

New Urban Worlds

Inhabiting
Dissonant
Times

AbdouMaliq Simone
Edgar Pieterse



New Urban Worlds

For these inhabitants of new worlds:
Manu, Na'ilah and Rafael

NEW URBAN WORLDS

Inhabiting Dissonant Times

AbdouMaliq Simone
and Edgar Pieterse

polity

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Preface

New Urban Worlds is primarily a polemic, an impassioned argument that stretches across diverse experiences, literatures and professional domains. It is a polemic because it tries to “call for things” even if all of the evidence is not yet in and often hard to come by. We call for the intersection of long-honed everyday practices of African and Asian urban residents with new forms of governing and with a strategic deployment of technological innovations of varying kinds. We desire to restore experimentation as a normative aspect of living in and running cities and want to think about how concretely to create space for such experimentation to be possible.

We are aware that, when you call for things, the immediate question is “How do you know enough about what is going on in order to call for something specific?” And, even then, should you reveal everything you know is going on, especially at a time when we are all being “read” in ways that we cannot control and often do not even know are taking place? But let us consider briefly what we think is going on – something about the fundamental conditions that drive the “calling” of this book.

If you are one of the scores of millions of residents across much of the urban “South” who cannot depend upon one specific job to earn your keep, who lacks sufficient documentation to secure a place to live over the long term, or who can’t afford to get sick or into any kind of trouble, what is

it that you pay attention to in order to know something about what to do? What happens if the people you rely upon for support or information are no longer available or suddenly turn against you? What happens when the skills you have to apply are also those of an increasing number of residents, and competition becomes increasingly fierce for opportunities? The question here is how can you best know what is going on and try to situate yourself in a position where opportunities might “come your way”? In other words, how can you be at the right place at the right time when there is no clear map available? We are convinced that these kinds of considerations dominate the minds and spiritual practices of most urban dwellers, yet much of what appears in both urban scholarship and policy prescripts seems oblivious.

In a not dissimilar way, researchers of urban life face difficulties when it comes to engaging with the largely makeshift complexion of many cities in Africa and Asia. The enormous transformations of the built environment and the enhanced possibilities of consumption that have marked even some of the most marginal of the world’s cities should not detract from acknowledging just how dependent the majority of the urban residents of these regions are upon constantly putting together some workable form of income and inhabitation. The makeshift character of much of what this majority does is quite literally “make+shift,” as pointed out by Vasudevan (2015).

Whatever they come up with is rarely institutionalized into a fixed set of practices, locales or organizational forms. This doesn’t mean that relationships and economic activities do not endure, that people do not find themselves rooted in the same place and set of affiliations over a long period of time. Rather, these stabilities come from constant efforts on the part of inhabitants to redefine the boundaries and interfaces between work, leisure, home, neighborhood and elsewhere. It entails constantly addressing the questions “What spaces are relevant to me?,” “What do I pay attention to and where?,” “Who do I talk to and do things with?,” “Who can I depend on and show things to?” In neighborhoods across the urban South, whatever is made, in terms of economic activities, buildings and social solidarities, then shifts in terms of its availability to specific uses and users, as well as its exposure to new potentials and vulnerability.

Drawing upon decades of work in poor, working- and lower-middle-class districts in urban regions across Africa and South-East Asia, this book attempts to weave interconnections among different ways of engaging and thinking about the complexity of how different urban actors decide and act within highly circumscribed and often uncertain contexts.

In methodological terms, it means that we locate our research and propositions within a relational epistemological force field that is anchored by two axes. The first axis stretches from surface knowledge to in-depth understandings of highly localized phenomena, including psychological interiors of actors. Surface knowledge references the insights that one can assemble from quantitative data sets that allow the analyst to consider scale, frequency, relationalities and patterns over time. Quantitative trends are crucial to appreciate the specificities of urbanization dynamics in diverse geographical scales in the early twenty-first century, when the very foundations of the economy, political systems and cultural reference points are undergoing profound change. At the same time, due to the “make+shift” character of these cities, it is equally important to expand dramatically in-depth accounts of the social drawing on relational ontologies (Pieterse 2015a). It is only by triangulating both depth and surface dimensions of contemporary urbanism that can we hope to get a purchase on what is actually going on.

