UCL

BUDDlab

Volume 3
February 2012

Speculations on a Good City

Cover image: Benjamin Leclair-Paquet

Design and layout: Ricardo Martén

Preface

William Hunter

"Through its complex orchestration of time and space no less than through the social division of labor, life in the city takes on the character of a symphony: specialized human aptitudes, specialized instruments, give rise to sonorous results which, neither in volume nor in quality, could be achieved by any single piece."

The symphony of Lewis Mumford's city is one of progressive innovation, an evolving repository of meanings and memories. It distinguishes itself from other scales of creation due to the way density harnesses and gives rise to a new energized circuitry manifest in social activity and material artefacts. Yet the city, with all this dynamic sophistication, is arguably just as imperfect. Essentially the city provides the location for culture to feed, to roam, and to make mischief.

Indeed plenty of mischief occurs in cities- from the wallows of criminal activity, to uneven capital distribution and societal fragmentation brought about by neoliberal urban planning. Hardly a city in the world can claim exclusion from these debilitating forces. But certainly these rather negative and challenging facets of human nature are not the only defining features of our cities. After all, cities everywhere are counteracting these realities with ever-competing campaigns of unique and attractive urban projects and initiatives, cultural experiments, and overall positivity. The burning question then is not one of perfection, but rather considers what factors and criteria can simply render a 'good city'?

Defining a 'good city' could rest upon technocratic notions of infrastructure and services or it could revolve around successful governance and regulatory frameworks. It might entail the emergent call for a just and inclusive landscape of interactive mingling of classes or derive from a centrality of arts and culture, a pulsating membrane of individual and collective creativity.

Captured in this volume are the varied perceptions of what a 'good city' might be, what values of a city are worth highlighting, which existing cities might serve as 'good' examples, and better yet, what concepts and design strategies may yield a 'good city'. Here the theme of diversity is covered in a loose trilogy of essays respectively considering the impact of urban art and senses of place, the recognition and representation of insurgent citizenships, and the pertinent question of 'good for whom'? Musings on the ideals of connected identity and sensorial human participation sit next to the promotion of comprehensive urban transport network planning as a driving framework. Also included here is the perplexing identification of specific cases such as the emerging innovation catalysts of Rosario, Argentina, the contemporary city visions of Chile and the UK, and the history-laden cum pleasurable enigma of Las Vegas.

Together these essays acknowledge that cities are composed of fascinating components, both material and human. This interweaving of the living and the static, for better or worse provides the heartbeat to which cities flow and recycle. Here the focus is defining what is good about or what makes a good city. Alas there is also an attempt here to highlight the perceptive nuances in defining 'good' and the profound allure of the city. Furthermore, beyond our fascinations with the city, there is a crucial responsibility of those involved in the continuous debate on the city to regularly overhaul the understanding of what characteristics and parameters should be considered when discussing urban transformation and critical strategies. For only then can we arguably envision, design, and re-design dynamic and sustainable cities of the future.

The Good City

Inclusive City: Recognition, Redistribution and Representation for Negotiating Insurgent Citizenships

Veyom Bahl

Contemporary political debates range on issues from the powers of the nation-state in a global economy to international divisions of labor, from migration and multiculturalism to accelerating environmental degradation. Yet, all of these debates point to one broader question: How do we want to live? This question must assume an urban focus at this phase in the history of human settlement. More than half of the world's population lives in cities, and two-thirds will live in cities by 2050 (Amin, 2006, p. 1012). Discussions on successful urbanization (the process) and successful urbanism (the state), thus, become central to broader concerns over the livelihoods of human beings; "the human condition has become the urban condition" (Ibid.). How we intend to use our cities informs our political institutions, economic exchanges, sociocultural interactions and environmental relations. To dissect the question "How do we want to live?", therefore, we must aspire to answer, "What makes a good city?".

A Contemporary City

In defining a contemporary city in this paper, I am not concerned with the technical—at what population threshold a town becomes a city, or how the city is differentiated from the urban or metropolitan area. Rather, defining a city is a methodological preoccupation. As John Berger writes, "seeing comes before words." What we conceive as the city has direct bearing on the people, issues, environments and processes with which we choose to be concerned when qualifying a good city.

The definition of "city" in contemporary terms lies between extremes—neither restricted to political-spatial borders, nor unfettered in its membership—neither bounded nor boundless. While the influences of globalization cannot be ignored, neither can cities be "discounted as spatial formations…simply questioned as bounded territorial formations, in preference for an account of them as places of nodal connectivity, inflected by the overlaps of historical legacy and spatial contiguity" (Amin, 2007, p. 112). A city has become a "subtle folding together of the distant and the proximate, the virtual and the material, presence and absence, flow and stasis, into a single ontological plane upon which location—a place on the map—has come to be relationally and topologically defined" (Ibid., p. 103).

Integral to this understanding of cities are two components: diversity and change. If we accept a city as a place of "nodal connectivity," then we must acknowledge that this connectivity implies movement of ideas, cultures, technologies, capital and their literal embodiment—people. People, belonging to multiple identities of class, ethnicity, gender, religion, age, ability, and sexuality (Levy, 2010b), have come together in the world's cities, making them epicenters of immense diversity. Furthermore, accepting the city as a site of flows acknowledges that their nature—and their impact on the reproduction of social and political norms—is ongoing. Thus, the definition of a good city must not only reflect the existence of diversity, but also the evolving nature of its composition.

A Good Contemporary City

This leads to the inevitable question: If all cities are ordinary, how can we possibly attempt to evaluate how "good" a city is? In what form, through which provisions and under which processes can "good" be manifested? In a classical sense, a good city could have been seen as one that served the "public interest." Diversity and change—particularly when conceived as functioning within political, social and economic power relations—inherently call into question the notion of "the public interest." Rather than consensus, diversity and change breed in cities spaces of "insurgent citizenship," sites of conflict over "rights to and in the polis" (Sandercock, 1998, p. 165). I argue it is in these spaces of insurgent citizenship that the central criterion for successful contemporary urbanism arises. If we view creating the good city "as the challenge to fashion a progressive politics of well-being and emancipation out of multiplicity and difference," then a good city is one that embodies inclusion in its resolution to conflicts arising from diversity and change (Amin, 2006, p. 1012).

I must make three qualifications: Drawing on Lefebvre, who is to be included are the inhabitants of the city, citizens or not, and those concerned with their interests, such as government, planners, civil society and private

organizations. Conflict is not synonymous with violence, though it can take on violent forms. Conflict is conceived here as competition and debate over the right to the city. Finally, inclusion is neither a one-time phenomenon nor is it the antithesis of exclusion (Madanipour, 1998, p. 160). Drawing on Nancy Fraser's "three dimensional" conception of social justice, inclusion is viewed broadly as a process embodying recognition, redistribution and representation (Fraser et al., 2004, p. 380) in the form, content and governance of a city. The remainder of this paper will argue that inclusionary processes in these realms can respond directly to the challenges of diversity and change, thereby providing for the basis of "a good city."

The Form of a City—Inclusion as Recognition

Inclusion is first contended at the most elemental level of a city—the form of its built environment. At this level, inclusion is manifested through the recognition that diverse individuals have reasons to value or reasons for arriving at different ways of living.

Looking specifically at urban homes, numerous reports detail the demolition of low income tower blocs (such as those in East London in anticipation of the 2012 Olympic Games), the eviction of families from informal settlements (such as those along railroad tracks of Mumbai), and the construction of wealthy gated communities (such as those in suburbs of San Francisco). While the gated communities of San Francisco face little threat from developers, tower blocs and informal settlements capture the imagination of planned interventions. In an effort to bring economic growth to East London, local authorities plan to replace estate tower blocks with mixed-use luxury housing and commercial developments. In an effort to better integrate slum dwellers into the formal fabric of the city while improving the efficiency of commuter trains, Mumbai planning authorities relocated families from their trackside homes.

Debates on how to develop these areas—and, by consequence, how to "develop" the residents—are framed predominantly in economic terms. As a result, analysis of the quality of these homes focuses on the quality of the structure, degree of maintenance, location, transportation links, aesthetic judgments, and the like. Such an approach, however, confounds functionality with value. An inclusive recognition of value would more closely resemble Pierre Bourdieu's notion of the "habitus," which "allows language, ideas, practices power relations and resources to be seen as part of the same [home] space, as mutually constitutive and productive of…ways of life" (Haylett, 2003, p. 62). In this view, homes are not only structures of the built environment; they are also the product of social relations and the spaces of their reproduction. Their form is intimately connected with individual and collective identity and culture.

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The Contents of a City—Inclusion as (Re)Distribution

Also critical to a good city is inclusion manifested in the distribution of the city's contents—focusing here on the examples of utility and transportation networks. At their most basic level, these contents provide for services, such as light, water, sanitation and mobility, which allow for productive activity within the city. It is precisely "their dominance in everyday lives," however, that makes "that which is socially constructed appear to be the natural order of things" (Kong and Law, 2002, p. 1505). As Stephen Graham and Simon Marvin write:

> "*The assumption within urban political economy seems to be that urban utilities are a largely unseen, relatively unchanging and given infrastructural underpinning for the restructuring and development of cities—little more than a set of ducts and wires that lie beneath the city and support the urban fabric*" (Graham and Marvin, 1995, p. 170, emph. original).

More inclusively viewed, however, utilities are "powerful elements of place-based capital… key elements within the institutional fabric of urban governance" (Graham and Marvin, 1995, p. 187) and are the product of decisions made about "emplacement, where things are put in space" (Soja, 2010, p. 47).

As such, utility and transportation networks serve to provide or deny access to basic rights within the city. Rudimentary sanitation and water infrastructure in Delhi's poorer suburbs force families to spend hours collecting water at tanks alongside the city's highways. With few stations offering handicap access, the London Tube effectively strangles the mobility of the city's less-abled population. In a peculiar twist, the wealthy Georgetown

neighborhood of Washington, DC is purposefully not accessible via the city's subway system - not to limit the mobility of those living within an area, but rather to restrict entrance to those from outside. Spaces of insurgent citizenship form in these arenas, fueled by the "distributional inequalities" arising from unequal access to the city's contents (Soja, 2010, p. 48).

Furthermore, influenced by neoliberal economic policies and pressured by the current recession, cities are increasingly evaluating the merits of privatization in these sectors. This transformation risks exacerbating exclusion and further disadvantaging marginalized segments of the urban population (Graham and Marvin, 1995), by converting users to clients, and the ability to use into the ability to pay (Levy, 2010a).

The Governance of a City—Inclusion as Representation

In the context of city governance, inclusion is manifested through representation. In theory, representation is ingrained in systems of democratic governance. Voters appear at ballot boxes in regular intervals to elect peers who will operate the machinery of governance on their behalf. Theories of democratic governance, however, do not invariably translate into the practice of representative democracy. The social production of "unjust geographies" isolates communities from the political mainstream. Spatial and political tactics also alter systems of formal representation, undermining the participation of the full diversity of urban inhabitance (Soja, 2010). This "democratic deficit" draws into focus the need for inclusionary processes of representation. Engendering participation and open debate where diversity is equitably represented becomes critical in negotiating conflicts arising from multiple claims to the city (Cornwall, 2002).

