



The *Knowledge Platform for Urban Transformation*, in partnership with the project "Science Advice and COVID-19" of the *International Network for Government Science Advice*, the *Coordination of Humanities*, the *Coordination for Scientific Research* and the *Center for Interdisciplinary Research in the Sciences and Humanities* of the National Autonomous University of Mexico UNAM, and *The New School Observatory on Latin America*

invites to present a *discussion note* for the webinar

Cities and COVID-19:

New Directions for Urban Research and Public Policies

April 29-30, 2020

10:00 – 13:00 hours; CDT North America

<https://www.gotomeet.me/transformacionurbana/ciudades-covid-19>

Deadline for sending proposals: April 23, 2020.
Further information: covid19.pctu@gmail.com

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The COVID-19 pandemic highlighted new manifestations of old urban problems becoming more relevant in public discussion. The measures taken to cope with the pandemic revealed new nuances of problems ranging from the complexity of urban teleconnections (the multi-scaled relationships of cities in terms of flows, e.g. people, energy, materials, investments, etcetera) versus the limited governmental coordination, the vulnerability of urban economies, the governmental capacity to respond to emergencies, and infrastructural deficiencies. The novel expressions of problems related to socioeconomic inequality, gender, informality, social exclusion, and the shifting diet in relationship with public health, convey the priorities and loopholes of the urban agenda during the last decades.

To name a few examples, the massive workers layoff in several industries showed the negative side of having a low-density unionization.¹ The calls to stay at home made visible the significant numbers of people lacking any kind of social safety net, whose income depends entirely on going out to work.² The massive closing of businesses has compromised the financial sustainability of the business ecosystem.³ The rising panic towards the pandemic showed the fragility of urban food systems.⁴ The increasing need of economic resources to face the pandemic made evident the lack of financial instruments at hand for local governments.⁵ The standout of hypertension and diabetes as underlying conditions aggravating the disease by COVID-19 highlights the problems with a diet transition towards ultraprocessed food, high in saturated fats, sugar and salt. The list of new faces of urban problems made visible by the COVID-19 could go on. On top of it, the pandemic puts into question the governments' capacity to address other urgent urban problems due to budget constraints, the urgency of addressing the immediate effects of the pandemic, and the mobility restrictions faced by urban dwellers.

These new faces of old urban problems uphold the need to strengthen the links between science and public policy decision-making. They also open new possibilities for novel research and force us to question the relevance of conventional urban policies and its means of implementation. In this context, the *Knowledge Platform for Urban Transformation* and co-organizers make a call for the submission of discussion notes about the new directions of urban research and public policies that have become evident as a byproduct of the COVID-19 pandemic. The seminar will put emphasis on discussing Mexican cities but will also accept discussion notes on other Latin American cities.

- 1 Aristegui Noticias (2020, marzo 20) "Este es el plan de Alsea ante Covid-19: No pagará a empleados que descansen". <https://aristeguinoticias.com/2003/mexico/este-es-el-plan-de-alsea-ante-covid-19-no-pagara-a-empleados-que-descansen/>
- 2 Contra Réplica (2020, abril 3) "Si no salimos, no comemos". <https://www.contrareplica.mx/nota--Si-no-salimos-no-comemos-20202429>
- 3 El Sol de Puebla (2020, marzo 26) "Morimos de hambre o de Covid: tianguistas de Atlixco". <https://www.elsoldepuebla.com.mx/local/estado/morimos-de-hambre-o-de-covid-tianguistas-de-atlixco-5021001.html>
- 4 Abstracto Noticias (2020, marzo 26) "Supermercados de NL racionalizan productos y limitan el acceso de clientes por COVID-19". <http://abstractonoticias.com/supermercados-de-nl-racionalizan-productos-y-limitan-el-acceso-de-clientes-por-covid-19/>
- 5 La Jornada (2020, marzo 30) "Gestiona Jalisco préstamo por mil mdp por crisis de Covid-19". <https://www.jornada.com.mx/ultimas/estados/2020/03/30/gestiona-jalisco-prestamo-por-mil-mdp-por-crisis-de-covid-19-6380.html>

The discussion notes will be organized and presented in panels during a webinar taking place on April 29-30, 2020. The webinar will be in Spanish. The panels will be recorded and posted for free access in the *Knowledge Platform for Urban Transformation* webpage. The Platform will also publish a dossier with the discussion notes that are accepted and presented at the seminar. The publication will go through a blinded peer review process and will have a DOI. The date of publication will be between two and three weeks after the seminar. The authors will have an opportunity to make revisions to their discussion notes between May 9-12, either to take into account the feedback received during the seminar or the suggestions made through the peer review process.

The discussion notes must have a length between 1,500 and 2,000 words, not including bibliography, tables, or figures. The text should be Arial 12, with a paragraph spacing of 1.5. Tables should be included at the end of the text, indicating their location in the text. Figures should be sent in a separate file indicating their location in the text, and with a resolution of 300 dpi. The discussion notes should provide an explicit discussion of the following elements:

- The new face of an urban problem brought about by the COVID-19 pandemic.
- A justification of the relevance of allocating research efforts to this new face of an urban problem.
- The suggested research questions to spark new directions in urban research or public policies, including the mechanisms to strengthen the science-policy links.
- The possible case studies and research methods that can potentially advance the proposed line of research.
- At the end of the discussion note, include a brief biographic description of the author(s) of no more than 100 words.

The discussion notes should be sent to the email covid19.pctu@gmail.com cc'ing contacto@transformacionurbana.mx, indicating in the following in the subject of the email: "Discussion note proposal". The deadline to receive discussion notes will be April 23, 2020. Participants will be notified of their acceptance and the date and time of the panel in which they have been scheduled between April 25-26, 2020.

