

Sessions

at the “1st International and Interdisciplinary Conference on Spatial
Methods” (SMUS Conference)
and “1st RC33 Regional Conference – Africa: Botswana”
in cooperation with ESA RN21 “Quantitative Methods”
23 – 26.09.2021, Gaborone, Botswana

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Rules for Session Organization (According to GCSMUS Objectives and RC 33 Statutes)

1. There will be **no conference fees**.
2. The conference language is **English**. All papers therefore need to be presented in English.
3. All sessions have to be **international**: Each session should have speakers from at least two countries (exceptions will need good reasons).
4. Each paper must contain a **methodological problem** (any area, qualitative or quantitative).
5. There will be several calls for abstracts via the GCSMUS, RC33 and RN21 Newsletters. To begin with, session organizers can prepare a call for abstracts on their own initiative, then at a different time, there will be a common call for abstracts, and session organizers can ask anybody to submit a paper.
6. GCSMUS, RC33 and RN21 members may distribute these calls via other channels. GCSMUS members and session organizers are expected to actively advertise their session in their respective scientific communities.
7. Speakers can only have **one talk per session**. This also applies for joint papers. It will not be possible for A and B to present at the same time one paper as B and A during the same session. This would just extend the time allocated to these speakers.
8. Session organizers may present a paper in their own session.
9. Sessions will have a length of 90 minutes with a maximum of 4 papers or a length of 120 minutes with a maximum of 6 papers. Session organizers can invite as many speakers as they like. The number of sessions depends on the number of papers submitted to each session. E.g. if 12 good papers are submitted to a session, there will be two sessions with a length of 90 minutes each with 6 papers in each session.
10. Papers may only be rejected for the conference if they do not present a methodological problem (as stated above), are not in English or are somehow considered by session organizers as not being appropriate or relevant for the conference. Session organizers may ask authors to revise and resubmit their paper so that it fits these requirements. If session organizers do not wish to consider a paper submitted to their session, they should inform the author and forward the paper to the local organizing team who will find a session where the paper fits for presentation.
11. Papers directly addressed to the conference organising committee (and those forwarded from session organizers) will be offered to other session organizers (after proofing for quality). The session organizers will have to decide on whether or not the paper can be included in their session(s). If the session organizers think that the paper does not fit into their session(s), the papers should be sent back to the conference organizing committee as soon as possible so that the committee can offer the papers to another session organizer.

1 Decolonizing Social Science Methodology – Towards African Epistemologies

Session Organizers: Monageng Mogalakwe and Shamsul Alam (Botswana and Bangladesh)

Colonialism was a direct political control of people of a given territory by a foreign power. Usually, if not always, colonialism was accompanied by permanent settlements, or occupation, by people from the colonizing power, such as the British, French, or Germans. The colonized people were mainly in the continents of Africa, Asia, and Latin America. At the experiential level, colonialism was really the political control of one race by another, with the colonial settlers invariably being ‘Western’, ‘European’, and ‘White’, and the colonized being the ‘Other’. But colonialism was also, simultaneously, about the production of ideological justifications of such control, which justifications involved the creation of a perception in the ‘Other’ of the superiority of the colonizer, hence the asymmetrical power relations that characterized the relationship between the two agents’. This condescension encompassed all aspects of the ‘Other’s’ systems (i.e. the economic, cultural, political, legal, etc. systems), including the epistemologies and methodologies on which such systems were predicated. All these aspects required total eradication and a root and branch replacement with a Western European world view. The result was a systematic marginalization and undervaluation, if not total eradication, of the ‘Other’s’ worldview (Chilisa, 2012). The impartation of this worldview constituted the ‘process of civilization’, a process that necessarily involved a unidirectional transfer of information, skills, understanding and civilization from the European to the ‘Other’ (Serpell, 1993). This is how the Western European colonial epistemologies and methodologies came to inform and shape the development and trajectory of the social sciences, and are today regarded as the essential ingredients in the process of production of knowledge. The main objective of the proposed session is to call for the emancipation of the social sciences from Western, European epistemologies and methodologies in the production of knowledge. It is a modest attempt to reinsert African epistemologies and methodologies in the discourses of the social sciences, with a view to making the social sciences more relevant to the African context. This would constitute an exercise in decolonization of social sciences knowledge production and curation. Papers in the proposed session will be based on following assumptions: (1) That there is an inherent bias in theoretical, problem selection, methodological and research priorities in research in the social sciences in Africa, which emanates from European and American foundational social sciences literature. (2) That instead of being displaced during the post-colonial phase, these foundational works and their inherent biases were further entrenched and perpetuated globally, yielding a social sciences thinking out of sync with contemporary realities in Africa. (3) That the significance of these biases and systematic silencing of the ‘African voice’ denied a “voice of its own” to the post-colonial subjectivity. Accordingly, papers in the proposed session would include indigenous post-colonial methodologies and epistemologies. Furthermore, emphasis will be on the heterogeneous and plural methodological tradition, meant to critique and displace the global hegemony and privilege of Eurocentric/Colonialist and Orientalist discourses. We affirm that such attempts constitute a reformulation of Social Science discourse that will pave the way for the development of fresh concepts, theories, methodologies and research agendas appropriate to the African context. Two goals would guide such an important and urgent academic mission: (a) it would problematize the notion of ‘value-free’ (objective) research that is entrenched in Eurocentric conceptions, and, in the process, contemplate producing knowledge that is relevant and engaging, and that (b) such alternative methodologies do not call for a willy-nilly rejection of extant canons, but rather seeks to put emphasis on regional and local historical experiences and cultural practice i.e. contextualization. This session will cater for papers from different social science disciplines, e.g., Economics, Political Science, Psychology, Sociology etc.

