

THE URBAN AGE

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A C E L E B R A T I O N O F C I T Y L I F E

Cities Today: A New Frontier

by Saskia Sassen and Sujata Patel

BOMBAY. As the 20th century draws to a close, there is a debate about the future of cities that has two facets.

First, developments in the telecommunications and information industries have facilitated massive dispersals of economic activity and led analysts and politicians in highly industrialized countries to declare that cities are dead. Cities, they say, are now finished as economic entities.

Second, the rise of the megacity, especially in Asia and Latin America, has led many observers in developing countries to see cities as places where social problems are concentrated, and which are unmanageable and unproductive. Furthermore, predictions of continued population growth in cities like Mexico City and Calcutta, both of which will have about 20 million inhabitants in the next century, contribute to this pessimistic view. The megacity of the developing world conveys to these observers an image of millions of people wasting their lives, unemployed and without any prospects of change in the future.

Both these views are exaggerated. And when we look at the global city and the megacity more closely, they provide us with a more complex idea of the way cities are developing today.

The global economy and cities

The idea of a global economy is now deeply entrenched in political circles and in the media throughout the world. Yet the dominant images of such a notion—the information revolution, the neutralization of distance through telematics, the instantaneous transmission of money around the world—are only part of the transformation process. As such, they are profoundly inadequate as images of what globalization and the growth of information economics really mean for cities. What is lacking in this abstract model is the understanding of the actual material

processes, activities, and infrastructures that are crucial for the process of globalization.

When telecommunications developed in a big way in the advanced countries of the world in the 1980s, an unexpected strengthening of the role of the city occurred. It is the simultaneous combination of the global dispersal of economic activities and of global integration that has given major cities a strategic role and transformed them into global cities.

Globalization requires centralization

What happened then to the predicted demise of cities as important economic units? One explanation is that both national and global markets, as well as globally integrated operations, need central places where globalization work is done. Information industries by their very nature require a huge infrastructure with strategic nodes or centers of operations, and a concentration of facilities. New forms of management and of operations controls have thus become centralized.

When examined more closely, the global economy demonstrates just how important cities are and how crucial having a broad range of workers is for such an economy. Even the most advanced information industries need an agglomeration of different buildings and different types of employees. For example, secretaries and blue-collar workers are essential to the international financial industry; so are truckers—and the trucks they drive—for delivering the

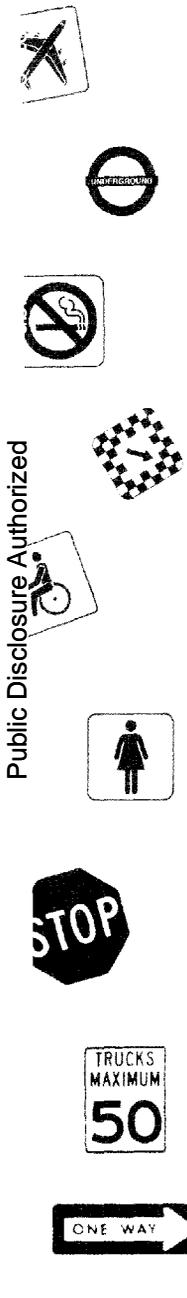
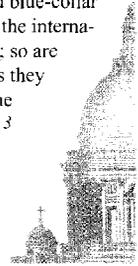
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THE URBAN AGE

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

We welcome your comments, thoughts, and suggestions about *The Urban Age*.

Editor:

The article that appeared in the Urban Finance issue about the federal control board in Washington, D.C., was certainly very provocative. It underlines the fact that although they have partially succeeded at gaining home rule—there is an elected mayor, a council, and a nonvoting delegate to Congress—the residents are yet to be fully enfranchised.

The establishment of the control board is a

form of external intervention that offers the District immediate hope of a competent and responsible financial policymaking body. One should view this board not as an imposition but as an objective and efficient mechanism in helping the District to clean its financial house.

E.A. Anigbede
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Editor's Note

Cities offer us the extremes of life: wealth and poverty; beauty and decay; success and failure. In this issue we celebrate city life. Why? Because despite their problems—unsustainability, degradation, poverty, and violence, they are also the locus of commerce, invention, and creativity. To borrow Robert McNamara's phrase, "cities exist as an expression of man's attempt to achieve his potential."

Saskia Sassen and Sujata Patel in their lead offer compelling evidence that the city today—the new frontier—is emerging in two ways: as the global city in the developed world and as the mega city in the developing world. This does not mean, as some observers have suggested, that the city is dying. Rather they are reinventing themselves.

In "The Tempestuous Birth of the New Asian Cities" Deyan Sudjic describes the emerging 21st century megalopolis. The tremendous power and potential of the cities of the Pearl River Delta are astonishing. Not since the industrial revolution of the 19th century have cities offered so much opportunity for so many people to prosper. However, he leaves us with a sobering thought:

without responsible planning and development of these cities lie the seeds of catastrophe.

The realization that the cultural life of cities is worth preserving and that this preservation can also be a tool for urban development is explored by Charles Landrey and Jann Darsie. They write respectively about the efforts of the museums of Eastern Europe and Russia to develop cultural tourism, and the attempts by a small El Salvadoran town to create a cultural plan and preserve its heritage. Both writers demonstrate the ways people in cities are creating better places for themselves to live.

From the Greek philosophers to the European Romantic poets of the 19th century the city in literature, poetry and the arts has commanded a unique cultural and social position in the lexicon. In this issue we also explore the beauty and the impact of cities through the media of storytelling, carnival, music, photography and cinema: the traditional and modern expressions of urban vitality. Through these articles we learn that the city is the place where humanity has placed its hope for the future. It is this that we celebrate.

As always we welcome your comments, and suggestions about the issue.

—Margaret Bergen

Farewell and Thank You

It is with bittersweet emotions that I say farewell to readers of *The Urban Age* to take up a post with the International Finance Corporation of the World Bank. When *The Urban Age* was launched in 1992, we could not have anticipated its reception. Today more than 22,000 people in 178 countries read the journal, and its reputation continues to grow as a leading vehicle for dialogue about global urban issues.

I would like to thank those members of the

editorial board who were vital to the launch of *The Urban Age* and whose support has allowed the journal to flourish. Thank you also to Michael Cohen at the World Bank, without whose guidance and vision *The Urban Age* would not have been born.

The Urban Age will continue to cover those issues most crucial to the developing world's cities. We look forward to your continued support.

—Mary McNell

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CITIES TODAY

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industry's software.

Today's global cities are command points in the organization of the world economy: key locations and marketplaces for the most advanced contemporary industries, which provide finance and specialized services, and major production sites for these industries.

The megacity

The megacity is popularly depicted as being overcrowded with dense slums, squatter settlements, and pavement-dwellers whose access to the most elementary services is negligible and who frequently fall victim to epidemics and disease. Such cities are also usually associated with drug-trafficking, prostitution, and crime. Yet the image of slums as unclean, dirty, and hazardous is exaggerated. Indeed, such images often say more about the neglect of local authorities than the life-style and preferences of the slum-dwellers. Many slum dwellings are clean, and a great deal of self-help and self-development by the slum-dwellers has ensured a minimum of services.

More importantly, the popular images seem to ignore the fact that these slum-dwellers have often been forced to migrate to cities due to the privatization of land and then forced into extreme poverty. But they still have aspirations and energy, and a determination to find work; and they are willing to work as hard as they can. They also have expectations for their children and a knowledge and understanding of grassroots political processes—and often a capacity to develop their urban shelters in imaginative ways if given even minimal resources.

What is omitted in these popular images is that the slums and crowded spaces of megacities are also productive areas. Most slum-

dwellers work in a broad range of activities. Slums are key sites for the production of low-value-added goods that are necessary for urban life such as plastic goods, cosmetics, food products, and stationery products.

So there is an enormous potential among the large, desperately poor populations of megacities. We must find ways of harnessing this energy to make cities more productive and to ensure a better life for these workers and their children.

Cultural diversity

Large cities around the world are places where a multiplicity of transnational and transregional processes assume concrete, localized forms; and where people from many different regions, countries, and villages converge. They are thus intrinsically diverse.

The international character of major cities lies not only in their telecommunications infrastructure and their multinational firms: it also lies in the many different cultural environments in which their inhabitants live and work. The large city may bear the marks of a dominant corporate culture, but it also contains a variety of other cultures and identities that reflect humanity's diversity and potential.

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Urban Music: The Birth of Rock and Roll

Peter Hall is a professor of planning at the Bartlett School of Architecture, University College, London

Modern popular music was born in Memphis, Tennessee, in July 1954. The place was the studio of the Sun Record Company and the artist was an unknown truck driver and part-time musician called Elvis Presley.

That much is legend. But in any event, the new sound would have emerged sometime around 1955, because the conditions were right: there was a new generation of affluent young people, who rejected the norms and the tastes of their parents; there was a breaking-down of the old racial barriers, which encouraged musicians to mix different musical strains that had previously been kept apart; there were new technologies—the FM transistor radio, long-playing record, and recording tape; and there was the rise of another new technology, television, which was marginalizing radio and forcing it to develop new niche markets.

It could have happened in several American cities, but the most likely was Memphis. For the new music was folk music, created by desperately poor rural people. There were two such groups around Memphis: the whites in the hills to the east, the blacks in the delta cotton fields to the south. Segregated by the most oppressive race laws in the United States, these musical traditions nonetheless influenced each other.

Despite segregation, the two groups lived side by side, and could not help hear each others' music. Memphis was the place where the two streams met and finally fused.

Memphis was a unique city. For decades, it had possessed a reputation as a wide-open, free and easy, slightly crazy place. In the 1950s, a new group of white entrepreneurs emerged who knew and cared for both musical traditions. One, Sam Phillips, who came out of commercial radio to found Sun Records, was willing to give a chance to an unknown singer straight off the street—which was how Presley arrived. Memphis thus became the scene of a real cultural revolution. It was the setting for the first recorded victory of the art of a rural underclass and of its underclass performers, and finally of its values.

It all came together in the person of Presley: born from very poor Irish stock in 1935 in Tupelo, Mississippi, he lived at the border of the black delta and the white hills. Presley was exposed to both musical strains from childhood: the white strain through his parents' Pentecostal church, the second through a black radio station he listened to after his parents moved to Memphis in 1953. He began to go to black clubs and hear the music there; much of his early music was taken from this experience. Of his first ten recordings between mid-1954

and mid-1955, about half came from country, half from blues; it was the blues-based records that were to make him famous.

The music he sang, rockabilly, was white country music with a black rhythm—and no white man had sung like that before. When the disk jockeys heard it, they didn't know if Presley was white or black.

It was a genuine cultural revolution, a very special case of urban artistic creative innovation. The interesting point was this: Memphis, a deeply provincial city almost unknown to mainstream America, innovated while New York's Tin Pan Alley—the East Coast half of America's entertainment capital—desperately resisted this revolutionary music. The established musical industry fought viciously to preserve its position—not least because everyone in it found the new music incomprehensible and shocking.

This story is significant. In almost all previous history, cultural innovation in the Northern hemisphere had emerged from established cities—centers of wealth and power, like Florence, London, Vienna, Paris, and Berlin. Technological-industrial innovation, in contrast, had come out of upstart fringe cities like Manchester, Glasgow, Pittsburgh, and Detroit. But now, cultural innovation was happening in those places too, and it

was a different kind of innovation: bottom-up rather than top-down, a new kind of commercial folk art. Hollywood in the 1920s had been the sole previous example; and it is surely significant that both these cases were American. America at last democratized culture, and the resulting new tradition would have momentous implications.

