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Editorial

Shaping the Inclusive City: Power Relations, Regulations, and the Role of Social Work

Karine Duplan [1,2,*], Monica Battaglini [1], Milena Chimienti [1], and Marylène Lieber [2]

[1] School of Social Work Geneva, University of Applied Sciences and Arts Western Switzerland (HES-SO), Switzerland
[2] School of Social Sciences, University of Geneva, Switzerland

* Corresponding author (karine.duplan@unige.ch)

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Abstract
While being celebrated as the ideal of inclusiveness, cities also constitute the place of different types of discrimination, which some public policies intend to tackle. The "urban" has also been pointed out as the locus where vice and lust concentrate, leading public policies to develop regulations for public space aiming to maintain the social order of the city. This, in turn, contributes to the definition of the contours of urban moral economies, which are continuously shaped by processes of in/exclusion. Hence, crucial is the need to further explore how cities can be welcoming to their dwellers and newcomers, as well as the role public policies (have to) play in the vision of the future of an open and inclusive city. In so doing, social work is certainly called upon to play a major role based on its historical presence in cities and its know-how in accompanying transitions. How does social work contribute to the definition of an inclusive city? By presenting new and original research that draws on various case studies as well as theoretical reflections across disciplines, this thematic issue aims to provide answers to this question to better understand the role of social work in the shaping of an open and inclusive city.

Keywords
exclusion; inclusion; inclusive city; planning; power relations; public policies; public space; regulation; social work

Issue
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1. Introduction

Cities have long been framed as places of emancipation and possibilities; in the context of growing urbanisation and globalisation, they have been described as melting pots of diversity favouring encounters with otherness (Amin, 2006; Sennett, 2013). However, this idea of togetherness has soon been confronted with the lived experiences of those who face various forms of exclusion at the intersection of multiple power relations, among others, gender, class, and race. Urban dwellers, therefore, adapt their behaviours, uses, and practices as strategies for place-making. Indeed, while framed as places of collective rituals that can potentially strengthen social ties and be celebrated as the ideal of inclusiveness, cities are also the place of different types of discrimination that public policies propose to tackle. The urban space has also been singled out as the locus where vice and lust concentrate, leading public policies to develop regulations for public space to maintain the social order of the city. This, in turn, contributes to the definition of the contours of urban moral economies, which are continuously shaped by processes of in/exclusion. Hence, it becomes imperative to explore how cities can be welcoming to their dwellers and newcomers, as well as the role public policies (have to) play in the vision of an "open and inclusive" city—utopia?—represented as a "good city" (Pile et al., 2023; Yazici et al., 2023). In so doing, social work

is certainly called upon to play a major role based on its historical presence in cities and its know-how in accompanying transitions. What is an inclusive city? To what extent are cities inclusive and what are their limits? How do people manage to negotiate this inclusion? How does social work contribute to the definition of an inclusive city? What role do social work professionals play in the development and eventual realization of these inclusive visions of cities?

By presenting new and original research that draws on various case studies as well as theoretical reflections across disciplines, ranging from sociology and anthropology to urban, cultural geographies and social policy, this thematic issue aims to provide answers to these questions to better understand the role of social work in the shaping of an open and inclusive city. Considering how working towards open and inclusive cities leads us to reflect on the notions of "urban space as public space," scholars have long argued on how space results from social imaginaries and representations as a process of ongoing construction shaped by social actors and imbued with power (Massey, 2005). As such, the urban becomes a place of struggles when it comes to one's own place-making, and the city is revealed as produced by tensions between institutional discourses and practices and its inhabitants' everyday practices. Far from the inclusionary ideal of democratic inclusion through the encounter of different publics, urban space is therefore rather a place of multiple forms of intersectional discrimination depending on the position of social actors within the matrix of power relations (Mitchell & Staeheli, 2006). In this context, public policies act to regulate the contours of the inclusive city as the "good," "progressive," and "virtuous" city, which might lead to conflicts in uses, projects, and consequently processes of in/exclusion rather than joyful coproduction.

