



— WORKSHOP —

CITIES AS SITES AND TECHNIQUES OF FUTURING

19–20 August 2025

For more information, visit <https://ari.nus.edu.sg/events/cities-as-sites/>

This international workshop is organized by the Asia Research Institute (ARI), National University of Singapore. It is funded by the Singapore Ministry of Education Academic Research Fund Tier 2 grant (MOE-T2EP40222-0001) on Capitals of the Future: Place, Power and Possibility in Southeast Asia

The workshop forms part of ongoing efforts to theorize cities as sites of futuring, where specific techniques of presentation, exhibition, immersion, designing, piloting, inter-referencing, and so on are deployed to create imaginations, possibilities, and actualizations of urban futures. While research on sites of memory and history are very well established (Nora, 1989), recent scholarship has taken a more forward-facing approach in examining how “some places are imagined as instantiations of the future” (Bunnell et al., 2022, p. 1083). Such approaches include consideration of ways in which sites of futuring are rendered and render each other as “truth spots” (Gieryn, 2018) in the contradictory age of thoroughgoing urbanization (Jones, 1997) and adaptation to the climate crisis. Related approaches not only consider cities as material and discursive environments that entail subjection to new regimes of everyday life and identity but also in relation to recurring events, digital hotspots, extended infrastructures, and other representational techniques of re/making futures and un/doing futures (Chakkalakal & Ren, 2022).

In our *Capitals of the Future* research project, the workshop organizers are examining greenfield urban sites of futuring in Southeast Asia that are rising as new capital cities (Nusantara), administrative centers (Putrajaya), and business and cultural hubs (Marina Bay, Jurong Industrial Estate, and Jurong Lake District in Singapore). We are also interested in similar cities and districts that have been built, or are planned, in Asia and beyond. Examples include Dholera, Neom, Songdo, Takanawa Gateway City, Xiong'an, as well as others that are expansions of metropolitan areas, connecting hubs between primary cities, and reclaimed industrial land. We invite expressions of interest from scholars examining such spaces and cities in relation to futuring in ways that include (but are not limited to):-

- The framing of smartness, invocation of innovation, and deployment of futuristic technologies in the techniques of futuring
- Spiritual aspects of futuring visions that take on religious/pseudo-religious forms or secularized manifestations of cultural vibrancy and creativity
- The deployment and practice of visual and performing arts in the aesthetic politics of futuring
- Ecological expressions of human-nature relationships and green techniques of futuring in the making of the new cities
- Rearticulations of gentrification and the good life in geographies of futuring stretched across different scales from neighborhoods to mega-urban regions
- The reimagining of ways of living and working together, including governance institutions, spatial communities, and the social contract
- The futures past that new cities and districts have inherited and the times to come that they anticipate and seek to bring into being

PROGRAM AT A GLANCE

DATE	TIME (SGT)	PANEL SESSION
19 AUG 2025 (TUE)	10:00 – 10:30	WELCOME & INTRODUCTORY REMARKS
	10:30 – 12:00	PANEL 1 – FUTURING POLITICS
	13:30 – 15:00	PANEL 2 – SMART CITY AS METHOD
	15:30 – 17:30	PANEL 3 – WORLDING FUTURING
	18:00 – 20:00	WORKSHOP DINNER (<i>For speakers and chairpersons only</i>)
20 AUG 2025 (WED)	10:30 – 12:00	PANEL 4 – ECO-FUTURING
	13:00 – 14:30	PANEL 5 – UTOPIAN MARGINALITIES
	15:00 – 16:30	PANEL 6 – FUTURING STRATEGIES
	16:30 – 16:40	DISCUSSION
	16:40 – 17:00	CLOSING REMARKS

19 AUGUST 2025 • TUESDAY

10:00 – 10:30	WELCOME AND INTRODUCTORY REMARKS
	TIM BUNNELL <i>National University of Singapore</i> DANIEL P.S. GOH <i>National University of Singapore</i>
10:30 – 12:00	PANEL 1 – FUTURING POLITICS
<i>Chairperson</i>	JOSHUA COMAROFF <i>National University of Singapore</i>
10:30	Insurgent Play and the Aesthetic Counter Politics of City Futuring DUNCAN MCDUIE-RA <i>Monash University Malaysia</i>
10:50	From Wetland to Truth Spot: Songdo and the Politics of Urban Futuring HAERAN SHIN <i>Seoul National University</i>
11:10	The Shekou Ethic and the Spirit of Chinese Urbanization NICK R. SMITH <i>Columbia University</i>
11:30	QUESTIONS & ANSWERS
12:00 – 13:30	LUNCH BREAK
13:30 – 15:00	PANEL 2 – SMART CITY AS METHOD
<i>Chairperson</i>	HAERAN SHIN <i>Seoul National University</i>
13:30	Aspirational Smart Futures: Towards a Human-Driven SETS Framework for Smart City Scholarship SENG BOON LIM <i>Universiti Teknologi MARA, Perak</i>
13:50	Singapore Data Futures: Designing “Smart Cultural City Nexus” NATALIA GRINCHEVA <i>LASALLE, University of the Arts Singapore</i>
14:10	The Imagined Cities: Patterns of Urban Futuring in Indonesia through Large Language Models ARIF BUDY PRATAMA <i>Universitas Tidar</i> M. RIFQI MAARIF <i>Universitas Tidar</i>
14:30	QUESTIONS & ANSWERS
15:00 – 15:30	AFTERNOON TEA BREAK

15:30 – 17:30	PANEL 3 – WORLDING FUTURING
<i>Chairperson</i>	NICK R. SMITH <i>Barnard College</i>
<i>15:30</i>	Intricacies of Newness: The Future as a Lived Experience of Chinese Urbanism XUYI ZHAO <i>The Chinese University of Hong Kong</i>
<i>15:50</i>	Financialised Volume and the Temporality of Country Re-Asserted: Historicising Future Cities in Sydney's Barangaroo DONALD MCNEILL <i>The University of Sydney</i>
<i>16:10</i>	From Peace to Creativity: Re-narrating Hanoi as a Creative Capital of the Future THUY TRAN <i>University of Melbourne & University of Manchester</i>
<i>16:30</i>	Futuring Nusantara: Olympic Aspirations for a Capital-in-the-making FRIEDERIKE TROTIER <i>University of Passau</i>
<i>16:50</i>	QUESTIONS & ANSWERS
17:30	END OF DAY 1
18:00 – 20:00	WORKSHOP DINNER (<i>For speakers and chairpersons only</i>)

