

The Production of Alternative Urban Spaces

Alternative urban spaces across civic, private, and public spheres emerge in response to the great challenges that urban actors are currently confronted with. Labour markets are changing rapidly, the availability of affordable housing is under intensifying pressure, and public spaces have become battlegrounds of urban politics.

This edited collection brings together contributors in order to spark an international dialogue about the production of alternative urban spaces through a threefold exploration of alternative spaces of work, dwelling, and public life. Seeking out and examining existing alternative urban spaces, the authors identify the elements that provide opportunities to create radically different futures for the world's urban spaces. This volume is the culmination of an international search for alternative practices to dominant modes of capitalist urbanisation, bringing together interdisciplinary, empirically grounded chapters from hot spots in disparate cities around the world.

Offering a multidisciplinary perspective, *The Production of Alternative Urban Spaces* will be of great interest to academics working across the fields of urban sociology, human geography, anthropology, political science, and urban planning. It will also be indispensable to any postgraduate students engaged in urban and regional studies.

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An International Dialogue

**Edited by Jens Kaae Fisker,
Letizia Chiappini, Lee Pugalis
and Antonella Bruzzese**

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1 Conceptualising the production of alternative urban spaces

Jens Kaae Fisker, Letizia Chiappini, Lee Pugalis, and Antonella Bruzzese

Introduction

In October 2016 a broad range of representatives and stakeholders convened in Quito for the United Nations' Habitat III conference to create and adopt a New Urban Agenda, signalling their collective commitment to the initiation of no less than an urban paradigm shift. Full of sweeping declarations, the New Urban Agenda promises people-centred efforts that empower 'all individuals and communities while enabling their full and meaningful participation' while also 'promoting equally the shared opportunities and benefits that urbanization can offer and that enable all inhabitants, whether living in formal or informal settlements, to lead decent, dignified and rewarding lives and to achieve their full human potential' (United Nations, 2017: 7). Crucially, the declaration also acknowledges that current urban development trajectories do not generally point in this direction, hence the perceived need for a paradigm shift.

For us, the New Urban Agenda embodies at the same time a moment of hope and concern. On the hopeful side, it reaffirms the urgent need for a radical change of direction and amplifies this message by giving it a global and multi-faceted voice. The participation of an unprecedented breadth of urban stakeholders, including representatives of the least privileged of urban inhabitants, has made its mark on a declaration text that does not shy away from the affirmation that what ultimately matters most is the lived lives of urban dwellers and the future of the planet as our shared space of habitation. The text makes it clear that no other priority should be allowed to trump this, and even endorses the enshrinement in urban policy and legislation of the right to the city:

We share a vision of cities for all, referring to the equal use and enjoyment of cities and human settlements, seeking to promote inclusivity and ensure that all inhabitants, of present and future generations, without discrimination of any kind, are able to inhabit and produce just, safe, healthy, accessible, affordable, resilient and sustainable cities and human settlements to foster prosperity and quality of life for all. We note the efforts of some

national and local governments to enshrine this vision, referred to as ‘the right to the city’, in their legislation, political declarations and charters.

(United Nations, 2017: 3)

We take heart from the recognition that things will need to change radically and from the endorsement of the right to the city as an indispensable ingredient in urban development going forward. But we also sense a worrying discord between the contents of the declaration and the actual urban realities we observe around us, both in our own everyday urban lives and as reflected in urban scholarship from around the world. This reminds us of the fact that lofty declarations are relatively easy to make compared to the immense difficulties of implementing them. We also note that, while the New Urban Agenda reinforces the view that cities are for people, it sidesteps the arguable corollary that they cannot simultaneously be for profit (Brenner et al., 2009). Instead it seemingly harbours the old belief that cities can function as human habitats and capitalist growth machines at the same time without detrimental implications for the former.

In this book we have sought to harness these mixed feelings of hope and concern in the pursuit of constructive and evidence-based scholarly visions of other ways forward in our collective production of urban space. Our concern equips us with a sense of urgency and reminds us continually that change does not happen by itself. Our hope reminds us that no effort is futile, even if it seems diminutive and inconsequential in the present moment. By focusing on the production of alternative urban spaces we have specifically sought out ‘spaces of hope’ (Harvey, 2000), but in every case we have been careful to address both sides of the proverbial coin by attending critically to the ways in which hope can so easily be turned to despair (and, hopefully, back again). In *Spaces of Hope*, David Harvey suggested usefully that:

The task is . . . to define an alternative, not in terms of some static spatial form or even of some perfected emancipatory process. The task is to pull together a spatiotemporal utopianism – a dialectical utopianism – that is rooted in our present possibilities at the same time as it points towards different trajectories for human uneven geographical developments.

(Harvey, 2000: 196)

By seeking out already existing alternative urban spaces, however imperfect and ambiguous they may be, our efforts in this book fall decidedly on the side of the present possibilities, identifying at least some of the seeds of change which potentially can be nurtured into broader trajectories towards radically different urban futures. This does not imply a rejection on our part of that other, utopian, side of the coin. We simply direct our efforts towards the teasing out of present possibilities from current realities, asking always if a wider transformative potential is present instead of simply praising the alternative for being alternative. Assessing that potential requires some utopian

sense of what alternative urban futures might look like, but it is not our primary purpose here to develop those ideas. Instead we focus on the present-day urban realities from which they too will have to be realised.

This introductory chapter sets out key conceptual markers which are useful to keep in mind when reading the eleven empirically grounded chapters that follow. We seek to provide a shared point of departure in the form of an opening statement from which a cross-disciplinary and international dialogue can proceed and to which it can return. Three simple questions that all pertain to the title of the book provide our impetus: what do we mean by 'alternative'? What do we mean by 'urban'? And what do we mean by the production of spaces that are simultaneously alternative and urban? The answers loosely frame the subsequent chapters, but they are deliberately non-restrictive, necessarily partial, and ultimately open to discussion and contestation. Our aim is to chart alternative urban becomings in heterogeneous spatio-temporal conjunctures and to stage an open-minded dialogue between them. This is only possible if we eschew the temptation to set prohibitive boundaries. To the extent that the book can be accurately located in the academic landscape, its primary dwelling place is the field of urban studies. But it is hardly a sedentary text; it has many secondary homes and also makes explorative excursions from which it returns to look at its origins with fresh eyes. As such it attempts to embody the cross-disciplinary spirit of urban studies by acknowledging from the outset that its object of study cannot be adequately grasped from within the confines of any one academic discipline or, indeed, from any one point of view.