The second axis of our epistemological force field stretches between applied theoretical concerns that we define, in contradistinction to philosophy, aesthetics and the poetic, as “grounded pragmatism.” These denote theoretical rest-stops that store conceptual resources to support sense-making of different kinds of data, but also to instigate propositional concepts and experiments. This book draws on an eclectic mix of theoretical resources to anchor our sense-making of highly fluid contexts, but we have deliberately resisted getting into the nitty-gritty of competing theoretical frames or performing a review of the literature. The references offer the reader a comprehensive insight into materials we find most compelling. Moreover, we are not particularly interested in the academic game of theoretical one-upmanship that seems to dominate so much of urban scholarship these days.

In a nutshell, this epistemological force field allows us to adopt a research approach that seeks to articulate the gener-

ous engagement with the details of urban life with the power of re-description in order to understand what might be going on while keeping an eye on clarifying resonant propositions. Thus, the work we have done includes ethnographic and applied research, forging research, advocacy and policy-making networks, advising municipal governments and development agencies, and starting and running urban institutions dedicated to enhancing broad-based participation in making rules and plans. The language of the book then reflects these different viewpoints and engagements with different actors, sectors and cities. It is a language that covers different “musical scales” – i.e., styles and rhythms. It looks for different ways into cityscapes that always seem to be switching, pulsating and reshaping. Thus the analysis applied and the proposals suggested are experimental and provisional and invariably ask for patience to see the conceptual journey to the end. Our account reflects a need to be able to do things differently now. While massive and long-term transformations are of course necessary, this book attempts to make use of what exists now but is sometimes not seen, not read, and thus does not become a resource for deciding and acting. While we offer strategic visions for how to face the enormous challenges of impoverishment, urban growth during climate change, and the exigency of justice, we concentrate on mapping out the potentials of the immediate – the lived realms of the “make+shift” city.

Just like the processes through which urban actors decide and act, this task of reworking the immediate is full of twists and turns. This is in part because the urban is full of paradoxes. Clear differentiations between urban and rural, local and global, self and other, time and space, human and non-human, North and South, public and private – long critical vehicles of orientation – are simultaneously intensifying and waning, becoming more sharply drawn as they are also being folded into each other. In a world where there is so much to pay attention to, where each decision seems more urgent, imbued with greater significance, it is harder to make distinctions between what is and what is not important to pay attention to, what is salient or irrelevant. This means that decision-making gets simultaneously more complicated and frustrating. The constitutive nature and generative potential of paradox is foregrounded throughout the book.

The capacities of the poor to get by with little, and thus to be rendered either targets of development or manipulated pawns in a game of continuous displacement, may ironically suggest a conceivable future for everyone in light of carbonated dystopias that become more apparent every year that CO₂ emission reduction targets are spectacularly missed. How is it possible to live through these seeming paradoxes? How is it possible to maintain the productive boundaries among places, between spatial exteriors and interiors, and among distinctive ways of life without being disabled by their paradoxical encounters? How to think the doubleness of things, of ways in which differences can move toward and draw from each other as a movement of justice and equanimity?

In *New Urban Worlds* we try to follow and understand some of the dimensions of the “make+shift,” but we do so with the proviso that this pursuit does not end with a systemic conclusion or the pretence that we think we have got our hands on what is really taking place. Much of our uncertainty here has to do with a politics of urban knowledge where, in many instances, the “majority” has been ordered to “shut up” and not make waves. Equally significant is the tendency on the part of government and the apparatuses of the corporate and political elite to unleash violence and exert control over the uses of space and materials. They often either marshal or steal outright the capacities, ideas and resourcefulness of the majority in order to manoeuvre through situations where they otherwise would lack legitimacy and know-how.

At the same time, in order for any “make+shift” to work in a grounded pragmatic sense, it has to embody generosity, reciprocity, a sense of openness and experimentation in order to keep affective ties, information and cooperation flowing. So, in order to create space for such exchanges, residents have often had to make it look like nothing much was ever going on, or to amplify the problematic aspects of their everyday lives so as to appear so depleted or self-occupied that it would seem impossible for there to be any room for experiments, sharing, or give and take.

