eprints@whiterose.ac.uk
https://eprints.whiterose.ac.uk/

— EPISTEMIC JUSTICE AND THE UNIVERSITY:
Reclaiming the academy for emancipatory urban praxis

STEPHANIE BUTCHER, TANZIL SHAFIQUE, REDENTO B. RECIO
AND ISHITA CHATTERJEE

Abstract

This essay offers provocations on the possibilities and challenges of advancing 'epistemic justice' in urban research, with particular care for the growing 'academic precariat'. We explore some of the institutional barriers and possibilities of doing collaborative justice-oriented work within urban and built environment scholarship, especially for those fixed-term, early career, casual academics, independent scholars or those with career breaks. To do so, we refer to and reframe three concepts that are core within academic institutions: ethics, engagement and excellence. We explore the potentials of the urban as a site of political struggles, the projective potential of urban disciplines and the university as an urban actor to offer our intentionalities—alternative pathways— through which we can reclaim the radical role of the university towards an emancipatory urban praxis.

Introduction: the multiplicities of epistemic justice

'The academy is not paradise. But learning is a place where paradise can be created … In that field of possibility we have the opportunity to labour for freedom … to transgress.'

bell hooks, 1994

This essay offers provocations on the possibilities and challenges of advancing 'epistemic justice' (Fricker, 2007) in the university, with particular care for the growing 'academic precariat'. It is borne of a long-simmering preoccupation faced by the four authors over four years, reflective of our circular conversations and frustrations with institutional silences. We write as early career researchers (ECRs), based broadly within the disciplines of urban studies, architecture, urban planning and geography. At the time of thinking and writing together, we have moved through different institutional and personal positions: variously as PhD researchers and postdoctoral fellows based in Australia, who have moved to the UK (working as lecturers), the Philippines and India (working as associate professors), and/or as activists and practitioners who have joined the academy. Across these shifting forms of scholarship, we share an interest in knowledge co-production and action, working with activists, NGOs, grassroots groups and research institutions to advance research and practice that can support the lived struggles of marginalized, oppressed or excluded groups. While we speak primarily in reference to our situated experiences within Australian and UK academia, we also draw from our experiences across diverse geographical and educational backgrounds. As such, these provocations are written also in recognition of the ways similar processes manifest across diverse institutions and geographies, particularly within contexts of corporatized or neoliberal Anglophone institutions within both the global South and the global North.

In framing this piece around the concept of epistemic justice, we echo Byskov (2021: 116) in asserting that unfair and unjust knowledge institutions and practices 'have the potential to reproduce and further exacerbate existing socio-economic inequalities and injustices', which we find even more apt when parsing out the intersection of the university, its discursive role in relation to urban knowledge production and the socio-material implications of its urban presence. As scholars moving within traditions of decolonial, Southern, poststructural and feminist theory, we ground our scholarship within the assumption that particular knowledge claims have been silenced, erased or marginalized over time—a product of intersecting global relations of colonialism, capitalism, racism, structuralism, patriarchy and casteism. Moreover, even within such critique of universities, their role as a key actor implicated within capitalist speculative urban production often remains unquestioned. We posit that centring such historical relations that shape knowledge production, theorization and its everyday impact on our cities is crucial to unpack the re-production of global inequalities and processes of dispossession. This includes examining the ways in which the university as an institution has operated as a 'knowledge enclosure' (Hall and Tanden, 2017; Connell, 2019) which has produced theory from a place of European and North American centrality, legitimating particular kinds of knowledge and frameworks of understanding. Just as there is no neutral education, there is no neutral research, but we often feel constrained within a wider university discourse that positions 'research excellence' in terms that may not encourage longer-term partnership and knowledge co-production, 'slow scholarship' (Berg and Seeber, 2016) or the pursuit of impacts that are practice-oriented, socially engaged, unmeasurable or intangible.

While acknowledging the broader difficulty of engaging in scholarship which speaks to epistemic justice, we feel there are particular challenges for the (ever-growing) 'academic precariat', represented by fixed-term, early career or casual academics, independent scholars or those with career breaks. Despite the strong critical scholarship dedicated to decolonizing urban theory and reflexive practice, academic precariats face several barriers to practising engaged, decolonial, feminist or antiracist forms of scholarship. Those at the knife edge of precarious labour conditions may be subject to the very injustices they are fighting, the institutional risks for speaking out may be too high or there may be barriers to entering university spaces that are responsible for shaping knowledge production practices. Crucially, we fear that these issues have only been exacerbated by the growing market-driven environment of higher education institutions, further heightened during post-Covid restructuring.

Yet this essay comes out of our deep and enduring belief in the mandate of the university as an institution of public good, and of the value of academic scholarship in supporting the collective struggles of groups living in conditions of marginality or oppression. As such, while reflecting on the struggles we have faced as members of the 'academic precariat', we also believe that crucial to reorienting the university is to move beyond critique, towards the 'active construction of the pluriverse', as an antidote to scholarly traditions which reproduce unjust worlds (Reiter, 2018: 5). In particular, we posit that as 'urban' scholars we have a particular opportunity to reflect on three core issues: *the urban as a site of political struggles; the projective potential of 'critical' urban theory; and the role of the university itself as an urban actor*. Within this context, we explore some of the institutional barriers and possibilities of doing justice-oriented work, drawing on three concepts that are core within academic institutions: *ethics, engagement and excellence*. We highlight the challenges within 'traditional' academic structures, and the disproportionate impact on precariously employed or early-stage academics. In doing so, we explore the radical and emancipatory potentialities of the university within its tensions: 'as a site occupied by communities of resistance but also shaped by elitism' (Sudbury and Okazawa-Rey, 2015: 2).

Epistemic (in)justice and the university

At the heart of 'epistemic justice' is the recognition and valuation of diverse epistemologies, or underlying belief systems, which shape the production of knowledge. As such, the pursuit of a just academy calls for examination of the power dynamics and biases that shape knowledge production and hinder equitable access to knowledge. Recognizing and addressing different forms of epistemic injustice is essential for dismantling oppressive structures and challenging power imbalances.

Globally, deep inequalities within university structures across race, gender, class and geography are well documented, shaping who is in leadership and secure employment, what gets published, how and by whom theory is constituted, who gets heard and who controls the narrative, and which languages are centred and silenced (Rojo, 2021; Blell *et al.*, 2023). These exclusions are reflective of barriers to doctoral studies (and other levels)—relating to poverty, social class, age, geographic location, language and societal pressures (Patterson-Stephens *et al.*, 2017). While grants, scholarships and fellowships can help to address these challenges, they may equally entrench gender, class, caste and racial inequalities where focused on narrow forms of merit or academic achievement, which do not engage with the barriers to entry into further studies. Likewise, for those who finish a PhD, this may be at the cost of a debt cycle—conditioning job prospects, which are also often contingent upon a series of (sometimes international) moves to generate financial stability. Upon entry into the academy, numerous emergent scandals explicitly within our urban disciplines, including sexual harassment, gatekeeping or a culture of bullying by powerful academics have revealed the profound abuses especially impacting less established academics, women and non-binary people and/or scholars of colour (Fox Tree and Vaid, 2022).

