

MUMBAI

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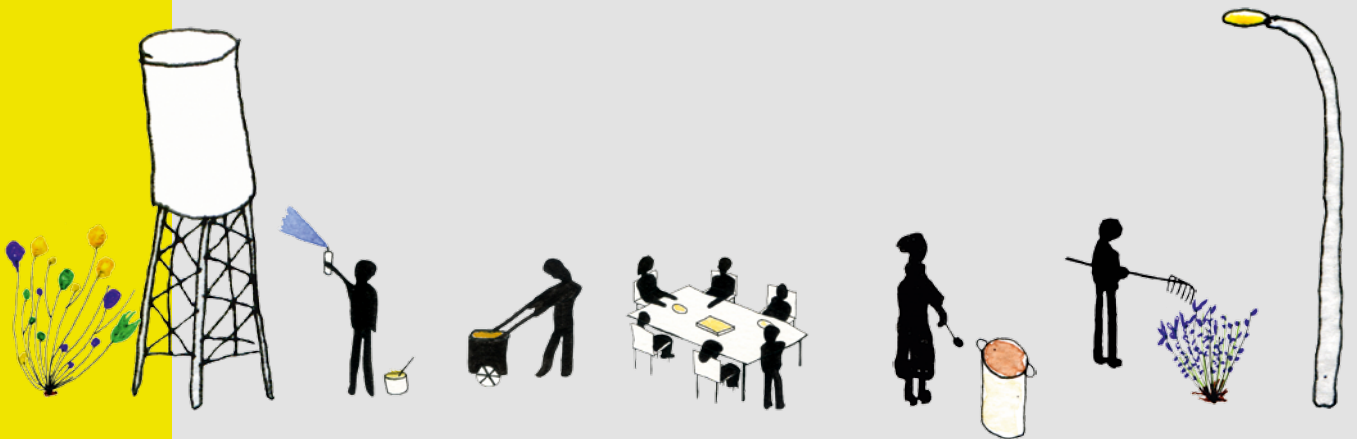
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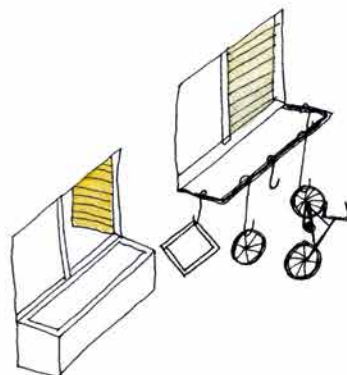
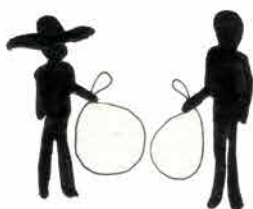
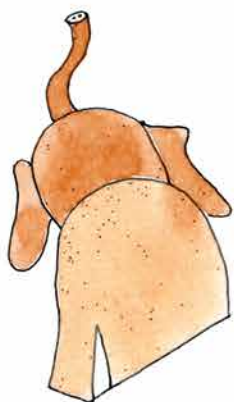
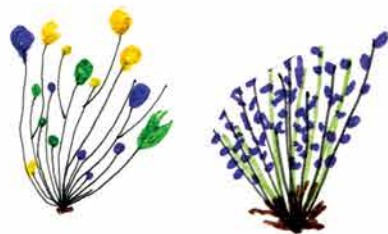
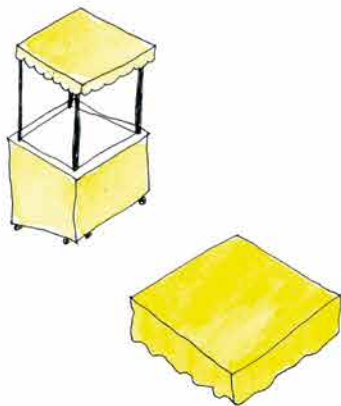
MEXICO CITY

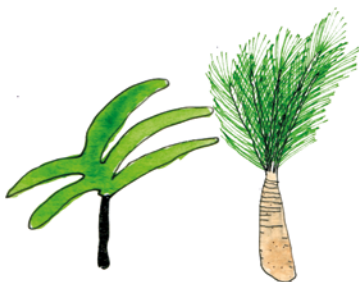
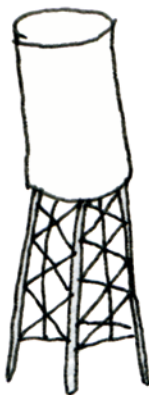
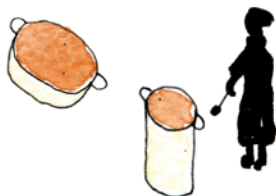
CAPE TOWN

# Handmade Urbanism

From Community Initiatives  
to Participatory Models







*Handmade* describes something made by hand or by a hand process, not by machine, especially with care or craftsmanship, and typically therefore of superior quality.

Handmade urbanism is the way of providing urban change carried out by local residents in their own neighborhoods or communities, with their own hands and means. It starts with the residents recognizing a problem, followed by the active realization of an idea to solve that immediate issue. Community initiatives evolve from those active gestures and support the citizen's active participation at the local scale. Their acts recognize chances in challenges, make creative use of existing resources, and forge partnerships and relationships to achieve predefined goals that address their daily needs and, eventually, ensure an improved quality of life for communities.

