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URBAN PLACES AND PEOPLE IN COMPARATIVE PERSPECTIVE

We used an *evolutionary* approach or framework in the previous chapter to describe urbanization in Western societies. It was popular among 19th century researchers who tried to make sense of the world in which they were living by reminding themselves of the history their ancestors had made. Obviously, we still find it useful today.

The observations and records that are used in evolutionary arguments let scholars make some sweeping generalizations about cities in general. In no way, however, do they capture all the variations among those cities or the fact that some cities did better and some did worse. This approach also allows us to compare cities on the basis of an important variable—in this case, how industrialized a city or society had become—and enables us to make some broad statements about how people lived in cities during different periods of history. Scholars quickly seized on a question that had bedeviled partisans and critics of cities from the time of the ancient Greeks. That is, how could so many different kinds of people possibly find a congenial and effective way to live with one another in such densely compacted places?

An “evolutionary” way of tracing and making sense of history helps to reveal some important features of cities and urban life. But it probably

overlooks many others that would have helped us understand better the kinds of problems and opportunities urban people and places have today. This is one of the main reasons why 19th and 20th century scholars studied cities in parts of the world that weren’t like the places they knew in Europe. This *comparative* approach to studying cities and urban life is invaluable. It compels observers to confront their own deeply rooted ideas about how the world works. They see other kinds of people looking at the world differently and making the world work for them in ways that are both different and reminiscent of the ones they know best.

The people and places discussed in “comparative” studies are not identical, not to each other and certainly not to our own. They may have more in common than we imagine, of course. But that’s no guarantee that their histories will mimic those of countries like Australia, Canada and the United States in North America, and much of Europe, which have the kind of cities and metropolitan areas we would recognize best. The same could be said of their people, too, even if we never had a chance to visit them, speak their language, or learn their history.

Their cities’ large buildings, commercial areas, and many public and private institutions

are like those we know in U.S. cities. Their residents, like our own, might like to garden, but few of them engage in agriculture or have anything to do with the production of food. They possess strong manufacturing industries that export finished goods but today would be considered “postindustrial” societies. That is because they have a rapidly growing service sector specializing in finance, technology, health, education, and research. These countries are rich as measured by the per capita income of their citizens. And, finally, their populations are rapidly aging and probably would be shrinking if they were not receiving large numbers of immigrants from other parts of the world.

Countries in Central and South America, Africa, and parts of Asia have cities that look different from the ones we know best (Light, 1983, p. 123), or at least they did until recently. They have large populations, to be sure. Indeed, their city populations are often much larger than those of cities in countries like the United States. Until recently, however, they didn’t have much in the way of metropolitan areas and suburbs or anything like the expanse of commercial and public institutions that are so common in the cities of more economically developed countries. There were, again until recently, just a few really big cities and many small towns or villages that were poorly connected by way of trade, lacked an extensive system of roads, and before the advent of wireless phone service had few effective ways to communicate and travel between them on a routine basis.

There are good reasons, then, why city building turned out differently in these different kinds of countries. *Until recently, less economically developed countries had little in the way of independent manufacturing that exported finished goods. Most of their people lived in areas that were substantially agricultural. The service sector in these countries was small. These countries tended to be poor. Their urban populations were growing both by natural increases and migration, but the migrants are coming from rural areas in their own country.* They didn’t get as many foreign immigrants. They couldn’t feed,

house, and employ their own populations much less people from other countries.

There have been recent improvements in the living standards of people in less developed societies, especially for city residents in comparison to people from rural areas. But the difference between their situation and that of people in more developed countries is only decreasing slowly, as measured by the percentage of gross world products each country’s people consumes (Light, 1983, p. 123). Part of the reason for the continuing disparity, as we just hinted, is that the larger cities in less developed countries can have more than two and three times as many people living in them as cities in the more developed regions. Furthermore, the number of people residing in shantytowns, which are found almost exclusively in less developed regions and already hold approximately one quarter of the world’s urban population, at this point is doubling every decade (Palen, 2008, p. 294).

In this chapter, we will delve more deeply into the way that cities in Latin America, Africa, and Asia have changed in the last half-century. We will explore in a very general way how their respective patterns of urbanization are alike and different. We also will compare these patterns to what has happened in cities in more developed parts of the world.

CITIES IN NON-WESTERN AND LESS DEVELOPED COUNTRIES DURING THE ERA OF URBAN “PRIMACY”

The world’s population more than doubled between 1800 and 1900 and more than tripled between 1900 and 2000. Its urban population probably tripled between 1800 and 1900 and grew three times faster than the overall population between 1900 and 2000 (Light, 1983, p. 128). *Most of the increase in the world’s urban population in the 20th century can be accounted for by the staggering growth of cities in less economically developed countries.* Looking at these statistics in a slightly different way, it appears that the

urban growth rate in less developed countries in the 20th century may well have exceeded the urban growth rate in more developed countries during the height of their urban expansion in the 19th century.

Some less developed countries like those in Latin America are predominantly urban. Indeed, Latin America is the most urbanized continent on the planet. Some countries like those in East Asia and North Africa have populations that are fairly evenly split between their urban and rural areas at this point. The rest are predominantly rural despite large increases in their urban populations in the 20th century. Obviously, this pattern of urbanization is entirely different from the one that has been followed in more developed countries.

The reasons for the difference aren't difficult to understand. *Western societies did a better job of employing and housing their populations and exporting people they didn't need at home to become colonists in faraway lands.* Western death rates declined fairly early because people had more access to clean water, better waste removal systems, and better food. Decreases in birthrates followed suit. Better food and manufacturing could feed and employ part but not all of the larger and increasingly superfluous rural population as cities began to grow rapidly between the late 18th and early 20th centuries. Prior to that, countries that would eventually qualify as being more developed had managed their populations by exporting people to colonial settlements, which turned out, unsurprisingly, to be in less developed regions of the world (Hawley, 1971, pp. 281–283).

Death rates in less developed countries have declined, but birthrates haven't. The fact is that many less developed countries have actually increased their agricultural and manufacturing output at rates as high as or higher than those seen in the West in the 19th century. However, the failure to decrease their birthrates has led to a population imbalance and left these countries with too many people to feed and employ. Inasmuch as these countries were the object of colonization but never built their own foreign outposts and empires, they

couldn't get rid of their excess population that way. The result has been that the populations of their cities have become extremely large (Light, 1983, pp. 129–130).

