

# Socially Inclusive Cities

Emerging Concepts  
and Practice

Edited by Peter Herrle and Uwe-Jens Walther

Schriften der Habitat Unit, Fakultät VII, Architektur – Umwelt – Gesellschaft  
der TU Berlin

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Peter Herrle, Uwe-Jens Walther (eds.)

# Socially Inclusive Cities

Emerging Concepts and Practice

With contributions from

Peter Herrle, Uwe-Jens Walther, Horst Matthäus,  
Reinhard Goethert, Alicia Ziccardi and Arturo Mier y Terán,  
Christoph Stump, Debra Roberts, Monika El Shorbagi,  
Neelima Risbud, Anne Power, Mary Corcoran White,  
Heidede Becker and Hans-Peter Löhner



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# ***Introduction: Socially Inclusive Cities - New Solutions for Old Problems - or Old Wine in New Bottles?***

*Peter Herrle, Uwe-Jens Walther*

This book is based on a series of papers that were originally presented to a forum on '*Socially Inclusive Cities*' at the XXI World Congress of Architecture organized by the International Union of Architects UIA in July 2002 in Berlin. The response to this theme was overwhelming and continued well beyond the original event. This led us to the decision to widen the scope of the publication by including contributions from authors other than those who had attended the conference in 2002, rather than just publish conference proceedings. The widening of the scope has both further enriched and differentiated the topics and has eventually resulted in this book.

When we first developed the idea for the forum at the UIA conference, we wanted to bring together different groups of people - different in terms of the problems they are dealing with, different in terms of their professional backgrounds, analytical judgments as well as strategies proposed - and of course different in terms of the geographic regions they come from.

Despite the obvious economic and cultural globalization trends and the fact that in a few cases cities in the developed countries of the North have slum-like pockets of poverty with conditions close to what can be observed in the developing world, there is no sign of convergence. Still, cities in the South continue to have political, social and spatial characteristics of their own, shaped by local and colonial history, by local and international factors, producing social and economic and spatial patterns different from cities in the North. Global economic disparities and political power imbalances are certainly among the factors perpetuating these differences. They become apparent in discussions on all major issues of the urban agenda such as poverty, governance or environment.

With the increasing variety of the issues involved a variety of circles of 'experts', government advisors and academics emerged who specialized

in their own professional geography. There have been few links between the camps, partly because of the implications of 'development' which was difficult for researchers and practitioners from the North to permeate. Only with growing international networking of city governments and NGOs has a process of mutual exchange of perceptions and ideas begun. Our forum at the UIA conference was an attempt to promote cross-thinking between professional groups and geographic regions.

However, notwithstanding the differences one overriding theme seems to have emerged in the past decade. It is a formula that has been able to interlink practical efforts from different parts of the globe and gather various streams of academic discourses. The unifying strand of the debate is provided by the twin term 'social inclusion/exclusion'. It seems that this twin term captures previously disjointed debates and integrates various strategies and concepts. What used to be discussed in other terms such as 'marginality' and 'participation' has now come under the broader umbrella of 'social exclusion' vs. 'social inclusion'. Such a short-circuited use of the terms, however, seems to devalue both their analytical and practical potential.

To us, the important question is: does the new umbrella term suggest that there is more than just old wine in new bottles? Are the same old concepts being perpetuated under new labels following the global trend for permanent renewal of brands? Where is the value added to urban development theory and practice, if the terms inclusion/exclusion are adopted? What is it that helps us to better understand and conceptualize urban developments in a global arena when strategies of inclusion are advocated?

A few arguments in favor of the novelty of the approach come to mind instantly. They are more of a principal order and suggest that the twin terms exclusion/inclusion are more than yet another fashion:

- Firstly, the concepts of exclusion/inclusion marry the concerns of both thorough analysis and differential practice; they invite and call for a combination of diagnosis and therapy.
- Secondly, exclusion/inclusion has many faces and facets. Whilst there is strong evidence of the economic bases of exclusion, it is also a cultural, hence multidimensional phenomenon. As such, it cannot be reduced to being an epiphenomenon that just mirrors the unequal distribution of wealth even if closely connected with it.
- Thirdly, because the terms are a systematic pointer towards the cultural variety of exclusion, they also help us to understand the cultural diversity behind – as well as reminding us of the universality of the basic problem behind.

Hence the umbrella terms make it possible to capture multiple dimensions of inclusion and exclusion. This perspective, then, could also be used as a possible corrective – to capture the variety of both exclusion as well as that of combating it; to correct the promising globalized rhetorics of developmental planning. For, currently used policy concepts such as *de-centralisation*, *devolution*, *local authority*, *partnerships*, *civil society*, *citizen participation* and *network building* claim universal validity. In doing so, they seem to ignore such variety of inequality and particularity. Given the central importance of these concepts for future planning in, and for, developing countries, the potential and limitations of urban planning and politics can be looked at in more detail.

