Governing the Plural City

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Acknowledgements

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Introduction
Ash Amin

Cities have the capability of providing something for everybody, only because, and only when, they are created by everybody.

Jane Jacobs[1]

More than 50% of the world's population lives in cities, and this figure is expected to rise to 70% by 2050. World affairs and city affairs have become deeply enmeshed, and what goes on within cities – their economic productivity, environmental footprint, cultural practices, social wellbeing, and political stability – affects the world at large. They shape the weather and are the weathervane of our times, so getting them right matters. But what this involves and how far it is within reach is by no means clear.

For example, cities have always been constellations of contradictory flows and forces – of wealth and poverty, growth and stagnation, diversity and division, power and constraint, peace and conflict. Exponential population growth and unplanned urban sprawl, along with operational and financial limits on what municipalities can do, will only exacerbate these contradictions, with rising inequalities, poverty, marginalisation and ecological stress all threatening to derail attempts to harness urban prosperity, cohesion and sustainability. Then, in gathering myriad flows and forces, cities are sites of plural authority and power, unevenly contested between diverse actors including public bodies, corporations, artificial intelligence systems, institutions, communities, consocations and interest groups, and not always in visible or formal ways. Fixing the urban future in this context rarely plays to the general interest or managed plan, especially when we consider that one in three urban residents in the developing world lives in unplanned slums, with the majority of future urban growth expected to take place in the poorest regions of the world.

Thus, while the international policy community may confidently call for cities to be made 'inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable' in the way headlined in the UN's 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, it tends to underestimate the challenges of achieving traction in a distributed, plural and often hidden force field. A number of pressing questions arise. Should state effort focus on comprehensive master plans and general infrastructures and services, or on strategic risks and vulnerabilities, while coordinating risks? What are the limits and limitations of state action, and how is the balance between the general and the specific or the communal and sectionalist to be found? What is the relationship between central authority plans and the communities who are to benefit, and how can neighbourhood knowledge and effort be supported amidst policy neglect or corporatist calculation? Is it possible to reconcile strategic and democratic goals in the twenty first-century city of multiple logics, demands and actors?

These concerns were at the forefront of an expert roundtable on *Inclusive Urban Governance* which the British Academy and the National Institute of Urban Affairs (NIUA) convened on 1 December 2018 in Delhi. The participating researchers and activists critically and imaginatively engaged with issues of urban inclusion, cohesion, vulnerability and resilience, and considered the activities and potential of community-based organisations, strategic planning and multi-level governance. Without lapsing into prescriptive conclusions, they offered a range of interdisciplinary perspectives, responding to the need for developing new ways of imagining, understanding and governing the city. This publication dwells on the nuances of formality and informality, community and state power, and expert and lay knowledge.

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1   J. Jacobs (1961), *The Death and Life of Great American Cities* (Random House: New York), 238.

We open with a portrait of the contemporary city of extreme contrasts. Colin McFarlane proposes that we might better understand the 'plural bundle of experiences', politics and possibilities encapsulated by the proliferation of life on the urban economic margins through what he calls 'fragment urbanism'. Fragment urbanism, he argues, is a genre of urban knowledge that recognises the incomplete, plural and provisional nature of urban life, with its myriad of relations, rhythms, politics, material realities and spatial divisions that are experienced, negotiated, destroyed and rebuilt in the everyday. Understanding these fragments, these 'bits and pieces of everyday material', McFarlane posits, is the key to understanding the contemporary global urban condition.

Narendar Pani considers the economics of urban inclusion and, importantly, brings to our attention that inclusion comes at a price. He distinguishes between two models of economic growth, which he calls 'post-hoc inclusiveness' and 'inherent inclusiveness'. 'Post-hoc' refers to a method of economic growth that excludes the poor, who are later compensated through welfare initiatives, whereas 'inherent' has inclusiveness built into its economic growth strategy. Pani does not promote one method over the other, but recommends that strategies of economic growth should be monitored for their inclusiveness, in order to predict when 'a particular economic strategy for inclusiveness is likely to fail'.

Idalina Baptista picks up on the theme of urban planning in such a context, proposing it as a continuous and dynamic process requiring constant negotiation. She reflects on the relative merits of pursuing 'big plans' and 'tweaks' and engages with literature that allows the two to be considered as mutually constitutive. Proposing 'thinking big and acting small' as a more productive, collaborative tactic, she rekindles a line of utopian thinking in city planning that proposes plans not as inaccessible and unrealistic templates, but as an envisioning tool harnessed in the everyday to make 'the impossible possible'.

Taking a different approach, Dipankar Gupta argues for the state as the driving force behind urban development. He is critical of fragmented, disparate local initiatives that lack overarching structure and coherence and that might encourage the division of communities. Seeing the distinctions between urban public space and 'non-space' as emblematic of two different approaches, he argues that the former, normally governed by the state, can elicit strong feelings of connection and belonging in its inhabitants. He condemns the trend towards building visually unappealing non-spaces (e.g. mass housing for the poor in Delhi) and celebrates instead municipal effort in cities such as New York, Bilbao and Dresden that have created aesthetic havens amongst their concrete, purpose-built blocks. For Gupta, such interventions reinforce urban cohesion and inclusion.

Like Gupta, Sanjay Srivastava focuses on Delhi. He outlines planning procedures, such as satellite mapping, that attempt to 'regularise' informal settlements (slums, or 'Unauthorised Colonies' as they are designated). He highlights the dangers of such planning, arguing that aspirational, universal 'global templates' – similar to those used in Shanghai and Singapore – cannot be applied in Delhi. Given the persistence of Delhi's informal dwellings and their growing populations, Srivastava suggests the appropriateness of 'realistic urbanism' – which is a tailored approach to policymaking that consults the urban poor and considers their quotidian hardships.

Caroline Knowles furthers this shift in perspective towards a more distributed and inclusive model of urban governance, returning to the street, in the informal slum dwellings of Lahore, where the construction of the city's transit line has forcibly displaced many residents in the Anarkali district. While acknowledging the necessity for large-scale, often state-run, projects such as this – Lahore badly needed a new transport infrastructure – Knowles is critical of the impact that such top-down approaches have on the lives of what she calls 'ad-hoc'

communities. Urban governance, she warns, should not be conducted through the 'erasure' or 'neglect' of these communities by state and/or city authorities. Instead, Knowles advocates for a grassroots, experimental approach to urban governance that consults its citizens, and makes for ground level activity by communities through an accumulation of small 'tweaks'. She also reminds us that urban governance is an iterative process that should never be assumed complete.

Alerting us to the variegated and often ambivalent character of ground level activity, Michele Lancione cites residents of a homeless facility on the outskirts of Turin to ask the pertinent question: 'what does it mean to look at difference from the standpoint of groups that have already been marked as different by racial histories and normative governance?' He delves into the politics of difference in the urban margins, proposing that rights-based approaches be radically reworked to avoid 'sanitised detachment', replaced by effort encompassing the everyday encounters of difference, race and the squalid material reality of urban poverty and homelessness. Lancione suggests that in place of 'propositional politics', cities should explore a 'politics of micro-interventions and diffused solidarity' from the ground and its margins.

Such a politics can benefit from appropriate forms of advocacy to ensure that voices in the margins are heard. This is shown by Renana Jhabvala, focusing on the 80% of the urban workforce in India that is informal and also frequently housed informally. For Jhabvala, governance structures in India do not cover the needs of informal labourers and residents, whose access to basic provisions, proper sanitation and decent work is curtailed. She argues, however, that there are organisations in India that are beginning to change this, such as the Self-Employed Women's Association (SEWA) and the National Alliance for Street Vendors in India (NASVI). Collectives like these are judged to be vital in amplifying voices in the informal sector.

The final chapter returns to the politics of city-wide challenges in discussing urban sustainability. David Wachsmuth argues that the effective governance of urban sustainability in a 'green urban age', requires the integration of broader socio-economic concerns into environmental ones. He also warns against the paradox of 'climate-friendly' initiatives that disproportionately benefit the wealthy – redevelopments in affluent downtowns, for example – and displace poorer communities who are forced to live more carbon-intensive lives. Most pertinently, Wachsmuth asks the urgent and existential question: Can cities save the planet? Across these concerns, emerges the obligation and leadership of the state.

The Fragment City and the Global Urban Condition
Colin McFarlane

The number of people living in urban poverty is growing globally, driven by a fierce ecology of factors. The key drivers vary from place to place, but there are some common causes at work, including: exclusion from land and decent housing, leaving more and more people in insecure, rented homes; a lack of affordable food, infrastructure and services, with these basics often becoming more expensive for lower-income groups; and local and central states that lack either resources or the political will to seriously tackle poverty and inequality. We know that the estimates of the numbers living in informal neighbourhoods (or 'slums') are unreliable, but the direction of travel is undoubted: from approximately 880 million in 2014 to potentially over 3 billion by 2050.[2] For the one in three urban residents who currently live in some form of informal neighbourhood – in 'slums', refugee camps, transit camps, on pavements and other slivers of urban space that increasingly house the denizens of global urbanism – a great deal of everyday life is a struggle for the most basic provisions.

Understanding contemporary cities – and responding to the challenges of growing poverty and inequality – demands that we pay attention to the city of fragments. The fragment city is the situated, everyday city on the margins, where bits and pieces of material things are caught up in all kinds of social and political relations. Fragments are the material scraps of infrastructure, housing, services, everyday objects, former commercial enterprises, and more. What I call 'fragment urbanism' is the changing, multiple and often politicised relations between fragments and densities on the economic margins of the city. My argument is that, at a minimum, understanding these incomplete, fragmented, dense urbanisms, and the possibilities those relations can disclose, matters if we are to understand the contemporary global urban condition.

Urban fragments on the margins are expressions of inequality and poverty and legacies of powerful historical injustices: colonialism; structural adjustment; rounds of capitalist urbanisation and disinvestment; cultural politics of race, ethnicity, and so on. These histories are histories of fragmentation, carving up and dividing urban space, pushing people into economic and spatial margins in the city that leave increasing numbers of urban residents globally without reliable and stable housing, infrastructure and services and often with barely adequate fragments.

A central task of critical urban research has been to elucidate the causes, forms and alternatives to the fragmentation of the city, whether spatial, social, economic or material fragmentation. To take just one example, Stephen Graham and Simon Marvin's landmark book, *Splintering Urbanism,*[3] examined the 'splintering' of public space and provisions in the context of urban infrastructure. They demonstrated how neoliberalism, and in particular the relations between privatisation, liberalisation and the application of new technologies, shaped a globalising process of 'unbundling' infrastructure. This process led to the collapse of what Graham and Marvin called the 'modernist infrastructural ideal' – standardised, monopolised and integrated infrastructures for all – in the process intensifying inequalities across urban space.[4]

2   M. Murali, C. Cummings, J. Feyertag, S. Gelb, T. Hart, A. Khan, I. Langdown and P. Lucci (2018), *10 Things to Know about the Impacts of Urbanisation* (London: Overseas Development Institute).

3   S. Graham and S. Marvin (2001), *Splintering Urbanism* (London: Routledge).

4   S. Graham and C. McFarlane (eds.) (2015), *Infrastructural Lives: Urban Infrastructure in Context* (London: Routledge-Earthscan); J. Monstadt and S. Schramm (2017), 'Toward the Networked City? Translating Technological Ideals and Planning Models in Water and Sanitation Systems in Dar es Salaam', *International Journal of Urban and Regional Research*, 41(4): 104-125.

Henri Lefebvre[5] conceived capitalism as actively requiring the fragmentation of urban space in order to sustain itself. This includes, for instance, the shuffling and displacing of labour densities, or targeting particular places for speculation. Along with a host of other key voices in the radical urban spatial tradition,[6] Lefebvre argued that if we are concerned with understanding how space is produced, then we need to attend to how it is divided, carved up, controlled and commodified. It is a position that has held a commanding influence over how urbanists think and research the city.

Yet, fragments are not just historical products; they are also active in the present. They are objects deeply connected to urban living, and in all sorts of ways. They are provided, maintained and manipulated by all kinds of illicit and sometimes violent groups, and at the same time usually require huge amounts of labour – often by women and the poorest – just to make them operate and reproduce daily life.[7] Fragments are experienced, not as theoretical questions, but as bodily and social problems connected to poor health, dehydration, homes that can be too hot, too cold, too wet, overcrowded, too flimsy and require too much work. Fragments can exacerbate health problems and are part of the reason why children have to miss school or adults cannot pursue livelihoods and other opportunities.

This struggle with fragments is intimately connected to urban densities. On the one hand, these fragmented provisions barely meet the needs of dense urban communities. Straightforwardly, the matching of provisions to numbers of people falls far short, not because there are 'too many people', as some might wish to suggest, but because of the failure of the state – whether that failure is deliberate or not – to provide good quality basic urban amenities. On the other hand, it is in dense urban communities that residents and activists often find their greatest resource: a close collection of people through which to organise, repair, fight back, and make demands. Densities, it turns out, are not just a 'problem', but an active resource in the making and remaking of fragmented provisions. In these changing relations of fragments and densities on the economic margins of our increasingly urban world, the present and future of the city are being composed and contested. I call these relations 'fragment urbanism', and they are at the centre of what it means to be urban and to live an urban life for growing numbers of urbanites around the world.

At the same time, fragment urbanism is more than just survival. While the city is shaped through processes of historical fragmentation, those processes do not terminally determine urban experience, expression and politics. The city that pulls together and falls apart is also open to possibility, albeit in a context of huge inequalities of power, position and resource that shape the potential of different groups, individuals, histories and cultures to act. Residents are caught up in all kinds of relations, rhythms, projects, collectives, personal ambitions and opportunities, routes through and beyond the city, and fragments become part of these relations. AbdouMaliq Simone rightly describes residents as part of an urban 'method' that emerges from, but which is also not simply reducible to, 'the shards of broken lives and broken infrastructure'. This method, which he calls 'the uninhabitable', is a rhythm of endurance and possibility.[8]

5   H. Lefebvre (1991 [1974]), *The Production of Space* (Wiley/Blackwell).

6   D. Harvey (1973), *Social Justice in the City* (Johns Hopkins University Press); D. Massey (1984), *Spatial Divisions of Labour: Social Structures and the Geography of Production* (Macmillan); N. Smith (1996), *The New Urban Frontier: Gentrification and the Revanchist City* (London: Routledge).

7   S. Mattern (2018), 'Maintenance and Care', *Places*, https://placesjournal.org/article/maintenance-and-care/?cn-reloaded=1 (accessed 9 July 2019).

8   A. Simone (2008), 'The Politics of the Possible: Making Urban life in Phnom Penh', *Singapore Journal of Tropical Geography*, 29(2): 186-204; A. Simone (2018), *Improvised Lives: Rhythms of Endurance in an Urban South* (Cambridge: Polity). See also M. Lancione (ed.) (2016), *Rethinking Life at the Margins: The Assemblage of Contexts Subjects and Politics* (London: Routledge); Lancione (2017), 'Revitalising the Uncanny: Challenging Inertia in the Struggle Against Forced Evictions', *Environment and Planning D: Society and Space,* 35(6); S. Srivastava (2015), *Entangled Urbanism: Slum, Gated Community and Shopping Mall in Delhi and Gurgaon* (Delhi: Oxford University Press); T. Thieme (2017), 'Navigating and Negotiating Ethnographies of Urban Hustle in Nairobi Slums', *CITY,* 21(2): 219-231.

Cities Liberal and Wild

It is important to ask how the city of fragments might be connected to the *city of wholes*. The city of wholes is the city of distribution – of basic provisions, urban rights and citizenship – without which it will be impossible to deal with the scale of the challenges of urban poverty and inequality. Just as historical processes of fragmentation divide up urban space and leave urban majorities with material fragments in often dense, underprovided contexts, so too might the relations between fragments and densities provide resources for reimagining or changing the wider city.

One way to connect the city of fragments and the city of wholes is through *urban maintenance*. Much of the labour that takes place in the city of fragments is about making things operational, ensuring that ordinary conditions endure, investing in the care and repair of basic provisions, and campaigning for those conditions.[9] The struggle to reproduce urban life often necessitates going beyond the fragments themselves. Thus, maintenance might mean attending not only to the city of fragments but to the city of wholes, through, for example, campaigning for rights, new city budgeting priorities, or new policy frameworks. These and other ways of connecting fragments and wholes are the *connective devices* through which basic urban provisions might be reproduced. For example, fragments and wholes might be connected through supporting forms of social infrastructure, or provoking new spaces of reflection through urban art, or making political claims through urban occupation, and so on.

We can think of these connective devices not just in terms of the city of fragments and wholes, but as operating across the liberal city and the 'city in the wild'. The liberal city has a global resonance, even if it is understood in different ways across world-regions. It is the city of rights, state institutions and processes, planning and policy processing, distributions of land, infrastructure and services, and social contracts. It is difficult to imagine understanding or addressing fragmented cities without it. At the same time, it is absolutely complicit in the histories and geographies of fragmentation we find in increasingly unequal cities today.

