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## Introduction: Betrayal and Urban Development Across the Globe

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This special issue analyzes the experiences of people affected by and dealing with betrayal in the face of urban development interventions. Through ethnographies from different continents, it brings together insights into how marginalized people act upon both the disruptions and the emergent potentialities of urban development projects that intervene in their lives. The articles approach such interventions as inherently conflictual processes that reveal wider societal issues, not least the contested nature of the relationship between the state and low-income city residents. Urban planning is generally portrayed as an optimistic, future-oriented activity, one that promises a better future for a city and its population (Abram and Weszkalnys 2013). These promises, however, often go unfulfilled, are not fulfilled in ways that had been expected, or come with unanticipated downsides as they collide with people's identities, life trajectories, and aspirations. The authors in this special issue find in the notion of betrayal a clarifying lens for exploring the conflicts and disenchantments that urban development projects generate for those living or working in target areas.

Urban development projects and programs tend to carry particular visions of urban modernity consisting of orderly cities, often conjured up in the context of national development (Gregory 2013; Holston 1989; Nuijten, Koster, and de Vries 2012). In general, urban residents tend to support such development projects, in spite of the attendant frequency of evictions and wide-ranging economic ramifications, because they also wish their city to be part of such progress. In Vietnam, anthropological studies show that local governments legitimize urban upgrading projects in statements about progress and the future of the country. The ambitions and visions inherent in these interventions are shared by residents of an urban zone that is undergoing large-scale redevelopment in Ho Chi Minh City (Harms 2013), as well as by vendors in a central market place in Lào Cai City that is being rebuilt as a modern market (this issue). Urban residents do not necessarily oppose the projects' goals to modernize the city, although they may resent the ways in which they are carried out. Both development projects in these studies were detrimental to the residents' and vendors' livelihoods. In Indian cities, we see similar projects that are supposed to turn urban environments into "world class

cities,” a process that has been referred to as “worlding” (Ghertner 2015; Roy and Ong 2011). Without intending to demonize urban planning, the contributions in this special issue demonstrate how, in spite of the promises of progress for all, low-income or otherwise vulnerable urban residents are repeatedly betrayed in urban development projects.

## The Betrayal of Urban Development

The articles in this issue examine people’s experiences of betrayal in their encounters with state-led urban development projects and the ways in which they try to reorganize their lives in the wake of such treachery. People recognize that things are turning out differently than expected, or that the state’s policies are failing outright (Koch 2016; Lewinson 1998). The interventions instill or relate to certain expectations of a better life in the city (Koster and Nuijten 2012) that urban residents usually have not asked for. The ethnographies in this issue connect urban residents’ everyday practices to larger mechanisms of betrayal as political visions collide with people’s lives and dreams for the future. A sense of double betrayal extends through the urban development projects to encounters with local actors (market managers, long-term residents of the relocation site, or newly relocated neighbors): residents are betrayed first by the state and its public officials, then by local stakeholders who further disrupt their dreams and expectations.

Previous studies on development interventions have explored processes of betrayal between urban residents and state actors. In a study of the informal sector in Dar es Salaam, Tanzania, Anne Lewinson (1998) showed how street vendors and kiosk owners felt betrayed by the state when it tried to regulate their informal market because it failed in its duty to take care of its citizens. At the same time, the government’s office workers, who were sometimes personally involved in official attempts to regulate the informal market, felt betrayed since the state failed to control the urban space and provide them with the life to which they aspired. As Saskia Sassen (2013, 126) points out, the middle classes can also share this sentiment because the state “has broken the social contract with a hardworking, dutiful section of the population.” While for the middle classes the consequences can be serious, for the urban poor, being betrayed by authorities often implies a denial of their basic human needs.

In this issue, we approach betrayal as a social practice in which a betrayer deceives another person, damages that person’s confidence, or breaks his or her promises to that other person. This dynamic can operate on an individual or collective level, as studies of “institutional betrayal” demonstrate. Gentile (2018, 649) shows how official institutions “can become active agents in violent betrayal through their protocols, policies, or failure to fulfill the promises of these procedures.” Smith

and Freyd (2014, 578) argue that institutional betrayal occurs “when an institution causes harm to an individual who trusts or depends upon that institution.” People are betrayed by their own “affective investment in an ideological apparatus like ‘school’ or ‘the justice system’” (Doyle 2015, 35). This resembles what happens to people affected by urban development interventions: as they are affectively engaged with the state as an ideological apparatus and its promises, they are vulnerable to the state’s acts of treachery.

