

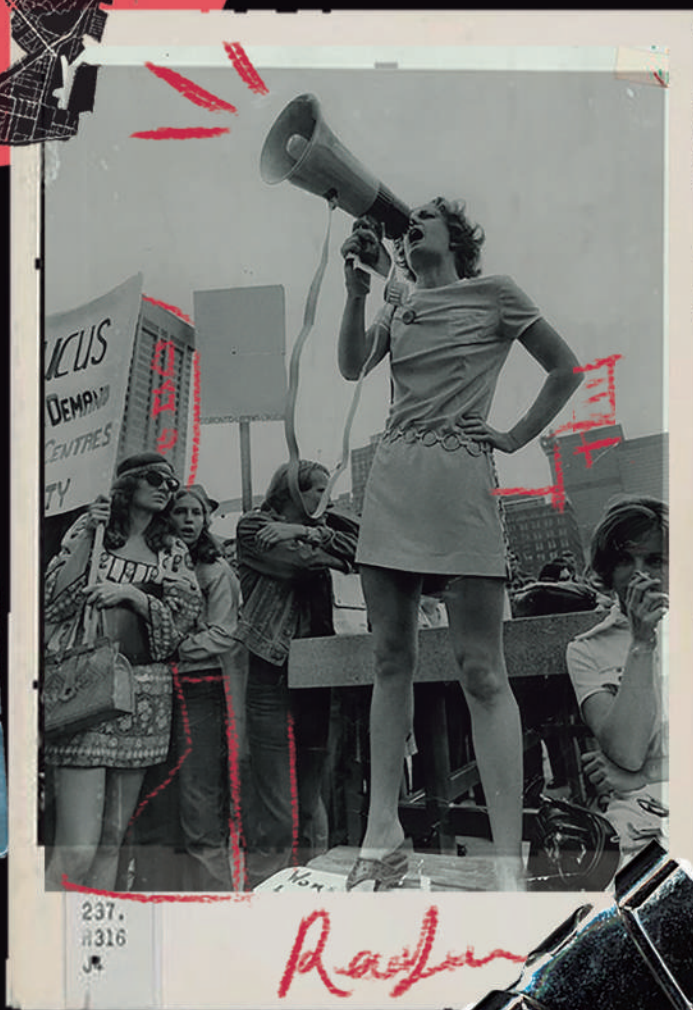
# IV

## JORNADAS INTERNACIONALES DE ANTROPOLOGÍA DEL CONFLICTO URBANO

### call for papers

Cotidianidades movedizas:

# Poética, política y conflicto en el espacio urbano



Del 30 de noviembre  
al 2 de diciembre de 2022  
Barcelona



UNIVERSITAT DE  
BARCELONA

GRECS

Grup de Recerca sobre Exclusió i Control Social



OBSERVATORI  
D'ANTROPOLOGIA  
DEL CONFLICTE URBÀ

# **4th INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE on ANTHROPOLOGY OF URBAN CONFLICT**

**Shifting everyday lives: Poetics, politics, and conflicts in urban space**

10 years of the Observatorio de Antropología del Conflicto Urbano (OACU)

**November 30<sup>th</sup> to December 2<sup>nd</sup>, 2022, Barcelona**

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## **FIRST CALL FOR ABSTRACTS**

### **I. Introduction**

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The 4<sup>th</sup> International Conference on Anthropology of Urban Conflict celebrates the 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary of OACU, reaffirming again conflict as the cornerstone of urban life, thus of the production of space. In the 1<sup>st</sup> edition of the Conference, held in Barcelona in 2012, we approached conflict starting from the events of urban unrest, collective contempt towards authority, and against a spatial order based on political, economic, and social inequalities and injustice. In the 2<sup>nd</sup> edition, held in 2014 in Río de Janeiro, we debated the wider processes of neoliberal urban reform, and its impact on residential forms, mainly focused on the development of urban conflicts in Rio and Barcelona. The 3<sup>rd</sup> edition of the Conference took place in Buenos Aires in 2017, and focused on the role of heritage within the frame of the new urban tourism and the issues related with the commodification of cities, especially in Latin America.

