

# From mere urbanity to urban bioethical standards

---

Muzur, Amir; Kyu Lee, Chan; Byun, Sun-yong; Doričić, Robert; Rinčić, Iva

Source / Izvornik: **Jahr : Europski časopis za bioetiku, 2020, 11, 143 - 158**

**Journal article, Published version**

**Rad u časopisu, Objavljena verzija rada (izdavačev PDF)**

<https://doi.org/10.21860/j.11.1.7>

Permanent link / Trajna poveznica: <https://um.nsk.hr/um:nbn:hr:184:262584>

Rights / Prava: [Attribution 4.0 International](#)/[Imenovanje 4.0 međunarodna](#)

Download date / Datum preuzimanja: **2024-07-05**



Repository / Repozitorij:

[Repository of the University of Rijeka, Faculty of Medicine - FMRI Repository](#)



Iva Rinčić\*, Robert Doričić\*\*, Sun-yong Byun\*\*\*, Chan Kyu Lee\*\*\*\*, Amir Muzur\*

## From Mere Urbanity to Urban Bioethical Standards: An Invitation to a Broadening of Bioethics

### Summary

---

An interest in research, deliberation, and reflection on urbanity has been present for a long time. Due to rapid urbanisation in the last few decades, such interest has intensified, attracting scholars from different disciplines and creating new platforms for discussion.

The first indicators of a 'bioethical' interest in urban life are already present in Van Rensselaer Potter's early papers (urban ethics). However, more extensive research into urban bioethics remained on hold until recently, mainly due to the dominance of the biomedical paradigm within modern mainstream bioethics.

In 2017, the European Bioethics in Action project (funded by the Croatian Science Foundation) ended, resulting in a list of general bioethical standards related to animals, plants, and human health. The aim of this paper is to present the rationale for developing bioethical standards in a specific urban context.

**Keywords:** bioethics, city, standards, EuroBioAct.

---

\* Department of Social Sciences and Medical Humanities, Faculty of Medicine / Department of Public Health, Faculty of Health Studies, University of Rijeka, Rijeka, Croatia.

\*\* Department of Social Sciences and Medical Humanities, Faculty of Medicine, University of Rijeka, Rijeka, Croatia.

\*\*\* Graduate School of Education, Faculty of Elementary Moral Education, Seoul National University of Education, Seoul, Republic of Korea.

\*\*\*\* Department of Korean linguistic and literature, Humanities Research Institute, Chung-Ang University, Seoul, Republic of Korea.

*Correspondence Address:* Iva Rinčić, Department of Social Sciences and Medical Humanities, Faculty of Medicine, University of Rijeka, B. Branchetta 20, 51000 Rijeka, Croatia / Department of Public Health, Faculty of Health Studies, Viktora Cara Emina 5, University of Rijeka, 51000 Rijeka, Croatia. ORCID ID: [orcid.org/0000-0003-1028-8813](https://orcid.org/0000-0003-1028-8813). E-mail: [iva.rincic@medri.uniri.hr](mailto:iva.rincic@medri.uniri.hr).

## Introduction

In recent years, numerous changes in the wider bioethical discourse have led to the gradual opening up of the traditional biomedical paradigm to topics of a broader scientific, professional, and public interest. This happened as a result of the upheaval in bioethics at the end of the 20<sup>th</sup> century (such as the revitalisation of the original *Jahrian* foundations of bioethics as the ethics of life, or *Bio-Ethik*),<sup>1</sup> but also due to increasing awareness of other phenomena that have long-term effects on the quality of life, and the survival of humankind and the Earth in general. The most prominent of these are the topics of climate change and pollution, the increasing use of digital media<sup>2</sup> (artificial intelligence and new habitable environments, e.g. space bioethics),<sup>3</sup> together with certain earlier fields of interest previously unjustly marginalised in bioethical discourse. One such field of interest is the city, simultaneously a historical and modern social fact, a kind of institution of the essential elements of the living and the artificial, an area of (co-)existence of the individual and collective, consequently, a space of challenges and conflicts between privacy and security. The life of modern humankind is largely lived in cities. According to *UN World Urbanization Prospects* (2018), around 4.3 billion people are living in urban areas, and the number is constantly increasing (it is estimated that by 2050 the figure will have reached 6.6 billion, i.e. two-thirds of the world's population), as is the number of people living in highly populated areas.<sup>4</sup> Although urbanisation generally has more positive features compared to rural areas (higher income, electricity access, improved sanitation and drinking water, clean fuels for cooking and heating, child malnutrition),<sup>5</sup> some studies are more cautious and 'weaken the rationale for either encouraging or discouraging urbanisation as part of a strategy for economic growth'.<sup>6</sup> Irrespective of the above, this is undoubtedly a very complex and controversial process, the consequences of which go far beyond the significance of cities and their residents, and calls for

1 Jahr, Fritz (1926), *Wissenschaft vom Leben und Sittenlehre (Alte Erkenntnisse in neuem Gewande), Mittelschule*, 40 (45), 604-5; Rinčić, Iva and Muzur, Amir (2012), *Fritz Jahr i radanje europske bioetike [Fritz Jahr and the Emergence of European Bioethics]*, Zagreb; Pergamena.

2 Muzur, Amir (2018), Interdisciplinarity as a state of mind: how can individuals and societies reach it?, *European Review*, 26 (S2), S76-S84.

3 Langston, Sara M. (2018), Reimagining Icarus: Ethics, Law and Policy Considerations for Commercial Human Spaceflight, in: Russomano, Thais and Rehnberg, Lucas eds., *Into Space - A Journey of How Humans Adapt and Live in Microgravity*, IntechOpen Limited, London 2018, 1-17.

4 *World Urbanization Prospects 2018* United Nations, Department of Economic and Social Affairs, Population Division (2018), in: *World Urbanization Prospects 2018*, <https://population.un.org/wup/DataQuery/> (accessed: 7 March 2020).

5 Ritchie, Hannah and Roser, Max (2020), Urbanization, in: *Our World in Data*, <https://ourworldindata.org/urbanization/> (accessed: 7 March 2020).

