

PhD project by John Mwangi Kimani

## Understanding everyday practices of functional mixing in mono-zoned planned neighbourhoods in Nairobi

The study is anchored on the need for reappraising city-making practices that are rooted in place and receptive to specific realities, needs and aspirations and to provoke localization of planning practice and theory in the global South. The study aims at understanding the diversity in city making in many African cities such as Nairobi where urban space is produced and reproduced majorly through local logics of diverse practices that defy formal urban orders by varied actants holding multiple perspectives. It interests in the use of out of touch planning approach that pursues modernism, formalism and systematic orders through rigid separation of functions in Nairobi City and where other city making practices are labelled as marginal, invisible, and chaotic despite being deeply embedded in the way Nairobi city largely works.

In Nairobi city, although everyday city making practices exemplify typologies that are more mixed than segregated, they are misrepresented as spatially illegitimate and viewed as conflictual to the mainstream planning of modernistic urban imaginaries and visual coherence due to their visual complexity. This results to the city almost always failing to account for the multitude of other practices involved in the social and spatial city making. The research seeks to address the gap between over ambitious, rigid, structured, top-down and urban modernist approaches and the everyday practices of the majority in Nairobi city. It aims at exposing the need to advance corrective to rigid and out of touch modernist concepts by making more sense to the desperate and ordinary daily city making practices and experiences of communities in Nairobi city.

Through the lenses of everyday urbanism, the study treats the everyday practices as equal in city making and views them as spaces of potential transformation. It aims at furthering the understanding on the everyday practices and how they particularly exemplify the concept of functional mix. Through everyday urbanism, the study understands all activities involved in city making, those that overlap, go beyond or fall outside planning. It endeavours to contribute in offering other ways of seeing the complex systems of everyday functional mix as order rather than chaos. Secondly, it aims at offering a more nuanced appreciation of people's agency as revealed through their everyday practices in the production of functional mix in planned neighborhoods and how they coexist with formal practices.

Aligning the contribution in urban studies and planning that call planning to examine what actually happens in cities of the global South, the knowledge may contribute in search for ways that reflect a more diverse set of realities, expanding the scope of knowledge on how cities like Nairobi really work. It also aims at expanding interventive options for planners while designing and implementing locally relevant urban policy for the everyday urbanization.