

Urban Trajectories: Comparing Integration, Enclaving and Development in Africa and China



Workshop

13-14 September 2023, 09:00-17:00
Nordic Centre, Fudan University, Shanghai

<https://www.uib.no/en/urbanenclavingfutures>



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Workshop abstract

Organised by the international and multidisciplinary research project, Urban Enclaving Futures, in this workshop Nordic, European and African researchers will meet with scholars from Fudan University to comparatively discuss the development and trajectories of urbanisation and housing markets in the African cities the Urban Enclaving Futures project focuses on: Accra (Ghana), Johannesburg (South Africa) and Maputo (Mozambique). We will compare this with trends in contemporary China, and focus on how local families, real estate developers, (inter)national companies and state agencies navigate the housing market. Realising the influence that global flows of capital, people, technology and goods hold for local development, urbanisation and housing, we will also discuss the diasporic African and Middle Eastern merchant communities in the Chinese city of Yiwu, to generate insights about the Belt and Road initiative and its links between Chinese and global development. The core themes of the workshop -- integration, enclaving, and development -- are coined to capture different aspects of urban trajectories that can and should be compared between different empirical settings. In this context, integration refers to how urban developments meld into and become part of the existing urban morphology, while enclaving refers to the unequal distribution of urban infrastructure. Both tendencies -- integration and enclaving -- seem simultaneously to be part of urban development we see across the globe. In other words, in this workshop we will discuss issues that are as local as they are global!

Day 1: Workshop Program

item	Title:	Speaker	Location:	Time:
01	Registration for day 1	N/A	Seminar room 302, NC	08:45-09:15
02	Welcome speech by Mr Veli-Matti Palomaki, Programme Director of Nordic Centre.	Veli-Matti Palomaki	Seminar room 302, NC	09:15-09:30
03	Opening keynote: Urban trajectories: Global Trends of Enclaving and Integration Which Transform How We Conceive of the City	Bjørn Enge Bertelsen	Seminar room 302, NC	09:30-10:00
	Introductory discussion of workshop objectives and outcomes	Bjørn Enge Bertelsen	Seminar room 302, NC	10:00-10:30
04	Private Cities, Land, and the Transformation of Africa's Urban Fringe	Austin Dziwornu Ablo	Seminar room 302, NC	10:30-11:00
05	Coffee Break			11:00-11:30
06	Reproducing Global Hierarchies in Urban Discourses of Cancer in Tanzania	M. Yunus Rafiq	Seminar room 302, NC	11:30-12:00
07	Overseas Dayuan: The living space and its encounters of a Chinese state-owned enterprise in Tanzania	Lei Wen	Seminar room 302, NC	12:00-12:30
08	Lunch		Fudan faculty restaurant	12:30-13:30
09	Urban Zones of Poverty in Sudan	Leif Manger	Seminar room 302, NC	13:30-14:00
10	Not home yet! A Quest for Social Affirmation in a Social Engineering Utopia Project	Sandra Manuel	Seminar room 302, NC	14:00-14:30
11	How Did Yiwu's International Business Respond to the Pandemic?	Fan Lizhu	Seminar room 302, NC	14:30-15:00
12	End of day summary discussion	Moderated by Bjørn Enge Bertelsen	Seminar room 302, NC	15:00-15:30
13	Optional: City walk around redevelopment areas nearby Dinghaiqiao bridge. The walk lasts about 1,5 hours and goes between Aiguo road and Jiangpu park (line 12)		Departure from hotel lobby	16:30
	Dinner		Di Shui Dong (Hunanese restaurant)	20:00

Day 2: Workshop Program

item	Title:	Speaker:	Location:	Time:
01	Registration for day 2	N/A	Seminar room 302, NC	09:00-09:30
02	Opening keynote: South-South collaboration from below: a reflection	Min Tang	Seminar room 302, NC	09:30-10:00
03	The Shezidao Paradox: The Politics of Being Informal	Qi Li	Seminar room 302, NC	10:00-10:30
04	'Selling One's Liver to Buy a House': How Science Parks Affect Aspirations and Family Dynamics in Southern Taiwan	Ole Johannes Kaland	Seminar room 302, NC	10:30-11:00
05	Coffee break			11:00-11:30
06	How Yiwu Connects Global Migrant Merchants and Local Market	Chen Na	Seminar room 302, NC	11:30-12:00
07	On the Democracy of Buildings. Thoughts on Urban Architecture and Political Struggles Through the Case of the Prédio da Lagoa in Luanda	Ruy Llera Blanes	Seminar room 302, NC	12:00-12:30
08	Lunch		Fudan faculty restaurant	12:30-13:30
09	Hope Made of Cements: Housing Enclaves and Navigating Political Changes in Urban Ethiopia	Samson Bezabeh	Seminar room 302, NC	13:30-14:00
12	Summary of workshop and discussion	Bjørn Enge Bertelsen	Seminar room 302, NC	14:00-14:30
13	Discussion about way forward: publication of special issue, initiation of Sino-Nordic-African urbanization network.	Moderated by Bjørn Enge Bertelsen	Seminar room 302, NC	14:30-15:00
14	Quick rest to freshen up			15:00-16:30
15	Departure by metro with Line 10 from Fudan University station to Yu Garden station		Crowne Plaza Hotel lobby	16:30
16	Walk from Yu Garden via Shanghai Old Street and Weekend Market to river front.		Yu Garden	
17	River cruise on Huangpu river from Shilipu Marina departing 18:40. Then walk to restaurant.		Shilipu Marina	18:40
18	Dinner		Lost Heaven Restaurant (the Bund)	20:00

