

# Re - City

## Urban Democracy & Radical Care

30 - 31 October 2025

# Re-City Conference

## Urban Democracy and Radical Care

In the 3rd International Re-City Conference, we focus on the questions of radical care, justice, democracy, and the city. We divide our approach into four partly overlapping themes of **1) the theory and ethics of care in the city 2) urban transformation, 3) social and spatial justice, and 4) urban democracy and activism.**

Radical care means recognizing urban vulnerabilities and carrying collective responsibility with and for our cities by adopting caring and critical approaches and practices. Linking care with democracy highlights how care is crucial for everyday democratic action and vice versa, when aiming to create *care-full* cities and inclusive societies

### Organizing team and session chairs

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## Keynote Abstracts

As part of Re-City conference's program, we have invited three interesting urban research professionals to explore the theme 'Urban Democracy and Care' from different perspectives.

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● Prof. Dr. phil. habil. Sabine Knierbein

*Sabine Knierbein (European Urban Studies (PhD), Internationale Urbanistik (PD)) is an Associate Professor for Urban Culture and Public Space and the Head of the Interdisciplinary Centre for Urban Culture and Public Space. Sabine explores everyday life and urbanization; urban politics, the political and democracy; disruptive precarity, unsettlement and crises; social inequality and intersectional urban research methodology and more recently also democracy theory, dissidence and alter politics.*

### **Tensions between Urban Care and Uncare: Situating care ethics, care labor and caring relations in an everyday-theory based approach to urban studies**

The discourse on care has been on in the spatial arts, social science and humanities disciplines for a while right now: It has invited urban scholars to rethink the political through a moral philosophy on care ethics; to revisit the social by further advancing feminist critiques of Marxist (and other) thought ; and to re-address the cultural through a focus on the body in geographies of everyday life, where moments of presence can be turned into moments of encounter, thus shaping geographies of encounter, and processes of learning. Care here has urban dimensions, the City is understood as harbouring constant social change and Democracy, in a radical care perspective, is first and foremost a spatial trope. By offering an intersectional analytical approach that combines the urban and spatial study of care ethics, care labor and caring relations, counter-individualist narratives are set up that help to frame humans as always being in (social, cultural, political) relations with other humans, and non-humans. What does radical mean in these three – political, cultural and social – dimensions of care? And why is care seen as radically needed to rethink also the ecological and economic practices to actualize urban democracy, too?

## ● Päivi Kymäläinen

*Päivi Kymäläinen is a Professor of Social Policy at Tampere University, Finland. Her position is linked with Tampere University's profilation area STUE (Sustainable Transformation of Urban Environments) and the question of socially sustainable cities. Päivi's research interests include urban inequality, everyday democracy, housing precarity and place/law relations. She approaches these questions mostly through everyday life and practices, and in the contexts of alternative communities, suburban neighborhoods and urban public spaces.*

### Places of justice and radical care

Place is one of the key concepts in understanding urban everyday life, yet its theoretical importance has not been fully acknowledged. By taking four conceptual viewpoints to place, I will discuss how places frame social life, as well as the practices of justice and caring in urban contexts. Place thinking offers various intellectual tools depending on if places are regarded as territories and locations; as meaningful urban spaces; as processes; or as agents. The concept of place offers perspectives for analysing especially mundane practices and experiences in which the formal aspects of justice (such as distributional and processual justice) are accompanied by more informal ones (such as recognition). I will ask how care might be constituted in relation to (just) places, and what radical care could mean in today's urbanism.

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## ● Ross Beveridge

*Ross Beveridge is an interdisciplinary urbanist who has taught and published widely on urban forms of politics and democracy in diverse global contexts. Currently he is a Senior Lecturer in Urban Studies in the School of Social and Political Sciences at the University of Glasgow and a Visiting Researcher at the Georg-Simmel Centre for Urban Studies at the Humboldt University of Berlin.*

### Urban Democracy as Ethos, Strategy and Practice

This paper outlines a project of democracy as urban self-government drawing on urban theory and the radical democracy tradition. Urban democracy, as understood here, is not architectonic, a project premised on a structured institutional model, like the state, but rests on political practices and common experiences of urbanity. This can lead to criticism that urban democracy is hard to define and is unrealizable as well as inadequate in the face of political power. To counter this line of argument, and with reference to recent European examples, the paper articulates urban democracy as an ethos, strategy and practice. In doing so, it confronts (1) democracy's resonance as a political project of urban collective life; (2) democracy's relationship with power, capitalism and the state; and (3) democracy's multiple and mutable modes of being political. Urban democracy is, in essence, a decentralizing and fragmenting force. However, greater attention to these three components (ethos, strategy and practice), and greater learning and cooperation between projects, can facilitate the advance of urban democracy.

# Theme 01 - Theory and Ethics

Theme 01 explores urban care as a concept and a value. The focus is on feminist and relational ethics of care and care-full cities, but also other related theories and concepts can be discussed. Further, we are interested in what makes care a radical approach and practice in current urban environments.

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# Urban care as embodied moving together

Elina Alatalo

architect, PhD researcher, Environmental Policy, Tampere University

Working group: Hanna Kahrola , Anna Kupari , Tuuti Touhunen, Mia Tiihonen & Jaakko Simola

Hiedanranta district in Tampere Finland is under construction and undergoing dramatic scale change. It is on the threshold of a frightening new, in a liminal state, which can appear as chaos, but also as a phase of change with seeds of better future. In this liminal state, e.g. the embodied experience and awareness of the space as well as the power and social relations related to the space are redefined: an empathic connection can be unexpectedly experienced both towards urban non-humans and people that earlier were the others.

We present the ongoing work of a multiprofessional group developing joint practice of activist dance and research of architecture. This work is based on conscious moving exercises in Hiedanranta. It is at the same time performative, participative, public and producing new scientific knowledge. The dancers' expertise helps to develop scientific methods for understanding embodied knowledge and spatial experience.

We ask, how can aware embodied moving help people to be present in the radical urban transition and to preserve the experiences of safety and belonging as well as their own agency? Explorations of ideas such as somatic presence, kinesthetic empathy and movement therapy are discussed with the theory around urban care.

Keywords: embodied knowledge, conscious moving, activist dance, liminal state, kinesthetic empathy, movement therapy

# **RADICAL CARE: KEEPING UP A PALACE FOR THE PEOPLE BY THE PEOPLE**

Ruth Baumeister

Aarhus School of Architecture

This contribution—through video, photography, and text—explores how care takes shape at Corviale, (1974-85), a social housing complex on the outskirts of Rome. The 1,000-meter-long, nine-story structure, nicknamed “the serpent,” was envisioned by Mario Fiorentino and a team of over 20 architects as a self-contained city for 8,500 residents, complete with commercial, cultural, and social infrastructure.

Corviale, however, never fully realized its utopian vision. Before completion, over 100 squatter families occupied the 4th floor, compromising infrastructure and disrupting public spaces. Over the past five decades, the complex has been marked by neglect, obsolescence, and stigma and repeated threats of demolition—despite a persistent shortage of affordable housing.

This project highlights how residents respond to abandonment through grassroots care. Acts such as inventive repairs, gardening, and cleaning may seem small, but they represent “radical care”—tangible expressions of resilience that challenge the absence of institutional maintenance. These actions leave visible traces on the building and its environment, simultaneously criticizing systemic neglect and materially improving the community’s conditions. - In doing so, they not only extend Corviale’s life cycle but also contribute to a more sustainable and socially engaged urban future.

(Stemming from ‘Cultures of Maintenance’ research, conceived with Carolina Dayer)

# Visualizing the Care-less City: A Feminist and Rhythmanalytic Reading of City Symphony Phenomenon

Aygen Erol Çakır

Istanbul Technical University

What happens to care when cities begin to move faster than those who inhabit them? This paper explores how early experimental urban films register the aesthetic and emotional consequences of care's absence in the modern city. Drawing from feminist and relational ethics of care (Tronto, Puig de la Bellacasa), it reconsiders "the city symphony phenomenon" (1920s–1940s) not merely as a celebration of urban dynamism, but as a visual meditation on disconnection, routinization, and the breakdown of relational life under capitalist modernity.

Structured through rhythmic montage, city symphonies emphasize movement, labor, and the circulation of bodies through fragmented space. Though seemingly vibrant, they reveal a city that no longer makes room for attention, vulnerability, or empathy—the core elements of care. Through synchronization, abstraction, and disembodiment, they construct a cinematic world where affective and ethical relations are muted or erased.

Henri Lefebvre's rhythmanalysis supports this reading by offering tools to interpret the temporal pressures and repetitions shaping daily urban life. However, this paper centers care as a sensory and ethical lens to critique the emotional numbness these films portray.

Ultimately, city symphonies are not only aesthetic records of urban transformation, but poetic documents of what is lost when cities evolve without sustaining human connection, emotional labor, and shared rhythms of care.

keywords: city symphony phenomenon, urban care, feminist ethics, rhythmanalysis, experimental cinema



# Making Care Visible: Infrastructure, and the Public Architecture of Carmen Gil Torres

Aygen Erol Çakır<sup>1</sup>, Ángel Cordero Ampuero<sup>2</sup> & Paula Ruiz Usero<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Istanbul Technical University, <sup>2</sup>Universidad Politécnica de Madrid

Care rarely makes it into the canon of architecture—nor do the women who design its spaces. Carmen Gil Torres’ architectural production reveals a substantial built archive of over 60 public projects between 1991 and 2018, yet her presence in academic literature remains strikingly scarce. Despite being a key contributor to Madrid’s social infrastructure, her work has largely been sidelined in architectural historiography—a silence that mirrors the systemic neglect of care-centered, non-iconic spatial practices.

This paper reclaims Gil Torres’ practice as a radical feminist intervention in the built environment. Drawing on feminist care ethics (Tronto, 1993; Puig de la Bellacasa, 2017) and theories of social reproduction (Fraser, 2016; Federici, 2004), it explores how her designs—such as Casa de Baños de Embajadores (2001), Centro Deportivo Miguel Guillén Prim (2002), and Centro de Servicios Sociales San Diego (1997)—embody spatial logics of empathy, dignity, and inclusivity.

Through qualitative analysis of built work and personal testimony (Ruiz Usero, 2024), the study reveals how Gil Torres’ architecture, rooted in the public sector, offers a counter-narrative to the masculinized, market-oriented paradigms of urbanism. By re-centering care, this research not only highlights a forgotten architect but also calls for a rethinking of architectural value through feminist and ethical lenses.

# The Subconscious Home

Sara Hayball, Elena Marco & Mike Devereux

University of the West of England

Housing in the UK is often driven by metrics of affordability, density, and policy compliance, frequently overlooking the profound emotional and psychological impact of the built environment. From early childhood, our emotional responses to space are defined—often subconsciously—and these responses can influence mental and physiological well-being throughout our lives.

This research challenges the standardised approach to UK housing design, arguing for a radical shift that places care at the centre of how we design homes and cities. By rethinking housing through the lens of the subconscious emotional experience, this research is developing innovative methods to harness the subconscious nature of emotional response as a tool for housing design. Using interactive, free-association interviews, it uncovers participants' deep-seated spatial preferences. The findings reveal that the emotional qualities of childhood spaces strongly shape adult housing desires. While some preferences align with UK standard housing typologies, many challenge dominant design norms, calling for more emotionally attuned approaches.