Not the least of these implications was the creation of new mass media, which were broadcast to millions of people worldwide. It was significant then and it is significant now, when another economic revolution is taking place. Technological and cultural innovation are fusing to create a new service product today, multimedia. And, unsurprisingly, the locations of the new industry are in California: in urban areas such as Silicon Valley, where the modern electronics industry was born in the 1950s, as well as in Hollywood.

In Memphis, the emergence of this quintessential urban art form was a special kind of cultural freedom, a freedom typical of cities in a fringe region, that allowed these streams to flow in the first place. It is that same freedom that is now unleashing a flood of creative activity in other urban American areas—with global effects that will be equally profound.

Innovative Programs for the Urban Poor in Cali, Colombia

by Rodrigo Guerrero

Rodrigo Guerrero, a physician with a Ph.D. in public health, is the former mayor of Cali, Colombia.

CALI. There is no question that among urban-dwellers the most important environmental threat, as well as the strongest predictor of ill health, is poverty. I say this as a physician who has spent most of his life trying to do the traditional things that doctors do to help the poor—things like working in health centers or advising people on nutrition. It is always poverty that has the greatest impact on the health of urban-dwellers. So the best way to improve the health of the urban poor is to fight poverty.

Definition of poverty

There has been a lot of discussion among economists about the definition of “absolute” poverty. To me, the definition is very simple: for an urban-dweller, unemployment means absolute poverty. Unemployment is more important than health, education, or environmental sanitation. The poor have to live, and to live they need to earn money. You don’t have to search, as many people have done, for other measures of absolute poverty, such as daily caloric intake vis-à-vis the number of calories needed to live. An unemployed person in a city is a person in absolute poverty.

To help its unemployed and impoverished residents to improve their quality of life, the city of Cali, Colombia, has managed—through developing microentrepreneurial activities and encouraging waste recycling—to create employment opportunities while simultaneously contributing to a healthier environment in poor neighborhoods. Cali is the third largest city in Colombia, with nearly 2 million people. It is perhaps best known outside Colombia for its active drug cartel and the violence associated with illegal drug

activity. Despite this image, Cali—with its crowded slums and squatter settlements, high rates of morbidity and mortality, large informal sector, and extreme poverty—is, in many ways, typical of large urban centers in Latin America and elsewhere.

Poor to solve their own problems

Cali’s urban poor may be illiterate, but they are also extremely intelligent, hard-working, creative, and resourceful people. They are adept at solving their own problems and fulfilling their own needs. In most cases, this is despite governmental efforts, which tend to be either inadequate or nonexistent. The urban poor avoid unemployment every day of their lives by finding self-employment.

Economists previously neglected the importance of this kind of employment, calling the poor in our cities members of the “informal” sector of the economy, in contrast to the “formal” sector in which employees work a fixed number of hours per week, receive regular compensation, pay taxes, contribute to mandatory social insurance schemes, and save for retirement. In Latin America, the informal sector employs more than 50 percent of the total urban workforce. In some cases—in Peru, for example—this figure may be 70 percent or higher.

Cali’s program to alleviate poverty

Recently, the city of Cali has tried to help its urban poor to help themselves. I’ll give two examples. First, having discovered that the poor of Cali are among the best microentrepreneurs in the world, we devised a program of small business development based on training, counseling, and credit. The combination of all three was

used extensively in Cali, and is now being used elsewhere in Colombia. More than 100,000 microentrepreneurs have gone through this process, and more than \$30 million has been made available in loans. The default rate is less than 1 percent. Each \$1,000 in loans creates another stable job opening—a success rate that compares very favorably with other kinds of investments in entrepreneurship.

The beneficiaries of the project go on and develop businesses of their own. Ten years ago, I became acquainted with one of the first people to go through the training/counseling/credit process. Today, he has two businesses; neither of which is “micro.” One business makes mattresses; and the other, in which he employs his family and all his children, makes beds and household furniture.

Another example of the kind of businesses people start are corner food shops. In the impoverished neighborhoods of Cali, there are several on every block. Supermarkets aren’t appropriate in communities where people need to eat now and pay later, but corner food stores are a natural food distribution system in these communities.

Cali’s recycling initiative

My second example of how the city of Cali has helped its urban poor to help themselves involves recycling. Cali is a very modern town. But still there are parts of the city where you’ll find slums, where there is running water and where water is distributed in closed carts.

Because the city does not do a good job of collecting waste in poor neighborhoods, the residents normally throw their trash into holes in the ground or into the river that runs close to where they live.

Problems can also be opportunities

So, with the philosophy that the problems of the poor should be viewed as opportunities and that the people involved should be part of the solution, we recommended to these people that they collect their recyclable materials and use them to pay for paving their streets. We established recycling centers where people can take recyclable materials. They are credited with the market price of each item they bring in. They can spend the credit either to help pave the streets or for their own individual purposes—improving their houses or paying for doctor visits.

Bottle caps, for instance, are considered scrap iron; so some people bring in 55-gallon drums filled with bottle caps for recycling. The credits they earn can be used to purchase cobblestones, which are put in place by members of the community. This helps to unite people. When a street paving job is finished, the group dynamic remains, ready to be channeled toward another goal.

I recently read a book that I’m sure most of you know, *Reinventing Government* by David Osborne. One of the key ideas in this book is that government should do the steering, not the rowing. That is what we’ve tried to do in Cali: to channel people; to indicate the direction; and then to liberate the energy that is inside individuals, communities, private organizations, and nongovernmental organizations. **UF**

This article was adapted from the book Down to Earth—Community Perspectives on Health, Development and the Environment, eds. Bonnie Bradford and Margaret A. Gymore (West Hartford, CT: Kumarian Press, Inc., 1995).

Planning for Culture—The Special Future of Suchitoto

by Jann Darsie

Jann Darsie is a recent Fulbright Scholar who worked with CONCULTURA in El Salvador. She is a contributing writer for AMERICAS Magazine (Organization of American States) and teaches at American University in Washington, D.C.

SUCHITOTO. Political unrest in El Salvador in the late 1970s exploded into all-out civil war in the 1980s. The peace accords signed in January 1992 paved the way for national reconciliation. After 12 years of armed conflict, government agencies—together with a host of international entities and nongovernmental organizations—are rebuilding the nation.

For Suchitoto—a town of 13,000 residents known as the cultural capital of El Salvador—the last few years have also been a time of economic, cultural, and social reconstruction and reconciliation. The town has one of the few colonial churches left in El Salvador, many beautiful colonial residences, and a historic central plaza. It is a place that values its past and was recently named by the Ministry of Education as a national historical monument.

Time for reconstruction

Municipal leaders have actively sought resources to reconstruct their community and have come together in Suchitoto to restore the town's ordinary buildings and its historic monuments. These objectives have united opposing political parties. In order to reconstruct the community, a task force of citizens' groups and city officials convened in September 1994 to discuss the development of tourism and culture, as well as the preservation and improvement of the environment of Suchitoto. How should the tourist industry be developed to benefit, not ruin, the town? "Suchitoto has tremendous potential in the area of cultural development," proclaimed Mayor Sandoval Alas. "How can its development best be directed and encouraged?"

The September meetings gave

rise to a special planning process focused specifically on the town's cultural heritage and how to shape its future direction. A major impetus behind the cultural development of Suchitoto has been the effort of the town's native-born son, Alejandro Cotto. He has taken on the role of producing cultural performances and exhibitions, and has spearheaded efforts to restore the Santa Lucia Church. Cotto also composed the music and wrote the words to the "Suchitoto Hymn."

The meetings to restore Suchitoto raised important questions such as "What does it mean to be a national historical monument?" "Who will carry on the work of Alejandro Cotto in the future?" "How should the special character of Suchitoto be preserved?"

Creating a cultural plan

A committee was formed to devise a cultural plan for Suchitoto. The planning committee included representatives from the mayor's office and the city council, the Committee for the Reconstruction of Cuscatlan (the jurisdiction where Suchitoto is located), and Casa de la Cultura (the local community cultural center which is part of the Ministry of Education). Together, they planned the agenda and chose 40 community leaders to participate.

An important feature was the participants' diverse political, social, and artistic views. The participants ranged from Mayor Sandoval Alas, one of the few elected mayors from the opposition party, and the chief of police aligned with the conservative regime; to an artist who had just opened a gallery and a couple who are building Suchitoto's only hotel. Citizens' groups; youth,

social, and health organizations; and other nongovernmental organizations were also called on to participate.

A cultural plan is an instrument that can be utilized by a community (both its civil leaders and local institutions) to give



The restoration of Santa Lucia continues.

shape to ideas, take action, and obtain results to preserve and develop its cultural assets.

A cultural plan allows a community to identify and confront problems that hamper the development of culture. It should be used as an integral part of the municipality's other development plans. For example, a cultural attraction such as a church or a museum stimulates tourism, economic benefits, and educational opportunities. The plan helps to define priorities, and establish goals and responsibilities. In the words of an ex-guerrilla leader: "Art heals the trauma of war. A cultural plan can help rescue part of what has been lost—to help us confide in our neighbors again."

The process of micro-planning is based on consensus, ideally

drawing on a broad representation of all civil, official, and institutional sectors. In Suchitoto, the process was organized around workshops, with all attendees actively participating. Different viewpoints on the problems were voiced, and consensus was reached in a short period of time. In November and December 1994 the "Cultural Plan for Suchitoto" took shape in two workshops held over three weeks.

The plan ensures that the cultural and artistic development of the town not be left to chance, but determined in a focused and controlled way through citizen input.

The first step in the consensus process was to identify problems. These were:

- lack of education and promotion of cultural values,
- lack of a cultural plan that relates to the overall municipality, and
- lack of adequate venues to present the arts and culture.

To remedy lack of funding, a key problem in developing Suchitoto's cultural resources, it was recommended that a tax-exempt foundation be created to raise funds. In honor of the name Suchitoto, it was recommended that it be called the "Flower and Bird Foundation."

The Cultural Plan for Suchitoto is a work in progress. The town is already attracting performances and audiences from the capital city of San Salvador with increasing regularity. The restoration of the Santa Lucia Church is well under way. The local leaders have made their cultural future an integral part of planning the physical and economic aspects of development. They have also succeeded in protecting and nurturing the cultural and social value of their town's history.

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The Spirit of Miami

by Margaret Bergen

M Margaret Bergen is the editor of *The Urban Age*.

MIAMI. It has often been suggested that Miami society is some kind of cultural experiment. But this suggests conscious, organized planning. Rather, the development of modern Miami has been a lucky accident of politics and geography—a confluence of forces that have dramatically changed its demographic landscape.

This year, the city celebrates its centennial.

Of tourism—and trains

Julia Tuttle was a Cleveland widow who came to Miami in the late 19th century to escape the cold Ohio winters. This “Mother of Miami” felt others would be equally attracted to the tiny town’s pristine beaches, sunny skies, and warm climate. Consequently, she persuaded railway magnate Henry Flagler to extend his Florida East Coast Railway south from Palm Beach. He did so in 1896. The trains brought an invasion of wealthy sun-seekers who built grand homes and hotels that made Miami a tourist destination. With the construction of the Intracoastal Waterway and the development of Miami Beach in the 1920s, a tropical capital was born.

