Advancing urban rights
Equality and diversity in the city
Eva Garcia-Chueca and Lorenzo Vidal (Eds.)
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I. Introduction

How can the set of rights that underpin the notion of the “right to the city” be advanced? In seeking answers to this question over several decades, social mobilisations have been assembled and new political and legal frameworks promoted, especially in Latin America (where the cases of Brazil, Ecuador and Colombia stand out), but also in Europe and at global level (PGDC, 2014). This has been shown, for example, by the New Urban Agenda adopted in 2016 by the United Nations, 1 or by the Municipalist Declaration of Local Governments for the Right to Housing and the Right to the City, 2 approved in 2018 under the leadership of the city of Barcelona and the auspices of United Cities and Local Governments (UCLG).

Multiple interpretations and resignifications have been made of the right to the city since it was coined in the late 1960s (Lefebvre, 1968). The concept may be summarised as a narrative that appeals to residents to collectively appropriate their cities, to shape their form and content through their daily activity. Since the late 1980s, it has been claimed as a way to channel struggles for housing and so-called “urban rights”, which include tangible issues such as the right to public transport, sanitation, basic services, urban infrastructure, public spaces and quality facilities, as well as more intangible demands such as the right to centrality, environmental quality and political participation (Borja, 2013).

New interpretations and political articulations of the right to the city, especially those that have emerged since the end of the 2000s, encourage us to view it through the lens of identity politics (Goonewardena et al., 2008; Liss, 2012). They propose that attention should be given to the diversity of the social groups that live in urban environments, whose voice and agency must be recognised in the construction of the city in the interests of equality and social justice. Whether as a result of the legacy of colonialism in the form of racialised communities, the arrival of migrants or refugees, the attraction of international “talent” or, simply, the presence of different identities, groups and socioeconomic segments, cities are spaces in which a wide range of people and groups coexist that are not always recognised and do not always communicate with each other. In these conditions, how is it possible to implement the right to the city based on difference? How can cohesive cities be built in highly diverse and even polarised contexts? How can a city be modelled that both expresses the social mix and at the same time addresses the inequalities and oppressions that course through it?

Addressing these issues not only involves recognising and valuing the subjects that have historically been marginalised in the construction of urban space, both physical and symbolic (women, migrants, people of African descent, the poor, religious minorities, etc.). It also means

2. See: https://citiesforhousing.org/#section-0.
bearing in mind, as certain social scientists remind us (Robinson, 2006; Simone and Pieterse, 2017), that the city materialises and is experienced in a different way by the different groups that inhabit it through their practices and uses and, in short, how their daily life takes shape. This intimate relationship between space and its inhabitants, as well as the multiple interdependencies between the two (Lefebvre, 1974), is what gives each neighbourhood and city an idiosyncratic character in the different regions of the world. Recognising the different layers and connections that comprise urban diversity, from bodies to territories, via the multiple ways of living and producing the city, is the focus of new debates on the right to the city.

Faced with these complexities, local governments in various corners of the world have worked over the past two decades to respond to the challenge of promoting diversity and equality in the city through rights policies. To do this, they have resorted to several mechanisms: municipal charters, human rights departments, strategic plans and evaluation indicators, to name just a few examples. Similarly, metropolitan areas are subject to new frameworks of metropolitan and multilevel governance that seek to respond to the pressing social, political, economic and cultural challenges that divide their territories between centres and peripheries and provoke the proliferation of ghettos, gated communities and non-places (Augé, 1992).

However, long before an institutional response emerged, urban civil society in both the Global North and South has for several decades promoted initiatives aimed at improving the quality of life and recognition of the urban dweller as a political actor and rights-holder. Through these – often transnational – dynamics new processes of social production of the city and new forms of citizenship construction detached from the nation-state have come about (Holston, 1998).

This CIDOB monograph explores how to combine processes of redistribution and recognition, institutional change and the social production of the city in an increasingly urban world.

II. The right to the city as the right to difference

The right to the city concept has travelled from academia to social mobilisation and, from there, to institutions at local, national and global levels; it has passed through several regions of the world, through various types of actors and several historic moments. In this geographical, social and temporal to-and-fro, it has acquired new meanings and interpretations (García-Chueca, 2016). In terms of the academic interpretations that have emerged around this concept, the best-known concerns political-economic issues around the redistribution of and access to existing urban resources and opportunities. The starting point
for this analysis is the diagnosis that the main problem with the current urbanisation model is its intertwining with neoliberal capitalism, as it comprises one of the conditions of its expansion via several types of processes: the construction of urban infrastructure and housing (new housing developments), the redevelopment (and gentrification) of certain areas, the promotion of a lifestyle based on consumption and the financialisation of land and urban property (Harvey, 2008; Rolnik, 2018; Sassen, 2017). From this point of view, the main objective of the right to the city is to ensure greater democratic control over the economic processes and material conditions that sustain urban life. The collective enjoyment of the use values of urban resources, rather than their exchange value, is demanded. Hence, a framework that is sensitive to the various concrete forms of social appropriation of the city begins to be established, challenging the processes of homogenisation and abstraction entailed by its integration into monetary circuits.

Since the 1980s analytical categories such as daily life, lived space and difference have been acquiring importance in urban analyses (Soya, 1989; 1996). These new readings emerging from postmodern schools of thought have gone on to coexist with issues related to the politics of identity and difference, which are intimately related to the reality of cities, the quintessential spaces for social mixing and diversity. These new approaches have strengthened the idea that the right to the city is the right to the production of a place to live that is shaped by the inhabitants themselves and is, in consequence, an inherently contradictory space that contains various rhythms of life and uses of urban space and time (Goonewardena et al., 2008). A “differential space”, to use Lefebvre’s term (1974), that is radically opposed to the abstract space favoured by modern urbanism.

This reading of the right to the city as a right to difference is not based on a pluralistic liberal conception of diversity – it does not consist of celebrating differences per se. Rather, it proposes to understand it as the right to be equal when difference prejudices us and the right to be different when it homogenises us (Santos, 2005). In other words, it means granting a new centrality to the demands of marginalised social groups that fight against a discriminatory and segregating urbanisation (Kipfer, 2008) and, from there, questioning the construction of the city and the place these groups occupy in these processes.

III. Contribution of this volume

Right to the city, right to difference

This monograph aims to provide reflections and practical experience on advancing the exercise of rights in cities towards greater equality. With that aim in mind, the first two contributions establish the main theoretical and conceptual frameworks around the right to the city.

Michele Grigolo, Lecturer in Sociology at Nottingham Trent University (United Kingdom), begins this volume with a theoretical reflection on
what it means to interpret the right to the city from the perspective of the right to difference. After discussing the two notions, Grigolo proposes their synthesis, based on the idea of the “right to a different city”. Using this concept, he addresses the interconnections between the redistribution of resources and political representation in the city. The “right to a different city” implies recognition of the diversity of urban experience, while addressing the structural inequalities that run through it.

Next, Jordi Borja, Professor Emeritus at the Universitat Oberta de Catalunya (Spain), reviews the theoretical and practical trajectory of the right to the city from a historical point of view, placing particular emphasis on its deployment in Spain and Latin America. He goes on to question the role of urbanists and urban planning policies in the processes of constructing the right to the city which, he argues, should be led by citizens. These processes struggle between dynamics of rupture and reform, as they are subject to the interaction between a mobilised society and representative political institutions.

**The role of local governments**

The next section focuses on programmes and measures promoted by local governments around the world to promote rights policies. Since the end of the 1990s, a local government movement has taken shape that cares about diversity and seeks to manage it with the aim of promoting greater equality and social cohesion. To this aim, they have defined rights policies via multiple mechanisms: municipal charters (Montreal, Vienna, Mexico City, Bandung), human rights offices or departments (Barcelona, Nuremberg, São Paulo, Venice), commissions (Mexico City, Eugene or New York), strategic plans or road maps (Bogotá, Graz, Madrid), evaluation indicators (Gwangju, York), local ombudsmen (Montreal, Lleida or Vitoria-Gasteiz), municipal ordinances (Higashiōsaka, Oizumi, Seoul) and highly diverse public policies conceived with a human rights approach (social welfare, housing, culture, education, environment, citizen participation, etc.) (Garcia-Chueca, 2018).

These examples show how the development of local social cohesion projects based on the recognition and assessment of differences does not constitute an abstract, static exercise. Forging cohesive urban societies is a complex, long-term project that must make social diversity fit with a common project of collective coexistence. It is a project that must be flexible in order to adapt to the constant changes cities experience as a result, for example, of a rise in the migrant or refugee population, of gentrification dynamics, strategies for attracting international innovation or processes of impoverishment of certain neighbourhoods, among others.

This monograph explores some of these examples, specifically the work of local governments in the United States, Mexico, Austria, Spain, Jordan and South Korea.

JoAnn K. Ward, Lecturer at Columbia University (United States), reports that in her country human rights have historically been a controver-
sial policy framework and that local governments have established themselves as the sphere of government most committed to their defence and implementation. Typically, their approach has revolved around the protection of civil rights, especially the right to non-discrimination, as evidenced by the work of experienced human rights commissions (Seattle, Washington, Los Angeles) and some municipal ordinances (San Francisco). However, a growing number of cities are focusing their efforts on also promoting economic and social rights, particularly the right to housing (Eugene, Madison), and implementing measures that consider the impact of intersectional identities on the redistribution of goods.

Going deeper into the US context, Thomas Angotti, Professor Emeritus of Urban Policy and Planning at Hunter College at the University of New York (United States), takes a close look at the case of New York City to show how the legacy of colonialism, a profoundly racist system, has shaped the current urban model. Angotti argues that behind the image of New York as a diverse, cosmopolitan city lies an ethnically and racially segregating city. The uncontested right to individual property, the cornerstone of colonialism and later engine of urban development, combined with the conversion of urban land into an element of the expansion of neoliberal capitalism, is primarily responsible for gentrification, the displacement of poor and racialised communities and the generation of deep social inequalities.

Jaime Morales, Undersecretary of Human Rights for the Government of Mexico City (Mexico), reviews the main legal and political documents on the right to the city, focusing on those that address the right to difference and the promotion of diverse cities. In particular, he refers to the Mexico City Charter for the Right to the City (2010), the recently approved Political Constitution of Mexico City (2017) and the government plan of the current mayor, Claudia Sheinbaum (2018–2024). Morales concludes by pointing out that the work carried out in the Mexican capital focuses not only on promoting specific policies aimed at combating discrimination against certain groups (women, indigenous communities, LGBTTTI community, etc.), but also on promoting territorial justice, the equitable distribution of public goods and the democratic management of the city.

From Vienna, Shams Asadi, Human Rights Commissioner for the City of Vienna (Austria), describes how the city moved on from the paradigm of integration policies focused on the migrant community in place since the early 1990s in favour of promoting diversity policies from the turn of the millennium onwards. The targets of these policies were not only migrants, but also the host population. A participatory process was promoted to adopt the Vienna Charter for good neighbourly relations (2012), which was followed by a broader strategy to make Vienna a city of human rights (2014). Since then, Vienna has worked to mainstream human rights in the administration and its public policies and actively promotes international cooperation, training and public awareness about human rights.

Staying in Europe, the next contribution comes from Enrique López, former Chief of Cabinet of the Third Deputy Mayor’s Office of Madrid (Spain). He shares Madrid’s experience in the development and prepa-
ration of the Strategic Human Rights Plan promoted between 2015 and 2019. Despite the initiative’s short duration, other cities around the world linked to the human rights cities movement watched its experiment with the participatory design of local human rights strategies with interest. Several aspects should be highlighted: the plan’s motivation of mainstreaming a human rights, gender equality and intersectionality approach in municipal policies; the prior participatory diagnosis on the basis of which the plan was prepared – also in a participatory manner; and the development of an exhaustive system of indicators to evaluate the plan’s execution.

Testimony from the other side of the Mediterranean comes from Haleemah Alamoush, Head of Social Responsibility Plans for the city of Amman in Jordan. Historically, Jordan has received a number of refugee flows: Palestinians in 1948 and 1967, Iraqis in the early 1990s and Syrians since 2013, as well as smaller groups of Libyan, Yemeni, Somali and Sudanese nationals. This broad social diversity is reflected in the Jordanian capital, with 30% of its population being foreign-born. To handle this complex reality, ensuring social cohesion has become one of the main objectives for Amman’s metropolitan government, which also faces the challenge of increasing pressure on the city’s public services and facilities. Alamoush identifies the main policies and projects undertaken in this respect.

Soo A Kim, former director of the Human Rights Office in the Metropolitan Government of Gwangju (South Korea), takes us to East Asia to contribute her city’s experiences. Internationally renowned as a human-rights promoting city, Gwangju has been working intensely since the turn of the century on the development of several types of instruments for “localising” human rights, including several human rights ordinances (2005, 2009), a human rights office (2010), a master plan, a participative committee, an education programme, a system of evaluation indicators (2012) and a local ombudsman (2013). Added to this are specific policies for citizen participation and social inclusion aimed, in particular, at promoting gender equality and care for children, the elderly, people with disabilities and migrants.

Jordi Baltà, consultant expert in culture for the global organisation United Cities and Local Governments (UCLG), concludes this section with a reflection from the field of culture, exploring the link between the right to the city, the right to difference and local cultural action. According to Baltà, this link, despite its potential, only materialises occasionally because cultural policies and programmes often deviate from inclusive, participatory and rights-based approaches. Baltà proposes the Agenda 21 for Culture adopted in 2004 by United Cities and Local Governments (UCLG) and revised in 2015, as a tool that can contribute to re-establishing this link according to three lines of action: decentralisation, inclusive access and citizen participation in cultural activities; recognition and support for the cultural ecosystem, which is inherently plural and diverse; and the establishment of participatory governance frameworks. Baltà provides several examples that show how cities from different regions of the world are taking inspiration from this document when designing their local cultural policies.
Addressing the metropolitan challenge

Metropolitan environments play host to multiple challenges related to their territorial dimension, demographic concentration and institutional fragmentation. They are territories threaded with multiple socio-spatial fractures that provoke deep inequalities in, for example, access to housing, basic services, health and education, public transport, livelihoods and job opportunities.

Far from being homogeneous, these inequalities are experienced in different ways by the different urban groups that inhabit the metropolitan territory. They experience a degree of exclusion based on their social class, ethnicity, gender, sexual identity or religion, among other factors. When several of these factors of social differentiation (and ranking) combine, the degree of discrimination to which these people are subjected multiplies (Crenshaw, 1991).

This section explores possible ways to address these challenges via new formulas for metropolitan and multilevel governance that produce political and institutional frameworks to promote territorial cohesion and equality in metropolitan areas.

Ricard Gomà, Director of the Barcelona Institute of Regional and Metropolitan Studies (Spain), considers whether the right to the city in the 21st century can continue the civilisational work the welfare state began in the 20th century. The author argues that it is necessary to move towards a “local-level welfare” model that combines the fight against inequalities with the recognition of differences as well as incorporating spatial justice and ecological transitions. In this framework, municipalism becomes a key tool for redefining not only public policies, but also a new geography of global governance. In turn, the metropolitan level becomes particularly central to the configuration of the main political proposals and challenges of today’s urban era. For Gomà, the right to the metropolis gives the right to the city effective content.

But the right to which metropolis? Antonio Aniesa, Advisor to the President of Plaine Commune (France) asks whether the same urban realities are experienced in spaces with 10,000, 100,000, 500,000 and several million inhabitants? Metropolitan areas host a diversity of territories and life experiences that cannot be objectified by homogenising perspectives. Since 2006, a network of local governments, the Forum of Peripheral Local Authorities (FALP), has engaged in international municipalism to promote “another view of metropolises”. This view expresses the aspirations of peripheral cities to have a greater say in metropolitan governance and to articulate policies that allow progress to be made towards greater justice and inter-territorial solidarity. To this end, FALP promotes a polycentric metropolitan governance model that breaks with the centre/periphery duality, prizes intermunicipal cooperation over domination and centralisation, and allows each territory to define the right to the city based on its own reality and lived experiences.

Fernando Carrión, coordinator of the Area of City Studies at FLACSO-Ecuador, ends this section by addressing the new patterns of urbanisation and the institutional frameworks they require, with particular emphasis on the Latin American reality. Complex urban geographies
produce multiple centralities and peripheries, exceed administrative and national boundaries, and generate relationships beyond strict territorial contiguity. In this scenario, the challenge facing the realisation of the right to the city is to build an institutional structure within which this right can be claimed and developed.

Social innovations

The political history of the right to the city is closely linked to the emergence and evolution of urban social movements that have used this narrative to articulate their claims and advance the right to housing and “urban rights”, sometimes in collaboration with local governments (Mayer, 2012; Sugranyes and Mathivet, 2010). Their activity has shown that there are different ways of producing the city and urban space; and through them, new forms of citizenship have emerged from a grassroots level that break with the predominant state-centric frameworks. The US anthropologist James Holston (1998), in line with schools of thought linked to “legal pluralism” (Santos, 2005), defines these practices as forms of “insurgent citizenship”, as they emerge from the practices of city dwellers themselves, and subvert the classic forms of rights attribution that depend exclusively on the state.

Alex Frediani, Associate Professor at University College London (United Kingdom), reflects on these issues in an exploration of the practices and ideas that have emerged from grassroots social movements for the right to the city in Latin America, Africa and Asia. For Frediani, these experiences reflect an “ethos of engagement” and not a defined project. By analysing a range of cases, Frediani extracts three key crosscutting ideas: (1) a more substantive formulation of citizenship, demanding rights for all urban dwellers beyond their formal affiliation with the nation-state; (2) an emphasis on highlighting the inequalities in access to and appropriation of urban resources; and (3) the link between the collective production of space and the expansion of rights in cities, exemplified, for example, by the relationship between the social production of habitat and the right to housing.

Finally, Irene Escorihuela, Director of the Observatori DESC (Spain), focuses her chapter on identifying dynamics of cooperation and conflict between civil society organisations and local governments in the construction of the right to the city in Europe. Based on concrete experiences in Barcelona, Berlin, Terrassa and Zagreb, Escorihuela illustrates how the virtuous combination of institution and movement can multiply the impact each element would have alone. For her, the main challenge of municipalism is to give space to social initiatives that emerge outside institutions and implement them without co-opting or leading them.

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THE RIGHT TO THE CITY AS THE RIGHT TO DIFFERENCE

• UNDERSTANDING THE RIGHT TO THE CITY AS THE RIGHT TO DIFFERENCE

  Michele Grigolo

• THE RIGHT TO THE CITY: FROM THE STREET TO GLOBALISATION

  Jordi Borja
UNDERSTANDING THE RIGHT TO THE CITY AS THE RIGHT TO DIFFERENCE

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This paper introduces some of the core ideas of this volume, elaborating on the right to the city from the viewpoint of the right to difference. The main question it tackles is how far the right to the city contains and can eventually convey the right to difference. This question is explored in theoretical terms, from a sociological perspective, drawing on selective empirical evidence. The paper is divided into three parts. The first part introduces the right to the city. The second part brings the right to difference into conversation with the right to the city and introduces the right to a different city as one way of understanding the right to the city as the right to difference. The third part reflects on agents, processes and issues involved in the realisation of the right to a different city.

I. Introducing the right to the city

Since its origin the idea of the right to the city has taken many forms. Originally developed by Lefebvre (1968) as part of a broader attempt to anchor Marxism to the urban dimension of capitalism, in the right to the city, the “urban” provides the epistemology and scale for a new social and political revolution (Lefebvre, 2003; Prigge, 2008). Central to the idea of the right to the city is the primacy given to use as opposed to exchange value, against powerful economic interests in the city and its space. Emphasis placed on use is, in turn, to be understood in the context of Lefebvre’s critique of everyday life, in which the everyday becomes the level of analysis of oppression as well as a possibility for reinventing the city based on people’s needs and creative forces.

That said, the right to the city has subsequently been appropriated to fit a variety of programmes and ideas about cities, rights and justice. For Kuymulu, the notion of the right to the city “is increasingly becoming a conceptual vortex, pulling together discordant political projects that frame the urban problematic around democracy and human rights” (2013: 924). At the same time, the current association between the right to the city and radical democratic projects for cities is undisputed (Purcell, 2008; Garcia-Chueca, 2016). In line with its original
formulation, the right to the city continues to evoke participatory and user-centred approaches to city government and the management and organisation of space to combat the capitalist exploitation and neoliberal governance of the city (Purcell, 2002; Sugranyes and Mathivet, 2011; Belda-Miquel et al., 2016). Eventually, Purcell argues that the right to the city entails two main rights held by the inhabitants of the city: first, the right to participation “in any decision that contributes to the production of urban space” (2002: 102); and, second, the right to appropriation, which “includes the right of inhabitants to physically access, occupy and use urban space” (2002: 103).

Despite focussing on the city, the right to the city is not necessarily the city’s responsibility alone. Cities and their local authorities are best understood as part of a state whose powers and competences are nowadays articulated across a variety of levels of government and dispersed across multiple specialised bodies and agencies. Purcell (2006) warns against surrendering to the idea that local problems can only be found at city level and within one city, in a way that emphasises the “multiscalar” nature of the right to the city. The example of Brazil suggests that the city is the space in which the right to the city is practiced and ultimately realised. Municipalities are also inevitably involved in the production of the right to the city, if only because of the powers and competences they retain in urban planning and the management of space. The same case, however, clearly shows how the broader framework for and regulation of the right to the city came from state legislation (the City Statute, in 2001) and established an ad-hoc institution (the Ministry of Cities, in 2003) (Maricato, 2011; Garcia-Chueca, 2016). As such, it is important to maintain a sophisticated and strategic approach to how different scales of politics and government, not only the city, can contribute to but also hinder the practice of the right to the city.

While some form of institutionalisation of the right to the city appears desirable (Purcell 2008), right to the city “policy” raises concerns about what has been lost of the community-oriented, activist spirit of the idea. Empirical studies show resistance to some of the more radical implications of the right to the city, such as those around the approval of urban plans (Maricato, 2011). At the same time, there is evidence of support and receptivity amongst civil servants and street-level bureaucrats (Belda-Miquel et al., 2016), meaning those agents who already play a key role in the more general delivery of social policy. Overall, as also suggested by the study of human rights in cities (Grigolo, 2019), institutionalisation both enables and constrains the right to the city within a political context that tends to favour the adaptation of the concept to the imperatives of neoliberalism.

II. Bringing the right to difference into the conversation

Difference is understood here as the line that divides people according to characteristics such as class, gender, sex, ethnicity, race (understood as a social construction and not as a biological factor), citizenship, and disability. From a sociological viewpoint, these differences, class included, are social divisions. Social divisions never operate in isolation from each other but rather combine to produce sometimes very specific
“intersectional” experiences of difference. Based on these premises, the right to difference may be seen as the right of social groups and communities defined by one or more difference to have their difference(s) acknowledged and, in terms of public action, fully considered in the definition and implementation of policy. Recognition of difference always raises some issues around redistribution of resources and political representation (see Fraser and Honneth, 2003). It entails the right to have difference elicited to the extent that it leads to undue and unfair attention, but also emphasised as a source of social enrichment and positive transformation.

Integrating the right to difference into the right to the city draws attention to the “special relationship” that exists today between difference and the city. The increasing urbanisation of the global population has been accompanied by a process of differentiation of the same population. Cities produce but also attract differences, because of the opportunities cities offer to different groups and communities. For instance, big cities, in particular, offer migrant communities job opportunities in a variety of markets. Cities have also offered LGBTQI+ people the level of anonymity and the possibility of experimenting with sexuality and gender that are usually not available in small towns and villages.

At the same time persisting inequalities in cities interrogate the power of differences (as social divisions) to shape the material and social space of the city. In fact, we may argue that marginalisation, exclusion and segregation generated by difference are typical urban phenomena and that programmes of austerity stimulated by (the crisis of) neoliberalism have arguably contributed to their intensification. From these premises, achieving what we could define as a positive “indifference to difference” in the city requires exposing urban inequalities by placing differences at the centre of processes of reconfiguration and reorganisation of the city in order to redress urban inequalities around issues such as class, gender, ethnicity, sexuality and disability.

This process is, to be clear, primarily political. In this respect, cities not only offer a venue for the recognition of difference at symbolic and material levels; cities are also spaces for the political organisation and representation of communities defined by difference(s). The presence of difference in the city produces, on the one hand, a mobilisation of communities seeking to give voice and representation to their difference and, on the other hand, a response from the state, including the local state in the form of municipal authorities, via different arrangements, policies and laws that recognise and regulate difference. This politics of difference is also an identity politics, the city has often been its stage and municipal authorities one of the main targets of community action for political recognition. As Isin (2000) suggests when discussing global cities, these have become crucial spaces for claiming rights. Quite significantly, but not surprisingly, much of the conversation going on in cities around human rights concerns questions of difference, discrimination and equality (Grigolo, 2019).

Lefebvre does include difference in the right to the city (Goonewardena et al., 2008), but in ways that have sometimes been found wanting. Gender provides a useful lens here for reflecting on the multiple, ambivalent relations between the rights to the city and to difference. On the one hand, as
Garcia-Chueca (2018) argues, Lefebvre and feminist authors like Doreen Massey criticise both modern rational urbanism and ways of ordering the city that marginalise unwanted subjects: the lower classes (expelled to the periphery of the city) and women (confined to the domestic space). On the other hand, Fenster (2005: 68) observes that Lefebvre understands difference as the question of how particularities are forced into dominant and hegemonic categories. From these premises, she stresses the absence in Lefebvre's work of an analysis of oppression within the private sphere, where many women continue to experience inequalities. Accordingly, Fenster argues for the right to the *gendered* city, a right to the city in which a feminist perspective is fully incorporated into the right to the city in order to “open” the right to the city to the private sphere.

If the right to the gendered city seems to solve, at least conceptually, the tension between gender and the right to the city, from the viewpoint adopted here it nevertheless leaves unresolved other possible tensions between difference (beyond gender) and the right to the city. In this vein, we can rethink the right to the city *through* difference as the right to a *different* city: the right to produce a city that is connected – in its representation as well as its material reality – to the lived experiences of differences that, because they inhabit the “urban”, both shape and are shaped by it. The right to a different city raises awareness of the differentiated nature of the city, and promotes a more comprehensive understanding and fulfillment of the right to the city. Overall, the right to a different city may be primarily the right of social groups and communities defined by difference to make decisions about and appropriate the urban space. In the right to a different city, the use value of space becomes central, as against the exchange value imposed by the neoliberal order in which cities are (re)produced.

Before considering what the realisation of this right entails, it is important to stress that the meaning of a “different city” is by no means set in stone. Rather, the right to a different city draws attention to ongoing and ever-changing dynamics of differentiation amongst the city’s population. As such, the right to a different city is closely intertwined with the classed, gendered, racialised, sexualised and disabling characteristics of the urban space. At the same time, the right to a different city is receptive of new, emerging forms of cultural and economic oppression experienced by social groups and communities defined by difference(s) that may at any point become socially relevant (e.g. migrants when discussing issues of nationality and citizenship). In line with these premises, the right to a different city is best understood as an open-ended and dynamic concept: as a discursive arena and political standpoint available to different social groups for criticising the social and material order of the city in order to promote their active re-appropriation and transformation of the “urban”.

### III. Realising the right to a different city

The right to a different city is about *becoming* a different city. At the centre of this process are the actions and mobilisation of the groups and communities that, by making claims based on and driven by difference, convey their own vision of how the city should look. By raising their voices, directly or through some form of collective representation, mem-

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The right to a different city may be primarily the right of social groups and communities defined by difference to make decisions about and appropriate the urban space.
bers of social groups defined by difference begin to exercise their right to appropriate urban space and participate in its use and management. Rights and human rights provide an important language for articulating difference as a matter of justice and can complement an approach based on the right to the city in many ways. For example, human rights can help women articulate oppression in the private sphere, including violence, a claim which we can then reconsider as part and parcel of the right to the city as far as it hinders women’s use of the city and, because of that, their right to a different (gendered) city. Cultural rights enabling artistic expression should be included here as well. The literature on the right to the city provides interesting examples of the centrality of creativity in the production of the right to the city (Iveson, 2013). From our standpoint, art plays a crucial role in voicing and representing difference in the conversation about the city: the urban space constitutes the social source of art as well as the material structure on and through which the artistic expression of difference is conveyed.

Public authorities also play an important part in the production of a different city and, of course, in the respect, protection and fulfilment of (human) rights. As far as local governments are “close” and sensitised to difference and the communities defined by it, while also retaining important responsibilities in the area of urban planning and management, they are also the part of the state most obviously concerned with the construction of the different city. Municipalities may play the role of a facilitator, working towards enabling groups and communities defined by difference to exercise their rights and freedoms and (continue to) build the different city. Policies centred on difference and its recognition contribute to the right to a different city. Cities have spoken and developed the language of diversity and equality for a long time. Antidiscrimination policies can help redress behaviours that inhibit the use of the city by residents defined by difference. The law can be a precious ally in fighting discrimination in cities: from international human rights treaties to local ordinances and regulations, many laws that converge and “compete” for their own application in the city can be used to redress discriminatory behaviour and eventually socialise city residents into non-discriminatory conduct (Grigolo, 2019). As the case of Barcelona’s Office for Non-Discrimination shows, municipalities have some margin of effective intervention on specific instances of discrimination, in collaboration with public prosecutors but also relying on mediation and referral to city services (Grigolo, 2010; 2019).

However, to realise the right to a different city anti-discrimination policy is not enough. The structural inequalities that shape the urban experience of members of social groups defined by difference must be tackled. A focus on the structural dimension of inequality interrogates the ambivalent relation between, on the one hand, difference and, on the other, the neoliberal order of cities in which difference is experienced, imagined, spoken, acted and eventually recognised. Unpacking this relationship is often a difficult exercise, especially since neoliberalism has co-opted difference and identity politics into strategies of marketisation, participating in some way in the recognition of difference while at the same time exploiting it for profit. If the celebration of diversity has certainly helped LGBTQI+ people to engage positively with the city, its association with city strategies to boost the local economy has contributed to the marketisation of gay identities and the de-politicisation of
pride parades, something which has disappointed some LGBTQI+ activists (on the case of Barcelona, for example, see Grigolo, 2019). Migrants and newcomers in general – central to the promotion of “diverse cities” – continue to represent a useful source of (cheap) labour for local economies. At the same time, maintaining the profitability of the city space implies the securitisation of the urban space through law-and-order measures that particularly target marginal communities of migrants, including sex workers (Grigolo 2019).

In the same vein, we should reflect on how much urban “diversity” can participate in processes of gentrification aimed at attracting more affluent, “creative” classes towards the centre of cities at the expense of lower classes (Grigolo, 2017). Research has shown how institutional venues in which “diversity” is spoken are in fact populated by middle-classes (Hoekstra, 2015). As such, diversity emerges almost as, to put it in Bourdieusian terms, an element of “distinction” between classes and eventually a form of symbolic violence exercised by middle- and upper-classes towards the lower-classes. Infused with exclusiveness more than just exclusion, a positive emphasis placed on diversity in cities can sustain urban marginalisation processes, something which is entirely at odds with the theory and practice of the right to the city and that, unfortunately, can be exploited and manipulated by right-wing political associations eager to promote themselves as defenders of the “people” against the “elites”.

As such, realising the right to a different city stretches beyond the right to a diverse city, as far as diversity is understood solely or mainly through a “liberal focus on the celebration of pluralism” (Garcia Chueca, 2018, my translation) that maintains diversity within the purpose and scope of a neoliberal practice of the city. Rather, central to the right to a different city is the question of how capitalism affects the urban experience of those groups and communities defined by difference in a more comprehensive way, with an understanding that this experience should be spoken and articulated by members of groups and communities, including the lower classes, as part of their exercise of the right to a different city. For this reason, it is crucial that these subjects gain access to those institutional venues in which decisions are made that affect their experience and use of the city. These venues include agencies and departments with power over the regulation of relevant policy areas (e.g. planning and housing) as well as council and advisory bodies in which the voice of neighbours and communities are supposed to be heard and to influence policy across a wide spectrum of issues. It goes without saying that achieving at least some degree of control over any significant law or policy affecting difference will meet with significant resistance, especially in those areas in which strategic choices are made over the planning, transformation and “regeneration” of the space of the city. Achieving concrete results may well imply influencing decisions from outside institutions, by engaging in demonstration and protest.

As a conclusion, the right to a different city can be understood in a dynamic way: as a project which is hardly fully realised and a process that should be sustained by social action, political organisation and public intervention. It is a right co-produced by groups, communities and institutions with a stake in it, not least via their engagement with difference, under the influence of a broader political, social and, most
importantly, economic environment which imposes certain rules on the actors within it. In this respect, at least two broad issues must be considered to account for some challenging aspects of the right to a different city. Firstly, while this right has an obvious connection to urban life and environment, its realisation invites attention to be drawn to what happens outside of the city that influences the perception and agency of social groups defined by difference. In line with the theorisation of the right to the city discussed at the outset of this chapter, the politics of the right to a different city should be fought at the scale at which questions that affect urban groups and communities are or become politicised, and decisions over them are made. That said, moving and mobilising across scales requires resources and skills that are not always readily available to communities and their organisations.

Secondly, the right to a different city in its fuller sense cannot be realised without sharing differences and turning differences into a collective project of and for all city users. This is about, on the one hand, acknowledging that social groups are internally divided and defined by more than one difference. Fenster’s (2005) research, for example, show that women are never just women and that they experience the city based also on their ethnic, national and/or class identity. The intersectional character of the urban experience requires the political alliance between groups to be identified and organised by difference. In this way, the right to a different city can reflect the variety of urban experiences of difference and eventually the conflicts and tensions between these experiences. The right to a different city requires discussions and negotiations between groups and communities, and the transformation of those communities through the acknowledgement and sharing of (other) differences.

On the other hand, to realise the right to a different city it is crucial that all the city’s inhabitants engage with difference(s) to produce that different city. By turning differences into a shared project for the city, the risk of their compartmentalisation should be minimised, as should that of communities being singled out and “distinguished” in the sense discussed above. Eventually, collectivising difference is about realising that each user of the city is different in some way, and that this particularity should become part of the production of a different city.

**IV. Conclusion**

This chapter has explored the relationship between the right to the city and the right to difference, and suggested the former should be a conceptual and practical tool that embodies and sustains the latter. This exploration, admittedly selective and partial, has been guided by the idea that the two rights should come together to realise the right to a different city, one in which the urban experience of social groups and communities defined by difference is placed strategically at the centre of the right to the city. At the same time, I have tried to suggest, first, how our understanding of and approach to difference, at social and political levels, should remain open to the many forms in which established and emerging differences operate and intersect in the city, including class differences; and, second, how for the sake of both the right to the city and the right to difference, differences should be shared and collectivised.
References


I. And the right to the city became real when it was reinvented by active citizenship

The ideas

First came the creator god of the right to the city, Henri Lefebvre. His book *Le Droit à la Ville* is widely quoted but, I fear, little read. Written in 1967, it contains just one chapter on the “right to the city”, which is full of ideas but deliberately lacks a deductive structure. The rest of the book is more structured and focused on Marx. A nod is given to the centenary of *Capital*, published in 1867, and at the end Lefebvre proposes theses on the city, the urban and urbanism. In the 1970s he developed the concept, although always framed by other socio-political and urban issues. The stimulating Situationist atmosphere at the University of Strasbourg helped give his work, which has a philosophical grounding, a foundation in sociological impressionism. He edited the magazine *Espaces et Sociétés* and produced a set of works on urban matters. His seminal book not only recovers the idea of the “right to the city”, it also concludes that urban reforms will only be possible if they result in an “urban revolution”. In the words of David Harvey, “Lefebvre was right to insist that the revolution has to be urban … or nothing at all (Harvey, 2008: 40).

At the beginning of the 21st century David Harvey’s thinking about the “right to the city” started becoming influential. His Marxist and urban works began with *Social Justice and the City* (Harvey, 1973). But it was his structural reflection on the right to the city in the *New Left Review* (Harvey, 2008), subsequently developed in *Rebel Cities* (Harvey, 2012), that gave Harvey the opportunity – using concepts from Marx’s *Capital* – to make a conceptual study. So, if Lefebvre was the creator god, Harvey was the son of God, not crucified but worshipped, who offered us a solid theoretical structural basis. In works such as *Spaces of Hope* (Harvey, 2000) and the later *Seventeen Contradictions and the End of Capitalism* (Harvey, 2014), as well as in his articles and interviews, he gives clues towards endowing citizens with instruments for intervention and making demands in urban territories. In this area, a particularly inter-

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1. In this monography we publish a shortened version of the original manuscript provided by the author.
esting work is the short but intense La città dei ricchi e la città dei poveri (The City of the Rich and the City of the Poor) in which the great Italian urbanist Bernardo Secchi (2014) provides ideas to rally behind.

