

Urbanization Past and Future

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- Patrick Bond. *Unsustainable South Africa. Environment, Development and Social Protest*. Pietermaritzberg: University of Natal Press, 2002. xxvi + 449 pp.
- Teresa P.R. Caldeira. *City of Walls. Crime, Segregation, and Citizenship in São Paulo*. Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 2000. xv + 487 pp.
- John Friedman. *The Prospect of Cities*. Minneapolis: University of Minneapolis Press, 2002. xxvi + 194 pp.
- Peter Hall. *Cities of Tomorrow. An Intellectual History of Urban Planning and Design in the Twentieth Century*. Oxford: Blackwell 1995 (orig. 1988). xvi + 473 pp.
- Gillian Hart. *Disabling Globalization. Places of Power in Post-Apartheid South Africa*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 2002. xi + 385 pp.
- James K. Mitchell, *Crucibles of Hazard: Mega-Cities and Disasters in Transition*. Tokyo: United Nations Press, 1999. xiii + 535 pp.
- André Raymond. *Cairo*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2000. x + 436 pp.
- Aidan Southall. *The City in Time and Space*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998. x + 473 pp.
- United Nations Settlement Program. *The Challenge of Slums. Global Report on Human Settlements 2003*. London: UN Habitat, 2003. xxxiv + 308 pp.
- Luigi Fusco Girard, Bruno Forte, Maria Cerreta, Pasquale De Toro, Fabiana Forte, editors. *The Human Sustainable City. Challenges and Perspectives from the Habitat Agenda*. Aldershot: Ashgate Publishing Ltd. 2003. xiii + 573 pp.

As urban populations predominate across the globe, and increase most rapidly in poorer countries, urban problems and prospects have increasingly attracted attention. Southall's magnum opus, *The City in Time and Space*, provides the best overall analysis to date of the history of urbanization across the globe. Southall uses a mode of production perspective to analyse the growth of cities from the ancient world to the present and documents in excoriating detail the exploitative dichotomy between elites and the masses at the core of city growth and decline. Chapters deal, in order, with the pristine cities of the ancient world (pristine in conception not hygiene), the cities of Greece and Rome, European feudal cities beginning with the decline of Rome, Asian cities, colonial and Third World cities, and finally a lengthy and brilliant chapter on the transformation of the city through the age of globalization. Southall's unwavering comparative focus on urban problems and urban planning illuminates urbanization in ways that would be simply impossible within the frame of a work on a single city. In the end, Southall proposes an possible optimistic outcome in which urban problems could be overcome, cities converted largely into cultural centers, population levels controlled and environmental impacts mitigated but suggests such a world will require billions in "compensation, education, interreflexive enculturation and mutual moral reconstruction" that could only occur under the clear threat of apocalypse as the likely alternative. Thus his short-term gloom based on the massive and increasing level of current problems, in good Marxist perspective, may be best interpreted as the birth-pangs preceding the birth of a new world order.

Patrick Bond's, *Unsustainable South Africa. Environment, Development and Social Protest*, is a tour de force focusing on the maladaptation of urban infrastructure in South Africa to the needs of the majority and the reality of the local environment. Although Bond is the principle author, all but two chapters also recognizes the co-authorship of one or more other scholars and the broad expertise this provides may explain the extraordinarily rich and insightful detail in each chapter despite the consistency of the prose throughout the book. The general theme of the book is that capitalist development in South Africa from the Apartheid era to the present has been directed at benefiting a small minority while even recently it has unscrupulously sacrificed the interests of the poor. After the introduction the book is divided into four sections: I. An Unsustainable Legacy, II. Unsustainable Projects, III. Unsustainable Policies, and IV. Environment, Development and Social Protest. The second section examines in separate chapters urban planning in the cape and

the harnessing of Lesotho water for urban elites in Johannesburg. Section III critiques neoliberal policy and its "eco-social injustice for working-class communities" in the South African context. A second chapter focuses on privatising water and the cholera epidemics caused by depriving the poor of an essential public good around Richards Bay Port. A third chapter discusses energy inequity and the environmental impacts of energy policy. Section IV provides the conclusion which suggests that both local and global conflicts over resource allocation and environmental impacts should be viewed as data that can be used first to figure the lay of the land, what forces are aligned with which positions and why, and second to use this analysis to change for the better the impacts of the global and local capitalist systems.

