



The Institute of Ethnology and Cultural Anthropology of the University of Warsaw  
invites paper proposals for the conference

## **Spaces of the Political**

to be held in

**Warsaw on 10-11 June 2016.**

**Guest speakers:** Prof **Michał Buchowski** (Adam Mickiewicz University, Poznań); Prof **Penny Harvey** (University of Manchester); Dr **Yael Navaro** (University of Cambridge); Prof **Jonathan Spencer** (University of Edinburgh).

### Conference theme

The conference interrogates the current state of political anthropology through a focus on space. A product of political relations, in turn space is what makes other political relations possible. It is also intrinsic to definitions of the state. But what are the spaces of the political today? This is not only asking about 'globalisation' and how it transforms territorial notions of sovereignty. At once more broadly and more concretely, we ask where the political is located and how different spaces shape political relations. This is primarily an exploration of 'ordinary', material space, but also the virtual spaces of electronic media, politically-charged landscapes of the imagination, the utopian and dystopian spaces of possibility. How does the political germinate and dwell in all those different spaces? Our interests range from the intimate spaces of the home and the body to spatialising states, to the political economy of world-systems and the geopolitics of empires, to the planetary politics of climate change, resource control, and deterritorialised sovereignty. How are the different spaces made and unmade? How do they condition emerging political configurations and dynamics? How are scales and connections produced, maintained, and unmade? How do different states relate to various types of space, from the capillaries of biopolitics, to everyday materialisations of statehood, to the digital infrastructures of global sovereignty? And how do various kinds of space meet, overlap, and communicate? Exploring political spaces ethnographically, this conference also reflects on the place of political anthropology in today's global intellectual space.

## Panels

We invite prospective presenters to propose ethnographically informed and theoretically grounded research papers, choosing one of the following four panels:

### ***Affective Spaces*** (discussant: **Yael Navaro**)

This panel explores the politics of affect and emotion in mutually constitutive relationships with various spaces. It focuses on the spatiality of intimate bodily affects as well as diffuse structures of feeling. The questions the panel will address include, but are not limited to, the following:

- What are the political effects of the affects flowing through, or imbuing various places and spaces?
- How can such affects be politically generated and used, through discourse, design, and material intervention?
- How can spatial affects be contested, transformed, resisted, or rejected?

### ***Terrains of Excess: Politics, Spectacle, Violence*** (discussant: **Jonathan Spencer**)

This panel focuses on the notion of the political as a domain enlivened by expressivity and excess. Seeking to shed light on spatiality as a constitutive dimension of culture and the political, the panel addresses, inter alia, the following questions:

- What spaces become the sites of cultural performances – terrific spectacles or terrifying acts of violence - that make politics a thrilling business?
- How do the specific material, social, or symbolic characteristics of different kinds of place and space affect or determine that cultural-political productivity?
- How do spectacle and terror produce or transform spaces and their political properties?

### ***Infrastructures of (Dis-)Connection*** (discussant: **Penny Harvey**)

Places are defined by their connections to other places; one productive way to conceive of space, in turn, is as a meshwork of such translocal connections. This panel highlights the political entanglements of material and digital infrastructures of connectivity by posing these and related questions:

- How are places and spaces constructed through various kinds of infrastructures, and what relationships can infrastructures establish between different places?
- What is the politics of the construction, maintenance, and use of such translocal infrastructures?
- What are the political effects of infrastructurally mediated connectivity, and how do political relationships change when infrastructures – through failure or by design – interrupt translocal connections?

***Spatializing the 'Post-': Socialism, Colonialism, Difference, Relation*** (discussant: **Michał Buchowski**)

Through focus on the prefix 'post-', this panel addresses the problem of the afterlives of plural pasts in various kinds of space and place. It raises the matters of the geopolitical, economic, and epistemological relationships between spaces described as 'post-socialist', 'post-colonial', and 'global'. The specific question addressed will include:

- What specific social and material landscapes are produced by the layerings of post-socialist, post-colonial, and other pasts?
- What social and political forms and dynamics emerge when post-socialist and post-colonial legacies are meshed with neoteric 'global' processes grounded in specific localities?
- How do cartographies of post-socialism, post-colonialism, and globalisation overlap or diverge over various territories of the body, the imagination, or politico-economic relationships?

*Submitting proposals*

Prospective participants, if they so wish, are invited to submit more than one proposal – in each case specifying the panel in which they would like their respective paper to be included.

Paper abstracts of approximately 250 words should be emailed to [spacesofthepolitical@gmail.com](mailto:spacesofthepolitical@gmail.com) by **29 February 2016**. Selection decisions will be subsequently communicated by 11 March.

For any queries, please contact: [spacesofthepolitical@gmail.com](mailto:spacesofthepolitical@gmail.com)