

24th European Colloquium on Theoretical and
Quantitative Geography

Beyond Home–Activity Space Antagonism: Understanding the Vicious Circles of Segregation

Keynote talk

Tiit Tammaru
Department of Geography
University of Tartu

13 September 2025, Tallinn

Chair of Human Geography

Research

Centre for Migration and Urban Studies

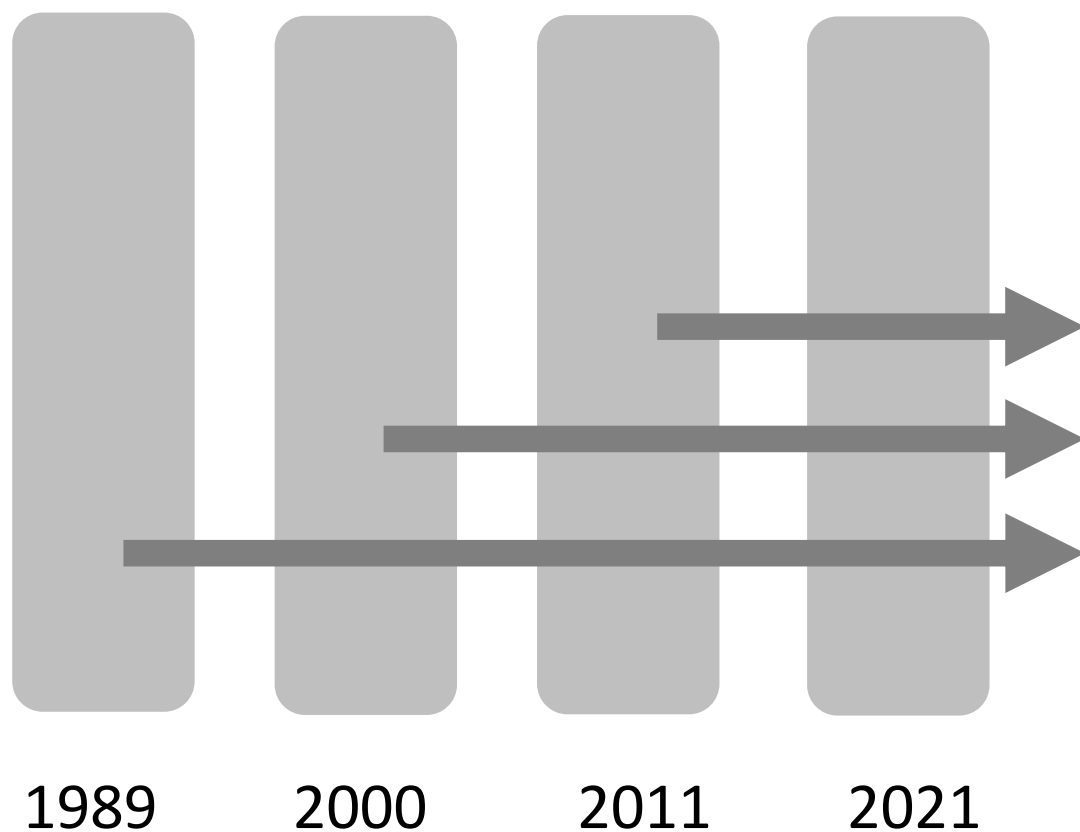
Mobility Lab

Teaching

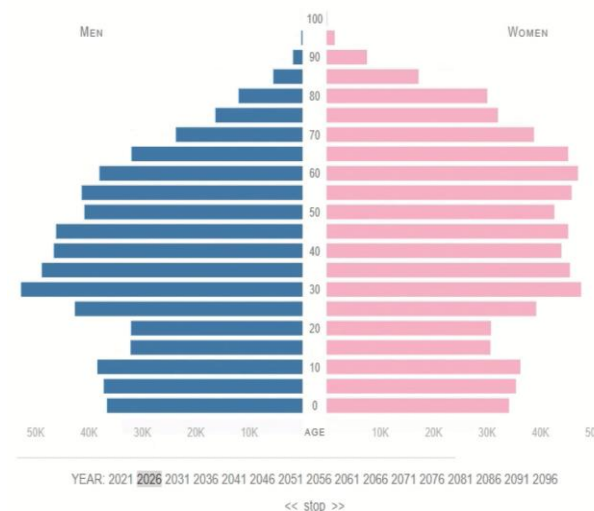
Geoinformatics for Urbanized Societies



Estonian Longitudinal Population Database



Census rounds



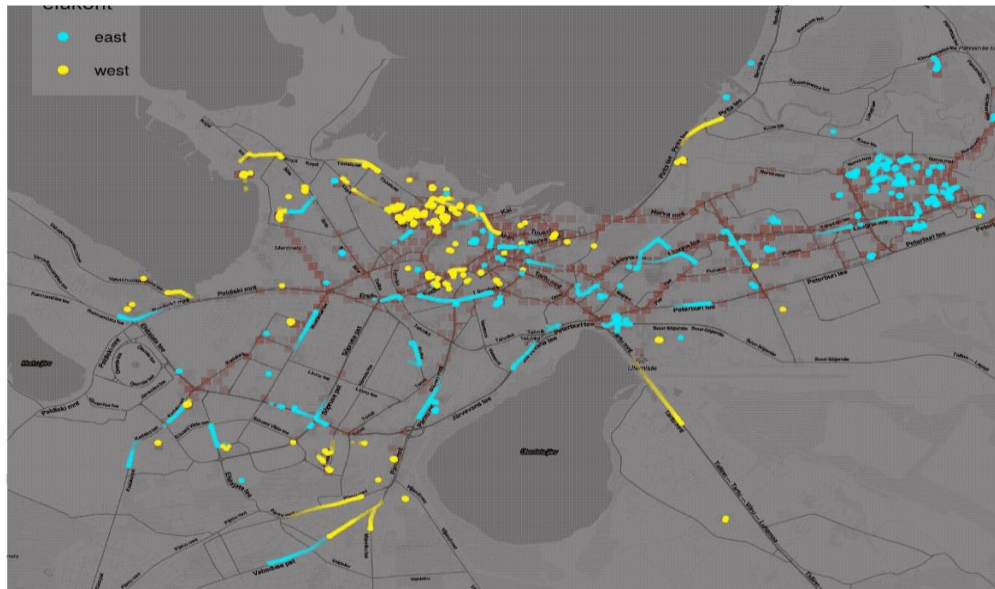
Daily mobility data



Passive whole-population mobile positioning data



Experimental data based on smartphone application MobilityLog



Today's topics

- ✓ Points of departure
- ✓ Polarization vs professionalisation debate
- ✓ Vicious circles of segregation approach
- ✓ Global trends in residential segregation
- ✓ A look forward

POINTS OF DEPARTURE

Paradigm change in research on segregation

Charles Booth and Chicago school of urban researchers layed the foundations for segregation studies, focussing on **residential neighbourhoods**



Charles Booth poverty maps of London (1886-1903)

Paradigm change in research on segregation

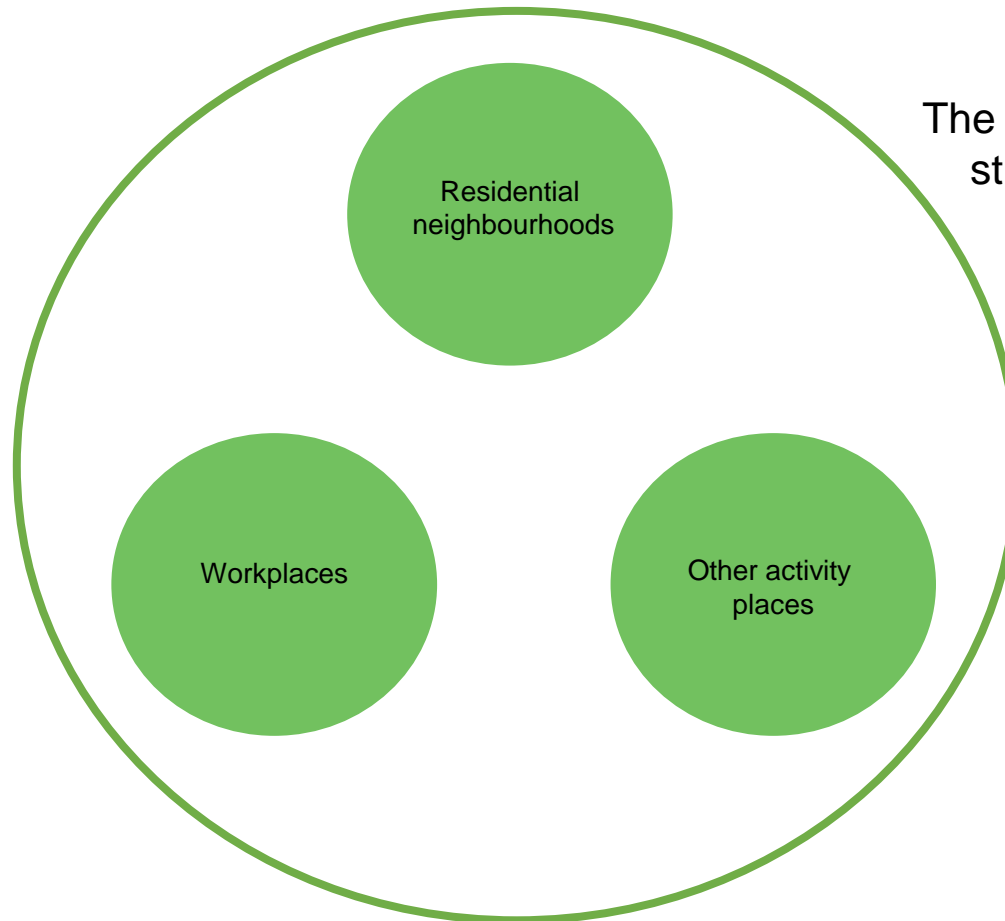
Charles Booth and Chicago school of urban researchers
laid the foundations for
segregation studies, focussing on
residential neighbourhoods



Frederick W. Boal (1987):
Residential **neighbourhoods**
reflect where people stay at night, whereas much important
social interaction takes place
elsewhere

Paradigm change in research on segregation

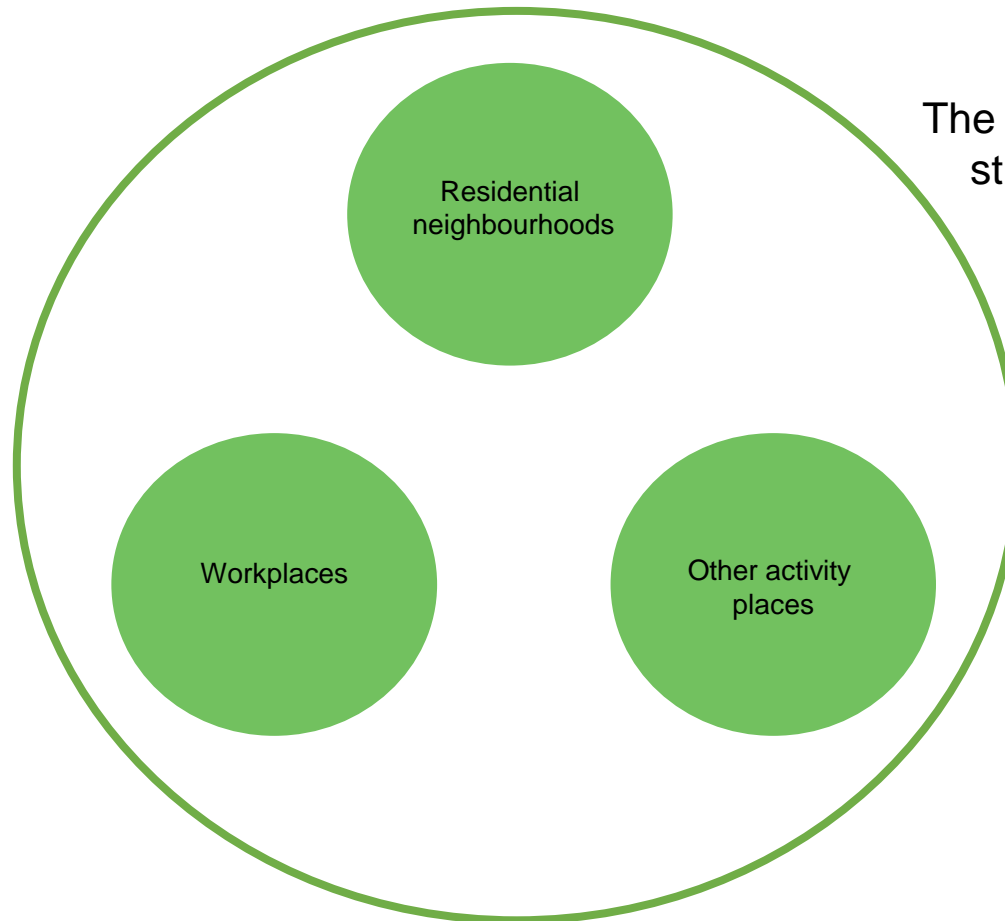
Charles Booth and Chicago school of urban researchers
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segregation studies, focussing on
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The focus of research shifted from
studying segregation residential
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studying **segregation**
in activity spaces

