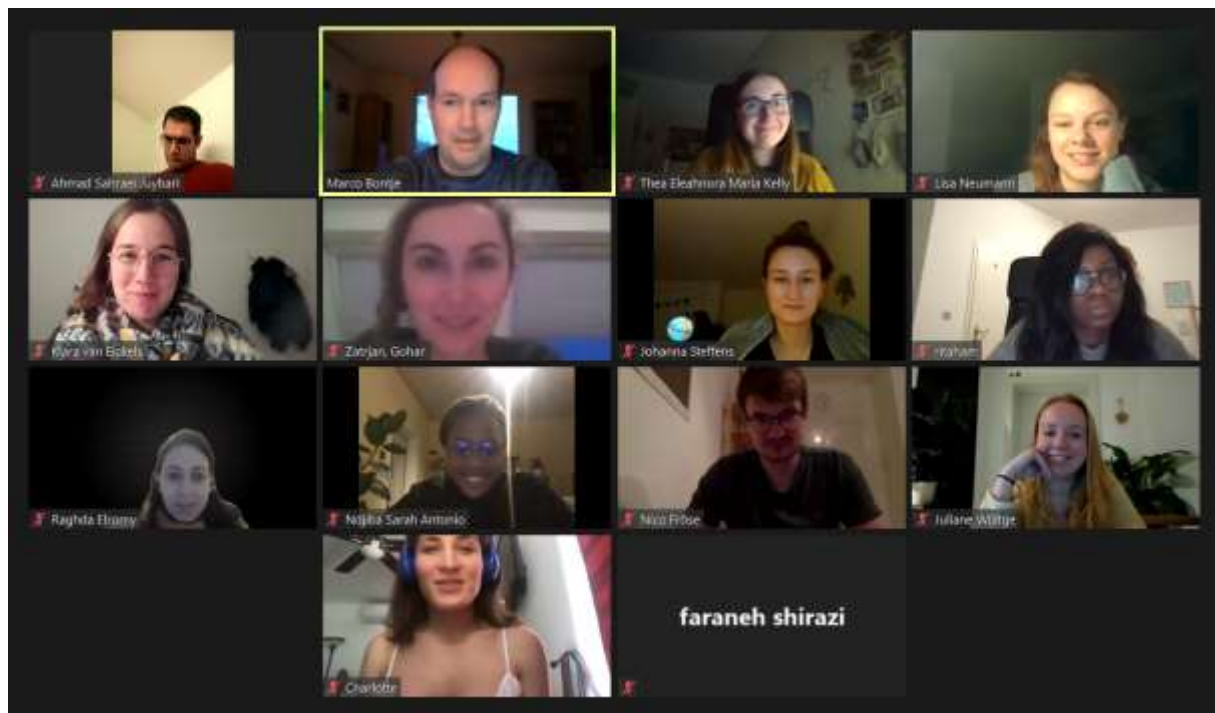


## BISTUS VIII Explored Cities Before, During and After COVID-19

The eighth edition of the Bochum International Seminar on the Transformation of Urban Spaces (BISTUS VIII) took place from Monday to Friday last week. The second online edition of BISTUS was instructed by Dr Marco Bontje, Assistant Professor at the Department of Human Geography, Planning and International Development Studies at the University of Amsterdam. The course reviewed the 'state of the art' of urban studies debates about why cities grow or decline. It then proceeded with a critical reflection on the strengths and weaknesses of theories about urban growth and decline, and considered the policy implications of applying such theories to urban development strategies. The students explored how and to what extent the COVID-19 pandemic and crisis should change the way we think about urban growth and decline. Finally, participants were challenged to analyse urban growth or decline in a city of their choice and develop policy recommendations for 'urban development after COVID-19'.

Once again, BISTUS proved to be a showcase for interdisciplinary co-operation in the UAR competence field of metropolitan research. The 15 graduate students came from RUB (6), TU Dortmund (6), and the University of Duisburg-Essen (3), representing programs as diverse as geography, spatial planning, management and economics, urban systems (urban culture, society and space), transformation of urban landscapes, urban transformation, and international development studies. While BISTUS VIII are still busy writing their reports, plans for BISTUS IX in the summer term of 2021 are already well advanced: The course will be announced and registration will be opened shortly.

Bochum, 19 January 2021



All smiles for BISTUS VIII: The group photo with Prof Bontje (top row, second from left) leaves no doubt that BISTUS makes students happy.