



ESRC SEMINAR SERIES: VISUAL DIALOGUES: NEW AGENDAS IN INEQUALITIES RESEARCH

SEMINAR FOUR: THE POLITICS OF SPACE AND PLACE

ABSTRACTS

Picturing the hidden boundaries of everyday place

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This paper is based on project that uses visual methods for capturing subjects 'embodied uses of space. We focus on the multiple ways different groups, men and women, of different ages and backgrounds position themselves, and are positioned, in relation to the urban community in a medium sized town in central Sweden. The study aims at analysing how they use, interpret and attribute meaning to the places surrounding them in their everyday lives. From a theoretical point of view, the research connects theories on place and social relations in order to analyse the way the accessibility of place is structured for these groups and to explore the ascribed meaning to essential places. Hereby, special attention is given to intersections between structures such as gender, ethnicity and age and to how these intersections influence experiences of inclusion and exclusion in their everyday life. The results shed light on the ways immigrants use place in their everyday life, and how they do, or do not, connect to the area. By this, we argue, the importance equal encounters for the formation of social relations is explored.

Ulrika Schmauch is a senior lecturer in Sociology, Department of Social sciences, Mid Sweden University, Sweden. Her research interests are Critical Race Studies and postcolonial theory, mainly concerning the normalisation of everyday racism in Sweden. At the moment she is one of the participants in the gender excellence program *Challenging Gender* <http://www.ucgs.umu.se/english/research/challenging-gender/?languageId=1> financed by the National Research Council where she focuses on place as a site where processes of normalisation take place in terms of inclusion and exclusion concerning gender, ethnicity and class.

Katarina Giritli Nygren is a senior lecturer in Sociology, Department of Social sciences, Mid Sweden University, Sweden. Her research interests are connected by a main theoretical interest on how to understand the relation between social reproduction and social change from a critical perspective. All of her research, despite different empirical fields, rests on

critical theory and particularly classical Marxism. At the moment she is one of the participants in the gender excellence program *Challenging Gender* <http://www.ucgs.umu.se/english/research/challenging-gender/?languageId=1> financed by the National Research Council where she focuses on place as a site where processes of normalisation take place in terms of inclusion and exclusion concerning gender, ethnicity and class.

'Visualising the Ups and Downs of Mumbai'.

Dr Andrew Harris, University College London

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This presentation reflects on the visual methods used in a recent research project exploring elevated transport projects in Mumbai. In particular it charts how photographs, video and internet technologies were used to supplement and extend traditional archival, interviewing and ethnographic techniques. These visual methods have been key in investigating how the construction and maintenance of vertical transport projects are often indicative and constitutive of a growing polarisation in urban India between social groups with access to infrastructure and those that survive and subsist at a more basic, 'horizontal' level. However, the presentation also suggests that more explicitly artistic interventions are required beyond visual documentation to capture some of the more dynamic and opaque qualities of everyday life in Mumbai. www.verticalurbanism.com

“Why do you want a picture of my dad eating his breakfast?”: Reflections on visualising landscapes of community

Dr Andrew Clark, University of Salford

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This paper reports on a three year methodological investigation funded under the ESRC's National Centre for Research Methods. The project explored the temporal and spatial contexts of social connections and community formation in an economically and socially heterogeneous inner city neighbourhood. We aimed to understand how individuals perceived their social networks, the neighbourhoods where they lived, and the communities they belonged to. I will consider how our visually-orientated methods (participatory mapping, walking interviews and diaries) worked in practice, particularly in their capacity to illuminate the spatial dimensions of 'community' formation. Then, I will focus on some of the contradictions in our data, and reflect on whether these may be due to individual experience, the complexities of 'placing' community, or perhaps our methodological strategy. In doing so, I suggest that while visually-orientated methods have the potential to illuminate the significance of space and place in everyday life, their deployment forces us to question how we come to know this.

The view of the child: Taking children seriously in school design

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This presentation will draw from research that over the past five years has explored the 'view of the child' that shaped post-war design of new primary schools. It will argue that there are significant enduring principles of design that it is useful in the present to recognise as we go about envisaging a school for the future. Taking children seriously in the design of schools for the future means more than a consultation exercise. Drawing from evidence produced by children and young people for 'The School I'd Like' initiative with The Guardian Newspaper (2001) and subsequent funded research projects (EPSRC, 2005; AHRC, 2007-8; University of Cambridge, 2008-9) it will be suggested that transformation of education through participative design strategies can succeed only if there is a shift in the way that we view children and childhood.

Performing for camera? Exploring childhood, friendship and community through the lens of participatory video

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This paper examines the value of participatory video (PV) for exploring childhood and children's experiences within the context of a larger research project which sought to examine the everyday lives of residents in a neighbourhood identified as 'disadvantaged'. Participatory methods are often premised on ameliorating the gap between the concepts and models of researchers and those of individuals and communities. However, within PV there has been much less focus on the process of participation and its implications for research outcomes. This paper addresses this gap in order to explore how the children, researchers and residents co-produce a visual narrative about life on the estate and in particular, how the process and politics of participation can be critically interrogated to bring into view children's researched relationships within a participatory methodological framework. We suggest that a methodological focus on PV as process makes visible its potential to offer valuable insights not only into intergenerational relationships and friendships but also to the theorising of children's identities and childhoods.