

# Book Notes

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Book Notes gives short descriptions of recently published books, papers and reports on all subjects relevant to the environment and development. Priority is given to publications produced by research groups and NGOs in Africa, Asia and Latin America. Send us a copy of any relevant publication you would like included; we produce Book Notes of publications in Spanish, French or Portuguese, as well as English (*Environment and Urbanization* has more than 300 individual or institutional subscribers in Latin America and over 100 subscribers in France and Francophone Africa). When you send us publications, please include price details for those ordering from abroad and how payment should be made.

The Book Notes in this issue are grouped under the following headings:

- I. DISASTERS
- II. ENVIRONMENT
- III. HOUSING
- IV. URBAN DEVELOPMENT
- V. CLIMATE CHANGE
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Please note that a web-based bibliographic database at <http://eandu.poptel.org.uk/> has details and summaries of all the publications reviewed in the Book Notes section of *Environment and Urbanization* from the early 1990s, with details of how these can be obtained, along with summaries of all papers published in the journal since 1989.

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## I. DISASTERS

**Managing Urban Disaster Risk. Analysis and Adaptation Frameworks for Integrated Settlement Development Programming for the Urban Poor**

*Christine Wamsler, Doctoral Thesis, No 4 of HDM Thesis Series, 2007, 297 pages, ISBN 978-91-87866-31-9. Published by Housing Development & Management (HDM), Architecture and Built Environment, Lund University, PO Box 118, SE-221 00, Lund, Sweden; website: www.hdm.lth.se.*

The urban poor are particularly vulnerable to natural disasters such as earthquakes, floods, landslides, windstorms, volcanic eruptions, wild fires, water surges and droughts, as their settlements are often located on marginal land and have sub-standard housing and infrastructure. Currently, more than one billion people worldwide live in "slums". Thus, increasing attention has been given to the need to reduce disaster risk through development work so as to bring about poverty reduction. Moreover, one of the Millennium Development Goals is to achieve a significant improvement in the lives of at least 100 million slum dwellers by 2020.

This book provides an understanding of the challenges of increasing risk and its impact on the living conditions of the urban poor, as well as suggesting new conceptual and strategic approaches to facing those challenges. A central question is how can disaster risk management be properly integrated into urban development programming? From here, three areas are researched: first, the existing linkages between disasters and building and planning practices relating to low-income settlements; second, the current relationship between the working fields of disaster risk management and territorial planning; and third, the actual possibilities for overcoming existing challenges and gaps, in order to increase the potential of settlement development programming to reduce and transfer, or share, risk. The research methodology combines case studies, grounded theory and systems analysis. El Salvador, which is located in one of the most disaster-prone regions in the world, was the focus country for the cases studies, comprising four aid programmes implemented in 15 disaster-prone slum communities.

Urban development and related practices are not only affected by disasters but also are one of their main causes. So far, neither urban development actors nor professionals have addressed this effectively. Therefore, to achieve holistic and thus sustainable disaster risk management, an "Analysis and Integration Model" is elaborated, based on seven strategies combined with five measures to tackle disaster risk. The seven strategies are:

- direct stand-alone disaster risk management;
- direct integrated disaster risk management;

- programmatic mainstreaming of disaster risk management;
- organizational mainstreaming;
- internal mainstreaming;
- synergy creation; and
- educational mainstreaming of disaster risk management.

In the same context, the measures to tackle disaster risk are prevention, mitigation, preparedness, risk financing (which aims to increase the capacity of sharing risk so as to establish a "security system") and stand-by for recovery (which aims to increase the capacity to establish appropriate recovery mechanisms and structures for households, communities and/or institutions that are accessible after a potential hazard/disaster). This edition also includes several papers previously published by the author, and a CD with an electronic version of the book.

**Construyendo Organización: Sistematización del programa "Dotación de vivienda permanente para los damnificados de los terremotos de 2001 en los municipios de Tacaba y San Pedro Masahuat"**

*Fundación Salvadoreña de Desarrollo y Vivienda Mínima (FUNDASAL), Documentos de Estudio No 34, January 2006, 73 pages. Published by FUNDASAL, Ciudad Delgado, San Salvador, El Salvador, Apartado Postal No 421; e-mail: direccion@fundasal.org.sv; website: www.fundasal.org.*

Between January and February 2001, two major earthquakes hit El Salvador in Central America. Hundreds lost their lives and thousands lost their dwellings, especially among low-income families who lived in rural areas or beside motorways or on the fringes of the cities. The country's health system was severely shocked and the educational system and a great part of the national historical patrimony were also largely destroyed. Harvests were massively spoiled, especially coffee plantations. Ninety-seven out of the 262 national municipalities were affected and the social deprivation that existed before the catastrophe was much increased. The estimated impact on El Salvador's development was a five-year backward step.

Under the framework of the National Plan for Reconstruction (NPR) and the international help provided, a programme was created, namely the "Provision of Permanent Housing for the Victims of the Earthquakes in Tacuba and San Pedro Masahuat Municipalities". This programme was funded and channelled by the Agencia Española de Cooperación Internacional, whereby the local agencies FUNDASAL and ADIC worked as national counterparts.

