International comparative analysis of public policy is central to the development of policy theory and practice. Comparisons between different cities and countries in terms of the level and form of state intervention, and how they affect well-being and levels of inequality within society, are crucial in advancing our understanding of the relationship between variables across units of both geography and time.

In this talk, I will discuss the benefits of interdisciplinary and comparative approaches in several fields of state intervention, namely social policy, housing and planning. I will also look at ‘ideal types’ as a useful tool to build theory, guide the formation of hypotheses and assist in the exposition of scientific results.