ROUTLEDGE HANDBOOKS

Routledge Handbook of Asian Cities

Edited by Richard Hu

ROUTLEDGE HANDBOOK OF ASIAN CITIES

This handbook provides the most comprehensive examination of Asian cities—developed and developing, large and small—and their urban development.

Investigating the urban challenges and opportunities of cities from every nation in Asia, the handbook engages not only the global cities like Shanghai, Tokyo, Singapore, Seoul, and Mumbai but also less studied cities like Dili, Malé, Bandar Seri Begawan, Kabul, and Pyongyang. The handbook discusses Asian cities in alignment to the United Nations' New Urban Agenda and Sustainable Development Goals in order to contribute to global policy debates. In doing so, it critically reflects on the development trajectories of Asian cities and imagines an urban future, in Asia and the world, in the post-sustainable, post-global, and post-pandemic era.

Presenting 43 chapters of original, insightful research, this book will be of interest to scholars, practitioners, students, and general readers in the fields of urban development, urban policy and planning, urban studies, and Asian studies.

Richard Hu is an urban planner, designer, and critic. His work and interests—both intellectual and professional—integrate built environment, economy, and technology to tackle contemporary urban transformations and challenges, with a focus on the Asia-Pacific region. He is the author of *Smart Design: Disruption, Crisis, and the Reshaping of Urban Spaces* (2021).

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CONTRIBUTORS

Amanda Achmadi is Senior Lecturer in Architectural Design, Asian Architecture and Urbanism at the Melbourne School of Design of the University of Melbourne, Australia. Her research works consider the interactions between architectural discourses, socio-spatial practices, and identity politics in colonial and postcolonial Indonesia. She is a founding member of the Society of Architectural and Urban Historians of Asia (SAUH-Asia) and a member of the InfUR research hub.

Noman Ahmed is an architect and planner, working as Dean of the Faculty of Architecture and Management Sciences at NED University, Karachi, Pakistan. His recent books include *Water Supply in Karachi: Issues and Prospects* (2008), *Karachi: The Land Issue* (2015), and *Karachi, from the Prism of Urban Design* (2016).

Md Moynul Ahsan is Assistant Professor at Ankara University, Turkey, and has over eight years of professional experience in teaching and research in the fields of urban planning and development, sustainable real estate, housing, climate change, disaster, and migration at a number of universities and research centres in Bangladesh, Brunei, and Turkey.

Henryk Alff was trained as a human geographer and 'areanist' (Slavic and Central Asian Studies) and currently is a senior researcher in the TRANSECT project (Agrarian Transformations and Social-Ecological Complexities, Local Bioeconomy Scenarios in Central and South Asia) at Eberswalde University for Sustainable Development (HNEE), Germany.

Raven Anderson is an urban planner and writer who has worked on urban development projects in Mongolia, Brazil, Indonesia, and the United States. He works for the New York City Economic Development Corporation (NYCEDC) and previously worked for the City and County of San Francisco and the World Bank.

Lara Arjan is an Urban Development Specialist at the Asian Development Bank and concurrently serves as a Project Officer for the Cities Development Initiative in Asia. With over 20 years of experience as an urban planner, she has a wide-ranging experience in urban development, programme management, monitoring, and evaluation with familiarity in both international and municipal contexts.

Giovanna Astolfo is an urban researcher with an architectural theory and practice background. As a Lecturer and MSc Director at the Development Planning Unit, University College London (UCL), London, UK, she combines research-based teaching and action learning from contested and ungovernable urban geographies in Southeast Asia and Southern Europe with a focus on non-conventional urbanisms, continuous displacement and migration, spatial violence, and housing justice.

Dolorès Bertrais is a PhD candidate and teaching assistant at the Institute of Environmental Governance and Territorial Development of the University of Geneva, Geneva, Switzerland, since September 2019. Her research focuses on new mechanisms of city production in Southeast Asia and East Africa, particularly in Phnom Penh, Cambodia, and Kigali, Rwanda.

Tim Bunnell is Professor of human geography and Director of the Asia Research Institute (ARI) at the National University of Singapore, Singapore. His academic interest in Kuala Lumpur began with doctoral fieldwork in the 1990s.

Pietro Calogero studied urban design and housing and practised in the San Francisco Bay Area for ten years. Through Afghan–American contacts he began periodic work for the Afghan government in 2003. He worked as a senior policy advisor on housing formalisation in Kabul in 2017–2018.

Xiangming Chen is Director of the Urban Studies Program and Paul E. Raether Distinguished Professor of Global Urban Studies and Sociology at Trinity College, Connecticut, USA, and a guest professor at the School of Social Development and Public Policy, Fudan University, Shanghai, China.

Chun Hei Cheng was a research assistant at the Institute of Future Cities at Chinese University of Hong Kong (CUHK), Hong Kong, China. His research interests focus on community planning and heritage conservation. He is currently studying a master's degree of urban planning at Hong Kong University.

Rajjan Chitrakar is a researcher and educator with a background in architecture, urban design, and planning. He is currently a Lecturer in Architecture and Urbanism at Melbourne Polytechnic. Rajjan holds a PhD in Urban Design and Planning from the Queensland University of Technology and has widely published in highly ranked international journals.

João Pedro Costa is Professor of Urbanism at the Lisbon School of Architecture, Lisbon, Portugal. His research interests include urban waterfronts, climate change adaptation, and urban policy. Recently he published *Challenges for European Tourist-City-Ports* and *[Re]Urban Practice, Towards a European Research Agenda for Urbanism*.

Matias Echanove, co-founder of urbz.net, has studied Economics and Political Science at London School of Economics and Political Science (LSE), Urban Planning at Columbia University in New York, and Urban Information Systems at the University of Tokyo, Japan. He has initiated urban participatory workshops with civic groups and municipal bodies in cities around the world.

Pavel P. Em is Visiting Research Fellow at the Seoul National University Asia Center, South Korea. He obtained a PhD in geography from Moscow State University in 2013. His main area of interest is the comparison of urbanisation in the two Koreas with a recent focus on the urban development of Pyongyang.

Gabriel Fauveaud is Assistant Professor at the Department of Geography and the Centre for Asian Studies at the University of Montreal in Quebec, Canada. His work explores various aspects of the production of urban spaces in Southeast Asia and North America.

Pilar Maria Guerrieri is an architectural historian. She is now a researcher for Ambedkar University in Delhi and Lecturer in the History of Architecture at Politecnico di Milano. She is the author of books *Maps of Delhi* (2017) and *Negotiating Cultures: Delhi's Architecture and Planning from 1912 to 1962* (2018).

Hoon Han is Associate Professor of City Planning and Associate Director of City Futures of Research Centre (CFRC) at the University of New South Wales, Sydney, Australia. He has published over 100 publications in spatially integrated social science. He currently sits on the editorial boards of *Housing Studies* and *Spatial Information Research*.

Carola Hein is Professor and Chair of History of Architecture and Urban Planning at the Delft University of Technology and UNESCO Chair Water, Ports and Historic Cities. Her recent (co-)edited books and monographs include *Oil Spaces* (2021), *Urbanisation of the Sea* (2020), and *The Routledge Handbook of Planning History* (2018).

Michael Hooper is Associate Professor of Community and Regional Planning at the University of British Columbia in Vancouver, Canada. He previously taught at Harvard University and worked with UNDP in New York and Kenya.

Slavomír Horák is Associate Professor in Political and Cultural Geography, based at the Department of Russian and East European Studies, Faculty of Social Sciences, Charles University in Prague, Czechia. His research covers Central Asian political, social, and economic issues. He conducts systematic research on Turkmenistan's domestic politics, especially informalities and state- and nation-building processes.

Richard Hu is an urban planner, designer, and critic. His work and interests—both intellectual and professional—integrate built environment, economy, and technology to tackle contemporary urban transformations and challenges, with a focus on the Asia-Pacific region. He is the author of *Smart Design: Disruption, Crisis, and the Reshaping of Urban Spaces* (2021).

Du Huynh is Senior Lecturer at the School of Public Policy and Management, Fulbright University, Vietnam. His teaching and research interests are urban economics, local and regional development, infrastructure development, and finance and banking. His recent book is *Making Megacities in Asia: Comparing National Economic Development Trajectories*.

Tahmina Inoyatova is a PhD candidate at Simon Fraser University, BC, Canada, researching media, urban space, culture, identity, and power in Eurasia. Tahmina has authored a chapter in the forthcoming edited volume *Mapping the Media and Communication Landscape of Central Asia*.

Farrukh Irnazarov is Co-Founder at the Central Asian Development Institute. He has been working on economic transition and urban development, trade, and migration, and he managed projects for ADB, World Bank, IOM, UNDP, UNICEF, GIZ, USAID, DFID, GDN, and Volkswagen and Gerda Henkel Foundations.

Yu-Min Joo is Associate Professor at the KDI School of Public Policy and Management in Korea. Her latest books include *Megacity Seoul: Urbanization and the Development of Modern South Korea* (2019) and a co-edited volume titled *Smart Cities in Asia* (2020).

Madina Junussova is Senior Research Fellow at the Institute of Public Policy and Administration of the University of Central Asia, Kazakhstan/Kyrgyzstan/Tajikistan, and a CERGE-EI Foundation Teaching Fellow. Her research interests include public policy, urban and regional development, and sustainable use of local resources.

Leishipem Khamrang is Professor of Human Geography at the Royal Thimphu College, under the Royal University of Bhutan. His research interests centre on development studies, human well-being, urban studies, population and environment, and environmental humanities.

Rameesha Khan is Editor at the University of Central Asia. She holds a master's degree in public policy and management from the University of Glasgow, Scotland, UK.

Ross King is Emeritus Professor and Former Dean in the Faculty of Architecture, Building and Planning at the University of Melbourne, Australia. Research in recent decades has focused on the urban condition of Asian cities. Recent books include *Reading Bangkok* and *Heritage and Identity in Contemporary Thailand* (2011 and 2017) and *Seoul: Memory, Reinvention, and the Korean Wave* (2018).

Ziming Li is Assistant Professor at the Institute of Central China Development & Institute of Regional and Urban-Rural Development, Economics and Management School, Wuhan University, Wuhan, China.

Joana de Mesquita Lima is a PhD candidate at the Lisbon School of Architecture, Lisbon, Portugal, focusing on urban Dili. Research interests include the urban global south and housing. Recent chapters are included in the books *Overlooked Cities* and *Rural-Urban Dichotomies and Spatial Development in Asia*.

Nok Yin Ma was a teaching assistant at the Urban Studies Programme of Chinese University of Hong Kong (CUHK), Hong Kong, China. He obtained an MSc in Global Sustainability Solutions from the University of Exeter with research interests in the areas of sustainability and society. He is currently a PhD student at CUHK.

Kh Md Nahiduzzaman held faculty positions at the Department of City and Regional Planning in KFUPM (Saudi Arabia) and at the Department of Urban Planning and the Environment in the Royal Institute of Technology (Sweden), prior to joining the University of British Columbia (UBC) Okanagan. His research interests are transformational planning, urban resilience, and environmental studies.

Emil Nasritdinov teaches urbanism and anthropology at the American University of Central Asia, Bishkek, Kyrgyzstan. He holds a PhD in Urban Planning from the University of Melbourne, Australia. His main research interests include urbanism, migration, and Islam. He leads the Social Innovations Lab Kyrgyzstan (SILK) research centre, which focuses on urban issues in Bishkek.

Keng-Khoon Ng is Lecturer at NUS College, the undergraduate honours college of the National University of Singapore, Singapore. His urban transformation research focuses on Penang, Kuala Lumpur, Johor Bahru, and several cities in Malaysian Borneo.

Mee Kam Ng is Vice-chairman of the Department of Geography and Resource Management, Director of the Urban Studies Programme, and Associate Director of the Institute of Future Cities at Chinese University of Hong Kong (CUHK), Hong Kong, China. She is a fellow of RTPI, the Academy of Social Sciences in the UK, and the HKIP.

Victor K. S. Ong is an educator and a practitioner who is pursuing his doctorate at the University of Canberra. He travelled regularly to offshore sites in oil-rich cities for work. His current research encompasses digital disruption. Professionally, he is leading an Industry 4.0 transformation project for a logistics firm.

Rita Padawangi is Associate Professor of Sociology at the Centre for University Core, Singapore University of Social Sciences, Singapore. She coordinates the Southeast Asia Neighbourhoods Network (SEANNET), which connects academic institutions, scholars, and communities for collaborative research and education on urban life.

Nihal Perera is Professor of Urban Planning at Ball State University, Muncie, IN, and the founder-director of CapAsia immersive-learning program. The two-time Fulbright scholar was also Senior Research Fellow at the National University of Singapore, Singapore. His research focuses on how ordinary people produce (lived) spaces for daily activities and cultural practices.

Emma Porio is Professor at the Department of Sociology and Anthropology, School of Social Sciences, Ateneo de Manila University in Quezon City, Philippines, and Science Research Fellow at Manila Observatory. She is currently the President of the International Sociological Association (ISA), Clinical/Sociology Division (2019–2023), and of the Asia Pacific Sociological Association (2020–2023).

Shilpi Roy is Associate Professor of Urban and Rural Planning at Khulna University, Bangladesh. She is currently the Country Lead of the Centre for Sustainable, Healthy and Learning Cities and Neighbourhoods (SHLC) project and the focal point in Bangladesh for the UNESCO-IIEP 'Local challenges, global imperatives: cities at the forefront to achieve Education 2030' project.