Post-pandemic, the home has become a central space for living and working, and designing for emotional response is vital. By embedding emotional experience into the design process, we can reimagine housing as a form of urban care, nurturing healthier, more meaningful ways of living.

# Reclaiming the City for Gaia: Terrapolis Planning and the Right to the Urban Planet

Merete Kemppainen

Aalto University

In response to the accelerating crises of urban inequality, ecological collapse, and planetary urbanisation, this paper proposes a theoretical synthesis between Henri Lefebvre's right to the city and Bruno Latour's Gaia politics, reimagined through Donna Haraway's speculative vision of Terrapolis. It argues that the right to the city must now be reclaimed as a right to an Earthbound urban planet—a relational, livable world co-produced by human and more-than-human actors.

Reframing the city as a critical zone—a thin, contested layer where life, matter, and meaning coalesce—the paper introduces Terrapolis Planning: an experimental, situated approach to urban thought and praxis that centres care, cohabitation, and planetary accountability. Cities are no longer viewed as autonomous human projects, but as ecological assemblages embedded within Gaia's dynamic and politicised body.

By integrating political ecology, urban theory, and environmental ethics, this paper contributes to emerging debates on urban democracy and radical care, calling for a multispecies, multiscalar urban politics. To reclaim the city today is to reclaim it for Gaia—for the atmospheres, infrastructures, and entangled life-worlds that shape our collective survival.

# Poetic Dwelling and the Horizon of Meaning: A Heideggerian Perspective on Care for the City

Tuomas Lammi

Tampere university

This presentation offers a Heideggerian intervention into smart-city discourse by asking: what becomes of meaning, care, and dwelling in an urban environment governed by data and optimization? Drawing on Heidegger's concepts of Dasein, Bedeutsamkeit (meaningfulness), Gestell (enframing), and Sorge (care), I argue that the smart-city's promise of total knowability undermines the finite, lived, and poetic ways in which humans inhabit cities.

Instead of appearing as neutral objects, cities emerge through significance—they matter to us. Poetic dwelling refers to a mode of being that sustains openness to meaning. Yet smart urbanism risks displacing this horizon with a computational logic that renders everything visible, measurable, and actionable.

Rather than reject technology, I suggest that radical care requires confronting its ontological consequences—caring not just for infrastructures, but for the existential spaces that sustain meaning. Caring for the city, in this light, means more than managing systems—it means preserving the very conditions for things to show up meaningfully. In an age of digital urbanism, I call for an ethics of dwelling rooted not in mastery, but in vulnerability, ambiguity, and wonder.

This paper bridges urban theory with existential phenomenology, proposing poetic dwelling as a radical, care-full stance toward our urban futures.

Keywords:

poetic dwelling, Heidegger, smart-city, meaning, care, urban ethics

# **Between justice and care – a recognition-theoretical approach to justice and ethics in participatory planning**

Hanna Mattila & Tiina-Riitta Lappi

University of Turku

Justice has been an oft-debated topic in communicative planning theories. The question has been whether just planning should be based on universalizable norms of justice, or on ethics of care that is sensitive to particular community values. While the theories of communicative planning were originally based on Habermasian or Rawlsian theories of justice – both being oriented towards universal norms – current strands of participatory planning rather highlight the aspect of care, given especially that planning always takes place in some specific local contexts and influences some specific local communities. However, some critics have pointed out that community values may be oppressive to local minorities and that planners would also need to consider the generalizability of local values.

In this paper, we argue that context-sensitive ethics of care and universally oriented just planning are not mutually exclusive approaches, but that both could and should be accommodated into planning practice. We will sketch an integrative theoretical model of planning by using Axel Honneth's philosophical theory of recognition. Furthermore, we will demonstrate how this model could be used as a framework for assessing planning in practice and shed light on the dilemmas that practicing planners face when balancing community values and more general norms.

# **Design developer competitions: Local policy as toolbox for the production of ecological architecture**

Markus Rönn

Kulturlandskapet

The design developer competition is a type of competition locally governed by municipalities to transfer land to developers. In doing so, the municipality has access to a strong toolbox, despite the deregulation in the 1980s, as competition organiser, landowner, planning authority and decision-maker for building permits.

The purpose is to describe, critically show and reflect on how municipalities conduct design developer competitions to meet housing needs and ecological challenges. The municipality's policies provide no detailed information on competitions. Case studies are therefore important for understanding the conditions.

This article presents three design developer competitions in Sweden looking for new housing characterised by (a) design quality, (b) sustainability, and (c) circular processes, including innovation as goals and assessment criteria. Data consists of interviews of key actors, competition documents and site visits analysed through close reading and architectural critique of design proposals.

The findings highlight the architects' experiences of the design developer competitions. By voluntarily taking in the competition, developers are trying to gain access to building land and implement by design. The architectural offices were hoping for continued assignments.

Keywords:

Design developer competition, design quality, sustainability,

## Ecological justice and radical care

Nicolette Slagle

Aalto University

To embrace radical care, we must view nature as equal or kin, understanding our responsibilities and striving for a reciprocal relationship with nature. The principles of radical care align with the ethical foundations of traditional ecological knowledge (TEK), which emphasizes kinship, reciprocity, respect, and responsibility. Academically trained architects and designers often approach landscapes objectively, maintaining detachment that can overlook relational aspects. Instead, adopting relational approaches and recognizing the agency, stewardship, and respect among human and more-than-human communities are essential.

Examining the environmental histories of contaminated landscapes through an ecological justice framework reveals how human actions have distanced us from nature. These histories can also highlight how engaging in remediation and restoration processes can physically and metaphysically repair our relationship with nature. Utilizing these spaces and processes as learning labs can deepen our understanding of the transformation from industrial neglect to radical care. The story of the St. Louis River Estuary exemplifies these ideas. A community has developed through the two decades of remediation and restoration actions within the estuary. This case study example illustrates effective community-driven remediation efforts, offering valuable lessons for applying ecological justice in riverine remediation and restoration efforts.

# Spatializing Rights: Designing Fields of Action for Spatial Justice and Care

Marianna Frangipane & Arianna Scaioli

Politecnico di Milano, DASTU

Architecture, often conceived and perceived as a complete, static and neutral object, is a cultural and political act of social control and an expression of hierarchical rituals and relationships (Aureli, 2020). This contribution questions the need to investigate the theme of care, its times and its forms from the point of view of the design discipline. Therefore, emancipatory architecture is actively engaged in reformulating design as a tool for political change, redistributing authorship and empowering marginalized voices in line with feminist materialist perspectives such as Silvia Federici's (2019). Here, the role of architecture is not only to respond to functional or aesthetic needs but also to provoke forms of spatial justice, through acts of care and collective resistance.

Spatializing Rights explores the role of design by pointing out five fields of action that will be explored in a conceptual and design-oriented dimension through some relevant projects:

The Right to Space

The Right to the Everydayness

The Right to be Heard

The Right to Relations

In this sense, these fields of design action propose a renewed reflection on the poetics of space as a possible beacon of "Hope in the dark" (Solnit, 2016).



## Urban Anomalies. Fragments of Siena.

Nuria Casais

Aarhus School of Architecture

The artistic research project 'Learning from Siena' focuses on what we consider to have been lost in newer Danish urban neighbourhoods. Qualities that can be said to set the framework for the good (city) life. Specifically, it focuses on the physical design of cities –the shape of the city, the city's space and the city's architecture– and the designing practices to imagine alternative living conditions for the contemporary understanding of 'the good life'.

This contribution presents the investigations working with the city of Siena as a tool to propose questions for the research by working with spatial fragments that go closer to the architecture of the city and the connection between the city's grounds and the conglomerate of building volumes.

Through the mapping, drawing and making models of Siena's spatial fragments, the research investigates particularly attractive densities, different spatial scales, how the urban structure intertwines with the surrounding nature, the influence of regulations and ordinances on city beauty, the balance between extraordinary and ordinary, or the compact spaces with still room for spontaneous and social encounters. Essential matters to contribute to rethinking, understanding, designing, transforming and building the current and future city with a holistic, experiential, and site-specific vision.

# Capacity building for care-full transformations: findings from an urban experimentation in Helsinki

Elif Erdogan Öztekin & Elisa Lähde

Aalto University

The latest research emphasizes the urgent need to reestablish human-nature relationships in urban contexts with care ethics, multispecies perspectives and biodiversity-sensitivity (Tschakert et al, 2021). This need suggests that cities and urban systems shall be fundamentally rethought and reconfigured. In relation, alternative approaches to urban planning shall be developed to deliver ecoliterate responses to unfolding sustainability polycrises from within collaborative efforts.

In this research, through an urban experimentation, we scrutinize how novel urban planning practices, (with processes, methods and tools tailored for collaborative work on urban socio-ecological systems change), can increase societal capacities for urban transformations. By 'capacities', we refer not only to the cognitive and practical skills that are needed to understand, plan and implement impactful interventions, but also to the social and emotional skills, the social network structures and distribution of agencies, the trust and responsibility that are needed for steering large-scale societal changes and deep sustainability transformations (Wolfram et al., 2019; Ketonen-Oksi and Vigren, 2024).

In this conference presentation, following a brief introduction to the 'capacity building' concept, we expand on our urban experimentation in Helsinki (2024) and present our findings in pursuit of improving established theoretical understandings with empirical data.

# Case Studies in Mass Timber Humanism: Advancing Democratic Values and Care-Oriented Urbanism in Wood

Edward Becker & Sarayu Buchireddygari

Virginia Tech

The biophilic properties of wood have been demonstrated to improve human well-being in buildings from both physiological and psychological perspectives. Mass timber, a category of large, structural engineered wood products, is increasingly employed in urban environments to enhance sustainability and humanistic design outcomes for large, multi-story buildings. The use of mass timber from a humanistic and care-oriented perspective has been widely studied at the human and building scales, but has rarely been studied at an urban scale.

Considering the growing use of mass timber for large, multi-block urban transformation projects such as Stockholm Wood City and others, this scholarship explores how humanistic and urban democratic values through mass timber are being realized at an urban scale and what care-oriented benefits are brought to human and non-human actors. Research methods include a literature review of mass timber humanism at the human and building scales, followed by the analysis of three case study buildings in three different geographic regions to clarify how mass timber humanism at the urban scale can support the realization of more care-full and democratic urban spaces. The research indicates that bio-focused design approaches at the building-urban threshold have a particularly strong impact on urban well-being and spatial discourse.

## Theme 02 - Urban Transformation

Theme 02 explores what happens to care in urban transformation and whether urban change can happen in a caring manner. This theme is related as much to the social, built, and ecological environments in cities by focusing especially on people, buildings, and ecosystems whose well-being or existence are threatened by either too rapid or too absent city development.

