Crises, Civility, Imaginaries, Revolt: New Politics for the Global City?

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Abstracts and Biographies

Panel 1: What Makes Cities Global?

Of pioneers and pirates, or: emerging global city strategies
Michele Acuto, University of Oxford

How do contemporary metropolises become “global cities”? Is there a recipe for ‘building’ settlements into the strategic hinges of globalization? How do marginal centres beyond the ‘Global North’ emerge to compete with world-famed metropolises like New York or London? There is now an extensive literature that deals with the phenomenon of the “global city.” Yet, what remains relatively overlooked is the process of becoming: if the “global city” is a common object of discussion, empirical application, and mass media fascination, less so can be argued for the dynamics and governance of the process that lead to the emergence of global cities. Comparing several newcomers (Sydney, Hong Kong, Singapore and Dubai) that have now risen from “off the map” to global city notoriety, this paper investigates the politics of global city formation. It analyzes the relation between “global city” theory and its urban public policy practice, and it discusses what global city strategies have been deployed in the past decades to mobilize global publics and enacts visions of a global future in present urban developments. In doing so, the paper surveys plans such as Sydney 2030 or the Dubai Strategic Plan to underline the importance of appreciating leadership, performativity and relationality in the governance and discourses on globally-oriented urban strategies. As the paper illustrates, global city strategies are inherently relational not only in their competitiveness but also in inspiration and formulation. Models, policies and ideas are hybridized in these “visions” to produce the founding narratives and core governance frameworks that sustain claims to unique-but-global appeal. Overall, the paper points not only to the unavoidable relationality of these global city strategies, but also to the unavoidable search for urban development through networks and cross-city comparisons.

Michele Acuto is Stephen Barter Fellow in the Oxford Programme for the Future of Cities at the Institute for Science, Innovation and Society (InSIS), University of Oxford, and Fellow in the Center on Public Diplomacy at the Annenberg School, University of Southern California. Michele is also a member of the Interdisciplinary Working Group on shortlived climate pollutants convened by the Institute for Advanced Sustainability Studies (IASS) in Potsdam, co-editor of Palgrave’s Cities and the Global Politics of the Environment series, editor of Global City Challenges (Palgrave) and Negotiating Relief (Hurst/OUP), and author of The Urban Link (Routledge).
The Continuous Interior: a living crisis
Craig Bremner, Charles Sturt University

According to Marshall McLuhan print gave us the single city and electronic media the global village. In this paper I propose that digital media is not giving us the global city but is instead producing a continuous interior. The continuous interior is an idea that has been part of the urban imaginary for some time. First given illustrative form 50 years ago by the radical Italian architecture groups Archizoon and Superstudio and then forgotten, it was reprised ten years ago in Rem Koolhaas’s polemical essay Junkspace, in which he proposed the scenario that the omission of three elements from the history of architecture had insulated us from the fact that all architecture is unwittingly producing a single conditional junkspace. Not too dissimilarly, Peter Sloterdijk has also advanced the idea we are living on the planet in an atmosphere that is essentially one big interior that we have already air-conditioned. Superstudio called their project the Continuous Monument and Archizoom the No-Stop City, and population flows are projected to produce what Mike Davis has tagged the Planet of Slums. What is missing from these interpretations is the role of the digital in the production of the continuous interior. In this paper I explore the digital effect on the urban imaginary; how digital reproductivity has changed the city from project to image; how the cloud of images and words has turned the city into a sentimental project; how dematerialised production has intensified the call for preservation; and just as the global financial platform is the derivative, so too the global city is a derivative of the digital.

While the projection of the continuous interior was perhaps a technological exit from utopia for the radical architects, it is now a product of digital media. By contrast the advancing crisis of the coming global city appears to be split between two micro-utopias—digital preservation of the here-and-now and digital projections of what-might-become. But digital media is already broadcasting the real crisis – how are we to live together in the continuous interior?

