

2024
URBAN RESEARCH DAY
WEDNESDAY, MARCH 6

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URBAN RESEARCH DAY

WEDNESDAY, MARCH 6, 2024

12:00 PM -1:00 PM	Rudin	**Registration Opens & Doctoral Poster Session** *Check-in, visit posters, and reconnect with your fellow faculty members*
1:00 PM	Rudin	**Luncheon Begins**
1:15 PM -2:00 PM	Rudin	**Urban Table Discussions & Presentation Session Overview** ***Sherry Glied, Dean, NYU Wagner***
2:00 PM - 2:15 PM	--	**Transition to Presentation Rooms**
2:15 PM - 3:15 PM	Various Rooms	**Round 1: Lightning Presentations + Panel Discussions**
3:15 PM- 3:35 PM	Rudin	***Break, Transition, & Poster Display*** *Doctoral Student Poster session continues*
3:35 PM - 4:35 PM	Various Rooms	**Round 2: Lightning Presentations + Panel Discussions**

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NYU Wagner
295 Lafayette Street, 2nd Floor



FACULTY PRESENTATION GROUPS

04

Up to five faculty presenters will be in each room, and will share their research in a lightning style presentation sequentially. Presenters give a 3 minute presentation of their work accompanied by 3 slides. A facilitator will then moderate a 15 minute discussion on the common theme. Q&A will follow the discussion for 15 minutes. 15 minutes will conclude the panel allowing for one-on-one conversations with panelists. This process will be repeated in three rounds. Each room will have a timekeeper and facilitator

ROUND 1 // 2:15 - 3:15 pm

Group	Neighborhoods & Housing	Urban Design & City Planning	Sustainability & Environment	Education
Room & Location	Rice (2nd Floor)	Lafayette (3rd Floor)	Mulberry (3rd Floor)	Jersey (3rd Floor)
Presenters	O'Regan Johnson Angel Norman	Tompkins Ventura Naro-Maciel Mascaro Momchedjikova	Rozhkov Cromar Kontokosta	Ogundimu Miller Pryor-Ramirez Ma Aguilar

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ROUND 2 // 3:35 - 4:35 pm

Group	Health	Mobility / Transportation	Methods & Data Security
Room & Location	Rice (2nd Floor)	Lafayette (3rd Floor)	Mulberry (3rd Floor)
Presenters	Taylor Trude Zhang	Kaufman Cheng Zimmerman Moran	Balcetis Zhu Yabe Laefer Ellen

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FACULTY PRESENTERS

Angela C. B., Trude
Angie,Kamath
Anton, Rozhkov
Blagovesta, Momchedjikova
Charles, Ogundimu
Constantine, Kontokosta
Debra, Laefer
Elizabeth B., Miller
Emily, Balcetis
Genia, Naro-Maciel
Giuseppe, Mascaro
Gustavo, Aguilar
Ingrid, Gould Ellen
Jasmine Y., Ma
Judy, Pryor-Ramirez
Katherine, ORegan

Kevin, Cromar
Kimberley, Johnson
Lauren A.,Taylor
Marc Norman
Marcel, Moran
Quanyan, Zhu
Rae, Zimmerman
Roni Barak Ventura
Sarah M., Kaufman
Shlomo (Solly) Angel
Siwei, Cheng
Takahiro, Yabe
Thomas R., Kirchner
Tim, Tompkins
Xiaogang, Wu
Yuzhang, Lin
Zhaoxi, Zhang

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Angela C. B., Trude

Assistant Professor of Nutrition, Department of Nutrition and Food Studies, NYU Steinhardt

Despite increased usage of online grocery shopping among urban populations with low income, barriers to healthy online food purchases persist, including delivery fees, mistrust, loss aversion, and impulse purchasing. Thus, we pilot tested four strategies uniquely designed to support online healthy food shopping. This was an eight-week pilot randomized trial with four groups with families of low-income living in the Bronx: 1) free delivery-only; 2) weekly text messages targeting mistrust; 3) weekly $10 matching credit for online fruit and vegetable (FV) purchases; or 4) weekly texts of personalized menu plans with grocery list recommendations. Feasibility was assessed via the creation of an online grocery account, and receipt of the intervention materials via text. Acceptability was assessed via post-intervention interviews and participants' ratings of the intervention. The high feasibility and acceptability of these pilot strategies is promising for the development of a fully powered trial behavioral intervention to support online healthy food shopping.



Marc Norman

Clinical Professor
Schack Institute of Real Estate

Marc Norman is the founder of consulting firm Ideas and Action, the Larry & Klara Silverstein Chair in Real Estate Development & Investment, and Associate Dean of the Schack Institute of Real Estate at the NYU. Trained as an urban planner, he has worked in the field of community development and finance for over 25 years. Norman works nationwide with cities, for profit and non-profit projects related to economics, wealth building and equitable development. He also engages in numerous public service and academic service activities. Since 1994, he has served as a board member for numerous non-profit, governmental and community organizations addressing issues of affordable housing and design, currently serving on the boards of New York City's Housing Development Corporation, the Governor's Island Trust and the Center for Architecture. Formerly he served on the boards of MASS Design Group, CAMBA Housing Ventures, and served as Chair for the Federal Reserve's Community Advisory Council.



Anton, Rozhkov

Industry Assistant Professor

Recent technological advances and the surge in decentralized systems are reshaping traditional energy infrastructure. This transformation, driven by renewable energy sources, alters socio-technical dynamics in urban areas, influencing consumer behavior and reshaping the energy landscape. Policymakers are crucial in facilitating this transition, requiring a deep understanding of energy systems as complex socio-technical entities. This research provides a valuable framework for stakeholders, assessing policy and technology consequences and guiding urban planners through the transition. Using modeling techniques like causal loop diagramming, system dynamics, and graph theory, the research evaluates strategies for distributing urban renewable energy systems. The model envisions future energy market scenarios and quantitatively analyzes key variables driving the transition. Profit-driven approaches, community engagement, visibility of energy-related topics, strategic planning, and sustainable urban practices are identified as pivotal factors, among others. These insights support integrating decentralized grids into urban planning, fostering a sustainable shift to renewable energy in cities.

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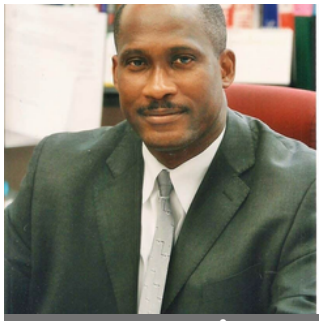
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Blagovesta, Momchedjikova
Clinical Full Professor, Expository Writing Program and Tisch School of the Arts

As Miniature World prepares to open doors on Staten Island in New York City, thus becoming one of the most comprehensive miniature (panstereoramic) exhibits in the world, questions about what is but also isn't represented in comprehensive exhibits such as this, come to mind. Who decides what is worthy of being represented? Who decides how to represent what is worthy of representation? What agency, if any, do the represented environments carry in their own representation? (For instance, it is a well-known fact that at Miniature World, the model environment of Brazil is created by an Argentinian team: what does that mean about the exhibit itself?) How is the power of representation handled at such seemingly innocent exhibits? Is the "colonial touch" still present in exhibits such as these? I will look at Miniatur Wunderland in Hamburg, the prototype behind New York's Miniature World, as a point of comparison, in an effort to understand if comprehensive panstereoramic representations continuously position themselves as educational, fun environments while darker, perhaps, ideologies lurk behind their carefully put together exteriors.



