

Centre for Urban Research on Austerity (CURA)



ONLINE CONFERENCE 2022

Towards the Post-Pandemic City?

Book of Abstracts

Welcome to the CURA 2022 Conference

We are delighted to host this year's conference: Towards the Post-Pandemic City?

Cities, especially disadvantaged and peripheralised urban areas, are simultaneously exposed to the worst and most iniquitous fiscal and public health impacts of COVID-19 and lauded as agents of renaissance, recovery and transformation. Herein lies the apparent multi-faceted contradiction we wish to explore through this conference. On the one hand, international organisations, including the UN and OECD, represent cities as a source of the vitality and creativity required to 'build back better' or deliver 'new social contracts' encompassing economic wellbeing, public health and environmental sustainability. From a different vantage-point, urban and peri-urban struggles for equality have pragmatically organised for solidarity and mutual aid and are seen as possessing emancipatory potential and capable of inaugurating alternative political economies. On the other hand, cities remain intense zones of infectivity and have been severely debilitated by the intense economic, demographic and fiscal shocks arising from the pandemic and decades of neoliberal retrenchment. The emergence of Omicron, moreover, is a reminder that an endlessly mutating virus could challenge the very idea of a "post-pandemic city" for the foreseeable future.

Regardless of how tractable COVID-19 turns out to be short-term, we are faced with the question of how radical urban theory, scholarship and activism confront continuing aftershocks, as they intersect long-existing crises and inequalities of public health, environment, work, welfare and economy across the dimensions of class, race, gender, generation and geography. We are also concerned with whether the pandemic has, for better or worse, stimulated shifts in urban policy (engendered from the top-down or bottom-up). Without transformative political economics, argued Adam Tooze in *Shutdown*, "there is every reason to think that 2020 will be only the first of an increasingly unmanageable series of global disasters". The Russian invasion of Ukraine in February 2022 could very well be the second, and a timely reminder that military or paramilitary conflict remains an everyday reality for many cities. Given such portentous and destructive events, how can the urban be a source of transformation?

Over the course of three days we hope to explore the provocative question asked by Angelo and Wachsmuth (2020): Why does everyone think cities can save the planet? More specifically, given the inauspicious conditions unleashed by the pandemic/syndemic, and myriad prequel urban crises, how can cities and city-dwellers plausibly be agents of progressive, egalitarian or emancipatory futures 'beyond' or indeed 'living with' COVID-19 and whatever successor crises emerge? Where, if anywhere, does the pandemic open new political-economic vistas for transformative urbanism of more-or-less radical and fundamental kinds? Conversely, how and where do histories of unequal urban development instead accelerate death-dealing crises of health care, ecology and social reproduction, and encourage sceptical resignation or regressive, authoritarian, conspiracy-laden movements, and dynamics? In the process, of course, we may well generate new 'unanswered' questions, establishing novel agendas and exchanges across disciplines for the future.

We wish you a good conference!

About CURA

Launched in 2015, the Centre for Urban Research on Austerity (CURA) explores the impacts of austerity, retrenchment, neoliberalisation and anti-neoliberal resistance on global urban living. With our national and international collaborators, we seek to do research that contributes to a radically new egalitarian policy landscape, enabling and empowering grassroots democratic participation, and giving a voice to those currently marginalised and dispossessed. We aim to lead debates and develop egalitarian responses to the intersecting inequalities in global urban contexts. The centre occupies a clearly defined interdisciplinary niche, looking at how governing and resisting austerity (a concept with many valences) leads to urban transformations. CURA is an interdisciplinary research team serving as a mechanism to translate shared interests across disciplines and subject areas into outstanding collaborative research with a global reach. With a new “age of austerity” threatening, even as the last rites are performed on the last one, we believe these goals are relevant for high, medium and low GDP nations alike. Our agenda has synergies with the New Urban Agenda arising from Habitat III and, regardless of the outcome of Brexit negotiations, the Horizon Europe societal challenge in tackling climate change and promoting sustainability.

Research

The mission of CURA is to study and make sense of austere neoliberalism, its contradictions and limitations. Austerity battles and their impacts are lived far beyond the city in its classical sense, and CURA focuses both on the classical metropolis as a fulcrum of the global austerity conjuncture, and the relationships between urban centres and peripheries. These are spaces and relations where austerity bites and where alternatives to austerity are forged through struggle. With the rise of “localist” ideologies, the city has become the object of serious political attention from national and international elites, heralded as the dynamo of “resilience”, and post-crash cultural and economic revitalization. The character of “good” urban living in the aftermath of COVID-19 will be a significant arena for intellectual and political struggle. CURA’s research interests span a variety of topics that are presented under four broad headings of Urban Austerity Governance and Resistance, Urban Labour, Revitalizing Cities and Racialised Inequalities, and five cross-cutting themes of Municipalism, Informality, Intersectionality, Latin America and Urban Culture.

Conference Opening and Welcome Address

Professor Jonathan Davies

Jonathan S. Davies is founding Director of the [Centre for Urban Research on Austerity](#) and Professor of Critical Policy Studies, De Montfort University. His research interests span critical issues in governance, urban studies and public policy. In addition to developments in governance theory, Jonathan is also working on a number of projects on crisis and austerity governance. His latest book *Between Realism and Revolt: Governing Cities in the Crisis of Neoliberal Globalism* (2021, Bristol University Press)

Dr. Valeria Guarneros Meza

Valeria is Reader in Politics and Public Policy at the Department of Politics, People and Place, De Montfort University. She is also deputy director of the Centre for Urban Research on Austerity. Her research interests are in citizen participation and local governance with a focus on urban informality, securitisation and extractivism in Latin American and Europe.

Key Note Speakers



'The zoonotic city' by Professor Matthew Gandy, Department of Geography, University of Cambridge.

In the context of the Covid-19 pandemic this presentation takes a longer view of the evolving relationship between urbanization and the range of zoonotic diseases that have spread from animals to humans. I suggest that the existing interpretation of epidemiological transitions remains overly Eurocentric and requires a more nuanced conception of global environmental history. Similarly, the conceptualization of urban space within these teleological schemas has relied on a narrow range of examples and has failed to fully engage with networked dimensions to urbanization. At an analytical level I consider the potential for extending the conceptual framework offered by urban political ecology to take greater account of the epidemiological dimensions to contemporary urbanization and its associated pandemic imaginary. I examine how contemporary health threats intersect with complex patterns of environmental change, including the destruction of biodiversity (and trade in live animals), the co-evolutionary dynamics of viruses and other pathogens, and wider dimensions to the global technosphere, including food production, infrastructure networks, and the shifting topographies of peri- or ex-urban contact zones.



Cities and Possibilities by Dr. Kian Goh, Associate Professor of Urban Planning, UCLA Luskin School of Public Affairs, Los Angeles.