Craig Bremner is the Professor of Design at Charles Sturt University. Prior to this he held the positions of Professor in Design Pedagogy at Northumbria University (UK), and Professor of Design at the University of Canberra, where he was also Head of the School of Design & Architecture, and Dean of the Faculty of Design & Creative Practice. Currently, he is researching the residue of Utopia and exploring the derived landscape.
An urban affair: global city leadership in global governance
Michelle Acuto, University of Oxford

Unspoken of in “high” politics circles until recently, and almost completely overlooked by the majority of both international and urbanist scholarship, city leaders have now gone a great length to lend their helping hand to providing innovative responses to global causes such as global warming. Through covenants, leadership groups, track-II initiatives or even just localized projects, mayors have rapidly become capable of inspiring the production of multiple policymaking frameworks and advocacy coalitions in global environmental politics. Seeking to breach the “great divide” that hides them from world politics, criticizing states and international organizations for their lack of effective action, and forging not only alliances but new constituencies of “urban” citizens, mayors raise key questions for global governance. Against this scholarly oversight, the paper discusses the initiatives of global city mayors and compares discursive frames to investigate what geopolitical room for maneuver city leaders have in climate politics, and highlight what contradictions this agency brings about. Providing evidence of this agency, the paper focuses on the discursive production of new “international” identities for the cities these leaders claim to represent across a series of global governance challenges. As it illustrates, the framing of global cities and mayors as leaders in international affairs has been characterized by five main features that define “new” identities for global cities. Respectively, mayors have presented cities as central to global challenges, capable to address them, proactive in formulating responses while not waiting for others to call them up and hybrid in the nature of their governance initiatives. Yet this has also been coupled with a framing that charts city leaders as “responsible” for devising an effective and transnational momentum to tackle the limits of the international system. Taken together, these characteristics set mayors and their increasingly pervasive agency in a particularly pivotal light in the contemporary global political scenario.

Michele Acuto is Stephen Barter Fellow in the Oxford Programme for the Future of Cities at the Institute for Science, Innovation and Society (InSIS), University of Oxford, and Fellow in the Center on Public Diplomacy at the Annenberg School, University of Southern California. Michele is also a member of the Interdisciplinary Working Group on short-lived climate pollutants convened by the Institute for Advanced Sustainability Studies (IASS) in Potsdam, co-editor of Palgrave’s Cities and the Global Politics of the Environment series, editor of Global City Challenges (Palgrave) and Negotiating Relief (Hurst/OUP), and author of The Urban Link (Routledge).
Keep Making New Global Cities, We Have Big Budget Action Movies to Make
Christian Long, University of Queensland

Three major film franchises – Bond, Bourne, and Mission: Impossible – feature heroes who have an institutional home in an established Western global city, but do their work in the field. The longer these film franchises have survived, the more their field has expanded into non-Western global cities. While at first these franchises made established “old world” global cities – London, New York, Moscow – their settings, in their sequels new global cities – Dubai, Sydney, Manila – began to appear with greater frequency. This cinematic tourism echoes the realities of globalization. The increased presence of new global cities in big-budget blockbusters reflects more than boredom with cities like London, New York, and Paris, or even the advantages of decreased labour costs and tax incentives. Rather, my paper argues that the generic requirements of action-espionage films inform the increased use of new global cities as settings. More specifically, action films follow the location shifts of industrial production into the developing world and, once there, embed their chase narratives within the built environment. To use The Bourne Legacy as an example, medical research may take place in the United States, but to solve the film’s narrative mystery of Aaron Cross’s re-engineering, he and Marta Shearing must trace his trauma, in the form of blue and green chems, to its origin: Manila, where pharmaceuticals are produced. Upon reaching this narrative point, Manila’s locational advantage appears in that, like so many megacities, it offers what Lisa Park identifies as “the exhilarating, risk-infused environment” necessary to staging a thrilling climactic chase sequence. The more Anglophone cities like New York and London turn to finance, insurance, real estate, and branding and away from the production of goods, the more necessary – and common – the newer global centers will be in the films that dramatize the national and corporate policing of the global economy.

