

PUBLIC SPACE

UCLG Think piece



Written by :
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UCLG Committee on Urban
Strategic Planning

FOREWORD

The UCLG Committee on Urban Strategic Planning herewith wants to share *Public Space: a Strategy for Achieving the Equitable City* written by Pietro Garau. Pietro is the international curator of the Biennial of Public Space, INU project leader for the INU/UN-Habitat partnership on public space and co-lead of the Habitat III policy unit on Urban Spatial Strategies, land markets and segregation.

The global Urban Sustainable Development Goal no 11 has a target 11.7 on public space: by 2030, provide universal access to safe, inclusive and accessible green and public space, in particular for women and children, older persons and persons with disabilities”.

Vis-à-vis the implementation of this SDG, we must stop looking at public space as merely a land use application and instead advocate for its recognition as a cross-cutting issue of a global relevance. We aim at making public space seen as a public service by local governments and as a place where we can all exercise our shared right to the city. The sustainable management of public space can only be entrusted by the entity that responds directly to its citizens and delivers goods and services for all: local government.

We will encourage our leaders to tell their stories, articulate policies and participate in learning and networking activities on public space, in order to both reshape cities and improve the citizens’ quality of life. For the past two years, UCLG has also been associated to the United Nations Habitat work programme on public space. We will continue future cooperation on public space with UN-Habitat, the initiative of the European Prize for Urban Public Space, the Biennial of Public Space and initiatives of all regions reminding the relevance of public space in local and international agendas.

The following note was delivered as a keynote address, during a Peer Learning Exchange on Public Space in Durban, South Africa, in 2014 and we would like to make it available to a global and greater audience, as it expresses common values with the UCLG. Pietro Garau argues that public space is important if we want to achieve the equitable city and thus, urban strategies should be public space centred. As public space, in its various forms and functions, covers sometimes over fifty per cent of the total area of our cities, it is crucial to focus on public space in order to achieve the “equitable city”.

We wish you a good and inspiring reading!



PUBLIC SPACE: A STRATEGY FOR ACHIEVING THE EQUITABLE CITY

By Pietro Garau

Summary

The concept of inequality, introduced by the social sciences, has been gaining increased attention since leading economists (e.g. Lansley, 2012; Stiglitz, 2013) demonstrated the positive relationship between equity and economic growth. In addition, environmental awareness increases once employment levels rise, basic needs are satisfied and educational levels improved. We also know that in an increasingly urbanised world, our planet's livability would be determined by what happens in cities. Therefore, equity in our cities can be considered a fundamental driver of sustainable development.

This note argues that equity, besides being a powerful driver of sustainability, is also a fundamental goal in itself; and that a good way of achieving the "equitable city" is to adopt a public space centered urban strategy. One of the many reasons for this is that public space is where all citizens, regardless of their income and personal circumstances, can feel equal and cared for. Unfortunately, the quality and supply of public spaces vary dramatically among cities and within most cities.

This can inspire positive opportunities for a new style of urban governance based on public space as an organizing principle for urban form and wellbeing. This new urban governance can be nurtured and supported by a host of useful tools. Among them are city-wide surveys of public space supply, quality and distribution to determine priority areas and sectors of intervention; city-wide urban plans with a clear focus on public space; advance public purchase of land for future urban development reserving fair shares of public space for various uses; mechanisms for land and building-rights tradeoffs; maintenance-oriented design; encouragement of temporary public-space uses of idle land; participation of citizens in all aspects of public space development such as planning, design, resourcing, maintenance and enjoyment (the "citifier" concept); mobilization of resources through fair and efficient taxation of private property and capture of unearned land-value increment due to public investment; incentives for private sector involvement in public space development and management.



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PUBLIC SPACE &



A landscape photograph of a dirt road in Blantyre, Malawi. The road is wide and unpaved, with a person walking away from the camera in the distance. The road is flanked by lush green trees and vegetation. The sky is blue with scattered white clouds. A semi-transparent white banner is overlaid across the middle of the image, containing the title text.

