

The Spirit of Cities

Professor Daniel Bell

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Transcript

Supported by Allens Arthur Robinson

Cities define us. They shape the outlooks, opportunities and lives of billions. Yet most contemporary political thought neglects their role. The Ancient Greeks, by contrast, thought that every city had its own ethos and values that helped to determine its institutions, political systems and the lives of its citizens. Daniel Bell thinks it is time to revive the thinking of the Greeks and rediscover the spirit of cities.

Professor Bell explored the findings of his book, *The Spirit of Cities: Why the Identity of a City Matters in a Global Age* (co-written with Professor Avner de-Shalit). The book looks at nine cities – Jerusalem, Montreal, Singapore, Hong Kong, Beijing, Oxford, Berlin, Paris and New York – and shows how the ethos of each is expressed in its political, cultural and economic life, and how the character of each city works against the excesses of nationalism on the one hand, and the sameness of globalisation on the other.

Speakers: **Professor Daniel Bell**
 Jane-France Kelly, Program Director – Cities

AUDIO: This is a podcast from Grattan Institute, www.grattan.edu.au.

JANE-FRANCES: Alright, I think we'll start. We've noticed as we were doing small talk up here that the microphones were switched on so we made sure that we were only saying complimentary things about the city of Melbourne and all the people in it. Explained to Daniel about us being the most liveable city in the world, obviously. I'd like to start by showing my respect and acknowledging the traditional custodians of the land on which this meeting is taking place, and I enjoyed explaining to Daniel what that means and why we do that. And he's kind of interested in going back to Beijing and thinking about what that might look like there.

I'm Jane-Frances Kelly, Director of the Grattan Cities Program. Welcome to this seminar co-hosted by Grattan and Allens Arthur Robinson who were initially going to be putting us up in one of their facilities, but Daniel proved a great draw and we sold out I think within two hours and moved to a larger venue.

It's a pleasure to welcome Professor Daniel Bell. Daniel is a professor of ethics and political philosophy at Tsinghua University in Beijing. He was born in Montreal, educated at McGill and Oxford Universities, has taught in Singapore and Hong Kong and has held research fellowships at Princeton and Stanford. He's the author of *China's New Confucianism: Politics and Everyday Life in a Changing Society*, which was published in 2008. And that was actually how I first came across Daniel and his work. It was a podcast on Canadian Broadcasting, a podcast, it's called Big Ideas, and different ... you may remember the lecture and I found it a really fascinating topic compellingly presented. And so when we were offered a chance to talk about Daniel when he had written something in kind of my kind of bailiwick, as it were, and talk about his latest book, we jumped at it.

So that book is *The Spirit of Cities*, and this is it. There are order forms for it at the back if people are interested. It's got a lovely vector map on the front and later on I'm going to ask him what that vector map is, 'cause I should know that kind of thing I should think probably with my job title. And I've got those kind of like Post-it notes that you use if you want to show like you've read a book, but I actually have read almost all of this. They're a great invention. So as is a Grattan want, we're going to do the seminar in a kind of a high end chat show format, sort of in conversation, no PowerPoint allowed and so on in which I will gently grill Daniel for half an hour or so, leaving 25 minutes or so for your questions and finishing on time, the most important thing, at 7:00pm.

I also mention at this point that we're recording the event. Hi mum. She landed in Melbourne this morning so I reckon she's still asleep. We're recording the event and you will be able to link to that from the Grattan website and what that means is that this is a good time to remember to switch your phones off. Hello, switch your phone off.

Okay. This year the Grattan Cities Program has been focusing on issues around city structure and housing, looking at some very important questions involving lots of hard core evidence bases, reams of data, actual econometrics and actual econometricians. So talking about a topic like the spirit of cities is enormously refreshing this year in particular. And it's also a very important question. It seems like many of the debates about cities seem to be struggles for a particular ethos, as you call it, of a city and which indeed is for a particular account of what life should be. As Socrates said, you remember this is no chance matter we are discussing, but you know, how to live, as it were.

We should start with the question, I mean your book is called *The Spirit of Cities: Why the Identity of a City Matters in a Global Age*. What do you mean by the spirit of a city?

DANIEL: Well, I guess it's a pretty vague idea on the face of it, but the basic idea is that certain cities have dominant values or outlooks that are shared by the large proportion of people living in those cities. And if you think of it in the past, it's kind of obvious that Athens, for example, represented democracy, and Sparta represented a kind of more militaristic form of government, and people theorised on the basis of the dominant ethos of those cities. Now does it make sense to think of that in a modern era? Well I co-wrote it with a friend, Avner de-Shalit, and he is a professor in Jerusalem. Of course I live in Beijing, and it occurred to us that those cities are, you know, have a strikingly different ethos. Of course Jerusalem is mainly about religion, and Beijing is mainly about political power, and the way that the cities are structured, you know, the centre of Jerusalem is the old city which represent religious or spiritual values in its concentric circles emanating from that. Whereas Beijing, the centre, is a centre of political power, also with concentric circles emanating. So, and then we started thinking of the cities that we know quite well from our own personal experience, and it struck us, I'm from Montreal where it's kind of obvious that peoples' everyday life is very much determined by the value of language, both economic value and a psychological sense of feeling at home in the world, that the different cities that we know quite well seem to have strikingly different dominant values that inform peoples' ways of life there. And I had been working, you know, comparing East Asia and the West and people were criticising me, that's too essentialist. Okay, fine, so let's talk about countries, so compare China and the US and maybe we can talk about different dominant values. And that's what I did last night to an extent. And you know, but still people criticise you, oh there are some doubts, okay, so let's talk about cities, and how cities express different dominant outlooks. And that's the basic idea that informs the book. So we looked at nine cities that we think have strikingly different outlooks or ethos.

