Slum Fictions: De-delimiting Place in Nairobi

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Today we start to realize that true freedom presupposes belonging, and that 'dwelling' means belonging to a concrete place.[i]

– C. Norberg Shultz

The global proliferation of slums urges us to reconsider the way we think about 'place' in architecture. What does Juhanni Palasmaa's nostalgic sound of rain on his tin roof[ii] 'mean' to a resident of Nairobi's Kibera, one of Africa's largest slums, where such events create a deafening white noise resulting in flooded streets and homes, sickness, and even a rise in crime? How can the poetic voice of weathered materials and patina capture the imagination of one ceaselessly surrounded by a recycled and deteriorating world? The condition of the slum is arguably more closely linked to notions of non-place[iii] as a vessel for social mobility, yet it is most often indentified and discussed as a physical 'place' with definitive geographical boundaries and hard urban edges. Provoked by Saskia Sassen's informal borderlands and fragmented topographies, this essay examines the use of 'place' in the context of our rapidly urbanizing world, and particularly in Nairobi. The 'environmental character' of place, as Norberg-Shultz phrases it, is not considered here as solely the physical makeup of that space, nor as exclusively linked to subjective memory. Instead, place is considered here as a complex fictional construct, formed from our tendencies to compartmentalize spatial and human relations in order to better understand them. Yet this kind of fictional 'place' ultimately undermines the role of the slum as an integral component of our urban networks and perpetuates strategies ultimately denying slum dwellers the sense of 'place' they are entitled to.

'Nairobi, that is not a place'

To consider 'place' as it relates to informal settlements presents a peculiar prompt, as both 'place' and 'slum' are inherently problematic terms. As Tim Cresswell writes, "[despite the] general enthusiasm for the study of places there is very little considered understanding of what the word 'place' means."[iv] It is often paired with its even vaguer sibling, space, in an ongoing discussion of how the ubiquity of space can morph into place through time, interaction and memory. A worthy discussion of the relationship between the two exceeds the scope of this essay; however, it is important to be mindful of it in relation to informal settlements. Space, for Yi-Fu Tuan, can be considered as a resource that "yields wealth and power when properly exploited,"[v] and David Harvey has similarly insisted, for decades, that we be mindful of the spatial implications of capitalism, noting the difference between "place-bound feudal powers" and the urban "labor power in space."[vi] Harvey's linking of place with the feudal system and peasant labor, resonates with John Berger's observations of the relationship between the peasant laborer and the land on which they worked, the cyclical patterns of time and activities specific to their 'culture of survival'.[vii] This frames the familiar schism between rural/pastoral and urban/industrial conditions, where 'place' is linked intimately to the natural rhythms and processes of the landscape while the city is characterized as a disconnected aggregate of capital in an existential vacuum. In Kenya, these sentiments are seemingly amplified. Beyond the Marxist position of Harvey's 'spatial fix', we might consider the following anecdote by Dr. Rob Campbell of Montana State University describing a conversation with a Kenyan colleague named Leketari during the 1980s.

> ...I had one evening told him that I was heading back to Nairobi - we were both working for a biologist in the Maasai Mara...Not missing a beat, he said simply - "Nairobi, that is not a place." Context is, of course, everything. And it'd require a much longer response to consider what he meant. He'd been to Nairobi, but he certainly wasn't from Nairobi. He grew up in the Naibor Keju area of northern Kenya, near the town of Wamba. His world was and is one of cattle keeping, wet seasons, and dry seasons - following the grass and the rain. For Leketari that was a place - the confusion, chaos, anonymity, and emptiness of Nairobi stripped it, I think, of its 'placeness.'[viii]

Figure 1 – Nairobi's Kibera with Slum Upgrading project in background

Leketari's sentiment is not uncommon in Kenya where 'place', like its enigmatic sibling 'home', is inextricably tied to birth and burial customs, evidenced in the highly publicized legal dispute over the location for Nairobi lawyer S. M. Otieno's interment in 1987.[ix] His rural Luo clan claimed he must be buried in Western Kenya, their lawyer arguing that if not buried in his home village alongside his placenta, "the spirit of Otieno would haunt his Luo family."[x] Otieno's widow, Virginia Wambui, countered that Otieno was a modern Kenyan who spent most of his life raising a family in Nairobi, owning properties in various locations, and whose lifestyle was culturally diverse. Hence, he should be buried in Nairobi, where he lived and worked. Wambui's plea ultimately fell short as the clan claimed victory, with such tensions over burial location persisting today.[xi]

