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OVERLOOKED CITIES

POWER, POLITICS AND KNOWLEDGE BEYOND THE URBAN SOUTH

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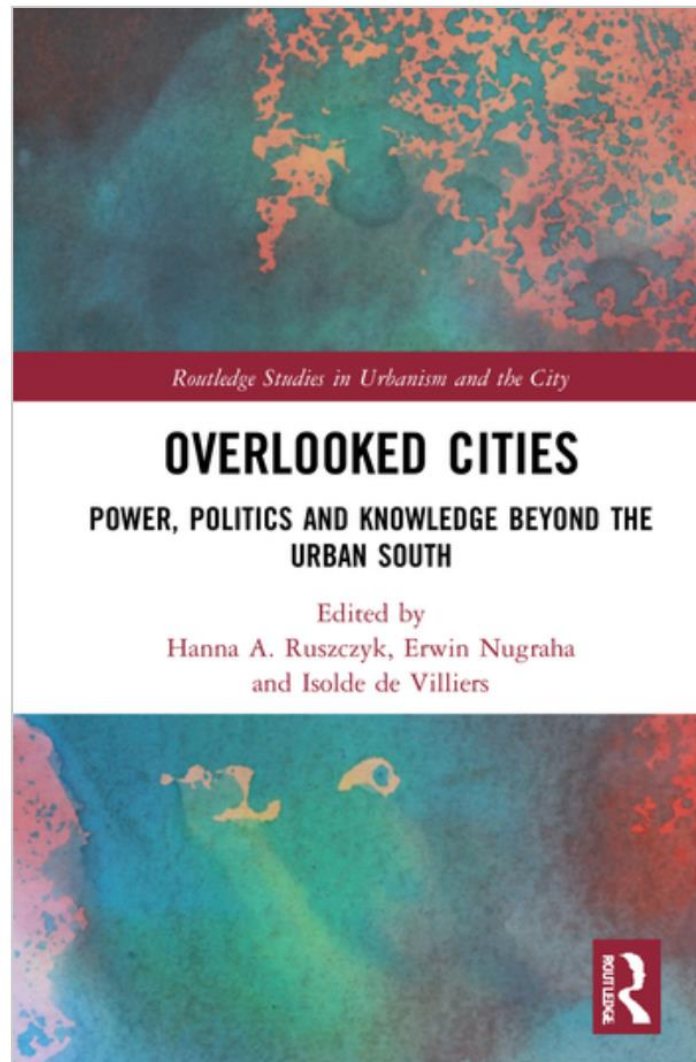
Introduction

> "With the massive demographic and economic changes of the last three decades, the parochialism of the research heartland is a problem. It means that cities that are highly profiled in the canon of urban studies no longer reflect the hubs of urbanisation or the most critical contemporary global urban problems".
> Oldfield, S. and Parnell, S. (2014: p.1)

> "Tell me what your cities are like, and I will tell you how your country or your continent is and most likely will be. This observation has never been truer, and it is fundamental that its implications are assessed".
> Ferrão, J. (2003: p.220)

Looking at cities – whether to explain, understand, or merely to observe – inevitably involves a degree of 'overlooking'. Some cities and urban processes always seem to be kept out of view, and remain removed from familiar ways of seeing, thinking, questioning and engaging. And yet, these cities are still subjected to the various assumptions made and the categories and labels devised by scholars, policy-makers, and practitioners alike. Critical urbanists have long emphasised the partiality of urban theory, demonstrating how patterns of urban knowledge production reflect *particular* historical, institutional, political, economic, cultural, and (post-)colonial formations. Even so, urban knowledge travels between cities and across continents and, in the process, it may be argued, becomes "richly populated in place, region, networks, and in conversation" (Oldfield 2014: p.7). But which cities are situated outside of these circulations of urban knowledge? What is happening in the streets, neighbourhoods, districts and cities that are rarely represented in these conversations?

'Southern' and post-colonial urbanisms have been enormously influential in refocusing attention towards cities throughout the global South, and yet many cities continue to be systematically overlooked. While mega cities and capital cities function as "city states in a networked global economy, increasingly independent of regional and national mediation", other cities are left to "seek new ways of claiming space and voice" (Appadurai, 2001: p.25). The lack of attention given to smaller cities (Ali & Rieker, 2008: p.2) is a self-imposed limitation on our understanding of the urban, and it implies that these cities are less worthy of critical analysis, or that they experience the same urban development issues but on a different scale (Sheppard et al., 2013: p.894). Methodological, theoretical, and conceptual frameworks have yet to position smaller and/or more regional cities front and centre, and yet it is in these cities where the majority of city-dwellers reside (Price & Ruszczyk, 2019).

