

Cities News

Cities Programme newsletter issue 19
Lent Term 2017



MSc City Design graduates at the LSE Graduation Ceremony December 2016, image courtesy of Megan Groth.

MSc student news

Congratulations to our latest MSc City Design and Social Science graduates who received their degrees in December, and especially to **Heather Zaccaro**, awarded the Cities Prize for Academic Achievement 2016, and **Darren Gill**, awarded the Cities Prize for Outstanding Contribution 2016 in recognition of his contribution to the work and culture of the programme.

Heather reports that she is already hard at work at her new job with the National Complete Streets Coalition at Smart Growth America. Darren is now working with Arup's International Development Group. See our Alumni news for more about the Class of 2016 and graduates from previous years.

This year the focus of the City Design Research Studio, which is at the heart of the MSc programme, is the huge **Thamesmead** development bordering the Thames in the south-east of London. Thamesmead falls between the London Boroughs of Greenwich and Bexley and is home to 40,000 people. It emerged in the late 1960s as part of a 'new town' planning initiative in response to London's housing shortage. To complement this exploration of a London site the students will visit **Naples** from 13-17 February 2017.

Current student **Ghadeer Mansour** is also the Co-Director of Finance for the LSE Africa Summit, an annual two-day conference that showcases Africa's contributions to the world. The summit is a platform to engage in and explore cutting edge research and business trends across Africa's rapidly changing socio-economic environment. Now in its fourth year, the summit has welcomed heads of state, senior government officials, leading entrepreneurs, and researchers from across Africa and its diaspora. The 2017 theme is "Built for Africa: African Solutions to African Issues," hosting panels and presenters across a broad range of disciplines, including discussions of design within African context. More information can be found online at lseafricasummit.org and the LSE Africa Summit social media pages. Save the date: March 31st & April 1st.

Alumni news

Naveed Ahmed (Class of 2008) is Principal Strategy Planner for Surface Strategy and Planning at Transport for London. He reports: "Through TfL's Internal Surface Innovation Fund I've installed a green roof bus shelter as part of an urban greening project. The site was selected for the new green #Buzzstop so that the roof provides an attractive pocket park visible at eye level as people exit Baker Street station, from surrounding buildings and from the top decks of passing buses. In Spring, wildflowers will blossom creating a much more visible presence.

"The #Buzzstop provides a new habitat for pollinators such as solitary bees and butterflies creating a link in the green corridor between Hyde Park and Regents Park, supporting London's [B line](#) initiative. Additionally, it supports sustainable urban drainage by cleverly channelling rainwater. It ties in to the Mayor's manifesto

Teaching 2016-17:

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commitment to support green corridors and improve air quality and biodiversity.

"We welcome you to visit and post photos and feedback about this new feature on social media using the hashtag #Buzzstop."



Keep off the grass! TfL's new 'buzzstop', image courtesy of Naveed Ahmed.

Dr **Corinna Dean** (PhD Cities 2014) has taken up a position as Lecturer in the Architecture Department of the University of Westminster. She will be carrying out a residency in the ROOM gallery on the Isle of Sheppey, Kent in June, as part of the Sheerness Dockyard Preservation Trust,

exploring ideas under the archive and research programme ARCA, Archive for Rural Contemporary Architecture which she established in 2015 www.arca-projects.com

Sofia Garcia (2014) will present her current research on land markets, property rights and housing affordability in Lima at the 18th Annual World Bank Conference on Land and Poverty to be held in Washington D.C. in March this year. Her paper is entitled: "From Housing to Titling: a critique of the Peruvian approach to housing informality and a contribution to a new land and housing policy".

Sofia explores the Peruvian practice of land titling, which was massively deployed during the 1990s under the neoliberalizing project of former president Alberto Fujimori, with the financial aid of the World Bank and following Hernando De Soto's advice on property theory. She analyzes how the formal legalization of ownership through the delivery of individual freehold titles functioned as a form of neoliberal populism which expanded the gap between the formal housing market and the poor's capacities to access it; and undermined the State's own financial capacities for investment in affordable serviced land and public housing.