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Mansi Garg

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## **Urban expansion and equity in access to green spaces: A case of Guiyang City.**

Houheng Ban & Yuta Uchiyama

Kobe University

This study investigates urban expansion and planning impacts in Guiyang, a medium-sized mountainous city in southwestern China, over a 32-year period (1990-2022). Using GIS, remote sensing, and machine learning techniques, we analyzed land use/cover changes across three distinct phases: slow growth (1990-1999), accelerated expansion (2000-2010), and rapid development with enhanced ecological focus (2010-2022). Our research had three objectives: (1) to analyze urban expansion patterns in Guiyang; (2) to investigate policy influence through logistic regression analysis in conjunction with the Guiyang Comprehensive Plan (2006-2020); and (3) to evaluate the green space equity changes throughout the urbanization process. Results demonstrate a transition from disordered sprawl to planned growth, with planned districts showing superior spatial organization and better integration of green spaces. Logistic regression revealed that planned urban zones and road networks most strongly influenced expansion, followed by ecological protection zones. Green space equity analysis indicated that newly expanded urban areas showed significantly higher equity than older urban districts, aligning with ecological civilization policies and demonstrating considerable improvements in accessibility and distribution across socioeconomic groups. This research contributes to understanding how medium-sized mountainous cities can balance development with ecological protection through effective planning while ensuring equitable access to urban green spaces.

# Conversion of Office Buildings to Affordable Housing: A Comparison of Finnish and Belgian Practices

Paulien Beeckman<sup>1</sup>, Waldo Galle<sup>1</sup>, Niels De Temmerman<sup>1</sup> & Sofie Pelsmakers<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Vrije Universiteit Brussel (VUB), Department of Architectural Engineering, <sup>2</sup>Architecture Unit, Tampere University

The shift towards remote work, initiated by the COVID-19 pandemic, has significantly reduced the demand for office space. Consequently, older office buildings are becoming obsolete, and many are being repurposed for other functions, including housing. In the Brussels Capital Region (BCR), there has been a longstanding trend of conversion. From 2018 to 2020, almost 200,000 m<sup>2</sup> of office space was converted to housing. In Helsinki, this number is considerably lower; since 2015, 200,000 m<sup>2</sup> of office space has been converted, partly due to strict policies governing functional changes. However, Helsinki is now starting to explore initiatives to support office-to-housing conversions, recognizing the potential benefits of adaptive reuse in addressing housing shortages.

This research delves into the current practices of both cities to identify similarities and differences in their approaches to office-to-housing conversions. By comparing the contexts of Brussels and Helsinki, we aim to uncover insights that can inform and improve urban transformation strategies in both cities. Through detailed case study analysis, we seek to identify common practices and challenges that contribute to the understanding of adaptive reuse as a sustainable approach to urban development and the influence of contextual factors

# Reversing the Urban Dogma Rural Futures and Radical Care

Alvaro Corredor Ochoa<sup>1</sup>, Carmen Antuña Rozado<sup>2</sup> & Esther Valiente Ochoa<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Tampere University, <sup>2</sup>VTT Technical Research Centre of Finland, <sup>3</sup>Universitat Politècnica de València

Dominant discourses in planning and development are saturated with projections of unstoppable urban growth: billions of people moving into cities, the progressive abandonment of rural areas, and the repeated—yet unproven—assumption that urbanisation equals progress, a better life, and a more sustainable world. But what if this future were neither inevitable, nor desirable, nor even sustainable?

This paper challenges the paradigm that frames the city as the sole stage for sustainability. While ecological, social, and economic crises demand a profound transformation of our territorial models—exposing the limits of centralised, resource-intensive urban systems—rural areas across Europe continue to be structurally neglected and actively emptied. The consequences are not only demographic, but also cultural and ecological: the loss of traditional knowledge, of local identities, and of the capacity to care for the land.

At the same time, the appeal of urban life is waning. Work-related stress, unaffordable housing, pollution, and lifestyle shifts accelerated by the pandemic have led many to reconsider their way of living and to look towards smaller towns or rural settlements.

In this context, multiple initiatives have emerged across Europe aiming to revitalise rural areas through more sustainable, self-organised, and community-oriented ways of living. Among these, ecovillages stand out as one model—alongside others such as cohousing projects, collective land stewardship, or hybrid forms of rural–urban living. While often driven by ecological values, these experiences are not free from contradictions, including issues of governance, accessibility, and long-term viability.

Still, they invite us to rethink territorial futures from the margins. If radical care is to guide the future of our territories, the countryside must no longer be ignored—not as a place to escape from, but as a place to rebuild from.



# Assessing Spatial Justice in Urban Regeneration: A Methodological Approach for Milan's New Campus Project

Giulia D'Antonio

Università degli Studi di Milano

How can urban regeneration be implemented without producing exclusion and gentrification? What role can universities play in promoting more just and inclusive cities? Can tools like social impact assessment support these goals?

The contribution addresses these questions through field research in the Città Studi neighbourhood of Milan, currently impacted by a major urban regeneration plan. The Università Statale intends to relocate its science departments to the former Expo area, leaving the future of Città Studi undefined. This case offers a critical lens on the university's evolving role: not only as a centre of education and research, but also as an urban actor—sometimes operating as a real estate developer—with significant influence on the city's spatial and social dynamics.

The paper investigates how universities can contribute to just regeneration by engaging more deeply with local communities. It proposes a participatory approach based on the co-construction of knowledge with residents and the academic community, aiming to build a shared understanding of the area, define common objectives, translate them into social impact indicators, and identify inclusive methods for ongoing evaluation. The project ultimately explores how social impact assessment can be used as a planning tool to guide urban transformation towards spatial and social justice.

Keywords: spatial justice, social impact assessment, urban regeneration, popular education, co-learning

# **How can service design thinking in urban planning contribute to transforming disadvantaged neighborhoods? A case of school segregation in a Finnish suburb**

Mansi Garg

Department of Architecture, Aalto University

Schools in segregated neighborhoods often face stigmatization and school rejection leading to an imbalance between the student base in the neighborhood and school composition. This phenomenon of school segregation has increased within the last decade in Finland coinciding with increased immigration in dense neighborhoods. Literature review indicates that school segregation is mainly driven by residential segregation, which is a neighborhood planning outcome. Schools thus face the challenge of limited space for integration activities for families in disadvantaged neighborhoods. Consequently, service design thinking can tackle the challenge of efficient use of resources in such neighborhoods by creating a network of spaces. This research addresses the lack of interaction and multipurpose spaces for schools and communities in disadvantaged neighborhoods.

Havukoski in Vantaa was selected for the empirical study due its high level of school segregation and neighborhood composition. A mixed method approach using data mapping, site visits and thematic analysis of expert interviews revealed challenges to development in the neighborhood and the potential for a spatial network using service design thinking. The study resulted in a spatial network which serves as a planning scenario and introduces a new tool for urban planning in segregated neighborhoods.

Keywords: Socio-spatial segregation, school segregation, service thinking, urban planning, community spaces, touchpoints

# **Tactical Urbanism as a Tool for Inclusively Transforming Public Spaces: Lessons from Two Academic Projects in Austria**

Lena Hohenkamp

TU Wien, Research Unit of Local Planning, Institute of Spatial Planning

Traditional urban planning and design often fall short in reflecting the diverse realities of everyday life, resulting in spaces that do not address certain groups (e.g. youth) and are not safe (e.g. for women), accessible or usable for everyone (e.g. people with disabilities). Tactical urbanism offers an innovative approach to include gender and diversity perspectives in small-scale urban design – especially when it comes to designing public spaces. At the intersection of participatory urban planning, feminist and intersectional urban research and the pursuit of social justice in urban design, this contribution focuses on the question: How do various marginalized groups benefit from and participate in tactical urbanism projects—as initiators, implementers, and users.

Drawing on two university-led tactical urbanism projects in Austria, the presentation examines the roles of students, educators, and local stakeholders, with particular attention to gender and diversity dynamics. The findings indicate that such projects, when embedded in academic contexts, serve not only as valuable learning environments for future planners but also as instruments for promoting greater social equity in public spaces. The presentation concludes by identifying key challenges and factors for successfully and sustainably integrating gender and diversity considerations into both urban design education and practice.

# Navigating Urban Resilience: The Impact of Temporary Use Initiatives in Brussels

Gabrielle Kawa, Waldo Galle & Niels De Temmerman

Vrije Universiteit Brussel

The value of temporary use in reactivating vacant buildings is gaining increasing recognition, leading to its broader adoption by public authorities, property owners, and civil society actors. In Brussels, where more than 6.5 million square meters of unused space exist, temporary use has become a professionalised strategy—particularly as an interim solution in anticipation of redevelopment projects.

This study examines temporary use in its integration within the context of urban renewal and resilience. Drawing on insights from literature study and an in-depth case study analysis, supported by semi-structured interviews, the paper explores how temporary use facilitates capacity building through experimentation, social learning and collective action. In addition, the paper reflects on the future, sustainability and continuity of temporary use projects. The case of Wood In Molenbeek (WIM) within Brussels' Sustainable Neighbourhood Contract (SNC) framework exemplifies how temporary use could contribute to long-term urban renewal strategies and thereby enhance urban resilience. However, temporary use still faces various challenges in this context by its current short-term vision and integration in urban renewal. This paper aims to open and facilitate discussion on how to navigate trade-offs between urban and community resilience and individual resilience facilitated through temporary use effectively

Keywords: Circular Design, Temporary Use, Urban Vacancy

## **Caring for age-friendliness? An analysis of how the nine Swedish members municipalities of the WHO Age-friendly cities and communities' network translate policy to space.**

Ebba Högström

Umeå University

This conference contribution presents an analysis of the spatial implications of age-friendliness in strategic documents and action plans of the nine Swedish member municipalities of the WHO Age-friendly cities and communities' network. The aim is to critically interrogate the 'how', 'what' and for 'whom' when ideas, visions and policies of the age-friendly city are translated into built form. Focusing topics such as social infrastructure, localization and mixed neighbourhoods, the contribution seeks to broaden the discussion of the age-friendly city and community through the lens of the capability of the older person. Therefore, it takes as its point of departure the intertwined multi-scalar relations between the home, building, neighbourhood, and city with the overarching questions: for whom are our cities built for and what measures would be needed to plan and design a just and inclusive living environment, to plan and design a caring and care-ful city?

# The story of street trees in an urban planning project, and what it tells about the politics of urban greening in cities

Jenni Kuoppa

Tampere University

Urban greenery is recognized as vital to cities' sustainability transformation. Despite its prevalence in urban policy agendas, urbanization creates tension between promoting compact cities and preserving green spaces (e.g., Hautamäki et al., 2024). It has been claimed there is a need to link humans and nature in cities in ways lost in modernist urban planning (Houston et al., 2018; Metzger, 2019). More-than-human thinking challenges the separation between the city and nature in mainstream planning theory. However, there is a need to better understand how these ideas and a more-than-human sensibility can be integrated into urban planning practices and enacted in actual processes.

This presentation examines the approaches and challenges of fostering greener cities through a Finnish planning case study. Using ethnographic observation data, it traces how ambitious plans for greenery are gradually compromised in the planning process. The analysis seeks to understand frequent failures in including urban green, opening perspectives to how street trees are woven into fight for space and politics of coexisting in cities (cf. Geirbo & Pettersen, 2023). The presentation aims to contribute to debates on integrating ecological considerations into planning processes, and the diverse agencies and practices necessary for reimagining and creating greener and care-full cities.

