

GCGS annual Research Day – Thursday October 20, 2016
Call for participants

The annual Research Day of the Ghent Centre for Global Studies aims to bring together all (junior and senior) researchers of its affiliated research groups, for an interdisciplinary dialogue on common research themes, different approaches and theoretical perspectives. The organizing committee of pre- and postdocs of the GCGS will offer **4 interdisciplinary workshops** (2 parallel morning and afternoon sessions) on the following topics:

- 1. The ultimatum of climate change: re-thinking climate and energy governance**
- 2. Debating global citizenship: on cosmopolitanism and human rights**
- 3. Global commodities: transforming the local?**
- 4. Mobilities, borders, immobilities**

KEYNOTE LECTURE

**Others without history:
plants as agility-shifting actors in the trajectory of capitalism**

Anna Tsing, University of California Santa Cruz

Colonial plantations remade human nature, setting in motion the forms of “race” we know today. Plantations also remade the nature of other organisms, and not just through breeding. Pests, weeds, and pathogens changed their habits of growth and reproduction in the plantation, and some developed newly virulent trajectories as “creatures of empire.”

Plants, fungi, and bacteria make their own history, but they do not make it as they please...

We are used to imagining other organisms as backgrounds—or resources—for human histories. What if we were to look again to notice the histories they make? As the environmental consequences of capitalist industry spiral out of control, reshaping life across the earth, habits of imagining that only humans make history are no longer adequate.

Anna Tsing is Professor of Anthropology at the University of California Santa Cruz (USA) and the Nils Bohr Professor at Aarhus University (Denmark), where she heads the research project “Living in the Anthropocene”, a transdisciplinary program that encompasses the humanities, natural sciences, social sciences, and the arts in an exploration of the “Anthropocene” - the geologic epoch defined by human disturbance of the earth’s ecosystems. Anna Tsing is known for her research on global interconnections and the environment. She is the author of, among others, *Friction: An Ethnography of Global Connection* (2005). Her latest book *The Mushroom At the End of the World: On the Possibility of Life in Capitalist Ruins* (2015) follows one of the strangest commodity chains of our times, that of the matsutake mushroom, to explore the unexpected corners of capitalism.

Programme:

9.00-9.30	Welcome and registration
9.30-12.00	2 parallel sessions Workshop 1 – The ultimatum of climate change: re-thinking climate and energy governance Workshop 2 – Debating global citizenship: on cosmopolitanism and human rights
12.00-13.00	Lunch
13.00-14.00	Keynote lecture - A. Tsing: “Others without history”
14.30-17.00	2 parallel sessions Workshop 3 – Global commodities: transforming the local? Workshop 4 – Mobilities, borders, immobilities
17.00-19.00	Drinks

Venue: Het Pand, Onderbergen 1, 9000 Gent

To register for this event, please sign up on:

<https://webapps.ugent.be/eventManager/events/GCGSResearchDay>

No abstracts or proposals required.

The deadline for registration is September 12, 2016.

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Organizing committee: Mathieu Blondeel (GIIS), Julie Carlier (GCGS), Hanne Cottyn (GCGS / CCC), Loes Debuysere (MENARG), Jozefien De Bock (SHERPPA), Freke Caset (SEG), Lenni Mertens (POS+), Robin Thiers (CRG), Katrijn Vanhees (HRC), Joren Verschaeve (CEUS)

Workshop 1 – The ultimatum of climate change: re-thinking climate and energy governance

Keywords: climate change, climate governance, energy governance, sovereignty, capitalism, political ecology, democracy, technocracy, carbon imperialism, carbon democracy

Of all rifts in planetary boundaries, anthropogenic climate change is increasingly staged as signaling a great danger of epic dimensions. According to scientific research, there is less than a generation of time in which a revolutionary reconstitution of society and the economy at large has to take place, if a major tipping point - after which vast changes in the earth's climate system will likely be irreversible - is to be avoided. This precarious biospheric condition at the planetary scale presents novel and urgent questions for climate governance and energy policies. In this workshop we aim to discuss three major aspects of this current controversy, i.e. scale, legitimacy and capitalism.

