



# DPU News April 2021 Issue 68

The DPU (post)COVID Lexicon

Editors: Haim Yacobi, Jordana Ramalho,  
Adriana Allen, Colin Marx, with  
El Anoud Majali, Harshavardhan Jatkar



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## Introduction

*Haim Yacobi,  
Jordana Ramalho, Adriana Allen*

During the last year, the global pandemic has affected teaching, research and public engagement at the DPU. It has required our staff, students and partners to think creatively about how to continue with their work and commitments both locally and globally. In this special issue - The DPU (post)COVID Lexicon - we reflect on selected key terms at the core of the DPU's work, and share some thoughts on the related issues, challenges and opportunities that COVID-19 has brought to the fore in our academic and professional lives. The pandemic presents an opportunity to critically revisit policies and planning approaches, as well as processes fundamental to understanding current urban conditions. Generally, the last few decades of urban development have been characterised by the domination of private (capital) interests versus common good in cities, and the related privatisation (of space, services and infrastructure) versus the provision of means for collective consumption. In parallel to the policy-driven commodification of urban spaces and emerging social diversity in cities, we have also witnessed rising levels of socio-spatial inequality, hyper-segregation, poverty and homelessness. As many of the

discussions in this special issue attest, COVID-19 has exposed and reinforced (rather than necessarily created) these social gaps, and uncovered the weaknesses of this form of urbanity, especially when we talk of a 'return to normality'.

The accelerated urbanization processes of recent decades - as most of the world's population now live in cities - requires consideration and planning for the wellbeing of urban residents beyond the current health crisis. With widening social and economic gaps within and between cities, such questions of environmental and social justice increasingly shape the everyday lives of urban dwellers. It is now clear that premature deaths and diseases resulting from poor environmental conditions are disproportionately concentrated in areas where residents of certain ethnic and racial groups are concentrated. In recent decades, there have also been voices in research and practice that emphasize the need to move away from an exclusively clinical approach to health towards one that encompasses an understanding of the broader interconnected social and spatial aspects of the city that affect public health. In this context, the definitions and approaches

of urban development planning addressing some of the issues highlighted in this special issue (relating to land, housing, open spaces, transport and mobility, among others) directly and indirectly impact the health of urban populations.

As discussed in this special issue, a significant turnaround can be seen in the role of development planning in responding to immediate challenges. The diagnosis of a link between poor environmental conditions in the industrial city and epidemic outbreaks has harnessed planning for the regulation of space, addressing aspects of sanitation and hygiene which are the basis of urban life.

With the hope of returning to a 'new normality', we should work towards the flattening of the already existing curve of spatial injustice in cities. What we see from the last year is that the effects of COVID-19 vary depending on the strength of the welfare system, including health, education and housing. The response to the aggressive neoliberal policies of the last few decades is to develop urban planning that will ensure greater accessibility, better quality care and solidarity; and more diverse housing, open spaces, infrastructure and services.



## Advocacy

*Catalina Ortiz, Adriana Allen, Michael Walls*

To 'advocate' means to 'plead in favour of'. The question then is: what is the meaning and role of advocacy in planning? Furthermore: whose pleas are to be favoured and which ones acted on? Back in the 1960s, Paul Davidoff and Linda Stone Davidoff introduced the notion of 'Advocacy Planning' as a reaction to the US planning practice of reproducing the structural conditions that produced racial inequality, while championing elite interests. In the following decades, this debate was significantly expanded in its geography, aims and scope to encompass the needs, aspirations and practices of citizen action and social movements across the Global South and North. Under the rubrics of 'equitable', 'radical' and 'transformative' planning we see a common aspiration: to reinvent planning away from colonial, patriarchal, racist and othering priorities; and to re-politicise planning as a plural, ethical practice. We argue that advocacy planning means practicing planning as advocacy, as a means to make planning accountable, to expose its contradictions and renew its emancipatory aims by questioning what and whose pleas are favoured, why and with what consequences. What does it mean then to practice planning as advocacy in COVID-19 times? Times in which we witness a pandemic objectivised as a universal 'enemy', while operating through the exacerbation and extension of existing social injustices, geo-political polarisation and austerity. Times in which planning is called upon to deliver effective responses with an almost militaristic logic that seeks objectives that seem antithetical to many of the priorities we have long espoused: we are now to surveil, isolate, control and suppress. Practicing advocacy in times of global crisis calls for overcoming the temptation to approach

planning as a symptomatic treatment, to question the framing of the 'crisis', to trace and denounce new sites of othering. Above all, to carve new pathways to re-imagine and practice planning as an emancipatory practice. The pandemic has demonstrated that the right to housing and, more widely, to the city are inseparable from the right to life. In the midst of a global health emergency and the call to 'stay at home', we have also witnessed continuous housing rights violations targeting informal settlements, refugees and the homeless, and the erosion of migrants' rights to the city, that reinforce stigmatisation, exclusion and marginalisation. These processes, together with the retrenchment of UK international aid, the regressive and insular measures exacerbated by the so-called 'COVID-Brexit cocktail', the reproduction of systemic racism and gender inequality, and the climate crisis, among other tangible challenges, prompt the building of new horizons and more pluriversal forms of advocacy in which to position future progressive planning. Joining forces to forge an ethic of care and global solidarity, over the last year the DPU staff and students have actively practiced advocacy as planning by drawing from a deep commitment to socio-spatial and environmental justice, while relying on partnerships with equivalence to advance a rights-based approach. In doing so, we have repurposed our international research to advocate against returning to the old 'normal' and to instead challenge the financialization of housing and life by foregrounding community-based practices that foster solidarity, commoning and the strengthening of infrastructures of care. Here are just two examples of the many ways in which we have embraced advocacy as planning in recent months:

**Housing rights: Looking back, looking forward:** On 2020 World Habitat Day, DPU with the Habitat International Coalition (HIC), the International Institute for Environment and Development (IIED) and United Cities and Local Governments (UCLG) brought together various communities of practice converging in the defence and production of the 'right to housing' as the 'right to life'. This event prompted a lively and ongoing collective debate on how our responses to housing rights are changing / need to change in the current context and beyond COVID-19.

**Decalogue for Participatory Slum Upgrading:** DPU has championed a call for action on neighbourhood upgrading based on the joint Decalogue for Participatory Slum Upgrading, developed in collaboration with the Global Platform for the Right to the City (GPR2C), UN-Habitat Latin-America, Cities Alliance, Habitat for Humanity, TECHO, Habitat International Coalition (HIC), COINVITE, United Cities and Local Governments (UCLG), Red de Investigadores de Vivienda y Habitat de las Americas (RIVHA) and Urban Housing Practitioners Hub (UHPH).

**As new borders are emerging, traditional borders can be transcended digitally, allowing new and sometimes more inclusive ways of working globally.**

*Andrea Rigon, Rawya Khodor*

COVID-19 has exposed the false security of national borders by showing how a virus can travel across them. Similarly, the negative impact of climate change and the ecological crisis disregard borders, revealing that security can only come from global collective action. In April 2020, while top scholars were asking for borderless collaboration, 194 countries adopted cross-border restrictions, and an increasing national competition emerged over personal protective equipment, medical machineries, drugs and, more recently, vaccines. Against growing nationalism, of which Brexit is the clearest expression, COVID-19 demands new transnational governance. However, the border between the Global North and the Global South has never been greater. While things may slowly improve, at the end of January the WHO denounced that while higher-income countries had administered more than 39 million doses of vaccine, only 25 doses were administered in low-income countries: illustrating the growing border of global inequalities. National borders in COVID-19 times further affect the most marginalised. In violation of international law, some countries are preventing asylum-seekers and refugees from entering their borders. At EU borders, migrants are beaten in the Balkans, rejected on the Italy-French border, and drowned in the Mediterranean Sea. Within borders, migrants, who have lost jobs and income due to COVID-19 and have become stranded as a result of travel restrictions, are increasingly exposed to risks of deportation, exploitation, and often excluded by COVID-19 social protection measures. Owing to movement restrictions and curfews, individuals are forbidden to move beyond their local area or municipality, or a few hundred meters from home. Houses have become the borders. Borders we can only transcend digitally. This is changing our perception of space and freedom. The collective

protection of the right to health and life has affected our ability to move, creating new borders. These borders are experienced very differently depending on social identities, including gender, age, race and class. The elderly have been shielded away from society, dying alone in for-profit care homes without being able to see their loved ones. Students who travelled to universities have found themselves forcibly confined within these new borders. New boundaries have also been created through the categories of essential and non-essential workers. Within the essential worker category there are medical doctors but also, more significantly, a low paid, working class of cleaners, carers, supermarket workers and delivery staff. Such workers often come from ethnic minority or migrant backgrounds, and are exposing themselves to the virus without adequate social protection. As new borders are emerging, traditional borders can be transcended digitally, allowing new and sometimes more inclusive ways of working globally. Academics can teach to a global class from anywhere in the world, as well as conducting the fieldwork of complex global projects from their bedrooms. This all requires a theoretical rethinking of space. With these new boundaries, what does spatial injustice mean? How to study it? Do our methodologies and research questions take these changes into account? Are they leading to more inclusive research? The new de facto borders that prevent researchers from travelling offer a glimpse into the future of our work: networking globally, relying heavily on locally based researchers, and reducing our ecological footprint. Academics on twitter say they miss airports; they need to understand that international travel isn't a perk of XXI century academic jobs. The limits to travel are here to stay, should we want a just present and a future for coming generations.



## Climate change

*Liza Griffin*

Climate change is one of humanity's greatest challenges; and it requires a collective effort to mitigate its effects and adapt to its consequences. It became clear during the early days of COVID-19's emergence that equivalent collective energies were also needed to address this developing pandemic. In fact, there are several intersections and parallels between these intransigent global challenges, and it's likely that they will impact one another in ways we could not have imagined back in 2020. Climate change may well have played a central role in the development of coronavirus itself. Recent research has shown how climate change - including increases in temperature, sunlight, and carbon dioxide - have altered habitats in some forest regions creating more suitable environments for coronavirus-carrying bat species. What's more, those climate change contributing processes are thought to be the originator of this capricious, novel virus. Human encroachment on forests, for example, transverses the so-called 'wildlife frontier' increasing interactions between domestic and wild animals and allowing new viruses to 'jump' into human populations. Air travel is both a significant contributor of climate emissions and a conduit for COVID-19 infection. While connections across continents and within cities enable trade and travel, they have also eased the spread of contagion in this pandemic. Despite these adverse entanglements, some commentators have a more optimistic tone, arguing that the pandemic may paradoxically provide the space and opportunity for urgent action on the climate crisis. For instance, lockdowns - in both the north and south - have resulted in fewer pollutant car journeys, and many countries

have closed their borders to air travel during much of 2020 and 2021. One study has shown that daily global emissions levels in April 2020 were around 17% lower than in 2019. And it is expected that emissions from aviation will be up to 40% below those in 2019. A reduction in commuting due to widespread work from home policies has also played a role in reducing pollutants. Research has shown that air quality improved in many regions of the world in 2020. According to a report by Stanford University, just two months of reduced air pollution will have saved the lives of 4000 children under the age of 5 and 73000 adults over the age of 70 in China alone. However, despite this brief intermission in emissions increases, the planet is still on course for a global temperature rise in excess of 3 degrees Celsius this century according to the United Nations. Concentrations of CO2 have continued to rise in the atmosphere despite this brief hiatus. The period from 2016 to 2020 remains likely to be the warmest five years ever recorded. A green recovery from COVID is evidently needed. Recovery from the pandemic must be turned into an opportunity. It might well be that that environmental campaigns take on renewed vigour, in a similar way to Black Lives Matters, for example. It is hoped that for some citizens there could be a 'new baseline' for remote working and education. And while tourism may bounce back, for many of us, flying across the globe to watch a PowerPoint presentation has lost its appeal. It has been reported that some of us have developed more sustainable lifestyle habits over the last 12 months: reducing our food waste (and using blackening bananas to make bread), purchasing less stuff, or taking up cycling, for instance.

However, many of these laudable lifestyle changes have been limited to a privileged minority. We must remember that both COVID-19 and the climate crisis have underlined that the poorest and most marginalised are always the most vulnerable and that they usually bear the least responsibility. For instance, according to the Lancet, the combined emissions of the richest one percent of the global population account for more than twice the combined emissions of the poorest 50 percent. And it has become clear that the poorest in COVID-19 affected contexts are very often those who could not work from home, meaningfully socially distance, or access the sanitation facilities required to perform basic hand hygiene. Together, we need to think about new ways of addressing these vicious cycles and to learn from the past, to meaningfully act in the future. We must do this in ways that put social justice and environmental sustainability at the heart of our efforts. Aligning global responses to the climate crisis and future zoonotic pandemics presents an opportunity to improve global health and to create a more sustainable future for many more of us.

## Distance

*Paroj Banerjee, Haim Yacobi*

Distance is a geographical concept, a measure of separation between two locations. Predominantly expressed in quantitative terms, distance provides crucial insight into the understanding of the world's spatial and social organisation. In social terms distance underscores the relation between people. With the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic, social distance has acquired central importance in our response. If not total inoculation, social distance has nevertheless been perceived to be the antidote that protects the population. Coronavirus has ripped through distanced geographies across the globe. While mainstream media, in alignment with policy directions from global health organisations, circulated the idea of social distancing, an alternative narrative that met with severe criticism was also in circulation: building herd immunity. In a press briefing during the early phases of the pandemic, Boris Johnson echoed the need for 60% of the population to be impacted by the virus to gain herd immunity. Herd immunity, it was suggested, would be achieved not through social distancing, but social consumption. Schemes like 'Eat Out to Help Out', meant to support the flailing economy, encouraged the public to consume in retail. The biopolitical logic of maintaining and mediating distance thus formed an important tool for governing the pandemic. This pandemic has served as a reminder of how systemic distances have had differential impacts on people. While social distancing has been an important measure for containing the spread of the virus, the ability to social distance has been a matter of privilege. 'Stay home, stay safe', the slogan for the pandemic of most governments, reinforced the

dominant stereotype that conflates home as a safe space. Home was thus meant to be a sanitised sphere distant from a potentially polluting sphere, the street or the outside. Social distance was directly proportional to the size of one's home, the number of people living in it and its access to services. In other words, the bigger the size of the house, the lesser the number of people, the more effective it was to social distance. This narrow vision of distance invariably excluded populations who did not inhabit conventional homes. Street dwellers, homeless people and those living in informal settlements were particularly impacted. COVID-19 disproportionately harms vulnerable individuals and communities including people of colour, the poor, undocumented migrants, refugees and indigenous communities. The WHO recommends that people all over the world self-isolate, wash their hands frequently and keep a safe social distance. However, can one take these precautionary measures in cities, which are the most crowded places on earth? Social distancing in cities assumes some control over density, distances and spatial regulations. Yet for those who are living in temporary

shelters without basic services, distance is a highly politicised idea. Distance is not neutral. Rather it is political and social as we learn from the exponential increase in domestic violence. Taking cognizance of the emergence of this 'shadow pandemic', as UN Women calls it, the UK government's regulations regarding staying home have seen a shift. Subsequent lockdowns have made provisions for people to seek distance from their homes to avoid violence. While policy and interventions regarding home-based violence have considerable distances to cover, this policy shift made a significant acknowledgment, that home is not necessarily safe, and that often physical distance from the oppression of home is emancipatory.



Signal in Cambridge.  
Photo Credit:  
Haim Yacobi



## Economy

*Naji Makarem, Le-Yin Zhang, Alexandra Panman*

Over the past year, governments all over the world have intervened radically and disruptively in societies and economies in response to the pandemic. Does this mark a new era of widely-accepted government intervention in society and markets? Some people have called for an equally radical response to the twin crises of our time: inequality and the environment. A slow shift towards a Green Economy has been underway for two decades. Government dictates, such as, immediate bans on single use plastics; shifting agricultural subsidies to smaller organic farms; and removing subsidies from oil companies, have become more conceivable and politically palatable. It also seems that the lockdown experience, unique in our lifetimes, has changed how people value different aspects of their lives. Spending so much time at home has arguably highlighted what we find precious and sacred. Many people seem to have rediscovered the intrinsic values of health, clean air, nature, relationships and other aspects of wellbeing. Will this shift the political landscape towards more equitable and sustainable policy frameworks? A widely-shared view is that we cannot return to business as usual. The economy must change in response to climate change, environmental devastation, poverty and inequality. Already, new ways of working and shopping that incur a lower carbon-footprint are emerging, and their impact on cities may be profound. Remote working may offer urban folk the ability to leave behind high-cost, high-speed living, and the limited space in cities, for remote work opportunities in smaller towns and villages, especially having already gained the skills, ideas and connections that come from several years in a city. Online services may also make education and healthcare more accessible to more people no matter where they live. This may give rise

to a more inclusive world. Universal access to ICT will become an even bigger issue for those concerned with inclusive development. The lockdown also revealed the degree to which people and businesses are resilient and adaptable in the face of crises. This is important to note because if, for example, governments agree to an immediate ban on single use plastics and other measures in pursuit of circular economies, businesses and entrepreneurs can be trusted to adapt and thrive. The other phenomena we are noticing is the acceleration in the development and adoption of frontier technologies such as artificial intelligence (AI), the internet of things, digital twins, distributed ledgers and blockchain. These promise to increase the efficiency of urban systems such as power, water, infrastructure maintenance, security, and mobility. They may even help us mitigate and adapt to climate change and meet the SDGs through Smart Cities; and are transforming many sectors of the economy, including the creative industries and manufacturing, in de-industrialised areas (Manufacturing 5.0).

Technological change, however, is also ringing alarm bells as many have low levels of trust in government institutions and corporations. People are concerned about labour-saving technological change and excessive forms of social control and monitoring. The world is changing fast and change is desperately needed. This is a time to be involved in shaping the future, so that our economies become platforms that enable us to co-create the future we want, in line with our shared values.

