



One-Day International Conference
'Intersectional Inequalities and (post-)Covid Urban Public Spaces'

Cambridge, 20-21 June 2023

Organization: *Dr Fraya Frehse* (British Academy Visiting Fellow – Centre of Latin American Studies [CLAS], University of Cambridge)

How do intersectional inequalities relate to the physical and social fabric that has made urban public spaces since the onset of the Covid-19 pandemic? The Conference addresses the ongoing, broader international debate about the connections between social asymmetries and the daily (re)production of the most accessible empirical instances of urban space in our (post-)Covid world – whether in legal, physical-material, or informational terms and hence ranging from public streets and squares to digital environments. But the issue is approached from a specific angle. The Conference is interested in how social categories of difference, which help human beings (re)establish inequalities towards each other, both (re)produce and are (re)produced by the materiality of urban public space. Experts from different disciplines based in Latin America and the UK/Europe will discuss their findings in the framework of five roundtables composed around definite spatialities of intersectional inequalities: educational institutions, bodies, social margins and territories.

FULL PROGRAMME

Tuesday, 20 June 2023

16:00—16:15 – Opening + Introduction

Pedro Mendes Loureiro (University of Cambridge) + *Fraya Frehse* (University of Cambridge + University of São Paulo)

16:15—17:30 – Roundtable 1: Educational institutions

- **Privilege as spatial affordances; discrimination as danger. On the logics of spatial inequality at UNAM, Mexico City**
Federico Navarrete (University of Cambridge + National Autonomous University of Mexico)
- **(dis)Rupture: Communication by destruction**
Kelly Fagan Robinson (University of Cambridge)

Moderator: *Mónica Moreno Figueroa*

17:15—17:30 – Break

17:30—19:15 – Roundtable 2: Bodies

- **Intersectionality. Gendering and racializing urban spaces**
Martina Löw (Technische Universität Berlin)
- **Reflecting on intersectionality and the emotional effects of oppression: End Everyday Racism at Cambridge and Anti-racist practice in Latin America**
- *Mónica Moreno Figueroa* (University of Cambridge)

Moderator: *Fraya Frehse*

19:45 – Dinner

Wednesday, 21 June 2023

09:30—11:00 – **Roundtable 3: Social margins I**

- **Carcerality, space and inequalities: a conceptual exploration across territories, places, scales and networks in Brazil**
Pedro Mendes Loureiro (University of Cambridge) + *Graham Denyer Willis* (University of Cambridge)
- **On the situational impact of intersectional inequalities on urban public space -**
Fraya Frehse (University of Cambridge + University of São Paulo)
- **Negotiating urban space through cultivated invisibility: the habitual responses of migrants experiencing homelessness**
Simon Stewart (University of Portsmouth)

Moderator: *Felipe Hernández*

11:00—11:15 – **Break**

11:15—12:30 – **Roundtable 4: Social margins II**

- **Intersectional inequalities and food acquisition in low-income settlements amidst the COVID-19 pandemic**
Aiko Ikemura Amaral (King's College London) + *Gareth Jones* (London School of Economics) + *Mara Nogueira* (University of London)
- **Informal settlement upgrading with an intersectional approach**
Ángela María Franco-Calderón (Universidad del Valle)

Moderator: *Pedro Mendes Loureiro*

12:45—13:45 - **Lunch**

13:45-15:00 – **Roundtable 5: Territories**

- **Race, class, forced displacement, and the construction of a home in Cartagena de Indias, Colombia**
Felipe Hernández (University of Cambridge)
- **Difference, intersectionality and territorialization**
Monika Streule (London School of Economics)

Moderator: *Fraya Frehse*

15:00-15:15 – **Break**

15:15-15:45 – **Final discussion + Perspectives**

15:45 – **Refreshments**

ABSTRACTS

Roundtable 1: Educational institutions

- **Privilege as spatial affordances; discrimination as danger. On the logics of spatial inequality at UNAM, Mexico City**
Federico Navarrete (University of Cambridge + National Autonomous University of Mexico)

By analyzing my own and my students' experiences of privilege, inequality and risk at the ultra-modern facilities of the Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México, I will explore how modern urban planning and architecture build class, gender and race discrimination into urban spaces. How can a public institution committed to inclusiveness and equality, and a functionalist architectural style supposedly oriented to the needs of its users, result in spatial configurations that favor only a small minority and submit the rest to unacceptable levels of precariousness and risk?

