

The City and Community: programme of speakers

Co-organised by the Politics-Space-State (PSS) research cluster, Durham University
& the BISA Poststructural Politics Working Group

The Derman Christopher Room, Durham University
18 November 2009, 9.00am – 4.30pm

- 9.00 Welcome: Angharad Closs Stephens
- 9.15 – 11.00 Keynote address:
Professor Michael J. Shapiro (University of Hawaii)
‘Gothic Philadelphia: Divided Subjects and Fractionated Assemblages’
(from his forthcoming book: *The Time of the City: Politics, Philosophy and Genre* (Routledge Interventions series, 2010)
- 11.00 – 11.15 Coffee/tea
- 11.15 – 1.00 **City communities: the ontology of urban social ties**
Ash Amin, Durham University: ‘The Freight of Social Ties’
Joe Painter, Durham University: ‘Neighbourhood and Community’
Angharad Closs Stephens, Durham University: ‘Beyond “imagining” community’
Martin Coward, Newcastle University: ‘Agonism, community, urbanity’
- 1.00 – 2.00 Lunch
- 2.00 – 3.45 **The city as a site of politics**
Steve Graham, Durham University: ‘Disrupted Cities: Failing Infrastructures and Urban Communities’
Vicki Squire and Jennifer Bagelman, Open University: ‘Seeing sanctuary like a city: Mobility, mutuality and politics in the City of Sanctuary movement’
Delacey Tedesco, Keele University/University of Victoria, BC: title tbc.
- 3.45 - 4.00 Coffee/tea
- 4.00 - 4.30 Closing remarks

Travel bursaries are available for postgraduate students travelling to Durham for this event. Please keep receipts and pick up a claim form at the workshop. Rooms at the University are also available to book for £40.

We would encourage those travelling to Durham to also attend the international conference hosted by Newcastle University on World Politics and Popular Culture, 19-20 November:
(<http://www.ncl.ac.uk/niassh/WorldPolitics/index.html>) Durham University is a 12 minute train journey from Newcastle city centre.

Places are FREE but limited. Please contact Angharad Closs Stephens [a.c.stephens@durham.ac.uk] if you would like to know more or are interested in attending.

Organised by Angharad Closs Stephens, with additional assistance from Louise Amoore, Martin Coward, Michele Lancione and Eduardo Neve-Jimenez.

The City and Community

This workshop seeks to pose again the question of the relationship between community and the city. Many have suggested that the city poses a different imagining of community (Shapiro, 2009; Tonkiss, 2005; Massey, 2005; Nancy, 2003; Amin & Thrift, 2002; Isin, 2002) as open to difference, suggestive of another sense of being-in-common, and presenting alternative formations and modalities of 'throwtogetherness'. Featuring a keynote address by Michael J. Shapiro, in which he will present selections from his forthcoming book on the politics of cities, this workshop seeks to ask: what more can the city offer us in the task of re-imagining community? And how might the changing urban landscape pose new imaginings of the city and new questions for the study of politics?

The spotlight on cities has formed an attempt to shift our readings of politics from a focus on containers, levels, scales and status, to acts, encounters, ruptures and practices. In this context, Georg Simmel and Walter Benjamin's works have been particularly influential (Amin & Thrift, 2002). But Simmel and Benjamin drew from a very particular understanding of what the city might be, which was both Europe bound and belonged to another time. How might Simmel and Benjamin's attempts at capturing the spatialities and temporalities of social life, drawing on the site of the city, affect another understanding of the political? What are the limits of Simmel and Benjamin's contributions? And in which ways does the city continue to suggest the 'conflictual essence of the political' (Dillon, 1996) or are we all agreed on the city as a model of openness, chance and as celebration of difference?

This workshop is interested in work that approaches the political through the city. But it also aims to ask: where does such work go next, in politicising ideas of community? The workshop will address the question of community, through the city, in a variety of ways: what form does the urban take in different geographical contexts today and how do these present new questions for the study of proximity and politics? How does the mega-city, the postcolonial city, and the sprawling city, offer new suggestions – and a new set of urgencies, for asking what politics might be and where politics takes place? What might 'being in common' look like if we take urban ecology, hybrid assemblages, and non-human relations seriously? How do processes of segregation and insularisation make encounters more difficult in the city? And how might Utopian cities, and other mythic urban imaginaries, provoke different understandings of community?

This is one of two workshops being organised by the Poststructural Politics Working Group for 2009-10:

The City and Community, with keynote address by Michael J. Shapiro

18 November 2009, Durham University

Citizenship without Community, with keynote addresses by Étienne Balibar and Engin Isin

10 May 2010, The British Library Conference Centre, London

DO SAVE THE DATES!