

Conclusions and Next Steps

Our project, we have explained, is to come to an understanding of what it is that makes a city a city of equals; a place that appeals to those who consider themselves egalitarians. Combining our own theoretical reflection, reading of the literature, and interviews, we developed an initial central suggestion that a city of equals gives each city-zen a secure sense of place. We then broke this idea down into four critical core values. As explained in Chapter 5, the core values are: non-market access to goods and services; a sense of a meaningful life; diversity and social mixing; and non-deferential inclusion.

The obvious next question is that now we have this theory, what can be done with it? What use could be made of it, and what needs to be done to make it fit for that purpose? It would be understandable to assume that the general idea is to be able to use the theory to judge whether or not any city can be regarded as a city of equals, and to rank cities against each other. But it may also be clear that this isn't quite right, for we have not attempted to set out an ideal of a city of equals and so the judgement that, say, one city has achieved a score of 90 per cent against an ideal whereas another has achieved only 55 per cent, would not be how we envisage using the theory. Furthermore, there is something almost distasteful and contrary to the idea of the egalitarian spirit, as we understand it, to sit in judgement and rank cities as to how much they live up to an ideal. It is like having a ranking of individuals for their modesty. It may be possible, but it rather misses the point of equality, and in any case such rankings carry little conviction. For example, there are annual rankings of 'the world's most liveable city' in which Melbourne, Auckland, Vancouver, Geneva, and Vienna have triumphed in recent years. The headlines these rankings generate can be very useful to get publicity for the organization sponsoring the ranking, and, perhaps, for marketing purposes for the top-listed cities, but few really believe that the ranking settles any important question. Various rankings for cities have been attempted, the purpose of which is not always very clear. Giffinger and Haindlmaier (2010) complain that often public attention of city rankings is mainly concentrated simply on the ranks themselves totally neglecting its meaning as an instrument for strategic planning. Whether they rank cities according to their

power (financial, economic, political influence) or comfort (walkability, sustainability, resilience, smartness, beauty, etc.) (Tan et al. 2012) and whether they view cities from outside (e.g. tourists, business people) or inside (e.g. residents, the elderly) these rankings often do not gather data in a scientific manner or use it to any purpose.

But at the same time, it would be very disappointing if we were to stop at this point. We have set out a broad account of a city of equals, with four core values, each of which can be dissected into further themes. To refuse to go any further raises the question of why we have decided to come even this far, especially as we are especially concerned with policy questions. One possible response to the question of why stop at this point draws on a distinction we made in Chapter 1 between questions of definition and questions of measurement. We could simply rest content with the claim that we are only interested in questions of definition and will leave questions of measurement to others. But there are several defects with this answer, the most important of which may well be that it simply isn't true. We are also interested in questions of measurement, and although we cannot settle all such questions here, we owe to ourselves and any readers still with us at this point, to say more about measurement.

And it is clear that many will have some strong intuitions about critically important factors, some of which we may judge to be much more important than others, and some of these factors are not mere measures of inequality but constitute inequalities in their own right. A viciously racist city, for example, will be very far from a city of equals, however well it does in other respects. And, we might say the same thing about a city that makes limited provision for residents with disabilities, or one that fails to offer acceptable means of transport other than the private car, or has any number of other failings. For this reason, it might be tempting to regard different factors as setting threshold conditions for a city of equals, rather than components that feed into a system of measurement. However, even to introduce this discussion is to get somewhat ahead of ourselves. First of all, we do not even yet have an account of the factors under each core value that we wish to focus on, and still less a way of measuring them. These will be minimal requirements before we can operationalize the theory and discuss how the different factors could be weighted or aggregated.

But before deciding what to measure, first we should return the question of what purpose an index is intended to serve. The reason to raise this question, as we argued in *Disadvantage* (2007), is that there is no way of knowing whether an index is fit for purpose until you know its purpose. For some purposes a very simple index will suffice, in others a much more complex one

is needed. Of course, once an index is constructed it is possible to put it to unforeseen purposes, but in this case, we want first to be sure what we want before going further. We see two main possibilities; one, the most obvious, which we have already mentioned, is to provide a ranking of the degree to which cities can be regarded as cities of equals; the other is to provide a tool by which a city can monitor its progress (or lack thereof) in the direction of equality, which does not in itself licence comparisons.

