



ZMO-Colloquium Winter Term 2015/2016

*The Future of the City: Contested Urbanism
in Asia, Africa, and the Middle East*

Thursday, November 26th, 2015, 5 pm

Abide in Me: An Enduring Faith in the Disappearing City. Reflections from the 'Deep South'

By Prof. Dr. AbdouMaliq Simone

Venue:

Zentrum Moderner Orient
Kirchweg 33

14129 Berlin

Many working and lower middle class districts in Southeast Asian cities have long been an array of rough landscapes, full of rough edges. The gates, the walls, the structures, the pathways, and so forth may have been propelled with a similar set of imaginaries and constructed with similar kinds of tools and labor, but the outputs resounded with a diversity that stood out by virtue of all the elements of commonality. What James Holston long ago labeled autoconstruction in these districts was the plurality of constant incremental adjustments, adaptations, and small innovations that not only reflected a heterogeneous social body but was also itself a platform for intricate differentiations among people. These were sensory, spiritual, cognitive, performance, and experiential environments in addition to being built and economic domains. They were elaborations of various information and ways of connecting and disconnecting things. They were full of things, which because of their lack of fit, lack of seamless articulation, exerted different impacts on each other at different scales and with different processes.

In past work, I have designated these districts as zones for an *urban majority*, and I will discuss how this notion illustrates both the potentials and conundrums of urban change in Jakarta. But above all I posit how the ways in which this majority navigate across increasing fractious terrains and the frictions of prolific interfaces between endurance and disappearance constitute an abiding faith in the multiple possibilities of city life.

AbdouMaliq Simone is an urbanist with particular interest in emerging forms of collective life across cities of the so-called Global South. He has worked across many different academic, administrative, research, policy making, advocacy, and organizational contexts. Simone is presently Research Professor at the Max Planck Institute for the Study of Religious and Ethnic Diversity, Visiting Professor of Sociology, Goldsmiths College, University of London and Visiting Professor of Urban Studies at the African Centre for Cities, University of Cape Town.

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