# Geographies of Aspiration:

# Urban Places, Constitutive Connections & Methodological Innovations

**July 22nd & 23rd 2013, AS7, Shaw Foundation Building, Research Division Seminar Room 06-42**

What kind of urban lives and places do city dwellers aspire to? Where do these aspirations come from? And how do we go about studying them? Trans-disciplinary urban studies has seen a recent upsurge in interest in the geographically extensive relations through which cities are (re)constituted, while at the same time retaining a longstanding concern with urban space and territoriality (e.g. McCann and Ward, 2010; Bunnell and Das, 2010). This has generated a series of useful insights into the origins of different 'models' of urban policy and the ways in which those who lead cities cite, compare and evaluate the performance of their own cities against others. However, to date, relational/territorial studies of cities have focused on those who make policy rather than on the lived experiences, aspirations and capacities of ordinary urbanites (although in some cases, of course, they are the same people). Similarly, while there has been some important methodological innovation with regard to mobile people and practices and associated interurban relations, this has centred upon those who make policy and effect urban change from 'above' (e.g. McCann, 2011; Peck and Theodore, 2012).

The purpose of this workshop is to bring an expanded range of actors into accounts of the ways in which cities are constituted through geographically extended – but also locally grounded – relations. In particular, we seek to extend beyond those who make policies to consider actors who experience their consequences and who strive to (re)make cities from 'below'. We are also concerned with possibilities for socially progressive urban projects to be extended beyond local 'spaces of hope'. We thus bring together scholars with overlapping interests in: (1) diversifying the currently burgeoning, but elite actor-centred, field of interurban studies; (2) possibilities for extending studies of interurban effects beyond neo-liberalization (see also Parnell and Robinson, 2012), and; (3) methodological innovations – particularly, but not only, forms of urban ethnography – that are necessary for examination of geographies of urban aspiration as both grounded and relational.

The two-day event combines participation from urban scholars at NUS who form part of the MOE Tier 2 research grant on 'Aspirations, urban governance and the remaking of Asian cities' and key members of the University of Manchester's 'cities@manchester' urban studies research initiative (www.cities.manchester.ac.uk). The aim of the workshop is to forge collective and collaborative insights into the complex geographies through which people seek to realize better urban places and lives in Asia and beyond.

| PROGRAMME – Monday, July 22nd | |
|---|---|
| **Day 1** | |
| 09:00am | REGISTRATION and BREAKFAST |
| 09:30am | **WELCOME REMARKS AND INTRODUCTION by A/P Tim Bunnell and Prof Kevin Ward** |
| 09:50am | **Provincialising planning: ethnicity, place and power by Dr Yasminah Beebeejaun** |
| 10:10am | **Pods, Migrant Labor and Global City Making in Hong Kong, Penang and Singapore by A/P Daniel PS Goh** |
| 10:30am | **DISCUSSION – Chaired by Prof Mike Douglass (NUS)** |
| 11.10am | TEA BREAK |
| 11:30am | **Producing urban asylum: forced migration and the city by Dr Jonathan Darling** |
| 11:50pm | **Aspiring to Belong: Comparing Migrant Experiences of Gurkhas in the UK, Singapore, and Nepal by Dr Kelvin E.Y. Low** |
| 12:10pm | **DISCUSSION – Chaired by Prof Kevin Ward (University of Manchester)** |
| 12:50pm | LUNCH |
| 2:00pm | **Urban aspirations of African student migrants in Chinese cities by Dr Elaine Ho** |
| 2:20pm | **City twinning: the return(s) of aspirational urban governance? by Dr Mark Jayne** |
| 2:40pm | **DISCUSSION – Chaired by Dr Chin-Ee Ong (Wageningen University)** |
| 3:20pm | TEA BREAK |
| 3:40pm | **Mobilising intervention: Aspirations, conflict and community empowerment through leadership by Dr Helen F. Wilson** |
| 4:00pm | **Urban Aspirations and Vernacular Re-Imaginations of Waterfront Settlements in Surabaya, Indonesia by Dr Rita Padawangi** |