The current chapter follows a simple two-part structure. First, we consider the three questions posed above in a section that aims to clarify what we mean by the production of alternative urban spaces. Second, we use the conceptual markers thus arrived at to outline a set of guiding principles that serve to sharpen the focus of our empirical gaze. In this second part of the chapter we also introduce each of the three thematic parts that organise the book: (1) spaces of work, exchange, and consumption; (2) spaces of dwelling; and (3) spaces of public life. Individual chapters are briefly introduced along with an attempt at positioning each part vis-à-vis existing urban literature. Chapter findings, however, are not considered here but are thoroughly covered in Chapter 13, which both revisits each of the three themes and highlights how the chapters have also broken various other ground.

What is an alternative urban space and how is it produced?

We begin quite simply by attending in turn to each element of this composite term: alternatives, the urban, and the production of space. Guided by a principle of openness, the conceptions outlined below are deployed to engender elaboration, reinterpretation, and critique. As such they comprise what Bob Jessop (2008) has called abstract-simple entry points from which concrete-complex accounts and analyses can proceed. While the book as a whole cannot claim to be a fully fledged instance of the 'strategic-relational approach', we do

find its epistemological principles useful for framing the kind of translocal dialogue that we seek: ‘Rather than seeking to resolve concrete–complex issues of practical action in specific conjunctures through abstract epistemological or methodological fiat, the “strategic–relational approach” leaves these issues under-determined on an abstract–simple level and permits their resolution through appropriately detailed conjunctural analysis’ (Jessop, 1996: 127).

The following reflections and the conceptual markers they engender are all located at the abstract–simple level, but it is only through the conjunctural analyses conducted in the empirical chapters that concrete–complex accounts can be completed. The empirical exercise, to be sure, is not one of making findings ‘fit’ within rigid abstract frameworks, but can better be described as a movement beyond, acknowledging that to move anywhere it is necessary to start from somewhere. Our conceptual markers simply locate that somewhere and sketch possible directions of travel. The travelling itself takes place in subsequent chapters.

Alternatives: difference, possibility, and otherness

To articulate something as ‘alternative’ necessarily involves an assertion of difference in relation to something else. It also typically implies some kind of dissatisfaction with the present situation and an impetus to explore and demonstrate other ways forward. Assuredly, our mission in this book is not to somehow figure out what *the* alternative is. On the contrary, we seek, first, to identify and elucidate some of the various openings towards alternative urban futures that appear in current conjunctures, and second, to document and analyse the efforts undertaken to generate and utilise such openings. As to the exact nature of alternatives, we retain an agnostic and open-ended perspective which is nevertheless grounded in existing work on difference, possibility, and otherness.

The social sciences in general, and urban studies in particular, have produced numerous fields and traditions in which difference, otherness, and alternatives have been explored both theoretically and empirically. While we cannot do justice to the full breadth and depth of such work here, there is merit in outlining the most pertinent insights. Across a number of fields (e.g. subaltern and post-colonial studies, feminist and post-modern geographies) scholars have consistently and convincingly pointed out how academic discourse, even in its most critical guises, has often worked to produce monolithic and totalising world views that leave little if any room for difference and severely limit the space of political possibility within which (new and old) alternatives can emerge and come into view (e.g. Gibson-Graham, 1996). Post-colonial writers in particular have rigorously exposed the invariably partial and geographically situated origins of conceptual frameworks masquerading as universal and all-encompassing. Whereas the ills of eurocentrism, capitalocentrism, and other ‘centrism’ are by now widely acknowledged, their various symptoms have by no means been eliminated. The basic task of rendering

difference, otherness, and the possibility of alternatives visible therefore remains an important one.

Crucial as they are for ‘messing with the project’ (Katz, 2006), such interventions should not be used as excuses for rejecting out of hand any old approach to scholarship that aims ultimately at grasping totalities. As scholars such as Henri Lefebvre and Edward Soja have forcibly demonstrated, it is possible to combine a sophisticated attentiveness and sensibility to difference, plurality, and indeterminacy without losing sight of the various totalities that emerge from the messy jumble of our world(s). One such totality is of course capitalism, and even if one takes an open stance towards the contingent hegemonies in relation to which urban alternatives are posed, it would be highly surprising if capitalism turned out to play no part at all in their (re)production. In the current day and age, we can point more precisely to the geohistorically variegated, evolving, and mutating processes of neoliberalisation as co-constitutive elements of contingent and localised hegemonic formations across the globe. We can, and must, do so without stipulating either that hegemony is always and only neoliberal (and capitalist) or that neoliberalism is somehow more foundational in constituting current hegemonies than other elements such as patriarchy, racism, authoritarianism, and so forth. In this way we can avoid a narrow focus on alternatives posed only in relation to urban neoliberalism (compare Cumbers & Routledge, 2004; Leitner et al., 2007; Purcell, 2008). In the messy realities of urban worlds, alternatives are rarely, if ever, posed solely in relation to neoliberalism and, in any case, neoliberal regimes manifest in vastly different ways across urban contexts (Brenner & Theodore, 2002). A crucial task in enabling translocal dialogue between urban alternatives is therefore to carefully unpack, in every case, the differential relations that warrant the label ‘alternative’; i.e. in relation to what exactly is something posed as an alternative?

It should be clear that our aim is not to celebrate difference and otherness per se, but rather to explore instances of significant otherness which generate alternative urban politics. Appropriating Donna Haraway’s (2003: 3) words, we can tentatively conceptualise the alternatives we are looking for as embodying ‘an ethics and politics committed to the flourishing of significant otherness’. In terms of empirical engagements, and staying with Haraway, this translates into ‘vulnerable, on-the-ground work that cobbles together non-harmonious agencies and ways of living that are accountable both to their disparate inherited histories and to their barely possible but absolutely necessary joint futures’ (Haraway, 2003: 7). This book is a heterogeneous collection of such engagements converging on the animating scholarly challenge of recognising the moments when urban otherness becomes politically significant. Such moments may involve (1) the opening up, as opposed to the closing down, of possibilities whether reflected through the performativities of language, material practice, or both; (2) the attenuation of difference as a generator of hope for more liveable futures; (3) the recognition of ‘other’ views, ways, and means even as particular urban futures are pursued through a specific set of ways and means; and (4) the critique, challenge, and circumvention of widely accepted truths, norms, and

commonplaces, whether actualised in oppositional and confrontational modes of struggle, through a more agonistic politics based on outreach and cooperation, or perhaps by means of a combination of the two. In short, an alternative disposition to the production of urban space emits a radical potency to recast the status quo and can therefore be understood as interjecting revolutionary potential.