20 AUGUST 2025 • WEDNESDAY

10:30 – 12:00	PANEL 4 – ECO-FUTURING
<i>Chairperson</i>	GEORGE WONG <i>Singapore Management University</i>
<i>10:30</i>	Xiong'An: "Techno-natural" Utopia or Folly of Technopolitics? ANDREW STOKOLS <i>Singapore Management University</i>
<i>10:50</i>	The Rhetoric and Reality of Eco/Smart Cities: Technocratic Environmental Governance, Market Forces and Social Participation in East Asia XIANG LI (YENNY) <i>The University of Hong Kong</i> CREIGHTON CONNOLLY <i>The University of Hong Kong</i>
<i>11:10</i>	Infrastructure Regime and Agenda Setting: The Case of Indonesia's Nusantara City TESTRIONO <i>Indonesian International Islamic University</i> KHAIDIR HASRAM <i>Indonesian International Islamic University</i> PRIZA MARENDRAPUTRA <i>National University of Singapore</i>
<i>11:30</i>	QUESTIONS & ANSWERS
12:00 – 13:00	LUNCH BREAK
13:00 – 14:30	PANEL 5 – UTOPIAN MARGINALITIES
<i>Chairperson</i>	ANDREW STOKOLS <i>Singapore Management University</i>
<i>13:00</i>	Competing Futures: Upzoning, Growth, and the Politics of Land Use Planning in Bangkok NAPONG TAO RUGKHAPAN <i>Chulalongkorn University</i>
<i>13:20</i>	No Future: Aspirational Dystopias, Dark Space, and Gothic Inclusion JOSHUA COMAROFF <i>National University of Singapore</i>
<i>13:40</i>	"Sin City" Redux: A Crypto-Urbanist Reading of "Future-Cities" Urban Vice Topographies as Calibrated Marginality GEORGE WONG <i>Singapore Management University</i>
<i>14:00</i>	QUESTIONS & ANSWERS
14:30 – 15:00	AFTERNOON TEA BREAK

15:00 – 16:30	PANEL 6 – FUTURING STRATEGIES
<i>Chairperson</i>	PRIZA MARENDRAPUTRA <i>National University of Singapore</i>
15:00	Back to the Future: Aspirations and Challenges of Gulf Megaprojects AGATINO RIZZO <i>Luleå University of Technology</i> SIMONA AZZALI <i>Canadian University Dubai</i>
15:20	From Waterways to Airways: Reimagining Lat Krabang as a Sustainable Aerotropolis for Bangkok's Future PECHLADDA PECHPAKDEE <i>Maharakham University</i>
15:40	Unveiling Nusantara's Future Urban Transformations in Urban Design Development (UDD) of Governmental Core Area (KIPP) DIANA ZERLINA <i>URBAN+ Institute</i> SIBARANI SOFIAN <i>URBAN+ Institute</i>
16:00	QUESTIONS & ANSWERS
16:30 – 16:40	DISCUSSION BOSMAN BATUBARA <i>National University of Singapore</i>
16:40 – 17:00	CLOSING REMARKS KAH-WEE LEE <i>National University of Singapore</i> DANIEL P.S. GOH <i>National University of Singapore</i> TIM BUNNELL <i>National University of Singapore</i>
17:00	END OF WORKSHOP

Insurgent Play and the Aesthetic Counter Politics of City Futuring

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Techniques of city futuring produce aesthetic politics bound to carefully calculated expressions of power, identity, and ambition. Once built, however, the surfaces and field forms of future cities spark aesthetic counter politics through a range of acts, including play. Aesthetic counter politics happen when play disrupts calculated expressions of futurity, an activity referred to here as 'insurgent play'. In this paper, I use illegal street skateboarding performed and captured on video in Astana (Kazakhstan), Nay Pyi Taw (Myanmar), Putrajaya (Malaysia), and Ordos (China) to explore four possibilities for an aesthetic counter politics of city futuring. First, play in this way challenges dominant aesthetics of city futuring; the symbols, performances, and discourses of futurity materialised in the urban landscape, as well as attendant systems of surveillance, control, and order undergirding them. Second, insurgent play introduces alternative visual and somatic rhythms to the infrastructure of these cities. Alternative rhythms are irregular and choppy. As such, they counter the prioritisation of speedy, automated, and on-demand mobility integral to future city visions. Third, insurgent play takes us to patches of these cities that we might not otherwise go to, objects and traces we might otherwise ignore, and encounters we might otherwise overlook. In other words, they take us backstage of future cities, behind and beneath the calculated veneer. Finally, these counter-politics are generated from below, shaped by subcultural identities that position devotees in opposition to prevailing urban orders, their antecedent visions, and their remnants. These are the unruly bodies that future city visions pledge to keep out. However, attempts to partition insurgent play into designated spaces and boost creative precincts are evident in two of the four cities discussed, suggesting these counter politics have their limitations.

Duncan McDuie-Ra is Professor and Head of School of Arts and Social Sciences at Monash University Malaysia. Duncan's main research interests are urban migration, urban culture, urban play, urban technology, and the borderlands of Northeast India. Duncan's monographs on Northeast India include: *Borderland City in New India: frontier to gateway* (Amsterdam Univ Press, 2016); *Northeast Migrants in Delhi: Race, refuge and retail* (Amsterdam Univ Press, 2012), *Debating Race in Contemporary India* (Springer, 2015), and the co-authored *Ceasefire City: Militarism, Capitalism and Urbanism in Dimapur* (with D. Kikon, Oxford Univ Press, 2021). Other books include: *Skateboarding and Urban Landscapes in Asia* (Amsterdam Univ Press, 2021) and *Skateboard Video: Archiving the City from Below* (Springer, 2021). Duncan's latest book is *Insurgent Play* (Anthem, 2025). Duncan has authored over 60 journals articles and essays including in the journals *Political Geography*, *Memory Studies*, *Geographical Journal*, *Modern Asian Studies*, *Social & Cultural Geography*, and *Mobilities*.