Likewise, differential access to resources and recognition continue to proliferate between 'Northern' and 'Southern' research foci, institutions, and scholars. Academic scholarship remains overwhelmingly produced about and from institutions within Europe and North America, even when supposedly 'decolonizing' (Táíwò, 2022). While there has been a rise in research about the global South from within Western institutions, it has been marked by criticisms of superficial engagement or treating the global South as a metacategory (Haug *et al.*, 2021). Echoing these epistemic disparities, we have also observed the ways in which our wider built environment disciplines continue to be informed by universalizing theories (Brenner and Schmid, 2015), while within international discourses, the predominance of 'best practice' notions (McFarlane, 2006) or the 'transnationalism of elites' (Mbembe, 2016) can see the flattening of situated knowledge as it travels. In this sense, we share Connell's (2019) view on the role of the university as a 'knowledge enclosure'—historically unrepresentative, exclusive/exclusionary, extractive and reflective of privilege. Put in other words, the university has a key role in (re)producing which social groups or issues are recognized as credible or relevant, which methods are seen as valid, which research outputs or engagements are considered impactful and who has ownership over this knowledge or models of theorizing.

These specific issues are overlaid onto longer-standing trends which, as will be discussed, challenge epistemic justice within the academy: performance-based metrics which reward certain outputs (especially single-authored peer-reviewed papers) over collaborative writing and alternative ('non-academic') outputs; institutional procedures rooted in unconscious (racist) prejudices; research funding bodies that require strong alignment with the national interest, and which can be unfunded;[1] ethics procedures

---

[1] In the UK, for instance, represented by programme cuts and eventual dismantling of the UKRI 'Global Challenges Research Fund', intended to operate as a part of the UK's official development assistance (ODA); in Australia, represented by at least six high-profile cases in which Australian Research Council funding was awarded via a rigorous peer review process, only for these to be unfunded by education ministers.

which can discourage work with 'vulnerable' communities or issues related to injustice and power structures; or incompatibilities in the long-term timescales and relationship building required for engaged scholarship, especially for those on short-term contracts. A strategic disinvestment in the humanities and social sciences[2] has been accompanied by a push across neoliberal Anglophone universities towards research marketization—with funding streams designed to support the translation of research outcomes into commercial terms.[3] Such trends raise key questions for epistemic justice, including what this means for researchers who wish to engage in *non* 'commercially viable' forms of research—such as those which speak to issues of racism, classism, casteism or other injustices—or how rising course fees in de-prioritized subjects, such as the arts, will limit choice especially for students of low socio-economic backgrounds, and those who have experienced intergenerational inequalities. We fear that the growing tendency to treat scholars as 'academic entrepreneurs'—under pressure to attract external research grants to offset declining state funding (Sudbury and Okazawa-Rey, 2015)—is likely to promote research supportive of industry or government agendas at the expense of generating incisive analysis critical of state and corporate interests, as well as any radical form of organizing with communities under oppression.

– Precarious worlds
Perhaps most concerning to us is how the increasingly neoliberal and corporatizing university context has generated additional barriers for reflexive practices and decolonial theory building which challenge 'status quo' practices for what we might deem the 'academic precariat'. With this term, we reference four fundamental aspects: the precarity borne out through casual or short-term hiring practices; barriers to equitable engagement arising from implicit or explicit forms of exclusion, related to identity; the formative period of scholarship, in which mentorship and modelling of ethical research practices are crucial; and the relative lack of authority to shape strategic decision-making institutionally. The casualization of employment, wage theft and job precarity of contractual staff most often impact early career academics, who may not have the security and stability to engage in these more disruptive or non-traditional forms of academic knowledge production (Cahill, 2021). In our experiences across UK and Australia, the university sector has undergone a series of transformations in the post-Covid context, leading to widespread restructuring, the loss of staff (which may be unaccounted for, in the case of casual staff) and strike actions linked to pension and workload disputes. As articulated by the Urban ECA Collective *et al.* (2022), these trends are likely to be felt most keenly by those precariously employed or at the 'early' stages of their career, whether linked to budget cuts and diverted research flows, hiring freezes, postponement of fieldwork or border closures disproportionality impacting global South scholars. Taken together, we see the experience of epistemic injustice in the university both in a moment of acute crisis and embedded in longer-standing trajectories of structural inequalities, dominated by shifts towards casualization, marketization and competitive ranking.

– Urban praxis: spaces of hope?
Despite these challenges, and speaking from our disciplinary positions, we also acknowledge the precise role of the university as an institution of critical urban

---

2   While not the primary focus of this essay, it is relevant to note that students have simultaneously been subject to changes in higher education funding arrangements, designed to encourage 'job-ready graduates'. In Australia, this comprises the provision of higher subsidies in subject areas such as STEM and IT that are aligned with key areas of economic interest, and in the UK closures within humanities and critical social science disciplines—echoing the crisis in education in the US linked with 'critical race studies' and the humanities in general (Reitter and Wellmon, 2023).

3   In Australia, for instance, there was an announcement from the central government in 2022 of a new investment package designed to fund research which demonstrates commercial potential in key areas of national priority—including defence, space and clean energy.

thinking in challenging inequalities in urban knowledge production and itself as an urban actor. We are inspired by a diverse set of epistemologies, which have explored knowledge production as fluid, multiple, situated in social contexts and historical trajectories, emergent from lived experiences and deeply imbricated within the consolidation of power. An example is Mignolo's (2009) urge to critical scholars to embrace epistemic disobedience, a process of challenging a detached and neutral point of observation resulting from Euro-American-centred epistemology and the idea of universal/universalizing knowledge. We take hope from critical pedagogical work situated within urban settings that pushes the role of the university as a facilitator of collaborative action (Patel *et al.*, 2015; Ortiz and Millan, 2022). Concepts such as the 'activist scholar' (Sudbury and Okazawa-Rey, 2015) and 'research as praxis' (Lather, 1986) offer guidance on the messy and intertwined roles that academic scholarship can play in addressing deep injustices. Methodologically, traditions such as participatory action research and knowledge co-production have generated important possibilities for collaboration across academia and practice, through which alternative forms of expertise might be recognized towards justice-oriented goals (Latulippe and Klenk, 2020). Epistemologically, a rich discourse of theorization from 'the South' has been vital in uncovering the ways in which colonial processes delegitimized or erased indigenous or local understandings and knowledge, in favour of Euro-centric beliefs and values, as an extension of colonial power (Roy, 2009; Watson, 2016), and has contributed to calls to 'decolonize' the curriculum, even if the process is incomplete (Le Grange, 2016).

As such, we posit that these possibilities for reclaiming epistemic justice within the university are crucial for urban scholars for at least three reasons. The first is the acknowledgement of the urban as a crucial 'site'—not just for our scholarly and practice-oriented work, but also for broader political contestations. Analytical focus on the right to the city, uneven urban citizenship and urban protest has explored the particularities of the urban condition as a battleground through which broader claims to entitlements are staked, seeing the emergence of new political urban subjects (Holston, 2009; Roy, 2015; Yiftachel, 2015). The urbanization of inequalities—where we see enormous expansion of existing and new urban centres across especially Africa and Asia, accompanied by an ever growing chasm between elites and the urban poor—indicates the vital necessity of centring justice in the urban condition. Acknowledging that planning education and practice in much of the global South and North still reflect colonial legacies, urban scholars have called for the production of new urban praxis from the urban majorities where conventional planning theory and practice are, at best, irrelevant, and at worst, deepening inequalities (Watson, 2016; Butcher *et al.*, 2022; Sami *et al.*, 2022). Such recognition of 'the urban as political terrain' (Oldfield, 2015) opens up possibilities through which the co-production of knowledge through and with urban struggles can enrich scholarship—as well as for scholarship to enrich urban struggles. If our scholarship is oriented towards political or strategic contributions (Nagar, 2002) within the urban sites in which we work, then epistemic justice is required both as a normative orientation for our research and as an intended outcome.

