



4-5 AUGUST 2022

GREEN CITIES BEYOND FAILURE

TOWARDS HOPEFUL EPISTEMOLOGIES
OF ECOLOGICAL URBAN FUTURES
IN ASIA



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As more urban areas across the world adopt green visions, more case studies are conducted to document how these projects have yet to deliver on their environmental promises. Together, the dominant discourses reinforce a recurring and deterministic view that without radical reforms, existing political-economic structures will doom green city experiments to failure. Since such wholesale structural transformations seem far-fetched in most societies, the saturation of existing criticisms inevitably conjures up a bleak outlook on ecological urban futures. Repetition of similar criticisms is prone to overgeneralize the drawbacks of green city experiments, especially when the dominant discourse overshadows contextualized and differentiated outcomes. As a result, green cities are often viewed as ecological utopias that disguise state or market rationale to capitalize on nature, and urban scholarship on green cities seems to have hit a cul-de-sac of universal disapproval. Focusing on Asia, we acknowledge the importance of scholarly critiques of green cities but also seek to nudge the discourse beyond conclusions of inevitable failure.

There is, by now, a large and valuable body of critical urban scholarship on green and sustainable urbanisms in various parts of Asia. In particular, Asia's eco-cities have been subjected to considerable scrutiny, resulting in rich insights about how and why these and related experiments have failed (e.g. Chiu-Shee, 2021; de Jong et al., 2016; Joss & Mol, 2013; Rapoport, 2014; Shwayri, 2013; Sze, 2015; Williams, 2017). In contrast, this workshop encourages participants to leverage existing critical insights and identify promising roadmaps towards alternative urban ecological futures. We invite scholars who have examined "green" or eco-city developments in Asia to share experiences and reflect on ecological urban futures in ways that move beyond the generation of yet more critical case studies.

Centered on Asian cities, the dialogues that we envisage should generate new perspectives that address questions including, but not limited to:

- In what ways can academic work on "green," "eco," or "sustainable" experimentation retain a critical edge while also contributing to hopeful epistemologies (Pow, 2015) in urban studies?
- Rather than adding new research on the failure of green city experiments, can future research clarify what constitutes success and how to achieve it?
- Rather than viewing Asia's existing green cities as sites and vehicles of capitalist growth or as symbols of untenable green futures, what lessons can we draw from Asia that would encourage more genuine green transitions?
- In more nuanced examinations of Asia's green cities, are there promising shifts in the diverse processes and outcomes that counter the view of a dismal or dystopian future? What progress has been made in Asia's green cities that might be expanded to enable hopeful transitions?
- Assuming that pro-environmental experimentation will (and should) continue in cities, what are the domains and types of intervention that can contribute to meaningful progress?
- In academic research on rethinking ecological urban futures, how to generate methodological/theoretical breakthroughs and forward-looking insights to nudge policy and action in progressive directions?
- What are some existing responses to academic critiques in design, planning, and policy practices? What could be some responses to academic critiques?
- Given that COVID-19 has shaken up human-nature relationships in cities and fomented debates about green recovery, what lessons does the pandemic offer for rethinking ecological urban futures in (and *from*) Asia?

WORKSHOP CONVENORS

Dr Colleen Chiu-Shee | The University of Hong Kong, and National University of Singapore

Prof Tim Bunnell | National University of Singapore

SINGAPORE
STANDARD TIME

THURSDAY, 4 AUGUST 2022

13:30 – 13:45 WELCOME & INTRODUCTORY REMARKS

TIM BUNNELL | National University of Singapore

COLLEEN CHIU-SHEE | The University of Hong Kong, and National University of Singapore

13:45 – 15:10 PANEL 1 | PLANNING GREEN FRONTIERS OF ASIAN CITIES

CHAIRPERSON **OFITA PURWANI** | National University of Singapore

13:45 Identifying Nature Positive Futures in New Cities: An Application of the Urban Nature Futures Framework

SHAIKH FAIRUL EDROS BIN SHAIKH AHMAD | Nanyang Technological University

PERRINE HAMEL | Nanyang Technological University

14:00 Urban Environmental Governance for Emerging Industrial Megaprojects: Examining Potential Templates in Karnataka, India

AMOGH ARAKALI | Indian Institute for Human Settlements

14:15 Geographies of Nusantara: Indonesia's New Capital City as a Site of Environmental Concern and Progressive Possibility

TIM BUNNELL | National University of Singapore

JESSICA CLENDENNING | Ludwig-Maximilians-University Munich

14:30 COMMENTS BY DISCUSSANT

LAURENCE CÔTÉ-ROY | National University of Singapore

14:40 QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

15:10 END OF PANEL 1

15:30 – 16:55 PANEL 2 | SHAPING COMMUNAL ECOLOGOIES IN ASIAN CITIES

CHAIRPERSON **VEN PAOLO VALENZUELA** | National University of Singapore

15:30 Governmentality and Green Cities: Urban Agriculture in Chinese Cities

YICHI ZHANG | University of Oslo

15:45 Evaluating Framing and Diffusion of Low Carbon Lifestyles: The Case of Organic Terrace Gardening in Bengaluru

SUNAYANA GANGULY | Azim Premji University

16:00 Visualizing the Value of Green Spaces and Technology through Mapping: Lessons from Kashiwanoha International Campus Town

