

Cities News

Cities Programme newsletter issue 16
Summer Term 2015



New friends in a new city: Beirut field trip, image courtesy of Bianca Ryseck.

MSc student news

This year's City Design Research Studio (2014-15), led by Professor **Fran Tonkiss**, Dr **Günter Gassner** and Dr **David Madden**, took the theme of the 'critical city' and focused on Tottenham, a district in the borough of Haringey in northeast London. Tottenham is a place where many of the crises of urban life are visible. It is the poorest neighbourhood in the most unequal borough in the capital. Many Tottenham residents experience numerous forms of injustice, and many locals feel that the council's regeneration plans threaten to bring gentrification and displacement rather than social progress. The students' challenge was to understand this area without simplifying or stigmatising it and to propose critical interventions designed to support Tottenham's communities on their own terms rather than facilitating their erasure.

On 17 June the students and Studio convenors took part in a "Super Crit" of their work on Tottenham. The event, organised by the GLA for the 2015 London Festival of Architecture brought together four leading schools of architecture who were invited to present their research, findings and proposals for Tottenham to a panel including Haringey councillor Alan Strickland and the studio leads of the four universities.



All aboard: image of Beirut boat trip courtesy of Nicole Hofert.

This year's Studio publication *Critical City*, edited by MSc students Aron Bohmann and Melissa Chin was published at the end of June and the launch party will be on 2 July.

The MSc student group, together with faculty members Günter Gassner and Fran Tonkiss, travelled to **Beirut** 16-21 May 2015 for the graduate programme's annual international field-trip. Working in collaboration with colleagues based in the Neighbourhood Initiative at the American University of Beirut, and in the AUB's Department of Architecture and Design, the students explored processes of urban development in key sites in central Beirut, including: the Solidere redevelopment of the city's historic core, new residential developments in the Ain Mreisseh area bordering the AUB campus, and the planned development of the Dalieh of Raouche seafront area to the west of the centre. The field-trip included guided site visits by foot, bus and boat, as well as seminars with local urban experts. More images from the trip will be available soon on the Cities Programme webpages.

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At the Tottenham Super Crit, image courtesy of Aude Lucien.

Diana Martínez (current MSc student) spoke on "Projects and actions around bike usage in Barcelona" at the World Bike Forum in Medellin, Colombia this February. Her lecture presented the achievements, difficulties and lessons of different projects to promote the bicycle in cities. She put emphasis on one of the projects where she was manager for five years, called Bicicampus: "Go to the University by bike". Read her post for the blog *This Big City*: [8 Highlights from Medellin's World Bike Forum 2015](#).

Diana also lectured on "Planning of urban mobility and bicycle" at the Piloto University, America University and Colombian School

of Engineering in Bogotá, Colombia. Her presentation explored conditions of mobility in different cities and the role the bicycle plays in improving urban quality of life. On this lecture, Diana wrote the post "[Three mobility challenges facing Bogotá](#)" for her blog [Cities for us](#). Twitter: @Citiesforus



Diana Martínez (right) is presented with a copy of *Around the World in 80 Bicycles* from editor Ximena Ocampo (class of 2012) for her winning images at the World Bike Forum.

Alumni news

Karl Baker (class of 2010) is now Senior Consultant at MRCagney, transport and urban planning consultants in Auckland, New Zealand. His work focuses on economic evaluation of public transport infrastructure projects, integration of transport and land-use planning and economic assessment of planning regulations.

Dr Lawrence Bird (2000) practises urban design on TOD and LID developments in Winnipeg, Canada. He teaches as a sessional instructor at the University of Manitoba and, last year, at Harvard University. He also has a visual arts practise focused on images of cities and geography, most recently the projection *Transect* at DRHA 2014 in Greenwich. Recent publications include "Earth or World? Aerial Image and the Prosthetic Imagination", in *Architecture's Appeal*, Routledge (2015); "Beyond the Desert of the Real: Regenerative narratives in the cityscape", in *Emerging Landscapes*, Ashgate (2014); and a blogpost for the LSE Field

Research Methods Lab: [Art in the field: harvesting visual narratives in the dispersed city](#) (2014).