6 Bloom, David E., Canning, David and Fink, Günther (2008), Urbanization and the Wealth of Nations, *Science*, 319 (5864), 772.

the inclusion of all available resources in planning and redefining the urban way of life. We, therefore, believe that when contemplating modern man and society, it is also necessary to include the relevant bio-ethical issues of urbanity, and to do so by problematising and defining a basis, framework and (bioethically relevant) urban standards. The starting point for this can already be found in the pioneering works of bioethics scholars (Van Rensselaer Potter, Albert Jonsen), but for the sake of strengthening the theoretical basis, more contemporary authors need to be included as well. The goal of this paper is to establish and evaluate the basis of bioethical deliberation of the city as a starting point for the following stages of research (analysis of the methodological tool of bioethical standardisation, carried out as part of the European Bioethics in Action project; a proposal of urban bioethical standards using modern digital tools).

## **The emergence of the city: Roots, meaning, and bioethical potential**

Despite the limited availability of early evidence on the emergence of cities, that available indicates that the first geographically compact entities ('settled communities',<sup>7</sup> as V. Gordon Childe calls them) emerged in the Neolithic Age more than 7,000 years ago in various locations around the world (Mesopotamia, China, America, Egypt, India, etc.) Although some authors advocate the theory that the first cities emerged before the Agricultural Revolution, the so-called '*Cities First*' Model,<sup>8</sup> archaeology supports the opposite theory, according to which an excess of agricultural products encouraged the exchange and trade of goods, and thus a more sedentary way of life. The early cities were primarily geographically defined units. This is the main reason why the majority of them kept a compact structure until the Industrial Revolution, maintaining functionality through physical proximity (with walking distance as the main reference of measurement). However, further progress of the city and its development into the complex system of the 21<sup>st</sup> century required more than a large population, a surplus of products and an available market. In addition to having a permanent population of, as a rule, socially diverse individuals<sup>9</sup>, 'being' a

---

7 For a more detailed analysis of Childe's contribution to the theoretical shaping of the history of city development (the books *Man Makes Himself* and *What Happened in History*), cf. Michael Smith (Smith, Michael E. (2009), V. Gordon Childe and the Urban Revolution: a Historical Perspective on a Revolution in Urban Studies, *The Town Planning Review*, 80 (1), 2-29).

8 An example of such a city (Çatalhöyük in Anatolia) is mentioned by Jane Jacobs in her book *The Economy of Cities*, where communal life established the creative preconditions for the development of agriculture (Jacobs, Jane (1969), *The Economy of Cities*, New York: Random House, quoted in Smith, Michael E., Ur, Jason and Feinman, Gary M. (2014), Jane Jacobs' 'Cities First' Model and Archaeological Reality, *International Journal of Urban and Regional Research*, 38 (4), 1525).

9 Wirth, Louis (1936), Urbanism as a Way of Life, *American Journal of Sociology*, 44 (1), 1.

city eventually also implied a (relatively) flexible but at the same time the sustainable level of social organisation, planning, and management. Therefore, a modern city is a true core of (co-)existence, or, as Lewis Mumford has pointed out, the essence of the city, apart from its geographic unity, is its system of economic relationships, institutional processes, social interactions, and shared aesthetic experience.<sup>10</sup> A city is not only a social organism<sup>11</sup> and social system<sup>12</sup> but also a political experiment,<sup>13</sup> and a symbolic area of the philosophy of language.<sup>14</sup>

More recent approaches have rightly treated cities as more complex systems, often giving up in the face of an (in)ability to fully experience, define and understand them. In the second half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century and at the beginning of the new millennium, coupled with other socio-technological processes, the city became (or remained) a place of capitalist expansion and a physical, cultural, and symbolic location of constant change, development, and profit. The ‘girding the globe’ of the processes of urbanisation, as David Harvey writes in his renowned article *Right to the City*, crucially encompasses the issues of global financial influences and instruments. These have been unfairly and somewhat irresponsibly pushed into the background by other important topics related to the city, such as what it means (to be) a city, sustainability, quality of life (of citizens but also other living creatures), and, no less importantly, the dilemma of the accumulation and distribution of the community, consumerism, justice, and freedom. Cities have become ‘spaces of global capitalism’.<sup>15</sup>

‘The urbanisation of China, over the last twenty years, has been of a different character, with its heavy focus on infrastructural development, but it is even more important than of the USA. Its pace picked up enormously after a brief recession in 1997, to the extent that China has taken in nearly half the world’s cement supplies since 2000. More than a hundred cities have passed the one-million population mark in this period, and small villages, such as Shenzhen, have become huge metropolises, of 6 to 10 million people. Vast infrastructural projects, including dams and highways – again, all debt-financed – are transforming the landscape. The consequences for the global economy and the absorption of a surplus of capital have been significant: Chile booms thanks to the high price of copper, Australia thrives, and even Brazil

10 Mumford, Lewis (1937), What is a City, *Architectural Record*, 1937, 82 (November), 58-62.

11 Schnore, Leo F. (1966), The City as a Social Organism, *Urban Affairs Quarterly*, 1 (3), 58-69.

12 Safa, Helen I. (1969), The City as a Social System, *Science*, 166 (3909), 1189-90.

13 Nawratek, Krzysztof (2019), How brave can we be? The city as a political experiment (editorial), *Journal of Architecture and Urbanism*, 38 (1), 1-2.

14 Ackermann, Robert J. (1988), *Wittgenstein’s City*, Amherst; The University of Massachusetts Press.

15 Harvey, David (2019), *Spaces of Global Capitalism: A Theory of Uneven Geographical Development*, London; Verso.

and Argentina have recovered in part because of the strength of Chinese demand for raw materials...<sup>16</sup>

Even if at some point in time it was possible to find a process that has changed civilisation more than urbanisation, today this is almost impossible, for the city has to this day remained the longest-standing and most resilient social institution. The emergence of cities, often without criteria, frameworks or plans, is only partly a matter of quantitative indicators but mostly of significant and irreversible qualitative changes in very different aspects of life. Migrations, metropolisation, tertiarisation, residential segregation, suburbanisation, urban blight, and gentrification are just a few of the rapidly growing processes immanent in contemporary urbanisation. In sociological discourse, these qualitative features of urbanisation can be classified into three main groups: a) the creation of new forms of socio-spatial forms (the development of large, vast and densely populated urban areas, so-called global cities,<sup>17</sup> megacities, megapolises; diffuse and without clear borders, and often without the ‘traditional’ characteristics of a city),<sup>18</sup> b) changed social relationships (living conditions in a city depend on a variety of factors, such as social climate, position, sex, gender, race, age, and (un)availability of resources), and finally c) the transformation of natural surroundings into artificial ones (and the associated risks of climate change, natural disasters, the pollution of air, water and soil, inadequate infrastructure, and waste problems).<sup>19</sup>