This essential link between Kenyan identity and the land, as illustrated by the Kikuyu aphorism that 'people are land, land is people', further extends to labor. In Jomo Kenyatta's detailed account of his Kikuyu roots, he states that, "As agriculturists, the Gikuyu people depend entirely on the land. It supplies them with the material needs of life, through which spiritual and mental contentment is achieved."[xii] John Lonsdale further notes that the "modern experience of urban labor and slum-dwelling has lent a new note of anxiety" to Kenya due to their long history of working on and with the land.[xiii] It can be deduced that, as

in many global cultures, such sentiments remain in the Kenyan foreground,[xiv] yet it would be shortsighted to exclusively link 'placeness' in Kenya to an existential bond between human and soil. To be 'sons of the soil', and Lonsdale argues it is always sons, depends on a patriarchal sociopolitical framework, 'place' reinforced by generations of established social and gender hierarchies. Lonsdale further argues that gender roles play a significant role in Kenyan perceptions of urbanization where the city "is treacherously female territory," due to its historical protection of rural women fleeing from oppression.[xv]

Thus, while it is futile to attempt to circumscribe the notion of 'place', 'belonging', or 'home' in Kenya related to these essential factors, it becomes at least partially understandable why Nairobi might be described as 'not a place', by a rural Kenyan (Leketari) reflecting on his country's ongoing modernization.

Safe Places, Slum Fictions

With this in mind, we return to the issue of 'placeness' in Nairobi in terms of social segregation and differentiation. Related to Harvey's sentiments towards gated communities, Cresswell writes that place as "a secure bounded community" is often positioned against what Harvey calls the "uncontrolled vectors of spatiality…against fluidity and flux which are portrayed as threatening." [xvi] The

emphasis on security and place echoes both Tuan[xvii] and Bachelard,[xviii] with Don Mitchell further noting that our post-9/11 society has accelerated the shift towards exclusionary 'place' as Manhattan rids itself of 'undesirables'.[xix] Meanwhile, Mike Davis ends his comprehensive discussion of the global slum with an even more ominous take on the future of our cities based on class segregation.

> With coldblood lucidity, [war planners] now assert that the 'feral, feudal cities' of the Third World – especially their slum outskirts – will be distinctive battlespace of the twenty-first century. Pentagon doctrine is being reshaped accordingly to support a low-intensity world war of unlimited duration against criminalized segments of the urban poor.[xx]

The numerous gated communities in suburban Nairobi clearly highlight such hardened borders between rich and poor, a utopian ideal entrenched during colonial times. Commenting on Nairobi's claim in tourism brochures of being a 'pleasant place', Robert Neuwirth notes the underlying reality for the majority of Nairobi's inhabitants is that they "will never be part of that city."[xxi] Yet internal segregation, as a form of exclusionary territorial behavior, is also on the rise in the slum as Kikuyu, Luo and Luhya have been increasingly dividing their territories into clan-based enclaves, establishing new borders within Kibera.[xxii] These constructed 'places', Lonsdale argues, have less to do with local protection against globalization or crime, than "against the daily inequalities, the unpredictable inclusions and exclusions by which their states decide who is to gain from global linkages, and who bear their local costs."[xxiii]

Place, as here linked to security, identity, and politics, is worthy of further consideration. As Davis concludes, the hard line between the poor and the rich has intensified. Yet given that territorial behavior forms the grounds for progressive and/or exclusionary politics, Harvey insists that place, when seen as a *social construct*, can help us understand emerging, or perhaps evolving, notions of difference and otherness. In the collective strife against imbalanced distribution of opportunity depending on one's ethnic affiliations, many Nairobi slum dwellers seek their 'well-being' in the comfort of 'places' linked to their rural 'homes', this process of territorialization further securing the role of the slums in mediating between the urban and rural. This is an essential point that J. O. Oucho has emphasized - the slum dweller is neither 'at home' nor 'in the city'.[xxiv]