The programme ran from 2001 to 2004. It comprised the implementation of several housing projects in both municipalities, leading to the development of a whole experience of reconstruction at local scale. The programme evolved from an initial short-term

strategy of supplying emergency solutions into a long-term programme towards the strengthening and consolidation of local communities, also aiming to reduce their social vulnerability in the future. This report summarizes the experience, addressing the following points:

- The improvement in building technologies and people's capacities concerning self-construction. Both aspects became considerably more adapted to local environments. People participated in the design and construction of their dwellings; they acquired new knowledge that served to establish a minimum expected quality for future processes of housing improvement. This knowledge also worked as livelihood, enabling people to have jobs in the formal building sector.
- Environmental risks were reduced. The new houses were built with better materials, more resistant to earthquakes, more durable and made of environmentally friendly materials. Also, houses were planned with adequate professional assistance.
- Legal aspects of land tenure were strongly addressed. This benefited especially women and children, who usually are at a disadvantage due to the traditional power relations that exist within families and communities. Women also gained the right to participate in communal decision processes, to own a house and be heads of families.
- Local networks' capacities were considerably empowered, in order to deal with other grassroots actors, municipal governments, NGOs and several entities from the national government. Without a doubt, the programme helped to define a model of local development oriented towards improving people's quality of life under conditions of considerable social and gender equality.

## II. ENVIRONMENT

### **Street Science. Community Knowledge and Environmental Health Justice**

*Jason Corburn, 2005, 271 pages, ISBN 0-262-53272-7. Published by Massachusetts Institute of Technology Press, 55 Hayward Street, Cambridge, MA 02142, USA.*

Like many other low-income communities, the Greenpoint/Williamsburg neighbourhood in Brooklyn suffers more than its share of environmental problems, with a concentration of polluting facilities and elevated levels of localized air pollutants. The author looks at four instances of "street science", where community members and professionals combined forces to address the risks from subsistence fishing in the polluted East River, the asthma epidemic in the Latino community, childhood lead poisoning and local sources of air pollution. These demonstrate ways in which residents can establish their own credibility when working with scientists.

The concept of street science engages at least six issues that remain so far unaddressed by the environmental policy and public health literatures. First, it has been shown in the literature that local knowledge has contributed to producing effective and sustainable resource management practices and development decisions, especially in low- and middle-income nations. Second, it is now accepted that inequalities in environmental health, morbidity and mortality result from a combination of poverty, discrimination, political disenfranchisement, environmental exposure and biological agents. Third, public health has a rich history of studying how the quality of place structures population health. Fourth, there has been a tendency to romanticize local knowledge as always being in harmony with natural and human systems, often leading to naïve environmental or public health decisions. Fifth, much of the study on local knowledge is ethnographic and deeply contextual, but few general patterns or lessons are offered; this makes it very difficult to scale it up to broader analytical frameworks, applicable in different contexts. Sixth, urban planning and public health have increasingly embraced the importance of bottom-up, as opposed to top-down, approaches to research and decision making.

Yet street science differs from other bottom-up approaches. For instance, participatory action research emphasizes the involvement of directly impacted individuals and groups, though not specifying how this involvement should take place. Something similar happens with community-based participatory research, which also embraces an action paradigm but aims at community "capacity building". Popular epidemiology is a variation of community-based participatory research that lets people gather scientific data for directing the knowledge of experts, in order to understand the epidemiology of diseases.

However, while street science encompasses many of these ideas and methods, it is not limited to epidemiological research alone but also embraces wider ranges of legitimate knowledge making and popular communication techniques such as murals, hand-drawn maps and other kinds of images, to understand what people know and want to communicate. Street science also builds from a collaborative method of resolving public scientific disputes called "joint fact-finding", a process that make explicit three elements:

- that science controversies involve value judgements;
- that a range of stakeholder interests must be involved in data gathering and analysis; and
- that environmental dispute-resolution techniques, including neutral mediation, should be used to assist stakeholders in resolving controversies.

Chapter 1 provides a literature review of local knowledge, focusing on environmental health policy. Chapter 2 proposes a way of driving these ideas to practical application in the four case studies of Greenpoint/Williamsburg neighbourhoods. Chapter 3 shows

how the knowledge of organized community residents improved environmental health decisions in the Greenpoint/Williamsburg area. Chapter 4 follows the work and street science of El Puente, a high-school and community-based organization in Greenpoint/Williamsburg, to address the neighbourhood's asthma epidemic. Chapter 5 discusses how the community organized its street science to support its legal claim and convinced the city to prepare an environmental impact statement. Chapter 6 explores actual forms of mapping street science. Finally, Chapter 7 addresses possible ways of driving street science to a broader model of environmental justice, more specifically to the recalibration of the priorities and political relationships that shape environmental health decision making.

This book speaks directly to researchers, policy makers and planners. It advocates for less bureaucratic, more reflective practice. Professionals must learn how to view their work in a more open-ended way, managing uncertainty by acknowledging the limits of their expertise and seriously valuing people's own ways to knowledge. Street science does not devalue science, but it revalues other kinds of information, democratizing the inquiry and decision-making processes in environmental management.

### III. HOUSING

#### **Subprograma Mejoramiento de Barrios en Bolivia (1998–2002). Lecciones aprendidas de proyectos integrales: componentes tangibles e intangibles**

*Sara Rivas, Cuaderno de Análisis No 16, 2007, 53 pages, ISSN 1652–571X. Programa de Capacitación para el Mejoramiento Socio Habitacional (PROMESHA) and Housing Development & Management (HDM). Published by Universidad Mayor de San Simón, Cochabamba, Bolivia.*

Urban informal settlements seem inherent to cities in low- and middle-income nations. Between 40 and 65 per cent of the urban population in Latin America live in informal dwellings with inadequate levels of urban development. In the case of Bolivia, there are historical reasons. During the 1950s and 1960s, the state produced large-scale housing projects, which in the 1970s became unable to tackle the rapidly growing rates of precarious suburban development. Then, "site and services" schemes became the most important instrument for housing policy, but soon they proved inadequate for solving the massive problem of homelessness. The public sector also made erroneous financial calculations, usually overestimating people's capacity to pay. The situation was made worse by the extreme labour instability and weak national economy during the 1980s. The failed processes of creating a national housing policy contributed to the spread of informal settlements.