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| 4:20pm | **DISCUSSION** |
| 5:00pm | END |

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| **PROGRAMME – Tuesday, July 23<sup>rd</sup>**<br>**Day 2** | |
| 09:00am | BREAKFAST |
| 09:30am | **On the waterfront:  the mobility and mutation of the Tax Increment Financing (TIF) model by Prof Kevin Ward** |
| 09:50am | **The Roots and Routes of a Success Story: Solo's Urban Geographies by A/P Tim Bunnell** |
| 10:10am | **DISCUSSION – Chaired by A/P Daniel PS Goh (NUS)** |
| 10.50am | TEA BREAK |
| 11:10am | **Aspirational Roots and Routes in Beijing's Art World by Dr Peter Marolt** |
| 11:30pm | **Urban futures: aspirations, visioning and futuring by Ms Elisa Pieri** |
| 11:50pm | **DISCUSSION – Chaired by A/P Yong-Sook Lee (Korea University)** |
| 12:30pm | LUNCH |
| 1:45pm | **Migrant Aspirations – Of, In, or Through the Urban? by A/P Eric C. Thompson** |
| 2:05pm | **Bringing the countryside to the city: practices and imaginations of the "rural" in Ho Chi Minh City, Vietnam by Dr Jamie Gillen** |
| 2:25pm | **DISCUSSION – Chaired by Dr Michele Acuto (University of Oxford)** |
| 3.05pm | TEA BREAK |
| 3:20pm | **FINAL DISCUSSION SESSION AND CLOSING** |

# Abstracts_____

**Provincialising planning: ethnicity, place and power** by Dr Yasminah Beebeejaun (Planning and Environmental Management, School of Environment and Development, University of Manchester)

Urban planning is an inherently modernist form of activity (Scott, 1998). This paper seeks to analyse the practices of planning to problematise modernist planning as applied to representations of ethnicity. Drawing upon postcolonial theory and the exhortations of Robinson to rethink our models of urban theory (2005) and "encourage an acknowledgement of the parochial nature of much of what still passes for universal theory in the western academy "(2003: 65). This paper engages with planning from an ethnographic perspective in order to unpick the limitations of dominant narratives produced by urban elites.

Drawing upon qualitative research this paper explores how actors make sense of ethnicised place-making in cities and in doing so challenges norms of ethnic representation promoted within urban planning. Historic and contemporary immigration to western societies from Asia has been the catalyst for the emergence of ethnic enclaves such as chinatowns.  Alongside other longstanding patterns of immigration to the west, integration and assimilation has been understood through a prism of essentialised racial and ethnic differences. This mindset presumes a fixity to ethnic identity outside of the political and social forces that create tensions to integration within the nation-state or challenge the effectiveness or meaningfulness of multicultural policies.

In this paper I want to explore more fully how the modernist impetus of planning subverts community meanings attached to place.  In particular how are they to be interpreted within multicultural cities that aspire to liberal forms of democracy?  And given that chinatowns emerged through historical community struggles from below what complications emerge from their contemporary celebration within city development strategies?

References

Robinson, J (2003) 'Postcolonialising geography: tactics and pitfalls' Singapore Journal of Tropical Geography 24(3) pp.273-289

Robinson, J (2005) Ordinary Cities: Between modernity and development (London: Routledge)

Scott, J C (1998) Seeing like a state: How certain schemes to improve the human condition have failed (New Haven: Yale University Press

**The Roots and Routes of a Success Story: Solo's Urban Geographies** by A/P Tim Bunnell (Geography, FASS/Asia Research Institute, NUS)

