

CITY HABITS

Room 21, Level 6 PSQ, Parramatta Square (169 Macquarie St, Parramatta)
Parramatta City Campus, Western Sydney University

DAY 1 NOVEMBER 6

- 9.30 – 9.45 **WELCOME AND AIMS**
Gay Hawkins & Donald McNeill, ICS
- 9.45 – 10.30 **INTRODUCTORY PAPER**
Tony Bennett, ICS
The Dualities of Habit and the Analytics of Power
- 10.30 – 11.00 **MORNING TEA**
- 11.00 – 12.30 **PANEL 1**
HABIT INFRASTRUCTURES
Abby Mellick Lopes & Stephen Healy, ICS
Cultivating the Habits of Coolth.
Donald McNeill & Andrea Connor, ICS
Habitual geographies of people movement: the governance of escalators, elevators and footfall in contemporary cities.
- 12.30 -1.30 **LUNCH BREAK**
- 1.30 – 3.30 **PANEL 2**
SENSING HABITS/HABIT DATA
Yolande Strengers, Monash & Jenny Kennedy, RMIT
Digital women in the wild: rethinking our gendered habits with feminised digital voice assistants.
Gavin Smith, ANU
On the elusive trail of habit: making sense of the governable and ungovernable surveillant city.
Gill Matthewson, Monash
Mapping the Urban Experiences of Women and Girls.

DAY 2 NOVEMBER 7

- 9.30 – 11.00 **A LITTERING WALKSHOP IN PARRAMATTA**
Gay Hawkins & City of Parramatta Council
- 11.00 – 11.30 **MORNING TEA**
- 11.30 – 12.45 **PANEL 3**
HABIT, SPACE AND MOVEMENT
Ben Dibley, ICS
A History of NYE Sydney: from the crowd to crowded spaces.
David Bissell, University of Melbourne
Mobility Habits and the Gig Economy.
- 12.45 – 1.30 **LUNCH BREAK**
- 1.30 – 3.00 **PANEL 4**
MENTAL LIFE AND THE MODERN CITY.
Nick Manning, Kings College, London
Interactions and Rituals of City Life.
Simone Fullagar, Griffith University
Women's Depression and Recovery: gendered habits and city rhythms.
- 3.00 – 3.15 **AFTERNOON TEA**
- 3.15 – 4.00 **CLOSING DISCUSSION**

WESTERN SYDNEY
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Institute for Culture
and Society

ABSTRACTS

Tony Bennett, ICS

The Dualities of Habit and the Analytics of Power

Habit is, in both its everyday and its theoretical uses, a notoriously double-dealing rascal: condemned by some as the source of dull repetition and mechanical automatism, it is praised by others as a mechanism that plays an essential role in the acquisition of new skills and capacities. These dualisms have been well rehearsed in accounts of habit's career as a key term in Western philosophical discourse. But they apply equally to its subsequent career in the empirical disciplines: biology, psychology, sociology. Indeed, the two are inseparable, feeding off and informing one another. In this presentation I consider how these dualities have informed habit's political career as a means for governing conduct as this has been articulated across its entanglements with different analytics of power: pastoral, sovereign, governmental, and biopolitical. The implications of these considerations for city habits will be discussed.

David Bissell, University of Melbourne

Mobility habits and the gig economy

There has been much attention devoted to understanding how rideshare services are disrupting established mobility industries in cities. My paper supplements this important political economy approach by speculating on how rideshare services are transforming embodied tendencies and proclivities in cities in subtle but significant ways. Pairing analysis of fieldwork with users of rideshare services in Melbourne with cultural geographical conceptualisations of habit that emphasise the slow creep plasticity of body-environment relations, I seek to explain how the emergence of rideshare services has important implications for understanding how mobility habits are being transformed.