By investigating issues of urban inclusiveness, this collection of articles provides new insights into the notion of the in/exclusive city. It questions the dynamic forms of inclusion and exclusion at play and how they feed one another (e.g., Piñeiro et al., 2023). The articles in this issue highlight the nuanced forms of in/exclusion and question the various representations, as well as the naturalisation of what would be an in/exclusive space (e.g., Colombo et al., 2023). Contributions acknowledge the variegated practices performed by city users to negotiate their place or "right to the city" (e.g., Colombo et al., 2023; Felder et al., 2023). They allow for a better understanding of the shifting dynamics of inclusiveness given the increased neoliberalisation of modes of urban governance, including in traditional welfare regimes (e.g., Sandberg & Listerborn, 2023). The issue also offers further reflections on the scales of in/exclusion and the contradiction across scales (see Duplan, 2023; Felder et al., 2023; Peruzzi Castellani, 2023; Tissot, 2023). Finally, some contributions insightfully question the definition of in/exclusion from the point of view of different actors at the street level (see Felder et al., 2023; Sandberg & Listerborn, 2023) and the urban policy level (see Dhananka, 2023; Frauenfelder et al., 2023; Matthey et al., 2023; Ramachandran & Di Matteo, 2023; Richter, 2023).

The rest of this editorial presents the three main themes through which this collection is organised: (a) negotiating the socio-spatial regulation of public space through everyday practices; (b) in/exclusion through the lens of power relations of gender, sexuality, culture, and ethnicity; and (c) planning the inclusive city through public policies, participation, and social answers.

2. Negotiating the Socio-Spatial Regulation of Public Space Through Everyday Practices

For some authors, the dimension of in/exclusion in cities materializes in the social and political regulation of access and use of urban public spaces and their amenities—including housing—in which paradoxes take place. They look at how people negotiate the openness of city life (see, e.g., Hall, 2015; Vertovec, 2007). On the one hand, there is a tendency to politically protect the normative ideal of inclusion; on the other, this inclusive ideal finds itself having to cohabit with practices that, in reality, exclude certain categories of users. Among the categories representing deviance in the use of these urban spaces are young people and migrants (particularly irregular ones) who are denied access to these spaces and have to negotiate their spatial rights. By participating in these contradictory movements of in/exclusion, social work faces its paradoxes, concerning most notably matters of support and empowerment. In this thematic issue, contributions that fall within this category/theme examine how city dwellers and street-level actors adjust and give meaning to their everyday practices in relation to the socio-spatial regulation of public space.

Piñeiro et al. (2023) explore the tactics performed by an emerging kind of actor in the continental European context they refer to as outreach socio-preventive municipal order services (OSPOS), which are oriented towards the soft policing of socio-spatial marginality. Their ethnographic research sheds light on how these services work through dialogue, "nudging," and cooperation to either regulate deviant individual practices or encourage a fairer shared use of public space—aiming to "protect" the ideal of inclusion of public space while shedding light on the exclusionary mechanisms of the in/exclusive city. This echoes the representation of youth as actors of public disorder in urban space that Colombo et al. (2023) seek to demolish in an ethnographic study of the various uses of public space by this (still) overlooked demographic: Highlighting how young city dwellers negotiate the normative expectations of the public, these authors show how geographical and social contexts are used by youth to assert their place in the city, in a careful and nuanced understanding of the dynamics of in/exclusion in space.

When considering how to make "a place of one's own," issues of housing become crucial: More particularly, Sandberg and Listerborn (2023) address the outcomes of the neoliberalisation of the housing market in the declining Swedish welfare regime. Analysing data from interviews conducted with social workers and other municipal officers in charge of housing demands, in a context of increasing homelessness rates, the authors show how the shifting landscape of housing demand results in social services acting as providers of emergency solutions that prevent the provision of secure housing. In so doing, the authors account for the ambiguous situation of social workers that have to (re)negotiate their role and position amid a shift in the Swedish housing market. Finally, the paradoxical nature of inclusion is addressed by Felder et al. (2023) concerning the services provided to irregular migrants in the assistance circuit at the local level of the city of Geneva. Their analysis allows us to understand in greater depth the subjective experience of support services, as well as the meaning associated with these services as recognised by those who provide them at the street level. This results in an argument for an implicit palliative social work paradigm that keeps people on the move through the daily spatio-temporal configuration of the assistance circuit, to supposedly enhance their autonomy, although exhausting any of their will.