Stories of socially progressive urban transformation emerged from the city of Solo (aka Surakarta) during Joko Widodo's time as mayor (2005-2012). In particular, Jokowi's equitable relocation of street vendors from public spaces and squatters from flood-prone riverbanks in Solo became something of a 'model' for emulation by other cities in Indonesia, and beyond. My research examines both the roots and routes of these success stories. In the first place, this means considering the local conditions that allowed success stories to arise and examining the extent to which these are reflective of 'on the ground' realities. Successive rounds of public negotiation with city authorities (including mayor Jokowi himself) meant that the aspirations of street vendors and riverside squatters were aired and incorporated into the eventual process of relocation, but that is not to say that their aspirations have been realized. A second strand of my research concerns the extralocal routes of Solo's success stories, or the way in which they have travelled through: local government study tours; the initiatives of international donor

agencies (such as the Partnership for Democratic Local Governance in South-East Asia [DELGOSEA] which facilitated its 'transfer' to the municipality of Pakkret in Thailand); and Jokowi's own political mobility, having left Solo to become governor of Jakarta in October 2012. Third, I seek to complicate a dichotomy between local 'roots' and extra-local 'routes'. This means attending to the more-than-local dimensions of the relocation process in Solo, including Philippines-inspired histories of participatory planning, financial support from central government ministries, technical input from UNHABITAT, and aspirations shaped by imaginings of diverse elsewheres. In addition, in cases where Solo success stories have already travelled to other cities in Indonesia and beyond, it is important to consider the rooting (or territorialisation) and mutation of the Solo model.

**Producing urban asylum: forced migration and the city** by Dr Jonathan Darling (Geography, School of Environment and Development, University of Manchester)

This research sets out to investigate the politics of urban asylum in contemporary Britain at a time of increasing pressure on asylum services and provision. In 2009, the UK Border Agency announced moves to increase the private provision of dispersal accommodation for asylum seekers and to halt contracts with urban authorities. Such a move effectively ended the provision of public housing to asylum seekers in British cities and moved their accommodation into the hands of multinational security contractors such as G4S and Serco. This research represents the first endeavour to examine the impacts of this policy shift and its transmission to four key dispersal cities within the UK, alongside a reflection upon the varied local histories and place contexts through which asylum policies are incorporated, interpreted and understood in everyday urban life. The research is centred upon the cities of Birmingham, Cardiff, Glasgow and Sunderland and will draw upon a multi-method approach, including; archival and media research; interviews with key figures in the refugee sector and local authorities; a public forum for stories of asylum from each city; focus groups with asylum seekers; and the observation of asylum campaigns and political movements. In doing so, the research will critically question the practice of urban dispersal and asylum policy-making from the perspectives of those negotiating and practicing such policy in the urban everyday, from urban officials and asylum activists to asylum seekers themselves. The research thus seeks to take seriously the experiential elements of urban asylum, asking how asylum seekers view their relationship with dispersal cities and how the histories and relational connections of each city influence how relations between asylum and the city are understood.

**Bringing the countryside to the city: practices and imaginations of the "rural" in Ho Chi Minh City, Vietnam** by Dr Jamie Gillen (Geography, FASS, NUS)

By zeroing in on the spatial "potentiality" and tensions of the urban experience, this paper examines the countryside's role as a set of everyday practices and imaginative discourse in the growth and transformation of Ho Chi Minh City, Vietnam. I show how urban residents draw on material practices and symbolic discourses of the "rural" to imbue the city with meaning. In doing so, this presentation extends from arguments demonstrating how emerging Southeast Asian city-regions grow outward to illustrate how Ho Chi Minh City residents bring "the rural in" and enliven the value of the countryside in urban development. Related to this, I wish to highlight how the folding of the countryside in to the city does not deprive either rural or urban space of meaning. In sum, this paper contributes to debates surrounding the urban Global South and its contribution to urban theory-building, the countryside's role in linking the "rural" and the "urban" in the Global South, and the classic "push" and "pull" factors involved in rural-urban migration by rethinking the urban/rural binary in Vietnam.