The urban: socio-spatial processes with constitutive outsides

From our diverse disciplinary vantage points we share a broad interest in an urban world that cannot, in our view, be meaningfully constricted to the confines of geographically bounded units of human settlement such as cities, towns, and villages. Instead, we side with the likes of Brenner and Schmid (2015) who hold that urban studies ought to focus on urban processes rather than be preoccupied with settlement types and urban forms. Yet, even if we eschew such methodological cityism (Angelo and Wachsmuth, 2015), we are also not ready to endorse the alternative offered by Brenner and Schmid in their search for a new epistemology of the urban, what Brenner (2014) has also called urban theory without an outside. Rather, we prefer to insist, with Jazeel (2017: 12), that ‘urban studies does have an outside’ and that ‘it is from this outside that a usefully unsettling supplementary historical logic/analysis can emerge’. It is, in other words, only by retaining constitutive outsides of the urban that we can hope to ‘stretch our understandings of the socio-spatial processes at work in the production of cities in a world of difference’ (Jazeel, 2017: 12); and that is precisely what we aim to do in this book.

Our abstract-simple entry point, then, is to conceive of the urban as a set of socio-spatial processes with constitutive outsides. But what does this mean for our study of alternative urban spaces and their production? To answer this, we need to dwell for a moment on the notion of a constitutive outside, imported and appropriated for urban studies by Ananya Roy (2011, 2015) through her reading of Chantal Mouffe (2000), but originating in Henry Staten’s (1984) earlier interpretation of Jacques Derrida. According to Staten (1984: 16), Derrida ‘takes the outside to be *necessary* to the constitution of a phenomenon in its as-such, a condition of the possibility of the inside’. Staten thus boiled down Derrida’s thinking on constitutive outsides to the following schema:

X is constituted by non-X. X here means essence or self-identity as conceived by philosophy, and non-X is that which functions as the ‘outside’, or limit, to the positive assertion of this self-identity, that which keeps ideality from complete closure, yet in *limiting* it remains the *positive* condition of the possibility of the positive assertion of essence.
(Staten, 1984: 17)

This is not meant to suggest that ‘identity is drowned in otherness, but that it is *necessarily* open to it, contaminated by it’ (Staten, 1984: 18). What this means for our current purposes is that, if constitutive outsides are not retained and

kept alive in urban scholarship, then the result is an artificial decontamination, a false purity, through which the important workings of multiple constitutive outsides are hidden from view, kept out of analytical sight. This serves only to impoverish and degenerate urban studies as a field of scholarship that could otherwise be capable of pointing out pathways towards alternative urban futures, especially given that constitutive outsides arguably contain some of the seeds that can be nurtured into radical change. Roy (2015: 4) has taken a particular interest in the rural outside but is also quick to caution that 'by no means is the rural the only or even a privileged constitutive outside'. It is also important to note that 'outside' in this sense is not a question of geographical location; the rural outside that permits the positive assertion of an urban inside may reside anywhere, including the geographical inside of cities however defined.

Our insistence on keeping urban outsides squarely within our field of vision, then, speaks both to the field of urban studies in general and to the particular project at hand. It is our way of approaching the challenge posed by Jennifer Robinson (2002: 539) when she argued that 'urban studies ought to be able to contribute its resources more effectively to the creative imagining of possible city futures around the world'. Working creatively with constitutive outsides and keeping a tight focus on urban process rather than urban form is our preferred way of enacting such creative imaginings from the present possibilities of our shared urban worlds. But Robinson's critique of urban studies was also directed at the peculiar relations between empirical sites and urban theory that the field has engendered over the years: the problematic fact that urban theory tends to be based on fieldwork conducted within a relatively small and homogeneous number of urban places. This is a problem that urban studies has inherited from its early beginnings with the Chicago School of urban sociology, whose stated mission was to generate universal urban theory (Wirth, 1938), but whose empirical work was almost entirely carried out in its own Chicago backyard. While the field has seen substantial changes since then – not least with the emergence and ascendancy of critical urban studies in the 1970s (e.g. Harvey, 1973; Castells, 1977 [1972]) – the tendency to ignore large swaths of urban reality in favour of a small number of world or global cities (cf. Friedmann, 1986; Sassen, 1991) has only recently been seriously challenged. Robinson (2002) has thus been joined by Bell and Jayne (2009), Waitt and Gibson (2009), and Lorentzen and Van Heur (2012) among others in calling for research and theory on ordinary and small cities, while Bishop et al. (2003), Roy and Ong (2011), and many others have called for urban research that takes seriously the heterogeneous urban realities beyond Europe and North America.

Space: relational, real-and-imagined, and multiple

The sections above already indicate the kind of spatial imaginaries that we seek to invoke, explore, and explicate. We are obviously in need of a spatial imagination that goes well beyond the containerised sterility associated with

purely Cartesian conceptions of space. Rather we proceed from an understanding that conceives of space as simultaneously active, multiple, situational, and relational: active in the sense of space being co-constitutive with the social, multiple in the sense that socio-spatial relations are multidimensional, situational in the sense that spatial becoming is both historically and geographically contingent, and relational in the sense that space does not pre-exist the relations that define it but is continually produced through them, entailing also that space is processual. Our conception, then, is broadly aligned with that of Doreen Massey (2005) whose three propositions about space can be usefully highlighted as conceptual signposts. She suggests:

First, that we recognise space as the product of interrelations; as constituted through interactions, from the immensity of the global to the intimately tiny. . . . *Second*, that we understand space as the sphere of the possibility of the existence of multiplicity in the sense of contemporaneous plurality; as the sphere in which distinct trajectories coexist; as the sphere therefore of coexisting heterogeneity. . . . *Third*, that we recognise space as always under construction. Precisely because space on this reading is a product of relations-between, relations which are necessarily embedded material practices which have to be carried out, it is always in the process of being made.

(Massey, 2005: 9)

While holding on to these propositions, we also find it necessary to move beyond any simplistic distinction between discursive/mental and material/physical spaces as though they were somehow separate realms. Instead we follow Edward Soja's (1996) insistence that space is always both 'real-and-imagined' and consequently needs to be treated as such. For Soja, this composite term was shorthand for the Lefebvrian spatial trialectics of perceived (real), conceived (imagined), and lived space (Lefebvre, 1991 [1974]), where the latter serves to add the 'and' and the hyphens, not as a simple Hegelian synthesis but as an 'other' term that allows analysis to proceed heuristically, practising what Soja calls 'thirdspace epistemology' or, quite simply, 'thirthing'.

