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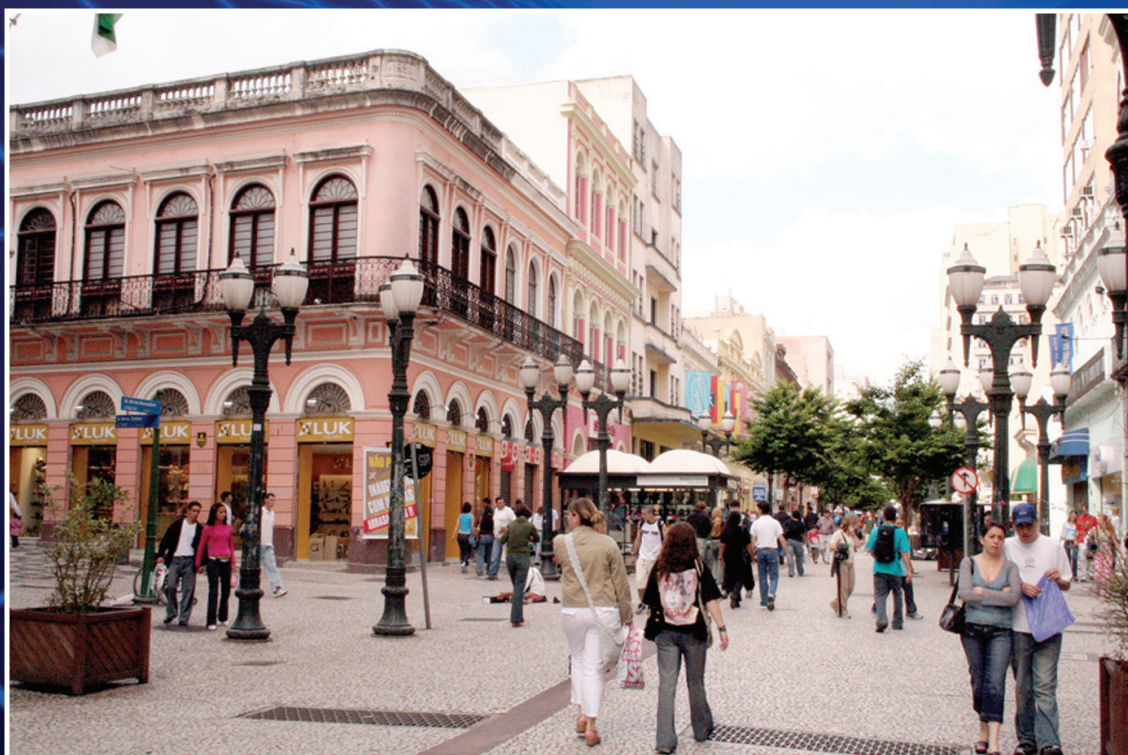
TOWARDS INCLUSIVE CITIES

- **Urbanisation – Lessons from the UK and Brazil**
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WHO CREATES THE CITY? HOW THE "LONG LIVE SOUTHBANK" CAMPAIGN CHAMPIONED INCLUSIVE URBAN CREATIVITY

