Introduction: Transforming Cities: Urbanization and International Development in Africa and Latin America since 1945

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ABSTRACTS

Forschungen zur Stadtgeschichte und zur Geschichte der Entwicklungszusammenarbeit sind bisher selten miteinander in Verbindung gebracht worden. Welche analytischen Perspektiven aber eröffnen sich an der Schnittstelle dieser beiden Forschungsfelder? Ausgehend von einer Zusammenschau neuerer Forschungen benennt die Einleitung Anliegen und Forschungsfragen dieses special issue und führt in die einzelnen Beiträge ein. Der Blick auf die Geschichte urbaner Entwicklungspolitik, so wird argumentiert, ermöglicht nicht allein ein besseres Verständnis der Kategorie „Raum" als Zielobjekt und Handlungskontext von Entwicklungspolitik. Sie eröffnet auch neue Einblicke in die Rolle transnationaler Akteure wie Architekten und Stadtplaner. Nicht zuletzt zeigt die Geschichte urbaner Entwicklungspolitik, wie Entwicklung zum big business wurde.

This introduction makes a case for a more forceful dialogue between historians of development and global urban historians. Global processes of urbanization, it argues, have long been an important concern for development actors, but historians have only recently begun to explore the meaning and role of urban spaces within international development. The article suggests that a look at the history of urban development policies provides a better understanding of space as an object and context of development. It also claims that a new research focus fosters new insight into the transnational agency of architects and city planners. Last, it sheds new light on the ways in which development became big business in the post-1945 world.

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This special issue brings together two highly dynamic fields of historical research: the history of development and global urban history. Global urban history examines the global connections of cities as well as the intersections between globalization and the transnational circulation of ideas and actors, and as such increasingly overlaps with the history of global development. However, global urban historians have only very recently begun to connect their stories to the history of international development. Historians of global development, on the other hand, typically address the historical ideas, motivations, aims, and interests of political actors and institutions, but they only rarely focus on the actual spaces of development policies and their local ramifications.[1]

Urban spaces have for a long time been an important focus for international development institutions, not least because of the centrality of urbanization in many regions of the world. In Asia, Africa, and Latin America, many cities underwent dramatic transformations in the decades between the 1920s and 1990s. Rural poverty, the modernization of agriculture, land grabbing, civil wars and violent conflicts in the countryside, but also urban industrialization and the hope for work and better living standards in the 'modern city' set millions of people on the move from hinterlands to urban areas, making rapid population growth a shared experience of many places across the colonial and postcolonial world. Historical census data and estimates often reveal spectacular growth numbers. In Mexico City, an area with roughly one million residents in 1920, surveys registered a population of 3 million some thirty years later and counted already 5 million by 1960. By 1980, it was one of the world's largest cities, with a population of more than ten million city dwellers.[2] African cities, too, more than doubled their urban population between the 1920s and 1950s, a process that carried on and accelerated after decolonization and independence.[3] By 2018, all of the world's ten biggest megacities were located in Latin America, Africa, and Asia, including Mumbai, Mexico City, São Paulo, Cairo, and Dhaka.[4]

A historical perspective shows that colonial governments began to address the immense social, economic, and infrastructural challenges involved with urbanization already in the 1930s, if on a limited scale.[5] By the 1950s, international organizations, under the

1 See most recently on the history of development: C. Unger, International Development: A Postwar History, London 2018; S. Macekura and E. Manela (eds.), The Development Century: A Global History, Cambridge 2018. See also the review articles by J. Hodge, Writing the History of Development. Part 1: The First Wave, and Part 2: Longer, Deeper, Wider, along with the roundtable discussion in: Humanity (2016), http://humanityjournal.org/joseph-hodge-roundtable/ (accessed April 20, 2020).

2 See Sabrina Kirschner's contribution to this issue.

3 See United Nations, World Urbanization Prospects 2018, under https://population.un.org/wup/Publications/Files/WUP2018-Highlights.pdf (accessed April 28, 2020). See also the contribution by Tobias Wolffhardt in this issue and A. Eckert, Lagos im 20. Jahrhundert: Informalität als urbanes Prinzip, in: W. Schwentker (ed.), Megastädte im 20. Jahrhundert, Göttingen 2006, pp. 238–256.

