

## List of Thesis Topic Proposals (April 2021)

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### **Infrastructure Megaprojects (Univ.-Prof. Dr. Sophie Schramm)**

Africa, Asia and Latin America are currently the target of massive investments in infrastructure-megaprojects. Europe and North America are affected as well. Regional infrastructure networks like deep-water ports, airports or international transport corridors are expanding rapidly. With The Belt-and-Road Initiative China is playing an increasingly important part. Furthermore, various other actors are involved in developments and expansions of regional infrastructure networks.

- Which spatial and economic ideas are developments and expansions of regional infrastructure based on?
- Who are the key actors driving the expansion? Which aims do these actors pursue? What are unintended consequences?

The geographical focus of the work is open.

Literature: <https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/00343404.2019.1661984>

### **Urban Megaprojects (Univ.-Prof. Dr. Sophie Schramm)**

Urban design and planning are currently seeing a revival in Africa and Asia: Cities and satellite cities planned from scratch emerge in unprecedented speed. In Indonesia, for example, a new capital city is planned as a replacement for Jakarta. The thesis can focus on the following questions:

- Which models, ideas and ideals of urban development are at the basis of current mega projects?
- Who are the key actors driving this process?
- What role does formal spatial planning play?
- How do these new planned cities fit into the existing spatial structures?
- For whom are these cities planned and who is excluded?

The geographical focus of the work is open.

### **Financialisation of Housing (Univ.-Prof. Dr. Sophie Schramm)**

The financial sector grows in importance for the economy and, through the financialisation of housing, it also has a direct influence on urban planning and development. The thesis can focus on the following questions:

- How does financialisation change housing markets/ urban spaces?
- How do these tendencies influence urban planning?
- How can urban planning deal with them?
- Which opposing trends are visible, who are the important actors?

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### **Heterogeneous Infrastructures (Univ.-Prof. Dr. Sophie Schramm)**

The term “Heterogeneous Infrastructures” defines the manifold constellations through which city residents receive basic infrastructure services. These reach beyond standardized supply through centrally regulated large-scale networks. Generally, the heterogeneity of infrastructure is depicted as a characteristic for urbanisation in the Global South, however in cities of the Global Northwest versatile constellations of infrastructure supply can be found (for example: waste disposal in Dortmund-Nordstadt or Kreuzviertel). The thesis can focus on following questions:

- How do diverse urban actors get access to basic services beyond large-scale networks?
- Which options do city dwellers have to alter their access to infrastructure, in how far are they bound to their role as a passive consumer of services?
- Which broader questions of justice are connected to the concept of heterogeneous infrastructures?
- What role does/can spatial planning play in the development of “heterogeneous infrastructures”?

The geographical focus of the work is open.

### **Insurgent Planning (Univ.-Prof. Dr. Sophie Schramm)**

„Insurgent Planning“ (IP) describes interventions in the built space of actors, who are usually opposed to or excluded from traditional planning (for example: Hambacher Forst). The term broadens the conventional understanding of planning by including practices that are usually not considered as planning.

- How do actors shape built space through IP-practises?
- Which relationship do these IP-practises have with formal planning?
- How can formal planning rethink and change its approach to IP-practices?

### **Coproduction of Services (Univ.-Prof. Dr. Sophie Schramm)**

Especially in cities in the Global South public actors and institutions regularly fail to provide basic infrastructure services to the urban population. Coproduction is a term that describes the joint provision of services from different public and non-public actors. Co-production can help improving access to services. Slum Dwellers International (SDI), for example, is pursuing the approach of “coproduction” of basic services in cities of the Global South. The thesis can focus on following questions:

- How do governmental and non-governmental actors work together to provide basic infrastructure services?
- What are the factors for success or failure of coproduction?
- How can initiatives be stabilized?

