

Mitchell Cook

Toward a Sustainable Urbanism:

Globalization, Urban Planning and the New Urban Reality

Quality of urban life has become a commodity, as has the city itself...

– David Harvey, *Right to the City*

We see cities as the brightest opportunity for our smarter planet.

– IBM Website

I. Introduction

Reporting that half of the world's population now lives in cities, the United Nation's Human Settlements Programme's (UN-Habitat) 2008-2009 *State of the World's Cities* publication declared this century as the Century of the City (UN-Habitat 2008, x). In what undoubtedly was a political gesture to the World Urban Forum's host, China, UN-Habitat found a utopian epistemology for the global formulation of the urban: harmony. The publication is filled with references to spatial, social and environmental harmony, including a chapter devoted to planning for harmonious cities. Drafted and released amid mounting evidence of an impending global economic crisis, intimately tied to urban financial markets and that would have devastating consequences for human security, the thematic selection of "harmony" to describe cities appears ironic in retrospect. Only a year later, in a descriptive-to-normative turn, UN-Habitat (2009) titled the 2009 edition of their other flagship report, *Planning Sustainable Cities: Policy Directions*, suggesting a growing unease with the reality of the global conception of the urban.

Few would argue UN-Habitat was not merited in labeling this century the urban century. The evidence presented is more than compelling, if not definitive. The global urban population increased during the 20th century from 220 million to 2.8 billion and demographers are predicting it will more than double over the next fifty years to 6.4 billion, with every region of the world experiencing net growth in their urban population (UN-Habitat 2008, 7). Demographic growth in the urban environment has also been accompanied by rapid economic growth through agglomeration and the achievement of highly productive economies of scale. In China, the standard-bearer of the urban century, three decades of economic development witnessed the transition of cities from largely administrative centers with little economic output and importance in the national economy to dominant engines of economic growth, contributing 65% of GDP in 2005 (Woetzal et. al. 2008). In most industrialized countries, urban economic activity now accounts for over 80% of GDP. Rapid demographic and economic growth has also been complimented by a dynamic revolution in information technologies and telecommunications infrastructure, compressing time and space (Harvey 1990) and creating a networked society (Castells 2000). In this networked, global society of the 21st century, cities' central contribution to economic production, cultural expansion and social interaction is undisputed.

While urban growth over the last century has led to major advances in productivity and personal wealth, agglomeration and technological change were met with increasingly complex and interdependent externalities. The unprecedented density achieved in cities led to a burgeoning list of negative externalities in the form of pollution, crime, and congestion which all have led, in some cases, to a drastic reduction in urban productivity. Increasing carbon dioxide

emissions, an enduring byproduct of industrial urbanization, have contributed substantially to an accelerated rate of global climate change, raising sea levels and threatening urban centers along the world's coastal lines through increased exposure to volatile weather patterns and catastrophic meteorological events. Most recently, the financial innovation that spurred much of the urban restructuring in the United States served to spark a global economic crisis, pushing the global economy into recession while managing to threaten the very global financial architecture that sustained it. Things do not look much better at the micro-scale either. A billion urban residents now live in slums, delinked from trunk infrastructure, with little or no land tenure, unable to access municipal resources, often officially unrecognized on maps and invisible to urban policymakers. For an increasing number of urban residents around the world, harmony is hardly a state that adequately describes the urban environment in which they reside.

The UN-Habitat's rapid shift in themes is, however, reflective of a larger sense of urgency in building capacity to mitigate the pernicious consequences of the rapid urbanization of the planet. It is also indicative of a deficit in urban knowledge and a conceptual divorce of planning theory from the city. This paper seeks to explore the gap between planning theory and the city under contemporary globalization and articulate ways to redress this deficiency through a more explicit integration of social justice and public wealth, two fields of inquiry underrepresented in urban planning literature.¹ It proceeds as follows. In the next section I

¹ I define the notion of public wealth as the total stock of public goods and services available for local consumption. Public goods and services include essential infrastructure, public education facilities, and public housing as well as more discretionary local goods like libraries, museums, parks and recreational facilities. When equitable access is guaranteed, the production of public wealth through the financing of investments in transportation, electricity, sanitation and clean water supply is a critical channel through which everyone can benefit from agglomeration. Indeed, without these investments in core infrastructure, the gains to productivity from agglomeration are muted or even reversed for poor workers who, for example, are forced to pay expensive rates for even minimal access to clean water or sanitation facilities and whose employment opportunities are geographically limited, resulting in higher unemployment rates due to an absence of accessible transportation infrastructure.

unpack the notion of a new urban reality, including a brief literature analysis of city planning theory in relationship to the patterns of urbanization under contemporary globalization. I identify contemporary globalization as the period beginning around 1970 and ending with the economic crisis beginning in the fourth quarter of 2007. This sets the context for prioritizing social justice and public wealth as a value base for planning practice. In the third section I link urban planning practice to the equitable allocation and optimization of space through a new conceptualization of sustainability amenable to city planning theory based on the new urban reality. I conclude with implications for urban policy.