4 Schwentker, Die Megastadt als Problem der Geschichte, in: Schwentker (ed.) Megastädte, pp. 7–26, list on pg. 9.

5 See R. Harris and S. Parnell, The Turning Point in Urban Policy for British Colonial Africa, 1939–1945, in: F. Demissie (ed.), Colonial Architecture and Urbanism in Africa: Intertwined and Contested Histories, Farnham 2012, pp. 127–151; F. Colombijn and Joost Ctoé, Modernization of the Indonesian City, 1920–1960, in: F. Colombijn and J. Coté (eds.), Cars, Conduits, and Kampongs: The Modernization of the Indonesian City, 1920–1960, Leiden 2015, pp. 6f.

leadership of the United Nations' Department of Housing, Building and Planning, too, began to enter the field, mainly through sponsoring studies, international conferences, and expert missions. Funding for ambitious new housing schemes, for instance in Islamabad, Rio de Janeiro, Buenos Aires, Dakar, or Singapore, however, also increasingly came from aid donors such as the United States, and, since the late 1960s, the World Bank. Both were joined by a multitude of housing experts, architects, and international planning consultants like Alexandros Doxiadis, Otto Koenigsberger, Charles Abrams, Le Corbusier, or John Turner, who charted urban master plans for postcolonial governments, formulated blueprints for new policies, and thus contributed to making cities a new playing field of international development initiatives.

Histories of development have paid little attention to the multiple historical trajectories and experiences with urban development so far. This special issue therefore seeks to centre attention on the overlaps between urbanization and international development in the twentieth-century world. Contributions assembled in this special issue ask how exactly and why global processes of urbanization became a concern of the development community, what ideas about urbanization they formulated, and which concepts and solutions they promoted in response to the social, political, and environmental challenges of urbanization in Africa and Latin America. The issue also seeks to understand how urban development policies in Africa and Latin America linked up with transnational urban movements such as the "Urban International"[6] (Pierre-Yves Saunier) and how international urban interventions contributed to maintaining political orders or building new nations. In addition, it is one of the goals of this issue to bring in new transnational actors to the international history of the later twentieth century: scientists and engineers, city planners and architects, mayors and private businesses. Collectively and individually, the articles assembled here therewith seek to sketch out first insights into the intertwined growth of cities and international development.

Research on such legacies has long taken place outside and beyond the discipline of history. Practitioners in fields such as social science, geography, city planning, architecture or urban anthropology often foregrounded the process of urbanization as such, compiling data on city growth, modelling the features of the emerging 'third world Mega-City' and inquiring into its functional primacy.[7] Others inquired into the patterns and reasons behind rural-urban migrations or they addressed issues like the housing crisis and the emergence of the informal sector.[8] Many of those works included short history sections,

6 P. Saunier, Sketches from the Urban Internationale, 1910–50: Voluntary Associations, International Institutions and US Philanthropic Foundations, in: International Journal of Urban & Regional Research 25 (2001), pp. 380–403.

7 See for example R. Potter, Urbanisation in the Third World, Oxford 1992; P. Feldbauer et. al. (eds.), Mega-Cities: Die Metropolen des Südens zwischen Globalisierung und Fragmentierung, Frankfurt 1997; D. Bronger, Metropolen, Megastädte, Global Cities: Die Metropolisierung der Erde, Darmstadt 2004.

8 Examples are R. Potter (ed.), Cities and Development in the Third World, London 1990; A. Gilbert (ed.), The Mega-City in Latin America, Tokyo 1996; A. Gilbert / J. Gugler (eds.), Cities, Poverty, and Development: Urbanization in the Third World, Oxford 1997; C. Rakodi (ed.), The Urban Challenge in Africa: Growth and Management of its Large Cities, Tokyo 1997.

but those were often sketchy at best and typically privileged process and structure over historical agency and context.