# Knowledge Broker Perspectives on Green Infrastructure Concepts across the Metropolitan Regions of Helsinki, Milan and Stockholm

Hamed Mazaherylaghab & Juho Rajaniemi

Tampere University

This article explores how key stakeholders in advanced European metropolitan cases have theorised biodiversity-friendly green infrastructure (GI) planning characteristics, focusing on their perceptions and understandings. GI, an open-ended and evolving concept, has been mainstreamed in urban planning since the early 2000s due to its systematic integration of ecosystem services, providing numerous socio-ecological benefits. In addition, GI planning contributes to sustainable, resilient, and inclusive urban development, aligning with major UN Sustainable Development Goals and EU objectives. Although EU policies, particularly the EU GI and Biodiversity 2030 Strategies, have strongly promoted GI planning, stakeholders face significant challenges, such as lack of expertise and territorial policies/mechanisms.

This study employs reflexive thematic analysis to critically examine the perspectives and backgrounds of key policymakers, practitioners, and researchers in GI planning and governance from the metropolitan regions of Helsinki, Stockholm, and Milan. Expected findings will demonstrate the varied conceptualisations and prioritisations of GI concepts among these stakeholders, while identifying knowledge gaps. These GI interpretations, grounded in participants' own words, will be linked to theoretical discourses on the power-knowledge-actors nexus. Insights from this research will inform future efforts of diverse stakeholders in effectively prioritising and applying GI principles in urban planning.

# Caring Urbanism: Cross-Sectoral Collaboration in Housing for Older Adults in Umeå, Sweden

Daniel Movilla Vega

Umeå School of Architecture, Umeå University

This paper explores how care is spatially organized and governed in the city, focusing on housing for older adults in Umeå, Sweden. Centering on the historically significant neighborhood of Focken, an established site for municipal eldercare, the study traces the evolution of cross-sectoral collaboration between spatial planners, social services, and representatives of senior citizens. These actors operate under the mandates of Sweden's Social Services Act (SFS 2001:453) and the Planning and Building Act (SFS 2010:900), yet their coordination remains fraught with structural and procedural challenges.

The paper unfolds in three parts: first, it maps the care-oriented housing landscape of Umeå to contextualize Focken within broader urban and legislative frameworks. Second, it zooms in on Focken to analyze historical and ongoing collaborative practices in planning and design. Finally, the paper suggests ways forward to enhance intersectoral collaboration, informed by identified gaps and inefficiencies.

By situating eldercare housing within themes of urban transformation, planning, and social justice, the study contributes to a more care-full understanding of how cities can respond to ageing populations. It offers both a critical and propositional view of how planning practices might better support inclusive and sustainable urban futures.



# Beyond the Lawn: Rethinking Urban Nature through Tiny Food Forests in Leftover Spaces

Tugba Ozer

TED University

As cities expand and densify, urban transformation often imposes standardized, ornamental, and grass-dominated landscapes across public and recreational areas. While visually appealing, such green surfaces are ecologically shallow, water-intensive, and offer limited habitat for nonhuman species. This research questions the dominance of grass as an urban default and instead proposes food forest systems as a more resilient, low-maintenance, and biodiversity-supporting alternative.

Rooted in permaculture principles, food forests - or forest gardening - are sustainable food production and land management systems based on woodland ecosystems. They not only conserve water and reduce upkeep but also provide habitat for pollinators, birds, insects, and microbial life. Moreover, they offer opportunities for urban food production, environmental education, and communal care.

This research calls for a shift from ornamental greening toward regenerative, multi-species urban practices. It advocates for transforming leftover urban spaces - those often overlooked and underutilized - into tiny food forests. In doing so, it reframes urban nature as something that should grow, feed, and adapt - rather than simply appear green - and invites a more inclusive, resilient, and biodiverse vision for the future city.

Keywords: urban nature, food forest, forest gardening, leftover space, biodiversity. .

# **Qualitative Growth Trajectories of Small Towns: Resilience-Based Strategic Tools to Address Shrinkage and Promote Planetary Well-Being**

Annuska Rantanen & Jaana Vanhatalo

Tampere University

This study, conducted at Tampere University, Finland, from 2022 to 2024 and funded by The Foundation of Municipal Development, explores how Finnish small towns can enhance their role in regional development while contributing to sustainable transition. Small towns play a crucial mediating role in the systems of cities. They form an essential component of the regional framework, providing infrastructure for a significant portion of the population, economy, and services. However, they face challenges such as population decline, migration to larger cities, and decreasing birth rates, leading to economic stagnation or decay.

Given that quantitative growth may not be feasible for small towns, the study investigates potential qualitative growth strategies. Concepts like 'smart shrinkage' and 'smart adaptation' involve adaptive practices that uncover new resources from existing ones. Utilizing insights from complex adaptive systems, we developed analytical methods and strategic tools based on resilience and resource efficiency. Our findings suggest that, to thrive, small towns could benefit from development strategies aimed at planetary well-being, leveraging their unique resources in ways that provide multiple simultaneous benefits, economic, social and environmental.

keywords: small towns, strategic planning, shrinkage, adaptation, resilience, resource efficiency .

# **The snakes and ladders of public participation: The case of East Side Coastal Resiliency project, NYC**

Iina Sankala & Ilari Karppi

Tampere University, Faculty of Management and Business

The 2012 Superstorm Sandy highlighted structural inequalities in New York City urban space, particularly in neighborhoods with vulnerable populations such as public housing residents in Manhattan's Lower East Side. In response, the East Side Coastal Resiliency (ESCR) project was established to provide long-term flood protection, representing a significant urban transformation intended to safeguard residents against the effects of climate change. Despite the project's good intentions, the local residents' experiences of losing the beloved East River Park and failures in the project's public engagement revealed that the planning process itself was not conducted in a caring manner (cf. Beauregard 2023).

We examine controversies that the ESCR has caused among the local community and focus on public engagement as a source of social value in planning. Participation resembles a game of snakes and ladders where participants can fall from higher levels of engagement and partnerships rot to mere tokenism (Arnstein 1969). Yet, the city can show agility by reconfiguring its planning system and institutions, restoring thus trust within the community.

We demonstrate how social value created through participation can benefit the community and be brokered into public value through negotiation – provided that the community's strategic role becomes properly recognized.

## Theme 03 - Social and Spatial Justice

Theme 03 explores social and spatial justice in relation to care. The focus is on urban inequalities and vulnerabilities, the urban spaces of care, formal and informal care, the institutions of care, and the effects of care practices on social sustainability. This theme is related on how justice, law, and care are related to each other in urban contexts.

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# The Anatomy of Safety - Architecture at the Intersection of Securitisation and Safe Space

Iris Andersson

Aalto University

Safe space and securitisation represent contrasting approaches to social and spatial justice in public spaces: the former is rooted in care and inclusion, while the latter focuses on control and exclusion. Although the concepts differ in origin and implications, both address tensions surrounding security. Perceptions of security shape how space is used and experienced – different individuals may view the same space as unsafe and indifferent or safe and caring.

Transportation nodes can simultaneously create inclusive or exclusive environments and evoke heightened fear. The safety of railway stations is not limited to one discipline; therefore, it requires a multidisciplinary, empirical, and sensory ethnographic approach. Drawing from fieldwork at the Helsinki Central Railway Station, my PhD research in architecture explores how securitisation and perceptions of safety and insecurity shape the use and experience of urban space – and, in turn, influence its design. What factors define security in public space, and from whose perspective are spaces constructed as safe or unsafe?

I conceptualise the anatomy of safety as the intersection of physical environments, socio-psychological and socio-demographic factors, and power structures.

The presentation will analyse field observations, survey responses, and interviews from the perspectives of care, inequalities, and vulnerabilities.

# Reclaiming the Everyday: Informal Urbanism and the Politics of Survival in Gaza

Alessandra Gola<sup>1</sup>, Abdalrahman Kittana<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Birzeit University, <sup>2</sup>Tampere University

In the wake of relentless bombardment and displacement, Gazan communities continue to reconfigure urban life through a complex informal survival practice. This paper explores the action of grassroots in Gaza in shaping emergency urban landscapes, through the mobilisation of all available elements to ensure the survival of the local community and its grasp on the native spaces. The contribution focuses on the value of minute yet collective acts of care as the ultimate claim to the right to exist against colonial aggression through perpetuating an everyday that contextually asserts presence, ownership, and self-determination.

The paper approaches the informal and improvised patterns of practices through the perspective of infrastructural citizenship (Lemanski, 2020), looking at them not only as responses to crisis, but as radical acts of care that contest dispossession and reclaim the urban as a site of endurance, dignity, and political presence. Applied to the Palestinian and Gaza contexts, the concept of infrastructural citizenship is used to illuminate how the destruction/subtraction of essential infrastructures by totalitarian powers and the civic society's struggle to repair/replace them indicate the status of fundamental human rights of communities and the struggle of citizens to maintain or regain such rights.

Such forms of spatial resilience are largely obscured by dominant narratives that fixate on Gaza's landscape of destruction. This contribution challenges the prevailing academic and media frameworks that depoliticise Gaza's urban agency by shifting the analytical lens from spectacle to detail, from ruin to reinvention. In doing so, it exposes how these overlooked practices confront the narrative of total and irreversible loss that underpins state-driven proposals for forced displacement, such as Israel's 2017 "Decisive Plan" and the Trump administration's 2025 resettlement strategy.

# Young Urbanist: Supermarket Democracy? Teaching Social Justice and Exclusion in the Ailes

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EMMIR – The European Master in Migration and Intercultural Relations

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This paper presents findings from a participatory research project conducted with students as part of the Young Urbanist methodology, examining how everyday spaces like supermarkets reveal hidden structures of social inequality. While supermarkets appear democratic, open to all, offering choice and access. Our collective exploration uncovered how they reproduce deep social, emotional, and economic divides.

Through art-based research methods, interviews, and counter mapping, students critically examined how consumer identity is shaped and restricted within these spaces. For some, the supermarket represents comfort, abundance, even pleasure. For others, it is a space of exclusion, anxiety, or silent resignation. Clothing becomes a code for legitimacy; product placement and advertising manipulate dopamine-driven desires; identical food packaging masks unequal access. These invisible forces differentiate tend to differentiate citizens beneath a veneer of neutrality and choice.

We argue that supermarkets function not only as sites of consumption but also as civic arenas where belonging, dignity, and identity are negotiated. Just like cities themselves, these spaces oscillate between serving the public good and enabling neoliberal systems of production, profit, and privatization. Are they designed for everyday civic life, or for invisible forms of social sorting?

By teaching students to deconstruct these “ordinary” spaces, Young Urbanist challenges urban education and social work to move beyond formal institutions and engage with the lived, felt, and consumed city. The supermarket becomes a metaphor for broader urban questions: who is the city for, and who is excluded in the name of access?

# Everyday practices of childcare in the non-caring city: how marginalised groups negotiate the Dutch neoliberal childcare system

Bárbara Oliveira Soares

Utrecht University

Recent scholarship on the geographies of care has underscored the crisis of care in contemporary cities, where the marketization and erosion of public care infrastructures have deepened social and spatial inequalities (Gabauer et al., 2021; Power and Williams, 2020). While this literature has drawn attention to care as an essential yet often invisible dimension of urban life, childcare as a spatialized everyday practice remains underexplored. In particular, analyses of the neoliberalisation of childcare in the Global North have largely focused on institutional frameworks, such as state policy and market-driven services, without adequately offering a deeper insight on how caring mothers navigate the non-caring urban context. To address these gaps, the paper develops a conceptual lens by examining: (1) how urban space structures access to care and shapes care practices; (2) how childcare policy operates across scales to reproduce spatial inequalities; and (3) how mothers exercise agency to navigate, resist, or reconfigure these systems in everyday life.