The actions of handmade urbanism are unique, each shaped by the individuals and the field of operations that define them. They are carried out at the local scale, as products of culture and environment, and deal as much with soft infrastructure—physical and emotional wellbeing, education, etc.—as with the reshaping of the built environment.

The study of handmade urbanism acknowledges that large parts of cities have been built by the residents themselves, without help from governments, planners or designers. It suggests alternative ways to approach planning other than the traditional methods currently employed.

At a global level, handmade urbanism reveals overlaps in the characteristic ways of life of urban societies, clarifying common threads and differences among them. These provide us with opportunities to learn from the ways needs and problems have been addressed.

The operative modes of handmade urbanism contribute to the discussion around participatory models. Its creation and appreciation is transformative to individuals and communities.

▶ This e-book contains video links in the Five Cities section. Clicking on the video title will open a browser window where the video can be viewed (working internet connection required).

To Wolfgang Nowak, who is always a great source of inspiration.

MUMBAI

SÃO PAULO

ISTANBUL

MEXICO CITY

CAPE TOWN

# Handmade Urbanism

**From Community Initiatives  
to Participatory Models**

ORGANIZED / EDITED BY MARCOS L. ROSA, UTE E. WEILAND,  
WITH ANA ÁLVAREZ, LINDSAY BUSH, DEMET MUTMAN, PRIYA SHANKAR

JOVIS

Since 2007, the Deutsche Bank Urban Age Award has been organized by the Alfred Herrhausen Society as an outcome of the Urban Age conference series, jointly organized with the London School of Economics, and initiated by Wolfgang Nowak (AHS) and Ricky Burdett (LSE).

For five years, Ute E. Weiland has coordinated all of the awards in five cities, organizing the content and compilation with the local researchers chosen to carry out the communication, organization, and fieldwork in each city.

Jessica Barthel and Anja Fritzsich have also made valuable contributions in the organization of the award.

We would like to acknowledge the work of our local researchers, who have coordinated the DBUAA in each of the cities: Priya Shankar in Mumbai (2007), Marcos L. Rosa in São Paulo (2008), Demet Mutman in Istanbul (2009), Ana Alvarez in Mexico City (2010), and Lindsay Bush in Cape Town (2012). They have worked on the ground, rediscovering their own cities and unveiling networks of local practices that have been built throughout a year of fieldwork. To a great extent, these are the researchers that kept in contact with the local projects, giving continuity to the work that started with our compilation, through the development of their own research and work. And they have collaborated on this publication, a project coordinated by Marcos L. Rosa, by participating in a critical review of the findings. In this review, we look back at the developments and current status of the projects that are showcased, conduct a comparative analysis, and suggest common points among all of the five cities. Specifically, we would like to acknowledge the critical input of Priya Shankar, who organized the first award in Mumbai and made a valuable contribution to this book, and the constant support and discussions with Lindsay Bush, who has influenced the format of this publication, as well as the debates with Ana Alvarez who reviewed our ideas and contributed with insightful concepts.

This book compiles twenty-five interviews—or, five for each one of the five cities—giving voice to different stakeholders who have played an important role in the rebuilding of these cities on a local scale. Each interviewee generously shared their knowledge—unveiling subjects that are key to understanding how the projects are organized, the mechanisms behind them, as well as providing arguments for the importance of small-scale developments to face important challenges posed by each one of these cities. All of the voices intertwine and organize layers that allow a complex understanding of the projects, highlighting their potential for the city at large.

This publication has also benefited from the invaluable support of four people who had the chance to see the projects in all five cities. Ricky Burdett, Olaf Jacobs, Wolfgang Nowak, and Anthony Williams share their point of view in interviews, helping us trace common threads among the showcased community initiatives.

Olaf Jacobs produced the documentary *Zukunft der Städte* (The Future of Cities), which brings us stories from the community projects presented in this book, allowing the general public to experience these projects closely.

Richard Sennett and his writings and lectures on “cooperation” and “the open city,” as well as his reflections about some of the projects in São Paulo and Istanbul, have strongly influenced the work on this publication from the beginning.

His contribution serves as a theoretical background for considering these projects. We also highly appreciate his generous comments and advice in the process of producing this book.

Paulo Ayres, who visualized each of the showcased projects in illustrations created with Marcos L. Rosa and Lindsay Bush and informed by all of the local researchers. Working with him has been a delightful experience. He has employed his expertise in graphic drawings that illustrate the processes, mechanisms, operational modes, as well as the impact and changes in each one of them.

Tom Unverzagt, who carefully conceived the graphic design that structures all of these ideas.

Inez Templeton who greatly refined the text through her review and proofreading.

We graciously thank all of the photographers who contributed to our image archive, which has been growing over the years.

Jochen Visscher and Philipp Sperrle have supported the idea of this publication from the beginning and have given us guidance throughout the production process. We thank them for their constant support, discussions, and critical input.

Most importantly, none of this would exist without the courage and entrepreneurship of those individuals, active in their own cities, who have shown other ways to fight against shortages and urgencies of all kinds. Their pioneerism transforms challenges into opportunities making use of available resources, identifying potentials, and employing them in proactive ways that generate benefits to the built environment and, especially, to the users and residents.

Finally, we are grateful for those who have provided guidance and for every partner in each city. We would also like to thank all of the institutions, organizations, and associations that took part in the initiative during these five years.