The liberal city has ensured not just the circulation of people, cultures, ideas and innovations, but has actively channelled the circulation of capital into some areas and not others, facilitated the transformation of some sites into spaces of speculation in land and real estate at the cost of existing residents or other neighbourhoods, and has left many places suffering from neglect, disinvestment, demolition and segregation.[10] The liberal city is a profound site of struggle and transformation for the urban commons – the distribution of resources, spaces and opportunity – and will unquestionably remain so.[11]

However, that struggle often takes us beyond the liberal city. The city in the wild is entangled with the liberal city but exceeds it. This is a city of situated everyday negotiating, makeshift political bargaining and social infrastructures, forms of protest which seek to shock and startle, or forms of artistic experimentation and provocation of the city. It is not a city, however, that 'belongs' to marginalised neighbourhoods. Recent accounts arguing for the value of 'seeing like a city' have emphasised that the seemingly disorderly, complex, non-compliant city simultaneously exceeds and yet becomes absolutely necessary to how power functions and how things get done or contested in cities.[12] The city in the wild is found as much in city and state planning offices as it is in low-income neighbourhoods, in much the same way that the city of wholes is found in and alongside the city of fragments with residents and activists in informal neighbourhoods.[13]

9   S. Graham and N. Thrift (2007), 'Out of Order: Understanding Maintenance and Repair', *Theory, Culture and Society,* 24(3): 1-25; Mattern (2018).

10   See P. Joyce (2002), *The Rule of Freedom: Liberalism and the Modern City* (London: Verso); P. Marcuse and D. Madden (2016), *In Defense of Housing: The Politics of Crisis* (London: Verso); A. Merrifield (2014), *The New Urban Question* (London: Pluto Press).

11   A. Amin and P. Howell (2016), *Releasing the Commons: Rethinking the Futures of the Commons* (London: Routledge) and A. Jeffrey, C. McFarlane and A. Vasudevan (2012), 'Rethinking Enclosure: Space, Subjectivity, and the Commons', *Antipode,* 44:1247-1267.

12   A. Amin and N. Thrift (2017), *Seeing Like a City* (Cambridge: Polity Press); W. Magnusson (2011), *Politics of Urbanism: Seeing Like a City* (New York: Routledge); M. Valverde (2011), 'Seeing Like a City: The Dialectic of Modern and Premodern Ways of Seeing in Urban Governance', *Law and Society Review,* 45(2): 277-213.

13   M. Acuto, C. Dinardi and C. Marx (2019), 'Transcending (In)formal Urbanism', *Urban Studies,* 3(56): 475-487.

The point, then, is not a geographical one but a political one: just as it is vital to understand and connect the city of fragments to the city of wholes, so too must we recognise that understanding what makes cities tick requires connecting the liberal city and the city in the wild. Understanding fragment urbanism demands attention to the relations between the liberal city and the city in the wild, as does developing progressive ways forward. Importantly, though, making these connections does not only mean integrating residents into pre-existing liberal wholes. The city in the wild also demands an encounter with difference and alterity that relate to entirely different kinds of wholes, and which therefore require a careful, reflective set of engagements about the limits and possibilities of supporting different residential experiences, perceptions and struggles.

Residents, activists and artists often know this very well. There is much we can learn from how they stitch together – socially, materially, discursively, imaginatively and politically – the city of fragments and the city of wholes through entangling the liberal city and the city in the wild. My aim is not to romanticise these actors. It is quite easy to idealise or become sentimental about activism, which we know can often go very wrong. Activism is not immune to exploitative power relations, can make false claims on behalf of communities, and can sometimes be downright regressive. Indeed, there are plenty of examples of activists protecting their own interests at the costs of urban majorities in all kinds of ways.[14] Ordinary residents in marginal spaces are equally often romanticised.

The multiplicity we see in relations between fragments and densities has consequences for progressive responses to fragmented cities. No one model will be adequate to responding to the challenges of fragment urbanism; all kinds of potential tactics and approaches have to be on the table, developed in conjunction with the practices activists and residents are already pursuing in different urban contexts. In the end, we need the city in the wild every bit as much as we need the liberal city.

Conclusion

This leaves us with a particular version of global urbanism. Fragment urbanism is a specific genre of global urbanism, aimed at understanding the experience, politics and possibilities of life on the economic margins of contemporary cities. By 'global urbanism', I do not have in mind one process, state of being or logic. While the human condition is an increasingly urban condition, I am not intending to imply a structured, coherent set of conditions. Instead, I use 'global urbanism' as a name for the myriad forms of *being urban today*, in a moment when the world is becoming increasingly urban and in which cities define more and more of the economic, social, political and ecological questions and problematics around us. Attending to the relations between fragments and densities reveals some of the ways in which inhabitants are differently '"written" into the fabric of urban life, performing different kinds of urbanism and possibilities'.[15]

As I use it, the term 'global urbanism' is not, then, intended to refer to the encounters between the urban and the global, which has been the focus of much debate in urban scholarship in

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14   See, for example A. Ghertner (2015), *Rule by Aesthetics: World-Class City Making in Delhi* (Oxford: Oxford University Press) and S. Srivastava (2015).

15   A. Simone and E. Pieterse (2017), *New Urban Worlds: Inhabiting Dissonant Times* (John Wiley & Sons), 187.

recent years.[16] Global urbanism does not need a specifically 'global' signature in order to be global. Instead, the stories that emerge from examining the relations between fragments and densities are themselves instances of what it means to be urban today in an urbanising globe. It is to insist that there are many global urbanisms. Refugees forced from Syria and ending up in Berlin perform a particular instantiation of global urbanism, which differs from the experiences of low-income residents trying to develop coping strategies or forms of politicisation in Mumbai or Kampala, or artists in Dakar trying to tell a story about how localities are shaped through fragments of stuff spilling over all kinds of spatial and cultural borders.

This concept of global urbanism, which I develop, derives not from a coherent body of theory or practice, but emerges from a loose and irreducibly plural bundle of experiences, ideas, practices and politics reflecting different ways of inhabiting or disrupting urbanism.[17] Writing global urbanism emerges from this perspective; from examining fragments and densities, and the relations between and around them. Rather than singular understanding of global urbanism, what surfaces is a provisional construction of urbanism at the margins that is differently pulling together and falling apart, and where the bits and pieces of the city become important sites for urban experience and politics. This is global urbanism as a vast constellation of situated processes, or what Ash Amin and Nigel Thrift call 'an uncertain and uncontrollable science-art'.[18]

Fragment urbanism is a position that stays with the incomplete, power-laden multi-city, an urbanism that must work with 'partial and adjusted insights' and the recognition that the 'urban' is always plural and provisional.[19] This is a version of global urbanism that seeks to work from the multiplicities and possibilities of the city, including its complex and shifting densities, fragments and provisional orderings. Fragment urbanism is part of a genre of urban knowledge that, as Amin argues, posits a 'modest and experimental style of knowing and acting in the world'.[20]

16   See, for example, debates ranging across and between accounts of urban worlding (A. Roy and A. Ong (eds.) (2011), *Worlding Cities: Asian Experiments and the Art of Being Global* (Oxford: Wiley-Blackwell) and Simone and Pieterse (2017)), urban planetarity (T. Jazeel (2018), 'Singularity: a Manifesto for Incomparable Geographies', *Singapore Journal of Tropical Geography* (40)1: 5-21 and H. Leitner and E. Sheppard (2015), 'Provincialising Critical Urban Theory: Extending the Ecosystem of Possibilities', *International Journal of Urban and Regional Research* (40)1: 228-235), complex adaptive assemblages (A. Amin and N. Thrift (2017) *Seeing Like a City* (Cambridge: Polity Press)), urban cosmopolitics (A. Block and I. Farias (2016), *Urban Cosmopolitics: Agencements, Assemblies, Atmospheres* (London: Routledge)), planetary urbanisation (N. Brenner and C. Schmid (2015), 'Towards a New Epistemology of the Urban?' CITY 19(2-3): 151-182), peripheral urbanisation (T. Caldeira (2017), 'Peripheral Urbanisation: Autoconstruction, Transversal Logics, and Politics in Cities of the Global South'. *Environment and Planning D: Society and Space,* 35(1): 3-20.

17   E. Sheppard et al. (2015).

18   A. Amin and N. Thrift (2017), 31.

19   A. Amin (2013), 'The Urban Condition: a Challenge to Social Science', *Public Culture,* 25(2): 201-208; A. Simone (2011), 'The Surfacing of Urban Life', *City,* 15(3-4): 355-364.

20   A. Amin (2013), 207, 206.

The Shifting Economic Base of Inclusiveness

Narendar Pani

With more than half of the world's population now living in cities, urbanisation has long been recognised as a driving force for development. As engines of economic growth, cities have the potential to lift millions out of poverty and provide better opportunities to many more. However, economic growth can, and does, give rise to exploitation and inequality, and cities can be – and often are – places of exclusion and even extreme deprivation. Today, one third of urban residents in developing countries live in slums with inadequate services, and this number is predicted to increase, especially in Asia and Africa. There is thus a pressing need to create more inclusive cities – spatially, socially and economically. The following reflections focus on the economic aspect, and the measures that are available to governments in this regard, highlighting how they might work in practice, without advocating for one approach over the other.

The case for inclusiveness is typically so compelling that it cannot wait for the evolution of an explicit conceptualisation of the economic base for a particular initiative. Campaigns against some of the most extreme forms of exclusion (championed by the likes of Gandhi, Ambedkar, and others against, for example, untouchability in India) were built around the need to fight injustice, rather than upon explicit understandings of the economic base of these campaigns. Initiatives against economic exclusion, by their very nature, require greater attention to be paid to the economic base of initiatives for inclusion. But here again, the urgency of the need to fight, for example, starvation often leads to measures that economists may find financially less prudent. As the list of the specific forms of exclusion that are to be fought moves from the local to the global (particularly after the use of the term 'social exclusion' gathered momentum in the 1970s), the economic base for these exercises in inclusion has tended to evolve more in practice rather than from clearly worked out theoretical arguments.

There have been occasional efforts to conceptualise social exclusion, notably Amartya Sen's theorisation of social exclusion as a form of capability deprivation.[21] However, most contributions to the larger discourse on social exclusion, and the measures that states have taken to combat it, do not explicitly trace their origins to this or any other specific theoretical position. The emphasis remains on building a compelling case against social exclusion, with each instance finding its own economic resources in practice.

The particular routes to finding the economic resources for an exercise in inclusion could vary a great deal. Some states have fallen back on substantial taxation, others have relied on international aid, and still others have tapped into philanthropy. Efforts to combat major forms of social exclusion do, however, require a sustained supply of resources; a supply that can only be provided by a growing economy. Inclusiveness is thus closely linked to growth. Since the link is not always explicit, there is often less than adequate attention being paid to the relationship between inclusiveness and growth. This relationship usually emerges from local economic, social and political contexts. There are cases where the economic base for inclusiveness is created by a rapidly growing economy, and there are other situations where the battle against social exclusion can take forms that are economically unsustainable. The diversity of these approaches need not, however, be entirely without a pattern. Indeed,

21   A. Sen (2000), 'Social Exclusion: Concept, Application, and Scrutiny', *Social Development Papers No. 1,* Office of Environment and Social Development, Asian Development Bank.

in practice they tend to converge around two poles. One pole attracts policy regimes that are not too concerned with economic inequality and follow strategies that are primarily focused on removing extreme forms of economic exclusion, such as absolute poverty. The other pole attracts policy regimes that are more sensitive to inequality, and not just focused on the removal of poverty. The difference between the two poles is perhaps best captured by distinguishing between what can be termed 'post-hoc inclusiveness' and 'inherent inclusiveness'.

Post-hoc Inclusiveness

Post-hoc inclusiveness refers to an approach where the process of economic growth has high degrees of exclusion, which are later sought to be addressed by specific welfare initiatives. A typical case of post-hoc inclusiveness would involve growth strategies that do not increase employment and are followed by measures involving direct cash transfers to the poor. As post-hoc inclusiveness is only concerned with what is to be done after an economic process has played itself out, it overlooks the inequalities that are generated in that process. It may even be supported by a popular discourse that poverty cannot be removed without first achieving high levels of growth and the urgent need to remove absolute poverty would be used to turn a blind eye to inequality. In more cynical cases, inequality may even be seen as an advantage in the battle against the exclusion generated by extreme poverty. An increase in the income of the rich would potentially raise the revenue from taxation which could be used to create welfare schemes for the poor.

The case for post-hoc inclusiveness can also gain wider sanction within a society. Some of this acceptance of inequality could come from the severity of economic exclusion. In societies where starvation or severe malnutrition continue to exist, the super-rich can be seen as a resource. Societies could then be quite comfortable with situations where the rich get richer, as long as they can be taxed sufficiently. In such instances, it is quite possible that inequality will increase alongside a reduction in levels of poverty.

An effective fight against absolute poverty and other forms of social exclusion could result in the champions of post-hoc inclusiveness gaining a moral edge. The beneficiaries of extreme economic inequality could also launch philanthropies that associate them with initiatives that directly target absolute poverty. These initiatives, when they are effective, could raise their moral stature. Stories of substantial fortunes earned by individuals, who later use parts of it to target absolute poverty, can also be an inspiration and increase what Arjun Appadurai has termed 'the capacity to aspire'.[22] Appadurai has argued that this capacity is adversely affected by poverty, but the extent of this limitation, if it exists, would be reduced by the process of globalisation. The communication technologies that reduce the effects of distance also reach the poor. It would not be unusual for the poor to aspire towards their interpretation of the lives of the beneficiaries of inequality. In cities like Bengaluru (the official name for Bangalore), poor garment workers have been known to set aside a substantial portion of their meagre earnings to provide an English education for their children.[23] They see this as an important first step for their children.

The possibility of such instrumental actions by a family or by philanthropists can, over time, influence the priorities of the state as well. A state following post-hoc inclusiveness may come to believe that with the instrumental actions against exclusion being taken by individuals, families and philanthropists, it only needs to focus on the constitutive aspects of social exclusion. As long as it at least reduces the aspects of social exclusion that are deplorable in

22   A. Appadurai (2004), 'The Capacity to Aspire: Culture and the Terms of Recognition' in Vijayendra Rao and Michael Walton (eds.), *Culture and Public Action* (Redwood City: Stanford University Press), 59-84.
23   N. Pani and N. Singh (2012), *Women at the Threshold of Globalization* (New Delhi: Routledge).

themselves, it need not concern itself with trying to reduce social exclusion. Take the objective of ensuring that no one is excluded from access to basic health facilities. A government following post-hoc inclusiveness would only be concerned with helping to provide this access and not with the conditions that cause large sections to be excluded from basic healthcare in the first place. It would believe that its duty is done if it provides health insurance for all. This approach can be further generalised by providing a direct cash transfer to the poor, and not worrying about how these transfers will be used. A popular narrative can also be developed to support the non-instrumental aspects of post-hoc inclusiveness. The narrative would typically point to high levels of corruption and argue that the leakage would be reduced by a direct transfer of funds to the poor. The narrative can be extended to the rights of individuals to make their own choices rather than having the state choose for them. While this narrative may not say so, there is the implicit assumption that if the cash transfers do not lead to choices that will remove social and economic exclusion, the fault will lie with the individual and the family, and not with the state.

Inherent Inclusiveness

In contrast to post-hoc inclusiveness, inherent inclusiveness does not begin with the premise of high growth at any cost being a prerequisite for an effective battle against social exclusion. Instead, inherent inclusiveness would involve a growth strategy that has inclusiveness built into it. A typical case of inherent inclusiveness would be growth that generates broad-based employment for the poor, thereby improving their quality of life, ideally without the aid of welfare measures. Such an approach is not necessarily confined to the constitutive aspects of inclusiveness. The fact that it intervenes in the growth process provides it with an important instrumental role.

The instrumental aspect of inherent inclusiveness would extend to making up for any shortfall in the battle against social exclusion. It would be open to the possibility that, despite the instrumental role that the state plays in encouraging pro-poor growth, the results may not be substantial enough to completely remove economic and social exclusion on their own. There would then be a need to also take steps that would be instrumental in directly removing forms of social exclusion. Staying with our example of exclusion from basic health services, a state following inherent inclusiveness would not confine itself to providing cash transfers or insurance policies but would directly contribute to the creation of health services that the poor can access.

Such a system would be less tolerant of inequality. This would be particularly true in societies that have overcome the challenge of extreme absolute poverty. In such societies, the argument of allowing high inequalities in order to provide resources for the removal of absolute poverty would not exist. There would then be a greater tendency to focus on the unfairness of large shares of income being concentrated with what is popularly termed 'the one percent'.

Circumstances of Inclusiveness

While the two poles that I have identified have an abstract logic of their own, the one a society gravitates towards would be influenced by the circumstances that society faces. These circumstances would be unique, but the pole would not be independent of larger processes and conditions as well. Arguably, the most significant of these conditions is the extent of absolute poverty. A low-income society that faces extreme starvation would need to tap whatever resources it can to remove this severe deprivation. In search of the growth that will generate these resources, the state could be quite willing to opt for strategies that lead to high levels of inequality, as long as those at the top of the unequal economic hierarchy can be tapped to provide resources to combat starvation. Such societies would tend to lean towards

the post-hoc strategy for inclusiveness. They may well believe that the urgent need to remove extreme forms of absolute poverty would justify ignoring the inequalities that may be built into the economic growth of that society.

This is not to suggest that the gravitation of a society towards one pole or the other would be determined entirely by levels of income and economic deprivation. While the urgency of the need to deal with absolute poverty is undoubtedly an important influence, there is no dearth of individualistic advanced societies that are content to function with post-hoc inclusiveness. The potential for an advanced society to gravitate towards either of the two poles is perhaps best reflected in the contrasting approaches to universal healthcare in the United Kingdom and the United States of America. The British approach emphasises investment in healthcare facilities. This instrumental approach fits into the larger framework of inherent inclusiveness. The approach to healthcare in the United States is much less instrumental and focuses on providing health insurance for all. The relatively lower emphasis on the creation of public healthcare facilities ensures that the system is focused on the constitutive aspects of providing healthcare for the poor. The movement towards post-hoc inclusiveness or inherent inclusiveness is thus also influenced by the socio-political culture of a society.

