

Editorial: What role for mayors in good city governance?

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I. INTRODUCTION

The last 10 years have brought more attention to the role of mayors in development in Africa, Asia and Latin America. This issue of *Environment and Urbanization* has two papers that draw on interviews with mayors: the first with Mayor Lifschitz, who was recently re-elected for a second term as mayor of Rosario, Argentina's third largest city; and the second with four mayors in Colombia who were coming to the end of their terms, including the mayor of Medellín, Colombia's second largest city. Papers in *Environment and Urbanization* often mention mayors, but this issue provides an opportunity to actually consider their role (along with other factors) in "good city governance". Of particular interest here is whether this governance is "good" for those with limited or inadequate incomes. Clearly, good governance from this perspective needs to combine economic policies that support city prosperity with good social policies. Environmental policies must address local environmental health risks (and most such risk is usually concentrated among low-income groups in informal settlements); now, they are also expected to address global warming. Getting a balance between all these is never easy. There is also the issue of what mayors cannot do. While the success of certain mayors in development is well established, it is also important to consider what they cannot do or what they can only do when other factors are present. As discussed later, the success of many mayors in Latin America would not have been possible without many broader legal and institutional changes at the national level.

It is difficult, or perhaps impossible, to know what creates and sustains "good governance" in any city for those city dwellers with inadequate or limited incomes. But we know enough to realize that five aspects generally support this:

- elected city governments;
- city governments with resources and powers to allow them to act (often linked to decentralization);
- formal and informal avenues to allow civil society to influence what city governments do and hold them to account;
- organized urban poor groups that can work at the level of the city, that are able and willing to interact with city government and to whom city government is prepared to listen (otherwise it can be middle- and upper-income groups who are the key civil society influence on city policies); and
- a rule of law not too biased against low-income groups and their informal economy and informal housing. Of course, this rule of law must also protect community leaders and other citizens from arbitrary arrest (or worse).

This is not to claim that all five aspects listed above need to be present to explain every example of a city government that has brought benefits to those with limited incomes. It is also difficult to generalize when the scope for what can be done and what needs to be changed to benefit those with limited incomes is so rooted in local contexts and local political forms – along with the extent of supportive laws and institutions at higher levels of government. But most of the papers in this and the previous issue of *Environment and Urbanization* with examples of governments with policies that benefit the poor (and/or work with them) exhibit most of these five aspects; in all the papers describing cases

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of anti-poor government policies or measures, most or all of these aspects are absent – perhaps most dramatically in the case of Harare, as described in Amin Kamete's paper. The previous issue of *Environment and Urbanization* (October 2008, also on city governance and citizen action) paid particular attention to the fourth aspect listed above, and the ways in which organized urban poor groups take direct action themselves, make demands on government or offer government partnerships for "co-production".

Local governments have important roles in addressing poverty and inequality. In a context in which low incomes are a reality for a significant proportion of the population of any urban centre, access to housing, infrastructure, services and other resources is critical for avoiding poverty. In most urban centres, local government has some role in all of these, especially in providing basic services and influencing access to land for housing, and in what can and cannot be built (even if it is to allow illegal structures). Urban governments are also generally important in influencing the scope for livelihoods in the informal economy – for instance, whether and where street trading can take place, and with what ease. There are dramatic differences between urban centres in the scale of the deficit in infrastructure and services and in the investment budget available to local government (including a high proportion of urban centres with little or no investment capacity). But what is of interest is what is it that makes the government of a city or smaller urban centre more, rather than less, responsive to the needs and interests of their low-income citizens? What role can mayors have within this?

II. WHAT ROLE FOR MAYORS?

There is little detailed discussion of the role of mayors (or heads of urban government, however named) in urban governments (and more broadly of governance) and of how much urban governance addresses the needs of those with inadequate incomes. But what mayors do and think is obviously an important influence on urban development in many urban centres. Mayors generally head the political and administrative parts of urban governments that, as noted above, are so important to low-income groups with regard to the potential for getting or building housing, being able to pursue livelihoods, having

access to water, sanitation, health care and education, and often also to the rule of law. As Julio Dávila notes, drawing on interviews with four Colombian mayors, local governments are particularly relevant to people's daily lives as they manage the infrastructure and services that directly influence quality of life. In urban centres where mayors have influence, they will also influence the form of the city's current and future development, including its success in attracting new investment. They are also likely to influence the form and extent of the urban centre's physical expansion (and whose needs are accommodated in this expansion) by the extent of their commitment to managing land use.

Mayors are mentioned in around one in five of all the papers ever published in *Environment and Urbanization*,⁽¹⁾ but rarely are their roles discussed in any detail. In some papers, they are mentioned as important supporters of social innovation, although with no real discussion of how. Some papers clearly show that mayors have considerable power and influence, while others highlight their lack of power and influence, as so many key decisions are made outside of local government,⁽²⁾ or by civil servants. Most papers that mention mayors stress the importance of city mayors or district mayors or deputy mayors for "good" governance, while some note the difficulties in getting such mayors to address urban poverty issues, or work with urban poor groups.

The main exceptions to these passing references to mayors are papers about urban issues in Latin America, where particular mayors are mentioned as having had important roles in new policy directions, including those relevant to poverty reduction. Over the 20 years that this journal has been published, most of the papers published with examples of mayors with pro-poor policies are from Latin America, especially Brazil.

1. If you place a search for the word "mayor" in the quick search for all issues of *Environment and Urbanization* (<http://eau.sagepub.com/archive/>), the text for each paper that mentions the word "mayor" will be brought up. A review of all these papers shows that around one-fifth of all papers published include some discussion of the role of mayors. The original search suggests rather more, but this is because it is picking up the word "mayor" in the section that has summaries of papers in Spanish. However, this is a nice coincidence because the English word "mayor" is thought to have come from the Latin "māior" (meaning greater), from which the Spanish word "mayor" is derived.

2. See Benjamin, Solomon (2000), "Governance, economic settings and poverty in Bangalore", *Environment and Urbanization* Vol 12, No 1, April, pages 35–56.