Christian B. Long lives in Brisbane, where he teaches in the School of English, Media Studies and Art History at The University of Queensland. He is the co-editor, with Jeff Menne of Film and the Presidency (Routledge 2014) and the author of articles in Senses of Cinema, Post45, and Canadian Review of American Studies.
Globalisation is mainly identified and perceived as an economic force, however an important aspect of the multidimensional process is that it is also a cultural and a visual phenomenon. The ‘global’ pervades and alters the urban social fabric through media-representations and it has the symbolic power to transform urban spaces by creating the ‘global imaginary’ in a single place. Although the scholarships of globalisation as an ‘objective’ phenomenon are greatly expanded, so far not much attention has been paid to the feature of its ‘subjective’ dimension. This paper considers globalisation as a material process and an imaginary and carries out an investigation from the perspective of aesthetics of global change. Through an image-driven investigation, this paper explores the relations between social processes, city spatial forms and the circulation of media-representations that condense spatial-symbolic scales of the ‘local-national’ and the ‘global’. Hence, exemplified by a given body of still images that show Sydney as a ‘global city’ of Australia in the Asia-pacific region and Santiago de Chile as a globalizing city of the ‘Global South’, this presentation analyses and interprets two selected visual evidences through the lens of political theory. This subjective interpretative approach to the people’s consciousness of being-in-a-global-interconnected-world, the ‘global imaginary’, aims to better understand social change, history in the global age and to contribute to the debate on the pertinent literature. The visual exploration of one of Australia’s major city, Sydney, and Santiago de Chile in South America, suggests that these two cities, beyond their different history and geography, both display a contradictory fragmented ideological landscape, which also generates symbolic resistance.

Tommaso Durante is a Researcher in the Globalisation and Culture Program of the Global Cities Research Institute (RMIT). Durante’s academic research addresses the social (global) imaginary and its articulation with aesthetics and ideology. More specifically he is interested in theorising aesthetics of global change through visual images, developing critical approaches to global cultural media-flows to understand the relationship between nation-state, ideological power and globalisation processes. His research combines critical theoretical analysis with fieldwork and case study methods. He adopts a transdisciplinary approach, drawing on a background in art history and theory, extended to ‘urban iconology’. Tommaso is also a professional visual artist and a freelance lecturer of Art History and Theory focused on Europe and Italy. As an artist, Tommaso Durante produces sculpture-installations, paintings and artist books. Tommaso moved from Italy to Australia in 2001 under a ‘distinguished talent’ visa for art.
The Occupy movement is not just about resistance and demands for change within the context of status quo economic and political arrangements. This paper compares the epistemological and ontological assumptions behind liberal democracy, with the ontological commitments of the environment and occupy movements in order to expose fundamental shifts in cultural ontologies. This paper analyses the cognitive image schemas structuring the ontological commitments of liberal political theory and mainstream economics, and the way these dominant image schemas marginalise calls by the Occupy and environmental movements for more participatory forms of economic and political democracy. Liberal political philosophy and economic theory reflect an objectivist conception of society as the sum of containerised and separate selves competing for scarce resources. This paper will show how Occupy and the environment movements operate on the basis of an alternative ontology – of interdependence, interconnectedness, and non-objective categories. This ontology grounds demands for participatory democracy and an understanding of humans as part of, and dependent on, our shared global ecosystem.

Karey Harrison is Senior Lecturer in Communication Studies at the University of Southern Queensland. Her current research focuses on the ontological metaphors structuring institutional discourses of science and technology, economics, politics, gender and ethics.
Authenticity and Occupy: 'The Who' of the 99%
Richard Hammond, University of Ballarat

Beyond the initial Occupy Wall Street phenomenon, the Occupy movement has largely been represented as a nebulous conglomeration of events carried out by a disparate group of participants. Throughout ‘the West’, Occupy has attempted to channel the voice of the ‘99%’: the economically and politically powerless majority. Mainstream political commentary on the movement, from both and left and right, has largely focussed on the lack of cohesion and its broad goals, concluding that Occupy has little real-world political efficacy. Further, the geopolitical Western bias of Occupy throws into question the validity of its claims to universality, and perhaps even its ability to adequately represent the multiply oppressed members within its own 99%. In order to reframe these issues and to thus put Occupy into a different light, an alternative reading of the Occupy phenomenon can be explored via the work of Martin Heidegger. The notion of authenticity in politics is largely associated with right wing, even fascist perspectives. ‘Authenticity’ has been used as a condition for exclusion, a tool for discrimination, and thus is regarded with deep mistrust by the left. But the grounds for authenticity, the conditions for its existence are over-shadowed by the historical content of the term. If a break in the ‘average-everyday’ facilitates ones ‘existentiell modification’ of the world in which one always-already is, then the Occupy movement may justifiably be seen as an authentic (largely left wing) political movement. In exploring the Occupy movement as an expression of authenticity as formulated throughout Being and Time, the criticisms of Occupy in terms of its geopolitical bias, lack of cohesion (in message or manifestation) are reframed, as is Occupy itself. Moving beyond the idea of an ineffective political movement, Occupy can perhaps be fore-grounded as an awakening of the West’s awareness to our ‘definite possibilities’.