The gravitation towards one or the other pole of the economic base for inclusiveness is also not unidirectional. It is possible for the movement towards a particular strategy for inclusiveness to be slowed down, or even aborted, by the internal dynamics of the two poles. A commitment to post-hoc inclusiveness is based on the expectation that high growth rates would provide the resources to deal with absolute poverty. But if other factors cause a decline in growth, it would hurt the resources available for post-hoc inclusiveness. The decline in growth would also further reduce the ability of the poor to cope with economic adversity. At the very moment that the poor need inclusiveness the most, post-hoc inclusiveness would be at its lowest effectiveness. This could very well lead to political resentment. If the political system allows for democratic change, it could cause a change of government and the new government need not follow the same strategy for inclusiveness.

The movement towards the pole of inherent inclusiveness could also face challenges that cause a change of direction. State investment in the delivery of basic services in education and health would limit the resources available for state-led investment in industries. If this leads to lower growth rates, it would limit the ability of the economy to provide employment to the poor, thereby reducing the degree of economic inclusiveness. The scenario of low growth and low inclusiveness could generate political resentment leading to a change of government and the new government could be more inclined towards a post-hoc approach to inclusiveness.

The economic base for inclusiveness could thus involve diverse strategies. Not only would countries gravitate towards post-hoc inclusiveness or inherent inclusiveness, but they could also change course midstream. The effectiveness of the economic strategy for inclusiveness could also have peaks and troughs. The peak of post-hoc inclusiveness would be when growth rates are high, generating substantial resources to fight economic and social exclusion, while its trough would be when low growth leaves it without the resources to reduce the economic exclusion of the poor. The peak for inherent inclusiveness would be when its instrumental interventions generate growth that increases the employment of the poor, while its trough would occur when its interventions are not sufficient to provide employment for the poor and they hurt the resources available for instrumental interventions in welfare.

The common thread running through both patterns is the relationship between growth and inclusiveness. In periods of low growth, the potential for both post-hoc inclusiveness and inherent inclusiveness would be low. This would also be the time when the need for inclusiveness would be the greatest. At such times, there would be a case for switching to the method that generates growth. At a time when extremely low growth brings down levels of employment, those who would normally favour inherent inclusiveness may prefer to take any measure that revives the economy, even if that means waiting for growth that can be tapped

for post-hoc inclusiveness. Conversely, supporters of post-hoc inclusiveness can, at times of an economic slowdown, choose to implement employment generation schemes that would help revive demand and, hence, growth. A slackening of the growth rate could thus bring in a degree of ambiguity to the choice between post-hoc inclusiveness and inherent inclusiveness.

In the midst of a continuously changing economic base for inclusiveness, it is important for national and city-level governments to recognise the particular economic strategy that is being used and to monitor its progress. If nothing else, such a continuing review would help predict when a particular economic strategy for inclusiveness is likely to fail, and perhaps even provide the needed course for correction. This is essential if we are to ensure that growing urbanisation around the world does not derail the progress of development.

Planning and Utopianism: Big Plans, Tweaks or Everyday Utopias?
Idalina Baptista

In this short note, I reflect on the ways in which we think about planning and utopianism in shaping the quality of the places we live in. The balance between big plans and tweaks has remained a matter of debate for planning scholars, policymakers and practitioners worldwide for many decades now. The New Urban Agenda, approved in Quito, Ecuador in 2016, foregrounded the importance of planning in achieving sustainable development (see also Sustainable Development Goal 11).[24] The remaining question, however, is what kind of planning we are to undertake, especially when some of the major urban challenges are now in cities of the Global South dealing with fast-paced urbanisation, often understaffed and under-resourced, struggling with extensive inequality and poverty. In many such cities, choosing between big plans and tweaks to the urban fabric does not seem to offer a tangible alternative to the status quo, especially where the legacies of modern colonial planning clash with the resourcefulness of urban dwellers seeking to make do on an everyday basis.[25] At present, a certain dose of utopianism may be in order to imagine a planning practice that delivers quality places for all.

To this end, I begin by sketching how planning has dealt with utopianism and the search for making the impossible possible. I then briefly examine how planning scholars have conceptualised a key conundrum in city-making; that of coordination between diverse interests. I identify how different approaches rely on revised versions of big plans or tweaks and discuss their limitations and alternatives. Finally, I suggest that opposing big plans to tweaks is perhaps a false choice we should avoid. I reframe the practice of planning as a process always in the making that requires a focus on everyday utopias – i.e., thinking big and acting small in the spaces of everyday life.

Planning Utopianism

In a 2015 publication, planning theorist Louis Albrechts captured an on-going angst among planning scholars and practitioners. As he put it, '[a] lot of traditional planning is about maintaining the existing social order rather than challenging and transforming it'.[26] Albrechts further complained about the lacklustre performance of this traditional planning in conjuring quality places and its adherence to market-oriented priorities:

> *Traditional spatial planning becomes less focused on the visionary and imagining the 'impossible' and more concerned with pragmatic negotiations around the 'immediate' in a context of the apparent inevitability of market-based forms of political rationality.*[27]

Albrechts's criticism may not be wholly fair. After all, masterplans produced by international consultants promise to deliver the 'impossible' in many cities of the Global

24   United Nations (2015) 'Goal 11: Make Cities Inclusive, Safe, Resilient and Sustainable', *Sustainable Development Goals* https://www.un.org/sustainabledevelopment/cities/.
25   V. Watson (2009), 'Seeing from the South: Refocusing Urban Planning on the Globe's Central Urban Issues', *Urban Studies,* 46(11): 2259-2275.
26   L. Albrechts (2015), 'Ingredients for a More Radical Strategic Spatial Planning', *Environment and Planning B,* 42(3): 510.
27   L. Albrechts, 510.

South, transforming existing landscapes into glitzy versions of Dubai.[28] Many authors have denounced, rightfully, these 'neoliberal' forms of urbanisation for promoting market-based rationalities at the expense of more just sustainable cities. Yet, their incisive critiques seldom provide ways of making *that* 'impossible' (just sustainability) possible. With available 'visions' derided, utopianism in planning seems to have been lost and we seem unable (or unwilling) to find more generative ways to engage with it.

Concerns with imagining the 'impossible' for city life are not new. From Ebenezer Howard's *Garden Cities of To-morrow*[29] to Henri Lefebvre's *The Urban Revolution*,[30] we have plenty of works that reference utopianism in planning, in one way or another. However, planning utopianisms are not the same across these works. Russell Jacoby distinguishes between two currents of utopianism.[31] One current refers to the 'blueprint' utopians, those who define utopia to its very last detail, to the extent that their plans soon become at best anachronistic, or at worst a force of domination and exclusion. These are the utopians of the likes of Howard and, in many respects, of 'neoliberal' urbanisation. The other current entails a form of utopianism possibly worth considering and recovering, which Jacoby calls the 'iconoclastic' utopians. As Jacoby suggested, in their willingness to visualise (but not predetermine) what the future looked like, these utopians kept alive the possibility of what could be. Similarly, Ruth Levitas, a leading figure of utopian studies, speaks of utopianism as 'visualising, hoping for, and working for a better world'.[32] A way to accomplish this is through a focus on everyday, not grand, utopias. Davina Cooper refers to 'everyday utopias' as alternatives to dominant practices, or in her words as 'networks and spaces that perform daily life… in a radically different fashion… by creating the change they wish to encounter'.[33] Arguably, Lefebvre's imagination of the 'urban' aligns well with this latter current of utopianism:

> The urban… is the possible. To reach it – in other words, to realise it – we must overcome or break through obstacles that currently make it impossible.[34]

Technocratic planners and their 'big plans' were some of the obstacles that Lefebvre alluded to. Like Jane Jacobs before him, Lefebvre was a keen critic of both planners and big plans, which he perceived to drain the lifeblood of everyday urban life as an embodied, poetic and sensuous experience of 'habiting'. Lefebvre thought that planning emphasised space over time, and thus neglected the dynamics of differential space (time-space) in creating a diverse urban experience centred on the everyday. He also felt that planning regimented, if not erased, 'habiting', obliterating its inherent poetics, desire and everyday rhythms. I am unsure if Lefebvre thought that planning could ever be usefully rehabilitated to conceptualise the urban as a condition of possibility. As the utopianism Levitas and Jacoby referred to, Lefebvre offered largely inspiring, yet hazy, imaginations of the urban:

> If the urban is total, it is not total in the way a thing can be, as content that has been amassed, but in the way that thought is, which continues its activity of concentration endlessly but can never hold or maintain that state of concentration, which assembles elements continuously and discovers what it has assembled through a new and different form of concentration. Centrality defines the u-topic (that which has no place and searches for it). The u-topic defines centrality.[35]

28   For example, see A.D. Ghertner (2015), *Rule by Aesthetics: World-Class City Making in Delhi* (Oxford: Oxford University Press) and V. Watson (2013), 'African Urban Fantasies: Dreams or Nightmares?', *Environment & Urbanisation*, 26(1): 1-17.

29   E. Howard (1902 [1898]), *Garden Cities of To-morrow* (London, UK: Swan Sonnenschein and Co. Ltd).

30   H. Lefebvre (2003 [1970]), *The Urban Revolution* (Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Press).

31   R. Jacoby (2005), *Picture Imperfect: Utopian Thought for an Anti-Utopian Age* (New York, NY: Columbia University Press).

32   R. Levitas (2011), *The Concept of Utopia* (Oxford, UK: Peter Lang Ltd), xiv.

33   D. Cooper (2014), *Everyday Utopias: The Conceptual Life of Promising Spaces* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press), 2.

34   H. Lefebvre, 16-17.

35   H. Lefebvre, 171-2.

Here resides the angst some have with planning today: stuck between a utopian tradition that emphasises the certainty of blueprint 'big plans' and the utopian view of the urban as the dreaming up of the impossible without making it sufficiently concrete.

Coordinated Action

This conundrum is not lost on planning scholars or practitioners concerned with the importance of coordinated action to successful planning. With all its imperfections, a 'big plan' is a viable instrument around which to rally people and motivate action. Thinking of planning as process shifts attention from predetermined urban outcomes to questions about the possibility of collectively devising a 'big plan': who to involve, how, when and how to sustain this involvement over time to achieve quality places among competing interests, often unequally represented in our societies.[36] Some authors have proposed that such coordinated action could be conceived of as part of broad-scale initiatives of strategic spatial planning (as proposed by Albrechts, Healey and many others). But others, perhaps disillusioned with the possibilities of coordinated action, suggest we ought to intervene in space through forms of city-making that are 'tactical' or 'Do It Yourself'.[37] Arguing for short-term, low-cost, bottom-up interventions in the urban fabric, this form of city-making dispels 'the slow and siloed conventional city building process' in favour of flexible neighbourhood solutions that 'embrac[e] the dynamics of cities'.[38] Tactical urbanism thus offers urban 'tweaks' as key to a new life in cities, yet their short-term nature may fall short of the transformative potential of Cooper's everyday utopias. In fact, despite the hype piled onto these forms of community-based interventions, some scholars argue that tactical 'do it yourself' urbanism is nothing short of a US-centric, neoliberal urban fad,[39] which imperils the possibility of further integrated, long-term planning that considers more inclusive needs.[40]

Colleagues working in the Global South have cast doubt on the possibilities of such approaches in their terrain. They are particularly weary of trying to consider how such initiatives would work amidst the networks of power and influence dominant in the production of space,[41] or how they would square with the informal lived realities of most urban dwellers.[42] Their claims are partly contextual (i.e. context matters in planning), and partly epistemological (i.e. knowledge production in planning has remained narrowly based on Euro-American realities and, therefore, is unsuitable to address different contexts).[43] Some have proposed that forms of planning co-production, engaging state and society groups across the Global South, can '"deepen the pot" from which planning ideas can be drawn'.[44] Co-production is neither grand planning nor small 'tweaks', but a set of strategies that poorer communities have drawn upon to satisfy basic urban needs amidst significant power imbalances.[45] However, its effectiveness should not be romanticised, not least because it still requires coordination among those involved to be sustained over time, especially when co-production efforts challenge established networks of power and influence.

36   P. Healey (2007), *Urban Complexity and Spatial Strategies: Towards a Relational Planning for Our Times* (London, UK: Routledge).

37   See, for example, M. Lyndon and A. Garcia (2015), *Tactical Urbanism: Short-term Action for Long-term Change* (Washington DC: Island Press).

38   Lyndon and Garcia, 3.

39   O. Mould (2014), 'Tactical Urbanism: The New Vernacular of the Creative City' *Geography Compass*, 8(8): 529-539.

40   D. Finn (2014), 'DIY Urbanism: Implications for Cities', *Journal of Urbanism: International Research on Placemaking and Urban Sustainability*, 7(4): 381-398.

41   T. Goodfellow (2013), 'Planning and Development Regulation Amid Rapid Urban Growth: Explaining Divergent Trajectories in Africa', *Geoforum*, 48: 83-93.

42   E. Pieterse (2008), *City Futures: Confronting the Crisis of Urban Development* (London, UK: Zed Books).

43   S. Parnell and E. Pieterse (2016), 'Translational Global Praxis: Rethinking Methods and Modes of African Urban Research', *International Journal of Urban and Regional Research,* 40(1): 236-246; S. Parnell and J. Robinson (2012), '(Re)Theorising Cities from the Global South: Looking Beyond Neoliberalism', *Urban Geography*, 33(4): 593-617; E. Pieterse and A. Simone (eds.) (2013), *Rogue Urbanism: Emergent African Cities* (Auckland Park, South Africa: Jacana Media).

44   V. Watson (2014), 'Co-Production and Collaboration in Planning – The Difference', *Planning Theory & Practice,* 15(1): 62-76.

45   D. Mitlin (2008), 'With and Beyond the State: Co-Production as a Route to Political Influence, Power and Transformation for Grassroots Organizations', *Environment and Urbanisation,* 20(2): 339-360 and Watson (2014).

Think Big, Act Small... in Everyday Life

I have no intention of resolving here these various planning conundrums. Discussions about the appropriate scale of planning interventions or the adequate roles for the state, market and civil society in city-making are some of the most enduring topics over the last several decades among planning scholars.[46] Instead, I would suggest the choice between big plans and tweaks seems rather unhelpful, if not misplaced. As the example of co-production highlights, it may be more profitable to diversify the strategies available to us when considering how to develop and achieve visions of better, more just places where we can live together. If context and localised knowledge are of essence to planning, then we should probably seek to enlarge the toolset available to planners and policymakers when considering how to tackle the urban challenges they face. Sometimes it may be necessary to undertake a small tweak; other times having a big plan can help rally energies towards action; other times still some other approach may be needed. The balance is not, it seems, between 'big plans' or 'tweaks', but between a wider diversity of approaches that take place at different times in different arenas, with consideration of the everyday lives of the communities we are planning for.[47] Nabeel Hamdi perhaps said it well: '[...] in order to do something big – to think globally and act globally – one starts with something small and one starts where it counts'.[48]

Balancing between different approaches to planning seemingly aligns well with Lefebvre's view of the urban as a process of continuous assemblage in everyday life. In other words, we may have to continuously think big, 'with open hearts and ears'[49] about what the future might look like, while at the same time acting small, continuously assembling the elements that make our everyday urban lives possible. Considering the power relations, interests and resources (or lack thereof) that this involves, planning emerges less as grand design or temporary change, and more as everyday utopia always in the making.

46   B. Sanyal, L.J. Vale and C.D. Rosan (2012), *Planning Ideas that Matter: Livability, Territoriality, Governance, and Reflective Practice* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press).
47   Healey (2007).
48   N. Hamdi (2004), *Small Change: About the Art and Practice and the Limits of Planning in Cities* (London, UK: Earthscan), xix.
49   R. Jacoby (2005), 36.

The State as Prime Mover in Urban Planning: Emphasising Space over Non-Space
Dipankar Gupta

Urban planning, properly done, should add up to reveal a vision of what the city stands for, how its residents connect, and, of course, public aesthetics. Naturally, this demands coherence and structure at the state level and cannot be left to disparate local initiatives, led by diverse concerns and informed by moral ties. Indeed, in all such efforts, consultations with stakeholders are vital. This is not because their views are inviolable but because the considerations they bring forward need to be factored in, lest something significant is left out. At the same time, neighbourhoods do not add up to a good city; in fact, it is the other way around. If the city is planned with the right vision, neighbourhoods will connect, or else they will stand apart as enclaves, gated or relegated.

A city is not just an agglomeration of people whose numbers make it urban by census classification. It is first and foremost where citizens live and where the reach of citizenship expands. A city has the potential to advance culture, the arts and sciences and create a democratic temperament among its residents. A city is where human horizons expand and human creativity is at its best. It is essential, therefore, that citizenship concerns drive urban planning. This demands the crafting of an overall perspective of what we want the city to accomplish for its residents. It cannot be achieved piecemeal, lurching from project to project; a housing colony here, an industrial site there, offices somewhere else, and so on. For citizenship to be placed uppermost in urban planning, two issues need to be kept in mind.