RICHARD SENNETT



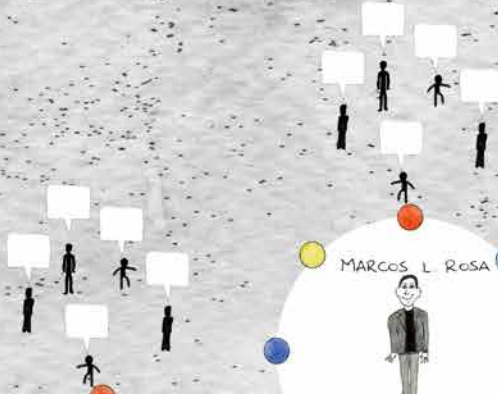
HANDMADE URBANISM  
FROM COMMUNITY INITIATIVES  
TO PARTICIPATORY URBANISM

"THE COMMUNITY"

UTE E. WEILAND MARCOS L. ROSA



"MAKE THE INVISIBLE VISIBLE"



FIVE CITIES

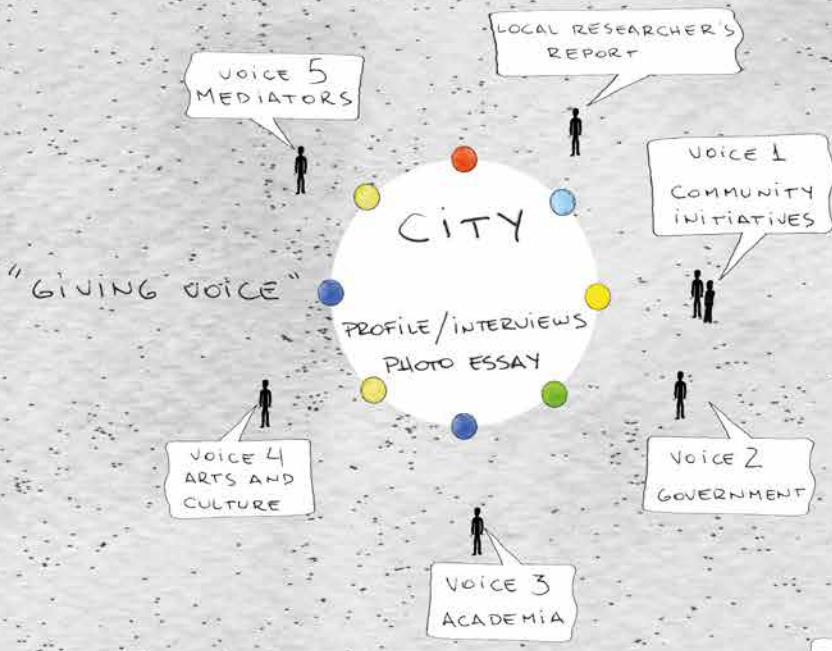
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WOLFGANG NOWAK

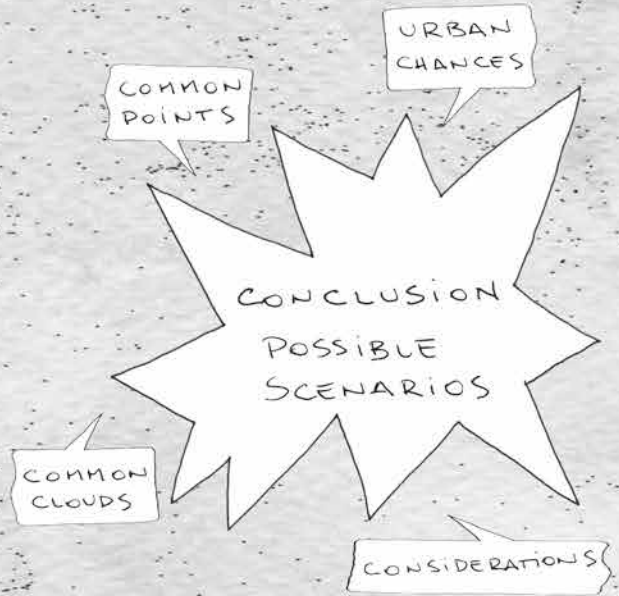


INTERVIEW WITH WOLFGANG NOWAK  
"RETURNING TO THE ROOTS"





INTRODUCTION OF THE  
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# Returning to the Roots

Wolfgang Nowak was the initiator of the Deutsche Bank Urban Age Award

## What inspired the Deutsche Bank Urban Age Award?

The idea for the award goes back to February 2006, when we hosted an Urban Age conference in Mexico City. I had an opportunity to visit a slum. Despite being a really awful crime-ridden neighborhood, its inhabitants had nonetheless created a marketplace and a school. They had tried to improve their own situation, creating a new city inside a situation of hopelessness. You find the same thing in Mumbai and São Paulo, people resisting their environment by building something. This is what prompted us to create the Urban Age Award. The aim of the award is to enable people to find better solutions and become active citizens. I am not one of these people, like a Florence Nightingale, who stands and gives soup to the poor. What we want is to enable the poor no longer to accept soup queues and produce their own soup.

We encourage citizens to take forward their projects, and sometimes we even enable mayors and citizens to meet. We honor alliances that improve the quality of life in cities and the prize celebrates the shared responsibility between residents, companies, NGOs, universities, public bodies, etc.

## We remember that after coming back from Cape Town earlier this year your first words were “Déjà vu.” Can you tell us that story?

