

## **Anthropological Forays into Urban Polarization**

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This session is dedicated to anthropological studies of cities and urban formations—especially focusing on the social life of cities. In particular, we are interested in providing comparative perspectives on the multiform and multisemic effects of neoliberal tendencies within urban development and urban planning. Concretely, such tendencies may include processes which redefine and restrict urban commons, class-based forms of spatial access, ghettoification, systems of surveillance and control that suffuse our everyday lives and urban spaces, as well as the emergence of privately engineered, privately built and fully privately owned cities. Such tendencies generate, we claim, various and contested urban forms of polarization that are not only accessible for anthropological analysis but should be of keen interest to our discipline, reflecting a long-standing interest in friction, conflict, resistance, and modes of governance in socio-spatial circumstances.

Based on this broad and deliberately inclusive focus, in this session we explicitly hope for a range of papers that deal with different parts of the globe. This is done not only to juxtapose formal commonalities and similarities between in urban contexts around the globe but also to open up a broader discussion which approaches, in critical fashion, common understandings of the private-public distinction, the relations between the material constitution of the city and its many imaginaries, or the ways in which urban governance relates to various forms of capitalist transformation, to name some.

## **Conjuring compassion: Auditive and visual affective signification in Maputo.**

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When approaching large-scale and/or highly unequal urban orders as analysts, one may easily reach for template descriptors of structural/neoliberal violence, portrayals of multiform patterns of exclusion, narratives of the excesses of militarized/secured urbanism or other analytical short-hands denigrating (the potential for) human sociality, relationality and care. While such analyses are enormously important, not least in the context of novel dire forms of inequality brought on by the recent global pandemic, there are, I hold, crucial and identifiable practices in cityscapes oriented towards forms of compassion or, at least, mutuality of being. In this paper I will explore two such practices in Maputo, namely contemporary rap music and the names given to the overcrowded minibuses (*chapas*) and cars in the form of painted or printed signs. Both practices engage the sensory apparatus of urbanites but as they do, there is a tangible commonality of direction to at least some of what is conjured: a desire for a new sociality, an attack on non-compassion itself and a conjuring desire for creating affective spaces of love, care and mutuality. In mapping the auditive and visually affective in Maputo, I will also draw on other contemporary urban work from African contexts to argue for a more nuanced understanding of African urban spaces.”

## **Occupation, expulsion, and collapse: Housing migrants in the city of Marseille.**

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In November 2020, as France was envisaging a gradual exit from its second national COVID-lockdown, the police forcibly evacuated several low-income apartment blocks (HLM) in the Quartiers Nord of Marseille, one of the poorest suburbs in Europe. The city council had issued a decree of imminent danger due to the unsafe condition of the buildings, a topic that had been high on the political agenda since the collapse of several houses in the inner city two years earlier. The apartment blocks had been squatted by between 150 and 300 West-African asylum seekers and undocumented migrants for around a year, denouncing the failure of authorities to offer them housing. The squat was one of several instances in later years of migrants occupying urban space. In this paper I take these events of occupation, collapse, and expulsion as points of departure for discussing the intersection between modes of migration governance, neo-liberal urban policies, and the materialities of political struggle.

## **Eierskap til besvær: Om privatisering av byrom.**

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I mitt bidrag til arbeidsgruppen ønsker jeg å se nærmere på hvor grensene går for eiendomsrettigheter i private by-allmenninger og hva privatiseringen betyr for byutviklingen og for felleskapet. I den norske byutviklingsdiskursen pågår en debatt om hvordan privatisering av byrom kan medføre begrensninger på det demokratiske ytringsrommet. Som Bjerkeseths kategorisering av byromsbruk viser (Bjerkeseth 2021) så er det en tydelig sammenheng mellom eierskapet til byrommet og graden av offentlighet som innbyggerne opplever. Dette er selvfølgelig viktige og kritiske aspekter ved det privateide byrommet. Samtidig mener jeg vi ikke kan forstå hva privatisering av byrom betyr for fellesskapet uten at vi tar inn i analysen finansialiseringen av eiendom og den utvinning av verdier fra kollektivet som dette medfører. Etnografien er hentet fra den pågående byutviklingen på Fornebu, en del av hovedstadsområdet i Norge. Fokus her er først og fremst på eierskap og hvordan eierforhold virker inn i byutviklingen. I presentasjonen skal jeg se nærmere på hva eierskap gjør i konkrete planprosesser og hva det gjør med forvaltningen av felles arealer, byallmenninger eller 'urban commons', nærmere bestemt Fornebu Felles, og Nansenparken. Jeg håper å vise at eierskap, og da særlig det kapitaliserte eierskapet gjør en betydelig forskjell, som kjennetegnes mest av at den har en makt og innflytelse som er ureflektert og uartikulert i samarbeidet mellom kommune, grunneiere, planrådgivere og innbyggere. Analysen av byplanutviklingen som pågår på Fornebu vil vise og forsøke å forklare hvordan den norske urbanismen og samfunnsplanleggingen er forankret i et verdensbilde og en etos som er i utakt med transformerende finanskrefter.