If living in a city has become part of our habitus and an integral part of the collective memory and common future, it comes as no surprise that the topic of urbanity has often been chosen by researchers and experts, writing from scientific and artistic perspectives. The city as ‘interdependent facets, as social, economic, infrastructural, and spatial complex systems that exist in similar but changing forms over a huge range of scales’<sup>20</sup> finds its place in numerous areas of activity, ranging from architecture and design to traffic, municipal, IT, marketing and media, public healthcare, psychiatry, studies of sustainability and resilience, climate change, philosophy,<sup>21</sup> etc. This

---

16 Harvey, David. (2008), *Right to the City*, *New Left Review*, 53 (September-October), 23–40.

17 Sassen, Saskia (1991), *The Global City, New York, London, Tokyo*, Princeton; Princeton University Press.

18 ‘In the words of Lewis Mumford, the “container” of such a historical city broke open, and its content scattered across the surrounding areas...’ (Pajvančić Cizelj, Ana (2017), *Globalni urbani procesi: stanja, koncepti i alternative [Global Urban Processes: Conditions, Concepts and Alternatives]*, Novi Sad; Mediterranean Publishing, 48).

19 A better understanding of existing urbanisation concepts is impossible without an insight into the context of globalisation that goes beyond existing local, national, industrial or other paradigms (Pajvančić Cizelj, A. (2017)).

20 Bettencourt, Luis M. A. (2013), ‘The Origins of Scaling in Cities’, *Science*, 340 (6139), 1438–41.

21 The city as a complex interrelation is not exclusively the area of philosophical circles, although many associate it with feminist philosophy, especially in the continental tradition, building argumentation on the prevailing non-compatibility of thought and place. ‘The links between thought and place, thinking and space, remain elusive, if not mutually exclusionary. To think is to be where one is not, and to be, in body and soul, is to focus on the moment, on what is present at hand. Yet, thinking is conditioned by space, just as how is space, a place, in turn,

network of interrelationships<sup>22</sup> has given rise to ideas of an ‘experimental city’, a city of ‘wealth, knowledge, greenery, health and happiness’,<sup>23</sup> and cities have been labelled as innovative (the ‘measure, compare, improve’ approach),<sup>24</sup> playful,<sup>25</sup> or smart (often as a synonym for intelligent<sup>26</sup> or cognitive).<sup>27</sup> The European Commission also published a document in a similar vein in late 2019, in which it advocated the concept of a so-called ‘human-centred’ city, where ambitious research, innovations, and investments in the urban sector are based on 4 main pillars: ‘people, place, prosperity, resilience’, as well as two cross-cutting dimensions (governance and measuring).<sup>28</sup> The objective of this document, the title of which is reminiscent of Rudi Supek’s ‘city tailored to man’,<sup>29</sup> is to contribute to the implementation of the European Green Deal Investment Plan,<sup>30</sup> affirming the notion and understanding of the city (tailored to man) as a (mere) investment space.

As expected, the phenomenological complexity of the city has attracted socio-humanistic studies aimed at detecting and describing urban phenomena and processes, ultimately overcoming the role of being passive observers of social problems and injustice conditioned by the space of the city. Henri Lefebvre, Manuel Castells, David Harvey, and Saskia Sassen are just some of the key figures who have irreversibly changed research into the content and meaning of the city. Recently, this list has been joined by researchers who have become interested in the moral side of life in cities, so-called urban or city ethics.<sup>31</sup> They often critically reflect upon and re-evaluate the legacy of

---

is made accessible by a way of thinking.’ (Mendieta, Eduardo (2001), *The City and the Philosopher: On the Urbanism of Phenomenology*, *Philosophy & Geography*, 4 (2), 204).

22 Spilhaus, Athelstan (1967), *The Experimental City*, *Daedalus* 96 (4), 1129-41.

23 Glaeser, Edward L. (2011), *Triumph of the City: How Our Greatest Invention Makes Us Richer, Smarter, Greener, Healthier and Happier*, London; Penguin Books, 1. It would be encouraging to see whether the presented arguments provide a critical view or revitalise the previously mentioned ‘Cities First’ approach of Jane Jacobs.

24 *Innovation Cities™ Program*, <https://www.innovation-cities.com/> (accessed: 7 March 2020).

25 Donoff, Gabrielle and Bridgman, Rae (2019), *The Playful City: Constructing a Typology for Urban Design, Interventions*, *International Journal of Play*, 6 (3), 294-307.

26 Deakin, Mark and Al Waer, Husam (2011), *From Intelligent to Smart Cities*, *Intelligent Buildings International*, 3 (3), 133-9.

27 Finger, Matthias and Portmann, Edy (2016), *What Are Cognitive Cities?*, in: Portmann, Edy and Finger, Matthias eds., *Towards Cognitive Cities. Studies in Systems, Decision and Control*, Springer, Cham 2016, 1-11.

28 *The Human-Centred City: Recommendations for Research and Innovation Actions (Report of the High-Level Expert Group on Innovating Cities)* European Commission (2020), Brussels: European Commission, in: *Publications Office of the EU*, <https://op.europa.eu/en/publication-detail/-/publication/b3e3431e-424a-11ea-9099-01aa75ed71a1/language-en/format-PDF/source-search/> (accessed: 4 March 2020); Xu, Hong and Geng, Huexian (2019), *People-Centric Service Intelligence for Smart Cities*, *Smart Cities*, 2, 135-52.

29 Supek, Rudi (1987), *Grad po mjeri čovjeka [The City Tailored to Man]*, Zagreb; Naprijed.

30 *The European Green Deal Investment Plan and Just Transition Mechanism* European Commission (2020), Brussels: European Commission, in: *Publications*, [https://ec.europa.eu/info/publications/200114-european-green-deal-investment-plan\\_hr/](https://ec.europa.eu/info/publications/200114-european-green-deal-investment-plan_hr/) (accessed: 25 February 2020).