THE EQUITABLE CITY

Blantyre, Malawi

The Concept of Equity

“Equity” has become a very popular notion. Much has also been said and written about its correct interpretation and its relationship to similar concepts, such as “social justice” and “equality. It is only a sign of the times we live in that “equity” can be “the value of an ownership interest in property, including shareholders’ equity in a business”, as well as something expressing the concept of “fairness”. The latter was, of course, the meaning that inspired the 2014 World Urban Forum held in Medellin, Colombia, to adopt equity as its main theme. At the Forum public space was also accorded a notable level of attention. It will be useful, therefore, to explore the issue of the relationship between **equity and public space**.

The germane concept of “Equality” is a stronger, more definitive, unequivocal term: we are “equal”, and not “equitable”, in front of the law (but laws should be “equitable”, and not “equal”). “Gender equality” basically means that we should all have the same rights and opportunities, irrespective of gender. “Equal” is “equal” – there can be no confusion about it.

In public spaces we are all equal, in the sense that we can all exercise our shared right to the city without having to display our social status nor our ability to spend money. But public spaces are also the embodiment of equity.

“Equitable” is a more difficult, nuance-ridden concept. We can say an agreement should be “equitable”, in the sense that it should be fair to both parties. But who is to decide the degree of this fairness, and what is fair to each of the parties?

Yet, if we speak of cities, the term “equal city” becomes void of sense, while “Equitable City” resonates as a desirable goal. Literally, it makes “a lot of sense”. “Equal” is the result of something – an action, a ruling, a social pact. “Equitable” is more of an attribute, something describing a course of action, an ethical precept being followed and put into practice.

Yet, public space is where the two concepts of “equity” and “equality” come together. In public spaces – a street, a sidewalk, a square, a kiosk, a playground, a park, we are all equal, in the sense that in such places we can all exercise our shared right to the city without having to display our social status nor our ability to spend money. But public spaces are also the embodiment of equity, as the physical expression of the principle that it is fair for all citizens to enjoy access to basic, fundamental amenities, such as recreation, aesthetic enjoyment, walking, cycling, play, sports, culture, information. All these spaces, with the exception



Blantyre, Malawi



Shanghai, China



Porto Alegre, Brazil

of streets and sidewalks that also have to exist for mobility and physical access purposes, have to be created for the sheer enjoyment of citizens. Public space is the result of purposeful action.

The Equitable City

So, what is an “equitable city”? It is a city that is fair to all, a city that treats all in an equitable manner – particularly those who are in greatest need of fairness and equality – the poor, the discriminated, the disadvantaged. This does not mean that everybody will live in the same kind of housing or even enjoy the same standards of services. It does mean, however, that regardless of economic and political status, origin or nationality, at the bare minimum the equitable city will offer, free of charge and on a not-for-profit basis, a substantive and accessible stock of agreeable space, accessible amenities and useful services whose costs are shared by all according to each individual’s means. This is a fundamental definition of public space.

Public Space and the environmental aspects of the equitable city

Open green spaces are important components of a city’s public space endowment. When designed and used as parks, gardens and playgrounds, they offer much-needed services to city users and visitors alike. But of course, open and green spaces also perform vital ecological functions. Take trees, for example: Trees act as natural pollution filters by absorbing pollutants; they lower temperature by transpiring water and shading surfaces; they help prevent heat sinks; they reduce erosion; they provide food and wildlife habitats; they recharge ground water and sustain stream flow. At the same time, trees provide aesthetic pleasure and shade; a row of trees can transform an indifferent street into a pleasant urban space.

Open and green spaces also perform vital ecological functions [...] Trees act as natural pollution filters [...] trees provide aesthetic pleasure and shade.

What is good for environmentally meaningful public spaces is good for equity, and vice versa.



Open spaces are particularly valuable when they are part of an urban environmental system/network combining eco-compatible activities (walking, running, cycling) with the natural landscape and habitats. Opportunities for re-connecting episodically open and often-neglected spaces are particularly frequent in peripheral urban areas, where the lack of good public spaces is most severe. What is good for environmentally meaningful public spaces is good for equity, and vice versa.

Public Space and the ethical aspects of the Equitable City

One of the most interesting aspects of the debate that preceded the Charter of Public Space adopted at the 2013 Public Space Biennial was on who should have

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access to the free services cities have to offer: "taxpayers", and residents, or also those who happen to live and work in a city without the full, formal attributes of citizenship. The consensus was that the term "citizen", when applied to urban contexts should indeed conform to the second, wider meaning.