2 Decolonizing Social Science Methodology – Overcoming Positivism and Constructivism

Session Organizers:

Nina Baur, Manuea Boatcă, Fraya Frehse and Johanna Hoerning (Germany and Brazil)

Epistemological approaches in the tradition of e.g. constructivism, relativism, postmodernism or postcolonialism stress that empirical findings are strongly influenced both by the researcher's social position and positioning in the world system and by the social organization of doing science. Sociology of science has provided strong empirical evidence for this position. This means that, if researchers find (dis)similarities between different social contexts, it is not clear at all, if these (dis)similarities result from actual substantial differences or rather e.g. from diverging theoretical perspectives, research styles, ways of doing methods or different reactions of the field to social science research. At the same time, approaches in the tradition of e.g. positivism or critical radicalism stress that it is important that science upholds the ideals of searching for truth, intersubjectivity and empirical evidence and that relativism itself is also a fallacy because – if you take this serious – what is the difference between “fake news” and “alternative facts” and scientific knowledge? Moreover, many research questions in the social sciences require to be sure about (dis)similarities between contexts, e.g. in social inequality research. So far, suggestions to overcome these contrasting demands on social science methodology have mostly focussed on methods, e.g. by mixing methods or applying cross-cultural survey methods. In contrast, the session aims at addressing the underlying deeper epistemological and methodological issues which remain mainly unresolved: Papers should ask how to overcome the divide between positivism and constructivism and to truly decolonize social science methodology.

3 Decolonizing Methodologies and Epistemologies: Discourse Analysis and Sociology of Knowledge

Session Organizers:

Reiner Keller, Sasa Bosancic, Florian Elliker and Annette Knaut (Germany and Switzerland)

In the mid-1990s, Stuart Hall proposed to analyze discourses as knowledge processes: “[D]iscourses are ways of referring to or constructing knowledge about a particular topic of practice: a cluster (or formation) of ideas, images and practices, which provide ways of talking about, forms of knowledge and conduct associated with, a particular topic, social activity or institutional site in society” (Hall 1997a: 4). A few years later, in her influential work on “Decolonizing methods”, Linda Tuhiwai Smith pointed out that in the context of a necessary “decolonization of methods”, the question of knowledge becomes of central importance. She argued that we should focus on questions “about the roles that knowledge, knowledge production, knowledge hierarchies and knowledge institutions play in [...] social transformation” (Smith 2012: XII), and that we should look for methodologies suited to that purpose. Taking Hall's and Smith's arguments together, discourse research integrating “discourse”, “knowledge” and “power/knowledge” seems to provide research with a concept that allows for such inquiries. The planned session therefore asks about the suitability of discourse-related as well as sociology of knowledge-related perspectives for the tasks of a contemporary and future decolonized social research that focuses on knowledge in social relations and the politics of knowledge – in Foucault's words: the power/knowledge regimes – in the North/South relationship. In particular, the potentials of the Sociology of Knowledge Approach to Discourse (SKAD) and other (related) perspectives in discourse research will be explored. Submitted proposals should therefore discuss from a methodological perspective the possibilities, pitfalls, limits and extensions of such approaches with regard to core questions of decolonization of methods. This might include discussing the need for and challenge of hermeneutic procedures, interpretation and translation of data. It might also

include examinations of the (current state of the) conceptual apparatus that has been developed primarily based on ‘northern hemisphere’ views on the discursive construction of reality in and between rather diverse social arenas and more or less ‘public’ spheres. Proposals may also address questions of the challenges and limits of the concepts of knowledge or discourse that arise from the post- and decolonial condition. The session welcomes papers on conceptual and methodological questions as well as presentations from empirical work relating to its purpose.

4 Culturally Sensitive Approaches for the Global South – Potential New Directions of Empirical Research

Session Organizers:

Wolfgang Aschauer and Thomas Herdin (Austria)

Empirical social research in the Global South should be implemented using a complex set of methodological tools to value the hidden dimensions of culture and to analyse cultural phenomena on location in a sophisticated way. With culture we refer to shared value orientations, language patterns and worldviews within social groups as well as to the so-called deeply rooted symbols guiding the behaviour of certain communities. As culturally sensitive researchers the acquisition of cultural knowledge is of utmost importance to reflect our data collection process, to accurately interpret our results and to strive for a better understanding of local living conditions. When we simply choose quantitative approaches we seek to predict, compare and generalize results but we often face limits to account for local complexities, power relations and concrete live experiences. A culturally sensitive research design thus means to be open to methods triangulation (especially favouring mixed-methods studies), to researcher’s triangulation (to strengthen the de-westernization of dominant research paradigms) and to multi-sited research. We can only understand local culture when we “deprovincialize” ourselves, when we learn to see the findings of our research with the eye of others. Especially in the intercultural field, building bridges in data interpretation is of great importance because researchers are often entangled in their value systems. Without collaborative efforts we are inclined to misinterpret data. In this session we want to reflect on best practice examples how to deal with cultural specificities in the Global South in general and in African countries in particular. We are open to empirical approaches following the quantitative logic highlighting issues such as political and social values or quality of life, wellbeing and sustainability (among many others). But we particularly encourage qualitative researchers to contribute to this session because interpretative paradigms may offer greater possibilities to build locally grounded-theories or to refer to multiple (cultural) realities which are embedded in certain communities. We specifically welcome abstracts and papers, focusing on contradictions when it comes to an intercultural dialogue of research findings or certain limits communicating home-grown research from the Global South to a wider public. Therefore the session tries to enhance a critical global dialogue on methods and aims to identify culturally sensitive research which is able to generate new theories to challenge (and therefore enrich) Western-based discourses.

5 Critical Conversations on Bagele Chilisa’s Indigenous Research Methodologies

Session Organizers: Sethunya Tshepho Mosime and Esther Nkkukku-Orlando (Botswana)

To celebrate this leading African scholar from Botswana and critically engage with her world renowned book, ‘Indigenous Research Methodologies’, this session will use this book by Bagele Chilisa as a starting point to engage with the practical and theoretical implications of indigenising methodologies, specifically for Africa. Critically drawing from the work of Chilisa, papers are invited to engage with her

work around but not limited to. Topics that could be covered are: Indigenizing methodologies or Ghettoization of African research? The meaning of ‘indigenous’ methodologies and implications for doing research that celebrates diversity and inclusivity, prospects and challenges in indigenizing methodologies, differences and similarities between decolonizing methodologies and indigenizing methodologies.