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### **Urban – rural – linkage in the Global South (Dr. Ing. Genet Alem)**

#### **Urban – rural linkages and impacts on the role of sustainable regional development**

Literature review of urban-rural linkages as well as background of traditionally separated approach of urban and rural land management. It is advised to use case study approach, which could facilitate an in-depth analysis of urban-rural linkage in a particular socioeconomic context.

- Possible consequences of policy gaps in managing land transcending urban-rural boundaries, for instance for sustainable regional development and management of natural resources.
- Factors of success for development of strong Economic Cycles between small and middle towns to their hinterland.
- Influence of expansion of small and middle towns on the natural resources in the hinterland and possible actions of regulation
- Impact of megacities on people and nature in peri-urban and rural areas,

### **Informal urban development (Dr. Ing. Genet Alem)**

#### **Urban informality and state regulation**

- Study of informal settlements and production of shelters in a selected case study (on urban or neighbourly level) from the Global North or South. The research should use empirical primary data
- Government approach toward informal settlements and production of shelters; forms of informal rules and regulation through Neighbourhood communities, NGO etc. /
- International comparison of strategies for dealing with settlements and production of shelters. The research could mainly be a literature review, evaluation of instruments and procedures and analysis of transferability.

#### **Urban governance and role of actors at grassroots level**

- Analysis of participation processes and conflicts in planning in urban planning projects in the Global North and South.
- Investigation of empowering urban politics and alternative forms of housing using concrete case studies

### **Land use management, climate change, climate adaption in developing and emerging countries (Dr. Ing. Genet Alem)**

#### **Analysis of land management system in a city or region in the Global South**

- Land policy and institutional structure of land-management system
- Access to housing and buildable land
- Land use planning and land management instruments

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### **Climate Change and Climate adaption in the Global South**

- National and local ambitions and adaptations strategies to manage impact of climate change.
- Role and influence of urban planning policies in dealing with adverse effect of climate change
- Institutional capacities and adaption capabilities for a resilient urban development

### **Migration and Multilocality as themes in spatial planning (Dr.-Ing. Katrin Gliemann)**

#### **Spatial impact of remittances in the countries of origin of migrants**

Based on a survey of migrants from the same country of origin who live in Germany and send remittances to the country of origin.

#### **Transnationalism and local/urban integration – a contradiction?**

Literature discussion on transnationalism, transnational practices and possible effects on above all spatial integration processes. Analysis, for example, of an urban integration plan, to what extent these newer migration trends are taken into account, formulation of future approaches for planning.

#### **Inclusive Cities in Canada: Factors of success for spatial integration of new residents**

Analysis of planning processes and paradigms on municipal levels, fields of action and success criteria for (socio-)spatial integration, role of different stakeholders, question of transferability on cities and regions in Germany

#### **Citizens with a migration background in participation processes**

- Participation obstacles and innovative approaches to overcome these obstacles
- Compilation best/worst practise examples (national/international)
- Role of migrant-self-organisations in participation
- “Foreigner”, “Non-German”, “migration background”: How do these categories contribute to or hinder urban and neighbourhood development?

#### **Accommodation, housing and integration of refugees**

- Comparison on housing strategies in national/international context
- Lessons learnt? Consequences from last years’ experience (Initial placement, municipal integration strategies, preventive measures ...)
- Housing of refugees in small or middle towns in rural areas
- The role of established migrant-self-organisations for the integration of refugees in cities
- Spatial practises of refugees in and outside of accommodations
- Arrival infrastructures from and for refugees and migrants
- Migrants: Promotors of urban transformation?