Caldeira's *City of Walls. Crime, Segregation, and Citizenship in São Paulo*, though it deals only with São Paulo addresses one of the most prominent features of large urban areas across the globe but especially in the developing world; the rapid development of fortified enclaves or wealthy housing surrounded by walls and defended by security personnel. The rapid proliferation of such residences even across Africa is striking. Caldeira writes as a Brazilian trying to bridge the gap between Brazilian public intellectual and American academic and focuses on discourse about crime and its reflections on what might be called the de-construction of modern notions of citizenship in response to perceptions of disorder in the urban fabric. This fascinating book details the construction of literal and figurative walls as the rich increasingly see the poor as threatening and the poor see the rich as criminals beyond reach of the law and both view the project of modernity and democracy as failing. *City of Walls* is divided into four parts; I. The Talk of Crime, II. Violent Crime and the Failure of the Rule of Law, III. Urban Segregation Fortified Enclaves and Public Space and IV. Violence, Civil Rights and the Body. The first part explicates through examples of discourse about crime how people, rich and poor, have reached the conclusion that the classic promises of modernity may be beyond reach. The following part (three chapters) details the excesses and failures of the police of government that have convinced people that democracy is not working for them and that infringement of some of the rights traceable to the enlightenment is necessary. Part Three explains how this has led to the implosion of public life (discourse and participation) and withdrawal of the population to fragmented spaces in which they feel more secure. The final part deals with a new discourse on crime and punishment among the public and among public intellectuals that seems to be best understood in the frameworks set out by Foucault.

Raymond's *Cairo* is a translation of the original French that appeared in 1993. Its charm is part the author's romantic attachment to his subject and part the panoramic approach which endeavors to cover the development and transformation of Cairo from the time of the Islamic conquest and the establishment of Fustat (642) up to the time of publication. The focus of the book is on urban planning as response to demographic growth, environmental constraints and the urban problems linked to a multi-ethnic and culturally pluralistic major city which always had to balance the presence of a majority of poor and the interests of elites and the government. Raymond deals insightfully with a host of sociological issues from Islamic law dealing with property or citizenship to the constraints imposed by participation in the global economy on urban planning. He is at his best, and perhaps most enthusiastic, when he describes the transformation of particular places as inhabitants move out or in as they respond to economic and cultural factors. Raymond does a superb job contrasting these human decisions and their sometimes unpredictable or undesirable impacts on the urban fabric with the attempts by urban planners to rearrange the urban space from the top down. Raymond gives us sixteen chapters divided into four parts: I. Foundations (642-1250), II. Medieval Cairo (1250-1517), III. The Traditional City (1517-1798), and IV. Contemporary Cairo (1798-1992). Throughout this grand sweep of history, Raymond keeps his eye, even if it is always a little romantic, on the class structure in the city and the problems of the poor as well as the strategies of the elites. In Cairo, even more consistently than in other cities, the poor have always been a major factor that urban planning has never quite succeeded in managing. They have long since taken over the cemeteries as residences and landlords to accommodate them have long evaded construction permits and architectural safety regulations with foreseeable consequences. Rapid growth in the second half of the 20th century brought to the forefront the conflict between the environment and urbanization as a preference for the more habitable fertile land and demand for red bricks for construction had major impacts on agriculture. Urban planners have only partially diverted construction to the desert areas as urban growth peaked at more than 4% per year in the 1960s and has continued to outpace overall population growth in Egypt. Although Raymond presents some critical awareness of global impacts on Cairo his theoretical position seems best described as viewing the world as neither a

grand conspiracy nor open to completely rational analysis: Egyptians are and have been engaged in complex adaptations to changing circumstances for which apparently it serves no purpose to engage in recrimination.