So how important is the role of the mayor? How much is their role influenced by whether they are elected by city inhabitants, or chosen by elected urban councillors, or appointed? Of course, care is needed in drawing conclusions about the potential impact of these alternatives, given the very large differences between and within nations in the power and accountability of mayors. In many urban centres, mayors have very limited roles. But in some contexts, mayors have considerable importance, both for city development and for the nature of the government's relations with urban poor groups – for instance, in opening and maintaining dialogue with urban poor groups or other groups whose needs have been given inadequate attention (including women and children), and in piloting institutionalized change that can transform the ability of an urban government to address the needs and interests of the poor (for instance, through introducing or supporting participatory budgeting). The case studies and discussions of local governance published to date in *Environment and Urbanization* would strongly support the notion that local democracy has been an important feature of more pro-poor city and municipal governments. In addition, most of the more innovative mayors have been directly elected by city voters (rather than chosen by elected city councillors). Perhaps mayors who depend on voters in their city or municipality are more likely to be responsive to the needs and priorities of these voters – although it might also be that such mayors are also more visible, and that their work and influence is noticed more than that of mayors or heads of city councils who are chosen by elected city councillors. In addition, elected mayors may focus their attention on the people and urban districts that helped get them elected, excluding all others. Once elected, they may become less responsive to civil society demands and pressures, as they claim that their election gave them the right to make decisions.

It may also be that urban researchers are drawn to positive examples of mayors, so the literature may be misleading in that it documents the exceptions. From this can emerge an exaggerated idea of the potential role of mayors in other cities and nations. Just because there are many examples of innovative mayors in certain Latin American nations does not mean this is likely (or possible) elsewhere. However, many papers that mention mayors focus on what they

should be doing (and thus, implicitly, on what they are not actually doing); some also note that mayors are anti-poor, or are serving primarily the elite.⁽³⁾ Where corruption is mentioned in relation to mayors, it is most often in relation to corrupt practices related to land use and development. This is hardly surprising in that land use regulations usually fall within the responsibilities of local governments, and land values are so influenced by the development that is allowed on this land. For instance, the paper by Tej Kumar Karki on Kathmandu⁽⁴⁾ noted that the mayor in Lalitpur (one of the three cities within greater Kathmandu) was providing permits to illegal builders, while Patrick Kelly's paper on land conversion around Manila described the links between mayors and real estate development, with re-zoning decisions often involving bribery and kickbacks.⁽⁵⁾ Michaela Hordijk's paper on participatory budgeting in Peru noted that several of the mayors of San Juan (a municipality within Lima) ended up in jail for illegally selling off plots, for corruption and for abuse of power.⁽⁶⁾ Mariken Vaa's paper on Bamako pointed to the influence of the mayor and their staff in each municipality in allocating plots in resettlement zones to those who were not being resettled.⁽⁷⁾

III. A GROWING RECOGNITION OF THE ROLE OF MAYORS?

Perhaps the main reason why the role of mayors in development has been overlooked is the lack of attention from aid agencies and development banks to "urban" and "local governance" (and this persists in many such agencies today). It also

3. See the discussion of Alemán's "beautification" of Managua in Rodgers, Dennis (2004), "Disembedding the city: crime, insecurity and spatial organization in Managua, Nicaragua", *Environment and Urbanization* Vol 16, No 2, October, pages 113–124.

4. Kumar Karki, Tej (2004), "Challenges of managing a government town planning office in Nepal: a planner's experience", *Environment and Urbanization* Vol 16, No 2, October, pages 223–234.

5. Kelly, Philip F (1998), "The politics of urban-rural relationships: land conversion in the Philippines", *Environment and Urbanization* Vol 10, No 1, April, pages 35–54.

6. Hordijk, Michaela (2005), "Participatory governance in Peru: exercising citizenship", *Environment and Urbanization* Vol 17, No 1, April, pages 219–236.

7. Vaa, Mariken (2000), "Housing policy after political transition: the case of Bamako", *Environment and Urbanization* Vol 12, No 1, April, pages 27–34.

relates to the rather delayed recognition within development discussions of the importance of cities and urban systems in successful economies. The United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) was among the first of the large development assistance agencies to recognize the importance of mayors in development. From 1990, they sought to engage mayors in discussions of their roles in child development, and even to award particular mayors with the title of defenders of children. But this interest was not sustained. UNICEF has always been uncertain about its role in urban development, and although UNICEF country offices have supported many innovative urban programmes working with the urban poor going back to the early 1970s, these have never enjoyed much support from UNICEF headquarters. Then, suddenly, no international conference on development was complete without various mayors, and there are even conferences where most of the presentations are by mayors. Several international agencies work directly with mayors – for instance, the Cities Alliance, Local Governments for Sustainability (ICLEI) and United Cities and Local Governments (UCLG). Mayors are now being courted by international agencies and networks to act on climate change (including the C40 Cities Climate Leadership Group supported by the Clinton Climate Initiative), although at the moment the support is far more for greenhouse gas reduction (mitigation), despite the far more urgent need within low-income nations for support for adaptation to climate change impacts.⁽⁸⁾

Mayors may be invited to give speeches at conferences but it is rare for them to be given the opportunity and encouragement to reflect on what they have achieved and why – and what they failed to achieve.⁽⁹⁾ So what role do mayors have in “good governance”? Mayors have made important contributions to many of the innovations documented in previous issues of *Environment and Urbanization* – Manizales,⁽¹⁰⁾ Ilo,⁽¹¹⁾ Cali,⁽¹²⁾ Porto Alegre,⁽¹³⁾ Villa El Salvador,⁽¹⁴⁾ Huaycan,⁽¹⁵⁾ and participatory budgeting in general.⁽¹⁶⁾ In other instances, it is not mayors but senior civil servants who have also had important roles in innovations that brought major benefits to urban poor groups – community police stations and community-managed toilets in India,⁽¹⁷⁾ the nationwide “slum” and squatter upgrading programme in Thailand, supported by the Community Organizations Development Institute,⁽¹⁸⁾

and the housing programme in São Paulo from 2000 to 2004.⁽¹⁹⁾ As the paper in this issue about Dharavi's redevelopment makes clear, the willingness (or not) of senior civil servants to engage with resident organizations within Dharavi and allow them to influence Dharavi's redevelopment is having an impact on the form this redevelopment takes. Certainly in India, there are many examples

8. Bicknell, Jane, David Dodman and David Satterthwaite (editors) (2009 forthcoming), *Adapting Cities to Climate Change: Understanding and Addressing the Development Challenges*, Earthscan Publications, London.

