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Abstract

This article considers the conundrums entailed in maintaining the notions of “city” and “Global South” in an era where urbanization is no longer epitomized by the city form and where the Global South as a distinctive geopolitical entity has largely been fractured into a multiplicity of domains and histories. Nevertheless, the compositions of contemporary urbanization processes engineer an urban world that is largely deterritorialized in terms of geographical and socio-technical specificity but simultaneously necessitates heterogeneous articulations across territories that open up spaces for the reiteration of many Souths. These potentially continue a long trajectory of solidarities and singularities among postcolonial urbanities. The article details the ways contemporary urbanization processes are composed via a heterogeneity of flows and corridors, while they are simultaneously reterritorialized through the elaboration of popular economies that express a partial disjuncture with capital-central logics of urbanization and the concretization of urbanization potentials embodied by long histories of struggle.

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INTRODUCTION

For many working in urban studies, the notion of cities and the Global South might sound a bit like an oxymoron. Not only do the two terms seem to fall apart in a plethora of new configurations of urban geography but each also works against the other. The accelerated remaking of urban space taking place everywhere has largely been exemplified in the vastly jumbled up formations of territory, often subject to weirdly oscillating rhythms of ascendance and decline, that is prevalent in the South. Urban regions there have come to encompass nearly every imaginable built form across multiple juxtapositions and governmental arrangements that make it difficult to sustain the coherence or salience of conventional notions of the city (Angelo 2017, Keil 2018).

Likewise, the massive mobilizations of real estate capital have altered significant portions of Southern landscapes in ways that often self-consciously aim at erasing historical distinction or fulfilling historical destinies, albeit in forms that tend to match the imaginaries of the West. Thirty years ago, moving across warrens of densely packaged mud-constructed huts in Addis Ababa while trying to avoid the heavy-handed, Soviet-assisted surveillance of the police, I could not have imagined how the city would be transformed into a world of superblocks, condominiums, and monorails, largely implanted by Chinese finance and engineering. Although its boundaries are disputed, Addis Ababa now extends far into its hinterlands where hardscrabble peasant subsistence is converted into a game of lucrative land speculation.

All of this necessitates considerations of why and how lands of Central and South America, Africa, and Asia were turned into the South in the first place, as various acts of othering that deemed those lands either empty or populated by people so devalued that cheap extractions of resources could be legitimated and external modalities of rule imposed. While most Southern regions possessed long legacies of urban life of markedly different longevities, by the late nineteenth century, most existent cities were simply treated as logistical hubs, centers of administration for resource-laden hinterlands, and their populations not capable of being sufficiently urban. In Mamdani's (1996) famous treatise on the difference between citizens and subjects, these cities became mechanisms for racializing space, where different parts of the city were either white or black.

Urbanization would come to provide an important impetus and infrastructure for the anticolonial struggles of the twentieth century even as nascent governments would inherit an amalgam of spatial designs, institutional operations, and densely populated landscapes that would be difficult to alter or sustain. If, as has become the common mantra, the world is primarily an urbanized one, much contemporary research brings to the forefront the massive expansions of established Southern primate cities, the proliferation of towns and secondary cities, and the enfolding of rural areas into vast factory floors.

Particularly in the South, there is a will to urbanization that rushes to convert agricultural, grazing, and fallow land into extensions of cities hundreds of kilometers away. In Kinshasa, with a capital budget a quarter of that of Antwerp and the largest proportion of residents living below established poverty lines for any city of more than five million, residents commonly speculate on the acquisition of land at various locations in the hinterland, not wanting to miss whatever trajectory of expansion becomes the most dominant (De Boeck & Baloji 2016, World Bank 2018). Extended urban regions become a hodgepodge of makeshift, hurriedly constructed commercial centers; affordable housing for an emerging middle class; farmland; rough-hewn, autoconstructed provisional shelters; leisure parks; waste dumps; and factories—which, for all of their urban features, frequently remain dependent upon rapidly diminishing agricultural surpluses.

The urban Global South seems to presently exist in a kind of parallax view. On the one hand, the term acts as vernacular shorthand to refer to long-term parochialism in the formation of urban

theory. Thus, it is a means to make the case for the need to consider a broader multiplicity of places, histories, and processes. In this way, the urban South assumes an enhanced view, one whose consideration becomes the key resource for the replenishment of existent and depreciated urban theories or the basis for new theorizing (Watson 2009, Bunnell & Maringanti 2010, Edensor & Jayne 2011, Parnell & Oldfield 2014, Miraftab & Kudva 2015).

On the other hand, the Global South once acted as a trope for a divergent urbanism, an ontologically distinct amalgam of urban zones constituted by shared subjections to colonialism and underdevelopment. Additionally, it pointed to a process of city making in the interfaces between culturally dystonic impositions of planning, infrastructure, policy, and local vernacular practices. This is evident in the postabyssal thinking that attributes to the South its own cognitive vitalities (de Sousa Santos 2014), or the role of a constitutive outside (Roy 2009, Williams et al. 2009), or a prospective way of doing things whose time has finally arrived (Comaroff & Comaroff 2011). At the same time, such purported distinctiveness could be construed as a denial of peoples' real aspirations (Varley 2013, Wilson & Swyngedoux 2014). Still, as Robinson (2016) argues, the distinctions between North and South have proven fruitful for opening up a more generative series of comparisons, which continuously reiterate the South as a means of narrating new urban possibilities.

Empirical explorations of an urban South may continue to have some purchase in accounts of geopolitical trajectories, the pragmatics of international political organizing, or analyses of economic inequality and precarity. From Mignolo's (2011) work on decoloniality, Escobar's (2008) propositions on new forms of territory, academic projects that incorporate the Global South as a locus for new critical theory (Rehbein 2010), histories of challenging Western hegemony (Garavini 2012, Prashad 2013), and the politics of including Southern women in the development of gender theory (Medie & Kang 2018) to the elaboration of specific forms of urban governance and service provision (Jaglin 2014, Roy 2014, Derickson 2015), there are wide-ranging efforts to sustain the Global South as a salient discursive construct in struggles for global justice.