Since the 1970s and 1980s European intellectual output in this field has been considerable: from social scientists like Étienne Balibar, Manuel Castells, François Ascher and Christian Topalov in Paris, to the New York group of Harvey, Peter Marcuse, Neil Smith, Tom Angotti and the militant urban planners from Venice – Secchi, Marcelloni, Ceccarelli and Indovina, among others. All emerged in the same era and were contemporaries of architects and transformational politicians from Barcelona like Oriol Bohigas, Joan Busquets and Pascual Maragall. Through their work public space acquires importance across Europe (and to a lesser extent America), along with the culture of the “civic urban project” in France and Italy, the new Anglo-Saxon urbanism, regeneration and the invention of “centralities” and so on. Do they all lay the groundwork for realising the “right to the city”?

In Latin America, from the 1970s onwards, the scholarly work that emerged from universities and independent centres in coordination with FLACSO, Clacso and a range of networks in a number of cases resulted in collaboration with social activists. In the decades that followed, hundreds of academics, professionals and political and social activists developed political and legal criteria that they expressed in “rights”, which while not necessarily legal, were certainly legitimate. Then they realised that public policies were interdependent and from the 1980s and 1990s onwards they began to promote political and legal changes. The expectations raised in many cases ended in frustration because effects were targeted more than causes. Market mechanisms and weak or complicit governments led to their perversion. As we will discuss later, this was “urbanisation without a city”.

In Spain the CEUMT (Centro de Estudios Urbanísticos, Municipales y Territoriales) stood out. Linked to Red Flag and the PSUC (the Catalan Communist Party), it emerged in 1970s and 1980s Barcelona and spread throughout the country. It included professionals, social scientists, lawyers, architects, engineers, doctors, teachers, social workers and journalists. In Madrid, a centre was promoted by architects and some sociologists and jurists connected to the Workers’ Revolutionary Party (PRT in its Spanish initials).

Without being proclaimed, in Latin America and Spain the right to the city was expressed, more or less explicitly, in more practical than theoretical terms. The number and quality of experts, academics and professionals in Latin America who have produced multiple texts, both theoretical and analytical, should be highlighted. Among others, I would like to mention Enrique Ortiz, Alicia Ziccardi, Antonio Azuela (Mexico), Fernando Carrión (Ecuador), Manuel Dammert (Peru), Ana Sugranyes, Alfredo Rodríguez (Chile), Horacio Corti, Eduardo Reese, Marcelo Corti (Argentina) and Raquel Rolnik, from the Instituto Pólis (Brazil).

Urban policies

Well-intentioned discourses are at best ambivalent. Urban policies can improve the compact city and create areas of citizenship; however, social, legal and economic mechanisms generate exclusions and increasing
inequalities. If public spaces and their surroundings are rezoned, land, housing and business prices skyrocket. If the physical fabric is regenerated, accessibility and mobility are improved while achieving a safer environment. But the downside is that the middle and upper classes gradually expel the working classes. Gentrification is not limited to the elites. In a more widespread process, lower and middle-class groups tend to move from cities to suburbs. The intellectual discourse of professionals and (mainly local) government political programmes and their good intentions generate perverse effects. Due almost always to forgetfulness or inability, their measures accentuate inequalities, the opposite of what is sought. The main responsibility does not lie with the actors involved, but with the politico-legal framework that produces social injustice. For their part, local governments and professionals must condemn this scandal and propose technical and legal instruments for guaranteeing the objectives of democratic citizenship. To do this they require active social support.

The right to the city was constructed by citizen mobilisation. Urban, neighbourhood and citizen movements emerged out of the intellectual ferment and urban development projects of the 1960s and 1970s. It was the working classes and, to some extent, the middle class, that made the concepts their own – they intuited them without having learned them – and appropriated the instruments of transformation. With the exception of a few who joined the social activists, neither professionals nor politicians adopted them. Latin America was the continent where working class social movements that generated mass mobilisation with considerable continuity and organisation developed most. It is worth highlighting the National Urban Reform Movement in Brazil, which made politico-legal proposals, and the struggle for housing and the recognition of place in Chile, Argentina, Mexico, Ecuador and Peru, among others, which managed to influence public policies, although often those who got a roof over their heads ended up without a city.

From the events in Europe in 1968 urban movements grew out of previously intermittent, fragmented structures that supported local governments, who carried out the political mediation. In the years that followed, citizen mobilisations made a range of demands and claims: housing, transportation, public services (water, energy, facilities), security and the environment, among others. They also claimed socio-cultural and political rights, such as the feeling of being represented and recognised in public space and in terms of references or icons, in accountability and popular initiatives, in the control of governments and in political participation beyond elections.

II. From catalogues to instruments

The catalogue of citizens’ rights

Citizens’ rights derived from the United Nations’ Universal Declaration of Human Rights (1948) and from demands that were given greater or lesser recognition in national constitutions: housing, education, health, social protection and work, among others. They underwent a boom in the 1990s and at the start of the 21st century. Yet, these theoretical rights were not real but programmatic, as they could not be recognised or demand-
ed before the judiciary or public administration. In practice, government public policies recognised some more or less universal rights, such as education, but not others, such as housing. What is more, in many cases these basic or necessary rights for all, such as water or energy, require monetary payment. Programmatic rights guide governments but they are not mandatory, which means they are not genuine rights. To exercise them you have to win them. The clearest historical example of this is the union movement of salaried workers which earned the right to strike, to union recognition within the company, to collective bargaining on wages and working conditions, and to rights on working hours, among others.

Work, or productive activity, has led to a conflict of interests between employers (public and private) and employees. Social reproduction, or indirect wages (housing, transport, education, urban services, etc.), is enacted by a highly diverse range of institutions and companies. And the citizens making demands are a very complex group that differs according to income and needs, location in the city, capacity in terms of resources and influence, and so on. However, if property and enterprise frame the workers, the city frames the vast majority of the population. And the city requires not only the totality of infrastructure, equipment and services, but also their coordination and universality. Citizens’ rights are interdependent: housing, transport, access to work and income, health, social protection, education, public space, coexistence, security and all political rights and recognition are, or should be, for all of a city’s inhabitants.

Catalogues or charters for the right to the city remain abstract statements that foster a sense of helplessness in citizens. The rights mentioned do not only depend on those offering them, be they public administrations or private companies. A politico-legal framework is required to enable the construction of a concrete set of rights. Obviously, social reproduction affects the entire population, but to proclaim the “right or rights to the city” requires legal and financial frameworks. In the vast majority of countries, housing production and land, energy and water management are controlled by private ownership and profit-making. To enforce citizens’ rights, public goods must be appropriated or publicly controlled. Even classical economists from Adam Smith to Léon Walras considered such goods to be public in nature and necessary for the entire population. Some have been basic goods since ancient times, such as energy, water, land and air; but banks, transport, education, health, housing and others should be remembered too. They depend not only on governments and parliaments, but also on professionals and citizen culture. On the one hand, professionals must provide practical tools to enable access to common goods and, on the other, citizen culture must legitimise collective ownership. On this, citizens are very often ambivalent: “what belongs to everyone also belongs to me, but what is mine is mine alone”.

Professionals, technicians and academics versus policymakers. Do an ethics of the urbanist exist?

The culture of discipline led to urbanism becoming the city’s “functionality” in order to make all collective goods and services accessible to the entire population. Urbanism promotes citizen freedom. As they said in the late Middle Ages “city air makes you free”. And the urbanism of the industrial city approaches the city as the coexistence of large, diverse populations in
equality of conditions (such as Cerdà’s idea of projecting “the egalitarian city”). In professional practice however, urban planners comply with laws and adopt public policies that facilitate inequalities and exclusions. Most professionals adapt to the needs of public or private clients to develop infrastructure or facilities located in quality areas of the city or in areas in the process of urbanisation that lack what the city has to offer (meaning spaces that are limited and deficient). Currently, exclusive cities and urbanisation without citizenship are promoted. Urbanistic ethics do not exist. We must revalue the ethical foundations of urbanism as well as the means of applying them.

Technicians and researchers must propose technical and legal instruments to policymakers and active citizens. Examples vary substantially. It is possible to regulate the supply of urban or developable land, but what about making the land public? It could be revolutionary, but political power is able to regulate land use. Taxation might also be applied to disused land to categorise it for uses of collective interest. If non-urbanised land is put up for sale, its price would be that of rural land, or little more. Planning should require at least 50% be given to public spaces, facilities and roads. Housing supply must be mixed to cater for all social levels. One example of this was the public housing policy implemented after World War II in the United Kingdom by the Labour Party government in 1945.²

Citizen culture, politics and economics

Urban planners, professionals and academics can spread their own culture in their own media, but their influence is highly relative. Those in power, for the most part, do not understand the territory and cities even less. They know the state, an abstract entity. The city is concrete, material and sensual, as Darhendof (1990) wrote. At best, policymakers can promote sectoral actions, housing, infrastructure and large facilities, but they do not make cities. Each ministry or department acts in its area of speciality and within a legislative framework of civil law that almost always prevails over administrative law. “Beware of words”: I saw this motto painted on a large wall on Rue Belleville in Paris, very close to the Le Genre Urbain bookshop. The idea that speech is one thing and action another is often applied to politics. Economic agents almost always tend to act as predators in the territory and their competitive discourse generates unsustainability and inequality. Hope comes in the form of active citizenship, emerging from the neighbourhoods and from the cities in a range of forms: associations and movements, social or cooperative economies, accountability campaigns and popular initiatives. The dialogue between professionals and citizen movements can build a practical ethics.

III. Will the urban revolution be a revolution? Can the right to the city be won in the current political and economic frameworks?

Revolution and democracy in urbanised societies

“The revolution has to be urban … or nothing at all”: we have already mentioned David Harvey’s acceptance of Henri Lefebvre’s assertion. But

². See: La città dei ricchi e la città dei poveri (The City of the Rich and the City of the Poor) by Bernardo Secchi (2014).
revolutions are not invented, they are produced, and very infrequently. More fail than succeed. And they are made by social majorities, not intellectuals or politicians. Intellectuals and professionals stay in their institutional fields; politicians, in public office and in their organisations. Clearly, the mobilisations, revolts and revolutions include intellectuals and politicians when they join the majorities. But revolutions are not born in social explosions – though they may provide the spark, trigger, or an accumulation of inequalities, privileges and injustices. But some revolutions are silent: transformations in social relationships that become more egalitarian when political institutions open up to the working classes and democratising ideas reign in society as a whole. At this moment in history, revolutions, noisy or otherwise, are not emerging from democratising processes, rather the opposite. We are living through a period of de-democratisation, as Europe and America quite clearly show.

Is the right to the city the concept that can explain the urban revolution? The theoretical basis of the right to the city is formed of citizens’ demands for social reproduction within a framework of multidimensional democracy (spatial, political, social, cultural, economic and environmental). Democratising urban processes achieve rights that are linked to social reproduction and indirect wages and they interlink with social production. Whether these processes culminate in breakdowns or revolutions that occur progressively or with advances and setbacks will depend on the relationship between political and economic forces, and on whether more or less conflictive circumstances pertain. In fact, over recent decades – and today – the “urban revolution” that has taken place has been more of a “counterrevolution”, as it has formed in opposition to what the “right to the city” advocates. De-democratisation has largely materialised in urbanised territories and cities via spatial injustice and societies of contempt. Cities are subject to the laws, powers and financial resources of central states, while globalised financial capitalism colonises and dispossesses the urban social world. The potential power of cities, however, lies in their ambivalence: they have a representative political institutional base and an active society that puts pressure on political and economic forces. The revolution will be either ground-breaking and noisy or gradual, silent conquest. The synthesis will be the theoretical banner of the “right to the city”.

Making the city and making citizenship

With no city, there is no citizenship and what occurs is a capitis diminutio of rights, even in urbanised territories. Acting as citizens involves coexistence, diversity and recognition of others. Citizenship is co-citizenship, not atomised habitation. In the compact city there is also a citizenship deficit, as access to goods and services for social reproduction is very unequal. A basic relationship exists between city-citizenship-social reproduction and rights. But the city continually tends towards exclusions. Those who miss the train feel dispossessed of full citizenship. Social reproduction continually generates old and new inequalities, whether social, economic or spatial. New demands and emerging rights appear. Citizenship is won every day, social reproduction extends and rights must be exercised continuously; if not, they are perverted. Making the city and citizenship is not just a competence of public authorities and local governments.
IV. The space that lies between production and reproduction: reorganising the territory

Production and the city as a space for social reproduction

Social production and reproduction form a whole. The working and salaried classes require direct wages and indirect wages that are linked to social reproduction. Businesses – whether in industrial or commercial production or public or private services – may exist within the territory, but most are in other areas of it. The producers, on the other hand, live in the same territorial area, be that the city, the metropolitan area or the urbanised region. Their demands and their rights are closely related to their wages, jobs, mobility, housing and other factors. The vast majority of the salaried or self-employed population are both workers and citizens. Territories for citizens and territories for production are constructed and almost always mixed. The social conflicts in production and in reproduction unite in the social majorities. There is no need to separate generic citizens from specific workers. In both conditions a range of social classes exists that have diverse interests, but the vast majority of the population shares certain needs (monetary income, access to housing, collective services, public space, etc.). Active citizenship and the working population form a majority that can demand their citizens’ and union rights.

Political organisation and the recovery of the active society

The urban territory has different levels: the neighbourhood, the district, the city, the metropolitan surroundings, the urbanised spaces without cities and the urban region. At each level, there are forms of cooperation and coexistence, of providing formal or informal services, delegations of the public administrations and political participation. But the hegemonic protective realm is multidimensional: the metropolitan city, the urban region or the network of cities, depending on the configuration of each territory. The representative, normative political power that manages the grand projects and major services must be unified. But it is desirable that forms of citizen association (formal or non-formal) exist at the different territorial levels for the agents of production, for public or private companies and for the representatives of public administrations.

The city in all its dimensions is a physical and social body. Citizens come together in their diversity to defend and win their rights. The city in its different dimensions and active urban society must adopt “the right to the city”. This multidimensional city must have a powerful political organisation in the normative, executive, judicial, decentralised and participatory senses. In terms of citizenship, an active urban society is in itself a force for cooperating with the government of the city or urban region, or for confronting it. Together they are able to establish contractual (rather than hierarchical) relations with the state. And, if necessary, they can stand up to it. They can also become allies in a much more positive sense and choose to stand up to the “global power” of financial capitalism and large multinationals (whether industrial, commercial or services). The multidimensional city is, or should be, a global actor. To achieve this, “the right to the city” must really be won.
V. Reference bibliography

First, I will mention the works (books or articles) that led to my work on the right to the city. I refer to the work done from the 1970s–1990s on “the right to the city” and its corollaries, such as “citizenship”, “citizens’ rights” and “the city is a public space”, among others, which emerged mixed with other issues. Some of my own books and articles that refer to rights and the city are Movimientos sociales urbanos (Borja, 1975), “Movimientos urbanos y cambio politico” (Borja, 1981), Estado y ciudad (Borja, 1988), “Urbanismo y ciudadanía” (Borja, 1991), “Ciudadanía europea: derechos civiles y sociales desde la perspectiva local” (Borja, 1997), “Los desafíos del territorio y los derechos de la ciudadanía” (Borja, 1999).

In my works from the current century, I go more deeply into the subject of the right to the city: Espacio público: Ciudad y ciudadanía (Borja and Muxí, 2003); La ciudad conquistada (Borja, 2003); and Revolución urbana y derechos ciudadanos (Borja, 2013). Then there are my collaborative works as a co-author: “Ciudades, una ecuación imposible” (Belil, Borja and Corti, 2012); “Ciudades resistentes, ciudades posibles” (Borja, Belil, Carrión, Cohen and Corti, 2016); and “Derecho a la ciudad: conquista política y renovación jurídica” (Corti and Borja, 2018).

The works cited at the start of the text form part of my reading of key authors such as Lefebvre, Harvey and Balibar’s Ciudadanía (2013), among many others (geographers, sociologists, urbanists, architects, engineers, environmentalists, jurists, political scientists, philosophers, historians, as well as social activists and public officials).

The Right to the City Charters set out the objectives well, but do not always specify the means. Among the interesting and diverse charters, without underestimating the rest, it is worth mentioning, for example, the World Social Forum in Porto Alegre (2005), the European Charter for the Safeguarding of Human Rights in the City (Saint-Denis, 2000), the Mexico City Charter for the Right to the City (2010), the Council of Europe’s European Urban Charter (1993) and many others. UNESCO and UN-Habitat promoted the publication of Urban Policies and the Right to the City (Jouve, 2009).

The Institut de Drets Humans de Catalunya has published seven volumes on emerging rights, the last being a text prepared by the Observatori DESC (2011). I will mention three highly relevant but lesser-known works. One is historical in nature: “Labour and Human Rights” in Eric Hobsbawm’s Worlds of Labour (2015). The second, political in nature, is Cities for All: Proposal and Experiences towards the Right to the City, published by the Habitat International Coalition (HIC) and edited by Ana Sugranyes and Charlotte Mathivet (2011), which is also available in Spanish and French. And finally, a social philosophical work, La sociedad del desprecio by Axel Honneth (2006).
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FOSTERING EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY AT LOCAL LEVEL

• HUMAN RIGHTS AS A MEANS TO ADVANCE EQUITY AND EMBRACE DIFFERENCE: LESSONS FROM US CITIES
  JoAnn Kamuf Ward

• DIVERSE CITIES: THE LEGACY OF COLONIALISM AND PERSISTENCE OF RACISM IN NEW YORK CITY
  Thomas Angotti

• INNOVATION AND HOPE: THE RIGHT TO THE CITY IN MEXICO CITY’S NEW GOVERNMENT (2018–2024)
  Jaime Morales

• FROM THE VIENNA CHARTER FOR NEIGHBOURLY RELATIONS TO VIENNA AS A CITY OF HUMAN RIGHTS
  Shams Asadi

  Enrique López

• AMMAN, A WELCOMING CITY FOR MIGRANTS AND REFUGEES
  Haleemah Alamoush

• POLICIES, TOOLS AND MECHANISMS TO BECOME A HUMAN RIGHTS CITY: THE EXPERIENCE OF GWANGJU
  Soo A Kim

• CULTURAL POLICIES, THE RIGHT TO THE CITY AND THE RIGHT TO DIFFERENCE: REFLECTIONS ON THE AGENDA 21 FOR CULTURE
  Jordi Baltà
Within the United States, human rights remain a contested framework for governance. While human rights principles are increasingly used by social justice advocates and grassroots movements to shape demands, these norms are rarely explicit in national or local law. But the momentum is shifting, and human rights have been elevated by a number of social movements in recent years. The Movement for Black Lives, for example, is founded on the idea that liberation requires centring the most marginalised and prioritising the “full humanity and dignity of all people” (Movement for Black Lives, n.d.). Demands for economic justice, community control and participation are central to the movement’s platform. The national women’s marches launched in the wake of the 2016 presidential election have also been squarely grounded in women’s rights as human rights, with the stated goal of “creat[ing] a society in which women – including Black women, Indigenous women, poor women, disabled women, Jewish women, Muslim women, Latinx women, Asian and Pacific Islander women, lesbian, bi, queer, and trans women – are free and able to care for and nurture their families, however they are formed, in safe and healthy environments free from structural impediments” (Women’s March, n.d.).

The US Right to the City Alliance (RTC), founded in 2007, predates the prior two examples. The Alliance stresses that “everyone, particularly the disenfranchised, not only has a right to the city, but as inhabitants, have a right to shape it, design it, and operationalize an urban human rights agenda” (RTC, n.d.). With a focus on housing and land ownership, the RTC Alliance aims to build a “truly intersectional national social justice movement” (CarsonWatch, n.d.).

The right to the city – by its nature local – incorporates core international human rights norms, often thought of as falling within the purview of national governments. Primary is the notion that all residents share the ability to have basic needs met, enjoy all facets of city life, and participate meaningfully in decisions that impact their lives. Understood with regard to the right to difference, the goal of universal enjoyment of urban life requires governance to respond to the diverse needs of residents in proactive and affirmative ways. In a domestic context where economic and

1. The author wishes to thank colleagues Rob Robinson and Columbia Law School Research Assistant Madeleine Durbin for their contributions regarding the Right to the City in the United States.
social rights are consistently challenged, and where the predominant legal framework focuses on equal access, rather than equality of outcomes, these principles (the right to the city and the right to difference) have the potential to disrupt and transform decision-making.

The advocacy platforms emerging in the US are powerful because they demonstrate a growing appetite for this type of change. They not only recognise the inherent worth of every individual regardless of identity, but also highlight that identities matter because they shape the experiences each of us have on a daily basis. They race, gender, gender identity, sexual orientation, ability or origin. Rather than seeking to erase difference, these platforms embrace it. They aim to ensure that governments respond to the intersectional identities that exist across communities not only in law, but in policy. In particular, these platforms highlight that full humanity and dignity require governments to ensure that basic needs are met in the form of safe and healthy environments, as well as economic security. The Movement for Black Lives expressly articulates the need for economic and political transformation so that historically marginalised communities can participate directly in decision-making, and benefit economically.

As human rights demands become increasingly visible, it is vital to assess how cities – often the closest government level to the people – are responding. To contribute to this assessment, this piece explores three main questions: (1) To what extent are the human rights norms that undergird the right to the city and the right to difference – the rights to non-discrimination and equality, and economic and social rights – reflected explicitly in local law and policy in the United States; (2) who are the key actors in current efforts to fulfil fundamental rights; and (3) how do local government efforts fit into fostering the transformative change that human rights demands ultimately require?

The following discussion will be grounded in local initiatives to foster racial and gender equity, as well as to recognise the right to housing – areas where global norms have most visibly permeated local governance. The piece contributes a brief snapshot to inform a larger national and transnational dialogue. Indeed, US cities have much to learn from counterparts around the world, such as Kwangju, Barcelona, Madrid and Mexico City, where commitments to human rights have been the basis for concrete and sustained action.

2. The US cities that have declared themselves “human rights cities” via resolution are not the focus of this analysis. However, more information on US human rights cities can be found at https://ushrnetwork.org/national-human-rights-city-alliance.


4. Alabama, Arkansas and Mississippi lack a state-level civil or human rights agency or equivalent body.

I. State and local civil and human rights agencies as agents of change: addressing bias and discrimination, fostering equality

A valuable starting point for a discussion of human rights in the United States is the work of city, state and county human and civil rights agencies – agencies that have been established by law in cities, counties and states to monitor and enforce anti-discrimination laws, as well as to conduct research and public education. Civil and human rights agencies exist in all but three US states. While their mandates vary, these agencies collectively aim to “encourag[e] and facilitat[e] institutional change through policy and practice to eradicate discrimination and promote equal opportunity” (Kaufman, 2011: 91).
Most of the human rights commissions that exist today trace their origins to three distinct moments in time, each of which coincides with racial violence and tension in the United States: (1) the aftermath of WWI, when there was a surge in race riots across the United States; (2) the 1940s and 1950s, when racially motivated violence again swept across US cities; (3) the 1960s when landmark federal legislation was enacted to address discrimination in education, employment, voting and public accommodations, establishing a national civil rights enforcement regime and complementary state and local infrastructure (Kamuf Ward, 2017: 156–158).

A significant portion of the work of these agencies has always been responding to individual complaints of discrimination in the contexts of employment, housing and public accommodations. Yet, many also take a broader approach to eradicating discrimination, making policy recommendations and working in partnership with communities to ensure that local government is effectively responding to the needs of the multi-dimensional communities they serve. In the past ten years, agencies in cities including Seattle and Los Angeles have embraced efforts to address discrimination more systemically, while working to recognise and celebrate difference. Seattle’s Office of Civil Rights has been a leader in effort[s] to end institutionalized racism and race-based disparities within City government through a focused race and social justice initiative (RSJI) Across Los Angeles County, which includes one of the United States’ largest and most diverse cities, the government has developed a strategic approach to addressing implicit bias within government through training and other measures. This is part and parcel of the Los Angeles Human Relations Commission’s strategic priority to enhance fairness and equity on several issues, including in the arena of criminal justice. The commission has acknowledged that “When the likelihood of being arrested, jailed, shot, executed, or rearrested after being released from incarceration in LA County is tied to one’s race, ethnicity, gender or other protected characteristics, fundamental human rights are at issue” (Los Angeles County Human Relations Commission, n.d.) and that it is committed to changing the system to get at the root causes of disparities within the justice system, including through support systems for individuals that re-enter communities after incarceration. This work sits at the nexus of civil rights and economic and social rights. For communities impacted by mass incarceration – disproportionately communities of colour – to thrive, it is incumbent on local governments to address the discrimination that perpetuates disparities and to target resources to these communities in order to mitigate inequality. Individuals who come into contact with the criminal justice system often face barriers to housing, education, voting and employment opportunities, which jeopardise their ability to fully engage in civic life, or to thrive as residents of cities or other communities.

In other localities, human rights have been embedded more holistically into multiple prongs of governance. In the city of Eugene, Oregon, the Human Rights Commission, with the support of the mayor, has also expressly embraced human rights, which manifests in governance in a number of ways. An important step occurred in 2011 when the commission’s mandate was formally expanded to support and promote the full range of rights in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR), and centred on the International Convention on the Elimination of All

Forms of Racial Discrimination, or ICERD (Columbia, 2012: 12). The new ordinance resulted from wide-ranging community engagement and community calls for the commission to address vital basic needs, such as housing and a lack of services for immigrant communities. The change was not only to update the language, but also to signal a new approach to meeting multifaceted and diverse community needs. To address the priority issue of homelessness, in 2011 the city developed a Community Task Force on Homelessness to study the issue and develop a set of policy recommendations to improve housing access (see City of Eugene, 2012). Like Los Angeles and Seattle, and a growing number of other cities internationally, Eugene also recognised that how decisions are made impacts who benefits from them. To promote more deliberate decision-making and foster greater equity, city agencies, in concert with the Human Rights Committee, now apply a triple bottom line analysis (TBL) to decision-making. The aim is to identify how a proposed policy or decision will impact social equity, the environment and economic prosperity for all Eugene’s residents, which includes a review of civil, political, social, economic and cultural rights implications, as well as community participation (Columbia, 2012: 23; City of Eugene, n.d.).

This specific recognition and protection of economic and social rights as such is quite unique in the United States, where they have not been widely embraced. The limited recognition and protection of economic and social rights that does exist is found in state constitutions, not in the federal constitution (Davis, 2006: 360, 372). While the pace is slow, there are a growing number of local governments that are embracing human rights to catalyse action to meet the needs of residents, particularly those most in need of a social safety net. Eugene provides an instructive example because the city deliberately aimed to improve outcomes. Additionally, the processes used to amend local law and respond to the housing crisis are rooted in community participation. These explicit human rights initiatives are further consistent with foundational components of the right to the city. By formally recognising that cultural identity and economics influence outcomes, Eugene has also demonstrated respect for the right to difference.

The following section broadens the scope of the discussion to look at additional municipal actors fostering change.

**II. City councils and mayors as human rights change-makers: using law to promote and protect economic and social rights and gender equity**

In recent years, a number of municipal governments have recognised housing as a human right, using aspirational resolutions as a catalyst for action. One positive example comes from Madison, Wisconsin, where the city council adopted a “housing as a human right” resolution. Through the resolution, adopted in 2011, Madison made a commitment to improve access to affordable housing, grounding the call for action in human rights treaties the US has ratified: the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights and the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination. The resolution highlights specific identity groups that face significant barriers to basic housing rights, including people of colour, LGBTQ individuals, immigrants and older persons. It
calls for the city to adopt a long-term housing strategy to improve the availability of adequate housing, reduce the number of homeless children in local schools, and prevent the criminalisation of homelessness; it should dedicate staff to taking action, and provide public funds to support affordable housing (City of Madison, 2011). And action has followed. The city put a strategy in place, and committed $20 million over five years to an Affordable Housing Fund, in order to build more affordable rental units and support home ownership. This example demonstrates that human rights can pave the way to change.

Developments in Madison and Eugene highlight not only that there is an appetite for human rights – including economic and social rights – but also that actually putting these rights into practice requires political will and resources. This has always been challenging (Columbia, 2012: 25–26). Yet in the current political context, where the federal government is peddling a “small government” agenda, and actively penalising cities and localities that seek to expand rights protections, the barriers are significant. The example of sanctuary cities, where cities that affirmatively took action to protect immigrants’ rights were threatened with loss of funding, offers one example. In some cases, US states are also impediments to city action, as we have seen in the arena of efforts to expand the minimum wage and prohibit discrimination against LGBTQ individuals, where states have used legal doctrines to prevent more expansive municipal protections.7

Despite the challenges, cities continue to be at the forefront of human rights implementation. City level advances in the arena of women’s human rights illustrate how mayors and legislators are proactively fostering equality in outcomes, and realising that real progress will require an explicit recognition of difference.

The US has yet to ratify the Convention on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW), yet nine local governments have adopted laws based on the convention, and dozens of others have committed to use CEDAW’s principles as a guide (Columbia, 2016: 3–4, 8).8 San Francisco broke new ground with the first CEDAW law in 1998. Recognising that traditional anti-discrimination protections had failed to ensure true equality for women, it put in place a more proactive approach to identifying and eliminating barriers to gender equality. Consistent with the human rights framework, the ordinance defines prohibited discrimination to include distinctions on the basis of sex and race that limit women’s enjoyment of human rights, and focuses on discriminatory impacts. It further calls for a gender analysis of city departments’ employment, budgets and services, and requires that agencies undergo a gender analysis to develop action plans to better integrate human rights into their operations, working in partnership with the Department on the Status of Women, which is the body that monitors progress on action plans.

Los Angeles passed a similar CEDAW law shortly after San Francisco, but little action was taken to implement the law until 2015, when Mayor Eric Garcetti revitalised the law though executive action on gender equity, requiring each city agency to adopt gender-equity strategies and to submit action plans to the Mayor’s Office, which tracks progress based on target goals and metrics (Columbia 2016: 10–11).9 Action in Los Angeles was

7. Through the doctrine of pre-emption, US states have the ability to adopt laws that set specific standards (i.e. defining which groups qualify as protected classes for the purposes of protection against discrimination) and prohibit localities within the state from adopting a more expansive set of protections. See e.g., American Constitution Society, 2017.
8. The status of local activities is tracked on a Cities for CEDAW webpage: http://citiesforcedaw.org/ (last visited February 28th 2019).
part of a resurgence of municipal CEDAW action, and six additional local governments have since passed CEDAW Laws. Los Angeles has been quite explicit that the aim of this initiative is to eliminate disparities grounded in “CEDAW’s recognition ‘that the intersections of multiple forms of discrimination have compounding negative effects on women’” (Columbia, 2016: 5–6). This focus on intersectionality is also found in the 2016 Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania CEDAW law. This law establishes a Gender Equity Commission to advise city agencies and monitor and implement gender analyses of city departments, which include “an intersectional examination of the cultural, economic, social, civil, legal, and political relations between women and men ... recognizing ... that these differences... affect how decisions, including budgetary decisions, and policy are made” (Council of the City of Pittsburgh, 2016). The Pittsburgh Ordinance, in the nascent stages of implementation, requires the city to establish a Gender Equity Commission comprised of government actors alongside community members. Commission members must have experience in issues that include development, health, labour and education. Additionally, at least one must hail from the local Cities for CEDAW campaign that advocated for the law, and at least one must be active in “minority communities.” In this way, the ordinance seeks to imbibe participation into legal implementation and include an array of perspectives specifically to address areas where women and marginalized communities have been absent from decision-making.

In the CEDAW context, community participation has also been a means to assess community needs. Salt Lake, Utah, where a CEDAW law has been considered, but not yet adopted, offers one such example. The Salt Lake City Mayor’s Office of Diversity and Human Rights worked with the Salt Lake Human Rights Commission to convene community dialogues specifically on the status of women. These dialogues exposed that many women in the city had concerns that were not being addressed, including unequal educational opportunities and employment. As part of the dialogue process, CEDAW was proposed as a framework for creating more equitable gender policies at local level (Columbia 2012: 20).

As CEDAW laws evolve, they can build upon the progress that has been made by governments in San Francisco and Los Angeles, where local authorities point to an array of tangible outcomes. Results include increased numbers of women in leadership positions and in hiring across city agencies, as well as improvements in pay equity. Local governments also point to improved responses to gender-based violence and harassment, and initiatives that enhance the safety of women. There is also an opportunity to deepen and expand community participation in shaping and addressing local concerns. Indeed, advocates across the country have been working through the Cities for CEDAW coalition to share information and strategies to enhance the impacts of human rights laws on the equity for women and girls of all identities.

The local initiatives introduced here embrace human rights principles as a foundation for addressing longstanding impediments to ensuring basic needs for all. They also recognize that effective and responsive governance must account for intersecting identities and elevate the needs of historically marginalized and disenfranchised communities. Local CEDAW initiatives in San Francisco, Salt Lake and Pittsburgh in particular reflect efforts to include underserved groups in assessing the effectiveness of existing policy and shaping change.
These human rights initiatives move beyond the more traditional anti-discrimination approach, which aims for formal equality, but has failed to deliver equal outcomes or opportunities. This reality is borne out by statistics across a wide range of indicators. Despite strong anti-discrimination law at the federal, state and city levels, disparities exist in health outcomes, employment and housing affordability. For example in New York, for major racial and ethnic groups, across all education levels, women have higher rates of educational attainment, but receive lower earnings than men (Lewis & Sharp, 2018: 7, 11–13, 161–162). Health outcomes for pregnant women also reflect strong disparities based on race, income and neighbourhood, with high rates of maternal mortality (New York Women’s Foundation 2013: 4, 5, 13). Recent studies indicate that the availability of affordable housing is one of the most essential needs for women, girls and transgender and gender non-conforming persons in the city (New York Women’s Foundation 2018: 6, 13, 56).

Just this snapshot of New York City demonstrates how the dominant approach to governance continues to deny basic rights for many, particularly when analysed across identities. As a result, outcomes in social, economic and political life are driven in large part by gender, age, racial and ethnic background, sexual orientation, income and neighbourhood. The failure of governments to fully acknowledge and accommodate differences has entrenched inequality, harming the most historically disadvantaged communities.

The right to the city framework offers a means to re-imagine city governance in the US, and to build upon current human rights-based initiatives, which are somewhat limited in substantive focus and scope. Conceptually, the right to the city provides an overarching umbrella under which city agencies and officials can fashion a more holistic approach to improving the lives of residents, working in partnership with residents who live and work within cities.

The examples above highlight some ways that local governments are enhancing community participation and strengthening the political agency of historically marginalised groups, consistent with the social movement platforms outlined at the outset. Yet, these efforts have not yet achieved (or in some cases, even aimed for) the economic transformation that the Movement for Black Lives and the Right to City Alliance require. Resource distribution is most cognisable in the right to housing resolution cited above. However, rights-based advocacy that puts resource distribution front and centre remains somewhat on the periphery, and has yet to gain significant political traction in the United States.10

III. Conclusion

Responding to growing calls for greater recognition and protection of fundamental human rights from community advocates and attorneys, US cities have been using human rights principles as a basis for more proactive identification and elimination of barriers to equality. This includes measures to address structural and systemic discrimination through initiatives to eradicate bias at the state and local agency levels. Mayors and legislators have also begun to account for differences on the basis of race and gender in more proactive and intentional ways, such as

10. There are encouraging countereamples, such as the Right to the City Alliance’s Homes for All campaign, which is advocating for comprehensive national policies to ensure dignified and affordable housing as a human right, and which has member organisations around the country fighting for city laws that guarantee strong protections for renters and putting in place community land trusts, among other initiatives, as steps towards building collective power for change. See Jimmy Tobias, “A New Housing-Rights Movement Has the Real-Estate Industry Running Scared”, The Nation (February 9th 2018), https://www.thenation.com/article/a-new-housing-rights-movement-has-the-real-estate-industry-running-scared/ (last visited March 9th 2019).
Local officials are embracing efforts to meet city residents’ basic economic and social needs.

adopting a more expansive definition of discrimination to include unintentional discrimination, and developing racial and gender analysis tools. Increasingly, local officials are embracing efforts to meet city residents’ basic economic and social needs.