There are also good arguments in favor of the new perspective on a less conceptual but more historical plane. These arguments relate to the very nature of cities and what they stand for: cities have long been places of social integration. Ancient urban cultures adopted and merged people of different economic classes, different ethnic origins and different social status; their integrative power is well known. Cities have been able to deal with unequal distribution of wealth without fundamentally threatening the legitimacy of their ruling elites or creating mass exclusion. They did so through providing mechanisms for socio-cultural inclusion and the building of social cohesion. Is it possible that in our modern globalized world the civilizing consensus of cities is no longer valid and that their inclusive mechanisms are functioning less and less well? This would indeed justify a concept beyond the level of regional or local particularities such as the twin concept of exclusion/inclusion. If a general lack of cohesion is the major problem, it can be conceptualized in terms of inclusiveness and can be translated into a strategy by using different sets of tools adapted to local standards and requirements. The level of social and spatial fragmentation, poverty, violence and physical decay that many cities around the world are experiencing - no matter where they are located - supports this assumption. Against such background, then, it does make sense to re-evaluate the old participatory strategies and their contribution towards social inclusion - and hence in terms of the social and economic coherence of the city.

Today, strategies of social inclusion are under way in almost every continent. They are put in the contexts of urban and regional development for good reasons. Here, the issue of social exclusion and related strategies can be discussed on several levels:

- In many cities in the South we see a huge informal sector, which in some cases amounts to 80 per cent of the city's GDP. This indicates exclusion of a major part of the urban population from formal working relations, credit facilities and social security.

- Informal and illegal settlements accommodate up to 60 per cent of the urban populations in some cities of Latin America, Asia and Africa. While the proliferation of these settlements is the real engine of urban growth, the settlers are often deprived of even the most basic infrastructure such as water, drainage or sewerage systems and legal security. Access to land is one of the key issues for 'including' the urban poor in the South.
- On the other hand, despite the existence of formalized social networks in wealthy countries of the North, there is an increasing number of people falling out of these networks. This has given rise to counterbalancing policies and strategies in almost every country within Europe and North America and the discovery that there are also commonalities with the situation in the South.

What this brief sketch of inclusion strategies intended to demonstrate is the common denominator of attempts that deal with the complex issues raised. They all look at people *and* the places where they live and work. Strategies of inclusion do not separate them. In other words: they try to solve or mitigate the problems caused by exclusion by working *with* the concerned people *in* their own environments and neighborhoods. It seems that such a combination of *people and places* constitutes the conceptual paradigm underlying the inclusive policies and strategies discussed in this book. In fact, the evidence from numerous case studies shows that structural policies at national levels need to be complemented through localized measures combining the notion of place as a social and economic realm with structural policy. In one way or another all the case studies presented in this book elaborate on the precarious relation between 'programs' and localities, or in other words: between systems and people.

*Reinhard Goethert's* contribution to this volume is on the key role of people in their places and how they can participate. He unravels the interrelations of 'inclusiveness' with other development concepts and raises some critical questions about the concept's meaning and usefulness. From his background in participatory planning techniques and methodology he argues that formal procedures would have to adapt 'informal' mechanisms and thereby gradually be 'included' into informality, which is the prevalent mode of urban growth in a major part of the world. He argues for a reverse type of 'inclusion', rather than including the poor in mainstream top-down planning and implementation procedures.

*Horst Matthäus* reports on experience from Recife, Brazil, a city well known for its innovative approaches. With 60 per cent of the population below the poverty line and living in unserviced slums, there has been a strong popular movement of the urban poor. This has led to internationally recognized programs such as the ZEIS (1983) and a participatory urban upgrading program called PREZEIS starting from 1987. Recife was among the first state capitals in Brazil to experiment with participatory budgeting, thereby introducing an earlier form of the 'orcamente participativo' for which Port Alegre became famous. Based in Recife as coordinator for a capacity building GTZ project, he draws the conclusion that the effectiveness of the new instruments is still largely hampered by inadequate funding and bureaucratic structures.

*Alicia Ziccardi* with *Arturo Mier y Terán* tell the context and history of a remarkable house upgrading projects which assisted about 53,000 families between 1998 and 2003. The program offers loans to social groups with very low incomes to improve their housing conditions without any collateral. It transforms the beneficiaries into borrowers based on confidence and a simple procedure and without requiring them to mortgage their property. The scheme is considered largely a success, not only because of its output but also because of its benefits to the local economy and positive effects on the building of a network wherein government institutions, academics, NGOs and CBOs cooperate. However, through its focus on house improvement and extension, the program has so far not been able to address the infrastructure problems typical of very poor areas.