In contrast, current state policies in Bolivia focus on the integration and upgrading of informal settlements into the urban structure. This implies the provision of basic infrastructure and services, facilities for social development, regularization of informal plots, securitization of land ownership and the strong participation of the benefited communities. A whole new housing programme, called PROVIVIENDA, emerged in 1998 and was supported by funding from the Inter-American Development Bank. This programme aimed to improve property and financial markets and facilitate access by the poor to credit systems, creating a subsidy policy for the poor. PROVIVIENDA consisted of four sub-programmes, among which the Neighbourhood Upgrading Sub-programme (SMB – Subprograma de Mejoramiento de Barrios) was financed by 72 per cent of the total resources of PROVIVIENDA. The author of the present report participated directly in this sub-programme.

The neighbourhoods selected by SMB had to be among the most impoverished in the cities. Most of the plots had to be inhabited by homeowners (in order to avoid speculation by landlords). They also had to be legitimately organized and the investment per plot could not exceed US\$ 2,800, although in some exceptional cases it could reach US\$ 4,200. In a selected neighbourhood, 75 per cent of dwellings should lack a sewage system, although the area should be close to already installed infrastructure and service networks. They also had to be accessible from road systems and to garbage collection trucks. Among other conditions, neighbourhood size could not be under 100 plots nor could they be situated in disaster risk areas.

The SMB was conceived to operate in two different areas. The first aimed to supply potable water, sanitary sewerage, road improvements, rainwater drainage, electricity and public lights, toilets, and infrastructure for social activities. The second area was community development and the regularization of land property rights. The report analyzes these in depth. After a difficult process of adjustment, these different elements could work together to create multiplier effects, where social improvements are reinforced by better infrastructure. A major conclusion is that actions for community development were essential for the greater success of this sub-programme, compared with other more traditional policy schemes. The report includes quotations from interviews with local beneficiaries in several cities. These actors provide a first-hand evaluation of the successes and failures of the Subprograma de Mejoramiento de Barrios.

#### **50 Community Upgrading Projects**

*CODI Update, March 2008, 75 pages. Published by the Community Organizations Development Institute, 2044/28–33 New Phetburi Road, Khet Huai Khwang, Bangkok 10320, Thailand.*

This report presents 50 cases of successful housing upgrading projects in Thailand. The projects come

from the Baan Mankong programme, launched by the Thai government in January 2003 as part of its effort to tackle the critical housing situation in the country's poorest urban enclaves. (This programme was described in some detail in the paper by Somsook Boonyabancha in Vol 17, No 1 (April 2005) of *Environment and Urbanization*.) The programme channels government funds in the form of infrastructure subsidies and soft housing and land loans directly to poor communities, who plan and carry out improvements to their housing, environment, basic services and tenure security, and manage the budget themselves. Instead of delivering housing units to individual families, Baan Mankong puts communities and their networks at the centre of a process of developing long-term, comprehensive solutions.

The programme is being implemented by the Community Organizations Development Institute (CODI – under the Ministry of Social Development), which works in close collaboration with communities, local governments, professionals, universities and NGOs to plan upgrading processes. Once a project is finalized, CODI channels the infrastructure subsidies and house loans directly to the community. These funds cover infrastructure costs, land/housing loans, administrative costs and subsidies for “process support” (aimed to promote the sharing of information among participants). The system rests on community savings activities, the use of people's managerial skills to deal with housing problems, and especially the commitment by central government institutions to allow people to be the main actors and to decentralize the development of solutions.

The programme gives high levels of power to local communities. Five factors have been found to be important for success:

- **flexible finance:** when people see resources that are accessible to them (without difficult bureaucratic barriers), they will plan for what they really need and manage the resources well;
- **savings groups:** communities have to be organized on a collective financial basis;
- **collective everything:** communities have to find ways to do things together, and everyone in the community (even the poorest) has to be included in the project to (re)invigorate the groups' strength;
- **horizontal support:** the whole programme is a learn-in-practice experience, where communities share their knowledge with others; and
- **technical support:** community architects, planners and universities are essential supports.

Five hundred and twelve projects have been approved so far, with 1,010 communities or 53,976 households benefiting. The total budget approved so far is US\$ 46.1 million for upgrading subsidies and US\$ 52.3 million for housing and land loans.

The result is hundreds of projects, rooted in their environmental, urban and social contexts. All are

different, as they all emerge after local processes of participation. They are also much smaller than the traditional state-designed social housing projects. Moreover, land tenure is key to success, as are diverse methods of converting idle public or private land plots into liveable residential communities. Landowners who traditionally have been reluctant to accept slum allocation on their plots now offer land for the projects. Finally, high building costs have also been reduced as a result of the increasing number of community-built projects that use the people's building skills. The report is illustrated with many photos, maps and drawings.