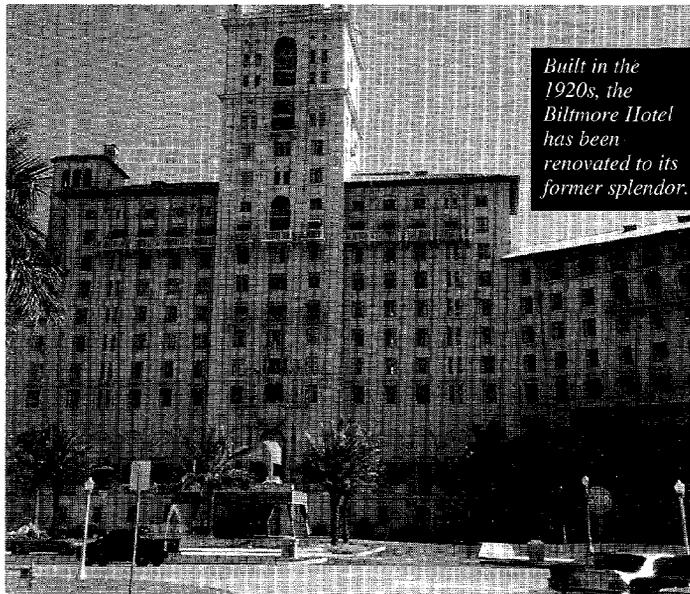
Miami boomed between the 1920s and 1950s, a place of pastel glamour with a tradition of easy money. But in the 1960s and 1970s, while the Florida economy grew rapidly, Miami’s tourist industry stagnated. Competition from other Florida resorts and direct flights to the Caribbean diverted tourists from the city.

Unique source of immigrants shapes society

As tourism waned, a new kind of migration shaped the city,

turning it into a uniquely American experience in bicultural and bilingual living. After Fidel Castro’s 1959 revolution, Miami was deluged with wave after wave of Cuban refugees—over a half-million in all over the course of two decades. And, unlike most immigrants, these people were political rather than economic refugees. This factor greatly influenced Miami’s future development.

This first wave of Cuban



Built in the 1920s, the Biltmore Hotel has been renovated to its former splendor.

immigrants were from the upper and middle classes. They came, they thought, for temporary asylum and were ready to leave as soon as the revolution failed. Many came with money. Others came with academic and intellectual resources that allowed them too to flourish. During *el exilio* (the exile), as the months turned into years and then into decades, the Cubans formed their own social, economic, and political world that was to alter permanently the nature of Miami.

Other immigrants also helped shape Miami society at this time: Haitians, Nicaraguans, Mexicans, Dominicans, Panamanians, and

Puerto Ricans. These were immigrants in the traditional mold who sought economic opportunities. The multiple migrations produced a pool of cheap, bilingual labor that in turn led to the development of a new and muscular ethnic economy.

Concurrently, the growing social and political clout of the Cuban groups was transforming Miami into a locus for Hispanic investment, with links to the emerging economies of the Latin

American and Caribbean region. Miami was becoming a place where people from the region could come and do business; it would eventually emerge as an important trading entrepot with Central and South America, thanks in part to the Cuban diaspora and to the waves of Caribbean and Central American immigrants.

Maturation of Miami—From playground to trading partner

In the 1980s, Miami seriously set about reversing its decline in tourism. This initiative began with renovation of the art deco

buildings of South Beach. These buildings were predominantly the apartments and hotels inhabited by a previous generation of tourists, the now-elderly population who had begun coming to Miami in the '20s. The effort succeeded. Overnight, Miami Beach became a hip watering hole for those in search of a cheap holiday. The TV show “Miami Vice,” filmed on location at Miami Beach, added to the allure of the place.

Gradually, the business community came to see that a niche market for a new breed of discerning tourist—more vacations of shorter duration—could be created here. The recently renovated Delano Hotel exemplifies this thinking. After extensive market research—and a sizable payout of \$25 million—the hotel’s owner, Ian Shrager, sees the Delano as a serious investment in the city itself. “Its position between Europe and Central and South America—and, of course, the rest of the United States—is unique. The city is maturing: it is becoming very service-oriented, and this is the place for a hotel that appeals to those who care about quality.” Thus, the Delano, with its stylish whimsy, elegance, and good return on investment (it has an occupancy rate of 90 percent), precisely captures the Miami spirit first tapped by Julia Tuttle—that is, the ability to capitalize on natural assets like sea and sand by wooing business interests.

In the 1980s, the maturation of Miami was occurring on another front as well—as an international trading partner, a gateway to Latin America. The Beacon Council, Miami’s economic development agency, describes

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the city as “The Business Capital of the Americas.” The statistics are indeed compelling. For example, the city is currently the third largest international banking center in the United States and home to more than 330 multinational companies. And in her book *World Class* (New York City: Simon and Schuster, 1995), Rosabeth Moss Kantor notes that, in Miami, “trade surpassed tourism as the number one industry in 1994 to reach an economic impact of over \$7 billion.”

Separate, parallel societies

But what of the people who have made these changes possible? Margery Bonnet, a Haitian accountant and resident of Coconut Grove who has lived in Miami for six years, calls Miami “the best city in America for foreigners.” She says that the city is familiar with and tolerant of immigrants: “It is a place of incredible opportunity.” Conversely, though, she feels there is very little intercourse among the different ethnic groups.

This vision corresponds to the words of Joan Didion. Didion, in her book *Miami* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1987), describes the city as a community of parallel but separate societies. There is much truth to this statement. As Carlos Guittierrez, a Cuban-American university student, puts it, “At high school you mix with whoever is in your class; at home you do not.”

Further, Alex Stepick, a sociologist at Florida International University and coauthor of *City on the Edge* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1993) a book about immigration in Miami, has this to say on the subject of a common Miami identity: “About cultural convergence—on the negative side, polarization continues, particularly in the political arena, where there is no apparent convergence in political appeals. Politics are polarized by

ethnicity.” On the positive side, he maintains that there is an emerging common culture. “The arts, music, and dance have numerous events that mix styles and people.” Predictably, he notes, second generation Miamians still speaks their native language, but “their cultural tastes are more in line with mainstream American culture than with their parents’.”

Miami spirit

The “official” Miami spirit is the ambiance of an effective service culture created for the international traveler and business person. Easy communication, world-class port facilities (the city boasts the world’s largest port facility for vacation cruises), and strong trade and banking links throughout the hemisphere justify the title “City of the Americas.”

But the city’s heart and soul beat to many different rhythms—

rhythms kept alive by its numerous immigrant communities. Here, cultural traditions and the language of the old country are protected and nurtured.

For instance, in Calle Ocho, the Cuban neighborhood, the storefronts describe their wares in Spanish. But what really distinguishes the area from the rest of the city is the small scale of the place: the shops lined up against each other look as if they were built for a smaller city; there are old men playing chess on the broad sidewalks; music blares from car speakers hung by wire from the stores. The physical layout harks back to an architecture from an older society; one that forces people into a daily intimacy; one that predates and belies the anonymity of the strip malls of the “other” Miami.

This is a city that presents many faces to the world. There

are the Mediterranean-style villas of Coral Gables, one of the first planned communities in Miami built in the 1920s, and the cinder block houses of parts of poor northern Miami.

There are luxurious condominiums in Coconut Grove and on Brickell Avenue which were put up during the cocaine years of the 1980s; these rival in opulence the mansions of movie stars and famous singers on Star or Hibiscus Island. And the American middle class dream of the good life finds its expression in houses with two-car garages and swimming pools in prosperous South Miami.

Julia Tuttle had the vision to lure the railway and the developers here. Not even she, however, could have imagined that the city carved from a subtropical wilderness would become at its centennial a rich and varied international megalopolis.



City Quiz—Test Your Urban Knowledge

1. When did the first cities come into being?
2. How many countries are 100 percent urbanized? Name them.
3. How many cities in the United States have populations of one million or more?
4. Which city has the largest population?
5. Which country contains the most cities with populations over one million?
6. What country has the smallest capital city population?
7. What city along the equator has the largest population?
8. How many cities have subway/metro systems (16 km minimum underground)?
9. When Yemen and South Yemen merged, which of the two capital sites became the primary capital, Sana or Aden?
10. Name the four quarters of Old Jerusalem.

Answers

1. 4,000 B.C.
2. Three—Monaco, Holy See, and Singapore. Source: Standley D. Brian and Jack F. Williams, *Cities of the World*, World Regional Urban Development, New York: Harper Collins, 1993.
3. Eight. The eight in order are New York; 7.3 million; Los Angeles; 3.5 million; Chicago; 2.8 million; Houston; 1.6 million; Philadelphia; 1.6 million; San Diego; 1.1 million; Denver; 1.0 million. Source: U.S. 1990 Census.
4. Mexico City—20,200,000. Source: *United Nations, UN 1993 Demographics Yearbook*, 45th ed., New York, 1993.
5. China. It has 32 cities with over 1 million residents. Source: *Chinese State Statistical Bureau, China Statistical Yearbook*, 1995. Beijing, 1995.
6. Holy See (Vatican City). The population is 800. Source: UN 1993 Demographics Yearbook.
7. Pontianak, Indonesia—304,778. The city must have the equator run through the city border. The second largest city is Abandaka, Zaire, at 137,291. Quito, Ecuador, is 2 south of the equator. Source: UN 1993 Demographics Yearbook.
8. 46. These are Buenos Aires, Vienna, Brussels, San Paolo, Montreal, Toronto, Santiago de Chile, Beijing, Tientsin, Paris, Lyon, Berlin, Cologne, Frankfurt, Hamburg, Munich, Koenigsberg, Budapest, Hong Kong, Milan, Rome, Fukuoka, Nagoya, Osaka, Sapporo, Tokyo, Seoul, Mexico City, Lisbon, Bucharest, Moscow, St. Petersburg, Barcelona, Madrid, Stockholm, Khar'kov, Kiev, London, Boston, Chicago, New York, Philadelphia, San Francisco, Washington, D.C., Caracas. Source: Chris Bushell, ed., *Jane's Urban Transport Systems*, 1995-96 edition, Surrey, England: International Thomson, 1996.
9. Sana.
10. Jewish, Christian, Muslim, and Armenian.

Contributed by Richard Sheehy, geographer

The Tempestuous Birth of the New Asian City

by Deyan Sudjic

8 Deyan Sudjic is a writer specializing in urban affairs. He is the author of a book on cities, *The 100 Mile City* (New York: Harcourt, Bruce and Company, 1992).

HONG KONG. The new Asian cities of the late 20th century owe nothing to the contemporary European ideal of urbanism. They are dense, raw, chaotic, and—above all—vast. Architects in Asia have a weakness for glossy, white tiles; mirrored glass; and chrome. It is as if the construction materials they use are an attempt to disinfect the squalor of old Asia. They build shopping malls, skyscrapers, airports, and business parks. But all of these familiar urban landmarks have been subverted into something very different from their Western antecedents.

Europe has forgotten what it is like to live in a city in which the population doubles and redoubles in a single lifetime; where a surveyor's grid laid out with pegs and string in open fields can quickly mushroom into a skyline of skyscrapers. The building boom that is now happening around the Pacific Rim is an apocalyptic transformation not seen since the 19th century, when London and Paris turned themselves into the largest cities the world had yet seen.

The Pearl River economy

The jetfoil to Zhuhai in Guangdong province on the Chinese mainland splutters out of Hong Kong's China Ferry Terminal 15 minutes late. This aged blue-and-white tub has acquired a new lease on life as a makeshift floating mass transit system crossing the Pearl River to the world's newest metropolis, Zhuhai, a sprawling monster city still in the throes of a violent birth.

Chain-smoking commuters cross and recross the Pearl River

to run the factories that Hong Kong has built in China's Guangdong province, one of the largest new economic zones. There are a few Westerners on the ferry too, in search of bargain basement manufacturing deals, or pedaling high-tech equipment to entrepreneurs. From the other direction come teenage hustlers lugging suitcases of pirated software, clutching mobile telephones.

uncontrollably across international frontiers.

