

Sustainability in the City and Beyond

Concordia University

March 19-21, 2019

Urban Sprawl and Fairness Across Generations

Matthias Fritsch

Due to path dependence, urban sprawl not only affects present city dwellers but future generations. Given the time urban sprawl (like all ‘creeping problems’) takes, perhaps it affects future city dwellers above all. I am not a specialist in urban geography, and so cannot detail these long-term effects. However, I (as a philosopher) can ask how in general one can ask the question as to how we might think about sharing a complex item like a city across time. In the little time I have available, then, I propose taking turns among generations as the best model for addressing how we ought to hand over a city like Montreal to the next generation. I argue that, despite division into private parts, the city is a common fund that, like other holistic objects, cannot be fully possessed, and thus asks to be handed on to the next generation. Turn-taking respects this indivisible, common, and holistic nature of the city, and thereby suggests that city dwellers ask themselves how to pass on the city they do not fully own.



FACULTY OF ARTS AND SCIENCE

Loyola College for
Diversity and Sustainability

Loyola Sustainability
Research Centre

Department of
Communication Studies

Department of Biology

Department of Geography,
Planning and Environment

Department of
Political Science

Department of
Sociology and Anthropology

JOHN ▼ MOLSON
SCHOOL OF BUSINESS

Department of Management