

RSA

21st century enlightenment

Journal Issue 3 2013



The power of cities

Jennifer Bradley and **Bruce Katz** ask whether Europe will follow the US in seeing metropolitan centres driving national economies

Xuefei Ren contrasts Chinese and Indian urbanisation

Simon Williams argues that sleep is a vital political concern

Case study: Plan Zheroes

Plan Zheroes is a Catalyst-funded project started by RSA Fellows Maria Ana Neves and Chris Wilkie. It is a citizen-led initiative to inspire food businesses to give their surplus food to those who need it, so it will never go to waste.

Rather than businesses throwing away and paying councils (sometimes by the tonne) to take good food to waste, their online map makes it simple to find a charity nearby and organise to drop off surplus food to a local soup-kitchen, community group or food redistribution programme. Over 300 businesses have signed up so far at www.planzheroes.org

Maria Ana was chosen by the RSA Social Entrepreneurs Network to be one of 9 "spotlighted" social enterprises for 2012.



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“WAVES OF ECONOMIC CHANGE HAVE PUT CITIES AND METROS AT THE FOREFRONT”

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“CITIES HAVE LEARNED THE LESSON OF THE CRASH”



MATTHEW TAYLOR

The answer to getting the right kind of economic growth may lie more in your town hall than Whitehall

Given both the weak fundamentals of the British economy and the role being played in the recovery by a mini housing boom seemingly engineered by the government, it is easy to conclude that the debate about new economic models, which was precipitated by the 2008 crash, has proved to be insignificant. There are multiple imbalances in the economy – geographical, industrial and social – but the only one taken seriously by the coalition is the one it perceives between the respective sizes of the public and private sectors. Ministers speak positively of industrial strategy and the government is happy to invest in what it predicts will be winning sectors, but the scale of intervention is still small. Indeed, the most significant form of industrial intervention may turn out to be a series of steps to give cities more economic freedom.

The government deserves credit for having generated – through the establishment of local enterprise partnerships (LEPs) and various national funding pots – the emergence of bottom-up movement towards city–region collaboration. Greater Manchester’s combined authority of 10 urban councils is the pioneer, but plans are advanced for city regions around Leeds, Liverpool, Sheffield and even in the traditionally parochial north-east.

The perspective of these city regions is both more inclusive and strategic. Yes, they want growth but it should be growth for the long term, which generates jobs and can raise living standards across the locality. As Bruce Katz and Jennifer Bradley from the Brookings Institute argue in this journal, cities have learned the lesson of the crash. Evidence suggests that investment in activity that leads to exports from cities has greater benign spill-over effects than activities that either circulate money round the local economy or – as in the case of spending in national or international retail chains – remove money from the economy.

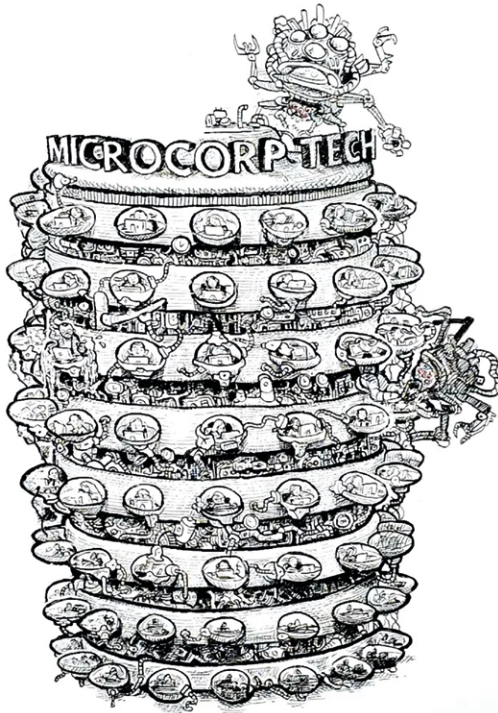
Criticising government policy in one paragraph and praising it in another is not simply a sign of my inconsistency. It reflects a strange dualism. While at national level the economic debate

feels polarised, predictable and short-termist – and while certain ministers continue ritually to trash local authorities – key parts of the coalition are being much more pragmatic as predominantly Labour councils develop ambitious local economic strategies. Similarly, while pronouncements from lobby groups imply national business interests are squarely behind the Conservatives, at the city region level government-appointed LEPs, Labour councils and the private sector are pursuing economic revival together.

There have been many unsuccessful attempts to create effective regional and sub-regional economic governance in England, which remains just about the most centralised system in the developed world. However, my sense is that this time may be different. There are many reasons for this, including the role of key figures such as Lord Heseltine and ‘core city’ leaders like Manchester’s Sir Richard Lees. When I interviewed Hezza recently, he was at pains to argue that the modest steps taken towards economic devolution are only the beginning of what could be a fundamental shift. But the biggest driver is not political will but simply that, when it comes to the two biggest challenges we face – sustainable and inclusive economic growth and affordable public services – the city region is much more likely than the nation state to be the place where integrated and imaginative solutions can emerge.

In this context, the RSA’s 2020 Public Services team is launching the City Growth Commission, an independent enquiry into how best to enable cities to drive economic growth and face future economic and fiscal challenges. The commission will both develop a strategy for supporting city-led growth and propose specific and practical mechanisms to make this a reality. Chaired by Jim O’Neill, exiting chairman of Goldman Sachs Asset Management, the commission will be supported by the Core Cities group of local authorities, the Mayor of London and London councils, among other partners.

We may be at the beginning of a quiet and long-overdue devolution revolution in economic and wider policymaking. But given that neither Ed Balls nor George Osborne will win plaudits in their parties by talking up nationally sponsored, locally designed public–private corporatism, don’t expect local pragmatism to be echoed in national debate any time soon. ■



ANIMATE

FLEXIBLE FUTURE

A new RSA Animate video looks at how rapid changes in technology have affected the world of work. Dave Coplin, chief envisioning officer at Microsoft UK, argues that, too often, technology imprisons rather than empowers workers.

In the past few years, there has been a fundamental shift in the way we use technology. People are connecting and embracing it in diverse ways, whether communicating with friends over Skype or on Facebook, streaming movies and music, and sharing photos. This is increasingly happening on the move as trends in mobile technology, the cloud, big data and social media have become a part of many people's everyday lives. For many, this means we no longer need to be in a certain place for work, to access a computer and get on the network.

Coplin argues that organisations need to harness the power of these technologies to create a much more flexible approach to both the workplace and the work we do. He believes that employers need to embrace collaboration and flexible working in building a more agile and creative working environment. Currently, he argues, we are too reliant on email and people are often too busy being busy to think creatively.

In the RSA Animate, Coplin argues that open-plan offices have led to problems, with staff feeling like managers on the outside of the pen are constantly watching what is on their screens. To make the most of developing technologies and deliver a more flexible workforce, it will be essential to increase levels of trust between employers and staff, and employees and their peers.

— Watch the latest RSA Animate video at www.thersa.org/events/rsaaanimate – the video has already had more than 60,000 views and is based on a recent lecture by Dave Coplin at the RSA, sponsored by Microsoft.

CAMPAIGN

TRANSPARENCY AND PENSIONS

A five-year RSA campaign to reduce hidden costs levied on British pensions gave a cautious welcome to Office of Fair Trading (OFT) recommendations on the issue.

A study undertaken as part of the RSA's Tomorrow's Investor project found that many pension charges were opaque, customers were misled and some charges were very high. The research, *Seeing Through the British Pension System*, was published in summer 2012, in advance of the OFT inquiry, which began work in January this year.

The OFT report recommends that charges should be investigated, governance structures changed, and that consultation takes place on providing better information to the public. It does not, however, recommend a cap on charges or define what information the industry should provide.

"This is a big step forward," said David Pitt-Watson, who leads the RSA's Tomorrow's Investor project. "But are we there yet? Absolutely not. A well-governed pensions industry with clear information is a necessary condition for effective markets.

"In Denmark and Holland, such systems are there as a matter of course and it is disappointing that UK companies that operate in those countries seem unable to replicate best practice in Britain."

The RSA survey found that purchasers of personal pensions are routinely misled about the level of hidden costs and services. Audit and custodial costs are often charged separately and further hidden costs, including taxes, stock lending fees and broking commissions are not being declared.



DEVELOPMENT

AFRICAN DIASPORA NETWORK

The RSA has invited leaders from the UK's African diaspora to form a powerful new network aimed at supporting sustainable development in the continent. Working alongside Comic Relief and Unbound Philosophy, the RSA hopes to use this network to tackle persistent levels of poverty and unemployment among their communities in both the UK and Africa.

The Diaspora ChangeMakers project will ask participating leaders to identify and develop a venture – either a business, social enterprise or project – that addresses a particular cause or issue they are passionate about.

“Across the UK, we know there are hundreds of people from the African diaspora working hard to improve the lives of others in their communities,” said Gaia Marcus, senior researcher at the RSA. “Too often, these people go unnoticed and their talents untapped.

“The Diaspora ChangeMakers project is our attempt to better harness their passion, energy and ideas. Whether it is a Ghanaian interested in tackling youth unemployment, or someone with a Kenyan background seeking to widen people's access to healthcare, the support we provide will take them one step closer to achieving the change they want to see in the world.”

Arnold Sarfo-Kantaka started his business, Mi Firi Ghana, to sell patriotic t-shirts to the Ghanaian diaspora. The company has grown into a multi-platform social enterprise with a charity spin-off called the WAM Campaign, which encourages young people in the UK to volunteer with children in Ghana.

It is people like Arnold who the project is targeting. The leadership programme will build on individuals' knowledge and skills and add to the already extensive levels of aid remitted by the UK diaspora. According to the World Bank, the size of remittances – money sent by a foreign worker to his or her home country – flowing from the UK reached \$23bn in 2012, making the UK's diaspora the fourth-biggest sender of remittances in the world.

■ *Fellows who wish to take part in DiasporaChangeMakers, or want to nominate someone else, should visit www.thersa.org/diaspora*

CITIES

CITIZEN POWER

An RSA project has helped city leaders in Peterborough become more enterprising, collaborative and focused on problem solving. Citizen Power Peterborough – a partnership between the RSA, Peterborough City Council and Arts Council England – was formed to help local communities become more civically active, more resilient and better able to solve problems such as drug dependence and anti-social behaviour.

An assessment of its successes and failures found that the project has provided many people with a sense of pride in Peterborough and helped them feel like they could make a difference to their local communities. An Innovation Forum, for example, continues to foster a city-wide leadership ethos and inspire innovative working practice.

Over the lifespan of the £1.25m, three-year project, the RSA engaged with more than 1,500 local people and hundreds of businesses, charities, schools and civic organisations. The Peterborough Curriculum, introduced in five schools, helped increase levels of student literacy and engagement with the local area. The Drug Recovery Project left a strong legacy, with service users now involved in the development of treatment programmes and improved local services.

The assessment report identified lessons from the project that could be applied elsewhere. It concluded that one of the biggest challenges was developing the right mechanisms to connect people to activity that would help address the civic goals they identified. Project organisers also found it difficult to give public officials the incentives, space, expectations and support to be creative, responsive and entrepreneurial.

The experience of Citizen Power Peterborough provides important insights into the challenges of developing citizen power by combining the efforts and investment of a range of organisations.

■ *Download the report at www.thersaorg/action-research-centre*



ENTREPRENEURSHIP

BOOSTING YOUNG BUSINESS

The RSA and the Royal Bank of Scotland (RBS) have put forward a Manifesto for Young Enterprise that will act as a call to action for businesses, support organisations and wider society to do more to help young people start successful businesses.

“Economic growth is picking up pace, unemployment levels are falling and society as a whole is becoming more confident about the future,” said Julian Thompson, director of enterprise at the RSA. “While conditions remain tough, there has not been a better time in recent years for young people to start up in business. More needs to be done to help young people realise their entrepreneurial potential as too few have an ambition to start a business and, even if they do, many cease trading shortly after starting.”

The manifesto draws on findings from the first year of the RBS Inspiring Enterprise initiative. It sets out a wide range of practical actions for how young people can be supported at different points along their entrepreneurial journeys; from exposing them to the very idea of enterprise through popular media, to building their entrepreneurial acumen at school and helping them start their own business.

NEWS IN BRIEF

DESIGN AWARDS 2013/14

Registration is open for the RSA Student Design Awards 2013/14. Potential entrants can create their account online and download the briefs to start their work.

The eight briefs challenge entrants – all design students or recent graduates – to tackle pressing social, environmental and economic issues through design thinking. Entrants have until 10 March 2014 to submit their work, before judging begins on 17 March.

Register at <http://sda.thersa.org>



CHAIR'S LECTURE

ARTISTIC VISIBILITY

In her first public lecture as RSA chairman, Vikki Heywood set out a strong defence of the arts. She warned against current rhetoric, which suggests that arts subjects are not of value to students in later life. Making the case for how the UK could begin to truly value arts and culture, Heywood said that interest in subjects such as drama, music and art was waning and that changes being made to the national curriculum has not been thought through properly.

In her speech, given to an audience at the RSA's Great Room on 9 October, she argued that in response to these challenges, artists needed to increase their visibility in society by engaging more with local communities.

“We need to shed considerably more daylight on the role [artists] play,” she said. “And I would suggest that we are as much to blame as anyone for the fact that we are not ‘seen!’

“[Artists] are not on the boards of businesses, retail or banks, we are not governors of schools, sitting on planning committees, local enterprise partnerships or regional planning committees. We do not stand as councillors, MPs or become the secretary of state for the arts.”

Heywood called for the introduction of a new double-award GCSE in the arts, which will combine cultural knowledge with practical elements across at least two art forms, an idea that the RSA is now testing.

Listen to the lecture at www.thersa.org/events

PREVIEW



ENSURING AN ACTIVE FUTURE

How are children – the future of the planet – likely to interact with the environment in the future, given socio-economic trends towards urbanisation, consumerisation, widening inequalities and sedentary, screen-based lifestyles? To mark the 70th anniversary of the Field Studies Council, a distinguished panel of public thinkers will discuss the emerging drivers that will most affect our physical connections with the outdoor environment. Among others, the panel will feature Children's Commissioner for England Dr Maggie Atkinson.

Where: RSA

When: Tuesday 5 November, 6.00pm



EMPOWERING EMPLOYEES

What does it mean to be a citizen of the workplace? Matthew Taylor's annual Chief Executive's Lecture will focus on good employment and how to move this from an idea with general support, but very mixed take-up, into something that is available to all employees and supported by wider society.

Where: RSA

When: Monday 11 November, 6.00pm



GRADUATE INSPIRATION

The second in our new series of RSA Commencement Addresses will be delivered by renowned poet and novelist Michael Rosen. The commencement address is a time-honoured tradition in universities and high schools across the US, whereby a leading thinker gives a speech to inspire and advise an eager class of scroll-clutching graduates about to face the world. We are delighted to be welcoming leading lights from around the world to give a uniquely RSA spin on this transatlantic institution.

Where: RSA

When: Wednesday 13 November, 1.00pm



THE STRUCTURAL CHANGE WE NEED

Influential philosopher, social theorist and politician Roberto Mangabeira Unger visits the RSA to ask where the free-market right and the social-democratic left have gone wrong. What are the fundamental economic, political and social institutions we need? And how do we go about making them?

Where: RSA

When: Wednesday 13 November, 6.00pm

Events and RSA Animate producer Abi Stephenson has selected the highlights above from a large number of public events in the RSA's programme. For full event listings and free audio and video downloads, please visit www.thersa.org/events

FOR HIGHLIGHTS OF RECENT EVENTS, SEE PAGE 49

LEADING LIGHTS

Can Europe's cities follow their US counterparts in rebuilding local economies and creating jobs?

By Jennifer Bradley and Bruce Katz

A revolution is stirring in America. Leaders in cities and metropolitan areas are doing the hard work of reshaping their economies and thereby the economy of the US as a whole. The work is not being done by elected officials alone. Rather, it is in concert with heads of companies, universities, medical campuses, metropolitan business associations, labour unions, civic organisations, environmental groups, cultural institutions and philanthropies, all working in overlapping and interlocking networks. Lacking any choice, these networks are supporting advanced manufacturing, export promotion and foreign direct investment; creating new public-private financing mechanisms for advanced transport and energy infrastructure; upgrading the education and skills of a diversifying workforce; and forging strong relationships with trading partners in mature and rising economies alike.

