Urban Europe, Precarious Futures?

A Conference hosted by Coventry University and European Urban and Regional Studies Journal

2nd December 2020

Welcome to the conference

We would like to extend a warm welcome to all today's presenters and conference attendees. The theme of today's conference is *Urban Europe, Precarious Futures?* As rising uncertainties across aspects of economic and social life have increasingly led to growing discussions around the concept of precarity in different parts of urban experiences, our aim was to bring together contributions on urban precarity from a range of perspectives.

When we first developed the conference it was before any of us had heard of Covid-19 or could imagine the ensuing turmoil across cities, regions and countries. We had hoped to be able to welcome you to Coventry, a city which has experienced its fair share of ups and downs over the past century, and which is now gearing-up to be the UK City of Culture in 2021. However, one of the benefits of the conference going virtual has been to expand the accessibility and international reach of the day; with presenters from 13 different countries across three continents.

We were delighted by the response to the call for papers and would like to thank all our presenters for submitting. The conference programme brings together a diversity of perspectives and theoretical, conceptual and empirical insights. We were very excited by the Abstracts we received

and are very much looking forward to hearing more in the paper sessions. Collectively the paper sessions address issues of development, employment, housing and governance.

We would also highlight again to the presenters the European Urban and Regional Studies Journal Special Issue which is linked to the conference theme. We would invite presenters to consider submitting to the Special Issue, which has a deadline of February 5th 2021 (full details appear towards the end of this conference brochure).

We would also like to thank our three keynote speakers. We are very grateful to all three for sticking with us through changing dates and format and for contributing what promise to be fascinating presentations.

Finally, we would like to thank Nick Henry and the European Urban and Regional Studies journal for their support of the conference.

We hope you all have an interesting day.

Jennifer Ferreira, David Jarvis and **Paul Sissons**
(Conference organisers)

A welcome from European Urban and Regional Studies journal
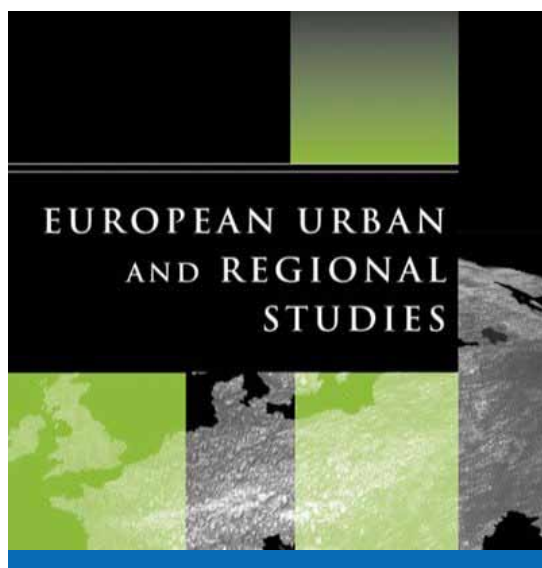
For over 25 years, *European Urban and Regional Studies* (EURS) has published leading-edge multidisciplinary work on European urban and regional development issues. Exploring the ways in which place, space and scale make a difference to the cultural, economic, social, political and environmental map of Europe, EURS highlights the important connections between theoretical analysis and policy development. Published four times a year, including Special Issues and EuroCommentaries as well as its standard articles, European Urban and Regional Studies provides a high impact journal focused on Europe but read across the continents. On behalf of the Editors of EURS I am pleased to welcome colleagues from all over the world to this day conference hosted by Coventry University. The delivery format may have changed but the desire to engage, debate, learn and inspire has never dimmed throughout the ages of (uneven) time-space compression. We wish you a stimulating and enjoyable day.

Nick Henry
Editor-in-Chief,
European Urban and Regional Studies

Conference Programme

All timings are GMT

9:30	**Dr Paul Sissons & Dr David Jarvis**
	Welcome and introduction to the day

9:40	**Prof. Nigel Berkeley**
	Welcome from Coventry University

9:45	**Prof. Nick Henry**
	Welcome from European Urban and Regional Studies

9:50	**Keynote 1: Precarization and the urban spatial contract: Delivering socio-spatial reliance systems in Vienna**
	Prof. Jürgen Essletzbichler
	Institute for Economic Geography and GIScience, Vienna University of Economics and Business

10:40	COMFORT BREAK

10:50	**Parallel Session A: Urban governance and urban futures**
	Breakout Room 1
	Parallel Session B: Labour and livelihoods
	Breakout Room 2

12:10	LUNCH BREAK

13:10	**Keynote 2: Precarious Energy Transitions – Do European Cities Differ? A Comparison of Hamburg and Glasgow**
	Prof. Janette Webb
	Professor of Sociology of Organisations, The University of Edinburgh; co-director of the UK Energy Research Centre

14:00	**Parallel Session C: Urban development, sustainability and resilience**
	Breakout Room 3
	Parallel Session D: Housing and communities
	Breakout Room 4

15:20	COMFORT BREAK

15:30	**Keynote 3: Housing displacement: conceptual issues, and how they unfold in a Swedish town**
	Prof. Guy Baeten
	Director, Institute for Urban Research, University of Malmo

16:20	**Dr Jennifer Ferreira**
	Closing remarks

16:30	Conference finishes

Keynote 1:
Precarization and the urban spatial contract: Delivering socio-spatial reliance systems in Vienna

Prof. Jürgen Essletzbichler

Institute for Economic Geography and GIScience, Vienna University of Economics and Business

ABSTRACT

This presentation examines the relationship between rising precariousness and the provision of urban reliance systems in the context of Vienna. First, the presentation discusses and defines precariousness. Once we define precariousness broadly as insecurity, vulnerability, destabilization and endangerment of the individual's capacity to function, then the counterpart of precarious is protection, political and social immunization against everything that endangers or reduces the capacity of individuals to pursue their subjective goals. Second, the presentation argues that socio-spatial reliance systems are integral components that provide the capacities for humans to act and realize their goals. Because reliance systems are not built from scratch, they come in many forms and shapes. What works in one place may be inadequate in another. Third, because "urban" areas are key sites of delivery of those reliance systems, but the systems are never bounded territorially, it is important to highlight the relational and multi-scalar properties of these "urban" reliance systems. The path-dependent nature of urban reliance systems as well as the limits of urban politics to build, maintain and protect their functional purpose are illustrated through a discussion of housing and mobility systems in Vienna. While municipal socialism, as practiced in Vienna, has been challenged by free market and New Public Management supporters, the relatively successful resistance to handing over large parts of Vienna's reliance systems to the private sector offered some resilience in the city's fight against precarization in the context of a rapidly growing and diversifying urban population.

BIOGRAPHY

Jürgen holds a PhD in Economic Geography from the University of California Los Angeles (UCLA). He is Professor of Economic Geography, the Head of the Institute of Economic Geography and GIScience and the Deputy Head of the Department of SocioEconomics at the Vienna University of Economics and Business where he teaches courses on economic geography, regional uneven development and socio-spatial inequality. His areas of expertise include the evolution of regional innovation and production systems, industrial regional branching processes, urban inequality and the political implications of rising social and regional inequality. Recent research examines the spatial variation of the rise of the populist radical right between and within Austrian municipalities and the link between uneven metropolitan growth, rising income inequality and income segregation in the United States.

Keynote 2:
Precarious Energy Transitions –
Do European Cities Differ?
A Comparison of Hamburg and Glasgow

Prof. Janette Webb

Professor of Sociology of Organisations, The University of Edinburgh; co-director of the UK Energy Research Centre

ABSTRACT

Are clean energy developments more precarious in some European cities than others, and if so, how might this be explained? This paper explores the interactions between governance institutions and legacy infrastructures in Germany and Britain, and the differential clean energy initiatives in Glasgow and Hamburg. It draws on civil society theories, new institutionalism, and actor network theory.