**Many people seem to have rediscovered the intrinsic values of health, clean air, nature, relationships and other aspects of wellbeing. Will this shift the political landscape towards more equitable and sustainable policy frameworks?**

*Ignacia Ossul-Vermeiren*

“(...) the long tradition of fieldwork must be aggressively and imaginatively reinterpreted to meet the needs of the present” (Gupta and Ferguson, 1997, p. 39–40).

To say that COVID-19 has changed the way we do fieldwork would be an understatement. Fieldwork has been at the centre of anthropological work for more than one hundred years. First coined by the anthropologist Bronisław Malinowski, it refers to studying away from one’s own society. What happens when ‘being away’ is not possible? What does this mean for research and/or collaborating in international development, particularly engagements that are participatory, embedded and active, as DPU principles state? Whether you are a researcher, practitioner or are facilitating learning through work with partners, you’ve had to deal with the logistical, analytical and ethical implications of delaying your work, shifting activities to online platforms, or delegating more actively to partners. I see this as an invitation to interrogate and to de-construct the notion of ‘field’. In the contexts of climate change and limiting international travel, reconfiguring power relations between North-South and challenging colonial legacies, as well as with the increase and uptake of technology: should we reject the term ‘field’ all together? Postcolonial literature argues that the term is problematic as it carries a colonial history, in which Eurocentric views propagate an underlying exoticism in the notion of the field. In addition, others question the usefulness and boundaries of the term. What and where is the field? Is it a

**What and where is the field? Is it a place? Ethnographers have called into question the traditional conception of the field site as a bounded space containing a ‘whole culture’. Instead, it has been articulated as a process defined by relations between people.**

place? Ethnographers have called into question the traditional conception of the field site as a bounded space containing a ‘whole culture’. Instead, it has been articulated as a process defined by relations between people. Is it bounded by time? With technological progress, increasingly there is no clear-cut distinction between the start and end of ‘fieldwork’, as online relations established with partners and participants tend to continue remotely. Although there is evident anxiety around not ‘being away’, which gives rise to the possibilities of insubstantial data and/or lower engagement, this also presents an opportunity. It has become clear through working on the DPU’s AT2030 research project, as well as in the Overseas Practice Engagement (OPE) with students of MSc Social Development Practice (SDP) and the Urban Citizenship Academy in Indonesia, that there is shift in the politics surrounding research and teaching engagement. Both the Federation of the Urban Poor in Sierra Leone and the NGO Kota Kita in Indonesia have had more control over their work, deciding timings, outputs

and strategies of engagement. The OPE has also become an example of how Indonesian students have been able to engage earlier, working alongside SDP students, widening their scope to two cities and facilitating a more horizontal relationship. The idea of developing remote research methods aligns with already-established principles in disability studies: that is, internet-based methods can respond to the needs and impairments of specific participants. The logistical challenges posed by COVID-19 have created the conditions to act on what Gupta and Ferguson suggest. Now may be the time to radically reimagine what we understand as fieldwork.



## Gender

**Women make up a high proportion of the low-income, informal economy and of domestic care workers: both sectors that have been greatly impacted by lockdown restrictions.**

*Jordana Ramalho, Julian Walker, Caren Levy*

In the year since the World Health Organisation declared COVID-19 to be a global pandemic, the unequal impacts of this health emergency on different groups have become increasingly pronounced. Pre-existing structural inequalities are deepening and being reconfigured to produce new forms of vulnerability and precarity. What has become very clear is that exposure to COVID-19 is highly related to the intersection between gender, race, and class in terms of occupational risk. In the UK the crisis in care homes has meant that old age and disability have also become associated with the risk of infection. At the same time, the unequal distribution of costs related to COVID-19 is associated with the same intersecting set of inequalities, regarding disruptions to housing, livelihoods, schooling, and mobility. These have emerged during the prolonged periods of enforced lockdown. The centrality of social reproductive labour to the survival and resilience of households and communities during times of hardship and uncertainty has long been documented. These largely feminised responsibilities are intensified during public health crises, as seen in the context of HIV/AIDS, Ebola, and the current COVID-19 pandemic. Women and girls are bound by gender norms that place them on the front lines of caring for (and home-schooling) children as well as tending to the needs of the sick and elderly in their households and communities. For women and girls living in crowded informal settlements with limited access to green space, WASH infrastructure or affordable healthcare, the health risks and challenges associated with these everyday activities are heightened. We have also seen a huge rise in cases of domestic violence and calls to refuges and support lines, as stay at home orders trap women and children with abusive family members, and make it increasingly difficult to move to new homes for safety as relationships break down.

At the same time, women make up a high proportion of the low-income, informal economy and of domestic care workers: both sectors that have been greatly impacted by lockdown restrictions. According to a United Nations policy brief, in the first month of the pandemic informal workers globally lost 60% of their earnings (and nearly 80% in Africa and Latin America). Key livelihoods in the informal economy that have been disrupted by COVID-19, such as catering, domestic work, or childcare, are highly feminised. For example, women are estimated to account for 70 percent of health and social workers globally. The predominantly women workers in these sectors have been largely left out of government furlough schemes or other COVID-19 related social protection measures. They therefore face the impossible choice of losing crucial income for themselves and their dependents, or of breaking social distancing laws and risking exposure to infection if they continue to work. On an international scale, in the context of 'gendered care chains', huge numbers of mainly female migrant domestic workers face an intensification of the difficult working situations they were already experiencing: more isolation in their employers' households where they work and reside, limited access to labour protection, little distinction between work and leisure time as they are always on call, and longer separations from their families and loved ones, as travel becomes impossible. Feminist advocacy organizations such as Women in Informal Employment, Globalizing and Organizing, or SEWA (the Self-Employed Women's Association) in India, and the UK Gender and Development Network, have documented the intensification of gender and intersecting inequalities around race, class and other identities as a result of COVID-19. They are driving forward an agenda to challenge this, but for now, the pandemic continues to intensify existing inequalities.

## Housing

*Camillo Boano*

The V&A Museum has organized a virtual exhibition entitled *Pandemic Objects*, collecting exhibits that have taken on new meanings and purposes during COVID-19. These include masks, windows, parks, streets, weather, roses, cafes, exercise books, Tik Tok and houses. The presence of the house in *Pandemic Objects* is certainly not as serious as it should be. However, it does reposition housing to the centre of the question highlighting structural injustices and systemic paradoxes in the construction of urban space, inhabiting it, and in economic and social relations and narratives that are both estranged and visionary. Homes have become interpreted as sites of closure, as suspension, and as a topography of simplified, quantified and numerical distances, suggesting alternative cues into the pandemic urban. Pandemic responses and reflections are a perfect example of the saturation of the debate around the urban and simplification in how knowledge is construed and framed. A new universalism has been presented in respect to the policies and strategies of social distancing, and out of housing discourses seems to have emerged a new modern sanitary imagination that has been presented as being able to challenge the urban spread of the virus. Let me use a literary reflection from a book that to my knowledge has not been translated into English, Giorgio Manganelli's *La Palude Definitiva* (the definitive swamp): "a place where it is difficult to enter and impossible to leave" and where the paths found there "change from day to day, or at least from month to month; nor is it possible to recognize them in a certain way". A place in which it seems inevitable to enter because "one notices the swamp, only when one is inside, too much inside". This pandemic resembles the swamp, a kingdom in the making. It is a moment that does not stick to the narrative rhetoric of the crisis in its variegated manifestations

and disciplinary declinations (of the public, health, politics, representation, the urban, the environment), but that exists in an eternal present that leaves room for what Donatella di Cesare (2020) called "secular and scientific modernity" within the body, precisely because inside the body is where the struggle for survival and resistance to the swamp is played out to the end. Traveling with uncertainty over the boundless land, without history or time, without maps or paths, where everything seems abandoned to decay, Manganelli's fugitive finds a home in what could be the centre of the swamp; "It is a bare construction, perhaps made of wood, and I distinctly see the doors, all open, indeed wide open, in an exhibitionist way". This perhaps has no foundation because it is forced to adapt to the changes in the marshes. The fugitive enters the house and sits on a chair in the room on the ground floor after opening the only, empty wardrobe. On the table are some papers that he explores, asking himself many questions about the nature and essence of this strange, almost impossible construction that seems "completely incompatible with the nature of the swamp" but being careful to "dominate my speculative anxiety".

The image of the swamp is a perfect metaphor for the COVID-19 reality and the exhausted capacity for thinking about housing. Understanding the swamp is to attempt a multiform epistemology, a space where knowledge mixes to give deadly forms of coercion: "the swamp appears to me as [...] a noble and lowest place, a central and peripheral place, well-formed and deformed, shapeless, deformed, obscene, vile, mephitic and at the same time troubled". The current housing and urbanism dimensions demonstrate the impossibility (conceptual and ethical) of defining the housing object in a universally recognized way. At the same time, this recalls the need for redefined discourses capable of not obscuring and making invisible the extreme variety and complexity of its own conditions, without reducing, simplifying or abstracting them. COVID-19 has strongly re-proposed the violence of universalism of colonial modernity, but also re-proposed the centrality of the home and the practices of living as fundamental for care and for the construction of commons. It is no coincidence that the centrality of the house in the swamp of Manganelli evokes an epistemology of living where one can feel "a profound sense of rest, as if the fatigue of the future dissolved into a contrary procedure, as if yesterday, the uninterrupted yesterday would give refreshment to all tomorrows, the impossible tomorrows".



## Infrastructure

*Rita Lambert, Pascale Hoffman, Raktim Ray*

Infrastructure is predominantly understood, in popular discourse, as the physical structures and facilities needed for the operation of a society or enterprise. That is, the system of pipes, sewers, drains, wires and highways that support productive and reproductive life. COVID-19 disrupts this understanding through our lived experiences. At least for some, systems of pipes and cables might have been laid and roads might have been tarmacked, but that has not been enough to keep things flowing. The COVID-19 pandemic has shaken the fundamental assumptions that infrastructure provision will automatically translate into service delivery and access. First, it brought the temporariness of the urban to the fore through continuous ruptures caused by uncertainty. Second, it changed the socio-spatial materiality of infrastructure due to reduced mobility (because of lockdown), social-distancing and increased dependency on digital infrastructure. The pandemic has further exposed the vulnerability and paradox of infrastructure provision through its simultaneous presence, and absence, within cities. Specifically, it has brought into question the duality of centralised and decentralised infrastructure. Ideals of modern centralised systems dominate infrastructural development and investment decisions. However, in practice, they serve the better off while lower-income residents rely on various off-grid arrangements. In these contexts, we find that solidarity networks have played an important role helping marginalised 'off-grid' communities to deal with insufficient infrastructure provision. We can see numerous examples of solidarity networks mobilising resources during the pandemic to support vulnerable communities, e.g., through crowdfunding and voluntarism. They emphasise how civil society self-organised during the crisis to provide alternative forms of infrastructure. While civil society participation outside the state's

premise is not new, the pandemic put the spotlight on people as infrastructure through, for instance, the 'networked mobilisation' of social capital. Arrangements that are typically understood to be provisional, makeshift and unreliable are precisely those that seem to better meet people's needs. Cities with more decentralised systems have been able to keep up with the provision of essential services to their citizens during lockdown measures. Hence the pandemic not only shows us the limits of certain infrastructural ideals, but also expands our understanding of the crucial role of people themselves in any infrastructure system. COVID-19 has also demonstrated the need to understand resilient infrastructure as a system that is composed of hybrid solutions for service provision. This enables inhabitants to maintain independence, control costs, and limit consumption. Hybrid solutions not only better reflect the reality of the majority of people in cities of the Global South, but they are also generally more flexible, responsive, and oftentimes better suited to support the shift to more environmentally friendly solutions. In times of crisis, they provide the necessary adaptability for survival. Furthermore, because the majority of residents in such contexts rely on heterogeneous configurations that are built incrementally and through different rationalities, infrastructure is never finished. It is always in the making. It cannot be understood as static or inert. Infrastructure is a site where the social and technical intersect in inextricable ways and co-construct one another. If anything, COVID-19 has brought to the fore the notion that it is practice that defines how accessible infrastructure is.

**Justice**

*Julian Walker and  
Ignacia Ossul Vermehren*

The COVID-19 pandemic has thrown the existing landscapes of (in)justice in cities into relief. For disabled people living in informal settlements, COVID-19 has intensified existing disability injustices. Through the DPU's AT2030 research project - working with disabled people and assistive technology (AT) users in four informal settlements in Freetown, Sierra Leone, and Banjarmasin, Indonesia - we have seen this very clearly in the redistribution of resources, misrecognition and stigma, and spatial injustices. As our main research was suspended during the pandemic, we decided to look at how our disabled and AT user participants were experiencing COVID-19 and COVID-19 responses. Our purpose was to better understand these experiences, but also to maintain contact with the research participants, and to try to use the project resources to influence local organizations involved in COVID-19 relief to better include disabled people in their work. In terms of material and distributional injustices, it was clear that many disabled residents were disproportionately affected. In both cities, disabled people's livelihoods rely more on activities which have been made difficult, or impossible, by social distancing (for example, in Indonesia, it is very common for blind people to work as masseurs). As well as loss of income, many disabled people have less access to government support, for example due to inaccessible bureaucracy that needs to be navigated to access social protection schemes such as cash transfers. At the same time, adaptations to existing public services have created new barriers. For example, in Indonesia, parents of disabled children have found it difficult to adapt to online teaching, having had to modify learning materials and cope without sign language support. In terms of misrecognition, our participants told us that COVID-19 responses have reinforced the stigma

Participants of the COVID-19 research in Solo, Banjarmasin. Photo credit: Nina Asterina.



**“Due to the COVID-19 outbreak and the social distancing measures applied, I had no clients so my income as a masseuse dropped significantly. No patients come to my house. There are no community meetings or religious events, which also means there are no opportunities for promoting my services.”**

- Susiana, masseuse in Solo

that already exists around disability. In particular, regarding public information narratives that emphasise the importance of ‘healthy bodies’. Regarding spatial justice, and the right to the city, social distancing rules have increased the isolation of many disabled people, which was already a problem for those confined to their homes due to stigma and inaccessible urban landscapes. COVID-19 rules have meant that disabled people's organizations (DPOs) cannot meet or provide in-person support, and online alternatives are unaffordable or inaccessible. In terms of mobility around the city, signage about social distancing is not accessible for people with visual impairments, causing greater difficulties in using public space. Additionally, concerns around COVID-19 mean that the disabled have fewer offers of help from the public. However, the fact that COVID-19 has made many existing injustices more extreme, and more visible, means that it has created new entry-points for justice-based claims, and new collaborations to address injustices. As a result,

organizations working on community COVID-19 responses, such as our partners FEDURP and Kaki Kota, have increasingly made targeted COVID-19 relief interventions (e.g., food parcels and face masks, with transparent masks for sign language users) to people with disabilities in low-income communities, built accessible sanitation points, and distributed coronavirus information in a range of formats. Hopefully, as things return to ‘normal’ this will influence future thinking about the injustices faced by disabled people and how organizations working on grassroots interventions place disability at the centre of just and inclusive approaches to urban development.



## Knowledge Co-production

*Emmanuel Osuteye, Camila Cociña and Caren Levy*

Knowledge co-production has become increasingly central to the design, aspirations and activities of collaborative research projects. The process of collaborating in research with different actors - a diversity of 'knowledges' that rely on different practices and 'ways of knowing', a diversity of epistemologies - yields knowledge that is grounded and relevant in specific socio-cultural and political-economic contexts in order to better understand urban challenges and facilitate transformative change. Opening up spaces of engagement for knowledge generation with different actors serves as a targeted means of including marginalised and other unheard voices that are often invisible in 'traditional' planning rationalities and processes. It also has the potential to confront collectively held assumptions and development practices that obstruct transformative change, accelerating wider processes of social learning and paving the way for collective action. This 'knowing and doing together' is central to uncovering structural obstacles to urban equality and furthering the cause of epistemic justice. This reflection takes place within the context of KNOW ('Knowledge in Action for Urban Equality', 2017-2021) a DPU-led international, multi-partner and multi-site programme. KNOW's approach to knowledge co-production goes beyond the explicit acknowledgement of multi-stakeholder participation. It is embedded in the intentional building of 'partnerships with equivalence'. This implies a reciprocal recognition of the diverse capacities, knowledges and values between partners, which directly contribute to the research and its outcomes. It also means that relationships are built through mutual respect and trust, transparency and accountability, and a commitment to co-produce knowledge and learn together. As the pandemic extended globally in space and over time, it directly called

### **The global nature of this crisis has shown that diverse local responses need to adapt to specific local needs, grounded in situated understandings of existing local practices and knowledges.**

into question the proximities implied by 'knowing and doing together', given the restrictions to movement, assembly, and physically 'being together' for research teams within cities, in communities and in planned interactions across international projects. Not only is the pandemic reconfiguring the face of cities and the outlook on urban life globally. It is also exposing and exacerbating urban inequalities. At the same time, the need for co-produced knowledge in action to tackle these challenges has become even more apparent and urgent in a COVID-19 afflicted world. Working through the pandemic has opened up new insights and experiences of knowledge co-production for the KNOW team. The purposive evaluation of the changing needs and priorities of partners as a collective and caring endeavour has proven essential to the long-term maintenance of trust and reciprocal listening in co-production processes. This involved wide-ranging discussions about adjustments and mutual support, and considering the ethical implications of re-planned work with communities, local governments and other actors. COVID-19 ushered in a new normality of remote working that caused us to reflect on the limits of what can and cannot be done remotely. This included sharing digital equipment and skills related to online tools and methodologies to assist city teams

to overcome local digital divides and to work together remotely. Remote meetings have become 'sites' of knowledge co-production, of solidarity and critical reflection. Through this, teams have explored, created and curated new spaces of learning, whilst building and sharing new capacities to use flexible online tools, increasingly moving research activities into virtual spaces. These experiences exemplify an exploration of 'remote pedagogies', as opportunities that can also facilitate 'social proximity' in remote learning. COVID-19 has shifted the research focus of knowledge co-production in some cities to support vulnerable urban communities and work collaboratively with local organisations that provide support. The global nature of this crisis has shown that diverse local responses need to adapt to specific local needs, grounded in situated understandings of existing local practices and knowledges. As the pandemic lingers, knowledge co-production remains critical to both short-term emergency interventions as well as for longer-term urban planning and policy that shape pathways to urban equality. This central message of KNOW is a demonstration of the value of knowledge co-production in the re-imagining of post-pandemic 'collective life'.