Johannes Dragsbaek Schmidt is Senior Expert at the Nordic Institute of Asian Studies, Copenhagen University; Senior Researcher, Global Policy Institute, London; and Adjunct Associate Professor in Development and International Relations at Aalborg University, Denmark. He has published about 250 publications with a primary focus on Asian issues.

Justin See is a postdoctoral research fellow at the Sydney Environment Institute at the University of Sydney, Sydney, Australia. His research centres around issues of justice, vulnerability, and adaptation. He has published his research in *Global Environmental Change, Climatic Change* and *Climate and Development*.

Wladimir Sgibnev received his PhD from Humboldt University of Berlin, Germany. Currently he works as senior researcher at the Leibniz Institute of Regional Geography (IfL), where he is coordinating the research group on Mobilities and Migration, and leading the Leibniz Junior Research Group 'Contentious Mobilities through a decolonial lens'.

Christopher Silver is Emeritus Professor of Urban and Regional Planning and past Dean of the College of Design, Construction and Planning, University of Florida, Gainesville, FL. His recent publications include *Urban Flood Risk Management: Looking at Jakarta* (2022). He is a four-time Fulbright Senior Scholar in Indonesia and holds honorary faculty appointments at the University of Indonesia and the Institute of Technology Bandung, Indonesia.

Ramola Naik Singru is Principal Urban Development Specialist with the Asian Development Bank with over 23 years of experience. Her research interests are urban liveability, equitable futures, and climate-resilient growth. She holds a master's degree in City Design and Social Science from the London School of Economics and Political Science (LSE), London, England.

Sidh Sintusingha is Senior Lecturer in Landscape Architecture at the University of Melbourne, Australia. He researches on socio-cultural, environmental, and scalar issues relating to urbanisation in Southeast Asian cities. He co-edited *International Perspectives on the Belt and Road Initiative: A Bottom-Up Approach* (2021).

Saniya Soltybayeva is a research fellow at the Economic Research Institute, Ministry of National Economy of Kazakhstan. Her research interests include regional and local economic development, decentralisation, human capital development, and regional innovation systems.

Rahul Srivastava, co-founder of urbz.net, has studied Social Anthropology at St. Xavier's College (Mumbai, India), JNU (Delhi, India), and Cambridge University (UK). He works closely with urban practitioners to use his learnings and skills in anthropology as an applied tool for civic action and research.

Bambang Susantono is former Vice-President for Knowledge Management and Sustainable Development of the Asian Development Bank. In March 2022, he was appointed the Chairman of the Nusantara Capital City (Ibu Kota Nusantara – IKN) Authority, the future capital city of Indonesia. He holds a PhD in Infrastructure Planning from the University of California Berkeley.

Aldarsaikhan Tuvshinbat works as the Head of Exploration (Accelerator Lab) at UNDP Mongolia. Prior to joining UNDP, she worked on urban development projects in Ulaanbaatar and at the New York City Economic Development Corporation (NYCEDC).

Thanousorn Vongpraseuth is a faculty member at the National University of Laos, Vientiane, Laos. He is a founder of the Urban Development and Built Environment Lab of the Faculty of Architecture. His research interests are in urban planning, transportation planning, urban and health development issues, smart and liveable cities, and related fields.

Chia-Huang Wang is Full Professor in the Department of Social and Policy Sciences at Yuan Ze University, Taoyuan City, Taiwan. His current interests include Taipei's urban culture and the sociological analysis of contemporary information technology applications, such as algorithms, social media, and smartphones.

Tsz Chun Yeung was a research assistant at the Institute of Future Cities at Chinese University of Hong Kong (CUHK), Hong Kong, China. His research interests focus on geographical information systems and sustainable communities. He is currently a PhD student at CUHK.

Belinda Yuen is Professorial Fellow and Research Director at the Lee Kuan Yew Centre for Innovative Cities, Singapore University of Technology and Design, Singapore, where she directs the Ageing Urbanism Programme. Belinda is interested in the planning of inclusive, sustainable cities, particularly, environmental, health, and sociocultural dynamics.

Shahid Yusuf is Chief Economist at the Growth Dialogue in George Washington University, and Non-Resident Fellow at the Center for Global Development, Washington DC.

Mariyam Zulfa is currently a founder-member of Maldives Policy Advocacy Caucus (https://mpac.ac). A former Minister of Tourism and an urban planner, she has worked in the Office for Planning & Design and later as Director of Selected Islands Development Unit, the Maldives. Her research interests are in constitutional law and the Maldives.

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1
URBAN ASIA IN PERSPECTIVE

Richard Hu

Introduction

A handbook of Asian cities is an ambitious and bold endeavour. Asian cities are numerous, diverse, dynamic, and complex; they are rapidly expanding, evolving, and changing. The vastness and diversity of Asia and Asian cities, the elusiveness and ambiguity of delineating and defining them, the complication and entangling of perspectives and contexts involved in approaching them—any one of these issues could have impacted people's interest and will of making such an endeavour. These could be reasons for not doing it. These could also be reasons for doing it. This handbook pioneers the endeavour, exploring a vast area—in both geographical and intellectual senses. It has no intention or capacity of including every Asian city and every aspect of Asian cities into one collection: it is neither possible nor desirable. Rather, it endeavours to offer a comprehensive, up-to-date, and inclusive examination of Asian cities at a critical time to advance knowledge of and inform policymaking and planning for them.

The timing of this endeavour in the early 2020s is critical. The macro processes and trends that have contextualised and structured our approaches to and aspirations for Asian cities are shifting, rapidly and paradigmatically. We are at the mid-point of the timeline—not necessarily the mid-point of the progress albeit—towards the United Nations' (UN) 2030 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and the associated New Urban Agenda (NUA) since these international agreements were negotiated and reached in the mid-2010s. Urban sustainability is the dominant imperative for contemporary cities including Asian cities. It is not a new discourse. However, the SDGs and the NUA, for the first time in the history of urbanisation, have forged a cohesive framework for engaging debates, establishing consensus, and undertaking concerted actions for a common urban future. They provide visions and roadmaps; they also encounter challenges and roadblocks for achieving them, calling for further shared understanding and efforts.

Translating such grand visions into actions and outcomes on a global scale is not an easy task. Localising the SDGs and the NUA—the process of adapting, implementing, and monitoring the goals at the local city level, taking into account subnational contexts—is crucial (UCLG ASPAC Cities Alliance, 2018). United Nations' review of the implementation of the NUA in Asia and the Pacific in 2018–2021 identifies unclear, uneven, and uncoordinated transformative commitments in the region to the implementation (United Nations, 2022a). Urban sustainability, as underlined

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in both the SDGs and the NUA, is confronting new challenges, uncertainties, and changes. Disruption is the keyword of the global transformations at the turn of the second decade of the 21st century. Globalisation is being reinvented. COVID-19 is dismantling an old normal, and a new normal is yet to be established. Uncertainty is the only certainty; change is the only constant.

What are the latest development patterns of Asian cities? How do they fare in pursuing urban sustainability? What are the implications of the global disruptions for Asian cities? What is the 'Asianness' that defines Asian cities and differentiates them from other cities? These are legitimate questions for inquiry and debates at this critical moment for urban Asia. Addressing these questions in the broad global and Asian contexts, this handbook has four broad aims:

- To provide the most comprehensive and the latest survey of the development of Asian cities.
- To understand the state of Asian cities in the context of the SDGs and the NUA.
- To reflect on and imagine Asian cities in the post-sustainable, post-global, and post-pandemic settings.
- To capture the 'Asianness' in urban development and experience.

Urban Asia in the world

Geographically, this handbook delineates Asia that includes East Asia, South Asia, Southeast Asia, and Central Asia (further read Chapter 43 about the geographical scope of the study). This geographical scope of Asia includes 32 countries and regions including Chinese special administrative regions (SARs) of Hong Kong and Macau, in addition to Taiwan. An overview of Asian development measured by economic development levels and urbanisation rates is presented in Table 1.1. Selected measures of both urbanisation rate and gross domestic product (GDP) per capita in 2020 are further plotted in Figures 1.1 and 1.2, comparing urban Asia by countries and regions within Asia and comparing urban Asia in the world, respectively.

Here is a snapshot of the latest state of urban Asia in the world:

- 55 per cent of the world's population live in Asia.
- 48 per cent of the world's urban population live in Asia.
- Asia's urbanisation rate is 49 per cent, while the world's is 56 per cent.
- Asia's average GDP per capita is US$ 6,889.1, accounting for 63 per cent of the world's average of US$ 10,918.7.

If Asia were a country, it would be one of upper middle income, close to the levels of Thailand and Maldives. Measured by urbanisation rate, the 'country' of Asia would be like the Philippines, Uzbekistan, and Thailand. Indeed, Asia is a developing continent. In terms of either economic development or urban development, it is below the world's average and is lagging way behind the developed world of the European Union, North America, or the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD).

Diversity is probably the most salient attribute of Asia in a general perception. This diversity is multi-dimensional: geographical, environmental, cultural, religious, historical, political, and economical. In terms of economic development, Asia has high-income countries like Japan and South Korea, and it also has low-income countries like Afghanistan and North Korea. A country's economic development and urban development are generally correlated. In Asia, the range of urbanisation rates is as vast as economic incomes. The urbanisation rate ranges from 19 per cent (Sri Lanka) to 100 per cent (city-state of Singapore, and Chinese SARs of Hong Kong and Macau). The high-income countries are also highly urbanised societies:

Table 1.1 An overview of Asian development

Asian countries / regions	*Country classification, 2021*	*GDP per capita (current US$), 2020*	*Population (in thousands), 2020*	*Urban population (in thousands), 2020*	*Urbanisation rate (%), 2020*
East Asia					
China (Mainland)	Upper middle income	10,434.8	1,410,929.36	866,705.69	61
Hong Kong SAR	High income	46,323.9	7,481.8	7,481.8	100
Macau SAR	High income	39,403.1	649.34	649.34	100
Taiwan	High income	32,787	23,451	18,502	79
Japan	High income	40,193.3	125,836.02	115,494.82	92
Korea (North)	Low income	618	25,778.81	16,081.08	62
Korea (South)	High income	31,631.5	51,780.58	42,156.64	81
Mongolia	Lower middle income	4,061	3,278.29	2,250.78	69
South Asia					
Afghanistan	Low income (LDC)	516.7	38,928.34	10,131.49	26
Bangladesh	Lower middle income (LDC)	1,961.6	164,689.38	62,873.47	38
Bhutan	Lower middle income (LDC)	3,000.8	771.61	326.51	42
India	Lower middle income	1,927.7	1,380,004.39	481,980.33	35
Maldives	Upper middle income	6,924.1	540.54	219.83	41
Nepal	Lower middle income (LDC)	1,155.1	29,136.81	5,995.19	21
Pakistan	Lower middle income	1,188.9	220,892.33	82,094.63	37
Sri Lanka	Lower middle income	3,680.7	21,919	4,101.7	19
Southeast Asia					
Brunei Darussalam	High income	27,443	437.48	342.33	78
Cambodia	Lower middle income (LDC)	1,543.7	16,718.97	4,051.34	24
Indonesia	Lower middle income	3,869.6	273,523.62	154,926.51	57
Lao PDR	Lower middle income (LDC)	2,629.7	7,275.56	2,640.3	36
Malaysia	Upper middle income	10,412.3	32,366	24,973.6	77
Myanmar	Lower middle income (LDC)	1,467.6	54,409.79	16,943.75	31
Philippines	Lower middle income	3,298.8	109,581.09	51,950.2	47
Singapore	High income	59,797.8	5,685.81	5,685.81	100
Thailand	Upper middle income	7,186.9	69,799.98	35,898.13	51

(*Continued*)

Table 1.1 Continued

Asian countries / regions	*Country classification, 2021*	*GDP per capita (current US$), 2020*	*Population (in thousands), 2020*	*Urban population (in thousands), 2020*	*Urbanisation rate (%), 2020*
Timor-Leste	Lower middle income (LDC)	1,442.7	1,318.44	412.94	31
Vietnam	Lower middle income	2,785.7	97,338.58	36,346.23	37
Central Asia					
Kazakhstan	Upper middle income	9,122.2	18,754.44	10,815.87	58
Kyrgyzstan	Lower middle income	1,173.6	6,591.6	2,429.4	37
Tajikistan	Lower middle income	859.1	9,537.64	2,623.42	28
Turkmenistan	Upper middle income	7,612	6,031.19	3,167.34	53
Uzbekistan	Lower middle income	1,750.7	34,232.05	17,258.43	50
Asia		6,889.1	4,249,669.84	2,087,510.9	49
LDC (UN)		1,053.8	1,057,438.16	366,304.35	35
Low income		691.2	665,149.04	222,498.08	33
Lower middle income		2,217.2	3,330,652.55	1,413,633.26	43
Low & middle income		4,754.8	6,518,253.97	3,339,281.47	51
Middle income		5,216.9	5,853,104.94	3,116,783.4	53
Upper middle income		9,177.8	2,522,452.39	1,703,150.14	68
High income		44,003.4	1,214,930.23	993,239.32	82
World		10,918.7	7,761,620.15	4,357,623.76	56
European Union		34,148.9	447,801.42	335,656.32	75
North America		61,502.1	367,553.26	303,426.49	83
OECD		38,218.9	1,370,858.75	1,110,609.31	81

Data source: GDP per capita, population, urban population, and urbanisation rate—The World Bank (2022a, 2022b, 2022c); Taiwan—various online sources; GDP per capita for Korea (North)—United Nations (2022c); country classification—The World Bank (2022d); United Nations (2022b).