Less developed countries are often said to be "overurbanized" because their cities can't adequately house and employ their rapidly growing populations. To make matters worse, urban populations fed by rural migration also tend to be disproportionately young. Nearly a half-century ago, the youthful migrants were more likely to be female in Latin America and male in Africa and Asia (Hawley, 1971, p. 295). In either case, however, there are still more than enough young men and women around to make many children. This problem was compounded by the fact that the largest city in these countries back then was sometimes the *only* large city in these countries and was many times bigger than other urban places. These countries did not yet have anything like a system of smaller and medium-sized cities dispersed across their territories. Thus, there were usually only one or two main cities to which these people could move.

The original "primate" cities were clustered along seacoasts and were the administrative centers for colonial powers and such export-oriented trade that the colonial overseers could muster. The trade in question, not unlike that in the original American colonies, was one-way. It was designed to take natural resources, raw agricultural products like tobacco or precious metals, to the colonial power overseas. It wasn't designed to allow the colonized people to develop their own commercial and manufacturing capacity.

Primate cities contained most of the country's urban population and dominated an interior region that remained sparsely populated and relatively underdeveloped (Light, 1983, p.129). The population of a primate city may have been larger than the combined populations of the next two or three cities in the country or region. A second class of cities in less developed countries was not on the seacoasts. These indigenous urban settlements served as regional administrative centers, market towns, and concentrations of agriculturalists.

Countries with primate cities and less developed economies tended to be smaller in addition to being poorer. The native populations of these societies were decimated by war, disease, and slave taking. Inside these cities, segregation was commonplace, a pattern somewhat more prevalent in the southern than in the northern parts of Africa. The European model of city building in Latin America had a city center with major government buildings and a church, a market area, and housing for higher-status Europeans. A bit farther out were more modest dwellings for clerks, merchants, and artisans. The city's poor occupied areas farther out yet. The local elite were ceded tracts of land on the outskirts of cities.

These cities didn't begin to grow much less prosper until after colonial powers left and local people were able to trade more directly with Europe and take in just enough European immigrants between 1860 and 1930 to facilitate trade with their former colonial overseers. These immigrants ended up controlling much of the commercial life of these cities. Cities of this sort didn't develop an independent manufacturing base or a class of consumers until the latter half of the 20th century when U.S. manufacturers and manufacturers from other developed countries moved their plants into countries with cheaper labor. Even with that, however, automation limited the number of manufacturing jobs available to native peoples.

URBAN AREAS IN DEVELOPING COUNTRIES IN THE POST-PRIMACY ERA

Much about development in parts of Asia, Latin America, and Africa has changed in the last few decades. Let's begin with differences in their respective populations. United Nations estimates have the number of megacities with 10 million or more residents almost doubling to 34 by 2015. Of these, only six will be in more developed countries (Palen, 2008, p. 295). The rate of urban population growth in less developed regions of the

world shows no sign of letting up. The effect on urban areas has been quite remarkable, as we will see below.

CITIES IN CONTEMPORARY LATIN AMERICA

Cities in Latin America and the Caribbean are located in the most urbanized part of the developing world. They also are the engines driving the dramatic economic growth in the region's gross domestic product (GDP). As reported by the McKinsey Global Institute in 2011,

The region's 198 large cities—defined as having populations of 200,000 or more—together contribute over 60 percent of GDP today. The ten largest cities alone generate half of that output. Such a concentration of urban economic activity among the largest cities is comparable with the picture in the United States and Western Europe today but is much more concentrated than in any other emerging region. China's top ten cities, for instance, contribute around 20 percent of the nation's GDP.¹

What happens in these cities will have a big impact on economic growth throughout the region. Unfortunately, their populations have grown faster than their local and regional economies could absorb all the new workers who moved there. These cities have used more resources than could reasonably be replenished. They have been unable to generate enough tax dollars to pay local governments to make needed infrastructural improvements. And, finally, they have more social problems than either officials or local people can manage effectively much less eradicate.

As the Inter-American Development Bank argued in 2010,

New city dwellers have tended to have little or no education or capital. Moreover, guerillas and armed conflicts in rural areas in Peru in the 1980s, in Guatemala, El Salvador, and Nicaragua for several decades, and more recently in Colombia have speeded up the migration to the large cities

among the impoverished inhabitants of rural areas. In this way, the migration process has led to the urbanization of poverty.²

The *uneven development* evidenced in Latin American cities has been marked by gross disparities in wealth and opportunities available to the vast majority of newer urban settlers. In Latin America, many of these persons built brand-new shantytowns or expanded ones that had already been established on the outer edges of cities. These are places that had virtually no urban amenities and often became centers for organized gangs whose members controlled much of what happened there. Drug gangs were cleared from one such complex outside Rio de Janeiro in anticipation of the 2014 World Cup and 2016 Olympic Games being played in that city. Welcomed as their removal was, no one was certain how long or how well the “pacification program” would work (Domit, & Barrionuevo, 2010).

The police and army may have been able to clear shantytowns of their more dangerous residents. But they didn’t count on the remaining residents putting up much resistance when officials declared that some of the shantytowns would have to be cleared for the 2016 Olympics. The people who still lived there didn’t want to leave. As reported in the March 5, 2012, edition of *The New York Times* (Romero, 2012), the 4,000 people in one favela marked for demolition refused “to go quietly” and took their fight to the courts and the street.

Crime and personal insecurity remain big problems in virtually all Latin American cities. In fact, Bryan Roberts (2011, p. 421) has recently observed that gangs, drug trafficking, and the kind of crimes associated with them are undermining other sources of social cohesion that otherwise would be making life in these cities better. Quoting again from the McKinsey Global Institute report, “the average cost of insuring a car against robbery is 33 percent higher than it is in New York.” Rio de Janeiro has “33 homicides per 100,000 people each year, compared with four in New York City in 2009.” Drug violence has grown dramatically in recent years.