## Land

*Colin Marx, Harshvardhan Jatkar*

For many, the pandemic fundamentally changed how they relate to land and how land relates to them. As coronavirus travelled across territorial boundaries of nation-states, land became boundaryless for the virus. In a way, an opportunity was presented to share a common resource in land to provide a collective, equitable and global response to the impact of the virus. However, out of this blurring of territorial boundaries, a hardening and sharpening of national territorial claims emerged. The fear against the spread of the virus brought into force regulations and restrictions on who could leave and enter different territories. Land was remade into territories with hard boundaries. Importantly, this territorialisation of land was also witnessed at city and neighbourhood levels. Entire cities were locked down as coronavirus zones, while people's movement was restricted to neighbourhoods. Land as territory is fundamental to the underlying epidemiological model for responding to the virus' transmission. There are two basic ways of understanding transmission: through people and through a place. A place, for example a crowded shopping market, can lead to the transmission of the virus; and certain people (who are un/knowingly infected) can make that place a 'hotspot' for its transmission. As Foucault so vividly shows in relation to plagues, such management and control over who is where is a key component of biopolitics. Locking down 'who is where' is key to restricting vectors that drive the pandemic. Land gives identity to people and identity decides how land is categorised and what restrictions apply. Through the epidemiological model, people became landed beings tied to their territories as such; and the virus was controlled to an extent. Yet, biopolitical control only works well if it corresponds to the vision of life that inheres in a particular form of 'living well'. That is, if biopolitics is to

ensure and sustain life by ordering it, then controlling the virus could not be the only condition for the possibility of 'living well'. For instance, what happens if people's lives do not fit within the vision of separate land-use zones in which workplaces are separate from residences? What happens if people are not resourceful enough to bring work to their fixed home? What happens when people do not reside within a fixed territory? Since the outbreak of the pandemic, many people have had to walk back to their villages as the cities were locked down, and give up their long-established territorial claims to land. Others had to cross territories to meet with their loved ones. It is only some that could remain within the comfortable confines of their abodes and country cottages, working and living from a fixed location. In effect, the control of the pandemic through the epidemiological model has made the virus and us subject to land as territory and place. While some would self-subjectify without remorse, the virus and the not-so-fortunate are forced to disobey land's territorial boundaries and their place-based identities.

**For many, the pandemic fundamentally changed how they relate to land and how land relates to them. As coronavirus travelled across territorial boundaries of nation-states, land became boundaryless for the virus.**



## Migration

*Giovanna Astolfo, Camillo Boano*

The pandemic had a massive impact on migration flows; redefining territories of mobility and immobility. From India to sub-Saharan Africa to Europe, millions returned home or fled the spread of the disease. In certain regions, the sealing of borders resulted in a decrease in migration rates globally, however, the pandemic has deepened inequality, and this in turn has generated a steep increase in migration. Attitudes and behaviours have also changed, with increases in restrictions, the criminalisation of migration, colonial and racialised approaches, and racist discourses. In some countries, the pandemic has silenced the debate on asylum seekers and refugees, whereas the prominence of migrant labour in economic and social life has become apparent. Workplaces were shut, and employees vanished. Widespread closures made evident the spectral presence of the migrant as a worker. When India enforced the lockdown, migrants turned to refugees overnight; while in Europe, undocumented migrants 'benefited' from temporary regularisation. The pandemic has multiplied the number of internal and external borders, each performing differently according to the crossing body. It has also further exposed issues of sovereignty and governmentality of migration. This was initially taken in a positive manner, as an opportunity to change the status quo, in particular in relation to processes of othering, populism, instrumentalization of discourses around identity, and orientalism of the migrant; but now there is less optimism. Paradigms of inclusion/exclusion have worsened. The pandemic has exposed further existing power hierarchies and reinforced the presence of a dominant category of human vis-a-vis the less-than-human others, including the sexualized, racialized and the migrant others, as Braidotti would have it. Yet the agency of the others

has become more evident. The BLM movement has changed in many ways how the racialised body of the migrant is seen. Race has moved centre stage in the discourse on migration - even if it is not policy yet - raising the necessity of rethinking inhabitation. The pandemic has shown an urgency to govern the constitutive tensions between the settled and unsettled. The imposition of rules of immobility compelled people to 'go underground', as Simone put it, to identify subterfuges that circumvent rules and police action. This resulted in more mobility than before, but also in greater tracking and visibility. Such increased visibility has pros and cons. On one side, it increases vulnerability; on the other, the gaps within the system of surveillance open up opportunities for demonstrations and for mobilisation. In a time of intensified detection, the space outside detection has become very important. Increased surveillance and its impact on the political, biological and affective lives of migrants is another central debate in migration studies and practice. The pandemic has extended the system of surveillance from migrants to all urban populations. In many cities, the virus response has generated a tighter control of behaviours, following the need to limit or justify movement, imposing curfews, and so on. Governments have entered homes and the private, even sexual, lives of its citizens in an unprecedented way that recalls procedures of the government of migration, exposing their inherent paradoxes. Surveillance in the name of protection has always been a feature of migration management: now it applies to everybody in the name of public health and security. Yet the pandemic has little to do with the biopolitical and the state of exception theories. The sovereign is the virus, not the state. It is true however, that the pandemic has gone two ways: on one side, distancing, controlling and dehu-

**Surveillance in the name of protection has always been a feature of migration management: now it applies to everybody in the name of public health and security.**

manising; and on the other, leading to the rediscovery and use of existing resources and a sociality that was not registered before, an underlying affective mood as Braidotti has defined it. A number of networks and practices of mutual reliance and solidarity, self and collective care, have emerged in many places. There have been several systems of support established for and by migrants. The pandemic has acted as a portal, opening up, for a while at least, a new space to relate to others. Vulnerability and fragility link us one another, even though we are not in this together as we are not all equally expendable. For each of us the other is both a danger and salvation. Self-interest coincides with the common good. The pandemic stresses embodiment, and interconnection acting as the source of counter knowledges, methods, and values against Eurocentric, masculinist, anthropocentric, and heteronormative epistemic violence.

**In the North American context, a strong solidarity between Black and Indigenous struggles is very much focused around issues of food knowledge sovereignty. We can see this as a democratised form of nutrition, inseparable from the social networks in which it is embedded.**

*Robert Biel*

Nutrition is an interesting concept in relation to post-COVID transition. Speaking as a Political Ecologist, the starting point would have to be the implications for equity. From a purely ecological angle, the transition to organic agriculture is an absolute imperative: it's the only way to prevent the erosion of soil, rebuild biodiversity, and sequester carbon. But if we look at a social framework, better quality food tends to be available only to wealthier consumers, so the nutrition divide (reflected in many health indicators) is not improved, and more organic food may make it even more glaring. This shows that the solution to sustainability is not going to work at a purely technical level: there must be a social movement. Food sovereignty is an important concept in this respect, because it highlights issues of empowerment and autonomy. Although nutrition can be thought of in an individual framework, it makes more sense as nourishing a complex system. We have our own microbiome, and so do plants, whose immune systems are embedded in complex mycorrhizal environments which involve much signalling and information exchange. The origins of a pandemic like COVID-19 can in many ways be seen as a deficit in complexity (depletion of biodiversity). We won't manage to heal this if our field of action is a definition of 'nature' abstracted from ourselves. In research on wellbeing, which I've shared with colleagues Liza Griffin and Marina Chang, it's increasingly clear that we can/must see nourishment in a wider sense: it can't be separate from rebuilding social networks, deeply damaged by a system which has no respect for the conviviality which should be central to our food systems.

There are concrete examples of a movement from below to rebuild nutrition in a democratic sense. We could see this in the Open Food Network, which has a strong basis in the north of England, precisely where the old industry-based working-class social networks have been seriously damaged, but can be rebuilt around food. This kind of solidarity, which uses IT communications in an interesting way, has laid a resilient groundwork for addressing COVID-related food insecurity for vulnerable people. It's a kind of nutritive analogue, in the social sphere, for the physical interactions which agroecology seeks to rebuild in our relations with nature. It's no accident that COVID-19 coincided with an upsurge of Black Lives Matter, nor is it an accident that food is intrinsic to this movement. Thus, in the North American context, a strong solidarity between Black and Indigenous struggles is very much focused around issues of food knowledge sovereignty. We can again see this as a democratised form of nutrition, inseparable from the social networks in which it is embedded.



## Open space

*Giovanna Astolfo, Catalina Ortiz*

In an essay that interrogates the troubled distinction between private and public space – which starts from the western binary of oikia / polis – a Lebanese student of ours put forward a, not novel, critique of Arendt's gendered vision of the private as the lieu of reproductive labour that women are confined to. The private is the space of biological necessity. The open, on the contrary, is the space of political action, of the realisation of freedom and a fully human life. The space of appearance, in Arendt's words, is where we can be seen and heard, because political action is intrinsically collective, and politics can only come to be if there is a public, a witness. It is the space where humans create and recreate themselves, but it is devoid of emotions, masculinised, and rendered objective. It is necessary to go back to such critique in a moment like this, while we are trying to make sense of how the pandemic is changing our paradigms. The pandemic has increased spatial segregation on the basis of class and race and has provided the perfect excuse to increase surveillance, restricting participation and the chance of imagining socially just futures. Rather than Arendt's spaces of appearance where intimacy can sublimate in the open, we are surrounded by spaces of surveillance where intimacy is scrutinised. The global nature of this crisis has shown that diverse local responses need to adapt to specific local needs, grounded in situated understandings of existing local practices and knowledges and identity is imposed. Detection-scapes are no longer limited to the open. The outside gaze has entered homes. Such pervasiveness of detection conflates use and freedom. But what if the outside is safer than the inside? What if everyday survival depends on it? As Simone reminds us, people will try to operate under the radar, they will go undetected until they need to be visible again.

More importantly, for the vast urban majority there is no binary public/private, open/domestic. That binary only exists in an imaginary world, where people can survive without new income, networks, mobility. It doesn't exist for migrants, refugees and homeless people. For some of them, home is an extended territory of relations, for other there is just a zone of indistinction where there is no private nor common. It is a continuous space shaped by everyday activities that cannot be given up as they sustain life, 'collective life' as Bahn, Simone and Caldeira call it. "The open in the south is the street, the community kitchen, the taxi rank, the landfill, the market, the neighborhood watch, the queue for the collection of cash transfers and water supply." The lack of a distinction between open, public, private does not mean that political action is not possible. What we have probably missed in the critique of the public, is the emerging (see Singh 2020, Katz 2021) point that even for Arendt, everyday dwelling is political. Political action is possible even in the less open spaces. Life in the more intimate and extended spaces of the home is and can be a worldbuilding gesture. It is part of human life, hence political. But do not misunderstand us, we are not saying that the pandemic has made ordinary activities more political in an emancipatory way. In most cases the pandemic has changed nothing for the better, unless perhaps minor changes in the 'formations of collective life' that we can find in acts of collective care and solidarity.

**We are not saying that the pandemic has made ordinary activities more political in an emancipatory way.**

## Pedagogy

*Julia Wesely, Barbara Lipietz*

Think of the different knowledges, capacities and skills you have learnt during the past ‘pandemic’ year; learning which is, or will, inform your urban practice as an everyday city maker, professional planner, academic or activist. A substantial part of this individual and collective learning has taken place outside the classroom, itself transfigured under the exigencies of lockdown. Learning has been activated via media intake; in discussions with peers or with new co-learners thanks to the wonders (?) of zoom; or through remote, on-the-ground or hybrid advocacy and activism. In response to COVID-19, the field of urban learning has at once localised, as everywhere networks of care and solidarity have emerged or been refocused on sustaining life itself in place, thereby inviting rapid co-learning processes (as documented, for example, in the KNOW programme’s COVID-19 stories). It has also simultaneously

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internationalised and networked, as online learning platforms have mushroomed in collective attempts to make sense of the ‘new normal’ (see, for instance, United Cities and Local Governments’ Live Learning Experience #BeyondTheOutbreak, or the DPU’s Post COVID-19 Urban Futures webinar and blog series).

These recent learning experiences echo a complex and already-existing ecosystem of multi-scalar, multi-actored, multi-directional learning, captured under the umbrella of critical urban pedagogy. Critical urban pedagogy beckons reflections on our learning processes, asking who learns the city, from and with whom, where, how, and with which purpose and consequences. Questions which explicitly foreground the politicality of pedagogies. For pedagogies – as social processes – are simultaneously impacted by, contribute to, or contest, the structural conditions that shape the educational and learning systems in place. That is, intersections of coloniality, race, gender, language, class – amongst other factors – affect the abilities of learners and pedagogues to genuinely speak, listen and learn together. Indeed, the very ability to apprehend or designate legitimate bearers and sharers of knowledge. In expanding and de-hierarchising the ecosystem of urban learning and emancipatory pedagogies, social movements and community networks such as Abahlali baseMjondolo in South Africa, Just Space in London, Shack/Slum Dwellers International, the Asian Coalition for Housing Rights, and multi-actor networks like the Habitat International Coalition, have been spearheading efforts to reveal and challenge the power and ethical dynamics that shape the content and locus of learning, as well as the identities of learners and pedagogues. The pandemic and the shift to remote and digital learning have arguably foregrounded and expanded such

critical efforts. The past year has boosted existing calls for unlearning and re-learning; for transforming our knowledge of fundamental urban and development planning concepts such as density or home; for fore-fronting care in reimagining socio-environmentally just ‘post-pandemic’ urban futures – that is, for recentring urban development ambitions on the knowledges and lived experiences of those on the frontline of mitigating the pandemic’s impacts. Meanwhile, the ability to connect virtually at scale through digital platforms has galvanised opportunities for making co-learning more accessible and inclusive, supported by extended networks of solidarity, institutional traction and/or infrastructural investment. Yet the pandemic has also exacerbated inequalities, including in access to digital resources and digital literacy, risking further marginalisation of certain voices and their practices in learning processes. As we strive to develop post-pandemic (but likely multiple-crisis-ridden) pedagogies, we need to strategically revisit the question: what critical urban pedagogies can help us re-imagine and curate remote, yet emancipatory and transformative co-learning processes?



## Quarantine

*Nura Ali, Haim Yacobi*

“Time travels at different speeds for different people”, goes the alleged quote by Shakespeare. Today we know that quarantine does so, too. The world’s fine-mesh interlacement and human-made susceptibility to ecological imbalances knocked on the doors of both villas and shacks. But the furlough experience unfolded differently across space and time. The word quarantine - meaning 40 days - is linked to the Black Death plague when ships were isolated before letting passengers disembark. Quarantine, as a method of preventing communicable diseases, restricted the movement of people and the flow of goods. In the new millennium, the centuries-old strategy of quarantine is becoming a powerful component of the public health response to emerging and re-emerging infectious diseases. During the 2003 pandemic of severe acute respiratory syndrome, the use of quarantine, border controls, contact tracing, and surveillance proved effective in containing the global threat in just over three months. However, the use of quarantine as a measure for controlling epidemic diseases has always been controversial; such strategies raise political and ethical issues unveiling it as a tool of spatial, demographic and social control. A telling example is the planning of the Apartheid City in South Africa, where spatial quarantine in the form of a cordon sanitaire justified racial segregation as a method of controlling the spread of diseases. Indeed, quarantine brought out what had been accepted as normalized evil, and the reproduction of structural health inequalities suddenly became poignantly visible. In a globalized world that is becoming ever more vulnerable to communicable diseases, a historical perspective can help clarify the use and implications of a still-valid public health strategy. Quarantine is about isolation of the physical body from the social body, and normalises solitude. In this vein, the digital world provides a vehicle to

escape *vanitas* where one controls and is subject to depictions of reality through a flow of imageries. However, at a time when social media is one of the few ‘outside’ visual-social spaces, photographs and videos of our homes also contribute to the unmasking of the layers that make up a hyper-individualized humanity. One year into varying degrees of lockdown, socio-physical immobility, overstressed health systems, vaccine elitism, concomitant intellectual property right regimes, and re-thinking our systems of organizing society birthed a powerful, yet merciless, opportunity: a de-compartmentalization of inequality. A zoonotic disease that works itself through the world cannot be framed in a neat, far-away context. Being confronted with our and others’ unmasked selves, we have been challenged to listen to the rattling lungs of our social and natural ecosystems. Being quarantined affected our experience as both students and lecturers. It has been difficult to bond as informal connections have been moulded into formalized Zoom sessions. Indeed, the role of embodiment and the performativity of studying as motors of intellectual curiosity took a hit this past year. At the same time, boundaries were dissolved by being granted a peak into colleagues’ spaces of introspection: their homes. The necessity of a more conscious, and straight-forward, way of creating a sense of community brought the kindness of member students to the surface - like one MSc student suggesting a talk in self-isolation because, ‘it is hard’. Lecturers delivered an intriguing range of angles on the pandemic, while genuinely caring about the mental health of their students. Where informal chats on the corridor broke away, empathy, connection and resilience popped up. Indeed, quarantine might travel at different speeds for different people, but our shared experiences hold the potential to transform empathy into solidarity.