This is a fascinating story about Cape Town and about all of the other cities. People start building their own “city centers” inside big “deserts” of agglomerated houses, they start building these oases based on the same pattern: it is the tree in the center and around this tree there are benches and gardens, and they plant some crops and then there is the spiritual center, which might be a library, or a school or some teaching or health facility, and the kitchen, where one learns how to prepare a good meal. They also have small places, squares, playgrounds where there is entertainment. These are safe environments where people can meet.

What fascinated me, if you start in Mumbai’s *Triratna Prerna Mandal*, and then go to Mexico City’s *Miravalle*, or even to the Sao Paulo’s *Instituto Acaia*, or to any other of these five cities, you can find a “center” with a facility, the square, an area that is somehow protected, secured not by a fence, but by the common will that collectively does something. Today, if you travel from the center outside of the city, which does not have clear borders, suddenly the city becomes just an agglomeration of houses, there is nothing else of what makes a city—there is nothing. And if you look at a famous picture of Mexico City that depicts “the endless city,” it looks like a horror vision of the city that started to sprawl and is not a village but an ocean of hopelessness where people live. My idea and what fascinated me is that inside this ocean of dwellings, people started to build what could be the beginning of a new city. And you could see this, for instance, in India’s slum of *Khotwadi*, inside of which a community project started building a city. In *Miravalle*, another initiative looks like the center of a village. We like Paris because if you go away from the large boulevards you will find little centers, with markets, trees and restaurants, and these cities are cities with different centers. This is also the charm of Berlin. In that sense, the vision of that “endless city” is not a vision of horror. If you look carefully, you see that people are starting to build their own cities or centers. It is different from the faceless cities being built by star architects and investors, with the skyscrapers and shopping centers. These small centers are surrounded by people who build their own “city within the city,” one that is surrounded by several others centers alike. They are the reinvention of cities inside of areas that we call *slums*, *favelas*, *gecekondus*, *barrios*, *townships*. Indeed, their efforts make sense, because they do not destroy the existing, but build on it.

**Why go to five cities to award best practices such as the ones we can see in this book? What can we do with what we found?**

I think the most urgent problem we face is our cities—it is a global problem. You cannot rethink cities without acknowledging the experience of grassroots projects that are designed by the people, not urban planners and architects. The award allows us to compare all these projects.

We found that there is a variety of creative initiatives indicating the different ways in which people forge partnerships to create a better urban environment and, as a result, a better life for themselves and their communities.

The Award looks for projects that bring together partners and visions in the organization of a better environment in some of the largest cities in the world. Along with that, it is intended to serve as a platform that organizes a network of urban initiatives at the grass roots level.

I think we can encourage mayors and urban planners to look around their environment to see if there is something happening. For me, it was interesting to see that whenever we told mayors about these initiatives in their cities, they were surprised. They were astonished about how many of these initiatives existed. City leaders should link these initiatives together. Such initiatives and those who manage them should be part of urban planning and not excluded. If we want to reinvent cities in the twenty-first century, this means returning to the roots, linking urban planning with community initiatives in order to learn from each other. I think we can learn a lot from the grassroots level.

**Wolfgang Nowak**

is Director of the Alfred Herrhausen Society, the International Forum of Deutsche Bank. Wolfgang Nowak initiated the Urban Age program, an international investigation into the future of the world's mega-cities in the twenty-first century jointly organized with the London School of Economics. He has held various senior positions in Germany's state and federal governments, France's Centre national de la recherche scientifique (French National Center for Scientific Research) in Paris, and UNESCO. After unification, he was State Secretary of Education in Saxony from 1990 to 1994. In addition, he was Director-General for Political Analysis and Planning at the German Federal Chancellery from 1999 to 2002. He lectures and publishes widely on academic issues and is a regular commentator for German television and newspapers. He is honorary Vice President of the British think tank Policy Network, Senior Fellow of the Brookings Institution in Washington, and Fellow at the NRW-School of Governance at the University of Duisburg-Essen.

**The Alfred Herrhausen Society**

Named after Alfred Herrhausen, a German banker and former chairman of Deutsche Bank who was assassinated in a roadside bomb attack in 1989, the non-profit Alfred Herrhausen Society (AHS) is a corporate social responsibility initiative of Deutsche Bank. Founded in 1992, its work focuses on new forms of governance as a response to the challenges of the 21st century. The Urban Age conference series and award program is one of three major initiatives supported by AHS. Broadly speaking, the AHS seeks traces of the future in the present, and working with partners in government, academia and business, aims to conceptualize relevant themes for analysis and debate globally.

# Make the Invisible Visible

Ute E. Weiland has coordinated the award process in all five cities

Cities—and megacities in particular—have become way too complex to be governed from a centrally located city hall. Nowadays, successful urban politics are largely based on temporary alliances, created for the solution of concrete challenges. With different stakeholders partaking, they prevent the alienation of citizens from one another. Alienation has already seized whole living districts of this world’s megacities; suggesting they form part of the city by labeling them “city districts” would certainly be wrong. They are isolated from the traditional quarters, not only geographically but also through sordid living conditions, high crime rates, and inadequate housing situations.

With the Urban Age conferences, organized jointly with the London School of Economics, Alfred Herrhausen Society has established a network of architects, urban planners, mayors, scientists, and NGOs, in order to find solutions for the cities of the twenty-first century. With the help of the Urban Age Award, this “network from the top” is supposed to be complemented by a “network from the bottom” to merge these to a better overall picture of the respective urban region.