This does not mean that residents don’t have a rough time or that they do not spend a lot of time and effort just to put food on household tables. It doesn’t mean that the manipulations and everyday brutalities are simply a deception. They

are present, and urban life for many is a constant process of being worn down and wasted. But, at the same time, to circumvent a life of dispossession often means taking the risk of losing everything or of playing with practices and ways of making money that embed individuals in relationships that are both volatile and trusted – that build trust, obligations and reciprocities from the sheer fact that they are not recorded, institutionalized. This can be seen in operations such as gambling, smuggling, pooling, diverting, and bundling time, money, people and things into seemingly weird schemes or hustles.

As such, much of research that depends on getting people to say what it is that they are doing and what it means cannot readily apply, even if there is no choice but to talk to as many people as possible as the primary means through which to try to come to grips with what is going on in a particular place or situation. All of this is to say that, in this book, we are up against a complicated politics of knowledge, of how inhabitants decide and act. This has led us over the years to try out many different ways of engaging different residents and aspects of the cities in Africa and South-East Asia where we have done most of our work.

The research business is full of many tricks, particularly the ethnographic variety, and we have employed many of these throughout the years. Perhaps the most crucial aspect of our engagement with urban processes is that most of the research we have conducted over the past decades has been done at the behest of some local institution or movement that itself is trying to extend its work into new areas of a city or to equip its members with new tools to mobilize residents more effectively around issues that are important to them. This task has meant having to come up with ways that help “sneak” inhabitants – who have been ignored and marginalized – into parts of the city that don’t want them there, so that they could find out for themselves more about what is going on. It is a method that combines performance, invention and, at times, just a little bit of deception.

We have worked across many different popular participation exercises implemented by municipal governments and NGOs to try and broaden the constituencies involved in planning, service delivery and program development. We have worked with local markets, political campaigns and municipal

restructuring programs. We have worked as retailers in local markets, as journeymen in long-distance trade networks, and as teachers in local schools. We have sometimes been asked by associations of residents themselves to help them look differently at their own dynamics, to become researchers of their own living and economic spaces. All of this work has produced a great deal of stories, glimmers here and there of well-oiled machines at work. But, mostly, these engagements have shown that there is an inordinate amount of complexities at work, even in situations of clear deprivation where the story would seem to be a simple one of dispossession and little else.

We emphasize the point about the politics of knowledge because it is crucial to an overarching point that we attempt to make here. That is, nothing really can be done to make urban life more sustainable, just and economically viable without going through the “make+shift” complexion of the city and urban regions. Whether the processes of urban transformation entail incremental development, militant social activism, smart city management, entrepreneurialism or state-based redistribution, they all have to be effectively linked to the everyday makeshift practices through which the majority of residents in Africa and Asia come to grips with urban life. These links will have to be predicated on a broader, more open and experimental engagement with practices which are often not unambiguous in terms of their ethical composition and efficacy, which are often of limited duration, and which, like the “make+shift,” change their looks and ways of operating.

Instead of being quick to rectify apparent problematic situations, what residents are up to needs to be engaged with in its own terms, even when terms, words and concepts may not actually be available. Often, all we have to work with is a vague sense of things or an unyielding determination on the part of residents. Too often activists and policy-makers expect that residents should do more to fight for their rights and for justice. Too often they are criticized for being enamored of consuming the latest products. Too often they are condemned for their fundamentalism, aggressiveness, lack of initiative or dogged pursuit of money. It is important both to step back from those assumptions and to find more ways of stepping into the fray as a means of thinking through what

else might be taking place. This is why we insist on the importance of a multiplication of slow research work that falls on the “depth” end of the methodological axis.

Furthermore, we should not assume that residents are interminably resilient and thus capable of finding their ways out of jams and dead-end projects. To engage difficult places on their own terms does not mean simply leaving them alone or relinquishing the responsibility to speak critically. But it does mean, as entailed in the sense of the “make+shift,” that researchers, advocates, politicians, administrators and service providers should make their “move.” They also must be willing to shift what they do and think in face of the wide range of responses those moves will inevitably elicit, and not seek some overarching, standard set of development procedures.

That said, as we argue later on, there are at least four aspects at the core of an anticipatory politics and research ethic for the city:

- 1 a rigorous and unromantic engagement with technological change as digital platforms become increasingly pervasive, enabling and predatory;
- 2 a commitment to walking the street and finding compelling ways to re-describe the affective dynamics of everyday urbanism and the kinds of horizon lines to which they may be pointing;
- 3 coming to grips with the changing and creaking institutional formats of the state (hierarchy and market), market and civil society organizations (network and hierarchy) with an eye toward figuring alternative formats to curate organizational designs that are fit for purpose;
- 4 instilling a passion for experimentation in order to forge new concepts and imaginaries that can anchor and accelerate new practices, at diverse scales and in numerous institutional settings. Practically, this points to a sensibility to advance learning through experimentation.

