

## Urban space in tension between financialization and the right to the city

26th-27th of May, 2025

Vienna Doctoral School of Social Sciences, University of Vienna, Austria

In the past decades the politics of urban production has undergone significant changes. A large literature has emerged arguing that urban space, or in fact planetary space more broadly (Brenner 2013), is best understood as a process of adaptation to financial and capital needs and as such it is a neoliberalized project of economic growth with financialized forms of accumulation (Brenner and Theodore 2002; Harvey 2007). This shift in the policies and political underpinnings of the production of space finds expression in variegated projects depending on their historical and cultural trajectories ranging from gentrification-driving revitalization (Morell 2015), over “spectacular development” of cities like Dubai or Beijing (Kanna 2011; Ren 2011), to the growth of “mega slums” (Davis 2004) or spatial segregation and growing social inequality (Caldeira 2001).

Such projects may come in combination with proclaimed states of exception or other forms of suspension of rights (Goldman 2011). Consequently, protests emerge as counteract forces challenging processes of neoliberalisation and financialization. Especially after the financial crisis of 2008, movements arose demanding affordable housing and better living conditions in many parts of the world. In this workshop, we will explore contemporary tensions between financialization and the “right to the city” (Lefebvre 1998) as expressed in and emerging from transformations of (urban) space.

We warmly welcome contributions from PhD students working on these and related phenomena in any part of the world and from various disciplines.

The workshop is a ViDSS (Vienna Doctoral School of Social Sciences) International Workshop hosted by the PhD Club *Critical Approaches to Policy and Governance* of the University of Vienna. As such, it will be held in presence over two days on the premises of the University of Vienna.

In the two day workshop, we will share and collectively reflect on our work in progress and engage in guided collective writing in groups. We will have a talk as well as an urban walk given by Gabu Heindl, architect, urban planner and activist in Vienna and professor at the Department of Building Economy and Project Development at the University of Kassel.

If you are interested in participating, please send a single pdf stating your motivation, your research focus and your affiliation to [petra.kolb@univie.ac.at](mailto:petra.kolb@univie.ac.at), [nana.iashvili@univie.ac.at](mailto:nana.iashvili@univie.ac.at) and [catherine.polishchuk@univie.ac.at](mailto:catherine.polishchuk@univie.ac.at) by **Monday, 31st of March**. Priority will be given to student members of the ViDSS.

Please let us know whether you require support with travel or accommodation costs. We have limited funding available, so we kindly ask you to seek funding from your home institutions.

We look forward to your applications!

Organizers of the workshop,

Petra Kolb, *PhD student, Political Science, University of Vienna*

Catherine Polishchuk, *PhD student, Social and Cultural Anthropology, University of Vienna*

Nana Iashvili, *PhD student, Social and Cultural Anthropology, University of Vienna*