### **Vivienda social. Investigaciones, ensayos y entrevistas**

*Rubén Gazzoli, 2007, 266 pages, ISBN 978-987-584-125-3. Published by Nobuko, Buenos Aires, Argentina.*

In Argentina, the 2001 national census showed that more than 2,600,000 households lived in deficient dwellings. This means slightly more than 13 million inhabitants, or 36 per cent of the national total population. Even though these numbers represent an improvement compared with 1991, they still configure a tremendous political and social problem that has come to be called the “national housing crisis”.

In this book, Gazzoli discusses the historical evolution of this crisis, including critical analyses of recent state policies and programmes, also overcoming the narrow-minded statistically based descriptions and the usually sectoral political responses to the problem. The book compiles research, essays and interviews produced by the author after decades of work as an academic and a consultant.

In Part I (“Observing the Housing Situation through the National Census”), the analysis focuses on the achievements and failures of the housing policies developed by Alfonsín's and Menem's governments between 1984 and 2001. Although the analysis also considers previous democratic governments and dictatorships, these are taken only as antecedents. Chapter 1 observes historical census data in order to verify an evolution of the housing crisis in Argentina. Chapter 2 analyzes the Fondo Nacional de Vivienda (FONAVI, National Housing Fund), an institution created in 1972 to tackle the housing crisis. But FONAVI's unrealistic goals, amidst national political instability and the chronic lack of efficient implementation that characterized the 1970s and up to the mid-1980s, curtailed its effectiveness and worsened the crisis. FONAVI was finally reformed in 1992, and Chapter 3 analyzes the more recent national housing policies operating up to the present and evaluates their impact. Chapter 4 specifically observes the several social and technical dimensions of the rental housing market in the country.

Part II (“The Inhabitants of the Deficit”) brings together a series of essays, fieldwork research and interviews focused on urban and peri-urban low-income

inhabitants and their general conditions of life. This is a qualitative-based approach, so the aim here is to bring the perspectives of groups usually marginalized from the property market or the public housing programmes. Chapter 5 focuses on several of the particular urban *asentamientos* (low-income settlements) spread across the fringes of Greater Buenos Aires. Chapters 6 and 7 observe other forms of extra-institutional dwellings: squatter occupation and *inquilinos* (the latter is not only a form of extreme subdivision of derelict buildings in urban areas, occupied by low-income dwellers, but also a profitable way for landlords to milk properties). Chapter 8 observes and compares all these modalities, provides some general conclusions about the diversity of forms of dwellings existing in the country, and addresses the impact of these modalities on the social life and mental health of their inhabitants. Chapter 9 brings the perspectives of those who live in the *asentamientos*, many of whom are rural-urban migrants. These interviews were conducted between 1985 and 1995 and provide a first-hand, in-depth understanding of the real implications of the still existing housing crisis, depicted by the people who experience and suffer it everyday.

#### IV. URBAN DEVELOPMENT

##### **The Polycentric Metropolis: Learning from Mega-city Regions in Europe**

*Written and edited by Peter Hall and Kathy Pain, 2006, 228 pages, ISBN 978-1-84407-329. Published by and available from Earthscan Publications, 8-12 Camden High Street, London NW1 0JH, UK; e-mail: earthinfo@earthscan.co.uk; website: www.earthscan.co.uk; also available in bookshops: price £99. In the USA, Earthscan, 22883 Quicksilver Drive, Sterling, VA 20166-2012, USA.*

Polycentric global metropolitan city regions are geographical units composed of between 10 and 50 cities and towns, physically separate but functionally networked, clustered around one or more central cities and drawing enormous economic strength from a new functional division of labour engaged within a large-scale functional urban region. They are different to global cities. The latter are defined directly or indirectly in terms of their **external** information exchanges, while the former should be defined in terms of their **internal** linkages. Thus, big questions emerge: how to conceptualize the transmission of this information along these links?; and how does that transmission impact on the urban nodes that connect them into a network? This book aims to answer these questions.

Metropolitan city regions are the emerging urban form at the beginning of the twenty-first century. In part, they are evidence that face to face functional

relations are fundamental to economic and social life, and they cannot be simply replaced by advanced communications systems. This is what explains their levels of "concentrated deconcentration", i.e. they disperse over the scale of a wide city region but simultaneously re-concentrate at particular nodes within it, limited only by continuing time-distance constraints. Traditional centres still matter, but increasingly they form part of a wider, highly specialized division of labour.

The present book is the product of the POLYNET project, whose aim was to analyze and compare the functioning of eight European metropolitan city regions which, together, constitute the core of what is known as the European pentagon area. These city regions are:

- *Southeast England*, where London is now the core of a system of about 30-40 centres within a 160 kilometre radius;
- the *Randstad* in the Netherlands, encompassing Amsterdam, The Hague, Rotterdam and Utrecht, also including Almere;
- *Central Belgium*, comprising Brussels and a surrounding ring of large and medium-size cities, with a total population of 7.8 million;
- *Rhine Ruhr*, one of the world's largest polycentric MCRs, embracing 90 towns and cities with a total population of 12 million;
- the *Rhine-Main region* in Germany, including the cities of Frankfurt, Wiesbaden, Mainz, Darmstadt, Hanau and Aschaffenburg;
- the *EMR of Northern Switzerland*, an incipient MCR extending in a discontinuous linear pattern from Zürich in the east to Basel in the west;
- the *Paris region*, where recent research shows that the region's economic core is no longer within the historic "Ville de Paris" but, rather, in a "Golden Triangle" bounded by the city's western *arrondissements*: La Défense and the suburbs of Boulogne-Billancourt and Issy-les-Moulineaux; and
- *Greater Dublin*, within a 50-70 kilometre radius around the city, but particularly northward along the Dublin-Belfast corridor, crossing national boundaries.