The tendency to *overlook* certain cities is not just a concern within the Academy. Political, economic, and cultural logics within individual nations and across regions will inevitably look to certain cities over others. It is inevitable that growth strategies, development agendas, fiscal

transfer arrangements, and restructuring and reform processes are designed with certain places and cities in mind, implemented unevenly across vast territories and with unresolved questions of equity and justice at their core. To *overlook* is not simply to ignore; processes of overlooking have direct material consequences for the present condition and possible futures of these cities.

This exploratory and experimental book showcases the critical importance of research in overlooked cities. 'Overlooking' is a multi-faceted process, reflecting different power relations, political economies, knowledge networks and resource allocations unique to each individual city. In other words, processes of overlooking strike at the very heart of what we understand to be 'the urban' throughout many parts of the world. This collection of essays, focusing on 13 cities in nine countries and across three continents, makes a vital and timely contribution to urban scholarship. *Overlooked Cities* reflects and impacts the changing landscape of urban studies and geography from the perspective of smaller and more regional cities in the urban South. Our attentiveness towards the dynamics and processes of overlooking allows us to critically examine the ways in which cities are uniquely positioned within different urban and knowledge hierarchies. In many respects, these asymmetries define various aspects of the urban condition in these cities, and are reflected in matters of governance, urban planning, disaster risk reduction, climate change adaptation, international development assistance and the activities of non-governmental organisations. The aims of the book are to (1) unpack the dynamics of 'overlooked-ness' in these cities, (2) identify emerging trends and processes that characterise such cities, and (3) provide alternative sites for comparative urban theory. All of the authors are united by a shared commitment to challenging the unevenness of urban knowledge production, first and foremost by approaching these cities on their own terms. Only then can we harness the insights emanating from these overlooked cities, and contribute to a deeper and richer understanding of the urban itself.

'Overlooked-ness'
To overlook is not merely to ignore. Overlooking is not defined by a silence or an absence, but is itself a process filled with presuppositions, prejudices, prioritisations, and expectations. Overlooking may be intentional or unintentional, but it is a form of neglect all the same. It may involve a conscious choice to look elsewhere, or it may constitute an act of simultaneously knowing but not caring. Either way, overlooking produces its own hierarchies, impacts urban political economies, and even plays a constitutive role in what urbanism means in cities out of the spotlight, nor under the microscope. Overlooking, then, embodies heterogenous temporalities, relationalities and forms of socio-spatial configuration in cities throughout the urban South.

<FIGURE 0.1 HERE>
Figure 0.1. Counter Overlooking
Source: Cartography Unit, Department of Geography, Durham University

The map in Figure 0.1 draws attention to the cities featured in this book. These cities would not usually appear on an ordinary world map, due to the convention of only displaying nation-states and their capital cities. Robinson uses "off-the map cities" in contrast to global and world cities

(2002). Countering the under-representation of these cities by putting them on the map as it were, does not suggest a shift towards a new major category of analysis or grand narrative. This critical graphic depiction of our world forces us to consider the following questions: How does this map disrupt more established cartographic representations? What are the political implications of highlighting these cities over national capitals? What are the map's intellectual implications? Take a moment to imagine this world. Pronounce the names of these places which might, for now, be unfamiliar to the ear. While reading through the chapters that follow, imagine this world and bear this map in mind, and think of how this map places the different authors in relation to one another. It is critically productive to approach urban research in many parts of the world through Brenner and Schmid's (2015: p.155) epistemological question: "through what categories, methods and cartographies should urban life be understood?". For scholars and practitioners more familiar with larger cities in each of these countries, think about its relationship to the smaller, more overlooked cities. What can you learn by foregrounding overlooked-ness in each of these contexts?

It is important to emphasise that the implications of 'overlooking' cannot be defined *a priori*. It is not our objective to categorise overlooked cities but to explore the dynamics of 'overlooked-ness' and the consequences of overlooking as they manifest in particular cities and in specific contexts. We do not want to confine these cities to the margins nor do we want to mainstream these 'marginalised' cities into existing urban theory. Overlooking a city may marginalise it from important policy discussions and resource allocations, but it may equally provide local actors with the space to experiment, create and innovate. Additionally, we are not trying to fetishise or romanticise the ordinary, but nor are we content with 'ordinariness' as a satisfactory analytical category. We challenge how the accumulation of urban knowledge has meant that certain cities – particularly in the global North but also the mega- and global cities in the South – have received special attention. Overlooked cities are neither the derivation nor the exception of other cities; there is something different about them, yes, but there is undoubtedly a kind of conventionality to them. Our focus on overlooking allows us to hold the ordinary in tension with the extraordinary, exploring cities on their own terms as they continue to be omitted from mainstream scholarly analysis.