Additionally, recent research shows that in much of the Global South, urbanization remains largely decoupled from industrialization (Christiaensen et al. 2013, Turok & McGranahan 2013, Gollin et al. 2016), for the Global South has also experienced enormous levels of inactivity. Particularly since the 1980s, this inactivity amounts from 30% to 40% of potential working man-hours (van der Linden 2014). For the Global South, the spread of precarious work across sectors is especially structural in nature. Berndt (2017) and Werner (2015) show how such precarity operates through the near absence of social protection regimes or the application of income supplements contingent upon stringent adherence to specific procedures of household organization. A disposable population is constituted not only to provide flexible labor for mobile and eventually transient capital investment but also to leverage the state's access to enjoining the game of financial speculation. Here, as Tadiar (2013) powerfully argues for the Philippines, a disposable population is bundled in aggregate as that which can be offered as wholesale life commodities offered in advance through a state's compliance with austerity measures, structural adjustment, debt repayment, and budget cuts in health, education, and social services.

Despite empirical evidence for persistent structural divides, the salience of the divides is largely grounded in the ways in which a multiplicity of interchanges, economic flows, governance regimes, national histories, and regional alliances actively shape and reproduce disparities across urban areas. This is evident across very different kinds of disciplinary analyses, including work on decoloniality (Mignolo 2000), planetary and extended urbanization (Brenner & Schmid 2015), the spread of highly uneven institutional capacities (Fox 2014), and trends of global gentrification (Wyly 2015). How salient territories get made may have little to do with being enfolded in any semblance of a univocal South or even in an extensively textured one. But retaining the distinction

has strategic value in tracing the trajectories of contemporary forms of financialization and its concomitant resistances (Caison & Vormann 2014, Roy 2014).

Some, like Connell (2007), have insisted that the South was always composed of multiple Souths across geographical divides, something that connotes external conceptual invention and resistance, the relationalities of inequity, production and resistance (Grosfoguel 2011), and “in relation to, with, through but also against other spaces, places, times, peoples, modes of knowledge and action” (Fiddian-Qasmieh & Daley 2018, p. 6). The South has served as a pragmatic designation for various forms of solidarity, cooperation, and interchange among nations and societies that have found themselves marginalized in the predominant geopolitical and geocultural arrangements (Said 1978, Mignolo 2000, Wynter 2003, Chakrabarty 2007, Quijano 2007, Ndlovu-Gatsheni 2013, de Sousa Santos 2014, Sundberg 2014, Kwoba et al. 2018).

Particularly salient in the contemporary period is the creation of a political ecology of the South that challenges hegemonic Global North narratives about the relationship between people, development, and the environment (Bryant & Bailey 1997, Peet & Watts 2005, Neumann 2014). In the reiteration of a global humanity that faces the crises of climate change, there is a turn toward the South as a source of more sustainable orientations to the Earth.

For example, Escobar (2008, 2018) has developed the notion of a pluriverse, a theoretical move that argues how different beings elaborate their own distinct worlds, which then have to respond to each other in ways beyond domination and instrumentality. Here, instead of an entanglement of worlds, the need for mutual responses creates ongoing and open-ended ways for each to be interdependent and create the conditions of each other’s survival.

What I want to do in this review is to narrow down the focus to two primary registers. On the one hand, the geographical and historical specificity of Southern urban spaces is being radically deterritorialized through the ways in which the built environment is constituted as a locus of financial investment. Rather than infrastructural development responding to specific local demands—of which there are many—it has come largely to function as an instigator of demand. Once in place, and accompanied by a range of subsidies, tax credits, and exemptions, large-scale residential and commercial developments will lure various investors, residents, and businesses, whose debt payments can then be securitized into instruments that constitute streams of continuous monetary flows.

An important aspect of this change is that key urban actors are articulating their interests around the development of specific projects, rather than in undertakings on behalf of local, state, or regional governments (Pinson & Journal 2016, Guironnet & Halbert 2014, Halbert & Rouanet 2014, Shatkin 2017). Rather than presuming that states and municipalities with their given borders will be the most effective territories for managing critical economic processes, material and financial flows piece together new territories, new metropolitan entities, through the conjunctions of trans-scalar financial flows, expertise, and legal arrangements. Arboleda (2016) effectively demonstrates this process in Chile. At the same time, sheer dispossession—of people’s assets and social anchorage—has become a convenient and widely used instrument of urban governance (Tadiar 2013, Abourahme 2018).

Maximizing the value of land has become a key governmental strategy for municipal financial growth; the locus of investment portfolios on the part of pension funds, insurance companies, and mutual and equity funds; and a means of individual and household accumulation. Particularly as municipalities can now largely access bond markets on their own, they compete with others across their own or external national territories for infrastructural investments aimed at making their cities smarter, cleaner, more sustainable, and more worthy of international attention. Regulatory environments are altered to permit more fluid flows of capital investment and repatriation. Subsequent spatial products strive toward greater singularity and exclusivity but largely end up

mirroring each other (Yeoh 2005, Keivani & Mattingly 2007, Goldman 2011, Seto et al. 2011, Fawaz 2014).

All of these trends contribute to the material and fiscal elaboration of urban regions in ways that lack distinction, a sense of territorial specificity, even when the composition of territories entails highly context-specific assemblages of policy, brokerage, political practice, and financial resources. Under such conditions, it is difficult to retain an operational sense of a geographically specific urban South.

Yet, as the section titled *Reterritorialization of Southern Cities* emphasizes, reterritorialization does take place and in ways that render the South as a potentially important nexus of countervailing ideas and practices regarding globalized urbanization processes. Reterritorialization is also at work in the intricate politics of how infrastructure and urban services are made functional in particular domains of an urban region—the ways in which materials, actors, institutions, and discourses are entangled in an often messy array of piecemeal dispositions, as the city becomes a patchwork of different affordances and capacities. This is demonstrated, for example, in the intense competitions over space in Cairo (Abaza 2016), the deployment of discourses of risk to move populations around in Bogotá (Zeiderman 2016), the complex political calculations at work in distributing water in Mumbai (Anand 2017), and contestations about citizenship through waste management in Dakar (Fredericks 2018).