Charles, Ogundimu
NYU Teacher Residency Director, NYU Teacher Residency Program; Visiting Assistant Professor, NYU Teacher Residency, Department of Teaching and Learning

This research study is in its infancy, and it is built on the seminal work of Howard Adelman and Linda Taylor (2017). The title is: "A Preliminary Investigation into the Identification and Mitigation of Learning Barriers in a K-12 Settings." My goal is to build on their findings through direct application and expansion of the principles established in their work in a real school environment. I intend to start in a 3rd grade class in a charter school in NYC and compare the results with another 3rd grade class in a public school. Third grade is selected because this is when students are introduced to high stakes standardized tests with potential long-lasting educational ramifications. Ultimately, the goal is to expand this research into all grades 4 through 12. It is difficult to overestimate the potential benefits of the results of this empirical research.

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Constantine, Kontokosta

Associate Professor of Urban Science and Planning and Director, Civic Analytics, Marron Institute

The decarbonization of buildings marks one of the most significant pathways to reducing global GHG emissions and the impacts of climate change. Cities, in particular, are well-suited to advance climate action through a combination of regulations and incentives to both encourage and mandate greater energy efficiency and lower carbon emissions in existing buildings. New York City has been a leader in sustainability planning, taking a data-driven approach to measuring, evaluating, and implementing energy reduction and climate mitigation policies impacting the built environment, including energy benchmarking and building energy grading. Most recently, New York City adopted the Climate Mobilization Act (Local Law 97 or LL97) that sets carbon intensity targets for buildings and penalties for non-compliance. This project uses data from approximately 50,000 buildings over 10 years to analyze pathways to compliance and carbon reduction goals, focusing on the environmental, social, and economic effects on subsidized housing and vulnerable communities.



Debra, Laefer

Professor of Urban Informatics, Director of Citizen Science

This presentation will provide an overview of the current restarting of NYU's Urban Observatory (UO) in Brooklyn. In particular, there will be an introduction for the exciting and groundbreaking plans and anticipated capabilities for both individual and combined data layers, especially those related to hyperspectral imaging and the built environment. As the UO is expected to be an evolving and growing resource, this is an opportunity to suggest future capabilities. This talk will also introduce NYU's burgeoning efforts in creating a data lake that would be an NYU-open-access resource that would support a variety of location-specific, high-dimensional data sets.



Elizabeth B., Miller

Assistant Professor of Population Health

My research is at the intersection of education and public health. My research primarily focuses on the environmental contexts in which children spend the most time during their early childhood years (birth-8) and how these environments interact with each other and shape children's development. I use a developmental perspective to study early childhood policies and programs and how they can increase low-income children's school readiness.

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Emily, Balcetis

Associate Professor of Psychology

Individuals are especially vulnerable to numerous forms of cyber-security threat for multiple reasons. Hardware and software vulnerability, new scam scenarios and other technical changes open up opportunities for harm. However, technical solutions to technical problems will not fully mitigate risk, as it is people who must engage with the technology. People themselves pose a significant threat to cyber security. I explore psychological factors, including base-rate neglect, self-enhancement, illusion of invulnerability and sociocultural orientations, that threaten the security of infrastructure. I discuss the insufficiency of current risk-protection services offered in the industry, given their inability to mitigate psychological barriers to accurate risk assessment and harm prevention. I offer implications for increasing the accuracy of self-assessments of risk and managing the threat of security breaches.



Genia, Naro-Maciel

Clinical Professor; Sustainability, Health, and the Environment Chair, Global Liberal Studies

Protected Areas represent a cornerstone for biodiversity conservation globally, and are valuable for human well-being and recreation, but their establishment has not always been equitable or just. Urban parks offer extensive benefits through contact with nature and the outdoors, but have led to gentrification, removal, and exclusion. New York City houses some of the world's most famous public green spaces, from Manhattan's High Line to Staten Island's Freshkills, a globally important former landfill being transformed into a park. While books, articles, and more explore these sites, none focus on protected areas, justice, and biodiversity conservation in the context of ecocentrism, a philosophical approach that uplifts underrepresented human and non-human beings. To bridge this scholarly gap, I am working on a multidisciplinary book, supplemented by online self-guided tours of ten parks including "Decolonizing the High Line", that critically explores environmental, social, and ecological justice in New York City's green spaces.



Giuseppe, Mascaro

Associate Professor, Arizona State University. Visiting Faculty at NYU

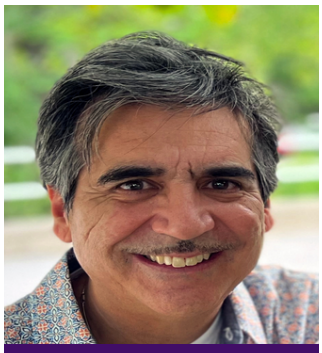
My urban research focuses on urban hydrology and attempts to address the following questions: How can we observe and model precipitation at high spatial and temporal resolutions for a range of storm types? What is the most efficient approach to model street flooding at hyperlocal scales (1 m) in urban basins? What are the impacts of different storm types on urban flooding, and will they change under global warming? To answer these questions, in my ongoing and future projects, I am and will be (1) applying an advanced stochastic model for the generation of random space-time fields that preserve precipitation correlations and distributions; (2) improving the application of a hydrodynamic model to simulate urban flooding at hyperlocal scales in NYC using the FloodNet street flooding observations; and (3) quantifying changes in the occurrence of the precipitation generating mechanisms in the U.S. using reanalysis products and climate models.

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Gustavo, Aguilar
Associate Arts Professor

The Gramercy Creative Research Initiative will serve as a incubator for student residents of Gramercy Green to collectively organize and carry out a socially-engaged project during the Spring Semester 2024.



Ingrid, Gould Ellen
Professor of Urban Policy and Planning

Few have studied the impact of the pandemic on sorting and segregation within cities. On the one hand, departures during COVID may have opened up opportunities for new types of residents to settle in central neighborhoods, On the other hand, the uncertainty about the city's future may have led in-movers – especially white in-movers – to choose neighborhoods where they felt more racially comfortable. Focusing on New York City, we use individual-level address history data to compare the racial composition of inmovers to that of outmovers on the same blocks. In the first year of the pandemic, white households avoided lower-income, less white neighborhoods, which led to a brief stalling of the secular decline in racial segregation. But changes were short-lived: by early 2022, racial turnover had largely reverted to pre-COVID patterns, and white households were even more likely to replace white outmovers throughout the city than in the pre-pandemic period.



Jasmine Y., Ma
Associate Professor of Education

This participatory design study is a collaboration between researchers at New York University and those at a New York City informal science organization, BioBus. We compare three different program formats, in different locations, of afterschool science programming for middle schoolers: one located in a lab space on a university campus, one in the public middle school building of participating students, and one aboard a mobile science lab, a bus that has been transformed into a research science lab. Our broad goal is to better understand how setting and science identities shape each other, and subsequent implications for our understanding of science identities. In other words, we are investigating interrelationships between where informal science programming takes place and how and which positive science identities can be supported, particularly for Black and Latinx students, whom BioBus explicitly serves.