Day 3: Field Day Program

item	Title:	Location:	Time:
01	Easy morning		
02	Departure from hotel by metro (line 18) to Zhangjiang Hi-Tech Park (line 2).	Crowne Plaza Hotel lobby	11:00-12:00
03	Lunch		12:00-13:00
04	Tour along high-tech plants, shopping -and residential areas in this science zone	Zhangjiang Hi-Tech Park	13:00-14:00
05	Departure to Former French Concession from Guanglan road station (line 2) to Dashijie (line 14). Walk to guided tour meeting point.		14:00-15:00
06	Guided tour of the French Concession with Culture Shock Shanghai	Former French Concession	15:00-18:00
07	Return to hotel to freshen up, or a predrink?		
08	Dinner	Old Jesse Shanghainese Restaurant (Tianping road)	20:00

Private Cities, Land, and the Transformation of Africa's Urban Fringe

Austin Dziwornu Ablo
Senior lecturer
Department of Geography and Resource Development
University of Ghana

Abstract:

The growth and transformation of African cities are driven by multinational developers, businesspeople, urban citizens, and political stakeholders. From ultra-modern shopping centers and gated communities to private cities, urbanization in Africa has gathered momentum. This paper explores the effects of large-scale land deals for a private city development project in Ghana – the Appolonia City of Light. From the conceptual lens of accumulation by dispossession, the article sheds light on the new forms of urban inequalities that arise from this project. It is argued that land acquisition for urban development has exacerbated existing inequalities and transformed the socioeconomic, spatial, and institutional context of the community. The project is beneficial to multinational corporations who accumulate through 'sweet land deals' legitimized by the state. At the community level, there is a centralization of wealth among local elites who brokered such deals to make economic and political gains. Conversely, livelihoods dependent on the environment suffer dispossession in various forms. First, the loss of farmlands creates livelihood uncertainties. Second, the commodification of communal land disrupts social relations and land tenure arrangements and exacerbates chieftaincy disputes in the community.

Bionote:

Austin Dziwornu Ablo holds a PhD Degree in Development Geography from the University of Bergen, Norway. With disciplinary background in human geography, Austin draws upon relational perspectives, political ecology, political economy as well as organisational and institutional approaches to explore human-environment interactions at multiple scales. His research focuses on natural resource governance, energy, urban studies, entrepreneurship and employment, gender and rural development.

“Urban trajectories: Global Trends of Enclaving and Integration Which Transform How We Conceive of the City”

Bjørn Enge Bertelsen
Professor
Department of Social Anthropology
University of Bergen

Abstract

While stating that that “the world is becoming urban” has almost become a truism, what this claim means empirically, analytically and theoretically for our understanding of the city has become increasingly complex. Here, I will delineate three significant trends, pointing also to the great interlinkages between urban development trends across regions and domains such as Africa and China. For one, I will focus on how urban development to an increasing degree also indexes, and are entry-points into analyzing, how contemporary forms of both markets and governance structures work, i.e. how capital and the state are central to emerging urban formations. Second, and drawing on work by Stephen J. Collier, I will argue for urban forms—among these spectacular new private or detached cities or zones—increasingly being *teleological*: No longer are these cutting-edge developments modulating the social but, rather, *moulding* the social. Moreover, such built urban environments negate austerity politics and are, in some ways, repudiations of developmentalist or classical modernist ways of thinking urban development. Third, contemporary enclaving and integration afford great possibilities to also map generativity, desire and people-driven developments in the urban. Such mapping, can be undertaken through a keen attention to urban morphologies, including alterations to the built environment and the actual forms inhabiting these spaces assume. Being disparate, the three trends do not necessarily indicate urban trajectories moving in a single direction. They do provide, however, clues to grappling with emerging urban forms that harbour possibilities for both inclusion and detachment. Crucially, these trends will become important to compare across China and Africa as these are both, an in both linked and contrastive ways, at the forefront of global urban trajectories. Put differently, comparing and undertaking research across these spaces can provide key inputs into what “the world becoming urban” might entail—empirically, theoretically and analytically.