JANE-FRANCES: And so as you look at those nine cities, what are the kind of characteristics of a city that provide clues to what its ethos is?

DANIEL: Well there's different ways of ... one is the kind of more social scientific way, You could do surveys and you ask people what are the values that you adhere to. And different cities are doing that, including in China. China, people believe that there's 30 years of kind of capitalist monetisation has led to the cities becoming more and more homogenous. And others are a counter-reaction to that where many cities including Beijing and [unclear - Chiangxia ? 7:05] are carrying out surveys to determine what is a dominant set of values that are adhered to by the people there. That's one way. So, or you could look at the urban planners and find out what sorts of values determined their plans. Or you look at the history and just try and look at the literature associated with the cities.

We also, you know, cities that we lived in for extended periods, I think it helps to draw on your own personal experience in that case. And for cities that we don't know that well, we also use perhaps a more qualitative or choose something less kind of subjective method which we call strolling where we just ... we come up with some tentative hypotheses based on our reading about the city and we do interviews with different peoples from different walks of life, sometimes pretty random interviews, sometimes structured as well as observations and we question our hypotheses and we ... that allows us in some cases to come up with certain ethos'.

JANE-FRANCES: No, it sounds like a fantastically fun book to write and I am definitely going to get myself a research grant to go and stroll around cities. John, where are you? The ... can you

talk a little bit more about the methodology that you used for each city and how people have reacted to that methodology? What people have kind of found, sort of said to you about the approach, if you like?

DANIEL: Well, the book is officially out on October 5th, so ... but having said that, we did send it out to many people. We did ... we've been working on it for many years and we sent drafts to people living in those cities and we revised on the basis of the reactions. And some cities, it's pretty uncontroversial. I mean if you want to talk about Jerusalem, it has to be about religion, or Montreal and language. But other cities it was a bit more controversial because for example, Paris, we had this tentative hypothesis that it's a city that expresses the ethos of romance. But then the more interviews we did, the more we found out that that ethos was rejected by the people within Paris. So we had to change our hypothesis. And we realised that actually the term romance is used very differently by people from outside Paris who tend to have this Hollywood idea, you know, of kissing and living happily ever after. But for Parisians it's more the romantic spirit in the sense of how you go, you know, and for them it means like an anti-bourgeois ethos, that we ... so which ... and in fact they didn't even know what was meant by the ... you know, I have a very good professor friend who speaks many languages and so on, and he was ... he went to a restaurant in Paris with a visiting American academic and she saw roses on the table and then she said how romantic. And he didn't understand what she was talking about. So they have very different ideas of romance.

JANE-FRANCES: That date didn't go that well.

DANIEL: It didn't, so he had to ... you know.

JANE-FRANCES: So, and you say that people can identify with more than one city and you have yourself, and I mean I certainly feel that cities I've lived in that I feel a strong affiliation with. I lived in Prague for a few years and it really got under my skin. I fell in love with Melbourne and married it. But I lived in London for five years and didn't ever feel like that about London. And you've sort of talked about kind of sort of similar senses yourself. And in fact, you think there's a ... you know, it's great that we can feel more at home in different places. You go further, you think there's a moral case for diversity between cities. Can you talk about what you mean by that?

DANIEL: Right. Well, globalisation has a good side, that it leads to openness and more ... and a culture of tolerance. But it also has a dark side which is that it leads to the homogenisation of cultures and generates this culture of consumerism which is very uniform. And again you see that in China, but more generally speaking. So how do you resist that? Well if states try to resist that by affirming a national essence, then it's people are way above that. I mean for one thing, the states have a very bad history when they tried to express their national essence and usually it's defended against another state or else against an unpopular minority within the state. And of course states are armed militarily so could and does often lead to a military conflict. So we worry about states strongly affirming their essence to resist the homogenisation of globalisation. But when cities do it, we think there's a much better case for that. For one thing it's less dangerous because cities don't have armies, and cities are still smaller than states and it makes more sense for ... and even for cities to have a competitive relationship, whether it's Melbourne or Sydney or Montreal and Toronto, or Jerusalem and Tel Aviv or Shanghai and Beijing, it could be kind of charming and humorous and it's not as ugly as when states have a strong, you know, China versus Japan, a strong kind of sense of the other. So that's one reason that cities can better resist the homogenisation of globalisation. But also we think that most people have this need to have some sort of communal identity. And what are you going to attach it to? And again if people strongly attach it to the nation, it leads to often very ugly forms of nationalism. So we're not against nationalism per se, but we think that it's better, other things being equal, for people to attach their need for some sort of communal identity to a city than to a country. So another is partly to resist the extremes of nationalism, that's another reason.

But another very important reason is that states often find there are hard to do things that need to be done. For example, think of dealing with climate change, I mean we're going to wait a long time for China and the US to have a strong national policy to deal with those problems. But meanwhile cities that have, for example, cities that have a strong environmental ethos can do

things, and they are doing things. In China you have states ... you have countries ... even I am slipping into this mode, you have cities, you know, like Hungjo or [unclear – Bowting ? 13:30] that are doing ... very strong measures to ... and probably because they can draw on this environmentalist ethic. And in the US too you have cities like Portland and San Francisco, they are doing much than could be done at the level of the State to promote I think desirable causes like dealing with environmental issues.

JANE-FRANCES KELLY: And it was fascinating to see in Copenhagen, the C40, the sort of ... the Mayors from 40 cities across US actually kind of going and talking and being represented at what you would think would be a kind of a sovereign level sort of summit like that as cities.