Climate change and the COVID-19 pandemic are challenging prevailing ideas about the city. Climate change implicates the city: as places in which marginalized residents are often the most vulnerable to climate change impacts; as urban processes deeply responsible for climate change causes; and as sites of the most optimistic and far-ranging climate-responsive solutions. COVID-19 has upended notions of urban life, especially around considerations of economy, density, and social relationships. We've observed, for example, too-soon assessments of the so-called end of cities, or their triumphal return. More than two years on, a global public health crisis still transforms city life. How are we to make sense of the city now, in the face of these transformations, and how might we imagine its climate-changed future? This talk explores the possible convergence of two trajectories of urban reorganization witnessed during the pandemic: first, the rise of bottom-up mutual aid networks, organizing to help vulnerable groups survive and challenge violent, unjust, and hierarchical systems, and, second, the at times unprecedented reconfiguration of state regulatory and urban governance structures in the face of continuing crises. The talk explains how reconceived and reinvigorated notions of grassroots mutuality and the public good together reset the bounds of possibilities for urban responses to our most pressing problems.

Day One Parallel Sessions

Spatialized Islamophobia in the City and Neighbourhoods.

Dr. Kawtar Najib, Visiting Research Fellow at Newcastle University, UK

Islamophobia is not only a global phenomenon; it is also locally targeted and observable in cities and neighbourhoods. The exploration of urban and infra-urban scales makes it possible to highlight the spatial elements of Islamophobia as well as its processes of operation. First, spatialized Islamophobia can be quantitatively measured and mapped in cities to fully appreciate where it occurs. The geographies of urban Islamophobia reveal logics of spatial distribution showing the importance of particular spaces and places, such as centres, suburbs, communication axes, pockets of segregation, public areas, transport networks and public institutions, which offer striking differences between Paris and London. Second, spatialized Islamophobia reveal geographical tensions between neighbourhoods that seem to attract or discourage such practices of exclusion/inclusion as well as the (in)ability to move safely across the city. The spatial mobility and belonging of victims of Islamophobia are therefore seriously undermined, especially for veiled Muslim women. Through a more qualitative analysis, these Parisian and London women explain that they experience anti-Muslim practices in everyday encounters and develop a perceived 'geography of risk' that questions their right to access certain areas of the city and accentuates their strong spatial attachment to their home neighbourhood.

Digital Leisure as Sites of Diasporic Solidarity

Dr. Jennie Jordan, Creative Research and Innovation Centre, Loughborough University | Dr. Indrani Lahiri, Centre for Urban Research on Austerity, De Montfort University, UK

The Covid-19 pandemic has caused disruptions and restrictions to communal and place-based leisure activities globally. Wherever there were quarantine regulations, leisure emerged as a socially distanced connection point for communities. Examples in spring 2020 included neighbourhood teddy bear hunts and balcony bands and the rise of the TikTok dance video and family Zoom quizzes. This paper develops Rojek's (2005) active leisure thesis to argue social media gave Leicester's South Asian diaspora a space to develop a shared understanding of the effects of the pandemic, to find ways of representing that understanding and providing a sense of solidarity. Through participant observation of two cases, Children's Stories in Times of Corona, and Manav Utsav Festival, the paper shows how active responses were developed using arts and culture to take control of public health messaging in active solidarity with South Asian communities around the globe, first digitally, and from 2022 through live events in Leicester.

An interrogation of the constructions of race and identity among the Bangladeshi and Somali communities in Tower Hamlets, East London.

Dr Fatima Rajina, Stephen Lawrence Research Centre, De Montfort University, UK

This paper aims to interrogate the constructions of race and identity among the Bangladeshi and Somali communities in Tower Hamlets, East London. It will be an ethnographic study of how people create notions of identity and race and thus creating boundaries to demarcate who can constitute that identity. This will also help to inform how, historically, racial identities have been located within specific geographic parameters globally and how those very identities are then prioritised within a local context of a London borough. The political discourse in the borough currently positions Bangladeshis in a more powerful position because of already established social, cultural and political institutions while Somalis are still developing such institutions. The conceptualisation around perceived Islamic solidarity, in addition the ever-changing race discourses and practices in the UK, is interrupted in the links between people as members of 'imagined communities' and exposes its frailty.

The invisible stories of a tourist nightlife spot in Lisbon: An ethnographic study of a street dealing gang in the night of Bairro Alto

Dr. Jordi Nofre, Associate Research Professor, Interdisciplinary Center of Social Sciences, NOVA University of Lisbon, Portugal

Over the past four decades, the old historical neighborhood of Bairro Alto, in Lisbon's city center, has become the most iconic nightlife spot not only for locals but especially for tourists. Interestingly, the expansion of commercial nightlife in the area has been accompanied by an increasing presence of informal economies in the public space of the neighborhood, namely street vendors, and street drug dealers gangs. While public media sphere and representatives of middle-class neighbors' associations (gentrifiers) have blamed the latter for being responsible for the growing insecurity and violence during nighttime hours in Bairro Alto, an ethnographic study of the night in this touristified nightlife spot of the Portuguese capital allows to deny such an affirmation. In fact, street drug dealing is a fundamental part of 'party tourism' in Lisbon that is promoted by local lobbies and institutions. Based on a 12-year ethnographic study of the night of Bairro Alto, this paper will focus on the particular case-study of Atalaia Street, the most crowded area during nighttime hours, to show that (i) Street drug dealers are fundamental in ensuring public order in the massively crowded nights of Atalaia Street, (ii) and street drug dealing arises (in some cases) as an informal, alternative, but effective, mechanism for economic survival and even socioprofessional inclusion within a context highly featured by institutional(ized) marginalization, racialization, and exclusion.

Nocturnas: women's everyday/everynight life through feminist urban planning.

Dr Sara Ortiz Escalante, Col·lectiu Punt 6, Spain

Most research on planning the night focuses on Western city centers' 'night-time economy,' particularly neo-liberal economic revitalization practices related to leisure and alcohol consumption. Although some studies include gender and race analyses, few challenge the underlying male-centered, hetero-patriarchal, and racist night-time cultures. They also overlook the everyday/everynight needs of those people who due to productive, care, and reproductive work use the city after dark on a regular basis. Through different projects developed by Col·lectiu Punt 6, this presentation will examine the everyday/everynight planning in the region of Catalonia from an intersectional feminist perspective. In particular, the presentation will focus on two projects. The first is a Feminist Participatory Action Research Project that analyzes the everyday/everynight life of women nightshift workers in the Barcelona Metropolitan Area. The second project is the assessment of women's everyday/everynight life and perceptions of safety through more than 50 exploratory walks and safety audits conducted with diverse women in several municipalities in Catalonia. Through the use of Feminist Participatory Methods we analyze the role of contemporary urban planning and mobility practices in shaping women's everyday/everynight life. We also examine the transformational potential of feminist participatory methods to promote feminist urban planning for night use. The results reveal that women experience restricted public space access and differentiated right to the city,

mainly because of fear of sexual violence rooted in hetero-patriarchal and gender, race, and class oppressive structures. However, they develop individual and collective strategies to increase their appropriation of the night and gaining public night space. The work developed aims to move from a neoliberal approach of planning the night-time economy to an intersectional feminist approach to planning the everyday/everynight life, and argue that Feminist Participatory Methods should be central in planning research and practice.

The informal economy of a crisis: between the speculators and the speculated.