Case studies are derived from a larger comparative research project on European heat and energy efficiency policy and practice. The rationale for the focus on heat is not only the scale of energy used for heating buildings and water, but also the fact that heating systems are built into the urban fabric, creating densely interlocking technical and social infrastructures. 'In principle' commitments to clean heating in both Germany and UK therefore pose considerable practical challenges for policy makers, businesses and publics. Urban governments are often expected to be critical intermediaries in resolving conflicts and assembling routes to innovation, but progress has been patchy, even when the differential powers of European urban governments are taken into account. One potential explanatory factor which has had less attention is the capacity of civil society actors to organise institutional change.

Civil society energy initiatives in Hamburg and Glasgow have differed significantly. Campaigns in Hamburg have resulted in radical change in ownership and control of the city's energy grids, and planning for heat decarbonisation. The citizens' initiative sought a mandate not only for municipal buy-back of the privatised gas, electricity and heat networks, but also for democratic control to enable government and citizens to act directly on development of clean energy. In Glasgow, community-led energy systems' initiatives have remained small scale; civil society campaigns have mainly focused on policy change to ameliorate fuel poverty. How can this difference in formation of civil society actors challenging energy systems' ownership and economics be explained? At least part of the answer stems from the interactions between civil society and the different urban governance institutions, and associated energy markets, of Germany and Britain. But the materiality of energy infrastructures in the two cities also shaped the particular formation of civil society actors, and their scope for transformative initiatives. The implications for the differential precariousness of urban energy transitions are considered.

BIOGRAPHY

Janette Webb is Edinburgh University Professor of Sociology of Organisations, Co-Director of the UK Energy Research Centre, and member of the Scottish Science Advisory Council and UK Research and Innovation (UKRI) Energy Scientific Advisory Committee.

Her research concerns social studies of energy and climate change. With funding from UK Research and Innovation, she is studying comparative European heat and energy efficiency governance, and local and regional energy systems. Further work is evaluating the Energy Efficient Scotland Pilots. The research is used in 2017 Scottish Government Energy Strategy Consultations and 2018 UK Government Clean Growth: Transforming Heating.

She was awarded an MBE for services to the energy transition in the Queen's Birthday Honours List 2020. She is a Fellow of the Energy Institute and member of Scottish Power Energy Networks Customer Engagement Group. Her research contributes to policy: she served as a commissioner for the Infrastructure Commission for Scotland; and has advised Scottish Government on Fuel Poverty, Low Carbon Infrastructure and the Climate Change Plan. She is a member of UK Government BEIS research evaluation group, and Adviser to the UKRI Industrial Strategy Challenge Prospering from the Energy Revolution. She chaired the UK Committee on Climate Change 2016 Advisory Group on Energy Efficiency and Heat. She was a Non-Executive Director, and Sustainability Lead, NHS Health Scotland 2003-11 and a founder member of NHS Scotland Public Health and Sustainability Network.

Keynote 3:
Housing displacement: conceptual issues, and how they unfold in a Swedish town

Prof. Guy Baeten
Director, Institute for Urban Research, University of Malmo

ABSTRACT

This presentation seeks to highlight how housing injustice finds its prime expression in the act of displacement. Following the work of Marcuse, amongst others, we argue that housing displacement needs to take a much more central place in our understanding of urban injustices. We need to reveal how housing displacement processes mutate into new forms and are more diverse than have been acknowledged thus far in the literature. We need to think beyond the existent gentrification literature to understand the reasons and consequences of housing displacement. Through giving primacy to studying displacement we can, first, put more focus on gentrification's unjust nature. Second, we can highlight unjust housing policies in cities and neighbourhoods that are simply not undergoing gentrification. Third, the dominance of Anglo-American experiences of housing displacement leaves our conceptual apparatus unequipped to capture, contextualise and compare the contemporary varieties and complexities of housing displacement. These points will be illustrated with ongoing processes of housing discrimination in the Swedish town of Landskrona.

BIOGRAPHY

Guy Baeten is Professor of Urban Studies at Malmö University and is the Director of the newly established Institute for Urban Research. He has previously worked at the universities of Lund, Oxford, Leuven and Strathclyde. Guy Baeten is interested in urban development projects and urban sustainability. He is the principal investigator of the FORMAS Strong Research Environment CRUSH – Critical Urban Sustainability Hub. He is involved in two research projects on smart cities with case studies in Toronto, Copenhagen, Stockholm and Antwerp that are running between 2018 and 2020. Guy Baeten recently co-edited the book Housing Displacement: Conceptual and Methodological Issues (Routledge, 2020).

Image: Landskrona, Sweden. (Dguendel via Wikimedia Commons)

Parallel Session Abstracts
Parallel Session A: Urban governance and urban futures

Governance scenarios for European spatial planning post-2020

Prof. Stefanie Dühr
(University of South Australia)

The member states of the European Union have been cooperating since the 1980s in the field of spatial development in pursuit of more balanced development. Non-binding spatial policy strategies such as the 'European Spatial Development Perspective' (ESDP, 1999) and the 'Territorial Agenda for the EU' (2007, 2011) have been outcomes of this cooperation. They were expected to achieve policy coordination across sectors, government levels, and administrative boundaries and thereby contribute to sustainable development. However, the application of these strategies and their relevance for spatial planning in the different member states has been variable. Moreover, the relevance of these documents and their underlying reasoning for pursuing a spatial planning approach and better policy coordination have yet to be embraced by actors groups beyond those directly involved in planning at different scales.

Within the context of an EU currently faced by numerous political challenges and a weakening of strategic spatial planning in most member states over recent years, the EU's objective of territorial cohesion appears ever more relevant while at the same time increasingly difficult to achieve. This raises questions over how intergovernmental cooperation on European spatial planning and territorial cooperation can be taken forward, and how intergovernmental planning cooperation can acquire greater relevance in policy- and decision-making at different scales in the context of considerable uncertainty.

This paper draws on a project completed in 2019, which was undertaken in preparation for the German EU Presidency in 2020, during which the adoption of a follow-up strategy to the Territorial Agenda by the ministers for spatial planning of the member states is envisaged. Using the concept of precarity, the focus of analysis is on the governance arrangements which may offer greatest potential for embedding a territorial dimension in EU and national policies and to more effectively engage with actors across sectors and across scales in a long-term processes characterised by considerable uncertainties. The research methods included desk study analysis and an expert workshop, during which questions of potentials and challenges of different governance scenarios were debated and the future paths for European cooperation on spatial development were assessed.

On the basis of the project analysis, three such governance scenarios and their potentials and challenges are discussed in this paper: a stronger embedding of territorial cohesion within EU Cohesion Policy; ensuring more effectiveness of intergovernmental cooperation on spatial planning and a better application of the Territorial Agenda; and strengthening the territorial dimension of spatially-relevant EU sector policies, including environmental policy. The paper concludes with a discussion on how the emerging 'Territorial Agenda 2020+' might best be applied and the roles of urban and regional actors within this European spatial planning process to ensure more effective spatial coordination across different scales and policy sectors.

The fiscal crisis of urban government – desperation and collaboration and then came COVID

Prof. David Byrne
(Durham University)

In a context in which general austerity, the implications of climate crisis, the impact of COVID-19, and increasing general inequality and polarization all combine, urban local governments face a crisis in funding services. This is particularly acute in the UK including the devolved nations but worst in England. There has been a radical reduction in the amount of central funding allocated to English local government and a modification of the funding formulae which has had a severe impact on post-industrial city region authorities. This has coincided with massive cuts where local authorities have born the brunt of austerity with their spending power reduced by about 30% since 2010-11. English local government which as recently as 2010-11 received 64% of funding for expenditure from Central Government by 2018-19 received 31% of their funding from government grants, 52% from council tax, and 17% from retained business rates – revenue from business rates that they do not send to the Treasury. Council Tax is highly regressive as in England the outdated valuations of properties are capped at £320,000. The occupiers of a multi million pound mansion will pay just three times more in council tax than somebody who lives in a bedsit in the lowest band. Council tax is paid by the occupant of the dwelling so tenants pay. Given the considerable boost to the real incomes of owner occupiers from the imputed rents on their own dwelling this considerably increases household inequality in and off itself.

