

GPEIG VOICE

2025



Grand Canal Hanggang Park, Hangzhou, China
Industrial Heritage Reborn as Cultural Landmark
Photo by Lu Liao 2025



2025

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Message from the Co-chair



Alejandra Reyes, Co-chairs



Susmita Rishi, Co-chairs

Dear Colleagues,

It has been a rewarding experience to serve as GPEIG co-chairs. We thank you all and our committee members in particular for your continued service and support in these difficult times. These past two years have been challenging for many of us throughout the globe, making it hard for international students and scholars to come together. While one would always like to do more, we have aimed to overcome some of the impacts of conflict and intolerance on our wellbeing through events to reflect upon current events while envisioning alternative futures. Last year, the virtual roundtable 'Life, apartheid & urbicide: Prospects & spaces of decolonial engagement for Palestine' brought several planning scholars together, including a West Bank resident, to critically engage with the historical and ongoing struggles faced by Palestinians, enhance solidarity, and foster informed and compassionate academic communities.

At the 2024 conference, GPEIG leadership brought the ACSP interest groups together in sessions underscoring the multiple and intersecting barriers hindering the safety, agency, inclusion, and support of immigrants, people of color, women, LGBTQI+ com-

munities, and under-represented groups in university settings. In collaboration with the Faculty Women, Queer and Trans, and People of Color interest groups, we mapped strategies for collective action and a forthcoming commentary. GPEIG also organized the roundtable 'Closing Socioeconomic Gaps in Planning Education and Research' and a 2024 World Urban Forum session 'Alternative & Context-Sensitive Planning Education for Post-Conflict Reconstruction in Palestine'. Alongside these critical efforts, GPEIG has continued to collaborate with ACSP's Global Planning Education Committee (GPEC) on their International Students Pre-Conference Workshops every year, among other efforts like last year's roundtable 'Pathways to Global Careers for Planners'.

In 2025, GPEIG began holding a series of monthly listening sessions over Zoom as a sort of temperature check, resource, and guidance for our by-right conference session. At these meetings, we discussed a wide range of topics, reflective of our global perspectives. In North America, the immigrant or non-citizen experience unites many of us even when our diverse backgrounds can understandably pull us sometimes in different directions. Solidarity and coalition building seem particularly important given many of our limited abilities to voice concerns and foster a sense of belonging to cope with current conditions. Despite hostile political climates and uncertainty, we hope to continue to uphold the substantial and historical contributions of immigrant scholarly communities. We invite you to join us in crafting a way forward.

Lastly, with decreasing budgetary support from ACSP, we must emphasize the importance of donations and voluntary support from our members to fulfill our yearly business meetings, among other activities and communications. You can donate here: <https://www.acsp.org/donations/donate.asp?id13591> or reach out via email if you would like to join our efforts as a volunteer.

Best wishes to our new and incumbent co-chairs. We are looking forward to seeing some of you in Minneapolis.

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GPEIG @ ACSP 2024

Wednesday, November 6, 2024

International Students Pre-Conference Workshop

The GPEIG collaborated with GPEC to host the International Students Pre-conference Workshop. The workshop began with opening remarks from ACSP President Rayman Mohamed and President-Elect Ivis Garcia, who acknowledged the unique challenges faced by international scholars in planning education and practice.

The first panel discussed transitions from graduate study to careers in infrastructure, academia, and international research. Following a robust Q&A, participants engaged in small-group breakout discussions on topics such as immigration, funding, mentorship, and sector-specific job search strategies. The second panel offered insights into community-based planning and regional agency roles. The day concluded with an open discussion, a resource-sharing session, and an evening dinner and reception for continued networking.



Thursday, November 7, 2024

Roundtable: Intersectional Barriers to Planning Scholarship and Academic Freedom

This roundtable discussed the complex challenges faced by scholars with intersectional identities in planning academia. Panelists highlighted how political climates in the U.S. and abroad are increasingly undermining Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) efforts, and how institutional structures continue to marginalize historically underrepresented voices. The session emphasized the urgent need to protect academic freedom and to create more inclusive and equitable planning spaces.

Roundtable: Closing Socioeconomic Gaps in Planning Education and Research

The GPEIG hosted an engaging conversation on how socioeconomic inequality shapes who becomes a planner and whose research is prioritized. The panelists shared personal stories as first-generation scholars and discussed how planning education can better support students from low-income and working-class backgrounds. The roundtable called for a broader rethinking of access, mentorship, and representation in both education and research.



Friday, November 8, 2024
GPEIG Annual Business Meeting & Breakfast

GPEIG members gathered early Friday morning for the annual business meeting and breakfast. The agenda included welcome remarks, research updates from Shruti Syal and Andre Comandon, an awards presentation, and open discussion. Members shared updates, celebrated achievements, and discussed priorities for the coming year in a collegial and inspiring setting.



Workshop: Forging Resistance and Mapping Intersectional Barriers

This participatory workshop built on the previous day's roundtable by creating a collaborative space for attendees to reflect on the growing barriers to academic freedom and inclusion in planning. Facilitated by representatives from GPEIG, FWIG, POCIG, and the Inclusion IG, the session encouraged participants to map out personal and structural challenges and identify collective acts of resistance. Discussions focused on topics such as state-level censorship, institutional neglect, and global solidarity across academic communities.

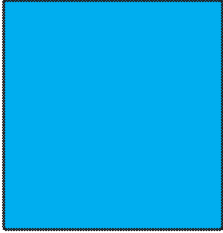
Roundtable: Pathways to Global Careers for Planners

This roundtable, co-organized by GPEC and GPEIG, explored the diverse career pathways available to planners in today's global marketplace. Speakers from the public, private, academic, and nonprofit sectors shared insights on what skills and mindsets are needed to succeed in international roles. The session also addressed how to make these opportunities more inclusive and equitable for students with varied backgrounds and aspirations.

(Photo credits: Deden Rukmana, Meiqing Li)



GPEIG Awards



Student Award

Best Dissertation on International Planning Award

Winner: Aarthi Janakiraman



BIO

Aarthi Janakiraman is a planner and designer whose work centers on the spatial politics of the built environment, particularly in relation to heritage conservation in rapidly urbanizing contexts. Aarthi is currently an Assistant Professor in the School of Architecture at Tulane University. She earned her PhD in Urban Planning at MIT's Department of Urban Studies and Planning in May 2024. Aarthi has over five years of professional experience as an architectural designer working in Singapore, New York City, and India. She received her Master in City Planning from MIT and also holds a Master of Science in Architecture from Pratt Institute, and a Bachelor of Architecture from Anna University.



Dissertation highpoints

My doctoral dissertation, titled Repurposing Colonialism: Postcoloniality and the Politics of World Heritage examines the tensions of preserving colonial-era World Heritage in postcolonial contexts, asking: how does colonial-era heritage serve postcolonial societies? I study this issue through a transnational comparative study of four living urban sites in the Indian Ocean region – Singapore Botanic Gardens (Singapore), Mumbai's Victorian Gothic and art Deco ensemble (India), George Town (Malaysia), and Galle (Sri Lanka). The dissertation explores how colonial-era heritage is instrumentalized for postcolonial nation-building by signaling modernity, masking ethno-racial politics, and conserving elite privilege. This triad of uses shows how spatial manifestations of colonial power are coopted by different actors and legitimized through global institutions to further the present-day agendas of postcolonial elites.

1. What inspires you about the work for which you won the award?

Following the summer of 2020, when colonial statues and colonial heritage more broadly drew global attention, I was fascinated by what appeared to me to be a paradoxical phenomenon – despite a painful history of decolonization coupled with rising nationalist sentiments, I observed that many post-colonial nation states continue to seek World Heritage status for their colonial heritage. For me this inspired a need to ask: Why? What explains this seeming paradox? These curiosities sparked this particular line of inquiry in my dissertation and current research.