6 Policy Analysis and Political Economy

Session Organizers: Eric Yankson (Namibia)

Urban policy and politics strongly configure spatial development outcomes, particularly in terms of sustainability, climate change, physical infrastructure, public health, safety etc. This session invites submissions which examine the implications of urban policy and politics for various facets of spatial development. Specifically, papers should employ concepts in policy analysis and/or political economy to investigate the urban spatial, socio-political or ecological forms. Possible matters of investigation include how policy or political economic choices shape sustainable urbanism. Moreover, the intermeshing of public policy and political economy in configuring climate change mitigation measures by local authorities can be investigated. Also, the implications of strategic policy and political interventions for infrastructural development, public health, safety etc. could be explored. Papers can also examine how the nature of spatial development in turn shapes the policy and political economic choices available to municipalities. Accepted submissions should employ relevant methodological approaches and demonstrate how these techniques enrich the discourse on policy analysis and/or political economy.

7 Researching the History of Postcolonial States with Qualitative Methods

Session Organizers: Johannes Becker (Germany)

In this session we welcome contributions which deal with the social history of postcolonial states from the perspective of the biographical trajectories and family histories of everyday actors. How did they experience, navigate, and shape state and institution building, and the gradual establishment of borders, and what did this mean for geographical and social mobility up to the present? Further questions concern the methodological possibilities to approach these topics: Which methods are suitable for studying such complex socio-historical processes (e.g. multi-generational interviews, family discussions, analyses of photographs, mappings)? Which possibilities do case studies offer in such a research context? What are the limits of these approaches?

8 Hermeneutics – Interaction – Social Structure

Session Organizers: Kai-Olaf Maiwald (Germany)

In the last decades, the concept of “social structure” has been often addressed within the frames of “micro/macro” or “subjectivism/objectivism”. Predominant in these approaches is the idea of a tension between “individual actions” and “structure”. “Structure” is conceived as a macro-phenomenon which needs to be theoretically mediated in terms of “aggregation” of more or less rational individual actions (Coleman), “habitus” (Bourdieu) or “structuration” (Giddens). Even in systems theory, with its distinction of interaction, organization and society as three different levels of social structure (Luhmann), there is a notion of some macro-aspects residing “above” interaction. This

session attempts to address the concept of “social structure” in a more methodological way. Several major approaches in qualitative sociology operate under the premise that the primary sociological data are interactional data (e.g. interaction transcripts, interviews, visual recordings of interactions). What if we turn this into a theoretical perspective and state that “society” basically operates in interactions and communications (Maiwald/Suerig 2020)? Is it thus possible to identify social structure in properties of interactions? Even if we assume that certain aspects of social structure, like institutions, norms or roles, are not, in a strict sense, socially constructed in interactions, but analytically precede each specific interaction, one could still argue that it is in interaction only that they “happen” (being reproduced or transformed, refreshed or rejected). How, then, is structure formation on the interaction level conceived? What are relevant dimensions of structure in this respect? Are there limits to this interactionist approach? What about, e.g., typical macro-structures like social inequality?

9 Interpretative and Multi-Method Approaches to Global-South-Migration

Session Organizers: Arne Worm and Steve Tonah (Germany and Ghana)

This session aims to discuss potentials and challenges of, as well as innovative approaches to interpretative research on migration and mobility in the context of the Global South. Migration research – especially in societies of the “Global North” – tends to have a narrow and state-centered view on migration (e.g. focusing predominantly on economic “worth” of migration, bordering or on questions of “assimilation” or “integration”). It oftentimes neglects the complex and changing social realities of migration and mobility towards, within, and more specifically, outside of the “Global North”. Interpretative methodologies seek to understand social phenomena by giving priority to the level of everyday life, meaning of experiences, (life-)histories and (inter-)actions of ‘individuals’ and collectives, and the relations or figurations between them. Furthermore, an important principle of interpretative methodology is to be sensitive, open and adaptive towards the nature of the phenomena under research. In the context of migration and mobility, this means dealing with very dynamic processes connected to social changes on different levels. We welcome contributions, which are empirically based on qualitative-interpretative research and discuss how interpretative methods and their combination contribute to a better understanding of migration and mobility within and between societies of the Global South and Global North.

10 Process-Oriented Micro-Macro-Analysis

Session Organizers: Jannis Hergesell and Maria Norkus (Germany)

Many of the current methodological approaches are best suited to either analysing individual behaviour or social structures. In this sense, there has been a division into methods that mostly challenges questions of macro phenomena and methods that address problems on the micro-level. That also led to a division into quantitative and qualitative research methods. For current sociology analysing the social has to address the reciprocal connection between micro and macro and furthermore there need to be methods that address time as well. Methodologically this brings us to several questions: How to combine which methods, how to define the population/field of analysis? How to differentiate between micro and macro? How to conduct a temporal sampling for process-orientated methodology in multi-analysis and in cross-disciplinary ways and in what way this could spawn new cross-cultural methods and what does that mean for comparability?