“Monterrey’s kidnapping rate of 15.5 per 100,000 is also significantly above average,” and is another indication of all the “drug-related crime in the region.”³

These levels of incivility and disorder are quite high, but probably match those witnessed in 19th century American cities, which also were known for their intemperance and violence. For all the problems that Latin American cities have, however, there are some signs that people in the region are rising to the challenges created by their particular brand of overurbanization. Some of the responses have been positive, others less so. For good or ill, however, they mimic what has been going on in the urban areas of many developed countries for some time.

We have already alluded to the fact that mid-size cities are beginning to become more prominent players in the region’s economy. It has been fueled by more liberal trade policies like the 1994 North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA). In the case of Mexico, this act had the effect of moving economic activity to smaller urban centers closer to the northern border and American markets. One of the results of spreading out or creating more trained workers in other parts of the country has been to increase commercial ties between bigger cities and these smaller cities. This is an important step in the creation of the kind of commercially inspired “system” of larger, medium-sized, and eventually smaller urban places that countries like the United States have long enjoyed.

A related step taken by governments promises to bring more of the region’s workforce out of the “informal” economy and into the “formal” economy. It involves reducing much of the “excessive regulation” that “hobbles entrepreneurship in many cities in Latin America.” Governments are making it easier for business people to own property, acquire credit and licenses, and operate a business even as they increase sanctions on things like tax evasion.⁴ Improved tax collection increases government resources, which in turn will make it possible for public agencies to provide more and better services to their constituents.

What can happen when a government imposes too many regulations on what business people do and how much money they charge for goods and services became apparent in Venezuela. Federal officials in 2012 introduced such severe price controls on products that manufacturers had to sell their goods on the black market (Neuman, 2012). This move into the informal part of the economy led to marked inflation and a reduction of government tax revenues.

When governments loosen their control and collaborate better with the private sector, there are social as well as economic payoffs. As early as the 1960s, for instance, “companies in Medellín took a lead in . . . pooling resources for investment in community services” by investing in local parks, schools, and social centers for their workers.²⁵ These practices have become more commonplace across Colombia since then.

The very idea of “corporate responsibility” so common in the United States but only now taking root in some Latin American countries deserves further comment. It is part of the colonial legacy that countries were not encouraged or even allowed to develop their own independent class of entrepreneurs and business people. In Western societies, these men and women assumed broader responsibilities in the community than just providing jobs and decent goods and services at a fair price. They were civic leaders and patrons of all sorts of community-minded and political endeavors. International companies in the United States that work in Latin America today are “exporting” the idea and practice of “corporate responsibility” along with goods and services they want local people to buy. Local business people are learning new civic roles along with making more money.

The results of these changes are predictably better early on for people at the middle and upper ends of the economic spectrum than they are for people subsisting at the margins of society. Better-off people see parts of central cities and waterfront areas revitalized with new housing and entertainment districts, can find malls stocked with goods, and even have gated residential areas to live in (Angotti,

2013, pp. 134–135). Changes to civic roles and routines will come more slowly.

Poorer men and women, as we have already stated, often live in haphazardly constructed and badly maintained housing in neighborhoods with few services and legal protections. The only difference between their situation and that of American minorities living in inner-city slums is that these Latin American settlements are on the edges of urban areas rather than in the middle of the city (Auyero, 2011). Yet that situation has changed dramatically.

The informal economy, which used to provide subsistence-level but otherwise legitimate jobs for the urban poor, doesn’t work as well as it once did, either. The gradual introduction of more people to the formal economy certainly helped stabilize and modernize the local economy. But it came with a serious cost: the rise of an illicit drug trade. Together they have diminished the importance of “petty commerce” and the “small-craft workshops” that once catered to the low-income populations living in these areas (Roberts, 2011, p. 420). It will take time for people to adjust to these new economic realities.

In the meantime, the basis for social cohesion in these areas or at least the way it is being expressed these days also has changed. Informal neighboring and efforts to protect these areas from government agencies that wanted to knock down their shanties certainly still take place. But local residents today aren’t nearly as resistant to efforts by officials to clear out drug gangs. Furthermore, their grassroots activism has blossomed and moved into the formal political arena where they hope to have their areas certified as legal and serviced by public agencies. The poor and marginalized urban people in Latin America today are fighting to be included in the city rather than resisting efforts to push them out.

The point, as we have previously stated, is that there are promising signs that people in the region are taking steps to address the problems that have come with the kind of cities and economic conditions they inherited. Many of their responses bear a striking resemblance to the way in which people in more Western societies have

organized and insulated themselves from the challenges they face. People living in Latin American cities aren't acting exactly as their counterparts in North American cities do, but they are working at it.

URBAN AREAS IN AFRICA AND THE MIDDLE EAST

Africa is in the throes of a profound demographic transformation. As late as the 1990s, "two-thirds of all Africans lived in rural areas" (UN Human Settlements Programme [UN], 2008, p. 4). Within 50 years, half or close to half of the continent's 1.2 billion people will be living in cities, many of them really large. No place, not Europe during its industrialization or in the most quickly urbanizing parts of Latin America or Asia today, would have seen this large or rapid a transition in its rural population into an urban population.

Africa for the moment, in any case, is still the least urbanized continent, with less than 40% of its people living in cities. It may still be by the time this transition plays out. In the meantime, African cities are becoming larger faster than cities in other less developed parts of the world. This growth is most apparent in the continent's largest cities along the coast or on major rivers just off the coast, in places like Cairo, Kinshasa, and Lagos. Although they are growing less quickly today, the consequences of their urban "primacy" are readily apparent and not likely to diminish any time soon.

What happened in Cairo after the 2011 overthrow of Hosni Mubarak's regime shows how people have had to improvise, not just with "do-it-yourself infrastructure" on a grand scale but also in their affairs with each other. As Michael Kimmelman (2013) reported in *The New York Times*, Egyptians "are figuring out anew how they relate to one another and to the city they have always occupied without quite owning—figuring out how to create that city for themselves, politically and socially, as well as with bricks and mortar." A kind of gentrification not sponsored by government is taking place in some

parts of the city as people with money occupy brand-new skyscrapers that replace rundown buildings that had housed poorer people. In other parts of Cairo, grassroots groups work to make neighborhoods more habitable for their poorer residents, sometimes with the help of the Muslim Brotherhood and sometimes without it. "Cairo is in a state of becoming," observed one resident. "We just don't know what it's becoming yet."

