

Dr. Peter Kellett

Visiting Fellow

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<https://www.ncl.ac.uk/apl/people/profile/peterkellett.html>



Dr. Peter Kellett has a BA (Hons) Architectural Studies. Newcastle University, a BArch (Hons) Bachelor of Architecture. Newcastle University, an MA Socio-Cultural Anthropology (Distinction). University of Durham, UK and a PhD at the Newcastle University, UK. He has a ARB/RIBA Part III (Registration as an architect). He has studied architecture and social anthropology and a PhD combined both disciplines in a longitudinal ethnographic study of self-made environments and social practices in Latin America. His research continues to focus on the interrelationship between social, material and spatial practices in contexts of disadvantage and vulnerability. He has worked on several international research projects with a focus on informal settlements, participatory planning and poverty alleviation, and published extensively, particularly on housing, informality and urban issues in the global south. He has successfully supervised over 30 PhDs and examined at numerous universities in the UK and internationally.

The theoretical basis of much of his research work falls within the fields of material culture and environment-behaviour studies, which aim to deepen our understanding of the interrelationship between people and their environments. The main focus is on relatively disadvantaged groups in contrasting parts of the world who inhabit or create environments in conditions of acute resource constraint or relative powerlessness, with the aim of contributing to address these inequalities.

His doctoral work was an ethnographic study that explored the creation, use and value of self-made, informal settlements in Latin America, focusing particularly on Colombia. He has continued with this longitudinal study – which now covers over 30 years based on data collected during periods of fieldwork living with a family in one settlement.

He has developed analytical, theoretical and methodological insights from this work which I have applied in funded projects in several parts of the world, mostly in collaboration with colleagues in the Global Urban Research Unit (GURU). For example, two DFID-funded Home-based Enterprise projects (with Graham Tipple) examined how low-income households in developing cities use the space of the dwelling and the labour of the household to generate income. The findings have challenged accepted policy and demonstrated how such activities can lead to poverty alleviation and improved housing, both key components of the Millennium Development Goals. He has worked with Michael Majale on issues of disability and informal settlement upgrading, and more recently on issues of housing regeneration and sustainability with Elias Yitbarek at Addis Ababa University.

In the UK, he has applied ethnographic research techniques to environment-behaviour relations of groups with limited control over their circumstances, such as hospital patients and the elderly. Because of his expertise in micro-level analysis of environments he has been invited to join an inter-disciplinary team in the Centre for Arts and Humanities in Health and Medicine (CAHHM) at Durham University, to evaluate hospital environments for NHS Estates, particularly from the perspective of the patient. He has also worked with Rose Gilroy on issues of identity and independence in the housing of older people

Housing and Material Culture in Ethiopia

During 2013, he has worked as a VSO volunteer in Ethiopia – where he was Visiting Professor of Housing at EiABC within Addis Ababa University. Ongoing research collaboration with Ethiopian colleagues has included research visits to Addis Ababa in 2015 and 2017.

He is also active in the visual arts, based on approaches from contemporary art and visual anthropology. Drawing directly on continuing research in Ethiopia, he has presented a series of three solo public exhibitions (in Newcastle, Bath and Bristol). Funded by awards from NICAP (Newcastle Institute of Creative Practice) and NISR (Newcastle Institute for Social Renewal) the exhibitions focus on changing material culture at a time of rapid social and economic change. The exhibitions are piloting the potential of contemporary arts in challenging negative perceptions of international development.

This work forms part of the Creative Practice activities of the Architectural Research Collaborative (ARC) within the schools. Above research activities have led to numerous publications. Some of them are as follows.

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- El-Masri S, Kellett P. Post-war reconstruction. Participatory approaches to rebuilding the damaged villages of Lebanon: A case study of al-Burjain. *Habitat International* 2001, 25(4), 535-557.
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Authored Book

Turgut H, Kellett P. *Cultural and Spatial Diversity in the Urban Environment*. Istanbul: Istanbul Technical University, Faculty of Architecture, 2001.

Book Chapters

Kellett P. *Towards Belonging: Informal Design and Dwelling Practices in Northern Colombia*. In: Klaufus, C; Ouweneel, A, ed. *Housing and Belonging in Latin America*. New York: Berghahn Books, 2015, pp.223-240. In Preparation.

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- Cheung CN, Kellett P. Spatial Configuration and Place Identity: a Study of Tapei. In: *Topophilia & Topophobia: Reflections on Human Habitat in the 20th Century*. 2005, Beijing.
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- Hernandez F, Kellett P, Allen L, ed. Rethinking the Informal City: Critical Perspectives from Latin America. Oxford and New York: Berghahn, 2010.
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Report

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