Thus, if 'place' is indeed considered to be primarily a *social construct* as Harvey argues, what does this mean in the context of the slum and why is this important for architectural discourse? Most architectural attention towards the slums has focused on creating 'places' *in* the slums. Such interventions perhaps hope to capture the physical 'placeness' of the slum, or inject new 'placeness' into it, by directly improving the 'quality' of the built environment, a worthy effort not to be disregarded here. There is undoubtedly an urgent global crisis demanding prompt attention and architecture has the capacity to directly improve these conditions. But we must also be mindful that, as Marie Huchzermeyer points out, there are limitations to strictly focusing on the physical conditions. For instance, slum upgrading projects, which NGOs such as UN-HABITAT have admirably embraced alongside their governmental allies, are often increasingly desired by the middle-class and eventually become unaffordable for the people they were designed for.[xxv]

Yet while 'place' clearly transcends physical space, how it is described and fabricated can also be problematic. Filip de Boeck has colorfully posited, using Congo's Kinshasa as an example, that colonialism not only physically altered the 'placeness' of African countries, but also constructed a sense of 'place' that was never there to begin with. He describes how this process of misrepresentation creates a "fault-line between representation and reality so characteristic of the problematic place of 'place' in the colonial and postcolonial periods."[xxvi] Today, this rupture arguably persists in the misrepresentations of the modernizing African city. The images of slums such as Kibera are projected to the developed world through NGOs, government organizations, and, more recently, by researchers and even tourists. Residents of Kibera jokingly claim that there are more people in Kibera trying to help than there are people living there.[xxvii] Photojournalists such as Jonas Bendiksen offer colorful and ethereal photos that suggest 'placeness' in various slums, including Kibera;[xxviii] films such as *Slumdog Millionaire* (2008) and *City of God* (2002) bring slums to DVD players around the globe; in architecture we witness digital renderings of proposed solutions and critique the appropriateness of slum-upgrading schemes that were so adamantly opposed, in earlier decades, by architects such as John Turner and John Habraken.[xxix]

But this kind of slum representation and discussion only further moulds the slum into a 'place', as a fictional geography delineated from the city through its economic

disparity and physical degradation. In our fascinations with the dynamics of the informal city as 'the other', as Koolhaas has alluded to,[xxx] we begin treating the slum as a site for intervention, myriad efforts organized to heal the slums' social, economic, and physical wounds, while documenting these shocking landscapes of informal human congestion. One must assume, or perhaps hope, that such efforts and accompanying representations are intended to raise awareness towards improving the living conditions in slums, but we must also be mindful of the tendency for these representations to turn into spectacles, consumed from the safety of more comfortable 'places'. Jane Rendell has similarly questioned artistic fixations on dilapidated urban environments by asking, "[is] this a vision that only someone removed from the realities of living in these poorly maintained environments could afford to have?"[xxxi]

And this is precisely the problem. By fixating on the fabricated slum image as a defined 'place' overshadows its actual 'placeness' as a complex *social construct* defined through its myriad networks and interactions. It categorizes the slum as an urban enclave with rigid boundaries no different than those of the gated communities. Whether rich or poor there is evidenced a certain comfort, and in some cases necessity, in packaging people into such identifiable categories – socially and spatially. For instance, UN-HABITAT has used a satellite image of Nairobi with the slums colored in bright red while the golf courses are accentuated in bright green. While this is clearly intended to expose the perversity of imbalanced land distribution between the haves and have-nots, and it broadly succeeds in this effort, it also further concretizes the slum as a physical 'place'. NGOs committed to improving the slums require such a delineation of what is considered a slum before they can decipher how to improve it. Yet tellingly, UN-HABITAT writes that, in 2002, despite the numerous ways of identifying a slum, a United Nations Expert Group Meeting recommended that its definition be, "restricted to the physical and legal characteristics of the settlement, and excluding the more difficult social dimensions."[xxxii]

But what if we instead forget these physical and legal characteristics and look precisely at the slum as a multifaceted network of interaction? Sassen has offered this very approach. Let us recall Harvey's positioning of 'place' against the 'fluidity and flux' of 'uncontrolled vectors of spatiality'. It is precisely such 'uncontrolled vectors' that Sassen treats as 'analytic borderlands'.