Even within critical urban theory, there remains an overwhelming focus on the world's largest cities. This is not merely a case of under-representation; Paterson and her colleagues (2017: p.109) explain that smaller cities face disproportionate risks, due not only to the concentration of "most of the world's vulnerable urban populations" in these cities, but also due to "limited data, political power, personnel, and resources". Jorge Enrique Hardoy and David Satterthwaite have dedicated much of their academic careers to these kinds of cities, and their work has provided the foundational thinking behind the orientation of this book. In *Small and Intermediate Urban Centres*, Hardoy and Satterthwaite (1986: p.xvii) argued that urban studies lacked a detailed and nuanced account of the diversity of urban centres, and how smaller cities interacted with their surrounding areas. In *Squatter Citizen*, the authors recognised that many of the largest Southern cities "owe their foundation and early development to colonial rule", but focused their attention on the specificities and contingencies of life in smaller cities. To do so, Hardoy and Satterthwaite argue, requires an understanding of their "own unique mix of resources, development potential, skills, constrains and links with the surrounds and the wider regional and national economy" (1989:

p.299). Reflecting on the book three decades later, Satterthwaite reiterated the urgency for this line of enquiry, explaining how "the rights [of residents] to water, education and healthcare are often denied" in these overlooked cities (2019: no pagination). As a collective, we share Hardoy and Satterthwaite's commitment to the urban populations living in these cities, and share their hope for "a better body of knowledge [to] widen the understanding of small and intermediate urban centres (1986: p.xix).

Following the publication of these two books in the 1980s, urban geography has continued to diversify, welcoming increasingly nuanced accounts of differently-sized cities throughout the North and South. Post-colonial urbanism views the constitution of the urban as "always variable, polymorphic and historically determinate" (Robinson, 2014: p.62), and thus seeks to disrupt the universalising tendencies of urban theory through conceptual innovation and the examination of alternative urban geographies. This is not merely an intriguing intellectual exercise but a political and moral imperative, given its potential to re-write urban knowledge to account for a much larger proportion of the world's urban population. The 'provincialisation' of global urbanism has gained significant traction over the last two decades, seeking to put urban theories "literally and figuratively in their place" (Pile, 2006: p.306). Provincialisation involves an examination of the ways in which a particular city is both like and unlike other cities close by as well as further afield. Roy's (2009: p.828) concept of 'worlding' has proved influential among critical urban scholars, recognising how "distinctive and alternative modernities are produced in multiple urban sites", and that "such experiences can speak to and inform one's analysis of other places". This book offers a unique and timely contribution to these literatures, extending the critical perspective to overlooked cities in order to explore what these urban realities tell us about urbanism in and beyond the global South.

Ordinary, Peripheral, Secondary Cities
This book's emphasis on 'overlooking' reflects a political and intellectual commitment to challenge the 'disproportionate visibility' (Parnell & Robinson, 2012: p.596) of cities within urban theory. This can also be seen as an important epistemological intervention, not just focusing on overlooked cities but examining what a focus on overlooking tells us about the urban condition and the limits of existing urban theory. It is necessary to point out that a focus on overlooked cities should not be to the exclusion of other concepts, spaces and places. Rather, it provides a point of critical engagement with a range of labels used to describe these kinds of cities: 'ordinary', 'peripheral', 'secondary', and so on. The foundations of this perspective reside in Robinson's highly influential work *Ordinary Cities* (2006). By emphasising the ordinariness of cities, Robinson advocates for a culture of theorisation that accepts significant levels of differentiation in and among cities. Here, 'ordinary' is not a descriptive category of urbanism but an epistemological position, which focuses on the dynamism and diversity of cities and moves away from the labels and categories familiar to a Western-centric intellectual canon. A recent text such as *Cities of the Global South Reader* (Miraftab & Kudva, 2015) illustrates how the legacy of colonialism lead to binary relations in conceptualising cities: historical legacies first/third worlds, wealth/poverty, development/underdevelopment, and inclusion/exclusion. By asking: "whose city? whose development?" Miraftab and Kudva (2015) call for questioning these binaries. In this collection we show how history, climate, politics, markets, academic projects, financial institutions, national

leaders, law and city officials have perpetuated another binary – that of looked-at/ overlooked. In the variety of cities chosen for this collection we challenge not only the fact that certain cities are looked at (forming part of what Parnell calls the urban canon), but also the very dichotomous thinking underlying the parochial production of knowledge on cities.