Urban historians and historians of development, in contrast, were slow to link their work to the history of international development. One of the first historians to do so, Mike Davis, in his *Planet of Slums* described the historical making of mass poverty in the megacities of the 'global South' and addressed urban interventions by the World Bank and the United Nations as well as the role of influential experts like John Turner.[9] Early works by Leandro Benmergui and Mark Kehren, meanwhile, addressed the urban policy dimensions of the 1960s *Alliance for Progress* by exploring its programmes on housing and urban renewal.[10] More recently, pioneering works also came from historians like Markus Daechsel whose study of the planning and making of postcolonial Islamabad stands out as one of the finest examples of current history-writing on urban development.[11] Much in a similar vein, Nancy Kwak's *A World of Homeowners*, charted new terrain by exploring homeownership campaigns in the United States, Puerto Rico, Dakar, and Singapore, arguing that "Americans pursued homeownership for all first as a Cold War strategy to control radical elements in geopolitically critical regions of the world, and then as a way to install capitalist institutions like savings and loans and as a stimulant for American overseas investments."[12]

Colonial urban historians also continue to provide insights that intersect in new ways with this growing literature. By virtue of their research interests in colonial experiences, transfers, and models of social organization, colonial historians have long focused on city planning, colonial architecture, residential segregation, race relations, and differing spheres of power and privilege.[13] Newer works by Richard Harris, Tim Livsey, or Michael Sugarman build on such traditions, but extend the focus to aspects like mass poverty, social housing, and 'modern' building.[14] Histories of urban planning and renewal, too, have shifted their interest since the publication of Peter Hall's groundbreaking study

9 M. Davis, Planet of Slums, London 2006.

10 L. Benmergui, The Alliance for Progress and Housing Policy in Rio de Janeiro and Buenos Aires in the 1960s, in: Urban History 36 (2009), pp. 303–326; M. Kehren, Tunnel Vision: Urban Renewal in Rio de Janeiro, 1960–1975, Diss. University of Maryland 2006.

11 M. Daechsel, Islamabad and the Politics of International Development in Pakistan, Cambridge 2015.

12 N. Kwak, A World of Homeowners: American Power and the Politics of Housing Aid, Chicago 2015, 234 f.

13 Some of the classic studies on colonial urban history are: A. King, Colonial Urban Development: Culture, Social Power, and Environment, London 1976; R. Betts / R. Ross / G. Telkamp (eds.), Colonial Cities: Essays on Urbanism in a Colonial Context, Dordrecht 1985; G. Wright, The Politics of Design in French Colonial Urbanism, Chicago 1991; B. Yeoh, Contesting Space in Colonial Singapore: Power Relations and the Urban Environment, Singapore 2003; R. Home, Of Planting and Planning: The Making of British Colonial Cities, London 1997; H. Gründer / P. Johanek (eds.), Kolonialstädte – europäische Enklaven oder Schmelztiegel der Kulturen? Münster 2001. See also L. Bigon, A History of Urban Planning in Two West African Colonial Capitals: Residential Segregation in British Lagos and French Dakar (1850–1930), Lewiston 2009; M. Fuller, Moderns Abroad: Architecture, Cities, and Italian Imperialism, London 2010.

14 See R. Harris / S. Parnell, Turning Point in Urban Policy; R. Harris, Housing Policy for the Colonial City: The British and Dutch Experience Compared, in: Urban Geography 30 (2009), pp. 1–23; R. Harris / A. Hay, New Plans for Housing in Urban Kenya, 1939–1963, in: Planning Perspectives 22 (2007), pp. 195–223; M. Sugarman, Reclaiming Rangoon: (Post-)Imperial Urbanism and Poverty, 1920–1962, in: Modern Asian Studies, 52 (2018), pp. 1–32; T. Livsey, Suitable Lodgings for Students': Modern Space, Colonial Development and Decolonization in Nigeria, in:

on the *Cities of Tomorrow*.[15] A new handbook of planning history, edited by Carola Hein, now devotes more space to global histories of planning.[16] Sue Parnell and Sophie Oldfield's edited handbook on cities of the global south continues to offer fresh insights for scholars of both the north and south.[17] Research by Andreas Hofer on Karl Brunner's influence in Latin America, or, more recently, by Helen Gyger on John Turner, too, has done much to illuminate the transnational agency and influence of experts and city planners since the 1920s.[18] Marcio Siwi, David Lee, Tobias Wolffhardt, Tracy Neumann or Tamar Elshayal follow similar lines in their research on São Paulo, Manaus, and the urban development policies of international organizations, INGOs, and corporate actors.[19] Much of the emerging scholarship on urban development policies falls in line with a general reorientation of urban history. Connecting their work to the broader currents of transnational and global history, urban historians in Europe and North America no longer take the European or American city as their natural point of reference, but inquire into connections, flows, and interlinkages between cities across continents and regions. Research on transnational networks of architects and planners, long a matter of transatlantic history, now increasingly targets the ways in which networks such as the Congrès Internationaux d'Architecture Moderne (CIAM) extended into regions like Latin America.[20] Other networks and regions, too, are moving more and more into focus.[21] As a recent volume on "The Transnational Turn in Urban History" argues, the writing