This distributional issue is important but even more important is the way that the fiscal crisis – the need to acquire revenue to meet service demands – has influenced the behaviour of elected local authorities working in very close collaboration with a range of other governance agencies but in particular Local Economic Partnerships (LEPs), a crucial and powerful part of the new magistracy. The language of policy focuses on regeneration which means in practice real estate developments in all of housing, office space,

retail (although there are real problems for core urban retail), and the hospitality sector. There is always reference to the creation of employment but much of the employment created, particularly in the hospitality sector, is poorly paid with weak contracts. This sector is an important employer of young adult entrants into the labour force. Essentially local authorities in these areas, which typically in England are controlled by the Labour Party, commit to development plans which give real estate capital whatever real estate capital wants. In a previous period this was achieved by taking planning control away from elected local authorities and giving it, along with an enormous amount of publicly owned land, to Urban Development Corporations which facilitated what was called 'catalytic growth' and were significant drivers of deindustrialization. The collaboration of the nominally social democratic Labour administrations in these processes now is one factor in the disillusionment of traditional working class groups with that party and an important factor in the political instability of contemporary England.

And then came COVID-19, managed in England primarily though lock down strategies which have had a particular impact on the hospitality sector which pays 13% of British business rates whilst generating just 2.5 % of value added although the sector employs nearly 10% of all British workers and an even higher proportion of workers under the age of 25. COVID is hitting local authority locally raised revenues both through its impact on businesses and on the incomes of householders. Businesses in some sectors have been given a business rates holiday for the Financial Year 2020-21. Central Government has released £4.3 Billion to support local authorities which will provide temporary and ongoing relief and fund services. However, the longer term remains very uncertain. At the same time the Conservative government has adopted what Klein calls a 'disaster capitalism' orientation and has handed key functions in relation to track and trace to private sector providers rather than the existing public health functions of local authorities. The way in which local authorities have reacted against high levels of closure in hospitality reflects their reliance on this sector both for revenue and for employment.

This presentation will explore how these issues have worked out across the NE of England in the Greater Tyneside Area – population 1.9 million – which is an extreme example of deindustrialization and historically a stronghold of socialist politics.

Ethnography (and/of) precarious urban futures: exploring urban precarity through co-productive and creative techniques of futuring

Dr Paul Raven (Lund University)

Precarity has become a term of prevalence across a number of different disciplines, as well as in more everyday discourses. In terms of futures, urban or otherwise, it reflects a growing sense of uncertainty regarding outcomes and circumstances at a variety of scales, from the personal (housing precarity, employment precarity) to the systemic (climate precarity, public health precarity, macroeconomic precarity). While all of these precarities, and the study devoted to them, are doubtless well intended (not to mention necessary), there is nonetheless more than a hint of essentialism about them: precarity is presented as a category into which lives can be sorted, as opposed to a phenomenon of the context in which particular lives may or may not unfold.

This problem is compounded by the top-down perspective of the techniques of futuring which currently dominate academic, governmental and practitioner approaches, to precarity or otherwise: statistical models and foresight scenarios alike look down into the city from above, and reinforce the notion that "the future" (of the urban or elsewhere) is as much subject to managerialism and elite capture as the present.

A potential counter to this "god-trick" futuring (Haraway, 1988) can be found in the political-economic ethnographies of Anna Tsing; in The Mushroom at the End of the World, Tsing (2015) offers an understanding of precarity not as a category or a quantity, but rather as a condition of life which has been always-already present for significant (and growing) numbers of people the world over – not as an irruption or a transition, but as a baseline fact of existence. As such, Tsing suggests that the study of precarious existence, rather than being something we hope to "cure" or even just "address", should be instead where we – the precariously as-yet-not-precarious – might turn for lessons in how to live in the self-propagating ruins of "salvage capitalism".

Tsing's work is embedded in its situated present – a present which is now our recent past, an arguably less precarious pre-pandemic past – but it nonetheless contains the hyphae of a new approach to thinking futurity, precarious or otherwise: what might a political-economic ethnography of a future look like? If the majority of imaginable futures are imagined to be (more) precarious, then exploring precarity in the context of situated futures, in co-production with those for whom precarity is a (if not the) fact of their past and present, would surely provide something to add to (and perhaps critique) the proliferating sheaf of top-down perspectives upon urban precarity-futurity.

But how to explore these futures? How to speculate on precarity in co-production with those who know it best? A new project hosted at Lund University (and funded through the Marie Skłodowska-Curie postdoctoral fellowship scheme, as well as by the Swedish research council FORMAS) will draw upon leading research on novel and (co-creative) techniques of futuring (see Hajer & Pelzer 2018) particularly suited to the urban context, as well as on techniques from transitions design (Wangel et al. 2019) and narrative prototyping (Raven 2017) as applied to sociotechnical transitions for decarbonisation (REINVENT Syndicate, n.d.), and use them as the basis of a work of co-productive future ethnography with people living in Skåne, the southernmost county of Sweden.

This paper will explore the potential connections between Tsing's ethnography of life in capitalist ruins and the possibilities of community-led techniques of futuring with an emphasis on creativity, imagination and play, as well as discussing the communicative affordances presented by fictional appropriations ostensibly non-fictional narrative forms for the production and presentation of such work.

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Out of the ordinary, or magnifying it? Precarious governance in Stockholm and London after the riots

Dr Anthony Ince (Cardiff University), **Dr Ilda Lindell,** and **Dr Thomas Borén**

This paper presents a comparative study of urban governance in the aftermath of disruptive events, specifically the riots that erupted in London (2011) and Stockholm (2013). Of particular interest is how institutional relations, contexts and structures shaped urban governance actors' ability to address and respond to what they perceived to be the underlying causes of the riots. Existing research has studied the causes and immediate impacts of riots on cities, but rarely engaged with the everyday practices, opportunity structures and power relations at neighbourhood and district scales in the longer term.

The paper draws on interviews with local policymakers, urban planners, local activists and community groups, alongside policy analysis in each city. While some studies following the riots have focused on the production of order through governmental discourses and policing practices (e.g. Morrell et al., 2020), scholars are yet to investigate in depth the longer-term institutional dynamics in either city in the years that followed. However, since policy agendas are increasingly recognised as shaped partly by affective impulses and desires (e.g. Borén et al., 2020), it is crucial that any study of

how policymakers and their bureaucracies respond to traumatic events takes account of the emotional resonances and implications of those events. Bringing together literatures concerning geographies of the event (Cloke et al., 2017), urban trauma (Pain, 2019), and the institutional relations and dynamics of the state and its subjects (Harney, 2002; Lindell et al., 2019), the paper triangulates between events, affects, and institutional patterns within local governance actors. This approach allows us to focus in on the diverse factors that produce precariousness in urban governance following materially and emotionally disruptive events such as riots.

The specific circumstances that triggered both riots were very similar, whereas the different forms and levels of neoliberalisation and austerity produced distinct contexts for the riots and their responses. A number of commonalities and contrasts are therefore identified in the empirical material.

In London, the specificities of place and local political cultures diverged sharply between the two case study areas, leading to very different policy priorities and outcomes. Moreover, the emergence of 'austerity urbanism' in London was enacted and experienced between different local government departments unevenly in both form and depth, and this unevenness was reflected in post-riot capabilities and priorities. Outsourcing of public services to charities and community organisations added instability to this already precarious governance landscape by introducing a range of underfunded and often volunteer-run organisations that often were not prepared for, or supported in, such roles. Council bureaucracies, in turn, became torn between active support, and dismissal, of these groups' efforts,

often differing between individuals within those bureaucracies. Short-term project funding related to post-riot reconstruction was at times withheld by councils, mismanaged, or misdirected due to single-issue project-based funding structures, further compounding the already emotionally-charged post-riot environment and leading to increased distrust in local and national political institutions.