What helps greatly this wider acceptance of the concept of citizenry (after all, virtually every inhabitant of the

earth is a "citizen" of some country) is the non-excludable nature of public space. It is impossible to discriminate on access to streets, sidewalks, public gardens, playgrounds, and parks. Consequently, public space is a powerful instrument of inclusion. This is of great importance to cities. It means that all those who are in a city and behave responsibly are treated as equals, at least in the considerable portions of a city that are public. The Equitable City is where all have access to the

public facilities of cities: public libraries, gardens, parks, playgrounds, and public sports grounds.

Of course, there is more to the equitable city than public space. For example, an equitable city is a city that offers decent and affordable housing opportunities, and that manages to provide efficient public transport at a reasonable cost. But public space, as we shall see further on, is also a fundamental pre-requisite for the satisfaction of these fundamental urban needs.

Public Space and the Economic Aspects of the Equitable City

As mentioned in the foreword, the concept of inequality, introduced by the social sciences, has been gaining increased attention since leading economists (e.g. Lansley, 2012; Stiglitz, 2013) demonstrated the positive relationship between equity and economic growth. Economists famously lack an appreciation for space. In spite of that, Joseph Stiglitz, in accepting the challenge of talking about cities at the recently held World Urban Forum in Medellin, wasted no time in mentioning public space and public transport as two areas that can promote equality and consequently urban development.

Urban transport, by definition, occurs over public space, and its planning is paramount to sustainable urban development. A study from a Nairobi-based urbanist and scholar demonstrated that the costs of a comprehensive new urban plan for the city, regularly turned down because it was considered too expensive, would have been covered by the opportunity costs of just three days of chronic traffic congestion.

Urban space is, of course, urban land. In all

«Public space and public transport as two areas that can promote equality and consequently urban development.»
Joseph Stiglitz



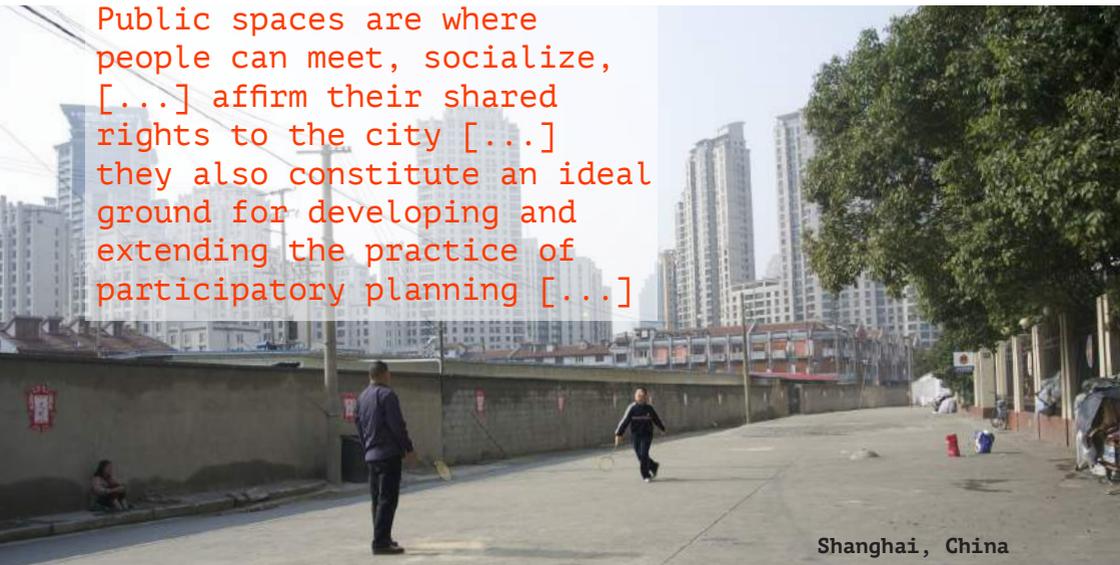
Shanghai, China

cities, the commercial and/or speculative use of land is a major economic activity. How can this activity be governed in such a way that it can become as equitable as possible? We shall try and deal with this challenge in the final part of this note.

