3
Interview Themes and Results, Part 1

3.1. Our Starting Point

As discussed in Chapter 1, we did not approach the interviews with a blank piece of paper. Instead, a considerable period of reflection and reading preceded the interview studies leading to the formulation of a basic approach to the topic, which we sought to test, challenge, modify, enrich, and ultimately specify, on the basis of the interviews. The core idea, which seemed to us the essential basis to develop in much more detail, is that a city of equals is not so much a city in which there is equality of income or wealth, or homogeneity of population, but rather one in which it is possible to make a meaningful urban life whatever your economic resources, and your personal characteristics and identity such as gender, race, religion, ethnicity, disability status, age, sexuality, values, interests, preferences, and so on. In a city of equals you are made to feel that you matter, and, most essentially, that you belong. Summing up a thought many interviewees expressed in their own way, we boil this key idea down to the sense that you are proud of the city, and the city shows that it is proud of people like yourself. And you also have the sense that a meaningful life, mattering and belonging are available to all, and not only to a select elite, or even the majority. Instead, there should be a welcoming place—a sense of belonging—for everyone.

As an example, which is anecdotal, and at the same time telling, consider this. Many residents of Amsterdam are aware of their city's nickname, *Mokum*, and there are several galleries, restaurants, and cafes that carry that name. But it may be that fewer are aware of the reason for this. In 1796 the Jews in Amsterdam were emancipated; there was a new regulation, an enactment of equality for Jews, equivalent to what we would now term city naturalization. This made a strong impression on the Jews in the city. For example, they decided to introduce the Dutch language into their schools. But more interestingly, throughout the years Amsterdam's Jews started to refer to their city as *Mokum*, which in Yiddish, the language spoken by many European Jews at that time, means 'place' and also sometimes safe haven. Indeed, their feeling was of now having a place. Until then Jews in

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Europe thought of themselves as living out-of-place, in the diaspora. They were not welcomed, they were not allowed to own and cultivate land, and often suffered from violent attacks and pogroms. They therefore prayed to return to Jerusalem (Zion). Amsterdam's decision to legally acknowledge their equal status, which followed many years in which in practice they were tolerated and even welcomed, made the local Jews feel at home and they therefore called the city 'place', indicating a sense of settledness, perhaps even integration, belonging, not being out of place (Ostow 2005; de-Shalit 2021).

3.2. The Results of the Interviews

We undertook the interviews over a period of four years, and we discussed and reflected on our central claim and how to develop it into further themes as we considered the transcripts and summaries of the interviews. Therefore, there was a development both in our ideas and the nature of the interviews as time passed, allowing us to refine our understanding and use of the interviews, rather than sticking to the same script in every case. In what follows in this and Chapter 4 we will weave our interview results with observations from the literature, sometimes going beyond the literature review of Chapter 2, to compare the claims of theorists with the experiences of our interviewees.

There are a number of ways in which we could present the interview materials. There is far too much to print transcripts, or even summaries, of all the interviews. Accordingly, in this chapter and the next we will present and discuss extracts that we found most illuminating. We shall discuss the themes as relating to the city's four core values which we mentioned earlier: non-market access to goods and services; sense of meaning; diversity and social mixing; and non-deferential inclusion. Of course, some themes fall under two or more core values. Subsidized public transport is a good example, as it is clearly about non-market access to services but also about enabling people to visit friends, attend schools and universities, commute to work, and so on, all of which relate to meaningful life in the city as well as non-deferential inclusion. Thus, the allocation to some themes to particular values could be arbitrary and changeable.

Also the break between this and the next chapter is somewhat artificial, in that we have too much material to restrict ourselves to one chapter, but we could have presented the material in various different orders. Hence this and the next chapter should be treated together. However, in this chapter we primarily look at the first two core values: non-market access to goods and services, and meaningful life, which can be characterized as dealing with the

well-being of the individual as an urban self: it is about what is so attractive to many people about the city and urban life, and how a city of equals should enable each and every of its resident to flourish and enjoy urban life. The next chapter, Chapter 4, concentrates more on how the city as a social unit respects the differences between city dwellers, hence diversity and social mixing, and non deferential inclusion. We will then, in Chapter 5, draw on the interviews, as well as the literature review and our own reflections, to develop our conception of a city of equals as providing a secure sense of place for all, relating it to the four more specific, but also more comprehensive parameters, which we will present as core values of a city of equals.

3.3. Relational Equality

Before we move to the thematic breakdown, however, it is worth framing the discussion in terms of how our interviewees approached issues of equality. Of course, many were concerned with material distribution, especially as it affects such things as housing, local amenities, and access to, and variety and frequency of, transportation, to which we will return shortly. But material factors far from exhausted concerns about equality. We have several times suggested that not enough has been written about relational equality, or social equality in the city, and in our interpretation of our interviews, nearly all city dwellers think about equality in the city in relational terms. Moti, a 63-year-old resident of Tel Aviv, says:

> They say Tel Aviv is the culture city, but I can't find anything cultural in it. It lacks compassion and benevolence. Social alienation here is the worst. If a neighbour dies, no one will know until he'll start stinking. It's not how it used to be, when you could knock on your neighbour's door. (. . .) In my work I've seen people in the worst situations; and yet there is no volunteer work here. (. . .) I don't understand where this kind of behaviour comes from, where are their hearts?

Jenny, aged 28, also in Tel Aviv, thinks that equality is not only about what we offer to the more disadvantaged but also about the concern and respect with which the city provides its services:

> I can really tell the difference between the way you get access to services in different areas. When you go to the welfare bureau in south Tel-Aviv [the less affluent neighbourhoods], you have to wait in line without even having a glass of water. There are no coolers there, and obviously you can't make yourself a cup of coffee.

And then she adds, in terms that we would say picks up on the critical importance of relational equality:

> We need to be sensitive to the dignity and self-esteem of those who need help. (. . .) I think that is exactly the problem. I'll give you an example. There is this soup kitchen down south that is decorated to look just like a restaurant. And you tip the waiter there, even just with one Shekel [about a third of a US dollar], so you wouldn't feel that you're getting free food. I think that the fact that one is eligible for welfare payments (. . .) he still has the right to feel equal. He deserves a glass of water. That is why when we [at work] decorated our youth centre we bought new furniture, instead of just getting some donations, because we wanted the guys to feel like they deserve better.

Yet our interviewees were, in some cases, deeply concerned by economic issues too. Valentina, 37, from Rio de Janeiro says:

> I'm horrified by the economic inequalities that I see here. There is a great distance between rich and poor (. . .) extremely wealthy neighbourhoods with everything, such as Ipanema, and extremely poor neighbourhoods without anything, such as the favelas.

However, she immediately adds that one key manifestation of this inequality is that poor people cannot reach the two most important areas: the city's centre and the beach because they are very badly served by public transport. Indeed, in many cases, even when they referred to material inequality, interviewees immediately framed them in relational terms. Thus, Valentina calls Rio a 'city of division': 'I have a close black friend. He said to me that when he needs to take a taxi in town it is very rare for a taxi driver to stop and pick him up. This is so wrong.' (This echoes Arthur's (35) description of the same city, Rio, for similar reasons, as 'a city of brutality'.) She then goes on to point to what is now commonly termed intersectionality in the city:

> The coloured people are not only a minority, ethnically speaking, but are also poorer, and work in the less sought-after jobs. Another example is when you go to the shopping centre, you'll see white people buying, black people working, serving them. (. . .) There are different kinds of shops: some for the rich, others for the poor.

The highly visible economic divide was picked up by other interviewees in other countries. Alex, a 41-year-old male interviewee in London says:

> I've just been into the Isle of Dogs, you know, Canary Wharf, and I went to the supermarket there. It's just amazing, you find very poor people there in the south

> of Canary Wharf. And it's just interesting to see the poor and obese people in the supermarket, and then, you know, just around the corner the fancy people are getting out of their Bentley.

Alex, identifying himself as a lower-paid worker, clearly felt that his life opportunities were restricted by lack of money, and the high cost of living in London, but nevertheless, he was able to find some coping strategies:

> £30k really isn't enough for anything. I couldn't buy a house, couldn't have a family. And who are you gonna seduce as a 41-year-old with a salary of £30k a year, you know? So I'm doing a lot of things that help me cope with the stress of being in London, like 10 yoga classes a week (*laughing*).

There is a lot of truth in what he says. The fact that yoga classes are open and accessible, often cheaply, to many people whose salary is low, and the fact that in these classes or other such amusements they meet people from different backgrounds makes one feel that inequality in the city is not as harsh as it could be. In his book *What Money Can't Buy* (Sandel 2012) Michael Sandel fondly recalls the times when, he claims, people of all classes met each other in the baseball stadium—they shared the queue to the ticket office, they paid more or less the same price, lined up for the toilets together, and they bought the same lousy hotdog after the game. Nowadays, he regrets, they are separated in different sections of the stadium, as a market rationale has penetrated to sports events. So the gap between them is not only bigger, it is also seen and felt every minute, as more and more goods and services are subject to the power of money, which, in turn, diminishes the sense of community.

But there are many nuances to the picture in the city. Alex notes:

> Well, the thing is poor people in London, they may still have an advantage of living centrally, you know, it's the one advantage. You're very poor, but you're living in Zone One (if, of course, they can afford it . . .)

Alex's point is that in London highly subsidized social housing can be found all over the city, even in some of the most lively and affluent parts. Our aim is to capture at least the essential elements of this complexity.

Valentina and Alex, cited above, do mention issues of income and wealth. However, they are far from representative of our interviewees, very few of whom mentioned income gaps as a matter that concerned them in particular when they think about well-being in the city, and how access to it is distributed between city-zens. This is also consistent with Martina Löw's

argument (Löw 2013) which has become a type of touchstone for us in this project, that city-zens regard their cities as 'entities of meaning'. Löw's argument can explain why the type of attachment people have to their cities differs from that they have to their country or state and why their expectations from the city differ from their expectations from the state. The interviews confirmed Löw's perception of cities, as people time and again described their cities in intimate terms. As the philosopher Avishai Margalit, who was born, raised, and lived in Jerusalem once said, 'I don't like Jerusalem, but I love it' (Bell and de-Shalit 2011, 52).

3.4. Themes that Relate to Non-market Accessibility to Goods and Services

We begin our detailed review of the themes that were expressed by the interviewees referring to those themes which express the core value of non-market access to goods and services.

3.4.1. Spatial Dimensions of Integration, Segregation, and Their Consequences

Integration and segregation could naturally be discussed with reference to the core value of diversity and mixing. But our point here is that while this is true, it is also interesting and important to see how segregation might affect city dwellers' opportunities to access the goods and the services that the city offers. We therefore wish to begin with a few words about how the interviewees described integration and segregation as related to diversity and social mixing, but continue with how this affects accessibility to goods and services, and how this might, but should not, be a function of the market and one's wealth.

Within the academic literature there is a distinction commonly made between two types of group segregation: clustering and isolation. Clustering concerns the concentration of distinct socio-economic groups across neighbourhoods. Concentration, and therefore clustering, is high if all the members of a particular socio-economic group live in the same neighbourhood, lower if they live in several neighbourhoods, and lower still if they are not associated with any particular neighbourhood. Isolation is related to how unlikely it is for a member of a group to meet a member of another group. Although related, the two concepts are different. If, for example,

a socio-economic group is spread between several locations, but highly concentrated and self-contained for work, leisure, religious worship, and education in each, isolation can be high, but concentration lower (see OECD 2018).