KEVIN MACARIUS FLORENTIN | The University of Tokyo

16:15 COMMENTS BY DISCUSSANT

TERRY VAN GEVELT | Singapore Management University

16:25 QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

16:55 END OF PANEL 2

SINGAPORE
STANDARD TIME

THURSDAY, 4 AUGUST 2022

17:15 – 18:40 **PANEL 3 | THE POLITICAL ECONOMY OF GREEN CITIES IN POST-PANDEMIC ASIA**

CHAIRPERSON **RICARDO MARTINEZ** | National University of Singapore

17:15 **Green Optimum Economy: The Case of the Khonkaen Already Green City, Thailand**

SAKKARIN SAPU | King Mongkut's Institute of Technology Ladkrabang

17:30 **Assessing the Potential of Urban Heritage Conservation in Green City Development: Learning from Penang Hill Biosphere Reserve**

CREIGHTON CONNOLLY | Lingnan University

17:45 **At the Margins of the International Community, but Inside Global Knowledge and Policy Flows? How Cities in Taiwan and Scotland Position Themselves within Intergovernmental Rhetoric on Nature-Based Solutions**

LESLIE MABON | The Open University

18:00 **COMMENTS BY DISCUSSANT**

MAY TAN-MULLINS | James Cook University

18:10 **QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS**

18:40 **END OF PANEL 3**

SINGAPORE
STANDARD TIME

FRIDAY, 5 AUGUST 2022

09:30 – 10:55 PANEL 4 | ECOLOGICAL DESIGN FOR CLIMATE RESILIENCE

CHAIRPERSON **COLLEEN CHIU-SHEE** | The University of Hong Kong, and National University of Singapore

09:30 Unexpected Positives from Ho Chi Minh City High Rises in the Time of COVID: Possible Lessons for the Green Realization of South-East Asia Cities

ERIK HARMS | Yale University

PHAM THANH THOI | Vietnam National University

TRUC HONG NGUYEN | Vietnam National University

09:45 Green Initiatives for City Development in Sinking Jakarta, Indonesia: Addressing the Design Challenges in Urban Development

RADHA WAYKOOL | National University of Singapore

10:00 Building Sustainable Social-Ecological Futures in Southeast Asia Cities after the COVID-19 Pandemic

NGUYEN DANG DAO | Cornell University

10:15 COMMENTS BY DISCUSSANT

NAOMI HANAKATA | National University of Singapore

10:25 QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

10:55 END OF PANEL 4

11:30 – 12:55 PANEL 5 | DECONSTRUCTING THE 'ECOLOGICAL' CITY

CHAIRPERSON **DAN ZHANG** | National University of Singapore

11:30 Lion City Zoopolis: Urban "Crittizenship" in Biophilic Singapore

GEORGE WONG | Singapore Management University

11:45 Deconstructing the Green City: The Case for De-growth in Singapore

POH YONG HAN | Oxford University

12:00 Disturbed Ecologies in the City in Nature

SOPHIA TAN QI YING | National University of Singapore

SIMONE SHU-YENG CHUNG | National University of Singapore

12:15 COMMENTS BY DISCUSSANT

HARVEY NEO | Singapore University of Technology and Design

12:25 QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

12:55 END OF PANEL 5

SINGAPORE
STANDARD TIME

FRIDAY, 5 AUGUST 2022

14:15 – 15:15 ROUNDTABLE DISCUSSION

HARVEY NEO | Singapore University of Technology and Design

LAURENCE CÔTÉ-ROY | National University of Singapore

MAY TAN-MULLINS | James Cook University

NAOMI HANAKATA | National University of Singapore

TERRY VAN GEVELT | Singapore Management University

COLLEEN CHIU-SHEE | The University of Hong Kong, and National University of Singapore

TIM BUNNELL | National University of Singapore

15:15 – 15:30 CLOSING REMARKS

15:30 END OF WORKSHOP

Identifying Nature Positive Futures in New Cities: An Application of the Urban Nature Futures Framework

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With the increasing loss of biodiversity due to urbanization, it is essential to examine and reimagine the place of nature in cities. The opportunity to redesign positive relationships between cities and nature is particularly apparent in the development of new cities – rapidly developing areas observed in many Asian and African countries. As these new cities are built on a perceived tabula rasa, there is a potential to design positive nature futures. This study, therefore, aims to understand the place of nature in existing plans for new cities and identify pro-nature visions these plans could incorporate. We use the Urban Nature Futures Framework (UNFF) as our framework to conduct a content analysis on the master plans of new city and town developments within the Jakarta Metropolitan Area (JMA). The UNFF promotes the creation of multiple positive visions of nature in cities by considering three broad nature perspectives: Nature for Nature, Nature for Society, and Nature as Culture as well as emphasizing equity in these visions. Through the content analysis, we extract information on how these master plans incorporate nature into new cities and assess the combinations of nature perspectives adopted within these plans. Our findings show that while the Nature for Society perspective tends to dominate the design of new cities in the JMA, we found that new cities are emphasising the Nature as Culture perspective through nature stewardship programmes. The equitability of these different nature perspectives varied according to the companies - with some lower accessibility due to the focus on private residents. Future new city designs might want to enhance more Nature for Nature perspective as well as equity dimensions to help reap additional benefits for both people and the environment beyond the new city.