II. When the Economy Moves Faster than the Planners

At a recent lecture at the Graduate Program in International Affairs at The New School, Mario Coyula-Cowley, a distinguished urban planner from Cuba, was asked about a new commercial district, filled with modern high-rise office towers, being developed along the Malecón promenade and to the west of the Vedado neighborhood in Havana. Financed by Israeli investors, it was clear that this particular urban site, like so many in cities throughout the developing world, was built *for* globalization, that is, to attract foreign capital in the future rather than to meet current local demand for floor space. Seeking an answer to this very contradictory urban phenomenon under contemporary globalization, the individual wanted to know how in Cuba, a country that adopts a socialist planning ideology, urban form could take such a favorable orientation toward global financial capitalism. Coyula-Cowley, showing some hesitation, responded that this is one example in which “the economy moved faster than the planners” (Coyula-Cowley 2009).

Coyula-Cowley's response opens up a dynamic space for inquiry into the relationship between planning theory and practice and the central unit of analysis of those endeavors: the city. Susan Fainstein, whose work has attempted to imbue planning theory with social valuations of the "just city," declares the contemporary distinction between urban theory and planning theory as intellectually untenable and which results in "the isolation of process from context and outcome" (2005, 121). Judd (2005) argues the opposite of Fainstein, forcefully asserting that the urban scholar's close identification with the object of their analysis has skewed their understanding and led to excessive rhetoric and an apocalyptic tilt within urban studies. Neuman (2005) outlines the uses and scope of planning theory, delineating between explanatory, predictive, justificatory and normative uses of planning theory as they relate to city planning practice and suggests that a more clear and robust normative city planning theory is needed to understand the complications that arise between local, regional and global interests that lead to exclusion, segregation and other inequities in the city. He discusses the risks to urban planning theory in the "mimicking" by urban theorists of scholarship within political science, sociology and geography, listing Wildavsky, Habermas, Foucault, Bourdieu, and Harvey; however, it is these multidisciplinary theorists who have articulated normative approaches to the city. Indeed, Neuman's article reflects a general timidity within the planning field in dealing comprehensively with the object of its analysis. On the one hand, he would like to see the notion of sustainability as a normative framework for city planning, but makes no mention of the new urban reality planners confront.

Kingsley Davis (1965) began the shift in urban studies toward a framework of a global urban society by looking empirically at the dynamics of global urban demographic growth and

the spatial growth of urbanized regions. Lefebvre (2003) extended this analysis with his historic hypothesis that society was becoming completely urbanized, reflecting a reality that was just beginning to coalesce around what Neil Brenner and Roger Keil refer to as “the worldwide (spatial) extension and (temporal) acceleration of urbanization processes” (2006, 407).

However, within planning theory, the general discourse throughout much of the second half of the 20th century centered on the role of the planner in mediating the socio-spatial conflicts that arise in the determination of a future urban action. Chief among these approaches was the rational model which dissected the planning process to test for policy alternatives, allowing for public input only in goal-setting (Fainstein 2005). Thus, in the process of (re)producing the city, the technical was divorced from the democratic, or common, process. Under strategic urban planning, which evolved from increased inter-urban competition in the 1980s, centralized management of the city was replaced by modalities of management to optimize the outcome of the interactions between multiple urban agents that participate in the production of the city. Consequently, Jane Jacob’s (1961) original thesis still resonates today: the city as engine of privatized, individualized and homogenized consumption invariably comes at the expense of civic interaction.