Both clustering and isolation were mentioned, albeit mostly in other terminology, by our interviewees as significant contributors to inequality in the city. For example, several interviewees in the southern neighbourhoods of Tel Aviv described the clustering there of minority groups, poor people, and undocumented immigrants who work in Tel Aviv, whereas in the north, 'I want to see what will happen if an illegal immigrant asks to rent there—the police will immediately be invited.' Isolation—the unlikeliness of meeting a member of another group in the city—appeared most frequently in our interviews not so much as consequence of pure material factors of planning and the location of housing and amenities but as intertwined with more relational factors. For example, when the dominant culture is of suspicion and avoidance of 'the other', then a member of a minoritized group will feel unwelcome in the parts of the city where the majority resides, and will tend not to visit there; in that case this person feels isolated. So, for example, interviewees we interviewed in Blackbird Leys, one of England's most deprived neighbourhoods located in the south of Oxford[1] told us that they simply avoid going to the city centre because people in Oxford are snobbish, they say, so they would feel unwelcome there.

Nevertheless, some interviewees see no injustice in the way the city's population is arranged spatially, even when there is some separation of more advantaged and disadvantaged populations. For example, R migrated from southern France several years before we interviewed him in Manhattan, New York City (NYC), in 2016. He was in his thirties and lived in Queens, NYC. He ran a tiny cafe (four people could sit inside) in the lower part of Manhattan. The espresso was really good. When we asked him what equality in urban life meant for him he said:

> What do we care about and what do we expect our city to offer? Safety for our kids when they walk in the street; having good friends around; good schools; accessibility to all kinds of places and attractions.

And then he added about his neighbourhood in Queens: 'People don't see me as different because I speak with a French accent, as so many of them are immigrants themselves.' When asked if there are other parameters which

[1] A focus group conducted for the purpose of previous research.

imply that Queens is such a good place he said it was close to the seaside, which was great for his family. Then he added something important: 'Basically,' he said, '*I don't worry* when I am in Queens: my kids are safe, I know that they have good friends, and I have good friends too. I don't care about access to the jazz clubs and the theatre; I care about access to shops, schools, and the seaside.' R. describes advantages and disadvantages in spatial terms, including how access to places as well as to his friends enables him to feel secure and not worry.

We return below to integration, inclusion, and exclusion, but now we wish to consider their material dimensions, including those that are often ignored. For example, public toilets, not so much discussed by philosophers, but vitally important for the experience of the city, are worth thinking about. They are typically built by the municipality and they are crucial for enabling people to walk outside their homes, to stay outside home or, for some types of employment, work for longer, to go shopping and just to stroll in the public space, especially for parents with young children, and, sometimes, older city-zens, but of course, ultimately, for everyone. A city without public toilets is much more problematic for those without the money to go to a pub or restaurant, or the confidence to walk into a hotel lobby, if they need to, in order to have access to private toilet facilities. Perhaps the worst affected are those homeless people who sleep on the streets, and are often not allowed to use lavatories in commercial places like restaurants and cafes. Thus, Jeremy Waldron suggests that 'If urinating is prohibited in public places (and if there are no public lavatories) then the homeless are simply unfree to urinate' (Waldron 1991, 315). Therefore,

> the generous provision of public lavatories would make an immense difference in this regard—and it would be a difference to freedom and dignity, not just a matter of welfare.
>
> **(Waldron 1991, 321)**

Mothers with children often learn which department stores or shopping malls have freely usable toilets. But where there is thoughtful public provision, rather than haphazard private provision, the city becomes more accessible to all. This is clearly and simply a spatial aspect of equal treatment, which was mentioned mainly by female interviewees.

A different type of material example was brought to our attention by an employee of eBay in a European city. The company, he said, has data about neighbourhoods that lack a post office where boxes can be posted or collected, or in which residents have to walk or travel some distance to reach a

collecting point. The company, we were told, has less interest in advertising and improving its services in such neighbourhoods, as people are unlikely to use them because posting or collecting the boxes is a burden. The result is that residents of the neighbourhoods that are poorer and less well served by the post are furthermore discriminated against when they cannot use the service, which might have helped them purchase better value goods. And what is true for eBay presumably generalizes to other companies delivering goods to homes. Furthermore, those who live in large blocks of flats, without a concierge, are presumably more liable to their parcels going missing once delivered to the building. Hence they may be put off from purchasing online and again miss out on cheaper deals. And companies may be reluctant to send their goods to locations where they often get complaints of missing deliveries. Of course, these are exactly the circumstances in which many poorer people live.

Spatial inequalities were often noted in our interviews. As Sabine, an interviewee in Berlin said: 'Those from the East [Berlin] are strongly disadvantaged . . . they need to secure additional earnings somehow, on top of their pensions.' And as we noted in Chapter 2, the fact that inequality in cities has a spatial dimension has been widely observed in classic works in urban sociology and urban political science, such as Wilson (2012 [1987]) or David Harvey (2009 [1973]) who, for example, refers to 'the philosophy of social space', when he analyses the speed of change and the rate of adjustment in an urban system, or the redistributive effects of the changing location of jobs and housing. It has been also analysed in more recent empirical works, such as Mahadevia and Sarkar (2012) and Anderson (2010). These works, though, show how inequality coincides with exclusion or spatial segregation, whether imposed, in former times, by legal regulations, or by norms, or is the result of the markets, as we discussed in Chapter 2. We also noted that some critics argue that spatial differentiation does not always take the form of segregation in a negative sense, if the minoritized group, whether identified on a cultural or ethnic basis, wishes to stick to each other and live with 'their own' (Sundstrom 2013; Shelby 2014). We can see how, for example, ultra-Orthodox Jews live side by side with each other and how interviewees in Jerusalem told us that having a synagogue where prayers are conducted in the fashion they are used to is crucial for them when they choose where to live. For example, in a study parallel to our own, Jonathan (19) was reported as saying:

> What I mostly love in our neighbourhood is my synagogue; this is where I study, pray, this is my main place in life. I therefore try not to leave the neighbourhood.
>
> **(Ben-Dahan 2017)**

And yet, as Sundstrom argues, even if the segregation is initially voluntary, it will very often lead to growing inequalities between neighbourhoods or even streets, such as in the services they receive. For example, Shatilla, aged 50, from an Arab neighbourhood in Jerusalem, complains that residents there are discriminated against in services:

> There is no proper place for my children to play at. Nothing like the place we are sitting in right now [in the Jewish neighbourhood where they, she, and other Arab city-zens work]. I pay just like everybody else, but I don't get any of the services. They hardly take out the garbage in my neighbourhood, and the roads are terrible.

Differentiation in waste collection in Jerusalem has been confirmed by research by Issar (n.d.) and Bimkom (2012), an Israeli NGO of architects that monitors discrimination and harm to Palestinians' rights during the planning process. Of course, less regular collection of garbage or street cleaning will leave poorly served areas more heavily littered for longer, feeding cultural stereotypes about the tendency of poorer people to care less about the condition of their streets. Another form of spatial inequality concerns street planting. The planting of trees in cities, especially those of hot climates, to give shade from the heavy sunshine, has also been noted to follow patterns of wealth and deprivation, even though they are paid for out of municipal funds (Davis 1997).

Spatial factors have further significant effects on how people are able to experience their lives. First, spatial arrangements and city planning are a significant factor in city dwellers' capabilities, by which we mean their *genuine* opportunities (Wolff and de-Shalit 2007) to practice their functionings. By genuine opportunity we mean both the bare presence of opportunities, and also the real possibility of taking up such opportunities without sacrificing or risking other things of great importance. For example, if someone has to travel a long distance across town to go to dance class, we would question whether they have a genuine opportunity to take dance classes (even though it is a far better situation than one in which there are no dance classes or they are prohibited). Practicing one's talent in opera singing or karate is so much easier if there are opera clubs and karate studios near to home, at reasonable prices, and the same thing is true of securing health and the proximity of a free or heavily subsidized clinic nearby. This may sound trivial; but it is central to life especially for those living in the city on low incomes. Everyone's capabilities are conditioned by such spatial arrangements in their city, and people living in wealthy parts of the city are typically very well served. For poorer people it can be especially difficult to reach a dentist or a health clinic,

as well as a library or a karate studio if the cost (in terms of money and time) of reaching the place is relatively high or even if the cost is not very high for the average person, but is a high percentage of a low income. In other words, the question is not only whether urban goods and services are available in the city, but the distribution of accessibility, or who can and who cannot use these services easily, and whose freedoms in the city are expanded and whose are limited. Consider how, when in June 2022 the American Supreme Court ruled against the federal constitutional right for abortion, there was much talk about how it would disproportionately affect poorer women, as many women would now have to travel from states in which abortion would become illegal to neighbouring states where it would remain legal, and the cost of travel is more of a burden for poorer, rather than more affluent, women.[2]

Many interviewees claimed that inequality in the city consists of dimensions which have some spatial character, and greatly affect accessibility in practical terms, *but go beyond segregation*. First and foremost, and especially in Rio de Janeiro, but also in other cities such as Hamburg, interviewees remarked on the spatial dimensions of exposure to violence. As we noted in Chapter 2 in relation to the Brazilian city of Manaus (de Silva, Fraser, and Parr 2021), when people are exposed to violence they typically avoid going outside, even to the point of not seeking jobs, so as not to be exposed to risks to their life and safety. Thus those among the least advantaged, who reside in places where there is a high level of violence, have to decide whether to sacrifice their functioning of working in order to secure their life and bodily integrity. Accordingly, even if facilities are available and close by, there is a serious lack of opportunity and capability if people do not use them because of fear of violence.

In many countries, police services are controlled by the city rather than the state, and the police is run by the local mayor. Accordingly a city of equals could make a difference to policing, by providing more of such things as greater police presence, and faster arrival of a police van following an emergency call, although how welcome such intensifying of services will be will also depend on how trusted the police are, which we cannot take for granted,

[2] See also Frediani (2015) and Frediani and Hansen (2015) for how 'the availability of infrastructure or characteristics of the built environment might compromise or facilitate individuals' abilities to enhance their well-being' (66). One of their examples is illuminating. The use of bicycles can help poorer people tremendously: to reach locations; find a job and easily reach their workplace; visit relatives, and even for leisure. But for this to happen the city needs to regulate and must also provide special arrangements for secure and easy riding. Indeed, we wish to add the example of Copenhagen, where a system of 'intelligent traffic lights' prioritizes buses *and bicycles* so that the time of reaching places by bicycles is reduced, and is even sometimes faster than the car (Davies 2016). We would also add the importance of facilities for safe and secure storage of bicycles especially for people living in cramped premises or high crime neighbourhoods.

especially in minoritized communities. But putting issues of trust to one side, even though often crime rates tend to be higher in poor neighbourhoods, in many cities police services are offered more intensively in neighbourhoods where the more affluent and politically powerful populations live. In Tel Aviv two interviewees complained that the police are often reluctant and slow to show up when they are called by residents of the southern, less affluent neighbourhoods. In contrast, they respond very quickly to any call by residents of the northern, more affluent neighbourhoods, for example, when an illegal immigrant is seen there and is considered a nuisance. And Valentina, an interviewee from Rio, reported that police officers will tend to be more violent towards poorer people.

These claims are consistent with many research findings. Often where poor minoritized communities reside there is under-policing and police neglect of their neighbourhoods (Ben-Porat 2008). Moreover, Joel Suss and Thiago Oliveira (2022) show (based on a study of data from London in 2019) that police officers more frequently stop and search members of the public in neighbourhoods where well-off and economically precarious people co-exist, and of course it is those who present as more precarious who are stopped. They claim that economic inequality is positively associated with Stop and Search incidence in those neighbourhoods. That the effect of neighbourhood on police activity can be even greater than race is confirmed also in research in the United States (Terril and Reisig 2003). So the provision of policing should not be influenced by the wealth and power of those receiving the service. We return to the theme of security later, when we discuss the value of a sense of meaning.