Mitchell's *Crucibles of Hazard: Mega-Cities and Disasters in Transition* is an edited volume that focuses exclusively on the significance of natural disasters, terrorism among other things being explicitly excluded, for urban planning in mega cities in the modern era. There are case studies of Tokyo (Yoshio Kumagai and Yoshiteru Najima), Seoul (Kwi-Gon Kim), Dhaka (Saleemul Huq), Sydney (John Handmer), London (Dennis J. Parker), Lima (Anthony Oliver-Smith), Mexico City (Sergio Puente), San Francisco (Rutherford H. Platt), Los Angeles (Ben Wisner), and Miami (William D. Solecki) as well as introductory and concluding chapters by Mitchell. The general theme is that the potential (and likelihood: 5-6000 deaths in Mexico City's 1985 earthquake, 6,300 deaths in Kobe's 1995 earthquake and in each case perhaps more than 100 billion dollars in damages) for massive mortality and monetary losses is both extremely high and nowhere are cities adequately prepared. The authors focus attention on the notion of urban sustainability from an environmental perspective and its almost complete exclusion from key international conferences such as Habitat II held in Istanbul in 1996. They argue that there is a strong institutional bias either toward considering Green hazards (due to industrial caused environmental degradation) or Brown hazards (related to poverty and lack of urban services). Each of these agendas have broad constituencies and now have regular and influential spokespersons in international fora. Because natural disasters are less ideologically rooted in elite discourse they appear less important even though their consequences may be as or more significant. In brief, this may in part be due to the popularity of a politics of recrimination and the receding of a belief that the world can be controlled.

Hart's *Disabling Globalization. Places of Power in Post-Apartheid South Africa*, is an immensely sophisticated and interesting critique of globalization and its impacts in South Africa's townships within the context of a national focus on urban areas as embodying the future. Building on LeFebvre's ideas about the social construction of space, Hart suggests socio-spatial change, viewed as a social construct transforming physical and social landscapes, occurs along multiple trajectories and creates in the process places of power that might be seen as having both physical location and social location. As the South African government under Mbeki advocates neoliberal policies which benefit the elites it simultaneously takes positions in international fora which align it with the poor and downtrodden. Similarly Industrialization remakes social spaces in townships and urban areas but is itself reworked in response to global processes and this reworking in turn reverberates on the social spaces it has constructed in South Africa and of course also transforms the physical landscape. Urban and rural become cultural categories whose fluidity over time reflects a discourse of spaces, social and natural. Hart suggests that the best way to counteract globalization is to understand its multifarious influence on the remaking of social categories and the use of this understanding to find current contradictions which can be exploited to effect change. *Disabling Globalization* is divided into three parts: I. Forging Places, II. Transnational Trajectories, and III. Post-Apartheid Possibilities. Hart, who is a specialist on Asia but a native South African focuses on Asian investments in South Africa and their transformative impacts but keeps his eye on the disjunctures and contradictions which might provide leverage for improving the situation of the poor.

UN habitat's *The Challenge of Slums. Global Report on Human Settlements 2003* is both an essential book for anyone interested in global urbanization and the first official UN publication to decisively split from the orthodox neoliberal view that environmental problems in the developing world are the fault of the poor rather than, as all but the most conservative scholars have long argued, an effect of poor policies and poverty imposed by such policies. The book provides statistics, graphs and data in abundance about slums around the world. The data documents major improvements where more enlightened policies are implemented, such as implementing housing inspection regulations in Los Angeles to prevent landlords from obtaining excess profits from unsafe housing, and provides numerous examples of received wisdom that now appears quite misguided. The extremely broad coverage of *The Challenge of Slums* and the useful summaries of key findings by city at the end make it easy to see that while major similarities exist around the world in terms of the basic shortage of housing for the poor there are just as significant differences in the social dynamics in cities on different continents. Many cities in South America share strong perceptions of the poor as dangerous and are far along the path sketched out by Careira while key concerns in Asian cities focus less on danger than on vulnerability, overcrowding and lack of

services with concomitant shortages of funds to ameliorate the latter problems and lack of social will to tackle elite exploitation of the poor (who seem distinctly less politicised than their counterparts in South America). Antagonisms against whites in Africa have little significance for slum development outside of South Africa or Zimbabwe and nationalistic ideologies have by and large included the majority. Though the cases of conflict in countries like Rwanda, Sudan, Nigeria, Mauritania, Ivory Coast, Uganda or the DRC reflect ethnic and religious conflicts of major import, these do not translate into specifically intra urban issues. Thus the key concerns in Africa remain ones of infrastructure, employment, tenure, health and environment and have not yet developed into significant class conflict. Processes of enclave fortification in Africa are currently focused on protection from tiny criminal minorities not protection from a perceived criminal majority though African cities may be developing in this direction. One of the major contributions of this book is the copious comparative data embodied in well designed graphics and tables which document the extraordinarily rapid growth of cities outside the old industrial countries and a multitude of figures on socio-economic conditions in those cities.