This paper examines the case of the Netherlands, where the decentralisation of childcare governance since 2004 has transferred responsibilities to municipal levels, reconfiguring the spatial and institutional landscape of care. These shifts have reinforced inequalities and placed increased pressure on especially marginalized families to organize care through precarious, informal care networks. Focusing on the case of Amsterdam, the paper shows how neoliberal childcare system restricts access to formal childcare and how caregivers negotiate these constraints through practices of radical care in everyday urban spaces. It highlights the overlooked agency of marginalized groups in contesting and creatively adapting to the limitations of the formal childcare system. The contribution speaks to broader debates on gendered and racialized urban inequalities and the everyday politics of urban care and offers new perspectives for imagining more equitable, care-centred cities.



# **(Dis)Orienting the Green Transition: A Multimedia Mapping of Alternative Temporalities**

Pia Palo

Umeå School of Architecture, Umeå University

The “green transition” has become the dominant policy response and institutional climate-action narrative, driven in Europe primarily by private-sector megaprojects—from battery plants to green steel and hydrogen facilities. Although these narratives claim to address social inequality, their rapid, growth-oriented logic risks sidelining justice, obscuring entanglements with past extraction, displacement and dispossession.

Through an architectural lens, I critically engage these entanglements by examining how built environments both enable and unsettle them through multimedia mapping. Working with a pilot site in Skellefteå, northern Sweden, the multimedia mapping combines archival and document analysis, field recordings and audiovisual storytelling. In this presentation, I will show latent stories uncovered by the mapping and examine how these challenge and create alternatives to green transition narratives, effectively contesting their hegemony.

Initial insights include:

- Residue & Rubble: Toxic soils as geological archives of environmental injustice
- Riot & Precarity: Worker mobilisations refracted through crisis-driven growth rhetorics
- Interstitial Temporality: Ambiguous in-between moments within boom-bust cycles that defy linear progress

By revealing latent stories, multimedia mapping lays the groundwork for using built environments as sites of engagement, disorienting growth narratives and imagining more just transitions. Layered media and creative methods also foster broader care-driven conversations on climate and urban futures.

# **Communal Reclamations Manifesting Care facing socio-spatial injustice in Deir Alla - Jordan**

Haifa Saleh

Katholieke Universiteit Leuven – KUL

Deir Alla a rural province located in the Jordan River Basin, an ecological zone afflicted by impoverishment, social stratification, and a dilapidated natural and built environment. The displacement of indigenous communities from their ancestral lands and the centralization of resource governance due to imperial dominance began in the late Ottoman era and crystalized with the 1952 Imperial British Land Program. This consequently led to land fragmentation and human and non-human commodification. Moreover, geopolitical imperialist wars and Zionist settler-colonialism exacerbated by neo-colonial policies confiscated natural resources, and deeply damaged cooperative practices and settlement of communities. As a result, local communities' rights to a dignified life were jeopardized, subjecting them to precarious living conditions, thus, forfeiting social justice, autonomy, and sovereignty.

Nonetheless, according to Gramsci (1971) and Scott (2017) such injustices have been continuously challenged by communities, grassroots organizations, and unions. This paper aims to unravel and foreground hidden and outspoken practices of subaltern forms of care and empowerment embedded in fights for justice enacted by the intersections of environmental and development organizations, with 'unauthorized' agricultural workers union led by women who draw on long-repressed subaltern Indigenous knowledge asserting cooperative relations, practices of care, collective stewardship, and political activism. Harvey (1973) and Soja (2010) reassert the gravity of space in critical social theory and all matters of justice. Therefore, interpretative critical cartography and creative participatory research methods will be the bases of revealing and translating these socio-spatial findings.

# Who Counts as Vulnerable? Designer Responsibility in the Context of Finnish Housing

Annika Taipale

Oulu School of Architecture

This paper examines how vulnerability is understood and defined in Finnish housing design from the perspective of architects. Through qualitative analysis of interviews, the study explores how professionals interpret vulnerability in the context of housing and how they respond to the needs of those in precarious positions. The findings highlight the ways in which care is present in design work, both through formal planning processes and informal, often intuitive, practices. The paper considers how designers reflect on their own role in defining and addressing vulnerability, and how this responsibility is negotiated within institutional and spatial constraints. Ultimately, it reveals how professional choices made by designers engage with broader questions of care, responsibility, and justice in urban contexts.

# **The right to exist: the socio-ecological intertwine in everyday practices of care and repair in warfare landscapes in Gaza.**

Maria Gabriella Trovato<sup>1</sup>, Alessandra Gola<sup>2</sup> & Anwar Awadallah<sup>3</sup>

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Keywords: socio-ecological repair, warfare, landscape, everyday practices, justice.

This paper explores power dynamics developed within warfare landscapes in Gaza through the inspection of ordinary spaces. The study casts a light on the presence of creative and re-creative practices for reparation and socio-ecological justice underlying and intertwining scenes of radical destruction.

The contribution draws on posthumanist thought that emphasises the interconnectedness of human and non-human life. This perspective aligns with ethical and political commitments to care, distributed agency, and situated knowledge, in a posthumanist understanding of landscape, wherein the dichotomies of nature-culture and human-non-human dissolve.

Using this theoretical framework, this study elucidates the concepts of justice and the inherent right to inhabit while examining acts of resistance against the socio-ecological devastation resulting from war and colonial legacies. It frames the right to inhabit land not solely as a legal or political claim but as a relational and ethical practice, referencing the European Landscape Convention and posthumanist ideas of "rights and responsibilities for all".

Building upon Rebecca Solnit's narrative in "A Paradise Built in Hell" (2010), this work emphasises the agency of various life forms in preserving, affirming, and propagating their existence in opposition to systematic ecocidal and genocidal violence. The reflection will concentrate specifically on the alliance among living beings, artefacts, and materials in shaping and sustaining everyday life, demonstrating how scenes of radical violence can serve as pivotal sites for resistance, recovery, and the assertion of fundamental rights for civic society.

# THE EVERYDAY FOODWORK OF URBAN CARE-GIVERS IN A POST-WELFARE CITY. A CASE STUDY OF STOCK- HOLM'S COVID-19 FOODSCAPE

Adele Wylie

University of Reading

Drawing on geographies of care, this paper explores the work of informal grassroots groups that mobilised in central Stockholm during the pandemic to provide what Alama and Houston (2020, p. 2) describe as “everyday, non-institutional care.” This care included the distribution of food and drinks, clothing, tents, as well as support for health and well-being including providing access to haircuts, dental treatment, and emotional support. I examine the ways in which these informal infrastructures of care provided by volunteers fill care deficits left by the state in this post-welfare city, supporting those who are hidden, forgotten, and navigating life outside institutionalised systems of care and welfare, whether due to exclusion, inaccessibility, or personal choice. It also attends to how these acts of care challenged public health restrictions and surveillance practices that reinforced spatial marginalisation. By focusing on how urban care-givers adapted to, and endured, the extreme challenges of the Covid-19 pandemic, I illustrate the substantial role of informal care infrastructures in providing the relational, material, and emotional needs to those on the margins. Unlike many countries which imposed strict regional and national lockdowns, Sweden’s decision to forgo a national lockdown provides a distinctive context for examining the relationship between state responses, care deficits, and grassroots mobilisation. Using a patchwork ethnographic approach, this research combined interviews, participant observation, and active participation in the foodwork of three organisations through preparing and distributing food to those in need.

# Rebuilding Inequalities: Urban Materiality and Post-Disaster Transformations in Antakya

Mehmet Ali Gasseloglu

Gebze Technical University Faculty of Architecture; Istanbul Technical University Faculty of Architecture

This study explores the entangled relationship between material transformations and socio-spatial inequalities through the case of Antakya following the 2023 earthquakes. Drawing on the material turn in urban theory and actor-network approaches, the research frames urban space as a product of both human and non-human agencies. Topographical formations, geological layers, and material flows—such as rubble, construction resources, and altered landscapes—are not merely passive elements, but active agents in shaping urban life.

The research identifies four layers of post-disaster intervention: emergency sheltering, debris displacement, extractive operations, and state-led reconstruction. Through spatial mapping, archival analysis, and field documentation, the study traces how these layers of material change both reflect and reinforce uneven power relations and environmental injustices. At the same time, the agency of matter also opens space for resistance, care, and alternative urban imaginaries.

The findings suggest that material transformations do not only follow social orders but co-produce them, amplifying or mitigating vulnerabilities. By situating care in material processes, this research contributes to broader discussions on radical care, justice, and urban transformation, showing how urban futures are negotiated through both political and material terrains.

# Care-full Urban Governance: learning from city-led care initiatives

Gavin Nilsson Lewis

Linköping University

Despite care being a “vital necessity”, care remains undervalued and underexplored in urban justice theories and practices, perpetuating gender, income, and racial inequalities. In response, there is a call for care-full justice. By centring on urban governance, this paper asks what it means to govern with care by investigating how city governments have conceptualised and operationalised care at the urban scale. Furthermore, this paper examines how cities are responding to urban injustice on the ground when they take a care perspective. Taking inspiration from Power & Williams’s (2020) platforms for future urban geographical care research, this paper examines three city-government-led care programmes: Bogota’s Care Blocks (Manzanas del Cuidado), Barcelona’s Caring Cities Initiatives (Ciutat Cuidadora), and Vienna’s Gender mainstreaming work (Dezernat Gender Mainstreaming).

Through thematic analysis of policy documents and semi-structured interviews with policymakers and civil servants from each city, this paper analyses how care is being implemented in practice by city governments, expanding upon Power & Williams’s (2020) three platforms: care at the urban scale; locating urban care, and universal care. The paper concludes by conceptualising “care-full governance” and discussing what care can offer the three pillars of climate justice and urban climate action moving forward.

## Theme 04 - Urban Democracy and Activism

Theme 04 explores the (radical) practices and methods of how care can be enhanced in cities through urban politics and action. The focus is on urban politics and democracy in a wider sense, understanding them as activities that people or organizations adopt to make impact in the society or everyday life. In these sessions we will discuss what researchers, teachers, and artists can do to take better care of the cities through participatory and creative methods.

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# Postdystopian care: climate mobilities, anticipatory geomedia and ecosocial infrastructuring

Tuomo Alhojärvi

University of Eastern Finland

The ongoing climate breakdown has disastrous ramifications on different peoples, species and ecosystems. This is acutely seen in people forced on the move due to politically mediated ecosocial unravelling. Climate mobilities are exposed to practices of violent bordering in geopolitical but also cognitive and epistemic terms. As critics of racialised and securitised governance argue, global violences of racial capitalism also translate into dystopian frameworks of anticipating mobile peoples. In the Global North, dystopian racialisations often feed into militarised forms of securitisation as well state-centric, structurally violent frameworks of governance. However, there are alternatives to dystopian responses to prospective climate mobilities. I present a framework for conceptualising, exploring and amplifying urban forms of care from a decidedly postdystopian perspective. This focuses on ecosocial infrastructuring, which refers to a geomediated patterning of solidarity, abundance and commoning. I present a conceptual and methodological toolkit for taking radical care seriously in an age of racially differentiated climate breakdown. Because the public sphere is inescapably geomediated, the approach concentrates on counter-cartographic strategies for reinventing spatial mediation. This does not simply concern how we think of prospective future mobilities – rather, it concerns a heterotopian rereading of the urban present.