31 Chan, Jeffrey (2018), *Urban Ethics in the Anthropocene: The Moral Dimensions of Six Emerging Conditions in Contemporary Urbanism*, Singapore; Springer Verlag; Moraitis, Konstantinos, and Rassia, Stamatina, eds.

pioneering urban researchers,<sup>32</sup> but also launch new institutional forms of action, such as journals, educational programmes and courses,<sup>33</sup> projects and research groups.<sup>34</sup>

Whether justified or not, this trend of ethically considering cities has remained fairly immune to the emergence of bioethics, just as bioethics once missed the chance to revitalise the city as a (true) space of the ethics of life. Even though it was advocated in the developmental phase of bioethics in the 1970s, urban bioethics has yet to find its mission, goals, and means of action.

## The history of urban bioethics as part of the history of bioethics

Even though he was at the peak of his career as a biochemist and oncologist, in the early 1970s Van Rensselaer Potter (1911-2001) published his first papers in which he promoted and advocated the need for a new discipline – bioethics.<sup>35</sup> Potter deplored the dehumanisation of science and the fact that rapid modern technological and medical advancements brought knowledge but not the wisdom on how to use this knowledge properly. According to Potter, re-establishing an ecological balance and the protection of natural resources could only be guaranteed by new science that he called ‘bioethics’ (deriving this term from ‘biological science’ and ‘ethics’, that is, returning lost moral values to biology), which he saw as a ‘bridge’ between natural and human sciences.<sup>36</sup> Those who are acquainted with Potter’s ideas will not be surprised by the fact that the term *urban ethic* appears as early as the first page of his 1970 programmatic article:

‘We are in great need of a Land Ethic, a Wildlife Ethic, a Population Ethic, a Consumption Ethic, an Urban Ethic, an International Ethic, a Geriatric Ethic, and so on... All of them involve Bioethics...’ (Potter, 1970, 127).<sup>37</sup>

---

(2019), *Urban Ethics under Conditions of Crisis Politics, Architecture, Landscape Sustainability and Multidisciplinary Engineering*, New Jersey: World Scientific Publishing Company Incorporated.

32 Laurence, Peter, L. (2019), Jane Jacobs’s Urban Ethics, *Cities*, 91, 29-38; Schubert, Dirk (2019), Jane Jacobs, Cities, Urban Planning, Ethics and Value Systems, *Cities*, 91, 4-9.

33 *Ethical Cities: Shaping the Future of Your City*, in: *Future Learn*, <https://www.futurelearn.com/courses/ethical-cities/> (accessed: 8 March 2020).

34 DFG Research Group Urban Ethics, in: *Ludwig-Maximilians-Universität München*, <https://www.en.urbanethiken.uni-muenchen.de/activities/index.html/> (accessed: 9 March 2020).

35 Today, we know that the older concept of ‘Bio-Ethik’ originates from Europe ((Jahr, 1926) (Rinčić & Muzur, 2012)).

36 Muzur, Amir and Rinčić, Iva (2019), *Van Rensselaer Potter and His Place in the History of Bioethics*, Zürich; Lit Verlag, (translated from Croatian), 46-7.

37 Potter, Van Rensselaer (1970), Bioethics, the Science of Survival, *Perspectives in Biology and Medicine*, 14 (1), 127-53; Potter, Van Rensselaer (1971), *Bioethics: Bridge to the Future*, Englewood Cliffs, New York; Prentice-Hall.



Potter offered a number of key theses: 1. urban ethics is one of the disciplines necessary today; 2. typically, these are disciplines that go beyond the moral activity of individuals, but include a collective, spatial, and temporal dimension of responsibility (Land Ethic, Wildlife Ethic, Population Ethic, Consumption Ethic, International Ethic, Geriatric Ethic); 3. bioethics is an indispensable part of urban ethics. In light of the above, Potter defined the social and scientific-historical moment, presented the arguments, and established the conceptual space for the need of humanity for the emergence and development of bioethics. Potter also dealt with the issue and phenomena of bioethics in his later work, with several significant breakthroughs in terms of content (Global Bioethics, 1988). However, the issue of urban (bio)ethics no longer appeared as a direct area of interest and activity. We can only speculate about the reasons for this, but the fact remains that Potter did not take advantage of the initial impetus of (urban) (bio)ethics, and his most notable contribution to date remains that of the original bioethical idea, as well as the efforts and successes of promoting bioethics outside the US.

The direction which bioethics took very soon after his first works can be seen in the strong focus on issues relating to medicine, research, and healthcare, leaving no room for the expansion of the bioethical horizon. The protection, promotion and improvement of individual freedoms and values (especially in a clinical environment), along with legal regulation and contractual practices typical of the market-oriented modus operandi of the American healthcare system, have for decades delayed (bio) ethical sensitisation to the urban, as well as the urban profiling of modern bioethics.

To say that bioethics has remained completely immune to the challenge of the urban would be an overstatement, even though there have been no specific studies that could identify concrete contents, methods, and models of urban content implementation in bioethics in recent decades.<sup>38</sup> For example, in February 1997, the Fordham University School of Law organised the Sixth Annual Stein Center *Symposium on Contemporary Urban Challenges - Urban Bioethics: A Symposium on Health Care, Poverty, and Autonomy*, aimed at the 'socioeconomic framing of bioethical and healthcare issues and the challenge of moral consensus'.<sup>39</sup> As part of the common denominator of the urban, this was a typical symposium dedicated

38 Certain historical experiences can still serve as lessons today, for example in the 1980s HIV epidemic in American urban centres, when the failure to regard the urban context of the onset and spread of the disease (especially in San Francisco and New York) delayed research but also solutions (Hall, Irene H., Espinoza, Lorena, Benbow, Nanette and Hu, Yunyin W. (2010), 'Epidemiology of HIV Infection in Large Urban Areas in the United States', *PLOS One*, 5(9), 1-9. On the other hand, today we are witnessing a different model (*Fast-Track: Cities Ending the AIDS Epidemic* Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS (2016), Geneva: Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS (UNAIDS), in: *Publication*, [https://www.unaids.org/sites/default/files/media\\_asset/cities-ending-the-aids-epidemic\\_en.pdf](https://www.unaids.org/sites/default/files/media_asset/cities-ending-the-aids-epidemic_en.pdf) (accessed: 19 March 2020)).