DANIEL: Right.

JANE-FRANCES KELLY: The C40. Just wonder if Andrew's ...

AUDIENCE: Eighty-nine actually, not ...

JANE-FRANCES KELLY: Arup. Eighty-nine?

AUDIENCE: Eighty-nine of the top cities, yeah.

JANE-FRANCES KELLY: Eight-nine of the top 40 cities? Sorry. How does that work? We'll come back to that, I'm sorry. So, I mean obviously I love something naturally which has the city as the unit of analysis, but it is also the case that there are many divisions within cities and I didn't grow up in a city but the closest city I did grow up, the city closest to where I grew up was Glasgow where there's kind of a lot of ... there are really strong cultural divides within the city which can be really problematic. And you get lots of other divides within cities, even kind of inner city versus suburbs and so on. How can divides like that sit alongside a common ethos?

DANIEL: Well, I mean they don't. Not all cities have a common ethos, and if cities have people who live completely different ways of life, you know, whether it's rich or poor or different racial groups, you know, like think of Cape Town, there's no ... it's hard to describe those cities as having a common ethos. And so if we agree that having a common ethos is desirable for the reasons that we just discussed, then the question is how do we move towards the cities that don't? And one of the ways in which to do it is to minimise the gap between, for example, rich and poor, different racial groups.

JANE-FRANCES KELLY: Yeah, that was my next question which is, you know, can you manufacture the spirit of a city? I've always been fascinated, when I land at Adelaide airport there's kind of big posters sort of proclaiming Adelaide to be the city of ideas and I'm just like I thought I'd just left the city of ideas in Melbourne and so on, and it seemed like there are attempts to kind of manufacture ... are they genuinely successful?

DANIEL: I think it depends on the context. I mean, you know, Paris wasn't known as a beautiful city that expresses romantic ideas until Baron Haussmann in the 19th Century, you know, basically razed much of the city and built these beautiful buildings that we see today. So sometimes it's not very successful. Like Robert Moses was this very important urban planner in New York who thought that we should make it a city of cars and he ... much of his attempts at urban planning were unsuccessful. Or where I'm from, Montreal, there was a Jean Drapeau, he was very important Mayor in the '60s and '70s who thought that Montreal could become a global city, and he promoted the Olympic games and Expo '67 and with the idea that Montreal could become like New York, you know, but that was ... but that didn't resonate with the thing that people really cared about which was really the value of language, and therefore that sort of effort was not very successful. So it can work in some cases but I think it's more likely to work if it comes from the top, if it resonates to a certain extent with peoples' actual needs and desires.

JANE-FRANCES KELLY: And you mentioned about Paris, I'm often curious as to whether a city can be perceived by outsiders to have a particular spirit or ethos, but that residents of the city feel really quite different about that. Did you come across other cases of that?

DANIEL: Well, I guess Paris was the obvious case. I mean Berlin, you know, we thought was ... again my friend is the one who wrote the chapter on that, but we went in with a hypothesis that was somewhat, you know, questioned once we spoke to people there. And we thought it really was a city about coming to terms with the past. But the more we spoke to people there and the more we read about it, the more we think that the really thoughts that expressed Berlin is these extremes of swinging between on the one hand the most tolerant city in the world which is where it's at now, but on the other hand also is its history of extreme tolerance and it seems to swing between one extreme to another. And that seemed to make more sense as a way of thinking about the ethos of Berlin in our initial hypothesis which came from our external perspective.

JANE-FRANCES KELLY: And there's another kind of fascinating thing I found about this, is taking a look at the physical layout and the physical aspects of a city. I should actually kind out read out the nine cities you take a look at. So there's Jerusalem, Montreal, Singapore, Hong Kong, Beijing, Oxford, Berlin, Paris and New York. And we've both lived in Oxford. In fact we just discovered we lived in Oxford at the same time. I knew I recognised you. And you sort of noticed really specific things about just the sort of physical layout of Oxford and kind of the signals that that sends about what the city's for and can you talk about that a little bit?

DANIEL: Well, in the case, you know, I mean I guess perhaps an obvious example would be Montreal where the signs are ... you have to look at the language of the signs and what that says about the city. And the way in which French speakers were made to feel at home in the city was to have a very public face of French as a dominant language. Initially it meant that public signs would allow English at all, but once Francophones became relatively successful in feeling at home in their language, then English was allowed as ... but it has to be in smaller script than French. So that's one way in which ...

JANE-FRANCES KELLY: I loved your story about all of the stop signs had to say *arrêt* for years and then you realise that in France they actually say Stop.

DANIEL: Right.

JANE-FRANCES KELLY: But yeah.

DANIEL: That's true, and there are many words that are used in Quebec which actually are not used in France. You know, like in France they say weekend but in Quebec we say *fin de semaine*.

JANE-FRANCES KELLY: Yeah. And you talk about how the architecture in Oxford, for example, is one that kind of, in the colleges, really kind of turns inward ...

DANIEL: Right.

JANE-FRANCES KELLY: ... and sort of gets who knows about kind of the life of the mind and so on. But that's got consequences for people who are outside the walls as well, and ... yeah.

DANIEL: Right, right. So if we think that education, that one very important purpose of education is to train those who have I guess the most talent, so to speak, but that they also have an obligation to serve the community, then that sort of architecture undermines the second aim.

JANE-FRANCES KELLY: So, I mean if you were to kind of land in a completely new city now, for example Melbourne, what kind of things do you immediately start kind of just noticing that you didn't notice before you did this work and ..?