Public Space and the Social Aspects of the Equitable City

An equitable city is a city where the most pressing needs of citizens – those “present needs” mentioned in the Brundtland report’s definition of sustainable development - are taken care for. They are, generally, individual or household needs: housing, education, and health. These needs are usually satisfied in different ways. In those cases

Public spaces are where people can meet, socialize, [...] affirm their shared rights to the city [...] they also constitute an ideal ground for developing and extending the practice of participatory planning [...]



when people are taken care for, by way of special programs or subsidies, the problem of social stigma is almost always inevitable.

By contrast, public space is where all citizens, regardless of their income and personal circumstances, can feel both equal and cared for. Public space embodies the special dimension of commonly satisfied needs; needs that are classified as social ones like the others, but have in addition a socializing quality. Public spaces are where people can meet, socialize, discover common likes and passions, affirm their shared rights to the city, organize, and where they can demonstrate to defend or champion commonly held rights or demands.

An equally important dimension of public spaces, in their capacity as commonly enjoyed resources, is that they also constitute an ideal ground for developing and extending the practice of participatory planning, particularly at the neighbourhood

level. Nothing can beat a new public space – a playground, a park, or a new public facility – as an opportunity for calling citizens together around a common purpose. Therefore, public spaces offer both the place and the content for social involvement, and as a result for more equitable conditions in cities.

Public Space and the Spatial Aspects of the Equitable City

Equity in a city cannot be measured in aggregate terms. This is what advocates of the priority of rural poverty do when they point out that schools and health care are much more available in cities than in rural areas. They are: but only to those who can afford them.

This should not be the case of public spaces, which are accessible for free by definition. Unfortunately, the quality and supply of public spaces varies dramatically between cities and within most cities – one more reason for seeking equality through a fairer urban distribution of good public spaces and international cooperation at, and for, the local level.

The quality and supply of public spaces varies dramatically between cities and within most cities [...] public parks are concentrated in the city centre or close to the most elegant neighbourhoods.



Berlin, Germany

same applies to elegant avenues, streets, boulevards, and squares. This is true in Paris, Rome, London, New York, but also in cities like Nairobi, where public parks are concentrated in the city centre or close to the most elegant neighbourhoods. Sadly, these parameters were hardly applied as cities expanded from the centre to the periphery. There, profit motives prevailed over wise planning criteria. As much available space as possible was reserved for private estate development, with the bare minimum left over for vehicular circulation and access, parking,

This fairer distribution will hardly happen by itself. In fact, the greatest parks and gardens in the great capitals of the old world, as well as those of post-world war two independence, are located in the older, more established, and wealthier sections of the city. The

and even less for gardens, playgrounds and parks. And of course, outcomes were even more disastrous in informal settlements. Today, the only exceptions to this situation, seen from the air at least, are gated communities, with their often-generous endowment of private open space.

Again, equity and public space come hand in hand. Moreover, while affordable housing and access to employment for all require a combination of good policy and favourable economic cycles, public space is a natural and viable promoter of equity. Through a combination of sound surveying, good planning and creative resource mobilization much can be done in relatively short periods of time – both for carving out public spaces in developed areas and for using public space, as we shall see below, as the organizing principle of new urban development.

The Cultural Aspects of the Equitable City (the city as a public space)

The cultural dimension is frequently, and rightly, included as a fourth parameter/indicator of sustainability. Here we shall refer to the concept of “Public Space as Culture” as distinct from “The Culture of Public Space”. In the latter case, one usually expresses a “system of values” around which a “community” of experts - professionals, experts, practitioners, and zealots – rally to establish principles and develop practices. On the other hand, the concept of “Public Space as Culture” is “meta-urban” and “meta-place”: it takes public space as a founding principle, and the very essence if you like, of urban civilization. It is also universal: it does not belong to the East or the West, to the North or to the South. As we all know, great cities surfaced and thrived when what we call the West today was covered with forests and inhabited by rural tribes.

And here we come to a phenomenon we might want to call “the urban paradox”.

The concept of “Public Space as Culture” is “meta-urban” and “meta-place”: it takes public space as a founding principle, and the very essence if you like, of urban civilization. It is also universal [...]

Cities are, by definition, settlements characterized by high density over considerable extensions in space. The living paradox they embody is that the denser and vast the settlement,



the greater freedom we enjoy. In a small village, everybody watches what we do. In a city we can seize rich opportunities for socializing, but we can also choose the privilege of walking, moving, doing business alongside perfect strangers that we are not particularly inclined to make the acquaintance of. This freedom, of course, is everybody else's freedom as well. Anybody at all can walk on a city sidewalk. Anybody at all can sit on the same bench at the museum or in a park, or next to us in a public library. Those who resent this tacit contract are the ones who build gated communities. By closing that gate, people reject the very concept of freedom. This is the paradox of cities.