Policing is just one example, though, of the way facilities are not evenly spread throughout the city. Interviewees mention the frequency and variety of transportation which is available to different neighbourhoods (more on this later), or the number of cafes and health clinics or even supermarkets in their neighbourhood. There is evidence that people in poorer neighbourhoods consume more junk food because going to the supermarket is time-consuming as chains tend not to locate their shops in the poor neighbourhoods (Wolff and de-Shalit 2007). Ease of transport is central to many people's quality of life. For example, Maria (25), a Jerusalemite, says:

> I am happy with the transportation here. I can easily walk from my home to the bus station, and there are tons of buses there. I take traffic into account, but even so it doesn't take me more than twenty minutes to get to work. Without traffic it takes about six minutes. I know everybody likes to hate the light train, but I am fine with it.

The nature of public transport has far-reaching effects. Arthur (35) from Rio de Janeiro, we noted earlier, calls the city a 'city of brutality'; and he associates it with the fact that people from different background and classes do not mix, because not only do they live in separate parts of the town, but also the public transportation system is:

> terrible, (. . .) [the city's] north and the south are not well connected. [Hence] our population is so segregated. I mean that our public transport makes the interaction between those from different backgrounds and neighbourhoods even harder. . .Geographically, the city of Rio looks like a maze of hills. The city is winding. Lots of curves surround you, they trap you. It's hard to find a way out. Most white and upper-middle-class people live in the south of the city or even in the rich suburbs, while lower-middle-class and poor people are in the north or west of the city, in the favelas or very far away from the centre. Public transport for those living in the poor areas is really terrible, they're left far out from the centre and the beaches. Look at the metro lines! [Mostly concentrated in the wealthy south.] This makes our lives very difficult. I think twice when I need to visit a friend who lives in another neighbourhood.

This testimony is echoed in the inequality map of Rio de Janeiro (Casa Fluminense 2013), which uses twenty-three indicators and seven key themes to analyse inequality according to neighbourhoods in the city. It can be clearly seen that there are spatial differences, and, for example, that in the same neighbourhoods (in the north-west) we can see high percentages of people who spend more than an hour travelling each way to work, high homicide rates, low percentages of children at the age of 4–5 in pre-school and very low levels of people served by a sewage system.

Our interviewees were keen to discuss what is available to them and under what conditions. The first, and, for many, most pressing, issue is accessibility of basic services regarding nutrition and health. Gerd, 72 years old, was born and raised in Hamburg where he still lives, and he loves the city. When he is asked to say what is the best thing about the city he says:

> Everything is easily reachable and within short distances, doctors, etc. I always use public transport. I got rid of my car when I stopped working and I haven't regretted it for a single moment.

Torge (male, 25) from Hamburg also acknowledges that it is easy to reach a grocery store or supermarket everywhere, as well as cafes, snack bars, and bars. He laughs: 'in terms of gastronomy we are being looked after very well'.

And he adds, more seriously, 'Everything I need, every place I have to be at frequently is within fifteen minutes from where I live.'

Indeed many of our interviewees mentioned accessibility of basic services of shopping, schools, and medical facilities as among the most important parameters that determine our well-being in the city. It is what many regard as a crucial advantage of the city over the countryside or small town. It is clearly an urban good. And therefore its distribution among the city's inhabitants is critically important for equality. For example, during the Covid19 pandemic lockdowns there were neighbourhoods which were better served than others. One example reported to us is that delivery drivers, who worked for profit, did not want to go to certain neighbourhoods for reasons of security, or went more often to other neighbourhoods where there was more demand. This created much resentment among those whose neighbourhoods were not properly served.

Another obvious issue is accessibility for those who find it difficult to walk, and for the elderly and those in wheelchairs. Nicky (36) from Oxford, United Kingdom, describes how she adores the museums in Oxford, and yet, she says:

> It's really not great for wheelchair users, which is a pity. Some museums, like the science museum for instance, are non-accessible. And then in other museums, the lifts are too small, they're developed for people on feet but not for wheelchair users. And the colleges here, too; many of them are not accessible.

In thinking about accessibility, it is natural to think perhaps along Maslow's (1943) hierarchy of needs, with services that supply basic needs, such as food and medical services, as the most important. Yet even Maslow had reservations about his hierarchy, and many of our interviewees treated accessibility to leisure services as of enormous importance to their lives, not explicitly relying on any hierarchy of needs. For example, John (30) says of London that he strongly appreciates

> having everything I need so close by my doorstep. Museums, shops, cinemas, restaurants, parks, shopping malls, everything. I'm a city boy. I go to the country for day trips. But you know, here in the city, you never have to travel too far.

Similarly, Yap (67) in Amsterdam says that what he likes about the city is accessibility:

> Amsterdam offers everything one might need: culture, social life, accessibility. Yesterday we went to a small square near our house, where there was live music, and

a nice cafe nearby served food. (. . .) It is much better to age in Amsterdam than in Rotterdam, mainly because here everything is close by.

Such sentiments are widely repeated. For example, Roana, a 37-year-old Londoner describes how in London people have plenty of facilities available within a short distance, accessible by the tube or on foot saying: 'This morning I went to the gym and to Yoga just over there. And I can walk from home. It's very easy to get around here.'

Sumeye (32) from Hamburg highlights easy access to supermarkets, shops, and also amusements for her children as among what she appreciates so much about the city, and indeed nearly all Hamburg interviewees mentioned how easy it is to access green parks and even the waterfront, which remains accessible to all and so the city is called 'Tor zur Welt' (gateway to the world).

Opinions can differ about conditions of access in different cities. In Jerusalem we interviewed Amalia (an orthodox Jewish woman) and Tal (who is secular) together and they had the following exchange regarding accessibility to pubs for orthodox Jewish women:

AMALIA: Jerusalem is the most equal city! As a religious woman I can go to a bar here and feel free.

TAL: Can you? I can offer a different intuition. Jerusalem is a religious place, and so many different complaints from different sectors can be held against a religious girl in a pub. There's much more criticism here.

AMALIA: In my opinion Jerusalem is actually more open to different sectors than other cities. You can see the diversity especially in Nahla'ot [a mixed, religious and secular neighbourhood]. It's not possible everywhere, obviously. There will be no pub in Ramat-Eshkol [an ultra-Orthodox neighbourhood]. But I'm fine with it! If we are talking on a specific ultra-Orthodox neighbourhood, then that's OK, as long as it does not force me to take another road. [By which she refers to rather rare cases when ultra-Orthodox men demand that women avoid walking in public spaces in their neighbourhoods side by side to men, and should, therefore take special, different routes.]

These interviews go hand in hand with the data collected in a survey conducted in 2010 in twenty-six American cities by the Knight Foundation and Gallup (n.d.). Those surveyed were asked to specify the key factors which were crucial for them in order to feel attachment to their cities. In all twenty-six cities social offerings (opportunities for entertainment, social life, places for people to meet each other, vibrant night life, etc.) came first (n.d., Overall Findings, 10). Correlation between social offerings and attachment to the

city was much higher than the economy and even safety, not to mention opportunities for civic engagement.

However, for goods and services to be accessible, it is not enough that they are distributed evenly in spatial terms, or that public transport is plentiful; the goods and services need to be affordable as well. Raze (24) came from Geneva to London. After saying that Geneva people are more laid back while people in London seem to either make money or spend money, he does acknowledge that for the average income in London, the cost of living is very high. 'Yes, I never go out on the weekend. I don't have money to do so. I like football and going to the stadium. But that's too expensive here.'

Public amenities, provided free or at very low prices by the city, occupied the thoughts of many of our interviewees. We have already discussed the importance of public toilets, and, also mentioned live music in the park. But the concern spreads much more broadly, and many worry about what the city can offer to children and adolescents. Moti (61) from Tel Aviv complains that although the number of children per family in the south of Tel Aviv (where poorer families reside) is much higher than the number of children per family in the north of the city, there aren't enough playgrounds and very little money is invested in developing facilities for those children in the south of the city. He then comments ironically, 'only soup kitchens for children do they build here'. Channy, aged 36, lives in a gentrified neighbourhood in Tel Aviv, popular with young unmarried hipsters. She was born in the neighbourhood when it was a neglected area:

> There is not even one park here, or one community centre. The young people have bars, but for families and people my age there is nothing. Not even one playground for a mother to play with her children. There are more dog courts than playgrounds for kids.

So accessibility should take into account the preferences and goods sought after by a variety of people, and not only the very young, or the bourgeois, or those who speak up the loudest. And cities should never forget that accessibility is not merely a matter focusing on bicycles rather than cars, or public transport rather than private cars. It should also be about walkability, as Mary Soderstrom, resident of Montreal, Canada, argues. Describing the anguish that she and her husband experienced while looking for a flat to buy, she writes: 'The only thing clear from the start was that we were going to live within walking distance of my husband's work' (Soderstrom 2008, 13) which, indeed, many among today's more fortunate city dwellers find as a major component of their urban well-being. Therefore, sidewalks have to be

maintained and fixed regularly; but often municipalities spend more money on fixing them where businesses are located and in neighbourhoods where the more affluent residents live. People literally fall and get hurt more often in areas where sidewalks are not maintained regularly.

Sidewalks and their use, perhaps surprisingly, have long been an arena for political conflicts and debates because some of their uses have proven controversial, from demonstrations to shelters for homeless people (Loukaitos-Sideris and Ehrehfeucht 2012). Sidewalks are where we meet our neighbours for a quick chat, and in some neighbourhoods where children play, but also where cafes put their tables on a sunny day, prima facie 'annexing' public space to their businesses. When a cafe does so it increases the accessibility and enjoyability of its services, but it also can make passing through more difficult for people who are walking past, or, even more so, pushing prams or using mobility devices. The same happens when people gather round to listen to buskers sing in the street. In Copenhagen the city encouraged owners of cafes, and restaurants, but also regular flats and buildings, to put tables and chairs on the sidewalks next to their buildings or businesses, in order to make what they defined as 'edge zones', where the private borders with the public, more inviting for all who pass by (Mclaren and Agyeman 2015, 137). Another regulation in Copenhagen forbade developers of new buildings or people who owned private estates to put a sign 'private' or 'private, no entrance'. This, as the ex-city architect, Tina Saaby explains, literally meant that access to each building became free at all times of the day and that nobody felt she was unwanted or not welcome in a certain building or housing project (Saaby 2015: see minute 15:50). The idea behind these policies is to deliberately blur the boundaries between public and private, which, in turn, should make city dwellers who are less affluent feel more equal and respected.

3.4.2. Frequency and Variety of Public Transportation

Following the themes that relate prominently to the value of non-market accessibility to goods and services, we arrive at transport. The two are actually closely related. Here we turn back to an example that we mentioned in Chapter 1. In Rio de Janeiro we were shown public football pitches that stayed open during the entire night to enable those who work night shifts and want to play before or after work to do so. This policy enables wider access to pitches in a city where football is central to social and cultural life. Alas, when we presented this as an example in a talk in São Paulo, we were told that most working-class people who worked night shifts could not use the

pitches because the public transportation system from their neighbourhoods to these pitches was unreliable and often did not work. So yes, the city should have facilities and make them accessible to all, but if public transportation does not work well, many will not be able to make use of these facilities. Still, we would like to say, a city with such facilities, even if for a partial group of working people, is more equal than a city without such facilities.