DANIEL: I should be very careful about what I say, other than the fact that I do have a slight preference for Melbourne compared to Sydney, but ... but one thing about ethos is, I mean about discovering ...

JANE-FRANCES KELLY: Any seminars in Sydney?

AUDIENCE: Yes.

DANIEL: But not about ... sorry ... the ... is that sometimes it's pretty obvious, you know. In Jerusalem of course it's about religion, in Montreal about language. But sometimes it's not so obvious and we've been told the past couple of days in Melbourne that, what's it really about? And then people say we have a culture of understatement, and we're committed to quality life but not in a kind of flashy way. So if that's true, then it's not something that's immediately obvious, right, it would ... just that you can't discover an ethos of understatement. I mean you can't ... so that's true then, it takes a certain amount of research before one could affirm that view with any conviction. But I'm still new to this city, so I'm ...

JANE-FRANCES KELLY: Yeah, as sort of someone who kind of, you know, immigrated here and fell in love with the place it sort of ... is it in the way of someone who searches for any mention of the beloved I looked for anything the books had to say about Australia and you know, the first place you go is the index and so on. But I found a mention of Melbourne in the Singapore chapter and described as a low pressure city where people can live in fancy suburban homes with gardens. And I wondered if Neighbours had something to do with ... Neighbours, the soap opera, had something to do with how we're perceived kind of outside, 'cause you know that description is kind of radically different from say my experience of Melbourne and ...

DANIEL: Right. But it's ...

JANE-FRANCES KELLY: But now you've been here two days, you ...

DANIEL: It's ... the person who said that was a very successful Singaporean academic who had given up a post in Canada to return to Singapore who himself was Singaporean. And of course in Singapore the ethos is nation building, right, 'cause it's both a city and a state and this ... and it was created into a state very reluctantly and they had to develop this sense of being a nation. So we asked them, you know, why are you ... and he's a leading critic of the government too, so we asked him why are you here? And he says, well look, I'm committed to my nation as a social critic, it's my home, I want to improve it. And it's not because of, you know, for material reasons. I mean if I ... I could be ... and then that's where he said, I could be in a place like Melbourne which is, you know, much more ... I guess what he means by low pressure part is that you wouldn't be subject to political pressure in a way that you would in Singapore if you're a social critic. And I guess it's easier to live well in a relatively large home compared to Singapore where the space is much more limited. So I think that's what he meant. So I'm not sure if it was inspired by Neighbours. I ...

JANE-FRANCES KELLY: No, no, no, I mean actually the thing about Neighbours was that there was someone who came over from the UK a couple of years after I arrived and he spoke at a very large gathering and it was his first time in Australia. And he kind of stood up and said to this audience of about four or five hundred Australians, you know, this is my first time here and it's marvellous and I'm realising there's a little bit more to Australia than Neighbours. And I was like ... and this just went down like a lead balloon, as you can imagine. And I was just like oh, I must make a mental note to tell him that that's like going to Britain saying my goodness, it's not all like Benny Hill. Amazing. And I just sort of forgot to mention it and I thought well he'll have noticed it went down like a lead balloon and, but no, he did it again that same evening with another 100 people and, yeah. So, yeah, that was the kind of memory that that triggered. I'm sure there's lots of questions that have come up in people's minds now. We've got microphone people, as it were. There we go. And so I'll ask Daniel a last question, but ... and sort of put us kind of notice. The thing I'd sort of say about kind of asking questions is two things: one, wait for the microphone, because we're recording and so that way we'll be able to have you in the transcript; and in the nicest possible way, please ask a question, as it were. And the other thing that we kind of notice is that people kind of tend to sort of wait and then at two minutes to 7:00 there's a forest of hands and it all becomes incredibly stressful for me because we have to let people down and so on. So do please put your hand up earlier rather than later, that would be fantastic. So, my last sort of sense of this is, or my last question around this is, do you have a sense of what proportion of cities in the world have a really distinctive ethos or spirit? And how many of them kind of don't, as it were?

DANIEL: Yeah, well that's a good question, and you didn't send me that question in advance.

JANE-FRANCES KELLY: I'm sorry.

DANIEL: But if I ...

JANE-FRANCES KELLY: You know what you could ask me back, is how many cities are there in the world? And at that point I'd go ...

DANIEL: Okay. About China, it's where there's the most rapid urbanisation in the world now. And perhaps ... and also there's very strong worry about the cultural homogenisation. And to be honest, it's hard ... but I don't know enough about so many different cities in China, but I would think on the face of that, not many have a ... some of them do, like Qufu is basically the place where Confucianism developed and they strongly promote Confucianism and it's quite clear that's a dominant ethos and there are many descendants of the Confucius family that live there and they're very proud of that ethos, you know, or some cities like Hangzhou would have a strong environmental ethos, and of course Beijing and political power. Not just political power in the sense that's where the government people live, it's also where the social critics tend to live, and that's where people argue about politics. But, so I would say that not many cities in China have done either. But having said that, but many want and have ... and develop one you know, and maybe that's where perhaps at the end of the introduction we have some policy recommendations for if you want to develop an ethos where this was the things to look out for, and that's where there might be some relevance.

JANE-FRANCES KELLY: Can you go through quickly what those are?

DANIEL: Well as mentioned, one of them is no big gap between rich and poor or between different cultural groups. Another one is ... but again it's not all cities have the luck to have an urban planner whose ideas resonate with the sorts of dominant needs and desires of their community.

JANE-FRANCES KELLY: Some cities, the bad luck was to have a particular urban planner ...