## Risk

*Emmanuel Osuteye, Julia Wesely, Cassidy Johnson*

The COVID-19 pandemic has cast a significant light on our understanding of risk occurring as a 'spectrum': that there is a wide range of hazards that people are increasingly vulnerable to and impacted by. This spectrum ranges from everyday perils (parasitic diseases, road traffic injuries), to small / extensive disasters (structural collapse and flash floods), to major / intensive disasters (tropical storms, earthquakes, and pandemics). Although COVID-19 can be conceptualised as a single event and intensive disaster of global proportions, its long-lasting and far-reaching impacts are very much felt at the everyday, individual level, where it intersects with the existing vulnerabilities, such as exposure to gender-based violence, or lack of access to food or medical services. Thinking of risk as a spectrum helps us to forge a better understanding of the interactions between the cascading effects of disasters and the underlying drivers of risk linked to poverty, deprivation, poorly planned and unmanaged growth, and infrastructure deficits. These interactions are especially acute in urban areas, which bear the biggest burdens from COVID-19. Consequently, COVID-19 has exposed the pressing inequalities in both the Global South and the Global North, for example in who is able to safely self-isolate, who has access to vaccines and testing, as well as shining a light on stark inequalities existing across the Global North. A key determining factor for understanding these inequalities and the underlying politics of disaster risk management during the COVID-19 pandemic concerns whose voices, data and knowledge are being silenced or toned down, and who are being listened to, or amplified. This lens has helped to reveal, amongst others, dynamics in terms of the policy levels that dominate public discourses, such as in the case of vaccine nationalism vs global vaccine diplomacy. It interrogates

the qualification, accountability and impact of the expert as the authoritative knowledge holder who informs government decisions, and it highlights the disciplinary silos in which many professional bodies work, and which have translated, as an example, into false dualisms such as managing the risk to public health vs the economy. Fundamentally, the pandemic has cast a light on the subjectiveness of the term 'risk'. While some governments have aimed for a 'Zero-COVID' strategy, others have argued for keeping the virus to a 'manageable' level, or even downplayed or denied its risk. These strategies (or lack thereof) raise critical questions about risk management: are certain numbers of deaths acceptable? How much infringement on one's freedoms and rights is acceptable if this reduces the risk? And for some, does the risk even exist? The term 'losses' which is associated with 'risk' is also important in this regard. As the number of deaths from the virus will eventually subside, this will only be the beginning of recovery. There are the other 'losses' that have occurred, such as macro and micro economic losses, profound personal losses, gender inequality, loss of learning time and the years lived with disability due to long COVID-19. The longer the pandemic lasts, it makes one realise that perhaps COVID-19 is not even the main risk: instead it may be about living with the implications of the widespread losses that the pandemic has brought and will continue to bring into the future.

**The longer the pandemic lasts, it makes one realise that perhaps COVID-19 is not even the main risk: instead it may be about living with the implications of the widespread losses that the pandemic has brought and will continue to bring into the future.**

## Sanitation

*Pascale Hofmann, Nelly Leblond*

Etymologically, sanitation comes from the 19th century French ‘sanitaire’ meaning ‘pertaining to health’, itself from Latin ‘sanus’: ‘healthy, sane’. The COVID-19 pandemic accentuates sanitation as a crucial hygiene issue for limiting the spread of coronavirus (wash your hands!), with human waste being a potential source of exposure. It also sheds light on sanitation inequalities since households in less favourable conditions must forgo isolation measures to access shared toilets, where hygienic conditions are inversely proportional to their number of users. Furthermore, sanitation work such as faecal sludge removal, latrine cleaning, and waste picking is often relegated to residents in subaltern positions, especially women and marginalised groups, with less capacity to protect themselves as they continue to perform these key functions. In short, the COVID-19 pandemic has pronounced and often amplified existing sanitation injustices. Particularly important, and potentially long lasting, is the framing of sanitation reproduced by COVID-19 and the implications for responsibility. Who must take action to sustain and improve sanitation? The pandemic reinforces a discourse that spotlights individual households. Many solutions promote individual hygiene measures such as masks and protective equipment, hand washing, lockdown, and social distancing. But this is out of reach for residents with no or limited access to toilets and water, for tenants sharing housing and for inhabitants of off-grid neighbourhoods whose fate is tied to collective sanitary (un)provision. It disproportionately places the burden on women who clean, care, and provide. If you rely on shared facilities, or if your dwelling is entangled in wastewater overflowing from drains, tanks and pits, you cannot both meet your needs and avoid exposure. Sanitation becomes a cornelian dilemma. COVID-19 offers an opportunity to approach sanitation justice beyond

individual actions. A persistent lack of prioritisation of the sanitation sector all along the chain must be addressed: from reduced budgets for the Water, Sanitation and Hygiene (WASH) sector, to the minute amount allocated for sanitation provision, to the concentration of these meagre resources spent on pipes, pumps, ponds, and drains which overlook the most vulnerable households, to the relegation of on-site sanitation to individual, private issues. Too often the marginalisation of sanitation reproduces colonial divides between grid infrastructure and off-grid residents. It reinforces the interplay of socially constructed categories such as race, gender, ethnicity, ability, and class, generating stigma, exclusion and suffering instead of respect, care, and wellbeing. Sanitation justice, however, is not simply about providing more services and infrastructure, it is also about distributive, procedural and recognitional justice. This means getting key stakeholders to support the delivery of sanitation services that meet the needs of communities and their

diverse members. Participation of those hitherto neglected is crucial to shaping infrastructural and maintenance choices, to co-producing safe and dignified sanitation services that guarantee inclusion, accountability, and respect, and to re-balancing the distribution of benefits and costs. Though people continue to shape ascending sanitary trajectories to the best of their abilities, COVID-19 has demonstrated this is not enough to generate healthy neighbourhoods and environments. This renewed attention to sanitation can and should be used to develop a more inclusive and just reframing of sanitation-as-health, in its etymological meaning. Many of the issues raised are explored in the research project OVERDUE “Tackling the Sanitation Taboo across urban Africa”, join us: [overdue-justsanitation.net/](https://overdue-justsanitation.net/)

On site self-provided sanitation in Dar Es Salaam. Though residents take great care to uphold privacy, there is a limit to what can be achieved individually in a context of heightened proximity, reduced drainage, and limited resources.  
Photo Credit: Pascale Hofmann, 2019



*Daniel Oviedo*

In cities of the Global South, where millions deal with acute conditions of poverty and limited access to formal livelihoods, social security, and basic connectivity to material and digital infrastructures, measures to control local outbreaks are likely to increase already large social gaps between the poor and the rest of society. In the wake of pandemic-related constraints, social groups in urban societies have adapted by different degrees to a new normality marked by remote working and digital accessibility to employment, education, culture and social interactions. By contrast, a large share of low-income and other socially vulnerable citizens have faced the loss of their main activities, while others have been forced to engage in physical travel and exposure to contagion in order to maintain their livelihoods and access essential goods and services. COVID-19 raises important questions about how to reduce health risks while ensuring equitable access to critical urban activities for populations often in peripheral locations enduring long, daily commutes. For instance, the majority of the poor in large cities of Latin America work in activities with variable or centralised locations, which makes them heavily dependent on public transport. The economic activities of low-income populations are commonly informal and are largely dependent on low-skilled labour. Jobs in the informal economy commonly share a lack of security, access to social protections, and fair wages. Citizens working in such activities are frequently unable to work from home, due to either the nature of their jobs and/or a lack of access to critical

**A large share of low-income and other socially vulnerable citizens have faced the loss of their main activities, while others have been forced to engage in physical travel and exposure to contagion in order to maintain their livelihoods and access essential goods and services.**

resources (such as computers and internet connections), or to access social support in compensation for their lack of income. Social distancing and measures to control local outbreaks have forced millions already dealing with acute poverty, lack of basic connectivity, limited access to formal livelihoods, social security and safety nets to engage in physical travel and expose themselves to contagion to maintain their livelihoods and access essential goods and services. The effects of the pandemic on urban transport and mobility are diverse and have not been sufficiently covered in the literature. How safe will it be to return to public transport remains an open question, with research alluding to public transport being a significant vector of contagion for general airborne transmitted diseases. In particular, overcrowding conditions on public transport systems has been suggested as a risk factor in the spreading of COVID-19, with many public transport authorities resorting

to suspending or restricting services. Beyond debates on public transport and mobility behaviour, significant concerns in the current agenda around urban transport in a COVID-19 and post-COVID world exist around the rapid advance of climate change and changing risk of contagion. Such concerns have made evident the needs to (i) modify mobility habits in cities, and (ii) devise strategies for long-term transformations in the distribution of urban land and infrastructure. Most literature acknowledges the likelihood of a marginal modal shift to private motorised vehicles in the context of the pandemic. Such changes in behaviour can not only widen gaps in access and mobility across urban populations but would negatively impact sustainability goals. Scholarship in the context of COVID-19 and before the pandemic suggests that a transition to non-motorised alternatives such as walking and cycling would be a desirable direction for future urban mobility and public health. Such debates call into question the long-term implications of the pandemic on transport, urban planning and decision-making, needing further research that examines individual and collective perceptions and preferences about risk, mobility, activity patterns and the needs and capacity to make use of different forms of transport.



## Urbanisation

*Barbara Lipietz, Donald Brown, Azadeh Mashayekhi*

Urbanisation, in a nutshell, refers to the proportion of a given national population living in territories classified as 'urban'. Whilst such classification is often mired in political wrangles linked to resource allocation, urbanisation trends talk to the broad shifts in the locus of social and economic activities. For a long time, that shift has been associated with economic development: the industrialisation and eventually tertiarisation of the economy. However, this neat modernisation trajectory, imbricating urbanisation trends in a singular and unitary direction, has been seriously challenged by the so-called 'second wave' of urbanisation. The latter refers to the observed massive population shift to urban centres in a record amount of time; a shift particularly marked in Asia and Africa which up to the mid-20th century were still largely rural societies. Some striking figures illustrate the contemporary geographic and demographic shift at stake: whilst 15% of the world population is currently African, it is estimated this figure will rise to 25% by 2050 and above 40% by 2100. Urban imaginations appear largely stranded, still, between the exaltation of global and world cities that link core urban areas to the vicissitudes of the global, financialised economy; and the dystopia of sprawling megalopolises mired by endless underserved informal settlements. Second wave urbanisation undoubtedly enfolds both experiences, and beckons in the need to complexify assumed interactions between economic growth and urbanisation dynamics. However, multiple processes are simultaneously at play, shaping urbanisation differentially in diverse geographies: from differentiated imbrications into diverse economic networks, to differentiated impacts of overlapping environmental crises, to local and regional conflicts etc. These translate into equally diverse spatial ramifications of human beings' agglomeration tendencies. In particular, much current urban-

isation is taking place in so-called intermediary or secondary centres through the processes of suburbanisation or extension, or in rural areas where entirely new urban centres are emerging. As cities expand outward, how can they be planned in ways that are healthy and sustainable? Equally, as much contemporary urbanisation unfolds in contexts of depleted (formal) economic growth, bulging youthful populations, and meagre resources to respond to the massive social, economic and infrastructural needs of growing urban populations, how should urban theory and planning respond? COVID-19, like other zoonosis and infectious diseases before it, promises to complexify further our understanding of – and responses to – differentiated urbanisation. COVID-19 appears to spread mostly in cities, and in dense areas at that. But transmission and mortality appear less connected to density than to accumulated governance failures. Seoul, Hong Kong and Taipei are amongst the world's densest cities and yet have fared relatively well. Yet in most dense (and undense) urban territories, it is the poor, the racialised, those long underserved, that are suffering most, trapped into spatialised silos of 'uncared-for' urbanisation. In contrario, high social

development indicators and public-driven governance go a long way in explaining the effective management and control of the virus in Kerala. COVID-19 is both revealing the extent of urbanisation and disrupting the intricate and differentiated connections linking urban centres to their peri-urban and broader hinterlands. The virus itself is likely a result of run-away urban extension. It has spread to the most remote spaces, as the result of urban areas' intricate dependence on globalised resources. It is disrupting globalised food systems, as it follows localised/regional circular migration patterns and urban-rural linkages. It is beckoning a review of dense urban living, just as it is potentially focusing attention on re-localisation processes – of economic processes, of urban living (see the call for the 15 minutes city). As the pandemic highlights the magnitude of urbanisation's footprint, can 'post'-pandemic development planning respond in ways that recognise and address the differentiated processes and manifestations of urbanisation?

**COVID-19 appears to spread mostly in cities, and in dense areas at that. But transmission and mortality appear less connected to density than to accumulated governance failures.**

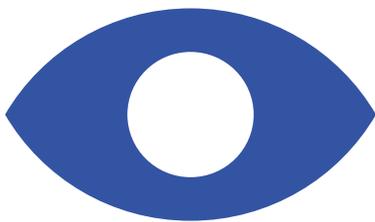
*Alexander Macfarlane, Ottavia Pasta*

Humans use vision to find concepts through the rapid identification of imagery. Visualisation is a powerful tool for analysis, exploration and communication. It helps to imagine and question our world and to foresee future scenarios. The COVID-19 pandemic has created challenges to all aspects of our society, fundamentally changing the way we live and work, and also the way we communicate. The proliferation of digital content has shortened people's attention spans more than ever.

At the DPU, face-to-face interactions have been suspended, forcing all our teaching, research and communication activities online. One of the challenges for our digital communication activities has been to carve out a space in an increasingly competitive online mediascape, with the immediacy of visual and graphic imagery at the core of our communication strategy. Although this has been a challenge, it has also provided an opportunity. Our large audience and network of students (past, present and future), practitioners and partners, is global. The pandemic has challenged us to be less London-centric and to think more strategically about connecting to and communicating with our audience across all time zones of the world. In relation to our communication activities more broadly, an example of this is our move from in-person events to our webinar series. As an immediate response to the pandemic, we launched 'Post COVID-19 Urban Futures', and have subsequently continued our Dialogues in Development series online, as well as our internal DPU Teas and DPU Career Sessions. However, joining the webinar revolution has resulted in increased saturation

and ultimately webinar fatigue. Maintaining relevance and interest in our digital communications has required strong visualisation, with graphic design and imagery at the core of our drive to develop our visual identity. We extended our communication strategy to an effective and frequent use of social media in order to connect with target audiences across the globe. This includes a more systematised approach to content sharing before, during and after an event. We also introduced a 'From the archive' plan, promoting past activities and giving a second life to past events. In order to keep connected with students, we have boosted the use of Instagram and introduced GIFs, videos, and simple animations in our communications. Studies confirm that the human brain processes images 60,000 times faster than text, and producing attention grabbing graphic content with a consistent style in our communications helps audience engagement. Launching a new visual identity in these challenging times hopefully helped the DPU to resonate more effectively with diverse audiences.

Looking ahead to the post-COVID world, while some aspects of our working life will return to some semblance of 'normality', the move to more digital and virtual interactions will be permanent. We will continue to host webinars to connect our audience globally, with visual imagery at the heart of all future communication activities. The power of images is more important than ever, and as the philosopher Aldous Huxley said, "The more you know the more you see, but the converse is also true, the more you see the more you know."



**What's the first thing you saw in this page?**

**Probably an eye: the human brain processes images 60,000 times faster than text.**



## Webinar

*Alessio Kolioulis*

Webinars are internet-based conferences, meetings or discussions that enable the participation of people located in different places. While seminars are as ancient as the need for people to come together to discuss and learn from each other, it is the mass diffusion of the World Wide Web that made webinars a reality. The COVID-19 pandemic, however, took the technology to a different level. Various webinar apps were in use well before March 2020. But the occasions utilizing these software programs were confined to either organizing informal events among friends, or to connecting audiences with invited speakers who couldn't travel. Audio and video quality were also often an issue. Today, video conferencing is a key aspect of everyday life in lockdown. Thanks to ever-improving webinar technologies, communication, work and even 'travel' becomes possible. The rise of a start-up like Zoom, now valued at over \$130bn, demonstrates that innovation means not only creativity but also diffusion into new markets. Some technologies exist but are not adopted. Others evolve while they get diffused rapidly. So, what is the future of webinars? Governments may be anticipating that with vaccines being rolled out people will become less reliant on online-based solutions, but webinars are proving that they offer opportunities not fully tested before. Across Higher Education, for example, disability groups have long advocated for the regular implementation of online conferencing. Accessibility is a key feature of webinars and their inclusive nature can boost collaborations, learning and sharing. In my personal experience, webinars offer a new practice, a move towards what I call 'everyday transnationalism'. To give an example of what I mean, I will take my experience teaching and doing research at UCL. With universities now allowing students to attend lectures and other activities

online and from abroad, the norm is for classes to connect several time zones, day and night, into a single window. This temporal compression provides, in turn, the feeling of bringing people and cities together. The multiplication of daily initiatives where people across nations are in dialogue is a fascinating aspect of this new normal. However, it also brings challenges. For instance, central time zones reinforce East/West divides. For those new to the digital economy, finding new audiences can also be daunting. This is, for example, key in the creative industries, where physical spaces of production and performance were fundamental for the sector. Despite existing challenges, the shift towards this type of 'everyday transnationalism' can be seen as a positive outcome of the development of webinars. It may also be how seminars will continue to survive. After the 12th century, the rise of universities meant the decline of traditional ecclesiastic institutions. New typologies of seminars emerged, with innovative schools and teachers. And this, ultimately, produced new forms of knowledge.

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## Xenophobia

*Kamna Patel*

... Writing from the UK:  
Retreat to the island. Pull up the drawbridge. Close the portcullis. Patrol the moat. We are safe, at last. The changes to Britain's borders stemming from finally and fully exiting the European Union on 1st January 2021, and subsequent travel restrictions enacted since March 2020 as efforts to manage COVID-19, operationalise the fortification of an island. Our borders, once stretching, encompassing, and fluid through dual acts of violence and diplomacy, are solidifying in retreat in response to the threat of foreign dangers. These dangers include a new and unfamiliar coronavirus, and a trope so familiar to the national psyche that he even has a name, Johnny. Imagining a post-pandemic future is to imagine the dismantling of defensive infrastructure when the 'foreign danger' is perpetual and omnipresent, but also nebulous, amorphous and intangible. For 'foreignness' is continuously made and remade, resting on unbounded concepts such as culture, race, ethnicity and language.

The processes of othering that make the 'foreign' foreign and render the 'unknown' as unknowable, are deeply entrenched and demand conscious effort to see, unpack and rework. From the vantage point of development studies, a discipline with its own protracted entanglements with processes of othering, come a series of critical lenses – postcolonial and decolonial, among others – attuned to recognising the making of unknown subjects in lands faraway and near. Such lenses offer our community a way to see and frame the 'unknown' in ways supportive of a lively reimagining of our post-pandemic futures, where paths of openness, plurality and xenophilia can cut through castle walls.