These important strides have been driven by advocacy campaigns and social movements focused on political, economic and social transformation. The confluence of advocacy and local action holds powerful potential to strengthen economic and social rights protections within the United States on a national scale. To date, successes are limited to a small number of locations. Broader change will only be possible with greater public awareness and dialogue on the ways traditional approaches have failed to meet the needs of most Americans. This must be coupled with action. Specifically, laws and policies that fulfil government obligations to provide economic and social protections for all, including the most marginalised, are vital for sustainable change. These steps require bold leadership and political will that is absent at the national level – at least for the time being.

References


In highly urbanised North America and Europe, local governments are facing protests against gentrification and displacement. The protests often open up new avenues for affected populations to participate in local decision-making – through community-based planning, participatory budgeting, and other inclusionary tactics. In response to threats of displacement of vulnerable populations, diversity – of ethnicity, race, gender, age and sexual orientation – is often recognised as a powerful element to be protected and promoted in local policy. It may lead to progress in realising the right to the city. In this chapter I will question whether inclusionary tactics tend to undo or reinforce diversity, considering the case of New York City.

Within North America, New York City has a longstanding reputation for ethnic and racial diversity and tolerance of difference. However, in this city, where the majority of inhabitants are immigrants and the descendants of immigrants, the persistence of socioeconomic inequalities and disproportionate vulnerability of minorities to displacement are vivid reminders of how the long history of colonialism and racism remains an obstacle to the emergence of democratic and socially just cities. I will argue that behind the veneer of the diverse city we find one of the most ethnically segregated cities in the world. Attempts at participatory democracy obscure longstanding prejudices that interpret diversity through the lens of colonial and racist ideology, and reconstruct the economic and social divisions inherited from the past. The uncontested power of private property, the cornerstone of settler colonialism, territorial expansion and “The American Dream” of individual home ownership, is instrumental in reproducing gentrification, displacement and inequalities in cities and metropolitan regions throughout the nation.

I will first establish the context in North America, before discussing New York City and the case of one neighbourhood, Inwood.

I. Land and colonial North America

One of the great national myths in the United States is that the immigrants who came from Europe to free themselves from oppressive regimes and economic conditions defeated the colonial powers in America – Britain,
France and Spain – and settled a mostly unpopulated continent. Indeed, Columbus was said to have “discovered” an American wilderness and settlers moving west were said to have occupied a barren land. The truth is that America was already occupied by indigenous nations. The settlers claimed land stewarded by indigenous people for themselves; militias and soldiers were dispatched to protect the white settlers; and some 38 million indigenous people died from the violence and diseases visited upon them as they were evicted. In the mid-nineteenth century “manifest destiny” was a popular cry that asserted that the US was destined to settle the entire continent. Thus, displacement was part of the story of colonisation from the start (Dunbar-Ortiz, 2014) and both have remained central elements of modern urban development.

Most of what is now the United States of America – the 50 states making up the union – were previously lands under the stewardship of native nations, colonial territories occupied by European powers, or large parts of Mexico. The nation’s founders in 1776 included only the 13 states that were colonies under the British Empire. New states were added after more than a century of westward expansion abetted by military force and the injection of capital to build railroads and other infrastructure. Most important for our understanding of how this affects diversity and displacement in US cities are the radically different approaches to land of the settlers and indigenous people. Indigenous people treated the land as a sacred and integral part of life. The settlers treated land as a commodity, established individual ownership, and left large swaths under the trusteeship of the government for national parks, railroads and mining concessions; indigenous people were excluded from these lands (Dunbar-Ortiz, 2014).

The right to land ownership is enshrined in the US Constitution and is treated as the basis for all other individual rights. In practice, it is a hallmark of white privilege. Property owners were mostly white males, and as land ownership was the point of entry into government, land was therefore the foundation for political power. Even today, the largest urban landowners are corporations and investment trusts mostly owned and controlled by white males. Cities in the United States develop in accordance with the private land market, where the role of government has been to regulate growth through zoning, taxation and health codes. Moves towards comprehensive planning in the public interest have been limited and at best resulted in big infrastructure projects, like the federal interstate highway network, which promoted private land development.

As historian Kenneth Jackson has demonstrated, the westward expansion in the 19th century and the establishment of private homesteads (on land once stewarded by indigenous people) was followed by a similar process of suburban development in the 20th century. Both were based on “The American Dream” of individual home ownership, a privilege unavailable to blacks due to slavery and then discrimination in the real estate, finance and insurance industries (Jackson, 1985). The dream would be supplemented by economic growth based on individual car ownership, individual computers, individual phones and electronic devices, and a surrender to mass consumption.

Coloniality in the US is not simply a remnant of the past. It lives on in the present. The US has a military presence in every part of the
globe and spends more on weapons than all other nations combined. However, the United States has dominated nations across the globe not by direct colonial rule but through nominally democratic proxy regimes, economic control, and military interventions. In the epoch of globalised capitalism the US exercises imperial power on a scale that none of the older colonial nations ever knew.¹

In the US federal system, financing and control of schools and urban services, and the right to local governance stem from private land ownership. To this day public education in the US is financed primarily by local property tax revenues, which guarantees that the wealthy have better schools and services. This explains why the US school system is highly segregated by income and race – low property values in black and poor communities starve the school systems while white homeowners have well-financed schools.

The important point here is that control over land has been a fundamental element in the distribution of political power in the US, and this is rooted in its colonial past and imperial present. It is not just the key to expansion, it is the key to sustaining the power of the propertied elites within every human settlement – the small town, city, suburb, and metropolitan region. Zoning and land-use planning, dominated by powerful property interests and elites, are critical in preserving segregation and white privilege, and they are obstacles to diversity, not tools for achieving it.

II. Race and displacement

Another great American myth is that the political foundation of the United States is individual freedom for all. The reality is that the nation was born a slave state. Millions of slaves were displaced from Africa. They were not only excluded from property ownership, they were property, while white settlers accumulated property in land. Race, displacement and colonialism were joined from the start.

It was not until the end of the Civil War in 1865 that slavery was abolished. After a single decade in which blacks began to reconstruct a different future, institutionalised racism re-emerged and led to a century of Jim Crow – a regime in which residential segregation and discrimination in public places were legal in the southern states. Throughout the South, restaurants, hotels, drinking fountains, rest rooms and most public facilities were labelled “Whites Only” and “Colored”. When the civil rights movement of the 1960s ended Jim Crow, a fierce backlash by entrenched whites took the form of “the war on crime” that produced the highest incarceration rate in the world, with a prison population that is mostly black and brown (African American and Latinx) (Alexander, 2012).

With the migration of blacks to the northern states (the first free states), racism persisted. Today, metropolitan areas in the US remain sharply segregated by race and ethnicity and local efforts to build communities based on democracy and equality confront a resistance to integration that has deep historical roots (Massey and Denton, 1993). In the post-World War II suburban boom, the government policy known as

¹. The US still rules Puerto Rico and a host of Pacific islands as colonies.
“redlining” made it virtually impossible for blacks to buy new homes in the suburbs or to borrow to improve their homes in central cities. Today, predatory lending by banks and financial institutions disproportionately exploits blacks and other minorities, while access to mortgage financing is still unequal. Local and national efforts that seek to build and defend diverse cities must therefore come to terms with the deep historical roots that continue to produce new forms of segregation. These are not simply “remnants” of a distant past. They exist and are reproduced in the present.

III. New York City: in the shadows of the luxury city

The brief discussion about New York City that follows underlines the main point I am making in this essay: the obstacles to democratic solutions to the divisions of race and class in the modern metropolis run very deep, and in the US they are imbedded in four centuries of settler colonialism and racism. They are reflected in a systemic process of displacement of people and entire communities based on race and ethnicity. In sum, displacement is an organic part of the nation’s history and urban development (Fullilove, 2004).

From a distance New York City appears to be a model of cosmopolitanism, ethnic diversity and racial integration, an atypical model of social justice and ethnic integration. Often proclaimed to be a glorious “melting pot”, a majority of the population are immigrants and descendants of immigrants. A ride on the subway shows the visitor a broad array of races, colours, ethnicities, and sexually non-conforming people. Yet if we look at how and where people live, it is one of the most racially segregated of US cities and its landscape is fragmented into myriad ethnic enclaves. These racial and territorial divisions overlap with and reinforce huge imbalances in economic and political power and the ability to control development and change (Angotti, 2008; Angotti & Morse, 2017).

For example, after World War II, the federal government established an urban renewal programme that allowed the city to condemn land in low-income, largely black and Latinx neighbourhoods to promote new luxury developments. The neighbourhoods fought back during the powerful civil rights movement of the 1960s, highlighting racial injustices. At the same time, black neighbourhoods demanded community control of schools, which were largely staffed by white teachers who lived outside the city. After the assassination of Martin Luther King, Jr. in 1968 widespread civil disorder (in New York City and other large cities) further highlighted demands for change (Report of the National Advisory Commission on Civil Disorders, 1968).

IV. Land, race and community planning

Throughout history, the long-term structural inequalities related to land development, race and ethnicity have been met with protest and resistance. With the growth and maturity of the civil rights movement, black and Latinx neighbourhoods facing massive displacement fought back and were able to either slow down or stop the process, win important concessions, and open up new opportunities for the regulation and
control of land development. Even though the city now boasts that it is “The Real Estate Capital of the World” it has not been able to conquer grassroots organising, as witnessed by the recent defeat of the plan by Amazon, the world’s largest corporation, to expand in the city due social mobilisations.

In its 400-year history, New York City has distinguished itself from other major US cities by never having developed and approved a comprehensive long-range plan. Ever since European settlers took over the land where the native Lene Lenape people lived, private land ownership has prevailed. Today, the hegemony of real estate is maintained by control over the city’s complex and convoluted zoning regulations.

On the other hand, community-based planning emerged as an instrument for empowering low-income communities. In 1959, residents and businesses in Manhattan’s Lower East Side, a multi-ethnic working class neighbourhood, faced an urban renewal plan that would have displaced thousands of people to allow for the construction of middle-income market-rate housing. They fought back and after more than a decade of struggle were able to defeat the plan and win support for their own plan. The Cooper Square Alternate Plan became the first of a long line of community plans generated as alternatives to the official plans driven by land market speculation and oblivious to the adverse impact on communities of colour (Angotti, 2008; 2014).

The long sequence of tenant and community protests against displacement led to major planning reforms. Following the historic civil rights protests and struggles against the urban renewal programme, political reforms were instituted to correct the historical imbalances in decision-making power. In 1975, the city established 50 community boards and a structured process for making major land use and zoning decisions. Previously the mayor and his planning commission had clear control. However, the powerful real estate industry shaped the new process in such a way that communities would have only a weak voice and a symbolic vote. This left the power in the hands of the traditional power brokers and political leaders, historically white men and allies of the most powerful landowners, who had the economic and political resources needed to get their way on land use issues. Today, the powerful Real Estate Board of New York (REBNY) is dominated by corporate firms and powerful individuals, and remains mostly male and mostly white. REBNY is the largest financial contributor to local politicians and has successfully opposed enhancing the powers of community boards, which have very small budgets and staff.

In 1989, reforms advocated by civil rights organisations gave community boards the explicit authority to develop their own plans. This drive for community-based planning was strongly supported by the environmental justice movement, which had fought against noxious facilities that negatively affected the health and environment in communities of colour. Community plans were understood as a means for guaranteeing community improvements without displacement. However, what followed was a massive push from above for new luxury high-rise development facilitated by strategic zoning changes.

The hegemony of real estate is maintained by control over the city’s complex and convoluted zoning regulations.

Following the historic civil rights protests and struggles against the urban renewal programme, political reforms were instituted to correct the historical imbalances in decision-making power.

Community plans were understood as a means for guaranteeing community improvements without displacement.

3. The Uniform Land Use Review Process (ULURP) gave the decisive votes to the City Planning Commission, the majority of which is appointed by the mayor, the 51-member City Council and Borough President (there are five boroughs in the city).
Community plans were virtually ignored and once again land value increases mattered most, not racial equity. While there have been many community-based plans, the city continues to rely on zoning changes, which tend to respond to developer needs instead of community concerns, and which disproportionately displace people of colour (Angotti and Morse, 2017).

V. Inwood: gentrification and displacement

Over the course of two years, the City of New York engaged the neighbourhood of Inwood (in the Borough of Manhattan) in an extensive process of public discussion about the city’s proposal to rezone a large portion of the neighbourhood to promote new residential and commercial development. Inwood is an economically and racially mixed neighbourhood in which the largest group is made up of immigrants and the descendants of immigrants from the Dominican Republic. The greatest objection to the city’s proposal was that it would feed the gentrification of the neighbourhood and displace the most vulnerable residents and small businesses. Especially among Dominicans, displacement was often seen as racially charged, since discriminatory practices in the real estate industry would limit the options of Dominican renters who were forced to move.

Furthermore, rezonings typically raised land values in areas with low-rent housing, leading landlords to raise rents and convert their buildings into condominiums, cooperatives or other forms of home ownership, or sell them to big developers, driving out low-income renters.

The rezoning process in New York was launched along with an unprecedented array of participatory techniques, efforts at community-based planning and budgeting, and attempts to engage diverse sectors of the population. City representatives maintained that their objective was to preserve diversity in the community and some even argued that new development would make the community more diverse by bringing in more whites. Inclusionary zoning rules would require up to 30% of new housing units to be “affordable”, though in reality most would be unaffordable to the vast majority of Inwood residents. Neighbourhood activists opposed to the rezonings understood this to mean the expulsion of low-income blacks and Dominicans and an eventual transition to a wealthier and whiter neighbourhood. In a community made up mostly of renters, more people would own their own homes. Rezoning advocates claimed that this was also a move towards greater diversity, but neighbourhood activists opposing the rezoning saw it as yet another factor leading to displacement since historically low-income people of colour do not have equal access to affordable home financing. Neighbourhood activists have launched two lawsuits, one of them alleging racial discrimination. They have forcefully denounced the city’s participatory process as aimed at defusing community opposition instead of sharing decision-making power.

The Inwood rezoning followed a series of similar rezonings in other low-income communities of colour, all of which were undertaken during the administration of Mayor Bill DeBlasio, who ran on a platform based on reducing inequalities. All of DeBlasio’s rezonings were hotly contested and faced significant opposition. Prior to DeBlasio, the administration

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4. While many Dominicans are dark-skinned and do not always identify as black, racial discrimination in the US has been historically based on the fictitious binary of black/white. This is complicated by a thread of anti-black prejudice in the Dominican Republic based on hostility to its neighbour, Haiti, which launched the first revolution in the Americas led by former slaves.
of billionaire Michael Bloomberg had rezoned almost 40% of the land in the city to encourage new development. Most of these rezonings followed a similar pattern: areas with higher-income white populations would be preserved while areas with lower-income communities of colour (black, Latinx and Asian) tended to be targeted for new development, stimulating processes of gradual gentrification already underway and displacement of existing residents and small businesses (Angotti, 2008; Angotti and Morse, 2017). During public discussions and debates around the rezonings, many community activists raised longstanding charges that gentrification and displacement were not simply driven by economic phenomena but were part of the long and deep history of settler colonialism and racism that persist in the city, nation and throughout the Americas, including the Dominican Republic. Since the 19th century the US has followed the so-called Monroe Doctrine in Latin America, which reserves it the right to intervene overtly and covertly whenever it is considered in its national interest. It has done so many times (Galeano, 1973). The US invaded the Dominican Republic as recently as 1965 to overthrow a democratically elected president, an act that, along with economic dependency, contributed to the flow of Dominican immigrants to New York City.

Despite recent progressive changes in city government, private land ownership, first established by Dutch and British colonists on land once stewarded by the Lenape people, remains intractable. The owners have become corporate entities including real estate investment trusts, limited liability corporations, and investors from all over the world. This is not particularly different to how it was in the colonial period, when landowners were whites with roots in Europe; now they are truly globalised but remain organically tied to financial capital, Wall Street and global investment firms. While the colonial roots may have been forgotten by most, what has not changed is the organic connection between life in the city and control over land by external forces, and the connection between investments in land and the displacement of low-income people of colour.

Today the majority of households in the city are renters. When land values increase and owners seek to sell or redevelop their properties, they face enormous pressures to move out. Displacement also threatens small homeowners, especially black and Latinx homeowners who were able to buy their own homes despite discrimination by banks and insurance companies that refused to lend to them. In sum, the colonial heritage that gave power to landowners, mostly of European origin, persists today but in a new, more globalised form.

VI. Race matters

In sum, to use the words of Cornell West, “race matters” (West, 1993). Residential displacement has different consequences for blacks and whites. It is part of black history: blacks were displaced from Africa; then when slavery ended they fled racist exclusions in the South and moved to northern cities where they lived in segregated neighbourhoods. Then they were displaced from central cities by urban renewal programmes (this was known in the Civil Rights movement as “Negro Removal”) (Fullilove, 2004). Today, overheated real estate pressures continue to
Counter to many liberal myths, gentrification and displacement has not led to racial integration but instead has re-segregated the city and its suburbs (Regional Plan Association, 2017).

This reality flies in the face of the “melting pot” myth. It also refutes the real estate industry’s claims that only the development of more housing will provide the housing minorities need and automatically desegregate the city. On the contrary, the latest waves of high-rise development coincide with growing inequality and segregation. The prevailing urban strategy is based on “trickle-down economics” – the notion that by simply increasing the supply of housing, prices will come down, making more units available for people with lower incomes, who are disproportionately people of colour. This myth is belied by the evidence: the highest vacancy rates are in new buildings; after building booms, existing rents go up and not down, pushing out low-income tenants; and dramatic increases in land values, stimulated by new development, are a major obstacle to making housing more accessible to people on lower incomes.

In sum, the big issue is really about land, not housing. Land values rise with new luxury development, and this has a ripple effect that increases rents in nearby low-income housing, forcing people out. This takes us all the way back to the colonial legacy and usurpation of land that once only had a use value to indigenous people. The Dutch and English settlers took the land and sold it for its exchange value.

The promoters of New York City myths about diverse ethnicities also like to focus only on the urban core of some 8 million people, as if that were the entirety of the metropolis; in fact it is a region with more than 22 million people covering portions of three states – New York, New Jersey and Connecticut. The reality today is that the entire region, as well as the core City of New York, remains highly segregated by race and income, and is driven by the inexorable trends of land value increases spreading out from the centre to the periphery. As the suburbs become more ethnically diverse and gain more rental housing over homeowner-ship, they are resegregating.5

References


5. The Regional Plan Association, a powerful non-profit corporation, acknowledges that displacement of racial minorities in the region is a problem while the City of New York has ignored it. (Regional Plan Association, 2017, 2018).


INNOVATION AND HOPE: THE RIGHT TO THE CITY IN MEXICO CITY’S NEW GOVERNMENT (2018–2024)

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While in Europe the right to the city grew out of deep intellectual debates, in Latin America, and especially Mexico, its roots lie in historical student struggles, in the poverty of working-class neighbourhoods and in anti-establishment slogans demanding more social participation and democracy.

Many of the elements that formed the Mexico City we know today – as a space of solidarity and resilience – were consolidated following the painful events of 1968, which remain in our collective memory. The 1968 movement was more than a student movement. A frustration was released that had built up over many years in the working class, in the teachers’ and railway workers’ movement, and in many families and groups of people who demanded an end to police repression and freedom for the political prisoners of the regime in power at the time. 1968 was the year Mexican society demanded the right to protest and to occupy public space as a means of resisting the oppression and despotic power of an authoritarian government.

That year was also the culmination of a turbulent decade in various parts of the world, the product of protests by a generation that refused to perpetuate inherited and imposed patterns. It was also the year Henri Lefebvre published the first volume of Le droit à la ville, a milestone in the history of human rights. In that book, the French philosopher and sociologist reflected on the unease that incessantly plagued the minds of the era and which emanated from the exhausting conditions the prevailing economic system imposed on cities. Fifty years on from that historic year, the meaning of the right to Mexico City has been symbolically updated, evolving simultaneously in two directions at once. The first was the consolidation of the right at international level and its consequent incorporation into local regulations around the world. The second occurred when local initiatives claimed this right, leading to its incorporation into the Political Constitution of Mexico City (CPCM in its Spanish initials) and the government plan of Dr Claudia Sheinbaum Pardo, the current mayor.
I. The first steps towards claiming the right to the city in Mexico City

The path to building democracy in Mexico City has been long and full of ups and downs. Its peaks have been iconic moments such as the people’s organised response to the emergency that followed the 1985 earthquake, which represents the rise of Mexican civil society (Monsiváis, 2010: 51). Following representative victories, such as the first democratically elected head of city government in 1997, and rights being recognised that were not in the rest of the country, the Mexican capital took its first decisive step towards the right to the city in 2007, when several organisations from the urban popular movement agreed with the authorities to draft the Mexico City Charter for the Right to the City.

This document, whose foundations are in solidarity, non-discrimination, gender equity and cooperation between peoples, was a “social response, counter to the city-as-merchandise, and as expression of the collective interest” (Comité Promotor, 2010: 4). For the first time in our country, the charter proposed a definition, agreed between the government and civil society, of the right to the city. It understands it to be:

… the equitable usufruct of cities within the principles of sustainability, democracy, equity, and social justice. It is a collective right of the inhabitants of cities that gives them legitimacy of action and organisation, based on respect for their differences, expressions and cultural practices, with the aim of achieving the full exercise of the right to self-determination and at an adequate level of life (Comité Promotor, 2010: 7).

The charter recognises all people who inhabit or travel through Mexico City as rightholders for whom all the authorities, servants and public servants of what was then called the Federal District are responsible. The document brings together the main human rights demands of the capital’s civil society, outlining the steps towards achieving a city that is:

1. Inclusive
2. Democratic
3. Sustainable
4. Productive
5. Educational
6. Livable

(Comité Promotor, 2010: 13).

This joint effort envisioned the political reform that materialised in 2017, aimed at guaranteeing citizenship rights and reinforcing “the Delegations as autonomous entities co-responsible for guaranteeing the development and fulfillment of rights in the city” (Comité Promotor, 2010: 8).

It should be noted that many of the principles outlined in this first document served as a reference for the drafting and promulgation of the new CPCM, and were also taken up again in the principles and propositions presented by the new mayor. We will examine this issue in more detail later on.
II. The right to the city in the Political Constitution of Mexico City

Mexico City has a long democratic history, characterised by numerous social movements that play a crucial role when seeking testimony on truth, justice and memory. The capital of the republic has been a stronghold of the human rights struggle in the country, and historic demands first made here have gone on to be promoted in other states. Major achievements such as the recognition of the universal right to family life (including LGBT parenting), and women’s right to decide over their own body using legal pregnancy termination were made in Mexico City first, setting a defence and enforceability precedent for the future. But despite these advances, the relationship binding the city to the federal government significantly diminished its autonomy. In contrast to the country’s other states, many of its decisions – on budgets, security and other areas – were subordinated to the federal executive and legislative powers.

The process of transforming Mexico City began on January 29th 2016 when a decree containing reforms to the Political Constitution of the United Mexican States (CPEUM, in its Spanish initials) was published, which renamed what was previously the Federal District and allowed the city to administer its own security and justice systems, which were previously directly linked to the federal executive branch.

Mexico City’s political reform peaked on February 5th 2017, with the issuing of its own constitution, even while priority issues remained pending on the different regulatory tasks of the local and federal legislative powers. The enactment of the city’s Magna Carta represents an important paradigm shift, as it was the first in the country to recognise sexual and reproductive rights, rights to science and technological innovation, to care, to a dignified life and to sustainable development. And, among many others, it recognised the right to the city. The most recent step our city has taken towards democratic consolidation is, undoubtedly, the election of Claudia Sheinbaum as mayor for the 2018–2024 term. A precedent has been set in which the citizens of the capital participate in elections with a constitution of their own, and for the first time democratically elected a woman. It should be noted that it was also the first time a candidate from the newly created National Regeneration Movement (Morena) had been elected, displacing the party that had ruled the body since the first elections were held in 1997.

The new government entered office undertaking to comply with the principles of the first Political Constitution of Mexico City. That text recognises that certain groups require priority attention because they face discrimination, exclusion, mistreatment, abuse, violence and major obstacles to the full exercise of their fundamental rights and freedoms due to structural inequality. Those groups are women; girls, boys and adolescents; the elderly; the LGBTTTI community (lesbian, gay, bisexual, transsexual, transgender, transvestite and intersex people); migrants; people of indigenous identity; people living on the street; and people with disabilities, among others.

Our Magna Carta thereby claims the right to difference in the urban sphere and respect for the dignity every person deserves from the state.
and society, regardless of context, characteristics, creed or ideals. In this regard, the new mayor has been given the task of substantially modifying the city’s state architecture, creating new secretariats and agencies whose main objective is to generate public policies that guarantee the rights already recognised by our legal framework.

In addition to the above, the CPCM took another fundamental step to support those who inhabit and travel through Mexico City, recognising the right to the city, which the capital’s society had been promoting since 2007. According to the CPCM, this right:

(...) consists of the full and equitable use and usufruct of the city, founded on principles of social justice, democracy, participation, equality, sustainability, respect for cultural diversity, nature and the environment.
The right to the city is a collective right that guarantees the full exercise of human rights, the social function of the city, its democratic management and ensures territorial justice, social inclusion and the equitable distribution of public goods with the participation of citizens (Mexico City, 2017: 46).

Thus, progress was also made towards the ideals of the United Nations’ New Urban Agenda, which advocates the construction of inclusive cities, all of whose inhabitants, “of present and future generations, without discrimination of any kind, are able to inhabit and produce just, safe, healthy, accessible, affordable, resilient and sustainable cities and human settlements to foster prosperity and quality of life for all” (UN-HABITAT, 2016: 5). In addition, the CPCM’s articles are ordered according to the ideal of building a city of guarantees, freedom and rights that is democratic, educational and knowledge-based, supportive, productive, inclusive, habitable, safe and that recognises the intercultural, multiethnic, multilingual and multicultural nature of its people.

III. The right to the city in Claudia Sheinbaum Pardo’s government plan

Although Mexico City’s legal framework on human rights issues is highly advanced, serious violations and obstacles systematically continue to occur. The country’s political, economic, social and cultural centre is still a place where a woman’s right to a life free of violence is constantly violated, where discrimination against the LGBTTTI population is manifested through hate crimes and the denial of services, where the inequalities that harm people living on the street are far from being eradicated, where people with disabilities are still waiting to see their right to mobility 100% respected and where the ambition to end discrimination against indigenous people once and for all remains.

As our government plan says:

Mexico City faces increasing challenges today in providing its services, extending the human and social rights of its inhabitants and preserving its natural resources and the environment (Sheinbaum Pardo, 2018: 2).
In this regard, alongside her collaborators, Claudia Sheinbaum Pardo has set out a city project whose guiding principles are open government, sustainability, innovation, honesty and equality. This project has twelve pillars:

1. Open government
2. Security
3. Water
4. Risk management
5. Sustainable economic development
6. Public space
7. Mobility
8. Culture
9. Human rights and equity
10. Equality and inclusion
11. Education and sport
12. Ethnic diversity.

Based on the ideal embodied in the Mexico City Charter for the Right to the City, below we present measures proposed and achieved by Dr Claudia Sheinbaum and her team of women and men who strive every day to build spaces that are respectful and guarantee human rights for all people. In line with the tone of the international seminar “The right to the city, the right to difference: Methods and strategies for local implementation”, we emphasise the construction of a city free from discrimination, where those who inhabit it and travel through it, with their multiple opinions, beliefs and identities can find “the conditions necessary for the exercise of their political, economic, social, cultural, and environmental rights, assuming the duty of solidarity” (Comité Promotor, 2010: 11).

IV. Towards an inclusive city

According to the National Survey on Discrimination 2017 (INEGI, 2017), 23.7% of the inhabitants of Mexico City have suffered discrimination, mainly because of their appearance, age or religion. The data from the Second Survey on Discrimination in Mexico City (COPRED, 2017) reports that the most discriminated against people are: members of indigenous groups and communities, gay men, people with brown skin, people with lower socioeconomic levels and people who speak a language other than Spanish (mainly indigenous languages).

This demographic exercise reveals that discrimination is associated with the following ideas: “there is no respect”, inequality, abuse, humiliation and racism. The most frequently cited causes of discrimination are skin colour, sexual orientation, educational level, dress, economic status and advanced age.

Women in our city face serious day-to-day inequality problems: from obstacles to their sexual and reproductive rights to violations of their right to a life free of violence. LGBBTTTI people also continue to face persistent issues. Although important demands have been achieved, numerous hate crimes continue to occur in the country and the city, as well as the transgender population facing various obstacles to the recognition of

The Constitution took another fundamental step to support those who inhabit and travel through Mexico City, recognising the right to the city.

Although Mexico City’s legal framework on human rights issues is highly advanced, serious violations and obstacles systematically continue to occur.

their identity. People with disabilities remain a long way from seeing their city become accessible, while indigenous people are marginalised day after day. People living on the street, meanwhile, continue to suffer from being denied their rights to employment and health.

In order to strengthen gender equality, inclusion and equity, the mayor has proposed a series of actions, many of which have already begun to be implemented (Sheinbaum, 2018). Recently, along with her team, Dr Sheinbaum recognised these in her progress report, the *Primer Informe de Gobierno: Diciembre 2018–Septiembre 2019* (Sheinbaum, 2019). Below, I highlight some that relate to the spirit of the Mexico City Charter for the Right to the City, with emphasis on groups that should be given priority attention.

Nine months since our government took office, we have implemented various participatory democracy and accountability mechanisms, such as the digital participation platform Plaza Pública, on which the 2019–2020 government programme was discussed and through which citizens participated in the Reconstruction Commission that emerged from the earthquake that shook the city on September 19th 2017. With respect to indigenous peoples, we are starting out on the path towards ensuring that they are heard in the public decisions that concern them. Hence, for the first time in our history, an indigenous people, in this case the population of San Miguel Topilejo in Tlalpan, were consulted on whether or not to proceed with the construction of a general hospital.

This administration has recognised that urban development aimed at generating private profits has bequeathed us a city with great social and territorial inequalities (Sheinbaum Pardo, 2019: 127). In this regard, we are fighting the practices and corruption that allowed real estate developments to break land use rules to produce housing accessible only to high-income populations while displacing the original inhabitants, in the process known as gentrification. On the other hand, the Urban Regeneration and Inclusive Housing Programme was launched, which promotes the construction of decent, well-located housing, increasing the supply available for middle and low-income groups while respecting standards that do not harm the environment. Alongside these private developments, the government is making public investment in infrastructure, public space and mobility to guarantee a decent way of life for the inhabitants of these newly developed spaces.

To reverse the damage to the environment, the Environmental and Climate Change Programme was presented. Its goals are to rehabilitate and expand green areas, rescue rivers and bodies of water, promote sustainable water management, make better use of solid waste, move towards an integrated and sustainable mobility system, improve air quality, and promote alternative sources of clean energy (Sheinbaum Pardo, 2019).

A range of measures have been implemented in the fields of non-discrimination and priority care groups, and only a few can be mentioned here. To combat gender-based violence and inequality, we launched an Immediate Action Plan for Attention to Violence against Women, as well as measures designed for medium and long-term impact, such as

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3. Programa de Regeneración Urbana y Vivienda Incluyente.
5. Plan de Acción Inmediata de Atención a la Violencia contra las Mujeres.
women’s civic networks to help the enforcement and exercise of their human rights. Examples include the Indigenous Women’s Mutual Support Network, which receives training in family and community security, and the Women’s Lawyers Network, which provides legal advice to women who have been victims of gender-based violence. Action to combat this type of violence must focus above all on those who perpetrate it, so we have generated campaigns and spaces such as the Youth Network for Peace and Non-Violence, where young men can take action and engage to support gender equality. Of course this is accompanied by a series of measures that work more deeply to combat impunity and ensure access to justice.

Other anti-discrimination measures worth highlighting are:

- The creation of the first Mexican Sign Language Academy.
- The creation of the Comprehensive Protection System for Girls, Children and Adolescents.
- The implementation of the Action Plan against Racism, Discrimination and Xenophobia.
- The creation of the Human Rights and Sexual Diversity Council in the 16 municipalities.
- The launch of a telephone line for sexual diversity through the Locatel system, to provide support with a focus on human rights, non-discrimination and the recognition of diversity.
- Daily, free medical care and food are provided to 2,100 homeless people at Social Integration and Assistance Centres.
- Our city has also adopted measures that focus on migrants, based on the principles of hospitality, solidarity, interculturality and inclusion, ensuring access to water, providing shelters, food assistance and medical care.

V. Mexico City in the days to come

Over the next few years, Mexico City will face great challenges that cannot be postponed. We must achieve adequate water management, protect conservation areas and improve air quality; the rights of indigenous peoples and communities must be defended, while working towards gender equity, eradicating discrimination and recovering public spaces. In summary, we must strive to build a space that is supportive, democratic, sustainable, productive and liveable. This administration will have to face these tasks and it will do so with enthusiasm and in the spirit of full respect for human dignity.

The right to the city is a beacon that constantly reminds us that we are working for an inclusive, just, equitable and democratic city.

6. Red de Apoyo Mutuo de Mujeres Indígenas.
7. Red de Abogadas de las Mujeres.
8. Red de Jóvenes por la Paz y la No Violencia.
9. Academia de Lengua de Señas Mexicana.
10. Sistema de Protección Integral de Niñas, Niños y Adolescentes.
11. Plan de Acción contra el Racismo, la Discriminación y la Xenofobia.
13. Centros de Asistencia e Integración Social.
References


FROM THE VIENNA CHARTER FOR NEIGHBOURLY RELATIONS TO VIENNA AS A CITY OF HUMAN RIGHTS

Shams Asadi

Human Rights Commissioner and Head of the Human Rights Office,
City of Vienna

I. Introduction

As one of the fastest growing metropolitan cities in Europe, Vienna is – and has historically been – characterised by migration. The economic growth in the 1950s and labour migration in the 1960s, the establishment of United Nations (UN) headquarters in the 1970s, the establishment of a common European market, the freedom of movement and the opening of Europe to the east have particularly influenced the diversity of Vienna’s population and its international status. Since the early 1990s, Vienna has pursued proactive and sustainable integration policies, but in 2004, a change of paradigm took place and since then Vienna has perceived itself as a city of immigration. This led to the further development of integration policies directed towards diversity and diversity management in a city characterised by migration.

Integration is regarded as a process that concerns not just migrants and people with a migration background, but in a context of diversity, the host society and its institutions are also included in this process. The City of Vienna has focused on developing its diversity competence, which is the awareness of the diversity and similarities of people and the ability to make use of this awareness when designing and delivering services to socio-culturally diverse users. Creating equal rights and opportunities in all areas of life is essential and forms the basis of social cohesion. Hence, the City of Vienna established Municipal Department 17 - Integration and Diversity in 2004, thereby creating the organisational framework for the implementation of diversity policies. This department forms part of the Vienna city administration and initiates measures and projects to promote equal opportunities and empowers the Viennese to get along well with each other in daily life.

For an intensive exchange of experiences and peer learning on measures and policies promoting equal opportunities and non-discrimination, Vienna joined the European Coalition of Cities against Racism (ECCAR). ECCAR is an initiative launched by UNESCO in 2004; its leading actors are municipal administrations working to ensure a dignified, safe and just coexistence for all in 138 member cities with the aim of implementing policies combating discrimination and xenophobia.
The Vienna Charter process was about working out basic principles and rules for living together in a diverse society.

Such a broad process cannot and should not be organised by political decision-makers and the city administration alone.

Vienna has also adopted the New Urban Agenda as a guideline. This political declaration, signed by all UN member states, sets out a human rights-based approach to policymaking and service delivery as a path towards inclusive and sustainable urban development and embraces the principle of the “right to the city”, which is based on the freedom to (re)make our cities and ourselves. As host of one of the four UN headquarters, Vienna is in close and constant cooperation and exchange with the Vienna-based UN organisations; the municipality is also represented by a liaison office in the United Nation's premises in Vienna.

