

Introduction: How (Can) Cities Work

Theodora Tsimpouki



Electronic version

URL: <https://journals.openedition.org/ejas/11337>

DOI: 10.4000/ejas.11337

ISSN: 1991-9336

Publisher

European Association for American Studies

Electronic reference

Theodora Tsimpouki, "Introduction: How (Can) Cities Work", *European journal of American studies* [Online], 10-3 | 2015, document 2.1, Online since 31 December 2015, connection on 08 July 2021. URL: <http://journals.openedition.org/ejas/11337> ; DOI: <https://doi.org/10.4000/ejas.11337>

This text was automatically generated on 8 July 2021.

Creative Commons License

Introduction: How (Can) Cities Work

Theodora Tsimpouki

- ¹ “What is a City?”¹ So begins the collection of essays in the recently published Cambridge companion to *The City in Literature* (2015). “Why Cities”² is the opening line of another recent publication edited by Robert Inman, and entitled *Making Cities Work* (2009). While the first question concerns the origins of social and political life, the second views cities as the main source of global economic growth and productivity. To these overriding questions pertaining to the urban enigma, I would like to pose another one: “How (can) Cities Work?” Although the impact of urbanization in recent decades and the key role that cities play in “sustainable development” have been widely acknowledged, sustainability discourses have remained for the most part theoretical, and pertaining to the global rather than the specific and the local. By sustaining the question of how cities can work, this collection of essays attempts an opening toward diverse approaches to individual cities both as geographical realities and spaces of creative intervention and artistic intertextuality.
- ² This Special Issue originated from a Salzburg Global Seminar held in September 2013, under the title “Sustainability and the City: America and the Urban World.” The volume brings together six interdisciplinary essays that all address the contemporary process of urbanization. They do so by challenging abstract models of sustainability, as was the Brundtland Report,³ and focusing instead on specific practices, policies or interventions that promote the building and well-being of local communities. I hope that

the readers of EJAS will recognize the passionate commitment of its contributors whose engaging experience and academic expertise inform their formidable thinking. The volume would not have reached its completion without the exemplary guidance and support of Ana Manzananas. Special thanks go to the general editor of EJAS, Jenel Virden, for her patience and enthusiasm for the project.

NOTES

1. Antonis Balasopoulos's "Celestial Cities and Rationalist Utopias," in *The City in Literature*, ed. Kevin R. McNamara (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 2015): 17.
 2. Robert P. Inman "Introduction: City Prospects, City Policies," in *Making Cities Work: Prospects and Policies for Urban America*, ed. Robert P. Inman (Princeton and Oxford: Princeton UP, 2009):1.
 3. The Brundtland Report included the "classic" definition of sustainable development: "development which meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs." The term, sustainable development, was popularized in the Brundtland report, also known as *Our Common Future* report, published by the World Commission on Environment and Development in 1987.
-

AUTHOR

THEODORA TSIMPOUKI

University of Athens. **Theodora Tsimpouki** is Professor at the Faculty of English Studies, University of Athens. She studied at the University of Athens, the Sorbonne and at New York University from where she received her Ph.D. Her research has centered on American literature and culture, gender studies and theories of space. She is editor of the EJAS Book Review section since 2000.