Ben Dibley, ICS

A history of NYE, Sydney: from the crowd to crowded places

This paper presents a history of Sydney's NYE event. First established when a crowd gathered outside Sydney's GPO in 1897 to celebrate the inauguration of International Standard Time, in more recent years it has evolved into a signature event on the City's calendar, drawing an excess of one million people into the CBD in a spectacular celebration of the global city. For those authorities and experts charged with managing the event an enduring problem concerns the question of security: how is the aggregate of human bodies that gather to be governed in ways that secure it from the risks it presents: be they risks to public order (riot), to the crowd itself (panic), or external to it (terror attack)? It is this governmental problematic of securing the crowd that is the focus of this paper. It is concerned with the changing ways in which the aggregate of bodies that gather are conceived as an object of knowledge by those who would seek to govern it and the ways in which the particular qualities attributed to it open such aggregations in distinct ways as fields of invention. In so doing the paper maps the changing fortunes of the notion of 'the crowd' and adjacent formulations of habit, imitation and contagion. This is as the NYE event evolves from one that once feared and celebrated the psychic singularity of 'the crowd' to one that is governed as a series of physical environments managed as 'crowded places', where the affective qualities once animating 'the crowd' have evaporated in mathematical models of ingress and egress that are now the current diagrams of collective behaviour in such spaces.

Simone Fullagar, Griffith University

Women's Depression and Recovery: Gendered habits and city rhythms

This paper develops new approaches to women's depression. Moving beyond the atomistic mind as the 'location' of depression, Erin Manning's (2014) work on habit usefully orients us toward the 'directional

forces through which a certain knot of tendencies begin to tie themselves together. This knot is the 'bodying'. Bodying foregrounds the affective and spatial relations through which bodymind habits form within the urban milieu. Drawing on a major research project, women's bodyminds are configured as permeable and porous, constituted through interactions with non-human elements (medication, pollution, parks, animals, walkways, sport spaces, women's services, work places) across suburban locales. Recovery often involves unsettling gendered patterns and relations through habits as a 'point of transition between living beings and matter' (Grosz, 2013, p. 217) that shifted capacities for care of self, others, world. A more than human understanding of women's accounts of everyday habits highlights the need for more expansive repertoires of recovery and for dynamic infrastructures of care within and beyond the biopolitical context of mental health provision.

Gill Matthewson, Monash

Practicing Vigilance: Mapping the urban experiences of women and girls

Operating at the intersection of gender, identity, urban space, and advocacy the Monash University XYX Lab explores gender inequity in public spaces. This presentation will outline the geo-locative mapping projects undertaken by the XYX Lab: Safer Cities (Melbourne, Sydney, Delhi, Lima, Kampala, and Madrid). The research outlines the internalized behaviours, the routines and habits of women and girls, that create complex personal geographies. For women, the city becomes an embodied terrain of 'no-go' zones and 'take-extreme-care' zones that they must negotiate every day. The paper will explore the XYX Lab's dataset of women and girls' experiences and how this research is deployed to challenge our preconceptions about designing safer cities.

Abby Mellick Lopes and Stephen Healy, ICS

Cultivating the Habits of Coolth

Coolth – a term with a long history, has never shaken its 'odour of facetiousness' according to etymologists, possibly due to its twinning of fashion and temperature. In this paper we reclaim coolth as a critical term to describe the experience and sensation of feeling (temperature) cool. The habits of 'coolth' are unpractised in environments dominated by air-conditioning and what Ronald J. Horvath (1974) termed the expanding 'machine space' of the city, which is increasingly uninhabitable without artificial air. Living, working and travelling in these spaces, we delegate to the machine the governance of our own experience of comfort. This paper will explore how Cooling the Commons – a research program exploring responses to urban heat at the intersection of design, geography and sociology – attempts to cultivate the habits of coolth in planning and designing for everyday social practices in the urban commons. Our challenge is to redirect and intervene in routine perceptions of the hot city as a series of technical problems to be solved, and to consider rather how design can support the cultivation of habits of coolth for the (long now). For us this involves engaged research projects that use social learning – for designers, planners, students, and community members – where the aim is thermal re-habituuation in cooler, more convivial city-spaces.