As we have seen, issues of transportation around the city came up very often, especially as so many city dwellers do not own cars, whether for financial reasons or because the inconvenience of finding parking places and keeping a car well-maintained is simply not worth the effort. Excellent public transport, of course, changes the balance and more people will do without cars if they feel there are ways of getting where they need in good time. Hence the frequency, speed, and comfort of public transport will be critical, and a poor system of public transport can make life very difficult. Admittedly, in some cities there is broad positive consensus (e.g. satisfaction rates with public transit in Zurich is 97 per cent, Vienna 95 per cent, Helsinki 93 per cent (Flash Eurobarometer 2016, 419)) suggesting that the city serves the current residents in an egalitarian way, in that very few feel left out. London residents' satisfaction (86 per cent) is also impressive because of its size, but in general it is difficult to compare cities from different countries in this way because differences might be a function of political cultures, or tendencies to complain which vary in different nations and cultures**.** However, complaints about unequal accessibility to public transportation were common in the interviews. For example, Dvora, a 60-year-old Tel Aviv city-zen reports with regret:

> You just can't tell someone, 'I'll take the bus and will be there on time'. You can never make it on time. . . . And yet, we depend on this system nevertheless.

Reliability is one important factor of course, as are speed and experience. And the comfort of the journey should not be ignored. For example, until recently London's underground system was designed on the assumption that passengers could easily ascend and descend short flights of stairs, with lifts and escalators only for the longer climbs. It also recognizes in its carriage design that not everyone will be able to get a seat at all times, and standing spaces and handrails are built into carriages. But, of course, as not all are equally able to manage even a short flight of stairs or stand for long, this generates a type of inequality, compounded by the facts that for some people the handrails are too high, and, for all, standing very close to others, especially in the heat, can be unpleasant. Many older people, women, and those travelling

with children, prefer to use the bus system even though it is much slower, simply because it's more pleasant. When new lines are built, issues of comfort, accessibility, safety, and convenience are closer to the top of the agenda, but older lines are very hard to retrofit.

In cities that have grown rapidly, residential settlement often out-paces thoughtful public transport, leaving those in less-served parts of the city with daunting commutes. Brazil's major cities are notorious in this respect, with an average daily commuting time reported to be 141 minutes in Rio, and research indicating that from the outlying regions of São Paulo many workers have a commute, standing in a crowded carriage, of an extraordinary three hours in each direction daily. This is part of what is often termed time poverty in the city. Time has become a precious resource for everybody, but especially so for those who have to commute long distances. It is often the case that social position as well as gender can have a bearing on how one uses their time in the city and how challenging time poverty is for them (Walker 2013). Our interviewees from Rio confirmed that this was their experience. Arthur, from Rio reported: 'Life is tiring and stressful and insecure because of poor public transportation in my neighbourhood' and 'the geography of the city keeps people apart from each other.' The lack of transport opportunities can sustain perceived divisions that people already have, often referred to as 'mental maps'. Greenberg, Raanan, and Shoval (2014) interviewed Palestinian, secular Jewish, and ultra-Orthodox Jewish women in Jerusalem to learn about their mental maps, and where they felt 'belonging' and where less so, and then compared it to their actual behaviour, using tracking technology (GPS) and activity diaries to plot the actual use of space. They found a very strong relationship between perceived personal territory and actual spatial activity (Greenberg, Ranaan, and Shoval 2014). We conclude that, in addition to making commuting time reasonable for all, in a city of equals all groups—race, class, gender—go anywhere, or at least can if they wish to, without feeling unwelcome.

From the perspective of inequality, an inadequate system of public transport will impact the poor more heavily than the well-to-do, for two reasons. First, because those who can afford to own a car or use taxi services will find a solution, annoying and tiring as it may be, to reach their destinations. Second, because public transport systems often leave the neighbourhoods where the poor reside even less well served than more affluent neighbourhoods (see also Soja 2010, vii–xviii). This, we saw, was noted by interviewee Arthur from Rio who suggested that the lines do not reach all the poor neighbourhoods, and where there are buses or trains, there are fewer per day than there are in the more affluent neighbourhoods or in the city centre. This of course, is a

self-fuelling mechanism; house and apartment prices will tend to rise faster in areas with good transport.

When public transport does work well, and people from all walks of life tend to use it, there is more mixing of ethnic groups, classes, young and old, and to the extent that there is some exclusion or spatial segregation in the city, it is diminished and becomes less severe. Under these conditions the city feels safer for women and elderly people. In terms of inequality between generations and between the sexes, an excellent public transport system makes the city more welcoming, inclusive, and more of a city of equals.

For this reason, Berlin's former mayor, Klaus Wowereit, attempted to plan that its transport system of U Bahn, S Bahn, trams, and buses, as well as public bicycles and e-scooters, spread all over the city, so that city dwellers can make use of one of the means of transport without walking more than 400 meters from wherever they are. This was considered a very egalitarian move, although in practice the system has not functioned as planned, or at least so it was claimed by many, with the term 'Zug fällt aus' (train is cancelled) an all-too-common refrain. Fatima is 24 and has moved to Berlin recently. She says:

> In many places you really need a car, and you are in trouble if you don't have one. That's where the gap stems from; but this is less pronounced here in Berlin than it is elsewhere.

Indeed, as they also understood very well in Berlin, how easy it is for a person to reach public transportation is not less important than the frequency of buses or trains that serve the neighbourhood. In addition, a question arises as to what would count as equality in access to transportation. Litman (2023) describes the two main answers as horizontal equity (people with similar needs and abilities should be treated equally, so for example trains and buses should serve all destinations with equal frequency) versus vertical equity (disadvantaged groups should receive a greater share of resources, so trains and buses should arrive to their neighbourhoods more frequently).

But even this does not reveal the entire picture. Perhaps the most pressing issue when it comes to transport and inequality in the city is the length of time it takes to travel from home to work or school. In many mega-cities and metropolitan cities in the Global South, this has become a daunting issue, because, as we mentioned in relation to São Paulo, people who live in the distant suburbs can have a commute to work of three hours each way, which, we were told, typically requires waking up at 4 a.m. and returning home in the late evening. Giannotti and Logiodice (2023) developed an interesting way to analyse the inequality of transport in the city: they measure how many jobs

can one compete for or apply for, considering commuting time; how many schools can a child reach from their place of residence? With the latter, they found that while prima facie inequality is not substantial; when the quality of these schools is also taken into consideration, it became clear that in some areas of the city they studied—São Paulo—it was impossible to reach a good school without debilitating fatigue, due to commuting time. They applied the same checks for hospitals, clinics, and leisure activities. When they added the cost of transport (those who earn less live far away from all these goods and have to pay even more to get there) they found that inequality was severe. In some cases, people commute four to six hours a day, and they would either work fewer hours in order not to risk the functioning of parenthood (i.e. fulfil their duties as a parent) or work eight hours a day and either risk the functioning of parenthood or sleep very little, thereby risking their mental and physical health.

One theme that came up, especially in European cities, was how accommodating the transport system is for those who cycle, as well as for pedestrians. Although, of course, cycles are a form of private transport rather than public in a strict sense (unless the city purchases bicycles on a mass scale and makes them available throughout the city for the use of city dwellers), encouraging cycling and walking often goes with a public transport ethos, where the main aim is to discourage the wasteful and dominating use of the private car. Cities such as Los Angeles are notoriously difficult to navigate other than by motor vehicle, whereas in Copenhagen the 'green wave' of traffic lights is designed to meet the tempo of cyclists rather than cars. Numerous interviewees were concerned about whether the city is planned for car drivers or for cyclists and pedestrians, with adequate sidewalks and attention to the needs of those who don't have their own car.

Julia (29) from Amsterdam says that one of the advantages of her city is that while it is cosmopolitan, it also feels like a village in the sense that 'everything is accessible by bike'. Interestingly, she points to two advantages that go beyond swift accessibility: first, it is easy to become very familiar with the city, and second, she gets to chat with a lot of people. 'I love the small conversations I'm always having just cycling down the street. These small interactions are the best.' Interestingly, Julia's positive feeling extends beyond considerations of the convenience and well-being of cyclists but includes a sense of togetherness that people have when so many of them ride bikes to and from work or study, shopping, visiting friends, and picking up their children from their schools. The city is designed in a cycle-friendly manner and is tolerant to them, and it just feels good, as well as safe, to be part of a community that travels by bike.

This testimony concurs with a claim made by Tina Saaby (2015). Describing Copenhagen's *bikestrategy*, which was part of the city's goal to make people spend 20 per cent more time outside their homes in public spaces, she explains how the city's urban planners made it more time-consuming to use private cars, hoping to incentivize people to ride their bikes more; the result was that this indeed happened, and people described how they enjoyed the experience of talking to other cyclists while riding their bikes in the bike lanes.

3.4.3. Gardening, Environment Goods, and Environmental Bads

In the past, cities were often surrounded by walls which were meant to protect the city not only from human animals, but also from wild beasts. Nature was perceived as distinguished from the city. Researchers today call this attitude the city–nature dualism thesis. As Barak explains:

> The relationship [was seen] as oppositional and antithetical—the city is not conceived of as being part of nature and vice versa. Dualism incorporates two standpoints—one which regards cities as 'bounded social containers' in a nonsocial nature and another which sees urban parks, wildlife, etc. as islands of 'nature in cities'.
>
> **(Barak 2020, 56)**

But, as Barak continues to explain, most contemporary urban planners and environmental activists subscribe to the view that this thesis is false, or at least should not guide us when we plan our cities. The bird that nests on a tree in the street we live in or on the roof of one of the city's buildings, is part of nature and of city at one and the same time. And so are city-zens. National Geographic's website recommends several ways to enjoy what they call *urban nature*: volunteer at a community garden; pay attention to the way the city looks in different seasons; on stormy days or if it's too late to go outdoors, experience nature by watching webcams of birds of every kind; plant a tree; look out for flowers in your neighbourhood; go for an early day walk, before the day's bustle begins, to watch the animals you can see around you; collect leaves, and so on (National Geographic n.d.).[3] The intended

[3] We do not here discuss the relationships between humans and non-humans in the city. For an interesting discussion of several questions with regard to the interplay of cities and the non-human world, see Epting (2023).

audience is schoolchildren, but many adults too would benefit from these activities. The urban nature atlas describes more than a thousand nature-based solutions to urban environmental problems. For example, in October 2021 in Boston, United States, the Barr Foundation started a programme called Waterfront Initiative, which has two goals, environmental and civic: 'to support the sustainable planning and accessibility of the waterfront area while also increasing residents' awareness and environmental stewardship of the waterfront' (Urban Nature Atlas 2023). Scholars emphasize the health benefits of urban nature (Shanahan et al. 2015) which includes physical health as well as cognitive and psychological health.

Indeed, from our interviewees we learnt that city-zens appreciate the many aspects of nature in the city and they think that being deprived of access to urban nature—to the extent that this happens—is a key component of inequality in the city. Amar (65) immigrated to Amsterdam from Tunis thirty-eight years ago. He sees access to parks as a comfortable and less unpleasant way of aging in the city:

> I wake up, take a stroll in the park. (. . .) Sometimes friends are here too and we get together. Then I just walk around a bit, having some beer on the way, and by 8 pm I'm home.

Brenda (60) migrated to Rotterdam from Romania. She also believes that access to parks is especially important for the elderly: 'There are many parks here, and an old woman like me enjoys feeding the ducks.' Women also mention how they often find it difficult to enjoy the park as an issue of gender inequality. Maria is a relatively young Jerusalemite, who complains that she has to avoid the Sacher Park, close to her home, because of harassment. Moti, in Tel Aviv, complains about inequality between the haves and the have-nots, because the latter reside in the south of Tel Aviv 'where you do not see parks'. Chany, who also lives in the south of Tel Aviv, is asked 'what comes to mind when you think of inequality in the city', and answers immediately, referring to her own, less-affluent neighbourhood: 'There is not a single park here.' Tamir (40) from Tel Aviv, describes a different situation in the north of the city: 'I really grew up in and with the park; I was there all the time.' Mariza from Rio de Janeiro mentions especially Parque Madureira, describing the fun of chatting with others in the open area, and Renata, also from Rio, claims that 'there are fewer parks and nice open spaces for citizens in the North and West Zones [where the poor live] to enjoy during their free time'. Arian (38, male) from Oxford, lives in East Oxford, but visits regularly the various parks and meadows, as well as the college gardens: 'What I like about the

city? There is lots of green (. . .) the park here, but also the meadows, and then obviously there's all the colleges with their own greens. I really like that.'

