

Inequities in Urban Development Global North Versus South

Muhammad Haneef^{*} Shahbaz Altaf[†] Muhammad Sulaiman[‡]

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ABSTRACT

The increased urban influx over the globe is so much high that 55% of the world population currently lives in urban area, whereas gigantic urban growth is expected in near future. The causes for the urban population increase include political, economic, natural population growth, educational institutes, social picks, environmental and calamities etc. The urban centers if planned and developed accurately are considered economic engines for the whole country whereas in other case the urban sprawl contributes to longer commutes and service cost. Global North is more affluent and developed, whereas the Global South is less developed and often poorer. Beside others, the major reason for this disparity is right urban development in Global North and vice versa. To evaluate elements responsible for inequities in global urban development it is claimed that major factors for understanding it in Global North have been Agglomeration Economies and Marxism. Urban development of the Global South, on the other hand, has been largely understood through the notions of over-accumulation and globalization. We have discussed similarities and differences in urban development in both the regions. Lastly, we focused on the emerging idea of governmentality and how it could be beneficial to understand urban development in Global South. In addition, critique on the notion of urbanism in the South from a single lens of neoliberalism was done

INTRODUCTION

Urbanization has become a rapidly growing phenomenon with a rate of 1.7% where half of the world's population lives in cities. Although the urban planning experts count disadvantages of the megalopolis as pollution, traffic congestion, and stress etc., but on the other side the megalopolis are the economic

¹Capital Development Authority, Islamabad, Pakistan. plannerhaneef@yahoo.com

² Department of Urban and Public Affairs, University of Louisville, Kentucky, USA shahbaz.shahbaz@louisville.edu

³Iqra National University, Peshawar, Pakistan. m.sulaimankhan1@gmail.com

engines of any country attracting population from rural areas. Urban development projects are of greater importance as they increase the productive capacity of households. It helps improving health and life expectancy and is effective in labor supply, which ultimately enable overall higher economic growth. There are multiple relationships between urban development and economic growth (Zambon, Serra, Grigoriadis, Carlucci, & Salvati, 2017).

‘Global South’ is an evolving term used by the World Bank to refer to low and middle income countries located in Asia, Africa, Latin America and the Caribbean which are different from the high income nations of the Global North like Europe, North America, Australia and South Africa. One group of scholars argues that global urban development is uneven in Global South and Global North. The source of these inequities everywhere is capitalism (Brenner & Keil, 2014; Brenner & Theodore, 2002; Harvey, 2001), while the other group states that capitalism is just one factor among many others impacting global urban development, especially in developing Global South (Ferguson, 2010; Robinson, 2002b; Roy, 2005). Apart from capitalism what are the possible factors responsible for uneven urban development in Global South and Global North?

To answer this question, there are many factors contributing to the urban development in Global North, however, [Agglomeration Economies](#) and [Marxism](#) are the two major factors claimed in this study. Urban development of the Global South, on the other hand, has been largely understood through the notions of [over-accumulation](#) and globalization. The over-accumulation in Global South is due to the surplus of devalued capital and labor on the market which results in ‘falling rate of profit’ crisis. The negative impacts of globalization in developing Global South owing to deindustrialization of Global North includes increased urban immigration, job insecurity, increasing urban slums, and pollution. Penultimately, there is a focus on the emerging idea of ‘[Governmentality](#)’ and how it could be useful to understand urban development in Global South. In addition, critique the notion of studying urbanism of Global South from the lens of [neoliberalism](#). Lastly, concluding with a brief summary of the article.