Japan's urbanisation rate is 92 per cent and South Korea's is 81 per cent. In 2021, of the 46 least developed countries (LDCs) defined as 'low-income countries suffering from structural impediments to sustainable development', eight of them are in Asia (United Nations, 2022b) (see Table 1.1). There are different approaches to understanding the diversity of Asia. The measures here indicate the very insufficient and unbalanced development within Asia, as a representation of its diversity.

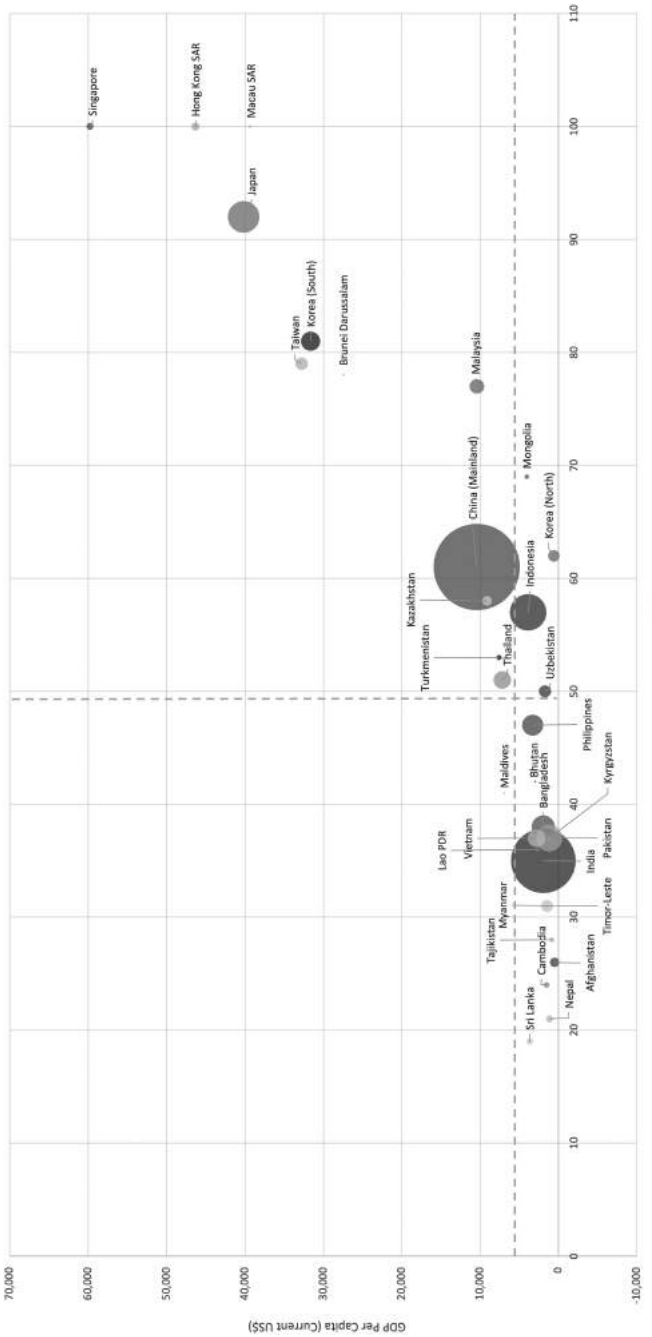

Figure 1.1 Urban Asia, 2020. Notes: The dotted lines indicate Asia's averages of urbanisation rate and GDP per capita, respectively. The bubble sizes are proportional to the urban populations they represent. Source: Created by the author.

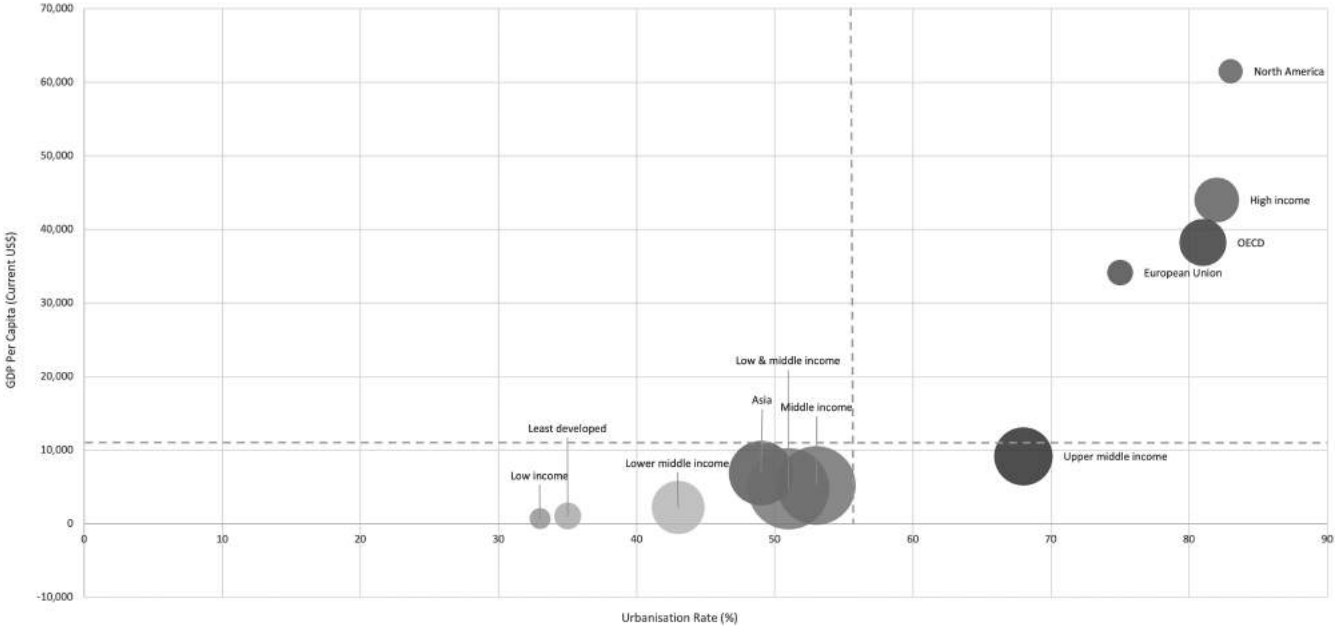

Figure 1.2 Urban Asia in the world, 2020. Notes: The dotted lines indicate the world's averages of urbanisation rate and GDP per capita, respectively. The bubble sizes are proportional to the urban populations they represent. Source: Created by the author.

Urban Asia has been a focus of research and policy debates for its vast size, massive processes, complicated outcomes, and challenging futures. Asia has two of the most populous countries in the world—China and India. Observers and commentators tend to compare the development trajectories of these two countries. The urbanisation of both or either of them would significantly impact not only urban Asia but also urban world. Both countries have been the centres of the world's urbanisation in recent decades. In around 1990, both countries had a similar urbanisation rate of around 25 per cent (The World Bank, 2022c). Ever since both countries have experienced significant urbanisation with differing scales. Three decades later, China recorded an urbanisation rate of 61 per cent and India 35 per cent (The World Bank, 2022c). China is now at the threshold of a high-income country and a highly urbanised society. It is restructuring the urban landscapes of Asia and the world, for both progress and challenges it is bringing about. Many Asian cities are rapidly growing, as well as transforming—shifting from quantity to quality in urbanisation (UN Habitat, 2015). However, this shift is not a smooth process that will be naturally happening in due course. Instead, a quantity–quality contradiction is confronting urban Asia, which is materialised in the tension and interaction between quantitative growth and qualitative transformation and underpins many representations of urban Asia's progress, opportunities, and challenges (further read Chapter 43 about the quantity–quality contradiction in urban Asia).

Growth and growth-driven transformation do not fully represent urban Asia. There are five countries whose urbanisation rates are below the world's average of 33 per cent for low-income countries: Timor-Leste (31 per cent), Afghanistan (26 per cent), Cambodia (24 per cent), Nepal (21 per cent), and Sri Lanka (19 per cent) (see Table 1.1). The different stages of urbanisation would create another layer of complexity for appreciating and tackling urban sustainability in Asia.

In and beyond urban sustainability

The United Nations' *2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development* (2015) and *New Urban Agenda* (2016) were adopted by 193 nations and 167 nations, respectively. They combine to provide the benchmark visions, targets, principles, and roadmaps for sustainable urban development across the world. They probably represent the broadest international consensus on confronting common challenges and shaping a common future in cities. These two agreements are closely connected. They work in tandem in developing knowledge and informing policy and planning 'for a better urban future' (United Nations, 2017).

Below is a recapping of the 17 SDGs, which will be referred to in some subsequent chapters:

- SDG 1 No Poverty: end poverty in all its forms everywhere.
- SDG 2 Zero Hunger: end hunger, achieve food security and improved nutrition, and promote sustainable agriculture.
- SDG 3 Good Health and Well-being: ensure healthy lives and promote well-being for all at all ages.
- SDG 4 Quality Education: ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all.
- SDG 5 Gender Equality: achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls.
- SDG 6 Clean Water and Sanitation: ensure availability and sustainable management of water and sanitation for all.
- SDG 7 Affordable and Clean Energy: ensure access to affordable, reliable, sustainable, modern energy for all.
- SDG 8 Decent Work and Economic Growth: promote sustained, inclusive and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment, and decent work for all.

- SDG 9 Industry, Innovation and Infrastructure: build resilient infrastructure, promote inclusive and sustainable industrialisation, and foster innovation.
- SDG 10 Reduced Inequalities: reduce income inequality within and among countries.
- SDG 11 Sustainable Cities and Communities: make cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient, and sustainable.
- SDG 12 Responsible Consumption and Production: ensure sustainable consumption and production patterns.
- SDG 13 Climate Action: take urgent action to combat climate change and its impacts by regulating emissions and promoting developments in renewable energy.
- SDG 14 Life below Water: conserve and sustainably use the oceans, seas, and marine resources for sustainable development.
- SDG 15 Life on Land: protect, restore, and promote sustainable use of terrestrial ecosystems, sustainably manage forests, combat desertification, and halt and reverse land degradation and halt biodiversity loss.
- SDG 16 Peace, Justice, and Strong Institutions: promote peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, provide access to justice for all and build effective, accountable, and inclusive institutions at all levels.
- SDG 17 Partnerships for the Goals: strengthen the means of implementation and revitalise the global partnership for sustainable development.

(United Nations, 2015)

The SDGs are interrelated. In an increasingly urbanised world, many of the development goals are quintessentially urban development goals. The NUA accelerates the SDGs, particularly SDG 11 Sustainable Cities and Communities, which is intrinsically linked to the other SDGs. The synergies between the two agreements and among the SDGs underscore that the efforts to achieve the SDGs and the NUA must work together. The majority of the 17 SDGs feature explicit urban targets. The targets of SDG 11 also have clear linkages to other SDGs (Table 1.2). The NUA focuses on the SDGs within an urban context and outlines core dimensions of sustainability and means of implementation to achieve them (Table 1.3).

Securing agreement on SDG 11 with an urban focus and the resultant NUA was not an easy task. It has involved significant political battles across differing interests and parts of the world; the fruition of them represented a major triumph, fundamentally reshaping the urban development discourse into the future (Watson, 2016). They continue to be hot topics of discussions and debates, as well as battlegrounds of competing interests and stances. Readings, responses, progress, and prospects of them differ by contexts and localities. The goals and targets conveyed in them are 'far-reaching, ambitious and socially progressive' (Watson, 2016, p. 447). One could also easily read them as utopian. They are hard to achieve—if not impossible at all—given the explicit mismatch between aspirations and implementations, the tight timeframe of achieving them in only one and half decades when they were agreed, and dependence on major shifts in global governance and urban development paradigms. But the greatest triumph of having them agreed by the international community was to establish a new urban development discourse for debates, actions, policymaking, and planning.

> The New Urban Agenda provides a holistic framework for urban development that encourages the integration of all facets of sustainable development to promote equality, welfare and shared prosperity. Our cities and towns must mainstream these commit-

Table 1.2 Linkages between SDG 11 targets and other SDGs

SDG 11 targets	*Linkages to other SDGs*
11.1 By 2030, ensure access for all to adequate, safe and affordable housing and basic services and upgrade slums.	SDG 1, SDG 3, SDG 4, SDG 5, SDG 6, SDG 7, SDG 10
11.2 By 2030, provide access to safe, affordable, accessible and sustainable transport systems for all, improving road safety, notably by expanding public transport, with special attention to the needs of those in vulnerable situations, women, children, persons with disabilities and older persons.	SDG 1, SDG 2, SDG 8, SDG 9, SDG 13
11.3 By 2030, enhance inclusive and sustainable urbanization and capacity for participatory, integrated and sustainable human settlement planning and management in all countries.	SDG 16
11.4 Strengthen efforts to protect and safeguard the world's cultural and natural heritage.	SDG 4, SDG 5, SDG 10, SDG 12, SDG 13
11.5 By 2030, significantly reduce the number of deaths and the number of people affected and substantially decrease the direct economic losses relative to global gross domestic product caused by disasters, including water-related disasters, with a focus on protecting the poor and people in vulnerable situations.	SDG 6, SDG 7, SDG 13, SDG 14, SDG 15
11.6 By 2030, reduce the adverse per capita environmental impact of cities, including by paying special attention to air quality and municipal and other waste management.	SDG 6, SDG 7, SDG 13, SDG 14, SDG 15
11.7 By 2030, provide universal access to safe, inclusive and accessible, green and public spaces, in particular for women and children, older persons and persons with disabilities.	SDG 1, SDG 5, SDG 8, SDG 9
11.a Support positive economic, social and environmental links between urban, peri-urban and rural areas by strengthening national and regional development planning.	SDG 10, SDG 16
11.b By 2020, substantially increase the number of cities and human settlements adopting and implementing integrated policies and plans towards inclusion, resource efficiency, mitigation and adaptation to climate change, resilience to disasters, and develop and implement, in line with the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015–2030, holistic disaster risk management at all levels.	SDG 10, SDG 12, SDG 13, SDG 16, SDG 17
11.c Support least developed countries, including through financial and technical assistance, in building sustainable and resilient buildings utilising local materials.	SDG 10, SDG 17

Source: Adapted from UN Habitat (2020a).

