

Histories and Rhythms of Urban Violence: Global-local Encounters in the Nexus of Space and Time



**Interdisciplinary Workshop 06 - 07 December 2018
at University of Erfurt, Germany**

Call for Papers

Cities play a crucial role in the histories of empires and in the violent processes of state formation. They are focal points for social, political, and cultural developments and for the contemporary internationalization of rule. Cities have been understood as hubs of global (capital) flows and networks, where tendencies towards acceleration and the imaginary of progress crystallize most clearly. The spiraling of urban slums, however, also shows that today's cities are characterized by material deprivation and inequality, depriving millions of people of their 'right to the city'.

The tensions and dynamics of global-local encounters are particularly pronounced in cities. Violence has thus taken centre stage in these processes of city formation and transformation, but cannot be understood as a purely 'local' phenomenon: While the ways cities change are shaped locally, they are also entangled in social dynamics and processes with much wider scalar reach. Global-local encounters are visible in the intertwining of global mobilities and flows (of people, capital, ideas,

goods) and local materializations which facilitate and spatialize these flows and give them their particular direction (infrastructures, barriers, transition or waiting zones etc.).

The forms, actors and dynamics of violent performances in cities differ from rural environments, as indicated by practices of urban warfare, by urban upheavals or riots, by urban forms of gang violence or vigilantism but also by violent government technologies. Everyday associations of ‘modern city’ rhythms – vibrancy, fluidity, speed, rapid transformations – are confronted with a solid built environment, and a multiplicity of urban forms, which imply much greater heterogeneity of social, political and even infrastructural configurations than is usually acknowledged.

The planned workshop builds on the insight that violence itself is a spatio-temporal practice that shapes and changes urban space and time (or SpaceTime). For example, violence can produce urban segregations or dissect city-space through the building of barriers, which then serve to direct and slow down people’s movement. The social and political heterogeneity likely results in diverging perceptions and imaginations of both space and time, which can lead to urban conflict. Furthermore, violence is itself produced and shaped by particular characteristics of the urban, its spatial configuration and rhythms, on both a physical and social level. The space and rhythms of cities, however, also facilitate counterinsurgency measures, among them mass arrests or house to house searches, or the use of specific technologies, i.e. water cannons, surveillance or profiling.

The workshop aims to explore the generative capacities of violence, in particular if and how it transforms space and time in the city. We invite papers (e.g. empirical case studies, comparative studies, theoretical and conceptual papers) from different disciplines, with a variety of methodological and analytical approaches to the study of spatio-temporal practices of violence in cities. We would particularly welcome submissions on the following four themes:

- 1) **Spatio-temporal practices of violence:** We invite in-depth empirical papers on the following questions: What are spatio-temporal effects of violence on the production and transformation of the urban? How do specific practices of violence shape rhythms of city life? How do particular qualities of urban space and city rhythms produce and shape violence and generate different forms of violence?
- 2) **Memories, narratives, symbolic and visual representation of violence:** Here, we aim to explore different representations of violence: What role do spatio-temporal practices have in remembering (urban) violence? How are memories of violence embedded in the city’s spatial and temporal configurations? How do visual representations of violence (media, art, monuments etc.) affect the SpaceTime of the city? How do visual representations of violence transform and rearrange space and time of the city (or more broadly the image of the city)? What are the

peculiarities of sacral space with regard to violence and what role do religious rhythms and cycles or imaginations of time play with regard to urban violence?

- 3) **Methods to study the SpaceTime of violence and its relation to the city:** Social sciences and humanities have developed a repertoire of methods and technologies to capture space and time (mapping, mobility maps, travel diaries, GIS based methods and geoprocessing etc.). We invite papers that explore how we can build on existing time-space “measures” to understand the SpaceTime of violence and its relations to the city.
- 4) **Theorizing the relation between time-space-violence and the city:** We invite papers that explore and advance existing theories of space (from Lefebvre to Massey, Latour to Postone) and time with regard to violence in urban space. How can we understand the ruptures and destructive features of violence *and* its capacities to initiate and accelerate change? What connection can we draw between abstract (capitalist) time and the very concrete violent enactments that helped to produce abstract time and that continue to shape its execution?

The workshop concludes with a round-table discussion that summarizes the above-mentioned questions on urban Space-Time.

Abstract Submission: For this workshop we invite abstracts of proposed papers of up to 1.500 words. Please submit them by 1 September 2018 to mara.albrecht@uni-erfurt.de.

When accepted, participants are expected to submit papers of around 5000 words four weeks prior to the workshop, on 7 November 2018. Workshop presentations should be kept short.

Organised by: Mara Albrecht (University of Erfurt, Germany), Jutta Bakonyi (Durham Global Security Institute, UK), Alke Jenss (Arnold-Bergstraesser-Institute, Germany), Kirsti Stuvøy (Norwegian University of Life Sciences).

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and the

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