

Urban Anthropology: spatialities, displacements, territorialities and removals

The course explores issues of “urban anthropology” relating to processes of displacement, fixation, transit and removal constitutive of the city and its inhabitants. Thus it aims at considering the wider scenario in which certain ways of thinking anthropologically the urban were established in Brazil. From the 1980s, new discussions on differential spatiality, segregation, poverty, migration and dialogues on violence, work relations and culture were added to the ongoing debates on inequality, class and conflicts in Latin American big cities. The first part of the course begins with the wider scenario, considering arguments in favor and against the “Chicago School” and the “Manchester School”, in order to draw a map of issues of research experience in urban contexts that were (or were not) retaken in contemporary works. The following sections focus upon the production of space and urban territories as sets of tensions and movements. In the second half of the course, the emphasis follows upon migration dynamics as producing displacements, reconfigurations and permanences of ways of living in the city. Attention will also be paid to social class as an experience of urban circulation, taking into account its limits and its forms of producing “barriers” and immobilization, as well as zones of tension and prohibitions that make themselves or are made visible. Moving on from the playing of the visible and the invisible, we will reflect upon gender as producing spatialities and conflicts, evidencing disputes over forms of inhabiting the city, resignifying certain spaces or evidencing the oppression lived in others. In the last section, we will explore the urban-spatial folds evidencing tensions in small/big struggles conducted by dwellers in order to turn the city inhabitable for themselves. Here we take into account the barriers imposed against specific occupations and urban movements, as well as the infiltrations altering maps, spaces and territories. The conceptual duality centrality/periphery will also be questioned taking into account displacements and public politics of urbanization, where removal of home-residences operates upon a logic of emptying and cleaning with regards to both the (re)form of urban centers and the elitism of peripheries, generating ghettos and insets in various localities.

We aim at gathering contemporary studies and foundational works in anthropology and other convergent areas in order to think through processes and narratives constituting the city as transits and spatialities in dispute. Hence, we suggest investing in the reading of ethnographies of city dweller experiences and their forms of resisting to the idea of the city as a totality.