



IMAGINATIONS OF THE STREET EUROPEAN CAPITAL OF CULTURE EVENTS AND THE RIGHT TO THE CITY

Workshop, 2-4 May 2012

Center for Advanced Studies (CAS), Ludwig Maximilian University of Munich (LMU)
Seestraße 13, D-80802 München (Tel: +49 (0) 89 / 2180 72080)

Organizers: Derya Özkan, Vildan Seçkiner
Workshop Assistant: Yeliz Soytemel

FILM SCREENING (2 May, 20:00): Ekümenopolis- City Without Limits (Imre Azem, 2011)

3 May 2012, Thursday, 09:30 Welcome and Introduction by Derya Özkan

SESSION 1 (3 May, 10:00-13:00) : “The production of the street as a political space and the space of politics”

Discussant: Vildan Seçkiner

The ECoC events attracted a substantial amount of investment in projects involving the regeneration of urban public space. Accordingly, the imagination of the street was considered an important element of city marketing. It is evident in the programs and final reports of examples such as Glasgow, Liverpool and Istanbul ECoC events that street life was instrumentalized to attract visitors; and it was turned into a means for the promotion of a city image.

This session will focus on the production of the street and its political contents to discuss the approach of the ECoC events to the political dynamics of street life. Some questions to explore are the following: What is the political on the street? Which terminologies and theoretical discussions can lead us towards rethinking and realization of the right to the city on the street? What kind of urban public spaces are produced by the political actions/moments on the street? What is the relationship between the instrumentalization of the street as political space by ECoC and similar mega city events and the street as a space of political acts that do not necessarily conform to the urban public order?

10:00-10:10 – Introduction by Vildan Seçkiner

10:10-10:30 - Presentation 1: ‘Whose City is it? Glasgow 1990: City of Culture or Workers City?’ by Gerry Mooney

Glasgow, as European City of Culture in 1990 is frequently held up as the model City of Culture, an ex-industrial city on the north western periphery of Europe undergoing successful



cultural-led urban renewal and regeneration. It is often cited the example par excellence that other European Cities followed, from Belfast and Liverpool through to Porto, Rotterdam and Krakow, among others. Glasgow was not the first European COC, but arguably it has been one of the most talked about. In part this is due to the dominant narrative that represents Glasgow COC 1990 as a ‘success story’. However, in this presentation it is argued that it is also due to the politicisation of Glasgow, or perhaps more correctly, the re-emergence of a contested politics of Glasgow in which questions of whose culture, whose histories, stories, imaginings and visions for the Glasgow of the future were being valorised and celebrated. That there was vocal opposition to Glasgow 1990 is marginalised in official accounts as well as in a number of academic essays on the city’s year as European Cultural Capital. Much of the opposition, brought together around a relatively loose and diverse ‘workers city’ movement, sought to mobilise an alternative vision of Glasgow, drawing on its history as a place of agitation, popular unrest and struggle. In particular the alternative vision fought to recall Glasgow’s socialist past, its ‘Red Clydeside’ period from the First World War to the 1930s and beyond. It also celebrated a history and vision of Glasgow as an industrial city, a proletarian city – a workers city! While this alternative vision should not be accepted uncritically, for reasons that the paper will touch upon, it was nonetheless successful in raising the much more fundamental question of the right to the city – and the right to particular histories and particular stories – and the right to construct and pose alternative visions for the future. Glasgow 1990 therefore is not only a story of a large-scale culture-led urban renewal programme – but also of resistance and struggle – and the right to be heard in the contemporary city.

10:30-10:40 Q & A

10:40-11:00 - Presentation 2: ‘Try writing a law about being a responsible citizen – Liverpool’s participatory ECoC agenda’ by Anna Richter

My study of the 2008 Liverpool ECoC focused on discourses of participation – a term traditionally associated with grassroots and activists – as propagated on the part of the organisers of the ECoC. There is thus an implicit irony in finding local authorities calling for participation: are they confessing their failure to involve people with a view to compensate for democratic underachievement? Irony aside, the enthusiasm seems to emerge from recognising limitations of top-down decision-making and ineffectiveness of externally imposed and expert-led policy as well as research – yet without resulting in questioning the economic and hence exclusive principles of urban regeneration *per se*.