The work of *Re-constructing Sarajevo*, the publication which many of the MSc City Design students 2013-14 contributed to, and edited by **Sofia Garcia** and **Bronwyn Kotzen**, will form part of the *Sarajevo Now* conference line-up on invitation from Professor Alfredo Brillembourg and Haris Piplas - curator of *Sarajevo Now*, a pavilion at the Venice Biennale and part of Urban Think Tank at ETH, Zurich: <http://www.reactivate-sarajevo.com/#team>. **Serena Girani** presented the publication on Friday 23 September 2016, as an LSE alumna and representative of the *Reconstructing Cities* project.

Dr **Günter Gassner** (PhD Cities 2013 and former Course Tutor in the Cities Programme) is currently Lecturer in Urban Design at the

University of Cardiff. He has contributed a chapter, "A Religious Office Tower? Virgin Mary's Outspread Cloak in the City of London", pp. 171–188 in Quash, B., Rosen, A., Reddaway, C. (eds.) *Visualising a Sacred City: London, Art and Religion*. London: I. B. Tauris, see [publisher's webpage](#).

Günter has also written an article on "Seeing Capitalism in the View" in a special issue on Tall Buildings of *Urban Design*: http://www.udg.org.uk/sites/default/files/publications/UD139_magazine.pdf

Recent graduate **Cristian Gil** (2016) and fellow members of the MINGA Collective Waste Management team won The Geneva Challenge in November 2016. The Graduate Institute, Geneva launched the Advancing Development Goals Contest, an international competition for graduate students, in 2014. The Challenge looks for theoretically grounded and pragmatic solutions to a relevant international development problem; in 2016 this was [The Challenges of Urbanisation](#).



Cristian Gil (third from right) and fellow Geneva Challenge prize-winners, image courtesy of Cristian Gil.

Peter Griffiths (2014), Managing Editor at LSE Cities, has written a report on 'Bolstering urbanization efforts: Africa's approach to the New Urban Agenda', Chapter 4 of the Brookings report [Foresight Africa: Top priorities for the continent in 2017](#).

Megan Groth (2016) has joined LSE Cities as the Urban Age Publication Coordinator to assist with the third instalment of the Urban Age book. After graduation and prior to joining LSE Cities,

Megan worked with **Charlie Peel** (2011) as an urban design consultant for his firm The New Civic.

Denizer Ibrahim (2012) joined BNP Paribas Real Estate in January 2017 as Director of Retail Special Projects. Denizer has moved from Appear Here, the global leading online marketplace for short term retail, to BNP Paribas Real Estate to head up and drive a new division within the retail team focussed on advising clients, both international landlords and retailers, on their pop up/transient strategy and production.

Dr **Alasdair Jones** (PhD Cities 2008), Assistant Professor in the Department of Methodology, has recently been involved in a working group on 'enabling-interdisciplinarity in urban-related practice' as part of the EU Horizon 2020 cost action 'INTREPID'. The aim of this cost action is to better understand how to achieve more effective interdisciplinary research as a means to order to enhance our capacity to meet increasingly complex and 'wicked' contemporary global (urban) challenges. The cost action involves regular themed action workshops and conferences across Europe, as well as training schools in interdisciplinarity for urban research and practice, and selective funding is available for participation in these. The organisers of the Cost Action are keen to involve more doctoral students and early career researchers in INTREPID so please get in touch with Alasdair (a.jones@lse.ac.uk) if you might be interested in taking part.

Juan Sebastian Lama (2014), is making news in San Francisco with Hitmap, a Smart Cities start-up based on a sales prediction algorithm (MyHitmap.com).

Hitmap is an online service where retailers can find new business locations and predict sales for each new store. The core is an algorithm that statistically condenses hundreds of urban variables (e.g. median income, distance to public transport, closeness to

competitors) into a sales-prediction score specific to each business.

In its three years of research development and operations, Hitmap has shown its full potential by helping Off The Grid – the famous food-truck markets in San Francisco, California – expand from 5 to 52 locations in two years, becoming the fastest-growing food-truck company in the USA. But its potential doesn't end in retail, Hitmap GIS intelligence and easy-to-use interface has also proved effective for cities transforming underdeveloped commercial areas. They want to make a call to any reader who is interested in – or researching – big data and cities, to create a space for collaboration and debate: contact juan@hitmap.com.