Though published in 1988, Hall's *Cities of Tomorrow. An Intellectual History of Urban Planning and Design in the Twentieth Century* remains one of the most insightful discussions of urban planning on a global scale. Hall divides urban planning into a small number of types grouped around what he considers the small number of key ideas and makes no secret of his own preferences for the ideas derived in large part from 19th century planners with anarchist leanings (read anarchism as against a significant role for the state not as in favor of chaos). Hall suggests that the key inspiration for urban planning in the 19th century was the proliferation of urban slums in the industrializing countries especially the United Kingdom and the United States. Hall suggests that just as some initial ideas were developed changes in capitalism obviated many of the worst problems of slums in the industrial world lessening the urgency and often displacing the implementations to other countries. The few key concepts Hall adumbrate include the Garden City concept of Ebenezer Howard (locally developed cities in the rural suburbs of London), the extension of this idea to full regional planning characterized by ecological sensitivity by Patrick Geddes, a monumental tradition of urban planning associated with the names of Georges eugène Haussman or Ildefonso Cerda which was preoccupied with commercial boosterism or civic pride and beloved of totalitarian regimes, Le Corbusier's solution to overcrowding which Hall abhors but involved vertical construction with skyscrapers and even denser populations (if projected onto a two dimensional grid). Two other streams of thought have also been critical: one emphasizing participatory planning and the other focusing on the significance of mobility: giving rise to many variants from commuter suburbs to utopian bicycle linked housing and productive units. Hall's long perspective suggests that by the 1960s cities were beginning to decay and all the earlier ideas began once again to seem important and by late 20th century we were back almost where we had been a century earlier - massive urban problems and a major need for ways to fix them but in practice a preference for the anarchist approaches under perhaps different rubrics.

Friedman's *The Prospect of Cities* begins by characterizing the Habitat II conferences (La Rochelle and Istanbul 1996) as well as a series of subsequent conferences in July 2000 (The future of the City: URBAN 21 in Berlin and Urban Futures in Johannesburg) as overwhelmingly dominated by an economic neoliberal vision which characterized cities as divided into poor cities of hypergrowth, middle-income cities with rapid growth and mature (rich country) aging cities. The conference envisaged a world of cities competing for investment at the global level and relegated all other differences to insignificance. Friedman recounts the failures of efforts headed by Peter Hall and the World Commission 21 to get other issues on the table through an alternative conference (Cities for All--Local Heroes 21--European Meeting of Urban Grassroots Organization). Friedman goes on to discuss his own alternatives to the dominant neoliberal view centered around the need for creative local inputs and significant autonomy at the urban level. In Chapter 4 on transnational migration, Friedman, using Bourdieu's notion of habitus, makes a strong case for the importance of integrating migrants into what he calls local citizenship via special education, job training and restructuring local governance. The approach recognizes the reality of modern cities and emphasizes the critical importance of real participation in civic affairs if cities are to become vibrant places. In Chapter 5 (The City of Everyday Life: Knowledge/Power and the Problem of Representation), Friedman goes on to review radical urban planning projects (insurgent planning) which involve a broad spectrum of urban residents in creating the urban fabric. Chapter 6 (The Good City: In Defense of Utopian Thinking), both reviews the history of utopian or visionary urban planning and makes a case for its importance in the modern context.

The final chapter provides a thoughtful biographical review of Friedman's life as an urban planner which gives the reader numerous examples of how particular projects come to fruition and insights into the dynamics of the international urban planning community.

Luigi Fusco Girard et al's *The Human Sustainable City. Challenges and Perspectives from the Habitat Agenda*. includes 27 chapters each by different authors sorted into three sections: I. An Environmental Approach, II. An Inclusive Approach, and III. An Integrated Approach. The nine chapters in the first part focus on the sustainability of cities. The failures of urban policies to deal with water, energy, waste, transport and housing are complemented by case studies of cities that have been successful through a focus on the urban ecological footprint, ecological planning and assessments of environmental resources, ethics and economics. The following ten chapters of the second part emphasize governance, justice, construction and the role of business. One key theme is the goal of creating socially inclusive cities that empower citizens to satisfy basic needs and to participate in urban life. This goal is presented as a combination of "Green" and "Brown" agendas referring to long term environmental goals and short-term environmental issues such as air or water pollution and waste management. The final 7 chapters of the third part deal with integrating issues of environment, cultural heritage and economics in the improvement of urban quality of life. Each of the three parts has its own introduction (I: Pasquale De Toro, II: Maria Cereta, and III: Fabiana Forte) and the book also has a preface by Václav Havel, a general introduction by Luigi Fusco Girard and a general conclusion by Bruno Forte.

