



Exploring Belgrade: theory x discipline x method

2016 Summer School of the
Graduate School for East and Southeast European Studies and the Honours Master`s
Programme East European Studies (LMU Munich/ University of Regensburg)
in collaboration with the Philosophical Faculty, University of Belgrade

23-29 September 2016

The Summer School 2016 will be an interdisciplinary exploration of the city in which we will dwell, Belgrade. The aim is to get acquainted with Belgrade as an important post-socialist and Southeast European city but also to reflect on how we – influenced by our disciplinary, theoretical, and methodological ‘habits’ -- construct objects of research, apply particular methods, and shape our perception of reality. Hence the aim is to juxtapose the various ways of ‘constructing’ the city, working across and at the intersection of different disciplines, theories and methods. We are particularly interested in how various disciplines (anthropology, visual arts, architecture, engineering, geography, history, literature, political science, planning, etc.) approach a city, and how they, through procedures of selection and research design, arrive at particular insights, producing ‘knowledge’.

Some of the questions we would like to ask are: does every city, every urban site, every emerging urban issue, need its own method of exploration? Are some disciplines better equipped than others to answer particular questions? How important are reflections on method in urban studies, a field dominated by grand theorizing? How important is it to develop new methods sensitive to local contexts? How specific, unique, and changeable are urban sites and to what extent does this require methodological innovation and flexibility? Is there any scope to take seriously the intuitive and subjective exploration of cities carried out by novelists, film makers, and artists, normally denied scholarly attention or status?

The participants to the Summer School will be divided into three working groups covering three major fields of urban research. In these respective fields, the groups will investigate how theory, discipline, and method intersect, and they will also reflect on representation and representational formats in their field. The three fields are:

1. **“Everyday life”**, led by Ger Duijzings und Čarna Brković. Key words: street, social and community life, rituals and cultural activities, class and ethno-religious differences, the social fabric, social inequality and cohesion. Disciplines and representational formats relevant for this field are for example: anthropology and ethnography, urban sociology, human geography, cultural and performance studies, social history, the visual arts, photography and documentary film.

2. ***“The past: history and memory”***, led by Ulf Brunnbauer, Miranda Jakisa und Nina Weller. Key words: the historical growth of cities, urbanization, public memories, mnemonic and monumental landscapes, material legacies of previous urban and political regimes, urban palimpsests. Disciplines and representational formats relevant for this field are: history, architectural and art history, geography, memory studies, the fine arts, historical fiction, biography and autobiography, fictional and documentary film, photography, mapping, etc.
3. ***“Public spheres: local politics and urban planning”***, led by Marie-Janine Calic und Jasper Trautsch. Key words: local governance, public spaces, political discourses, power, elites, social and political movements, street protests, art interventions, media. The disciplines and representational formats relevant for this field are: history, political science, media studies, critical geography, urban planning, public art, photography and documentary film, mapping, the internet, social media, etc.

Each day will start with plenary sessions offering brief statements by academics attached to the Graduate School, speakers and (local) experts from abroad and Belgrade, in which they will provide overviews of theoretical and methodological approaches relevant in their field. Some will deal specifically with Belgrade. The plenary sessions will be followed by working group sessions, where theoretical literature and representational formats will be discussed, and where this will be ‘translated’ and connected to the local context of Belgrade. In the afternoons the working groups will do fieldwork, exploring the city following the methods and lines of inquiry typical for their field, meeting up with local experts, visiting relevant urban sites or venues, and carrying out observations and gathering relevant materials. The working groups will report back on their work with presentations of 30 minutes each during the last plenary session in the afternoon of Wednesday 28 September. Prior to the Summer School students will make themselves acquainted with the general and discipline specific key readings on urban theory, as well as some introductory texts on Belgrade, for which a reader will be provided.