## **TENEGRES Brasilândia – Black Territories and Schools: education, memory, and activism in the periphery of São Paulo**

Giselly Barros Rodrigues

Federal Institute of São Paulo

The extension project “TENEGRES – Black Territories and Schools: Discovering the northern side of São Paulo (Brasilândia),” developed at the Federal Institute of São Paulo (IFSP), aims to highlight and value black and peripheral memories in the favela of Brasilândia, in the northern zone of São Paulo, marked by the strong presence of the Afro-Brazilian community. In partnership with the State School Jornalista Ruy Mesquita, which has 430 students aged 12 to 16, the project adopts a decolonial and afro-centered approach, engaging the school and local community in building a counter-hegemonic narrative of this urban territory. By valuing oral traditions and active listening, the project promotes education on ethnic-racial relations and highlights stories and knowledge often silenced. Strengthening the identities, memories, and protagonism of the local Black population, the initiative becomes a practice of radical care and urban activism. One of its outcomes is the documentary TENEGRES Brasilândia: Community and Education, available at <https://youtu.be/qjPPKUKWASI?si=UZXFrt4r7dWbcxnN>, which records the school community’s experiences through oral testimonies. By integrating teaching, research, and extension, TENEGRES contributes to the empowerment of Black and peripheral identities, emphasizing the bodies, voices, and memories of a community actively engaged in the city’s development.

# Prefigurative Pedagogy through Tactical Urbanism: Learning from Radical Care Practices

Turkan Firinci Orman

Independent Researcher, Tampere, Finland

In response to urban inequalities, environmental crises, and neoliberal privatization, prefigurative urban care practices offer transformative possibilities for reimagining cities. This paper examines how tactical urbanism—such as guerrilla gardening, mutual aid networks, DIY urban repairs, public space reclamation, street libraries, street art, and protest—enacts alternative futures, challenging consumerism, exclusion, and spatial injustice. By exemplifying these practices, this paper explores prefigurative pedagogy, conceptualizing urban care as both political and educational. I argue that tactical urbanism and urban care are multidimensional actions that embody prefigurative politics, challenge capitalist urban structures, and create alternative futures. These practices not only critique the urban system but also actively construct the cities we aspire to inhabit. They contest exclusionary paradigms—drawing from the Right to the City—and offer alternative urban models rooted in sustainability, solidarity, and justice. I conclude that grassroots initiatives cultivate relational learning, collective agency, and embodied urban knowledge, offering a framework for pedagogies grounded in care, sustainability, and social justice. By positioning these transformative practices as sites of critical learning, this paper highlights their potential to shape participatory, justice-oriented urban futures.

**Keywords:** Prefigurative pedagogy, urban care, collective learning, radical care, sustainability, social justice.

# **Sustainable practices, transformative public pedagogy, and creative pathways of radical care in Tampere**

Turkan Firinci Orman<sup>1</sup>, Zeynep Kayna<sup>2</sup>

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This paper explores radical care as a framework for addressing urban vulnerabilities, fostering inclusivity, and promoting democratic participation in Tampere's transformation into a sustainable city. Focusing on three community-based initiatives—a cultural cooperative, an art center, and a community garden—we examine how bottom-up approaches in public spaces enable citizen participation, creativity, and care practices. Through in-depth interviews and site visits, we analyse these initiatives across three key aspects: citizen participation, the integration of artistic and urban care practices, and transformative pedagogies that foster public engagement. We argue that these grassroots initiatives serve as public hubs for activism and care, amplifying diverse voices—particularly youth—in shaping social sustainability. By emphasizing creative, bottom-up activities in urban care and democratic engagement, this study highlights their transformative potential. These initiatives enable citizens to enact care, engage in democratic processes through creative practices, and contribute to Tampere's sustainable future. The paper underscores the role of the creative practices, public pedagogy, and radical care in building inclusive cities and advancing Tampere's intercultural urban landscape.

**Keywords:** Transformative public pedagogy, radical care and creativity, grassroots initiatives, social sustainability, citizen participation

# From neglect to care? Knowledge politics in the struggle over a threatened daycare building in Helsinki

Hella Hernberg

Aalto University, ARTS, Department of Design

How could we better care for buildings and spaces that already exist? Caring for existing building stocks through reuse, repair, and revitalization is not only essential for reducing cities' environmental impacts but also promotes sociocultural values. However, such values are often ignored in today's techno-economic urban development paradigm. Finland is undergoing a demolition wave, targeting many municipal service buildings like daycare centers and schools. This presentation examines the rhetoric and knowledge politics behind the demolition and closure of daycare and school buildings in Helsinki, with a specific focus on Päiväkoti Pihlaja, a 1950s daycare center building in Meilahti. Through document analysis and action research, the study demonstrates that official arguments for demolition are identical across cases, referring to risks, functional inefficiency, high renovation costs, and compliance with regulations. With a closer look at the formal decision-making process and citizen activism surrounding Päiväkoti Pihlaja, I discuss the more complex circumstances underlying the official arguments, as well as the counterarguments from local activists and experts. This raises questions about the values and power dynamics guiding decisions concerning the care and neglect of our building stock, also highlighting other values and knowledge that are overlooked.

Keywords: Care; Demolition; Knowledge politics; Sustainable urban development; Participation

## **Space to just “be”: examining young women’s belonging in urban public space**

Carmel Keren

Central Saint Martins, University of the Arts London

Thinking through the connections between urban care, democracy, safety and belonging, this presentation will share case studies from Moabit, Berlin, and Tottenham, London. The two diverse neighbourhoods, home to a mix of migrant populations, raise questions about the contingent relationship between migration, cultural identity, and placemaking. A care-full methodology that begins with articulating our affective and embodied sense of space emphasises these temporal and relational elements at play.

My research argues that the issue of women’s safety, framed through belonging, is embodied as much as spatial. In the UK, some 86% of women aged 18-24 experience sexual harassment in public space (GLA, 2024). This lack of safety, both real and perceived, results in marginalisation in public space. This presentation will explore how site-specific, collaborative performance can be used to articulate and alter young women’s sense of belonging in their neighbourhood public spaces. Collective movement, mapping, and performance are used to consider how belonging and safety intersect and shape one another. Collective performance as a radical practice provides a profound repositioning, an agency, for young women to claim and reshape space. As one young woman collaborator said, all they want is a space to just “be”.

## Urban activism as radical care of the city

Mikko Kyrönviita, Antti Wallin, Krista Willman, Riina Lundman & Elina Alatalo

Tampere University

This presentation examines self-organised urban activism as practices of radical care through which citizens re-make the city and create spatial and social alternatives that disrupt the dominant processes of urban development. The focus is on activists' inner motivations, aspirations and political legitimation, a perspective that has received little attention. Based on the qualitative empirical data of various urban activisms, such as independent art projects, communal working spaces, DIY skatepark building and urban gardening, the presentation argues that urban activism as radical care is 1) embedded in urban space that the action seeks to change, 2) driven by individualistic motifs and later receiving collective and societal relevance, and 3) antagonistic to some forms of contemporary urban life that drives individuals to direct action. As a result, inspired by the ethos of outsider art, the presentation proposes the idea of a self-made life city: an activists' inner vision revealing spatial potential, turning action into way of living and political projects of care towards contested urban environments. The new conceptual orientation allows to understand activist practices as having intrinsic value for individuals as well as for the wider urban society.



# Urban Interfaces: Examining Co-Presence and Solidarity for Palestine in Oslo

Alessia Marzano

UiT- The Arctic University of Norway

The global mobilization following the genocidal violence in Gaza since October 2023 has reiterated the multi-scalar nature of seemingly place-specific occupations, extending far beyond their immediate geographical contexts.

This paper originates from one site of solidarity, Oslo, Norway. Oslo's rich history of public engagement and activism is exemplified by spaces like Eidsvoll's plass, in front of the Norwegian Parliament. Additionally, transient solidarity events, such as Visit Vestbredden ("visit the Westbank", 2024), a cultural occupation of Akerselva (one of Oslo's rivers), create new spaces of solidarity while reinforcing the rhetorical and performative dimensions of places as "intersections of bodies, material aspects, past meanings, present performances, and future possibilities" (Endres & Senda-Cook, 2011, p. 261).

Employing an interdisciplinary framework rooted in the participatory rhetoric (Endres et al., 2016), performance studies (Taylor, 2003, 2016; Colin, 2023), and the spatial turn in media studies (Ek, 2006), this contribution discusses urban places-of-protest as interfaces—zones of interaction, exchange, and negotiation where local and global political actions converge. Finally, I explore the concept of co-presence (Giannachi, Kaye, & Shanks, 2011; Colin, 2023) referring to the simultaneous presence and interaction of individuals and collectives across different spaces characterizing the embodied experience of solidarity during crises.

# From Collective memory to public space: The Impact of modern heritage on Resistance for Democracy in Tehran

Sara Sabet, Anu Soikkeli

University of Oulu

Modern heritage plays a significant role in social inclusion. These spaces serve as focal points for civil society to engage in urban activism and seek democracy. This study examines how urban spaces can serve to link the memories of different social groups and contribute to social inclusion, and what role urban decision-makers play in this context.

Focusing on Tehran's Revolution Street, the research investigates three key sites: the main entrance of the University of Tehran, the Vesal Shirazi intersection, and the City Theater building. This research is conducted using a qualitative method, combining spatial analysis tools with documentary studies, interviews, and observations.

The findings reveal that all the selected spaces act as spatial anchors that link the citizens' memories to reality by gathering socio-political, cultural, and spatial factors. At the same time, the analysis shows that prevailing urban policies seek to control and decrease social inclusion in the street.

This study highlights the crucial role of memorial spaces in sustaining democratic use of urban environments and offers new perspectives on the interplay between collective memory, modern heritage, and urban transformation processes.

Keywords: Collective memory, Inclusion, Public space, Memorial Space, Modern Heritage

# **(Re)city and (Re)production: Activism and Democratic Infrastructures of Care in a Multi-Species Urban fabric.**

Shonali Shetty

Hogeschool Utrecht

The role of (re)production in driving capitalistic regimes has been established by several authors like Silvia Federici, Lee Edelman and Sophie Lewis[1]. The role that architecture plays in driving these regimes is further developed by authors like Paul Preciado[2]. This paper is based on the case study of two sites of (re)generation embedded in the Dutch city of Schiedam, Netherlands. (1) An urban floating dairy farm in Schiedam and (2) The Langehaven, a canal that centers the city. Connecting the dots between milk and water, the research aims to negotiate the interwoven significance of human and non-human (re) production housed in architectures that activate a (re)city of care.

The research is an ongoing conversational tool of democratic action, between the various actors such as farmer, artist, cow, fish, and local government. Throwing light on the ecological entanglements of (re)production of both humans and non-humans in driving a (re)generative economy. The paper aims to generate discussion around the role of artistic interventions in driving conversation around activism and co-operation, birth and extinction, (re)production and (re)generation in the becoming of a (re)city.

