

Contesting Place: Practices of (Un)Doing

26th - 27th June 2025
Eichstätt, Germany

In the context of new political confrontations, ecological challenges, and heightened social polarizations, conflicts in practices of place are intensifying. Encounters with place across the humanities and social sciences often focus on matters of identification and delineation: that is, on making and doing place. Yet, every emplacement entails displacement. Understanding places as configurations of conflict raises questions on the entanglements of (un)doing that this conference seeks to centre, by exploring de-stabilisation, dis-location, and de-identification as practicing place. Within our research training group **“Practicing Place. Socio-Cultural Practices and Epistemic Configurations”**, we supplement the question of what is a place with the question of how it is continuously designed and produced, from a decidedly interdisciplinary perspective. Our work thus far has informed an orientation toward conflictuality and for this conference we invite proposals on contestation as situated and situating. How are places undone and thereby made in a praxis of contestation, both materially imaginatively, simultaneously and through time?

Contesting established histories, epistemologies, and seemingly stable grounds involves denaturalizing – indeed, displacing – accepted modes of thought. Research in the environmental humanities, for instance, has made apparent the multiple and opposing strategies of appropriation and exploitation which politicise landscapes, such as in locally mobilised struggles against extraction, coal mining and land grabbing. From a posthumanist perspective, landscapes are gatherings of diverse ways of being in the making; they are not intentionally designed but emerge through imaginative and material entanglements. Further, sociological and cultural studies approaches to placings of the political are being rethought as publics are enclosed across privatised city squares as well as the digital agora and as geographies of accumulation are reinscribed across shifting labour markets and border regimes. Contact zones come into view in which universalizing fictions of the West are challenged by pluriversal narratives deriving from local histories.

Our praxeological approach to question the how of places pushes us beyond traditional disciplinary divisions of labour and subject matter. In this spirit, our conference opens up a space for cross-disciplinary perspectives that bring into focus phenomena in danger of being marginalized and overlooked in the course of restorative political developments of the present. Facilitating cross-fertilization between the humanities and social sciences, our conference approaches place not as a singular, static entity but a multifaceted, affective dialogical, conflictual system of relations.

practicing
place

Socio-Cultural
Practices and Epistemic
Configurations

GRK 2589

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Themes and topics for panels and presentations might include, but are not limited to

- Fictional representations of conflictual imaginaries
- Conflict(s) of place in literature
- Problematising the Anthropocene: methods, concepts and frameworks for undoing the nature/human binary
- Posthumanist and New Materialist approaches to undoing epistemologies of place
- Experimental ethnographies: undoing place through aesthetic engagements to generate new ways of seeing
- Visual and sonic dislocations
- Forms of decolonial praxis enacted in the margins that confront, transgress, undo the modern/colonial matrix of power
- De- and Postcolonial perspectives on struggles for and on (urban) territory
- Placing the Political in the everyday
- Media and contesting (public) place
- Situated affects as practices of doing and undoing
- Infrastructure as contestation: undoing and remaking networks of power
- Gendered practices of place, queer geographies, and other forms of undoing normative place-making
- Interstices from an interdisciplinary perspective
- Aesthetics and spectacularization of conflicts in transmedia narratives
- Memory and/as contested places
- Digital placemaking and algorithmic ordering

We invite contributions from scholars of Humanities and Social Sciences, practitioners and activists that engage with the conflictuality of places and place-related practices. We encourage experimental contributions such as presentations on experimental methodologies, including materials gathered and generated through research and field work, such as photographs, videos, sound recordings, artworks, and maps. If you have any questions regarding your proposed contribution, please don't hesitate to get in touch.

Please submit, as a single document, abstracts of no more than 300 words along with a short bio to conference_pp@ku.de by **3rd March 2025**. We will notify applicants of acceptance in mid-April. The conference will take place on the **26th and 27th of June**, hosted by the **Catholic University of Eichstätt-Ingolstadt**, in Eichstätt, Germany. There will be an optional pre-conference programme on the 25th March to get to know each other and Eichstätt. The conference language is English. We plan subsequent publication(s). This is an in-person event. If you have any questions, please contact conference_pp@ku.de. For more information about 'Practicing Place Socio-Cultural Practices and Epistemic Configurations' please visit us at <https://www.practicing.place/>.

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