



DISPUTATIO OF BARCELONA 2020

Cities, Climate and Pandemics: Reflections from Urban Studies and Environmental Economics

Tuesday, 19 January 2021, 6:30 – 8:30 p.m.

Advance registration required for following the event live on Zoom.

REGISTRATION FORM: <https://www.iec.cat/jornades/disputatio2020.asp>



Aerial view of Barcelona (Photo © TimeOut)

Starting in the early twentieth century, rapid urbanisation has become one of the dominant demographic trends of our times, driving the interrelated issues of climate change and public health issues. This year the **Academia Europaea - Barcelona Knowledge Hub (AE-BKH)** has been a close collaborator of the Barcelona City Council on its recently published Barcelona Science Plan 2020-2023, outlining strategic municipal policies for bridging science and society in a variety of areas, including the ongoing climate crisis. Thus, in light of the current COVID-19 pandemic and its widespread social impact, the AE-BKH has decided to devote the 2020 edition of its *Disputatio of Barcelona* annual debates to “**Cities, Climate and Pandemics:**

Reflections from Urban Studies and Environmental Economics”. The session will focus on the essential role of cities in climate change mitigation and in the control of pandemics such as COVID-19. Barcelona, along with other major metropolises in the world, will provide for an interesting analysis.

Disputantes: Urbanist **Prof. Kathrin Golda-Pongratz**, MAE, UIC Barcelona School of Architecture; and environmental economist **Prof. Jeroen van den Bergh**, ICREA Research Professor, Institute of Environmental Science and Technology of the Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona (ICTA-UAB). Coordinator and convenor: **Prof. Alexander Fidora**, MAE, ICREA Research Professor, Department of Ancient and Medieval Studies, UAB.

The session will follow a hybrid model of (limited) in-person attendance as well as access via live streaming on Zoom. Details regarding registration for attending in-person will be confirmed at a later date. (Please check for updates on the details of this event on our website.)





Introduction to “Cities, Climate and Pandemics”

COVID-19 has altered our daily life in an unparalleled way, making us keenly aware of the need for a change in paradigm rooted in resilience and sustainability and permeating all systems. The current pandemic has highlighted how vulnerable our society is to newly emerging diseases, particularly those of zoonotic transmission, which have been linked to habitat destruction resulting from human activity. Similarly, the impact of widespread lockdowns enacted around the world in response to COVID-19 has been strongly felt on many levels: environmental, social and economic. In consequence, the rapid urbanisation and economic and population growth characterising our times are challenged as unsustainable, as they represent key factors identified in the degradation and/or loss of biodiversity and natural habitats, which is responsible in part for climate change and the origin and spread of pandemics.

As UNESCO states in its document **Urban Solutions: Learning from cities’ responses to COVID-19: The multidimensional nature of the pandemic has left an indelible mark on the outlook of the cities and has led to rethinking cities’ development in different dimensions - social, cultural, economic, and environmental. Being at the forefront, cities have played a central role in the global response to the ongoing pandemic.**

Cities, in this sense, play an essential role, as they provide the basic structures for where and how we live, work, move and communicate, as well as for how we manage issues such as land use and sanitation, all of which directly affect public health. How can cities become more resilient and sustainable, in order to mitigate climate change and to prevent and/or control pandemics like the one that we are currently dealing with? What lessons are provided by fields such as urban studies and environmental economics, regarding what kind of policies to adopt? Who are the major stakeholders in changing the current paradigm of city planning, and how can consensus be reached among them about what strategy or strategies to employ?

Coordinated and moderated by Prof. Alexander Fidora, MAE, ICREA Research Professor in the Department of Ancient and Medieval Studies, UAB, this debate attempts to shed new light on the aforementioned questions by bringing together experts from different fields: urbanist Prof. Kathrin Golda-Pongratz, MAE, UIC Barcelona School of Architecture; and environmental economist Prof. Jeroen van den Bergh, ICREA Research Professor, Institute of Environmental Science and Technology of the Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona (ICTA-UAB). We turn to our home city, Barcelona, along with other major metropolises in the world, in our search of examples to analyse.

