The toxic indeterminacy of explosive remnants of war: a planning perspective on social memory

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This talk discusses the 'toxic indeterminacy' inflicted by explosive remnants of war (ERW) on livelihoods and environments in Bosnia and Herzegovina. Based on field work in the northwest of the country, the session will describe the environmental conditions and hardship of daily work for the Bosnian demining agency (BHMAC) as well as the urban and rural poor, including migrant and refugee people who have ended up stranded in this part of the so-called Balkan Route(s) since late 2017. The talk argues that the presence of ERW is part of a territorial project that serves the interests of capitalist accumulation and its forms of social domination. Indeed, on the one hand, ERW-contaminated soils keep in place a spatial order that facilitates the exploitation of local populations. On the other, toxic environmental contamination has been strategically weaponized as part of the securitisation tactics employed in particular by Croatian border police, supported by EU technology, personnel and funding. The talk will engage with the question of social memory starting from these traces of past armed conflict and their material reverberations into the present.



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