

Maantieteen päivät 2017: WELCOME TO FINLAND?

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RELATING FINLAND: CRITICAL APPROACHES TO RELATIONAL AND TERRITORIAL GEOPOLITICS

Session chairs Dr. Roger Norum, Dr. Derek Ruez, Dr. Joni Vainikka and Katharina Koch

Session 1 on Thursday 26. October 2017 at 14:15 – 15:45

Hidefumi Nishiyama: **Geopolitics of disregard**

Katharina Koch: **The European Union's Approach towards Finnish-Russian External Cross-Border Cooperation**

Joni Vainikka: **Geopolitics of Human Rights: Universal dreams inflicting territorial nightmares?**

Christopher Lizotte: **Beyond neoliberalism: Understanding authoritarian populism through a geosocial framework**

Session 2 on Thursday 26. October 2017 at 16:15 – 17:45

Gitte du Plessis: **A digital era of state-sanctioned hunting**

Derek Ruez: **The Politics of the 'Compassionate City'**

Roger Norum: **Tourisms of Prosumption and the Geopolitical Gaze**

Vilhelmiina Vainikka: **Re- and De-Bordering the Urban Masses in Mediated Threats and Violent Attacks**

RELATING FINLAND: CRITICAL APPROACHES TO RELATIONAL AND TERRITORIAL GEOPOLITICS I

Geopolitics of disregard

Hidefumi Nishiyama, RELATE, University of Oulu

In this paper I propose the concept of "geopolitics of disregard" and explore the ways in which it reproduces imperial spatial formations in the present. Critical approaches to geopolitics and International Relations have underscored the role of memory and remembrance in border politics at national and international levels. However, little has been discussed about how acts and state of disregard contribute to the formation of the nation state and the colonial present. Drawing from Stoler's concept of "politics of disregard", the paper aims to advance the existing literature on the politics of memory in political geography and International Relations, and shed light on the complexities and subtler mechanisms that operate through people's everyday lives in a postcolonial territory and state policies and practices.

The European Union's Approach towards Finnish-Russian External Cross-Border Cooperation

Katharina Koch, RELATE, University of Oulu

This presentation is based on a doctoral thesis which aim is to contribute to the scholarly discussion of transnational governmental structures in the context of the EU external border between Finland and Russia. The European Union (EU) has established the European Neighbourhood Instrument (ENI) to develop cross-border cooperation (CBC) programmes that fund projects at the external borders of the EU. The thesis argues that cross-border cooperation creates a territorial space in which authority is overlapping, sovereignty is shared between the different scales, and new borders charged with inclusionary and exclusionary effects are established. This presentation focuses on the aspect of power relations and dynamics between Finnish-Russian ENI CBC actors. Elements such as personal interactions but also the broader geopolitical environment in which the cooperation takes place influence these relations. The following questions guide the research: How can the shifting European external borders be conceptualised in the context of cross-border cooperation? What is the role of territory and territoriality in cross-border cooperation and how are both being transformed? How do re- and de-bordering mechanisms affect the actor relationships within the ENI CBC programmes? What is the impact of trust on cross-border cooperation? The thesis offers a framework for analysis that encompasses all actors as geopolitical agents which have an impact on the rationalisation and realisation of cross-border cooperation.

Geopolitics of Human Rights: Universal dreams inflicting territorial nightmares?