Neuman’s plea for a more robust normative planning theory assumes that in the absence of a developed corpus of normative theory within urban planning literature, a particular normative practice has not materialized. In the context of the city, this *a priori* reasoning is destructive and is dismissive of the new urban reality that has taken shape over the past forty years. His assumption is echoed in calls within the field of architecture and urban development for alternatives to recent patterns of urbanization and for design solutions inspired by nebulous

notions of “sustainability.” I use quotations to indicate that, despite a growing but still fragmented global environmental movement articulating standards of the environmental impacts to individual consumption (e.g. corporate and civic campaigns that encourage recycling), this is but one dimension of the urban reality and thus the conventional notion of environmental sustainability as it relates to the city remains compartmentalized. These calls also suggest that the new urban reality, like those that previously existed, has limits and that quite possibly, the socio-spatial patterns of urban development that have materialized over the past four decades are beginning to expose these limitations. How then can we describe the new urban reality?

The foundations of the new urban reality began in the 1970s, during the period of transition from Fordist modes of capital accumulation to flexible accumulation.

It [flexible accumulation] rests on flexibility with respect to labour processes, labour markets, products and patterns of consumption. It is characterized by the emergence of entirely new sectors of production, new ways of providing financial services, new markets and above all, greatly intensified rates of commercial, technological, and organizational innovation. (Harvey 1990, 147)

Under the regime of flexible accumulation, it was necessary to develop an urban network through which commercial, technological and organizational innovation could flow. As urbanization in the developing world began contributing to a rapid acceleration in the global rate of urbanization around 1965, the particular quality of urbanization that has emerged challenges conventional models of the urbanization process whereby rural migration is absorbed by urban employment.² It also highlights the role of flexible accumulation in reshaping the geographic

² For example, India and Vietnam are countries where urban population growth has lagged behind rapid growth in the urban share of GDP. In India, despite recent growth in the manufacturing sector, the structural shift in the economy has more or less jumped from agriculture to services. Whether this is directly attributable to the massive influx in global capital flows or the result of restructuring of regional economies will require further empirical research. It does suggest though that the field of urban planning, and urban studies in general, could benefit tremendously from a renewed interest in comparative models of the urbanization process.

distribution of economic activity.³ In their 2007 report, the United Nations Population Fund aptly describes cities in the developing world:

[V]ery few developing-country cities generate enough jobs to meet the demands of their growing populations. Moreover the benefits of urbanization are not equally enjoyed by all segments of the population...the massive increase in numbers of urbanites, coupled with persistent underdevelopment and the shortage of urban jobs, are responsible for conditions that can outmatch the Dickensian squalor of the Industrial Revolution. (UNFPA 2007, 8)

It was during this period that the “local” city shifted its posture toward the “global” economy, contributing to the expansion of the global economy while simultaneously being reshaped by it. This reciprocal process is what has been referred to ubiquitously as “glocalization” (Swyngedouw 1992). Timothy Luke describes this process as “urbanism as logistics,” distinguishing “global cities” (with a lowercase g) from “Global Cities” as “entirely new built environments tied to several complex layers of technological systems whose logistical grids are knit into other networks for the production, consumption, circulation, and accumulation of commodities” (2003, 12).

Through these networks flowed an explosion of financial capital, beginning with the expansion of the money supply through loose monetary policy in the early 1970s and then continuing through various periods of financial liberalization of capital accounts and deregulation in countries around the world. By 2007, the average daily turnover of foreign exchange market transactions had reached US \$3.2 trillion and US \$4.198 trillion for over the counter (OTC) derivatives (BIS 2007). The tremendous volume of financial flows was not only accelerated by increases in information and communication technology but also by the creation,

³ While it is outside the purview of this paper to discuss in detail the complex spatial patterns of industrial production under flexible accumulation, it is important to note that the disagglomeration of the once local or regional production process has contributed substantially to the agglomeration of industrial activity in many rapidly urbanizing regions of the developing world.

through mergers and acquisitions, of global corporations and private financial firms, some of which have larger economies than many developing countries making them highly influential entities in the global financial services industry. The true extent of the financialization of the global economy was exposed through the cascading impacts of the sub-prime mortgage crisis in the United States when it was discovered that global financial assets totaled US \$160 trillion, then over three times the value of global GDP (Sassen 2009).