While Stockholm experienced far less stringent austerity measures than London following the 2008 financial crisis, the case study neighbourhoods experienced similarly fragmented and 'projectised' logics of governance, emphasising short-termism and lacking useful lateral connections between local government departments. Tensions both 'vertically' (between different scales of government) and 'horizontally' (between different urban districts) created an environment where necessary improvements (e.g. to schools or infrastructure) faced substantial institutional inertia. Real or perceived state withdrawal or inaction in riot-affected communities therefore exaggerated pre-existing lack of trust in the state, and in some areas even led to the emergence of politically ambiguous forms of informal self-governance.

Overall, while the state is itself inherently precarious in many ways, different forms and frontiers of already-existing precariousness are magnified when traumatic events disrupt the routinised practices of the 'ordinary'. In this regard, the paper highlights four key dimensions that help to explain the production and dynamics of precariousness in urban governance following the riots. First, the 'peopling' of institutions as patterns of human relations; second, inter- and intra-scalar institutional dynamics; third, the temporalities of institutional (in)action; and fourth, the complex and contested boundaries between the state and its subjects.

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Parallel Session B: Labour and livelihoods

Precarious self-employment in European urban areas

Dr Darja Reuschke
(University of Southampton)

Dr Mary Zhang (University of Bristol)

Independent workers have attracted much attention in different literatures because of their growth in the workforce in many countries and their 'nonstandard' or 'atypical' working conditions (Kalleberg, 2011). The umbrella term 'independent workers' include the self-employed/sole traders who work on their own account, freelancers (the professional self-employed) and sub-contractors who have frequently been regarded as being at risk of precarious working and living conditions because of their insecure earnings and a lack of employment protection rights. The precarity in available work and income and the individualization of self-employed work together are often associated with self-exploitation as highlighted in sociology and cultural studies (Petriglieri et al., 2018; Harvey *et al.*, 2017; Ross, 2008; Gill and Pratt, 2008). Most recent urban literature has linked the precarity of freelancers with urban labour markets, most visibly through the growth in coworking spaces (Merkel, 2019). Self-employment itself is driving greater flexibility in work location in urban areas (Burchell, Reuschke and Zhang, 2020). However, while existing studies have provided evidence of the growth of the self-employed/freelancer workforce and some of its characteristics at national level (Kalleberg, 2011; Allmendinger et al., 2013), little is known

about precarious self-employment and freelancing in the urban landscape. Who are the self-employed or freelancers in urban areas at risk of precarious working and living conditions? Is the risk of precarious self-employment and freelancers influenced by country/welfare state contexts?

This paper seeks to provide answers to these questions using the European Working Conditions Survey 2015 and the Eurofound COVID-19 Survey 2020. The literature suggests that an increasing proportion of the self-employed are 'reluctant' sole-traders or own-account workers, who have been discouraged by an inability to find well-paid, secure and satisfying employment opportunities in the labour market, or have found themselves pressured to work as freelancer or independent contractor due to the flexibilisation strategies of employers or the growth of 'gig' working. Some studies highlight that 'bogus' self-employment has grown, particularly in Europe, where the self-employed are not truly independent workers but rather 'dependent' on the demand of one client/firm. This latter form of 'precarious' self-employment seems to be predominantly male as it appears to be common in the construction sector (Ales and Faioli, 2010; Böheim and Mühlberger, 2006).

Reluctant self-employment/freelancing is defined in this empirical study as having no alternative for work. Dependent self-employment/freelancing is defined by having only one client. Both forms of precarious self-employment and freelancing are investigated for urban areas in the EU28 plus Norway and Switzerland. We add to this analysis of precarious self-employment in the COVID-19 crisis. Here, we examine the perceived job insecurity of the self-employed. In multi-variate models that predict the risk of being reluctant or dependent self-employed (2015) or at risk of job loss (2020), the influence of the industry sector, educational/skills level, gender, age and European regions/welfare system regions are analysed.

One key finding that emerges from preliminary analysis is that in European urban areas women are at greater risk than men to be in precarious self-employment. This is a new finding since previous research in this area has rather highlighted the precarious situation of men (in the construction sector). This is highly relevant and requires attention from researchers and policy makers as one might anticipate that the 'reluctant' or 'dependent' self-employed are more likely to be at risk from employment retrenchment strategies by large organizations amplified by the current COVID-19 pandemic.

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Fair work in the foundational economy: prospects and policies for less precarious working lives in cities and regions

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In 2019 the employment rate for Great Britain rose to a historical high, with nearly 76 per cent of 16-64 year olds in work. However, this national rate disguised persistent urban and regional inequalities in employment across cities and regions, with some of the largest urban areas and some surrounding cities and towns seeing lower employment rates, especially amongst those with no qualifications and in some ethnic groups – including people of Pakistani and Bangladeshi groups. Nevertheless, most local areas shared in the general rise in employment rates following the Global Financial Crisis (GFC), albeit recovery to pre-recession levels took longer in areas which had previously suffered greater labour market disadvantage.

With the increase in employment rates, there was a shift in emphasis of policymaking away from the quantity of employment, which was a primary focus in the GFC, to the quality of work. This reflected ongoing concerns about weak productivity growth, employment insecurity and precarity, in-work poverty, the impact of technological change on the experience of work, skills polarisation and persistent skills shortages and labour shortages in some occupations, sectors and local areas. Some elements of employment precarity are more pronounced in cities; for example, the gig economy tended to develop initially in urban areas. More generally employment polarisation tends to be starkest in major urban areas. From a policy perspective, the Taylor Review of Modern Working Practices added impetus to debates on 'Good Work'. Dimensions of 'Good Work' highlighted in this review included wages, job design, education

and training, precarious working conditions, work-life balance and collective participation and representation.

In 2020 the Covid-19 crisis has led to renewed concerns about the quantity of employment in the context of the closure of sectors of the economy during lockdown, furloughing and redundancies, it has also re-energised debates about the quality of work – including amongst workers whose employment relationships and working patterns meant they were excluded from government support schemes. However, in the initial lockdown phase there was a particular focus on low-paid workers in sectors on the frontline of the Covid-19 crisis, such as in social care and in supermarkets, some of whom are engaged on zero hours/ low hours contracts – even if they regularly work longer hours.

As attention turns to economic recovery, a desire to 'build back better', to have 'more and better jobs', to 'level up' and to see 'inclusive growth' across and within cities and regions, the concepts of 'Fair Work' and the Foundational Economy (FE) have generated increasing interest as a way of thinking differently about employment and economic, regional and local development. Fair work encompasses just reward in terms of pay and benefits, employment security, legal rights being respected, a safe and inclusive work environment and opportunities for progression at work. The FE focuses on a heterogeneous collection of goods and services, which together constitute the social and material infrastructure of civilised life, that have taken centre stage in the Covid-19 crisis.

Fair work and the FE is gaining support from policymakers at national, regional and local levels. This is notable particularly in the devolved nations of Scotland and Wales, but is also evident in some of the large metropolitan Combined Authorities in England where discussions about the soft regulation of employment standards have been taken forward and issues of employment quality have been included in regional monitoring. One area where fair work has attracted attention is around the potential for improving job quality in the FE sectors of the

economy that have historically been largely ignored by economic development policy and industrial strategy; sectors which are often typified by precarity and comparatively low pay. While the FE is often considered to be geographically ubiquitous, it remains the case that some local areas are disproportionately dependent on the FE overall.