Nick Manning, KCL

Interactions and Rituals of City Life

This paper will discuss interaction ritual chains, habits, and social practices, and their mutual overlap and differences, to address the question of how the city creates "momentary encounters among human bodies charged up with emotions and consciousness because they have gone through chains of previous encounters" (Collins, 2004, p.5), and the consequences that this city-living might have for the mental wellbeing of city dwellers. I will illustrate with examples from our recent project in Shanghai on 'mental health, migration and the mega-city'. »



ABSTRACTS

Donald McNeill and Andrea Connor, ICS
Habitual geographies of people movement: the governance of escalators, elevators and footfall in contemporary cities

The recent 'volumetric turn' in geography has refocused attention on the dimensionality of the built environment and the conjoined issues of volume and capacity in complex urban spaces such as public transport nodes. Optimizing connectivity and people flow between vertical, diagonal and horizontal planes and spaces is becoming a major issue in many large cities. This paper considers the emergence of the People Movement Industry as a new form of 'habitual calculative governance' drawing on techniques such as way-finding, flow prediction, digital messaging and other subtle governance mechanisms to 'nudge' people into modifying their habitual geographies of traversing cities.

Gavin Smith, ANU

On the elusive trail of habit: making sense of the governable and ungovernable surveillant city

In many ways, habit – understood by those doing surveillance work as the conscious and unconscious, stable and fluid, patterns of activity engaged in by social agents as they interact with various urban phenomena – is a critical nexus point for surveillance practices. Surveillance does three principle things vis-a-vis the habits of contemporary urban citizens. First, it seeks to reveal and map habits by subjecting the movements and practices of social agents to multiplex modalities of monitoring. Second, and drawing on what becomes both personalised and aggregated knowledge, surveillance progressively attempts to modulate the habits of urbanites by staging a plurality of micro interventions (in the symbolic and physical realms) to anticipate, nudge, push, coerce and orientate (that is to say, govern) behaviour. Third, those habits situated outside designated normative boxes and codes are generally met with a punitive or corrective response.

Interestingly, the habits forming the object of observation are also contingently affected by the encounter with ubiquitous surveillance, as they help fashion a habitus that is predominantly at ease with and predisposed to its own visibility. Although habit analysis and manipulation is a key facet of the surveillant imaginary – and capitalism – of commercial and state agencies, the form of habit idealised is often at odds with the complexities,

imponderabilities and situatedness of everyday events, thereby enabling a micro-politics to materialise. The paper will explore the emergent habit-surveillance space of Toronto's Sidewalk Labs to accentuate some of these relations, tensions and implications.

Yolande Strengers, Monash and Jenny Kennedy, RMIT

Digital women in the wild: rethinking our gendered habits with feminised digital voice assistants

Moving within and through urban environments is increasingly being carried out with a new workforce of feminised digital voice assistants that can coordinate your diary, navigate to your next destination, or make you a cup of coffee. In this paper we interrogate the ways in which these 'digital women' are both reinforcing and realigning gendered habits when deployed 'in the wild'. Drawing on popular media articles and reported interactions with these devices, we analyse the ways in which people are performing gender with these devices through their everyday habits. We find that people reinforce gendered assumptions through their interactions with these assistants, by subjecting them to abuse, sexist remarks, or attributing glitches to their gender. Reflecting digital research and practices more broadly, these gendered reactions and responses to digital women can be amplified when compared to interactions between humans. This can also be exacerbated by the devices themselves, which are not commonly programmed to defend themselves or refuse to tolerate habitual abuse. Conversely, we explore pockets of resistance to these trends, such as where people actively reassess the gender of their assistants (to male or gender-neutral), or use these devices as opportunities to teach oneself and others how to interact respectfully and ethically with (digital) women. The paper raises important considerations for the gendered design of digital technologies and the habits they give rise to, which are increasingly relied upon as part of our navigation within and through cities.

