

USF Seminar Series “Overlooked Cities in Asia: Interrogating blind fields in urban knowledges and praxes”

Bandung, Indonesia, 6-8 September 2023

Call for Participants
Conference & ECRs Mentoring Programme
Deadline: 19 May 2023, 23.59 Western Indonesian time (GMT+7)

Sponsored by the Urban Studies Foundation’s Seminar Series Award, this event will be the first in a series of academic events on “**Overlooked Cities: Thinking and doing global urban studies differently.**” The conference aims to facilitate a collective critique of the indifferent views on Asian cities that are marginalised, off-the-map, and under-theorised due to the logics of domination and control. It seeks to sharpen and expand post- and de-colonial interventions that shift the focus of global urban studies to the urban majority, articulating under-studied and under-represented spaces, knowledge, and practices in the Asian context.

The key concern of this conference is to promote a fundamentally collective praxis of counter-overlooking, which requires broadening the scope and extending the subjects in seeing, knowing, and acting from/with overlooked cities. Therefore, we invite researchers (particularly early career researchers), scholars and practitioners across Asia to work together on shaping a counter-overlooking agenda, to provide renewed critical impetus to think about, write about, care about and act on urban lives. Please consider joining us, with your observations or ongoing research projects that are related to any kind of overlooked cities in Asia.

This meeting will be in Bandung, which has a deep imprint in the global movements of de-colonisation and de-imperialisation. The Bandung Conference held 68 years ago connected Asia and Africa, for the first time in history, with their struggles against imperialism. Having our conference in Bandung is critical and significant for returning to and resolidifying these commitments and solidarities against any form of domination – and this time in the field of urban knowledge production.

In line with a recent call by Kuan-Hsing Chen et al. (2022), we invite you to join us and go back to Bandung for alternative (urban) futures. By shifting the gaze to heterogeneous temporalities, relationalities, power relations and socio-spatial configurations of otherwise overlooked and hence invisible Asian cities, the praxis of counter-overlooking will hopefully be able to “transform existing modes of thought and carry on the de-imperializing spirit of Bandung” (Chen et al. 2012: 281), while at the same time weave together other possible futures in terms of both global urban studies and our modes of urban living.

During the Conference and ECRs Mentoring programme, we seek to discuss and reflect upon the following questions in the Asian contexts:

Diagnosis:

- What and whose urban conditions and lived experiences have been overlooked in the “mainstream” urban studies literature and why?
- What logics and mechanisms are underlying the ethos and praxis of overlookedness?
- How can we render visible, and map overlooked conditions and experiences?

Alternatives:

- How can we approach overlookedness relationally instead of creating yet another urban category or typology?
- Is it productive to get rid of the limits of boundary, border, or population criteria in these discussions?
- What methods and toolkits can support counter-overlooking initiatives in research, praxis, and pedagogy?
- What can other disciplines such as law, anthropology, sociology, history, and philosophy, as well as indigenous inquiries contribute to the counter-overlooking agenda?

Implications:

- How can we identify, interrogate, and reshape the hegemonic geographies of (over)looking in global urban studies?
- How and to what extent can we make counter-overlooking an emerging, collectivising agenda in global urban studies?
- How to galvanise the work of grassroots organisations, networks of cities or everyday solidarity to foster collective learning and address inequality in overlooked cities?

Formats and participants

The conference will be organised as an in-person event, and conference presentations will be live-streamed. We recognise that counter-overlooking would open a diversity of lived experiences to inform global urban theory in an iterative process of translating knowledge: from academics to inhabitants and practitioners and vice versa. We, therefore, invite practitioners, artists as well as academics who are working in/on Asia to participate and contribute to this conference.

The conference is open to presentations in a variety of formats, including academic papers, artistic interventions (such as visual arts, installations, etc.), and audio contributions (such as storytelling, music, audio interventions, etc.). Please share with us an abstract of your contribution (see details below on “how to apply”). The abstract can be in English, Chinese or Bahasa Indonesia, but the conference will be organised in English. Simultaneous translation in Bahasa Indonesia will be offered for audiences who watch live streaming.