This paper presents a detailed analysis of job quality in the FE by deriving novel estimates from large secondary datasets, including at regional level. The analysis demonstrates the heterogeneous nature of job quality in the FE, and the different challenges faced by particular sectors – notably social care and retailing. The paper also draws on an evidence review of policy mechanisms for improving job quality in the FE, at UK, regional, local, firm and workplace levels, to examine policies and prospects for less precarious working lives in cities and regions. It assesses whether and how fair work in the FE can play a role in economic recovery strategies. It highlights a role for public policy measures, such as minimum wage legislation, 'good employment' pathway interventions, learning and skills policies, business-/sector-focused initiatives, procurement policies and place-based policies (including employment charters and living wage places, whether at city, town or borough scale). At business level it looks at possibilities for strengthening management, improving job design and in-work progression. From a strategic perspective it focuses on prospects for a focus on the role of job quality and the FE in economic recovery strategies. Finally it assesses what policy levers are available at different geographical scales to tackle precarious working lives in cities and regions.

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

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The last decade has been characterised by periods of economic uncertainty, resulting mainly from the Global Financial Crisis of 2008. However, the impact of the recent Covid-19 pandemic on the economy, jobs and social security has been unprecedented. In addition, enormous changes happened to working and social interactions: due to the strict social distancing policies people have been forced to suddenly change their working patterns, with a severe impact on their working conditions and work-life balance. With enforced venues' closures, events cancellations and social distancing, cultural and creative industries (CCIs) are among the sectors which have been suffering the most from the economic and social consequences of the pandemic, resulting in deep worsening of the already precarious conditions of their workers. The concentration of CCIs production and retail or consumption outlets in major cities and global cities has further concentrated this negative impact. In this sense, the Covid-19 crisis has clearly exacerbated some of the existing fragilities of the sector, widely acknowledged in academic literature (de Peuter, 2011 Morgan & Nelligan, 2018, Comunian & England 2020).The issue seems not to have borders: everywhere in the world creative and cultural workers (CCW) have been deeply impacted by the crisis, as acknowledged by many reports issued internationally in the period March – September 2020. A key example is the ICOM study addressed to museum professionals globally, according to which 16,1% of the respondents have been temporarily laid off, and 22,6% have not had their contracts renewed. This highlights the fragility of the sector, relying on freelance work, with 56,4% of the respondents stating that they will have to suspend the payment of their own salary as a result of the crisis. CCW precariousness may consistently vary when looking at specific cities or regions. In this context, since March 2020, several surveys and research projects have been launched focusing on the main cultural hubs and countries, highlighting an overall severe situation (Germany, France, UK).In Italy surveys have been conducted on a national scale highlighting the precarity of cultural work under Covid-19 restrictions. According to a recent report (Mi riconosci sono un professionista dei beni culturali, 2020), 79% of the respondents registered a decrease in their incomes due to the pandemic. Furthermore, 78% saw the measures provided by the Government to support CCW as inadequate. With €25,4 billion of added value generated and approximately 365.000 workers (respectively 26% and 24% of the nation's total), CCIs in Italy are driven by the Lombardy region, thanks to the primary role of the city of Milan, contributing for 63% of the added value of the region and 56% of the employment (Symbola, 2019). At the same time, the area has sadly played a primary role in the Covid-19 pandemic, having represented the Italian region most affected by the virus. This study, based on both a quantitative (survey) and a qualitative (interviews) approach, details the impact of Covid-19 and related restrictive measures on CCW operating in Milan and the Lombardy area. As precarity is not only an economic issue, the research also investigates the psychological, social and personal impact, together with the most relevant current issues as new working patterns and modes and the role of digital and connectivity. In order to provide a fair representation of the sector, the study considers different categories of workers as employees of public and private institutions/companies, freelancers, professionals and entrepreneurs and different careers stages, gender, and creative and cultural disciplines. Given that precarity of CCW seems to gain attention only in moments of crisis (Comunian and Conor (2017)), the research aims to also reflect on the future of creative and cultural workers in European cities and the social securities and infrastructure necessary to allow CCW to continue to flourish in the future.

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Abandoned by all: systemic failures and the precarity of living in Spain

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I [have] visited areas I suspect many Spaniards would not recognize as a part of their country. A shantytown with far worse conditions than a refugee camp, without running water, electricity, or sanitation, where migrant workers have lived for years without any improvement in their situation. Neighborhoods of concentrated poverty where families raise children with a dearth of state services, health clinics, employment centers, security, paved roads or even legal electricity.

Philip Aston, on his visit to Spain in January and February 2020. (Alston 2020)

On January 2020, Philip Aston, the United Nations Special Rapporteur on extreme poverty and human rights visited Spain to assess the social context and poverty levels in the country. Over the course of 12 days, Aston travelled across the country and met with representatives from civil society, NGOs and local, regional and National Government. Aston also talked to people who had lost their jobs; to migrant working living in informal settlements working in the agricultural fields of Southern Spain, or to the Roma communities living in the fringes of cities.

In a press conference at the end of his visit – and the subsequent report submitted to the UN Human Rights Council later in the year (HRC 2020) – Alston presented a picture of Spain far from the prosperous and friendly image we have grown accustomed to on print and tv adds, that of a country of warm weather and nice beaches. Instead, the Special Rapporteur described a very different reality characterised by high unemployment rates, social exclusion, widespread poverty, alarmingly high school dropout rates and a deep housing crisis (Alston 2020). In what one could argue was perhaps a premonitory visit, Alston's report laid out some of the existing structural urban problems that the COVID-19 crisis would only exacerbate in the following months. Above all, as Aston put, "The word I heard most frequently over the past two weeks is 'abandoned,'" (*idem)*. Abandoned by an economy that has privileged a few while leaving many others behind; abandoned by the lack of public and affordable housing that has led to many families to live in precarious conditions (2.5% social housing of the entire market) ; abandoned by the lack of stable and secure employments due to the precarity of labour markets (13.78% unemployment rate, twice that of the EU average – pre-Covid-19 levels).

Although the visit of the Special Rapporteur to Spain was widely covered by the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) and the local and international media (Alfageme 2020; Jones 2020), the conclusions presented by Alston at the end of his visit and the subsequent report – perhaps unsurprisingly – hardly had any echo amid the political class. Using as a point of departure some of the recent debates on policy failures (Davidson 2019; Temenos and Lauermann 2020) this paper looks at the context of Spanish politics over the past 20 years to explain some of the chronic systemic failures that have led to the precarious social context in which the country is immersed today – including many of its cities – and which the Covid-19 crisis has aggravated even more. I argue that one of the main reasons behind these failures lies not only on the implementation of austerity measures derived from subsequent economic crisis but also by the inefficient and dysfunctional decentralized Spanish political system, which has resulted in a heavily bureaucratic apparatus at local, regional and national levels, with a duplicity of functions and an enduring severe lack of transparency and accountability.

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Parallel Session C: Urban development, sustainability and resilience

'The City is (Not) for Sale': The Creative Precariat and the Critique of Urban Development

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Contemporary urban policymaking is permeated by a competitive ethos of selling and marketing places. In order to attract funds and amass collective symbolic capital, the irregular and uneven labour conditions of local artists and cultural producers are instrumentalized by policymakers in the unfolding of inter-city rivalries. I argue that the 'creative precariat' unfolds as one of the contradictions intrinsic to policies and practices of urban competitiveness. As tourism, promotion, and urban spectacle instrumentalizes already precarious cultural producers and (re)produces precarization, it also (re)creates the 'creative precariat' in the mirror image of the much desired 'creative class'. Cultural producers – positioned in the flux of the increasing valorisation and instrumentalization of their precarity for urban development policies – encounter discrepancies that can offer insights and enable them to practice critical politics. As such, the '(creative) precariat' is not a sociological category but a political category used to describe political mobilisation of the 'precariat of urban spectacles' and its utopian potentialities.