It is crucial to note that all activity within and through the city has a spatial correlation. Zukin (1992) distinguishes space through two categories: the vernacular, the local neighborhood spaces of everyday life; and landscape, the spaces of power created and managed by commercial and state institutions. This juxtaposition within urban form can be observed in cities throughout much of the world. From global and gateway cities to provincial cities in interior regions, commercial and financial centers that are spatially contiguous but functionally disjointed from the spaces of everyday living are now common. This all reflects a particular pattern of debt-financed urbanization that has come to dominate urban development since the 1970s (Harvey 2005). The system reached its apex with the explosion of mortgage-backed securities (MBS) and over the counter (OTC) derivative contracts that allowed the very largest global financial institutions to extract the monetary value of urban real estate and repackage it into complex financial instruments that corporations, institutional investors and hedge funds could use to hedge risk or seek speculative profits. Constructed on the false premise of perfect markets and a logic of perpetual growth, global financial capitalism found within the contemporary city a spatial and regulatory configuration that has perpetuated its most destructive forces.

Harvey (2008) explores the relationship between the urbanization process and global capitalism and shows how urban restructuring processes have been critical stabilizers to regional crashes and crises since the 1970s. While financial expansion and contraction were general corollaries to the urbanization process from the 1970s to the present, there were other more acute forces intervening in the city during this period. Reagan and Thatcher's neoliberal revolution was exported around the globe: strategic domestic price controls were abandoned, currencies were devalued to promote exports, and public expenditures were drastically cut across the board as structural adjustment became the governing doctrine of both national and urban economies. This led not only to volatile swings in municipal finances but also distortions in the inter-urban distribution of public expenditures through increased competition for scarce public resources. In Buenos Aires in 1991, for example, it was found that 11.5% of the population received 68% of public investment in infrastructure and 26.1% in education (Cohen and Debowicz 2001).

Returning to Luke (2003), a necessary but not mutually exclusive distinction must be made between the planning processes within the few Global Cities *a la* Saskia Sassen (1992) and the numerous globalizing cities throughout the world. The employment of scale theory (Brenner 2001) is useful in moving past the hierarchical conceptualizations of global integration, in which power and change flow along a straight line of cause and effect, to dynamic spatial models of global economic interaction. The historical need for global financial centers with centralized control functions over the global economy has always existed (Arrighi 1994) and the interaction between the global economy and these cities is well-documented in the urban literature (Friedmann and Wolff 1982; Friedmann 1986; Fainstein 2001). However, a cursory appraisal of cities throughout the developing world, with minimal fiscal resources to meet rapidly increasing

demand for essential services, much less public education and transportation, would show that most do not fit the Global City typology. Yet it is in these very cities that the dominant logic of global capitalism frequently informs a very peculiar planning dogma, illustrated by the rampant zoning of commercial and business districts to attract highly mobile capital flows, that shows little or no concern for the long-term socio-economic consequences of urban restructuring.

Logically, urban scholars and policy makers assert that context matters. However, typologies derived from hierarchy often obscure as much as they explain. As the current global economic crisis persists, we are beginning to observe new ways in which the impacts of economic globalization get woven between and spread diffusely among cities that are not financial centers. In short, how global integration is shaping the new urban reality. It is now apparent that the linkages global urbanization has created and through which the processes of globalization have flowed over the past forty years have become channels through which risk could be distributed beyond traditional geographic boundaries.⁴

The scale and intensity of penetration by contemporary globalization into all cities, particularly aspects of financial globalization though not exclusively, have created a distinct landscape of inequality within the city.⁵ Capitalism's tendency to produce periodic crises has been manifested regularly throughout its history as an economic system yet we are just beginning to see the cumulative effect of these crises' impacts on the city and the residents that inhabit

⁴ There is a growing consensus for increased government intervention in this phenomenon of global capitalism and the city. If the level of urban and national development is relative but risk is spread absolutely throughout the global economic system, then the possibility of systemic crises creating chronic conditions of underdevelopment in select regions of the world becomes much more likely. The request to the IMF by G-20 officials at the Pittsburgh Summit in October 2009 to research the feasibility of a financial transaction tax (FTT) to regulate global financial markets suggests that policy makers are aware of this structural risk derived from an integrated global economy (IMF 2009).

⁵ The uneven patterns of global economic, political, cultural and social change produced over the past forty years often complicate any unified definition of "contemporary globalization." The general use of the term is not meant to obscure that complexity but is employed to delineate a time period marked by an accelerated rate and geographically dispersed scale of change.

them. Indeed, as the frequency of crises over the past forty years has increased, high income countries and developing countries with open economies alike are increasingly exposed to this phenomenon. Empirical evidence shows that economic crises tend to increase inequality as wealthy individuals own multiple classes of assets to mobilize during recessionary periods while the poor have little to none (CEPAL 1997). Miller (2005) found that during crises in both Mexico and Indonesia in the 1990s, urban wage workers suffered disproportionately negative impacts on income, pushing many of them into the informal sector where they lost job security and faced increased competition, driving down wages and welfare.