Second, we argue that as a set of disciplines interested in spatial ordering, scalar interactions and material interventions, the analytical focus on the 'urban' holds a propositional or projective potential. This call has been taken up by 'critical' urban scholars—moving beyond critique and towards a 'search for emancipatory alternatives' (Brenner, 2009; Marcuse, 2009). Yet as Roy (2016) reminds us, our urban disciplines hold long traditions of writing from a limited set of geographical reference points. A 'Southern turn' in urban studies and planning theory has called for knowledge production that acknowledges the extensive global differences in cities and recognizes that ideas are shaped by specific contexts, looking to 'provincialize' urban studies and planning (Flyvbjerg, 2004; Rao, 2006; Lawhon and Truelove, 2020). This Southern turn has been

crucial in calling for new 'vocabularies' (Bhan, 2019), practices and theorization from 'ordinary cities' (Robinson, 2005) which acknowledge this particularity and contribute to urban theory beyond 'developmental' framings (Recio *et al.*, 2022). Yet such empirically grounded work—from marginalized geographies—may lack the 'buzz' and broader uptake of universalized theory, while citation metrics (still a measure of academic success) remain the purview of 'established authors, universities, topics and canons' (Oswin, 2020: 13). More recently, if global development is increasingly conceived as 'everywhere' (Kumar *et al.*, 2024), if urbanization is planetary (Brenner and Schmid, 2015), we might ask what possibilities this leaves for centring the specific materialities and ongoing impacts of colonialism, violence and dispossession, highlighting the continued necessity of articulating epistemic justice within our urban disciplines.

Finally, while the university as a 'knowledge enclosure' has been well discussed (Hall and Tanden, 2017; Connell, 2019), important scholarship has turned to the agentic role of the university in creating spatial enclosures—from acting as a real estate developer via investments in buildings, facilities and student accommodation to discussions of 'town and gown' or 'studentification', to the transformation of urban peripheries (Frediani, 2013; Goddard and Vallance, 2013; Bose, 2015; Prada, 2019; Oh and Shin, 2023; Dovey and Recio, 2024). Echoing Derickson (2016), it is important to foreground the ways in which knowledge production is analytically folded in—temporally and geographically—to the 'field' that we study as scholars. This framing of knowledge production rejects the idea that the ends (e.g. the knowledge produced, journal articles published) justify the means (e.g. the ways and social fields in which knowledge is produced). Rather, 'this approach holds the processes, spaces, and institutions where knowledge is made and theory is built to the same standards we use to evaluate social justice "out there"' (Derickson, 2016: 825). Taking this assertion seriously requires careful attention to how broader trends within the neoliberal university, especially as linked with metricization, commercialization or investment, may be mirrored within the university's role in the reorganization of urban resources and space. The question of epistemic justice and the university has a distinctly urban materiality, asking what responsibilities of care (near and far) we have for the urban communities with/in which we labour.

The discussion that follows reflects the contradictions, limitations and possibilities of the university as an institution of knowledge production, which can be both complicit in and contest the kind of knowledge(s) that are recognized and valued. It reflects first and foremost our ECR (postdoctoral and PhD) positioning within Australian and UK academia from where these conversations originated. However, it is also informed by more recent shifts—into more permanent positions and different geographies—as well as our past histories of research based elsewhere. The international and interdisciplinary nature of our research engagements and our precarious employment status as contractual or untenured academic/research staff has allowed (or compelled) us to be constantly mobile and to practise what Katz (1994) has called 'displacement'. In our individual and collective experiences, these practices of displacement (and entanglement) afford us an opportunity to witness how various forms/processes of neoliberal academia define the academic metrics system in both the Northern and Southern contexts. Whether through the reduction of our scholarly work to a form of 'comatose scholarship', dictated by checklists for promotions (especially experienced in Dhaka), the imperatives of an 'institutional home' in collaborating with grassroots organizations (especially experienced in Manila) or the collusion between university and state (especially experienced in India), or through satisfying the narrow forms of excellence (within the UK and Australia), only scholars with exceptional grit remain truly productive (in terms that satisfy our own ethics as well as the demands of academic worlds), and even then perhaps at the expense of personal and social well-being.

In collectively exploring these various challenges as well as inspirations throughout the years, we have sought to build alternative networks to share and learn

how to navigate this complexity, through different pathways within the university.[4] This complexity foregrounds the important tensions we will engage with in the remainder of this article, that is, on the one hand, recognizing academia as a system that has reproduced knowledge hierarchies, inaccessibility and extractive practices, and on the other, as an institution intended to stimulate critical thinking, imagine alternative possibilities and act as an institution of public good to address pressing global challenges.

The following sections offer three areas for discussion through which we see these tensions and opportunities manifesting: ethics, engagement and excellence. We have selected these three not as all-encompassing discussions or as part of a comprehensive conceptual schema, but as entry points that have been significant in our own praxis—that are drawn from our empirical registers and autoethnographic reflections—and also where we see possibilities for alternatives.

From procedural ethics towards positionality

One particular concern that informs our work, engaging from 'sites' of the urban peripheries, is the question of ethics, particularly when engaged in knowledge production from marginalized spaces or groups. The dominant institutional arrangements for how 'research ethics' is conceived and practised within the academy is through the ethics application process—operationalized through an abstract, standardized set of criteria. This application may be unrelated to the ethics of academic knowledge production itself—expressed through a checklist and routine review committee performance. In the rationalistic and instrumentalist ontology of Anglophone/Western universities, which prizes speed and efficiency, this may not allow for longer, slower and more situated and *ongoing* reading of ethical dilemmas. In some instances, we have found that this process conditions the possibilities of working with communities that may be deemed 'too risky' or 'too vulnerable'. In other cases, we find the requirements of ethics procedures to conflict with practices on the ground—such as the call to anonymize data versus the desire of some groups to be named and to claim the rights to their knowledge and practices, or the framing of consent through a lens where the researcher's responsibility or ethical expectations are tied to the timelines of the project or institutional demands. While acknowledging ethical reflection is an important precondition for any research, and may indeed generate important procedural reflections, as Blee and Currier (2011: 402) note, 'scholars face complex ethical issues that are not addressed by the procedures and protocols of institutional reviews'.