Although the general ranking scale seems bold and ambitious, we have already raised a general reservation against it: the apparent inappropriateness of ranking cities for how equal they are. But others may not have such reservations and will wish to push this possibility further. There is no *a priori* reason why this shouldn't be attempted, but we see at least three problems with the idea that any such index could produce meaningful results.

The first is simply that in international comparisons of cities there is likely to be too much 'noise' in the data, in the sense that the factors under a city's control may often be dominated by national factors. Although in Chapter 1 we argued that cities have considerable power, they nevertheless operate in a context of the national law and national policies, most notably income tax, and the methods by which cities are allowed to raise their own finance. If being higher on the ranking means that the city is more just and its policies are more ethical then there is something unfair if a city that struggles to remain egalitarian in a libertarian state with gross inequality is ranked below a city that is more egalitarian but in a rather egalitarian state. Suppose, for instance, that we do compare cities around the world, and find that in state A, a libertarian and inegalitarian state, there is a city AA that gets a score 0.6, whereas in state B, a social democratic and rather egalitarian state, there is a city BB, which is slightly more egalitarian than AA and gets 0.65. Which city deserves to be named a city of equals? BB that gets a higher score, or AA, that against all odds and within a libertarian legal system gets 0.6? In theoretical terms, what we claim here is that at the end of the day, comparing cities from different states as if the states were not part of the game should not in itself enable us to praise one mayor or local government and condemn the other. At the same time when cities promote many egalitarian policies when the state is conservative and inegalitarian, this is very impressive. One such case is the city of Vienna, which during the Covid19 pandemic issued very egalitarian policies, including generous financial help to small businesses, despite heavy pressure from the central government that opposed the city's policies.

Still, one might argue that the index is not about being fair to cities and mayors but simply to record facts about which city can be regarded more of a city of equals, and hence if a city is equal because of national policy rather

than local policy that should make no difference to its ranking. So really this objection amounts to a caveat or warning: if there is an international ranking of cities, performance on that ranking should not be wholly attributed to the consequences of local policy.

A second difficulty may be more important. In seeking an index appropriate for international comparisons, we may be forced to very generic measures that lack nuance. For example, one thing that may have struck the reader is that at several points we have written approvingly of cities that encourage walking and cycling, and give preference to bicycles over other forms of travel. Typically, such cities have an egalitarian character, and it would be tempting to include some measure of walking and cycling in a city equality index. Yet the possibilities for walking and cycling are highly context dependent. Most obviously, the size and geography, such as the flatness or hilliness of terrain, or the mildness of the climate, makes walking and cycling more realistic in some cities rather than others. In some cities, especially in the developing world, people are forced to walk long distances daily simply because of the absence of public transport, but this looks like a way of ignoring the interests of the poor, rather than an enlightened policy. And we should also not forget the importance of social norms. In some cities, with short blocks and a norm of not crossing the road unless one has a green signal to cross, walking even a relatively short distance can be very irritating and time-consuming, whereas in others where such lights are treated as advisory rather than mandatory for pedestrians, while strictly observed by cars, walking across town is much more congenial, provided that the car traffic is not too heavy.

These examples may seem rather trivial, but the problem generalizes. The form of the problem is that any measure has an 'other things being equal' assumption, but when it comes to real life and policy recommendations other things are rarely equal, and we need a more holistic approach than one which a simple index can provide. For example, consider housing affordability. It may seem promising to look at median rents of properties of a certain size or character and compare them to the median net incomes of the lowest quartile of households, for example. But if in one city there is universal health care and in another people have to buy their own insurance policies and/or pay out of pocket then disposable income will be rather different. Of course empirical economists are used to these type of adjustments, but this is only one factor. In some cities it is very common for people to live alone, or even, effectively, to have a household spread over two properties (especially on second marriage) whereas in others for cultural reasons, multiple generations occupy the same housing unit. For another example, some cities such as Toronto or

Miami are extensively multicultural with a very high proportion of residents born outside the country, whereas for cities such as Madrid the proportion, though significant, is considerably smaller. What equality means in such varied circumstances could be rather different, and a generic measure may well have biases.