3. In/Exclusion Through the Lens of Power Relations of Gender, Sexuality, Culture, and Ethnicity

The literature has addressed the issue of in/exclusion in cities from the angle of diversity management and minorities. Authors often point to a "deepening" of diversity, leading the literature to speak of "super-diversity" where cultural differences are both broad and intertwined (see, e.g., Hall, 2012; Keith, 2005; Neal et al., 2017). In this context, social actors can play a decisive role in city governance systems. Their relations with the authorities who implement policies in response to challenges posed by super-diversity—e.g., issues that emerge within sexual and gender minorities—represent a decisive element in the development and implementation of actions. In this thematic issue, contributions that fall within this category/theme question the opposing interests of various publics on what should constitute an open and inclusive city.

In an ethnographic study of Park Slope in New York, a formerly known lesbian neighbourhood now largely gentrified, Tissot (2023) questions the expression of acceptance of gay men and lesbians by heterosexual residents. She sheds light on the heterogeneity of progressive attitudes towards homosexuality depending on places and contexts and argues that what is framed as "progressiveness" has become part of a habitus that consolidates class position as well as whiteness. In so doing, the article highlights how this proclaimed progressiveness dissimulates the entanglements of mechanisms of in/exclusion while contributing to the reproduction of power relations through the making of "moral profit."

Shadowing Hayden's (1980) seminal work on the inclusive city, Duplan (2023) analyses the ambiguities of the language of "inclusion," especially in relation to gender and sexual identities, as it has become increasingly prominent across policymakers and transnational institutions in times of an increasing neoliberalisation of modes of urban governance. In so doing, her theoretical contribution sheds light on the possibilities of making an inclusive city for gender and sexual minorities while accounting for the need for more queerly engaged planning practices.

Issues of planning are also central in Peruzzi Castellani's (2023) article, which presents how the city of Barcelona is building its image as an inclusive city drawing on the emergent paradigm of interculturalism. Indeed, according to this new frame of reference at the European scale, diversity has been described as "super-diversity" and includes a very wide range of interwoven particularities. Barcelone's Bones Pràctiques Socials project, based on the cooperation between municipalities and social actors, is analysed here in terms of opportunities and challenges. Finally, Ramachandran and Di Matteo (2023) propose an exploratory and comparative study of how the inclusive city is conceptualized in social work literature in Sweden and the UK in relation to migration policies developed at the municipal level, aiming at an inclusive and sustainable city. The authors propose a six-step analysis of the literature from both countries, focusing on underlining the lack of knowledge about the role played by social work in the development and practical implementation of policies aimed at various immigrant minorities.

4. Planning the Inclusive City: Public Policies, Participation, and Social Answers

Our final group of contributions address the issue of in/exclusion in cities from the point of view of urban planning stakeholders. The fundamental question here lies both in the way the city is conceived and in the methodology used to achieve it. In other words, who builds the city of the future, and how? For Sennett (2018), the inclusive city relies on an ideal of openness which depends on how to build and dwell in the "open city." Authors in this final section address this issue by questioning the inclusive or non-inclusive composition of the modalities that lead to the construction of urban planning designs. In other words, the authors hypothesize that decisions about the inclusion or exclusion of residents in the construction of planning foundations, as well as the involvement or non-involvement of social work, influence the design and realization of city evolution. These reflections invite us, as scholars, but also professionals—social workers and policymakers—to reflect further on our practices.

Matthey et al. (2023) describe their experience of "narrative research," which is characterised by the implementation of an original methodology for involving

residents in territorial planning in a neighbourhood. The article is a reflective presentation of this methodology, which consists of producing stories with citizens during writing workshops. These stories give a very different vision of the area than the results of the participatory events organised by local authorities. The fiction that emerges from this experience describes a potential city of the future in which the places that are important to the inhabitants in the present are preserved. The identification of these places could easily be incorporated into a town planning document as part of development decisions.