The basis of this revolution is that cities and metropolitan areas (metros) are the engines of economic prosperity and social transformation in the US. The country's 388 metropolitan areas are home to 84% of its population and generate 91% of national GDP. Metros are so dominant because they concentrate the innovative firms, talented workers, risk-taking entrepreneurs, and the supportive

JENNIFER BRADLEY IS A FELLOW AT THE BROOKINGS METROPOLITAN POLICY PROGRAMME. BRUCE KATZ IS A VICE PRESIDENT AT THE BROOKINGS INSTITUTION. THEY ARE THE AUTHORS OF *THE METROPOLITAN REVOLUTION* (BROOKINGS INSTITUTION)

institutions and associations that co-produce economic performance and progress. There is, in essence, no American economy. Instead, the national economy is a network of metropolitan economies.

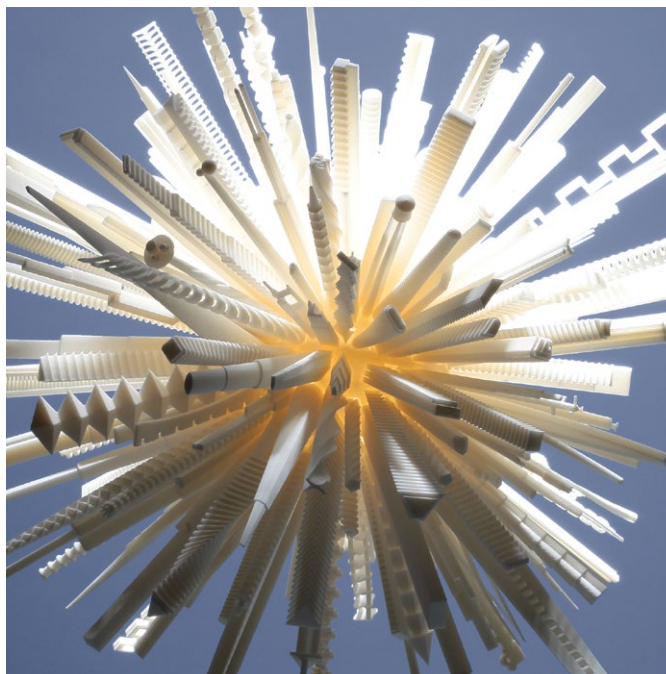
In the wake of the Great Recession, it has become clear that the US, like many nations, needs to reorient economic growth away from consumption and debt and towards production, exports, innovation and opportunities for all. It has also become clear that, after a brief and much-needed burst of federal stimulus spending, America's cities and metropolitan areas have been left largely on their own to develop and deliver this model because the US government is mired in partisan division and rancour.

The factors that drive the metropolitan revolution in the US are not confined to North America. The world's 300 largest metro economies now contain approximately 19% of the global population, but account for 48% of world GDP, according to the Brookings Global MetroMonitor 2012 report. The top 50 metropolitan areas in the EU harbour 36% of its 502 million people, but generate 43% of its \$16tn GDP.

Germany's top four metropolitan economies – Cologne-Düsseldorf, Hamburg, Frankfurt and Stuttgart – contain just over a quarter of the country's population but generate more than 30% of national GDP. Barcelona, Madrid, Valencia and Seville represent 35% of Spain's population, but nearly 40% of its GDP. The top 10 metro economies in the UK house just over half its population, but produce nearly







two-thirds of the country's output, with more than one-third coming from Greater London alone.

While capital regions tend to dominate in terms of both population and economic output in European nations, so-called second-tier cities and regions also make major, even disproportionate, contributions to national economies. Evidence suggests that European countries, such as Germany, that rely more on a greater number of metropolitan engines, rather than focusing investments almost exclusively on their capitals, saw more robust growth before the Great Recession and somewhat less of an employment jolt during and immediately after it. Of course, national-level policies in Germany, such as a commitment to manufacturing and exports, are critically important to the relatively robust performance of that nation and its metros. That said, according to a recent report by Professor Michael Parkinson at Liverpool John Moores University, "Germany's economic resilience has been helped by key state and city actors putting in place the necessary infrastructure and investment so that key urban economies flourish".

As in the US, national governments in Europe are not necessarily supportive of their metropolitan engines. Many national governments are pursuing post-recession austerity policies that sharply limit their ability to invest in metropolitan areas and increase – or even maintain – spending in areas like infrastructure, education, innovation and transport, which are vitally important to metropolitan economies.

But many (though not all) cities and metropolitan regions in Europe lack critical tools that US metros can use to grapple with those challenges, control over locally raised revenue

being chief among them. On average, 60% of local revenues are raised through property taxes, income taxes, business taxes, sales taxes, tourist taxes and user fees. Given these fiscal tools, cities are able to access the municipal bond markets and use innovative financing techniques, such as tax increment financing, to support specific economic development strategies and projects. Cities and counties in many states can seek voter support for bonds or dedicated new taxes to support specific projects. All these financing tools can raise additional funding and resources from outside government.

There is an inextricable link between fiscal devolution and the shaping of economies in cities and metropolitan areas. In New York City, for instance, mayor Michael Bloomberg has sought to diversify the city's economy from an over-reliance on financial services. The mayor's office and the New York City Economic Development Corporation created the Applied Sciences NYC initiative, which will support three graduate-level science and engineering schools in the city. The city redirected about \$130m from its infrastructure budget to support physical improvements at the campuses. In return, it will see \$2bn in investment as the campuses are built and, over the next three decades, it could realise 48,000 new jobs, 1,000 new companies and \$33bn in economic impact.

The power of city leaders in the US to ask voters for additional funds is also critical. In 2004, for example, voters in Denver, Colorado approved a 0.4% sales tax increase for a \$4.7bn (now \$6.8bn) plan to expand the regional transport system. This major regional investment has been the catalyst for significant development and private investment along the new transit

corridors. Similarly, in 2008, voters in Los Angeles approved a half-cent sales tax increase to build a major transport system in the county. Over the next 10 years, thanks to a federal loan to jump start construction, the project will create 160,000 new jobs in construction, operations and maintenance in the metro area, and reduce greenhouse gas emissions and traffic congestion.

There are, of course, drawbacks to the US system of fiscal devolution. It enhances the vulnerability of cities during recessions, as tax revenues plummet while demand for public services soars. Rather than coming to the aid of cities, federal and state governments have made cuts to key programmes for cities in order to address their own major budget issues. Cities and metropolitan areas in the US bear more responsibility for their own destiny than cities and metros in many other nations, for better or worse.

THE FIRST STIRRINGS

We see signs of the metropolitan revolution in many European cities and regions. Whether their central governments are free-spending or frugal, permissive with devolution or stingy, these cities and regions are using their existing powers creatively. This is the true spirit of the metropolitan revolution. Places are not waiting for the perfect conditions, but rather are being impelled by radically imperfect conditions and grappling with them as best they can.

Eindhoven is the fifth-largest city region in the Netherlands, but it is a European leader in innovation. With only 4% of the Netherlands' total population, it accounts for 37% of the nation's patents and 24% of its private R&D. Historically, this innovation power is largely attributable to the presence of Philips electronics, which started as a lightbulb factory in Eindhoven in 1891. Yet from the early 1980s to the early 1990s, Eindhoven suffered from major employment losses as Philips shifted production work to low-cost countries. The business cut thousands of jobs and additional job losses came from the DAF truck company. Leaders in Eindhoven and 20 surrounding municipalities responded with an aptly named Stimulus programme to create jobs and bolster industry, using some EU funds, but supplementing them with their own resources at a rate of 11.5 guilders per resident per year.

By the early 2000s, it was clear that Eindhoven needed an even more robust strategy to counter the structural changes in manufacturing that led to the off-shoring of routine manufacturing jobs. Regional actors, including representatives from business, the education sector and regional government, created the Horizon programme, a publicly funded regional strategy to emphasise the innovation strengths of the region. The Horizon programme had a small staff, a steering

committee and well-defined objectives. Its successes include the development of a marketing plan for the opening and redesign of the High Tech Campus Eindhoven around the concept of open innovation. Originally, this property was an exclusive Philips research campus, but the most inventive companies in the most inventive sectors increasingly depend on collaborative and open innovation. Philips companies, including ASML, NXP and FEI, have grown steadily at the High Tech Campus. Other successful Horizon projects included Brainport International Community, which aimed at attracting international high-tech talent to the region.

The Netherlands' government structure facilitated Eindhoven's actions. Directly elected bodies create the budgets of provinces and municipalities. These expenditures are funded by the central government and supplemented when necessary by fees and additional taxes that provinces >>

FELLOWSHIP IN ACTION

ANY EMPTIES?

Rob Greenland FRSA was inspired to do something about the problem of empty properties in Leeds after watching *The Great British Property Scandal* on Channel 4. "I'd seen empty properties around and thought it would be a good issue for Social Business Brokers, the social enterprise I run with my partner, to focus on," he said. "There are 5,000 empty homes in Leeds, mostly privately owned."

Their most successful idea so far is Empty Homes Doctor, a six-month pilot partly funded by the RSA that helps owners bring their properties back into use. "We visit the property, get to understand the issues and resolve them," Rob said. "Many landlords have had difficult tenants who left the property damaged and are either reluctant to rent it out again or have no money for refurbishments. Others have inherited a property but feel unable to rent it out for emotional reasons or because of issues with probate."

In cases where the owner has overpaid for the property, or has never been able to let it because of its condition or location, and is in negative equity, it can be hard for Empty Homes Doctor to help. But Rob has met 75 owners over the past six months and, with his support, at least five of those properties have been rented out. "Over the next six months, we are going to make sure we meet our target of working with 125 owners and bring 25 properties back into use," he said. "The next project is to take the model to other cities in West Yorkshire and, ultimately, beyond."

www.leedsemties.org.uk



and municipalities have the discretion to apply. Both types of funds – those from the central government and those raised independently – can be spent as the province or municipality sees fit, so these levels of government have a fair amount of autonomy to pursue policy objectives. Thus, Eindhoven's elected leaders had the leeway to fund Horizon and to contribute to Brainport.

Barcelona is another example of metropolitan innovation. In Spain, decentralisation of power to autonomous communities in 2006 passed responsibilities in health and education to the regional level. Regions also play a significant role in attracting foreign direct investment and funding advanced R&D. Some critics blame Spain's current woes partly on decentralisation, profligate spending and large deficits in regions like Catalonia. Now, severe austerity measures will likely result in more centralisation, due to large cuts in local and regional budgets.

Yet empowering Spanish metros to set policy in certain areas has led to transformative economy shaping. One of the most promising efforts is the Barcelona innovation district, known as 22@Barcelona. In less than a decade, 4,500 firms have moved to the area, thousands of housing units have been built, and linkages to more than 10 universities, 12 R&D technology clusters, and new spaces for start-ups have been created in a highly integrated system of innovation-driven development.

Through extensive public investment and strong, focused public planning, Barcelona has transformed a 494-acre industrial area. There were significant infusions of EU, national and provincial-level funds (more than €180m), which covered the costs of burying train tracks, building a

public tram and setting up new energy and telecommunications services. But innovative market mechanisms, such as density bonuses and exactions for infrastructure, were used to generate private revenue.

The transformation of the physical space was paired with efforts to create a new knowledge and innovation hub. After studying the city's economic and geographic advantages, leaders of 22@Barcelona decided to pursue five industry clusters: media, medical technologies, information and communications technology, energy and design. City leaders then did intensive work to lure universities, institutions, companies and organisations to the district, and also created meeting and residential spaces for specific industries, a technology centre, incubators, and residences for students and workers.

We could highlight other efforts elsewhere: Copenhagen's push to be at the vanguard of sustainable development has yielded many economic and fiscal benefits. Turin's transformation from an auto-dependent economy to a diversified one serves as the model for Detroit. Munich's network of world-class firms, advanced research institutions and high-tech centres makes it a world leader in innovation.

ENGLISH OPTIONS

England is far more centralised than Spain, Germany or the Netherlands. While there has been considerable devolution to Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland, the UK government has kept hold of the economy-shaping agenda, devolving very little to English local governments. Post-recession, the governing coalition embraced devolution, rhetorically at least, as a means

for delivering government more efficiently. Part of this stems from the success of giving London more control over regional economic policymaking in 2000, which has led to the Localism Act and the creation of local enterprise partnerships (LEPs) between business, political and civic leaders.

But while the central government is travelling in the right direction on devolution, it is moving at a very deliberate pace. Lord Heseltine's report on economic growth and devolution called for "a very significant devolution of funding from central government to local enterprise partnerships so that government investment in economic development is tailored directly to the individual challenges and opportunities of our communities, and can be augmented by private sector investment". Lord Heseltine called for £49bn over four years; the government has instead allocated £2bn a year over the next five years to a Single Local Growth Fund. Much of the money in the local growth fund has already been allocated to cities and regions and it is not at all clear how much of their share a city or region will be able to spend flexibly (ie, how much is really 'unringfenced'). At the same time, the central government plans to cut local authority budgets by 10%.

Given this tepid commitment to devolution, the challenge for England's cities and regions is to use the resources that they do have in a way that convinces central government that devolution is a good bet for economic growth. That means creating economic growth plans that not only use the existing funds wisely, but make a bold case for what LEPs and local governments intend to do. Alexandra Jones of Centre for Cities describes this as "looking beyond the single pot" and "setting the agenda for the future".

The City Deals programme, which started in 2011, indicates what networks of metropolitan leaders might do with more flexibility. As with the proposed single pot, City Deals gives cities greater control of central government funds for transportation, housing and apprenticeships. Greater Manchester's City Deal will establish a low-carbon hub and a regional strategy to achieve a 48% reduction in carbon emissions in the urban area by 2020. The central government in London agreed to support the region's applications for funding from the EU and to commit national funds from the UK Green Investment Bank to a joint green-venture fund. The fund will have the authority and flexibility to develop an investment portfolio in areas from retrofits to public buildings and houses. In October 2012, the Greater Manchester Combined Authority and the UK Department for Energy and Climate Change signed a memorandum of understanding that outlined goals and division of responsibilities between the metro and the central government for implementing the low-carbon hub and realising the region's carbon reduction goal.

The Greater Birmingham and Solihull LEP (GBSLEP) has created a careful outline for how it intends to organise itself differently and the projects it will prioritise to take advantage of the Single Local Growth Fund opportunities. These projects include infrastructure investments, projects that strengthen the

“A NATIONAL ECONOMY IS A NETWORK OF METROPOLITAN ECONOMIES”

innovation potential of sectors such as advanced industries and life sciences, and skills training that connects with employer needs. The GBSLEP plan, created in consultation with Lord Heseltine, clearly demonstrates that networks of local leaders approach problems in a significantly more integrated fashion than national leaders. For example, the central government has declared that it will not devolve innovation funding, focusing instead on transport, housing and skills. But Greater Birmingham and Solihull business and elected leaders understand that innovation is a priority for their economy and hope to use single pot funds as they can to support innovation. They support, for example, land development around the city's Advanced Manufacturing Hub and the clean-up of contaminated sites adjacent to a major hospital and Birmingham University.

English cities and regions are without a doubt at a disadvantage compared with cities and regions elsewhere when it comes to implementing the metropolitan revolution. But, given the larger trends in the economy and the importance of designing city and regional answers to city and regional challenges, they have no choice but to push on and convince the central government to devolve more. The competitiveness of English regions, and of the larger UK economy, depends on it.

It is a disruptive act for cities and metropolitan areas to assert themselves as the engines of national growth and prosperity. Nations, states and provinces are the largest single investors in cities and metropolitan areas, their infrastructure, their residents (particularly disadvantaged ones) and their leading-edge institutions. They set the regulatory rules of the game by which cities and metros (and their companies and core institutions) grow advanced industries, attract global talent and compete on the world stage. It is impossible to ignore these higher levels of government, even as local leaders condemn their inaction and unreliability or decry their prescriptive and intrusive tendencies.

The point of the metropolitan revolution is not that these so-called higher levels of government do not matter. Rather, the point is that they must act in service of their metropolitan engines. Every metropolitan leader – and every national leader – must ask how national governments, local governments and other actors should interact to co-produce the economy. Waves of economic change have put cities and metros at the forefront. Will national governments ignore these changes, or will they recognise that supporting metropolitan areas is the new imperative? ■

FOLLOW THE DRAGON?

India would be wise to learn from the economic and social mistakes of Chinese urbanisation

By Xuefei Ren

About 10 years ago, Bombay First – a business promotion organisation based in Mumbai – commissioned the consulting firm McKinsey & Company to conduct a study into making Mumbai a more competitive city and a destination for global investment. After dozens of interviews with politicians and the business community, McKinsey produced a report, Vision Mumbai, in which it offered eight recommendations to improve the city’s performance in sectors such as housing, transportation, infrastructure, finance and governance. McKinsey claimed that if these recommendations were followed, Mumbai could reinvent itself as a ‘world-class city’ by 2013. As examples of such successfully reinvented cities, the report listed Cleveland, Ohio and Shanghai, a curious combination by any standards.