From Wetland to Truth Spot: Songdo and the Politics of Urban Futuring

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This research contributes to the workshop's exploration of cities as sites of futuring by conceptualising Songdo as a staged truth spot—a meticulously crafted urban space where physical design, narrative scripting, and scenographic choices converge to construct persuasive visions of the future. Originally a tidal mudflat inhabited by wildlife and fishermen, Songdo was transformed through land reclamation into a choreographed urban environment. Staging Songdo as a truth spot consists of three interrelated dimensions. First, its physical layout, including LEED-certified towers, sensor-enabled infrastructure, and artificial waterways, materialised a vision of technological and ecological advancement, turning urban design into a form of performance. Second, narrative scripting played a central role in shaping this vision. White papers, official slogans, and policy documents defined Songdo's evolving identity through successive labels such as “international hub,” “ubiquitous city,” “eco-city,” and “smart city.” These scripts guided legal reforms, planning priorities, and investment strategies, embedding the city's function within broader national and global agendas. Third, scenography further reinforced these narratives by staging actors and events that performed the future. Press tours, smart city exhibitions, and political visits cast government officials, private developers, and global tech firms into visible roles that enacted the scripted vision. These performances gave material form to abstract ambitions and generated public momentum, making the city appear as a space where the future was already unfolding. To illustrate these three dimensions effectively, the case of Songdo is placed in conversation with Los Angeles, whose development was similarly shaped by spatial choreography, promotional mythmaking, and spectacle. Both cities demonstrate that urban development involves not only physical construction but also the careful staging of stories and scenes that legitimise particular futures while erasing contested pasts. This research contributes to the study of city-making, knowledge production, and urban futuring by highlighting how persuasive techniques embedded in physical form, narrative framing, and performative roles shape the trajectory and meaning of contemporary urban development.

HaeRan Shin is Professor of Geography at Seoul National University, specialising in political geography and migrant studies. Her research covers urban festivals and cultural politics, places of memory, culture-led urban regeneration, new towns, eco-cities, and risk perception. She has also worked on the issues of transnational migrants and refugees, mobilities, infrastructuring networks and settlements of Joseonjok migrants, North Korean defectors, and Vietnamese marriage migrants, as well as the dynamics of mobilities and the territoriality of their networks and ethnic enclaves. She has published a number of articles and books, including *Contested Placemaking in South Korea* (2025, Palgrave), *The Cultural Politics of Urban Development in South Korea* (2020, Routledge), an edited volume, *North Korean Defectors in Diaspora* (2022, Lexington Books), and *Who Governs the City?* (2022, in Korean, Imagine). Before joining Seoul National University in 2013, she taught at University College London.

The Shekou Ethic and the Spirit of Chinese Urbanization

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This research revisits the origins of China's reform era through an ethnographic and historical investigation of the Shekou Industrial Zone from 1978 to 1992. Now part of the city of Shenzhen, Shekou preceded the more famous Special Economic Zone by a year and developed independent of its larger neighbor for the next decade, giving it the flexibility to pursue more ambitious and innovative policies. During the 1980s, Shekou served as a 'test tube' for experimenting with new practices of development, planning, and governance—in short, to figure out how the abstract idea of 'reform' could be concretized into societal transformation. What happened during these early years of China's reform era to produce such dramatic change? What did reform mean to those who were participating in it? Most importantly, what did reform feel like? In exploring these questions, this research complicates the commonsense assumption that the radical transformations of Chinese society over the last fifty years—including the nation's rapid urbanization—resulted from economic liberalization. Instead, this book argues that China's reforms arose through a fundamentally inequitable process of urbanization, in which new ways of being in and relating to the world were cultivated and perpetuated through the creation of new spaces and institutions and from which some residents of Shekou were excluded. At the heart of this process was the emergence of new affective sensibilities, as people in Shekou left behind the collective trauma of the Cultural Revolution and crafted ways of living and working together that could better achieve the ideals of the communist revolution. Through an examination of this process, the research shows how urbanity has acted as a generative force in the realization of China's reforms and in the production of societal change more generally.

Nick R. Smith is Assistant Professor of Architecture and Urban Studies at Barnard College, Columbia University. Smith's research investigates the spatial politics of urban development and planning, with a geographic focus on China and Southeast Asia. He is the author of *The End of the Village: Planning the Urbanization of Rural China*, which explores the recalibration of urban–rural relations in contemporary China. Smith is also a faculty affiliate at the Columbia University Weatherhead East Asian Institute and a fellow in the Public Intellectuals Program at the National Committee on US–China Relations.

Aspirational Smart Futures: Towards a Human-Driven SETS Framework for Smart City Scholarship

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Smart city development is a popular and applied approach, often referred to as a neoliberal strategy, for developing future cities towards sustainability in both developed and developing countries. This technology-driven method (TDM) worldview posits that technological advancements (or ICT) are believed to be an efficient tool for solving urban complexity and urbanisation problems, while subjugating the role of citizens. The alternative worldview is “city for whom”. If the role of people is subjugated by technology, what will be the direction of development? Thus, under the human-driven method (HDM), the designed solutions prioritise the needs and contributions of people through optimum (not maximum) ICT applications. On the other hand, another strand of system theorists debates the smart city agenda from the technological (i.e., socio-technical system, STS) versus the common (i.e., social-ecological system, SES) perspectives, extending to the holistic perspective of socio-ecological technical system (SETS). However, the combination of HDM and SETS is framed as the aspirational smart city development pathway, and the associated factors are lacking in research, especially in the Southeast Asian context. Thus, this paper aims to examine both the HDM and SETS worldviews through a systematic literature review and case studies of Southeast Asian smart city development, namely Putrajaya, Malaysia, Singapore and Nusantara, Indonesia. The output is the proposed framework of aspirational smart city development through the spectrum from HDM and SETS. This paper contributes to adding insights into the theoretical debate and the policy direction for the smart cities of the future, where the paradigm of upholding the citizen’s role and social-ecological resilience is critically needed and noble for mankind.

Seng Boon Lim is Senior Lecturer at the Programme of Urban and Regional Planning, College of Built Environment, Universiti Teknologi MARA (UiTM), Perak Branch, Malaysia. His research interests include sustainable smart city development and planning, focusing on participatory governance and citizen roles, safe and resilient city, sustainable-smart-healthy city, rural and regional planning, housing planning, planning law, project management, and mixed research methodology. He is a SmartCity expert and has been appointed as one of the technical committees for developing the national sustainable smart cities and communities standards under official appointments from PLANMalaysia and Standards Malaysia. He has published two smart city development books and over 25 articles in WoS/Scopus-indexed journals, has been involved in more than five research grants and consultation projects, and has been invited more than 30 times to share knowledge on smart city development and research methodology topics.