Richard H. Hammond is currently undertaking his PhD in Philosophy at the University of Ballarat. Having completed an undergraduate degree in Psychological Science, Richard decided that his exploration of ‘human beings’ would be more effectively (and entertainingly) facilitated by an exploration of human ‘being’. As such — as part of his Honours degree in philosophy under the supervision of Dr. Jane Mummery — Richard engaged with the phenomenological ontology of Martin Heidegger, focussing on the groundwork laid out in Division One of Being and Time. Richard continues to engage with the work of Heidegger exploring authenticity, the ‘I’, and ethics.
Panel 3: Civilities, Imaginaries, Memorialisation

**International Art Exhibitions as a Means to Globalisation - On the Constraints and Potentials of the Taipei International Biennials**

Hsiu-Ling Kuo, National Chung Cheng University, Taiwan

Since the late 20th century, major cities all over the world, particularly in regions outside Europe and the United States, began a series of large scale international art exhibitions in the name of city biennials. These cities compete to host biennials to demonstrate a certain degree of achievement and commitment to the prosperity of art and culture in an imagined global community. In terms of the naming, the form and the content, city biennials of various countries appear to be an imitation of the world renowned Venice Biennale. Its initial goals were to enhance the international visibility of the city, to create an international cultural platform for the region, and to connect the city with global cultural venues through art. This phenomenon can be seen as a version of the so-called Shan-zhai (mimic) culture in China. It is visible in the development of arts and culture, as well as the form of imitating international fashion brands. The Shan-zhai culture has directly challenged the existing power relationship and resource balances of the international community. Hybridity, transformation, and appropriation, key characteristics of Shan-zhai culture can be an intriguing niche for cities holding international biennials, when being employed with insights. Has the Taipei Biennial as a pioneer in Taiwan’s cultural and creative industries successfully achieved the goal in bringing its art developments up to date? Or has the Taipei Biennial authority been pre-occupied by endless attempts to learn from the hegemonic discourse of the Western art and failed to innovate and go beyond? At the crossing point of the timeframe and the topography of globalization, the observation and analysis of the Taipei International Biennial offers an important entry to the understanding of art and urban culture in the wave of globalization.

**Hsiu-Ling Kuo** is Assistant Professor of History at National Chung Cheng University in Taiwan. She completed her PhD at the University of Edinburgh, UK. She worked as curator at Kuandu Museum, Taipei in 2005 and started her academic lectureship since 2006. Her main research areas are art and architectural history, urban studies and critical cultural theories. Her recent publications includes *Modernity and Monumentality in Hitler’s Berlin: the North South Axis of the Greater Berlin Plan* (Peter Lang, 2013), “Urban Development and Municipal Power: Beijing in the Wave of Globalization” (The *International Journal of Regional and Local Studies*, Spring 2011), and “The Politics of Hygiene in Berlin” (The *Journal of New History*, forthcoming).
Claiming a place in a global city: who is the public for post-national memorials?
Alison Atkinson-Phillips, University of Technology Sydney