Significance of Public Space and Non-Space

The first issue in which the state is crucial is through 'public space', and the second is the important distinction between space and non-space. A public space is not simply a place in the open that people pass through, but one that generates a sense of belonging to all. This happens when there is a general awareness of its aesthetics and public utility, which together create a sense of belonging and membership. Public spaces, therefore, are made up of two aspects, viz., public and space. The first tells us that it is open to all, but the second alerts us to the fact that this is a 'space' that everyday people can identify with and have a sense of belonging to. This latter aspect can be clarified by referring to Marc Auge's all-important distinction between place and non-place.[50]

A non-place, of which there are plenty in most unreflective urban projects, is where people come and go, frequently too, but they form no attachment to it. It does not tug at the heart and if they were to move to another non-place that performs the same function, they would not notice the difference very much. An airport, for example, is a non-place. It can be functional and can amp up your travel time efficiencies, but it will remain an airport; a place you enter and leave. Few will ever say that they love their city because of its airport. If they did, it might be a danger sign; an indication that the place where they live is starved of public spaces, allowing non-places like airports to become a focal point.

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50   M. Auge (1995), *Non-Places: Introduction to an Anthropology of Supermodernity* (London: Verso), 34.

Just as airports are non-places, so are supermarkets, office complexes, and some apartment buildings as well. They are recommended for their efficiencies and not for the feeling of membership or generating a spirit of ownership. A space is, then, somewhere people can call their own and if they were to be away from their city, it is areas such as these they would recall the most. A public space, then, is where the public, in general, have this feeling of belonging and where they congregate in happy numbers in a routine fashion. This is why some of the more sensitive urban planners do their best to convert non-places to public spaces to the extent they can. So, the grounds around a supermarket and the area within it are developed in such a way that those who do not really need to buy anything will still come there. A public space is, therefore, useful, but not devoted to a particular cause. It is multifunctional, but most importantly, it is where people of diverse backgrounds happily congregate *without* any direct purpose. An ideal public space would be one from where other dedicated non-places could be accessed, depending on one's needs.

When Instrumentality Becomes Primary

Considerations of this kind require a frame of reference that neither individuals nor neighbourhoods, acting out of their own interests, can provide (nor can voluntary groups and activists do the job because they simply lack the resources, as well as the information, needed for the purpose). People can be active sounding boards – and sensitive urban planners must involve them – but ultimately it is the state that has the responsibility to deliver. At this point, it is worth digressing just to clarify that public space has a political content to it (albeit not a partisan one). True, most cities are slanted towards the better off and against poorer sections, but it is not as if the tables need to be turned for citizen-driven urban planning. Although cities can be contested areas,[51] and India offers many examples of that,[52] struggles between socio-economic classes are not the answer. Instead of tensions between classes, urban planning that keeps public space centre stage might be the way forward.

Master Plans of different cities give us an indication of how the idea of public space figures, or does not figure, in the calculations of their framers. In the Master Plan for Delhi 2021 (MPD 2021),[53] meeting certain targets for designated classes of people dominates the scene. But where is the attention to whether a city has a heart that beats? There is an acute housing shortage in Delhi so if that requires regularising the irregular then so be it.[54] About 4.8 million people, maybe more, need housing in Delhi which means another million homes, at least, need to be constructed. To make some advance here, a number of steps are advocated in the plan. These include in situ slum development, construction of cheap homes and reclassifying structures that may have been illegally built as legal. Meeting this pressing need overpowers all other considerations and little attention is paid to aesthetics, or public space, in this connection.

Poor Housing or Housing the Poor

The poor housing sections that the MPD 2021 went about constructing were ugly to begin with, so they became uglier in quick time. Several slum rehabilitation structures were not just unappealing to look at, they were difficult to live in. Imagine setting up home in a box-like unit which is several floors up with no balcony, little space to move around in and no lifts. Getting water up so many floors and keeping the premises in good order are both expensive and labour-intensive. In this context, it is worth keeping in mind how Indian legal procedures have given in to elite interpretations of 'aesthetic', against the interests of the citizens. As

51   M. Foucault (1975), *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison* (New York: Vintage), 226-230.

52   A. Kundu (2003), 'Politics and Economics of Land Policies: Delhi's New Master Plan', *Economic and Political Weekly,* 38(4): 3530-3532.

53   The Master Plan for Delhi 2021 was first conceptualised by the Government of India on 7 February 2007. It was subsequently modified on 31 March 2017. Master Plan for Delhi 2021 (n.d.), (New Delhi: Delhi Development Authority), https://dda.org.in/ddaweb/planning.aspx.

54   Master Plan for Delhi 2021, 31-40.

Asher Ghertner has shown, just because slums are ugly, they are ordered to be demolished, while illegally constructed expensive structures happily exist. After all, the reasoning goes, if something so elaborate and expensive has been put up, how can that be illegal?[55] As slum dwellers are not quite 'citizens' in such renditions, but 'nuisance' creating people, putting them out of sight of middle class areas is seen as a just solution. Consequently, the places that are constructed as slum rehabilitation centres are un-aesthetic and dysfunctional.

Who would willingly call such places home? They would hardly qualify as 'space' but could easily be categorised as 'non-space'. This is because it would matter little to one occupying such a unit if they had to move to another unwelcome non-space. Although the MPD 2021 states that between 50 and 55% of new residential units in the city should be reserved for the poor, there is not a word about aesthetics here. A visit to any of these places would illustrate this well. Those from Economically Weaker Sections (EWS) are entitled to units as small as 30 square metres in government sponsored housing projects. Not just the size and construction material of houses for the EWS need to be questioned; their locations too are very unhelpful to the poor. Many of the new resettlement areas are over 20 kilometres from the city where most of the jobs are. A further affront to the idea of public space comes from the disregard for pedestrians and those who would rather cycle to reach their destinations. First, cycling should not be seen as a poor person's mode of transportation and, second, there should be safe cycling lanes, in addition to pedestrian zones. In fact, the Master Plan for Delhi 1962 did emphasise the need to lay cycle tracks that would act as arterial routes across the city.[56] However, this aspect finds no mention in MPD 2021. The question of 'pedestrianisation' gets only seven lines in this over 300-page document, and public art receives just one paragraph. Clearly, little attention is paid to the need for public spaces where people across classes can meet in pleasurable, aesthetic and functional surroundings.

What blinds us from seeing this fact clearly is the seemingly laudable instrumental goal of providing mass housing for the poor, regardless of quality. That such an approach is elitist rather than citizenship-oriented is often lost on people because the official purpose is 'housing for the poor'. When such predispositions rule, it is hardly surprising that non-space easily trumps space. This is why it is easy to spot class differences in the way people reside, work and shop in Delhi. The absence of 'public spaces' explains the persistence of gated communities in Delhi as well as long stretches of squalid housing. Even where green belts are proposed, it is done with the intention of letting the city breathe, but not planned with the idea of keeping it beautiful. Instrumentality wins once again. Predictably, then, these green belts are in disuse, and have often been encroached upon while the authorities look the other way.[57] This, sadly, is not just limited to Delhi, but characterises other cities too, including Bengaluru, often considered to be the garden city of India.

Space and Non-Space in a Comparative Perspective

In the mid-1950s, New York saw a tussle between Robert Moses and Jane Jacobs as they had conflicting views about urban planning. Moses favoured bulldozing neighbourhoods which he considered 'blighted' to build modern structures and avenues.[58] Not only were Soho and Little Italy in the way of his plans, he did not even hesitate to invade Washington Park. Jacobs,

55   A.D. Ghertner (2008), 'Analysis of New Legal Discourse Behind Delhi's Slum Demolitions', *Economic and Political Weekly,* 43: 57-66 and Ghertner (2011*), 'Rule by Aesthetics: World Class City Making in Delhi',* in A. Roy and A. Ong (eds.) *Worlding Cities: Asian Experiments and the Art of Being Global* (Blackwell).
56   Master Plan for Delhi 1962 (n.d.), Delhi Development Authority.
57   MPD (2021), 18.
58   Jagmohan's efforts at rebuilding Shahjahanabad in the old city of Delhi, during his tenure as Vice Chairman of the Delhi Development Authority (DDA), also gave evidence of forcing new structures on old established neighbourhoods and ridding them of unsavoury characters (see Jagmohan (1975), *Rebuilding Shahjahanabad: Walled City of Delhi* (New Delhi: Vikas Publishing House)). Jagmohan was Vice-Chairman of the Delhi Development Authority between 1975-1977 when India was under Prime Minister Indira Gandhi's Emergency Rule and was given the task to beautify Delhi.

on the other hand, was principally inclined towards establishing friendly neighbourhoods and creating 'space' where it did not exist.[59] Needless to say, the 'powers that be' sided with Moses and this profoundly disappointed Jacobs; in fact, she left for Canada soon after. If parallels with city planning in Delhi seem uncanny, it is because elites everywhere will tend to think alike. This is why it is imperative that citizenship concerns be purposefully introduced into the process from above through state intervention. Although there are many examples of elitist views of aesthetic city planning, let us not forget that the state has often, in recent times, moved in the other direction too. This has helped in establishing 'space' in many state sponsored projects, where urban dwellers feel a sense of membership with their surroundings.

Notwithstanding the earlier negative history of New York, Mayor Bloomberg's appointment of Amanda Burden as director of the City Planning Department in 2002 made a difference. Burden realised that green spaces alone were not enough if they did not attract people to use them for pleasure on a regular basis. It was not just about having parks, but about making them attractive to residents throughout the year.[60] The High Line Park in New York is an example in this regard. More spectacularly, the cities of Dresden and Coventry provide us with paradigmatic illustrations of how the notion of 'public space' makes a difference. Both these cities were flattened by aerial strikes in World War II. Dresden chose to return to a more aesthetic version of its past and even used Bernardo Bellotto's eighteenth-century portrait of the city as a model; that is how keen the planners were to recreate the space they associated with Dresden. This effort has been a remarkable success and the reconstruction of the Frauenkirche church is a testimony to it. Coventry, on the other hand, chose to be purely functional under Donald Gibson and the contrast with Dresden is very striking. Warsaw too, decided to recreate its older spaces after World War II. In more recent times, we have the splendid example of Bilbao in Spain. In 1980, post-Franco Bilbao was a grey city, which aroused no special feelings in anybody. Then the Guggenheim Museum was built. It was an architectural marvel that transformed the ragged character of its neighbourhood. The Nervion River in its vicinity, which used to be rather polluted, now attracts large numbers of people who derive pure joy from its clear waters.

The State as Prime Mover

There are many more examples globally where the creation of space, and not just non-space, has been uppermost in the minds of urban planners. In all such cases, it has been possible because of initiatives that were generated by the state. Tall buildings, massive boulevards and intricate clover leaf flyovers can create a feeling of awe, but not of membership. Who wants to walk alone in New York's Wall Street at night? Thus, the state acts as a prime mover, but whether a city supports the creation of space or just non-space is a matter of choice. For space to be created, an overall vision is needed. In making this vision realisable and sensitive to collective citizenship concerns, it is wise to involve local government authorities. In India, such institutions suffer from large deficiencies and struggle to handle even simple urban tasks such as the provision of water, drainage and salaries. The 74th Constitutional Amendment of 1992 gives formal recognition to municipalities, which are tasked with performing 18 clearly delineated functions, including urban planning. In practice, however, state governments decide everything, including property tax. As a result, urban planning becomes a jumble of diverse projects without coherence. This prompts the alternative belief that voluntary groups, regardless of their diverse provenances, can fill the gap. Without question, they can instigate certain processes, activate mass opinion, but the final task will always remain for the state to accomplish. No doubt, non-spaces are essential, but they should not dominate all; in fact, they can be tempered by spaces that surround and set them off. An office district need not be unfriendly and unwelcoming after dark; nor should housing for the poor be ugly.

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59   J. Jacobs (1961), *The Death and Life of Great American Cities* (New York: Random House); J. Moss (2017), *Vanishing New York: How a Great City Lost its Soul* (New York: Dey Street Books).

60   See https://www.ted.com/talks/amanda_burden_how_public_spaces_make_cities_work.

Negotiating Governance, Accommodating Informality

Sanjay Srivastava[61]

In this essay, I use 'informality' to invoke both academic discussions of the term relating to activities beyond 'regulation'[62] as well as quotidian uses that denote 'illegitimacy' in contexts of commerce, finance, work and housing. Current invocations of the term 'informality' are usually accompanied by a sense of its liminality; it is a staging-post on the way to 'formality' and hence a temporary state of affairs. Informal work is meant to lead to its formal counterpart and informal housing awaits a better future. This is an understandable perspective as 'informality' – notwithstanding connotations of spontaneity and conviviality – is also a state of socio-economic marginalisation (a striking consensus in scholarly discussions on aspects of urban informality).[63] However, the problem is not so much regarding the desire for the imminent dissolution of social and economic informality. Rather, with respect to Indian cities at least, the key aspect is how to think about the persistence of informality as a seemingly permanent aspect of urban life. Urban planning and 'the orderly development of cities through a strict spatial segregation of functions such as housing, commerce, industries, etc.'[64] has found mention in a variety of government documents since the mid-1960s. However, in Delhi at the current time, '40 per cent to 60 per cent of the urban poor live in slums or squatter settlements. [And] the rest live on pavements (close to sources of income), overcrowded tenements, or commute daily to and from peri-urban areas'.[65] Indeed, it is the recognition of the permanence – or, at least, persistence in the foreseeable future – of the informal that is reflected in the fact that the 'Unauthorised Colony' forms an official category of urban settlements. It 'is one of seven types of unplanned settlements in Delhi, built on land which is either not zoned for residential use by the Master Plan or which has not yet been included in the development area'.[66]

Informality Meets Aspirational Governance

The persistence of urban informality notwithstanding, the processes of urban governance that characterise Indian cities are based on the pretence that the model most suited to administering them is one that borrows from an ideal type. That is, while the *actually existing* conditions of urban life might call for methods of governance that hybridise negotiating tactics between those who govern and the governed, the policymaking shows traces of *aspirational* urbanism. In recent years, as urban planning has become an important part of the official policy discourse, the most significant inspiration is the idea that Indian cities should (and will) become like Singapore or Shanghai. The crucial question, in fact, is how to govern informal cities such as Delhi, Mumbai and Kolkata *on their own terms*, so that the mechanisms of governance reflect the constraints and possibilities of the kinds of cities we live in.

62   S. Sassen (1994), 'The Informal Economy: Between New Developments and Old Regulations', *The Yale Law Journal*, 103(8): 2289-2204; K. Hart (1973), 'Informal Income Opportunities and Urban Employment in Ghana' in R. Jolly, E. de Kadt, H. Singer and F. Wilson (eds.), *Third World Employment - Problems and Strategy: Selected Readings* (Harmondsworth UK: Penguin), 66-70.
63   R. Bandyopadhyay (2016), 'Institutionalising Informality: The Hawkers' Question in Postcolonial Calcutta', *Modern Asian Studies,* 50 (2): 675-717; G. Shatkin (2014), *Contesting the Indian City: Global Visions and the Politics of the Local* (Oxford: Wiley Blackwell).
64   L. Batra (2009), 'A Review of Urbanisation and Urban Policy in Post-Independent India', Working Paper Series (New Delhi: Centre for the Study of Law and Governance, Jawaharlal Nehru University), 8.
65   N. Risbud (2009), 'The Poor and the Morphology of Cities', in *India: Urban Poverty Report* (New Delhi: Oxford University Press), 186.
66   S. Sheikh, S. Banda, B. Jha and B. Mandelkern (2015), *Limbo in Sangam Vihar: Delhi's Largest Agglomeration of Unauthorised Colonies: A Report of the Cities of Delhi Project* (New Delhi: Centre for Policy Research), 1.

Additionally, even though the well-off are also significantly part of various contexts of informality,[67] informality is too frequently interpreted as an aspect that characterises the lives of the poor. What is frequently missed within this perspective is that the urban poor resort to informal means of accessing resources, for example, as a matter of survival, while the better-off use it is a means of further enrichment. The nature of precarity at the margins of the cites of the Global South – characterised by a permeable boundary between life and death, rather than, say, the choice between casual or formal employment – requires state-led initiatives that recognise the need to negotiate with those who occupy such margins.

The State and its Subjects

What might be called the flexible state is an important aspect of a great deal of anthropological literature that has begun to re-orient the discipline through altering its traditional focus. Ethnographic accounts of the 'everyday state'[68] have questioned 'the tendency in scholarship on the state to reproduce the Weberian argument that formal legal rationality eclipses substantive cultural factors, so that all modern states are substantially the same'.[69] The state, as Fuller and Harriss go on to suggest, is nowhere as bounded as imagined and is open to historical influences that transform it as well as the society that exists beyond it. That is to say, the state that negotiates and accommodates expressions of need on the part of its most vulnerable citizens is not a utopic idea. Rather, what is required is that its functionaries recognise its actual character that deals with existing, rather than aspirational, urbanism.

What are the actual conditions of life in a city such as Delhi that require calibrations of state procedures of governance in order to account for extreme conditions of precarity and powerlessness? I outline below two specific contexts – relating to shelter and livelihoods – drawn from ongoing research that provide brief glimpses of the situation on the ground.

Satellite Cities: Technologies of Planning and the Urban Poor

A significant aspect of what has come to be regarded as 'good governance' has become closely identified with the intensive application of technology. This is the most common approach in tackling issues of urban governance. So, for example, the Indian government's 100 Smart Cities Mission seeks 'to improve efficiency in service delivery through software-driven technological solutions'.[70] This, in turn, is linked to the consolidation of ideas around 'technocratic governance' and 'technocratic citizenship'.[71] Within these discourses, there is a sense that technology can 'cut through' older forms of personalised dealings and incomplete data sets that characterise policymaking and provide 'a deeper, more holistic and robust analysis'.[72]

The case of Delhi's informal settlements, that contain significant sections (around 40%) of the city's population, tells us that the certainty and transparency promised by techno-positive discourses ought to be treated with caution. It also tells us that dealing with the wellbeing of such a substantial proportion of the city's population requires an approach that relies less

67   A Soni (2000), 'Urban Conquest of Outer Delhi: Beneficiaries, Intermediaries and Victims. The Case of the Mehrauli Countryside' in V. Dupont, E. Tarlo and D. Vidal (eds.), *Delhi: Urban Space and Human Destinies* (New Delhi: Manohar), 75-94.