Currently, climate and energy governance takes place and has policies enacted across diverse spaces and scales, from the local to the global. The interactions between these geographical arenas raise important questions as to where the power and authority for governing climate change (should) lie. Some scholars stress the importance of the planetary scale when heralding a rapid and structural change in global governance, arguing that the main approaches today are no longer sufficient to bring about societal change with the speed required to mitigate and adapt to earth system transformation. Others state that efforts to build an effective and legitimate global regime are unlikely to succeed, given the continuing friction in intergovernmental interests and abilities to implement such tough commitments.

Closely linked to this are issues of legitimacy and democracy. According to some, the climate change conundrum is increasingly depicted as a global humanitarian cause, whereby a thoroughly depoliticized populist discourse is produced in which decision-making is increasingly considered to be a question of expert knowledge and not of political position. Adepts of such techno-managerial approach argue that democracy is too slow and imbued with short-term and local interest to tackle climate change. Opponents are however questioning the legitimacy of technocracy or the equal representativeness of different voices within global governance. Suchlike questions of democratic pressures and the alleged dominance of 'super powers' are increasingly raised by post-colonial perspectives, referring to concepts such as 'carbon imperialism' and 'carbon democracy'.

Lastly, the political space of climate and energy governance is also challenged by the presumed intrusion of global corporations through lobbying, agenda setting and eco-efficiency initiatives. Some argue that these corporations present themselves as proponents in responding to the climate crisis while simultaneously opening up new opportunities for value creation, thereby recalibrating the role of the state: from acting in the collective interest of citizens to becoming a protector of corporate profitability. This challenge is reflected in the growing emphasis within climate and energy governance on market-based mechanisms that are steering emissions mitigation (e.g. the commodification of CO₂), on technical corporate innovations (e.g. hydrogen vehicles) or even large-scale geo-engineering systems (e.g. aerosol spraying of the atmosphere). It is argued that this type of response to climate change ignores the underlying contradictions of corporate capitalism, in which the destruction of a habitable climate is seen as a necessary cost for the pursuit of profitability. However, imagining alternative stories and fictions proves to be a thorny question. Perhaps it is easier to imagine the end of the world than to imagine the end of capitalism?

Key questions:

- Do energy and the climate need global governance? Which institutional level is most favorable in tackling climate change?
- Are democratic principles convenient in governing climate change?
- When it comes to global negotiation rounds and talks (e.g. COP21), is the legitimacy of countries in the Global South changing due to an increased acknowledgment of post-colonial perspectives (e.g. carbon imperialism)? If so, how are geopolitical relationships changing?

- Is it possible to reach the sustainability targets set in the latest climate negotiations within the current liberal-capitalist system? Which actors can (or should) catalyze the realization of this consensual goal?
- Do you link capitalism to climate change or climate and energy governance in your own research? What are the particular advantages or limitations to this approach?
- (How) are major global corporations shaping climate governance? Do they (or should they) have a leading role in this issue?
- How do you imagine a post-capitalist society? What alternative stories and fictions already exist? Is it indeed easier to imagine the end of the world than the end of capitalism?

Speakers: Thijs Van de Graaf (GIIS) en Erik Paredis (CDO)

Preparatory literature:

- Swyngedouw, Erik. 2010. "Apocalypse forever? Post-political populism and the spectre of climate change." *Theory, Culture & Society* 27 (2-3): 213-232.
- Wainwright, Joel, and Geoff Mann. 2015. "Climate Change and the Adaptation of the Political." *Annals of the Association of American Geographers* 105 (2): 313–21.
- Bryce, Robert. 2015. "The Climate Conference and 'Carbon Imperialism'". *National Review* (<http://www.nationalreview.com/climate-conference--carbon-imperialism>).