In constituting [slums] as analytic borderlands, discontinuities are given a terrain of operations rather than being reduced to a dividing line…A topographic representation would capture the enormous discontinuity between the places and built environments of each informal economy and the financial or design district in a city, and fail to capture their complex economic interactions and dependencies.[xxxiii]

Sassen here employs 'place' to describe the slum as a topographical representation, yet astutely observes that the delineations between slum and city are ceaselessly penetrated. Her position thus deflects slum discourse, if we can call it such, towards Manuel Delanda's assemblage theory, for instance. Delanda employs Deleuzian notions of assemblage [wholes characterized by relations of exteriority] to discuss 'social ontology' in relation to cities which he describes as "assemblages of people, networks, organizations, as well as of a variety of infrastructural components, from buildings and streets to conduits for matter and energy flows…"[xxxiv] The city as an assemblage, is defined by Delanda as processes of territorialization, which is intimately linked to Harvey's 'exclusionary territorial behavior', and deterritorialization, the former stabilizing the identity of the assembly, the latter destabilizing it.[xxxv] Tellingly, he writes that "Not acknowledging the hybrid nature of social mechanisms can be a source of misunderstanding and mystification in social science."[xxxvi]

We might similarly conclude that not acknowledging the hybrid nature of the slums is also a potent source of misunderstanding in architecture. Kibera residents rarely refer to their residences as homes and when asked what slum dwellers would do if there was a distant location where a factory could provide housing and a job, the answer is: "They would run to that place."[xxxvii] Evidently, as Norberg-Shultz asserts, dwelling, in an existential sense, demands a concrete place, which for slum dwellers means a right to be in that place without the fear of eviction and uprooting. There has been much debate over Peruvian economist Hernando De Soto's position that issuing property rights to slum dwellers will link them into the capitalist system and offer them a sense of belonging,[xxxviii] a process that has gained some momentum in certain countries.[xxxix]

It is possible that land title could immediately affect one's perception of 'place' in the slums. For instance, long-term infrastructure improvements have arguably had such impact on 'place' through Rio's Favela-Barrio Project.[xl] But regardless of whether universal land tenure will ever broadly manifest, or be of any benefit to slum dwellers who are inevitably tempted to turn their newly acquired property assets into unprecedented short-term capital, is not the primary issue here. Furthermore, until such programs are initiated in Nairobi, which does not appear imminent, the slums themselves are not 'places' for the vast majority of the people living there (the original Nubian settlers, long-term residents, and resident slumlords perhaps being the exceptions). Instead, like Marco Polo's description of Despina in Calvino's *Invisible Cities*, they are vessels - utopian vessels - to take them from their rural homes to the unknown wonders of prosper in the great Kenyan city.

> When the camel driver sees, at the horizon of the tableland, the pinnacles of the skyscrapers come into view, the radar antennae, the white and red windsocks flapping, the chimneys belching smoke, he thinks of a ship; he knows it is a city, but he thinks of it as a vessel that will take him away from the desert, a windjammer about to cast off, with the breeze already swelling the sails, not yet unfurled, a steamboat with its boiler vibrating in the iron keel; and he thinks of all the ports, the foreign merchandise the cranes unload on the docks, the taverns where crews of different flags break bottles over one another's heads, the lighted, ground-floor windows, each with a woman combing her hair.[xli]

The imagery of Calvino's city is relevant in a couple of significant ways. First, the slum as a vessel for social mobility is a potent metaphor to keep in mind. But secondly, Calvino's vessel is not described in isolation, as lost somewhere at sea. The image of the vessel emerges through the description of the ports, the cranes that activate the ship and enable its purpose, the goods to be exchanged, and the 'places' for social interaction so important for urban commentators such as Lefebvre.[xlii] Without describing the surrounding network of the ship, there would be little to say.