Dr. Joseph Helou, Lebanese American University, Beirut, Lebanon | **Dr Abel Polese**, Research Fellow, Institute for International Conflict Resolution and Reconstruction, Dublin City University, Ireland | Marcello Mollica, Associate Professor in Cultural Anthropology and Ethnology, University of Messina, Italy

In our contribution, we aim to examine the informal dynamics of a crisis. We seek the discovery of no hidden secrets or the distinction of 'good' from 'bad' behavior, but express interest in the new structures, dynamics and synergies that emerge from a crisis; this might include the reasons for persons' new found wealth (becoming a billionaire), the creation of a new state, new ways of experiencing social justice and solidarity and/or the invention of new survival strategies to cope with evolving conditions. From the Middle East, Central Asia and Africa to vast parts of the developing and developed world, people's behavior during times of crisis produces new governance patterns, incubates a set of new actors, inspires a bundle of formal and informal rules and creates conditions that challenge the state. A crisis is a moment when old power and economic dynamics are revolutionized in the space of a week, day or a few hours. Although they might pave the way to substantial change that would have been unthinkable before the crisis, they open pathways to speculations, abuse of power and easier acceptance of immoral behaviors out of necessity. A crisis is a moment when immoral deeds become more acceptable than they were. In the context of crises, the trafficking of human lives and bodies increases, the dependency on certain resources diminishes and the shift to a demand for new resources, material and procedures occurs. While this metamorphosis sets the ground for speculation, exploitation and criminal organizations and behaviors, among others, it constructs new structures of solidarity and undermines current institutions –and their symbolic powers– to clear room for the consolidation and subsequent normalization of informal behavior and organizations. Widely used, these informal organizations and behaviors can become the new way practices, businesses and other interactions are executed. To engage with the above points, we will examine the urban political landscape of Beirut, a city reeling from multiple crises. Situated on the Mediterranean, Beirut has been home to a fragile consociational model, predatory political elites, failed political-economic policies exacerbated by both sporadic episodes of internecine conflict and regional conflagrations with spillovers to Lebanese politics. With these dimensions as a backdrop, it remains vital to examine the long-term effects of these cascading crises on the urban politics of Beirut. A quick overview of Lebanon's postwar (post-1990) history witnesses Syria's suzerainty of politics, repetitive rounds of conflict with terrorist groups, armed conflict with the occupying Israeli Defense Forces in South Lebanon (1993 to 2000 and then 2006), the Syrian withdrawal from Lebanon in 2005 and most notably, Lebanese elites' re-negotiation of power sharing dynamics in the post-2005 era. These political-economic dynamics produced a series of consequences unpropitious for the country's balance of payments and, in the process, created massive political economic dislocations. Then, the concomitant advent of a sovereign debt crisis on 7 March 2020 and the first-few diagnosed cases of Covid-19 in Beirut in February 2020 –not to mention the 4 August 2020 Beirut-port explosion– signaled a new era in the country's politics. Our research will discuss the coping mechanisms adopted to weather these storms in both the currency market through everyday practices and in the management of a public health sector amidst these dismal conditions.

The 'In/formal Nocturnal City': updating a research agenda on nightlife studies from a Southern European perspective.

Dr. Begoña Aramayona Quintana, Research Fellow, NOVA University of Lisbon /Centre for Urban Research on Austerity, De Montfort University | Dr. Valeria Guarneros Meza, Reader in Public Policy and Politics, Centre for Urban Research on Austerity, De Montfort University, UK

During the last three decades, nightlife policies in Southern European cities have been directed towards the commercialisation, branding and hyper-regularisation of the night as a space-time for tourism-oriented promotion. At the same time, so-called “informal” nocturnal actors, such as precarious, often racialised, workers performing labour activities during night, or nocturnal users and partygoers using the night beyond formal nocturnal venues, have been (re-)criminalised, put under surveillance and persecuted by public discourse and policy-making. In this presentation, we call into question how the criminalisation of what we call the “In/formal Nocturnal City” is used as a cornerstone to understand broader processes of governance in neoliberal cities. Based on a Southern European approach, we propose an agenda to help disentangle the complexities and particularities behind the governance of informal nightlife by addressing the current situation of subaltern bodies using night-time spaces; particularly of precarious nocturnal actors, their survival/resisting strategies and the public (securitising) policies implemented to sanction or persecute them. Throughout the research agenda suggested, we argue that criminalisation of informal nightlife is used to reproduce urban neoliberal governance in Southern European cities.

The radical democratization of local public services: commons-state institutions in Naples and Barcelona.

Dr. Iolanda Bianchi, Institute of Government and Public Policy, Autonomous University of Barcelona, Spain

Over the last decades, and especially with the spread of the Covid -19 pandemic, the most common modalities of local public service management - direct management and outsourcing - have been widely criticised for their limited democratic nature. Within this context, the common has emerged as a paradigm that can inspire the construction of a radical democratic management modality by way of application of the principle of self-government. This implies that the decision-making power about local public services is no longer an exclusively prerogative of the local state, but it is distributed between the local state and the self-organised civil society: it implies creating commons-state institutions. This contribution analyses the implementation of the paradigm of the common in the transformation of local public services.

By adopting a qualitative-interpretative methodology based on a two-case comparative study, the contribution analyses two contexts, Naples and Barcelona, and examines the common-inspired transformation of their local public services, respectively, water services and sociocultural facilities. It concludes by reflecting on the capacity of commons-state institutions to represent an alternative and more democratic modality for the management of local public services.

The role of local authorities in building more sustainable and resilient communities.

Dr. Tania Arrieta Hernandez, Teaching Fellow, University of Leicester, UK

This paper argues that in the UK, local authorities are important drivers in the process of building more resilient communities. In spite that the powers and decision-making of authorities were constrained during the pandemic in some areas, we learnt that local authorities are important agents in the management of risks and in mobilising their resources and networks to protect their communities and the most vulnerable groups during crises. We have seen signs of commitment by central government in increasing the funding to local authorities, and in particular in 'levelling 'the revenues of cities. Yet, this paper presents some of the limitations of this agenda, which inevitably affects the project of developing more sustainable communities. This paper concludes that moving forward, the sector needs to be supported through adequate levels of expenditure - enough to give local government the capacity to protect the provision of services, increase their levels of reserves, invest in their workforce, develop a sustainable and diversified economic base, and support the involvement of communities and voluntary organisations in the provision of services.

A Comparative Study on Micro-Lockdown Policies in Jakarta.