## **Electronic Waste Valuation: The art of scavenging and its malcontents in Dar es Salaam city's landscape.**

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A Scavenging waste is a critical sector of global south cities. On the one hand, scavenging complement the gap of under-resourced waste collecting and handling institution. Furthermore, on the other hand, it offers employment and steady income to many who are crumbling from the high unemployment rate. How can we understand the art of scavenging methodologically?

Based on 12months of ethnographic fieldwork among informal electronic waste recyclers in Dar es Salaam Tanzania, I want to present walking as a method of understanding value and valuation during waste salvaging. By walking with my interlocutors during their labour, I walked along the trail of value production; things moved, and people moved to generate value. Value is not only produced through labour and exchange; things move from one place where they are valueless to another place where they are valorised to ending up as valuables. Walking enables my interlocutors to connect between different parts of the city, enhances the city's knowledge and materiality essential in the valorisation of e-waste. The connection to the heat, soil, dust and puddles, urban vegetation and concrete, the shadows and thousands of sunray droplets under Neem and Flamboyant trees, the smell of food and rotten garbage, perfumes and sweat, tranquillity and noise, words and gestures, are equally important in the process of valuation.

By exploring Tim Ingold concept of "*becoming knowledgeable*," I want to argue that e-waste scavenging in the global south cities can be very well understood through walking. Walking not only exposed the ethnographer to physical obstacles, ingenuity, valorisation processes and violence of post-modern consumerism, it also involves experiences from other sensory organs that give unique experiences about the city while observing.

## **Walking in the differentiated city of Paris.**

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A big city such as Paris no doubt presents a challenge to the anthropologist. It is a city of many levels, of social plurality, and vast depths of historicity. These aspects of the city as a differentiated and complex place entail a longer discussion in anthropology. Marilyn Strathern (1991) provocatively suggested that anthropologists have tended to exaggerate when representing the city as a complex system. In contrast to presumably less complex field-sites, we should not take for granted that there is more variety, less coherence, and less order across the big city. She pointed out that such complexity can be fractal; that is, the phenomenon which appears to reveal different scales might be "the same all the way through". Strathern's simple lesson for the study of the big city, then, is to not take complexity for granted but to search for different social scales. What are the breaking points between what kinds of social arenas displayed in the city? I think an important clue for actually finding different scales in the city is to look at public spaces and their role in accommodating different social formations, and also different symbolic regimes. It is of interest to observe that different streets, squares, and greens might feature differently motivated crowds assembling for different symbolic purposes. This is linked to De Certeau's point that when people walk in the city they construct, by their footsteps, the differentiated symbolic reality of the various city spaces as they walk into them and populate them. This approach also requires us to draw our methodological focus away from family life, institutions, factories and shops and towards the spaces in between, towards the public domains of street, squares and parks.

## **Hvorfor mobiliserer de ikke? Utforsking av klasse, naboskap og motstand i en slum i New Delhi.**

*Anne Waldrop, professor i utviklingsstudier, OsloMet [anwal@oslomet.no](mailto:anwal@oslomet.no)*

India er historisk sett kjent som et svært hierarkisk samfunn der kastesystemet rangerer folk som iboende forskjellig, og der det er enormt store forskjeller mellom rike og fattige. I perioden fra India ble selvstendig i 1947 fram til 1990-tallet, kan urbane områder sies å ha vært preget av fysisk nærhet og sosial avstand mellom folk fra forskjellige kaster, klasser og religioner. Til tross for de enorme forskjellene i inntekt og levekår, har det i denne perioden vært lite polarisering og generelt liten grad av klassebevissthet og mobilisering blant de fattige. Med økonomisk liberalisering fra 1990-tallet av har klasseforskjellene blitt ytterligere forsterket, og i byer som New Delhi har det vokst fram 'gated communities', en vrimmel av privatskoler, og shoppingssentre og eksklusive markeder med egne vakter, samtidig som de mange slumområdene som tidligere lå spredt rundt sentralt i byen, har blitt flyttet til byens perifere utkanter. Byen preges nå i sterkere grad av både fysisk og sosial avstand. Samtidig med denne forsterkingen av klasseforskjeller, har kaste tilhørighet endret betydning i India. På den ene siden, har kaste fått mindre betydning i dagliglivet, men på den andre siden, har kaste blitt politisert gjennom dannelsen av politiske kaste-partier, og kaste for de nederst i hierarkiet antar en mer klasselignende form. Til tross for disse endringene, er det i New Delhi generelt en svært liten grad av polarisering, konflikt eller kollektiv mobilisering blant de fattige.

I dette innlegget vil jeg med utgangspunkt i et 40 år gammelt slumområde i utkanten av New Delhi, utforske fraværet av dette. Teoretisk sett ligger forholdene her godt til rette for kollektiv mobilisering: Området er relativt homogent klassemessig og folk flest har usikre, dårlig betalte jobber i uformell sektor; som slumbeboere deler de en felles marginalisering; det er et generelt godt naboskap der smugene mellom husene fungerer som fellesområder og barn leker sammen; og selv om de har krav på visse kommunale minimumsgoder, er tilbudet dårlig, og de lever med usikkerhet rundt området videre skjebne.