Our end goal is to push the interrelated issues of city planning, climate change and pandemics to the forefront of the public agenda, and to begin to find the tools necessary to face the challenges that these issues pose to citizens locally and globally.





Disputantes

Kathrin Golda-Pongratz, architect, urbanist and urban researcher, is a professor at the UIC Barcelona School of Architecture and recently an associate professor at the Department of Urban and Territorial Planning at the UPC-BarcelonaTech. She lectures and publishes internationally. Her research focuses on urban memory, urban culture(s) and public space, postcolonial urbanization, non-formal urbanism and place-making strategies. Her book (with J.L. Oyón and V. Zimmermann), *John F C Turner. Autoconstrucción. Por una autonomía del habitar* (Pepitas de Calabaza, 2018), was distinguished with the 2019 FAD Award (Thought and Criticism). Her documentary film, *Ciudad Infinita –Voces de El Ermitaño* (2018), portrays a self-built neighbourhood and ecological threats through urbanization in Lima, Peru. Her experience expands into curating and cultural transmission, and she currently curates the programme, *Paradigma Mur. Berlín - Barcelona 1989-2019 / 1961-2021*, at El Born CCM. She served as president of the jury for the 2019 City of Barcelona Prize in Architecture and Urban Planning. She is a member of the Institut dels Passats Presents (IPP) created by the Barcelona City Council, of Deutscher Werkbund (dwb), of the German Academy of Urban and Regional Planning (DASL) and of Academia Europaea (AE).



Kathrin Golda-Pongratz
(Photo by Renzo Salazar)



Jeroen van den Bergh

Jeroen van den Bergh is ICREA Professor at the Institute of Environmental Science and Technology of Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona (2007–present), and honorary full Professor of Environmental Economics at Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam (1997–present). His current research is on the interface of environmental economics, energy-climate studies and behavioural sciences. He is founding Editor-in-Chief of the journal, *Environmental Innovation and Societal Transitions*. He is the recipient of various prizes, including the Royal/Shell Prize 2002 for Sustainability Research, the Institute for Catalan Studies (IEC) 2011 Sant Jordi Environmental Prize, and an honorary doctorate from the Open University in the Netherlands. He currently leads an ERC Advanced Grant on the topic “Behavioural-evolutionary analysis of climate policy – bounded rationality, markets and social interactions”. His latest book is *Human Evolution beyond Biology and Culture: Evolutionary Social, Environmental and Policy Sciences*, published

by Cambridge University Press. Recent articles examine a transition path to global carbon pricing and the role of cities in combatting climate change.





About the *Disputatio* of Barcelona series

The *Disputatio* of Barcelona is a series of annual debates in English organised by the Academia Europaea-Barcelona Knowledge Hub (AE-BKH) and held between two renowned experts (*disputantes*) holding different viewpoints on a common topic of social relevance. Now in its eighth edition, the series began in 2013 and was inspired by the original *Disputatio* held in Barcelona in 1263, a theological debate between Christian and Jewish intellectuals presided by King James I of Aragon.

The modern-day *Disputationes* organised by the AE-BKH have covered a wide variety of topics in the exact, natural and social sciences, following a similar format consisting of a brief exposition by each of the two *disputantes*, followed by questions (total duration between 90 and 120 minutes). As is tradition, the two invited *disputantes* will interact with the audience, comprised of members of the local academic community.

Additional information, including links to video recordings, is available on the AE-BKH webpage:

<http://barcelona.acadeuro.org/home/annual-programming/disputatio-of-barcelona/>



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CITIES, CLIMATE AND PANDEMICS:
REFLECTIONS FROM URBAN STUDIES AND ENVIRONMENTAL ECONOMICS



Photo by Renzo Salazar

KATHRIN GOLDA-PONGRATZ
(UIC BARCELONA SCHOOL OF ARCHITECTURE)



JEROEN VAN DEN BERGH
(ICREA, ICTA-UAB)

CONVENOR: ALEXANDER FIDORA (ICREA-UAB)

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Institut
d'Estudis
Catalans

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More information:
<http://barcelona.acadeuro.org/>

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Ajuntament de
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