Elisa Sutanudjaja, Vidya Tanny, Zahra Khairunnisa, Rima Aisha Rujak Center for Urban Studies, Jakarta, Indonesia

In the earlier time of the Covid pandemic in Indonesia, the grassroots responded and reacted before the government introduced policy measures and plans. Certain urban neighborhoods react to the situation by imposing self lockdown and limiting access from outside, especially in Jakarta, a city where 27% of settlements are informal settlements called kampungs. The government also follows suit by producing neighborhood-based policies and guidelines as a preventive measure and tackling pandemics and their impact on the local level. Some policies include a 2021 micro-scale approach in the prevention and handling of COVID-19, known as PPKM-Mikro (Restriction of Community-based Activities in Micro level), and impose a micro-lockdown red zoned area where there are many positive and suspected cases of COVID-19. In addition, a program called Kampung Tangguh (Resilient Kampung) emerged by the East Java Regional Police, which was later amplified to a national level and affected 7024 informal settlements in Indonesia. The ongoing pandemic also provides an opportunity for the government to assess policies and implement new policies that are considered more appropriate in dealing with the COVID-19 pandemic. We will study and compare three lockdown policies for tackling the COVID-19 pandemic at the micro-level and how these different initiatives and community involvement affect implementation in the field and their effectiveness in reducing the number of positive COVID-19 cases in their respective areas. And furthermore, we will look into how both programs initiated by different agencies transformed during the pandemic and were utilized for non-pandemic purposes and agenda

Contemporary Art's Urban Marxism and the "Post-Pandemic" City.

Dr. Amy Melia, Early Career Researcher and Sessional Lecturer, Liverpool John Moores University, UK

This paper considers the potential role of art and its institutions in forming more equitable, radical and relational cities in the aftermath of Covid-19. In particular, it addresses 'urban Marxist' art practice—that is, socially engaged, contemporary art practice that responds to the urgencies of capitalist urbanisation such as gentrification, the housing crisis and the degradation of the urban social milieu. Through exploring themes of usership, care and relationality, the overarching aim of this paper is to contend that there are possible indications within contemporary art's urban Marxism for how to best formulate a radical, progressive 'post-pandemic' urbanism. Characterised by '1:1 scale' engagement, urban Marxist art practice directly engages with urban social urgencies as opposed to simply representing them through traditional art forms. This practice uniquely signals urban Marxism's extension into contemporary art production—from the 'right to the city' debates of Henry Lefebvre and David Harvey, to the 'détournement' tactics of the Situationist International. 'Urban Marxism' is a field of scholarship that highlights and examines the relationship between capitalist production and urbanism. Contemporary art's urban Marxism crucially highlights how, prior to the pandemic, 'the urban' was already the site of the most pressing social urgencies of our contemporary moment.

Art, grassroots organizing and the post-pandemic neighbourhood.

Anna Coromina, 3 Stages of Succession | Aviv Kruglanski, Community Economies Institute, UK

This paper takes a tentative excursion into the small-scale dynamics of grassroots organizing in neighbourhood, specifically highlighting possible contributions of 'arts thinking' and arts practices. It uses our experience during the pandemic as a point of departure for reflection about the nuts and bolts of such organizing, as it is and as it could possibly be. We have spent the last six years collaborating with a housing charity located in what is defined as one of the wards plagued by the highest level of deprivation in the UK. While the charity's main work during the pandemic was to support its tenants with issues of food, mental health and house repairs, our work within it was arts based, alternately organizing a local neighbourhood market and an online community radio. In the paper we tell the story of this market and this radio as they evolved throughout the past 6 years, entangling itself with the work of this charity. We show the pandemic as being a point of inflection, demonstrating some insights both about our arts-based processes and the unique alternative organizational dynamics of this charity. In it we show the tensions between formality and informality, between spontaneity and control to be useful dimensions to explore when imagining post-pandemic neighbourhoods, nourished by the diverse assets, economies and livelihoods. We present the practices and modes of doing of artists as useful for pragmatically exploring such possibilities.

(Post) Covid nightscapes. An ethnographic review of the tactics adopted by venue owners to survive night closing policies.

Dr. Manuel Garcia-Ruiz and Guilherme Teixeira Costa, Centre on Sociological Research and Studies, Lisboa University Institute (ISCTE-IUL), Portugal

The night time leisure industry intensively suffered from the irruption of the COVID-19 pandemics. Many venues were forced to close, and many did it knowing that they would never open again. Local, national, and international policies reproduced and materialised the everlasting fear of the night. Laws, and decreets criminalised the frequent goers, who were pointed as a focus of infection. Recently, owners were able to come back to business, finding their streets full of empty spots. Many historic places and spaces of contemporary pop history are exposed now to predatory new owners who take advantage of those vacant places. Here, and using the case study of Cais de Sodre, one of the most vivid night leisure areas of Lisbon, we will i) longitudinally review the closing policies and their effects in Portugal; ii) describe the tactics used by venue owners to survive the pandemic. Here, we present part of the critical ethnographic data collected during 2020-2022 and a deep documental review of legal and news published during the same period. We finish arguing about the need for a Lisbon Nightlife Commission in Lisbon that may help transition to the “new” nocturnal city.

Day Two Parallel Sessions

Recondite Issues Shaping Urban Food Supply and Food Security During COVID-19 Emergency in Nigeria

Olalekan Tolulope B. Aduloju University of Ilorin, Nigeria | Abdullateef Iyanda Bako, University of Ilorin, Nigeria | Ibrahim Ademola Adeniran, The Hong Kong Polytechnic University | Pius Akinwande Ayadi, Federal University of Technology, Nigeria | Abdulfatai Olanrewaju Anofi, University of Ilorin, Nigeria | Kolade Victor Otokiti, Leeds Beckett University, UK

The leading conditions profiling present and future urban food systems are population growth, urbanization, changing diets, and recently COVID-19. The study employed a review of secondary data, which included data on the state of the Nigerian urban food system, the Impact of COVID-19 on urban food prices, and inter alia. Findings revealed that prices of food groups such as cereal and grains, tubers and vegetables, increased iniquitously by an average of 23%, 158.35% and 88.03%, respectively. Government interventions through palliatives to urban vulnerable were insufficient, with less than 50% achievement in the state that received the most intervention. For instance, intervention is short of 2.8 million poor households in Lagos and almost 150,000 households in the Federal Capital Territory (FCT). The study recommends a more robust food system such as urban agriculture as a safety net during food crises.

(Post-) pandemic urban waterscapes: The present and future of water supply and use in Nairobi

Moritz Kasper (M.Sc.), Doctoral Researcher, Department of Spatial Planning, Technical University Dortmund, The Netherlands | Emmanuel Mwenje (M.Sc.), Doctoral Researcher, Department of Urban and Regional Planning, University of Nairobi | Professor Sophie Schramm, Head of International Planning Studies research group, Department of Spatial Planning, Technical University Dortmund, The Netherlands | Dr. Elizabeth Wamuchiru, Lecturer, Department of Urban and Regional Planning, University of Nairobi, Kenya.

Especially at the onset of the pandemic, the spread of SARS-CoV-2 highlighted the importance of water access in protecting human health. However, in many southern cities, promoted hygiene routines and changed demand patterns were met by uneven urban waterscapes, mediated by heterogeneous and unequal infrastructure configurations, especially but not only in marginalized areas. In Nairobi – simultaneous with a temporary shift in urban governance structures – national and municipal authorities thus implemented new, albeit far from universal policies and water supply projects (e.g. ‘free water for informal settlements’ and new public boreholes). At the same time, many water users across the city remained dependent on pre-existing, unequal supply modes and faced increased prices by private water vendors as well as economic hardship. Drawing from qualitative and quantitative data, collected in Kibera and Eastleigh in 2021/22, our contribution explores how the pandemically triggered changes in ‘top-down’ governance, policies and projects as well as in everyday water practices may or may not reverberate into a post-pandemic future of Nairobi’s waterscape and overall urban condition. By doing so, we present initial lessons learned from the disruptive event of Covid-19 for potential alterations to historically rooted and socio-technically produced uneven waterscapes in southern cities.