9. *Environment and Urbanization* has had more success in getting contributions from senior civil servants or ex-senior civil servants – see, for instance, papers published by Somsook Boonyabanha, Paulo Teixeira, Debra Roberts, Edésio Fernandes and A N Roy while still in office; also by Sundar Burra after he had left the Indian Administrative Service to work with the NGO SPARC, and Rualdo Meneget after leaving the city government of Porto Alegre to return to his university.

10. Velasquez, Luz Stella (1998), “Agenda 21; a form of joint environmental management in Manizales, Colombia”, *Environment and Urbanization* Vol 10, No 2, October, pages 9–36.

11. Díaz, Doris Balvín, José Luis López Follegatti and Michaela Hordijk (1996), “Innovative urban environmental management in Ilo, Peru”, *Environment and Urbanization* Vol 8, No 1, April, pages 21–34; also López Follegatti, José Luis (1999), “Ilo: a city in transformation”, *Environment and Urbanization* Vol 11, No 2, October, pages 181–202.

12. Cruz, Luis Fernando (1994), “Fundación Carvajal; the Carvajal Foundation”, *Environment and Urbanization* Vol 6, No 2, October, pages 175–182.

13. Menegat, Rualdo (2002), “Participatory democracy and sustainable development: integrated urban environmental management in Porto Alegre, Brazil”, *Environment and Urbanization* Vol 14, No 2, October, pages 181–206; also Souza, Celina (2001), “Participatory budgeting in Brazilian cities: limits and possibilities in building democratic institutions”, *Environment and Urbanization* Vol 13, No 1, April, pages 159–184.

14. See reference 6.

15. Arévalo T, Pedro (1997), “May hope be realized: Huaycan self-managing urban community in Lima”, *Environment and Urbanization* Vol 9, No 1, April, pages 59–79.

16. See reference 13, Souza 2001; also Cabannes, Yves (2004), “Participatory budgeting: a significant contribution to participatory democracy”, *Environment and Urbanization* Vol 16, No 1, April, pages 27–46.

17. Roy, A N, A Jockin and Ahmad Javed (2004), “Community police stations in Mumbai's slums”, *Environment and Urbanization* Vol 16, No 2, October, pages 135–138; also Burra, Sundar, Sheela Patel and Tom Kerr (2003), “Community-designed, built and managed toilet blocks in Indian cities”, *Environment and Urbanization* Vol 15, No 2, October, pages 11–32.

18. Boonyabanha, Somsook (2005), “Baan Mankong; going to scale with ‘slum’ and squatter upgrading in Thailand”, *Environment and Urbanization* Vol 17, No 1, April, pages 21–46.

19. Budds, Jessica with Paulo Teixeira and SEHAB (2005), “Ensuring the right to the city: pro-poor housing, urban development and land tenure legalization in São Paulo, Brazil”, *Environment and Urbanization* Vol 17, No 1, April, pages 89–114.

of senior civil servants who have been strongly pro-poor and accountable – although there are also examples of the opposite. And in Pakistan, the success of the Orangi Pilot Project–Research and Training Institute in getting much improved provision for sanitation and drainage in low-income districts of Karachi and other urban centres is in part due to senior civil servants who were prepared to support their new approach.⁽²⁰⁾

In this issue, the two papers drawn from interviews with mayors contribute to an understanding of the role of mayors in urban poverty reduction. The first is Florencia Almansi's interview with Mayor Lifschitz, now in his second term as mayor of Rosario, Argentina's third largest city. The effectiveness of his first term clearly depended on a mix of economic, social and political changes that brought benefits to large sections of the population. His policies also combined support for Rosario's economic development and environmental improvement with pro-poor policies.

Mayor Lifschitz also speaks of the constraints he faced, including the limited capacity of any city government to reduce unemployment (although the city government has done much to promote and support local economic development). Also of the larger political difficulty of having the provincial government, the national government and many surrounding municipalities controlled by a different political party – which meant that almost all initiatives in Rosario had to be funded from municipal sources. Among the key points raised in this interview are the importance of a coherent strategic plan for a city, which draws in and supports private enterprises and urban planning with strong social dimensions (including expanding public space and improving infrastructure in peri-urban areas). The mayor also stresses the need to control speculation, limit high-rise development and preserve architecture – but not in ways that inhibit good quality new buildings. At the same time, the city government needs to work with local businesses – including working with private landowners to create a large number of open spaces, pedestrian zones, public beaches and new parks. Many municipal services in Rosario were decentralized to district centres that provided community space and had sections for administrative services, including urban development, health services and customer service outlets for electricity, gas and water. A portion

of the city's budget was divided among the six districts so that decisions on priorities were made within each district; this also increased the scope for neighbourhood community organizations and for leaders to influence priorities.

Julio Dávila's interviews with four mayors in Colombia demonstrate that all were committed to their cities, despite the differences between the mayors and their local contexts (ranging from a large successful multi-million inhabitants' manufacturing and service centre to a small port that is effectively bankrupt). All four mayors worked hard to get elected to a position that has financial and personal drawbacks in a country where elected leaders are often victims of violence from illegal armed groups. All had a sense of purpose in that they were involved in a tough but much needed job of breaking with bad political habits and putting local government on a sounder financial footing. All saw themselves as political outsiders who opposed entrenched local political systems (this is also a common theme among many other elected mayors in Latin America). All combined social agendas with attention to improving financial management.

If we consider the examples of innovative mayors that have been mentioned in papers in *Environment and Urbanization*, virtually all of them work within national systems that support elected mayors, and many of them come from outside the conventional political system. Many were trained in relevant professions – as architects, engineers, medical doctors – while several came from the staff of universities.⁽²¹⁾ For most such mayors, urban planning and land use management is seen as important, but within an alternative paradigm, supporting local economic development as well as social and environmental issues, that is less focused on control and more on catalyzing and supporting development. There is also recognition of the importance of a pro-poor social and environmental agenda as well as support for economic development, especially in increasing the scale and quality of public space (including parks) within the city as a whole and within low-income neighbourhoods.

