Making and Changing Spaces of Action under the Global Condition

Joint Conference
7th Flying University of Transnational Humanities (FUTH)
15th International Summer School of the Graduate School Global and Area Studies
Graduate Centre Humanities and Social Sciences of the Research Academy Leipzig

Leipzig, Germany 12 to 15 June 2017

The Graduate School Global and Area Studies (GSGAS), in collaboration with the Flying University of Transnational Humanities (FUTH) – a consortium of Sogang University (South Korea), University of Pittsburgh (USA), University of Tampere (Finland), National Chiao Tung University (Taiwan), University of Leipzig (Germany) – and supported by the Collaborative Research Centre “Processes of Spatialization under the Global Condition”, and the Centre for Area Studies at the University of Leipzig invites paper proposals for presentation and participation at a summer school for PhD-students to be held June 12-15, 2017 in Leipzig.

Research Context of the Summer School

Each year beginning in 2010, the Flying University of Transnational Humanities (FUTH) has gathered PhD students and Postdocs in the humanities and social sciences across the globe for a summer school centering on presentations by leading scholars as well as by PhD-students. As a truly transregional collaboration it profits from the willingness of participants to share the core arguments of their current research project and to situate it in a global context.

The Leipzig based Graduate School Global and Area Studies as the local organizer of this year’s joint conference currently comprises 120 PhD candidates from more than 30 countries and from a wide range of disciplines across the social sciences, history, and the study of cultures. Its annual Summer School is an integral component of the PhD programme and occupies a special place within the educational concept of the Graduate School by providing PhD candidates with a forum to present the results of their respective research to their peer group, including fellow PhD candidates and Postdocs from abroad.

Encouraged by the very positive experience we made in 2013 with this collaboration, we are happy to announce the Summer School of 2017 again as a joint effort with FUTH, and we invite young researchers from all over the world whose research interests are in line with the focus of this year’s Summer School.

Thematic Focus of the Summer School

When defining globalization as a dialectical process of de- and reterritorialization we have to analyse space as a central resource in global processes – past and present. To position a political project towards and in the world means to spatialize it. This may take the format of a territory as we know from state building processes, but it can also take the format of a chain or a network. Other projects prefer the format of enclaves or use a
language of transcending all kinds of borders to describe their ambitions. What brings all these efforts under one analytical umbrella is the fact that they react to the global condition, which means that they react to the unavoidability of connectivity (not to be confused with free trade, cosmopolitanism etc. which is only one of the many facets of reactions to the global condition). To find the right spatial format is the challenge all these projects of global positioning are confronted with – not in the same way and not disposing of the same kind and amount of resources, though in principle the challenge is the same. We invite papers analyzing the various ways actors (of all kinds, from individual to collective, from state elites to companies, from rebels and revolutionaries to conservatives and reactionaries) take up this challenge and combine their spatial routines with the search for new (as well as old and well experienced) spatial formats to meet this challenge.

Not all entanglements are global in nature, many of them remain transnational or transregional, some national, or even regional or local. Connections happen at all spatial levels and they remain unstable. Spatialization as an effort to situate one’s own activities (economic, political, cultural etc.) towards this multi-scalarity has to be renewed all the time – often it repeats the solution found beforehand but sometimes a new format is experiment with. We are particularly interested in these innovations but we welcome papers on repetition as a dimension of spatialization as well.

The current political situation where many commentators see rather old fashioned spatial formats such as the protectionist nation state coming up again is an interesting moment for the study of global processes. Some see deglobalization progressing as a countermovement to what happened since the 1980s. Instead of opposing modern global processes and strategies of nationalization we are looking rather at the embeddedness of all spatial formats in the context of the global condition and their changes over time.

We are interested in practices and processes through which (relatively durable) spatial arrangements are created, maintained and subverted. Who forges national and transnational connections and how do these impact the making of spatial orders? How are people integrated or socialized into spatial arrangements with global reach or ambition? Which role does power, the access to resources and violence play in this regard?

We invite contributions that present case studies and/or integrate them into a comparative discussion of practices of spatialization under the global condition.