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Judy, Pryor-Ramirez

Clinical Assistant Professor of Public Service and Director, EMPA

In 2019, in response to increased youth advocacy, the Student Voice Manager role at the New York City Public Schools was established to ensure student voices are heard and considered in school, district, borough, and city-wide policy matters. High school students have the opportunity to serve on School-based Leadership Teams (SLTs), the Borough Student Advisory Council (BSAC), the Chancellor's Student Advisory Council (CSAC), and the Panel for Education Policy (PEP). These policy bodies are ripe sites for investigation to better understand the extent to which student "lived experience" can advance social equity within a public institution like New York City Public Schools. This project is in its early stages with a focus on building a literature review and qualitative research design in partnership with the CSAC seeks to understand the relationship between lived experience and three concepts: leadership, voice and power. Specifically, this project examines (1) how policy bodies like the CSAC engage youth policy actors as leaders? (2) what structures help or hinder agentic voice? (3) how much power do youth policy actors have on this policy body? (4) how are youth policy actors shaped by the experience of the policy body as representatives with "lived experience"? This research project is led by Judy Pryor-Ramirez and supported by NYU graduate students Avery Moody (Wagner '25) and Annie Nelson (Wagner '25) and in partnership with NYU alumna and New York City Public Schools Student Voice Manager Amallia Orman (Gallatin '15).



Katherine, ORegan

Professor of Public Policy and Planning, Wagner Graduate School and Furman Center

Does Opportunity Come with Trade-Offs? The Housing Choice Voucher program faces two key challenges: a large share of recipients fail to lease-up in private market homes; and those that do often end up in a limited set of high poverty neighborhoods. To address the latter, HUD mandated that 24 metropolitan areas replace metropolitan-wide rent caps with ZIP Code based caps which should make more units available in higher rent neighborhoods; but they also decrease the number of eligible units in low rent neighborhoods, the neighborhoods in which most voucher recipients lease-up. We examine whether this policy leads to improved locational outcomes, and if this comes at the expense of lease-up rates. We find implementation led to greater improvements in locational outcomes for new voucher recipients relative to those in metros that just missed qualifying for the program but we find no evidence of lowered lease-ups, suggesting no tradeoff.



Kevin, Cromar

Director of the Health, Environment and Policy Program

International capacity building efforts increase the impact of our translational research by building up local resources and capabilities that continue to address local problems long after we have completed our engagement with government officials and civil servants. With financial support from NASA Headquarters, we have teamed up with other research institutions currently focused on addressing environmental and health challenges in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil. By working together, we are not only expanding the impact of our work, but we are also lessening the stakeholder fatigue that is commonly experienced by governments simultaneously working with a large number of external partners. Our work is supporting local management efforts in Rio by improving air pollution forecasting capabilities, assessing the effectiveness of existing air quality indices, and providing support for improved communication of the daily health risks of outdoor air pollution.

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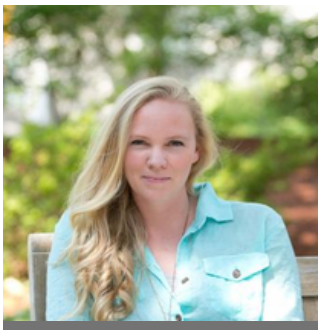
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Kimberley, Johnson

Affiliated Faculty, NYU Wagner; Professor of Social & Cultural Analysis, NYU College of Arts & Sciences

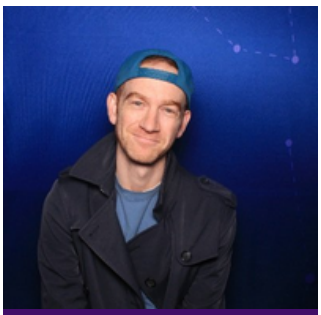
This paper examines development politics in majority-Black suburban jurisdictions. Using a multi-methods approach, Black suburban jurisdictions are shown to be more likely to engage in a developmental politics regime more similar to community development strategies of "inner city" urban areas, rather than the economic development strategies deployed by majority-white suburban jurisdictions. The findings of this research suggests that current models of suburban political economy need to reflect ongoing effects of the spatialization of racial and economic inequalities as well as the greater racial and ethnic diversity that now exists in America's metropolitan areas.



Lauren A.,Taylor

Assistant Professor

The Public Hospitals Project is a multi-case study research project, funded by the Stephen G. Vladeck Junior Faculty Fellowship at NYU Wagner School of Public Service. Public, city hospitals are a dwindling organizational form in the current US health care delivery landscape. A few hundred are still in existence with several dozen transitioning to nonprofits or being closed altogether each year. Most are based in major metro areas and serve primarily low-income and uninsured populations without regard for ability to pay. By collecting data on select public hospitals through public document reviews, key-informant interviews and on-site observation, this project is one of the first to explore the creation of de facto rights to health care within US cities. These are rights that extend beyond a basic right to emergency care and have De facto rights are entitlements that grow from the bottom up as caregivers use their discretion, professional expertise and knowledge of the local landscape to create programs and policies that meet patients' needs. The de facto rights in question extend beyond codified rights to emergency care spelled out in federal statutes. Unlike formal rights which may entail externally imposed obligations, de facto rights are more likely to arise when groups of professionals impose obligations on themselves. Although such rights would be unlikely to stand up in a court of law, they nevertheless have substantial impact on patients' access to care. To the extent that public hospitals do create locally-bounded rights to health care, they may be uniquely deserving of policy attention and financial support.



Marcel, Moran

Faculty Fellow, Center for Urban Science & Progress, NYU Tandon

New York City maintains the country's largest network of automated speed cameras, though fines are set lower than if written by police, and are omitted from license-suspension calculations, regardless of the number incurred. What does such a program design entail in terms of speeding recidivism, particularly at the extreme end? Mining a decade of publicly available speed-camera data finds that beginning in 2020, individual automobiles crossed the threshold of 100 or more camera-based speeding violations per year, 25 times the number that would prompt license suspension if manually written by police. Cross-referencing these 'super speeders' against traffic-violation data finds they average 35 non-speeding violations (including driving through red lights), as well as roughly $11,000 in unpaid fines each. The emergence and growth of this extreme recidivism indicates the need to evaluate and potentially modify the penalty design and enforcement of New York City's camera-based speed program.

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Quanyan, Zhu
sociate Professor, Department of Electrical and Computer Engineering

Toward Cyber Resilience in Intelligent Transportation Systems The increasing reliance of transportation systems on information systems has introduced new vulnerabilities to data poisoning, manipulation, and misinformation across multiple layers of intelligent transportation systems (ITS). These layers include the inter-vehicle, intra-vehicle, system, and human domains. To ensure the dependability and safety of modern transportation infrastructure, resilience to such informational attacks is critical. In this paper, we present a cyber resilience framework that provides a theoretical foundation for understanding informational attacks and their impact on different layers of the ITS. Our framework enables the quantification of fundamental tradeoffs and facilitates the development of feedback and learning-based mechanisms to proactively mitigate these attacks. Specifically, we will discuss zero-trust and proactive defense mechanisms to mitigate Advanced Persistent Threats (APTs) on 5G-enabled vehicle-to-vehicle communication systems, data poisoning attacks on GPS navigation systems, and misinformation attacks on route recommendation systems. By employing this framework, we can better protect our transportation systems and improve the resilience of the ITS against the ever-evolving threat landscape.