Singapore Data Futures: Designing “Smart Cultural City Nexus”

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This research explores the potential of AI to reshape the city's data-driven future, examining its integration across smart city and creative city agendas to create “a smart cultural city nexus.”¹ This project investigates how AI can be leveraged to enhance data collection, analysis, and utilization within Singapore's urban ecosystem, particularly focusing on its impact on cultural production, consumption, and circulation to contribute to urban co-design and development. By examining existing smart and creative city data policies, infrastructures, and stakeholder perspectives, the project will analyze how AI is envisioned to be employed to: 1) optimize resource allocation and enhance the efficiency of the creative sector; 2) personalize cultural experiences and foster greater audience engagement while managing tourism flows; 3) predict emerging trends and inform proactive urban policy interventions; and 4) address the ethical and social implications of AI-powered cultural data intelligence. This research will explore the potential of AI to bridge the gap between Singapore's "Smart Nation" and "Creative City" visions, transforming data into a valuable asset for fostering cultural innovation, economic growth, and sustainable urban development. By analyzing Singapore's case, this project seeks to contribute to the workshop's broader inquiry into how "futuristic technologies" are deployed in the techniques of futuring, specifically examining how AI-powered data intelligence can shape the future of cities in Southeast Asia.

Natalia Grincheva is Program Leader in Arts Management at LASALLE, University of Arts Singapore, and an Honorary Senior Research Fellow in the Digital Studio at the University of Melbourne. She is an internationally recognized expert in digital museum diplomacy and the author of four monographs *Digital Soft Power of Heritage Media* (Cambridge University Press: 2025 forthcoming), *Geopolitics of Digital Heritage* (Cambridge University Press: 2024), *Museum Diplomacy in the Digital Age* (Routledge: 2020) and *Global Trends in Museum Diplomacy* (Routledge: 2019). Dr Grincheva is also a conceptual designer of the [Data to Power](#) application, designed for academic inductive research to facilitate the exploration of complex global phenomena through data visualization, mapping, and interactive data storytelling.

The Imagined Cities: Patterns of Urban Futuring in Indonesia through Large Language Models

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Urban futures recently emerge and is gained attention in urban scholarships. How cities aspire their futures have been nascent interests for both scholars and practitioners. Situating urban development planning as the practice of futuring, this paper seeks to analyze the pattern of urban imaginary of Indonesian cities reflected in long-term development plans. These planning documents provide archival data sources that document the cities' aspirations and development agenda in the next 20 years. Using Large Language Models (LLMs) as *story machine*, we analyze 64 long-term development plans and their implications for urban governance and development in Indonesia. Specifically, LLMs are used to identify recurring themes and trends by analyzing the semantic relationships between words and phrases across the documents. Unlike traditional topic modeling, LLMs provide a more nuanced and context-aware extraction of topics, revealing implicit aspirations and urban development priorities in the cities' long-term planning. Our initial results reveal the uniformed pattern, which to some degree, neglect the diversity of cities' characteristics in Indonesia. The findings contribute to the discussion of urban planning institutions and urban futuring scholarships by providing empirical evidence of the uniformed urban futuring within multi-leveled and decentralized system.

Arif Budi Pratama is a political scientist working on urban governance and development. His recent research focuses on the socio-political dimensions of smart cities. He is currently a Fulbright Visiting Scholar at the Weatherhead Center for International Affairs, Harvard University. He also coordinates Center for Smart and Sustainable Cities at the Universitas Tidar, Indonesia.

M. Rifqi Maarif is a senior member at the Center for Smart and Sustainable Cities, Universitas Tidar, Indonesia. He is an engineer and computer scientist, expertise in Natural Language Process (NLP) and Large Language Models (LLMs). His recent publication (with Arif Budi Pratama and other colleagues) titled 'Tweeting Circular Economy: Unveiling Current Discourse through Natural Language Processing' appears in *Sustainable Development*. <https://doi.org/10.1002/sd.3323>

Intricacies of Newness: The Future as a Lived Experience of Chinese Urbanism

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A new round of city making in China has been marked by an “infrastructural urbanism” (Oakes 2023), with state investment in infrastructure driving the urbanization process and powerfully reshaping urban imaginations and aspirations. The latest expression of such state rationale is the building of “national new areas” across major Chinese cities. Brand-new infrastructure provides a canvas on which the state can chart its planned urban future as an all-encompassing modernization project with a speeding-up logic: rural landscapes disappeared in weeks, new apartment buildings rose in months, and a modern city that could house millions of people took shape in just a few years. Nevertheless, my research also shows that even within the governmental framework of city-making, a different temporality of delays emerged to justify the discrepancy between the so-called urbanization of land and the urbanization of people—or the conversion of rural land into urban territories and the making of a livable city with a steadily growing population.

City-making is thus also an affect-laden process whereby state officials, planners, citizens, and quasi-citizens navigate different temporal horizons. Based on ethnographic fieldwork in a “national new area” in China’s southwestern metropolis of Chengdu, this paper explores the intricacies of newness and the contrasting imaginations about an emerging urban neighborhood that has been planned and developed as Chengdu’s next city center. In doing so, I theorize “the future” as a lived experience of Chinese urbanism and demonstrate how the omnipresent futural imaginations work to overshadow and reorient the present.

Xuyi Zhao is Assistant Professor at the Center for China Studies, The Chinese University of Hong Kong. She is broadly interested in urban anthropology, political anthropology, and women’s and gender studies. Her current research project investigates China’s state-engineered urbanization at the intersection of infrastructural urbanism, community building, and the reconfigurations of time. Combining a “studying up” approach to urban governance with a careful examination of day-to-day lived experiences, the research traces different imaginaries engendered by state planning, what those imaginaries mean to urban residents, and how they materialize to both perpetuate and change social dynamics surrounding class, family, and work. Zhao holds a PhD in anthropology from Boston University, an MPhil in Asian and Middle Eastern studies from the University of Cambridge, and a BA in political science from Peking University. Her publications have appeared in *City & Society*, the *Asian Journal of Women’s Studies*, and the *Palgrave Studies in Urban Anthropology* book series.