In the epilogue to this special issue, Martijn Koster further analyzes the contested relationship between urban residents and the state through the lens of an intimate relationship between partners. He draws on Berlant’s (1998, 281) writings on intimacy, in which “romance and friendship inevitably meet the instabilities of sexuality, money, expectation, and exhaustion, producing, at the extreme, moral dramas of estrangement and betrayal, along with terrible spectacles of neglect and violence even where desire, perhaps, endures.” He argues that in urban development interventions, the state keeps the desire alive time and again through its promises, its presentations of the future, and its allegiance to moral notions of care and solidarity. In spite of its estrangement and betrayal, the state generates hope and instills aspirations in its subjects.

## Toward a Global Anthropology of Urban Development

Anthropologists, specifically those from the Manchester School, had been conducting urban ethnography since the 1940s (Pardo and Prato 2013). But urban anthropology emerged as a widely recognized subdiscipline in the 1970s in response to the rapid urban growth and growing pressure on cities across the globe. It was also part of a shift toward “bringing anthropology home” and studying social life in places of greater familiarity to the fieldworker, perhaps even in their home city (Jaffe and De Koning 2016; Stack 1975). As urban governments have intervened in the development of cities in response to continued urbanization, infrastructural challenges, housing deficits, environmental challenges, issues of sustainability, and the desire for smart cities, the production of anthropological research on urban development interventions has increased significantly, especially since 2000.

While some argue that urbanization in the Global South differs from modes of urbanization in industrial cities of the North (Caldeira 2016), the present issue pursues a global perspective on urban development across different national and urban contexts.<sup>1</sup> Focusing on particular development projects and the urban imaginaries they offer opens up the potential for comparisons across the North-South divide (Haid and Hilbrandt 2019; Robinson 2011). Our special issue aims to transcend the divide that generally separates urban research

in regional contexts by bringing together studies from Brazil, India, Vietnam, and the United States. Embedding their studies in literature on urban development from both the Global North and South, the authors show how city residents around the world both dream of better futures and experience betrayal when urban development projects intervene in their lives. Such North-South links are heuristically fruitful, revealing interesting similarities in very different places in both how urban development is carried out and how the urban poor develop strategies to live with or resist it (Aguilera and Smart 2016; Auyero 2011). Furthermore, this collection looks beyond the megacities that have been overrepresented in urban anthropology and urban studies (e.g., Robinson 2011).

In this issue, Kirsten Endres explores urban upgrading in Vietnam in the northern border city of Lào Cai, which involved the transformation of the central marketplace into a cleaner and more modern market environment. The low-income traders shared the state's visions of modernization and market-based urban development, but when the promise of a better future through marketization caused them economic distress, they felt betrayed and initiated intense negotiations with the local government. Elisa Lanari's study of an ambitious redevelopment project in suburban Atlanta explores the impact of these interventions on working-class African American and Latinx residents in a white-majority suburb. The promise that redevelopment would transform the city center into a diverse and inclusive communal space betrayed its minority residents by producing the opposite upon implementation. The redevelopment plans involved the demolition of their neighborhoods, displacement of working-class renters, and exclusion not only from the visions of suburban improvement but the city itself. Jelena Salmi explores world-class city-making in Ahmedabad, India, where state-sponsored urban development produced large-scale displacement and the resettlement of slum dwellers to the outskirts of the city. At first excited to be part of national progress, they found themselves betrayed by the state—as personified by the otherwise-popular prime minister, Narendra Modi—which deprived them of the benefits of development. Marie Kolling's ethnography from Salvador da Bahia, Brazil, also explores betrayal in the aftermath of displacement and forced resettlement to state-built social housing. It traces the socio-spatial transformation of this new urban space, co-constituted through the negligence of the state, the aspirational house-building practices of its impoverished residents, and the discursive practices of both long-term neighbors and ultimately the residents themselves in labeling the social housing a *favela*. This has produced an urbanization process in which the new social housing is becoming a favela in both urban form and lived experience.