**Our borders, once stretching, encompassing, and fluid through dual acts of violence and diplomacy, are solidifying in retreat in response to the threat of foreign dangers.**



## Youth

*Daniel Oviedo, Jordana Ramalho, Barbara Lipietz*

Definitions of youth vary widely across the globe, encompassing the period of adolescence and just beyond, or extending substantially into adulthood. In many countries, 'the youth' includes those aged 16 to their early 30s, who often have notably differentiated access to resources, opportunities and 'legitimate' voice depending on where they fall in the gerontological spectrum. Young people are the future, and very much the present in countries where they represent the majority population, as in much of Sub-Saharan Africa. Yet they suffer from a lack of cultural and political recognition, translating into sub-optimal investments in education and job opportunities, and limited agency in household affairs and decision-making, with adolescent girls especially marginalised. Ultimately, lack of attention – and at times, outright hostility – towards young people's needs, desires, and contributions represents an unfathomable loss for development planning. COVID-19 has added a whole new dimension of struggle and uncertainty to the lives of adolescents and young adults everywhere. Sustained periods of lockdown, alongside the closure schools, universities and youth centres have left young people isolated from their main sources of companionship, wellbeing and emotional support – their friends – and facing significant challenges as they prepare for exams, make the leap to university, or seek out employment in an increasingly competitive and precarious economic landscape. In many parts of the world, the economic crisis brought on by the pandemic has meant interrupted educational trajectories and limited options to return to (informal) work, as young people have tended to be the most affected by the job cuts brought on by the pandemic. Unsurprisingly, these multiple adverse impacts and disruptions have been compounded among young people who already face intersecting disadvantages and discrimination on account of their race

and ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation or socio-economic background. In the UK for instance, a significant body of evidence has shown that Black, Asian and other racially minoritized ethnic groups are both more exposed to, and more likely to die from, COVID-19 due to their over-representation in 'essential frontline services', extended-family living arrangements, and related socio-economic vulnerability. Young people who fall within this demographic are also likely to be disproportionately affected. Yet attention to the needs and interests of young people in the media and public policy remains limited. In order to render these impacts and experiences more visible, we have been engaging in a collaborative project with The Ubele Initiative – Navigating Space under Lockdown - to capture and shed light on the experiences and impacts of COVID-19 on young adults living in England who are of Black, Asian or other ethnically minoritized decent. Using a mix of quantitative and qualitative research methods to explore evolving understandings of home, neighbourhood, 'community' and encounters with public authorities in the context of COVID 19, our initial findings suggest a disproportionate impact of COVID-19 on racially and ethnically minoritized young adults. Findings from our pilot survey suggest they live in crowded homes with limited access to green and open spaces. There is limited privacy or facilities to self-isolate, especially among young people with lower incomes and education levels, and those who depend on benefits, adding to the uncertainty and stresses of the pandemic. Such findings echo results from a similar study across five Latin American countries. Here the DPU was involved in co-creating an observatory of COVID-19 effects on mobility and use of time (Observatorio - Coronavirus (intalinc-lac.com)). Findings from a sample with a higher representation of middle-income respondents

showed that over 15% of respondents below 20 years in cities in Colombia, Brazil, Mexico, Uruguay, Paraguay and Ecuador saw their main activity interrupted because of the pandemic between March and May 2020. While nearly 37% saw their time available to dedicate to their main activity reduced. Moreover, in this age group, over 57% reported that their time dedicated to leisure activities decreased compared to the pre-COVID period, and 55% reported their time dedicated to physical activity decreased. These patterns seem consistent across the region and much of the Global South, and they carry serious implications for physical and mental wellbeing.

## Zoonoses

*Julio Dávila*

In 1969 the US Surgeon General declared the end of the era of infectious diseases. Soon after, Harvard and Yale Universities closed down their infectious disease departments. Science had conquered one of humankind's worst scourges and could address 'modern' diseases such as cancer, diabetes and heart disease. Two decades later, US and Western European cities would be violently jolted by news of a new disease killing scores of mainly young men. HIV/AIDS would eventually kill over 32 million people worldwide. The deaths of citizens of rich countries launched a massive scientific effort to find a cure that still proves elusive. The optimism of the 1960s was premature. In 2020, COVID-19 gave the world a much more violent jolt. Despite having a lower death rate than HIV/AIDS, its economic and social consequences are much more profound, with hundreds of millions of children missing out on school for a year, an even higher number of workers in low and middle-income countries losing their sources of livelihood, and an as yet unquantified mental health pandemic. Through remarkable international collaboration and ingenuity, scientists came up with several COVID-19 vaccines within a few months. COVID-19 and HIV/AIDS originated in viruses that jumped from vertebrate animals to humans. Like some 60% of emerging infectious diseases in humans, they are zoonotic diseases traceable back to an animal reservoir, often in the wild. HIV/AIDS originated in chimpanzees and SARS-CoV-2, the virus that causes COVID-19, most likely came from bats. These illnesses starkly remind us that, as countries and cities have become more closely interconnected through air travel and trade, diseases can spread rapidly with no regard to national boundaries. They also show that over-exploitation of natural resources in distant lands not only risks exhausting the planet's

Pigs in alleyway in Viwandani, an informal settlement in Nairobi.  
Photo Credit:  
Julio Davila



limited reserves, but can also unleash powerful forces that modern science might be unable to contain next time. Zoonoses has also been linked to human exploitation and colonialism. Geneticists pinpoint the origins of HIV/AIDS to early 20th century Cameroon, with one hypothesis attributing it to the need by African soldiers and porters forcibly recruited by European Colonial powers to hunt and eat wild chimpanzees. Until vaccines are fully rolled out, the current pandemic may take years to subside, especially in poorer nations. And yet, one of the 1.7 million unknown viruses lurking in the wild, or some other zoonotic pathogen, could cause similar havoc in the near future. Despite affecting the daily lives of millions, including poor inhabitants of urban informal settlements, few of the 260 or so zoonotic viruses known to infect humans are headline-grabbing. As research work by the DPU with colleagues in the UK and Kenya shows, zoonotic diseases are amplified by the increasingly frequent interaction between humans and live animals,

or foodstuffs of animal origin. Capital-intensive farms that tightly pack live pigs, cattle, chicken and ducks together may lead to lower food prices but are also breeding grounds for diseases that can spread to neighbouring farms and to humans. Insofar as these are a market response to the food demands of fast-growing cities, by understanding their risks and potentials, urban development planners can make an important contribution to reducing the crippling daily toll of zoonotic diseases among the poorest urban residents, while also ensuring that all city dwellers have access to secure sources of affordable, uncontaminated and nutritious food.

# Head On

## **GOLD VI: Co-producing an urban equality agenda for local action**

**Knowledge in Action for Urban Equality** (KNOW) has been deeply involved in a multi-faceted process of co-production that has gone into the planning, structuring, and setting out of diverse contributions for the upcoming Global Observatory of Local Democracy and Decentralisation (GOLD) Report. The sixth version of the GOLD report will be jointly produced by United Cities and Local Governments (UCLG) and the KNOW team, and launched in November 2022, under the title "Pathways to Urban and Territorial Equality: Addressing inequalities through local transformation strategies". GOLD VI Steering Committee is composed of eight members from UCLG and KNOW, three of which are from DPU (Caren Levy, Adriana Allen and Camila Cociña). The DPU staff is also participating with curators for three of the GOLD VI chapters: Barbara Lipietz (Chapter: Commoning, with Gautam Bhan), Julio Davila (Chapter: Connecting, with Regina Amoako-Sakyi), and Adriana Allen (Chapter: Renaturing, with Mark Swilling and Isabelle Anguelovski). The co-production process behind GOLD VI will draw on contributions from several DPU researchers and partners. [Find out more.](#)

## **Debating resilience: complexity, contradictions and optimism**

In January 2021, **Julia Wesely** and **Cassidy Johnson** hosted an online book launch for the Handbook of Urban Resilience (editors: Michael A. Burayidi, Adriana Allen, John Twigg, and Christine Wamsler). This gave authors and editors space to reflect on the complexity, contradictions and optimism of resilience as a ubiquitous notion, concept, and principle, which has taken hold in urban research, policy and practice. Drawing on current



Thanon Phahon Yothin Canal, Bangkok, Thailand.  
Photo credit: Camila Cociña, 2019

debates and research findings, the speakers discussed particularly how disaster risk and resilience are, and could be, re-framed in efforts to address issues of urban equality. Speakers included John Twigg, Mark Pelling and Allan Lavell, and was hosted as a joint Dialogue in Urban Equality with the KNOW programme and DPU's Environmental Justice Urbanisation and Resilience Research Cluster.

## **Researching Transport Inequalities in Global South Cities: Interactive Bi-weekly Webinar Series 2020**

The DPU was a co-host of the INTALInC interactive Bi-weekly Webinar Series on Researching Transport Inequalities in Global South Cities between 21st May and 30th July 2020.

**Dr Daniel Oviedo** from the DPU along with Professor Karen Lucas from Manchester University and Rafael Pereira from IPEA co-organised and chaired the webinar series. The series brought together an international community of established and early career scholars working in this diverse and vibrant research domain to share their recent work and experiences,

and to reflect on the key challenges and opportunities we face under six themes: Access to opportunities, Informality, Transitions, Health, Gender, and Age. The webinars covered a wide range of topics and broadly, how they relate to issues of social exclusion, transport poverty, social and health inequalities in the Global South. In times of physical distancing when so many conferences are being cancelled or postponed, this was a timely opportunity to bring together and build upon existing research networks virtually. The series also served as an opportunity for researchers to share information about open calls for papers and new research collaborations and projects. You can access all of the presentations and listen to live recordings through the INTALInC website [intalinc.leeds.ac.uk](http://intalinc.leeds.ac.uk).

## **Settler Colonialism (without Settlers) & Slow Violence in the Gaza Strip**

**Professor Haim Yacobi** was invited together with Professor Michelle Pace (Roskilde University) to present their research project, supported by the Wellcome Trust 'Settler Colonialism

(without Settlers) & Slow Violence in the Gaza Strip'. The webinar was organised by the Middle East Studies Forum at Deakin University, Australia. The presentation focused on the impacts of Israel's ongoing settler colonialism in occupied Palestinian territory, and how Israel's interventions, in particular since its "withdrawal" from the Gaza Strip in 2005, can be conceptualized through a combined lens of Wolfe's logic of elimination and Nixon's slow violence. The presentation suggested that the idea of eliminating the existing population – without the physical presence of settlers inside Gaza – is not only inherent in the production of a new reality and geography, but also at the core of the transformation of the Strip into a frontier. In this manner Israel has fewer and weaker moral obligations over Gaza's population and hence the possibility of manipulating destructive power and violent practices. With a specific focus on Israel's interventions in the field of health, Yacobi and Pace discussed how power, violence and health are entangled in conflict zones in general and in Gaza in particular, by presenting the effect of violence in general and infrastructure demolition in particular, on the everyday life of Gazans, arguing that Israel's withdrawal marks not only a continuation but even a radicalization of settler colonialism in the Gaza Strip through (often) slow violence.

## Inclusive Spaces

In late 2020, **Kamna Patel**, working alongside The Bartlett faculty communications team, helped to launch 'Inclusive Spaces'. She is the host of a series that promotes the work of colleagues, students and alumni that advances our thinking and practices of inclusivity in the built environment. Recent talks have discussed disability and architecture, community

**Recent talks of 'Inclusive Spaces' have discussed disability and architecture, community participatory planning in the UK and Bangladesh, and spaces for play for refugee and Kenyan children in Nisha, Kenya**

participatory planning in the UK and Bangladesh, and spaces for play for refugee and Kenyan children in Nisha, Kenya. A call for new talks will be issued later this year.

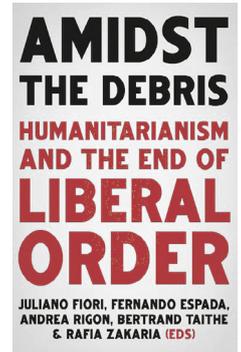
## Bartlett Promise

The Bartlett Promise, a 100% equity based scholarship, is expanding from undergraduate to masters and doctoral students across The Bartlett. The Promise aims to diversify built environment professions, including development planning, and improve representation in the section. The Promise is a comprehensive scholarship of fees and living stipend. Applicants must meet the eligibility criteria in order to be considered for a scholarship.

## Inclusive Urban Development in the Global South

Routledge published a new book edited by **Andrea Rigon** and Vanesa Castán Broto: *Inclusive Urban Development in the Global South. Intersectionality, Inequalities, and Community*. The book explores how diversity of gender, class, race and ethnicity, citizenship status, age, ability, and sexuality are taken (or not taken) into account and approached in the planning and implementation of development policy and interventions in poor urban areas. The book employs a practical perspective on the deployment of theoretical critiques of intersectionality and diversity in development practice. The book contains contributions from many DPUers, including **Caren Levy**, **Julian Walker**, **Jordana Ramalho**, **Ignacia Ossul-Vermeiren**, **Afia Afenah**, **Stephanie Butcher**, as well as DPU partners across the world. The book is dedicated to the memory of DPU's friend Sylvia Chant.

Book cover of 'Amidst the Debris: Humanitarianism and the End of Liberal Order'



## Amidst the Debris: Humanitarianism and the End of Liberal Order

A multi-year partnership between the DPU, the Humanitarian Affairs Team at Save the Children, and the University of Manchester's Humanitarian and Conflict Response Institute has produced a new book: *Amidst the Debris: Humanitarianism and the End of Liberal Order*. Published by Hurst, the book is edited by Juliano Fiori, Fernando Espada, **Andrea Rigon**, Bertrand Taithe and Rafia Zakaria. As humanitarian multilateralism seems to have lost strategic currency, the book reflects on the relationship between humanitarianism and 'liberal order'. What role has humanitarianism played in processes of liberal ordering? What are the implications for the political economy of humanitarianism, and for the practices of humanitarian agencies?

## Knowledge in Action for Urban Equality (KNOW) First Doctoral Training Course

How can doctoral research contribute to more equal cities? During the 18th - 21st of January, the KNOW Programme was delighted to welcome the first cohort of doctoral students to the KNOW Doctoral Training Course entitled, "Co-producing Urban Doctoral Research in the Global South." The Course brought together 22 participants from institutions across the UK and KNOW City Partners to explore issues related to knowledge co-production, partnerships with equivalence, and urban equality. [Find out more.](#)

# Research

## Voicing Just Sanitation Campaign

Responding to the COVID-19 context, which brings the vital role of sanitation to the fore, the OVERDUE project organized Sanitation Festivals and initiated the “Voicing Just Sanitation” campaign. Sanitation tours, radio debates, drawing representations, and collective discussions were organized by core partners of the OVERDUE project - SLURC, CCI, Ardi University and COWI – in Freetown, Mwanza and Beira. Read more here. Celebration turned out stimulating as a method, as it values the positive, inspiring, courageous and generous actions and engagements deployed by residents, local institutions and collectives. It enabled both to acknowledge the men and women, girls and boys, who build and maintain healthy homes, workplaces, communities, and neighbourhoods, and to ground the project’s questions and objectives in local expectations and relations. In parallel, the Voicing campaign further brought together short audios shared by sanitation providers, advocacy groups, and researchers, initiating a public conversation across countries and experiences. Though African women appeared central all along the sanitation chain, they remained a minority of speakers among the 28 first contributors, with peripheral references made to their experience, mainly located as victims of sexual violence or mere users of facilities. As a response,

**“Voicing Just Sanitation” campaign enabled both to acknowledge local people, who build and maintain healthy homes, workplaces, communities, and neighbourhoods, and to ground the project’s questions and objectives in local expectations and relations.**



Sanitation tour in Freetown coordinated by SLURC on World Toilet Day 2020. Photo credit: Ibrahim Bangura/SLURC, 2020

the OVERDUE project drew on the work and collaborations established by Claudy Vouhé from l’Etre Egale to reach out to more African women to enrich the depth and breadth of the discussion. Festivals and podcasts appeared fertile to generate both physical and online spaces where issues such as open defecation, janitors’ livelihoods as handlers of human waste, or gender inequalities in sanitation maintenance, could be discussed respectfully. This turned out essential to work on taboos and sensitive questions, and is to be further developed and reflected upon in the project. To follow the Voicing Just Sanitation campaign, please visit us on Twitter @Just\_OVERDUE. To add your voice to the campaign get in touch with [Professor Adriana Allen](mailto:a.allen@ucl.ac.uk) (a.allen@ucl.ac.uk) and [Dr Nelly Leblond](mailto:n.leblond@ucl.ac.uk) (n.leblond@ucl.ac.uk)

## Rural Heritage Recovery and Post-Conflict Development in Kurdistan Regional Government (KRG)

**Professor Camillo Boano** in collaboration colleagues from Salahaddin University-Erbil, Iraq and AUB Lebanon was part of the research project “Rural Heritage Recovery and Post-Conflict Development in Kurdistan Regional Government (KRG): The Case of Erbil’s Rural Periphery” ended and presented its final report on March 2, 2021. The project focused on three villages of Gazna, Kany Qrzhala, and Qareatax as sites of inquiry to research the rich rural-urban heritage of Erbil such as landscape features, ancient archaeological practices (qanáts), and vernacular building techniques. The project was conducted with Citizen Scientist (CS) and community-based capacity building with the involvement of 12 participants from Salahaddin University.

## Space and violence: thinking an archive and its lifelines

**Professor Camillo Boano** and Dr Elisabetta Pietrostefani (UCL Institute for Global Prosperity and RELIEF Centre) have been granted £97,000 from the GCRF: UCL Internal Small Grants

to assess vulnerabilities for urban recovery solutions in the Mar Mikhael and Karantina neighbourhoods after the Beirut Port explosion of the 4th August 2020, in Beirut, Lebanon causing at least 177 deaths, over 6,000 injuries, US\$15 billion in property damages, and the displacement of 300,000 people. This work on vulnerability and urban recovery will be carried out in collaboration with [Catalytic Action](#) and the [AUB Beirut Urban Lab](#).

