

Conference

Crowds, Protests, and Processions

April 21, 2015

Zentrum Moderner Orient, Kirchweg 33, 14129 Berlin

Organizer: Reza Masoudi Nejad

Programme

10:00-10:30 Arriving, welcome, and introduction

Morning sessions, chaired by Dr Julian Tadesse (ZMO)

10:30-11:20 Dr Mikkel Thelle: Appropriating spatial right: Vote, violence and embodied citizenship in nineteenth-century Copenhagen

11:20-11:30 Short tea-break

11:30-12:20 Dr Sam Griffiths: Three processions and a protest: built environment agency and symbolically privileged movement in Victorian Sheffield

12:30-13:30 Lunch break

Afternoon sessions, chaired by Dr. Nils Riecken (ZMO)

13:30-14:20 Dr Ajay Gandhi: The Language of the Crowd: Public Sociality in Urban India

14:20-14:30 short tea-break

14:30-15:20 Dr Reza Masoudi: From Built to Performed Space: Post-election protests in Tehran

15:20-15:30 short tea-break

15:30-16:15 discussion and conclusion session

Dr Mikkel Thelle | iksmikkel@cas.au.dk

Aarhus University & The Danish Center for Urban History. Denmark

Appropriating spatial right: Vote, violence and embodied citizenship in nineteenth-century Copenhagen

The lecture will examine a number of public disturbances in urban space in the decades around 1900 that in different ways relates to appropriation of urban space. These both political motivated and more undefined riots and demonstrations will form a platform to discuss how a new repertoire of activism was developing in a city that was simultaneously under transformation, and where public regulation was being redefined. In the light of this empirical discussion, the lecture will turn to concepts of appropriation, choreography and affordance in order to reflect on the ways in which city space, emotion and violence was related, and what this can mean for the notion of public space.

Biography: Dr Mikkel Thelle is educated as a historian from University of Copenhagen. Working in cultural history, he has been investigating urban questions and especially spatial notions of the modern city. He is now Assistant Professor at Aarhus University and director of the Danish Center for Urban History, which is a cooperation between the university and the Danish Open Air Museum for Urban History. Mikkel's PhD-dissertation "Copenhagen 1900. The City Hall Square as laboratory for the public space of the modern city", to be published in Danish this fall, is an attempt to trace the emergence of a new public space through a microhistorical tracking of ideas, technologies and practices.

Dr Sam Griffiths | sam.griffiths@ucl.ac.uk

Space Syntax Laboratory, Bartlett School of Architecture, UCL. The UK

Three processions and a protest: built environment agency and symbolically privileged movement in Victorian Sheffield

This paper examines four funeral processions in Victorian Sheffield, an industrial city in the north of England. The first of these, that of Samuel Holberry (1842), marked the passing of a Chartist agitator. By contrast those of James Montgomery (1854), Wilson Overend (1865) and Sir Mark Firth (1880) honoured departed local 'worthies'. All four funerals were major public occasions involving processions through important urban thoroughfares, but while the first was without official sanction, the other three were coordinated by the civic authorities. All four processions included a large number of Sheffield's population as participants or spectators, but if the first expressed popular discontent and might be regarded as a 'protest', the others celebrated the city's civic identity and legitimized its elites. All four funerals involved participants in processions that moved from the centre of Sheffield to the General Cemetery located at the urban periphery. This paper examines the routes of the processions, and explores the extent to which their symbolic potency was realized through the rapidly changing built environment of the city. It argues that acknowledging the embodied nature of processional activity implies a reciprocal recognition of the material agency of social space in giving rise to certain possibilities for collective movement. It notes how the changing materiality of Sheffield's urban spaces over the nineteenth century served to symbolically privilege certain scales of movement over others. From this, built-environment, perspective both 'procession' and 'protest' appear as distinct but not unrelated dimensions of the emerging spatial culture of a nineteenth-century industrial city.

Biography: Dr Sam Griffiths is Lecturer in Spatial Cultures in the Space Syntax Laboratory at UCL's Bartlett School of Architecture. His research focuses on understanding built environment agency in a range of historical and contemporary urban contexts, including high streets and industrial cities. He is co-editor with Alexander von Lünen of *Spatial cultures: new perspectives on the social morphology of cities past and present* due to be published by Ashgate later this year.

Dr Ajay Gandhi | gandhi@mmg.mpg.de

Max Planck Institute for the Study of Religious and Ethnic Diversity, Göttingen, Germany.

The Language of the Crowd: Public Sociality in Urban India

This paper, drawing on ethnographic research in Old Delhi, examines the crowd. It details the fascination, jocularity, apprehension, and ambivalence expressed in the language of the crowd. It considers the taxonomy of crowds: *khalbali*, which refers to panics, mob consciousness, or hanging-out; *dhakka mukki*, being tossed to and fro in the metropolis, pushing and shoving onto the bus or Metro; and *bhid*, for choked, uncomfortable bazaars that nevertheless retain an allure. These terms may simultaneously signal places, actions, groups, and morality, and underwrite a vocabulary of public sociality. This paper considers these immanent terms vis-à-vis the prevailing social science understanding of the crowd, which derives from a specific Euro-American history of modernity, and may not adequately reflect the particular evolution of cities and crowds in India.

Biography: Dr Ajay Gandhi is a Research Fellow at the Max Planck Institute for the Study of Religious and Ethnic Diversity in Göttingen, Germany, where he has worked since 2011. He is an urban anthropologist who, for his PhD from Yale University, carried out fieldwork in Old Delhi, and more recently has worked in Mumbai. He has published on topics such as the senses, space, materiality, governance, and exchange.

Dr Reza Masoudi Nejad | r.masoudi@soas.ac.uk

ZMO, Berlin

From Built to Performed Space: Post-election protests in Tehran

This paper examines the production of protest space through the narrations of people and participants during the post-election protests in Iran in 2009. It is aimed at redefining the protest space through the idea of performed space in order to move beyond a definition in which protest and public space are entangled with the built environment. The discussions explain that collective action is the keystone of *performed space* and that there is a discursive relation between collective action and performed space. The discussions reveal that while the existence of performed space is not dependent on positioning collective action in the built environment, by superimposing performed space people colonize public spaces and the city. The paper exhibits that performed space, coexists with collective action, is a temporal/liminal space; when collective action ends, there is no trace of the performed space and the normal status of public space is retrieved.

Biography: Dr Reza Masoudi Nejad is an urbanist, trained as an architect and urban morphologist, interested in urban violence and protest, and the spatial organisation of rituals. He is currently an Alexander von Humboldt Research Fellow at the Centre of Modern Oriental Studies (ZMO) in Berlin. He is also a Research Associate at SOAS, University of London (2011-). He was a Research Fellow at the Max Planck Institute for the Study of Religious and Ethnic Diversity (MPI, MMG), Germany (2009-2011). Reza received his PhD from the Bartlett, UCL, University of London in 2009.