I would like to argue that what has emerged in the 21st century is an urban reality that is the cumulative effect of successive periods of growth and crisis, defined by a qualitatively new level of integration within the global urban network. Ironically, the general pattern of increasing inequality in the city flies in the face of evidence of a positive relationship between income equality and urban efficiency in the optimal allocation of resources (Jensen-Butler 1999, 869). If the optimal spatial allocation of resources within the city and over a given period of time is the *raison d'être* of urban planners, then what is to be made of the gap between reality and theory and the practice (or lack thereof) informed by it? Here an important caveat must be inserted. Economic globalization has been the product of a number of forces at work within, between and above the scale of the city. These forces include those that exist in certain political arenas outside the delegated authority of a many local urban planning professionals. That is not to say, though, that alternatives to prevailing paradigms do not exist. "Market forces cannot operate in a vacuum. They are governed by man-made rules. Globalized markets require the acceptance by local authorities of established rules of the dominant economy" (Liu 2007, 1). In the absence of a

robust normative planning theory, normative urban practice has been guided by a global economy that has moved ahead of planners and reshaped the urban reality according to its logic.

III. Planning Sustainability

The formulation of an integrated global urban network has not been matched by an equally sophisticated and active urban planning practice, inclusive of the risks and contingencies associated with contemporary globalization. As discussed in the introduction, the declaration of the urban century by UN-Habitat seemed appropriate from a demographic perspective. However, in some of the most crucial areas of the city – housing, employment and security – the beginning of the urban century has not proven it is capable of the equitable provision of these important services. In short, urban planners have been unable to manage the pace and intensity of economic globalization and while many positive development outcomes have come from the expansion of the global market and the technological innovation that has accompanied it, including accelerated productivity and income growth for some of the poorest, it is still unknown whether this imbalance in the relationship is sustainable.

The popular concept of sustainability as applied to cities originated within the biological sciences and was employed to explore the environmental impact of industrial development. It has been extended, as the rate of urbanization has accelerated, to be inclusive not only of environmental consequences but also social impacts of economic growth and urban land-use (Pinderhughes 2004; Bulkeley and Betsill 2005). It would seem that the concept of sustainability

and the action of urban planning would be amenable and could potentially be the “silver bullet” for planners to reassert their position vis-à-vis the global economy. Its internalization into the theory and practice of urban planning, though, remains superficial at best.

A fundamental distinction must be made between globalization and the city. Jepson discusses the scientific basis for sustainability through the literature on system dynamics and shows “the built-in tendency for systems to become ever larger and more complex (i.e., too many connections, too many agents) until lag times and systemic interdependencies leave them virtually unmanageable and prone to catastrophic collapse” (2001, 501). This systemic tendency for cause and effect to become blurred was recently experienced with the global economic crisis, beginning with the collapse of the housing market in the United States and spreading throughout the global financial sector and real economy as a result of overleveraging of sovereign and institutional balance sheets. The city, as the spatial correlation to globalization, has the potential to manage these lag times and interdependencies and build an urban system that contains globalization instead of facilitating its most pernicious impacts. While popular notions of sustainability have tended to center on the environment, I would argue that sustainability as it relates to the city cannot be fully addressed without extending the discussion to the distribution of equity within the city, which can only come from a more normative planning theory rooted in social justice, based on increased equity in the city through the production of public wealth.

Sanyal argues that as a result of their professional responsibilities, urban planners tend to locate themselves somewhat in the middle of the ideological spectrum which, at one end, is occupied by pro-globalization cheerleaders and at the other by anti-globalization skeptics. He states that these two groups “rely on neatly interconnected sets of theoretical propositions which

have very little room for ambiguity, surprises and moral hesitation” (2002, 118). For Sanyal, this ideological middle ground that planners occupy should be recognized as a strength, forged in the spirit of compromise and the only “fair and rational way of reaching an agreement between different points of view” (Ibid., 118). However, there are a set of unintended consequences that have arisen from the trend toward an ideological middle ground and a lack of normative planning theory that are evident in the most common form of interaction between planners and the city – incrementalism. In answering the question of whether or not planners should intervene in the city to improve performance in transportation, environment and employment sectors for the poor, Bertaud writes, “a planner disposes of three tools to influence city shape: land use regulations, infrastructure investments and taxation. However, to be able to use these tools coherently, clearly established objectives must have been formulated by elected officials” (2004, 2). Because the use of “objectives” is never value-neutral, by extension, urban planning practice and theory can never be value-neutral.