Part of the Small Grant GCRF “Imagining Futures”, Camillo Boano and Hanadi Samhan are working with two colleagues in Beirut Hoda Mekkaoui and Arjee Abu Harb in an exploratory project “Space and violence: thinking an archive and its lifelines”, exploring archive of the contemporary spatial violent events in Beirut as maps to capture and construct trajectories of recent violence in Lebanon (taking the port explosion as day zero & moving backward and forward), by eliciting current practices (institutional, governmental, civil society, etc.), and examining it against individualistic violence narratives using shared personal data (pictures, messages, emails, social media, etc.). By expanding the meaning and imaginaries of archiving as a tool, the constructed narratives will act as “living archives” exposing diversified and shared pasts, intersected presents and conflicting futures.

## ESRC grant to work on housing/displacement

**Giovanna Astolfo** was awarded a small ESRC grant to work on housing/displacement. The project is led by Helmholtz university, and starts June 2021. The focus is on how housing remains an intractable challenge. The current Covid-19 crisis has reinforced housing injustice globally through discriminatory and exclusionary practices, but several measures to counteract the crisis bear the potential for policy change as well. Hence, a focus on co-designing innovative housing strategies, that operate at a higher level than housing policy and programmes and are based on a vision of structural change, might contribute to address inequalities in existing

housing systems and infrastructures. Set against this background, the JPI/ESRC funded project “HOUSE-IN” will identify structural, organizational and knowledge gaps towards the implementation of more just housing strategies, with a focus on the experience of migrants and refugees in European cities. [Find out more.](#)

## Risk and insurance in low-income and informal urban environments

**Cassidy Johnson** has been commissioned to write a Think Piece for UK Research and Innovation (UKRI) considering the ability of insurance-based approaches for managing risks in low-income and informal urban environments. The Think Piece aims to scan the landscape of current funded research and draws on interviews with a range of stakeholders to provide recommendations to UKRI about in what ways they could invest in social science research funding in this area. The review considers how insurance in informal or low-income environments could help to address risks to livelihoods, health and assets in a holistic way that considers the multiple vulnerabilities of the poor to disasters like flooding, as well as everyday shocks and stresses, such as heat stress and other hazards exacerbated by climate change. It looks at community-driven models of insurance and collective savings and points to the need for innovative ways to scale up meso-level organisations that can be active in providing insurance in ways that people are used to saving. It also points to the need for greater collaboration in global south country contexts between researchers and practitioners who are deeply knowledgeable about urban informality with those who work on finance and data-driven insurance approaches.

## Urban Planning and Resilience Building in the Caribbean

**Cassidy Johnson** and **Armando Caroca Fernandez** (BUDD 2018-2019) have been commissioned by

the World Bank to write a background paper for an upcoming flagship report on Revisiting Resilience in the Caribbean: a 360-degree approach. The background paper aims to explore the complex and integrated nature of urban planning by developing a methodological framework to assess the various “building blocks” that make up the system of urban planning in order to capture the ability of urban planning to serve to reduce disaster risks. This methodology is applied using a desk-based study, to nine countries in the Caribbean region: Belize, Dominica, Dominican Republic, Guyana, Haiti, Jamaica, St Lucia, St Maarten, and St Vincent. The Caribbean region is one of the most exposed regions to natural hazards, including hurricanes, flooding, storm surges, volcanic eruptions, and landslides. This coupled with limited land space available for development, high rates of informal urbanization and poverty, as well as ecological and economic pressures for tourism mean that the spatial and social configuration of development is vital in achieving sustainable development. Urban planning potentially has an important role to play in facilitating Caribbean states to become more resilient to hazards and to protecting fragile ecosystems.

## Datathon of informal transport in Central America

The DPU with the Global Partnership for Informal Transportation (GPIT) and the Centro Para la Sostenibilidad Urbana (CPSU) staged the Central American Datathon of Informal Transport during the month of March 2021. The Datathon gathered information about informal transportation systems across Central America. The project, funded by the British Embassy in San Jose, Costa Rica, constitutes a first step towards the GPIT’s effort to develop the Global Encyclopedia of Informal Transportation Vehicles. The effort gathered and surfaced information about the ubiquitous informal transportation systems that serve the majority of cities and towns in the Global South using DPU’s web-based participatory mapping platform, Maptionnaire. **Dr Daniel Oviedo** was DPU’s investigator in the project,

providing inputs on the frameworks and methodological design of the project and training on Maptionnaire to the teams of GPIT and CPSU. The Central American Datathon crowdsourced information on vehicles and routes across the region. CPSU will recruit volunteers and researchers to collect information on local names, vehicles form factors, routes, geography, the availability of ride-hailing apps, and other important dimensions of informal transportation in Central America. The information will be useful to understanding the particular characteristics of informal transport in different countries, and the value it generates to operators, users and local economies. It will also provide insights that will facilitate calculations regarding the carbon footprint of the sector and develop data-based policies for inclusive urban infrastructure (urban design), transport planning and post-COVID economic regeneration.

## Regional COVID Observatory on use of time and mobility

DPU's **Dr Daniel Oviedo** led an international team of researchers from the Latin American chapter of the International Network for Transport and Accessibility in Low-Income Communities (INTALInC LAC) in a partnership with the Inter-American Development Bank to launch a regional observatory on the effects of COVID-19 on use of time and urban mobility. The outbreak of Covid-19 has nearly halted urban mobility in many cities as governments increasingly restrict movement in an effort to slow its spread. Global South cities already dealing with high inequality and poverty, compounded by pessimistic economic growth forecasts for 2020, are likely to face dire economic and health consequences, which will impact poor and other vulnerable populations the hardest. The crisis and the wide array of government responses raise important questions on how best to reduce the health risks to citizens, while ensuring equitable and fair access to critical opportunities for populations. Governments implemented a wide array of measures to reduce the spread of COVID-19 within cities and transit vehicles, however, little is known

about their effectiveness and impacts on the outbreak, public health, and access for vulnerable populations. The observatory focused on the effects of the pandemic on urban mobility, use of time and accessibility to opportunities through a consistent and comparative mapping of changes in urban mobility and activity patterns as a result of measures taken by countries including Colombia, Ecuador, Mexico, Brazil, Uruguay and Paraguay, highlighting inequalities mediated by the intersection of social identities. The team collected an international online survey using DPU's Maptionnaire platform between March and May 2020. Findings led to the development of an interactive dashboard of data for all countries openly available at the [INTALInC website](#) and co-authored papers to be published in peer-reviewed journals.

## DPU Internal Grant 2021, Recipient: Dr. Paroj Banerjee

The DPU Internal Grant will support **Paroj Banerjee's** project titled 'Interrogating 'unsafety': a comparative action-research on COVID-19 governance and exacerbation of everyday insecurities of houseless populations in Indian cities'. Located in the cities of Kolkata and Delhi, this research will advance existing action-research in Mumbai to examine how official measures related to Covid-19 negatively impacted houseless groups. Divergent to the dominant ideas of home which is not only seen as a safe haven but also a physical structure tied to a specific consumer consciousness, there has been alarming evidence to suggest that Covid-19 pandemic has exacerbated atrocities in relation to home. As the 'home' was seen as an important site to shield from the virus, those inhabiting the streets were perceived as contaminants and several measures were introduced to confine these groups physically, economically, socially and politically. Mandatory physical confinements within the home have not only presented the 'sacred' sphere as oppressive for many (UN Women has termed this as 'shadow pandemic'), but have failed to provide protection to the houseless. On the contrary the

pandemic has compounded intersectional vulnerabilities of houseless populations as they were perceived as contaminants to the 'housed' public. Measures taken by national and local governments in Indian cities to contain the spread meant confining these street dwellers and rough sleepers into packed spaces negatively impacting their livelihoods, social networks and physical safety. The proposed project will advance the existing work in Mumbai by strengthening the dissemination and policy advocacy, but also be extended to the cities of Kolkata and Delhi to gain a comparative perspective of institutional and everyday conditions that pushed houseless groups to a situation of 'unsafety'. By unsafety this project is alluding towards the embodied forms of social, economic, cultural, psychological and physical precarities generated through concerns and practices of institutionalised protection. The action research aims to address urban marginalisation that was produced as effect of imbibing inequitable notions of safety.

## Urban Studies Foundation Seminar Series Awards

**Professor Haim Yacobi**, Programme Leader of the MSc Health in Urban Development, received the Urban Studies Foundation Seminar Series Awards in collaboration with Dr. Mori Ram (Newcastle University) and Dr. Charlotte Lemanski (University of Cambridge). The grant will fund the project and seminars series "Infrastructure, Inequality and the Neo-Apartheid city". The project will focus on apartheid as a systemic institutionalised process of division that drives apart communities and is framed by variegated modes of governance that generate unequal integration into the polity. The primary focus will be on three parameters of analysis: Urban Health and the infrastructure of apartheid, Citizenship, capital and infrastructure in the apartheid city and Mobility and movement beyond apartheid. [Find out more.](#)

## UCL Cities Partnership Programme will offer a critical and interdisciplinary debate about how cities in the Middle East are represented, understood and discursively shaped in our globalising world

### UCL Cities Partnership Programme

**Haim Yacobi**, Programme Leader of the MSc Health in Urban Development, received the UCL Cities Partnership Programme Fund in collaboration with Professor Eric Verdeil and Dr Helene Thiollet from SciencesPo Paris. This research project and seminar series will offer a critical and interdisciplinary debate about how cities in the Middle East are represented, understood and discursively shaped in our globalising world. In the workshops to be conducted at UCL and SciencesPo we will invite scholars to discuss (i) how, in our globalising world with its flows of knowledge, capital and people, one characterises “Cities in the Middle East” as a distinct urban category without falling into an essentialist trap? (ii) is there any justification for generalising the urban processes of various cities located in a region despite their diverse histories, politics and cultures? (iii) what is our role as scholars in de-constructing the modern geopolitical and urban map of the Middle East that has resulted from the post-war European imperialism which actually created the concept? The first workshop at UCL will focus on global representations of cities in the Middle East in art, film industry, media and current literature. The second workshop at SciencesPo will focus on how Eurocentric notions of diversity, cosmopolitanism and modernity discursively and tangibly shape cities politics, space and culture in the Middle East.

### Navigating Space Under Lockdown

The needs and experiences of young people from minority ethnic backgrounds have been largely absent from public policy and debate relating to the pandemic in the UK. To help address this gap, the DPU’s **Barbara Lipietz**, **Daniel Oviedo** and **Jordana Ramalho** have teamed up with The Ubele Initiative to develop a multi-methods pilot research exploring the impacts of COVID-19 on young “BAME” (Black Asian and Minority Ethnic) adults in England. Funded by the National Lottery Community Fund, the project employs a number of creative methods including film and podcasts, along with a geo-questionnaire, co-developed with the support of young researchers, social activists and change makers in their communities. The ‘Navigating Space Under Lockdown’ project will present findings at a public launch event in May 2021, with a view to expanding the research nationally.

### Gridding Equitable Urban Futures in Areas of Transition (GREAT) in Cali, Colombia and Havana, Cuba

The 3-year project was awarded funding by UKRI-GCRF. The project is led by Lancaster University alongside the DPU, with **Catalina Ortiz** as Co-Investigator and **Julio Davila** and Caroline Moser part of the Advisory board. The international interdisciplinary team of researchers

overseas operate in Universidad del Valle, Colombia; and, in Cuba, the Technological University of Havana. The project seeks to transform our understanding of the relationship between off-grid infrastructures and the dynamics of growth and change of informal settlements in areas of transition. Through a series of three thematic PublicLabs on policy and urban planning, transport and mobility, and waste management the project will combine: fieldwork and related research activities, participatory community workshops, seed-funded projects, and work with local policy and planning authorities as well as charitable organisations in the two cities. Working closely with communities from two informal settlements, the project aims to contribute to ‘gridding’ equitable urban futures in Cali, Colombia and Havana, Cuba.

### Activating abandoned heritage: The Medina of Tunis’ potentials and pathways

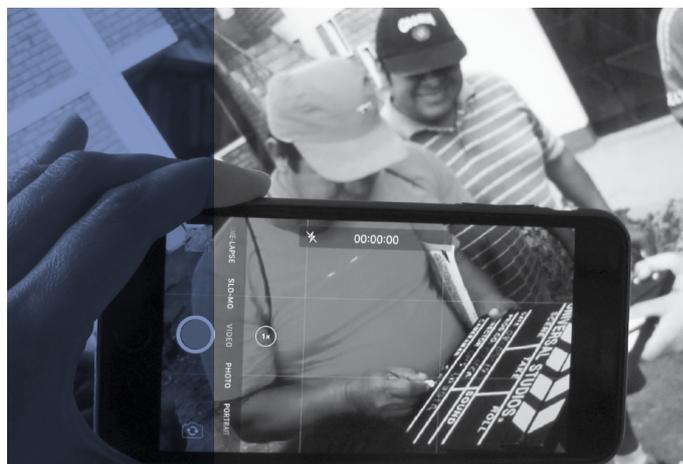
The 6-month project was awarded funding by GCRF: UCL Internal Small Grants Call (AY 2020-21). The project is led by the Institute for Sustainable Heritage, BSEER, and has **Catalina Ortiz** as Co-investigator. Using the Medina of Tunis as the field of action, we will explore the potential of urban vacancy as seed for community-centred revitalisation of historic cities in LMIC through developing and testing a replicable and intensely digital participatory methodology for co-devising futures for vacant historic buildings. The project will assess the collective value of ruins and vacant heritage landscapes and identify and interrogate the potential of reuse of vacant buildings in fragile environments for capacity-building; green recovery and social activation. Along with Blue Fish, Commune de Tunis, M’dinti, Collectif Creatif and ICOMOS Tunisie the team looks at the potential of heritage led regeneration of the medina of Tunis (Tunisia), a 16th century world heritage site that experienced considerable decay after the 1950s socio-economic changes.

## Cultural and creative industries – drivers of development

**Alessio Kolioulis** has been working as economist of the project “Cultural and creative industries – drivers of development”, a flagship initiative of The German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ). The project is implemented by GIZ and the Goethe-Institut and takes place across seven cities in Iraq, Jordan, Kenya, Lebanon, Senegal and South Africa. “Cultural and creative industries – drivers of development” address diverse stakeholders ranging from individual freelancers and business owners to organizations and platform events operating in the cultural and creative industries. The most targeted sectors are Music, Fashion, Design, and Animation/VR. Alessio contributed to the research design and analytical framework, helped with the design of an industry survey that received over 600 high quality responses, compiled country and city profiles and co-led the data analysis. The study provides empirical evidence on the impact of Covid-19 on the cultural and creative industries in the Global South and is helping to formulate recommendations for suitable response actions. This research was designed by VibeLab, a consulting agency specialized on empowering creative communities in cities across the world. [Find out more.](#)

## The number one provocateur

In January 2021, **Kamna Patel** was presented with “The number one provocateur disrupting the rigged system Award” by Sound Advice (an architectural collective) for contributions to creating inclusive education in the field of the built environment. In a write up in [DeZeen magazine](#), the award was described as, “celebrating spatial practitioners who are insiders, often working in the shadows, quietly and diligently in cultural organisations or educational institutions. The build-up of their impact can be slow and unheralded but their influence over time is undeniable, as the power and impact they have is remarkable”.



Participatory video workshop with inhabitants in Lima organised by CENCA  
Photo Credit: CENCA/Rita Lambert

## Remote documentaries and collective narrative construction in post-COVID research

COVID-19 has increased the uptake of digital technologies by informal dwellers with the possibility of producing ‘cellfilms’ and ‘digital stories’ that can be harnessed for strategic ends. At the same time, for researchers and practitioners alike, the pandemic has hastened the experimentation with remote visual methodologies, but without the critical consideration of how these methodologies might recreate or exasperate extractive approaches. The pressure to find ways to study context without physical presence means that researchers revert to the disembodied gaze provided by the camera and transfer textual and visual material that can be analysed and repackaged elsewhere. Calls for co-production of knowledge are all too good to counteract some of these problems. However, co-production relies heavily on being in the context, working with people and being able to collaborate. Questions around how we support communities to devise strategies for self-representation, how we enact co-production remotely and how we conduct ethical research are more urgent than ever at

this time and beyond the pandemic. This research seeks to advance collective narrative construction through remote documentaries. It will examine the contextual and situated ethics of visual material and different documentary styles together with inhabitants. By doing so, it aims to develop an ethical and practical framework for working remotely on visual outputs produced by urban dwellers in low-income neighbourhoods. The activities proposed include a series of workshops with experts and practitioners, online training sessions in storyboarding and video-making, and the production, screening and evaluation of two documentary films. The films will focus on collective action generated in the light of COVID, with the precise angle chosen by participants. The project is led by Dr Rita Lambert with co-investigators, **Dr Ignacia Ossul-Vermeiren** and **Alexander Macfalane** from the DPU; Arq. Carlos Escalante Estrada from Peruvian NGO CENCA and Ahmad Rifai from Indonesian NGO Kota Kita.



## Impact of Covid-19 on the work of The Centre for Community Initiatives in Tanzania and the communities it works with

The Centre for Community Initiatives (CCI) in Tanzania is an NGO that supports that Tanzanian Federation of the Urban Poor. CCI is a long-standing partner of the DPU, having hosted MSc field trips and participated in several research projects, including the Knowledge in Action for Urban Equality (KNOW) programme. During the early days of the pandemic, CCI developed a campaign to fill knowledge gaps about COVID-19 and raise awareness about prevention in informal settlements in Tanzania. In a KNOW blog post, they outline how informal settlements in cities of Tanzania have relied, during the pandemic, on local community organisations to mobilise and bridge the deficits in information and in the provision of essential aid. Emmanuel Osuteye and Cassidy Johnson have been awarded a DPU Internal Research funding to work with CCI and its Director, Tim Ndezi to understand more about the impacts of COVID-19 on this local NGO, as well as the impacts of COVID-19 as an emerging risk in informal settlements. The current research funding will enable field work to assess the impacts, and also enable the team to focus in on important questions emerging for future research in this field. To date, there has been very little work done that looks at these issues in Tanzania.