The vulnerability of Hungarian small towns

Réka Horeczki, Research Fellow, Institute for Regional Studies, Centre for Economic and Regional Studies; Budapest, Hungary

Major economic, natural and social shocks can always bring new insights for the regions/areas, requiring new directions for development and action (Holling 1973; Ultramari–Rezende 2007). The Covid-19 epidemic sweeping across the globe from 2019 onwards has triggered meaningful transformations in almost all spheres of life, in many ways generating changes in urban-rural relations (Forster, T. et al, 2020; Bouckaert et al., 2020). Small towns and rural areas have re-emerged as ‘safe havens’ (OECD, 2021). The mental image of small towns has long been limited to two opposing clichés. The study of small towns is a neglected research topic in spatial studies, although they are important elements of the settlement structure (Horeczki–Egyed 2021; Pirisi–Trócsányi 2011). The concept of vulnerability has undergone a major transformation in recent years, as it has evolved from a narrowly understood ecological concept to a much more widely used term, which is now understood as the ability to respond and to adapt flexibly to any external stress. The study will answer the following questions: To what extent do negative external shocks affect the fragility factors of small towns? Does a crisis- resilient small-town-model exist? Can spatial structural differences within countries be identified in these period

Precarity, connectivity and urban lives: the impact of Covid-19 on Milan creative and cultural workers.

Dr. Jessica Tanghetti, Ca'Foscari University of Venice, Italy | Dr. Roberta Comunian, King's College London | Dr. Tamsyn Dent, King's College London, UK

Large cities in Europe have been amongst the most affected by the Covid-19 (C-19) pandemic, due to the high-density population. Cities are hitherto the places where many precarious workers concentrate, specifically those working in and out of the creative and cultural industries. In this paper we use the case study of Milan, widely acknowledged, prior to C-19, as a creative city but also set in one of the regions that have been most affected by the C-19 health crisis. Using qualitative interviews with creative and cultural workers from the city, alongside digital ethnographic materials from their online interactions, the paper explores the criticalities of the sector and the impact of C-19 on their livelihoods. It highlights how C-19 not only exposed their precarious working conditions but also allowed for time and focus for workers to collectively organise. It captures their collective protests and their use of the city to make precarious working conditions visible. It also engages with the need of re-futuring contemporary understanding of the creative city in light of the impact of C-19, questioning the value (and feasibility) of agglomeration economies and creative city policies, especially if workers' rights and livelihoods do not become central to the future local policy agenda.

Decent work and the post-pandemic city: a power resources approach.

Dr. Mat Johnson, Lecturer in HR Management/Employment Studies, University of Manchester | Eva Herman, Research Assistant, Work and Equalities Institute, University of Manchester | Angel Martin Caballero, PhD Researcher, University of Manchester, UK

In the wake of covid-19, many cities have foregrounded decent work within their 'build back better' strategies, and some have introduced specific measures to enhance wages, worker rights and social protection. But while literature has focused on mayors and the scalar dynamics of progressive policy making around 'good jobs' and 'inclusive growth', other studies draw our attention to the importance of worker-led and grassroots movements in resisting neoliberalism and articulating prefigurative alternatives; what Souza (2006) describes as social action in, with, against and despite the state. Drawing on selected case study data from varied sectors in three cities (Buenos Aires, Manchester, New York), we observe how specific campaigns and moments of struggle are shaped by the power resources available to social actors (structural, institutional, associational, coalitional, and ideational, c.f. Refslund and Arnholtz, 2021) which are, in turn, influenced by labour and product market conditions at a point in time, as well as the broader political and social context. Moreover, our case studies reveal the

dynamic interactions of power resources through online and offline social networks that help connect 'spatially fixed' precarious workers with broader global struggles for justice, equality and decent work for all.

Unsettling and reshaping property in a time of crisis: the role of housing occupations and anti-eviction movements in Brazilian cities.

Dr. João Tonucci, Assistant Professor at the Federal University of Minas Gerais, Brazil.

Brazilian cities have seen an upsurge in housing occupations by working-class homeless families in the last two decades. Occupations of public or private property responded to a housing crisis fueled by precarization of work, rising land prices, and market-driven urban policies. Although occupations are not a new phenomenon, this moment has been characterized by new forms of mobilization and organization, and important achievements in securing housing. One of the most remarkable aspects is how the hegemony of private property over housing needs and other forms of land tenure has been put into question. Movements challenge the legal order by mobilizing constitutional rights and notions such as the social function of property, security of tenure and the right to housing. Building on these previous mobilizations, a national campaign called Despejo Zero emerged in 2020 to mobilize people to stop evictions and repossessions during the Covid-19 pandemic, which hit hardest the poor and black population living in urban peripheries. By looking at the experience of occupations in Belo Horizonte, and their connections to the Despejo Zero campaign, this paper reflects on how housing movements have been radically unsettling and reshaping property relations in Brazilian cities in a time of overlapping crisis.

A link between "New-build gentrification" and emotional distress: The construction of high-rise buildings during the Covid-19 pandemic in Lima.

Mirtha Lorena del Castillo, PhD Candidate, University of Amsterdam, The Netherlands

In the last decade, Latin American metropolises have experienced intensive construction of mid- and high-rise buildings in strategic inner-city neighbourhoods, targeting middle- and upper-class consumers. Some scholars have referred to this process as "New-build gentrification" and have explored the socio-spatial effects of this phenomenon on the social and physical fabric of those neighbourhoods. However, despite the significant material transformations triggered during the construction processes, the impact on the emotional distress experienced by long-term residents of adjacent housing has hardly been explored. This article analyses the cases of Barranco and Lince, two strategic neighbourhoods in Lima, a Latin American metropolis experiencing an on-going real estate boom since 2007. Despite the strict confinement policies imposed by national authorities to control the spread of the Covid-19 pandemic, the government authorized the continuation of construction activities, considering them a source of economic reactivation. This decision already accentuated the various nuisances experienced by long-term residents living next to the new developments. Through ethnographic analysis and secondary data collection, this paper explores the implications of the emotional distress of construction activities on the daily lives of long-term residents, as well as how local residents channel their grievances and how local governments deal with them. In doing so, we aim to delve deeper into the consequences of gentrification for crisis-ridden cities.

Sanitary crisis and dealing with massive death in the metropolis: the case of Buenos Aires, Argentina.