20. Hasan, Arif (2006), "Orangi Pilot Project; the expansion of work beyond Orangi and the mapping of informal settlements and infrastructure", *Environment and Urbanization* Vol 18, No 2, October, pages 451–480.

21. See also Campbell, Tim (2003), *The Quiet Revolution*, University of Pittsburgh Press, Pittsburgh, 208 pages.

A recent book on the role and capacities of indigenous mayors in the Andes highlights the importance of charisma, of visibility and of frequent interaction with constituents. It also notes certain factors that are important for effectiveness, including the ability to be re-elected (innovation and institutional change takes time and often considerably more than three- or four-year terms) and the capacity and the will to communicate across social and cultural divides (in this study, specifically ethnic divides) and with external actors (especially donors). Successful mayors need to maintain a certain degree of autonomy from their supporters, yet simultaneously foster warm relations with the civil society groups that elected them. Striking the right balance in this requires a high degree of social skills.⁽²²⁾

IV. MAYORS' RELATIONS WITH URBAN POOR GROUPS

Obviously, in urban centres where mayors have influence, the way in which the mayor views low-income groups and their organizations, the settlements in which they live and the work in which they engage is important. The fact that *Environment and Urbanization* has published various papers showing the positive roles mayors have played in this probably misrepresents the more general reality. Once in office, it is also difficult for any elected mayor to remain open to criticism and real dialogue with grassroots organizations, especially where there is little scope for them to act. But what is more worrying is that mayors often view the poor and their settlements and income-earning activities as "the problem", even as the city economy depends on them. In many cities, there is a strong middle class that uses democratic processes to push city and municipal governments towards policies that Arif Hasan has noted are anti-poor, anti-vendors, anti-street, anti-pedestrian and anti-mixed land use. These policies are often closely associated with real estate interests. Perhaps it is more common for mayors in Asia to come from the private sector and to emphasize the need to focus on attracting new investment. Many mayors dream of transforming "their city" into a "world class city". In doing so, they often look to successful cities that they have visited or read about – for instance, Singapore, Dubai or Shanghai. City mayors often want to support mega-projects that will be their

"legacy" (and, they hope, get them re-elected or shifted to other political positions), with little concern for the evictions and displacements that these mega-projects bring.

Singapore has long served as an example that captures the imagination of politicians and developers. But this is without any recognition of what has actually underpinned Singapore's development – one of the fastest growing economies in the world over a long period, a very small population with almost no rural population and so no rapid rural-urban migration boosting the city's population growth, and much of the land in public ownership. More recently, Shanghai and Dubai have increasingly been used as examples to which cities should aspire, but these are hardly models of participatory democracy. And, perhaps more worryingly, these images are used to justify projects or programmes and "partnerships" with powerful private interests that do little or nothing to address the key needs within the city and may actually involve large-scale evictions. Papers by Arif Hasan in 2005, 2006 and 2007 all include discussions of this issue for Karachi.⁽²³⁾ For instance, his 2007 paper noted that the two elected mayors of Karachi in the previous five years had been in favour of "investment friendly" development, with many Memoranda of Understanding signed with international companies and international finance institutions for mega-projects that do not take into consideration the needs of the majority of the population and that adversely affect Karachi's natural and built environment; this includes a plan to privatize 14 kilometres of popular, widely used public beaches for elite hotels, condominiums, marinas and golf courses.⁽²⁴⁾

Many mayors and civil servants pursue an anti-poor policy, justified by its apparent contribution to attracting new investment. They see informal settlements and their inhabitants as inhibiting the city's development. Here, organized urban poor groups and the institutional measures that allow them (and other groups) to hold mayors and civil servants to account are important checks

22. Van Cott, Donna Lee (2008), *Radical Democracy in the Andes*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 280 pages.

23. See reference 20; also Hasan, Arif (2005), "The political and institutional blockages to good governance; the case of the Lyari expressway in Karachi", *Environment and Urbanization* Vol 17, No 2, October, pages 127–142; and Hasan, Arif (2007), "The Urban Resource Centre, Karachi", *Environment and Urbanization* Vol 19, No 1, April, pages 275–292.

24. See reference 23, Hasan (2007).

on anti-poor policies; where organized urban poor groups can offer city government partnerships to address such issues together, the possibility of combining economic success with pro-poor measures is much increased.

The paper by Gautam Bhan on Delhi discusses the relationship between city development and the rising number of evictions and other anti-poor measures restricting or banning enterprises that are important income sources for the urban poor. This is driven not by urban planning but by judicial rulings, and is underpinned by the larger political and economic interests that have reconfigured the politics of public interest in Indian cities to serve middle- and upper-income groups rather than protect low-income groups. Informal settlers are seen as illegal encroachers who inhibit the city's development rather than as city dwellers and workers with no alternatives; as trespassers rather than citizens with rights and entitlements. The urban poor are also blamed for pollution they did not cause. There have been instances where public interest litigation contributed to protecting poorer groups – but no longer. One judge commented that: "...if they cannot afford to live in Delhi, let them not come to Delhi." This view is also encouraged by notions the elite hold about the world class cities they would like to live in and by the strong market logic that has pushed its way into post-1991 politics in India. Creating a "world class city" is also about the image of what a city should look like – with "slums" considered aesthetically unacceptable and with bans on rickshaw dwellers, street food vendors and hawkers. This is a reminder of how anti-poor approaches become possible in a long-established democracy, by changing the discourse so that the poor are criminalized and blamed for being anti-progress. Public interest litigation becomes the entry point for aspirational middle-class consumer citizens, creating a shift in decision-making powers from ballot box and municipal government to the courtroom.