Cleveland did not make an impression among Mumbai’s political and economic elites, but Shanghai – China’s primary global city – has touched a nerve with India’s top politicians. In the mid-2000s, the prime minister, Manmohan Singh, and several state ministers frequently expressed their admiration for Shanghai, especially for the city’s state-of-the-art infrastructure. Its Maglev train, with a maximum speed of 430km per hour, sleek skyscrapers, new metro lines, bridges, tunnels and international airport designed by a French architect were everything Mumbai wanted to have.

Market reform in China started in 1978, more than a decade before economic liberalisation in India. The 10-year lag has made China a natural reference against which, implicitly and explicitly, India’s political elite debate and decide their own policies. As China’s economy took off in the

1990s, Indian government officials frequently visited China and adopted a number of things they saw and liked. Several high-ranking bureaucrats advocated the idea of Special Economic Zones (SEZs) after touring Shenzhen, one of China’s first SEZs, which has grown from a fishing village of 30,000 people in 1978 to a metropolis of 10 million in 2012.

With Chinese SEZs in mind, the Indian Parliament passed the landmark Special Economic Zone Act in 2005, after years of debate. The Indian SEZs, of which there are more than 600, turned out to be a very different species from Shenzhen. Because of complex land ownership laws in India, it has proved to be extremely difficult to acquire and assemble land from individual stakeholders for SEZs. Several states, such as Kerala, have elected to end their SEZ programmes and political parties have repeatedly opposed land acquisition cases for SEZs to agitate other parties in power and to campaign for local re-elections. In short, the SEZ agenda has proved to be an area fraught with political difficulty and over-expectation.

India has watched how China manages the growth of its cities. As of 2012, 31% of India’s population lives in cities and 45 Indian cities have more than one million inhabitants. Driven by both natural growth and migration, the urban population in India has increased by 50 million since 2000, reaching a total of 377 million. China has urbanised just as aggressively as India. Half of the Chinese population lives in cities, and 129 Chinese cities have more than one million inhabitants. China added 200 million urban dwellers from 2000 to 2010, mostly from migration and by reclassifying cities, and its total urban population reached 665 million in 2012. Together, Chinese and Indian cities accommodate one-seventh of the world’s population. >>

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Although both countries are on the fast track of urbanisation, Indian cities could not be more different from their Chinese counterparts. Indian cities are under-planned, while Chinese cities are over-planned. Indian cities are diverse in culture, ethnicity, language and landscape, while Chinese cities are singular. They are dominated by one ethnicity (the Han), are largely Mandarin-speaking, and have a universal structure. Urban Indians live in very different settlements, from sidewalks and slums to apartment buildings and gated communities, while most urban Chinese – no matter how young or old, rich or poor – live in some kind of *xiaoqu*, which are gated housing estates. Indian cities are known for their lack of investment in infrastructure, while in China the spending on fixed-asset investment reached 70% of the national GDP in 2011, and infrastructure spending has passed foreign trade as the biggest contributor to national economic growth.

In spite of, or maybe because of, these huge differences, Shanghai appealed to some of India's policymakers as a model city. And, over the past few years, Indian cities have been doing three things that Shanghai and other Chinese cities did from the early 1990s: investing in infrastructure; hosting mega-events and building mega-projects; and redeveloping older inner-city neighbourhoods, mostly where the poor lived, into upscale living and shopping quarters. As one can imagine, these urban strategies have unfolded very differently to the Chinese experience, thanks to India's multi-party democracy and vibrant civil society, with more than three million NGOs. But certain parts of a few large Indian cities have begun to look a lot like Shanghai, with their generic architecture, middle class-friendly shopping malls and no traces of the poor. These urban strategies learned from China are problematic, both for the economy and for social equity.

The SEZ labour regime has increasingly shown its limitations, sometimes with deadly consequences. It pits local governments against one another to make generous offers of tax cuts, cheap land and cheap labour in order to attract capital. These government concessions have given rise to mega-factories

operating at a scale never seen before in history. The Taiwanese firm Foxconn, for example, started in Shenzhen in 1988 with only 150 employees and, in less than two decades, grew into the world's largest electronics manufacturer, employing one million people in 11 Chinese cities. In Shenzhen, its workers are housed in 33 factory-owned dorms and 120 rented dorms.

The monotonous work, long hours and harsh treatment push workers to their limits. When rush orders arrive from foreign clients, such as when Apple releases a new model of iPhone, workers have to endure 24-hour shifts to ensure supply. The factory can make 175,000 iPhones in a single 24-hour working day. From January to November 2011, 18 Foxconn employees in different factories all over China jumped from their dorm buildings and committed suicide.

FALSE TEACHING

Other Chinese lessons have to be unlearned. The first is the importance of massive investment in infrastructure. Many experts list infrastructure as the number one bottleneck preventing urban growth in India. But many fail to notice that good infrastructure is often a result, as opposed to the cause, of sustained economic development. It is true that India has underinvested in its urban infrastructure, but it will have better infrastructure with sustained economic development.

In China, many local governments have borrowed heavily from state banks and find themselves in deep debt, unable to repay hefty infrastructure loans. Yunnan province, one of the poorest regions in China, built the third-longest stretch of highway in the country in the hope of opening up its mountainous region to outside investment. But the slow economy generates little demand for traffic and the income from toll charges is minimal, leaving the builder – Yunnan Highway Ltd, a state-owned investment firm – to tell the banks it would be able to pay only the interest on their loans and not the principal.

India does not have state-owned enterprises and largely relies on the private sector for infrastructure investment. But

when private investors take over, there is always the danger of turning infrastructure projects into profit-making machines. When that happens, the right to use infrastructure – new roads, metros and bridges – will depend on the ability to pay, and, in India, this will exclude the majority of the poor.

The second lesson that has to be unlearned is that hosting mega-events and building mega-projects for these events is vital for a world-class city. Hosting mega-events is costly, but the benefits are never entirely clear. Beijing invested \$200bn in the 2008 Olympics. The city built more subway lines, paved better roads and planted more trees, but the Bird's Nest, the national stadium used throughout the 2008 Olympics and Paralympics, stands mostly empty today. Because of its huge size, very few events can fill the stadium.

Empty sports venues have become fixtures of the landscape in post-event cities. Delhi had its share of the media spotlight during the 2010 Commonwealth Games, and the organisers were probably relieved that the facilities were finished just in time and the games went without a major hitch. But it is far from clear what the event brought to the city and its people.

The last wrong lesson to learn from China is the practice of carrying out urban renewal and demolitions in the Shanghai style. In the 2000s, more than one million households in Shanghai were relocated. Most relocated residents in China today are compensated with cash only, far below market prices, and have no choice but to move to the city edge where rent is cheaper. On the urban periphery, huge new satellite towns have appeared in recent years, with the largest housing half a million people. These are mostly relocated lower middle class families who cannot afford a home in the city. But the former French and International Concessions in the centre of Shanghai have become new colonies for the transnational elites, complete with boutique hotels, upscale restaurants and Ferrari showrooms, with no trace of the poor.

Mumbai had several large-scale demolition campaigns in the mid-2000s, displacing more than 300,000 slum dwellers. But in contrast to Shanghai, Mumbai's active NGO community has helped slum residents protect their rights. Developers normally provide on-site resettlement housing to some residents, but on-site accommodation is no less problematic than the faceless resettlement housing on Shanghai's city edge. The longer-term consequences of living in such forced mixed-income arrangements have yet to be seen.

GIVING THE CITY AUTONOMY

A decade has passed since McKinsey's Vision Mumbai report. Economic growth has been slow and living conditions in Mumbai have been deteriorating for the middle class and especially for the poor. Residents still need to negotiate painstakingly with slum landlords, municipal councillors, politicians and civil engineers to gain access to water, toilets and electricity, the basic amenities that any city should provide. Following the Shanghai model, which is highly problematic and can only be realised in the unique context of one-party rule and state capitalism, will not solve Mumbai's problems.

“HOSTING MEGA-EVENTS IS COSTLY, BUT THE BENEFITS ARE NEVER ENTIRELY CLEAR”

India has learned the wrong lessons from China. Instead of advocating mega-projects, infrastructure investment and urban renewal, the key to making Indian cities better places to live is to empower municipal governments. In India's three-tier system – made up of the central, state and municipal governments – city authorities are the weakest and have no real power to make major policy decisions. State-level governments run urban affairs, but their constituency is still largely the rural population.

A good starting point would be to build human capital at the municipal level. In China, many of the best and brightest young people choose to work for city governments. The municipal planning commissions in Beijing and Shanghai are filled with graduates from the top universities in the country. In India, city jobs are shunned and municipalities are poorly staffed. There are few planning schools and large urban areas such as Mumbai and Delhi have only a handful of professional planners and architects working for the city.

India does not need Chinese-style cities on steroids, with mega-infrastructures, spectacular events and massive demolitions. If, one day, ambitious and talented Indian students begin to work for city governments – and state politicians can pass some of their power to municipalities – India will be much better prepared for its urban age. It will have much more interesting, diverse and liveable cities, which will make China envious. ■

FELLOWSHIP IN ACTION

FEET ON THE GROUND

Red Ochre is a social enterprise working to help improve the performance of individuals and organisations that create social change.

For the past three years, Red Ochre has worked extensively with social enterprises in China. “The British Council in Beijing's global Skills for Social Entrepreneurs programme supports enterprises such as the Chinese Youth Development Foundation, which builds 40 to 50 schools a year,” explained Robert Foster FRSA, Red Ochre's co-founder. “We work with them to raise awareness of social enterprise and develop business skills, such as financial and strategic planning.” Red Ochre also works with organisations facing the challenges of China's huge ageing population.

■ www.redochre.org.uk

CITY LIMITS

Thinking local is often held up as the answer to the big problems facing the world, but does this claim really carry weight?

By Thomas Hale and David Held

The painter Ambrogio Lorenzetti learned the virtues of effective governance by being born in Siena, Italy, in 1290. His city had won independence from the church and invested authority in a council held accountable, under law, to a broadening proportion of the population. The city kept the peace, enforced the law and invested in beneficent public works. At a time when most of Europe lay trapped in feudal misery, cities like Siena, Florence, Venice – and the other centres of what would become the Renaissance – flourished.

Lorenzetti was clear on the causes of this success. Inside the Palazzo Pubblico, which anchors the unparalleled geometry of Siena's central piazza, he painted a series of room-sized frescos (collectively known as *The Allegory of Good and Bad Government*) on both the promise of government and its peril. Under good government, finely dressed citizens play music and dance, harvests are rich and even the pigs are plump. Under bad government, buildings crumble, citizens lie dying in the streets and flames rise from the fields.

Today, the value of 'good governance' is as important as it was

700 years ago. But in the 21st century, the scale at which political institutions must be effective has expanded beyond cities and their surrounding fields to include countries, continents and, with globalisation, the world as a whole. What would *The Allegory of Good Government* look like today?

GLOBAL GRIDLOCK

Tragically, at the global level we have a far clearer picture of *The Allegory of Bad Government*. The world has not been able to negotiate a new global trade deal for 19 years. After more than 20 years of climate talks, we have yet to find a way to meaningfully reduce the amount of carbon pouring into the atmosphere. And just five years after the financial crisis forged enormous political will to reduce the risks created by global financial flows, regulation is increasingly balkanised and far too weak, because countries cannot agree common standards.

In short, global governance has become gridlocked. Across almost every area of policy, the multilateral institutions we rely on to solve global problems are increasingly unable to do so, even as the problems themselves grow worse.

One of the most significant responses to this governance gap at the global level is a return to local solutions: the scale at which Lorenzetti's frescos were originally imagined. Across the world, cities are taking action to confront global threats like climate change, transnational networks of terror or criminality, pandemic diseases and food security. >>

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In a globalised, urbanising world, cities are a potent force. London alone has a larger population than about half the members of the United Nations. And half the world's population lives in cities, just 600 of which account for 60% of global economic output.

Moreover, cities are teaming up across borders to cooperate where national governments and international institutions have not. C40 is a global network of mega-cities working together to tackle climate change. If they were a country, the 58 cities of C40 would fall just behind the United States in terms of GDP and just behind China and India in terms of population. Globally, cities account for 70% of carbon emissions, meaning that the power to solve this most global of issues falls under the jurisdiction of local authorities.

To gauge the significance of these changes, we must first understand the failures that have spurred them. Ironically, many of today's barriers to effective global governance stem from the success of global governance in the past. Indeed, this pattern repeats across history. Good governance leads, over time, to changes that undermine its institutional foundation. These shifts then require a new way of organising politics, a new rendering of *The Allegory of Good Government*. Consider, for example, what happened to Lorenzetti's Siena.

FROM CITIES TO NATIONS

Lorenzetti's frescos showed how cities could transform the way people lived. But the successful institutions of city-states like Siena helped set in motion a series of changes that would eventually render them obsolete.

City-states altered the medieval European economy through trade, innovation and growth. The resulting increase in capital and technology made it possible for polities to rule on larger scales. The most effective, like Venice and Florence, came to control significant territories, largely through a system of suzerainty. But on the European periphery, similar trends allowed strong leaders to build a new type of polity that fused countryside and city into what would eventually become the nation state.

This new way of organising politics proved brutally effective. Exploiting economies of scale to concentrate the resources of a large swath of territory in a single government – indeed, in a single sovereign ruler – the nation state outcompeted both multinational empires and city republics like Siena in wealth, power, innovation and culture. After 400 years of self-rule, the city of Siena lost its independence to the combined armies of Florence and Spain in 1555 and was incorporated into the Duchy of Tuscany. This polity was itself made vassal to various larger neighbours before being brought, centuries later, into Italy, a latecomer to the family of nations.

Today the nation state has been largely repurposed through representative democracy. Instead of concentrating authority in an absolute ruler, in many parts of the world it has become a vehicle for self-determination, recapturing elements of the spirit of city republics like Siena. Indeed, by facilitating political conditions in which public needs can be articulated and collective solutions applied, the modern nation state has shown how Lorenzetti's vision of good governance can extend far beyond a city-state and its surrounding fields.

“MULTILATERAL COOPERATION IS INCREASINGLY THREADBARE RELATIVE TO THE CHALLENGES IT FACES”

Just like the Renaissance city-state, the modern nation state has generated trends that pose challenges to its effectiveness. Within their boundaries, modern states possess enormous power to regulate, to levy and spend taxes, and to control the use of force. But this authority is intimately linked to states' sovereign autonomy. Within their bounds, they are unchallenged. What happens beyond boundaries is someone else's concern.

NATIONS TO COOPERATION

Or at least it used to be. Globalisation has led to growing interconnectedness among states and societies, in politics, economics and communication, among other areas. We live in a world of overlapping communities of fate, where the fortunes of countries are increasingly intertwined.

These changes have made us mutually dependent. In order to manage the economy, governments cannot merely concern themselves with domestic fiscal and monetary issues. They must find a way for their economy to thrive in a competitive global market. To provide security, it is not enough to keep the peace at home; states must concern themselves with transnational terrorist networks, the diffusion of deadly weaponry or the potential spread of diseases. And providing a healthy environment for future generations is no longer just a matter of cleaning up a country's air and waterways. Human activities anywhere on the planet now affect the climate in which every other person on the planet and their descendants must live.

Bound to territory, nation states are not well suited, individually, to managing the interdependencies created by globalisation. Nor, for that matter, were the Italian city-states. In 1348 *Yersinia pestis*, a rod-shaped bacterium, entered Siena inside fleas carried on the backs of rats and inside the clothes of the merchants who made the city wealthy. Within a matter of months more than half the city's population had died and in just a few years, a third of all Europeans – including Lorenzetti himself – were fatally struck by plague.

Effective governance within the city was of little use against this transnational threat. But unlike the city-states of Renaissance Italy, modern nation states have created a series of powerful tools to manage problems beyond the state: multilateral institutions. Organisations like the United Nations or the World Trade Organisation help governments negotiate with one another to mutually adjust their policies so that the actions of one country help other countries realise their own objectives, and vice versa.

These institutions provide the governance structures needed in a world where risks – like fleas – spill easily across borders.

They have also proven successful. The managed system of economic globalisation, begun at Bretton Woods in 1944 with the creation of the international financial institutions, allowed a multitude of actors to benefit from forming multinational companies, investing abroad and developing global production chains. These conditions, combined with the expansionary logic of capitalism and technological innovation, changed the nature of the global economy, radically increasing dependence on people and countries from every corner of the world.