Once again it may be said that with enough ingenuity these problems can be overcome, but we then come to a different type of issue, one of values. In so far as different cities have their own character it may be that people in different cities simply value things in different ways. For example, street noise in one city may be regarded as a form of pollution, whereas in another it is taken as perfectly normal and barely noticed. A general scale can tell us how a city performs on various indices, but much more work would be needed to convert those indices into an account of what they mean for equality in each individual city.

In one way, though, in the case of our own research we should say the concern about a wide variation in values between different cities looks at first more of a theoretical problem than a practical one, as it was not our experience in the interviews. On the contrary, we were quite surprised how the themes that we have discussed in this book were mentioned in all ten cities and six countries. And yet, there are two points to be made. The first, is that we should recognize the limitations of our study, and admit that because our research is the first to be conducted in that manner, more research has to be done, and it remains to be seen, whether, after such research is repeated in additional cities from all continents, the city dwellers in these cities confirm the themes that we believe are the most relevant to thinking about equality in the city. We take some comfort in the fact that Amartya Sen makes an analogous argument when he writes about which capabilities and functionings should be considered most critically important, suggesting a democratic decision in each country (Sen 1999).

The second point is that even if all themes are shared universally, what we suspect will be different is the relative weight of each of them, such as whether more weight should be given to access to clinics or to playgrounds for children, or to pubs. One could hypothesize that a significant gap in the average age of the city's population could imply different values and different answers to this question. So, our point is that differences at least in the weighting of the core values might be disrespected if we were to recommend a single index.

Thirdly, we would be particularly concerned that an international index would be vulnerable to attempts to game the system; an application of 'Goodhart's law' (Goodhart 1975). Measures would be turned into targets, and

policymakers will take steps to improve their performance on the scale, which might not reflect actual underlying performance. To take a crude example, if the scale measures the number of bus journeys, a cynical mayor might be tempted to game the system by coming up with a new way of designating what counts as a journey so that their city rises up the scale but with no one's life improving. This, of course, is a general problem for an issue of measurement, and attempted solutions are possible: auditing changes; having many measures; or making the components of the index highly meaningful and therefore impossible to game. But in the end, is it really worth putting this level of endeavour and resource into constructing, maintaining, and policing an index to make it resistant to gaming if its only point is to rank cities with no further consequences beyond the ranking itself?

Rather, then, the main use we envisage for any such index is not so much to compare cities, but so that a city can understand its own trajectory, looking back over the months and years, and to consider what it needs to do in order to come closer to a city of equals. And just as our core idea is that a city of equals is one that offers each city-zen a secure sense of place, it is also important that the city-zens 'own' any such index as reflecting what they value in the city. This yields two further methodological refinements. First, the index could be customized to each city, at least at the level of detail, if the city wishes to do so, and second the city-zens themselves should be part of that process of customization, greatly involved in deciding what to measure and what to ignore. Having said that, this does not mean we have to start again, as we have made what we regard as significant progress in drawing out the elements that will structure the construction of any such index. It will be broken down into four areas, reflecting our four core values: non-market access to goods; a sense of a meaningful life; diversity and social mixing; and non-deferential inclusion. Beyond this we can break the core values down into themes, which we will do over the next sections, but which specific themes are to be included and how much weight should be given to each of them is, broadly, a matter for each city to decide for itself, although we will offer examples for consideration where appropriate.

Before we get to the discussion of the themes, we should first discuss the types of data that could be used to populate the index. In an ideal world, with limitless time and resources, it would be best to start with a list of factors under each theme, decide on how to measure them, and then commission studies to carry out such measurements. Of course this is unrealistic, and, most likely, the index will have to rely on existing data-sets for the most part. We would like to propose a pragmatic exercise in first finding out what relevant material is available for a given city, and then working out

an accommodation between the factors and measures, probably in a modest consultative exercise. Any theory proposed on the basis of this analysis should be scrutinized by the academic community and city dwellers; if the theory is accepted, perhaps after some modification, then it is only if vitally important information is missing that it would be worth considering commissioning new studies, or amending existing forms of data collection, if resources are available. In what follows we will largely, however, disregard this complication, as we will generally be discussing factor measures at a level of abstraction above particular issues of data collection.

