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An inclusive development perspective on the geographies of urban governance

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Joyeeta Gupta • Karin Pfeffer
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Editors

Geographies of Urban Governance

Advanced Theories, Methods and Practices

 Springer

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Contents

Part I Theories of Urban Governance

1	Setting the Scene: The Geographies of Urban Governance	3
	Joyeeta Gupta, Karin Pfeffer, Mirjam Ros-Tonen, and Hebe Verrest	
2	Theorizing Governance	27
	Joyeeta Gupta, Hebe Verrest, and Rivke Jaffe	
3	Governance Networks: Conceptualization, Genealogy, and Research Frontiers	45
	Tara van Dijk	
4	Beyond the Network Effect: Towards an Alternative Understanding of Global Urban Organizations	65
	Paul James and Hebe Verrest	
5	Governing Beyond Cities: The Urban-Rural Interface	85
	Mirjam Ros-Tonen, Nicky Pouw, and Maarten Bavinck	

Part II Instruments, Methods and Practices of Urban Governance

6	Instruments of Urban Governance	109
	Stan Majoor and Klaas Schwartz	
7	Participatory Instruments and Practices in Urban Governance	127
	Michaela Hordijk, Liliana Miranda Sara, Catherine Sutherland, and Dianne Scott	
8	Geo-Technologies for Spatial Knowledge: Challenges for Inclusive and Sustainable Urban Development	147
	Karin Pfeffer, Javier Martinez, David O’Sullivan, and Dianne Scott	

9 Big Data and Urban Governance 175
Linnet Taylor and Christine Richter

10 Scenario Building as a Process and Tool in Urban Governance..... 193
Shabana Khan, Liliana Miranda Sara, John Sydenstricker-Neto,
Catherine Sutherland, and Michaela Hordijk

Part III Epilogue

**11 An Inclusive Development Perspective
on the Geographies of Urban Governance** 217
Joyeeta Gupta, Karin Pfeffer, Mirjam Ros-Tonen, and Hebe Verrest

Index..... 229

Chapter 11

An Inclusive Development Perspective on the Geographies of Urban Governance

Joyeeta Gupta, Karin Pfeffer, Mirjam Ros-Tonen, and Hebe Verrest

Abstract Urban governance in cities is shaped by, and shapes, global discourses. These discourses shape the discussion of how governance should be organized, what forms it takes, what kinds of governance instruments, methods and data are used and what urban governance practices may look like. Much of this is presented in gender- and place/space-neutral, objective language and complex scientific jargon, which obfuscates the highly political nature of the shifts in governance and associated governance theories, instruments, methods and practices. It is assumed that these dimensions can be scaled up and down and transferred to different contexts. Close examination reveals, however, that many of these are being used in the service of the most powerful, while the shift from government to (network) governance creates the illusion of empowering all. In practice, accountability, legitimacy, legality and equity are compromised as the most powerful actors influence the governance process. In the process, public goods and services are being privatized; infrastructure developments relocate the poor and serve the rich; market/economic instruments are replacing regulatory ones; big data and maps can be used manipulatively; and network governance and participatory processes may be more disempowering than empowering. This chapter argues for a deconstruction of discourses, theories, instruments, methods, technologies, practices and outcomes to ensure that these are used in the service of human well being and their ecosystems. This deconstruction should build on an understanding that place specificities are highly relevant and that urban governance is situated in a produced space. Moreover, cities and urban governance do not operate in a vacuum but are related to and intertwined with processes at other scalar levels.

Keywords Inclusive development • Geographies of governance • Governance theory • Governance networks • Smart city

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11.1 Introduction

Given the growing concentrations of people in urban regions and that cities are likely to be the core locus of activity in the twenty-first century, this book set out to reflect on the state-of-the-art knowledge on the geographies of urban governance. It has argued that urban governance has co-evolved with globalization. Globalization has been both shaped by and shapes developments at urban levels. Cities are embedded in networks, spatial relationships and flows of ideas, goods, services, technologies, transport, communication and people. This means that there is a mutually reconstituting process at the level of discourses and how these play out in the theories, instruments, methods, technologies, practices and outcomes of urban governance. We have argued that globalization (ideological, financial, economic, cultural, technological and scientific) and urban scholarship and policies have co-evolved. Globalization has influenced the shift from government to governance, created new urban connectivities, influenced transnational urbanism and facilitated the digitalization of society and the territorialization and deterritorialization of urban governance. This requires relational thinking to address the increasing processes of poverty, inequality and marginalization especially of minorities, women, children and the elderly; the city's growing ecological footprint and its vulnerability to environmental change; and the issues of security and privacy. We see governance as a geographical process, i.e. in relation to place, space, scale and human-environment interactions. We have tried to understand the commonalities and differences in different parts of the world and the different kinds of influences across different types of cities.