This nameless conurbation—its only competitors are Shanghai and Jakarta—is exploding; its population the benchmark for a new generation of turbo-charged metropolises. Within a decade—if it continues to expand at its present rate—this new city will become home to 40 million people, surpassing Tokyo, Osaka, and Mexico City to become the

city the size of London every six months. Intense urban growth is surging toward Guangzhou, situated 70 miles up the Pearl River, to meet another firestorm of rapid urbanization raging on the other side of the delta.

And a continuous ribbon of concrete high rises, industrial warehouses and hotels is snaking all the way down to Macao. This phenomenon is more than a chaotic spectacle—a temporary byproduct of China's rediscovery of capitalism. Fueled by an exploding economy, the urbanization of the Pearl River represents the future of the modern metropolis—a decisive shift away from the European and American urban ideal.

As the ferry to Zhuhai moves away from its berth, businessmen hardly give a second glance to the view through the salt-streaked windows. Every inch of the shoreline has been built up; it is a solid mass of dry docks and container terminals overlooked by high-rise apartments stretching up into the hills. The water itself is so thick that it too has become part of the city. A little way out, the ferry skirts the towering concrete piers of the half-built suspension bridge linking the still-not-complete runways of the new airport that Britain will bequeath its last colony.

Zhuhai—City of the future

But even this frenzy of construction is hardly adequate preparation for the extraordinary world of Zhuhai. "Development is the Only Way" proclaim giant hoardings written in English and embellished with childlike paintings of the high-speed French railway system, the TGV

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The two sides of the Pearl River are inextricably linked. In the last decade, an increasingly affluent Hong Kong has exported a constant stream of jobs to the low-wage economy across the border in China, investing millions of dollars in the process. The Pearl River delta is becoming a single giant city spilling

largest city in the world. A population greater than most of the individual countries of Europe will be packed into an area not much larger than the greater London region.

Exploding coastal economy

Coastal Asia is building a new

Cultural Tourism in Eastern Europe and Russia

by Charles Landry

Charles Landry is the director of Comedia, a British urban research and planning consultancy. He is coauthor of *The Creative City* (London: Demos Books, 1995).

BUDAPEST. "I enjoyed myself in Prague. Prague once more had become a cosmopolitan center in which Europe found its identity again. Compared with modern metropolises with their uniform skyscrapers and concrete shacks Prague has remained the creation of a cultured society."

This was written by Oskar Kokoschka, the Austrian artist, in 1930. What Kokoschka grasped then, many Westerners are only now appreciating: the beauty of the cities straddling the former faultlines between East and West. It is not only Prague, which is popular (it receives 30 million tourists a year); but also Budapest, Cracow, Lvov in the Ukraine, Vilnius in Lithuania, Riga in Latvia, Tallinn in Estonia, and St. Petersburg.

Of course, these cities have their share of eyesores, such as monotonous housing estates or gargantuan factories that pump out orange toxic fumes. However, their relative lack of skyscrapers, the fact that mixed uses still exist—where an artisan might live next door to a doctor, or where a workshop in the yard may coexist with a foodshop in the front—remind us of a society where life seems more homogeneous.

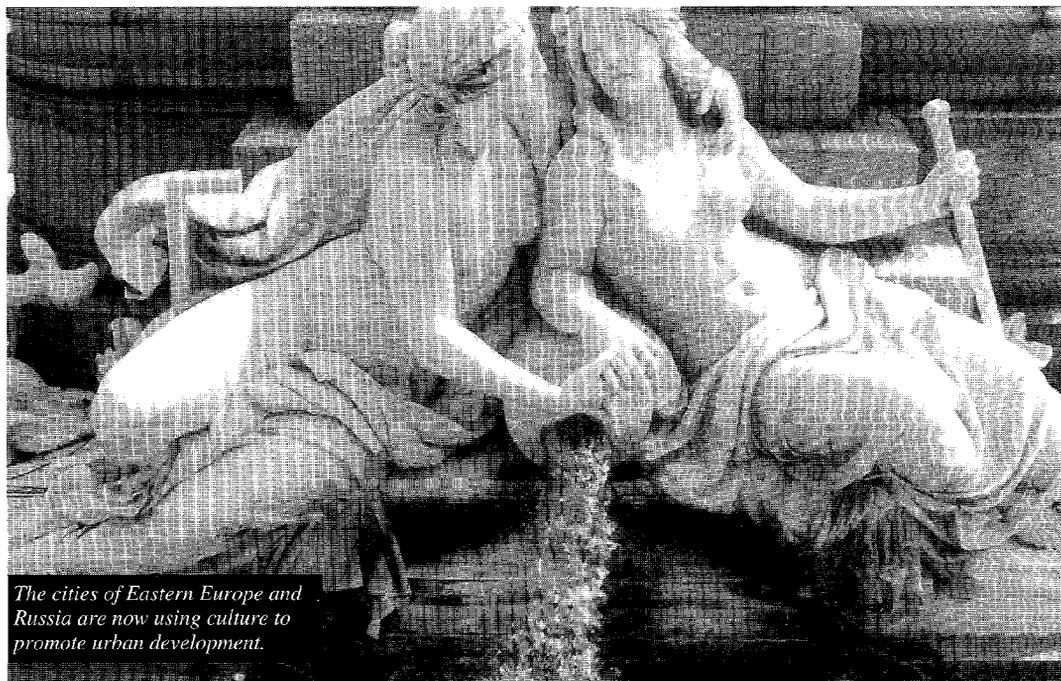
In part, this attraction is about Western nostalgia. A name like Prague or Budapest evokes memories: these cities seem to have both depth and promise. And this conviction seems even stronger now that urban changes in the West have frequently erased our past in the name of progress.

Our substitutes in the West might be glamorous shopping centers made to look like palaces of consumption, but we know there is more to a city and to urban life, including history, identity, and a culture. Yet the East, for its part, also wants some

of our consumer society. They aspire to a McDonalds, while we go to East European cities to avoid them. It is precisely the absence of

have to develop to survive. So the questions are: what values should they adopt, and what assets should they emphasize?

the most of them. Take Florence. Its culture reinforced its importance. Or consider Canterbury or Chartres,



The cities of Eastern Europe and Russia are now using culture to promote urban development.

such consumer symbols that makes these cities distinct and unique and attractive to Western tourists.

East European cities often seem to have more culture because it is easier to see their layers of history. Consider Tallinn. It is one of the few places in Europe where the aura of the 14th and 15th centuries survives intact—the jumble of medieval walls and turrets, and winding cobbled streets. Or take Vilnius's array of Central European architecture: winding streets, hidden courtyards, and dozens of old churches.

Or consider St. Petersburg, with its magnificent palaces and numerous museums filled with treasures.

These cities are contradictory. They are beautiful; yet dilapidated and sometimes filthy; progressive yet stagnant; sophisticated yet industrial; anarchic yet conservative.

But cities in Eastern Europe

In most of these cities, it is their culture that is their strongest selling point. The more successful East European cities are those that are becoming the communications nodes and gateways to the East, such as Prague, Budapest, and St. Petersburg. They are also cities that are culturally very rich.

Importance of culture to urban development

When we re-emphasize the importance of culture in a city we are not doing anything particularly new. Culture has always been a crucial tool in what we now call urban development, and in urban competitiveness strategies. There is nothing particularly novel about using culture to regenerate or revitalize a city. Humans have always been clever at picking up unlikely resources and making

where a saint's relic helped make a city rich.

The museums of St. Petersburg

So now the East is using its cultural heritage, occasionally with surprising results. Consider St. Petersburg with its nearly 100 museums. What have they done? Many are underfunded and reflect obscure interests, like bread, hygiene, or urban sculpture. These museums can either go bankrupt or be saved by a strategic cultural tourism policy which has several objectives. For instance:

- Cultural tourism can be a way to change foreigners' mindsets about St. Petersburg and Russia, by conveying an image of a civilized society with a great deal to offer. By association, such tourism opens the way for

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The New American Ghetto: Spirit of Survival

by Camilo Jose Vergara

O Camilo Jose Vergara is a photographer specializing in urban subjects. He is the author of a new book, *The New American Ghetto* (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 1995). He will be a visiting scholar at the Getty Center in Santa Monica, California, later this year.

NEW YORK CITY. After a troubled academic career in Chile, I came to the United States as a college student at the age of 21. I arrived at the University of Notre Dame hoping to become an electronic engineer. I had dreams of returning to Chile, regaining the family fortune, and one day settling down as a gentleman farmer. I never imagined that this strange and prosperous land was going to become my home, that I was going to raise a family here and devote my life to documenting its most dangerous and destitute neighborhoods.

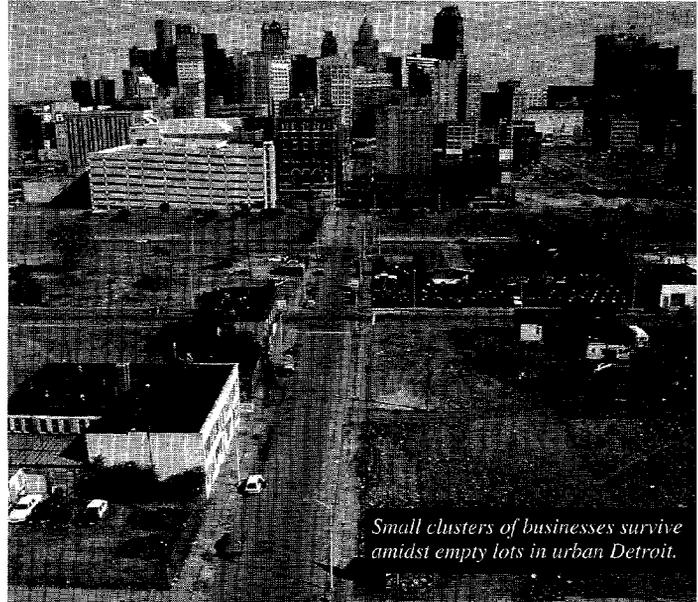
The loss of my family's wealth made me sharply aware of changes of fortune. The dissolution of my personal life in Chile seemed to be mirrored on a huge scale in America's cities—and nobody I knew seemed concerned about it.

I soon found out that the wondrous IBM 360 did not want to share its secrets with me. But then, I was not really interested in computers. Instead I read inces-

santly, was attracted to the liberal arts, and settled for sociology as a choice of career. My friends tried to dissuade me: Chile didn't need sociologists. I was poor and could not afford to waste time, so why make my return difficult? I found myself marginal amidst the aggressive wealth and optimism of the United States of the late 1960s. My friends directed their interests to sports, the war in Vietnam, and their professional futures. In their eyes, my concern with ghettos was peculiar at best and useless at worst, explained perhaps by my foreign origins. I could not make a living as a photographer of ghettos, but all the same I was drawn to them.

Urban photography

I began as a street photographer until I realized that my interest lay more in what was behind the people I was placing at the center of my photos. I did not find models for the work I wanted to do among contempo-



Small clusters of businesses survive amidst empty lots in urban Detroit.

rary photographers. Architectural photography showed the formal perfection and promise of new buildings, while street photography depicted life as a collection of moments in which physical surroundings functioned as backgrounds.

I was awed to see so many substantial buildings discarded, even in their derelict condition. To my provincial eyes, these Sears, Woolworths, assorted banks, mansions, decaying skyscrapers, and huge movie theaters looked grand. Why were people abandoning what had been built with so much love?