We have argued above that the importance of public spaces in general is not simply that they are out there, but that they are accessible and usable, and that people of all races, ethnic groups, ages, attributes, and from all neighbourhoods, should feel welcome in them. People want to feel that they can enjoy urban nature according to their current needs: if I come to a park alone, I can sit to rest on a bench, and it does not matter very much how the bench is arranged as long as it's in a pleasant spot. But if I come with six other friends, we'll probably need two or three benches facing each other. In his widely read *The Social Life of Small Urban Spaces*, William Whyte (1980) examined the most important factor for determining whether people will or will not use public space in the city and found that it was a combination of (a) enough shade, and (b) whether there were accessible chairs or benches and whether they were movable and attractive to use. Indeed, Amanda Burden, who was NYC's chief planner when Bloomberg was mayor, explains why people near Paley Park, a pocket park in Manhattan, are very fond of visiting the park on a daily basis. The park had a profound impact on New Yorkers, she claims. One of the reasons was comfortable, movable chairs. People would come, find their seats, and move them a bit, to suit the way they wanted to sit (Burden 2021). We conclude that parks in egalitarian cities should be planned so that they can cater to a variety of groups; those who visit the park in large groups or families, those who visit the park by themselves, and so on. They should also be open as long as possible, and never carry the message that some people are not wanted.

Perhaps even better, and as Jane Jacobs taught us, to cater to the needs of recreation and playing outdoors for all, cities should design small parks in each neighbourhood or at the end of the street, in addition to spacious parks such as Hyde Park or Regent Park in London, Tiergarten in Berlin, Bois de Boulogne in Paris, Century Park in Shanghai, Flamengo Park in Rio de Janeiro, or Central Park in NYC, to mention just a few of the world's most famous parks. These huge parks are of course impressive and attract many locals as well as tourists; but most city-zens have to travel by train, bus, or car in order to reach them, and so accessibility to these parks becomes an issue. In addition, as Jacobs suggests, small, human-scale gardens should be planned around the corner.

But some, wealthier, city-zens pay more local taxes than others, and some—very often the same people—have better access to decision-makers. The result is that sometimes, to return to the topic of trees and shade mentioned above, city authorities tend to plant trees in neighbourhoods

where municipal tax receipts are high, and to avoid planting where for socio-economic reasons residents do not have to pay, or pay significantly lower, taxes. This produces heat islands, and different micro-climates, which can make an enormous difference during heatwaves. Heat islands can also be part of the explanation, alongside the lack of local social and material resources to cope with extreme heat, why in certain city neighbourhoods heat waves cause deaths whereas in other neighbourhoods in the same city there are far fewer fatalities (Davis 1997; Klinenberg 2002; Harlena et al. 2006).

Access to gardens and parks should ideally include private outdoor spaces, such as allotments to grow your own vegetables, although of course this is not practical in very densely populated cities. But where allotments are available, they provide a hobby but sometimes also occupational therapy, or simply extra food for the family. At the moment it is often the case that the more affluent who want or need such practices can rent allotments outside the city and drive there. If cities can provide more allotments near every neighbourhood there would be many beneficial effects including the reduction of inequality in the city.

But when it comes to the environment, cities distribute not only access to parks and gardens, but also exposure to environmental bads, which, if they cannot be avoided altogether, should normally be distributed on an equitable basis, although there are exceptions.[4] There are at least two kinds of exposure to environmental bads, involuntary and voluntary. Naturally, the involuntary is the more problematic. By this we mean that the more disadvantaged citizens find themselves residing by the sources of pollution, or the less beautiful quarters, while the rich enjoy calm views, and a well-kept and quiet environment where they do not have to face industrial pollution. So, for example, Petra (60) from Berlin says you can see how different neighbourhoods are treated if you look at the cleanness of their local train stations. Explaining why she recently moved to the neighbourhood where she lives, she says something many among her age would appreciate: '[This is where] I can immediately

[4] How are environmental bads (pollution, noise, garbage) distributed? Some of these bads are associated by many with cultures; namely that some cultures tend to care less about littering in the public domain, or about making noise. Nona (59) complains that in the neighbourhood where she lives in Jerusalem there are many ultra-Orthodox people who are mostly poor, and, she claims, therefore the area is always filthy. But unlike others, who blame the city authorities for not cleaning up, she believes that it is a cultural thing, as 'they have their own ways'. However, we want to note that littering might be a cultural thing, but it is surely also structural: if local facilities are poor, with no garbage cans outside, people might be tempted to litter. Even more problematic is irregular emptying of public garbage cans, which can overflow or be disturbed by birds or animals spreading litter on the streets. Even if everyone has disposed of their litter responsibly the streets may still end up in a very poor state. See, for example, Schultz et al. (2013), and Carpenter (2014).

relax—and that's something where noise, or rather its absence plays a big role.' Dvora (60, Tel Aviv) complains that she pays taxes, but in her neighbourhood the municipality does not clean often, as it is a neighbourhood occupied by less-affluent residents: 'I don't get anything back! Nothing! They don't clean here, and there are even no public toilets here.'

The other kind of exposure to environmental bads—the 'voluntary' form of exposure—is where those living in the city centre are exposed to noise and pollution, but that is a price they are ready to pay. Several examples for the latter come to mind: St. Pauli in Hamburg, Soho and Ladbroke Grove in London, 5th Ave, or by Central Park in NYC, Central District in Hong Kong, and many more. Sivan from Tel Aviv lives in a trendy neighbourhood with lots of bars and cafes. She says:

> Obviously the neighbourhood is very noisy. But I live the noise [i.e. it gives me life], I need it. I can't be surrounded with quiet; I need to hear some life around me. I really can't have the quiet.

Eddi (32), also from Tel Aviv, says: 'You know, for some time this kind of noise is actually very pleasant.' It is often a matter of age, but Hanna (70) who used to live in Jerusalem and moved to Tel Aviv says that noise shouldn't be a problem. 'I actually like it,' she says. It seems that David (50) from Tel Aviv is right when he sums it up: 'Some people like quietness; I don't. People are attracted to different places because of who they are.'

Some interviewees suggested that environmental matters impact the way people behave to each other, as when we mistreat the environment we tend to mistreat each other. Moti (61) from Tel Aviv says 'it is all cement around; it is so symbolic. (. . .) People are wolves to each other (. . .) The city has become like that; we are all capitalist pigs.' However, when Jane Jacobs was writing, American planning was turning to zoning, and factories were being moved out of town centres. This, many urban historians claim, killed communities (Silver 1997; Gray 2022a; 2022b) and in that sense was not sustainable. Therefore, we wish to note that of course pollution and noise are, at least in physical health terms, bad and exposure to them is often risky and harmful, but physical health should not be the only consideration. Some light industry could be beneficial in terms of equality, in bringing different types of people to the same neighbourhood, who will then have to find ways of peaceful coexistence. It is almost a paradox that an egalitarian city may well have more pollution than a tranquil, upper-class, city. This is because the egalitarian city will want to create a welcoming and encouraging environment for poorer people and allow a variety of opportunities for people to

flourish and get out of poverty (Alster 2022). So it probably needs jobs in industry as well as people on the move, using trucks, older cars, and so on. The result is that this egalitarian policy will inevitably create more air pollution.

Michael Young and Peter Willmott (2011 [1957]), in their classic study *Family and Kinship in East London* looked at patterns of housing and work in London. In the 1950s families who had been living in the slum areas which had been badly damaged during the Blitz were re-housed to new towns in the suburbs. For the men this was largely a positive experience because their improved housing did not stop them from continuing to work as they had done before and thereby keep their social ties, for example, going for drinks after work. But their wives had a miserable time because they were taken away from their neighbourhoods. Women in the study cared more about contact with friends and close family than about improved housing. The book shows that although crime dropped and husbands spent more time at home with families than they did before, overall there was a serious harm to the community. In our book *Disadvantage* (Wolff and de-Shalit 2007) we describe a similar process. As we have already mentioned, John Bird, the founding editor of the magazine *The Big Issue* told us how when the city wanted to help him and others in their run-down neighbourhood, a decision was taken to rebuild, but because residents were dislocated in order to enable the construction, they lost their communal ties and the relationships which had kept them all functioning despite their poverty, to the extent that many of them fell into crime, drug addiction, and so on.

Nevertheless, we cannot avoid the fact that exposure to environmental bads is harmful, as it is seen in any theory of environmental justice. Moreover, it is not only a matter of physical health. In addition, exposure to environmental bads is often described in terms of exposure to the stress of the 'hustle and bustle' of the city. Mano (70) from Jerusalem enjoys the tranquillity and quietness where he lives and says that at his age this is an escape from the noise and chaos of the city. Neusa is 59 years old, an African-Brazilian woman, born and raised in Rio de Janeiro. She picks through garbage for aluminium cans to sell to recycling companies. She lives in both a violent and filthy area of the city together with her son and four grandchildren. She says all she longs for is to live in a 'quiet environment', referring both to the violence and the hassle and noise around her. But Neusa is disadvantaged in her city not only because she is exposed to hazardous waste, violence, noise, and the hustle and bustle of the city. She is also homeless. Which brings us to one of the main themes for a city of equals, as described by the interviewees.

3.4.4. Housing Policy

Housing was an enormous concern for our interviewees, and with regard to several related issues: housing availability and affordability, most often discussed in terms of rent, which has been rising rapidly in many cities in the early 2020s, especially as a percentage of average gross pay; the proportion of households in temporary accommodation; chances of owning a flat in the city, especially during times of rapid house-price inflation; and also the number of people seen sleeping rough.

Regeneration and urban renewal, discussed under the heading 'gentrification' for most interviewees, was a common topic. While many interviewees appreciated the facilities that regeneration brings, they were concerned that the process spirals to attract business or wealthier newcomers and drive out long-standing residents. Erika, 75, from Hamburg says:

> They are tearing down buildings. Buildings that are not too bad actually. And then they're constructing these huge and really expensive office buildings, and no one can pay the rent.

Klaus from Hamburg says:

> The rents! We really need to regulate this, it's completely out of control! Where are all these people supposed to live? We'll end up with a drastic situation where those who have money can afford to live in the city, and all others will have to leave. That's unacceptable.

Nearly all interviewees in Berlin told us that housing prices are too high. Similarly, Sandra (49) a designer from San Francisco, now in Berlin, reported that she had moved to San Francisco because it was a walkable, bicycle-friendly city and it had a European atmosphere, which she liked. But then the city became very expensive. Initially teachers and artists had to move out, then more and more people found it unaffordable. Tina from Hamburg also complained about the housing prices:

> Up till now Altona North [a neighbourhood in Hamburg] was a place also of the 'simple people', normal people, and by that I mean the medical nurse and the truck-driver. But now they can't afford it anymore. Real estate, housing, it's all too expensive.

She is not the only interviewee who also subscribes to the view that cities are being damaged by investors treating housing as a financial asset rather than a home. It was not unusual to suggest that cities will become much more

egalitarian if they introduce regulations to prevent or at least reduce foreign investments in housing:

> I'd introduce stricter regulations for the real estate market, so that investors from China or the US cannot buy property here as capital investments. If you take a look at the houses around the Alster [the main river of Hamburg] at night every second house is empty. I'd prevent this from continuing.