### **II. Objectives**

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This 4<sup>th</sup> Edition aims at deepening the critique of everyday life, challenging the rise of several trends that promote urban reform and legitimize it with the rhetoric of “taking care” of citizenship. Such rhetoric allows to bypass the dynamics of urban capitalism, whose goal is to give a stable form to the slippery flow of urban life. On the other side, we expect the Conference to also focus on the emancipatory projects whose aim is apparently opposite to those enforcing economic growth, but that equally work to contain and restrict urban life. This is why we will give special attention to the poetics and politics that are inherent to any urban conflict. The goal of the 4<sup>th</sup> Edition is to call at different disciplines and perspectives to elaborate on the critique of urban life, to reaffirm its meaning as an eminently practical and symbolic domain, thus as a revolutionary process from which critical action constantly originates and develops.

### III. Working panels

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We invite scholars and independent researchers to send their abstracts to one of the following panels, contacting directly their coordinators:

#### **Panel 1. Problematizing the Commons. Fortunes and Misfortunes of a Concept.**

Coordinators: Marc Morell, Universitetet i Bergen i Observatori d'Antropologia del Conflictu Urbà, [marc.morell@uib.no](mailto:marc.morell@uib.no) | Galvão Debelle dos Santos, Observatori d'Antropologia del Conflictu Urbà, [galvao.dds@protonmail.com](mailto:galvao.dds@protonmail.com)

Description: This panel proposal aims at developing a critical reflection about the notion of “the commons”, that enjoyed a remarkable academic resurgence in the recent decade. In a strive to renovate the concept, several approaches overcame the original idea of common goods, focusing on the already existing emancipatory processes that until the emergence of the commons were understood basically from a class perspective, and from the perspective of the various and often different practices that put this concept to work.

From direct action to “commoning”, the notion of the commons thus ended up enjoying a privileged role, in which the organization of alternatives to the social reality were conveyed into thinking possible transformative horizons, starting from challenging private property, to the need for collective work, the developing of everyday resistances to state and capital, as well as to the experience of the here-and-now of many conflicts, from reclaiming urban life to digital networks. Things, however, not always were simple. While these processes that rethink and envisage the kind of transformation we need were taking place, the notion of the Commons imploded into a variety of projects that ended up being even contradictory among themselves: the term “the Commons” shifted from meaning possible subversions to being an umbrella for anything, thus an object of disagreement that lost all its revolutionary capacity in the extension of its basis and operativity.

On top of that, the concept of the Commons suffered a process of institutionalization, being co-opted by the dominant political and economic system, that speculated with it and turned it into a spectacle and even a commodity; the Commons became a label that lost its legitimacy, losing all references to popular culture, to affect, to horizontality, to solidarity, but also distancing from exploitation, extractivism, and class struggle, all the elements that gave it its meaning.

In this landscape of commons without class struggle, this panel intends to examine and critically debate the conflict of a notion of commons that approaches these tensions in any of its possible forms, being from the ethnographic description and comparison, or from theoretical analysis and explanation.



## Panel 2. Drama, rituals and feast in urban contexts

Coordinators: Oriol Pascual, Universitat de Barcelona, [oriolpascual@ub.edu](mailto:oriolpascual@ub.edu) | Marta Contijoch, Universitat de Barcelona, [martacontijoch@gmail.com](mailto:martacontijoch@gmail.com) | Manuel Delgado, Universitat de Barcelona, [manueldelgado@ub.edu](mailto:manueldelgado@ub.edu)

Description: This panel focuses on how popular celebrations convey collective identities and states of mind. By reframing the interpretation of streets and squares through the lens of riot and revolt, we aim to highlight the importance of shared anger. Our focus is thus on ritual, i.e. culturally shared, repetitive and in some way obligatory actions, that span from massive celebrations of a strange saint, to a landscape of barricades on fire and flying cobblestones. They can be minor ritual practices in unlikely spaces, where social unrest disguises as religious cults. It is in any case a reference to what scholars of conflict – the theoretical legacy we aim to retrieve – called “social drama”, ritual representations that allow the expression of tensions, disobedience, recalcitrance and disaffections always simmering in the fictitious social order.