These governance conflicts are most visibly manifested in debates over space allocation and planning approvals in the city, all the more evident when spaces under question are of symbolic value. This was the case with recent debates over the construction of an Islamic center, Park51, blocks away from the World Trade Center site in New York City. Tension mounted over the prospect of building an Islamic center in such proximity to a site whose history is so intimately connected with the enormity of Islamic extremism.

A New York Times poll in September 2010 revealed the core of the conflict: while 62% of New Yorkers believed the people have a right to build the Islamic Center, 67% believed it should not be built because "they should find a less controversial location" (Barbaro and Connelly, 2010). At its surface, debate was over the content of the city—whether a mosque could be built. But the debate highlighted challenges of inclusive governance, as the Islamic center became the physical manifestation of the collision between the diversity of New York City and

multiple versions of change New Yorkers (and Americans more broadly) had envisioned for the World Trade Center site. As Leonie Sandercock writes, "Cities are the repositories of memories, and they are one of memory's texts" (2003, p. 222).

The multiplicity of attachments to a site must be represented in the governing process if inclusion is to be achieved. Just as the World Trade Center site held personal meaning for those affected by the attacks of September 11, the site adopted symbolic value for the proponents of the Islamic center, who saw its presence as an opportunity for education and interfaith dialogue. In this context, the city becomes a space of debate without a predetermined outcome – where insurgent citizenships can be negotiated, and where representative governance plays a central role in promoting inclusion.

Despite protestations of many inside and outside of New York, the City's Landmarks
Preservation Commission voted unanimously in favor of building the center.7 "If we need to destroy as part of our city-building, we also need to heal," writes Sandercock (2003, p. 222). The Islamic center aspires to create a space where:

> *"Protestants might pray or swim while their children take an Arabic slang class; where Jews might find a congregation emphasizing multicultural community over the singularity of their experience; where Muslims could pray in a place that establishes their prominence in the city's culture, proud to host New Yorkers of every religion"* (Dominus, 2010).

Perhaps this vision best approximates the ideals of inclusion and representation in light of the tremendous diversity—and its concomitant challenges—in contemporary world cities.

Conclusion

One could argue that I have contradicted myself: at the same time that I argue there can be no list of criteria that defines a good city, I offer "inclusion" as a primary criterion for successful urbanization. Notions of inclusion, however, do not prescribe that a good city have a particular form, contain certain amenities, or utilize a specific governance structure. A good city is not singular. Rather, achieving inclusion demands that a city be reflective and vigilant in an ongoing effort for its identity construction. Diversity and evolution are critical in this model of the good city, particularly in light of globalizing trends and greater connectivity. Furthermore, "good" cannot be perceived as unidimensional; the ultimate test is the degree to which inclusion - through recognition, redistribution and representation - is achieved at present and in the future in all the form, content and governance of a city.

"Rather than consensus, diversity and change breed in cities, spaces of insurgent citizenship, sites of conflict over rights to and in the polis."

(Sandercock, 1998: 165)

Cultivating Innovation: Seeds of a good city and the case of Rosario

Krista Canellakis

"The dream of a better city is always in the heads of its residents."
– *Jaime Lerner, Former Mayor, Curitiba, Brazil*

A good city is one that consistently harnesses the creativity of its people to generate innovative solutions that address pressing urban challenges. In an era of the looming threat of climate change coupled with the ascendancy of the "urban" reality developing new ways of managing cities' precious environmental resources is arguably more important than ever. Cities represent both the symbolic and physical crossroads of diverse people, ideas and visions for the future. A good city leverages this unique position to bring about greater social cohesion and more efficient and ecologically conscious management of the city's environmental resources.

Innovation in an Urban Context

Innovation has been an important part of the urban discourse since the 1970's. Much of the literature on innovation focuses on its potential to drive economic growth. In "The Economy of Cities" Jane Jacobs (1969) brought considerable attention to the link between urban economic growth and a city's ability to expand into new kinds of goods and services. Morley, Proudfoot and Burns (1980) provide a broader definition of urban innovation "not only as responses to the pressures of change, but also as the initiators of structural or systems-wide changes with long term effects". They emphasize that innovation is a dynamic and ongoing process rather than a single outcome. The introduction of the notion of a "creative city" added a new lens of analysis for cities that attempts to explain the precursors for innovation: creativity. In a development of new indicators for the "health" of cities, a city's capacity to be creative was of primary importance. They characterize creativity as,

"experimentation; originality; the capacity to rewrite rules; to be unconventional; to think a problem afresh… to discover common threads amid diversity; to look at problems laterally and with flexibility." (Bianchini & Landry, 1994)

Diverging from previous definitions, this new perspective on urban innovation was driven more by people and culture than by economic and bureaucratic factors. This paper deals with this bottom-up, people-centred approach to urban innovation and how it can be mobilized to produce a "good city" that empowers people to sustainably manage their local natural resources.

The Seeds of a Good City

This paper proposes three alternative parameters for evaluating a city's ability to spark innovation:

First, a good city is an interconnected city. Cities are by nature diverse and composed of people with diverse interests, skill sets, education, cultures, and ways of thinking. Through the creation of established interactive networks of citizens, businesses and civil society institutions, a good city brings these diverse groups together to tackle common problems. These networks can come in many forms including but not limited to public-private partnerships, community groups, citizen task forces, think tanks, unions, and university initiatives. This web of interconnections is important because it facilitates knowledge transfer and stimulates learning.

Second, a good city is an open city. As Peter Hall (1998) observes, cities that have gone through periods of innovation and creativity are characterized by volatility, turbulence and a general lack of harmony. Periods of uncertainty and insecurity about the future present unique opportunities to take risks that have the potential to transform a city. Given that innovation by definition means that change on some level is occurring, a good city is amenable to transformation and open to taking risks. From a social perspective, a good city weathers the turbulence by embracing diversity and mobilizing with the possibility of change. On the contrary, xenophobia and homogeneity stifle innovation because they create an environment of fear with respect to change. From a bureaucratic perspective, a good city has a government structure in place that does not only accept and tolerate changing circumstances but also channels energy and resources towards innovative ideas as they emerge. In brief, being open means a willingness and capacity to have a somewhat of an open agenda; good cities learn and evolve as innovations take hold.

Finally, a good city has a leadership with a vision. Leadership can come in many forms and from anywhere in a society and different skills are needed depending on the circumstances. Of primary importance is a leader's ability to understand the needs and aspirations of the city and its people. To drive cities towards innovation, leaders can help members of society collectively recognize the challenges that need to be faced and, in turn, align resources and interests towards those challenges. A classic example of urban leadership, which has created an innovative urban transformation, is in the city of

Curitiba, Brazil with Jaime Lerner's 'tipping point leadership' style (Foliente et al, 2007). Lerner's main focus is on the development of human capital with a practical idealist approach that engages and empowers people's aspirations for the future, spurring innovation from all sectors of the community.

Rosario: from Crisis to Creativity

The city of Rosario, Argentina's third largest city, exemplifies the good city model and how it is utilized to stimulate a dramatic urban transformation. The economic crisis in Argentina was felt deeply in the city of Rosario. From the period of 1997 to 2001, thousands became unemployed and the acute nature of the crisis left 610,000 Rosario residents (61%) below the poverty line with 30% in extreme poverty in 2001 (Santandreu et al, 2009). This dire predicament led to advantageous opportunities for mass organization among the socially and economically discontent. The 'piqueteros', a national movement of highly organized groups of the unemployed (mostly women), banded together in protest of the economic conditions demanding employment or assistance from the government (Petras, 2001). In February 2002, the municipality of Rosario responded by reinvigorating the agriculture heritage of the area and launching the Programa de Agricultura Urbana (PAU — Urban Agriculture Program). In partnership with a national government program, Pro-Huerta, and a local NGO, Centro de Estudios deProducciones Agroecológicas (CEPAR — Centre for the Study of Agroecological Production), the municipality launched a city-wide program to promote joint and participatory ways of producing, consuming and marketing healthy food grown locally. The poor in Rosario were provided training on growing food organically, gardening equipment, and seeds. However, this program was not just about food and agriculture. The aim of the program was also to contain the social unrest and provide places for the community to congregate and build their capacities. It was remarkably successful in both of these chief objectives and engaged over 10,000 families in the creation of more than 800 community vegetable gardens (Municipality of Rosario, 2006).

Recognizing the value of the program and the demand for growing food, the government, in conjunction with international NGOs, pooled resources to assess the available vacant land throughout the city. Through new interdepartmental collaboration and discussion, the municipality helped to regularize the occupancy of the farmers, also known as 'huerteros', again mostly women, who were officially considered squatters on the land. They also identified other new vacant plots throughout the city and made legal arrangements with the owners to lease the land for a several years at a time. This unconventional undertaking was critically important in institutionalizing the program beyond the crisis period and validating the integrity of the 'huerteros' and their successes. Furthermore, it resulted in a better utilization of the city's land resources and public spaces while also providing healthy food to the community and livelihoods for the poor. Although hesitant at first, landowners ultimately appreciated the program as they now gained an income stream for land they didn't have the resources to develop themselves. In addition, the city government also established designated farmers market areas in public spaces in middle and upper income communities where the gardeners could sell their products. The program has also taken on a gender dimension in that women are reliably at the helm in the PAU. With the help of government-led leadership training and capacity building workshops targeted at women at the early implementation stages of the program, women were empowered to coordinate and manage day-to-day operations of the gardens. Their role was also institutionalized in the formation of the Urban Agriculture Producers Network of Rosario, the main organization of farmers in the city. This is evidenced by the fact that 70% of garden group leaders are women, 100% of women participate in the farmers markets and consider it a positive experience, and 49% of women farmers are responsible for managing their gardens' income (Ponce, 2009).

The innovations that arise from the Rosario case are numerous and lasting. After the crisis passed, some plots were abandoned but the majority are still actively being utilized and more than 7,000 people who were previously unemployed are involved in the program (Valente, 2006). Huerteros are increasingly developing new and creative ways of adding value to the plants and vegetables they have grown. With the broad success of the program amongst the urban poor, there is an increased demand for plots beyond vacant private properties. Through a research partnership with International Development Research Corporation (IDRC), a Canadian NGO, the city farmers identified large amounts of permanently available land on public spaces next to railroads, roads and streams. Once overlooked and disregarded as 'dead' space, this land is now a fertile food-growing locale that enables more people to work and feed their families. As a side benefit, this land, once neglected and littered, is now cared for and adds to the aesthetic experience of the community. (IDRC, 2009)

Ploughing Innovation, Plot by Plot

The case of Rosario contains all of the key elements of a good city and provides valuable insight into how a city can harness the people's innovation toward the sustainable management of its environmental assets. The complexity of the types of actors involved created a scenario ripe for innovative thinking and action. The large number of nodes in the interconnected web of actors enhanced communication and learning and introduced different kinds of competencies to the effort. It enabled the knowledge and skills of professionals and academics to be transferred to the aspiring and active farmers.