Shaikh Fairul is currently a PhD student at the Asian School of the Environment, Nanyang Technological University (NTU). His PhD research broadly focuses on examining the resilience of new cities in Indonesia using mixed methods such as quantitative spatial analyses and qualitative research. His other research interests include urban ecosystem services and the socio-cultural valuation of these services.

Perrine Hamel is an Assistant Professor at NTU's Asian School of the Environment. Her research group examines how green infrastructure can contribute to creating resilient and inclusive cities in Southeast Asia. Prior to joining NTU, Perrine was a senior scientist at Stanford University with the Natural Capital Project, a global partnership aiming to integrate the benefits provided by nature into major societal decisions. There, she led the Livable Cities program, an initiative aiming to understand and elevate the role of nature in urban environments. Prior to her research on natural capital, Perrine has worked as an environmental engineer in Phnom Penh, Cambodia, and conducted her PhD research in the field of integrated urban water management. She holds a PhD from Monash University, Australia, and a Master of Civil and Environmental Engineering from Ecole Centrale Nantes, France.

Urban Environmental Governance for Emerging Industrial Megaprojects: Examining Potential Templates in Karnataka, India

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New urban forms, driven by megaprojects (such as industrial corridors, manufacturing zones, and smart cities), have begun to occupy noticeable positions in Indian narratives on urbanisation. While these megaprojects are still at nascent stages of development, there are promises that their growth will enable significant urban and environmental transformations in the spaces they occupy.

Megaprojects like industrial corridors are planned in India with mostly economic and industrial targets, but do not contain formal structures for environmental governance (barring impact assessment exercises). This strict emphasis on economic and industrial targets has led to discourse around megaprojects being often framed in binaries, where the economy and the environment are often seen as opposing factors and megaprojects are seen as antithetical to environmental and social good.

However, industrial, and ecological histories of Indian cities suggest more complex pictures. In particular, the city of Bengaluru, Karnataka has had a history of both industrial and environmental development, with the two both undermining and complementing each other. While the industrial evolution of Bengaluru from textiles to information technology resulted in significant environmental impacts, the city's evolution also enabled the emergence of research institutions, government action, and proactive populations spearheading ecological conservation efforts. While Bengaluru's environmental future is still precarious, its recent history offers valuable lessons for building environmental governance templates in India's emerging urban spaces, particularly within industrial megaprojects.

This paper draws on Bengaluru's industrial and environmental evolution to build templates for emerging urban spaces within Karnataka's industrial corridors. It argues that while there are valid threats from industrialisation, drawing on lessons (both good and bad) from Bengaluru allows for governance templates which can treat the industrial and the environmental in tandem with each other. These templates could help build new urban spaces where industrial and environmental can complement each other more.

Amogh Arakali's research examines relationships between economy and environment in urbanising regions of Asia, focusing predominantly on India. At present, he is interested in the institutional systems governing large infrastructure projects in India. While trained as an economist, he is also interested in building methodological approaches to urban and regional research that combines conventional economic and statistical analyses with new methods of study. Previously, Amogh has studied institutions of environmental governance as part of IHS' research under the IDRC-funded Adaptation at Scale in Semi Arid Regions (ASSAR) project, examining the institutional frameworks at national and state levels in India for climate change adaptation funding. He also participated in a project that studied links between industrial corridors and urbanisation in India, using the case of the Delhi-Mumbai Infrastructure Corridor in Gujarat and Rajasthan. Additionally, he was part of a team that conducted a study of water vulnerabilities in Bengaluru in 2014.

Geographies of Nusantara: Indonesia's New Capital City as a Site of Environmental Concern and Progressive Possibility

Tim Bunnell

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In August 2019, Indonesian president Joko Widodo (“Jokowi”) announced that the government planned to build a new capital city in the province of East Kalimantan. The main official rationale for moving the capital some 1,300 kilometres away from Jakarta to one of the provinces that comprise the Indonesian part of Borneo Island was to spread development more evenly across the national territory. The specific location selected was also deemed to be free from problems of traffic, pollution, water scarcity and flood vulnerability associated with Jakarta, as well as natural hazards such as volcanoes and earthquakes that have afflicted other cities across the archipelago. Even before site selection, the head of the National Development Planning Agency (Bappenas) expressed the goal of building Indonesia’s new capital as a “smart, green and beautiful city”, and reported that Jokowi “had especially emphasized the green aspect”.

Almost all new city projects around the world today are couched in “eco” or “green” rhetoric. However, the location of Indonesia’s new capital afforded a particularly rich array of imaginative resources for architects and designers. The winning city design plays on the jungle/forest as well as island connotations of Borneo (and Indonesia more widely). Both the overall decision to develop a new capital city in the ecologically precarious context of Borneo, and the specific “Nagara Rimba Nusa” design, have been subjected to environmental critique, a recent article in *Science* noting that Nusantara (the official name for the new capital since early 2022) “may not be as green as it looks”. While such critique is vital in its own right, our intention is not to follow that line of investigation. Rather, we consider what, if any, progressive socio-ecological possibilities arise from the Nusantara project. We ask: might aspects of Nusantara become good practice for adoption in planning and urban (re)development elsewhere in Indonesia?; and, even if there turns out to be little that is socio-ecologically progressive about Nusantara, to what extent does environmental concern about the project generate (as well as reflect) new, green(er) systems of developmental evaluation and future priorities?