#### **International retirement migration**

- (Spatial) effects on origin and/or destination regions. Focus on one destination or comparison of different destination areas

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- Expansion of the IRM on structurally weak countries
- Proposals for supporting, limiting or controlling retirement migration (depending on results of analysis)

### **Issues of urban studies**

#### **Transformation of urban space (Dr. Ing. Genet Alem)**

Analysis of the urban space with high percentages of residents with migration background in German or other European cities

- The entrenchment of ethnic and religious diversity in the physical and sociocultural characteristics of a given
- The role of urban spaces in the integration process of residents with migration background and the provision of space of negotiation and encounter of different cultures

#### **Socio-spatial polarisation in cities of the Global North and South: development and strategies (Dr.-Ing. Katrin Gliemann)**

Analysis of a case study or comparison of the development in two chosen countries/regions: How does the social-spatial polarisation display itself in these cities, how do urban planning and policies deal with this topic, which strategies are discussed and implemented?

#### **Fiction or reality: cityscape in the TV-series "Phoenixsee" (Dr.-Ing. Katrin Gliemann)**

Analysis of the WDR TV-series "Phoenixsee" especially regarding the display of the district Dortmund-Hörde and the Phoenixsee-project. Comparison with the actual situation in Hörde or different perspectives on the district; comparison with strategies of the district- and project marketing. Embedment in the discussion on upgrading "disadvantaged" urban districts.

#### **Digitalisation – a topic for spatial planning? National/international (Dr.-Ing. Katrin Gliemann)**

- Experience of or in municipalities with webbased media, on the basis of planning-related case studies
- Analysis of local websites (various thematical containment possible)
- Digital participation: Prevalence, possible uses, potentials and risks
- Use of social media in the field of city marketing
- Virtual and augmented reality in spatial planning: real benefit or just a new gimmick?
- Attitudes and opinions of planning practice towards digital tools

#### **Potentials of real world laboratories in urban development and/or urban research (Dr.-Ing. Katrin Gliemann)**

Analysis and/or comparison of projects in the context of urban development which are implementing the concept of real world laboratories. Highlighting positive effects, specific challenges and limitations. National or international focus possible.

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### **How are narrations linked to spatial planning? (Dr.-Ing. Katrin Gliemann)**

Narration-oriented research and participation formats and their possible use in planning practise. For example: biographical approaches, Storytelling-workshops on urban district level etc.

### **Slums, Informal Settlements and how we see the world (Nick Nowara)**

Slums and informal settlements can be found in Africa, Asia and South America. However, examples of this typology do not only exist in the Global South, they can also be examined in the Global North. The research field is very extensive and, in its entirety, relevant to research. Whether **slum upgrading strategies, good governance, disaster risk management** or the integration of settlements in **rapidly growing cities**, I would be very happy to supervise these and other topics.

- Which slum upgrading strategies are there and how were or are they implemented?
- What role does disaster risk management play in informal settlements?
- How big is the influence of good governance on the development and integration of slums in the cities?
- What happens when poor settlements gradually move into the center (of attention) of growing cities?
- Etc.

### **Refugee camps - the built reality in which people (have to) live (Nick Nowara)**

Millions of people are "housed" in **refugee camps** around the world. Whether on the Greek islands, in Jordan, or in the so-called "failed states". There are thousands of refugee camps. They are i.a. **planned, built and operated** by the United Nations, governments or non-governmental organizations (NGOs). The **tent or container cities** often remain the built reality of the refugees for years.

- What planning approaches are there for the construction and operation of refugee camps?
- How do tent cities for refugees arise and how do they develop over time?
- How can governance improve the situation and through which measures?
- Etc.

### **Poverty, "Wohnungslosigkeit" and homelessness | How do we live with that? (Nick Nowara)**

In cities such as Berlin, Lima or Belgrade alone, thousands of people are affected by so called "Wohnungslosigkeit", tens of thousands are homeless and for a large percentage of the population poverty is part of the visible or invisible cityscape and thus also part of everyday life.

- How does poverty shape our cities?
- What are the criteria for a district of the "poor"?
- Can poverty be read off from urban planning or can it already be predicted?
- What niche do the homeless occupy in the city?
- Etc.