68   C.J. Fuller and Veronique Bénéï (eds.) (2000), *The Everyday State and Society in Modern India* (New Delhi: Social Science Press), T. Blom Hansen and F. Stepputat (eds.) (2001), *States of Imagination: Ethnographic Explorations of the Postcolonial State* (Durham and London: Duke University Press).

69   C.J. Fuller and J. Harriss (2000), 'For an Anthropology of the Modern Indian State' in C.J. Fuller and V. Bénéï (eds.), *The Everyday State & Society in Modern India* (New Delhi: Social Science Press), 1-30.

70   P. Shetty and R. Gupte (2017), 'Cities and Smartness' in S. Patel and O. Goel (eds.), *The Contemporary Urban Conundrum,* (New Delhi: India International Centre Quarterly), 121.

71   A. Datta (2018), 'The Digital Turn in Postcolonial Urbanism: Smart Citizenship in the Making of India's 100 Smart Cities', *Transactions of the Institute of British Geographers,* 43(3): 405-419.

72   R. Kitchin (2014), 'The Real-Time City? Big Data and Smart Urbanism', *GeoJournal,* 79(1): 1-14.

on inflexible 'global' templates of good governance and more crucially on an understanding of cities as organic entities with their own peculiar needs. In 2015, the Delhi government calculated that there were 1797 'Unauthorised Colonies' (UCs) in Delhi.[73] According to some estimates, approximately 25% (around four million) of Delhi residents live in UCs.[74] The term 'Unauthorised Colony' is an official one and refers to 'unplanned settlements in Delhi, built on land which is either not zoned for residential use by the Master Plan or which has not yet been included in the development area'.[75] A UC is both an informal and an illegal entity and although, in many instances, it is provided with official electricity and water connections, until it is 'regularised', residents do not have formal title to the land they occupy and the accommodation they have built upon it. The quest for 'regularisation' is an unceasing one and UC residents respond with alacrity to official announcements regarding it.

The regularisation process involves a number of steps. It begins with the Residents Welfare Association (RWA) of a particular UC submitting a map of the area they seek to be made regular. This ('raw') map is submitted to the Urban Development Department (UD), which, in turn, directs one of its agencies, Delhi Data Corporation (DDC), to 'verify' the residents' claims through satellite imagery. The satellite map is intended to determine the proportion of occupied land, natural boundaries and whether any government agency has a continuing claim over the land that is sought to be regularised. Between the 'raw' map submitted by an RWA to the Urban Development Department and the satellite map prepared by DDC lies a complex social domain that has much to tell us about the role of the state, technological imaginations of the city and everyday contestations born out of life at the margins of the cities of the Global South. In many parts of Delhi, the maps produced by DDC are frequently disputed by residents who maintain that the government seeks to deny their claims to the city through rejecting (and redrawing) maps produced by the RWAs. Such disputes – that involve residents of UCs, the Delhi government and the central government in complicated relationships – frequently lead to interminable delays in desperately needed infrastructural improvements for some of the most impoverished urban localities. The tortuous routes taken by files between different sections of the Urban Development Department and the multitude of 'notations' by different functionaries are testimony to the lack of efficiency occasioned by the uncritical deployment of technology.

The idea that technology can bypass the 'messiness' of urban life – piecemeal records, incomplete information, venal middlemen, self-serving politicians and other aspects – is a crucial rationale behind strategies that place it at the heart of urban policy. However, satellite mapping does not account for the wide range of stakeholders whose actions produce the quotidian politics of urban space. Poor migrants to the city occupy spaces in ad hoc ways – actions similar to those of the urban rich – clinging desperately to any hope of finding shelter. This requires complex strategies of dealing with the state, land mafias, corrupt bureaucracies and the original landowners who sell their lands for illegal occupation. This, in turn, produces an urban environment of perilous negotiations that cannot be captured through apparent tools of transparency, such as satellite mapping. Rather, effective urban planning requires a grasp of the actual conditions of urban life through an understanding of 'the sociotechnical fuzziness of data as it falls between epistemological problems, material infrastructure and organisational concerns'.[76]

73   From information accessed via the Urban Development Department, Government of Delhi.
74   Sheikh et al.
75   Sheikh et al., 1.
76   C. Coletta, L. Heaphy, S. Perng and L. Waller (2017), 'Data-Driven Cities? Digital Urbanism and its Proxies: Introduction', *Tecnoscienza,* 8 (2): 6.

Biometrics in the Life of the Footpath: Mapping Street Vendors

Technology is the centrepiece of another policy initiative that tells us something about the need to think about relationships between statist formalism and the actually existing informality that defines quotidian existence for the majority of Delhi's working populations. Many Indian cities are seeking to implement the provisions of the Street Vendors (Protection of Livelihood and Regulation of Street Vending) Act of 2014, which seeks both to regulate the activities of street vendors and to protect their rights. In some cities, for example, municipal corporations are carrying out biometric surveys in order to identify street vendors as well as make sure that they are confined to specific, newly designated, vending zones. The case of Gurgaon (its name recently changed to Gurugram) provides an appropriate illustration.

Gurgaon – which is both a district and a city – is located in the state of Haryana on the southern borders of Delhi. Over the past three decades, it has been a site of intense real estate activity, led by a number of private companies, the most significant of which is the Delhi Land and Finance (DLF) Corporation. Beginning from the early 1980s, vast tracts of agricultural land have been transformed into shopping malls, gated residential communities, independent houses, private hospitals, theme parks and a variety of other leisure-related spaces. The 'Millennium City', as Gurgaon is known in both real estate advertising and lay discourse, has, however, become divided into two quite distinct parts: New Gurgaon (containing malls and gated enclaves); and Old Gurgaon (characterised by narrow roads, unruly traffic and poor infrastructure). The latter part is also where street vendors proliferate, selling a variety of goods and cooked and uncooked food. Over the past few years, the Municipal Corporation of Gurgaon (MCG, formed 2008) has been active in the task of bringing the New and Old Gurgaons into closer aesthetic alignment through urban policies that 'clean up' the latter. Implementation of the Street Vendors Act – that includes confining vendors to specific vending zones through geo-tagging and biometric applications – is part of the initiative.

In 2014, the MCG commissioned a private company to carry out a survey of all vendors in its area. The survey came up with a list of 12,172 vendors who were to be shifted to specially designated vending zones. These are located some distance away from the areas they currently occupy, which are usually near transport nodes, hospitals and other areas with heavy pedestrian footfalls and, hence, potential customers. However, the 'resettlement' process – moving vendors away from their current locations to new ones – has been far from smooth with a slew of court cases against removals, conflicts with Market Traders Associations (who may not want new street vending zones near their businesses) as well as with middle-class Residents Welfare Associations (who may also oppose new vending zones on the grounds of noise and 'safety'). In addition, a range of factors peculiar to cities of the Global South have made the implementation of the Act an extremely difficult affair. These include financial relationships between shop-owners and vendors whereby the former charge the latter a 'fee' for allowing them to set up stalls in front of their shops (the new vending zones would upset this relationship); allegations of corruption by MCG officials who 'settle' more than the agreed number in the new vending zones (hence, recreating the congestion that was sought to be addressed in the first place); and financial irregularities by private companies contracted to oversee vending zones and vendor 'rehabilitation' (they often impose illegal fees in excess of that determined by the MCG).

As the above indicates, the most significant aspects of implementation of the Act relate to the relationships between different stakeholders and the peculiar urban politics that characterises Delhi. The most significant focus as far as the MCG is concerned, however, has been in the realm of 'technical' aspects. Private companies have been contracted to carry out biometric surveys that seek to cover two aspects: personal information and location. It is intended that biometric surveys will allow 'tracking' of individual vendors to ensure that they set up their stalls in designated spaces (rather than returning to those from which they have been evicted). In addition, private contractors are carrying out Geographic Information System (GIS) mapping of all towns in Haryana State in order to assist the state government in implementing

the 2014 Act. GIS maps are intended to identify both areas currently occupied by vendors and those available for the creation of new vending zones.

The implementation of the Act in Gurgaon has, in fact, come to a standstill. The objections of middle-class RWAs regarding new zones near their areas, those by shop-owners relating to loss of business if street vendors were to be relocated near them, and a legal objection by vendors against removals from what are seen to be more lucrative selling-spaces have all played a role in this. Among all this, the street vendors suffer the most, their livelihood activities marked by extraordinary uncertainty such as frequent evictions, harassment by the police, shop owners and bureaucrats.

In both the case of the Unauthorised Colonies and the street vendors, the lack of official attention to the *actual* circumstances in which policies must play out has led to an almost complete breakdown of policy mechanisms, with continuing uncertainty and hardship for the urban poor. A negotiable outcome where the organisations that represent UC residents and vendors are *not* dismissed – as they are at present – as 'informal' interlocutors, but whose input regarding the difficulties faced by their members is incorporated into policy making, is key. The need for this approach lies at the heart of both dealing with urban complexity and devising workable solutions to effective urban governance, which benefits the most vulnerable sections of the urban population.

Governing the Streets
Caroline Knowles

Two approaches to urban governance of urban populations – neglect and erasure – dominate urban agendas in the Global North and South alike. The absence of urban governance (neglect),[77] in what seems like a gathering anarchy of ad hoc habitation and survival, of ways of getting by in terms of food and shelter on a day by day basis, in living the informalities of slums,[78] limits as much as it unleashes the potential of cities and the wellbeing of those who live in them. In these circumstances of neglect, dark and uncompromising forces, mafias and racketeers, thrive[79] in unruly liminal spaces that sometimes occupy commanding positions in cities. These circumstances feed popular pathologies of marginalised urban spaces on the one hand, and challenge idealised notions of life organised by and for the people of popular (poor and densely populated) neighbourhoods on the other. Urban experience and scholarship focused on cities in the North and South alike, suggest that the absence of urban governance inhibits collective prosperity, and frustrates moves to improve the living conditions of the masses, who are readily skimmed by mafias and racketeers.

The opposite approach, to crush unruly spaces – the *tabula rasa* approach to urban governance – is of equally dubious benefit. Refusing to acknowledge the viability and legitimacy of unruly urban spaces, bulldozers cleanse cities of the informal survival strategies of popular life, promoting instead a more organised street life, at least in the calculations and fantasies of city planners.[80] A recent example is in the Anarkali district of Lahore. The first time that local residents heard that their area was to be cleared to build a new rapid transit line was when their homes were marked up for demolition, as bulldozers backed by the Pakistan army moved in to flatten the neighbourhood and its long established social architectures of interconnection and mutual support.[81] This is an all too common example of top-down approaches to implementing big plans. Even though these plans will have beneficial outcomes in public transport for all, they were executed with a catastrophic failure to consult local residents, who were dispersed throughout the city with only small amounts of compensation.

Somewhere in between these two approaches to urban governance of neglect and erasure – between the bulldozers that demolish the built and social architectures of popular neighbourhoods, and the regimes of dark forces – is a space in which it might be possible to negotiate appropriate, socially inclusive forms of governance, forms that enable the masses to access the resources composing viable urban life. What follows is a series of suggestions and ruminations on improving life for the masses through small-scale tweaks to urban governance that work from the street (from the ground up) while also acknowledging the widespread benefits of investments in big plans, if not their methods. Big plans are vital in improving urban life, but the violence and disruption of the bulldozer are not the best way to implement them. Tweaks, small adjustments in urban governance aimed at tiny improvements to life in popular neighbourhoods, can be most effective. Ad hoc situational-responsive approaches to combinations of big plans and tweaks might offer a way forward.

77   The absence of urban governance or its operation in the most minimal of forms is frequently a matter of expediency. Cities in the Global South expand rapidly due to all manner of pressures including rural to urban migration, making it difficult for municipal authorities to provide even the most basic kinds of infrastructure.

78   'Slum' is here used as in M. Davis (2007), *Planet of Slums* (London: Verso). Davis uses it to denote ad hoc informal vernacular settlements that are often technically illegally sited. The UN estimates that these will grow to comprise three billion people by 2050, http://mirror. unhabitat.org/content.asp?typeid=19&catid=10&cid=928.

79   See L. Weinstein (2008), 'Mumbai's Development Mafias: Globalization, Organised Crime and Land Development', *International Journal of Urban and Regional Research,* 32(1).

80   C. Knowles (2014), 'Dancing With Bulldozers: Migrant Life on Beijing's Periphery', *City,* 18(1): 41-57; L. Richaud and A. Amin (2020 forthcoming), 'Life Amidst Rubble: Migrant Mental Health and the Management of Subjectivity in Urban China', *Public Culture,* (32)1.

81   C. Knowles (n.d.), 'Urban Development and Dislocation in Lahore', *Medium,* https://medium.com/@urbanmorph/urban-develop-ment-and-dislocation-in-lahore-f8f2a8fac422.

The situation we face demands urgent action. Cities in the Global South are, for a variety of reasons, growing uncontrollably, particularly the informal, slum cities, which are already struggling to provide the bare necessities such as food, water, shelter, and adequate livelihoods. The urban policies which are devised in response are often connected to research programmes and projects in the UK which will be delivered as part of government aid to developing countries, while in the Global South urban policy is informed by the political priorities of those in power. Developing robust knowledge of social and technical conditions and how cities work is imperative in addressing the quality of life of the poorest people in the poorest cities and nations. It is vitally important to unravel the social complexities, inequalities and diverse needs of city populations, and to understand significant social differences that may affect a population's ability to call upon resources. Cities are composed of plural populations with unequal rights and access to vital goods. Access to decently paid and dignified employment is particularly important. Even the poorest popular neighbourhoods contain significant social differences and women, in particular, are often multiply disadvantaged.

But the urgency of the situation we face demands that we act now rather than wait for the results of further research. It demands that we move forward with incomplete knowledge, well-honed guesswork, and an altogether more experimental approach to trying things out and discovering what actually works on the ground. Cities have always been social laboratories, and experimentation is a viable approach to the situation we are now in, given its urgency and importance. New, improvised, issue-driven repertoires of urban governance that move rapidly in new directions need to be tried out, evaluated, and then rolled out (if they work) in other places too. A cacophony of dissonant tweaks and small-scale adjustments might also accumulate and work as 'big plans' in unforeseen ways.

Small adjustments work well as experiments as they work closer to the ground than big plans, tapping into what Edgar Pieterse calls the operating systems of popular neighbourhoods, in order to reimagine or remake them with the limited ambition of reducing the factors which threaten people's survival.[82] This type of intervention with limited ambition in improving everyday life would best work collaboratively with the inhabitants of densely populated neighbourhoods, rather than delivering improvements to them. Such initiatives would ideally involve small, practical changes, such as simple shelter building initiatives, rubbish removal, unclogging blocked drains and knowing how to manage contaminated water; immediate and practical improvements with advantages in enhancing the quality of everyday life that are obvious to all. These community-led approaches and initiatives do not necessarily need big plans, although such plans would enhance them. They are rapidly actionable and controllable by local communities working on the issues that are the most important to them.

Practical, life-improving tweaks like these have broader resonance in building urban political literacies, or knowledge about how to get things done. Apprenticeships in political processes are embedded in them. Approaches that work upwards from practical interventions are simple, if limited, practices of urban community involvement in action. Community-level politics are linked to broader local politics and political decision-making processes that people and communities can learn to navigate to secure the outcomes they desire. Communities seeking small incremental improvements in living conditions often must learn how to move up to the next level (including state level) in order to navigate blockages. Who needs to be spoken to and how? A practical education in politics is imbricated in these simple, concrete, life-improving initiatives.

Building urban political literacies can eventually, in the right circumstances, add up to new forms of collective life, and potentially, new contracts between the nation state and different scales of governance. Despite being fragile, temporary and constantly renegotiated, as is the

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82   E. Pieterse (n.d.), 'Incorporation and Expulsion', *e-flux architecture* and A. Simone (2018), *Improvised Lives: Rhythms of Endurance in an Urban South* (Polity).

nature of such endeavours, developing political literacies also grows community confidence in the possibilities of change and an understanding of how to make it happen. Approaches to governance that rescale to the neighbourhood with legible lines connecting upwards to bigger scales of influence and governance are more likely to capture the understanding and active participation of poor neighbourhoods. The right tweaks empower. No more waiting for the authorities to act, all they need to do is enable.

Public participation, of course, is not inevitably progressive. There are many examples of resources being captured by well-organised, well-connected, loud and affluent populations. Participation, as Michael McQuarrie warns, can also be a tool of elite authority.[83] The key issue here is the political framing of participation. Is it progressive and politically just in confronting disadvantage? Does it recognise the needs of the poorest neighbourhoods? What sort of participation is envisaged? What practices? Are these likely to make a difference in an everyday politics of survival? Connections upwards need to be clear, accountable, and helpful in improving the conditions of the poorest urban lives. Progressive political alignments, forces and commitments are vital.