Rosario, as a whole, also proved to be highly open and adaptable to change. As a result of this dense network of communication, ideas for unconventional solutions to the city's problems flowed and creative solutions were met with open-minded consideration rather than resistance by the city government. The level of commitment to institutionalizing urban agriculture in the city of Rosario is unique and impressive. By establishing a legal framework that gives the poor access to secure land tenure, the municipality showed its capacity to quickly adapt to on-the-ground circumstances. Likewise, when the government saw that the beauty products business was thriving, it recognized the opportunity to expand its role as land, training and materials provider into also being a developer of spaces for farmers to manufacture their products. From a social standpoint, the new farmers markets, sited strategically in middle and upper income areas, could have easily been rejected by local residents who were likely uncertain about 'the activist poor' coming into their neighbourhood. On the contrary, the markets were welcomed and highly successful as community-building events that established a direct relationship between the food's producer and consumer and rallied support for the ecological management of Rosario's public and open spaces. Moreover, and perhaps most importantly, it helped to connect the marginalized poor and the upper classes into a more inclusive Rosario identity.

In the case of Rosario, the leadership dimension of this urban transformation comes from the robust women whose initial bravery led the protests that instigated the government to take action. With the help of some initial government support, the women became empowered to forge a path for how they envisioned the program in the city's future. By fully engaging in the marketing of the produce and management of the program,

they were at the front lines of interaction with both the producers and the consumers and thus were able to better understand the needs and aspirations of both parties. Many of the women were single mothers and the sole providers for their families, and thus they involved their children, particularly in the educational and hands-on gardening components. In doing so, these women helped to make the program more sustainable by reinforcing the values of the program and incubating the next generation of farmers and urban innovators. While this group form of leadership strays from that of a traditional centralized figurehead, the resulting impact on creativity and innovation was no less evident.

Conclusion

The innovative urban transformation that took place in Rosario over a few short years clearly demonstrates the potential of creating environmentally sustainable and socially just public policies when the community is empowered to participate in the process. Through dense and diverse interconnected networks, an openness to change on many different scales and a strong base of local leaders, this 'good city' transformed the use of 'dead' spaces in the city into productive, vibrant and flourishing centres of economic, social and environmental activity. The words of Jaime Lerner capture the essence of this good city:

> "There is no endeavour more noble than the attempt to achieve a collective dream. When a city accepts as a mandate its quality of life; when it respects the people who live in it; when it respects the environment; when it prepares for future generations, the people share the responsibility for that mandate, and this shared cause is the only way to achieve that collective dream."

"Experimentation; originality; the capacity to rewrite rules; to be unconventional; to think a problem afresh... to look at problems laterally and with flexibility."

(Bianchini & Landry, 1994)

Shaking Up the City: From Street Art to Creating a Sense of Place

Melissa García-Lamarca

The multiple layers of cities are interwoven in complex and simple, direct and abstract ways, their stories told through a multiplicity of voices, experiences and spatial manifestations. Elements of a good city cannot be assessed in isolation but rather must be explored in relation to, embedded within – and struggling against – a complex global network of economic, political and social systems and processes. Towards exploring some pieces of this dynamic context of city life and form, this paper will focus on two specific, sensory characteristics of a good city: street art and a local/global sense of place. These concepts will be analysed and interwoven amidst social, economic, political and physical dimensions of urban life, concluding with what this means for making a good city.

Street art: questioning urban form and power structures in the city and beyond

Street art – with styles or media including spray painted stencils, self-adhesive stickers, wheat-pasted posters and sculptural/three-dimensional works – tends to be done clandestinely, in the shadow of darkness, in public spaces including streets, corners, sidewalks and walls. Its usually unauthorised content tends to provoke and challenge dominant social structures and norms, humanising urban spaces through an alternative form of citizenship. Different and often unheard concerns and questions are thus expressed in a visual, tangible way, providing a passerby with a different experience and feeling of the city. At a deeper level, street art is a visual and visceral manifestation of people questioning urban form and power relationships not only in the city but beyond into regional and global processes that form our day-to-day life experiences.

Street art as transgression and resistance

As street art is unsanctioned by those who are 'allowed' to shape the city, the immediate question arising is who decides these rules and 'appropriate' behaviours, and how the boundary between what is allowable and not allowed defined. Lefebvre's The Production of Space (1991) highlighted the fact that every society produces its own space, a complex set of social constructions including meanings and values, what constitutes 'right' and 'wrong' behaviour. A hegemonic landscape is thus created in the urban fabric, expressing this constructed system of dominant, 'appropriate' meanings, terrain that is context-specific, continuously contested and negotiated (Cresswell, 1996). Street art is one activity

that challenges such socially constructed ideas of what is 'right' and 'appropriate' in space and place, an expression of transgression and resistance to normative boundaries and structures. Its appearance is important as 'the moment of transgression marks the shift from the unspoken unquestioned power of place over taken-for-granted behaviour to an official orthodoxy concerning what is proper as opposed to what is not proper – that which is in place to that which is out of place.' (ibid.: 10).

The past few decades have seen space and time deeply transformed through technological innovations, where a space of flows, as compared to historically rooted space of place, is becoming the dominant spatial manifestation of power and function in society (Castells, 2000). Many authors have highlighted the complimentary processes of globalisation and social and spatial fragmentation, how traditional urban spaces are disintegrating and morphing into a global network of interconnected nodes (Jacobs, 2002). The emergence of global cities, strategic sites in transnational networks arising from outsourcing and specialised economic activity, illustrate specific terrain where the complex dynamics of globalisation processes become concrete (Sassen, 2005). Yet questions of power and inequality arise as these global cities often concentrate capital and communication infrastructure in highly provisioned areas, increasing the gap between these places and people who inhabit and use them and disadvantaged areas and residents of the city (ibid.).

While the transnational and hypermobile character of capital has had a tendency to instill powerlessness among local actors (ibid.: 38), street art otherwise is an expression of marginalised individuals and groups reclaiming power over space. This reclamation also connects to the experience described by Castells (2000: 436) in mega-cities, the phenomenon of being globally connected, through television and mass media, yet locally disconnected from place, both physically and socially. Again here the act of street art can be seen as an assertion of claim over space, reconnecting locally in place. In this way street art can be seen as a response and challenge to the space of flows, of the unequal effects of time-space compression: while spaces and objects of power and wealth are projected throughout the world through mass media and social norms – the 'dreamworlds' of consumption, property and power as described by Davis and Monk (2008) – only a fraction of the world's population can access this experience. As most people's lives are rooted in place, one of the reac-

tions and contestations to this virtual and inaccessible reality find expression on walls, sidewalks, streets.

Street art as 'insurgent citizenship'

Flowing from the transgression of and resistance to social-space boundaries and hegemonies, reactions to a capitalist-neoliberal system benefiting the few over the many, the concept of street art as an expression of insurgent citizenship emerges. Street artists participate –consciously and unconsciously – in the personal and collective struggles as described by Holston (1996) that expand and erode what it means to be a member of the modern state, over citizenship. Street art repurposes space, reacting against the entire modernist political project and approach to planning that has used shock techniques of decontextualisation, defamiliarisation and dehistoricisation to force the subjective appropriation of a new social order (ibid.). Street art fundamentally questions who owns the city and who participates in its shaping, in the creation of identity and belonging in the city. It is one small contributor, as Holston (1996: 39) posits, to the development of a different social imagination, one that reinvents modernism's activist commitments to the invention of society and construction of the state.

Street art: subversion becoming mainstreamed?

Originally seeking to challenge the status quo, recent years have seen several street artists exhibiting in galleries, developing merchandising lines and selling work for significant sums. As street art is increasingly given

economic and/or social value and status, is this subverting the subversive, incorporating it into the status quo of which it is so critical? Will these alternative forms of expression become subsumed into the hegemonic landscape and if so, will such works retain their crucial role of questioning structures and forms of power in the city and beyond?

Sense of place: local to global connections and expressions

A 'sense of place' as characteristic of a good city often emerges from an experiential appreciation of the uniqueness and distinctive feeling of a particular place, one connected to history, culture and locality. It can also be explained in reaction to, for example, being in high-end cinemas or shopping centres in a given city around the world and experiencing a profound feeling of 'place-lessness', where the design and layout of space is an interchangeable non-place (Augé, 1996) with no regard to context, culture or emotional connection. At a larger scale Muñoz (2008) labels this homogenisation of place urbanalisation (urbanalización), referring to the imprint of globalisation on urban landscapes that makes urban experience in different places, paradoxically, similar and interchangeable.

Place, a 'sense of place', and who creates it?

Globalisation processes have led to increasing uncertainty about what we mean by place and how we relate to it. Understanding the particularity of place as an
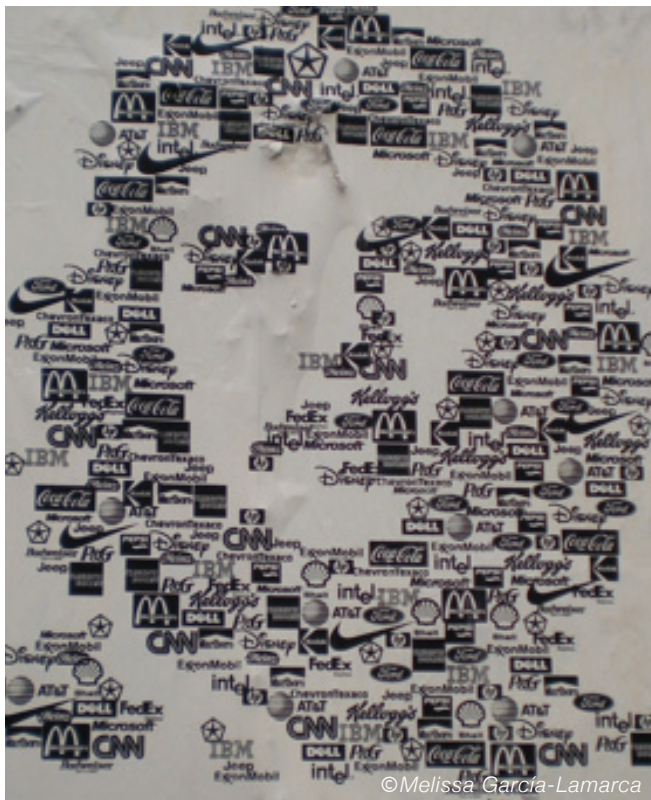
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instance of underlying social processes, Harvey (1996: 261, 302) defines place as a process of carving out 'permanences' in the flow of space and time, and posits that place is becoming more rather than less important due to the tension between mobile capital and fixed place. Yet while place becomes more important according to Harvey (ibid.), Castells (2000) notes that the function and power in our societies are increasingly integrated into the space of flows, whose structural domination of logic essentially alters the meaning and dynamics of place.

If we bring together Harvey's and Castells's perspectives, we can see this seeming paradox leading specific segments of society, those integrated into the space of flows, to have more power over determining and creating a sense of place. For example, in London's Docklands, between 1981 and 1989, £31 million was spent on campaigns painting the Docklands as a desirable place for investment capital and potential wealthy residents, in an attempt to create a sense of place for these groups alongside effectively erasing alternative interpretations of place (Rose, 1995). Another example of a spatial manifestation of power to 'create' a sense of place are redevelopment theme-park projects that produce a simulacrum of urbanism, an analogous city, that instead of linking the visitor with an authentic past create an illusion of safety and foster consumption (Fainstein, 1996).

A sense of place in the space of flows

Towards grounding experience in the era of global capital flows and time-space compression, Massey (1997) calls for a sense of place that is progressive, adequate to global-local times, not self-defensive but outward looking and useful in political struggles inevitably based on place without being reactionary. She identifies components of a progressive sense of place as one with multiple identities, as dynamic and without boundaries – a meeting place, articulated movements in networks of social relations and understandings (ibid.). The critical challenge here is how to create such an open and dynamic sense of place in our current globalised multi-cultural context, a challenge that parallels Castells's (2000) call for cultural, political and physical bridges between the space of flows and space of place.