> ments in their local development plans with a deliberate focus on tackling inequality, poverty and climate change, among other challenges. Sustainable urban futures remain a cornerstone of the fight to ensure that cities are better prepared for the next crisis.
>
> *(UN Habitat, 2022, p. v)*

Table 1.3 Dimensions and implementation of the New Urban Agenda

Core dimensions	Social sustainability	• Empowerment of marginalised groups • Gender equality • Planning for migrants, ethnic minorities, and persons with disabilities • Age-responsive planning
	Economic sustainability	• Job creation and livelihoods • Productivity and competitiveness
	Environmental sustainability	• Biodiversity and ecosystem conservation • Resilience and adaptation to climate change • Climate change mitigation
	Spatial sustainability	• Spatial sustainability and equity • Spatial sustainability and urban density
Means of implementation	Intervention mechanisms	• National urban policies • Land policies • Housing and slum upgrading policies • Urban legislation and regulations • Urban design • Municipal finance • Urban governance
	Hard measures for infrastructure and services	• Transport and mobility • Energy • Solid waste • Water and sanitation
	Soft measures	• Culture • Education • Health • Urban safety
	Technology and innovation	• Technology • Transportation • Construction and building technology • Mapping and spatial data

Source: Adapted from UN Habitat (2020a).

The SDGs and the NUA provide a ready discourse for approaching urban Asia. While this discourse is as encompassing as possible and is open to extension and interpretation, it could fall into a pitfall of 'reductionism' given its emergence as a 'temporally bounded moment of opportunity' (Caprotti et al., 2017, p. 375). There are always emerging and evolving forces and factors, which were not able to be fully anticipated or prepared previously. But they are forging new contexts and dynamics that are reshaping the way we approach cities in Asia and the world.

A study of Asian cities in the early 2020s would have to face several interrelated contexts, which might not be possibly or sufficiently comprehended in the mid-2010s when the SDGs and NUA came into fruition. These contexts are not all new; they are either emerging abruptly or evolving into a significant stage at the turn of the second decade of the 21st century. Among many, three of them stand out, directly impacting how we should approach urban Asia at present and in the future.

First, the timeline towards the 2030 SDGs is within one decade, and the future pathway is uncertain and challenging. 'With [less than] ten years left to achieve the SDGs, the importance of sustainable urbanization as an entry point for ensuring progress across multiple SDGs needs to be reemphasized' (UN Habitat, 2020b, p. 10). This pressing timeline raises due questions: Are the SDGs achievable in the Asian context? Is the NUA achievable for urban Asia? How do individual Asian cities fare in the new urban development discourse? The NUA and the urban realities in the region raise justified concerns in areas like urban governance, urban planning and policy, and service delivery and access for social inclusion (Dahiya & Das, 2020). The Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP) of the United Nations identified four broad areas—planning, urban resilience, smart cities, and urban finance—as the thematic pillars for pursuing sustainable urban development in the region and for assessing progress in implementing the SDGs and the NUA:

> Planning lays a foundation, resilience guards against future risk, smart cities deploy the best technology for the job and financing tools help pay for cities to achieve the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.
>
> *(United Nations, 2019, p. 40)*

COVID-19 has hindered the progress of achieving the SDGs. In Asia, the pandemic accelerated the urgent need for sustainable urban development, challenging the resources available for urban management and investment, shrinking local taxes and revenues, and exacerbating poverty (United Nations, 2022d). The implementation and monitoring of the agenda rely on the voluntary action and partnership of member countries and localities. The disruptions of global crises and the voluntary nature of participating actors cast great uncertainties on the effectiveness of delivering these advocacy initiatives and aspired goals.

However, the SDGs and the NUA, in a very broad sense, incorporate numerous Asian cities into one discourse of urban sustainability. This discourse serves both a context and a prism for examining Asian cities. Rather than benchmarking the targets and indicators of sustainable development in Asian cities, these international agreements bring them onto one dialogue debating on the state of Asian cities in and beyond urban sustainability.

Second, the globalisation process that has been intertwined with much of Asia's urbanisation seems to be at a crossroads. As far as East Asia is concerned, it has experienced at least two major waves of urbanisation—as well as rapid economic growth—since World War II. Both urbanisation and economic growth, which are mutually enabling, are integral to the globalisation process which had been developing in the post-war decades and has been accelerating since the late 20th century. The first wave of urbanisation mainly occurred in Japan and the newly industrialised economies like the Four Asian Tigers of South Korea, Taiwan, Hong Kong, and Singapore. By 1990, the urbanisation rates of Japan and South Korea had reached 77 per cent and 74 per cent, respectively (The World Bank, 2022c). The second wave has been led by China, which has increased its urbanisation rate from 20 per cent in 1980 to 61 per cent in 2020 (The World Bank, 2022c). Chapter 6 by Shahid Yusuf provides an overview of urbanisation in East Asia.

Many factors could explain the rapidity of urbanisation in East Asia and elsewhere in Asia. Globalisation is a major one: integration with the world economy and participation in the new international division of labour have concurrently industrialised and urbanised these Asian localities. Export and globalisation have been the main drivers for Asia's urban economies and thus urbanisation (UN Habitat, 2010). Asia is the world's largest regional economy: its shares in the world in several key socio-economic indicators—GDP, consumption, and middle classes—have been growing in the early 21st century; the strategic urban centres in Asia are global

urban hubs, underpinning the growth of Asia (Tonby et al., 2019). The success of leading Asian countries has set models for other countries to imitate and adapt. China's early development of export-oriented economy in the coastal cities benefited from the successful experiences of Japan and the Four Asian Tigers. Now it seems these practices are diffusing to Vietnam and other Southeast Asian countries. In the first two decades of the 21st century, Vietnam's urbanisation rate has increased from 24 per cent to 38 per cent (The World Bank, 2022c).

However, the globalisation as we have known it for half a century is changing itself. Globalism is being challenged by rising nationalism and populism, arousing observed trends and due concerns of deglobalisation involving geopolitics, trade war, decoupling of leading economies, and inward turn to economic isolationism and protectionism. There are arguments in stark contrast. One strand of arguments holds that globalisation is in retreat, in crisis, or is simply dead (Flew, 2020; *The Economist*, 2019). There is also a counterargument that these changes will be marginal rather than fundamental in nature, and the future world economy will need even more globalisation (Contractor, 2022). It is too early or hard to judge that deglobalisation will become the new paradigm. 'Asian cities can be considered crucial places for … the evolution of the role of cities in globalisation' (Bekkering et al., 2019, p. 16), as well as for the impacts of globalisation on cities. But the globalisation that has contextualised our understanding of Asia's urbanisation is shifting, presenting a new setting for comprehending and imagining Asian cities in a post-global era.

Third, the COVID-19 pandemic is setting a 'new normal' for understanding many aspects of Asian and global cities. The pandemic is still ongoing. It is integral to globalisation; it is also disrupting globalisation and reinventing globalisation. The pandemic has placed unprecedented burdens on the world economy, healthcare, and globalisation, exposing and exacerbating the vulnerability and disparities between countries (Shrestha et al., 2020). For cities, the pandemic is far more than a public health challenge. In many developing countries of Asia, the immediately observed challenging issues include inadequate urban and social infrastructure; intensified impacts on vulnerable population; ineffective information and communication technology system; urban economic crisis at the macro- and micro-levels; and strained local government planning and management (Asian Development Bank, 2020). The profound impacts of this pandemic are yet to be explored in the coming years or even decades and longer. Undoubtedly, it is the most overwhelming global crisis since World War II. It has impacted nearly every aspect of urban life: environmental quality, socio-economic impacts, urban management and governance, and transport and urban design (Sharifi & Khavarian-Garmsir, 2020). It has also tested practices and refreshed our thinking about innovation, smart cities, and sustainability. While it has disrupted the way we live and work, it seems to have also presented new opportunities for new ways of living and working. It has accelerated the practice of smart work—working anywhere, anytime—and is profoundly impacting the future of work and urban spaces (Hu, 2021). It has also aroused new opportunities of leveraging towards strategies for a circular economy (Ibn-Mohammed et al., 2021). It presents an unusual circumstance under which to observe, reflect, and imagine the post-pandemic cities in Asia. Most of all, the pandemic has enhanced a realisation of the imperative for a more just, green, and healthy urban future (UN Habitat, 2021).

There are many important contextual factors that should not be overlooked in understanding Asian cities. They include new technology and smart cites, innovation, exacerbating climate change, enlarging social inequality, and escalating challenges to liveability. These factors are incorporated into the urban sustainability discourse, and their recent trends require focused attention to reveal the latest development in Asian cities. The smart city imaginary has triggered some optimistic aspirations for creating liveable Asian cities (Susantono

& Guild, 2021). However, there remains a grey area of defining liveability: sometimes the buzziness of terms blurs a clear differentiation between aspirations for liveability or sustainability. An ostensible gap exists between aspiration and outcome; the urban reality would rebut a sweeping wish list. All these contexts—established or emerging—deserve a critical inquiry that integrates the reality and imagining of Asian cities under a structured framework to seek the essence.

Framework and approach

A conceptual framework is created to underpin the operationalisation and summarisation of the study, involving both deductive and inductive processes. This framework incorporates the aims and contexts for the study into a relational structure for observing the present and imagining the future of Asian cities (Figure 1.3). The framework integrates the current forces—sustainability, globalisation, and COVID-19—into an interconnected ambience for examining the state of Asian cities and imagining their future in post-sustainable, post-global, and post-pandemic settings. All these settings—both present and future—are further abstracted and externalised into one of change, uncertainty, and disruption that characterise a new urban age for approaching Asian cities. Both of the layers of settings are centred on the core of searching for 'Asianness'. The framework and the relationality between the constructs within it are designed in a way to ensure the structure is dynamic, interactive, and flowing, maximising its capacity of incorporating the complexity and elusiveness of the phenomenon it is applied to. This framework is enclosed enough to provide a distinct and cohesive framing for the study. It is also open enough to encourage and include the unexpected and the unconventional into the framing. This framework is utilised to introduce and guide through the study; it is also used to summarise it and draw conclusions (see Chapter 43).

There has not been a title on Asian cities like this handbook yet. A small number of collections have been produced, bearing the title of 'Asian cities' or equivalents. The emergence of a

Figure 1.3 Conceptual framework. Source: Created by the author.

small number of them in the recent decade reflects the growing scholarly interest in the subject on the one hand; on the other hand, they also reflect the challenge of undertaking the task. These titles have collectively enriched the wealth of knowledge about urban Asia. They also point out the void and direction of advancing the subject area.

The existing titles can be classified into two broad types in terms of approach and organisation:

- First, they address one umbrella and/or a set of urban themes in one Asian region. This type includes titles like *Routledge Handbook of Urbanization in Southeast Asia* (2019) and *Cities in South Asia* (2015).
- Second, they address either one umbrella theme or a set of broad themes of urban Asia, based upon a group—large or small—of selected cities/countries/regions in Asia. This type includes titles like *The Emerging Asian City* (2013), *Planning Asian Cities: Risks and Resilience* (2011), *Post-Politics and Civil Society in Asian Cities: Spaces of Depoliticisation* (2020), *Transforming Asian Cities: Intellectual Impasse, Asianizing Space, and Emerging Translocalities* (2013), and *Asian Cities: Colonial to Global* (2015).

Each of these titles, listed or unlisted here, has its focus and merits, contributing to the scholarship of urban Asia in its own way. This handbook builds upon and extends them, in approach and organisation, to offer a 'comprehensive, up-to-date, and inclusive examination' of Asian cities—one prime drive for the endeavour of this handbook as stated in the beginning of the chapter. To do so, it includes every country in every region scoped for Asia in this study. From each country, it selects at least one representative city. By doing so, this handbook does not necessarily include every Asian city, nor is it possible at all. Instead, it includes the most representative Asian cities to draw eclectic insights. It is also most inclusive of Asian cities—developed and developing, large and small, and prominent and obscure. It includes cities like Shanghai, Tokyo, Singapore, Hong Kong, and Mumbai—the sort of star cities that have attracted the most attention and have been selected by default to (mis)represent Asian cities. It also includes cities like Dili, Malé, Bandar Seri Begawan, Kabul, and Pyongyang—the overlooked or isolated cities that have attracted much less attention. These cities are of no less importance than their counterparts of global glamour. They are integral to urban Asia and are indispensable to our understanding of it. However, the claimed 'comprehensive, up-to-date, and inclusive examination' needs to be understood in a relative sense, and as a goal aspired and approached as close as possible. The handbook represents the latest effort of studying urban Asia, addressing the exclusivity of Asian cities within one geographical region or the selectivity of them in certain parts of Asia in the extant literature.