Keywords: urban/rural binary, potentiality, urban development, countryside, Vietnam

**Pods, Migrant Labor and Global City Making in Hong Kong, Penang and Singapore** by A/P Daniel PS Goh (Sociology, FASS, NUS)

Migrant labor to Asian urban metropolises has often been studied as social problem or romanticized as cultural hybridizers, but rarely as a constituent factor in the making of global cities. As part of a larger study of two competing forms of Asian urbanisms in postcolonial, post-developmental Hong Kong, Penang and Singapore, this paper treats migrant labor as active agents of the urbanization process. Governments of the three city-states, along with business and household employers, adopt spatial regimes to police, control and discipline migrant labor. I show that these spatial regimes are characterized by the production of "pods", or dispersed ghettoes, that contain and restrict the physical movement of migrant workers and minimize communal congregation. Pod production is the migrant labor counterpart to the production of podiums to contain and enhance commodity and consumer flows in "global city making" projects. On the other hand, migrant workers, with the help of local migrant rights NGOs and artists, respond with spatial strategies that make up "worlding city" urban projects to overcome the containment. These strategies are used to harness their own cultural heritage, so as to express and reconstruct their aspirations through public cultural practices such as carnivals, picnics, concerts, marches, religious meetings and shopping. The culmination is when migrant workers use these practices to overcome intra- and inter-national divisions to achieve class consciousness as migrant labors. I explain why migrant labor "worlding city" has succeeded in Hong Kong, while Singapore and Penang show a mix record in this respect. The implication is that Hong Kong is consequently a more open and cosmopolitan global city than Singapore and Penang.

**Urban aspirations of African student migrants in Chinese cities** by Dr Elaine Ho (Geography, FASS, NUS)

A growing scholarship on China-Africa relations focuses on Chinese migration to Africa; however, counter-trends indicate that migration from Africa to China is on the increase. The emerging literature on African migration to China mainly considers the experiences of African traders, drawing out issues of illegality, 'low-end' globalisation and their impacts on Chinese trading cities. This presentation pays attention to African student migration to China instead; it argues that such migration represents forms of brain circulation between Africa and China. While the spatial manifestations of this brain circulation can converge in Chinese trading cities, it may also diverge from the predominant framings of African migration to China. Thus this study is carried out in two comparative sites, Guangzhou and Wuhan. Educational institutions in both cities attract African student migrants, but Guangzhou is also associated with trading activities and a perceptible African presence in the urban environment whereas it is less so in Wuhan.

The study focuses on African students enrolled in university degree courses in Chinese universities and who are learning the Chinese language. The presentation will draw on preliminary research on how migration policies and educational ties promoted by national and city-level decision makers (e.g. visa policies and scholarship schemes) influence African migration to China. More importantly, it examines how African students situate themselves in Chinese cities and their visibilities/invisibilities within Chinese urban environments. The presentation further considers their personal motivations for obtaining an educational experience in China, their capacities to act and the extent to which their experiences of living in Chinese cities are seen as aspirational models for African cities. The presentation draws out the geographically extensive relations between China and Africa and the relational urban framings invoked through the educational experiences of African students in China.

**City twinning: the return(s) of aspirational urban governance?** by Dr Mark Jayne (Geography, School of Environment and Development, University of Manchester)

Twinning is a practice that creates formal and informal political, economic, social and cultural relationships between cities throughout the world and this paper contributes to recent interest in city twinning by urban theorists. The paper begins with a review of writing which theorizes how care and hospitality are key elements of twinning practices. Ethnographic research from the City of Manchester (UK) is discussed in order to consider the ways in which twinning is constituted through circuits, networks and webs of cooperation and competition involved in the transfer of policy and knowledge which can be strategic, uneven and at times ambivalent. However, in contrast to other practices of urban governance which are dominated by evaluation and monitoring of targets and outputs, twinning emphasizes intimate moments of hospitality that are relied on to facilitate particular political and economic (although often un-measurable) returns by affecting long-term and 'at a distance' outcomes. The conclusion reflects on the ways in which aspirational elements of twinning can inform more socially progressive urban policy.