2. Could you share some memorable experiences regarding this work?

Doing fieldwork for this project was such an adventure. It was an eye-opening experience to spend time in places I'd visited before, but now wearing my researcher hat. I was constantly amazed by all the new things I learned—particularly about places that I thought I knew pretty well! The incredible people I met and interviewed while in the field were definitely the highlight of doing this work.

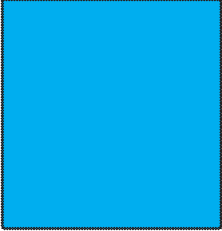
3. How did you feel upon accepting the award?

I was absolutely delighted. I felt incredibly honored to receive the award and to have my work recognized this way! And it wouldn't have been possible without the support of my wonderful mentors, colleagues, and friends.

4. What's next?

In terms of research, I am now working on adapting my dissertation into a book! After taking a little time away from the dissertation as I settled into my new position as Assistant Professor at Tulane University, I am really excited to be coming back to this project with new energy. I'm eager to get a broader perspective of the processes I explore in the dissertation and am planning on fieldwork in a range of other World Heritage contexts. I want it to be read in Colombia, and, hopefully, other Latin American countries. I would like my interviewees to be able to get a glimpse into how I have written about the stories that they have shared with me.

GPEIG Awards



Best Student Paper on International Planning Award

Winner:
Saumitra Sinha



BIO

Saumitra is a Postdoctoral Research Associate at the Pulte Institute for Global Development, Keough School of Global Affairs at the University of Notre Dame. His research centers on reducing interrelated risks in urban areas, as well as the role of water and sanitation planning and policy in these processes. At Notre Dame, he is part of a team studying how water, sanitation, and hygiene (WASH) are connected to various aspects of people's daily lives in Malawi, affecting their well-being through multiple pathways. His doctoral dissertation, done at the Department of City and Regional Planning at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, examined how residents' diverse perspectives and preferences can be incorporated into decision-making for reallocating limited resources, using both quantitative and qualitative methods, with a focus on Delhi's water subsidy policy. Saumitra holds a master's degree in regional planning from Cornell University and a degree in architecture from the School of Planning and Architecture, New Delhi, India. His previous experience includes researching floodplain management in India and the United States, as well as supporting quantitative and spatial analyses of agricultural markets and nutrition in India.



Topic of paper

The paper focused on assessing Delhi residents' to gather views on a prospective reform of Delhi's water subsidy policy using choice experiments conducted through a face-to-face survey of 728 representative households. Respondents were presented with several hypothetical water service profiles in which the subsidy amount and level of services varied. The analysis provided quantitative measures to assess people's acceptability of various options for water policy reforms in which the level of subsidy was reduced and re-allocated.

1.What inspires you about the work for which you won the award?

I am interested in learning about strategies that can be utilized to incorporate the diverse needs and wants of people in large urban areas into policy-making. Typically, this has been achieved through community-based research, which has provided very important insights into people's lived experiences. In this paper, I explored how we can adapt economic frameworks to understand people's preferences. From the entire process of conducting this research, I gained new insights into the value people place on various aspects of water services, which was very valuable to me as a researcher of WASH in low- and middle-income countries.

2.Could you share some memorable experiences regarding this work?

Preparing for the fieldwork and conducting the survey in Delhi was a very enriching experience. Delhi is my home, and I lived there for 25 years before pursuing graduate studies. However, during the survey for this study, I discovered many new aspects of Delhi that I had not been aware of, and probably would not have known about had it not been for this study. The willingness of the participants to take the time to share their views on a topic important to them was humbling. I am grateful to everyone who took part in the survey.

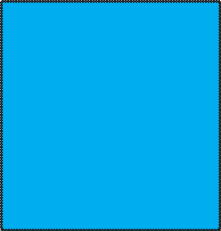
3.How did you feel upon accepting the award?

The student presentations from the previous year were so impressive and rigorous that I felt very honored to be recognized among my peers.

4. What's next?

I am continuing to do research on WASH as a postdoctoral research associate at the University of Notre Dame. Toward the end of my appointment at Notre Dame, I plan to apply for faculty positions and explore other opportunities for teaching and leading research.

GPEIG Awards



Best Student Case Study Award

Winner:

Anton Rozhkov, Center for Urban Science and Progress (CUSP), New York University



BIO

Dr. Anton Rozhkov is an Industry Assistant Professor and Director of the MS Program in Applied Urban Science and Informatics at the Center for Urban Science and Progress (CUSP) at New York University. His research explores how data-driven policies, spatial analytics, and emerging technologies can transform urban infrastructure and planning. With a Ph.D. in Urban Planning and Policy from the University of Illinois Chicago, he specializes in complex systems and the role of decentralized, renewable energy in city design, focusing on GIS, AI, spatial analysis, decision modeling, and machine learning to build more sustainable and equitable cities.



Case Study Highlights

My case study examines how the state of Illinois (US) can adapt European renewable energy policies, specifically Denmark's strategies, to accelerate its path toward 100% renewable energy and climate neutrality by 2050. By comparing Chicago and Copenhagen, the research reveals how municipalities can drive large-scale energy transitions, identifies policy and technological hurdles, and proposes locally adapted solutions inspired by global best practices.

1. What inspires you about the work for which you won the award?

I'm inspired by the potential to translate global successes into local action, in other words, bridging ideas across continents. Denmark has demonstrated that a coordinated mix of renewable energy targets, municipal action, and advanced grid technologies can transform an entire nation's energy landscape. The opportunity to apply those lessons at the state level in the US, in my case study in Illinois, integrating smart grids, distributed generation, and spatial planning, offers a rare chance to combine technical innovation with policy reform for measurable impact.

2. Could you share some memorable experiences regarding this work?

Diving into Copenhagen's energy transition strategies (many hours of reading policies and research articles) was eye-opening; seeing how community-scale solutions integrate seamlessly into urban life was both instructive and inspiring. One highlight was exploring Copenhagen's district heating and wind integration systems: reading about how data-driven energy management, combined with strong local governance, supports near-total reliance on renewables brought a lot of hope and ideas to my research.

3. How did you feel upon accepting the award?

I felt honored and also motivated. It was a validation that this type of cross-continental policy and technology transfer can capture attention beyond the academic space. The work was done when I was a doctoral student, so winning this award proved the need for this type of study and motivates me to continue this work now, as a faculty member, with the help of my students.

4. What's next?

The next step is expanding this research to a comparative framework for multiple U.S. states, focusing on how advanced energy analytics, decentralized grids, and municipal innovation can accelerate renewable adoption. I also prototype decision-support tools that integrate geospatial energy data with policy modeling, helping interested parties to test "what-if" scenarios before committing to major infrastructure. My large goal is to keep the dialogue flowing with colleagues on both sides of the Atlantic, building lasting bridges for collaboration, knowledge sharing, and innovation in our field.

News from Planning Schools

International planning courses

1

Renmin University of China

Contributor: Lu Liao, Assistant Professor of Renmin University of China

Lu Liao has developed an international planning course titled “Urban Development and Policy” for the International Master’s Program in Urban Governance at Renmin University of China. The aim of this course is to provide a guided survey of the concepts, theories, and contemporary practices of urban development. The course establishes a foundational framework for understanding cities by drawing on theories from urban planning, public policy, and urban studies. Key questions will be explored, such as: What constitutes a “city”? Why is the world urbanizing so rapidly? How do globalization and colonialism alter interactions among “global cities”? The course will also delve into pressing social and urban policy issues, including environmental and climate policies, social equity and gentrification, transportation, housing, and community development. Students will encounter a range of contemporary concepts related to urbanism, such as sustainable cities, creative cities, and smart cities. Finally, this course offers the opportunity to examine cities around the world, including but not limited to Beijing, Shanghai, London, Rio de Janeiro, New York City, Mumbai, and Singapore. Through case studies of cities from both the Global North and South, we will discuss strategies for achieving sustainable and inclusive urban development in various regional and local contexts.