The city itself is
a Public Space.

In this sense, the city itself is a Public Space. Freedom is a universal value: it is "meta-public space". But the freedom cities give us is realized through public space.





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A PUBLIC-SPACE LED



NEW STYLE OF URBAN GOVERNANCE

Sfax, Tunisia

So far, we have argued the central role of public space in promoting equitable cities, and in turn ensuring a sustainable development based on equitable social, economic and environmental premises. We shall now consider a number of tools that can be used to pursue the objective of an adequate supply, quality and distribution of public space in our cities.

[...] planning and coordination will always have to rest with the local government. Equally important will be enablement at the national level.

It seems obvious that regardless of the strategies to be pursued in involving actors and taking into account the very welcome cases of grassroots initiatives, planning and coordination will always have to rest with the local government. Equally important will be enablement at the national level. Some of the tools described below will require legislation supporting such tools as a robust local planning authority, a dependable local revenue base, participation enabling procedures, adequate land and development taxation measures, and capacity building. Also, the cultural aspect of public spaces should not be neglected in the new urban governance. Therefore, preserving material heritage and supporting the relation of immaterial heritage with the contemporary has to be considered, as well as the protection and promotion of cultural diversity.

City-wide public space surveys

Surveys will classify public spaces by type [...] the “obvious” public spaces [...] it might be advisable to assess supply in terms of “raw supply” such as availability and access.

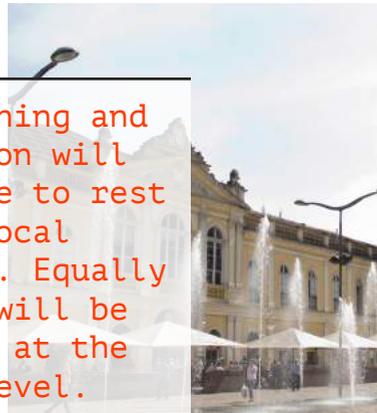
the first important step is to identify the parts of the city where public space supply is lacking, or of a poor quality, or both. It is very likely that this will occur in peripheral lower income neighbourhoods and even more so in informal settlements and slums.

It has been noted before that the supply and quality of public spaces tend to diminish with the distance from the central city. Since, as argued previously, one of the principal purposes of public space endowment is to reduce inequality,

Marseille, France

Porto Alegre, Brazil

Durban, South Africa





Surveys will classify public spaces by type. In terms of playgrounds, gardens, and parks (the “obvious” public spaces), it might be advisable to assess supply in terms of “raw supply” such as availability (e.g. surface per inhabitant) and access (e.g. walking distance by type of open space).

Assessments can become more difficult when it comes to roads and streets. While roads, streets and sidewalks are the most ubiquitous and flexible public spaces, it is somewhat harder to assess their supply in quantitative terms. But there will be exceptions; for example, it is well known that most of informal settlements totally lack paved roads wide enough for accessing most dwellings with a motor vehicle such as an ambulance. In all road infrastructures, quality of (paving and state of maintenance) will be important.

Linear public spaces reserved for non-motorized mobility are important elements of a good public space system. First and foremost, the all-important sidewalk – Is it wide enough? Is it in a good state of repair? And then other essential elements of the sustainable city, such as bicycle lanes? Are they designed and managed as a network, thus allowing longer runs?



City-wide urban plans with a clear focus on public space: a revolution in the making

The “new style of urban governance” postulated above rests on a revolution (literally: turning upside down) of the concept of planning. The traditional concept of planning for expanding cities rests, by and large, on the identification of the portions of urban territory where private development can occur, the setting of rules about construction, and the matching identification of infrastructure and public facilities that can serve the development. Often, development happens in this very order, with infrastructure falling behind construction.

Planning with a focus on public space means reversing this order and starting, rather than from the “private city”, from the “public city”. It is the concept of public-space led planning.





Planning with a focus on public space means reversing this order and starting, rather than from the “private city”, from the “public city”. It is the concept of public-space led planning. The idea is to start with the infrastructure and the open spaces that the city will require in the future, taking into account the “public space deficit” identified through city-wide public space surveys. This architecture will constitute the organized container for private development, including the all-important solution of assisted self-help housing.

