

TRIALOG 160

A Journal for Planning
and Building in a
Global Context

September 2026

Governing
Urban Transformations



Editorial

The interactions between society and state in shaping urban space, especially at the interface of the private and public domain in the Global South remain relevant for academics and practitioners. This issue collects contributions presented at the 21st N-AERUS Conference on “Transforming Role of State in Addressing Inclusive Urban Development” (October 2022) held by the *Department of Sustainable Cities and Communities*, at the University of Kassel in Germany, and the *Urban and Rural Planning Discipline* of Khulna University in Bangladesh, on behalf of *Network-Association of European Researchers on Urbanisation in the South*. Topics ranged from the global crises and local challenges to ideologies and policies as well as emerging agents, dynamics, and narratives within urban development.

The papers presented here shed light on how socio-spatial inequalities are (re)produced through the interaction of different stakeholders engaged in the planning process, thus making visible the ambivalent role of the state in enabling urban development and searching strategies aiming at the public good. While neoliberal mechanisms remain present within planning processes, the authors explore how new narratives gain force, giving legitimacy to exclusionary and even violent urban processes that continue to shape the Global South. Furthermore, they highlight a wide range of intervention levels and their entwinements, which have a direct impact on people’s lives.

Hossain et al. investigate current discourse on climate change adaptation and resilience-related policies at national level in Bangladesh and the challenges in integrating them into local urban planning and city-making praxis. The authors show the difficulties of resolving structural inequalities within the existent frame of donor-based ad-hoc projects, highlighting the importance of micro-macro stakeholder collaboration. Moving to a different political and geographical setup, and focusing on rural areas, **Xiao’s** work demonstrates emerging and changing actor networks and power relations within recent development-led rural land transfers in China. Direct and indirect resistance by marginalised groups can leverage

power and surpass the established and rigid hierarchies, such as those between the state and villagers without land rights. **Rosen’s** contribution highlights the social construct creating a conscious divide between formal and informal urbanisation, still persisting in planning practice. Investigating water and mobility infrastructures in Arequipa, Peru, the author introduces hybrid urbanisms as a way to investigate how formal and informal practices complement and interlink in basic infrastructure delivery. Lastly, **Banerjee et al.** use the framework of biopolitics and hygienisation to analyse how pandemic governance at the time of COVID-19, forwarded urban policies that reproduced existing inequalities by destroying the innovative and incremental practices of survival in Indian cities, such as the case in Mumbai.

On the one hand, contributions show the persistence of patterns of how urban territories are negotiated and occupied, observed in the interaction of inhabitants, institutions, and civil society, and made visible in scholarly work. We still detect spaces in-between, everlasting strategies in shaping the public space and infrastructure, permeability between the formal and the informal and continuous practices of self-help. On the other hand, new narratives such as the adaptation to climate change or ad hoc response to emerging threats such as the COVID-19 Pandemic give legitimacy to certain players, such as state representatives, donors and individual private actors to push their preferred urban development. In this context, we also observe how groups most affected also adapt, like villagers without land titles and intermediary actors evolve, such as professionalised civil society organizations.

Engaging with the scholarly work on how the state navigates inclusive urban development in the Global South, this special issue reiterates the timeliness of research focusing on the constantly evolving interaction among stakeholders involved in urban processes, continuities and ruptures. Together, it highlights the relevance of understanding how affected groups and communities respond and adapt to those. We continue to observe, learn, accumulate and share knowledge with the expectation of a just urbanization to emerge.

Governing Urban Transformations

Editors: Lorena Melgaço and Umut Kienast-Duyar

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TRIALOG

A Journal for
Planning and Building
in a Global Context

A journal for professionals in the fields of architecture, urban and regional planning, geography, sociology, anthropology, and economics.

Dedicated to global issues and development cooperation, TRIALOG assists the assessment of research of relevance as well as the exchange of professional experiences in the fields of planning and building, with a focus on Asia, Africa, and Latin America.

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Print copies of issue 1 to 130/1 cost €6 (plus postage)

Print copies of single issues 134-143 cost € 10 (plus postage), double issues 132/3 and 140/1 cost € 18 (plus postage). As of issue 145-146, print copies cost € 24 (plus postage), double issues cost € 24 (plus postage)

PDFs of issues 1 -130/1 can be downloaded for free at:
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Subscription of TRIALOG (4 issues/year):

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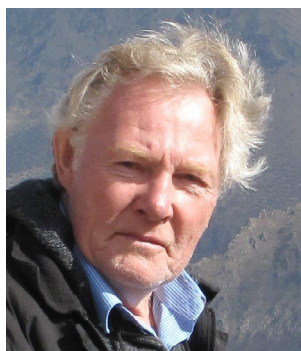
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Hans Harms

10 May 2031 – 10 April 2026

Hans Harms, our esteemed friend, mentor, teacher and founding member of TRIALOG, passed away in London, UK, on 10 April 2026, just one month before his 95th birthday. Hans was ultimately the eldest member of our association (and honorary member!), but he always seemed younger to me than he actually was. Every time I had the pleasure of seeing him, he always had new projects, ideas and trips planned – but sadly that came to an end last year when serious health problems began to affect his life.