A second question is whether we should be looking at 'objective' measurable facts, such as average rents, and the frequency of walking in the city, or 'subjective' factors about how people feel about their experience or the services offered in terms of satisfaction. But the question is partially answered by the previous discussions. First, it will depend on what data is available, and second, on what emerges from the city-specific consultative exercise. But our initial assumption is that both types of data are relevant and important. Below we illustrate this point with the example of how to measure inclusivity and how we need both subjective and objective data to really capture the notion of how inclusive a city is.

Similar comments apply to a third question, concerning whether we should be measuring the provision of services, or their use. For example, should we count the number of public swimming pools in a location, or how often they are used, or, indeed, how many different people will use them in a time period? This relates to a question of how liberal a city wants to be. To rely on Sen again, his argument is that when we think of equality what ultimately matters is people's functionings, but liberals should not measure the functionings: they should not measure whether people do come and read at the library, but rather whether they have the relevant capability: in this case the freedom to read. The policy question will become whether there are well-stocked libraries available to them and no laws or overt social practices that stand in their way. And yet, this is more complicated, especially as social practices can be subtle. To use the example we have just given, if we only count how many swimming pools the city has, rather than whether people do use them, or who uses them, we might overlook the fact that in this city there are obstacles to the use of the swimming pool. Consider the example of city regulations against the use of burkini swimming suits that we raised in Chapter 5. Religious Muslim women in a city that regulates against the use of burkinis might, in some sense, have good access to the swimming pool, but they in fact cannot use them. So once more, what to measure will depend on what data is available, and what the city-consultation prioritizes, but again, on the face of

it, there is no *a priori* reason to exclude any data source, although we have to be mindful not to complicate the exercise without enriching it by including too much data.

And finally, before getting into the details, there is one more methodological question we have been skirting around that we now need to face head on. We have used the idea of ‘a city of equals’ which is, for us at least, an inspiring phrase. But as we have said we do not intend to offer a model of a city of equals, or utopian blueprint, even though we have sometimes used phrases such as ‘moving closer to a city of equals.’ There are various reasons for our reticence. One, as should be apparent, is that we do wish to encourage the academic community and city-zens to re-examine our theory and modify it wherever necessary. For another, as in previous work (Wolff and de-Shalit 2007) we take our task to be to expose and help address inequalities, rather than provide yet another contested ideal of equality, which may or may not have connection with social policy. Discussing inequality in the absence of an articulated theory of equality, on the face of it may seem problematic, even incoherent. There are deep questions here. But those questions are for another occasion and we have discussed them elsewhere (see Wolff 2015). For practical purposes most people will agree that a society displays a highly problematic degree of inequality if, for example, schools in wealthy areas have twice the funding per pupil than schools in poorer areas. And most who agree with this claim do not have a developed theory of what funding formula or school access policy would treat every child as an equal, and may also accept that this is a question with no easy answer, for example whether funds should or should not be allocated for remedial purposes, and if so on how much and on what basis? It seems a matter of common experience to have a strong sense in particular cases that something is wrong, unequal, or unfair, and a sense for what could improve the situation, without necessarily having a view of what would be morally optimal. As Michael Walzer (1994) argues it is also interesting to note that a clear idea that something is morally wrong, unfair, or unjust, is empirically speaking often universally shared, and such a claim made in one country can be easily understood by others in other countries; whereas when we come to what is fairness, or what is just, people start raising different ideas. Accordingly, we will focus on areas where it seems manifest that there is at least potential for troubling inequalities, and where, by policy change, those inequalities can be reduced, even when there is no agreed, privileged, account of an ideal.

With these observations and caveats in place, we are now in a position to explore generating factors from the themes, and considering what sorts of measurements may be available.

6.1. Core Value 1: Non-market Access to the City's Facilities

As explained in the previous section, we feel that ultimately each city will need to decide for itself, in detailed consultation with a wide range of representative city-zens, what should be in its own index. But on the basis of our research we also feel we are in a position to make a number of recommendations about the themes they should at least take into consideration in their deliberations. That said we do not think our work is definitive and we would be delighted to hear of possibilities we have overlooked. In what follows, therefore, what we say in relation to the themes should be taken in the spirit of a non-exhaustive checklist. We would be surprised if the themes we discuss were ignored entirely, even though we accept that in some cases they may ultimately be rejected as inappropriate or too marginal for a particular city. How the factors are defined precisely, how they are measured, and how much weight they are given, will be deliberative decisions for each city.