2

University of Denver

Contributor: Stefan Chavez-Norgaard

University of Denver (DU), Josef Korbel School of International Studies
Teaching Assistant Professor

During the 2025–2026 academic year, Prof. Stefan Chavez-Norgaard will be teaching two applied-experiential international planning courses conducted in partnership with the Cambridge, MA-based Lincoln Institute of Land Policy and the U.S. Department of State, respectively. In teams, University of Denver undergraduate students will explore and produce client-driven research outputs related to topics of their choice related to the themes of planning practice and international relations and futures. Students will gain skills in client-driven research, oral presentations, building and maintaining professional networks, and planning-based facilitation.

3

The University of Hong Kong

Contributor: Tianren Yang
The University of Hong Kong
Assistant Professor and Assistant Department Head

Prof. Tianren Yang (The University of Hong Kong) recently became the first Chinese scholar to be invited to the UN-Habitat Global Urban Lecture Series in its 10-year history. Prof. Yang delivered the inaugural lecture of Season 7, titled “Deciphering and Improving Commuting in Our Cities.” The lecture explored critical challenges and innovative approaches to urban commuting, offering insights highly relevant to international planning education and practice. (https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1ZToS_hdAQ0)

4

University at Buffalo

Contributor: Xuanyi Nie
University at Buffalo
Assistant Professor

25 Spring URP 563 Cities and Globalization

5

Renmin University of China

Contributer: Chaowei Xiao
Renmin University of China
Associate Professor

The course titled “Towards Sustainable Rural-Urban Development of Human Settlement: The Asian-African Collaborative Network” was hosted by Department of Urban Planning, CAUP, Tongji University at College of Architecture and Urban Planning (CAUP), Tongji University in 2024

Refer to the link for details:

<https://caup.tongji.edu.cn/caupen/1a/14/c33444a334356/page.htm>



Contributor: Xuanshuo Xu, Zhejiang University
Assistant Professor

ZJU 2025 SDGs Global Summer School: Empowering an Inclusive Future through Academia and Practice

From July 2 to 15, the School of Public Affairs at Zhejiang University successfully hosted the “Zhejiang University 2025 SDGs Global Summer School— Inclusive Development Study Program.” Twenty-eight young scholars from 15 top universities across the globe—including University College London (UK), University of Pennsylvania (USA), Nanyang Technological University (Singapore), Monash University (Australia), and University of Lisbon (Portugal)—gathered in Hangzhou, China. Through interdisciplinary courses, field study, and cultural immersion, they engaged in in-depth discussions on the practical pathways for achieving the United Nations’ Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) in fields such as agriculture, social policy, and urban development.

I. Academic Frontiers: Structuring Inclusive Development through Multidimensional Perspectives

On July 3, Professor Kevin Z. Chen (Qushi Chair Professor at Zhejiang University) took China’s poverty alleviation practices in Guizhou Province as a starting point to systematically unpack the logic chain behind China’s “miracle of poverty reduction,” achieved through a multidimensional strategy involving industrial development, relocation, and educational support.

From July 4 to 7, Professor Liu Tao of the Department of Social Security and Risk Management offered a theoretical framework of “Global Social Policy,” covering areas such as social insurance, social assistance, and welfare. On July 6, in a focused session on the “Reform of the U.S. Social Security System,” Associate Professor Chen Gang from the State University of New York at Albany delved into the tension between the pay-as-you-go model and the funded model, proposing a



reform pathway of “gradual retirement age extension + diversified investments.”

On July 9–10, Dr. Xu Yuanshuo, a researcher under the “Hundred Talents Program” in the Department of Urban Development and Management, led a course on “Inclusive Cities.” He guided participants to examine urban governance through the lens of social sciences, exploring concepts such as spatial justice and the digital divide. Using Hangzhou’s “Future Community” as a case study, discussions focused on how public space redesign and accessible infrastructure can enhance the integration of vulnerable groups.

On July 11–12, Professor Gong Binlei from the Department of Agricultural Economics and Management explored the theme “Inclusive Agriculture: Pathways Toward Zero Hunger.” He systematically analyzed the core concepts of inclusive agriculture, using China’s “Functional Zoning for Grain Production” policy to demonstrate how standardized land transfer and full-coverage agricultural insurance enable smallholder farmers to benefit from economies of scale.



II. Technology Empowerment: Unlocking Innovation through Field-Based Learning
On July 5, participants visited the Liangzhu Ancient City Heritage Park. There, technical experts from Zhejiang Yolu Robotics Co., Ltd. explained the design logic behind embodied intelligent cleaning robots. Students conducted device debugging and route planning exercises, critically reflecting on the integration of AI technologies within the 5,000-year context of Chinese civilization.

On the afternoon of July 10, Dr. Dong Zhaoyingzi, a researcher from the Department of Urban Development and Management, led a field visit to Yunqi Town. Through immersive 5D films, students traced the trajectory of Hangzhou's urban development. At the biomedical exhibition hall, iMedImage®—a large-scale medical imaging AI model developed by DAAN Gene—sparked heated discussion for its few-shot learning capability, demonstrating the vast potential of inclusive innovation in technology.

During the field study at the AI Town on July 14, participants experienced real-time physical control using brain-computer interface devices and observed surgical AI systems planning tumor resection paths with precision. These emerging technologies are fundamentally reshaping work patterns in traditional industries.



III. Cultural Immersion: Civilizational Dialogue in the Fragrance of Millennia-Old Tea

On the afternoon of July 14, participants experienced a Song Dynasty-style tea ceremony rooted in the cultural tradition of Jingshan tea. Through the foam and fragrance of the tea, youth from around the world connected with the essence of Chinese civilization—grasping its aesthetic and philosophical richness in each grinding, pouring, and whisking gesture.

To date, the Inclusive Development Module of the ZJU SDGs Global Summer School has attracted nearly 1,500 young participants from over 30 countries. Moving forward, the School of Public Affairs will continue to deepen cooperation with global universities, promote the localization of inclusive development theory and practice, and contribute the “ZJU Solution” to building a community with a shared future for humankind.



University of Maryland

Contributer: Reemberto Rodriguez
University of Maryland

The School of Architecture, Planning and Preservation has now completed three consecutive study abroad courses in Havana, Cuba (2023, 2024, and 2025). The interdisciplinary course is titled “Havana’s Art & Culture: The intersection of architecture, planning, preservation and economics”. The course is offered during the short Winter Semesters in January. It begins and ends with a couple of days of virtual gatherings, with two weeks in Havana.

The students stay in homes - not hotels - and participate in morning lectures by Cuban-based professors at a neighborhood learning center. In the afternoons - after lunch at entrepreneur-owned restaurants - they explore the streets of Havana guided by local experts. Most evenings are free to venture into the City to discover more restaurants and neighborhoods. During the weekend in the middle of the two work-weeks, students take a break from academia and visit Western Cuba landscape on Saturday, and the beach on Sunday.

The course demonstrates the importance of ‘lived experiences’. The students are exposed to the challenges and realities of daily life in Cuba, learn about its rich history, and engage in substantive discussion about its future. Some students have expressed that this course is a ‘life-changing experience’.