Tim Bunnell is Professor in the Department of Geography and Director of the Asia Research Institute (ARI), where he is also leader of the Asian Urbanisms cluster. The primary focus of his research is urbanisation in Southeast Asia, examining both the transformation of cities in that region and urban connections with other parts of the world. Tim’s books include *From World City to the World in One City: Liverpool through Malay Lives* (Wiley, 2016) and *Urban Asias: Essays on Futurity Past and Present* (Jovis, 2018; co-edited with Daniel P.S. Goh), and he has also published in a wide range of journals in Geography and urban studies. He is currently working with Jess Clendenning and a team of other colleagues comparing Nusantara with other ex novo administrative capital cities in Southeast Asia.

Jessica Clendenning is a human geographer interested in rural development, environment and agrarian change in urbanizing Southeast Asia. She currently works as a Postdoctoral Fellow at the Rachel Carson Center for Environment and Society at LMU Munich, where she studies how COVID-19 has affected rural places and people in eastern Indonesia. Jessica obtained her PhD in Geography at the National University of Singapore (NUS) in 2020. Her most recent publication discusses how being remote affects young people’s aspirations and forward movements (*IDPR*, 2022).

Governmentality and Green Cities: Urban Agriculture in Chinese Cities

Yichi Zhang

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Urban agriculture, with undertaking agricultural practices in the urban areas, is emerging in major Chinese cities in response to the implementation of green cities. The monopolistic land management authority of local governments in Chinese cities provides a striking challenge to contemporary Western bottom-up self-governance via practicing urban agriculture. Beyond existing works, which focus on the impact and design of urban agriculture, this paper contributes to understanding the epistemologies on green cities in China by examining the role of local governments in the implementation process of urban agriculture. Through comparatively studying three cases in pacesetters of urban agriculture in China – ‘Cityfarm’ in Guangzhou, households’ farmlands in Shenzhen, and ‘Zhichuang kitchen garden’ in Shanghai, it aims to fathom how local governments mobilize various environmental policy-innovation based on different urban functional areas. Specifically, local governments comprehensively utilize the methods of setting eco-demonstration sites in the downtown to co-create an environmental information-communication and knowledge-exchange space for residents, organizing residents’ self-governance at residence zones, and adopting decentralized management at urban villages. In doing so, the governments not only arouse the initiative of urban citizens to foster environmental resilience of cities but also collectively progress a societal consensus integrating the governmentality and urban agriculture governance.

Yichi Zhang is a postdoctoral fellow at the Department of Culture Studies and Oriental Languages, University of Oslo, and editorial board members of the journal *Architectural Histories* and the journal *Landscape Architecture Frontiers*. Currently, he is heading in the research on the case study on transnational architecture production of the ERC project - *Brokering China’s Extraversion*. He was a Postdoctoral Fellow (2019) at the Paul Mellon Centre for Studies in British Art, Yale University, and research fellow (2015) in Garden and Landscape Studies at Dumbarton Oaks, Trustees for Harvard University. He is recipient of both the 13th Annual Mavis Batey Essay Prize, 2017 (the Garden Trust, the UK) and the Annual Award for Post-Doctoral Scholars, 2017 (Geographical Society of New South Wales, Australia). His research interests include transnational architecture production, green urbanism, urban geography, modern Chinese urban and garden history, and the history of British settlements in China.

Evaluating Framing and Diffusion of Low Carbon Lifestyles: The Case of Organic Terrace Gardening in Bengaluru

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This article analyses the Organic Terrace Gardening (OTG) community in Bengaluru from a lifestyle movement perspective. It evaluates how OTG communities frame gardening practices and their role in mainstreaming and diffusing terrace gardening into a movement toward personal identity and lifestyle consumption (Haenfler et al., 2012; Wahlen & Laamanen, 2015). Based on 28 interviews with civil society, private companies, and government actors, conducted by a student field practice team over 8 months and data from social networking groups and websites, this paper discusses the way terrace gardening is framed and diffused through networks. It addresses three questions:

1. What behavior changes are promoted through OTG networks?
 2. How are wider public incentivized to make changes?
 3. How does this relate to the vocabulary and practice of low-carbon lifestyles?
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Sunayana Ganguly is a political scientist who works on environment politics, forest governance, sustainable consumption and cities. She is currently faculty at the School of Policy and Governance, Azim Premji University and a collaborator with the Initiative for Climate Action. She has a PhD from the Environmental Policy Research Centre, Freie University, MSc in Development Studies from LSE and a BA from St Stephens College. Her book "Deliberating Environment Policy in India: Participation and the role of Advocacy" unpacks the dynamics of deliberation and collective action in the formulation of the Forest Rights Act and National Biodiversity Strategy Action Plan. Currently, at Azim Premji University, she teaches interdisciplinary courses on environment, governance, advocacy and research methods. She has consistently published scholarly articles and reports. She has previously worked in think tanks in Germany and India.