Crucially, the abstract quality of the ethics application is acutely incapable of preparing the researcher for the ethical anxiety and trepidation encountered in the field and processing 'data' afterwards, leaving individual researchers responsible for navigating inevitable tensions that emerge when engaging with complex urban struggles. Seldom do we find institutional structures that actively generate these conversations, with ethics coming into play only as part of the university requirement to get approval before 'collecting data'. Such absences for collective reflection and institutional learning throughout research are particularly challenging for 'new' researchers (doctoral students or ECRs), operating within moments of possibility when patterns and trajectories are being established. While we have each experimented with forms of research co-production, we also have been frustrated where limited by timelines, framings, priorities and risk management as set by the university or our funders, particularly where dictated by the structures of the PhD (with institutions increasingly pushing for funding completion within three years). Likewise, we have found that even with shared agenda setting, research can become extremely problematic

---

4   One example, for instance, was the establishment of the 'Space for Engagement and Epistemic Diversity' (https://infur.msd.unimelb.edu.au/projects/engagement/seed-fellows/) by some of our authors from within the University of Melbourne, entailing over 80 members that cross-cut geographies, hierarchies, and disciplines.

in contexts of violence or dispossession where the interviewees have lost their home, family, livelihood or land, or are shaped by complex politics. As researchers engaged with such everyday and often violent struggles to live with dignity, we may encounter scenarios in which we are unsure how to act. Working in an informal settlement, should we continue our research interviews when we know of an imminent eviction? Should we expose experiences of exclusion or extractive practices within social movements? How do we engage/disengage when bodily or emotional harm is in question—whether for our partners or ourselves? As argued by Sudbury and Okazawa-Rey (2015), 'research with emancipatory intentions is inevitably troubled by unequal power relations', highlighting the inevitability of such ethical and political dilemmas and (potentially) conflicting interests. Such encounters, particularly in the early stages of doctoral research, left many of us feeling inadequately prepared for the ethical repercussions of working alongside vulnerable people, and lacking institutional support when such issues were raised.

This gap between 'procedural ethics vs being ethical' (Shiraani *et al.*, 2022) is symptomatic of the structural issues of injustices embedded in knowledge production. Yet as Hunt and Godard (2013) point out, this need not be so, as research ethics training is the 'natural venue' to draw linkages to issues of justice and equity in knowledge production and our embeddedness. Perhaps what can move ethics beyond a procedural requirement is to claim positionality as a 'research tool' (Jacobson and Mustafa, 2019: 2)—both individually and collectively—in all aspects of research environments (from research conception to investigation, from the formulation of findings to dissemination). As informed by our Southern, feminist, action-oriented approaches within the urban discipline (Kobayashi, 2003; Robinson, 2003; Cahill, 2007), we see the world from our individuated situations, bodies, senses, affects, histories, desires and narratives, and this impacts how we interpret the world, and how the world sees and presents itself to us. Understanding our position and privileges, particularly in relation to those we work alongside, allows us to see the field of difference across which we conduct research, interpret and use 'data' and generate 'theories'. Moreover, the power dynamics revealed by examining our positions is not just related to our individual selves, but also allows us to see the illusion of neutrality of our academic institutions, as complicit in the production of knowledge and spatial enclosures. How we incorporate modalities of positionality in our research at all levels raises new questions that act as resistance to the reductive tendencies of the institution and becomes a prerequisite to ethical practice. We call for a radical reflexivity that allows us to move beyond 'academic production', being simply a value in itself, and places a reflexive ethic with the communities and societies—both those within which we are spatially located, as those 'afar', and with whom we co-produce knowledge—at the centre of what a university does.

Engagement and relationship-building

A focus on 'engagement' with diverse stakeholders is increasingly found in the mandate of the institutions in which we work, formalized through explicit university strategies and tactics. The language within such documents is often framed through partnership and collaboration (across public, private, academic or third sector organizations and industry players), implying mutual benefit whether through shared access to 'world class' facilities, drawing from 'talent pools' of staff or students, engaging in 'research innovation'. Engagement may be framed in 'global' terms or might be articulated in relation to specific 'strategic' geographies. Such aspirations may be aligned with the history of public institutions in contributing to civic life or articulated as connecting universities with non-academic partners to multiply alternative funding streams. Yet there are multiple modalities and intentions through which such partnerships might be framed, with different possibilities for reciprocity or solidarity. Likewise, there are questions on how to negotiate different demands, interests and requirements between academic research and methodologies and between partner communities and organizations.

Recognizing such multiplicity amplifies the need for scholars to engage with the following questions: *in whose interests are research partnerships pursued; and does the partnership create avenues for empowerment and facilitate the questioning of oppressive structures in contexts of power imbalances?* On the one hand, our positions within 'critical' urban scholarship—focused on the propositional and the projective—leave us well placed to leverage and reorient the resources of the academy as framed around engagement towards different struggles. A rich literature on collaboration and co-production, within urban disciplines and beyond, has opened up discussions on the processes through which meaningful engagement can happen across university researchers and diverse communities (Janes, 2016; Temper and Del Bene, 2016; Mitlin *et al.*, 2020). On the other hand, we also wonder if it is possible to conduct research that genuinely values 'solidarity' (Butcher, 2021) or 'allyship' (Yomantas, 2020), given the uneven political economy of knowledge within the university. Such concepts imply taking concrete steps towards dismantling systemic barriers, and yet research agendas, when framed by concepts such as academic neutrality and non-participant observation, can generate a form of 'political apathy' and undermine the principles of genuine allyship. Engagement implies collaborative action towards complex global challenges, but what might it mean to research dispossession(s) within the walls of institutes which (re)produced unjust spatial practices? We wonder how our research collaborators see us when we are not around, when we exit, and where the imagination of 'engagement' may be limited to academic publications, media articles, films and websites which have a wider and quicker international reach. Too often the slow and persistent policy change, advocacy work, care-full community engagement or production and translation of findings into alternative languages and instruments of change is left to the activists, communities fighting their struggles or research assistants based in global South cities. We have also found that engagement that falls outside the 'norm' has been discouraged, for instance, at the PhD level being discouraged by senior academics from returning to the research location to discuss the theorization and findings, as it was feared that this would hamper the research progression. We have also encountered challenges as we have moved into positions of greater authority, for instance, in a recent struggle to engage a researcher without an institutional affiliation, who would be required to 'relocate' to a UK-based university even to conduct engaged work in their home country. We have found that such efforts at partnership may be framed as 'extra' to the 'real work' of knowledge production, or at worst, dismissed as 'activism', external to the rigours of academia. As Benson and Nagar (2006: 589) remind us, 'we deliberately need to give more formal recognition to non-academic products (e.g. pamphlets, primers, performances) as works that enable and enhance the quality of academic knowledge, rather than as peripheral byproducts of academic research'. Yet such limitations are particularly risky for the academic precariat, who may feel increased pressure to conform to more traditional expectations of progress.

Despite these challenges, we observe that some of the more significant moments of insight emerge from micro-scalar everyday engagements without an intentional research purpose: running external seminars and workshops, collaborating in local meetings/events, aiding with organizational tasks or engaging with local media or advocacy strategies (Recio and Shafique, 2022). Perhaps more explicitly, we have found that the authority conferred by universities can be a valuable resource, a convening tool that can support urban poor groups to determine the most critical issues and articulate policy, planning or programming demands, for instance, in an experience during a dialogue with the mayor of a city in the Philippines, in which community leaders used the convening power of an academic researcher to pose questions pertaining to necessary local policy reforms in the post-resettlement housing context. Such experiences help us think about important questions about who is driving research priorities and the possibilities of orienting academic partnerships explicitly towards impact-oriented goals. However, such efforts are reliant upon the individual to nurture trusted and ongoing relationships—exceeding the traditional academic demands and expectations and increasingly incompatible with a precarious

labour market. Such challenges can be acutely felt at the doctoral level, where practices are heavily shaped by supervisory committees and institutional oversight. Even when contracted as full-time staff, these forms of engagement make it difficult to safeguard in formally negotiated terms. In a neoliberal atmosphere of keeping track of every hour,[5] the essential value of such engagement is beyond the usual apparatus of value capture. For us, then, engagement is perhaps better reframed as a process of *relationship building*—which requires revisiting formal institutional and professional protocols—beyond the labour of particular individuals, as well as informal norms that guide the conduct of academic research. It entails revisiting existing approaches and promising ideas that enable researchers to embrace a 'praxis of the present' (Gramsci, quoted in Salamini, 2014: 73) in which both the researcher and the researched become more conscious of their situations, actions and relations with the wider society.

