

Kimberly Noronha

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RESEARCH INTERESTS

Urban informality & Coastal Communities: Politics and planning of informality, with a focus on urban fisher communities and marine spatial planning at the urban-ocean border.

Urban inequality & Development: Socio-spatial dynamics of poverty, policy, and governance frameworks in rapidly urbanising cities of the Global South-East.

Environmental Governance: Climate and environmental vulnerability, adaptation strategies, and participatory approaches to research and planning that centre marginalised voices.

Geographic focus: South Asia and Sub-Saharan Africa, with comparative studies in Ghana and India.

EDUCATION

University of Pennsylvania Philadelphia, PA, USA
PhD in City and Regional Planning 2017–2025

Dissertation: *The Landscape of Informality: A comparative study of Ga-Mashie (Accra, Ghana) & Kochi (Kerala, India)* | **Committee:** Eugenie Birch (Chair), Lisa Mitchell, and Francesca Ammon

Fields: International Development Planning and Urban Sociology (Community & Economic Development)

Certificates: Certificate in Urban Studies; Certificate in College and University Teaching[0.5sem]

University of Pennsylvania Philadelphia, PA, USA
A.M. in City and Regional Planning 2019
(earned 2019; awarded 2025)

University of Delhi Delhi, India
MPhil in African Studies 2006–2008

School of Oriental & African Studies, University of London London, UK
MSc in Development Studies 2003–2004

St. Xavier's College, University of Mumbai Mumbai, India
B.A. in Sociology & Anthropology 1998–2001

CURRENT POSITION

Postdoctoral Fellow, City and Regional Planning, Weitzman School of Design, University of Pennsylvania 2025–present

Researching subnational capacity assessment and climate finance architecture frameworks for Task Force 5 of the SDG Urban Finance Commission. Developing modular assessment protocols that integrate governance diagnostics into financial readiness evaluations for channelling climate finance to subnational governments.

PUBLICATIONS

UNDER REVIEW

Conducting Resilient Development in the Global South: The Case of Accra, Ghana. Wang, Hsi-Chuan, Kimberly Noronha, & Carlos López-Ortiz. *Journal of Planning Education and Research*. [Revise & Resubmit]

BOOKS IN PREPARATION

Noronha, Kimberly. *The Landscape of Informality: A Comparative Study of Ga-Mashie (Accra, Ghana) and Kochi (Kerala, India)*. Dissertation under revision as book manuscript for University of Pennsylvania Press.

PEER REVIEWED

The Canary in the Coal Mine: Understanding Climate Change through the indigenous language of “sea attacks” in Kochi’s urban fisher communities. *Urban Political Ecology* 1–23. 2026. DOI: 10.1177/30497515261452928.

Book Review: Shatkin: Cities for Profit: The Real Estate Turn in Asia’s Urban Politics. *Journal of the American Planning Association*, 85(2), 175–176, 2019. DOI: 10.1080/01944363.2018.1560830

Leveraging National Schemes to Support a Heritage Agenda in India (with M. Naik). *Context: Special Issue on Asia and Urban Heritage*, XII:79-81, 2016.

PUBLICATIONS COMMISSIONED & MANAGED

O. P. Mathur (Ed.). ***Inclusive Urban Planning: State of the Urban Poor Report, 2013.*** New Delhi: Ministry of Housing & Urban Poverty Alleviation, Government of India & Oxford University Press, 2014.

A. Kundu (Ed.). ***India: Urban Poverty Report, 2009.*** New Delhi: Ministry of Housing & Urban Poverty Alleviation, Government of India & Oxford University Press, 2009.

Municipal Corporation of Greater Mumbai (MCGM). ***Mumbai: Human Development Report, 2009.*** New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 2009.

RESEARCH REPORTS

Manual Scavenging in India: A literature review and annotated bibliography (with T. Singh & M. Malik). CPR Research Report, 2018.

Monitoring Open Discharge-Free India: A Comprehensive Sanitation Matrix (with S. Dasgupta). CPR Research Report, 2016. DOI: 10.13140/RG.2.2.33228.41607

Odisha Urban Sanitation Policy & Strategy. Government of Odisha, 2016.

Swachh Bharat: Industry Engagement – Scope & Examples (with S. Dasgupta et al.). CPR Research Report, 2015. DOI: 10.13140/RG.2.1.4724.3287.

Promoting Equity and Productivity in Indian Cities. Report for the Ministry of Housing & Urban Poverty Alleviation, Government of India, for the 24th Session of the Governing Council of UN-HABITAT, 2013.

Possible alternative options for determining the BPL households in urban areas. Discussion paper for the Expert Group of the Planning Commission, 2012.

Report on Social Housing in Singapore and China (Shanghai & Wuhan). Ministry of Housing & Urban Poverty Alleviation, Government of India, 2011.

Report of the Working Group on Slums, Urban Poverty and Basic Services. Planning Commission, Government of India (12th Five Year Plan), 2011.

Strategy Paper of the Ministry of Housing & Urban Poverty Alleviation, Government of India for 2012-2017, 2011.

Health & the Urban Poor in India. Policy paper for JNNURM-NUHM collaboration, 2010.

Cities Development Index. Proposal for the Ministry of Housing & Urban Poverty Alleviation, 2010.

RESEARCH EXPERIENCE

Doctoral Dissertation | University of Pennsylvania 2017–2025
Visual ethnography of urban informality in fishing communities. Five years of fieldwork in Accra, Ghana and Kerala, India, developing theoretical frameworks (adaptive resistance, embedded exclusion, informal state) for understanding how marginalised coastal communities navigate climate vulnerability.