Visualizing the Value of Green Spaces and Technology through Mapping: Lessons from Kashiwanoha International Campus Town

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Kashiwanoha in Chiba Japan is a greenfield development that began in 2005, which envisioned an “environmental-symbiotic city,” a “city of health and longevity,” and a “city of new industry creation.” Today, its population continues to increase, going against a super aging Japanese society, and has seen a roll out of various technology that aims to address pressing environmental sustainability issues. Although several evaluations have been carried out on its projects, the actual impact of their development plan to the relationship between its citizens and green spaces. The present study thus implemented deep mapping as a tool to investigate the relationship of Kashiwanoha’s citizens and the natural and manmade landscapes of their community. The process was conducted through a transdisciplinary setting that brought graduate students and citizens together to co-create a deep map that visualizes the importance and meanings the community ascribes to their green spaces. The study found that different age groups valorize green spaces as areas of community making where interpersonal relationships are fostered. The maps were also used by participants to realize successes in local planning strategies, but they also used their maps to advocate how future technological ventures of top-down development should foster and cultivate their environment. The present research offers a valuable alternative of people perspectives to the current bleak and techno-centric focus of urban development in Asia.

Kevin Macarius A. Florentin is currently a PhD Sustainability Science candidate at the University of Tokyo with a concentration on Cultural Inquiry in Smart Cities. He earned his master’s degree from the same institution, and he published his study on pre-disaster recovery planning for cultural heritage of the Philippines. He graduated magna cum laude from the University of the Philippines Diliman with a degree in Bachelor of Arts Public Administration. He is also a member of the International Council on Monuments and Sites, where he advocated for wider adoption of culture discourse for sustainable development.

Green Optimum Economy: The Case of the Khonkaen Already Green City, Thailand

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This article's approach is based on two significant issues of Green Cities. The first is that social inequalities are incurred from Green City policy-driven processes (de Jong et al., 2016; Pow, 2014). There are critical questions about the gap between policy and practice, emerging from global to local. One of the issues has been extensively discussed. The Green City concept seems to advantage the middle class and higher-income groups, instead of the urban poor, informal sector, and marginal groups (Davis & Daniel Bertrand Monk, 2007; Elizabeth Rapoport, 2014; Haase et al., 2017). The second is that Green Cities should be framed relating to the informal Green Economy, especially the security and safety of urban food. According to the food crisis among COVID-19, many cities have been affected by the counter-COVID by the City Closing Policy. As a result, the logistics of food, both domestic and international, were disturbed due to the pandemic crisis. Thus, the review of Green City studies should be more inclusive and engage with the informal sector in both demand and supply chains.

Recently, the Green City concept paid more attention to physical and technology development, instead of the balance of environmental resources. With regret to Green Infrastructure Strategy (GI) and Nature-Based Solutions (NBS), there are important concepts in the discussion about sustainable cities (Haase et al., 2017). This article focuses on both the GI and NBS approach and raises research questions to study the mechanism and ecology of the informal green economy, including upstream-midstream-downstream. Such a pattern of the economy would shape the urban form and pattern. The result found, that to achieve economic and city development, the most Green City policy-driven processes are more concerned with infrastructure and technology intervention. On the other hand, this article proposes the paradigm of Green Optimum Economy (GOE), appearing from inductive research based on Khonkaen city. GOE is a household and neighbourhood scale of economy, consisting of (1) Local Trust (2) Content-based Products (3) Creative Green Chain (4) Appropriate Logistic (5) the Selected Customer, and (6) Passive and Active Income.

Sakkarin Sapu, PhD, is an Assistant Professor in the School of Architecture, Art, and Design, King Mongkut's Institute of Technology Ladkrabang, Thailand. Moreover, I am now a director of the centre of Urban and Community Interactive Action (UCIA). My research is in the field of poor community planning, urban conservation, community architecture, housing planning, urban innovation, creative city, and special economic planning. In 2012, I was one of the committees on country reform, responding to urban development. Furthermore, I am working with many partnerships such as Community Organisation Development Institution (Public Organisation) (CODI), Asian Coalition for Housing Rights (ACHR), Political Development Council, and National Innovation Agency (NIA).

Assessing the Potential of Urban Heritage Conservation in Green City Development: Learning from Penang Hill Biosphere Reserve

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Conservation of green and open spaces in the city has acquired increasing importance for citizens of rapidly urbanising cities seeking to foster a balance between development and the environment (Bandarin and van Oers, 2012). This paper will argue that the integration and conservation of cultural and natural heritage in cities can encourage more genuine green transitions, as opposed to the capital-intensive 'green-infrastructure' focused mega-projects – including the development of entirely new cities - that are commonly pursued in green and eco-city visions. It also suggests that this is an area in which some common ground can be found between the aspirations of various stakeholders, including civil society leaders, governments and policy makers. As Douglass et al (2007: 3) have observed, there have been 'instances where the state has sided with civil society in preserving built heritage and green space when this has ... increased its legitimacy and popular support'.