This magisterial work, which includes far too many specific analyses to treat adequately in this short space, focuses on reintroducing a human and spiritual element into urban planning. Bruno Forte's conclusion summarizes the themes of the book as attempting to transcend the postmodern abandonment of enlightenment values by refocusing on *veritas* rather than *vanitas* and the need for urban development that promotes universal empowerment and community. The totalitarian disasters of the enlightenment's heirs have produced what he calls the "weak thought" of postmodernism which is incapable of promoting strong ethical values and it thus falls to more religious perspectives to bring human dignity and pluralistic community integration to the fore as key goals in urban planning. *The Human Sustainable City* argues that poverty must be seen as comprising insufficiency in a variety of forms e.g. of man-made, natural, human or social capital and that cities as poles of civilization must be focal points in which economic development is integrated with social and environmental justice. Every day 170,000 people move to cities and it is estimated that the majority of humanity will be urban imminently (p.4) and that 93% of those moving to cities in the future will move to cities of less developed countries. Girard suggests that the great ethical challenge of the 21st century will be the reduction of poverty through the humanization of economic development and in particular the amelioration of urban living for the poor. Careful examination of Best Practices collated since 1996 by UN-Habitat suggest that the most success in humanizing urban life were achieved by cities that focused on improvements in six areas (adumbrated as *ecoware*/quality of natural built environment, *hardware*/systems of transport and communications, *finware*/financial support services, *orgware*/institutions of the organization of urban life, *civicware*/civil infrastructure and *software*/skills and know-how and innovation.

The numerous chapters give countless examples of successful projects in each of these areas from the rehabilitation of the Medina of Fès (Radoine) to the innovative financing and the conservation of cultural heritage in China (Jin and Zhao). Yet this volume places particular importance on the spiritual element or an ethics of responsibility (p.391) and even discusses the notion of spiritual capital (29 ff.) beginning with pointing out that since the 1990s major international conferences (the U.N. Agenda 21, Beijing Fourth World Conference on Women, Habitat Agenda, The Earth Charter and The Naples Declaration) have all emphasized the need for respecting and promoting spiritual well-being. The Naples Declaration, included as an appendix, has ten major clauses of which the last two are titled: 9. Towards a New Global Ethics and 10. The Importance of the Spiritual Dimension. In the urban context, this translates to an emphasis on making provision for cultural heritage preservation, including religious structures, and an attention to the importance of the human dignity of all urban citizens whether through better governance or explicit concern for social justice.

These ten books provide the reader with invaluable information for an understanding of the history and current state of modern cities as well as the state of the art in urban planning. At the same time they critique the overwhelming focus on basic socio-economic indicators and the current inattention to what, other than money, makes a city interesting, livable or vibrant. They do

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provide a number of approaches to improving this situation and several envisage, after considerable time, a transition to a world less dominated by slums, poverty and environmental disasters. Southall, for example, imagines a transition to decentralized living and production with the aid of telecommunication systems but Caldeira imagines a long process of renegotiating civil rights and re-empowering Brazilian public spaces before urban Brazil has any hope of mitigating its current escalation of violence and fear. Girard et al, while envisaging disaster unless ethical and spiritual values are prioritized, emphasize the many successful efforts that have already been made to humanize cities.

It is probably reasonable to expect cities in different parts of the world to follow different trajectories but even more we can, and should, hope that cities will not all end up the same and it might even be best if they develop in different ways reflecting their multifarious cultural heritage and their own ideas. A case might even be made for arguing that vibrant cities will provide a great diversity of employment opportunities and not try to be mere clones of a general neoliberal prototype. This will require rethinking the current ideas dominating aid and investment as well as recognizing that diversity may be a better key to long term robustness and prosperity than grinding, homogenizing, competitive emulation. Girard et al may even be correct that a new focus on community needs to replace the individualistic ethic that has produced a post-modern renunciation of the notion that human dignity, or anything else, could represent a universal transcultural value.