In order to discuss the 'creative precariat' as both condition and political mobilisation, I will look at the urban mobilisations which took place in the Spanish cities of Burgos, Córdoba, Donostia-San Sebastián and Málaga against the European Capital of Culture 2016 Title. Although these struggles had their own local specificities and were not part of a coherent movement, they arose from the common, embodied experience of precarious artists and cultural producers.

Firstly, I will discuss these urban struggles and the emergence of a 'creative precariat' as condition and as political mobilisation vis-à-vis urban development policies. Secondly, I will discuss the imaginaries and socio-spatial practices of these mobilisations. Lastly, the paper will interrogate the relations between these mobilisations within/with structures of power: how the creative precariat partially resisted co-optation and the ways their critiques of urban development were also instrumentalized and appropriated, becoming sources of innovation and imagination for the over-saturated field of urban branding. Even though small and 'ineffective', even though some are co-opted, appropriated, and translated, the creative precariat and their critique undermined ideologies of harmony and pointed towards openings and cracks in the pursuit of urban development.

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The effect of industry interconnectedness on German economic growth and resilience during the 2007-09 global financial crisis

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Many of today's pressing social, economic, and ecological issues are focused in cities. They are epicenters of pollution, crime, inequality, and health problems. Yet cities are also engines of creativity. They are the global drivers of innovation and productivity that fuel the global economy and the emergence of new technologies. Being the focal point of so many social, ecological, and economic forces makes the management of cities incredibly difficult. This complexity of urban systems has often been an obstacle to understanding and guiding cities and has resulted in policy interventions that have unintended and sometimes negative consequences.

Fortunately, complexity science has begun to mature to the point that it is enabling researchers to move beyond lingering obstacles to a fundamental understanding of urban systems. Here we adopt the framework that cities are complex adaptive systems, which exhibit the ubiquitous feature of internal networks of interdependent components. As the internal connectedness of those networks increases, it can enable information and resources to move more rapidly and efficiently within a region. Yet, higher connectedness also increases the

speed and efficiency at which the effects of shocks cascade through the system. In this study we focus on urban networks of interdependent economic components and how their structures relate to a region's vulnerability to shocks. We do this using a metric of economic connectedness, known as tightness, which has previously only been analyzed in U.S. metropolitan areas. This metric attempts to capture and quantify the ambiguous notion of a region's degree of internal connectedness or integration relative to other regions. Using industry employment data, we calculate the economic tightness of 141 German labor market regions at the onset of the 2007-2009 global recession. We then compare that metric to each region's economic performance during both the shock (2007-2009) and the subsequent recovery (2009-2011). While U.S. labor market data covers only urbanized areas, German labor market data includes both urban and rural areas, allowing us to evaluate the metric's robustness to different national systems. Using per worker GDP as a measure of economic performance, we find that tightness is negatively correlated with changes in economic performance during the shock but positively correlated with performance during recovery. In other words, regions with tighter economies suffered more severely during a shock but had larger growth rates in the absence of a shock. This supports the notion that economic interdependence can make regions more economically productive but also more precarious. Thus, regional economic planners must navigate a tradeoff between being more productive or being more vulnerable to the next economic shock. However, it also highlights a tantalizing area of research for regional science – to identify those industries, occupations, and skill sets that may simultaneously enhance both economic health and resilience. Such planning capabilities are critical in an increasingly dynamic world where regions must navigate frequent shocks, such as the ongoing COVID pandemic, national transitions in energy production, sudden changes in trade arrangements, natural disasters, etc.

Prospects for success in the newly (still) born towns of Romania

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Three-quarters of the European population live in urban areas, commonly regarded as core hubs for the promotion of territorial cohesion and economic growth (Cotella 2019) – but only about 40% live in large cities (European Union, 2016). Scholarly emphasis on the European metropolis (Demazière 2017) epitomized by case studies such as London, Paris, Berlin and more recently Prague, Budapest, Warsaw, Riga, Sofia, has neglected the more humble urban environments of towns in which millions of people live. This emphasis on big cities has overshadowed long standing questions of what is 'the urban' and overlooked country specificities, and urban hierarchies and the diversity of urban life within countries.

Indeed countries differ in their historic urbanization trajectories and current urbanization rates as they differ in what is understood to be urban and the prerequisite of urban life. In Central and Eastern Europe (CEE), the accession to EU has driven a new wave of urbanization, resulting in the creation of more than 450 new towns across the region. We focus our attention to this category of new towns in one of the least urbanized countries in the EU, Romania, and revisit the rural-urban continuum by examining the 60 new, (still)born towns ratified after 2000.

It is interesting to note that communist cities and towns constituted tantalising economic and cultural poles of attraction – with access being politically controlled, often closed (via a system a residential permits similar to the China's Hukou). While one may have expected the urbanization rate to explode with the new freedoms brought by regime change, this was clearly not the case. It took more than a decade until the symbolic prestige of the urban was mobilized

in the political discourse, resulting in the declaration of the 60 new towns based on local referenda. But about a decade later, the local communities of a growing number of these towns have expressed through referenda the will to return to rural status. Under these circumstances, it is timely and legitimate to raise the question: what is the prospect for socioeconomic success in the newly declared towns of Romania and how can we adequately measure it?

To answer our questions, we first position the new and old small towns (as well as all rural and all urban) along an axis of socioeconomic precarity/ development by calculating an index at the micro-scale of the place (LAU2) by means of aggregating a number of variables on housing conditions, social services provision, population change and vitality, labour market and social exclusion, and local economy. We call this Socio-Economic Development Index (SEDI, see Popescu et al forthcoming; analysis completed). This allows us to observe that the socioeconomic profiles of the new towns gravitate towards rural precarity except for the seven located in the metropolitan area of Bucharest. Second and in order to delineate conditions for successful development (analysis in progress), we perform logistic regression with SEDI as dependent variable to interrogate the statistical relevance of regional location (core/non-core region), relational connectivity (distance from county capital), population size and urban history (towns' age period). Turning the attention to a grossly understudied area of urban research (for exceptions see de Souza 2018, Ward 2015), the neglected small towns where precarity often accumulates through the displacement of low-income people from increasingly unaffordable cities, our study is relevant beyond the Romanian case or that of similarly less urbanized EU countries.

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Facing urban extinction: Extractivist economies and the residualisation of urbanity in the European South

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With the outbreak in 2020 of the Covid-19 pandemic and its impressively widespread diffusion across the world many commentators have signalled the advent of an irreversible urban crisis particularly affecting densely populated urban areas more exposed to the epidemic. While it is likely that the city as an ever-present societal phenomenon in human history will not come so easily to an end, my paper argues that what is precarised by today's continuing pattern of extractivist capitalism – during and beyond the pandemic – is urbanity, understood as a thick and at the same time permeable social formation. The distinctive feature of urbanity lies in its social thickness, particularly in the varying combination of density and social diversity that characterises the urban experience. This kind of thick but also permeable urbanity is today facing extinction all across the world, due to processes of monetisation that extract an economic value from the entirety of urban life and its socio-spatial forms. The economisation of urban life – that is, the fact that "all events and relationships in the world around us can be assigned a market value" (Vogl, 2015: 79) – ultimately leads to the rarefication of the social density of urban ecosystems. In cities in the South, forms of life that we typically associate with the idea of urbanity have been more persistent in many respects. In urban societies of the South, indeed, gentrification and other commodification processes have been historically less pervasive compared to those experienced by urban communities in the global North. In Southern Europe, for instance, urban young households are less inclined to pursue residential mobility compared to those in the North of Europe, thus preserving urban communities in which long-term residents form a significant part of the populace. However, the recent explosion of exogenous forces such as over-tourism and government-led urban revival has impacted heavily on the social structure of cities in the South of Europe, in line with the broader globalisation of gentrification and speculative urbanism.