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Since the turn of the millennium, urban and regional studies has been focused on the increasing neoliberalisation of cities (e.g. Brenner and Theodore, 2005, Robinson, 2011), a process that manifests itself in the world's cities becoming more privatised, commercialised and securitised. Moreover, many urban governance structures are now using the mantra of 'creativity' to develop specific urban locales and neighbourhoods within this broader ideology of neoliberalism (Peck, 2005). Theories such as the creative class and the creative city have appeared in many urban policy frameworks internationally, mobilised on the promise that enhanced 'creativity' will translate into enhanced economic competetiveness and productivity (see Florida, 2002). Whilst the evidence supporting this promise is scant, there is little doubt that for cities where 'creativity' features prominently within urban policy agendas, gentrification, securitization, and privatisation have continued apace. Given that via neoliberalism, urban development becomes the purview of corporate entities, physical urban space is becoming more heavily protected and its 'publicness' eroded (Amin, 2015); in other words, being able to 'create' the city and to be creative within it, is becoming less and less *inclusive*. The creation of urban space that is considered 'alternative' (or not in-keeping with prevailing commercialised versions of public space), are often swiftly and strictly marginalised or even criminalised. This alternative creation of urban space and different urban experiences is conducted by subcultural activities, such as skateboarding, parkour, graffiti and other collective forms of artistic interventionism (Mould, 2015); but also by more direct political activism such as protests, squats, sit-ins and rallies. Such activities are sometimes resisting their own increased marginalisation, while at other times, are undertaken for more artistic and creative purposes. However, the prevailing forces of neoliberalised urban development may look to appropriate and co-opt these subcultural, marginal and activist activities to 'enliven' urban space. Yet in so doing, they further reduce people's inclusion in the creation of urban space, and expand the ability of the few to do so. Therefore, the question is raised, who really is included in this urban creativity rhetoric?

There are numerous examples from all around the world of people and groups resisting this neoliberalised and exclusionary process of urban development, some more successful than others. However, we can look at the recent events around skateboarding and the South Bank in London for an example of how people have been able to maintain a semblance of inclusive creativity in an increased climate of neoliberalised urban development. In March 2013, the South Bank Centre announced as part of its development plans, that it was to turn the undercroft area, an area that has been used by skateboarders since the 1960's, into retail units. The history of the undercroft is one very much about subversive creativity in that the skaters reused the space as a skate spot, despite the strategies of the South Bank Centre to marginalise and criminalise them (Mould, 2015). Skateboarding therefore is a creative subculture because it takes urban space that is designed for one (commercialised) purpose, and imbues it with new meanings, new ways of behaving, new (sub)cultures. Due to their strong attachment to the undercroft, the skateboarding community rallied together to form the "Long Live South Bank" campaign, which undertook a range of activities to actively resist these plans. Some of these activities were formal, such as delivering the largest planning petition in UK history, writing to MPs, collecting petition signatures. Other activities were more creative; art was produced in the form of photography, videos, blogs, exhibitions, books and sculpture; and even some clandestine activity such as protesting at closed planning meetings, undercover filming and other subversive activist procedures. So the subversive creativity of the skateboarders includes the reuse of the urban space, the more artistic creativity of producing critical art forms, but also the more political creativity of activism.

However, all of these practices of the campaign were very much about saving the undercroft from being lost; it was a desire to not be excluded from the on-going creation of urban space. In the course of the campaign, the skateboarders created institutions (i.e. the "Long Live South Bank" campaign) that began to produce codified procedures, branding and media narratives. Such 'institutionalisation' itself was resisted, but realised to be an important and necessary step to challenge their displacement. However, the South Bank Centre also began to engage in more activist politics themselves. They campaigned against the perceived normalised identities of the skateboarding culture (i.e. criticising them for being largely white,

The undercroft space at the South Bank Centre, London (Source: Author's photo, March 2014)

middle-class and able-bodied), and pro-duced art works that championed their own reasons as to why they wanted to recapture the undercroft space. So far from being a clear-cut case of resisting the dominant forces of hegemonic urban development, the 'battle for the under-croft' represents how such binaries begin to breakdown, and new 'cross-border' assemblages are created that create new forms of creativity that are resistive, but also arguably complicit in advancing the 'Creative City' agenda.

The 'battle for the undercroft' came to a conclusion in September 2014 when a joint statement by the South Bank Centre and the Long Live South Bank campaign was released saying that the undercroft would be spared from any future devel-opment. Long Live South Bank now campaigns for the rights of skateboard-ers across the UK, and is extending its campaign with a view to restoring the undercroft to its original specifications. In addition, the South Bank Centre has also utilised skateboarders in its planning processes, and begun to articulate the community, cultural and creative benefits of having a thriving skateboarding com-munity on its site. As such, the 'success' of alternative forms of creativity was important, but also fleeting.

