**THE URBAN SCALE:**

**build environment, social forms, and political potentials**

**Claudio Sopranzetti**

**COURSE DESCRIPTION:** More and more people around the world live in cities. But what are cities? How do they operate? What challenges, difficulties, and opportunities do they generate? What is that can and cannot be done in cities? The main objective of this class is to engage with these types of questions through an engagement with key theoretical concepts, case studies, and social research. With this in mind the course is divided in three sections. In the first one we will explore prominent conceptualization of urbanism, urban revolution and the relations between cities and capital. In the second section, instead we focus on different traditions of exploring cities at a variety of scales and in relation to different social formations (individual, neighborhood, global and so on), finally we engage with the political potentials that cities, and their multiple scales, offer. Each week is directed by one basic big question that we will engage with and, hopefully, by the end of the term we will be able to provide some answers to them.

**CLASS FORMAT:** The online course consists of three parts: video-recorded lectures or field explorations, readings, and seminar discussions. Each week you will have eithere an introductory lecture that grounds the themes and readings for the week in their historical, intellectual, and political context or a video that your TA and I produced on a Vienna based case study. The second part will instead be based on your readings and comments on them using Perusall. This is a very important part and is a requirement that you engage there with each other questions, comments, and notes. Finally, we will have a discussion section. Ideally, we would do this live online in the class designated time but, given the time difference, we may have to break down in groups or occasionally have asynchronous discussions.

**COURSE REQUIREMENTS AND LEARNING OUTCOMES:** Students are expected to critically engage with the questions we raise each week, contribute to discussion both through annotated readings and class participation, and develop a research projects (see final paper).

[1]      Careful preparation of the mandatory readings by the date on which they are to be discussed in class. Class discussion will require informed participation on the part of all. The readings will be available on Perusall, an annotation and reading software. Basically, this will allow you to write notes on the text, both notes for yourself (that no one else will see) and others that will be public. The idea is that through your notes, comments, doubts, and question we get to read together and develop a discussion directly in the text. This will be a very important part of class so you are expected to engage with our questions and with one another, which will be part of the final grade. (see below for info on how to use Perusall). This accounts for 30% of the final grade.

[2]    Class discussion. This is a question-driven class, which means we need to participate in trying to answer those. Class participation is therefore expected and a big part of your work. Examples from your own experience, movies, research are essential to our discussions so make what we read work for you, bring in your own questions and curiosities, and don’t be afraid of wrong answers, there aren’t any! Class participation accounts for 30% of the final grade.

[3] Final Paper: This will be a research paper based on something you are working on. We will discuss over the course of the term this with each of you. The paper should be 4000-5000 words. This will account for 40% of your grade.

**SECTION I: ON URBANISM**

**WEEK 1: Urban Revolution**

**Q: what is a city?**

**Required Readings:**

Wirth, Louis. 1938[2016]. “Urbanism as a way of life." In Richard T. LeGates and Frederic Stout, eds. The City Reader, 6th ed. Routledge, Milton Park, Abingdon, Oxon: 115-123.

Weber, Max. 1969[1921]. “The Nature of the City.” Pg. 23-46 in *Classic Essays on the Culture of Cities*. R. Sennett, ed.

Lefebvre, Henri. ‘The Specificity of the City,” and “Theses on the City, the Urban and Planning,” In Writings on Cities. Oxford: Blackwell.

**Additional Readings**:

Molotch, Harvey. 1976. “The City as a Growth Machine.” *American Journal of Sociology* 82, pp. 309‐330.

Smith, Neil. 2003. *Forward*. In Lefebvre, H., The Urban Revolution. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, pp. vii-xxiii.

Lynch, K., 1960. The city image and its elements. *MIT Press, Cambridge*, *41*, p.98-102

Lefebvre, Henri. 2003. “From the City to Urban Strategy,” from The Urban Revolution. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, pp.1-22.

Foucault, Michel. 1986. “Of Other Spaces,” Diacritics 15(1): 22–27.

**WEEK 2: City and Capital**

**Q: why are cities born and what attracts us there?**

**Required Readings:**

Harvey, David. 1978. “The Urban Process Under Capitalism: A Framework for Analysis” International Journal of Urban and Regional Research 2(1-3): 101–131.

Lefebvre, Henri. “Industrialization and Urbanization”, In Writings on Cities. Oxford: Blackwell

Brenner, Neil, and Nik Theodore (2002) "Cities and the geographies of “actually existing neoliberalism”." Antipode 34.3: 349-­‐379

**Additional Readings:**

Harvey, David. 2001. “Globalization and the ‘spatial fix’,” Geographische Revue 3(2), 23-30.