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Workshop 2 – Debating global citizenship: on cosmopolitanism and human rights
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Keywords: transnational civil society, global governance, supra-national citizenship, human rights, global justice, cosmopolitanism, migration, refugees

Globalization poses challenges to citizenship, as social relations that shape people's lives overflow national borders. The Westphalian state no longer serves as the sole site of decision-making processes or belonging in a globalized world. As a consequence of political, economic, cultural, environmental processes of globalization, tensions are rising among local, national and global forces. The increasingly complex web of connections and interdependencies makes that global choices and actions sometimes have repercussions for people and communities locally, nationally or internationally. Therefore, claims for redistribution and movements for recognition increasingly look beyond the territorial state and national economy.

The concept of global citizenship serves to understand what belonging, justice, ethics and human rights can mean in a globalizing world. On the one hand, theoretically, citizenship comes with certain rights and duties. On the other hand, practically, it is strongly built upon the idea of belonging, which has its inherent in- and exclusion mechanisms in the socio-economic and political field. In short, the workshop will focus on the possibility and limitations of inclusive global citizenship, both in theory and in practice. Some of the topics that will be discussed include social movements, international human rights law and the citizenship of illegal immigrants, unaccompanied refugee minors, labor migrants.

Key questions:

- How does globalization – and the unequal international power relations that come with it – affect human rights culture(s)? Is global citizenship without exclusion possible?
- What can the European experience teach us about opportunities and difficulties with supra-national citizenship?

- What are the promises and pitfalls of global citizenship, governance, ethics in the light of democratization?
- What can global citizenship mean to refugees and immigrants? How do they make claims for inclusive citizenship?

Speakers: Chloë Delcour (POS+) and Frank Caestecker (SHERPPA / CCC), Koen Bogaert (MENARG)

Preparatory literature:

- Nash, K. (2009). Between citizenship and human rights. *Sociology*, 43(6), 1067-1083.
- Soysal Yasemin Huhoglu. (1998). Toward a Postnational Model of Membership. In Shafir Gershon (Ed.), *Citizenship Debates: A Reader* (pp. 189-217). Minneapolis: University of Minneapolis Press.

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Workshop 3 – Global commodities: transforming the local?

Keywords: global commodity chains, local-global connections; governance; frontier; capitalism

Today's world-economy is characterized by a strong interconnection between local and inter/transnational dynamics in the production and circulation of commodities. Tracing and understanding how localized resources are drawn in the production, distribution and consumption of global commodities along different nodes of a manufacturing and distribution network is a key way to explore and understand the complex relationships between capital, labour, and states in today's world-economy.

From an academic perspective, the study of global commodities is not easily handled by paradigms from one specific field of study. This is shown in contemporary multidisciplinary efforts from the fields of economic geography, business sociology, development studies and world history to grasp this phenomenon in terms of the 'governance' of 'global commodity chains' (Gereffi & Korzeniewicz 1994), the 'embeddedness' of 'global production networks' in local social relations and institutions (Henderson e.a. 2002), or yet the recent wave of attention for the role of 'commodity frontiers' and 'chains' in the functioning of capitalism as a world ecology (Moore 2016, Tsing 2015). Also from a policy perspective global commodity chains have attracted attention over the past two decades, with consumers, businesses and governments increasingly relying on public and private forms of regulation in their efforts to make them more inclusive, sustainable, ethical and fair.

The main purpose of this workshop is to bring together the expertise within GCGS on the history, politics and governance of global commodities.

Key questions:

- What are the world-historical/world-ecological dimensions of commodity chains, frontiers and expansion?
- What are the promises and pitfalls of regulation (private and public) to achieve more fair, ethical and sustainable integration into global commodity chains?
- What are the dynamics of labour regulation, control and agency at play in global commodity chains?
- How do local (state) institutions global commodity dynamics interact?