Bionote:

Bjørn Enge Bertelsen is Professor of Social Anthropology at the University of Bergen and the Academic Director of the Holberg Prize. Currently directing the international research project “Enclaving: Patterns of global futures in three African cities”, his research includes political and social anthropology, egalitarianism, and urban Africa. Bertelsen has published numerous books, including having authored *Violent Becomings: State Formation, Sociality, and Power in Mozambique* (2016) and coedited *Crisis of the State: War and Social Upheaval* (with Bruce Kapferer, 2009); *Navigating Colonial Orders: Norwegian Entrepreneurship in Africa and Oceania, ca. 1850 to 1950* (with Kirsten Kjerland, 2015); and *Critical Anthropological Engagements in Human Alterity and Difference* (with Synnøve Bendixsen, 2016). He regularly publishes in journals such as *Urban Studies*, *International Journal of Urban and Regional Studies*, *Journal of Southern African Studies*, *Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute* and *Ethnos*.

How Yiwu Connects Global Migrant Merchants and Local Market

Chen Na
Research Professor
Center for Social Development
Fudan Development Institute
Fudan University

Abstract:

This presentation focuses on Yiwu City, located on southeastern coast of China. It developed as the world's largest wholesale consumer goods market by accident benefited from economic globalization. In the past 20 more years, Yiwu attracts a large number of businessmen and traders from home and abroad, and also other people who are involved in small commodity trading business as language translator, catering and so on. In this unexpected world's largest wholesale consumer goods market, there is another unintended consequence --- with very large numbers of foreigners in addition to people from inside China.

Islam is almost entirely new in Yiwu, although most of the immigrants in our research about had been Muslims all their lives. This research on Muslim migrants from China and abroad who are in Yiwu, will discuss how certain religion unintentionally developed in the process of a local market linked to global economic system. Because Islam includes so much global variation, how those Muslim from very different national and ethnic backgrounds are all held together by the belief in the wonders of the market. We will try to understand the "economic rationality" of Muslim traders through analyzing the multifaceted growth of Islam brought by Muslim migrants and how they reconcile their religious teachings with economic necessity.

Bionote:

Na Chen 陈纳 is a research fellow at the Fudan Development Institute, Fudan University, Shanghai, China. He received his academic degrees from Peking University in China and the University of Pennsylvania and Temple University in the US. His research interests include sociology of religion, sociology of development and intercultural communication. He has published dozens of papers and book contributions, both in Chinese and in English. His recent research includes the study of "Confucian Congregation" in Southeast China, the revival of Confucianism and the reconstruction of Chinese identity, and the dialogue and understanding between different civilizations and religions in the globalization era.

How Did Yiwu's International Business Respond to the Pandemic

Fan Lizhu
Professor
School of Social Development and Public Policy
Fudan University

Abstract:

At the beginning of 2020, the Covid-19 epidemic shocked the world. Besides the direct economic losses and social unrest, the pandemic has also changed our working and living patterns. In 2020, the Chinese central government proposed to upgrade the industrial structure to tackle the pressure of both global pandemic and international trade frictions (especially with the U.S.). It requires changing the export-oriented economy to a new "dual circulation" development, focusing on both international trade and domestic consumption. Therefore, it is a huge challenge for Yiwu, which relies largely on foreign trade, to respond best to the pandemic. This report focuses on various unprecedented fluctuations, i.e., increasing shipping cost, limited factors exchanges, and local market demand changes. To accommodate changes in the global trade structure, Yiwu also has to focus on the domestic market, while consolidating its export advantage. Since June 2020, our research team has been conducting online and offline interviews with Chinese and foreign business people and government officials in Yiwu. We have also visited Yiwu's markets and factories to understand their difficulties and needs better. Combining with the related policies and literature review, we hope to treat Yiwu as an example to further understand China's export during the epidemic.

Bionote:

FAN Lizhu 范丽珠 is a Professor of Sociology at Fudan University. Director of Globalization and Religious Studies at Fudan University. As a pioneer scholar on the study of sociologist of religion in China, she has engaged in historical and ethnographic studies of Chinese folk religious beliefs, sociological theories of religion, and the study of the revival of Confucianism. She has published many academic publications both in Chinese and English. She taught at many distinguished universities in US and Europe on Chinese Culture and Society, Religion in Chinese Society. Now she focuses on the studies on Globalization and Religious Transformation, Revival of Confucianism in the new era.