Paradigm change in research on segregation

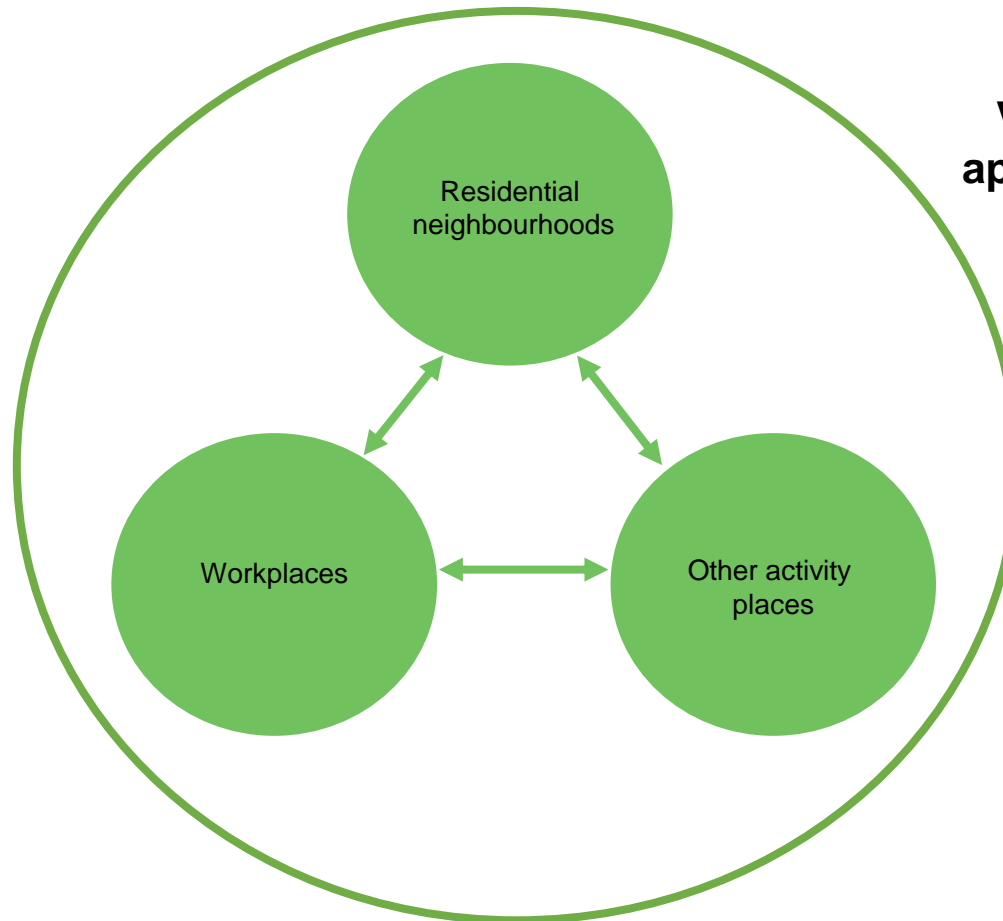
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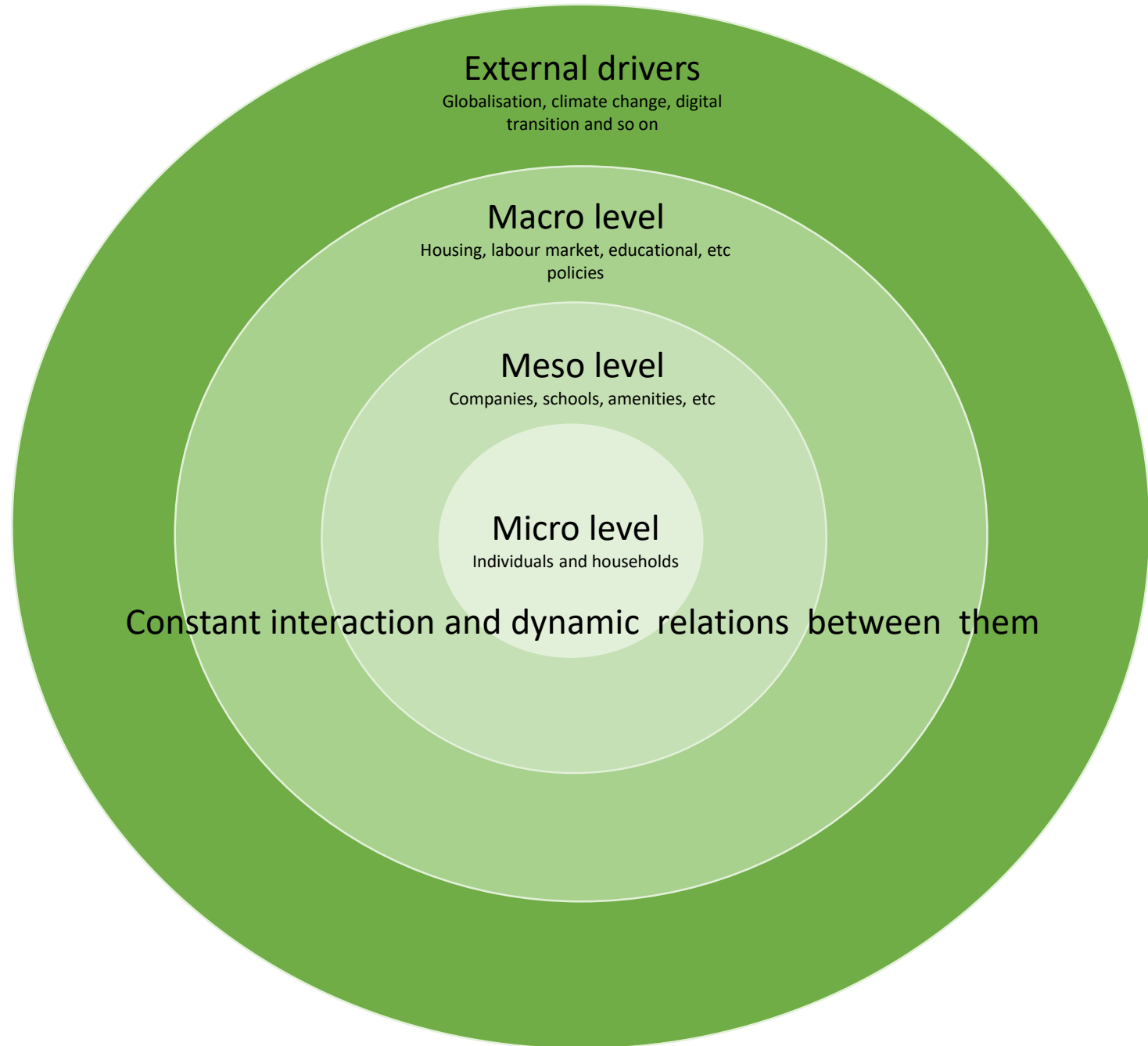
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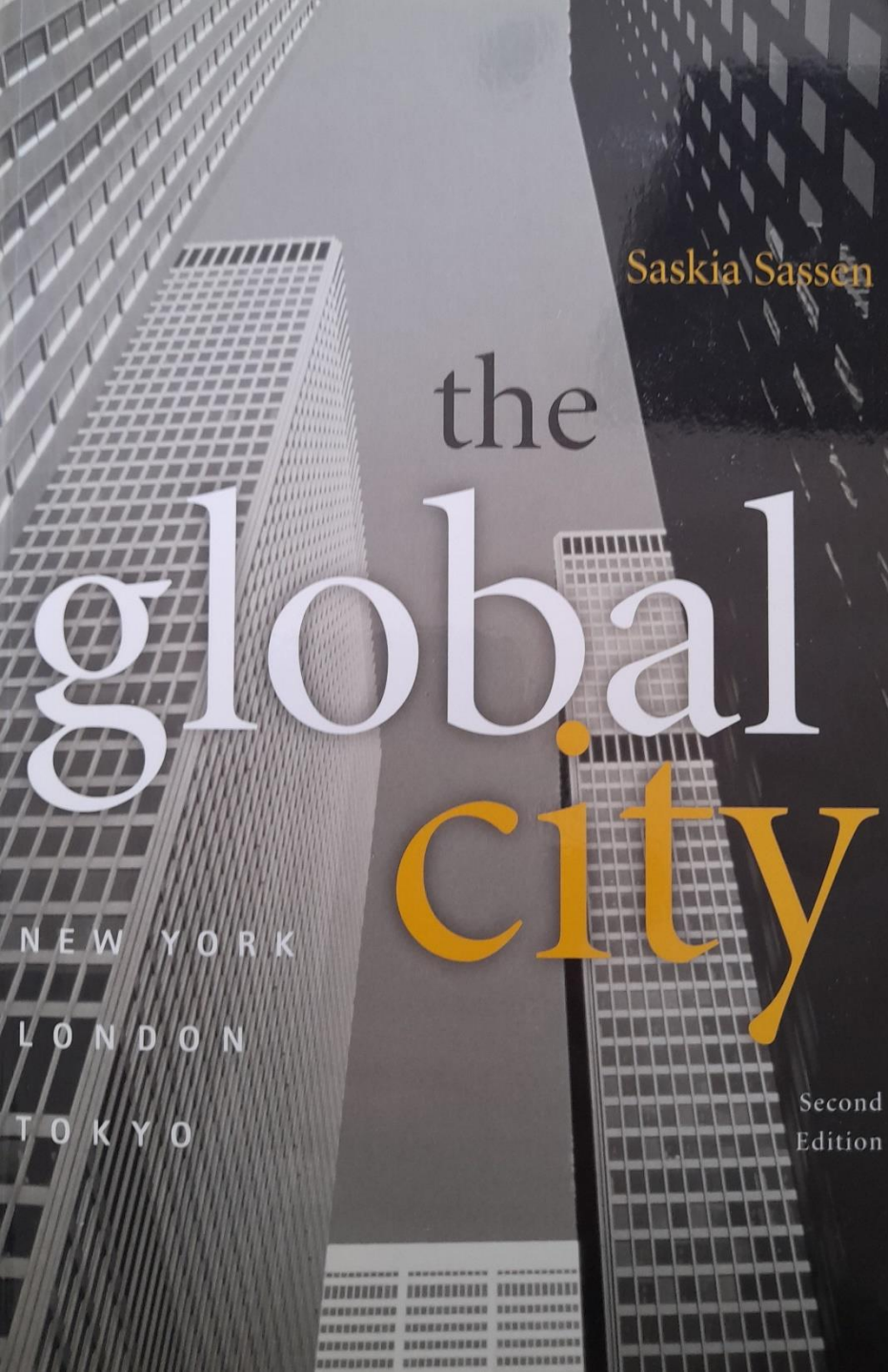


Vicious circles of segregation
approach: segregation in activity
places centres around homes
with segregation in activity
places being related
to each other

Factors shaping segregation in the activity spaces



POLARISATION VS PROFESSIONALISATION DEBATE



social polarisation thesis



Saskia Sassen

social polarisation
vs
professionalisation
debate



Chris Hamnett

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Photo credit: Unequal Scenes by Johnny Miller



Urban Inequality and Segregation Lab

The Urban Inequality and Segregation Lab brings together resources and researchers inspired to better understand how the spatial inequalities are produced and reproduced with ultimate goal to help to plan more inclusive, equitable and livable cities around the world.

Growing levels of socio-economic and ethnic segregation can seriously harm social inclusion and ethnic integration, economic competitiveness of cities, and increase concerns about safety and the intergenerational transmission of (dis)advantage. According to the 'Urban Agenda for the European Union', high level of spatial segregation is one of the key challenges in European cities. However, our recent comparative book 'Urban Socio-Economic Segregation and Income Inequality: A Global Perspective' shows that levels of inequality and segregation in Europe are lower than in most other parts of the world.

Segregation levels between socio-economic groups have grown in most large cities around the world, with the main geographic shift being the gentrification of the more affluent and suburbanization of the less affluent households. Employment opportunities are undergoing similar changes as the best-paying office jobs have concentrated to the downtown areas. As people with different incomes and employers providing different incomes cluster in urban space, other spatial opportunities change as well, leading to segregation in schools and leisure time activity sites as well as differential access to sustainable modes of mobility.

segregationlab.com

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Team

Segregation Lab is coordinated by four researchers who most of their research time dedicate to the topic of segregation and whose common ambition to create an international network of segregation researchers resulted in this virtual space. The team members listed below are our collaborators on previous or current research.

Coordinators

Tiit Tammaru



Maarten van Ham

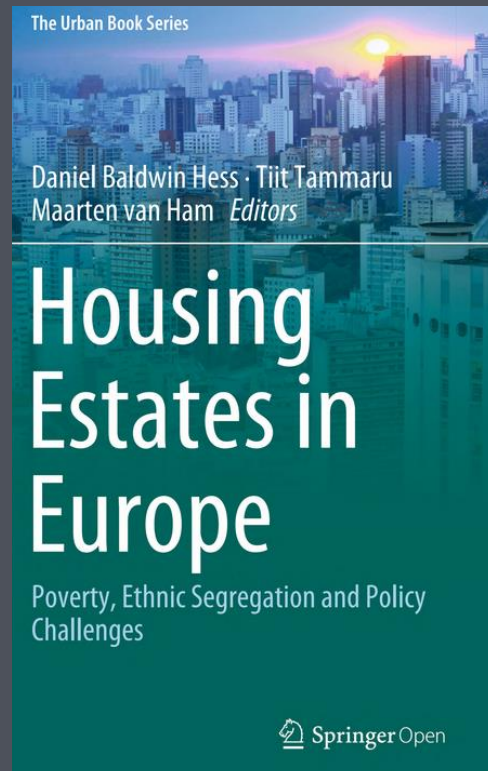


David Manley

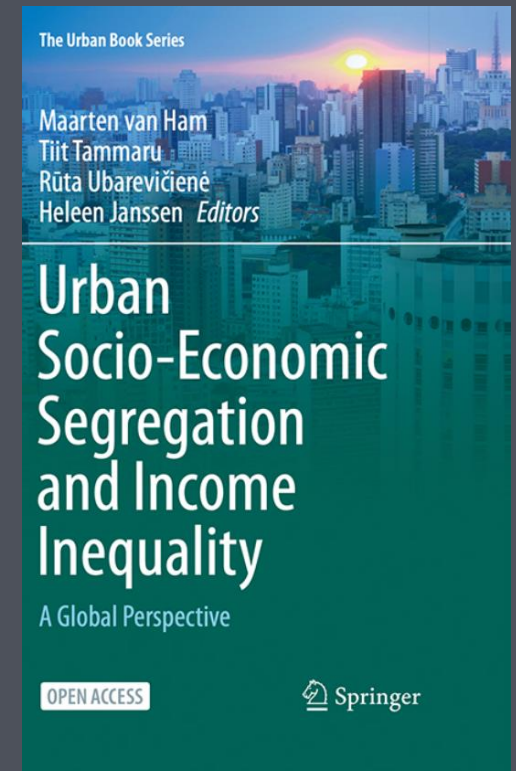
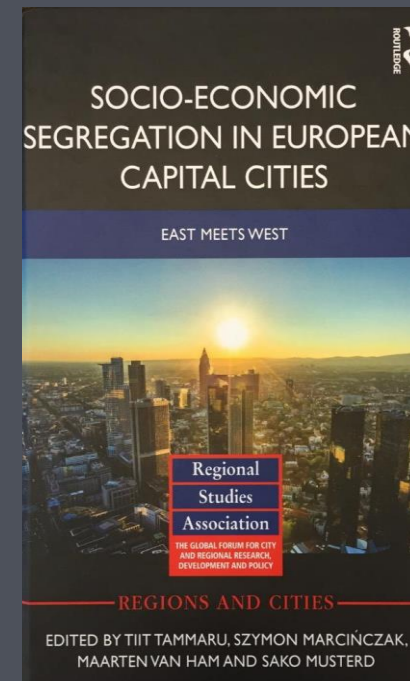
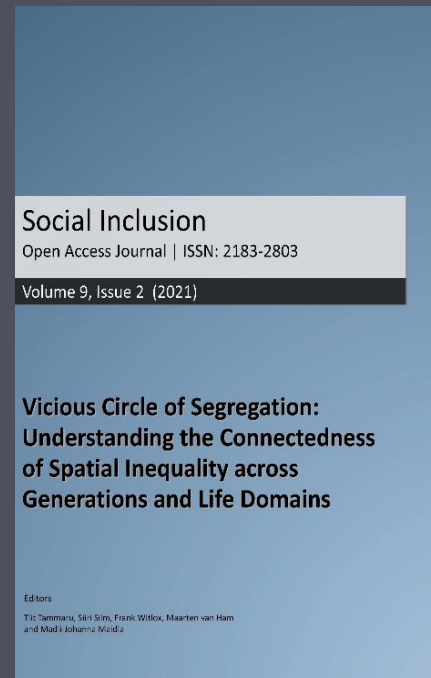