DANIEL: Also who's ... who was at odds with ...

JANE-FRANCES KELLY: I don't have any cities in mind at all. [Unclear 28:09].

DANIEL: Yeah, so those are some of the issues. There's many, I mean even it comes ... you know, some cities hire companies to do branding campaigns and that could be successful to a certain extent, but of course it has to resonate with many other issues as well, yeah.

JANE-FRANCES KELLY: It has to align with something substantive that's already there, the way that doesn't work.

DANIEL: Right, exactly. Yeah. Like you couldn't ... I don't mean to say bad things about certain cities, but like Cleveland couldn't have, you know, were the city of romance, it just wouldn't work, right.

JANE-FRANCES KELLY: First one down here, and the second one ... oh the front row's ahead, well done. Excellent. So these two and then we'll go up there.

AUDIENCE: Interesting [unclear 28:57]. I'm interested in your selection of nine cities and why you chose those nine? Was it because it was easiest to support your thesis, or was it ... were you trying to make some other kind of point?

JANE-FRANCES KELLY: Would you like to take a couple of questions at a time by the way?

DANIEL: Either way.

JANE-FRANCES KELLY: Yeah, let's do that, let's do a couple at a time and then we'll get more.

AUDIENCE: You describe yourself as a communitarian in the book. Could you explain that briefly for me, thanks?

DANIEL: Okay. Well I guess the first question, why we selected those nine cities. Partly it's because my friend and co-author, Avner and I were more familiar with those cities, so it's easier for us to discuss those cities in a certain degree of depth. But in a way it's kind of lucky that those ... like he's from Jerusalem, I'm from Montreal, obviously those cities have a relatively strong ethos. And that maybe it's partly luck too that we spent substantial periods of time in other cities that have a strong ethos. And maybe also were in some unconscious way we only realised that after we finished the book and maybe we were attracted to those cities because they had a relatively strong ethos. But it's not meant to suggest that those cities are representative, which goes to that question that I didn't prepare for, maybe those cities are not representative. But we do think that having an ethos is a good thing for the reasons that I say, you know, resist homogenisation, resist extremes of nationalism and allow for cities to do certain things that can't be done to another state. I mean I think those are three important reasons. Also given our ... we're both of us are political theorists and we think it's very interesting that cities with a strong ethos also have a history of generating the great ideas in political theory, you know, think of ... I think the fact that Athens and Sparta had very contrasting political systems certainly stimulated [unclear 31:03] so come up with their theories. And in the Chinese history, the warring states, period. You had the great thinkers like Confucius and Mencius who roamed from basically cities to cities, that sometimes had a different ethos, that also led to perhaps the most creative period in Chinese philosophical thinking. Of course Jerusalem has stimulated much religious thought, and today many of the great theories about multiculturalism and language have emerged from Montreal, like Charles Taylor is perhaps the most famous thinker. So that's another reason perhaps why we were attracted to those cities. And Paris with the kind of anti-bourgeois kind of theories, of course I think has ... they're stimulated by the cities as well.

JANE-FRANCES KELLY: You're a communitarian.

DANIEL: Yeah. So about that question, I guess my ... I guess what we mean by that is that, and it's not just me, it's my co-author as well, that we think that most people have this need for a communal identity and that it's both a descriptive fact and also it can have positive things. At one level it's purely descriptive, like what kind of animals are we? Are we like tigers who are purely individualistic and spend their lives more or less alone? Or are we like lions who live in a community? So we think we're more the second type of people. And on that basis we think ... since we live in communities and we have certain need for a communal identity, and let's think of what that would mean in a city context.

JANE-FRANCES KELLY: Now there's one here and there was one ... there was somebody in there who's changed their mind, that's fine. And Mary, at the wall was a lady in the red jacket, the woman who is sitting inside, as it were. It's not my most articulate moment. Yes. Oh, have we got one microphone?

AUDIENCE: One here.

JANE-FRANCES KELLY: Right, okay. Yeah, so one here, then one there, and then over there. Sorry. I'm usually better.

AUDIENCE: This is a tourism advert posing as a question. Talk first, the question second. There's a place just out of Melbourne, a regional centre called Ballarat. Now Ballarat was built by very successful gold miners and sheep breeders, mostly Scots. And the clear message that they had, the founding fathers had was we want to build something that we can be incredibly proud of, that's every bit as good or better than what we left behind in Scotland. We want to show the world and Scotland what can be done when you transplant Scots. And they built a beautiful city and it is still a beautiful city, and it has a very, very powerful ethos of community spirit, high quality cultural pursuits and the young people that you meet in the street today are all

part of that. So the question is, are you going to go to Ballarat to L'Espresso Coffee Shop and see for yourself exactly what you're talking about in this microcosm of a regional city?

DANIEL: I hadn't considered that, but if my fellow travellers allow that, we would certainly be happy to do it. But let me just say one thing, though, that what I mean by communitarianism is not that cities need to have a very strong communal ethic because some cities, if we look at New York, and New York has this very strong ethos of ambition, so in some sense it's individualistic ethos. Or Hong Kong, we call ethos materialism without hedonism. But we think where community comes in at those parts is precisely at the moments, the darkest moments in those ... in the case of New York the darkest moments in the history, that's where the communal spirit kind of almost rescues the cities from those moments. But we're not saying that cities need to have a very strong communal anti-individualistic ethos. Some cities can take pride in the ethos, you know, for example New York can take pride in its ethos of ambition, so long as it's not an individualism that's completely unrestrained.