Among geographers of a critical, Marxist bent, the Lefebvrian triad has often been elevated to the status of a holy spatial trinity, an unfortunate side effect of which has been the proliferation of peculiarly forced analyses in which empirical material gets squeezed into three predefined boxes with no apparent purpose, engendering a sterilised exercise of stale categorisation. That was most definitely not Lefebvre's intention and we find it important to stress that what *The Production of Space* provided was a radical Marxian heuristic that introduced an openness and an embrace of indeterminacy that had otherwise been marginalised by dogmatic and orthodox Marxism. It offered an approach to space that recognised it from the outset as deeply political, always in process, and, although path-dependent, ultimately indeterminate. For our current purposes this is important for two key reasons: first, it underlines the necessity

of exposing how relations of power and dominance are imbricated in (re) producing space, and second, it keeps open the possibility for imagining and realising alternative modes of spatial production. The spatial triad retains its heuristic capacity by demanding us to imagine alternative spaces that are not free-floating utopias but differential trajectories grounded in the material realities from which they will have to spring forth.

The challenge that thus presents itself is to conjure up images of, and routes towards, alternative futures that are radically different from our present situation while knowing that precisely this situation will have to be their cradle, all ills of injustice, repression, and exploitation included. While the conceptions of space found in the work of Massey, Soja, and Lefebvre are well placed to facilitate such an undertaking, the work of a number of feminist geographers allows us to move somewhat further. Gillian Rose (1993: 155), for instance, usefully surveyed the spatial imaginations of feminist thought and concluded, in line with our sentiment above, that 'the subject of feminism ... depends on a paradoxical geography in order to acknowledge both the power of hegemonic discourses and to insist on the possibility of resistance'. Hence, she called for

a geography that acknowledges that the grounds of its knowledge are unstable, shifting, uncertain and, above all, contested. Space itself – and landscape and place likewise – far from being firm foundations for disciplinary expertise and power, are insecure, precarious and fluctuating. They are destabilized both by the internal contradictions of the geographical desire to know and by the resistance of the marginalized victims of that desire. And other possibilities, other sorts of geographies, with different compulsions, desires and effects, complement and contest each other.

(Rose, 1993: 160)

It is precisely this kind of spatial imagination that is needed if the production of alternative urban spaces is to be conceived of and explored in meaningful and politically relevant ways. Moreover, it is explicitly sensitive to – indeed it actively invites and demands – heterogeneity of perspective, form, and content, and so is well adept as a basis for instigating a truly open-minded international dialogue where diverse urban experiences actually get to count in their own right.

A three-act dialogue

The conceptual markers set out above sketch the outlines of a collective effort to tease out of specific urban conjunctures the present possibilities for enacting alternative urban futures. What we look for in this search are differential socio-spatial becomings, understood specifically as multidimensional spatio-temporal processes that point in other directions than those reflected in currently prevailing trajectories of urban development. Avoiding both methodological cityism and totalising views of the urban, we furthermore insist not just on

retaining constitutive outsides but also actively seeking out such outsides, based on the proposition that they contain source material from which alternative urban futures can be created. Combined with an insistence on a conjunctural mode of analysis which respects the contingency of urban processes, this approach is intended to ensure that our findings, first, are rooted in contemporary urban realities with all the challenges their dwellers are currently faced with, and second, move beyond mere diagnosis of the urban condition and into a prognostic mode capable of elucidating other possible ways forward. In other words, we take inspiration from the strategic-relational approach to enact a dialectical utopianism by searching for politically significant otherness in messy, indeterminate urban worlds. The alternatives in question, then, are not merely different but capable of mobilising that difference to challenge, subvert, and change their 'other(s)'. They may even be posited explicitly as responses to the deep political, economic, social, and environmental crises that have come to define the early decades of the twenty-first century (cf. Kirwan et al., 2016).

We find it important to underline that political relations between the urban alternatives that we seek and prevailing urban regimes may oscillate between confrontational antagonism and cooperative agonism and need not be stable; indeed, analysis may beneficially proceed precisely by mapping how these relations change (e.g. Daskalaki and Mould, 2013). This also speaks to a wider need to move beyond binaries; an imperative which is particularly important to keep in mind because alternatives ostensibly begin life in binary terms. It is therefore easy to get caught in a dichotomous web which obscures more than it reveals, a trap that can be sidestepped by replacing an 'either/or' with a 'both/and also' frame of mind. This includes the introduction of other terms that depart from the original binary in ways that work to fundamentally redefine it – i.e. Soja's heuristic practice of thirding. Binaries such as contestation/cooperation, reform/revolution, and top-down/bottom-up are particularly relevant here, but others such as urban/rural, production/consumption, and public/private are also brought under critical scrutiny. The structure of the book follows a threefold analytical distinction between (1) spaces of work, exchange, and consumption; (2) spaces of dwelling; and (3) spaces of public life. This distinction is purely thematic and reflects a crude typology of the kinds of alternative urban spaces that preoccupy the empirical work of our authors. At the same time, however, it is designed to cover key aspects of urban life. These are obviously deeply entwined and this is reflected in the fact that the dialogue enacted in Chapter 13 is far from enclosed within each part but permeates thematic boundaries freely.

Alternative spaces of work, exchange, and consumption

The key question addressed by chapters in Part I is how urban actors reinterpret prevailing urban economies and produce alternative spaces of work, exchange, and consumption. The alternatives in question thus can be

said to relate in one way or another to the capitalist mode of production. As emphasised for instance by Rogers (2014), however, it is beneficial here to make a distinction between alternatives *to* capitalism and alternative capitalisms. We do so by reiterating Gibson-Graham's (2006) more elaborate typology which distinguishes between capitalist, alter-capitalist, non-capitalist, and anti-capitalist economies. Alternative urban spaces of the sort in focus here thus respond in diverse ways to prevailing urban economies in which the majority of wealth is increasingly concentrated in fewer hands, while many others are left to contend with precarious working conditions, unemployment, and economic exploitation. Precariat classes are burgeoning (Standing, 2011) and it is especially from within their ranks that alternative spaces of work and production, exchange and consumption are being sought.

