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by Ruediger Korff

Cities can be cited as prime examples of the combination of social, economic, cultural and political dynamics that create a social formation referred to as a «city». Castells points out: «A city (and each type of city) is what a historical society decides the city (and each city) will be. Urban is the social meaning assigned to a particular spatial form by a historically defined society»[1]. A closer analysis of these processes indicates combinations as well as tensions and conflicts between a hierarchical public administration planning the future of the city, different entrepreneurs that use markets to enhance their private profits, and finally patterns of self-organization and public articulation by the citizen to express their demands of the city. A concept of urban politics in which the city council and «government» formulates decisions to be implemented by the executive and administration does not take into consideration the multiple demands and interests of different groups, organizations and actors. As a result, city planning is not in line with demands and requirements of the citizen, private business or civil society, and lacks legitimacy.

Not least due to urban conflicts resulting from the neo-liberal transformation of cities in the 1980s and 1990s' new concepts of how to manage cities became necessary. The new concept was «governance» to indicate a new mode

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[1] M. Castells, *The City and the Grassroots*, Berkeley, Los Angeles, 1983, p. 302.

of governing, different from the old hierarchical model in which authorities exert sovereign control over the people and groups making up civil society[2]. Similarly Anguelov defines governance as «the networked relations between government and private sector actors (and occasionally civil society groups) involved in the generation and implementation of public policies in cities or metropolitan regions»[3]. Following Rhodes, «governance» refers to a non-hierarchical, network mode of governing, where non-state, private corporate actors (formal organizations) participate in the formulation and implementation of public policy[4]. Governance indicates the substitution – at least in theory – of top-down urban planning and regulation within a hierarchical administration and bureaucracy, by a horizontal coordination of diverse organizations within different networks. Through this change, governance entailed de-regulation of urban development, new forms of public-private partnership, and taking into account public demands as formulated by civil society groups and the public sphere. Urban governance was thereby seen as a means to enhance participation, particularly of civil society and citizen in general, to reach a better consensus of the urban future and thereby provide legitimacy to urban politics.

The shift towards governance as combination of public and private actors and organizations has to be seen not only as a liberal intent towards citizen participation, but as a response to the financial crisis of cities in the 1980s. City councils faced severe financial deficits and were increasingly unable to pay for collective consumer goods and services. A way out was seen in privatization or public-private partnerships of communal industries like electricity, water works, gas, public transportation and canalization etc. In other words, governance evolved as a concept from budget deficits of urban administrations.

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[2] R. Mayntz, *New Challenges to Governance Theory*, Jean Monet Chair Papers No. 50, European University Institute, 1998.

[3] D. Anguelov, *Urban Governance*, in H. Leitner, J. Peck and E. Sheppard (eds.), *Urban Studies Inside-out: Theory, Method, Practice*, Los Angeles, 2019, pp. 311-313.

[4] R.A.W. Rhodes, *Understanding Governance. Policy Networks, Governance, Reflexivity and Accountability*, Buckingham, Philadelphia, 1997.

While the financial crisis of cities was of high importance in developed cities, cities in the developing world faced the problem of increased demands for urban planning under conditions of limited information. Rapid in-migration implied that new city neighbourhoods evolved within a few years, and shifts of centres took place as a result of private investments, and the location of industries and the establishment of gated communities. These dynamics could hardly be controlled, supervised or even surveyed by city administrations, not least because the capacities of the communal administrations were insufficient to maintain a level of control, or even supervision, of rapid urban changes.

In conclusion, in developed countries, governance as a non-hierarchical means of administration, regulation and control was mainly a response to the limits of regulation and control due to globalization, the rise of financial markets etc. In developing countries, governance was seen as the base for solving development problems. Thus, the main organizations pushing forward the concept of governance were the UN, IMF and World Bank. Governance thereby was a perspective to go beyond the state, but shift to the market for regulation.

Urban governance: Network, actors, institutions and discourses

As a network, urban governance involves different actors connected to different institutions, and specific discourses that allow for communication between the actors. Quite a lot of diagrams have been created to show the structure of the field of urban governance. In these we find differentiations of levels, namely the global, national, communal and local level; discourses and ideologies; sectors like public, private, collective; and finally actors associated to all these[5]. For example we have different state and public agen-

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[5] See J. Kedogo, S. Sandholz and J. Hamhaber, *Good Urban Governance, Actors' Relations and Paradigms. Lessons from Nairobi, Kenya and Recife, Brazil*, ISOCARP, Congress, 2010; N. Devas *et al.*, *Urban Governance, Voice and Poverty in the Developing World*, London, 2004; A. Brown, *Planning for Sustainable and Inclusive Cities in the Global South*, Evidence on Demand, 2015, available online at http://dx.doi.org/10.12774/eod_tg.march2015.browna, p. 5.