To manage this growing interdependence, countries created an increasing number of international institutions. In 1909, 37 intergovernmental organisations existed; in 2011, the number of institutions and their various offshoots had grown to 7,608. This expanding web of global governance allowed for even deeper globalisation, which in turn increased interdependence and created more need for international cooperation. We call this dynamic 'self-reinforcing' interdependence.

COOPERATION TO GRIDLOCK

Today, just like city-states and nation states before them, multilateral institutions are, in their success, pushing interdependence beyond the limits of their management capacity. The need for international cooperation has never been higher. Yet the 'supply' side of the equation, institutionalised multilateral cooperation, has stalled. In areas such as nuclear proliferation, small arms sales, terrorism, failed states, global economic imbalances, financial market instability, global poverty and inequality, water deficits and climate change, multilateral cooperation is increasingly threadbare relative to the challenges it faces.

In our book *Gridlock*, written with Kevin Young, we identify four reasons for this blockage. First, the rise of new powers like India, China and Brazil means that a more diverse array of interests have to be hammered into agreement for any global deal to be made. Second, the problems themselves have grown more complex, penetrating deep into domestic policies. Third, the institutions created 70 years ago have proven difficult to change as established interests cling to outmoded decision-making rules that fail to reflect current conditions. Fourth, international institutions have often proliferated with overlapping and contradictory mandates, creating a confusing fragmentation of authority. >>

“NATION STATES ARE LIKELY TO GUARD THE POWERS THEY HAVE AMASSED”

These diverse trends do not just have a common effect – to hamper the effectiveness of multilateral cooperation – they also share a common origin. To a large extent, they are all products of the deepening of interdependence that the post-war aggregation of multilateral cooperation has allowed.

GRIDLOCK TO CITIES?

What innovation will this latest round of ‘success-induced failure’ produce in our political institutions? A teleological reading of history might suggest a further expansion of political authority into a kind of world state. Indeed, Lorenzetti’s contemporary Dante Alighieri laid out a vision for a single global political order in his *De Monarchia* and the idea has since been endorsed in various forms by communists, religious fundamentalists, liberal cosmopolitans and science fiction writers, among others.

In the long term, the flow of history may indeed progress this way. But in the short term, and certainly in our lifetimes, that possibility remains remote. Seen up close, the arc of history seems more to bend in a circle. Indeed, in many spheres it seems to be returning to Lorenzetti’s original vision of the city.

Consider, again, climate change. Cities are taking on the responsibility that far too many nation states, individually and collectively, have abdicated. A recent study by University College London’s Vanesa Castán Broto and Durham University’s Harriet Bulkeley looked at policy in 100 global cities and found 627 climate-related initiatives across them.

In the US, the contrast between national inaction and local dynamism is particularly stark. While federal actions are limited to those regulations President Obama can take without Congressional approval, cities and states accounting for almost half of US emissions have taken action on their own.

A PARTIAL SOLUTION

As significant as these trends are, they do not, in our view, amount to more than a partial solution to the dilemma of managing our increasingly interconnected world.

First, there are functional limits to what cities, as local sites of governance, are able to contribute to managing interdependence.

As global issues penetrate deeper into domestic societies, cities’ core competencies – transportation, infrastructure, policing, service delivery – are increasingly important, even necessary, for confronting them.

But they are never sufficient. Global issues remain, in many respects, beyond the reach of municipal governments. Cities may play a large role in preventing extremist networks from attacking civilians, but they cannot track these groups globally to gather the intelligence needed to prevent attacks, nor can they address the larger geopolitical issues that motivate them. And for many major global issues – such as nuclear proliferation, macroeconomic stability, financial regulation and humanitarian intervention – cities have relatively little to contribute.

Second, cities do not have the same capacity to overcome these territorial limitations through international cooperation that nation states do. City networks like C40 are superb for sharing information and, through peer pressure and moral suasion, galvanising action. This phenomenon is an important and growing power asset in world politics.

It is also limited. A recalcitrant city that does not wish to learn, led by policymakers with little care for social opprobrium, is unlikely to be moved by pleas for greater global citizenship. Countries, of course, face this problem as well. But they also possess a wider spectrum of diplomatic tools to cajole, entice or coerce their interlocutors to action. They can offer economic carrots or sticks, they can link cooperation on one issue to cooperation – or non-cooperation – on another and they can call upon military force. To note, as we have above, that these traditional tools of diplomacy are increasingly constrained is far from saying that they have lost all relevance.

Third, nation states are likely to guard, jealously, the powers and authorities they have amassed over the past several centuries. While control over the use of force is the most obvious and central, two others are particularly relevant to managing global cooperation. One is the ability to tax and spend. In most parts of the world, cities are highly dependent on national governments for resources. This is even true in relatively decentralised countries like the US, where cities’ tax revenue is about a third of the federal government’s tax income. And these resources must be spent, in the first instance, on roads, schools, trash collection and the other basic tasks of municipal government, leaving few discretionary resources for broader initiatives.

Nations will reluctantly give up their unique status in international affairs. Tellingly, cities’ engagement in global governance thus far has been complementary or subordinate to state diplomacy. C40 provides an international platform for cities to share information and ambition around issues, such as transportation and building codes, which fall safely inside their traditional remit. Counter-terrorism operations are subordinate to a hierarchical national security bureaucracy. Should cities stray beyond these confines and challenge the state’s own



policies or authorities in global politics, we can expect a backlash. Indeed, such a reaction would be a strong indicator that cities' engagement in global governance had reached a new threshold of significance. But so far there is little evidence that states feel threatened by the new city diplomacy.

Finally, there may be important areas of policy for which it may not be wise to grant cities greater authority. We often celebrate cities as hubs of globalisation and innovation. But this unique position sometimes puts them at odds with the interests of society as a whole. Consider financial regulation, for example. The lack of an effective global agreement stems in no small part from the resistance of the global financial industry, concentrated in the world's great global cities. Giving municipalities more authority over how to regulate these industries would be unlikely to generate more effective global governance.

A GROWING PATCHWORK

Today a visitor can see the passage of time in Lorenzetti's frescos. Sections have fallen away or faded, transforming *The Allegory of Good Government* into something of a patchwork. The change may have made the work a more apt metaphor for governance in the 21st century.

The shift back to cities is part of two broad trends in world politics. First, globalisation has blurred the boundary between domestic and international issues. Mayors face challenges with global dimensions and diplomats debate issues whose ramifications penetrate deep into domestic societies. Climate change is only the most obvious example.

Second, world politics has pluralised. NGOs, multinational corporations, professional organisations and ostensibly domestic government officials are now all key players in

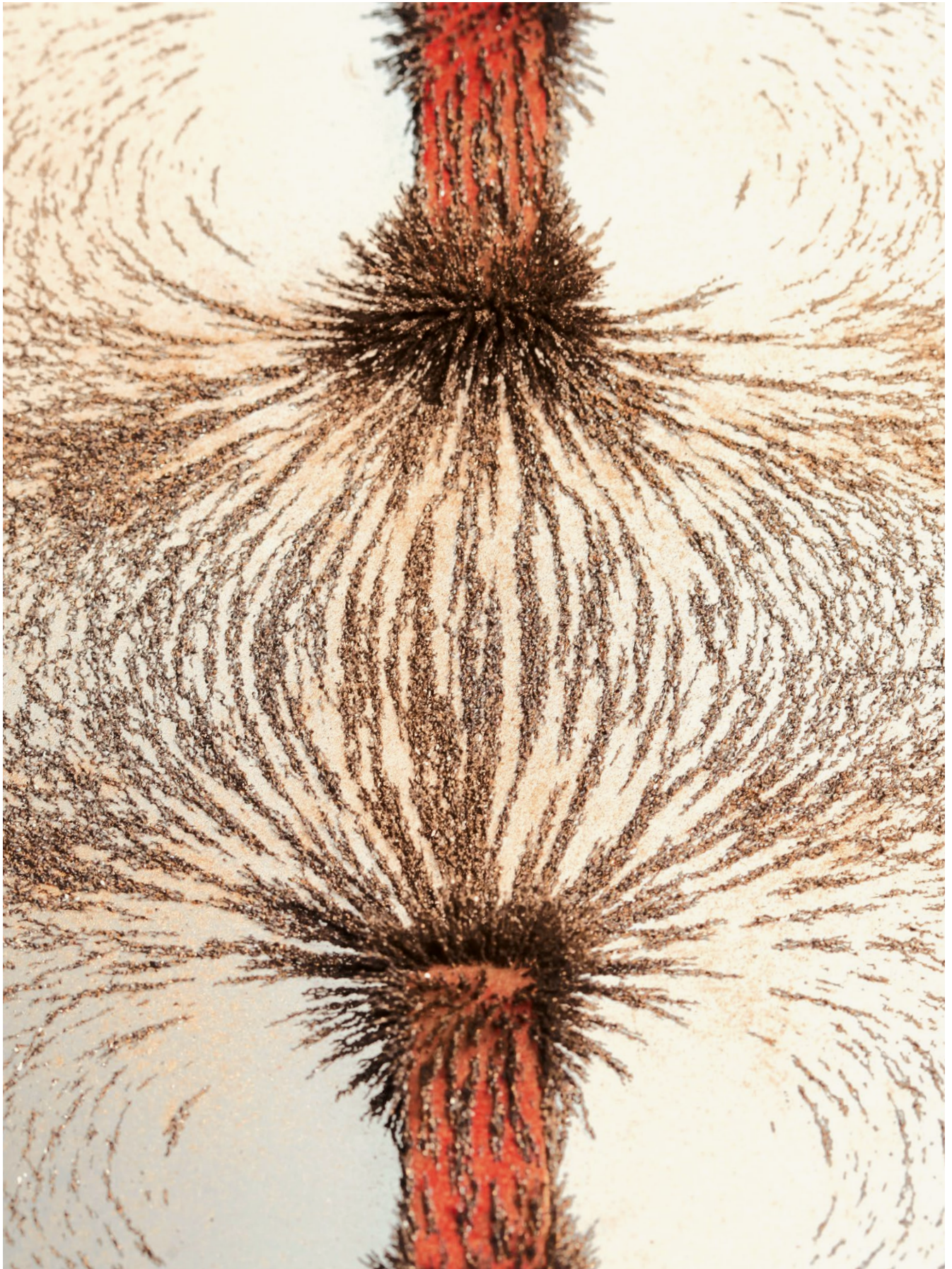
global governance. They play a direct role in governing global issues, either on their own or in partnership with countries or international organisations.

These shifts suggest that good governance in the future will not consist of any one level of authority or even, necessarily, of public institutions. Rather, they will all play a role within a patchwork ecosystem of multiple and overlapping forms of political organisation. Cities will play a crucial and growing role within this increasingly complex system.

Traditional actors in world politics should welcome these developments. Indeed, some, like the World Bank, have partnered with groups like C40 to coordinate their mitigation and carbon financing programmes.

Others could do more. UN climate negotiations, though open to a wide range of participants and observers, remain focused on negotiating emissions targets for nation states and channelling money for adaptation from rich countries to poor. With few results to show after two decades of negotiations, perhaps it is time for the multilateral process to take cities – and other actors – more seriously. Cities could be asked to pledge specific emissions reductions targets, as nation states have been asked to do. This could help inject some much-needed dynamism into moribund international negotiations, while also helping to institutionalise and diffuse local actions.

While global gridlock has rightly renewed interest in local solutions, it is important to remain clear-eyed about the natural limitations of local governance in a globalised, interdependent world, in which nation states retain enormous power. We cannot return to Lorenzetti's Siena. Instead, we need to figure out how *The Allegory of Good Government*, and cities' roles within it, should be painted today. ■



THE SOCIAL FLOW

Municipal planners must consider how residents will be affected when building and developing new urban areas

By Nicola Bacon

It is a constant source of amazement to me how successfully people in cities as dense and stressful as London routinely navigate crowded, claustrophobia-inducing situations. Think about the tube, Hoxton on a summer evening, the South Bank on New Year's Eve, Peckham's Rye Lane on a Saturday afternoon: walking through these environments requires the skill to weave between strangers and avoid collisions. Yet conflict and arguments are infrequent. Recognition of these capabilities – in projects like Michael Landy's 'Acts of Kindness', which celebrates everyday compassion and generosity on the London Underground – is rare, in London and elsewhere.

But when we consider the institutions and people who govern our cities, who decide how they should be run and shaped, this sort of empathy and deftness can be less apparent. The failure of city administrations to relate the complexity of everyday human experience to spatial planning is not news. Different examples are cited across the globe: in the UK, the mass housing of the 1960s and 1970s; the clearance of neighbourhoods in Seoul; and the building of new apartment blocks in Buenos Aires in spite of the protests of community activists: '*Basta de Demoler!*' ('Stop the Demolitions!').

The explanations offered for these failures range from poor political choices to whim and even malice. But we need to recognise how difficult it can be to get this right; that mistakes are often made despite good intentions and understanding and navigating city life is challenging. Increasing diversity, inequality and

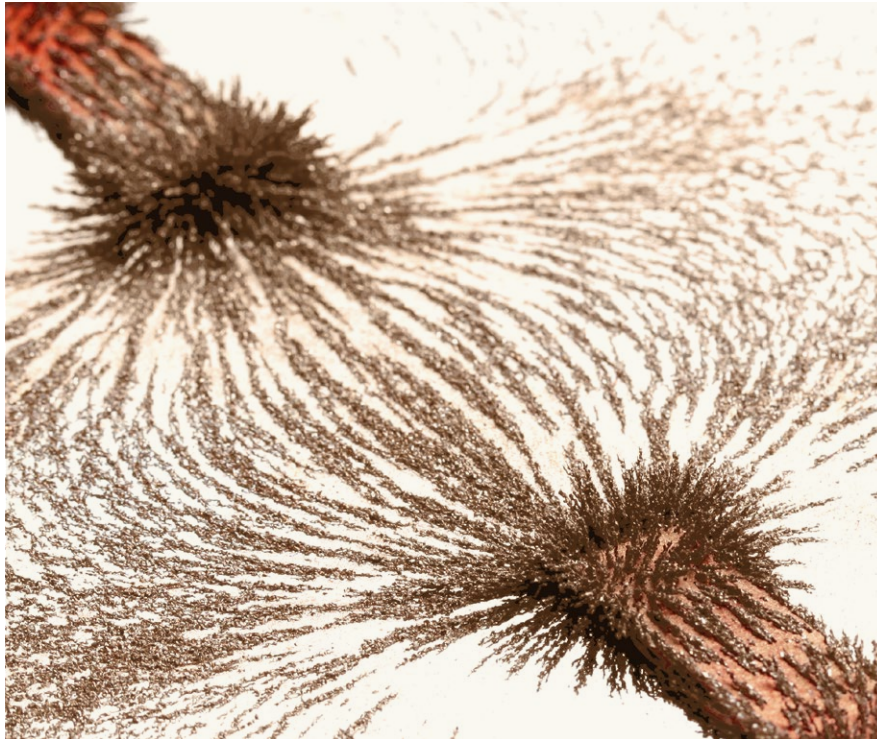
public sector austerity are making this task both harder and more important.

The social life of cities – the way that residents relate to each other and to their local neighbourhoods and communities – shapes how individuals experience urban life. People's sense of belonging, resilience and connectedness to others affects their well-being and quality of life, their capacity to act individually and collectively, and a community's level of crime, health and educational achievement.

City authorities must help people feel comfortable with others whom they think of as 'different', to share space as well as cling to the familiar. Urban residents tend to cluster with people they consider to be like themselves, spatially segregating cities by social class and background. Recently arrived migrants to a city come together in the same way as the middle classes in the suburbs. One of the tasks of living in a city is to learn to get on with difference. Institutions can ensure that all residents can access public spaces, schools, libraries and parks, and that housing and planning policy create socially mixed neighbourhoods.

