

15. Rewriting Belonging and Identity Through Urban Spaces: Everyday City-making in Turbulent Times

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The proximity of city life offers a particular socio-political setting which not only accommodates but is also a product of situated everyday practices of social actors from all walks of life. City-space presents the concrete conditions in which actors construct both exclusionary privileged spaces with reserved entry as well as alternative/radical/progressive counter-spaces that renegotiate terms of membership to an imagined community. As such, the city is an open and unfinished productive process of territorialization of wider political trends, reverberating in the everyday struggles of its inhabitants, who reappropriate and rearticulate urban spaces to demarcate inside/outside. The production of contending spaces is concurrently a process of (re)producing contending identities, be it inward looking/singular/particularistic or outward looking/multifarious/porous. Given the rise of reactionary nationalisms in multiple settings in our contemporary societies, as well as novel forms of resistance that challenge such static timeless construal of belonging, everyday struggles of city life prove to be a stimulating venue of research to unearth the concrete roots of collective identities that undergird political subjectivities as relational and sited daily practices. In this sense, the city not only is the spatial and social environment, but it assumes an active role in the making of the political.

Against this backdrop, the session invites contributions that are premised on sound (preferably interdisciplinary) theoretical grounds and rich empirical research, investigating everyday territorialization practices of social actors in the city-space that produce multiple and often contending place-based identities, as well as how such constructions of belonging in turn are translated into acts of city-making. Research that integrates new conceptual tools for understanding place-based identities in the city-space, novel methodological approaches that bring together a variety of data and methods (including visual methods), and case studies or comparative studies that demonstrate how wider political trends play out in everyday settings are welcome.

In an attempt to explore the often overlooked nexus of everyday spaces and subjectivities (and the ways in which they are mutually constructed), the session attempts to examine interconnected themes that include but are not limited to the following:

- a. everyday situated practices of identity construction,
- b. acts of territorialization to reframe the city and belonging to the city,
- c. social conflict between contending belongings in the city-space,

- d. emotional and embodied dimensions of urban identities,
- e. the interaction of place-based identities with wider socio-political trends,
- f. as well as how local struggles in shared urban spaces reach out to the national, international, and transnational levels.