AUDIENCE: Tony Dalton from RMIT University. I'm just wondering, to what extent do you pick up issues about ethos that is differentiated across now what are some very large cities. So if we look at Melbourne and ... but many of the ones that you've studied in the book are huge, so they go from central city area where you've got very well established political and cultural institutional sort of presence, to the suburbs, the suburbs of Paris, I guess. Can you say that the ethos is different in different parts of the city or to what extent does it change as you move across these now very large cities from the centre to the suburbs?

JANE-FRANCES KELLY: And as you answer that, can I get that microphone to make its way across there. That would be great, thank you.

DANIEL: Okay. Yeah, I mean again, if the suburbs have a kind of way of life which is completely separate and different than the life of people in the inner city, then obviously we can't say that they have a common ethos. But again, let me just come back to the more clear cases like Montreal and Jerusalem. I think the ... like in Montreal you can't escape, you have to navigate the linguistic politics of the city, whether you live in the suburbs or in the inner city, so clearly that binds people to a certain extent. And in New York, not ... sorry, in Jerusalem, not everybody is a card-carrying religious person, but you can't escape dealing with religious issues on an everyday basis. So to a certain extent people are bound by the ethos, no matter where they live. In the case of Paris, we do agree that the biggest ... and this is maybe one more controversial part of the book, we think that sometimes if there's a kind of dominant ethos, we think that we have an obligation to respect it, even if we don't partake of it, or even if we don't agree with it. There's an expression in English everybody knows, when in Rome do as the Romans do, which expresses the idea. And at the level of countries we're about that, you know, like we don't say when in Italy ... well, I mean some people might say that, when in Italy, do as the Italians do 'cause that sounds like a kind of code for bashing immigrants or something. But when cities express, you know, let's just ... I'm not religious, I mean I worked in Jerusalem with my friend on the book, and the university closed on many religious holidays and it was inconvenient, but of course I'm not going to complain, I'm just going to live and to a certain extent even try to learn from it. And there is a sense where I became a bit more religious when I was in Jerusalem so, you know, so it's ... yeah, so in other words, I do think that if it's true that the people in the suburbs of ... just purely hypothetical in if there was a suburb in Melbourne where people were so flashy, loved to drive gold coloured cars and so on and it just might be a bit distasteful and if people express the distaste, I don't have a problem with that, yeah.

JANE-FRANCES KELLY: So over here and then there was somebody very ... yeah. So can we take you two together? That'd be great.

AUDIENCE: Hi. With regards to the different units of analysis you talked about, so East-West, then country and then cities, have you got any insights on how people deal with potential conflicts between those identities? So for example you talked about Portland being very environmentally conscious, but then potentially looking at America, maybe there's some conflict there, and whether that leads to people prioritising their identities differently.

JANE-FRANCES KELLY: And the other one, right.

DANIEL: Okay, Well, you know again, our review is that if cities have an ethos, and the ethos' are only morally defensible, it should be said, if they don't involve the violation of basic human rights, and we have a pretty thin idea of human rights, you know, it doesn't include democracy, but cities of course need to protect basic human rights. In fact if cities are so poor that they don't provide for basic material welfare, then we don't think that resources should be spent on developing an ethos unless that's a way of improving the material welfare of the people. So the first obligation is to alleviate poverty. But once that is done, and sometimes, especially in China, one way of dealing with that is to promote a certain ethos of a city. But once that's done then we think that we do have ... that there's a good case again for the reasons that we said earlier about why, and having ethos is a good thing, it's a good thing for people's identity to be attached to cities even more than countries in cases in conflict. So ... and it's ... I mean New York is a good example where people have a very strong ... in fact there's no word in English to describe the love of city, to say I love my country we have words nationalism or patriotism, but there is this feeling that many have, I love my city. New York, the famous slogan, I love New York. But then there's no word to express that, so we had to invent a new word, civicism, to express this feeling that many people have of urban pride. And we do think that having this urban pride or this civicism in cases of conflict with love of one's country should have priority. And to be honest, it's also, and perhaps one of ... if I have a certain ethic or view which is more universal, it's commitment to Confucian ethics. And in Confucianism there's this idea of graded love, meaning that the more intimate the community, the greater the love and commitment and responsibility to that community. So in Confucianism the strongest attachment should be to the family, and then you spread that attachment to others. But the further you move from the family, the less intense that commitment, and the fewer responsibilities you have. So if that's true, then we should have this greatest commitment to the family, and then to the city and then to the nation and then to people outside the nation, so kind of fits within this kind of Confucian idea of graded love which I think is a good way of thinking about our ethical obligations.

JANE-FRANCES KELLY: Just on ...

AUDIENCE: Sorry. Matthew Ford, University of Melbourne. I just was interested in your comment about the spirit of cities somewhat being generated or helped to be generated when people within a city had a certain degree of homogeneity, or similarity or like thinking. And I'm just wondering how you worked with that, say compared to the notion that diversity and interaction and innovation and energy comes from groups of different people. And I was also thinking about say Montreal where you've got the language but there's two languages and Jerusalem, you got the religion but there's two religions, and you mentioned New York which I don't think was one of the ... in the book. But they share that ambition. But obviously it's a very, very diverse city as well. I was hoping you could comment on that.

JANE-FRANCES KELLY: I'd love to take another question and get you to answer both at the same time. So, we'll come downwards and then come back up. I don't know who put their ...

AUDIENCE: Oh well, I'll go first then.

JANE-FRANCES KELLY: ... arm up first.

AUDIENCE: So can you ... how viable is it to impose an ethos, spirit or culture on a city as opposed to it being organic? So for example, you have a Lord Mayor who travels and sees a great idea which generates a community spirit within a particular city and comes back and has a plan to transplant that. How viable is that?