The book has five parts and two appendices. Part I is the introduction. Part II comprises four chapters, which analyze and quantify polycentric metropolitan city regions and mega-city regions. The topics range from a descriptive overview of the eight regions, to their organization through corporate structures and networks (i.e. the connectivity within the "European heartland", measuring flows of information, business travel and telecommunication traffic between the eight POLYNET regions and between these and the 25 capital cities of the enlarged European Union), to a spatial mapping of these flows of information.

The three chapters in Part III aim to understand actors and networks at the regional level, and ten conclusions are addressed in terms of sustainable regional management. Part IV addresses identities and policies at the regional level. Part V provides conclusions drawn from the comparative study. The most important are:

- the need to tackle the ongoing dichotomy between territorial disparities and territorial cohesions (a problem that might be addressed paradoxically by injecting more resources into areas of concentration);
- POLYNET has shown that morphologically **polycentric** MCRs display sectoral specialization among centres, while morphologically **monocentric** MCRs develop a greater concentration of services in one centre, showing multi-sector clustering of creative milieus;
- the close linkage between spatial and informational accessibility and knowledge should be an issue more developed and tackled by European policies;
- it appears that polycentricity, whether morphological or functional, fails to provide a sustainable solution to issues of territorial, social and economic inequalities, thus a deeper understanding is needed of the forces that underlie prevailing geographies of uneven development; and
- in more morphologically polycentric regions, some scepticism has emerged in the policy analysis about the value of polycentricity as a regional development objective. These issues represent the need of a continuing research agenda: “...the mysteries of the polycentric metropolis have been partially unravelled, but there is much work still to do.”

### **International Handbook of Urban Policy, Volume 1**

*H S Geyer (editor), 2007, 348 pages, ISBN 978-1-84720-458-5. Published by Edward Elgar Publishing Limited, Cheltenham, Glos, UK.*

In the book’s introduction, Brian Berry writes about the two competing paradigms that will inspire urban policies in the world for the next decades: the market-oriented versus the rationally planned social-spatial regulation. From this starting point, the following 17 papers offer arguments for and against this. For instance, in Part II (about urban morphology), the first chapter defends urban sprawl as concomitant to the process of agglomeration and specialization produced in metropolitan areas. Sprawl, these authors claim, is a natural, positive outcome; hence, it should not be artificially regulated by any centrally or locally commanded policy since the market is a better distributor of resources in space. Yet the rest of the chapters do not necessarily agree with this perspective, offering

instead less radicalized approaches to urban form regulation through the following topics:

- location in economic space and urban restructuring;
- impacts of globalization on the redistribution of economic activities; and
- the effects of globalization in former communist countries now in process of economic liberalization and growth.

Part III deals with social and economic inequalities in urban areas. Being a politically loaded problem, the unequal spatial distribution of wealth is analyzed from several different angles. The first two chapters examine the nature, size and outcomes of the current international migration flows, their changes over the last decades and their implications on local community life at urban scale (the second chapter is more specifically centred in British and Japanese territories). The subsequent four chapters deal with:

- the problems of global migration, observed from a European urban perspective;
- “place” quality of urban space;
- urban terrorism (written from a US perspective, these authors demand more “technical” – and less “political” – responses to the increasing threat of terrorism in cities); and
- crime and urban living in current metropolises. Regarding the chapter on crime, its author argues that although the media usually magnifies urban malaise and violence (which have historically existed in urban agglomerations), it is also true that crime statistics show, especially in many low- and middle-income countries, that it is becoming not only more frequent but also more violent.

Part IV deals with issues of governance related to urban sustainability. The topics range from spatial and organizational integration of urban management, to infrastructure, to environmental management issues. The chapters debate:

- the “smart growth” movement in North America, a wave of new regionalism and metropolitan planning informed by global paradigms of sustainable development, which nevertheless, as these authors conclude, needs to be more flexible in responding to specific regional and local particularities;
- the need to integrate urban planning in regional environmental contexts;
- the way infrastructures not only shape cities but how cities shape infrastructures; and
- urban environmental policies in Europe and Africa, at regional and local levels.

Finally, in Part V, Alan Gilbert is asked to make a sort of prediction about the global process of urbanization to the year 2020. Trying to “avoid science fiction”, he claims first that overgeneralizations and grand theories

of the past have done little to predict or explain the major process of urban change we experience today. He recommends more observational-inductive ways of knowledge. From this epistemological standpoint, Gilbert's forecasts for the near future include the following:

- there shouldn't be any great environmental urban disasters due to global warming in the forthcoming years;
- although, increasingly, poverty will be an urban phenomenon, over the years, cities have proven superior to rural areas for improving people's living conditions; moreover, this "urban advantage" should be reinforced by the correct use of technology;
- conflicts of governance need to be resolved by supra-local institutions, which are essential for solving spatial inequalities even though, increasingly, globalization seems to reduce national and local governments' capacities to control their territories; and
- cultural patterns of consumption and consumers' consciousness should become much **greener**, given that the increasing threat of small- and large-scale urban disasters is being internalized by societies globally.