cies at the different levels. In the private economic sector we have actors such as entrepreneurs and businesses, as well as informal organizations. Turning to civil society and communication, we have f.e. NGO and also citizen groups, neighbourhoods etc. The question is, how much can these different actors communicate with one another? Is there a common language or discourse? How is governance institutionalized within the different sectors and parts of society? Here the differences of the respective logics and rationalities become evident. The state and public organizations follow a rationality of expertise and power. They legitimize their power through their expertise, and by working for a common good defined within politics instead of personal gains. By contrast, the private economy follows a rationality of utility maximization, profitability and thus efficiency, while civil society is oriented towards communication and enhancing understanding, as well as defining common goods and a better future.

The diagrams are helpful to understand the complexity of the field of governance of a city. For real cities, however, empirical studies are required, as the actors differ, as do the networks and figurations of the actors and the discourses. Especially because of the «salience» of bigger cities in the political systems, and also the economy, governance of the city is a highly disputed field. Furthermore, in many cities we have actors that try to escape public knowledge, such as gangs, secret societies, and also informal entrepreneurs etc. These might play an important role within the city. For civil society and the citizen to be relevant actors for urban governance requires a lively public sphere in which issues are raised and discussed. However, especially authoritarian states try to limit and outlaw public discourses. How can the views of citizens be taken into consideration, if they are not present within the networks of governance? From this network perspective, urban governance implies continuous negotiations between actors. However, actors have different political power and therefore they can push forward their interests even at the expense of others. The question for any analysis of urban governance is therefore, what are the strategic resources of actors, how can these be used and how far do these impact on the figuration or interdependencies, and thus on governance? In this analysis, non-public,

often secret actors have to be taken into consideration, such as gangs and their power in favelas, and also criminality and corruption, violence etc.

The New Urban and Sustainability Agenda

Urban governance is defined as crucial for the so-called New Urban Agenda, promoted during Habitat III in Quito in 2016. In short, the New Urban Agenda presents a «paradigm shift» with new standards and principles for the planning, construction, development, management, and improvement of urban areas. It underlines the linkages between good urbanization and job creation, livelihood opportunities, and improved quality of life, which should be included in every urban renewal policy and strategy. Thereby the agenda is closely linked to the Agenda for Sustainable Development, especially Goal 11 on sustainable cities and communities[6].

What is meant by urban governance in this context? Crucial is the development and creation of institutions and mechanisms that empower and include stakeholders, as well as checks and balances. The UN-Habitat «Sustainable Cities Dialogue» from 2018 is more explicit with regards to urban governance. As the title indicates, urban governance is at the core of the implementation of SDG 11[7]. «Urban governance is about managing institutional relationships, powers and interests. In this regard, planning, implementing and monitoring urban related SDGs needs to be based on renewed urban governance processes, focused on coordination, trust and partnerships. Urban governance is the string that holds all targets together» (UN-Habitat 2018, p. 27). Of primary importance is that urban governance implies a new model to involve citizens in policy-making innovations, which is crucial to achieve the aim of inclusive, innovative and sustainable cities. This requires the creation of new institutions, or the in-

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[6] Habitat III, *New Urban Agenda*, United Nations, 2017.

[7] UN-Habitat, *Sustainable Cities Dialogue. Urban Governance at the Core of the Implementation of SGD 11,* Contribution to the first assessment of Sustainable Development Goal 11 at the 2018 High Level Political Forum (New York), available online at https://www.global-taskforce.org/sites/default/files/2018-10/ENG-INFORME%20Estrasburgo-%20WEB-ok.pdf.

stitutionalization of citizen participation in policy-making. Unfortunately, the articles are not at all explicit, so how this can be achieved within the context of authoritarian regimes, high levels of criminality and extreme forms of inequality? To involve citizens in policy making faces further problems. The experts tend to look at the common citizen as un-informed and «non-experts». Citizen often regard opportunities for participation organised by the administration as useless endeavours. In other words, the way citizen communicate, and the way communication is organized within the administration differ to such a degree that neither can understand the other. «All too often the result (of such participatory meetings – Author's note) is a plan with a swimming pool here or a playground there and lots of great detached houses – sadly none of it affordable, either for the city or the citizen. So everyone goes home disappointed»[8]. One major shortcoming of such forms of participation is that the problems to be solved or the challenges for urban planning etc. are defined by the administration, or jointly the administration, business and development organizations as representatives of the people, without, however, ever talking to the people! In this way urban governance works within a network, however, a network of organizations. These organizations define what is understood as the problem, as well as what the best practices etc. are, from their experience and from the global state of knowledge and expertise. Of course, this is far removed from the life-world of the citizen, and how they communicate with each other. But, how can the citizen be integrated? A first step is to identify problems from the point of view of the citizen. This implies what impacted people think about new development plans etc. Often planning involves negative choices. Certainly, nobody would like to have a landfill or noisy airport or highway in close vicinity. However, the landfill has to be located somewhere. One way might be to provide expert information to different communities and let them negotiate ways to cope with it. A possibility might be that those communities not impacted provide services or funds for the affected communities.

