Post-national rule and the policing of space

Call for Papers for 56th ISA Annual Convention,
February 18-21, 2015, New Orleans

Deadline: May 19, 2015

New political entities, polities and authorities below, above, and beyond the national state play an increasingly important role in political life. Political regionalism, be it secessionist, like in Catalonia, or integrative, as in regional organisations; transnational networks, like those governing environmental regulation or those fostering the diffusion of Occupy protests; or more local spaces like global cities and Ecovillages, affect not only communication and identity formation, but develop alternative political institutions with considerable clout over political life. They constitute different spatial varieties of post-national rule.

Yet while sociology has rediscovered space as central analytical category, political science and International Relations have typically equated the concept of space with a restrictive notion of ‘territory’. At the same time, they remain blind to a certain degree to the symbolic representation and its role in the construction of social order. Consequently, IR still lacks the theoretical and analytic tools to investigate how political spaces are socially produced, ordered and maintained.

Any particular space is also a function of demarcation, which can be instantiated in practices, rules, symbols and physical barriers that produce the differences between spaces and those within them. Space is often considered in terms of a void, but what signifies political space is the presence of institutionalized power. Its demarcations are neither independent of the contents of that space, nor are they self-reinforcing. Rather, they must be policed in the sense of administrative practices aimed at maintaining social order and discipline in a ‘well-ordered state’. Through these practices of rule, the form and coherence of political space is maintained. Modes of policing reinforce the power, authority and system of rule that apply in a particular space, its functions and social organization. They also condition the practices of dissent that are likely to follow. At the same time, policing activities themselves are co-constituted by the organization and production of a particular space, and the resulting political order is a product of this interplay. In this sense, political entities consist of institutionalized relationships of power and rule, and in their symbolic and material formations, they reflect the spaces they constitute.

This abstract depiction is immediately recognizable in national territories, but it is also applicable to political spaces not, or not only, circumscribed by national borders. Civic squares, rural terroirs, transnational financial markets, communications media and expert communities all display insides and outsides, images thereof, and policing activities to maintain the integrity of that difference.
This panel will explore the social production of political space in a time when the nation-state is quickly losing hard-won ground as the primary and most important sphere of political organization. It is a forum to discuss new local, transnational, or hybrid political entities where political space is produced, including both the social production of material places, spaces, and scales as well as the symbolic and representative meaning-making through which social organization in these political spaces is achieved.

In order to further the theorization of post-national political spaces and explore the policing practices necessary for their creation and maintenance, we welcome papers that examine the interplay of policing practices in the wide sense proposed here and the (symbolic) politics of post-national spaces. Possible topics could be, but are not limited to:

- the interplay of formal or policing practices and spatially organized forms of resistance;
- the interplay of spatially organized forms of resistance in light of the production of space through states;
- the creation of political space(s) through transnational diaspora communities, intentional communities, transnational expert networks or virtual networks, and how they are policed;
- the production of transnational market spaces and the attendant practices of inclusion and exclusion;
- attempts at challenging existing political space formations through alternative spatial projects and the prospects of such resistance;
- the pluralization of political entities above, below and beyond the nation state in informal modes of politics and its interplay with legal pluralism;
- the situatedness of actors in place and the politics of location.

This Call for Papers is for a panel at the ISA’s 56th Annual Convention on “Global IR and Regional Worlds. A New Agenda for International Studies”, taking place from February 18 to 21, 2015, in New Orleans. Please send your **abstracts of max. 200 words by Monday, May 19, 2014** as a .doc or .rtf file including your name, email address and affiliation via email to ben.kamis@normativeorders.net. We will inform those accepted well in advance of the submission deadline.

Looking forward to your contributions,

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