

International
Conference on

BODIES AT THE WORLD CITIES

**Rome, 4-5 October 2019, Regina Hall, Italian
Parliament (To be confirmed).**

Agorà by Richard Wentworth (commissioned by Bold Tendencies) Photo © Quintin Lake, Courtesy of Greater London Authority

This Conference aims at determining a “reconstructive surgery” of our urban spaces based on the geography - and also on the history - of the bodies crossing them.



Dear Colleagues and Friends,

the technological revolution, a new geopolitical landscape, shifting economic power bases, mass migration and environmental issues are all transforming the world as we know it. As these tectonic plates shift, the pressure is felt most intensely in cities. To show **What, How, Why and Where** the bodies of leaving people unlock the potential for culture and social links is, therefore, up to your contribution.

THIS IS INDEED JUST A CALL, as follows:

Call for Papers

The AIDU (Italian Association of University Professors) and the Research Committee 54 “The Body in the Social Sciences” of the International Sociological Association are organising the International Conference “Bodies at the World Cities: The New Places of the Social Link”.

The Conference comes within the framework of the complex transitions that are transforming the social areas (physical and symbolic ones) of our cities, in Italy as well as in Europe and on the whole planet. In the words of the economist Edward Glaeser (2011), the very nature of cities makes them an attempt to cancel distances and “their success depends on the demand for *physical connection*”.

Change is the only constant in today's world. Cities constitute the *frontline* of this change that is currently characterised by apparently unsurmountable *inequalities* and *conflict*. Aware that the city is the place where the rules of community life are modelled and human experience is transformed into *society and history*, the proposed event calls on sociologists and social scientists, historiographers and urban planners, art and philosophy historians: but, above all politicians and operators in medicine and psychiatry to reconsider “the bodies at the *World Cities*” as basic “*places*” of social link. We ask ourselves: *What will happen to the bodily habits through which we live the social space developing the abilities and customs necessary to interact with every different context or territory?* Are we capable of living our body like our house and our house like our body?

It is a very difficult question because it summarises the fundamental dispute between *sedentary bodies* and *moving bodies* that characterises the social space in general and, in particular, the Western one starting from the Greek *polis*.²

As both Lefebvre and Sassen also teach us, one of the problematic nodes of global cities is the *struggle for space*. From the current "exercise to the cities" there is now an increasing emergence of anti-social behaviours, empathic disorder, emotive resilience, when they are not true psychopathies associated to criminal figures. There is a growing resistance by those citizens who are excluded from the benefits of globalisation, those from the suburbs, from the social centres, from the business activities that try to withstand the logic of the major distribution groups by trying to preserve their local specificity.

In tackling the emerging behavioural fragility, this Conference thus aims at determining a “*reconstructive surgery*” of our urban spaces based on the *geography- and also on the history- of the bodies crossing them*. Starting from the consideration of common sense as spatiality (Fuchs, 2018), the urban spaces are proposed as *habits*. These are the uses and customs from which the collective memory and identity of each different society (and/or social group) have been progressively modelled. And we also ask ourselves, not without concern, about the excessive use of social networks that, in various situations, are showing themselves to be responsible for incomprehensible and sudden expressions of social disease, precisely in the meeting between the person's body and the bodies with which it interacts at a given moment and place.

By analysing domestic and international *case studies*, the participating scholars are, therefore, called on to tackle this basic problem whose *methodological* and above all *ethical* focus is the bodies of human beings, of animals and of objects by considering the topicality and the multidisciplinary nature of this problem, the Conference becomes the *pioneering event* of an *international digital platform*, aimed at monitoring the evolution of uses and habits in the construction of the different bodily spaces related to the specific territory. We wish to create an interactive project, modulated by the *geography* and by the *history* of the “bodies at the *World Cities*” on the basis of the diversity and wealth of the genders, ages, memories and religions, lifestyles and consumption, sexual dispositions, geographical and cultural origin, conditions of physical and mental health and social position.

Bianca Maria Pirani

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AIS Member;

AIDU Member;

ISA Member, RC54, Board. ³

The following thematic areas are proposed:

- What is a *World City*? The Glories and Discomforts in the Geopolitics of the Cities.
- Nomadic Bodies and sedentary Bodies through the elementary Needs.
- On social Disease: the house as aesthetic Prison or as a Resistance Site.
- *Housing and Habits*: the Body Inhabits Common Sense.
- The Tree of *Fitness*: urban Gyms and Icon-Bodies of the Digital Heroes.
- Does Facebook steal all our Attention? Opiate Effects on the excessive Use of Social Networks.
- The Beauty of Women beyond the “*Me too*” Movement;
- *Panel on Climate Change*: environmental Criticalities and Health of the Bodies.
- Bodies of Tourists facing the “*Wild Nature*”.
- The “*deep Time*” of the Diversity of Food;
- *Rumours and Rockstars*: the fragile Bodies of Adolescents;
- *Footballers and Stadium Fans Bodies*: the confused Bodies of the Spectators.