Reterritorialization is also demonstrated in the spread of urban protests in recent years and their political consequences. As Caldeira (2015) and Sommers (2015) point out, the main protagonists of these protests are members of a new generation of urbanites who are not migrants to the city, as their parents and grandparents were, but rather are city born. New arrangements of collective life are considerably transforming the everyday urban spaces and politics of many cities across the South, reflected in new forms of spatial composition, household arrangements, livelihood, and everyday circulation, as pointed out by Bayat (2010) and Furniss (2016) for Cairo, Harb (2016) for Beirut, and Boudreau (2016) for Mexico City and Hanoi. While this intensely urbanized generation is shaped by the city's possibilities for expression, experimentation, autonomy, and education, it is also constrained by shrinking labor markets, substantial privatization of urban provisioning systems, and political regimes acutely aware of the volatility that youth sensibilities pose.

Here I refer to this process of reterritorialization as an urban popular economy. If common understandings of the urban South's distinctiveness largely centered on the productivities and crises occasioned by makeshift, informal ways of making and regulating bodies, spaces, and things, then a focus on popular economy is not so much a particular logic of urbanization and place-making but a domain in which various actors, most particularly the majority (working poor and lower-middle-class residents), attempt to work out their lives facing various measures of marginalization, accumulation, economic uncertainty, exposure, and opportunity (Chattopadhyay 2012, Clare 2019).

While urban regions are situated in nations that continuously must reposition themselves in regard to global trade regimes, multilateral institutions, financial markets, and international accords, the macro level constraints on the majority are largely experienced as impositions over which they exert little control. Much of the rise of populist authoritarian politics sweeping across Brazil, India, Philippines, Thailand, and Indonesia could be attributed to the difficulties residents face in constructing viable narratives about the conditions they face and how they are articulated to the larger world (Moffitt 2016, McCoy 2017, Mazzarella 2019). Confounded by what to pay attention to and how to effectively assess their prospects and the itineraries necessary to endure them, the performances of heroic action in defense of sovereignty and the predominance of passion over interests become ever more important.

While in the realm of political competition these more impulsive sentiments may now predominate, residents must nevertheless get on with things and get along with an increasingly diverse

set of actors, no matter how residentially segregated given urban areas might be. In urban regions where the incorporation of youth into productive work remains a critical challenge, the ways in which residents are capable of generating the material conditions that underlie what they value in their existence and how particular values inform choices about how to deal with the materials, persons, and institutions to which they have access remain a key urban agenda.

Here, then, popular economies refer to the variegated forms of organizing the production of things and their repair, distribution, and use, as well as the provision of caretaking that simultaneously falls inside and outside the ambit of formal capitalist production. The popular is not reducible to notions of informality, shared, or social economy; rather, it embodies the various efforts undertaken by those with no, partial, or unsustainable access to wage labor to not only generate a viable livelihood based on weaving together whatever is at hand but collaborate with each other in the pooling of resources and opportunities. These collaborations, always being revised, provide the time and connections that enable them to participate in larger circuits of sociality across the city. They also provide a semblance of a public infrastructure—education, childcare, social welfare services that the state may largely have stopped providing (Esteva 2015, Lazar 2016, Gago 2018).

DETERRITORIALIZING SOUTHERN CITIES

Deterritorialization is operationalized in many ways across the South. The predominance of financialization as a value-generating modality of capitalist operations is by nature deterritorializing. The specificities of place and singular conditions are continuously translated into and hedged by seemingly unlimited externalities. The capacity of any locality's ability to be what it is is assessed in terms of its actual, probable, and speculative impacts on the capacities of other locales in such a way that no locality can, at least in financial terms, exist for itself (Dixon 2011, Halbert & Attuyer 2016). A municipality's position is always being shifted, and this has led to the predominance of insurance as a means of trying to gain some stability in terms of budgeting and planning. As Furlong (2020) points out in her review article on financialization, abstract articulations of space continuously unsettle the longevity of assurances that can be offered to the investment portfolios at work in restructuring built environments. This provisionality, in turn, occasions the need for further rounds of insurance, largely through more intricate forms of securitization.

At the same time, much apparent urban growth takes place in halting, decentered fashion. Vast regions are marked by continuously shifting terrains of semi-industrial production, crop cultivation, real estate development, and transport hubs that literally come and go, which capitalize on the remains of past projects and policies in momentary bursts of activity that are usually only temporary (Pradhan 2012, Lombard 2014, Samanta 2014). Instead of transitions among mobile populations signaling major projects of changed livelihoods, most residents are pursuing small attainments of many different kinds.

Yet, across the many Southern urban regions, there is a rush to build. Politicians, developers, investors, bureaucrats, and ordinary residents seem to talk of little else but the need to build things—from new freeways, transit systems, luxury suburbs, and flood canals to thousands of small houses and commercial buildings (Ghertner 2014, Denis 2018).

While replete with technical specifications, the building of infrastructure entails a complex process of assembling sentiment, authorization, finance, and labor. It has to disrupt and implant, anticipating as much as possible the ramifying implications of this duality (Furlong & Kooy 2017, Knox 2017). As an assistant to one of Indonesia's major property developers aptly puts it, "it is a constant effort to keep things from slipping away" (A. Simone, unpublished interview). Urban infrastructural development not only constitutes a guess on where the city is going, it also elicits

the possibility of being part of a cascading and lateral chain of meanings and realignments not necessarily burdened with the city's past history.

This rush to build tries to outpace escalating land prices, labor shortages, changing policy frameworks, cost overruns, and widening disparities in interest rates incurred by borrowing in different currencies. It tries to outpace a creeping diversification of options in the housing market as both available and anticipated stock remain unaffordable to 70% of the population looking for accommodation. Rapidly shifting land use patterns; speeded up circulation of residents across different housing locations; the formation of growth boundaries in the form of massive industrial land estates at the urban periphery; the youth demographic that floods the market with new workers every year; the accelerated rollout of flyovers, bypasses, and rail systems; the uncertain morphological and ecological implications of massive concentrations of new developments in particular parts of the city—all impact upon each other in ways that amplify the sense of exigency to deploy infrastructure as pathway to stability (Mitra 2015, Zoomers et al. 2017).