Addressing the question how ‘participation’ is actually understood by official ECoC organisers, my paper presents a critical discourse analysis of interviews with key informants in Liverpool. It unpicks a (self) celebratory urban policy discourse in Liverpool that permitted replacing the focus on actually existing problems, inequality and their causes with ‘fluffy’ solutions, colourful street parties and tasking unemployed volunteers in branded jackets and caps with greeting tourists and visitors (Richter 2010). Official discourse of participation is shown to depoliticise and thus narrow down the breadth of understandings and actual ways of participation and the Right to the City. Rather than suggesting that this results in taking



politics, and by extension power, out of participation (discourse), however, this serves a decidedly political urban policy agenda that appears as apolitical and culturally innovative. The central role that participation played in the ECoC thus engenders a paradox: as a discursive space, the notion encompasses processes of symbolic, inclusive politics whilst ultimately depoliticising the scope for political participation by reducing its scope to cultural consumption. Culminating in the explanation that ‘writing a law about being a responsible citizen’ is impossible, Liverpool08 was arguably more concerned with creating consensus for ongoing regeneration efforts than creative, expressive and autonomous participation.

11:00-11:10 Q & A

11:10-11:40 Coffee break

11:40-13:00 Closing / concluding discussions

Lunch, 13:00-14:30, CAS

SESSION 2 (3 May, 14:30-17:30) : "Resistance through Street Arts: performances and public demonstrations"

Discussant: Erden Kosova

The ECoC programs encouraged street artists to take part in the ECoC program and act as an intensifier of the city marketing image. In this session, we will dwell on issues of the street as a space of free expression and resistance against the policies of authorities and their attempts to govern public space. The inclusion of such expressions and acts of resistance by mega city events to generate an image of the city desired by the authorities will be discussed. The discussion will develop around the following questions: To what extent and in what ways do the governing policies and the market co-opt resistance and free expression? To what extent and in what ways is outdoor culture (street festivals, etc.) transformed into a commodity by the market and the governors? What does “freedom on the street” stand for?

14:30-14:50 – Introduction by Erden Kosova

Contrasting with its distinctively political content, the contemporary art practices in Turkey seem to have failed in transposing this edgy character into their presentational/institutional framework. The frequently expressed yearning for breaking up the constraints of the protected spaces/neighbourhoods assigned for artistic activities have not produced much practical outcome. On one hand, there have been reactions, even physical attacks, coming from the traditional segments of the peripheral city quarters, which associate the art circles with cosmopolitan decadence, cultural profligacy and dynamics of gentrification -which clearly points at the failure of delivering the message of the politically engaged practices to the intended audience. On the other hand, the current process of rapid commercialisation of the art scene brought back the commercial gallery model as the dominant format of presentation,



suffocating all experimental alternatives for articulating a space for sharing art. Most of the occasional appeals for locating art practices onto the public space shy away from displaying the existing and exacerbating antagonisms and come up with a very sterile and simplistic take on converging art and public space. These dilemmas will be illustrated with some visual examples in the introduction to the session.

14:50-15:10 - Presentation 3: ‘De-Spatialized Space as Neo-Liberal Utopia: Gentrified İstiklal Street and Commercialized Urban Spaces’ by Yaşar Adanalı

Today İstanbul ranks seventh among world cities in the number of foreign visitors and international meetings it hosts and fifth in the number of dollar millionaires living within its premises. It is possible to list many other striking statistics about İstanbul. What these numbers indicate is that İstanbul is moving at a fast pace towards becoming a global city and it finds its place in the world city map as a global magnet of capital and people. "Global city" is a project made possible via the reproduction of the city in the framework of processes of capitalist accumulation and mechanisms of neoliberal production and consumption. This project consists of spatial, economic and social processes as well as those that are by content and application political.