This initiative corresponds to a consolidated line of research within OACU: religious anthropology in the urban environment. We are interested in debating the importance of contemplating urban space as a ritual space, and the cartography of cities as a pattern of occult temples and secret pilgrimages. It is a universe in which, from time to time, some encouraging forces emerge; the powers-that-be perceive them as dark, small or huge effervescences, that express to its highest point what Lefebvre described as the essentially urban force defended in struggles he proposed to call “the right to the city”.

The exposition of cases, and the debate it will bring, aim at bringing new evidence of how urban space is a space created for and by conflict, far from the assumptions that imagine it as a stable and previsible reality, subject to clear rhythms and friendly occupations. We will show that all urban landscapes can quickly become a terrain for contempt and disobedience by multitudes, that may be dressed in feast or in riot, but also in costumes for minor or intimate celebrations that also choose threshold times and spaces, hidden or marginal in the urban time-space. We will discuss the occasions when urban life allows the emergence of the ultimate nature of social life that resides in it, often built up of layers of injustices, offenses and passions. By understanding this magmatic compound of impatience and yearning through which cities write their history, we want to show how the expression of this malaise is inseparable from the expression of ritual and festive moments that social sciences have been often incline to disassociate with any form of struggle, and that we want here to put at its center.

### **Panel 3. Urban memories and socio-territorial conflicts**

Coordinators: Muna Makhoul De la Garza, OACU and GRECS (UB), [manturan11@gmail.com](mailto:manturan11@gmail.com) | Antigoni Geronta, OACU and GRECS (UB), [antigoni.geronta@gmail.com](mailto:antigoni.geronta@gmail.com)

Description: Memory represents a fertile field for anthropology and history, and an important bridge among these and other disciplines. Its formal study has broadened horizons of research, especially for the exploration of the everyday life of groups and communities. Memory, as a process and a social construction, intertwines with affects, social practices, and is a constitutive element of collective identities. This identitarian aspect makes it especially relevant for populations whose lifestyles have been severely affected by neoliberal urbanism. In recent years, for instance, the activation of collective memories has been important for neighborhood movements: memory has been essential in order to defend specific urban territories, especially within the frame of the neoliberal turn of urban policies.

An ethnographic approach of the confrontation against these forms of territorial transformations by social actors under threat of urbanistic violence, can stimulate questions on the collective processes that, by activating memory, configure political subjects capable of producing their living spaces and deciding over them. On the other hand, we observe conflicts around memory, as narratives of the past that stage collective forms of inhabiting and appropriation of specific places, and state their own intentions on the present and future living conditions in them.

In this context, we seek to inquire on other issues such as the registration and transmission of memory, the orality facing the writing process, the forms, methods and practices of documenting and reactivating memory, and the implications that all these issues have on its social legitimation. Based on the fact that we approach memory both as a theoretical-methodological tool and as a social category, this panel aims at gathering theoretical and ethnographic papers that address memory as a central topic of urban conflict, and in particular of the processes of resistance and defense of urban territories within the capitalist city.

### **Mesa 4. Inhabited urbanism. The social life of the built environment**

Coordinators: M. Gabriela Navas Perrone, GRECS-Universidad de Barcelona, [etnoproyecto@gmail.com](mailto:etnoproyecto@gmail.com) | Juliana Marcús, Universidad de Buenos Aires, [julimarcus@gmail.com](mailto:julimarcus@gmail.com)

Description: This panel proposes a reflection on the urban transformations in the frame of the wave of capitalist reappropriation of cities since the end of the last century. We invite scholars to present papers that analyze the renewal of the built environment from a socio-spatial approach, considering the economic and political factors that contribute to its production, and the lived and perceived

dimensions that are inherent to the act of inhabiting. We will gather researchers that highlight the *social life of the built environment* moving from an interdisciplinary gaze, by recovering the contributions of Geography, Architecture, Urban planning, Anthropology, Sociology, Urban economy, and other fields of Social sciences and humanities, to study the processes of production of habitat and their interaction with the peculiar sociabilities that inhabit it.