Ruta Ubareviciene

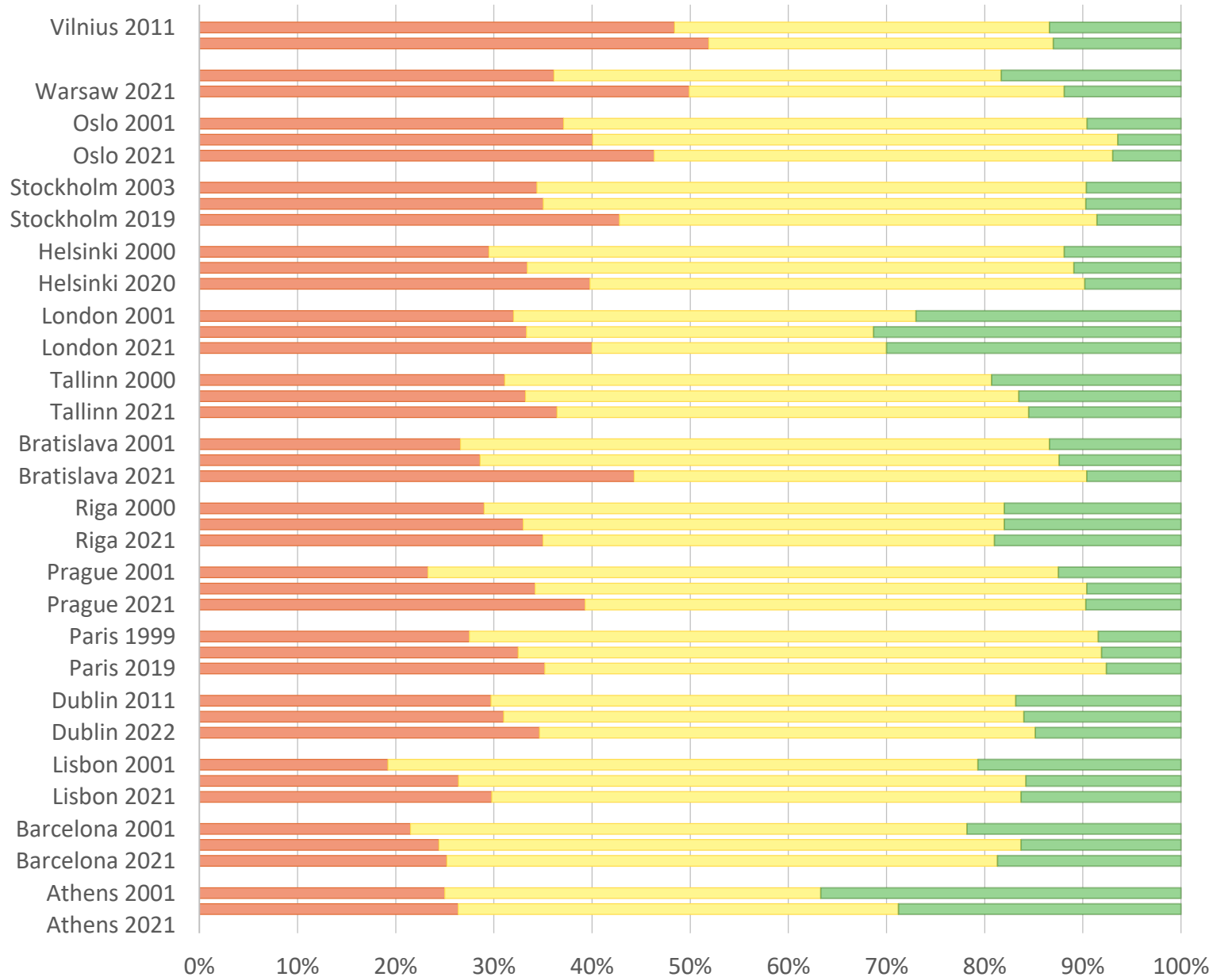




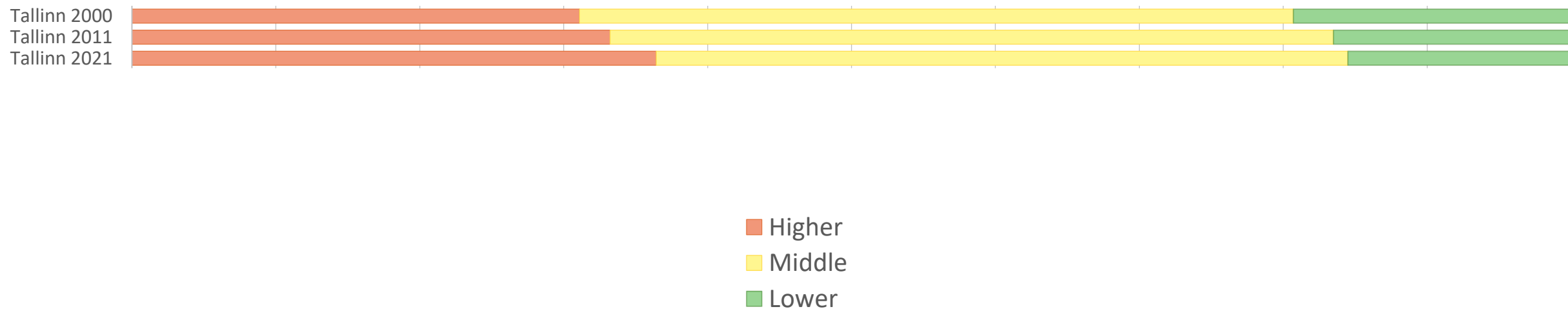
segregationlab.com



Changes in occupational structure



Changes in occupational structure



First takeaway message:

**Professionalisation of the urban workforce
is a global megatrend**

Higher

Medium

Lower

First takeaway message:

**Professionalisation of the urban workforce
is a global megatrend**

Higher

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Lower

VICIOUS CIRCLES OF SEGREGATION APPROACH

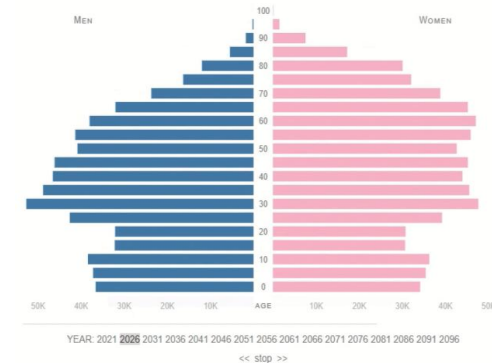
Skills and
income



Preferences
and homophily



Other
factors

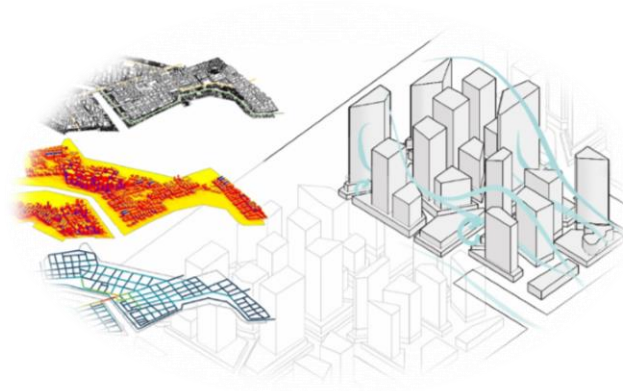


Segregation as a group-level phenomenon occurs as a result of individual-level sorting into different activity places

Policy fields

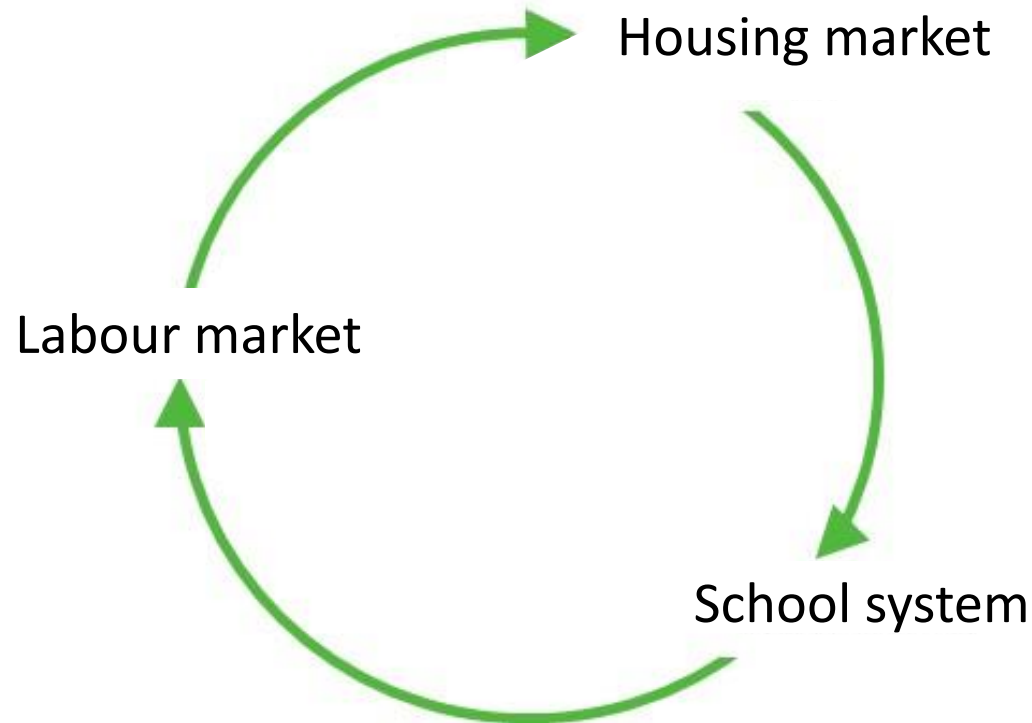


Spatial planning

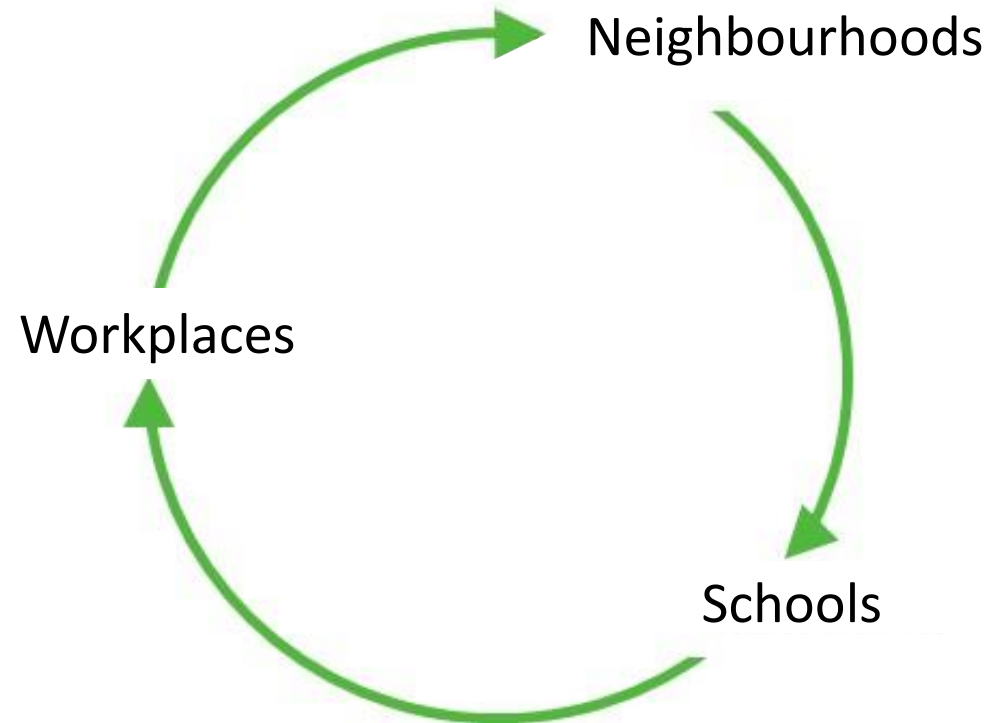


Segregation as a group-level phenomenon occurs as a result of individual-level sorting into diferent activity places shaped by contextual factors

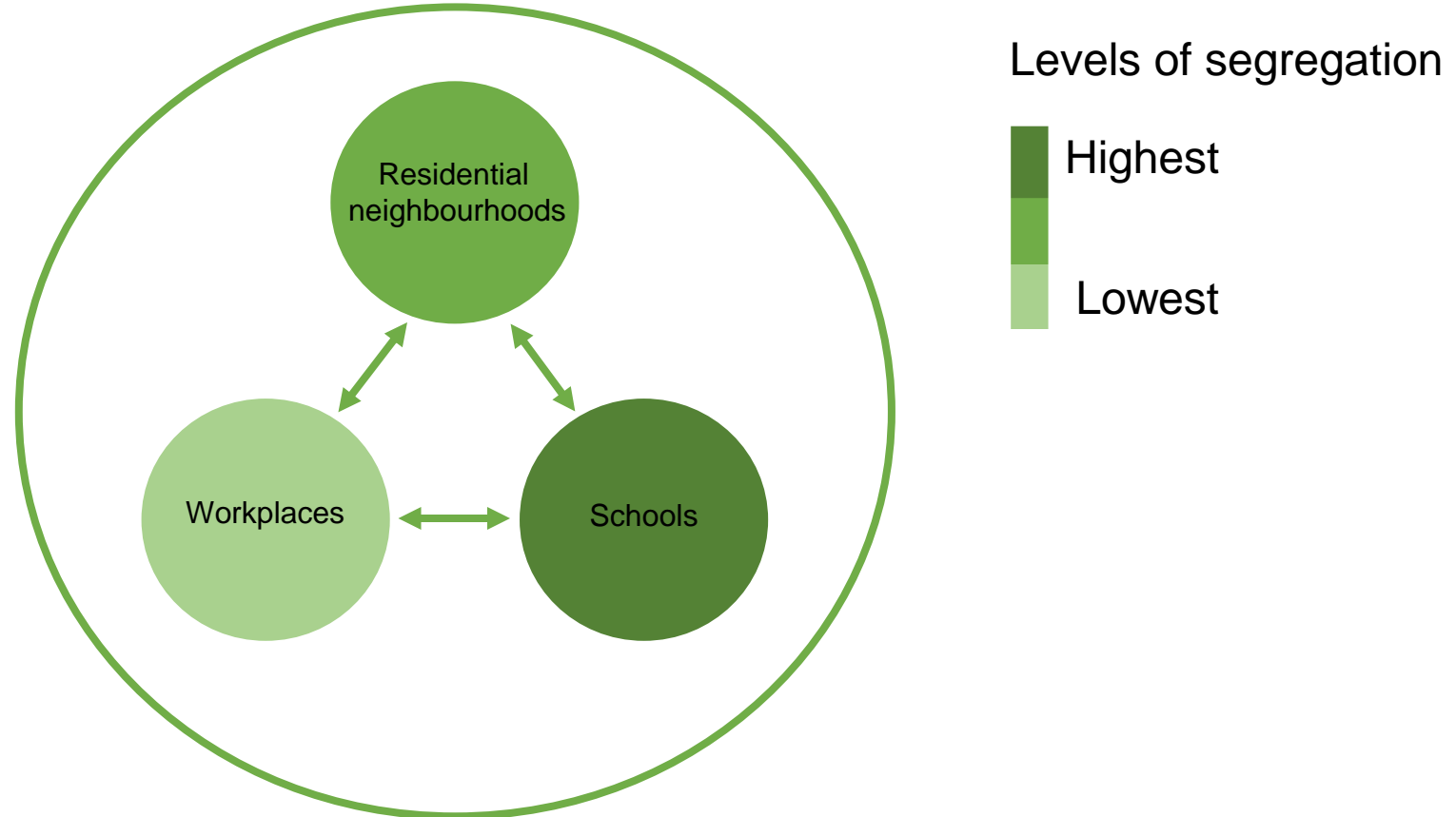
Vicious cricles of segregation
arise because of selection and contextual effects