39 Cooper, Elizabeth B. and Zipursky, Benjamin C. (1997), Foreword: Urban Bioethics, *Fordham Urban Law Journal*, 24 (4), 663.

to medicinal-bioethical themes, healthcare issues, and increasing inequalities against the poor and marginalised in urban settings.<sup>40</sup> Since American academic literature does not abound in articles either, the article ‘Urban Bioethics’ by Ruth Cecire, Jeffrey Blustein and Alan Fleischman,<sup>41</sup> published in the *Kennedy Institute of Ethics Journal* in 2000, deserves more detailed consideration. The article differs from the prevailing approach, advocating a mission to ‘broaden the traditional focus of bioethics to encompass questions about the interplay of individuals with family, group, community, and society’, and defines urban bioethics as an essentially multi-disciplinary, synthesising enterprise. The addition of the attribute ‘urban’, the authors say, broadens the traditional focus of bioethical interest, with the aim of encompassing interrelationships and tensions between individuals and groups, and individuals and society. Even though the authors do not shy away from topics connected to health, the focus of their interest and analysis are primarily cities as complex inter-life units, ‘as purveyors of sin and disease, as centres of learning and venues of innovation, as places of vulnerability and contagion, as creations of powerful economic interests, as a home for the morally questionable and “inferior” foreign-born, as hubs of class conflict, as sites of stigmatised substandard health institutions [that] have continued to inform the context of urban health care and to provide the backdrop for an urban bioethical inquiry.’<sup>42</sup> There are three main directions in urban bioethics: ‘the tension between the desire to be responsive to urban pluralism and the need for moral cohesion; the tension between the practices of democratic politics and the often conflicting demands of justice and equity; and the tension between the coercive potential of public health mandates and individual autonomy prerogatives. In addressing these paradigms, urban bioethics seeks to identify and analyse values in conflict and thereby to set the stage for effective approaches to their resolution.’<sup>43</sup> Apart from their urban approach, it is interesting to note that the authors also advocate an ‘integrative approach’ in this article, which has been very significant in certain later stages in bioethics history.<sup>44</sup> Notwithstanding the

40 *Fordham Urban Law Journal*, 24 (4) Fordham Law School (1997), Fordham: Fordham Law School, in: *Urban Law Journal*, <https://ir.lawnet.fordham.edu/ulj/vol24/iss4/> (accessed: 19 March 2020).

41 Cecire, Ruth V., Blustein, Jeffrey and Fleischman, Alan R. (2000), Urban Bioethics, *Kennedy Institute of Ethics Journal* 10 (1), 1-20.

42 Cecire RT et al. (2000), 4.

43 *Ibid.*, 5.

44 Rinčić, Iva, Sodeke, Stephen O. and Muzur, Amir (2017), From Integrative Bioethics to Integrative Bioethics: European and American Perspectives, in: Byk, Christian and Sass, Hans-Martin eds., *Fritz Jahr (1895-1953): From the Origin of Bioethics to Integrative Bioethics*, MA Editions –ESKA, Pariz 2017, 181-94; Čović, Ante (2012), The Europeanization of Bioethics: Opportunities From Integrative Ethical Reflection on the Basis of Intra-Cultural Differences in Europe. In: Muzur, Amir and Sass, Hans-Martin eds., *Fritz Jahr and the Foundations of Global Bioethics: The Future of Integrative Bioethics*, Lit Verlag, Münster 2012, 111-4; Jurić, Hrvoje (2007), Stützpunkte für eine integrative Bioethik im Werk Van Rensselaer Potters, in: Čović, Ante and Hoffmann, Thomas S. eds., *Integrative Bioethik/Integrative Bioethics*, Academia Verlag, Sankt Augustin 2007, 68-92.

fact that the impact and importance of this, as well as certain other works,<sup>45</sup> have remained almost insignificant to this day, it is indisputable that these articles deserve further and more detailed analysis in the future as rare and important links in the development of urban bioethics.

The ideas of urban bioethics have found their way to some South American authors. Erick Araujo<sup>46</sup> found a basis for his work in the 2001 article by Albert Jonsen ‘Social Responsibilities of Bioethics’,<sup>47</sup> although his strongest arguments are based on Potter’s work.<sup>48</sup> A special contribution, which is yet to be sufficiently appreciated, is that of the Argentinian architect María Laura Sarmiento,<sup>49</sup> who defended her doctoral thesis on urban bioethics in 2017.<sup>50</sup>

Apart from scientific circles, evidence of urban bioethics can also be found in educational circles, most notably in the master course in Urban Bioethics offered by the Lewis Katz School of Medicine at Temple University.<sup>51</sup> Given that the ‘degree [is] designed for Temple graduate students and area professionals who face, or will soon face, the complexities and disparities of urban health, and want a specialized training in the ethics, values, and politics of health care in our increasingly multidimensionally diverse society’, most courses focus on typical medical-bioethics topics, with one exception (The history and theoretical foundations of bioethics).

## New trends in bioethics – a request for standardisation

In recent decades, bioethics has been subject to numerous changes. These have neither been fully completed, nor have they permanently ensured its justification and viability. Many of these were discussed when, following the discovery of the

45 Blustein, Jeffrey and Fleischman, Alan R. (2004), Urban Bioethics: Adapting Bioethics to the Urban Context, *Academic Medicine*, 79 (12), 1198-202.

46 Araujo, Erick (2015), Fragments of Urban Bioethics: An Essay of Power and Asymmetry, *Revista bioetica*, 23 (1), 97-103.

47 Jonsen, Albert (2001), Social Responsibility of Bioethics, *Journal of Urban Health: Bulletin of the New York Academy of Medicine*, 78 (1), 21-8.

48 Potter, Van Rensselaer (1988), *Global Bioethics: Building on the Leopold Legacy*, East Lansing; Michigan State University Press.

49 Sarmiento, Laura (2015), Bioética urbana: La ciudad como bien común/Urban Bioethics: City as a Common Good, *Bitácora Urbano Territorial*, 25 (2), 15-20.