Another interviewee also called Tina, who is 74 and from Oxford, said house prices were the most inegalitarian aspect of the city.

> I think the big problem in Oxford is the cost of the housing, that is a big factor. So people on middle incomes . . . nurses, teachers, those essential industries . . . find it very hard to find anywhere to live in the city.

Many interviewees were aware of the benefits of gentrification as well, namely that neighbourhoods become vivid and full of life again, where otherwise they would have continuously deteriorated, especially in areas where cuts to the budgets of local authorities make it very difficult to intervene by using public money to save run-down areas. However, while from the perspective of the city regeneration or urban renewal private investment is welcome, current residents who are forced to move out are understandably very bitter about it, and their plight evokes wide sympathy. N (33), from London, answers straightforwardly when asked what comes to mind when he thinks about inequality in the city: 'Housing!' He waits a bit and then elaborates:

> There's many landlords buying property massively. And as a consequence, people are being forced out. Gentrification is happening. I know in Germany they have price-capping, so maybe that's an idea. (. . .) OK, I have to choose my words carefully here. I think in many poor areas, socially weak, perhaps not so safe . . . when new people move in, they can improve the neighbourhood . . . they upgrade it, and the situation as a whole. (. . .) But some people [are particularly vulnerable], those from a lower socio-economic background. That is not necessarily Black and Asian communities, I think . . . it's not necessarily race.

Following rents, house prices, and gentrification, interviewees associated inequality in the city with the connected issue of the low supply of affordable housing, either publicly owned or by private entrepreneurs. Maaike (60, Amsterdam) believes that the worst thing about inequality in Amsterdam is that it has too little social housing; affordable accommodation for people who can't afford the market rent to live in the city. The 'ridiculously long waiting period for social rent housing motivates people to leave the city'.

It is interesting to note that Maaike's comment runs against one of the leading academic studies of justice in the city. In her famous discussion, Fainstein argues that Amsterdam's housing policies were responsible for keeping the city relatively egalitarian. Housing policy has been a major instrument in maintaining the quality of life for the city's lower-income population. Because subsidized housing units, as well as recipients of individual housing benefits, are scattered throughout the city, housing policy has sharply restricted spatial inequality of households by income. Moreover, the very large public subsidy involved in housing construction, by keeping rent levels low and thereby raising disposable income, has contributed substantially to popular welfare, mitigating class differentiation and thereby weakening resistance to residential integration of different income groups.

It is worth reflecting on the difference between Maaike's perspective and Fainstein's analysis. Maaike is aware of the many regulations that the city has in place, and which Fainstein applauds, but nevertheless believes that more has to be done. And this may go hand in hand with the increasing salience housing has had for people in the last decade, with increasing pressure on authorities to treat the matter with urgency in urban settings. For example, The Eurobarometer survey asked what are the three key urgent topics for the city authorities to face, and it shows that already in 2015 housing was mentioned many more times and by many more people than several years before. For example, in 2015 it was more likely to be mentioned as an important issue than in 2012 in Dublin (45 per cent, an increase of 25 per cent), with large increases (of at least 10 points) also seen in five other cities (Flash Eurobarometer 2016, 165). Fainstein's book was published in 2010, so it might be even in this short time the shortage of affordable housing has become much more important in cities around the world.

But there are also factors more specific to Amsterdam, and in particular related also to the change in its the local government. When Fainstein was doing her research Job Cohen, of the Labour party, was mayor of Amsterdam. He was known for his slogan 'keeping things together', emphasizing his attitude to the variety of ethnic groups and the city's responsibility for all its residents. Our interviews were taken during the period in which two mayors served, van der Burg and van Aarsten, both from the 'People's Party for Freedom and Democracy', a centre-liberal-conservative party. Things changed since Fainstein conducted her research.[5] Affordable housing was a key topic

[5] Already in 2009 a paper by Justus Uitermark (2009) suggested that although Amsterdam had become a just city it was then dying. Uitermark claims that both equitable distribution of scarce resources and democratic engagement, two essential preconditions for the realization of a just city, were disappearing from Amsterdam's scene.

in the March 2022 local elections, and a recent housing survey conducted by the municipality (Sevano 2022) found that, between 2019 and 2021, the number of privately owned rental properties increased by nearly 10 per cent, to over 137,000.

More recently, under the leadership of the Green mayor Femke Halsema, new regulations have been announced, intended to mitigate scarcity by preventing flats in the city from remaining unoccupied. In 2019 the mayor declared that homes are meant to be lived in, not to earn money (Halsema n.d.) explaining why she was in favour of limiting the time a flat can be vacant. But whatever the reason for these differences, the relevant, though unsurprising, conclusion for our argument here is that affordable housing in particular, and housing in general, is perceived as a key element of a city of equals.

In moving forward progressively, the egalitarian city can be innovative in its solutions, and this is an area where new experiments (literally 'experiments in living') would be very welcome. The American Community Development Corporation (CDC) is a good example. CDCs are vehicles for supplying affordable housing, below market prices, in the United States by subsidizing tax reduction and philanthropy (Bratt and Rohe 2007). In most CDCs there is representation of the residents on the governing board. A good example is Dudley Street Neighborhood Initiative in Boston (DSNI n.d.). Not only does it lead 'development without displacement', namely a process of development and urban renewal in the neighbourhood that ensures that the neighbourhood's residents are not displaced and that it can persist and flourish, but it does so by means of empowering the local residents so that a long-term effect is much more likely.

3.5. Themes that Relate to Sense of Meaning

We now come to two themes which are closely related to having a sense of meaning, or of a meaningful life. These are, first, how people experience the city, the urban public space, and the city's amenities; and second, having a sense of security, especially in the public space, including having a sense of identity which in the city can be simultaneously communal and individualistic.

3.5.1. Inequalities in Urban Experience

When asked what they like about living in the city, many people answer in ways that draw on the particular character of urban experience. In the

beginning of the twentieth century Simmel (1903) observed that the city with its stimuli and rush offers us anonymity. However, today many urbanites would suggest that emphasizing the anonymity the city offers is a very one-sided picture and would argue that the city can offer a very pleasant sense of community life. The city is full of action, sources of enjoyment and opportunities, and huge variety day by day. Urbanism, the urban way of life, which for Simmel meant anonymity, is thought by city dwellers to offer joy, satisfaction, and even self-fulfilment and a meaningful life.

But this is not experienced evenly by all city dwellers. Jerusalem is thought by many to be a very beautiful city. When the British ruled in Palestine (1917–1948) they put regulations in place to maintain the tradition of building in local stone (rather than cement) for aesthetic reasons. As stone became more and more expensive, the regulation changed, after the formation of the state of Israel in 1948, so that the walls had only to be covered by stone veneers which are cheaper. Still, the city managed to retain its unique atmosphere and beauty. Many city dwellers like to stroll in different parts of the city in different hours of the day, as they do in many cities. Yet the sense of beauty is not enough to make all feel calm and welcome. Jerusalem, is, of course, a bi-national city of Arabs and Jews, and many Arabs from the east city feel that they live under occupation,[6] and for the Arab population strolling in different parts of the city during all times of the day is not possible, or will at least result in feeling out of place. Arabs in Jewish parts of the city very late at night or before dawn in the morning are likely to be confronted by police patrols and even if not, might experience a sense of hostility when they meet others. Such fear, perhaps on both sides, creates a division whereby those lacking the confidence born of superior political power feel they'd better stay in their neighbourhoods in the eastern part of the city during these hours. So Jews and Arabs in Jerusalem experience the city in very different, and unequal, ways.

In Rio de Janeiro, 10,302 kilometers from Jerusalem, two interviewees tell Katarina, our research assistant, completely opposite stories about how they experience their city. Neusa, a poor woman who was found begging, keeps saying that what she dislikes about Rio is that she is never safe, her grandchildren are not safe, and there is always violence. Mario, a professor at a local university says that what he likes about Rio is what he describes as being able to 'walk *freely* around the city'. The point here is not merely that

[6] In the 1967 Six Days War the eastern part of the city, which had been Jordanian, was occupied by the Israeli forces. A few weeks later part of the eastern city was annexed to the state of Israel. Unfortunately, the Arab residents were not granted full citizenship and many also would not want Israeli citizenship, as they identify as Palestinians.

different people have different *subjective* notions of what they see and we are not promoting a purely relativist theory of how the city is experienced. People experience the city differently because their lives objectively differ, because their environments differ, and because their urban experiences vary, in addition to any purely personal or subjective factors, such as their general disposition.

Mario himself is not a relativist, nor is he naive. He continues, sadly describing 'the symbolic and physical divisions'. He says:

> Can you believe that either by observing the way a person talks, wears her clothes, or in the way she walks or by the colour of her skin, I can identify the zone in the city which this person comes from?

Similarly, we ask city-zens of Rio to describe what they like and dislike in the city, and Quésia, a homeless woman, reports that she lives in constant fear of paedophiles who, she says, might 'steal my daughter', whereas Renata, a young psychologist asserts that what she dislikes about the city is that 'I have seen a lot of holes in the sidewalks, dirty streets, and bus stops that don't work properly. This makes our life difficult.' It is clear from these interviews that obviously, in Rio, people experience the city very differently, as a function of their socio-economic status. When Katarina asks Renata whether she sees things that might make life difficult for others, she points to the many social inequalities. When Katarina asks again, about how all the inequalities she described affect her, she answered frankly, 'I think I got used to seeing this inequality, and I try to protect myself.'

Division is experienced in different ways in different cities, including in some of the wealthiest cities in the world. 'The Village' in NYC is a pleasant place to stroll. Or so many people believe, because they are not out on the streets very early in the morning. Between 6.00 a.m. and 7.00 a.m. there are dozens of people cleaning the streets and the amount of filth and garbage they have to remove is just unbelievable. Many tourists and locals like walking in the Village because the streets are cosy, charming, and clean. The atmosphere is pleasant, generating a feeling of security. It is said that Jane Jacobs was inspired by the Village when she wrote *The Death and Life of Great American Cities*, the Bible of many city planners even today. But the Village before 7.00 a.m. is seriously unpleasant. In some streets it is almost impossible to avoid stepping in garbage, which is spread everywhere. We walked these streets in those hours deliberately and it generated a complex set of feelings. One is sheer incredulity about the thoughtlessness of those littering to such a degree, and their disregard of others who have to walk through their garbage. Another

feeling is contempt that even today many have the entitled expectation that others will clean up after them. Overall, we felt a kind of both personal and vicarious humiliation that other human beings are prepared to act in this way.

Experiencing the same neighbourhoods in different ways is a form of inequality in the city. Although there is a divide between those who clean versus those who walk in the clean environment, that is not our main concern. Obviously, those who clean do not enjoy spending time in the filth, but it is reasonable to claim that at least they are being paid to do so, and all jobs come with burdens. Rather we have in mind those whose work in sectors with unsocial hours or require a very early start and have to walk through still-filthy streets on their way to their work, in cafes, or cooking breakfasts in diners, or as a cleaner or concierge in offices, apartment buildings, or hotels. We attempted to interview some of these workers very early in the morning. Many, understandably, apologized that they were in a hurry, but some stopped to speak. Those we spoke to had typically left Harlem, Queens, and the Bronx between 5.30 a.m. to 6 a.m. that morning, in order to be on time and open the cafe or arrive for their shift in the hotel. All of them told us they rarely were able to make use of Manhattan's entertainment because they lived far away, it is expensive, they have a family they want to spend time with, and so on. And yet, every day they have to walk through the garbage left there by those who had a good time the night before. It is a very stark form of inequality in the city.