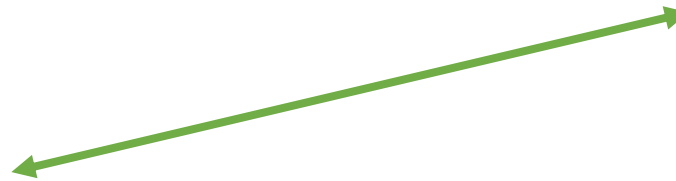
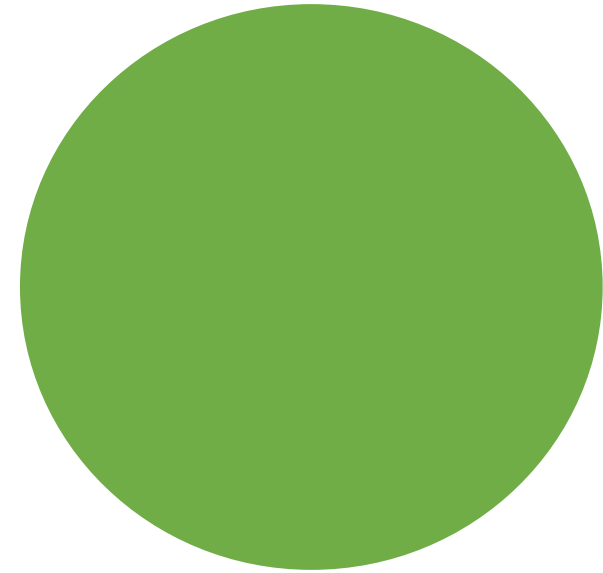
Vicious cricles of segregation
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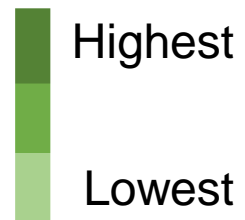
Levels of segregation tend to be the highest in schools and lowest in workplaces



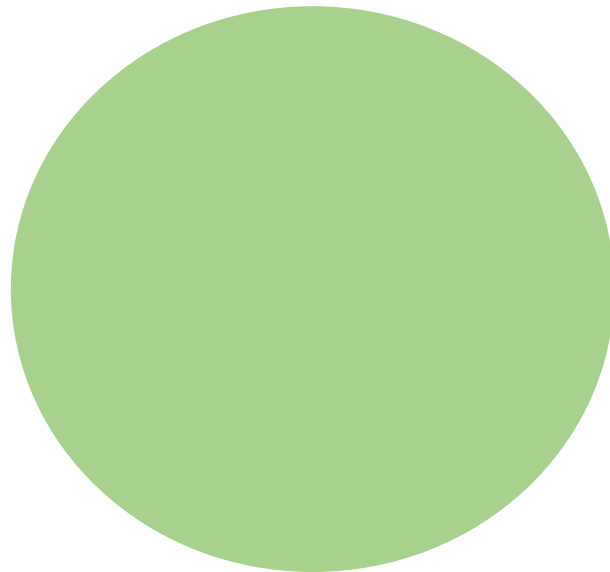
Residential
neighbourhoods



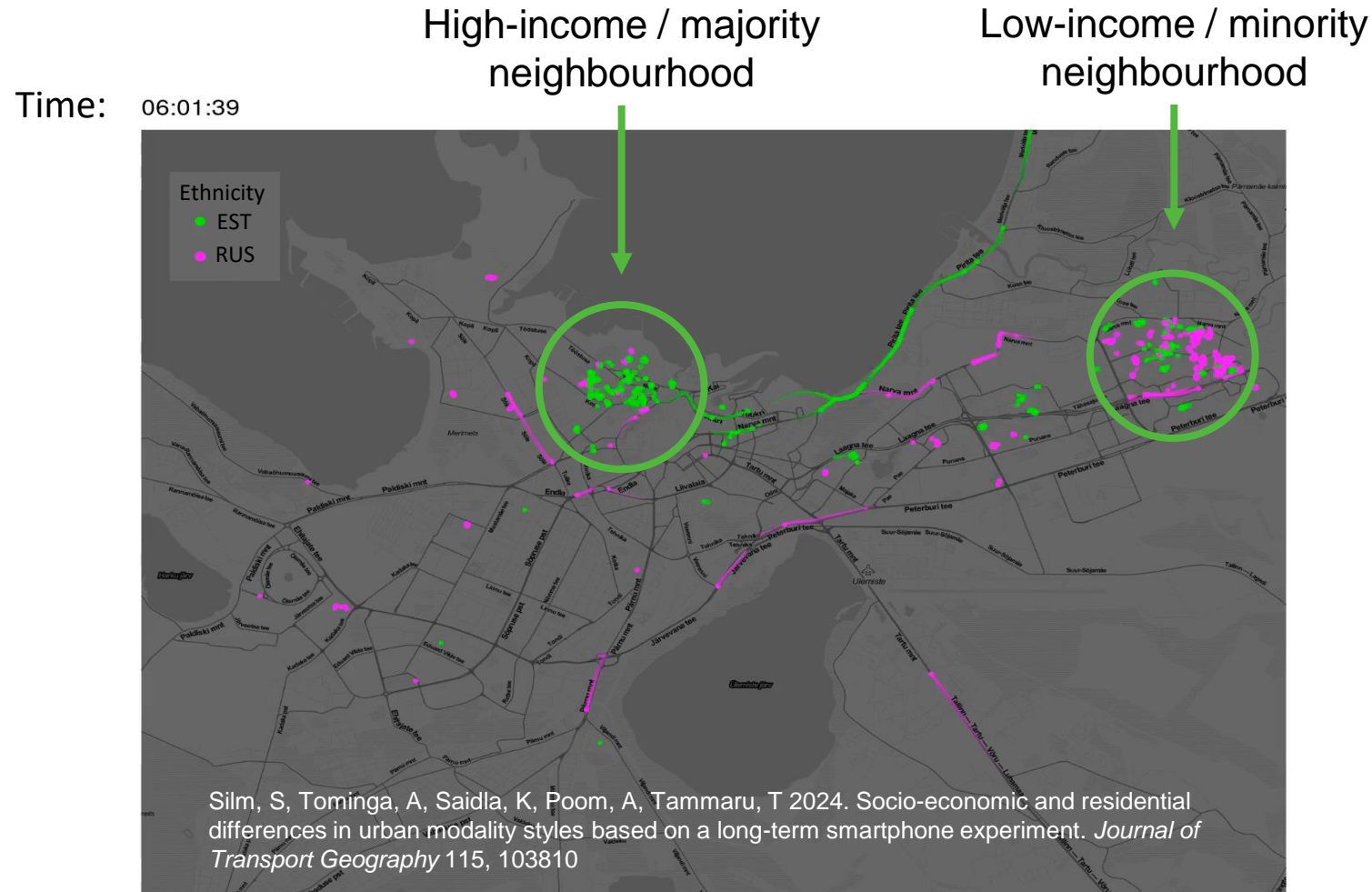
Levels of segregation



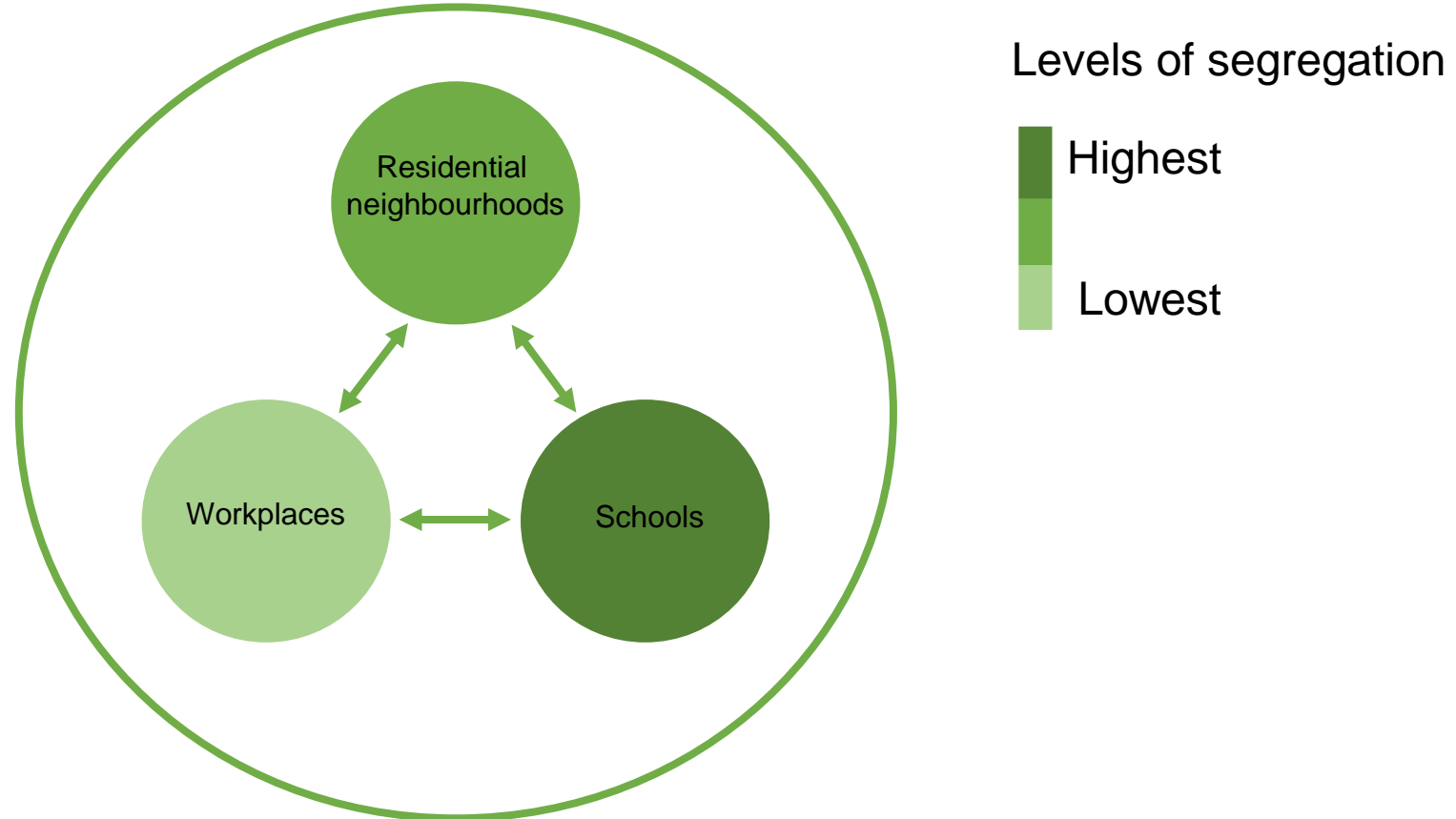
Workplaces



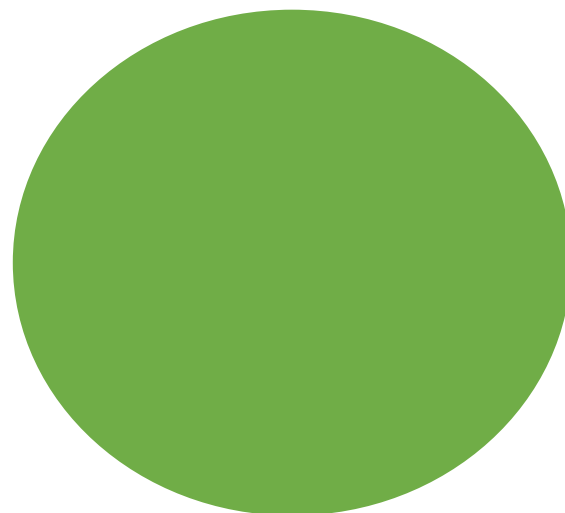
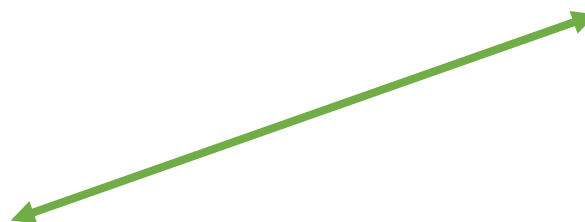
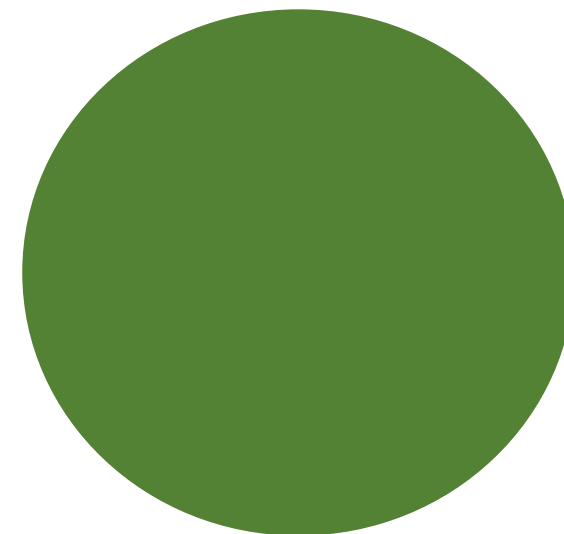
Daily mobility of the residents of the two neighbourhoods of Tallinn