Another facet of urban life that can be shaped is our sense of belonging. Our attachment to neighbourhoods is created by personal experience, but also by the events that happen there, the rhythms and rituals of a place. These can be spectacular, like Carnival in Rio de Janeiro, or linked to traditions of protest like the May Day rallies on Tyneside in the north of England. They tend to grow organically, but can be nurtured by city planning. The Mayor of Paris introduced the 'Paris Plages' – fake beaches on the river – as a way of making Paris more bearable during August for those left behind by the annual holiday exodus. They are now well loved by tourists and Parisians alike. >>

NICOLA BACON IS A FOUNDING DIRECTOR OF SOCIAL LIFE, A SOCIAL ENTERPRISE THAT WAS CREATED BY THE YOUNG FOUNDATION



But people make cities, more so than institutions. They have a way of adapting and improving how structures are used. Look at London's South Bank, where, since the 1970s, generations of skateboarders have taken over the undercroft beneath the Royal Festival Hall, turning it into a colourful concrete space that comes alive in a way that was never imagined by the original designers and planners. In Caracas, Venezuela, squatters occupied an abandoned 45-storey tower block after construction stopped following the collapse of the country's economy in 1994. Almost 20 years later, Torre David is a home and a community for hundreds of families. City administrations' instinct is often to quash this sort of unofficial change of use, but this risks losing the creativity and energy that makes cities thrive, and undermining residents' capacity to help themselves. Protests at plans to redevelop London's South Bank, and the debate about whether the skateboarders should move to another site, are ongoing.

Cities have always been complicated entities and are becoming more so, as the movement of people within nations and across the globe increases and economic pressures highlight inequality. As different groups migrate into new neighbourhoods they create their own sense of belonging. Change becomes contested and tensions emerge over who wins and who loses. My organisation, Social Life, has seen this in its work in Brixton, south London, where different generations of incomers compete to shape the space. Debate becomes polarised. Does Brixton belong to older communities (both black and white)? Or to newly arrived, more affluent residents, whose presence is exemplified by the newly regenerated market and the thriving restaurant and bar scene?

When space becomes contested it threatens people's sense of security, their homes and their lifestyles. Disagreements become inflamed. The protests in Taksim Square in Istanbul this summer were sparked by outrage at the replacement of Gezi Park with a shopping mall.

City authorities have to keep up with change at the neighbourhood level in order to do their broader strategic jobs. To stay on top of – and ideally one step ahead of – the complications of city life, they need to develop their understanding of social relationships, improve their social skills, become more sensitised and empathetic to both the vulnerabilities and the strengths of their populations, and improve their knowledge of what the options for intervention can be.

Insight needs to permeate their work, from strategic planning to data gathering. Swedish cities, for example, are becoming increasingly diverse and, in the city of Malmö in the south of the country, more than 40% of the population are first- or second-generation immigrants. Coming mainly from different Muslim backgrounds, these citizens were often attracted by Malmö's open-arms policy towards refugees. Half a century ago, only about 5% of Malmö's population was foreign-born. Accommodating diversity raises profound challenges for Swedish welfare institutions, which were developed to meet the needs of a homogeneous population whose people share values and early life experiences. Swedish data on volunteering focuses around membership of *föreningar* – the church, trade unions and welfare societies – which were the formal civil-society institutions of the 20th century. Swedish data does not count participation in less formal community associations, so

“PEOPLE HAVE A WAY OF ADAPTING AND IMPROVING HOW CITY STRUCTURES ARE USED”

fails to capture the activities of those who come from different traditions of community activism. This makes it difficult for city managers to understand community dynamics in the most diverse areas and can make institutions insensitive to both the needs, and the strengths, of the non-Swedish-born population.

City managers need to find ways of understanding the reality of people’s lives. This means asking people what they would like and what they think, but also observing what people do. There is a well-known disconnect between our aspirations and wants, and what we say we think will make us happy. The literature on happiness and well-being demonstrates that, when asked, most people say they would like a foreign holiday or new possessions to be happy, but the evidence is that what actually makes people happy is much more mundane: gardening, dancing and having friends, for example.

Family and Kinship in East London, Michael Young and Peter Willmott’s classic study of working-class life, published more than 50 years ago, documents conversations with people living in post-war Bethnal Green, documenting the rich social relationships and social capacity in a community that was being broken up and moved to new housing estates in Essex or further out of the East End. The conflict between notions of ‘progress’ in the built environment and respect for the strengths of the existing communities resurfaces in every urban development, as do the tensions between existing communities and newcomers. Young and Willmott’s work reminds us of the need to take the lived experience of people as our starting point, rather than our ideas of how we would like places to look.

In Chicago, Social Life has been working with the University of Chicago as part of that institution’s programme of action to become a ‘better neighbour’ to the South Side neighbourhoods that surround it. Social Life used ‘social design’ methods to understand how South Side communities could boost their resilience, and what role digital technologies could play in this.

Working with design exercises and ‘personas’ (fictional South Side residents), a group of community organisers, public sector officials and representatives of the private sector came up with an idea to help people feel safer. In south Chicago’s neighbourhoods, gun crime is chillingly high. Speaking to teenagers on university summer programmes, we realised the extent to which living against this extreme backdrop of violence pervades every aspect of life. Communities can only be more resilient when they feel safer, and the app we designed

together will help build ‘survival resilience’, the quality that enables people to manage difficult situations.

In countries where the state is retrenching and government money is scarce, austerity puts a new imperative on the need to work with the grain of communities and neighbourhoods. Scarce resources mean that trade-offs need to be made between different imperfect options, requiring dialogue and negotiation. The public money that used to be available to support struggling neighbourhoods and the vulnerable people who live in them, cushioning the impact of change, is now in short supply.

For urban leaders, taking the time to pay close attention to the collective social life of their cities may seem trivial compared with million-dollar property deals. It may also feel like a loss of authority, as working with the grain of communities demands compromises between the interests of those who live in and use the space now and those who plan for the future. However, the long game – designing cities that work for everyone and that help people thrive – can only be won if cities can learn to become as adept and fleet of foot, and as good at living with urban complexity, as the people who live in them. ■

FELLOWSHIP IN ACTION

A CITY TRANSFORMED

Plymouth was recently announced as one of Britain’s first social enterprise cities by Social Enterprise UK. There are about 150 social enterprises in the city, collectively employing 6,000–7,000 people and generating £500m a year.

One such enterprise is the Real Ideas Organisation (RIO), which works to create opportunities for young people through initiatives ranging from hand-crafted ramps for skateboarders to bespoke schools consultancy for headteachers. Ed Whitelaw FRSA is lead developer and consultant at RIO and has worked extensively with other social enterprises in Plymouth. A Fellows event a couple of years ago got the idea started.

“At the time we were working to develop Plymouth as a social enterprise city, the city council was bidding to become the UK City of Culture,” he said. “People could have been put off by the idea of working towards being a social enterprise city at the same time, but having the RSA brand helped us to ask the right questions and provided a political shield.”

■ www.realideas.org



BOUND FOR CHANGE

Urban areas are providing the context for a revolution in the way local services are provided

By Henry Kippin

Fidel Castro famously described a revolution as “a struggle to the death between the future and the past”. Many of us may not subscribe to his theory of change, but we should pay attention to this sharp framing of a concept that is laced through recent debates on the future of cities, government and public services.

Despite the desperate plight of Detroit, which declared itself bankrupt earlier this year, we are in the midst of a wave of global optimism about the revolutionary potential of cities. In the UK, fresh debates have opened up about the right ‘functional geography’ to pull the country out of recession and enable innovation, creativity and a more

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collaborative and bottom-up model of growth. Local enterprise partnerships, City Deals and Lord Heseltine’s high-profile growth review demonstrate both the openness of government to this debate and the beginnings of a structural response.

Yet these efforts are missing a crucial element. Public services should be central to the city growth narrative. As well as improving the balance sheet of UK plc, growth should create the conditions for people to lead independent, economically active and socially productive lives. Public services provide the structures, services and relationships that knit society together and connect people and communities to place.

FINDING A NEW MODEL

Our plan for future cities needs to include a serious debate about the right ‘functional geography’ and governance model for public services. Most government spending is currently

“PUBLIC SERVICES SHOULD BE CENTRAL TO THE CITY GROWTH NARRATIVE”

centrally administered. Huge sums of public money are spent on localities without any real awareness or control from local people. Economic growth and public spending are, at best, disassociated.

We need this to change because today’s models are socially and economically unsustainable. Recent economic modelling by the RSA and the Local Government Association indicates a £14.4bn budget shortfall by 2019/20 within local government if new ways of meeting – or managing – demand are not found. Our ambitions for future cities will be short-lived unless we find a better path.

Working at city level enables fresh thinking about how public agencies can support livelihoods, build social capacity and improve outcomes for the most marginalised communities. This ‘social investment’ strategy for a place is driving the first wave of cooperative councils (such as Lambeth and Oldham, both parts of city regions) to develop new service models in partnership with citizens, and work outside of traditional lines to make a difference to the cost and quality of living. Stoke-on-Trent, for example, is creating its own local authority power company. In several urban areas, including York, Leeds and parts of London, high-profile commissions have emphasised the need for responsible partnerships with the private sector to tackle poverty and inequality. With experts predicting a drop in living standards for low- to middle-income families between now and 2020, we need more creative thinking on how the public sector – as a service provider, local employer and convener of other sectors – can not only meet the needs of today, but do so in a way that catalyses social and economic productivity for the future.

SOCIAL GROWTH

Central government works in departmental silos, so interdependent policy agendas are treated like separate problems. Yet at a city level, they can come together more obviously and with greater accountability. In Greater Manchester, for example, a ‘whole-place community budget’ pilot is being used to foreshadow an integrated approach that sees inclusive growth, demand management and public service reform as three strands of the same narrative. This has the potential to produce savings in service delivery and welfare budgets invested in boosting the economic potential of the city. In Sunderland, a strategic partnership between the city’s manufacturing and hi-tech businesses, its council and its residents aims to build a

21st century ‘producer city’, in which community leadership and economic innovation go hand in hand.

In both these cities, there is potential for sustainable employment, social investment and public service reform (with attendant fiscal savings) to be seen as part of the same virtuous cycle. Far from being an inevitable drain on resources, public spending can be a driver of innovation and the ‘social spine’ of future competitiveness. It is up to urban authorities to make this vision a no-brainer for central government.

GROUND-UP COLLABORATION

In the language of markets, big cities offer liquidity: hundreds of thousands of potential interactions and matches between assets and opportunities. This can also be true in the face of some of the most difficult social and local problems, where building strong relationships and networks is crucial. Social enterprises, such as Turning Point and Participle, have long championed the value of community-led networks to reduce isolation, shape integrated health, social care and housing services, and hold local government commissioners to account.

Leeds Empties, a new social enterprise partnership based in the city, brokers the re-use of properties that have been empty for more than six months. And, just outside London, a new scheme called Jobs At Home is beginning to create sustainable training and employment opportunities for social tenants through the establishment of new social enterprises in partnership with housing providers. These are examples of bottom-up social innovation in which public, private and social sectors all play a part. For modern cities to be truly connected and take advantage of their population concentrations, governance and leadership structures must actively enable these collaborations.

The story of future cities is about people. It is a story about those who come to live and work in the creative hubs of our future economy. Yet it is also a story about those who depend on the public and social sectors, the people who deserve better than a future of incremental service cutbacks and endless debates over the affordability of the services that help to keep them afloat. We need to ensure that our excitement over the potential of cities is a spur to creating a different model of public services, part of a new grand bargain that compels all the sectors to contribute. Now that would be revolutionary. ■

THE CIVIC REINVENTION

New models of public ownership are helping organisations take flight and reach their full potential

By Cliff Mills and Dr Ruth Yeoman

The *Metropolitan Revolution*, whose authors write in these pages, recognises a trend in the US: a shift of power away from the federal government and states to cities and metropolitan areas. These smaller units have emerged as the vanguard of policy innovation and action, taking transformative steps to grow jobs and remake their economies for the long haul.

But another trend is emerging that represents a similar shift of power. It involves a renewal of associational activity at grassroots level, as individuals within communities recognise the need to take action and solve problems themselves. It is a response to the withdrawal by nation states from the levels of service provision that citizens had come to expect, but which are no longer economically possible; and to the failure of the market to step in because it does not see the opportunity to be sufficiently profitable.

In the face of personal adversity or the suffering of others, it is human nature to respond through collective self-help and individual philanthropic action. Self-help comprises steps taken by those who themselves lack access to goods and services, usually basic things like food, healthcare and financial security. In philanthropic action, by comparison, those who see others in need are motivated by generosity of spirit to bring them relief, using their own resources.

The self-help and philanthropic traditions are at the heart of community

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and citizen-based action, which is making a comeback. From Transition Towns to Occupy; from social enterprise to cooperatives; from football supporters' trusts to village shops and credit unions to cooperative schools, these ideas are taking hold. If we want things to be better, then we need to make them better, rather than waiting for the state or the market to do it for us.

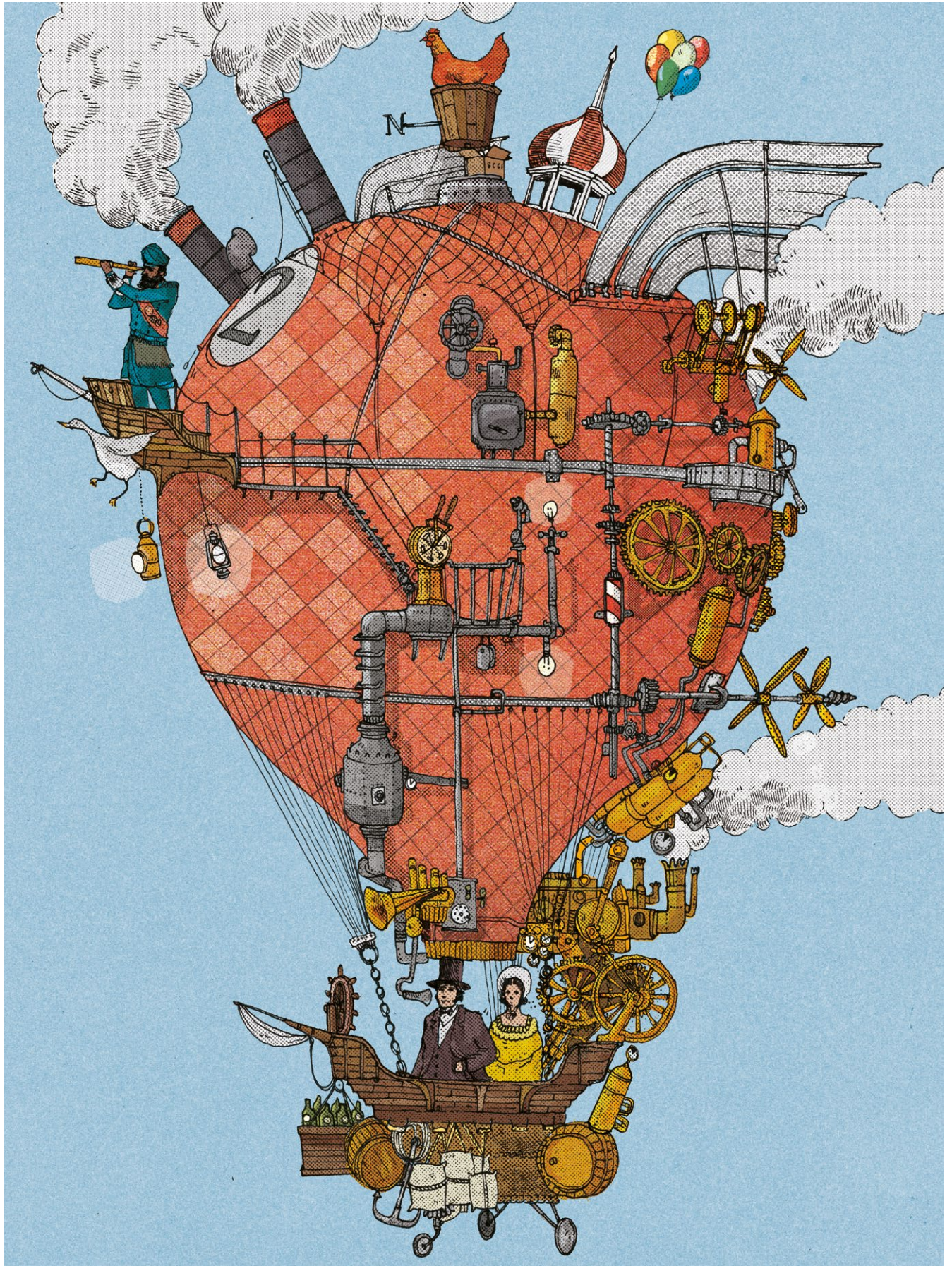
The revival of cooperative and mutual fortunes, illustrated by the coalition's policy of encouraging such organisations in public sector reform, is not just a UK trend. The United Nations declared 2012 to be the International Year of Cooperatives and, in its Blueprint for a Cooperative Decade, the International Cooperative Alliance (the global body representing a movement with one billion members worldwide) has a vision for the cooperative form of business to become the fastest-growing form of enterprise by 2020.