11 City Networks between the Structural and the Everyday: Methods that Bridge Macro- and Micro-Perspectives for a Better Comparative Understanding of Cities

Session Organizers: Sophie Schramm and Nadine Appelhans (Germany)

For informed decision-making, cities can gain from understanding their position within a larger network of cities. For a long time, however, comparison in urban studies (such as the world city hypothesis or the global city discussion) focused on comparison of global economic performance and failed to include a large number of cities as subjects of comparison, that did not comply with the limited scope of comparative criteria. These limited scopes of comparative criteria have been criticized, yet it still remains somewhat unclear, how they can be overcome methodologically and made inclusive to the full global scope of cities and themes of comparison. This is mostly due to the fact, that different approaches exist in urban research that are often framed as opposed to each other or even mutually exclusive. One is the approach to study cities from a macro-perspective, to examine the broader structures, be they economic forces, technological innovations or social changes as explanatory factors for the evolution of cities and regions. This approach lends itself for comparative research as it identifies broader trends that might have similar impacts in different places. Another approach to understanding cities is to study them from the bottom-up, focusing on everyday experiences and practices of actors in shaping urban life and form. Related methods lend themselves to understand the particular, place-specific characteristics that make every city unique. We consider cities as complex relational entities that are shaped by an interplay between broader structural configurations and dynamics and local practices and activities (cf. Kihato 2013). We therefore argue that approaches with a focus on structural dynamics and everyday practices, can not only be combined, but they should also be combined for a better understanding of cities. However, this combination of perspectives poses methodological challenges, particularly in terms of research comparing cities, as the description of the internal interplay needs to be abstracted, without losing the specificities. Our aim for this panel is to accept this challenge and to discuss methods that bridge the divide between approaches focusing on the “structural” on the one hand and the “everyday” on the other, while being able to place the individual urban accounts within the larger realm of city-systems. We invite contributions focusing on one or more of the following questions: (1) Which particular methods, sets of methods and research designs lend themselves to understand cities through everyday practices as well as structural forces? (2) Which methods allow comparative urban research that pays attention to the common trends as well as to the particularities of cities? (3) What are suggestions for expanding criteria of urban comparison and proposals for heterodox descriptions of city-networks?

12 Methodologies for the Investigation Spatial Transformation Processes

Session Organizers: Gabriela Christmann (Germany)

In spatial research, the insight has become a matter of course that spaces (like cities, neighbourhoods or urban places) must be conceived as a “social construct”, i.e. as a socio-spatial fabric. So far, however, insufficient attention has been paid to the fact that socio-spatial fabrics are not static but rather in a process of constant transformation, or in other words: that they are permanently “reconstructed” by social actors. In this context, it is a question by which methodological tools socio-spatial transformation or reconstruction processes can be investigated empirically. Spatial transformation may happen by urban actors who develop a new perspective on some aspects of a particular place and discuss the place in a new way. This may come along with changing patterns of space-related practices, whereas existing social and material arrangements initially remain

unchanged. As a consequence of a changing perspective and a different public communication about the place, however, after a period of time some responsible urban actors may decide to redevelop selected run-down buildings, to tear down others or to build new ones, all of which will gradually change even the built structure. This is, of course, only one possibility of spatial transformation. In the session we will focus on the question of how such spatial transformation processes can be explored, or to be more concrete, how the social reconstruction of spaces can be methodologically investigated. We invite papers that – by the example of sustainable urban development processes or other spatial transformations – suggest qualitative, quantitative or mixed-methods approaches, be it in terms of long-term statistical analysis, discourse analyses, participant observation, visual methods, other methods or a combination of different methodological tools.

13 Human Centric Approaches on Urban Futures

Session Organizers: Angela Million and Gaurav Raheja (Germany and India)

The continuous re-figuration of the built environment amidst dynamic human cultures makes the urban spaces we inhabit a palimpsest of multiple re-imaginings and alternatives in interdisciplinary spatial research and practice. The session reflects on methodologies highlighting human-space interactions, with an increased emphasis on urban futures in an ongoing pandemic and a post covid world. It combines future study, research by design, strategic foresight and action research that engage participants and articulate complexity and criticalities. Human needs as centric approaches to understand experience, behavior and cultures in urban contexts of future remains a key focus of this theme.

14 Methods of Architectural Research

Session Organizers: Silke Steets (Germany)

Each building, once erected, spatially structures certain parts of the world for us, and we can either adopt this structure, or reject it. For example, a building directs our gaze through lines of sight, or through pictorial or graphic elements, e.g. in a museum. Moreover, semiotic as well as spatial cues help us to understand the social situation we happen to be part of: A restaurant's dining room, for instance, is different from its kitchen, which is why waiters (who understand the cues) behave differently, depending on whether they are in the dining room or the kitchen. Buildings also convey the way in which we can relate to each other communicatively, e.g. a lecture hall is spatially different from a seminar room (so are the discussions), and they pre-figure courses of action, for instance when we're shopping in a supermarket. Rather in terms of their materiality, buildings create atmospheres that affect us (for example in a stadium or a church building) or they simply get in our way of which prisons are good examples. The panel is intended to explore whether social and cultural science perspectives on architecture can help to inspire an interdisciplinary spatial research. In terms of social theory, it seems to be most fruitful to understand buildings not only as passive expressions of the social in the non-social world of objects, but as material products of human social actions that act back on them. This opens up a wide range of empirical questions that form the background for addressing the methodological problems this session is actually aimed at. With regard to processes of planning and erecting a building empirical projects might ask: How do architects intervene in a place with their design? How do administrative regulations and the building industry pre-structure design work? Once a building is erected and 'there', empirical projects look at what it 'does' by standing where it stands and ask: How does it direct gazes and movements? What meaning do people ascribe to a building,

both through using it practically and through talking, discussing or fighting about it? Has it become a symbol of something? And, finally, with regard to its use, empirical projects ask: How is a building actually used? By whom? For what? Is it being used according to its original idea? Or is it being reused or even alienated? If yes, what happens to the original idea? What levels of meaning are attributed to the building with a possible new use? While these questions could provide some empirical background for the debate, the focus of the session will be on the reflection of methodological problems associated with architectural research and on methods that could help to better understand the social significance of buildings. I therefore invite papers that present and discuss – the connection between the theoretical conceptualization of architecture and methodological questions associated with this – methods that help to capture the materiality and/or spatiality of architectural objects – arts- and design-based methods that explore buildings (or aspects of them) – spatial methods that help to understand floor plans and the arrangement of rooms – methods for analyzing visual and textual discourses about the meaning of buildings – methods for analyzing the (sometimes conflicting) (re-)uses of buildings – methods that help to capture the atmospheric qualities of buildings – methods that help to understand the semiotic elements of buildings