Rae, Zimmerman
Research Professor and Professor Emerita of Planning and Public Administration

Human Perceptions, Attitudes and Behavior as Critical Factors in User Acceptance and Adoption of Infrastructure Services. Human behavior continues to be a common element in analyzing how vital infrastructure services – energy, transportation, communication, and water – are used. Critical infrastructure resource performance depends on integrating human behavior into their planning, design, management, and operation, for infrastructure service protection and recovery from natural and human induced hazards. This research covers various services, incorporating interdependencies among them, and various threats. It demonstrates how human perceptions and attitudes shape behavior which contributes to service acceptance and use. Service focus: autonomous vehicles and multi-modal shifts (transportation); renewables (energy), and conservation and quality (water). Human behavior measurements are presented including those from risk analysis and communication. The research exemplifies social and physical system convergence. The human behavioral perspective are shown to be widely applicable across multiple threats and services. Credits: NSF grants #2122060, #2133356, and #2027884.



Roni Barak Ventura
Postdoctoral Fellow, Center for Urban Science and Progress, National Collaborative on Gun Violence Research

Firearms pose a serious public health threat in the U.S., where the number of fatalities by firearms exceeds motor vehicle fatalities. In New York alone, more than 42,000 people died in homicides and suicides with firearms between 2000 and 2020. In the same time period, eight restrictive firearm-related laws were passed. Here, we investigate the effectiveness of these laws in reducing firearm harms in metropolitan and non-metropolitan areas. We employ an integrated causal inference framework, combining information theory with the synthetic control method. Information theory is used to detect laws that have the potential to disrupt the relationship between firearm ownership and firearm harms, and synthetic controls demonstrate the causal role of each law in mitigating firearm harms. This analysis could provide initial guidance for future legislation to effectively reduce regional firearm harm rates.

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Sarah M., Kaufman
Director, NYU Rudin Center for Transportation

Sarah Kaufman directs several projects related to improving transportation for contemporary needs: adapting to the increasing frequency and impact of extreme weather events on mobility; an autonomous vehicles policy framework for U.S. cities; The Pink Tax on Transportation, an analysis of how safety concerns impact women's travel patterns in New York City; Intelligent Paratransit, to rethink how we transport seniors and disabled residents; and the Emerging Leaders in Transportation Fellowship, a program to enhance innovation at all levels of transportation planning and policymaking.



Shlomo (Solly) Angel
Professor of City Planning

In this presentation, I will introduce an outline for a novel pilot project in accommodating urban growth in Sub-Saharan Africa, a project that can now be implemented in cities in Malawi and Ethiopia and possibly in other countries in the region as well. The core idea is to prevent the formation of new informal settlements on the urban periphery at the course by engaging and empowering village councils in organizing farmers to pool and subdivide their land properly with registered land titles instead of dividing them up and selling plots on the informal market.

We have now created an online course titled Accommodating Urban Growth, which is aimed at empowering municipal officials and other stakeholders is the rapidly growing cities in the Global South to plan for their densification and for the 'greening' of their expansion. We are now putting together the Atlas of Urban Growth wihch aims at providing maps and metrics that are necessary for making densification and expansion plans. They include information on the urban extents and populations of all cities and towns with 10,000 people or more, their change over the past decades and their projections to 2050, as well as a series of maps related to topography, environmrntal assets, and environmrntal risks. Both the course and the Atlas will be available in many languages.



Siwei, Cheng
Associate Professor of Sociology

This study combines daily mobility data collected via mobile device and the American Community Survey to create comprehensive measures of activity space segregation across geographic areas in the United States. We extend conventional measures of spatial segregation to incorporate exposure in individuals' routine activities, weighted by the flows of individuals between census block groups. Our analysis reveals three key findings. First, metropolitan areas vary significantly in the degree of activity space segregation. Second, individuals exhibit a lesser degree of income and racial segregation in their activity space than in their residential space. Third, MSA-level income inequality is associated with greater isolation for both lowest and highest income groups; economic inequality exerts a more substantial influence on activity space isolation compared to residential segregation.

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Takahiro, Yabe
Assistant Professor of Technology Management and Innovation, Joint Faculty at Center for Urban Science and Progress

Urban economic resilience hinges on understanding how shocks propagate across local businesses and urban amenities during pandemics, disasters, and technological shifts. While disruptions in supply chains have been extensively studied, it is imperative to recognize that human behavior changes may also amplify shocks to businesses and amenities that are connected via mobility and lifestyle patterns. In this talk, I will present novel network-based methods that leverage large-scale human mobility data to predict the network cascades of urban shocks, and further discuss applications to optimize civil infrastructure systems to achieve urban resilience.



Tim, Tompkins
Adjunct Professor of Urban Planning, Wagner // Fellow, NYU Marron Institute

Place-based collaborations led by neighborhood-based nonprofits partnering with government and the private sector have played a key role in saving cities, spurring neighborhood-based economic development, and making municipal government more nuanced and responsive at the local level. As we enter a new era of urban stress, now is the time to address the limitations of those collaborations by creating and testing new mechanisms and models to make them more empowered, sustainable, and equitable. The Sustaining Places Initiative at Marron aims to identify and develop models and mechanisms, including financial ones, which will allow these hyperlocal community partnerships to create vibrancy in more contexts and communities, by convening and collaborating with the nonprofit, government, and private-sector practitioners who are doing the work in the field. It also seeks solutions to address the challenges and fragmentation of delivering government services at the district level, challenges which Jane Jacobs wrote about decades ago.

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Xiaogang, Wu
Yufeng Global Professor of Social Science, Professor of Sociology, NYU Faculty of Arts and Science and NYU Shanghai, Center for Applied Social and Economic Research, NYU Shanghai

A classic thesis on the decline of community in modern society argues that industrialization and urbanization would undermine the intimate social relationship and voluntary groups, which play important roles in fostering community collective efficacy. Urban sociological literature on the neighborhood effect is largely built upon the loss-of-community assumption and social disorganization theory. We re-examine this classic thesis based on the two waves of household panel data collected in Shanghai in 2017 and 2019 (Shanghai Urban Neighborhood Survey [SUNS]). Results show that collective efficacy are negatively associated with neighborhood socioeconomic status (SES). Further analysis reveals that, collective efficacy is positively associated with SES in both low SES and high SES neighborhoods, but negatively associated with SES in middle SES neighborhoods. While neighbors' social interaction enhances collective efficacy in low SES neighborhoods, formal participation boosts it in high SES neighborhoods. We place the community change in a historical context to reconcile the different associations between neighborhood SES and collective efficacy found in different societies.



Yuzhang, Lin
Assistant Professor of Electrical and Computer Engineering, NYU Tandon

Dr. Yuzhang Lin's research focuses on smart power grids and renewable energy integration, and critical infrastructure resilience. He is interested in physical, statistical, and learning-based methods for improving power grid operation and planning using a variety of data sources. The objectives are to facilitate large-scale integration of renewable energy and to enhance the disaster resilience of interdependent critical infrastructures such as power, communication, heating, and transportation.



Zhaoxi, Zhang
Faculty Fellow at CUSP

Rapid urbanization worldwide continues to challenge the health burden of the environment in which we live, although a number of actions are being taken to promote urban health for today's and tomorrow's cities. However, it is still a challenge to develop an in-depth investigation to monitor the risks in cities to combat environment-related diseases. Micro-scale Public Open Space (POS) is defined as "all managed open space of public value", including parks, streets, recreational grounds, sports fields, commons, lakes. A well-designed POS can encourage residents' physical activity, and contribute to the mental health. With the advancement of sensor technology, a body-worn system-based environment and health monitor is rapidly gaining popularity, providing a new perspective to investigate the health effects of the environment at the individual level. This study took advantage of the novel technology and developed an in-depth investigation of the role of urban place in public health.