But this deployment requires its own twists and turns. It entails complicated negotiations as to the extension of road widths and the resettlement of hundreds of thousands of workers who use roads, sidewalks, verges, riverbanks, rail lines, and underpasses as places of residence and employment. It entails the consolidation of land replete with various histories, ownership structures, entitlements, and functions. As pointed out by Akar (2018) for the southern suburbs of Beirut, Collins (2016) for the complex land registration system in Phnom Penh, Buire (2014) for the massive resettlement of urban core residents to the periphery of Luanda, and Ramakrishnan (2014) for Delhi, it entails negotiations with different kinds of authorities who derive their power from the mobilization of different interests and constituencies frequently living and operating side by side but often in very different worlds.

The actual delivery of the large repertoire of new spatial products across the urban South depends on complex assemblages of actors, capacities, policies, and places. As Addis Ababa, Mumbai, Luanda, Lima, and Phnom Penh continue to tear down large swathes of their urban cores to build in ways that fundamentally mirror each other, this similarity nevertheless is the work of highly specific and contingent assemblages of players, even when the same players may indeed be implicated in each of these cities (Hansen 2001, Rethel 2018, Richmond 2018). Deterritorialization through the substantial restructuring of the built environment depends upon specific operations of making territory through the interactions of political and financial institutions, developers, prospective tenants and users, and intermediaries.

Intermediation occurs through particular acts of brokerage and facilities, such as real estate investment trusts that pool the diverse savings of multiple funds into specifically honed investment vehicles targeted at specific projects (Roy 2005, Halbert & Rouanet 2014, Searle 2018). Large-scale investments in bulk infrastructure are increasingly designed not in terms of the efficacy of urban provisioning but rather to promise future income streams, share prices, bond rates, and risk derivation (Fernandez & Aalbers 2016, Pryke & Allen 2019). Consumers of water or power, then, are availed services calculated in terms of what kind of share prices can be offered to investors who have no or little interest in the details of the water sector or the quality of services offered.

Still, for the most part, the role played by capital markets in producing urban space is contingent upon the ways in which investment protocols, local opportunities, and the complexions of the socio-technical worlds of everyday residents as well as experts intersect (Gurionnet & Halbert 2014, Mosciaro et al. 2020). This is evident in Bear's (2017) work on how dockworkers and stevedores on Kolkata's Hooghly River must mobilize long-honed skills and ethics in order to steer ships through a maritime economy largely ruined by state austerity. Across Southern cities, calculations about expected returns, risk levels, durability, locational advantages, qualities, and financial underpinnings of prospective use are products of intensive intermediation. The work of

Weinstein (2008) on informal brokers in Mumbai, Jaffe (2013) on strongmen in Kingston, Klink & Denaldi (2014) on the lure of owning a home in the middle of nowhere in Brazil, Bogaert (2018) on tracing of mass suburbanization in Morocco as a mechanism of elite consolidation, and Steel et al. (2017) on cross-national comparisons of land grabs point out the complex complicities among different actors in the production of new urban spaces. Land acquisition and development; marketing; business plan structuring; compliance with prevailing legal and regulatory systems; vetting of prospective buyers, tenants, and users; due diligence; leverage equity management; mobilization of labor; design; project management; consultancy; and certification are all the purview of different actors whose interactions are always susceptible to various external pressures and who bring with them particular professional and political interests not always readily reconcilable. This is increasingly the case as local developers begin to flood the market, securing deals and realizing modest projects that tie down increased volumes of land, either for the long term or as a calculated strategy to raise prices.

Standardization of inputs that allow comparison to projects elsewhere and that are seen as consolidating already proven successful models are one concrete form of this intermediation—hence, as Ong (2011) points out, the constant invocation of Singapore, Dubai, or Shanghai models, even as their compositional specificities vary widely. Not only is this standardization of built environments, albeit constantly upgraded to offer higher degrees of sustainability, greening, or accommodations of mixed use, a deterritorializing operation, but the very process of project development, with its varied layers of articulation across different institutional spheres and communities, deterritorializes as well (Jones & Moreno-Carranco 2007).

In detailed ethnographies of urban development in Phnom Penh (Kim 2017), Cairo (Simcik Arese 2018), and Rio de Janeiro (Richmond 2018), it is clear that cities were always, by definition, the sites and products of intermediation themselves, where the shape of the built environment and the layouts of urban space, except in the occasional Haussmann-type top-down re-engineering, reflected the shape of accommodation among divergent interests and forces. The critical difference today is that while large portions of the built environment in metropolitan areas across the South were self-constructed by various constellations of residents, artisan builders, and informal contractors in largely impromptu arrangements with local authorities of some kind, the majority now are subject to forms of project construction that largely render them as either prospective consumers or surplus, potentially expendable populations (Goodfellow 2017). As one of the prevailing attributes of Southern cities was the extent to which residents composed and reshaped their material and social environments, this capacity has largely now been curtailed or at least, as I show below, channeled into other forms (Angotti 2013, Desai & Loftus 2013). This is most evident in Karaman's (2013) work on the marshalling of Islamic norms to restructure neighborhoods in Istanbul and Harms's (2016) explorations of how the struggles for fair compensation undermine the ethos of past forms for legitimating neighborhood solidarity in Ho Chi Minh City.

As Gilbert & De Jong (2015), as well as Janoschka & Arreortua (2017), demonstrate for Mexico City, while upper-end commercial and residential developments remain the signature investment objectives of most metropolitan regimes and international investors, the provision of affordable, largely vertically-based housing has also grown as a major investment market, especially in terms of the mobilization of local development-oriented finance (Janoschka & Arreortua 2017). From Jakarta to Addis Ababa to Saigon, neighborhoods of single-family homes, replete with challenged yet still adequate material underpinnings, are being torn down to accommodate residential high-rise living, now targeted for a cross-section of the city's income groups, albeit with markedly different qualities of construction and amenities.