Levels of segregation tend to be the highest in schools and lowest in workplaces

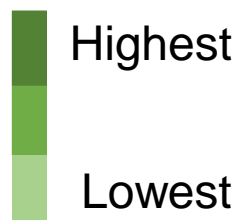


Schools

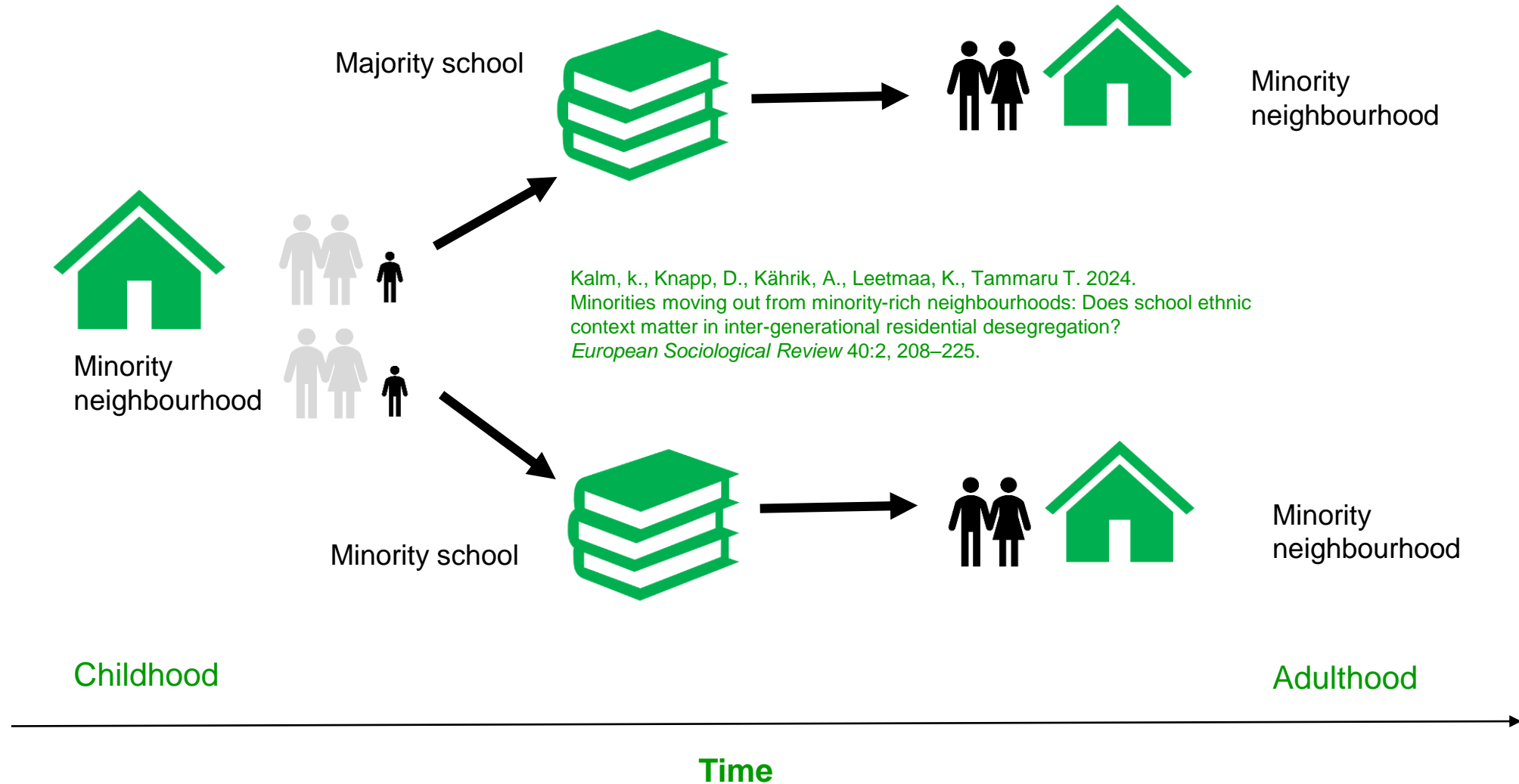


Residential
neighbourhoods

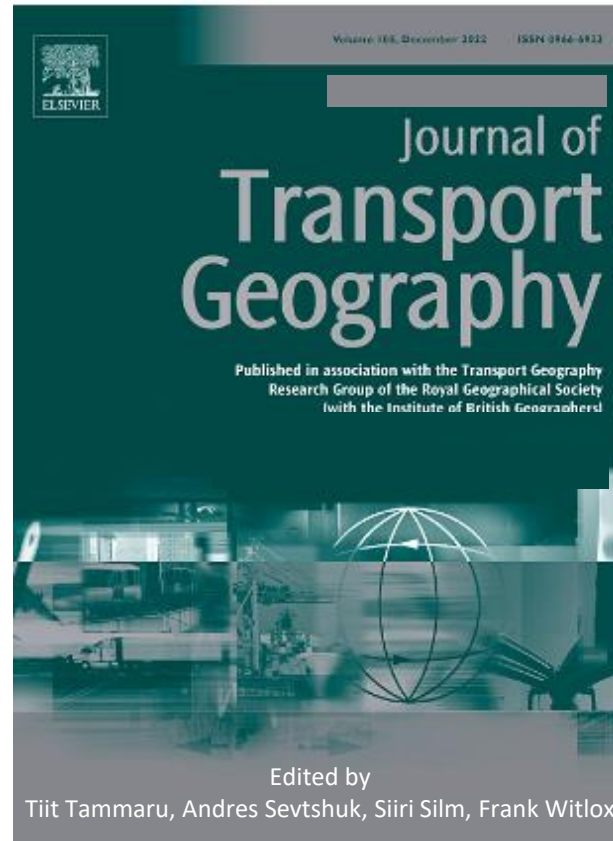
Levels of segregation



Daily activity spaces and long-term segregation patterns are strongly linked



From this perspective: What about 15 Minute City?



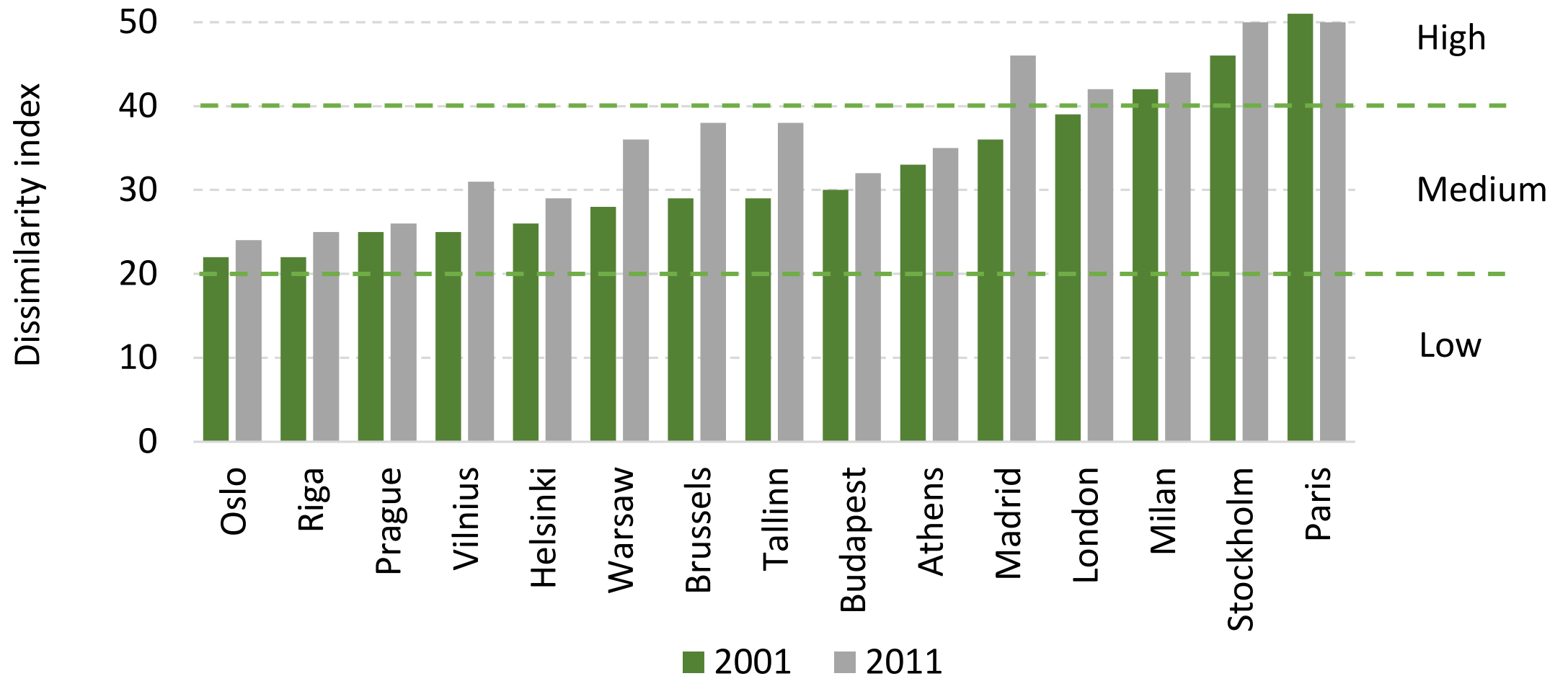
Special issue: Segregation and mobility — Understanding the nexus between inequality, segregation and sustainable urban mobility

Second takeaway message:

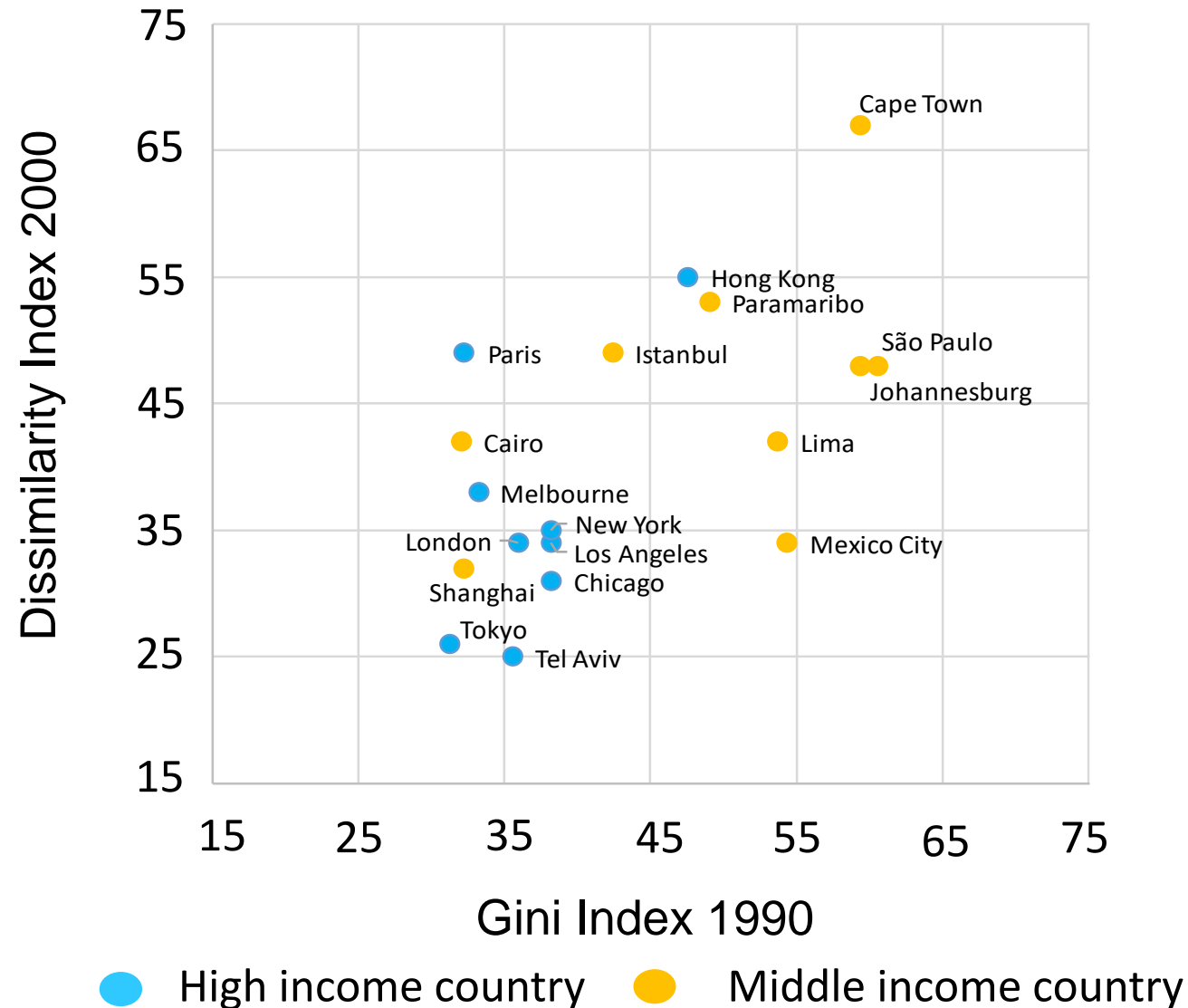
**Urban inequalities continue to be shaped by
residential segregation**

GLOBAL DYNAMICS OF RESIDENTIAL SEGREGATION

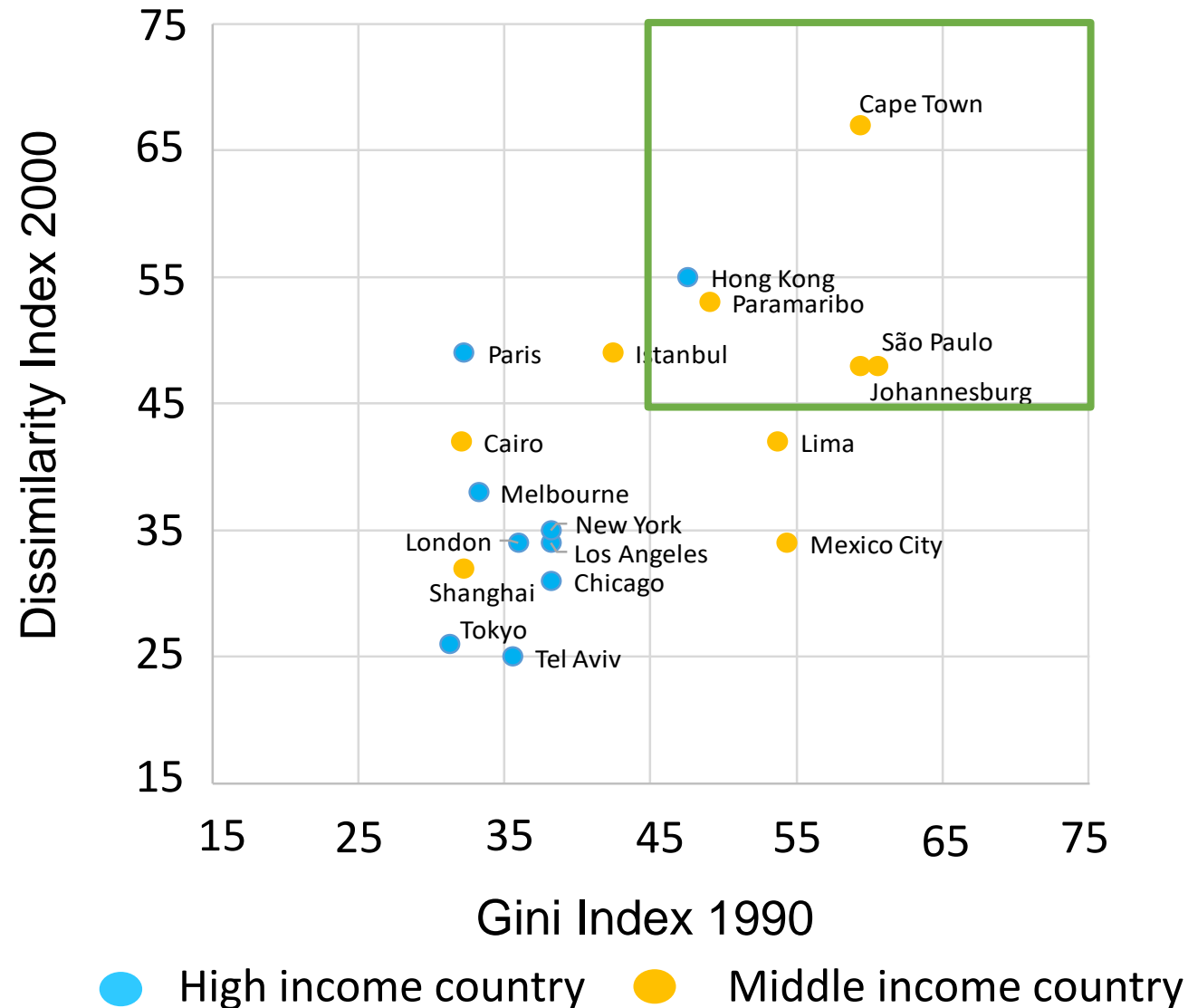
Level of segregation between top and bottom occupational groups