8

University of Cincinnati

Contributer: David J. Edelman, Professor, University of Cincinnati

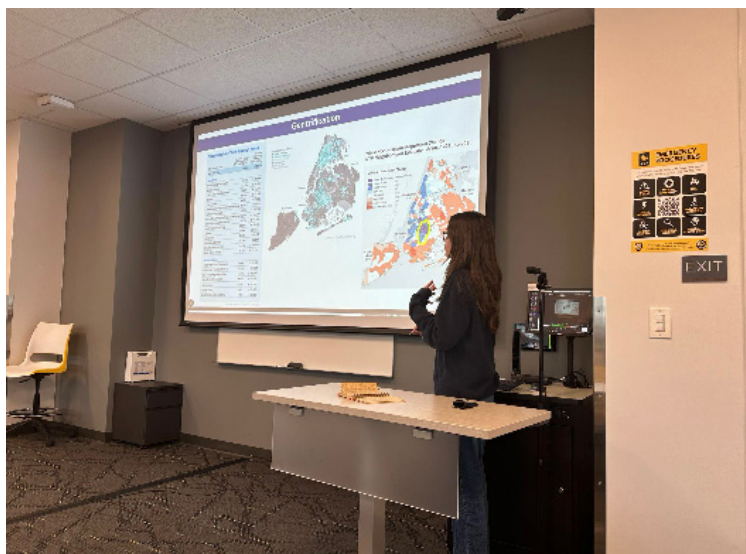
This past fall term, I offered PLAN5138/PLAN6038: Managing the Urban Environment in Developing Countries for the 11th time. Each year we develop a 5-year environmental plan for a different city. These have been: Mysore, Jakarta, Manila, Bangkok, Istanbul, Lagos, Casablanca, Santo Domingo, Lima, Rio de Janeiro, and this year Dhaka. Next fall we will study San Juan. I already have data for future plans for Mexico City, Nairobi and Kingston. Classes are run as a workshop/studio and students in pairs or threes write major papers on poverty alleviation, industry, energy, transportation, sewage and sanitation, water management or finance. In the spring semester, I write additional chapters and put the student papers together as a book published in print and digitally with an ISBN number by an academic publisher in Europe. The student names are on each chapter, and every student receives a digital copy of the book. Books about Latin American cities are also published in Spanish, or, for Rio, Portuguese. The Casablanca book has appeared in French. The course is an opportunity to do directed research and learn, not only about a foreign city and country very different from our own, but also how to write for publication according to publisher guidelines. About 150 students have taken this course so far. Classes are small – between 12 and 15. Most participants are planners, but students from other disciplines across campus have taken the course. Although this is designed as a graduate course, serious undergraduates are welcome and have done excellent work.

9

University of Central Florida

Contributer: Meiqing Li, Assistant Professor
University of Central Florida

25 Spring PAD 5930 Global Cities





Upcoming Conferences/workshops

1

Contributer: Shruti Syal, Virginia Commonwealth University, Assistant Professor

Nidhi Subramanyam and Shruti Syal organized a meeting for planning academics working on water at ACSP in Seattle. Following that, we have launched quarterly meetups every CY, focused on specific professional and research/practice topics. Our first quarterly meeting on February 13 brought members together to plan pre-organized sessions for ACSP 2025, and our May meeting will focus on developing collaborative research opportunities within the group. Please reach out to Nidhi (nidhi.subramanyam@utoronto.ca), Shruti (syals@vcu.edu), or Andrea Restrepo-Mieth (andrea.rm@rutgers.edu) if you'd like to learn more.

2

Contributer:Stefan Chavez-Norgaard
University of Denver (DU), Josef Korbel School of International
Studies,Teaching Assistant Professor

Along with Iowa State University Professor Jane Rongerude, Prof. Stefan Chavez-Norgaard will be leading a workshop at the Fall 2025 Association of Collegiate Schools of Planning conference on the theme of “Planning Pedagogy.” Attendees or participants will be asked to bring to the workshop one innovative classroom activity, material, technique, or approach that they might like to share. The workshop will open with two short presentations by Profs. Chavez-Norgaard and Rongerude. These presentations will situate applied, experiential learning in planning within these faculty members’ literary and scholarly inspirations and include a high-level discussion of how each faculty member integrates applied, experiential learning techniques and professional soft skills into their classrooms. Following opening framing presentations, both Prof. Rongerude and Prof. Chavez-Norgaard will share short class micro-interventions and solicit feedback from other workshop attendees. In a final portion of the workshop, attendees will share their own pedagogical innovations, solicit comments and questions, and discuss the benefits and drawbacks of these approaches to teaching. We expect that the workshop will be tremendously useful to ourselves and to other attendees, in identifying novel teaching practices and approaches, discussing what works and does not work for students at various levels (i.e. master’s programs, undergraduate programs), and creating a community of practice of planning scholars committed to inclusive pedagogy and to applied, experiential learning in varied course contexts, including and especially for those interested in international planning theory and practice.

3

Contributer:Stephen Boodhram,Trinidad and Tobago Society of
Planners

The Trinidad and Tobago Society of Planners (TTSP) is proud to host the 14th Annual Caribbean Urban Forum (CUF) from June 4th-6th, 2025. The event will be held in collaboration with, The University of the West Indies, the Town and Country Planning Division of the Ministry of Planning and Development, The Ministry of Rural Development and Local Development, the Caribbean Network for Urban and Land Management (CNULM) based at the University of the West Indies, and a network of regional and international partners. This year’s forum brings together land use practitioners, urban planners, municipal leaders, policymakers, academics, and professionals to confront emerging urban challenges across the region.

The theme for CUF 2025 is “Re-Planning and Resilience: The Roadmap for Caribbean Cities.” It reflects the urgent need for Small Island Developing States (SIDS) to build sustainable, adaptable urban systems in the face of rapid environmental, economic, and social changes.

With recent global shifts in climate patterns, urban expansion, and infrastructure demands, Caribbean cities are at a crossroads—necessitating innovative strategies for future growth and resilience.

This year's theme emphasizes re-planning approaches that respond to contemporary challenges while creating future-proof cities that thrive under both routine conditions and unexpected disruptions. Throughout the forum, participants will explore the importance of resilient planning frameworks that prioritize sustainable development, climate adaptation, and disaster preparedness. From mitigating the impacts of tropical storms and rising sea levels to redesigning public spaces and infrastructure to promote social equity, CUF 2025 aims to define clear pathways for strengthening urban centers across the Caribbean. Sessions will address the need for integrated urban governance models, new data-driven decision-making tools, and collaborative planning approaches across national and municipal levels.

CUF 2025 will continue to foster knowledge sharing and practical learning, offering an invaluable platform for cross-disciplinary dialogue among professionals, academics, and decision-makers. Through presentations, workshops, and interactive discussions, participants will develop actionable insights on how to navigate the complexities of urban resilience. The Forum will also spotlight innovative practices and policies from across the region, ensuring that Caribbean cities are equipped to confront future challenges with confidence and foresight.

The 14th Annual Caribbean Urban Forum offers an opportunity to shape the roadmap for resilient Caribbean cities—charting a future where sustainable growth, equity, and climate resilience intersect. As urban leaders come together to exchange knowledge and share solutions, this year's Forum promises to lay the foundation for a new era of proactive, adaptive, and forward-looking urban development in the Caribbean. The submission of proposals related to any of the conference themes including contributions that are both theoretical and empirical are encouraged. We intend to have the active involvement of various stakeholders including government and non-governmental representatives, civil society organizations, policymakers, and other non-academic participants in panels, workshops and presentations. The Local Organising Committee anticipates to publish a report of the CUF 2025 featuring a synopsis of the event's proceedings, critical insights and outcomes from held discussions, and relevant research projects. There will be a review process for Authors who wish to present papers for publication.