The prevailing practices they have to contend with include, but are far from limited to, established regimes of wage labour and precarianisation (Castree et al., 2004; Gill & Pratt, 2008; Ross, 2008; Standing, 2011), market-based regimes of commodity exchange (Harvey, 2010), conventional money systems and financialisation (Leyshon and Thrift, 1997; Haiven, 2011; Sotiropoulos et al., 2013; Adkins, 2015), commercialised cultural activities (Throsby, 2001), food systems (Schanbacher, 2010), etc. Responses in the form of alternative urban economies (Lee et al., 2003) are correspondingly diverse and include the rejection of wage labour (Carlsson and Manning, 2010), worker-owned enterprises (Wolff, 2012; Vieta, 2014; Kokkinidis, 2015), non-commercialised cultural production (Shaw, 2013; Buser et al., 2013; Valli, 2015), low-intensity production for local markets (Bialski et al., 2016), informal economies (Davis, 2006; Gibson-Graham, 2006; but see also Samers, 2005), 'prosumption' (Toffler, 1990; Ritzer and Jurgenson, 2010; Bruns, 2012), self-organised work spaces (Cornwell, 2012; Merkel, 2016), etc. Crucially, the ills of prevailing urban economies are not just about exploitative social relations, but often extend into the realm of mere survival and basic necessities such as food, safety, and shelter (Davis, 2006; Lancione, 2013).

Part I consists of two thematic pairs: Chapters 2 and 3 attend to alternative food spaces while Chapters 4 and 5 address alternative work spaces. More specifically, in Chapter 2 Pia Heike Johansen and Hannibal Hoff investigate the arenas of tension generated by the emergence of alternative urban spaces of food provisioning in Copenhagen; while in Chapter 3 Christine Mady uses the case of a Beirut-based food non-governmental organisation (NGO) to show how, in unstable, post-conflict conjunctures, alternative food spaces can be about much more than just food. In Chapter 4, Carolina Pacchi travels between Berlin and Milan to critically evaluate the transformative potential of coworking spaces as sites for the emergence of organised precarian labour struggles. This is complemented by Letizia Chiappini and Petter Törnberg who turn attention, in Chapter 5, to another kind of alternative urban work-space: makerspaces, again based on fieldwork in Milan, where 'makers' have come to play a somewhat surprising role as partial substitutes for church- and state-based welfare provision.

Alternative spaces of dwelling

From homeless people roaming the streets to urban elites residing in the enclosures of gated communities, the sites and practices of dwelling are some of the most visible markers of the often absurd levels of urban inequality today. The global financial crisis that unfurled in the late 2000s has made issues concerning urban dwelling even more pertinent. Thoroughly financialised housing markets were thus at the heart of what caused the crisis and urban dwellers have been among those hit the hardest by its consequences (Harvey, 2012). It follows that provision of, and access to, affordable and adequate housing continues to comprise one of the main battlegrounds of contemporary urban struggles.

Examples of alternative spaces of dwelling include squatting (Montagna, 2006; Pruijt, 2013; Vasudevan, 2015b), slum dwellings and other informal settlements (Davis, 2006; McFarlane, 2009; Roy, 2011), co-living arrangements and radical enclaves (Miles, 2008; Ergas, 2010; Jarvis, 2011), etc. Key roles have been played by broadly constituted housing movements (Bradley, 2012; Beitel, 2013; Romanos, 2014) as well as various forms of self-organisation at the neighbourhood level (Winders, 2014). Social movements in particular have insisted on staking claims concerning basic rights to housing, thereby mounting serious challenges to prevailing urban property regimes under which the urban poor have to contend with ever-lurking threats of eviction and homelessness (Brickell et al., 2017). In addition to the articulation of housing rights there has also been a widespread tendency to invoke various conceptions of housing as an urban common (Pithouse, 2014; Huron, 2015; Chatterton, 2016). Responses from urban governments and authorities have ranged from violent repression of protest (Benson, 2015; Zheng, 2017) to collaborative outreach and state recognition (Morrison, 2017). The production of alternative urban dwelling spaces has thus relied on a diversity of actor constellations which include progressive planners and politicians (Beitel, 2013), social enterprises (Gerrard, 2017), and NGOs (Das and Randeria, 2015), in addition to the aforementioned grassroots and social movements.

Chapters in Part II attend to the heterogeneous ways in which such actor ensembles are created under varying socio-spatial circumstances, and how they result in the production of alternative spaces of dwelling by challenging, disrupting, and reorienting consolidated regimes of housing provision and private property. Because of the key role played by the housing question in recent rounds of social, political, and economic crises, special emphasis has been placed on cases that reflect timely responses to such crises. Furthermore, a particular aim has been to generate translocal dialogue that transgresses perceived divides between the global North and South. We begin in the outskirts of Cairo, where Samir Shalabi and Lee Pugalis (Chapter 6) use urban ethnography to show how Syrian refugees are struggling to turn a neglected area of a desert new town into an urban home of their own. From there we

travel to the other end of the Mediterranean Sea, where Vitor Peiteado (Chapter 7) elucidates how the Spanish housing movement PAH has managed to turn the discursive tide by reframing housing issues from matters of private property to questions of the rights of urban dwellers. In Chapter 8 we return to Africa, this time to Accra, where Esther Yeboah Danso-Wiredu, Jens Kaae Fisker, and Lee Pugalís use the Old Fadama slum as an exemplary case to show how solutions to the urban issues related to slums can be found within the slum itself by taking seriously the agency of slum-dwellers. Finally, we shift continents once more, when Preetika Sharma invites us on an ethnographic journey into the urban village of Kajheri in Chandigarh, where the marginalised *kothi* gender minority have turned to the urban interstices in order to enable and sustain their precarious mode of urban dwelling.

Alternative spaces of public life

The latest rounds of capitalist restructuring and transformation of urban space have involved the enrolment of urban public life as a vehicle for sustaining and accelerating capital accumulation (Brenner et al., 2009). The touristification of city centres (Colomb & Novy, 2017), the rise of commercialised and speculative cultural quarters (Shorthouse, 2004; Mould and Comunian, 2015), and more recently the commodification of ‘sharing’ (Richardson, 2015; Martin, 2016) are just a few examples of this. In the name of inter-urban competition, planners and politicians have been involved in facilitating these and other processes, based to some degree upon influential academic work on creative cities, cultural economies, and related concepts (Peck, 2014). Within all spheres of urban society, however, counter-hegemonic voices and responses are making themselves heard and felt. The most visible and popularised manifestations of this have arguably been associated with a number of widely publicised ‘occupations’ of central public spaces such as the transnational Occupy movement (Sparke, 2013; Sbicca and Perdue, 2014), the 15M movement in Spain (Lopez and Bernardos, 2015), Gezi Park and Taksim Square in Istanbul (Dursun, 2015), and Tahrir Square in Cairo (Ramadan, 2013; Said, 2015), etc.