One of the big virtues of Hans was his interest in other people, his empathy for the personal issues of his friends, their family members, and people in need. For more than 60 years, Hans devoted himself to teaching, research and the publication of articles on urban planning and housing in Latin America, Europe and the Middle East, frequently travelling between continents and cities. He had studied architecture in Darmstadt, Germany and urban and regional planning focussed on 'Developing Countries' as a post-graduate at the University of Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania. During his life as a young professional, as well full of travelling and adventures, he worked as an architect and urban planner in France, the USA (in Pennsylvania and California), Peru and Germany. He later became an assistant professor at MIT in Boston and was teaching at the State University of New York, at the Architectural Association (AA) and the Development Planning Unit in London, and as a professor at HafenCity University in Hamburg, but gave as well many lectures at several universities in Latin America, North Africa or other places.

The most significant experience of his professional life came in the early 1960s, when Hans got in touch with land-occupiers who were building their own settlements in the 'Pueblos Jóvenes' of Lima, Peru. It was there that he met John F.C. Turner. A few years later, from 1968 to 1974, as an assistant professor at MIT in Cambridge, Massachusetts, he founded the Community Projects Laboratory together with other faculty members and supported low-income tenants in Boston's South End in their struggle against the destructive practice of urban renewal by city planners and developers. When

John Turner published his famous book 'Freedom to Build' (New York: Macmillan 1972), Hans contributed two articles. As a passionate advocate of the right to housing, he was well aware of the 'limitations of self-help housing', as we can see in his contribution in Architectural Design 46, 1976, in his editorial in the book Self-Help Housing: A Critique (Oxford: Mansell 1982, pp. 17–53), or his programmatic article in the first issue of TRIALOG in 1983: 'On the History of Self-Help: Practice and Ideology' (TRIALOG 1, pp. 9–13). Since then, Hans has widely published in English, German and Spanish, including a long list of papers on housing and urban issues, informal settlements, structural changes in harbour cities, and the problems of urban renewal and inner-city development.

While working as Director of Housing and Urban Planning at the Architectural Association in London (Graduate School) from 1974 to 1981, and serving as External PhD Examiner and Student Adviser at the Development Planning Unit of University College London, the British capital became Hans's second home, where he lived with his family and where he spent as well most of his final years. In 1981, he became a professor at the Technical University of Hamburg-Harburg (now Hafen City University), where he integrated the concerns of planning and housing in the Global South into the newly established Urban Planning study programme through seminars, student projects, study trips and research. From this position, he was a very important pillar of support for TRIALOG at its inception in 1983, when Hans was elected as the vice managing director of the association. After being awarded the status of Emeritus in Hamburg-Harburg in 1996, he continued to teach and to supervise doctoral students for a long time to come (always on the move between Hamburg, Berlin and London), well into his late 80s, and remained very active as an editing member of TRIALOG – most recently as co-editor of a double issue of the journal on the subject of Ethiopia (TRIALOG 130–131) in 2017.

His passing is a great loss to all of us, Hans gave us so much, and we will always remember him!

Klaus Teschner, May 2026

Editorial (Deutsch)

Steuerung städtischer Transformationen

Die Wechselwirkungen zwischen Staat und Gesellschaft bei der Gestaltung des städtischen Raums, insbesondere an der Schnittstelle zwischen privatem und öffentlichem Bereich im Globalen Süden, sind für Wissenschaftler und Praktiker nach wie vor von Bedeutung. Diese Ausgabe enthält Beiträge, die auf der 21. N-AERUS-Konferenz zum Thema „Wandelnde Rolle des Staates bei der Förderung einer inklusiven Stadtentwicklung“ (Oktober 2022) vorgestellt wurden, die vom Fachgebiet *Nachhaltige Städte und Gemeinden* der Universität Kassel in Deutschland und dem Studiengang *Urban and Rural Planning* der Khulna-Universität in Bangladesch im Auftrag des europäischen Netzwerks N-AERUS (*Network-Association of European Researchers on Urbanisation in the South*) veranstaltet wurde. Die Themen reichten von der globalen Krise und lokalen Herausforderungen bis hin zu Ideologien und politischen Strategien sowie neuen Akteuren, Dynamiken und Narrativen innerhalb der Stadtentwicklung.

Die hier vorgestellten Beiträge beleuchten, wie sozio-räumliche Ungleichheiten durch das Zusammenspiel verschiedener am Planungsprozess beteiligter Akteure (re)produziert werden, und machen so die ambivalente Rolle des Staates bei der Förderung der Stadtentwicklung und der Suche nach Strategien zum Gemeinwohl sichtbar. Während neoliberale Mechanismen in Planungsprozessen nach wie vor präsent sind, untersuchen die Autor*innen, wie neue Erzählungen an Einfluss gewinnen und ausgrenzenden und sogar gewalttätigen städtischen Prozessen Legitimität verleihen, die den Globalen Süden weiterhin prägen. Darüber hinaus heben sie eine breite Palette von Interventionsebenen und deren Verflechtungen hervor, die einen direkten Einfluss auf das Leben der Menschen haben.