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OUR TEAM

Urban Initiative Co-Directors

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Kimberly Johnson

Co-Director of the Urban Research Seminar

Kimberley Johnson is Professor of Social and Cultural Analysis and Affiliate Faculty Member of the Wagner School of New York University. Johnson's research focuses on American and urban political development, urban and local politics, and race and ethnic politics. Johnson is the author of two books, Reforming Jim Crow (2010) and Governing the American State (2007) and numerous articles on American political development and its intersection with racial and ethnic politics. Current research projects focus on African American urban and suburban politics. Johnson is completing a book manuscript, tentatively titled, Dark Concrete, exploring the development of black power urbanism in Newark and East Orange, New Jersey and Oakland and East Palo Alto, California



Ingrid Gould Ellen

Co-Director of the Urban Research Seminar

Ingrid G. Ellen, the Paulette Goddard Professor of Urban Policy and Planning, is a Faculty Director at the NYU Furman Center for Real Estate and Urban Policy. She teaches courses in microeconomics, urban economics, and urban policy research, and her research centers on housing and urban policy with a focus on neighborhoods and racial segregation. She is author of Sharing America's Neighborhoods: The Prospects for Stable Racial Integration (2000) and more recently editor of The Dream Revisited: Contemporary Debates About Housing, Segregation and Opportunity (2019). She has written numerous peer-reviewed journal articles and book chapters related to housing policy, community development, and school and neighborhood segregation. Professor Ellen is currently president of the American Real Estate and Urban Economics Association. She has held visiting positions at the Department of Urban Studies and Planning at MIT, the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, the Urban Institute and the Brookings Institution.

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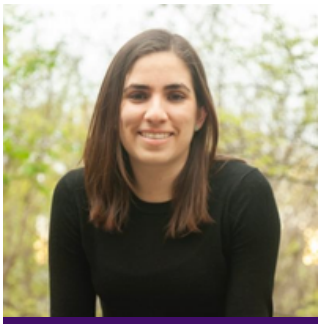
OUR TEAM

Urban Faculty Committee

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Jo Ivey Boufford
Kevin, Cromar
Kimberley Johnson
Kristen Day
Linsey, Edwards
Lorna, Thorpe
Matthew, Kwatinetz
Michael, Lindsey
Thomas Sugrue

DOCTORAL STUDENT PRESENTERS

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Ariadne, Rivera
PhD in Epidemiology,
NYU Grossman School of Medicine

In 2021, 106,699 people died from drug overdoses: a 51% increase from 2019. Prior evidence suggests that evictions are associated with a higher risk of overdose. Amidst the economic fallout from the COVID-19 pandemic and the associated increased risk for evictions and mass displacement, many US states implemented temporary eviction moratoria. Between April 2020 and December 2021, these eviction moratoria began to expire, putting households at risk of eviction. Using monthly county-level counts on fatal overdoses in the US and information on timing of state eviction moratoria, we evaluated whether lifting eviction moratoria were associated with higher fatal overdose rates in the US. To reduce confounding bias, we restricted the analysis to states that implemented any eviction moratoria (n=44) and to the period between April 1st, 2020, and December 31st, 2021. We adjusted models for time-varying confounders, demographic, socioeconomic characteristics, other Covid-19 mandates, COVID-19 cases, and deaths.



Caitlin, Krenn
Doctorate in Clinical Social Work,
NYU Silver School of Social Work,
Doctorate of Clinical Social Work (DSW)

The housing insecure population, although often a source of political contention, is forgotten and unseen when it comes to their role and participation in the civic process. My research explores misunderstood and overlooked barriers to civic participation while homeless. My work analyzes the oppressive nature of the problem and how it is systematically generated, then addresses the ways in which the homeless population is impacted by voter suppression efforts. Finally, my work offers potential solutions, informed by the voices of those with lived experience in order to begin envisioning a roadmap for crafting empowerment interventions to enhance the civic participation of those experiencing homelessness.



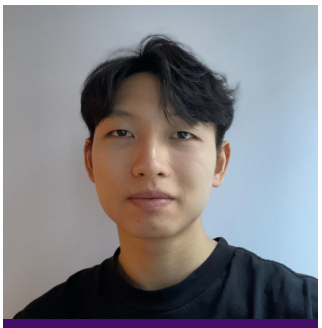
Callie, Clark
Urban Systems PhD,
Tandon Engineering, Civil and Urban Engineering Department

With more than one in ten Americans experiencing food insecurity, reliable access to emergency food assistance, or food pantries, is an important resource in the food access landscape. However, research shows there are still issues with accessibility to food pantries, and there is a need for a comprehensive analysis of the limiting factors. We propose a multi-dimensional access index that considers travel time, operating hours, and availability of transit infrastructure. Using New York City as a case study, we produce a novel dataset by simulating travel time from each census tract to the nearest open food pantry across NYC for 28 time periods and four modes of transportation. Combining all aspects, we propose an index that quantifies spatiotemporal access by mode and we further compare it with need. We compare our results to two traditional access indices and quantify the added benefit of our proposed index.

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DOCTORAL STUDENT PRESENTERS

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Chuyang, Chen
BM in Music Technology
Steinhardt

A comprehensive study on noise levels in the New York City subway system reveals significant health risks for millions of passengers due to prolonged exposure to high sound levels. Data from 183 train tracks across 32 stations in Manhattan and Brooklyn, including peak hours, show that noise levels often exceed safe limits recommended by the EPA and WHO. Key findings indicate that larger stations with express tracks and multiple divisions (both numbered and lettered lines) exhibit the highest noise levels. Factors like station design, track alignment, and the number of tracks contribute to these elevated levels. For instance, Union Square, one of the busiest stations, recorded peak noise levels at 94.32 dBA, with sound events occurring over 75% of the time. These excessive noise levels are linked to various health issues like hearing loss, increased stress, high blood pressure, and disturbed sleep. The study suggests that the Metropolitan Transportation Authority (MTA) can mitigate these health risks by addressing the identified "loud spots" through improved maintenance and design strategies, and by actively monitoring noise levels for effective remediation.



Costanza, Paolillo
PhD in Italian Studies
GSAS - Italian Studies

In order to explore the interactions between heritage preservation, tourist consumption, and negotiation of a sense of place for local communities in contemporary Italy, I analyze the case of the Oscar Niemeyer Auditorium in Ravello, Amalfi Coast. Built in 2008 in a UNESCO cultural landscape site, the structure aimed to promote a sophisticated year-round tourism, but faced a significant opposition by both intellectuals and residents, who were concerned with the disruption of landscape as an identity space shaped by traditional social exchanges. With the growing pressure of global mass tourism, over the last twenty years objects and places preserved as cultural heritage have increasingly been managed to cater to the needs of tourists rather than locals. Uses of public space are often redefined accordingly, jeopardizing traditional practices and social bounds for local communities. This sparks the question: for whom is heritage preserved?



Diedre, Brown
Urban Systems
Tandon Civil and Urban Engineering - Urban Systems;
CUSP - Urban Science

Human health cannot be disentangled from our commensal relationships with dynamic microbiomes. Effective molecular maps of the environmental microbiome have the potential to spatially connect the impact of these microbiomes on human well-being and identify microbial reservoirs and transmission pathways. Yet, how individuals interact with outdoor environmental microbiomes through specific urban substrates (e.g., soil, glass, etc.) remains unclear. Currently, microbial maps are based on metagenomic methods to establish spatialized microbial metrics. They are often interpreted with minimal metadata and limited spatial and temporal resolution due to methodological constraints (sampling and sequencing analysis). To achieve a future microbial map that parallels what has been accomplished with urban temperature metrics, establishing a metric that links an individual's outdoor exposure to diverse environmental microbiomes and urban characteristics is necessary. My research identifies the features essential for creating such an inferred urban microbial map.