Against this backdrop, this article explores how extractivist urban economies in the South of Europe undermine the survival of urbanity in this region. In doing so, it examines the local pre-conditions that have paved the way for the advent of extractivist economies but also identifies possible grassroots responses to the dissipation of urbanity. Elaborating on comparative field research in Belgrade (Serbia) and Naples (Italy), two historical cities located in different regions of the South of Europe, the article exposes how the intensified monetisation of social life leads to the reduction of urban environments to 'money-making machines' through a speculative urbanism that turns forms of life into profitable lifestyles. The paper associates Belgrade and Naples with the critical-geographical notion of the 'European South'. It does so on economic-political grounds. The 'European South' has experienced a process of systemic marginalisation, on the one hand, and of economisation of social life, on the other hand. This combination of marginalisation and economisation makes this region qualitatively different from wealthier contexts of Southern Europe, particularly of what is defined here the 'North of Southern Europe'.

Speculative urbanism can resisted locally but has nonetheless remained hegemonic, leading to a growing sense of residualisation of urbanity in the European South. In this perspective, the article looks at the 'last dwellers' of an urbanity facing extinction. 'Last dwellers' are highly vulnerable, precariously housed city inhabitants being displaced from historic urban areas whose social character has been deeply distorted by extractivist economies and large-scale regeneration projects. Drawing on George Didi-Huberman's re-reading of Pier Paolo Pasolini's allegory about the 'disappearance of the fireflies', 'last dwellers' are viewed as 'fireflies' threatened by the abrupt modifications of urban environments, but at the same time capable of giving rise to an embryonic politics of survival and resistance to urban extinction.

Parallel Session D:
Housing and communities

Multiple geographies of precarity: the accommodation and housing policies for asylum seekers in metropolitan Athens, Greece

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During the last three decades, since the beginning of the migration movements to Greece and until recently, the immigrant and refugee newcomers mostly followed self-housing trajectories in the cities, and especially in Athens, in the context of a market-led laissez-faire approach regarding housing, accommodation, and integration. The urban settlement of immigrants from the Balkans (since the 1990s), as well as of those from Middle East, Asia and Africa (since the mid-2000s), took place at the available and affordable residential stock of the central neighborhoods of Athens, following the relocation of part of the local population to the suburbs since the 1970s. In the context of strict migration laws, absence of housing policies, and the financial crisis, migrants' settlement in Athens increased socio-economic inequalities and housing precarity. At the same time, it produced a geography of socio-spatial mixing and ethnic diversity, which reduced social segregation and led to spatial proximity, establishment of networks, and the emergence of inter-ethnic cohabitation between newcomers and locals.

Since early 2016, after the mass refugee arrivals, the closure of the "Balkan Corridor", and the EU-Turkey Statement, Greece started to transform into a country of massive obligatory stay for asylum seekers. Through a new national legal framework that followed the relevant EU regulations on refugees' "reception", specific asylum accommodation policies were established for the first time in Greece consisting of two main axes: On the one hand, the "campization" of asylum seekers' accommodation in camps in the mainland, and on the other hand their accommodation in urban residential areas in apartments in block-of-flats or other buildings. In the case of the former, camps are usually located at the outskirts of the cities or in rural areas, thus (re) producing the spatial and social segregation of their inhabitants. As regards the latter, asylum seekers are accommodated in the socially and ethnically mixed urban neighborhoods of Athens, in close spatial proximity with locals and previously settled migrants. Thus, the accommodation system in Greece creates multiple and uneven geographies that (re)produce conditions of ongoing housing precarity for asylum seekers, an issue that has largely remained on the margins of the relevant scholarship.

This presentation aims to explore the multiple geographies of precarity of the accommodation and housing policies for asylum seekers in metropolitan Athens. It is argued that the multiple geographies of precarity are formed through a complex grid of (socio-spatial) policies and regulations and consist of: a) A set of filtering criteria by which asylum seekers are divided into those 'deserving' and those 'undeserving' to be placed in urban accommodation. Filtering constitutes a continuous process of producing precarity, as asylum seekers depend on constantly changing 'vulnerability criteria' that they have to fulfill in order to be placed in – or not evicted from – urban accommodation; b) The different and unequal types of accommodation and housing (camps and urban apartments) that are characterized by material and spatial inequalities. These differences create a multiplicity of precarious living conditions, based on different types of housing (tents, containers, buildings or apartments), facilities, sanitation and hygiene conditions, overcrowding, as well as deprivation that emerge in unequal ways in the different accommodation types; c) The "no-choice" basis on which asylum seekers are placed in accommodation – or evicted from it. The fact that asylum seekers cannot choose their accommodation place, type, and time until eviction on their own, deepens aspects of precarity and insecurity in everyday life. At the same time, the "no-choice" basis may interrupt pre-established social networks and processes of belonging in the city, thus not permitting a long-term process of socio-spatial settlement to unfold; d) The unequal access to social services and benefits, as asylum seekers living in camps don't have the same opportunities for education, health care, legal support, and public services, as those residing in urban space. The recent extension of the COVID-19 lockdown only for those living in camps, enhances precarity as well as confinement and control in unequal ways in the accommodation system.

This presentation argues that the multiple geographies of accommodation and housing policies for asylum seekers in metropolitan Athens constantly (re)produce conditions of precarity, instead of (pre)conditions for integration. The latter are hindered by the policies' ambiguous impact on socio-spatial identities, relationships, networks, patterns of navigation in the city, and processes of coexistence. The presentation draws on ongoing research in metropolitan Athens, Greece and the research methodology is based on both policies' analysis and mapping, and on field research and semi-structured interviews with asylum seekers and representatives of the relevant authorities.

'Press-ganged' generation rent: youth homelessness, precarity and poverty in East London

Prof. Paul Watt (Birkbeck, University of London)

This paper examines youth homelessness, precarity and poverty via a critical account of 'Generation Rent' – that young people are living in the private rental sector in perpetuity having been locked out of both homeownership and social renting. For most of the post-War period, the UK private rental sector was regarded as a 'transitional tenure' which primarily catered for young people before they moved into either owner occupation or social housing, i.e. the two 'tenures of destination'. By contrast, the post-2008 crash period has witnessed a profound transformation in young people's tenure expectations and experiences such that homeownership has become an impossible dream for most, while social renting has also become increasingly out-of-reach for working-class youth due to four decades of neoliberalisation and the last decade of austerity welfare cutbacks. Rather than being a transitional tenure for young people embarking on their housing careers, the private rental sector has become their de facto tenure of destination, hence giving rise to the influential notion of 'Generation Rent'. This paper examines precarity and the notion of Generation Rent by focussing on both employment (non-standard contracts) and housing (insecurity and evictions) with reference to in-depth interviews undertaken with 55 young people aged 18-30. This multi-ethnic group of low-income, working-class youth were living in temporary accommodation either in East London or in South East England having been displaced there from London. The paper illustrates the interlinkages between employment and housing precarity. The young people experienced the 'low-pay, no-pay cycle' which contributed towards making the expensive London private rental sector an insecure and unrealistic housing 'option'. Their preferred housing was social renting, but access to this diminished due to austerity-related shrinkages, alongside the reprioritisation of social housing allocations towards the 'deserving poor' of those currently in employment. Despite the young people's well-founded antipathy towards the private rental sector – based upon their own and their peers' negative experiences – they were increasingly being steered towards this tenure destination by housing officials since *not renting* from the private rental sector was no longer an option. Therefore, if the private rental sector is becoming a 'tenure of destination' for young people, this represents a case of coerced, 'press-ganged' Generation Rent for low-income youth. The neoliberal, austerity-shrunken welfare state is coercing working-class youth into a tenure that they know themselves to be unsustainable given the kind of precarious, poverty-paid jobs they have had in the past and are likely to have in the future.