Nabeela Malik (2016) has had a proposal accepted to present a paper at an upcoming conference. She will present 'The Tempelhof Revisited: Spaces of Crisis Driven Urbanism' at the 54th International Making Cities Liveable Conference on Public Places for Community, Democratic Dialogue, Health, and Equity in Santa Fe, New Mexico, 2-6 October 2017.

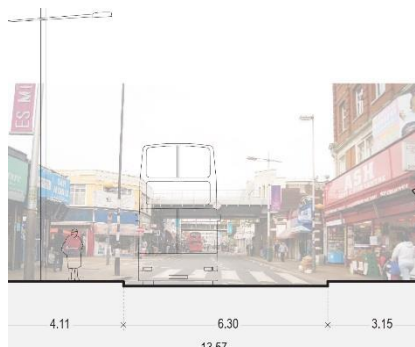
Lucrecia Montemayor (2008) has been named Deputy Director for Energy and Environment at Regional Plan Association (RPA), an urban research and advocacy non-for-profit based in New York City. Recently, she published a paper with Ellis Calvin on [Identification and Classification of Urban Development Place Types for the New York Metropolitan Region](#), describing the process of creating a place typology for the New York Metropolitan Region for use in the upcoming regional plan [A Region Transformed](#), which was presented in Seattle at the 1st International ACM SIGSPATIAL Workshop on Smart Cities and Urban Analytics.

As part of the planning process for RPA's fourth regional plan, RPA in collaboration with Guy Nordenson and Paul Lewis from Princeton University, is launching a design competition in late January for design strategies along four

regional corridors. To learn more go to design-competition.rpa.org. The plan, a multi-year research effort, will be released in the fall accompanied by an exhibition from the design competition finalists in New York City.

Alejandra de la Mora (2016) is now working at the Sustainable Development Research Centre at the National Workers Housing Fund (Infonavit) in Mexico, where she is in charge of two projects. One is research into social housing for rent, focusing on the internal framework of Infonavit, with the intention of getting on foot a pilot project at the end of the year. The other is an in-depth analysis of the re-drawing of the urban outlines of Mexico's most populous cities.

Nicolas Palominos (2012) has just begun PhD studies at The Bartlett Centre for Advanced Spatial Analysis, UCL. His research focuses on how citizens' engagement with urban issues is being and could unfold in a context of rapid advancement of urban and digital technologies, with a focus on the design of interactive visualisations that can facilitate and synthesize the complexity of the city and contribute to its knowledge, empowering and encouraging citizens for an informed and creative involvement in building more liveable cities.



Section detail Rye Lane (cropped), image courtesy of Nicolas Palominos.

Tim Pittman (2011) recently finished the development and publication of Gensler's new Research Catalogue, published on January 15th, for which he served as Managing Editor (<https://www.amazon.com/Gensler-Research-Catalogue-2/dp/1939621410>)

Max Pollock (2012) has started a non-profit called Brick + Board in Baltimore, MD. He says "We hire and train people with barriers to employment, and train them in salvage, milling, and woodworking. Check out our website: brickandboard.com!"

Bethania Soriano (2012) is a member of Mobilicity, a research initiative aimed at making London's transport network more accessible for those with mobility restrictions. The six-month project is funded by the European Commission Horizon 2020 Programme, under the OrganiCity umbrella. The group of urban professionals is studying how people with mobility restrictions utilise the London transport system, by tracking the movements of volunteers as they go about their daily journeys through the city. The goal is to analyse collated data, highlighting inaccessible, 'black spots' along the network, and provide transport authorities with recommendations on how to improve accessibility. You can find more about the project on www.mobilicity.london.

Michael Sutherland (2006) has moved to Hatch to lead the development and growth of Hatch's Urban Solutions consulting practice in Canada. Prior to Hatch Michael moved to private practice after leading the economics and investment strategy analysis team at Metrolinx, the Toronto Region's transport authority. Michael is helping high-profile public and private sector clients involved in large-scale regeneration and development, and is actively hiring. Hatch Urban Solutions is a global platform with offices in California, New York, Toronto, Melbourne, South Africa, and London. If you are interested please contact him: michael.sutherland@hatch.com.