What then are to be the central values that guide planning theory and practice as it negotiates the conflict within and between cities and regions that has been created by globalization? The simple delineation of the planner’s toolkit – land use regulations, infrastructure investments and taxation – says nothing of how the planner is to utilize these tools to produce sustainable cities. The deficiency in urban planning theory and practice is that the debate has remained for too long in the descriptive realm, within the contours of negotiation and moderation, and has shied away from normative prescriptions of what the city is to look like and how it should operate. While there may be no optimum spatial form, there must be an optimum distribution of opportunity throughout the city. This critical importance of equity must be

considered if sustainability is to be operationalized as a solution to the negative urban impacts of globalization. “Opportunity” in the context of the city is defined as “the right to change ourselves by changing the city” (Harvey 2008, 23).

Harvey’s invocation of a right to the city is based upon collective power reshaping the whole horizon of opportunities in the city. However, it must be noted that collective action, in relationship to rapidly evolving urban form and function, has been at times muted by acquiescence to an unsustainable status quo. For example, the collective inaction by urban residents around the planet on issues of environmental sustainability, in the context of carbon dioxide emissions from private vehicle ownership, has been a major contributing factor to climate change and insecurity. Americans, coerced by a seemingly unceasing extension of consumer credit, were more than happy to accelerate the suburban transformation of their cities to dependency on cheap oil, fueling for decades the global production of automobiles which continues to undermine public or zero-emission modes of transportation. Consequently, this same suburbanization of the city seems to be gaining traction in many of the world’s most rapidly urbanizing regions, including in India and China.⁶

I hold no illusions regarding the allure of private rather than communal forms of consumption and private rather than communal urban shapes and places. Therefore, I argue that urban planners are presented with an opportunity to reassert themselves in the management of space and place to temper the advances of individualism and the logic of global capitalism in the city and become more active in the production of local public wealth. If, according to the 2009 World Development Report, “place is the most important correlate of a person’s welfare” (World

⁶ During the period 1981-2001, the number of registered vehicles in India’s six largest metropolitan regions increased 7.75 times, over four times the rate of population growth (Agarwal 2006, 106). In China, private vehicle ownership has grown at an annual compound rate of approximately 31% since 1987 (NBSC 2008).

Bank 2009, 1) and urban planners are fundamentally concerned with the allocation and optimization of space, then a substantial opportunity exists to contribute to the remaking of sustainable cities.

IV. Conclusion

The new urban reality has been shaped by forces of contemporary economic globalization which have imprinted themselves on the city and led to a number of complex interdependencies that have added immense challenges to the work of urban planners at the local, regional and national level. In the absence of normative urban planning theory based on concepts of social justice and a right to the city, urban planning practice became increasingly divorced from the object of its profession: the city. This created the conditions in which the global economy was able to move faster than the planners, contributing to high levels of pollution and inequality, the downsizing of urban government, extensive deregulation and damaging privatization. That contemporary globalization has moved faster than urban planners is not a new trend, but, combined with the structural conditions of the new urban reality, presents new risks to articulating and achieving sustainability. The 21st century may be the urban century but it is still unknown whether or not this is unequivocally a good thing for human security and prosperity.

As it is highly unlikely for the patterns of contemporary globalization to be reversed in the short-term, a vigorous debate on the role of urban planning in creating sustainable cities must be promoted. If urbanization is central to globalization then the city must become central to urban planners. In the context of urban planning, a more comprehensive redefining of the city is

necessary in light of the outcomes of economic globalization, as this paper has argued. A collective redefinition of the objectives of the city could be the basis for a normative planning theory. Any definition of the objectives of the city must be based on the idea of sustainable urbanism because as the spatial correlation of globalization, the city is not just the container of economic activity but also of culture, behavior, morality and aesthetics. It is the conflation of lifestyle with space and both work together to define the urban experience. Invoking social justice to redefine the objectives of the city is a counterpoint to the political process of urban planning that, under contemporary globalization, frequently has come to operate opposite and in opposition to the equitable planning of the city.