DANIEL: Yeah, well again I think it depends on the context, and it's viable if, as I mentioned, I mean if it resonates to a certain extent with people's way of life, and if there's a conflict, you know. I mean Montreal is a clear case, as mentioned, you know, where people ... the key issue that really motivated people in Montreal was worry about feeling at home in your own language, so this idea of making Montreal into a global city was just a non-starter. I guess it's easier to say in retrospect, but it wasn't successful. But if you have urban planners who have good ideas, that resonate to a certain extent with what different social groups want, then perhaps it's more viable. Which maybe I can use that as an entry point for the last ... for the first question, that

homogeneity doesn't mean that people all have to think the same thing, right. I mean having ethos doesn't mean that people all have to think the same thing. And it depends on the content of the ethos. If the ethos is one of ambition, then obviously, almost by definition, you're going to have people doing different things to the best of their ability. So in New York they say we're the capital of culture as well as the capital of 'apital, you know, meaning financial capital. So people do different things to maximise their abilities and talents in those respects, and it attracts immigrants who have huge ambition to different things and different ways of life. So depends on the content of the ethos. But if the ethos is one ... or Oxford where the ethos is maybe related to learning, then people will pursue that in different ways. So it's not saying that people have to adhere to a common set of values in that way. But where heterogeneity is at odds with having a common ethos is where there's, as mentioned, different racial groups where ... who have strikingly different ways of life and don't interact or different classes, you know, where the rich and poor live in different neighbourhoods and they don't interact in any way, and they don't feel that they have a common way of life at all, then we think there's a problem with the idea of developing an ethos.

JANE-FRANCES KELLY: Glasgow, in 1990, Glasgow was a European city of culture and many people in the UK found this laughable. And it was really ... see I worked in the tourist board in Glasgow in that summer when I was an undergraduate, as a sort of summer job and I remember this ... there was a series of campaigns which did actually kind of change a lot of the confidence of residents of Glasgow, but it was also, the reason I want to tell the story is there was this great cartoon where Glasgow had less been known for ... as being a centre of culture as being a centre of essentially kind of muggings and violence. And there was a cartoon where European city of culture and the guy was being kind of mugged on the street and sort of holding out, at knife point and the little speech balloon said, is this a dagger I see before me? But you know, it's sort of interesting, I mean there was a renaissance in Glasgow which did kind of continue. I've got the two questions, yes, one there and then the gentleman in front of you. And then we're going to go right up the back with the chap who's really holding his arm up, and then fourth row from the back, so.

AUDIENCE: Ros Hanson, Urban Planning consultant. Aren't we really talking about the branding of cities, which is a concept that's been around for quite some time and is actually been accentuated as a result of the globalisation push? That to me seems to be what's happening here in terms of the ethos, that it's then translated into a brand mark.

JANE-FRANCES KELLY: And the gentleman in front of you, sorry.

AUDIENCE: And my question was just do you see that there's any potential or have you experienced any potential of teams of cities with similar ethos' internationally kind of pooling resources, as such, in the furtherance of that ethos?

DANIEL: Yeah, that's ... I mean I think that question, that's ... you know, cities that have a strong environmental ethos are doing things together and in a way that couldn't be done at the level of state. So I think that's a very promising thing. But again it depends on the ethos. Or Montreal has links with other Francophone cities to promote the French language and culture which again would be hard to do at the level of state. So sometimes yes, I mean that's a good way of promoting things that are generally desirable. It couldn't be done at other ... at the level of other political units. About branding, I know that I'm not an expert and at some level branding might be important as a way of helping to communicate the idea of an ethos, but at some level it's the ... not necessarily the kind of the essence of what's really going on. As mentioned, branding won't work if it doesn't correspond to something that's already there. And it might help to max ... and sometimes branding, you know, there's an example that we have where it might not be done in kind of appropriate ways, like the city of Eilat in Israel, which is a kind of beautiful beach city right next to Jordan. It was branded as a beautiful beach resort in Europe, hoping to attract tourists but they didn't mention, they deliberately didn't mention that it was in Israel because people would think it's too dangerous to go if they mention that it's from Israel. So sometimes branding could be a bit deceptive as well.

JANE-FRANCES KELLY: We'll go right up the back.

AUDIENCE: Yeah, I just wonder if just the idea of ethos is just too vague and wishy-washy really to mean anything except the sort of self-conceit of people in various cities. I once went to a city in the Ukraine, Chernivtsi I think it was called, and everybody told me, oh it's a city of books and cafes. Books and cafes, books and cafes. Everybody in the Ukraine told me this. And when I finally got there, there wasn't any. I mean, did you not take an ethos that had absolutely no ... obviously no connection to what was going on in peoples' lives or it just were ... self-delusions on objectives. I mean because that's the way many ethos' are actually presented, just sort of fairly delusional really.

DANIEL: Sure, yeah.

JANE-FRANCES KELLY: And then there's an additional question about something like the fourth row from the back. There you go.

AUDIENCE: John Daley from Grattan Institute. My question was about the link between this ethos of cities and the power structures and political structures of cities. Do you think that there's a link, so say take Oxford, it has a very unusual political structure in the sense that a lot of the power is exercised by the colleges in a very devolved way, and that potentially is reflected in the kind of ethos of the city, and I'm sure you could find other examples in other cities. So do you think there's a link between the political structures, the power structures and the ethos?

JANE-FRANCES KELLY: So wishy-washy self-delusion and power.