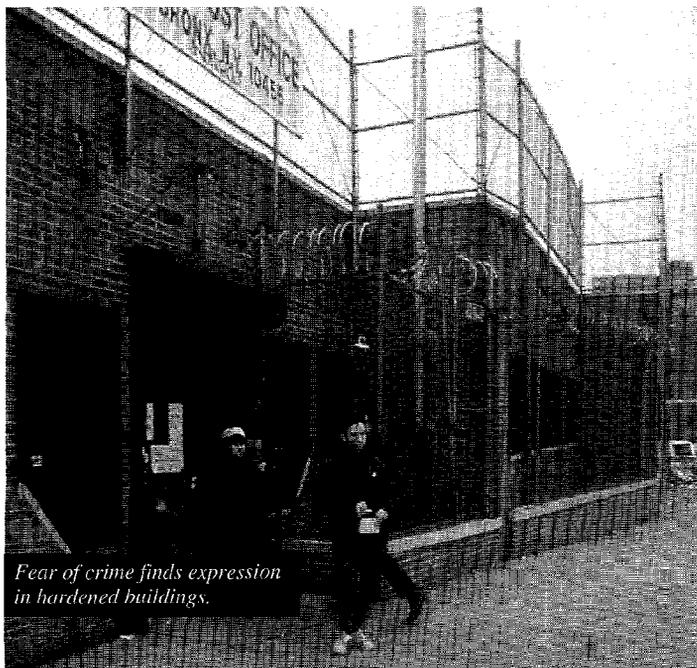
I have read many articles and books explaining the flight from the cities first by the white middle class and later by those blacks and Latinos able to do so. The three main reasons went like this: the highway system had made it possible for people to move away from cities, and federal loans and tax breaks made it affordable for young families to buy a new suburban home with a small down payment and a government-backed mortgage.

Very few minority families benefited from these programs. Further, Defense Department regulations, shaped by fear of bomb and missile attacks, encouraged contractors to move their plants out of urban areas. Racism, too, played an important role. Large migrations of blacks and Latinos to the industrial cities created panic among whites afraid that their neighborhoods would become dangerous and that the value of their homes—often their only investment—might decrease.

Recording the urban environment

These explanations ignored what was happening to the urban environment. With photography, I could make a record of these momentous physical transformations. In 1977, I decided to document the landscape of urban poverty: commercial streets, skylines, empty land, industrial scenes. Old postcards depicted skylines, main streets, and

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Fear of crime finds expression in hardened buildings.

NEW AMERICAN GHETTO

important buildings, showing me the type of views I needed. Since the subjects of my documentation were changing so rapidly, I returned to the same places and re-photographed the same scenes. To the simple techniques of postcard photography, I added a time dimension.

“Ghettoization”—The trends

In two decades of documenting ghettos, I have encountered a number of major trends: fortification, ruination, the development of enclaves, and resistance to ruin.

Fear of crime finds expression in hardened buildings: their windows cinderblocked, wooden doors replaced by metal doors, once-open courtyards now fenced. Large dogs bark loudly as one

approaches homes and businesses, signs warn of bodily harm and even loss of life if one dares to trespass. Fortifications separate buildings from the street and from other buildings, giving a menacing character to neighborhoods. With locks that need to be opened, alarms to be connected and disconnected, dogs to be fed, and guards to be paid, security needs add considerably to the cost of doing business in inner cities.

Cities desperately try to be attractive to the middle classes by offering them the amenities of suburban environments such as commercial malls and townhouse developments. Built as enclaves, often behind fences and protected by security guards, these efforts present a stark contrast to their decrepit surroundings. As is now

well-known, much of the industrial infrastructure that created the nation’s wealth lies rusting. Large stretches of commercial streets, miles at a time, are semi-abandoned, except for small clusters of businesses amidst empty lots, boarded-up structures, and overgrown sidewalks.

Resistance to ruin

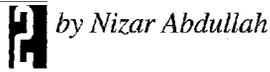
The last trend—and the one that inspires hope that the “ghettoization” might one day end—is the private, individual struggle to resist neglect and degradation. Testament to this resistance can be seen inside homes, in gardens, and on walls. People remaining in our ghettos struggle to maintain their

dwelling, to decorate their private spaces in ways that contrast with their surroundings, and to use the empty land for vegetable gardens and flowers. Signs of pride are common. In interiors and public murals, symbols of Africa mix with portraits of black leaders.

When people first looked at my images of ghettos, I expected anger and denial, but instead people said they were moved by such scenes and thought the photographs should be more widely seen. Many people expressed deep sadness about what has happened to American cities. Perhaps this sentiment is the first step toward rebuilding our urban heritage.



Urban Tales: The *Hakawatis*—Popular Story-Tellers in Syria

 by Nizar Abdullah

Nizar Abdullah is an economic researcher and publisher from Syria.

DAMASCUS. Popular story-telling is an age-old profession among urban Arabs and is a frequent event, especially in the *souks*, or markets, and street cafes of towns in Syria. Historically, popular story-tellers, or *hakawatis*, were narrators of religious stories; they then moved on to mythology, and later to epics and popular biographical narratives.

The popular story-teller of old aroused the imagination of his audience, instilling hope in them through tales about popular heroes. Those tales described the hardships such heroes endured and the heroic feats they accomplished; they also provided a mechanism for the story-teller to condemn tyranny and tyrants.

Story-telling's cultural function

The story-tellers would sit, as they still do, in elevated armchairs inside buildings or in cafes, so that they could be seen by their audiences—just as professors do in universities. Their cultural function was to establish social and moral values through the successes and failures of popular heroes. Values such as generosity; courage; honesty; patience; fortitude; philanthropy; aesthetic appreciation; and loathing of cowardliness, meanness, and laziness were a key part of such stories. By so doing, the story-tellers aimed to promote the values upheld by the Arab nation—and in particular the urban Arab nation—and ordinary Arab attitudes toward life.

Today, as in the past, the *hakawati* must possess certain qualifications. He must be male, over 40 years old, cultured, educated, and a well-spoken

interlocutor. Most likely, his father and grandfather would also have been story-tellers.

Hakawatis always tell their tales in towns; they are an essential part of the Arab urban landscape.

There have been many dark periods in the Arab world of intellectual and political repression and foreign occupation when the media and *hakawatis* were stifled. At these times, popular story-tellers alternated between emergence and disappearance; nevertheless, they always remained alive in the popular urban psyche.

In the past, there used to be a story-teller in each quarter in the city of Damascus. He was popular among the people around him and enjoyed a distinguished social status. His income was mainly derived from subsidies from the notables residing in his neighborhood, plus tips paid to him by the cafe owner where he would tell his stories. The cafe owner could generally count on the *hakawati* being good for business because he would relate a portion of the popular biographical narrative each night over a period of several months.

Audience interaction essential

It is interesting to watch evening entertainment-seekers listening to today's *hakawati* alternating between gloom and joy, or anger and ecstatic happiness. Every evening, the story-teller stops narrating his story at a moment fraught with suspense, thereby creating the incentive for his audience to return the following evening to hear the next exciting installment—just like modern-day TV soap operas.

The narration might, for

instance, stop where the popular hero A'ntara is a prisoner while his beloved A'bla is about to be wed to another man. The *hakawati* stands among his audience gesticulating with his fingers or moving his hands and face making certain gestures—very much like an actor. He might decide to narrate the story in a nonliteral manner and resort to hyperbole to exaggerate the strengths of the hero in his tale. But if this happens, the audience often intervenes to stop the exaggeration.

Many in the audience are illiterate. However, they have excellent memories. They will probably have heard the narration many times and know all the details. Recognizing their disapproval, the *hakawati* will come to his senses and reduce the exaggerations with a skillful turn—as if he were merely trying to find out if everyone was listening carefully to every word. This interaction between the story-teller and cafe habitués sharpens the *hakawati*'s imagination, polishes his style, and whets his talents. Such interaction is vital for the *hakawati*'s originality.

Popular biographical narrations are numerous, such as the story of A'ntara Ibn Shaddad who lived near the end of the pre-Islamic era. He was a poet whose poetry is still read. Nevertheless, the popular narration portrays him as a legendary hero and adds many fictitious chapters to his biography, thereby mixing reality with imagination. When he asked for the hand of his cousin A'bla in marriage, her father asked for a dowry of 1,000 thoroughbred she-camels. A'ntara was poor. Only King Nu'man had that kind of

very expensive she-camels. A'ntara marched single-handedly against the army of King Nu'man. A'ntara was brought before the king who had heard a lot about him and admired his courage and bravery. The king offered the required she-camels to A'ntara as a gift, treated him hospitably, and released him from captivity.

The audience listening to the story is angry at A'bla's father for requesting such an excessive dowry. They privately curse fathers like him. They admire A'ntara's bravery and daring, and are pleased with the generosity of King Nu'man who—like them—sympathized with the lovers. Sentiments among the audience alternate between anger, astonishment, and delight at the miraculous deeds which transport them to other worlds.

In other *hakawati* stories, principles of efficiency and merit—considered positive social values by the public—are extolled. In the process, each member of the audience in the cafe can believe that he possesses talents and traits that serve to distinguish him from others.

In the past, rulers noticed the strong influence of the *hakawati* over the masses in Arab towns and their potential mobilizing power. Some rulers sought to influence these story-tellers in their favor, as often happens with writers, journalists, and poets. Nevertheless, any story-teller who agrees to play such a role soon loses his audience, his stage, and his livelihood. 

Carnival: The Ultimate City Celebration

by Ian Isidore Smart

Ian Isidore Smart is a professor of Spanish in the Department of Modern Languages and Literature at Howard University. Dr. Smart's book, *Amazing Connections: Kemet to Hispanophone Africana Literature*, will be released this spring.



PORT-OF-SPAIN. Carnival is the ultimate city festival. Through its celebration, the city reaches its potential—as the center and guardian of civilization.

At the very dawn of civilization, the holy cities of Abydos and Denders in Upper Kemet (Egypt) entered into history as carnival sites. By 4236 B.C., the people of the Nile Valley—the inventors of civilization—had created a calendar, dividing the year into 360 regular days with five “marvelous” ones that were to be a mystical period outside of time. It was during this period that the celebration of life, resurrection, and renewal took place, with its main focus on Wosir (Osiris)—the supremely generous ancestor, the bestower of all the tools necessary for civilization—who gave his life for his beloved people.

Data provided by scholars such as E.A. Wallis Budge make it clear that what took place in

carnivals throughout the ancient world from Babylonia to Rome. The link to Kemet—that is, to Africa, with the contemporary Trinidad and Tobago carnival—becomes clear when one considers the details of many West African cultural expressions: the central role of masks, the processional street dancing to rhythmic music, the mass participation.

Port-of-Spain carnival

Port-of-Spain is totally transformed by carnival. Stanley Lane-Poole, the British historian who in 1886 published his classic work, *The Story of the Moors in Spain*, wrote of the role of the arts in society that were created by those Africans of Islamic faith who brought the gift of high civilization to the Iberian Peninsula and to a Europe sunk in the Dark Ages. He said: “The whole Moslem world seemed given over to the Muses.”

In Port-of-Spain at carnival time, the city belongs to the people

Carnival is life

Carnival is drama, histrionics, and hysteria; it is chaos and reversal; but it is always organized. Wrapped in the mantle of the celebration, everyone is protected from the violence that plagues the streets during the year. For the two days of carnival, everyone can traverse even the roughest sectors of the city without fear—because, as the *kaiso* (calypso) tells it, “the road make to walk on carnival day.”

True carnival is a moment for all, from the king to the lowest commoner, to take their place literally in the *Ra* (sun). Inebriated by the power of this Sun, everyone becomes a *Heru* (hero). Earl Lovelace, the Trinidad and Tobago novelist, captures this excellently in his book, *The Dragon Can't Dance* (1979). His protagonist, Aldrick, is representative of all those countless thousands who become *Heru/Wosir* for two days under the blazing power of *Ra*. And so

Aldrick felt a tallness and a pride, felt his hair rise on his head, felt: “No, this ain't no joke. This is warriors going to battle. This is the guts of the people, their blood; this is the self of the people that they screaming out they possess, that they scrimp and save and shore and work and thief to drag out of the hard rockstone and dirt to show the world they is people.”