Financialised Volume and the Temporality of Country Re-Asserted: Historicising Future Cities in Sydney's Barangaroo

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This paper addresses the workshop themes by setting out a discussion of a megaproject based on reclaimed industrial land, Sydney's Barangaroo, that has acted as a condensation site – or truth spot - of contestation over different visions of both Sydney and Australian urbanism. During more than 10 years of urban development, different groups – property developers, artists, politicians, architects, and many others – have intervened in understanding the future of one of Australia's key sites. During this same period, there has been an important shift in Australia towards 'designing with Country', adopting architectural and design processes that respect the timeless land that preceded colonial contact with First Nations peoples. A huge mixed use development of multiple office and residential skyscrapers, a re-engineered relationship to water, a reconstructed 'pre-contact' parkland, and materially restructured layers of land, Barangaroo is also a complex spreadsheet of financial calculation and future prediction. Justified as a means of creating capacity for future residents and economic activities, the planning for this involves methods of forecasting which is materially translated into volumetrically calculated infrastructural and spatial territories. However, the paper pivots from established discussions of volumetric urbanism by considering how First Nations custodians of the land on which Barangaroo sits have simultaneously sought to approach future reconciliation with the colonial state, while resurfacing ancestral origins hidden beneath two centuries of concrete and stone-blasting. This temporal interpretation of Barangaroo could become highly significant given Australia's gradual progress towards truth-telling. The paper will work with concepts of ground, Country and volume to explore Barangaroo's spatial ontology as a site that brings the uneasy temporality of contemporary Sydney into view.

Donald McNeill is Dean and Professor of Urbanism at the School of Architecture, Design and Planning at The University of Sydney. His research interests focus on the cultural economy of global cities, including the use of architecture and design to reshape elements of underground, surface and airspace to create calculated territories. His work is often framed within concepts of 'volumetric urbanism', along with ideas gathered in his book *Global Cities and Urban Theory* (Sage). He is currently working with colleagues on projects concerning universities and cities and how the built environment professions understand First Nations cultures and knowledge.

From Peace to Creativity: Re-narrating Hanoi as a Creative Capital of the Future

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In 2019, Hanoi was designated as UNESCO Creative City of Design, 20 years after its UNESCO City for Peace designation. Since then, new narratives of creative capital futures have been adopted by both cultural policymakers and creative practitioners in the city. This paper traces the multiple layers through which the process took place, different actors involved, and technologies employed. Most importantly, it asks what these future narratives have been ‘doing’ in the context of Vietnam and what they tell us about where the country’s urban cultural governance is heading. Engaging with J.L. Austin’s foundational work on ‘speech acts’, the analysis follows the ways in which the adoption of Creative City future narratives constituted new spaces for cultural governance and participation and, along these lines, policy reforms and social changes. At the same time, it attends to the limits of this constitutive process by engaging with Michel Callon’s concept of ‘performation’. Focusing on socio-political and cultural developments leading to and following the Hanoi Creative City designation, the paper uses data from policy documents, in-depth interviews, and digital ethnography to show how future narratives of creativity can work as configurative devices to mediate control and growth in the strategic authoritarian setting of Vietnam. While the existing literature on Vietnamese cultural policy tends to emphasize control and censorship, this research brings complexities and nuances by focusing on how state cultural managers in Hanoi have been translating the Creative City future imaginations, which emphasize growth, into practical projects on the ground and how this translation has transformed their approaches to control, though only to a limited extent. The paper contributes a case study of futuring narratives in urban cultural governance and provides new insights into recent policy developments in urban Vietnam.

Thuy Tran is Postdoctoral Researcher at the Center for International Relations Studies (CEFIR), University of Liège. Her PhD (a joint degree between the University of Melbourne and the University of Manchester) examined the translation of internationalized cultural policy concepts, narratives, and knowledge in Vietnam through UNESCO designations and projects. Thuy works across three main areas of research in arts/media/cultural governance: the world-making forces of cultural policies and creative practices in different contexts; the global politics of culture and cultural diversity; and neurodiversity in media/creative industries.

Futuring Nusantara: Olympic Aspirations for a Capital-in-the-making

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Preparing a bid for the Olympic Games opens a kaleidoscope of urban future-making, aspirations, and worlding practices. Historically, host cities of the Summer Olympic Games have been major urban centers, often recognized as global or mega cities. This paper examines the unique and unprecedented attempt to enter the bidding process with a capital-in-the-making: Indonesia's Nusantara, proposed as a candidate for the 2036 Games. By exploring Indonesia's Olympic aspirations through the multifaceted practices of futuring Nusantara and employing the concepts of aspiration and worlding cities, this study contributes to broader debates on envisioning Nusantara and the future of Olympic host cities. The analysis of local and global perspectives is grounded in document and media analysis.

The paper situates Indonesia's hosting ambitions within a historical context, examining their continuity with past endeavors and assessing how prior hosting successes might inform the framing of these aspirations. This includes addressing the challenges of transferring narratives to Nusantara, a city without a historical urban identity. Moreover, as a city under construction, Nusantara offers fertile ground for speculative worlding practices. By analyzing the visions of key Indonesian actors, the paper illuminates the perceived malleability of a planned city, rife with promises and opportunities but also fraught with significant risk.

From a global perspective, entering the Olympic bidding process requires establishing a relationship with the International Olympic Committee (IOC) and engaging with its plans and visions, which are based on the committee's current agenda. Through an analysis of official IOC documents, particularly the Olympic Agenda 2020+5, and a comparison with Nusantara's planning documents, this paper identifies points of alignment and divergence in framing the future of an Olympic city. Overall, the study reveals how Olympic aspirations reflect the ambitions and projections of current stakeholders in shaping Nusantara's – and, to an extent, Indonesia's and the Olympics' – futures.

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Xiong'an: “Techno-natural” Utopia or Folly of Technopolitics?

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Nearly eight years after its declaration, Xiong'an remains an indeterminate monument to Xi Jinping's new era. Over 100 billion USD have been invested in the project, making it one of China's most expensive megaprojects to date. Yet, few permanent residents have yet to move to the area from Beijing—its original purpose was as a satellite city to relocate “non-capital functions” from the capital. Yet slowly and steadily, several headquarters for state-owned enterprises, research parks, and university campuses are being completed. Xiong'an may not have attracted private capital, but it is a new type of state-powered industrial cluster driven by state-owned enterprises and state capital. Through detailed examination of plans, texts, and Chinese commentary on the project, this paper analyzes symbolic elements of the design and planning of Xiong'an New Area. The paper argues that the concept of “technonaturalism” can help us understand the symbolic function of the project as a 1.) A testbed for constructing an emergent technoindustrial future in Xi's China in which imperatives of digital innovation, cultural nationalism, and “ecological civilization” are reconciled, and 2.) a living model of key ideological doctrines in Xi's China. Many of the buildings and landscapes in Xiong'an purposely integrate Chinese traditional elements, digital technologies, and natural elements. A virtual twin of the entire city is being built alongside the city's construction—which is described as three cities: the city in the cloud, the city on the ground, and the city underground—massive underground utility corridors carry utilities and digital infrastructure. A network of levees, sponge-city parks, and man-made canals aims to create a city in harmony with nature. A massive ecological engineering effort has been required to clean the Baiyangdian wetlands and make the low-lying area safe for development. From a survey of the project's massive ecological engineering, high-tech architecture, and traditional Chinese landscapes, Xiong'an's main symbolic purpose is as a model of “Chinese-style modernity.”