Starting in 2007, the Deutsche Bank Urban Age Award distinguishes “partnerships of shared responsibility” between citizens, politicians, the economy, and NGOs, which contribute to an improved quality of living in their cities. The award was designed to encourage people to assume responsibility for their living environment. It is awarded annually, usually in the city that hosts the Urban Age conference of that year. After an open application process, an independent international jury awards the prize, which is worth 100,000 USD, to the winning project.

The overall aim of the Deutsche Bank Urban Age Award is to make the invisible visible, to show what potential there is in the slums, townships, barrios, gecekondu, or favelas of this world, and to constitute a lobby for those who have never had one.

For the implementation of the project, a local Award Manager (from the field of political science, architec-

ture, or urban planning) is assigned for the fieldwork in each city. Their overall function has been to trace projects in which people proactively improve their environment by forging partnerships and sharing responsibilities. While coordinating the award, each Manager has been in constant contact with those initiatives, learning about their aims and methods, visiting their sites, and documenting their work.

Their first task has always been to communicate the award to a network of different stakeholders—local authorities and administration, academia, journalists, artists and designers, NGOs, community associations, etc. In a second step, they created a platform for networks of different societal parts that are active in shaping the urban environment. These platforms were designed to mobilize the civil society of the respective city as well as to circulate the call for initiatives.

The Award Managers were sent on the ground in order to be in direct contact with a network of local actors involved in collective practices. The whole process of organizing the award provides an enormous potential for field research, as it allows exploring a number of projects in the urban local sphere.

By the immediate observation of these initiatives, the researcher no longer contemplates the world passively; he or she rather starts to experience it actively through the contact with people active in their own environment. In every city, the fieldwork continued with the search for local leadership immersed in their realities, or in the scale of their own neighborhoods.

In São Paulo in 2008, corresponding projects were located by systemic mapping, and subsequently related to the dimensions of the city as a whole for the first time. Furthermore, the intensive investigation of the local projects started to produce actual knowledge; the amount of information gathered from there was unforeseen until that moment. It opened up opportunities to reveal practices, to pinpoint fields of opportunity for actions, and to highlight their importance to the

construction of the city, as well as to document and to share it. These activities received considerable media coverage, which informed the civil society about the potential of those initiatives and about their impact on citizen's lives.

The mapping has taken place ever since. Even though most of the projects are modest in size, the procedure organizes a network that reveals innovative modes of spatial organization and disseminates this information to other stakeholders.

On a critical note, it is important to remember that the award has been successfully communicated through public relations activities and extensive documentation; to reach and induce local authorities to get involved, however, it requires a strong network between decision-makers and active citizens, a temporal alliance to make use of the dedication that was experienced in desperate environments. In other words, it needs urban planning that is willing to benefit from the open spaces that the participating projects have created despite adverse circumstances.

This was accomplished in Cape Town for the first time, where a vigorous Governor, an interested municipality, and the Cape Town Partnership were willing to interlink the 250 applying projects not only with each other, but also with the City of Cape Town and the Provincial Government. The result was an alliance that connects in a sustainable way what had not been connected before.

The Deutsche Bank Urban Age Award is designed to initiate such developments; it can make visible that the borders between historical urban quarters and slums do not symbolize walls between citizens and slum dwellers. Active citizenship exists even where the concept itself is unknown.

After five cities, five awards, and hundreds of projects documented during these years, the compiled material allows us to critically reflect on commonalities between the projects, about their exemplariness, their potential, as well as about their impact and innovation.

"Make visible what, without you, might perhaps never have been seen." (Robert Bresson, director)

#### **Ute Elisabeth Weiland**

has been the Deputy Director of the Alfred Herrhausen Society, Deutsche Bank's international forum since 2007, a member of the Executive Board of the Urban Age conference series at the London School of Economics since 2004, and since 1 January 2010 member of the Governing Board of LSE Cities.

In 1997, she co-founded the Erich Pommer Institute for Media Law and Media Management at the University of Potsdam and was its deputy managing director until 2003. Born in the former German Democratic Republic, she graduated from the Academy of Music in Weimar. After unification, she became chief of staff to the Secretary of State for education in Saxony. Ute E. Weiland is a member of the German-Israeli Young Leaders Exchange of the Bertelsmann Foundation and young leader of the Atlantik Brücke.



# The Community

Richard Sennett is Professor of Sociology at LSE and New York University and author of 'The Craftsman'

## Practising Commitment

I would like to visit the scene of a settlement house in Chicago where informal cooperation helped provide a social anchor for poor children like myself. Cooperation's difficulties, pleasures and consequences appeared among the people who passed through this dilapidated, bustling building on the city's Near West Side. Or so it seemed to me, when decades later I returned to share a weekend, sponsored by the settlement house, with thirty or so African-American adults who had grown up in this small corner of the Chicago ghetto.<sup>1</sup>

Memory played the same trick on my childhood neighbours that it does on everyone; the experience of years of change can be compressed in the memory of a face or a room. The black children I grew up with had a compelling reason to remember in this way. They were survivors. Their childhoods disorganized by poverty, doubting as adolescents that they had much of value in themselves to offer the larger world, they puzzled later in life about why they survived while so many of their childhood mates had succumbed to addiction, crime or lives lived on the margins. So they singled out a person, place or event as a transforming experience for themselves, as a talisman. The settlement house became a talisman, as did the strict local Catholic school and the sports club run by an organization called the Police Athletic League.