The first theme of non-market access to the city's facilities is potentially very comprehensive and wide ranging. Broadly speaking each city would want to come up with an account of the facilities that are, or should be, available in the city, what use is being made of them, and what may explain different patterns of use, and whether any difference in use is a legitimate expression of different (group) preferences, or whether there are financial, logistical, or social barriers to their use. For example, do children from poorer families ignore tennis courts because they lack money for equipment or for court hire, or is it simply that they find football or basketball more fun? And is that because they prefer one sort of physical challenge to another, or because they want to be with their friends, who play football or basketball because they don't think of tennis as a sport for 'people like me'?

But before we get into questions of patterns of use, we need to have an account of the type of facilities that we believe should be made available to all, even if, in practice, different levels of service may be available to those with more money. Facilities that come first to mind, and have been mentioned in previous chapters, include food shops, markets, pharmacies, and health clinics, for both physical and mental health. Also important are schools, including those for children with special needs, as well as colleges of further education, leisure services such as museums, cinemas, pubs, cafes, parks, playgrounds, swimming pools, tennis courts, and football grounds; and public amenities, from public toilets to libraries, and access to the beach or other waterfront, such as a lake or river, where there is one, as there is in most major cities. Also important is the availability of subsidized or free services,

concerts, libraries, museums, children's clubs, and evening classes. Facilities for day care are very important, and also, as introduced by our interviews, night care too for children whose parents or other carers work nights, though we suspect most cities would currently fail badly on this measure.

Transport, of course, is vital for access to facilities, as well as for work, and should be assessed for how frequent, varied, safe, comfortable, accessible, and affordable it is. We also would include cycling (including publicly owned bicycles) and walking, with the caveat noted above that it is more appropriate in some cities than others. Hence it is likely to require detailed investigation in each city to devise an appropriate set of measures around transport. We must not forget the urban environment. How frequent and efficient is garbage collection? Are the streets kept clean? What about noise, especially at night? Are trees planted throughout the city to give shade in the summer?

However, the factor that probably weighed heaviest on the minds of our interviewees was housing. Interestingly education was mentioned less often, but this may be because there is less of a sense that it is in crisis in big cities at the present time. But, education, as well as health care and transport, will, alongside housing, be of great significance in any index. For housing we would expect issues such as rents, availability, criteria, and length of waiting lists for subsidized housing or council housing to be at the top of the agenda for most cities. But we should also mention that when there is council housing, the aesthetics both of the accommodation and its environment need to be assessed. It is often the case that cities offer council housing located near sources of air or water pollution, and which is designed to meet a basic standard of accommodation without luxury or ornament. Amsterdam's experience with the neighbourhood of Bijlmermeer is telling. In 1975 and following the independence of Suriname, it was decided that the neighbourhood would house the mass migration from Suriname. But unfortunately, their integration did not go well, and the neighbourhood deteriorated in terms of crime, poverty, alcoholism, and so on. Following a comprehensive new plan, including tearing down many buildings, renovating and building others, and in particular moving the city's main football stadium to Bijlmermeer (the Johan Cruyff ArenA), the neighbourhood became a much more attractive location, and it now hosts more than fifty thousand inhabitants from more than a hundred ethnic groups. And as for schools, assuming most are already free, we would expect that issues such as quality of education, location, and typical length of commute will all be important. For medical services, the range available, the distance to clinics, length of waiting lists and continuity of care are all likely to be important. And as we have mentioned, convenience of visiting times cannot be ignored. Recall we are interested not

just in whether these facilities are present in the city, but whether everyone is able to make use of them, whatever their level of household income, and the time pressures of their jobs and caring responsibilities.

6.2. Core Value 2: A Sense of a Meaningful Life

Many of the components of a meaningful life will depend on access to the facilities of the city, and indeed this is why access for all is so important. But, as discussed in Chapter 5, there are also other components that are much less tangible which are highly fateful for people's lives. We reported that a pattern emerging from the interviews and other studies is that many urban residents nevertheless hanker for a type of communal village life in their pocket of the city, where dog walkers chat to each other, and parents and children picnic together in the local park on a sunny afternoon, but with easy access both to the vibrancy of the city centre and the calm of places with the feel of the countryside, and to feel welcome and at home in all these disparate places. Any city would do well to incorporate measures that both create the objective conditions for community, and people's subjective sense of it.