In illustrating this argument, this paper will draw on my experience of conducting long-term research in Penang, Malaysia, which has aspirations to become 'Asia's greenest' and most liveable city. There, civil society members have advocated for additional greening of urban spaces, including a network of urban parks, which is something that has been promised, but not yet fully realised, by the state government. One promising development, however, is the establishment of a UNESCO Biosphere Reserve in the centre of the island-city, which is one of the 'innovative and green approaches' that the state government is using to achieve their vision of balancing nature conservation with sustainable economic development. The paper will also include examples from other rapidly developing city-regions in Asia which have sought to pursue similar strategies, and will assess their potential to generate more genuine green transitions in the future.

Creighton Connolly is an assistant professor in the School of Graduate Studies and Institute of Policy Studies at Lingnan University, Hong Kong. He is an urban political ecologist, with a research focus on urban environmental governance, urbanization, infectious disease, and urban redevelopment in Southeast Asia (Malaysia and Singapore). He is the author of *Political Ecologies of Landscape: Governing Urban Transformations in Penang* and editor of *Post-Politics in Asian Cities: Spaces of Depoliticisation*. Prior to his current position, he was a Senior Lecturer in the School of Geography at the University of Lincoln, UK, and Postdoctoral Fellow at the Asia Research Institute, National University of Singapore. He holds a PhD in Human Geography from the University of Manchester, UK.

At the Margins of the International Community, but Inside Global Knowledge and Policy Flows? How Cities in Taiwan and Scotland Position Themselves within Intergovernmental Rhetoric on Nature-Based Solutions

Leslie Mabon

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Nature-based solutions are gaining interest as a response to environmental change in cities. Whilst there is growing academic interest in how knowledge and expertise travels between cities to enable learning for and deployment of nature-based solutions and other climate and sustainability strategies, intergovernmental fora and institutions retain a key role in mediating these knowledge and policy flows. This paper evaluates how cities in countries distanced from these formal international platforms engage with global knowledge flows on nature-based solutions for climate adaptation in particular, assessing New Taipei City (Taiwan) and Glasgow City Region (Scotland). Analysis of municipal adaptation plans and associated policies shows both New Taipei City and Glasgow City Region pro-actively adopt the language and metrics of international policies and strategies when justifying and assessing nature-based solutions, and use nature-based solutions as a means of furthering their aspirations for greater international recognition and engagement. Moreover, localisation of international best practices for nature-based solutions offers an opportunity for cities such as New Taipei City and Glasgow City Region to attract global attention and position themselves as centres of expertise – regardless of the status of their country – in the global knowledge economy of urban nature-based climate adaptation.

Leslie Mabon is a Lecturer in Environmental Systems at the Open University, United Kingdom. Leslie is a qualitatively-driven researcher with a grounding in environmental sociology, whose research focuses on how different knowledge systems and types of expertise are embedded and negotiated within environmental policy and governance. He is also interested in how social science and humanities research can support a green economy and a just transition to a resilient society, with a particular focus on coastal regions. As well as research in his native Scotland, Leslie has established long-term collaborations on societal resilience and nature-based approaches to climate change adaptation in Japan, Taiwan and Vietnam. His work deploys a range of methods including ethnography, archival work, narrative policy analysis, and consensus-based deliberative techniques. Leslie's research has been funded by the Japan Foundation, the British Academy, the Wellcome Trust and the Royal Society of Edinburgh among others. Outputs from his work to date on societal resilience to environmental change have been published in journals including *Global Environmental Change*, *Landscape and Urban Planning*, *Sustainability Science*, and *World Development*. In 2018, he was selected to become a member of the Young Academy of Scotland, and since 2020 he has been a Future Earth Coasts Fellow. In 2021, he authored a report for the British Academy on Nature-Based Solutions and the Green Economy.

Unexpected Positives from Ho Chi Minh City High Rises in the Time of COVID: Possible Lessons for the Green Realization of South-East Asia Cities

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Many of the new eco-towns and green buildings flourishing in Vietnam over the last three decades have been dismissed by scholars as mere products of neoliberalism and consumerist culture rather than offering genuine environmental solutions. Despite the cynicism, some of these new vertical residences have successfully incorporated eco-friendly features into their design and building discourses. Furthermore, collective responses to the COVID-19 pandemic within some high-rise developments suggest some unexpectedly positive aspects of collaboration which deserve more careful attention by scholars. Building from a research project comparing social responses to COVID in low-rise alleyway neighborhoods and high-rise apartment buildings, this paper will focus on three unexpected positives that residents associated with life in high-rises during the pandemic. First, the findings suggest that residents in high-rises expressed a distinct appreciation for the psychological and added-value offered by practices deemed “ecological” within their high-rise communities. During the pandemic, the “Eco” aspects of high-rise life were understood not only as physical objects (such as green parks, environmental-friendly designs, or energy-saving-materials), but were associated with intangible social constructs, such as domestic enjoyment, efficient management, and participatory norms. Second, the pandemic sparked a kind of communal awakening within high-rises that hinted at ways in which the residents were prepared to transcend some of the market-oriented and individualistic lifestyle traits often associated with high-rise dwelling. In the face of the pandemic, high rise residents invented new tactics to mobilize collective resources and were able to draw upon a wide range of social connections that much of the scholarship assumed to have disappeared. Third, evidence showed that high-rise communities interact with surrounding urban areas more than commonly assumed, and that some of the ideas of eco consciousness expressed by these developments help foster widespread desires to develop green facilities, foster sustainable behaviors, and promote low-carbon lifestyles and pro-environment culture.