**Aspiring to Belong: Comparing Migrant Experiences of Gurkhas in the UK, Singapore, and Nepal** by Dr Kelvin E.Y. Low (Sociology, FASS, NUS)

The Gurkhas, whose history of migration from Nepal to Southeast Asia and other regions dates back to the period of British colonialism, have established themselves in former British colonies that include Singapore, Hong Kong, and India, as well as the U.K. itself. They were first recruited by the British Army in 1815 in the middle of the Anglo-Nepalese War of 1814-16, as the British were impressed with their bravery and hardiness. Over the last two centuries, Nepali Gurkhas and their families have had a palpable global presence, working and residing not only in the countries for which they serve in the army (Britain; India; Brunei; Malaysia) or police force (Singapore), but also in other contexts where they have retired or embarked on a second career overseas in the private military and security industries, cruise tourism, and others. Their migrant lifeworlds and aspirations, however, have seldom been addressed in scholarly literature with the exception of some works. In order to comprehend these global dispersions, and to query the migratory processes and implications for both Gurkhas and their children, this preliminary paper deals with notions of belonging and not belonging by comparing Gurkhas' urban experiences and aspirations in the contexts of the UK, Singapore, and Nepal. In doing so, the aspirations of migratory Gurkhas at a transnational level can then be more critically engaged by analysing their biographies in different urban milieu and temporal contexts in association with the backcloth of military historiography. How do Gurkhas and their family members negotiate transnational interfaces in terms of their migrant experiences of work, belonging and notions of 'home'? How are they situated with regard to citizenship, belonging, rights and privileges? How can we then appraise global migratory flows and the production of transnational social spaces?

**Aspirational Roots and Routes in Beijing's Art World** by Dr Peter Marolt (Asia Research Institute, NUS)

Artists, usually rooted in particular places, are often also influenced by relational phenomena and processes. This paper argues that the tension between local-territorial and interdependent–relational processes and ideas lies at the heart of how urban aspirations become capable of shifting their (and our) understanding of what is possible. I aspire to examine where urban aspirations come from and how artist-practitioners, often in collaboration with facilitators, build connections between urban aspiration and urban change.

Looking through the lens of two urban places in and near Beijing (the 798 Art Zone and the Songzhuang Art Colony), I show how practitioners imagine and image the urban in their work, and how they reproduce their aspirations (and related to this, their discontent with the status quo) in their art. Aided by interviews with artists and curators as well as other observations and online data – and drawing on Appadurai, Bunnell, Castells, Featherstone, Goh, Massey, McCann, Simone, Ward, and others, for conceptual guidance – I then attempt to contextualize how these works of art and their interventions into dominant narratives connect to the urban aspirations of their creators and curators. Finally, I examine how these aspirations have emerged and travelled through space. Following these local roots and trans-local routes, I try to capture what has spurred the artistic 'capacity to act', how artists form 'spaces of autonomy' within and across projects and group networks, and reassess the link between organically grown urban imaginaries and political action, in the light of intra- and inter-urban interdependencies and the potential of urban aspirations to 'travel'. Particular emphasis throughout will be given to the role of cyberspace in these processes, and how the 'virtual' augments urban life-worlds and is actively used to accrete into a politically significant mass and propel socio-political change towards a more diverse and inclusive urbanity.

**Urban Aspirations and Vernacular Re-Imaginations of Waterfront Settlements in Surabaya, Indonesia** by Dr Rita Padawangi (Asia Research Institute, NUS)