Over two million people walk up and down İstiklal Street, which is about two kilometers long, every day. This massive human flow is accompanied by a massive capital flow and its transformative effects. Along with its side streets and the neighborhoods surrounding them, it has become a showcase where the gentrification process in Istanbul can be observed and intensely experienced. Led by market economy actors, the gentrification process that takes place on the basis of singular enterprises, parcels or buildings is deeply felt as it starts transforming the spaces of daily life.

This article discusses how the local government-capital alliance imposes its vision of gentrification via commercialized and disciplined city spaces, and the rising urban opposition confronting this process in relation to one of the most important streets of İstanbul, a city on its way to becoming a global city.

15:10-15:20 Q & A

15:20-15:40 - Presentation 4: ‘Kayısı Kent A4 Project’ by Dilek Winchester

Kayısı Kent A4 is a fanzine/zine-like-thing. Each issue is made by a different artist /artist collective and is copied and sold by mobile photocopiers in the streets of Istanbul. The vehicle widely used by the mobile photocopiers is an anonymously designed, multifunctional design wonder, combining a photocopy machine, a laminator, a car stereo and a generator on wheels. Kayısı Kent A4 is reproduced and distributed by means of the possibilities presented by this anonymous design and clings to the illegal but often overlooked mobile photocopier network like a benign parasite. The first issue came out in March 2010. Kayısı Kent A4 is initiated and run by Dilek Winchester. The presentation will focus on the first issue which offers an introduction to what Kayısı Kent A4 is, and more specifically explores the intricacies and possibilities of the informal distribution network that serves as the medium through which the project is conceptualized and realized. Evrim Kavcar, Burak Bedenlier, Nalan Yırtmaç,



Stephan Kurr, Delphine Rigaud, Yasemin Özcan Kaya, Antrepo, Burak Delier, Jorge Méndez Blake, Yahya Madra, Ceren Özselçuk and Balca Ergener are among the contributors to the first twelve issues.

15:40-15:50 Q & A

15:50-16:20 Coffee break

16:20-17:30 Closing / concluding discussions

SESSION 3 (4 May, 10:00-13:00): "Visibility on the Street"

Discussant: Begüm Özden Fırat

The purpose of the European Council to achieve a 'Unity in Diversity' through ECoC events in terms of a European identity resulted in the inclusion and exclusion of various acts and identities on the street; and this attempt was legitimized with reference to the neoliberal discourse of democracy. While the people raising the issue of identity politics were in struggle with the state on and off the streets', the issue of visibility was articulated by the ECoC events and by the final reports as a matter of social integration.

The third session will discuss issues such as the street as the space of identity politics and self-expression, identity politics claiming visibility on the street, and the modes and tactics of street politics that are outside of the visible part of daily life. What is included and excluded by the ECoC events in terms of visibility on the street? In what ways are these exclusions and inclusions exercised? In this session we will discuss the street not only as the space of visibility for politics but also as the space of invisible resistance.

10:00- 10:10 Introduction by Begüm Özden Fırat

10:10-10:30 - Presentation 5: 'Aesthetic Political Action for the public space as the space of visibility' by Ezgi Bakçay

Between the discussion of the production of the street as a political space and the resistance through art and public demonstrations, visibility merges as the key notion. While the issue of visibility was articulated by the ECoC events as a matter of social integration (based on the notion of multiculturalism, for instance); visibility can as well become a tool against social integration and political legitimization. This presentation aims at describing visibility as the effect of the political action and the aim of a politic struggle. The place of this struggle is the public space as the space of visibility. This is the place where invisible bodies become political actors in the course of political actions. "Aesthetic political action" can become a form of political action if/when it participates in formation and reconfiguration of visibility, if we use the term of Ranciere, it seeks to change "the distribution of the sensible." In this presentation I propose to discuss, what I call, "aesthetic political action" as a notion by looking at example of creative manifestations for saving Emek Cinema threatened by urban



regeneration. I propose to make visible the invisible struggle for public space in European Capital of Culture.