METHODOLOGY

This research is based on extensive literature review. A systematic analysis of peer-reviewed articles and books on the topic of urban development in Global North, Global South governmentality, neoliberalism, global urban development inequities, agglomeration economies, and Marxism theory was carried out in three stages. In the initial stage, conceptual frameworks of similarities and differences in global urban development in Global North and Global South and its assessment in light of agglomeration economies and Marxism were shortlisted. In the next phase, theoretic studies on

global urban development, in the perspective of global urban development and neoliberalism were searched. In the third phase, screening of empirical studies on global urban development, Marxism, capitalism, and governmentality was carried out. Five catalogs including Scopus, Science-Direct, Web of Science, Springer-Link, and Google Scholar were searched. In addition to this, various reliable sources, like published reports, dissertations, and newspaper articles were also examined. Keywords used in all three stages of the literature included ‘governmentality’, ‘neoliberalism’, ‘global urban development inequities’, ‘agglomeration economies’, ‘Marxism’, ‘urban development in Global North’, ‘urban over-accumulation’, and ‘globalization’. Various groupings of these keywords almost generated five hundred matches. At first, unrelated and duplicate publications were removed based on their titles. Then, the summaries of remaining articles were studied and arranged based on the objective of the research. As of the screening criteria, around two hundred publications were selected for analysis. This literature analysis resulted in linking various aspects of global urban development, as well as factors responsible for differences and similarities in urban development in Global South and North.

URBAN DEVELOPMENT IN THE GLOBAL NORTH

Major scholarly works in the Global North describes urban development in light of the works of two schools of thoughts: [Agglomeration Economies](#) and [Marxism](#)- each one of them will be discussed rather succinctly below.

Agglomeration Economies

According to economists, a city is a concentrated physical space of firms, labor and consumers whose proximity produces benefits of external economies of scale (Glaeser& Gottlieb, 2009). This benefit acts as a stimulant for people to concentrate in a small space (Brueckner, 2011; Glaeser, 2010) that results in reduced transportation costs of the economic actors (Glaeser& Gottlieb, 2009; Krugman, 1991). Additionally, when transportation costs are low, businesses find it easier to access labor, and labor moves easier across firms, obtaining the best wages without requiring to geographically relocate to a new place (Mankiw et al.1992). The agglomeration of firms and labor also increases the efficiency of the labor market by facilitating a healthy flow of knowledge across firms and people. The spillover effect of information promotes technological innovation and market efficiency (Glaeser& Gottlieb, 2009).

To achieve agglomeration, urban economists use the macroeconomic doctrine called neoliberalism (Peck, 2008). Neoliberal ideology calls for states/governments to be run like a business, promote

privatization, deregulating capital markets, lowering trade barriers, flexibility in labor laws and belief in the liberating power of the free markets, all of which contributes to urbanization (Saad-Filho & Johnston, 2005). Urban areas also compete with each other to attract capital, providing specific bundles of goods and taxes– that results in targeted policies to attract business and people in the cities causing urban development (Tiebout, 1956). Another popular policy of agglomeration is by supporting projects like “place-marketing, enterprise and empowerment zones, business-incubator schemes” (Peck et al., 2009, p.76) that helps to attract new residents and businesses in cities.

Marxist View

According to Harvey (1978), urban development is a process of capital accumulation and class struggle. He argues that capitalism needs to perpetually grow in order to solve its inherent crisis. This growth creates a surplus or over-accumulation of wealth that cannot be used back in the production process. This excess capital is therefore invested in the built environment, like in the housing sector or building infrastructure that drives urban development (Harvey, 1978). Castells (1977) explain the urban process as the reproduction and consumption of labor power. The urban residential zones, its public amenities, institutions and structures are essentially created for social reproduction of labor. Investments are also made on the social front (like in public transport, basic health and education) to alleviate the problems being faced by the working class (Harvey, 1978). However, the motive behind these measures is not to solve social inequity, or seek justice, but to reproduce and maintain labor for the capitalistic gains (Castells, 1977).