Urban waterfronts in cities of developing countries often face pollution issues and at the same time are sites of dense settlements that would eventually be targets of redevelopment. Resettlements in these redevelopment practices are inevitable in the name of better environmental qualities and resilience, although the implementation is often in the form of river dredging and concrete walls. With such seemingly normative argument for the sake of environment, macro-level and long-term considerations and therefore for the good of the public, "best practices" in urban waterfront redevelopment place much emphasis on development coordination and top-down authority. This paper centres on the question "How can we understand the image of the city from the residents of urban waterfronts?" Embedded in this question is the notion of the good city in the eyes of waterfront communities, how it relates to the realities of immediate surroundings and how the aspiration of the good city relates to the reflexive meanings between urban river living and urban river spaces. In addition to literature-based learning from various waterfront redevelopment experiences, this paper also looks at two particular communities in Surabaya: Dinoyo Tenun and Bagong Ginayan as the last two urban settlements along Kalimas branch of Brantas River in Surabaya. Observations, interviews and a workshop with community members reveal vernacular efforts to materially express the image of the good city in their neighbourhoods. Community-based initiatives in building urban spaces reflect their aspirations as residents of the city. Nevertheless, the fluidity of community efforts without commonly shared methods in achieving aspirations also materialises in the form of space appropriations among community members.

**Urban futures: aspirations, visioning and futuring** by Ms Elisa Pieri (School of Social Science (Sociology) & Manchester Architecture Research Centre (MARC), University of Manchester)

The planning, management and 'making' of cities is arguably pursued also through the mobilisation of desirable futures. Aspirations of city makers and branders play a central role in shaping how cities may evolve in certain directions rather than others. Yet theoretical and empirical work looking at how these imagined futures are mobilised and, more importantly, whether they are indeed shared by various actors beyond the main institutional stakeholders still remains scarce.

At the same time, the practice of mobilising aspirations has come under close theoretical and empirical scrutiny in other areas of policy, for instance in policy pertaining to innovation, science and technology. It is within these fields that scholars in social studies of science have more sharply highlighted the contested nature of these visioning and futuring exercises and their implications.

This paper aims to combine insights and understandings about aspirations from these fields, and relate them to the urban policy domain. It builds on theories of public engagement, multi-stakeholder mapping, uncertainty and contested knowledge. The paper calls for a critical appraisal of the underlying values inbuilt in any urban visions and aspirations mobilised, and is based on ongoing research looking at these processes of futuring.

**Migrant Aspirations – Of, In, or Through the Urban?** by A/P Eric C. Thompson (Sociology, FASS, NUS)

The focus of this presentation is thinking through the place of rural-to-urban migrants in the context of a broader research agenda on "urban aspirations." The conceptual framework of the broader project – and of much of urban studies in general – presumes to take the urban as a central site of desire. That is to say, the urban – or more colloquially – cities are presumed to be places in which aspirations are to be achieved. Activities within cities are taken to have as their implicit or explicit goal the production of a particular sort of urban way of life or way of life within the urban. In other words, 'urban aspirations' are assumed to be aspirations of the urban. From the point of view of rural-to-urban migrants, however, might these assumptions be put into question? Specifically, might it be the case that these migrant aspirations may be through the urban but neither of nor in the urban? My particular focus (in the research for the current project as well as related projects) is on circular migrants, whose lives are often anchored as much in rural as in urban places. In these cases, there is evidence to suggest that the urban places, a.k.a. cities, are a peripheral site within their aspirations. Urban places – cities, towns – are sites through which rural aspirations (or other aspirations generally) are to be achieved; but not sites of aspiration in-and-of themselves. The urban is a means, not an end. In the presentation, I seek to work through the implications of this both methodologically (what questions should I or we be asking?) and theoretically (what are the implications for a project on "urban aspirations" more generally?).

**On the waterfront: the mobility and mutation of the Tax Increment Financing (TIF) model** by Prof Kevin Ward (Geography, School of Environment and Development, University of Manchester)

