

2050 Global Perspectives Trends and Governance in the Next Half Century

29th – 31st August 2014

Fellows Dining Room, Balliol College, University of Oxford



Introduction

In the summer of 2014, the *Altius* Annual Conference will take place at Oxford. The conference is born as a venue for the discussion of important topics in the fields of Philosophy, the Social Sciences, and Science and Technology. This meeting aims to enable discussions in all of those fields and deep reflection about their future in the next 20 to 50 years: What are the crucial changes taking place in these disciplines? Where are we headed in the next 25 years? What conclusions should we draw from this change and its impact in the evolving dynamics of human activity?

The **first part** of the conference will consist of an in-depth examination of three important topics of contemporary **philosophical reflection**: the impact of “information age”, the search for a world ethic, and the implications of transhumanism. With the growth of communication technology, our society is experiencing a deep cultural revolution. However, this phenomenon also exhibits some alarming effects, like the loss of critical thinking. The first part of the panel will explore the implications of the information age for the traditional idea of culture. Globalization, while strengthening ties and connections between human beings, is also accentuating differences and, in some cases, conflicts between cultures. The second part of the panel will examine how to reconcile the quest for global values and norms, and respect for cultural diversity. Transhumanism has been presented as a revolutionary philosophical movement, which may radically transform our present conception of the human being and its possibilities. The discussion of the philosophical presuppositions of transhumanism that will close this panel will enable us to explore some fundamental categories of Anthropology, Metaphysics, and Ethics. Three great areas of philosophical reflection (Sociology, Ethics and Anthropology) will therefore come under scrutiny. The debate will be oriented towards “the future”: panelists will be asked to make assessments regarding the outcome of contemporary philosophical discussions in the short to medium term.

The **second part** of the conference will be focused on issues of **global governance and its challenges**. First, we will examine global *economic* governance. Here we will look at the shifting dynamics in the global economy with a particular emphasis on the disruptive impact of technology for the global economy and income inequality. We will also study the role of traditional institutions in this field as well as their limitations. Finally we will bring into the discussion the private sector, as an important driving force of change in this field. Our second focus of analysis will be *political* global governance with an emphasis on the key subjects at the core of international relations. We will firstly explore the current state and the future of the transatlantic partnership. The US- Europe relation has been central to global governance for decades but it is uncertain this will remain the case in the coming years. The much touted “US pivot to Asia” could be part of a broader process of erosion of the Atlantic link and a manifestation of the decreased importance of the north Atlantic in world affairs. We will then move on to analyze the impact of technology on global governance.

The key issue here will be to better understand the role of disruptive technologies on how the international system is designed and operates. Our final panelist will address the all-important issue of traditional governance structures (like the UN) and emerging forms of governance like the G20 and others. Overall our intention is to analyze the challenges the world is facing and how current powers, emerging ones and international institutions will tackle them.

With the ever-growing capacity of **data collection and intelligence**, our societies are living a true revolution. The **third part** of our conference will first focus on the future of disciplines within this field. The declining cost of collection, storage, and processing of data, combined with new sources of data like sensors, cameras, and geospatial technologies, mean that we live in a world of near-ubiquitous data collection. All this data is being crunched at a speed that is increasingly approaching real-time, means that big data algorithms could soon have immediate effects on decisions being made about our lives. Developments there will open up new possibilities for sciences, businesses and government. The panel will address the technological perspectives of data intelligence and discuss its potential disruptive impact for businesses and governments while trying to lay-out boundaries to protect our privacy and other values.

Overall the conference will have three conceptual threads that will connect all panels. These are: the impact of technological advancement on the various disciplines studied, changing paradigms when addressing the challenges of the future, and the effect of the exponential growth of information and networks in the world. We will move from more abstract or conceptual fields like Philosophy, to those spearheading change like the Applied Sciences, including the perspective of practitioners and entrepreneurs. This effort should enable us to analyze these three trends and their impact on human affairs from key perspectives.

Friday,
29th August

Agenda

16:00 Welcome Remarks

First Part: The Future of Philosophy in the Western Hemisphere

16:15-18:15 Panel: What idea of “the human being” do we have nowadays?

Topic One: The Information Age and the future of culture

- Key features of the “information age”
- What is the impact of the excess of information on critical thinking?
- How to reconcile information, knowledge, and wisdom in a digital age?

Speaker: Federico Mayor Zaragoza, Chairman, Foundation for a Culture of Peace, Former Director-General of UNESCO

Topic Two: The quest for core values in a globalized world

- Global values and conflict
- The role of cultural diversity
- Universality and particularity in a globalized world

Speaker: Sean Cleary, World Economic Forum, Future World Foundation

Topic Three: Transhumanism

- The transhumanist program: origins and goals
- Can biotechnology overcome the human species?
- Is it possible to control evolution? Natural *versus* cultural development?

Speaker: Anders Sandberg, Oxford Martin Programme on the Impacts of Future Technology

Chair: Carlos Blanco, *Universidad Pontificia de Comillas*

19:30 Dinner & Keynote at Balliol Dining Hall

“The future of Democracy”

Speaker: Luca Belgiorno-Nettis, Founder, newDemocracy Foundation

Chair: Aaron Maniam, University of Oxford, Singaporean Administrative Service

Saturday,
30th August

Second Part: The Future of Governance

9:30-11:30 Panel I: Global Economic Governance: The Challenge of Global Capitalism

Topic One: The Challenges for Economic Development.

