The Routledge Handbook on Cities of the Global South

Edited by Susan Parnell and Sophie Oldfield

THE ROUTLEDGE HANDBOOK ON CITIES OF THE GLOBAL SOUTH

The renaissance in urban theory draws directly from a fresh focus on the neglected realities of cities beyond the west and embraces the global south as the epicentre of urbanism. This Handbook engages the complex ways in which cities of the global south and the global north are rapidly shifting, the imperative for multiple genealogies of knowledge production, as well as a diversity of empirical entry points to understand contemporary urban dynamics.

The Handbook works towards a geographical realignment in urban studies, bringing into conversation a wide array of cities across the global south – the 'ordinary', 'mega', 'global' and 'peripheral'. With interdisciplinary contributions from a range of leading international experts, it profiles an emergent and geographically diverse body of work. The contributions draw on conflicting and divergent debates to open up discussion on the meaning of the city in, or of, the global south; arguments that are fluid and increasingly contested geographically and conceptually. It reflects on critical urbanism, the macro- and micro-scale forces that shape cities, including ideological, demographic and technological shifts, and rapidly changing global and regional economic dynamics. Working with southern reference points, the chapters present themes in urban politics, identity and environment in ways that (re)frame our thinking about cities. The Handbook engages the twenty-first-century city through a 'southern urban' lens to stimulate scholarly, professional and activist engagements with the city.

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"This Handbook brings together some of the most interesting and prominent voices on cities to speak of and from the conurbations in which the majority of the World finds itself. Thinking on cities has been dominated by perspectives from the north, but this volume provides an elegant and insightful reassessment; one that manages to get past familiar but unhelpful north–south dualisms. It illuminates the lives and spaces of the many, the politics of being and becoming, the materiality of urban formation, and the contours of a new urbanism informed from the south. An essential and compelling read put together with care by the editors."

Ash Amin, 1931 Chair in Geography and Fellow of Christ's College,
University of Cambridge, UK

"Cities across the global south are busily reconstructing multiple forms of 'received' twentieth–century urbanism. During the early twenty-first century, they will help reshape the global and regional economic landscapes, along with our contemporary imaginations of justice, good governance, social development and sustainability. Through this, they will almost certainly create new geographies, histories and epistemologies. Under the editorship of Parnell & Oldfield, this Handbook explores this diverse and heterodox terrain in a rich and timely contribution to the theory and practice of critical and transformative urbanism as articulated by leading voices of the global south."

Aromar Revi, Director Indian Institute of Human Settlements, India

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CONTENTS

Contents

Contents

LIST OF FIGURES

LIST OF TABLES

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1
'FROM THE SOUTH'

Sophie Oldfield and Susan Parnell

Writing from the southern tip of Africa in the crisp winter temperatures of June, this is an exciting moment for us personally and professionally. This is a big book on what are path-determining issues for the twenty-first century. Cities, especially southern cities, are our future. We want to make clear, however, that this book does not establish a body of scholarship on the global urban south through a critique of the norms and the limits, the problems and the lacunae of northern scholarship and its universal presumptions and applications. It is instead a celebration of scholars and scholarship committed to making urban futures better, more interesting, legible, sustainable, and more just. It also works towards a geographical realignment in urban studies, bringing into conversation a wide array of cities across the global south – the 'ordinary', 'mega', 'global' and 'peripheral' – as well as diversely situated authors and perspectives. As the nuanced texts and the many glorious images in the book reveal, assuming a southern perspective, or point of departure, inevitably alters one's gaze on cities: this is an invigorating, not debilitating, shift in orientation for urban studies.

The 700 or so pages that follow demonstrate unequivocally that efforts to create southern urbanism *de novo* are misplaced: this scholarship, although not exhaustive or complete, already exists. Moreover, the work on cities from the south, in the third world, beyond the west – however one labels and packages that suite of cities we all recognize by their informality, their diversity, their pace, their youth, their poverty, their human energy – is rich. Contributors to the geographical realignment of urban studies, moreover, include scholars from the social, scientific and technical fields, multinational consultancies and agencies and the big NGOs. Working from across this multi-sourced and interdisciplinary material, we seek to provoke thinking on what southern dominated urbanism in the first truly global urban century implies for ideas and practice. We have configured *The Handbook* to open rather than foreclose intellectual debate, showcasing a multiplicity of styles and methods, political views and research questions. This does not mean we have no specific agenda for the volume. What infuses this collection is the explicit commitment to engaging the twenty-first century through a 'southern urban' lens, doing so in a manner that stimulates scholarly, professional and activist engagements with the city.

The new international distribution of cities has shifted profoundly, with the global south the new epicentre of urbanism. To account for the significant reorientation that the real demography of the present and future demands, the task for this *Handbook* is to outline a different way of doing urban studies. Questions of how to achieve a 'worlding' of cities, investigate the 'ordinary' city, or foster a 'southern' theorizing of urbanism permeate every chapter of the book.

The chapters in *The Handbook* also reflect the groundswell of (southern) writing on the (southern) city, much of which has not yet been fully acknowledged in the old urban studies core. With the massive demographic and economic changes of the last three decades, the parochialism of the research heartland is a problem. It means that cities that are highly profiled in the canon of urban studies no longer reflect the hubs of urbanization or the most critical contemporary global urban problems. For urban theory, the consequence of the distortion is the prioritization of ideas that speak predominantly to cities forged by the industrial revolution, the realities of the Anglophone parts of the world, and an associated tendency to overlook the rapidly growing cities where traditional authority, religious identity or informality are as central to legitimate urban narratives as the vacillations in modern urban capitalist public policy. This lacuna in understanding urban practices is also a product of a distorted global distribution of research-active scholars and scholarship, the politics of knowledge that shapes urban studies. Where academics work is a dynamic that is difficult for an ascendant southern urbanism to counter; as editors our aim has been to establish an internationally credible cohort of authors commensurate with *The Handbook's* objective of providing a prestige reference work, while giving greater profile to lesser-known cities and researchers located outside of the intellectual heartlands.

The tone of *The Handbook* is unashamedly academic, but because of the subject matter, where a significant proportion of the knowledge on urban places lies beyond the academy, there was an imperative to respect styles and sources of knowledge production regardless of whether it was found in a United Nations document, a scholarly journal or an activist blog. It is not just the complexity of cities but also the diversity of theorists and researchers that the book showcases and problematizes. For instance, we, like many others published here, have both worked and lived in north and south. We also live in a context where simple notions of north/south, rich/poor, black/white are grossly insufficient to understand power and identity in the city. Urban studies has a tradition of invoking the intellectual writings of divergent disciplinary traditions, something our training as geographers embraces, a discipline that stands at the crossroads of ecology, biology, anthropology, development studies, planning and history, and which we have endeavoured to pursue in seeking contributors from diverse backgrounds to *The Handbook*.

We hope that the multi-register tone of the book also reflects our far from pure academic commitments. Like an increasingly large percentage of scholars, we are embedded in multiple relationships and conversations across donors, state, province, city, activists, and non-governmental and community organizations. In consequence, in selecting the topics covered too, we were careful to ensure that the concerns that dominate southern policy makers, scholars and residents were appropriately profiled. In framing our search for chapters, we were especially anxious to speak to a new generation of urbanists, who may not necessarily live in cities of the south, but will be much more conscious of and engaged with cities in the south than past generations of either academics or professionals. *The Handbook* is intended to provide this cohort with a robust and authoritative overview of the state of this rapidly developing sub-field of urban studies, known somewhat clumsily as southern urbanism or cities of the south.

To frame why such a large and diverse volume is necessary, the opening section of the book speaks directly to the debate on the utility of an alternative southern theoretical positioning and the value of establishing a distinctive set of southern urban problems. Here we seek to open up discussion, rather than take a position on the precise meaning of the city in or of the global south. Indeed, we would also caution against splitting off or prioritizing the theoretical from the conceptual, empirical and methodological concerns that infuse every other section and chapter. Many of the papers deal overtly with particular southern urban issues, but there is never a suggestion of a unique city form or even exclusively southern problems. Rather, working from southern urban realities highlights known urban divisions such as food security, fragmented urbanism or inequality, while underscoring the relative lack of state resources and high levels of household poverty as overarching determinants of the urban

condition. Even loosely applied, this southern (re)framing challenges the intellectual status quo and makes way for new modes to illuminate the drivers of urban change.

We have aimed to build *The Handbook* from empirical evidence and intellectual formulations drawn from the physical, social and economic realities of relatively under-documented cities. The majority of the urban places we invoke are located in territories that the Bruntland line delineated as 'the global south'. The spatial scope of the collection is however not literal. Throughout the volume we have used lower case text for the 'global south', connoting that this is not a physical nomenclature. Across (and sometimes even within) the chapters, authors invoke widely varied 'definitions' of southern urbanism, revealing that for urban scholars in general the notion of the global south is fluid and increasingly contested, both geographically and conceptually.

Reticence over being specific about what places are in or out of the southern delineation should not detract from the widespread concern to (re)view the global urban condition with a southern sensibility. There is little consensus on how exactly to move a (southern) urban agenda forward, representing in our view a healthy diversity of views within the field. In contrast to eschewing regional or global categorizations of a city, a cohort of writers, marked by strong exposure to African, South Asian and Latin American cities, press the view that extreme levels of urban poverty and under-servicing create imperatives for distinctive practical and political action that can only be achieved when there is greater understanding of the dynamics of fiscal impediments, urban need, management failure, complexity and struggle in actual cities, those conventionally thought of as 'in the global south'. For other authors in *The Handbook*, such distinct southern positioning is less useful; instead they work from a relational, rather than binary, notion of south–north relations, revealing in many instances the 'reverse' flow of ideas and practices from southern to northern cities, and highlighting too the ways in which urban experiences (including poverty and informality) are also global and universal.

While the big ideas of urban studies infuse the work of scholars across the world, a major challenge for urbanists in and of the south has been to generate publications that have local traction and practical application. Ideas used to shape research have to be seen to be legitimate at the city and national scales and this means a locally legible account that gives due weight to drivers of urban change, regardless of their form or point of origin. In our global system of cities, it is essential to theorize urban change in ways that make transparent how specific local problems resonate with universal challenges of, for instance, natural resource threats, the uneven distribution of wealth, new technologies, sustainable infrastructure management, and the erosion of the quality of life.

No city is static, and cities everywhere are subject to major forces of social, economic and environmental change, a set of debates that provide necessary reminders of the absolute limits of resource constraints for all urban life. Mindful of our common urban future, a number of the chapters within *The Handbook* deploy theory and practice from the southern city to conditions in northern cities, highlighting that resource limits, poverty, informality and growth are not the preserve of the south. In seeking contributions for *The Handbook*, our premise was that there are important issues around wealth and consumption evident everywhere and much extant urban theory has a global application.

To reflect the widely varying and diverse research and conceptual entry points, as well as a device for organizing and making the debates more accessible, we have placed the close to fifty chapters into sub-sections. Some chapters could readily be located in one or more section, and the intention is not to compartmentalize. To aid readers each section includes a brief introduction to the critical issues that illuminate rather than summarize the chapters within each theme.

We are mindful that *The Handbook* has shortcomings and gaps. For example, there is not enough on crime, biodiversity or housing. We have not addressed the issue of how cities should be taken up in the global Sustainable Development Goals that are currently under formulation through United Nations processes. China is underrepresented, much of Eurasia is ignored; issues of research methods and ethics

are almost entirely absent, and so on. The themes we profile are in no way presented as a comprehensive assessment or manifesto of a southern repositioning of urban studies. Moreover, we have no pretentions that we provide a sufficient range of case material to satisfy the need for a more comprehensive coverage of cities that simultaneously informs local action and the way global thinkers frame their generalizations. What we hope the collection does do is profile provocative material from alternative points on the map, minimizing the disconnect between solutions born of the richest urban centres and their application in some of the poorest. We also hope it inspires a confidence in normalizing the use of southern cities as common reference points for comparative debate and collective abstraction.

Lastly, the cover image invokes the notions of travel and departures, metaphors consistent with the premise of the volume that the start, if not the end point, for innovation in urban research and praxis, of necessity, has to hold the city of the global south as a critical, if not exclusive, reference point. The ideas and practices of twenty-first-century cities are widely contested, varied in scope and scale and there are multiple theoretical entry points. This is not a relativist argument – this is not everything goes, a 'both/and' type of approach. Rather we acknowledge that what emerges out of a conversation about southern urbanism is a product of contestation, debate, the ability to invoke evidence, the acknowledgement of theory generated in multiple places, and an ability to acknowledge and access corridors of power inside and outside the academy.

In this growing and diversifying community of scholars and practitioners, the tightly knit leadership that marked out the dominance of Anglo-American writing on the city is fraying. This is both healthy, in that there is no orthodoxy, but tricky in that the scholarship is fragmented and difficult to access.

Selected precisely because they are representative of the 'new normal' of the urban world, this body of work on 'southern urbanism' helps us move forward. It reminds us that the majority of research on southern urbanism is not focused on the issue of whether the city of the south is a useful or correct theoretical framing. Rather, most authors are associated with a tradition of empirical work and engaged political practice that invokes theory to interpret global forces and their local specificity. There is no single expression of this bottom-up conceptualization that stands in contrast to big theory formulation analytically; it nonetheless provides and provokes bodies of work that critically and theoretically inform interventions that come out of the south.

Overall, *The Handbook* embraces the imperative for multiple genealogies of knowledge production and a diversity of empirical entry points essential for excavating the complex ways in which cities of the global south and global north are rapidly shifting. It demonstrates that it is possible to map and understand these processes but this requires extensive and sustained research, and on the ground exposure. Moreover, multiple investigations and diverse entry points are essential to understand what levers of change might be, who actors are, and the diverse power configurations that are at play. The book is thus not prescriptive, there is no squaring of one theory and body of knowledge in relation to another; rather we aim for recognition and conversation between and across them, drawing on these diverse readings to highlight the complex interplay of structure and agency, the global and the local, the theoretical and the empirical that give substance to our understanding of how cities run as well as the ephemeral qualities of citizens, spaces and urban knowledge.

PART I

Critical urbanism

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2
CRITICAL URBANISM

Sophie Oldfield

What inspires a conversation about critical urbanism? For some, it is a project of overt engagement and celebration of the breadth and complexities of cities of the global south, the myriad realities that shape cities and makes the task of 'thinking cities' innovative and exciting today. For others, it is a challenge to develop urban knowledge and theory that can travel and engage complexity, across borders and boundaries, producing new and better ways of knowing. Certainly, critical approaches to southern urbanism pose a challenge to do things differently, to 'dis-assemble' and 're-assemble' our notions and practice.