This handbook is not organised by themes; this is different from the common way of most collections of its type. It is mainly organised into parts by Asian regions, with each part comprising those representative cities—mostly capital cities—in countries within the region. This seems to sit squarely within an inductive approach to case studies. However, the commissioning and preparation of constituent chapters were guided by a general alignment to the pre-set aims and contexts. It is also open for the authors of individual chapters to develop themes and focus that are important and unique in local contexts. This openness welcomes and enables the generation of outcomes that are beyond the initial project design. Each city chapter bears the city's name as the title and uses a subtitle to illustrate the thematic focus of the chapter. Altogether, they are not a mosaic of city profiles. As outlined in Figure 1.3, they are structured under a cohesive framework of aims and contexts for studying urban Asia while maintaining a focus on local urban issues and settings. Similar representative city-focused approaches are employed in titles like *Planning Asian Cities: Risks and Resilience* (2011), *Asian*

and Pacific Cities: Development Patterns (2013), and *Directors of Urban Change in Asia* (2005). As commented earlier, these titles would have to tackle a common issue of balancing 'selectivity' and 'completeness' in representing urban Asia.

We have a group of 59 authors—most are academics, and some are practitioners with research interest—from across the world contributing the chapters of original research. They have local experience, knowledge, and expertise, as well as global engagement. The combination of both inside-out and outside-in approaches enables a complementary and balanced reading of urban Asia in the global context. As we are going to read in the subsequent chapters, the diversity of the authorship and the diversity of perspectives—conventional and unconventional—well serve the diversity and complexity of urban Asia.

Organisation and overview

The handbook is divided into six parts. Part I introduces and Part VI concludes the handbook. Four parts on each of the four Asian regions constitute the main body. Each of these main body parts contains an introductory overview chapter, followed by individual city chapters which are alphabetically sequenced.

Part I: Introduction

Part I introduces the handbook and provides overviews of several dominant issues and challenges in urban Asia. Chapter 1 sets the contextual and conceptual scenes and introduces the aims, approach, and organisation of the handbook. It stresses the timing and the importance of undertaking the study to contribute to the debates on urban Asia in both established and emerging contexts including sustainable development, globalisation at a crossroads, COVID-19, and new technology and innovation. The remaining chapters in this part address smart cities, COVID-19, and liveability, respectively, laying broad thematic structures for subsequent chapters, many of which address how these issues impact the case cities to various degrees.

Smart cities are the new urban imaginary in Asia and the world. In Chapter 2, Hoon Han examines the booming smart cities across Asia and compares the innovation and evolution of smart city programmes in several Asian countries. Han argues that technology-based smart city practices do not always translate into aspired outcomes in terms of urban equality, liveability, and sustainability. In part, this is a result of the conflict between the rich cultural diversity and rapidly urbanising economies in the Asian megacities. Smart city imaginary does not provide a panacea for contemporary urban challenges. It must be situated within local settings to seek smart urban solutions that can be technology-enabled, but cannot be technology-centric.

COVID-19 is the new dividing line of comprehending the world. Both Chapters 3 and 4 concern the impacts of COVID-19 on Asian cities, with different focuses and from complementary perspectives, however. In Chapter 3, Kh Md Nahiduzzaman and Md Moynul Ahsan critically review the planning, development, and management responses to the pandemic in several major Asian cities—the formal top-down interventionist approach. In Chapter 4, Amanda Achmadi and Sidh Sintusingha reflect on the informal bottom-up adaptative approach to the pandemic, drawing upon observations and experiences in Indonesia and Thailand. The complementarity of the approaches in the two chapters sheds light on the diverse efforts of achieving resilience in response to the pandemic in Asian cities with mixed results. The impacts of and responses to COVID-19 are a major theme in the subsequent chapters.

Liveability is a common aspiration for Asian cities, but its conceptualisation and approaches differ by contexts. In Chapter 5, Bambang Susantono, Ramola Naik Singru, and Lara Arjan draw observations on making liveable cities in Asia and the Pacific largely from the urban development projects of the Asian Development Bank. Despite some grey areas in conceptualisation, liveable cities are essentially sustainable cities. In a dialogue with the previous Chapters 2–4, Chapter 5 develops several initial recommendations on policy and research for liveable cities in the region in the new contexts of both COVID-19 and rising smart cities.

Part II: East Asian cities

East Asian cities have attracted probably the most interest and attention among Asian regions, for the rapid urbanisation and economic growth there. However, urban East Asia is more than a story of 'growth', as commonly perceived. Within East Asia, both urban scholarship and urban development are unbalanced: the 'success' stories of cities in Japan, South Korea, and China often overshadow the urban transformations in North Korea and Mongolia and efforts of understanding them. Further, the 'success' stories are often read as ones of 'growth' at the expense of the complexity and multi-dimensionality of them. Behind the 'success' stories are shared challenges of achieving sustainable development; 'growth', while significantly enhancing socio-economic standards, is also extravagating the sustainability challenge. This part retells a story of the East Asian cities that is beyond 'growth'. In Chapter 6, Shahid Yusuf provides an overview of East Asia's rapid urbanisation and challenges of deindustrialisation, digital disruption, and climate change. Yusuf sharply observes that East Asian cities have been slow to rise to these challenges, despite rapid growth of them. Addressing none of these challenges will be easy, however. They call for hard choices and actions.

China is a focal centre of contemporary urbanisation as well as urban challenges, in Asia and the world. Four Chinese cities—Hong Kong, Taipei, Shanghai, and Xi'an—are included here; they have different historical and political settings and face different urban development issues. In Chapter 7 on Hong Kong, Mee Kam Ng, Tsz Chun Yeung, Chun Hei Cheng, and Nok Yin Ma apply the NUA principles to critically analyse the city's spatial forms and recent development strategies. They are doubtful that the development approach will transform the city's current 'fate'. Rather, they advocate a strategy that is more aligned with the NUA to change the city's spatial forms into settlements that can optimise their cultural and natural heritages and lead to more sustainable communities for human well-being and flourishing. In Chapter 11 on Taipei, Chia-Huang Wang employs a similar critical approach to the city's grand vision of building a liveable and sustainable city. Wang raises several cardinal challenges such as energy policies by the ruling party that increase greenhouse gases, high housing price and lack of social housing, and partisan politics, which together might undermine the city's substantiality vision. On the contrary, the two chapters on the mainland cities—Shanghai and Xi'an—tend to be more sympathetic towards their growth agendas. In Chapter 10 on Shanghai, Richard Hu presents the city's ambitious aspiration for global leadership through transformative metropolitan planning, in which sustainability is both a vision and an instrument for its globality. Chapter 14 on Xi'an presents another Chinese case of aspirating for global city in the country's less developed western region. In this chapter, Xiangming Chen and Ziming Li examine the roles of the local state, market, and favourable location in launching the oldest Chinese capital city onto a new path and pattern of development. Xi'an's resurgence into a global city has been powered by freight train logistics, manufacturing revival, and consumption boom.

Both Tokyo and Seoul are East Asia's leading global cities, and they are the most frequently cited cases in the 'success' stories about the region. In Chapter 9, Yu-Min Joo traces Seoul's

trajectory from an aspiring global city to a leading global city in vision, planning, and action. Seoul is now sharing and diffusing its global city experiences elsewhere along with its self-developmental motivations and global outreach. In Chapter 12 on Tokyo, Carola Hein takes a historical lens to the city's resilience, exploring its transformative experiences of surviving disasters through adaptative strategies. Tokyo, in its role as Asia's prime global city, has set models for other cities including its East Asian neighbours like Seoul and Shanghai. This chapter draws out its lessons for cities in Asia and worldwide in terms of employing adaptive strategies to nurture resilience and sustainable development.

Global forces and global–local interactions do not just influence urban planning and development of global cities like Seoul, Shanghai, and Tokyo. They also occur in less prominent cities, in different senses, however. In Chapter 8 on Pyongyang, Pavel P. Em makes an alternative urban narrative about East Asian cities. Em employs an unusual angle to investigate how marketisation—an alien perception of the most enclosed capital—has instigated a metamorphosis transforming it into a post-socialist city. In Chapter 13 on Ulaanbaatar, Aldarsaikhan Tuvshinbat, Raven Anderson, and Michael Hooper present the collision between international plans and local preferences over densification. This is a vivid case of the disjoining between international expertise and local realities in planning approaches and tools in much of the developing Asia. This case bolsters the importance of consensus building and local engagement in adapting international practices to local settings.

Part III: South Asian cities

Urban South Asia is less prominent—in terms of urbanisation rate—but is more diverse or complicated than its eastern neighbour region. Globalisation, colonial and post-colonial transition, wealth, power, poverty, and environmental vulnerability are all working to position the uniqueness of urbanisation in the region—both its growth and challenges. Several megacities are globally leading in terms of sizes, urban characteristics, and challenges. Informalisation is an entrenched perception of many cities in South Asia. However, informalisation itself is a contested reading of urban South Asia: it is criticised as the source of urban problems, calling for formal urban interventions; it is also celebrated as the solution to urban problems, contributing to urban dynamism. In Chapter 15, Johannes Dragsbaek Schmidt provides an overview of the urban challenges in South Asia. Schmidt explores the trends of informatisation in light of the SDGs and the disruptions of COVID-19 to underline the problems pertinent to urban South Asia: infrastructure, services, economy, housing, and ecology.

India dominates urban South Asia for the sizes, growth, and challenges of its cities. For this reason, two Indian cities—Delhi and Mumbai—are included, illustrating Indian urbanism from related and somewhat complementary perspectives. In Chapter 17 on Delhi—one of the world's biggest and most chaotic megacities, Pilar Maria Guerrieri explores the independent nuclei structure that characterises the megacity and its functioning at the neighbourhood level, on a much more minute scale—an often neglected, decisive aspect in understanding the capital's identity and the unique soul of Indian urbanism. Mumbai offers another strong manifestation of Indian urbanism. In Chapter 23, Matias Echanove and Rahul Srivastava challenge the conventional 'slum' notion of Mumbai—a notion of probably much urban South Asia as well. Instead, they posit 'mess is more' and argue that: Mumbai's urbanism is misunderstood by failing to acknowledge its complex history; Mumbai has grown in an incremental and homegrown way like many urban settlements. Both chapters reveal certain aspects of authentic Indian urbanism and challenge some conventional 'outside' reading of Indian cities.

Growing megacities in South Asia are confronting similar sustainability changes to cities elsewhere. They suffer from governance and policy failures, and they indicate urgent imperatives for planning and development transformation. Chapter 18 concerns the fast-growing megacity, Dhaka. In this chapter, Shilpi Roy finds that urban policies and interventions have been ineffective at stemming and managing the city's rapid, haphazard, unstable, and unregulated urban growth. Roy calls for a shift in philosophical preferences that would demonstrate the state's willingness to ensure distributive justice of economic growth, commitment to sustainable urban growth, and a people-centred development approach that would make Dhaka a liveable and inclusive city. Chapter 20 on Karachi documents and analyses the city's transformations during the post-independence period from an institutional perspective. In the chapter, Noman Ahmed includes a diversity of cases and examples illustrating weak urban governance, fragile political process, the rise of various interest groups, and informal processes that inflict the city's management. Chapter 21 on Kathmandu Valley presents another case of problematic urban planning and chaotic urban development. In the chapter, Rajjan Chitrakar offers insights into the drawbacks of the current process of urbanisation and the barriers to a healthy and sustainable city, and points out a need for renewed urban planning and policy measures.

South Asian urbanism takes different forms; urban failures occur in different contexts. In Chapter 16 on Colombo, Nihal Perera traces the city's colonial and post-colonial transition—a salient theme of many transformative Asian cities—towards an indigenous kleptocratic city. Perera observes that the post-colonial authorities have made little progress; instead, the city's subjects have incrementally transformed it by living in it and have shown a high level of connectivity. In Chapter 19 on Kabul, Pietro Calogero goes beyond the global urban imaginary of the city as a site of ongoing and recurring catastrophes. Rather, Calogero integrates onsite experience and distant observation to argue that Kabul is an 'ordinary city' that is representative of an urbanism that we did not expect in the early 21st century.

Less prominent cities may convey a fresher image of urban South Asia. In Chapter 22 on Malé, Mariyam Zulfa examines the decentralisation strategy of the densest island capital of the archipelagic country of Maldives. This unique city has not received due attention in urban studies in both Asian and global contexts. Chapter 24 on Thimphu presents an urban image opposite to the other (South) Asian cities: a sustainable, convivial, peaceful, happy, and eco-friendly city. In the chapter, Leishipem Khamrang discusses the Bhutanese notion of happiness—Gross National Happiness—and unfolds the transformative process of Thimphu city which is deemed essential for implementing the SDGs at the local level.