Building a progressive sense of place in a good city must begin through day-to-day lived experiences of the city. One example is in the 'micro-publics' where dialogue and negotiation is compulsory – places such as workplace, schools, youth centres – and the micro-publics of 'banal transgression' that bring together people from diverse cultural backgrounds in unfamiliar territory to work on a shared project, for example community gardens,

or the regeneration of derelict spaces (Sandercock, 2003: 94, quoting Amin (2002)). Such spaces begin to challenge fear and intolerance of the 'Other' (ibid.), and begin to create a dynamic sense of place with multiple identities.

Another idea to connect to a space of place is through Amin and Shift's (2002) three metaphors around everyday urbanism: transitivity, rhythms and footprints. Transitivity stems from Walter Benjamin's flânerie, where transitivity meant grasping the city as a place of intermingling and improvisation, understanding and experiencing the dynamism of place from the street level. Rhythms express another aspect of the place of cities, created through daily encounters and manifold experiences of time and space, arising out of teaming mix of city life. Lefebvre (1996: 230) called this rhythmanalysis, where 'concrete times have rhythms, or rather, are rhythms – and every rhythm implies the relation of a time with a space, a localised time, or if one which is, a temporalised place.' Finally footprints refer to 'imprints from the past, the daily tracks or movement across, and links beyond the city.' (Amin and Shift, 2002: 9). These three place-based activities, if accessible, provide potential entry points to the sensory experience of place, connecting to history and the present, also grounding global networks from the space of flows to the locality.

A good city: closing thoughts

Street art and a sense of place are but two examples that highlight the complex dynamics and multiple factors playing into city life and spaces. Important in making a good city, the two points illustrate the fact that conflict, ambiguity and indeterminacy are characteristic of social life in cities and must be considered as constituent elements of planning, in order to productively admit and develop the paradoxes of the imagined future (Holston, 1996). The dynamic tension between the state, civil society and market is a reality, a healthy reality that is shaken up in a good city – street art is just one small example of how existing boundaries can be transgressed and/or resisted, one way that citizenship can be is manifested and space reimagined. This shaking up connects to the need for a progressive local-global sense of place with multiple identities in a good city, one an attempt can be made to create with an approach to planning and designing cities that acknowledges the politics of difference, understands and integrates multicultural histories and literacy into space and place-making and claiming (Sandercock, 1998). At the nexus of the present, past and future, a good city must strive towards a 'politics of potentiality – that is, a transgressive politics of radical democracy and distributive justice' (Pieterse, 2008: 106). The city in this way is everyone's to engage with and transform.

"Cities are plugged into the globe of history like capacitors: they condense and conduct the currents of social time."

(J. Holston, 1995: 35)

Two Ideal Contemporary City Visions: England and Chile

Daniela Godoy

This essay first seeks to find a set of common values which make any city a good or better city. Under this supposition we compare two city visions of very different countries- England and Chile. Despite the differences among them, both share a similar vision of how their cities should be: integrated, competitive, and sustainable with better governance. Reviewing these common concepts through urban theory, we understand that in a context of increasing globalization, cities do have similar problematic and therefore similar ideals. Despite these similarities however, looking at the projects which materialize, we also found that in order to become a good or better city each place requires an understanding of their own specificities and suitable contextual interventions.

UK`s urban vision: Urban Task Force, "Towards an Urban Renaissance"

In 1998 the Deputy Prime Minister of England, invited a group of experts in different areas such as social exclusion, sustainable development, urban design, and urban regeneration, to integrate the Urban Task Force. Some of the main objectives of this group, headed by Richard Rogers, were to identify possible causes for urban decline in the post industrial cities of England as also to establish a common vision for their future. Towards an Urban Renaissance pointed out three specific urban challenges:

- A decline of regional inner-city areas and communities,
- An official prediction of a requirement for 4 million additional households
- Suburban sprawl consuming Greenfield sites at an alarming rate, causing social and economic decline within inner-city areas.

This urban ideal was characterized through the report as a city that "should be well designed, be more compact and connected, and support a range of diverse uses-allowing people to live, work and enjoy themselves at close quarters-within a sustainable urban environment which is well integrated with public transport and adaptable to change" (Urban Task Force, 1999).

The concepts behind this vision and the different recommendations proposed by Urban Task Force illustrate a city socially and physically integrated, which allow social diversity and mixture- a sustainable city which takes care of the environment through high urban design standards and a responsible management of land development. It is a competitive city which attracts people to live, work and socialise. Finally, Urban Task Force recognizes that the most effective method to achieve an urban renaissance is promoting a new style of governance based on a viable economic and legislative framework and with a strong participation of local authorities and communities.

Chile`s urban vision: Cities' agenda

As in England, the government of Chile created its own report elaborated by the Ministry of Housing in the year 2006. Called Cities' agenda it sought to establish new parameters to guide urban development. According to this document, the main urban challenges of Chilean cities are:

- Economic transformations from traditional manufacturing to post industrial services based in new informational technologies
- Population growth and as a consequence, high demands of land and housing
- High levels of mobility
- Urban sprawl consuming Greenfield sites
- Urban poverty, inequality and city fragmentation

An image of a city "beautiful, friendly and equitable" (MINVU, 2006) was proposed leading a range of measures and strategies that should tackle the challenges listed above. The report asserts these main themes:

"Integration, because we want to create participative cities with social cohesion. Sustainability, because we want to achieve development within environmental preservation. Competitiveness, because an integrated and sustainable urban development should promote real progress for people, generating employment and investment opportunities." (Personal translation based in Cities' Agenda 2006)

At the end, the document illustrates the needs for a new legislative framework mentioning new systems of governance, management and participation (MINVU, 2006).

Good City Concepts Explained by Urban Theory

Jane Jacobs (1961) described urban integration from a spatial perspective explaining how in older cities density, diversity and mix uses enriched places making them

continuous, more intensely used, and safer. Steven Jacobs (2002) defines the city of these days as a post urban space, "amalgamating the former periphery and the former metropolis into a vast patchwork, presents fragments as autonomous entities." Another approach relates integration to accessibility, understanding this as the possibility to find "channels of participating in the mainstream society" (Madanipour, 2000). Extending this understanding of accessibility, Castells (2000) links integration to a new "informational mode of production", present in the informational city. From this analysis it is possible to identify different levels of integration, not only defined by the access to basic goods and services but also to utilities and networks (Graham & Marvin 1995).

Theory tends to relate competitiveness to globalization and how this has changed the role of cities. Gospodini (2006), describing the new landscape of the post industrial city, argues that "the creation of entrepreneurial epicentres accommodating high level financial services, technology-intensive and knowledge-based firms is associated with globalisation, capital volatility, service industries searching for spatial optimization of production, and on-going intercity competition. Sassen (1991) describes contemporary cities as complex systems which generate and transmit wealth becoming part of a global urban network in which each city plays a certain role.

Governance is described as a reaction to global forces, which create an atmosphere of uncertainty, decreasing the legitimacy of traditional governmental institutions (Safier, 2003). This lack of confidence could be produced by the complexity of contemporary urban problems which find slow and inadequate governmental reactions, or just as a result of increasing social and cultural polarization in contemporary cities. As a consequence of this phenomenon, a range of "self-organising, inter-organisational networks" (Goss, 2001) appear taking a fundamental role in the new urban governance. These new public, private and social organisations, according to Safier (2003), "are a forcing ground of organisational innovations; and at the same time they provide the stimulation for new forms of participation, empowerment and accountability" while Sandercock (2003) argues that the real work of managing co-existence in cities takes place at the local level.

Sustainability is a relatively new ideal and term, still in constant transformation. A certain evolution of the term can be observed looking at United Nations own definitions. In 1987 they made a strong call for environmental protection, "sustainable development, which implies meeting the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs" (UN, 1987). Viewed from a wider perspective, in 2005 they stated the need for an appropriate equilibrium between the three fundamental pillars of sustainability- social, economic and environmental needs (UN,

2005). A different interpretation is proposed by Fainstein (1999) who recalls Harvey's relation of "the tension between human comfort and respect for the environment to a defence of environmental justice that shift the focus from the relations of human to nature to the relations among human groups."

The suitable intervention for a good city

In order to become a good or a better city, each place must identify the suitable way in which they will become closer to such vision. The following sections describe four policy-projects. The idea is to show how, through common visions each city tries to find the suitable answer to their own reality.

London`s brownfields redevelopment:

This measure follows the Urban Task Force's promotion of densification through brownfield redevelopment, which in reusing existing infrastructure and social facilities, can promote an intense use of public transport, and avoid further Greenfield growth.

Urban policy in London has been consistent to this vision. Iconic projects in Elephant and Castle, King Cross and, the Battersea Park Station are examples of a larger policy which has favored brownfield redevelopment over city sprawl (Hall, 2008). Among these examples, Greenwich Peninsula is probably the best example of a brownfield redevelopment which has been designed considering urban and architectural environmental standards.

Although, this policy can be can criticized in terms of efficiency and outcomes it has clearly been guided by England`s urban vision with a strong emphasis on en-

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vironmental preservation. This as by containing urban sprawl London has faced some important economic costs such as land and property prices increase together with a future housing shortage predicted (Hall, 2008). In recognition of its economic reality and seeking for a sustainable development it could be argued that London has given priority to environmental considerations over economic ones.

Santiago's private highways:

During the last years one of the Santiago's most significant changes has been the development of a new private highway system aiming to reduce transport costs keeping Santiago's competitiveness at the top of Latin American cities (MCWCC, 2008).

Marcial Echeñique, one of his leaders, argues that the proposal reduces transport costs by enlarging Santiago`s supply of infrastructure which is at the same time only paid by the people who uses them and find benefit out of them. This has a positive impact on the existing public network as fewer cars allow public transport to move faster (Echeñique, 2006).

In contrast to London`s example this project clearly has given priority to economic factors. Even social outcomes are measured in terms of economic redistribution through public transport improvements. In fact the project has been largely criticized by people who argue that the project favors car use, promotes indiscriminate urban sprawl, and affects spatial integration and continuity. Again what is clear, is how within its own vision of sustainability, Santiago has placed economic competitiveness as a key priority in its urban development.

Rich Mix Cultural Centre (London)

Set within one of the most traditionally deprived areas of London, Rich Mix Cultural Centre addresses, among other objectives, city integration and cohesion. It is home to diverse immigrant groups, most of which are badly integrated to London's broader dynamics. Within this local problematic, Rich Mix intends to be a cultural bridge creating links between different immigrant and local groups in the context of a cultural centre. Taking advantage of its complex surroundings the project is built over a mix programme of spaces with a "three-screen cinema, exhibition spaces, a café, a broadcasting studio, and a flexible 200-seater performance venue" (BFT, 2008). It hosts film festivals, art exhibitions, public lectures and meetings, educational and training pro-

grammes, and other diverse type of activities, creating an active place that intends through education and cultural programmes to increase social integration of culturally diverse groups. It has also been largely criticized by people who have suggested that the project hardly achieves its objectives, and too much money has been spent in such initiative (Mirza, 2008). Independently of judgments, this illustrates how the vision of an integrated city is adjusted to London's particular problematic.

