

## Foundational Anxieties: Referendum Politics and Democratic Disavowal

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Wyk?ad dr Madeleine Reeves (University of Manchester)

#### [Foundational Anxieties: Referendum Politics and Democratic Disavowal | Madeleine Reeves \[1\]](#)

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Referendums rupture the normal socio-material field, exposing the artifice at the heart of all sovereign claims. It is the very capacity to conjure 'the people' that gives a referendum its authorising power: to found a new constitution; to 'take back control'. But this very moment of conjuring can also elicit feelings of disquiet at not being represented, or the institution itself being unable to contain the social antagonism that it sets in motion. In Kyrgyzstan such disquiet has crystallized around the disavowal of sayasat, politics, as a realm of volatile and potentially destructive social antagonism. Drawing on ethnography from Kyrgyzstan, which, in December 2016 held its sixth constitutional referendum in twenty-three years, this paper takes popular opposition to the referendum as the starting point for an anthropology of political refusal. Critically engaging anthropology's predominant concern with political hope, it considers what is at stake for our understanding of democratic disquiet by engaging nonparticipation as an object of ethnographic concern.

**Madeleine Reeves** is a Senior Lecturer in Social Anthropology at the University of Manchester, and since 2015 has served as Editor of Central Asian Survey. Her research interests lie in the anthropology of politics and the state, the anthropology of mobility and time, and increasingly, in questions of ethics in relation to the beginning and end of life. She is the author of *Border Work: Spatial Lives of the State in Rural Central Asia* (Cornell, 2014) and the co-editor, most recently, of *Marginal Hubs: Conviviality Beyond the Urban Centre in Asia*, a special issue of *Modern Asian Studies* (with Magnus Marsden, 2019).

SEMINARIA NAUKOWE IEiAK - w trakcie seminariów badania prezentuj? pracownicy instytutu, a tak?e antropolodzy i przedstawiciele pokrewnych dyscyplin z kraju i ze ?wiata. To okazja do zapoznania si? z najnowszymi badaniami i swobodnej dyskusji w kameralnej atmosferze. Spotkania s? otwarte dla publiczno?ci. Serdecznie zapraszamy wszystkich zainteresowanych: zarówno badaczy, jak i studentów, absolwentów oraz wszelkie osoby, którym bliska jest tematyka seminariów. Wi?cej o seminariach

Antropologia dzi? - otwarte seminaria naukowe – zadanie finansowane w ramach umowy 973/P-DUN/2018 ze ?rodków Ministra Nauki i Szkolnictwa Wy?szego przeznaczonych na dzia?alno?? upowszechniaj?c? nauk?. Projekt jest realizowany przez Stowarzyszenie Pracownia Etnograficzna im. Witolda Dynowskiego we wspó?pracy z Instytutem Etnologii i Antropologii Kulturowej UW.



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