It is pertinent to note that urbanization has a dialectical relationship with capitalism. Urbanization has helped developed capitalism and capitalism has driven urbanization (Harvey, 1997). Pirenne (1925), for example, gives an account of medieval Europe where urbanization produced capitalism. On the other hand, he argues that the urbanization of Europe gave birth to a new economic order; mercantilism responsible for the demise of the feudal system. The freed serfs moved from agricultural lands to cities in search of livelihoods, another wave of necessary labor for capitalism to flourish (Pirenne, 1925). Gordon (1978) also lays out a detail account of capitalistic roots of American urban development. He argues that there are three stages of capitalism (i.e. commercial, industrial and advanced corporate accumulation) in the history of the United States. All three stages end up creating spatially different cities with a strong need to control social reproduction (Gordon, 1978).

URBAN DEVELOPMENT IN GLOBAL SOUTH

Urban development in the Global South from the viewpoint of Harvey's theory of spatial fix and globalization needs detailed exploration.

Over-accumulation and Spatial fix

The perpetual need to grow is a capital built-in crisis (Christophers, 2011). To elaborate, the failure to use the over-accumulated wealth tends to disrupt the circulatory flow of capital and causes the profits to fall, that's why capitalists are always in search of new markets, labor and recourses. This geographical expansion and reorganization of capital to new locations and markets is dubbed with the spatial fix (Harvey, 2001). The major stimulant for the spatial fix was the de-industrialization of Global North that forced the over-accumulated capital to locate/move to the Global South (Storper, 1997). This movement was accelerated by World Bank and IMF-led Structural Adjustment Program (SAP) aiming to deploy capitalistic ideologies in the Global South (Davis, 2006).

Global trade and direct investment were the primary means to move the capital to the Global South. This over-accumulated wealth of the North was invested heavily in fixed assets such as airports, highways, office complexes, commercial centers etc. (Harvey, 2001) and in the processes fueling urbanization in Global South cities. Structural Adjustments Program (SAP) was a major factor in intensifying urbanization by opening the domestic markets for the free movement of goods that destroyed small business in the Global South cities (Miraftab & McConnell, 2008). The agriculture sector in the Global South was hit the hardest because small farm owners were not able to compete with the giant agri-businesses from the Global North (Bryceson, 2000). In result, farmers with their families abandoned their farmlands and moved to urban communities for work (Swanson, 2007). Millions of people lost their jobs both in cities and rural areas (Davis, 2006; Miraftab & McConnell, 2008). There was an extreme influx of people to cities, where administrations were simply not equipped to manage this change. As a consequence, such cities are facing severe problems like the development of slums and urban environmental damage (UN-Habitat, 2004).

1. Similar to the Global North, capital will slowly try to entrench itself in the Global South cities and will develop an ideological superstructure (i.e. political, legal, religious processes) that legitimizes the logic of capital (Sassen, 2005; Ball and Dagger, 2009). The workings of the capitalistic logic can be seen at work through enactment of private property rights, privatization of public services and commodification of labor in Global South cities (De Angelis, 2004). In many nations, the priority of the government is to attract [transnational capital](#), therefore they adopt austerity measures like small budgets,

investments in infrastructure to attract capital and tax relief for big corporations (Frobel, Heinrichs, & Kreye, 1980; Friedmann, 1986). In other words, the surplus that capitalism is producing in the Global South is being transferred to global corporations (Alford & Friedland, 1985; Friedmann, 1986; Sassen, 2005).

Globalization

Urban development of the Global South is also studied through the lens of globalization. The world city hypothesis, one of the globalization theories, refers to the spatial organization of the New International Division of Labor (NIDL) which claims that cities around the world are increasingly performing unique functions in the global economy (Friedmann, 1986). Cities like New York and London act as financial hubs in the global economy, therefore, occupy the top rung in the NIDL hierarchy. Then, there are secondary cities that perform a particular function like San Francisco which is a technological development hub. Lastly, the semi-peripheral cities like Guangzhou and Mexico City are manufacturing centers located in the Global South (Friedmann, 1986).