Research excellence beyond market-driven values

Finally, we reflect upon the traditional mechanisms for defining 'research excellence', and how this is reflected in structures of recognition and advancement. On the one hand, the growing recognition of engaged research, as above, creates possibilities for the kinds of engaged scholarship that we aim to practice. Such shifts offer up space for how we define our own role within the academy, as well as the role of academic institutions more broadly. Emerging infrastructures of knowledge translation, exchange and impact—articulated through different funding streams within the university—offer different pathways to activate research success. On the other hand, the monitoring and measurement of impact continue to be underpinned by a limited set of technologies and epistemologies, including Research Excellence Frameworks, 'high quality' research articles (often still driven by citation metrics, Scopus or other databases that inform QS rankings and H-Index scores), patents and collaborations with industry, which generates tensions in 'advancing' epistemic justice in the university.

The focus on performance evaluation metrics—via the race to produce publications, win grants and be 'relevant' on the global stage—fundamentally shapes the boundaries of what success looks like in the university. In Australia, for instance, 'single authored' articles, particularly when in 'high-ranking' ISI-indexed journals, are granted more 'points' in promotion criteria compared with collaborative, multiauthored pieces, which we feel are the most horizontal forms of knowledge production that truly foster transdisciplinarity. Similarly, in our experience within global South universities, Scopus-indexed publications are encouraged through an award system to keep up with their Western counterparts, creating a competitive, stressful and toxic environment where researchers may be incentivized to engage in questionable and extractive research practices in order to enhance productivity. Indeed, here we could question whether the peer-reviewed article—pay-walled, inaccessibly written—is the highest form of research rigour at all. Even the idea that writing constitutes the 'labour' of knowledge production feels inadequate to capture the multifaceted nature of contributions, which may not acknowledge the work of research assistants, translators, activists and community members who bear the greatest risks in navigating community dynamics, cultural practices or ethical questions. Producing the valuable commodity of peer-reviewed journal articles at the fastest pace is not necessarily in our best interests if we aim for a deeper engagement with these collaborative or ethical questions.

As such, we have sometimes found ourselves in the unsavoury position that it would be easier to thrive in the university if we abandoned some of the practices we have sought to cultivate as a part of reflexive ethical practice. Such epistemic exclusions are not just linked with the production of knowledge artefacts, but also experienced by

---

5   In the UK, expressed via complex negotiations around 'Workload Allocation Models'.

those trained within different intellectual traditions or geographies, who may struggle to prove their credibility within the elite system. Such a reality has been well discussed within the urban studies disciplines in relation to how research focused on/in the global South has historically been relegated to 'area studies' or seen as 'case studies' rather than theory production (Jazeel, 2016). Likewise, while impact infrastructures (e.g. via REF impact case studies in the UK) raise the visibility of engaged research, they require onerous processes of 'evidencing'—validation and verification—which may often exist in parallel to the work of 'doing impact'. The desire to gain recognition on the international stage may divert attention from the local, indigenous and historical social issues to those that are 'current', 'international' or 'generalisable'—those which emanate from dominant epistemic viewpoints, or which engage the latest 'buzzwords' to generate high citation possibilities (Oswin, 2020; Kirchherr, 2023). While calls for 'slow research' (Kuus, 2015), 'collective theorising' (Kushner and Norris, 1980–1981) or 'chaotic theory' (McLean, 2018) offer alternative mechanisms of collaborative engaging with knowledge production and challenging the boundaries or what is considered 'productive' research, ECR and precarious staff do not always have the luxury of engaging in these practices.

Despite such challenges, we continue to believe in the value of research that activates and 'drives intellectual advances and address[es] global challenges' (UK Research Excellence Framework), but which may not always fit neatly within the existing structures of recognition. This aspiration would require universities and research funding bodies to prioritize research that has social impact and supports researchers to engage in critical inquiry, rather than focusing on immediate market and traditional research outcomes. This might lie, for instance, in using oral histories to support legal casework to contest evictions; designing outputs (scholarly and otherwise) to support community groups in enhancing their own political campaign and policy advocacy for a more humane and inclusive city; encouraging public hearings and community consultancy meetings as alternatives to interviews and focus group discussions, which might otherwise be seen as a tool for knowledge extraction; or bearing witness to and documenting systematic exclusions or violence. However, successful engagement with impact and excellence infrastructures requires delicate manoeuvres and efforts at translation to ensure that the ethical core and interests remain while fitting the wider narratives through which research achievement is framed. Thus, we ask what would it look like to develop a set of criteria that recognize the quality of research and its contribution to social impact, without resorting to market-driven promotion and publication of research outputs? What would it mean if 'excellence' can be re-defined around reclaiming the university as a site of public good, a space for emancipatory engagement? This would entail a rethink of interdisciplinary research that places social justice at the core, ensuring that it is firmly grounded in addressing systemic inequities and pushing for change.

A call to reclaim the university through emancipatory urban praxis

'One can only sneak into the university and steal what one can. To abuse its hospitality, to spite its mission, to join its refugee colony, its gypsy encampment, to be in but not of—this is the path of the subversive intellectual in the modern university … Another university is possible, and it's already here somewhere, its cover creased from being passed back and forth, from being held until long overdue.'

Harney and Moten (2013: 26)

The challenges to the university in supporting practices of 'epistemic justice' appear vast. As we write, the higher education sector in the UK remains locked into exhaustive rounds of strike action, our employers committing to ever-more punitive

measures in response to calls for more equitable working conditions, acknowledgement of racial and gender pay gaps and precarious and zero-hour contracts. In Australia, high-profile cases have recently revealed and made important financial claims on the extent and devastating impacts of casualization and underpayment on the sector.[6] This precarity and unsustainability of working conditions more generally, with the invisibility or lack of recognition of the work involved in justice-oriented research, and operational constraints in university systems and procedures create interlocking challenges. Deeper still are the tensions linked with the commodification of knowledge and ongoing imagery of the university as the producer of 'expert' knowledge, and the (im)possibilities of activating equitable partnerships within such legacies.

However, here we take inspiration from Liboiron (2021), who in turn draws upon the words of Schuurman and Pratt (2002), in calling for a critique of the broader paradigms and systems which structure the academy: '*To be constructive, critique must care for the subject*'. So, with this sense of care, how can institutions make epistemic justice the core of how they function? How can academic precariats be better supported so that knowledge from disenfranchised and marginalized groups are not silenced? How can we, individually and collectively, extend criticality to care for/with our research partners, particularly those operating on the urban margins? How can we reclaim the university?