II. The Vienna Charter: Shaping the Future Together

In an international city, people with diverse lifestyles and convictions, ages, genders, sexual orientations, natives and immigrants, those with and without disabilities, all live together and should be able to cope with that diversity. The Vienna Charter process was about working out basic principles and rules for living together in a diverse society. The special feature of this project was that it was developed by the people of Vienna. They identified the issues at stake themselves, and took an active part in shaping the charter by participating in debates taking place in all parts of the city. The city was merely the initiator and facilitator of the process.

Starting point: Direct democracy for more solidarity in the city

The Vienna Charter was a strategic project for the first coalition government formed of the Social Democratic Party and the Green Party in 2010. It is a project with strong links to direct democracy which was launched by the Mayor, Deputy Mayor and the Executive City Councillor in charge of integration and diversity, who welcomed citizens' demands for public participation beyond elections. This was a sign of powerful political support and commitment as well as a new understanding of politics. It was clear that living together as a community cannot and should not be regulated by law alone. The city officially began the charter project in March 2012, though the first preparatory steps, which included the drafting of a core document, had already been initiated between May and September of the previous year.

The core document

A group consisting of legal experts and “experts from everyday life” – people from different professions and students – developed a document based on a number of fundamental and inalienable core elements of international legal norms and treaties as well as the Austrian constitution. Democracy and the rule of law, human and fundamental rights and women’s and children’s rights were the pillars.

Advisory committee and partner organisations

An independent advisory committee was established to safeguard the principles of transparency, openness and credibility. This committee represented all dimensions of diversity and had the task of defending the core document and acting as an arbitration panel to resolve disputes. A broad
process with the aim of involving a broad spectrum of Viennese society cannot and should not be organised by political decision-makers and the city administration alone. Businesses, clubs and associations, employer associations, trade unions, religious and ethnic communities, political parties and so on were invited to become partners in the Vienna Charter; 325 partner organisations from an impressively diverse range of fields declared their intention to hold charter talks or used their information channels to promote awareness of the project.

**Timeline and implementation phase**

- March 2012 – Gathering the relevant topics. In the first two weeks the Viennese were invited to identify the topics they considered crucial for good neighbourly relations online or over the phone.
- April 2012 – Clustering the topics. Members of the advisory board worked through the topics and developed topic clusters to facilitate the following discussions: What is important for good neighbourly relations in Vienna? What do the participants expect from each other? What are they prepared to do? What should the Vienna Charter include?
- April to October 2012 – Conducting offline and online charter talks on the topic clusters. The charter talks were the project’s centrepiece. During the last 17 days of the project phase all Vienna’s inhabitants had the opportunity to join the discussion online and comment on the results.
- November 2012 – Presentation of the results. The “Vienna Charter. Shaping the Future Together” was presented to the public at a press conference and online.

**Content and main topics**

Based on the inputs provided by the Viennese population, the Vienna Charter advisory committee identified three key aspects to be addressed:

1. **Living together**
   - Behaviour in traffic and on public transport;
   - Manners and consideration.

2. **Not the same all the time**
   - Young and old;
   - Speaking German/speaking other languages;
   - Me and those who are different to me.

3. **Feeling healthy and tidy**
   - Clean city;
   - Public space – room for everyone to live.

**The Vienna Charter in figures**

- 325 partner organisations;
- 651 charter talks in all districts;
- 8,500 face-to-face participants invested over 12,500 hours in good neighbourly relations;
- Over 30% of the participants in charter talks had migrant origins.
Over 47,000 online contributions and likes were submitted.

The City of Vienna provided moderators for all charter talks free of charge. They accompanied the discussion process, summed up the results and put them on the online platform. Over 30% of the participants in charter talks had migrant origins (mostly labour migrants who had resided in Vienna for a long time). Providing multilingual moderators encouraged the participation of speakers of languages other than German. The gender ratio was well-balanced in general and throughout the whole process.

The project ran for several months and resulted in a collection of basic principles for living together respectfully and with good neighbourly relations compiled by the inhabitants of Vienna. The charter may be considered an instrument for direct democracy in Vienna and the main aim was to develop more solidarity in the city. The text of the charter was made public in November 2012, and the discussions and contributions are also available online.

Main obstacles to the charter project

The main challenge was to encourage and persuade people from diverse political, ideological, religious and social backgrounds to jointly participate in charter talks. The discussion was most engaging when the participants were highly diverse, although it was demanding for the moderators to facilitate and to achieve common results. The engagement of multilingual moderators eased the participation of migrants during the whole process. It should also be noted that, like in other participatory processes, it was mostly people with similar opinions or from similar milieus or “lifestyles” who came together in the charter talks.

Lessons learned from the charter project

Throughout the process, the time schedule was very tight. The time span between the public announcement, the mayor’s press conference on March 13th 2012 and the start of the process only a month later on April 13th was too short. A longer period of time should have been planned for this phase. The same also applies to the communication with partner organisations. Most of these organisations became partners after the mayor’s press conference and his invitation for cooperation on a voluntary basis. The first phase of the project should have been started after wider communication and a clear kick-off phase. Considering the number of partners, the different means of participation – from online and offline to personal contacts – and the need to assemble different charter discussion groups in all parts of society, more time resources should have been allocated for such a broad participatory project.

A general evaluation of the Vienna Charter was not foreseen in its planning process. Nevertheless, it can be considered to have been a successful practice in bringing people together especially at neighbourhood level. This is the main reason the charter talks are still implemented as an instrument for integrating refugees and asylum seekers. The Vienna Charter talks for refugees aim to help newcomers understand what the Viennese consider essential for good neighbourly relations and which rules are particularly important.

III. Vienna - City of Human Rights

The City of Vienna pledges to act as a guardian and defender of human rights by striving to respect, protect, fulfil and be accountable for human rights in all its areas of competence. Based on this approach, the City of Vienna actively supports its population in asserting and upholding their human rights by providing adequate framework conditions and using them as a basis for its activity. As a city that is experienced in matters of migration, integration and diversity management and strongly committed to principles of non-discrimination and equality, Vienna is all the more determined to further advance its cross-cutting human rights approach through additional inclusionary measures.

After two years of a broad, participatory process in collaboration with civil society, NGOs, academia and the national government, the city council approved the declaration “Vienna – City of Human Rights” in December 2014 and with this official act, Vienna became a Human Rights City. An important step in this process was the establishment of the Human Rights Office in 2015. The basis of the work of the Human Rights Office is defined in the declaration as well as in the government coalition agreement between the Social Democratic and Green parties that formed the Vienna city government from 2015.

The Human Rights Office works with political and governmental entities, as well as non-governmental organisations and civil society both on a local and an international level, to implement the city council’s declaration and to guide the further development of the human rights culture in Vienna. The main goal of the Human Rights City is to ensure inclusion in an equitable society. This approach is firmly anchored in the Declaration “Vienna – City of Human Rights”, which reiterates that “every person living in the city has the same human rights – regardless of their nationality or residency status”4.

Five strategic areas of the declaration

1. Establishing the human rights approach as a cross-cutting principle in politics and administration

Human rights form the City of Vienna’s guidelines for its decisions and actions in legislation, executive authority and administrative jurisdiction, when acting as a local authority or as a private entity, in its own sphere of competence and in matters of delegated federal competence. The Vienna city administration has adapted its structure since the 1990s to the new strategies and measures on equality and human rights. In other words, the basis and foundation of all policies in Vienna is equal rights and access to services provided by the public administration. Establishing the Department for Women’s Affairs in 1991 was the first step towards implementing gender equality in all fields of life. The foundation of the departments for diversity management and integration and for equal rights for the LGTBIQ population as well as the unit for the promotion of gender mainstreaming, including gender budgeting, followed in the late 1990s. The City of Vienna develops continuously adequate measures to promote openness, diversity, political participation, a barrier-free environment and equal opportunities in all spheres of life, guaranteeing universal access to rights as a consequence.

The Human Rights Office acts as a connecting link between departments of the city administration, the various human rights organisations located in Vienna and in general all governance levels. Since 2016, the office encourages dialogue between these institutions on human rights and regularly invites different target groups (children, youths, seniors, newcomers and women and men of all ages) to discussions and seminars on various subjects related to human rights.

Security policy and human rights as a holistic concept, which includes social security and access to education for all, children’s rights (combating child poverty, homelessness among families with minors, unaccompanied minor refugees, violence against children and child trafficking) and combating human trafficking especially at the local level, have been the main topics until now.

2. International cooperation and networking

Due to its federal status and the distribution of competences, the City of Vienna (it is also a federal province) forms part of national and international networks. The office provides support to delegations coming to Vienna from all over the world and cooperates globally with human rights cities to exchange experiences in order to provide mutual support. Office staff participate in regional, European and global networks. In May 2018, on the occasion of the 25th anniversary of the UN’s World Conference on Human Rights, the Vienna+25 international expert conference took place on the premises of the Viennese municipality. The Human Rights Office had a key role and contributed to defining the contents and the concept of the conference.

3. Human rights learning and the promotion of human rights education in the city and in all parts of society

Education of pupils and students

The Human Rights Office has held many seminars and panel discussions to raise awareness about human and children’s rights in schools. In the past years over 1,000 pupils and students have taken part in different relevant activities. Since its establishment in 2015, the Human Rights Office has established strategic cooperation with the Vienna School Board. The school authority is an important partner facilitating access to teachers, pupils and their parents. Moreover, it serves as a platform for disseminating the outcomes of cooperation with schools.

Human rights learning in the city

This was a project implemented in cooperation with the European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights (FRA). Students were invited to participate in a competition to create videos, advertisements, animated films, photos or drawings on human rights in the city under the motto “connect.reflect.act”. The competition was led by the Human Rights Office, the FRA and the Vienna School Board. The winners of this contest were announced at the first “Fundamental Rights Forum” held in Vienna in 2016. Workshops with professional film producers and directors were organised during this conference.
“Youth make cinema”

With the support of the Austrian Film Institute, the agency “EINBLICK unfiltered” and the Human Rights Office carried out the “Youth make cinema” project. The project aimed to attract young people, especially potential female filmmakers with a migration background to be participants and to promote human rights as the content of their films. The films were produced by young people under professional guidance. They received inputs and workshops on human rights before the process of film-making began. More than 3,000 youths and young adults have watched the films at schools and the films were broadcast on the Austrian TV channel OKTO.

Events on International Human Rights Day (10th December)

On International Human Rights Day in 2015, just after the establishment of the office, the Human Rights Office organised an open door day. The Human Rights Office team, alongside representatives of the international organisations UNHCR, the Austrian Commission for UNESCO, the United Nations Information Services in Vienna (UNIS Vienna), the FRA and the Information Office of the European Parliament, answered questions from participants from all walks of life.

On International Human Rights Day in 2016, Vienna House in Brussels invited members of the EU’s Commission and Parliament, as well representatives of different member states, to a lunch debate. The role of cities and regions in raising awareness and promoting human rights and the presentation of Vienna – City of Human Rights were the focus of this debate.

The Human Rights Office organised a human rights walk for students on this day in 2017. The aim was to give them an interactive introduction to human and children’s rights and insights into the human rights activities in Vienna. At City Hall the participants had the chance to talk to “living books” – experts from politics, international organisations and NGOs.

On International Human Rights Day 2018 the Human Rights Office, in cooperation with representatives of the European Union in Vienna and the Vienna School Board, organised a panel discussion with young members of the European Parliament on “Freedom of Expression” as a fundamental right underpinning the protection of all other civil rights. Civil society was invited to this discussion.

Examples of diverse awareness-raising and human rights-learning measures

– Speed dating for Human Rights: The Human Rights Office has been organising speed dating for human rights on its premises on the last Friday in April since its establishment. The diversity (gender, age, ethnicity, etc.) of the participants is the significant feature of this event.

– Educational programmes targeting city administration employees: In order to establish a culture of human rights in the city administration, the Human Rights Office integrates human rights into the educational programmes of the city officials provided by the city’s administrative academy. The following examples can provide a panoramic view of these programmes.
In 2015, a training course under the title “The Human Rights City of Vienna Presents Itself” was offered to interested employees of the City of Vienna. Since 2017, human rights have been included as a cross-cutting subject in the “Administrative Procedures” seminar, and special courses on human rights have been established aimed at law enforcement officials. Online education on human rights is to be offered soon.

4. Civil Society Participation

Developing an urban human rights culture is of major importance for a Human Rights City. The Human Rights Office actively contacts initiatives and prepares and opens up new forms of participation that promote the advancement of human rights. Members of civil society are considered to be experts and the members of different initiatives are encouraged to take part in the thematic discussions and round tables organised by the Human Rights Office.

A group of inhabitants of the neighbourhood where the Human Rights Office is located have formed the “Citizens Council”, which is active under the umbrella of the Local Agenda 21 and uses the premises of the Human Rights Office for their activities. The staff of the office takes part regularly in panels and discussions on human rights and they are also (co) organisers of seminars and workshops.

5. Institutionalisation, action plan and reporting, independent monitoring

A steering group was established at the very beginning of the process of making Vienna a Human Rights City. Representatives of the city government, an independent research institute on human rights and the city administration are members of this group. Strengthening the collaboration between administration, politics and academia on human rights and observing implementation steps based on the declaration “Vienna - City of Human Rights” are this steering group’s defined areas of action.

The outcomes of round tables and panel discussions organised by the Human Rights Office and the recommendations of NGOs and civil society have been documented and will be collected in an action plan (still in the drafting process). This action plan should be a guideline for the activities of the Human Rights City at both strategic and operative levels. Setting up an independent monitoring structure for evaluating and ensuring the achievement of proposed goals is planned for 2019.

“Added value” of human rights in Vienna

As an inclusive city, Vienna is experienced in implementing equality measures in all fields of life and can build its human rights approach on the milestones achieved over past decades. The path to social inclusion and an equitable society had already been defined prior to Vienna becoming a Human Rights City. The human rights approach adds the aspect of the city as a defender of human rights.

The role of the city in upholding, promoting and protecting human rights has become clearer and more pronounced in challenging times. In 2015 Vienna adopted a welcoming attitude towards asylum seekers arriving in the city.
Each winter, Vienna implements its “winter package” and provides homeless people with a place to stay in dignity from November to April.

By way of organising round tables on different subjects like housing as a human right, security policies and human rights and children’s rights, the Human Rights Office makes the city’s commitment to human rights visible and gives relevant stakeholders the opportunity to learn from each other and to coordinate their measures in the respective fields.

**IV. Challenges and helpful steps**

Visible establishment of the Human Rights Office within the city’s administrative structures;

Strengthening the Human Rights City through a visible network of Human Rights Cities, especially in Europe;

Using the same language globally for addressing the human rights approach at local or regional level. Using three different titles – Human Rights Cities, Human Rights in the City and the Right to the City – in this context is confusing.

Establishing human rights as guiding principles for as many public and private institutions as possible, as a basis for decision-making, a directional indicator for institutional measures, and a key topic in education and training.

Cooperation and networking with other human rights cities to exchange experiences and provide mutual support. Unfortunately the need for cities to have an official platform for networking has not yet been met.

Strengthening the World Human Rights Forum (WHRCF) as the only existing global conference on human rights at local level, which has taken place annually in Gwangju, South Korea, since 2010. The City of Vienna is a member of the advisory board.

**Lessons learned**

Social cohesion cannot solely be “prescribed” from the top: it must be articulated, demanded and lived by the city’s inhabitants. A city can declare itself a Human Rights City by means of official acts (laws, legislations or declarations), but to protect human rights at the local level it is important to increasingly remind everybody of those rights and to continuously work on the fundamental social consensus about their unconditional validity.
I. Introduction

From 2015 to 2019, Madrid City Council prepared and developed its Plan Estratégico de Derechos Humanos (Strategic Human Rights Plan). This brief innovative exercise yielded a number of lessons and pending challenges, and other cities and institutions have used it as a reference.

In this chapter, first we address the most important aspects of Madrid City Council’s Plan Estratégico de Derechos Humanos (hereafter, the Plan), which are the participatory process and the implementation mechanisms. Particular attention is given to how the Plan sought to contribute to realising the right to the city based on the right to difference. Then, we will share some of the lessons learned since we took up the challenge of building a rights policy in the City of Madrid back in December 2015. While the Plan’s implementation and the activity of the Human Rights and Memory Office (Oficina de Derechos Humanos y Memoria) were interrupted following the May 2019 municipal elections, successes and mistakes may be pinpointed, existing difficulties noted and some conclusions and pending challenges may be extracted.

Finally, we would like these contributions to inspire other cities to promote their own mechanisms and to use our experience to improve instruments meant to mainstream a human rights approach in municipal public policies.

With this Plan, Madrid joined other cities that have been actively working for years on the protection and promotion of human rights through various mechanisms.

It should be noted that Madrid City Council, like many others, has been making daily contributions to the defence and promotion of human rights through all its policies and programmes. However, for the first time, in the 2015–19 Government Action Plan human rights were incorporated as a cross-cutting axis. It was also the first time a plan had been designed to mainstream an approach based on human rights, gender and intersectionality (DH-GI in its Spanish acronym) in municipal policies.1

The Strategic Human Rights Plan was a brief, but innovative exercise that other cities and institutions have used as a reference.

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2. The intersectional approach allows us to examine how different categories of socially and culturally constructed discrimination interact and interrelate, contributing to discrimination against specific people, in what is known as multiple discrimination.
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<th>Sections</th>
<th>Goals</th>
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<tr>
<td>1. A city that contributes to guaranteeing civil and political rights</td>
<td>Goal 1: Right to participation, information, transparency and accountability</td>
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<td>Goal 2: Right to security based on human rights</td>
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<td>Goal 3: Right to freedom of conscience, religion, opinion and demonstration</td>
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<td>Goal 4: Right to freedom of assembly, association and demonstration</td>
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<td>Goal 5: Right to truth, justice and reparation</td>
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<td>2. A city that is committed against discrimination and violence</td>
<td>Goal 6: Women’s right to a life free from discrimination and violence</td>
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<td>Goal 7: The right of LGBTQ people to a life free from discrimination and violence</td>
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<td>Goal 8: Right of migrants, refugees, victims of trafficking and minorities to a life free from discrimination and violence</td>
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<td>Goal 9: Right of children and adolescents to a life free from discrimination and violence</td>
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<td>Goal 10: Right of people with functional diversity to a life free from discrimination and violence</td>
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<td>Goal 11: The right of elderly people to a life free from discrimination and violence</td>
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<td>3. A city that contributes to guaranteeing economic, social, cultural and environmental rights</td>
<td>Goal 12: Right to health, including sexual and reproductive</td>
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<td>Goal 13: Right to decent and adequate housing, including the right to energy</td>
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<td>Goal 14: Right to receive care and rights of caregivers</td>
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<td>Goal 15: Right to quality education with human rights content</td>
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<td>Goal 16: Right to dignified employment</td>
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<td>Goal 17: Right to sufficient, appropriate and healthy food and water</td>
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<td>Goal 18: Right to culture of quality and with human rights content without discrimination</td>
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<td>Goal 19: Right to a sustainable urban environment, guaranteeing quality of life and mobility in the city</td>
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<td>Goal 20: Build a municipal public policy for justice and global solidarity with a human rights approach</td>
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<td>Goal 21: Right to equal access to basic and local-level municipal services that are available, accessible and high quality.</td>
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<td>Goal 22: Human rights training for city council staff and privately run organisations.</td>
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Example lines of action

Implement a strategy on the participation of girls, boys and adolescents in municipal policies

Commission the ethical committee of the independent and impartial municipal police composed of representatives of the police and external human rights specialists, among others

Adopt a protocol for relations between the city council and religious groups and bodies for the defence of non-theistic and atheistic beliefs and of secularism and/or the lack of religious affiliation of the public administrations

Review the municipal procedure on the allocation of public space for the enjoyment of the right of assembly, association or demonstration

Creation, recovery and/or reinterpretation of certain spaces as particularly significant places of memory (graves, sites of repression and deprivation of liberty, prisons, cemeteries)

Mainstream the DH-GI approach in municipal policies, through the implementation of the Equal Opportunities Strategy between women and men

Adopt a protocol to guarantee the rights of transgender and transsexual people working in the city council during the transition process

Measures to ensure the implementation of the Neighbourhood Card


Adapt municipal services to be able to follow up and demand compliance with the social clauses included in Instruction 1/2016 regarding the incorporation of social clauses in contracts concluded by Madrid City Council

Review the operating regulations of homes for the elderly with a DH-GI approach

Adopt plans to promote sexual and emotional education with a DH-GI approach, both in the educational field and in other municipal and community spaces

Increase the supply of municipal public social housing with a DH-GI approach, which reflects the diversity of needs (accessibility, security, community creation and support networks)

Promote co-responsibility in care work through, among other measures, awareness campaigns aimed especially at young people and men. Ensure the inclusion of human rights education in their own educational and cultural centres and programmes

Review current occupational risk prevention plans to ensure their proper implementation

Promote the implementation of the Milan Urban Food Policy Pact, adopting measures to promote sustainable, inclusive, resilient and safe food systems, and to ensure the management and use of natural food resources in the most sustainable way possible

Promote channels for residents to participate in the design of at least 30% of the programming of municipal cultural centres, and guarantee, in particular, the participation of women and people from discriminated against groups.

Air Quality and Climate Change Plan.

Implement a programme for the reception of human rights defenders

Study social needs using a human rights approach to show the existing “human rights gaps” in the City of Madrid in a disaggregated manner by district and neighbourhood and a range of variables

Course on the “Right to a life free from violence and discrimination”
II. The Strategic Human Rights Plan: guiding principles and contents

We made use of the conceptual framework developed by the United Nations, which makes human rights and gender equity the foundation, objective and instrument of public policies. Specifically, we sought above all to strengthen municipal action to tackle Madrid’s most significant human rights failures, inequality and poverty. Women are particularly affected, as are the most discriminated against groups: LGBTI; ethnic minorities; people with disabilities/functional diversity; the elderly; the young; people with addictions; migrant and refugee populations; children and adolescents; the homeless; and the families hardest hit by the economic crisis and austerity policies.

In short, the Plan sought to mainstream a human rights-based approach to municipal policies. It aimed to ensure that Madrid City Council complies with its obligations to respect, protect and enforce human rights in its day-to-day work, in all areas and aspects of its government activity.

The Plan was conceived as an instrument for giving effect to the right to the city, incorporating human rights values, principles and norms and, in particular, the principle of non-discrimination.

To do this, the Plan’s drafting process had specific objectives that served as transversal axes:

a) Promote mechanisms for active and effective citizen participation, especially of women and the most discriminated against groups, in the design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of municipal policies.

b) Contribute to improving the development of Madrid City Council’s capacities to respect, protect and guarantee human rights: the city council as “guarantor of rights”.

c) Strengthening the capacities of rights holders to demand and claim that their rights are upheld.

Finally, this relationship with the implementation of the right to the city based on difference is better understood if we take into account the guiding principles underlying the Plan: 1) the universality, indivisibility and interdependence of human rights; 2) participation, accountability and the enforceability of rights; 3) the social function of the city, urban property and the natural environment; and finally, and more directly, 4) the principle of equality and non-discrimination.

The principles of equality and non-discrimination are peremptory norms of international law that oblige the city council to place the human rights of all the people who live in its city at the centre of its structures, services and policies, regardless of race, colour, sex, language, religion, political or other opinion, ethnic or national origin, position or social status, nationality, civil status, family status, affiliation, birth, age, disability, health.
status, place of residence, administrative status, sexual orientation or gender identification, or membership of any group, among other possible considerations.³

Both principles oblige the city council to act decisively to realise equality between men and women in all spheres, as well as to identify the obstacles certain sections of the population face in the exercise of their rights, particularly the most discriminated against groups.

In summary, the Plan obliged Madrid City Council to use all available means, including “temporary special measures”,⁴ to eradicate all forms of discrimination that may, directly or indirectly, be suffered by anyone living permanently or temporarily in Madrid to guarantee the respect for, protection of and effectiveness of their rights. With respect to the contents, very briefly, the structure can be seen in the table below, with the sections, goals and strategic objectives for each goal and line of action.

III. The Plan as the fruit of a thoroughly participatory process

Direct citizen participation in the decision-making processes that affect people’s day-to-day lives was a firm commitment of the last Madrid City Council team. From the start of our mandate we strived to implement participatory instruments and processes. Our aim was for a substantial proportion of municipal policies to be decided directly by citizens, thereby responding to a model of democracy that made the fundamental right to political participation more real and effective.

This became a fundamental issue when we discussed implementing the right to the city based on the right to difference. Without broad participatory processes and collective construction, no advance is possible on implementing the right to the city, on social cohesion as the backbone to the city, or on the construction of cities that are the authentic expression of the “social mixture” or diversity in each of our neighbourhoods. We highlighted the importance of the participatory process, emphasising that participation should be opened up to all groups and individuals in the city, in order to gather, as far as possible, their requests and needs, both for the purposes of making diagnoses and for drawing the sectoral lines of action themselves.

As noted, the Plan is the result of an extensive participatory process that was launched in December 2015 and in which the government, political groups, the various city council departments and their staff were involved (internal participatory process), as well as associations, human rights organisations, NGOs, and social and citizen movements (external participatory process). A total of 2,000 people and 400 organisations participated in the drafting process, in the over 100 meetings and workshops held, or through the surveys carried out and the questionnaire on “Decide Madrid” (Madrid Decides).⁵ Once the Plan’s initial design was ready, it was published on the “Decide Madrid” platform and people were able to include proposals and vote on them. Thus, each citizen was invited to have real participation in the Plan from its beginning to the final text.

3. The main grounds for discrimination prohibited by international human rights treaties.
4. Term used by human rights committees; equivalent to expressions such as “positive” or “affirmative action”.
5. The platform (https://decide.madrid.es/) now has 350,000 registered users, includes direct democracy processes such as citizen initiatives and participatory budgets, and other processes such as citizens’ debates, votes, surveys and specific participatory processes on matters such as urban developments and regulatory approval. Madrid’s citizens have an open, connective platform through which they can directly decide on the most important issues in the city. The platform’s success and being free software have made it the largest online citizen participation project in the world. Any government can install, modify and use it for free, as cities in countries such as Argentina, France, Italy, Mexico, Peru and Colombia already are.
The process began with the participatory performance of a diagnosis of the state of human rights in Madrid.

The Plan must be understood as a fundamental tool for building a city that takes a rights-based approach to managing its diversity in all its municipal policies and in all its agencies.

This diagnosis provided a documentary and factual basis for drafting the specific measures in the Plan, which was the result of the internal and external participatory processes mentioned above. Academic assistance helped give the Plan the scientific rigour and quality a document of this calibre requires; and widening participation ensured the acceptance of the voluntary networks and citizens involved in its design.

Among the main findings of the diagnosis were the existence of major obstacles to guaranteeing social rights and the absence of a civic culture of participation, transparency and accountability. Both issues highlighted the limitations and obstacles various groups encounter when exercising their rights in their city. The diagnosis directly challenged Madrid City Council to establish multisectoral lines of action that guarantee the principle of equality and the right not to be discriminated against. The Plan must be understood as a fundamental tool for building a city that takes a rights-based approach to managing its diversity in all its municipal policies and in all its agencies.

IV. The mechanisms for the implementation and evaluation of the Strategic Human Rights Plan

The Plan considered the creation of a series of structures for its set-up and implementation, on the one hand, and their management by citizens and human rights organisations, on the other. The principle of citizen participation, which was present since the beginning of the Plan, also became particularly important throughout the whole accountability process for its effective implementation by the city council.

Initially, after the Plan was approved, an Office of Human Rights and Memory was created at the Third Deputy Mayor’s Office (Tercera Tenencia de Alcaldía). Its purpose was to coordinate and promote the Plan’s measures. Implementing them was the responsibility of the various departments of Madrid City Council.

Secondly, the Human Rights Bureau, a collegiate body for monitoring the Plan, was created by the City Council. The bureau was chaired by the Third Deputy Mayor’s Office and included a representative from each of the departments and from city council bodies with responsibilities in matters related to the Plan.

One of their notable duties was the approval of the operational programmes prepared by council departments for the three years of the Plan’s validity. Once approved, these programmes – which contained the activities each department committed to performing to comply with the Plan’s lines of action – were published for the purposes of transparency and accountability by human rights bodies and citizens.

To properly evaluate and monitor the Plan’s implementation, a system of indicators was designed (relating to structure, effort and result) based

on the obligations derived from state and international regulations in this regard. The Human Rights Bureau proposed this system of indicators, which was subsequently taken on by human rights entities.

As the principle of citizen participation underpins all phases of the Plan, by necessity it also had to form part of its evaluation. In this sense, the Human Rights Forum, was created as an instrument for citizens and the groups that defend human rights to participate in the Plan’s implementation and evaluation. The aim was to give the City of Madrid a continuous channel for social movements to participate in the implementation and achievement of the Plan. The forum worked through plenary sessions, as well as the panels and working groups that were created to facilitate and improve their work.

As a communication channel between the City Council and the human rights defence bodies, the forum contributed to the creation and implementation of the system of human rights indicators and actively participated in the annual reporting tasks related to compliance with the Plan. Similarly, their participation was foreseen in preparing the final evaluation report planned for 2019, which will not now be carried out, as was briefly stated in the introduction.

Finally, prior to the participation process, for all the actors involved within the City Council and the voluntary networks and human rights bodies, the Office of Human Rights and Memory had to produce the annual follow-up reports for the activities carried out (2017 and 2018). These reports met the objectives of: 1) reporting on the degree of implementation of the planned initiatives; 2) serving as a tool for the City Council to assess the scope, suitability and quality of the initiatives carried out; and 3) introducing improvements for future planning.

As the Plan became ineffective before the planned deadline, the final evaluation report by the Office of Human Rights and Memory will also not be produced. It would, once again, have benefitted from the active participation of all the sectors involved at the City Council.

V. Lessons learned and pending challenges

As mentioned, three years after this initiative was launched, some lessons may be drawn from both the drafting and implementation processes. Fundamentally, we will indicate some of the difficulties identified, which are surely shared by other ongoing initiatives, and to mention some of what we consider to have been successful parts of the endeavour and others that on future occasions we would avoid or reformulate.

The creation of the Office of Human Rights and Memory. The Plan emerged in response to the question “How can Madrid City Council improve its performance in order to continue contributing to protecting human rights in the city?” In 2015, the change of municipal government led to departments being restructured. A new Department of Social Rights and Equity was created with its own powers to perform all the policies in fields that touch upon the rights of the elderly, childhood, functional diversity, housing, employment and social services, among others. One possible option was to roll out human rights policy from
that department. However, our goal was not only to develop social and equity policies from a rights perspective. As already noted, our main objective was to mainstream that DH-GI approach for all municipal policies and actions. To that end the Office of Human Rights and Memory was created, which reported to one of the mayor’s offices, but lay outside of any particular department, with delegated powers for the Plan’s promotion, implementation and evaluation. On the other hand, along with the delegated powers in the human rights field, powers were delegated for the design and direct execution of public policies around democratic memory. We believe that creating an office to promote council departments’ compliance with the Plan (with exclusive powers for implementing the measures included in the Plan and with budget provisions assigned for this purpose) was a success.

Budget allocation and structure. As mentioned above, implementing the contents of the Plan was the responsibility of each department, and we have remarked on the success of its promotion and implementation depending on the Office of Human Rights, which performed the role of “monitoring” compliance with it. Our experience showed that it was essential to have our own budget line and a minimal administrative structure intended exclusively for the operation of the office and the achievement of its own objectives. The budget allocation had two fundamental objectives: 1) It allowed the office to conduct its own activity to promote human rights and raise awareness about them. As such, it allowed us to organise events, conferences, workshops and other such activities as part of the city council’s global commitment to the defence and promotion of human rights. Having resources allowed us to organise activities around the international Human Rights Day, campaigns against racism and discrimination, and to support the activities of other departments or social organisations. 2) Implementing measures in areas we might call “residual powers”, that is, competences not expressly allocated to other departments. Specifically, this allowed us to act in the field of rights of freedom of conscience, religion, opinion and expression and, above all, rights to truth, justice and reparation. These powers were expressly delegated to the Third Mayor’s Office for the planning of initiatives and their implementation by the office itself.

Diagnosis and participation. Undoubtedly, this prior process of preparing a diagnosis which was open to the groups in the city and the local administration itself was decisive in drafting the Plan. The findings that emerged from the content have enormous value for constructing public policies with a DH-GI approach. All this abundant and complex information, contributions and documentation allowed us to identify the main areas where human rights are lacking, and to analyse their causes and consequences. Finally, it was fundamental to understand the institutional capacity and municipal resources we possessed (regulatory, material and human), as well as the services, programmes, policies and good practices. Hence the importance of extending the participatory process to the monitoring and follow-up of the implementation of the initiatives in the Plan. For that purpose the Human Rights Forum was created, a sectoral forum for human rights organisations working in the City of Madrid. To date, over 150 entities make up the forum, and are highly involved in it, albeit always relying on the resources and personnel of the organisations themselves.

Report on municipal powers. Another essential element prior to drafting the contents of the Plan was the preparation of a technical-legal report on the framework of competences. This was a key issue when addressing the proposal for specific lines of action. For this reason we chose – correctly, in our opinion – to establish initiatives that fitted within the city council’s direct areas of competence along with promotion activities directed towards other public administrations, which allowed us to indirectly influence the promotion of residents’ human rights. This issue is specified in the Plan, with two sections distinguished in the lines of action, “direct City Council competence” and “to be promoted to other administrations or institutions”. The latter took place, fundamentally, in the fields of intergovernmental and interinstitutional relations through diverse channels and in the activity of the city council’s plenary session through the proposals or motions made by the political groups. They were subject to follow-up just like all the lines of action but, obviously, it was not possible to establish mechanisms for monitoring the fulfilment of the measures promoted to another administration or institution with competence for its implementation and execution.

Harmonisation with other cross-cutting plans and programmes. Since 2015, Madrid City Council has implemented a number of plans, programmes and strategies (“Madrid, ciudad de los cuidados”, “Estrategia de Alimentación Saludable y Sostenible”, “Plan Local de Infancia y adolescencia”, “Plan Impulso de consumo sostenible”, Proyecto MARES, etc.). The mainstreaming that defines the Strategic Human Rights Plan means its goals, objectives and lines of action come into connection with such plans. Effective coordination between plans ensures their successful development and implementation. This experience has taught us the practical importance of harmonising these plans and establishing mechanisms for cooperation. Taking this into consideration is vital for future experiences. In our case, the Department of Territorial Coordination and Public-Social Cooperation launched a coordination mechanism for the various municipal plans and programmes. Despite the complexity of the plans and the difficulties we faced in the departments devoted to implementing their projects it continued to function.

Development of indicators. The system of indicators was developed after the Plan’s approval and implementation. Without dwelling on the content of the indicator system itself, it would have been better to have developed the indicators in parallel to the development of the Plan itself, that is to say, alongside the construction of strategic goals and objectives. This would have allowed us to follow up the Plan sooner after the development of the Plan’s own policies. Constructing a system of indicators afterwards, using the same participatory premise that also underlay the creation of the Plan itself delayed the first evaluation of the Plan until the end of 2018.

Information collection system. One of the greatest shortcomings we encountered was the absence of an information transfer system between departments and the Office of Human Rights. Acquiring disaggregated and systematised information remains a challenge. Quantitative and qualitative data are not enough to grasp the progress made or the obstacles to the Plan’s fulfilment. In our experience, a deficient filing system has been reproduced that has saturated the departments and has created a difficulty accessing this information and the lack of specificity and precision, as
well as contrasting information, in the data provided by the departments and bodies involved. Undoubtedly, one of the challenges we should immediately face is designing a system for collecting, processing and publishing data from Madrid City Council. In places such as Mexico City, a system has been specifically created for the monitoring and evaluation of the human rights program.

Dialogue with council departments. The importance of having focal points in the different departments and agencies of Madrid City Council involved in the Human Rights Plan is closely linked to the content of the previous section. First of all, permanent interlocutors must be appointed that are involved in the promotion and implementation of the measures set out in the Plan for which they are competent. Preferably, these focal points should be permanent, allowing operational dialogue between the office and the corresponding department. This does not mean “directive” dialogue, dissociated from the functions attributed to the Human Rights Bureau as a collegiate body for the city council to monitor the Plan. As proof of this, Delegate Councillors sometimes represented their departments at some of the bureau’s meetings. Secondly, they should be interlocutors with specific training in the Plan’s contents and a degree of human rights knowledge. An optimal scenario, but one that would be difficult to achieve due to budgetary and personnel issues – at least in Madrid City Council – would be for these focal points or interlocutors to be integrated into the structure of the Office of Human Rights.

