



3B-1.2: Juxtaposition, conflict and segregation in cities

Tuesday 12 November, 14.00 – 15.30

IAS Forum

Chair/ discussant: **Prof. Mona Harb**, Professor of Urban Studies and Politics, American University of Beirut

Breaking down the nation-state: retreat and belonging in upper class gated communities in Johannesburg

Dr Federica Duca, Senior Researcher, Public Affairs Research Institute, University of the Witwatersrand

Despite the formal and institutional spread of democracy, the steady growth of inequality is one of the main hindrances to the accomplishment of democratic societies. Cities are spaces in which inequality is visible, especially when looking at its spatial outlook. The stark difference, yet physical proximity, between wealthy suburbs and informal settlements is one of the most staggering images of cities of the Global South. In this context, the increasing presence of wealthy enclaves is analysed as the epitome of the retreat of the successful and as spaces that represent the demise of the nation-state. Contributing to the existing literature on citizenship, nation-state and gated enclaves in cities of the Global South, this paper argues that in South Africa we are witnessing a moment in which the nation and the state take two different directions. Thus, instead of a weakening of the nation-state as a single concept, we see the detachment of the nation from the state. In this context, the wealthy see and experience the state as the main facilitator of citizenship and belonging for the poor, why citizenship for the rich is mediated mostly by the concept of the nation. The institutional, spatial and social makeup of gated communities facilitate this idea of belonging to the nation, and a very pragmatic association to the state, thus challenging the accomplishment of an equal, democratic society. Based on deep and extensive ethnographic work in Johannesburg, the paper details that articulation of the relationship between the nation and the state via the space of the urban gated community and the notions of nationalism and patriotism. It thus offers a way of positioning the urban space between state institutions and belonging to the nation.

Juxtacities: urban divides, authority and citizenship in the global south

Dr Amanda Hammar, Associate Professor, Centre of African Studies, University of Copenhagen

Paper co-authored with Dr Marianne Millstein, Oslo Metropolitan University

While acknowledging the existing scholarship on divided, polarised, segregated or fragmented cities, this paper offers its own Southern-driven contribution to thinking about urban divides. Neither taking them for granted, nor merely asking how such divides are

produced, the main conceptual focus is on the productive qualities and effects of urban divides in themselves. We recognize that divides – be these spatial, social, physical, economic, political or symbolic – emerge out of differences, or more specifically out of productive tensions in the articulation between juxtaposed differences. In this context, we conceive of juxtaposition as the location of two or more relatively distinct or contrasting phenomena (actors, infrastructures, events, visions, temporalities, etc.) in close proximity to one another, in some way interacting and co-producing one another. Examples of such proximate contrasts may include, for example, squatter areas adjacent to affluent neighbourhoods, informal street vendors beside corporate enterprises, or the co-presence of different kinds of authority. In this regard, we see urban divides as particularly generative ‘intermediate’ and ‘kinetic’ spaces of creative friction, through which various urban forms and relations get made or remade. Adopting what we are calling a ‘juxtacities approach’, and drawing on both our own and others’ related empirically grounded scholarship, this paper pays particular attention to the relationship between urban divides and the production of authority and citizenship in their various manifestations. This entails examining how differently positioned actors produce, reinforce, contest or use urban divides and what implications this has for shaping both authorities and citizens and the co-constitutive dynamics between them.

Designing Care Via Sharing: Theorizing South-South Urban Practices

Dr Elahe Karimnia, Researcher, Theatrum Mundi

The paper theorises from the sharing of south-south urban practices that restore care to the city and thereby **transform the meaning of public spaces**. The “wall of kindness” originated in Mashhad and other cities of Iran, under conditions of austerity and threats of sanctions. Citizens anonymously began sharing the basic necessities of life, such as clothing [and later books, tools and other items for homes] by attaching hangers outside the walls of buildings followed by the motto: "Leave what you don't need" and "Take what you do". Since then, the concept has travelled to other cities of mainly the Global South (such as 'Muro da Gentileza' in Rio de Janeiro) and its form has developed, while the main meaning of care through sharing in cities stays the same.

This paper investigates and theorises how such south-south practices emerge, grow and transfer around the world by further developing the comparative analysis of types and degrees of publicness [following Karimnia 2018] in two cities: Tehran and Rio de Janeiro. These community-based urban practices appropriate the urban walls and transform them into public common. Designing care reveals how the material city can be part of meaningful actions through which not only is sharing spatialized, but also the meaning of urban walls is transformed: built for separation, they have become places for sharing and care. These micro-urban practices show the power of grassroots actions in making social change and transforming cities to become democratic spaces.

Making space between confinement and contention: Afro-Colombians at the pluri-ethnic interface

Giulia Torino, PhD candidate, University of Cambridge

This contribution is concerned with the making of space and urban life across racial(ised) borderlands in the Latin American pluri-ethnic city. Borderlands and frontiers that mark space are epistemic, representational, as much as physical thresholds; they can be apparatuses of racialised control but also devices of tactical operability. Black urban dwellers in Latin America are often simultaneously Afro-descendant and internally displaced, human rights activists and the urban poor, community leaders and single mothers. Embodying Blackness in Latin American cities entails inhabiting the urban through its multifold barriers while carrying the weight of a colonial difference which is not yet extinct, but which has been forever enshrined in a tri-ethnic coalescence, despite the refractory whitening telos of the mestizo population. This results in living under and through several forms of confinement, while concurrently resisting them by means of an enduring, albeit not linear, process of contention. Stemming from a concern with the systematic invisibility and neglected urban and spatial experiences of Afro-descendants in Latin America, this paper ethnographically resorts to the stories of “making space” of youth groups, female community leaders, informal street vendors, human rights activists, heads of social organisations, barbers, cooks, charwomen, and other residents who inhabit, for their greatest majority, Bogotá’s so-called peripheries and inner city. In doing so, I contend that making space in the mestizo capital city acquires a twofold acceptance for Afro-Colombians: re-signifying the urban through the territorial distinctiveness of their ethno-racial identity, while (re)producing one’s own identity through the particularity of the urban. This contribution will conclude with an open interrogation: how can emerging Afro-descendant urban ontologies in Latin America help us move beyond the current frontiers of knowledge in urban studies that have been historically rooted in racial-colonial urban schemes – epistemically, psychologically (representationally), and materially?