For many Egyptians and other African city dwellers the answer to this problem isn't going to be found in older cities but away from the coastline and spread among a number of "intermediate" cities with fewer than 500,000 people (UN, 2008). As we already know, a similar change has taken place in Latin America and was an important step in the development of an "urban system" in North America and Europe. In the case of Africa, the reconfiguration of urbanization as a "regional" phenomenon will be the dominant theme in the continent's development for the foreseeable future.

Much of this development is uncoordinated and unsanctioned by any government body. Such is the case in Tripoli City, Libya. There, population growth has spread beyond the traditional city into surrounding agricultural areas so quickly that different national and regional government offices have been unable to coordinate the reallocation of land. As a result, urban sprawl has been driven by property transactions taking place outside of the formal government system much as it has in Egypt.

Though smaller cities in Africa are growing more rapidly today, most major African cities, as we noted, retain the character of primate cities. This is especially the case in sub-Saharan Africa. As in Latin America and the better part of Asia, their dominance extends over most parts of the country's life. They are population and investment centers, the leading trade and manufacturing hubs, and usually are seats of governmental power as well. The contrast between these places and the relatively undeveloped rural areas surrounding them is striking. Recently, however, cities in South Africa have been doing a better job of developing some of these farther out areas as "suburbs" or at least are incorporating them

into the larger urban service delivery system better than they did in the past. This is part of the regional pattern of urban growth to which we have referred.

That said, urbanization has proceeded differently in different parts of the continent. North African countries, according to the United Nations, “have made great strides in improving their cities and reducing the population living under slum conditions through a mix of upgrading and resettlement programmes” (UN, 2008, p. 9). Public–private partnerships between government agencies and businesses have been instrumental in effecting some of these changes as they have been in more developed countries for a long time. That is not all.

Significant efforts have also been made to encourage the participation of civil society and the activities of non-governmental organizations. Community development associations at the neighbourhood level are emerging and becoming significant partners in developing and implementing community-based initiatives, often with the support of national and local NGOs. (UN, 2008, p. 10)

Cities in west, central, and east Africa, like the countries of which they are part, have not fared as well. The “mostly unplanned and haphazard . . . settlements and mega-slums” characteristic of the region “have become centers of urban squalor, aggravated poverty and human misery.” According to the United Nations, these “urban agglomerations” are also “becoming social hotbeds and breeding grounds for unrest and political risk.” People do not have routine access to clean water and sufficient food. They do not make enough money to live decent and secure lives much less acquire property. Pollution is endemic. Resources to mount effective building and reform initiatives are lacking.

Cities like Cape Town and Johannesburg in the southern part of Africa have made strides in addressing some of the most obvious and troubling problems that come with the legacy of urban primacy and racial inequality. Their national government has begun to adapt, albeit

slowly perhaps. The new urban world is one in which opportunities and responsibility for running the economy and fashioning more inclusive regulations and programs that will eventually fall to all their people, not just the descendants of White colonialists.

Evidence of this is apparent in Cape Town where deindustrialization “has not produced a large class of Black low-wage service-sector workers” as many observers predicted. Instead, it has produced a class of professional and managerial jobs that are largely integrated or “deracialized” alongside a large class of unemployed Black laborers. “The consequence,” Owen Crankshaw (2012, p. 836) observes, “is that the city is becoming divided into racially mixed middle-class neighborhoods and Black working-class neighborhoods characterized by high unemployment.”

The political upheaval that South Africa went through has produced a more complex and in some ways more “modern” way of organizing its key cities and problems to deal with. The same thing is happening in Sudan as a result of internal struggles between its “African” and “Arab” populations. Nyla, the second largest city in Sudan, has experienced major growth as its role as the “logistical nerve center” for aid operations during the Darfur crisis expanded dramatically. Rental costs escalated for housing deemed more secure in the center of the city and created pockets of “niche gentrification” that hadn’t existed before. Here, too, “new kinds of markets and services have developed for the incoming population.” This includes tourist restaurants in downtown Nyla that serve foods not typically eaten by Sudanese and land on the outskirts of the city that is now dedicated to growing vegetables consumed “almost exclusively by the aid worker population” (Bartlett, Alix-Garcia, & Saah, 2012, p. 165).

In other African cities, the UN’s “Cities Without ‘Slums’” campaign to encourage the development of cityscapes more congenial to Western investors led to a much different reaction on the part of local people. Efforts to clear “slums” have been “resisted, stalled, or derailed by various

activist-led rights-based initiatives” and even non-resident property owners in the slum clearance area (Bjorkman, 2013, pp. 125–126). Here as in Latin America, people and property owners in “informal settlements” are demanding to have their claims taken seriously by government officials who would rather see them move away.

The shantytowns of Africa are every bit as much a feature in city life as they are in other developing parts of the world. They house up to one third of all urban residents. The sex ratios in these places tend to favor males and younger people. Poverty, understandably, is rampant. *For all their problems, however, the poor and recently migrated often are able to count on ethnic, tribal, and family ties to help them make the transition into city dwellers.* They are buffered, too, by the gradual diffusion of urban ways into more rural areas, which makes their transition easier.

Changes in women’s status are among the biggest adaptations these people have to learn to embrace. More educated women are moving into more modern sectors of the economy, while less educated women make some headway in the informal self-employed part of the economy. Otherwise, they may fall into prostitution and even more marginal economic activities. In general, women’s social and economic status has expanded as the size of the families and their importance as economic units decreased. Both are important features of urban life in more developed regions of the world.

Middle Eastern cities include the cities of northern coastal Africa and the major cities of interior Saudi Arabia, Iraq, and Iran. The former flourished through trade with Europe and the Far East. The coastal cities reached their height of influence during the Middle Ages but didn’t really grow substantially until the 19th century when Europeans saw them as markets for their goods, as sources of raw materials, and for their strategic military importance (Macionis & Parillo, 2010, p. 375). Cities in the interior of predominantly Muslim societies enabled traders to conduct their business over vast stretches of inhospitable terrain. Divided into many quarters,

Islamic enclaves often were hostile to each other because of religious differences between their respective members. The semi-privacy of the narrow streets provided protection from dust storms and unwanted outsiders contrasted with the courtyards into which residential walled enclaves opened and could be used for communal/family gatherings in a relatively more open and “public” nature.