Kenneth Galbraith (1992) introduced the concept of what he calls 'the functional underclass' who will include many of those people who in contemporary cities are compelled to face walking through the filthy streets in the early hours. Galbraith suggests that others do not even see or notice members of the functional underclass, partly because they go to work when most of us are still at home, asleep, or just waking up, but also because they are not noticed even when they are there. But our point here is not that early morning workers have to leave home early but rather that in some parts of big cities they experience walking in public space very differently from other city dwellers who in this respect and many others are more privileged.

Other researchers have noted that how we experience public space is of critical importance to how we think of our place in the city. Sharon Zukin (1995, 42–3) argues that through 'mingling with strangers' in public space a shared urban citizenship (our notion of city-zenship) and a shared public culture is constructed. Zukin claims that in such places of meaningful public culture one can find civility, security, tact, and trust. We add that it happens spontaneously rather than through discussion and planning. People feel it,

they sense it, they know it when it happens. And when it does not happen, people can sense a form of urban alienation.[7]

In the 1950s, Galbraith (1958) argued that while many middle- and upper-class people could purchase all kinds of goods, among them some luxury items, our public space is dirty, polluted, and unsafe. Since then much has improved with regard to safety, but with regard to dirt, as we have noted, while the city can look clean at least during office hours, the effort needed to make that happen is immense and those using the city at other times of day can have a very different experience. This is part of what makes some jobs in the city less appealing than others.

Galbraith also claimed that in the affluent society people care more about having an enjoyable job than about how many hours they work. It seems that in cities jobs differ in terms of the experience they offer, and this is another respect in which the distribution of work makes up part of the picture of inequality in the city. More enjoyable jobs in general also tend to be better paid and also allow more leisure time, and the resources to make good use of it, although some very highly paid jobs leave very little spare time (Markovits 2019). In theory non-enjoyable jobs appear at least to allow some leisure time, as they are usually eight-hour shifts, whereas those in more enjoyable jobs may even put in ten and twelve hours a day, as Markovits notes. But as things work out, the non-enjoyable jobs typically do not pay well, and since rent in the city is so high many workers have more than a single job, and the exhaustion of work means that their scant leisure time is used for rest rather than enjoyable experience. In addition, as we described earlier, in some mega cities, commuting to work takes so long it leaves no leisure time at all.

As Michael Walzer argues (1983) societies distribute access to leisure time; but in cities this is even more important, partly because when asked about why they like living in the city, many city dwellers refer to the various opportunities they have to enjoy their time away from work. But making good use of available time can be even more important for those who are retired, where stark inequalities in access to cultural events is apparent. Klaus, 73 years old from Hamburg, praises his city for this:

> I like going to cultural events; not only high culture. I go to concerts and performances in local schools, but also to the State Opera, the Elbphilharmonie . . . Not every week, you know, but I appreciate the offers and opportunities. That's one of the big advantages of living in such a large, affluent city.

[7] Leonard Cohen's song 'Please Don't Pass Me By' comes to mind. Cohen describes NYC at the time living there was known to be harsh for many. He describes how he was walking in NYC and brushed up against a man in front of him. Cohen felt a cardboard placard on the man's back. When he passed a streetlight, he could read it. It said: 'Please don't pass me by—I am blind, but you can see—I've been blinded totally—Please don't pass me by.'

But, in contrast Ruth, 89 years old, also from Hamburg says:

> If it weren't for my son, who is financially supporting me, I couldn't even pay rent. So yes, I'd love to go to the theatre and to the opera as well as to other cultural events, but I can't afford it.

Lack of access is also a problem, of course, for those still of working age, as we noted above. Christian, aged 40 from Berlin, makes the point when he says that he feels excluded from a 'decent life': 'Without a very good salary you can't really afford much in Berlin. Something should be done about this, really.' To our question what is included in his idea of a decent life from which he feels excluded, he says:

> Well, cultural offerings, events, for example. You know, being able to participate [he used the somewhat stronger term 'teilhaben'—which in a more literal translation would mean both participation and co-ownership]—I think if you like to participate in cultural events—in order for you to be able to do so . . . now, well, you have to pay for it. Also exhibitions etc., it all costs money of course.

In other words, accessibility to cultural events, which is part of the urban experience, requires not only availability but also affordability for city dwellers.

Many city residents, in the most populated metropolitan cities, especially younger workers new to the city, live alone in a tiny 'box' of a single room somewhere, or have a room in an apartment, often shared with people they had not met before. They work hard, and a peak experience of leisure time is when they meet their mates and colleagues for a chat and beer after work. The city enables us to really enjoy these moments, as there are so many opportunities to dine out, sit in a cafe, stroll in the park, or sit in the pub, or more often now, standing outside the pub with friends. A famous jazz song describes NYC as great fun because you don't need to spend a cent on having fun—all you do is sit in the park and watch people go by. This is true; but one needs free time and enough energy to spare even to do this. Those interviewees who had to start their work at 6.00 a.m. or 7.00 a.m. reported that they rarely enjoyed leisure time in this sense.

There is something else you need in order to enjoy the rich variety that the city offers: an attitude that others in the urban space express to you that makes you feel welcome to use and enjoy these attractions. Margaret Kohn (2011) notes that formal and informal rules about the use of public space can lead to unintended patterns of class segregation, which, viewed from the point of view of the tastes and interests of each individual could enhance

everyone's personal experience, yet seems problematic from the point of view of equality. Kohn discusses the work of Frederick Law Olmsted, the nineteenth-century American landscape architect who is today considered by many to be the 'founding father' of landscape architecture. One of his most famous projects is Central Park in Manhattan, NYC. Being sensitive to inequality in cities, Olmsted hoped that urban parks could enable people from different walks of life and different neighbourhoods to mix and mingle, which, he thought, would enable them to also feel more empathy to each other, and then perhaps support city measures to reduce inequality. However, Kohn argues, Olmsted did not pay sufficient attention to how formal rules and informal norms and customs can make the use of parks more fitting to the tastes of bourgeois residents and make poorer and working-class people feel uneasy and unwelcome there. Olmsted, like many of the middle-class New Yorkers who used the park, regarded it as a work of art, and expected visitors to treat it as such. Therefore, the use of the park was regulated by strict codes, 'similar to the rules governing military recruits' (Kohn 2011, 83). Playing musical instruments, for example, was forbidden in Central Park, together with fishing, picking flowers, and many other activities. In practice the rules enforced middle-class conceptions of proper behaviour, and poor and working-class people did not feel at home at all. Instead, they favoured Jones Woods Park, that 'allowed more boisterous recreation, including spectacles, beer tents, games of chance, popular music, competitive sports, dancing, and large picnics' (Kohn 2011, 84; Rosenzweig and Blackmar, 1992, 233). The use of space is critically important for opportunity and well-being, and this is something worth reflecting on, alongside Kohn's discussion of Central Park. It is tempting to think that a city of equals should offer everyone a similar experience. Yet it may be impossible to find a similar experience that suits all tastes and interests. Hence significant diversity in a city is not always a problem from the point of view of equality so long as everyone feels included in the city in their own way. This is important, for if people feel strongly identified with one group and one neighbourhood, but do not feel embedded in the city as a whole, then a critical aspect of a city of equals is missing, even if everyone is contented in their own way.

Before we move on to the next theme, we want to comment about access to places of worship such as churches, synagogues, and mosques. We were slightly surprised that not many interviewees mentioned them as part of what constitutes their sense of meaning in the city. Obviously, for those with religious faith, access to places of worship will be critical to their sense of being able to live a meaningful life. It might simply be that the issue didn't come up because everyone who values such facilities is already well served; perhaps in

the cities where we conducted interviews there is no shortage of such buildings and facilities, so people do not think of it as a matter of inequality. Still, we argue that because there are diverse religious populations in all cities, having a place to pray and worship your God or Gods is also a crucial part of a city of equals.

3.5.2. Sense of Security

According to Flash Eurobarometer 419 (2016), Jane Jacobs was right: there is a very high correlation between satisfaction with one's city and feeling safe, both in one's neighbourhood and one's city.

Indeed, security or safety, or lack of, is an essential element of city life. In fact, it is mentioned in many interviews that we have already discussed, particularly where we consider who is affected by violence and who benefits from policing. It is also mentioned in the context of gender, age, childhood, violence, harassment, and ageism, all of which we discuss below.

One question which is revealed in these interviews is whether what matters is that people *feel* secure or *are* secure. The former is about a subjective notion of security, whereas the latter is about an objective one. Many interviewees talked about both, which is consistent with work we have done exploring the difference between objective risk and subjective fear, noting, for example, that one way to reduce objective risk is to increase subjective fear, so people take higher levels of precautions (and vice versa) thereby lowering their risk (Wolff 2006). What was especially interesting, however, is that in our interviews city dwellers often tended to understand security where they live, in their neighbourhood, in objective terms: they refer to widely available knowledge, including rough statistics, about crime, violence, and sexual harassment. But they also think about security in parts of the city with which they are less familiar, and they do so in subjective terms, or they rely on what might be misconceptions of the level of security in these neighbourhoods, especially neighbourhoods where many immigrants reside. Accordingly, many interviewees felt much less safe when they strayed from the familiar; a feeling which is closely connected to a sense of not belonging or being a stranger, or of being watched, even if this is empirically baseless. Outside their comfort zone, where they live, our interviewees tended to rely less on well-founded information about how secure this area is, and more on scare stories that they hear from the press or as rumours. This was confirmed in interviews in Rio de Janeiro. Even people who resided in neighbourhoods that objectively are very unsafe, for example, in the favelas, expressed anxiety

and fear about going to other city zones, which were statistically much safer. What we observed in other studies is that when people need to experience something as part of their daily life, such as regular commuting, they tend to downplay the risks, while those for whom the activities are optional and less frequently encountered are more likely to be swayed by exaggerated scare stories (Wolff 2006). Similar reasoning can apply here: one cannot avoid one's own neighbourhood, but it is much easier to stay away from others. While the explanations we have offered here might seem as nothing more than hypotheses, the important bottom line is this: it seems to us that both objective and subjective risk matter in that we want people to have a feeling of security and we want them to have a good reason to have this feeling.

Yet how a feeling of safety is achieved is not a simple matter, as we have already noted. For example, and particularly relevant to our topic here, there is a complex relationship between the feeling of safety and the presence of the police and other security facilities. This can be seen in an example from Fine et al. (2003), who found that urban youth, and especially young men of colour, express a strong sense of betrayal by adults and report feeling mistrusted by them. Given this, while for some groups, perhaps of older people, police on the street can seem reassuring; for others police patrols as well as CCTV cameras can be a constant reminder that such things are needed. Furthermore, and this is the thrust of Fine's et al.'s study, when trust in police is low, they can be seen as a threat in themselves. This will be particularly so for those who feel they may be victimized by the police, and this will typically be the poorer and minoritized members of the city. For example, Valentina in Rio says, 'Police officers are violent to those from a poor background.' During 2013, when the 'Black Lives Matter' campaign started, and later, in particular during the protests against police brutality in 2020 and 2021, it was clear that in many American cities many African Americans perceive the police as a threat.

Though race is a critically important factor in differential treatment by the police, factors other than race can also play a part. How safe and secure one feels in the city varies considerably from person and person and often relates to their perception and experience of their fellow city dwellers' behaviour in public space. In Rio de Janeiro Neusa, 59, whom, as we have mentioned, we found begging, also makes a modest income by collecting aluminium cans from the garbage throughout the city and selling them for recycling. She reports that she and her grandchildren are not safe, for there is always violence around.