Precarious housing and "spontaneous suburbanization" on the peri-urban areas of Budapest

András Vigvári (Hungarian Academy of Sciences Centre for Excellence)

For three decades after the postsocialist transition housing poverty and precarious housing conditions are one of the most desperate social problems in Hungary. It is not only the poorest social strata whose access to housing is highly limited but many segments of the lower middle class are also exposed to the crises to a great extent in Hungary. The trajectory of the declining lower middle-class with its spatial consequence are to be remarkably found all around the bigger cities in Hungary – but especially in Budapest – where rampant housing exclusion forced people to adjust with more sophisticated survival strategies in order to ensure access to some forms of housing.

Housing exclusion is manifest through various economic and social mechanisms. In Hungary, for instance, in the 1990s, housing privatization was the main cause for people to be pushed out of their rented accommodations if they could not cover the rising expenses on their flats or if they fell victim of a debt-spiral for whatever reason. From the 2000s, due to the expansion of the private real estate market, housing expenses have become even higher, while the public housing sector has almost completely disappeared due to mismanaged state initiatives or the complete lack of any public policy. The real estate boom of early 2000s and the debt crunch after the global financial crisis of 2008 made it even more difficult for dwellers to find affordable housing because many of them faced difficulties in repaying mortgages. The foreign-currency denominated mortgage debt-balloon which burst during the financial crises forced many (lower) middle-class people who used to be eligible for bank loans out of the city to the peripheries. After the recession, the revitalization of the housing market has accelerated the displacement which has begun

to attract not only the victims of the crises but also those young households who would avoid to getting financialized in the further by housing expenses (as rising rental fees, loans).

Since about the 1990s, but particularly since the financial crises in 2009, however, a new phenomenon of spatial exclusion appeared: the transformation of former (socialist) allotment gardens ("zártkert") into permanent residential neighbourhoods on the peri-urban areas. During state socialism allotment gardens served predominantly recreational and small farming spaces for blue collar workers. However, after the regime change in 1989, these recreational activities and small farming declined and the lion share of the garden plots became abandoned getting "a niche space" for the victims of housing crisis who were seeking for cheap housing because of their still optimal geographical proximity to the city and the cheap dwellings available there.

Allotment gardens are situated outside of the housing zones therefore these are not registered as residential areas. One consequence of their remoteness is that these gardens are usually lacking communal services there. The lack of basic infrastructure such as sewage or asphalt roads, which on the one hand can be considered a major aspect of housing poverty and precarious housing. It can on the other hand become an advantage and an attractive factor for incoming residents in terms of keeping affordable real estate prices and reducing housing-related costs. Apart from electricity, there is no central heating or gas network (dwellers use firewood to heat their bungalows during winter) and no piped water system either (they use private wells or public faucets).

In my paper I would give a brief overview of the most important findings of my anthropological research that was based on my field work experience at an allotment garden situated in the eastern suburban area in Budapest done between 2017 and 2019. In my presentation I would show how housing struggles push people into precarious housing conditions on one hand, and how certain precarious housing conditions (such as the semi-informal, isolated allotment-neighbourhoods in peri urban areas) can be considered as an agency against housing tensions in Hungary.

State of Precarity? Exploring the everyday topology of young adults' kinship networks for support in precarious times, through UK based case study research

Jenny Hewitt
(University of Sussex)

Political theories have predicted decline and demise of kin relations in modern societies, particularly due to advancing bureaucratic state. However, concepts such as kinship (both familial and peer) have been, and remain, crucial in the way nation state is conceived and performed. Furthermore, my research suggests that far from declining; these relationships have been proven essential, as young people navigate the consequences of precarious political climes.

There is a sizeable body of evidence which seems to point to the significance of family / kin, mentoring relationships and friendships in formulating an individual's complex sense of citizenship and civic engagement. The paper draws upon field research for my PhD, conducted in 2018, with young people in the UK aged between 18-25. The research invited the participants, using methods such as life story interview / photo voice / walking interviews, to share narratives about their close relationships and the ways in which these connected to their concepts / experiences of state regulation and 'politics'. The paper explores how these relationships impact on young people's relationship with the state, and interweave with their decision-making, experiences of precarity, and interconnected relationships – both physical and digital.

This paper contributes to debates contesting established public discourses such as the "troubled families" (Levitas, 2012) narrative, and the prevalence of the "neoliberal personhood" (Thelen & Alber, 2018) narrative, which may miss the complexity of young people's everyday life interactions with familial and friendship kin, and how these both impact upon conceptualisations of the state, and shore up youth identity in precarious times.

Special Issue of European Urban and Regional Studies

Guest edited by Dr Jennifer Ferreira, Dr David Jarvis and Dr Paul Sissons (Coventry University)

EUROPEAN URBAN & REGIONAL STUDIES

Rising uncertainties across aspects of economic and social life have led to growing discussions around the concept of precarity in different parts of urban experiences and from different disciplinary perspectives. Most recently, the Covid-19 crisis has clearly highlighted some of the fragilities of contemporary societies and cities.

Different scenarios for urban futures arising from climate change, technological shifts, big data, the changing world of work, political (in)stability and a range of other factors have variously painted a broad spectrum of utopian and dystopian visions. While there remains much uncertainty about aspects of urban change, the future of cities will be characterised by increased complexity and 'deep-seated changes that are intrinsically unpredictable' (Batty, 2019; 5).

Across the social sciences the concept of precariousness has broadly encompassed:

- Climate change and public health in urban areas (Edwards and Bulkeley, 2018).

- Precarious labour markets, non-standard employment and the gig economy (Standing, 2011; Kalleberg, 2009).

- Housing affordability, situations and transitions/ pathways (Beer et al, 2015; Bobek et al, 2020).

- Insecure public services and financialisation (O'Brien and Pike, 2015).

- The uneven impacts of austerity (Vaiou, 2016; Gray and Barford, 2018).

- Precarious politics and populism (Rodríguez-Pose, 2017).

- New urban approaches to precarity: for example through targeted regulation, Universal Basic Income 'experiments', degrowth and community wealth building models.

We invite paper submissions for this Special Issue which will focus on urban precarity from a range of perspectives and across different thematic areas (such as employment, environment, housing, health and governance). Submissions might include analysis of the drivers of precarity, the important societal impacts, what it means for the future of urbanity, and identifying responses to ameliorating risks at different spatial scales. We encourage the submission of papers which relate to different notions of precarity and risk in urban areas.

These include:

- Urban precarity and reimagined futures

- Precarious urban economies

- Precarious urban lives

- Precarious urban governance

- Precarious infrastructures

- Precarious cities

We also welcome submission of papers which provide a more systemic analysis of urban precarity. The contributions will place the urban system in a central position in developing new understandings of the nature of precarity in contemporary European economies and societies.

The deadline for paper submission is 5th February 2021. Papers should be submitted through https:// mc.manuscriptcentral.com/eurs. When submitting please select the Special Issue '*Urban Europe, Precarious Futures?*' Please also review the journal's submission guidelines (https://uk.sagepub.com/ en-gb/eur/journal/european-urban-and-regional-studies#submission-guidelines)

For any questions please contact: Paul.Sissons@coventry.ac.uk

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The Centre for Business in Society

Changing behaviours for the benefit of economies, society and the individual

The Centre for Business in Society (CBiS) is the principal research centre within the Faculty of Business and Law at Coventry University. CBiS is home to thirty five specialist researchers, over 20 Associates, a dedicated research support team, over a hundred PhD researchers, most of the Faculty of Business and Law's professoriate and many staff in the Faculty currently undertaking their sabbaticals. CBiS also looks after the Faculty's new professional doctoral programme, the DBA.

Through understanding and interrogating the impact of organisations' activities, behaviours and policies, CBiS's research promotes responsibility and inclusivity, seeking to change behaviours in order to achieve better outcomes for economies and societies.

CBiS's traditional core interests in sustainability and economic development are now joined by teams exploring two of the biggest sources of business's impact on society in recent years: post-financialisation and the implications for economies and the individual; along with the explosion of big data and the digital economy, and the ramifications for organisations, consumers and society.

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