Ellison, Glenn, Edward L. Glaeser and William R. Kerr. 2010. “What Causes Industry Agglomeration? Evidence from Coagglomeration Patterns.” The American Economic Review. 100(3): 1195-1213.

Harvey, David. 2013. Rebel Cities, Chapter 2, "The Urban Roots of Capitalist Crises.”

Gilmore, Ruth Wilson. 2007. Golden Gulag: Prisons, Surplus, Crisis, and Opposition in Globalizing California. UC Press.

Searle, Llerena. 2018. “The contradictions of mediation: intermediaries and the financialization of urban production.” Economy & Society 47.4, 524–46.

Peck, Jamie, and Adam Tickell (2002) "Neoliberalizing space." Antipode 34.3: 380-404

Geddes, Mike (2009) "Marxism and urban politics." In Jonathan Davies and David Imbroscio (eds.) Theories of urban politics, London: Sage: 55-­‐72.

Greenfield, Adam. *Against the Smart City: A Pamphlet. This is Part I of" The City is Here to Use"*. Do projects, 2013.

**SECTION II: MULTIPLE SCALES**

**WEEK 3: City and Individuals**

**Q: what do cities do to people? And what do people do to cities?**

**Required Readings:**

Simmel, Georg. 2002 [1903] “The Metropolis and Mental Life.” In The Blackwell City Reader. Edited by Gary Bridge and Sophie Watson. Oxford; Malden: Wiley-Blackwell.

Ghannam, F., 2011. Mobility, liminality, and embodiment in urban Egypt. *American Ethnologist*, *38*(4), pp.790-800.

Caro, R.A. and Caro, R.A., 1974. Introduction in *The power broker: Robert Moses and the fall of New York*. Alfred a Knopf Incorporated.

**Additional Readings:**

Bourgois, P., Bourgois, P.I. and Schonberg, J., 2009. *Righteous dopefiend* (Vol. 21). Univ of California Press.

Kracauer, Siegfried. “Cult of Distraction.” In The Mass Ornament: Weimar Essays. Translated by Thomas Y. Levin. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1995. (First written in 1926).

Du Bois, W.E.B. [1899]“The Negro Problem in Philadelphia,” “The Question of Earning a Living,” and “Color Prejudice” In The City Reader.

Bondi, Liz, and Linda Peake. (1988) "Gender and the city: urban politics revisited." In Jo Little et al. (eds.) Women in Cities: Gender and the Urban Environment, New York: NYU Press: 21-­‐40

Paz, Octavio. “The Present Day.” In The Labyrinth of Solitude: Life and Thought in Mexico. New York: Grove Press, 1962. (First written in 1950

**WEEK 4: Neighborhoods and Enclaves: the city as mosaic?**

**Q: Is a city the sum of its neighborhoods?**

**Required Readings:**

Sampson, Robert J. 2012. Great American City: Chicago and the Enduring Neighborhood Effect, Part I.

Sopranzetti, Claudio. "Towards an ethnography of urban circulation." *The Routledge Handbook of Anthropology and the City* (2018).

Hannerz, U., 1980. *Exploring the city: Inquiries toward an urban anthropology*. Columbia University Press.

**Additional Readings:**

Bestor, Ted (2003, 2001) “Markets and Places: Tokyo and the Global Tuna Trade.” In Anthropology of Space and Place, S. Low and D. Lawrence-ZuZiga, eds. Malden and Oxford: Blackwell.

Richardson, Miles (2003,1984) “Being-in-the-market versus being-in-the-plaza: Material Culture and the Construction of Social Reality in Spanish America. In Anthropology of Space and Place, S. Low and D. Lawrence-ZuZiga, eds. Malden and Oxford: Blackwell.

Wacquant, Loic. 1997. ‘Three Pernicious Premises” In The Study Of The American Ghetto’ International Journal of Urban and Regional Research, 21,2, 341 – 353.

Lefebvre, Henri. “Lost in Transportation,” In Writings on Cities. Oxford: Blackwell.

**WEEK 5: City Governance**

**Q: Who runs a city?**

**Required Readings:**

Turner, John F.C. “Who Decides?” In Housing by People: Towards Autonomy in Building Environments. New York: Pantheon, 1976.

Lefebvre, Henri. ‘The Right to the City,” In Writings on Cities. Oxford: Blackwell.