Asa Montagnard, the protagonist in this author's first novel, *Sanni Mannitae* (Washington, DC: Original Word Press, 1994), like Aldrick, occupies the carnival stage:

This is we time, we road, we stage, we thing, Borrokeets get off the stage! You mad or what! Yes, that was precisely it, we were mad, mad with the fullness of humanness,

mad with the fullness of godhood, mad with the Wine of Astonishment, with the music of the Bass Man.

The Port-of-Spain carnival contains a lesson for all contemporary cities that are plagued with the scourge of violence, all cities crying out for the restoration of civilized existence. C.L.R. James, a Trinidad and Tobago-born scholar, pointed out in his book, *The Black Jacobins* (1938), that the societies of the enslaved African masses on the sugar plantations in the Caribbean constituted an authentic lumpen proletariat that would not emerge in Europe until after the industrial revolution. Manuel Zapata Olivella, another Caribbean intellectual, from Colombia, has made it clear in *Las Claves Magicas de America* (1989) (*The Secrets to Understanding American Society*), that the West first experimented with the model for New World society in the Caribbean. In accordance with this “manifest destiny,” the city of Port-of-Spain has shared its gift of carnival with London, New York, Toronto, and many other cities of the North.

Washington, D.C., presents great potential, for it is a city that produced “go-go,” a cultural expression that exactly parallels the steelband and *kaiso* of Trinidad, the Colombian *vallenato*, the Cuban *son*, and the marimba music of Ecuador, among others. Once steelband and *kaiso* belonged to the world beyond the pale of respectability, the world of the underclass, the world of “jamettes,” of “wabeen and grog and pan beating fine.” Now steelband, *kaiso*, and carnival are Trinidadian national treasures. They have transformed Port-of-Spain, and Port-of-Spain has transformed them.



Carnival—the ultimate city celebration.

Kemet at the dawn of recorded time was the first carnival: a religious drama danced out in the streets in which everyone, from the pharaoh to the commoner, participated.

As the gift of civilization spread from the Nile Valley to the rest of the world, so too did the mother of all festivals. There were

and is transformed into a mystical space, where women and men put music before everything else. In accordance with the timeless exhortation of the poet Charles Baudelaire, “*Il faut etre toujours ivre*” (Be drunk all the time), they are solemnly inebriated on wine/rum, poetry/soccer, and the virtue of a “recentered consciousness.”

Cities in Films

by Alcira Kreimer

4 Alcira Kreimer is a principal evaluations specialist in the Operations Evaluation Department at the World Bank. She has a Ph.D. in environmental planning and is an avid movie-goer.

WASHINGTON D.C. If you want to see the city of your dreams, of your fantasies, of your nightmares, go to the movies. In many films, the city is the protagonist. The city is the “star” in films like *Asphalt Jungle*, *Grand Canyon*, *Mi Vida Loca*, *Do the Right Thing*, *Metropolis*, *City Hall*, and *Black Orpheus*. Just as actors adapt their personality to play different roles—Al Pacino is a Mafia boss in *The Godfather*, and the mayor of New York in *City Hall*—cities are also reinvented to fit new personalities. In *City Hall*, New York has a role as prominent as its fictitious mayor, John Papas, as the Mafia boss (Danny Aiello), or as the deputy mayor (John Cusak).

The city as protagonist

New York can be fun—witness *Breakfast at Tiffany's*, overwhelming (as Gotham City in *Batman*), dysfunctional (*Bonfire of the Vanities*), witty (*Manhattan*), a political machine (*City Hall*), and (almost) a small town in (*Smoke*). To reinvent cities, films select and emphasize certain aspects of urban life and obliterate others. Thrillers and gangster films highlight obsolete and dysfunctional settings; they bring action to demolished buildings; take us for walks in streets at night full of mysterious fumes, and through vacant lots strewn with debris. *The French Connection* showcases three cities: New York, Marseilles, and Washington. It provides an image of American cities as wild, urban jungles. New York is sinister. It is a labyrinth, a game of mirrors and of hiding places. In Brooklyn, the action is framed by empty lots, freeways, bridges, subways, traffic, and fumes. The city, through its urban furniture,

provides props for action—store windows are convenient mirrors to see what happens behind on the street, and traffic bottlenecks are perfect hiding places.

Marseilles, on the other hand, is a friendly Mediterranean city, a city of open spaces, where the action takes place in broad daylight. When the action moves to the third city, Washington, we arrive in a monumental city, the picture postcard city where the monuments organize the urban perspective. The Capitol, the Washington Monument, the Lincoln Memorial are the background to a centered space.

Our journeys into cities through films can follow a linear path or a topographic puzzle. In *The White Balloon*, we follow a little girl's search for her dream (a fish) through the streets of a city populated by shady characters like snake-charmers, who seem threatening initially but who turn out to be benevolent instead. Our expectations of urban violence turn out to be misplaced. The city is a cocoon that protects the little girl's dream. The accent here is on drift, sequence, and continuity. But our journey into cities can also start with a panoramic perspective as in *La Dolce Vita*, where the opening shot shows a helicopter with a large statue of Christ flying over Rome. Or *City Hall*, where New York is first seen from the aerial perspective of skyscrapers, of City Hall, of Gracie Mansion.

Technology and films

Technology can create threatening cities. In *Metropolis*, the film Fritz Lang dreamed about while visiting New York in 1924, there is a sinister robot, the mirror image of a young woman who tries to liberate the “have-nots”—

thousands of people who live underground and who work in deprived conditions—to support the “haves”—a small group of people who lead a life of leisure above ground. Technology is also an evil force in *Alphaville*, a film by Jean Luc Goddard, where the main character, Lemy Caution, is a detective who tries to neutralize the machinations of a scientist who governs the city of Alphaville with a computer. This was obviously dreamed up before everyone owned a portable computer with access to the world through the Internet! Corruption is also a major issue in films about cities; witness *City Hall*, *Chinatown*, and *The Untouchables*—or even *A Taxing Woman*, where a dedicated tax collector in Tokyo fights efforts by a group with Mafia and gambling connections to evade taxes.

In some films, like *Roman Holiday*, cities are portrayed as mechanisms to achieve freedom. But other films portray the threats to personal freedom posed by urban life. Freedom here is understood in the sense described by Jane Jacobs concerning the use of streets and sidewalks as elements of civility. Think about the cars in Jacques Tati's *Traffic*, or the drive-through ghetto streets in *Bonfire of the Vanities*, of the very threatening nature of urban technology in Truffaut's *Fahrenheit 451*. All those films depict urban settings that are mechanisms to reduce personal freedom. The very grim and daunting view of Tirana in *L'America* portrays threats to personal freedom in a city ravaged by a totalitarian political regime.

Urban employment and types of production are not glamorous subjects, but they are nonetheless portrayed in films like *Tampopo*; which describes the efforts of a

single woman to establish a small business—a noodle restaurant—in Tokyo; or *Do the Right Thing*, which shows conflicts between the owners of a store in a ghetto and the local youths who work there. Or take *Wall Street*, where the city provides the support system to promote greed and financial speculation. A more glamorous view is provided where the city is portrayed as a stage, as in *The Birdcage*, where it is the locus for the spectacle provided by marginal lifestyles; and in *Black Orpheus*, where it is the stage for a joyous celebration turned into a nightmare in Rio de Janeiro; or in Fellini's *Roma*, where it is the setting for urban drama and decadence.

Movies manipulate urban images

Do we want to use this powerful medium, film, as a mechanism for urban education? Do we agree with the abject and decrepit image of Calcutta in *The City of God*, with the oppressive quality of London's West End in *Shirley Valentine*? In this issue of *The Urban Age*, we are celebrating urban life. To support it, we need to understand how images are created and disseminated by films, what is the stock of attitudes about urban life that are either created or reinforced by this medium, and what types of stereotypes are created. After all, we live in a global culture and a global village. We might as well use, as well as learn from, the media. □

Celebrating Urban Life: Searching for a Livable City

by *Diego Carrion*

Diego Carrion is the director of CIUDAD, a research center, and a lecturer on the faculty of architecture and design at the Central University of Ecuador.

QUITO. Between the 13th and the 18th of November, 1995, a Latin American and Caribbean festival was organized in Quito, Ecuador, entitled "Searching for a Livable City."

It was attended by over 1,000 people who exchanged views on about 300 case studies in Latin America on how the urban problem has been tackled by governments, municipalities, non-governmental organizations, and grassroots organizations. In the

But there was also a deliberate accent during the festival on the fun-loving aspects of urban life, with participants enjoying themselves at plays, films, concerts, firework displays, and dances.

How to make a city livable

During the festival, delegates prepared a manifesto on the basic rights and requirements for making a city livable and fun to live in; this will also be presented in Istanbul.

be humanized. This means making it more democratic so that ordinary people, and especially a city's most vulnerable inhabitants—poor women and their children, the unemployed, and old and handicapped people—can also have access to all the positive things a city offers and have the opportunity to express and develop their different cultures. In other words, as well as material provisions, what makes a city

the participation of practically all the community in finding solutions to their own particular problems—and a high degree of solidarity between members of the community in helping each other.

Participation improves urban environment

Such social, participatory programs are now universally recognized as being one of the most effective ways for poor people to improve their living conditions. In fact, in Latin America and the Caribbean, as a result of such grassroots endeavors, more houses, urban services, and cultural facilities have been constructed than in any other urban policy or planning program by architects, governments, the state, or the private sector.

The manifesto says that in most cases, such popular efforts have succeeded thanks to the assistance and advice provided by qualified technicians and experts—who often provided their work free of charge.

Because such social/community endeavors work, the manifesto warns, this does not mean that the state should opt out of its responsibilities toward the urban poor. Instead, what is needed is that poor people and poor communities should have a say and participate in the way decisions are made regarding the design and building of their homes. The state, the private sector, and community organizations should cooperate and collaborate more closely in finding participatory, creative, and just solutions to the urban problem in Latin America, declares the manifesto. And, it adds, such a collaborative effort is vital.



Building livable cities is crucial for the next generation.

course of the festival, the views of the participants were summarized on a huge panel that became the centerpiece of the event. The panel is also going to be one of the Latin American region's chief exhibits at the United Nations's forthcoming Summit on Cities to take place in Istanbul in June. Indeed, the festival itself was a prelude to this world conference.

All aspects of urban development in Latin America were discussed at the festival in workshops and various groups.

The manifesto emphasizes the importance of providing poor people with the material conditions for living, such as houses; basic services like piped water and electricity supplies, sewage, and transport; as well as paved and lit streets, squares, and parks. However, the manifesto also underscores that such provisions are not enough.

Democratizing our cities

To make a city livable, it must

livable is cultural and democratic freedoms—and the possibility of engaging in both, declares the manifesto.

The manifesto further emphasizes that in the vast majority of experiences so far, low-income communities in Latin America and the Caribbean have resolved their urban problems largely on their own, developing popular, grassroots initiatives to build and maintain their houses and basic services. The key to such programs was

The Second Inter-American Conference of Mayors: An Emerging Policy Agenda for Local Government

6 MIAMI. This April, 350 people—including 95 mayors—from throughout North, Central, and South America, participated in the Second Inter-American Conference of Mayors. Their work here focused on the premise that decentralization will only be effective and sustainable if subnational institutions are strengthened.