Our chapters review the urban governance literature and related fields to communicate key issues and debates. They cover theories on how place-based multiple actors, actor coalitions and networks engage in urban governance and on how cityscapes (the interaction between urban residents, work hubs, recreation and other civic amenities, land- and waterscapes) are changing. Moreover, they address instruments and methods that are utilized in governance practices. Ostensibly, the changes in cities are progressive/transformational and modern and aim at addressing key social, economic and environmental challenges. However, scratching below the surface reveals that while many of these theories, instruments, methods, technologies and practices are framed as being more scientific, legitimate, inclusive and empowering, they are created and used by those in power. Relationships are being created in which powerful actors may take 'public' goals as hostage to a more nebulous process of governance where accountability can scarcely be demanded and which further marginalizes and excludes the poorest and most vulnerable. Furthermore, the control over governance is 'invisible' when big data is collected by multiple sensors, cameras and the recording of telephone/GPS and other related activity, and the process of participating in providing this information is involuntary. Those who control access to this data then have control over how the data is used and interpreted. If they do not have ground truthing in place, this data can lead to inappropriate policy decisions.

11.2 Discourses and Theories

A key storyline in this book is trying to understand the space, place and scalar aspects of governance. Chapter 2 presents the current state of knowledge on theories of governance and contextualizes them for the urban context. It focuses both on what and who are to be governed as well as who governs and examines how urban governance systems are nested in other governance systems.

We argue that governance is both an analytical and a normative tool. In its analytical incarnation, governance helps us understand how society manages itself, who acts, how, why and for what purposes. From a normative perspective, the shift from government to governance was justified by the way in which it would democratize society and make it less top down. However, by removing state monopoly over governance, other actors gain control over the process. This may simply replace one kind of power (state power) with another kind of power (the power of finance, the power to network and so on). While a primary justification of the state was its role in providing public goods ranging from defence and security to streetlights, education and health services, the new governance actors and networks may not be equally motivated or equipped to provide such public or merit goods. Furthermore, to what extent are they motivated to participate in governance to further their own political, private and personal agenda and use money or influence to control governance processes? To what extent do they try to privatize public goods as a way to increase their own profits?

Governance studies can focus on how actors interact to develop strategies, how they network across time and space to develop governance options and how they form hybrid arrangements (Chaps. 2, 3, 4, and 5). These processes of governing can be both constructive and corrosive as responsibilities, functions, rights and processes of formal and informal systems get entangled in ways that make it impossible to plan for the future. Across much of the social sciences, urban studies, media institutions, ICT entrepreneurs and think tanks, one hears repeatedly how the network is now the preferred mechanism of governance from the micro to the global level. Networking is considered the better mode of structuring authority and governance between the economy, the state and civil society, enabling innovation across these spheres (Fuchs 2009; Fisher 2010; Davies 2012). However, the actual functioning of such networks and their benefits for better cities remain understudied (Chap. 4). Furthermore, network governance and its study tends to flatten complex political relationships into two-dimensional diagrams.

Even concepts such as good governance that are seen by some as emancipatory because of their focus on the rule of law, accountability, legitimacy, legality, equity, effectiveness, responsiveness and efficiency are seen as either inapplicable to governance (e.g. who can you hold accountable in governance and to what; what criteria ensure the legitimacy of a nebulous process) or being manipulated to serve specific interests of the most powerful through, for example, an almost exclusive focus on efficiency or reducing the above concepts to universal targets and indicators that do not take space- and place-based issues into account. Good governance is