We do not see this as a point to declare a manifesto, a grand gesture of a revolution, of overturning academia. Yet rather, following from the notion of inhabiting and subverting through everyday actions, tactics and heuristics, we, as academics embedded in the 'system', see multiple opportunities to extend critique to care in our lived entanglements in the academy. Perhaps, a useful imaginary to hold these subversions, stealings and squattings—various modes of resisting what academia has become—is the notion of an 'everyday rebellion', drawn from the recent work of Simone (Shrestha *et al.*, 2023). Reclaiming urban praxis, through a thousand cuts, then does not offer a teleological vantage point to aim for, but rather is a call for all of us to actively seek ways to transcend the traps we have captured in this essay. This allows an opening up, an activation of the agencies that we do possess even within our limited precariat conditions, rather than lamenting the lack of just structures in universities. Our granular 'otherwise' actions (Escobar, 2007) over time sediment an alternative performative ground for future precariats to further the rebellion.

As such, given the intrinsically democratic and participatory nature of our call to actions, we refrain from setting their terms—rather trusting that the reader can use this piece as a reflective device for their own everyday entanglements. However, we end with three 'intentionalities'—reflecting again from our positions as urban scholars to offer hints as to the pathways for emancipatory urban praxis. We return to the three calls of the urban as a site of intervention, the propositional potential of the urban discipline and the university as an urban actor to give direction to our collective efforts as researchers—desires that act as a commoning apparatus—and the actions that they may encourage. We leave them open:

1. *The urban as a site of emancipatory intervention*—to engage in our urban sites with an orientation towards emancipatory praxis is to commit the role of our research in going beyond knowledge production, to engage with politics on the ground (Benson and Nagar, 2006). As urban researchers, this means close attention to the spatial—material groundedness of our research in urban settings and how we may build 'situated solidarities' (Nagar and Geiger, 2007) with those on the margins of urban struggles. Such efforts require attention and investment in *practices*

6   For example, see: https://www.afr.com/work-and-careers/workplace/wage-theft-rife-in-university-sector-report-20230217-p5cld3.

which can build and sustain allyships: recognizing our own privilege, supporting and amplifying the voices of the groups we work alongside, making space for our allies to drive research agendas and outputs, and continuous self-reflection and learning from those outside academia to actively challenge our own biases and engage in transformative research. While recognizing that it may not be pragmatic to sustain traditional forms of direct involvement over a longer period, we may still explore more feasible, yet more meaningful, forms of engagements that may use universities as a site of a shared ground to foster allyship. Concretely, forms of emancipatory praxis to build and sustain allyships might entail engaging in ethical collective writing and theorizing that help ongoing struggles in our sites of scholarship, producing diverse outputs beyond traditional academic writing that are accessible and actionable, keeping the writing grounded by allowing our allies to review, setting up protocols for accountability, making visible the different forms of labour that underpin knowledge production, rewiring the resources of the university by engaging local partners as active collaborators, representing allies in networks otherwise outside of their reach, allocating sufficient time for working on joint funding and designing our research agendas around desired grounded impact. We propose that such practices can move beyond parachute scholarship and extractive knowledge relations towards imagining the university as undercommons that channels resources towards the allies (Harney and Moten, 2013). However, allyship also needs to take root and grow within the academy—across disciplines, across departments, across committees, across generations of scholars, with particular care for ECRs. It means creating a work environment that values collaboration, collegiality and solidarity, a space where creative and critical thinking is encouraged, with institutional support to engage in such 'non-traditional' forms of research and action. Preaching and practising allyship can easily thrive in a healthy and supportive intellectual community. Such strategies require revisiting (and recommitting to) the fundamental role of the university as a site that cultivates independent scholarship for public good and produces knowledge that helps to confront the broader forms of social injustice.

2. *The emancipatory potential of the urban discipline*—re-asserting the projective potential of the urban planning discipline requires moving beyond Anglophone and Northern hegemonic worldviews, to *embrace pluriversal possibilities*. This involves asking if our research can enable the different worlds to come into relations of ontologies and epistemologies otherwise, allowing for a decolonial agency to take hold and allow developing their own terms of reference. We heed Benson and Nagar's (2006: 584) call for collaboration as resistance, where 'meaning forged through dialogue is not necessarily arrived at through agreement and shared perspective but can evolve from constructive disagreements'. If we can imagine a broader and more diverse set of audiences for our research intentions, impacts and outputs, then our research also becomes more diverse. In the sense of everyday rebellions, embracing pluriversal possibilities might take the shape of actively citing and using references that highlight marginalized discourses and voices, framing research questions not from a singular set of prevalent values, publishing in other languages, privileging the local by using their own terms and building theory from spaces outside the academy. Underpinning these approaches is the insistence on resisting universalizing urban theory, centring the particularities of the postcolonial condition in an institutional and global environment that feels it is increasingly narrowing its commitments to the majority world. Here we can take cues from urban researchers who have enquired what is shared and what is specific across worlds—as in the interrogation from the 'East' in framings of the 'South' (Shin, 2021), exploring shared exchange, but also holding space for difference. We call for universities to become sites for

many different urban worlds and to move beyond a re-circulation of Northern urban theories produced in a few cities towards a future of hosting suppressed ontologies and histories from urban majority worlds, past and present.

3. *The university as an emancipatory urban actor*—acknowledging that our universities are made through our research, reclaiming the university as an emancipatory actor requires re-examination of not just the institution, but also ourselves. Beyond the engagement in a set of ethical tick-boxes for us to fill, at the core of our call is a desire to interrogate our own praxis, cultivating a *reflexive ethos of inquiry*. Articulating such an epistemic standpoint echoes Bhan *et al.*'s (2018) reminder to interrogate how personal geographies shape the way we understand and frame the geographies of knowledge and resonates with a long tradition of feminist research that asks the researcher to sit with 'relationality, discomfort, vulnerability, and encounter' (Kern and McLean, 2017). To articulate a reflexive ethos of inquiry involves situating one's epistemic entanglement with our sites of scholarship. This might entail alternative research protocols built with communities, nurturing spaces for mentorship and sharing on complex ethical challenges, making visible in our writing and our sharing of the ethically important moments in our research, exploring the politics of knowledge in our research and teaching and embracing our research biases, activisms and positionalities. Such practices, as urban researchers, act as ethical benchmarking even when we do engage across pluriversal worlds and with many different allies. Yet beyond our individual or collective research practices, emancipatory praxis also requires interrogation of the kinds of spatial interventions, communities or agendas our universities align with. That is, while our own research may undergo operational forms of ethical scrutiny, the practices of our university may not. Institutionally, this includes moving beyond tokenistic diversity and inclusion regimes and critically examining curricula to include diverse voices and perspectives, ensuring fair representation in leadership and decision-making processes, dismantling systemic barriers and implementing policies that support underrepresented groups. Spatially, it requires attention to ongoing processes of displacement, gentrification and enclosure that continue in spite of (or sit comfortably alongside) anti- or decolonial scholarship, and crucially, critically examining the investments and endowments of our universities, pushing for transparency and accountability to ensure divestment from partners whose practices lead to environmental degradation, social inequality and exploitative labour practices and who are complicit in ongoing colonial extraction and genocide. Such contradictions remind us that we operate from within bureaucratic knowledge institutions that may reduce or limit emancipatory intentions, and therefore, we need to be cautious with espousing values of pluriversality and allyships, even while committing to urban struggles. Yet it is also necessary to recognize that even as we labour under different metrics of excellence, there is always space to intervene in and re-orient the political economy of knowledge of the university.