The emphasis we place on 'overlooked-ness' must be distinguished from other labels that may be viewed as interchangeable with the concept. While this book acknowledges the indebtedness to the way in which the following concepts have shaped our ideas, this book emphasises the notion of overlooked-ness as related, but distinct from notions of small, middle, marginal, peripheral, and intermediate, secondary. What follows is a brief description of these concepts with the valence and value judgement they carry, and also the way in which this edited volume challenges and expands these terms through a focus on overlooking.

Small/ middle cities
Hardoy and Satterthwaite's scholarly interest towards small and intermediate cities began over thirty years ago, since their initial publications, detailed above, few other studies have engaged with different epistemological approaches towards and the significance of "theorising from the middle" (Chen & Kanna, 2012). Studying non capital and non mega cities, learning towards smaller or secondary cities, is not only an intriguing theoretical exercise, but a political and moral imperative. In this edited collection, Nugraha's chapter explicitly uses the term "middle city" to refer to the pervasive embodiment of cities in between complex interplay with other, mostly dominant, cities. It invokes the in-between where finitude of spectacles has to be negotiated and re-scaled, and strategies for counter overlooking have to be defended. The 'missing middle' is potentially a rich concept for these cities that are not looked at, not investigated nor respected by policy, development cooperation, academic scholarship, other cities, or the private sector.

Overlooked-ness does not only relate to population size and this edited collection was not conceptualised around numbers. But since low numbers of inhabitants often coincides with a lack of resources, lack of attention politically and academically, most of the cities in this book are small cities, understood in terms of number of inhabitants. Half of the cities have a population lower than a million (with three of them, Bharatpur, Bontang and Dili, below 500,000) and only Luzhou has far more than 1.5 million inhabitants – at almost 5 million. Paterson and her colleagues (2017) state small and medium-sized cities, with between 300,000–500,000 and 500,000–5 million populations are home to most of the world's vulnerable urban populations and yet have received less research and policy attention than large and mega cities. This is a result of limited data, political power, personnel, and resources (Birkmann et al., 2016).

Marginal/ Peripheral cities
The concepts margin, centre and periphery are also at home in critical race theory and feminist theory and this edition engages both with margin as a metaphor and a spatial designation, as illustrated by the chapter on Bloemfontein/ Mangaung and Pretoria/ Tshwane (De Villiers, this volume). This proposes that the analytical investigation is part of our critical and political

commitment to challenge the current production of urban knowledge and urban politics of knowledge production. This collection of essays is an effort to de-centre and re-centre theory as well as avoid flat ontology towards cities in the urban South (for example see: Lawhon & Truelove, 2020; Robinson, 2011; Roy, 2011; Roy & Ong, 2011). There are increasing critiques that suggest these 'southern' cities are a distinct and plural arena of urban practice or urbanism but yet have partial and contextual specific conjunctures (Lawhon & Truelove, 2020).

To date, there are several contributions, which have provided ground-breaking debates and discussions on the diversity of geography of cities beyond a single urban characteristic or phenomenon. These contributions include case studies from across the world, for example: different sized – such as small cities in Bell and Jayne (2006) and secondary cities in Chen and Kanna (2012), different geographical sites such as urban Asia in Bunnell and Goh (2018), middle Indonesia in Van Klinken and Berenschot (2014) and lastly, India in Denis and Zerah (2017), as well as different theoretical perspectives. These books all make valuable contributions and provide empirical evaluations for the geographical sites and regions they cover. *Small Cities* (Bell & Jayne, 2006) focuses on small cities in industrialised countries. The *Implosions/Explosions* (Brenner, 2017) is concerned with urban processes on the planetary landscape, *Urban Asias* (Bunnell & Goh, 2018), engages with global cities in Asia, including Dhaka, Hong Kong, Jakarta, Singapore and Seoul and *Subaltern Urbanisation in India* (Denis & Zerah, 2017) presents Indian case studies. This edited collection wishes to add to these explorations of cities on the periphery. The chapter on Luzhou (Jin & Zhao, this volume) contributes the notion of a "double marginal situation" where cities are overlooked by multiple systems and marginalised both horizontally and vertically. The chapter on Bandar Lampung, Semarang, and Bontang city (Nugraha, this volume) concedes that the discourse of the marginal, peripheral and on the edges of new capital dominates secondary cities, but argues that the politics of intermediary is not only the politics of the margins in idle, but also a politics in the making by small and intermediate cities. The chapter on Bloemfontein/ Mangaung and Tshwane/ Pretoria (De Villiers, this volume) points out the ways in which cities in the interior of South Africa are overlooked. This results in what the chapter calls "marginalised centres". By drawing from feminist theory, the chapter further draws similarities between the concepts of overlooked, marginal, peripheral and notions such as minor, everyday, ordinary, local, and domestic.

