

**Book of Abstracts:**

**Postgraduate workshop in memory of  
Associate Professor Michael Gunder**

***Ideological Fantasies in Planning Practices***

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# **Neoliberal fantasies within public housing policy in New Zealand**

**Penny Gaze**

## **Master of Urban Planning**

Gunder and Hillier's (2009) work on empty signifiers and ideological fantasies in planning provided a comprehensive framework with which to undertake my masters research dissertation analysing recent public housing reforms in New Zealand. Based on Gunder's theory of ideological fantasies, I examined two pieces of legislation – the Kainga Ora Act: Homes and Communities 2019 and Urban Development Act 2020 – to understand whether they are yet another continuation of neoliberal housing policies or if they are a step towards making a real contribution to providing public housing for low-income groups. I undertook a discourse analysis of these two pieces of legislation and uncovered numerous empty signifiers that conceal underlying economic objectives and overstate social objectives of affordability, choice and inclusion without any real protective mechanisms. I conclude, in line with Gunder & Hillier's (2009) work, that there is a need for housing policy makers and planners to acknowledge and critically reflect on these empty signifiers that our policies continue to be filled with. Instead, our approach housing – and development planning as a whole - should be from a place of genuine empathy and a responsibility and willingness to care for others in order to move away from the continuation of ideological fantasies that perpetuate neoliberal systems and associated inequalities.

# **The Planning Framework of Smart Cities with emphasis on Social Inclusion, case study: Auckland, New Zealand**

**Atefe Malekkhani**

**PhD Candidate in Planning**

As urban populations grow increasingly diverse, many cities are turning to technology and smart city hubs to build more liveable environments and improve the delivery of public services. These initiatives have the potential to expand access to city services, improve public engagement, and spur economic development. However, smart city planning and implementation shortcomings, coupled with the digital divide between different population segments, might unintentionally leave some communities behind. Social inclusion is a concept that indicates the process of improving the terms which individuals and groups take part in society- improving the ability, opportunity, and dignity of those disadvantaged on the basis of their identity. To date, considering citizens' perceptions about and perspectives of smart city development is seen as a sound strategy for many political and administrative leaders. This study will examine the question that how urban planning efforts to create smart cities using smart technology can improve social inclusion. One of the big issues for local government and its communities in Auckland is social issues including inequality, unaffordable housing, and community safety. Several projects in the field of smart city are being planning and implementing in Auckland, but it considers that there is no framework to improve social inclusion. The focus of the paper is thus the potential of Smart Cities to develop new possibilities to reduce social isolation and to increase new forms of autonomy, and the factors to have in consideration to avoid digital-divide in Auckland city.

# **Investigation on a Holistic Approach to Urban Poverty Alleviation In Kabul: From Assessment to Planning**

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Cities can provide significant economic and social growth possibilities if managed appropriately. Urban areas are fundamental to national economies as engines of economic growth and focal spots for essential activities such as trade, commerce, industry, and government administration. Nonetheless, despite these advantages, cities are not without problems. Most cities in developing countries faced challenges such as shortage of basic services, informal settlement development, and the urbanization of poverty. However, the most significant source of concern is the enormous rise in urban poor, particularly in the developing countries and Global South. Afghanistan is not exception, where access to services is minimal across urban areas. Nevertheless, Kabul, the capital of Afghanistan, has been affected more than other cities, where two major issues are associated with urban poverty and informality: 1. Lack of adequate urban economic infrastructure and services hurts the poor urban groups significantly in terms of lost economic opportunities and a decline in human and economic capital. 2. Absence of sufficient urban planning, legislation, and regulatory instruments to address urban economic infrastructure deficiency. Inadequate economic infrastructure and services prevent industries from flourishing and agricultural products from promptly reaching local and international markets. On the other hand, land use policies determine a city's economic performance. Consequently, urban planning is required to effectively steer the development in Kabul city to drive economic and social growth. Therefore, it is critical to conduct researches in Kabul to determine a holistic urban planning approach to

# **Ontologies, Heritage and Planning**

**Nicola Short**

## **PhD Candidate in Planning**

My project is situated in the ‘in-between’ of different heritage ontologies and ‘heritage assemblages’. In this respect it is post-positivist planning (Sandercock, 2000; Derrida, 1998) exploring the narratives and meaning making of contemporary heritage planning. The linguistic turn (Fisher and Forester, 1993), heritage ontologies (Harrison, 2013) and assemblages are a strand of Critical Heritage Theory (CHT) which are concerned with ways of being and dimension(s) of reality<sup>1</sup> understanding and existence<sup>2</sup>, the ontological turn and how these function at the intersections of bureaucracies, places and people. Through examining the different values and perceptions of cultural heritage landscapes and the manner in which the functions of governments, Local and Central, communities, iwi and hapu assemble around these concepts the research explores the “in-between or third space, where hybrid possibilities are produced in, and through, language and new positions emerge through negotiation” (Harrison, 2012, 251).

Critical Heritage Theory is a movement within the heritage sector which aims to critically address the role of heritage in power relations. It challenges the existing Authorised Heritage Discourse (AHD) on the basis that: “[H]eritage is used to construct, reconstruct and negotiate a range of identities and social and cultural values and meanings in the present” (Smith, 2006, 36). A CHT approach to heritage law, planning and policy in Aotearoa New Zealand, or AHD as it operates in Aotearoa New Zealand, needs to be rooted in the role of heritage in treaty relationships and associated Indigenous rights. My research is an exploration of heritage ontologies in Aotearoa New Zealand, focussing on the initial Te Tiriti partners, Māori and Pākehā, however from a methodological perspective it is anticipated that the principles and associated enquiry could be applied to a diversity of ontologies and cultural heritage planning within western colonised states.<sup>2</sup>

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1 Salmond 2012: 121, 135

2 Harrison 2018: 13-65