Colonial powers never tried to populate these countries, but they did end up helping to undermine the traditional bazaars in older cities by trading with people outside those central places. They even set up manufacturing sites in more “suburban” or rural areas, thereby undercutting traditional guilds and their prices as well as the communal social supports that had ensured their continuity (Macionis & Parillo, 2010, p. 377). In an interesting twist on this older pattern, large numbers of people working for international nongovernment organizations (INGOs) have moved into a place like Nyala, Darfur, with the idea of helping the local people deal with the myriad problems they face. The effect of their arrival, however, has been to create a kind of “niche gentrification” that has a big impact on property values and relations between established residents and the migrants that have taken up residence on the outskirts of the old city (Bartlett, Alix-Garcia, & Saah, 2012).

URBAN AREAS IN ASIA

Asia, the second least urbanized region of the world with just over 42% of its people living in cities, had more urban dwellers than any other part of the world two centuries ago and still does today. According to the United Nations, however, Asia is not expected to have 50% of its people living in cities until sometime around 2026. In the meantime,

The number of megacities (those with populations of 10 million or more) is increasing, and half (12 out of 21) are now in the Asia-Pacific region. Moreover, mega urban regions, urban corridors

and city-regions reflect the emerging links between city growth and new patterns of economic activity. (UN, 2010, p. 4)

There are notable exceptions to this pattern, to be sure. Japan, Australia, and New Zealand already are predominantly urban. Their cities and metropolitan areas look very much like those in Western Europe and North America. But until recently they have been the exception in Asia.

The location and growth of Asia's cities depends in part on whether they were indigenous cities or founded as colonial outposts. The indigenous cities of Asia were built away from the coasts and for religious and political purposes rather than for trade. As was the case elsewhere, colonial cities were built largely along the coasts and were established to administer colonial affairs and to monitor the exportation of the society's raw materials. Hong Kong, Singapore, Shanghai, Calcutta, and Mumbai were all developed to be this kind of foreign-dominated port city.

Across much of Asia today, one certainly can find people who emigrated from their homeland to join the native residents of large cities. But most of the growth that Asian cities have seen comes from rural communities in the same country. Urban migrants often move back and forth between their rural points of origin and new city residences. What LeGates and Hudulah (2013, p. 5) have said of China in this regard appears just as valid in other Asian countries such as Indonesia.

[People] alternate between living in urban and rural areas based on their life cycle (migrating in search of work when young, returning to their village of origin only for the month-long Chinese New Year celebration, to marry or start a business, or to retire when they are too old to work), seasons, (home for planting and harvesting; working elsewhere—perhaps in a distant city—the rest of the year), or economic conditions (working in the global economy where jobs are plentiful, returning to village agricultural work when they are not).

China and Vietnam are among the few nations that attempt to impose limitations on the number of persons allowed to migrate and how long they

are allowed to stay in cities. As we already observed, however, migration from foreign countries has become easier and more prevalent, “growing from an estimated 28 million in 1960 to more than 53 million in 2005” (UN, 2010, p. 7). The push factors (e.g., natural disasters, war, internal conflicts, and chronic underemployment) and pull factors (e.g., safety and better jobs) are no different here than they are in other parts of the world.

As is the case in Latin America and Africa, “urban agglomerations in Asia are evolving into mega urban regions and corridors.” The population in urban areas has spread here, too, with smaller and medium-sized cities growing faster than nearby big cities. Indeed, “today, 60 percent of Asia's urban population lives in urban areas with populations under one million” (UN, 2010, p. 8).

The movement of people has become so pronounced and permanent a feature of Chinese life that a range of new living arrangements has emerged to accommodate it. There are “suburban private master-planned communities . . . gentrified neighborhoods . . . festival marketplaces, mega malls, and other consumption-oriented spaces” where the “new bourgeoisie” can live and meet (Shen & Wu, 2011, p. 257). Even the Chinese government has gotten into the act, so to speak, by cultivating and promoting arts colonies and festivals as a new commercial tool. “Middle class” tenants buy the public housing units in which they had been living (Zhang, 2010). Migrants living in special enclaves make a place for themselves and earn a decent income in the informal economy even as more marginal workers and migrants turn to spaces like basements and defense shelters for housing. It is no surprise that homeowners' associations have begun to pop up in different Chinese cities and are advocating for their members (Wu, 2012). More surprising, perhaps, local Chinese officials are tolerating their activities (Yip and Jiang, 2013).

Singapore may be governed with something akin to an iron fist, but it is a model of contemporary urban development for the better part of Asia. Surabaya, Indonesia, has carved out a

5,000-acre “city within a city,” for instance, that attempts to bring some of the same infrastructural advantages and ordered life that is well known and admired in Singapore. Cleanliness and orderliness are two of the most important qualities that Indonesian officials and developers have tried to build into this planned enclave (Onishi, 2010).

Cities in countries like China and Singapore show the influence of strong central government intervention in matters related to the incorporation of newcomers. They are coping, though not as well as they might want outsiders to think, with the challenge of making room for large numbers of migrants. India, with its comparatively weaker central government and history of intervening in municipal affairs, has cities that show the effect of unregulated growth.

The older cities of India provide further evidence of the two-track focus of colonial-era cities that was carried out in Africa. As Macionis and Parrillo (2010, pp. 378–381) have stated, “Where cities already existed, like Delhi, the British simply constructed a second settlement next to it—in this case, New Delhi . . . resulting in a striking contrast between the indigenous part and the Anglicized part. One typical distinction would be a congested urban center in the old section and carefully planned, often spacious sections nearby.” On the other hand, “the older area . . . typically has a form much like that of the Islamic cities. . . . Crowded into a central market . . . numerous small retail shops offer a vast range of goods. . . . Surrounding the marketplace is a residential area strictly divided into quarters, dividing Muslims from Hindu and separating Hindus according to their caste position.” Brahmins would be closer to the center and lesser castes distributed farther from it. “The British part of the city . . . is very Western in form, with broad streets, often arranged in a grid pattern. At the center is a trading and manufacturing area, with a railroad leading outward.”