These manufacturing hubs attract many migrants from rural areas where SAPs have devastated the agriculture sector (M. Davis, 2006). The new migrants will negatively affect the existing labor force by ensuing a greater competition for a limited number of jobs (Ross & Trachte, 1983). According to Castells (1989), urban poor are especially vulnerable to under-employment and unemployment owing to lack of skills for the specialized roles that the labor market offers resulting in poor living conditions (Castells, 1989). Most of the new migrants will be forced to work in the informal sector where there are no legal job protections and salaries are minimal, for example working as domestic workers and waste pickers (Ross & Trachte, 1983). The income gap between informal labor and a tiny number of well-paid high skilled workers will create spatial polarization (Friedmann, 1986; Brenner & Keil, 2014).

2. The ill-equipped and inefficient local governments in the Global South were not ready for such a rapid growth in urban areas. Resultantly, these cities ended up having numerous slums (UN-Habitat, 2004). About 85 percent of urban poor in the developing countries now live in slums (Davis, 2006, p.15; Holston, 2009, p.1). The situation is so acute that even willing governments often fail to provide basic infrastructure, services, and amenities at these locations (UN-Habitat, 2015; Satterthwaite et al., 2010; Lemanski, 2012). The outcome is an urban environment that is overcrowded and polluted without inadequate sanitation, solid waste disposal and safe drinking water (Hardoy & Satterthwaite, 1991, p.1)

Similarities and Differences

Capitalism and its political doctrine of neoliberalism are at work in both the Global South and Global North cities, and thus there is a certain degree of similarities that both these locations share. However, it is argued that studying all cities with the sole perspective gives a skewed and incomplete picture.

Similarities

Viewing cities from the Marxist and neoliberal lens are beneficial for understanding the socio-spatial inequities of both the Global South and Global North. For example, the de-industrialization of cities in the Global North has a detrimental effect on the people working in the manufacturing industry. Low or no wages for the labor class results in urban poverty and segregation. Another effect is the devaluation of immobile/embedded capital in the form of a built environment, that leaves a trail of destruction and economic recession (Harvey, 2005). Attempts to revitalize these devastated localities further augment the spatial polarization. These spatial inequalities have been etched on the urban space in the form of sprawling, gated communities and fortified enclaves (Brenner & Theodore, 2002; Harvey, 2001). Similarly, in the Global South, the creation of slums (M. Davis, 2006), peripheralization of poor citizens (Caldeira, 2017), informal economy (Chen, 2016) and fortification of rich in the Global South (Caldeira, 2012) and other inequalities can be understood through the lens of global neoliberalism.

Differences

Global neoliberalism perspective alone is inadequate to understand urban development in Global South. Unlike the Global North, in the Global South the neoliberal project is still incomplete (Anjaria, 2016). For instance, cities in the Global South have not been fully able to institute private property rights (Ghertner, 2015), therefore, fixation of understanding Global South cities through only economics/neoliberal accounts is of a very little scholarly value (Davis, 2005). This essentially limits our understanding of other factors like politico-cultural forces might be responsible for urban development in the Global South (Robinson, 2002a). Likewise, Roy (2015) critiques the neoliberal accounts of Global South cities, stating that “when claiming to speak for all cities, such narratives efface the historical differences through which that particular place on the map has been produced” (p. 205). It is argued that studies need to incorporate the specific history of the space that builds its social context. For example, cities like Mumbai, Delhi and Sao Paulo are rife with the influences of their colonial past that cannot be compared to the cities in Global North. During the colonial era, the impact of the Global North was mostly in the form of military dominance and economic exploitation. In the mid-twentieth

century, many Global South cities were subject to European town planning policies. Therefore, cities of the Global South must also be understood through the lens of colonialism (Scott & Storper, 2015).

Governmentality and Neoliberalism in the Global North

In this section, we will discuss about governmentality in Global North, focusing on Michel Foucault's conception of governmentality and how it can be used to understand cities of the Global South better. In the second half, we will explain neoliberalism, a second idea from the Global North. We will argue that neoliberalism is insufficient alone to understand cities of Global South.