From 'worlding' to 'de-territorialized' global thinking, from scepticism to a claim for southern urban knowledge, at stake in this debate lies contention over the significance of place – the south, the post-colony, the periphery, its relationship to theory, and the ways in which both shape the epistemological knowledge at the heart of an invigorated project for urban studies. Indeed, what marks this collection of interventions are the divergent views within a cohort of scholars who, nonetheless, collectively assert the imperative of reframing of urban studies (in general) from a southern vantage point.

Ananya Roy, for instance, draws on contemporary notions of the global south as temporal rather than geographical, emerging in specific historical conjunctures – the 'now' of the 'Asian urban century' in this case. A project of 'worlding' urban theory, she takes seriously circulations, 'shadow lines', to create new geographies of theory of and from the global south. Unsurprisingly, given the dynamic pace of this critical debate, arguments for and against southern urbanism are taken in different directions by other authors in this section.

While sympathetic to a project of global southern urban theory and its intent, Alan Mabin is sceptical of the utility of 'urban theory from the south'. What we need, or lack, is not addressed by imposition of a theory from and of the south. And, must we be didactic about where our ideas travel, rejecting the notion, for instance, that northern theories aren't useful in the south *carte blanche*? He suggests instead that theories travel, and in doing so, are richly populated in place, region, networks, and in conversation. Working between Paris, Johannesburg and São Paulo, unlike Roy's located urbanism, he suggests thinking in relation, in pathways across conventional terrain of north and south.

In clear contrast, Sujata Patel argues for 'southern urban theory', to overcome the Eurocentric epistemic trap in which urban studies (and sociology) are caught. Demonstrating the problematic and persistent equating of urbanization and modernization in critical – supposedly progressive – urban theory, she argues for the disruption of such universals. While 'provincializing' North Atlantic urban

studies is a task for those in the North Atlantic, Patel invites southern scholars to conceive of a reinvigorated urban studies, networked across the south, a project that addresses the serious material and political inequalities central to the contemporary global production of academic knowledge. Writing from India, she challenges us to create a language and practice of social science that is southern, and thus truly global and critical.

Like Patel, Carlos Vainer argues that we must 'move beyond *out of place* urban ideas'. Reflecting a Brazilian, and more generally, a Latin American experience, he argues that coloniality − knowledge shaped in colonial relations − sustains the dissemination of 'best practice' city modelling built on what was European, and is now largely a North American model. To challenge coloniality we have 'to imagine a different world, a better world'. Vainer highlights the need for a *dialogical* approach − one that is 'free' and 'fair', that recognizes its assumptions; a project in which all theorists acknowledge the location and limits of ideas.

In concluding with Jennifer Robinson's chapter, the section comes full circle. Robinson argues that in calling for 'urban theory from the global south' we are too easily caught in a 'territorial trap' − embodied in notions of south, north, west, colonial, and post-colonial. She suggests 'southern city knowledge' can only be an interim way to redress and address what is absent in our global ways of thinking about cities. She aims, instead, to 'reconfigure the tactics and form of our comparative imagination' in order to 'think cities in a world of cities'. What is really lacking in our urban knowledge? Engaging the notion of planetary urbanism (drawing on Brenner and Schmid 2013) and the idea that urbanization is always variable, polymorphic and historically determinate, she offers a more abstract, less territorial, terrain and sensibility to think the city anew.

Divergent and contentious, rich and exciting, these approaches all break with the status quo of urban studies and open up how we see and view the city and its place in the world. By repositioning our point of departure, they ask us to consider too how we imagine the academic project, the nature and purpose of knowledge, the societal debates and tensions that shape the research project. Not simply divisions of theory and practice, south and north, applied and academic, a debate about critical urbanism from the varied perspectives of theorists of the urban south is rich and contentious, full of possibility, reshaping and forging new conversations and imaginations.

3

WORLDING THE SOUTH

Toward a post-colonial urban theory

Ananya Roy

But unless theory is unanswerable, either through its successes or failure, to the essential untidiness, the essential unmasterable presence that constitutes a large part of historical and social situations (and this applies equally to theory that derives from somewhere else and theory that is 'original'), then theory becomes an ideological trap.

(Edward Said 'Traveling Theory' 1983: 173)

Inventing the south

In Singapore, at the heart of the Kampong Glam heritage district, lies Muscat Street. Bordering the Sultan Mosque, it is lined with a series of arches, each depicting the global interconnections that bind Singapore to the Arab world (see Figure 3.1). Murals prominently feature trade maps, specifically shipping routes from Muscat to Canton and Singapore (Figure 3.2). *Sans* date, such maps narrate a glorious and timeless history of economic hegemony. In doing so, they inaugurate a post-colonial present, one in which Muscat, Canton and Singapore are the centres of a world order, world cities bound together in a geography of familiar relationalities.

I present the murals of Muscat Street as an instance of the 'worlding of the south'. Following Heidegger, the iconography of the arches can be understood as a 'world view … not a view of the world but the world understood as a view' (Heidegger 1976: 350). They are an ineluctably modern world view, in Heidegger's sense of a world view being necessarily modern, that 'the basic process of modern times is the conquest of the world as picture' (ibid.: 353).

As a world view, the maps of Muscat Street also decentre the world. They conjure a world of trading relations that span a territory broadly understood as Asia. Other geographies remain off the map, irrelevant in this decentred representation of economic hegemony. A historical depiction of Indian Ocean empires, such representations are also bold assertions of a future that is now imagined as the Asian century, an era of the emergence and ascendance of Asian economies that stretch from the Arabian Gulf past the South China Sea to the Pacific Ocean. Heidegger (1976: 350) reminds us that in the age of the world view, 'we are in the picture . . . in everything that belongs to it and constitutes it as a system, it stands before us'. What stands before us at Muscat Street is the invention of the global south. I do not mean invention in a pejorative way, but instead as the sheer creativity of human practice, and as the sheer fact of the invented character of all that passes as tradition (AlSayyad 2003). And what

Figure 3.1   Muscat Street (Photo: Ananya Roy)

is invented at Muscat Street is indeed a 'system', the global south as system, as that which can stand before us as a whole.

The world that is on view at Muscat Street is inevitably an effect of the state. The Kampong Glam neighbourhood, now a heritage district, was designated as a Malay settlement in British colonial master plans. Anchored by the Sultan Mosque and neighbouring madrassas, the area came to be seen as home not only to merchants from the Indo-Malay archipelago but also to trade routes linking Singapore to the Arab world (Ismail 2006: 244). Street names evoked these distant and yet familiar geographies: Bussorah (Basra), Muscat, Baghdad, Kandahar, and the generic Arab Street. As Yeoh (1992: 316) argues, the conferral of the street name, Arab Street, by the British indicates the effort to identify the area as an 'Arab kampung'. In this way, the colonial city itself could be neatly ordered into 'recognizable racial units', with Europeans inhabiting the 'town' and racial–ethnic others 'relegated to separate kampungs' (ibid.: 317).

But what is at work in Muscat Street is more than the remains of the colonial past. Equally at work is the statecraft of post-colonial government. The designation of Kampong Glam as a heritage district (see Figure 3.3) took place in the 1980s when, as Yeoh and Huang (1996: 412) detail, historic conservation emerged as an urban planning priority in Singapore. Such efforts were part of a broader state project to reclaim 'Asian roots' as a 'bulwark against westernization' (ibid.: 413). What was at stake was not only a search for ancestry but also the making of national futures. Thus, Minister of State George Yeo was to declare in 1989: 'As we trace our ancestries, as we sift through the artifacts which give us a better understanding of how we got here, as we study and modify the traditions we have inherited, we form a clearer vision of what our future can be' (Yeoh and Huang 1996: 413). The murals of Muscat Street can be understood in keeping with this vision of the multi-cultural, post-colonial city, one in which heritage becomes a vital element of the redevelopment of urban futures. But it can also be understood as a world view, one that constructs the global south, its histories and its future. To the extent that this world view is the Asian century, Asia must be understood not as a bounded location or even as a set of circulations but rather as a citation, a way of asserting the teleology of progress.

Today, at the arch that marks the entrance to Muscat Street, sits a brass plaque (see Figure 3.4). It signifies the 'reopening' of the street in 2012 as a joint redevelopment effort of the city–state of Singapore and the Sultanate of Oman. We are instructed to view the arches and murals that 'reflect Kampong Glam's role as a hub for Arab traders during Singapore's early history' and 'symbolise the maritime and trade connection between Singapore and Oman which have continued to this day'. As in British colonial urban planning, such a script creates stable ontological categories of recognition, notably that of Arab-ness. And as in the case of the state-led urban redevelopment of the 1980s, the joint Singapore−Oman venture is a tracing of ancestry in order to forge new destinies of global capitalism. Such destinies implicate and transcend the territorial boundaries of sovereign nation–states, evoking the unbounded geography of empire and world. The collective subject imagined here is at once national citizen and post-national worldly subject.

The reinvention of Muscat Street can thus be understood as an example of what Aihwa Ong and I have analysed as inter-referenced Asian urbanism, a set of citationary practices that seek to narrate a history of Asian hegemony and a future of Asian ascendance (Roy and Ong 2011). Marked by numerous urban experiments of which Muscat Street is only one, these geographies of solidarity (re)invent Asia as territory and temporality, and above all as a citation. From global Islam to global capital, from ancient trade routes to speculative financial markets, such circulations and citations place cities like Muscat and Singapore at the centre of a 'reopened' world order. It is in this way that the global south becomes a world view, the world understood as a view. But such a world view is necessarily untidy, in Said's (1983: 173) words necessarily 'unmasterable'. What then is the theory/Theory that is generated from and about such a world view? What then is theory/ Theory from the south?
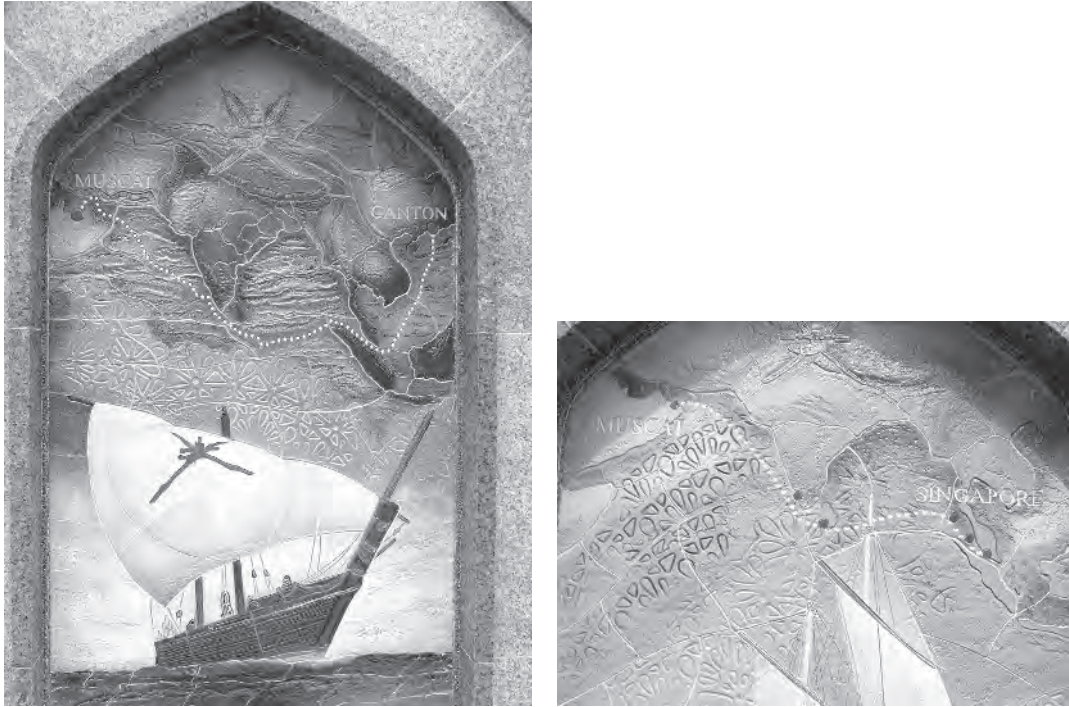
Figure 3.2   Murals featuring shipping routes from Muscat to Canton and Muscat to Singapore (Photos: Ananya Roy)
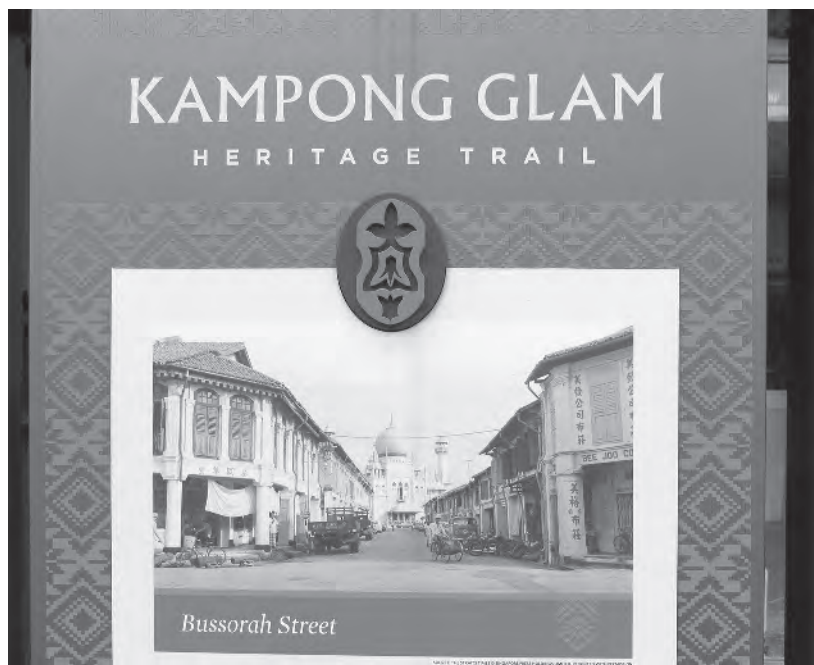
Figure 3.3   Kampong Glam heritage district (Photo: Ananya Roy)
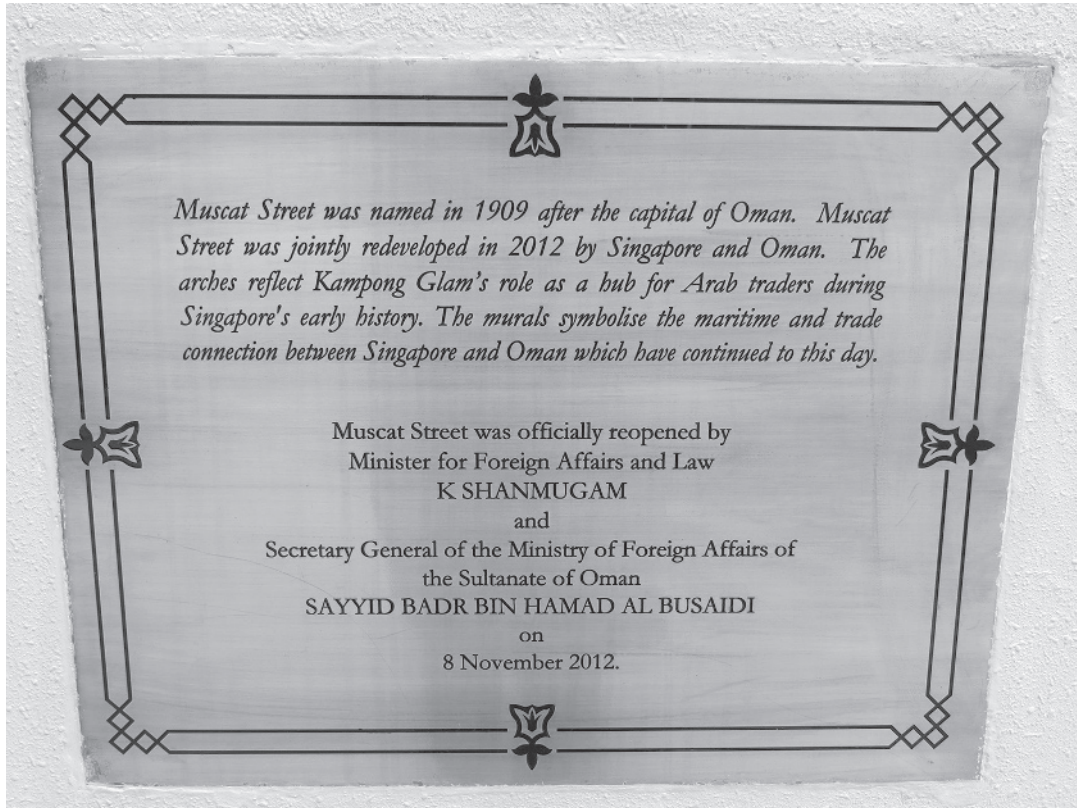
Figure 3.4   Plaque at the entrance to Muscat Street (Photo: Ananya Roy)