The skills and sensibilities at work in all of the various home-grown, city-specific varieties of the “make+shift” have to be the basis for a pluri-scalar approach to climate adaptation strategies and a more just city. New employment opportunities must be coupled to the deployment of green technologies

and implemented through various pilot experiments. City-wide social movements must be engaged in policy debates, planning commissions and sectoral reforms. Grassroots coalition building has to be more creative in terms of coordinating different forms of organization.

Again, a spirit of openness and generosity must persist across these efforts. This entails a willingness to work with the *details* of how everyday life, institutions and technologies actually operate without necessarily rushing to envelop the details in ready-made ideological or interpretive frameworks. In this book we have tried to stay close to these details and to work with the knotty ambiguities of everyday urban life, knowing full well that the epistemological ground is shifting beneath our feet all of the time.

1

Paradoxes of the Urban

Inhabiting the paradox

This is a book about stories, or, rather, about particular ways of telling them, or, in another sense, how to discover and unearth them. It is about story *lines* – lines that connect stories urban inhabitants tell about themselves, other inhabitants and cities near and far. It is about stories that cities seem to tell about themselves, about what needs to be done. What kinds of lines navigate through all of these different stories? How is it possible to draw new lines, lines that make unusual connections, but which allow us to see urban phenomena in different ways, and thus make different kinds of decisions? Such story lines are not straight and narrow. They often end up in such a way that they don't get their stories straight. But perhaps this is the only way to deal with a story of cities that is full of paradoxes.

Cities across Africa and Asia move toward and away from each other in significant ways. No longer, if ever, coherent actors in themselves, cities as social and administrative entities, nevertheless, attempt to posit themselves as dynamic engines of economic growth and social transformation. Urbanization, as a process once embodied by the city form, now takes on varying shapes and sizes, expanding cities into megalopolises, shrinking them into shadows of former selves,

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or articulating a vast range of places and resources in tight relationships of interdependency.

Cities become the venues for all kinds of countervailing tendencies: where narrowing and expansion, ambiguity and precision, dissipation and consolidation, embodiment and digitalization, movement and stasis are all intensified – and sometimes become indistinguishable from each other. Urbanization is something that seems increasingly to make itself, something independent from its once familiar function as an arena where different things were made, articulated and prompted into new synergies. Associations with density, social diversity, churn, and the circulation of disparate experiences through each other no longer seem to hold as key criteria for designating something as “urban.” Differentiations between local and global, public and private, exterior and interior, intensive and extensive appear to fold into and, sometimes, collapse upon each other. The very organization of meaning, with its boundaries of here and there, self and other, citizen and stranger, becomes both more pronounced and more subject to erasure. More and more the urban seems to be a confounding story (Amin 2013a, 2013b; Easterling 2014).

What does it mean to think politically within an urban environment of such seeming paradox? This is the question we attempt to address in this book, particularly by considering how urban politics and programmatic interventions might operate simultaneously through inventions at the level of municipal and metropolitan systems *and* through acupunctural interventions at the level of neighborhoods or districts. This *double* approach assumes that the conventional rules of the game – home and property ownership, formal taxation systems, standardized outlays of infrastructure – are inadequate to the realities in which urban life is actually lived. This is life not layered through orderly scales and sectors but, rather, assuming multiple spatial forms. As such, interventions, policies and mobilizations must be capable of resonating across disparate terrains and vectors of impact.

Some of the key theorists of urbanization – Robert Wirth, Lewis Mumford, Manuel Castells, Henri Lefebvre, David Harvey, Saskia Sassen, Neil Brenner and Christian Schmid – all point, albeit in different formulations, to urbanization as both a process of intensive differentiation of people and things and the subsuming of singular human experiences, technical instruments and spaces

of sociality to a continuous remaking of abstract worlds. In other words, urbanization makes things more specific and, at the same time, turns specific things into components of “machines” that appear to have no “real” body, no concrete being, but yet act as a powerful entity. Jennifer Robinson has gone beyond these formulations to develop modes of knowledge creation that, through creative acts of comparison, continually reconstitute a wide range of possibilities for what the urban is and can be.