Although betrayed and marginalized in relation to their position within the city, local community, and wider socioeconomic and racialized social structures, the people portrayed in these four contributions

are not passive victims. They are inventive agents who respond to their changing physical, spatial, and sociopolitical environments, avoiding threats and looking for opportunities grounded in their everyday practices and life histories (Anjaria and McFarlane 2011; Pardue 2014). In the following, drawing upon a wide range of studies, we bring together the topics and theoretical insights we consider central to developing a global anthropology of urban development.<sup>2</sup>

## Exclusion as Betrayal

**A**cross the globe, people's needs and desires are ignored or impeded in the planning and implementation of urban development. Anthropological and critical urban studies have shown how urban development interventions (re)produce and even enhance inequalities between city dwellers through an unequal distribution of resources, such as housing, infrastructure, and security (De Boeck 2013; Miraftab 2009; Waldorff 2016). The neoliberal policies that drive urban development interventions result in the centralization of wealth and power in the hands of a few, thus facilitating gentrification and the construction of privately owned corporate districts and commercial areas (Gaffney 2010). This accumulation of capital occurs at the expense of local populations, who are thereby dispossessed of their homes, land, places of work, and associated local networks. Harvey (2003) describes such processes as "accumulation by dispossession." Numerous studies demonstrate how urban planning violates many residents' right to the city by excluding them from a life in the city (Banerjee 2010; Harvey 2012; Lefebvre 1991).

Interventions in commercial areas may target market halls and their accessibility by public transport, thus affecting the economic viability of the marketplace and exposing stallholders to higher levels of economic uncertainty (Endres 2014). Such interventions entail diverse mechanisms of exclusion through the implementation of rules and regulations regarding, for example, permits, the size of stalls, taxation (Endres, this issue; Milgram 2014), and street vending (Anjaria 2015; Gibbings 2013). Exclusion may also occur gradually and indirectly through mechanisms of gentrification and segregation, spurred by moral understandings of who is considered an asset to the city (Caldeira 2000; Endres 2014; Lanari, this issue; Low 1997; Salmi, this issue; Tidey 2012). Studies document how the residential compositions of neighborhoods change through gentrification (Brown-Saracino 2010; DeSena 2009), the construction of gated communities (Caldeira 1999, 2000; Low 2003), and economic transitions that produce urban marginality and new groups of working poor (Desmond 2016; Wacquant 2008).

While gentrification can be a relatively slow and subtle process, at times it occurs less subtly, as in the case of "heritagization." When

historical city centers become branded as UNESCO World Heritage sites, their low-income residents are often rendered superfluous. This happened in the city centers of Salvador da Bahia, Brazil, and Havana, Cuba (Collins 2008; Scarpaci 2000), among other places. Pelourinho, the historic center of Salvador da Bahia, became a UNESCO World Heritage site in 1992; its “revitalization” program has been criticized for focusing on preservation and beautification rather than actual revitalization, and for excluding and displacing marginalized black communities socially, economically, and spatially (Collins 2008; Gledhill 2013; Perry 2004). Similarly, governments imagine that mega-events, such as the World Cup and the Olympics, will boost a country’s image by improving the appearance of the host cities and thus their ability to attract tourists and businesses (Castro et al. 2015; Greene 2003; Newton 2009; Olds, Bunnell, and Leckie 2002).

Forced evictions to clean up the city are not a new phenomenon—quite the contrary. Sanitation—conflating the poor with dirt and disease—has been a rationale for urban renewal and evictions since the nineteenth century, as is evident in the reforms of cities such as Paris and New York, as well as an array of cities under colonial rule such as Delhi and Willemstad (Dürr and Jaffe 2014; Olds, Bunnell, and Leckie 2002; Scott 1998). Under the concept of “healthy cities,” this continues today both in the Global South, as in Delhi (Ghertner 2010) and Ahmedabad (Salmi, this issue), and in the Global North. In the Swedish city of Malmö, a Roma squatter settlement was demolished in 2015, displacing two hundred families (Persdotter 2017). The settlement had been defined as a health and safety risk to the public as well as the squatters. Because the squatters’ dwellings and belongings were legally defined as trash, municipal authorities could invoke the law to intervene and “clean up” the area (Persdotter 2017).

Such demolitions are brutal and leave the evicted families in despair. However, planned evictions can also instill expectations of a better future for those families that are resettled to new housing, as described in this issue’s contributions from Kolling and Salmi. They may also spark hope in others who are trying to take advantage of the resettlement schemes. In Brazil, planned evictions with the promise of resettlement to free or heavily subsidized social housing have produced a rapid growth in targeted squatter settlements by people in search of housing. Seeking to be included in the state-led projects, they aim to gain “possession through dispossession,” hoping this will enable them to claim a permanent home of their own (Kolling 2017).