Jacobs, Jane. 1961. “Introduction.” In The Death and Life of Great American Cities. New York: Vintage.

Larson, S., 2009. Whose city is it anyway? Jane Jacobs vs. Robert Moses and contemporary redevelopment politics in New York City. *Berkeley Planning Journal*, *22*(1).

Fernandez-Anez, V., Fernández-Güell, J.M. and Giffinger, R., 2018. Smart City implementation and discourses: An integrated conceptual model. The case of Vienna. *Cities*, *78*, pp.4-16.

**Additional Readings:**

Scott, James C. 1998. “The High-Modernist City,” In Seeing Like a State. Yale University Press, pp. 103–146.

Mitchell, Timothy. 2002. “Principles True in Every Country,” In Rule of Experts: Egypt, Techno-Politics, Modernity. UC Press, pp. 54–79.

Rotenberg, Robert (1995) Landscapes and Power in Vienna. Johns Hopkins Press.

Foucault, Michel. 2007. Lectures 1, 2 & 4 of Security, Territory, Population. New York: Palgrave Macmillan.

Holston, James (1999) “The Modernist City and the Death of the Street.” In Theorizing the City, S. Low, ed. New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press. Pps. 245-276.

**WEEK 6: Global Cities**

**Q: Are cities all the same?**

**Required Readings:**

Sassen, Saskia “A New Geography of Centers and Margins.” In The City Reader.

Sassen, Saskia. 2002. “Locating Cities on Global Circuits.” Environment and Urbanization 14(1): 13–30.

Robinson, Jennifer. 2002. “Global and world cities: A view from off the map.” International Journal of Urban and Regional Research 26(3): 531–54.

Swyngedouw, Erik (2004) "Globalisation or ‘glocalisation’? Networks, territories and rescaling." Cambridge review of international affairs 17.1: 25‐48

**Additional Readings:**

Spivak, Gayatri Chakravorty. “Megacity” Grey Room 1, no. 1 (2000): 8–25.

Sassen, Saskia. 2011. “The Impact of the New Technologies and Globalization on Cities.” Pg. 554-562 in The City Reader, LeGates and Stout, eds.

Logan, John. 2000. “Still a global city: the racial and ethnic segmentation of New York.” In Globalizing cities, edited by Peter Marcuse and Ronald van Kempen. Oxford: Blackwell, pp. 158-185.

Taylor, Peter. 1995 “World cities and territorial states: the rise and fall of their mutuality” in World Cities in a World System Paul Knox and Peter Taylor, Eds. Cambridge UP: 48‐62

**WEEK 7: Cities from the South**

**Q: Are all cities created equal?**

**Required Readings:**

Simone, A. M. (2008). The Last Shall be First: African Urbanities and the Larger Urban World. In A. Huyssen (Ed.), Other cities, other worlds: urban imaginaries in a globalizing age. Durham: Duke University Press.

Caldeira, Teresa PR. 2017. “Peripheral Urbanization: Autoconstruction, transversal logics, and politics in cities of the Global South.” Environment and Planning D: Society and Space 35(1): 3–20.

Roy, Ananya. 2004. “Urban Informality: Toward an Epistemology of Planning.” Journal of the

American Planning Association.

Watson, Vanessa. 2009. “Seeing from the South: Refocusing Urban Planning on the Globe’s Central Urban Issues” Urban Studies 46 (11) 2259‐2275

**Additional Readings:**

Cohen, Michael. 1996. “The Hypothesis of Urban Convergence: Are Cities in the North and South Becoming More Alike in an Age of Globalization?” in Michael Cohen, Blair Ruble, Joseph Tulchin and Allison Garland, eds. Preparing for the Urban Future: Global Pressures and Local Forces Washington: Woodrow Wilson Center and Johns Hopkins University Press, pages 25-­‐38.

McGee, T.G. 1995. “Eurocentrism and Geography: Reflections on Asian Urbanization”

in Jonathan Crush, ed. Power of Development London: Routledge, 192-­‐207.

Simone, AbdouMaliq. 2011. “Deals with imaginaries and perspectives: reworking urban economies in Kinshasa.” Social Dynamics 37(1): 111–124.

**WEEK 8: The Nature Metropolis**

**Q: Is the city “natural”?**

**Required Readings:**

Swyngedouw, Erik, and Nikolas C. Heynen. "Urban political ecology, justice and the politics of scale." *Antipode* 35.5 (2003): 898-918.