We hope to receive contributions that allow us to elucidate, from different perspectives, the political economy of the morphological dimension of urban space, the social impacts caused by the reforms of the environment, the functionality attributed to practices of spatial appropriation, as well as the symbolic dimension of the production of space. Among the possible lines of research and subfields of interest of this panel we highlight:

- The analysis of the production of built environments in urban or rural areas that have been subject to processes of spatial commodification, or that are threatened by pressures from the real estate industry or extractivist activities. We pretend to incorporate debates that make visible the economical and political implications of such reforms, the institutional framework in which the activities of planners and architects are developed, as well as the effects of their plans and design over people's everyday lives.
- An approach to the inhabited dimension of space, understood as the radical expression of social order, that is made evident in the manifestations of urban informality or in the subversive nature of the appropriation of space, against the projectual dimensions conceived by municipal technicians, as well in the displays of assimilation or resistance vis-a-vis urban reform.
- Reflections that problematize urban *praxis* moving from an examination of their disciplinary foundations, with a particular attention towards actions conceived in the context of the Covid-19 pandemic, also concerning forms of urban post-pandemic everyday life and the dimensions of inhabiting as a raw material to rethink the epistemic frames.

### **Panel 5. Lefebvre and the anthropology of urban life**

Coordinators: Carla Rivera, OACU, [criverablanca97@gmail.com](mailto:criverablanca97@gmail.com) | Horacio Espinosa, OACU, [horacio.espinosa.zepeda@gmail.com](mailto:horacio.espinosa.zepeda@gmail.com)

Description: Right at the beginning of *The Urban Revolution*, Lefebvre suggests that urban life is *eventful*. That is, what is urban cannot be reduced to the industrial mode of production despite urban society having “emerged from industrialization”. This means that urban life, in itself, is an *excess* that cannot be mechanically explained as a simple effect of industrialization. The ‘urban’ is an *eventful excess* with great consequences for a critical epistemology of urban life, since understanding the city is not a mere reflection over an empirically well-defined object. The *object of inquiry* is thus not a conceptual copy of the object as it “really exists”. The ‘urban’ is a “*virtual*

*object*, that is, a *possible object*, whose birth and evolution we have to present as linked to a *process* and a *praxis*".

Starting from dogmatic positions, it is impossible to think of the *production of what is radically new* as if all urban ontologies were contained in the economic structure or urban planning. These deterministic positions are challenged by lefebvrian epistemology, which invites us to a cautious analysis of everyday life. *Moments, situations, events...* the first of these concepts implies a deliberate action by the researcher, since they create the situations that will later be analyzed *ex nihilo*. The latter is more slippery, for it implies an attention to the extraordinary dimension of everyday life. What is important, in any case, is to be aware that an ethnography of urban life should always confront the immanent *utopic* possibility of the urban as an object of study.

Therefore, the aim of this panel is to collect either theoretical or empirical papers that reflect on, or apply, Lefebvre's theory to the field of urban ethnography. We welcome all those who are interested in developing proposals in which lefebvrian concepts such as 'lived space' and 'everyday life' from an anthropological approach and highlight their socially transformative potential.