Hossain et al. untersuchen den aktuellen Diskurs über Strategien zur Anpassung an den Klimawandel und zur Resilienz auf nationaler Ebene in Bangladesch sowie die Herausforderungen bei deren Integration in die Praxis der lokalen Stadtplanung und -gestaltung. Die Autor*innen zeigen die Schwierigkeiten bei der Beseitigung struktureller Ungleichheiten innerhalb des bestehenden Rahmens von geberfinanzierten Ad-hoc-Projekten auf und betonen die Bedeutung der Zusammenarbeit zwischen Akteuren auf Mikro- und Makroebene. **Xiao** wechselt zu einem anderen politischen und geografischen Kontext und konzentriert sich auf ländliche Gebiete in China. Ihre Arbeit zeigt aufkommende und sich wandelnde Akteursnetzwerke und Machtver-

hältnisse im Rahmen der jüngsten entwicklungsorientierten Landübertragungen im ländlichen Raum auf. Direkter und indirekter Widerstand von marginalisierten Gruppen kann durchaus Macht entfalten und starre Hierarchien – wie etwa zwischen dem Staat und Dorfbewohnern ohne Landrechte – überwinden.

Rosens Beitrag beleuchtet das soziale Konstrukt, das eine bewusste Trennung zwischen formaler und informeller Urbanisierung schafft und in der Planungspraxis nach wie vor fortbesteht. Anhand einer Untersuchung der Wasser- und Mobilitätsinfrastrukturen in Arequipa, Peru, führt der Autor hybride Urbanismen ein, um zu untersuchen, wie sich formale und informelle Praktiken bei der Bereitstellung grundlegender Infrastruktur ergänzen und miteinander verknüpfen. Schließlich nutzen **Banerjee et al.** Biopolitik und Hygienisierung als konzeptuellen Rahmen um zu analysieren, wie während der COVID-19-Pandemie eine Stadtpolitik vorangetrieben wurde, die bestehende Ungleichheiten reproduzierte, indem sie innovative und inkrementelle Überlebensstrategien in indischen Städten wie Mumbai zerstörte.

Einerseits zeigen die Beiträge, dass bestimmte Muster der Aushandlung und Nutzung städtischer Räume fortbestehen – Muster, die sich im Zusammenspiel von Bewohnern, Institutionen und Zivilgesellschaft beobachten lassen und in der wissenschaftlichen Literatur sichtbar werden. Nach wie vor erkennen wir Zwischenräume, Strategien zur Gestaltung des öffentlichen Raums und der Infrastruktur, Durchlässigkeit zwischen dem Formellen und dem Informellen sowie fortwährende Praktiken der Selbsthilfe. Andererseits verleihen neue Narrative wie die Anpassung an den Klimawandel oder Ad-hoc-Reaktionen auf neu auftretende Bedrohungen wie die COVID-19-Pandemie bestimmten Akteuren – etwa staatlichen Vertretern, Gebern und einzelnen privaten Akteuren – Legitimität, die ihre bevorzugte Stadtentwicklung voranzutreiben. In diesem Zusammenhang beobachten wir auch, wie sich die am stärksten betroffenen Gruppen, wie etwa Dorfbewohner ohne Landtitel, anpassen und wie sich neue intermediäre Akteure, wie professionalisierte zivilgesellschaftliche Organisationen, herausbilden.

In Anlehnung an die wissenschaftliche Arbeit darüber, wie der Staat inklusive Stadtentwicklung im Globalen Süden gestaltet, bekräftigt diese Sonderausgabe die Aktualität von Forschung, die sich auf die sich ständig wandelnde Interaktion zwischen den an städtischen Prozessen beteiligten Akteuren, Kontinuitäten und Brüchen konzentriert. Gleichzeitig unterstreicht sie, wie wichtig es ist, zu verstehen, wie betroffene Gruppen und Gemeinschaften darauf reagieren und sich daran anpassen. Wir beobachten, lernen, sammeln und teilen weiterhin Wissen in der Hoffnung, dass eine gerechte Urbanisierung entsteht.

Impressum/Imprint

Herausgeber von TRIALOG / editor: TRIALOG e.V.,
Verein zur Erforschung des Planens und Bauens in
Entwicklungsländern <www.trialog-journal.de>

Postadresse für Redaktion und Verein / address:
TRIALOG e.V. c/o A 53 Habitat Unit, TU Berlin
Straße des 17. Juni 152, 10623 Berlin

Vertrieb / distributor:
ISSN Nr.: 0724-6234; V.i.S.d.P.: Dorcas Nthoki Nyamai
Redaktion / volume editors: Lorena Melgaço and Umut Kienast-Duyar

Satz / layout: Eleonora Silva, Caracas
Proofreading: Bryin Abraham, Berlin
Druck / print: bis500, Klicks GmbH, Ilmenau
Umschlag / front and back cover: «Last Village» in China,
by Gaoli Xiao

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GLS Bank 44774 Bochum, SWIFT: GENODEM1GLS
IBAN: DE06 4306 0967 1237 2813 00

**TRIALOG 158/159 kostet / costs 24,- € + Vers. / postage
Stand / up-dated: 03/2026**