Maps of theory

While the twentieth century closed with debate and controversy about the shift from a 'Chicago School' of urban sociology to the 'Los Angeles School' of postmodern geography, the urban future already lay elsewhere: in the cities of the global south, in cities like Shanghai, Cairo, Mumbai, Mexico City, Rio de Janeiro, Dakar, Johannesburg, Singapore, Dubai. For many decades, the canon of urban theory had remained primarily a theory of a Euro-American urbanism, a story of urban change in a handful of global cities: Chicago, New York, Los Angeles, all located in the global north. The cities that housed the world's urban majority could only appear in this canon as 'mega-cities', sites of underdevelopment, on the margins of the map of global capitalism. Although considerable empirical research and robust analysis was being conducted in the context of such cities, this work had not necessarily entered into the annals of what constitutes Theory, or the authoritative canon of the discipline of urban studies. Mega-cities were, as Jennifer Robinson (2002) sharply put it, 'off the map' of urban theory. Against the 'regulating fiction' of the First World global city, Robinson (2003: 275) called for a robust urban theory that could overcome its 'asymmetrical ignorance'.

Robinson's call has been taken up by several genres of urban scholarship. From the mandate to 'see from the South' (Watson 2009) to the effort to create new regional theories that can 'speak back to putative "centres" of geography in transformative ways' (Sidaway, Bunnell and Yeoh 2003: 279), the effort to enact a post-colonial urban theory is now fully underway. In this chapter, I outline one such

approach and its efforts to disrupt the canon of global urbanism by foregrounding the cities of the global south. Following my previous work with Aihwa Ong, I designate this approach as 'worlding' and suggest that it is one of several possible contributions to the making of post-colonial urban theory (Roy and Ong 2011). But before I outline an analytics of worlding, let me first address the question of cities of the global south and why they matter.

Urbanism in the south

The twenty-first century is commonly understood as an age of historically unprecedented urbanization, notably in the global south. As the most recent *State of the World's Cities* report produced by UN-Habitat, notes, 'today of every 10 urban residents in the world more than seven are found in developing countries' (UN-Habitat 2012: 25). The 'urban millennium' is also then an age of southern urbanization, or specifically an 'Asian urban century', with half of the world's urban population now living in Asia (ibid.: 28). UN-Habitat (2012: 28) describes this world of cities as that of 'massive conurbations', or 'meta-cities'. If nothing else, contemporary urban theory has to take account of the material realities of the urban century. However, as Brenner and Schmid (2013) warn, the idea of the urban age is a 'chaotic conception'. They caution that 'the urban is not a pregiven, self-evident reality, condition or type of space' (Brenner and Schmid 2013: 20). Instead of a focus on settlement types, they call for the study of historical processes of spatial change and global capitalist development. Such an approach is in keeping with Lefebvre's (1974) philosophical mandate to understand urbanism not as objects in space but rather as the production of space. It is in this sense that the cities of the global south are the centre of a world order that is being created and recreated through the urban revolution. And it is in this sense that southern urbanism is today's global urbanism, what Lefebvre (1974: 412) would have described as the making of space on a 'world scale'.

To take account of southern urbanism also requires conceptualizing urbanism as a formally constituted object, one produced through the practice of statecraft and the apparatus of planning. This is, as Lefebvre (1974: 11) argues, the 'active − the operational or instrumental − role of space'. The 'urban millennium', and indeed the 'Asian urban century', must be understood then as historical conjuncture, one at which the terrain of the urban becomes the matter of government. As Rabinow (1989: 76) explains, such forms of government produce a field of rationality; they are a 'normative project for the ordering of the social milieu'. A prominent theme in the normative projects of the urban millennium is that of economic growth, recast in the recent UN-Habitat report as 'prosperity'. Keenly attuned to economic crisis, and titled 'The Prosperity of Cities', the report argues that cities are a 'remedy' for 'regional and global crises' (UN-Habitat 2012: 11). In the face of stark socio-spatial inequalities, the report frames the question of economic growth as 'shared prosperity' (ibid.: 12). It is language that is reminiscent of emerging policy paradigms in many parts of the global south, for example, the discourse of 'inclusive growth' that now dominates urban planning in India (Roy 2013).

What is significant about the vocabulary of shared prosperity or inclusive growth is not its remedial character but rather its implied reference to a new world order of development and underdevelopment, the rearrangement of prosperity and growth across global north and global south. On the one hand, the economies of the North Atlantic are in turmoil. From the American Great Recession to what has been dubbed the 'existential crisis' of the Eurozone, hitherto prosperous liberal democracies are on shaky ground. If the 1980s was billed as the lost development decade in Africa and Latin America because of structural adjustment, then today, the Bush era of neoliberal redistribution is being billed as the lost decade for the American middle class (Pew Research Center 2012). In sharp contrast, in the economic powerhouses of the global south, for example in India and China, new hegemonic models of capital accumulation are being put into place. And there is fast and furious experimentation with welfare programmes and human development, be it the building of the world's largest development NGO in

Bangladesh (Roy 2010) or the crafting of a 'new deal' for India's slum-dwellers (Mathur 2009) or the institutionalization of 'right to the city' policies in Brazil (Fernandes 2011) or vigorous debate about a guaranteed minimum income in South Africa (Seekings 2002; Ferguson 2009). These exist in relationship with, and also at odds with, what Wacquant (2009: xi) has billed as 'the neoliberal government of social insecurity', or 'America as the laboratory of the neoliberal future'. Such socio-spatial formations call into question the global south as the location of underdevelopment. They reveal the intense reinventions of development that are taking place in the global south, practices and imaginations that seem foreclosed in the North Atlantic. They also bring into view the multiplicity and heterogeneity of capitalism's futures. In short, they present a challenge for how a post-colonial urban theory, one concerned with cities of the global south, may be forged.

Theory from the south?

In previous work (Roy 2009: 819–20), I have argued that it is necessary to craft 'new geographies of theory', those that can draw upon 'the urban experience of the global South'. The intent of such an effort was 'not simply to study the cities of the global South as interesting, anomalous, different, and esoteric empirical cases', but rather to recalibrate urban theory itself. I expressed optimism that 'as the parochial experience of EuroAmerican cities has been found to be a useful theoretical model for all cities, so perhaps the distinctive experiences of the cities of the global South can generate productive and provocative theoretical frameworks for all cities'. My call for 'new geographies of theory' raises at least two questions. First, at a time when the global south is being reinscribed and redrawn, what does theory from the south entail? Second, why theory?

Following Sparke (2007: 117), I mean the global south as a 'concept-metaphor' that interrupts the 'flat world' conceits of globalization. Sparke (2007: 117) notes that 'The Global South is everywhere, but it is also always somewhere, and that somewhere, located at the intersection of entangled political geographies of dispossession and repossession, has to be mapped with persistent geographical responsibility.' Such an approach to the global south allows us to think about the 'locatedness' of all theory, and to take up the task of mapping geographies of theory as one that entails responsibility. But the locatedness of the global south does not imply a single and stable location. Instead, I am suggesting that the global south be understood as a temporal category, an emergence that marks a specific historical conjuncture of economic hegemony and political alliances. It is this conjuncture that I have designated with the short-hand reference, the Asian Century.

If the global south is not a stable ontological category symbolizing subalternity, what then does it mean to produce theory from the south? Comaroff and Comaroff (2012: 12) define the task in a manner that is attentive to the historical conjuncture I have already outlined: that it is in the global south that 'radically new assemblages of capital and labor are taking shape' and that these 'prefigure the future of the global north'. Theory from the south, the Comaroffs (2012: 7) argue, is not about narrating modernity from its 'undersides', but rather revealing the 'history of the present' from the 'distinctive vantage point' that are these frontiers of accumulation. It is with this in mind that I have been interested in 'post-colonial self-government', its audacious programmes of reform and development, and its aspirations of economic hegemony (Roy 2013). For theory to respond to this 'specific historical and social situation', it must disassemble the world view that is the global south.

Here it is worth turning to Clifford's (1989) 'Notes on Theory and Travel'. Clifford writes: '"Theory" is a product of displacement, comparison, a certain distance. To theorize, one leaves home. But like any act of travel, theory begins and ends somewhere.' For Clifford, 'every center or home' is today 'someone else's periphery or diaspora'. Theory, he thus argues, 'is no longer naturally "at home" in the West', because the West is no longer 'a privileged place' to 'collect, sift, translate, and generalize'. In keeping with Said's 'Traveling Theory', Clifford 'challenges the propensity of theory to seek a stable

place, to float above historical conjunctures'. If the condition of no longer being 'at home in the West' is understood as the post-colonial condition, then it may mark a useful, albeit unstable, (dis)location for a theory from the south. But for such a theory not to become what Said cautions against as an 'ideological trap', it must also conceptualize the global south as a place that cannot be privileged, as a world view that must be diligently and constantly disassembled. After all, a world picture or world view is, as Sidaway (2000: 606) notes, an essential truth. While Sidaway sees a world picture to be a mainly western representation, I am arguing that the self-worlding of the south also entails the conquest of the world as picture. Recently such a world view was on display at the summit of the BRICS held in Durban and at which a new development bank was discussed. Bond (2013: 1) describes the summit as one at which heads of state met 'to assure the rest of Africa that their countries' corporations are better investors in infrastructure, mining, oil and agriculture than the traditional European and US multinationals'. To craft a theory from the south it is necessary to critique such forms of post–colonial reason.

But why theory? Theory matters because too often cities of the global south are narrated in the format of empirical description. I am not suggesting that empiricism can somehow be separated out from theorization. In fact, all theory is provincial and parochial, and thus empirical. All empiricism contains within it organizing concepts and purposive norms. What I am concerned with though is the structuration of urban theory through a divide between Theory and ethnography. Note my deliberate capitalization of Theory, as that which masquerades as a universal, as that which has global purchase, as that which can be capitalized. While cities of the global north are often narrated through authoritative knowledge, or Theory, cities of the global south, are often narrated through ethnography, or idiosyncratic knowledge. While Theory is assumed to have universal applicability, ethnography is seen to be homebound, unique, lacking the reach of generalization. Thus, in their recent treatise, *Theory from the South*, Comaroff and Comaroff (2012: 1) note that too often the 'non-West … now the global south' is presented 'primarily as a place of parochial wisdom … of unprocessed data … as reservoirs of raw fact: of the historical, natural, and ethnographic minutiae from which Euromodernity might fashion its testable theories and transcendent truths'. Such geographies and methodologies of authoritative knowledge must be interrogated and disrupted. As Cheah has noted (2002: 59), 'we need to understand more fully the schema through which the subject of universal knowledge becomes isomorphic with the West and all other regions become consigned to particularity'. It is in this sense that what is needed is not only a rich empirical description of cities of the global south but rather what I have earlier termed 'new geographies of theory' (Roy 2009). To be concerned about the geography of theory is to pay attention to how theory is inevitably located and the 'conditions of acceptance' (Said 1983: 158) under which it travels to exceed and even transform its geographic origins.

In his famous essay on 'Traveling Theory', Edward Said (1983: 168, 173) reminds us that 'theory is a response to a specific social and historical situation' and it is thus 'unanswerable' to 'the essential untidiness … that constitutes a large part of historical and social situations'. Following Said, it is possible to argue that a theory of/from the south is necessarily a response to the specific historical conjuncture that I have already outlined, one in which the urbanization of the world must be interpreted and analysed and one in which new claims to economic hegemony must be critiqued. But such a theory, also following Said, is necessarily incomplete, necessarily an articulation of the untidiness that is the ontological category that is the global south. If southern Theory is to avoid being what Said (1983: 173) fears is an 'ideological trap', then the radical instability of the meaning, location and history of the global south must constantly be in view. The murals of Muscat Street, which I presented at the start of this essay, are a glimpse of such radical instability, of the untidiness of the seemingly stable categories of Asia, Arab, Singapore/Singapura, global south. As Comaroff and Comaroff (2012: 47) suggest, 'the south cannot be defined, *a priori*, in substantive terms. The label bespeaks a *relation*, not a thing in or for itself.'

