

COMPLETED DOCTORAL DISSERTATIONS

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Social Life and Moral Economies in Danish Cooperative Housing: Community, Property and Value

This thesis examines how contemporary cooperative housing in Copenhagen is lived in and imagined — and the tensions that arrive from the paradoxes that such housing incarnates. The thesis is based on fifteen months of ethnographic fieldwork carried out in 2008-2009 in eight selected housing cooperatives in Copenhagen. The ethnography is drawn from the perspective of current occupants but these narratives are also contextualized by histories of welfare, urban regeneration, gentrification and social and cooperative housing provision in Denmark, with a detailed account of recent changes accompanying the neoliberalisation of national government and municipal administration. The effects of these changes are accentuated by the global financial crisis of 2008 and its continuing aftermath. As the thesis demonstrates, the home and cooperative are caught at the nexus of apparently opposing values of investment maximization and long-term social reproduction, and the thesis allows informants' voices to puzzle through these contradictions. The thesis captures the processes through which economic and political issues of great significance to individuals and families are negotiated and managed collectively. One of the main contributions of the thesis is the notion of collective housing as a symbolic and concrete commons in the nation and the local collective.

Dr Maja Hojer Bruun is Assistant Professor in Applied Anthropology at the Department of Learning and Philosophy at Aalborg University, Denmark. She received her PhD in anthropology from the University of Copenhagen in 2012. Her research interests are in urban anthropology, organizations, politics, economy and technology. She is part of an interdisciplinary research project on contested property claims and social controversies surrounding the issue of squatting and the use of urban space.

Name: Cynthia Gonzalez

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Watts, Our Town: 'Nothing about us without us, is for us'. An Auto-Ethnographic Account of Life in Watts, Los Angeles, CA

This dissertation explores the popular and scholarly representation and construction of Watts — a 2.5 mile inner-city neighbourhood of Los Angeles — vis-à-vis an auto-ethnographic

account of life in Watts. Identified as a Black urban ghetto, Watts has a long-standing history of marginalization in which residents encounter limited access to basic resources (for example, education, work, health) that perpetuate poverty in the community. Urban ghettos have been characterized as spaces densely inhabited by minority groups who live in deprived conditions that perpetuate social and health disparities. Such dominant narratives have obfuscated the lived experiences of discrimination in these spaces. For this reason one of the most severe and intensely studied race riot in L.A. history — the 1965-Watts Revolt — is largely misunderstood. It has become a trope from which scholarship and popular media aim to represent the people from Watts in its totality. Thus, the community's future is threatened by disappearing community participation and gentrification projects that may not aim to displace the residents, but may do so inadvertently. In this dissertation, I demonstrate that despite dual legacies of cultural inheritance and survival, over the past 50 years, Watts has been misrepresented as a powerless community. This auto-ethnography engages the following methodological tools: postcolonial, critical race and feminist theories of representation and identity formations; a review of historical and social science literature on Watts and 'ghettos' in general; interviews and archival research in Watts; and my own experience as a lifetime resident of Watts. In addition, I critically examine the persistent reductive representation of Watts as a poverty-stricken backward community, addressing how such representations have impacted residents and their identity. The auto-ethnographic methodological and analytical approach of my research addresses the limitations of historical and contemporary scholarship conceptualizing Watts, its residents, and the idea of the urban ghetto.

Dr Cynthia Gonzalez is the Faculty Outreach Liaison in the Division of Community Engagement and Teaching Faculty in the College of Science and Health's MPH Program in Urban Health at Charles R. Drew University of Medicine and Science. Dr Gonzalez attended UCLA where she majored in Chicana/o Studies with a minor in Public Health and completed her MPH at USC in Epidemiology and Biostatistics. She received her PhD in Social and Cultural Anthropology from the California Institute of Integral Studies in San Francisco. As a first generation Chicana, her doctoral research included a multidisciplinary methodological approach to address the quality of life for residents of Watts, an inner-city neighbourhood in Los Angeles and her hometown.

