Are there ways of thinking about Indian and Chinese urbanisms in an inter-connected way? Furthermore, does this allow us to think about the South in the North: ‘immigrant’ neighborhood districts in cities like Toronto? With a growing realization that almost all new urban growth has, and increasingly will be, in the global ‘south’, scholarship in recent years has usefully questioned the relevance of conceptual frames evolved with North American and European histories. This presentation explores the questions above in light of the move away from American- and European-centric understandings of urban theory. More specifically, the presentation deploys the concept of ‘occupancy urbanism’ in order to understand: (1) land as embodying complex cultural logics that assume an active role in shaping urban territoriality; (2) municipal/local governance beyond a narrow techno-administrative perspective of local government delegated (often dumped) with maintenance / civic functions; and (3) the settlement of land, and its politics of occupancy as a shaper of economic forms constituted around small trading and manufacturing firms.