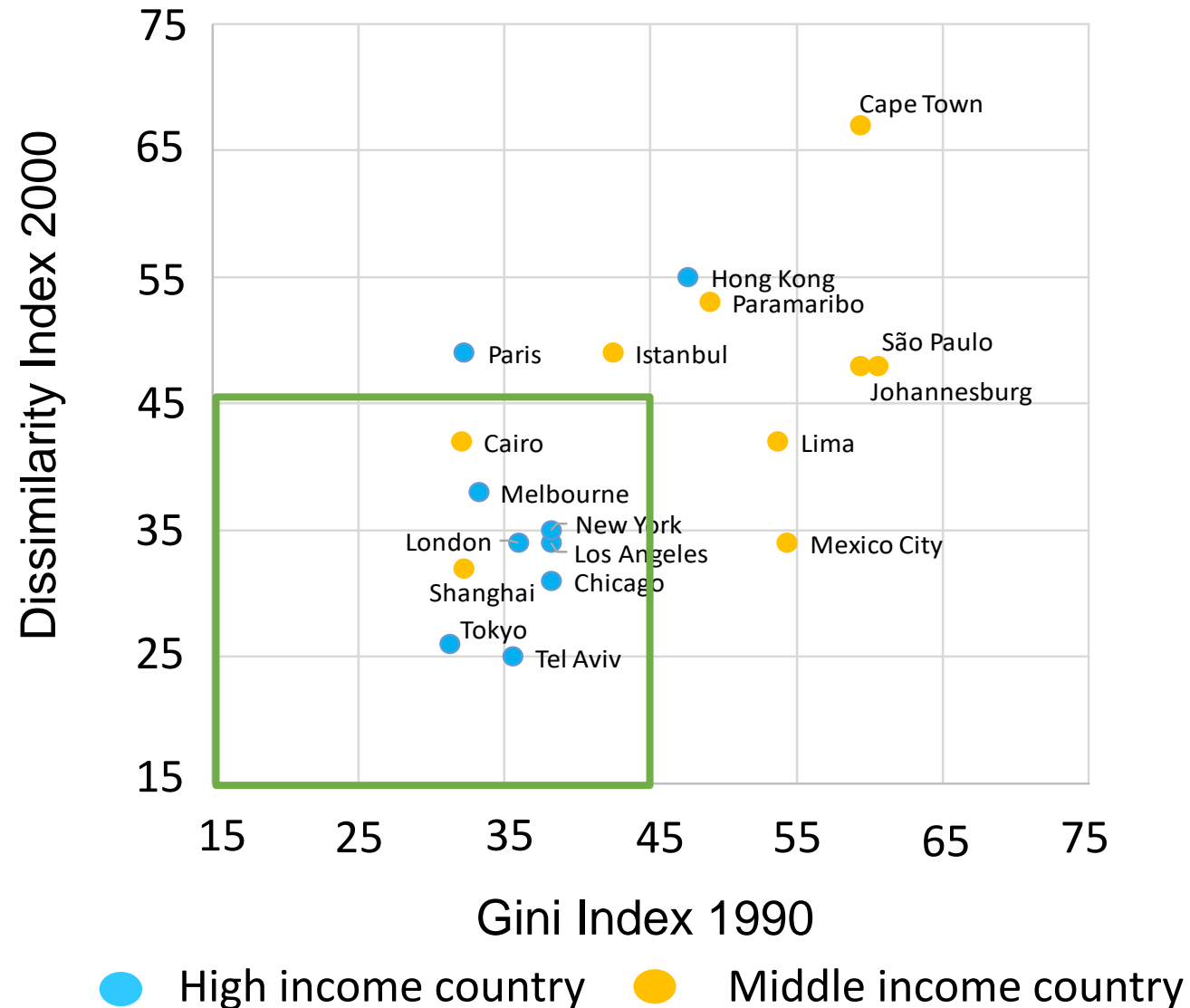
Levels of income inequality and segregation (1)



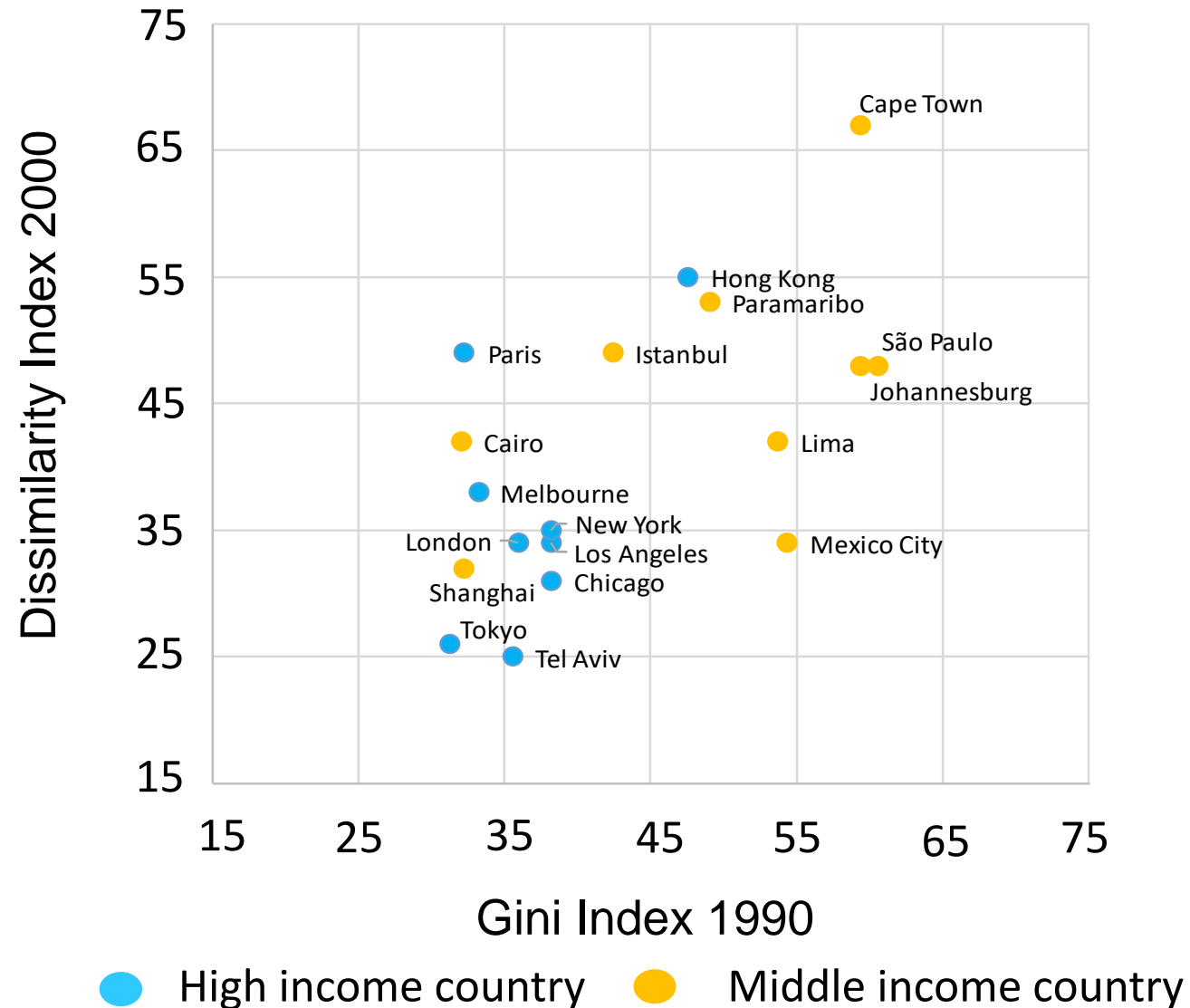
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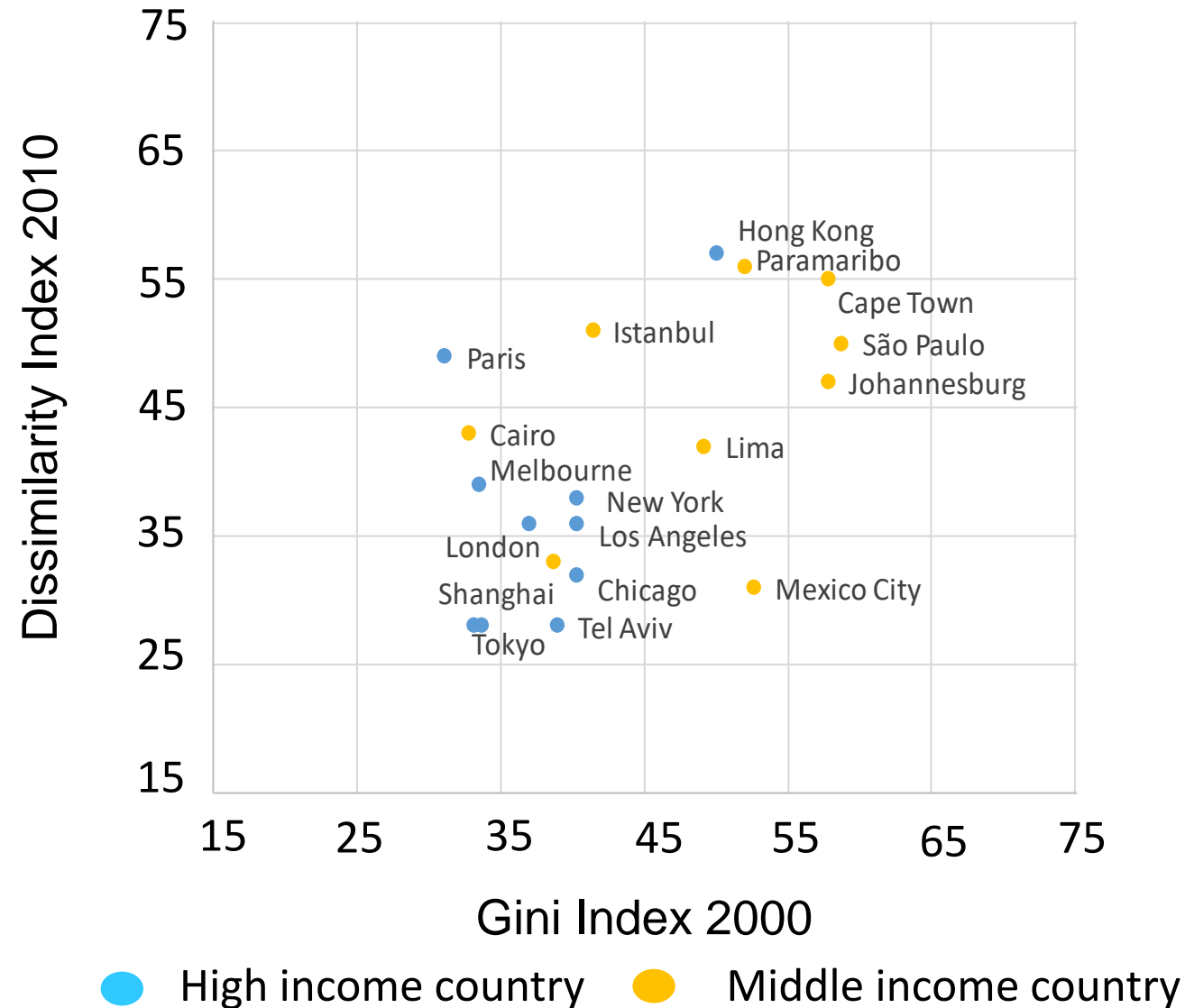
Levels of income inequality and segregation (1)



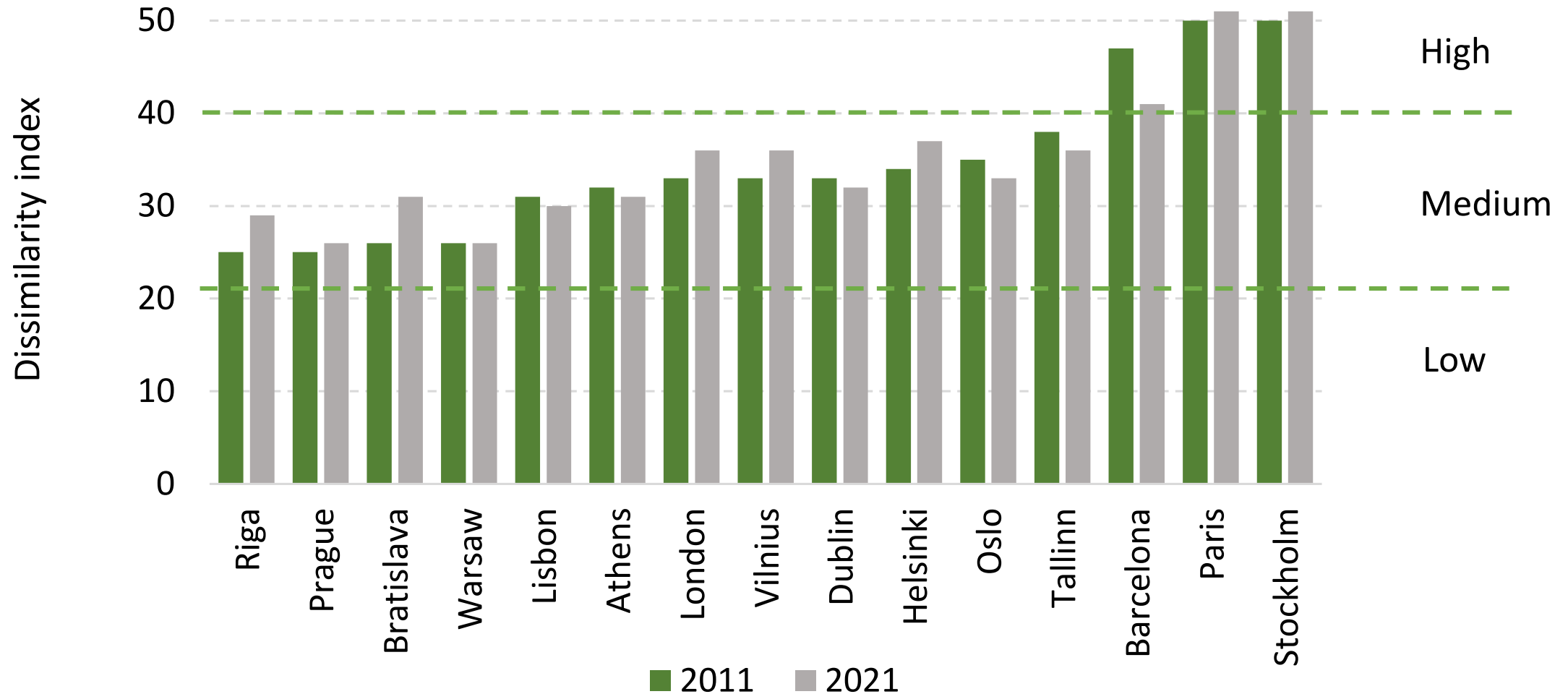
Levels of income inequality and segregation (1)



Levels of income inequality and segregation (2)



Level of segregation between top and bottom occupational groups



Third takeaway message:

**No clear evidence for a continued increase
in residential segregation**

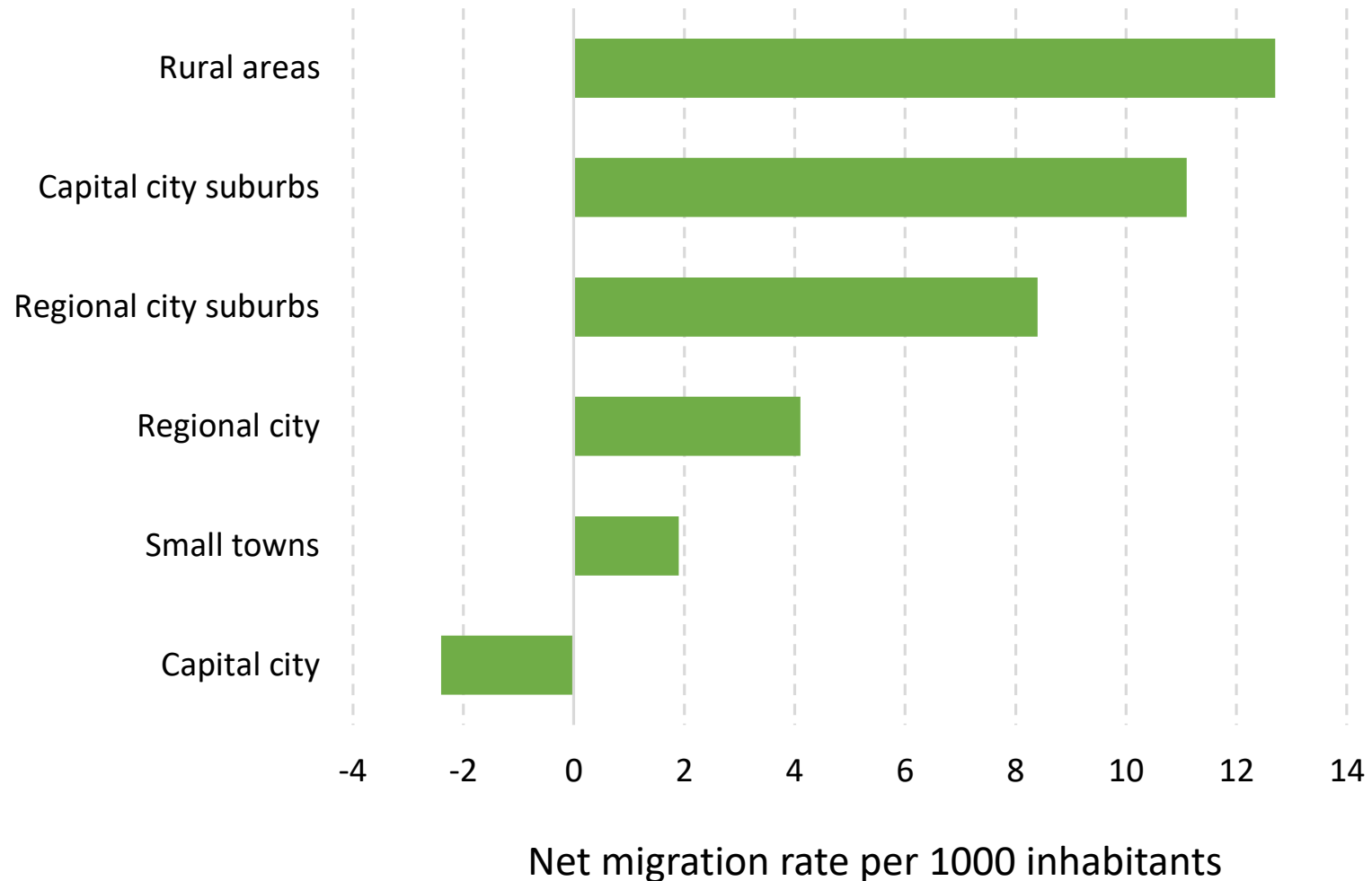
A LOOK FORWARD

(1) Digital transition and changing patterns of residential mobility

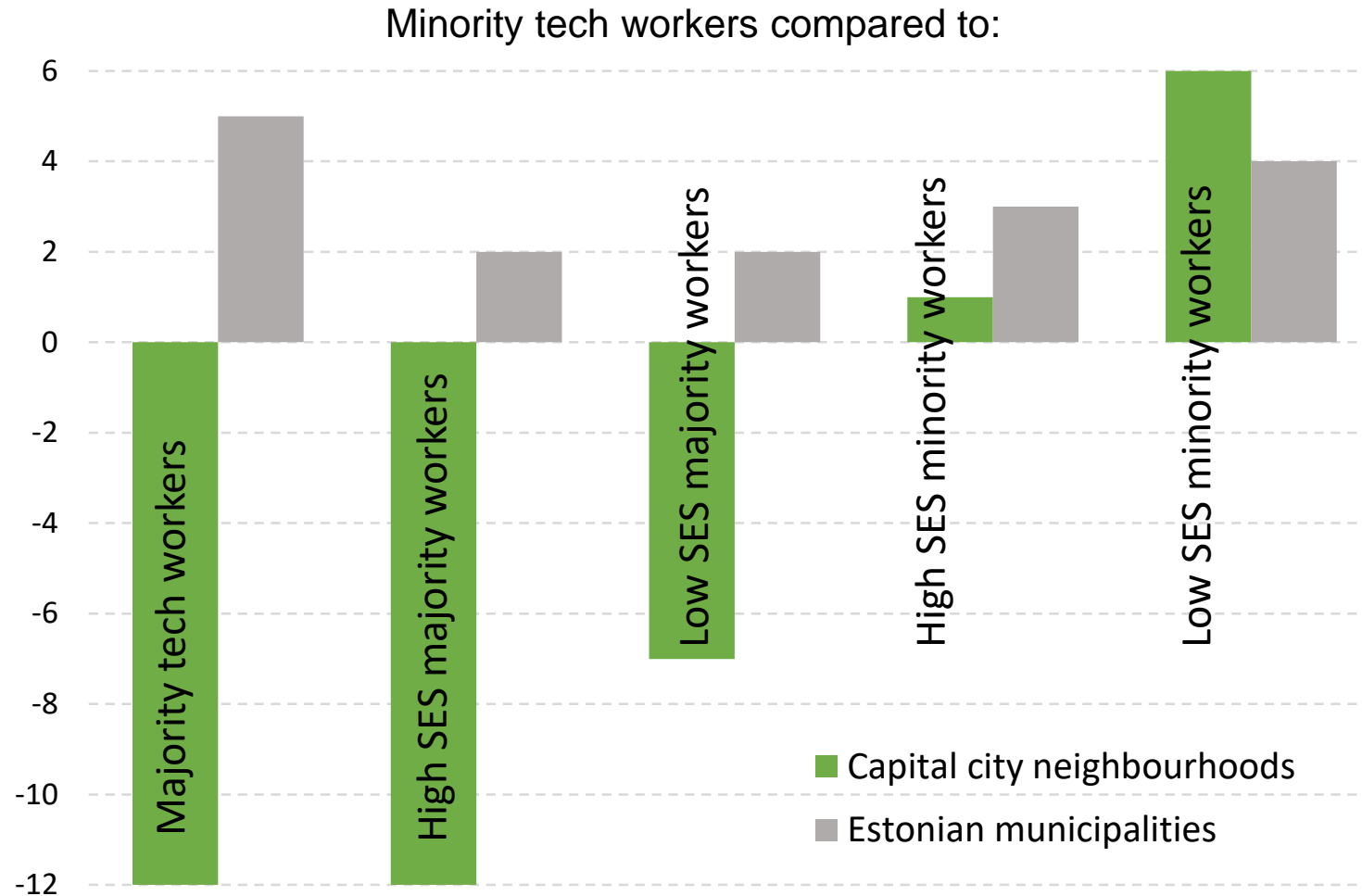


segregationcircles.eu

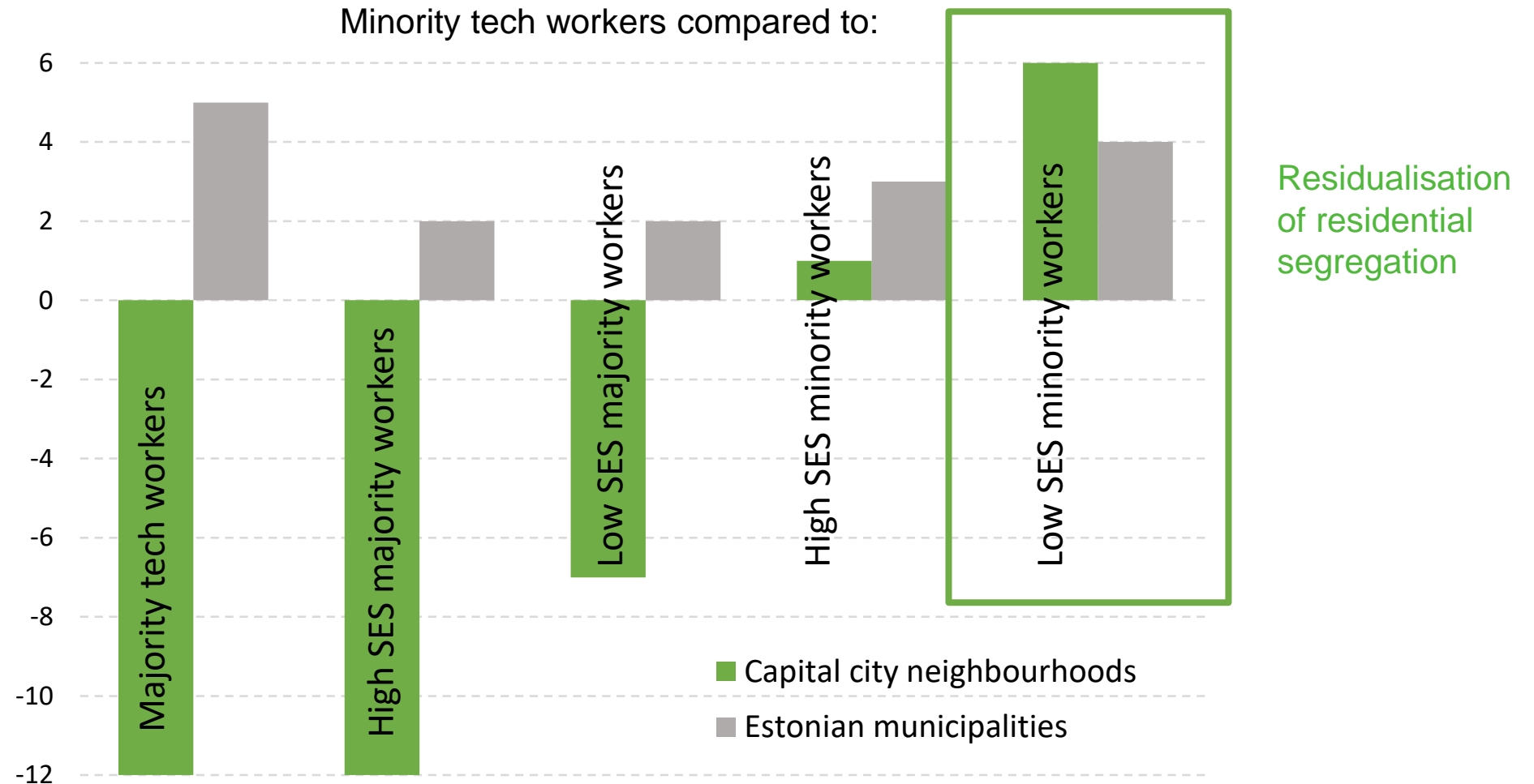
Net migration of teleworkers by settlement type, Estonia



Change in the level of residential segregation, 2011 to 2021



Change in the level of residential segregation, 2011 to 2021



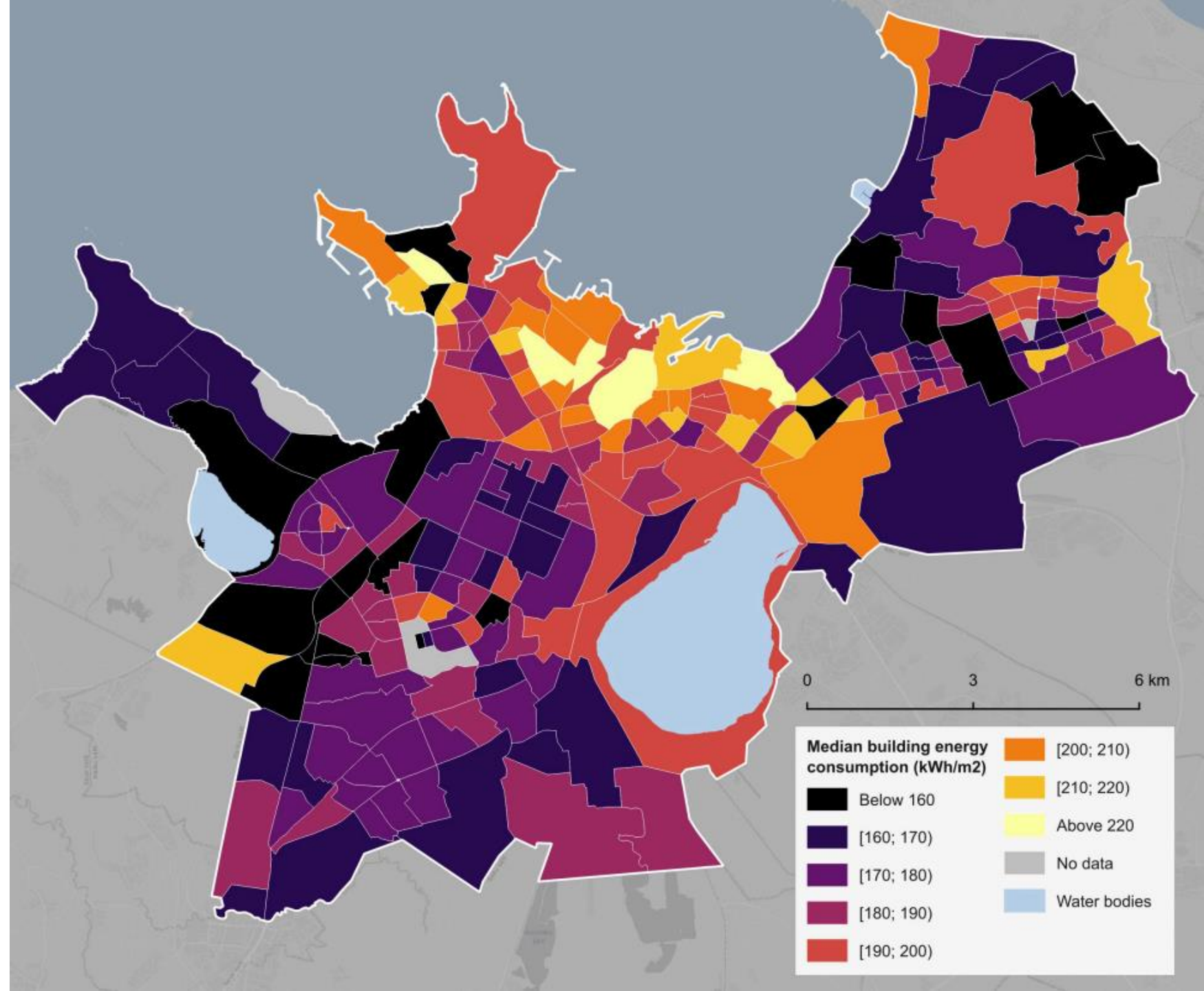
(2) Green transition, housing and mobility