The chairman of the Metro Dade County Board of Commissioners, Arthur E. Teele, Jr., opened the conference by referring to the “Spirit of Miami” President Clinton had invoked at the November 1994 Summit of the Americas. At that summit, the president had underlined the importance of “continuing to invest in local governments.” Mr. Teele noted extraordinary progress—a “new era of cooperation and improved relationship” between municipalities and central governments—since the First Inter-American Conference of Mayors in November 1994.

Historical background— Decentralization and democratic transition

Reform of the role of the state and a transition to wholesale democracy have led the Latin American and Caribbean region to grapple with the issue of decentralization, as the power of local authorities has been strengthened over the last ten years. By way of context, it should be noted that 75 percent of this region is urbanized, and 120 million people live below the poverty line.

Today, the strength of local authorities is broadly accepted. Spending responsibilities have shifted to local governments, backed by automatic revenue transfers which in some cases double, and even quadruple, city revenues. Many local governments are now responsible for 10

to 30 percent of public spending—a significant proportion of gross domestic product.

The profound political shift that has created a democratic transition means that virtually every mayor and council person is elected—in more than 13,000 units of local, intermediate, and state governments. This new power has given credibility to mayors to play an increased role in civic affairs.

Conference aim: Strengthen subnational institutions to support decentralization

The conference was designed to provide an opportunity for mayors throughout the hemisphere to share their experiences, discuss their common issues and problems, and learn how others have dealt with those concerns arising from decentralization and electoral reform.

By capitalizing on recognition of the importance of decentralization and democratization, the event promoted debate about some of the traditional challenges facing cities such as economic development (specifically, economic growth through trade, and the economic and entrepreneurial role of the

nongovernmental organizations—all of whom are concerned with the improvement of municipal management in the region. Between attending panels such as “Economic Incentives for a Sustainable Environment” and “Local Government Management Capacity,” and networking sessions such as “Building Partnerships for International Trade,” the participants came to make new contacts, refresh old acquaintances, and—in the words of one participant—“find resources and funding.”

Much of the “business” of the conference was carried out in informal meetings in the hallways. In this way, the conference provided a forum for building new partnerships among the private sector, nongovernmental organizations, and local community groups. By creating an informal network of knowledgeable professionals in the region willing to share experiences and resources, these partnerships will help address two crucial issues underlined at the conference: dealing with the shortfall in the efficient provision of urban services and

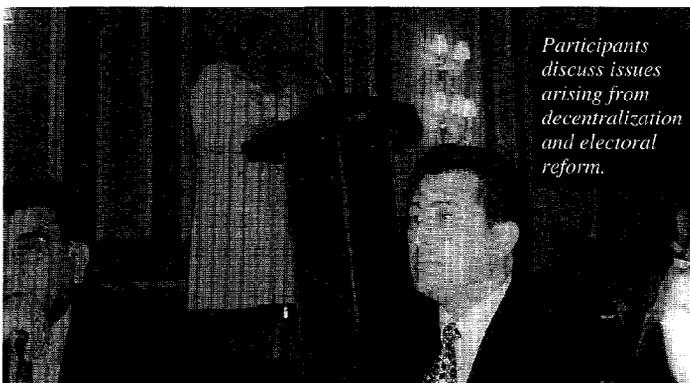
participation in city government have received recognition throughout Latin America—spoke of the “responsibility we all have to manage the public trust.” One way to do this was suggested by Mayor Carlos Filizzola of Ascunson, Paraguay: he said ways for the state to reach out to the new civil society should be sought by creating a new “openness of information sharing” between the two sectors.

Other important messages emerged from the conference:

- Mayors are not working alone. They must work together, sharing ideas and experiences.
- Municipalities must coordinate with central government over allocation of resources and policy setting.
- Coordination between central government and municipalities is essential to promote innovation.
- Municipalities must empower residents to build on local initiatives.
- The voice of civil society is crucial to the continuing process of decentralization and electoral reform.

But perhaps the most important, overarching message heard at the conference was a statement made by a participant during a comments session: “We all have a responsibility to stay close and listen to the people.”

—Margaret Berge.



Participants discuss issues arising from decentralization and electoral reform.

municipality in a global economy); the environment of the urban poor; and the role of the municipality in the development of civil society.

The gathering brought together local government executives and officials, national government officials, and representatives from

improving the living conditions of the poor.

Conference highlights

Tarso Genro, mayor of Porto Alegre, Brazil—whose programs to increase citizen

The Second Inter-American Conference of Mayors was convened under the sponsorship of the World Bank, the Organization of American States, the Inter-American Development Bank, the U.S. Agency for International Development, and The Inter-American Foundation, in collaboration with FEMICA and Florida International University. The conference was hosted by Metro Dade County.



We actively seek our developing country readers' input for this section. Our intention is to facilitate networking among developing country city managers and their constituents.

ANDHRA PRADESH VOLUNTARY HEALTH ASSOCIATION

Contact: M.R. Arulraja, Executive Secretary, Andhra Pradesh Voluntary Health Association, 157/6, Gun Rock Enclave West Staff Road, Secunderabad-500 009, Andhra Pradesh, India.

The Andhra Pradesh Voluntary Health Association (APVHA) is a secular, nonprofit association of hospitals, health centers, dispensaries, and developmental organizations and associate members. APVHA's primary objectives are to promote community health, social justice, and human rights related to the provision and distribution of health services in the region.

Through its information and documentation center, APVHA has links with over 200 grassroots-level member organizations and their community health programs.

COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION ORAL HISTORY PROJECT

Contact: Pratt Institute Center for Community and Environmental Development, 379 DeKalb Avenue, Steuben Hall, 2nd Floor, Brooklyn, NY 11205, USA. Tel: 718-636-3486, fax: 718-636-3709.

It is estimated that there are over 3,000 community development corporations (CDCs) located throughout the United States. Now that the field is established and a new generation of leaders has emerged, the Pratt Institute Center for Community and Environmental Development (PICCED) has documented the movement's early history and original mission.

PICCED is a university-based technical assistance and training organization that has assisted in the creation of many CDCs. With the support and encouragement of the Ford Foundation, PICCED initiated an oral history project to describe the founding of the CDC movement from the perspective of its founding leaders.

In-depth videotaped interviews were conducted with the founders and leaders of 19 CDCs across the United States. In addition, PICCED has produced *Building Hope*, a one-hour video documentary; and written a series of brief profiles on many of the CDCs included in the oral history project and the documentary.

PICCED's intent is to provide community development practitioners, educators, researchers, and the general public with a body of materials that will foster a better understanding of the impact and importance of the community development movement.

VICTORIA TRANSPORT POLICY INSTITUTE

Contact: Todd Litman, Victoria Transport Policy Institute, 1250 Rudlin Street, Victoria, British Columbia, V8V 3R7, Canada. Telephone and fax: 604-360-1560.

The Victoria Transport Policy Institute's goal is to develop practical tools for incorporating social and environmental values into transportation decisionmaking. The institute is dedicated to innovative research and analysis.

The institute has just released Transportation Cost Analyzer, a Windows software program that evaluates transportation activity, costs, and benefits. It is the first software program to incorporate full transportation costs, including environmental and social impacts.

The program estimates user costs, government expenses, and environmental and social costs from specific travel activities. It can estimate and compare costs for different transport modes, policies, and plans. Once costs and other input values are selected, Cost Analyzer calculates the total cost per passenger mile (or kilometer) for each mode. Results can be used to determine savings from a reduction in trips or a mode shift, and the distributions of costs between users and society.

CENTER FOR RESEARCH AND DOCUMENTATION

Contact: Via Monte Zebio, 32-00195 Rome, Italy. Tel: 0039-6-3201375, fax: 0039-6-3221218.

The Center for Research and Documentation (CERFE) is a social research institute, based in Rome, that has been operating in Italy and abroad since the 1970s. CERFE is a nonprofit association, formed to promote and support scientific research on development focusing on social and cultural change; to promote and implement development assistance programs; to promote dialogue and solidarity among peoples and cultures, within the framework of East-West and North-South relations; and to provide professional and scientific training to researchers and scholars in the social sciences field.

Ceara Project Awarded U.N. Prize

This project appeared in the February 1995 issue of The Urban Age, Information and Cities, Vol. 3, No. 1.

A program for the improvement of *favelas* (shantytowns) involving 400 poor neighborhoods in Fortaleza (capital of the state of Ceara) was chosen to receive an "Award of Excellence in Improving the Living Environment" by an international jury as one of the 12 best projects presented worldwide during Habitat II, which will take place in Turkey in June. The Fortaleza program was classified by the committee as having adopted "a holistic strategy which focuses human and material aspects in the rehabilitation of 400 *favelas*."

This community experience has been developed in Ceara by the Cearah Periferia and by GRET (Research and Technology Exchange Group), both nongovernmental organizations, in conjunction with the state government and five prefectures. It is divided into five projects, and should benefit, by the end of 1996, 1,500 dwellings (12,500 persons) and generate approximately 500 jobs.

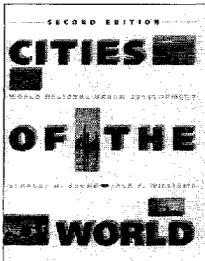
The first initiative, named Mutirao 50, conceived and put into effect by GRET, began in 1988 with the construction of 50 houses in the periphery of Fortaleza. (*Mutirao* means working together, involving the whole community and for the benefit of the community.) A village was built up which had running water and sewers, a commercial center, a daycare center, and a shed for training purposes. By using alternative technology, the cost of the houses was reduced by 50 percent. According to GRET, each house is 30 square meters and costs approximately US\$1,000 to build.

From News of Brazil, supplied by SEJUP (Servicio Brasileiro de Justicia e Paz).

Cities of the World: World Regional Urban Development

8 by Stanley D. Brunn and Jack F. Williams. HarperCollins College Publishers. 10 East 53rd Street, New York, NY 10022, 1993.

The huge range of this book covers the cities of developing and industrial countries, beginning with the earliest cities on



record in Mesopotamia in 4000 B.C. The book addresses two basic issues: What makes cities grow, and what is a global city. Regarding the stimuli behind a city's development, the authors claim that, from the fall of the Roman Empire right up to the 17th century, European cities grew slowly or completely stagnated. This was because throughout this period, towns were isolated from each other and forced to be self-sufficient if they were to survive. By contrast, history shows that whenever there is interaction and trade between towns and the adjacent countryside, urban growth takes place.

Meanwhile, global links between cities started with changes in transport and communications when railways, airlines, automobiles, and telephones replaced horses, stagecoaches, and the carrier pigeon. The next development, the authors say, will lead to urban corridors—in which primary, secondary, and tertiary towns and regional centers form a vast continuum where people, raw materials, finished products, and services are exchanged in a multitude of places or nodes linked by one form of transport or another. These regional and national urban corridors are occurring in industrial countries like Britain and the United States; in southeast Brazil in Rio de

Janeiro, Belo Horizonte, and Sao Paulo; in Mexico, in Mexico City, Puebla, and Veracruz; and in Egypt in Alexandria and Cairo.

And what will the new global city look like? One new architectural form may be expanded domed enclosures to the point where an entire city is enclosed in a climate-controlled dome. But that kind of city, the authors concede, will exist in a post-petroleum age.

Cities and People

by Mark Girouard. Yale University Press, New Haven and London, 1985.

The author of this book says there is nothing new about cities being in a state of flux, as they are today; the only difference is that the flux now is more dramatic than before. Consider the present-day troubles of textile towns in New England in the United States, and in the north of England. They are losing trade to Japan and Korea, just as Flemish towns once lost trade to Italy or England in the Middle Ages. Other cities' troubles stem not from economic decline but from too much prosperity—which is bound to attract poor immigrants in large numbers. As a result, there are shantytowns on the edge of Brasilia and Bombay



today, just as there were shantytowns on the edge of Jacobean London or Third Empire Paris in the past. The difference, though, is that today the slums are so much bigger.