The campaign table of LLSB which was in situ everyday (Source: Author's photo, March 2014)

The broader rhetoric of 'creativity' that is marbled through the pervasive neoliberalised urban landscape is con-stantly changing, adapting and reshaping to include other forms of activities. The skateboarders in London have shown that, albeit fleetingly, this process can be resisted. In so doing however, they have highlighted more permanently that having the right to create the city around you is not, and should not, be the pur-view of corporatized and neoliberalised activities. Being creative in the city needs to be as inclusive as possible; and exam-ples of successful campaigns should be championed as places where a different kind of creative city is possible.

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BIG DATA, WELL-BEING AND INCLUSIVE CITIES: SOME REFLECTIONS FROM THE UK AND BRAZIL

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One of the major impacts of the global economic crisis is the way it has deep-ened inequalities in the world. Cities have once again been identified by politicians and policymakers as drivers of economic growth. However, GDP-based development or the dominant narrative based on economic growth are no longer the only indicators used to measure the progress and success of cities. Happiness and well-being are two alternative measures of success that governments are using increasingly to justify certain policy agendas. Rather than treating cit-ies as 'growth machines', these alternative measures allow us to conceive of cities as 'platforms' where citizens can achieve their social, personal and economic aspirations. Within this discussion, 'big data' has been held up as an asset that can be used by analysts and policymakers to better understand well-being and happi-ness within urban populations. Within this short introduction, we aim to dem-onstrate the progressive role of big data for the UK and Brazilian governments and the relationship between big data and well-being and happiness research in these two countries.

In the UK, there has been an increas-ing interest in the concept of big data recently. The UK Government is com-mitted to making the most of big data; what the government sees as a 'UK success story'[i]. In this context, big data has been used to refer to "…both large volumes of data with high levels of complexity and the analytical methods applied to them which require more advanced techniques and technologies in order to derive meaningful infor-mation and insights in real time (HM Government, 2014, p.2)". A UK Science and Technology Committee Report published in 2016 stated that 58,000 jobs could be created and big data research can contribute £216bn to the UK economy by the end of 2020[ii]. Research Councils in the UK, including the ESRC and the EPSRC, have actively encouraged academics to explore the potential of big data for economic, social and environ-mental purposes. Big data research has become one part of the academic syllabus
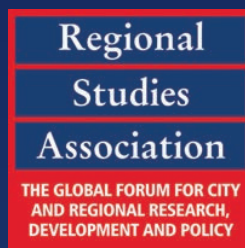
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THE VOICE OF THE MEMBERSHIP

This issue of *Regions* includes a *Regional Survey* from our Guest Editor, Stephen Hincks, (University of Manchester, UK) which draws together a series of articles on the topic of 'inclusive urbanisation'. The special issue emerged from a workshop entitled '*Urban Dialogues: Creating inclusive urban spaces in uncertain global times*' which was held in May 2016 at the Federal University of Minas Gerais, Brazil and funded through the Newton Fund Researcher Links via the British Council, UK and Fundação de Amparo à Pesquisa do Estado de Minas Gerais (FAPEMIG), Brazil.

The contributions cover a range of subject areas including: Extended urbanisation in Brazil (Castriota and Monte-Mór); Opportunities and challenges associated with the use of big data to promote health and well-being in the UK and Brazil (Alberto and Ersoy); Sub-cultures and alternative use of urban space in the UK (Mould); Social justice and the governance of urban space in the UK and Brazil (Russel) and; The implication of public-private partnerships for inclusive urban development in Brazil (Rufino).

Our *In Depth* article written by Yannis Psycharis and Panayotis Panntazis (Panteoin University of Social and Political Sciences, Greece) is an analysis of income and inequality changes in Greece that have resulted from the economic crisis there. The Association News section includes a report on the results of the RSA Members' Survey.