

Entangled Urbanization Conference 2017

Day 2 Breakout Group 1 Summary_Emily Rains

We reviewed the five research sub themes we discussed yesterday and tried to further develop how we would operationalize these themes with research questions.

Our group had disagreements about whether it was necessary or even ethical to begin a research agenda by imposing definitions on the concepts of interest. We also had disagreements on whether the best way to move forward was to develop the themes from the previous day or to discuss newly emerging themes from today.

We concluded that despite our diverse backgrounds, we are commonly motivated by an interest in analyzing these research themes through the framework of inequality and marginalization. We proposed developing two research questions for each research sub theme. The first question would be critical and the second would be programmatic. For example, for the research area around existing data, the critical question would ask how the use of existing data has served to further marginalize the urban poor. The programmatic question would ask how data can be used or improved to mitigate marginalization.

Another proposed research idea centered around the idea of “transactional politics.” We noted that our discussions have focused around how the urban poor interact with other classes, other agencies, etc. and that the poor access services via transactions with each of these groups. We discussed creating a map of a city that highlights the different actors in a city, the types of transactions between these actors, and the resulting power hierarchies. Whether this type of exercise would be separate from or embedded within the earlier framework is still unresolved.