15 Art and Design Based-Research, Cross-Disciplinary Approaches for Material Knowledge Production

Session Organizers: Ilana Boltvinik and Nora Morales (Mexico)

Design and arts-based research has received much attention in the last years as it has extended research possibilities to more intuitive and material-centered epistemology. It is also able to disrupt the foundations of hegemonic forms of knowledge production, resulting in a more inclusive, intersubjective and social construction. Inherently, it is cross-disciplinary and ground-based in such a way that it encourages citizen science as a solving problem strategy, as well as visual literacy as a way to examine and analyze space. For this session, we propose to address methodological dilemmas such as cross-disciplinary communication and relation-building, deconstruction of worldviews, the role of uncertainty in the implementation of participatory and action research methods centered on the process and not necessarily the outcome. Some formats of qualitative based research methods to explore are participatory mapping, installations, books and other multi-format products. We welcome all types of experimental papers and case studies, as well as theoretical and methodological perspectives that approach any of these dilemmas.

16 The Contribution of Urban Design to the Qualitative Methodology Discourse

Session Organizers: Shamin Golrokh (Iran)

To understand, explain and promote the quality of the urban environment, the discipline of urban design remains subject to knowledge and analysis from other disciplines that consider the social nature of space. Recently, the number of researches in the field of urban design that focus on the lived experiences of people by applying qualitative methodologies, e.g. ethnography, phenomenology, grounded theory etc. are growing. Emphasizing the contextual attributes of people experience, the qualitative research has empowered urban design to consider more cultural and local differentiations. However, these methodologies are primarily rooted and developed within other human sciences such as psychology, sociology, anthropology, nursing, etc. Despite the relatively large body of literature about qualitative research methodologies especially the text-based data analysis methods, Urban Design is still borrowing from other disciplines and did not develop actively compatible and identical

methods. Emphasizing the methodological knowledge within the urban design discipline, this session invites theoretical as well as empirical and self-reflexive papers considering the following questions: What is urban design contribution in the qualitative methodology discourse, within and beyond its disciplinary boundaries? What are the disciplinary obstacles, limitations, and potentials within Urban Design in developing relevant qualitative methods? What are educational, institutional and local challenges for developing and conducting qualitative research in urban design? If and how other disciplines benefit from qualitative urban design studies? How methodological knowledge of urban design – e.g. spatial analysis, visual language, observation, etc. – can contribute to the qualitative methodology discourse? How and if qualitative methods in urban design facilitate understanding of the materiality of social space?

17 Mapping for Change? Resituating 'Slow Time'. Craftwo/manship and Power

Session Organizers: Natasha Aruri, Katleen De Flander, Andreas Brück and Tim Nebert (Germany)

This session focusses on practices of mapping in relation to the contemporary urban polycrises, and therein an investigation of necessary steps to decolonize maps and modes of their production. From this perspective, the session seeks to labor and articulate particular methods, frameworks and ideas that would serve countering the image of mapping as merely scientific and neutral. It explores how to bring to the forefront its apolitical nature as an instrument that perpetuates power relations and influences understandings of the world through underlying (re)engineering agendas (intellectually or otherwise) for the (re)production of spaces and social relations. While acknowledging that we are living in proliferating uncertainty and have conditioned and limited foresight, the driving question is: How can urbanists who seek to impact the current and forthcoming future urban transformations re-think and re-situate mapping – as method, tool and process – such that it serves shifting powers towards practices and policies that improve the everyday of people and establishes (more) socio-environmental justice? The session focuses on the practices of mapping in relation to the contemporary urban polycrises, which the session regards as perpetuated by violence and hegemony, and therewith, it is an investigation of necessary steps to decolonize mapping, maps and modes of their production. In this context, the session argues the need to ground intersectionality as a concept with spatial materializations, and how principles of feminist data visualizations can orient mapping processes to establish new frames of seeing our everyday; by revealing the spatial articulations, dimensions and relations of power differentials, structural violence, dispossession and hegemony. Therein, the session explores how data and data visualizations can challenge and shift these paradigms, and argue that changing the rules-of-the-game of mapping requires resituating 'slow time' and experiential elements at the center of mapping processes. This is essential for nurturing tacit knowledge and therewith a new kind of mapping craftwo/manship that is able to capture and articulate the complexity and messiness of our urban present being, and probably our futures. One of the goals this project had set for itself was to identify methodologies and tactical-mapping strategies that could be conducive to endeavors aimed towards a more just and environmentally conscious urban, whether those of institutions or civil struggles. Through transdisciplinary dialogue our project explored modalities for navigating contemporary complexities and ideas for methodologies that could give rise to cumulating and layering different mapping strategies, typologies, and tactics (STT's) for tackling urban polycrises.

18 Applying Research Methods in Interdisciplinary Urban Sustainability Projects

Session Organizers: Claire Wagner and Jacques du Toit (South Africa)

As some research-intensive universities encourage interdisciplinary projects as a means to address global sustainability goals, much of the literature discusses the challenges that are experienced by collaborators across disciplines, such as difficulties in communication and grasping interdisciplinary contexts, and underestimating the time, effort and institutional red tape involved. Consequently, interdisciplinary research tends to be limited to the natural sciences where research is often conducted within more structured and close-knit networks. Interdisciplinary research, however, includes many benefits, such as broader networks for students and faculty, students being more engaged in collaborative projects, transferring knowledge across disciplines, etc. This session aims to explore methods appropriate for studying urban sustainability that harness the strengths of various disciplines, particularly across the spatial and social sciences. These may include interdisciplinary collaborations that make use of approaches such as experiential or project-based learning to train students in methods of urban sustainability research. Any recommendations for modifying institutional structures to enhance interdisciplinary research and teaching will also make a meaningful contribution.