My childhood companions were not heroic; they did not rise from rags to riches, becoming racial exemplars of the American Dream. Only a few made it to university; most steadied themselves enough to get through secondary school, thereafter taking jobs as secretaries, firemen, store-keepers or functionaries in local government. Their gains, which might seem modest to an outsider, were to them enormous. Over the four days of our reunion, I went to visit some of their homes, and recognized domestic signs of the journey we had all taken: tidy backyards with well-tended plants, unlike the broken-bottle-strewn play areas surrounded by chain-link fences we had known as

children; domestic interiors stuffed with knick-knacks and carefully brushed furniture, again a contrast to the bare, scuffed interiors which before had counted for us as 'home'.

At the settlement-house reunion, people spoke with wonder at what had happened to the neighbourhood since we had all left. It had sunk further than any of us could have imagined, and was now a vast archipelago of abandoned houses, isolated apartment towers in which the elevators stank of urine and shit, a place where no policemen responded to telephone calls for help and most adolescents carried knives or guns. The magic talismans of a place or a face seemed even more required to explain the luck of escape.

The administrators of the settlement house, like the elderly cop representing the Police Athletic League, were of course happy to hear these testimonials to their saving presence, but too realistic to believe entirely in their own transforming potency: many kids who banged on instruments in the settlement house or played basketball on a nearby paved court eventually wound up in jail. And the past remained unfinished business for the survivors; issues they faced as children they continued to face as adults. That unfinished business falls under three headings.

The first concerns morale, the matter of keeping one's spirits up in difficult circumstances. So simple to state, morale was less clear to explain in practice, since my neighbours had every rational reason to succumb to low spirits as children, and even now could still wake up at night, when worried about an unpaid bill or a problem at work, thinking the whole edifice of their adult lives might suddenly collapse like a house of cards.

The second issue concerns conviction. At our gathering, people declared they had survived thanks to strong, guiding convictions—all were devoted churchgoers, and all had faith in family writ large. Though the African-American adults had passed through, and benefited from, the American civil rights upheavals of

the 1960s, those political gains didn't figure so much in their own thinking about their personal survival; if a door opens, you do not automatically walk through it. Yet when we got down to the grit of discussing our own children's adolescent angst, few people applied Scripture to that perennial, particular hard case. So too at work; rather than moralizing, people think flexibly and adaptively about concrete behaviour. On the job, for the first time, many of these young African-Americans were working side by side with whites, and they had to feel their way. Even twenty years later they had to do so, as when my childhood next-door neighbour became the supervisor of a group of mostly white subordinates in the motor bureau of Chicago.

And then there was the matter of cooperation. As children, the 'fuck you' version of cooperation dominated our lives, since all gangs in the community subscribed to it, and the gangs were powerful. In the immediate post-Second World War era, gangs dealt in petty theft rather than in drugs, as they would a generation later; small children were sent to 'front' shoplifting, since, if these children were caught, they could not be sent to jail. To avoid being sucked into gang life, kids had to find other ways of associating with one another, ways that flew under the radar-screen, as it were, of the gang's control. This meant hanging out in bus shelters or other places than those marked out as gang turf, or staying late at school, or heading directly to the settlement house. A place of refuge meant somewhere you could talk about parents, do homework together, or play checkers, all intermissions from 'fuck you' aggression. These intermissions in retrospect seemed enormously important, since the experiences planted the seed for the kind of behaviour, open rather than defensive, which had served people to make their way outside the community.

Now some of those who had survived by leaving wanted to 'give something back', in the words of a childhood neighbour, a foreman in the city's sanitation

department, but the youngsters in the project a generation later were hostile to people who offered themselves as helping hands, as 'role models'. As always, the message 'If I can do it, so can you' can be turned around: 'If I made good, why aren't you succeeding? What's wrong with you?' So the role model's offer to give something back to the community, to reach out, was rejected by the young people in the community who most needed help.

All three of these issues—the fragility of morale, conviction, cooperation—were familiar to me, but for me as a white boy they cut a different way. My mother and I moved to the housing project when my father left in my infancy and left us penniless, but we lived there only about seven years; as soon as our family fortunes returned, we moved out. The community posed dangers for me but not mortal dangers. Perhaps thanks to this distance, the reunion sparked in me the desire to understand how the three pieces of unfinished business among my childhood friends might be seen in a larger context.

### **Vocation**

Self-sacrificing, long-term, wilful and so fragile: these measures of commitment make it an experience inseparable from the ways we understand ourselves. We might want to reframe these experiences by saying that strong commitment entails a duty to oneself.

And then shift again the oppressive weight of that word 'duty' by thinking of commitment as a road map, the map of what you should do with your life.

Max Weber sought to explain this kind of sustaining commitment by the single German word *Beruf*, which roughly translates into English as a 'vocation' or a 'calling'. These English words are saturated with religious overtones from the time of the Great Unsettling.

The medieval Catholic imagined a religious vocation as the monk's decision to withdraw from the world; for others, remaining engaged in society, choice didn't enter the picture in the same way; faith was natural-

ized behaviour, taken for granted, beelike, though programmed culturally rather than genetically. Lutheran theology changed this. Drawing on the experiences of early Christianity, particularly on St Augustine's struggles to believe, Luther portrayed faith as an inner, active decision, a 'commitment to Christ' which has to be renewed again and again in the course of a believer's lifetime. The Protestant trauma lies in knowing what you should do with yourself, in the world. Judaism, Islam and Catholicism all provide life-designs external to the self; Protestantism of Luther's sort provides less of a design and stresses more the self.