Joni Vainikka, RELATE, University of Oulu

In 2012, the Russian president Vladimir Putin signed an amendment to the law that controls the actions of non-governmental, or non-commercial organizations. Much to the outcry of prominent human rights activists and organizations the so-called foreign agent law started to curtail civil society freedoms and restricted the functionality of organizations stigmatized as foreign agents. As the political elite seeks to construct highly nationalistic public support that, for example, favours All-Russian organizations, the law portrays many networked, international, co-operative NGOs, from national human rights movements to independent research institutions, as suspicious. The legislature can be used to cut links aboard or to cease the operations of an NGO if they are found receiving any funding from abroad and if they are engaged in vaguely defined political activity. The legislation is especially troublesome for the human rights organizations, whose work is fundamentally networked. Following the 1948 Universal Declaration of Human rights, the Helsinki Accords of the 1975 Conference of Security and Cooperation underlined the tie between human rights and fundamental freedoms and the inviolability of borders and a security balance. For 18 years, Russia was making progress to a more networked European Society whose Constitution treated the Universal Declaration as a 'founding document'. Now the atmosphere has turned nocuous for social movements that further the universal idea of human rights that cross territorial borders. Arguably, human rights have been pushed to the spotlight of geopolitics. Based on interviews with human rights movements in Finland (e.g., Amnesty), the paper conceptualizes the interplay between transnational networked space and forms of territorial power, and how the topological reach of NGOs is contested within the European space.

Beyond neoliberalism: Understanding authoritarian populism through a geosocial framework

Christopher Lizotte, RELATE, University of Helsinki

Across the world, a variety of populist reactionary political movements have recently enjoyed electoral success in places such as the United States, Great Britain, Turkey, and Hungary. Ironically, these avowedly right-wing ideologies are embracing a rejection of neoliberal globalization that has long been a project of the political left. Despite some ad-hoc commentary on this moment, however (e.g. Page and Dittmer 2016; Bachmann and Sidaway 2016; Görkiäksel 2016), political and economic geographers have so far remained largely silent on how we should interpret what appears, at least superficially, to be a growing global popular preference for authoritarianism not easily reducible to economic explanation.

In recent years, however, some scholars have begun to question the ubiquity of neoliberalism in critical work, whether for its status as a somewhat vacuous shibboleth lacking analytical substance (Ferguson 2009), its dubious applicability to real-world conditions of urban governance (Le Galès 2016; Storper 2016) or evidence of the preponderance of territorial thinking in statecraft (Moisio and Paasi 2013). In this paper I consolidate and extend this line of thinking by drawing on recent work in feminist and critical geopolitics on the 'geosocial' (Kallio and Mitchell 2016) to propose a framework that returns our attention to the 'allure of territory' (Murphy 2013) that is driving much of the contemporary political turn towards authoritarian populism. I draw on the example of French policies towards personal religious expression in order to illustrate a mechanism for managing and governing territory that extends from global narratives of risk through national articulations of civic value to the management of intimate bodily space.

RELATING FINLAND: CRITICAL APPROACHES TO RELATIONAL AND TERRITORIAL GEOPOLITICS II

A digital era of state-sanctioned hunting

Gitte du Plessis, RELATE, University of Oulu

States hunt for terrorists, dissidents, 'illegals' and suppressed minorities, much as they have done historically. The police continue to be a hunting institution whose activities often clash with the rule of law. This paper investigates a new, contemporary era of state-sanctioned hunting characterized by the digital. Today, devices, sensors, software and algorithms are trained to hunt for the state. As sophisticated hunting tools, they roam through data to find persons of interest. Sweeping surveillance of geographical and digital whereabouts enables machines to hunt for protesters at Trump's inauguration, Black Lives Matter activists, undocumented immigrants, and suspected terrorists, all to aid the government in controlling the citizenry by targeting, tracking and capturing 'dangerous' or otherwise unwanted individuals. A theoretical framework of hunting emphasizes how the state, by separating between those who are prey and those who are not, enacts deep separations within its populace: Hunting power is a form of bordering between legitimate and illegitimate citizens. A theoretical framework of hunting also stresses an important difference between surveillance and targeting, points to analytical weaknesses in a focus on biopower, and highlights camouflage as a mode of resistance for terrorists and activists alike.