50 Sarmiento, María L. (2017), Bioética urbana, conflictos urbanos y resistencias creativas al cuidado de la vitalidad colectiva, in: *El Repositorio Digital de la Universidad Nacional de Córdoba*, <https://rdu.unc.edu.ar/handle/11086/4674?show=full> (accessed: 11 April 2020).

51 *Urban Bioethics, M. A.*, in: Bulletin 2019-20, Temple University, <https://bulletin.temple.edu/graduate/scd/medicine/urban-bioethics-ma/> (accessed: 16 April 2020).

first bioethical imperative (Jahr, 1926), the process of the Europeanisation and ‘philosophisation’ of bioethics began (which is still ongoing).<sup>52</sup>

For the purpose of this paper, we will discuss a special area: bioethical standardisation. Indications of (generalised) standardisation in bioethics can already be found in Jahr’s bioethical imperative and its later versions, with either a stronger or weaker bioethical note (Van Rensselaer Potter, Aldo Leopold, Laura Westra, Richard Grantham, Arne Næss, Karl-Henrik Robèrt, etc.).<sup>53</sup> On the surface, the ‘standard’ undoubtedly carries the risk of a (monotonous) normalisation and passivation. However, it also has the potential and power of a well-argued, unified and formulated intellectual reflection and definition of a particular topic. A few years ago, a group of authors in the European Bioethics in Action project, EURO BIOACT (Croatian Science Foundation, 2016-2019, project number 7853, head of project Amir Muzur)<sup>54</sup> had a similar starting point, with the intention of applying a theoretical basis for the ‘New European Bioethics’ (the tradition of Fritz Jahr, Ignaz Bregenzer, and other thinkers, enriched with the findings of modern environmental science) when creating a list of ‘bioethical standards’. The process included a pluri-perspective methodology, open coordination methods, and a precautionary principle. The ultimate goal was to use bioethical standards in the selected three local administrative units in the Northern Adriatic as a bioethical ‘platform’ which defines means and approaches to improving human health and the well-being of animals and plants, i.e. the ecosystem as a whole – in short, to suggest how to optimise the relationship of humans towards their own health and living environment.<sup>55</sup>

The official result of the project is a list of 97 bioethical standards,<sup>56</sup> which are useful in practice but also as a model for how bioethics could (and should) be applied in specific circumstances. Furthermore, the content of the list (humans, plants, animals) is confirmation of the original bioethical thought (primarily Jahr’s bioethical imperative, but also Potter’s bioethics), which is directed towards an ethical approach to all living beings, and more broadly, to space in general (as opposed to narrow human interrelationships in medical and health issues).

---

52 Rinčić, Iva and Muzur, Amir (2019), *Fritz Jahr and the Emergence of European Bioethics*, Münster; Lit Verlag.

53 Muzur, Amir (2016), Standardi u bioetici: motivi, efekti, limiti [‘Standards in Bioethics: Motives, Effects, Limits’], *Jahr – European Journal of Bioethics*, 7/2 (14), 197-202.

54 *European Bioethics in Action – About the Project*, in: EuroBioAct – European Bioethics in Action, <http://eurobioact.uniri.hr/en/about-the-project.html/> (accessed: 16 April 2020).

55 Eterović, Igor and Doričić, Robert (2017), EuroBioAct: New Paths of Integrative Bioethics, *New Presence: Review for Intellectual and Spiritual Questions*, 15 (3), 377-91.

56 Miloš, Maja and Doričić, Robert eds. (2017), *Europska bioetika na djelu – EuroBioAct: lista bioetičkih standarda za lokalnu zajednicu* / *European Bioethics in Action – EuroBioAct: A List of Bioethical Standards for Local Communities*, Rijeka; University of Rijeka, Faculty of Medicine; Fritz Jahr Documentation and Research Centre for European Bioethics of the University of Rijeka.

## A conclusion or towards standards of urban bioethics

During his time, Potter gave life to the body of the city by interpreting it as an area of (all forms of) life. A logical step in instrumentalising the bioethical standards produced by the abovementioned European Bioethics in Action project would be to analyse a set of standards connected with the city and (co-)existence in the city, and to complement it in accordance with new challenges (in terms of urbanism, architecture, digital technologies, epidemiology, social anthropology, etc.) Starting from the theoretical basis outlined in this article and by choosing an appropriate methodology, this would continue the process of creating directives for the optimal relationship between homo urbanus and their own health and the well-being of other forms of life in a way worthy of the initial ideas of Fritz Jahr, Van Rensselaer Potter, and numerous other thinkers whose work is the basis of modern (European/integrative/Mediterranean) bioethics.

## Acknowledgements

This paper was produced as part of the *Bioetički standardi urbaniteta. Grad kao okvir etike života (s posebnim osvrtom na Rijeku)* [Bioethical standards or urbanity. The city as a framework for the ethics of life (with special reference to Rijeka)], project leader Iva Rinčić (uniri-human-18-49) and *Novi trendovi u bioetici srednje i jugoistočne Europe: istraživanje i umrežavanje resursa* [New trends in the bioethics of Central and South-East Europe: Research and networking of resources], project leader Amir Muzur (uniri-human-18-4-1130) projects, financed by the University of Rijeka and supported by the Ministry of Education of the Republic of Korea and the National Research Foundation of Korea (NRF-2017S1A6A3A01078538).

## Literature

- Ackermann, Robert J. (1988), *Wittgenstein's City*, Amherst; The University of Massachusetts Press.
- Araujo, Erick (2015), *Fragments of Urban Bioethics: An Essay of Power and Asymmetry*, *Revista bioetica*, 23 (1), 97–103.
- Bettencourt, Luis M. A. (2013), *The Origins of Scaling in Cities*, *Science*, 340 (6139), 1438–41.
- Bloom, David E., Canning, David and Fink, Günther (2008), *Urbanization and the Wealth of Nations*, *Science*, 319 (5864), 772–5.
- Blustein, Jeffrey (2001), *Setting the Agenda of Urban Bioethics*, *Journal of Urban Health: Bulletin of the New York Academy of Medicine*, 78 (1), 7–20.
- Blustein, Jeffrey and Fleischman, Alan R. (2004), *Urban Bioethics: Adapting Bioethics to the Urban Context*, *Academic Medicine*, 79 (12), 1198–202.
- Cecire, Ruth V., Blustein, Jeffrey and Fleischman, Alan R. (2000), *Urban Bioethics*, *Kennedy Institute of Ethics Journal*, 10 (1), 1–20.