19 The Role of 'Productive Interactions' between Researchers and Stakeholders in Creating Rigorous and Relevant Research for Urban Sustainability

Session Organizers: Jacques du Toit and Claire Wagner (South Africa)

Research is increasingly expected to be rigorous as well as relevant to policy and practice, especially for social and spatial disciplines that are meant to contribute towards urban sustainability through evidence-based policy and practice. Yet, to what extent is current research both rigorous and relevant to policy and practice, and what are the factors that appear to contribute towards research being both rigorous and relevant? The field of research evaluation proposes various models to help explain research relevance, particularly in terms of utilisation and social impact. The interaction model, for example, suggests that relevance is largely influenced by various interactions between researchers and stakeholders throughout the research process. Such interactions are termed 'productive' if they lead to research having some form of social impact. The focus of this session is to present examples of research from social and spatial disciplines that proved to be both (1) rigorous i.e., the research has been accepted by peers, typically through publications, and (2) relevant, i.e., the research has had some form of social impact beyond academia and policy, particularly in terms of helping to bring about tangible examples of sustainable or low-impact urban development. Presentations should focus on the various factors that have possibly contributed towards rigour and relevance, especially through 'productive interactions' that took place between researchers and stakeholders during the research process. For example, what role did the following factors play: the context of the research (different organisational needs and interests), the processes followed (linkages between researchers and stakeholders), the methods used (quantitative, qualitative, or participatory), and the dissemination strategies? The idea is to facilitate a dialogue around and a more nuanced understanding of the role of productive interactions between researchers and stakeholders in creating research that proved to be both rigorous and relevant for urban sustainability.

20 Knowledge Creation in Informal Settlements: The Process, Ethics and Outputs of Co-Productive and Community-Led Research Methods

Session Organizers: Jakub Galuszka and Aditya Kumar (Germany and South Africa)

The methodological debate has increasingly recognized the relevance of conducting research ‘with’ communities rather than ‘on’ them. Particularly within the context of informal settlements in Southern cities, this means progressing from conventional research methods to participatory and co-productive approaches. Those encompass solutions in which communities actively co-gather data with a researcher (for instance through participatory urban appraisal methods) or produce data by themselves. The latter includes examples of community-based mapping and enumeration, which are utilized by communities in their efforts to gain full citizenship rights and wider access to services. On one hand, these methods reduce power-dependencies in the researcher-community relationship, promote engaged academia and stimulate embedded research generating real social impacts. On the other hand, the close relationship between community groups and researchers may be tainted by the loss of objectivity in the research process, refocusing attention on already ‘empowered’ communities as well as limited critique concerning the methodological and practical aspect of the approach. This session invites papers which critically investigate these issues and discuss the prospects of co-productive and community-based methods on research process, policy debate and urban development practice. Papers concentrating on the practical impacts, ethical issues and methodological considerations are equally welcomed in the session.

21 Fieldwork in the Global South – Shedding Light into the Black Box

Session Organizers:

Wolfgang Aschauer, Martin Weichbold, Dimitri Prandner and Benjamin Baisch (Austria)

In recent years developing countries have become part of major worldwide surveys (such as the World-Value Survey or the Gallup World Poll among others) and specific cross-national barometers (such as the Afro-Barometer, the Arab-Barometer, the Asian-Barometer or the Latino-Barometer) have been established in the Global South. Most surveys in developing countries continue to be conducted face-to-face because large-scale internet and telephone use is still not sufficient to guarantee representative samples. This leads on the one hand to higher response rates compared to the (over) established survey industry in the West. But on the other hand we know very little about ongoing fieldwork procedures. Here, potential biases are in general rarely reported all over the world and specific challenges in the Global South may deserve particular attention. How do we deal with certain cultural or gender norms in interview constellations? How do we guarantee an appropriate interview situation (e.g. quiet places, privacy and the avoidance of bystanders during the interview)? How do interviewer characteristics such as gender, race, ethnicity, religiosity or interviewer experience shape the answers of the respondents? How do these interviewer characteristics interact with certain questions (e.g. factual and attitudinal questions, social and political values, complex scales or open-ended questions)? How do we strive for adequate responses in the developing world with lower levels of literacy, or multi-ethnic societies with various languages and local dialects? How can we use technological advancement (such as electronic devices, audio-recording, GPS-tracking among others) to monitor interviewees and to assure a better quality-control of the fieldwork process? In the session, we particularly welcome contributions focusing on various aspects around fieldwork in large-scale surveys and we are particularly interested in innovative solutions to improve the survey quality in challenging environments. Additionally, we also encourage researchers conducting small-scale pilot studies, pretest-studies or survey experiments to submit abstracts to our session. In general, we

intend to compare potential interviewer effects, measurement errors, culture-specific response styles or answering patterns in certain interview constellations to shed light on those neglected areas of research and to analyse similarities and differences in fieldwork procedures in different World regions.

22 Survey Data Quality in Interviewer-Administered Surveys in LMIC Contexts

Session Organizers:

P. Linh Nguyen, Julie de Jong and Zeina Mneimneh (United Kingdom, Germany and USA)

In low- and middle-income (LMIC) countries both within and outside Africa, interviewer-administered, face-to-face (F2F) surveys are and will remain the main data collection tool for the foreseeable future. In fact, previous research has shown that 85% of surveys in LMIC countries published in renowned social science journals between January 2010 and October 2015 were conducted in a face-to-face context. While high penetration of smartphones and internet usage facilitates the transition to often less costly self-administered mobile and web surveys in high-income countries, their absence underlies the continued reliance on face-to-face surveys in countries with fewer resources. Considerably few people in these countries, particularly in rural areas, are connected to the internet or have reliable telephone connections. Varying levels of literacy in such contexts also presents a challenge to collecting data in modes other than F2F. Therefore, telephone and web surveys for a general population survey are difficult to implement. In this setting in which both survey implementers and respondents are highly dependent on interviewers, the role of the interviewer and assessment of data quality vulnerable to error introduced by interviewers is particularly critical. However, there has been limited research in the translation of relevant quality assessment approaches to LMIC contexts. The objective of this session is to explore approaches to quality assurance and quality control relating to F2F surveys in LMIC countries. Papers will focus on how survey researchers and practitioners, particularly across Africa, consider quality in those components of the total survey error framework where interviewers are likely to introduce error. This session welcomes research on practical approaches to minimizing and assessing interviewer-related error in these contexts as well as on implementation of innovative approaches to achieving collection of high-quality data in interviewer-administered surveys.