Urban History 41 (2014), pp. 664–685. See also T. Livsey, Nigeria's University Age: Reframing Decolonisation and Development, London 2017.

15 P. Hall, Cities of Tomorrow: An Intellectual History of Urban Planning and Design in the Twentieth Century, Malden 2003.

16 C. Hein (ed.), The Routledge Handbook of Planning History, London 2017. See also C. Hein, Crossing Boundaries: The Global Exchange of Planning Ideas, in: A. K. Sandoval-Strausz / N. Kwak (eds.), Making Cities Global: The Transnational Turn in Urban History, Pittsburgh 2018, pp. 114–132. See also the issues in Routledge's series on Planning, History and Environment.

17 S. Parnell / S. Oldfield (eds.), The Routledge Handbook on Cities of the Global South, London 2014.

18 A. Hofer, Karl Brunner und der europäische Städtebau in Lateinamerika, Wien 2010; H. Gyger, The Informal as a Project: Self-Help Housing in Peru, 1954–1986, Diss. Columbia University 2013.

19 M. Siwi, Making the Modern and Cultured City: Art, Architecture, and Urbanism in Postwar São Paulo, 1945–1968, Diss. New York University 2017; D. Lee, De-Centring Manaus: Post-Earthquake Reconstruction and Revolution in Nicaragua, in: Urban History 42 (2015), pp. 663–685; T. Wolffhardt, Vom Wiederaufbau zur urbanen Entwicklungspolitik. Die Vereinten Nationen, transnationale Netzwerke und das Problem der Urbanisierung, ca. 1945–1966, in: Historische Zeitschrift 309 (2019), pp. 337–376. Tracy Neumann's current project addresses „The Urban International: Design and Development from the Marshall Plan to Microfinance" (see more under: http://tracyneumann.org/the-urban-international/); Tamar Elshayal, a PhD student at Harvard University explores the broader history of UN-HABITAT (see http://urbantheorylab.net/people/tamer-elshayal/). See on the World Bank for example E. Ramsamy, The World Bank and Urban Development: From Projects to Policy, London 2006.

20 See for example the contribution by Amanda Waterhouse in this special issue as well as A. Almandoz, Urbanization and Urbanism in Latin America: From Haussmann to CIAM, in: A. Almandoz (ed.), Planning Latin America's Capital Cities, 1850–1950, London 2009, pp. 13–44. See also A. Novick, La Ciudad, El Urbanismo Y Los Intercambios Internacionales: Notas Para La Discusión, in: Revista Iberoamericana De Urbanismo 01 (2009), https://www.raco.cat/index.php/RIURB/article/view/267879 (accessed April 29, 2020).

21 See for example Philipp Wagner's study of the International Federation for Housing and Town Planning: P. Wagner, Stadtplanung für die Welt? Internationales Expertenwissen 1900–1960, Göttingen 2016. See on intermunicipal connections in Asia for example P. Saunier / S. Ewen (eds.), Another Global City: Historical Explorations into the Transnational Municipal Moment, 1850–2000, New York 2008.

of urban history not only involves "provincializing the United States by contextualizing its metropolitan areas within (…) global processes of urbanization and suburbanization" – it also "necessarily means looking at different geographies and chronologies" of urbanization "in East Asia, South Asia, and the Americas."[22] Similar views are being voiced under the newer rubric of global urban history.[23] Following the lead of Carl Nightingale, Michael Goebel, and others involved in the Global Urban History Project, global urban historians examine how practices and models of social urban organization and control travelled around the world, they compare experiences and urban processes between cities inside and outside of Europe, they address the importance of cities for the formation of global political movements, and they inquire into the transformations of port cities into the hubs and nodal points of global trade lines.[24] More important, they shift attention away from places like Berlin or New York to bring in the stories of individual cities in Latin America, Africa or Asia.[25] Newer works like David Morton's "Age of Concrete" offer much needed insight here by addressing the ways in which 'modern' building technologies like concrete transformed social life-worlds and aspirations in a city like Maputo, Mozambique.[26]