The question that animates contributions to Part III of this book is concerned with the ways in which urban actors create, develop, and appropriate heterogeneous urban spaces for alternative ways of staging, performing, and practising public urban life. The sites of protest mentioned above may figure prominently as symbolic spaces for alternative urban becomings (Barnett, 2014; Hurd, 2014), but our interest here goes beyond these particular sites, and the spectacular moments of protest associated with them, to include also the more vernacular aspects of urban life in public spaces. This can involve various forms of occupation and alternative uses of public squares, parks, infrastructures, and private properties (Hözl, 2015; Vasudevan, 2015a), interim uses of the built environment (Bishop & Williams, 2012; Andres, 2013; Ferreri, 2015), struggles over access to and use of public space (Anwar, 2012; Newman, 2013), etc. The sites and practices in question often evolve into various hybrids of political,

cultural, and social space, which are either explicitly or implicitly associated with broader movements for urban change. Chapters in Part III focus on the socio-spatial conditions within which such spaces are produced, the ways in which the differential production of public space actually plays out, and the aftermath that it engenders. The key point is to gaze beyond the moment of spectacular protest into the vernacular becomings that follow in order to elucidate whether and how sustained trajectories of urban change are actually generated.

We begin, in Chapter 10, in the Brazilian city of Belo Horizonte, a planned city based on strict rationalistic principles, where the public life of most urban dwellers has not been a priority of city authorities. Fausto Di Quarto shows how artistic interventions, based primarily on hip-hop culture, in urban interstices have come to play a key role in the struggles of marginalised urban dwellers of the suburbs and the favelas to reappropriate their city. With Basak Tanulku and Jens Kaae Fisker in Chapter 11 we gain important insights into the afterlife of one of the most notable occupations of public squares and parks in recent years: Gezi Park in Istanbul. The protests have had a ripple effect in the form of alternative urban spaces emerging in various neighbourhoods around the city; Tanulku analyses the emergence, development, and decline of a social centre in Yeldegirmeni and a guerrilla garden in Uskudar. Finally, in Chapter 12, Silvia Gullino, Cristina Cerulli, Heidi Seetzen, and Carolina Pacchi take a step back to include in their field of vision alternative mechanisms of funding the production of urban spaces of public life. They engage in a critical evaluation of the transformative potential engendered by civic crowdfunding platforms as a means by which a bottom-up mode of spatial production may be enacted. To this end they investigate four cases in London and Milan where civic crowdfunding has been used to initiate and fund various urban regeneration projects.

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This re-signification was manifested through the newly generated aesthetic experiences in the spaces and through the highlighted activities and objects, which were communicated through phrases and images resonating with the needs and experiences of the local people. The proposed model and system implemented in the NGO's activities in various and unrelated locations challenged the current market-led practices in Lebanon, by providing alternative interpretations. These re-signified spaces transformed the way markets and other conventionally business-oriented activities could support local development and induce interaction in societies within unstable contexts. The organisers or framers empowered small-scale producers and vulnerable people, and enabled encounters within conventionally inaccessible locations. This people-centred approach demonstrates the transformative potential of these alternative spaces. By addressing the challenge of social divides in Lebanon through establishing new spatial relations, mobilising people to see and experience the city centre in a different atmosphere, and equally visit other areas in the country, it allowed room to question and, to some extent, alter deeply rooted perceptions about refugees or sectarian divides within the local context.

In conclusion, the chapter has presented one approach leading to re-signifying urban spaces into alternative spaces that secure encounters within unstable contexts. This requires the combination of insider knowledge and the ability to join efforts and clearly frame a problem through appropriate contextual communication tools. The result comprises aesthetic experiences resonating with interests and spatial associations that could be sought both locally and internationally.

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Notes

- 1 The term 'confessionalism' reflects the government system, which is based on the distribution of positions relative to the sects within the two religions: Christianity and Islam in Lebanon. More information on how confessionalism has affected the country is available in Hanf (1993) and El-Khazen (2000).
- 2 www.agriculture.gov.lb/html/نتاى_ج_الاحصاء_الزراعي_الشامل_2010/نتقري_الاحصاء_الزراعي_2010.pdf (Accessed: 11 August 2017).
- 3 Souq El Tayeb's organisation chart: www.soukeltayeb.com/the-organisation/structure-team.
- 4 Souq El Tayeb's website: www.soukeltayeb.com.
- 5 Souq El Tayeb's events: www.soukeltayeb.com/food-feast/events.

the government is essentially building an aeroplane runway of practices associated with the creative class, with the hopes of attracting the Western aeroplanes of “creative workers” and international capital. This type of cultural analysis may in fact prove to be a more useful way of understanding the makerspace phenomenon than an analysis that departs from speculative claims about their innovatory and revolutionary potential.

To conclude, makerspaces and their 3D printers seem like the latest iteration of the frequently recurring story where a new machine is envisioned to come upon the stage of capitalism to resolve its difficult plot situations. But if we wait for the godly intervention of such a *deus ex machina*, we will not only be in for a long wait, but also continue to fall for precisely the same traps that the makerspace dreamers fell for: we will mistake technological change for social revolution, individualism for freedom, and the reinvention of capitalism for revolution. If we are to change the plot of the tragedy in which we live, we cannot wait for the intervention of an imagined celestial scriptwriter – we will have to craft our own future.