Urban integration: Elemental, Social Housing in Santiago

In Chile, the problem of social housing is solved by private developers who are subsidized by the state. As resources to build houses are very low, developers tend to localize their projects in the cheapest urban areas available. People receiving these houses are spatially excluded to the poorest peripheries. Within time these new areas become social ghettos which negatively affect housing prices, devaluing the state's initial investment.

The key idea behind Elemental social housing is improving the conditions of social housing with the same resources given by the State. Understanding the problem of location as an essential condition of inclusion and value, Elemental gives priority to the selection and purchase of sites within city network of opportunities. In order to achieve this with limited resources, two spatial strategies are introduced. First, increasing density and second, initially building only the essential part of the house which can cover the indispensable needs of a family. More money is spent on land than houses. Though these projects are debatable, in Santiago, Elemental has been able to locate social housing in better urban areas. People have been able to get better jobs, spend less time in public transport and their houses have increased in value from the state`s original investment.

Conclusion

The idea of the last sections is not to discuss whether these are necessarily good or bad projects, or whether they make good or bad cities. In a global context and from the examples analyzed, integration, competitiveness, governance and sustainability are important conditions which make cities better places. The final argument behind this essay, however, and the reason why these examples have been chosen is to illustrate how under common values different proposals are admissible. In there own complexity what finally makes a good city is the ability to find the suitable answer for its own particular reality.

"(...) a forcing ground of organisational innovations; at the same time they provide the stimulation for new forms of participation, empowerment and accountability"

(Safier, 2003)

Memory City-
Still Learning from Las Vegas

William Hunter

There is a belief that in understanding historical origins and the transformative nature of cities, we can clarify our current condition and better assess our future potentials. Aside from diverse beginnings, cities have developed quite differently in regards to time, growth in society, and natural inferences. Despite grand shifts and the expediency of change brought about by industry and technology, connections to the past remain in symbolic and tangible forms, providing us with clues to build upon.

Refraining from distinctions between the subjective of 'good' and 'bad', this essay will attempt to establish reasoning behind what is 'good' for a city and thus 'good' for the people in it. If a city sets forth a specific goal, and achieves it, promises a 'service' and delivers miraculously, then could its success yield a label of being 'good.' One could argue that there are issues shared by cities, albeit at various degrees, that can cancel each other out- urban sprawl for example. Therefore other qualifying elements can lead us to measure the worth of a city.

In regards to history, let's first examine some theories associated with the development and shaping of cities in regards to history as time and history as symbol. Then let's look at the more sensorial qualities that a city offers its inhabitants and how they relate to history. Serving as the protagonist of my argument is the city of Las Vegas and I will argue how it has used reflections on history and pleasure to become one of the most fascinating and meaningful cities in the world.

Origins and Postmodern Satisfactions

Lucien Febvre claimed that there are strong contrasts in the factors of origins and the factors of growth. This suggests that an origin, however significant, may have less bearing in development- certainly in the global sense (Harold, 1983). An origin could be seen as a springboard for development or simply a mere beginning to a disassociated transformation.

The proof of these scenarios is what archaeologists and geographers have unearthed. We have found that some cities were strictly planned and formally organized by central authorities while others were more unplanned and contained a more fragmental development (ibid.). Steven Jacobs (2002) believes that fragmentation is precisely what erased the prior social structure of cities. As a result, this uncontrolled erasure

opened the door for a new order- society modern. The modernist approach to urbanism, among other things was one of rational standardization. It recognized this fragmented derivation of history, and contrasting its own mantra of process fragmentation, decided that a new totality should override any seam of organic logic. The drivers of the movement, including the plans conceived by Le Corbusier, also saw in this new reading, a utopian future. As it turned out, their utopian virtues failed to gather steam alongside the actual reality of the city and as Rem Koolhaas points out in that sense, "we have only fragments of modernity" (ibid.; p.17).

What followed was an attempt to reclaim the fragments of history. Postmodern thinking went about this in different ways, from the eclectic references of Charles Moore, the memory consciousness of Aldo Rossi, the fractured forms of the Deconstuctivists, the modern city logic of Koolhaas, or the linking of 'fragments' discoursed by Rowe, Lynch, and Alexander (Jacobs, 2002). Judgment aside, many physical elements and accompanying theories of the Postmodernism defined our landscapes and conscience more than any other. For as cities and society have evolved we have safeguarded ourselves in a fascination with the past.

The work of the New Urbanists and places like Seaside, Florida have led this nostalgia movement which Peter Katz describes as addressing the ills of current sprawl development, while returning to the American icon of compact, close-knit community. New Urbanism was also mirrored in the UK which sought to recreate the atmosphere of medieval villages. Though different in character and reference, the movements signaled a collective attack on modernism. Indeed these projects were met with mixed reviews by critics, labeling them as old-fashioned and not of this age (Lorzing, 2001). However, these projects achieved exactly what they set out to do, whether a reaction urban sprawl or simply a nostalgic re-creation of a time and place lost.

These examples illustrate a strong linkage to historical symbolism and a theme of memory. Taken from the writings of Charles Moore, I am referring to cities that carry significance and invoke remembrance (Lyndon and Moore, 1994). Generating memory is a primary characteristic in determining why someone could feel 'good' about a place. Of course I am considering here only positive memories- thus, (a level of) satisfaction precedes memory.

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In recognizing the successful city, John Montgomery (1998) said there will be interesting shapes, surprises to keep citizens awake, hospitality, fantasy, flamboyance, open-mindedness, color, degrees of leisure, and cultural continuity. He was not calling for cities to be paradises or interpreted theme parks, but rather signaling the importance that cities offer a level of stimuli in which people can enjoy themselves to the fullest. There are two types of pleasures- those of the body and of the mind. The pleasures of the body being of a sensory fulfilling nature, while the pleasures of the mind give us contemplative delight (Mumford, 1922). If we take Mumford's utopian idea of contemplative pleasure one step further, then it could be determined that memory, for its relevance, is associated with sustained awareness. This 'newly-created' knowledge, like a personal memory, can rewind us back to a subject for reflection and understanding.

Viva Las Vegas

The origins of Las Vegas are not unlike those of other cities. In the early 1800s the region had significant value of mineral deposits (gold) and sometime near 1830, an abundant oasis was discovered. Founded on the existence of natural artesian wells, the location soon became an alternative route to California. Las Vegas' development as a trading post and railroad town, although significant in regards to the intricacies of regional history, was relatively normal at this point, officially named a city in 1905. Gambling was made legal in 1931, though many towns in the west claimed this as well. It was the building of the Hoover Dam in 1935 that gave the region a shift in development and tourism. In 1946, the notorious mobster Bugsy Siegel, having fled New York, opened the now infamous Flamingo Casino (Gottdiener, et al, 1999) and the Las Vegas known today was officially born. What happened next is a phenomenon in blitzkrieg transformation unparalleled anywhere in the streams of history. With its superlative shapes and colors, everyone seemed enamored by this aesthetic, and "overnight the Baroque Modern forms made Las Vegas one of the few architecturally unified cities of the world" (Wolfe, 1963; p.11).

Tom Wolfe famously observed that Las Vegas' only architectural counterpart was that of Versailles. Reyner Banham (1964) tried to reconcile this creed in terms of the means in construction, recalling that while Versailles manifests as a space of massively structured enclosure with an organized sprawling landscape of gardens and water, Las Vegas exudes its pure power in the form of abundant colored light. He felt the truth behind the depth of exertion in both cases was overwhelming and the process of creating a vastness of virtual forms as significant as any admired structures of history. Oth-

ers shared this idea of re-thinking the legitimacy of Las Vegas, most notably, Robert Venturi and Denise Scott-Brown. Their seminal manifesto, Learning from Las Vegas was, was a charge for architects and urban designers to be more receptive to common society. Using Las Vegas as a model, they too argued against an ignorance of Modernism. The iconography of signs and symbols in architecture were abandoned by modernists for a more purist form (Venturi et al, 1972). But here in Las Vegas signs and symbols were the architecture. The postmodern ideology that images and history precede the realities of the world is illustrated in Las Vegas more than anywhere else, clearly demonstrating the significance in erasing urban reality in favor of a city of consumable signs (Jacobs, 2002).

Builders were celebrating the new America, one feasting on a style of glamour (Wolfe, 1963). Many people have viewed Las Vegas as the ultimate fake environment, comparing it to Disneyland. I would argue that they are lazily missing the point or, as Venturi and others have argued, simply not learning. Whereas Disneyland is the ultimate idea of contained fairytale fantasy, illustrated in a child or family-like manner, Las Vegas was founded on the tendencies, desires, and vices of human character. More of a hedonist playground, its grand stage is dotted with the pyramids and sphinx of Egypt, the Eiffel Tower, Venice, the skyline of New York, and pirate ships. All of these representations have led to the creation of unreal spectacle in a place that is very much real and human, lacking all the luxuries of physical and mental safety that one would find in a theme park.

Las Vegas has transitioned from a railroad town to a gambling town to a global paradise of pleasure and entertainment. It has done so always with an ear to history- its own history, that of America, and the world, continuously keeping people at the heart of its agenda. It could be said that the shapers of Las Vegas knew long ago that "as an artificial world, the city should be so… shaped by art, shaped for human purposes… to heighten the imageability of the urban environment is to facilitate its visual identification and structuring" (Lynch, 1960; p.95). The city combines entertainment, experience, and opportunity for all that grace its streets, making good on its promise to indulge and offer a sort of escapism. And as it continues to analyze human behavioral trends for the benefit of capital and for the people who bask in its pleasures, the experience becomes more refined, more related, however utopian, to a sense of reality.

Las Vegas lives by the view that "the ability to quench desire brings people; the chance to dream of more brings them back again and again" (Rothman, 2002; p. xiii). The city has been extremely successful in synthesizing its character and vision of grander. The catering of this synthesis to the individual is where memories derive. In the representations of worldly paradise, the pure pleasures of entertainment, and the understanding of human character, Las Vegas gives us something in a way that no other city can claim to.

Conclusions and Beyond

Consciously or sub-consciously, we have seen our cities and societies develop with strong ties to the structures of old. In the case of Las Vegas, we have a city at the highest echelon of symbolic and historic reference. Its ultra-comprehensive use of signs, architecture, light, and inhibited freedoms has attracted millions of pleasure seekers. However, Vegas itself is changing, becoming the fastest growing city in America, with a current metropolitan area population said to be around 2 million. This is the quintessential service industry town where 60% of its residents are directly or indirectly associated with the casino and resort industries. It was a blue collar paradise that has attracted white collar business, a place where a croupier can afford to live next door to a computer executive. It is simultaneously a city where people are going to establish a career and others go to retire (Rothman, 2002).

In a recent interview Venturi and Scott-Brown recognize that the iconographic sprawl they were interested in 35 years ago is now paralleled by urban sprawl on the periphery of downtown Las Vegas (Koolhaas, 2004). The commercial agenda of Las Vegas is shifting as well. The 'Shops' at the Bellagio, the Freemont Street Experience, and the MGM City Center have introduced mall-like shopping to the city. In truth, Las Vegas is increasingly becoming like so many other cities.