Too often in architectural discourse we interpret the slum vessel as if it were simply a 'place'. We want to design better engines for the ship, upgrade the interior to make it more comfortable, or patch the holes in its sails so they look and function better. However, this fixation on 'place' overshadows the transitory function of the vessel, its connecting points, and the various mechanisms that activate it. Related to the urban landscape, Lefebvre argues that "...the housing question has for it and its representatives concealed the problematic of the city and the *urban*."[xliii] We might say the same thing about the slums. As designers, we must transcend this myopic approach to design and instead question how we can optimize the very mechanisms that activate the slum, weaving it more effectively into the city by understanding the systems of economic and social exchange already there. Hence, the most sustainable solution to alleviating the increasing challenges of the slums through architecture may not be in the slums themselves but rather in redesigning, or perhaps rewiring, the networks they are already engaged with. We must not only improve the space of the vessel (e.g. slum upgrading) but also improve the systems that can pull people from the slums through various strategies including incremental capital acquisition and skills training.

Design has this capacity. Architect Teddy Cruz has already accepted Sassen's challenge through his work on the Tijuana/San Diego border in new and promising territories for architecture. Cruz is interested in the "landscapes of flows: of manufactured goods and people seeking employment to the north and the surplus goods and remittances to the south."[xliv] John Beardsley describes his work as extending the analysis of boundaries "between the formal and informal to the international frontier."[xlv] We see similarities to Sassen in Cruz's following position about housing:

> Housing can even be a neighborhood economic engine; it can be a site for the production of new social and cultural relations spawned by pedagogical programming carried out at the scale of the community. In other words, housing cannot be understood in a vacuum. It must be viewed as a relational tool.[xlvi]

Furthermore, he describes the shift in design where architecture can engage with the issues of social mobility linked to slums.

> This is what I consider to be the political in art or architecture: not the production of political architecture, but the construction of the political itself, towards an architecture of social relevance.

This begins by asking questions: Who owns the resources? Whose territory is this? In other words: the exposition of an institution's mechanisms in order to show how it operates. My aim is to open up institutions, turning its mechanisms into material to be reconfigured.[xlvii]

Others are taking similar approaches. In Rio, slum-upgrading projects aim to preserve the existing urban networks while rebuilding them.[xlviii] Meanwhile, as one of the rare 'social architects' working in Nairobi, Ronald Omyonga is working with architecture programs at Montana State University and Jomo Kenyatta University of Agriculture and Technology to further develop the idea of more 'holistic' housing strategies that can supply the immense gap in Nairobi's lower-middle class housing market while employing people living in the slums. The designs of these houses consider existing incremental loan structures and introduce both monetary and material payment structures through the design of the housing components. Combined with affordable plots of land and designs for incremental habitation (based off of earlier wet-core schemes), such developments are designed to empower slum dwellers, not exploit them. While the intervention may not be directly in the slums, it has the long-term potential for employment and skills training which are more valuable, desirable, and sustainable, than any architectural handouts in the slums.

As cities continue to explode in the twenty-first century alongside increasing economic disparity, architects must refocus their efforts on meaningful solutions to the challenges ahead. If we remain focused on designing for 'place' as simply a sensorial bond between us and our surrounding landscapes (natural and/or built), we will divert past the social premise for the term and ultimately minimize its potential for architecture. Our profession, and the training of architects for this century, benefit from visionary leaders like Cruz and Omyonga who understand that architecture must become more socially relevant, and this starts with an entire re-think of what the city can be – a well-designed ship with well-designed docks, cranes and pubs, all facilitating its primary function - mobility. If we reach for these aims we may have a chance to help emancipate existential 'place' for the majority of inhabitants on this planet who are presently denied it.

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Notes

[i] Christian Norberg-Shultz, "The Phenomenon of Place," in *Theorizing a New Agenda for Architecture: An Anthology of Architectural Theory 1965-1995*, ed. Kate Nesbitt (Princeton Architectural Press, 1996), 425.

[ii] Juhanni Pallasmaa, Lecture on "Home and Existential Homelessness: Rootedness and Alienation in Architecture," (University of Dundee, January 23, 2008).

[iii] Auge recognizes that that there is ultimately no such thing as a non-place yet he posits non-place as a dialectical condition linked to place in our 'globalized' context. Non-place is often refered to in architecture in relation to Auge's discussion on ubiquitous space – airports, shopping malls, etc. See Marc Auge, *Non-Places: An Introduction to Supermodernity* (Verso, 1995).