- Understanding the root cause: 'Why are some countries (& regions) richer than others?'
- A change of paradigm: Knowledge as the main driver of economic success. 'Division of Labor' vs. 'Division of Knowledge'.

An Introduction by Ricardo Hausmann, Director of the Center for International Development and Professor of the Practice of Economic Development at Harvard University, former Chair of the IMF-World Bank Development Committee

Topic Two: The Race with the 'Machines'

- 'The end of innovation, the end of growth?'
- The nature of the 'New Machine Age'
- Is Humanity doomed to increasing inequality as a result of technology progress?

An Introduction by Roberto Mangabeira Unger, Roscoe Pound Professor of Law at Harvard University, former Minister of Strategic Affairs of Brazil under President Lula Da Silva

Topic Three: Implications for Global Economic Governance

- Can we "govern" globalization through institutions?
- How should traditional institutions, such as the IMF and the World Bank, be transformed to cope with these disruptive future trends?
- How should societies adapt to increasing inequality?

Panelists:

- Stan Veuger, Resident Scholar at American Enterprise Institute (AEI)
- Sean Cleary, World Economic Forum, Future World Foundation
- Jacek E. Giedrojc, Founding Partner Warsaw Equity Group

Chair and Discussant: Alexandre Perez, Founding Partner Principia Investments, former Investment Executive at Kolhberg Kravis Roberts

11:30-12:00 Break (and group photo)

12:00-13:00 Lunch at Balliol College Hall

13:00-15:00 Panel II: Global Governance

Topic One: The Future of the Transatlantic Relation and its Impact on Global Governance

- Where is the transatlantic partnership headed?
- Will the West "dominate" global governance in the future?
- What alternatives are there to the US-Europe alliance?

Speaker: Jose Maria Beneyto, Vice-President of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe and Spanish Member of Parliament

Topic Two: The Future of Global Governance: Global Trends 2030

- To what extent is it possible to study the future of governance?
- What will the impact of disruptive technologies be on global governance?
- Who will be the central actors in the international system in the next 20-50 years?

Speaker: Matthew J. Burrows, Director, Strategic Foresight Initiative, Atlantic Council

Saturday, cont'd

Topic Three: Classic and New Forms of Governance

- Where are global governance institutions headed?
- Does the emergence of informal structures such as the G20 pose a threat to classic governance institutions?
- Are there alternatives to the UN and other institutions when it comes to global governance?

Speaker: Diego Hidalgo, Founder, Club de Madrid and FRIDE

Coordinator: Marcin Kilanowski, *Nicolas Copernicus University*

15:00-16:15 Keynote & Coffee

"Past, Present and Future of Global Civil Society: The Trilateral Commission"

Speaker: Paul Révay, European Director, Trilateral Commission

Discussant: David Cadier, Fellow in International Strategy and Diplomacy at the London School of Economics (LSE)

Third Part: Science and Technology, "The World of Tomorrow"

16:15-17:15 Videoconference: "From Biology to Engineering: The Engineering of Life and Its Possibilities"

- What are we discovering about the origins of life on Earth?
- Will biological engineering be an effective reality in the next 25 to 50 years?
- Where will the engineering of life take us?

Speaker: Juan Perez-Marcader, Senior Research Fellow, Department of Earth and Planetary Sciences, Harvard University

Chair: Stan Veuger, *American Enterprise Institute*

17:15-18:15 Keynote

"The Quantum Leader"

Speaker: Danah Zohar

Discussant: Augustus Rylands, Head of Business Development at *Desert Technologies*

18:30-19:00 Walk through Oxford to St. Hilda's College

19:00 Dinner & Keynote at St. Hilda's College, University of Oxford

"The future of Diplomacy: A European Perspective"

Speaker: Robert Cooper, European External Action Service

Sunday,
31st August

9:30-11:30 Panel: "Perspective, impact and limits of Data Intelligence"

Topic One: Myths and Promises of Data Intelligence

- Big Data and its potential
- New forms of data intelligence

Speaker: Min Chen, Professor of Scientific Visualization, University of Oxford

Topic Two: Privacy and Data Governance in the Information Revolution

- Information and its impact on the individual
- Society and the challenge of Big Data

Speaker: Rosemary Jay, Senior Attorney, Hunton&Williams

Topic Three: Data intelligence as an enabler for social change and government transformation

- New tools for more effective government policies
- The empowering of the individual and new forms of social action

Speaker: Pēteris Zilgalvis, Head of Health and Wellbeing Unit, European Commission

Topic Four: Data intelligence as a catalyst for business disruptions

- Big data's impact on the productive model
- Business models at risk and emerging ones

Speaker: John Taysom, Founder and Managing Partner, Reuters Venture Capital

Coordinator: Thomas Dermine, McKinsey & Co

11:30-12:00 Closing Remarks

Speaker: Manuel Muniz, President of Altius

12:00 Lunch and farewell at Balliol College Hall

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