But there are also examples of mayors with not only strong social commitments to those with low incomes but also a recognition of the need to allow them to engage in government – and even an acceptance of the need to work in partnership with them – or with co-production.⁽²⁵⁾ Of the four mayors in Colombia interviewed by Julio Dávila, three emphasized citywide change while one emphasized a strong focus on working with poor groups. For some mayors, perhaps there was no alternative but to work with urban

poor groups – for instance, one of the key innovations brought by Julio Diaz Palacios as the first elected mayor of Ilo was to make all citizens see that Ilo was their city and to use the municipal government's limited budget to work with and support community-led initiatives to improve living conditions.⁽²⁶⁾ Alfredo Stein's paper on the PRODEL programme in Nicaragua, which supported local development in a range of urban centres, included discussions with mayors, and he quotes Manuel Maldonado, mayor of Somoto in 2001:

"We previously had an erroneous idea of what community participation was. We knew that it was a key element with a great deal of economic and human potential for municipal development, but in fact we were not providing any space in which it could take place. We are now convinced that it is essential to have community participation in all possible processes and all stages of the projects. This participation has facilitated the creation of coordinating committees and the identification of opportunities between the communities and the local government, which has been beneficial to both sides. Involving the communities has given the *barrios* greater confidence in the management and transparency of the funds by the municipal government. There is now improved communication and understanding between the members of the communities and the municipal government, and a higher level of satisfaction on the part of the population with the projects that have been carried out."⁽²⁷⁾

25. Mitlin, Diana (2008), "With and beyond the state; co-production as a route to political influence, power and transformation for grassroots organizations", *Environment and Urbanization* Vol 20, No 2, October, pages 339–360.

26. See reference 11, Díaz, López Follegatti and Hordijk (1996) and López Follegatti (1999); also Boon, Ronald G J, Nancy Alexaki and Herrera Becerra (2001), "The Ilo Clean Air Project: a local response to industrial pollution control in Peru", *Environment and Urbanization* Vol 13, No 2, October, pages 215–232; and Díaz Palacios, Julio and Liliana Miranda (2005), "Concertación (reaching agreement) and planning for sustainable development in Ilo, Peru", in Steve Bass, Hannah Reid, David Satterthwaite and Paul Steele (editors), *Reducing Poverty and Sustaining the Environment*, Earthscan Publications, London, pages 254–278. See also discussions on municipal innovations in participation from the early 1980s in Brazil discussed in reference 13, Souza (2001).

27. Stein, Alfredo (2001), "Participation and sustainability in social projects: the experience of the Local Development Programme (PRODEL) in Nicaragua", *Environment and Urbanization* Vol 13, No 1, April, page 25.

Michaela Hordijk's paper on participatory budgeting in Lima included an interview with Martin Pumar, mayor of Villa el Salvador between 1999 and 2002, and he made similar comments. He supported the introduction of participatory budgeting as a means of both allowing the inhabitants to take part in decision-making and encouraging them to take responsibility – to become co-governors:

“What we do need now is no longer the constant confrontation between citizens and authorities. We need leaders willing to take responsibility for our city, leaders who come up with development proposals ... we all – citizens, entrepreneurs, NGOs, authorities – have to consider ourselves protagonists of change, with a shared responsibility to develop our city.”⁽²⁸⁾

Here, in Maldonado and in Villa el Salvador, the mayors recognize the validity of what is often termed co-production; the various examples of co-production in the October 2008 issue of this journal must have been similarly recognized by senior politicians or civil servants. Underpinning this is a recognition of both the rights of urban poor groups and the legitimacy of their needs and priorities. But perhaps as importantly, beyond this was a recognition of the right of these groups to be at the table, discussing and influencing policies and initiatives. But urban poor groups need to be organized and develop their own citywide agenda for this to be effective. The previous issue of *Environment and Urbanization* examined in detail the strategic decision by representative organizations of the urban poor to offer partnerships to mayors and city governments – and this too is important in getting mayors to see urban poor groups as partners.⁽²⁹⁾ In Cebu in the Philippines, grassroots organizations formed their own Urban Poor People's Council to negotiate with the mayor.⁽³⁰⁾

Many mayors or civil servants judged to be “good” were judged so because they worked in partnership with organizations and federations of slum and shack dwellers. For specific local groups, a mayor who is elected by citizens offers an additional point of engagement with the local council if the group is negotiating for access to resources and/or seeking protection against abuse. A further aspect may be the citywide election process that engages community groups to consider issues beyond the immediacy of their

settlement and to look at how the municipal authorities can work in a way that is good for all citizens. We should not forget that the innovation of participatory budgeting in Porto Alegre came about when federations took on the challenge of making the council address the interests of all low-income settlements rather than the particular interests of individual, well-organized settlements. Participatory budgeting helped reverse the traditional patronage approach that characterizes public administration in most Brazilian cities.⁽³¹⁾ However, these city councils frequently only make available finance for very partial upgrading and improvement programmes; there appear to be very few cities in which a well-organized citywide process is in operation. While citywide elections for an individual post may help in more integrated and holistic thinking, it is not evident that this is sufficient in itself.

There is also the issue of whether mayors succeed in institutionalizing change. Although in recent years the social and pro-poor innovations in Ilo and Porto Alegre have been eroded after changes in government, they were sustained for many years and through different mayors. In some cases, mayors appear to be important for their individual qualities but the innovations they introduce disappear when they leave office; the innovations were not institutionalized at the local level. In some cases, mayors may be important because of the structural changes that they catalyze, drawing organized communities into discussions at the level of the city and helping those civil society organizations to understand new strategies and opportunities. In the Philippines, for example, community organizations have learnt over time how to use some of the legislative changes of the early 1990s to their advantage; invitations from mayors have helped them to understand the possibilities (and the difficulties) that lie within such engagements.⁽³²⁾

28. See reference 6, page 225.

29. See reference 25; also Arputham, Jockin (2008), “Developing new approaches for people-centred development”, *Environment and Urbanization* Vol 20, No 2, October, pages 319–337.

30. Etemadi, Felisa U (2004), “The politics of engagement: gains and challenges of the NGO coalition in Cebu City”, *Environment and Urbanization* Vol 16, No 1, pages 79–94.

31. See reference 13, Menegat (2002).

32. Racelis, M (2007), “Anxieties and affirmations: NGO–donor partnerships for social transformation”, in T Bebbington, S Hickey and D Mitlin (editors), *Can NGOs Make a Difference: The Challenge of Development Alternatives*, Zed Books, London, pages 196–219.

Political traditions, cultures, structures and processes influence the extent to which local democracy can secure lasting change, and the importance of municipal leadership to such changes. This helps to explain why mayors are mentioned so much in some countries and not in others.