If the nineteen nineties where characterised by excitement over the concept of the ‘global city’, they were also characterised, at least in the west, by a growing obsession with ‘community’. Geographer Doreen Massey warned of the need to acknowledge “people’s need for attachment of some sort.” In this ‘contested space’ (Sassen 1994) formerly disenfranchised groups gained access to the symbolic space of the city. In taking on an artistic/architectural form associated with the nation—the memorial monument—subaltern groups claim their place as part of the ‘imagined community’ (Anderson 1983). While Doss has spoken of ‘memorial mania’ driven by a need to assert citizens’ rights in the US context, Ashton et al suggest memorials create meaning in different ways in Australia, a good reminder that in a global world, the local is still important. An emerging genre of post-national memorials tell previously un-heard stories of loss; rather than mourning past history and death, they place ‘difficult knowledge’ (Lehrer et al) of lived and living history—rape, forced separation of families, torture, and environmental destruction—at the centre of the communal life of our cities. Where the Occupy movement has been able to claim the symbolic centre of the city for short period, these objects tell stories, sometimes of the most disenfranchised 1% of the 99%, taking on locations and artistic forms previously reserved for the conquerors. Using examples of public memorials and site-specific public art located in Perth, a city that is at once central and peripheral/parochial, I will explore the ways in which such memorials offer at once an opportunity for the subaltern to speak and the risk of having their stories co-opted back into the global flows of capital and power. Either way, I suggest these markers remind us that our cities have always been global.

Alison Atkinson-Phillips is a first year doctoral student at the University of Technology Sydney, within the Faculty of Arts and Social Science and with a focus on Public History. She is interested in memorials and memorial art work in the public arena, particularly the emerging genre of public memorials which commemorate non-death loss and trauma in the Australian context. Alison completed her BA(Hons) at Curtin University, Perth, during the nineteen nineties, and has spent the last decade working as a communications professional before re-entering academic life.
Space and Food in the City
Alec Thornton, University of New South Wales

A shift towards post-modernist approaches in city planning has led to rapid growth in community-based ‘urban greening’ movements. The spatial and socio-enviro justice themes are largely playing out in the ‘North’, or western cities. This paper will position urban agriculture within radical urban theory, in an effort to conceptualise a phenomenon that takes place in both the ‘global North and South’ as response to various ‘justices’, but are played out at different scales with very different results.

Alec Thornton is a Senior Lecturer in Geography at The University of New South Wales (UNSW Canberra) at the School of Physical Environmental and Mathematical Sciences. His research interests are urban agriculture and sustainable community based development in Sub-Saharan Africa and the South Pacific. Alec is also vice president of The African Studies Association of Australasia and the Pacific (AFSAAP).
This paper will address how certain contemporary immersive theatre practices respond to a globalised community of artists and audiences in creating a synaesthetic performance arena in which the participant is (deliberately) disoriented and their geographic, physiological and cultural boundaries challenged. In looking at how both virtual and real time site specific practices in contemporary performance encourage diverse individual encounters through interactivity, the paper identifies how the immersive realm might recover a *theatrical loci* – in and through which the independent experiencing audience member can navigate performance spaces through experiential means. This paper will reflect on a range of current technological arts networks that promote globalised creative communities through both satellite communications and simultaneous and multiple event design structures where the role of sight, touch, smell and hearing all merge to create tangible forms through which to interpret a multiplicity of performance events. Within such events, the role of the imaginary global city operates through an ethnographic discourse that places communities in direct contact with one another whilst staging a direct resistance to conventional cultural values that endorse ‘real time’ civil arts institutions through state based economies. Drawing from the diverse performance practices of Bonemap and Tess de Quincy Co. (AUS), Wrights and Sights and Blast Theory (UK), as well as reflecting on the author’s own recent dance ecology research project undertaken as a Visiting Fellow through the HRC, this paper will expand an inquiry into site responsive performance that inform the following themes: tactile encounter, gift economy, adaptation, synaesthesia, agency in spectatorship, interactivity in performance, globalised resistance). Finally, in interrogating the role of artist agency within certain globalised ‘staged events’ such as the Occupy movement, this paper will question the role of immediacy and identity within ‘post site’ performance environs, questioning the inherent socio-economic values and embodied ethics of what I will argue is currently an imposed cultural legacy within arts practice in the UK today, following the 2012 Olympics.