As Vegas transforms yet again from a pleasure paradise into a legitimate metropolis, the city is more relevant than ever. Whether it was through the gonzo journalism of Hunter S. Thompson, the observant satire of Tom Wolfe, the critical urban theory of Robert Venturi, or the memories of every person who has pumped capital into its sustenance, Las Vegas continues to mesmerize. Vegas can teach us things we already knew but are only now beginning to understand.

"Life has still too many potentialities to be encompassed by the projects of a single generation."

(Lewis Mumford The Story of Utopias, 1922)

Musings on a Networked City

Benjamin Leclair-Paquet

A 'good city' is rudimentarily one where the basic needs (water, food, adequate shelter, access to sanitation and basic health system) are met for every denizen. Additionally, it is a place where vertical mobility is possible and where social interactions are not hindered by the built environment or restrictive governance. It is a place where jobs are available and accessible, and where self-actualization can be achieved by all. A 'good city' is also one that is transparently governed and where citizens are given equal rights. It is a place that can prosper in time; a place that is developed sustainably (United Nations, 1987).

Well-built infrastructures should provide networks that allow for these elements to be readily available to all. In this sense, a salient feature of public infrastructure lies in their need to be accessible for whoever wishes to make use of them. Throughout this essay, which outlines how both physical and intangible infrastructures play a determining role for the social, environmental, economic and esthetical qualities of a city, we will repeatedly underscore how good governance (a key element for 'good cities', we will argue) can transpire through the question of 'accessibility'.

Physical Infrastructures: Transportation Networks

1. Transportation Networks and Urban Design

Urban Design for Beautification:

The physical qualities of roads play a role in the overall image of the city. Kevin Lynch (1960) identifies paths as one of five elements that users utilize for understanding their surroundings and creating mental maps. The same author argues that city users move within urban areas in a pattern that is determined by their imageability (the particularities of a place that provides strong images to users) of a place, a term coined by Lynch (1960). Other authors such as Allan B. Jacobs (1995, p2) support this view as the latest explains the way in which "you go back to some streets more often than to others, and not just because the things you do or have to do are more centered on one than another". We can surmise based on Lynch's (1960) and Jacobs' (1995) work that the physical qualities of road networks are important for cities as they influence the routes that citizens will use to transit from place to place and to fulfill their needs now and in the future. In this sense, appropriate road network design allows for arteries to grow in a way that can not only be good for the city's aesthetic, but also for its comprehensive dynamic.

Urban Design for Socialisation:

In his book entitled Great Streets (1995, p.8), Jacobs states that "a great street should help make communiti[es]: should facilitate people acting and interacting to achieve in concert what they might not achieve alone". The author's outlook vis-à-vis the role of design in encouraging social interaction is made clear. Because "social or economic status is not a requirement for joining in" (Jacobs, 1995, p.9), "streets are settings for activities that bring people together" (Jacobs, 1995, p.8). In this sense, streets can promote social interactions which are accessible to all; ergo participate to good governance by means of social inclusion.

Urban Design for Economic Growth:

The discourse on 'great streets' put forward by Jacobs (1995, p.4) also recognizes the importance of design for economic activities as "streets are places of (…) commercial encounter and exchange". Good design can participate to the success of a commercial street by providing users an environment that reduces stress partly by increasing feelings of security and by offering places to rest and eat; by providing a setting which allows for the experience to be pleasing through multidimensionality (Jacobs, 1995).

2. Transportation Networks and Mobility

Mobility and Economic Growth:

It has for a long time been true that cities can beneficiate from their position on important transportation route. Jodhpur was mapped for the first time as its position between Jaisalmer and Jaipur represented the mid-point of a long journey for many merchants (Bindloss, Bainbridge & Brown, 2007, p. 205). Other examples can be taken from the Industrial Revolution when cities like Montreal and New York flourished predominantly because of their position on important international waterways (Marsan, 1994). Well-built transportation networks can allow businesses to lower their operational cost, which can create opportunities at different levels. This is especially true as the question of time and delays is a central factor to spatial functions in modern economy (Lewis, 2007).

Roads can allow cities to take part of national or international commercial networks when designed in a way that reduces the transportation cost for organizations. Transition networks, whether tangible (highways, rail-

ways, waterways) or not (aerial routes), can therefore play an important role in the economic development of a place. Incidentally, "much innovation proves to depend for its exploitation on the creation of infrastructural network (railways; (…) highways; airports (…))" (Hall & Preston, 1988, p.273).

Mobility and Urban Development:

As urban dwellers are increasingly travelling greater distances in their everyday life, transportation infrastructures are playing an ever-growing role in urban development. In 1998 in Montreal's central sectors, 71% of users went to work using motorized transportation (cars, motorized two wheelers and public and semi-public transportation) averaging 6.5km of travel per household per day (Le Colleter, 2002). For those living outside the central district, this percentage was as high as 91%, for an average of 55km of travel per day (Le Colleter, 2002).

"Transport innovation played the key role in the transformation of the spatially limited pedestrian city to the much more extended networked metropolis" (Tarr & Dupuy, 1988, p.1). Admittedly, 'transport oriented development' (TOD), the trend of creating "compact, walkable communities centered around high quality train systems" (Transit Oriented Development, 2008) makes evident the capacity of transportation networks to influence urban development.

On the other hand, hypermobility has been proven to polarize people through geographic dispersion and to increase dependence on motorized transportation, which can participate to health and obesity issues (Adams, 2000; Lewis, 2007).

Mobility and Good Governance:

The public nature of city roads and public transportation systems invokes that such infrastructures should be accessible to all (Merlin & Chaoy 2005; Graham & Marvin 2001; Demos 1997; Lewis 2007). This issue is existent in high-income cities, but is singularly noteworthy in low and middle-income settings where this bone of contention contributes to the poor's' vulnerability. In Delhi, "the poorest 28% of households with monthly incomes of less than Rs. 2000 [(40 USD)], a single worker would spend 25% or more of their entire monthly income on daily round trip bus fares" (Tiwari, 2001, p.4). This often forces workers to live in central districts where in generality, work can be found, but where the rents are most expensive. For them, often constrained to urban slums, living in places where marketisation wins over the creeds of universal access (Pinch, 1997, p.33) "the poverty that matters is not so much material poverty, but rather a poverty of connections" (Demos, 1997, p.6).

Intangible Infrastructures: Social Networks

Social Networks in Urban Livelihood:
As physical infrastructures can sustain or splinter livelihood, intangible infrastructures can have the very same effect although their implication is often harder to assess empirically. For the purpose of this paper, social networks will be used to exemplify the different ways that this variety of nexus can influence the quality of a city. This will be done by showing how social networks participate to the themes of inclusion, self-actualization and of goal reaching.

Social Networks and Inclusion:

The process of exclusion leads to the marginalization of vulnerable individuals which builds and reinforces barriers between groups in society (Madanipour, 1998, p. 161). Graham and Marvin (2001, p.288) agree that "a poverty of connection limits a person['s] (…) ability to extend their influence in time and space, often condemning them to local, place-based ties and relationship" which "works against people sustaining relations with the people and institutions that may help them to access services, markets, knowledge, skills, resources and employment opportunities" (Graham & Marvin,

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2001,p.288). Although diversity may foster dividing societal forces, intrinsic collective dispositions should allow for associations through these very differences. The Housing Development Board (HDB) in Singapore has developed inclusionary neighbourhoods by capitalizing on socio-demographic dissimilarities through the notion of complementarity. By developing housing projects where young families are neighbours with elderly, HDB's planning policies have allowed for improbable social networks between variegated people to take place (Wah, 2005). As elderly can look after young couples' kids during office hours, the HDB projects have allowed for networks based on notions of convenience and services to flourish. The communities formed as a result of these policies allowed for ties between socio-economically opposed groups.

Social Networks and Self-Actualization:

The diversity and density which characterizes most cities can play a key role in the intellectual development of city dwellers. Amin, Massay & Thrift (2000) acknowledge cities as 'social arenas' in contrast to purely 'built-environments'. Divergent ideas, cultures, and personalities which are more likely to manifest in densified places exposes people to new ingredients. Simmel (1903, p.62) argues that the diversity found in cities fosters an intellectualist psychism which allows urbanite to uptake one's intelligent abilities (versus emotionalist abilities).

Gay communities, ethnic minority communities (e.g. Chinatowns, Italian communities, etc.) or interest-based groups (e.g. American writers of the 1920s book clubs, European sport cars clubs, etc.) allow for their members to self-actualize by exchanging with others who have corresponding specific interests. This sort of dialogue allows for information to travel within social micro-networks. It also allows for groups to "establish or maintain an identity and to have a voice in a democratic urban debate" (Amin, Massay & Thrift, 2000, p.9). This sort of exchange allows urban citizens to heighten their knowledge by fuelling on others' experiences and incite further social interactions.

Social Networks and Goal-Reaching:

In his book Small Change Hamdi (2004) outlines how both local communities and local government can prof-

it from partnering with each other. "[P]ractice is about building densely interconnected networks, crafting linkages between unlikely partners and organizations" (Hamdi, 2004, p.xix). In order to generate development based on collective wisdom, it is essential to first recognize what it available locally and secondly to find a way to make use of these resources, something that can often be achieved through networking (Hamdi, 2004, p.xviii). A good city should allow for mechanisms which recognize and find ways to make use of what is available locally through networking. At a governmental level, the political structures should concede enough flexibility to partner with atypical collaborators by time (especially in low-income settings) when it can lead to auspicious results. In other cases, goal-reaching can be achieved inadvertently as a result of urban design intervention and associations (Hamdi, 2004, p.75). Community members and governing powers alike should exhibit willingness to participate by bringing to the table what is at their disposition, and more importantly to agree to dialogue with others, however unlikely the association may look (Hamdi, 2004).

Conclusion

This essay has attempted to demonstrate different ways by which both material and immaterial networks can shape the key constituents of a city, how the central issue of good governance can transpire and be tackled through befitting network design solutions. First expressing how themes of beautification, socialization and economic growth can be addressed through the urban design elements of transportation networks it then showed how transportation networks can also be determining matters for urban development, good governance and economic growth because of their intrinsic role in conveyances. Lastly, this essay outlined how the questions of inclusion, self-actualization and of goal-reaching can be achieved through adaptive use of social networks.

Network infrastructures design can play a prevalent role in a city's dynamics. By showing that what streets do is more than what they are, this essay has shown that a network's influence extends outside its fundamental realm. It has also exemplified how social networks are central to urban livelihood, leading us to that etiological element responsible for realizing 'good cities'.

"A great street should help make communiti[es]: should facilitate people acting and interacting to achieve in concert what they might not achieve alone."

(Jacobs, 1995: 8)

Urban Feedback, Connectivity & Strengthened Identity

Andrew Wade

"The world and I reciprocate one another. The landscape as I directly experience it is hardly a determinate object; it is an ambiguous realm that responds to my emotions and calls forth feelings from me in turn."
-David Abram, The Spell of the Sensuous, p. 33

The relationship between humans and their environment is critical to a sense of identity and belonging. This is due to the fact that, as David Abram noted: "Humans are tuned for relationship. The eyes, the skin, the tongue, ears, and nostrils - all are gates where our body receives the nourishment of otherness. This landscape of shadowed voices, these feathered bodies and antlers and tumbling streams - these breathing shapes are our family, the beings with whom we are engaged, with whom we struggle and suffer and celebrate" (Abram, 1996, p. ix). This need for relationship with our surroundings continues to hold true whether we reside in rural or urban areas. In an increasingly urbanized world, it is critical for our cities to nurture a mutually responsive relationship and engage in a flexible dialogue with our needs, our desires, and our aspirations. The most important constituent of a good city in the 21st century is the quality and strength of the physical and visceral connection between city dwellers and the built environment that surrounds them. The city must respond actively to the aspirations and desires of its citizens and a malleable policy framework needs to encourage these adjustments. I will first detail the importance of the sensory experience of the city and locate the citizen's perspective in this experience, and then I will proceed to discuss the necessary active participation of the citizen in shaping the 'good city'.