In Mumbai, the Saifee Burhani Upliftment Trust is completely remaking the renowned market area, Bhandi Bazaar, by tearing down more than 150 buildings and resituating this intensely

small-scale commercial economy within a superblock of 17 high-rise towers, of which only a few will be reserved for the nearly 2,000 displaced households. In a commercial economy characterized by the crisscrossing of multiple networks, personal relations, and ground-level exchanges and witnessing of a myriad of everyday transactions, it is difficult to conceive how these operations can be translated into a high-rise context, where activity is necessarily overcoded and dependent upon more structured modalities of transaction. While this is largely a locally initiated development on the part of powerful religious and commercial figures in this predominantly Shia community, undertaken partly in response to the highly deteriorated state of many of the area's buildings, it also represents the capitalization of a more diffuse modality of value—that of the very liveliness of the area itself. The appearance of chaos is replete with a seething liveliness, and in this project, this very liveliness is converted into financial calculation that bets on the prospective profitability of converging upper-middle-class housing, service provision, and commerce with a relocated and restructured bazaar economy.

In a world of logistics, just-in-time production, and constantly recalibrated commodity chains, the bazaar, a multifaceted commercial system that integrated individual merchants and trades; provided credit to those unable to access formal banking mechanisms; mobilized political sentiment; charted out specific geographies of articulation; shifted resources across various kinds of social, geographic, and religious ties; established the price of things based on considerations that far exceeded those of supply and demand; and shaped the structure and settlement of built environments attempts to continue to thrive (Keshavarzian 2009). But it thrives not on the basis of what it was, and the implications of its own logics and operations, but because those very logics and operations offer a resource to so-called modern economies and advanced logistical operations when those economies and operations run into difficulty when confronting choke points or blockage (Neilson et al. 2018).

Construing liveliness to be something inherent in the bodies, memories, and future commercial practices of its residents, rather than in the particular assemblage of space, with its interweaving of goods, talk, bodies, exchanges, crowdedness, unraveling of gridlocks, and ground-level sensibilities, the Saifee Burhani Upliftment Trust bets on the capacity of the community to increase its local gross domestic product tenfold. Such is a trend in many Southern cities as the specificities of its liveliness, even of its chaos and its slums, are reframed as potential resources that can be sources of financial value (Moreno 2018).

Deterritorialization also occurs in the ways particular cities are folded into new territorial configurations that exceed those of metropolis and nation. Cities have always been oriented toward various external pathways and articulations. They are thoroughfares of materials, ideas, and times. Long-distance trade has long situated various entrepôts and administrative centers so that the appearance of corridors today does not pose anything necessarily new. What may be unprecedented are the enormous sums of money and the inordinate institutional attention being deployed to intentionally configure corridor projects. Again, we have a process where cities are dispersed as the constitution of new territories consolidates new arrangements of power and sense. China's Belt and Road Initiative is the most well-known and well-financed of these projects. This is an attempt to consolidate Chinese global economic power through infrastructures of territorial articulation that permits not only enhanced logistical capacities in the movement of Chinese goods but also the active conversion of existing territories into Chinese satellites, under the auspices of enhanced national development for the countries enfolded.

For example, the East African corridor that spans the Indian Ocean from Somalia to South Africa is in the process of being radically reshaped, as it becomes one of the world's new epicenters for resource extraction, corporate agriculture, and infrastructure development. The accelerated infusion of material and financial investment also gives rise to new imaginaries about how

the distinct nations making up the corridor, fraught with difficult colonial inheritances and post-colonial conflicts, might effectuate new consolidations. Some of these imaginaries are concretized through the development of new intermodal transport systems and the restructuring of urban space. Other imaginaries mobilize memories of historical trade regimes in order to emphasize the potential of the region as a substantial node in the enhancement of the Indian Ocean as an economic powerhouse (Tavengwa & Newhouse 2017).

The region has been the object of increasing volumes of inward investment, occurring across different temporalities and scales. Large acquisitions of land, primarily by Asian companies, immediately preceded the identification of large reserves of minerals and oil, particularly in Kenya, Uganda, and Mozambique. The speed at which changes in land use and ownership, the infusion of infrastructural investment, and the remaking of both primary and secondary cities intersect are spurring new forms of internecine conflict, urban inequality, and population displacement. The reformatting of policy and legal frameworks taking place in the region's primary urban centers—Nairobi, Kampala, Dar es Salaam, Addis Ababa, and Maputo—is undertaken to enable the development of new, high-end subcities. These are mostly appropriated by hundreds of different local consortia, again largely affiliated with Asian and Gulf investors, to acquire and remake large tracts of existing urban built environments. In many respects, the new mega-size plantation and company town systems that are put in place will substantially disrupt local ecologies and livelihoods, contributing to overall environmental depletion (Fouéré & Maupeu 2015).

Another consideration is how the formatting of heterogeneous spaces within the rubric of a corridor, with its attendant protocols, standards, exemptions, regulatory procedures, and imaginaries, maps onto oscillating historical trajectories and conduits of movement and transaction (Sammadar & Mitra 2016). It concerns how corridors harden articulations but, in doing so, generate a wide range of contingencies, speculations, and improvisations, which in turn constitute affordances for a wide range of extrajudicial actors and illicit economies. Just as corridors offer a means of extending national and urban capacities, they also pose the specter of dangerous mixtures, disparate advantages, and intensely differentiated powers that potentially dilute the capacity of states to use development agendas as a means to strengthen their authority over the entirety of national territories.

RETERRITORIALIZING SOUTHERN CITIES

While the past twenty years have, in many ways, marked the ascendancy of cities of the Global South as a vitally important area of study, and where Southern cities have enhanced their visibility not only as harbingers of global crisis, teeming with poverty, criminality and civil conflict but also as attractive destinations for implantations of all kinds, the basis for their conceptual distinctiveness is increasingly uncertain. This is not only because they increasingly look and act like cities of the North or because the status of cities everywhere as the embodiment of urbanization no longer holds. Rather, the very composition, governance, and development trajectories of these cities take them farther away from themselves, enfolding them in spatial imaginaries, circuits of material sustenance and decision making, concretized geopolitical rearrangements that wear down the coherence of that very city form.