It is not a long walk from the centre of Edinburgh to the Leith waterfront. It takes about twenty minutes, and along the way the signs of economic change are all too visible. Cheaper shops, empty store fronts, fewer revitalized pubs, less condo developments – sure signs of you are moving through a neighbourhood of lower economic value. Unlike its gentrified neighbour Edinburgh, and despite a modest growth in its number of bistros and cafes, Leith continues to wear its working class history on its sleeve. This is one where the port and the waterfront figure strongly. Not only a large employer of locals, the port and associated economic activities along the waterfront have historically played an important role in shaping the identity of Leith. This is one informed by connections to elsewhere due to the regular coming and going of people and their products. And as the area began to experience industrial decline and rising unemployment, with an associated decrease in its population, so attention turned to what to do with the waterfront. Successive government scheme came and went. All failed. In 2010 there was a refocusing of government and public energies around a master-planning of the area that would be financed using a model that had not been used before in the UK. The presentation explores this model's geographies and histories, the work done by range of actors of differing geographical reach in order for it to be presented as the way of financing the redevelopment of Leith waterfront, and the stasis that currently characterises the use of the model. It concludes by reflecting on the methodological and theoretical challenges raised by seeking to study the geographically distant but socially proximate elements to the making up of redevelopment 'models'.

**Mobilising intervention: Aspirations, conflict and community empowerment through leadership** by Dr Helen F. Wilson (Geography, School of Environment and Development, University of Manchester)

In the US, organisations concerned with reducing urban violence and conflict have developed community intervention models that have been replicated across cities with high levels of conflict and crime. Through peer-training programmes, these organisations aspire to eliminate violence, racism and prejudice through empowering people to take leadership in their local communities. Research within the US has attempted to evaluate the effects of mobilising such programmes in different urban contexts, with indication that models have differing levels of success depending upon local dynamics and variations in implementation. As these organisations develop partnerships in Canada, Europe and Latin America, my research considers the implications of mobilising US models of community intervention to tackle what are often very different urban problems in very different cultural contexts across an international network.

The research is thus positioned within debates on policy mobility and specifically concerns the European prioritisation of community-based intervention as a means to address ethnic, religious and cultural divides in urban areas. By developing ethnographic details of the taking-place of a peer-training programme, the research will ask how US aspirations for community empowerment resonate in different cultural contexts across Europe. In so doing, the research focuses on three areas of inquiry. First, it considers how knowledge, support and community aspirations are mobilised across a network of city-based chapters. This includes not only a concern with the organisational structure of the group, but also with the volunteers and ordinary friendships and associations that sustain it. Secondly, it considers how the programme is taken up in different cities to respond to differing local and national policies, funding opportunities and socio-cultural problems. Finally, and utilising cultural discourse analysis techniques, the research will consider the gaps that exist between local communities and the organisation's way of operating, to focus more concretely upon the experiences of programme participants and the ordinary geographies of conflict and aspiration on the ground.

# Participants' Curricula Vitae_____

**Michele Acuto** is Research Fellow for the Oxford Programme for the Future of Cities. He is also a CPD Fellow of the University of Southern California's Centre on Public Diplomacy, and a Contributing Editor for the Diplomatic Courier. He completed a PhD in the Asia-Pacific College of Diplomacy at the Australian National University (ANU), where he began his research on the strategic role of global cities for global governance. He also taught sociology in the Faculty of Business & Government at the University of Canberra between 2008 and 2011, and was associated with the Milan Polytechnic's Faculty of Architecture "Urban Hybridization" Project between 2009 and 2010. He held visiting positions at the National University of Singapore's Cities Cluster and Asia Research Institute, as well as at the Institute of International and European Affairs in Dublin. He previously worked as independent consultant on conflict resources and the Kimberley Process on diamonds for several years, and subsequently served as JPO to secretariat of the International Campaign to Ban Landmines. Michele holds a Bachelor in Diplomacy from the University of Genoa, a specialization in Peace and Conflict Studies from the International Peace Research Institute in Oslo, as well as a Master of International Affairs and a Master of Diplomacy from the ANU.

**Yasminah Beebeejaun** is a lecturer in the Department of Planning and Environmental Management at the University of Manchester. Her work engages with the racialisation of urban politics in the UK and North America. She has undertaken comparative research in the USA and Canada investigating how community interests become represented within contested practices of place making. Her work has been published in Urban Studies, Planning Theory and Practice and the Community Development Journal.