- **(dis)Rupture: Communication by destruction**
Kelly Fagan Robinson (University of Cambridge)

A broken window. A boot-crushed through a frozen puddle. An ethnographic drawing defaced to include symbols of hate. A shopping cart crashed into public art. Amidst experiences of anger, trauma, a new country, fear, apathy, and/or ambiguity about what lies ahead; children seek to be acknowledged, but often not through discussion. In this paper I explore the ways that people engage with, damage, or even destroy physical objects and surfaces to enact material rupture when no alternative communication seems viable/legible to those around them. The aim is to examine the value of disruptive communication, and the counterpoint offered by learning the weight of making one's own perspectives and ambitions for various futures legible to others.

Moderator: *Mónica Moreno Figueroa*

Roundtable 2: Bodies

- **Intersectionality. Gendering and racializing urban spaces**
Martina Löw (Technische Universität Berlin)

My paper will deal, first, with similarities in the social construction of race and gender, and, secondly, with the relational dynamics of gendering and racializing bodies in the context of urban spaces. I hope that my contribution offers an input for lively debates during our meeting, as both gender and race have one *important aspect in common*: they appear to be *lifelong constants in people's bodies*. And this sets them apart from other social constructions.

- **Reflecting on intersectionality and the emotional effects of oppression: End Everyday Racism at Cambridge and Anti-racist practice in Latin America**
Mónica Moreno Figueroa (University of Cambridge)

In this presentation I will share some perspectives on intersectionality and the emotional effects of oppression that we can learn through two very distinct projects. One is a research and activist intervention in the University of Cambridge where we have used an online platform to map out experiences of racism in the university by applying a methodology of solidarity and focusing on the emotional and physical effects of racism. Difficulties navigating the physical space of the university was a particular salient aspect coming through the testimonies. The other project is on antiracist discourse and practice in Brazil, Colombia, Ecuador and Mexico and I will specifically focus on how we developed a perspective on intersectionality and antiracism to guide an assessment of social interventions. I will reflect on how such a perspective has implications for researching different kinds of spaces.

Moderator: *Fraya Frehse*

Roundtable 3: Social margins I

- **Carcerality, space and inequalities: a conceptual exploration across territories, places, scales and networks in Brazil**
Pedro Mendes Loureiro (University of Cambridge) + *Graham Denyer Willis* (University of Cambridge)

This presentation is an exploratory attempt to conceptualise how the expansion of the carceral system in Brazil is reshaping—and in turn being shaped by—spatialities, (intersectional) inequalities, power, and their interactions. We propose that the expansion of incarceration and carceral sites has been reconfiguring territories, places, scales and networks, through sharp relations of public and private power and intersectional inequalities, in ways that connect, segregate and hierarchise individuals and communities. Consequently, the very notions of what is public or private space, and the salience of specific inequalities and their associated groups, are remoulded as the process unfolds into ever-larger dimensions.

- **Negotiating urban space through cultivated invisibility: the habitual responses of migrants experiencing homelessness**
Simon Stewart (University of Portsmouth)

This paper explores life-story narratives co-produced with migrants across three urban contexts that capture their experiences of homelessness before and during the pandemic. In considering the impact of hostile environment policies and austerity measures, we introduce the notion of *cultivated invisibility*, referring to a habitual, deeply-ingrained mode of practice through which migrants respond to and navigate their experiences of being read as 'Other', in racialised or classed terms, by staying on the move or blending into the crowd. The paper highlights the intersectional ways in which migrants negotiate urban space having internalised invisibility as an embodied disposition *and* learnt to survive without statutory support.