Southern cities are significantly deterritorialized as cohesive entities even as they continue to struggle with the encumbrance of having to pragmatically and institutionally function as concrete identities. For they must govern themselves, generate sufficient revenue to cover the costs of providing for expanding populations, and address the variegated and increasingly discordant demands made upon them by those who reside within them. While much attention has been paid to policy mobilities, best practices, and the transmission of governance practices, the sheer capacities

of metropolitan systems, and particularly the residual city, to work through disjunctions between available resources, population needs, existent institutional competencies, and the pushes and pulls of external forces require renewed attention to the endeavors of residents to make viable lives in places not yet fully liberated from the distortions of imperial and colonial impositions (Fernández et al. 2017).

These endeavors take various shapes, and while they entail different forms of valuation, they are neither fully inside nor outside of capitalist operations. As such they are not, nor do they pretend to be, fully fledged alternatives to the predominant systems of accumulation and power in which they find themselves embedded. Rather, they pose particular questions, challenges, experiments, and propositions that reflect an understanding of what it means for a particular group to act both viably and autonomously within specific conditions (McQuarrie et al. 2013, McFarlane & Desai 2015).

Such efforts draw on long histories of autoconstruction, the process whereby residents assume primary responsibility for constituting the material and economic infrastructures of residency. Holston (1991) first mobilized this notion for how residents of the Brazilian peripheries attempted to concretize their right to the city, and subsequently it has been explored by Bayat (2010) and McFarlane (2008) as a particular modality of collective action through which low-income groups insert themselves into urban spaces. In more recent years, it includes Dovey's (2014), Caldeira's (2017) and Bhan's (2019) mobilization of the notion to point to specific forms of city making and city theorizing from below.

These processes of self-construction that produced much of the urban built environment across Asia, Latin America, and Africa occurred incrementally, step-by-step without definitive imagination of a specific destination. Even if those who built their own quarters looked toward concretizing particular dreams or norms of place worthy of them, many would run out of money or motivation. To leave things incomplete was often the wisest thing to do—so as to avoid taxes, leave room to address different contingencies, or bring in others into the production process.

As Sawyer (2014) demonstrates in her examination of how land and residencies were plotted throughout much of Lagos, what was important was a sense of forward momentum, that the efforts were worth something, not necessarily in monetary terms but in the ongoing capacity to build relationships with the surrounds—with other inhabitants, human and nonhuman—that afforded a range of different possibilities for action. When conditions do not seem to be taking you anywhere, where you constantly battle to keep your head above water, and where most of the efforts you make, both individually and as part of a larger collective, at best only manage to repair breakdowns of all kinds, then the particular format or mode of living the urban does not really matter. It does not really matter no matter how much it is familiar or embodies cherished memories or attainments. As such, indifference sets in; inhabitants wait for seemingly inevitable displacements or eagerly jump for opportunities to acquire new assets, new property, and new lifestyles, if the price is right.

Cities throughout the Global South largely worked, not to the extent to which they constructed a particular kind of person, inhabitant, or citizen, but rather in the way in which everyday practices availed spatially and materially heterogeneous environments with densities. These densities were of not only bodies, but ways of doing things, and a wide range of technical devices that put things into a plurality of different relationships with different scopes, degrees of visibility, and durations (Edensor & Jayne 2011, Bertelsen 2014, Thieme 2018). The sheer diversity of the overall built environment and the activities that took place within it, and in close proximity to each other, precipitated discussions, compensations, repairs, alliances, trade-offs, and short-term pooling of information, contacts, and resources that supplemented official income and earnings. At the same time, the composition of the built environment reiterated a sense of separateness among residents

and the unavailability of any overarching reference point of easy commonality. As such, these were localities of fractures that necessitated the constant reworking of lines of articulation.

The everyday, of course, could not be enacted and could not serve as the substance of life making without at least the appearance of coherence offered by states and other institutions, as well as the availability of wage labor. Both continuously demarcated boundaries and lines of authority. States rolled out and managed physical infrastructure and deployed particular practices of rule. National and municipal projects of modernity, which sought to define and embody collective aspirations as well as posit a sense of how people should live in cities and their responsibilities to each other, provided a critical framework through which decisions about legitimacy and eligibility were made. Regardless of their efficacy and the state's relative ability to actually administer urban life, the state was always a critical point of reference and a driver of domestic economies that provided opportunities for wage labor, even when many residents were marginalized by or disengaged from it.

Equipped with Law 341 of the federal district of Buenos Aires, numerous residents of the *villas miseria* (shantytowns) responded to the Argentine economic disaster of 2001 by organizing themselves into housing cooperatives. This law provided government-financed, low-interest 30-year loans to finance land acquisition and construction while mandating participatory design and planning by the members of each cooperative. Many groups, faced with limited possibilities to acquire land, began to occupy factories and office buildings abandoned during the crisis. Across Buenos Aires, there were several hundred such groups, most beginning with an arduous process of collective self-development that would enable them to collaboratively construct their own homes, converting occupied spaces into new forms of settlement through their own labor and negotiations with various authorities. The cooperative form was appropriated not just as means of managing buildings but as a way of enhancing skill development, political astuteness, and the formation of new governance institutions that could be generalized across a given territory. But as most construction projects took many years to complete, the capacities of households to stick together began to wane, and often endurance was predicated on the eventuality of individual home ownership.

At times, the generation of collective values is more implicit in the kinds of adjustments that are required in order to make fragile provisioning systems work in volatile political conditions. Anand (2017) takes this issue up in his analysis of water infrastructures in Mumbai, where engineers, local politicians, and administrators must exceed existing law in order to manage the socio-technical landscapes of the city. Faced with a complex weave among shifting constellations of relationships and interdependencies, those responsible for tending to water infrastructures have to be able to constantly move materials and things around so as to elicit favors, mobilize compliance, generate productivity, and suture together highly differentiated political interests. Consumers are not just a faceless population but an amalgam of various constituencies that continuously rehearse new languages of entitlement and belonging. The variable supplies of water, its biophysical properties, and its directionalities of flow shape how it is used, as its multiple uses and the hedges deployed against scarcity also affect what water is in any given context.