Worlding the south

In an essay on the 'fantasy of urban India in its current phase of globalisation', Lata Mani (2008: 43) argues that 'globality' is a 'phantom discourse' which creates a 'mode of affiliation' for the 'chief beneficiaries' of globalization. Mani's critique marks a disavowal of the 'global' that is widespread in post-colonial theory. And it raises the important question of the geographic signifiers of theory and their distinctive meanings. I borrow this idea from Jazeel (2011: 75) who calls into question the 'innocence' of such geographic signifiers. As I have already noted, to assert the global south as a signifier of theory requires constant vigilance. Mani's critique raises the additional question of how a theory that speaks from the 'unmasterable presence' that is the global south can reject the phantom discourses of globality and globalization and yet retain a sense of embodied location and material relationality. It is with this puzzle in mind that I turn to the concept of 'worlding'. In particular, I am interested in how 'worlding' may provide an alternative to the phantom discourse of globality and the dominant paradigm of globalization (see also Madden 2012). Radhakrishnan (2005), for example, argues quite vigorously that worldliness must not be confused with globality. For him, 'globality is a condition effected by the travel of global capital', while worldliness is the state of 'being in the world'. While 'being in the world' is available to all locations in the world, globality is a 'fait accompli in the name of the world'. Worlding is 'a perennial process of a lived and immanent contingency', while globality is a 'smooth and frictionless surface where oppositions, antagonisms and critique cannot take hold' (ibid.: 184). In a brilliant turn of phrase, Radhakrishnan (2005: 185) presents the 'metropolitan legitimation of globality' as the 'provincialism of dominance'. It is this provincialism of dominance that several scholars have sought to expose and critique the canon of urban theory as well.

I am keenly sympathetic to Radhakrishnan's distinctions between globalization and worlding, between globality and worldliness. Yet, in my use of the term worlding, I am also interested in how the world-picture or world view is entangled with the global circuitry of capital, with ways of 'being in the picture'. If we are to rely on Heidegger's concept of the 'worlding of the world', then we must also acknowledge, as does Young (2000: 189), that Heidegger, especially the late Heidegger, is concerned with dwelling rather than with homelessness or radical insecurity. 'To dwell is … the experience or feeling of being "at home" in one's world … it is the existential structure of being-in-the-world' (Young 2000: 194, 202). Dwelling, for Heidegger, as Young (2000: 189) notes, is 'ontological security'. In other words, here worlding becomes a way of finding a privileged place, of being at home, of crafting the art of being global. As on Muscat Street, a being-in-the-world is produced alongside the travels of global capital. With this in mind, there are at least three ways in which I deploy the term 'worlding' to provide an approach to post-colonial urban theory and to the worlding of the global south.

First, in my previous work with Aihwa Ong (Roy and Ong 2011), I have argued that the canon of urban theory, with its emphasis on 'global cities', fails to capture the role of southern cities as 'worlding' nodes: those that create global connections and global regimes of value. The worlding city is thus a claim to instantiate the world understood as world view. From Indian 'world-class cities' to influential world models of urbanism such as Singapore, the worlding of the south is a complex and dynamic story of flows of capital, labour, ideas and visions. Ambitious experiments, these worlding cities are inherently unstable, inevitably subject to intense contestation, and always incomplete.

Second, it is important to note that worlding practices are not simply the domain of governing and transnational elites. In his work on African cities, Simone (2001: 17), for example, highlights how practices of worlding are set into motion through the 'state of being "cast out" into the world'. For Simone, 'worlding from below' involves 'circuits of migration, resource evacuation, and commodity exchange'. It is thus that, in the Indian context, I have described the 'world-class' city as a mass dream, rather than as imposed vision. Such notions of the popular and populist character of worlding cities bear

resemblance to recent discussions of subaltern cosmopolitanism. Jeffrey and McFarlane (2008: 420) thus present cosmopolitanism as a 'set of performances enacted by diverse agents'. Indeed, as Gidwani (2006: 16) argues, the 'unmarked Eurocentrism' of dominant strands of cosmopolitanism must be called into question through the actually existing cosmopolitanisms of the world's subordinated populations. It must be noted, this is no romantic alternative to the provincialism of dominance. Gidwani (2006: 18) pointedly argues that 'there are no subaltern solidarities to be sutured' across subaltern populations who 'inhabit vastly different places within globalization's geographies' and even have 'opposed interests'. Nevertheless, to be attentive to the world view as a mass dream is to understand both the scope of hegemony and its limits.

Finally, worlding indicates how disciplines are worlded. For example, Gillman *et al.* (2004: 260) view globalization as a 'godterm', one emanating from a 'US nationstate that continues to occlude its myriad interests and intentions under the mythic term, America'. They thus call for a worlding of American studies that is quite closely beholden to Heidegger, as a 'critical tactic' that can make the 'world horizon come near and become local and informed, instantiated as an uneven/incomplete material process of world-becoming' (Gillman *et al.* 2004: 262). In urban theory, the idea of worlding makes evident how cities are worlded in authoritative knowledge.

If the idea of a world view, and even that of 'being in the picture' of the world view, relies to some extent on Heidegger, then this third meaning of worlding requires moving beyond metaphysical philosophy to post-colonial critique. In fact, as Spivak (1999: 212) comments in a footnote on Heidegger's concept of worlding, 'it is not okay to fill these outlines with the story of imperial settlement although Heidegger flirts with it constantly'. She argues that it is imperialism that transformed the 'uninscribed earth' into a 'represented world on a map', into the 'worlding of a world'. Indeed, in an earlier essay, Spivak (1985: 262) had drawn attention to the 'worlding of what is now called the Third World'. Examining the 'empire of the literary discipline', Spivak shows how the Third World is taken up as 'distant cultures, exploited but with rich intact literary heritages waiting to be recovered, interpreted, and curricularized in English translation'. At the same, there is a silence about such worlding connections in the literatures of European colonizing cultures, a sanctioned ignorance of imperialism and its penetrations. Spivak urges us to study such cartographic inscriptions and silences. She also asks if 'an alternative geography of the "worlding" of today's global South' can be broached (Spivak 1999: 200). To me, this is what seems to be at stake in the project of urban theory: an analysis of the worlding of the world but equally an effort to imagine other worlds.

Shadow lines

In the novel, *The Shadow Lines*, Amitav Ghosh (1988) tells the story of a protagonist who traverses a world that spans Calcutta and England. It is a provocative and poignant post-colonial tale. Its post-colonial sensibility lies partly in the ambiguity of what constitutes 'home' in a series of acts that Ghosh (1988: 113) describes as 'coming home'. But more significantly, the novel is a glimpse of the violences through which the post-colonial subject is constituted. A young boy, the protagonist, tries to make sense of the 'trouble in Calcutta', wondering whether it is meant to 'keep Muslims out or Hindus in' (Ghosh 1988: 194, 199). Years later he was to try to speak of the communal riots of 1964, to deal with 'an emptiness in which there are no words', to wonder why he remained silent even though there was 'no barbed wire, no check-points to tell me where the boundaries lie' (Ghosh 1988: 213). Now a doctoral student in New Delhi, he pulls out a tattered atlas and a rusty compass. He begins to draw circles with cities at the centre, to see which other cities are encompassed by the arc of the compass. Each, he realized, was a 'remarkable circle: more than half of mankind must have fallen within it':

Beginning in Srinagar and travelling anti-clockwise, it cut through the Pakistani half of Punjab, through the tip of Rajasthan and the edge of Sind, through the Rann of Kutch, and across the Arabian Sea, through the southernmost toe of the Indian Peninsula, through Kandy, in Sri Lanka, and out into the Indian Ocean until it emerged to touch upon the northernmost finger of Sumatra, then straight through the tail of Thailand into the Gulf, to come out again in Thailand, running a little north of Phnom Penh, into the hills of Laos, past Hue in Vietnam, dipping into the Gulf of Tonking, then swinging up again through the Chinese province of Yunnan, past Chungking, across the Yangtze Kiang, passing within sight of the Great Wall of China, through Inner Mongolia and Sinkiang, until with a final leap over the Karakoram Mountains it dropped again into the valley of Kashmir.

(Ghosh 1988: 227)

Ghosh writes that his protagonist was trying to 'learn the meaning of distance'. The scene, I would argue, depicts a worlding practice, an alternative worlding of the global south and an alternative worlding of cities. It is a scene that manifests what Ash Amin (2004: 33), building on the work of Doreen Massey and in calling for a 'new politics of place', describes as an 'excess of spatial composition'. Here cities are imagined not as 'territorial entities' but rather as 'temporary placements of ever moving material and immanent geographies' (Amin 2004: 33, 34). Here once again we are reminded of Radhakrishnan's insistence that, unlike globalization, worlding is a process of 'lived and immanent contingency'. But in seeking to learn the meaning of distance, Ghosh's protagonist is worlding the global south in a manner that disrupts the established world view. That rusty compass on a tattered atlas in a college student's hostel room in New Delhi cannot conquer the world as picture. It can only seek to write against/ speak against/ draw against the violence that has already been enacted in the post-colonial nation. The circles, and what they encompass, are untidy. They defy post-colonial reason. Ghosh's protagonist thus draws 'shadow lines,' relationalities hitherto unimagined but with the potential to disrupt the provincialism of dominance.

I would like to think that urban theory is on the cusp of drawing such shadow lines, those that do more than travel with global capital or replicate what Ghosh (1988: 288) calls the 'looking-glass border' of petty nationalism. If the Asian urban century is an age of the world view, of the conquest of the global south as picture, then such shadow lines are more urgent than ever before. If the task of theory of/from the south is to be consolidated, then such shadow lines must be, as Spivak (1999) has already insisted, 'a critique of postcolonial reason'.

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4

GROUNDING SOUTHERN CITY THEORY IN TIME AND PLACE

Alan Mabin

Introduction[1]

In their recent book, *Cities: Reimagining the Urban*, Ash Amin and Nigel Thrift offer what they characterize as a 'provisional diagram of how to understand the city'. They see this attempt as being limited, of course, by several constraints, not the least of which is the epistemological question of 'what counts as knowledge of the urban?' Along with this there are caveats to the effect that they were unable to cover, issues of 'gender, race and the environment' and that it was the 'cities of the North' that they had in mind while writing the book. None of these detracts from this excellent book, but they are reminders that the universal reach of the book's title – to *reimagine the urban* – turns out to be somewhat limited after all.

(Rao 2006: 225)

Cities are always incomplete and in transition. Do the same ideas, concepts and understandings help to comprehend what is going on in *all* cities; are cities completely individual; or are there distinct sets of cities, to which particular ways of thinking apply? As with most questions of theory, the generality of statements about cities inevitably arises. In conducting detailed work along some select comparative axes in São Paulo, Paris and Johannesburg, I confront the possibility of distinction between cities in apparently very different settings. It is through these routes that contemporary intrusions of 'theory from the south' into debate become significant for my work. In researching and writing change in three cities on three continents, a single theory of cities, or as Rao (2006: quoted above) suggests, a universal framing fails to explicate my chosen sites of enquiry. I have confronted what to make of 'southern theory' (Connell 2007) in relation to cities in the south as well as the north of the world. Students of urban anthropology, architecture, geography, history, planning, politics and sociology find themselves bathed in the idea that southern cities cannot be understood through western or northern theory and need something new.[2] I consider the question here: what is 'theory from the south' or 'urban theory beyond the west' (to cite the titles of works from Comaroff and Comaroff 2011 and Edensor and Jayne 2012)?

Cautions can be sounded around the problem of models – from Chicago to Los Angeles, and then on to Miami, Atlanta and cases in the 'elsewheres' of global urbanisms. Moreover the notion of 'the south' or 'cities of the south' evokes in general a post-colonial turn in many social disciplines, and its possible intersection with critiques of political economy (from 'dependency theory' to 'anti-

neoliberalism'). One key proposition in current argument is that 'cities of the south' present a space of experimentation that prefigures the near future of the west (or north). The risk of wholesale adoption of such perspectives may be 'a larger set of claims that tend to obscure even while claiming to clarify' (Aravamudan 2012).

Mindful here of the possible dismissal of such theorizing as merely an 'obsessive anxiety about latest fashions in Northern theory' (e.g. Mbembe 2010; 2012), I explore what there may be to gain for consideration of the world of cities from new realities and new ideas emerging 'in the south'. For as Roy and Ong (2011) have it, 'both political economy and post-colonial frameworks' are limited. Neither, they claim, is 'sufficient in enabling robust theorizations of the problem-space that is the contemporary city'. There is thus a search for 'new approaches in global metropolitan studies', doing better than either positioning cities 'within a singular script, that of "planetary capitalism"', or searching for '"subaltern resistances" in cities that were once subject to colonial rule' (Roy 2011: 307).

To explore these debates, the chapter first reflects on what is theory from the south, asking what we mean by 'cities of the south' and by theory 'in' or 'from' them. I then consider the debate that there is something to learn of more general utility from cities of the south. Are there some limits to the idea of 'urban theory from the south' or 'beyond the west'? Here I outline a sympathetic but sceptical position. Lastly, I work through what some consequences for action in cities of theory from the south might be. That is for policy, for programme, for plan, for practice – and for democracy, as well as for possibilities of writing the city.

What is 'theory from the south'?

Where does the use of the term 'the south' originate? Aravamudan (2012) suggests that the initial origin of the term lay in Willy Brandt's 'North–South' report

> that attempted to transpose the major developing divide in the world of the 1970s away from the standoff represented by the Cold War that was seen as an 'East–West' divide. Sometimes 'south' merely and supposedly politely substitutes for 'what we used to call the third world' (Comaroff and Comaroff). All the same, as [Comaroff and Comaroff] acknowledge, the 'South' stands loosely for the 'postcolonial'.
>
> (Aravamudan 2012)

Of course we may use that notion to include the entire world-after-colonialism and thus city spaces from London to Brisbane (see, for example, Jacobs 1996). While there can be no precision about these terms, there is, indeed, a problem if we understand 'the south' as a geographical category, or the cities of the south as such, for then we impose spatial ideas on a relational category: that of the south as referring to social relations, not to place. Instead, Grovogui (2011: 175) reminds us that the term relates to a *movement* visible in contradictory ways since the Bandung conference of 1955. In effect the oppositional binary which the term 'south' mostly conjures seems to be 'west' versus 'south', as in the title phrase of Edensor's and Jayne's (2012) collection, 'beyond the west'.