Omer Cavusoglu (2008, researcher at LSE Cities 2008-2014) collaborated with Emre Arolat Architects, a leading Turkish architectural firm with a new office in London, to put together an exhibition titled "ist-on situations" at the RIBA, running between 2-30 June. The exhibition explored a parallel timeline between two of Europe's great cultural capitals: Istanbul and London, looking at major events that shaped the story of urban development of the past two centuries in these two cities. Omer was one of the two chief consultants and provided its London content. Omer continues to work as an independent consultant in urban planning and development, based in London.

Tsu-Jui Cheng (2009) recently completed a PhD with the Accessibility Research Group at University College London and is now working as a research associate in the AART-BC project at both UCL and the University of Salford. The AART-BC will develop a platform to support people with reduced mobility to navigate in the built environment.

As Team Leader for international Projects at the German Sustainable Building Council (DGNB), **Dominic Church** (2001) presented a Gold Pre-Certificate to Mairdar City in Ulaanbaatar. The certification process embeds benchmarks for sustainable urban development in the design of the new city, to be located ca. 15km south of the capital. Planned to accommodate ca. 220,000 inhabitants on an area of 163 square km, Mairdar City represents the keystone in a national initiative to meet the challenges of extremely rapid urbanisation. The visit to Mongolia concludes Dominic's missions for DGNB following his appointment to the city of Lucerne as Project Lead for real estate development.



Informal development in Ulaanbaatar, image courtesy of Dominic Church

On July 5th, **Miriam Fitzpatrick** (2004) will be presenting at the International Conference of Historical Geographers 2015 at the Royal Geographical Society, London in a session on 'Distributed Landscapes; Centres and Edges in American Planning'. Her paper will be on the subject of Propinquity and W. H. Whyte (1958-1988), for more see [webpage](#).

Dr Robin J. H. Kim (PhD 2010, now Research Fellow at UCL) has been appointed as Professor on Special Assignment at the Graduate School of Urban & Real Estate Studies, Hanyang University, Korea, which specialises in comprehensive research and practice on contemporary cities, offering interdisciplinary postgraduate training programmes.

Based in UCL Geography, Robin's major role is to widen academic collaboration with international institutions, and to supervise students by visiting Seoul regularly. He will also continue to focus on collaborative research projects on urban regeneration and comparative studies between UK and Korean cities. He advises several major cities in Korea, including Seoul and Incheon, helping them to establish sustainable urban and architecture policies.

Bronwyn Kotzen (2014) has been awarded a research grant from the South African Presidency for a project on 'Infrastructures of Separation' together with a research partner. The country's profound socio-economic challenges are reflected and compounded in the apartheid-

driven, spatial inequality of its cities; a reality which severely limits transformation and growth. Akin to mainstream global urban development practices, South African local government has adopted large-scale infrastructural investment in order to reshape the stark inequalities of the country's urban centres. This regeneration assumption has created a focus on infrastructural planning and investment which often results in a unintended and unexpected consequences: the maintenance of historic orders of separation. The project therefore engages with how infrastructure regulates people's action and behaviour through an understanding of the mundane interactions between the two on an everyday basis. The research aims to provide place-specific data that government could use to change approaches to infrastructural implementation. The project will be published and presented at a national conference in October.



Help needed to transform this site, image courtesy of Paul McGann.

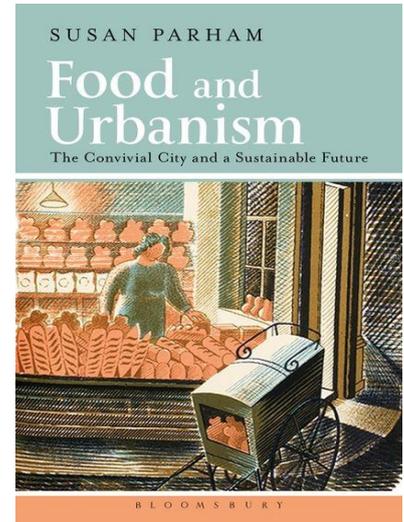
[Mobile Gardeners CIC](#), a social enterprise set up by **Paul McGann** (2009) is making a community garden and social space in Elephant and Castle in partnership with local residents. Paul says, 'The space will be called Grow Elephant and our site is on New Kent Road. We need all sorts of help, from building and gardening, to organising events, publicity, fund raising etc. The project is an unusual example of community led interim use, and is an attempt to create a shared outdoor room that encompasses a wide range of social activity that goes well beyond the traditional definition of a community garden.' If any Cities

students or alumni would like to get involved please contact paul@mobilegardeners.org.