Rotenberg, R.L., 1995. *Landscape and power in Vienna*. Johns Hopkins University Press.

Monstadt, Jochen. "Conceptualizing the political ecology of urban infrastructures: insights from technology and urban studies." *Environment and planning A* 41.8 (2009): 1924-1942.

Heynen, Nik. "Urban political ecology I: The urban century." *Progress in Human Geography* 38.4 (2014): 598-604.

**Additional Readings:**

Davis, Mike. “Fortress LA.” Pg. 222-63 in City of Quartz and “How Eden Lost its Garden” in Ecology of Fear.

Heynen, Nik, Maria Kaika, and Erik Swyngedouw, eds. *In the nature of cities: urban political ecology and the politics of urban metabolism*. Vol. 3. Taylor & Francis, 2006.

**WEEK 9: Planetary Urbanization**

**Q: Is the whole world now a giant city?**

**Required Readings:**

Brenner, Neil, and Christian Schmid (2012) "Planetary urbanization." in Matthew Gandy (ed.) Urban Constellations, Berlin: Jovis: 10-­‐13

Reddy, R.N., 2018. The urban under erasure: Towards a postcolonial critique of planetary urbanization. *Environment and Planning D: Society and Space*, *36*(3), pp.529-539.

Buckley, M. and Strauss, K., 2016. With, against and beyond Lefebvre: Planetary urbanization and epistemic plurality. *Environment and Planning D: Society and Space*, *34*(4), pp.617-636.

Oswin, N., 2018. Planetary urbanization: A view from outside. *Environment and Planning D: Society and Space*, *36*(3), pp.540-546.

**Additional Readings:**

Brenner, Neil, and Christian Schmid. 2014. “The ‘Urban Age’ in Question.” International Journal of Urban and Regional Research 38 (3): 731–55.

Balakrishnan, Sai. 2019. “Recombinant Urbanization: Agrarian-urban Landed Property and

Uneven Development in India.” International Journal of Urban and Regional Research 43(4): 617–632.

Clark, David (2003) “The Future Urban World” in Urban World / Global City (2nd

edition) London: Routledge, pp. 191-­‐216

Brenner, Neil, et al., (2008) “State Space in Question” In Brenner, Neil et al. (eds.) State/space: a reader. Malden: Wiley

Brenner, Neil and Christian Schmid. 2015. “Towards a New Epistemology of the Urban?” City 19(2–3):151–82.

**SECTION III: POLITICAL OPPORTUNITIES**

**WEEK 10: Housing, Gentrification, and Squatting**

**Q: Why are cities full of houses without people and people without houses?**

**Required Readings:**

Foltin, R., 2014. Squatting and Autonomous Action in Vienna. *The City Is Ours: Squatting and Autonomous Movements in Europe from the 1970s to the Present. Oakland: PM*, pp.255-277.

Desmond, Matthew. 2012. “Eviction and the Reproduction of Urban Poverty.” American Journal of Sociology. 118(1): 88-133.

Ghertner, D. Asher. 2015. “Why gentrification theory fails in ‘much of the world’,” City 19:

552–563.

Bodnar, Judit, and Virag Molnar. "Reconfiguring private and public: State, capital and new housing developments in Berlin and Budapest." *Urban studies* 47, no. 4 (2010): 789-812.

**Additional Readings:**

Di Feliciantonio, Cesare. "Subjectification in times of indebtedness and neoliberal/austerity urbanism." *Antipode* 48.5 (2016): 1206-1227.

Martínez, Miguel. "Beyond solidarity: migrants and squatters in Madrid." *Migration, squatting and radical autonomy*. Routledge, 2016. 189-206.

Special Issue Editors: Birgit Glorius and Jeroen Doomernik, and Milena Belloni. "Learning how to squat: cooperation and conflict between refugees and natives in Rome." *Journal of Refugee Studies* 29.4 (2016): 506-527.

Ross, Kristen. 2015. Communal Luxury: The Political Imaginary of the Paris Commune. Verso.

Holston, James. 2009. “Insurgent Citizenship in an Era of Global Urban Peripheries.” City &

Society 21: 245-267.

Appadurai, Arjun. "Spectral housing and urban cleansing: notes on millennial Mumbai." *Public culture* 12, no. 3 (2000): 627-651.

Bayat, Asef. 2000. From 'dangerous classes' to 'quiet rebels': Politics of the urban subaltern in

the global south. International Sociology, 15(3).