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### **Emergency and Disaster Management - (Prevention, Mitigation, Reconstruction and Resilience) (Nick Nowara)**

Earthquakes, tsunamis, heavy rains and storms: urban areas are increasingly exposed to dangers due to increasing climatic change. Depending on their geographical location, cities and metropolitan regions have to prepare for disasters. In view of the experiences and expectations, a large number of emergency plans have been drawn up and countless measures taken, and yet disasters cannot be completely prevented. All that remains is prevention, the reduction of possible damage and to lower the number of victims, the optimization of reconstruction and the pursuit of resilience.

- What threats do cities or metropolitan regions face (also in the future)?
- What prevention strategies or projects are there?
- What distinguishes a resilient city?
- Etc.

### **Topics with Moritz Kasper**

I am happy to supervise theses in **German or English**, which combine theoretical and empirical material and ultimately use newly gained knowledge for **urban/ spatial design, urban planning or urban governance/ activism**. I am particularly interested in work that has **one or more** of the following aspects:

- **The everyday experience of urban space and the everyday collective production of urban spaces and architectures**
- **Cities in the Global South**, especially Sub-Saharan Africa
- **The application of topics/ discourses from the global south to spaces/ phenomena in the global north** (*postcolonial thoughts, (in) formality, exclusionary/ violent urbanism, etc.*)
- **Comparative work** with different case studies (cities, districts, streets, initiatives, etc.)
- **Approaches of cities or spaces as relational arrangements**; integrated into local to planetary networks of humans and non-humans

I am looking forward to a wide range of specific topics within the frameworks mentioned above.

**Examples of subject areas** that interest me include:

- **Mundane Urban Infrastructures**: small objects, mundane architectures, heterogeneous assemblages, ...
- **Road-Side Economies and Markets**: spaces, networks, threats, opportunities, gender, ethnicity ...
- **Cultural and Creative Scenes**: spaces, economies, networks, institutions, infrastructures ...
- **Urban (In)Equalities**: colonial planning legacies, 'right-to-the-city', segregation, fragmentation ...
- **Mobility and Transport**: mobility apps, vehicle bans, infrastructure projects ...



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### **Thesis Topics – Dorcas Nthoki Nyamai \*supervision only in English\***

- **Urban Mobility and Accessibility** – sustainability of future mobility; active mobility; flexible transport; city residents' experiences, perceptions, and expectations of mobility; transportation planning and mobility practices; inequalities in access to mobility; non-motorized transport.
- **Urban Development and Resilience** – strategic urban development; contributions of planning and policy towards urban management and development; resilient cities; urban growth and competitiveness
- **Sociality and Spatiality of Place and Space** – urban topologies participatory urban planning; spatial planning; socio-spatial organization of space; use of GIS in urban management and spatial assessment.
- **Spatial injustices** – spatial inequalities; spatial exclusion; urban injustices and intersectionality; relation between social and spatial justice and dynamics in societal perceptions; injustices in access to urban social services, facilities, opportunities, and infrastructure.
- **Urban Land Use and Management** – urban land governance; urban land markets; urban land rights and entitlements

### **Thesis Topics with Robert Barbarino**

- Digital platforms as driving forces of place making, urban development and housing. Digital Platforms like Google, AirBnB & Co. have a huge impact on our daily routines and the production of urban environments itself.
- Transformative and transdisciplinary science approaches in planning. Doing research with and for social movement; Participatory Action Research, Citizen Science, Lab approaches (like Urbans Transition Labs, Urban Living Labs & Real-world Labs).
- Urban Governance of Migration and Diversity. How does an interplay of bottom-up and top-down policies place Migration and Diversity as driving forces for urban change.
- Technology-driven approaches in participatory urban development. How does Augmented Reality or the use mobile devices influence participation in urban development.
- Methods: I am happy to supervise theses with a strong empirical orientation towards qualitative data analysis, using qualitative coding approaches. In the field of quantitative analysis, I am interested in supervising theses applying Text Mining approaches.