The essays assembled in this special issue build on those conversations by adding new nuance and insight to a number of pertinent issues, including the role of transnational experts, knowledge, and networks, the travels of planning concepts, and the importance of colonial legacies. They also open a number of new lines of inquiry, particularly for historians of development. For example, they show that physical space and the built environment mattered in the history of development. Changing the built environment of cities contributed in very practical ways to improving local living conditions; all the while, reorganizing urban space was also central to maintaining social order and political control. Bringing in space as an analytical category points our attention to new dimensions such as housing, infrastructure, resources, and urban management. It sheds new light on the concrete social and spatial contexts in which ideas and strategies of development played out. And it demonstrates the importance of a research perspective that shifts focus away

22 A. K. Sandoval-Strausz / N. Kwak, Introduction: Why Transnationalize Urban History? in: Sandoval-Strausz / Kwak (eds.), Making Cities Global, pp. 1–16, quotes on pg. 8 and 7.

23 See the Global Urban History Blog for reviews and discussions of new works: https://globalurbanhistory.com/.

24 See C. Nightingale, Segregation: A Global History of Divided Cities, Chicago 2012; M. Goebel, Anti-Imperial Metropolis: Interwar Paris and the Seeds of Third World Nationalism, Cambridge 2015; J. B. Prestel, Emotional Cities: Debates on Urban Change in Berlin and Cairo, 1860–1910, Oxford 2017. See on the newer literature on port cities the review by L. Heerten, Ankerpunkte der Verflechtung: Hafenstädte in der neueren Globalgeschichtsschreibung, in: Geschichte und Gesellschaft 43 (2017), pp. 146–175.

25 See for a useful overview F. Miraftab / N. Kudva (eds.), Cities of the Global South Reader, London 2015. Other good examples for this shift are: S. R. Sanchez, Ruralizing Urbanization: Credit, Housing and Modernization in Colombia, 1920–1948, Diss. Cornell University 2015; J. Brennan / A. Burton / Y. Lawi (eds.), Dar es Salaam: Histories from an Emerging African Metropolis, Dar es Salaam 2007; B. Freund, The African City: A History, Cambridge 2007; S. Salm and T. Falola, African Urban Spaces in Historical Perspective, Woodbridge 2005.

26 D. Morton, Age of Concrete: Housing and the Shape of Aspiration in the Capital of Mozambique, Athens, OH, 2019.

from armchair strategists in Washington, New York, London, Paris or Bonn to those individuals and institutions that made development happen on the ground.

Another theme that comes through in the essays is that urban development, just like development in general, was also big business: In Africa, construction firms like West German Julius Berger drew large profits from constructing urban expressways, roads, waterworks, and bridges. In Latin America, meanwhile, European and U.S. companies often found new business opportunities in developing urban metro systems. Development historians have done little work on the commercial aspects of development so far, but, as some of the essays suggest, may find urban development a productive object of inquiry here. Historians of capitalism also have much to discover in this collection, for it was precisely these networks of investment and profit that fueled an expansive form of twentieth-century economic interdependence and hierarchy.

Third, the special issue suggests that histories of urban development offer a fruitful perspective for international historians. Cities across Asia, Africa, and Latin America were drawn into global frameworks not only by way of trade or new mobilities. Given their chronic lack of resources, they also increasingly integrated into the evolving global governance structures of development institutions since the 1940s. For a metropole like Mexico City, funding by the Pan-American Health Organization or the United Nations Development Programme was key to being able to address the environmental problems of urbanization. In other places, urban administrations turned to international institutions like UNESCO, the World Bank, regional development banks, or organizations like the Rockefeller and Ford Foundations to promote urban disaster protection and resilience, or more recently, to mitigate the impacts of climate change.[27] Addressing the urban histories of international development offers international historians alternative opportunities to generate similar and other new themes, questions, and research perspectives.

