What features do megacities share and how do they differ? Melissa Butcher was part of ABC Radio National’s recent exploration of this topic. Listen to the full interview here.

UPCOMING EVENT
THE FORGOTTEN GENERATION

Penny Vera-Sanso is screening her documentary The Forgotten Generation next January. Chris Roles, Director of Age International will be coming to discuss issues on people working in later life.

The film is based on research undertaken by Penny into old age poverty in urban Tamil Nadu, rural Rajasthan and tribal Maharashtra. The film reveals the realities of their lives, relationships and work as well as their expectations of the future.

1-5pm, 18th January, 2019.
BIMI, The Birkbeck Cinema, 43 Gordon Square.

REAL CHOICES, REAL LIVES

Jasmine Gideon has written for Plan International, along with Lynsey Robinson, reflecting on children’s time use in India, Ethiopia, Vietnam and Peru.

Read more.

PALEOCLIMATE TALKS

Stefan Engels was invited to give a lecture in the Palaeoclimate seminar series at UCL Geography Department on 16th October. He gave a talk about ‘High-resolution lake sediment records in NW Europe: new methods, new results, new challenges’.

TO LISTEN: MEGACITIES

What features do megacities share and how do they differ? Melissa Butcher was part of ABC Radio National’s recent exploration of this topic.

Listen to the full interview here.

THINK UBER DRIVERS HAVE IT BAD?

Rosie Cox’s article for The Guardian presents findings of her research with Nicky Busch revealing low pay and lack of rights for au pairs in the UK.

Read more.
Kate Maclean gave a talk at UEA on 24th October titled “The emerging middle class? Wealth, informality and vulnerability among the ‘Chola Bourgeoisie’ in La Paz, Bolivia”. Her talk addressed the circumstances that facilitated the rise of the chola bourgeois and the controversies surrounding consequent changes in Bolivian social and cultural fabric, demonstrating the political complexity behind the term ‘middle class’ and the multiple dimensions involved in ‘vulnerability.’

Physical geographer Becky Briant spent a week in Helsinki, visiting a new collaborator, Dr Minna Valiranta, and bringing home some seeds to radiocarbon date for her project reinvestigating the environment during the time when neanderthals were being replaced by modern humans in Europe. This site, in Kaareoja, is the first evidence of forest in Scandinavia during a very cold period. Their work will help to improve the precision with which the age of this sequence is known.

Rosie Cox gave a public lecture at the Purai Global Indigenous and Diaspora Research Studies Centre at the University of Newcastle, Australia on 7th November. Her talk asked ‘Who Will Mind the Baby After Brexit’ and examined the UK’s reliance on European domestic workers. Rosie is an external affiliate of Purai and the Centre has recently created a partnership agreement with Birkbeck to facilitate further work between colleagues in the two institutions.

In September, Simon Pooley attended the third annual meeting of the IUCN Task Force on Human Wildlife Conflict, at Trinity College, Oxford. The team discussed a definition of human wildlife conflict, and the guidance documents that will be produced based on this. These will draw on humanities, natural and social sciences expertise to tackle the social and ecological dimensions of conflicts. Simon will be leading on a document on history, culture and conservation.

William Ackah was the keynote speaker of the conference Re-engaging Pan Africanism, held at Birmingham City University from December 6-8th. He gave a talk titled ‘Black Theology and Black Power in Dialogue with Spiritual, Cultural and Revolutionary Power: A Pan-African Conversation’. The aim of the conference was to bring together academics, activists, policy makers and members of the public to re-engage in Pan-African politics.

Kalpana Wilson was invited to present a paper on ‘The Neoliberal Feminism of International Development’ in a symposium at the University of Warwick, ‘Feminism, Queer and Neoliberalism: Critique, Complicity and Complexity’, on 14th June.

Kalpana also took part in the first meeting of the working group on Decolonising Development Studies Network, International Institute of Social Studies, Erasmus University of Rotterdam, on 15th June.
Stefan Engels organised and taught a summer school for PhD students and ECRs in the Vosges mountains in July. A camera crew from the local news channel was there and they ended up in a 6 o’clock news broadcast!