In our previous book *Disadvantage* (Wolff and de-Shalit 2007) we discuss how risk to one functioning can become corrosive, meaning that the risk can

spread to other functionings. For example, it is often the case that people on low incomes stave off the feeling of hunger by eating very cheap, highly processed food, including low quality pasta, rice, and bread, which is rich in sugars and carbohydrate. In overcoming their hunger, they risk their health, showing how achieving one functioning can put others at risk. But we also discussed the more obvious type of case where failing to achieve one functioning can also put other functionings at risk. Neusa has not been able to achieve secure housing in a safe area and thereby is more likely to be attacked in the street. In the terms of the capability approach, this puts her bodily integrity at risk. The situation is problematic for anyone without a secure home but is particularly difficult for rough sleepers. Another interviewee in Rio, Quésia, also mentioned above, is a rough sleeper and says she is terrified of paedophiles stealing her daughter. Because they sleep in the street, both she and her daughter live in perpetual fear and high risk.

The experiences of Neusa and Quésia, as noted above, contrast sharply with those of Mario, a Rio professor, even though they live in the same city. He reported that he loves strolling in the city and describes what he does as 'walk *freely* around the city', though he was acutely aware that others do not have his privilege of security.

The fact that people who live in different neighbourhoods experience the city differently intersects also with life stage, and the differences may be more intense for those in teenage years, looking for sources of entertainment and stimulation. One constant refrain in the interviews was the availability of facilities for young people. Parents in under-served areas of the city worry that their children may have no option but to hang around on the streets getting into trouble. Wealthier parts of town may have more facilities, such as clubs, leisure centres, or cinemas, which will often be another form of spatial segregation. Equally, many adults enjoy strolling around lively, historic, or beautiful parts of their own city, seeing street performers, or interesting graffiti, or going to the park and enjoying nature or solitude. Yet these opportunities to be amused or astonished in these ways may not be available to all in some cities.

It is no surprise that issues around safety and security were a constant refrain in the interviews, both explicitly and implicitly. Here are some further examples:

Mayowa (19) in Oxford says:

> There's always somebody somewhere, you're never alone on the street and there are lots of coffee places and the like. I haven't entered all of the coffee shops yet, of course, but I just like the atmosphere. It creates a nice feeling when you're

> just walking around and there are people everywhere talking, drinking coffee. I like that.

Chino is 65. In the 1990s he moved from Suriname to Rotterdam. He complains:

> It's crazy, I'm a grown man and I'm scared of walking down the street in certain areas. I would never return to Suriname, I guess whatever happens here is so much better than there, but it's really hard these last few years.

Omri is a 28-year-old student who has been living in Jerusalem for four years. He believes security should be the focus of the city's attitudes to its city-zens:

> The most important thing is the sense of security. I too, as a man, am not enjoying walking around in my neighbourhood after dark. I'm not even thinking about the old city [where religious and national tensions are high and often lead to violence], where I used to hang out a lot.

Sara is a 20-year-old religious woman in the neighbourhood of Pat, perhaps the least affluent area in Jerusalem, with a high poverty rate. She used to live in an exclusively religious neighbourhood, but moved to Pat because she enjoys the variety of people around her. But the downside, she testifies, is that she never walks outside after dark, whereas in other neighbourhoods, she says, women can walk outside, even alone.

3.5.3. Identity, Community, and Anonymity

Urban identity has a type of inbuilt duality or hybridity, which for many is one of the main attractions of the city. It can offer a sense of secure community, yet it also offers something diametrically opposed, as we saw that Simmel emphasized: the opportunity for anonymity, which itself has upsides and downsides. This multiplicity is beautifully expressed by David (33) from Berlin. He first says how much he appreciates that the city allows its people to be themselves and how there is no pressure to conform:

> Berlin is a mixture of many smaller cities and cultures. And with culture I don't only mean 'foreign' cultures but Germany, all corners of the country. (. . .) there is no 'standard model' here. You can develop and follow your own art of living . . . be authentic. It's all about diversity and differences. I like the openness and the curiosity that is created by this plurality of cultures and lifestyles.

However, he is quick to add:

> Variety has its downside too. Arriving in Berlin can be tough because everything is so impersonal here.

As for anonymity, it is interesting that our interviewees distinguished between not really knowing anybody, and respecting privacy. Moris (26), who currently lives in Amsterdam, but came there from a small town in East Holland, describes this as a function of diversity, and sees anonymity as an important condition for facilitating personal change:

> What I like the most about Amsterdam is the diversity. (. . .) Where I come from everyone in the streets already know something about you, so it's tremendously hard to reinvent yourself.

And Carl, 68, from Amsterdam says you can feel anonymity even if you do know many people:

> I enjoy the anonymity here. And it's not because I don't know people here, but because privacy is respected here. No one is actively at your back, no one looks through the window at what you do or where you're at.

Andrea (47) is a Berliner:

> I like the diversity, that everyone can be as they are. You can be yourself. (. . .) It's a general atmosphere I'd say, hard to describe. But, for example, you can be dressed however you like and people here meet each other more or less on eye level, I'd say.

But at the same time, another interviewee in Amsterdam, Maaike, 60, praises the personal feeling of knowing people around you: 'I adore Amsterdam. (. . .) it really feels personal—I know everybody and everybody knows me.' And Mano, a pensioner in Jerusalem, answers our question whether Jerusalem is a good city to grow old: 'I've got all I need. My friends are here, my family. Everybody knows me here and I know everybody, except for the very young guys.' And Carl from Amsterdam, whom we quoted above about the possibility of anonymity, adds: 'People here are willing to help in need.'

So there are two ways to experience the city: as an escape, as a place that worships privacy; but also as a place which has a great potential for a sense of community, bonding, and friendship. And these two ways can be experienced simultaneously; they are not either-or; many city dwellers feel that

what they like about the city is that at any given minute you can choose how to experience it with regard to community versus anonymity. If so, a city of equals should be able to offer both ways to experience the city to all of its city-zens, with the emphasis on 'all'. An example of how unequal this can get is described by an interviewee who now lives with his wife and children in Berlin but originally immigrated from Peru. He describes a different experience, in which an immigrant is clearly recognized as an immigrant, as an outsider, under pressure to conform:

> When I go around, I speak to my kids in Spanish, to my wife in English—but I don't feel comfortable speaking that in public. I had an experience with racist attitudes. A woman told me to speak German in Germany, in her country, a woman in her mid-50s.

He nevertheless claims that there is no xenophobia, yet this experience has made him 'feel uncomfortable speaking other languages in public. (. . .) my wife's family name is German, so my kids took on her name, to avoid discrimination.'

Presumably nearly all egalitarians will sympathize and suggest that until everyone feels comfortable to speak their own language freely in public the city is not fully egalitarian. Another, potentially more controversial, example comes from Jerusalem where there is a large ultra-Orthodox Jewish community. Many of the men do not work but study the Torah until they are in their forties and then rely on welfare benefits. This creates some tension with the secular population, who struggle to work and who pay most of the local tax and national income taxes. In addition, some ultra-Orthodox city-zens argue that for them to be able to practice their beliefs and culture and to really feel a sense of community they need the city to respect their preferences about how others should behave. They want the public space to reflect Jewish values and since they believe there should be no transportation on Shabbat (Saturday), they want the city to forbid any kind of transportation on Shabbat, if not in the entire city then at least in the neighbourhoods where they reside. The religious prohibition on using vehicles on the Sabbath already causes tension with those who need to cross the neighbourhood using their cars. But much more controversial is the ultra-Orthodox community's demand that in some of the streets where they live the city should enforce strict modesty regulations including separation of men and women in public, including walking separately on the two sidewalks, one for men one for women. Feminists and egalitarians have argued that such regulations should be illegal as they discriminate against women. The reason members of the ultra-Orthodox community want women to walk on the other side

of the street is that women are seen as sexually tempting, and men should avoid being tempted. This, feminists and egalitarians have argued, reduces the woman to her body and projects on women what goes on in men's minds. Ultra-Orthodox Jews answered that this argument restricts their right to culture and to a sense of community in their city (Ben-Dahan 2017). This is a just one example of how respecting everyone's sense of community, as well as cultural rights and groups rights, is fraught with difficulties. In Jerusalem restricting the use of public space by women is illegal, and yet in some of Jerusalem's ultra-Orthodox neighbourhoods it is the norm in practice, even if it is legally forbidden, and the local police look away.

Contested cases, such as the one just discussed, show how hard it may be to make everyone feel completely at home in the city, and there may be a need for negotiated compromise and accommodation so that everyone can get at least part of what they need to attain a secure sense of belonging. For many of our interviewees being able to attain both a feeling of anonymity and community was critical to their idea of a city of equals, and the ability to choose between anonymity and community and be whatever and whoever you want to be is perceived as freedom and autonomy. Amar moved to Amsterdam from Tunis thirty-eight years ago. He is now 65. He says:

> What is good here is that everyone is free. You can choose to do and to be whatever you like. People are very kind here, always helping each other. There is an atmosphere in the street that allows you to just talk or to feel free to ask for help.

Sivan, a 35-year-old dog walker who moved to Tel-Aviv from a Kibbutz (a small community in which many means of production are owned collectively) seven years before our interview and mentioned that one of the reasons she didn't get along there was that she was not comfortable with the fact that everybody in the Kibbutz knew everything about her. She likes Tel Aviv because it offers her privacy, though she does like the fact that people around know her:

> It's a matter of degree. People do not go on looking for you here, for what you're doing, for what your Mom used to do. They can't ask my Mom where am I, and with whom I've brushed my teeth. It's a matter of degree. Here I can sit with some friends, sit with people in the dog-court, have a nice conversation or sit for a drink with my neighbours. But at the end of the day, no one is looking through my window.

Being oneself for many people obviously includes identifying with a particular culture, gender, and ethnicity, and many cities have adopted welcoming

pluralistic attitudes and policies. Although the pattern is changing, cities have been slow to recognize that many people live outside traditional family structures, perhaps living in a same-sex relationship, or are transsexual, or living alone either by choice or fate. For example, many cities give housing priority to families with young children. While this is understandable, we also have to ask what message such a policy sends to those who will never be in that position. We also need to consider the relation between social or economic class and a secure sense of belonging. In many cities a working-class pride is developed, which helps those with lower salaries still feel they belong to the city's story. Referring to Liverpool, Tid (30), now living in London, explains why the working class who still work have this advantage whereas the unemployed, he claims, lose this sense of belonging:

> You are working class, you get payment. But you take care of your family. You'd work in a factory like Vauxhall [which is located in Ellesmere Port, near Liverpool]. And so you went and had that working-class experience with others. You're not doing a very skilled job but you brought home money and looked after your family. But if you never make it, if you're never part of this community then you'd go and get money from the government. And you were 'on the dole' as we used to say, you know, so in a sense you lose the working-class hero status. You're also thought of as lazy or drinking or someone who takes drugs—a loser really. (. . .) You lose that privilege to look down on the upper classes, you know, as a working-class hero, you lose the ability to say that the government doesn't give a fuck about you. You lose the working-class hero privilege once you're on the dole. So you are not a part of that community.

For many interviewees, a sense of community meant feeling oneself to be at the heart of the city, whereas lack of it implied inequality. Moti (61) has been living in Tel Aviv for over forty years. He expressed this very eloquently:

> Let me explain it to you, that alienation here, this is the most alienated place there is. Every neighbour to himself. If he does not die and stink you will never know that he is dead. It is not like it used to be, that people would knock on your door, say hello. This is not a cliché. People would sit at my home, laughing. You would see shining eyes (. . .) Now we are like wolves to each other.

'But isn't it what is so good about the city', we ask him, 'that people can avoid others?'

'Yes,' he says, 'but Tel Aviv took it to the extreme. (. . .) Consider Jerusalem, there is solidarity, there is care. Not only among religious people for religious reasons.'