#### **Dharavi: Documenting Informalities**

*Sophie Allgårdh, Stina Ekman, Jonatan Habib Engqvist, Love Enqvist, Maria Erlandson, Jake Ford, Jonas Jernberg, Martin Karlsson, Maria Lantz, Monika Marklinger and Johan Widén, 2008, 303 pages, ISBN 978 91 633 2785 8. Published by and available from The Royal University College of Fine Arts, Art and Architecture, Box 16315, SE-103 26, Stockholm; price 35 euros.*

This large-format book with many colour photos and drawings is an amazing documentation of home, work, life and culture in Dharavi. As most readers of *Environment and Urbanization* will know, Dharavi is a large informal township in Mumbai, which is the home and workplace for several hundred thousand people. Papers by Jockin Arputham and Sheela Patel in the two previous issues of *Environment and Urbanization* have explained how Dharavi is now under threat from external developers.

This book was put together by a group of artists, architects and writers as part of a project based at the Royal University College of Fine Arts in Stockholm. After an initial visit to India in 2005, which included a visit to Dharavi, they recognized how little they actually knew. But fascinated by both the poverty of Dharavi and the vitality and ingenuity of its inhabitants, they decided to document it, drawing heavily on interviews and discussions with its inhabitants. They returned to Dharavi in 2006 and 2007. This book brings together what they learnt,

and photographed. The authors are also clear that they went to Dharavi to learn, not to teach.

Chapter 1 gives background information about Dharavi, including its history and its multiple links with the economy of Mumbai and beyond. Chapter 2 is a description of a walk through one street, giving a lot of detail and many photos to show its complexity, including the mix of home and business. It includes plot maps and detailed drawings of particular houses and their use of space. Chapter 3, entitled "Density and Infrastructure", describes the lack of provision for water and sanitation (and the politics of defaecation in Dharavi), land use in Dharavi, examples of businesses there (for instance, the private doctor's office), the use of streets and congested spaces and the quality of public and private infrastructure – all illustrated with numerous photos. Chapter 4 documents Dharavi's economy, including the recycling industry, leather production, the printing industry, potteries, textiles, food production, a kite factory and many crafts and other businesses – again all illustrated with photos. Chapter 5 is about Dharavi as home to hundreds of thousands of people – with multiple photos, drawings and details of housing conditions. Here, as in Chapter 4, it combines general statistics with very detailed examples of particular people's homes and interviews with Dharavi residents. Chapter 6 is about Dharavi's organization and sustainability. It describes local organizations and how they work (for instance, the Mahila Milan groups within Dharavi); also the lives and livelihoods of various Dharavi residents. The book ends with details of what is currently happening with regard to plans for Dharavi's redevelopment – including the black flags protest in June 2007 and the support for Dharavi residents from a group of well-known civil servants and professionals.

This is a book that deserves to be on the reading list of all courses that deal with urban development. It also deserves to be read by all professionals engaged in urban redevelopment, including those involved in discussing Dharavi's redevelopment.

#### **The Intercultural City. Planning for Diversity Advantage**

*Phil Wood and Charles Landry, 2007, 384 pages, ISBN 978-1-84407-436-5. Published by and available from Earthscan Publications, 8–12 Camden High Street, London NW1 0JH, UK; e-mail earthinfo@earthscan.co.uk; website: www.earthscan.co.uk; also available in bookshops; price £24.95. In the USA, Earthscan, 22883 Quicksilver Drive, Sterling, VA 20166–2012, USA.*

Humans are social beings who need interaction for survival but today, our societies are inventing some threats that could reduce social interaction. A risk-averse culture is creating conditions around life in public domains and cities that promote a "no culture", which determines how urban space

looks, feels, works and how we behave in it. As a consequence, many choose to isolate themselves in gated estates or ghettos. Equally, increasing numbers of social relationships are migrating to virtual worlds, avoiding face to face interactions.

This book advocates for more direct communication in cities. As the authors claim, only when we realize that we still live side by side will we foster empathy by learning more of each other and reducing the distrust about social and cultural difference. But communication across cultures does not come naturally. The large majority of people prefer to live in a comfort area of predictability, without taking the risk (real or imagined) of intercultural interaction.

The book discusses these fears and analyzes some ways of solving them. Although the greater the cultural difference the more chance for misinterpretation and conflict, our current globalizing cities are increasingly making us live together in closer proximity. Thus, policy challenges should rest on how to proactively manage the potential (or actual) conflicts, by acknowledging the types of problems that proximity creates, such as fear or pre-judging people, and then to deal with them in a direct way that does not put down the argument in favour of interaction.

Two conflictive antipodes lie in the intercultural debate in today's cities. The first is fundamentalism, not only in its religious manifestations but also in economic terms (i.e. neoliberalism and its pervasive market-based rules of engagement). The second is secularism, not in normative, westernized approaches to modern rationality, but understood as the right of societies to be ruled by logical thought and evidence instead of faith-based principles. A well-understood secularism is core to encouraging multicultural urban societies successfully, because secularism acts through:

- providing settings for a continually renewing dialogue across differences, cultures and conflicts;
- allowing strongly held beliefs or faiths expression within this core agreement; and
- acknowledging the "naturalness" of conflict and establishing means and mediation devices to deal with difference.

The book also transforms the usually taken-for-granted approach to cultural "diversity as a deficit" into a more optimistic conceptualization of "diversity as an advantage", an opportunity to build more cohesive societies.

