

Overlooked Cities: Thinking and doing global urban studies differently

“Ordinary and overlooked cities in conversation”

Hybrid – University of the Free State, Bloemfontein Campus Modlec Venue A2

(The modular Lecture venues are next to the Winkie Direko Building)

&

Online via Microsoft Teams

16 and 17 October 2023

All times indicated in the programme are SAST

To attend in person, please RSVP to devilliersi@ufs.ac.za

Register for the teams link here:

<https://events.teams.microsoft.com/event/c6a8db93-19ec-4447-be36-38842f33c08e@8efc1bb9-b90f-4a48-bf6c-ba0686193b80>

Day 1 – 16 October 2023

08:30 – 09:00 Coffee and registration

09:00 – 09:10 Opening of the event by Vasu Reddy (University of the Free State)

09:10 – 09:20 Welcome and introduction by Isolde de Villiers (University of the Free State) and Hanna A Ruszczyk (Durham University)

Ordinary cities in dialogue

09:20 – 10:00 Jennifer Robinson (University College London)

10:00 – 10:15 Lochner Marais (University of the Free State)

10:15 – 10:30 Karin van Marle (University of the Western Cape)

10:30 – 11:00 Summary and discussion: Yimin Zhao (Renmin University of China)

11:00 – 11:20 Tea

Spatial justice and overlooked cities

11:20 – 12:00 Stephan de Beer (University of Pretoria)

12:00 – 12:15 Jonty Cogger & Danielle Louw (Ndifuna Ukwazi)

12:15 – 12:30 Danie Brand (Free State Centre for Human Rights)

12:30 – 13:00 Summary and discussion: Isolde de Villiers (University of the Free State)

13:00 – 13:45 Lunch

13:45 – 14:00 Afternoon sessions: Serges Kamga (University of the Free State)

Land and urban governance

14:00 – 14:15 Marie Huchzermeyer (University of the Witwatersrand)

14:15 – 14:30 Anél du Plessis (University of Stellenbosch)

14:30 – 14:45 Lindsay Sawyer (University of Sheffield)

14:45 – 15:00 Mercy Brown-Luthango (African Centre for Cities)

15:00 – 15:30 Discussion

15:30 – 16:00 Tea

Towns and city-region economies

16:00 – 16:30 Ivan Turok (University of the Free State)

16:30 – 16:45 Gijsbert Hoogendoorn (University of Johannesburg)

16:45 – 17:00 Lateefa Joseph-Rajab (African Centre for Cities)

17:00 – 17:30 Discussion

18:30 Dinner

Day 2 – 17 October 2023

08:00 – 08:30 Coffee and registration

Secondary cities in Africa

08:30 – 09:00 Abraham Matamanda and co-authors (University of the Free State):

09:00 – 09:15 Rita Kesselring (University of St Gallen)

09:15 – 09:30 Paula Meth (University of Sheffield)

09:30 – 09:45 Zemecha Teshome (Hawassa University)

09:45 – 10:15 Discussion

10:15 – 10:45 Tea

Overlooked and unheard narratives

10:45 – 11:00 Hanna Ruszczyk (Durham University)

11:00 – 11:15 Thomas Coggin (University of the Witwatersrand)

11:15 – 11:30 Geetika Anand (African Centre for Cities)

11:30 – 11:45 Bibi Burger (University of Cape Town)

11:45 – 12:00 Discussion

12:00 – 13:00 Way forward, reflection and wrap-up

Packed lunch and spatial justice tour

Overlooked Cities: Thinking and doing global urban studies differently

“Ordinary and overlooked cities in conversation”

<https://www.overlookedcities.org/>

Hybrid – University of the Free State, Bloemfontein Campus and online via Microsoft Teams

In the seminar series “Overlooked Cities: Thinking and doing global urban studies differently”, made possible by the Urban Studies Foundation Seminar Series Award, we expand on the term “overlooked cities” to mark our collective critique of the indifferent views on cities, city-lives and city-ness that are marginalised, off-the-map and under-theorised (Ruszczuk et al., 2021; Nugraha et al., 2022). Whereas the first seminar in the series focused on Asia, with great inputs especially from early career researchers, the second seminar shifts the focus to Africa and attempts to make theoretical dialogues between overlookedness and other related concepts and discourses. In particular, we want to foreground the relationship between “overlooked cities” and “ordinary cities.” Jennifer Robinson (2006) has long been inviting us to attend more to the differences and diversities among a world of cities. Calling for alternative takes on Western modernity and development, and their association with urbanisation, she insists that all cities should be seen as ordinary. What’s next, we may wonder, to further interrogate global and uneven urban conditions where, it seems, many cities are rendered more “ordinary” (read: invisible) than others? How and how far can we make overlookedness a critical lens? What does it mean for a politics of counter-overlooking in envisioning alternative urban futures for the urban majority? To answer these questions, we invited scholars from diverse disciplines: law, urban studies, geography, theology, and history, to engage on how their work corresponds to the conversation between overlooked and ordinary cities. Please join us online or in person on the Bloemfontein campus of the University of the Free State to reflect on the geographies and politics of seeing our cities for a renewed critical impetus to think about, write about, care about, and act on the often overlooked urban experiences.