largely about how the state can steer governance and its networks, i.e. manage relations with existing networks or change the structure of governance networks (participants, relationships and goals) to keep it at arm's length so that they productively interact with (add value to) other governance networks in line with current social, economic and environmental goals (Chhotray and Stoker 2009). Carried to the logical conclusion, this also involves creating networks through the injunction, invitation or nudge to participate, collaborate and network (Chaps. 3 and 4). Contemporary statecraft, in terms of regulation, then is dominated by a mandate to enable and create markets and enable (steer) and create networks where possible (c.f. Fisher 2010). But creating such networks, which originate from ideals of good governance, may in itself lead to situations where they are actually not accountable or legitimate, but transitory and self-serving. Globally, there is a huge rise in urban networks and programmes such as Metropolis, UN-Habitat, the Global Compact Cities Programme and C40 in urban governance (see Chaps. 4 and 5). City networks are an important tool for enhancing collaboration between urban networks globally. In the large descriptive literature on global urban networking, the current tendency is to assume that generalized networking is positive and increased connectivity through web-based interchange is making a significant difference to enhancing political engagement. Globally accessible websites and global newsletters outlining the latest and best practices may be useful, but their effectiveness in practice and their ability to change paradigms is yet to be proven. Chapter 4 inquires into the role of degrees of interaction and relational integration in the efficacy of work in the field of urban sustainability. More specifically, it asks what kind of knowledge is being exchanged, formed and distributed in networks and to what extent these multiple knowledges are being acknowledged. It illustrates the importance of different forms of interaction and knowledge in assessing the benefits of global urban networks for creating sustainable and inclusive cities. Being part of such a network increases the chance of accessing particular forms of knowledge and implementing policies as is the case of city networks working to address the problem of climate change.

Globalization has changed the geographies of urban governance as multiple co-existing relationships now affect urban governance: those with the rural hinterland, provincial to global governance processes, and horizontal and diagonal networks that criss-cross the global landscape. In Chap. 5, we examine the urban-rural landscape more closely and show that urban transformation will have economic, social and ecological impacts on the peri-urban fringe and rural landscape. Meeting the demand for land, food, energy, water and timber means an increasing pressure on biodiversity and other environmental services and competing claims on natural resources. Pollution and the emission of greenhouse gases will affect climate change and climate variability far beyond the city. The challenges ahead call for synergies between policies that seek to enhance food and water security, and the resilience towards climate change. Such a synergy stretches governance across scales and beyond urban boundaries (Bulkeley and Betsill 2005) and takes account of both problems and opportunities of urbanization for the transition to sustainability (Seto et al. 2010). By going beyond issues of urban design, reconciling the brown and green agenda, closing substance cycles, developing peri-urban agriculture and 'greenbelts', and

examining the impacts of urban expansion on natural areas and environmental services, Chap. 5 takes an integrated landscape governance approach to develop an inclusive perspective on the urban–rural interface. In doing so, it contributes to filling a gap in both urban and landscape governance literature. It thereby builds on the landscape approach, understood as a negotiated, learning- and process-driven approach towards reconciling multiple interacting land uses (Sayer et al. 2013).

11.3 Governance Instruments, Methods and Technologies

Emerging instruments, methods and technologies that influence urban governance are the range of policy tools used by formal and informal actors (see Chap. 6), participatory processes (see Chap. 7), geo-technologies for producing and managing spatial knowledge (see Chap. 8), big data (analytics) and the smart city concept (see Chap. 9) and scenario development (see Chap. 10).

The literature shows a range of governance tools that can be used by state and non-state actors to try and create better cities, each with their own pros and cons. Functionalists often present governance instruments and methods as neutral tools to address social and environmental problems, but these instruments are extremely value laden. The choice of the instrument (regulatory, market, persuasive or voluntary) or method (e.g. poverty mapping) already embodies a specific definition and framing of a problem – private or public good – and may have differential impacts on urban residents. It may also disrupt or ignore existing informal relations and governance practices and deliberately or involuntarily further marginalize the poorest. We should therefore be cautious at taking governance instruments and tools (e.g. maps) at face value and examine how these instruments are chosen and why and what their place-specific impacts can be (Chaps. 6, 7, 8, 9, and 10). In fact, many of the best practices with respect to these governance instruments are developed in cities of the global North where populations are stable, a certain average income level has been achieved and governance systems are fairly well developed and stable. Scaling up and transferring these best practices to cities of the global South, which are characterized by growing rural-urban migration, low average income levels that mask the huge differences between the rich and the poor, where governance systems are yet to become stable and vastly different contextual circumstances exist, may not lead to the kinds of theoretically anticipated outcomes. They may instead lead to counter-productive effects in specific contexts.