A final point on this issue: this dialogue played a fundamental role in the design of the Plan. In other words, the internal participation process, which included returning the contents of the activity that corresponded to each department to that department, was decisive in the result. The goals and lines of action produced may be seen as a success, as the departments responsible for implementing them have fully signed up to them through bilateral meetings and the continuous exchange of proposals between the department and the office.

Human Rights Forum. When assessing the merits or successes of the Plan, special mention must be made of the creation of this forum. Though it has been mentioned before, in our experience the launch, for the first time in our city, of a body for civil society participation in human rights policies was a genuine milestone. The forum seeks to deepen the citizen participation philosophy that characterises the human rights approach, and become the direct channel for dialogue between the city council and the human rights defence organisations and groups that make it up.

A DH-GI-focussed budget. In the future the Department of Economy and Taxation should draw up a DH-GI-focussed budget. Efforts have been made, but it has not materialised. Nevertheless, the budgets do consider gender impact, which we consider to be a positive step.

Human rights training. One of the most important parts of the Plan as a cross-cutting obligation is human rights training in the city council and privately entities. For the first time, training initiatives have been included in the Annual Plan that aim to promote the development of a human rights culture among public employees (and the staff of organisations and companies that provide public services), especially those with responsibilities in services related to the human rights of the citizens of Madrid.
VI. Conclusion

With all its errors and successes, some of which have been described in this contribution to the debate, this Plan embodied the city council’s political commitment to making Madrid a human rights city. Human rights are not something distant or beyond our borders. They take shape on a daily basis in our streets, neighbourhoods, districts and work places. Respecting and promoting them not only forms part of our city and democratic model, without human rights they cannot be understood. Hence our commitment to making Madrid a model rights city even if that effort has, temporarily, been paused.

We chose to establish initiatives that fitted within the city council’s direct areas of competence along with promotion activities directed towards other public administrations.
AMMAN, A WELCOMING CITY FOR MIGRANTS AND REFUGEES

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I. Jordan’s long migration history

Amman is Jordan’s capital and most populous city, as well as its economic, political and cultural centre. Jordan is at the centre of the Middle East region, and has a long history of migration, acting as both a vertical and horizontal corridor for migration throughout the region. This is due in no small part to the country’s stability and security, which have served not only the Jordanian people, but all others who have sought a safe haven there from other countries in the region.

Since its creation, Jordan has received three major influxes of refugees. Of the Palestinian refugees registered by the United Nations Relief and Works Agency (UNRWA) in the region, 42% live in Jordan. The 450,000 refugees in 1948, followed by 240,000 in 1967, are now dispersed across the cities and in the 13 official refugee camps served by the UNRWA. The Iraqi refugee population, driven from home since early 1990s as a result of economic and political conflicts, varied between 500,000 in 2008 and 54,586 once the fighting between civilians stopped and large numbers of Iraqis were sent back to their country in 2010. UN humanitarian relief records show that as of February 2017, 61,405 Iraqis are registered with UNHCR in Jordan.

Since 2013, Jordan has received a new wave of refugees. The ramifications of the Arab Spring brought Libyans and Yemenis to the country seeking shelter until peace returns to their home country. Small numbers of Somali and Sudanese also arrived in Jordan. The Syrian influx, however, was the most concerning because of the large numbers of people seeking safe haven. The seasonal/economic migrants from Syria who used to commute between Jordan and Syria for work opportunities could not go back home, so they remained in Jordan. Not all have registered as refugees. Large numbers of Syrians entered Jordan through official and non-official borders. The number of Syrians registered with the UNHCR has been 660,015, meanwhile in the 2015 government census registered Syrians numbered 1.265 million, making 13.2% of the total population. The difference between the UNHCR figures and those of the government of Jordan reflects the discrepancy in registration amongst the Syrian refugees. Not all Syrians living in Jordan registered with UNHCR, as a large number of them were economic migrants in Jordan before the conflict and had well-established social and professional capital in the country. This led many Syrians to attempt to
secure a livelihood without seeking to register with UNHCR. In 2017, the figure rose to 1.4 million according to the updated figures.

The country has, thus, always been open to migrants and people fleeing their home countries and in need of assistance. Relative to its own population, Jordan has the second-largest refugee population in the world, with refugees representing more than 30% of the total population. Despite this fact, Jordan has not signed up to the 1951 UNHCR Refugee Convention and does not have legislation that regulates the status of refugees.

II. Amman, a welcoming city

Today, approximately 30% of Amman’s 4 million inhabitants describe themselves as foreign-born. Indeed, historical and current migration patterns in the Greater Amman Municipality (GAM) reflect regional and international political history over the last century, and, as such, the development of Amman has been highly influenced by migration.

The Circassians and Chechens were the first to seek haven in the city in the 19th century. In the 1950s and 1960s Amman's population more than doubled due to migration. Between 1991 and 2003, 80% of Iraqis who arrived in Jordan settled in Amman as a result of the Israeli-Palestinian wars. Since 2013, the population of Amman has sharply increased with the mass arrival of Syrian refugees, who mostly settled in the city (in 2016 alone a total of 435,000 Syrians were reported as residing in Amman). Smaller numbers of Libyans, Yemenis, Somalis and Sudanese nationals have also sought refuge in Amman in recent years.

On the whole, despite this increase, the city has responded effectively to the needs of both new and settled communities. Throughout the city, essential municipal services are provided to people regardless of their country of origin or nationality. Nevertheless, for a number of districts in Amman, the growth of refugee communities has caused increased pressure on municipal infrastructure and public services, particularly regarding education, transport, public spaces, waste management and the provision of energy and water.

The city's main challenges can be synthetized as follows:

- **Acute shocks:**
  - Economic crisis
  - Terrorism
  - Major infrastructure failure
  - Drought
  - Heatwaves
  - Flash/surface flood.

- **Chronic stresses:**
  - High energy costs
  - Water shortage
  - Lack of natural resources
  - Limited access to financial assistance
  - Major influx of refugees and/or asylum seekers
  - Changing demographics
  - Low quality services especially in health and education
  - Urbanisation
  - Unemployment
  - Lack of affordable housing
  - Lack of diverse livelihood opportunities
  - Traffic congestion/lack of public transport system.
III. Social cohesion: the core of Amman’s migration policy

In response to growing levels of need in Amman’s districts, the Greater Amman Municipality has initiated a project that takes a social cohesion approach that aims at strengthening the resilience of vulnerable populations, improving living conditions, expanding the social communication between refugees and the local community and establishing community-based activities and capacity-building opportunities. Through various micro-initiatives, the project also aims to promote social cohesion by fostering the emergence of a neighbourhood identity, common to all residents irrespective of background.

Implementation

Although composed of numerous micro-initiatives, the main objectives of the project are to provide improved access to social, economic and cultural opportunities for refugees as well as promoting initiatives that bring refugees and the host community closer together. Project activities promote universal human rights and have thus focused on the facilitation of refugee access to work and medical care. Additionally, the project aims to create spaces of encounter, where people can meet and where barriers inhibiting exchange can be collectively dismantled. Such spaces are provided through local charity bazaars; through the rehabilitation of local parks; and through the creation of social networking programmes, such as football training courses for children.

Initiative 1: Rehabilitation of GAM parks

The rise in the numbers of refugees living in the districts of Amman has increased pressure on public spaces such as parks and open/green spaces. Indeed, two local parks, Shura Park and Jordan Park, proved incapable of meeting the maintenance requirements associated with increased visitors. GAM designed a micro-project to improve park facilities and preserve these two parks as spaces for meeting. All micro-initiatives were designed in an intensive planning phase that lasted three years. The implementation phase of the rehabilitation of local parks initiative started in June 2016 and took six months to complete. The main objective of this initiative was the creation of opportunities for increased interaction and improved social cohesion between Jordanian citizens and Syrian refugees. Active community participation has been a key element of the project throughout, and both Jordanian citizens and Syrian refugees were actively encouraged to participate in the project’s development and implementation. Furthermore, the inclusion of Syrian refugees as laborers has been promoted, providing access to capacity building and employment opportunities. Across the two parks, activities included the rehabilitation of both soft and hard landscape areas, additional planting, carpentry and playground maintenance.

Initiative 2: Training courses for young football players

A second micro-initiative supported by this multi-stakeholder cooperation is structured around the provision of football training courses for local
children aged 8–12 years. Participants in this programme come from local families, with both host and refugee communities represented. This social programme was designed to increase social cohesion and cultural inclusion in GAM districts through the development/strengthening of lines of communication between local Jordanian and Syrian children. This initiative promotes the social participation of refugee families and contributes to maintaining and enhancing a sense of social security. The project was initiated by the local community in collaboration with the Badr Nazzal district in February 2016 and ran for seven weeks. During this time, young residents received professional instruction from trainers drawn from similar social communities in spaces provided by GAM.

Results and impacts

The overall project is comprised of several short-term initiatives, each delivered with relatively modest budgets. This mode of operation encourages active community participation through the regular delivery of tangible short-term impacts.

The rehabilitation of local parks succeeded in redesigning public spaces to meet evolving local needs. The community’s satisfaction with the renovation project was shown by an increase in park visitors. This, in turn, creates further opportunities for social interaction between the host community and refugees. District employees have confirmed an observable increase in park usage by members of both the refugee and host communities.

Equally importantly, the visible involvement of Syrian refugees in the implementation of project activities has had a positive impact on their wider social inclusion, mitigating the threat of social segregation and countering localised discrimination. Furthermore, it can be argued that the employment opportunities provided for many Syrian refugees during the renovation activities enabled them to build a daily routine and offered a form of psychosocial support to a frequently traumatised community. Similarly, the football training programmes also worked positively towards improved social cohesion. During the programmes, project managers observed noticeable improvements in the way participating children behaved and engaged with each other. Playing football together enabled them to cross social and cultural divides.

These are just two examples from a number of initiatives connected with social-cohesion projects in districts of the Greater Amman Municipality, although almost exclusively located in the eastern part of the city, where most of the Syrian refugees currently live.

Barriers and challenges to implementation

During its implementation phase, the rehabilitation of parks faced several obstacles. These were predominantly related to project activity timeline delays. Such delays were triggered by issues with external contractors, but also as a result of both parks remaining open to the public for the duration of the rehabilitation works.
In contrast, the implementation of the football training scheme did not experience any major challenges in terms of implementation. On the contrary, the project, which had originally been initiated by the local community, benefited from broad support from all involved parties. However, where this project can perhaps be seen as limited is in terms of its focus on a heavily gendered activity. In fact, no girls participated in the project activities.

Overall, both initiatives are limited in terms of temporal and financial scope. Whilst limited, project-specific budgets can be useful during a pilot phase, insofar as they allow innovative practices to be tested, ultimately they represent a barrier to scale and risk impeding the longevity/sustainability of overall project objectives.

IV. Open border policies

Amman, endowed with peace and stability, has always received masses of migrants from the surrounding region, including forced migrants seeking safe haven and economic migrants seeking labour and economic opportunities in Jordan’s booming economy. Until recently and due to the conflicts in neighbouring countries, migrants have been welcomed with open border policies. Since receiving Palestinian refugees, followed by Iraqis and Syrians in large numbers, and some Yemenis, Libyans, Somalis and Sudanese, the priority has been to build infrastructure to serve the human capital. Economic development projects have been designed to respond to the needs of the newcomers while ensuring the provision of basic services to every citizen. The human capital became an asset for Jordan’s strategic development.

Integration, diversity and migrant rights policies

At the local level, GAM seeks to ensure social cohesion while shaping the city identity. The services of the city, including community centres, libraries, cultural centres and entertainment parks/green spaces are open to all residents of the city, regardless of their nationality. Other structural services provided by GAM such as street cleaning, environment-related activities, building permits, local markets, health inspection and maintenance of the urban infrastructure serve all residents indiscriminately.

GAM uses the spectrum of policies at its disposal to ensure the well-being of residents. These include interventions in the fields of the environment, physical space and social and cultural affairs. City officials set out to ensure the overall population is engaged in the activities devised. Consultation with local stakeholders, including interviews and a meeting of local stakeholders in April 2017 in the framework of the Mediterranean City-to-City Migration (MC2CM) project, led to the identification of three priorities for migrant integration policies in the city:

– Development of a resource centre on migration;
– Community services for migrants and social cohesion;
– Training for municipal employees with a focus on vulnerable communities in highly populated areas.
**Municipal services are provided regardless of origin or nationality.**

The project seeks to support disadvantaged Jordanians and refugees by providing them with employment opportunities in public parks.

**Good practices**

Municipal services are provided regardless of origin or nationality. Employees at the municipality believe that their work at environmental, physical, social and cultural levels is to sustain the wellbeing of the people and the maintenance of the city. However, GAM has also taken specific steps to tackle issues related to migrants’ access to basic services and refugee livelihoods. To that end, it participates in programmes funded and run under the auspices of governmental and international aid organisations such as the European Union, the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation, the International Rescue Committee (IRC) and GIZ, among others. There are currently three ongoing projects related to migrants and refugees.

The MC2CM project funded by the European Union and co-funded by the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation aims to contribute to improved migration governance at city level, including migrants’ access to basic services and human rights. The project takes place within a network of cities in Europe and in the southern Mediterranean region (Amman, Beirut, Lisbon, Lyon, Madrid, Tangiers, Tunis, Turin and Vienna). It has been implemented since 2015 to increase the knowledge base on urban migration and to nurture peer-to-peer dialogue to support mutual learning about specific urban challenges such as social cohesion, intercultural dialogue, employment and the provision of basic services for migrants, among others.

The Amman Resilience Strategy: “Integration towards resilience” is led by 100 Resilient Cities (100RC), the IRC, the Global Alliance for Urban Crises and the International Institute for Environment and Development. This project provides a unique opportunity to connect refugee response efforts within the city to long-term resilience goals and actions. The Greater Amman Municipality, in partnership with 100RC and the IRC, is dedicated to establishing a coordinated response to the refugee crisis in a way that contributes to the realisation of the City Resilience Strategy and the successful implementation of the Jordan Response Plan in Amman.

GIZ Green Infrastructure Projects in Jordan. The project seeks to support disadvantaged Jordanians and refugees by providing them with employment opportunities in public parks managed by the municipality: the project involves the implementation and management of public open spaces (small plazas, recreational areas, pedestrian connection, stairs and urban agriculture).

**V. Conclusion**

Of Jordan’s total population of 9.5 million, Jordanians number around 6.6 million, while the number of non-Jordanians who reside in the country is around 2.9 million, representing 30.6% of the overall population.

GAM works towards the fulfilment of universal human rights for all residents of Amman and takes action to reduce socio-cultural tensions and mitigate the risk of segregation between host and refugee communities. The micro-initiatives discussed form part of these wider efforts and present short-term, tangible and easily accessible projects for refugees and local communities.
In many ways, they display the characteristics of “good practices”, as defined by studies on social cohesion/migrant inclusion in cities. Both initiatives, for instance, build on an awareness that the earlier migrant inclusion programmes begin, the better the chances of social cohesion. Additionally, the active involvement of refugees in the implementation of public projects (i.e. the rehabilitation of a local park) reflects an appreciation of the linkages between capacity building at an individual level and broader urban resilience.

Fundamentally, the involvement of non-native residents in neighbourhood development and recreational activities is key to enabling spaces of encounter and opportunities for dialogue. The football initiative, for instance, shows that the provision of active recreational activities is an effective means of bringing young people of different backgrounds together and providing access to a healthy lifestyle while defusing the potential for inter-cultural tensions. Some have even argued that such youth activities might also function as a bridge for enhanced parental interaction. However, such a suggestion would require validation through further research.

The football micro-initiative also suggests ways in which community initiatives, designed in direct response to self-assessed needs, have the potential to be catalysed and scaled up to district level. In theory, this local ownership creates a firm foundation for longer-term, sustainable programming. In this sense, the football initiative and the park project highlight the value of designing a range of micro-initiatives that take different entry points to promote the social integration of migrants.

However, this approach would be further strengthened if the design of pilot inclusion projects, such as those presented above, were embedded within a longer-term strategy to transform them into programmes that are adequately resourced and protected by local policy. That is why it is important that such small-scale activities are followed up, scaled up and integrated into a broader and longer-term approach to social cohesion. In this way, the comprehensive institutionalisation of participatory, inclusive processes has the potential to contribute to increased stability and local security at city level.
I. Building a human rights city from a painful history

Gwangju is a city in the south west of South Korea with a population of 1.5 million and a history of resistance to colonialism and dictatorship. In May 1980, when citizens of Gwangju bravely challenged the military rulers, several thousand people were killed and injured. Despite the extreme fear of death, human dignity was respected, as citizens shared food, donated blood to the wounded and not a single store was looted. The movement was the beginning of the seven-year struggle towards democracy that culminated in South Korea’s new democratic constitution being approved in 1987. Documents from the movement were listed in UNESCO’s Memory of the World Register in 2011.

The so-called Gwangju Spirit, representing “human rights, democracy and peace”, has become the core philosophy of the city’s administration and the basis of the city’s development as a human rights city. Since the start of the century a number of human rights mechanisms have been incorporated by the city’s administration, such as city ordinances on the rights of disabled people, migrants, children, young people and the elderly in 2005, while a comprehensive human rights ordinance was established in 2009. Eventually, Gwangju, at one time known as the city of agony, became a leading human rights city in the country. The Gwangju Spirit plays a key role in building and maintaining human rights mechanisms regardless of changes of political leadership. It has been a key part of the city developing positive narratives from its painful history in order to construct its human rights city brand and promote a noble community spirit to tackle social challenges.

II. Institutionalisation of human rights

Gwangju progressively institutionalised human rights by establishing human rights standards, human rights policies and administrative organs.

The city established the Human Rights Civil Committee in 2012, which consisted of representatives from the city council and various human rights groups.

Gwangju was the first local government in Korea to introduce a comprehensive human rights ordinance in 2009. The ordinance was fully revised in 2012 to contain the Human Rights Master Plan (Article 7), human rights indicators (Article 10), human rights education (Article 11), human rights centre (Article 12), the Gwangju Human Rights Charter (Article 19), international cooperation (Article 20), the Human Rights Civil Committee (Article 24) and the human rights impact assessment (Article 30). In 2013, the ordinance was partially revised to legalise the new ombudsmen system. The city's human rights ordinance has inspired other local governments to draft similar ordinances. By April 2017, 16 metropolitan cities and another 82 cities, counties and districts had introduced a human rights ordinance out of the total 243 municipal and local level governments in Korea.

Gwangju established a Human Rights Office with 12 staff in August 2010, the first Korean local government to do so. The office had three teams: democracy and human rights; human rights and peace exchange; and the May 18 movement enhancement team. The Ombudsmen Support Team was established in 2013 and the office changed its title to the Human Rights and Peace Cooperation Office. In 2014 it was expanded to six teams with 28 staff. The office played a key role in institutionalising human rights in the city administration. The human rights bodies were established in all five districts in Gwangju and other local governments started to set up similar organs, following Gwangju’s model. However, the Human Rights Office could not work effectively as the control tower for implementing human rights policies in all the departments due to the lack of a coordination mechanism. In order to solve this, the city recently raised the status of the office, calling it the Human Rights Burea, and giving it 45 staff in three departments: democracy and human rights; May 18 movement enhancement; and North and South Korea exchange (2019). With this upgraded status, the Human Rights Bureau is expected to play a more active role as the control tower for human rights mechanisms. The bureau is also strengthening the coordination system with relevant city departments by monitoring the implementation of the annual action plans deriving from the second Human Rights Master Plan and the human rights impact assessment.

As another implementation body based on the human rights ordinance, the city established the Human Rights Civil Committee in 2012, which consisted of representatives from the city council and various human rights groups focussed on women, migrants, and the disabled, among others. The committee’s role is to review the city’s human rights policies and programmes and make a recommendation to the city administration. The city has also been participating in a monthly joint meeting with the city’s education council, the Gwangju office of the National Human Rights Commission of Korea, and NGOs to coordinate the implementation of human rights policies.

The same year, the city of Gwangju also set up the first five-year Human Rights Master Plan (2012–2016). The master plan had five major goals: developing human rights indicators, establishing the Human Rights Charter and review the ordinance, building a human rights office and implementing the human rights ordinance, and monitoring and evaluating the implementation of the Master Plan. The Human Rights Master Plan is an action plan that consists of a series of tasks, activities, and strategies for the implementation of the human rights charter. The plan is reviewed every year and the results are published annually. The Human Rights Master Plan serves as a roadmap for the implementation of the human rights ordinance and is a key tool for achieving the goals of the Gwangju Human Rights City.

1. The human rights ordinance stipulates the structure of the institutionalisation of human rights in the city. The human rights charter and human rights ordinance bring human rights standards and principles to the city. While the charter presents a non-binding blueprint for the human rights city, the ordinance is a regulation that is legally binding on the city administration. The Human Rights Office (centre) and the Human Rights Civil Committee are the implementing organs of these human rights principles. As implementing tools for these human rights standards and principles, the ordinance also stipulates concrete human rights policies and programmes such as the Human Rights Master Plan, human rights indicators, the human rights ombudsmen system, human rights impact assessment, human rights education, etc.
rights city brand, promoting human rights education, and strengthening international cooperation. However, this master plan did not contain concrete policy strategies or annual action plans for each major area of human rights. In 2018, the second Human Rights Master Plan was made for 2018–2021. The second master plan selected six core areas: improvement for the socially marginalised; build-up the human rights administration; form a human rights culture; establish a collaboration system for human rights administration; and strengthen the city's status as a human rights city. To fill the gaps in the first Human Rights Master Plan, 123 annual action plans have been finalised across 27 different departments to be applied over four years following dozens of consultation processes with experts, NGO groups and other administrative departments. Another feature of this master plan is that the disabled, the elderly, migrants, women and children were chosen as target groups.

The Gwangju Human Rights Charter was established in May 2012 and consists of five chapters and 18 articles. This was the first human rights charter in any Asian city and its development was democratically conducted through the voluntary participation of all social classes and open discussion between members of Gwangju society. After that, Gwangju developed 100 human rights indicators in five target areas and 18 practice subjects corresponding to the structure of the Gwangju Human Rights Charter. The indicators were designed to implement the charter by measuring the human rights condition of the citizens and providing valuable data and information to develop relevant human rights policies. Since 2013, each of the city's departments has made a concrete action plan for implementing relevant indicators at the start of the year, which serves as an annual action plan, and the results are evaluated at the end of the year. In reality, it was difficult to make all the city's departments take up human rights work as their major tasks, and equal concern about all the indicators often resulted in a lack of action.

2012 was also the year when the city launched a human rights education programme. One year later, 5,884 public officers, 5,165 social welfare institution workers, and 16,101 citizens received human rights education. In 2014, 1,346 teachers in nursery facilities joined the recipients of human rights education and the newly launched on-site programme dispatched human rights trainers to locations requested by citizens and conducted 190 training sessions with 8,044 participants in various institutions and local communities. Since 2016, the city has also been conducting human rights education with officials above grade 4, who tend to be decision-makers.

In 2013, the city established the human rights ombudsmen system, which investigates human rights violation or discrimination cases in the city's public sector. The city recruited one standing ombudsman and one investigator and appointed non-standing ombudsmen in six areas: the disabled, migrants, labourers, women and children, academia and general human rights. In April 2018, the city also appointed a women's rights investigator who would be responsible for counselling and investigating sexual violence against women employees. From 2013 to 2018, the ombudsmen provided consultation on 346 cases and issued a recommendation on 33 out of 78 registered cases.
III. Social inclusion policies

Chapter 3 of the Gwangju Human Rights Charter is about “The Warm City Supporting the Disadvantaged” by assuring a minimum standard of living, gender equality and women’s rights, rights for the proper care of children and the elderly, the rights of the disabled to live without discrimination and diverse culture and identity in the city (Articles 8–12).

Under the leadership of Mayor Yoon Jang-hyun (2014–2018), Gwangju decided upon six major areas in which urgent measures were necessary in late 2014: poverty, high suicide rates, migrants, irregular workers, out-of-school children and the mobility impaired. The city received 61 policy proposals after holding consecutive consultations with human rights experts and open forums to directly hear the opinions of citizens, especially socially marginalised groups, in 2015. The city took another three months to draw up a concrete action plan including budgeting, alongside officers from 17 relevant departments and human rights experts on each proposal. As a result, 45 action plans were finalised out of 61 proposals in May 2016. For example, in the area of migrants, 13 action plans were made on educating citizens about migrants’ rights, supporting them to form the migrant community, guaranteeing migrant participation in local society, establishing a comprehensive support network for migrants, identifying the living condition of migrants and broadening Korean language education for migrants. The city’s Human Rights Office coordinated all the processes.

The city of Gwangju also introduced the “24-hour activity support service for severely disabled people” in 2014, which was designed to return human life to those who could not live without protection and to those who had to sacrifice their own lives for them. The city introduced the Gwangju Wage for Living Ordinance in December 2014 and decided that 7,254 KW per hour (approximately $7; 130% of the national minimum wage) should be the living wage for 2015, the highest of all the local governments in the country. It aimed to improve the living conditions of vulnerable workers and alleviate income inequality. A living wage has currently been applied to workers in the city’s public sector and rose steadily up to 8,840 KW per hour for 2018. The city plans to promote its application in the private sector.

One of the most representative of the city’s social inclusion policies was the status change regularising irregular public sector workers under Mayor Yoon Jang-hyun. Gwangju changed the employment status of all 859 workers in city hall, public corporations and city-invested institutions by the end of 2017, including 772 contract workers such as cleaners, security guards and information clerks. This policy was selected as one of 100 National Agendas by the new Korean government.

Since 2014, Gwangju has been putting huge efforts into introducing the so-called “Gwangju Job Model”, which is based on the tripartite agreement of the workers, the management and the city government. The city is trying to establish a maximum wage and to invest the money deriving from it to create new jobs. While workers receive a reduced wage, the city’s plan is to support decent living standards by providing better housing and social welfare services. Gwangju and the Hyundai Motor Company have signed an agreement to jointly invest to establish
an automotive plant based on the Gwangju Job Model on January 31st 2019. The city expects 1,000 decent new jobs to be created through this agreement.

Gwangju established a human rights impact assessment in 2017. It requires city officials to assess whether any discrimination or violation is being made against the socially marginalised before making ordinances and major policies that have a significant impact on the rights of citizens. A unique feature of the system is that the Human Rights Civil Committee has been given the power to select the subject of the assessment and to recommend necessary measures to the mayor. Over an approximately year-long period, 14 new and fully revised ordinances and 90 existing ordinances were subject to human rights impact assessment and 40 recommendations were made separately. The city also conducted a human rights impact assessment on 42 polling stations to ensure free access to the mobility impaired during the local election in June 2018. The “human rights impact assessment guidelines” for public buildings were introduced to adopt universal design and guarantee free access to socially marginalised groups. The Human Rights Office plans to include expected users such as the elderly, migrants and children in a list of assessment members to reflect their needs in a process of architectural design and construction. The Gwangju Safety Centre was selected to apply these guidelines and the city plans to broaden their application to public buildings step by step.

Besides these individual social inclusion policies, sustainable policies should be developed that incorporate the city’s human rights principles and strategies. Gwangju has clearly expressed its vision as a city where various kinds of culture and identity are respected under Article 12 of Gwangju Human Rights Charter. The city has been trying to acknowledge diversity in developing and implementing the human rights mechanisms explained in Part 2. One example of this is the second Human Rights Master Plan choosing migrants as one of its target groups and developing eight policy agendas: setting up a research plan and strategy on various migrant groups, conducting research on these groups successively, multi-cultural sensitisation education on inhabitants, operating programmes to empower migrants’ leadership, broadening services to undocumented migrants and refugees, providing assistance to stateless children, activating migrant culture communities and establishing participatory governance for migrants. Twenty-three annual action plans have been developed in line with these policy agendas.

As the city has only been actively establishing human rights mechanisms for around ten years, the city is in the initial stage of realising diversity in society especially for migrants. Korea has been a homogenous nation for a long time and Koreans have relatively low tolerance for migrants. There were 29,131 migrants living in Gwangju in 2015, about 2% of the city’s population. In 2018, over 170,000 Koreans signed a petition sent to Blue House (the South Korean presidential residence) calling for around 540 Yemenis who had entered Jeju Island to have their applications for refugee status refused, and over 100,000 Koreans signed a separate petition to Blue House calling for the abolishment of the Korean Refugee Act enacted in 2013. This conservative culture and limited domestic legal protection towards migrants mean Gwangju is struggling to develop sustainable policies that incorporate the city’s human rights principles and strategies.

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2. The Blue House is the executive office and official residence of the head of state and government of Korea.
progressive policies for migrants, especially for undocumented migrant workers and refugees. Develop comprehensive migrant policies based on the principle of human rights remains a major challenge for the city.

**IV. Promoting participatory democracy and citizen ownership**

Chapter 1 of the Gwangju Human Rights Charter focuses on the “Freely Communicating and Participating City” by assuring citizens’ right to free expression, autonomous administration through participation and cultivation of democratic civic consciousness (Articles 1–3). Collaboration with civil society and concerned parties has been the main approach taken to establish effective human rights administration and policies, particularly for socially marginalised groups. Strengthening participatory democracy and citizen ownership later emerged as major tasks. Gwangju has been strengthening participatory democracy in policymaking and decision-making processes based on the principle of collaborative governance.

Gwangju has been trying to cultivate citizen ownership at community-level in five districts by supporting the community movement. The city introduced the community support ordinance in 2010: by 2013 it was supporting 112 communities, and 600 by the end of 2017. The city established a Community Support Team, which has become a model of good governance, through which city officials closely collaborate with village organisations on planning, budgeting and implementing village projects. As a result, village residents are expanding their self-determination into diverse areas of life including children’s education, the environment and welfare.

Gwangju began its participatory budget system in 2011. Under Mayor Yoon Jang-hyun’s leadership (2014–2018), the city expanded its participatory budget system by introducing the “Gwangju Citizen Participation Budget System” in 2017. Participation in budget execution guarantees the outcome of citizen participation in policymaking. In April 2017, the city appointed 91 participatory budget committee members out of 193 applicants. The city selected members from socially marginalised groups, in addition to financial experts. The age of members varied from 20s to 80s as the city considered age balance, gender balance and residential area balance in a selection process. In this system, citizens can propose public projects and 91 committee members participate in three stages of reviewing, screening and selecting proposals (Gwangju Metropolitan Government, 2017). The city also doubled its participatory budget to 10 billion KW (about $9 million) per year for 2018 and beyond. This Participatory Budget System helps the city to divert part of the budget’s planning power from the city administration to citizens and to improve the transparency and fairness of the budgeting process. The committee selected 40 of the 632 submitted for 2019. However, the city government faced a challenge from the city council when processing the implementation. The city council cut 23 billion KW from 14 proposals saying that they overlapped or were not urgent. The city council had previously cut the whole budget of 21 out of selected 40 proposals, which amounted to about 50% of participatory budget for year of 2018 (NEWSIS, 2018). Reconciling the Gwangju Citizen Participation Budget System with the budgetary power of the city council is a major challenge.
Gwangju held its first Citizens’ Assembly on May 21st, 2017, Gwangju Citizens’ Day. The planning group consisted of civil experts and organisers who led the entire process of preparing and putting on the assembly with support from the city administration. All Gwangju citizens and civic groups had the right to propose policies. Finally, 100 policies proposed by citizen meetings and citizens voted for the most popular ten proposals. Representatives of city hall, the city council, the board of education, and five district offices signed an agreement to implement the policies adopted at the assembly. After that, the city reviewed proposals and accepted 53 out of 100; ten were accepted in their entirety, 22 partially and 21 were already being implemented (Gwangju Dream Daily, 2018). The accepted proposals included the establishment of a youth culture centre, community childcare rooms, and the expansion of services to families with three or more children. The Citizens’ Assembly was repeated in 2018. The Citizens’ Assembly was an experiment in inclusive governance between citizens, civil society groups, city hall and city councils. Consideration should be given to the city legalising for the assembly through city ordinance.

A successful public consultation on the construction of metro line 2 in 2018 provides a good example of collaborative governance. This issue had been controversial for 16 years. Under the new leadership of Mayor Lee Yong-seop (2018–2022), the city suspended all administrative procedures on the issue and empowered the public consultation committee, which consisted of seven neutral members of civil society, to coordinate all the public consultation procedures. The committee selected 250 civil participants: 125 each from supporting and opposing groups. The committee then conducted a two-day mature consultation. City officials were prohibited from participating in discussion. The construction of metro line 2 received an approval rate of 78.6% and the opposing groups accepted the result. This prevented a social dispute and tested a new decision-making culture in which the minority opinion is also considered.

Gwangju has been helping socially marginalised groups in policy monitoring and implementation. City ordinances require that all of over 100 city committees contain 40% women members. The city also has a separate youth committee to listen to the needs of young people and discuss plans and promote policies to solve them. In 2018, the city also launched a Civic Rights Committee consisting of various civil group representatives which receives and reviews citizen petitions and provides solutions within 100 days.

V. Outcomes and challenges

Under Mayor Kwang Woon-tae’s leadership (2010–2014), human rights were institutionalised in Gwangju’s city administration to a considerable degree. During his term, Gwangju established a Human Rights Office, unveiled the Gwangju Human Rights Charter, introduced human rights ordinance, 100 human rights indicators, a human rights ombudsmen system, and a Human Rights Master Plan. As a result, the city became a leading model of a human rights city compared to other local governments in the country.
However, strong criticism arose that the institutionalisation of human rights itself did not automatically lead to the actual improvement of citizens’ rights, especially those of socially marginalised groups. As a response to the criticism, Mayor Yoon Jang-hyun (2014–2018) put more efforts into internalising human rights principles in the city administration and adopted several social inclusion policies. During his term, the city introduced the “24-hour activity support service for disabled people”, the Gwangju Wage For Living Ordinance, the so-called “Gwangju Job Model” and the human rights impact assessment, as well as regularising the status of all public sector non-regular workers in the city. Mayor Yoon also took further steps to strengthen participatory democracy and citizens’ ownership by significantly expanding support to community activities, strengthening the participatory budget system and holding citizens’ assemblies. Current Mayor Lee Yong-seop (2018–2022) took on these policies and conducted the public consultation on the controversial metro line 2 issue and established the Civic Rights Committee. All these efforts were to encourage citizen participation on the decision-making process of city policies.

In my opinion, three key elements make Gwangju a human rights city. First is strong political will as well as a well-designed city philosophy on promoting human rights. All the important achievements were possible due to the strong will of two former mayors. An unchallengeable public consensus to respect human rights, the so-called Gwangju Spirit, has been the basis of this strong political will. An atmosphere has been created that means Gwangju’s mayor must respect the Gwangju Spirit and promote human rights regardless of a change of political leadership.

The second element is the establishment of competent Human Rights Office in the city administration. The Human Rights Office must have enough human and financial resources, its status must be sustainable and some staff including the head office must be chosen from civic human rights experts. From the beginning, at least seven years’ experience in the human rights field has been a minimum qualification for the director of the Human Rights Office. The Human Rights Office was set up under the direct supervision of the vice administrative mayor and holds the largest human resources of any similar human rights body in Korean local governments. The competent Human Rights Office played a key role in aggressively institutionalising human rights and implementing the relevant human rights policies in the city administration. The National Human Rights Commission of Korea also expressed its view that in order to localise human rights it is important to strengthen human rights departments and human rights civil committees in local governments.

Third, there must be good cooperation with civil society. Representatives of civic groups and academics were invited to participate in the process of institutionalising human rights as well as developing relevant human rights policies. A Civil Committee set up under the human rights ordinance has the power to review the city’s human rights policies and programmes and make recommendations to the city administration.
In my experience as the directress of the Human Rights Office at Gwangju City Hall, there were three major challenges in the process of localising human rights. First was the lack of human rights sensibility among city government officers and their reluctance to develop and implement human rights policies. As the institutionalisation of human rights was led by the Human Rights Office during the initial stage, city officers incorrectly assumed that human rights work was exclusively the competence of the Human Rights Office. In fact, all city departments are responsible for making and implementing concrete human rights policies. Different departments sometimes have to abandon their routine work practices and work collaboratively to realise comprehensive human rights policies. Since 2012, Gwangju has been conducting human rights education for city officials to raise their human rights sensibility and to attempt to introduce collaborative work between relevant city departments as well as with civil society.