Kalpana Wilson was invited to give a public lecture on ‘Racialised and gendered labour and reproductive justice in the era of the SDGs’ at the Institute of Geography, University of Bern on 18 October.

Rosie Cox spent one week of November as a guest of the School of Geography and Sustainable Communities at the University of Wollongong. She presented a seminar on ‘Gender and Home Improvement: Thinking about Material(s) and Work on the Home’.

In November, Paul Watt was a panel speaker on ‘The homelessness crisis and the right to housing’ at the RebLaw UK Conference in London. Paul also presented a talk on ‘The Housing Crisis in Britain’ to the UNISON South West Retired Members Group in Taunton.

Kalpana Wilson was invited to give a public lecture on ‘Racialised and gendered labour and reproductive justice in the era of the SDGs’ at the Institute of Geography, University of Bern on 18 October. A lively evening was had by all.

In the latest episode of Thinking Allowed, Rosie Cox talks to Laurie Taylor about her new book ‘As an equal?’ on au pairing and domestic labour in contemporary Britain.

In November, Paul Watt was a panel speaker on ‘The homelessness crisis and the right to housing’ at the RebLaw UK Conference in London. Paul also presented a talk on ‘The Housing Crisis in Britain’ to the UNISON South West Retired Members Group in Taunton.

The department’s Inaugural Annual Black Studies Lecture of 2018 was titled ‘Black Studies: Old Agendas New Possibilities - A Transatlantic Perspective’, with Dr Michael Tillotson (University of Pittsburgh) as keynote speaker, Dr Gabriella Beckles-Raymond (Christ Canterbury University) as respondent and Dr William Ackah as convenor.

The department was pleased to welcome Professor Hakim Adi and a distinguished panel of African descendant scholars, including Professor Robert Beckford, Professor Patricia Daley, Dr Jan Etienne and Dr William Ackah, to discuss his new book ‘Pan-Africanism: A History’ on 29th November.
**RACE AND RELIGION**

William Ackah was an invited speaker at the Speakers Chambers of the House of Commons with Rev Rose Hudson-Wilkins (Chaplain to the House of Commons) on the 18 September. Subject: Racism in Church and the State in Britain.

William was also an invited Panellist at University of Leeds Challenging Academic Debates, Situating Decolonial Science, Art and Faith in the Syllabus on 25th October 2108. Title: 'I can't write left handed: Discourses of Religion and Race in the Academy and Community'.

**FIELD TRIP TO SOUTH AFRICA**

In September, Simon Pooley completed a field trip to northern KwaZulu-Natal, South Africa, as part of his Birkbeck/Wellcome Trust ISSF Award project. He interviewed a range of individuals and communities involved in conservation, from rural stock owners losing cattle to hyena and leopard, to commercial game farmers, NGOs doing conservation outreach and ecotourism, provincial conservation managers and ecologists. He discussed poster competitions with local schools, based on his Don't Get Eaten by a Crocodile posters which are being used in the region.

**URBAN CHANGE IN BOLIVIA**

Kate MacLean presented a recent film project on 'Urban change and the Aymara bourgeoisie in La Paz, Bolivia' on 30 November. This short film explores how the wealth of the Aymaran bourgeoisie have changed culture, belonging and the built environment in the city by comparing two neighbourhoods. Following the screening, Kate was joined by Giovanna Miralles and Pamela Gomez Jiménez to discuss their work using film and photography to represent and engage with social and political processes in Bolivia.

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**PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT**

**EMPOWERING OLDER WOMEN**

On 15th November Penny Vera-Sanso contributed to a roundtable organised by Age International and the Overseas Development Institute on development policy and older women's empowerment in low and middle income countries. Her article in the volume 'Facing the Facts' was recognised as a significant influence for the work of Age International in this area, inspiring the writing of 'Who Cares: why older women’s economic empowerment matters for the Sustainable Development Goals', published by the NGO.

**A FAIRER HARINGEY**

Urban geographer Paul Watt is co-chairing a group of community and faith leaders, experts, local residents and politicians to help Haringey become a fairer and more equal borough for its residents, diverse communities and businesses. The commission will work to tackle inequality and ensure services meet local needs, and will benefit from Paul's academic research into social inequalities, social housing, communities and urban regeneration.