A key procedural instrument is participation in urban governance. This raises questions such as who invites, who can be a participant, the various ways in which participation is organized and how these ideas are dealt with in the different strands of participatory literature. Chapter 7 focuses on the role of participation as the magic bullet or the new tyranny in urban governance. It covers the literature on participation theory and methods and recalls differences in participation theory and practice in rich and poor countries. It focuses on participatory practices in Peru, Brazil, South Africa and India, using the distinction between closed, invited and

claimed spaces as an analytical lens and discussing the rapidly increasing importance of judicial action as a third form of participatory space.

Here too, the key message that emerges is that while participation and tools like participatory budgeting may be empowering, the question is whether it is possible to use this instrument for deliberative democracy and transformative purposes, and the extent to which these can be scaled up to metropolitan level. Participation can be used instrumentally and symbolically, leading to manipulation of local actors. The design of closed, invited, claimed and negotiated space is critical for ensuring that participation is emancipatory. However, recent work also shows that participation is not always necessary – especially where structured problems are being dealt with which require single-loop learning (fixing errors by improving routines, see Pahl-Wostl and Hare 2004; Armitage et al. 2008). But when triple-loop learning is required (transforming underlying norms, values and governance protocols) to deal with wicked unstructured problems, participation may not always lead to short-term solutions. This does not make it less important; it just emphasizes that discursive approaches towards wicked problems may take a very long time (Hurlbert and Gupta 2015).

Governance instruments including participation should build on scholarly knowledge to be truly effective (see Box 6.1). Amongst the various tools of scholarly knowledge, geo-technologies are becoming increasingly important. Chapter 8 examines the variety and nature of geo-technologies and their role in influencing urban governance processes with respect to economic, social and environmental issues. Examples are the development of GIS-based grievance redressal systems to provide a means for receiving citizen feedback on the quality of urban service provision; facilitating access to the cadastre or other types of urban information by means of online services; the creation of GIS maps to identify and visualize target areas for policy formulation; or the application of simulation models to better understand urban dynamics and human behaviour. In doing so, the chapter critically analyzes the kinds of knowledge produced, used and exchanged in relation to human well being, economic development and environmental sustainability and justice and how the geographical context shapes spatial knowledge production and use in urban governance processes. Geo-technologies are powerful means for developing spatial knowledge for moving towards inclusive urban development (Roche 2014). However, Chap. 8 warns that maps, models and information systems have embedded assumptions (Harley 1989) and can both invade the privacy of individuals as well as may have serious exclusionary effects in society (Elwood and Leszczynski 2011).

Increasingly, the amount of data available may make a city ‘datafied’. Such data is considered as essential to govern the city more progressively. Chapter 9 critically assesses the competing definitions of big data – relative data which is larger in scope and scale (Taylor and Schroeder 2014) and born digital data which is created by digital technology (Borgman 2014). It argues that the relative definition accounts for, and allows comparison of, technological differences between countries. It examines whether such big data can provide better and more useful information for

governance in comparison with predecessor systems such as GIS and spatial data infrastructure. They all face challenges of ground truth (Pickles 1995) being more ‘the God’s eye view’ (Pentland 2011), despite their ability to provide place and time details. While big data is a logical progression towards greater quantification and digitalization of government and governance, the question is whether it can live up to the claims currently being made with respect to reducing inequalities, increasing economic growth or creating smarter cities or whether it replicates existing problems of data collection, analysis, interpretation and representation on a new scale. The sheer volume, velocity and variety (Laney 2001) of data in itself does not guarantee that it is truly representative of what happens within the city, that it has a good contextual feel of the city, that it is a just representation of power reflected through the data that is collected, and that it can really be used without critical scrutiny for achieving goals.

With globalization, we now not only have information about the past, we have vast amounts of information about future trends. Modern cities will have to take the past (e.g. path dependencies), present (e.g. social priorities) and future (e.g. social and ecological trends) into account in policy processes. Scenario making is a tool for planning for the future. It can be based on quantitative, qualitative, participatory or hybrid methods that combine the previous types. Such scenario processes can be useful for visualizing possible, probable and desirable futures and for developing policies to shape the direction towards preferable futures. Chapter 10 examines the application of scenario building as a governance tool which is increasingly being used in thinking about urban futures. It discusses the whys and hows of place-based scenario building as well as the appropriate methods. It critically assesses its potential and limits, drawing on experiences in Lima (Peru), Guarulhos (Brazil), Durban (South Africa) and Dwarka (India). It argues that the differences noted in the process and outcomes of the scenario-building approaches are important indicators of underlying socio-economic and political contexts influencing urban governance at present that are likely to continue in the near future. Although several efforts have been undertaken to standardize methods of scenario building, the four case studies show that the use of scenario development and how to carry it out depends on the local context. Overall, it not only helps to understand the varied forms of water and development issues, but scenario processes are iterative processes to incorporate lessons learned across different nations and encourage the participation of various stakeholders. Based on the case studies, recommendations have been formulated on how to use scenario building in urban governance as well as issues related to other fields. While the cases presented in Chap. 10 focus on the degree to which they can empower, global scenarios such as those of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) have in the past been questioned for the way they shape responsibilities for the future. Parikh (1992: 507–508) was so upset with these scenarios that she protested in the scientific journal *Nature* that “considerable fat is permitted in the reference scenario itself; these cuts mean no sacrifice to the North [...] the stabilization scenarios of IPCC stabilize the lifestyles of the rich and adversely affect the development of the poor”.