Kerala Maritime Communities Project | University of Pennsylvania 2023–Present
& Mahatma Gandhi University
Interdisciplinary team studying coastal fishing communities; oral histories documenting indigenous climate knowledge and ‘sea attacks’ terminology

PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

Senior Researcher , Centre for Policy Research, New Delhi SCI-FI and IND-URBBS projects on urban sanitation and governance	2014-2017
Research Consultant World Bank India Analysis of slum population trends, Census of India 2011.	2013-2014
Social Development Specialist , DFID-Government of India Partnership, New Delhi £14.5 million urban poverty reduction programme covering affordable housing, basic services, and livelihoods. Negotiated World Bank support (\$20M + \$500M projects), Asian Development Bank (\$1M), and GIZ cooperation. Designed National Urban Livelihoods Mission (Rs. 64,050 million / \$1 billion programme).	2010-2014
Social Development Expert , UNDP-Government of India Partnership, New Delhi Policy and knowledge management inputs for national urban poverty reduction strategy.	2008-2010
Research Associate , Centre for Civil Society, New Delhi School choice advocacy for economically deprived parents	2007
Project Officer , Xavier's Resource Centre for the Visually Challenged, Mumbai Rights and advocacy programmes for visually challenged youth	2005-2006

TEACHING EXPERIENCE

INSTRUCTOR OF RECORD

The City in South Asia (SAST 0002), University of Pennsylvania	Spring 2025
Structure of the Urban Region (URBG 702), Hunter College, CUNY	Fall 2024
Undergraduate Urban Research Colloquium (URBS 428/CPLN 528), University of Pennsylvania Spring 2019, 2020	
Social Anthropology of Human Settlements , RICS School of Built Environment, India	Spring 2015
History of Anthropological Thought , St. Xavier's College, Mumbai	2005-2006
History of Sociological Thought , St. Xavier's College, Mumbai	2005-2006
Introduction to Social Anthropology , St. Xavier's College, Mumbai	2005-2006

TEACHING ASSISTANT

Introduction to City and Regional Planning (CPLN 500), University of Pennsylvania	Fall 2019, 2020
Global Sustainable Development: Formality and Informality (CPLN 581), University of Pennsylvania	Spring 2019
Transport, Livelihoods and Road Safety and Productivity: Stresses and Strains in a Rapidly Urbanizing City , School of Public Policy, Princeton University (included fieldwork component in Accra, Ghana)	Fall 2018
Urban Development and Infrastructure Finance (CPLN 502), University of Pennsylvania	Spring 2018

FELLOWSHIPS AND GRANTS

Penn Presidential PhD Fellowship	2021-2024
Sobti Family Fellowship, CASI	2021-2022
Humanities + Urbanism + Design Doctoral Dissertation Fellowship, Mellon	2021-2022
Doctoral Fellowship, Weitzman School of Design	2017-2021, Fall 2024
GAPSA Provost Interdisciplinary Fellowship Award	Summer 2020
Graduate Summer Research Grant, Center for Experimental Ethnography	Summer 2020
Summer Research Funds, CASI	2019, 2020
Graduate Student Research Award, Mellon H+U+D	2019, 2020
Penn Undergraduate Research Colloquium Grant (PhD Lead)	Spring 2019

CONFERENCES & PRESENTATIONS

INVITED TALKS

How has informality been defined and why is this important to us as planners, University of Pennsylvania	2024, 2020
New? Towns? In India? , University of Pennsylvania	2024, 2023
Looking through multiple lenses: Using photography in community-based research, University of Pennsylvania	2023
Who are the (urban) poor? Why do they work? , University of Pennsylvania	2021
The city in India: [How] does planning take place? , University of Pennsylvania	2017

CONFERENCE PRESENTATIONS

Knowledge Hierarchies at Ga-Mashie’s Urban-Ocean Interface: How planning reproduces epistemic exclusion across three planning moments at Jamestown Harbour (1906-2026) AAG Chicago	2026
The Canary in the Coalmine: Understanding Climate Change through the language of “sea attacks” in Kochi’s urban fisher communities, UAA, San Francisco	2026
Panelist, Improving Development Finance for Sustainable Urban Infrastructure in the Global South, ACSP Minneapolis	2025
Encountering everyday structural violence in the Landscape of Informality, ACSP Seattle	2024
Boundaries and Control in Ga-Mashie, AAG Honolulu; UAA/ENHR/EURA New York	2024
Encountering the landscape of social-structural violence, UAA Nashville	2023
Encountering the landscape of protest, Krueckeberg Conference; AAG Denver	2023
Encountering the landscape of boundaries and control, ACSP Chicago	2023
Moving from Pandemic adaptation to a mainstream method, ASA Philadelphia; ACSP Toronto; WPC Indonesia	2022
Encountering landscapes of urban informality, LSE London	2022
Inclusive infrastructure in India’s Slums, ESID Manchester	2019
What happens when villages get swallowed up by cities? , ACSP Buffalo; World Urban Forum	2018

SERVICE AND PROFESSIONAL ACTIVITIES

PROFESSIONAL SERVICE

Urban Affairs Association Conference Policy Committee, Member	2024-2026
ACSP 2024 Annual Conference, Co-organizer of three “Planning in Africa” panels	2024
Penn IUR Forum on Informality, Founder and Co-organizer	2020-2023
- Organised nine public webinars and five work-in-progress seminars	

MANUSCRIPT REVIEW

International Journal of Urban and Regional Research; Energy Research & Social Science; Progress in Planning (review in progress)

UNIVERSITY SERVICE

History of the Built Environment Search Committee, University of Pennsylvania	2021
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REFERENCES

Available upon request