Dr. Christien Klaufus, Centre for Latin American Research and Documentation, University of Amsterdam, The Netherlands

The sanitary crisis caused by the Covid-19 pandemic in Buenos Aires, Argentina, has resulted in two opposed ways of dealing with death. The city's formal death and disposal protocols follow a rationalist logic that separates the potentially risky and contagious "body" from the rest of the city. Having suffered from several intense waves of epidemics in the late nineteenth century, sanitary protocols and policies breathe a modernist ideology of social medicine and hygienism. Following from these earlier experiences with massive death, necro-politics and the spatial separation of the dead have historically informed the formal procedures of dead disposal and the spatial planning of deathscapes, aiming to literally "reduce" the problem of death in this metropolis of thirteen million. At the same time, however, popular religious cults draw death close as these are based on transcendent relationships with spirits, souls and saintly figures. Even under the Covid-19 restrictions and the confinement, these cults continued to shape alternative death repertoires in everyday life, in which "death" exists as a realm of the long and more recently dead, with which the living can communicate and interact. The growing number of devotees of popular cults such as San La Muerte and Gauchito Gil attest to the importance of this alternative death paradigm. This paper analyzes the conjunction of a politically powerful death-separation paradigm and a preponderant death-interactionist paradigm in a city in crisis, fleshing out notions of cultural resilience and cultural commoning as part of a potentially radical urbanism.

Contested walls and spaces: an analysis of the massive mural making processes during the National Strike of 2021 in Medellín, Colombia.

Lieke Prins, Ph.D. candidate, University of Amsterdam, The Netherlands

April 28th 2021, marked the start of the National Strike in Colombia where protesters voiced their anger concerning multiple crises: the structural and ongoing (state) violence, the socio-economic inequality which increased during the pandemic, and the proposed tax reforms which would especially affect the lower- and middle-income groups of society. During months of protest different resistance practices were employed, among which the creation of massive murals with political slogans. On May 3rd, over 80 street artists and grafiteros painted a mural of almost 100 meters long in a prominent street in Medellín with the phrase 'Assassination State' and President Ivan Duque depicted as the devil. The mural received much attention and images were widely spread on social media together with a manifest of 'la Comunidad de Pintura Callejera Medellin.' To some of the neighbors and the local government the message was considered aggressive and hateful and within five days the mural was painted over. However, censoring the message did not stop the painting community, contrarily, it motivated artists to continue to create numerous walls of (radical) resistance. This paper analyses the mobilization and creations of graffiti and street art network in Medellín during the national strike and discusses the (transformative) role of the murals in physical and digital public spaces within the context of the social, political, and economic crises.

Daily practices of resistance and mutual aid during the pandemic and beyond: An activist ethnography within the commons of Naples.

Martina Locorotondo, PhD Candidate, De Montfort University, UK

If cities have been dramatically exposed to the pandemic crisis and its social consequences, this is particularly true for the city of Naples, whose metropolitan area is the most densely populated in Italy and one of the most in Europe (ISTAT). Its UNESCO city centre hosts precarious and overcrowded dwellings (Laino, 2010), where isolation and social distance have been barely practicable. Ironically, the same habitations (called *bassi*) have been literally assaulted by a tourism industry in the last few years. Those have been reinvented as “typical” or “authentic” folkloristic experience, contributing to a controversial operation akin to “slum tourism” (Zakaria, 2019), with the risk of romanticising and depoliticising indigence (Nisbett, 2017). Upon the unblocking of the evictions enforced by the central government since the 1st of April 2022, 10.000 executive evictions have been notified in the city of Naples, which are consequence of guiltless arrears of citizens who have lost their jobs during the pandemic. On the contrary, the permission for bars and restaurants to occupy public soil have been renovated until June at the expenses of a democratic fruition of the public space. In such context of a city in which material space is shrinking for its inhabitants, and in which social relations are systematically attacked, grassroots resistance has strengthened around a proliferation of inhabitants mutual aid actions. In the “freed space” called “Scugnizzo Liberato”, solidarity food boxes and a project in support to motherhood have given entire families the opportunity to survive during and beyond the pandemic outbreak. The space called “Santa Fede Liberata”, despite being located at the very core of the tourist district, gives a rescue to marginalised people through the process of the communitarian lunch, as well as with a newly anti-eviction desk. Starting from activist ethnography and the everyday practice within these two sites, I will try to respond to the following questions. 1) How the urban commons in Naples have reinvented and remodulated their daily practices in front of the outbreak of the pandemic? 2) How the pandemic produced permanent changes in the organisational routines and agenda of such movements beyond the emergency first phase?

Radical Feminist Activism under the Regimen of Covid: 8M and the Huelga General Feminista in Madrid, 2019-2022.

Prof. Stuart Price, Centre for Media and Political Discourse, De Montfort University, UK | Dr. Jennifer García Carrizo, University of Madrid.

Normally, what the media covers here is the central demo, and all the rest becomes invisible ... implying that Madrid is feminist, but only in its centre'. 8M Organizer A, Madrid, 13.2.2020. '[The media] choose the parts of our ideas that are easier to express ... they ignore the other things that are super important here, the class thing and the anti-capitalist manifestations'. 8M Organizer B, Madrid, 17.2.2020. '8M calls for a movement that talks about a confrontation with the system ... 'placing life at the centre 'is not just an advertising slogan, it's a political project'. 8M Organizer C, Madrid, 18.2.2020. This paper, drawn from news sources, social media posts, and interviews with organisers and activists belonging to 8M/Huelga General Feminista collectives, analyses the forms of political intervention chosen by Spanish feminists during a succession of difficult circumstances: the mass mobilisations of 2019 were criticised by the political Right, while the city of Madrid and its corporate partners 'branded' the streets with International Women's Day slogans; the following year the pandemic reduced numbers, and when the protests revived in March 2022, two separate demonstrations were held, because the movement was split by attitudes to prostitution and trans-gender rights. Using the detailed analyses of the 8M movement and the 'mediated event' found in Montagnon (2018), Campillo (2019), and Price (2022), combined with material on 'city branding' (Garcia Carrizo, 2021), and recent work on the pandemic and capitalist austerity (Blackburn, 2020; Blakeley, 2020; Bratton, 2021), we offer an analysis of the physical, ideological and economic constraints placed on Madrid's 8M/HGF activists during the pre and 'post' pandemic era. This is set within wider contextual theory on contemporary feminist and intersectional movements (Mies, 1986; Bohrer, 2019; Bhandar and Ziadah, 2020; Gago, 2020), and the particular character of a Spanish tradition that is still shaped by anti-fascist, Republican, and revolutionary traditions (Price, in Fishwick and Connolly, 2018; Sanz Sabido, in Price, 2019).

Active citizenship and the formation of relational spaces of collaboration in urban neighbourhoods. Preliminary findings from a UK-based comparative case study.

Sally Ward, PhD Candidate, Institute of Local Government Studies, University of Birmingham/Research Assistant, Centre for Urban Research on Austerity, De Montfort University.

The potential to mitigate wider mechanisms of social injustice and inequality through interdependent efforts has prompted a growing interest in the importance and value of grass roots civic organising within theoretical debates and public policy making. Despite recent UK government intervention to empower citizens to shape the regeneration of their areas and improve public services in the aftermath of the covid pandemic, many communities are struggling to effectively mobilise by themselves. I present preliminary findings from a UK comparative case study of community self-organisation, during which I set out to understand and explain how residents mobilise to access vital resources and services in the place where they live. An examination of the interplay between the situated practices of residents and the relational spaces they formed using a critical realist approach to ethnography revealed that residents utilised a diverse set of organising, helping out, intervening and attending responses to meet the needs and opportunities of their neighbourhood. Such responses enabled open and dynamic relational spaces that expanded and contracted as residents moved in and out of the space in a way that fitted with their lifestyles. However when residents adopted paternalistic practices, their responses changed to joining, voting, watching and disconnecting; a closed relational space emerged, leaving residents either isolated at the core or waiting on the periphery for the conditions to change. The ability for residents to move autonomously in and out of relational spaces of collaboration is identified as a potential enabler of community self-organisation.