*Christoph Stump* provides an insight into the planning and development of the Bronx in New York since the 1970s. He argues that urban decline, poverty and social exclusion are a consequence of non-participatory planning and development strategies and explores the implications and partial successes of participatory concepts in Melrose, a small neighborhood community in the South Bronx. He concludes with what he feels is the most important effect: the restoration of "a sense of community and civic responsibility" and physical upgrading, while typical social problems, particularly of youth, prevail.

*Debra Roberts* reflects on inclusiveness from the experience with implementing the Agenda 21 in Durban, South Africa. Durban has been in the forefront of a movement that started with the advent of democracy in 1994. It has successfully developed a Local Agenda 21 Program which recognizes the importance of sustainability and stakeholder involvement. The contribution shows that inclusion policies should and can be embedded in a broader social movement.

*Monika El Shorbagi* reports on a GTZ-supported project in Cairo, Egypt. Using the project as a reference base she explores the typical mechanisms of exclusion and possible solutions for the improvement of informal settlements in Cairo, which accommodate some 60 per cent of the Greater Cairo population. The article presents experience from the Participatory Urban Development Project for Manshiet Nasser, which is one of the most densely populated inner city districts of Cairo. The project addresses problems related to service delivery, tenure security, and empowerment. While there are positive results in promoting collective action and community processes and thereby linking local initiatives with local and national government institutions, the author remains doubtful about the long-term impact.

*Neelima Risbud* provides a comprehensive account and analysis of 'inclusive' urban policies in India. She reports on changes in national and state policies starting from slum clearance and welfare approaches in the 1970s up to the 1990s, when under the influence of the World Bank the emphasis was shifted to poverty alleviation. The most widespread policy has been the provision of basic infrastructure while the provision of land for the poor has been limited to a few states. While there is an increasing realization that top-down planning is inadequate, NGOs have played only a limited role in the process. With little or even shrinking opportunities to get legalized access to land, squatting remains one of the primary options for poor settlers even today. The lack of managerial capacities, coordination and institutional capacity are among the factors which adversely affect inclusion policies.

*Anne Power* focuses on the English experience of Neighborhood Management - how to improve the conditions of everyday life in low-income neighborhoods by organizing and managing them differently. She puts her contribution in the context of long run attempts in England to tackle deprivation at the local level and of the central role of local government and housing organizations in changing conditions on the ground. The author argues that Neighborhood Management "addresses environmental and social problems within neighborhoods as part of a wider understanding of social exclusion, sustainable development and the need for greater care of our urban communities. Although its perspective is shaped by British examples, many of the issues are relevant to other countries".

*Mary Corcoran White* investigates a deprived housing estate in one of Europe's booming capitals, Dublin, Ireland. She depicts the case of a single social housing complex—Fatima Mansions—which is now the target of a major urban regeneration project. What she calls "the re-imagining of the Fatima Mansions" turned out to be "an ongoing process in terms of its

physical structure and layout, social structure and composition, economic potential and cultural creativity". The project is also "the outcome of a hard won partnership between local champions, community groups and activists, municipal authorities and central government representatives".

*Heidede Becker* and *Hans-Peter Löhr* report on the state of policy formation towards social inclusion in German cities. They give an account and appraisal of a joint program of the German federal government and the German Länder. The program is called "Districts With Special Development Needs – the Socially Integrative City" ("Soziale Stadt" - *The Socially Integrative City*). Like similar policies in other European countries, the program responds to overall changes to the urban fabric. It was launched in 1999 as an addition to conventional urban development aid. Its main objectives are to make urban regeneration a more socially responsive, co-operating, integrative area based policy.

The contributions in this book present a breathtaking variety of responses to combat the different forms of social exclusion in particular urban contexts respectively world wide. They come from national governments such as England, Germany or India, they may be deeply entrenched in regional and local politics and planning such as Recife, Mexico or Cairo. Or they may even come down to the level and scope of individual housing projects such as Fatima Mansions in Dublin, Ireland or Melrose Commons, Bronx/New York. This collection of international examples, we feel, presents both an intriguing and encouraging diversity of approaches. We have made no attempt to streamline this diversity because it is exactly the broad and colorful patchwork that makes up the new urban landscape of Inclusive Cities in the making.

The reader will hardly be surprised that such an internationally mixed bag of articles invariably entails problems of language as well. It posed problems of an editorial order, to say the least: to what extent should one tamper with the manifold backgrounds of nationalities, personalities and cultures involved that manifest themselves in different uses of language? Should it be edited in British English or American English for better coherence and readability? Or should one respect the local and national idiom? Again, we decided in favor of diversity in the end: we maintained the original color (or should it be *colour*?) of each contribution at the expense of coherence of presentation of the book as a whole. So this is a word of warning to the benevolent reader. Readers will not only be able to enjoy the indigenous lingo, but will also have to put up with *programmes* and *programs*; *Multi-Storey* and *Multi-story buildings* and will *talk to* someone as well as *talk with* someone to name but a few examples. At one point in

time we just gave up the idea that there should be a universal set of rules about these questions. Why indeed should there be one in the first place, one might well ask.