Along with others, I am suggesting approaches to governance that involve gradual, sustainable, step-by-step, bottom-up, practical renegotiation – on an issue by issue basis – of the terms on which plural populations live together and share urban space. Of course, this needs appropriate local and translocal political mechanisms to make it work in socially just ways that reduce social inequalities and improve popular access to vital goods. These approaches to governance can create new repertoires of entitlement on the one hand (perhaps to clean water or sanitation) and dispossessions (loss of ancestral lands and rents) on the other. Hard decisions between competing interests will have to be made. Negotiations like these need a more collaborative, rights-based approach to urban goods, with priority given to the most basic infrastructures of urban wellbeing (to shelter, nutrition, health and livelihood) of the most disadvantaged populations.

Inevitably, the most fundamental infrastructures of urban wellbeing also demand city and/or state investment in big plans. Provision of water and sanitation, for example, are beyond the reach of individual communities and neighbourhoods. But what matters is how these commitments are negotiated with local communities. Agreement with – as opposed to imposition on – communities is important, as is consultation over what is useful and when and how it might be delivered and put to use. Without this kind of collaboration and incorporation, the impacts of big plans can be disappointing at best and at worst, exclusionary. People need to be able to see themselves and their lives in the city of the future. With consultation and collaboration over the terms of displacement, the Lahore rapid transit plans mentioned earlier could be a community asset rather than a top-down displacement of poor communities.

Rigid distinctions between the legal and illegal and formal and informal occupation of land are common within big plans dominated by city and state authorities. In practice, as a number of urban researchers have noted, the distinction between the legal and the illegal and the formal and the informal is rarely clear-cut. The use of these terms in conferring or withholding rights – to land, subsistence and so on – could be more flexible and sympathetically exercised. Such flexible approaches, that recognise the grey areas of marginal life in the slums as pragmatic responses to uneven allocation of urban resources, might provide a way forward. Putting off legal issues (such as land tenure) until a later point in order to deal with immediate exigencies such as floods, landslides, crop failures or displacement in redevelopment – issues that can also be mitigated by local knowledge and traditional practices – would constitute a more humane approach tweak by tweak.

83   M. McQuarrie (2013), 'No Contest: Participatory Technologies and the Transformation of Urban Authority', *Public Culture 25*, 1(69): 143-175.

Distinctions between the formal and the informal are often linked with plans to formalise and regulate cities and are in keeping with conventional versions of what constitutes modernity in city life. Inevitably, this has global ramifications and resonates with the (assumed) competition between cities in being 'world class' and/or in attracting streams of investment and improvement in the lives of residents. Such moves rarely benefit all, and their spoils are restricted to the few.

Modest plans might be more appropriate alongside a willingness to work with and tap into what AbdouMaliq Simone calls the unruly worlds, resources and inventiveness of popular life.[84] As Edgar Pieterse points out, the poor have a capacity to aspire and to think beyond their immediate circumstances, even when rational calculations suggest otherwise. The urban poor have the imagination and ingenuity to invent workable lives even in unworkable situations. Working with them and harnessing their inventiveness could yield substantial benefits in imagining the cities of the future.

The *how* of urban governance is as important as the *what*. In other words, approaches to urban governance are as important as their content, and here, small tweaks can provide big improvements. What would happen if the strategy of starting with policies and giving them a force in practice was reversed? Why not experiment to find out first what works and then use this knowledge to design flexible policies? Small-scale experiments can be tweaked until they fit and then scaled up and rolled out in other places to see if they might work there too. Urban policy is then about small implementable improvements to urban life kept under constant review and adjustment; a methodology based on constant tweaking.

An experimental approach to negotiating competing plural interests in urban life backed by commitments to social justice could work well. What would happen if negotiations between interests were conducted on a concrete, case-by-case basis? Interests and populations that gain in one round may concede in the next. Some of these negotiations may adopt the force of collective actions and popular protests. Urban governance is always incomplete in process and is composed of live experiments in what does and does not work for specific populations in particular times and places.

Like cities, urban governance is a work-in-progress with the chance to steer things towards small improvements in the lives and circumstances of the masses. Tweaks are nimble and respond to circumstances on the ground. Tweaks provide guidance by accumulating towards the most appropriate big changes as well as providing a chance to test those tweaks in action. Both are vital in solving the urgent issues facing urban governance, and methods of governance are at least as important as their substance.

84   Simone, *Improvised Lives*.

Placing Urban Difference
Michele Lancione

I want to start with a vignette. We are in front of a shelter for homeless people in Italy (but similar kinds of encounters can be found all across the urban West). The facility is located in the middle of one of the biggest parks on the outskirts of Turin and is considered to be of an 'emergency' kind since it operates only during the winter. It is made from shipping containers: large metal rectangular boxes designed to move freight all over the planet. Here, however, each one contains eight bunk beds and some homeless people. Roberto, one of them, is an Italian man in his 40s. He comes forward and tells us:

> *'You can't sleep there! You've to trust me. Would you sleep if someone is smoking, someone else snoring like a pig, and in the other container a fight has just broken out? Would you tell the one who is smoking and talking with his friend to stop doing so? They are crazy. It is full of Moroccans and Romanians there. They always have knives with them. I go there just 'cause it's warm, that's it. But I'm gonna stop; it's shit!'*
> *(Roberto, Dec. 2009).*[85]

Roberto is not the only one expressing dissatisfaction with the temporary emergency shelter in such a charged way. Antonio, another Italian homeless person, comes forward and speaks even more vividly about his relationship with the camp:

> *'I don't go there. I prefer the train; the train is better. […] The Romanians are always drunk, they scream, they fight… Do you know what they do? They piss on the front step of the container! There is a smell of piss everywhere in that place…'*
> *(Antonio, Jan. 2010)*

Two details emerge from these accounts with particular strength. First, there is the materiality, the smell and the atmospheric ambience of the camp, a place – as a social assistant working there put it – that was considered to be 'the last resort'. Second, the dissatisfaction that Antonio and Roberto had with the camp was channelled through the proxy of race: that is, it was through the 'other' – the Romanians, the Moroccans – that the camp was depicted as a 'pigsty', a 'place to avoid' and a 'last resort'. Interestingly, similar patterns were at play in the accounts of migrant homeless people too. Here we hear Amiir, who comes from the Horn of Africa:

> *'I don't like this place, but hey, this is it. But you know what? The problem here is people like you, the Italians. They come to the camp, thinking it is their space and only theirs! They jump the queue, insult us, and they always get the best from the guy who stands at the door, the guy who opens the gate. I don't know what's up with these people, but they better not touch me, or I'll beat them so hard they won't touch me again!'*
> *(Amiir, Jan. 2010).*

In considering the experience of Roberto, Antonio, Amiir and many other homeless men and women that I have encountered in my work in Turin and elsewhere in Europe, a pivotal question arises: what does it mean to look at issues of civic inclusion and social cohesion from the standpoint of that camp, that encounter, from within marginal areas where people are excluding themselves in order to stay afloat, right at the edge of historical and economic forces that know nothing of cohesiveness, nothing of inclusion, nothing of what the 'civic' should supposedly be about? In other words, what does it means to look at difference from the

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85   All quotes come from tape-recorded interviews transcribed by the author.

standpoint of groups that have already been marked as different by racialised histories and normative governance? How, most importantly, is difference managed *within* these groups and what kind of politics emerges if one pays attention to the everyday management and negotiations crafted at the extended urban margins of our cities in the North and South?

The city has always been the site where different others have been most vividly juxtaposed. Scholars have investigated how urban space could become more inclusive by enhancing difference[86] and a wide range of research has been conducted regarding the problem of encountering and living 'with difference'.[87] However, in mainstream political discourse, *difference* is still read as something emerging from the encounter between a 'majoritarian' population and a 'minoritarian' one. 'Difference' is mainly understood from a comparative perspective: two or more social groups, more or less precisely defined, are considered in light of their capacities to assimilate, live alongside one another in peace, co-operate or oppose each other. Less has been said on how difference is negotiated within groups that are already seen as 'diverse', marginal and cast out from the social norm. When it comes to homeless people, for instance, their being 'different' is not only determined by their personal ethnic, sexual or cultural background but also – and most importantly – by the social category they are inscribed to.[88] Difference, in this sense, is 'not just constituted from the "inside", from the side of a minority culture, but also from the outside, from the representations and treatment of the minority in question'.[89] The same logic applies to 'slum' dwellers, 'refugees' and all other 'others' that are made not to count in the contemporary urban capitalist environment in the North and South.

How can one go about understanding how difference is negotiated within 'marginal' groups, and between those groups and society at large? How, more fundamentally, should those differences and the associated politically charged demands be negotiated? One option – popular in public and political discourse – pivots around a rights-based approach, which we could also define as egalitarian, or liberal. To work towards it, we might need what the American philosopher John Rawls called 'reflective equilibrium'.[90] To paraphrase Rawls, hypothetically one could for a moment put Antonio, Roberto, Amiir, the city of Turin and the reader of this book under 'a veil of ignorance' and – in those ideal conditions of equality – we could start a generative conversation which will eventually lead to what is best for each one of us and the collective 'good'. However, despite the fundamental importance of maintaining universal rights as a guiding framework and principle, rights-based approaches tend not to suffice, as we see all around the world at any given moment in history. Rights are given and taken away; people are defined equally on unequal bases; communities are included within spaces of exceptions created to control them, and so on.[91] If, as said, the liberal notion of egalitarianism can give a sense of orientation, it needs constant effort, constant labour, to be made to work. Rights need to be brought back, in other words, into the midst of the action, where life gets done, and things are fought over, and embodied, and experienced. Crucially, that 'bringing down and grounding' of rights *will alter how 'rights' are thought of and implemented.* It follows that a truly alternative management of difference can only take place if negotiations and radical politics-in-the-making are allowed to flourish or if, in other words, rights are contested and renegotiated on the basis of everyday inter-action. Only by giving space to such a form of radical direct engagement can the boundaries (re)making difference be contested and hopefully (re)worked.[92]

86   A. Amin (2012), *Land of Strangers* (Polity Press: London); D. Massey (1994), *A Global Sense of Place* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press); L. Sandercock (1998), *Towards Cosmopolis - Planning for Multicultural Cities* (Chichester: John Wiley & Sons).

87   For a review, see G. Valentine (2008), 'Living with Difference: Reflections on Geographies of Encounter', *Progress in Human Geography,* 32(3): 323–337.

88   M. Foucault (2016), *Abnormal: Lectures at the College de France 1974-1975* (London: Verso); E. Goffman (1963), *Stigma: Notes on the Management of Spoiled Identity* (London: Penguin).

89   T. Modood (2007), *Multiculturalism: A Civic Idea* (Cambridge: Polity Press), 39.

90   J. Rawls (1971), *A Theory of Justice* (Cambridge, MA: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press).

91   R. Ferguson, M. Gever, T. T. Minh-ha and C. West (eds.) (1990), *Out There: Marginalisation and Contemporary Culture* (New York: The New Museum of Contemporary Art).

92   S. Mezzadra and B. Neilson (2013), *Border as Method, or, the Multiplication of Labor* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press); M. Purcell (2013), *The Down-Deep Delight of Democracy* (Chichester: John Wiley & Sons).

But before such a re-grounding and re-making of rights can even be possible, fundamental cultural work needs to be done to re-approach how we think of (and then encounter) difference. In my work, I have argued that it is increasingly essential to re-approach the matter of difference, race and urban poverty in their everyday unfoldings and (un)makings,[93] leaving grand-theory and universalising claims in abeyance. This means contextualising difference within longer traditions of elimination and tracing how encounters are made and re-made at 'the urban margins'. Through this reading – which is inspired by a feminist, decolonial and ethnographic scholarship[94] – the 'margins' are not merely a 'place' and do not simply come to define a 'group'. Instead, they are read as a site of contestation,[95] a terrain upon which forms of lives with their own politics, makings and difference are made and re-made, contested and unfolding.[96] In short, to understand the urban experience of difference – how it is constituted and what it portends – one has to get closer to the scene of action, to the makeshifts of urban life.[97]

In order to understand where Antonio, Roberto and Amiir's colourful stances come from, one has to get closer to the materiality and affective atmosphere characterising the scene of action, the camp itself. The camp was located at the edge of the city, in the middle of a cold, poorly lit public park. Its location implicitly speaks about isolation, about distance from the city 'that matters' and about stigmatisation. Its being made out of converted shipping containers reinforced such feelings, evoking a sense of rustiness, deprivation and of being – as many homeless people put it – at the 'end' of their street life. The containers were filled with bunk beds, poorly arranged, and with no space for storing personal belongings. The space was so tiny that two average-sized people could not stand side-by-side in the middle of the room. One had to sleep with one's own belongings firmly attached to the body, sometimes with shoes still on because there was no safe place to put them. The camp was often dirty, and it could not be otherwise because of its location and nature: imagine dozens of people coming in and out of the containers on a rainy day in the middle of a muddy park, wearing their clothes at all times and sometimes vomiting or having diarrhoea.

What kind of encounter can emerge from *that* kind of context? This common question carries important consequences for how we think about difference in our cities and for how we manage it. This is because *social cohesion* is not an abstract signifier but a matter of every negotiation between humans, non-humans and their socialised normative histories. It is, in other words, always situated: made from the stuff that takes place in it, through it, within it. Under a veil of ignorance or through sanitised detachment, we can define and accept Antonio and the others as equal and agree they have all the rights in the world. However, at the end of the day, when dusk is falling upon Turin, *they* are queuing for the homeless shelter, and it is there – not under any veil – that the social happens. It is there that cohesiveness emerges from what is given. In other words, the containers in the park or the shacks in an extended urban periphery in cities like São Paolo or Delhi are not just a scenario, a backdrop upon which things can be designed, humanitarian approaches implemented, and capabilities boosted. On the contrary, they are agents in shaping the politics of the urban margin.[98] The bunk bed, the park, the dim lights, the smell of urine, the politics of management and control put in place by the city and the historical criminalisation of poverty concur in defining inclusion, exclusion, and more. Difference and racialised hatred are, therefore, a biopolitical machinery[99] that is activated in the day-to-day encounter with *l'autre*, in a way that both echoes historical discourses and normalises contemporary exclusionary violent practice.[100]

93   M. Lancione (2016a), 'Racialised Dissatisfaction: Homelessness Management and the Everyday Assemblage of Difference', *Transactions of the Institute of British Geographers,* 41(4): 363–375; M. Lancione (ed.) (2016b), *Rethinking Life at the Margins: the Assemblage of Contexts, Subjects and Politics* (London/New York: Routledge, Taylor & Francis Group).

94   A. Amin (2012); D. J. Haraway (1991), *Simians, Cyborgs, and Women: The Reinvention of Nature* (London: Free Association Books); b. hooks (1994), *Outlaw Culture* (New York: Routledge).

95   B. Hooks (1990), 'Marginality as Site of Resistance' in Russell Ferguson (ed.), *Out There: Marginalisation and Contemporary Cultures* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press), 341-343.

96   M. Lancione (2016b).

97   M. Lancione (2018), 'The Politics of Embodied Urban Precarity: Roma People and the Fight for Housing in Bucharest, Romania', *Geoforum;* A. Vasudevan (2015), *Metropolitan Preoccupations: The Spatial Politics of Squatting in Berlin* (London: Wiley-Blackwell).

98   A. Amin (2014), 'Lively Infrastructure', *Theory, Culture & Society,* 31(7/8): 137-161.

99   Difference and racialised hatred are mobilised (and produced as) 'biopolitical machinery' that affects everyday bodily encounters.

100   A. Amin (2010), 'The Remainders of Race', *Theory, Culture & Society,* 27(1): 1-23.

The importance of these situated details becomes even clearer if one follows the action and traces the details. In following Antonio, Roberto, Amiir, and the Italian and migrant homeless populating our cities, I found out something rather compelling. In many instances, the same people that hate each other at the park, within and throughout the containers, can be found co-operating under different conditions, within different urban contexts. In my work in Turin, I found that the same Romanians, North Africans and Italians fighting in a racialised manner at the camp were instead co-operating to find jobs in the informal market for bricklayers; sharing spaces to sell second-hand clothes at the edges of a public market; or exchanging information on how to get the best deal for their everyday urban transactions. In all the cases in which individuals were not forced to accept conditions that were perceived as normative, denigrating and vilifying, a different articulation of difference was coming to the fore. Within different conditions – through different material circumstances and affective predispositions – a different kind of encounter emerged. A different kind of civic cohesion was enabled to flourish. The racialised dissatisfaction that is increasingly common between poor communities, homeless people and migrants and that led to fighting for the few social services between individuals struggling to make ends meet, is not a given. Moreover, it cannot be quickly subsumed in elitist discourses linking racialised tensions to lack of education. Racialised dissatisfaction is instead a product of the context of action: it is assembled through the interplay of what humans are predisposed to care about, paradigmatic discourses and a whole plethora of small devices – which in the case presented in this short contribution included bunk beds, plastic cups, hard bread, out-of-date food, unpleasant smells, constrained spaces, lack of private space, piled-up bags, mud, broken toilets, and more. It is about the construction of subjectivities at the intersection of power mechanisms and particular truth about 'deviancy', acceptability and the norm.[101] Pointing to the small expedients making up these inter-subjective encounters does not avoid the question of who is or is not racist, but it complements that with a sensibility to understand how racial tensions arise in order to uncover the historic-material and makeshift junctions from which they emerge.[102]

As Amin reminds us, it is the 'frame of the encounter' that matters, more than the encounter itself.[103] Within that frame, the social is infrastructure, in the sense of being consciously socially constructed, but also in the sense of being populated by fragments, relations and affects that do a lot of infrastructural work in the background, almost silently, un-visibly.[104] What is needed is an anthropology of everyday life that – oriented by human rights propositions and attentive to the performative power of biopolitical governmentalities – focuses on uncovering and reporting those micro and macro mechanisms that (re)make understandings of 'difference' and of 'inclusion/exclusion', in the contemporary urban environment. From there – from experimental and situated understanding – cities could be re-built: *from* the ground and, importantly, *by* the ground.

