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Plenary 3B

**Remaking Urban Experiences**

Tuesday 12 November, 9.30 – 11.00

IAS Forum

Chair / discussion lead: **Dr Susan Moore**, Associate Professor of Urban Development and Planning, The Bartlett School of Planning, UCL

This session considers how urban experiences are being remade through cultural and political practices, including politics of queer and LGBTQ+ mobilizations, collaborative and community-based knowledge production and social movement activism.

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**Prof. Sophie Oldfield**

Sophie is the University of Cape Town-University of Basel Professor of Urban Studies. She is internationally recognised for research on southern urbanism. In her theoretical and empirical research on everyday urban geographies, she explores the ways in which citizens and organized movements craft agency to engage and contest urban governance. She has a track record of excellence in collaborative research practice, challenging how academics work in and between 'university' and 'community'. Commitment to this collaborative approach lies at the heart of her research and writing on cities of the global south.

**High stakes, High Hopes: Urban theory in Partnership**

*High Stakes, High Hopes* reflects on a decade-long research and teaching partnership, a collaborative process through which members of a township civic organization in Cape Town and I have researched the city together. In the paper, I track what unfolds differently when university practices of research are infused in civic realities and commitments, in its activism and politics, in provocative conversations on everyday urbanism. Narratives and stories bring into view the partnership and its practices. They open up the collaborative process, the forms of expertise in the Civic and in the university on which it builds, and their synthesis in the substance of the urban theory we produce. Anecdotal, ordinary, grounded, they become portals to theorise the city, able to move between university and neighbourhood. In the partnership's methodology and epistemology are, I argue, high hopes for creating disciplinary forms of knowledge embedded in everyday struggles, their contradictions and possibilities.

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**Iromi Perera**

Iromi is a Colombo based researcher and activist. Her research focuses on Sri Lanka's post war development related issues, specifically evictions and forced displacement in Colombo, spatial justice, contested sacred sites, and eminent domain. Iromi joined the Board of Trustees of the Asia Foundation in January 2019 and is a part of the People's Commission on

Land initiated by the People's Alliance for Right to Land (PARL) in Sri Lanka as a Commissioner. From 2008 - 2017, Iromi was a Senior Researcher at the Centre for Policy Alternatives (CPA), a Sri Lankan public policy research and advocacy think tank, and headed CPA's survey research unit.

### **Discipline and the city: The making of a world class city in Colombo**

After the end of the war in 2009, urban development and transforming the capital city of Colombo into a 'world class city' was a key priority for the Government of Sri Lanka. This ambitious plan was initially led by a newly created Ministry of Defence and Urban Development, with hundred of military personal at their disposal. The military was not just involved in the beautification of the city, but also disciplining and controlling spaces, and evicting urban poor communities from the city centre in order to make way for luxury condominium and high-end shopping complexes. My presentation will look at the remaking of the urban experience in post war Colombo through narratives of spatial injustice and modalities of disciplining and controlling space.

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### **Dr Miguel Kanai**

Miguel is an urban geographer whose work engages with the contested infrastructures of urban development in an age of global connectivity. He is currently engaged in a project focussed on the violences produced by the infrastructure conditionalities of trade liberalisation in Buenaventura, Colombia's biggest port, and has previously worked with the tactics and resources of sex/gender dissident activisms in the shade of patriarchal violence and homo-entrepreneurial schemes in Buenos Aires and Rio de Janeiro. Miguel is a Senior Lecturer in the Department of Geography and an active member of the urban research community at the University of Sheffield.

### **How to Survive the Patriarchal City: Sharing cultures and affects in Buenos Aires and Rio de Janeiro**

In this presentation I will reflect on fieldwork that I have been conducting for the best part of the last decade with gender and sexuality activists in Buenos Aires, Argentina and in a more recent project of digital coproduction in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil. I will begin the presentation explaining why survival is a key concept to understand such practices due to the multiple forms of violence that these collectives suffer in both cities, and which have acquired more urgency since the return of a hard right in Brazil. The presentation will then reflect on what could be gained by unlearning queerness to understand these activisms around gender-and-sexuality life projects as urban manifestation of the *feminismos populares* that have emerged throughout Latin America with women at the forefront of intersectional people's movements. Finally, a few concrete examples of cultures and affects at collaborative work will be provided to illustrate how the patriarchal city may be reshaped by the queer (free, diverse or dissident) tango movement in Buenos Aires and several grassroots initiatives to (re-)make Rio de Janeiro into a city of arrival and celebration.