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DOCTORAL STUDENT PRESENTERS

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Fallon, Meng
PhD in Biology
GSAS, Biology

Investigating the Spotted Lanternfly's (SLF) invasion in urban landscapes, our study uncovers the genetic underpinnings of this species' rapid adaptation to urban environments since its 2014 emergence in Pennsylvania. Utilizing whole-genome sequences from 98 SLFs, predominantly from New York City, we employed techniques to study the demographic history(invasion pattern), genetic diversity, population structure, gene-environment association to trace their urban evolutionary journey. We identified significant population bottlenecks that coincide with key urban development phases in Shanghai and South Korea, followed by their spread into the US cities. Despite these genetic challenges, the SLF exhibits a surprising genetic diversity and admixture, indicating a high gene flow and a possible pre-adaptation to urban ecologies. Our research provides vital insights into how invasive species like the SLF adapt and thrive in urban ecosystems, shedding light on their evolutionary resilience and informing urban biodiversity management.



Guanrui, Li
PhD in Electrical and Computer Engineering
Tandon School of Engineering, Electrical and Computer Engineering, Agile Robotics and Perception Lab

I have developed planning, control, and perception algorithms for a collaborative aerial robot team engaged in payload manipulation and human interaction. My contributions include scalable hierarchical perception and nonlinear control methods, enabling cooperative estimation and control of the payload using onboard sensors. This surpasses existing quasi-static and passive control methods, which limit system mobility. I have also devised optimal control methods for the team to manipulate the payload, interact with humans, avoid obstacles, and maintain spatial separation. Moving forward, my research aims to enhance these novel robotics system by establishing collaborative frameworks with other types of autonomous robots (e.g., legged robots with manipulators) and humans equipped with augmented reality glasses and haptic devices. This will contribute to a unified collaborative robotics framework at physical and cognitive levels, reducing the physical and mental efforts of humans and supporting them in complex and hazardous tasks.



Jessica, Siegel
PhD in Psychology and Social Intervention
NYU Steinhardt, Applied Psychology

Pre-k program quality has large implications for children and programs (e.g., racial disparities, funding). Common quality metrics use observations, which have been criticized as lacking a) predictive validity for children's academic skills, and b) attention to culture, race, and ethnicity. Additionally, observations alone miss the perspectives of key stakeholders: parents. This poster presents profiles of pre-k quality in New York City (NYC) Pre-K for All using observations and parents' perceptions, showing how these differ across profiles and by student race/ethnicity. Studies have yet to explore how broadening the definition of pre-k quality to include the perspectives of families, key stakeholders in children's pre-k experience, might strengthen our measurement of pre-k quality. Findings have practical implications for how districts define quality, support programs, and partner with families.

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DOCTORAL STUDENT PRESENTERS

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Michael J., Cziner

PhD in Public Health - Epidemiology
School of Global Public Health, Department of Epidemiology

New York City (NYC) public transit workers were essential workers throughout the COVID-19 pandemic and at elevated risk for infection. Annually updated COVID-19 vaccines may lessen the burden of disease in this workforce. Therefore, this study sought to examine the willingness of NYC transit workers to receive annual COVID-19 vaccines by various factors. A cross-sectional online survey of New York Metropolitan Transportation Authority workers was conducted between December 2023 and February 2024. A variety of factors were assessed, including demographic and occupational characteristics, physical and mental health status, and attitudes towards pandemic working conditions. Logistic regression models were used to identify factors associated with intent to receive annual COVID-19 vaccines. NYC transit workers appear to have low intent to receive an annual COVID-19 vaccine, especially among female and Black/African American workers. Understanding patterns of low vaccination intent may help to better position future vaccination efforts in this workforce.



Nallely, De La Rosa

PhD in Social Psychology
Graduate School of Arts and Sciences; Psychology

From the Bronx, Sonia Sotomayor became the first Latina, third woman and one of only three people of color, to ever serve on the Supreme Court of the United States. Yet, her narrative, while groundbreaking, underscores the challenges and typical leadership stereotypes faced by the city's diverse youth in pursuing leadership roles. To address this, we conducted a leadership workshop for primarily minoritized youth in New York City with the goal of broadening their perception of who can be leaders. With interactive evidence-based activities aimed at countering and rejecting stereotypes and building growth mindset, we found minority adolescents increased self-alignment as leaders and strengthened beliefs that any racial and gender group can be leaders. We also found decreased fixed beliefs and an increase in personal belongingness in leadership. We build on these promising results to diversify representations and self-perceptions of leadership, laying the groundwork for a more equitable future.



Payton, Johnson

PhD in Sociology
Sociology

The transformation of Denver's Five Points neighborhood, the once-central hub of Black social life in the city, epitomizes gentrification's disruptive presence in urban areas. Drawing from 32 interviews and mapping exercises with current and former Black residents of Five Points, this research examines how gentrification disrupts the social reproduction of neighborhoods. While interviewees have diverse notions of what Five Points is, they evoke Five Points' historic central corridor and lineage of local Black establishments as defining features of the neighborhood. Respondents recognize gentrification as a process that disrupts the canon of the neighborhood, as it introduces new names, incompatible boundaries, spatial recenterings, and white-washed historical narratives in the space. Aware of this, residents adjust their notions of neighborhood to reclaim Five Points as an ongoing Black space. Through these findings, gentrification can be understood as a breach in the social reproduction of neighborhoods instead of a process of residential displacement.

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DOCTORAL STUDENT PRESENTERS

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Rayan, Succar
PhD in Mechanical Engineering
Department of Mechanical and Aerospace Engineering and Center for Urban Science and Progress, Tandon School of Engineering

The United States (U.S.) is ranked first in gun possession globally and is among the countries suffering the most from firearm violence. Several aspects of the U.S. firearm ecosystem have been detailed over the years, mostly focusing on national or state-level phenomena. Systematic, high-resolution studies that compare U.S. cities are largely lacking, leaving several questions open. For example, how does firearm violence vary with the population size of a U.S. city? Are guns more prevalent and accessible in larger cities? In search of answers to these questions, we apply urban scaling theory, which has been instrumental in understanding the present and future of urbanization for the last fifteen years. To investigate mechanism underlying the U.S. firearm ecosystem, we establish a novel information-theoretic methodology that infers associations from the variance of urban features about scaling laws.



Ryan, Brenner
PhD in Urban Systems
NYU Tandon

The legislatures of both Hawaii and Puerto Rico passed local legislation establishing a goal to achieve 100% of electricity generation from renewable resources by a specific date. The federal government, through the Department of Energy, worked with both jurisdictions to assess the feasibility of these goals and to identify pathways to reaching 100%. Though both Hawaii and Puerto Rico have colonial histories with the United States, Hawaii currently has the status of a state while Puerto Rico remains an unincorporated territory. This case study examines the challenges and opportunities each jurisdiction faces in achieving their 100% renewable goals related to their respective political statuses.