Comparing experiences of urbanization and development in Africa and Latin America, the essays contributing to this theme issue are structured along geographical lines. Leading off the special issue, Tobias Wolffhardt introduces us to UN urban development initiatives in Sub-Saharan Africa between 1955 and 1965. UN experts, he shows, provided much sought-after urban expertise to newly independent nations, but could hardly ignore the colonial heritage of African cities, spanning from a lack of public housing through an inadequate building materials industry to growing shanty towns to a shortage of data, statistics, and qualified personnel. While, given those circumstances, UN housing programmes had little impact on the ground, they sparked much debate about the trajectories of Africa's urban futures and about the tools of how to get there: some UN experts favored industrialized building, others preferred self-help approaches or "community development", many saw urbanization as an engine of modernization and staked their hopes on housing policies as a way to introduce Africans to "modern" living. Either

27 See S. Kunkel, No Easy Solutions: Global Cities, Natural Disasters, Development, and the Origins of Resilience Thinking, 1960s to 1990s, in: D. Brantz / A. Sharma (eds.), Urban Resilience: Actors, Scales, Goals, to be published 2020 with Transcript.

way, what we see in those debates are not only first efforts to make sense of the meanings of African urbanization. Through them, we also see how the urban gradually moved into the orbit of development institutions like the United Nations.

Newer international histories of postcolonial African development often distinguish between Western or Socialist ideas and practices of aid, typically treating either one of them as a separate strand.[28] The study of urban development policies, in contrast, suggests that postcolonial environments often also provided fertile ground for surprising overlaps and collaborations, as Anne Fenk's, Rachel Lee's, and Monika Motylinska's analysis of the planning of Abuja shows. Following East German architect Heinz Schwarzbach's involvement in the planning of Nigeria's new capital, their article opens a fascinating window on an international project that integrated architects and experts from the UK, the United States, East Germany, and Japan, engineers from Poland, workers from Vietnam, the Philippines, and India as well as a West German construction company along with local staff and officials. The international character of the project made Abuja the site for the negotiation of national planning approaches and principles, but it also offered new business opportunities that the East German state and West German companies were keen to cash in on.

Bernardo Pinto da Cruz's contribution addresses urban planning ideas in the Portuguese empire. Situating those in the context of colonial warfare and counterinsurgency, his study points particularly to the importance of the concept of the "neighborhood unit". Appropriated since the 1940s by Portuguese architects and planners, the concept underwrote colonial ideas of spatial concentration and resettlement of scattered native populations into controllable units within and along the suburban periphery of Luanda. As such, it corresponded and overlapped with the military's villagization policy, but also informed new urban interventions in the low-income areas at the outskirts of Luanda. The essay shows that those urban reform projects, staged since the early 1960s, linked social engineering with socio-ethnic zoning and new techniques of police surveillance to fend off subversion and get control of population mobility. This way, it raises important questions about the darker legacies of urban planning in the twentieth century, namely its links to colonial violence, repression, and practices of social control.

Moving the focus to Latin America, Amanda Waterhouse's contribution, too, explores connections between urban planning and the state's quest for social control. Her subject is the set of new master plans which international star architects Josep Lluis Sert, Paul Lester Wiener, and Le Corbusier worked out for Bogotá in response to the 1948 *Bogotazo*. Theirs, too, is a tale of close alignments between planners and the interests of the state in which governments offered contracts and architects offered new concepts of order. Plans envisioned a web of new roads, walkways, parks, buildings, and shopping

28 See for example, most recently, the chapters in S. Lorenzini, Global Development: A Cold War History, Princeton 2019 or the works by A. K. Mc Vety, Enlightened Aid: U.S. Development as Foreign Policy in Ethiopia, New York 2012 and J. Monson, Africa's Freedom Railway: How a Chinese Development Project Changed Lives and Livelihoods in Tanzania, Bloomington, IN, 2009.

promenades that intended to create content citizens, but, as a side effect, also served to forestall the dangers of public revolt. Those plans, however, were never realized, as they ran into the opposition of the mayor, real estate businesses, land developers, and the president. By shedding light on those local frictions and struggles, Amanda Waterhouse's essay underlines a central point about urban development: In practice, it was seldom a set programmes of transformative ideas that was transferred from West to South, but a negotiated project that involved a multitude of local stakeholders and interest groups. The ensuing compromises not only integrated hybrids of alternative urban visions – they also created a relative openness of urban development that allowed local actors considerable rooms of manoeuvre.