The second challenge is the lack of central government-level human rights legislation and mechanisms. The Korean central government has not yet enacted a human rights basic act that enables it to guarantee a sustainable and comprehensive launch of human rights mechanisms in local governments. Decentralising authority for financial and human resources from central government to local governments is a relevant issue in this context.

Lastly, strong political will among local governments matters again. Institutionalisation of human rights must lead to the establishment of comprehensive and in-depth policies for expanding social inclusion and participatory democracy. Recently, Gwangju has experimented with several new policies to foster diversity in society and empower citizens in the decision-making process but these approaches have not yet taken root in the city administration. A strong political will makes it possible for the city to reach the next level to become a genuine human rights city.

**VI. Conclusion**

Gwangju has gone a long way towards becoming a human rights city, but much progress remains to be made. I hope the experience of Gwangju will be helpful for local governments that are willing to work towards a human rights city. Lastly, I would like to note that Gwangju has been strengthening international human rights cooperation among local governments. We need multi-layered international solidarity, including central and local governments and civil societies. Since 2011, the city has been holding the World Human Rights Cities Forum in order to share human rights policies and to promote the concept of human rights cities with the participation of city officials and civil society organisations and international organisations at domestic and international level. It is hoped that this network will help to strengthen international solidarity and enhance the rights of people, including the socially marginalised in the public sphere, to make the most of the practical experiences and expertise of all participating cities. Gwangju further plans to establish a secretariat office and launch the Gwangju 2030 Agenda for Human Rights Cities at the 10th WHRCF in 2020.
References


I. Introduction: Exploring the common ground

Contemporary cities are affected by numerous crises. Increasing social and cultural exclusion, the deprivation of basic rights, and the difficulty public authorities have addressing the structural roots of urban challenges and many other issues demand new policy approaches. They should take advantage of existing ways of thinking in different policy fields and in academic and grassroots communities, and develop more sophisticated paradigms that address the multidimensional nature of contemporary urban life.

The exploration of the nexus between the right to the city, the right to difference and local cultural action, including local cultural policies, provides one such space of opportunity in which potential synergies can be further explored. In particular, an initial analysis of the concepts suggests the following complementarities:

The right to the city involves inhabitants being able to take part in shaping urban spaces in accordance with their values and interests – and this is arguably informed by cultural values. David Harvey asserts that “the right to the city is … a right to change and reinvent the city more after our hearts’ desire” (Harvey, 2013: 4). Jon Hawkes likewise says that “[our] culture embodies the sense we make of our lives; it is built on the values we share and the ways we come to terms with our differences” (Hawkes, 2006: 240). Cultural action helps build a sense of shared meaning and purpose (Hawkes, 2001: 13).

The right to difference, as proposed by Henri Lefebvre, involves a rejection of trends towards homogenisation and domination embodied by capitalism, as well as the social fragmentation that come with them. It may be related to contemporary approaches to cultural policy which have stressed the need to preserve cultural diversity and to protect and promote the diversity of cultural expressions in the context of globalisation,¹ as “[cultural] diversity... is one of the essential elements in the transformation of urban and social reality” (UCLG, 2004: para 1).²

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¹ See, for example: UNESCO, 2005.
Ultimately, the right to the city is “interdependent of all internationally recognized and integrally conceived human rights” (HIC, 2005: article 1.2), including, among others, cultural rights such as the right to take part in cultural life (Universal Declaration on Human Rights; International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights) and related elements such as the right to historical and cultural heritage (UCLG-CISDP, 2016). As shall be seen later, operational approaches to cultural rights such as citizens’ involvement in cultural priority-setting, the use of public spaces as environments for the co-creation of narratives and symbols about the cultural dimension of cities, and the decentralisation of cultural facilities and opportunities, may be seen to embody the cultural dimension of the right to the city.

Despite these potential synergies, it could also be argued that, in practice, work around the right to the city and cultural action are only occasionally connected. The language used by activists, practitioners and policymakers in these areas is often different, priorities tend to differ, and the potential complementarities are seldom made explicit. One of the factors that may need to be addressed in this respect involves the clarification of the instances in which cultural action is effectively conducive to the right to the city.

II. The relationship between culture and the exercise of rights in the city

To reflect on the conditions in which cultural action can contribute to the exercise of the right to the city, a critical approach must be developed to cultural action and cultural policy. It should recognise that policies and programmes in these areas have often deviated from an inclusive, participatory, rights-based approach and have effectively contributed to other urban paradigms instead.

Contemporary developments in cities attest to this. It has been argued that cities, towns, neighbourhoods and local spaces provide the most suitable environment in which to exercise the right to take part in cultural life, and there are several clear examples (Martinell, 2014: 5). However, cities are also central sites of consumption, including of cultural goods and services. Indeed, the contemporary cultural industries have been to a large extent integrated in the global trade of goods and services, just like other basic services (e.g. housing), and may be seen to reinforce its dominant values: “The culture industry testifies less to the centrality of culture than to the expansionist ambitions of the late capitalist system … Besides, the more influential this culture grows, the more it reinforces a global system whose ends are for the most part inimical to culture in the normative sense of the term … [Capitalism] has incorporated culture for its own material ends …” (Eagleton, 2018: 151–152). Many of today’s trends in cultural tourism (major cultural festivals, blockbuster exhibitions, new branches of global museums as tourism attractors, etc.) and the use of cultural images and symbols in city branding for a range of purposes, provide extensive evidence of this.

Alongside the commodification of cultural expressions, which often involves homogenisation, the search for “authentic” and “diverse” spaces and activities, and the symbolic capital derived from them, is often instru-
mentalised in the name of profit. In many cities, the preservation of historic neighbourhoods, which often played host to artists' studios and other cultural initiatives, has led to the gentrification of urban spaces (Harvey, 2013). The impacts of this are various, including the non-affordability of living and working spaces (and the subsequent eviction of former neighbours and resident artists), the loss of social and cultural diversity, and the concentration of cultural narratives on a limited set of traditional and commercial aspects, ultimately preventing the dynamic evolution of cultural expressions and activities. In these contexts, culture serves to reinforce domination rather than to expand freedoms or to exercise citizens' rights.

These trends also impact on the working conditions of artists and cultural professionals. Certainly, these sectors have already experienced difficulties in the past, yet new forms of exploitation may be visible nowadays, including the increasing prevalence of freelancing in the cultural and creative sectors and the assumption that individual passion for working in the arts and culture serves to justify long working hours, poor working conditions, and low salaries (Zafra, 2017).

III. The right to the city, the right to difference and local cultural policies: areas for action

While acknowledging these tensions and limitations, instances in which cultural policies contribute to expanding individual and collective freedoms and to enabling the exercise of rights, including the right to the city, can also be observed. Very often, these approaches rely on innovation in governance approaches, involving citizens and civil society organisations either as initiators of new approaches or as active partners in the design, implementation and evaluation of cultural policies. And, in a pattern not dissimilar to other areas of activity related to the right to the city, comparable challenges and demands are experienced in cities across the world, thus somehow paving the way for international cooperation.

One relevant initiative emerging in this field is the “Agenda 21 for culture”, a charter adopted at an international gathering of local governments and civil society organisations in 2004, at the initiative of the Forum of Local Authorities for Social Inclusion in Porto Alegre (UCLG, 2004). Since then, the Agenda 21 for culture has been promoted by United Cities and Local Governments (UCLG), stressing the need for cultural aspects and policies to be seen as a core component of approaches to local sustainable development.

Although it should be recognised that the usage of the terms “sustainable development” and the related “sustainable cities” should be subject to critical reflection (García Chueca, 2019), promoters of the Agenda 21 for culture understand that a more multidimensional, holistic view of development is necessary, with cultural factors (values, expressions, heritage, diversity, creativity – always fully respecting human rights) recognised as central to development and gaining ground in local governance.

In practice, this involves adopting a visibly distant, if not opposed, stance to the “creative cities” paradigm (see e.g. Florida, 2004), which has generally seen culture as a driver of economic development, and
has contributed to reinforcing the hierarchies prevalent in mainstream approaches to development and to neglecting the inclusive, rights-based approach to cultural development. In this respect, the Culture 21: Actions toolkit adopted by UCLG in 2015, following an extensive consultation process in order to update the tenets of the Agenda 21 for culture and increase their applicability, argues that “[cultural] rights guarantee that everyone can access the resources they need to freely pursue their process of cultural identification throughout their life, as well as to actively participate in, and reshape, existing cultures”, and that “[the] reduction of culture to its economic value may reduce or eliminate its contributions to the common good and, consequently, its transformative potential … Twenty-first century economic models must allow for a more coherent link between public, private, and non-profit economies, and guarantee dignity and respect for individuals, social justice, and the environment” (UCLG, 2015: 11–12). Although the potential for cultural activities and processes to contribute to economic development is not denied, only limited emphasis is placed here on this nexus, with more attention being paid to inclusive participation in cultural life and the representation of diverse expressions and heritages in the public space.

Drawing on policies and projects inspired by the Agenda 21 for culture and by similar initiatives implemented in other contexts, a set of lines of action are set out below which serve to reconcile and strengthen the connection between the right to the city, the right to difference and local cultural policies.

a) Decentralisation, inclusive access and participation in cultural activities

One of the traditional challenges of strengthening the cultural dimension of urban planning concerns the concentration of opportunities for cultural participation within limited areas and spaces. Indeed, cultural activities have often tended to take place in formal, classic venues (museums, galleries, theatres, concert halls, palaces, etc.), a majority of which have historically been based in city centres, limiting the ability of citizens in peripheral neighbourhoods to access them. A range of complementary factors have also contributed to reducing rates of access to and participation in culture, such as limited diversity in the range of activities available in the main cultural facilities, unease experienced by significant sectors of the population in accessing major cultural venues, partly due to the images and values attached to them (the fear of not understanding, or the perception that cultural activities were meant exclusively for another segment of the population), ticket prices and lack of information.

Several complementary measures and approaches have been implemented by local actors in recent years to address weaknesses in this area, including the following:

Diversifying the aesthetics, styles and formats that are legitimate recipients of public support and which deserve a place in the public cultural space, for example, through public programmes supporting street art (Bogotá, Lisbon and others).

3. It should be noted that Richard Florida has in recent years revised some of his earlier approaches in this area to address increasing inequality, segregation and gentrification (Florida, 2017).

4. Several of the projects mentioned in the following sections, though not all, are drawn from the Obs database of good practices managed by the UCLG Committee on Culture, available at http://obs.agenda21culture.net/.
Establishing networks of decentralised community cultural centres, responding to citizens’ needs and developing a range of participatory activities (e.g. Belo Horizonte, Lille, Mexico City).

Providing support to cultural projects initiated by informal collectives and community groups, contributing to strengthening capacities across the city and to introducing more diversity to the public cultural sphere (e.g. Bogotá, Glasgow, Rio de Janeiro).

Establishing partnerships with a range of local stakeholders which enable cultural opportunities to be made available in a diverse set of spaces across the city, beyond the more traditional cultural venues, thus providing entry points to groups of citizens that would rarely be able to take part – e.g. the partnerships between artists and secondary schools promoted by the “Creators in residence” project in Barcelona, which engages students in creative processes.

Beyond the notion of “access to culture”, which may often entail passive reception of cultural works “produced” by artists, the more active notion of “participation” should prevail in these approaches. Furthermore, it is important to highlight that in addition to taking part in specific cultural activities such as, for example, the creation of new narratives and works, the right to take part in cultural life requires active involvement in decision-making and in the management of cultural processes and activities, as discussed further below.

b) Recognition and support for plural, diverse cultural ecosystems

Analyses of the structure and dynamism of contemporary culture highlight its configuration as an “ecosystem” of mutually dependent agents and processes (see Holden, 2015). In response, cities should strive to facilitate an enabling environment for a diverse range of cultural stakeholders and recognise their interdependence. This would show they recognise the right to difference and acknowledge that diversity is not only an intrinsic trait in humanity, but a desirable component of society. Indeed, as with natural ecosystems, a rich cultural life should encompass small grassroots initiatives alongside large cultural venues, classical music ensembles alongside hip-hop bands, commercial and non-profit initiatives, and opportunities and activities covering a diverse set of art forms and cultural expressions. Rather than seeing these initiatives as opposed, they often take complementary and variable positions within a continuum, and may feed into one another: graduates from public theatre schools and members of independent dance companies will often be recruited to take part in TV series and in feature films, for instance. Similar synergies can be found in several other areas.

In policy terms, recognising cultural ecosystems involves catering particularly for the most fragile and emerging elements in the cultural sector, as well as facilitating collaboration among diverse stakeholders, through, among others, the following areas of activity:

Providing incentives for collaboration between mainstream and “alternative” cultural groups, and ensuring that the main cultural...
organisations in the city provide participatory cultural activities in all neighbourhoods, as with the Charter on Cultural Cooperation promoted in Lyon.

Reintegrating the surplus value generated by some cultural activities into those that are less likely to obtain benefits in the market place, but which are important in cultural terms, e.g. through the public management of heritage sites and cultural centres attracting tourism to Lisbon, the resulting resources feeding into other cultural venues and activities (Richards and Marques, 2018: 92).

Establishing sectoral strategies which address creation, production, distribution and access to culture, supported by participatory, plural working groups, as with the work done by Terrassa in the film and audiovisual fields.

c) The preservation of public space and working spaces for culture

The availability of public spaces which enable opportunities for inclusive, participatory and universal access to culture is a core component of the right to take part in cultural life.

The availability of public spaces which enable opportunities for inclusive, participatory and universal access to culture is a core component of the right to take part in cultural life, which can be seen as part of the broader struggle for the preservation of public space in cities and the exercise of the right to the city in the face of privatisation, commercialisation and securitisation, among others. In cultural terms, public space holds the potential to facilitate the presentation of cultural work, the recognition and meeting of diverse identities and forms of expression, and the co-creation of new symbols and expressions, among others. A set of related threats, including a rise in housing prices, also affects the availability of working spaces for artists and cultural groups in many cities, including in neighbourhoods which had been used for cultural purposes in the past and have later been gentrified.

In the face of increasing pressure, in recent years local actors have adopted policies and measures addressing these issues, including the following:

Promoting public spaces as areas for inclusive, diverse cultural participation, through the organisation of festivals and other participatory activities, such as the Mosaic Parade in Vaudreuil-Dorion, which brings together a very diverse community following a process of cultural participation, exchange and learning; as well as festivals and events in many other cities.

Using collective artistic practices to reimagine public space and generate new narratives on urban life, such as the Šančiai cabbage field project in Kaunas, a grassroots initiative in which artists, urban activists and neighbours work together to reappropriate an urban space and define its purposes collectively.

Giving visibility in public space to the diverse stories that have contributed to making the city, such as the “Spirit of Enterprise” project which celebrates the progressive settlement of over 30,000 migrants and refugees in Greater Dandenong (Melbourne), and their stories.
Designing new mechanisms to foster the availability and affordability of working spaces for artists and cultural groups, such as the CAP programme for supporting cultural space development in Seattle, the service agency “Creative Spaces” in Vienna, and schemes for the cultural use of vacant spaces in other cities.

d) Innovation in governance frameworks

The right to the city involves citizens’ ability to see themselves represented in the urban spaces they inhabit. This should be reflected in the ways decisions are adopted, including through the establishment of open, transparent and participatory mechanisms when priorities are set, and ideally the availability of permanent consultation and decision-making spaces representing diverse interests in a balanced way and covering the whole policy cycle (policy design, implementation, evaluation). In the field of cultural policy, as in other policy areas, governance should be participatory, accountable and transparent, and should also involve the diverse range of policy departments that may have an impact on cultural life, as well as the different levels of governance in multi-level frameworks (UCLG, 2015). Ultimately, the aim is for citizens to have ownership of the cultural policies and programmes implemented in their cities.

Among the areas of action which can be adopted at the local level are the following:

Promoting participatory consultations in priority-setting (e.g. the participatory budgeting exercises which led to the setting-up of neighbourhood cultural centres in Belo Horizonte) and in the elaboration of cultural strategies and action plans (e.g. Concepción, Nillumbik, Washington DC, Yarra Ranges).

Establishing networks or platforms of community or civil society groups engaged in cultural development, representing citizens, artists and cultural professionals, in Busan and Montreal, among others.

Setting up permanent, “horizontal” frameworks for reflection and policy design on culture involving public authorities and civil society organisations in a non-hierarchical way, as in the case of the collaboration between the Izmir Mediterranean Academy and the Izmir Culture Platform in Izmir, and the Common Seongbuk Artist Roundtable in Seongbuk (Seoul).

IV. Final observations

The examples presented illustrate the common ground between initiatives to strengthen the right to the city and the right to difference, and local cultural development promoted by local governments and civil society activists. Indeed, it could be argued that by strengthening participatory and inclusive cultural practices and policies, the right to the city is being reinforced, and that the latter can be embodied in experiences that enable citizens and community groups to reshape the city through cultural practices, creative exercises and the reimagining of city narratives, identities and symbols.
Many such examples bring together a range of stakeholders which include advocates and activists promoting the right to the city, but this is certainly not a universal trend – very often initiatives take parallel routes, with limited points of contact. There is further work to be done at both the local and international levels to address the gaps (in the language used, the objectives sought, the working methods, etc.) and to further identify the main priorities for a common agenda between the right to the city, the right to difference, and local cultural action.

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BOTTOM-UP CITY-MAKING

- THE “RIGHT TO THE CITY” AS AN ETHOS OF ENGAGEMENT: LESSONS FROM CIVIL SOCIETY EXPERIENCES IN THE GLOBAL SOUTH
  
  Alexandre Apsan Frediani

- PROMOTING THE RIGHT TO THE CITY FROM BELOW: EXPERIENCES OF CO-CREATION IN EUROPE
  
  Irene Escorihuela
The concept of the right to the city received particular traction among civil society actors through debates and sessions at the World Social Forums.

I. Introduction

Ever since Lefebvre first used the term in 1968, the “right to the city” has been taken on by social movements, NGOs and even some government officials around the world to articulate myriad demands. The term has come about “because it has served to correlate a common set of crosscutting concerns that have emerged from a particular global pattern of capital accumulation and dispossession” (Görgens and van Donk, 2012: 4). The right to the city slogan has increasingly been used by civil society actors in cities of the Global South, where the tendencies of capital accumulation and dispossession have resulted in growing social and spatial inequalities as well as violations of a series of human rights. The concept of the right to the city received particular traction among civil society actors through debates and sessions at the World Social Forums, which culminated in the 2005 World Charter on the Right to the City. This movement has continued and gained new energy through the formation of the Global Platform for the Right to the City in 2014, bringing together a variety of organisations, including networks of local governments from the Global South as well as North.

This chapter approaches the “right to the city” not as a defined project or slogan, but rather as an “ethos of engagement”. Drawing on Southern urban theory perspectives (Bhan, 2019), an “ethos of engagement” is associated with a mode of practice which is defined through struggles and mobilisations located in particularly uneven geographies. While the concept emerged in Europe, the positioning of the “right to the city” within experiences of marginalisation, oppression and resistance in cities such as São Paulo, Lagos and Mumbai calls for the recognition of diverse trajectories of urban development, shaped by tendencies of market enablement intertwined with postcolonial relations. This chapter aims to explore the contributions of grassroots experiences from the Global South towards the discussions on the definition, interpretations and advancement of the right to the city. By doing this, the chapter aims to highlight the importance of continuing to connect the slogan to actual claims. Furthermore, the chapter hopes to feed into the making of translocal alliances in ways that avoid particularisms that fragment as much as universalisms that homogenise diverse experiences and conditions.
This chapter highlights three mains lessons from civil society experiences from the Global South in relation to the right to the city debate. Firstly, it recognises the need to reframe and redefine the meaning of citizenship. Instead of focusing on formal mechanisms of associations of nation-states, initiatives have called for all inhabitants of cities to be recognised as citizens, with a set of rights as well as responsibilities without distinctions. Secondly, civil society experiences have played a role in creating more awareness about the growing injustices related to the differentiated access and appropriation of the city. A series of campaigns and initiatives by civil society have aimed to illustrate in tangible and meaningful ways how social diversity associated with gender, class, age, (dis)ability and ethnicity affect the uneven distribution of opportunities to experience the city. Finally, practices from civil society groups in the Global South have emphasised the relationship between collective production of space and the expansion of rights in cities. Apart from condemning modes of spatial production that have deepened social and spatial inequalities, civil society has also been demonstrating precedents of diverse, more grassroots and democratic forms of city-making. Underlying these three practices is deep preoccupation among civil society to promote the right to difference in ways that recognise the role social diversity plays in the production of a more just city. The right to difference is also approached as a means to advance solidarity across claims and groups rather than to feed into the risks of fragmenting social mobilisations. These practices have the potential to illustrate alternative pathways to how cities can be planned and designed, enabling more inclusive, emancipatory and redistributive imaginations of urban futures.

II. The right to the city as an ethos of engagement

The emergence of the “right to the city” slogan amongst grassroots organisations, social movements and activists in the Global South has been substantially shaped by the activities around the 2005 World Charter for the Right to the City. According to Ortiz (2010), this process began in 1992 during the preparatory activities leading to the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development held in Rio de Janeiro. This initiative led to the development of a treaty on urbanisation called “Towards Just Democratic and Sustainable Cities, Towns and Villages”. The mobilisations around these discussions continued through a series of different events, which included the First World Assembly of Urban Inhabitants in Mexico in 2000. Since then, the World Social Forums have become a key space where civil society groups advanced on these debates, leading to the development of concepts around the World Charter for the Right to the City and discussions on its implementation, dissemination and promotion.

It was from this trajectory that the motivation to set up a Global Platform for the Right to the City emerged in 2014 because several organisations identified a “need to promote and mobilize national and local governments, international and regional organizations towards a new paradigm for development, more inclusive and democratic cities” (Global Platform for the Right to the City, 2015). Operating as an informal and loose international network of existing organisations, the platform has been leading a series of activities aimed at recognising and promoting the right to the city in the implementation of public policies. The platform played a particular role in pushing for the adoption of right-to-the-city principles and themes within the New Urban Agenda.
There is an ongoing debate raising a series of questions around the representativeness and applicability of this growing promotion of the right to the city agenda in the Global South. Many civil society groups do not mobilise around this motto, arguing that the language of rights may compromise the possibility of building productive partnerships and alliances that can lead to the distribution of resources and opportunities in cities. Some groups, particularly those from Africa and South Asia, have argued that in contrast to Latin America, rights-based approaches are not appropriate in contexts where there is a lack of trust and reliance on legislative, executive and judicial instances of the state to guarantee rights. Finally, it has been argued that the right to the city agenda might create unhelpful divisions between urban and rural struggles in contexts where experiences of the urban are very diverse and embedded in deep rural-urban linkages and movements, such as in African cities.

Instead of focusing on the right to the city as a “working slogan and political ideal” (Harvey, 2008), this chapter argues that civil society groups have often approached it as an “ethos of engagement”, channelling the emergence of a particular way of mobilising towards the production of a more equitable city. When attending meetings led by the Global Platform for the Right to the City, it is possible to see a variety of groups that do not use the slogan or mobilise around this concept. So, what is it that brings these groups together? Drawing on the work of Marcuse (2010) and Sugranyes and Mathivet (2010), the right to the city as an “ethos of engagement” can be defined in relation to three characteristics: firstly, it is an umbrella concept that allows the connection and sharing of diverse experiences of exploitation generated by market-led processes of urban development. Even without the use of the right to the city as a concept, there is growing recognition among grassroots groups about the linkages between their different struggles generated by the impacts of the neo-liberalisation of urban governance, such as the lack of access to adequate land, services and housing, insecurity of tenure, evictions, abuses of power and violation of a series of fundamental sets of human rights.

Secondly, the right to the city ethos of engagement represents the growing sentiment among grassroots groups to enable actions that can go beyond the manifestations of such problems, and address root causes of injustices associated with processes of urbanisation. As articulated by Marcuse, the right to the city “leads to an examination of what makes the system tick, what produces the pain and what produces the benefits it achieves, what its weaknesses and its strengths are — beyond what a simple analysis of the causes of individual problems and subsystems produces” (Marcuse, 2010: 89).

And thirdly, the right to the city as an ethos of engagement captures the interest of civil society groups in articulating visions of alternative forms of urban development. Instead of focusing on avoiding particular problems, civil society actors are advocating and calling for other ways of doing things, engaging in a deeper discussion about more socially and environmentally just values and imaginaries about cities. The right-to-the-city ethos of engagement is about capturing and recognising the diverse articulations of such concepts, rather than amalgamating them into one vision of a good city. Therefore, the right to the city is often understood not as a defined project, but rather constituted by a network of claims and mobilisations led by grassroots groups.
III. Lessons from civil society experiences

This section focuses on some of the key experiences and lessons generated by civil society groups relating to this right to the city ethos of engagement. The experiences outlined here were selected because of my own engagement and familiarity with them, as well as their connections to the debate on the right to the city. These encounters with practices reviewed here reflect my own trajectory with civil society initiatives in the Global South and this chapter does not intend to be comprehensive. The text attempts to depict practices as they have been presented and articulated, in order to recognise and draw on their particular narratives and thereby explore the lessons for the wider debate around the right to the city.

Firstly, we are seeing an increasing amount of civil society initiatives advocating for the recognition of a more substantive articulation of citizenship. Instead of calling for the protection of rights of citizens defined by their nationality or formal affiliation to the nation-state, these initiatives elaborate on the reasons all urban inhabitants should have their rights protected. This is leading to the articulation and production of new forms of citizenship, in line with Lefebvre’s notion of the “right of urban inhabitants” (Purcell, 2002) and the concept of “insurgent citizenship” developed by Holston (2008). The Nigerian Slum/Informal Settlement Federation has conducted a series of enumerations and para-legal activities in informal settlements in Lagos and Port Harcourt advocating the rights of all urban inhabitants to human dignity. Such an approach has been used to contest state-led evictions affecting urban inhabitants of various nationalities and citizenship statuses. In São Paulo, various urban social movements have recognised the importance of occupations of vacant buildings to operate as spaces where migrants and refugees can be assisted and welcomed. This approach can be seen for example in initiatives such as the occupation welcoming Syrian refugees led by the Movimento dos Trabalhadores Sem Teto (MTST), or Ocupação Marconi led by the Movimento Moradia Para Todos (MMPT) where residents of different countries join in various building management tasks, citizenship education programmes as well as demonstrations to fight against evictions and for more equitable housing programmes and policy (Frediani et al., 2019).

Similarly, the Right to the City Charter of Greater Beirut makes reference to the “sanctuary cities” debate, and calls for the recognition of the rights and responsibilities of all urban inhabitants.¹ The charter has been led by the Habitat International Coalition - Housing and Land Rights Network and the Amel Association and involves a variety of government and civil society stakeholders. It has the objective of addressing the growing refugee and displacement crisis resulting from Lebanon hosting approximately 1.5 million Syrian and 500,000 Palestinian refugees and displaced persons by providing a detailed analysis of the local, national and international legal commitments and obligations to protect the human rights of all inhabitants of Greater Beirut.

The interfaces between refugee rights and the rights of urban inhabitants have also been explored by academics from Makerere University in Uganda. In partnership with international researchers, they have been advocating for the protection of the human rights of refugees and internally displaced people (IDPs) in Kampala. According to the UN Refugee Agency, 94,958 refugees and asylum seekers live in Kampala. Uganda’s 2006 Ref-

¹ For more information on the Right to the City Charter of Greater Beirut, see: http://www.hlrn.org/img/publications/Assessment_FINAL_EN_web.pdf.
The main barriers to fulfilling such rights include a series of urban development issues, such as high housing costs and the erosion of affordable workspaces in the city.

These experiences often approach the differentiated access to opportunities in the city from an intersectional perspective.
the city from an intersectional perspective. Campaigns may enter the debate from a particular identity perspective, but they illustrate how the experience of injustices in the city are produced by the burdens generated by the intersection of different social identities associated with gender, class, age, (dis)ability and ethnicity. In the case of Mumbai, for example, Leonard Cheshire is revealing how the city’s Slum Rehabilitation Programme creates more insecurity, particularly for girls with disabilities. In Salvador, Lu gar Comum is exposing the particular form of racism experienced by poor black women caused by regeneration processes in the inner-city area.

And thirdly, various civil society groups from the Global South have demonstrated in practice how collective forms of spatial production can play a role in the advancement towards the right to the city. While being embedded in very different contexts, these experiences involve processes of social mobilisation and collective forms of production and management of space in the city. One of the most significant examples of this type of experience has been the work of various federations working on the urban extension, mainly in the Asia and Africa, networked through Shack/Slum Dwellers International (SDI). Their work has involved self-enumeration processes, recognising that the urban poor can enhance their power to influence urban decision-making by generating and owning the knowledge about their living conditions. In Cape Town (South Africa) for example, enumeration exercises have led to experiences of re-blocking of informal settlements, where communities re-plan their settlements in situ, enhancing access to services as well as improving living conditions. In Freetown (Sierra Leone), federation members have worked with the Sierra Leone Urban Research Centre (SLURC) and Architecture Sans Frontières-UK to develop Community Action Area Plans (Macarthy, Frediani and Kamara, 2019), which have supported existing processes of bottom-up and civic-led informal processes of slum upgrading, as well as coordinating interventions carried out in partnership with NGOs and government authorities (Macarthy et al., 2019).

In Latin America, Habitat International Coalition (HIC) has been supporting exchanges and systematisation of similar community-led processes of city-making by recognising them as a “social production of habitat” (Ortiz and Zárate, 2004). According to the HIC, social production of habitat is a people-centred and -driven process of designing, planning, building, maintaining and inhabiting spaces, and addressing historical social and spatial challenges. These practices are defined as complex and dynamic processes, built through social movements and interactions among urban dwellers and driven towards social transformation. Therefore, as summarised by Larraín, the process of social production of habitat “accounts for an improvement in material terms, but even more important than that, it is the advance in the emancipation of socially excluded and segregated groups” (Larraín, 2019: 1). In South East Asia, similar processes have been enabled and supported by the Asian Coalition for Housing Rights (ACHR), a network of grassroots groups, activists, NGOs and professionals that has operated in the region for more than 30 years, supporting community-driven processes of slum-upgrading based on collective saving groups, mapping and innovative land tenure and financial models. Collaborating with other regional groups such as the Community Architects Network (CAN), ACHR has worked over the past decade with hundreds of communities across 19 countries of South East Asia, influencing policies and development partnerships for the implementation of the Asian Coalition
for Community Action (ACCA) Programme, a people-centred citywide upgrading programme that seeks to work in 150 Asian cities.

Even though many of these practices are not formulated and advocated in terms of the right to the city, they represent an ethos of engagement that aims to highlight the fact that the dominant planning practices have been unable to respond to the needs and aspirations of the urban poor. These initiatives demonstrate the agency of organised grassroots groups in leading processes of city-making on their own terms, and in the process in unlocking new imaginaries for urban change. While these practices have set precedents for more democratic forms of spatial production, they have also faced substantial difficulties in challenging existing inequalities and power imbalances within and among “communities”. A key tension among these sets of practices is how not to “leave behind” the less organised, marginalised and vulnerable groups that face more obstacles to engaging in such processes. Likewise, how to deal with city-wide processes and needs beyond organised neighbourhoods is another issue. Therefore, instead of joining top-down, predefined and invited spaces of participation, these experiences call for public, market and civil society actors to support and enhance the community’s ability to be more inclusive and sustain ongoing initiatives.

IV. Conclusions

Is there such a thing as a global right to the city movement? Caruso answered this question by saying: “A global movement for the right to the city is not as yet a reality. However, it is possible that a group of leading activists and organisations may succeed in facilitating a growing alliance centred on crucial issues of exclusions and violations of rights as generated by the current hegemonic institutional framework of urban governance” (2010: 110). Today, with the emergence of the Global Platform for the Right to the City, this aspiration may well be a reality.

But together with this increased consolidation of a global movement for the right to the city, there is also growing institutionalisation of the same concept, posing opportunities as well as many threats. One example of this increased institutionalisation has been the recognition of the Right to the City in the New Urban Agenda, as well as in the process leading up to its formulation. The creation of the “Right to the City and Cities for All” policy unit opened up an opportunity to recognise the demands of this growing international movement within the Habitat III process. However, it can be argued that it also sidelined and compartmentalised the right-to-the-city agenda to one specific area, potentially leaving all other policy unit debates unchecked, such as the Urban Economic Development Strategies or Housing Policies. Ultimately, the final agenda has been criticised for its lack of coherence, with some elements that may support and others that may threaten the advancement of the right to the city.

The right to the city’s trajectory once again looks delicate. It is simultaneously used as an instrument for social mobilisation and transnational collective action, and an instrument to institutionalise a slogan without the content required to challenge the systems producing unfair and unsustainable urban development. Hence, this review of the lessons from civil society experiences in the Global South is a reminder about the im-
The right to the city is a meeting point, rather than one of departure or arrival; it is an ethos rather than a recipe.

The importance of connecting the concept of the right to the city to particular experiences of collective resistance and production of the city. This review outlines that these experiences call for urban politics that: recognise all urban inhabitants as citizens with rights and responsibilities; address the differentiated access to the use and production of the city, specifically by capturing how the intersections between social identities are shaping the distribution of opportunities and burdens in the city; and promote collective forms of production of the city that enhance the capacity of grassroots groups to safeguard against the commodification of land and property and contribute to the elaboration of more democratic imaginary concepts for our urban future.

To approach the right to the city from a Global South perspective means recognising that it is not a predetermined and clearly defined agenda. This chapter argues that it is necessary to understand it as an ethos of engagement, an approach that is rooted in the experiences and claims of struggles embedded and situated in local contexts, which have relevance and connections to global actors and processes. Such claims, driven by networks of civil society entities (including social movements, associations, collectives, NGOs, activists and academicians), articulate their own discourses and languages associated with the struggles for a more socially and environmentally just process of urbanisation. In this context of localised practices as well as global alliances, the right to the city emerges as a potential space to build solidarity and enable learning. I would argue that for many civil society actors, the right to the city is a meeting point, rather than one of departure or arrival; it is an ethos rather than a recipe.

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Historically, social movements and neighbourhood associations have shaped the territory through their struggles and demands. Today, the municipalist movement is creating unprecedented possibilities for achieving the right to the city, not only through government proposals but also due to a new approach to the demands made by urban movements.

The co-creation of cities can throw up dangerous examples, such as the administration committing to collaborating with the private sector, legitimising the privatisation of public space or the commercialisation of buildings, equipment and resources. However, co-creating the city from a rights perspective in partnership with civil society requires thinking about and designing engines of change for cities as common goods.

A favourable correlation of forces in the municipal government is fundamental to this, but many other battles are fought outside the institutions. On the one hand, it is difficult to implement certain changes solely through the will of the local government because the opposition is formed not only of political parties, which can be stood against, it also includes powerful lobbies and business groups with great advocacy capacity and access to the media, and significant influence on public opinion. Nevertheless, the spaces of day-to-day coexistence, where debate is generated and opinion disseminated, are also of the utmost importance. Without “conquering” these everyday spaces, victories cannot be achieved that represent steps forward in guaranteeing the right to the city. Organised civil society is essential to this. Civil movements can form a counterweight, denouncing the attacks on the right to the city while at the same time proposing radical proposals for change. The challenge for municipalism lies in giving space to rights-protecting social initiatives that come from outside the institution and putting them into practice without co-opting or leading them.

On the other hand, communities taking rights into their own hands is a reality in many cities, where social movements create opportunities to guarantee a dignified life, generate a caring economy, stop evictions or create feminist spaces. However, it is extremely complicated for citizens to prompt legislative changes that bring about improvements with universal application without
Each of the four European experiences examined exhibits a different relationship between civil society and local government. Municipal support, given the legal challenges and procedures necessary for their approval. Joint efforts by the public administration and civil society become necessary, with both leaving their comfort zones. The result of combining the two spheres should be virtuous, with the possibilities each institution and movement had when acting alone multiplying.