10:30-10:40 Q & A

10:40-11:00 - Presentation 6: 'Feminist Publics and Queer Injuries: performing sexualities in Istanbul's streets' by Begüm Başdaş

My work offers feminist engagements and embodied approaches to urban politics and culture by focusing on women's contestations and use of public spaces in Istanbul. Since the early 1980s, Istanbul has become a site of/for differences where ethnic, religious, gendered, sexualized, and all other groups articulate their identities and bodily claims to the city. In spite of a growing literature on these changing dynamics, gendered experiences of the city and women's sexualized identities have rarely been a topic of concern to understand how Istanbul's cosmopolitan diversity is actually lived. Thus, I am interested in the discourses and everyday practices of women's claims to urban citizenship, activism, and the nation-state in Istanbul. Following Anna Secor (2004), I engage with how both heterosexual and non-heterosexual women assert their rights to become a producer of the city, its spaces, and citizenship itself. Looking at the moments of encounters, negotiations, and continual insertions of women's sexualities in the city, I examine how publics and public spaces are made.

In this paper, I focus on divergent feminist claims to the city through their politics and performances of street activism. I discuss the location of feminist movements within the current milieu of Justice and Development Party's neo-conservative liberal politics in Turkey and articulate how multiple conservatisms on women's bodies and sexualities have emerged within the feminist movements, framing queer injuries. Multiple conservatisms work through regulating how gendered and sexualized identities should be made visible in politics and public spaces. Such normativity of visibility in city streets, controlling women's performances of sexualized identities through appropriations of desire and pleasure, begs the question of what remains as invisible resistance to claim rights to diversity in urban publics and public spaces through gendered and sexualized lived experiences.

11:00-11:10 Q & A

11:10-11:40 Coffee break

11:40-13:00 Closing / concluding discussions

Lunch, 13:00-14:30, CAS

SESSION 4 (4 May, 14:30-16:30): "Governing the street and policy making"

Discussants: Derya Özkan, Vildan Seçkiner, Erden Kosova and Begüm Özden Fırat



The main argument of ECoC events was putting ‘culture’ on the agenda of governance. To this end, in 1997, the Council of Europe put forward a model of cultural governance, which described the position of culture and art in the urban economy and proposed a monitoring system to promote cultural developments according to public financing and investment. Although these cultural concerns were pronounced by the Council of Europe as a way to invest in the quality of life of the citizens, the results of the events revealed that the main purpose had been the touristic attraction and competitiveness in city marketing rather than facilitating cultural accessibility for the inhabitants.

In this concluding session, the reproduction of the street as a space of ongoing resistance, the concept of governance, the policy making mechanisms of local governments in terms of the right to the city, and the exclusion and inclusion processes in the policy making processes will be discussed. The relationship between the state, local governments, the market, civil society and everyday life will be dwelled upon. Some questions to draw on will be the following: Can a mode of ‘participation’ in decision making processes in terms of the liberal democratic discourse solely be considered as the realization of the right to the city? In what terms can we discuss the case of international mega city events in terms of “the right to the city”?

14:30-14:50 Discussants lay out the framework for the concluding discussion

14:50-15:30 Questions and contributions

15:30-16:00 Coffee break

16:00 – 16:30 Closing / concluding discussions

Dinner, 19:30 (Restaurant to be announced)

This workshop is organized as part of the DFG Emmy Noether Research Project “Changing Imaginations of Istanbul: From Oriental to the ‘Cool’ City” and with the support of the Center for Advanced Studies, LMU. The Emmy Noether Research Project is hosted by the Institute of European Ethnology.