## Politics of Care in the Pandemic Time: Investigating Infrastructure of Solidarity Networks

**PI: Raktim Ray,  
CO-I- Amit Chatterjee,  
School of Planning and  
Architecture Bhopal**

The research aims to examine how civil society mobilises resources through solidarity networks to provide care. To do so, it explores comparatively how civil society self-mobilised during Covid-19 outbreak in London and Kolkata and offered various forms of services to vulnerable communities. These services are not only limited to arranging grocery or medications for shielding communities (in London) but also organising community kitchens and providing food for economically marginalised sections (in Kolkata). This ethnographic research draws examples from Covid-19 Mutual Aid Group in London and Quarantined Student-Youth Network (QSYN) in Kolkata to decipher how politics of care is operationalised through solidarity networks. By a nuanced understanding of their resource mobilisation strategies, the research also aims to reconceptualise the understanding of infrastructure. The project will publish collaborative blogs based on lived experiences of people who were involved with these solidarity networks. The project will also curate a 3-part vernacular podcast series on politics of care.

Community Kitchen  
in Kolkata during First  
Outbreak of Covid-19  
Photo Credit: Quarantined  
Student-Youth Network

# Connections

After a career as a diplomat and raising a child, **Hua Pan** (DAP 2009-10) is currently based in Beijing, China, working as a senior expert for State Grid International Development, the largest utility firm in the world, with projects in Asia, Europe, Australia, the Middle East and Latin America. Hua works with project teams from around the world. She is proud to be working for “a company exporting not only capital but also technology, management expertise and hopefully unique touches of China”.

A group of **MSc BUDD students** from 2019-20 has launched a collective called “Projektado”, a critical transdisciplinary and international design collective that responds to the ways design is perceived, taught, practiced and consumed today. The first issue of an online experimental magazine will be released in May 2021 on their website. Stay tuned!

**Carlotta Trippa** and **Naiara Yumiko** (MSc BUDD 2019-20) have won a competition titled ‘Counter – territories’ organised by Tajarrood Architecture and Art Foundation. Their project ‘The murderous border: Counter-trajectories in the context of Mediterranean migrations’ addresses different scales and trajectories involved in migratory processes, highlighting geopolitical dynamics.

**Bobae Lee** (BUDD 2018-19) has joined as a Regional Gender and Climate Change Expert at UN Women Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific. She is part of the project EmPower, and working on gender responsive climate actions, aiming to have women in every facet of decision making processes in policies, financing mechanisms, and wider climate actions.

**Mark Jones** (PhD DPU 2017) has been appointed Associate Professor at University of Queensland’s School of Architecture.

**Matteo Bellinzas** (UED 2004-2005) since 2015 has been Director of Unidad de Planificación y Desarrollo in Colombia, now working on a Sus-

tainable Tourism Plan for UNESCO Biosphere Reserve, Sierra Nevada de Santa Marta (SNSM-STP).

**Derek Roberts** (UCL Provost 1989-99) died in February 2021. On a visit to the DPU, shortly after taking up his appointment, he insisted that it should have a logo that clearly linked the Unit with the College. The result was the DPU’s first logo that he personally approved. He persuaded the UCL Council to set up the ‘Committee of Management the Development Planning Unit’ as a UCL Council sub-committee and appoint Sir Henry Phillips (a Council member) to chair it. In large measure, the success and international reputation of the DPU are due to Derek Roberts’ support, always advocating for its autonomy.

**Sivaguru Ganesan** died in Sri Lanka in March 2021. He had been associated and engaged with the DPU since the 1970s when he did his PhD, supervised by Otto Koenigsberger and Duccio Turin.

**Manu Mahajan** (UED 2005-6) In 2015, Manu was a research advisor to India’s National Institute of Urban Affairs and spent a year prior to that as a Principal Urban Designer at Halcrow India. In 2019, he attended the University of Leeds on a Commonwealth Split-Site Scholarship working on doctoral research on urban transport and local economy. After returning to India in January 2020, he appeared for an interview at the School of Planning and Architecture, New Delhi. In July 2020, he got selected to join the school as an Associate Professor of Urban Design

**Awo Mahad** (ESD 2016-17) is a Policy Officer for Developing Markets, Trade Diplomacy Department at the Foreign Commonwealth & Development Office. She was brought in to work on continuity trade agreements but has now moved to the trade diplomacy department.

**Yasmine Kherfi** (DAP 2017-18) is starting a PhD Studentship in Sociology, working with Dr Sara Sa-

lem and Dr Ayce Cubukcu at LSE on political violence and the (bio) politics of disposability in Syria.

**Kerry-Jo Lyn** (DAP 2009-10) is a director at the LGBTI Global Human Rights Initiative (a USAID/DC program) and Astraea Lesbian Foundation for Justice. She is managing a USD \$25 million LGBTI Global Development Partnership (funded by USAID and Sida & Global Affairs Canada) with programming in 12 countries (Albania, Bosnia & Herzegovina, Colombia, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, Honduras, India, Kenya, Kosovo, Peru, Serbia, South Africa). It is the first-of-its-kind public-private partnership for global LGBTI support.

**Ganesh Shankar Mishra** (DAP 2019-20) is the Director of Institutional Finance & Deputy Secretary to Government of Madhya Pradesh, Department of Finance. He monitors banking services, PPP projects and externally aided projects.

**Benyao Yang** (DAP 2016-17) is now an investor relations manager at CITIC Group in China. He is a liaison with CITIC’s manufacturing sector, namely CITIC Special Steel and CITIC Dicastal, both of which are leading figures in their fields.

**Terri-Ann Gilbert-Roberts** (DAP 2004-5) has been appointed Research Manager at the Commonwealth Secretariat and has a long list of roles in youth policy.

**Marie Toulemonde** (DAP 2011-12) In August 2020, she began working as a Program Specialist in Gender at the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) in Istanbul, Turkey.

**Mariana Dias Simpson** (UDP 2010-11) is a Coordinator at the Mutual Accountability Mechanism at Sanitation and Water for All, located in Lisbon.

**Jinguk Lee** (DAP 2019-20) is now working at Green Climate Fund in Korea. He works in both Communications and Climate Finance.

# PhD programme

In October 2020 **Gbenekanu Mpigi** successfully defended his thesis that the social relations of urban agriculture mediate people's engagement and success in generating food security for their household and reducing their vulnerability. His thesis explains how poor urban households in Port Harcourt City, Nigeria, engage with urban agricultural production practices to improve their conditions. He demonstrates how people negotiate and navigate urban agriculture processes, by examining social relations around three key decision-making points – firstly, what people do to start urban agriculture; secondly, if, and when, they diversify their engagement; and thirdly, if, and when, they cease engaging in urban agriculture. He counter-poses respondents in each of these three groups with a group of respondents that have never engaged in urban agriculture.

In January 2021, **Monica Bernal Llanos** successfully defended her thesis offering a critical understanding of how climate change adaptation responses are specific, not only to local geophysical and socioeconomic conditions, but to local ways of understanding and governing novel phenomena. In Colombia, these local ways manifest in the form of territories of adaptation where political-administrative, jurisdictional and ecological narratives materialise in an effort to mainstream adaptation into planning and governance at urban, regional and national scales.

**Kerry Bobbins** successfully defended her PhD thesis in December 2020. In her thesis, Kerry contends green infrastructure concepts come to exist in practice as part of a social process, where project level actors such as government officials, private sector professionals and members of civil society negotiate its many meanings in response to their interests, local context and historic setting. By exploring how green infrastructure concepts are used in Johannesburg, South Africa, Kerry identified green infrastructure concepts as what actors can claim ownership of and which uncertainties they can manage at project sites.

In March 2021, **Fanny Froehlich** successfully defended her thesis entitled Transnational and Local Concepts of Gender and Social Transformation in International Development Work: Understanding Normative Frameworks through Foregrounding Life Realities in Ghana. She explored concepts and lived modes of gender and social transformation as part of a gender-transformative international development programme, with a particular interest in social norm change. Drawing on a transnational feminist analytical lens, the thesis argues that addressing the 'cross-cultural question' in international development work lies in co-production of knowledge based on collaborative efforts among feminist development practitioners and community members, grounded in the value and principle of epistemic equality.

In February 2020, **Lucila Carbonel** successfully defended her thesis, titled 'Reframing Shelter Self-Recovery: Women's Experiences of Post-Disaster Reconstruction in Machhegaun, Nepal, after the 2015 Earthquake', argues that 'shelter self-recovery' can be used as an integrated approach that acknowledges the simultaneity of multiple social identities, partners with women-led local initiatives to define shelter needs and enables women to participate in formulating policies and programmes, and lead on decision-making.

In December 2020, **Mark Jones** successfully defended his thesis looking at Energy Justice in an informal settlement in Dhaka - making a good contribution to the Energy Justice debate and also to the Capability Approach.

In March 2020, **Eva Filippi** successfully defended her thesis, arguing that the appropriation of the concept of disaster risk management and its translation into everyday work routines across a whole municipality requires thinking through three phases of institutionalisation: emergence, embeddedness, and sustained change. In her thesis, she considered the incorporation of disaster risk management processes in the Municipality of Santa Fe, Argentina.

In February 2021, **Amina-Bahja Ekman** successfully completed her thesis titled A Critical Theory Approach to Inequality in Somali Society: Rethinking Class and Identity For the Gabooye Collective in Somaliland.

In November 2020, **Vicente Burgos** successfully defended his thesis on the social practices of planning law in Santiago, arguing that reading the co-constitutive relation between law and space in cities such as Santiago can help to uncover the potential for legal instruments to achieve desired urban change.

In November 2020, **Bruno Chichizola** successfully completed his PhD, arguing that, in Peru, current understandings of interculturalidad require the re-connection of the ideal behind the concept with its practice to avoid purely technocratic solutions to a process which is essentially political.

In January 2021, **Harshavardhan Jatkar** successfully completed his PhD thesis which argued that an analysis of how people subjected to slum rehabilitation projects themselves politicise land has to be attentive to postcolonial and subaltern land subjectivities. Drawing from postcolonial theory and subaltern studies, he proposed a theory of a socially made participatory land policy constitutive of bodily, material and textual encounters between the governors and the governed. Focusing on the socially made participatory land policy, he showed that people's articulations of land straddle between modernity and tradition (therefore postcolonial), while others remain unrecognisable using prevailing vocabularies (therefore subaltern). In particular, his thesis uncovered three subaltern meanings of land, namely: an anchor for interpersonal metonyms, inseparable from spatial morphology, and flesh of the community.

# Hands on

## Wellcome Trust's Doctoral Studentship in Humanities and Social Sciences

**Nura Ali** is the first DPU student to be awarded the Wellcome Trust's Doctoral Studentship in Humanities and Social Sciences, covering fees, research and living costs. Her research looks into the interrelations of water, informal networks, urban health, and socio-spatial inequalities, with a particular focus on the Makoko settlement in Lagos, Nigeria. Nura also explores non-anthropocentric ontologies and their potential for social science research. Her supervisors are **Professor Michael Walls** and **Professor Haim Yacobi**.

## UCL-Osaka University Walking Cities Lab met with communities in Freetown to deliver project outputs for advocacy and community-led planning

On March 2, 2021, The UCL-Osaka University Walking cities lab, co-directed by **Dr Daniel Oviedo**, delivered the research outputs from the participatory mapping of walkability and walking practices in Moyiba, Freetown (Sierra Leone), to the neighborhood communities. In association with the Sierra Leone Urban Research Centre (SLURC), the project produced a highly detailed assessment of streets, pathways, conditions, risks, and adaptations for walkability across the Moyiba area. It is the first rigorous mapping of connectivity and opportunities for walking access in the neighbourhood. During the meeting, which had a virtual presence from the UCL and Osaka co-directors of the lab, community members shared their thoughts, opinions, and expectations about using the maps. Community leaders and development partners will use the maps for advocacy, community-led planning, and support of

Photo Credit:  
Yasmina Yusuf, 2021

Below:  
Improved household toilet connected to a simplified sewerage system in a low-income settlement in Dar es Salaam, Tanzania  
Photo Credit: Pascale Hofmann, 2019



implementation work in Moyiba. SLURC and community leaders in Moyiba will organise further meetings so more people can understand the maps.

## Grassroots insights into urban risk and resilience

Informal settlements face many risks, often rooted in poor-quality shelter, inadequate services, and unresponsive local governance. These challenges are usually tackled in sectoral silos without the voices or knowledge of the residents themselves.

**Pascale Hofmann** is Co-Investigator in a British Academy funded collaborative research project led by IIED that forges interdisciplinary pathways to resilience with communities in Dar es Salaam. Interdisciplinary researchers from IIED and DPU are working with the Centre for Community Initiatives

(CCI) and the Tanzania Urban Poor Federation (TUPF) to examine multiple risks in informal settlements, including secondary data-analysis and additional participatory action research in Dar es Salaam. While focusing on inadequate sanitation and solid waste management, the team's analysis will encourage intersectoral strategies and create a platform for inclusive, co-produced interventions with government actors to foster interdisciplinary pathways to resilience with communities in Dar es Salaam. It will promote local buy-in as well as broader replicability by using the partners' existing networks, novel communications outputs, and South-South learning opportunities. [Find out more.](#)

## Policy Toolkit for achieving SDGs in Durban through sanitation (ToolSanDurban)

Together with a colleague from the Bartlett School of Construction and Project Management (BSCPM), **Pascale Hofmann** (DPU) has been awarded funding by UCL Grand Challenges and the Global Engagement Office for a project in Durban to facilitate the achievement of the UN Sustainable Development Goals. They are working with colleagues from other UCL departments and eThekweni Municipality to co-develop tools for the delivery of SDGs in Durban through improved monitoring and evaluation. In the short term, the project ToolSanDurban aims to support eThekweni Municipality in becoming a pioneer in the process of localisation and implementation of SDGs in the Global South. ToolSanDurban will demonstrate the wide-ranging benefits of sanitation supporting current initiatives in the municipality. In the longer term the project aims to impact outcomes for sanitation policies in the city as the work to be undertaken aspires to influence thinking on how improved policies for sanitation can deliver benefits across the SDGs. To that end, the interdisciplinary UCL team is collaborating with the eThekweni SDG Institutionalisation Committee comprised of members from multiple governmental departments to rationalise and contextualise SDG Targets and engage with other relevant stakeholders. ToolSanDurban will provide the evidence base required to leverage larger grants for the development of a longer-term collaboration with the eThekweni SDG Contextualisation Committee for which discussions are ongoing with potential external funders. There is potential to transfer lessons from this project and outputs such as the toolkit to other municipalities in the region and also to other sectors such as water, health and energy. This work will further lay the foundation for co-creating an online SDG monitoring platform and tools for municipalities.

## OVERDUE team is exploring intersecting inequalities shaping how COVID-19 and sanitation interact.

### MSc UDP and Just Space audio map launched as tool to amplify diverse community voices in 'post-pandemic' London

Part of a longstanding collaboration between Just Space and staff and students of the DPU's MSc Urban Development Planning programme, April saw the launch of a co-produced audio-mapping project designed to amplify the voices of London's diverse communities in London planning. As policy attention tentatively turns towards 'post-pandemic'/ recovery planning, this project, codesigned by **Barbara Lipietz**, **Tim Wickson** and the network of London-based grassroots organisations, underscores the importance of placing community experiences and knowledges at the heart of this process. More information on the project, and a link to the audio map, can be found on the DPU website. [Find out more.](#)

### The DPU contributes to the capacity building component of The Global Future Cities Programme

The UK's Global Future Cities Programme (GFCP) is a specific component of the Prosperity Fund, which carries out technical assistance for a set of targeted interventions aimed at encouraging sustainable development and increasing prosperity while alleviating high levels of urban poverty. It is based on three thematic pillars: urban planning, transport and resilience.

The DPU contributed to a capacity building session on inclusive planning to the 19 cities that participate in the programme, with more than 250 attendees. DPU's **Barbara Lipietz** and **Catalina Ortiz** delivered a presentation titled 'Inclusive Prosperity: from urban projects to strategic spatial planning systems' in which they reframed the notion of inclusive planning.

### OVERDUE - Intersecting Inequalities

Grounded in the African cities of Freetown, Beira, and Mwanza, the OVERDUE team is exploring intersecting inequalities shaping how COVID-19 and sanitation interact. Our first collective position paper addresses the heterogeneity of infrastructures, investments, practices and needs that exist on the ground. It suggests it is possible to move beyond narratives of 'infrastructural deficits' to support instead pathways towards just sanitation that fully recognise the role of women and men, girls and boys and their collectives during and beyond the pandemic. Tracking down past, ongoing and projected sanitary arrangements, exploring the political economy of both grid and off-grid investments and promises, and paying attention to the diversity of needs and practices from an intersectional perspective that considers, among other things, class, gender, age, ethnicity and ability, are three directions to do so. They can be harnessed to make the most of the renewed interest in sanitation, further inclusion, and challenge long-term inequalities for both sanitation users and providers. [Find out more.](#)

# Staff news

**Kate Goh** left her position as Graduate Teaching Assistant and we welcome **Kerry Bobbins** to take on the role.

**Nelly Leblond** joined the DPU as a research fellow for the OVERDUE research project.

**Qurratulain Faheem** (Quratt), GTA of the MSc Health in Urban Development has left for research leave to complete her PhD fieldwork in Pakistan. El Anoud Majali is replacing Qurratulain for this period.

**Camillo Boano** stepped down from his role of BUDD Program Leader a role he had served for 12 years

In February, the Journal Environment and Urbanization announced that the article Mapping repertoires of collective action facing the COVID-19 pandemic in informal settlements in Latin American cities (Duque, I. **Ortiz, C.**, Samper, J. Millan, G., 2020) was the third most downloaded paper.

**Giovanna Astolfo** is the new Director of Communications at the DPU after Alexandre Apsan Frediani stepped down in August 2020. She will be on maternity leave in April 2021.