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Green Initiatives for City Development in Sinking Jakarta, Indonesia: Addressing the Design Challenges in Urban Development

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Over the last few years, Sinking Jakarta has been an example of the effects of climate change. The developers have actively started incorporating the blue-green infrastructure to avoid further damage. However, several articles and current policies in Jakarta do not seem to achieve the goal of managing the sink and developing the city. The newer rapid developments in the outskirts of the Jakarta Metropolitan area are susceptible to several issues on multiple scales. While on a global scale, factors like rising sea levels and climate change pose a significant threat worldwide. Regional issues like inland flooding and sinking lands put the prospect of future developments in jeopardy. In addition, Local factors hampering the prosperity of action are also plenty.

Jakarta's complex social and ecological structure gets neglected in the development projects. For example, Will **the existing rice paddy fields** that serve most of the peri-urban areas of Jakarta suffer because of the developments? Can we find **a coherent way to achieve development and preserve the ecological features of Jakarta** with the growth? Furthermore, what are **the lessons from Jakarta for Asian development?**

This article will explore the possibilities for Asian cities to conserve the current ecologies and enhance them along with the newer development policies to show how there is still a chance to save the cities.

Radha Waykool is a landscape architect, designer, and Researcher. She is passionate about landscape ecology and urban development. She has been closely working on the research to make happier and healthier places for everyone.

Building Sustainable Social-Ecological Futures in Southeast Asia Cities after the COVID-19 Pandemic

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The scholarship of urban studies has been Western-centric, where radical reforms in the field of politics and socio- economics are often considered to be the prerequisite to achieving the green vision for urban development. Nevertheless, the success of East Asian countries in promoting green and sustainable cities, particularly China and ASEAN member states albeit their unique features have raised the questions of alternative urban socio- ecological futures for Asian cities. This paper first aims to highlight the common and differences of three authoritarian East Asian countries, including China, Singapore, and Vietnam, in 1) resilient and liveable environment-building; 2) sustainable and green transportation; and 3) inclusive public participation in city governance. I argue that these features are the three main features for a more green and sustainable urban development, particularly during the global pandemic. Following that, I will analyze how these three countries can still achieve various levels of success in green urban buildings without conducting radical reforms in their economic and political model, despite the fact that they have a different model of governance than the Western democratic model. Last, the paper proposes three types of policy intervention based on the three above-mentioned features to move toward a more sustainable and urban future in the post-pandemic world. Keywords: urbanization, sustainable city, green city, East Asia, urban governance.

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Lion City Zoopolis: Urban “Crittizenship” in Biophilic Singapore

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A central theme of Singapore’s “City in Nature” vision can be framed through biophilic urbanism, or efforts to harmonise biodiversity and urban development through built, social, and political design. In both governance and advocacy, the central discourses of biophilic urbanism in Singapore have typically emphasized on flora-centric paradigms, which include habitat conservation, proliferation, and integration of green spaces within city limits.

This paper detours from conventions of Singapore’s urban ecological futures, and instead explores the governance of fauna co-existence in the city-state through the concept of “urban crittizenship”. Defined as a more-than-human denization framework that situates the governance of urban wildlife, urban crittizenship opens a discourse of urban wildlife’s rights to the (eco)city that has received considerable public attention in recent years. Drawing on interviews, publicly accessible data, and ethnographic findings with local governing actors, I extend Donaldson’s and Kymlicka’s concept of “liminal denizens” in *Zoopolis* to explore the governance of urban “crittizens” in biophilic Singapore. I show how Singapore’s model of urban crittizenship operates on three differentiated categories of urban wildlife governance by examining otters, boars, and pigeons as “residents”, “wildlife” and “pests” respectively. In doing so, I argue that co-existence with urban critters is secured through infrastructural and political regime formations, enabled by experimenting and fostering a milieu of approaches towards crittizenship status. In other words, there is a politics of biophilia that warrants a conversation, because biophilia is political.

This paper contributes to the conference’s themes in two main ways. Firstly, it contributes to the hopeful epistemologies of urban ecological co-existence, showing how political processes can pave the way for biophilic residency. Secondly, adapting Parrenas’s concept of *bebas* (2018), as these discussions blur the human/animal and urban/nature distinctions in, it offers us some room to consider what “living freely” within/from Singapore’s biophilic urbanism looks like.

George Wong is a trained ethnographer and is currently an adjunct faculty at the Singapore Management University (SMU). He recently obtained his PhD in Sociology from the Nanyang Technological University, Singapore (NTU). His dissertation is a political ethnography of state-sponsored community leaders’ civic and political engagements in grassroots organisations in Singapore, and their wider significance to the city-state’s urban politics and governance. His research specialization lies at the intersection of urban politics and governance, community development and quotidian encounters that mediate contemporary urban political experiences and identities in Asian cities. Currently, his research projects consist of an eco-political analysis of sustainability agendas in Asian cities, as well a comparative study of state-sponsored grassroots organisations and actors in Asian urban regime formation and maintenance. Beyond academia, he is a community organiser and town councillor.