COLLECTIVE HISTORY

In the 19th century, citizen-based action, from both the self-help and philanthropic traditions, was a response to market failure. In the 21st century, such activity is a response to both market failure and state withdrawal, but there is something more subtle and significant going on, particularly in public services.

The traditional model of public services emerged in the post-war years as a mechanism for the state and local government to meet their newly assumed statutory responsibilities, such as providing a National Health Service and universal benefits. It is no surprise that it sought to do this in a controlled, coordinated and top-down way.





“CITIZENS ARE INVOLVED IN DECIDING HOW RESOURCES SHOULD BE SPENT”

By recent times, however, this approach had become outmoded. Ministerial direction and control of large operations no longer made sense and the political significance of better or worse results tended to distort important decision making from what was in the best interests of service users. Ultimate political control also meant that there was no real process of accountability, as regular general and local elections did little to connect those paying for services with those ultimately responsible for them.

In the late 20th century, an approach designed to provide services for all was unfavourably compared with what was perceived to be the more efficient approach to services in the private sector. This resulted in a widespread change to a customer-based approach, which treated citizens as consumers of public services. While that may have led to improvements through focusing on the experience of the service recipient, it did little if anything to enhance the ‘quality of service’ (to use the marketplace expression) in areas like health and social care. Crucially, by treating citizens accessing services as customers, it reinforced an ‘us and them’ approach, where all the responsibility is on the provider and the service user is a mere recipient.

If best use is to be made of scarce resources and the cost of services is to be reduced, it is essential that those who access services are proactively involved in their design and how they are used. If this is to happen, it is necessary to break down the binary mentality inherent in the current model, and the pigeonholing of people into certain roles.

WHAT KIND OF POWER?

When we talk about a power shift, we mean the capacity of mutuals and cooperatives to reconfigure relations based on a different concept of power, away from the power to coerce or influence. Rather, the ideal type of power embodied in mutuals and cooperatives is ‘power with’, or coactive power. Coactive power is the shared ability to work with others to produce just outcomes from which all those affected benefit. The justice of the outcome legitimates the form of the organisation capable of realising coactive power. When people share in power through democratic participation, they come to appreciate the differences between them and use those differences to incorporate the energies and capacities of everyone.

Of course, this demands a different form of leadership from that embodied in conventional organisations. How and under what terms such leadership arises depends upon ‘deliberated authority’, which, according to a recent study of the subject, “recognises that there are multiple modes of authority and

leadership is only one of them”. Co-owners authorise leaders to act on their behalf to fulfil particular roles or responsibilities, holding them to account against agreed leadership standards and behaviours. Some of these leaders will emerge from unexpected places. They could be ordinary employees with particular specialisms or community members with valuable insight into organisational challenges and member needs.

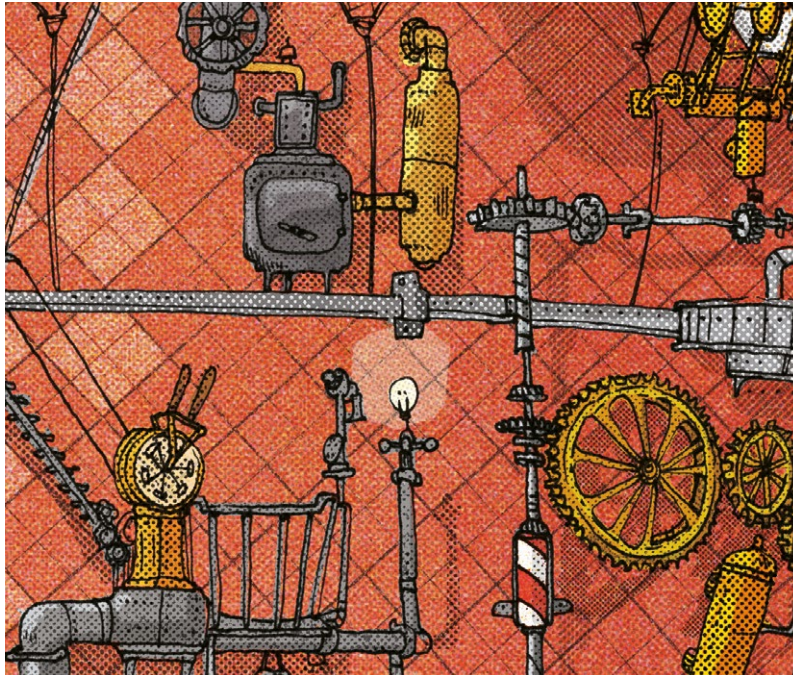
But coactive power also demands a new kind of political leadership. ‘Power with’ changes the role of elected representatives, who must draw close to their constituents, seek to understand their needs and encourage them to participate as co-owners in the design and delivery of public services. New kinds of civic skills will be required, as well as new forms of engagement and community working that build the member community and its values, sense of solidarity and civic competence. Consequently, the member community is vital to realising the mutual model and must be a key strategic focus for organisational and political leadership, without which coactive power will degrade into a competition between managerial and political elites.

The self-help organisations that survive as mutuals in the UK today are largely consumer-based. As they were started by consumers lacking access to something, their ownership and governance is largely user-based. The new mutual organisations being created today recognise that those using the service and those providing it are both crucial to the organisation, and each should have a voice and some form of representation.

THE IMPORTANCE OF INVOLVEMENT

Organisations that involve both service users and staff – and other constituencies of interest where relevant – in their ownership and governance arrangements, so the argument goes, are more likely to achieve better outcomes. Customer ownership certainly worked for the traditional mutuals. Before their demise in the second half of the 20th century, there was a building society in most towns, there were 19 million members of friendly societies, and cooperative stores had more than 30% of retail trade. The model worked because, being owned by their customers, mutuals were highly responsive to their needs and directly accountable to them. Modern mutuals build on this approach and the value of direct accountability by sharing ownership of the mutual between those using the service and those working for it, as well as other constituencies where appropriate (such as carers in NHS Foundation Trusts).

Many people ask whether there is a conflict of interest between service users and staff. There is: staff want to be paid more, and users want better and cheaper services. But that tension exists whatever the ownership and governance structure. Excluding one party from the dialogue does not make a problem go away; it is just worked out in a less open and transparent way. By involving both or all relevant parties in the dialogue, the organisation itself becomes the mechanism for providing a way of working out the best solution in the wider public interest.



Rochdale Boroughwide Housing, for example, has recently become the first mutual social housing provider, with tenants and employees as the two constituencies of its membership. Each constituency elects individuals to a representative body of 15 tenants and eight employees. The body also includes people nominated by specific external organisations, including the council. But the representative body does not run the organisation. That is the board's job. The body's role is to represent the constituencies and wider community in approving forward plans and strategy, and to monitor and hold to account those charged with carrying out those plans (the board). It does this through its power to remove non-executive directors.

This model has been regarded as sufficiently robust by the housing regulator, the registrar of mutuals, and private banks, which have agreed to lend £125m. More significantly, it proactively and directly engages tenants in the running of the organisation, doing so side-by-side with staff. At first this felt strange, but not for very long. The concepts of co-design and co-production are attractive because they enable those who know the most about the service concerned to influence how it is delivered. Clearly, tensions have to be managed and issues resolved, but this model provides a safe and legitimate place where that can happen. Most people tend to work collaboratively to seek to obtain the best outcome for all involved.

In truth, this is not surprising. Tenants know that staff will do a better job if reasonably remunerated and with decent working conditions. Staff know that tenants will be happier if they provide a good service and treat them respectfully.

Lots of members of staff are tenants themselves. Many tenants are related to, or friends or neighbours of, employees. A social housing provider needs to enter into legal relationships (a tenancy) with those who occupy its premises, and an employment contract with those it employs; and it needs to be aware of those roles to ensure the appropriate running or governance of its organisation. But life is richer and more complex than those simple labels allow, and the new mutual approach seeks to create organisations which reflect that richer tapestry, and which go with the grain of the community being served, rather than cutting across it.

So the new mutual approach starts to introduce a new approach to service design and service delivery. It seeks to engage people at grassroots level, to make it their service, which they can influence, and through those in charge are directly accountable to them. At the same time, it involves a shift in power, a shift away from the state making decisions on behalf of citizens about what is best for them towards a model where citizens themselves are proactively involved in the process of deciding how resources should be spent.

By moving towards an ownership and governance model where neither the state nor private investors call the shots, but where services continue to be owned and run for the public benefit, a new model of public ownership can emerge. Not only does power shift from the state to people in communities, but 'public ownership' becomes established in its own right as a form of ownership not by the state on behalf of the public, but by the public itself. Such a change really would be a shift of power. ■

COUNTING SLEEP

The wider effects of our restless 24-hour society make sleep a vital political concern

By Simon Williams

Sleep may seem the most personal and private, if not precious and pleasurable, of matters: time out from the everyday world and our conscious selves. But sleep is also problematised and politicised in countless ways today as a matter of public concern, if not a crisis in the making, given that many of us are supposedly not getting ‘sufficient’ sleep, whatever that might be.

Whether this is quite the problem some claim it to be – and, if so, just how novel a problem it is – is debatable. Sleep, after all, has a rich and complex history. We may well, as recent historical scholarship suggests, have lost the ‘first’ and ‘second’ or ‘segmented’ sleep pattern of pre-industrial times, prior to artificial light. Yet the quality of our sleep may generally have improved through the centuries, given overall improvements in health, housing and living standards, even if the number of hours we spend sleeping has declined. Sleeping patterns and sleeping practices are also, we should remember, culturally as well as historically variable, including so-called ‘monophasic’ (consolidated night-time sleep), ‘biphasic’ (siesta) and ‘polyphasic’ (napping) sleeping cultures around the world, both past and present.

Poor sleep nevertheless is a much-debated public matter today in a so-called 24/7 society that never seems

to rest. Our current busy lifestyles keep us from our beds and leave us tossing and turning in them once our (tired, yet wired or whirring) heads finally hit the pillow.

FEWER THAN 40 WINKS?

In 1993, the US National Commission on Sleep Disorders Research estimated that approximately 70 million Americans suffered from sleep deprivation or a sleep problem of some kind. According to leading US sleep expert William Dement, sleep deprivation has now reached epidemic proportions, with people sleeping on average 1.5 hours less per day than they would have done a century ago. A range of sleep-deprived members of society are pointed to in this regard, from sleepy drivers and sleepy doctors to sleepy pilots and sleepy parents, as well as sleepy children and teenagers.

These claims and concerns, of course, go hand in hand with the growth of sleep science and sleep medicine in recent decades, particularly in North America, where there are now more than 1,000 accredited sleep clinics. Sleep disorders come in many shapes and sizes, from insomnia to narcolepsy and obstructive sleep apnoea, restless legs syndrome and sleep paralysis to sleep walking and so-called ‘shift-work sleep disorder’: a circadian rhythm disorder apparently based on the mismatch between our age-old biological clocks and our contemporary shift-work schedules. Moreover, many of

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these sleep disorders, Dement claims, remain undiagnosed due to a lack of basic sleep-medicine training in medical schools.

As for selling us the dream of a good night's sleep, the sleep-aids market is anything but dormant, with annual sales of around \$30bn in the US alone, including a sleeping pills market worth about \$3bn a year. Although caffeine remains the drug of choice for keeping us awake – with more than 1.5 billion cups of coffee consumed worldwide every day – wakefulness-promoting drugs, such as Modafinil, are now supposedly turned to by some for 'enhancement' purposes to boost alertness and performance in the absence of sleep.

This is not just an American sleep problem, however. According to numerous sleep polls, studies and surveys, poor sleep is a widespread problem in many, if not all, advanced economies. Take the Great British Sleep Survey, for instance. As a self-selected, self-completed online survey of more than 20,000 Britons, it cannot be taken as a nationally representative picture, but it is nevertheless instructive. The average recorded sleep-quality score was just 5.1 out of 10, with women scoring lower than men, sleep scores declining with age, and 42% of respondents on sleeping pills reporting sleep problems for more than a decade.

Preliminary findings from the first wave of the new Economic and Social Research Council (ESRC)'s Understanding Society survey (a panel study of 40,000 households across the UK) are also instructive on this count. Some 12% of adults reported fewer than six hours of sleep per night, and one in 10 adults reported taking sleep medications at least three times a week. Significant variations in sleep duration and quality are also

evident, with women again more likely than men to negatively rate their sleep quality, and poorer sleep among those with no qualifications and in the 'least advantaged' occupations.

SLEEP'S CONSEQUENCES

There is a public cost to poor sleep, too, experts emphasise. It has implications for public health and safety, as well as lost productivity and performance for adults and children alike. Lack of night-time sleep has also, it is claimed, contributed to such headline-grabbing accidents as the Exxon Valdez oil spill, the Chernobyl nuclear disaster and the Selby rail crash. Drowsiness, consequently, is increasingly likened to drunkenness through discourses of risk and responsibility, if not culpability and blame.

To explain how things have come to this, many factors are pointed to, including long-standing negative attitudes towards sleep, underlying medical conditions and undiagnosed sleep disorders, artificial light and the demands and dilemmas of living in a 24/7 society. Our work cultures and schedules have changed, we practise around-the-clock lifestyles and are constantly connected or 'wired' into the digital world.

What, if anything, should be done about this situation is perhaps the most contested and contentious matter of all. For sleep advocates, much remains to be done to right these wrongs through a pro-sleep agenda. It is not just US sleep experts and related organisations such as the National Sleep Foundation that are doing the campaigning here, however. Other groups and organisations are also now joining the debate and backing the sleep agenda. Reports from the likes

“GETTING SUFFICIENT SLEEP IS A VITAL PART OF THE POLITICAL AGENDA THAT PROMOTES GENERAL WELL-BEING”

of Demos (2004), the British Association of Counselling and Psychotherapy (2005) and the Mental Health Foundation (2011) – as well as converts within the corporate and media world such as Arianna Huffington, founder of the *Huffington Post*, and Julia Kirby, an editor of *Harvard Business Review* – have raised the pro-sleep profile.

The measures that pro-sleep advocates would like to see implemented are diverse and wide-ranging. They include better medical training and healthcare provision for sleep problems and disorders and more effective education on the importance of sleep matters, both inside and outside the classroom. Later school start times, for example, could benefit sleepy teenagers (a policy that is already under way in some US states). In the workplace, policies could include an end to long-hours cultures and breakfast meetings, the design of more ‘sleep-friendly’ or ‘sleep-wise’ shift schedules and systems, and the promotion of workplace napping.

Less obvious proposals, perhaps, include better public provision of napping facilities in places such as motorway service stations, the harnessing of new technologies to help rather than hinder sleep (smartphone ‘apps for naps’, for instance, are already appearing) and further measures to reduce environmental noise and light pollution. Politicians and other public figures should lead by example here, it is argued, challenging long-standing negative attitudes and macho ‘sleep is for wimps’ attitudes.

DISPUTING SLEEP: THE CRITICS

Objections to these more pro-sleep agendas come in many shapes and sizes, from outright dismissal or devaluation of sleep matters, to disputes over the very nature and extent of the supposed problem in the first place. At most, critics may concede, sleep is a matter for doctors and sleep experts to address in the case of persistent problems or disorders. Beyond that, sleep is surely a matter of personal choice or discretion – including people’s right to reduce their sleep still further in future, perhaps through the promises and prospect of enhancement, should it prove safe to do so – not for others to start sticking their noses into. As for greater public health campaigning on the sleep front, critics point out that this may further fuel anxieties about sleep in a self-defeating fashion.

Given this continuing dismissal and devaluation of sleep matters and appeals to other more pressing priorities or worthwhile concerns, it looks unlikely that the pro-sleep agenda will gain much further ground, or influence those in power. In the current economic climate in particular, sleep is at best still seen as a luxury we cannot afford and, at worst, a further spanner in the works of economic recovery. Promoting economic growth will, in all likelihood, continue to trump calls to reduce the national sleep ‘debt’ and promote and protect our sleep.

Nevertheless, we should remember that getting sufficient sleep is a vital part of the political agenda that promotes ‘general well-being’ (GWB) as a counterpoint to simply thinking about GDP. To the extent that sleep is another socially patterned or structured dimension of inequality (with multiple links to other social and health inequalities), then measures that tackle sleep problems and promote a better or well-slept society may be justified on grounds of equity and social justice. ‘Downstream’ measures targeted at individuals can only achieve so much, from this broader viewpoint, if the deeper causes of many of our personal sleep problems today are ultimately ‘upstream’ public matters to do with the wider institutional and ideological drivers of contemporary global capitalism.