Advance public purchase of land for future urban development reserving fair shares of public space for various uses

The advantage of this approach is that a municipality might be in a position to co-ordinate its land and infrastructure development policy. A forward-reaching administration can identify ahead of time the corridors along which development is to take place, acquire vast portions of land along these corridors, and then resell part of this land, endowed with infrastructure, at a profit. It would be a very equitable way of internalizing the value added by the efforts of all, often pocketed by private operators through lack of an enlightened and responsible development strategy. Cities like Helsinki, in Finland, are renowned for having pursued consistently a public land acquisition and management policy, and never regretted it.

Mechanisms for land and building-rights tradeoffs to secure public space

Whenever public land is not available for developing suitable and accessible public space, the question will arise of how to secure the land that the plan allocates to public space purposes. In some cases, legislation or available municipal resources might allow for expropriation or outright purchase. In many other cases, however, these means may not be available. This is when alternative options such as transfer of development rights can prove useful. Interestingly, this is also where the concept of equity comes to the fore. The owner of a piece of land zoned for public space might claim being deprived of the “right to build” on his or her land. So the municipality can choose to compensate the owner for this loss. Where can the money come from? According to established

“transfer of development rights” procedures (TDR), the municipality can choose to boost development rights in a different area zoned for densification and exact fees from the owners in exchange for the increased value of their land. These fees are used to compensate the owner of the preserved parcel of land, or to acquire the land outright.

“Design must pay full attention to maintenance and management costs by using simple solutions and materials that are durable, simple, easily replaceable and climatically adequate”.
The Charter of Public Space, para. 25

This procedure, when applied to the public interest in mind, has three advantages. First, it promotes densification and thus prevents urban sprawl. It is equitable, because it safeguards landowners’ perceived rights and secures precious public space for others. And it can be carried out successfully at no expense to the municipality.

Maintenance-oriented design

The Charter of Public Space, para. 25, incorporated a number of converging experiences and summarized them in the recommendation that “Design must pay full attention to maintenance and management costs by using simple solutions and materials that are durable, simple, easily replaceable and climatically adequate”.

Too often, architects and urban designers forget that a public space project, mindless of environmental conditions and maintenance costs can turn out to be very expensive. On the other hand, there are plenty of solutions based on solid and durable materials that can be also enjoyable and aesthetically attractive. Such materials may appear to be expensive in the construction phase, but they often turn out to be money savers in the long run. One example is the celebrated sidewalks of the Copacabana public beach in Rio de Janeiro, designed by the famous Brazilian architect Carlo Burle Marx.

Encouragement of temporary public-space uses of idle land

[...] « Where there are only economic activity and no people, housing must come in.» Jaime Lerner, Acupuntura Urbana

Eleven years ago, Jaime Lerner, the inventor of the city of inventions, Curitiba, produced at the instigation of Oscar Niemeyer a little book titled Acupuntura Urbana. In one

small chapter titled “Continuity is Life”, Lerner insists that where there are only economic activity and no people, housing must come in. And if there is no activity, it is important to introduce services. An urban vacuum has to be filled, preferably with an activity that can bring about animation. If future uses are uncertain, portable structures can be installed, immediately. If the place is dead at night, let it be a night time activity. It is a form of instant acupuncture that can revitalize a whole urban environment.

The Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations is getting more involved in urban development and in agriculture-based activities that can help the urban and the rural poor. One of them is urban agriculture. There is no reason why undeveloped land, particularly publicly owned land bordering roads, cannot be used for growing crops. The same applies to public urban markets, other important public spaces, where produce and other goods can be sold by informal vendors. Often, such markets can be the result of clever urban recycling, as in the case of Durban’s Warwick Junction project.

Participation of citizens in all aspects of public space development such as planning, design, resourcing, maintenance and enjoyment (the “citifier” concept)

Saying that citizens should enjoy their public spaces can sound like a banality. Why shouldn’t they? After all, public spaces are created and maintained for them. Yet, enjoyment can be prevented by a number of negative factors. The first one is distance: residents who live far away will find it hard to enjoy a playground, a public library, a small park on a regular basis. Others are a lack of time, which is an indicator of urban inequality (the poor enjoy much less leisure time than the wealthy – they cannot afford to “take off for the day”). Other reasons can be lack of security, or bad design, or poor maintenance.