Notes

- 1 “Innovare per Includere” is a political slogan and a laboratory for public policy instituted by the public administration and an amalgamation of local knowledge composed of academics, storytellers, policy makers, and Cristina Tajani, Councillor for Labour Policies, Production Activities, Trade, and Human Resources. She is the main gatekeeper in crafting urban policies to support makers, social entrepreneurs, start-ups, etc. See the website: www.innovareincludere.it.
- 2 See the list on the website: www.lavoroedformazioneincomune.it/wp-content/uploads/2015/10/Misura-A-elenco-al-9-giugno-2017.pdf.
- 3 It is three times more than in Rome and Bologna (5.2% each) and four times compared to cities like Modena (3.7%), Venice (2.9%), Padua and Parma (3.6%) (Manzo and Ramella 2015).
- 4 Cf. Chapter 4 in this volume.
- 5 See the website: www.fastwebdigital.academy/digital-fashion-design-pro.
- 6 Since 2016, WeMake has contributed to a series of health and care projects with a bottom-up approach through the European Union-funded OpenCare project. The mission of the makerspace is oriented to support citizens, institutions, and companies in the creation of projects and solutions with a high social impact. The core of the project is the progressive automation of care solutions: from sensors to replace people dedicated to assistance, through the complete automation of performance acquisition functions, to the development of diagnostic techniques, assisted by computer algorithms. Over the course of the project, more than 400 participants made a written contribution to the online debate. In November 2017, the platform hosting the discussions on OpenCare recorded 760 threads and 4,850 posts for a total of one million words. In addition to the level of verbal interaction and storytelling, WeMake acted at the prototyping level. The online and offline solutions proposed were effectively designed, tested, documented, and shared for a total of six projects. See the website: <http://wemake.cc/openicare>.
- 7 See the website: <http://wemake.cc/2018/02/13/imprese-ristrette-la-digital-fabbrica-traversa-i-muri-del-carcere>.
- 8 The Municipality of Milan, in collaboration with eighteen partners, launched the project of free training courses on new technologies dedicated to young students

and citizens aged from eighteen to thirty-five years with residence or domicile in Milan who have precarious jobs, with the aim being to develop new skills and business ideas. The makerspace Yatta! is one of the main partners in this project.

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Lefebvre's perceived and conceived space and, on the other, lived space. These small, hyperlocal acts of disobedience to the hegemonic "expert" discourses on how space should be defined, constructed, and experienced, thus also can be seen as representing inventive imaginations of other socio-spatial futures. As such they demonstrate how alternative urban imaginaries cannot be isolated from the materiality and corporeality of urban spatial practice. An alternative imaginary may be most easily identifiable when observed in discursive utterances such as text, image, or video, but it is equally present in the mundane act of growing vegetables in the street or selling groceries from a balcony, and even more so as, in these cases, the alternative is not only imagined but put into practice. The fact that the act is not accompanied by a political statement or embedded in a coordinated programme of action should not subtract from its status as an act of resistance through reappropriation, a small assertion of one's right to the city, and the clandestine agency that flows from the lived space of everyday life.

Notes

- 1 Protests first erupted in the southern city of Dara'a in March 2011 after the authorities arrested some youngsters who had painted anti-regime slogans on a school wall. Having been met with brutal force by the regime, demonstrations spread across the country calling for the fall of the house of president Bashar al-Assad. The violent response by government forces to the initially peaceful protests prompted opposition groups and individuals to take up arms against the government, which thrust the crisis into a vicious civil war with strong international involvement.
- 2 In 2013, around 380 Syrian families were moved with the help of local UNHCR partner organisations from the neighbouring social housing estate Masakin 'Uthman to Beyt al-'Ayla due to protection issues, including cases of rape and sexual harassment of Syrian women. Since these 380 families moved in, Syrians in the ensuing years have continued to settle in the area. According to a Syrian aid distributor helping people in the area, in 2017 there were between 1,000 and 2,000 Syrian families living in Beyt al-'Ayla.
- 3 The term hyperlocal is borrowed from media studies where it has been used to designate new media production on, or directed towards, a minuscule scale, often involving citizen reporting, social media, and the use of mobile devices (Radcliff, 2012). We use it here in a broader sense that includes both material practices and symbolic acts or expressions occurring below the community or neighbourhood level.

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housing crisis—one of the frame’s tasks—by blaming not only the authorities but also economic elites—as exemplified in the framing of the *escraches*.

Concurrently, the previous account shows that attending to the influence of extra-discursive dimensions provides insights to better grasp social movements discourse formation mainly in three ways. First, it helps to explain how the discourse and the repertoire are embedded and influence each other; second, it shows also that the construction of the master frame implies an expansion of the frame meanings that relate it to new demands that are not directly linked to housing (the inclusion of guaranteed supplies is a good example); third, it demonstrates how the development of an antagonist master frame benefits from social mobilisation that reinforces it, making it necessary to consider it in the analysis to better understand the process of creating such a frame.

Moreover, this case provides an interesting example of how an antagonist conceptualisation of the right to housing can be developed and strengthened through the empowerment of people suffering during the housing crisis. This chapter has demonstrated the potential of bottom-up housing activism to challenge consolidated hegemonic housing regimes by developing and extending alternative perspectives of housing that question housing commodification discourses. Furthermore, the empowerment and the reformulation of the right to housing promoted by PAH politicised the housing issue, incorporating it into the public agenda. Therefore, without the path opened by PAH’s struggle, it would be impossible to understand the proliferation of initiatives to rethink housing issues that would have seemed strange in the Spanish context not long ago but now pop up all over the country, as, for example, the promotion of co-housing or the creation of a tenants’ union in Barcelona. As such the chapter contributes a more nuanced understanding of the dialectics between discursive and extra-discursive struggles in the production of alternative urban spaces of dwelling. This process can only be properly understood by considering the intertwined nature of extra-discursive activist performativity (the blockades to stop evictions, the occupation of empty houses, etc.) and the sustained discursive struggles necessary to produce counter-hegemonic urban imaginaries in which alternatives gradually begin to appear as real possibilities rather than vague utopian dreams.

Note

1 afectadosporlahipoteca.com.

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Chandigarh and beyond is limited. Yet, by showing how urban interstices such as Kajheri become hotbeds for the marginalised and clandestine undercurrents of urban life, this chapter contributes to identify and locate the kinds of places where advantageous conditions exist for the production of alternative urban spaces. It is in this sense that the urban interstice, embodied in India by the *lal dora* areas, holds a transformative potential that may play a role in enacting alternative urban futures.

Notes

- 1 I have kept the identity of the respondents confidential and used pseudonyms.
- 2 The term “housing societies” is popularly used in India to encompass residential buildings that have been divided into flats. These societies have a set of framed rules for their functioning and they are registered with the regi.