The experiences we have selected are based almost entirely on citizens’ demands, meaning the proposal is developed at the level of the people. In some cases, it is a historical demand made in one particular place, while others are situational – struggles that arise in response to a specific opportunity, or as an alternative to an unpopular proposal. Each of the four European experiences examined exhibits a different relationship between civil society and local government. In all of them we have considered the importance of working towards the right to the city for everyone, taking into account the right to difference. In the sections that follow we will present a housing measure in Barcelona (Spain) that was promoted by civil society and approved and executed by the city council, and promotes social mixture; the reconversion of Tempelhof Airport in Berlin (Germany) into a park that is accessible to all citizens, thanks to a citizens’ law approved in a referendum; water remunicipalisation in Terrassa (Spain) in order to manage it publicly and democratically, led by a citizens but pushed through by the municipal government; and finally, the creation of a cultural centre for young people jointly managed by the citizens and the municipality in Zagreb (Croatia).

I. Barcelona: the 30% measure for more affordable housing

Since the economic crisis broke out in 2008, movements for the right to housing in Spain have proliferated in response to the housing emergency. Following decades of a lack of protection, only a broad set of measures, regulatory changes and public policies with medium and long-term results will improve citizens’ access to housing.

How did the 30% measure come about?

One of the main demands the movement for housing rights put on the table was the need to increase social and affordable housing in the city. In February 2018, five organisations submitted a motion to the plenary session of Barcelona City Council that contained four specific measures related to increasing the affordable housing stock. The motion was approved with a large majority and the citizens’ victory was celebrated as such. Many were aware that motions are too often merely symbolic agreements that lack any practical impact or further development. However, in this case, the motion’s approval was only the starting point for the achievement of more affordable housing.

What is it?

Every newly constructed or completely renovated building of over 600m² in Barcelona must contain 30% of social housing. That means the price is fixed by government decree (below the market rate). Based on the premise that while the real estate market brings great profits, the needs for...
housing are acute, construction companies and housing developers are obliged to make part of their supply available at affordable prices. This has two purposes: to make housing available in the city at below the market rate, and to distribute it across all the city's districts, a commitment to greater social cohesion and less spatial segregation. This is fundamental for the right to the city: this affordable housing will not be located in a poor neighbourhood in the suburbs but across the city. The promotion of regulations and public policies that fight segregation, that are committed to social mixture in cities and avoid the formation of neighbourhoods with very limited resources as well as closed, elitist communities also goes some way to respecting the right to difference.

How did the collaboration between the city council and civil society come about?

Once the municipal motion was approved, the five organisations promoting it – formed into a “development group” (DG) – asked to meet the municipal government to begin its processing, which involved modifying the General Metropolitan Plan. They also convened a working group with the various parties so that they could move forward together, as well as meeting with the municipal groupings separately to secure their votes in favour. The council made economic and legal reports available to the DG and political parties, and enabled meetings with experts that allowed informed decisions to be made.

The municipal government accepted the DG’s leadership at all times. It was the DG who called the meetings of the working group and presented the results of the consultations with experts to the other parties. This is very important point, as it showed that civil society was promoting the measure rather than the government. Appropriation by the city council and partisan distrust were thereby avoided. As the council’s head of urban planning acknowledged, this measure would not have been approved if it had been a municipal initiative.

The urban procedures

Initial approval came in June 2018. Some political parties who had participated unenthusiastically in the working group were surprised at how fast it reached this point. Voices emerged demanding more time for other actors (especially private ones) to participate. The construction sector and developers used various means (the press, the positioning of certain important actors, etc.) to show their opposition to the measure, saying that it infringed regulations and would ruin the sector financially. But the city council, urged by the DG, kept the proposal on the table. The negotiations for its approval took two forms: the DG held rounds of meetings with parties and the city council shared the legal and economic arguments it possessed. Finally, the measure was given initial approval, leading to a participatory process. During this time, the DG promoted meetings within social movements, discussions with experts, press conferences and so on. For its part, the city council responded to the allegations made by citizens and interest groups and obtained extra reports to ensure the measure’s viability, which was questioned by some parties.

3. Barcelona City Council calculations estimate that if the rate of construction and rehabilitation of recent years is maintained, between 300 and 400 affordable homes will be available each year.
Finally, provisional approval was granted and the government of Catalonia had to ratify the decision with final approval. That government, from a different party to the one leading Barcelona City Council, introduced several impediments that delayed the measure’s implementation for several months. Here too, the dual dialogue from the municipality and civil society was key.

Some lessons learned

The first conclusion of this experience is that without the collaboration between Barcelona City Council and civil society this measure would not have seen the light. That the initiative emerged from social groups with significant community and media recognition facilitated a correlation between the forces in support that enabled its eventual approval. It is also true that it would not have been possible without the efforts the municipal government made in terms of technical work, reports, speed of processing and ceding centrality. However, the process was not without tension: the media and several parties repeatedly claimed that the measure was proposed by the mayor, completely ignoring the fact that the DG made the proposal and led the process; and on occasions the city council took advantage of the measure in its electoral campaign.

II. Berlin: Tempelhof Airport becomes a park

The Berlin Tempelhof case is paradigmatic for three reasons. First, because it repurposed no less strategic infrastructure than an airport. Second, because different elements of the right to the city entered the fray: housing (municipal initiative) versus public space and green spaces (citizens’ initiative). Finally, there is the major historical significance of the place due to its use during the Nazi era, which undoubtedly plays a role in the project as a whole, as historical memory is a crucial aspect of cities (Best, 2014).

The airport’s closure and the alternatives

The plans to close the airport date back to 1996, due to pollution, noise, its proximity to the centre, and its limited capacity. Added to that was the commitment to creating a single large airport in Berlin, as part of the urban planning of mega-infrastructure. In October of that year Tempelhof definitively closed its doors, but endless possibilities were available for the 300,000m² now vacant.

Without a clear plan from the public authorities, the old airport began to be used for bike rides, picnics and kite flying. By the time the Senate of Berlin began to design urban development proposals, Berliners had already made their own through various initiatives, such as “Squat Tempelhof” in 2009. The following year the Senate masterplan was announced, which supporters of the referendum thought would make housing more expensive and gentrify the surrounding neighbourhoods. The city, known for its relaxed atmosphere and social activism, was beginning to feel urban development pressure. The fight for Tempelhof became a battle between two contrasting ways of living in the city: the exclusive, competitive city versus the city that is open to everyone.

4. The disagreement about the airport’s closure carried over into a referendum in April 2008, when the arguments in favour of keeping it operational (mostly related to business opportunities in the area) won only 21.7% of the votes. This first vote was an early sign of the people’s predisposition to having a large open space instead of an airport.

5. The proposal was made by the department of urban development and environment of the Senate of Berlin, which is a city-state.

6. “Squat Tempelhof” was one of the many initiatives that advocated keeping the airport space undeveloped. Thousands of people were called to occupy the fields of Tempelhof to demand that it be kept as it was.
The “100% Tempelhofer Feld” proposal

In September 2011, “100% Tempelhofer Feld” launched a powerful campaign to preserve the park as it was. The municipality proposed to build homes: social housing for 4,700 families, but also luxury housing, a large library, offices and a shopping area. After collecting 185,328 signatures, 100% Tempelhofer Feld proposed a legislative initiative to be voted on via referendum along with the European elections. The text proposed keeping the airport area in its current state, without modification, as a green recreational space and urban landscape. The referendum group opposed private investment, speculation and the economic growth of the city without attending to the most vulnerable social strata. In relation to housing, they argued that while the housing crisis existed, there was a lot of empty housing in the city. The housing plan proposed was greatly distrusted, as it was seen to risk gentrifying part of the adjacent neighbourhoods and privatising part of the park.

In May 2014 the referendum took place, with 65% of voters approving the law proposed by 100% Tempelhofer Feld. From that time on, respecting the new law, which prevented construction in the park, the municipality brought various participation processes to the table. Specifically, a care and maintenance plan was produced that covered the park’s conservation, history, sport and management. Although various voices say that this was a highly participatory plan using joint decision-making, critics point out that it was top-down planning and bottom-up use (Schalk, 2014: 138).

Reflections

Like the other examples, Tempelhof Airport is a citizens’ struggle that became a reality. In this case, the city council’s role is intriguing. Although it initially took a position contrary to that of the groups promoting the referendum, it subsequently confirmed the winning option and contributed to citizen participation, leaving 300,000m² in the middle of the city unbuilt upon. What is the value of Tempelhofer Feld? On the one hand, such a large natural space is important for tackling pollution and environmental destruction (among the arguments made by 100% Tempelhofer Feld, the ecological gained importance). On the other hand, some authors cite the Berlin character, which loves openness and freedom. Tempelhof is now a meeting place for all kinds of people, without barriers. People of different socioeconomic statuses, origins, cultures, sexes and sexual orientations can enjoy many acres of landscape and free activities, without any restrictions. Tempelhofer Freiheit (freedom) represents an advance in the city’s social cohesion, a shared space for recognition and enjoyment. Shared leisure areas in public space that allow the expression of differences and social mixing are extremely important for progressing towards the right to the city.

III. Terrassa: the remunicipalisation of the water supply

Although access to water is a human right, its management in most large cities has been handed to private companies, controlled by three large global corporations: Suez, Veolia and Bechtel. In Terrassa (Catalonia,
Spain), for 75 years, Mina Pública d’Aigües S.A. held the water concession (Bagué, 2019: 18). Ownership is public but management private.

Access to water plays a central role in urban struggles, with the Cochabamba Water War (Bolivia) a paradigmatic example. In Europe at present, demands around water focus, on the one hand, on access to basic supplies and, on the other, on service management, and the two are closely related. Over the past decade various studies have been produced on water and its private management. The municipal movement’s more active sectors have, over the last five years, questioned the privatisation of public services and placed the need to bring its management back into public hands back on the political agenda.

**The citizens of Terrassa get organised**

It is in this context that irregularities detected in the concessions and fifty of them coming to an end in the Barcelona metropolitan area combined with the recent 15-M movement and the incipient municipalist “institutional activism”. The “Taula de l’aigua de Terrassa” was created in 2013, a proposal by citizens to return the water supply to public hands. As Mina’s concession ended in 2016, a number actions were launched. For example, an attempt was made to influence the 2015 municipal elections through the “Pacto Social por el Agua Pública” (Social Pact for Public Water), by challenging the parties directly about the remunicipalisation of water. At the same time, the Taula focussed on the study and technical documentation of the process of recovering the service and raising public awareness about the opportunity for the public, democratic management of water in the city through talks and debates.

**The role of the local administration**

Gradually, the municipal plenary session began to lean towards remunicipalisation, a consequence of the Taula’s advocacy work, the amount of social support and the work done on public water with other cities through networks. Far from remaining on the margins, Mina Pública d’Aigües S.A. responded in several ways: through the mass media, by preparing appeals to be heard in the courts, and by generating fear among the company’s workers, among others. In 2016, the municipality created commissioners for water and participation to promote public debates and a participatory process. The citizens presented two municipal motions in 2017 and a large demonstration was organised. Finally, that same year, the change in the way the public water service in Terrassa was managed was approved.

**Citizen control of water**

Next, a citizen monitoring stage began, with the creation of an observatory that will continue the joint work between the administration and the organised citizens – with voice and vote. This is crucial, because the management, as well as being public, should be democratic, and include the participation of the residents. The observatory facilitates the degree of citizen control of the water. This is a key point in the new water model: the demands are not fulfilled when a basic service such as water is (re)municipalised – civil society must participate in its subsequent governance. Otherwise, nothing guarantees that municipal management meets the requirements of being democr-
ic and public. For this reason, for example, a budget large enough for everyone interested to participate – whether they have resources and experience or not – is proposed in order to avoid making a democratic body elitist. In short, the right to difference is taken into account, considering the formation and dissemination of information to be essential, as well as facilitating the involvement of actors who are less involved in the process of defending this universal right.

IV. What place do culture and young people have in the right to the city?

Different issues intermingle in this debate: on the one hand, there is the situation of young people and adolescents with few job opportunities and an urgent precariousness. On the other are regulated education systems little given to innovation, which stigmatise or limit forms of artistic expression. Alongside many other elements, the result is that the public space also becomes a place of learning and leisure. Adult perceptions of young people often tend towards suspicion and even rejection, especially when it comes to racialised youth. But young people undoubtedly need spaces outside schools and secondary schools to develop their cultural interests, socialise and experiment. The exercise of the right to difference again emerges in this context, out of the need to consider the city young people yearn for. In the absence of specific proposals and as a result of the exclusion of their needs from the planning of the city, young people use spaces in their own way. Taking their claims into consideration, which are frequently linked to urban art and culture, can lead to virtuous synergies for the city as a whole.

Zagreb (Croatia): the experience of POGON

At this point we would like to look at the experience of setting up POGON in Zagreb, a co-managed centre for young people and independent culture, which was finally established in 2009 after years of struggle. It was conceived as a response to the lack of spaces for cultural creation in the city, especially for young people, and its set-up was the direct result of political advocacy and civil society activism (Peračić et al., 2016: 132). The key was uniting cultural and youth demands, initially embodied by two national networks in those spheres, a local platform, and cultural clubs. This coalition designed a campaign to influence the 2005 municipal elections with a document signed by the participating political groups, public debates and protest actions.

Despite a poor initial relationship with the municipal government, the persistence of the struggle, including protests such as the occupation of part of the factory that would eventually house the centre, brought the proposal to fruition, just before the coming local elections. A collaboration began between civil society (Operation City Alliance) and the city council to jointly manage the centre and, in the old factory (Jedinstvo), the centre now hosts exhibitions, concerts, festivals, theatre and dance among other things. The programming and projects carried out at POGON are managed by Operation City Alliance, with civil society responsible for designing and preparing the centre’s daily activity. The positive reception of POGON, both in Zagreb and internationally, has encouraged municipal support in terms of financing the reconstruction of the space and its operation.

When a basic service such as water is (re)municipalised – civil society must participate in its subsequent governance.
Some conclusions

From the case of POGON we learn, first of all, that social mobilisation can effectively achieve its objectives, even if means four years of protest actions, political advocacy and communicative work. Had it not been for those four years, POGON would not exist today. Secondly, combining youth organisations with cultural movements is a useful way to combine art with youth concerns. POGON plays an important role on the cultural – and international – scene and, in that sense, it is a commitment to social cohesion, the involvement of young people, not only as spectators but as creators, managers and decision-makers on the cultural scene, promoting dialogues and driving out prejudices.

V. Conclusions: co-creating the city?

While the right to the city as devised by Lefebvre contemplated high doses of democracy and social participation in urban life, weaving government-civil society alliances in representative systems is not easy. Frequently, the co-creation of public policies is the result of social victories following years of struggle. On other occasions they are opportunities – created by citizen power – for local governments to implement measures that are more progressive or aimed at certain groups that would otherwise never be approved and that act on the right to difference. It is key to recognise that cities are diverse and that opportunities must be given for the expression of their various manifestations, and that some undoubtedly enjoy more privileges than others, whether because of origin, gender, sexual orientation, religion, socioeconomic situation or any other reason. Increased affordable housing, municipal management and citizen control of the water supply, public spaces without barriers for different cultures and ages to enjoy, and cultural initiatives that facilitate young people expressing themselves are all examples of this.

Creating broad, plural platforms, hybrid spaces with working capacity, is as necessary as it is complicated. Social organisations have a major influence on public opinion and the media, as well as on social acceptance, when proposals arise from the street and not from the “offices”. The more popular the movements are, the more willing governments will be to open up decision-making to them that were previously the institution’s exclusive competence. Co-creating cities requires both the administration’s technical, personnel and economic resources, and respect for civil society’s leadership and management.

Risks certainly exist, such as appropriation by the public authorities, identification of the initiatives’ promoter movements with the governing party, and complaints of cronyism when a citizen proposal is accepted. Also, by spending a lot of time working on a proposal with the administration and handling more technical information, the movements may become more professional and even elitist. On the other hand, constant dissatisfaction is likely to take hold in the movements, considering the steps taken by the administration to be insufficient.

The experiences described show commitment to cities as common goods, in favour of the right to housing or water, to public space and the rights of young people. These undoubtedly represent progress towards the right
to the city and it is shared progress that follows debates and popular mobilisation, ensuring that cities are spaces where privileges are limited and universal rights prevail. Cities are the epicentres of profit, but also the homes of working people. The experiences described seek to improve life in those homes by ensuring their right to the city.

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I. The right to the city and new municipalism

Could the “right to the city” be the 21st century heir of the civilisational project the welfare state forged in the 20th? Can the new democratic municipalism become the main agent of its construction? The first section of this chapter is organised around these two questions. Subsequently, some reflections will be given on the metropolitan scale – where the main dimensions of the right to the city are settled today – and on the challenges of governing it in an innovative way.

Urban era, change of era and right to the city

*Industrial society* took shape in a space configured by states, but we now live in an *urban era*. Since the recession, the position of cities as key sites for configuring the liquid society and the digital economy has been consolidated. At Habitat III in Quito in 2016, we learned that the majority of the world’s population was urban. Today’s cities are the expression of the 21st century’s cross-cutting tensions and challenges: as vulnerable to speculation as they are creative and cooperative; filled with as much social division as community strength; responsible for climate change but also spearheading the ecological transition. The hegemony of the urban has become tangible: cities are the epicentre of the daily life of the majority, and the space where the conflict between fear and hope is being organised (Borja et al., 2016; Olmedo & Endara, 2017).

In this urban age, the *change of era* has a markedly spatial dimension. The patterns of sociocultural change are shaping a landscape of complexity and uncertainty that affects the family, work, emotional and housing spheres and promotes the strengthening of the local dimension of the welfare state (reception, inclusion, organisation of care, life cycles). The patterns of socioeconomic change, on the other hand, place the financialisation of housing at the heart of the accumulation system and paint a picture of real estate bubbles, housing exclusion, gentrification and residential segregation that demands the urban agenda of the welfare state be strengthened (social housing and rent controls, tourism
regulation, neighbourhood improvement with neighbourhood defence tools, etc.). The right to the city – as an everyday, community encapsulation of all basic rights – is gaining prominence as a project for rebuilding a citizenship for the 21st century. It is about placing local-level social policies and the urban agenda at the heart of the welfare system: returning the processes of collective progress and improvement that were in state hands in the 20th century to the local level. The challenge of rewriting social justice through the urban grammar of proximity thereby takes shape (Subirats, 2016).

Industrial society produced national frameworks for managing class conflict: welfare states with varying degrees of redistribution and welfare (Atkinson, 2016). Twenty-first century society faces the challenge of building citizenship formats that are more closely linked to their emerging range of realities. That is where local-level welfare comes in. In a complex society affected by multiple tensions, the construction of social rights is multidimensional. Certain key aspects of the design of social policies for the right to the city must be borne in mind: a) equity must be addressed in integrated and predistributive terms (not only redistributive or relating to income); b) fighting against inequalities means recognising differences: in a heterogeneous urban society all roads to equality pass through diversity; c) personal autonomy must be connected to the absence of collective domination, and social equality must be connected to personal self-determination in the face of state paternalism; d) all the above must be linked to community action: fraternity and care to weave urban interdependencies to tackle the exploitation of vulnerability. This network of core ideas may materialise in a catalogue of local-level welfare organised in four areas: social and relational inclusion policies; health, education, culture and income policies in community terms; day-to-day agendas (gender relations, social distribution of care and demographic change); and diversity agendas (LGTBI, interculturality, functional diversity, etc.) (Laval & Dardot, 2014).

In a context in which housing appears in the axis of vulnerabilities, in which metropolises are the hubs of the digital and financialised economy, and in which the urban production of environmental risks acquires maximum relevance, spatial justice and the ecological transition become key components of the right to the city agenda. As with local-level welfare, the urban agenda is also affected by multiple issues: housing as a financial asset or as a right; neighbourhoods as safe or gentrifiable places; the city as a segregated or cohesive residential space; natural environments and resources as goods or as elements of municipal sovereignty (Sennett, 2018). Faced with these dilemmas, the urban agenda of the right to the city requires the hybridisation of urban and ecological logics.

- Urban logics. Spatial justice policies should guarantee the right to housing and the neighbourhood in order to tackle dynamics of speculation and expulsion (Soja, 2014). Guaranteeing affordable and dignified housing within a framework of cohesive neighbourhoods and cities that are socially and functionally mixed requires the use of a range of instruments. A) An urban agenda for the right to housing: from increasing public parks to promoting cooperatives, via the municipal regulation of rents and prices; from renovation policies with mechanisms for guaranteeing the permanence of residents to
programmes to fight residential exclusion. B) An urban agenda for the right to the neighbourhood: from regeneration using neighbourhood defence instruments to the protection of local commercial networks, via the preservation of urban fabrics, memories and identities; from public land banks to the urban taxation of residential uses, and the protection of residential uses against their replacement by tourism.

- Ecological logics. The urban agenda is also the ecological transition to protect the climate and the air, and to regain citizen control over the food chain and the water cycle. We know that cities are responsible for 70% of climate change-inducing emissions, linked to the use of fossil fuels; we know that air pollution in metropolises causes hundreds of thousands of deaths annually, and that travelling by private vehicle is a decisive factor in that. UN-Habitat, on the other hand, has for years been raising the need for food alternatives and universal access to water as basic urban rights to tackle financial-commercial speculation dynamics. The ecological transition agenda is thus configured along four key axes: energy, mobility, water and food.

II. The new municipalism. Social innovation, urban movements and local governments

The change of era creates the conditions for a model of citizenship around local-level welfare, spatial justice and urban ecological transition. Through institutions, this model should bolster its municipalist dimension. The right to the city not only redefines public policies, it also re-articulates the rationale of governance, relocating the toolkit for its enactment in municipalism. We are living through a crisis of the classic political and governance structures. Globalisation unleashes realities and feelings of a lack of protection, and states tend to respond with exclusionary borders and authoritarian withdrawal. But using the language of hope, the municipalist alternative is also advancing: local-level governments with areas of collective empowerment, democratic expansion and the reconstruction of rights. A local sphere is progressively shaped around agendas connected to structural issues (inequalities, migration, human rights, climate change). Municipalism is redrawing – albeit incipiently – the geography of global governance and its power relations: local governments become democratic political subjects against global markets and state borders. Municipalism emerges as a project in which connections and differences can be articulated; community and reception. It creates a meeting place for openness and protection, and participatory democracy and the right to the city.

In Spain from 2011 onwards, the dynamics of the 15M movement and the recession-austerity duality seriously impacted the municipalism configured from 1979 onwards. Local reactivation based on new parameters grows out of collective action (social innovation and urban mobilisation) and political intervention (citizen and convergence candidacies).

- In the field of collective action, what emerges are:
  a) Social innovation practices. This is a set of community-based experiences that seeks to respond, first of all, to the social impacts of the crisis; initiatives that prefigure alternative models of producing and coordinating the urban commons using the rationales of personal

Spatial justice policies should guarantee the right to housing and the neighbourhood in order to tackle dynamics of speculation and expulsion.

Municipalism is redrawing – albeit incipiently – the geography of global governance and its power relations.
and collective empowerment. The social innovation unfolding is wide-ranging: from the solidarity economy to time banks, via networks of agro-ecological consumption; from citizen management of urban spaces to technological sovereignty initiatives via housing, energy or transport cooperatives (Blanco & Nel.lo, 2018).

b) A cycle of urban mobilisation. This is a series of dynamics connected to global problems, but which are expressed in everyday life: the “yes we can” to fight evictions and energy poverty; urban self-management to tackle speculation and the commodification of spaces; the women’s labour struggle in precarious urban economic frameworks; activities supporting the reception and citizenship of refugees and migrants; and local sovereignty (energy, water and food). They are innovative formats of collective action: in their organisation (community-focused); in their range of activity (more disruptive than conventional); in their narrative (creating stories with great social resonance); in their subjects (focussing on socio-economic issues after years of the postmaterialist cycle). And they are networks that seek to impact municipal agendas (Nel.lo, 2015; Martí et al., 2018).

- In the field of political intervention, municipalist subjects burst onto the local electoral scene. They emerge from a double transition: from fragmentation to confluence; and from the social sphere to the political arena. They are configured around processes that combine emerging and pre-existing cultures of action, and the general public and established political spaces. In May 2015, the new candidates won their first social and electoral majorities. They went on to lead the government of 4 of the 5 largest cities in the country (Madrid, Barcelona, Valencia and Zaragoza). Barcelona en Comú, which brought Ada Colau – an activist from the anti-evictions movement – to the position of mayor, is the clearest expression of this: she won 25.2% of the votes and was the leading force in 54 out of 73 neighbourhoods. The baseline political conditions are therefore set for the creation of the new municipalist landscape. The 2019 election results were more uneven. Government coalitions led by emerging forces were formed in Barcelona and Valencia, but not in Madrid and Zaragoza.

This scenario is substantially different from all those before, but certain dynamics are in tension as it comes into being: a) the adoption of a governance culture can reduce the disruptive capacity of new actors, but also generate new kinds of relationship between the institutional and the social with roots in mutual recognition, public-citizen alliance and processes of commoning; b) that the context of austerity may be processed by the local world out of resignation, but also as an opportunity to build alternatives: new social policies and urban agendas, processes of community appropriation of services and spaces, and more democratic and citizen-focused administration; c) the impacts of the crisis generate fear and suffering in both private and domestic spheres, but they also throw up new social innovation dynamics, empowerment processes and cooperative practices (Blanco & Gomà, 2016).

Indeed, municipalism is growing stronger as an institutional space for constructing the right to the city and as a political subject in multilevel governance. But states have too much clout, both symbolically and in...
effect. Local governments are pressured by historical inertia: they are not at the centre of the distribution of public resources, and they are not yet at the heart of welfare and ecological transition regimes. Three challenges must be addressed to change the global governance structure with a municipalist mindset: A) Empowerment. Substantially increasing government capacities in the local sphere. This must be done on issues such as migrant reception, the energy transition and the public control of rent, which are agendas linked to everyday life where the failure of the state-level approach is also proven. B) Horizontal interdependencies. Shifting from a top-down system of cities being subordinated to “higher” levels to another of a more horizontal type in which scale does not imply hierarchy. This would mean coordinating governance between equals whose sovereignty is accepted – a new relational grammar for cities, regions, states and supranational areas to communicate (Barber, 2013). In practice it means that cities co-govern the New Urban Agenda, the SDGs, the Paris Climate Agreement, and the EU’s Pillar of Social Rights, for example. C) Scaling out. Transferring urban policies and practices through international municipal networks and processes of policy learning. A few decades ago, in a less complex reality, the mindset was to “think globally and act locally”, but today, in a more complicated and interconnected world, there is also a need to “think locally and act globally” (the internet and digital spaces enable this). There is undoubtedly a long way to go, but an international geography of cities (C-40, Sharing Cities, Cities for Housing, etc.) is already starting to be outlined that aims to address the challenges of the global urban era from powerful agendas that are interconnected and not subordinate.

III. Right to the metropolis and innovation in governance models

Most of the planet’s population lives in cities; and most of the urban population lives in metropolises, complex human settlements of over a million inhabitants that are rapidly expanding. Constructing the right to the city, therefore, unavoidably involves metropolitan-level processes. It is at the metropolitan level where today’s battles take place between habitability and speculation and between socio-spatial justice and gentrification; where the daily dispute over economic exclusion and cooperative forms of production and consumption takes shape, as well as that between climate change and respect for the planet’s environmental limits. In the 21st century, the right to the city is also the right to the metropolis. But constructing it requires metropolitan governance models that remain largely unexplored.

The metropolitan dimension of the right to the city

Today’s metropolises were produced by multiple interactions over time (Marull & Boix, 2016). Their basic features must be modelled in order to grasp the realities on which public policies and governance dynamics can be rolled out. We may start with the idea that the recent metropolitan construction is the result of interconnected three-dimensional processes: economic, socio-residential and ecological. The crossover between these processes and their spatial materialisation has produced open, evolving metropolitan models (Table 1).
Table 1. Types of metropolis. Evolutionary dynamics in multiple dimensions

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<tr>
<th>Production model</th>
<th>Socio-residential structure</th>
<th>Environmental model</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Industrial metropolis</td>
<td>Fordist</td>
<td>Class-based society; intensive urban planning</td>
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<tr>
<td>Post-industrial metropolis</td>
<td>Flexible</td>
<td>Dual society; diffuse urban planning</td>
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<td>Knowledge metropolis</td>
<td>Creative</td>
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In economic terms, the Fordist city consolidates the economic specialisation of space: labour-intensive industries and the development of transport networks. At the end of the 20th century, the economic bases of the metropolis were outsourced, which had a double impact: the multiple spaces of the industrial shut-down contrast with the corporate sector’s concentration in a few global urban districts; and the central spaces of financial and technological services contrast with the peripheries, where the tertiary sector is located, which adds little value. Metropolises are emerging that have strong hierarchies and territorial dualities. A new economic-urban shift is already being developed with three key components (Harvey, 2016). Value creation is shifted to knowledge (innovation capacity) (Figuls & Galletto, 2019) and industrial reactivation occurs in the conditions of the technological revolution; digital activity explodes and internet-based platforms enter city economies; financial capital directed towards urban investments is activated and tends to create real estate bubbles. These changes at territorial level produce a complex set of opportunities/risks in the metropolitan sphere: the potential, on the one hand, for diluting spatial hierarchies and moving towards more reticular and sustainable metropolises; the threat, on the other, of gentrification processes.

In socio-residential terms, the middle decades of the 20th century were characterised by the massive urban presence of wage labour, with social class the main axis of stratification, along with the Fordist production of housing blocks in residential areas that are high in density and suburban-metropolitan in conception. At the end of the 20th century, two relevant changes occurred. In terms of labour, the market became polarised between new skilled sectors and precarious tertiary work with little collective organisation. In residential terms the extensive city became an urban and symbolic space for the new urban professional classes, with lower density and diversity. The current phase appears to again be taking the shape of a game of powers in tension. On the one hand is the unprecedented increase in urban social complexity (origins, homes, ages, etc.), which creates an opportunity for spaces with new diverse and compact morphologies; on the other, the social impacts of urban financialisation produce expulsions and functional and population replacement (Sassen, 2014).

In ecological terms, the prevailing model of the mid-20th century had severe environmental effects, producing urban economies highly dependent on fossil fuels and the growth of motorised mobility by private vehicle. Since the end of the 20th century, this has only intensified, and it is only very recently that strategies to reverse it have begun to be put in place. Higher emissions are provoking climate change and alarm, and

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1. Some metropolises have demonstrated the possibility of moving from the industrial city to the post-industrial without social dualisation. The overlap of growing welfare systems and urban cohesion policies may lie at the root. Barcelona is one of the leading examples (Porcel, 2016).
Metropolises are key agents of global warming. The mass use of the car causes air pollution, the main environmental health factor and a process of extensive space consumption has been triggered: from 1996 to 2016, the urban population grew by 25%, but urbanised territory extended by 40%. Today's metropolises pose ecological hazards that are socially produced due to a lack of protection for the climate, degradation of the air and the depredation of space.

In short, the Fordist, class-based city, which was dualised and embodied by diffuse urban design processes, and gave rise to hierarchical metropolitan areas and outsourced economies, now faces the transition from an urban era towards networked metropolises, and spaces in which all their complexities are expressed. These patterns are clearly revealed when we focus on Latin America and the EU.

- In Latin America, cities' demographic weight grew from 25% of the population in the early twentieth century to 75% in the early twenty-first; urban GDP rose over the same period from 20% to 80% of the total. There is no precedent for this explosion of metropolitan life. No Latin American city housed over a million people just hundred years ago; today over 60 metropolitan areas do. Of the world's 25 megacities (over 10 million inhabitants), four are in Latin America: Mexico City, São Paulo, Buenos Aires and Rio de Janeiro; while Bogotá, Lima, Santiago, Belo Horizonte, Guadalajara and Guatemala City have over 5 million inhabitants. These are dynamic metropolitan economies, albeit inefficient in global terms; they house unequal, segmented societies with high levels of labour and urban informality; they embody diffuse urbanisation processes; and have high levels of traffic and pollution.

- Shifting the focus to the European Union (EU), perhaps the most significant development in the urban sphere has been the process of forming 12 transmetropolitan networks: areas of high relational density (economic, sociocultural, ecological) centred around mature metropolises. Two of these megaregions are located in Great Britain (London-Birmingham-Manchester-Liverpool; and Glasgow-Edinburgh). Six are in the western and central EU: Amsterdam-Brussels-Cologne; Paris; Frankfurt-Stuttgart; the Berlin area; Prague-Dresden-Leipzig; and Vienna-Budapest. And three are in the Latin-Mediterranean EU: Rome-Milan-Turin; Barcelona-Lyon; and the Madrid-Lisbon region. In relation to EU totals, the 12 metropolitan networks make up 61% of the population, 69% of GDP, 74% of R&D spending and 78% of creative industries.

Thus, Latin America and the European Union have in recent decades consolidated a demographic and territorial reality characterised by metropolitan hegemony. This dominance has been transferred to the economic, social and environmental spheres, making metropolises the true epicentres of daily reality for most people. The metropolitan construction of the right to the city becomes completely inescapable.

Towards innovative metropolitan governance models

Today, municipalism is growing stronger through a process that is dual and interconnected: it is progressively articulating a policy agenda for the right to the city, and a political agenda for the recognition of cit-
Changing metropolises still display both significant deficiencies in their capacities for self-government, as well as weaknesses in their institutional architectures.

Three main metropolitan coordination structures have been implemented to date:

- The *supramunicipal government* model involves the existence of a territorial metropolitan institution – a space of self-government with the capacity to design and provide the suite of policies and services that allow the metropolis’s challenges to be addressed from the public sphere, beyond market logics. The authority may be directly or indirectly elected (based on municipal results). It may involve municipalities merging, or a framework of competence distribution with the metropolitan institution.

- The *intermunicipal governance* model involves building a flexible governance structure in the metropolis, coordinating capacities for joint action between cities, and providing such action with a model for cooperative formalisation. The institutional scaffolding can take two forms: a) a *commonwealth* of municipalities as a space for shared policy production; or b) a *strategic planning device* as a space for defining a metropolitan model and coordinating actions between actors of diverse natures.

- The *management agencies* model involves choosing to maximise the autonomy of metropolitan municipalities. This results from a double consideration: politics – it is assumed that it is within the scope of every city to decide where citizen preferences are best; and benefits – it is assumed that inter-municipal competition leads to better services and maximises conditions of economic or residential attractiveness. All of this is considered to be compatible with the existence of *sectoral agencies* at metropolitan level to administer all services where cooperation is advisable.

What forms does this take in practice? A great deal of diversity is observed at European level. Among the main metropolises 29% opt for the supramunicipal government model; 60% for intermunicipal governance; and 11% for agencies. If we consider only those that have taken on the *supramunicipal formula*, in all cases there is a two-tier system (municipal/metropolitan); some metropolises (London, Manchester, Liverpool, Stuttgart, Hannover) adopt the direct election of the mayor’s office and/or the metropolitan council; others (Barcelona, Lisbon, Lyon, Helsinki) follow that of elections at a sec-
ondary level. A high degree of overlap exists in the policy areas bloc upon which some type of metropolitan competence is being built: planning and territorial planning, mobility, ecology, and socioeconomic development. Diversity reappears when the focus slides towards taxation: in 44% of the cases, the main source of metropolitan resources are transfers from higher levels (regional or state); 35% of metropolises fund themselves through their own taxes; whereas the remaining 21% mainly receive municipal contributions. In all cases some kind of mix of financing models exists (Martí & Tomàs, 2019).

Beyond this reality, is it possible to articulate a metropolitan scheme that overcomes the rigidities, weaknesses and anachronisms of existing models? Is it feasible to explore an innovative proposal for governance with the capacity to build the right to the metropolis within 21st century parameters? (Table 2).