Urban Zones of Poverty in Sudan

Leif Ole Manger

Professor Emeritus

Department of Social Anthropology

University of Bergen

Abstract:

The paper discusses some aspects of urban development in Sudan following the 1970s when we see the start of the transformations of existing urban-rural systems due to disasters like drought and violent conflict. Environmental refugees and people escaping the violence of war produced IDP-camps that often were in urban areas, producing significant pressure on towns, and also bringing in foreign aid organizations with their projects. I want to reflect on two specific aspects of these processes, the first linked to the political field and relate to how the Sudanese government sought to control and rule such areas. The second relates to economic processes, in which we get an impression of how people living in such zones of poverty still could get access to global trade items, in this case cheap products from China. The political process in which the government seeks to rule such areas is a modern version of the old, colonial system of Native Administration or Indirect Rule, systems that helped make identities ethnic and thus also over time ethnicize Sudanese politics. Anthropologically what we see is what we saw in the early urbanization in Africa, with the spread of “urban associations” relating people in town to their home areas. What we see in Khartoum, especially for people from north Sudan, is the emergence of organizations (“Unions”) which emerge as an example of a new form of urban based voluntary ethnic associations within the context of state building processes in Sudan, with the regime of Omer Bashir (1989-20019) promoting the re-introduction of ethnic identity as a key element in the definition of groups. The unions are operating in the national capital with the assumed intention of producing benefits to their tribes back home. Such unions were most often led by educated people, thus indicating attempts by these groups at constructing and promoting tribal solidarity back home and to get benefits from the regime with reference to such tribal references. As the educated elites involved in this often are also activists within the regime itself, the dynamic is clear, it is a process producing political loyalty towards the same regime. My second line of argument is related to economy and the market, and it provides a link to China. Anthropologically we are now in the ongoing discussions on how global processes affect the poor. We are used to hearing about the globalization of the rich. For the new economic elites in Sudan during the regime of Omer Beshir the relationship to the Chinese state was key, in the oil sector, in the financing of infrastructure etc. This expanded greatly with the “Forum on China-Africa Cooperation” (FOCAC) which since the year 2000 was the platform for China’s relationship to Africa, later to be continued through the famous Belt and Road Initiative. But my focus is on the lower end of these relationships, not related to the state links, but rather a link dominated by smaller traders. The key place for such traders was Yiwu town. Through this China-Sudan trade the poor groups back home in Sudan that we pointed at above got access to cheap Chinese goods, goods that they were able to buy, thus in a way “benefitting” from a type of globalized trade which mostly went “under the radar” compared to the state-to-state formal activities.

Bionote:

Leif Manger is professor emeritus in the Department of Social Anthropology at the University of Bergen. He has also functioned as director of development and global research centers within the university. Manger's most long-term individual research has been related to the Sudan. He has also done fieldwork in south Yemen and on the Hadrami diaspora in the Indian Ocean. He has also initiated and led a number of research projects on different themes in different regions. From this activity Manger leaves behind a long list of publications. More recently Manger has developed interests in the effects of the Chinese Belt and Road Initiative in regions such as Yunnan and Xinjiang, while also pursuing his interest in the Africa-China relationships with a focus on Sudanese traders in the city of Yiwu.

Abstract title: South-South Collaboration From Below: A Reflection

Min Tang

Research professor

College of Architecture and Urban Planning

Tongji University

A growing interest in Southern city-making has been characterised by the 'Southern Turn' in urban studies since the 2000s. When critical and post-colonial scholars argue for a new era of urban theory of/from the South (Roy, 2011; Bhan, 2019), a revitalised 'comparative gesture' has been emphasised as a crucial method for "thinking cities and the urban through elsewhere" (Robinson, 2022). However, within the Southern countries (including China), despite growing interest in the 'others' counterparts, the majority of knowledge is still found in area studies and frequently remains at the macro level. The "South-South collaboration" is the primary focus of this talk. The empirical observation centres largely on the transformation of urban peripheries through human settlement development and inhabitation. By collaboration, I follow Estalella and Criado (2018)'s argument that the new era of collaboration should not only acknowledge the difference but also jointly examine and problematize the difference, to "co-produce" knowledge. Based on the previous research and practices within the peripheries of Mumbai, Nairobi, Shanghai, Lagos, etc., I offer some epistemological and methodological reflections on 'thinking with variety and their connection'.

I'll start by thinking about how to comprehend the chaotic, fragmented 'enclave pattern' that makes up the margins of Asian and African cities. I argue that the settlements can be understood as archetypes even if they are the results of site-specific developmental plans and policies. Questioning the process of these archetypes' consolidation and integration with one another underlines persistent interplays between institutional planning and customary habitation practices. They also reflect the global development agenda and local implementation. Triple layers of *movements* are embodied in these practices, namely, trans-local planning ideas, mobile bodies, and circulating practices. They help to unpack the non-linear trajectories of the settlements situated in the city-making, and to interconnect or resonate with other Southern contexts. How to capture this extremely rich time and space, therefore, remains a challenge. In particular, mobile bodies, and circulating practices urge interdisciplinary collaboration that relies on voices from the ground to produce situated knowledge. I will speak about my own experimental mapping with slum youth and performing art workshops with marginal artists. The talk invites discussion of potential modes of collaboration and comparative research across Asia and Africa.