A politics of micro-interventions and diffused solidarity is what is needed, encouraged through such a grounded approach to the urban experience of difference. I am advocating a grassroots and bottom-up politics that does not come from the centre, but from the ground and its margins. What the institutional city can do is to enable, sustain and orient those experiments, based on the solidarity that already exists within our cities: squatting, self-management, sit-ins, makeshift urbanism, hijacked infrastructures, informal economies, and experiments crafted around a politics of co-living, and horizontally organised groups.[105] The role of the institutional city in these makings can be to sustain, not to control and reduce, to trust what its concerned citizens can and would like to do and then back them when their interests collide with those of private property.[106]

101   M. Foucault (1988), 'Truth, Power, Self: An Interview with Michel Foucault' in L. H. Martin (ed.), *Technologies of the Self: A Seminar with Michel Foucault* (London: Tavistock Publications and Ellis Horwood Limited), 9-15; Foucault (2016).
102   M. Lancione (2016a).
103   A. Amin (2012).
104   C. McFarlane (2018), 'Fragment Urbanism: Politics at the Margins of the City', *Environment and Planning D: Society and Space,* 36(6); A. Simone and E. Pieterse (2017), *New Urban Worlds: Inhabiting Dissonant Times* (Cambridge: Polity Press).
105   M. Purcell (2013); A. Vasudevan (2015).
106   C. Ward (1976), *Housing: an Anarchist Approach* (London: Freedom Press).

Amplifying Voices of the Informal Sector in Urban Governance in India
Renana Jhabvala

The urban poor in most parts of the developing world are often unable to climb out of poverty and take advantage of growing GDP because they tend to work and live in conditions of informality. This leads to growing inequality between those who are able to progress using formal systems and those who remain behind in informal ones. Poor urban citizens tend to be informally employed as casual labour, contract workers and self-employed at a subsistence level, most of the work being temporary, insecure and without access to social security. Seventy-nine % of all urban workers in developing economies and 51% in emerging economies are informally employed,[107] while in India, 80% of urban employment is informal.[108]

A peculiar condition of the urban poor is that not only are they informally employed, but they are also informally housed. This means that they live in dwellings that are 'unauthorised' or 'illegal', not included in city plans, and often not legally provided with basic infrastructure such as water, sanitation, waste collection and electricity. Their dwellings tend to be clustered close together and unhygienic. Worst of all, these settlements are demolished by city authorities from time to time and the families living there are forced out of the city limits and made unemployed. In India, as in many other developing countries, urban population growth combined with the shortage of planned affordable housing have caused 26–37 million households (33–47% of the urban population) to live in informal housing.[109]

Generally, neither the needs of the informal economy nor those of informal settlements are taken into account when making city plans and policies. Although the structures of urban governance in India are decentralised and democratic in general, these governance structures tend to obscure informal populations' voices and representation. The Constitution of India gives considerable powers to the third tier of governance, known as Urban Local Bodies (ULBs). There are 4657 ULBs in India's 29 States and seven Union territories, including Municipal Corporations for cities, Municipalities for larger towns and *Nagar* (Town) Panchayats for smaller towns. These bodies are governed by representatives elected by citizens of the town and run by full-time officials appointed independently of the elected body. The most important posts in the elected body are the Mayor and the Standing Committee and the administrative head is the Municipal Commissioner or the CEO.[110]

However, in practice the second tier of governance, the state governments, have taken over many functions at the city level. In most states, the role of the elected ULB is supplemented, or even supplanted, by agencies run by the state, which play an equally important role in running the city. Provision of water supply and sewerage, for example, has in most cases either been taken over by state governments or transferred to state agencies such as Water and Sewerage Boards. These parastatal or state level agencies, including City Improvement Trusts and Urban Development Authorities, have been set up by most state governments to undertake land acquisition and development works, and remunerative projects such as the construction of housing, markets and commercial complexes. The municipal bodies, in many cases, have

107   ILO (2018), *Women and Men in the Informal Economy: A Statistical Picture,* 3rd edn. (Geneva).
108   M.A. Chen and G. Raveendran (2012), 'Urban Employment in India: Recent Trends and Patterns', *Margin: The Journal of Applied Economic Research,* 6(2): 159-179.
109   V. Jain, S. Chennuri and A. Karamchandani (2016), 'Informal Housing, Inadequate Property Rights', *FSG Mumbai.*
110   Commonwealth Local Government Forum (2017-2018), 'India: The Local Government System in India', Country Profile, Commonwealth Local Government Forum.

been left only with the functions of garbage collection, garbage disposal, street lighting, constructing and maintaining roads, and some welfare functions. Furthermore, states have taken over tax collection functions, leaving the ULBs with dwindling revenues.

Within this complex mix of authorities governing the city, citizens have a voice only within the urban local bodies where they have the capacity to elect the representatives. Agencies set up by the state tend to be controlled by influential groups and special interests, such as real estate developers, who have a voice at the state level, especially when it comes to the use of land and investments in the city. Furthermore, given the complexity of agencies governing cities, there is ample scope for bureaucratic control as well as opportunities for them and for politicians to make money 'off the books'.

This does not mean that the poor are completely powerless. While money creates voice for the rich, the spaces opened through the electoral process and the duties of the bureaucracies do allow some space for other voices to be heard. The poor and/or families who have been in the city for some time acquire election cards and are able to vote, which is the primary (and in most cases, only) way to exercise voice within the city. However, this space is small, and the voices can only be heard if they can be aggregated. In other words, only when the poor are able to organise in some way can their voices be heard in the process of city governance.

Creating Voice for Informal Settlement Dwellers: The Case of Vikasini in Ahmedabad

There are many types of informal settlements in the cities of India. Some have been created by city authorities in order to accommodate families who have been displaced due to their homes being demolished. Others are informal settlements that have been in the city for decades and are 'authorised' but not yet legal. Others are 'unauthorised' and may be displaced at any time. In all such settlements, informal dwellers realise how important it is to maintain some semblance of voice and are keen to get an election card.

Mahila SEWA Housing Trust (MHT)[111] is a technical organisation within the SEWA (Self Employed Women's Association)[112] network, which helps women to understand issues of local infrastructure and of city governance. It is active in the city of Ahmedabad in the western part of India and has helped women form themselves into community-based organisations (CBOs) within their settlements. These CBOs come together in a city-wide federation called a *Vikasini*, which translates as 'women causing positive change'.

The CBOs have had considerable success in bringing in better infrastructure into informal settlements, such as improved water supply, sanitation, drainage and paved roads. They are able to do this through the spaces that are created for them within governance structures. They might lobby the elected representatives, or municipal councillors, in their areas, through continuous contact, through inviting them for small functions in their area or through sit-ins outside their house. These methods remind the councillors that this group of people living in informal settlements are their voters, but also that if they do not respond to them, their votes may go elsewhere in the next election.

The CBOs learn to deal with the city bureaucracies as well. In general, city officials tend to attend to complaints, such as blocked sewers or accumulated waste, very quickly in richer areas, and neglect such complaints in poor areas, especially if the settlements are informal. However, the Vikasini CBOs are persistent. They learn which offices are responsible for their settlement and which officers are responsible for each separate infrastructure. They learn how to go higher up the bureaucratic chain if their complaints are not being addressed, and in more recent times, they have learnt to use online complaint mechanisms.

111   MHT, 'Home Page', *Mahila Housing Trust,* https://www.mahilahousingtrust.org/.
112   SEWA, 'About Us', *SEWA: Self Employed Women's Association,* http://www.sewa.org/.

Beyond local level issues, Vikasini began to position itself as an active organisation, positively reflecting the needs of the informal sector at the city level. It was invited to bid to undertake a biometric survey of informal settlement dwellers under a government urban renewal programme, and after having won the bid, Vikasini began to be recognised by the city authorities. Presently, Vikasini is invited to city level meetings to express its views on the Ahmedabad City Plan 2020, as well as the City Sanitation and Zero Waste plans. One of the important changes that Vikasini, with the help of MHT, was able to bring about in city policy was to delink the provision of infrastructure from the type of tenure. They argued that even when a settlement was informal or unauthorised, the settlement dwellers had basic needs, such as access to water and toilet facilities, which needed to be respected. This new policy helped to control both water-borne diseases and open defecation in the city.

Bringing Vikasini to this point required a great deal of input. First, people at the community level had to be mobilised and understand why it was important that they come together to form a CBO. Next, the CBO members needed to be trained in a variety of ways: to manage the finances of the CBO in a transparent and accountable manner; to understand the structures of city governance that applied to them; and to assert themselves within the governance structures in a way that would achieve results. Once the CBOs became active, they themselves were keen to form a city-level federation. Here again, a great deal of training was required to understand how city planning was carried out, how decisions were taken at a city level, and how to look out for projects and schemes that came in at city level. MHT remains active at the city level and continues to supports Vikasini.

An example case study from MHT's website helps to illustrate the above in practice:

> *Nafisa Ben was born in a poor family and had to give up her education at the age of 13 years. She moved to Nehrunagar after marriage, and found abysmal living conditions: wide open drains, the only public tap half a kilometre away, irregular electricity. She welcomed the SEWA Trust when it entered the area and helped organise a CBO. She took the lead in applying for legal drainage and water lines into her area, facing challenges such as false rumours being spread around to tarnish her reputation. However, her efforts paid off and all 945 households in her community were connected to individual water and underground drainage. Nafisa continued to lead her CBO and was elected a member of the Vikasini board. She then began attending meetings with city-level officials and came to the notice of the Municipal Councillors and was later offered a ticket for the 2015 elections by a leading political party. She won her seat by a huge margin.*[113]

Integrating the Voice of the Informal Economy: The Case of Street Vendors and Rag Pickers

People living in informal settlements have spaces through which they can bring their voice into city governance and change conditions for themselves. However, no such spaces exist for informal economy workers and so their issues usually remain unheard.

While cities contribute more to GDP than rural areas, and are seen as engines of growth with people flocking to them for better employment opportunities, planning their economic potential

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113   MHT, 'Empowering poor women to improve and upgrade their habitat: Nafisaben's journey from an ordinary women to a changemaker', *Mahila Housing Trust,* http://www.mahilahousingtrust.org/wp-content/uploads/MHT_Nafisabens-journey.pdf.

is rare.[114] City governance in India has traditionally been the responsibility of ULBs, which primarily concern themselves with the provision of basic infrastructure, including schools and hospitals, and management of urban land. Although they have detailed information about dwellings and infrastructure, they rarely have knowledge about the economic units, production or services that exist in the city. Although they have detailed information on numbers of citizens, there is little awareness of types and levels of employment. City planners spend a great deal of time and effort making the city more 'liveable' but rarely plan for people to increase their incomes or improve their employment opportunities. In fact, most city planners and policymakers prefer large manufacturing units to be outside of the city, leaving only cottage industries and services within the city, mainly carried out by the informal sector.

The travails of street vendors are a classic example of urban policies that not only exclude informal workers but also actively persecute them. A submission to Parliament from SEWA and the National Alliance of Street Vendors of India said:

> *There are about 10 million urban street vendors in India, and studies show that in most towns and cities 2 to 2.5% of the population earn their living from street vending. It provides a livelihood through self-employment to those who are left out of the formal sector and provides a service to middle class and working-class people. However, street vending is not recognised or promoted as an occupation and most town plans do not provide space for vending. As a result, vendors have to find their own space and are treated as illegal occupants. They are fined and arrested by the police on a regular basis and Municipalities remove them and confiscate their goods and carts.[115]*

Unlike informal dwellers, there are no spaces within governance structures for informal workers, such as street vendors, to raise their voices, and so they have to fight their battles through the courts, or with the help of higher tiers of government. After almost 20 years of cases being brought by street vendors to the courts (mostly, but not always, through their trade unions), the Supreme Court in 1997 declared that:

> *if properly regulated according to the exigency of the circumstances, the small traders on the sidewalks can considerably add to the comfort and convenience of the general public... The right to carry on trade or business mentioned in Article19(1)g of the Constitution, on street pavements, if properly regulated cannot be denied on the ground.[116]*

This judgement was hailed with great joy by street vendor organisations throughout the country. However, as states began to invest in mega-urban-infrastructure projects, such as bridges and flyovers, street vendors were very soon displaced in large numbers. They then realised that the only solution was to have a national policy which would force city governments to recognise and plan for street vendors and so, on the urging of SEWA, the National Alliance for Street Vendors in India (NASVI) was born in 1999. Advocacy by NASVI and SEWA at the national level led to a National Policy for Street Vendors.[117] It was formulated by the Ministry of Housing and Urban Poverty Alleviation in 2004 and, ten years later, the Street Vendors (Protection of Livelihood and Regulation of Street Vending) Act 2014, was passed by the Indian Parliament.[118]

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114   In India, cities are encouraged by the government to become 'Smart Cities' through the implementation of 'Smart Solutions' that build the core infrastructure required to provide a decent quality of life and a clean and sustainable environment for citizens. Despite this mission and the provision of government funding that cities were invited to apply for, not one city out of the first 81 applications thought that developing their economy would lead to a city becoming 'smart'. Further information on the Indian government's Smart Cities initiative can be found at *Smart Cities Mission*, Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs, Government of India, http://smartcities.gov.in/content/.

115   Government of India, Ministry of Housing and Urban Poverty Alleviation (2004), National Policy on Street Vendors, https://www.prsindia.org/sites/default/files/bill_files/bill82_2006123082_National_Policy_for_Urban_Street_Vendors.pdf.

116   Government of India (1997), 'National Policy for Urban Street Vendors', Ministry of Urban Employment and Poverty Alleviation.

117   Ibid.

118   Government of India (2014), 'The Street Vendors (Protection of Livelihood and Regulation of Street Vending) Act', Indian Parliament.

One of the main features of the Act is to give street vendors a voice in city governance. This is done through the formation of a Town Vending Committee chaired by the Municipal Commissioner or CEO, where 40% of the elected members are street vendors, 10% are from NGOs and the rest are nominated by the appropriate government to represent the local authority, the planning authority, the police, residents' associations, etc.[119] The Town Vending Committee has responsibility for surveying the numbers and locations of street vendors and for ensuring that all street vendors surveyed are 'accommodated in the vending zones subject to a norm conforming to 2.5% of the population of the ward or zone or town or city, as the case may be, in accordance with the plan for street vending and the holding capacity of the vending zones'.[120]

One of the poorest groups of urban workers are the 'rag pickers' who roam the streets and colonies of the cities picking up bits of paper, plastic, metal and other waste from the streets and dustbins. By collecting most of the city's recyclable waste, they unburden the city dumps, reduce pollution and earn a living for themselves. However, as India's cities began generating unmanageable amounts of waste, in 2000 the Ministry of Environment (central government) formulated new rules for cities to follow in their waste management, called the Municipal Solid Waste (Management and Handling) Rules. Fortunately for the rag pickers, they had already organised themselves in many cities and were able to come together in a national network. This network lobbied the central government and in the new rules the role of the rag pickers was recognised; they were to be given preference in collection of waste by the city.

Conclusion

I have personally been involved in the struggles of the informal dwellers and workers over the last four decades and have been part of many policy changes that have taken place. Although I have seen many successes, often it feels as if the push back is more than the steps forward. As inequality has increased, so has the power and reach of the people at the top of the economic pyramid, and their voice, their view of society, their capture of the media ensures that the voice of the poor has become weaker, rather than stronger. Poverty is not just a lack of money but also a lack of opportunities and, equally important, a lack of any medium to articulate a different world vision, a different growth path. In the past, Indian policymakers in general have been tolerant of the informal sector and have created just enough ways to integrate informal workers into the economy and to hear their voice, and that is why the crime rate and violence in Indian cities is much lower than in many developing countries. However, people's aspirations have grown along with their education levels and it is time for a serious rethinking of urban governance to include the informal economy and the informal settlements into the management of our growing cities.

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119   Ibid.
120   Ibid.

Sustainable Urban Governance and the Urban Governance of Sustainability
David Wachsmuth

We live, so the expression goes, in an urban age. We also live in an age of environmental crisis, and these two facts are inseparable. In the face of anthropogenic climate change, natural disasters, and apparently unstoppable urban expansion and suburban sprawl, the growing conviction of policymakers and researchers across the globe is that the city is where the battle for the environment will be won or lost. In this 'green urban age',[121] pundits contrast the deadlock of national and international environmental politics with the ability of local leaders to act in nimbler and less partisan ways to make cities, regions and societies more resilient and less polluting.[122] Above all, it is wealthy Northern cities such as London, San Francisco and Copenhagen where urban sustainability best practices have been established and promoted, on the basis of these cities' combination of 'grey' low-carbon density and 'green' liveability.[123] Should the rest of the world be learning from these cities? More generally, to what extent can we expect urban policy to help solve global environmental problems? Can cities save the planet?

In this essay, I take stock of the rapidly growing interest in cities as environmental protagonists on a global stage, with a thematic focus on climate change and a spatial focus on the affluent cities of the Global North which are most often discussed as models of sustainable urban governance. I focus on climate change because it is the most serious socio-environmental challenge facing the world today. And I focus on affluent Northern cities because they lie at the centre of a specific discourse on urban sustainability which both valourises these cities and has been actively promoted by their leaders.[124] Within the specific context of climate change and Northern cities, I ask two simple but vital questions about the urban governance of sustainability. First, what can cities actually do as agents of environmental governance: what are the most important opportunities, and conversely the most important limitations, on the local governance of sustainability? Second, how should we conceptualise the boundaries of the urban areas whose environmental impacts we are interested in measuring and changing? My argument is that much of the discourse on Northern cities and global environmental issues is simultaneously too narrow and too broad – it reduces a set of multi-scalar urban environmental issues to the limited domain of 'green cities', and yet ascribes to these cities an unrealistic set of hopes and expectations. I conclude by discussing the relationship between ecology and equity in sustainability governance.