Policy makers within urban planning have an opportunity to reassert the relationship between place and equity in building more efficient, sustainable cities. This reassertion, however, will not come from a return to descriptive approaches to the city based on compromise. The benefits of economic growth should be distributed evenly, contributing to a reduction in poverty reflected in a higher growth elasticity of poverty in urban areas. Cities should be made productive for all citizens, not just for those that own cars or live in gated communities. Greater investment in public wealth in the form of clean and safe essential infrastructure and public transportation, better education and health, and the equitable allocation of space among urban actors can only be achieved if urban planners push back against the economic logic of contemporary globalization. As discussed above, a more equitable city results in a more efficient city. One could speculate that in the absence of normative planning theory animated by concepts of social justice, rooted in a more comprehensive formulation of sustainability, and based on the

increased production of public wealth, the urban future could be met with damaging distortions, leading to cities without jobs (Cohen and Miller 2007) or a planet of slums (Davis 2006).

Central to a sustainable urban future is the production of public wealth. While economic growth has been unbalanced and distributed unevenly throughout space and time, material development can and should be equitable across places. The new urban reality does not yet reflect this principle and so urban planners must work to move *toward* a sustainable urbanism, cumulatively unraveling the negative impacts of globalization on the world's cities through prioritizing social justice and increasing the stock of local public goods and services. One should not expect this to come from incrementalism, as climate change and inequality, for example, have thresholds after which productivity can be lost for long periods of time if not permanently.⁷ What is needed is the development of normative urban planning theory based on social justice that will push urban planners out of an ideological middle ground and into the forefront of the debate on the sustainable development of cities in the 21st century. The normative shift to planning by the UN-Habitat in their flagship report, *Planning Sustainable Cities: Planning Sustainable Cities: Policy Directions*, should be considered a welcomed start.

⁷ See Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (2007). Climate scientists have asserted that a 2 degrees Celsius rise threshold in global average temperature is the range in which an exponential increase in the risks of disruptive climate change could be avoided.

References

- Agarwal, O. P. 2006. "Urban Transport," in *India Infrastructure Report 2006*, ed. Infrastructure Development Finance Company, 106-129. New Delhi: Oxford University Press.
- Arrighi, Giovanni. 1994. *The Long Twentieth Century*. New York: Verso.
- Bertaud, Alan. 2004. The Spatial Organization of Cities: Deliberate Outcome or Unforeseen Consequence. <http://alain-bertaud.com> (accessed October 15, 2009).
- Bank of International Settlements. 2007. Triennial Central Bank Survey: Foreign Exchange and Derivatives Market Activity in 2007. <http://www.bis.org/publ/rpfx07t.pdf> (accessed October 12, 2009).
- Brenner, Neil. 2001. The Limits to Scale? Methodological Reflections on Scalar Structuration. *Progress in Human Geography* 25(4): 591-614.
- Brenner, Neil and Roger Keil eds. 2006. *The Global Cities Reader*. New York: Routledge.
- Bulkeley, Harried and Michele Betsill. 2005. Rethinking Sustainable Cities: Multilevel Governance and the "Urban" Politics of Climate Change. *Environmental Politics* 14(1): 42-63.

- Castells, Manuel. 2000. *The Rise of the Network Society*. Malden: Blackwell Publishing.
- Cohen, Michael and Darío Debowicz. 2001. The Five Cities of Buenos Aires: Poverty and Inequality in Urban Argentina. In *UNESCO Encyclopedia of Sustainable Development*, ed. Saskia Sassen. Paris: UNESCO.
- Cohen, Michael and Steven Miller. 2007. *Cities Without Jobs: A Discussion Paper on Urban Unemployment*. Unpublished manuscript.
- Coyula-Cowley, Mario. 2009. The Many Centers of Havana. Lecture, The New School, New York, NY. August 24.
- Davis, Kingsley. 1965. The Urbanization of the Human Population. *Scientific American* 213(3): 41-53.
- Davis, Mike. 2006. *Planet of Slums*. New York: Verso.
- Fainstein, Susan S. 2001. Inequality in Global City-regions. In *Global City-regions: Trends, Theory, Policy*, ed. A.J. Scott, 285-298. New York: Oxford University Press.
- Fainstein, Susan S. 2005. Planning Theory and the City. *Journal of Planning Education and Research*. 25(2): 121-130.
- Friedmann, John and Goetz Wolff. 1982. World City Formation: An Agenda for Research and Action. *International Journal of Urban and Regional Research* 6(3): 309-344.
- Friedmann, John. 1986. The World City Hypothesis. *Development and Change* 17(1): 69-84.
- Harvey, David. 1990. *The Condition of Postmodernity*. Malden: Blackwell Publishing.
- Harvey, David. 2005. *A Brief History of Neoliberalism*. New York: Oxford University Press.
- Harvey, David. 2008. The Right to the City. *The New Left Review* 53(5): 23-40.
- Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change. 2007. *Climate Change 2007: Mitigating Climate*