In both sites, include artistic interventions in the form of photographic documentation, site specific installation, and ritualistic performance. (Re)productive Fluids of care such as breast milk[1], water, urine, are sort. While care labor of (m)other cows and (m)other eel are placed central to the conversation in negotiating the space between local food systems, and (re)generative care.

[1] In her book *Caliban and the witch*, Federici establishes the relationship between primitive accumulation and the loss of the common. Land enclosures resulted in loss of work for women and children on common land, leading to the beginning of the female body being reduced to reproductive labour, Federici, 2004, pp. [71] In his influential book, *No Future: Queer Theory and the Death Drive*, Edelman critiques the pervasive cultural, political, and social investment in the figure of the child as a symbol of the future, which Edelman argues reinforces heteronormative ideals and marginalizes non-reproductive identities and desires, Edelman, 2004, pp. [3], Sophie Lewis in the book *Full Surrogacy Now* talks about how reproductive bodies in distant land are commoditized (Lewis, 2018, p.66).

[1] Preciado, Beatriz. "Architecture as a Practice of Biopolitical Disobedience." *Log*, no. 25, 2012, pp. 121–134. JSTOR

# **Politics of and in sustainable housing – Planning, participation and privileges in transformative neighbourhoods in Sweden**

Hilda Wenander

Linköping University

In this presentation I argue for politicisation of sustainable urban transformations to create care-full and just cities. In Sweden, municipalities aim to advance sustainable urban transformations through new sustainability-profiled neighbourhoods that provide new housing and intend to concurrently address sustainability issues ranging from the climate crisis to housing segregation. However, due to e.g. the conditions of planners, inconsistent political leadership, scarce participation, and the market-focused urban development regime, the ambitions often fall short. Thus, these neighbourhoods are relevant for inquiring the influences of different actors, meaning the politics of, sustainable urban transformations. Politics is understood as the domain of contestations and choice. Departing from the market-orientation of the Swedish urban development regime, midst ecological and socio-spatial urgencies, the aim is to inquire what type of, how, and with what consequences, politics enters sustainability-profiled neighbourhoods centring the arenas municipal planning, municipal politics and everyday life.

This case study of sustainability-profiled neighbourhoods in Sweden comprising a document study and interviews with planners, politicians and residents. The results illustrate how de/politicisation occur in the early municipal planning as responsibilities are shifted to private developers while politicising participation is deficient. In municipal politics, de/politicisation are interdependent processes, yet the forceful political leadership de-politicises the development. The home is a potential political arena for collective politicisation of, and care for, sustainability. Nevertheless, the neighbourhoods individualise sustainability and provide privileges to the residents, while reproducing socio-ecological injustices. Summarised, this contribution advances the understanding of de/politicisation of sustainable housing, next to providing novel insights of the potential for caring and politicised engagement with sustainable urban transformations.

# From bottom-up and in between: Caring practices in sustainable cities

Pauliina Lehtonen<sup>1</sup>, Eleanor Jupp<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Tampere University, <sup>2</sup>University of Kent

As cities become more diverse and polarised, the concept of care has increasingly emerged in urban studies as part of the discussion on urban (social) justice (Williams 2017; Till 2012). In urban studies, care is addressed from the perspective of building just and fair cities, where urban environments are seen not only as objects of care but also as creators or mediators of care (Williams 2020) that contribute to the quality of life and well-being of people living in cities.

Our paper will discuss urban cultures of care by analysing care and caring as taking place in cities between bottom-up practices and welfare state structures. We take as a starting point Fisher and Tronto's (1990) famous definition of care as "everything that we do to maintain, continue, and repair our 'world' so that we can live in it as well as possible." Their view places care at the centre of how society, politics, and ethics are conceptualised, and recognises the often excluded and marginalised nature of care (Jupp 2022). To address the multifaceted nature of urban care, we identify care as an everyday activity having political and ethical impacts and consequences for sustainable cities and democracy.

Studying bottom-up initiatives, such as community-led gifting and sharing involving food, clothing, and household goods in the UK, and neighbourhood initiatives responding to segregation and urban development in Finland, we examine how local caring practices are shaped by shifting (state) infrastructures and bottom-up practices that emerge via everyday and affective interactions in urban space.

# **Considering future residents: The role of participatory processes and belonging in the redevelopment and densification of urban neighbourhoods**

Mathilde Kock, Gerald Mollenhorst

Dep. of Human Geography and Spatial Planning, Utrecht University

Cities across the Netherlands and globally are undergoing urban redevelopment and densification in response to intersecting challenges such as housing shortages, socio-economic inequalities, and declining well-being. Local governments and developers increasingly adopt participatory approaches in their efforts to include local residents in the creation of healthy and socially sustainable neighbourhoods.

Extensive research has critically examined the role of residents in urban redevelopment, underlining the importance of considering local narratives and residents' everyday practices of creating belonging in participatory processes. The arrival of new residents in densifying neighbourhoods creates new layers of such practices. We investigate how professional stakeholders, long-term residents, and newly arrived residents experience and enact (in)formal participation during the redevelopment and densification process in a disadvantaged urban neighbourhood in the Netherlands. Central to this is the investigation of care for place as a practice that enables a sense of belonging in the context of changes in everyday spaces.

We use qualitative, participatory research methods embedded in an urban living lab. Our research thus demonstrates how everyday practices of caring for place can offer alternative understandings of participation and belonging, thereby contributing to inclusive participatory strategies for urban renewal.

## **“No matter the space, no matter the time: understanding temporalities of care within Dutch squats”**

Maya Borean

Malmö University

This paper focuses on the temporal dimensions of informal and community-led practices of care carried out within squats in the Netherlands. Dutch squats have often been seen as spaces of contestation in the context of the country's increasingly inaccessible housing market, also becoming spaces of political organization and subcultural agglomeration. The Dutch legislative system is actively working against the formation of these spaces through hostile legislation and stigmatization, making existing squats become very impermanent and transitory spaces due to increasingly frequent and violent evictions. My research argues that squatted environments, seen as infrastructures of care through social reproduction theory, allow informal care practices to form in a self-organized way, creating a system of temporalities of care influenced by the impermanence of the squat itself within the urban environment. Through the use of semi-structured interviews and photo-elicitation with the participants, my expected results concern the understanding of community practices of care within squats as highly adaptable to the limited and transitory temporality of the squatted space. This creates networks of care mainly focusing on preserving the ephemeral nature of the squat through maintenance, yet also exceeding the physical boundary of the squatted space, involving the current residents, the ones who lived within the squat in the past, and the community as a whole system of provision of care.

# From crowdfunding to matchfunding: How collective financing empowers small-scale spatial projects in Vienna

Lena Schartmüller

TU Wien

As a recent survey in Vienna shows, local makers (one-person and small businesses, creative and cultural workers, associations, local initiatives) urgently need space for small-scale, community-oriented projects. The biggest challenge, especially when it comes to activating vacant spaces, is affordability. Traditional subsidies often fall short as they usually do not offer full funding or exclude various user groups (e.g. associations). Crowdfunding campaigns for spatial projects on the Viennese community platform imGrätzl.at already are not only effective in raising financial resources but also increase the visibility of projects and spaces. They enable bottom-up empowerment through participation in the financing of small-scale spatial projects with an impact at the neighbourhood level.

This presentation assesses the potential of matchfunding (combining crowdfunding with additional funding) as an effective alternative financing model for activating vacant or optimising already used spaces. It processes the results of a pilot project in Vienna - the RaumBooster at imGrätzl.at - in which three spatial crowdfunding projects were additionally supported by a community-financed fund. The three crowdfunding campaigns - the renovation of a historic space used by a cultural association, the activation of a vacant space for a new weight-neutral health centre, and the activation of a vacant space for a growing private school - were significantly more successful than other spatial crowd-fundings on imGrätzl.at. The presentation explores how matchfunding can contribute to social and spatial justice within using/activating space by democratising access to an alternative, community-driven financing instrument that can be further developed (e.g. municipal- or corporate-financed RaumBooster fund).



## Theme 05 - Spatial transformations, methods, and care ONLINE

These online sessions weave together the different themes of the conference.

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## **Caring begins with Understanding: Explore “Play” as an in-depth qualitative research method to uncover residents’ tacit preferences for spatial modification through life changes.**

Nhung Pham

Aalto University / KU Leuven

Flexible and adaptable housing has long been central to architectural design, yet existing strategies often reflect architects’ assumptions about how people ought to live over time, rather than addressing and responding to residents’ lived realities and evolving needs. This disconnect creates a tension between formal design intentions and the informal ways people actually inhabit and modify space over time. The root cause of this gap is the lack of tools that can effectively uncover the tacit ways individuals care for and adapt their environments.

To address this gap, this research explores play as an in-depth qualitative method to uncover laypeople’s spatial adaptation behaviors in response to life changes. By engaging participants in various play scenarios, the study seeks to expose implicit decision-making processes and spatial preferences that are difficult to articulate through conventional housing preference study methods.

The methodology includes an integrative literature review to frame the concept, followed by an iterative design process to develop a game prototype. The game was tested with volunteers, using qualitative techniques such as observation, interviews, and palimpsest mapping to collect and analyze data. Findings suggest that play offers a caring and intuitive medium for participants to express how they inhabit space. It reveals invaluable insights that support a more human-centered approach to flexible housing design, grounded in user care, and contribute to the understanding and implementation of social sustainability in flexible housing design.

## Mapping as a tool for social change: Co-creating spaces for empathy and deliberation

Saleha Sapra & Tanya Rana

City Sabha

In India, to co-create spaces for empathy and deliberation, the first order of action is to mobilise and collectivise citizen activism towards any radical city-making. This approach is interlinked with deep trust-building and intentional collaborations among marginalised identities and underserved geographies, so that, ultimately, people become agents of change.

For City Sabha (an interdisciplinary collective in New Delhi), what matters is gathering grassroots narratives to inform better needs-based planning and decision-making, which allows approaching claim-making as a precedent towards place-making, and mobilising people to demand accountability among governance actors.

To bridge the gap between people's realities and municipal realities, our work currently spans multiple neighbourhoods in Delhi. As the city undergoes massive urban transformations, our approach has attempted to zoom in on neighbourhood-level issues to inform bottom-up and citizen-driven accountability and governance practices. Our methods, further, are not boxed by disciplinary and pedagogical siloes. Some of these, for instance, include mapping through photo-walks and photo-voice, narrative building (using place game and quality of governance cards), storytelling (such as zine making), and citizen sabhas (or groups). This process-driven approach culminates in a People's Place Inventory, which illustrates a citizen-centric account of the city's public spaces.

Our contribution to Re-City will thus attempt to display our journeys through collective action for claim-making and the reimagination of hierarchical urban development paradigms.

# Archi-Theater: Reimagining Architecture as an Event for Social Transformation

Aleksandra Raonic & Tordis Berstrand

NTNU Faculty of Architecture and Design

Architecture, often conceived as static and permanent, is traditionally understood through its fixed nature. However, if acknowledged as a time-based, evolving process - an unfolding series of events - architecture can be seen as a live performance in its own right. This perspective informs the pedagogical practices discussed in this paper. In the Circular Experimental Practice studio at the Norwegian University of Science and Technology, performance serves as both a design and pedagogical tool, framing architecture as a collaborative process of weaving relationships in space. This approach integrates diverse voices, operations, skills, and craft perspectives, positioning architecture as a vehicle for societal change.