Governmentality

According to Foucault (1991), the purpose of modern government is to secure the well-being of the population (Chatterjee, 2004). To achieve this goal, the governments need to change habits, aspirations and beliefs of its people. However, unlike *Discipline and Punishments* (Foucault, 1975) which seeks to reform people through detailed supervision, the state in this case wants to reform people from a distance through a technique called governmentality (Scott, 1995, p.202). Governmentality is a set of "calculations and tactics through which governmental interventions are devised, and conduct conducted" (Foucault, 1991, p.102). The result of conducting will be that people, "by following their own self-interest, will do things that they actually ought to do" or what government wants them to do voluntarily (Scott, 1995, p.202).

We consider governmentality as a very useful tool in analyzing this kind of political relationship between the government and politically mobilized groups. It gives us a new window to look at the state's welfare and social infrastructure to help people, as well as to discuss the elephant in the room: power (who has power and how they are using it). In light of this study, the application of governmentality to analyze the similar situations in Global South will be useful to generate new understandings of governmental actions and powers.

To give example of application of governmentality to understand Global South, we present Partha Chatterjee's ethnographic work on an informal settlement in Calcutta, India, '*The Politics of the Governed* (2004)'. Chatterjee argues that the majority of people in India are not rights-bearing citizens, but it does not mean that they are outside the reach of the state. They still need to be managed and controlled (or conducted) by various governmental techniques. In the case of an informal settlement in Calcutta, it is apparent that it was the political mobilization of the poor people that have put them in contact with the state authorities. The political prowess and activism have helped them to get many public utilities and avoid evictions from the settlements (Chatterjee, 2004). From the point of view of

the state, it has negotiated with the political leaders of this settlement in an informal manner to reach compromises [ultimately] to control and manage them. These compromises can take the form of “tacit agreement, look the other way when rules are broken or create new administrative processes” that are paralegal in nature (Li, 2007, p.278).

Neoliberalism

Neoliberalism is not totalitarian (Parnell & Robinson, 2012). It may be partially relevant or a completely irrelevant factor in explaining urban poverty (Leitner et al., 2007). Actually, politico-cultural commitments to welfare and equality goals play a crucial role in determining what would be the outcome of neoliberal policies in any city (Parnell & Robinson, 2012). Thus, attributing responsibility for so much of the social change over the last few decades to neoliberalism ignores other dynamics active in the societies (Clarke, 2008). Most importantly, as Ferguson (2010) writes, “Capital is globe-hopping, not globe-covering” (p. 38).

Take for instance, the urbanization of the super-rich cities in the Arabian Gulf. These cities (like Dubai or Doha) are open to the world in terms of global capital (investments, trade etc.). However, global capital is just one factor among many (e.g. Islamic theology and politics) that is shaping these cities (Elsheshtawy, 2011; Karaman, 2013; Abu-Lughod, 1987). In the same way, Wu (2000) presents how local politics has been instrumental in shaping Shanghai. He acknowledges the role being played by the foreign capital, but he gives more credit to the local and state laws in the development of the city. Similarly, informalization and formalization of land in India is driven by urban planning and state politics (Roy, 2009).

CONCLUSION

This article was about exploring the ways in which urban development is being understood in both the Global North and Global South. We tried to strike a balance between the economic/ capitalistic point of view and their critique on the Marxist view to explain urban development in both the regions. The doctrine of neoliberalism as explained from literature could not be a helpful tool in explaining all aspects of urban growth in the Global South. Despite several similarities in explaining the urban development in both the regions, it is claimed that although economy is the principal determinant of urban development, however, there are other factors i.e. social, cultural and historical overwhelmingly responsible for shaping the cities in the Global South.

The Foucault’s governmentality, an emerging idea from Global North is a helpful tool to understand global urban development inequities in both the regions. This research has its own limitations; it only

considers tools responsible to understand urban growth in Global North and North and does not explain their magnitude, for which a cross sectional study is recommended in future research.

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