Meanwhile, even the modern city of today is not that modern. Practically all the architectural features that are commonplace in cities built after World War II existed before 1939: skyscrapers, low-density suburbs, and covered and underground shopping

arcades. Even the suburban shopping malls that are a feature of American life—and which are now spreading to Europe—have roots that go back to the 12th century, to the covered stalls of Cheapside or the great halls of Flanders; their immediate precedent was a shopping center in Kansas City built in 1923.

City Life: Urban Expectations in a New World

by Witold Rybczynski. Scribner, 1230 Avenue of the Americas, New York, NY 10020, 1985.

In this book, New World towns—the cities of the United States and Canada—are contrasted with the cities of Europe. In Europe, the author says, cities, or at least their essential characters, were often planned and fixed architecturally,

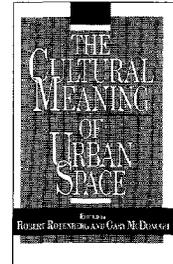


often by emperors and kings. The center of Paris is a classic example. Its Renaissance and Baron Haussman character—consisting of elegant residential and public buildings and squares: Place de l'Etoile, Place de la Concorde, Arc de Triomphe, and wide boulevards—is unchanged despite recent additions such as Centre Pompidou or expressways along the River Seine. By contrast, the author says, returning to a U.S. or a Canadian city after about 30 years, one is struck by how much has changed. Indeed, the building and rebuilding of North American cities since the 1950s demonstrates how much New World cities are in flux, and how much city planning is affected by fashion. This fleeting, temporary quality of planning in U.S. cities fits in with the American people's own restlessness and desire to move around—not just from one part of the country to another, but from

one neighborhood to another. The permanence of residence that is the core of European city life has always been absent in American cities. The author contends that constant change is the hallmark of American urban history.

The Cultural Meaning of Urban Space

by Robert Rotenberg and Gary McDonogh, Bergin and Garvey, 88 Post Road West, Westport, CT 06881, 1993.



Over the last 20 years, the meaning of urban space has been studied by anthropolo-

gists, social psychologists, architects, and city planners. But the novelty of this book is that it brings together much of this research, possibly for the first time ever. Armed with examples from Asia, Latin America, North America, and Europe, the book asks questions about the relationship of space to power, and about the attitudes of city-dwellers to space. For instance, in Japan, the *hokomachi*, or castle town, of Hikone straddles a hill overlooking a town; and the castle is considered the permanent point of reference—a fixed symbol—overlooking the changing, evolving urban community below. Another distinctive urban place—which, unlike the castle, is not an emblem of political power, but of space that has a social use—is the plaza in Spanish and American cities, which may be of pre-Colombian origin or of Spanish colonial design. Yet a third distinctive urban space is that constructed for or by school children. In Belize, at one end of the spectrum, high schools are formal, regimented, clearly defined spaces. But at the other end of the spectrum, "school space" may be a street corner, an alleyway, or a house porch.

Below is a selection of urban events and training courses culled from The Urban Age's current files. We are not always able to list events more than once, given space limitations. Please refer to past issues of The Urban Age for additional events scheduled in 1996. Send your announcements to: The Editor, The Urban Age, Room S6-147, The World Bank Group, 1818 H Street, NW, Washington, DC 20433, USA. Fax: 202-522-3232; e-mail: mbergen@worldbank.org



Conferences

On June 4 at **The Marmara Hotel, Istanbul**, a Habitat II Dialogue, **Finance and Cities in the 21st Century**, will take place from 10:00am to 6:00pm. This event, organized by the World Bank and co-sponsored by a group of public and private organizations and NGOs, will discuss issues of urban finance at the community, city, national, and international levels. A distinguished group of practitioners will participate. Tickets will be available at the Marmara Hotel the day before the event. Reservations can be requested by faxing J. Howley at 202-522-3232.

Vancouver, Canada—June 29–July 3, 1996. **International Credit Union Forum: Diverse Voices in Concert**. Contact: 1997 Forum Registration, World Council of Credit Unions, P.O. Box 2982, Madison, WI, 53701-2982, USA. Tel: 608-231-7130; fax: 608-238-8020.

New Delhi, India—September 9–13, 1996. **Water, Engineering, and Development Centre Conference: Reaching the Unreaches—Challenges of the 21st Century**. Contact: Professor John Pickford, WEDC, Loughborough University of Technology, Leicestershire LE11 3TU, U.K. Tel: 44-1509-22-2390; fax: 44-1509-21-1079.

Strasbourg, France—October 6–9, 1996. **The First European Conference of the International Association of Transportation Regulators: Conference on Passenger Transportation by Automobile**. Contact: IATR, 4949, rue Molson, Montréal, Quebec, H1Y 3H6, Canada. Tel: 514-280-6600; fax: 514-280-6596.

Arusha, Tanzania—October 16–21, 1996. **Eighth International Congress of the World Federation of Public Health Associations**. Contact: WFPHA Secretariat, c/o APHA, 1015 15th Street, NW, Suite 300, Washington, DC 20005, USA. Tel: 202-789-5696; fax: 202-789-5681; e-mail: diane.kuntz@msmail.apha.org

Jerusalem, Israel—October 13–16, 1996. **Migration and the Global Economy: Planning Responses to Disintegrating Patterns and Frontiers**. Contact: ORTRA Ltd., 2 Kaufman Street (Textile Center), P.O. Box 50432, 61500 Tel Aviv, Israel. Tel: 03-5177888; fax: 03-5174433; e-mail: ortra@trendline.co.il

Cairo, Egypt—October 13–17, 1996. **New Urban Communities: Past Experiences and Responses to the Future**. Contact: International Urban Development Association, INTA Secretariat, Nassau Dillenburgstraat 44, NL-2596 AE, The Hague, The Netherlands. Tel: 31-70-324-4526; fax: 31-70-328-0727.

Sendai City, MIYAGI Prefecture, Japan—October 14–17, 1996. **International Federation for Housing and Planning 1996 World Conference**. Contact: IFHP Congress Department, 43

Wassenaarseweg, 2596 CG The Hague, The Netherlands. Fax: 31-70-328-2085.

San José, Costa Rica—October 21–26, 1996. **World Congress on Air Pollution in Developing Countries**. Contact: J. Gruetter, ProEco, Apdo. 2105 San Salvador, El Salvador. Tel: 503-224-0514; fax: 503-223-7826.

Education Programs and Courses

Stockholm, Sweden—The Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency, in cooperation with the Royal Institute of Technology, will offer an advanced international training program on **Urban Land Management**, August 19–October 4, 1996. The program will teach the basic principles of urban land management and alternative methodologies. Contact: CITEC, Land Management Program, Kungliga Tekniska Högskolan, S-100 44 Stockholm, Sweden. Tel: 46-8-790-96-54; fax: 46-8-20-37-16; e-mail: ashraf@citec.kth.se

British Council International Seminar

Action planning and urban management: urban upgrading (9677)

8-18 September 1996

Oxford

Directed by Nabeel Hamdi

Fee: £1,690 (residential)

Low-cost housing design and technology (9664)

10-16 November 1996

Birmingham

Directed by Dr Mohsen Aboutorabi

Fee: £1,290 (residential)

Environmental education: from policy to practice (6007)

2 to 14 March 1996

Shrewsbury

Directed by Justin Dillon and James Hindson

Fee: £1,750 (residential)

For further information contact: Marketing Manager, International Seminars, The British Council, 1 Beaumont Place, Oxford OX1 2PJ, UK. Telephone: +44(0)1865 316636. Fax: +44(0)1865 57368/516590. E-mail: International.Seminars@britcoun.org

(Programme details are subject to amendment. For a full prospectus please contact Marketing Manager, quoting the seminar number in all correspondence).

The British Council

The British Council, registered in England as a charity no. 209131, is Britain's international network for education, culture and technology

THE NEW ASIAN CITY

continued from page 8

(*train de grand vitesse*) that the mayor dreams of importing. The city is a cross between an old

20 Soviet propaganda film in which heroic peasants move mountains by hand, and the 19th century Canadian Yukon gold rush: There is a constant crash of explosions as hillsides are blasted away to make new airports, new highways, and new railways. The fields meanwhile are full of men chipping away at blocks of stone.

In Zhuhai City, teenage whores parade outside the chrome and glass hotels every night, and haunt the food courts in the shopping malls by day. This is the shape of our urban future, just as much as Silicon Valley, but it is still a raw, violent place.

Great fortunes are being made here, which may account for the fact that China is now the largest importer of French brandy in the world. Great wealth means that there are checkpoints every 10 kilometers on the highway from Guangzhou to Zhuhai to keep out poor Chinese migrants.

Those who are allowed in come as unskilled laborers and endure conditions that would have been familiar to the Irish workers who built the canals and railways during the British industrial revolution. They flocked here to build the Zhuhai International Airport designed to handle 12 million passengers.

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Historical perspective

How can we make sense of this urban maelstrom that is changing the lives of countless millions? Perhaps a historical perspective can provide the answer to these changes. In the 19th century, Manchester, England, the Zhuhai, the Jakarta, the Shanghai, of its day. The city was both horrifying in its squalor and exhilarating in its vitality. What made its effect so powerful and glamorously alarming was that it seemed to represent the future.

The world was both riveted and appalled in a way that we can only begin to appreciate fully as the current cities of Asia undergo the vertigo-inducing urban flux similar to that of the industrial revolution. Asia's vast new cities are becoming—just as Britain's once were—gigantic mechanisms for the creation and structure of wealth and the transformation of rural migrants into city-dwellers for the next millenium.

It is almost impossible to imagine what these new monster cities will be like when they mature. They are now places of extraordinary vitality and economic potential. They must be guided well, for within them lie not only the seeds of success but also of catastrophe. 

CULTURAL TOURISM

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identifying other investment opportunities.

- Tourism is an industry in its own right that offers opportunities for joint ventures with Western companies.

- Foreign tourism gives museums the opportunity to start developing themselves as small businesses, by producing souvenirs and other museums products, which may be made locally or in partnership with foreigners.

Let us consider three of the lesser known museums.

The Museum of the History of Political Ideas, formerly the Museum of the Great October Socialist Revolution, changed its identity after the collapse of Communism. It changed its name and redesigned the display of its collection. It also started displaying collections that had been hidden since before the Russian Revolution.

Exhibitions have included one on life under the czars, and others on issues such as banking in St. Petersburg combining current and historic material on banking in the city. This exhibition was sponsored by a Russian bank and was the museum's first major sponsorship deal.

An even more imaginative endeavor was the museum's collection of wax figures based on Madame Tussaud's in London. These include the family of the czars, the literary greats of Russia and politicians like Trotsky.

Housed in a palace, the Museum of Hygiene is a relatively small museum funded through St. Petersburg's education department. Its purpose is health education. And the museum's highlight is the origin stuffed Pavlovian dogs.

The Kunstkamera museum has an extraordinary collection of Peter the Great's curios and grotesqueries. Peter the Great used to offer rewards for human or animal monsters. The specimen had to be preserved in vinegar or vodka. Among the specimens on display are Siamese twins, a two faced man, and a two-headed cat.

The future success of museum in Eastern Europe and Russia relies on a combination of imagination, creativity, and savvy marketing. As these three little-known museums demonstrate, almost anything can be achieved

Next Issue

The next issue of *The Urban Age* will focus on the results of the Habitat II City Summit in Istanbul. We look forward to receiving your comments and thoughts on this upcoming issue.

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