The agency and importance of local urban actors and experiences is also an important theme in Emilio de Antuñano's contribution that uses the example of Mexico City's *colonias proletarias* to explore shifting understandings of urban poverty and Mexico City's long transition towards new housing policies. Like many other large cities in Latin America and Africa, Mexico City saw the formation of slums and low-income housing areas at the urban fringes since the turn of the century. While early surveys and theories typically described those in terms of an urban pathology of overcrowding, crisis, and decay, views on *colonias proletarias* over time started to take on a more positive and progressivist meaning. By the 1940s, local urban development actors increasingly saw those *colonias* not as the problem, but increasingly promoted them as the solution to Mexico City's rapid population growth by offering settlers new urban services, building manuals for cheap and efficient building, counseling services, subsidies for building materials and new lines of credit assistance. In dialogue with Tobias Wolffhardt's contribution on Africa, Emilio de Antuñano shows here how Mexico City became part of a shared transnational moment in which international experts and organizations began to rethink the meanings of squatter settlements.

Andra Chastain's essay explores another important aspect of Latin American urbanization: the remaking of urban infrastructures. Covering Latin America's metro boom of the 1960s to 1980s, the article points to the importance of local political interests, new infrastructure ideas, and the particular symbolism of metros as a model of a new modern urbanism. At the same time it shows that metro building was also a transnational business. In doing so, Andra Chastain draws our attention particularly to French company SOFRETU (*Société française d'études et de réalisations de transports urbains)*, the French Company for the Design and Construction of Urban Transport, an affiliate of the Paris transit authority. The company provided consulting, equipment, French metro technology, and engineering expertise to Latin American cities. More important, its activities were backed up by massive French loans that enabled ambitious building projects in the first place. Following Clément Orillard, Andra Chastain sees French funding as a form of "geopolitical urbanism" that used urban development projects to build new influence and reputation in Latin America.

The rapid growth of Latin American cities not only fueled new forms of urban poverty and infrastructure between the 1940s and 1980s, however. It also came with environ-

mental costs and problems that ranged from urban industrial river pollution to the question of water infrastructures to issues like air pollution. Environmental historians like John McNeill have therefore long pointed to the need of studies that address those environmental dimensions of global urbanization.[29] In her contribution, Sabrina Kirschner does just that. Tracking the story of Mexico City's involvement in the REDPANAIRE, one of the first transnational air quality monitoring networks for Latin American cities, she shows how local industrial disasters, press reports, and international policy initiatives by the WHO and the Pan American Health Organization (PAHO) coalesced into first environmental surveillance measures already by the mid-1960s, and thus long before the much-hailed 1972 UN Conference on the Human Environment, often taken as the turning point of international environmentalism. The REDPANAIRE linked local researchers with national authorities and international organizations, generated the first basic data and new environmental knowledge about health threats and environmental relationships, framed the introduction of new national environmental legislation in the early 1970s, and overall helped to build awareness for the problem of urban air pollution, as the article underlines. Therewith it also marked one of the first transnational efforts to understand the scale and magnitude of urban air pollution in the emerging metropoles of Latin America, even though there was little actual improvement on the ground.

Global processes of urbanization, the essays assembled in this special issue underline, fundamentally changed the living conditions and social life-worlds of millions of people, turned cities into new showcases of global inequalities, and mobilized a wide network of international organizations, architects, scientists, city administrations, and companies to address the immense social, economic, environmental, and infrastructural challenges coming with those processes. The historical research presented here invites for a critical reflection of the ideas and policies those networks promoted, but, we hope, may also provide a starting point for histories of development that take urban space serious as a category and context of analysis.

29 See J. McNeill, Future Research Needs in Environmental History, Regions, Eras, and Themes, in: K. Coulter and C. Mauch (eds.), The Future of Environmental History: Needs and Opportunities, Rachel Carson Center Perspectives 2 (2011), pp. 13–15, quote on pg. 14.