**Panel 6. "Sustainable mobilities": *supermanzanas*, bikeways and the new forms to cross the city**

Coordinators: Ainhara Del Pozo Nogales, Universitat de Barcelona, [ainhara.delpozo@gmail.com](mailto:ainhara.delpozo@gmail.com) | Juan Granero Bellver, Universitat de Barcelona, [granerobellver@gmail.com](mailto:granerobellver@gmail.com)

Description: In recent years, we witnessed the proliferation of infrastructures that promote the growth of new forms of sustainable mobilities such as biking, skating and electric cars. Moreover, a series of infrastructures developed based on the so-called "tactical urbanism", which has acted as acupuncture in the urban fabric to promote good citizenship practices. Though initially perceived as a tool for social reappropriation of external urban space, this form of planning found its place in urban governance within the new repertoires of urban reform, now promoting a lovely and sustainable mobility. Despite their claims for an ethical and environmental improvement, tactical urbanism and the promotion of new forms of living and moving across the city do not challenge the neoliberal management of the regulatory frames that organize, control and distribute all commodities and people within cities. Neither do they alleviate inequalities and exclusions that cities produce. They allow, however, to stage low-cost and very visible initiatives that display a kind of social authenticity based on consent and participation, which is presented as a necessary step to create new ethical and aesthetic ways to plan and inhabit the city. These initiatives are incidental and peripheral, and act as a mechanism to depoliticize and aestheticize the streets, resulting completely inoffensive toward the capitalist appropriation of space. The proliferation of these infrastructures implies a revitalization of the moralistic concept of "public space", again in the sense of a righteous antidote to the evils of the city. Moreover, these transformations in many cities have

been implemented as a prophylactic contribution to the struggle against the Covid-19 pandemic, as well as a mechanism to delay and contain the environmental crisis, recalling the hygienist discourse that justified the great urban destructions that took place in the last decades of the 19<sup>th</sup> century.

### **Panel 7. Social polarization. Peripheral epistemologies and the culture of contempt**

Coordinators: Cecilia Vergnano, KU Leuven, [ceciliavergnano@yahoo.es](mailto:ceciliavergnano@yahoo.es) | Stefano Portelli, Leicester University, [stafe@inventati.org](mailto:stafe@inventati.org)

Description: The concept of “social polarization” seems to have become one of the *leitmotifs* of Western contemporary “advanced democracies”. The social fractures created by pandemic policies (e.g., among supporters and critics of the measure to govern the epidemic), in some cases overlap with pre-existing divisions, such as those that were caused by Brexit or by Trump's 2016 election. Since the beginning of the social emergency related to Covid-19, the argument between supporters and opponents to the political-sanitary measures was presented as epistemological, rather than political or moral. Science has been represented in a reductive way, as an univocal source of objective knowledge, from which political decisions descend in a self-evident manner – even if its effects on the social body are disparate and increment social inequalities. Those who do not agree with some specific measures or narratives are represented as anti-science, irrational, ignorant, reactionary, egoistic, or “conspiracy theorists”.

In this context, anthropology sits in a critical intersection. On one side, the politically “progressive” inclination of many professionals of the discipline brings them to highlight, more or less consciously, their distance from positions such as nativism, populism, homophobia or racism (embodied in figures such as Trump, Bolsonaro, and their supporters). On the other hand, however, distance towards “difference”, or towards what we don't like, is clearly at odds with anthropology's mission. In this panel we propose to open a space for empirical and ethnographically-based research about:

- the impact of contemporary emergency policies on the growth of social inequalities;
- the protests directed against political-sanitary measures in the pandemic context, the emergence of new social movement and the transformation of already existing movements;
- the epistemic battles among different sectors of science, media, and the citizenship;
- the processes of construction of the “other”, with the supporting moral panic, in time of the so-called “post-truth”;

More methodological, theoretical or ethical contributions are also welcome, if they focus on the difficulties to conduct critical research on the mentioned topics, in a narrative frame that is increasingly polarized.