For further information on general conference as well as the events being held prior to CUF2024, please contact:

Mr. Stephen Boodhram
Chair, Local Organising Committee
Trinidad and Tobago Society of Planners
Phone (876) 722-3165
Email: cuf.tt2025@gmail.com

Research highlights

1

**Contributer: Eugenie L Birch, University of Pennsylvania
Nussdorf Professor of Urban Research**

The University of Pennsylvania's Institute for Urban Research is serving as the secretariat for the SDSN Global Commission on Urban SDG Finance, co chaired by Anne Hidalgo, Mayor, Paris; Eduardo Paes, Mayor, Rio de Janeiro, and Jeffrey Sachs, President, SDSN. The Commissions 100 members work in one of six task forces, one of which is co chaired by Paul Smoke, Professor, Wagner School, NYU. The Commission is working on several projects including the creation of a Green Cities Guarantee Fund, supporting MDB reform efforts to fashion country platforms with the City Climate Finance Leadership Alliance (CCFLA), local initiatives to develop city project portfolios with the Resilience City Network (RCN), advocacy to get recognition of sustainable urbanization in the outcome document of the UN's Finance For Development (FF4D) conference to be held in Seville, Spain, in June, and contribution work on subnational climate finance in the IPCC special report on cities.



Contributer: Clara Irazábal
University of Maryland, College Park
Director and Professor, Urban Studies and Planning Program

Dr. Clara Irazábal's (University of Maryland, College Park) 2024 publications on international subjects:

- Jessen, J., C. Irazábal, S. Vidhyarthi. "Planning in Select Other Nations." In J. Levy, S. Hirt, and C. Dawkins (eds.). *Contemporary Urban Planning*. 12th edition, 2024. New York and London: Routledge: Taylor & Francis Group, 2024.
- Irazábal, C. E. Sweet (ed.). [Book review] *Disassembled cities: Social and spatial strategies to reassemble communities*. *Journal of Planning Education and Research*. Volume 44, Issue 1, 2024, 516-517.
- Irazábal, C. (2024). "Latin American Perspectives on the Urban Century: Planning Challenges and Opportunities." *Latin American Perspectives*, 0(0): 1-9. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0094582X241257500>
- Metawala, P, K. Golda-Pongratz, and C. Irazabal (2024). "All In a Day's Work: Impacts of On-demand Platform Delivery Work on Immigrant Riders in Barcelona." In M. Vale, D. Ferreira, N. Rodrigues (eds.). *Geographies of the Platform Economy: Critical Perspectives*. Springer.

Dr. Clara Irazábal was a keynote speaker at two international conferences and presented at four others:

- "Trauma-Informed Practices in Urban Planning for Immigrant Integration: Learning from Health-Related Disciplines" (with N. Alvarez). Pan African City Symposium PASPAC2024, Building Equity and Sustainability for the Future." June 26-29, 2024. US Africa Collaborative, Inc. Bowie State University, Bowie, MD.
- "Planning Latin American Cities 2033: Present Challenges and Opportunities." (Keynote). 22nd Network-Association of European Researchers on Urbanization in the South N-AERUS Conference, "Thinking Urbanization from the Ground: Innovations in governance, policy, and placemaking in the Global South." June 20-22, 2024, School of Natural and Built Environment, Queen's University, Belfast, Northern Ireland.
- "Trauma-Informed Practices in Urban Planning for Immigrant Integration: Learning from Health-Related Disciplines" (with N. Alvarez). LASA 2024, Bogota, Colombia, June 12-15, 2024.
- "University-City-Community Partnership: A Scenario Planning Approach to Restorative Justice in Lakeland" (with B. Andrews). International Town-Gown Association Conference ITGA 2024. "The Power of Partnerships: Solving Grand Challenges Together." June 4-7, 2024. University of Maryland, College Park.
- Panelist of "Global Networks and Extralegal Economies: A Discussion of Outlaw Capital by Jennifer Tucker." Urban Affairs Association (UAA) International Conference, New York City, April 23-27, 2024.

- “De la Pluricrisis a la Emancipación Universal.” (Keynote). 2nd International Academic Conference on Urban and Rural Research in Peru and Latin America. CIUR 2024, “Insurgent urban and territorial practices from Latin America and the Caribbean: epistemologies, knowledge and actions,” March 11, 2024, Center for Research in Urban and Territorial Theory - URBES LAB. Lima, Peru. Virtual. https://youtu.be/34FpjJL_hJI?si=Mw0k6UC2pMVfnc4L

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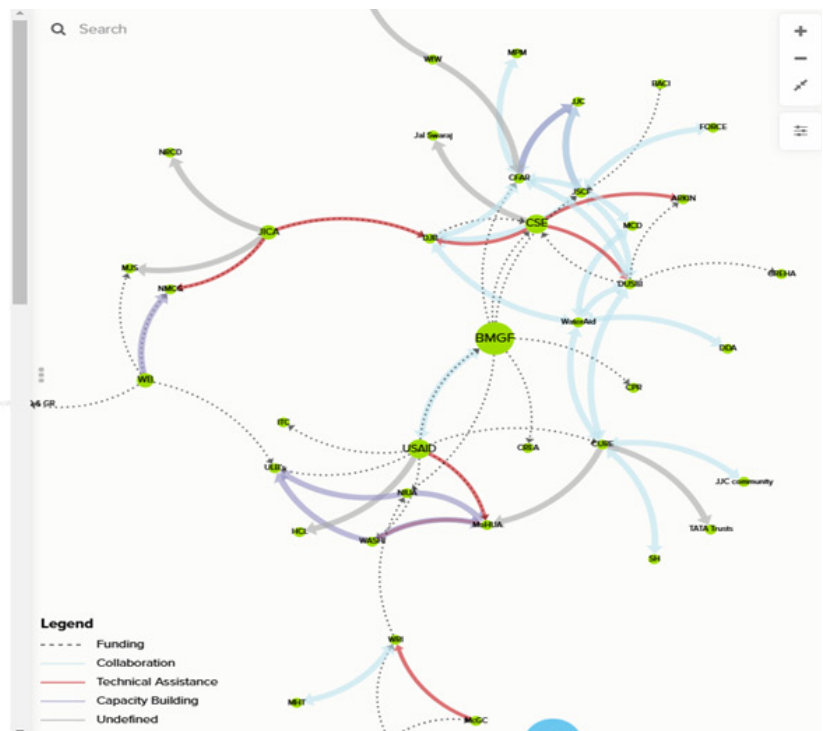
Contributer: Shruti Syal, Virginia Commonwealth University Assistant Professor

ACWUS: Artificially Constructed Wetlands for Urban Sewage treatment, envisions linking Delhi's environmental (water pollution remediation) and social ('basti' upgrading, focusing on WaSH services) agendas using Nature-based Solutions... like constructed wetlands. But this requires consolidating the many projects by hundreds of civic, governmental, nonprofit, private, or academic organizations involved in various aspects of the WaSH and NbS sectors, and documenting their relationships with each other. The upcoming (1) GIS site suitability map and (2) open-access social network map (see image) are meant to serve as resilience planning tools to realize that long-term goal, by (1) identifying sites with potential and (2) offering a way to identify key actors, instruments, partnerships, and network gaps needed to develop crucial synergies.

Overview Discussions

ACWUS, or Artificially Constructed Wetlands for Urban Sewage treatment, envisions linking Delhi's environmental (water pollution remediation) and social ('basti' upgrading, focusing on WaSH services) agendas using Nature-based Solutions... like constructed wetlands. But this requires consolidating the many projects by hundreds of civic, governmental, nonprofit, private, or academic organizations involved in various aspects of the WaSH and NbS sectors, and documenting their relationships with each other. The resulting social network map is a resilience planning tool to realize that long term goal, by offering a way to identify key actors, instruments, partnerships and network gaps needed to develop crucial synergies *right now*.