23 Assessing the Quality of Survey Data

Session Organizers: Jörg Blasius (Germany)

This session will provide a series of original investigations on data quality in both national and international contexts. The starting premise is that all survey data contain a mixture of substantive and methodologically-induced variation. Most current work focuses primarily on random measurement error, which is usually treated as normally distributed. However, there are a large number of different kinds of systematic measurement errors, or more precisely, there are many different sources of methodologically-induced variation and all of them may have a strong influence on the “substantive” solutions. To the sources of methodologically-induced variation belong response sets and response styles, misunderstandings of questions, translation and coding errors, uneven standards between the research institutes involved in the data collection (especially in cross-national research), item- and unit non-response, as well as faked interviews. We will consider data as of high quality in case the methodologically-induced variation is low, i.e. the differences in responses can be interpreted based on theoretical assumptions in the given area of research. The aim of the session is to discuss different sources of methodologically-induced variation in survey research, how to detect

them and the effects they have on the substantive findings. Keywords: Quality of data, task simplification, response styles, satisficing.

24 Digital Methods in Action: Use, Challenges and Prospects

Session Organizers: Gabriel Faimau and Jannis Hergesell (Botswana and Germany)

The emergence of digital methods has presented various ways of studying and understanding digital phenomena in general as well as online and internet-related research in particular. This includes studies of online archived objects, online spatial analysis, social media and social networking, online network mapping, and various online social, political, economic and cultural references. Internet and online environment researchers have lately focused on addressing the following issues: How digital methods provide tools to respond to the challenge of Big Data on the one hand and how digital methods provide a base for what scholars call "online groundedness" in order to examine various socio-political change and cultural conditions shaped by online dynamics and constellations on the other? These digital methods widen the scope of researchers and change research practices and subjects fundamentally. However, this also raises "classical" questions of empirical social research: How are sampling strategies, data collection and methodological procedures changing? Do conventional quality criteria need to be adapted or supplemented? This session provides a unique platform to reflect on practical use of digital methods in various research fields and map out frameworks for exploring new possibilities for online social science research as well as encourage critical discussions on recent trends in the field of digital methods. We invite papers that address ways of doing and using digital methods, including but not limited to: Internet research and methodological innovation: Digital methods of social media research. Digital methods in studies of online political discourses and participation. Ethics and questions of digital research. Practical use and challenges of doing digital research and methods. Mixing methods in researching digital landscape. Insights from dealing with Big Data. Techniques and challenges of online data collection. Interdisciplinary cooperation between technical and social sciences on digital methods. Enhancement of "established" research designs by digital methods. Online participatory action research.

25 Researching Climate Change Communication: Methodological Challenges and Opportunities in the Digital Era

Session Organizers: Anthony M. Gunde, Victor Chikaipa and Jimmy Kainja (Malawi)

Over the years, communication scholars have used multiple methods to research and analyse climate change discourses. In the advent of new media technologies, climate change communication and discourses have spanned from the traditional modes of communication such as the radio, print and television to emerging platforms including the social media. This has transformed the ways audiences encode and interpret issues revolving around climate change. In addition, the emergence of social media technologies allows researchers to analyse data on the dynamics of climate change debates with unprecedented breadth and scale. These platforms have expanded the research areas for studying changing patterns in interpersonal and institutional communication on climate change. At the same time this development has brought new methodological challenges and opportunities for studying content, context and climate change representations. This session is aimed at stimulating innovative investigations into the conceptual and methodological challenges and or opportunities of climate change communication research in the emergent new media digital technologies and directions for future researchers from an African perspective. Key words: climate change;

communication; research; digital research. Africa Type of papers for the session should be around but not limited to: comparing methods for analysing climate change discourses; methods for analysing the spatial dimension of land use in African social-political environments; epistemological challenges and ethical dilemmas in researching climate change communication in the digital era; climate change in the press, visual/textual analyses; semiotics and climate change communication; media framing, agenda-setting and climate change; qualitative/quantitative studies of climate change perception among African communities; media portrayal of climate change: longitudinal or case studies; social media use and climate change protests; climate change engagement in the digital era; corpus studies on climate change communication; meta-discourses on climate change communication; new media climate change discourses.

26 Money and Digitalisation in the Global South

Session Organizers: Sean Maliehe and Jürgen Schraten (South Africa and Germany)

The session addresses the methodological problem of studying the rapid changes in the usage of money, the procedures of payments and the marketization as a consequence of digitisation with a special focus on the distinctions formal/informal and rural/urban in the Global South. It calls for contributions that reveal the methodological challenges of the multiple forms of money usage in empirical studies. Money itself is a paradoxical social institution because it requires the existence of a network of money users, which it generates itself. Therefore, any empirical study of money usage has to deal with the structural element of a network and the individual agency of payment at the same time. The empirical study of money in African contexts revealed a high diversity in its forms and practices, which resulted in a methodological preference for the study of monetary agency. But digitisation, at the latest, brought the importance of structures back on the agenda, as the organisers of the session in their publications on mobile money (S. Maliehe) and consumer credit (J. Schraten) in Southern Africa have shown. The methodological challenge of the structure/agency-distinction in the Global South contexts is increased by two additional and overlapping poles of tension. The well-known distinction between rural and urban social conditions is complicated by the difference between formal and informal economic activity. While the former refers to the qualitative effect of a quantitative population density, the latter addresses the quantitative limitations due to qualitative differences regarding the economies of scale. Digitalisation keeps the promise to solve both. The session invites papers which address the methodological challenges of studying money and payments under the conditions of digitalisation in regard to the tense poles of rural/urban and formal/informal in the Global South.