- Chan, Jeffrey (2018), *Urban Ethics in the Anthropocene: The Moral Dimensions of Six Emerging Conditions in Contemporary Urbanism*, Singapore; Springer Verlag.
- Cooper, Elizabeth B. and Zipursky, Benjamin C. (1997), Foreword: Urban Bioethics, *Fordham Urban Law Journal*, 24 (4), 662–5.
- Čović, Ante (2012), The Europeanization of Bioethics: Opportunities From Integrative Ethical Reflection on the Basis of Intra-Cultural Differences in Europe. In: Muzur, Amir and Sass, Hans-Martin eds., *Fritz Jahr and the Foundations of Global Bioethics: The Future of Integrative Bioethics*, Lit Verlag, Münster 2012, 111–4.
- Deakin, Mark and Al Waer, Husam (2011), From Intelligent to Smart Cities, *Intelligent Buildings International*, 3 (3), 133–9.
- DFG Research Group Urban Ethics, in: Ludwig-Maximilians-Universität München, <https://www.en.urbane-ethiken.uni-muenchen.de/activities/index.html/> (accessed: 9 March 2020).
- Donoff, Gabrielle and Bridgman, Rae (2019), The Playful City: Constructing a Typology for Urban Design, Interventions, *International Journal of Play*, 6 (3), 294–307.
- Eterović, Igor and Doričić, Robert (2017), EuroBioAct: New Paths of Integrative Bioethics, *New Presence: Review for Intellectual and Spiritual Questions*, 15 (3), 377–91.
- Ethical Cities: Shaping the Future of Your City, in: Future Learn, <https://www.futurelearn.com/courses/ethical-cities/> (accessed: 8 March 2020).
- European Bioethics in Action – About the Project, in: EuroBioAct – European Bioethics in Action, <http://eurobioact.uniri.hr/en/about-the-project.html/> (accessed: 16 April 2020).
- Fast-Track: Cities Ending the AIDS Epidemic Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS (2016), Geneva: Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS (UNAIDS), in: Publication, [https://www.unaids.org/sites/default/files/media\\_asset/cities-ending-the-aids-epidemic\\_en.pdf/](https://www.unaids.org/sites/default/files/media_asset/cities-ending-the-aids-epidemic_en.pdf/) (accessed: 19 March 2020).
- Finger, Matthias and Portmann, Edy (2016), What Are Cognitive Cities?, in: Portmann, Edy and Finger, Matthias eds., *Towards Cognitive Cities. Studies in Systems, Decision and Control*, Springer, Cham 2016, 1–11.
- Fordham Urban Law Journal*, 24 (4) Fordham Law School (1997), Fordham: Fordham Law School, in: *Urban Law Journal*, <https://ir.lawnet.fordham.edu/ulj/vol24/iss4/> (accessed: 19 March 2020).
- Glaeser, Edward L. (2011), *Triumph of the City: How Our Greatest Invention Makes Us Richer, Smarter, Greener, Healthier and Happier*, London; Penguin Books.
- Hall, Irene H., Espinoza, Lorena, Benbow, Nanette and Hu, Yunyin W. (2010), Epidemiology of HIV Infection in Large Urban Areas in the United States, *PLOS One*, 5 (9), 1–9.
- Harvey, David (2019), *Spaces of Global Capitalism: A Theory of Uneven Geographical Development*, London; Verso.
- Harvey, David. (2008), Right to the City, *New Left Review*, 53 (September-October), 23–40.
- Innovation Cities TM Program, <https://www.innovation-cities.com/> (accessed: 3 March 2020).
- Jahr, Fritz (1926), *Wissenschaft vom Leben und Sittenlehre (Alte Erkenntnisse in neuem Gewande)*, Mittelschule, 40 (45), 604–5.
- Jonsen, Albert (2001), Social Responsibility of Bioethics, *Journal of Urban Health: Bulletin of the New York Academy of Medicine*, 78 (1), 21–8.
- Jurić, Hrvoje (2007), Stützpunkte für eine integrative Bioethik im Werk Van Rensselaer Potters, in: Čović, Ante and Hoffmann, Thomas S. eds., *Integrative Bioethik/Integrative Bioethics*, Academia Verlag, Sankt Augustin 2007, 68–92.
- Langston, Sara M. (2018), Reimagining Icarus: Ethics, Law and Policy Considerations for Commercial Human Spaceflight, in: Russomano, Thais and Rehnberg, Lucas eds., *Into Space - A Journey of How Humans Adapt and Live in Microgravity*, IntechOpen Limited, London 2018, 1-17.
- Laurence, Peter, L. (2019), Jane Jacobs's Urban Ethics, *Cities*, 91, 29–38.