We've also already raised the question of how the need for a sense of meaningful urban life can be translated to policy. We suggested that the role of the city is to provide the basis for people together to develop the activities and relationships that give shape to both the neighbourhood and to individual life, such as giving licences to restaurants and bars and encouraging independent small businesses, to keeping the streets safe and secure, and usable by people with different physical and psychological needs, to providing community centres, night classes, good transport into the late evening, and libraries, including cultural displays, as well as larger cultural festivals. Indeed, the spirit of a passage from Anthony Crosland's *The Future of Socialism* is almost as fresh today as it was in 1956, although it doesn't explicitly mention the importance of multiculturalism:

We need not only higher exports and old-age pensions, but more open-air cafés, brighter and gayer streets at night, later closing-hours for public houses, more local repertory theatres, better and more hospitable hoteliers and restaurateurs, brighter and cleaner eating-houses, more riverside cafés, more pleasure-gardens on the Battersea model, more murals and pictures in public places, better designs for furniture and pottery and women's clothes, statues in the centre of new housing-estates, better-designed street-lamps and telephone kiosks, and so on *ad infinitum*.

(Crosland 2006 [1956], 402–3).

The ‘*ad infinitum*’ for us would include opportunities to volunteer within the community, free courses on local urban history, newcomer clubs, street signs in different languages to cater for communities of immigrants and to show respect, and joining the local community garden, a shared space where residents of the neighbourhood can together maintain a garden space where they grow vegetables, flowers, and sometimes picnic together. Also important will be opportunities to take part in formal and informal political activities, including opportunities to be involved in Participatory Budgeting, which we looked at in some detail in Chapter 5. Some of these items can be measured objectively, but it also seems that the theme of a sense of a meaningful life would benefit from surveys of individual experience. We would expect all of these factors to be incorporated into a city’s index.

6.3. Core Value 3: Diversity and Social Mixing

The idea of diversity ranges over a number of differences between people: race, religion, ethnicity, language, gender, sexual orientation, disability, age, and perhaps others too. The first task is simply to record the range and numbers; some contemporary cities claim to be home to more than a hundred languages. While this, naturally, can present difficulties in communication, we largely see it as a component part of a city of equals that welcomes people of all backgrounds and types, although it should be noted that cities which tend to be overlooked by immigrants because they are not affluent or because the state makes migration to it difficult, might have few languages and still be very egalitarian. So the number of languages spoken is a relevant parameter for the city’s equality only if the city is a popular destination among immigrants. Again, because we believe that the main point of measuring the city’s level of equality is to compare itself to previous years, we think that if a city learns that all of a sudden, the number of languages spoken in its territory has dropped, then there might be something wrong going on. It could be, for example, that a group or several groups of people felt unwanted and left.

Also, as noted in previous chapters we believe a city of equals is a ‘city of many flavours’, with access to lively and diverse shops, restaurants, bars, and entertainments, the presence of a variety of types of people on the street and the feeling the city is inclusive with respect to gender, age, and race and so on. A city, though, could have wide diversity, statistically speaking, but homogeneity in each neighbourhood and hence provide little in the way of social mixing. Thus, the key issue is not so much the presence of diversity but how it is manifested.

Extreme residential segregation appears to cut against the promotion of social mixing, and, as we have noted, some theorists such as Elizabeth Anderson have argued for integration. But as indicated we hesitate to follow Anderson in all particulars here and accept there can be legitimate reasons for people (especially from minoritized groups) voluntarily to choose to live with people they identify with, rather than among strangers, even if doing so would improve economic and educational opportunities, which, in any case, is not always the case. Furthermore, living side by side with others does not in itself constitute social mixing, and there are many cases in which different groups live parallel lives in the same neighbourhood, largely ignoring the existence of the other group.

Accordingly, we are sympathetic to Iris Marion Young's account of when residential segregation is more or less acceptable, or, as we would put it, compatible with the idea of a city of equals, which we discussed in Chapter 3. To summarize, the aspects to take into account, and these could, if appropriate, be incorporated into a city's index, are:

1. Is segregation the result of deliberate discrimination in housing?
2. Is knowledge of where minoritized people live common knowledge in the city and are those areas avoided and stigmatized?
3. Do members of the majority move out of these areas?
4. Is business investment lower in these areas?
5. Are these areas generally less well provided for in terms of facilities and services?
6. Is the standard of living lower in these areas?