In the context of urban densification and the development of urban reforms, Frauenfelder et al. (2023) question the contrasting meanings given to the notion of "quality of life" and the premises that shape its moral contours. Based on an ethnographic study in Geneva, the authors shed light on the potential risks at stake when using such a term from a universal normative perspective without accounting for how social realities are embedded within local particularities. In so doing, they point to the in/exclusionary processes at play and the consequences in terms of social justice of these socially-laden choices framed in ecological and rationalistic debates.

Using the example of rapid building expansion in the peri-urban context of the Bangalore metropolis in southern India, Dhananka (2023) aims to show the consequences of urban planning dominated by speculative logics, resulting in unbridled urbanization that is rapidly and drastically reducing agricultural land. Highlighting a potential alternative model leading to inclusive urbanism, the author discusses the consequences of engaging social work in urban planning processes. Consequences that could support the emergence of the "inclusive city" because of the values linked to this profession, namely the proportion of human well-being over and above economic performance.

Finally, Richter (2023) offers a series of reflections on "post"-theories in social work research and practice understood as reconfigurations of thinking in this field. These "post"-theories often form the basis of the main demands of social work, such as social justice, empowerment, or ethical positions concerning research and practice. Among the "post"-theories, the author focuses more specifically on posthumanism, which could provide a basis for reflection on the issues of social justice and inclusion. These issues are particularly relevant to cities.

5. Conclusion

While the ideal of inclusiveness can always be questioned, especially as it is, somehow, always exclusionary, all the articles in this thematic issue tackle the question of possible actions that mitigate the power relations at stake and allow a more reflexive practice of inclusion. They question the meanings of urban citizenship and develop a critical lens to engage with the ideal of inclusiveness where social work plays a crucial role, both as a historical agent that addresses inequalities and as a political stakeholder that participates in the shaping of urban spaces. Engaging in a dialogue with research, therefore, allows us to further develop knowledge on the pitfalls and ambivalence of the "inclusive city" and develop further paths for action.

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Conflict of Interests

The authors declare no conflict of interests.

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About the Authors

Karine Duplan is a senior lecturer in geography in the School of Social Sciences at the University of Geneva. She also teaches at the School of Social Work Geneva, University of Applied Sciences and Arts Western Switzerland (HES-SO). Her research focuses on the spatial dimension of inequalities and privileges. She draws on feminist and queer theories to unpack the everyday discursive and material production of heteronormativity and its discriminatory effects as well as on the modes of transformation and contestation of heteronormative power.

Monica Battaglini is a political scientist and professor at the School of Social Work Geneva, University of Applied Sciences and Arts Western Switzerland (HES-SO). She works in the field of social policy and public policy analysis at the federal and local levels. She is also interested in the study of participation, particularly in the context of social diversity.

Milena Chimienti is professor in migration studies at the University of Applied Sciences and Arts Western Switzerland, School of Social Work Geneva, and an editorial board member of the journals *Ethnic and Racial Studies*, *Identities: Global Studies in Culture and Power*, and *Social Inclusion*. Her current work is concerned with spatial policies of prostitution (with Marylène Lieber), unprivileged youth (with Philippe Wanner), and hypervulnerabily and agency among domestic workers in time of pandemic (with Myrian Carbajal).

Marylène Lieber is a professor in gender studies at the University of Geneva. A sociologist, her work focuses on gender violence, migration, public space and power relations. Her current work concerns sexual violence in the penal chain, as well as spatial policies of sex work (with Milena Chimienti). Among other things she published *Genre, violence et espaces publics, la vulnérabilité des femmes en question* (Paris, Presse de Sciencepo, 2008), *Les théories en études de genre* (with E. Lépinard, Paris, La Découverte, 2020), and *Oui, c'est oui, le consentement à l'épreuve de la justice* (Genève et Zürich, Seismo, 2023).