Anjali Mittal (2008) is now Assistant Professor, Department of Architecture, School of Planning and Architecture, Delhi.

Dr **Olivia Muñoz-Rojas** (PhD 2009) continues publishing articles in English and Spanish on her [blog](#) exploring issues of cities and gender, war and aesthetics, some of which have featured in the main opinion section of *El País*. On 8 March she launched [OPINANTAS](#), a new blog section for the written opinion of women. Olivia gave a paper on the role of politico-economic ideology in modern city-making in LSE's Economic History Department in February, and on the urban legacy of anti-democratic regimes at the II International Seminar Historiography and Anthropology of Cities at Cáceres (Spain) on 29 May. In early June she attended the OECD Forum in Paris.

Susan Parham (PhD 2008) has a new book, *Food and Urbanism: The Convivial City and a Sustainable Future*, out now with Bloomsbury. Moving from the table, kitchen, dining room, and home garden to the food market, townscape, green space, suburbs, peri-urban edges, wider conurbations and rural regions, *Food and Urbanism* explores the urbanism connections between food and place at a range of nested scales expressed in past and present design and socio-spatial practices. The book also looks to methods for extending the 'gastronomic' possibilities of urban space in future, bringing together sustainable placemaking research from a number of disciplines including urban design and food studies, to urban sociology, geography and planning – with her own fieldwork on a range of foodscapes used to highlight the fundamental role food has to play in shaping an increasingly urban world. Susan is Head of Urbanism at the University of Hertfordshire.



Congratulations to **Katherine Robinson**, who was awarded her PhD in March 2015. Her thesis, which was passed without corrections, is titled: An everyday public? Placing public libraries in London and Berlin, and is available to read via LSE ThesesOnline. She is now working as a researcher on Triaging Values, an ESRC research project at Goldsmiths Sociology.

Lindsey Scannapieco (2010) and her team at Scout (www.scout-ltd.com) recently won the Knight Cities Challenge Grant for a public realm installation in South Philadelphia on the perimeter of a vacant high school. The project seeks to use participatory design to explore the concept of a public living room, see: knightfoundation.org/grants/201550671.

Torsten Schroeder (PhD 2014) is now teaching at Eindhoven University of Technology, where he is Assistant Professor in Architectural, Design and Engineering, Department of the Built Environment.

This year **Joshua Simoneau** (2012) authored the preliminary competition of the Rotch Travelling Scholarship (the oldest scholarship of its kind in the US, more info here: www.rotch.org).

This year's preliminary competition focused on issues at the urban scale, asking competitors to address the street as a stage for

public life and ultimately a place of belonging. The site chosen for this proposition was Winter Street in Downtown Crossing, located within the Downtown Boston Business Improvement District (BID), an area currently in the midst of an ongoing public realm improvement project seeking to enhance the pedestrian environment and transform Downtown Crossing as a place people go to rather than pass through.

Faculty news

Professor **Ricky Burdett** participated in the Designing City Resilience two day summit at the RIBA, London on 16 and 17 June. He took part in a session on 'Defining Urban Resilience' on Tuesday 16 June along with Jo da Silva, Director of International Development at Arup, and Dr Nancy Kete, Managing Director at Rockefeller Foundation.

Dr **Günter Gassner** presented a paper at the 8th International Critical Theory Conference, 7 – 9 May 2015. The paper was entitled "La Madonna della Misericordia di Londra: Benjamin, Nietzsche and neoliberal urbanisation" and revolved around a critical reading of the use of religious imaginaries in developer-driven planning processes in the City of London.