The dramatic growth of India’s urban population may not have obliterated these differences or made them irrelevant. But it certainly has made them less relevant. Contemporary Mumbai,

The New York Times has pointed out (Polgreen, 2010), is “unable to care for its people” who continue “to stream in from the countryside, where life is even worse. Such migration . . . depletes the rural areas of people and creates huge, unworkable cities.” Not unlike cities in England and the United States whose economies were dominated by a single large industry, Mumbai is the textile capital of India because it is close to the cotton-growing areas surrounding the city. It employs nearly half of the city’s factory workers. “Most others are employed in the production of silk, artificial fibers, chemicals, and glassware or in the dyeing, bleaching, and printing industries.”⁶

Illegal districts and “unauthorized colonies” in a city like New Delhi have become so commonplace that nearly one third of the city’s 17 million residents have come to live and work in them. They are not all slums. Indeed, there are many middle-class neighborhoods included among their number and “even a few illegally constructed enclaves [for] the rich” (Yardley, 2013a).

Among the many problems that cities in India face today none is quite so pervasive and annoying to its growing middle and upper classes as the absence of an effective publicly sponsored infrastructure. People may have malls filled with shops featuring designer clothes, access to the most modern communication technologies, golf courses, and fancy cars. But they don’t have a functioning water and sewage system. Government offices are hopelessly mired in red tape. Corruption among officials apparently is endemic. Businesses have to provide their own diesel generators for electricity, store lots of water, and set up company-run shuttle services so their employees can make it to and from work in a reasonable amount of time (Yardley, 2011b).

Middle-class activism in the form of newly emerging “citizens’ groups” has recently taken hold in Mumbai for just these reasons. According to Jonathan Anjaria (2009, p. 391), “civil society organizations” have taken it upon themselves to control the “unruly” street hawkers that try to take over many of the city’s streets and sidewalks.

These groups have brought a degree of orderliness to the city that is consistent with their bourgeois sensibilities. But they also have choked off the political voice and claims of the unregulated sidewalk entrepreneurs whose presence and behavior they find offensive.

The absence of effective government services and public infrastructure was a big part of the thinking behind the construction of a brand-new city, Lavasa, approximately 130 miles southeast of Mumbai. It is eventually supposed to house more than 300,000 and serve as the headquarters for a variety of software and biotech firms and film and animation companies. Such knowledge-based industries are crucial to the development of the “new India.” Most important, perhaps, the entire enterprise has been built and will be governed by a private corporation whose investors expect to earn a profit from all the buildings it fills and partnerships it makes with other companies that want to do business there (Kahn, 2011). It is one of five new cities that the national government has pledged to build in *the next five years* in order to relieve overcrowding in its other urban centers and to promote additional commercial expansion on the west coast of the country (Chandrashekar, Krishne, Sridhara, & Kumar, 2013).

A very different problem confronts would-be city builders and managers in China. Cities there have benefited from massive expenditures in public money for improvements in their roads, electrical services, water supplies, and sewage. But top-down government regulations have limited the kinds of political expression that people in India are beginning to practice with great zeal and stymied the kinds of entrepreneurship that allows India to grow despite its ineffective government.

Chinese citizens have mounted protests against local officials in rural areas from time to time in the past, mostly over the acquisition of property that was going to be given to developers. Urban unrest was uncommon. That changed in June of 2010 with a wave of riot-like episodes that lasted over three weeks, apparently without coordination, in a number of cities across the country. The issues that prompted unrest varied from city to city but

included corruption by government officials, aggressive property acquisition practices benefiting developers, police abuses, and ethnic tensions (Von Schirach, 2011).

Officials were surprised and took strong steps to tamp down the violence. Had they studied 19th century European and American history, they might not have been so surprised. The arrival of many migrants in a relatively short period of time led to tensions between people from different countries or, in this case, different regions of the same country. Even with its population still over 60% rural, China still has more city dwellers than any country in the world. More importantly, the number of urban residents has grown substantially in recent decades. Expressions of popular discontent are not likely to dissipate any time soon.

China’s biggest urban settlements until the 1970s were its manufacturing and industrial centers, all of which had been Western-dominated port cities. Many other towns and urban settlements grew much larger at the end of the 20th century. Their growth occurred after a new policy favoring rapid industrialization and technological modernization led to a massive migration of over 100 million people from rural to urban areas. Much of the migration was directed to the expansion of small towns (i.e., from 2,000 to over 20,000) and increasing the number of cities (i.e., from fewer than 200 to over 600).

In the course of two decades, the share of China’s population that lived in cities had grown from 20% to approximately 43% of the country’s population (Jankowiak, 2010). Today, Chinese officials are trying to relocate industries to outlying areas in order to limit migration from rural areas to cities. Public policy remains committed to distributing would-be urban residents to smaller and medium-sized cities. Nevertheless, Shanghai and Hong Kong, both of which were founded as colonial outposts and manufacturing centers, will remain China’s main commercial hubs for a long time.⁷

The Chinese government has tried to build some order into its own burgeoning cities and limit the number of rural people moving there to

find work. They did this first by controlling the number of people who were granted the equivalent of a visa that would allow them to access public services like free schools for their children, if they elected to move to a city (Mackenzie, 2002). Then, when that proved unworkable, at least in Beijing they introduced their own version of a gated community for rural migrants. The Shoubaozhuang area of Beijing is one of 15 that houses people who moved to the capital in order to find work and a better life. It is a walled and guarded complex that affords a measure of security for its largely poor residents even as it keeps them apart from better-off residents in surrounding neighborhoods (Gao, 2010).

The social walls between recent migrants and more established residents are every bit as large and tough to climb over. According to Wu (2012, p. 547), Chinese migrants from rural areas “do not identify themselves with the places where they live and do not actively participate in community activities.” This is not a coincidence, Wu argues. It is done by “institutional design” and has the effect of keeping these people “economic sojourners” rather than making them into effective city residents.