Sleep, as this suggests, is a vital political matter through and through, from expert discourses and debates on the problems and promises of sleep today, to the problems and politics of sleep within the home, the family, the school, the workplace, the corridors of power and even the military complex, where combating and customising sleep has long since been a strategic matter of war. Less obviously, however, this also includes such sleep-related matters as current disputes over the so-called ‘bedroom tax’ or ‘spare bedroom subsidy’ (depending on your viewpoint), the plight of those who sleep rough on our city streets night after night and the deliberate withholding of sleep in the name of interrogation or torture.

If we care to listen, however, perhaps the simplest lesson sleep teaches us is the most profound or radical of all: namely, that our bodies tick to a different clock from that of contemporary capitalism.

So it is time to vote for sleep, as right as well as respite, if not refusal or resistance, in a restless, relentless and ravenous age: something to sleep on, perhaps. ■



NEW INDUSTRIAL REVOLUTION

Digital fabrication labs have the potential to change the economics and culture of making

By Bruce Newlands FRSA

Imagine a place where you can make almost anything, where people and businesses can access the tools they need to digitally create products from a variety of materials. Fab labs (fabrication laboratories) do just that and are changing the future of arts, manufactures and commerce by opening up small-scale workshops, offering access to a selection of digital fabrication tools, to the public.

The recent FAB9 Global Fab Lab Conference in Yokohama confirmed that there are now more than 125 fab labs in 34 countries (seven in the UK) and an even larger ecosystem of similar making spaces, ranging from community-run electronics workshops to large light-industrial units that are run on a membership scheme in the US. While these spaces have yet to compete with mass production and its associated economies of scale in fabricating widely distributed products, they have already shown the potential to empower individuals to create everything from smart-city sensor devices to small community buildings.

Barcelona's municipal authority has made providing a network of digital fabrication spaces a key policy. The city sees it as a way to tackle high unemployment by providing opportunities for creativity, self-employment and invention in its young people. In Scotland, MAKLab – the digital fabrication studio that I head as director – is working with a wide range of partners to establish a network that connects geographically spread communities, individuals and businesses through digital fabrication technologies. It will sustain a valuable peer-to-peer network of shared vocational skills, training and knowledge.

In a world where open innovation is embraced and knowledge is distributed widely, companies cannot afford to rely entirely on their own research, but can instead procure knowledge from the network. Concepts of user innovation, cumulative innovation, knowhow trading, mass innovation

and distributed innovation flourish in these maker spaces. This will change the cost-benefit models of the past and foster a widely distributed network of micro-innovators/researchers working freely and feeding global manufacturers.

Additionally, however, there is the prospect of a powerful localised digital manufacturing network, flexible in nature and providing on-demand access to a broad base of users from individuals to small enterprises. Such a network, globally connected, could bridge the step changes between further education, vocational training and the world of work. Through initial steps in Glasgow, a generation of vocationally trained engineers, inventors and creative practitioners has risen. It has access to a unique peer-knowledge network, the skills to use advanced digital fabrication technology and a collaborative pioneering spirit that embraces open innovation. ■

CROWDFUNDING A LAB FOR LONDON

MAKLab Glasgow recently launched a crowdfunding campaign to raise funds to extend its operation to London and start to create a UK network. Working alongside RSA [Re] Make Hubs and MakersUniversity.org in the central London setting of Somerset House, MAKLab aims to create a world-leading creative space. It will be larger, better equipped and provide higher levels of nurturing to young creative start-ups. The wider public will have greater access than ever before and it will be a place to celebrate the UK's peculiar approach to open innovation, one that can ignite the spirit of a new industrial revolution.

RSA Fellows can support this initiative by visiting the campaign site and pledging support in various ways at www.kck.st/makfrsa

BRUCE NEWLANDS
FRSA IS DIRECTOR
OF KRAFT
ARCHITECTURE
+ RESEARCH AND
THE FOUNDER
OF MAKLAB

CROWD POWER

The RSA's partnership with Kickstarter will help Fellows' projects come to fruition

In a sense, crowdfunding has been around since the earliest days of the RSA. In 1754, the RSA's founders met in coffee shops to put up money for solutions to tackle social problems and decide which ideas would receive the cash. In this spirit, the RSA has launched a curated area on Kickstarter, the online crowdfunding platform, with the goal of mobilising Fellows' money and expertise to support the best innovations their peers come up with.

Crowdfunding, based on small donations, is simple and based on mass mobilisation. Below are six Fellows' projects from the initial set. Get behind the ones you feel most excited about or find out how the RSA can help you crowdfund at www.kck.st/rsaprojects

CLEARFEAR

ClearFear is a real-life social game, initially designed for recovery groups, that brings people together. Martin Webber FRSA got support from RSA Catalyst to work with Fellows with expertise in mental health, as well as gaming specialists, to develop and test the idea.

Martin, a researcher in social work at the University of York, would use funding to take the game to the next level. By developing a website where players could share their successes and new ideas for missions, the team will be able to launch the game for anyone to play.

Back the project at www.bit.ly/clearfearfrsa

3-2-1-IGNITION*

What if there was a place on the high street where families could explore the scientific questions that interest them or learn new skills such as coding?

3-2-1-Ignition* is a pop-up shop that aims to fulfil that need as a place for people to let their curiosities wander, and a pilot in Nottingham in summer 2012 saw 3,000 people visiting a

previously empty clothes store in just four weeks. Following that, Ignite! – the creative learning agency founded by Rick Hall FRSA – plans to open an expanded version with help from the Kickstarter campaign.

Back the project at www.bit.ly/321ignitionfrsa

MERU CINEMA PROJECT

Steve Ralf FRSA was supported by Catalyst to start up a printing-ink recycling business, which he has gone on to expand to communities in Kenya. While there, Steve set upon his latest venture in Meru, the sixth-largest urban area in the country. The social business aims to launch a mobile cinema to offer weekly screenings, showing local and international documentaries covering educational themes, using entertainment to inspire change.

Back the project at www.bit.ly/merufrsa

ARTSPACE BATH

The Kickstarter campaign aims to raise £10,000 to fund a contemporary arts event in the centre of Bath: a four-day pop-up featuring performances, workshops, installations and exhibitions. Penny Hay FRSA and others want to help reinvent Bath as a city of imagination and creativity, with playfulness, curiosity and eccentricity at its heart.

Back the project at www.bit.ly/artspacefrsa

STUDENT MAKERS' FESTIVAL

The economic climate means it is often difficult for young people to fulfil their creative potential. Lisa Oulton FRSA leads Future Foundry, which puts on Student Makers' Markets that supply free stalls and equipment to creative young people in areas struggling with high unemployment and other problems. The Kickstarter campaign will help create a month-long Student Makers' Festival and pop-up workshop in Folkestone.

Back the project at www.bit.ly/makersfrsa ■

LEND YOUR SUPPORT

Back your favourite project and find out more about them on the RSA's dedicated Kickstarter homepage:

www.kck.st/makfrsa



TEACHING RESILIENCE

Instilling young people with grit while they are at school will have wide-reaching implications

By Yvonne Roberts

Grit, in psychology, is a positive non-cognitive trait, based on an individual's passion for a long-term goal. It conveys motivation and something more; the plus is a persistence that never concedes defeat. At full throttle, so researchers tell us, an individual with grit but inferior academic ability can outshine a person with a high IQ and less personal drive. In 1995, Daniel Goleman wrote in his international bestseller, *Emotional Intelligence*: "At best, IQ contributes about 20% to the factors that determine life success, which leaves 80% to other forces."

In August, Nick Hurd, the minister for civil society, suggested that these mysterious 'other forces' might also include an element of grit. Young people, he said, are failing to find work because they lack persistence, as well as social skills such as self-discipline that schools fail to inculcate. He also said he was struck by the 'crushingly low' self-confidence of many youngsters, which damages their job prospects. Grit, in short, matters when it comes to education, and its consequences reach far into the world of work.

YVONNE ROBERTS
IS CHIEF LEADER
WRITER AT
THE OBSERVER

IMAGE: GETTY

Hurd's comments were in response to the latest statistics on young people not in education, employment or training (NEETs). The number of 16 to 24-year-olds in this category has risen to an estimated 1.09 million, almost half of whom are not looking for work and are classed as economically inactive.

Critics immediately charged that the minister was distracting attention from a systemic flaw in the economy, exacerbated by de-industrialisation and the demise of unskilled labour. They pointed out that Hurd, a fourth-generation Conservative MP, Eton and Oxbridge educated, must have had little cause to plumb his own reserves of grit. In addition, he had maligned the thousands of young people whom – beset by poverty, poor housing and a lack of apprenticeships, or struggling through university sinking in debt – have shown great resolve and persistence during a decade plundered by austerity. Such criticisms hold truths, but they also meant that an opportunity for constructive debate was lost. Unintentionally, perhaps, Hurd had performed a valuable duty. He had exposed the danger that is at the heart of so much of British education, the profound disregard for the cardinal rule: first, do no harm. Many young people are emerging from school qualified, but ill prepared and undermined.

The British system, corseted by testing, is made worse by a narrow Govian definition of what constitutes a 'good' education. It does not encourage pupils to risk failure, welcome challenge and learn the value of reflectiveness, which undermines efforts to build up grit in pupils. 'Nothing I do will make a difference' has become the sad mantra of those whom the system has defeated and who emerge from it with few qualifications and little sense of worth. Imaginative customised schooling, high expectations from teachers and the extensive and innovative involvement of employers could achieve so much more.

Hurd had linked the absence of 'soft' non-cognitive skills to the issue of employability. This includes capabilities such as initiative, self-discipline, flexibility, self-management, teamwork, problem solving, delayed gratification and resilience. International research indicates that employability is best cultivated when 'chalk and talk' lectures from the teacher are replaced, for instance, by group work and opportunities for experiential learning.

In the Metropolitan Regional Career and Technical Centre (the Met) in the US's Rhode Island, a pupil in secondary school experiences six internships for two full days of each week of her school career. Although it serves a deprived community, 95% of the Met's pupils go on to attend college. Pupil engagement is

high, and the dropout rate is low. Carol Dweck, an American professor of psychology, has spent decades studying what constitutes motivation and grit. She has discovered that about 40% of American children have a fixed mindset, believing they are either bright, stupid or somewhere in between. They are convinced that this ranking is fixed and unchangeable. The result is a vast waste of talent that is detrimental to lifelong well-being and active citizenship.

She discovered that those who believe they are 'dumb' see no point in trying. Those who are deemed academically clever avoid stretching themselves unduly for fear of failure and slipping back down the ranks. The pupils who do flourish are those rich in self-belief who understand that intellectual skills are not naturally in their gift, but are assets that require hard work to develop. And that takes grit.

This mindset can translate to the real world of work. Recent research indicates that female graduates expect to earn substantially less than men in the first five years after university. This is further infected by careers advice that is, too often, as narrow as a pinhead. The top destination for male final year students is investment banking, followed by management consulting and engineering. For women, it is marketing, followed by media then charity or voluntary work. That restrictive gendered view of employment – for both men and women – means that talent is wasted (we have, for instance, an unmet demand for 10,000 engineers a year) and employers lose out.

For a more optimistic story, where the advantages of grit and its related capabilities are self-evident although not necessarily showcased by a range of formal educational qualifications, the Silicon Roundabout at London's Old Street is home to a number of internet startups. The rise of social enterprises and the global success of Britain's creative industries is testament to the power of persistence, self-agency and the rewards of delayed gratification. Thousands of young people, many of them ill-fitted to formal education, defy the odds, see failure as the next step to success and foster their own talent.

Jamal Edwards, who founded SBTV at the age of 16, is an example. Now in his twenties, he has built a thriving business by simply filming what he was interested in and building an audience through social networks. The challenge for business and industry is to nurture the mavericks and encourage those diminished by their education to flower. Qualifications are among the least reliable of guides. As Professor Dweck points out: "IQ tests can measure current skills, but nothing can measure someone's potential. It's impossible to tell what people are capable of once they catch fire." ■

EMPLOYMENT



SEARCHING FOR EXCELLENCE

The UK and South Asia face a set of skills challenges that, in many places, are strikingly similar

By Louise Bamfield and Peter Upton

Every nation faces a profound ‘skills challenge’, a combined problem of certain types of skill being underachieved or under-supplied, and others being underutilised. To meet this challenge, countries need to learn from other nations and not only from those at a similar level of economic development.

South Asia is on the cusp of a demographic dividend even greater than China’s in the past century. With a population of 1.6 billion, of whom 20% are aged between 15 and 24, a new generation is emerging that sees skills acquisition as the key to individual and national economic success. The region is one of extremes, with an aspiring middle class of more than 400 million people, but nearly 500 million living below the poverty line. It is home to both the world’s largest democracy and extremely fragile states; and ranges in scope and capacity from centres of world-class innovation to areas that lack access to education.

The numbers speak for themselves. One million new entrants will join the labour force every month for the next 20 years.

LOUISE BAMFIELD IS THE RSA’S ASSOCIATE DIRECTOR OF EDUCATION. PETER UPTON IS DIRECTOR FOR PAKISTAN AT THE BRITISH COUNCIL

ILLUSTRATION: CARMEN GRAHAM

“A NEW GENERATION IS EMERGING THAT SEES SKILLS ACQUISITION AS THE KEY TO INDIVIDUAL AND NATIONAL ECONOMIC SUCCESS”

There are more than 750 universities in the region, with 1,500 more planned. More than four million people are taking vocational courses, but demand is for more than 100 million places, leaving a vast shortfall.

MEETING DEMAND

New research for the British Council highlights the scale of the challenge. One million additional skills-training places are needed every month for the next eight years in order to avoid an unsustainable rise in unemployment and a recession. The challenges for the region are fourfold: to provide sufficient capacity to meet the scale of demand, which in turns requires a radical approach to delivery; to develop a coherent policy framework that enables the public and private sectors to collaborate effectively to support employer needs; to develop and implement effective quality assurance standards that transform the low status of vocational training; and, finally, the urgent need for industry to invest and participate in the development of the skills infrastructure.

Neither government nor the private sector can solve the emerging skills crisis alone. It requires a leap of faith by both sectors, working together on a scale not yet attempted. At the moment, the private sector is responding to demand in an episodic manner and the public sector is following traditional models that are not highly valued.

NOT SO DIFFERENT

While the UK can only dream of matching the South Asian economies' average growth rate of 6%, there are some striking similarities in the issues they face. As South Asia suffers serious skills constraints that are hindering inclusive growth, British employers routinely complain of poor generic employability skills among new recruits, with specific skills shortages in key sectors such as science, technology, engineering and construction. As in South Asia, the UK will only solve its skills problem if it is able to achieve genuine collaboration between education providers and employers, with far greater investment and participation from industry in building and renewing the skills infrastructure.

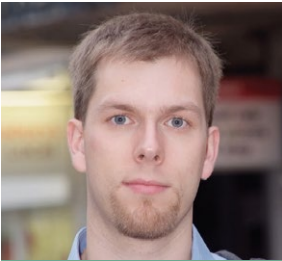
Current UK government policy is right to focus on devolving and strengthening strategic governance, as local stakeholders are best placed to broker employer engagement and reduce the mismatch between training courses and local jobs. But the major failure of the current approach is that it is overly reliant on government 'getting out of the way'. In reality, there is no hope of breaking out of the 'low-skills equilibrium' in many sectors without looking again at national policy levers, such as a hike in the national minimum wage.

Finally, while there is general recognition of weaknesses in the further education system (particularly the low employer recognition and poor rate of return to lower level vocational qualifications), the success of government skills strategies, both past and present, is hampered by two systemic failures in English schooling and pre-vocational education. First is the lack of progress in improving basic and functional skills and narrowing socio-economic gaps in children's early development and school attainment. Second, the continued preoccupation with traditional academic subject knowledge, reinforced by intensive testing, has squeezed out space in the school curriculum for a richer range of skills and aptitudes, such as thinking creatively, emotional intelligence and enterprise.

Action is under way to address the first, but with limited success to date, partly due to under-investment in professional-level qualifications and training for the early-years workforce. The second issue has yet to receive the recognition it deserves. To be truly innovative, the education system of the future needs to learn more from integrated models of learning that are starting to flourish in more vocationally oriented settings, while steering away from the rigid academic models that fail to capture the richness of human needs and capacities. ■

■ *In September, the RSA and the British Council held a joint policy dialogue with more than 130 senior policymakers from South Asia and the UK. Papers commissioned for the event included a think piece by the RSA's Louise Bamfield (downloadable at the [RSA's Action and Research Centre website](#)), and the latest benchmark research into skills in South Asia from the Economist Intelligence Unit.*

NEW FELLOWS



JASON KITCAT

GREEN SPACE

Jason Kitcat leads Brighton and Hove City Council, the UK's first Green-led principal authority. He has been a Green Party city councillor in Brighton for six years. With a professional background in technology and online business, he is a prominent digital rights campaigner, particularly in opposing the introduction of e-voting and e-counting for elections.