Preparatory literature: *tba*

Speakers: *tba*

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Workshop 4 – Mobilities, borders, immobilities

Keywords: Mobilities, borders, immobilities, movement of people, geographical scales, (ir)regularity, (de)regulation, border types, migration

In response to the increasing awareness of the importance of movement to human history at a global scale, the social sciences have experienced a ‘mobility turn’ in the 1990s, which continues to reverberate until today. The ‘mobilities paradigm’ that has been put to the fore in the aftermath of this turn focuses the attention on the many ways in which mobilities have impacted on the lives of people and the development of the societies in which they live. Within Global Studies, the paradigm has been used to talk about mobilities of people, capital, goods and ideas alike. It is however the geographical movement of people that has created a particularly vast literature and has led to the development of a genuine interdisciplinary field of study.

From this angle, the mobilities-paradigm has recently generated a countermovement, born from the critique of those that see the mobility discourse as an elitist, capitalist enterprise that does not concern the majority of people, both historically and today, and those that see opposing developments leading to heightened immobility, e.g. the construction of walls and fences to block uncontrolled border-crossings. These critiques have brought forth an ‘immobilities-paradigm’, referring to the proverbial ‘99%’ of the world population that can or will not move across international borders. But how useful is it to replace the mobility paradigm with an immobility-one?

In this workshop, we try to tackle this question by looking at the concepts of mobility and immobility not as mutually exclusive, but as two ends of a spectrum, within which many hybrid forms of (im)mobility can be found. Within this continuum, we will discuss the role of borders and boundaries, assessing whether these concepts can be helpful intermediaries for a better understanding of the dynamics of societal and individual (im)mobilities throughout history. The workshop places these questions squarely within the field of Global Studies, focusing on the co-construction of the local and the global throughout the contemporary-historical globalisation process that is increasingly affecting these (im)mobilities.

In order to open the discussion and provide us with a number of concrete examples of the use of the border- and (im)mobility paradigms in empirical research, four scholars from different disciplines within the Ghent Centre for Global Studies will present examples from their own work, which includes dealing with the quantitative measurement of mobility and borders, people on the move in Africa, migrant women and women seeking asylum in/to Europe, and the (virtual) mobility of the Jain diaspora.

Key questions:

- What kind of movements do we refer to when we use the concept of ‘mobility’ – in terms of geographical scales (transnational - internal) and/or objectives (work, tourism, commuting, flight, etc.) ?
- How can we measure these movements in an inclusive way, allowing for comparisons between them?
- How can the concept of ‘borders’ enhance our understanding of the interplay between mobilities and immobilities at different geographical scales? Is our understanding of borders

limited to their geographical dimension, or should we include other kinds of borders, such as financial, legislative, social, cultural and psychological boundaries, and if so, why and how?

- How do policy and legislation intervene in the mobile/immobile lives of people? What is the impact of the creation or abolishment of administrative borders and/or other forms of boundaries on (im)mobilities? Is the study of (im)mobility regimes a good way forward for our understanding of these phenomena?
- What are the hybrid forms of (im)mobility that appear at different points of the spectrum? How can we interpret places of immobile mobility (such as refugee camps), unfree mobility (slavery), mobile immobility (online connectivity/globalization of the internet), etc., and how can studying them help us to better understand the relation mobility-immobility?

Preparatory literature:

- Sheller, Mimi, and Urry, John (2006). The New Mobilities Paradigm. *Environment and Planning* 38 (2): 207–226.
- Turner, Bryan S. (2007). The Enclave Society: Towards a Sociology of Immobility. *European Journal of Social Theory* 10 (2): 287-303.

Speakers: Glenn Rayp (SHERPPA); Gillian Mathys (CRG / CCC, UGent, Radboud Universiteit Nijmegen); Lourdes Peroni (HRC); Tine Vekemans (CCC).

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