Much has been written about the rapid increase in urbanisation, especially in low-and middle-income countries in Asia and Africa, where sometimes the rate of increase has been more than three or four times in the last 50 years (United Nations, 2018). There has been a simultaneous assertion that cities and urban regions are engines of economic growth and have brought prosperity. However, it is clear that the benefits of this growth have not been shared equally. Urban areas are now more unequal than they were 20 years ago: although cities have emerged as global economic platforms for production, innovation and trade, 75 per cent of the world’s cities have higher levels of income inequalities than two decades ago (UN Habitat, 2016). This is compounded by persistent challenges around urban growth and employment, affordable housing and service provision as well as the emergence of newer concerns around climate change, growing insecurity and international migration.

Focussing on specific instances of equity, and access to the city, this issue engages with some of these questions in Southern cities. The three papers in the General Articles section look at how different populations within urban areas access the city. The first article by Bhuyan and Zhang is located in Dhaka, Bangladesh, and looks at how children move through Dhaka, one of the densest urban conglomerations. The authors find that about 60 per cent of children experience a low degree of independent mobility, especially pointing to cars as a barrier to mobility for both children and parents. The paper on Vizhinjam, Kerala, explores the nature of urban citizenship among fisher communities in Thiruvananthapuram. In Kerala, a state that is renowned for its achievements in human development and governance, the fishing community continues to be marginalised and lack collective power to influence policies. Ganga finds that participatory meetings in such contexts become tokenistic and their transformative capacity is undermined. The third paper, by Shivanand, looks at the experience of being a circular migrant in Bengaluru, India, by focussing on residents of two migrant settlements who work as construction labourers in the city.

Our Classics reprint from 2013 by McGranahan and Turok looks particularly at the relationship between urbanisation and economic growth in Asia and Africa. This article reviews the arguments and evidence for whether rapid urban population growth can help raise living standards. Its main finding is that the development effects of urbanisation and the magnitude of agglomeration economies are very variable. There is no simple linear relationship between urbanisation and economic growth, or between city size and productivity. The potential of urbanisation to promote growth is likely to depend on how conducive the infrastructure and institutional settings are.

The remaining two pieces are interesting intersections across visual and textual representations. Hendawy and Saeed’s essay is an exploration of Cairo’s public and private modes of transportation through photographs. Combining critical visual methodologies with ethnographic methods, this photo essay reveals the simultaneous existence of two cities as experienced by different publics. The review
piece by Moharir looks at Tejubehan’s visual book, *Drawing from the City*, which is both a remembrance of the author’s journey to art and a powerful imagination of a city for its women. The book is a nudge to look at the city with its multiple, overlapping imaginations and a reminder of different ways of seeing and relating to it.

**References**