11.4 Inclusive Development and the Geographies of Urban Governance

The various chapters illustrate that neoliberalism and capitalism are the dominant discourses, operating globally and at the urban level. This is both leading to greater inequality between people (Oxfam 2014; Piketty 2014) and contributing to the great acceleration in extracting resources, damaging our ecosystems and reducing our ecospace. This book has shown that whereas governance, network governance, policy and governance instruments, participatory instruments, geo-spatial and big data and scenario exercises may ostensibly aim at being gender, space, place and class neutral, empowering and ‘good’ governance, in fact this all depends on who is using the instrument, how, for what purpose and in which context.

Hence, we argue that inclusive development is a discursive approach that can counter the dominance of neoliberalism and capitalism. Inclusive development has three dimensions (Gupta et al. 2015). First, it focuses on the poorest and most vulnerable (including women, children, indigenous people and slum dwellers) and addresses persistent power imbalances. In the context of the geographies of urban governance, inclusive development implies that scholarship and related policies focus on local marginal and vulnerable groups and how urban governance shapes and reshapes the spaces within which these groups operate, and the associated scalar dimensions.

Second, inclusive development in the context of the Anthropocene implies building on ecological standards and principles. It tries to understand how these standards can be used to produce a certain ecospace and how this ecospace can then be equitably shared between people at multiple levels of governance. In the context of geographies of urban governance, this requires the sharing of rights, responsibilities and risks across temporal, jurisdictional, spatial and other scales. At a temporal scale, this implies that path dependency and future generations are taken into account and that horizontal and vertical fragmentation should be overcome at the jurisdictional scale (see Sect. 5.4). In terms of spatial scales, this implies:

- At the local level: the sharing of green and open spaces, local water and energy resources and the equitable location of waste landfills and incinerators;
- At the urban-rural level: an understanding of the two-way flows in such a way that the drivers of human environmental degradation are identified and the rights, responsibilities and risks with respect to ecospace are equitably shared by urban and rural communities;
- At the urban-national level: an understanding of the nested ecosystems and how the rights, responsibilities and risks associated with national ecospace are shared equitably;
- At the scale of the urban-transboundary river level: an understanding of how urban locations on transboundary rivers need to equitably share the ecosystem services that the river has to offer with other riparians of the river basin;
- At the urban-global level: that responsibilities for reducing greenhouse gases have to be adopted in a differentiated manner and cities need to also become

resilient as a whole including their peripheries and slums to the possible impacts of climate change.

However, our scenario studies indicate that many local residents in some cities in the global South are less aware of the social-ecological issues than in other places and that there is considerable work required to create broader awareness of these issues and their role in metropolitan governance.

Third, an inclusive development perspective requires a relational understanding of the power politics embedded and often hidden in discourses, networks, instruments, methods and processes. This implies a closer examination of how spaces of urban governance, of possible networks of inclusive development and of relevant communities of practice are being produced, and how they operate in specific cities in the global North and global South.