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[8] J. Gaines and S. Jaeger, *A Manifest for Sustainable Cities. Think Local, Act Global*, Munich, Berlin, London, New York, 2009, p. 150.

A basic problem of urban governance is that firstly cities, especially in the developing world, are rapidly changing. Former peripheries become central, traffic faces collapse, new centres emerge and new areas are settled and basic infrastructure has to be provided etc. Secondly, new opportunities evolve through e.g. development projects, global integration etc. This requires policies and projects by the city that have direct effects on the citizen. The problem is that one hardly has good versus bad projects, but rather ambivalences. Building a new highway or public transportation improves traffic, but requires resettlement of people to make way for the highway or tracks. Establishing industrial estates provides job opportunities, but often these are low paid and lead to the rise and extension of slum areas, as well as pollution. Thus, there are some groups who gain from policies and projects, while others lose. If we do not follow a repressive regime, which unfortunately is the case in many third world cities, this ambivalence requires negotiations between those impacted. Governance in this sense is less about decision making, but rather facilitating negotiation processes and providing equal opportunities for those involved in the negotiations.

To quite a large degree studies on urban governance and views of how the different stakeholders, public and private, state and civil society etc. should work together to enhance sustainability and provide for an inclusive city, appear rather idealistic. Of course, any forms of governance require legitimacy, but all involved actors are certainly not at all equal. Negotiations, especially with civil society, require an open public sphere and the possibility of a free articulation of interests, demands and views. Furthermore, the public sphere has to allow for protests and views not in line with the political powers. Where do we in fact have such a situation of transparency, democracy and liberalism? In most cities we have entrenched elite groups, combining politics and parts of the bureaucracy with business and private interests. Citizens' perspectives are articulated by NGOs and other groups, which often follow their own political and economic agendas. Thus, to assume that negotiations between stakeholders and interest groups are based on reason and rationality, as well as equality, is unrealistic. Often it is already a great achievement if the negotiations are non-violent! A fur-

ther complication is the different rationalities and linkages between urban administrations and urban private businesses. In general, any administration tries to extend control and regulation, while private business favours de-regulation and less control. If we add the general population, we have a third dynamic. Most people prefer to have access to comparatively cheap services, goods etc. in closer vicinity, rather than central places. Thereby a lot of decentralized, often small-scale economic activities closely connected to basic needs for the people evolve as an informal sector. The administration tries to reduce this, as it usually does not follow regulations (hygiene, quality of goods etc.) and appropriates collective spaces for private gains (e.g. streets, pedestrian walkways etc.). However, for the people the services provided obviously satisfy a demand!

Radicalization of the New Urban Agenda

The New Urban Agenda claims to be a paradigm shift, by focussing on urban governance instead of urban government. However, I think this shift is not as far-reaching as it would have to be. Although additional actors are taken into consideration, a radical shift would put the citizen rather than any organizations into the centre. Such a radical paradigm shift would affect the position of organizations (public, private, civil society) and their dominant roles.

The discussion of the linkages between sustainability and the city indicates that cities are not to be seen as problems, but rather as possible solutions. The Quito Agenda states: «we have reached a critical point in understanding that cities can be the source of solutions to, rather than the cause of, the challenges that our world is facing today». Taking this seriously requires a different assessment of the role of the citizen *vis-à vis* the economy and administration. Basically, it means we have to ask who makes the city, and therefore who creates solutions? The organizations that are prominent in governance, or the citizens who are not present but only represented, if at all?

Cities are transformers of development processes. As development is ambivalent, cities are not only centres of problems, conflicts and tensions,

but they form innovative milieus continuously creating new ways of coping with changing circumstances (social creativity)[9]. Solutions to numerous problems faced by humankind are in fact invented and tested in the urban context, and disseminated through city networks on national and global scales. The main task is to identify what solutions are already developing in cities. Understanding these solutions is essential to answer the most crucial question: is a form of urban development possible that combines sustainability of the environment, economic growth, social mobility, multiculturalism, security and political stability at the individual, household and city level? This requires a new perspective on urban planning and governance, namely how do citizens produce the city. For this pattern of local self-organization play a major role.