27 Methods in Food Studies Research

Session Organizers: Linda Hering and Julia Fülling (Germany)

Food Studies as an interdisciplinary field is interested in the historical, economic, cultural, social, and political investigation of the production, processing, distribution, purchase, preparation, incorporation and disposal of food. The scales on which research in food takes place therefore varies from the global scale to the individual or household level and even more connects those different scales. In our session, we would like to discuss methodological issues that arise from the investigation of a topic as complexity such as food in its manifold functions, meanings and entanglements. Papers should address one of the following questions either at a general methodological level or at using a concrete example of a specific research project: (1) Which are appropriate methods to analyse topics

such as food consumption practices, governance, sustainability, (alternative) food networks, food waste etc.? (2) Which data are suitable for which kind of research questions and how can they be collected? How valid are results drawn from the different kind of data?(3) Where and how can data be collected? Which sampling strategies can be applied and how does it affect the generalization of results? (4) When and why is it useful to use a mixed-method or multi-method approach? And which data collection and analysing methods fit best? What are the challenges which the researcher faced then? (5) What are further challenges and opportunities of food studies research? Papers debating general methodological questions and papers discussing specific problems using a concrete data type in a specific research project are both equally welcome.

28 Locating the Religious/Secular in Africa: Methodological Challenges Conveners

Session Organizers: Ludovic Lado and Gabriel Faimau (Tschad and Botswana)

Although scholars have questioned the relevance of Western models of secularization in the Global South, including Africa, little has been said about the related methodological implications with respect to studying religion. Secularism as the ideology of the promotion of the secular was introduced in Africa by Western colonization especially through the establishment and running of public institutions. But practice secularism is confined to a small urban intellectual elite in a continent that some have described as “inspired” (David Martin) because of the widespread predominance of religious interpretations of the world. This session seeks to explore the methodological challenges to the study of religion in African enchanted societies. The study of religion is based on a foundational distinction between the profane and the sacred, between the religious and the secular which can be traced back to the pioneers of the scientific study of religion such as Eliade, Durkheim and Weber. It is taken for granted in modern societies that secular institutions are clearly differentiated from religious realities which include objects, communities, localities, organizations, institutions, subjects, etc. How relevant is this distinction to the study of religion in African societies? At a time when classical secularization theories are tested by the resurgence of religion in international politics, one wonders whether the distinction religious/secular is useful for the study of religion in Africa. Besides, the secular/religious demarcation plays out differently in Christianity and Islam, especially when both are mobilized undermine the modern secular state and its liberal values. We invite papers that examine methodological issues around locating the religious/secular in Africa, including but not limited to the following questions: (1) How does one circumscribe the object of religious studies in a context of enchanted societies where almost everything has a religious dimension and where religious/mystical interpretations of reality inheres in individual and collective representations? (2) Is the Western model of secularization relevant to the study of religion in Africa? (3) To what extent has secularization contributed towards the rise and proliferation of new religious movements in Africa? (4) How does one locate questions around African religiosity within the context of the religious/secular debate? (5) What are the methodological implications of the religious/secular debate in the context of Africa?

29 Ethical and Methodological Dilemmas of Social Research in Violent Conflict Situations

Session Organizers: Edlyne Anugwom and Pius Adejoh (Nigeria)

The overarching goal of this session is to reflect on ethical dilemmas that researchers confront when conducting studies in violent conflict situations and how these dilemmas are overcome as well as their impact on methodologies of such research. The above concerns loom especially large in Africa where there has been proliferation of many forms of violent conflicts championed by violent non-state actors

ranging from terrorists, armed militias to violent cultists. The endemic nature of these conflicts in a good number of African nations point to the fact that we need to know more about the nature, dynamics and driving motives of these violent groups besides the very obvious consensus that these are driven by the quest for power, poverty and elite corruption. Such nuanced and reflexive knowledge would go a long way in the general efforts towards understanding, unravelling and overcoming the development retarding effects of these conflicts. Therefore, the need for in-situ research efforts as the basis of evidence-based apprehension of these groups and the conflicts they generate cannot be overstated. However, doing research in a conflict situation generates peculiar challenges and risks. Thus, such research efforts may be confronted with peculiar issues of ethics and by implication appropriate methodologies since the sensitive and overtly risky nature of such undertaking may undermine the desire and effort to abide with the main canons of social research ethics particularly issues of full disclosure and informed consent. In more cases than otherwise, the researcher is confronted with the choice over keeping to the best dictates of research ethics and not doing the study. This ambivalence challenges the innovative capacity of the researcher and often calls for engagement subtleties that one would not confront in any other research situation or environment. In view of the foregoing, the session calls for papers that address the ways and means of conducting ethical research in an on-going conflict situation and the methodologies of such undertaking. The organizers would particularly welcome submissions anchored on experience of such research undertaking as well as theoretical papers that radically interrogate the 'do-ability' of ethical research in such situations. Submissions can be guided and structured by the following issues: challenges of ethical social research in violent conflict situations; innovative strategies for overcoming peculiar ethical challenges in violent conflict situations; practical experience and lessons learnt in research in active conflict situations; methodological challenges of social research in active conflict situations, theoretical insights on ethical and methodological challenges of conflict research; ethical and methodological issues of social research with children living in situations of active conflict; ethical and methodological issues of social research with women in situations of active conflict; other submissions bordering on the general themes of ethics and methodologies of research in active conflict situations.