What Can Cities Do?

One of the most striking features of contemporary discourse on urban governance in the Global North is the extent to which cities are increasingly assumed to be leading governance actors across a range of policy domains which includes, but is by no means limited to, environmental sustainability. Here, for example, is the description on the back of the recent book *The New Localism*, produced by the influential American centrist policy think-tank, the Brookings Institution:

121   H. Angelo and D. Wachsmuth (2015), 'Urbanising Urban Political Ecology: A Critique of Methodological Cityism', *International Journal of Urban and Regional Research,* 39(1): 16-27.

122   E. Glaeser (2011), *Triumph of the City: How Our Greatest Invention Makes Us Richer, Smarter, Greener, Healthier, and Happier* (Penguin); B.R. Barber (2013), *If Mayors Ruled the World: Dysfunctional Nations, Rising Cities* (Yale University Press); V. Chakrabarti (2013), *A Country of Cities: A Manifesto for an Urban America* (Illus, SHoP Architects: Metropolis Books).

123   D. Wachsmuth and H. Angelo (2018), 'Green and Gray: New Ideologies of Nature in Urban Sustainability Policy', *Annals of the American Association of Geographers,* 108(4): 1038–56.

124   E. McCann (2013), 'Policy Boosterism, Policy Mobilities, and the Extrospective City', *Urban Geography,* 34(1): 5-29.

> *Power is shifting in the world: downward from national governments and states to cities and metropolitan communities; horizontally from the public sector to networks of public, private and civic actors; and globally along circuits of capital, trade, and innovation. This new locus of power – this new localism – is emerging by necessity to solve the grand challenges characteristic of modern societies: economic competitiveness, social inclusion and opportunity; a renewed public life; the challenge of diversity; and the imperative of environmental sustainability. Where rising populism on the right and the left exploits the grievances of those left behind in the global economy, new localism has developed as a mechanism to address them head on.*[125]

Cities leading while nation-states falter: this is the central premise of the 'new localism'. In fact, the new localism is no longer very new. It has its roots in late-twentieth-century debates about globalisation and the decline of nation-states.[126] Broadly speaking, localism refers to a strand of political thinking and practice which emphasises community and political decentralisation, and correspondingly has communitarian and liberal variants depending on which of these emphases dominates.[127]

Localism touches on a wide range of policy domains, but as a way to conceptualise a city–first approach to environmental governance in particular, the new localism dates back to the United Kingdom in the mid-1990s, when Marvin and Guy used the term to criticise what they viewed as wishful thinking about the capacity of local governments to address environmental challenges in the face of recalcitrant or even oppositional higher levels of government.[128] Since the 1990s, the new localism has enjoyed a steadily growing prominence in environmental policy circles, driven in large part by the failure of national governments and the international Kyoto and Paris treaty processes to address the challenge of global climate change with the urgency it requires.[129] Individual cities and mayors are valourised as protagonists in the fight against climate change, and interlocal sustainability compacts and networks such as Local Agenda 21, ICLEI, C40 and the Global Covenant of Mayors have proliferated. It is, therefore, useful to scrutinise more closely the assumptions about municipal leadership and governing capacity which underlie the new localism.

As a discourse on urban sustainability governance, the new localism spans a heterogeneous range of political arguments and analytical claims, but there is arguably a core of four commonly seen propositions for why cities are (or should be) leading environmental protagonists. The first is the simple idea that cities are now where most people live, so environmental politics is shifting to reflect that reality. The oft-repeated observation that, for the first time in history, a majority of the world's population now lives in cities is based in large part on problematic comparisons of national urban statistics,[130] but nevertheless captures the basic reality of a global urban transition and has been a potent symbol around which to organise claims to urban supremacy. The second proposition is that cities are the most democratically responsive level of government, and best embody the principle of subsidiarity – that decisions should be taken at the lowest possible level.[131] The third is that cities are more pragmatic and less ideological than their national counterparts. This does not imply that city leaders do not occupy a distinctive political space (after all, it is often true that urban areas are more progressive than non-urban areas within a given country, and that fact is reflected in the politics that city leaders champion), but rather that these politics do not map cleanly onto entrenched higher-level divisions. Fiorello LaGuardia, the mid-twentieth-century

125   B. Katz and J. Nowak (2018), *The New Localism: How Cities Can Thrive in the Age of Populism* (Brookings Institution Press).

126   K. Ohmae (1995), *The End of the Nation State: The Rise of Regional Economies* (Simon and Schuster).

127   K. Hickson (2013), 'The Localist Turn in British Politics and its Critics', *Policy Studies,* 34(4): 408-21.

128   S. Marvin and S. Guy (1997), 'Creating Myths Rather than Sustainability: The Transition Fallacies of the New Localism', *Local Environment* 2(3): 311-18.

129   H. Bulkeley (2010), 'Cities and the Governing of Climate Change', *Annual Review of Environment and Resources,* 35(1): 229-53.

130   D. Satterthwaite (2010), 'Urban Myths and the Mis-Use of Data That Underpin Them', working paper, World Institute for Development Economics Research.

131   P. Murphy (2000), 'Urban Governance for More Sustainable Cities', *European Environment,* 10(5): 239–46.

mayor of New York City, memorably expressed this sentiment with the claim that 'there is no Democratic or Republican way of fixing a sewer'.[132] The fourth (related) proposition is that cities are nimbler and less bureaucratic than higher levels of government, and, for example, are thus able to start delivering results on fighting climate change while nation-states are bogged down with fruitless treaty negotiations.

These four propositions inspire, for good reason, optimism about the role that cities can play in tackling global environmental challenges.[133] But they need to be contextualised with respect to three key sets of limits which cities face in attempting to implement 'new localism' leadership. The first is spatial limits: important urban sustainability problems do not respect city boundaries. Below I will discuss the boundary problems implicated in how urban sustainability is conceptualised and measured, but, to begin with, city boundaries circumscribe, in important ways, the kinds of actions cities are able to take, because many of the common scales of concern for environmental issues do not map well onto the scale of municipal government. Transportation issues implicate commuting zones, water issues implicate watersheds, and natural disasters establish their own chaotic and contingent territories. For municipal governments and their civil society partners to exercise effective leadership over these issues requires collaboration with peers and with senior governments, and while such collaboration is not impossible, it cannot simply be assumed to exist. An important consideration is that inter-urban competition operates, in a phrase David Harvey (1989) appropriated from Karl Marx, as an 'external coercive power' over individual cities, and thus makes collaboration hard to achieve, even where there are rational grounds for collaborating.[134]

Second, cities face important fiscal limits which restrict their ability to tackle key urban sustainability problems. In North America, municipalities depend on locally raised property taxes for the bulk of their revenue. In other parts of the world, direct funding from higher levels of government is more common, but cities are in almost every case junior partners in state fiscal capacity. Moreover, in too many cases, 'localism' is simply a euphemism for higher-level government austerity policies, which undermine the prospects for effective local governance by downloading responsibilities onto cities without the necessary resources to meet them.[135] Finally, cities face legal limits which deny them the authority to implement the 'right' policies, even if they are able to solve coordination problems and fiscal problems. Although the precise institutional frameworks differ from country to country, cities typically have authority over land-use and transportation issues (which are without question important drivers of environmental sustainability outcomes) but they typically do not have authority over questions of industrial policy, energy policy and broader economic management.[136] These latter issues are ultimately responsible for the bulk of cities' carbon emissions, and while addressing them will be an 'urban' project in a broad sense of the term, it is difficult to picture a scenario where cities in the Global North are sufficiently empowered to take the leadership role in any of them.

None of these limits means that cities are incapable of taking the lead on fighting climate change and other global sustainability challenges. But, taken together, they imply that successful urban sustainability governance will not resemble the model of the 'new localism' — of cities doing it alone — but rather embed cities and urban governance in collaborative, multi-scalar governance arrangements. This perspective can be seen, for example, in the work of the Coalition for Urban Transitions, which emphasises the need for national action in support

132   B. R. Barber (2013).

133   For a particularly lucid and insightful example of this optimism, see Michele Acuto (2013), 'City Leadership in Global Governance', *Global Governance,* 19(3): 481-98.

134   D. Harvey (1989), 'From Managerialism to Entrepreneurialism: The Transformation in Urban Governance in Late Capitalism', *Geografiska Annaler: Series B, Human Geography,* 71(1): 3-17.

135   For the UK case, see R. Eagle, A. Jones and A. Greig (2017), 'Localism and the Environment: A Critical Review of UK Government Localism Strategy 2010–2015', *Local Economy,* 32(1): 55-72.

136   D. Wachsmuth, D.A. Cohen and H. Angelo (2016), 'Expand the Frontiers of Urban Sustainability', *Nature,* 536(7617): 391.

of low carbon urban transitions.[137] As I will now discuss, the need for such arrangements is heightened by the underlying spatial realities of key urban sustainability challenges.

The Boundaries and Frontiers of Local Sustainability Governance

A prerequisite of effective urban sustainability governance is properly conceptualising and measuring the environmental performance of cities. And yet, particularly in the domain of climate change, the systems we have for measuring the sustainability impacts of cities are poorly matched to the realities of contemporary urban life. A fact which has long been recognised by scholars of urban climate politics[138] is that the 'urban' is a multiscalar, multispatial phenomenon which connects cities to non-city hinterlands and to each other in complex networks of social and material flows. But this fact is not well-reflected in arguably the most important benchmark of cities' environmental performance: their carbon footprint.

The prevailing model of measuring local carbon emissions is to add up all of the emissions produced within the city boundaries. This 'production' model tends to identify transportation and building energy use as the key drivers of local carbon emissions; cities with more private car use and with sprawling, energy-inefficient built forms have higher carbon emissions than those with less car use and with denser development patterns. The production model of carbon accounting lends itself to clear policy implications: to reduce carbon emissions, cities should develop as densely as possible, convert private drivers into public transit users, and shift their economic activities to low-pollution but knowledge-intensive 'post-industrial' sectors. The cities which, through some combination of historical luck and deliberate policy, have succeeded in producing these dense, affluent, green urban landscapes are correspondingly held up as 'best practices' for other cities around the world to emulate. San Francisco, Amsterdam and Singapore are some prominent examples.

However, there is another way to measure urban carbon emissions, which implies a strikingly different geography of local sustainability. This is the 'consumption' model, where emissions are attributed to the locations where they are consumed rather than produced. These non-proximate emissions are also called 'scope 3 emissions', in comparison to directly produced 'scope 1 emissions' and grid-supplied-energy 'scope 2 emissions'. When a San Francisco resident buys a new smartphone, the consumption method of carbon accounting assigns the geographical responsibility for those emissions to San Francisco, rather than Shenzen and the dozen other locations where the smartphone was manufactured. The disparity between the production – and consumption-based estimates of a city's carbon footprint can be quite large and will generally be greater the wealthier a city is, because the residents of wealthier cities will tend to consume more high-carbon products and services. San Francisco's carbon footprint, for example, is more than four times higher when measured with a consumption counting method than when measured with a production one.[139]

The consumption method of carbon accounting is harder to do – it requires aggregating life-cycle analyses of numerous economic sectors – but it maps much more clearly on the actual responsibility for emissions in a market economy, and, if widely used, would force a significant re-evaluation of which urban governance strategies are likely to actually produce more sustainable outcomes. Rice et al.[140] have recently argued that apparently 'climate-friendly' redevelopments of affluent downtowns (focused on active transportation and green buildings)

137   D. Broekhoff, G. Piggot and P. Erickson (2018), *Building Thriving, Low-Carbon Cities: An Overview of Policy Options for National Governments* (Coalition for Urban Transitions).

138   H. Bulkeley and M. Betsill (2005), 'Rethinking Sustainable Cities: Multilevel Governance and the "Urban" Politics of Climate Change', *Environmental Politics,* 14(1): 42-63.

139   E.A. Stanton, R. Bueno and C. Munitz (2011), 'Consumption Based Emissions Inventory For San Francisco', technical report, Stockholm Environment Institute (US Center, Somerville, MA).

140   J.L. Rice, D.A. Cohen, J. Long, and J.R. Jurjevich (2019), 'Contradictions of the Climate-Friendly City: New Perspectives on Eco-Gentrification and Housing Justice', *International Journal of Urban and Regional Research,* https://doi.org/10.1111/1468-2427.12740.

can counter-intuitively worsen the city-region's overall sustainability impact by increasing consumption-related carbon emissions in the newly gentrified downtown and displacing poorer residents to poorer suburbs where they are forced into more carbon-intensive lives.

Effective urban sustainability governance will thus need to take better account of the non-local ecological implications of local economic activity, and a central component to this shift will be to expand our understanding of urban climate planning beyond the prevailing focus on building green infrastructure in cities (as important as that is) and towards integrating broader socio-economic concerns into environmental ones. One promising step in this direction is the efforts of Chan et al. to develop climate action indicators better suited to non-state actors.[141]

The Virtuous Circle of Ecology and Equity

In this brief essay, I have argued that prevailing discourse on urban sustainability governance is simultaneously too narrow and too broad. It reduces a set of multi-scalar urban environmental issues to the limited domain of 'green cities', and yet ascribes to these cities an unrealistic set of hopes and expectations (the 'new localism'). I now want to conclude with a reflection on the double meaning of the 'sustainable governance' of cities. On the one hand, this is the local governance of sustainability; how environmental concerns are materialised, contested, and enacted in local policy making and local politics. On the other hand, this is local governance in a sustainable manner; governance arrangements which are themselves sustainable, in the sense that they reflect relatively durable compacts between social actors. I believe that these two meanings of sustainable governance belong together, that efforts to govern cities towards the goal of environmental sustainability will be more successful if they are more attentive to the factors which make governance itself sustainable. And here I want to suggest that a stronger focus on social equity is a promising 'glue' to connect a broad set of social, political and environmental concerns which will make sustainability governance more sustainable.

International comparative research has found that urban climate adaptation efforts have disproportionately delivered their benefits to wealthy residents and their harms to poor residents.[142] In one sense, this is not surprising: local politics – like non-local politics – is organised to prioritise the interests of the powerful. And yet, this fact works directly against the viability of broad social mobilisations to fight for common environmental goals. Likewise, Daniel Aldana Cohen has demonstrated that former New York mayor Michael Bloomberg's 2008 proposal to introduce congestion pricing in lower Manhattan – a 'best practice' which an increasing number of large cities have used to simultaneously reduce carbon emissions and reorient transportation to more public and active forms in their downtown cores – failed in large part because it was understood by New Yorkers to be an elite-driven plan, and was not adequately anchored to existing struggles over racial and economic justice in New York.[143]

The bottom line is that environmental governance cannot thrive on its own. It needs to be tethered to a broader social agenda, for example, to what in the United States of America is being described as a 'Green New Deal'. As my colleagues and I have argued previously:

> *Policymakers should treat social equity and ecological effectiveness as mutually reinforcing dynamics in urban sustainability. They should bring the widest range of social movements to the table... This would entail more frequent meetings of*

141   S. Chan, H. van Asselt, T. Hale, K.W. Abbott, M. Beisheim, M. Hoffmann, B. Guy et al. (2015), 'Reinvigorating International Climate Policy: A Comprehensive Framework for Effective Nonstate Action', *Global Policy,* 6(4): 466-73.

142   I. Anguelovski, L. Shi, E. Chu, D. Gallagher, K. Goh, Z. Lamb, K. Reeve, and H. Teicher (2016), 'Equity Impacts of Urban Land Use Planning for Climate Adaptation: Critical Perspectives from the Global North and South', *Journal of Planning Education and Research,* 36(3): 333-48.

143   D.A. Cohen (2016), *Street Fight: Urban Climate Politics in an Age of Finance and Revolt,* PhD dissertation (New York University).

larger groups of stakeholders and different metrics of policy success. But it would also yield more creative, sophisticated and encompassing policies that would have broader public support.[144]

In this way, local sustainability governance can itself be made more sustainable. Nothing less will be required to meet the environmental challenges of the green urban age.

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144   D. Wachsmuth et al. (2016), 393.

The National Institute of Urban Affairs

The National Institute of Urban Affairs (NIUA) is a premier institute for research, capacity building and dissemination of knowledge for the urban sector in India. It conducts research on urbanisation, urban policy and planning, municipal finance and governance, land economics, transit-oriented development, urban livelihoods, environment and climate change and smart cities.

The institute was set up to bridge the gap between research and practice, and to provide critical and objective analyses of trends and prospects for urban development. NIUA has assisted in policy formulation and programme appraisal and monitoring for the Ministry of Urban Development, state governments, multilateral agencies and other private organisations.

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The British Academy is the UK's independent national academy representing the humanities and social sciences. For over a century it has supported and celebrated the best in UK and international research and helped connect the expertise of those working in these disciplines with the wider public. The Academy supports innovative research and outstanding people, influences policy and seeks to raise the level of public understanding of some of the biggest issues of our time, through policy reports, publications and public events. The Academy represents the UK's research excellence worldwide in a fast changing global environment. It promotes UK research in international arenas, fosters a global approach across UK research, and provides leadership in developing global links and expertise.

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