Dr **Suzi Hall** will be launching the 'Ordinary Streets' film made with Sophie Yetton on 6 October 2015. The film explores diverse creative practises on Rye Lane in Peckham, which remain illegible or undervalued in the planning regeneration process.

In March, Dr **David Madden** organised an event on housing and the neoliberal city at PEER Gallery in London. In April, he presented a paper entitled "Dispossession and the Ideology of the Slum" at a conference on housing in the Global South at the Graduate School of Architecture, Planning and Preservation, Columbia University. In October he will lead a seminar at the Wohnunsfrage Academy at the Haus der Kulturen der Welt in Berlin. He is completing a book on

housing co-authored with Peter Marcuse.

Philipp Rode gave a presentation on 'Going green: How cities are leading the next economy' in the session on 'The City as a Catalyst for Green Growth' at the Future Built 2015 annual Conference in Oslo, Norway. This took place on 3 June and focused on the benefit of climate friendly architecture and urban development as well as how cities can be catalysts for smart, green growth. For more, see [website](#).

Professor **Fran Tonkiss** gave a public lecture on 'Divided Cities: urban inequalities in the 21st century' on 6 May 2015 at LSE. What kinds of cities are emerging as increasing urbanisation goes together with worsening inequality, why does urban inequality matter, and what is distinctive about urban inequalities now? Listen to/watch the event [podcast and video](#).

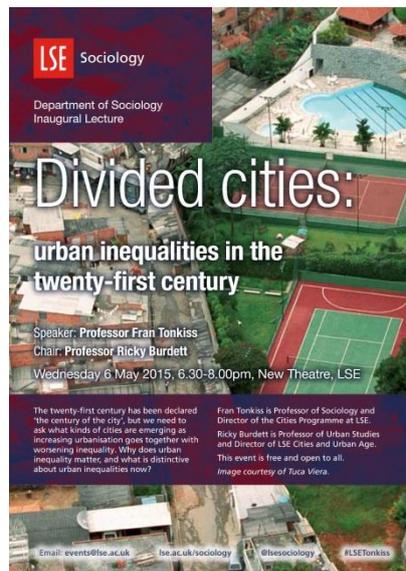


Image of Sao Paulo courtesy of Tuca Vieira.

In March, Fran took part in the international conference on 'Other gentrifications' at the American University Beirut, the 2015 edition of the AUB's City Debates annual conference series, and bringing academics, students and practitioners from Lebanon and the MENA region together with colleagues from Europe, North and South America. Fran took part in the closing conversation with Peter Marcuse. Watch the session on [YouTube](#).

In April, Fran participated in the EUI-MPI Graduate Workshop on Migration, Politics, Diversity at the European University Institute, Florence, speaking on the theme of cities, politics and citizenship.

In May, Fran spoke about 'Austerity urbanism' at the *Geographies of Austerity* workshop at Durham University, and in June gave a plenary talk on 'Urban open source: space, practice, knowledge' at the Make City festival in Berlin: <http://makecity.berlin/>

Also in June, Fran spoke on 'The social life of urban form: size, density, diversity' at the Future of Places conference in Stockholm, bringing together researchers, policy-makers, activists and practitioners in the lead-up to Habitat III, the third UN Conference on Housing and Sustainable Development: <http://futureofplaces.com/>

In May, an interview between Fran and the architect Krzysztof Nawratek was published in Krzysztof's *Radical Inclusivity: Architecture and Urbanism* (dpr-Barcelona, 2015), see [webpage](#).

Fran also published 'Afterword: economies of infrastructure' in a special feature on infrastructure edited by Hillary Angelo and Christine Hentschel in *CITY* 19/2-3: 384-91.

LSE Cities news

The LSE Cities Executive Summer School short course 'London and Global Cities - Governance, Planning and Design' (29 June – 3 July), led by Professor **Ricky Burdett**, Professor **Tony Travers**, Dr **Savvas Verdis** and **Philipp Rode**, draws on LSE Cities and LSE London's research work. It will explore the longer-term development of London (in the context of other global cities) so as to provide students with an understanding of the key challenges facing both mature and rapidly-developing metropolitan areas. For more on this and other LSE Cities news please see: lsecities.net.