We hope that these provocations can help us in making visible and making possible the commitments that sustain us in our scholarship, and which can reclaim the university for its radical potential as a site of emancipatory urban praxis, as space to practice, examine and challenge our ideas of epistemic justice. Ultimately, beyond protocols and regimens, beyond prescriptions of action, we end with the questions that remain at the core of our call, that we hope reverberate across academia toward emancipatory ends: for and with whom do we produce knowledge; how do we measure our own impact; why do we pursue certain forms of academic engagement; what lies behind our inquiry; what keeps us loving what we do; and as urban scholars, how and to what extent do we advance calls for justice within and outside our universities?

Stephanie Butcher, School of Geography and Planning, Sheffield University, Sheffield, S3 7ND, UK, s.butcher@sheffield.ac.uk

Tanzil Shafique, School of Architecture and Landscape, Sheffield University, Sheffield, S10 2TN, UK, t.i.shafique@sheffield.ac.uk

Redento B. Recio, University of the Philippines Diliman, Quezon City, 1101, Metro Manila, Philippines, rbrecio@up.edu.ph

Ishita Chatterjee, O.P. Jindal Global University, Sonipat, 131001, Haryana, India, ishita.chatterjee@jgu.edu.in

References

Benson, K. and R. Nagar (2006) Collaboration as resistance? Reconsidering the processes, products, and possibilities of feminist oral history and ethnography. *Gender, Place & Culture* 13.5, 581–92.

Berg, M. and B.K. Seeber (2016) *The slow professor: challenging the culture of speed in the academy*. University of Toronto Press, Toronto.

Bhan, G. (2019) Notes on a Southern urban practice. *Environment and Urbanization* 31.2, 639–54.

Bhan, G., S. Srinivas and V. Watson (eds.), (2018) *The Routledge companion to planning in the global South*. Routledge, Abingdon.

Blee, K.M. and A. Currier (2011) Ethics beyond the IRB: an introductory essay. *Qualitative Sociology* 34.3, 401–13.

Blell, M., S.J.S. Liu and A. Verma (2023) Working in unprecedented times: intersectionality and women of color in UK higher education in and beyond the pandemic. *Gender, Work & Organization* 30.2, 353–72.

Bose, S. (2015) Universities and the redevelopment politics of the neoliberal city. *Urban Studies* 52.14, 2616–32.

Brenner, N. (2009) What is critical urban theory? *City* 13.2/3, 198–207.

Brenner, N. and C. Schmid (2015) Towards a new epistemology of the urban? *City* 19.2/3, 151–82.

Butcher, S. (2021) Research solidarity? Navigating feminist ethics in participatory action-research in Kathmandu, Nepal. *Gender, Place & Culture* 28.4, 497–518.

Butcher, S., C. Cociña, A.A. Frediani, M. Acuto, B. Pérez-Castro, J. Peña-Díaz, J. Cazanave-Macías, B. Koroma and J. Macarthy (2022) Emancipatory circuits of knowledge for urban equality: experiences from Havana, Freetown, and Asia. *Urban Planning* 7.3, 206–18.

Byskov, M.F. (2021) What makes epistemic injustice an 'injustice'? *Journal of Social Philosophy* 52.1, 114–31.

Cahill, C. (2007) Repositioning ethical commitments: participatory action research as a relational praxis of social change. *ACME: An International Journal for Critical Geographies* 6.3, 360–73.

Cahill, D. (2021) Wage theft: our universities' dirty little secret. *Advocate: Journal of the National Tertiary Education Union* 28.3, 20–21.

Connell, R. (2019) *The good university: what universities actually do and why it's time for radical change*. Bloomsbury, London.

Derickson, K.D. (2016) On the politics of recognition in critical urban scholarship. *Urban Geography* 37.6, 824–9.

Dovey, K. and R.B. Recio (2024) *Informal settlement on UP Diliman campus: a preliminary study of spatial conditions and possibilities*. UP-Center for Integrative Development Studies. Quezon City.

Escobar, A. (2007) Worlds and knowledges otherwise. *Cultural Studies* 21.2/3, 179–210.

Flyvbjerg, B. (2004) Phronetic planning research: theoretical and methodological reflections. *Planning Theory & Practice* 5.3, 283–306.

Fox Tree, J.E. and J. Vaid (2022) Why so few, still? Challenges to attracting, advancing, and keeping women faculty of color in academia. *Frontiers in Sociology* 6, 792198.

Frediani, A.A. (2013) Navigating through civic and corporate spaces of UCL. Reflections from Carpenters Estate. *Territorio* 66, 58–63.

Fricker, M. (2007) *Epistemic injustice: power and the ethics of knowing*. Oxford University Press. Oxford.

Goddard, J. and P. Vallance (2013) *The university and the city*. First edition. Routledge, London.

Hall, B.L. and R. Tandon (2017) Decolonization of knowledge, epistemicide, participatory research and higher education. *Research for All* 1.1, 6–19.

Harney, S. and F. Moten (2013) *The undercommons: fugitive planning and black study*. Minor Compositions, Wivenhoe.

Haug, S., J. Braveboy-Wagner and G. Maihold (2021) The 'global South' in the study of world politics: examining a meta category. *Third World Quarterly* 42.9, 1923–44.

Holston, J. (2009) Insurgent citizenship in an era of global urban peripheries. *City & Society* 21.2, 245–67.

Hooks, B. (1994) *Teaching to transgress: education as the practice of freedom*. First edition. Routledge, Abingdon.

Hunt, M.R. and B. Godard (2013) Beyond procedural ethics: foregrounding questions of justice in global health research ethics training for students. *Global Public Health* 8.6, 713–24.

Jacobson, D. and N. Mustafa (2019) Social identity map: A reflexivity tool for practicing explicit positionality in critical qualitative research. *International Journal of Qualitative Methods* 18, 1–12.

Janes, J.E. (2016) Democratic encounters? Epistemic privilege, power, and community-based participatory action research. *Action Research* 14.1, 72–87.

Jazeel, T. (2016) Between area and discipline: progress, knowledge production and the geographies of Geography. *Progress in Human Geography* 40.5, 649–67.

Katz, C. (1994) Playing the field: questions of fieldwork in geography. *The Professional Geographer* 46.1, 67–72.

Kern, L. and H. McLean (2017) Undecidability and the urban: feminist pathways through urban political economy. *ACME: An International Journal for Critical Geographies* 16.3, 405–26.

Kirchherr, J. (2023) Bullshit in the sustainability and transitions literature: a provocation. *Circular Economy and Sustainability* 3.1, 167–72.

Kobayahi, A. (2003) GPC ten years on: is self-reflexivity enough? *Gender, Place & Culture* 10.4, 345–9.

Kumar, A., S. Butcher, D. Hammett, S. Barragan-Contreras, V. Burns, O. Chesworth, G. Cooper, J.M. Kanai, H. Mottram, S. Poveda and P. Richardson (2024) Development beyond 2030: more collaboration, less competition? *International Development Planning Review* 46.2, 227–42.

Kushner, S. and N. Norris (1980–1981) Interpretation, negotiation and validity in naturalistic research. *Interchange* 11.4, 26–36.

Kuus, M. (2015) For slow research. *International Journal of Urban and Regional Research* 39.4, 838–40.

Lather, P. (1986) Research as praxis. *Harvard Educational Review* 56.3, 257–78.

