

Cities in the Global South

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Cities

- Earlier referential point: the nation state:
- the city as a focal point of national glory or
- as a symbol of failed national growth
- New perspectives:
 - Cities in a globalised world: Bangalore, Milan, Manila
 - Old and new regionalities: i.e. Indian Ocean; global South
 - Transnational networks: corporate, civil society, individual
 - A look from within: history, people, environment, city as an institution


Shehr Network www.shehr.org

- Comparative Urban Landscapes and their Subaltern Citizen-Subjects in Africa, the Middle East and South Asia
- an academic initiative that seeks to further a **social-historical** and **critical understanding** of **contemporary cities** and **urban practices** in the Middle East, South Asia and Africa
- examines the efficacy of the category of the city in **modernist discourse** and seeks to chart this **spatial imagination** and its effects through an exploration of the complex processes through which **gendered, classed, and raced citizen-subjects** have negotiated and been the object of **urban projects** in these regions.



Attuned to both the legacy of modernist conceptual grammars and their inadequacy for understanding the **remaking of space and place** in the **neo-liberal present**, the purpose of the network is to open up an arena in which to address the particular positioning(s) of contemporary **urban landscapes** and **urban practices** through theme-based workshops, publications and an on-line discussion and exchange forum

- inter-disciplinary with focus on scholarship that is empirically and theoretically comparative
- seek to emphasize shared histories and contemporary processes that enable scholars to speak to the **similarities** and **divergences** that manifest urban practices in the Middle East, Africa and South Asia

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- shared history of the **colonial encounter, modernity, nationalism** and **urbanity** and is deepened by the larger framework of Muslim culture that influences social life in these spaces
 - the increased **migration** to and from the two regions and the **transnational flow of goods, capital and information** call for a move beyond mere formalistic representation of such processes
 - Publications:
 - Urban Visions of the Margins (Social Text #95)
 - Re-exploring the Urban: Citiscapes in South Asia and the Middle East (Cambridge University Press 2007)
 - Gendering Urban Space (Palgrave 2008)



On globalisation

Can be deconstructed in terms of the strategic sites where global processes materialize and the linkages that bind them

Export processing zones, off-shore banking centres, global cities

Produce a geography of globalisation

A changing geography

New feature, electronic space

Saskia Sassen: The Global City: Strategic Site/New Frontier. *American Studies* 41:2/3 (Summer/Fall 2000), pp.79-95



1. Alan Smart & Josephine Smart: Urbanisation
and the Global Perspective

Annu.Rev.Anthropol. 2003 32: 263-85


2. Setha M. Low: The Anthropology of Cities:
Imagining and Theorizing the City

Annu.Rev.Anthropol. 1996 25: 383-409






City as an institution

- Population density, ethnic characteristics
 - Unique physical qualities or appearance
 - Styles of social interaction
 - Social relations, symbols, political economies
 - Social history
 - Site of everyday practices
 - Colonial past and present
 - "Urban" as a process rather than category, intensification of the process, marginalisation
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Historical trends in Urban Anthropology

- Chicago School 1920s; urban ecological perspective: ecological niches, human groups
 - Bethal Green, London; policy and planning research
 - Network analysis; interconnections of family and household, urban poor
 - Structural forces, urban experience, industrial capitalism, class formation, urban built environment as a discursive realm
 - British anthropology in Africa: market relationships, political alliances, network analyses, exchanges, colonialism and post-colonialism
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City as imagined

- **The Ethnic City** historical roots, ethnic politics, ethnic urban social movements
 - **The Divided City** "White public space" (Thomas Page); gated communities; commercial areas; distribution of material resources
 - **The Gendered City** informal and formal market; segregation; public and private; exclusion and inclusion; social maps
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City as imagined, cont.

- **Contested City** symbolic control of the streets; inner-city neighbourhoods; unofficial settlements; contested settlements
- **The Deindustrialised City**
- **The Informational City** Castells: space flows (information-processing activities) supersede the meaning of the space of places (everyday activities) resulting in resistance; Hannertz: centralising agencies of culture vs. decentralising forces of diversity

Urban Planning and Architecture

- **The Modernist City** Brazil
- **The Postmodern City** "nonplace urban realm"; city of cultural consumption; city of scenographic sites; Orlando
- **The Fortress City** cutting off communities; youth gangs; new social imaginaries

Religion and Culture

- **The Sacred City** Varanasi, Mecca
- **The Traditional City** Venice

Themes of theorising

The social organisation of space; meaning of knowledge; maps of social spaces; power; commodity and political economy; cityscapes; social imaginaries (Taylor); the public sphere (Habermas); concept of boundary; social construction/ production of space; forms of metropolitan knowledge; time and place; institutionalisation of time; transnationality