The more a clear yes can be given to these answers, the more problematic the situation. Conversely, we would also encourage cities to pay attention to the prevalence of privileged enclaves, and especially gated communities—fortified enclaves as they have been called—or entrance-controlled shopping areas, and also to monitor the rate and consequences of gentrification.

Finally, it is worth returning to the vexed issue of income inequality. On the one hand inequality is very often measured in terms of income inequality, but on the other we are sympathetic to the argument that if a city shows less income inequality than the country in which it is located, or at least the region, then it is likely to be homogenous and exclusive, rather than inclusive. For this reason, we have suggested that a city of equals may well show more income inequality than its region, as its open nature makes less-privileged people feel welcome, or at least more able to improve their fortunes there (Alster 2022). Accordingly, while there is reason to monitor statistics

about income in the city, the main material factors that affect whether a city is a city of equals is not income inequality in the city in itself, but the types of lives available to people on lower incomes. This is something that is especially picked up in the first theme—non-market access to services and facilities—but in fact runs through all four themes of our analysis.

6.4. Core Value 4: Non-deferential Inclusion

As we have explained, the idea behind this core value is that city-zens should regard themselves as equal members with others, in which, for example, any benefits they receive from the city are considered theirs by right, not privileges arbitrarily granted and easily withdrawn, and people are not required to scrape or grovel before gate-keepers, or expend excess time or effort, to get what they are entitled to. We have suggested that inclusion in this sense means that newcomers and previously marginalized people are open-heartedly included in the job market, cultural events, social initiatives, local politics, social networks, local NGOs, and so on, irrespective of gender, race, sexual orientation, disability, or any other characteristic that previously has led to discrimination or disadvantage. Statistics can give part, though not the whole, of this picture, which, we suggest, needs to be supplemented with carefully worded surveys, or even better, interviews about people's expectations and experience for themselves and others.

In this respect the semi-metaphor of 'eye contact', discussed in Chapter 4 can be put to use, both literally—is the city designed so that people can meet each other as members of communities of equals?—and metaphorically. In this latter sense we are especially interested in patterns of asymmetrical respect: do you find yourself needing to show respect to others who show no respect to you (or, perhaps even more problematically, vice versa).

Inclusion can be a quantitative concept, such as the numbers or percentages of the newcomers or the previously marginalized and excluded who are now taking part in planning, deliberation, politics, social activities, cultural activities, or whatever parameter we can think of. (And this can be measured either subjectively, that is to say, by people's reports, or objectively, by comparing statistics and so on). But we are equally interested in inclusion as a qualitative concept, and in particular the quality of relationships. This again can be found by interviewing people and asking them about their feelings; or by asking what are the expectations of newcomers and the hosting community members from each other? What do they think should happen? And for yourself, do you feel comfortable in your own skin, able to move freely

from part to part of the city? How are you treated? Have you suffered racism, sexual harassment, or homophobia, for example?

6.5. Conclusion

This has been a relatively small book on large topic. We have tried first to motivate interest in the rather neglected question of how equality should be understood at the level of the city, rather than a nation or a state, or, indeed over the globe as a whole. In answering the question for ourselves we used a method of triangulation, combining our own reflections with our reading of the literature, and, most importantly, an extensive set of interviews, conducted over ten cities in six countries. Our contribution is to suggest that in a city of equals everyone has a secure sense of place, which consists of four core-values: non-market access to services and facilities; a sense of a meaningful life; diversity and social mixing; and non-deferential inclusion. While making a number of suggestions about how to understand each of these core values and the various themes they refer to, and how much weight should be given to each theme, we also suggest that a specific index has to be devised for each city, to reflect both its own special circumstances, and the interests and values of its city-zens, who should be consulted in the construction of the index for their city. The purpose of the index is not to rank cities in an equality index, but for a city to provide an audit of itself, and to set goals and monitor progress. We do not, however, consider that we have produced the last word on any of the matters we have introduced and discussed, but hope that this topic will attract the interest of other political philosophers, scholars of urban studies, urban planners, and empirical social scientists, to sustain but perhaps modify and improve our own work.