Latulippe, N. and N. Klenk (2020) Making room and moving over: knowledge co-production, Indigenous knowledge sovereignty and the politics of global environmental change decision-making. *Current Opinion in Environmental Sustainability* 42, 7–14.

Lawhon, M. and Y. Truelove (2020) Disambiguating the southern urban critique: propositions, pathways and possibilities for a more global urban studies. *Urban Studies* 57.1, 3–20.

Le Grange, L. (2016) Decolonising the university curriculum: leading article. *South African Journal of Higher Education* 30.2, 1–12.

Liboiron, M. (2021) *Pollution is colonialism*. Duke University Press, Durham, NC.

Marcuse, P. (2009) From critical urban theory to the right to the city. *City* 13.2/3, 185–97.

Mbembe, J. (2016) Decolonizing the university: new directions. *Arts and Humanities in Higher Education* 15.1, 29–45.

McFarlane, C. (2006). Knowledge, learning and development: a post-rationalist approach. *Progress in Development Studies* 6.4, 287–305.

McLean, H. (2018) In praise of chaotic research pathways: a feminist response to planetary urbanization. *Environment and Planning D: Society and Space* 36.3, 547–55.

Mignolo, W.D. (2009) Epistemic disobedience, independent thought and decolonial freedom. *Theory, Culture & Society* 26.7/8, 159–81.

Mitlin, D., J. Bennett, P. Horn, S. King, J. Makau and G.M. Nyama (2020) Knowledge matters: the potential contribution of the coproduction of research. *The European Journal of Development Research* 32.3, 544–59.

Nagar, R. (2002) Footloose researchers, 'traveling' theories, and the politics of transnational feminist praxis. *Gender, Place & Culture* 9.2, 179–86.

Nagar, R. and S. Geiger (2007) Reflexivity, positionality and identity in feminist fieldwork revisited. In A. Tickell, E. Sheppard, J. Peck and T. Barnes (eds.), *Politics and practice in economic geography*, Sage, London.

Oh, D.Y. and H.B. Shin (2023) University as real estate developer: comparative perspectives from the global East. *Geoforum* 144, 103764.

Oldfield, S. (2015) Between activism and the academy: the urban as political terrain. *Urban Studies* 52.11, 2072–86.

Ortiz, C. and G. Millan (2022) Critical urban pedagogy: convites as sites of Southern urbanism, solidarity construction and urban learning. *International Journal of Urban and Regional Research* 46.5, 822–44.

Oswin, N. (2020) An other geography. *Dialogues in Human Geography* 10.1, 9–18.

Patel, Z., S. Greyling, S. Parnell and G. Pirie (2015) Co-producing urban knowledge: experimenting with alternatives to 'best practice' for Cape Town, South Africa. *International Development Planning Review* 37.2, 187–203.

Patterson-Stephens, S.M., T.B. Lane and L.M. Vital (2017) Black doctoral women: exploring barriers and facilitators of success in graduate education. *Higher Education Politics & Economics* 3.1, 157–80.

Prada, J. (2019) Understanding studentification dynamics in low-income neighbourhoods: Students as gentrifiers in Concepción (Chile). *Urban Studies* 56.14, 2863–79.

Rao, V. (2006) Slum as theory: the South/Asian city and globalization. *International Journal of Urban and Regional Research* 30.1, 225–32.

Recio, R.B., I. Chatterjee, L.N. Lata and N. Dangol (2022) Whose vision, which city?: Planning and unseeing in urban Asia. In *The Routledge handbook of architecture, urban space and politics, Volume I*, Routledge, Abingdon.

Recio, R.B. and T. Shafique (2022) Reimagining (informal) housing futures in uncertain times. *International Journal of Housing Policy* 22.1, 106–18.

Reiter, B (ed.) (2018) *Constructing the pluriverse: the geopolitics of knowledge*. Duke University Press, Durham, NC.

Robinson, J. (2005) *Ordinary cities: between modernity and development*. First edition. Routledge, Abingdon.

Robinson, J. (2003) Postcolonialising geography: tactics and pitfalls. *Singapore Journal of Tropical Geography* 24.3, 273–89.

Rojo, L.M. (2021) Hegemonies and inequalities in academia. *International Journal of the Sociology of Language* 2021.267/68, 169–92.

Roy, A. (2009) The 21st-century metropolis: new geographies of theory. *Regional Studies* 43.6, 819–30.

Roy, A. (2015) Territories of poverty: rethinking north and south. *Territorio* 68.1, 40–56.

Roy, A. (2016) Who's afraid of postcolonial theory? *International Journal of Urban and Regional Research* 40.1, 200–9.

Salamini, L. (2014) *The sociology of political praxis*. First edition. Routledge, Abingdon.

Sami, N., R. Lall, G. Anand and S. Anand (2022) Rethinking planning education for urban equality: higher education as a site for change. *Environment and Urbanization* 34.2, 413–29.

Schuurman, N. and G. Pratt (2002) Care of the subject: feminism and critiques of GIS. *Gender, Place and Culture: A Journal of Feminist Geography* 9.3, 291–299.

Shin, H.B. (2021) Theorising from where? Reflections on de-centring global (Southern) urbanism. In M. Lancione and C. McFarlane (eds.), *Global urbanism: knowledge, power and the city*, Routledge, Abingdon.

Shiraani, F., I. Shaheer and N. Carr (2022) Procedural ethics vs being ethical: a critical appraisal. In F. Okumus, S. Mostafa Rasoolimanesh and S. Jahani (eds.), *contemporary research methods in hospitality and tourism*. Emerald, Leeds.

Shrestha, P., A. Young, A. Morton, T. Shafique, D. Rogers and A. Simone (2023) Book review forum podcast: the surrounds. *Urban Studies* 60.12, 2515–23.

Sudbury, J. and M. Okazawa-Rey (2015) *Activist scholarship: antiracism, feminism, and social change*. Routledge, Abingdon.

Táíwò, O. (2022) *Against decolonisation: taking African agency seriously*. Hurst, London.

Temper, L. and D. Del Bene (2016) Transforming knowledge creation for environmental and epistemic justice. *Current Opinion in Environmental Sustainability* 20. 4149.

Urban ECA Collective, N. Ahmed, A.G. Baker, A. Bhattacharya, S. Cawood, A.J.C. Pacheco, M.M. Daniel, M. Grandi, C.O. Grimaldo-Rodríguez, P.K. Guma, V. Habermehl, K. Higgins, L.N. Lata, M. Liu, C. Luederitz, S. Macktoom, R. Macrorie, L. Melgaço, I. Morales, E. Noterman, G. Owen, B. Oyalowo, B. Purvis, E. Robin, L. Sawyer, J. Terruhn, H. Unnikrishnan, T. Verbeek, C. Villegas and L. Westman (2022) Redefining the role of urban studies early career academics in the post-COVID-19 university. *City* 26.4 562–86.

Watson, V. (2016) Shifting approaches to planning theory: global North and South. *Urban Planning* 1.4, 32–41.

Yiftachel, O. (2015) Epilogue—from 'gray space' to equal 'metrozenship'? Reflections on urban citizenship. *International Journal of Urban and Regional Research* 39.4, 726–37.

Yomantas, E.L. (2020) Decolonizing knowledge and fostering critical allyship. In L. Parson and C. Ozaki (eds.), *Teaching and learning for social justice and equity in higher education*. Palgrave Macmillan, Cham.