



QUEEN'S
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CENTRE FOR
THE STUDY OF
ETHNIC CONFLICT



TAUBE CENTRE FOR ADVANCED STUDIES
IN THE SOCIAL SCIENCES
JAGIELLONIAN UNIVERSITY IN KRAKÓW



CALL FOR PAPERS

LIVED EXPERIENCES IN CONTESTED PLACES: GOVERNANCE AND HUMANITARIANISM

The Taube Centre for Advanced Studies in the Social Sciences at the Jagiellonian University, the Refugee Studies Centre at the University of Oxford and the Centre for the Study of Ethnic Conflict at the Queen's University Belfast invite submissions for the international workshop *Lived Experiences in Contested Places: Governance and Humanitarianism* to be held on 11-12 March 2027 at the Jagiellonian University in Kraków, Poland.

Keynote speakers

Ivan Gusic, Department of Government, Upsalla University

Tom Scott-Smith, Refugee Studies Centre, University of Oxford

How is everyday life governed in places where different groups struggle over authority, belonging, resources, and the rules that shape their everyday lives? Today, the sub-state levels of governance, especially the urban one, are increasingly becoming arenas of inter-communal conflict and identity politics, good and bad governance. They have become primary actors in globalization, focal points of the neoliberal global economy, and multidimensional political arenas, with profound consequences for society as a whole (Allegra et al., 2012). At the same time, contemporary cities are becoming increasingly diverse, shaped by migration, socio-economic inequality, and spatial segregation, alongside a plurality of identities and lifestyles. Conflicts related to ethno-national cleavages are also more prominent throughout urban spaces worldwide (Rokem, 2016). The accumulation of these pressures creates significant challenges not only for policymakers and institutions, but also for people in their everyday lives. These dynamics are even more pronounced in divided cities, which are particularly susceptible to intense, inter-communal, often identity-based conflicts and violence that reflects ethno-national fractures and expose the limitations and failures of liberal peacebuilding efforts (Björkdahl, 2013, Leonardsson and Rudd, 2015). Here deep ethno-national cleavages shape everyday lives, access to services, and the routines of urban governance (Lehrs et al., 2023).

The workshop brings together two bodies of research that have largely developed in parallel, focusing on two forms of contestation that are usually studied separately: places whose territory, authority, or identity is contested, including divided cities, disputed regions, segregated territories, and borderlands; and people whose mobility, status, or belonging is contested, including migrants, displaced populations, and returnees, as well as the spaces they inhabit and navigate, from cities and neighbourhoods to different forms of accommodation, including camps, shelters, reception centres, and other supposedly temporary settings.

The workshop's distinctive contribution lies in examining shared governance challenges across these different forms and spaces of contestation, rather than treating conflict, peacebuilding, diversity, humanitarianism, and governance as separate issues. Our central premise is that, despite the very different origins of contestation, these settings can produce similar everyday governance challenges: insecurity and violence, precarious living conditions, unequal access to services, parallel systems of provision, legitimacy disputes, and limited participation and representation.

Humanitarianism is integral to this discussion not only because humanitarian organisations are often present in contested settings, but also because humanitarian action can itself shape governance, access to resources and services, and the conditions of everyday life.



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People can become contested in the places where they live, just as places can become contested among the groups that inhabit them. In both cases, contestation is experienced locally, in neighbourhoods, municipalities, public institutions, humanitarian spaces, and everyday interactions. The workshop is deliberately focused on the substate level and seeks to explore connections across these settings through a shared focus on local struggles over governance. We therefore especially welcome studies examining how different groups experience, navigate, negotiate, contest, or resist the ways in which the spaces they inhabit are governed.

We particularly encourage submissions addressing, but not limited to, the following themes:

- lived experiences of governance, its challenges, and forms of resistance across contested substate settings, including municipalities, cities, neighbourhoods, borderlands, camps, shelters, reception centres, and other local or regional spaces;
- everyday peace practices employed by people in these contested spaces to navigate, prevent, or de-escalate conflict and violence and promote peace;
- how people in contested spaces navigate fragmented, overlapping, or contested systems of authority and provision, negotiate status and belonging, and access or circumvent formal and informal institutions and services, including formal and informal systems of governance;
- informal networks, responses to exclusion or unequal treatment, and intra and extra group dynamics.
- creative and cultural practices through which people express, negotiate, or contest exclusion, belonging, identity, and governance and foster peace, including art and other forms of cultural expression and research methodologies.

Authors of selected papers will be invited to submit their work for consideration for publication in a potential special issue to be guest edited by the workshop organisers.

We invite abstracts of approximately 300 words and a short biography of 100 words to both aleksandra.zdeb@uj.edu.pl and fabricio.carrijo@uj.edu.pl

IMPORTANT DATES

Deadline for abstract submission: **11 December 2026**

Notification of acceptance: **21 December 2027**

Submission of draft article: **05 March 2027**

Workshop: **11-12 March 2027**

We particularly encourage submissions from women, early-career scholars, and researchers based in regions and institutions that are underrepresented in international academia. We welcome contributions from a wide range of geographical, institutional, and disciplinary contexts and especially value perspectives that are often marginalized within dominant academic debates.

A limited number of travel grants for early career scholars will be available to cover participants' travel and/or accommodation expenses.

The workshop is organized as part of research network Comparative Governance in Contested Spaces, with the support of the Jagiellonian Centre for Migration Studies and the Chair of Migration and Ethnic Studies, both at the Jagiellonian University, as well as IPSA RC14.