- **On the situational impact of intersectional inequalities on urban public space**
Fraya Frehse (University of Cambridge + University of São Paulo)

The management of intersectional asymmetries within the spatial boundaries of face-to-face interaction moulds urban public space physical-materially and socially. This paper heightens in two steps the conceptual specificity of the above assumption in the scholarly debate on the relations between intersectional inequalities and (post)-Covid urban public space. Firstly, it locates the hypothesis within the corresponding scholarship. Secondly, it offers some preliminary ethnographic findings about how female heads of homeless families mobilized categories regarding class, race/ethnicity, gender and sexuality in the streets and squares of (post-)Covid-19 São Paulo (2020-2022) to sustain their lives and families.

Roundtable 4: Social margins II

- **Intersectional inequalities and food acquisition in low-income settlements amidst the Covid-19 pandemic**
Aiko Ikemura Amaral (King's College London) + *Gareth Jones* (London School of Economics) + *Mara Nogueira* (University of London)

This paper explores the impact of Covid-19 on food acquisition in low-income settlements in Belo Horizonte and São Paulo, Brazil. Urbanization reinforces intersectional inequalities that shape food (in)security among the urban poor. Guaranteeing food access in these areas requires a mix of public, semi-public, and private spaces and services, influenced by gender, race, and class hierarchies. The pandemic disrupted residents' strategies to access food due to the closure of essential infrastructure like open markets and schools, disproportionately affecting impoverished women. However, bottom-up initiatives, such as social infrastructures for food distribution, helped alleviate some of these challenges by shifting demands to public spaces.

- **Informal settlement upgrading with an intersectional approach**

Ángela María Franco-Calderón (Universidad del Valle)

This work analyses intersectional categories that inquire not only about individuals but also about communities and their relationship with the space they inhabit, as a basis to integrate the notion of intersectionality in informal settlement upgrading processes. Based on a case study in Cali, Colombia, this applied research employs a methodological framework that combines quantitative and qualitative tools, tested through broad community participation. Memory building, intersectional mapping, community data collection using mobile devices, child and youth participation through play, and participatory design of public spaces are some of the methods deployed to expand the applicability of the intersectional approach in urban studies.

Roundtable 5: Territories

- **Race, class, forced displacement, and the construction of a home in Cartagena de Indias, Colombia**

Felipe Hernández (University of Cambridge)

This paper explores the deployment of environmental discourse by powerful investing groups to liberate land for private urbanisation, ultimately, disguising land grabbing practices in Cartagena de Indias. It focuses on the construction of a park (public space) around *Ciénaga de la Virgen* to stop internally displaced people (mostly Afro-descendants) who build their homes inside the *Ciénaga*, while national and international real estate consortia put pressure to buy land. In this context, the protection of the environment, and the construction of public space, serve the interests of private developers, and perpetuate a cycle of dispossession and displacement.

- **Difference, intersectionality and territorialization**

Monika Streule (London School of Economics)

This paper discusses *territorial subjectivity* as a tool to analyse the formation of subjects through territorialization, with a special focus on difference and intersectionality. Following Alicia Lindón who coined this notion in her study of Mexico City, I understand territorial subjectivities as a recurrent process in which territorial ideas, meanings and imaginaries as well as territorial practices provide a strong framework of reference for the becoming of subjects. To illustrate this, I will use case studies from Berlin and Buenos Aires. I conclude with a reflection on a more complex understanding of socio-territorial relations imbedded in the making of territory.

Where:

Alison Richard Building – SG2
7 West Road
CB3 9DT Cambridge
United Kingdom

When:

Tuesday 20 June from 16:00-19:15 (followed by dinner)
Wednesday 21 June from 9:30-15:45 (followed by refreshments)

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