Table 2. Axes and models of metropolitan governance

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<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>DEMOCRACY</th>
<th>CO-PRODUCTION</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Institutional</td>
<td>SUPRAMUNICIPAL</td>
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<tr>
<td>architecture axis</td>
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<tr>
<td>HIERARCHY</td>
<td>Policy production axis</td>
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<tr>
<td>TECNOCRACY</td>
<td>Citizen engagement axis</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>INTERMUNICIPAL</td>
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To be sure, there are no simple answers, even at some remove from the political-cultural contexts of each metropolis, but some coordinates for reflection can be plotted. First, imagine a system – in the institutional architecture axis – of hybridisation between the metropolitan authority (broad policy agenda) and the network of municipalities: a model of cooperative metropolitan self-government. Secondly, imagine a system – in the democratic and policy production axes – of direct election, co-production and instruments for participation: a metropolitan model with a strong link with citizens. The intersection between cooperative self-government and citizen engagement outlines the space for innovation in metropolitan governance (the blue rectangle in Table 2). The democratic dimension can also become a lever for strengthening the demos: a collective subject at metropolitan level able to produce coordinated actors and practices at that same level, able to crystallise their own field of identification on the basis of neighbourhood and city identities that should be preserved and projected into the future.
Moving towards a metropolitan setting with the capacity for self-government that is horizontal and networked and open to citizen co-production and direct representation is the aim. This setting would make it possible to construct the right to the metropolis, and do so by means that are democratic, cooperative and community-based. In short, metropolitan democratic governance appears to be a key factor – along with the new municipalism – in strengthening local institutional architectures. Similarly, the right to the metropolis provides effective content in multiple fields to the right to the city in our era of change.

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In 2016 the New Urban Agenda, adopted at the Habitat III Summit in Quito, made reference to the “right to the city”. While some figures involved in the debate welcomed its inclusion, others suggested it risked denaturalizing the concept. After all, when those threatened by an idea fail to completely defeat it, do they not typically attempt to co-opt it?

I. The enshrinement of metropolitan competitiveness

The “right to the city” is undergoing a revival in the debates about urban space. This may be read as an expression of dissatisfaction among urban dwellers, a desire to reappropriate cities, or a reaction to urban transformations driven, in particular, by metropolitanisation, where life disappears behind the concepts of a “business” city, an “attractive” metropolis and of “competitiveness”.

Midway through the first decade of the 2000s, it was not exceptional for talk at a colloquium on “Grand Paris” to turn to “Greater London”, followed (and sometimes preceded) by a presentation of the “global cities ranking”. The conclusion was that to avoid losing ground on London, Tokyo and New York – and to prevent other cities catching up – the Paris metropolis must be transformed and become more competitive. Competitiveness, not life, was enshrined as the target of Grand Paris’s urgent transformation, and barely any reference was made to the British capital’s rising poverty rates and socio-spatial inequalities (Challenges.fr, 2017).

This chapter does not intend to discuss the links between metropolitanisation, neoliberal economic rationales and competition between global metropolises (Bouba-Olga and Grossetti, 2018). It merely notes that they make “attractiveness” the central pillar of the urban debate. This urban transformation strategy for raising financial investment and capital and increasing opportunities for the profitability of capital in the city is part of a trend that has taken hold globally.
Saskia Sassen (2009b: 263) explains that today’s global cities are places where multiple globalisation processes take on concrete, localised forms, as well as places where new forms of power can emerge. Much of the nerve centre of the global economy is concentrated in a network of approximately 40 world cities, forming a “geography of power”. Sassen has also described how a new geography of centres and margins in large cities in both the developed and the developing world is contributing not only to reinforcing existing inequalities, but also to mobilising a series of new dynamics of inequality (2009a: 124).

Grand Paris is one of the richest regions in Europe, but also one of its most unequal. The territorial policies that promote attractiveness involve implementing management projects that encourage a dual urbanism to emerge that leaves out entire segments of the urbanised space and the inhabitants (Deboulet et al., 2018: 32). This phenomenon undoubtedly affects the entire urban planet. Indeed, the urban poor represent at least half of the world’s urban population, according to relative national poverty thresholds (Davis, 2006: 28).

Henri Lefebvre (1989) wrote that the further the city extends, the more social relations degrade. In both the Global North and South, urban environments are under stress. Cities have become strategic spaces where a series of conflicts and contradictions arise (Sassen, 2009a: 133). Does this justify mobilisations that aim to promote other urban policies? While not necessarily referring to the right to the city, they form part, voluntarily or otherwise, of the idea that those who participate in urban life are entitled to have their claims heard in relation to what they have produced and one of their demands is the right to shape the city in the image of their aspirations (Harvey, 2011: 42).

II. The right to the city in urban agglomerations

But what does the right to the city mean in a metropolitan context? Are the same urban realities experienced in spaces with 10,000, 100,000, 500,000 and several million inhabitants? The same Parisian reality is not experienced in the centre of Paris and in Saint-Denis (a working-class suburb to the north), in Grigny (a working-class neighbourhood 23 km south of Paris), in Marne-la-Coquette (a well-off suburb) and in Champs-Élysées (Paris).

A metropolitan area contains a range of territories, experiences and lives that differ according to where a person lives. This is not to deny that shared problems exist across metropolitan areas. It is an invitation to “decentralise” our approaches to them. It means understanding metropolitan dynamics by starting with the range of real lives that face them. It is about not accepting the unique centralities – geographical, political, economic – that make all the other perceptions of a metropolitan area invisible. In this sense, if we want to speak of the “right to the city”, the territories that make it up should not be invisible either. That would be tantamount to making urban lives invisible.

Visibility and promoting another view of metropolises is what the first Forum of Peripheral Local Authorities (FALP) held in Nanterre (France) demanded in March 2006. Metropolitan dynamics were addressed...
using experiences from the political and social margins. In his conclusion, Patrick Jarry, the mayor of Nanterre, described the common will to work on unprecedented exchange and sharing of specific practices in the territories, which would contribute to encouraging the construction of democratic, sustainable, caring metropolises. He expressed his aspirations for greater inter-territorial solidarity and justice for their metropolitan areas.

The final declaration of the third FALP in Canoas in June 2013 expanded on this. As working-class territories that are often peripheral or suburban, the peripheral areas FALP brought together were an important part of urban growth. And while their history and futures as local administrations were linked to those of the “central cities”, they must not be reduced to merely extending the city’s borders. Those in attendance represented a diverse range of realities, subjectivities and sensitivities, but recognised in each other a refusal to be the invisible parts of metropolitan areas, and were convinced that their voices must be heard in order to deal with what is settled in our urban world.¹

By making their aspirations, experiences and needs as a “city” visible, these peripheral urban territories are working to promote a caring, sustainable and democratic metropolitanisation, and modify the shared spaces of the dominant urban debates. The right to the city is linked to this commitment. FALP II’s final declaration stated its commitment to the right to the city and to the development of the rights of the women and men living in them.² For FALP, the definition of the right to the city in metropolitan areas is based on the idea of “polycentrism”, meaning the right of each territory in these metropolitan spaces to guarantee proximity and attention to different human needs (public services, labour market, green spaces, cultural centres, public spaces, housing). The caring metropolis that is sought will accept no more forgotten spaces or populations.³ Polycentrism is what guarantees the right to the city in metropolitan areas.

III. Polycentrism as guarantee of the right to the city

The right to the city and the notion of polycentrism are closely related to the history of the struggles by working-class peripheries to “make the city”. The industrial revolution drove urban growth faster than at any time in history. A single example will suffice: while it took Paris 1,800 years to reach one million inhabitants (in 1850), over the next 170 years, the agglomeration reached 10 to 12 million. Growth of this magnitude, or even greater, is recorded across the planet. The “city” has overflowed. As Mike Davis has written (2006: 39), the majority of the poor urban population no longer lives in city centres. Since 1970, slums on the peripheries of cities in developing countries have absorbed most of the global urban growth. The suburban areas of many poor cities are already so large that the very concept of peripheries might need to be reconsidered.

Henri Lefebvre (1968: 15) wrote that as the periphery extends, a process begins that decentralises the city. Urban awareness dissipates, a deurbanised periphery takes shape around the city that is, nevertheless, dependent on the city. The association of the periphery and the right

1. Final declaration of the III FALP, Canoas, June 2013.
3. Final declaration of the III FALP, Canoas, June 2013.

The history and the present of many working-class suburbs has consisted of claiming the need to “make the city” to ensure that their future is very different to that of a forgotten periphery.
to the city seems, therefore, to be a paradox, but if we do not want to condemn a majority of urban dwellers to invisibility, we must overcome it. We propose to respond to Mike Davis’s invitation to reconsider the periphery by introducing the concept of “polycentrism”.

Ary Vanazzi, mayor of São Leopoldo, on the outskirts of Porto Alegre (300,000 inhabitants), says that the inhabitants arrived before the city, thus confirming the words of Henri Lefebvre. But Vanazzi added that just as we had to make the city in the past, now we have to continue making it. Jordi Borja (2003: 170) meanwhile emphasises that to make a city is, first of all, to recognise the right to the city for all.

The right to the city can form part of “making the city” if it demands fundamental and radical power to shape the urbanisation processes that constantly transform our cities (Harvey, 2011: 9). The history and present of many working-class suburbs has consisted of claiming the need to “make the city” to ensure that their future is very different to that of a periphery forgotten by imposed urbanisation rationales. Manuel Castells (1975: 6) referred to such struggles in 1970s Spain, describing how thousands of working families in Santa Coloma de Gramanet took to the street for hours to confront the fascist Guardia Civil and claim the right to a single hospital for a city of more than 100,000 people. The local governments of the metropolitan peripheries have played an important role in this regard. Braouezec (2012) writes that in the 21st century metropolis, the recognition of “polycentrism” in terms of proximity has roots in the continuation of the struggles of the residents and many elected local officials from working class suburbs who, throughout the 20th century, mobilised to gain access to collective equipment, public services, to be a city, and not simply to be homes near factories or mere dormitory cities.

According to Mitchell (2014: 320), the right to the city takes the form of a right to urban life, to renewed centrality, to places of encounter and exchange, to the rhythms of life and employment of time that allows the full use of these moments and places. If this is so, it can be argued that in the working-class peripheries “making the city” contributes to making the right to the city a reality in the different territories of the metropolis and contributes to creating polycentric metropolitan dynamics. Borja (2003: 318) formulates them as “rights to centrality”, whereby all areas of the metropolitan city must possess places that have centrality value and all inhabitants should be able to access urban and metropolitan centres with equal ease. In the metropolitan city, the relationship of the old and new centres, the access and requalification of historical centres not only of the central city but also of the peripheral areas, and the creation of new polyvalent centralities with mixed functions and social composition, are inherent parts of urban democracy.

**IV. Metropolitan governance under debate**

Demanding “polycentrism” reflects the desire of peripheral cities to be recognised as spaces for life, aspirations and democratic mobilisation in the metropolis. But it is not without controversy. Harvey (2015: 159) says that in polycentric governance, the reproduction of privileges and class power by the resulting polycentric governance is perfectly integrated into
the neoliberal class strategies of social reproduction. This would make polycentrism the opposite of solidarity, helping to favour a kind of “local selfishness” and a tendency for the more affluent not to mix. But Harvey forgets that, in reality, centralised metropolitan configurations offer no guarantees of an equitable distribution of wealth. As with the right to the city, the key is in the correlation of forces that exist in the territories. Of course, the working-class peripheries must have a voice to confront the ideology of competitiveness and the profitability of capital. From this point of view, demanding polycentrism means that the peripheries are recognised as territories that provide solutions to metropolitan challenges. One such challenge is the social fragmentation of metropolitan areas. Though it is sometimes argued that pluri-municipalism is responsible (to justify metropolitan centralisation), in fact the responsibility lies with the prevailing economic rationales. The transformation of the economic activities and the productive systems of the great metropolises leads to selective patterns in intra-urban spaces: spaces of banishment, spaces of attraction (Bretagnolle et al., 2011: 12). Saskia Sassen (2010: 28–29) argues that cities have paid major tribute to the new economic regime. All have undergone the mass displacements of modest homes and unprofitable businesses from the centres of the rehabilitated cities and the new business districts to the urban peripheries. David Harvey (2011: 87–88) speaks of Engels’s prophetic reference to “Haussmanization” to describe the “embourgeoisement” and “gentrification” excluding the working classes from the centre.

In reality the bourgeoisie has only one method of settling the housing question after its fashion … This method is called “Haussmann.” … By “Haussmann” I mean the practice, which has now become general, of making breaches in the working-class quarters of our big cities, particularly in those which are centrally situated … No matter how different the reasons may be, the result is everywhere the same: the most scandalous alleys and lanes disappear to the accompaniment of lavish self-glorification by the bourgeoisie on account of this tremendous success, but – they appear again at once some where else, and often in the immediate neighbourhood (Engels, 1995 [1873]).

Prevailing economic logics accentuate the socio-spatial fragmentations and constantly create more suburbs that the working classes put up with (as opposed to those chosen by the rich). In these conditions, the demands for “polycentrism” made by local governments in working class suburbs are not a reflection of a kind of “local selfishness”, but of a will to “be able to act” through democratic institutions to reject the fate of invisibility, the pure and simple banishment or annexation assigned to them by the prevailing logics. They are a reflection, in short, of the will to guarantee the right to the city in all the areas of the metropolis, especially those most affected by exclusion. Defending their local interests through polycentrism, they act against social segregations and fight selfishness, making the metropolitan need for solidarity and interest in it visible.

Recognising polycentrism forces us out of the centre/periphery duality. It forces us to think about the governance of the metropolis differently to the mere government of a larger city – which risks multiple failures (Gilli and Offner, 2009: 110) – or even considering metropolises to be

Demanding polycentrism means that the peripheries are recognised as territories that provide solutions to metropolitan challenges.

Prevailing economic logics accentuate the socio-spatial fragmentations and constantly create more suburbs that the working classes put up with – rather than choose.
ungovernable (Jouve and Lefèvre, 2004). New forms of governance must be invented. They will vary according to the different political traditions, and will involve remembering that peripheries also have histories (Gilli and Offner, 2009: 131) – shaped by “making the city” and the will to be. This is governance in which cooperation between centralities, the result of the struggles on the periphery for the right to the city, is key to responding to common challenges and helps everyone, but especially those who need it most. It is governance in which cooperation and solidarity for everyone prevails over domination and centralisation.

V. The experience of Grand Paris

In the debate on Grand Paris (specifically, the configuration of a metropolitan governance mechanism), the world of finance advocates “recentralisation” of the metropolis for the sake of economic efficiency and greater attractiveness. Polycentrism has few supporters, as, according to Faburel (2018: 170), it affirms the right of each local government to lean, in its own way, towards autonomy. The requirement for territorial grouping and the urban integration of territorial reforms since the 1960s is in clear contradiction to this idea.

The first ideas the supporters of centralisation defended were called Haussmann 1 and Haussmann 2 in reference to Baron Haussmann, who in 1860 ordered the annexation by Paris of the municipalities on its outskirts, ignoring their histories and over 100 years of local democracy. In many of the peripheral municipalities, whether working cities or dormitory cities, the struggles to “make the city” over the entire period of urban growth of the industrial revolution was the result of an alliance between local power and the labour movement the so-called “Red Belt”. The local authorities of the peripheries demonstrated a capacity for social innovation, which is why the Paris metropolis is characterised by this multiplicity of spaces for democratic mobilisation.

Deindustrialisation hit these territories and their inhabitants hard, but the existence of a strong local democracy, despite the difficulties, has allowed them to preserve their voice and visibility. When the debate on Grand Paris began in 2001, they were able to participate in it to defend the principles of solidarity against the requirements of competitiveness. Taking their realities as a starting point, they voiced the social and spatial inequalities they experience in order to reduce them. Some municipalities joined associations to help each other “make the city”, building a common project for all their inhabitants within the Paris metropolis. Plaine Commune is an example of this. Its ambition has been to advance the right to the city for the working classes in the face of the tensions caused by neoliberal policies and to participate, with other territorial dynamics, in building a polycentric, supportive and ecologically responsible metropolis. In this sense, Plaine Commune has worked to promote polycentric metropolitan governance that allows the projects of the territories that make up the metropolis to be valued so that none is banished to oblivion and everyone is served according to their needs. The creation of the so-called “Métropole du Grand Paris” is the result of an initial commitment. The debate continues between supporters of political centralisation and those that propose cooperation through polycentric governability.

5. Association of 450,000 inhabitants established in 2001 that unites nine municipalities located to the north of Paris (Aubervilliers, Epinay-sur-Seine, La Courneuve, L’Île Saint-Denis, Pierrefitte, Saint-Denis, Saint-Ouen, Stains and Villetaneuse).
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I. Introduction

This article seeks to show that to realise the right to the city, the new urbanisation patterns taking shape in a range of situations require new institutional frameworks and unprecedented government policies. To do this, a time period will be considered that runs from the 1980s to the present when three configurations of events are changing the dynamics of the Latin American city:

A process of urbanisation: the end of the countryside to city migration cycle and the beginning of international migration means cities grow less, but with greater complexity. Inequality replaces urban expansion as the main problem, leading to demands for the right to the city (Harvey, 2012; Carrión, 2019) and spatial justice (Secchi, 2015; Soy, 2014). On the other hand, cities cease to operate according to a size-rank mentality with urban hierarchies and begin to act through transurban and interurban dynamics that pose an unprecedented problem: the poor fit between the new forms of urban territory organisation and the institutional structures of government.

Democracy returns (after dictatorships) and is extended to local governments as part of decentralisation processes. In 1980 only seven countries in the region elected their local authorities (1980); today all are chosen by the people (Carrión, 2015). Urban society is thus democratised and relations with the states (unitary, federal), intermediate governments (states, provinces, departments) and local governments (municipalities) are redefined.

The neoliberal rationale taking hold in the production of cities leads to the focus shifting from the social (welfare state and redistribution) to the economic. Profit drives urban planning (efficiency) via: the privatisation of services and infrastructure (Pírez, 1999), tax policies (tax reductions), increased capital gains on land (Abramo, 2011) and public investment in urban planning projects.

These three factors form the core of the urban conflict, leading to the emergence of cities as a political phenomenon with complex institutional frameworks and where the right to the city is claimed. We will therefore
work on three coordinated themes: the characteristics of the urbanisation process; the lack of congruence between institutional frameworks and new urbanisation patterns; and the right to the city, understood as a political utopia that seeks the balanced distribution of power and citizens’ access to the goods the city produces.

II. The urbanisation process

Latin America has seen two phases of urbanisation in the past century:

Urban explosion

The urbanisation that began in the early twentieth century lasted until the 1980s and is characterised as an urban explosion due to the accelerated rural-urban migration that saw the concentration of the Latin American population in cities rise from 41% in 1950 to 71% by 1980, making it the continent with the highest level of urbanisation in the world.

In the urbanisation of cities, three phenomena should be highlighted: the increased number of cities, which multiplied by six; the growth in the size of the population concentrated in the largest cities; and the predominance of coastal or nearby areas (within 100 linear kilometres) (Rodríguez, 2002).

This migration produced a new urban reality. The people who arrived in the city did not meet the basic needs of city life. But by reproducing peasant cultures and economies in the cities as a survival strategy, they nevertheless transformed those cities by producing peripheral areas that operated as cities of peasants (Roberts, 1980).

The urban explosion phase produced the historical dissociation between urbanisation and the city, because migration from the countryside did not produce cities.

The urban area overflowing beyond the city core due to the sudden appearance of human settlements on their outskirts gave rise to slums with the names (depending on the city) of favelas, pueblos jóvenes, villas miserias, barrios de rancho and colonias populares. These settlements were built outside the city and on the edge of the urban area, forming a dual urban structure with one legal-formal city and another illegal-informal one (Hardoy and Saterwaite, 1996).

This urbanisation based on unrecognised human settlements twice caused boundaries to be broken down:

At present, urban illegalities extend beyond the outskirts and into work, trade and urban centres; but also towards more complex illegalities: drugs trafficking (consumption, money laundering), people trafficking and arms sales.

1. At present, urban illegalities extend beyond the outskirts and into work, trade and urban centres; but also towards more complex illegalities: drugs trafficking (consumption, money laundering), people trafficking and arms sales.

The overburdening of public institutions due to the poor capacity to respond to migratory pressure led social demands to be directed towards local administrations that lacked resources and competencies, showing
the limitations of the centralist state. This went so far that the crisis of the centralist state took hold, forged out of this urban crisis.

Urban transition

The 1980–2020 period, understood as the urban transition, resulted from the change in the direction of migration. The rural-urban movement cycle came to an end and that of international urban-urban migration began. It had two expressions: the rate of urbanisation fell, and an interurban and transurban system was formed, with urbanisation that was multi-sited and unfolded across continuous or discontinuous territories.²

It was multi-sited in the sense of a structure that assembles several spaces inhabited or appropriated by various types of capital (Bourdieu, 1999) into the form of a city of cities. In other words, a process of fragmentation of the territory – which promotes inequalities – based on an urban structure formed of a constellation of discontinuous spaces (Castells, 2001), island cities (Duhau and Giglia, 2008) or archipelago-type cities (Rubalcaba and Schteingart, 2012).

This structure was formed in various spheres, such as that of a new economy – urban and global – that links spaces and sectors in a pattern of dispersing economic activities and centralising their management in the territory (Sassen, 1999). They demand infrastructure that integrates ports, airports, highways and, above all, new communication technologies. In territorial terms a new type of urban centrality emerges that operates as an inter- and transurban articulation node, with central functions that stretch beyond the city in which they are registered to link with similar centres in other cities through the higher tertiary sector (Pradilla and Márquez, 2008).

This new way of organising the territory generates a mismatch with existing institutional frameworks, causing a lack of correspondence between the multiple territorial levels and the multilevel institutional complex. A juxtaposition results between bodies at the horizontal (municipal) and vertical levels, whether intermediate (province, department, state) or national (intra-state or interstate).

Hence, the pattern of urbanisation rooted in a core metropolitan city is left behind, in favour of a territory in which different activities can be integrated into a post-metropolitan interurban and transurban dynamic (Soja, 2008). The new urbanisation patterns produce a new urban geography from which multiple centralities emerge and so, as a result, do multiple peripheries.

III. Current urbanisation patterns

In the urbanisation process, there are two key elements to the integration of territories: the supra-national (Castells, 2001; Sassen, 1999), fed by the technological scientific revolution, which reduces distances, stimulates the flow and movement of capital and refunctionalises urban regions, borders and clusters.

Then there is the subnational (Borja and Castells, 1998). The strengthening of local governments through increased resources and competencies

². Place may be defined as the point in physical space where an agent or thing is located, “takes place”, exists (Bourdieu, 1999).
and, above all, the election of their authorities by popular vote, introduces something previously unseen: the territorialisation of politics. From this point on, the relationship between the state and local societies is modified, as a territory is formed that can be opposed, coordinated or isolated in a subnational or supranational way (global or border cities).

**Glocalisation** prompts a new model of accumulation to emerge, where the local is internationalised and the global is localised – the global being a constituent part of the local, rather than something external. From this perspective, cities and regions become a core part of the anchoring and development of globalisation: they are strategic locations for its articulation in continuous, discontinuous, diffuse and distant forms. Global city systems, urban networks and global cities are formed that reference the global coordination of cities.

Cities do not exist in isolation because they are not autarkic: they emerged connected to the countryside, and later linked to other cities to form interurban and transurban relationships. The first cities grew up along the seas, rivers and roads nature provided. Today they are produced socially, with new communication technologies playing a decisive role (Castells, 2001).

Urban territories are formed from these elements and the following three ideal types shown in Table 1 stand out:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>City type</th>
<th>spatial model</th>
<th>relations</th>
<th>government</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Nuclear city</td>
<td>[Image of a city surrounded by countryside]</td>
<td>City countryside</td>
<td>Municipal isolated</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Metropolitan city</td>
<td>[Image of a polarised city]</td>
<td>Polarised city</td>
<td>Metropolitan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clusters</td>
<td>[Image of clusters]</td>
<td>Factory City</td>
<td>Multilevel public/private</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Borders</td>
<td>[Image of borders]</td>
<td>Pair cities</td>
<td>Multistate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Imagined cities</td>
<td>[Image of multi-sited city]</td>
<td>Multi-sited city</td>
<td>Pluristate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Regional urbanisation</td>
<td>[Image of a city of cities]</td>
<td>City of cities</td>
<td>Multilevel</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: compiled by the author.
The urbanisation of cities derives from the first phase of urbanisation and has two expressions: nuclear cities (large, medium and small) with strong anchoring in the countryside, and metropolitan cities with an important regional base, whether flat or polarised.

Interurban urbanisation coordinates cities within an urban system or city network, a concept that goes beyond that of urban hierarchy, and is based on demographic size-rank and not relations. Borja and Castells (1998) argued the contrary, saying that the global urban system is a network, not a pyramid.

Transurban urbanisation comes from cities’ territorial sprawl, going beyond them and operating within them in multi-sited forms that go beyond relations between cities and have four expressions: Clusters and factory cities operate as a group of private units that act strategically in certain sectors of the economy and territory. They are interconnected concentrations of companies that can carry out intensive private-corporate production. States create the general conditions for production (taxes, infrastructure) without building public institutions, but municipalities are integrated. Clear examples are the areas producing salmon in the X region of Chile (Montero, 2004), cars in El Bajío in México (Montero, 2015) and tourism in the Machupichu region, in Perú’s Sacred Valley and Cusco (Navarrete and Caballero, 2015), all regions of mono-production with horizontal value chains.

Imagined cities – perceived as urban – unfold across the territories of distant and distinct countries and continents and operate as symbolic communities in transnational social spaces (Beck, 1998). Transurban cities form around the economy/culture/society and technology through two mechanisms. First, high-level markets in the new urban centres enable the Norths of the cities in the South to be integrated into Northern cities (Sassen, 1999). Second, through interurban migration, origin and destination can be integrated to found a transurban city thanks to the development of communications technology (smartphones with multiple applications), international banking (remittances) and the global integration of the economy (legal and illegal). Hence, a fifth of Mexicans and a quarter of Cubans live in the United States, Buenos Aires is the fourth-largest Bolivian city, Los Angeles the fourth-largest Mexican city, Miami the second-largest Cuban city, and New York the city with the second-most Salvadorans.

Border cities – multi-site cities, mistakenly called twins, mirrors or pairs, are an expression of the transurban city, as a border between two or more neighbouring countries is a condition of their existence. One could not exist without the other, to the extent that they may be considered one city with two different parts; they are shaped by urban segregation and fragmentation. The idea that they are two different cities has its roots in methodological nationalism, while that of integration comes from complementary asymmetries (Carrión and Pinto, 2019).

Regional urbanisation – cities of cities – result from urban integration that goes beyond the metropolisation developed around a central city that incorporates a neighbouring territory to form a space with multiple scales that produce governments with multiple levels.
IV. The institutional framework of territorial government

The institutional frameworks of city governments are structured on the basis of two stated purposes: reforming the state and the new patterns of urbanisation.

The first introduces the neoliberal rationale to the public administration of cities. Municipalities give up certain functions or privatise them, form municipal companies, foundations or corporations and carry out limited sectoral actions that create new links between the municipality and the economy and the city, and fit with the dynamics of the minimal state. Regarding public policy: planning is replaced by urban planning projects (Puerto Madero in Buenos Aires, Guayaquil 2,000 in Guayaquil and the second level of the Periférico ring road in Mexico City); and the tax authorities value fees over taxes, meaning municipalities specialise in producing services and infrastructure. Neoliberalism modified urban societies when urban objects became commercially tradable goods and the objects of speculation; citizenship acquired the dynamics of consumer sovereignty (demand, taxpayer). The right to the city is thereby questioned and new urban inequalities take hold that demand access to the city and the production of a new one.

Simultaneously, the so-called leftward shift occurred. The return to the public and post-neoliberal politics were expressed in higher public spending and investment in infrastructure (ports, airports) and in strategic sectors of the economy (oil, energy) – forming part of a “national project” according to the tenets of so-called “21st Century Socialism”. In this context, cities are democratised by holding mayoral elections and municipalities emerge as a local representative power reshaping the local/national relationship through political diversity and territorialisation. Neither neoliberalism nor the thesis of the return of the public recognised this historical fact. They were conceived as national projects that did not respect territorial differences, because their hierarchical vision does not build unity in diversity.

The second proposal relates to the government of interurban and transurban systems. In this case the absence of correspondence between urbanisation and government bodies produces complex inter-institutional structures. The growth of one or several contiguous urban areas beyond their administrative limits led to conflicts between public administrations at the same levels (horizontal, e.g. municipalities) or at different levels (vertical, e.g. intermediate or national), each of which has its own representation, functionality and policies, as the following cases illustrate:

Mexico City, with under 9 million inhabitants (a figure that has not changed since the beginning of the century) and which chooses its own head of government, in 2017 approved its own constitution, including 16 regional government delegations. Over 23 million people live in the metropolitan area, in 60 municipalities and two states. The Mexico megalopolis has over 28 million people living in 535 municipalities and five states (Iracheta, 2017). In short, it is an institutional government complex composed of: 16 delegations, a government headquarters, five states and 535 municipalities.

Neoliberalism modified urban societies when urban objects became commercially tradable goods and the objects of speculation.

The absence of correspondence between urbanisation and government bodies produces complex inter-institutional structures.
Ciudad Juárez has a million and a half inhabitants and, together with Chihuahua, which has 900,000 inhabitants, forms the eighth-largest metropolitan area in Mexico. When combined with El Paso – a US city of 800,000 inhabitants – it forms the second-largest transnational metropolitan area in Mexico and the United States. In this case, a number of municipalities, two metropolitan areas and two different national states constitute a “transurban city” that must seek a new government in between nation-states.

These forms of urbanisation have administrative units with governments that are juxtaposed at municipal, metropolitan, intermediate, national and inter-state level, showing the exhaustion of the nation-centric urban regime composed of a nuclear city set within one territory, one government and one state. In other words, multiple autonomies grow out of distinct governance units with urban policies that have little consensus in the territories, which end up complicating and fracturing the demands for the right to the city. This means recognising the territories where the types of cities and governments that form an institutional framework with differing autonomies unfold, in the manner of a multilevel institutional framework (horizontal and vertical). In this context of multiple institutions arising from different urbanisation patterns, how should we understand the right to the city?

V. The right to the city in a multilevel reality

The right to the city is much more than the individual freedom to access the collective consumer goods produced in the city – its services and infrastructure – because that would mean leaving its structure intact, which excludes and generates inequality.

Two key elements emerge: first, the point is not to pursue an inclusive city, as international cooperation advocates, but to build a different, democratic city, which goes further than granting the excluded access to the city but maintaining its structure. And second, it must be recognised that the right to the city is not homogeneous, because the city is the space of difference and because its government emerged from a complex inter-institutional assembly, which makes the demands for the right to the city an additional challenge.

The right to the city is the right to change and reinvent the city in a context of respect for the rights of nature. The current city must be changed because it is a machine for producing inequality and exclusion (Secchi, 2015). That being so, the starting point should be the questions: The right to which city, the current one or the desired one? Which city lies behind the right to the city? To be sure, it means producing a city that grows out of the foundations of the existing one, but one which is different. The right to the city concept is the bearer of a utopia that must deny the current and seek the new, in the sense Galeano expressed (2003): “utopia is on the horizon. I walk two steps towards it and it moves two steps further away, and the horizon runs ten steps further off. So what is utopia good for? For that, for walking”. It must be understood that a co-production of the city takes place that originates in the institutional assembly of several states, intermedi-

7. Cities are by definition the concentration of heterogeneities, one of which is plurinationality: this is evident in cities in Bolivia, Guatemala, Ecuador, Mexico and Brazil.
8. This was the thesis of marginalisation that developed around the theory of modernity, which gave us the concept of the dual city: legal/illegal, which was resolved by subsuming one into the other under the rules of the existing city (Germani, 1980).
10. Author’s translation.
ate governments and municipalities that results from the relationship between public/private/social, local/national and local/local. That is to say, in the production and consumption of the city there is a disjointed pluri-institutional urban complex that fragments the political framework of the right to the city, preventing the city from being conceived as a political unit or an urban whole. In other words, the fragmentation of political-institutional boundaries calls into question the right to the city rationale because it causes the atomisation of their social and political references, preventing the democratic control of production and its surplus. Hence, a fundamental starting point for boosting the right to the city is to build a coordinated institutional structure, within which the utopia can be claimed and built.

Within the dispersal of rights within the current institutional framework, some cases emerge that show the predominance of one level over another – the presence of a hierarchy of rights. In this regard, three symptomatic cases may be given:

Gustavo Petro, elected mayor of Bogotá, was ousted from his duties because he proposed the municipalisation of the rubbish collection service which, according to the Colombian attorney general, was a policy that runs contrary to freedom of enterprise as an absolute and full fundamental right that is above municipal autonomy (the right OF the City); meaning the rights to private and corporate property are above other rights, such as that of the city.

Venezuelan migration illustrates the competences dispute at three levels: UNASUR, a South American integration agency, established the free movement of people in the region, removing the need for passports and visas to enter another country (ID cards were enough). This mandate was unilaterally disobeyed by migrant recipient countries, which demanded not only visas and passports but also criminal, fingerprint and eye records. While national governments violate international standards, cities are more permissive and show more solidarity towards migrants.

Historically, Mexico City has shown significant respect for the civil rights of the population, setting itself apart from other municipalities, states and the federal government in this. The legal recognition of equal marriage and abortion is one example, as they are not recognised at other levels.

In other words, not only are rights fragmented by each city’s institutional framework, a hierarchy of rights also exists that depends on the level of government. This is a key element in the co-production of the city and, therefore, in the co-production of the right to the city.

That is why the right to the city must have one indispensable quality: a structured institutional framework in which the population is represented, participates and is close to the exercise of government. For this, the management model (public/private) must be changed and the multi-institutional complex must be constructed. This is the only way the sense of citizenship will change beyond market supply and demand and a new city can be born. This would mean understanding the city as a political community composed of citizens who seek, as Aristotle said, a happy and virtuous city.
The constitution of a coordinated institutional framework would involve the partial transfer of the autonomies of each body, because they would share them between the different vertical and horizontal levels of government. The chance of citizens exercising the right to the city will depend on how the public administration is reconstituted from a citizens’ perspective with multiple agreements: for a collective right to be formed, a structured collective power is required. As Barcelona’s mayor Ada Colau has said, this means that for citizens to have more power, municipalities need more power.

For this to happen, a shift must be made from the urban planning of projects that produce objects to citizen-based urban planning that solves social problems and strengthens citizens and their rights. Significant experience of this exists in the region, from the social production of habitat in Mexico to participatory budgeting in Porto Alegre, the glass of milk programme in Lima and decentralisation in Montevideo, among many others.

It follows that two general strategic scenarios must be constructed. More city must be produced for more citizens — a democratic city that creates the cultural conditions for the less integrated and diverse population to truly live in the city — and more citizens must be produced for more city. This is the right to the city, allowing the development of identities, meeting and participation within a framework of respect for social diversity.

References


The Mexico City Charter for the Right to the City emerged from this experience, which was later internationalised.

12. Budget design means deciding priorities and if these emerge out of participation, they tend to strengthen citizenship. This initiative has been so important that it was later internationalised through international cooperation.

13. This national proposal allowed eight local governments to be created and encouraged participation and representation of the differences.


Secchi, B. *La ciudad de los ricos y la ciudad de los pobres*. Madrid: CATARATA, 2015.


How can the set of rights that underpin the notion of the “right to the city” be advanced? In seeking answers to this question over several decades, social mobilisations have been assembled and new political and legal frameworks promoted. New interpretations and political articulations of the right to the city, especially those that have emerged since the end of the 2000s, encourage us to view it through the lens of identity politics. They propose that attention should be given to the diversity of the social groups that live in urban environments, whose voice and agency must be recognised in the construction of the city in the interests of equality and social justice.

Addressing these issues not only involves recognising and valuing the subjects that have historically been marginalised in the construction of urban space, both physical and symbolic. It also means bearing in mind that the city materialises and is experienced in a different way by the different groups that inhabit it through their practices, uses of it and, in short, how their daily life takes shape.

Local governments in various corners of the world have worked over the past two decades to respond to the challenge of promoting diversity and equality in the city through rights policies. Similarly, metropolitan areas are subject to new frameworks of metropolitan and multilevel governance that seek to respond to the pressing social, political, economic and cultural challenges that divide their territories between centres and peripheries. In parallel, urban civil society has for several decades promoted initiatives aimed at improving the quality of life and recognition of the urban dweller as a political actor and rights-holder.

This CIDOB monograph engages with these issues, focusing, in particular, on identifying and analysing redistribution and recognition policies, especially at local level, institutional change and social production of the city in an increasingly urban world.