Chapter 1 establishes basic terminology, also conceptualizing hierarchies and sociological categorizations. Chapter 2 provides historical and current evidence in favour of cultural diversity as being beneficial to urban life and socioeconomic development. Chapter 3 explores forms of exclusion and sociospatial segregation in several historical cities, while Chapter 4 revisits history exactly in the

opposite way, by exploring the evidence of successful cities as intercultural milieus, from ancient to modern metropolises. Chapter 5 addresses the many forms of sociocultural interaction in the post-modern society and how they are reproduced in its institutions. Chapter 6 presents the concept of "hybridity" as key driver for cultural and economic innovation. Chapters 7 to 9 analyze the city as a proactive milieu for a new intercultural kind of citizenship, also providing ways to measure it. Finally, Chapter 10 provides conclusions and recommends the recognition of a new kind of ecology and a new kind of civics in our increasingly intercultural cities.

### **Global Report on Human Settlements 2007: Enhancing Urban Safety and Security**

*United Nations Human Settlements Programme (UN-Habitat), August 2007, 448 pages, ISBN 978-1-84407-479-2. Published by and available from Earthscan Publications, 8–12 Camden High Street, London NW1 0JH, UK; e-mail earthinfo@earthscan.co.uk; website: www.earthscan.co.uk; also available in bookshops; price £29.95 (from the Earthscan website). In the USA, Earthscan, 22883 Quicksilver Drive, Sterling, VA 20166–2012, USA.*

This report addresses three major threats to human security in cities, namely urban crime, insecurity of land and house tenure, and natural and human-made disasters. It pays particular attention to the underlying causes and the effects of these threats in the world, also analyzing several strategies and policies developed in response to these threats in different countries. The report adopts a human security perspective that places concern on the safety and security of people rather than states, and highlights concerns that can be addressed through urban policy, planning design and governance.

After the introduction, Part II addresses a broad array of cases of crime and violence in the world, which from 1980 to 2000 increased by 30 per cent. The report also shows how the impact of terrorist attacks on cities, although they are much less frequent in relation to other forms of violence, have worsened recently, creating generalized fears, the destruction of business, growth of the private security sector and of gated communities, and the diversion of public funds from social development towards public and private security.

Part III deals with insecurity in land tenure and forced evictions. Two million people are forcibly evicted every year in the world, while the most vulnerable to this threat are the one billion living in slums. Evictions are often linked to bulldozing of slums and informal enterprises in low- and middle-income countries, gentrification, infrastructural development and beautification projects. Forced evictions are also more prevalent in areas with the worst environmental

conditions. Furthermore, the most vulnerable people are women, children and elders. Generally, evictions tend to increase, rather than ameliorate, the problems they are supposed to solve.

Part IV addresses disasters. Between 1974 and 2003, two million people in the world died, 182 million became homeless and 5.1 billion were directly or indirectly affected by natural disasters, while the reported economic damage in the world was US\$ 1.38 trillion. Small-scale hazards are also considerable. For instance, 1.2 million die every year due to traffic accidents. Among the causes of disasters are rapid and unplanned urbanization, an overconcentration of economic wealth in cities, human-made environmental modifications, the expansion of slums, and ineffective urban regulations. There has also been a growth in the number and intensity of extreme-weather event disasters, to which climate change is likely to have contributed.

Yet the most relevant factor for vulnerability to these threats is poverty. The poor are often located in the environmentally worst territories and have limited access to assets or to services that might reduce their vulnerability, for instance through insurance. Therefore, the report stresses the need for policy responses that place people, poverty reduction and community participation at the centre. Part V analyzes several policy actions from different countries aimed at tackling these threats. It encompasses a broad spectrum of crime reduction policies from the most classical responses (based on legal and police action) to the most innovative (including community participation and an increased role for urban planning). Also, the chapter documents a number of recent policies aimed at reducing tenure insecurity, including legislation against forced evictions, policies on upgrading and regularization, titling and legalization. In terms of disasters, the report observes approaches to more effective land-use planning, improved risk mapping and institutional reforms among others. Finally, Part VI presents a summary of all the cases studied, while Part VII provides a statistical annex that compares indices of threats to security across the world.

## V. CLIMATE CHANGE

### **Climate Change and Urban Children: Implications for Adaptation in Low- and Middle-income Countries**

*Sheridan Bartlett, 2008, ISBN 978-1-84369-705-3. IIED Working Paper, IIED, London, 74 pages. Available in print from [www.earthprint.com](http://www.earthprint.com); price: US\$ 20; the complete text can also be downloaded from [www.iied.org/pubs/pdfs/10556IIED.pdf](http://www.iied.org/pubs/pdfs/10556IIED.pdf). Note that the paper by Sheridan Bartlett in this issue of *Environment and Urbanization* is a condensed version of this working paper.*

This paper discusses the impacts on children of different ages of the increasing risk of storms, flooding, landslides, heat waves, drought and water supply constraints that climate change is likely to bring to most urban centres in Africa, Asia and Latin America. It also explores the implications for adaptation, focusing on preparedness as well as responses to extreme events and changes in weather patterns. As is the case with many poor groups, if adaptations to climate change fail to take account of the disproportionate risks to children (who make up between a third and a half of the population in the most affected areas), then they will be less than adequate in responding to the challenges.

Section I discusses why a concern for children, and specifically urban children, is important. Children, especially young children, are in a stage of rapid development and are less well equipped on many fronts to deal with deprivation and stress. Their more rapid metabolisms, immature organs and nervous systems, developing cognition, limited experience and behavioural characteristics are all at issue here. In addition, their exposure to various risks is more likely to have long-term repercussions than it is with adults. Almost all the disproportionate implications for children are intensified by poverty and the difficult choices low-income households make as they adapt to more challenging conditions. Events that might have little or no effect on children in high-income countries and communities can have critical implications for children in poverty.