In this context, students engage in the collective creation of wearable architectural constructs, where the architect's body becomes a site of intervention. Their architectures emerge through performing, sharing, and wearing, activated by participation and interaction, while reclaiming the streets as sites for practicing care, solidarity, and resilience.

Revisited through Badiou's lens that frames truth as an event, this paper explores new outlooks into the ethics of care and the new spatial truths that these events may generate. Through this recollection of archi-theatrical situations that activate the streets, the paper highlights the transformative power of performance towards the collective shaping of more ethical, empathetic, and just environments.

Keywords:

architectural performance, participation, experimental architectural pedagogy, ethics of care, transformation, resilience

# **Radical Selfiescapes: Collages of Selfie and Urban photography as pathways to Self-Care and Civic Emancipation of Teenage Girls in the City of Cardiff.**

Dimitra Ntzani<sup>1</sup> & Antonio Capelao<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Welsh School of Architecture, Cardiff University, <sup>2</sup>Architecture for Kids CIC, University College London

In *The History of Sexuality*, Vol. 3, Michel Foucault explores “The Care of the Self” as a means for self-knowledge and ethical growth in Greco-Roman times (Foucault, 1988). He emphasizes personal storytelling as a way to empower individuals, a radical truth-telling process (*pareisia*) that nurtures political liberation, not just personal growth. A few years later and from a feminist angle, queer theorist Audre Lorde sees self-care as a defence against racist and patriarchal systems. Audre Lorde’s writing emphasizes the materiality of the body as a site of subjectivity and self-representation and discusses the radical potentials these practices hold for black women in the 80s. This paper integrates 20th-century self-care philosophies to examine how teenage girls use social media for self-representation as a form of negotiation, definition and critique of their familiar urban environment.

Teenage girls use social media to create and share selfies photos or videos that express playfulness, dissatisfaction, or provocation. These images are quickly shared across their communities of interest before disappearing. The “My City, My Body, My Selfie” workshops, funded originally by AHRC Being Human Festival and later by the Wellcome Trust, we invited teenage girls to recreate and reflect on fleeting self-portraits in the context of their familiar built environment. Participants staged their self-portraits against public landmarks, streets, or venues of their choice, using analogue or digital collages as means of expression. The workshops aimed to challenge or confirm societal perceptions of young female bodies in urban spaces, highlighting both their strength and vulnerability.

By weaving theoretical perspectives on self-representation as self-care, self-awareness and resistance, this paper re-initiates a discussion on the radical potential of creative and critical collaging as means for discussing young women’s relationships with the city of Cardiff.

Link: <https://www.beinghumanfestival.org/events/my-city-my-body-my-selfie-closed-event>

# **Urban and architectural transition through political and economic developments. Case Study: Pristina**

Muhamet Spahiu

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As every city in the world, the capital city of Kosovo, Pristina has a transition period during three periods of developments. The Ottoman Period, Socialist Period and Period so-called after the war defined the urban and architectural transformation in Pristina. In this paper we will be more focused on the period after the war because that seems to be a more drastic transformation for 25 years, taking into consideration political and economic change.

After the war 1999, the country began to breathe deeply and seems to be a new beginning in every field. But, lack of professional administration in every municipality, the lack of plans, the lack of laws, has caused Pristina to have a complicated and not good development. Exactly architects and urban planning were the challenges to building the city of Pristina through the professionals' plans. Taking into consideration that before the war, for almost 20 years Pristina did not draft any urban plans just because the regime was fired to the Albanian administration. The absence of inspectors made it difficult to control the territory of Pristina from illegal buildings on another site. The new buildings demonstrate the physical transformation that has taken place in Pristina's city after the war.

Keywords:

urban and architecture transformation, rapid transformation, post-war transformation, economic and political transition

# Research as Care, Care as Action: A Southern Ethics for Urban Futures

Jakleen Al-Dalal'a

University College London

This paper proposes care as a foundational ethic and methodology for Southern urban research—one that extends feminist ethics by positioning care as action, commitment, and collective responsibility. In contrast to detached or extractive modes of inquiry, a Southern approach demands sustained engagement, the co-production of knowledge, and ethical accountability to the communities with whom we work. Here, care is not affective sentiment but political labour: it calls the researcher to act, to stay with 'trouble', and to 'make time' for situated, long-term commitments (Puig de la Bellacasa, 2017).

I argue that care becomes an operational ethic of Southern research through three inter-linked practices: acting with and for communities, committing to relational and ongoing co-production, and cultivating horizontal, translocal allyship. These principles are explored through *makāna*, an interstitial initiative in Amman founded during my doctoral research. As a platform for grassroots-led urbanism, *makāna* embodies a methodology of care—bridging activism and research to nurture transformative social, spatial, and epistemic change.

By articulating care as a Southern method, this paper offers a conceptual and practical framework for reimagining urban research as a form of situated intervention—attuned to justice, embedded in relation, and oriented toward collective urban futures.

# Community-led Temporary Intervention of Vacant Spaces: Practices from Bandung, Indonesia

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Citizens have a fundamental right to access public spaces, yet this often remains unrealised in cities that prioritise economic development, resulting in exclusive and inaccessible spaces that deepen spatial inequality. This study examines community-led temporary interventions in Bandung City, Indonesia, where experimental projects have transformed underutilised urban spaces into public amenities. The research explores how these initiatives address urban vacancy issues in the Global South context. Based on three months of qualitative interviews with initiators, communities, and stakeholders, the study reveals that informal actors play crucial roles in engaging residents and facilitating communication between communities and authorities. The findings demonstrate how these interventions have created affordable venues for creative communities and fostered participatory activities through a spirit of solidarity. The research raises important questions about scaling these initiatives: Can this positive community spirit create a broader impact? Is it possible to replicate these activities in different locations? To what extent are these interventions dependent on specific places and actors?

Keywords: vacant spaces, abandoned spaces, community-led, temporary urbanism, temporary use



# **Purplewashing Accessibility: Disability rights, ethical architectural practice and problematising compliance-based accessible design.**

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The World Report on Disability (2011) positions disability discrimination as a human rights issue and identifies the physical environment as having ‘a huge impact on the experience and extent of disability’ - affecting the everyday lives of disabled people and perpetuating disablement, stigmatisation, and discrimination (Imrie 1996; Hendren, 2019; Liebergesell et al. 2021).

This paper uses an interdisciplinary, chronological analysis method to contextualise the development of technical accessible design practice in the UK by mapping compliance standards alongside the emergence of disability rights and equalities legislation. By situating accessible design in the context of the social model of disability and human rights, the paper suggests a need for further research focussing on disabled people’s experiences, and an examination of the professional and ethical responsibilities of the architect.

With compliance-based design practice remaining the conventional approach, underpinned by basic minimum dimensions for spatial access which pre-date disability rights (Goldsmith 1963; Liebermann 2024; Shipley, 2025); isn’t it time we start calling out compliance-based accessibility as poor quality, discriminatory, and disrespectful of the rights of disabled people? And by claiming ‘accessibility’ when designs are in fact merely only minimally compliant, might we (architects) be fundamentally “purplewashing” accessibility, and failing to recognise unethical practice?

# The Urban Enclave: Exploring City Contrasts

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Urban enclaves have become a recurring theme in contemporary discourse, appearing across disciplines and scales—from geopolitical contexts like the Israeli-Palestinian conflict to sociological analyses of gated communities and architectural debates on monofunctional complexes. Despite their diversity, these cases share core characteristics: spatial and social dualities between interior and exterior, autonomy and dependence, exception and integration. Enclaves thus embody the tension between the open and closed city.

This contribution traces evolving perspectives on the urban enclave from the late 1960s to today. Initially seen as urban catalysts due to their exceptional nature, enclaves were later critiqued for fostering fragmentation. By the 2000s, the ideal shifted toward an open, integrated city. More recent approaches highlight the potential of interiority while advocating for permeability and public access.

Key thinkers discussed include Mathias Oswald Ungers, Rem Koolhaas, and Colin Rowe, who view enclaves optimistically as generative fragments. In contrast, Lieven de Cauter, David Grahame Shane, and Richard Sennett argue for openness and integration. Others, like Deljana Iossifova and Mathieu Berger, introduce nuanced terms such as “inclusive enclave” [1] and “borderland urbanism” [2] to describe hybrid forms.

Ultimately, how enclaves are theorized reflects broader understandings of urban contrast, imbalance, and the possibilities of coexistence within the city.

# Field-Driven Urbanization: The Spatial and Social Inequalities of China's Rural Dispossession

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China's pursuit of food security amid global geopolitical uncertainty has driven efforts to expand grain cultivation, part of a broader state-led strategy to counter the decline in food self-sufficiency, which fell from 93.6% to 65.8% between 2000 and 2020. In response, the Food Security Law (2024) and a series of agrarian policies have enforced large-scale land consolidation (farmland merging) and land-use conversion, exacerbating spatial and social inequalities, particularly in the Lower Yangzi River Delta mega-urban region, which accounts for 36% of China's total arable land.

This paper examines these socio-spatial inequalities by analyzing three key consequences of agricultural land expansion: the conversion of subsistence farmlands into state-led grain production zones, the demolition and relocation of villages and the displacement of enterprises as industrial land is repurposed for agriculture.

The findings reveal a novel pattern of field-driven urbanization, where the mechanisms of urban expansion mirror those observed in conventional urban growth but with an inverse objective: rather than replacing farmland with urban fabric, rural settlements and industrial zones are erased to create large-scale agricultural fields.

As displaced rural populations are relocated away from the newly produced agricultural spaces, they face systemic neglect, deepening environmental injustices, and further marginalizing communities within China's rapidly transforming urban environments.

**Keywords:** Field-Driven Urbanization, Rural Dispossession, Land Consolidation, Land-use Conversion, Yangtze River Delta, China.

# **Depletion by dispossession: urban displacements, conjunctural crises of reproduction, and the limits to labour in 21st Century Delhi**

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While urban geographers have long recognised the centrality of gendered labour in the production of space and place-making, only recently has a social reproduction lens been cast on the processes of eviction, gentrification, and revitalisation through which urban landscapes have been incorporated into land-markets and made profitable (Miraf-tab 2016; Brickell and Speer 2020; Sakızlıoğlu 2024). While this paper contributes to this careful work of opening up the “hidden abodes” of urban redevelopment, its objective is to delineate what the concrete gendered effects of urban displacements on working-class women’s household and community labour burdens in particular geo-historical circumstances might contribute to theorisations of contemporary dispossession as an “ongoing” and recursive process.

By navigating the contradictions between institutionalised caste and class-based violence, patriarchal subordination, resilience, and depletion at the heart of the life-histories of four middle-aged working-class women, displaced by informal settlement demolitions and relocations in the Delhi NCR from the early 2000s to the present, I propose the concept of “depletion by dispossession” as a means of incorporating the long-term costs of working-class and oppressed-caste women’s heightened and prolonged burdens of subsistence and reproduction into the temporalities and logics through which contemporary processes of urban dispossession in India is commonly understood.