DANIEL: Okay. Of course it's possible for some cities, and maybe Glasgow was mentioned, I mean there might be some cities where people say there's an ethos that doesn't correspond to the social reality. And of course that's possible. But the cities that we look at, you know, we're pretty confident that they have an ethos and as mentioned, we try to use to a certain extent social scientific methods, you know, value surveys, values that urban planners have, as well as these more qualitative interviews with people in those cities of different social groups and so on. And it's a kind of, you know, and as mentioned, in some cities like Jerusalem and Montreal, it's ... you have to navigate the dominant ethos' of those cities. And, but again some cities might not have an ethos and other cities, certain people claim that there's an ethos which doesn't correspond to the social reality. Of course that's possible. But we looked at nine cities that we think do have a pretty marked ethos, you know, and ... but we're not claiming that every city does or we're not claiming that some cities claim they have an ethos that in fact doesn't correspond to the social reality. And whether the ethos' are linked to the power structures, I mean again, yeah, I mean in ... it's quite clear that in the case of whether it's promoting ... and this is one way in which you could tell an ethos too, for example is where a proportion of the city budget is devoted to a certain cause. Montreal, relatively large proportion is devoted to the protection of language. And Jerusalem to the protection of religion. In Beijing, to certain expressions of political power. And of course in Singapore, would be to the ethos of nation building. So that's another way of looking or determining whether and to what extent there is an ethos is ... is looking at what the ... what's done with the resources of the city by the people who have power, yeah.

JANE-FRANCES KELLY: Chap in the middle. Chap down here.

AUDIENCE: Mark Solonsch from Urbis. I was interested in your comment earlier about the relationship between the ethos and the actual urban design of the city and whether you found that in many cases. And also whether or not there's a ... which one comes first, the ethos first and then the design, or the design first and then the ethos picking that up?

JANE-FRANCES KELLY: Chicken or egg. Can we pass that down and take your question quickly because I've ... having promised to finish on time, I'm just noticed the ...

AUDIENCE: Who's question? Where?

JANE-FRANCES KELLY: Andrew, down here, sorry. Right, there you go. Thanks.

AUDIENCE: Yeah, Chris Duffield from Super [unclear 21:58]. Just your research has informed us that cities have this ability to have an ethos and generate a force for good. Have you looked at ways that you can actually mobilise that force? So, in a city that has the potential ingredients to have an ethos, a framework to actually accelerate the motion of that being a force for good.

DANIEL: Well, again it depends on the particular cases. But for example, just off the top of my head, and it's not one that we deal with in the book, is I mentioned this city in China called Qufu which is really where the Confucianism developed. And many of us think that Confucianism has a very important role to play in China's political future. And if it's true that this city could strengthen its identity as a centre of Confucianism, it could also help in this broader commitment of promoting Confucianism in China as a whole. But other cities would have different needs obviously. Yeah, so that's ... and about urban design. I mean it's, to a certain extent, you know, of course the ethos' are shaped by the geographies or by the design, and sometimes there could be conscious efforts to shape the cities, the urban design so as to promote the ethos and so again it could work both ways. I'm not saying that one necessarily comes first. How much time do we have. 'cause I want to ask ... 'cause you said something very striking about you married Melbourne and that's one thing that ... I mean ...

JANE-FRANCES KELLY: Thirty seconds, luckily.

DANIEL: Because what really grabs is that many of do have this strong attachment to cities, but there's no way of articulating that, not even a word. We had to invent a new word and I never heard anybody say that they married a city before, so ...

JANE-FRANCES KELLY: I've never said it before either. That was a ... more of a, you know ...

DANIEL: I just wonder what you meant by that.

JANE-FRANCES KELLY: Yeah. Sorry. No, no, actually I came to Melbourne for nine months seven years ago. It was completely unexpected the extent to which I fell in love with Melbourne and Australia and kind of changed my plans about the rest of my life in order to stay here and immigrate and I mean citizenship was really the marriage I guess, permanent residency was the engagement and, but I mean, and it's now been seven years so, you know, yes. Time to write a book like this. The ... and really I kind of sort of meant that, and you're right, it's actually quite ... lots of people, lots of Australians kind of say to me, lots of my fellow Australians say to me, you know, what was it about Australia and Melbourne that you kind of, you know, made you want to stay? And I find the only metaphor that really kind of makes sense is kind of falling in love. And then I just enjoyed myself with the metaphor after that. And it is a little bit like it doesn't work to someone, you know, can you give a logical of a kind of why you fell in love with your wife, as it were, and so I suppose it was a kind of a ... it was something that was quite hard to express. And all the things like, you know, I just know I want to grow old here. But enough about me. And we should close, and just before thanking you, I want to do some gratuitous advertising around the ... what's happening in the Grattan Cities Program next. We're ... the Housing We Choose that we published in June that we are working at great pace on policy recommendations coming out of that, so you know, what we found was that the kinds of housing choices that we would like to make are not actually kind of as verbal in our cities as we would like and what we're building isn't kind of, you know, making that gap any smaller and what should we do about that. Look out for that in November on our website near you, www.grattan.edu.au. And after that we're going to work on Cities and Social Connections which basically kind of recognises, you were saying earlier, we're social animals and what role do our cities play and how well a job do our cities do in either hindering or helping our kind of needs for social connection, and that will come thereafter. Let me thank Daniel Bell for your time and for your book, I've been hugely enjoying reading it. And also to Allens Arthur Robinson, and to the Grattan staff who helped us do this this evening. But lastly and most importantly to ... for coming. Thank you. Thank you.

AUDIO: This has been a podcast from Grattan Institute. Want to hear more? Check out our website, www.grattan.edu.au.

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