

# OSTROM WORKSHOP COLLOQUIUM SERIES

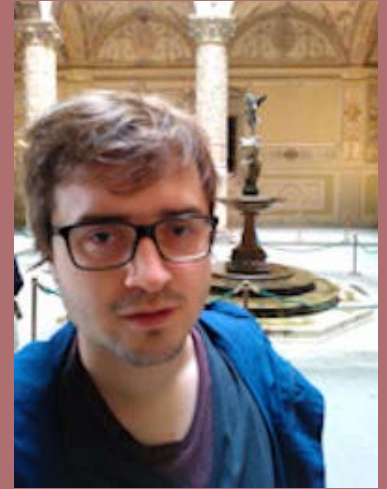
## Gertjan Plets

*Department of History & Art History  
Utrecht University*

“Well-Oiled Cultural Politics in the Altai Republic: Promoting Indigenous Heritage in Gazprom’s Resource Colonies”

**Monday, January 29, 2018**

12:00 – 1:00 p.m. • Ostrom Workshop, 513 N. Park



Drawing on ethnographic perspectives, this paper will explore the neoliberal imbrications defining cultural politics in Russia’s indigenous resource frontiers. Experiences from the Altai Republic (Siberia) will be used to illustrate how culture and indigenous heritage are central strategic tools employed by multinational Gazprom to shape unique institutional landscapes and cultural imaginations of energy extraction on the ground. Through funding archaeological museums and the repatriation of indigenous remains to certain Siberian nationalities, Gazprom has not only acquired a “license to operate” from indigenous groups and bureaucrats to construct a strategic pipeline to China, it has also provided specific ethnic groups with exceptional cultural privileges unique in Russia. In our assessment, we will not only focus on the the impact of the energy corporation as many studies have done. When a region becomes relevant for energy exploration, a suite of NGOs, multilateral organizations, and opposition parties enter the political field. Consequently, this paper will also study how this broader “complex” associated with resource extraction drastically reformulates local regimes of truth and institutional structures.



**Gertjan Plets** is a cultural anthropologist based at Utrecht University (Netherlands) specialized in energy infrastructure and indigenous Siberian politics. He has been working in the Altai Republic since 2009, where he has been tracing the impact of Gazprom’s corporate social responsibility programs on local politics and cultural dynamics. Before his tenure at Utrecht, Gertjan was based at Stanford University where he co-coordinated a research lab exploring the role of cultural heritage in global politics ([website](#)).

Presentations are open to the public and are live streamed (see our website for URL and papers). You are welcome to bring your lunch. For questions, contact Allison Sturgeon ([sturgeon@iu.edu](mailto:sturgeon@iu.edu); 812/855–3151).