Thus, water is an operational system more amenable not to clear rules and declarations, but to partly known materialized arrangements that can be continuously adjusted. So, in the constant working out of relations between surplus and scarcity, of who can afford what kinds of proportionalities between them, water provisioning becomes an incessant balancing act between what is real and apparent and what is physical and social. Here water infrastructure far exceeds sources, pipes, and hydraulics and becomes a constant negotiation of value—i.e., who counts, for what, and under what circumstances, as well as the constant recalibration of graded relations between what is authorized, tolerated, regularized, declared, and undeclared.

Similarly, the experimentation with new expressions of value can sometimes take on forms that might appear significantly at odds with the seeming objectives. In São Paulo over the past decades, the *funke* street parties, *pancadões*, have attempted to stay rooted in the working-class neighborhoods that appropriated the form from the favelas of Rio, where drug dealers sponsored these events as a display of their benefaction. Long criticized by the elite as misogynist, sex-obsessed, violent, and glorifying ostentatious consumption, these events were intensely public displays of a rejection of all the trappings of Brazilian pretensions to modernity, a refusal of youth to be relegated to the urban margins of visibility, as well as the generation of an economy of cultural production outside the media conglomerates. Most importantly, the all-night parties became a means of youth in a particular district to be together and to occupy the streets in order to witness what the district is in a way that circumvents the exigency of individualized itineraries of movement always having to assume defensive positions. *Funke* parties were construed as family affairs, a way of taking family away from its conservative, religiously defined inflections, and converting it into a tool of inventive relationships.

In a concrete way, the invention of the familial as locus of valuation comes to inform even the most basic of economic transactions. In peri-urban Madagascar, Cholez & Trompette (2015) highlight how small-scale production chains rely upon the invocation of kinship, actual and invented, as a means of cementing relationships that enable the tying together of those who generate a resource, transport it, and market it in webs of cooperation. These webs of cooperation depend upon a sense of constancy forged through incessant recalibrations of the forms and times through which payments are made and profits are allocated, as well as being a means of deploying the instruments involved as vehicles to access sudden opportunities and exchange supplementary favors.

Trade becomes the vehicle for securing kinship, and kinship becomes the modality through which trade is conducted. Relational packages become ways of reframing the everyday disruptions to economic life predicated on small margins. These packages are made up of several different tools—for example, the bundling of price information and negotiations about prices in notebooks that are exchanged back and forth between producer and retailer who do not want to exhaust cell-phone credits, the balancing of favors based on currency and barter, and the alternating uses of written script and text messages as mediums of communication contingent upon different levels of affordability across actors. These packages and their tools address the needs to both have immediate access to some form of earning on a daily basis and defer payment until goods are sold or customers have the means to pay. As Cholez & Trompette (2015) point out, the ways in which daily transactions are handled are inevitably tied to future ones so that the conduct of relationships is calculated in advance in order to persist through uncertainties and disruptions.

These sensibilities are also incorporated in the mega, so-called informal markets across the South, as exemplified by Buenos Aires's La Salada Market. Founded in 1992 by Bolivian and Argentine street traders, and now largely run by and for Argentina's diaspora communities, this massive commercial machine, which is centered on garments and fed by hundreds of workshops and sweatshops, artisanal transport networks, smugglers, brokers, and designers, has become what Forment (2015) calls the embodiment of plebeian citizenship. By that, he means a form of economic and political expression not beholden to the norms of conventional political and economic behavior. Particularly in the years after the Argentine economic crisis of 2001 that impoverished many middle-class residents, La Salada became an important crossroads for intersecting poor, working-class, and middle-class residents.

It consists of over 7,288 stalls, employing 110,000 people, with an additional 50,000 employed in the surrounding workshops (Dewey 2014). Massive quantities of jeans, underwear, jackets, socks, shorts, caps, bags, sport shoes, and T-shirts are bought in La Salada and resold in other provinces and neighboring countries. Land prices within the market itself, located in a lower-working-class

district on the outskirts of the city, are some of the highest in the country, with much of the operational infrastructure funded and built by the governing market association itself. Workshops generally are the purview of individual households drawing upon their own kin for labor; sweatshops use undocumented, usually Bolivian, migrants, who usually submit to terrible work conditions as a rite of passage to the eventual acquisition of the technical and managerial skills, as well as networks, to establish their own shops. La Salada continuously straddles clear distinctions between the licit and illicit, and the formal and informal. It has been subjected to continuously revised forms of harassment, scrutiny, and incorporation, much of which has been successfully resisted over the years, precipitating various accommodations. These accommodations take the form primarily of an informal taxation system that is able to suspend the application of law enforcement. When these arrangements broke down, and given the massive expansion of its operations, La Salada sought to create its own municipality.

Not simply a commercial operation, La Salada represents the efforts of a highly racialized lower class to define its own values regarding the making of things and to eliminate the power of intermediaries that subjected them to high prices and illusions of brand veracity. It represents an often highly problematic yet continuous working out of questions about property rights and the common good; what it means to labor, buy, and sell, in terms of rights, ownership, and distribution; what it means to govern an increasingly vast network of producers, suppliers, and retailers; and how to translate the provisional resolutions of these questions in terms legible to external authorities.

The efforts entailed in these popular economies will require many of the organizational proficiencies facilitating the deterritorializing processes demonstrated in the outlay of contemporary built environments and infrastructures in order to capitalize upon the important sensibilities embodied by them. This will require new organizational literacies (Pieterse 2018) and tactical deployments of long-honed logics of suturing disparate domains that characterize a Southern urban practice. As Bhan (2019) indicates, such practice is simultaneously incremental, uncertain, temporally fluid, speculative, transversal, and rooted.