The project is conceived and executed by Shruti Syal (<https://www.linkedin.com/in/shruti-syal-10025b24>). Seed investment in the idea came from Indian Institute for Human Settlements in 2011, and University of Illinois Urbana Champaign's Campus Research Board Grant (2014-15) and Hopkins Fellowships, culminating in a doctoral dissertation (<https://www.ideals.illinois.edu/items/112340>). This network map is the next stage of this effort, funded in part



Contributer: Praveen Kumar Maghelal
Rabdan Academy, Abu Dhabi, United Arab Emirates
Lead Researcher and Associate Professor

Student Community Engagement: Household Preparedness to Flooding in Fujairah, UAE Communities in Fujairah, one of the seven emirates in the United Arab Emirates (UAE), are frequented with floods almost every year. In 2022, flash floods in peak summer month of July devastated the livelihood of its residents, leading to one of the largest evacuations in the nation. Over 870 individuals were rescued, and 3987 individuals were temporarily sheltered in response to the flooding of the communities. The government mobilized emergency relief, and hundreds of volunteers assisted in clearing debris and distributing essentials. However, residents had harrowing experiences with floodwater reaching shoulder heights in some areas with extensive loss of property and endangering the lives of young and old. Although Fujairah suffers from flooding every year, not much is known about the household preparedness for future flooding events. Supported through a funded grant, nine students – both nationals and international – led by Dr. Praveen Maghelal, faculty of resilience at Rabdan Academy, United Arab Emirates conducted a survey of 223 households in four most impacted areas of Fujairah. This was the first field study for the Undergraduate



students at Rabdan Academy. Students traveled from Abu Dhabi and stayed in Fujairah for over a week to conduct household survey, both in English and Arabic. Almost all respondents recalled the incident afresh and still jittered by the flooding. Several households still had the mark of the water level in their homes and recanted their horrifying experience as most had not experienced flooding of that scale ever living in Fujairah. While such community engagement approach enhanced the undergraduate students research experience, it also brought to focus the real-world challenges individuals, both nationals and non-nationals, faced at grass-root level in dealing with flash floods in Fujairah. As one of the first studies in the United Arab Emirates that assess the household response and preparedness to flooding, this study with the support of Fujairah Police, provided pragmatic policy and design recommendation to enhance community safety and lay ground for future research in UAE to address flooding at household level and engage students in critical research.

5

Contributer: Xuanyi Nie, University at Buffalo, Assistant Professor

Two field visits to kampungs in South Jakarta, Indonesia. Two field visits to sky gardens in Singapore. Two field visits in China for a research project on territorialized healthcare infrastructures.

6

Contributer: Xiaomeng Wang, Zhejiang University, Assistant Professor

Our study focuses on community public space as a key arena of spatial governance, where interactions among government, market, and civil society actors shape evolving and complex social networks. Using Hangzhou's "Future Community" program as a spatial case, the research investigates how these multi-actor relationships develop and transform throughout the process of public space co-production. Drawing on social network analysis and grounded theory, the study reveals three distinct governance models: (1) government-led modes marked by high network stability; (2) tension-prone government-citizen dual structures, where declining civic participation leads to weakened spatial vitality; and (3) tripartite collaboration frameworks, in which market engagement enhances spatial resource optimization and stimulates dynamic, sustainable governance. These findings underscore the spatial logic and structural shifts in community governance networks, offering empirical insights into how collaborative governance can be effectively structured in urban China.

Contributer: Mennatullah Hendawy, TU Berlin and Ain Shams University in Cairo

At the 12th World Urban Forum (WUF12), GPEIG organized a session titled “Alternative Planning Toward Context-Sensitive Planning Education for Post-Conflict Reconstruction in Palestine.”. The session was facilitated by Mennatullah Hendawy (GPEIG co-chair), who brought together educators, planners, and policymakers to discuss transformative approaches to urban planning education. The event highlighted the urgent need for innovative, context-sensitive urban planning to address post-conflict challenges, with a particular focus on Palestine.

This event built upon the outcomes of a previous roundtable organized by the ACSP Global Planning Educators Interest Group (GPEIG) back in February 2024: “Life, Apartheid & Urbicide: Prospects & Spaces of Decolonial Engagement for Palestine,” which was initiated by Alejandra Reyes (GPEIG co-chair). The critique of traditional planning theories—often seen as static—set the stage for this session’s focus on post-conflict contexts.

The session featured a diverse panel of experts, including:

- Ms. Jumana Abu Sada: Urban Planner and GIS Consultant, Al-Quds University.
- Prof. Yahia Serag: Vice Dean for Community Service and Environmental Development, Future University in Egypt.
- Ms. Bosayna Abu-Eisheh: Director of the Urban Studies Department, Ministry of Local Government, Palestine.
- Prof. Ali Abdelhamid: Director of the Urban and Regional Planning Unit, An-Najah National University.

Each panelist brought unique perspectives on the challenges and opportunities in integrating decolonial, context-sensitive approaches into planning education. The session at WUF24 was structured to provide a comprehensive exploration of urban planning education through multiple perspectives, beginning with academic insights into Palestinian urban studies, followed by the lived experiences of students and educators navigating the complexities of planning in a post-conflict region by Jumana Abu. The agenda was organized into thematic sections, each focusing on a distinct viewpoint: (1) scholarly research by Mennatullah Hendawy, (2) student and educator journeys by Jumana Abu Sada, (3) practical applications by Prof. Yahia Serag, (4) governmental strategies by Bosayna Abu-Eisheh and (5) University perspectives by Prof. Ali Abdelhamid. The panel discussions were interwoven with individual reflections and case studies, allowing participants to delve into topics such as resilience, context-sensitive design, and the impact of limited resources on education and practice, as seen next.



International planning studios

Contributer: Lu Liao, Renmin University of China, Assistant Professor

With scholarship :Master of Urban Governance at Renmin University of China Master of Urban Governance (MUG) program at the School of Public Administration and Policy, Renmin University of China is the first international master program on urban governance in China. Students will spend two years at Renmin University of China. The tuition fee is RMB 82,000 Yuan/academic year, with the possibility of all covered by the CSC scholarship from the Chinese government. It's the first English urban governance program in mainland China and recruits students globally. The 2025 program starts at September 2025.

For further information, please do not hesitate to contact Lu Liao at luliao@ruc.edu.cn or visit our official application website: <http://en.spap.ruc.edu.cn/>. For detailed application materials please refer to: <http://iso.ruc.edu.cn/docs/2024-12/ec6293b113d04c7594f75f269f0f4c44.pdf>



Major publications

1. Lei Zhang, Jinghui Lu, Xiaodong Shi & Lu Liao published an article titled “From Rational Planning to Communicative Planning: Exploring the Roles of Responsible Planners in Beijing” on the Journal of the American Planning Association

Abstract

Problem, research strategy, and findings: Thirty-two of China’s largest cities have implemented community planner policies. Scholars have debated whether these initiatives have accelerated China’s urban planning system transition from more rational to communicative planning. Through a survey and 23 interviews, we investigated the role tendencies and motivators of a typical example of community planners, known in Beijing as responsible planners. We developed a typology delineating three roles of responsible planners: technical expert, advocate planner, and communicative planner. Results suggest that responsible planners frequently play hybrid roles, yet they exhibit a limited understanding of their role as communicative planners. Graduate planning education in China has tended to stereotype responsible planners as technical experts. Institutional design requiring public participation reduces reliance on technical experts. Responsible planners’ understanding their roles differ significantly from planning practices in North America. The qualitative interviews further illuminated these differences and unraveled the complex motivators in responsible planners’ role choices within the Chinese context.

Takeaway for practice: Planning authorities and educators should highlight policies advocating for public participation, graduate planning education emphasizing social planning, and continuing professional education featuring tutorials and knowledge sharing to facilitate a communicative turn in urban planning. This approach will empower planners to better serve residents.

