

# JOELHO

## # 07

### LEARNING FROM MODERN UTOPIAS

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**Co-Creative Urbanism:  
The Production of Plural  
Evolutionary Spatialities Through  
Conflicts and Complicities  
Between Public and Private in  
the Streets of Hanoi, Vietnam**



## 1. Creative Cities and Public Spaces: Resistance Spaces in Hanoi

One of the effects of globalization on urban governance is the prioritisation of principles of “livability” and “creativity” in policies and investments to enhance cities’ competitiveness (Cooke & Lazzarotti, 2008; de Chazal, 2010; Ho & Douglass, 2008; Ley, 1996; Scott, 2006). Global competition has made a determinant factor the ability of cities to effectively integrate state-of-the-art infrastructure, services and products necessary to the development of service-economy and cultural sectors (EIU, 2016; Hutton, 2015; Sassen, 2011). The implementation of these policies has marked urban revitalisation strategies in major cities and has often attracted criticism for the expansion of economic elements over cultural ones and for correlated problems affecting social relationships of local communities (Baycan, 2011; Harvey, 2005; Ruth & Franklin, 2014).

Although “creative” governance policies generally aim to produce authentic, plural places with strategies that stimulate social inclusion, participation and choralism, when the creative components are directly linked to the pursuit of economic development, their implementations tend to produce creative milieus with more-than-consumerist atmospheres (Lim, 2014; Scott, 2008, 2014; Wyly, 2013). Because of their ambition to achieve world-class quality, distinctive image (Evans, 2003; Florida, 2014; Landry, 2012; Landry & Bianchini, 1995) and eventful character, undetermined open-system plans tend to be superseded by over-determined ones.

Public space plays a fundamental component in these strategies, since it is crucial for the definition of character of localities (Madanipour, 1999), being the most accessible repository of social, cultural and historical values (Richards & Palmer, 2010). In most countries, the capacity to improve and renovate public spaces or create new ones has severe limitations imposed by increasing financial burdens of public administrations (Defilippis, 1997; Loukaitou-Sideris, 1993). The engagement of the private sector to offset such difficulties with public partnership or through delegation is steadily increasing, yet often results in the emergence of important privatization of public space (Hodkinson, 2012; Kärholm, 2016; Minton, 2012).

This particularly occurs in cities with a neoliberal framework, where developers are increasingly granted political and financial power over public space. Diminished civil autonomy and lack of emancipative agencies (Barber, 1998) lead to commodification and bending of important portions of public space into privately controlled and segregated domains (Loukaitou-Sideris, 1993). This results in a loss of genuine publicness that has been described as a fatal negation of the “Right to the City” and citizens’ alienation of power over the ontogenetic processes of urban production (Brenner, Marcuse, & Mayer, 2012; Harvey, 2000).

Central-city shopping districts are prime targets of these economic improvements. In their creative transformation, local culture is often

Frontispiece (Fig. 1) Contested sidewalks in Hanoi Ancient Quarter: Quầy via hè barber service. © Dat Nguyen.