Bionote:

Min Tang is a research professor at the College of Architecture and Urban Planning, Tongji University, Shanghai, China. She has received a PhD in Architecture from the KU Leuven (Belgium) and a PhD in Geography from the University of Paris 1 Panthéon-Sorbonne (France). Specialising in Global South Urbanism, she conducts multi-sited activities across urban peripheries of Asia, the Middle East, Africa, and Europe with multi-linguistic working ability (EN, FR, JP, CN). Her research interest lies in the decolonial and situated knowledge production of the urban, through critical examinations of moving human bodies, planning ideas and city-making practices. The aim is to understand how these moves trigger localised institutional and grassroots practices that continuously territorialise urban peripheries. The primary tools of inquiry are intensive ethnographic studies, action research, critical cartography and other qualitative and visual methods. She is the founder of "Asian-African studies On the Move(流动的亚非)" young scholar network. She serves as editor of "Urban Sense (城识)", and member of editorial board of the journal- CITY: Analysis of urban change, theory, action.

Reproducing Global Hierarchies in Urban Discourses of Cancer in Tanzania

M. Yunus, Rafiq

Assistant Professor of Anthropology

NYU Shanghai

Global Network Assistant Professor, NYU

Abstract:

Development and global health regimes have downplayed Africa's burden of non-communicable diseases for decades by focusing almost exclusively on communicable diseases like malaria or HIV/AIDS. Rising cancer cases, advocacy by African actors, and the discovery of the co-association between cancer and HIV/AIDS has started to change this view. There are now growing global health programs in cancer prevention, treatment, and care. In Tanzania, the resultant flow of financial, epistemic, and symbolic capital has generated a social commentary among urban Tanzanians about cancer. In addition to increased knowledge about the disease, urban Tanzanians speak about cancer by incorporating central themes associated with the urban experience, including poor health infrastructure, high costs, and governmental neglect. Nonetheless, in imagining the sources and treatment of cancer as exclusively urban, urban Tanzanians treat rural spaces as a space assumed to be unburdened by cancer, thereby reproducing the same hierarchies of global health which only until recently excluded African countries like Tanzania. Attending to these discourses opens new questions about localization of global discourses about development, identity, and urbanism.

Bionote:

I am an assistant professor of Anthropology at New York University; research fellow at the Center for Health Equity at NYU Shanghai; associated research scientist at Amsterdam School of Global Health; and Study Site Coordinator for The John Hopkins School of Public Health in Bagamoyo, Tanzania. My background training is in African studies and anthropology with specialization in medical anthropology, ethnography, and critical development perspectives. I have also worked with major health projects in Tanzanian utilizing ethnographic methods to understand the reception of randomized control trials interventions focused on maternal and child health and family planning in rural contexts. My current work is focused on understanding the peoples' beliefs, linguistics, and experiences of emerging non-communicable disease like cancer through attention to language and their implications to patient and provider communication and prevention. Since 2021, I have been working as a co-principal investigator on a study called the semantic landscape of Cancer in Urban Bagamoyo, which examines how urban residents use words to make sense of cancer.

Overseas Dayuan: The Living Space and its Encounters of a Chinese State-owned Enterprise in Tanzania

Lei Wen

Postdoctoral researcher

Sociology

College of Humanities and Development Studies

China Agriculture University

Abstract:

With the China's state-owned enterprises going out, the Dayuan (大院) residential spaces have also extended to overseas locations. This paper takes the spatial research on "home" as its point of entry and conducts a microanalysis of the residential spaces of a specific state-owned enterprise in Tanzania to elucidate this phenomenon. The research findings reveal that the going-out residential spaces are characterized by a top-down construction of collectivist "common home" connotations. However, during encounters with the Tanzanian community and diverse individual practices, the connotations of this "common home" also undergo changes and generating a more flexible meaning associated with the overseas "home".

Bionote:

I am a postdoctoral researcher in the field of sociology at the College of Humanities and Development Studies, China Agriculture University. My academic background includes training in development studies and social anthropology, with a specialization in the China in Africa issue. From 2013 to 2018 , I conducted an 8-month fieldwork study in Tanzania, with a specific focus on exploring the practices and encounters of a Chinese state-owned agro-enterprise in the country. Currently, my work centers around examining the historical interplay between Chinese aid initiatives and the evolution of urbanization in Tanzania.