In this chapter I use the term 'south' loosely – less as geographical expression (though that is inevitable and a conceptual/geographical tension persists), more as referring to a dual situation of post-coloniality and particular political economy. I do, in general, oppose the notion of the south to notions of north and sometimes west, as, I suggest, much of the current literature does: sometimes using other terms ('south-east' instead of south for example, in Yiftachel 2006 and Watson 2013 – although this is a geographical reference which might not resonate in South America).

The first characteristic of what these present literatures term 'southern' is one of being, at least previously, very much under the hegemony of people and organizations and ideas of an 'elsewhere' and

of 'different culture'. One component of 'south' is undoubtedly coloniality/post–coloniality. One cannot mean here that colonialism has 'gone', for as many scholars at least beginning from Bhabha (1994) argue, its cultures continually intrude on the present. But, there is a second component: the global south refers here, particularly, to conditions of scarcity for majorities, whatever the levels of superfluity for minorities may be. Such an image conjures familiar problems of negatively defining through 'lack' or absence, but the companion of scarcity is a complex of creativity, inventiveness and experiment, captured in the notion of the provisional in the relationships and interactions of people in the south of the world. The south, and cities of the south, are marked both by a political economy of insufficient resources to provide on average a decent life for all; and by (post) colonial disabilities. It is in these intersections that those promoting 'theory from the south' endeavour to engage.

Conceptually, 'theory from the south' is the terrain of the interventions of two of the most cited recent contributions to discussions of 'southern theory' – those of Australian sociologist Connell (2007), and Chicago anthropologists, Comaroff and Comaroff's more recent volume (2011). To a considerable degree, these authors base their work in that of others associated with southern ideas: Aijaz Ahmad (2008); Arjun Appadurai (1996; 2000); Homi Bhabha (1994); Dipesh Chakrabarty (2000); Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak (see especially Spivak 1999). Then there are others, moreover, whose work has been rooted in or at least read as post-colonializing the world – Fredric Jameson; Achille Mbembe; Ngugi Wa Thiong'o – in work written mostly in English and sometimes in French (Guénif–Souilamas 2012); and Obarrio (2012b) and Moraña *et al.* (2008), reflecting a somewhat different series of literatures from Latin America, writing originally in Portuguese and Spanish.

'Southern theories' proceed from the broad idea that 'the south' can produce different perspectives, concepts, arguments, from those traditional in literatures deeply embedded in western or northern experience. But beyond the idea, or claim, what is the problem that is being posed? In other words, what exactly *is it* that 'northern or western' theory cannot engage?

A central theme is that ideas deployed in much social theory and description originate in the north of the world and that ideas originating in the south are ignored in these hegemonic accounts. Reflecting on why 'southern theory' appeals to scholars located in the south, Duminy (2011) notes that

> Connell basically set out … a highly political argument demanding that global knowledge flows in the social sciences be reconfigured to respect the global South as a valid source of knowledge about social action. An intimidating task, given the persistent 'extroversion' of Southern authors towards the research methodologies, validity claims and financial incentives of dominant metropolitan knowledge industries.

Critiquing prominent figures in western sociology – in particular James S. Coleman, Anthony Giddens and Pierre Bourdieu, Connell seeks to 'tease out some of the geopolitical assumptions underlying general theory as such'. As with much post-colonial writing, she tries to establish 'what view of the world and its inhabitants is at work' in these authors' writing and theorizing. Connell argues against claims of universality deployed by these social theorists because they fail to engage the relativities of the south: for example, 'time involves fundamental discontinuity and unintelligible succession' (Connell 2007: 45).

Authors such as Connell or Comaroff and Comaroff do not evenly cover the entire spectrum of 'the south', nor do they claim to do so. In particular the conditions of Latin America often elude inclusion among descriptions and propositions applied to much of Asia and Africa. Although the complexities of difference between Latin American and African or Asian histories are legion, and could not begin to be exhausted here (cf. Sheinin 2003), approaches to dependency, development and modernity have substantial histories in Latin America itself and among those writing Latin America elsewhere (cf. Moraña *et al.* 2008). Salvatore (2010: 333–4) compellingly argues that 'Latin American literary and

cultural studies had been practising the critique of colonialism's impact on culture and had been criticizing Eurocentrism before Said, Spivak, or Bhabha appeared on the intellectual landscape of North-Atlantic universities'. Certainly Brazilian literature[3] is long replete with exploration of multiple modernities, a central feature of contemporary southern theory followed in the post-colonial (Asian and African) debate, more than the perhaps separate origins of such discussion in Latin America (cf. Cesarino 2012).[4] Limited in the Anglophone urban debate by English, the language consideration makes for inevitable partiality. So one has to work provisionally and at a rather broad level of generality, mindful of the limits of most statements, and at minimum, of the huge diversity of 'the south'.

But the purpose of 'southern theory', as with all social theory, lies in the terrain of power. A deep intent of 'southern theory' is destabilization of northern thinking − and of those who do it. That is not unusual, it parallels and intersects with other generational turns, which − however significant the associated ideas may be in comprehending change in the world − purposefully set out to unseat hegemonies and in many cases the hegemons purveying them. In the case of post-colonial writing and its partial offspring, 'urban theory from the south', the motivation lies along paths worn by Chakrabaraty (2000) − the provincializing of the North Atlantic world, and the worlding of the south (Mbembe 2001, 2010).

Leaving aside all sorts of difficulties of position, which shape this chapter,[5] southern theory has several lines of argument. I reflect on four here:

1 that northern theory fails or does not apply in the south;
2 the future is outlined in the south not the north;
3 the north−south axis of power can be inverted − northern hegemonies intellectually may be challenged, Europe may be provincialized (Chakrabarty), Africa may be worlded (Mbembe); and
4 events and ideas in the south are powerful for understanding the world as a whole, not only the south.

The subsequent discussion in this chapter takes up these lines of argument in relation to 'cities of the south'.

'Cities of the south' and theory for/in/from them

With the passage of the world and most of its territories towards urban living, 'la question urbaine est de nouveau au cœur des sciences sociales' (the urban question is once again at the heart of social sciences).[6] What is southern theory and research contributing to the urban question?

Following the general lines of 'southern theory' or 'theory from the south', a present tendency claims that 'northern' or 'western' urban theory cannot cope with explanation of *cities* in the 'global south', not to mention support intervention in such places (Edensor and Jayne 2012; Watson 2009), a notion gaining currency more widely (cf. Choplin 2012). There is some 'consensus that we need a new kind of urbanism[7] to reflect the reality of cities in the 21st century' (Parnell 2012; Roy 2009 and others), perhaps a 'postcolonial comparative urbanism' (see McFarlane 2010, Robinson 2011a and b). Expressing this sentiment directly, the *International Journal of Urban and Regional Research* published a call for contributions

> to challenge head-on theories derived from the global North … cities across the global South can pose fundamental challenges to theories from the global North. We look forward to a time when our urban theory is derived as much from studies rooted in Buenos Aires … as in ones rooted in Chicago or Los Angeles.
>
> (Seekings 2012)

In this mix, however, varying notions populate writing about possible differences between the 'northern' or 'western' urban theory and what is going on in the cities of the south.

A central case is the term the 'modern'. The notion of an export of modernity or modernism from northern to southern cities has long been contested in arguments about hybridity, multiplicity, provincialization, subalternality and experimentation (see Leontidou 1996 among others). The critique suggests that 'The western metropolis [is] implicitly considered as more developed, complex, dynamic, and mature' than its 'non-western' equivalents (Robinson 2003, cited in Edensor and Jayne 2012: 3). In consequence, urban theory has embodied a notion of linearity, that what has happened in cities of the north in the nineteenth and earlier twentieth centuries is being reproduced in the cities of the south. Under attack along with modernization theory and its variants, such arguments are still present in much urban writing – witness many general and even sophisticated textbooks on cities, written and published mostly in the 'north', in which most pages are taken up by northern illustrations with 'cities of the south' added almost as an afterthought, simply to be analysed and understood via the ideas established in the earlier pages.

The empirical passage of the majority of global city population to the south has, of course, given pause to many who seek to contemplate cities across the world as a whole. It is in part this new reality that provides for anxiety and excitement and generates audiences for texts traversing the field, with Robinson's *Ordinary Cities* (2006) a prominent example. From this body of work, differentiated as it may be, emerges the alternative hypothesis, that cities of the south reveal something new. Even without going to the extreme of claiming a new linearity, the future of the north or west is now visible in cities of the south. This is a powerful and appealing hypothesis. While there is a tension between the perspective that cities are part of a seamless whole – all are ordinary – and that northern theory does not suffice, a common thread lies in agreeing that intellectually privileging cities of the north is unacceptable; those of the south have been neglected and bypassed.

What is the claimed newness, or, perhaps difference in this departure 'from the south' (for there may be an elision here)? In 1996 Leontidou located what is different in contemporary southern cities as their 'in-between spaces'. The issue here is more profound than simply that western cities are the subject of huge literatures and research and discussion, whilst 'the other cities of the world remain relatively poorly understood' (a starting point in Choplin's 2012 useful review).

One facet of 'southern urban theory' might be deeper understanding of cities of the south. In 2010, Simone, for instance, evoked some of what might be new and different from the notions of northern urban theory in his theme of southern cities as made up by 'movements at the crossroads from Jakarta to Dakar'. Presenting qualities of 'cityness' that resonate with many readers, he has begun to convince audiences, including and beyond those primarily interested in cities of the south, that his rummaging around among those who have been less visible in the urban cannon holds a key to new questions about the city in general: for example, about what is and what is not governed, and about how things are and are not governed in the city (Le Gales and Vitale 2013).

What is new and different? What might be missed by older city concepts from the north? At a much smaller scale of the everyday, the street, the house, the market, the apparently casual grouping, Simone's work reflects on how peripheralized citizens create and recreate 'a new urban sociality even under dire conditions' through various experiments, 'trial balloons' and possibilities for popular culture (Simone 2010: 314–16). 'The city is a way of keeping things open and of materializing ways of becoming something that has not existed before, but which has been possible all along' (Simone 2008: 201). His work, whatever its possible limits (see below), has encouraged large numbers of readers to think of the city in terms of provisionality, circulation, operations, intersections, and in-betweenness.

Not stopping there, the directions of debate multiply: towards forgetting the massive weight of literature on 'northern cities', or more radically, claiming that northern cities may be better understood via ideas from southern cities, for that is where the 'new' is to be found. Perhaps the global star of

current southern city theory, Roy (2009) calls for 'new geographies' of imagination and epistemology in the production of urban and regional theory. She has sought to explore the production of space in select southern cities, from Calcutta to Beirut and beyond. Along with Simone she portrays 'worlding' the city as diverse and multiple processes, involving ways of mastering contemporary techniques of governance well beyond elites, of accomplishing forms of 'worlding from below', and of reframing city representation (Roy 2011). To move beyond vertical opposition of 'above' and 'below', she calls for a 'latitudinal' approach.

Similar ideas and concepts can be found in recent collections popularizing 'southern' takes on cities. With questioning modernities at the core of their approach, Edensor and Jayne (2012), for example, structure their collection of 'urban theory beyond the west' under headings such as de-centring the city, order/disorder, and mobilities and imaginaries, familiar tropes of improvisation, multiplication of opportunity, and accessing as many networks as possible. From this collection one gains support for Simone's proposition, in his own contribution to the volume, that southern cities 'are no longer the subaltern' (Simone 2011).

There is also a second line of thought on cities of the south. More radical in my mind, it gives rise in the wider 'southern theory' literatures, for example, to the notion propounded by Comaroff and Comaroff (2011) that 'it is Europe and America that are tending to evolve according to processes observed in Africa, and not the other way round as is typically assumed. The same may also be true for cities...' − 'In some respects, [southern cities] are … even foreshadowing what might happen (for better or for worse) in . . . Western cities' (Choplin 2012: 3). A variant of this approach, which flows from 'southern theory', in general, is that 'cities of the south' present a space of *experimentation* that prefigures the near future of the west (or north). In other words, for Obarrio (2012b), 'whereas the colonies might have always been the first laboratory of modernity', there is allegedly something new in the political, economic, and cultural ways in which the south anticipates the contours of the Euro-American future. I have certainly found that grounded understandings of what is going on in the *periferias* of São Paulo can be useful for telling stories of life and thinking about urban practice in the outskirts or *grande couronne* of Paris, at least in general terms. What the city *is* for ordinary urban residents can come alive through accounts of social life in southern cities provided by many recent authors. This necessarily eclectic review thus shows some of the excitement which notions of 'southern urbanism' have generated in the last decade or so.

Scepticism and 'new' southern city theory

Nonetheless, a lot of what is being written currently 'from the south' ends up analysing *cities* of the south through concepts and tools emanating from long-standing urban studies elsewhere. Within the pages of collections such as Edensor and Jayne (2012), or even Roy and Ong (2011), one searches a little fruitlessly for the promise of new concept and substantial difference in contemporary cities of the south. New consequences for society or of life in the city seem scarcer than some of the rhetorical promises.

For example Goldman's (2011) analysis of speculation and change in Bangalore may well introduce terminologies familiar from authors surveyed above, but the main lines of research and argument seem to come from something else: that is, from the western/northern canon. The same seems to be true of much of what authors report in the pages of Mayaram's (2008) collection *The Other Global City* − a set of texts that remain entirely dependent on 'northern points of reference'. It may well be that the relative neglect of cities from Istanbul to Tokyo in western literatures is an impoverishment, but that does not mean that something substantially different is introduced theoretically. An empirical corrective to imbalanced attention does not by itself produce a serious change in thinking. Despite its claims, the book did not achieve its ambition to get beyond *both* imperial and nationalist readings of cities.

Following Chakrabarty (2000), Robinson (2003) has appealed for acknowledgement of situatedness in the production of urban theory, a sentiment echoed by Edensor and Jayne (2012: 6). Certainly some humility of position is in order. But the same light can be shone in other directions. We are all inserted into a limited canon, quite apart from where we are physically situated: language is a profound limit.

