

What do we know about the urban impoverished areas of the world and the living environment of its inhabitants? When looking at research reports available so far the answer to this question is relatively sobering. The world of the people at the bottom of society appears to be widely homogeneous. According to the common belief it consists of drugs, violence and a very strong religiousness. Queries beyond this are rarely found so that Markus Schroer correctly speaks of “a reproduction of always the same images” in respect of ghettos, favelas and banlieues.

When applying this perspective we do not conceive the inhabitants of slum districts as individuals, as actively engaged people who shape the social conditions around themselves in a process of a purposeful adoption.

How did the participants of that society cope with their surroundings? How did they interpret and adopt urban space in order to fight individually and jointly against their position at the periphery of society? The conference wants to take up these questions and investigate how far approaches of cultural sciences can contribute to overcome the “exotification of the ghetto” (Loic Wacquant) and to look instead at the heterogeneity and individuality behind the facades.

The concept of this conference is based on the assumption that an interdisciplinary dialogue will be able to deal with this topic as extensive and promising as possible.

At the same time it is intended to examine the results of theoretical and methodical approaches on the basis of specific historical examples. The focus of the conference will lie on the socially deprived areas of European and American towns of the 19<sup>th</sup>, 20<sup>th</sup> and 21<sup>st</sup> centuries. It will be compared what we know about the lives of those people so far and how cultural science can provide deeper insights into the respective inner structures. In this way we hope to come to new perspectives for the research of poverty and inequalities that do not stop at collective categories.

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## Looking Behind the Facade of the Ghetto. Perspectives of Cultural Sciences on Urban Slum Areas and Their Inhabitants

Conference of the Research Unit “Historical Cultural Sciences”

Johannes Gutenberg  
University Mainz  
Philosophicum  
Old Faculty Hall  
Jakob-Welder-Weg 18  
55128 Mainz, Germany

March 30 to April 1, 2012



**30.03.2012 (Friday)**15:00-18:00

Welcome addresses:

*Prof. Dr. Elisabeth Oy-Marra* (Research Unit "Historical Cultural Sciences", Mainz)*Prof. Dr. Jan Kusber* (Department for East European History, Mainz)Opening: *Dr. Hans-Christian Petersen* (Mainz)Keynote Speakers*Prof. Dr. Peter Imbusch* (Wuppertal): Urban Spaces in Comparative Perspective: Taking a Closer Look on Desintegration and Social Exclusion

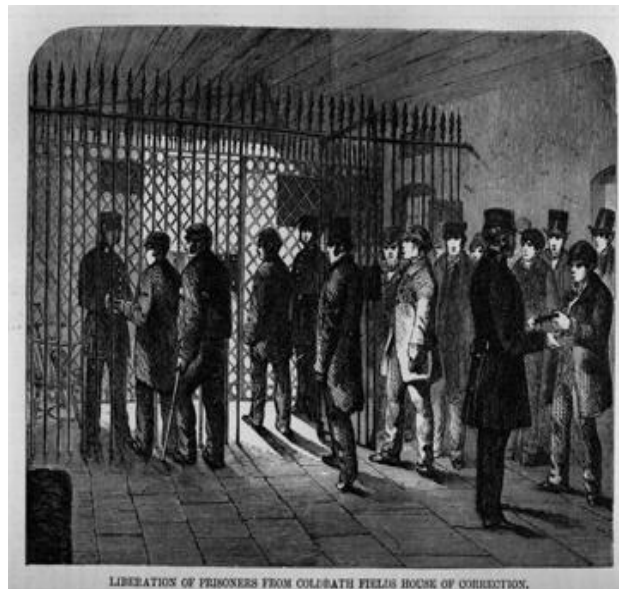
16:30-16:45 Coffee and Tea Break

*Prof. Dr. Jerry White* (London): The Worst Street in North London: Campbell Bunk, Islington, Between the Wars**31.03.2012 (Saturday)**10:00-12:30*Prof. Dr. Wolfgang Maderthaler* (Vienna): Outcast Vienna. The Other Side of a Fin-de-Siècle Metropolis

11:00-11:15 Coffee and Tea Break

*Johanna Niedbalski, M.A.* (Berlin): Funfairs and Amusement Parks. A Social Topography of Pleasure in Early 20<sup>th</sup> Century BerlinChair: *Prof. Dr. Jan Kusber* (Mainz)**31.03.2012 (Saturday)**14:00-17:30*Dr. Hans-Christian Petersen* (Mainz): Who Owns the City? Gentrification and the Creation of Social Spaces 'from Below' – St. Petersburg 1850-1914*Dr. Ilja Gerasimov* (Kazan): The Subalterns Speak Out: Urban Plebeian Society in Late Imperial Russia

16:00-16:15 Coffee and Tea Break

*Prof. Dr. Mark D. Steinberg* (Illinois): The Experience of Violence among the Poor of St. Petersburg, 1905-1917Chair: *Dr. Andreas Frings* (Mainz)

LIBERATION OF PRISONERS FROM COLLEBATH FIELDS HOUSE OF CORRECTION.

**01.04.2012 (Sunday)**10:00-13:30*Prof. Dr. Ingrid Breckner* (Hamburg): Urban Pockets of Poverty under Gentrification Pressure - The Examples of Ottensen, St. Pauli und Wilhelmsburg in Hamburg

11:00-11:15 Coffee and Tea Break

*Dipl.-Soz. Hauke Jan Rolf* (Mainz): The Location of Nicaraguan Migrants within Costa Rica's Metropolitan Area and the Spatial Effects on Their Social Support NetworksChair: *Dr. Hans-Christian Petersen* (Mainz)

Summary, plans for publication and future research perspectives.

**Contact**

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