Politics and Ethnography in an Age of Uncertainty
The 12th Annual Ethnography Symposium

University of Manchester: 30th August – 1st September 2017

Keynotes:

Professor Emma Crewe (SOAS, University of London); Professor Bruno Latour (Sciences Po);
Professor Bill Maurer (University of California, Irvine); Professor Hugh Willmott (CASS Business School, London)

Stream 20: Organizing Outsiders and their Spaces

Convenors: Mona Florian, Jana Costas (European University Viadrina),
Gideon Kunda (Tel Aviv University)

A fascination with "outsiders" (Becker, 1963) infuses the history of social sciences. Following the Chicago School, outsiders are people "who share the label and experience of being labelled as outsiders" (ibid., p. 10), such as "the nuts, the sluts and the perverts" (Goffman, 1959) who stand outside of the social order. Other established reference points of this fascination are Simmel's personage of "the stranger", Foucault's studies on madness, clinics and prisons, Spivak's thoughts on the subaltern (1988) or more recently Agamben's "homo sacer" (1998) embodied in the refugee. Being labelled as an outsider not only excludes these people from access to education, goods, services, civil rights, law and order, it also pushes them to distinct spaces which are decoupled from the wider society.

These spaces can be "total institutions" (Goffman, 1961), isolated and enclosed spaces in which a community of outsiders lives and works under the more or less strict control of a formal organization. Examples are old-age homes, asylums, camps, prisons, abbeys or army barracks. Other socio-spatial formations in which outsiders dwell are illegal encampments like the "Jungle" in Calais, favelas or otherwise socially deprived neighbourhoods such as Alice Goffman's Sixth Street (2014). Both types of spaces are inherently different. Total institutions take outsiders out of the city and impose the tight grip of a formally organized control regime on them, while these other spaces lack formal social organization and have limited or biased access to government services and intervention, which transforms the city in their area and shapes and limits relations to the world around them. Despite these differences, both may be seen as "spaces of the expelled" (Sassen, 2016), who's populations have grown dramatically over the last decades of global capitalism. While we share Sassen's concerns about the new quality of expulsions of outsiders, we think her argument overlooks the fact that "the expelled" are not only objects of suffering and help-receiving (Bauman, 2002) residing at the systemic edge. Given their often critical condition, it might be especially important to also explore how on a micro-level new forms of locality (Martin, 2015), subjectivity (Agier, 2002), community and political action (Sigona, 2014) are produced and organized, which potentially "unlabel" the outsider and blur the boundaries between the social system and its margins. Chances of "unlabelling" might lie in community projects, volunteerism, activism but also the creation of new digital spaces, which open up new possibilities for agency and community building but also for contact between insiders and outsiders.

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Organizations play a vital role in "labelling" and "unlabelling" outsiders (Matza, 1969). As "thresholds" (Agamben, 1998; ten Bos, 2005) they classify people as citizens, mental patients (Goffman, 1961) or "bare life" and manage passages between these categories. Being part of an interorganizational network of local authorities, the police, security companies, third and private sector organizations and NGOs, they design, administer and supervise spaces outsiders inhabit. They control boundaries, but also shape and manage contacts between insiders and outsiders. At the same time, organizations dealing with outsiders are objects of labelling themselves. Muslim community organizations, for example, might be discredited as potential terror cells, philanthropic organizations as "do gooders" or "lefties", public authorities as fascist or racist.

In this stream, we seek to examine how organizations produce outsiders and their spaces on the micro-level. We are interested in papers that deal with the following or similar questions: How are passages between the labels "outsider" and "insider" organized and legitimized? How do organizations "make" spaces in which outsiders reside? Which intraorganizational processes or phenomena influence their interaction with outsiders? To what extent do they enable contact, solidarity, participation or political action? How do outsiders and insiders deal with these organizations, how do they play by or with their rules? How are organizations themselves labelled when dealing with or consisting of outsiders? With its tradition of studying societal peripheries ethnography offers a range of opportunities to investigate these questions. It relates micro-phenomena of organizing to the broader social, cultural or historical setting and thus can shed light on the dynamics of managing outsiders within our neighbourhoods and cities. Its focus on practices allows to show how the "watchers" of the outsiders are involved in producing them (Van Maanen, 1978) and the spatial and material reality they live in.

Please submit a 500 word abstract or proposal by **Tuesday 28th February 2017** to florian@europa-uni.de. Decisions on acceptance will be made by 30th March 2017.

References

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Sassen, S. (2016): At the Systemic Edge. Expulsions, in: European Review, 24 (1), pp.89-104.

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The Annual Ethnography Symposium is a leading international forum for debate and dialogue on the theory, practice, and form of ethnographic work. It was established in 2005 at the University of Liverpool as a multi- and inter-disciplinary platform for researchers using ethnographic methods in the social and management sciences In this time it has established an international reputation for attracting the best keynotes and papers from across the world, covering disciplines as diverse as anthropology, business and management, criminology, history, health-care, philosophy, psychology, socio-legal studies, social care, and sociology. It is unique in its commitment to cross-disciplinary dialogue and its reputation also lies in providing friendly, supportive, yet rigorous critique on papers, integrating and supporting doctoral students, and opening up a wider network of cross-disciplinary scholars to those employing ethnographic methods.

In 2017 the symposium takes as its theme the question of politics and ethnography in "an age of uncertainty" and is hosted at the University of Manchester. In bringing the 2017 annual ethnography symposium to the University of Manchester we hope to take inspiration from the first industrialised city and all the tensions and contradictions that have made politics so lively in this city. From the Peterloo massacre to the mass trespass, the suffrage movement and the founding of the Trade Union Congress, Manchester has been a hotbed of protest, resistance, and revolution. Beyond these obvious manifestations of politics, we might say politics gets made first - or at least reinvented - in Manchester! The site where the atom was first made 'nuclear', and where the 1980s acid house rave culture forced us to re-think the boundaries of politics as it expanded our imagination about possible new ways of being, the energies in Manchester are never very far from politics. Feeding off some of these energies is the University of Manchester. Founded in 1824 as the Mechanics Institute, it became England's first civic university and since then has changed lives around the world; it was here that Rutherford split the atom and Chadwick discovered the neutron, where Alan Turing built the first self-contained computer, and where graphene was discovered by Nobel prize winning scientists Professor Andre Geim and Professor Kostya Novoselov.The University also has a proud heritage of cross-disciplinary ethnographic research, following the founding of the Manchester School Social Anthropology by Max Gluckman in 1947.

We invite you to join us in Manchester for the 12th International Ethnography Symposium. For the first time the conference is hosting a series of specialist streams that address the theme of politics from a variety of perspectives and disciplines see http://www.confercare.manchester.ac.uk/events/ethnography/ where further information, registration, travel and accommodation details can also be found.