As such, the city is always something to be remade according to new models, new possibilities of generating value (Sevilla-Buitrago 2015). Cities across Africa and Asia then share the problems of producing more spectacular built environments, accommodating large numbers of recent and usually poor residents, and managing vast and easily bubbled property markets (Watson 2009). Yet, composing these similarities can entail very different procedures and elements. They involve many different stories. When we say that we are going to deal with urbanization in Africa and Asia in this book, we know that these designations are shorthand. We know that we can never cover the intricacies of urbanization in these intensely differentiated regions with anything approaching comprehensiveness. Both Asia and Africa are not countries or stable territorial configurations. Rather, we use them here as signs of an evolving process of urbanization that both corresponds to and diverges from previous epicenters and conventional narratives. They are the backdrop for our stories, a way of narrowing down the lens of our considerations, and a way of pointing to a form of urbanization largely still in the making and thus potentially open to new forms of development and governance.

While cities and urban regions often act like unstoppable juggernauts in their pursuit of spectacular and easy profits, the messy details of how the particular spaces within African and Asian cities get to have the kinds of populations and characteristics they have draw on divergent histories and day-to-day encounters. Cities are arenas of action, and they vary as to how actions are considered, controlled and valued, and for whom certain actions are safe and legitimate. While cities may no longer embody the critical dimensions of urbanization, they remain powerful objects of imagination, sociality and governance (Derickson 2015; Hall and Savage 2016).

In some cities, sex is one of the few vehicles of free expression; in other cities it is full of routinized drudgery (Sheller

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2012). In some cities, the household is the bastion of security and nurturance; in others, it may be a dangerous minefield. In some cities, vast populations are warehoused with little to do but are equipped with a basic, subsidized existence; in yet others, existence is an unrelenting scramble for advantage (Zeiderman 2016). In some cities, most residents have reasonable recourse to officials designated to manage problems; in others, problems are addressed simply by temporarily substituting alternative problems for the original ones.¹

Of course cities differ within themselves concerning the practices of everyday behavior – actions about friendship and enmity, care and sexual desire, the circulation and hoarding of knowledge, the camaraderie or isolation of work, or the togetherness or apartness of where and how people spend their days. The veneers of official description – the ways in which cities seem controlled, the rules and habits, the possibilities and restrictions – also tend to cover up many public secrets (Taussig 1999). They occlude ways of living that are not supposed to be taking place, but do so anyway. Of course, almost everyone knows that these transgressions are taking place, but they also know that it is more dangerous to acknowledge this reality. The dimensions of this duality are explored in greater detail in later chapters.

In this book we will often refer to cities *and* urban regions as a way to point both to how urbanization does not necessarily equate to the city and to the various formats of urbanization that seem either to exceed the familiar scale of the city or to take on hybrid forms (Painter 2012; Addie and Keil 2015). These hybrids might include various amalgamations of cores, peripheries, corridors, greenfields and extraction zones. The notion of regions has been used in many different ways. Regions point to macro-level articulations or points of orientation around particular physical terrains or modes of production, occurring within and among national states (Sassen 2010). Regions might refer to spatial distributions of similarity and covariance in terms of demographics, histories and politics that cut across clearly delineated scales (Crescenzi et al. 2012; Zhang 2014). Notions of “new regionalism” refer to administrative and political constructions of specific transnational or transurban regulatory frameworks of economic operation. They point to intensifications of particularity and

clustering at sub-national levels (Agnew 2013; Jones 2002; Parr 2008), which seem to have become more salient to the logistics of globally articulated economic value chains. This discourse has also become more prolific with the policy focus on agglomeration economics as the key to prosperity (Glaeser 2012).

Each of these instances of the regional raises questions about the logics of coherence. To what degree are regions administrative artifacts, platforms of affective solidarities, basins of attraction, analytical or vernacular clusters of flows and linkages, or concretizations of specific political, economic or cultural relationships? How are they materialized through watersheds and other geomorphic features (Booth and Bledsoe 2009)? Whether they “actually” exist or are simply ways of materializing particular ideas about critical differences of various kinds is a seemingly moot concern. More importantly, what are the performative dimensions of what regions do in various circumstances and times? For the power of regions as constellations of emplacement lies in the way they both mediate between the stabilities of specific populations and ways of doing things *and* create more open-ended exchanges with larger surrounds (Brighenti 2016; Coward 2012).