[iv] Tim Cresswell, *Place: A Short Introduction* (Blackwell, 2004), 1.

[v] Yi-Fu Tuan, *Space and Place: The Perspective of Experience* (University of Minnesota Press, 1977), 58.

[vi] David Harvey, *Spaces of Hope* (Edinburgh University Press, 2000), 24-25.

[vii] A chapter in *Pig Earth* colorfully describing the slaughtering of a cow no longer productive for the family and re-placed in her stall by a younger one is tellingly called 'A Question of Place'. See John Berger, *Pig Earth* (Vintage, 1979), 3-6.

[viii] Personal email, March 3, 2010.

[ix] See Patricia Stamp, "Burying Otieno: The Politics of Gender and Ethnicity in Kenya," *Signs* 16, no. 4 (1991), and April Gordon, "Burying Otieno Revisited," *Journal of Women in Culture and Society* 20, no. 4 (1995).

[x] Laura DeLuca, "Burying S.M.: The Politics of Knowledge and the Sociology of Power in Africa," *PoLAR* 17, no. 2 (2008): 138.

[xi] See Kepher Otieno, "Millionaire's Burial Stopped Again over Gravesite," *The Standard* (2008), http://www.standardmedia.co.ke/InsidePage.php?id=1143998074&catid=159&a=1.

[xii] Jomo Kenyatta, *Facing Mt. Kenya* (Vintage, 1965), 22.

[xiii] John Lonsdale, "Soil, Work, Civilisation, and Citizenship in Kenya," *Journal of Eastern African Studies* 2, no. 2 (2008): 306.

[xiv] Miller and Yeager write that "being landed ranks very high among Kenyans' social and economic priorities and will figure centrally in personal aspirations for years to come." See Norman Miller and Rodger Yeager, *Kenya: The Quest for Prosperity*, 2nd ed. (Westview Press, 1994), 94.

[xv] Lonsdale, "Soil, Work, Civilisation, and Citizenship in Kenya," 309.

[xvi] Cresswell, *Place: A Short Introduction*, 56.

[xvii] Tuan writes that "Place is security, space is freedom." Tuan, *Space and Place: The Perspective of Experience*, 3.

xviii Gaston Bachelard, *The Poetics of Space: The Classic Look at How We Experience Intimate Places* (Beacon Press, 1994), 6.

xix See Don Mitchell, *The Right to the City: Social Justice and the Fight for Public Space* (The Guilford Press, 2003).

xx Mike Davis, *Planet of Slums* (Verso, 2006), 205.

xxi Neuwirth p.70

xxii Lonsdale, "Soil, Work, Civilisation, and Citizenship in Kenya," 305.

xxiii Ibid.: 312.

xxiv Oucho writes that "[labor] migration is largely temporary, involving circulation and reciprocity between urban areas and dividing families into two geographically separate households…migrants intercede between rural and urban areas, endeavoring to make the best of both worlds." J. O. Oucho, *Urban Migrants and Rural Development in Kenya* (University of Nairobi Press, 1996).

xxv Marie Huchzermeyer, "Slum Upgrading in Nairobi within the Housing and Basic Services Market: A Housing Rights Concern," *Journal of Asian and African Studies* 43, no. 1 (2008): 26.

xxvi Ibid., 249.

xxvii Personal Interview, Nairobi, July, 2009.

xxviii Jonas Bendiksen and Christina Larson, "Planet Slum," *Foreign Policy* (2009), http://www.foreignpolicy.com/articles/2009/11/03/planet_slum?page=0,1.

xxix See John Turner, *Housing by People* (Pantheon Books, 1976), "Squatter Settlement: An Architecture That Works," in *Housing and Dwelling: Perspectives on Modern Domestic Architecture*, ed. Barbara Miller Lane (Routledge, 1968), and John Habraken, *Supports: An Alternative to Mass Housing* (Urban International Press, 1972). Ivan Illitch has similarly argued for this kind of self-invested sense of dwelling. He sees the need to build one's own dwelling as an existential human need. Housing as a commodity, he argues, "decays from the day it is ready to use." See Ivan Illitch, "Dwelling: How to Tell a Resident from an Inhabitant," *CoEvolution* Spring (1984). For the reverse argument see Davis' chapter titled "Illusions of Self-Help," *Planet of Slums*, 70-94, and Herbert Werlin, "The Slum-Upgrading Myth," *Urban Studies* 36, no. 9 (1999).