2. Michael Hooper, a faculty member at UBC, and Alexander Eduful, with the Parliament of Ghana and Kwame Nkrumah University of Science and Technology, recently published a paper on employment outcomes for workers in urban malls in Accra. The paper is titled: “Decent jobs in Accra’s malls? The role of flexibilisation and informalisation in shaping workers’ employment outcomes.” The paper can be read at: <https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/02255189.2024.2375263>

3. Shruti Syal, Assistant Professor at Virginia Commonwealth University published the following articles:

“The (unprivileged) polluter pays: Conflict of Rights in Delhi’s stormwater drain-adjacent ‘informal’ settlements”, published in Planning Practice and Research (<https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/02697459.2024.2383824>)

“Overregulated and Underserved: regulatory overlap in infrastructure/service provision in Delhi’s ‘informal’ settlements”, published in Habitat International (<https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S0197397525000037?dgcid=author>)

4. Dr. Luna Khirfan authored Chapter 5: Mapping the Solution Space for Climate Action: The Role of Urban Planning and Design. In the UN-HABITAT’s World Cities Report 2024: Cities and Climate Action The full report is available here: <https://unhabitat.org/wcr/>

Chapter 5:

Mapping the Solution Space for Climate Action: The Role of Urban Planning and Design



5. Vinisha Singh Basnet at University of Illinois Urbana Champaign published a journal article titled “Towards eco-political becoming: Planning rural livelihoods in a more-than-human world” on Planning Theory. <https://doi.org/10.1177/14730952241298987>

Abstract

Emerging works within planning invite scholars to engage with a more-than-human approach. However, scholars note that such an approach is yet to gain broader acceptance within planning communities. I argue that the issue of acceptance is rooted in a lack of clear focus on how a more-than-human approach can have concrete effects on accepted domains of planning. Therefore, I introduce the analytic of eco-political becoming, which foregrounds the complex effects of the ecological on the sociopolitical. I present a case of eco-political becoming in planning rural livelihoods, where Indigenous communities engaged in rearing silk, find themselves entangled with crows. As the communities attempt to deter the crows from eating silk moth larvae, the crows in-turn disrupt two key sociopolitical categories and processes in the village—gender and caste. The case highlights sociopolitical outcomes of human-nonhuman entanglement that emerge out of economic planning. I propose that the analytical tool of eco-political becoming enables scholars to focus on the complex effects of nonhuman actors on the socially constructed identities and hierarchies considered important by the larger planning community.

6. Yingying Lyu at West Chester University of Pennsylvania published the following articles:

Forsyth, A. & Lyu, Y. (2024). Making communities age-friendly: Lessons from implemented programs. *Journal of Planning Literature*, 39(1), 3-24. <https://doi.org/10.1177/08854122231160796>

Lyu, Y., & Forsyth, A. (2024). Technological devices to help older people beyond the home: An inventory and assessment focusing on the neighborhood and city scales. *Cities & Health*, 8(1), 91–106. <https://doi.org/10.1080/23748834.2022.2094884>

National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine. 2024. Addressing the Impact of COVID-19 on Social Isolation and Loneliness. Washington, DC: The National Academies Press. <https://doi.org/10.17226/27874> [Rapid expert consultation. One of the three leading authors.]

7. Xuanyi Nie at University of Buffalo published the following articles:

Nie, X. Medical Reterritorialization: The Spatial Interests of Healthcare, Financialization, and Hospitals in a City-Region. *Regional Studies*. Accepted.

Qiao, R., Nie, X.,* and Heng, C. K. Concessionary Governance: The Shifting Local Statecraft in Nanjing's Innovation-Driven Urban Redevelopment. *Urban Studies*. Accepted.

Nie, X., Huang, Z., and Wu, L. Community Governance During the Shanghai COVID Lockdown III: The Changing Perception of the City. *Population, Space and Place*, 31(6), e70084.

Nie, X., Huang, Z., and Wu, L. (2024). Community Governance During the Shanghai COVID Lockdown II: Bridging Neighborhood Cohesion and the Perception of Community Governance. *Cities*, 151, 105110.

Nie, X., Huang, Z., and Wu, L. (2024). Community Governance During the Shanghai COVID Lockdown I: The Roles and Actions of Residents' Committees. *Urban Geography*, 45(9), 1640-1660.

Nie, X., Huang, Z., and Wu, L. (2024). Community Governance During the Shanghai COVID Lockdown I: The Roles and Actions of Residents' Committees. *Urban Geography*, 45(9), 1640-1660.

Nie, X., Wang, Y., Zhang, C., Zhao, Y., and Kirkwood, N. (2024). The varied restorative values of campus landscapes to students' well-being: evidence from a Chinese University. *BMC Public Health*, 24(1), 487.

Nie, X., Fan, H., and Liu, H. The “push and pull” factors in firm location choices: Financial regulations and headquarters in China. *Cities*, 167, 106316.

Nie, X., and Liu, H. (2024). Medical Institutions in the Geography of Innovation: Evidence from Public Tertiary Hospitals and Biotech Startups in Chinese Cities. *Regional Studies*, 58(3), 507–521.

Nie, X. (2024). The Ivory Tower in China's Speculative Urbanism: Instrumentalizing the University-Healthcare Nexus. *Urban Geography*, 45(6), 966-985.

Wang, X., and Nie, X.* (2024). Understanding the Uneven Distribution of Medical Resources in China Through the Disparity in Inter-City Patient Mobility for Severe Diseases. *Applied Geography*, 165, 103226

8. Eugenie L Birch, Nussdorf Professor of Urban Research at University of Pennsylvania has the following publications:

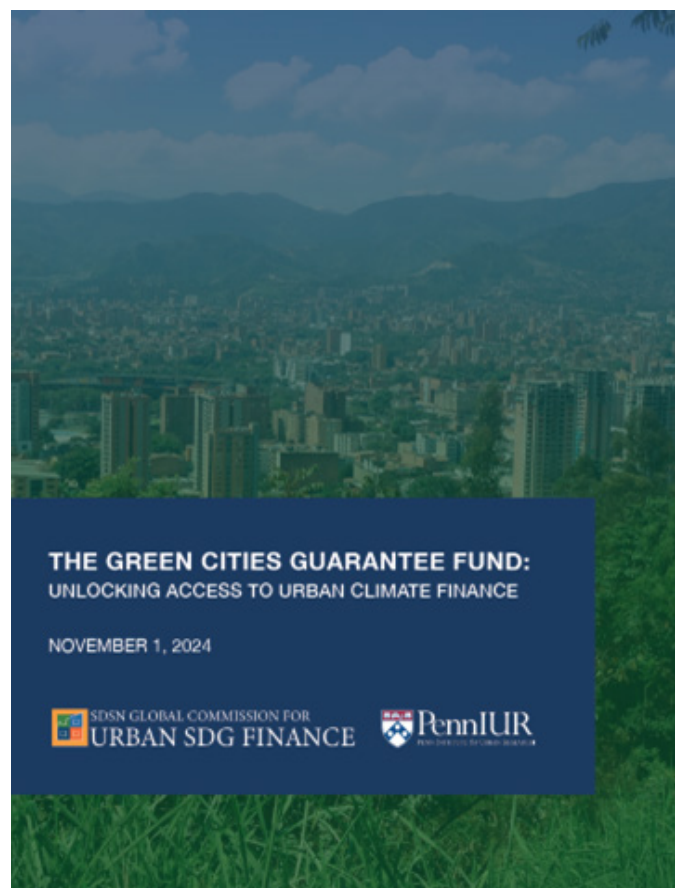
1) CCFLA and SDSN Commission. 2025. Integrating Urban and Subnational Priorities into Country Platforms: Policy Brief.

Available online: <https://citiesclimatefinance.org/publications/integrating-urban-and-subnational-priorities-into-country-platforms> Also refer to: <https://urbansdgfinance.org/>

2) Birch, E. L., L. Campo, and M. Rodas. The Green Cities Guarantee Fund: Unlocking Access to Urban Climate Finance. Philadelphia: Penn Institute for Urban Research for the SDSN Global Commission for Urban SDG Finance. November 1, 2024.