Part IV: Southeast Asian cities

Southeast Asia has the largest number of member countries among Asian regions. Thus, this part contains more case cities than other parts. Diversity characterises Asian cities, Southeast Asian cities especially. Its vast geographical area, numerous countries and cities, unbalanced socio-economic structures, complex political systems, and diverse cultural and historical settings challenge any effort of organising them into one urban narrative. Southeast Asian cities share the salient attributes with cities in other Asian regions, like the 'growth' in East Asia and the 'informalisation' in South Asia. They also have their own contesting urban issues that define and constantly redefine Southeast Asian urbanism. In Chapter 25 on an overview of Southeast Asian cities, Rita Padawangi skilfully canvasses Southeast Asian cities under one umbrella theme—the imbalances of urban development. Padawangi discusses a suite of issues—inequalities, migration, diversity, mega-urban regions, peri-urbanisation, the problematic formal–informal dichotomy, technologisation, and participatory planning—in Southeast

Asia's cities. Through the lens of those socially and economically marginal, Padawangi argues that each of these issues is remindful of contentious urban spaces in Southeast Asia. The remaining chapters in this part can be broadly classified into three themes about Southeast Asian cities: transformative growth, contested placemaking, and planning for sustainability and inclusion. In the following, the chapters are grouped and discussed by these themes.

First, transformative growth has been driven by both endogenous development imperatives and exogenous factors—foreign investment, geostrategic influence, and urbanism diffusion—in Southeast Asian cities. In Chapter 26 on Bandar Seri Begawan, Victor K. S. Ong explains how the capital of Brunei spearheads the oil-rich nation's economic diversification through administering economic development strategies and pursuing foreign investments for priority business sectors. The chapter critically examines the oil-rich Sultanate's unfolding contrasts, conflicts, and contradictions in its economic strategy, tourism industry, and governance, respectively. In Chapter 29 on Ho Chi Minh City, Du Huynh outlines a binary of urban futures for the city—the successful Seoul and Shanghai or the problematic Jakarta and Manila—all drawing upon examples of other Asian cities. Huynh casts doubts on the successful scenario and predicts the city's likely path dependence in urban planning and development towards an old undesired outcome. In Chapter 31 on Kuala Lumpur, Keng-Khoon Ng and Tim Bunnell provide a critical analysis of urban (re)development in the politically tumultuous years leading up to 2020 in Malaysia and the pandemic-dominated period since. They contend that the intersection of political and pandemic-related developments has inspired more people-centric actions and ideas for rethinking urban futures. The development of Phnom Penh, the capital city of Cambodia, has depended strongly on Western development and technical aid from the beginning of the 1990s. In Chapter 33 on Phnom Penh, Gabriel Fauveaud and Dolorès Bertrais observe what they call 'post-dependency metropolisation', a new phase and paradigm shift of urban development since the 2010s that is evolving into a more complex system of resources exploitation, capital formation and circulation, and multilateral politico-economic cooperation at both regional and international levels. Much of the growth aspiration in Southeast Asia has been inspired by the 'success' stories of their East Asian counterparts or regional leading city-state Singapore. However, it is the local settings and endogenous factors that would determine if the aspiration would be achieved in the end.

Second, contested placemaking has taken a diversity of manifestations in urban Southeast Asia. This theme often requires non-conventional approaches to delve into nuanced insights that would not be otherwise sufficiently uncovered in paradigms for conventional urbanism. In Chapter 27 on Bangkok, Ross King reads the disconnect between urban life and the real urban situation in the city from a juxtaposition of creative disorder and military imagination. Further, the city is dependent on imported fossil fuels and is flood-prone, raising justified questions and concerns of its sustainability. In Chapter 28 on Dili, a fast-evolving post-conflict city, Joana de Mesquita Lima and João Pedro Costa address public space as a missing element in the development of the city, presenting its absence as a hurdle towards development and supporting planning and creating space for community-led processes. In Chapter 36 on Yangon, Giovanna Astolfo focuses on displacement urbanism, engaging with the housing provisions in the marginal new towns, looking at multiple acts of reterritorialisation as feminist spatial practices at the urban margin, and showing how women collectives have created a housing infrastructure based on provisionality and care. Contested placemaking is intrinsic to the urban world. It is not exclusively manifest in urban Southeast Asia. One focal illustration of these cases is the relationality in the contestations—top-down and bottom-up, formality and informality, centrality and marginality, and conventional and non-conventional—that interact, conflict, and transform.

Third, the diversity of Southeast Asian cities is enriching approaches to sustainable planning and development to achieve resilience and inclusion, with mixed outcomes although. Jakarta and its surrounding districts and cities, commonly referred to as Jabodetabek, is the second most populous megacity region in the world. In Chapter 30 on Jakarta, Christopher Silver offers both a historical and a contemporary panorama of its urbanisation, aspiration, challenges, and governance system, and outlines a future of towers in suburbs in seeking a sustainable megacity region. Manila is another Southeast Asian city prone to climate and disaster risks. In Chapter 32 on Manila, Emma Porio and Justin See illustrate an initiative of adopting resilience-informed frameworks and tools, integrating the social development goals into the resilience agenda, and addressing the dual crises of climate change and social inequality. In Chapter 34 on Singapore, Belinda Yuen interrogates the city's planning and remaking of local neighbourhoods for healthy ageing in place, and discusses how senior-friendly housing, spatial accessibility, and social connectivity are being pivoted towards age-inclusive infrastructure and city. Vientiane presents a case of the 'least developed' city. In Chapter 35 on Vientiane, Thanousorn Vongpraseuth introduces the government's response to the dilemma of achieving both development and sustainability through an emerging vision of sustainable urban development and modernisation. Vongpraseuth traces an evolving regime of master planning and consequent policies and practices and points out their limitations.

Part V: Central Asian cities

Central Asian cities are starting to receive due attention in the studies of urban Asia. Compared with the diversity of cities in other Asian regions, Central Asian cities share more among themselves for their common Soviet history and intersecting Eurasian geography, history, and culture. But each Central Asian country has its own cultural and national identity, and their post-Soviet experiences converge and diverge. This part collects chapters on major Central Asian cities, revealing their commonalities and differences in urbanities, identities, and planning and development approaches. In Chapter 37, Madina Junussova, Saniya Soltybayeva, and Rameesha Khan provide an overview—probably the first effort of its type—of urban Central Asia, including urban development and governance challenges, applied reforms, and their impacts on urban planning and residents' satisfaction with contemporary urban living. They suggest that Central Asian national governments could improve urban development by implementing adequate administrative and fiscal decentralisation reforms, and by supplying city governments with resources and capacities to address development challenges. They advocate bottom-up and integrated planning for sustainable urban development through empowering city governments.

The seek for 'Asianness' is probably one of the most outstanding marks on urban transformations in Central Asia. The seek has to deal with the decolonisation of the Soviet legacies and the drive for modernisation in the new global and regional geopolitical and economic contexts. In Chapter 38 on Almaty, Henryk Alff and Wladimir Sgibnev trace the transformation of the city since independence—the top-down spatial reorderings and the underlying modernisation agendas that involve urban-level innovations in re-negotiations and clashes with Soviet legacies. They offer a critical analysis of unequal spatial development and sustainability, public transport system reforms, and Eurasian connections in the city. In Chapter 39 on Ashgabat, Slavomír Horák employs an architectural lens to view the city's post-Soviet transformation: the architecture of Ashgabat is an amalgam of presidential visions of the city—inspired by other Asian metropolises—and the architects' attempts to encapsulate these visions and present them to the president for the purpose of promoting business or simply obtaining the approval of the president. In Chapter 40 on Bishkek, Emil Nasritdinov chronicles the

evolution of and searches for 'Asianness' in the city. Despite being marginalised in the pre-independence eras, the city's 'Asianness' has been slowly coming back, reclaiming its urban presence and increasing its right to and centrality in the city in the last two decades.

In Chapter 41 on Dushanbe, Tahmina Inoyatova investigates the city's recent transformation and explores the relationship between urban space, nationalism, neoliberalism, decolonisation, and identity in Central Asia. Dushanbe is increasingly losing its Soviet identity in a strive for a new national identity and a more contemporary globalised urban image. This chapter addresses several significant aspects of Dushanbe's urban transformation. Situated in the context of global, regional, and local processes, the urban transformation serves as a crucial lens to study emerging transformations and changing identities and complex power relations in the nation and in the region. Different from the preceding chapters that have a common thematic focus on post-Soviet urban transformation in Central Asian cities, in Chapter 42 on Tashkent, Farrukh Irnazarov and Madina Junussova concern the city's economic growth and transformation by aspiring for an entrepreneurship and innovation hub. The chapter directly addresses the transformation and imperative for Central Asian cities in the global and regional contexts of increasing competition between countries through their urban centres.

Colonial and post-colonial transition could bring Central Asian cities into a dialogue with cities in other Asian regions in a very broad sense. But the historical contexts and post-colonial experiences in Central Asia are fundamentally different from those post-colonial cities in other Asian regions. The Eurasian connections—in both cultural and geographical senses—differentiate and define much of the uniqueness of urban transformation in Central Asia. There are significant external factors at play that are influencing the modernisation drive and self-identity in the region. These include the rise of China and the spillover of its economic prowess and political influence, traditional links and present proximity with Russia, and the escalating geopolitical confrontation and conflict (e.g., Russia's invasion into Ukraine and the West's eastward outreach). Central Asian cities have been Eurasian connectors in history; this geostrategic position will continue to play a significant role in shaping the future urban transformations there.

Part VI: Conclusion

The concluding Chapter 43 recapitulates the endeavour of providing a 'comprehensive, up-to-date, and inclusive examination' of Asian cities in the contexts of sustainability, globalisation, and COVID-19. It posits a quantity–quality contradiction—materialised through the relationality between quantitative growth and qualitative transformation—that confronts urban Asia and underpins many representations of Asian urban landscapes and changes. It delves into the conception of 'Asianness' and establishes an intellectual thread of Asian urbanism through the past, present, and future to capture the 'Asianness' in both the reality and imaginary of Asian cities. It revisits the extant scholarship on 'Asianising' the standpoints of and approaches to the Asian city, and extends the search for 'Asianness' in new contexts and along new directions into the second decade of the 21st century and beyond. In doing so, it refreshes the reading and imagining of post-sustainable, post-global, and post-pandemic Asian city in a new urban age marked by increasing change, uncertainty, and disruption.

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17

DELHI

Rethinking Indian urbanism through the capital's multi-nuclei development

Pilar Maria Guerrieri

Introduction

Delhi has been experiencing one of the fastest urban expansions globally, reaching a population that is swelling each year so much that the United Nations projects it will overtake Tokyo by 2028 (Smith, 2018). Delhi, one of the world's largest megacities, has become emblematic of the challenges the urbanising Global South faces, including housing insecurity, mounting inequality, pollution, and congestion.

Over the years, many have written about the cities of Delhi and their urban development, but often the periods analysed and the themes are the same. There are very few studies published on the first six cities of Delhi—Qila Rai Pithora, Siri, Tughlaqabad, Jahanpanah, Firozabad, and City of Sher Shah—and in most cases, they are only reconstructions by archaeologists or fantastic stories by travellers (Frykenberg, 1986; Fanshawe, 1902). The texts become numerous when it comes to Delhi's seventh Mughal city: Shahjahanabad, which still retains its urban character in its entirety. Certainly, the period about which most has been written was the colonial one, and mainly, looking at architecture, the texts focus on the intervention of the British architects Edwin Lutyens and Herbert Baker responsible for the construction of New Delhi expansion. After independence, there was again a loss of interest in writers in the city, and this gap was only partially filled in around the 1970s. The authors who have addressed the city's theme over the years are both Indian and foreign (Patil & Purnima, 1997). The latter, probably for reasons of language, has concentrated in particular on the colonial period. The study of the city's historiography clearly highlights colonialism's impact on urban memory.

Undoubtedly its multi-nuclei development is one of Delhi's most fascinating aspects. Directly from the Delhi Planning Department website, it is possible to read that

> rapid urbanisation has led to one distinctive feature in Delhi: different types of settlements. The type of settlements in Delhi are categorised in terms of civic infrastructure, types of houses, such as resettlement colonies, slum resettlement colonies, approved colonies, unauthorised-regularised colonies, unauthorised colonies, urbanised villages, JJ clusters, notified slum areas, and rural villages.
>
> *(Planning Department, 2000)*

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India's capital has been built in distinct parts, each with its own strong autonomy and character. This chapter intends to focus on these parts—the fragments of the old cities, the villages, the Mughal capital, the British capital, the independent capital, the colonies, and the megacity's latest satellite expansions—to better understand their unique nature. Many internal and external factors played a role in developing these characters, such as migrations after partition with Pakistan, migrants from rural areas, and foreign rulers' impact or economic aspirations.

Today certain parts are only archaeological remains, not alive at all, while other parts may be very much inhabited like pre-industrial settlements such as Shahajanabad or all the urban villages incorporated in the urban fabric. There are very green and open parts, such as the Lutyens zone (the area of Delhi designed by British architects during colonial rule) or the farmhouses green belt surrounding the megacity, and others incredibly dense, like the many unauthorised settlements areas.

The city presents very different ways of inhabiting the urban area; some zones are to be considered entirely urban while others still present a rural way of living despite urbanisation. Interestingly, large sections of the population, nearly 30–50 per cent in the case of Delhi, live in some squatter settlements (Planning Department, 2000). The National Commission on Urbanisation has described urbanisation in India as a process whereby the surplus population of workers from rural areas resettles in urban centres. However, urbanisation becomes a process of transfer of rural poverty to an urban environment, and it results in a concentration of rural inhabitants in pockets of urban areas and dynamics of village life transferred into the city.