## Panel 8. Shaky Shifting Panel

Coordinators: Luana Pfeifer Raiter, UDESC-PPGT, CAPES-PDSE; ERRO Grupo, [mandaluja@yahoo.com.br](mailto:mandaluja@yahoo.com.br) | Pedro Diniz Bennaton, ERRO Grupo; OACU, [pedrobennaton@errogrupo.com.br](mailto:pedrobennaton@errogrupo.com.br)

Description: This proposal is simply a way of subverting the call made by OACU for the conference and inserting, through simulation and a shifting act, some street action that could provoke an urban conflict so that we can observe it from its possible anthropological perspectives during the days of the Conference. That is why it could also be linked to all the thematic panel, as well as to all the tables proposed, swallowing them anthropophagously.

For example, a person who wants to register for a congress and is not sure which panel to choose (which often happens with interdisciplinary academic events) is in a shifting situation: when they think they want to select an axis, they suddenly find a reason to choose another, then an even stronger reason emerges not to choose that axis that they have already chosen. In the end, the person wants to choose more than an axis, or all of them, and they end up choosing none, or is sad for having chosen the wrong one. And as they present their communication they end up looking as an alien in the congress, a displaced person, a tourist, an immigrant, a person that do not correspond to the axis they chose.

The moving panel penetrates all tables; it is sliding, displaced, because it presents another way of doing what we have been doing for so long: a table, a person who speaks and others who listen looking frontally at the speaker. The moving table seeks to break with this boring arrangement of bodies in academic acts, to try to move around the city while a paper is presented. The device that moves this moving table is as simple as this proposal, and as well as changing all these old dynamics of static tables, inside the university, separated from the city, phallic. The moving table is in motion; the person who speaks shakes, shifts in the streets, the voice trembles, people are intervened by the shaky discourse, by this mobile object, the bodies that listen to this slippery discourse see the table, or not, and take part in this shifting movement.

The city inhabits the table and the table inhabits it. After all, we are celebrating the 10 year journey of OACU, and a journey can also be a rite of passage. And its tables can also pass, stroll, slide, move through the urban space. We could say that the moving table is the *détournement* of OACU's journey. This *détournement*, which also presupposes a drift with the shifting table, is an attempt to re-locate and re-signify. We intend for this rite to happen mainly with the participants of the table, but especially with this object so intimate to academics: the table, through a table that moves through the streets. It aims to create another attitude towards our lives at tables, a new way of

living the table, in a peripatetic way, between thinking, talking and walking: we think of a table that connects directly with daily life to cause a direct approach to reality at its very present time.

#### IV. Deadlines

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**Reception of abstracts:** July 25<sup>th</sup> to September 5<sup>th</sup>, 2022

**Abstract selection announcement:** September 19<sup>th</sup> to 23<sup>th</sup>, 2022

**Anticipate fee payment:** September 26<sup>th</sup> to October 24<sup>th</sup>, 2022

**Last deadlines for fee payment:** October 25<sup>th</sup> to December 2<sup>nd</sup>, 2022

#### V. Instructions to send abstracts

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We welcome abstracts of 300 - 500 words of length including information about the researcher's theme, aims, method and results. They shall also include the complete name/s of the author/s, their contact details, and academic or institutional affiliation. The file shall be a Word or other editable format, Arial 11, line spacing 1.5, identified with name and surname of the first author and the words ABSTRACT and panel number (example: MARIA-PEREZ\_ABSTRACT\_PANEL3). The abstracts shall be sent within the deadline to the coordinators' emails. A maximum of 6 abstracts will be selected for each panel.

The Conference will take place presentially at the University of Barcelona. Presenters who cannot assist for purposes of force majeure will be allowed to present online within the frame of in-person panels.

#### VI. Fees and deadlines

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CATEGORY	From 26/09/22 to 24/10/22	From 25/10/22 to 02/12/22
Students and unemployed	15€	25€
Researchers	60€	75€
Audience	No fee	No fee

#### VII. Information and contacts

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Email: [jornadas.oacu@gmail.com](mailto:jornadas.oacu@gmail.com)

Web: <https://observatoriconflicteurba.org/>

*Barcelona, July 25<sup>th</sup>, 2022*