Last not least, we are grateful to all of those who have made this publication possible. We are deeply indebted to Rachel Marks for proofreading and harmonizing all references at various stages, Franziska Berger and Tosca Piotrowski for their sustained technical support. In particular, we would like to thank the authors for their patience and their never ending belief in what to us became a wonderful, but never ending project. Now that we see the result in full shape, we are becoming more aware of its shortcomings, too. So the last words are directed to the editors' pride: Nobody but us should be blamed for any such flaws or blunders that remained uncorrected.

# ***Planning with People – Challenges to the Paradigm***

*Reinhard Goethert*

Ideas are powerful. They underpin programs and projects by giving legitimacy and direction. But as ideas take hold, new ideas evolve, and previous strongly held truths are often discarded. Ideas may be discredited from failure, or they may slowly be compromised by the desire for change, which is often driven by the notion of progress. It becomes a cycle: an initial unchallenged euphoria is increasingly tested, leading to tinkering with the basic concepts, and subsequently modified as remedy. Eventually the original idea is replaced, followed by a shift in projects and programs to reflect new thinking. To quote a common saying: “nothing seems to endure but change.”

The replacement is not always complete, for it may only relinquish its place as the primary focus and shift to a supporting role. But in some cases it is unceremoniously forgotten and leaves little impact.

Powerful and sustainable ideas must meet four criteria to avoid being marginalized:

- Clear, identifiable and understanding of what it is, and what it isn’t;
- Recognized value with tangible results;
- Support of a broad coalition of interests from different sectors; not captured by a few interest groups to the detriment of others;
- Institutionalization into the mainstream decision structure.

Social inclusion policies and methods have been promoted for many years in the development field. It is rare to find any development program or project that does not explicitly require participation in the development and implementation of a project or program. It has become accepted to be a basic precondition to success, and the involvement of beneficiaries in all aspects is a given. The momentum of inclusionary practice has gained in the last years and the concept is spreading into many fields.

Social inclusion is perceived as being mainstream, although there has always been disagreement as to what exactly it is. Techniques and methodologies that purport to be participatory exist and have been proven in

practice. ‘Action-Planning,’ ‘Micro-planning,’ ‘Planning for Real’ are other accepted and well-established techniques.<sup>1</sup> The well-known PRA (participatory rural assessment) family of techniques is widespread among practitioners. Social inclusion will not fade away because of inadequate methodology.

One wonders if social inclusion – community participation as it is commonly known – will follow an evolutionary cycle of euphoria, testing, modification, and replacement. Will it fall away completely to be replaced by a new paradigm, or will it be continuously modified, and perhaps evolve into a different form?

But it is not so simple: an additional consideration in the development field is the overbearing role of large agencies. They have increasingly become the main funders of programs, and hence the drivers of development ideas by default. The disillusionment and abandonment by the large agencies is not necessarily followed by disillusionment at the implementation level, but the redirected funding often severely affects the programs. But more troublesome is the ‘tone’ that the agency sets – the example which it sets – and consequently a ‘cloud’ becomes associated with a previously strongly held idea.

Including the large development agencies, there are four key sectors to be considered and particularly noted for their inherent bias and inclination toward participation:

- The large development agencies: participation considered suitable if fits within agency time and organizational constraints and delivers in project implementation;
- NGOs: inherently supportive of participation as a basic right and not necessarily from a project implementation perspective;
- Municipalities, government: often reluctantly accepts participation if it fits within structure and delivers on implementation with minimum disruption and added administrative and cost burdens;
- Communities: inherently participatory, but must deliver.

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<sup>1</sup> For a summary of the most common families of community participation method, see Hamdi/Goethert (1997). See especially Section Two: Tools for Practice.



Figure 1: Participatory techniques and methodologies exist and have been proven in practice.

One seldom remembers the 'site and services' programs of the 1970's. Site and services represents an idea that was replaced by the large development agencies, and even the term has fallen into disrepute. Essentially these were mimics of squatter settlements but with official support and legalization. Land was subdivided and a plot was given to families with legal title, and sometimes with a rudimentary 'starter' core house, along with basic water and sanitation provisions. Families were expected to mobilize their own resources in constructing their houses, similar as to what is found in squatter settlements. These programs had been strongly promoted as the 'perfect' alternative to previous direct-construction housing programs. The merits of the approach had been real, but it has, nevertheless, all but disappeared in contemporary practice and planning literature.

Although as a concept it was rejected, in practice the essentials continue, though under different names: resettlement areas, overspill developments, expansion areas, etc. Clearly the need for land allocation to poor families remains.

Will social inclusion follow the same fate as site and services? Hypothesizing a cycle of ideas, three futures may be speculated: