Human geography without hierarchy

Speaker: Simon Springer  
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Chair: Jamie Gillen, Department of Geography, NUS  
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Abstract
Responding to neoliberal decentralization, Marxists pair centralization with capitalism's abrogation. Such a view considers hierarchy necessary and horizontal organization as propitious to neoliberalism. Anarchism's coupling of decentralization with anti-capitalism is dismissed because Marxism cannot accommodate prefigurative politics, treating horizontality as a future objective.

This temporality ignores the insurrectionary possibilities of the present and implies a politics of waiting. In terms of spatiality, Marxian centralized hierarchy deems horizontality inappropriate when 'jumping scales'. Yet by rejecting this vertical ontology we may immediately disengage capitalism through a rhizomic politics. Consequently, human geography without hierarchy gains traction when we embrace an anarchist flat ontology.

About the Speaker
Simon Springer is an Assistant Professor in the Department of Geography at the University of Victoria, Canada. Prior to this he taught geography at the University of Otago and the National University of Singapore. Simon's research agenda explores the political, social, and geographical exclusions that neoliberalization has engendered in post-transitional Cambodia, emphasizing the spatialities of violence and power. He cultivates a cutting edge approach to human geography through a theoretical edifice that foregrounds both poststructuralist critique and a radical revival of anarchist philosophy in advancing a postanarchist positionality. In a relatively short period of time since being awarded his PhD from the University of British Columbia in 2009, Simon has published extensively in a number of top-ranking geography journals including, Transactions of the Institute of British Geographers, Annals of the Association of American Geographers, Environment and Planning D: Society and Space, Political Geography, Area, Geopolitics, Environment and Planning A, Geoforum, and Antipode. He is also the author of Cambodia's Neoliberal Order: Violence, Authoritarianism, and the Contestation of Public Space (Routledge, 2010). Most importantly Simon is the proud father of an Apsara daughter, Solina, and two Viking sons, Odin and Tyr.