

**The Politics of Inequality and Difference:
Critical Approaches in Anthropology and Sociology
Call for Papers**

*Central European University, Budapest,
Department of Sociology and Social Anthropology
12-13 June 2009*

The main purpose of the present graduate conference is to initiate a critical discussion of the ways in which the acute problems of inequality and difference are currently theorized and methodologically engaged both inter-disciplinarily, in the fields of sociology and anthropology, and extra-disciplinarily, in relation to policy and decision-making. The scope of the conference is thus wide-ranging inviting theoretically informed, methodologically reflexive and politically aware contributions that engage one or both of these major topics. Given the broad research interests of both faculty and students special attention will be devoted to a number of topics clustered in the following four panels:

Ethnicization of poverty (Convenor: *Kristóf Szombati*, szombati_kristof@phd.ceu.hu)

The aim of this panel is to bring sociological and anthropological perspectives on the poverty/ethnicity nexus together by asking how cultural differentiation and ethnic competition are linked to class dynamics and the rise of social inequalities. Our questions derive from an understanding of the ethnicization of poverty primarily as a political project (involving a range of actors, social scientists included) aimed at producing a new *social theodicy*, that is entrenching a normative answer to one of modernity's most pertinent and structurally under (though not un-) determined questions: 'who is poor and why'?

The panel invites written and visual materials engaging with:

- the production and circulation of denigrating discourses and images of the 'Poor Other'
- the memories and everyday experiences of this symbolic production
- the political debates in which representations of and arguments about the ethnic features of poverty are evoked
- the material and symbolic role of state and market in clothing poverty in an ethnic guise
- stigmatized groups' attempts to evade, counter or strategically employ the ethnicization of their social predicament
- the implication of sociological and anthropological knowledge production in the entrenchment or countering of the new social theodicy.

Nationalism and its others (Convenor: *Florin Faje*, faje_florin@student.ceu.hu)

Focusing on the appropriation and use of nationalism by various social groups this panel invites reflection on its historical transformation from a joint anthropological and sociological perspective. Acknowledging nationalism's complex historical development and contemporary manifestations we wish to inquire about its past and present political, social and cultural deployment. Aware of the relations of power in which the national emerges and gains potency we wish to initiate a discussion of nationalism and its others. Thus, we call for papers that directly or indirectly address one or more of the following topics:

- Nationalism's political force and relevance
- When, how and why is the nationalist discourse appropriated? How is it used and transformed?
- Nationalism as a class-based phenomenon
- Everyday expressions of the national
- Gendered views of nationalism
- National identity: caught between the local and the global?

The politics of space and the 'right to the city' (Convenor: *Judit Veres*, veres_judit@phd.ceu.hu)

In this panel we invite papers that take up the challenge posed by the exhaustion of the imagination of what the city as a body politic entails against the backdrop of a general decline in urban collective action. We want to move beyond an understanding of the city as a tabula rasa to be designed and reorganized according to hegemonic functional or aesthetic criteria, and call for a complex cultural, political and economic understanding of urban space and place with an increased sensitivity to history. We wish to inquire the links between space, the securing of rights, and class formation and to pose the simple questions: "Whose cities?" and "Whose rights?" Tentative themes to be addressed:

- Spatializing the public sphere
- Urban design and its lateral sidings with power
- Controlling the public space
- Social production and social construction of space
- The relational connectivity between public, quasi-public and private space
- How the "(feeling of) community" emerges and is enacted
- The chances and challenge of "small places"

Governance of inequality (Convenor: *Gábor Scheiring*, scheiring_gabor@phd.ceu.hu)

Processes of spatial rescaling, decentralization, the emergence of new non-governmental political actors, the rise of transnational networks and supranational political and economic forces have all redrawn the boundaries of the state. Traditional measures to tackle inequalities are becoming increasingly difficult to enact. Although admitting its changing shape, many maintain that the role of the state in governing inequalities remains central. The aim of the panel is to bring together sociological and anthropological studies on the changing nature of the governance of inequalities. The panel welcomes materials within this broad topic with a special (but not exclusionary) focus on the following questions:

- Who governs inequalities? What are the key actors and mechanisms influencing policies on inequalities?
- How do new symbolic representations and changing discourses of inequality, class and citizenship influence the governance of inequality?
- How is the public-private boundary redrawn in the new structures of governance?
- What is the material and symbolic role of the state, institutions and the market in the governance of inequality today?
- How does the global impinge upon the local in governance and what is the answer of the local?
- How are the interests of marginal groups channeled into politics?
- What is the practical relevance of sociological and anthropological knowledge in the debate on inequality?

300 words abstracts should be submitted by Tuesday 31st of March. If an abstract is accepted for the conference a full paper should be submitted by Friday 15th of May.

Please note that the abstracts should be sent directly to the conveyors of each panel.

Limited funding for travel and accomodation is available.