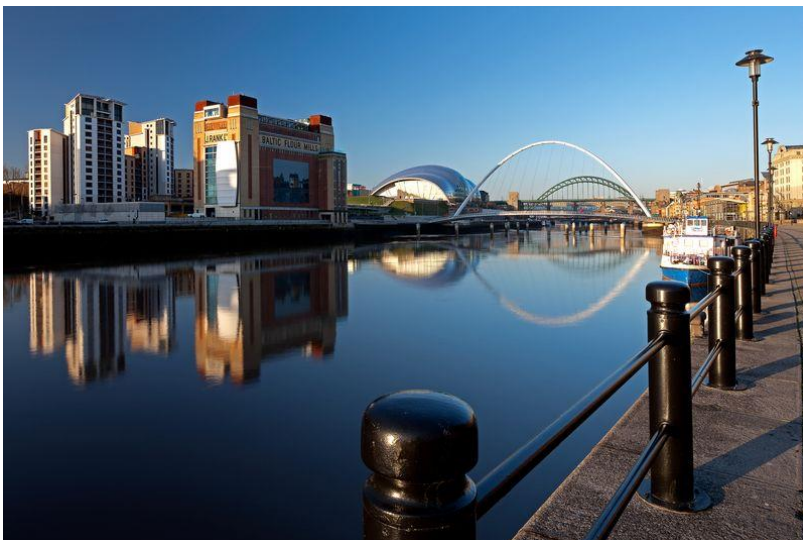


**The Global Urban Research Unit, School of Architecture, Planning and Landscape,
Newcastle University, UK**

The Global Urban Research Unit (GURU) was created in 2002 through the amalgamation of three research units to provide a single framework for research in urban studies, spatial planning and related areas such as regeneration and housing within the School of Architecture, Planning and Landscape. It aims to be: *"a globally significant organisation in the research and transformation of cities, place and territory"*. Around 30 of the academic and research staff in the School are also members of GURU. As suggested by its name, the international dimension of GURU research is of particular importance. Engagement in European research networks and with research projects funded through EU Framework programmes and ESPON form one of the key priorities. There has also been a long engagement with research in the Global South, focusing in particular on housing and community, supported by a large body of doctoral students from the developing world.

Newcastle has a strong tradition of significant and innovative work in planning theory and our work is always theoretically informed but often deeply related to the experiences of citizens, policy-makers and other stakeholders. GURU's work is centrally concerned with questions of social and environmental justice; it is explicitly pro-poor and seeks to champion the ecological dimensions of policy and decisions where appropriate.



Newcastle Quayside © Graeme Peacock

GURU research is particularly concerned with how places are governed and how different governance regimes affect outcomes. These concerns cut across all of our four over-lapping theme groups wherein work is organised:

Cities, security and vulnerability is concerned with the politics of risk, security and vulnerability in cities across the world. It includes a large body of research on vulnerability in informal settlements in cities of the Global South including poverty, health problems, infrastructural marginalisation, as well as erasure, eviction and homelessness. Food, energy and biological security provide another focus, while the 'new military urbanism' has been the subject of significant research, publication and contribution to public debate.

Cities and international development focuses on the housing, urban planning, environment and poverty issues facing the rapidly growing cities of the Global South. Research topics include processes of production and adaptation of low-cost housing, home-based enterprises and the issues posed for the disabled in informal settlements. Researchers have engaged with policymakers in a number of countries through UN-Habitat and national and local governments. The large number of doctoral students from the developing world supervised by researchers within this group enriches its work, while the establishment of a Masters in Planning in Developing Countries has provided a further research/teaching link.

Planning and environmental dynamics builds on Newcastle's position as an internationally-renowned centre for critical research into the theory and practice of spatial planning and environmental management. Change in the governance of spatial planning and environmental management, in the UK, Europe and elsewhere, is one aspect of this work, including understandings of institutional capacity and institutional transformation in urban and regional governance and the roles and ideologies of professionals. Issues arising from the interface of natural environments and ecosystems and human actions and interventions are a further crucial concern of this strand of research.

Power, place and materiality uses cultural and social analysis in research on the built environment which investigates the meanings of place, the production of space, and the power relations between different people and institutions involved. Research and publication incorporates issues such as sustainability in historic urban cores, health, obesity and the built environment, and mobility in later life.



Architecture Building © John Donoghue

Doctoral Research and Opportunities

The School of Architecture, Planning and Landscape has a large and very multinational body of doctoral students, providing a friendly and vibrant environment for around 70 students, a high proportion of whom are supervised by GURU academics. Research students are engaged with the work of GURU through, for example, regular research seminars and conferences and joint academic publication with staff.

Two doctoral scholarship schemes funded by UK research councils are open to EU students and enquiries and applications from institutions and potential students in Europe would be welcomed:

Newcastle University is part of the **North-East Doctoral Training Centre** which has an annual allocation of doctoral studentships which includes an environmental planning strand funding research in a wide range of spatial planning, urban and environmental policy topics. Enquiries should be made to Stuart Cameron (stuart.cameron@ncl.ac.uk).

The **Doctoral Training in Digital Civics** at Newcastle University supports doctoral students researching the design, deployment and evaluation of community-driven digital technologies and services. Within GURU this programme is co-ordinated by Professor Geoff Vigar (geoff.vigar@ncl.ac.uk).

GURU Contact

Professor Ali Madanipour (Director) Ali.Madani@ncl.ac.uk

Website: <http://www.ncl.ac.uk/guru/>