The Sensory Experience of the Urban Environment

The concrete sensory experience of a city is rooted in the materials and textures of the buildings that one passes by, and a feeling of intimacy or distance in response to their scale and form. Distant views down a well-planned boulevard can re-orient and instil a sense of grandeur, while winding paths and secluded turns can reveal the smells and tastes of unexpected markets and shops. These simple factors hold a great deal of weight with the citizen, since they translate into emotional responses, which, when reinforced over time, can blossom into a sense of identity and notions of place and security. Clearly there is no set of prescribed sensory experiences to distinguish a good city, as this will vary over geographical regions and cultural norms. The importance should be placed on the connection between the built form that radiates energy and colour and the citizen that responds to it. This sensory connection reinforces the imperative of quality design, from the scale of the city to the scale of the building detail. Every form, colour, texture and reverberation of sound actively creates the urban environment and shapes the way it is perceived, and therefore needs to be treated with corresponding importance. It is when the accumulation of parts coalesces in a harmonious way that we fulfil the imperative identified by Charles Landry: "Cities need stories or cultural narratives about themselves to both anchor and drive identity as well as to galvanize citizens" (Landry, 2006, p. 1). It is the cohesion of these signals that has the ability to transform cartographic space into a narrative map. This alternate mapping assures a critical shift of perspective.

The Human Perspective

"For the largest part of our species' existence, humans have negotiated relationships with every aspect of the sensuous surroundings, exchanging possibilities with every flapping form, with each textured surface and shivering entity that we happened to focus upon." David Abram, The Spell of the Sensuous, p. ix

It is essential to understand the human perspective of the urban environment in interpreting its sensory environment. I will define the 'human perspective' here as the subjective viewpoint of someone within the melee, receiving the urban signals, as opposed to a separated, orthogonal viewpoint that often characterizes the view of policymakers. It is a move from the black and white, lifeless axonometric line drawing to a rendered perspective vignette that demonstrates the energy of place. A shift from the top-down planning of cities in isolated offices towards the experience of the individual in the street is fundamental to this understanding. Margaret Crawford also emphasises that "lived experience should be more important than physical form in defining the city" (Jacobs, 2002, p.25).

The 'lived experience' in different areas of a good city will undoubtedly be different in its details, however as long as the strength of the emotional connection remains in place, the quality of the urban environment remains. This allows for the heterogeneous, fractured, and dynamic nature of modern cities, which only adds to the vitality of the sensory landscape and is a natural growth that should be supported. Daniel Libeskind has likewise expressed the ". . . idea that there shouldn't be

a masterplan, that there shouldn't be an overall solution, that it should be much more heterogeneous, heteroclite and fragmented" (Koolhaas & Obrist, 2006, p. 77). Such a diverse landscape cannot be planned with sufficient insight without incorporating the human perspective. It requires the view of what Charles Landry would deem to be an 'arational' person: "The arational person understands the principles of connections and processes and is not scared of emotion. They believe emotion is a source of great value and that it enriches understanding. The narrow rationalist eschews emotion and so misses out, and makes decisions without sufficient knowledge and insight" (Landry, 2006, p. 194). The city coloured through the emotional lens of the individual is illustrated in the painting shown in Image 1.

From a planning perspective, a city is a series of flat lines on a site plan, a series of population and investment figures, and infrastructure data. While this analytical approach has its necessary role, it neglects the real city that breathes and aches around us. From a human perspective, the city speaks to us; it resonates with the collective energy of its people. They listen to what is said and adjust accordingly. This places the ordinary citizen in a position of great knowledge and potential for shaping a good city. The resident is more adept and open to "acknowledge the mystery and stupefying complexity of everyday gestures" (de Botton, 2006, p. 247). It is these oft overlooked and underrepresented everyday gestures, the informal activities of the city, the habits and patterns of a culture, that constitute the human perspective and need to gain influence in the planning process.

Essential to these habits is the pedestrian view. Automotive culture can cause a distancing between a person and the city, and a corresponding disconnect with the sensory environment. This problem can then permeate into the design of areas, further dampening the sensory landscape. This is demonstrated in observations by Amos Rapoport in 1987: "(...) pedestrian and bicycle travel, being much slower, afford the ability to notice differences in the streetscape. A rich pedestrian environment, therefore, is one that maintains the pedestrian's visual and sensory attention. Streets that are abrupt, irregular, complex, and changing will be more highly valued by a pedestrian" (Frank & Engelke, 2001, p. 210). The pace at which pedestrians negotiate the urban landscape allows sufficient time for more sensory input to be processed and, at times, blended together.

Recent investigation into synaesthesia, or the mixing of the senses, published in January 2005 in New Scientist, indicates that we may have as many as 21 senses (Ward, 2008, p. 31). The ways in which we are able to gather information from our environment seem to be more complex and intricate than previously believed. This could account for many of the 'intuitive' responses and emo-

tions that we feel toward our surroundings. The clearest way for this sensory information to be processed and fed back into the design and planning of our cities, in other words, for it to be appropriately accounted for, is through the incorporation of the day-to-day experience of the individual as a generator of urban form and function. The majority of the population do not experience a synesthetic response to their environment, but "nevertheless both synaesthesia and normal vivid imagery do have something in common: both represent instances in which our inner thoughts manifest themselves in sensory and spatial codes" (Ward, 2008, p. 104). If this is carried one step further, by embedding these sensory and spatial codes within the urban fabric, one could dream of a city composed of the inner thoughts of its millions of residents – a psychological landscape within the urban environment (Image 2). Such poetic notions must not be disregarded, but rather they must be treated as a raw resource of every city – an essential resource for the creation of a good city.

[Re]orientation & Responsibility via Participation

In recognizing the central role of the senses in the urban experience, and the enormous resource of the ordinary human perspective, we must engage with the environment in a way that turns sensation and feeling into city-shaping. An essential component of nurturing this connection between inhabitant and habitat is active participation and involvement in the shaping and stewardship of a city. This assumes a degree of responsibility that stems from a feeling of ownership and belonging as well. In order to unlock the benefits of participatory processes, the informal potential and intuitive capacity of the city dweller must be recognized and respected. The formal planning structures must see "the increasing importance in the metropolis of informal places that harbor a great variety of activities" (Jacobs, 2002, p. 25).

The vehicle through which the physical and visceral connection between city dwellers and the built environment that surrounds them is strengthened is the participatory process in urban transformation. This ensures that cities are not built for citizens, but that they are a natural extension of the citizens themselves. It also requires as an imperative the recognition of the emotions and dreams of the people in cities.

"Built upon love, architecture engages the inhabitant as true participant, unlike the remote spectator of the modernist work of art or the consumer of fashionable buildings-cum-images" (Pérez-Gómez, 2006, p. 5).

It is this foundation in the fundamental human experiences of love and desire that is the raw material to foster good cities. There is no planning policy more flexible, more closely related to the needs of the people, than the guiding principle of the aspirations of the citizens them-

selves. In a good city this participatory process should be readable in the buildings, and the signals emitted by the urban fabric should be in harmony with its inhabitants. Steven Johnson describes this process well in the example of Manchester: "[The patterns] are (...) of human movement and decision-making that have been etched into the texture of city blocks, patterns that are then fed back into the Manchester residents themselves, altering their subsequent decisions" (Johnson, 2001, p. 40). This recognizes a shift from a linear process to an iterative one in which both the city and its people exert a symbiotic influence on each other.

A misconception of participatory design may be that its application is limited to poorer neighbourhoods or that it is not part of the discourse of the architectural elite. To the contrary, participation is a key avenue through which the imperative emotional connection between people and city can be strengthened and harmonised in any city or neighbourhood therein. Hans Ulrich Obrist noted the concept of participation in relation to Berlin: "the users of the buildings could almost say, 'this was my idea.' Many contemporary artists today work with this issue of participation. This is a critique heard quite frequently in Berlin - that the city could have been built with the involvement of the people" (Koolhaas/Obrist, 2006, p. 85). Thus we have not only discovered the essential connection in good cities, but we have also iden-

tified the avenue through which this connection may be strengthened.

Conclusion

Through the urban landscape we construct meaning, while constantly negotiating our identity in the urban realm. In this respect the sensory, tactile nature of the city changes us while we give it life and form. It is this unabated cyclical process that strengthens our bond with the cities we inhabit and ensures an accurate representation and reflection of our ideals and lifestyles. Cities are not only the places where we dream, or even the objects of our dreams – they are the manifestation of our dreams. In the truly 'good city' the urban dweller is not placed into the context of a built environment, but rather person and place become infused to the point where the aspirations and desires are clearly read as a 'sensory landscape' (Landry, 2006). Inhabitant and habitat, dweller and dwelling engage in a relationship of sinuous tension, a responsive push/pull dance of desire and hope, of conflict and resolution.

"Appreciated, seen, touched, smelled, penetrated, whether consciously or unconsciously, this fabric is a tangible representation of that intangible thing, the society that lives in it – and of its aspirations." Joseph Rykwert, The Seduction of Place, p. 6

"(. . .) idea that there shouldn't be a masterplan, that there shouldn't be an overall solution, that it should be much more heterogeneous, heteroclite and fragmented."

(Koolhaas & Obrist, 2006: 77)

Good for Whom?

Nick Wolff

The concept of the good city is inherently subjective – good for whom? Beyond the physical infrastructure, the concept of a city is also made up of its visitors and workers, the role that the city as a functioning entity performs and the influence that it brings to bear on those outside its borders, which may reach from the local to the global. However the group that has the greatest stake in the notion of a good city are its residents, and it is they with whom this essay will be primarily concerned. The essay will approach the good city as one that is good for all its residents. It is therefore directly concerned with the concept of social justice.

Definitions of social justice differ but most contain a variant on two main elements. Harvey (1973) offers a definition of a just outcome justly arrived at, which suggest that social justice is concerned with both an outcome and a process. Young (1990) elaborates that social justice involves more than a distributive outcome but must also be concerned with the social and institutional context, which helps determine distributive outcomes. Fainstein (1999) looks specifically at the good city as an outcome and a process. She offers a definition of social justice that incorporates material equity and social diversity, democracy and environmental sustainability. This definition is similar to that offered by Mandanipour (2007) where social justice equates to access to income, resources, decision making and social integration.

Because we are concerned with the city we are necessarily concerned with ideas of space. This essay will therefore emphasise the notion of integration / inclusion and specifically how it is reflected in space and the relation of this spatial connection to the good city in terms of achieving social justice both in distributive outcomes and inclusion in the process of determining those outcomes.

The hypothesis that will be used a filter through which to examine what makes a good city is: a good city is one that is spatially integrated - socially, economically and culturally.