Choplin (2012) points to the danger that the sociology of knowledge reveals a map of Anglophone dominance in the world of ideas. In doing so, she appeals to urbanists to take Francophone work more seriously (presumably one may add hispanic, lusophone, sinophone, and so on). Choplin goes on to warn of 'idealis[ing] anglophone scientific output to the point of creating a new hegemonic model of thought', in my opinion an extremely valid perspective. There is usually a great deal of self-referentialism, which marks many a scholarly grouping. And in that vein, some of the real difficulties of 'southern views' of the city may be more apparent to viewers who are not enmeshed in post-colonial texts or simplistic 'anti-neoliberal' literatures − including scholars in Latin America and beyond the English language.

We are still in the terrain of not quite being able to establish just what it is that northern/western theory cannot 'analyse', explain, or inform. The claimed consensus (Parnell 2012) that southern theory is what we need for exploring cities, may be a sufficient consensus for some, but may not, or not yet, stretch across the wide terrain of city studies. Moreover, Roy's (2009: 819) argument that the 'dominant theorizations of global city-regions are rooted in Euro American experience and are *thus* unable to analyse multiple forms of metropolitan modernities' (emphasis added) requires further scrutiny. It remains, for instance, unclear exactly what city/society relationships in the hyper-diverse 'south' elude ideas formed in the 'west' or 'north'.

The idea that what has been happening in the cities of the south should now inform what is understood of the cities in the 'north' seems attractive − but both conceptually and empirically poorly substantiated. The risk of wholesale adoption of such perspectives may be 'a larger set of claims that tend to obscure even while claiming to clarify' (Aravamudan 2012). Recording, comparing and juxtaposing the urban experiences of cities worldwide, as Rodgers (2012: 134) suggests, means 'identifying any universal dynamics in global urbanization arguably depends … on understanding … particular circumstances'.[8] It seems out of line then to propose that something about 'cities of the south' provides new models for cities in general, in analytical terms, as Chicago so successfully provided for so many for so long, and as various other schools have contested in many recent decades (such as the 'LA school' or its competitors in the United States, including New York from time to time, and places such as Atlanta and Miami). Key to the idea of these latter models of the city, its society, its geography and so on, are such elements as continuing cosmopolitanism, diversity of form and polycentricity both geographical and otherwise; and perhaps in the case of Miami (but others too) something special about 'key' cities and their elsewheres. Certainly as soon as I read the use of a general term such as 'Euro-America' I become suspicious about a failure to grapple with the very diversity and subtlety demanded by those who wish us all to take 'southern urbanism' and its theoretical potential seriously.

Notably, there are lacunae in recent claims about cities of the south, reflecting I think a forgetfulness or writing over of the multiple forms of social life argued for by many authors on American cities − noting, for instance, indeed that all is not 'formal', that governance is not complete (see Devlin 2011 for a compelling contemporary example). Moreover, recent calls for comparative research across the globe have historical precedent, for instance Castells (1983), Marcuse *et al.* (2011), and long-standing approaches to cross-continental comparison, whatever their flaws, such as Burgel's project *Villes en parallele* (Burgel and Conrado Sondereguer 2010).[9] Certainly, we are a long way here from the magisterial urban theory we might associate with Peter Hall, and other actors, authoritatively striding across stages of the past, even distant from Amin and Thrift (2002) in the more recent past.

New rhetorical representations can be astonishingly powerful, at least for some, even when they don't add much in the way of new ideas. Take Simone's statement cited above, that 'The city is a way

of keeping things open and of materializing ways of becoming something that has not existed before, but which has been possible all along' (Simone 2008: 201). Whilst evocative, it remains more opaque than helpful. Pieterse (2012) hints at this in his critique of the celebration of provisionality and the lack of an adequate political economy of 'what is going on' in the often well described 'swirling circumstances' of fast changing cities (as in Paling 2012 on Phnom Pehn). After all, are the kinds of social relationships and 'operations' explored really something we didn't know about, after Stedmann Jones's (1976) deeply sympathetic history of ordinary London lives in the mid nineteenth century, and many others? The question thus remains: what have self-consciously southern city theorists done to go beyond the northern? Is there reason *not* to take up northern concepts in the cities of the south?[10]

If calls for southern theory of the city reveal lacunae in considering what has 'come from the north', as Aravamudan (2012) suggests, it could be remarked of some of the recent literature that '[it] is much less from the South, than it is about the South'. Whilst praising Spivak for her contributions Eagleton (1999) noted that 'a good deal of post-colonialism has been a kind of "exported" version of the US's own grievous ethnic problems, and thus yet another instance of God's Own Country, one of the most insular on earth, defining the rest of the world in terms of itself' − and it is easy to project New York's problems onto cities in the rest of the world. When those focused on southern cities equally project onto the north, seeing Paris as though some of its disabilities merely mirror those of Johannesburg, the same error occurs: working more deeply across *both* spaces potentially helps to reduce this tendency (cf. Mabin 2013).

A further problem is that post-colonial accounts of power seem to abandon hard won rights, freedoms and ways of being which start from 1886, 1835, 1789[11] in 'the north' (in, for example, Chatterjee 1993 and Chakrabarty 2000: cf. Chibber 2013, esp. chapters 7 and 8). Purcell (2007: 204) seems reasonably measured when he writes 'It is especially important for democrats in advanced economies to realize that … the most exciting new democratic movements are just as likely to arise in South America or Africa as they are in New York or Brussels'. But of course, the inverse is equally true. 'When a consensual, democratic, encompassing order did finally slowly emerge [in the west] in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, it was not a gift bestowed by capitalists. It was in fact a product of very long, concerted struggles on the part of workers, farmers, and peasants' (Chibber and Birch 2013). In this vein, a little more caution is needed before celebrating 'resistance societies' which contribute to indigenous urbanisms, but which may also and simultaneously be global, linked to capital, and thus not easily reduced to the categories 'above' or 'below' (Roy 2011). One is reminded of the sobering thought put forward by the perhaps overly mercurial Sokal, in the course of furious debate occasioned by his spoof attack on Spivak, that 'epistemic relativism is suicidal for progressive political movements' (Sokal 2000: 1300).

A tendency which I discern in self-designated 'southern' writing is to overemphasize the income disparities and *by extension* identity and citizenship issues, of cities of the south *by comparison with* western/northern cities. For example, 'citizenship differs from the North Atlantic variants in being differentiated, that is it is universally inclusive in membership but massively unequal in … severe income inequalities' (Watson 2013: 87). Varying conditions in western-northern cities are passed over: the *banlieue*, for instance, becomes homogenizing of many things − blackness, youth unemployment, circular passages linked to African regions − as in Simone (2011). But some months in the Parisian banlieue taught me more than anything else how multiple and diverse are their conditions: a diversity not at all captured simply as 'badlands of the republic' (Dikeç 2007).

Exacerbating this limit, the evidence cited frequently arises from following elements of just a few lives or scattered observations, as in Nuttall (2008) and some of Simone's work (e.g. Simone 2007): scarcely 'fine grained' (as Watson 2013: 88 characterizes some of this work), or 'powerful ethnography' (cf. Pieterse 2012) as promoted and sometimes claimed. Of course powerful expressions and representations can be drawn from limited enquiry − as in literature and film − but the methods

applied can also miss what is going on. Reporting on conversation at tables in cafés and bars in Abidjan, Simone (2007: 246) suggests a mutual unintelligibility of language: 'every affective response seemed to make sense, although there was no surface evidence as to why particular feelings might come and go'. How would that impression differ from trying to follow occasional conversation in bars, cafés, social clubs or family mealtimes in all sorts of neighbourhoods, across many social classes, in cities from Chicago to Paris, as well as Johannesburg and Rio? Or, for that matter, from café conversation a hundred or more years ago?

More explicit claims of 'the new' emerge in another recent collection (Samara *et al.* 2013a: 2). Here 'three defining aspects of the city' turn out to be 'social polarisation and spatial division [with] … local expressions of transnational governance'; 'refashioning of certain city quarters into cosmopolitan landscapes'; and 'complicated politics arising from … changes cities are experiencing'. These features, which appear to me to be common observations, often made rather more subtly in long-standing literatures on New York, London, Paris, Berlin and Moscow, among many others, are then said to constitute 'an identifiable … transnational urbanism distinctive to the Global South' (Samara *et al.* 2013b: 2). The notion that eclectic bits of information tagged to quite common ideas found in pedestrian accounts of cities everywhere constitute 'empirically rich, theoretically informed' work seems a little unreasonable. As I've previously noted, 'Much present writing juxtaposes sweeping academic views on what's happening in cities with colourful journalism on a local event. The assumption of author (and I suppose reader) seems often to be that the two are related. But, frequently, they are not' (Mabin 2011: 1972). In the process, what is special about post-colonial, subaltern, and related theory 'from the south' seems to be lost: the experience and persistence of colonizing cultures in the lives of citizens. Perhaps that is not really surprising, for in most cases of recent self-conscious collections of work on 'cities of the south' the authors live, work and see for the most part very much in and from the cities of the north of the world, carrying exogenous concerns into inappropriate terrain.[12] Urban theory from the south seems to have difficulty carrying the contributions of southern scholarship into the northern city, beyond sweeping generalization usually about recent immigrant populations. Consequently it hardly provides a strong base for thinking about collective shaping of city futures. Sustained work on the politics, economics, histories, and daily life of southern cities, in all their glorious diversity, offers glimpses of something exciting and occasionally distinct, which is why I celebrate the contributions of many scholars in this terrain earlier in this chapter. But what we have available presently, does not yet take us very far into the promised land of southern urbanism.

And to action! – based on theory from the south?

Part of the project of 'theory from the southern city' is an agenda for action, built on a long tradition of engaged scholarship to which I am very sympathetic (Oldfield *et al.* 2004; Yiftachel 2006; Watson 2009). Rapidly changing cities in the south are definitely shaping agendas for change. Ferguson (2012) suggests

> Today, social assistance is being fundamentally reconfigured as a host of developing countries (from South Africa, to Brazil, to India, and beyond) have confounded the by-now standard scholarly narratives of a triumphant neoliberalism by morphing into various new kinds of welfare states. And they have not modeled these new welfare states on Northern exemplars (Sweden or what have you). Instead, they have developed new mechanisms of social assistance, and new conceptions of society, that rely less on insurance mechanisms and the pooling of risk among a population of wage-earners and more on non-contributory schemes anchored in citizenship and operating via the payment of small 'cash transfers' (often to women and children) … 'The Development Revolution from the Global South'.

The rise of the new welfare states may illustrate Comaroff and Comoroff's proposition that global innovation today often emerges first in the south, with its responses to 'normal' high unemployment, informalization, and mass democracy set against mass poverty, conditions which seem to some increasingly to describe 'wealthier' societies (Ferguson 2012). This line of thought certainly intersects with that of Robinson and Parnell (2011) who flag the limits of assuming global neoliberal intentionality in urban management (cf. Pieterse 2012). But, it is partly contradicted by others, for example Caldeira (2011) on São Paulo who writes a great deal about the deterioration of conditions for (most?) of the poor, or excluded, or indeed merely youthful, in that city of her birth and scholarship (cf. Caldeira 2000). Anything close to Ferguson's assessment, suggesting amelioration for many, is strongly contested, of course. Some Brazilian urbanists maintain the view that their cities continue to be fundamentally in crisis and that things are becoming more and more problematic for many. But they also provide cases of rapidly increasing complexities. For Caldeira 'worlds set apart' in the city (2011) represent profound fractures, and Brazilian cities saw widespread (but far from unanimous) social action in mid-2013. So, perhaps also for many, she concurs that things have moved on (personal conversation, São Paulo, July 2012, see Chapter 35 in this volume). Some of those who provided foundational analyses and played central roles in urban reform over several decades, also see elements of advance (Maricato 2001; 2009). These incomplete, but better city circumstances, have come about for many reasons and I've explored them elsewhere (Mabin 2012). If São Paulo's self-representation as a global city is a 'myth' according to Whittaker Ferreira (2007), it is nonetheless a confident, growing, increasingly well-managed city in which some major projects at metropolitan scale have made real differences to daily life, against the backdrop of a second Brasilian economic miracle and extremely positive politics − despite corruption, enormous mobility difficulties, and other continuing issues. National social policy combined with the success of the Partido dos Trabalhadores (PT) in shifting the agenda in national and city politics and programmes since the end of the 1980s and particularly since becoming the presidential party in 2003, certainly has quite a bit to do with these changes, though of course not exhausting causality. How we 'know the city' in these times and in such places emerges through exploration and recognition *both* of disability *and* celebration of successes in collective action − whether 'from below' or through public agency.

In this vein, a last arena of debate on southern theory is beginning to develop. It can be indicated broadly through some recent and contested South African experience. For example, Robinson and Parnell (2011) bring together Robinson's familiar thoughts on 'ordinariness' and observations of city development strategy processes (Robinson 2006) with Parnell's experience of 'city development strategy', primarily in South Africa but also in other southern cities (see also Robinson 2011a; 2011b). City strategy is about the future, clearly: the always unknowable but always shaped-in-the-present, made-in-the-future, without guarantees of connection between the two. The authors claim that one may reach something beyond 'neoliberalism' globally, by 'embracing' ways in which some southern city development strategies seek to do so. A key difficulty in the (northern) construction of 'southern' perspectives seems to be the imposition of recent northern histories into stories of the south:

> the turn towards privatization, deregulation and liberalization … figures prominently in new research and writing on transnational urbanism. In responding to the neoliberal challenge, municipal authorities of the Global South installed new regulatory regimes that have removed institutional constraints, legal barriers and administrative barriers in order to pave the way for making the market function efficiently through downsizing, outsourcing and rightsizing municipal services.
>
> (Murray 2013: 295)

The problem, however, is that many southern cities simply have not previously enjoyed much of the public provision of elements of life portrayed in this type of account: on the contrary, there are cases

where present municipalities are seeking to move in precisely the opposite direction. It does seem that some practitioners *read* authors such as Roy as being anti-planning, anti-design, anti-urbanism (cf. Fiori and Brandão 2010: 189−90). Yet as Meth (2010) indicates, the less formal types of authority, which emerge in at least some places, often reproduce the supposed ills of the full-tilt planning systems. It appears that similar contest can be identified in all sorts of places in the global south (cf. Paling 2012; Seekings 2012; Simone 2010; Watson 2013).