**Rachel Sweeney** is an interdisciplinary dance artist and co-director of Orr and Sweeney, an international site based collective whose performance work seeks to expand upon current knowledge practices in body–place relations both within and beyond the arts community to include land sciences and enterprise. Rachel has lectured widely in Performance Studies in the UK and Ireland (University of Plymouth 2006-08, Middlesex University 2004-06 and the Irish World Academy of Music and Dance 2008-09), and as a Visiting Artist through Monash University, Melbourne and the University of Sydney. Research posts include a Visiting Fellowship through the Humanities Research Centre at ANU and also Centre Fellowship through the Centre for Sustainable Futures at the University of Plymouth (2007-08) She is currently Acting Head of Dance at Liverpool Hope University, where she regularly facilitates cross disciplinary research forums between Performing Arts and Environmental Science, and has published on dance ethnography, dance ecology and cross cultural performance training.
Panel 4: Migration and Exile

*Marginal Lives, Excluded Narratives: Internal Displacement, the Urban Periphery and New Articulations of Belonging*

Helen Berents, University of Queensland

Often overlooked, internal displacement affects millions around the globe. Those who are displaced in many cases experience persistent social exclusion, stigma, violence and poverty as they attempt to reestablish their lives. Colombia’s protracted conflict, which has internally displaced between 3.9 and 5.2 million people (UNHCR 2012), has embedded these conditions as features of everyday life for many Colombians. Such challenges are most obviously articulated through informal barrio communities on the outskirts of major cities, in which the inhabitants live daily with the effects of poverty, neglect, risk and insecurity. Increasingly, connections between urban exclusion, insecurity and poverty can be read as a ‘violent’ failure of citizenship (Kees and Koonings, 2007) which negates the lived experience of those on the margins. Despite this negation those who struggle to survive make claims upon the broader city as well as find new articulations of place and belonging amongst the complexities of the everyday. Paying attention to spaces that are usually rendered invisible begins with recognizing the everyday lives of those who live there. With a focus on a particular community of displaced and marginalized people on the edge of Colombia’s capital Bogota, this paper asks how the effects of internal displacement challenge established notions of the city and how the presence of these communities are prompting new conversations about belonging.

**Helen Berents** is a PhD Candidate in the School of Political Science and International Studies at the University of Queensland. My research explores ways of engaging with conflict-affected young people and strategies for everyday peacebuilding with a focus on Colombia. More broadly I examine questions of forced migration, theories of childhood, peacebuilding, and feminist discourses of marginalization.
Smiling Faces in an Exilic City: The unique faces of the vanishing
Mammad Aidani, University of Melbourne

What do we see in the face of the other? This paper examines the notion of the face and the other through the prism of Iranian exile and the experience of banishment in diasporic city in our contemporary world. In particular, it discusses the tensions that Iranian exilic’ individual experiences in relation to the distinctions between other and self both within his or her own diasporic community and the host country (their exilic homes). It explores how the exilic individuals reconfigure their identity as others of the others in order to wrestle with feeling of inclusion and exclusion. The paper argues that the exilic Self and Other is not a paradoxical distinction for this diaspora as it nestles itself in its otherness - that is the exilic face is the self and the self is the other’s face - this quest for the face of the Other is itself in its unique category of otherness that is vanishing from our understanding of traditional definition and meaning of exilic individual that the host city has of this unique figure whose not returning to the city that he /she belongs and left because there is no freedom in their country.

Mammad Aidani is an interdisciplinary scholar specialising in Phenomenology and hermeneutics philosophy, cultural theory and narrative psychology based in the School of Historical and Philosophical Studies at the University of Melbourne.
Redefining Migration in Global Cities: A case study of Sydney
Richard Hu, University of Canberra

The global city discourse remains economic-centric, and fails to address the important element of migration to the extent it should be. In this paper, I provide a comprehensive examination of the spatial patterns of the foreign born population, the global services, and the people movement across global Sydney. The findings indicate that the global services – the defining attributes of global Sydney – have very weak association with the foreign born population, but have very strong association with the people movement. There is a need to redefine migration for the discourse of global city. We need to move beyond the conventional perception of migration by country of birth, and to define migration by global mobility and global capacity to capture the interplay between global city and migration.

Richard Hu is an Associate Professor and Convenor of the Globalisation and Cities Research Program at the University of Canberra’s ANZSOG Institute for Governance. Richard is an urban planner and designer. Richard’s research interests include urban competitiveness, global cities, and comparative urban studies (in FoRs 120502 History and Theory of the Built Environment, 120507 Urban Analysis and Development, and 120508 Urban Design).