

## **Ethnicities Spatialized: Divided Cities and Contested Public Spaces**

**Day 3 – Stream 2: Times: 9.00-10.30; 11.00-11.45 (Popper Room)**

**Rapporteurs:** Prof. Daniel Monterescu, Prof. Marius Lazar

**Participants and discussants:** Zsuzsanna Eva Katona (Prof. Michael Herzfeld), Ana Aceska (Prof. Jonathan Spencer), Elisabeth Schober (Prof. Michael Herzfeld)

Approaching *space* as a socially produced entity and tracing the socio-political contradictions in human interactions as realized in spatial terms (Levebre), this panel focuses on contestations taking place in the various public locations of divided cities, in urban areas with pronounced ethnic tensions and in spaces affected by complicated histories of militarization and violence.

The papers presented in the panel will explore various public claim-making practices produced among ethnically mixed groups and social networks in three particular geographical settings: First, struggles over land and housing rights will take us to South Tel Aviv Jaffa, where the focus will be on the production, reproduction and eventual change of contested public areas in the multi-ethnic city. Furthermore, in the case of Mostar, the violent transition from a famed space of inter-ethnic peaceful cohabitation to a war-torn divided city will be exemplified by looking at boundary making processes at two public sites of the city. And finally, the vast urban space of Seoul will give opportunity to explore both the effects of militarization and anti-military sentiments that arise in reaction to the decade-long presence of US soldiers in the city, whose former superior position has given way to rapid social and economic devaluation as well as accusations of violent misconduct that are playing themselves out on a day-to-day basis in various entertainment districts.

One crucial common denominator holding this panel together is the focus on ever-shifting urban landscapes that are continuously constructed, shaped and manipulated in the midst of ongoing contestations over public spaces. Our panel seeks to explore shifting practices of boundary making and border crossing in the everyday usage of public spaces, and to look closely at how various actors seek to make their claims towards full access to the city, and towards a secure position in its urban areas.

**Key Words:** divided cities, militarization, contested public space, boundary making, ethnicity.

### **Zsuzsanna Eva Katona: Contesting Space across Cultural Intimacies in South Tel Aviv Jaffa: Becoming Public**

My research explores processes of producing, reproducing and altering certain kinds of publics in the contestation over space involved in the struggle for housing and land rights in south Tel Aviv Jaffa. I examine public claim-making practices that are being produced when mixed groups and networks (activist, resident groups or NGOs) advocate on behalf of Arab Palestinian Israeli (PAI)

and to a lesser extent Mizrahi Jewish Israeli (MJI) urban resident citizens (i. e. conduct ‘public struggle for social justice and equality’). Through this, I seek to answer the following question: How does this contestation for housing rights appear for various publics when it is made in a specific form of public claim with mixed groups of public residents? What spaces and what publics are being produced in this contestation?

Photography and video are key parts of my research, which I use in the following ways: as a mapping technique of the various spaces; in order to elicit the ethnographic depth of events or stories, to evoke the place; to build a relationship between researcher and people through engaging with and visualizing their views. This visual practice stresses that visual evoking of spaces and publics is never a straightforward process but at the intersection of multiple cultural regimes of knowledge (Mulvey). In an over-mediatised context the manipulation of both the visible and that which is kept invisible by various actors and publics needs to be navigated.

I build on the premise that space is socially produced and socio-political contradictions are realised spatially (Lefebvre). With Mitchell and Deutscher I take the approach that contradiction and conflict is not the exception. Public space is always contested and is made in the very conflicts and contradictions that take place in it through interconnected but often exclusive cultural intimacies and their spaces (extending on Herzfeld and Shryock). This is why I am examining the notion ‘public’ in the encounters and conflicts generated through the housing struggle. Activist groups and NGOs are not only aspects of the state as part of its framework but also as public residents that may make claims on the public (e.g. lobbying for budget and support) with different legitimating frameworks. Moreover, they may take their publics – that were made visible in the public struggle – into the municipality (e.g. as a movement of public residents of various backgrounds and their new public representatives) with the intention to redefine the notion of public, publics and their faultlines that are being deployed elastically by municipal and other state actors in their practices. Because of the ongoing contestation in public realms the landscape is always shifting and manipulated in various ways. I will examine ways in which some groups attempt to establish fixed alternative points of reference through their claim-making practice with story-making, curating public art, synthesizing and publicizing alternative information, public alternative events such as protests and public representation in municipal framework. My paper will focus on one of these practices.

**Ana Aceska: “Beyond dichotomies” or how to assess a very peculiar borderline: the cases of one monument and one kafana in Mostar, Bosnia-Herzegovina**

After the ethnic wars (1992-95) the city of Mostar experienced a radical transition: from a territory of celebrated ethnic urban cohabitation to a post-war divided city. The pivots of my PhD research are the changes of the everyday practices of “boundary making” in the use of public space in this city. The foci of the paper that I will present at the conference are the two central squares on the

two sides of the city: Rondo Square (West/Croat/Catholic Mostar) and Musala Square (East/Bosniak/Muslim Mostar). The main research question is defined as follows: How do city dwellers in their everyday practices on the main city squares make use of public space and the built environment in the processes of “boundary making” in the post-war times?

“Boundary” implies that city dwellers and analysts alike perceive the practices and meanings of one territory of influence (such as the sitting areas of Croat teenagers in front Zrinjski Park in Rodno Square) as different from the practices and meanings of another territory. The paper, and the whole PhD project, are based on 15 months of field research conducted in the city of Mostar from April 2007 to June 2008.

**Elisabeth Schober: Violent Imaginations: Liminal Encounters from Camptown to the Inner City. Seoul and the United States Armed Forces in South Korea**

This presentation seeks to cast light onto why violence has emerged as a core symbol for the turbulent relationship between the US military and the South Korean people during the last few decades of rapid political and economic change on the Korean peninsula. A Korean woman killed by her American soldier boyfriend in 1992 emerged as a central symbol within these quasi anti-colonial narratives, which first put a glaring light onto camptown / kijichon areas – the liminal places located near US military installations, where US soldiers tend to look for the company of sex workers. While violent imaginations about GIs and their entertainment areas have turned camptown areas into virtual no-go zones for many Koreans, others find themselves attracted by kijichon's atmosphere of tolerance towards deviant sexualities and illicit erotic fun. However, US soldiers today, having become acutely aware of their ongoing stigmatization and the progressive decline of the entertainment neighborhoods that have been allotted to them, increasingly seek to escape their devaluation by venturing into popular inner-city entertainment districts, where their encounters with young Koreans who increasingly understand the US military presence in their country as a form of occupation lead to strategic personal alliances as well as further conflict. Based on findings gathered during 21 months of ethnographic field research in Seoul, I seek to portray a rapidly changing environment in which US soldiers have long lost their unquestionably secure position and are instead struggling with widespread representations of violent behaviour and sexual misconduct, with their off-duty behaviour having come under much scrutiny recently.