'Selling One's Liver to Buy a House': How Science Parks Affect Aspirations and Family Dynamics in Southern Taiwan

Ole Johannes Kaland
Lecturer and affiliate researcher
Department of Anthropology
University of Bergen

Abstract:

At the core of Taiwan's economy lie its science parks: the Hsinchu Science Park in Northern Taiwan, the Central Taiwan Science in Taichung, and the Southern Taiwan Science Park in Tainan. Since they were appointed and developed, each of them has led to incredible national and regional economic growth, which in turn has fueled local urban development. In popular Taiwanese imagery, southern Taiwan is often contrasted with the modernity, wealth, and cosmopolitanism of the north. Yet in Tainan, Taiwan's oldest city and home to the youngest of these science parks, these transformations are particularly distinctive. It is a city whose inhabitants grapple with its tradition and history, its rural surroundings and the fast-paced changes that happen as a result of the science park. On a macro level, we see changes to local politics, the economy, businesses, the rural areas surrounding the science park and the very city itself. On a micro level, the science park changes people's perceptions of the city and themselves – and in turn their life aspirations through education, family and housing. In this presentation, Kaland will share some reflections based on preliminary analysis of the data in Tainan and the districts related to the Southern Taiwan Science Park (Nanke). In addition to studying the core foci of the enclaving project in Taiwan, Ole is particularly interested in learning how young adults with families experience and relate to the housing market. How do people attribute meaning and value to living in a certain kind of house or district in Tainan, and what roles does this play in being seen as a certain kind of person or family? How do people reflect on Nanke's influence on the local housing market? Can Nanke be seen as a form of enclave? If so, how?

Bionote:

Ole Johannes Kaland is a social anthropologist (PhD University of Sussex, 2014). Since 2019, he has been a part-time lecturer for the Department of Anthropology at the University of Bergen, and an affiliate researcher with the Urban Enclaving Futures research project. He has conducted long-term fieldwork in China, particularly in Shanghai, where he has focused on governance of welfare, internal migration, education, aspirations, family dynamics and youth. In 2022, Ole was a Taiwan Fellow funded by the Taiwanese Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MOFA) and affiliated with National Cheng Kung University (NCKU) and National Yao Ming Chiao Tung University (NYCU). Here, he researched how the science zone of Nanke, and the microchip industries located therein, affect the housing market and family dynamics in southern Taiwan. For the spring of 2024, Ole plans to do fieldwork related to housing aspirations, zoning-politics and family dynamics in Shanghai, while being affiliated with the School of Social Development and Public Policy, Fudan University.

The Shezidao Paradox: The Politics of Being Informal

Qi Li

Ph.D. Candidate

Institute of Social Research and Cultural Studies

National Yang Ming Chiao Tung University

Abstract:

In the restless summer of 1989, a little theater troupe was on stage at a river delta in Taipei. The place was called Shezidao, or Shezi Island, located at the confluence of the Keelung and Tamsui rivers. The troupe chose a waste sandbar and set a tent near the river. Without electricity and water supply, actors who lived in the tent for weeks had to rent portable generators for lighting and take showers from a public faucet. This theatrical play, entitled “(Un)singing the Praises of Taiwan’s Three Hundred Years of History” (《割功送德：台灣三百年史》), was an eye-catching cultural event at that time. Conveying strong critiques of the Japanese Occupation and the US postwar dominance over the people in Taiwan, it attracted hundreds of audiences, political dissidents, and policemen to gather on this isolated island in the heart of Taipei. Why did the play take place at Shezidao, a place that seems shanty, wild, and distant to most citizens in Taipei? “To ancestors who had spent days floating on the sea, it might be the first view of the Taiwan land they had ever seen.” One actor in this play told me. After three decades, the play has become one of the important landmarks in Taiwan’s modern theater history, and the dissenter who was under police surveillance when he brought supporters to come and watch the play is now a top-ranking official, whereas only Shezidao remains undeveloped. It is weird because the island is surrounded by skyscrapers and housing blocks and the land should have enjoyed high location values as it is in the center of the Taipei Metropolitan Area. Since the 1990s, at least five urban development plans of the Shezidao have been proposed by different mayors of Taipei. All failed. The stagnant of Shezidao unfolds an urban growth paradox. According to the General Flood Control Plan of the Taipei Area, Shezidao residents, who live in the flood-prone area, have undergone a fifty-year restriction on constructing new buildings. The population on the island has consistently expanded with a huge amount of inflowing urban migrants to Taipei. Without sufficient urban planning, infrastructures, and public service, Shezidao has accommodated a large scale of informal settlements, unlicensed factories, and unpropertied households. The ongoing government-led development plan—“the Shezidao Eco-Project”—is about to conduct land expropriation on the entire Shezidao and adopt new zoning on the island. The project has received great opposition from the locals, as the land expropriation will dispossess most residents who do not have legalized properties on the island. Informality, the core problem in ruling the Shezidao, has been the art of survival by the Shezidao people and the tactic to negotiate with the authority. The practice of informality on land and space throughout the history of Shezidao also triggers intensive debates about the substantive public interest in profit-driven land taking, the preservation of local knowledge and spiritual tradition, and the sustainable urban design regarding environmental disasters and climate changes in Taiwan. Through in-depth fieldwork and archival research, this paper aims to investigate the Shezidao Paradox: how does the regulation of land keep generating informal land-use, and why maintaining the informality complies with the common interest of local communities?