**Tim Bunnell** is Associate Professor in the Department of Geography and at the Asia Research Institute at the National University of Singapore. An urban geographer with research interests in Malaysia and Indonesia as well as in interurban connections between Southeast Asia and other regions, he is author of Malaysia, Modernity and the Multimedia Super Corridor (Routledge, 2004) and more than 30 refereed papers in human geography and urban studies journals. His recent work has considered the position of Asia in EuroAmerican-dominated urban theory, including in a special issue of Urban Studies (co-edited with Daniel Goh, C.K. Lai and C.P. Pow) on Global Urban Frontiers: Asian Cities in Theory, Practice and Imagination. He is currently conducting research in the city of Solo, Indonesia, as part of a comparative research project on grassroots urban aspirations and their relational geographies, for which he is principal investigator.

**Jonathan Darling** is Lecturer in Human Geography at the University of Manchester. His research focuses on the spatial politics of asylum and sanctuary, particularly focusing on the connections between asylum and the city. He is currently working on a three year ESRC funded project titled Producing Urban Asylum that explores the political, social and experiential implications of changes in urban asylum policy in four UK cities. He has written on issues of hospitality and moral urbanism, sanctuary movements and practices and relational theories of space and ethics.

**Mike Douglass** is Professor at the Asia Research Institute and Department of Sociology at the National University of Singapore. He is Emeritus Professor of Urban and Regional Planning and former Director of the Globalization Research Center at the University of Hawaii. He holds a Ph.D. in Urban Planning from UCLA. He is a Co-Editor of the International Development Planning Review. Among his books and films are: Place of Hope: The Kasama Community and the Great Ordeal (documentary film, 2012). Globalization, the Rise of Civil Society and Civic Spaces in Pacific Asia Cities (Routledge, 2010). Dancing in the Park– Hanoi at Its Millennium (documentary film, 2010), and Building Urban Communities: The Politics of Civic Space in Asia (Routledge, 2008).

**Jamie Gillen** is an Assistant Professor of Geography at the National University of Singapore, where has been working since July, 2011. His research spans cultural, urban, tourism, and social geographies of Vietnam and Southeast Asia. His favored topics of study include entrepreneurialism, tourism, and the politics of the field.

**Daniel PS Goh** is Associate Professor of Sociology and Convener of the Cultural Studies Minor and Cultural Studies in Asia PhD Programme, National University of Singapore. He specializes in comparative-historical sociology, urban studies and cultural studies. His research interests include state formation, postcolonialism, multiculturalism, heritage activism and Chinese religion. He is lead co-editor of Race and Multiculturalism in Malaysia and Singapore (Routledge 2009) and has co-edited special issues in Urban Studies and International Journal of Urban and Regional Research. He has published articles on culture and urbanism in Singapore in Inter-Asia Cultural Studies and Space and Culture.

**Elaine Ho** is an Assistant Professor at the Department of Geography, National University of Singapore (NUS). Her research focuses on the way citizenship as a territorially defined concept is undergoing change as a result of transnational migration. She has carried out studies on immigration and emigration trends in Singapore as well as on Mainland Chinese immigration to Canada and return migration to China. Her current research focuses on the urban aspirations of African student migrants in China and also on successive flows of Chinese migration to Myanmar. Prominent themes from her research agenda include diaspora policy engagement, familyhood, emotions, ethnicity and cosmopolitanism.

**Mark Jayne** is a Senior Lecturer in Human Geography at the University of Manchester, UK. His research interests includes consumption, the urban order, city cultures and cultural economy and he has published over 60 journal articles, book chapters and official reports. Mark is author of Cities and Consumption (Routledge, 2005), co-author of Alcohol, Drinking, Drunkenness: (Dis)Orderly Spaces (Ashgate, 2011) and Rethinking Childhood, Families and Alcohol (Ashgate, 2013). Mark is also co-editor of City of Quarters: Urban Villages in the Contemporary City (Ashgate, 2004), Small Cities: Urban Experience Beyond the Metropolis (Routledge, 2006) and Urban theory Beyond the West: A World of Cities (Routledge, 2012).

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