However, once residents move in to their new homes, the hope for a better future is often replaced by new challenges and experiences of marginalization. People are often relocated to places remote from their work. They need more money to pay electricity bills that they did not pay in their former settlement, where they used illicit connections to the power grid. They have to deal with new neighbors and construct new support networks (DeMoss-Norman 2015; Kolling, this issue; Perlman

2010; Rao 2013; Salmi, this issue). Kolling examines the hostile attitude of many in the resource-deprived resettlement neighborhood. The state-built social housing is perceived as a favela because of the people inhabiting it and the “territorial stigma” (Wacquant 2008a) attached to the place where they used to live. The stigma situates them at the bottom of the local social hierarchy, despite their efforts to gain recognition. In the resettlement site on the outskirts of the city of Ahmedabad studied by Salmi, residents employed “nuisance talk” (Ghertner 2012) to express their moral superiority to their neighbors in the new housing in an effort to position themselves as worthy citizens of the “world-class city” from which they felt excluded. This reinforced the inequalities of caste and religion among the city’s urban poor.

Even in urban development projects that provide resettlement, neoliberal logics rarely produce the envisaged trajectories of progress but reorder space in a way that is at odds with people’s needs (Endres 2014; Nuijten, Koster, and de Vries 2012; Rao 2013). In fact, all the contributions to this special issue show how urban development interventions reorder the city in a way that is detrimental to many people’s lives and, as consequence, invoke a sense of betrayal. In the Global North, this occurs when people are purposefully excluded from urban regeneration projects, as Lanari shows in the United States (this issue). It occurs when, in the context of European welfare states, interventions in disadvantaged neighborhoods aim at “integrating” citizens (Johansen and Jensen 2017), or when residents of postindustrial neighborhoods are increasingly left to their own devices (Koch 2016). Similarly, betrayal in urban planning takes place in the Global South, in both socialist (Scarpaci 2000; Schwenkel 2015) and neoliberal settings (Endres, this issue; Kolling, this issue; Lewinson 1998; Perry 2013; Salmi, this issue).

Betrayal also occurs in projects that aim to improve living conditions for the city’s low-income populations (Kolling, this issue; Salmi, this issue) or to accommodate more affluent inhabitants, and as a consequence push migrants or other low-income residents out of the city (Endres, this issue; Lanari, this issue). As the mechanisms of exclusion become evident in these encounters with urban development interventions, the authors show how political visions collide with people’s aspirations and invoke a sense of betrayal when people realize that, despite all the promises, the interventions do not work in their favor.

## The Politics of Urban Planning

An interesting strand of studies of urban development concentrates not on the residents or traders who are affected but on the policies and the planners, engineers, architects, municipal officials, and other stakeholders. These studies include the planning of transportation infrastructure, such as new roads, bus lanes, railways, and

airports (Boholm 2013; Hilbrandt 2017; De Koning 2015; Lawrence-Zúñiga 2015; Sadana 2018). They show urban development to be a complete industry, with different social, political, and commercial interests on the part of public and private actors, full of messiness and contingency.

Scholars have also focused on infrastructure as an object of study in order to analyze processes of urban marginalization. Rodgers and O'Neill (2012) refer to the politics of infrastructure when they argue that it demarcates "[t]he kinds of people and goods that can and should circulate easily, and which should stay put, and who can and should be integrated within the city." Indeed, infrastructure can serve as a key entry point for exploring the political economy of social suffering in cities and the production of "infrastructural violence" (Rodgers and O'Neill 2012). The politics of infrastructure and urban materiality have been central to several recent studies of urban development (Anand 2017; Björkman 2015; Schwenkel 2015). Drawing on science and technology studies and actor network theory, studies of infrastructural politics analyze how infrastructure, such as water pipes and electricity grids, form components of human/non-human assemblages—or meshworks—that (re)produce particular power relations in the city (Coleman 2014; Larkin 2013; Pilo' 2017; Von Schnitzler 2013).

Another important perspective on the politics of urban planning and infrastructure gained ground following the shift from top-down modes of urban planning toward more participatory approaches in the 1990s. City administrators have used participatory urban development as a way of deepening democracy, improving citizen representation, and distributing resources equally among city residents (Caldeira and Holston 2015; Fung and Wright 2003); however, as is evident in the contributions to this special issue, in spite of the promises of participatory approaches, most projects fail to provide the affected population with any real influence in decision making (Denaldi 2003; Koster and Nuijten 2012). Power inequalities between the state and residents are instead accentuated, since urban development projects work as techniques of governmentality that make subjects amenable to being controlled and assigned to particular places in the city (McGuirk and Dowling 2011; Uitermark 2005).