Secondary/ Intermediate cities
The concept "secondary city" is used in the chapters on Peru (Rosen, this volume) and Jordan (Price, this volume), while the chapter on Zarqa develops the notion of secondariness with reference to relationality and qualitative difference. The chapter on Santa Fe and Manizales uses the term "intermediate city" rather than secondary, medium-sized or medium cities due to the wide use of this concept in Latin American scholarship and also because this concept characterises these cities as outward-looking (Wesely, Filippi & Johnson, this volume). Roberts and Hohmann (2014) in their thoughtful review of considering what comprises a secondary city in different contexts throughout the world created three broad spatial categories of secondary cities: (i) Subnational cities that are centres of local government, industry, agriculture, tourism or mining; (ii) City clusters associated with expanded, satellite and new town cities which surround large urban metropolitan regions; and (iii) Economic trade corridors that are urban growth centres or poles

planned or developing along major transport corridors. Roberts and Hohmann (ibid.) considered characteristics and functions of these cities rather than actual area or population. They suggest there are three characteristics of secondary cities including the first group of secondary cities that have a strong growth path and dynamic local economy often with an international connection, another group represents economies driven by migration and economic activities driven by local and national markets and lastly the laggards which include large numbers of urban poor. These cities are often forgotten.

Collaborative Process

This project has maintained a balance between inter-disciplinary, multi-site collaboration and independent, empirically-driven field research. All of the authors are early career researchers originating from and researching in many different countries, and working across geography, sociology, and urban studies. It was at the 2018 RGS-IBG Annual International Conference in Cardiff, Wales, where the idea for this book crystallised. Two of the co-editors (Ruszczyk and Nugraha) organised a two-part session titled *Urban South's medium-sized cities: emerging research*, and three of the chapters in this book began as presentations in the session (Timor-Leste; Peru; Columbia and Argentina). The session's organisers formulated the content for their own chapters (Nepal; Indonesia) and invited three additional authors to submit their own contributions (China; Jordan; South Africa), in order to expand the book's geographical reach and deepen its conceptual examination of 'overlooked-ness'. By bringing together scholarly research on different urban issues across different cities, and using different theoretical and conceptual frameworks, this book brings overlooked cities forcefully into international urban debates and agendas.

Our contributors have decided to conduct research in these overlooked cities because these cities represent a breadth and depth of geography in the global South. The selected cities are taken from small and medium-sized cities in five major regions: Southeast Asia, South Asia, Middle East, Africa and Latin America. These cities embody ordinariness in a world of cities that reach beyond the dominant urban landscapes. Our authors also engage in a rich body of theoretical and methodological approaches in analysing these cities including dynamic structuralism and ethnographic enquiry (Price, this volume), southern and post-colonial urbanism (Ruszczyk, this volume), relationality (Nugraha as well as Rosen, this volume), urban hierarchy as an emerging concept (Zhao & Jin, this volume) production of space (De Mesquita Lima & Costa, this volume), feminism (De Villiers, this volume), and comparative urbanism (Wesely, Filippi & Johnson, this volume). Our authors also use a wide range of methodologies, including document analysis, interviews, and comparative analysis.

In compiling this book, we have undertaken explorative knowledge exchange and a collaborative organic learning process. Following the 2018 RGS-IBG conference, the writing of the chapters took place in early 2019. Each of the chapter authors reviewed two other chapters and gave constructive comments in the summer of 2019. Some chapters needed more attention and care and the editors as well as other authors supported each other. In September 2019, most of the book project authors came together at a writing workshop at Durham University where we discussed the individual and collective contributions of the book. The conclusion was developed at this

workshop. In this book, all the early career researcher authors contributed to peer-review as well as supporting the writing of the introduction, conclusion, and deciding on the themes. This book project is a collective experience that is a product of collaboration and dedicated evolution of knowledge production. Implications of this process for the theoretical engagements are significant.

The authors of this book also share many similarities in their motivation to choose their respective cities:

Luzhou has been chosen for several reasons. First, as Jin and Zhao show in their chapter, this city bears the two identical labels as "sanxian" city in different historical-political conjunctures, which can facilitate historical comparisons. Second, this chapter is based on a larger research project on urban redevelopment conducted in this city. The historical complexity of this city makes the urban redevelopment project a more problematic process. Third, this "medium-sized" city (and more cities of this type in China) had never captured academic attention in the English literature.

Ruszczyk chose Bharatpur as the empirical site for her urban research after extensive consultation with national stakeholders and investigation regarding emerging urban issues in Nepal. She found there was very little academic research on cities located outside of Kathmandu Valley and the second largest city of Pokhara. Half the population of Nepal lives in the Terai, the plains bordering Nepal yet there has been minimal research into the cities located there. This led Ruszczyk to conduct her research on Bharatpur, one of the largest yet overlooked regional cities of Nepal.