Our notion of space draws on classical theories, such as Henri Lefebvre’s distinction between conceived, perceived and lived spaces or Michel DeCerteau’s theory of space as practice. People create historically concrete social spaces. Their choices are not random and rarely spontaneous. They are encouraged or constrained by powerful institutional arrangements. These might be ideological, social or material and manifest as infrastructures, architecture, maps, instructions or traditions.

The thematic focus on dialectics between projects of globalization and space making processes presents us with a tension. As an abstract notion globalization seems to stand in contrast to the everyday experience of space as obstacle and challenge. In order to act globally people must expand far beyond the limits of their body-space and act on multiple scales. They mobilize, construct, connect or subvert a plurality of spaces using techniques and technologies of connectivity. They imagine geographies, produce corridors for the movement of people and objects and create intersections for reliable translations, between locations, nations or institutions. By studying global space making we move beyond abstract notions of flow and exchange, to interrogate the spatial arrangements that direct and organise flows, determine their speed and create interruptions. Through this lens “globalization” becomes visible in the plural, as a multiplicity of projects of space and place-making. In addition, we use the term “global condition” as the historical time-frame since the emergence of a particular dense interaction between different projects of globalization beginning in the early 19th century.

We invite contributions from geography, anthropology, history, political science, international relations, economics, religious and literature studies and related disciplines as well as scholars with diverse area studies specializations. Potential papers may be both theoretical or empirical. Topics could include but are not limited to:

- Theories of practice of global space making
- Concepts of actors and agency in various disciplines and their connection to questions of space making
- Analysis of institutional arrangements, power structures or interventions that create spaces for global action
- Conflicts between different (groups of) actors about competing globalization projects in terms of space making
- Analysis of multiple cultural ways of relating to, activating, circumventing or subverting transnational spaces
- Social imaginings that frame the way people orient themselves or are oriented in globalizing projects.

**Sequence of Events of the Summer School**

The Summer School is organized into panels of 3–5 presentations each. Additionally, invited keynote speakers will introduce main aspects of the general theme. At the end of the Summer School, a round table with reports from the panels will bring the major findings together and integrate them into a conclusion.

Panels will be organized by young researchers who are invited herewith to submit applications containing a 1-page description (300 words) of the panel’s main goals and its relevance to the overall topic of the Summer School, plus a list of possible speakers with an indication if they have already agreed or have to be contacted after the acceptance of the panel. The selection of the panel will be undertaken by a committee of the Graduate School where supervisors as well as PhD candidates and postdocs are represented.

**Application**

Young researchers interested in the topic are cordially invited to submit either a proposal for a panel or an individual paper by application to the Summer School. The application should include:

- Personal details, as well as academic status, including relevant academic affiliation.
- An abstract of 300 to 500 words, together with an explanation of its connection to the ongoing dissertation as well as its relevance to the overall topic of the Summer School.

via e-mail to:
University of Leipzig, Graduate School Global and Are Studies
Dr. Martina Keilbach
Emil-Fuchs-Str. 1
04105 Leipzig
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Registration and application deadline: **30 April 2017**

Authors of accepted papers will be informed no later than 10 May 2017. A maximum of 25 papers will be selected. In order to prepare for academic commentary, submission of the actual paper (10 pages) is expected by **31 May 2017**. The paper will be pre-circulated and should fit within a presentation between 15–20 minutes.

**Participation fee**

The participation fee is 50 Euro. This fee covers all costs for conference material (including a reader of relevant publications that are discussed at the Summer School by keynote speakers), refreshments during the breaks, lunch meals, as well as participation in the welcome reception and the cultural events that will be held during the Summer School.

Upon request, reasonably priced accommodations in Leipzig will be arranged by the conference office.

With successful participation in the Summer School, it will be possible to receive a certificate from the Graduate Centre Humanities and Social Sciences. Further information can be found under: http://home.uni-leipzig.de/gsgas/
Childcare

For all events, childcare will be provided. Registration is requested (by 31 May 2017) at the above-mentioned address.