10 - Coexistence, Conflict, and Complexity: Ethnographies of Social and Political Change in Urban Communities

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Largely shaped by neoliberal policies that intensify inequalities, cities are becoming the sites of increasingly polarized battles on growing income disparities, segregation and cultural differences related to immigration, the place of religion in the society, or national identities. These tensions disrupt the social and political fabric calling into question what living together means. This panel seeks to understand how people move through, exist in, and make sense of difference and complexity in the urban everyday.

Anthropological examinations discuss communities and their dynamics mostly through cultural identity. Growing complexity in urban settings is generally addressed against the backdrop of ethnic, linguistic religious, cultural or other group-based attributes. Even the notion of hybridity, despite its contribution to the study of complexifying identities, remains ontologically connected to a group-based understanding of the social as it essentially supposes "an anterior pure". Anthropological insights into diversity, in turn, have largely revolved around the concept of citizenship, illuminating how regimes of citizenship translate into dynamics of inclusion and exclusion. This has normalized the nation-state as an entity of reference in discussions around community.

This panel wishes to engage with the affective and emotional experience of living with, in, and through diversity in its complexity. How can we think of community beyond the state, society or group-based accounts? We propose adopting not a cultural, but an existential perspective to belonging to grasp its personal and interpersonal, as well as affective and embodied modes. Furthermore, to understand the heterogeneous and changing nature of human lives, we suggest moving from a communal, consensus-based understanding of living towards a relational and dissensual understanding of coexistence. This double inflection makes it possible to rethink community through emergence, understood as ever-coming-into-being temporary negotiations that make coexistence possible amidst differences, tensions, and conflicts.

1. Policies and everyday practices of "social cohesion" in a mixed neighbourhood in Malmö, Sweden

Tina Gudrun Jensen and Erica Righard (Malmö Institute for Studies of Migration, Diversity and Welfare (MIM), Malmö University)

The neighbourhood of *Sofielund* in Malmö is marked by coexistence in terms of, for instance, its population's diverse native and migrant backgrounds and its varying architecture and types of housing. It is also marked by social divisions, including poverty, housing exploitations and criminality. Over time, a large number of interventions have been implemented to better the situation. A new wave of interventions, implemented since the mid-2010s, has gained national attention and are described in terms of success: The neighbourhood is becoming safer and criminality is lowered. The interventions are, among other things, inspired by the Business Improvement District (BID) model and include efforts to enhance social cohesion through a strategy of "opening up Sofielund". This policy strategy seeks to involve associations in Sofielund as a bottom-up way to ensure inclusion and residents' ownership in the process. Yet, many residents in Sofielund are both ambivalent and critical towards this development, and ask if the ongoing development in the long run may lead to exclusion. This presentation draws on research conducted within the project Governance and Lived Experiences of Urban Diversity in SEGregated and MIXed Neighbourhoods (SEGMIX). It includes policy analysis of plans for Malmö and Sofielund, but also of national policy and of projects funded through EU cohesion policy, along with ethnographic fieldwork carried out from 2020 in Sofielund. The presentation provides an analysis of multi-level policies and the lived experiences of residents in Sofielund, and shows how policy efforts on "social cohesion" are implemented and how they are perceived by residents. The presentation thus explores the various positions and normative assumptions about what constitutes a good neighbourhood and "social cohesion," and consequently issues of citizenship, inclusion and exclusion in a mixed neighbourhood.