So can mayors be effective on what might be termed a pro-city agenda as well as a pro-poor agenda? In a globalized world, where any city's prosperity depends on its success in attracting and keeping private enterprise, no socially progressive mayor can afford to alienate private investors. Indeed, to do so would be anti-poor. Is it possible to combine these roles? Porto Alegre, when run by the PT (Partido dos Trabalhadores), remained an attractive place for corporate investment because it was a well-run city with the infrastructure, services and educated labour force that such investment seeks. Mayor Lifschitz gave priority both to enhancing Rosario's economy and promoting a strong social and public agenda. But we should not forget the numerous examples of cities with brutal, large-scale evictions that are justified as being in the interest of that city's development (including Gautam Bhan's paper in this issue).⁽³³⁾

V. DO THE LARGER POLITICAL AND INSTITUTIONAL STRUCTURES SUPPORT EFFECTIVE MAYORS?

Most of the papers published in *Environment and Urbanization* that stress the positive role of mayors and that mention specific mayors are from Brazil or from other Latin American nations. For Brazil, obviously, this is strongly linked to larger political and institutional changes, including democratization, the new constitution in 1988 (and support for political and financial decentralization) and the introduction of elected mayors.⁽³⁴⁾ Both the initial success of the PT in getting into power at the local government level and then its success nationally with Lula as president are key parts of the story;⁽³⁵⁾ so too are the institutional innovations promoted by Lula's government at local and national level.⁽³⁶⁾ Also important, of course, is participatory budgeting – and most participatory budgeting both inside and outside Brazil has been in cities where mayors and councillors are elected by direct vote.⁽³⁷⁾

A book that compares eight different participatory budgeting experiences in Brazil concludes that the position of the mayor is decisive in their success or failure, in large part because of the degree to which mayors in Brazil control spending on new capital investment. The Brazilian legal framework is particularly favourable to mayors: legislative, budgetary and administrative authority are concentrated in the mayor's office.⁽³⁸⁾ The factors that supported participatory budgeting are similar to those mentioned earlier, which often underlie "good governance": elected mayors (willing to delegate authority to citizens); sufficient financial and human resources to ensure that investment decisions that are taken can be executed; and a vibrant civil society able to deliberate and negotiate – to cooperate and to contest. This study included cases with different rules for participatory budgeting, and the more these fostered direct participation of the poor, the better participatory budgeted functioned. The many new formal and informal avenues for state–society interaction created through these rules also improved local governance beyond budget decisions.⁽³⁹⁾

Other innovations in Brazil documented in *Environment and Urbanization*, in which mayors had important roles, include the involvement of children and youth in city government in Barra Mansa⁽⁴⁰⁾ and the community-based watershed

33. See reference 23, Hasan (2005); also ACHR/Asian Coalition for Housing Rights (1989), "Evictions in Seoul, South Korea", *Environment and Urbanization* Vol 1, No 1, April, pages 89–94; and du Plessis, Jean (2005), "The growing problem of forced evictions and the crucial importance of community-based, locally appropriate alternatives", *Environment and Urbanization* Vol 17, No 1, April, pages 123–134.

34. See reference 13 Souza (2001).

35. See reference 13, Souza (2001) and Menegat (2002).

36. See reference 19, Budds et al. (2005); also Fernandes, Edésio (2007), "Implementing the urban reform agenda in Brazil", *Environment and Urbanization* Vol 19, No 1, April, pages 177–189.

37. See reference 13, Menegat (2002) and Souza (2001); also see reference 16, Cabannes (2004).

38. Wampler, Brian (2007), *Participatory Budgeting in Brazil: Contestation, Cooperation and Accountability*, Pennsylvania State University Press, Pennsylvania, 280 pages.

39. See reference 38; also Chavez, Daniel (2004), *Polis & Demos; the Left in Municipal Governance in Montevideo and Porto Alegre*, Shaker Publishing, Maastricht, 248 pages.

40. Guerra, Eliana (2002), "Citizenship knows no age; children's participation in the governance and municipal budget of Barra Mansa, Brazil", *Environment and Urbanization* Vol 14, No 2, October, pages 71–84.

management in Santo André.⁽⁴¹⁾ The prominent roles that mayors now have in Colombia, including many mayors regarded as successful, also depended on national changes that included the introduction of elected mayors, a new constitution, new laws and more financial resources available to local governments.⁽⁴²⁾ The quality of Bogotá's government certainly improved during the 1990s, helped by the introduction of elected mayors but also by larger changes, including a stronger revenue base and a succession of mayors who "...built on the achievements of their predecessors and made genuine improvements in the quality of urban management."⁽⁴³⁾ Papers discussing innovative local governments in Peru are also linked to the introduction of elected mayors.⁽⁴⁴⁾

Thus one key question is how much is local democracy respected and nurtured? And how do national or state governments respond when mayors and city councils are elected that are from different political parties? For Mayor Lifschitz, it meant no financial support from national or state government during his first term. This is a common theme among papers discussing mayors in Latin America. In Mexico, when Cuauhtémoc Cardenas, who at the time led the main opposition party to the government, was elected mayor of Mexico City in 1999, the ruling party that controlled the federal government could greatly curtail his effectiveness. In many nations, it is also difficult for any mayor to go outside long-established traditional political procedures – for instance, of clientelism and of excessive control on non-government organizations.

Where local democracy is not respected, the possibility of effective mayors is much reduced. In Kenya, in 1983, the national government replaced Nairobi's elected city council with city commissioners whom they appointed, and it was not until 1992 that the city got back an elected government.⁽⁴⁵⁾ More recently, the government of Zimbabwe replaced the elected city council in Harare, as described in Amin Kamete's paper. Examples of this are not confined to low- and middle-income nations; when Margaret Thatcher was the UK prime minister, the effectiveness of London's elected government, headed by Ken Livingstone, as a centre of opposition to her policies led to her shutting down the Greater London Council – here it was the entire structure that was replaced, not just the individual who was leader of the city council. Perhaps ironically, when London got back an elected authority

(and the post of mayor, elected by Londoners, introduced in 2001), it was Ken Livingstone who was elected, standing as an independent, opposed by candidates from the main political parties.

In other political cultures, a much greater emphasis is given to the role of town clerk or the senior administrative officials within the city. Such officials have no direct electoral interest in addressing the interests of the poor or in responding to their demands. However, this does not mean that they are always indifferent. What it does mean is that securing pro-poor policies is much more likely to be dependent on the ability of the organized citizenry to show how they can contribute to the well-being of the city and/or to build up a relationship with the individuals in post. Citizens cannot hold over these individuals the threat that they will be dismissed from their posts.

