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Editors' Note

CHESTER HARVEY, YANIN KRAMSKY, AND GISELLE MENDONÇA ABREU

The tenuous interface between formality and informality is a fundamental condition of contemporary urbanism. Formal regulation by governments and other institutions has been celebrated in modern cities, yet informal and semiformal infrastructure and services permeate spaces and systems that are integral to urban life. Squatter settlements constitute vast and vibrant urban communities across the Global South. Appropriation of street spaces by informal vendors substantially influences urban economies and the character of the public realm. Transportation systems are heavily impacted by informal paratransit and disruptive technologies. Even urban data are increasingly open and crowdsourced, loosening researchers' reliance on governmental and corporate sources. Given the pervasiveness of informality, how can we differentiate it from the formal? Does informality benefit marginalized populations, or does it reinforce inequality? Are planning and informality inherently antithetical, or are there opportunities for planners to embrace informality as they seek to improve urban well-being?

The Call for Papers for Volume 30 of the Berkeley Planning Journal invited academics and practitioners to engage these questions. Submissions came in the form of original research, critical reflections, and photo essays that explore the conditions and implications of urban informality through various theoretical frameworks and methodologies. Taken together, the authors are situated and offer insights from around the globe. Their articles touch on a breadth of topics integral to informality, including self-organization, informal economy and trade, urban governance and transformation, public spaces, informal housing and slum-upgrading, design intervention, power and gender dynamics, and more. The specificities and commonalities these topics reveal deepen our understanding of informality across geographic and temporal contexts and have significance for planners and policymakers working from local to international scales.

We begin with Mehaffy and Haas's broad examination of the New Urban Agenda in relation to urban informality. Next, we zoom in on São Paulo, Brazil with Formicki's discussion of favela-upgrading efforts and shifting power scenarios for various social actors, such as favela dwellers, governments, and parallel powers. We set out to Durban, South Africa where DeVries turns toward the treatment of informal traders and the disconnect between planning perspectives and policy enforcement. Sadikoglu Asan and Ozsoy explore the intersection between informal and formal practices in Istanbul, Turkey as builders are considered both rule-breakers and rule-makers. Following

this, Ezeadichie et al. demonstrate the contributions of women running Home-Based Enterprises, a subset of the unemployment-led informal economy in Enugu, Nigeria, and the challenges they face. Maaoui then analyzes the implications of legalizing Accessory-Dwelling Units in Seattle, US, particularly in relation to minority households. Finally, Subramanian and Jana take us through the Recreational Open Spaces of urban India while evaluating the impacts of design interventions. We conclude this volume with a listing of 2017–18 doctoral dissertations and master’s theses from Berkeley’s Department of City and Regional Planning, which are just as thematically diverse and global in scope.

It is imperative to understand urban informality from a broad array of perspectives in order to grasp the complexities, challenges, and opportunities posed by this phenomenon. While informality certainly connects these geographically detached narratives, we hope each article is also considered alongside discourses on climate change, the alleviation of poverty, race- and gender-based inequities, and so forth, to truly affect change. We are excited to share this volume with our readers and encourage your feedback.