A vocation can be made simple, framed just as strategic personal planning; when business gurus like John Kotter give motivational pep talks, they speak of inventing 'life-pursuit strategies'—all the Protestant pain of not knowing your purpose in life is rather hygienically removed in that advice.<sup>2</sup> Searching for a life-purpose more deeply serves us as self-criticism; a commodity-trader on Wall Street who became a schoolteacher observed to me, 'I guess I was meant to do something else.' This observation might apply as well to the upwardly mobile people in Cabrini Green; they were meant to do something else in their lives than remain rooted in poverty. But do any of us have an inner core of self waiting to be realized through our actions? Can convictions alone constitute that inner self? What has kept all my childhood friends going is their religious convictions, which seem to realize that inner core in themselves, even when these convictions don't translate literally as guides for everyday behaviour.

Weber pondered vocations which were more commanding—commanding in the political sense. His essay 'Politics as a Vocation' focuses on the 'ethic of conviction'. That 'ethic' can solve the riddles of self pro-pounded by the Protestant Ethic, when command over others becomes a personal life-purpose. In part, this is not an original idea; both Arthur Schopenhauer and Friedrich Nietzsche believed that the exercise of power

cures sickness of self. But Weber focused more sharply on politicians who are genuine believers, politicians at the opposite pole from Machiavellian schemers, politicians who believe what they preach. Weber feared committed politicians because they are likely to force others to pay obeisance to the convictions which have saved the political believer from his or her own inner confusions. A concrete example of what worried Weber is the declarations of solidarity displayed on the walls of the musee social in the Paris Exposition. 'Solidarity' was for Weber a cover for the process of purifying the will, of reinforcing its certainties, and so warding off inner doubt. In Weber's view the 'ethics of conviction' must always exclude or punish difference; once admit disagreement and conviction itself will collapse.

What then of the alternative to the ethic of conviction? In Paris in 1900 an alternative was put on display in documents about settlement houses, communal associations and workshops; the organizers of these groups certainly had both convictions and commitments, but a different sense of vocation. Community itself had become the vocation, a vocation in which cooperation became more an end in itself, fulfilling the selves of the people who lived or worked in the community.

My childhood neighbours in Cabrini Green, who had an early and profound engagement with a local community, did not develop that sense of community as an adult vocation—nor did they follow Weber's trajectory of power over others to confirm the self. Nor did mourning the past guide them about the vocation of 'giving something back'.

What, then, does the vocation of community entail? Put aside the romantic overtones of fulfilling one's destiny in a vocation; the issue then becomes how one might develop a sense of inner purpose by communal cooperation. This study ends with three versions of community as a vocation made by the heirs to the Parisian community organizers, each compelling, each ambiguous and each still, now, unfinished business.

- 1 I've described at greater length the Cabrini Green project, its neighbourhood and meetings like this in Richard Sennett, *Respect in an Age of Inequality* (New York: Norton, 2003), pt. I.
- 2 I'm quoting from one such pep talk Kotter gave at the Harvard Business School in 2008, but this idea of planned vocation appears in almost any self-help book.

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# An Urban Trend: Residents Taking Ownership of their Environment

Marcos L. Rosa, Ute E. Weiland, with Ana Álvarez, Lindsay Bush, Demet Mutman, Priya Shankar

Increasingly, people across the globe are engaging in improving the urban environments they live in. They act in response to urgent issues and compelling needs such as shelter, security, employment, health, and education. Community-based initiatives indicate the ability of citizens to present solutions to challenges posed by everyday life, and use creativity to transform and multiply existing resources.

Inadvertently political by nature, these initiatives are a response to the incapability of today's cities to cope with urban challenges via traditional planning culture and its instruments. They invite different actors to cooperate towards a new urban scheme driven by participation and a proactive attitude. They build collective space, collectively. They reveal a shared layer of the city that is complex, incremental and difficult to articulate, as it does not organize systems, but rather operates on a local level, fulfilling micro-agendas through direct action.

## Community Initiatives

This book investigates a series of grassroots initiatives that provide social infrastructures to neighborhoods with shortages of all kinds. It is the product of a five-year program (2007 to 2012) that used the platform of the Deutsche Bank Urban Age Award to compile and map out community projects in five cities in emerging countries: Mumbai, São Paulo, Istanbul, Mexico City, and Cape Town. In each one of the five cities, the award called for existing projects that:

- were already implemented and functioning, and demonstrated engagement and innovation
- shared responsibility for building collective space
- proved their ability to forge partnerships with different stakeholders: local and cultural associations, community leaders, residents, users, NGOs, artists, architects, activists, government, planning institutes, businesses, academia, etc.

- benefited communities, improving quality of life and the urban environment in their neighborhoods and cities.

The 741 initiatives that applied for consideration cross every sector. Projects deal with collective built space, the recovery of public space, communal cleaning of garbage dumps, sanitation programs, slum upgrade, and housing retrofit. A large proportion relates to the environment, through waste management programs, recycling, greening, and urban agriculture practices that make available high-quality, fresh, affordable produce in disadvantaged neighborhoods. Some are of an economic nature, through shared entrepreneurial activities that work to reduce unemployment.