Two initiatives that sought to support innovative, pro-poor mayors have been documented in previous issues of *Environment and Urbanization*. The first was a UNICEF programme in Ceará (Brazil) to encourage municipalities to compete to obtain a municipal Seal of Approval, based on an external audit of their performance in meeting certain of children's needs and rights.⁽⁴⁶⁾ Perhaps surprisingly, given that there were no monetary rewards on offer, this did motivate many mayors, local authorities and civil society groups to deliver measurable progress for children. Mayors found UNICEF's endorsement useful and the programme received support from key unions, the association of mayors and state government. The second initiative was the Cities for Life forum in Peru, reported in two

41. van Horen, Basil (2001), "Developing community-based watershed management in Greater São Paulo; the case of Santo André", *Environment and Urbanization* Vol 13, No 1, April, pages 209–222.

42. See, for instance, reference 10.

43. Gilbert, Alan and Julio Dávila (2002), "Bogotá: progress within a hostile environment", in Henry A Dietz and David J Myers (editors), *Capital City Politics in Latin America: Democratization and Empowerment*, Lynne Rienner, Boulder, USA, pages 29–63.

44. See reference 11 López Follegatti (1999); also see reference 6.

45. See Stren, Richard, Mohamed Halfani and Joyce Malombe (1994), "Urbanization and urban policy", in Joel D Barkan (editor), *Beyond Capitalism vs. Socialism in Kenya and Tanzania*, Lynne Rienner Publishers, pages 175–200.

46. Fuentes, Patricio and Reiko Niimi (2002), "Motivating municipal action for children; the municipal Seal of Approval in Ceará, Brazil", *Environment and Urbanization* Vol 14, No 2, October, pages 123–133.

papers – the first described the national network set up to support more accountable, democratic and effective local governance,⁽⁴⁷⁾ and the second reported on progress.⁽⁴⁸⁾ There was also a paper on the experience of an Indian NGO, the Society for Participatory Research in Asia (PRIA), with participatory town planning in two urban centres that sought to bring together civil society groups and local politicians and civil servants as well as officials from state level institutions. PRIA's work included supporting urban poor households to organize to be able to make more demands on local government, and providing training and technical advice for newly elected town councillors.⁽⁴⁹⁾ The Orangi Pilot Project–Research and Training Institute (OPP–RTI) in Pakistan has also sought to help urban council mayors in Karachi to plan development. Urban councils are the lowest administrative unit and there are 178 of these in Karachi. OPP–RTI prepared detailed maps of each mayor's constituency and documented conditions; they then identified development needs on the basis of the documentation, and the role of the community and government in planning and delivering this development.⁽⁵⁰⁾

VI. WHAT ROLE FOR THE URBAN POOR?

As discussed here and in the October 2008 issue, urban poor organizations need to be organized in order to have influence on their local governments, and need to develop their own agenda and proposals (and show local government their capacities). They also need spaces and opportunities where local government lets them work. Four papers in this issue discuss how urban poor organizations and local NGOs organize, not only to implement initiatives but also to seek partnerships with government on redevelopment. They complement the many other papers on this topic in the October 2008 issue. They also complement papers in earlier issues – for instance the discussions of innovations in the municipality of León in Nicaragua that noted the important role of mayors – but also the key role of organized, militant and autonomous social movements.⁽⁵¹⁾ The introduction of participatory budgeting in Brazil was due in part to the power and influence of community organizations, social movements and trade unions. One of the key roles for the Urban Resource Centres in Karachi and other urban centres in Pakistan is to allow

grassroots organizations to influence citywide agendas and to help build alliances that support this.⁽⁵²⁾

For governments to sanction such partnerships depends on the recognition by senior politicians and civil servants of the legitimacy of the urban poor organizations (or other civil society organizations) and what they do and promote. Success will generally depend on urban poor organizations being prepared and able to deal with what is often a slow process that does not produce perfect outcomes. The paper on the squatters' movement in Kathmandu by Masako Tanaka documents changes in the stance of squatters from challenging government to encouraging partnerships with both government and non-squatters. The papers on Dar es Salaam and Dharavi (in Mumbai) are both interesting in that they are on the local processes that seek to avoid massive displacement/impoverishment of low-income groups as a result of city redevelopment. In both, there are critical issues around the entitlements of large numbers of low-income people living in informal settlements that are slated for redevelopment. In Dar es Salaam, the Tanzania Urban Poor Federation and a local NGO are looking for resettlement solutions working with the Ministry of Lands, Housing and Human Settlements and municipal authorities. In this context, the relatively young community network is seeking to initiate new experiences of collaboration between Temeke council (one of the three municipalities that make up Dar es Salaam) and the local residents who have been displaced due to the redevelopment of the port. In Dharavi, the paper by Sheela Patel, Jockin Arputham, Sundar Burra and Katia Savchuk shows that it is centred around who among the inhabitants is entitled

47. Miranda, Liliana and Michaela Hordijk (1998), "Let us build cities for life: the National Campaign of Local Agenda 21s in Peru", *Environment and Urbanization* Vol 10, No 2, October, pages 69–102.

48. Miranda, Liliana (2004), "Cities for Life revisited: capacity building for urban management through the National Campaign for Local Agenda 21s in Peru", *Environment and Urbanization* Vol 16, No 2, October, pages 249–262.

49. Sheikh, Khatibullah and Shrinivas Rao (2007), "Participatory city planning in Chhattisgarh: a civil society initiative", *Environment and Urbanization* Vol 19, No 2, October, pages 563–581.

50. See reference 20.

51. Montiel, René Pérez and Françoise Barten (1999), "Urban governance and health development in León, Nicaragua", *Environment and Urbanization* Vol 11, No 1, April, pages 11–26.

52. See reference 20.

to rehousing and the form this rehousing takes (including provisions within any redevelopment for local livelihoods and enterprises). Democratic pressures and strong urban poor organization prevented the preferred solution of many in Mumbai, both within and outside government – namely a complete redevelopment of Dharavi in which the inhabitants have no say. Here, as this paper discusses, the orientation of senior civil servants is also important. In this context, the community has long experience of collaboration, but in the context of a highly valuable land market it faces considerable opposition from developers and associated interests.