Urban children are generally better off than their rural counterparts, but this is not true for the hundreds of millions living in urban poverty. Without adequate planning and good governance, poor urban areas can be among the world's most life-threatening environments. In some informal settlements, a quarter of all children still die before the age of five. Nor does the "urban advantage" come into play in terms of education and life opportunities for most of those in poverty. In many urban areas, the risks children face are likely to be intensified by climate change. Most of the people and enterprises at most serious risk from extreme weather events and rising sea levels are located in urban slums in low- and middle-income countries, where there is a combination of high exposure to hazards and inadequate protective infrastructure and services.

Section II discusses risk factors and protective factors for children. Although children are disproportionately at risk on many fronts, it is a mistake to think of them only as victims in the face of climate change. With adequate support and protection, children can also be extraordinarily resilient in the face of stresses and shocks of various kinds. There is, moreover, ample documentation of the benefits of having children and young people active, informed and involved in responding to the challenges in their

lives, not only for their own learning and development, but for the energy, resourcefulness and knowledge that they can bring to local issues.

Section III reviews how climate change is likely to impact children with regard to health and survival, learning and competence, and coping with adversity. There is not enough hard knowledge about the implications of climate change for children to present a comprehensive picture. Even where more general impacts are projected, figures are seldom disaggregated by age. But it is possible to extrapolate from existing knowledge in related areas: work on environmental health in urban areas; disaster responses; household coping strategies; the effects on children of urban poverty; children's resilience and the beneficial effects of their participation in various efforts – all contribute to a picture of the implications of climate change-related disasters, as well as to more gradual changes.

Section IV discusses the implications for adaptation for children with regard to reducing risks and preparedness for extreme weather; also for how to meet children's needs and priorities, responding to immediate losses following floods and storms, and adapting to losses and rebuilding. Displacement and life in emergency or transitional housing have been noted in many contexts to lead to an erosion of the social controls that normally regulate behaviour within households and communities. Overcrowding, chaotic conditions, lack of privacy and the collapse of regular routines can contribute to anger, frustration and violence. Children's capacity to cope well in these difficult situations has been related to their own active engagement, the opportunities for problem solving and for interaction with peers, and the presence of at least one consistently supportive adult in their lives. The paper outlines what needs to be done with regard to ensuring children's optimal health and nutrition, strengthening families' capacity to cope, maintaining and restoring children's routines, networks and activities, and respecting children's capacities and supporting their active involvement.

## VI. POVERTY REDUCTION

### **Urban Poor Funds; development by the people for the people**

*Diana Mitlin, 2008. Poverty Reduction in Urban Areas Working Paper, IIED, London. Available in print from [www.earthprint.com](http://www.earthprint.com); price: US\$ 20; the complete text can also be downloaded from <http://www.iied.org/pubs/display.php?o=10559IIED>*

This paper describes a new kind of finance agency, Urban Poor Funds, that are now in operation in 10 nations and that serve federations of savings groups formed by slum or shack dwellers or homeless people. These Urban Poor Funds support the members of these federations to obtain better quality shelter with basic

services by providing finance systems that serve their needs (including supporting their savings). In doing so, they also help to change low-income households' relations with government agencies and the law, as these households obtain housing solutions that are legal and that can be served by publicly provided infrastructure and services. This is achieved either through a move to new sites or through upgrading and legalizing their existing homes.

The paper explains how Urban Poor Funds, as established by urban poor federations that are affiliates of Slum/Shack Dwellers International, are a pivotal mechanism for securing pro-poor change. Funds offer the possibility for organized collectives of low-income citizens to renegotiate their relations with the state and the market. No longer are finances only local and internal to the savings schemes that are the base organizations within the federations; rather, they are general (able to be allocated across the network) and public. Once established, the accumulation of funds catalyzes new possibilities for urban development. Through experiential learning from fund management, savings scheme leaders develop an understanding of these possibilities and consider in a collective forum how resources can be managed, in order to address the multiple needs of savings scheme members. The Urban Poor Funds can also manage external funding, as local governments, national governments or international agencies choose to support the work of the federations.

Thus, Urban Poor Funds are unusual for a number of reasons:

- They support those with incomes too low or too uncertain to get housing loans, including those whose livelihoods are derived from the informal economy and those living in informal (sometimes illegal) homes in illegal settlements.
- They are managed by boards, with members drawn from the grassroots savings groups and their federations, and from local professionals working in support NGOs.
- By supporting and working with grassroots savings groups, they provide finance to groups, not individuals. This means that they can fund investments that serve these groups – for instance, roads, water supplies and drains for groups of houses or whole neighbourhoods; they also support savings groups to purchase and service new land sites.
- They support precedents; in supporting the initiatives of many savings groups, when these work well, they become not only examples from which other savings groups learn but are also “precedent setting”, as they demonstrate to local governments and other potential supporters solutions that work for the urban poor. They often serve as the means to negotiate changes in official standards and can lead to changes in regulations.

- They support the federations' work with the state while avoiding cooption.
- They help increase the scale of work by building the capacity and influence of urban poor groups to negotiate with, and work with, the state.
- They provide external funders with institutions that can manage their funding and be accountable to these funders, as well as to the federation.