- Mendieta, Eduardo (2001), *The City and the Philosopher: On the Urbanism of Phenomenology*, *Philosophy & Geography*, 4 (2), 203–18.
- Miloš, Maja and Doričić, Robert eds. (2017), *Europska bioetika na djelu – EuroBioAct: lista bioetičkih standarda za lokalnu zajednicu/European Bioethics in Action – EuroBioAct: A List of Bioethical Standards for Local Communities*, Rijeka; Univeristy of Rijeka, Faculty of Medicine; Fritz Jahr Documentation and Research Centre for European Bioethics of the University of Rijeka.
- Moraitis, Konstantinos, and Rassa, Stamatina eds. (2019), *Urban Ethics under Conditions of Crisis Politics, Architecture, Landscape Sustainability and Multidisciplinary Engineering*, New Jersey: World Scientific Publishing Company Incorporated.
- Mumford, Lewis (1937), *What is a City*, *Architectural Record*, 1937, 82 (November), 58–62.
- Muzur, Amir (2016), *Standardi u bioetici: motivi, efekti, limiti*, *Jahr – European Journal of Bioethics*, 7/2 (14), 197–202.
- Muzur, Amir (2018), *Interdisciplinarity as a state of mind: how can individuals and societies reach it?*, *European Review*, 26 (S2), S76–S84.
- Muzur, Amir and Rinčić, Iva (2019), *Van Rensselaer Potter and His Place in the History of Bioethics*, Zürich; Lit Verlag, (translated from Croatian).
- Nawratek, Krzysztof (2019), *How brave can we be? The city as a political experiment* (editorial), *Journal of Architecture and Urbanism*, 38 (1), 1–2.
- Pajvančić Cizelj, Ana (2017), *Globalni urbani procesi: stanja, koncepti i alternative*, Novi Sad; Mediterran Publishing.
- Park, Robert E. (1967), *On Social Control and Collective Behaviour*, Chicago; University of Chicago Press.
- Potter, Van Rensselaer (1970), *Bioethics, the Science of Survival, Perspectives in Biology and Medicine*, 14 (1), 127–53.
- Potter, Van Rensselaer (1971), *Bioethics: Bridge to the Future*, Englewood Cliffs, New York; Prentice Hall.
- Potter, Van Rensselaer (1988), *Global Bioethics: Building on the Leopold Legacy*, East Lansing; Michigan State University Press.
- Rinčić, Iva and Muzur, Amir (2012), *Fritz Jahr i rađanje europske bioetike*, Zagreb; Pergamena.
- Rinčić, Iva and Muzur, Amir (2019), *Fritz Jahr and the Emergence of European Bioethics*, Münster; Lit Verlag.
- Rinčić, Iva, Sodeke, Stephen O. and Muzur, Amir (2017), *From Integrative Bioethics to Integrative Bioethics: European and American Perspectives*, in: Byk, Christian and Sass, Hans-Martin eds., *Fritz Jahr (1895-1953): From the Origin of Bioethics to Integrative Bioethics*, MA Editions – ESKA, Pariz 2017, 181–94.
- Ritchie, Hannah and Roser, Max (2020), *Urbanization*, in: *Our World in Data*, <https://ourworldindata.org/urbanization/> (accessed: 7 March 2020).
- Safa, Helen I. (1969), *The City as a Social System*, *Science*, 166 (3909), 1189–90.
- Sarmiento, Laura (2015), *Bioética urbana: La ciudad como bien común/Urban Bioethics: City as a Common Good*, *Bitácora Urbano Territorial*, 25 (2), 15–20.
- Sarmiento, María L. (2017), *Bioética urbana, conflictos urbanos y resistencias creativas al cuidado de la vitalidad colectiva*, in: *El Repositorio Digital de la Universidad Nacional de Córdoba*, <https://rdu.unc.edu.ar/handle/11086/4674?show=full> (accessed: 11 April 2020).
- Sassen, Saskia (1991), *The Global City*, New York, London, Tokyo, Princeton; Princeton University Press.
- Schnore, Leo F. (1966), *The City as a Social Organism*, *Urban Affairs Quarterly*, 1 (3), 58–69.
- Schubert, Dirk (2019), *Jane Jacobs, Cities, Urban Planning, Ethics and Value Systems*, *Cities*, 91, 4–9
- Smith, Michael E. (2009), *V. Gordon Childe and the Urban Revolution: a Historical Perspective on a Revolution in Urban Studies*, *The Town Planning Review*, 80 (1), 2–29.

- Smith, Michael E., Ur, Jason and Feinman, Gary M. (2014), Jane Jacobs' 'Cities First' Model and Archaeological Reality, *International Journal of Urban and Regional Research*, 38 (4), 1525–35.
- Spilhaus, Athelstan (1967), *The Experimental City*, *Daedalus* 96 (4), 1129–41.
- Supek, Rudi (1987), *Grad po mjeri čovjeka*, Zagreb; Naprijed.
- The European Green Deal Investment Plan and Just Transition Mechanism European Commission (2020), Brussels: European Commission, in: Publications, [https://ec.europa.eu/info/publications/200114-european-green-deal-investment-plan\\_hr/](https://ec.europa.eu/info/publications/200114-european-green-deal-investment-plan_hr/) (accessed: 25 February 2020).
- The Human-Centred City: Recommendations for Research and Innovation Actions (Report of the High-Level Expert Group on Innovating Cities) European Commission (2020), Brussels: European Commission in: Publications Office of the EU, <https://op.europa.eu/en/publication-detail/-/publication/b3e3431e-424a-11ea-9099-01aa75ed71a1/language-en/format-PDF/source-search/> (accessed: 4 March 2020).
- Urban Bioethics, M. A., in: *Bulletin 2019-20*, Temple University, <https://bulletin.temple.edu/graduate/scd/medicine/urban-bioethics-ma/> (accessed: 16 April 2020).
- Wirth, Louis (1936), *Urbanism as a Way of Life*, *American Journal of Sociology*, 44 (1), 1–24.
- World Urbanization Prospects 2018 United Nations, Department of Economic and Social Affairs, Population Division (2018), in: *World Urbanization Prospects 2018*, <https://population.un.org/wup/DataQuery/> (accessed: 7 March 2020).
- Xu, Hong and Geng, Huexian (2019), *People – Centric Service Intelligence for Smart Cities*, *Smart Cities*, 2, 135–52.



# Od pukog urbaniteta do urbanih bioetičkih standarda: poziv na širenje bioetike

## Sažetak

---

Interes za istraživanje, promišljanje i promišljanje urbanosti već je duže vrijeme prisutan. Posljednjih nekoliko desetljeća, zbog rapidne urbanizacije, taj se interes dodatno intenzivirao, privlačeći znanstvenike različitih disciplina i stvarajući nove platforme rasprave. Prvi pokazatelji „bioetičkog“ interesa za urbani život prisutni su već u ranim radovima Van Rensselaera Pottera (urbana etika), no iscrpnija istraživanja urbane bioetike sve su donedavno bila zanemarena, uglavnom kao posljedica dominacije biomedicinske paradigme unutar bioetike. Jedan od rezultata nedavno provedenog projekta „Europska bioetika na djelu EuroBioAct“ (koji je financirala Hrvatska zaklada za znanost, 2014. - 2017.), bila je lista općih bioetičkih standarda koji su definirali prihvatljiv odnos prema životinjama, biljkama i zdravlju ljudi. Nadovezujući se na spomenuto, cilj ovog rada je razrada uporišta za razvoj bioetičkih standarda u specifičnom urbanom kontekstu.

**Ključne riječi:** bioetika, grad, standardi, EuroBioAct.