Deconstructing the Green City: The Case for De-growth in Singapore

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Green Cities. Eco-Cities. Sustainable Cities. These are some of the buzzwords that dominate policy discourse today. In the face of a climate crisis, the Singaporean state has invested heavily in researching, promoting, and subsidizing the use of “green” building technologies such as prefabrication methods and the recycling of construction waste. I argue that paradoxically, far from enabling us to realize more sustainable cities, green technologies act as a blinding device that prompts us to build more, not less.

First, I examine policy documents, speeches, and press releases in our national archives to trace how discourse around green technologies have emerged. Next, I show how green technologies refocus the question of sustainability into a technical one, rather than a socio-politico-economic one. I explore how these technologies are endowed with magical powers, generating mythic effects that promise to sever the trade-offs between growth and its ecological effects. Borrowing from theories in STS and the anthropology of infrastructure, I consider how green technologies reduce the climate crisis into a series of quick fixes that occlude the deeper question – why do we even build at all?

I suggest that green technologies serve as a band-aid which masks the problems with a hegemonic growth model that sees perpetual growth as something desirable, necessary, and inevitable. I then unpack the implications of this via case studies drawn from secondary research, newspaper analysis and preliminary fieldwork. For example, I consider the ironies of how even as the state subsidizes research that enables building infrastructures to be longer-lasting, these very buildings are torn down decades before their life expectancy, generating significant amounts of construction waste that accounts for 20% of total waste in Singapore. Finally, I make a case for why degrowth is not just a useful metaphor but a necessary policy prescription if we are to think about addressing the impacts of human actions on the climate crisis.

Poh Yong Han is a DPhil student at Oxford University and an affiliate with the Centre for Migration, Policy and Society (COMPAS). Her dissertation looks at the intersections between migrant labour policy, infrastructure, and degrowth theories. Currently, she is interested in techno-politics, modernity, and experimental modes of ethnographic inquiry. Previously, she read Southeast Asian Studies (MA) at the National University of Singapore and Anthropology and East Asian Studies (BA) at Harvard University. She wrote her undergraduate thesis on migrant worker poetry and storytelling communities in Singapore, which won the Thomas T. Hoopes Prize. Her research has been supported by the Fung Foundation, the Singapore Social Science Research Council, and the Rhodes Trust.

Disturbed Ecologies in the City in Nature

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An unexpected outcome of the COVID-19 lockdown in 2020 was the flourishing of natural life across Singapore's meticulously maintained landscape that rekindled local appreciation of nature, in particular biodiversity heritage, and (re)mobilisation of the state's greening agenda. In truth, Nature in Singapore has historically been rationalised through a lens of extraction, for botanical, recreational and consumptive purposes. As a result, the island's topography and landscape has been subjected to over two centuries of continuous remoulding and terraforming, accelerated over the last five decades. Crucially, the discovery of the 'accidental' clearance of swaths of woodland in Kranji in early 2021 drew nationwide recriminations of callous environmental destruction precipitated by runaway private sector property development, and the need for better oversight by government agencies. The incident also demonstrated a shifting baseline syndrome in the public consciousness. With the 2030 City in Nature development plans underway, what insights can the state incorporate perspicaciously in a way that rightfully acknowledges and comprehends the past?

Current scholarship accepts that centuries of unprecedented human influence have led to the whole earth system operating in a non-analogue state. How can we break away from the Anthropocene belief that the environment is inherently a fragile entity under constant siege from our action? Moving beyond an environmental ethic of non-interference with nature allows us to make sense of the reality of a redirected, disturbed Nature. This paper inserts an ecocritical perspective grounded in local context via discrete examples of thriving disturbed ecologies such as Thomson Nature Park and Khatib Bongsu. It redresses the idealized sentiment of Nature in Singapore as a beautiful, static, and serene entity. Only by first deliberating over the non-designed, unintended outcomes of the legacy of the city's greening policies and actions can there be fruitful speculations into a future of newly shaped and agglomerated landscapes of human and nonhuman entities.

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Simone Shu-Yeng Chung is Assistant Professor at the Department of Architecture, National University of Singapore. She holds a PhD from the University of Cambridge and practiced as a registered architect in the UK after completing her architecture studies in London. She co-edited, with Mike Douglass, *The Hard State, Soft City of Singapore* (2020, Amsterdam University Press), and recently served as curator for the Singapore Pavilion at the 17th Venice Biennale International Architecture Exhibition (2021).

About the Chairpersons, Discussants and Organisers

Colleen Chiu-Shee will be Assistant Professor at the University of Hong Kong starting August 2022. She was a postdoctoral fellow at NUS's Asia Research Institute from 2021-22. Colleen practiced architecture and urban design in China and the U.S. and holds a PhD in Urban and Environmental Planning and Design from MIT. Colleen is interested in innovative spatial and sociopolitical interventions that seek to transcend preexisting paradigms to promote environmental sustainability and social justice. Her dissertation examines how developing countries forge adaptive capacity under the pressure of environmental degradation and urbanization through the lens of eco-city experiments in China. Colleen has collaborated to develop research projects that examined a range of topics, including ecologies of land reclamation, masterplanned new cities, urban informality and land politics, collective governance and urban resilience, housing development and management, public housing and affordability, climate adaptation in vulnerable communities, and digital technologies for pandemic management. Her current research concerns green and smart urban futures, the global mobility of policy innovation, and cross-cultural research and education.

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