The Politics of the ‘Compassionate City’

Derek Ruez (presenting author), SPARG, University of Tampere

Trushna Parekh, Department of History, Geography & General Studies, Texas Southern University

This presentation examines the ‘compassionate city’ as an imaginary increasingly taken up in urban governance and activism. In the face of growing anti-migrant sentiment, assertive forms of racial and religious discrimination, and growing economic inequalities across North American and European cities, the idea and language of compassion is increasingly being taken up by city officials and city residents as a goal to guide urban policy or city life more broadly. Over 90 cities around the world have affirmed the International Charter for Compassion and made plans to make themselves more compassionate, and an International Center for Compassionate Cities is being developed to circulate ‘best practices’ around promoting compassion in cities. Despite the term’s benevolent connotations, existing literatures in migration and urban studies are ambivalent about compassion, which is understood by some as key to potentially productive responses to the challenges facing marginalized city residents and by others as an individualizing or moralizing discourse compatible and complicit with the political-economic orderings that produce the very problems toward which compassion might be imagined a response. With those contradictory perspectives in mind, this research seeks to understand the possibilities and limits of compassion in urban politics. As a transnationally circulating urban imaginary, understanding compassionate urbanism requires attending to how political actors mobilize the idea of compassion in place- and context-specific ways, as well as how the politics of the compassionate city stretches beyond any individual city. Toward those ends, this presentation will report on preliminary research on the transnational networks of the International Charter for Compassion and the take-up of the compassionate city idea in Louisville, Kentucky.

Tourisms of Prosumption and the Geopolitical Gaze

Roger Norum, RELATE, University of Oulu

In this paper I examine how geopolitical imaginaries articulate with tourism practices, where they become powerful mechanisms of seduction (Di Giovine and Picard 2015). Using ethnographic examples from Northern Europe and Southeast Asia, this paper builds on emerging scholarship that links assemblages of tourism with geopolitical imaginaries that function through suppressing complex geographical realities via essentialized geopolitical abstractions (Tuathail and Agnew 1992). Drawing on recent work in critical geopolitics and the anthropology of tourism, I develop the analytic of the geopolitical gaze – the relational act of representation and spectatorship in tourism practices – to explore the layers of mediated relationships crafted between tourism actors, institutions and practices. This concept describes the combined logics of institutions, discourses and practices (e.g. photographic surveillance, social media re-presentations) in order to explore how the “geo” is “graphed” in tourism, that is to say produced by a range of place- and space-making processes and ideas (Sparke 2005, 2007). Thus, the paper pushes forward emerging work that considers such interconnections and the concomitant significance of geopolitical imaginaries in tourism.

Re- and De-Bordering the Urban Masses in Mediated Threats and Violent Attacks

Vilhelmiina Vainikka, GLASE, University of Oulu

The mass is a highly relevant concept in current times. In public and academic discourse the mass has been linked to several multi-scalar “threats”, such as mass migration, mass surveillance, mass killings and mass extinction. However, the concept has been overlooked in theoretical terms. I argue that a multi-ontological

account on the mass could improve understanding of different kinds of fears and threats experienced and mediated in everyday life. This study concentrates on four (mediated) attacks: Turku (“home”), Stockholm and St. Petersburg (“neighbours”) and Barcelona (“holiday destination”). In this presentation, I will introduce two of these attacks: Turku (18.8.2017) stabbing attack and Barcelona (17.8.2017) terrorist attack, and how the Finnish media re- and de-bordered people in its coverage. In relation to the Turku case, I will also discuss the ways securitizing mass events, the so called refugee crisis and hate talk were connected to this incident as forms of bordering. Barcelona will not be considered only as a location of terrorist attack but a contested tourism city, which has been subject to considerable growth in tourist numbers and affected by sharing economy (such as Airbnb) on real estate markets. The tourist masses as a challenge and disturbance for local life have been recognized by the Finnish press before the attack. With these examples, I want to demonstrate the various changing practices through which ‘us’ and ‘them’ are separated but also collected together. In both cases, the mass can be both the feared and the protected as well as the welcomed and unwelcomed. The mass may be seen as a demonstration of trust or mistrust. This research is work in progress and therefore instead of results I will discuss the preliminary findings and wish the audience to actively take part in the discussion.