Jessica Wurwarg (2004) was recently awarded the McCloy Fellowship on Global Trends through the American Council on Germany. She spent some time in autumn 2016 in Berlin, Hamburg and Dresden, Germany looking at Urban Policies in Sustainability, specifically at renewable energy/energy efficiency and

sustainable food systems. Currently she works as the Energy Manager for the NYC Department of Transportation and teaches about urbanization and food and water security at New York University's SPS Center for Global Affairs.

Faculty news

Professor **Ricky Burdett** has been awarded a Commander of the Order of the British Empire (CBE) as part of the New Year's Honours List for 2017. The Honours List recognises people who have made achievements in public life and committed themselves to serving and helping Britain. Ricky Burdett's CBE is for services to urban planning and design.

Dr **Suzi Hall** is very pleased to be working within interdisciplinary teams on two new research projects. The *High Streets For All* project for the Greater London authority explores the social and economic value of London high streets. LSE Cities and We Made That have teamed up, and Suzi and **Julia King** are working with MSc City Design alumna **Melissa Meyer** (Class of 2013).

Suzi will also be joining Myria Georgiou from the Media and Communication Department at LSE to work on the *Resilient Communities, Resilient Cities? Digital makings of the city of refuge* project, funded by the IGA-Rockerfeller Grant.

The Royal Commission for the Exhibition of 1851 awards some 25 postgraduate Fellowships and Scholarships a year, for advanced study and research in science, engineering, the built environment and design. The biennale Design Fellowship this year has been awarded to Dr **Julia King** for her proposal to identify, design, and prototype interventions to address the problem of how to deliver sustainable sanitation solutions in the context of disconnected marginalized communities in Delhi, India. The intention is to work from the scale of the individual toilet all the way to micro treatment plants.

These plants offer the currently largely untapped ability to manage effluent and convert that to water for a community who are deprived of both. The method of research by live project (action based research) is proposed in order to gain a more hands-on perspective by actively participating rather than only observing; adding to emergent forms of architectural practice and research, particularly in contested and marginalized spaces, as the endeavour of a collaborative maker.



A message to the new President from David Madden and daughter Emmanuelle, picture courtesy of David Madden.

Dr **David Madden** recently held two book launch events for his new book with Peter Marcuse, *In Defense of Housing*. One was held at the LSE and included Suzi Hall as a speaker. Another event was held at the CUNY Graduate Center in New York, where David Harvey introduced the book. David has also recently given lectures at Leeds University and Goldsmiths, University of London. In December, he organised a public forum in the Sociology Department at the LSE on Society and Politics in the Age of Trump.

David published an article in *The Guardian* on 5 October entitled "A Homegrown Housing Crisis." Read online at <http://bit.ly/2dwFBQ1>. With Peter Marcuse, he also published two pieces in *Jacobin*, "No Rent for Rats" and "The Permanent Crisis of Housing", available at <http://bit.ly/2gCh78z>

and <http://bit.ly/2dmsL7M>. In *Topos: The international review of landscape architecture and urban design*, David published an essay on the proposed Garden Bridge, entitled "Designing Against the Public." He also co-authored a chapter in Neil Brenner's recent book, *Critique of Urbanization: Selected essays* (Basel: Birkhäuser Verlag GmbH, 2017).

PhD news

Congratulations to our PhD candidates who successfully completed their PhDs in 2016 and have been awarded their doctorates: **Michelle Cullen** for 'Cities on the path to 'smart': information technology provider interactions with urban governance through smart city projects in Dubuque, Iowa and Portland, Oregon' and **Philipp Rode** for 'The integrated ideal in urban governance: compact city strategies and the case of integrating urban planning, city design and transport policy in London and Berlin'.

We have updated our guidelines for prospective PhD candidates: if you are considering whether to apply please read: [Urban Sociology Cluster PhD outline](#).

LSE Cities news

The third intensive teaching week of the [Executive MSc in Cities](#) will run in mid-February. The EMC is a flexible, tailor-made programme for urban professionals in the public, private and third sectors who want to improve the way their organisations understand and deliver change in cities. Enrolment for the 2017 EMC is now open, for more information follow link above or email the Programme Administrator Laurence Horstman at exec.lsecities@lse.ac.uk.