Jason had been toying with the idea of RSA Fellowship for some years. "Many people who I like and respect are Fellows," he said. "Then I spoke at a local government conference with Matthew Taylor. Afterwards, I asked him to give me the pitch and he convinced me."

Through his Fellowship, Jason hopes to connect with people who share his passion for creating an independent model of local government. "Everything we touch on, from education to green policy, there are people doing it within the RSA universe," he said.

Jason has a particular interest in the concept of civic pride and how to revive it within today's communities. He would be interested in exchanging ideas about this with other Fellows.



SARA CROFTS

HERITAGE FUTURE

Sara Crofts is deputy director of the Society for the Protection of Ancient Buildings (SPAB), with responsibility for all the organisation's casework and policy work. She trained as an architect at Edinburgh College of Art, specialising in historic building conservation at the Scottish Centre for Conservation Studies. Sara has worked for a number of architectural practices specialising in the repair of historic buildings in Edinburgh and Cumbria.

"I have been aware of the RSA for a long time," said Sara. "I attended lectures and events when I started working in London, but I had no idea whether I would make a suitable Fellow. Once my career had settled down and I had more free time, I began to look for opportunities to see what I could offer the wider world and the RSA seemed the perfect choice."

Sara has a particular interest in protecting our heritage and craft skills, forging a sustainable future while taking care of the past. "The common threads that run through the RSA are problem solving and creative thinking," she said. "Any organisation that is about these things is a place I want to be."

YOUR FELLOWSHIP

There are four main ways for Fellows to engage with the RSA:

Meet other Fellows:

Network meetings take place across the UK and are an excellent way to meet other Fellows. Check out the events taking place on the website.

Connect online:

You can like the RSA on Facebook, or follow us on Twitter @thersaorg using #thersa hashtag. There is also a Fellows' LinkedIn group, our own network www.rsafellowship.com, and blogs at www.rsablogs.org.uk

Share your skills:

Fellows can offer expertise and support to projects via SkillsBank using a form available online.

Grow your idea:

RSA Catalyst gives grants and support for Fellows' new and early-stage projects aimed at tackling social problems.

Explore these and further ways to get involved at

www.thersa.org

IN BRIEF

Here are a few more new Fellows who are working to drive social progress:

James Paskins is the coordinator for the University College London (UCL) Grand Challenge of Sustainable Cities and the UCL London Agenda. Both projects aim to address pressing societal concerns.

Yam Lan Lan is based in Hong Kong, one of the world's most polluted cities, and pioneers work in the green sector. Her research interests relate to sustainability for social innovation.

Pippa Read works as a policy leader for sustainable environments at the National Housing Federation. She looks for practical solutions to ensure the provision of decent and affordable homes.

Eli Konvitz is a director at Place and Space Consulting. His work treats the built environment as an inherently complex phenomenon and aims to make cities more sustainable, likeable, democratic and inclusive places.



ENVIRONMENTAL BALANCE

In response to Dieter Helm's article ('Natural capital', Spring 2013), I felt it useful to highlight that the state's need to invest in a national environmental balance sheet has, as with so many other now-commonplace civic initiatives, already been adopted and led by the private sector. In November 2011, the sportswear brand Puma published its first environmental profit-and-loss account, monetising its impact to enable its stakeholders to best engage with this perspective in reflecting on the organisation's performance and future planning.

As a sole trader, I adopted a simplified version of this approach eight years ago and annually report on the extent of my environmental impact arising from business practices. I am unable to commit the resources needed to monetise these in the same way as Puma, but they nonetheless ensure that my decisions take full account of potential environmental impact.

—Adrian Ashton

UNDERSTANDING SPIRITUALITY

There are many possible entry points for a response to Jonathan Rowson's piece ('The brains behind spirituality', Summer 2013), but I will limit myself to two that arose in me.

One is thinking about the point of not collapsing spirituality (or, as he says, difficult existential and ethical issues) into psychological and sociological concepts. I think the challenge or danger is in collapsing or reducing spirituality into any mental or intellectual construct. As Carlie Tart wrote many years ago, we need "state-specific sciences" to appropriately research and understand phenomena that do not fit materialistic, or even mental and intellectual domains. This is not an easy task, but there are methods and practices to develop a community of the adequate, and many people in the middle range Rowson describes are taking up various forms of these and benefiting from them, without associating them with a specific religious tradition.

The second view is one I have come across in various places and ways, that part of the issue that creates confusion or even embarrassment comes from the larger frame of assumptions about the core of our nature of existence. The 21st century view that we are fundamentally embodied could be seen as part of this and a counter view is that we are spiritual beings having human experiences. Changing the assumption or starting point can open up a different engagement with the issues Rowson addresses.

—Jonathan Reams

THE CARE GENDER GAP

Susan Himmelweit's piece ('Who cares?', Summer 2013) was an excellent article on arguably the greatest challenge ahead.

I absolutely share the focus on gender issues. Recent decades have seen men taking a greater share of childcare, but care for disabled or frail elderly relatives still largely falls to daughters and, often enough, to daughters-in-law. Most care for elders is spousal care, however.

Oddly, the national figures for England show a larger proportion of men as carers in older age. This could be a combination of many things, including that they are more likely to put their hands up and ask for help, thus getting on the statistics radar.

—Online commenter, www.thersa.org

Please send us your thoughts on the *RSA Journal* by emailing editor@rsa.org.uk or writing to: Editor, *RSA Journal*, Wardour, 5th Floor, Drury House, 34–43 Russell Street, London WC2B 5HA. Or comment online at www.thersa.org/journal



THE CAPITALIST'S DILEMMA

9 September 2013

Harvard Business School's Clay Christensen explores the relationship between innovation, investment and recession

“IT IS IMPOSSIBLE FOR INNOVATORS TO INVEST IN THE KIND OF THINGS THAT CREATE JOBS”

In each of the nine US recessions since the Second World War, there was a time lag between the economy hitting rock bottom and returning to its previous peak. For the first six of these recessions, that time lag was about six months; in the last three, it increased to 15 months, then 30 and, in the current recession, 70 months and counting. Furthermore, we are seeing jobless recoveries, which was not the case 20 or 30 years ago.

Innovation is the target of investment, and investment is the fuel that keeps the economy going. There are three types of innovation in the world, the first of which is an empowering innovation. This transforms a product that was complicated and expensive into one that is simple and affordable. Take the mainframe computer, which cost \$2m. Then the personal computer reduced that cost to \$2,000 and now \$200 smartphones enable billions of people around the world to have a computer. In a similar way, the automobile was developed as a toy for the rich, before Henry Ford made a car so affordable that millions could own one.

Almost all the jobs in an economy are created by empowering innovations:

CLAY CHRISTENSEN
TEACHES AT
HARVARD
BUSINESS
SCHOOL AND IS
THE AUTHOR OF
THE INNOVATOR'S
DILEMMA

if something is affordable and accessible, people will buy it. Then you have to hire more people to

make it, sell it and service it. Empowering innovations use capital, because every time you start a new business, you need capital on the balance sheet.

The second type of innovation is sustaining innovations. These make existing products better, but they create few, if any, jobs because when you sell a better product, people stop buying the old one. And the third type of innovation, efficiency innovation, actually reduces jobs by its very nature. For example, when Walmart opens a store in an American town, it hires lots of people, but on aggregate you end up with about 15% fewer jobs.

But efficiency innovations do free up capital. Before Toyota came to America, it took American car companies about 60 days to assemble a car. Toyota figured out how to do the job in 2.5 days, and less work-in-process inventory means less capital imprisoned on the balance sheet.

These three types of innovation work a bit like a perpetual motion machine. Empowering innovations create jobs and efficiency innovations reduce them. But as long as efficiency innovations are freeing up capital, which funds more empowering innovations, the machine keeps on going.

But something has gone wrong. Finance has cut the circle and created a system in which, instead of using capital to create new empowering innovations, it is reinvested in more efficiency innovations.

Finance is a profession led by intellectually powerful people. They use spreadsheets to figure out what inputs need to be at what levels to get the outputs they use to measure the success of management. And they have realised that the problem with empowering innovations is that they take between five and 10 years to pay off, whereas efficiency innovations take a year or two.

Over the past 20 years, we are generating empowering innovations at about a third of the level we were in the 1950s, 1960s and 1970s. And the recycling of capital into capital means there is so much money chasing so few deals, but entrepreneurs cannot get the funding they need.

We have seen this situation in Japan, where the unemployment rate in the 1980s was less than 2% and empowering innovations like the Sony Walkman and the Canon printer were used by billions of people around the world. Then Japanese companies hired graduates from western business schools, who taught them to maximise return on mid-assets and the internal rate of return, and their economy has been dead or flat for 23 years. And I worry that's what's going to happen to the US.

I do not believe the problem is lack of capital: the problem is that the way we calculate success makes it impossible for innovators to invest in the kind of things that create jobs. ■

IMAGE: MIKE KAMBER (ADAM GRANT)



DOES POPULATION MATTER?

10 July 2013

Danny Dorling, Professor of Human Geography at the University of Sheffield, explains why population growth is important, but that there are other things we should worry about more

Coming to London makes me realise why people get so het up about population growth: there are a lot of people here. It's understandable that some people think the thing is out of control. However, there are many hopeful signs – we just tend not to talk about them and, often, you need to look outside this country to find them.

I first became interested in the issue of population growth when working on a website that mapped data from the UN's base projections about the world. In 2003, the data suggested that the world's population would stand at about seven billion now, increase to about 8.9 billion midway through the century, and peak at about 9.1 billion in 100 years' time.

Then, in 2011, the UN revised its projections and it was around that time that I started work on my book. The UN upped the projection to 10.1 billion, thus giving me my title: *Population 10 Billion*.

But we shouldn't be worried. On any graph predicting population growth, you'll see a collapse in fertility in most of the world, apart from Africa. Although the falling birth rate coincided with worldwide availability of contraception, I don't think that is the reason. I believe we have seen what Darwin termed "a few favoured generations" – a kind of algae bloom

DANNY DORLING
IS THE AUTHOR OF
*POPULATION
10 BILLION*

of humanity – and that period is coming to an end.

Looking back, we can see that the incredible growth in the human population began in 1851, steadily increasing in percentage terms each year. In 1968, growth would have appeared completely out of control. And then it stopped, and for 40 years we've had a decline in the rate of growth.

The Swedish statistician Hans Rosling showed how fertility rates plummet once life expectancy exceeds 55, but you do see blips in that, such as the one the UK is going through at the moment. We've got a little baby boom going on right now, but across the world, people are having fewer children. Women simply aren't prepared to go through a third or fourth pregnancy and they have more power to say no.

Population growth works a bit like compound interest: a few more babies now means many more people in 100 years' time. Slightly fewer babies now will mean far fewer people in the future.

There's an interesting correlation between the spread and growth of population and increased GDP per capita. If you're manufacturing widgets, it's not hard to make a profit if there are more people next year wanting widgets than there were the year before. But more importantly, human beings are able to consume a fixed amount of food. If some of us could consume 10 times more than other people, then we'd have a problem.

Water is more of a problem than food but, unlike oil, it's a renewable resource and we won't run out. Soil and climate are bigger problems. War is a massive problem, but one we tend to forget about in rich countries. Rare earth elements are a problem, but we use them in the context of a high-consumption lifestyle, so they may not be as necessary as we think, if we can learn not to throw away our phones every couple of years. And the great thing about ageing is that you get wiser and, as you get wiser, it's harder to sell you things you don't need. ■

MORE FROM THE EVENTS PROGRAMME

Ruby Wax – comedian, writer and self-declared poster girl for mental health – had a moving, profound and witty conversation with fellow mental health campaigner **Alastair Campbell**; **Professor Matthew Lieberman**, one of the founders of social cognitive neuroscience, discussed how we should maximise the power of children's 'social brains' in the classroom; **Professor Howard Gardner**, father of the theory of multiple intelligences, explored the particular challenges facing today's 'App Generation'; **Shami Chakrabarti**, director of Liberty and one of the country's most inspirational public figures, delivered a specially commissioned RSA lecture to a packed audience in the new Birmingham Library; the world-renowned psychologist **Professor Carol Dweck** outlined how students' mindsets shape their motivation and learning; clinical psychologist **Dr Charlie Alcock** explained the challenges of radically transforming mental health service delivery for young offenders; and **Anthony King** and **Ivor Crewe** – two of the UK's most distinguished political scientists – explained how government blunders share common patterns and offered a spirited prescription for more foolproof policy.

The highlights above are just a small selection of recent events from the RSA programme. All of these, and many more, are available as audio downloads at www.thersa.org/audio

Full national and regional events listings are available at www.thersa.org/events

INTOLERANCE

On the big issues, city dwellers are among the most liberal people around, but it is the little things that evaporate goodwill towards their fellow citizens

By Rosamund Urwin

The test of good manners, according to the Hebrew poet and philosopher Solomon ibn Gabirol, is to be patient with the bad ones. If that's the ultimate etiquette exam, Londoners clearly wear the dunce's hat for decorum.

It's not as though cities, those great symbols of civilisation, make their inhabitants uncivilised. Rather, that they tend to breed tolerance about bigger issues while simultaneously making us intolerant about the trivial. The city triumvirate of commuting, cacophony and congestion can bring out the Incredible Hulk in any Bruce Banner. Anything that slows our progress makes us fractious. And proximity means your neighbour's foibles are well known to you, even if you do not actually know their name.

So there are few subjects more likely to launch an urbanite into an impassioned rant than the cardinal sins of city life. Tall folk loathe the way we stunted souls threaten their sight with our umbrella spokes. The romantics among us hate to see a BlackBerry playing gooseberry on a date. And everybody is irked by the traveller who stops just short of the ticket barrier to rummage around in a bag for his or her pass.

I have long thought that every city needs a local etiquette guide, handed out both to residents and to tourists as they come through customs. But London's could be summarised succinctly with a Seven Deadly Sins of the capital, which could apply to any large urban area. Forget greed, gluttony, lust and the like; these are the crimes that should see you banished to London's ninth circle of hell (also known as the North Circular, I believe).

Escalator error: On the tube, one crime ranks above all others. Sure, stinking out the carriage with a burger is revolting. But that is a mere inconvenience next to standing on the left on the escalator, the side where others walk up. Those dashing to the surface will tut. They will roll their eyes. Two hours later, they will probably be sticking pins into a voodoo doll fashioned in your image.

Meandering: A friend once had the bright idea of dividing up pavements

into fast lanes and slow lanes, like swimming pools. Walk fast, especially if you're in front of me. Never pause in the middle of the pavement. And, if you don't know where you're going, act as though you're a car and move to the side to check the map.

Public grooming: Commuting is dead time, so for that extra minute in bed, it makes sense to leave the lippy application for the bus. But this should be where the grooming stops. In the past few months, I've seen two women plucking their eyebrows on the tube and a gent applying deodorant on the bus. Worst of all was the woman who clipped her nails on a train, the remnants flying around the carriage as other passengers looked queasy.

Hygiene failure: That said, no one wants to get up close and personal, as commuting often requires, with someone who smells like they last washed when John Major and his grey underpants were still in office. As a woman of 5ft 4in, my nose is level with many a man's armpit, so I spend much of the summer enduring BO boy's scent.

Walking and texting: President Obama isn't so busy that he needs to fire emails off to other world leaders as he walks down the White House corridors. I'm pretty sure that means the average urbanite doesn't need to walk and type, either.

Seat hogging: When a couple board a train, it is a kindly type who – finding themselves sitting between the only two empty seats – moves to let them sit together. That commuter, alas, seems to be less common than the leg-splaying lad and Ms Shoes-on-Seat, who are only beaten to the award for the most detested traveller by the savage who pretends they haven't noticed the pregnant woman wanting a rest.

Over-sharing: No one should have to endure Robin Thicke's *Blurred Lines* from their neighbour's earphones, nor a bellowed phone call. But perhaps the ultimate aural invasion is the sweet soul who tries to talk to us on the tube. In London, we assume this means they're a serial killer who has singled us out as their next victim. So you'll have to forgive us if we don't respond: you'll have to be patient with our bad manners. ■

ROSAMUND URWIN
IS A COLUMNIST
FOR THE LONDON
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