The elaboration of formal institutions of governance, pedagogy, technical assistance, and political mobilization must be based on a capacity to maximize the resourcefulness and reach of local innovations, particularly where they are able to articulate the mobilization of labor, the production of sustainable material flows, and expansive provisions of care. For Southern cities, in their restless questioning and experimentation, potentially posit new forms of collective life and well-being.

CONCLUSION

What I suggest is possible to take away from this brief excursion through the terrain of Global South cities is the simultaneity of seemingly disparate trajectories that exist without apparent contradiction. This suggests, as McFarlane et al. (2017) emphasize, the need for further intra-urban comparisons. On the one hand, residents from various walks of life are jettisoning familiar, long-honed places and practices of inhabitation, even those that continue to demonstrate remarkable efficacy for much more provisional orientations to emerging urban conditions. This is concretely reflected in the ways in which the most substantial urbanization processes are taking place in the hinterlands, where it is not clear just what kinds of urban fabric will be consolidated. Here, both residents and places are set loose for destinations that are far from being crystalized.

On the other hand, there are substantial numbers of residents who are digging in, attempting to fortify densities of numbers, common vernaculars of belonging, or the backward and forward linkages of small- and medium-scale production economies. Despite official population figures, the urban cores of most metropolitan regions, far from being depopulated or comprehensively redeveloped through gentrification, continue to host large numbers of unregistered persons and

activities. Even in the massive swathes of working- and middle-class high-rise residences, the apparent facelessness and homogeneity of these environments often hide a profusion of various lifestyles, economic activities, and ways of doing things.

What perhaps, then, continues to distinguish a South is the intensity of the various ways in which urbanization is splintering or mutating into multiple forms, providing different proportions of both precarity and potentiality, risk and stability, and provisionality and continuity in relationships that are impossible to disentangle, and thus challenges us to continuously think anew about what we see.

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Contents

Prefatory Article

My Life in Words and Numbers
Samuel H. Preston 1

Of Modernity and Public Sociology: Reflections on a Career So Far
Claude S. Fischer 19

Theory and Methods

Advances in the Science of Asking Questions
Nora Cate Schaeffer and Jennifer Dykema 37

Computational Social Science and Sociology
Achim Edelmann, Tom Wolff, Danielle Montagne, and Christopher A. Bail 61

The Longitudinal Revolution: Sociological Research at the 50-Year
Milestone of the Panel Study of Income Dynamics
Fabian T. Pfeffer, Paula Fomby, and Noura Insolera 83

Tracking US Social Change Over a Half-Century: The General Social
Survey at Fifty
Peter V. Marsden, Tom W. Smith, and Michael Hout 109

Social Processes

Climate Change and Society
Thomas Dietz, Rachael L. Shwom, and Cameron T. Whitley 135

Social Networks and Cognition
*Edward Bishop Smith, Raina A. Brands, Matthew E. Brashears,
and Adam M. Kleinbaum* 159

Institutions and Culture

The Comparative Politics of Collective Memory
Geneviève Zubrzycki and Anna Woźny 175

Why Sociology Matters to Race and Biosocial Science <i>Dorothy E. Roberts and Oliver Rollins</i>	195
 Formal Organizations	
Employer Decision Making <i>Lauren A. Rivera</i>	215
 Political and Economic Sociology	
Organizations and the Governance of Urban Poverty <i>Nicole P. Marwell and Shannon L. Morrissey</i>	233
Relational Work in the Economy <i>Nina Bandelj</i>	251
What Do Platforms Do? Understanding the Gig Economy <i>Steven Vallas and Juliet B. Schor</i>	273
 Differentiation and Stratification	
Black Immigrants and the Changing Portrait of Black America <i>Tod G. Hamilton</i>	295
Immigrant Selectivity Effects on Health, Labor Market, and Educational Outcomes <i>Cynthia Feliciano</i>	315
Multiracial Categorization, Identity, and Policy in (Mixed) Racial Formations <i>Kimberly A. DaCosta</i>	335
Race/Ethnicity over Fifty Years of Structural Differentiation in K–12 Schooling: Period-Specific and Life-Course Perspectives <i>Samuel R. Lucas, Santiago J. Molina, and John M. Towey</i>	355
The Impact of Inequality on Intergenerational Mobility <i>Thomas A. DiPrete</i>	379
Transnational Professionals <i>Brooke Harrington and Leonard Seabrooke</i>	399
 Individual and Society	
Class Position and Political Opinion in Rich Democracies <i>Arvid Lindh and Leslie McCall</i>	419

Contemporary Social Movements in a Hybrid Media Environment <i>Neal Caren, Kenneth T. Andrews, and Todd Lu</i>	443
Norms: An Integrated Framework <i>Christine Horne and Stefanie Mollborn</i>	467
The Sociology of Creativity: Elements, Structures, and Audiences <i>Frédéric Godart, Sorah Seong, and Damon J. Phillips</i>	489
Demography	
Migration Patterns in East and Southeast Asia: Causes and Consequences <i>Eric Fong and Kumiko Shibuya</i>	511
Return Migration Around the World: An Integrated Agenda for Future Research <i>Jacqueline Maria Hagan and Joshua Thomas Wassink</i>	533
Sociology, Genetics, and the Coming of Age of Sociogenomics <i>Melinda C. Mills and Felix C. Troup</i>	553
Technologies and Health Inequities <i>Stefan Timmermans and Rebecca Kaufman</i>	583
Urban and Rural Community Sociology	
Cities of the Global South <i>AbdouMaliq Simone</i>	603
Urban Mobility and Activity Space <i>Kathleen A. Cagney, Erin York Cornwell, Alyssa W. Goldman, and Liang Cai</i>	623
Policy	
Sociology and the Climate Crisis <i>Eric Klinenberg, Malcolm Araos, and Liz Koslov</i>	649
The Social Consequences of Disasters: Individual and Community Change <i>Mariana Arcaya, Ethan J. Raker, and Mary C. Waters</i>	671
Sociology and World Regions	
Violence in Latin America: An Overview of Research and Issues <i>Carlos Vilalta</i>	693