[...] public urban markets, other important public spaces, where produce and other goods can be sold by informal vendors. [...] can be the result of clever urban recycling, as in the case of Durban’s Warwick Junction project.

One good premise for future enjoyment and use is participation in all aspects of the public-space cycle process: creation, design, maintenance, management, use, and evaluation. In fact, the quest for



Durban,
South Africa

Yet, enjoyment can be prevented by a number of negative factors : [...]distance [...] lack of time [...]a lack of security, bad design, or poor maintenance.



Blantyre, Malawi

good public spaces can trigger practices far more advanced than the conventional participatory processes of top-down initiative and project formulation, followed by some form of consultation and later by execution. There is hardly a more initiative-inducing project than a playground for children, a neighbourhood park to walk and run in, the adoption of measures for making streets safer and more attractive. Initiatives of this kind are growing everywhere, and are often supported by local organizations with very good skills in the interface between residents and local government and by public-space specialists with expertise in the realm of urban “placemaking”. And many of them are crowned with success. So, public space can become the ideal platform for building a sense of accomplishment that can lead to the building of confidence needed to establish a permanent sense of community and to move on to even more ambitious collective goals. UN-Habitat has championed the “I am a City Changer” slogan. Along with that aspiration, it would be wonderful if we could also transform ourselves from “city users” into “cityfiers”: people who nurture the urban wonderment with the care and respect their common living environment requires.

Mobilization of resources through fair and efficient taxation of private property and capture of land-value increment due to public investment

This fundamental function of local government is justified by the fact that private property in cities enjoys a number of municipal services not paid for as utilities. It is calculated in an equitable manner, commensurate for the value of the property. In many cities, however, the assessed value of property may not be commensurate with its value as it increases over time, or the collection of the property tax may be faulty or inefficient. This is one of the main causes of the chronic resource deficit of so many municipalities.

[...] there is a great potential for involving businesses of a different nature in non-profit public space development and management [...] it is equally important for the public sector counterpart to be fully equipped to establish, and manage these partnerships [...]

As cities grow and expand and new public infrastructure is built, or in the case of major rehabilitation / regeneration projects in parts of the existing urban fabric, public investment invariably produces a significant increase in the value of private property adjacent or near the intervention. Since this increase in value is not due to any investment on the part of the owner, this justifies the full, or partial, recapture of the corresponding land-value increment.

This procedure was recognized internationally as far back as 1976, by the first United Nations Conference on Human Settlements. Notable among national-level applications (UN-HABITAT 2009) is Colombia's tax law of 1997 (Law for Territorial Development) that set out several ways in which local authorities could

participate in capturing unearned value increments on real property. Property owners could negotiate a cash payment to the municipality, could pay in kind through transfer of a portion of the land, or could participate in the formation of an urban development partnership. This mechanism is an important source of income for the Colombian capital city's Urban Development Institute, responsible for infrastructure and public space development in Bogotá including its well known Transmilenio transport system.

Incentives for private sector involvement in public space development and management.

Of course, the construction of a new road or a park, not to mention management contracts, naturally involve private sector companies. Aside from this, there is a great potential for involving businesses of a different nature in non-profit public space development and management. It is important that such an opportunity be considered in a positive way, and not simply as a necessity to exploit the business sector when in need of resources. But it is equally important for the public sector counterpart to be fully equipped to establish, and manage these partnerships in such a way that they become an asset in the public interest. The free nature of public space also involves the need to find justifiable incentives for private sector involvement instead, or in addition to, the natural vocation of the private sector, which consists in making money. Many companies may be interested, for example, in becoming patrons of a playground, a park or a street. Others may be interested in outright donations of land. A case in point is the Jeevanjee Gardens in Nairobi, a

gift to the city on the part of an enlightened patron that have become one of the most treasured public spaces in the city. Another common practice is support for city museums and libraries. Public concessions in public parks and other public spaces can also become an interesting source for public space budgets as well as a welcome facility for visitors and public space users.



**Nairobi, Kenya
(Jeevanjee Gardens)**

Layout and illustrations: Isabelle Colas

Write up: Pietro Garau

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FOR A BETTER URBAN FUTURE