Name: Daniela Kraemer

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Planting Roots, Making Place: An Ethnography of Young Men in Port Vila, Vanuatu

This thesis is about an organised group or 'squad' of young men in Port Vila, the capital of the Pacific Islands nation-state of Vanuatu, and their practices of place making in the rapidly developing context of 'town'. The young men who are the subject of this research are second-generation migrants and thus first-generation born and raised 'urbanites'. Based on twenty months of fieldwork, this thesis examines how these young men are transforming Freswota Community — the residential area in which they live — from a place with no shared and

relevant social meaning into a place imbued with greater collective significance. First, I demonstrate how these young men experience themselves as ‘unplaced’, a condition which entails two aspects. They are displaced from the social structure and kinship systems within which their parents previously ordered their lives and from which they have drawn their social identity. Additionally, the young men experience themselves as marginalised from the formal education and employment structures of town. Following this, I show that it is through practices of place making, which they refer to as ‘planting roots’, that these young men are enplacing themselves in the Freswota area. ‘Planting roots’ includes such processes as developing their own shared history, naming roads, building topogeny and developing their own community social structure and social order. I argue that these processes are leading to the emergence of a new phenomenon: primary town emplacement. By coming into relationship with Freswota land, these young men are not only transforming it from virtual no-place into some place, they are also transforming themselves from ‘unplaced’ persons into emplaced ‘Freswota men’. I conclude that this is generating a new locative identity: it is now the Freswota community rather than their parents’ home island places that is emerging as their primary location of belonging and the source both of their sense of self and their social identification. A central aim of this thesis is to draw attention to the positive and creative ways in which unemployed young men, usually criticised and stigmatised as delinquents in newly and rapidly urbanising contexts, are actively engaged in developing their community and their relationships in order to live more viable and socially productive lives.

Dr Daniela Kraemer is a research fellow in the Department of Anthropology at the University of Toronto. She obtained her PhD in Anthropology from the London School of Economics in 2013. Daniela’s research focuses on under-educated and under-employed young men and how they develop community in Port Vila, Vanuatu. Daniela writes about social relationships with non-kin, development of youth councils and community social infrastructure, building of shared experiences through reggae music and marijuana, urban activism, how mobile phone practices are influencing transformations in gender relationships, and how young people are transforming a place with no shared and relevant social meaning into an urban place imbued with greater collective significance. Daniela is currently preparing several articles for publication.

Name: Benjamin N. Vis

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Mapping the Inhabited Urban Built Environment: The Socio-Spatial Significance of the Material Presence of Boundaries through Time

This thesis develops a comparative methodology and research practice enabling the interpretive social study of urban built environments (cross-culturally and diachronically). Its contribution to comparative urbanism is framed specifically as a method for studying the socio-spatial significance of the material presence of the composition of urban form (conceptualised as boundaries) to the interactional process of human inhabitation. This

perspective results from formulating a theoretical and conceptual rejoinder to questioning the nature of the role of the built environment as emergent from the human process of inhabiting the world and the functioning of urban life and development. On that basis an empirically operational method (BLT, Boundary Line Type mapping) for the conceptual remapping and analysis of ground level spatial data on the urban built environment (city plans) is devised, so the comparative socio-spatial study of cities from this perspective through time and across geographical areas and societies or cultures becomes enabled.

This foundational development of a research process and ontology is informed by a material adaptation of a critical realist philosophy of science. The practical and technical implications of executing the mapping process on spatial data of varying nature (archaeological, historical, historically reconstructive, and contemporary maps) are comprehensively worked through. The comparative functional ability of the method is demonstrated by exemplifying two case studies, the cities of Chunchucmil (Mexico, Classic Maya) and Winchester (UK, 16th, 19th and 21st century), on the basis of which two test cases are taken forward for preliminary visualisation and analysis with the aid of Geographical Information System (GIS) techniques. The findings confirm its potential, replicating common expectations about contemporary urban life as well as laying a novel foundation for insights into Winchester's historical development and Chunchucmil's archaeology, from which future research and development can burgeon. These are expected to contribute significantly to the deeper understanding of urban life and urbanisation across past and present urban traditions and provide an improved appreciation of urban alternatives which could inform planning and urban design in the long term.

Dr Benjamin N. Vis is Eastern ARC Research Fellow for the Eastern ARC consortium, comprising the universities of Kent, Essex and East Anglia in the Digital Humanities and Digital Heritage in particular. His research interests centre on (material and social) space, urban space and the built environment. Dr Vis investigates how human beings in societies transform their life-world for and through inhabitation focusing on interdisciplinary theoretical perspectives and methodological developments which draw upon research in archaeology, geography, anthropology, architecture, history, sociology, and related fields. He is developing case studies on a variety of cities to enable social comparisons of urban built environment traditions or cultures worldwide and across time. Dr Vis current research is concerned with gaining a better understanding of the functioning of tropical low-density cities or agro-urban landscapes as found in Mesoamerica, Sub-Saharan Africa and Southeast Asia. He has authored the book, *Built Environments: Constructed Societies*.