CENTRE OF EXCELLENCE
IN ENERGY EFFICIENCY



ener.ee

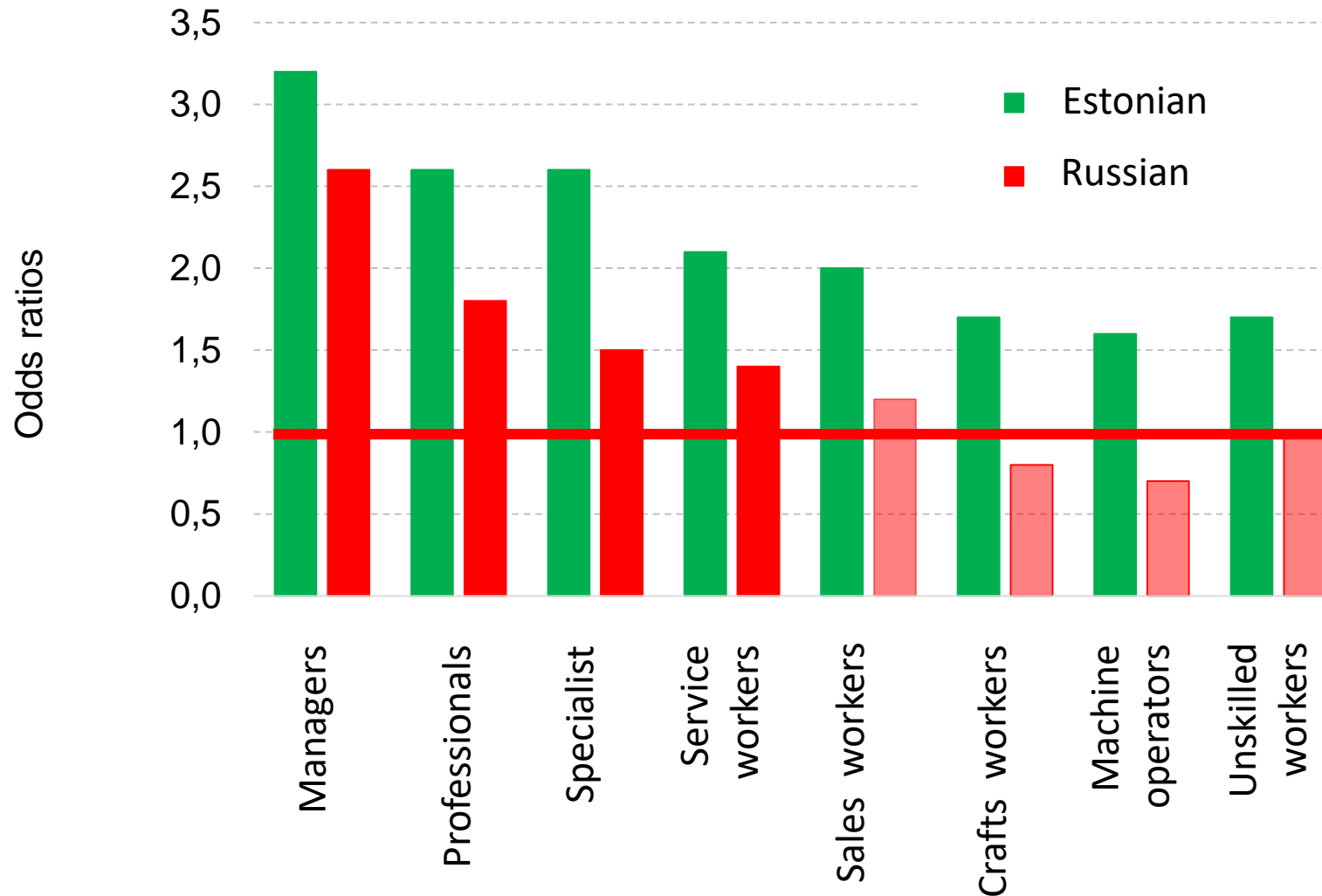
Energy consumption of residential dwellings by neighbourhoods



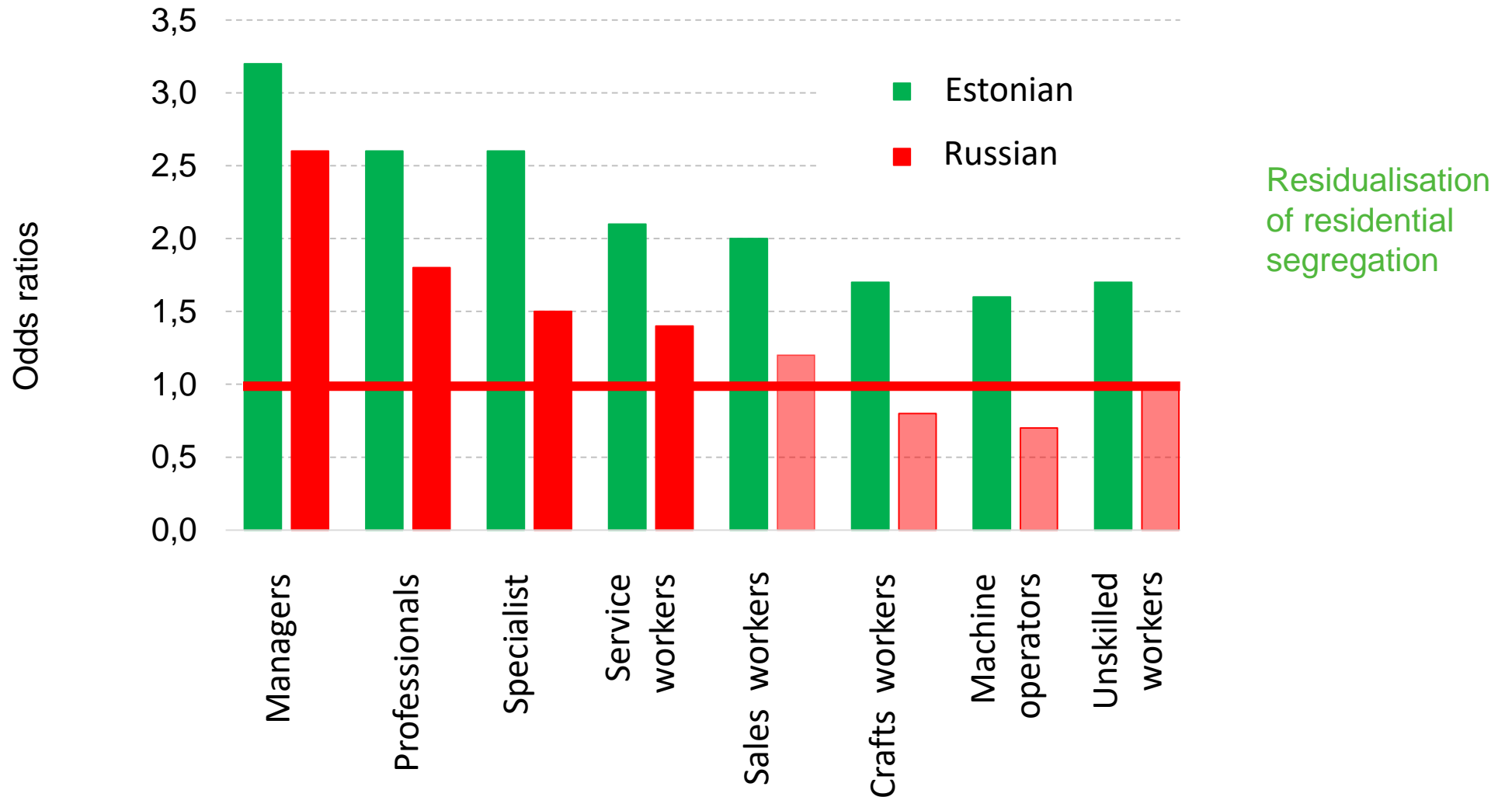


Eco-social paradox

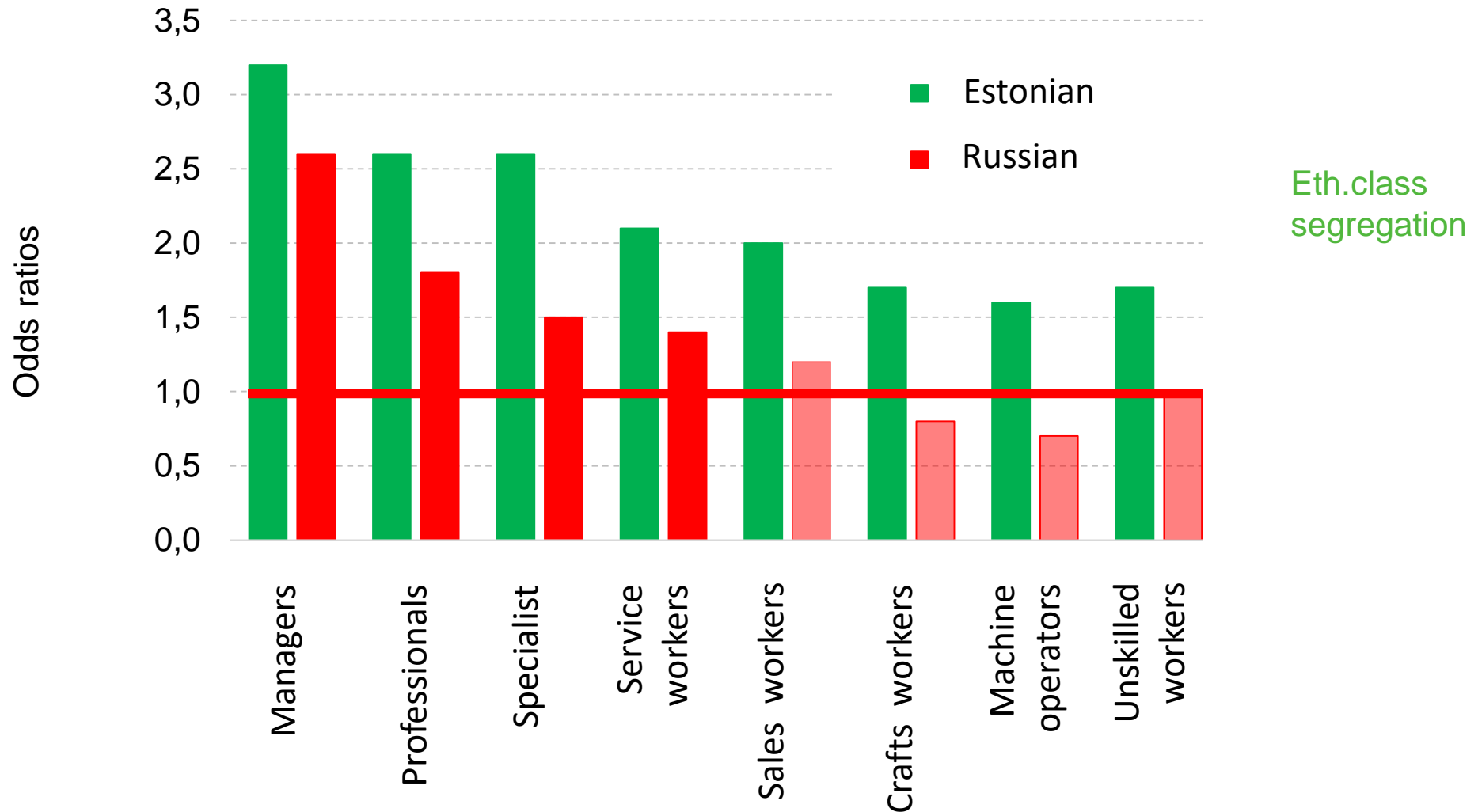
Odds of living in New vs Unrenovated houses by mother tongue and occupation



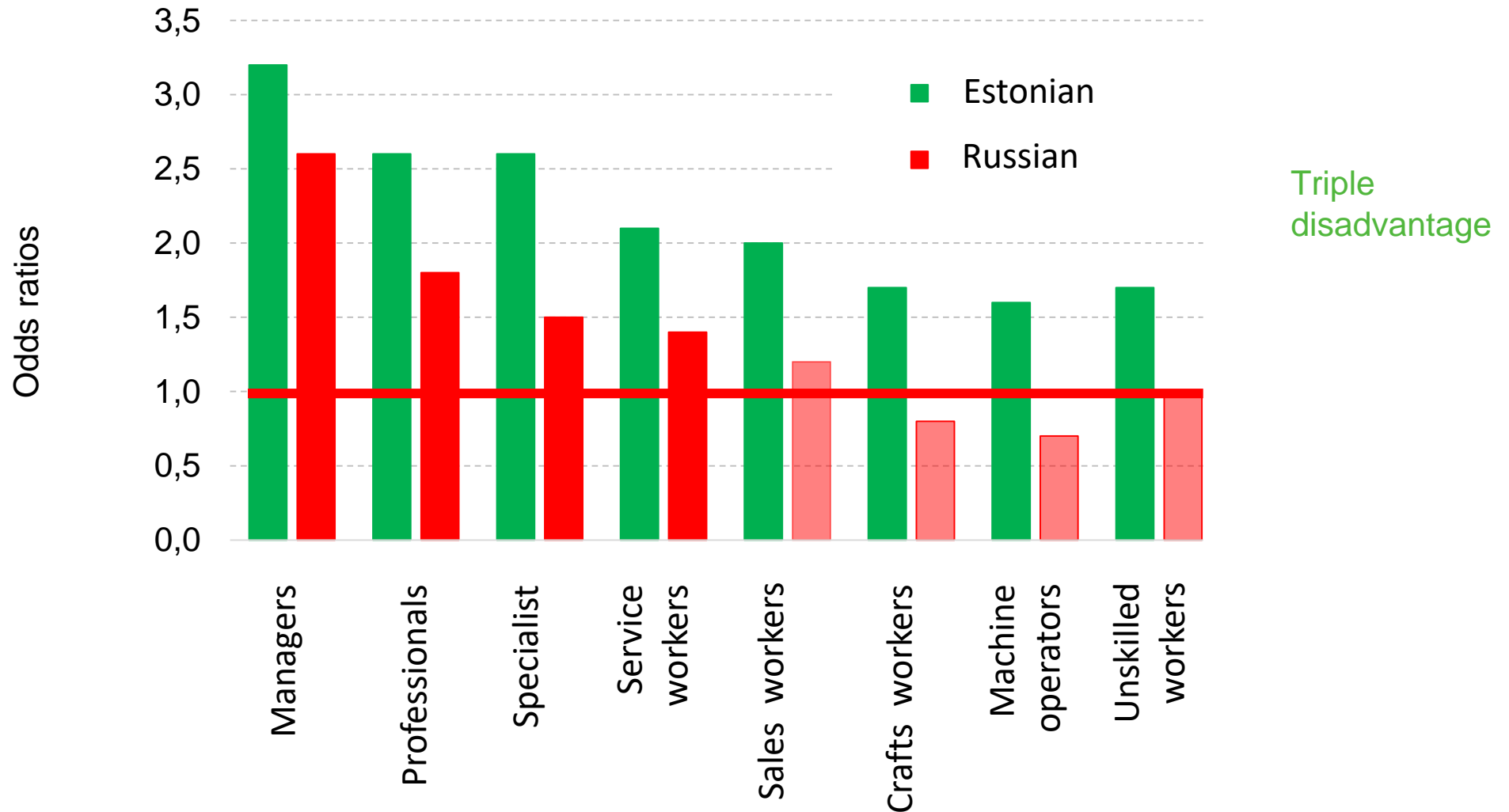
Odds of living in New vs Unrenovated houses by mother tongue and occupation



Odds of living in New vs Unrenovated houses by mother tongue and occupation



Odds of living in New vs Unrenovated houses by mother tongue and occupation



Third takeaway message:

**Residualisation of residential segregation
needs attention**

Key takeaway message:

- ✓ Professionalisation of the urban workforce is a global megatrend
- ✓ Urban inequalities continue to be shaped by residential segregation
- ✓ No clear evidence for a continued increase in residential segregation
- ✓ Residualisation of residential segregation needs attention

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Thank you!

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