Read more.

**PREVENTING CROCODILE ATTACKS**

Simon Pooley has been advising the Uganda Wildlife Service on preventing crocodile attacks in his capacity as a member of the IUCN Task Force on Human Wildlife Conflict, in partnership with the World Bank's Global Wildlife Program. The Bank and the Task Force are working with concerned governments to develop a Community of Practice on Human Wildlife Conflict, and Simon has participated in the first briefing meeting of Task Force experts with African country representatives from South Africa, Uganda and Zimbabwe.
Kate Maclean has a paper coming out for the *International Journal of Cultural Studies*, titled *Fashion in Bolivia's cultural economy*.

Rosie Cox's new book, written with Nicky Busch, was published on 15th November. The book presents a detailed examination into the lives of au pairs and the families who host them in contemporary Britain, exploring the increased reliance on an exploited workforce under austerity and the position of women within the neoliberal economy.

Details here.


Sue Brooks published a new open access paper in progress in *Physical Geography* with Pollard, J.A. and Spencer, T. on the 'Interaction between Coastal Erosion and Flooding'.

Becky Briant has a new publication coming out with Ismael Al Ameri, titled *'A late Holocene molluscan-based palaeoenvironmental reconstruction from southern Mesopotamia: implications for the palaeogeographic evolution of the Arabo-Persian Gulf'* in the *Journal of African Earth Sciences*.


Our PhD student Ana Luísa Sertã published her first book in Brazil, *'Following seeds: paths and circuits of Sateré-Mawé women between city and village'* as a result of her MRes in Social Anthropology (University of Sao Paulo). The book addresses the life histories of Sateré-Mawé women who live in the city of Manaus (located in Brazilian Amazon) and explores the connections established by them between city and villages through a network of collection and exchange of seeds, used for the production of necklaces and bracelets. In the event, she also exhibited her short film *'In the paths of the seeds'*.

Our PhD graduate, Camelia Dewan, who was awarded her PhD in Social Anthropology and Environment in Nov 2017 is about to start her 3 year post-doc at the University of Oslo on a project called 'Dis-Assembling the Life Cycle of Containerships': Camelia will be looking at the social and environmental effects of ship-breaking in South Asia on local communities.

Our PG student, Steve Westlake, MSc Climate Change Management, has secured a PG research grant to undertake a PhD at Cardiff University researching whether leaders who reduce their environmental foot print can spur significant behaviour change in others.
APPONMTMENTS & AWARDS

EXTERNAL EXAMINER

Penny Vera-Sanso has been appointed External Examiner for the Masters Programme, Social Policy Major at the International Institute of Social Studies, Erasmus University, Rotterdam (ISS).

SENIOR FELLOW

William Ackah was appointed in 2018 as a Senior Fellow of the African Diaspora Consortium World Education Research Network Sponsored International Research Network.

BLOOMSBURY SCHOLARSHIPS

Andrea Ballatore & team have secured a Bloomsbury PhD scholarship for the project 'Impact of changes in the food environment on food and drink purchasing using large-scale secondary data'.

Karen Wells also picked up a Bloomsbury Scholarship.

GCRF FUNDS

Jasmine Gideon has been awarded College GCRF funds for a project on 'Health-related Public-Private Partnerships in Latin America'.

Joana Barros and Kate Maclean got GCRF funding for a symposium to be held in La Paz, Bolivia on 'Urban data and the politics of city governance'.

Rosie Cox also got GCRF funding for a project related to domestic technologies.

NCCPE GRANT

William Ackah, together with Ben Campkin (UCL), John Egbo (North London Partnership Consortium Limited) and Stephanie Gamauf (Impact hub Brixton), was awarded a small grant from the National Co-ordinating Centre for Public Engagement (NCCPE) for a collaborative project to compare regeneration programmes, processes and outcomes in three London Boroughs.

NEWSLETTER INPUTS

Want to share your next publications, events, public engagement and other academic activities?

Please send a short paragraph and pictures to Ana Luísa Sertã (aserta01@mail.bbk.ac.uk) with “Newsletter input” as subject. Submissions must be received by the 1st March 2019 for inclusion in our next edition – the sooner the better!