Bionote:

Qi Li is a Ph.D. Candidate at the Institute of Social Research and Cultural Studies, and researcher at International Center for Cultural Studies, National Yang Ming Chiao Tung University, Taiwan. She studies the informality of urban housing and land rights in Asian cities. She is the editor-in-chief of the book *Where are the people? People’s Theater in Inter-Asian Societies* (2022, NYCU Press).

On the Democracy of Buildings. Thoughts on Urban Architecture and Political Struggles Through the Case of the Prédio da Lagoa in Luanda

Ruy Llera Blanes
Associate Professor
School of Global Studies
Gothenburg University

Abstract:

This paper proposes a reflection on the complexity of urban enclave formations in African urban contexts, based on an account of the rise and fall of the Prédio da Lagoa (Lagoon Building) in Luanda. Built in the 1970s, left unfinished by the colonial authorities after Angolan independence and subsequently occupied by war refugees, the building became an iconic landmark in downtown Luanda, conjuring reactions of fascination and horror among passers-by, and an ongoing debate about its dereliction and unsafety. Ultimately, the Prédio never actually fell, but was demolished in the 2010s, in the framework of a major urban development project, and its residents forcefully evicted. While the Prédio da Lagoa does not actually embody a ‘typical’ process of urban enclaving in contemporary cities, it nevertheless tells a story of speculative development and possible citizenships in a country with a known history of violence and dispossession when it comes to urban formations. Performing a particular ‘possible history’ of the Prédio and also framing it in a comparative reflection with other cases of iconic construction, occupation and inhabitation (such as Kinshasa’s Limete Tower or Beira’s Grande Hotel), I propose a discussion on “buildings and democracy”, in order to highlight such material formations as political indexes in what concerns citizenship, human rights and justice (Weizman 2010, 2013; Ockman 2011).

Bionote:

Ruy Llera Blanes is a Social Anthropologist (PhD University of Lisbon, 2007). As of 2023, he is Principal Researcher at the Research Center in Anthropology (CRIA) at ISCTE-IUL, Lisbon, and Associate Professor at the School of Global Studies of the University of Gothenburg. He has conducted long term research in Angola, where he has worked on the topics of politics, religion, social movements, heritage, urban forms, environment and landscape. Recently he has also conducted research in Mozambique, on the social and environmental impacts of extractive industries. He is the author, among other things, of *A Prophetic Trajectory* (2014, Berghahn) and the upcoming *A Revolução Angolana no Século XXI* (The Angolan Revolution in the 21st Century, 2022), and also co-editor, with Bjørn Enge Bertelsen, of the special issue “Utopian Confluences” (Social Anthropology/Anthropologie Sociale, 2021), and of the edited volume *Diana Espírito Santo*, of *The Social Life of Spirits* (2013, University of Chicago Press).

Hope Made of Cements: Housing Enclaves and Navigating Political Changes in Urban Ethiopia

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Abstract:

In 2018, Ethiopia experienced significant political hope with the arrival of Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed. His arrival to power was the result of protests that were organized in various parts of the country by people who were dissatisfied with the political and economic situation under the ruling party, the Ethiopia People Revolutionary Democratic Front (EPRDF). One of the main issues that sparked the protests was the Addis Ababa master plan, which aimed to expand the city's borders. The city was already expanding beyond its previous limits, and the new proposed master plan would have extended it even further. This led to the construction of government-sponsored condominiums and luxurious houses built by real estate agencies that mainly catered to diaspora clients and urban-based multi-ethnic upper-class families. The protestors demanded an end to this expansion as it was displacing farmers, particularly those from the Oromo ethnic group. When political changes occurred, one of the promises made by the new administration was to address these real estate issues. A new era was declared, where people would not lose their land and property for real estate development. Those whose land was taken were promised apartments and houses in their old sites. Furthermore, the government unveiled a plan to build Mega Urban projects as part of its effort to create a prosperous Ethiopia. This included an apartment and shopping complex, which was marketed as a way to bring Ethiopia into the future and make it comparable to cities like Dubai and Bangkok. This paper focuses on the promises made and the formation of the apartment complexes. It particularly examines how this discourse and project relate to political management and the discourse of development and poverty reduction, which serve as legitimizing tools for governance. The paper aims to show how creating a hopeful future through urban housing projects are intertwined with political games that also involve discussing and manufacturing poverty.

Bionote:

Samson A. Bezabeh, is an Assistant Professor at the University of Hong Kong. He was previously a Research Fellow at Makerere University, Post-doctoral researcher at the École des Hautes Études en Sciences Sociales in Paris, and has been affiliated with the University of Bergen, the University of Exeter, and Addis Ababa University.