Suggestions and advice for adding further areas of investigation that hopefully refer to the geographical and historical specificity of the different domestic and/or international territories analysed will be gratefully welcomed.

Participants are requested abstracts for a maximum of 300 words to be sent by 7 April 2019 to biancamaria.pirani@uniroma1.it⁴

***no profit* collaborations:**

The following *no profit* collaborations are already in progress

• **International Sociological Association**

<https://www.isa-sociology.org/en>

• **GASI, Global Awareness Society International, 400 East Second Street Andruss Library, Bloomsburg, Pa 17815, USA**

<https://www.globalawarenesssociety.org>

• **Atelier "Habiter la transition. Des pratiques existantes aux politiques de transition: circulations et ambiguïtés" Atelier thématique commun aux réseaux ACDD et ReHaL En partenariat avec le Master "Habitat et ville durable" - Pour une approche critique de la fabrique urbaine" (École Nationale Supérieure d'Architecture de Paris – La Villette**

<http://www.paris-lavillette.archi.fr/index.php?page=diplomesensaplv-up6>

• **World Cities Culture Forum**

<http://www.worldcitiescultureforum.com>

Proposal of the Organising committee (in alphabetical order) To be confirmed.

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The Body in the Social Sciences

International Conference “**Bodies at the World Cities**”, Rome, 4-5 October 2019, Regina Hall, Italian Parliament (date to be confirmed 45 days before according to the rules of the Italian Parliament).

New Deadline 15 July, 2019.

WHY this shift of date?

Premised that:

1. the general aim of this Conference is to show **WHAT, HOW, WHY** and **WHERE** the bodies of leaving people unlock their potential for culture and social links;
2. corporeal embodiment is a product of complex interaction between biology and culture but the human brain is part of our corporeal embodiment;
3. the basic question to which this Conference should find concrete answers is therefore “**Are we capable of living our body like our house and our house like our body?**”

its scientific and ethic core is to focus on the conflict habits¹ vs. habitat²

which fueled the **cognitive bias of Western Culture at least from the Enlightenment up to the Digital Era.**

This bias separated body from mind, emotions from reason, individual from society and the body of human being from the environment.

By this oscillation we discover that **our culture and our nature are in conflict in our own body.** This very dissociation reveals the “secret” of the body as a **key indicator of social malaise.**

¹People rarely speak about good *habits*, such as taking the keys out the car ignition when departing the vehicle or brushing one’s teeth after The word *habit* is also used to describe the outfit that one wears when riding a horse, or a *riding habit*, as well as the clothes that Roman Catholic nuns wear. The word *habit* is derived from the Latin *habere* meaning to have or to hold.

² Every insect, fish, species of plants and animal species is worth protecting. A biologist studies many different types of *habitats*, including temperate forest, tundra, marshes, coral reef, prairie, desert, rainforest, grassland, wetlands and even the Arctic. A large concern among people who study ecology is *habitat* destruction. Conservancy involves working to be sure that natural *habitats* are protected, for predator and prey. Destruction to *habitat* often triggers the rise of invasive species, which threaten the survival of native species and may even cause them to become extinct. Fish and wildlife departments across the globe work to restore and preserve wildlife *habitat* in the landscape. Marine protected areas help to mitigate *habitat* loss. Surprisingly, hunting can be a part of managing *habitat*, as it may keep the population of ruminating animals in check. Restoration and protection of *habitats* sometimes comes into conflict with those who wish to exploit natural resources such as oil and coal, or those who wish to practice industrial agriculture. However, our survival probably depends on our ability to conserve our ecological diversity.

Humans are transforming indeed Earth's natural landscapes so dramatically that as many as one million plant and animal species are now at risk of extinction, posing a dire threat to ecosystems that people all over the world depend on for their survival, a sweeping new United Nations assessment has concluded.

Given the importance of the topic, the change of date was made **in order to allow a full participation to the Isa Members currently joining the RC54 and to its Program Coordinators for the IV Forum 2020; of course also to all Isa Members paying attention to the spatial relationships between bodies and places in our environment.** Our body is built, indeed, on a *platform that is constantly sensing and monitoring the environment on multiple level*³.

30 abstracts already arrived /the pdf is at full disposal of anyone interested in reading) and 20 are announced within this month of June.

³ The body takes in all this information in pieces and configures a biorhythm which is a subset of your circadian rhythms. You have bio-rhythms that occur on multiple timelines; months (as is it is with something like the menstrual cycle) weeks and days (such as digestion, elimination, hair skin and nail growth, or even hours as is the case with things like hormones and neurotransmitters).