Methodology Lab: “Spatialising Culture: Methods and Approaches to Studying Space”

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Methodology Lab:

“Spatialising Culture: Methods and Approaches to Studying Space”

Date: 16th-17th May 2018

Venue: International Graduate Centre for the Study of Culture, Giessen, Germany

Application deadline: 15th February 2018

Contact: Nikola Baković, Alina Jašina, Amina Nolte (spatialising.culture@gmail.com)

In the last several decades, there has hardly been a concept that has penetrated social science and humanities in a more profound fashion that that of space. From a supposedly sidelined conceptual tool (Foucault, 1986), it came to be regarded as one of the most crucial features of human existence, prompting many scholars to subscribe to and to contest the advent of “spatial turn” (Döring and Thielmann, 2008), arguably one of the most popular “turns” in postmodern academic world (Bachmann-Medick, 2016). At the most general level, space affects the ways we experience, navigate through, understand and also recreate the world around us (Low, 2017). In more particular terms, it is implicated in plethora of social issues, from conflicts over real and imagined spaces, erecting physical and symbolical boundaries to separate and keep together individuals and groups, to multifaceted interaction of humans with their natural and man-made environments. Social production of space (Lefebvre, 1991) and construction of individual sense of place (Cresswell, 2014) is intertwined with and affected by politics, economics, power-relations, knowledge, culture, as well as by globalisation of commerce, the technologies of communication and transportation. Overall, space and related concepts (i.e. place, territory, landscape) trail long histories and multiplicity of meanings and connotations which reflect different aspects of life (Massey, 2001).

While investigating production, negotiation and acquisition of tenuous and fungible spaces is
an overarching goal of the numerous researchers, the application of the ever-growing theoretical scholarship on the peculiarities of selected case-studies remains rather a problem. Moreover, the disciplinary differences and plurality of methods often pose additional obstacles in approaching the notion of space. This workshop, therefore, picks up precisely on these demands and intends to enable doctoral and post-doctoral students to reflect on their own projects as well as on the steps they take to explore how meaningful spaces are both created by people and embedded in wider socio-political and economic structures.

*Spatialising Culture: Methods and Approaches to Studying Space* offers interdisciplinary thematic workshops in which the participants will present their own dissertation material and share their findings. We invite doctoral and post-doctoral students dealing with space and related concepts (place, landscape, territory, glocality) from the disciplinary perspective of anthropology, history, geography and sociology, as well as those applying interdisciplinary approaches to submit their abstracts. Four thematically conceived panels will be chaired by expert discussants, who will comment on previously circulated methodology-oriented papers, and offer hands-on advice on applying specific theoretical models and methodological tools on particular type of empirical material. The workshops will be followed by a joint roundtable discussion, in which invited experts and participants, on account of analysed topics and problems, would conceive concrete ways in which space can be studied and approached from different disciplinary perspectives. The panels will cover the following topics connected to the concept of space:

- Migrations, borders and minority issues
- Urban spaces in global context;
- National spaces and territoriality
- Environment and landscape.

Participants are encouraged to tackle the following questions in their papers, as well as to introduce other issues arising when using the concept of space and related terms:

- How to select appropriate methods to study particular research topics connected to the notion of space?
- In what ways does the selected method affect research results and understanding of theoretical postulates?
- What is the influence of disciplinary conventions on the ways in which space is approached, and how does interdisciplinarity broaden interpretational possibilities?
- How can the rise of new technologies and digital humanities enhance the scholarly research of spatial processes?
- What are the pitfalls and challenges of applying prominent theories on space on different kinds of empirical material?

The guest scholars will serve as panel discussants and participate in the final roundtable:
The interested doctoral/post-doctoral students are invited to submit a 300-words abstract of their research project, with special focus on methodological issues, together with a short professional biography (up to 100 words) by **15th February 2018** to spatialising.culture@gmail.com. Decisions on submitted abstracts will be communicated by **28th February 2018**. Selected participants are expected to submit their full papers (8-10 pages) by **15th April 2018**. The workshop will take place on **16th and 17th May 2018** at the Graduate Centre for the Study of Culture (Alter Steinbacher Weg 38, 35394 Giessen).

If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact the organisers:

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Also, feel free to visit our website: [https://spatialisingculture.wordpress.com/](https://spatialisingculture.wordpress.com/)

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