However novel these strategies may have been, they clearly didn’t reach enough people or make enough difference in the lives of the people they did touch to keep them from acting out. Though no one expected the 2011 riots to topple local governments, Chinese officials were unaccustomed to having their edicts and practices challenged by everyday urban people. As we already have noted, Chinese leaders were experiencing some of the same disquieting effects that rapid urban growth had brought 19th century European and American cities.

Japan, as we observed earlier, has a much different urban story to tell. It had a strong urban tradition and ancient cities. Among other traits distinguishing its development is the fact that the country was never colonized. It had a series of regional capitals that were protected by a class of full-time warriors. These cities developed a relatively wealthy and powerful middle class that eventually supplanted the warrior class in the

latter 1860s. It was big enough and strong enough to resist European and American colonization efforts by that time. Japan also rapidly industrialized and urbanized in the early 20th century (Macionis and Parillo, 2010, p. 384).

Differences in the nature and timing of their urbanization notwithstanding, countries across Asia are relatively well positioned to take advantage of their own growing domestic markets and international trade. Major cities have for decades participated in manufacturing and benefited from export-led trade and foreign financial investment. Their governments have provided money for improvements in transportation and communication technologies.

Not surprisingly perhaps, the economies in these cities are diversifying and pretty well integrated with a vibrant informal economy. As the United Nations has reported (United Nations Human Settlements Programme, 2010, pp. 11–12), “the informal economy includes the full range of ‘non-standard’ wage employment . . . such as sweatshop production, home-workers, contract workers, temporary or part-time work, and unregistered workers.” These people may not be directly tied into better-established businesses, but they “are clearly dependent on the formal sector for the “equipment, work location and sale of the final products they make.”

THE IMPACT OF “PRIMACY” AND “OVERURBANIZATION” IN LESS DEVELOPED COUNTRIES

The effects of colonization on the less developed countries of Asia cannot be overemphasized. It left behind underdeveloped economies based largely on the export of raw materials, which served the indigenous elite well enough but did little to promote wealth generation and consumption by the bulk of the population. Nor did these cities develop the interior of their respective countries. By the time they acquired their independence in the 20th century, they were already well behind Western societies in most important

indicators of modernization. Exceptions to this pattern included Hong Kong, Singapore, and the cities of Japan.

A crucial factor in the recent and rapid urbanization of less developed countries was the improvement in agricultural production, which didn't start until the 1960s. People were free to migrate to cities in many instances as we noted earlier. But until recently, development had been uneven at best. Their primate cities "distorted" investment in the sense that capital went to serve the needs of global firms rather than those of the indigenous population. Even with added income in cities, the standard of living in primate cities had been lower than it is in rural areas (Gottdiener & Hutchison, 2006, p. 283). Other than the AIDS epidemic, however, there's been little to slow the growth of spiraling populations in the cities of less developed countries. Adding further to their misery, fertility rates have remained high, and the portion of the population that is less than 21 years old is probably greater than 50% and may be increasing (Palen, 2008, p. 300).

Although the manufacturing capacity of these countries has grown in recent decades, it hasn't generated enough jobs or provided sufficient taxes to provide many basic services in water, waste removal, utilities, and police and fire protection. Pollution and privation are the central features of life in most of these urban agglomerations. This is especially true in the zones surrounding the central city, areas that are occupied largely by the poorest and most recent migrants to the urban area, just as they were in many Western cities. The gulf between more and less prosperous residents probably has grown in recent years. Money that might otherwise go to development efforts elsewhere in the country is siphoned off by initiatives to provide minimal levels of public services in their primate cities. John Palen (2008, p. 304) points out that "the cities of Mexico City, Bogota, and Santiago continue to grow faster than their national populations even though the governments of Mexico, Colombia, and Chile all seek a more balanced growth."

At the same time, primate cities aren't entirely or even necessarily bad. Most newly developing

countries simply don't have the resources to support the creation of multiple cities. Thirty years ago, it made good economic sense to focus economic development in a few large cities. Given the absence of effective intraregional and interregional transportation, Hawley (1971, p. 299) argued that "large urban agglomerations [were] a necessary means of concentrating labor supply, capital, technical skills, and other resources required for economic transformation and growth."

Countries need not remain underdeveloped. Only in the last quarter century, Korea, Taiwan, Thailand, China, and India have made great strides in becoming more developed. Mexico and Asia have become destinations for manufacturing facilities being moved from more developed countries. There also are signs that their birthrates are stabilizing. The fact that primate cities continue to grow and that most political movements in these countries emerge from these places suggests that the people there are open to change (Palen, 2008, pp. 299–304).

Competing explanations for why less developed countries have stayed that way so far have tradition-bound people resisting modernizing influences often brought from the outside. Representatives of countries in the West were said to maintain their hegemony over the less developed country through political and economic means: first by opposing progress and then limiting the chances for these countries to make any. And yet, the rapid urban development and industrialization of Russia and Japan in the past 125 years suggest that less developed countries can overcome even stiff political and economic limits placed on them by traditional elites and foreign interests (Light, 1983, pp. 153–154).

PHYSICAL AND SOCIAL ORGANIZATION OF CITIES IN LESS DEVELOPED COUNTRIES

These cities have common features that vary little over time or cultural setting. *The early indigenous cities were physically dense and compact.*

Largely pedestrian or walking cities, their residents traded accessibility over roominess, sanitation, and aesthetics.

Socially, the population was “segmented by tribe, caste, lineage, or previous place of residence.” *The city appeared “as a mosaic of residential quarters or enclaves” a “cellular” pattern that didn’t break down until the end of the 19th century.* Like most medieval European cities, there was “an absence of any marked concentration of specialized functions” like a central business district. Residential quarters were arranged in such a way that people with less status occupied buildings farther away from the ruling household or a religious edifice (Hawley, 1971, pp. 317–318).

The enclave was the urban equivalent of a rural village in some ways but not so much in other ways. Reproduced in it, for instance, were customary institutions, ethnic or tribal ties, a local market allowing for bargaining and price setting, religious edifices, village associations, and festive rites, friendship ties, and mutual aid. At the same time, these ties could be exploitative, especially when it came to the subject of recent migrants trying to find work. Furthermore, distorted age and sex compositions, the absence of elders, of family obligations, and normal mating opportunities also deprived the enclave of much of its village counterpart’s social adhesive and moral oversight. In the end, the presence of rivals in nearby quarters helped to counter the reluctance of some people to remain attached to the enclave and its leaders (Hawley, 1971, pp. 319, 321).

