterns of within-neighbourhood segregation, as well as functioning as one of the important push - or pull - factors in residential mobility, which should be better recognised in attempts to support inclusion in European cities.