Tao, Li
PhD in Electrical Engineering
Department of Electrical and Computer Engineering

In the realm of urban traffic management, the primary challenge of dynamically and efficiently monitoring traffic conditions is compounded by the insufficient utilization of thousands of surveillance cameras along the intelligent transportation system. This work introduces the multi-level Traffic-responsive Tilt Camera surveillance system (TTC-X), a novel framework designed for dynamic and efficient monitoring and managing various traffic objects in urban transportation networks. By leveraging widely deployed pan-tilt-cameras (PTCs), TTC-X overcomes the limitations of a fixed field of view in traditional surveillance systems by providing mobilized and 360-degree coverage. The innovation of TTC-X lies in the integration of advanced machine learning modules, including a detector-predictor-controller structure, with a novel Predictive Correlated Online Learning (PiCOL) methodology and the Spatial-Temporal Graph Predictor (STGP) for real-time traffic estimation and PTC control. Demonstrating scalability, cost-efficiency, and adaptability in experiments, TTC-X emerges as a potent solution for urban traffic management in both cyber-physical and real-world environments.

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DOCTORAL STUDENT PRESENTERS

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Teresa, Herrera
Population Health
NYU Grossman School of Medicine, Department of Population Health, Department of Pediatrics

To date, no studies have examined redlining's association with both air pollution and adverse birth outcomes in New York City (NYC). Using a prospective cohort design, this study investigated the extent to which maternal residence in a historically redlined neighborhood was associated with fine particulate matter (PM2.5) exposure during pregnancy and birth outcomes. Our air pollution model showed that living in a D graded census tract or an ungraded census tract was associated with increased PM2.5 exposure during pregnancy. We also found living in a D graded census tract or an ungraded census tract was associated with lower birth weight z-score. This research suggests that historical policies possess the capacity to influence environmental and health outcomes in enduring ways.



Tian, Gan
PhD in Mechanical Engineering
Tandon School of Engineering, Center for Urban Science and Progress

Impulsivity has been proposed as a key driver of obesity. However, evidence linking impulsivity and obesity has relied on the study of individual factors, with limited account for the urban attributes of obesogenic environments. Here, we investigate the relationship between obesity and impulsivity through urban scaling and causal discovery. For 811 cities in the United States of America, we study the prevalence of obesity in adults, attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD) in children, and relevant urban features. We observe sublinear scaling of obesity and ADHD with population size, these disorders being less prevalent in larger cities. By applying a causal discovery tool to the deviations of cities from the urban scaling laws, we identify an influence of ADHD on obesity, moderated by lifestyle. The strength of these associations is confirmed by individual-level data on a cohort of 19,333 children, wherein we observe that ADHD modulates obesity both directly and indirectly.



Valentina, Alaasam
Postdoctoral Researcher, Biology

Urban wildlife worldwide face similar environmental challenges, with spatially distant cities often resembling each other more than surrounding natural habitats. However, within urban landscapes there is also substantial heterogeneity. Many characteristics of urban green spaces are known to covary with socioeconomic variables such as household income and historical redlining. This can lead to the "Luxury Effect" where biodiversity is positively correlated with surrounding affluence. We are investigating whether there is support for the luxury effect across taxa in NYC. We survey birds, insects, and amphibians across New York City Parks in Manhattan and the Bronx. We predict that the socioeconomic landscape will predict biodiversity, but responses would vary across taxonomic group. We compare our results with biodiversity predictions based on iNaturalist and eBird data to investigate potential biases in user demographics. Results shed light on how socioeconomic heterogeneity in cities can lead to the reorganization of animal communities.

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Ashlin, Rakhra
PhD Population Health, NYU Langone Health

Ashlin Rakhra is a 2nd year PhD student at the Vilcek Institute of Graduate Biomedical Sciences at NYU Langone Health. Her research interests are implementation science, health equity, access to care, and community engagement. Her current work focuses on process evaluations of community health worker-led chronic disease programs among immigrant populations in New York City. Her ultimate research goal is to become an established implementation scientist with a focus on implementing contextually and culturally specific evidence-based interventions to achieve health equity. Ashlin holds an MPH from Emory University Rollins School of Public Health.



Austin, Lukondi
PhD American Studies

Austin Lukondi's research interests include spatial analyses of social issues, housing banishment / homelessness, and examining state-sanctioned carceral policies and practices through a critical lens. He has worked as a researcher on a variety of projects, including: monitoring New York's State Prison system for abuses and advocating for incarcerated people; supporting harm reduction and alternative to prosecution programs based in New York City; and providing insights on educational programs for homeless K-12 students. Austin holds a B.A. in Sociology and Education from Colorado College and a M.S. in Quantitative Methods in the Social Sciences from The Graduate Center (CUNY).



Beyza, Kiper
PhD Civil Engineering, NYU Tandon

Beyza Kiper is a Ph.D. Candidate in the Civil and Urban Engineering Department at Tandon School of Engineering. With the guidance of Dr. Ergan at BILAB, her research focuses on automating the process of inspecting building façades by incorporating urban sensing technologies to gather data and utilizing computer vision-based methods to analyze and visualize the data. By doing so, she aims to improve our understanding of a city's building façade conditions on an urban scale and ensure public safety. Beyza holds an M.S. in Civil Engineering from Purdue University and a B.S. in Civil Engineering from Yildiz Technical University in Istanbul.

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Callie, Clark

PhD Urban Systems, NYU Tandon

Callie is a NSF Graduate Research Fellow in the Urban Intelligence Lab and an Urban Systems PhD Candidate in the Civil and Urban Engineering department at NYU. Her research interests include spatial analysis of infrastructure equity and the resulting impact on community dynamics and resilience. Currently she is partnering with City Harvest to analyze geospatial and temporal food pantry access across New York City. Callie earned both a master's in Systems Engineering and a bachelor's degree in Civil and Environmental Engineering from UC Berkeley. At UC Berkeley, she performed research simulating response time under different scenarios of police defunding and alternate responder deployment. She also worked with eCAL lab to model equitable spatial distribution of new public EV charging infrastructure in the state of California to meet their future policy goals. Between her undergraduate and master's, Callie worked as a data analyst at Lawrence Berkeley National lab in the Building Technology and Urban Systems Division.



Diedre, Brown

PhD Urban Systems, NYU Tandon

Diedre Brown is a Brooklyn native interested in the interwoven and interdependent relationships between living things and their environment. As a designer and data scientist, she is interested in how data can express and reveal the correlations within this relationship. An interest that supports her research endeavors as a third-year Ph.D. Candidate in the Urban Systems program at NYU Tandon School of Engineering. Working with Dr. Elizabeth Hénaff and the Laboratory for Living Interfaces, she applies earth observation techniques to assess area-level conditions of the environmental microbiome (the microorganisms that inhabit specific environments and are associated with beneficial and pathogenic public health effects) of the urban microclimate as they relate to microbial diversity. Learn more about Diedre's work at https://www.diedrebrown.com/.



Elisa, Wirsching

PhD , NYU Wilf Family Department of Politics

Elisa Wirsching aims to increase our understanding of incentives and selection in city bureaucracies and their implications for public policy and accountability. She is interested in applying causal inference methods and computational data science tools to identify the causes and consequences of politically motivated behavior of public service providers, particularly police. In her current research, Elisa examines how police strategically adjusted their work effort following budget reductions in 2020 and seeks to explain why some city agencies are unrepresentative of their jurisdictions regarding partisanship, race, and gender. Before graduate school at NYU, Elisa worked as a researcher in the Office of the Chief Economist at the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development, the Chair of Econometrics at the University of Mannheim, and the Leibniz Centre for European Economic Research. She holds an MSc in Political Science and Political Economy from the London School of Economics and a BA in Political Science and Economics from the University of Mannheim.