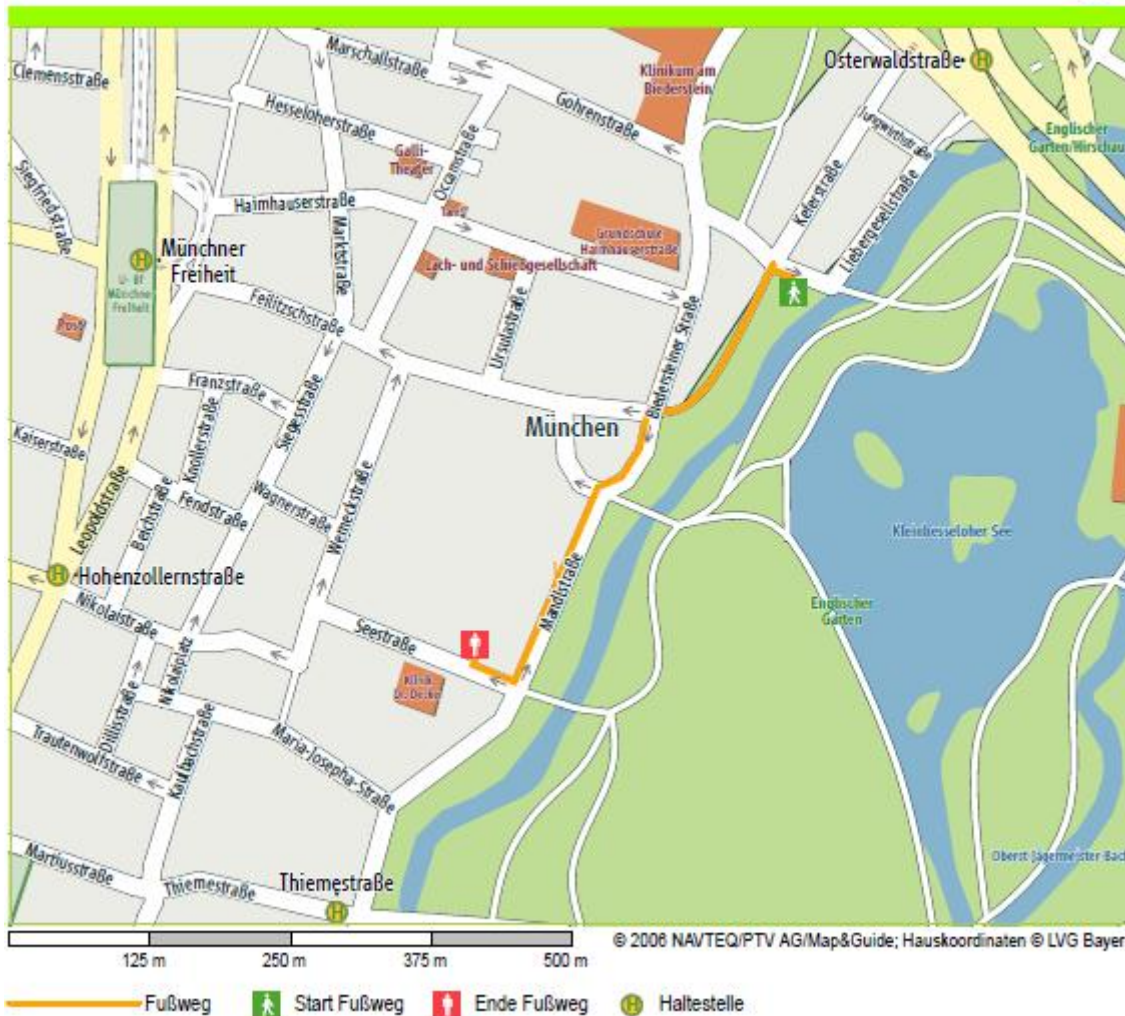
Institute of European Ethnology
Oettingenstrasse 67
80538 München

http://www.volkskunde.uni-muenchen.de/forschung/forsch_projekte/derya/index.html



Walking directions **from Hotel Gästehaus Englischer Garten (Liebergesellstrasse 8) to CAS (Seestraße 13):**

Weg von München, Liebergesellstraße 8 nach München, Seestraße 13



For directions **from the airport to the hotel**, please see the hotel website:
<http://www.hotelenglischergarten.de/html/directions.html>