- Change*. New York: Cambridge University Press.
- International Monetary Fund. "IMF to Assess G-20 Progress on Recovery, Mulls Financial Levy." IMF Survey Online. <http://www.imf.org/external/pubs/ft/survey/so/2009/NEW110709A.htm> (accessed February 19, 2010).
- Jacobs, Jane. 1961. *The Life and Death of Great American Cities*. New York: Random House.
- Jensen-Butler, Chris. 1999. Cities in Competition: Equity Issues. *Urban Studies* 36(5-6): 865-891.
- Jepson, Edward J. 2001. Sustainability and Planning: Diverse Concepts and Close Associations. *Journal of Planning Literature* 15(4): 499-510.
- Judd, Dennis R. 2005. Everything is Always Going to Hell: Urban Scholars as End-Times Prophets. *Urban Affairs Review*. 41(2): 119-131.
- Lefebvre, Henri. 2003. *The Urban Revolution*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.
- Luke, Timothy. 2003. Global Cities vs. "global cities:" Rethinking Contemporary Urbanism as Public Ecology." *Studies in Political Economy* 70: 11-33.
- Liu, Henry K. 2007. Super Capitalism, Super Imperialism Part One: A Structural Link. *Asia Times Online*. October 12. http://atimes.com/atimes/Global_Economy/IJ12Dj01.html (accessed May 16, 2010).
- Miller, Calum. 2005. The Human Development Impact of Economic Crises. *Human Development Report Office Occasional Paper*. http://hdr.undp.org/en/reports/global/hdr2005/papers/hdr2005_miller_calum_19.pdf (accessed October 9, 2009).
- National Bureau of Statistics of China. 2008. "Possession of Private Vehicles." National Bureau of Statistics Online. <http://www.stats.gov.cn/tjsj/ndsj/2008/html/P1527e.htm>.

- Neuman, Michael. 2005. Notes on the Uses and Scope of City Planning Theory. *Planning Theory* 4(2): 123-145.
- Pinderhughes, Raquel. 2004. *Alternative Urban Futures: Planning for Sustainable Development in Cities Throughout the World*. Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield.
- Sanyal, Bish. 2002. Globalization, Ethical Compromise and Planning Theory. *Planning Theory* 1(2): 116-123.
- Sassen, Saskia. 2002. *The Global City*. New York: Princeton University Press.
- Sassen, Saskia. 2009. To Big to Save: The End of Financial Capitalism. *Open Democracy*.
<http://www.opendemocracy.net/article/too-big-to-save-the-end-of-financial-capitalism-0>.
(accessed October 11, 2009).
- Swyngedouw, E. 1992. The Mammon Quest: “Glocalisation,” Interspatial Competition and the Monetary Order—the Construction of New Scales. In *Cities and Regions in the New Europe*, eds. M. Dunford and G. Kafkalas. New York: Belhaven.
- Comisión Económica para América Latina y el Caribe (CEPAL). 1997. *La Brecha de la Equidad: América Latina, el Caribe, y la Cumbre Social*. Santiago: United Nations Press.
- United Nations Human Settlements Program. 2008. *State of the World’s Cities 2008/2009: Harmonious Cities*. London: Earthscan.
- United Nations Human Settlements Program. 2009. *The Global Report on Human Settlements 2009 Planning Sustainable Cities: Policy Directions*. London: Earthscan.
- United Nations Population Fund. 2007. *The State of the World’s Population: Unleashing the Potential of Urban Growth*. London: Earthscan.

Woetzal, Jonathan, Janamitra Devan, Luke Jordan, Stefano Negri and Diana Ferrell. 2008.

Preparing for China's Urban Billion. Shanghai: McKinsey Global Institute.

World Bank. 2009. *Reshaping Economic Geography: World Development Report 2009.*

Washington: World Bank.

Zukin, Sharon. 1992. "The City as a Landscape of Power: London and New York as Global

Financial Capitals." In *Global Finance and Urban Living: A Study of Metropolitan*

Change, eds. Leslie Budd and Sam Whimster. London: Routledge.