About this Report:

The proposal for a Green Cities Guarantee Fund represents the deepening of an idea put forth by Task Force Two during the second Commission meeting in September 2023 at Climate Week in New York. Working with many Commission members and external experts, the Commission's Secretariat has evaluated the initiative based on a thorough literature review, assessments of guarantee fund reports, and extensive interviews conducted with current and former mayors, climate finance experts from the public and private sectors, guarantee fund experts, national government officials, and individuals with experience incubating and launching new development finance entities/funds.





The commission's meeting in the Paris city hall

3) Urban sustainable development: governance, finance and politics / edited by Pedro Vormittag, Marianna Albuquerque, Eugénie Birch. -- 1. ed. -- Rio de Janeiro : Centro Brasileiro de Relações Internacionais - CEBRI, 2024.

(A book published for the U20/G20 meetings in Rio de Janeiro, November 2024)

9.Xiaomeng Wang, Assistant Professor, Zhejiang University

One of my recent major publications examines how neighborhood physical environments shape social inclusion in the context of large-scale urban migration. Using Beijing as a case study, the article investigates whether accessibility to different types of public spaces fosters native residents' support for migrant inclusion through increased neighborly interaction. Based on a large-scale 2017 survey and structural equation modeling analysis, the study finds that quasi-public spaces (such as local markets or courtyards) are more effective than typical public spaces (like parks or squares) in promoting both interaction and inclusive attitudes. These findings contribute to the ongoing scholarly debate on the role of urban design in fostering inclusive cities and provide new empirical evidence for planning and policy strategies.

The article link is as follows: <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.landurbplan.2022.104495>

Grants, fellowships, honors, and awards

Contributer: Shruti Syal
Virginia Commonwealth University
Assistant Professor

Received the VCU Quest Fund grant for ACWUS: Artificially Constructed Wetlands for Urban Sewage treatment, previously funded by Indian Institute for Human Settlements (2011-14), University of Illinois Urbana Champaign Campus Research Board (2014-15) and Hopkins Fellowships, and now the Virginia Commonwealth University Wilder School Small Grant (2022-23) and Quest Fund grant (2024-26).

Dissertations on international planning

Contributer: Kimberly Noronha
University of Pennsylvania
PhD Candidate in City and Regional Planning

I completed and defended my PhD dissertation in City and Regional Planning titled “The Landscape of Informality: A Comparative Study of Ga-Mashie (Accra, Ghana) and Kochi (Kerala, India)” at the University of Pennsylvania in May 2025. This dissertation explores how urban informality is governed, experienced, and resisted at the urban-ocean interface in two coastal cities of the Global South: Ga-Mashie in Accra (Ghana) and Kochi (Kerala, India). It introduces the conceptual framework of a “landscape of informality” to analyse how women in fisher communities navigate governance systems that operate through strategic ambiguity, provisional enforcement, and delegated authority. Central to the analysis is the identification of a mediating actor—the abaeii, or “bureaucrat between the state and street.” The research combines multi-sited ethnography, remote photovoice, walking interviews, participatory mapping, and drone-based spatial analysis to trace how informal governance is enacted and how women resist through adaptive spatial strategies. The dissertation concludes with direct implications for marine spatial planning (MSP) and climate governance, arguing for greater recognition of women’s spatial knowledge in planning practices.

GPEIG members in the news

Contributer: Dr. Luna Khirfan
School of Planning, University of Waterloo, Ontario, Canada
Associate Professor

My work on the daylighting of buried urban streams was highlighted in this award winning report in the Canadian Broadcasting Company (CBC): <https://newsinteractives.cbc.ca/features/2024/daylighting-rivers/> And here is a link to my research project on the daylighting of urban streams, where I share datasets and an interactive map of all the daylighted/daylit streams around the world: <https://uwaterloo.ca/stream-daylighting/>

GPEIG Committees

Alejandra Reyes is an Assistant Professor of Urban Planning and Public Policy at UC Irvine's School of Social Ecology. Her research centers on questions of governance around housing policy, finance, production, and access – and highlights the critical influence of political and economic factors on housing and urban development.

Previously, she was the 2018-2019 Postdoctoral Fellow at the Institute on Municipal Finance and Governance at University of Toronto's Munk School of Global Affairs and Public Policy. She received her B.A. in Architecture at the University of California, Berkeley and a M.S. and Ph.D. in Community and Regional Planning at the University of Texas at Austin.

Contact: lreyesru@uci.edu



Alejandra Reyes
Co-chairs (2023-2025)



Susmita Rishi
Co-chairs (2024-2026)

Susmita Rishi is an Associate Professor of Regional & Community Planning at Kansas State University's College of Architecture, Planning and Design. As an engaged urban scholar, Dr. Rishi believes that in order to create a more sustainable present and future, we must understand and cater to the needs of all members of our society. At its core, this understanding is framed by her research and scholarship at the intersection of urban design, informality, social production of home, and southern theory. Her research is deeply rooted in the principles of spatial justice, emphasizing the need to bring marginalized voices to the forefront of urban design and planning. Dr. Rishi serves as the KState LARCP Technical Assistance for Brownfields Fellows (2024-2027) and in January 2024, Dr. Rishi (along with Dr. Janquiera and Prof. Gibson) received the inaugural APDesign Faculty Engagement Champions award. She was awarded the Graduate Faculty Mentor Award 2024 by the Graduate School, Kansas State University in recognition of her exceptional mentorship. She received her Ph.D. in Interdisciplinary Urban Design and Planning from the University of Washington, Seattle and her Master of Architecture from Pennsylvania State University, State College.

Contact: srishi@ksu.edu

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Abigail Friendly, Utrecht University

Newsletter Committee

Lu Liao, Renmin University of China (Chair)
Yingying Lyu, West Chester University of Pennsylvania
Meiqing Li, University of Central Florida
Hang Li, Renmin University of China

Newsletter Team

Lu Liao is an assistant professor in the Department of Urban Planning and Management at Renmin University of China. Her research lies at the intersection of environmental planning and urban governance, with a focus on sustainability, climate change, and social equity. Her current agenda examines local governments' decision-making and implementation of sustainability policies in both China and the United States. One recent paper, published in the Journal of the American Planning Association, analyzes changing roles of community planners in Beijing within the broader context of China's urban planning transition. She received her Ph.D. in City and Regional Planning from Cornell University in 2021, and holds a Master of Public Administration and a Bachelor of Laws from Tsinghua University.



Yingying Lyu is an Assistant Professor of Planning in the Department of Geography and Planning at West Chester University of Pennsylvania. She is also an associated researcher at the Harvard-China Project on Energy, Economy, and Environment based in the Harvard John A. Paulson School of Engineering and Applied Sciences. Her research is primarily focused on health, aging, and sustainability. The central question driving her research is: how can we construct cities and communities that promote positive health outcomes for all people? As an educator, she collaborates with industry professionals and local leaders to bring real-world insights into her curriculum, inspiring students to excel and contribute to their communities. She can be reached at YLyu@wcupa.edu.

Meiqing Li is an Assistant Professor of Urban and Regional Planning in the School of Public Administration at the University of Central Florida. She received her Ph.D. in City and Regional Planning from the University of California, Berkeley, a Master of City Planning with a Certificate in GIS and Spatial Analysis from Stuart Weitzman School of Design, University of Pennsylvania, and a B.A. in Urban Studies and Economics from the University of Hong Kong. Her research explores the intersection of sustainable transportation, travel behavior, and built environment in the United States and Asia. She experiments with mixed method approaches with AI applications to understand planning processes in a global context.



Hang Li is a student at Renmin University of China (RUC), currently pursuing a dual bachelor's degree in Resource and Environmental Economics and Public Administration, and is now in her sophomore year.



GLOBAL PLANNING EDUCATORS INTEREST GROUP

GLOBAL PERSPECTIVES IN PLANNING EDUCATION AND RESEARCH

2025

THE NEWSLETTER TEAM WOULD LIKE TO THANK ALL CONTRIBUTORS.