To be sustainable, urban development has to be based on a consensus of the goals and future visions (innovations, importance of the public sphere, civil society and habitat) of all people living in the city, not just as a consensus between different organizations dominating the city. Thus, pattern of exclusion resulting from power relations, valorization of knowledge and expertise have to be modified to allow for participatory inclusion in decisions about the future development of cities[10]. This means that «inhabitants» must be transformed into citizens. Such a change requires and gives rise to organizations that enable the articulation of interests (public sphere) and the creation of supporting social and economic practices (self-help, mutual cooperation, business networks, informal sector). Accordingly, urban governance has to interface with these organizations. Self-organization is the crucial process for such a transition towards real (rather than virtual) citizens' participation. Consequently, self-organization is a necessity for urban sustainability. As noted above, it is in slums that many of

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[9] P.G. Hall, *Creative Cities and Economic Development*, in «Urban Studies», vol. 37, 2000, pp. 639-649; J, Holston, *Urban Citizenship and Globalization*, in A.J. Scott (ed.) *Global City-regions. Trends, Theory, Policy*, Oxford, 2002, pp. 325-348.

[10] M. Carley, P. Jenkins and H. Smith, *Urban Development and Civil Society. The Role of Communities in Sustainable Cities*, London, 2001.

the most significant examples of self-organization are currently to be found from which we need to learn.

The EU and most Western European states have developed some form of urban policy and a renewed emphasis has been put on community participation. These policies have also led to a reconsideration of local governance and the role of such forms in urban regeneration and more generally in urban development[11]. In developing cities it is increasingly recognized that within deprived/marginalised areas, informal activities and resources that neighbourhood communities already possess contribute to regeneration and problem-solving. However, due to their informal/marginal nature, official programmes often find it difficult to conceptualise the ways in which they can be integrated into regeneration programmes and, equally importantly, how they can provide innovative means to address the problems in such areas.

Mingiones' work[12] provides a way of conceptualising and understanding these issues. He argues that the market, and the competitive relations and behaviour it entails, is a disorganiser of social life. Whereas, what he terms factors and behaviour of a reciprocal or associative type are forms of socialization, and it is the balance between these three types that is important. Traditionally it has been assumed that with the spread of markets, and the development of the welfare state, associative forms have been on the increase while reciprocal forms have been on the decline. However, his research suggests that reciprocal forms continue to exist, and remain an important alternative to the market and welfare state in the provision and (re-) distribution of resources necessary for the survival of households and local communities. The work of De Certeau[13] and Lefebvre[14] shows that individuals and groups

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[11] R. Atkinson, *European Urban Policies and the Neighbourhood: An Overview*, in «Urban Design and Planning», vol. 1, n. 3, 2008, pp. 115-122.

[12] E. Mingione, *New Aspects of Marginality in Europe*, in C. Hadjimichalis and D. Sadler (eds.), *Europe at the Margins. New Mosaics of Inequality*, Chichester, 1995, pp. 15-33.

[13] M. De Certeau, *The Practice of Everyday Life*, Berkeley, 1984.

[14] H. Lefebvre, *Critique of Everyday Life*, Vol. 1, London, 1991; H. Lefebvre, *Writings on Cities*, Oxford, 1996.

engage in actions that transcend particular forms of social reproduction, and use (exploit or even subvert) the opportunities inherent within the market and locality through *la perrique* and *bricolage*. It is this complex mix of social reproduction forms and everyday activities that regeneration (and more generally, policies on sustainability) policies need to identify and attempt to integrate into local area-based regeneration strategies. Clearly there are some informal elements that cannot be utilised, but there is much that exists in the locality that can provide a basis to build upon. Significant among these are kinship networks, forms of cooperation to provide community facilities, and the often neglected sense of surviving against the odds which is required to «get by» in many excluded spaces. However, there is also another, darker side (e.g. criminal activity, anti-social behaviour) to these resources/activities, not least the negative image which they may create in the wider local environment (e.g. stigmatization of an area), making it difficult for people to get jobs or access to credit, the internal conflicts they may generate within the area, and the apparent criminality of some communities. It is thus important to combine the various people, resources and survival strategies with care.

Final comment

A solution for urban governance has to be a holistic, inclusive planning system in which the respective capacities and competences of the urban actors are made best use of. The necessary macro-planning of a city cannot be made by localities and neighbourhoods, while for local development and planning these are the most competent. Neither a city built on purely economic principles works, nor a city fulfilling the demands of the administration. A city is made by interdependencies, and therefore governance should be based on negotiations, as there is not simply the good or the bad. Still, the main point and criteria for any project and policy should be that a city is for the citizen.

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