Many projects activate public or collective space by promoting leisure activities such as sports, recreational, and cultural events—sometimes leading to the improvement of these spaces and the construction of new facilities. By creating local startups, services, and infrastructures, these initiatives have a positive impact on their neighborhoods, enhancing social cohesion. Local organization often gives rise to a community center, a collective kitchen, or a social enterprise—structures that work as focal points within existing social networks. They offer classes, courses, skills training, child care, and health programs that address the symptoms of poor urban environments (poverty, substance abuse, violence, and crime), and support and empower individuals to study, find work, and become active and enterprising in their daily lives.

Not all of these categories, programs and mechanisms are necessarily obvious at first glance. For example, a peaceful meeting space with a tree and a bench can hide a great complexity. This simple arrangement of objects can host a number of overlapping programs, actions that change and adapt according to local demands, populating an open framework.

This publication intends to make the mechanisms of these projects legible, to draft their complexity systematically and clarify their strategies and operational modes:

*In response to what do projects start? Which partnerships were created? What are the main challenges in implementing a collaborative project? Was there a desire to improve the urban environment? How did these improvements take shape?*

### **The Spirit of Entrepreneurship**

With these questions in mind, this publication allows one to dive into some of the projects showcased for each city. Analysis of the projects is intended to reveal the driving logics of problematic urban environments as they are read by their residents and users.

What some may describe as naive gestures, simple measures employed to fight serious problems prove highly effective in using existing minimal resources to catalyze social and economic gains. As Arturo Mier y Terán says, referring to Mexico City, "In the places where these projects are being carried out, one can clearly see a change." Without aiming to romanticize the contexts where the projects take place, we understand that, as modest as some of these initiatives may be, they are successfully improving residents' lives and transforming collective space in cities.

This book consists of a collection of photographs, the documentation of these initiatives, an action protocol depicted through illustrations, and a set of interviews drawing out different perspectives on the subject.

The mode of enquiry was systematically repeated in each city, from Mumbai to Cape Town.

It showcases fifteen projects, three from each of the five cities. This gives us a wider perspective that allows us to compare these cities.

Detailed illustrations made individually for each project depict their operational modes, reveal the ac-

tors involved, and the organizational steps that were taken. These drawings extract commonalities through the reoccurrence of similar programs, organized differently according to local challenges and overlapping each other in interesting schemes. The situations arising out of these actions are resourceful experiments in city-shaping that demonstrate the power of our shared "humanness" and its capacity to cut across physical, cultural, and geographical differences.

### **The Capacity of Negotiating and Building Alliances**

More than just narrating the stories of these projects, this book intends to organize a platform for discussion that engages different stakeholders in conceptualizing the impact of local initiatives at various levels:

*What is the importance of "bottom-up" urbanism and what are its operational mechanisms at this scale? What is the attitude of municipalities towards urban improvement and the redressing of inequality? Can grassroots complement the efforts of the public sector to integrate the city and improve livability in all areas? Is there a move towards integrating bottom-up with top-down planning initiatives? What are the long-term prospects for bottom-up practices? What future scenarios might be envisaged?*

Having started responding to urgent needs, these community initiatives had become evident in the nineteen-eighties and nineties and later evolved from independent to negotiating and demanding co-responsibility to institutions and the government.

A series of interviews deepens the discussion, inviting representatives in each city to reflect on these practices and bringing different perspectives to the table: grassroots projects and local leaderships, the government, academia and researchers, artists and cultural figures, and individuals connected to the local challenges of each city.

### **Embedded Productive Capacities**

"We are recognizing what an immense natural resource is right there to help the transformation, to generate income and shared entrepreneurship." (Malika)

Despite their geographic and temporal distinctions, all of these actions rely on a collaborative process that is, in each case, dominant and fundamental. They explore the capacity for production within urban settlements, contesting the model of urban vs. rural, or agricultural vs. industrial vs. service economies. These projects demonstrate how the agricultural, industrial, and service economies that historically divide the evolution of our cities, nowadays coexist in urban areas.

Incorporating these initiatives into mainstream planning would require a drastic change in the conception of city. In this new form of planning, metropolitan systems would need to not only support the service economy, but also allow for production: urban farming, small-scale manufacturing, social enterprises, creative practices, informal economies, and so on.

*How can we make efficient use of what we have? How do we engineer a future based on the productive capacities of our cities? How can we build a framework accessible enough to enable and encourage people to take part? How might a developed scenario look?*

*Are these temporary projects, and how might they develop over time? Can they impact upon the urban fabric in the future? What is their collective productive capacity to generate change?*

### **Participatory Modes for Future Scenarios**

The book outlines existing operations, identifies innovative tools and planning instruments, and seeks to shape grammars of action. Based on this, it aims to explore possible future scenarios that could emerge from these localized practices. Could they be scaled up? Might they make a larger and more systemic impact?

Investigating small-scale and sometimes invisible urban processes can reveal not only opportunities for action, but methods of operation that could be relevant to others. This approach suggests a transversal way of thinking about planning, one that acknowledges the equal importance of all the different voices compiled here. It drafts arguments that might lead to participatory models, and envisages a scenario where the knowledge and findings compiled from these real world experiences can begin to feed back into planning and policy. It is not a finished work, but rather an open process of investigation that gives rise to further inquiry.

# Five Cities