2. Encounter and Coexistence: Development of the Political Thought on Urban Thresholds

Ebru Sevik (TaSSu - Tampere Centre for Societal Sustainability, Tampere University)

The growing complexity within urban societies renders a transformative effect on the socio-political condition of cities. Although the postmodern metropolis accommodates diverse social, cultural, ethnic and economic actors building interdependent relationships with each other, a paradoxical situation, on the other hand, arises from this multilayered structuring leading to the emergence of a divided society. The persistence of inequalities and growing distances among communities give rise to the fragmentation of urban space, which can be conceptualized as the 'city of enclaves'. Partitioning of the urban environment into so-called 'hegemonic territories', which are homogeneous within themselves, through the framing of identities as 'the self' and 'the other' leaves little room for public debate. In order to reclaim the political by overthrowing the oppressing consequences of this post-political condition, the public sites of the city can serve as a common ground where different identities encounter and create a collective hybrid culture through self-expression and deliberation. Within this framework, this paper revisits the idea of 'urban threshold' as an agonistic spatiality having the potential of provoking political thought for an emancipatory urban experience. With a close examination of the spatial emergences that occurred during the Gezi Park Occupation in Istanbul, Turkey in 2013, the in-between spatiality of thresholds is argued to offer a negotiating zone, where conflicting identities are resolved through various solidarizations. The paper investigates the agonistic insights found within the various form of spatial appropriations with regards to the collective resistance occurred during the uprisings. Urban thresholds are argued to frame a deliberative conception of space where debate and dissensus can lead to a collective culture of coexistence.

3. Urban everyday peace

Anna Sofia Suoranta (TAPRI, Tampere University)

Everyday peace is too often distanced from the lived surroundings of people. The city is taken as a given for conflicting or peaceful encounters that constitute everyday peace. The question of space is central to supplementing the social and structural aspects already theoretically emphasized. Addressing the city as the central stage where coexistence and conflict take place grounds everyday peace. It also gives opportunity to test the idea that everyday peace could be applied to "peaceful" societies and communities, not only to conflict or post-conflict situations. A shift in focus gives room for studying larger processes of how societies become divided or stick together. This will only be possible through understanding peace and conflict as simultaneous and ordinary parts of everyday life. This theoretical exploration into the connection between everyday peace and the urban is part of a PhD project in which the context will be youth living in diverse urban areas in Sweden and Finland.

4. Community formation of religiously segregated communities during communal conflicts in Ambon, Indonesia

Abellia Anggi Wardani (Department of Culture Studies, Faculty of Humanities, Universitas Indonesia)

Studies on communal conflicts tend to showcase the conflicts through the intensity of violence over time. On the contrary, scholars working on peace studies have argued that the absence of violence does not (necessarily) constitute peace. Others consider it negative peace, which allowed society to step ahead towards the post-conflict period. However, for a society that comprises complex entities such as diverse communities, conflict periodization cannot be simplified to fit into: prior to, during, and post conflicts. Such division begs explanations on what were happening in people's everyday lives during the in-between violent incidents, the period when it was kind of safe, but not yet safe or peaceful. In Ambon, where communities were geographically segregated along the religious lines of Muslims and Christians throughout the conflicts period, any contact between communities was considered dangerous. Although, such intercommunal contact was necessary to rebuild trust. Driven by communities' survival needs, people from both communities, Muslim and Christian started to engage in border trade surrounding the conflict hotspots. Once the exchange took place, the narratives of togetherness and brotherhood of the Ambonese people became prominent, and each tried to ensure one's safety and offered to step in the border area and conducted trade in the proximity. People started to develop a common narrative to indicate the shift from critical moments to somewhat normalcy, where they would say, "it was kind of safe, let's go to the market". This phrase has long been overlooked in studying Ambon conflict which was the most severe communal violence in the history of modern Indonesia. This article analyzes the formation of ethnoreligious coexistence in the border trader points during the conflict periods in Ambon. Guided by a "kind of safe" feeling, people chose to fight their own battle, which was to survive, and such attempts eventually cemented interreligious interactions through economic exchanges. Findings were derived from 2016 – 2019, including 10-month intensive ethnographic fieldwork on Ambon island, Indonesia. This article confirms grassroots level anecdote of "peace happened (started) at the market" by reflecting on the emergence of communities that trespassed borders to access affordable basic needs. Furthermore, peace was understood by the ability of people from both conflicting communities to coexist and achieve a common goal in the same space.