The Dharavi experience highlights the importance for local groups of being able to operate at the city level and having institutions (both organizations and working practices) that help them to do this. Many of the problems faced by the urban poor can only be addressed through a city agenda (not through local funding for settlement improvements), and commercial and elite interests able to function at that level are influencing this agenda. This reverts once again to the importance of having institutions (either within government or civil society, and ideally within both) that encourage such a “whole city” perspective and that enable plans, programmes and associated negotiations to take place within this perspective. This needs to include civil society organizations that can hold city governments to account. This does not mean ignoring the spatially particular and specific, but, rather, recognizing that this is not the whole picture and that many of the urban governance challenges simply cannot be addressed at this level.⁵³ Governance has to be more than simply negotiations by the inhabitants of an informal settlement related to access to water, sanitation and health facilities in their locality. At one level, it is important that the needs of all the settlements in the city that require improvement are considered. But equally, the needs of particular settlements have to be balanced with the opportunities for economic development, just as they have to be balanced with the needs of particular groups such as the young and the old. The challenge lies not simply in the need to deal holistically with the city in a spatial sense but also to create and address the aspirations of citizens and the governments that they elect.

The paper on Buenos Aires by Mariano Scheinsohn and Cecilia Cabrera describes how two powerful, well-known citizen organizations

in Argentina sought to work with the state on housing initiatives. The first is the Madres de Plaza de Mayo, which began as an association of mothers seeking to find their sons and daughters who had been abducted by the military dictatorship some 30 years ago. The second is the *piqueteros*, which originated from protests by workers who had lost their jobs (for instance, protesting by blocking roads) and which developed into a larger movement opposing the privatization of public services and other neoliberal government policies during the 1990s. These organizations are interesting because they are civil society organizations set up to make demands on government, that first developed their own social programmes and that are now developing an active role in solutions, working with government. The state is no longer their opponent. One initiative by the Movimiento Territorial de Liberación picket movement is producing 326 dwellings and 10 retail stores on abandoned industrial land in a working-class neighbourhood – and also provides employment for 700 workers. The Madres de Plaza de Mayo are working with the city and the national government in two of Buenos Aires's poorest neighbourhoods. The work includes a factory that produces prefabricated panels and housing projects that utilize these panels (which cuts housing costs considerably). The first housing project for 105 units is now complete; it generated 400 jobs, most of which were for unemployed people living in the neighbourhood. However, the intention of this association is to develop a series of pilot initiatives that, in turn, will encourage and support the state to develop a far more effective social housing policy. But an obvious danger for both these organizations is that by working with government, they may diminish their power to hold government to account.

VII. OTHER SOURCES OF PROTEST

Two papers in this issue are on protest and on demands for political change. One on Cairo, by Wael Salah Fahmi, examines new ways in which protest and dissent are being articulated, and new ideas promoted through blogging and protest organization using the Internet. It also describes

53. See reference 18 for a discussion of the citywide processes involving urban poor groups.

the authoritarian responses; the state does not want to engage with these groups (or indeed with the urban poor in general).⁽⁵⁴⁾ The other paper is on the role of the Combined Harare Residents Association (CHRA) in Zimbabwe in holding the city government to account – contesting the legitimacy of the imposed authority (as it contravened the law), demanding the right to influence the budgetary process and contesting the transfer of services to private enterprises. Here, many of the concerns of the CHRA are supported and legitimated by the law, but it is difficult to sustain pressure through sound legal arguments with a national government that flouts any law it chooses.⁽⁵⁵⁾

VIII. CLIMATE CHANGE

For cities, really there are three critical climate change issues: how cities can contribute to reducing greenhouse gas emissions (mitigation); how cities can adapt to the changes that climate change is bringing, or can prepare for those that it will bring; and what framework of external support from higher levels of government and from international agencies will help them do this. Each of the three papers on climate change in this issue of *Environment and Urbanization* deals with one of these issues.

The paper by David Dodman reviews the data from cities that have undertaken greenhouse gas emissions inventories and shows that in most cases, per capita emissions from cities are lower than the average for the countries in which they are located. The paper also discusses why this is so and examines the role and potential for cities to reduce global greenhouse gas emissions.

The paper by Jorgelina Hardoy and Gustavo Pandiella considers who within the urban population of Latin America is most at risk from the likely impacts of climate change over the next few decades. It also considers how this risk is linked to poverty and to the inadequacies in city and municipal governments. It discusses four key issues: who lives or works in locations most at risk (including those lacking the needed infrastructure); who lacks knowledge and the capacity to adapt; whose homes and neighbourhoods face the greatest risks when impacts occur; and who are least able to cope with the impacts (for instance, from injury, death and loss of property and income). The paper notes that now adaptation

to climate change cannot eliminate many of the extreme weather risks, so it needs to limit their impacts through good disaster preparedness and post-disaster response. This paper also discusses the measures currently underway that address the vulnerability of urban populations to extreme weather, and how these measures can contribute to building resilience to the impacts of climate change.

The paper by Jessica Ayers looks at current provisions for international funding to support urban adaptation to climate change. Recent estimates of the costs of adaptation to climate change in low- and middle-income countries are in the range of tens of billions of dollars per annum. The costs of adaptation in cities will account for a significant proportion of this average largely because of the expense required to adapt (or, in the case of many low- and middle-income countries, build new and resilient) infrastructure and services for densely populated areas. This paper discusses existing international funding to support adaptation needs (primarily through the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) and official development assistance), the serious shortfall in these funds, and opportunities for meeting the gap in funding. It pays particular attention to channelling funding to the most vulnerable urban stakeholders, taking into account the political and institutional constraints to the adaptive capacity of these groups.

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54. See also Fahmi, Wael Salah (2005), "The impact of privatization of solid waste management on the Zabaleen garbage collectors of Cairo", *Environment and Urbanization* Vol 17, No 2, October, pages 155–170; and Sabry, Sarah (2005), "The Social Aid and Assistance programme of the government of Egypt: a critical review", *Environment and Urbanization* Vol 17, No 2, October, pages 27–42.

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