# Networks and meetings

**Dialogue in Development “Trajectories of spatial violence in Southeast Asian cities.** Report launch” hosted by DPU on 9 March 2021. Chair: **Catalina Ortiz**. Speakers: **Giovanna Astolfo**, Elizabeth Rhoads, Shoko Sakuma, Marina Kolovou-Kouri. The event discussed and launched a new DPU working paper on spatial violence in Southeast Asia as part of the British academy project “Framing living heritage as a tool to prevent spatial violence” The paper aims to reveal how urban displacement shapes and perpetuates modalities of spatial violence in the context of rapidly urbanising Southeast Asia. While Southeast Asian postcolonial scholars have explored some manifestations of spatial violence such as displacement, a comprehensive regional analysis is still lacking, especially in relation to urbanisation impacts and planning. Through a comparative lens, this study looks at the urban development contexts and histories of displacement in six cities; Ho Chi Minh, Bangkok, Manila, Jakarta, Phnom Penh, and Kuala Lumpur.

**Urban Design conversations on “Critical engagement, Displacement Urbanism and Housing Justice”** hosted by MSc BUDD on 4,5 and 12 February 2021. Chaired by: **Catalina Ortiz, Giovanna Astolfo, Camillo Boano, Giorgio Talocci**. Speakers: Akil Scafe Smith, Lucy Warin, Witee Wisuthumporn, Silvia Chi, Joana Dabaj, Belen Desmaison, Marina Kolovou-Kouri, Melissa Garcia Lamarca, Laura Michener, Cristian Robertson. This is a series of conversations reflecting on the role of urban design in a changed world. It encourages and inspires the current student body by setting up conversations with alumni about topics addressing academic practice and beyond as well as disciplinary concerns and frontiers

In September 2020, **Camillo Boano** was invited to the State of Exception - Open City Documentary Festival in London discussing the effects of Lock-

down in urban spaces commenting on the State of Exception project by Merijn Royaards & Henrietta Williams

In December 2020, **Camillo Boano** gave a keynote presentation “Jerusalem as a paradigm. Archeology of the future” at the Palestinian Berzeit Jenuralem Museum’s second annual conference.

**Professor Julio D Dávila** was interviewed by international media, was a contributor to publications and a keynote speaker at a number of online events, mostly related to the impact of the pandemic and the future of cities. He was interviewed by the Wall Street Journal for an online video entitled ‘How the Coronavirus Pandemic Is Changing the Way We Commute’. He was one of a number of world experts consulted for a publication by the Fondazione Enrico Mattei entitled ‘Which future for cities after COVID-19; an international survey’. Julio was a speaker at, among others, ‘The Urban Thinkers Campus: The New Urban Normal’, organised by the Technical University Delft in The Netherlands; ‘Urban mobility for a new normality’, organised by ProPacifico, a think-tank in Western Colombia; ‘Regional responses to entrepreneurs and citizens in the new context’, organised by the Medellin Chamber of Commerce (Colombia); ‘Reflections on urban sustainability and resilience’, organised by Camacol Magdalena, in Colombia; and ‘Economic integration of bikes in cities’, organised by the Barranquilla Chamber of Commerce (Colombia). Julio was also invited to contribute to a discussion on public space and the environmental dimensions of housing and transport as part of an OECD consultation towards a formulation of a new urban policy for Colombia. He was also interviewed for a video on Medellin’s aerial cable-cars for a GIZ-funded online short course on sustainable urban mobility put together by the Bartlett School of Planning ([free enrolment here](#)).

**Dr Rita Lambert** presented her article interrogating the relationship between planning and peripheral urbanisation in Lima as part of the Launch of REVISTA ENSAYO 2- Revisando el Legado de John F.C. Turner, hosted by the Pontificia Universidad Católica del Perú on the 30th November 2020. Read the article, entitled 'Examinando la relación entre la planeación y la urbanización periférica en Lima'.

**Kamna Patel** is presenting her latest work on cosmopolitanism, international development and higher education at the International Development Department guest seminar series at the University of Birmingham in April 2021. This follows an earlier talk to the International Research and Researchers group of the Society for Research into Higher Education and their webinar on 'Marketing International/ised Higher Education: Critical Approaches'. A paper exploring the branding of international development and its study in higher education, is currently under review as part of a special issue on 'Development studies and the neoliberal university' co-edited by Kamna and Amy North at the UCL Institute of Education.

Screenshot of the webinar City Unfinished: Lima and reflexions on longitudinal film  
Photo credit: Rita Lambert, 2021;  
Image of Lima credit: Kathrin Golda-Pongratz



### Meeting of the Chevening Alumni Association of Mexico

On March 31, 2021, **Dr Daniel Oviedo** participated as Keynote speaker on a dialogue organised by the Future Cities area of the Chevening Alumni Association of Mexico. Dr Oviedo discussed with DPU alumna Daniela Muñoz Levy (UDP) from the Secretaría de Movilidad (SEMOVI) of Mexico City about transport and Inequalities in Latin American Cities. During the event, Dr Oviedo presented the recently published book *Urban Mobility and Social Equity in Latin America: Concepts, Evidence and Methods*, which he co-edits with Natalia Villamizar from Universidad Nacional de Colombia and Ana Ardila from Universidad Federal de Minas Gerais in Brazil.

### Transportation Week of the Inter-American Development Bank

On September 22, 2020, **Dr Daniel Oviedo** was invited to participate in a panel of experts on the topic Transport, social inclusion, poverty and inequality as part of the Transportation Week of the Inter-American Development Bank (IDB) in Washington, D.C. USA. The meeting convened over 200 transport specialists working in the Bank's Transport Division across the Americas. Dr Oviedo reflected on the need to challenge our understanding of transport's role on social exclusion and inequalities drawing from international examples and his work in Latin American cities.

### City Unfinished: Lima and reflexions on longitudinal film

This webinar event hosted by **Dr. Rita Lambert** on the 2nd December 2020, as part of DPU dialogues in development, saw the film screening of *Ciudad Infinita, Voces de El Ermitaño* (2018) [City Unfinished-Voces of El Ermitaño] directed by Dr Kathrin Golda-Pongratz and Rodrigo Flores. The film was followed by a commentary from John Turner, and a conversation between Dr Kathrin Golda-Pongratz and Professor Caroline Moser on urban longitudinal research methodology through film. The film provided insights into the contemporary challenges of El Ermitaño in Lima, Peru and opened interesting discussions about what is meant by documentary, the importance of seeing the neighbourhood from its physical and social landscape and how activating memory can be a means to activate agency and control over the social production of habitat.

**Catalina Ortiz** has championed a coalition around the initiative "Synergies for Solidarity" that aims to collectively imagine a more just post-pandemic future, building a global network of collaboration and empathy. The coalition is joined by the Global Platform for the Right to the City (GPR2C), UN-Habitat Latin-America, Cities Alliance, Habitat for Humanity, TECHO, Habitat International Coalition (HIC), COINVITE, United Cities and Local Governments (UCLG), Red de Investigadores de Vivienda y Habitat de las Americas (RIVHA) and Urban Housing Practitioners Hub (UHPH). As a result the partners have subscribed and generated a call for action on neighbourhood upgrading based on the joint Decalogue for Participatory Slum Upgrading in pandemic times. The decalogue proposes a road map for Latin American with ten guidelines presented arising cities from a collective process of analysis and synthesis of different documents and strategies framed in the response to COVID-19, added to the concrete knowledge generated by the inhabitants and different actors involved in the historical process of development of slum upgrading projects in Latin America and the Caribbean. This document was presented and adopted by the Assembly of Ministries of Housing and Territorial Development.



To counteract confinement and isolation, January 2021 saw the launch of **DPU HOUSE**, a relaxed space for DPU students and staff to connect, socialise and exchange thoughts, food, laughter and much more. The online space, which opens every Friday and has different rooms, operates through student volunteers. These have provided engaging activities to physically move (yoga, HIIT, stretch, dance), to cook and eat together or simply meet to have a conversation

In March, **Adriana Allan** and **Barbara Lipietz** participated in the United Cities and Local Governments (UCLG) #BeyondTheOutbreak Live Learning Experience virtual session exploring how local and regional governments were addressing the COVID-19 crisis and its relationship with contexts of informality. The series of sessions were launched jointly by UCLG, Metropolis and UNHabitat to promote meaningful exchange and co-learning amongst a variety of institutional and civil society actors in the face of the pandemic. [Webinar UCLG](#).

**Barbara Lipietz** was invited to reflect on community-responses to COVID-19 with regards 'decent housing' in a webinar session organised by the Réseau Marocain pour le Logement Décent (Morocco) (June 2020).

For Habitat Day, the DPU's **Adriana Allan** and **Barbara Lipietz** teamed up with Habitat International Coalition (HIC), United Cities and Local Government (UCLG) and the International Institute for Environment and Development (IIED) to propose a webinar entitled '[Housing Rights: Looking Back, Looking Forward](#)'. The event brought together various communities of practice converging in the defence and production of the 'right to housing' as the 'right to life'. The multi-actor event explored how our responses are changing / need to change in a 'post-'pandemic context.

October also saw the launch of UCL's two-week virtual conference 'Beyond Boundaries - Reading the UN Sustainable Development Goals' aimed at exploring why and how universities should respond to the UN's SDGs. DPU's **Barbara Lipietz**, who sat on the Steering Committee

for the conference, coordinated and co-chaired a panel on Transforming Infrastructures, bringing together academics, civil society, government and union representatives from global south and north contexts.

In February 2021, **Barbara Lipietz** was invited to participate as a panellist in the Network-Association of European Researchers on Urbanisation in the South's (N-AERUS) twenty-years anniversary conference on the theme of '[How to plan in a world of uncertainty?](#)'. She was also an invited speaker in the Van Eesteren Fellowship Lecture Series 2021 "[Towards a grounded, just and unapologetically ethical planning practice](#)", convened by Caroline Newton (TU Delft).

Post Covid-19 Urban Futures Series In a very short period, the Covid-19 crisis has forced us to devise new ways to find social proximity while working and learning remotely. The past months have shown the high adaptability of academics, social movements, local governments and other actors to experiment with, and instigate, collective learning opportunities at an unprecedented pace and scale. These experiences are what we term 'remote pedagogies'. While acknowledging that they do not replace face-to-face learning, and also that many different forms of distance learning precede the Covid-19 crisis, **Adriana Allen** and **Julia Wesely** hosted a webinar as part of the Post Covid-19 Urban Futures series to show and discuss the opportunities and challenges that these innovations and adaptations provide for social learning. This webinar was co-organised by The Bartlett Development Planning Unit, Habitat International Coalition and the Knowledge in Action for Urban Equality programme. Its speakers included Brenda Pérez Castro (Asian Coalition for Housing Rights, KNOW), **Barbara Lipietz** and **Catalina Ortiz** (both DPU-UCL, KNOW) as well as Emilia Saiz from United Cities and Local Governments, Maria Silvia Emanuelli from the Habitat International Coalition – Latin America, James Tayler and Sibulele Roji from KnowYourCity TV, and discussant Diana Laurillard from the UCL Knowledge Hub. Video clips are available on the KNOW website Last year's World Habitat Day was

themed Housing for All: A Better "Urban" Future, a theme that echoes the UN SDGs and New Urban Agenda to Leave No One Behind. Yet, COVID-19 continues to show that many are being left behind. While COVID-19 is primarily referred to as a health and economic emergency, the right to housing and housing related services play a critical role in how we are able to respond to the pandemic collectively. Co-organised by Adriana Allen and Barbara Lipietz at DPU, in collaboration with the Habitat International Coalition (HIC), the International Institute for Environment and Development (IIED) and United Cities and Local Governments (UCLG) this webinar congregated an amazing line of speakers and various communities of practice converging in the defence and production of the 'right to housing' as the 'right to life'. Our shared aim was to move towards a collective debate on how our responses are changing / need to change in the current situation. Before forging ahead, we took a moment to look back and reflect on Housing Rights and where we have come from. In looking forward, we engaged with the current moment to move beyond diagnosis and take stock of how various actors are defending and producing housing rights in the light of COVID-19.

The UKRI-GCRF funded research project [GEMDev: Grounded Energy Modelling for Equitable Urban Development in the Global South](#) was launched globally in February 2021. The Energy Institute and the Bartlett Development Planning Unit hosted the launch events in collaboration with CRDF-CEPT and MHT in India, as well as FORO, CIDAP, CENCA and SEA in Lima; where DPU's Dr Rita Lambert and Harshavardhan Jatkar presented with colleagues from the GEMDev team. The launch events took place in English and Spanish over Zoom and were attended by academics, practitioners, researchers, and students from across the world. The events stimulated an important discussion on the potentials and challenges of researching energy in informal settlements in the Global South. The discussion particularly foregrounded the timeliness of uncovering energy injustices in informal

settlements during the COVID-19 pandemic. For project updates, please visit our website and follow us on Twitter @gem\_dev and @gemdevesp.

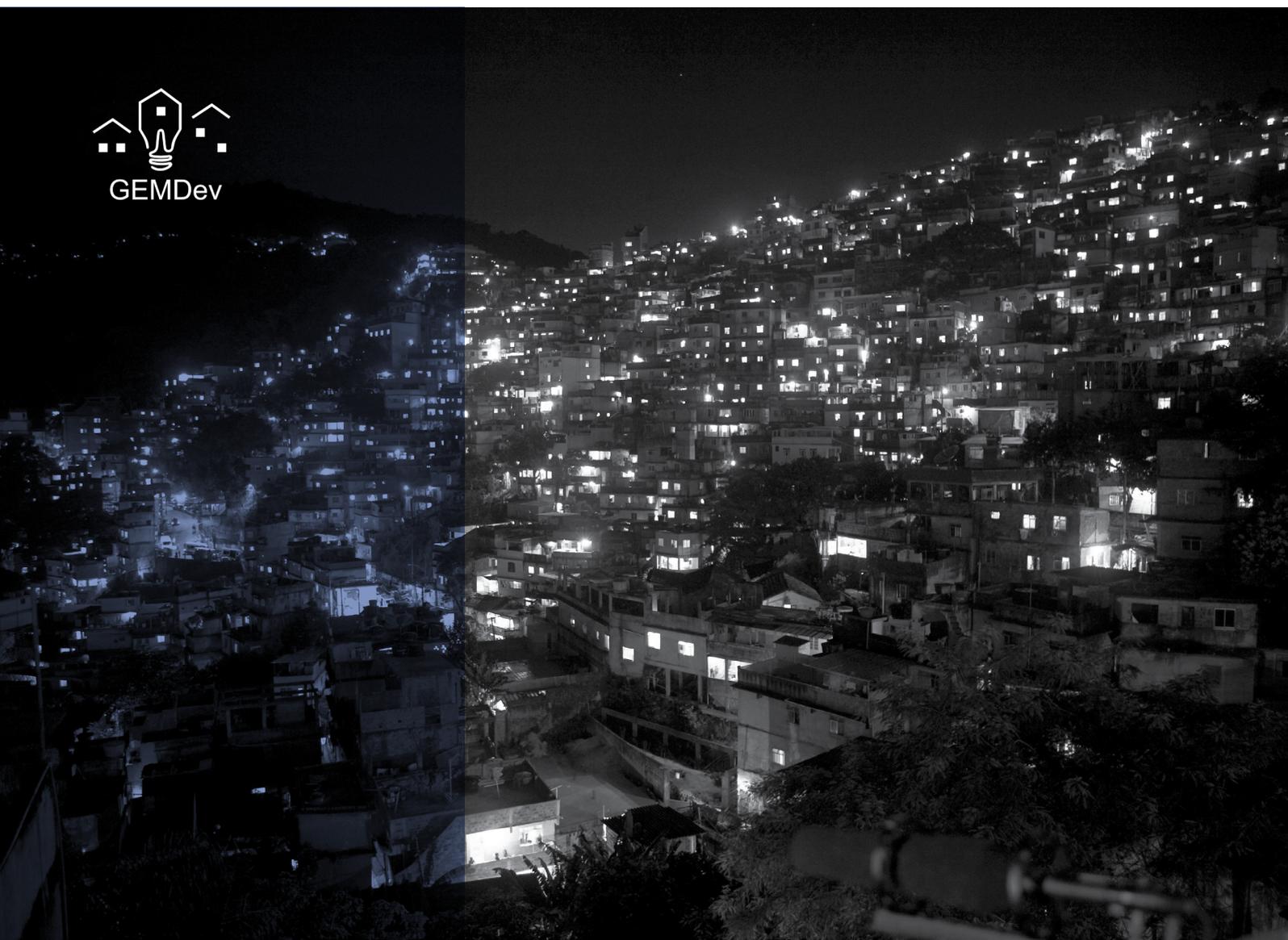
### **Knowledge in Action for Urban Equality (KNOW) Annual Workshop 2021**

From the 22<sup>nd</sup> to 26<sup>th</sup> February 2021, 52 KNOW investigators and partners gathered remotely for our fourth and final Annual Workshop. The week of online-facilitated discussions centred around unpacking what we have learnt about urban equality over the course of the programme. In the coming weeks, the team will reflect on lessons from the workshop, in order to continue our research, capacity-building, and outputs leading to the end of the programme

### **Development Workshop II. Covid-19 and Post Pandemic Responses: laying the foundations for pathways to urban equality.**

In October and November 2020, the Knowledge in Action for Urban Equality (KNOW) programme facilitated this year's Development Workshop II. It brought together over 250 students from all MSc programmes to discuss institutional and organisational responses to the pandemic, and to develop a set of performance criteria that would allow these responses to be evaluated in regard to their contributions to post pandemic recovery and pathways to urban equality. The sessions drew from case studies developed with KNOW city partners in Lima, Freetown, Dar es Salaam, Jaipur, Havana, as well as ongoing DPU research in Hargeysa, which allowed the groups to examine a wide range of responses from actors such as civil society organisations, the state and private sector.

Photo Credit: Felipe Goifman/iStock/GEMDev



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Cover Photo: A rainbow appears over the Saramandaia neighbourhood after a downpour in Salvador, Brazil, during the MSc SDP fieldtrip.  
Photo Credit: Alexander Macfarlane, 2018

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