

## **Utopian Urban Futures: Histories, imaginations, possibilities**

Artistique

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Conférence

**Date de début :** 27 Juin 2016 02:00

**Date de fin :** 28 Juin 2016 02:00

**Lieu :** Leeds

**Organisé par :** Leeds University

**Source de l'information :**

<https://utopiancities.wordpress.com/leeds-conference/>

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*"Utopia as a form is not the representation of radical alternatives; it is rather simply the imperative to imagine them." (Jameson 2005, 416)*

The history of urban planning is a history of urban utopias. Ebenezer Howard's Garden City, Frank Lloyd Wright's Broadacre City, Le Corbusier's Radiant City and Richard Register's Eco-City all provide fertile ground for examining both the imageries, visions and realities of modernist urban planning and the uncritical flow of urban theory and praxis from the global north to south. In the global south, Chandigarh and Brasilia are often cited as the result of these totalitarian visions that overlooked local contexts and produced failed utopias. Yet if anything the recent post utopian turn towards a global urban age recasts the historical, cultural, and political legacy of urban utopias in the rhetorics of crises around urbanization, migration and climate change. Utopian urban planning is still discursively, visually and materially sustained through tropes of heritage cities, eco cities, smart cities and other politically driven experiments with technology in the global north and south.

In this context, what is the scope for recasting utopian thinking as a paradigm of

critical urbanism? What can the histories and experiences of those traditionally silenced in 'blueprint utopias' (Holston 1989) hold for creating alternative urban futures? How is utopian thinking embodied and engendered by subaltern citizens to sustain as well as challenge political regulation? How can subaltern histories challenge the geographies of utopian theory that have traditionally flowed from the global north to south? How can the 'imperative to imagine' (Jameson 2005, 416) radical alternatives to a global neoliberal urban age provincialize and destabilise the very foundations of western utopian thought?

This conference seeks to interweave postcolonial historiography and critical urban studies to examine the histories, imaginations and possibilities of alternative urban utopias to a neoliberal urban age. As a background, this conference is the culmination of a six month long AHRC-ICHR network grant titled 'Learning from the Utopian City: Alternative histories of India's urban futures', which explores how subaltern histories of utopian urban planning can inform the trajectories of future cities and rapid urbanization in the global south and north. The conference will reflect upon four workshops in India's future smart cities - Varanasi, Chandigarh, Nashik and Navi Mumbai that are part of this network. In these workshops we will be exploring with city planners, policy makers and grassroots activists, the possibilities of shaping alternative and possible utopias for India's urban futures. The conference will move beyond these city workshops to discuss utopian urban futures with around 50-60 established and early career scholars. It will also include an exhibition space where speakers/participants can present relevant visual material. The project website and CfP is here <https://utopiancities.wordpress.com/leeds-conference/> (<https://utopiancities.wordpress.com/leeds-conference/>)

The central themes of the conference, include, but are not restricted to:

- Urban utopias in comparative context
- Histories of the future city
- Visualising urban utopias
- Imagining possible utopias

We welcome abstracts (for poster and paper presentations) of up to 300 words to be submitted to by 30 April 2016. We will notify of acceptance by 15 May 2016. Early career scholars are welcome

Career scholars are welcome.

Accepted paper presenters will be eligible for a contribution towards UK based economy travel and accommodation costs. This event is free for the first 50 attendees (includes registration, coffee, lunches and conference dinner) after which a contribution towards catering will be required. PLEASE REGISTER FOR THE CONFERENCE VIA OUR EVENTBRITE PAGE

<https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/utopian-urban-futures-histories-imaginations-possibilities-registration-22932258001> (<https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/utopian-urban-futures-histories-imaginations-possibilities-registration-22932258001>)

**Speakers include:**

§ Prof. Nandini Gooptu

§ Prof. Smriti Srinivas (tbc)

§ Prof. Nick Dunn

§ Prof. Malcolm Miles

§ Dr. Hyun Shin

§ Dr Sophie Hatfield-Hill

§ Dr Prashant Kidambi

**Informations pratiques :**