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A reappropriation of a public space, therefore, which is extraneous to the dominant capitalist system, thanks to its universal “musical” nature, also succeeds in giving a new meaning (a new identity) to an urban place that had become obsolete in the mental cartography of dwellers. What gains relevance here is the effect that music has on the urban space and the power relations it generates. The appropriation of this space acts as a mode of negotiating citizenship, mainly through:

- affirming a place and a presence in the city through a struggle for public space and a claim for street presence, where bodies represent a political act, to publicly manifest themselves, performing emancipation and resistance;
- managing conflict with the authorities (generated when citizens actively take over the streets) and putting on the public agenda the right to rediscuss the use of public space and, more generally, to what extent urban dwellers have the right to use and produce the city;
- the interaction of disparate actors of the city who confront themselves within a cultural event corroborated by music, bringing to the forefront different socio-cultural imaginaries, tensions, and expectations.

The concept of centrality reframes the idea that the city centre holds a power of attraction; centrality has the ability to concentrate wealth, power, information, knowledge, and traffic: in a nutshell, everything (Lefebvre, 2014 [1968]). The appropriation of the space under the viaduct serves to restructure public space and democratic agonism, redefining and renegotiating a shared living space within the city. As explained before, the city of BH has striven over the years to recover and reinsert this (residual) space in the urban area without succeeding because it never opened a space for political confrontation and participation over the use of (that) public space. One of the most important effects of appropriation (even if symbolic and temporary) has been to transform the area into a centre of interest for other groups that now use the space for different types of events. For this reason I believe that, as Casaglia (cited in Lefebvre, 2014 [1968]) suggests, it is not through the intervention of specialists but rather through participation and agitation that urban life can recover its capacity for integration and participation. According to this view, generalised self-management is the basis of the “right to the city” (Lefebvre, 2014 [1968]). This necessarily involves a movement from below. The voices that sing reveal social and political proposals, especially in a context like Brazil, where growing socio-economic polarisation limits the chances to influence public decisions (Castro, 2006; Fani, 2007). In BH, the VST embodies – metaphorically and metonymically – the effects of planning the city from above and a reappropriation – both symbolic and material – from below.

Notes

- 1 Interstitial spaces are framed here as low-prestige and non-dominated spaces that permit an easier negotiation and more flexibility to be used by dwellers.

- 2 <https://youtu.be/oiccUUmflG4>.
- 3 In this research we refer to the experienced musical practice known as *hip-hop* and its cultural practice. Founded in 1973 by DJ Africa Bambaata as a strategy to soothe ongoing clashes between young gangs in the Bronx, it was aimed at replacing conflicts with musical (rap), dance (breakdancing), and artistic (graffiti) competitions. Youngsters who attended the local dances represented and “defended” in this way the respective neighbourhoods of belonging, confronting each other, and celebrating for the first time a personal expression through rhythmic poetry and frenetic dances. Hip-hop was born as a new socio-cultural stage that can be seen as part of a process of socio-political demand inspired by the ideas of Martin Luther King, Malcolm X, and the Black Panthers. It promoted black identity and territorial pride, designed to subvert negative stereotypes related to African descendants. It slowly started to be understood also as a social movement, claiming urban improvements for rappers’ neighbourhoods, trying to fight the police violence, and proposing the recognition and insertion of the black community management and administration processes. Having undergone a strong media exposure, hip-hop crossed the United States borders and expanded all over the world; it has been adopted as a cultural manifestation globally, always relying on the urban universe as its background.
- 4 Other urban redevelopment plans were carried out in the last twenty years aiming at restructuring transport and transit in the central areas (1995); stimulating use of public spaces in order to increase life quality (1999); steering socio-economic and cultural inclusion through environmental plans and social security (2004); and (again) revitalising public spaces and degraded areas in the name of sustainable socio-economic and environmental development (2007).
- 5 In Brazil at the beginning of the 1980s hip-hop had already mobilised a substantial segment of the youth of the favelas and the suburbs of the cities. Starting from a moment of racial conscience and black pride, disclosed in the soul music by local artists (Jorge Ben Jor, Tim Maia, Cassiano, etc.), what gained importance and media relevance was the breakdance. Little by little during the 1980s the other hip-hop practices (graffiti and rap) spread out – especially in São Paulo, Brasília and BH – encompassing fashion, gestures, and language, to build a set of new codes and signs that are collectively codified and articulated (Dayrell, 2005).
- 6 With the urban reforms of the last century, public spaces were increasingly forbidden to the black population. Brazilian elites did not introduce new social concepts and practices with regard to the fate of African descendants that would allow socio-economic integration; the concern of the elites was to find a solution that would maintain the power and maintenance of the same power geometries. The expulsion of this part of the population from urban centres meant that these people headed to the hills (where favelas were born) and to the suburbs, thus distancing themselves from the pulsing centres of the city. Politically this strategy represented a way to relegate “black territories” from public policies, so as to weaken the political consciousness of inhabitants in the struggle for the right to urban space and its socially built territories.
- 7 See: Família de Rua (2009).
- 8 See: SouBH (2017).
- 9 The movement stated a clear message on the internet: “The decree N° 13,798 OF DECEMBER 09, 2009 of our mayor of BH, Marcio Lacerda, prohibits any type of event from happening in Praça da Estação. The question remains: who is interested in the fact that public spaces are merely areas of passage and consumption? If we are denied the right to remain in any public space in the city, we will occupy these spaces in a fun, playful and seemingly unpretentious way. Bring your bathing suit (shorts, shorts, bikini, swimsuit, underwear), chairs, towels, umbrellas, farofa . . . Bring drums and guitars! Bring food to a collective banquet! Where? Praça da Estação of BH.

- When? Saturday, 16/01/2010, 09h30min. How much? For free!” Source: CMI – Centro de Media Independente Brasil (2010).
- 10 See: PosTV (2014).
- 11 This was also related to the forthcoming events of the international soccer World Cup in 2014.
- 12 It has occurred every Saturday from 2pm in the centre of BH in *Goitacazes* street (centre district) since 2002.

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Notes

- 1 The match funding approach that the GLA is using shows how the process of crowdfunding is changing, at least in London. From a recent interview with the GLA (June 2017), it emerged that there had been an increase in formality in the funding process in order to make it more transparent. As the money invested in supporting such initiatives is public, the GLA is increasingly under pressure to make sure the projects it supports are: deliverable, meeting wider community needs, and talking to a wider audience. The risk, however, is that this increase in formality might come at the expense of losing local spontaneity and creativity.
- 2 At the time of writing this chapter, the Peckham Coal Line vision was under threat as a planning application for a residential development on a small site along the route of the Coal Line had recently been put forward. Although discussions between local groups, the Council, and the developers were ongoing, this recent turn highlights how fragile and vulnerable this type of project can be.

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