Day Three Parallel Sessions

Crisis, housing and austerity: the emergence of a new moral politics.

Dr. Adam Stranding, MCSA-Post-Doctoral Fellow, Centre for Urban Research on Austerity, De Montfort University, UK

The Great Recession (2007-2009) brought to a head a number of interrelated socio-economic crises through which a parallel housing crisis was both an aggravating factor – with the collapse of the US subprime loan system being a catalyst for global financial meltdown – as well as a symptom itself exacerbated by the breakdown. Austerity policies adopted across Europe in the wake of the recession increased economic precarity and housing insecurity for many but we should avoid giving too much causal weight to a single event. Austerity politics, its hegemonic logics and policies that increase inequality and insecurity in housing such as assetisation (Adkins, Cooper & Konings, 2020) and gentrification (Madden & Marcuse, 2016) long pre-dated the financial crisis and political decisions to maintain housing bubbles at all costs have increased the unaffordability of housing for many (Hearn, 2020). In addition to exacerbating the interrelated crises we face, the Great Recession opened up, as many crisis catalysts often do, the possibility to reconfigure the political frontiers of contestation. From the crisis emerged a great number of social movements to challenge the status quo at both the level of national and urban politics (Beveridge & Koch, 2021). It also provided political space to expand the notion of what knowledge and expertise was relevant to the area of housing (Stranding, 2021). Allowing practical, theoretical and experiential expertise to be integrated with more wide-ranging moral critique of the institutional and political structures that reproduce inequalities (Stranding & Donoghue, 2022). This paper introduces a new MSCA project that explores the emergence of a new and distinct moral critique of capitalism to emerge in the wake of the financial crisis and has coalesced around the fight for housing justice.

From Place of Exile to Quarantine: Low-Income Public Housing During the COVID-19 Pandemic.

Elisa Sutanudjaja, Vidya Tanny, Zahra Khairunnisa, Rima Aisha Rujak Center for Urban Studies, Jakarta, Indonesia

Rapid urban development in Jakarta has produced forced evictions in various areas. According to Jakarta Legal Aid, there were 305 forced evictions only in 2015-6. The frequent solution from the government before the evictions is only relocation to the rental public housing. However, the public housing project in Jakarta is usually located in the peripheral area with limited access to public transportation and economic resources. Therefore, lack of access and opportunity made evictees, which are primarily urban poor, live become more difficult. As a result, public housing is considered "tempat buangan" or unwanted dumps and exile for the urban poor. However, public housing suddenly became the spotlight and tool for fighting and containing the COVID-19 pandemic. Since its outbreak in March of 2020, the virus has elicited various responses from grassroots communities. Simultaneously, it has continuously put the government's strategy for controlling the increase in case numbers and damage to the test. As part of this effort, the Provincial Government of DKI Jakarta has regulated a temporary functional shift of several public institutions, including schools, official residences, child-friendly integrated public spaces, and public housing, which will serve as quarantine and isolation centers for COVID-19 patients, including three public housing complexes: Rusun Nagrak, Rusun Pasar Rumpit, and Rusun Daan Mogot. The modification resulted in new adjustments, particularly restrictions on residents' activities and the implementation of neighborhood-scale health protocols. However, residents of these public housing sites also encounter a stigma about the virus's dangers that threaten them by living side-by-side with COVID-19 patients. This paper aims to identify the residents, formerly forced eviction victims, initial reactions to the pandemic, and the functional shift of their living spaces in the aforementioned public housing. This research will also include examining the background and mechanism of the government's related regulation and its applicability in accommodating low-income public housing residents during pandemics.

The politics of seeing care: A feminist and anti-colonial perspective on the infrastructures of house and home.

Dr. Jessica Parish, MSCA Post-Doctoral Fellow, Centre for Urban Research on Austerity, De Montfort University, UK

The covid-19 pandemic brought the work of care into mainstream visibility in new ways. Yet that visibility has a particular geography. While middle class kitchens gained infamy via their transformation into workplaces and classrooms, the forms of care and neglect structuring other spaces of house and home – from parks to rental suites – were either ignored or grossly mischaracterized (e.g. Encampment Support Network, 2021). In an effort to think through and beyond this state of affairs, which predated but was exacerbated by the pandemic, this paper builds from recent scholarship that brings greater attention to smaller scale and more everyday socio-technical objects and practices that constitute "infrastructure" (e.g. Critical Infrastructure Collective, 2021; Power and Mee, 2020; Robin, 2021, Tozzi, 2021). It foregrounds care (Power and Mee, 2021) and social reproduction (e.g. Roberts, 2016) in thinking through the practices that constitute house and home both as objects of policy and finance, and as life sustaining infrastructures embedded within the broader metabolism of the urban political ecology (Edwards and Bulkeley, 2017). As feminist and anti-colonial scholars (e.g. Dooling, 2009; Goodling, 2019; Thistle, 2019) have shown, house and home are complex, interrelated practices whose boundaries are not necessarily co-terminus. Building from these contributions I argue that imagining the post-pandemic city requires explicit engagement not only with the politics of care work, but also with the politics of (in)visibility and (de)valuation of objects and practices of care (e.g. Kimari, 2018; Parish, 2019).

Post-pandemic urban policies in Barcelona. Can a superblock-based approach help to face long-existing crises and inequalities?

Federico Camerin, University of Valladolid | Lucas Alvarez del Valle, Politechnical University of Madrid, Spain

This work interrogates how the pandemic has encouraged shifts in urban policy in the city of Barcelona on the basis of the innovative pre-pandemic experience of Superblocks (2016-2019). The basic hypothesis is that the Covid-19 outbreak has accelerated the urgency to provide greener, more inclusive, and healthier urban environments to deal with the unequal and profit-driven Barcelona's urban development patterns. Barcelona's City Council claimed that the two pilot projects already implemented – i.e. the 3x3 block of Poblenou neighbourhood (2016-2018) and the entire Sant Antoni neighbourhoods (2017-2019) – have effectively helped to face the economic, health, and social challenges at the neighbourhood level. However, these solutions alone were considered insufficient to provide a progressive, egalitarian, and emancipatory future for Barcelona's citizens. The City Council consequently launched in late 2021 the innovative Superblock-based urban policy “Superilla Barcelona” for regenerating the whole city. Based on the literature review of the so-called ‘post-pandemic city’ and inquiries on Superblocks, specific fieldwork and interviews conducted in 2019 and 2022 show the multi-faceted contradictions of the Superblocks’ experiences in Poblenou and Sant Antoni at their different scale. Thought as solutions to provide inclusive, resilient, sustainable, and safer environments, Superblocks solutions have raised issues from local citizens and stakeholders.