My conclusion is not that 'harder work' is needed on bridging the divide between developmentalism and 'ordinary citiness' (Robinson 2006). I appreciate the frustrations of trying to move the urban along, leading to calls for working 'against the redundant division between applied and theoretical research agendas on the contemporary condition and possible futures of … cities' (Pieterse 2011: 1) Yet, the whole point of the lack of knowledge and (perhaps) concept of cities of the south is the overwhelming need for profound and substantial research on what is going on. Elision between shallow stabs at that kind of research and the world of 'what should be done' remains a fundamental shortcoming of texts on cities of the south: and perhaps, of the north as well. In the end, what is needed, and in some instances what is emerging, appears to be attempts at bringing *together* cities across the world.

Conclusion: grounding ideas in cities across south and north

The key to more profound, exciting and less sectional approaches to cities will lie in much more carefully constructed comparative method. This means more than McFarlane's (2010: 725) 'comparison not just as a method, but as a mode of thought that informs how urban theory is constituted'. On the contrary, specified points of comparison seem necessary (Le Gales and Vitale 2013), 'opening up new channels of urban research and policy formation within a wider world of cities' (Harris 2012: 2955). Of course, we need east, west, north as well as south. Marcuse (1989) said of 'dual city' that it's a 'muddy metaphor for a quartered city'; and the world of cities is rather more than bifurcated.

My current work, for instance, is set in my own city of birth and scholarship, Johannesburg, and in two cities in which I have spent substantial time conducting research: São Paulo and Paris. I do not claim universals from my work, but I would claim some prospect that more general points arise as I explore government, policy, planning, large-scale change, mega-projects, mobility and elements of daily life in these city regions (cf. Mabin 2012).

I am engaged in a search to express just some of what seem to me vital features of the urban question in these times. Of course I have no illusions about exhausting the subject, let alone realizing 'the promise of the city' (Tajbaksh 2001). My method certainly includes 'comparison [that] might be conceived as a strategy of indirect and uncertain learning' but perhaps because I have worked reasonably equally in three places on different continents I tend to doubt that what will make things more clear is 'transformation in a predominantly Euro-American-orientated urban theory' (McFarlane 2008: 340).

Perhaps there would be little future for urban theory in a world where 'urbanization has been generalized' (Brenner 2013: 93). But even if the planet were entirely 'urban', theorizing the city would still have to deal with difference − simply, diversity of the urban and what difference such diversity makes for society: to ignore that would *inter alia* be to miss the value of post-colonial theorizing. Yet, the notion that the world is 'all urban' denies the experience of places that are not like Manhattan − and of many who dwell and labour there, whose social units stretch across surprising spaces (Steinberg 2011 provides a marvellous illustration). Thus, Brenner's thesis that 'the concept of urbanization requires systematic reinvention' (2013: 101) invites translation into *continuous and diverse* reinvention, as well as in specific identification of the transitory or more durable and perhaps elusive *common*. Simultaneous work in three cities of Africa, Europe and South America indicates to me a requirement to pursue that translation. City scholarship will continue to enter less fruitful avenues: a pure 'southern take' will not resolve the problems of an arrogant and purely northern one. No-one, nor one single group, will

entirely succeed in drawing into connection the extent of contemporary urbanisms. Crossing language, disciplinary, conceptual and all sorts of other boundaries is essential, yet will remain unavoidably incomplete. But the pleasure, perhaps, lies in the engagement.

In 'European Capital of Culture' Marseille in February 2013, I had the opportunity to stay in the midst of Euromed (*le plus grand chantier de l'europe* − the largest construction site in Europe, we are told), and to walk through scenes of 'regeneration' in the docks − as ever running behind timetable − and neighbouring landscapes of gentrification in areas like lower La Villette. Up in a different old working-class neighbourhood, in Belle de Mai, at the recently opened La Friche (an old tobacco factory now named something like 'wasteland'), I spent some hours in the midst of the art produced by artists from the 'deux rives' (two shores) of the Mediterranean. The exhibition, part of Marseille-Provence Capital of European Culture 2013, is titled 'Içi, Ailleurs' (here, elsewhere). All of the artists address mobility and fluidity, movement, flux, as well as stasis. For example, one, named Kader Attia, explores cities of the Mediterranean world − through many periods of history and in shifting contact with each other. Grappling with this work, it struck me again that in the complex world of cities, everywhere, artists working right now may be onto more far reaching ways of communicating what contemporary city life and cities are about. The city is always suspended as a case of 'heres' and 'elsewheres', connected yet − yet … and that is why artists may be doing a better job than southern, or northern, theorists in 'painting', 'composing', 'dancing' and 'writing' cities into being. It remains to scholarship to go further.

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Notes

1 I hope that this chapter's value has been improved by responding to critique of versions at 'Cities are back in town', Sciences Po, Paris; at a social sciences/city institute workshop at Wits (Witwatersrand University, Johannesburg); at South African Contemporary History and Humanities/Cities in Transition seminar, University of the Western Cape; from a vigorous discussion at the Wits Interdisciplinary Seminar in Humanities at Wiser; referee's comments; and especially the remarks of Cynthia Kros, Ruchi Chaturvedi, Sîan Butcher, and the editors of this volume, none of whom is responsible for the outcome.

2 In leading journals of city studies, such as the *International Journal of Urban and Regional Research* and *Urban Studies*, there is ample evidence of the intrusions to which I'm referring. New publications pursuing related lines of argument appear with increasing frequency, the most recent including *Rogue Urbanism* (Pieterse and Simone 2013) and *Locating Right to the City in the Global South* (Samara, He and Chen 2013a).

3 A body of work I know a little in relation to its massive scale, but better than other Latin American scholarship.

4 A Latin American adoption of postcolonial perspectives (cf. Moraña *et al.* 2008) closer to those of some Asian and African authors could be connected to the rise in the very recent past of indigenous and black movements in Latin American countries and cities. Challenges to internal hegemonies and authoritative theories can appear differently in these circumstances, as South African scholars presumably know well. Moreover, it has been suggested that 'South Asian scholars writing from South Asian universities have an entirely different relationship with their counterparts in Anglo-American academia' from those writing from Africa (Burke 2003): 'African intellectuals should be motivated by one set of problematics in their writing and thinking and

Anglo–American academics by another.' On issues of language, here we are considering primarily a literature published in English. Of course, many ideas present in recent Anglo theorizing come from authors originally writing in French, well or badly translated into English, well or badly understood, for that matter 'good' or 'bad' depending on evaluations from different corners. Post-colonial studies have been rather more rare around 'Francophone' parts of the former colonized world, than is the case for the 'Anglophone'.

5 Such as being perhaps one of Spivak's suspicious 'white boys talking post-coloniality' (1999: 168).

6 http://blogs.sciences-po.fr/recherche-villes/a-propos/, accessed 26 June 2013.

7 In the Anglophone sense – not meaning 'planning' but the wider idea of 'city life'.

8 Here I note my own earlier error in promoting South African cities as the image of the future (Mabin 1999). Even though my argument contained a seed – urbanization without industrialization – of what might need further exploration as 'urban theory from the south' as one seam, it reflects how far removed recent Chinese or Indian experiences are from such tropes.

9 Where cities remain *in parallel* rather than intersecting somewhere before infinity, there will be much less to learn. In other words, identifying the possible points of contact is critical – a point made by Bob Beauregard (personal communication).

10 For instance, Deleuze and Guattari (1994) gave us striated and smooth spaces to work with, which some Latin American scholars have taken up in the city – Jáuregui (2010) on Rio for example: the formal built city with its lines and reference points as striated space, not in any way separated from the smoothness and less apparently determined nature of the informal city.

11 Dates respectively of mass demands for an 8-hour day in Chicago; beginnings of the Chartist movement in England; and the French revolution.

12 Without wishing to exaggerate the significance of such positionality, it is evidenced by the point that in one such recent volume, 14 of 19 contributors live and work in the USA or Western Europe.

5

IS THERE A 'SOUTH'[1] PERSPECTIVE TO URBAN STUDIES?[2]

Sujata Patel

Since the late 1970s and particularly after the 1990s, the dynamics of the world have changed. At one level, the world has contracted. It has opened up possibilities of diverse kinds of trans-border flows and movements, of capital and labour, together with signs/symbols, organized in intersecting circuits. While in some contexts and moments these attributes cooperate, at other times, these are in conflict and contest each other. Thus, at another level, even though we all live in one global capitalist world with a dominant form of modernity, inequalities and hierarchies are increasing and so are fragmented identities. Lack of access to livelihoods, infrastructure and political citizenship now blends with exclusions relating to cultural and group identity and are organized in varied spatial and temporal zones. Fluidity of identities and their continuous expression in unstable social manifestations demand a fresh perspective to assess and examine them. Not only do contemporary social processes, sociabilities and structures need to be perceived through new and novel prisms and perspectives but it is increasingly clear that these need to be seen through new methodological protocols. As a result, many social scientists have asked whether social theory has a social science language beyond what it formulated in its foundational moment in the nineteenth and early twentieth century to comprehend this challenge (Turner 1997).

Today, most scholars agree that the social sciences which were promoted in the 1950s and 1960s to examine and assess modernization and modernism across the world have little to no purchase. These theories were based on perspectives developed in late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century theories and promoted a 'convergence' thesis. The 'convergence' thesis, in its liberal and/or Marxist formulations argued that the structures, patterns and processes associated with modernization and capitalism and thus industrialization and urbanization (emerging earlier in Europe and later extending itself in the Americas and the Antipodes) were and are universal models of social change and dynamics of the world. Such a thesis, it is contended, cannot be accepted today. The experiences of modernization of the rest of the world are significantly different. The question that needs to be addressed is: do we have a social science language that eschews a convergence thesis to examine these new processes? One way out is to accept relativism and advocate the necessity of pluralizing models of modernity and urbanization thereby creating many ways of defining change. Another is to deconstruct and displace late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century structures of social science thinking and frame social sciences that can promote both inclusivity and diversity.

The first group of social scientists who suggest a need to pluralize argue for a cosmopolitan social science (Beck 2002). They propose that given the huge differences in the articulation of modernization

processes in the world including that of capital accumulation, patterns of industrialization and forms of urbanization, the nature of inequities and exclusions varies across the globe. The new global world order, cannot accept a thesis that standardizes the western experience and hegemonizes it as the only singular articulation of a model of modernity across the world. As a consequence, new concepts and theories to comprehend these plural worlds have been proposed, such as multiple modernities (Eisenstadt 1999), alternative modernities (Gaonkar 2000; Bhargava 2010), hybrid modernities (Bhabha 1994), entangled modernities (Therborn 2003) and global modernity (Dirlik 2007).

As against this position, another section of social scientists have suggested a need to move beyond pluralizing the Atlantic[3] model and to investigate the (negative) theoretical and methodological attributes and properties that have organized this model. They suggest that if these negative attributes are identified, new formulations will not only not repeat them but show that differences have always existed in experiences of modernization and modernities and what came to be universalized was the specific experience of north–west Europe.

These critics suggest that the perspective, Eurocentrism[4] (Amin 2008; Dussel 2002; Mignolo 2002; Quijano 2000; Wallerstein 2006), provides an answer to this question and it does so by formulating a new way to assess and comprehend the history of social sciences of the Atlantic region. It proposes that social sciences were primarily organized as a discourse and elaborated knowledge on and about the Occident that argued that the latter was distinctive and that its history was endogenous and internal to itself. European social sciences legitimized the organization of the world into two spatial units, the west and the east, having separate and distinct histories unrelated to each other.

Eurocentrism is a style of thought that distinguished ontologically and epistemologically the 'Occident' and the 'Orient' to create knowledge on and of the Occident and the Orient as distinct. Enmeshed in Eurocentrism were two myths: first, the idea of the history of human civilization as being a trajectory that departed from a 'state of nature' and culminated in the European experience of modernity. Second, that the differences between Europe and non–Europeans were and are natural though in truth these were based on racial differences. Within Eurocentrism, the colonial experience was present in its absence. No wonder Eurocentrism has also been discussed as the episteme of colonial modernity. 'Both myths', according to Anibal Quijano, 'can be unequivocally recognized in the foundations of evolutionism and dualism, two of the nuclear elements of Eurocentrism' (Quijano 2000: 542).

Eurocentrism has posed seminal questions regarding the episteme of the social sciences in a fundamentally different manner. The questions that these theorists raised were not about how to incorporate new voices and areas of study within the existing ways of doing social sciences. Rather the questions raised were primarily about the nature and construct of the corpus of established knowledge regarding the 'social' as formulated in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries; it was about what constitutes its 'science', its facticity and its truth. It was about the way this knowledge and its 'truths' has been designed and devised; it is about the moorings of its perspectives, methodologies and methods: in short, its system of practices. These, the social scientists argued, failed to comprehend the diverse and plural nature of the world and instead constructed a social science within and through the Atlantic experience.

This chapter is written from a sociological perspective which draws from these debates. It is important to mention this location as some recent interventions (Robinson 2006; Roy 2011) have used different explanations to raise the same questions. The chapter is divided into four sections. In the first part I delineate this debate regarding Eurocentrism and in the second part I discuss how the field of urban studies is enmeshed in this project. In the third section, the chapter elaborates the further ramifications of Eurocentrism and its expressions within the field of urban studies in the 'south', while the last section presents a strategy and a possible way to resolve the problem in order to create new themes for study and research.[5]

Eurocentrism, colonialism and modernity

The first full statement on Eurocentrism comes in the late 1980s[6] from Samir Amin when he critiques the Eurocentric vision in contemporary social science theory and argues that it is organized in and through twin processes, that of crystallization of the European society and Europe's conquest of the world. European theories of modernity, Amin argues, clothe these twin processes by asserting the first and disregarding the significance of the latter in the formation of the first. In order to understand how these two processes are organically interlinked, Amin's essay on *Eurocentrism* goes back into time and reinterprets history, to discuss the nature and growth of 'tributary states', a form of a pre-modern state,[7] and the articulation within various scholastic trends in these states that ultimately lead to the formation of a 'science'. Amin juxtaposes historical evidence with popular conceptions of its development within Europe to indicate how misrepresentation and 'misrecognition' displaced this historical evidence and became the basis for creating an episteme, one that excluded and disregarded how knowledge and 'science' actually were developed.