The relationships between the forces of global capital and the locally expressed forces of intermeshed and messy encounters are not assignable to clearly distinct scales. It is not that global capital sits above a world of cities orchestrating its circuits below, apportioning things here and there in some kind of command-and-control fashion (Amin and Thrift 2002; Brenner and Schmid 2014; Harrison and Hoyler 2015; Lawhon and Patel 2013). Neither are the intermixtures of inclinations, styles and practices that make up a local vernacular simply confined within the administrative or cultural boundaries of a specific urban region. The articulations are marked by infidelity of scale and thoroughly indeterminate. The prolific dispersal of highly localized African popular urban music is but one visceral example.

We know well just how wage relations, the extraction of surplus, or the hoarding of capacity work their way into the blood, into what may be experienced as the DNA of contemporary urban individuals. We also know the peculiarities of how cities spill over their boundaries. In part, residents

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embody this spilling by moving across the world, making their performances visible through all kinds of media. It is also reflected in the human inclination to imitate, to coalesce on the basis of people taking things from each other. So what connects or divides cities is a moving target, something shifting all the time across and within geographical scales and times (Lingis 2000).

One thing that seems certain, however, is that substantial demographic changes will constitute proliferating axes of urbanization across African and Asia as a powerful epicenter of global urbanization. While the youth bulge may have peaked across most of the world, the youth population will continue to grow substantially in Africa and South Asia for the coming two decades, which means a key challenge is the provision of work, particularly in cities largely centered on both informal and industrial labor markets, now increasingly overcrowded (ILO 2013; Nayar et al. 2012; Thurow 2014). We explore this imperative in greater detail in chapter 2.

Catch-22

So much of urban Asia and Africa seems caught in a catch-22. The very spatial products and policies undoing long-honed practices of inhabitation are offered as the cure for their loss. Customary land arrangements, public guarantees, forms of tenancy and land- and building-use give way to condominiums, shop-house complexes, and all-in-one sub-cities, almost always fully sold in advance of completion, at least in the Asian context. The actual mechanisms of “full occupancy” often entail complex and shady financial manoeuvres. But there clearly is a market for investments, especially on the part of a younger generation of urban residents who often are able to mobilize significant portions of the sale price up front. In Asia, the peripheries of major urban regions are being filled in with both new town developments and masses of cheaply and uniformly built small housing units, as poorer residents are often evicted from both the urban core and suburban areas.² We expect many African countries to mimic this trend as similar stylized investors are likely to

set up shop and operational modalities in fast-growing African cities.

The stories behind such financial mobilization are often varied. So, from Lagos to Jakarta to Recife to Kolkata, how such money is actually placed on the table derives from vast mixtures of the licit and the illicit, from savings to borrowing on future earnings, from the proliferation of the marketing of goods and services on and off the books – in other words, from an “urban economy” that does not necessarily become less diverse as the destinations of its proceeds may become more standardized.³ But even in cities where transitions are happening quick and dirty, where real estate restages piracy on the high seas and speculation becomes a national pastime, conditions now on the ground are more tremulous, uneven and volatile than the consolidation story would seem to make them. This is not so much a matter of the persistence of particular places and practices; it is not the obduracy of specific populations to change or a growing resistance of the marginalized, whether the long-term poor, a fallen middle class, or youth with no employment prospects.⁴

Rather, the intersections of cut-throat competition over the rapid acquisition and development of land, the sense of exigency shared by all kinds of inhabitants to do something quickly to improve their prospects, and the often murky ways in which land can become embedded in a thicket of bureaucratic statuses produce different kinds of voids, leftovers and transition spaces (Benjamin 2015). Perhaps these voids and transition spaces will be eventually folded into the prevailing standardized formats of commercial and residential development. But for now it is not completely clear where they are headed. Current trajectories of urban change take apart interwoven relations of proximity, economic livelihood, local collaboration, mutual witnessing, give and take, and a spirit of opportunism that were based on *both* sharing and theft. They also take apart the articulations of contiguity, where spaces physically next to each other had some kind of linkage no matter the character of the boundaries that divided them, even if transgressing the divides was the only available option.⁵

As such, the rush to parcel, to sort, to convert space to property, to maximize ground rent and to claim turf may generate spatial products that sweep across cities and their