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The Rhetoric and Reality of Eco/Smart Cities: Technocratic Environmental Governance, Market Forces and Social Participation in East Asia

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In the rapid urbanisation process in East Asia, “Eco-city” and “Smart-city” narratives have become prevalent in the majority of large-scale urban development initiatives, promising that existing and potential environmental problems could be addressed while achieving economic growth. These ambitious urban projects display a marked dichotomy: deploying advanced technologies and quantifiable indicators to demonstrate environmental commitments, while simultaneously prioritising economic imperatives and industrial development priorities. Based on a comparative analysis of Ocean Flower Island in Hainan and Melaka Gateway in Malaysia, our paper examines how the framing of smartness, innovation, and deployment of futuristic technologies is used in each case by examining the ecological concepts and technological innovations used to promote them. Despite the use of ecological concepts like sustainability, we find that the invocation of human-nature relationships is conspicuously absent in the promotion materials for the three cases. At the social level, the lack of grassroots participation makes it difficult to cultivate ecological awareness. The paper argues that realising true ecological transformation requires repositioning the role of technological governance, establishing an environmental governance system that meets local characteristics, and constructing a more socio-ecologically inclusive development pathway while fostering grassroots ecological awareness.

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Creighton Connolly is Assistant Professor in the Department of Urban Planning and Design at the University of Hong Kong. Originally from Canada, he obtained his PhD in Human Geography from the University of Manchester (2016), where he examined the controversies over the farming of edible birds’ nests in Malaysian cities. He subsequently worked at the National University of Singapore (2016-18), the University of Lincoln, UK (2018-21) and Lingnan University, Hong Kong (2021-22). Trained as an urban political ecologist, his work examines processes of urban and environmental governance, planning and development, focusing on the Southeast Asian region. He is the author of *Political Ecologies of Landscape: Governing Urban Transformations in Penang* (Bristol University Press, 2022) and *Pandemic Urbanism: Infectious Disease on a Planet of Cities* (Polity Press, 2022). His current research spans a range of topics, including political ecologies of land reclamation, large-scale infrastructure projects, participatory governance and planning, heritage management, and the relationships between urbanisation and infectious disease.

Infrastructure Regime and Agenda Setting: The Case of Indonesia's Nusantara City

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Jakarta's long-standing urban challenges and severe environmental degradation, including overpopulation, congestion, pollution, and flooding, have justified the idea of relocating Indonesia's capital. The disproportionate concentration of the population on Java, which hosts approximately 56% of Indonesia's inhabitants, further supported the argument to relocate the capital away from Jakarta. Although discussions about relocating the capital occurred during various presidential administrations, they never materialized until President Joko Widodo's technocratic vision and ambitious infrastructure agenda took hold. In August 2019, shortly after securing his second presidential term, Widodo announced the bold decision to relocate the capital from Jakarta to Borneo during his State of the Union address, with shocking support from two-thirds of the parliament. What is the key to Widodo's successful policymaking on the new capital? Employing an agenda-setting framework, this paper argues that political streams and policy windows significantly influenced Widodo's landmark decision. Political and institutional support coalesced during his administration, and Widodo dexterously mobilized political elites and government ministries to align behind his vision, minimizing opposition. By framing the capital relocation as a national pride project and promising distributed economic opportunities for regions outside Java, Widodo garnered broad legislative backing. Moreover, a crucial policy window opened between 2019 and 2022, coinciding with Widodo's dominance and legislative majority, that in turn became a political momentum, allowing the capital relocation initiative to transition from a conceptual proposal into the formal implementation of the making of Nusantara.

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Competing Futures: Upzoning, Growth, and the Politics of Land Use Planning in Bangkok

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Bangkok is revising its comprehensive zoning map for the first time in twelve years. The draft promises a “future-ready” metropolis: rail-linked growth corridors, heritage districts “unlocked” for creative commerce, and an eastern logistics belt framed by a yet-to-be-built flood-diversion canal. Drawing on critical cartography and anticipation studies, this paper argues that the map is less a neutral update than a device for selecting between incompatible futures. It analyzes three spatial controversies: (1) western up-zoning that converts orchard flood-basins into mid-rise housing; (2) transit-led densification that relaxes height caps in Rattanakosin and Yaowarat; and (3) contraction of the designated eastern flood-way, shrinking Bangkok’s rice belt in favour of “agri-tech” estates. Colour strokes monetize land in the near term while deferring flood risk, food security and cultural integrity to an undefined later phase. By reading the draft plan as a technique of futuring, one that choreographs time as much as space, the paper shows how Bangkok’s zoning resets the city’s horizon each decade, perpetually postponing the environmental reckonings it acknowledges but refuses to confront.

Napong Tao Rugkhapan is Assistant Professor of Urban Planning at the Department of Urban and Regional Planning, Faculty of Architecture, Chulalongkorn University in Bangkok, Thailand. He earned his PhD in Urban and Regional Planning from the University of Michigan in 2017. His research interests include the techno-politics of urban planning and design, focusing on how technocratic tools like mapmaking, zoning, architectural guidelines, and building codes become sites of contestation. He also explores comparative urban theory, the cross-context circulation of planning ideas, and vernacular urban architecture in Southeast Asia.

No Future: Aspirational Dystopias, Dark Space, and Gothic Inclusion

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The Singaporean state is often associated with an aggressive futurism, built upon the careful alignment of social order, sustainability, and free market forces. Such visions are reinforced by urban imagery: architectural renderings characterized by blue skies and an optimistic meld of technology and ecology. However, emergent among the nation's youth is a distinctly nocturnal, gothic subculture. Largely driven by queer and disabled youth communities, this draws upon body horror, as well as Asian discourses of the gothic and the abject, to speak of an emergent politics of personhood constructed around ambiguity, illegibility, and extreme transformation of the self. Significantly, its young proponents and participants articulate the lack of any viable "future," in the official and progressive sense. Events in art and music involve explicit projections of an imminent better world, a caring and radically inclusive present, which appears paradoxically to be *both* aspirational and dystopian. This paper will present ongoing qualitative research with members of this scene, including originators of rave and arts events, that raise questions about the longstanding dependence of progressivist and revolutionary agendas (both left and right) on the notion of the future. This paper also explores to the visual and architectural examples of Singapore's "dark" subcultures, with explicit attention to the role of darkness—both as a dominant materiality of inclusive place- and community-making, and as an aesthetics of counter-Enlightenment. Ultimately, it argues that the lack of a future-orientation is a generational phenomenon, and does not invalidate the possibility of a meaningful collective politics.