In this context, we note that the United Nations is aiming to adopt Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) in 2015. Comprehensive goal setting at UN level is of relatively recent origin with the Millennium Development Goals adopted in 2000/2002 as the precedent. Goal setting at global level serves two purposes: it aims to create a common broad discursive agenda for everyone in a globalized world aiming at inclusive and sustainable societies and, more importantly, it counters the dominance of the neoliberal agenda and its exclusive focus on growth-based economies. The proposed goals have simplified targets, but it is expected that each jurisdictional entity will shape its own targets and indicators based on their contextual circumstances. One of the proposed goals aims to “make cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable”. The inclusiveness in this goal is translated into 11 broad targets. The SDGs’ emphasis on inclusiveness, resilience and sustainability is one that we endorse strongly. The key question with the SDGs, as with the MDGs, is whether once these broad goals and targets are translated into indicators and instruments, they become so ‘flat’ and meaningless that the substantive emphasis in the goals are *de facto* not met. Our book has shown that there is a range of ideas about governance, good governance, networks, instruments and participation available. However, how these are designed, by whom and for what purpose will actually lead to a determination of whether these broad goals will be implemented and achieved. Overall attention for the specificities of place, for how the space of the SDG implementation is being produced, and understanding the importance and role of scale and levels is crucial. Insights from our book may help identify the ways and means to make these goals a reality.

11.5 Conclusion

This book has deployed a geographical perspective on governance, focusing on the importance of place, space, scale and human-environment interactions. We bring forward the relevance of the situated context of place in relation to governance theory, instruments, methods, technologies, practices and outcomes. Scenario

planning, for example, assuming collaboration among multiple actors, shows that the process through which scenarios are built is shaped by local political systems (see Chap. 10). While bottom-up participation in such processes is self-evident in Peru, known for its *concertación* processes (Miranda Sara and Baud 2014), in areas with more hierarchical governance layers such as in Indian cities, it is more challenging to bring different actors together at the same time and place (Pfeffer et al. 2011). Plans to implement the smart city concept, or its actual implementation, are illustrative of how specificities of place influence the way in which the concept is being rolled out (see Chap. 9). Availability and accessibility of digital information as well as the means to develop financial systems are but two of these specificities. As in New York, in Amsterdam the smart city concept implies the integration of several (digital) processes and tools across the city, whereas less-resourced cities in the global South such as Abidjan or Kampala are more concerned with the creation (and then integration) of the base information for governing the city (see Chaps. 8 and 9). Transferring ideas from one context to another or policy mobility is dependent on local contexts. Concepts such as scenario building, market mechanisms, stakeholder participation and smart cities all take different shapes in different contexts, and their outcomes are therefore also different. The relevance of place in governance theory is made explicit by means of the ‘ordinary city’ concept (Robinson 2006) in which universal urban transformations are perceived in the light of local and historical political and social-economic pathways (see Chap. 2). We underscore this through our cases in the global North and South.

Spaces of governance such as those of networks (see Chaps. 3 and 4), urban-rural regions and landscapes (see Chap. 5) and those created via governance instruments (see Chap. 6) or participatory processes (see Chap. 7) are constructed and produced through interactions between actors and institutions not necessarily located within the physical city boundaries. Inequalities and differences of power, knowledge and means determine how the urban space is shaped. Interactive governance (see Chap. 2) and governmentality (see Chap. 3) are useful approaches to address this production of space component. The benefits and limits of global urban networks or participatory governance processes are shaped by the space within which these are formed and operate.

Chapter 1 addresses scale by showing the inter-linkages between globalization and urban issues. Chapter 5 addresses the horizontal or territorial dimension of scale. The interaction and interdependence of the urban, the rural and the peri-urban, and the various flows between them, make clear that urban governance does not stop at the city boundaries but goes beyond to influence neighbouring and distant areas. Similarly, urban networks connecting cities to each other and facilitating the exchange of information and knowledge that feed (to a greater or lesser extent) into policies are another expression of this horizontal scalar dimension (see Chap. 4).

Cities are not only shaped by the multiple horizontal layers and linkages but also influenced by the multiple governance layers as governance at city level is connected to that at sub-city, state, provincial, national and international level. At and across these levels, policies, institutions and regulations and judicial elements are being created which need to be implemented locally. An example is the national

housing programme (RAY) in India requesting local bodies to digitize all informal settlements (see Chap. 8). Moreover, local governments are held accountable to national governments, while large metropolises are major sites where global markets and multinationals meet in forums of political decision-making (see Chap. 6) and where global actors (e.g. the World Bank or UN-Habitat) are active actors in launching local programmes or providing funding. Finally, urban governance is also determined by the position cities have within the political landscape. While capital cities may be closer to national governments and therefore more up-to-date, national governments often take over local mandates (Baud et al. 2014). The book examined current governance patterns from the perspective of inclusive development and aimed to build an understanding of how governance can contribute to the development of just and resilient cities. We believe that the many discussions on governance theories, instruments, methods and practices held in this book provide answers to this.

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