



**FRIEDRICH-SCHILLER-
UNIVERSITÄT
JENA**



Call for Participants for the Workshop

“Youngsters' Livelihoods and Movements in Peripheralised Regions”

27th - 28th February 2020, Institute for Slavistics and Caucasus Studies,

Friedrich-Schiller-University Jena

The Velvet revolution in Armenia, the “Rave revolution” and the Anti-Putin protests in Georgia, local election manifestations in Russia or “Fridays for future” climate demonstrations are widely perceived as youth movements. Unquestionably they had an impact on the respective regions, if not also on a global level. Youngsters come of age within a “cultural space”, which had been shaped by globalisation and digitalisation, and at the same time by nationalism and authoritarianism built on the debris of post-socialist or post-welfare societies. Youngsters engage in subcultures, not only for opposing mainstream norms but also for claiming their position and their rights and subject positions. They take part in diverse and often contradicting movements related to ecology, social justice, LGBTI rights, religious fundamentalism, nationalism, racism, etc, expressed in different performative acts like political activism, volunteering or lifestyle choices relating to fashion or music. Unambiguously, their positionality is framed by their peripheral location, marginalisations in terms of knowledge and capital flows, as well as reproduced, entrenched and internalised subalternities.

The workshop is geared to provide insights into livelihoods and movements of young people on the peripheries, and fills an existing gap in youth movement literature by integrating peripheral voices in global academic discourse. We build on existing critical research on education and youth policy (Roudometof 2019, Hahn-Bleibtreu 2012), subcultures (D. Buckingham et al 2014) and recent explorations of their links to “the global condition” (Cicchelli 2019). Youth movements in formerly socialist countries as Russia, Slovenia, Poland or Bulgaria attracted some attention (Junes 2015), especially subcultures as Punks (Zubak 2015, Brauer 2012), Rap (Oravcová 2016) and Hooligans (Perasović 2008), or street gangs (Frederiksen 2013). Some studies deal with the adoption of youth to disruptions caused by the collapse of the Soviet Union and effects of globalization (Schwartz, Winkel 2016), and peripherality (Kirmse 2013, Roche 2010). However, a systematic analysis of livelihoods and movements, especially in peripheralised regions such as the Caucasus or Central Asia, their local embeddedness and global connectedness, is still lacking.

With this in mind, the workshop addresses the sources, connections, and trajectories of current youth movements at the peripheries, their interactions, embeddedness or rejection, as well as

their policy impact, space production processes, the production and distribution of images and knowledge on and from peripheries, not only in post-Socialist countries but on the global level. The workshop format offers the opportunity to focus on exchanging field experiences and analytical pathways within a group of scholars working on youth in Eurasian peripheries. The workshop should lay the ground for a publication project, including a conceptual co-authored essay on young mobilisation in peripheralised regions, and a podcast series for a sustained dialogue with both academic and activist audiences.

The three planned workshop sessions oscillate around one central topics each:

1. Confronting peripheralisation: Youngsters in post-socialist peripheries are often confronted with marginalisation, poverty, and absence of parents due to outmigration. As state-developed visions for the youth often lag behind the realities, abilities and imaginaries of youngsters in the post-socialist space, many groups feel excluded and do not participate in national discourses of the future. Through access to media and social networks spread across national borders, they are in motion in a physical and social sense. Nevertheless, they have to cope with political (visa regimes), economic (poverty) and discursive (e.g. orientalising) constrains, as well as with local cultural (religious, normative) conditions. This tension leads not only to conflict, but has a productive side, which becomes visible in music, lifestyle, and sub-culture dynamics.

2. Searching for belonging: In many post-socialist societies, religion, nationalism and patriarchal structures are on the rise (Omelicheva 2015). Often this phenomenon is identified with a rejection of “Western” values. However, this does not explain the prevalence, mobilization power and impact such ideas possess also in the “Western world”. In East and West alike, movements spread their messages by digital means, and are globally connected. Muslim pilgrims as well as folklorist groups and LGBTI activists all reshape respective communities by negotiating embeddedness and connectedness.

3. Mobilisation with and against the state: Youngsters are at the forefront of proposing alternative political agendas, ranging from social volunteering work to sustainable urban development up to nationalist youth movements or criminal para-statal subcultures following own codes and laws and engaging in a radical detachment from the society (Mühlfried 2018). These political projects may be bottom-up or state-sponsored, nurtured by Western foundations, or rely on traditional kinship relations.

We are open for academic and non-academic contributions linked with the topics mentioned above (e.g. short presentations, research proposals, report of fieldwork or experience, observations, reports of activists). Please send a short abstract of the planned contribution (max. 350 words) and a CV to [tamar.khutsishvili \(at\) uni-jena.de](mailto:tamar.khutsishvili@uni-jena.de); [joseph.sparsbrod \(at\) uni-jena.de](mailto:joseph.sparsbrod@uni-jena.de) by the **31st of January 2020**.

The workshop will start at 27th February 9:00 a.m. and end on 28th 17:00.

We can only cover travel expense up to 130€, but we can organize accommodations suiting different needs and financial situations if desired.