Joshua Comaroff is Assistant Professor at the Department of Architecture, Yale-NUS Urban Studies at the National University of Singapore. He is a cultural geographer and designer. He studied literature and creative writing at Amherst College, before completing the Master of Architecture and Master of Landscape Architecture degrees at Harvard Graduate School of Design. Joshua received a PhD in geography from the University of California Los Angeles in 2009. Joshua has published writing about architecture, urbanism, religion, and politics, with an Asian focus. In particular, his research focuses on the effect of material and immaterial practices on the experience of the city and the affective potentials of architecture. He is the author of *Spectropolis: Enchanting Capital in Singapore* (fall 2025, University of Minnesota Press) and co-author of *Horror in Architecture* (University of Minnesota Press, 2023). His essays have appeared in *Cultural Geographies*, *Public Culture*, *CITY*, *Harvard Design Magazine*, *Architectural Review*, and elsewhere. Joshua has twice won Singapore's Presidents Design Award, and was the recipient of Harvard's Wheelwright Fellowship in 2005-2006. With Ong Ker-Shing, Joshua is the co-founder of Lekker Architects, a practice focused on design innovation and qualitative research methods.

**“Sin City” Redux:
A Crypto-Urbanist Reading of “Future-Cities”
Urban Vice Topographies as Calibrated Marginality**

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Cities are fascinating sites for their multifaceted layers of the urban milieu, both in open and secret. One such best/worst-kept secret is “urban vice”, activities through urban means that carry negative social and moral connotations in an associated society. Yet, contemporary discussions of new or revitalised speculative urban developments under the broad umbrella of “future-cities” scholarship typically either neglect or render urban vice as peripheral or non-existent in new urban futures.

Eschewing debates around morality or legitimacy, this article instead uses Arkaraprasertkul’s concept of “crypto-urbanism” as a theoretical framework to analyse the “futures” of urban vice topographies in tandem with “future-cities” developments. Using Singapore and Johor Bahru District as a twinned critical case, I deploy a crypto-urbanist reading of two ethnographic vignettes around sex work and poker “home games” to theorise what I termed as “calibrated marginality” of urban vice topographies.

Calibrated marginality is defined as intentional dispersion and rearrangements of ‘unaccepted’ urban activities into ‘tolerable nuisance’ by vice agents for urban authorities and consumers. In analysing how calibrated marginality is performed, I argue that when “future-cities” development redefine and redevelop urban spaces that conventionally inhabit urban vice, such activities are cryptographically re-layered at the “margins”, remaining barely visible/accessible to serve urbanites while evading the legibility of urban surveillance and (re)appropriation through border and brokerage work.

This article aims to contribute to the “future-cities” scholarship in two ways. Firstly, it brings urban “undesirables” back into serious discussion. In doing so, this article challenges the revanchist discourses present in both academic and industry “future-cities” accounts by situating an inconvenient yet necessary problematic of urban vice that warrants further conversations without prejudice. Secondly, it calls into question how governing urban vice retrofitted for new realities may anticipate new technologies of policing and appropriation that can transform the urban landscapes and urbanites in “future-cities” Asia.

George Wong is Assistant Professor of Sociology (Education) at the School of Social Sciences at the Singapore Management University, where he is the Coordinator of the Global Asia second major programme. His research sits at the intersection of 3Cs: Cities, Communities and Capital in Asian contexts. His works include examining community powers and development, and the role of private and public capital in making (im)possible urban regimes and everyday experiences on the ground. He is also a trained ethnographer with a decade of experience in examining state-sponsored urban community development as political legitimacy projects in Asia. His current research projects include a study of state-sponsored grassroots leaders in neighbourhood micro-governance, an urban political analysis of eco-urban regimes in Asian cities, and a study of private concessional capital in tri-sector community development. His works have been published in the *Journal of Intercultural Studies*, *Anthrozoös*, and *Asian Studies Review*. He currently teaches courses in urban and political sociology, including anthropocene Asia and deconstructing Singapore Society, among others.

Back to the Future: Aspirations and Challenges of Gulf Megaprojects

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For decades, Dubai has been a frontrunner among cities in the Persian Gulf in implementing urban megaprojects aimed at attracting international capital, workers, and tourists. This trend has not gone unnoticed by its regional neighbors. In fact, year after year, to compete with each other and other rising centers in Asia, urban megaprojects have become increasingly bold, incorporating ambitious futuristic city elements such as the Internet of Things (IoT) and digital twins. Gulf megaprojects can be understood as tangible expressions of shared and organizational future-oriented thinking. These ambitious urban developments embody the collective imagination and institutional foresight of the region, serving as physical representations of how societies and governing bodies envision and construct their future. These projects not only reflect aspirations for economic and technological leadership but also engage in constructing spatial environments that evoke specific emotional and cognitive responses, projecting an idealized future.

Through a comparative analysis between case studies located in the UAE, we address two primary research questions: how are visions of the future produced, represented, and materialized through Gulf megaprojects? And what do they suggest about present urban policy in the Gulf? Our findings reinforce the conceptual argument that Gulf megaprojects are best understood as performative testbeds where geopolitical ambitions are aestheticized and mediated through technology, spectacle, and curated space. Their contradictions—between promise and use, symbolism and activation, spectacle and substance—highlight the politics of visibility in a region where the future is constantly staged, rehearsed, and globally broadcast.

Agatino Rizzo is Professor and Chair in the Division of Architecture and Built Environment at Luleå University of Technology, Sweden. For more than a decade, he has worked on rapid urbanization and megaprojects in Asia, particularly in Johor (Malaysia), Qatar, and the UAE. Before returning to Europe, Agatino worked as an Assistant Professor at Universiti Teknologi Malaysia, Qatar University, and the University of Auckland. His work has been published in peer-reviewed journals, international exhibitions (Venice Biennale, etc.) and popular outlets (CNN International, etc.). His latest book, published by Edward Elgar in 2021, is titled *Predatory Urbanism: The Metabolism of Megaprojects in Asia*.