Not home yet! A Quest for Social Affirmation in a Social Engineering Utopia Project

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Universidade Eduardo Mondlane

Researcher
Kaleidoscopio Research Center
Maputo

Abstract:

Casa Jovem is a housing project launched in 2010 with the aim of building 2000 apartments in an innovative concept for Mozambique that would include apartments as well as commercial and service areas in the Costa de Sol neighbourhood in Maputo. The project emerged as a possible solution to the housing problem in Maputo by offering market-competitive prices for Maputo's young urban professionals.

This study uses the *Casa Jovem* project as an example and a site to explore expectations, choices, creative engagements, and relationships established among residents and young families seeking social affirmation through house ownership. In a context where owning a house emerges as one of the most complex challenges of adulthood, the study addresses broader questions related to housing and communal living in similar projects being developed in the greater Maputo area. Based on such analysis, I argue that the historical utopian social engineering project to create a cohesive social subject – replicated in *Casa Jovem* – is troubled by a lack of resources and faulty management that exacerbates the social fissures which negatively impact collective living and the sense of home.

Bionote:

Sandra Manuel is an anthropologist. Her career comprises a combination of academic research and lecturing as well as research towards public policy. She is an experienced researcher with a specific focus on sexuality, gender, and health themes. She belongs to various networks that question and challenge normative notions of feminine and masculine, looking at the intersectionality of gendered relations and understanding socio-cultural readings of the body and sexuality, specifically in the African context. She is currently a member of the editorial board of *Feminist Africa* journal.

Practical information:

Useful addresses:

Nordic Centre

Fudan University
220 Handan Lu
Shanghai 200433
P.R. China
+86 21 6564 2267
<http://www.nordiccentre.net>

复旦大学，邯郸路靠近国权路

Note:

The nearest subway station to Nordic Centre is the Fudan University station on line 18. Take Exit nr 2, turn left, and the gate is just a few minutes away.

Guoquan Road on line 10 is also within a walking distance. Take Exit nr 2, turn right onto Guoquan Road and walk straight for about 15 min. You will then reach Middle Ring Road and Handan Road, and Fudan campus is on the opposite side of the road

Crowne Plaza Hotel (Fudan)

199 Handan Road,
Shanghai 200433,
P. R. China
+ 86-21-55529999
reservations@crowneplazafudan.com

上海复旦皇冠假日酒店
上海市邯郸路 199 号（国权路口）

Note:

By metro, Fudan University Station on line 18 is closest (4 min away).

Di Shui Dong restaurant

2/F, 56 Maoming Nan Lu, near Changle Lu
茂名路56号2楼, 近长乐路口

Closest metro line is South Shaanxi road (7 min away)

Lost Heaven (on the Bund)

17 Yan'an Dong Lu, near Sichuan Nan Lu
延安东路17号, 近四川南路

Closest metro line is east nanjing road (20 min away).

Jesse restaurant (on Tianping road)

41 Tianping Lu, near Huaihai Zhong Lu
天平路41号, 近淮海中路

Closest metro line Jiaotong university (5 min away)

Useful apps:

SmartShanghai

[Play Store link](#)

[Apple store link](#)



THE app to have on your phone in Shanghai. It shows everything going on in terms of events. It also includes a searchable directory of all restaurants, hotels, etc in the city, including Chinese translations one may show to taxi drivers so they can find the way there.

Astrill VPN

[Play Store link](#)

[Apple store link](#)



Upon entering China, your access to many websites and apps (including social media) that you may take for granted abroad are blocked by the Great Firewall. You need a VPN Client to circumvent that. If you don't already have that privately or through your university, Astrill is one of many companies offering a VPN service for a fee. Important: this must be paid for and installed before you enter China!

Explore

Shanghai

[Play Store link](#)

[Apple Store link](#)



Shanghai's metro system is vast, and an app that helps you map the quickest and most convenient way of travelling is a must. There are different apps to choose from. Explore Shanghai is an easy-to-use alternative.

Didi Chuxing

[Play Store link](#)

[Apple Store link](#)



Shanghai doesn't have as many taxis as they used to. These days most people will use Didi, the Chinese version of Uber, especially downtown.

Alipay

[Play Store link](#)

[Apple Store Link](#)



China doesn't use Visa as much as many other countries but relies on its own system called Unionpay. Furthermore, it is getting more and more common to pay with one's phone, instead of cash and credit cards. Alipay and Wechatpay (available through Wechat (see below) are apps used for phone-based payments.

Wechat

[Play Store link](#)

[Apple store link](#)



In China, Wechat is the "one app to rule them all". It works the same way as Whatsapp/Messenger, and is the app locals will use to add you as a friend on social media. Also used for payments.