Early settlements in the area: The first six cities

Little or nothing is known about the ancient origins of the city of Delhi. Historiography always tends to refer to those cities in Delhi that were founded from the year 1000 onwards (Gupta, 1981). However, archaeological excavations in the 20th century have confirmed the existence of an older urban agglomeration dating back to the first millennium BC, in the area between Feroz Shah Kotla and Humayun's tomb. The only text in which the city seems to be described for the first time is the epic poem Mahabharata. The epic poem Mahabharata is entrusted with the mythical image of the city's foundation (Kaul, 1985). This text refers to a distant time when two families, including the Pandavas, were at war. The latter had their base in a city called Indraprastha, the present Purana Qila in Delhi. It should be noted, however, that in this account, historical truth is confused with myth.

There is a great deal of uncertainty in historiography about the actual number of cities in Delhi before the construction of the still well-recognisable Shahjahanabad. Sometimes one hears talk of six, sometimes of nine, sometimes of 13 or 14 settlements (Singh, 2006). Of these, not much remains today, except for a few ruins, fragments of walls of fortifications, or isolated religious buildings, and this lack does not help historical reconstruction. The towns have been consumed by time and encompassed by the contemporary city, becoming monuments. All, however, were founded in the triangle of land between the Ridge, Raisina Hill, and the Yamuna River. According to the most accredited hypothesis, it seems that the first city was officially founded in 1052 by the Rajputs (people coming from Rajasthan) and was named Qila Rai Pitora or Lal Kot. In 1203 a Mongol horde invaded the plains of Delhi, and Sultan Ala-ud-din to protect himself founded what is called the second city of Delhi: Siri. Tughlakabad, the third city, was born out of Tughlak Shah's desire for grandeur and protection in 1300. The fourth, Jahanpanah, was founded by Muhammad Tughlaq with the intention of walling in the settlements of Lal Kot and Siri and dated 1327. The fifth date back to 1354 and is located much further north than the others, commissioned by Firoz Shah and was named Firozabad. Finally,

the last of the six is the City of Sher Shah, which dates back to 1540. The megalopolis absorbs the latter pre-colonial cities, once fortified citadels and now gigantic ruins (Sharma, 1993).

We find it reported in Gordon Risley Hearn's *The Seven Cities of Delhi*: 'Ang Pal Built Delhi in 1052' (Hearn, 2010, p. 46), the only inscription on the famous iron pillar dating back to 550 AD preserved inside the Qutb Minar complex that comes back to Delhi. It was, in fact, the king of the Rajput dynasty Anangpal Tomar, driven out of Kannauj by Mahmud, who reconsidered the banks of the Yamuna River as the site for the capital of his kingdom. The book *The Seven Cities of Delhi* refers to this urban core, Old Delhi, as the first city. It fell into the hands of the Turkish invaders in 1193, and the first new king Muhammad undertook the construction of a series of monuments, first and foremost the marvellous Qutb Minar. Twenty-seven Hindu temples were also erected during this period, making Delhi a major centre of Hindu worship. As also happened in Europe, in this period, a process began that saw the superimposition of a centralising state apparatus on the feudal political system. This attempt at centralisation was put into practice by the ruler Iltutmish, who in 1206 founded the Sultanate of Delhi, destined to last until 1526.

The Mongol threat and that of the invincible leader Genghis Khan are certainly key issues for the Sultanate. A century after its foundation, in 1303, a Mongol horde invaded the plains of Delhi, forcing Sultan Ala-ud-din Khilji to retreat with his army to Siri. Here, after the expulsion of the raiders, Ala-ud-din decided to found the second city of Delhi. Between 1307 and 1311, the Sultanate saw a remarkable expansion of its possessions, as Delhi's armies penetrated deeper and deeper into southern India until they reached the southernmost tip of the peninsula.

When Tughlak Shah ascended to the throne in 1320, being a stern old warrior, used to facing constant enemy attacks, he stated that he did not feel sufficiently protected by the walls of Old Delhi, and in order to find the desired isolation and shelter, he decided to build a third city, Tughlaqabad, perched on a promontory five miles east of Old Delhi.

The large number of people who resided, encamped, between the cities of Old Delhi and Siri had increased progressively over the years and were in a very exposed position to possible enemy attacks. For this reason, Muhammad Tughlaq, the second ruler of the Tughlaq dynasty, built walls in 1327 to connect the two settlements, Old Delhi and Siri, effectively giving rise to the fourth city of Delhi: Jahanpanah.

Firoz Shah, having just ascended the throne as Muhammad Tughlaq's successor, also decided he wanted to build his own urban settlement, and in 1354, five miles northeast of Siri, he founded his fifth city, Firozabad. The exact extent of the latter is uncertain, but it is thought that it covered part of present-day New Delhi to the south, and to the north, it reached the Ridge.

As we read in Michelguglielmo Torri's *Storia dell'India*: 'The battle of Panipat in 1526 is generally regarded as the founding date of the Mughal (or Mughal, or Mughal) Empire […]. In fact, even at Babur's death (1530), Mughal rule in northern India was far from solid' (Torri, 2007, p. 250). It was only with Humayun, Babur's successor, that Mongol power began to consolidate, and, in 1534, he started the construction of the Purana Qila fort. In 1540, having ascended to the throne by force, Sher Shah decided to build the walls of the sixth city around Purana Qila, the City of Sher Shah, which occupied only part of Firozabad.

Urban villages

In addition to the individual ancient cities that built Delhi, the villages are no less important. Indeed, in India, the city played a subordinate role to the village communities for a long time. Many of these small, concentrated urban agglomerations rise around Delhi and today, like the ruins of the six cities, form part of the urban fabric. The rapid urbanisation of Delhi has seen

the enormous conversion of rural land into urban. Delhi's rural population has decreased from 9.49 lakh in 1991 to 4.19 lakh in 2011. This pace of urbanisation has reduced the number of rural villages in Delhi from 300 in 1961 to 165 in 2001 and 112 in 2011. Urbanised villages have increased from 20 in 1961 to 135 in 2011. In 2017, 89 more villages were added to the existing urban village list (Census of India, 1971–2011). The term urban village first appeared in the Masterplan of Delhi in 1962 (Goodfriend, 1980), to be used for those villages in the urban fringe of Delhi, where the rural type of small-scale industries was to be located (Tyagi, 1982).

Historically, an intricate system of water channels, which flowed into the Yamuna River, connected these settlements. The water system was accompanied by connecting roads (Sarin, 2000). The villages, with their characteristics, are still perfectly recognisable from the size of the streets (two and a half metres wide) or the concentration of buildings. Each village is often built around a religious monument, an empty loan, or a water pond (Lewis & Karoki, 1997). In the past, the buildings were two storeys high, but today they have been raised to three or four storeys, giving the feeling to those walking in the streets that they are walking inside a house corridor. Each village is an autonomous entity defined by the Lal Dora, an administrative boundary established originally during British colonial rule. The Lal Dora denotes that the jurisdiction of the municipal authorities or the Delhi urban development rules is not applicable in toto to the village area (Ajay, 2005). In the process of urbanisation, the shift from rural to urban results in various transformations such as loss of agricultural land and adoption of different urban occupations. The agricultural labour class is the most affected by the transformation. Population in the urban villages increases due to in-migration, resulting in the residential pockets of high density, poor infrastructure, and public amenities. The daily interaction between the city and the village is observed, generating a social and economic transformation of the village community. It is interesting to see how the proximity of the metropolis, the all-pervasive effect of the television and other media has planted urban aspirations in the rural mindset leading to a partial departure from traditional values.

An interesting example is Kotla Mubarakpur, a medieval settlement classified by the Delhi Development Authority (DDA) as an urban village in 1971. In the land of Kotla Mubarakpur, there are presently five different villages Kotla, Pilanji, Khairpur, Aliganj, and Jor Bagh. The main village is Kotla, surrounded by the other four villages. The population of this settlement has been steadily increasing over five decades, but the land available for the development of the village has remained almost the same since the time it was declared urban, and most roads are still very narrow. With the rise in urbanisation around the settlement and the massive demand for rental accommodation within it, development has grown vertically (Chattopadhyay et al., 2014).

Kotla is a service provider to the city, an important factor ushering in its development. The principal occupation of the people of this village is service sector-based or self-employed. A small population sector in the village depends on the primary sector of activities. The structural condition of the building in the village is primarily permanent in nature with the highest prevalence of pucca—permanent brick mortar or concrete—structures, but still, there is a small percentage of the houses which are semi-pucca—semi-permanent in nature. The village at present does not have any temporary kutcha structure of the housing. This area has much historical importance as far as valuable monuments are concerned. Some of the tombs which date back to the Lodhi and Sayyid dynasties are Bare Khan Ka Gumbad, Chote Khan Ka Gumbad, Bhure Khan Ka Gumbad, and Kale Khan Ka Gumbad. There are two wells in the village, which are not functional at present. There is a shortage of water availability in the area as the groundwater is depleting. The sewerage pipelines were laid in 1988 in the village by the Municipal Corporation of Delhi department. The settlement has open drains running along the roadsides. It has been electrified even before 1970, and all the houses have accessibility to electricity. The

market initially at peripheral road has expanded and covered 40 per cent of the village. This kind of commercial development co-exists with adjacent residential areas. The factor that it is surrounded by two posh markets of South Ex and Defence colony has created a lot of pressure on Kotla to change from raw building materials to finished products (Expert Committee, 2007). Kotla Mubarakpur, in the south-central part of Delhi, one of the oldest developed areas, does not lack social infrastructure due to ample development in the surrounding areas.

In the transformation phase of the rural village to urban village, these settlements have lost the fundamental essence of the village, but there are still some rural characteristics left in the village, such as dairy farming, keeping cows, and selling milk. Change in the elements of the morphology has resulted in an overall change in the urban fabric. The elements such as plot size have become way smaller and fragmented. Some of the houses have still retained the system of open veranda within the plot premise. The population has grown over the decades, but the open spaces have been reduced. Moreover, many pockets of open spaces have encroached for car parking or cattle rearing. The open/vacant pockets are often being used to throw garbage, resulting in environmental degradation. The demand for and supply of housing and other services has led to uncontrolled, unplanned haphazard growth of the urban village (Planning Department, 2018). The existing planning framework has often failed to integrate the urban villages into the planned development of the adjacent fabric. Kotla Mubarakpur, like many other urban villages, such as Khirki, Chirag Delhi, Shahpur Jat, Masjid Moth, Hauz Khas (Figure 17.1), Nizamuddin, and more, is still recognisable and an isolated nucleus.

The seventh city

The seventh city is called Shahjahanabad and was built in 1648 by the penultimate great Mongol emperor Shah Jahan (Blake, 1991). The latter demolished part of the city of Firozabad and the City of Sher Shah to erect the walls of his new settlement. The area of Shahjahanabad was much larger than any of the earlier cities of the Sultans of Delhi or of any other rulers on the subcontinent. Studies (Ehlers & Krafft, 1993) have shown that the city has Indo-Islamic characteristics. The plan of Shahjahanabad reflects both Hindu and Islamic influences. It is Islamic because of the presence of the straight road, Chandni Chowk, connecting the fort with the mosque, the presence of the walls, and the division into mohallas commerce communities. It is Hindu because of the unusual mixture and coexistence of different ethnic and religious groups—non-Muslims are not ghettoised in any way—and at the same time because of the crescent shape that turns towards the river (see the descriptions in the oldest architectural treatise Vastu Shastra) and the decorations with Hindu symbols. It seems to have followed a design from Manasara Shilpa Shastra, an ancient Sanskrit treatise on architecture (Fonseca, 1971).

Shahjahanabad was a walled city, and only some of its gates still stand. The city, in many ways, has been modified by British intervention during the 19th and 20th centuries. The most notable changes in the urban pattern are the gutting near the Red Fort and those for constructing the railway station, which removed all the Mughal gardens to the north (Ehlers & Krafft, 1993). Differently from the previous archaeological six historical cities of Delhi, Shahjahanabad today retains its size, walkable nature, and urban life. Shahjahanabad's lively bazaars, irregular narrow streets, and alleyways are among the best examples of the traditional urban environment in India (Figure 17.2), characterised by a great variety of hard and soft heritage, all sorts of people and activities (Chenoy, 2004). It is a multicultural, crowded, congested, and competitive environment, where there is no formal separation of vehicles, animals and pedestrians. This historic city's continued chaotic vitality challenges the rationale underpinning mainstream Indian urban

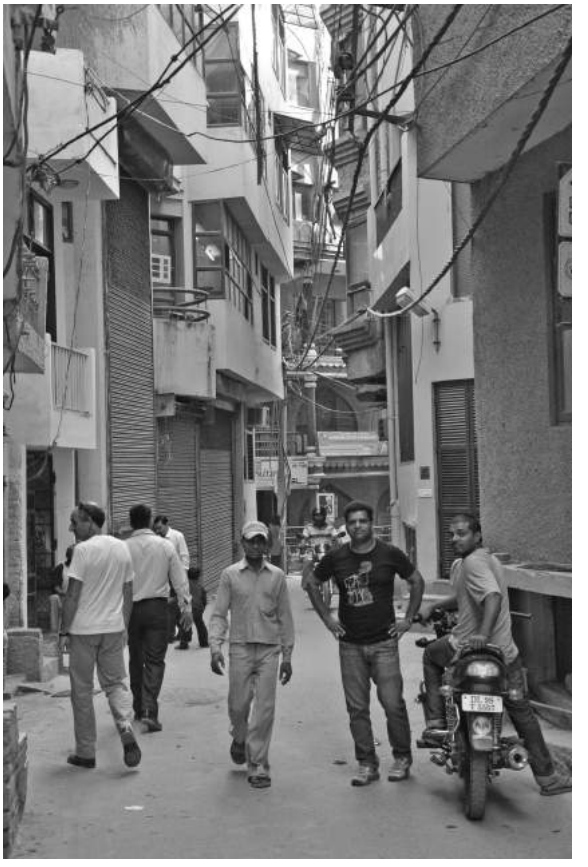

Figure 17.1 Hauz Khas urban village, Delhi. Source: Pilar M. Guerrieri.

planning. Lewis Mumford alluded to these forces when he said that dynamic, historic cities represent 'energy converted into culture' (Mumford, 1961, p. 570).