Simona Azzali is Associate Professor at the School of Architecture and Interior Design at the Canadian University Dubai. She is an interdisciplinary researcher with a background in urban planning and design. Her research crosses a wide spectrum, including urban spaces in the Middle East and tropical Asia; liveability and social sustainability of public spaces; place-making, as well as mega sporting events and their impact on the built environment. Before commencing her appointment at CUD, she contributed to education at various levels for several renowned academic institutions such as the National University of Singapore, James Cook University, Prince Sultan University, Politecnico di Milano, and Qatar University.

From Waterways to Airways: Reimagining Lat Krabang as a Sustainable Aerotropolis for Bangkok's Future

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This paper reimagines Lat Krabang as a sustainable aerotropolis, proposing an integrated urban design framework that leverages its strategic location between central Bangkok and the Eastern Economic Corridor. Recognizing Suvarnabhumi Airport's pivotal role in Bangkok's tri-airport system, the study addresses critical challenges such as fragmented connectivity, governance gaps, and the persistent threat of flooding. Drawing on both global best practices and local context, the framework emphasizes cohesive multimodal transport links, blue-green infrastructure, and innovative governance to transform Lat Krabang into a resilient, high-performance logistics and lifestyle corridor. In particular, the proposal advocates for the construction of floodways, retention basins, and restored canals to mitigate hydrological risks, while promoting transit-oriented development (TOD) around Airport Rail Link stations. The integration of flood management with urban redevelopment is positioned not only as essential for disaster resilience, but also as a catalyst for economic growth and improved quality of life. The paper concludes that establishing a unified governance platform will be crucial for coordinating cross-jurisdictional initiatives and ensuring sustainable development. Overall, this vision positions Lat Krabang as a model for airport-centered urban transformation, balancing economic competitiveness, environmental stewardship, and cultural heritage for Bangkok's future.

Pechladda Pechpakdee is a faculty member at the Faculty of Architecture, Urban Design, and Creative Arts, Maharakham University, Thailand. She earned her PhD in Politics and International Studies at the University of Leeds under a Royal Thai Government scholarship, after completing her Master's degree in Architecture at Silpakorn University and Bachelor's degree at Khon Kaen University. Her research and professional endeavors center on sustainable urban development, governance innovation, and inclusive city planning. She has led and contributed to numerous high-profile initiatives, including collaborative projects with the Thailand Research Fund (TRF), JICA, and the Bangkok Metropolitan Administration (BMA). Notably, she served as Project Manager for the Lat Krabang Aerotropolis development, integrating local heritage, climate resilience, and business-driven growth. Her work combines academic rigor with real-world impact, providing forward-thinking insights into how future urban capitals can be shaped by cross-sector collaboration, citizen-centric governance, and ecological sustainability.

Unveiling Nusantara's Future Urban Transformations in Urban Design Development (UDD) of Governmental Core Area (KIPP)

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Nusantara, Indonesia's new capital city (IKN), is visioned as the pioneer of Smart Forest City development. Derived from the IKN's 3 pillars vision, Nusantara's Governmental Core Area (KIPP) Urban Design Development (UDD) introduced Culture Transformations to deliver a better urban life quality, where people could live harmoniously with nature as Kalimantan and Indonesia's important values. The Transformation ideas in KIPP highlighted five aspects, which are transformative ways of working, living, movement, preserving & conserving nature, and presenting nationalism in urban scheme. The specific challenging site conditions of KIPP becomes the most important foundation that tries to resonate together with all aspects of comprehensive urban design approaches and imaginations of the future smart city. The orchestra between the consideration upon existing site environment, Kalimantan's nature, proposed design ideas, intended land use programs and visions' goals is a complex task to be adapted without suitable interventions.

The paper will present the design approaches and values in KIPP's Urban Design Development (UDD) by focusing on the Transformations idea, depicting the interventions that are made in the urban design process and planning documents from the designer's perspectives. It will unveil how each transformation depicts the imagined future built environment of Nusantara's KIPP, which lies in the forest narratives. It argues of how the design reimagining new ways of collaboration in living and working in the new future urban environment. By fully comprehending KIPP's urban design development, objective reflections will be upright when examining the planning development of Nusantara.

Diana Zerlina is Senior Urban Designer and an independent researcher. She has led and contributed to numerous multi-scale and multidisciplinary urban design and planning projects in Indonesia, while cultivating a strong personal interest in urbanism and public space. Together with Sibarani Sofian and the URBAN+ team, she developed the Urban Design Development (UDD) of Nusantara's Governmental Core Area (KIPP) and assisted its broader spatial planning efforts.

Sibarani Sofian is the Founder and Director of URBAN+, a passionate urban designer, planner and business leader with extensive experience in various urban projects in Asia, particularly in Southeast Asia and Indonesia. He focuses on executing sustainable urban development based on integrated multidisciplinary approach. Sibarani led the winning team in the design competition for Indonesia's New Capital City (IKN) in 2019. Following the achievement, he served as the Urban Designer Lead for the Urban Design Development (UDD) of Nusantara's Governmental Core Area (KIPP).

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Daniel P.S. Goh is Associate Professor of Sociology, Vice Dean (Special Programmes) at NUS College, and Associate Provost (Undergraduate Education) at the National University of Singapore (NUS). He specialises in comparative-historical and cultural sociology and studies state formation, race and multiculturalism, urbanisms, and religion. His publications include the co-edited books, *Urban Asias: Essays on Futurity, Past and Present* (JOVIS Verlag, 2018) and *Regulating Religion in Asia* (Cambridge, 2019). He is co-editor of *Current Sociology*, a flagship journal of the International Sociological Association, and principal investigator of the *Capitals of the Future: Place, Power and Possibility in Southeast Asia* at the Asia Research Institute, NUS.

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Kah-Wee Lee is an interdisciplinary scholar who works on the relationships between space and power, particularly through the lenses of modern expertise such as architecture, urban planning, law and public administration. His current project, "Casino Urbanism", examines the expansion of the casino industry across Singapore, Manila and Macau and asks how illicit and licit channels of capital are transforming these cities. Lee's research has been published in the international *Journal of Urban and Regional Research*, *Environment and Planning A and C*, *Geoforum*, and *Cities*. He is the author of *Las Vegas in Singapore: Violence, Progress and the Crisis of Nationalist Modernity* (2019).

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