The ECRs mentoring programme, which will complement the conference, is open to PhD students and early career researchers within five years of the award of their PhDs. In exceptional cases, we will consider applications from non-academic and non-traditional

career paths (e.g., ECRs coming from practice). The mentoring programme aims to support capacity development in writing and publishing academic contributions through group discussions and one-to-one mentoring activities. Participating ECRs will be expected to join a 1-hour preparatory online meeting and submit a 5000-word paper two weeks before the conference (by 23 August 2023).

The conference will also include a field visit to facilitate conversations between conference participants and local organisations and communities and learn about overlookedness and everyday urban experiences in Bandung, Indonesia.

Attendance at the conference is free of charge. Lunches and dinners during the conference will be provided. However, participants need to cover their own travel and accommodation costs. A limited amount of bursaries and childcare support are available for ECRs (see the application form for further instructions).

Conference hosts

Resilience Development Initiative, Indonesia
Renmin University of China
University of the Free State, South Africa
Saw Swee Hock Southeast Asia Centre, LSE, UK
Institute of Hazard, Risk and Resilience, Durham University, UK

Keynote speakers / ECR mentors (confirmed)

Professor Hyun Bang Shin (London School of Economics and Political Science)
Professor AbdouMaliq Simone (University of Sheffield)
Dr Rita Padawangi (Singapore University of Social Sciences)

Conference convenors

Dr Isolde de Villiers (University of the Free State, South Africa)
Dr Yimin Zhao (Renmin University of China and University of Zurich, China/Switzerland)
Dr Erwin Nugraha (Resilience Development Initiative and Durham University, Indonesia/UK)
Dr Julia Wesely (University of Natural Resources and Life Sciences, Vienna, Austria)
Dr Hanna A Ruszczuk (Durham University, UK)

How to apply

Please send your application using the form available at <https://www.overlookedcities.org/call-for-participants> to overlookedcities@gmail.com. The deadline for applications is **19 May 2023, 23:59 WIB (GMT+7)**. You will be notified about the outcome of your application by the end of May 2023.

Your application should include:

1. Personal details and contact information.
2. An abstract of a maximum 300-words of your contribution that describes how your planned paper or creative input (e.g., visual arts, audio, storytelling, music etc.) relates to one or more of the topics listed above.
3. Short biography
4. If you are an early career researcher and would like to participate in the ECRs mentoring programme, please fill in the motivation statement in the application form.
5. If you are an ECR and would like to be considered for financial assistance (bursaries and/or childcare), please fill in the final section of the form ("financial assistance").

Bursaries and financial support

With funding from the Urban Studies Foundation, we hope to provide ten partial bursaries and an amount towards childcare to enable ECRs to participate in this event. If you are eligible and would like to be considered, please elaborate briefly in the application form your situation and why you would like to be considered for the bursary and/or childcare support. The bursary is primarily aimed at covering accommodation expenses in Bandung during the conference and paying, in whole or in part, for traveling costs to and from the conference. In the application form, please provide a detailed budget of your travel-requirements.

Contact

Please contact us for any questions or inquiries at overlookedcities@gmail.com. You can also find more information about the Overlooked Cities Collective, as well as our past and current activities via our website: <https://www.overlookedcities.org>.

Reference and further readings

- Chen, K. H., Lu, M., & Qiu, J. L. (2022). Back to Bandung for the future: The never-ending project of de-imperialization. *Communication Theory*, 32(2), 281-288.
- Nugraha, E., Wesely, J., Rusczyk, H.A., De Villiers, I., and Zhao, Y. (2023). Overlooked cities: Shifting the gaze in research and practice in global urban studies. *Cities*, Volume 133.
- Rusczyk, H. A., Nugraha, E., and De Villiers, I. (Eds.). (2021). *Overlooked cities: Power, politics and knowledge beyond the urban south*. Abingdon, Oxon: Routledge.
- Neves Alves, S and Rusczyk, H.A. (2021) *Theorising from the overlooked city: Generating a research agenda & network on small / secondary cities*. Digital magazine.