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Ellie, Lochhead

PhD, NYU Wagner

Ellie Lochhead is a first-year PhD student and a Doctoral Fellow at the Furman Center. She spent the past two years as a Pre-Doctoral Research Fellow at the Furman Center where her work focused on housing policy issues including rental assistance programs, federal housing subsidy programs, and eviction. Prior to NYU, she received an M.S. in Economics and Urban Planning from Tufts University and a B.A. in Economics and Public Policy from the University of Denver. Her research interests include urban economics and housing policy with a particular focus on understanding policy responses that can alleviate housing challenges faced by the lowest-income renters.



Fatima, Mabrouk

PhD Social Work, NYU Silver

Fatima Mabrouk is a social worker and equity advocate with a passion for empowering historically underrepresented Black/African American women professionals. She specializes in helping individuals who experience racial microaggressions in behavioral healthcare settings and is interested in studying the stressful effects of microaggressions. With a background in clinical practice and social science research, Fatima has taught courses at NYU, Hunter, and Columbia on mental health and policy issues related to social work and workplace discrimination, and institutional equity. She was awarded the 2nd Annual CUNY Women's Recognition Award for her outstanding leadership and unwavering commitment to service. Currently, she is a PhD doctoral student at NYU Silver School of Social Work, Fatima is passionate about using her research to promote institutional equity and combat workplace discrimination.



Jasmin, Choi

PhD Social and Behavioral Science, NYU Global Public Health

Jasmin Choi research interests are harm reduction approaches to mitigate the effect of stigma and address barriers to healthcare access for individuals with co-occurring substance use and mental health disorders. Previously, she worked as a federal policy analyst and coordinator for Massachusetts' Medicaid program. She received a dual-degree Master's in Social Work (MSW) in group therapy work specialization and Master's in Public Health (MPH) in Epidemiology and Biostatistics from Boston University.

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Joshua, Coven
PhD Finance, NYU Stern

Joshua Coven studies the relationship between who owns housing and how that matters for affordability, access to geographies, and access to wealth building opportunities. His current focus is on the purchasing of single family homes by institutional investors in cities including Atlanta, Phoenix, Tampa, and Charlotte. Past work focused on COVID-19 in NYC, including a paper about urban flight and a paper that studied how disparities in housing crowding and sheltering in place were associated with disparities in COVID-19 exposure.



Kam, Waugh-Gordon
PhD Urban Education, NYU Steinhardt

Kam Waugh-Gordon has been an educator in NYC public schools for fifteen years. She has served as a Special Education Teacher, Assistant Principal, and, most recently, the Founding Principal of Bronx Legacy High School (BXL). Rooted in equity, inclusion, anti-racism, and belonging, the BXL community strives to actively address systemic inequalities, dismantle oppressive structures, and promote inclusivity at all levels. As a Bronx native, Kam has dedicated her life to positively affecting academic outcomes for students in the Bronx community. With a focus on empirical and ethnographic research, she is committed to dismantling barriers that hinder the equitable distribution of social and economic resources for adolescents in urban communities. Kam is interested in the impact of algorithms and artificial intelligence on wealth distribution within urban communities. Her research examines how these technological advances can foster opportunities for wealth creation but also critically analyzes how they can inadvertently perpetuate systemic oppression in specific communities. Her research pursuits also include exploring the effects of algorithms and artificial intelligence on mental health among adolescents and vulnerable populations.



Katherine (Kate), Thomas
PhD , Sociology

Kate's work uses quantitative and computational methods to address the causes and consequences of spatial inequality. Two of her current research projects address how residential sorting patterns respond to natural hazards and the impacts of discrimination in historical mortgage lending on contemporary racial inequality and segregation. Prior to graduate school, Kate was a Research Analyst at the Urban Institute. Kate received her B.A. in Statistics and Sociology from Rice University.

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Maria Teresa, Herrera
PhD, Population Health, NYU Langone Health

I am deeply committed to exploring equity issues in children's environmental health through my research. My approach utilizes insights from population health, pediatrics, epidemiology, environmental justice, and sociology. I received my bachelors in Ecology and Evolutionary Biology at the University of Colorado and a master's in public health from Mount Sinai School of Medicine. Prior to starting my doctoral studies at NYU, I worked as a program coordinator for the Environmental Protection Agency's Region 2 Pediatric Environmental Health Specialty Unit, where I implemented evidence-based interventions in healthcare and early childcare settings to help reduce exposure to environmental health hazards. I believe that scientific inquiry is essential in shaping policies that protect health, ensuring every child has the opportunity to thrive in healthy environments. Beyond academia, I find joy spending quality time with family and friends, painting, and biking.



Payton, Johnson
PhD Sociology

Payton Johnson is a Ph.D. student at NYU Sociology whose research explores how cultural production, political economy, and racial inequality inform urban spaces. Before NYU, he attained a Bachelor of Arts from Columbia University, receiving the Grant Squires Prize in Sociology for his thesis, "Conflicting Geographies: Shifting Notions of Space amidst Early Gentrification. Currently, Payton is a Ford Foundation Predoctoral Fellow, and he is working on multiple research studies at NYU's Department of Sociology and The Institute of Human Development and Social Change.



Simin, Hua
PhD , Epidemiology, NYU Langone Health

Simin Hua is a doctoral student in Epidemiology at the Vilcek Institute of Graduate Biomedical Sciences. She is interested in chronic disease epidemiology, particularly diabetes prevention and control. In her doctoral research, she is delving into the upstream factors, including social determinant of health and built environment, that may contribute to diabetes outcomes as well as the risk of diabetes. Before joining the PhD program at NYU, Simin worked at Albert Einstein College of Medicine and collaborated with researchers studying chronic diseases among Hispanic/Latino population and women with HIV. Simin obtained her master's degree in Epidemiology from Johns Hopkins University.

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Sohini, Das
PhD, Psychology and Social Intervention

Sohini Das (she/her) is a 3rd year doctoral student, elementary art teacher in the South Bronx, and community organizer for educational justice in New York City. She currently uses participatory action and community-engaged research methods to explore the theory of change of grassroots community organizing and advocacy within the movement for education justice led by Black, Latine, and working-class youth, families, and communities of color. In her research, she collaborates with youth, community organizers, and caregivers to develop and evaluate community-based workshops and programs that support organizing training, critical consciousness development, healing, a sense of community, with build organizational and community political power for communities of color. Sohini approaches research as a tool to support the development and sustainability of anti-racist, healing, abolitionist educational spaces with and for Black, Latine, and working-class youth, families, and communities of color.



Susana, Costa Amaral
PhD Social Work, NYU Silver

Susana Costa Amaral is an interdisciplinary researcher working at the intersections of the fields of performance, politics, critical theory, and queer-of-color critique. Originally from Rio de Janeiro, Susana lives and works in New York since 2018. She holds an MA in Performing Arts from the Federal University of Rio de Janeiro, where she also completed her BA in Cultural and Film Studies. In Spring 2022, she was a Visiting Graduate Student Fellow at the Global Research Institute in Berlin. Her upcoming dissertation, “Open Bodies: Brazilian Contemporary Art in the Age of the Far Right,” offers a meditation on the aesthetic and intellectual practices of young performing artists from Brazil.

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