Amin's argument is presented at three levels: First, he contends that Europe and the Afro-Asiatic regions were the peripheries of the Mediterranean tributary states whose centre was at its eastern edge, (Hellinistic, Byzantine, Islamic, including Ottoman). Scholastic and metaphysical culture of these tributary systems created four systems of scholastic metaphysics: Hellenistic, Eastern Christian, Islamic and Western Christian. While each contributed to the formation of culture and consciousness of Europe, it was the contribution of Egypt and later of medieval Islamic scholastics which was decisive in changing Europe's culture from being metaphysical to scientific (Amin 2008: 38). Second, he shows how since the period of Renaissance, this 'real' history of Europe has been distilled and diluted to be replaced with another history that narrated its growth as being the sole consequence of its birth within the Hellenic-Roman civilization. Third, Amin argues that the European narrative made Europe the centre of the world and of modern 'civilization', the distinctive characteristic of which was science and 'universal reason'. The rest of the world was constructed to be its peripheries, which, it was argued, could not or did not have the means to become modern − that is places of reason, science and technology. This later became the narrative of social science (Dussel 1993, 2000, 2002; Quijano 1993, 2000, 2007; Wallerstein, 2006)

Dussel and Quijano argue that the origin of social sciences is not in the Enlightenment period. Rather its growth can be located within the European Renaissance, the German Reformation, the French Revolution and the English Parliament. They assert what Amin had said earlier − that Eurocentrism was a theory of constructing a self-defined ethnocentric theory of history, that of 'I'. They also affirm, in a manner similar to Amin, that the European narrative and thus its theory of history simultaneously makes invisible and silences events, processes and actions of violence against the rest of the world, without which Europe could not have become modern. They extend this thesis to suggest that Eurocentrism is not only a theory of history but an episteme, a theory of power/knowledge. If this episteme theorized the 'I', the 'centre', it also theorised the 'other', the 'periphery'. Thus Dussel argues:

> modernity is, in fact, a European phenomena, but one constituted in a dialectical relation with a non-modern alterity that is its ultimate content. Modernity appears when Europe appears itself as the 'centre' of *World* history that it inaugurates; the periphery that surrounds this centre is consequently part of its self-definition. The occlusion of this periphery ... leads the major thinkers of the centre into a Eurocentric fallacy in their understanding of modernity.
>
> (Dussel 1993: 65)

Second, this episteme now termed 'categorical imperative', simultaneously creates the knowledge of the 'I' (Europe, the moderns, the West) against the 'other' (the peripheral, non-modern, and the East).

This perspective legitimizes a theory of the separate and divided nature of the knowledge of the West and the East. It divides the attributes of the West and the East by giving value to the two divisions; while one is universal, superior and 'emancipatory', the other is particular, non-emancipatory and thus inferior. Dussel quotes Immanuel Kant who argued that while European 'Enlightenment is the exodus of humanity by its own efforts from the state of guilty immaturity' … 'laziness and cowardice are the reasons why the great part of humanity remains pleasurably in the state of immaturity' (Dussel 1993: 68). This inferiority, a condition of its not becoming modern, in turn further legitimates the need to emulate the 'moderns' and to accept the colonizing process as a 'civilizing' process. This was the myth of modernity and led, according to Dussel, to the management of the world-system's 'centrality':

> If one understands Europe's modernity—a long process of five centuries—as the unfolding of new possibilities derived from its centrality in world history and the corollary constitution of all other cultures as its periphery, it becomes clear that, even though all cultures are ethnocentric, modern European ethnocentrism is the only one that might pretend to claim universality for itself. Modernity's Eurocentrism lies in the confusion between abstract universality and the concrete world hegemony derived from Europe's position as centre.
>
> (Dussel 2002: 222)

Third, as mentioned above, Eurocentric knowledge is based on the construction of multiple and repeated divisions or oppositions. These oppositions, Anibal Quijano (2000) argues, are based on a racial classification of the world population. This principle becomes the assumption to further divide the peoples of the world in geo-cultural terms, to which are attached further oppositions, such as reason and body, science and religion, subject and object, culture and nature, masculine and feminine, modern and traditional. While European modernity conceptualized its growth in terms of linear time, it sequestered the (various) East(s) divided between two cultural groups, the 'primitives'/'barbarians' and the 'civilized', each enclosed in their (own) spaces. No wonder this episteme could not provide the resources to elaborate a theory of space, affirming Karl Marx's insightful statement of 'annihilation of space by time'.

The consolidation of these attributes across the West–East axis and its subsequent hierarchization across spatial regions in the world allowed social science to discover the 'nature' of various people, nations and ethnic groups across the world in terms of the attributes of binaries, constituted in and by the West. This structure of power, control, and hegemony is termed by Quijano 'coloniality of power'.

Why is this critique important for doing social sciences and more particularly urban studies across the world? The field of urban studies, as mentioned above, has been critical in the elucidation of debates regarding capitalism and modernity. Adopting a Eurocentric approach would help us to understand that before capitalism and its ideology, modernity emerged in Europe and later expanded to the Americas, the world was always interconnected; that these new interconnections linked non-European/Atlantic regions and places with that of Europe and the Americas; that these linkages were built through structures of domination-subordination and based on exploitation of physical and human capital of the non-Atlantic regions; that these created enclaves of specific dependencies and led to uneven capitalist accumulation across the world. Fuelled by imperialism and colonialism, these processes negated this colonial and imperialist history and universalized them through the model of scientific knowledge. As a consequence, this scientific knowledge argued:

(a) that the patterns of modernization and capitalist accumulation which emerged in the Atlantic region were related to the growth of the latter's uniquely indigenous material and intellectual resources such as, that of reason, science and technology;

(b)   that the non-Atlantic region did not have these productive and intellectual resources and thus needed to emulate those that emerged in the Atlantic region; and,

(c)   that social sciences using the comparative methodology had to outline the problems, the complications, the hitches, the difficulties and the defects that restricted, constrained and circumscribed such emulation in the rest of the world.

How did Eurocentric positions affect the framing of urban studies?

Eurocentrism, urbanization and urbanism

It would not be incorrect to state that urban sociology and its broader area, urban studies has been and remains enmeshed in Eurocentric positions. Both these specializations were closely entwined with processes of change and transition taking place in the Atlantic region and the patterns of movement from countryside to city were considered inviolable, given and thus natural. No wonder urbanization became coterminous with industrialization and vice versa, allowing many to reaffirm a theory of change that equated both these with modernization. It became easy to argue that indigenous scientific and technological changes heralded social and cultural modernity and a higher stage of civilization. This theory thus became a *sine qua non* of contemporary social scientific thought. Thus when the Chicago School theorists elaborated their positions on what constitutes the field of urban sociology, they extended the above arguments and suggested that size, density and heterogeneity defined this field.

What happened, in contrast, with the growth of 'new urban sociology'?[8] Did it interrogate and erase this linear trajectory of Europe-centred growth and development? Did the political economy perspective it offered help to displace the myths of 'evolutionism and dualism' (as Quijano has called them) that had trapped the Chicago School theorists? Obviously there was a hope that the new urban sociology would develop a genuine international orientation and a global perspective. For example, writing in 1980, Sharon Zukin argued that this new orientation would not only document the changes from pre-industrial to the industrial city, or the reproduction of metropolitan urban forms in colonial and post-colonial cities but concentrate on the historical analysis of 'the hegemony of metropolitan culture within the world system as a whole; the rise and decline of particular cities; and the political, ideological, juridical, and economic significance of particular urban forms' (Zukin 1980: 579).

Certainly the marriage with political economy opened up urban studies, rechristened from its earlier *avatar* as urban sociology, to new interdisciplinary questions. The focus now became a critical analysis of the city as a form and urbanization as a process of capitalist accumulation. But did this reorientation eschew its evolutionism and thus a Eurocentric orientation? In this section, I highlight briefly how the theories of the two principle proponents of 'new urban sociology', sociologist Manuel Castells[9] and geographer David Harvey (1978) helped to instead extend the universalisms associated with Eurocentrism.[10]

In broad terms, both Castells and Harvey focus on the city and deliberate on the way urban space is produced as a response to capital: while Castells argued that consumption is the key to social reproduction, Harvey suggests that city formation is intrinsic to capital accumulation. Zukin (1980: 581) contrasts the two approaches and suggests that while Castells emphasizes localization of social reproduction (urban segregation of social classes and manual and mental work; unequal access of urban infrastructure and especially consumption goods; and connections between class politics and everyday life) Harvey analyses capital accumulation through the medium of control of state institutions (investment flows, support of financial institutions and creating credit mechanisms beneficial to capitalists).

It is clear that Castells' and Harvey's focus remains Europe, and its advanced capitalist system; its origin, the city as a site and consequence of its growth and the urbanization process as its key element.

In their analysis of its origin they continue to evoke the modernization paradigm associated with Eurocentrism. This orientation draws Harvey, on the one hand, to analyse the way Paris and Baltimore grew linearly in and through the dialectics 'between circuits' of capitalist accumulation and urban crises. The first circuit of the three that he analysed concerns the production of commodities within manufacturing and ultimately gives way to the crisis of overproduction of goods. It is at this stage that capital moves to the second circuit where it gets new investments in the form of fresh fixed capital such as infrastructure, housing, and construction of offices, leading to the growth of a town or a city. In the process, land is transformed into built environment, both for production and consumption; it becomes thus a constituent of the process of accumulation of capital.

Harvey's analysis draws on empirical material (from Paris) to argue that without the state playing a pivotal role in mediating the flows of capital from primary to secondary circuit through the creation of financial tools and policies such as housing loans and mortgage facilities, it would be impossible for further accumulation to take place. As in the first circuit, after some time there is overinvestment in the secondary circuit and due to the tendency of capitalists to underinvest in fixed capital (the built environment), this leads to its flow into the tertiary circuit. This involves investment in scientific knowledge and technological advancements to reproduce labour power.

On the other hand, Castells is upfront in his contention that his focus is Europe and particularly the politics in cities of advanced capitalist societies. His bias and his positionality are very clear. Focusing on collective consumption (housing, transportation, communication), he argues that it plays a key role in defining the capitalist system. The urban system works, therefore, within four spheres: production, consumption, exchange and politics. The state mediates between the various elements that constitute the urban system and engages in dialectical relationships with capitalist interests, elite groups, its own employees and the 'masses'. Since the city is the spatial location of capitalist development, it is the city, and hence space, that reflects the workings and outcomes of this relationship. Urban crisis occurs as a result of state failure to manage resources of and for collective consumption. The result is the growth of urban social movements. But, if the globe is interconnected surely the crisis relates to the capitalist world system? Why does Castells restrict his analysis to specific geographies?

The same geographical and analytical foreclosure limits Harvey's theorizing. Thus Harvey's answer to the question, how can one intervene in the process of capital accumulation, restricts his analysis to an assessment of class conflict within the city and the nation-state of the Atlantic region. In consequence, the geography of capitalist accumulation has been pre-decided. Because the urban process under capitalism is created in and through the interaction of capital accumulation and class struggle (in this pre-decided geography), Harvey argues that struggles by social groups threatened by the removal of capital can help prevent capital flight and ensure the survival of an urban infrastructure. No wonder Harvey's theories ignore the displacement and struggles of the poor in colonial countries taking place over the last 200 years against the transfer of natural resources to aid capital accumulation and investments of city growth in the Atlantic region. It reflects what Edward Said (1993) has said when he discusses *the imperial standpoint of knowledge*: the bias inherent in the knower was but the natural by-product of the very positionality of the knower in the geopolitical hierarchy.

Both Harvey and Castells are locked into linear theories of change inherited from nineteenth- and twentieth-century Europe. Though London's growth (Darwin, 2007) as a world city (and similarly that of Manchester, Paris and other cities of Europe) cannot be understood without evaluating English imperialism and its colonial relationships across the world,[11] both Castells and Harvey ignore the relationship between accumulation and imperialism/colonialism, not only mentioned in Marx's early writings on India but elaborated later by Lenin and Rosa Luxemburg. These latter texts became the basis for Paul Baran's classic, *The Political Economy of Growth* (1957). Yet, these works and many others do not find any mention in Castells' and Harvey's studies on capital accumulation and urban crisis. The

focus of their reflections remains cities in the Atlantic region whose expansion they see primarily as a site and consequence of the growth of capitalism within the Atlantic region.

Is there a way forward on this matter?

The geopolitics of travelling theory

The first issue that needs to be asked relates to the way contemporary scholarship confronts the problem of European universals. Some social scientists have argued that the best way out of this epistemic and methodological difficulty is to particularise the universals of European thought. For example, Immanuel Wallerstein has argued that:

> Europe in the sixteenth to eighteenth centuries did transform the world, but in a direction whose negative consequences are upon us today. We must cease trying to deprive Europe of its specificity on the deluded premise that we are thereby depriving it of an illegitimate credit. Quite the contrary. We must fully acknowledge the particularity of Europe's reconstruction of the world because only then will it be possible to transcend it, and to arrive hopefully at a more inclusively universalist vision of human possibility.
>
> (Wallerstein 2006: 106–7)

Dipesh Chakrabarty, the historian of subaltern studies, has made a similar argument. He coined a new methodology called 'provincialisation', and suggested that its quest was the following:

> To 'provincialize' Europe was precisely to find out how and in what sense European ideas that were universal were also, at one and the same time, drawn from the very particular intellectual and historical traditions that could not claim universal validity.
>
> (Chakrabarty 2008: xiii)

A similar stance has been taken by the urbanist Thomas Maloutas (2012), who argues that all concepts and theories travel from the core to the periphery and thus reproduce mechanisms of power relations within the academic division of labour. More particularly, he argues that when

> context is neglected, it is difficult to escape from reproducing these power relations even when you are producing radical theory: concepts and theories that travel are to a large extent imposed agendas on the periphery, even if intentions are the best possible.
>
> (Maloutas 2012: 3)

In the contemporary context, however, the problem is not merely an epistemic and methodological one. Eurocentrism is reproduced through academic dependencies in many institutional ways across the world, situations through which dominant intellectual traditions (in this case Atlantic ones) expand and extend themselves at the expense of so-called subordinate intellectual traditions elsewhere. These processes are exacerbated particularly when the former ensures its reproduction through the control of infrastructural and intellectual resources of the latter.

Academic dependencies[12] raise issues about the culture of doing social science globally. The Malaysian thinker Syed Hussein Alatas (1972) and the African philosopher Paulin Hountondji (1997) have discussed these as the 'captive mind' and 'extraversion' respectively. They argue that the syndrome of 'captive mind' and 'extraversion' can be seen in the teaching and learning processes, in the way curriculums and syllabi are framed; in the processes of research: the designing of research questions and in the methods and methodologies used; as well as in the formulation of criteria adopted for accepting