Income inequality and segregation in (post) pandemic cities.

Dr. Jenni Cauvain, Department of Social and Political Sciences, Nottingham Trent University, UK

This presentation builds on the recent research paper by Cauvain et al (2022) <https://rgs-ibg.onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/full/10.1111/area.12784> that details a first-in-UK analysis of the social geography of UK cities based on neighbourhood and city level income inequality and segregation. We found that income inequality and income based segregation may not always follow the expected pattern of positive correlation. Instead, in second tier UK cities, we found that rich cities and neighbourhoods were distinct outliers, characterised by high income inequality but lower segregation, due to the tendencies of high income households to “self segregate” in urban areas. The intention is to briefly summarise these main empirical findings, and then to turn to the question of the (post) pandemic city, critically examined through the lens of the “sustainable neighbourhood”. In traditional urban policy and theory the sustainable neighbourhood includes mixed incomes, based on evidence of multifarious disadvantages in segregated neighbourhoods that sociologists have associated with (place based) stigma, discrimination and medical mistrust. The post-pandemic city invites a curiosity about the impacts of income heterogeneity on health inequalities; and specifically the social mechanisms by which the uneven impacts on ill health and mortality are constructed and potentially mitigated at the neighbourhood level.

Strategies to combat Covid-19 in cities of the G20 countries: Results and reflections.

Prof. Richard Wilson Borrozine de Siqueira, Federal Institute of Brasília, Brazil

This article aims to present an assessment of the strategies and results obtained in the fight against Covid - 19 in the main cities of the G20 countries, developing reflections on the impact of the pandemic, its contradictions, and delineate new possibilities for public policies, supported by data and analysis of historical context. In the article, we organize a mosaic of solutions based on these strategies and results. Such instruments are helpful in the public policies aimed at solving the problems of urban crises existing in many countries. At the same time, we present reflections on different social groups and their respective possibilities of facing pandemics and degrees of participation in local public health decisions. We also delineate a review of the advantages and disadvantages of cities after years of fiscal austerity and large-scale health emergency.

The Greening of the Post-Covid High Street: Potentialities and Pitfalls.

Charles Goode, Teaching Fellow, School of Geography, Earth and Environmental Sciences, University of Birmingham, UK

With the profound and accelerating decline of the High Street as a place for retail traditionally supported by high levels of footfall, this paper aims to evaluate the emerging and growing popular movement for the 'greening' and repurposing of the High Street. Whilst there is a vast body of literature demonstrating the environmental and social benefits of greenspace generally, this paper proposes specifically exploring the greening of the High Street and city centres to evaluate its potentiality and pitfalls in a post-Covid environment. Environmental benefits include helping buildings and cities to achieve net-zero carbon emissions and contributing to urban agriculture whilst social benefits include facilitating social interaction between different social groups, reducing overcrowding in city/town centres and creating a more attractive and healthier urban realm. However, there are also profound questions about the potential (further) privatisation of public space. The paper therefore contributes to and critically evaluates the juxtaposition between the neoliberalisation of city centres with calls for cities to reorientate their primary policy objectives away from economic growth towards an ethic of 'care'.

Fit City as a Post-Pandemic Imagination: Mainstreaming Everyday Physical Activities in Cities of the Global South.

Lakshyayog, Centre for the Study of Regional Development, Jawaharlal Nehru University, India

The discursive production of cities as the critical sites of intervention for enhancing levels of physical activity (WHO, 2018) among the 'population' and combatting the pandemic of physical inactivity (Kohl, et al., 2012) is a result of a global assemblage of scientific studies measuring, analysing and producing levels of physical (in)activity worldwide (The Lancet), Global Action Plans by the World Health Organisation and their subsequent National Action Plans at the country level. This results in various local interventions in cities, such as open gyms, fitness trails and mass fitness campaigns by the state to nudge the citizens toward physical activities. However, with the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic, several studies reported the decreasing levels of physical activity among the population, while the impact of economic inequality on the physical activity levels and the role of differentiated accessibility to urban green and public spaces were often neglected. Drawing on an ethnographic case study of fitness practices in Delhi, India, before and during the COVID-19 pandemic, this paper proposes the fit city as a post-pandemic imaginary by advocating for mainstreaming everyday physical activities in the cities of the Global South. By highlighting the limitations of piecemeal approaches adopted in cities of the Global South that focus on specialised physical activities, the paper argues that physical activities remain embedded in the everyday and remain entangled with the socio-spatial dialectic of cities which any post-pandemic imagination of cities needs to take account of.

Building back better: Unpacking the nexus between covid-19 pandemic, urbanisation and fiscal performance in Nigeria.

Dr Hezekiah Daramola Olaniran, University of Ibadan, Nigeria

The outbreak of COVID-19 pandemic coupled with increasing rate of urbanization and population mobility, have had significant impacts on cities and Nigeria's economy generally. The shrinking fiscal space due to uncertainties in federally distributed revenue has led to the push to increase Internally Generated Revenue (IGR) of most Subnational Governments to sustain the economy. COVID-19 affected the IGR of many states, making it difficult for most states to meet fiscal and public health obligations at the peak of the pandemic. Using data from The National Centre for Disease Control (NCDC), BudgIT reports and National Bureau of Statistics, this paper examine the relationship between COVID-19 pandemic, urbanization and fiscal performance in Nigeria. The paper found significant correlation between number of confirmed COVID-19 cases and urbanization ($r=0.90$ at $p=0.01$), unemployment ($r=-0.49$ at $p=0.01$) and fiscal performance, (-0.38 at 0.05). The paper concludes that the worsening fiscal situation against the backdrop of COVID-19 pandemic and inflationary pressures represents a major challenge for cities and Nigeria economy. There is an urgent need to rethink and transform urban areas to achieve fiscal stability in order to respond to the reality of COVID-19 and potential future pandemics, and to recover better, by building more resilient, inclusive and sustainable cities.

Fiscal Stress in the United States 3.0: Did "Rainy Day" Funds and Federal Pandemic Relief Make a Difference during the COVID-19 Pandemic?

Brian Holland, Rutgers University, Bloustein School of Planning and Public Policy, Rutgers University, USA

In the United States, the COVID-19 pandemic reignited fiscal worries at the local government level, not seen the Great Recession of 2007 to 2009. These worries reflected competing budgetary priorities with diminished revenues, while also adhering to balanced budget requirements. These budgetary requirements ushered in a new age of fiscal austerity that was ameliorated, in part, by infusion of federal pandemic emergency assistance funding and the use of "rainy day" funds. This paper presents a preliminary analysis of both these short-term fixes and compares the application of this anti-cyclical funding during the COVID-19 pandemic with stimulus funding in the aftermath of the Great Recession. Findings of this comparative review are presented to suggest how these streams aim at maintenance of pre-existing policy preferences among local elected officials rather than spark the design of new initiatives that either aim to address poverty or embed equity into community-based decision making. Further, this analysis also assesses the level of (ill) preparedness of local governments to plan and be fiscally ready for any future downturns with little appetite for new fiscal tools to be designed or support.