The intrinsic nature of the 'energy' enables Shahjahanabad to continue functioning as a vibrant entity even today. This 'energy' has enabled it to face the challenges of Indian urbanisation and urbanism with dignity and grace that eludes the rigidity of modern cities. The concept of jugaad, the legendary Indian capacity to find solutions to problems through ingenuity, is crucial to understand how there is a form of order despite the city's seeming chaos. Understanding this 'energy' holds the key to mediating the regeneration of degraded city centres in India and conserving particular historic cities. Unfortunately, negative perceptions of the historic city often underpin the vision of the Masterplan of Delhi, 1961, which states: 'the Old City is … a chaotic mix of incompatible land uses', and 'there is an undesirable mixing of land uses almost everywhere in the city; residential with shopping and industry; wholesale with retail; business with service industry' (Delhi Development Authority, 1961). The Delhi Development Authority and the Municipal Corporation Delhi have designated the old city a slum and thus become complicit in the wrong production of inefficiency and inequality in the city, instead of highlighting Shahjahanabad's specific characters within the framework of its particular context and not with 'universal' templates provided by modernist western planning ideology.

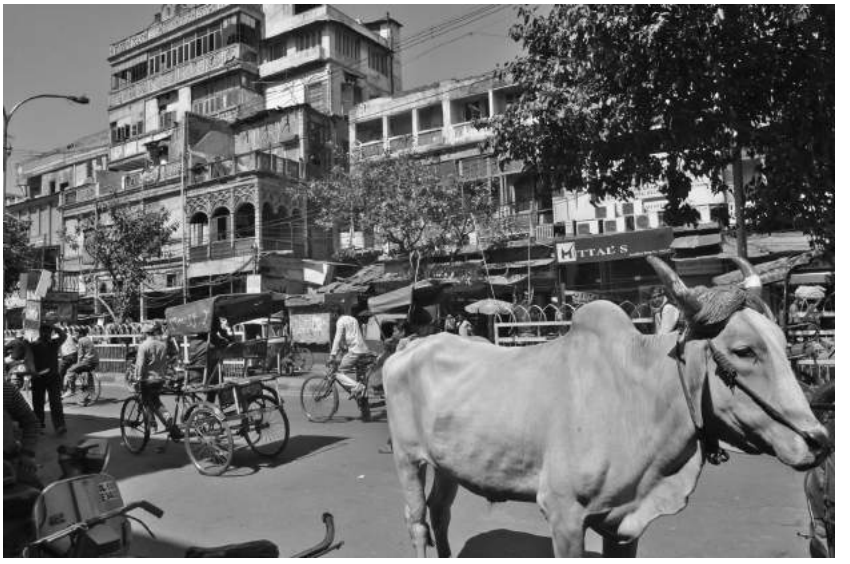

Figure 17.2 Shahjahanabad, Delhi. Source: Pilar M. Guerrieri.

New Delhi, the eighth city

Although the British arrived in the city of Delhi as early as 1803, New Delhi was only founded in 1911 with the decision to move the capital from Calcutta to Delhi. The idea was to rule the country from the interior, no longer from the edge of the Bengal coast, and to build 'Imperial Delhi' (Byron, 1931; Chakravarty, 1980; Irving, 1981). In 1911 there was uncertainty as to where the city should be located, whether north or west: in the end, the choice, for reasons of more stable terrain and the presence of Raisina Hill, was west. New Delhi has a completely different character from the congested Shahjahanabad, and the two cities are separated by a railway line. The new city is predominantly designed as a garden city, with wide avenues and green spaces, following the city's beautiful movement's principles (Chipkin, 1958; Davis, 1985). At the top of the hill is the heart of the 'Indo-Saracenic' public buildings designed by E. Lutyens and H. Baker, while at the foot of the hill is the residential area, designed by many other architects such as R. T. Russel or H. Medd or C. G. Bloomsfield (Hosagrahar, 1997). The latter was built to accommodate those who held the most prestigious government posts: an extensive area of bungalows and compounds called the Lutyens Bungalow Zone (LBZ) (Jain, 2010).

The whole town is designed according to a strict social division: the more prestigious the office, the closer to the government buildings. There are also many other residential areas, often overlooked by scholars, which are planned together with the imperial city or, from 1931, the date of its inauguration. Among the most interesting interventions are the colonies of the plotted housing types such as Karol Bagh, those entirely developed by private contractors such as Sujan Singh Park, or those designed by the Central Public Works Department (PWD) such as the colonies of Darya Gunj or Lodi Colony: all recognisable and of 'semi-modern design'. The panorama of public buildings outside Raisina Hill is equally varied and rich, ranging from St Martin's Church to Willingdon Airport. Despite the preferences of historiography, as Guerrieri's work *Negotiating Cultures* (Guerrieri, 2018) explains, it is clear that it is not possible to reduce the city of Delhi to the work of E. Lutyens and H. Baker. This British-designed city is very

recognisable in its westernised characters even nowadays, providing another clear autonomous part of the megacity of Delhi.

Greater Delhi, the ninth city

After independence and separation from Pakistan, the city of Delhi underwent a vast population increase. Practically all the British architects who had built the city up to that point returned to England; those who remained, to solve the problem of building houses for the new government employees, refugees from Pakistan, and a whole series of other newcomers to the city, was the Central PWD. Central PWD is an organisation founded by the British in the second half of the 19th century, where practically only Indian architects/engineers remained to work. There was an explosion of settlement projects for refugees from Pakistan after the country's partition (Ewing, 1969). Some government interventions try to buffer the emergency, offering two-storey houses like those in Lajpat Nagar or RK Puram, while other solutions, like Patel Nagar, are less generous, and the lot is sold without any housing. Government employees are given colonies like Sarojini Nagar that have their own recognisable architectural identity, and the first big private builders, DLF, take advantage of the moment by producing colonies like Hauz Khas Enclave or Greater Kailash. As many public buildings flourished, sometimes in revivalist style like Krishi Bhawan, sometimes modern like Transport Bhawan. In light of this explosion of construction, both residential and public, Nehru called for a commission to set up a Masterplan for the capital of the independent nation.

Thus, in 1955, work began on Ninth Delhi, the ninth city: a 'Civic Citizen Habitation' that would hold together all the previous eight cities (Cullen, 1960; Cullen, 1961; Singh, 1971). The intention of the preliminary plan, or *Greater Delhi Interim General Plan* (Delhi Development Authority, 1957), was to convert haphazard casual construction to planned and conceptualised building, to promote the health, safety, and social and moral well-being of the community, whilst also imposing limitations on the use of land. The zoning principles were intended to 'rationalise' the distribution of functions on the territory and ensure better hygienic conditions. The city was divided into functional zones, and each activity—residential, commercial, industrial, and entertainment—was governed by its own set of rules and spaces (Government of India, 1962). This master plan's principles for the city, though revised multiple times, are partly still in force today. Moreover, the basic concept of the master plan had been the development of Delhi colonies, considered the best unit for planning residential settlements. The British Delhi Improvement Trust was substituted in 1955 by the Delhi Development Authority (DDA) and became the biggest builder of houses for different income groups in the country's capital (Rao & Desai, 1965). Indeed, those in charge of urban development went on to construct autonomous, self-contained neighbourhoods (Ali, 1995). The master plan just confirms one of Delhi's most ancient traits—that of it being a polycentric urban formation. In Delhi, the neighbourhoods were no longer a British legacy, nor were they merely inspired by American culture; they had become the most crucial unit through which the megacity grew till today (Bopegamage,1957).

Satellite towns

Most of the recent expansions of Delhi occurred on the peripheries of New Delhi, as rural areas have become more urban (Bentinck, 2000). Already after 1947, The Delhi Masterplan envisaged the development of Ring Towns, viz. Ghaziabad, Faridabad, Ballabhgarh, Gurgaon, Bahadurgarh, Loni and Narela, and the Delhi Administration together with the Delhi Improvement Trust were considering building a series of Townships to house West Pakistani refugees (Singh &

Dhamija, 1989). Since India's economic liberalisation in the 1990s, real estate speculation and rising costs in urban centres have pushed growth centrifugally to the peripheries of Delhi and satellite cities outside Delhi have experienced fast urban growth (Nangia, 1976).

Interestingly, each of the Delhi peripheral satellite towns developed in different regions and are ruled by independent urban laws (NIUA, 1988). For example, Gurgaon is a district in the state of Haryana, southwest of Delhi; it is split administratively from the area of Faridabad, which is also located in the same state. While Faridabad developed more industrially, Gurgaon became more of an information technology hub. Many leading firms worldwide have decided to locate in Gurgaon, and there are 43 shopping malls, many expensive apartments and skyscrapers, 7 golf courses and luxurious five-star hotels, all realised by private developers. Gurgaon is an example of a new kind of city-making in post-liberalisation India, in which the private sector performed the major responsibilities of city planning (Figure 17.3). In Gurgaon, it is possible to witness the incredible contradiction between the private sector development, with shiny modern buildings, and poor public sector development, with a lack of infrastructure, services, and sewage (Rajagopalan & Tabarrok, 2014). Gurgaon was, and remains, one of the largest single real estate 'mega-projects' in India. In the 1970s, the Delhi Land and Finance Corporation (DLF) assembled nearly 3,500 acres of former farmland, while the company's chief executives battled with state governments to change the land ceiling laws that initially prevented large-scale real estate development (Goldstein, 2015, p. 3). Today Gurgaon is not only a bedroom community but offers employment opportunities; here, many young professionals move for work and find reasons to stay. Despite the absence of a strong government planning presence, Gurgaon has become a city of nearly 4 million in a few short decades.

Faridabad, like Noida, was conceived as two industrial satellite towns. Noida is a settlement in Uttar Pradesh initially imagined to relocate Delhi industries, and in the late 20th century, it was designated to be a new industrial town (Dupont, 2001a). It had constant tensions between local farmers, private builders, and government bodies, presenting a different set of issues and characters compared to other satellite towns. This is interestingly explored in the book of Vandana

Figure 17.3 Gurgaon development, Delhi. Source: Pilar M. Guerrieri.

Vasudevan *Urban Villager: Life in and Indian Satellite Town* (Vasudevan, 2013). The different characters of each of these peripheral urban developments from the National Capital Region of Delhi clearly suggest the idea of a continuing multi-nuclei logic through which the megacity is still growing.

Conclusion

Delhi conforms to the Multiple Nuclei Model conceived in 1945 by Chauncey D. Harris and Edward L. Ullman (Harris and Ullman, 1945, pp. 7–17): a model of urban land use in which a city grows from several independent points rather than a central one. These multi-centres developed independently and played a significant role in the city's evolution. The multi-nuclei have been the way the capital of India developed over the centuries; till today, Delhi is characterised by a multimodal quasi-continuous urban area. The recent progressive process of peri-urbanisation and urbanisation around Delhi has been following the same logic.

Interestingly, the spatial distribution in nuclei depicts social organisations and cultural relationships. The internal organisation of a city includes both physical and human aspects. Indeed, each Delhi urban area is strongly defined by its people. The development via nuclei has been defining and reflecting, simultaneously, segments of the population, and it also became a subtle system of segregation. According to how each area has been planned, it clearly resulted in more or less inclusive land. For example, the fenced bungalow areas of Lutyens Delhi are as much inhospitable as those of Gurgaon, where public services are reduced to the minimum. Otherwise, the well-defined smaller plots of neighbourhoods, such as Golf Links, Panchsheel Park, or Nizamuddin, facilitate the settlement of the middle class. The small size of houses and narrow multifunctional streets of urban villages welcomed the inhabitation by an even less wealthy segment of the population. The number of urban villages has increased from 20 in 1961 to 135 in 2011, while the number of rural villages reduced from 300 in 1961 to 112 in 2011 (Planning Department, 2019). The city development has not led to the total extinction of the city's rural scape. Delhi's rural–urban interactions are very interesting. Indeed, Delhi's multiple cities in its neighbourhood reality developed a 'village feeling', where on one side the city is generating new aspirations, and, on the other side, festivities typical of the rural areas and neighbourhood relationships representative of smaller settings are still visible. Despite the large size of the urban development, each area developed a much smaller human scale, liveable environment.

The urban pattern structure and its physical characteristics have defined social and cultural aspects, determining a natural segregation process. The economic parameter is just one that can be taken into consideration. Other relevant elements that define these areas are religion, type of employment, and similarities in terms of where people are coming from in India, such as Kerala or Punjab.

Even though Delhi has urban and regional planning policies, it has often been criticised for being unplanned and for all the contradictions and discrepancies between the planner's vision and the actual development of the metropolitan area. Its free and organic evolution clearly emphasised its cultural and social diversities, making Delhi, as much as other Indian urban environments, a fascinating example of Indian urbanisation.

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