xxx Kollhaas describes his incentive to study Lagos as a "…forced encounter with something I really didn't know anything about – Africa, which I was always intrigued by but I never had felt the kind of closeness that I feel, for instance, for North America, so I felt embarrassed that there was this world I didn't understand." Bregtje van der Haak, "Lagos: Wide and Close," (2003).

xxxi Jane Rendell, *Art and Architecture: A Place Between* (I. B. Tauris, 2006), 89.

xxxii UN-HABITAT, *The Challenge of Slums: Global Report on Human Settlements 2003* (Earthscan, 2003), 12.

xxxiii Saskia Sassen, "Fragmented Urban Topographies and Their Underlying Interconnections," in *Informal City: Caracas Case*, ed. A. Brillembourg, K. Feireiss, and H. Klumpner (Prestel, 2005), 84.

xxxiv Manuel Delanda, *A New Philosophy of Society: Assemblage Theory and Social Complexity* (Continuum, 2006), 6.

xxxv Ibid., 12.

xxxvi Ibid., 24.

xxxvii In 2009 the architecture program at Montana State University embarked on a journey to Nairobi, Kenya, to initiate a research project focused on the present housing crisis linked to the slums, and primarily Kibera, one of Africa's largest slums. This was one of our questions posed at a meeting with community representatives arranged by Eric Makokha from a local organization called Shelter Forum.

xxxviii See Bruce Mau and Institute without borders, *Massive Change* (Phaidon, 2004), Hernando de Soto, *The Mystery of Capital: Why Capitalism Triumphs in the West and Fails Everywhere Else* (Basic Books, 2000), and "The Missing Ingredient: What Poor Markets Will Need to Make Their Markets Work," *The Economist* June (1994).

xxxix According to UN-Habitat reports, "many countries are beginning to provide residents with access to land tenure and services." See John Beardsley, "Improving Informal Settlements: Ideas from Latin America," *Harvard Design Magazine* 28 (2008): 32.

xl Lu Peterson writes that the $600-million project, benefitting 160 slums, converted the Morro da Formiga area of Rio into one reminiscent of "the small cities on the slopes of Greece or Italy…" Lu Peterson, "Interventions for the Socio-Urban Integration of the Favelas of Rio De Janeiro," *Harvard Design Magazine* 28 (2008).

xli Italo Calvino, *Invisible Cities* (Harvest 1972), 17.

xlii For Lefebvre the notion of *oeuvre* captures the essentiality of social interaction in urban space. He writes, "The ideal city would involve the obsolescence of space: an accelerated change of abode, emplacements and prepared spaces. It would be the *ephemeral city*, the perpetual *oeuvre* of the inhabitant, themselves mobile and mobilized for and by this *oeuvre.*" Henri Lefebvre, *Writings on Cities* (Blackwell, 1996).

xliii Lefebvre, *Writings on Cities*, 146.

xliv See John Beardsley, "Border Crossings: Living Rooms on the Border/Manufactured Sites Estudio Teddy Cruz," *Harvard Design Magazine* 28 (2008): 62. See also Teddy Cruz, "Two Headed Journeys; Border Walls, Border Cities, and the Two-Headed Trojan Horse of Tijuana," *Thresholds* 20 (2000).

xlv Beardsley, "Border Crossings: Living Rooms on the Border/Manufactured Sites Estudio Teddy Cruz," 62.

xlvi Teddy Cruz and Caleb Waldorf, "Learning from Tijuana," *triplecanopy*(2009), http://canopycanopycanopy.com/7/learning_from_tijuana.

xlvii Ibid.

xlviii Conde and Magalhães write that "Whatever the city, its charter involves more than a physical location – beyond the streets and buildings, urban environments are built defined by the use made of them, by the traces left of past usage, the social relations and symbolical practices they elicit." Luiz Paulo Conde and Sergio Magalhaes, *Favela-Barrio Project: Rewriting the History of Rio* (Viver Cidades, 2004), 7.