De Villiers had recently moved to Bloemfontein/ Mangaung and having looked at the overlooked city of Pretoria/ Tshwane in her doctoral project, decided to compare it to her new home city, which is overlooked in comparable ways. For her, overlookedness manifested initially when she realised that there was a dearth of literary and artistic engagement on these cities in comparison to other South African cities.

The city of Zarqa was chosen for several reasons, firstly because urban studies in the Middle East is centred on a select number of capital cities, predominantly Cairo, Beirut, Tehran. Secondly, 'Arab' cities are also often viewed through the lens of terrorism, social unrest, violence, Islamism, and the author (Price, this volume) was aware of the need to challenge these representations. He chose Zarqa for its strong association with Salafi Islam and al-Zarqawi, the former leader of Al-Qaeda in Iraq. Lastly, the residents of Zarqa do not expect to encounter academic researchers, and local government as well as residents can be expected to be more open to research engagement. Prior to Price's first visit to it, Zarqa municipality had actively sought out foreign researchers interested in the city.

Wesely and Filippi who conducted the empirical research that informs their chapter, selected the case studies for their doctoral research on the basis of the recognised experience of Santa Fe

and Manizales in the field of disaster risk management. They were intrigued about the underlying conditions and drivers that could explain why these two cities have been labelled as 'frontrunners' and 'champions' in previous research as well as policy discourses. Rather than evaluating the success of innovative disaster risk management (DRM) measures in terms of risk, both authors were motivated to understand the processes and trajectories that have contributed to the emergence and sustainability of an enabling environment for DRM in the mid- and long-term. This is interesting, because it could be argued that due to their "success" these cities are not overlooked, but instead overly looked at. This chapter unpacks the complex ways in which cities are overlooked.

Apart from the capital Lima, Arequipa and Trujillo are the two most important regional centres in Peru's urban system in terms of economy, politics and infrastructure. Rosen therefore viewed them as particularly suitable for the relational research approach of secondary cities.

The choice of the city Dili stems from De Mesquita Lima having lived and worked there on different occasions, for different periods of time, and her desire to understand why and how the city changed between these periods. Costa stayed in Dili on different occasions in 2015 and 2016, as part of other work on the urban realm they were both working on, having also participated in discussions about the creation of a national planning system. Apart from these reasons, studying Dili was also an opportunity to understand a city that grows amidst a lack of a formal framework and consequent controls, as a result of the post-conflict context. It offers an opportunity to look for triggers of growth and processes in urban development in this context.

Nugraha selected these cities in his chapter, Bandar Lampung, Semarang and Bontang in Indonesia, for empirical and conceptual reasons. These cities represent new empirical sites that are known as under-studied or under-represented spaces in urban climate literature (Lamb et al., 2019). For conceptual reasons, these cities have a rich potentiality to inform broader knowledge production that goes beyond the global circuit of power from dominant cities, e.g. mega and capital cities.

Looking at the motivation of each author for choosing their respective chapter, it is therefore clear that this book is more than a collection of essays covering 13 overlooked cities. These chapters all stand on their own as significant contributions to thinking about overlooked-ness and about the specific cities they discuss. As a collection, several common threads bring these chapters into conversation with one another, as they expose blind spots in urban theory, and the authors simply dared to look. These commonalities and their implications for urban theory will be discussed in greater depth in the concluding chapter. For the purposes of clarity, we have organised the essays into two important yet distinct themes that emerged organically from the project's collaborative process; (1) politics and power and (2) the production and negotiation of knowledge in these overlooked cities.

Power and politics in Overlooked Cities

Power and politics are the first theme in this book and are central to debates and discussions focusing on who has power, where it originates and how it is being produced in overlooked cities. Negotiations over power, differential access to and control over resources (economic, technical, political, financial, human) from the perspective of the local authorities (Price, this volume), the act of using urbanization as a political project to further public sector agendas (Ruszczyk, this volume) and not allowing some cities to be politically (De Villiers, this volume) or economically important (Jin & Zhao, this volume) are themes addressed in the chapters from China, Nepal, South Africa and Jordan. Political contestations are a key theme in many overlooked cities and play a tremendous role in the development of the city. Hierarchy and related concepts in all its forms stand central to this theme. These chapters consider power, politics and the public sector in multiple ways. With politics, we do not (only) have party-politics in mind, but rather also the various power-dimensions not only within these cities, but also between these and other cities. In this sense this theme makes a double move – the political nature of these cities and political nature of knowledge production on cities, which links to the second theme of production and negotiation of knowledge. The four chapters that contribute to this theme are introduced in the following paragraphs:

Jin and Zhao's chapter explores a city in Western China that has long been "overlooked" by paying attention to its changing role as a "sanxian" city in two categorisations of cities in different time periods. The China chapter makes two major contributions to this volume. First, it investigates a newly emerging discourse in China's urban agenda – the rise of "Tier City" in terms of its content, background, and how this kind of urban hierarchy will have an impact upon "overlooked" cities. Second, by adopting a historical perspective, this chapter seeks to shed light on comparative urbanism and ordinary cities literature. This chapter raises questions such as: What are the constraints for "overlooked cities" in their trajectory of development and how did these constraints limit and enable their redevelopment? How did the emergence of the urban hierarchical system shape cities' practices? This chapter underscores the power relations brought about by history and its continuance in the present, as well as the power exerted by markets and as such the link between public and private power.

Ruszczyk's chapter represents a country that is rarely represented as an area of knowledge production in urban theory: Nepal. The Nepal chapter makes two intellectual contributions to the volume. Firstly, it develops the concept of urban planning through a critical consideration of the changes that occur in the regional city of Bharatpur, due to administrative changes led from the central level. Nepalese urban planning efforts are also highly dependent on the local authorities' relationships with elites in different parts of the city. Secondly, utilising the concepts of informality, incrementalism and learning, a space is opened to think and consider the limits of knowledge and power of the regional metropolitan city. This chapter raises questions such as: For how long will the rural areas and their elites be allowed to circumvent urban planning laws? If and when will the balance of power shift in favour of the government?

De Villiers's chapter draws attention to the silences and absences in urban theory from South Africa. By drawing historical similarities between the cities of Pretoria/ Tshwane and Bloemfontein/ Mangaung in central South Africa, she argues that overlooking these cities has been and continues to be political. She further points out how this can perpetuate the reproduction of unequal urban spaces in South Africa because of a lack of critical engagement with these cities that still fulfil important governmental functions. Drawing from feminist critiques of dominant discourses on spatial justice as well as calls for a rediscovery of the ordinary, she shows how shifting the scale of urban inquiry can change the perceptions around the roles that the overlooked cities of Pretoria/ Tshwane and Bloemfontein/ Mangaung play and can potentially play in addressing spatial injustices of the past. The power in this chapter is challenged to the extent that it correlates to patriarchal power and can be critically engaged form the perspective.

The final chapter in this section is the only case study in the volume centred in South West Asia (the Middle East), another under-represented region in the production of urban theory. Focusing on Zarqa in Jordan, Price's chapter makes several intellectual contributions to the volume. Firstly, it develops the concept of the 'secondary city' through a critical consideration of what 'secondariness' entails, as a relational and qualitative point of difference in the urban experience. Secondly, it advocates for a critical finance position within urban studies, particularly regarding the politics of public debt and the ways in which municipal finances are implicated in the 'overlooking' of certain cities by national governments and scholars alike. Thirdly, this chapter is evidence of how 'thick description' can shed important light on the lived experience of (otherwise) overlooked cities.

Production and negotiation of knowledge in Overlooked Cities
The production and negotiation of knowledge is the second theme in this book. This theme is a central to the key debates and discussion to understand how knowledge of the urban is produced, negotiated and resisted. Understanding the production of urban knowledge as a contested space in overlooked cities provides an opportunity to evaluate and examine epistemic relations, representation and material consequences in the production and re-production of urban knowledge. Our contributors engage in diverse and empirically rich analysis that we question the following: whose knowledge counts in these cities? What techniques are deployed to frame and understand these cities? How is expertise (and whose expertise) is utilised in these cities? And how is knowledge produced and negotiated in relation to these overlooked cities? Our authors contribute in this wide range of analytical points to discuss how urban knowledge is produced and negotiated in overlooked cities, from challenging the circuit of innovation and learning and how the process and trajectories influence overlooked cities in order to become urban innovators (Weseley, Filippi & Johnson, this volume), the role of urban actors in producing urban knowledge and what counts as expertise (Rosen, this volume), engaging in intellectual examination of how urban development is negotiated in a post-conflict city (De Mesquita Lima & Costa, this volume), to the politics of intermediary and relational power in small and medium sized cities (Nugraha, this volume). The four chapters that contribute to this theme are introduced in the following paragraphs:

Wesely, Filippi and Johnson's chapter comparatively examines the cities of Santa Fe in Argentina and Manizales in Colombia as flagship cases in disaster risk management (DRM). This chapter makes three distinct contributions to this book. Firstly, it analyses two already consolidated cities with rather low levels of urban growth, firmly institutionalised municipal government procedures, and relatively high availability of financial, human and environmental resources. While DRM practices in Santa Fe and Manizales have been *overly looked* at, the authors argue that their role in the discourse of intermediate cities remains largely *overlooked*. Hence, the case study selection and focus on capacities for innovation contribute a critical interrogation of these cities' positions as outliers in the narratives of rapidly growing and relatively young, resource-scarce medium-sized cities. Secondly, Argentina and Colombia both seek decentralisation of roles and responsibilities from the national government levels, thereby making departmental/provincial capitals central actors in shaping urban policies and developments. Decentralisation trends have severe repercussions on factors like institutional density, municipal budgets as well as local autonomy in decision-making. Thirdly, both cities are outward-looking intermediaries, meaning that their reference points and aspirations are not policies of capital or larger cities, but other champions and frontrunners that excel in the DRM field, which can be found in regional, international or global networks. Considering these three contextual specificities, the chapter shows how analysing Santa Fe and Manizales as 'intermediate' cities enables a comparative and inevitably relational interrogation leading to a more nuanced understanding of their flagship roles in DRM.

Rosen's chapter contributes to debates on urban development processes in secondary cities in the global South. On the one hand, it helps us to understand how similar the challenges are those cities are facing in different geographical and political settings. On the other hand, it shows us how different the development paths are as answers to these challenges. Conceptually, this contribution makes an argument for turning to the uniqueness of each city and a deeper analysis of local conditions. The presented approach of the holistic evaluation of urban development is particularly suitable for this, as it reconstructs the perspective of different actors and thus makes different perspectives of local experts and actors comparable with each other. Of particular relevance is the role of academia in urban policy creation. Altogether this contribution delivers a new methodological framework for the qualitative analysis of Secondary Cities to identify potential categories for future work on a definition of this type of city.

De Mesquita Lima and Costa's chapter allows for an exploration of Dili in Timor-Leste, a city that was brutally torched, left without records and operative capacity, and without the most basic of infrastructure for its population. Since the re-establishment of independence, Dili has been the stage of fast densification and population growth, yet the city in itself has been overlooked, with limited attention being afforded to processes and frameworks required to put checks in place to allow for an urban development that can respond to the needs of its fast-growing population. With focus turned to the international sphere and international positioning, despite it being a capital city, the regional scale of Dili, in itself a medium sized city, has meant that it is overlooked nationally and regionally, left with hollow references in governance tools, despite the urgency for action to improve the conditions in which its population lives. In a global scenario of conflict entering urban areas, tearing physical and governance structures apart, the importance and relevance of reflecting upon the post-conflict recovery of an overlooked urban fabric, is timely. This chapter signifies the

intellectual examination on how irregular urban development is negotiated between the urban agency and social actors in a post-conflict city.

Finally, Nugraha's chapter critically examines the roles of medium sized cities in Indonesia, which joined a transnational network of urban climate change resilience in 2009. The analysis evaluates how these cities are best described as "intermediary organisations" and as "agents of change" that contribute to the process of achieving successful socio-technical transitions towards climate resilience. The chapter expands our understanding of asymmetric relationships of influence and control, and the socio-political reconfiguration of urban climate governance at national and international level. This chapter's central concern is around the politics of urban knowledge and relational power of small and medium sized cities, also known as secondary cities, to encounter the global circuit of ideas and practices of urban climate resilience that flow nationally and internationally. This chapter exemplifies the geographical scale, as a network power, that is initiated, conducted, and negotiated by medium sized cities in Indonesia. This chapter contributes to discussions on how small and medium sized or overlooked cities, which are underrepresented in the global literature on climate change adaptation and urban resilience, have been involved in productive and critical engagements that challenge the dominant discourse by the mega and capital cities.

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Dare to look
This collection provides an exploratory glimpse into academically ignored urban spaces. We consider what these cities can tell us about urbanisation and the urban condition, and the state and potential of cities throughout the world. The chapters explore a range of issues that are of critical importance to each individual city, with the aim of opening up a discussion that transgresses multiple borders and boundaries. Individually and collectively, these chapters ask whether different processes are taking place in these overlooked cities, compared to their larger counterparts? And whether the production of knowledge in these cities has the space to challenge urban theory and conventional urban practices? This book marks an important stage in the proliferation of interest among early career researchers in overlooked cities, united by a common goal of exploring these spaces and furthering critical intellectual debate. More insight and knowledge needs to be produced in these and other overlooked cities, in order to develop vocabularies and conceptual frameworks that reflect the diversity of global urban realities. We invite other scholars into our virtual collective in order to broaden the scope of this project, and to deepen our understanding of the urban from the perspective of overlooked cities. Join us. These cities matter to our collective urban future.

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