Processes driving integration and segregation

City-space is socially produced and reproduced space and the processes that shape the function, structure, and internal relations of cities vary over space and time (Amin 2006, Harvey 1973, Marcuse 2002). Musterd and Ostendorf (1998) provide a useful starting point for examining the causes of segregation in cities with the view that the recent social processes that have been shaping cities are processes of polarisation, segregation and exclusion, which are dependent on wider factors, including the economic structure of a city, the welfare state, ethnic population divisions and the self-reinforcing effect of segregation (Musterd and Ostendorf (1998).

By highlighting economic structure, they raise the issue of polarisation in the workforce in many cities between higher skilled and paid jobs and the unemployed / low skilled that is said to have taken place as a result of economic restructuring since the 1970s, and its potentially significant role in the production of socio-spatial segregation and exclusion in contemporary cities.

In an alternative view of processes and impacts that identifies where the role of mediating the impact of economic change on cities might lie, Marcuse (2002) offers a typology of the divisions to be found in cities, which operate separately but may overlap and compete in the forces they exert on cities. These are Culture, which could be related to ethnicity, language and what others might call identity. The second is Functional Role, which are the relations of different economic uses arranged in space and expressed legally in zoning for uses in city planning. The third is Differences in Status, which are produced and reproduced by relationships of power including military, political, economic, social and legal power.

Marcuse claims that divisions in cities by status are enforced and therefore unjust. However to propose that the spatial integration - economic, social, and cultural - of people in cities represents the presence of social justice, and therefore a good city, we must look for evidence of a clear relationship between the two that relates not just to the processes of integration/segregation but also their outcomes.

Spatial integration and social justice

There is not consensus on the role of spatial segregation or integration in the production or reproduction of social inclusion or exclusion. For example Musterd and Ostendorf (1998) suggest that perceptions of the role of strong socio-spatial or ethnic segregation in cities in generating social problems for those segregated in cities are based largely on extreme cases found in the United States. They challenge whether the same effects can be found in Europe, where segregation is more moderate (their review of cases does not extend into the Global South, where segregation to a greater extreme than in the US maybe found).

Marcuse (2002:14) is more certain, arguing that "social relations determine spatial relations, [..] these in turn influence, generally but not always reinforcing, social relations". Certainly spatial proximity does not automatically equate to any definition of social justice, for example the live-in domestic employee of a high-income family in a gated community in the United States, is culturally different, economically dependent on and of different status to the people whose living space (s) he shares.

But we can look for evidence of this how this relationship between social and spatial relations operates through four brief case studies, which between them illustrate examples of spatial segregation and look at the causes (whether they are voluntary or involuntary, as Marcuse proposes) and at the impacts of segregation on those who have been excluded.

Schiffer (2002) reviews the case of São Paolo, where historical class-based segregation in the city has been exaggerated by the effects of economic restructuring since the mid 1970s. Globalisation and neo-liberal economic restructuring have been un-mediated by the state, with welfare and social housing policies sidelined for monetary and fiscal policies. The effect has been a falling average income, especially in the lowest waged households, increasing unemployment and a state too weak to effectively provide for the favelas within the city fabric. Outcomes for the residents of the favelas have been disastrous including huge increases in occupation densities and greatly increased crime and homicide rates. The response from the elite has increasingly been to retreat to fortified gated communities close to their similarly segregated sites workplaces, shopping, schools and leisure areas. She notes that negative effects are also being felt by the elite as the functional attractiveness of the city and overall quality of life are affected by the impacts of segregation.

Murie (1998) considers Edinburgh to examine the impact of what he calls the recommodification of housing in UK cities since the 1980s through Right to Buy, combined with the impact of economic restructuring. The effect in Edinburgh has been that those who have done best economically or "survived the restructuring of the economy" (Murie 1998:125) have bought their houses and so reduced the publicly provided housing available in the city. Those remaining, who are typically unemployed or outside the labour market are restricted to a reduced rental sector with a new spatial distribution, which reinforces where people live according to how they have been affected by economic change, and in turn has a reinforcing effect between spatial segregation and further disadvantage.

Lupton and Power (2002) also examine the process of segregation and local concentration of people with the least choice in UK cities and the effects on those who live there. Taking a behavioural approach to the analysis they illustrate how the least popular neighbourhoods can quickly decline, as more secure families choose not to live there and are replaced by the most economically and socially disadvantaged. This spatial concentration of the most disadvantaged people in the most undesirable neighbourhoods of a city negatively affects the neighbourhood through decline of the physical environment and infrastructure, fewer and more expensive private services, poor public services, a sense of powerlessness, inferiority and exclusion of residents, reduced social organisation and trust and increased crime and antisocial behaviour. They then progress beyond the other examples in identifying some measures to limit economic and social polarisation of neighbourhoods through state-led planning and housing interventions. These are revealing in their assumption – that living in a neighbourhood of mixed income is a better outcome in itself for the poorest and most disadvantaged.

Van Kempen (2002) examines the Netherlands where since 1945 promotion of income equality and rent subsidies has gone hand in hand with extensive social housing construction that has attracted mid- and high-income as well as low-income households. This combination of economic, housing and planning policies has resulted in urban areas where socially and ethnically homogenous areas are uncommon. However he notes that this pattern is under threat from the steady retreat of the welfare state, changes in the provision of social rented housing and growing effects of economic restructuring on low-skilled migrants which are likely to result in increased partitioning of Dutch cities along lines of ethnicity and economic status.

These case studies come from cities or countries with varying economic, political and social contexts but nonetheless provide some consistencies in their message about the relationship between spatial integration and social justice and segregation and its absence.

Firstly, all four examples demonstrate that segregation in these cases was (or in the case of the fourth, is predicted to be) involuntary and tied to issues of status and power relations, typically economic in origin.

Secondly, that the three examples where involuntary segregation was found to have taken place were accompanied by identifiable negative impacts on those who were spatially excluded, including impacts on quality of life, health, access to public services, economic opportunity and ability to exercise agency over elements of their lives.

Thirdly, all identify the major influence of state actions in influencing segregation in cities. They illustrate that the choices made by the state (in either its presence or

absence in making an intervention) and policies have intentional or unintentional socio-spatial effects as they interact with and mediate (or not) the effects of economic restructuring, people's behaviours and choices and competition for resources, in these cases housing.

We can conclude from these examples that involuntary segregation represents the spatial reinforcement of unequal social relations, can lead to negative impacts on those excluded that reinforce those inequalities and as such it has no place in the good city.

This conclusion is open to the challenge of being self-evident, however the examples above also illustrate that involuntary segregation is not always the result of the construction of walls or enforced through bulldozers, nor need it be an actively pursued policy by planners. They illustrate the ideas developed through Harvey, Lefebvre and others that cities are socially produced and reproduced spaces and show that those charged with responsibility for cities – governments, planners, architects etc are mediators that have choices, in the execution of which they resist or reinforce the reproduction of the most unequal social relations in space.

There are of course examples where people exercise the choice they have in cities by choosing to live in communities of identity. Ethnic or cultural groups may choose to live together to preserve cultural identity, for a sense of safety or to stay close to family and community networks. As Susan Fainstein offers "people often want to live in situations where they do not have to constantly interact with people pursuing radically different lifestyles" (Fainstein 1996: 39).

However this view must be treated with caution. The concept of active choice leading to spatial segregation along ethnic or cultural lines becomes problematic when ethnicity intersects with class along ethnic divisions of labour (Soja 2000: 290) leading to greater exclusionary effects. This corresponds to Marcuse's model refenced above where divisions of economic power "may be par-

ticularly damaging when it is reinforced by divisions of culture and/or function." (Marcuse, 2002: 15).

Conclusion

This essay has argued that a good city is an inclusive and integrated city. The case study examples have shown that spatial integration can be directly related to both inclusion and distributive outcomes. The two operate in a reciprocal and reinforcing relationship, to different extremes in different contexts and cases. Crucially the impact of segregation can be shown to have disastrous impacts on those excluded, which holds the most potent warning for the professional exercising their and decision making in the urban environment.

However, integration and inclusion do not mean assimilation in questions of identity. Lefebvre's right to the city includes the right to difference – the right to be different in the city (Lefebvre 1996). There is a question of agency, freedom to choose to be separate, to be on the margins, to challenge. Segregation should not be imposed but may be voluntary.

In returning to the question of how to achieve this good city, it is argued that the major driving forces of segregation are economic and their impacts are mediated to the greatest extent by the state. But if strong welfare state provision and intervention in housing allocation is needed to mediate impacts of global economic restructuring in segregating the city, how can this be achieved in countries without the infrastructure or resources for such a welfare state? Ultimately the neo-liberal paradigm must be challenged. If cities are where we find the greatest potentials and challenges for humanity then perhaps these are growing at the same rate as cities globally. As the São Paolo example shows, the negative effects of segregation reach the rich and powerful too. The responsibility for the good city lies significantly with the state, its priorities and their execution by those professionals granted the power to make choices concerning the making of cities.

"Whose place is this and how do we know?
Look to the 'twilight zone of communication'. The signs in the streets, the measures, the markings, the meanings, the movement..."

(S.J. Smith, 2000: 86)

Afterword

Camillo Boano

Since I claim the responsibility of teaching the "Transforming Local Areas: Urban Design in Development" module, the so-called "Good City" essay in student jargon has become an unprecedented learning experience for me. This is due to the breadth of written reflections on the multiple conditions and possibilities that the meaning of the good city offers to both the individual and collective pathways of design research at the DPU.

Certainly the paradigmatic and provocative question - "Is it possible to make a good city?" - easily fits within what Henri Lefebvre calls a "philosophy of the possible", or what Leonie Sandercock's cosmopolis suggests not as a state to be realised, but rather a movement toward a social project concerned with "living together in difference" that is open to dialogue, change and contestation. Even this claim can help in rediscovering Harvey's argument for a "dialectical utopianism" to counter claims about the lack of alternatives stimulating an "imagination and political guts" and a "surge of revolutionary fervor and revolutionary change" to challenge the sclerosis of design practitioners.

Surely though, it has long been argued that urban design is a variegated practice in search of a discipline, caught between the privatising and commodifying tendencies of aesthetic design while remaining unable to challenge the dynamic, ever-shifting kinetics of urban transformation. The debate is paralysed between –on one side– design practitioners and academics searching for a specific role in investigating the complexities of urbanism to design spaces that enable social justice and produce alternatives toward engagement and participation and – on the other – the reflexive, critical and ethical rediscovery of architecture, planning and design. Recent publications on the subject speak of urban designers becoming more alert to the social sciences and place-making grounded in holistic and integrated operations. Thus, while contemporary discussions on urban design show some promise, they seem to now be coming to terms with the fundamental processes by which we deconstruct, intervene and conceive of the future city. Such processes are particularly relevant to the complexity and contradiction inherent in contemporary cities and the contested geographies of the global south. These challenges are as much about process as they are about form, but such legitimacy, as Cuthbert suggests, requires serious intellectual engagement to establish the appropriate conceptual tools for dealing with the kinetic circumstance of cities in developing countries.

Hopefully by rediscovering and continuing to question the role, the potential of, and moreover the variegated contradictory meaning attached to the "good city" serves to reinvigorate contemporary utopianism through adopting a strategic negation of design as a project beyond its obviously defensive character, as more than a rhetorical gesture.

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