Power inequalities between residents are also accentuated. Urban development produces differentiated forms of citizenship—such as distinguishing between deserving and undeserving citizens. It often involves citizenship education, for example, with regard to hygiene and the use of public space (Holston 2009; Koster 2015; Nuijten 2013). Salmi (this issue) demonstrates how efforts to create a clean, slum-free world-class city invoke exclusionary notions of citizenship. In her study of Ahmedabad, slum dwellers were both physically and discursively excluded from the world-class city, and continued to be portrayed as non-citizens, as "useless" and "third-class" people.

## Acting against Betrayal

These ideas about citizenship can also be utilized by those on the margins to act against betrayal. Among the small-scale traders in Vietnam portrayed by Endres, people used the rhetoric of rights to protest against the planned interventions. Their disenchantment with neoliberal planning and anger about top-down decisions to increase their stall rental fees dramatically sparked numerous acts of collective resistance in the form of protests, petitions to government agencies, and letters to newspapers known for their investigative reporting. These protests led to intense negotiations over the terms.

In general, in response to betrayal, urban development projects may trigger collective protests. Collective protests can grow into social movements that use a citizenship discourse in order to resist planned interventions (Gibbins 2013; Pinto 2014; Risør 2016), while participants can give shape to notions of “insurgent citizenship” (Holston 2009) and “insurgent participation” (Hilbrandt 2017).

However, reactions to urban interventions do not always take the form of organized protest. There are also effective informal ways of affecting the implementation of urban development plans (Smart 2018) and more subtle and “ambiguous forms of contested action” (Harms 2013, 347). In Salmi’s ethnography, the resettled slum dwellers employ various strategies of “silent maneuvering” and a refusal to cooperate, for instance, by not paying their share of the house price, which they were supposed to pay in installments over the course of ten years. In this ethnography, however, the resettled slum dwellers also employ other discursive strategies to denigrate their unwanted neighbors in the resettlement site. In an effort to position themselves as good citizens who fit into the beautiful, clean spaces of the world-class city, those who have been resettled end up acting against betrayal through everyday practices in which they betray their peers.

In Lanari’s ethnography, low-income African American and Latinx residents in a white-majority suburb deployed various time-tricking (Bear 2016) and place-making tactics in an effort to build a life in what the author refers to as “leftover spaces of redevelopment.” By appropriating and caring for places portrayed as dangerous or decaying, such as parking lots, incomplete sidewalks, or public schoolyards, they engage in the urban development plans in ways that enable them to endure the urban transformations and uncertainty of future displacement they produce.

In Kolling’s study from Salvador da Bahia, the resettled families in the social housing project did not take action against the state to pursue their rights, for example, to the property titles they were promised but never received. Instead, the residents invested their scarce resources in improving their new but poorly built homes. Other studies from the Global South have described illicit building as a form of “inverse governmentality” in attempts to gain recognition by the state (Nielsen 2011; Rao 2013), but Kolling provides a different analysis. Illicit house

construction and home improvements are common practices in urban peripheries in Brazil (Caldeira 2016), motivated by the residents' aspirations for a better life, envisaged and measured through the improved materiality of their houses. Home improvements are a way to negotiate social status in the community in which their social lives are embedded, rather than with the disengaged state. Another example of subtle contestation in this ethnography is the residents' use of a barbed-wire fence as a washing line. The fence was put up by long-term neighbors living next to a housing project as a means of physical segregation between themselves and the undesired resettlers. These responses are examples of how people act upon the disruptions and potentialities that emerge when urban development projects intervene in their lives and of how, despite their marginalized positions, people intervene in urban development.

Looking at the juncture of state-led urban transformations and everyday life in the city, the contributions to this issue provide critical insights into the diversity of lived experiences in the wake of betrayal by urban interventions. Whether people organize protests and confrontations or employ more subtle forms of contestation, the feeling of betrayal prompts people to mobilize their resources and reorganize their lives, as they insist on their right to the city and persist in pursuing their urban futures.

## Notes

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<sup>1</sup>We are aware of the variety of modes of urban development across the globe; however, here we wish to focus on the similarities.

<sup>2</sup>In line with anthropologists' early interest in cities, urbanization, and city planning, which was influenced by classical sociological works of what later became known as the Chicago School (Pardo and Prato 2013), our overview includes references to seminal sociological works and disciplines such as urban studies, geography, public policy, and architecture. The boundaries between such disciplines are sometimes blurred, as is evident from the journals in which work in urban anthropology is published, the departments where urban anthropologists are employed, and the highly interdisciplinary use of references in urban anthropological publications.

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