Das, Veena. 2011. “State, citizenship, and the urban poor,” Citizenship Studies 15: 319-333.

Bhan, Gautam. 2019. “Notes on southern urban practice.” Environment and Urbanization, doi:

10.1177/.956247818815792.

Chiodelli, Francisco. 2019. “The Dark Side of Urban Informality in the Global North: Housing Illegality and Organized Crime in Northern Italy.” International Journal of Urban and Regional Research 43(3).

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Von Schnitlzer, Antina. 2016. “After the Rent Boycotts: Infrastructure and the Politics of Payment,” in Democracy’s Infrastructure: Techno-Politics and Protest after Apartheid. Princeton University Press, pp. 65–104.

Smith, Neil (2002) "New globalism, new urbanism: gentrification as global urban strategy." Antipode 34.3: 427-­‐450

Hayden, Dolores. “Edge City, Heart City, Drop City: Communal Building Today.” In Seven American Utopias: The Architecture of Communitarian Socialism 1790 – 1975. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1979.

\*Caldeira, Teresa P.R. 1999. “Fortified Enclaves: The New Urban Segregation” in James Holston, ed. Cities and Citizenship Durham, N.C.: Duke University Press, pp.114-­‐38.

Aalbers and Christophers - "Centering Housing in Political Economy" (2013)

Bryan and Rafferty - "Political Economy and Housing in the Twenty-First Century: From Mobile Homes to Liquid Housing?" (2013)

**WEEK 11: Urban Rioting**

**Q: What is a riot and how does it happen?**

**Required Readings:**

Kuymulu, M.B., 2013. Reclaiming the right to the city: Reflections on the urban uprisings in Turkey. *City*, *17*(3), pp.274-278.

Boutang, Y.M. and Riemens, P., 2005. The old “new clothes” of the French Republic. *Multitudes*, (4), pp.5-11.

Fassin, D., 2006. Riots in France and silent anthropologists. *Anthropology Today*, *22*(1), pp.1-3.

Tyler, Imogen. "The riots of the underclass?: stigmatisation, mediation and the government of poverty and disadvantage in neoliberal Britain." *Sociological Research Online* 18.4 (2013): 25-35

**Additional Readings:**

Razsa, Maple John. "Beyond ‘riot porn’: Protest video and the production of unruly subjects." *Ethnos* 79.4 (2014): 496-524.

Crane, Sheila. "Housing as battleground: targeting the city in the battles of Algiers." *City & Society* 29.1 (2017): 187-212.

Asseraf, Arthur. "Between the World and Algeria: International Histories of the Algerian War of Independence." *Arab Studies Journal* 25.1 (2017)

Hawthorne, Camilla. 2019. “Black Matters are Spatial Matters: Black Geographies for the Twenty-First Century.” Geography Compass : 1-13.

Dikeç, Mustafa. 2017. “Rage in the Urban Age” and “Young Turks find Peace in Revolt,” in

Urban Rage: The Revolt of the Excluded, Yale University Press, pp. 1–11, 175–213.

**WEEK 12: Mobility, Infrastructures and Blockages**

**Q: If the city is all about movement, what happens when someone blocks it?**

**Required Readings:**

Invisible Committee. *The coming insurrection*. Lulu Press, Inc, 2011.

Sopranzetti, Claudio. 2018. Selections from Owners of the Map: Motorcycle Taxi Drivers, Mobility,

and Politics in Bangkok. UC Press, pp. 17–62, 196–255.

**Additional Readings:**

Folkers, Andreas, and Julian Stenmanns. "Logistical resistance against operations of capital: Security and protest in supply chains and finance." *Geoforum* 100 (2019): 199-208.

Chatman, Daniel and Robert B. Noland. 2013. "Transit service, physical agglomeration and productivity in US metropolitan areas." Urban Studies 1(21): 1-21.

Frick, Karen Trapenberg. 2013. “The actions of discontent: Tea Party and property rights activists pushing back against regional planning.” Journal of the American Planning Association. 79(3): 190-200.

Anand, Nikhil. "Pressure: The politechnics of water supply in Mumbai." *Cultural Anthropology* 26, no. 4 (2011): 542-564.

Tufekci, Zeynep. *Twitter and tear gas: The power and fragility of networked protest*. Yale University Press, 2017.

Briziarelli, Marco. "Spatial politics in the digital realm: the logistics/precarity dialectics and Deliveroo’s tertiary space struggles." *Cultural Studies* 33, no. 5 (2019): 823-840.