Voluntary associations familiar to village dwellers were adapted to meet circumstances that migrants face upon their arrival in a city. Hawley reported that castes in Indian cities had developed “credit facilities, employment services, and educational aids for their members” (Hawley, 1971, pp. 322, 323). The landholding lineage had “adopted many of the fiscal and management procedures employed in a modern agricultural cooperative.” In the *barriadas* and *favelas* of Latin America, transplanted village associations had “equipped themselves to deal with the legal problems of squatting on urban

land and have found means to gain representation in municipal affairs.” There also were signs of newer associations being created, groups that crossed ethnic lines such as political parties and labor unions.

In Central and South America, many voluntary organizations have their origins in church-related activities. So, too, do the charity work, school building, and hospital construction that they often undertake. Their “evolution” into purely secular organizations has come with the gradual improvement of their members’ education and professional status. *It is important to note, however, that many of these organizations draw their members from different social classes, which promotes both consensus building and collaborative engagement across the class spectrum.*

Participation in voluntary organizations varies for different countries. In Asian countries, for example, up to a third of the adult population reportedly belongs to one or two associations. Depending on the country, the kind of organization that predominates is likely to be political, religious, and/or consist of “alumni” from particular schools. “Identity” or ethnic associations are popular as are labor and human rights groups. The motivation for joining organizations in Asia probably reflects the same mix of “affective” and “instrumental” reasons that people in Western societies use when deciding to join groups. Some groups are for fun and serve as purely social outlets for their members. Other organizations are intended to accomplish more practical tasks that are important to their members or their community.

Japanese people do not have many voluntary organizations that work on the national level. But most households are deeply embedded in their local neighborhood association (van Houwelingen, 2012). Family members of different ages find complementary ways to be engaged socially with each other through activities sponsored by the neighborhood group. Old people have their clubs as do children, women, and other adults. They raise funds to beautify their neighborhood, play sports together, do crime patrols and safety checks

together, and work on behalf of different cultural activities. These groups help to reinforce the kind of “bonding social capital” that occurs among people who are tied to a particular place and have a lot in common, like their gender or age. They do not act as substitute families, but they do supplement some of the good feeling and chances to join with other people that might otherwise be done by their family.

As in the West, the family changed to the extent that it didn't remain a unit of production like it had been in rural areas. In Nigeria, for example, extended families promoted entrepreneurship by “apprenticing a young member to an experienced entrepreneur” and “supplying the capital for a family-run firm.” From this, Hawley (1971, pp. 323–324) concluded that “industrialization is founded in part on the family system.” When it ceased to be an economic unit, it still persisted as “a viable mutual aid association.”

“Central to the survival of the poor,” Goode (2010, p. 189) has similarly observed, were the “informal sharing networks for mutual aid that develop between households . . . based on kinship or *fictive* kinship.” In this way, he concluded, one family could “help out the struggling households to which it is linked.” It could even include “sharing their residence for a time.”

Male unemployment and underemployment along with long commutes yielded more flexible “consensual unions” between men and women that were less financially draining than marriage and divorce. Yet, this hadn't eliminated the presence of males in the household. Fathers were available as time allowed, and a woman's male kin could stand in as father surrogates. “Living in poverty encouraged female-headed households” and “women-centered sharing networks made sense.” The act of weaving together incomes from “formal work, the underground economy, and public programs” required a lot of management (Goode, 2010, pp. 190–192) and speaks to the organizational skills of the people involved, especially perhaps the women who were involved.

Many lower-class people working in the “regular” economy had service jobs as messengers, domestic workers, restaurant workers, and

laborers. That's why people living in shantytowns are often deeply enmeshed in the informal economy and engage in a great deal of self-help activity with other family members and even people not necessarily tied by marriage but close to the family. This kind of “self-provisioning” included food and clothing production and home construction and repairs. Involvement in the informal economy by way of selling drugs, cigarettes, and items you'd find in convenience stores and sex gained people access to the illicit or illegal economy as well. Bartering was another way marginal people made ends meet (Gottdiener and Hutchison, 2006, p. 295).

The opportunity structures of low-income people may be limited, but work in the informal economy shows they have the ability to adapt and plan that belies notions of a perpetual culture of poverty among the poor. Drug dealing, street mechanics, home-based food production, acquiring money through children's work in government-funded jobs programs, the use of informal credit pools or organized “layaway payment” schemes, self-built housing, and the use of second-hand markets for clothing didn't make people rich. But it did help them to survive (Goode, 2010, pp. 188–189).

Life in shantytowns can certainly qualify as “disorganized” and “destructive” in many ways and more poor people live there than not. When we look more closely at shantytowns, however, they also reveal some very powerful and effective self-regulating elements involving family work and support and broader ethnic and kinship ties (Hutter, 2007, p. 456). Shantytowns thus emerge “as vibrant communities with strong forms of social organizations. They provide an important transition destination for many rural migrants into cities, serving as the initial site for assimilation and acculturation. They also provide a source of cheap and accessible labor for urban industries.”

Some shantytowns have developed to the point of becoming working-class suburbs of the cities to which they are appended. While most of the residents are not well-to-do, these places have provided a setting with many stable families and

more law-abiding people than they had in the past. Their homegrown leaders are making more credible and effective claims for better water delivery and sewage disposal. Over time, governments have become more accommodating to the people in these residential areas as well (Hutter, 2007, p. 457).

A middle-class way of thinking and associating developed in everything from marriage partners, child rearing, and taking meals with the family to working at salaried jobs. In the West the middle class grew from commerce and industry. In less developed countries, on the other hand, it has been "founded on advanced education and government employment." This means that the middle class in less developed countries has remained more "subservient to the elite which controls the government bureaucracy. A middle class so constituted can hardly be as aggressive or as creative as one based on entrepreneurial achievement," Amos Hawley (1981, p. 326) prophetically observed.

City building showed some capacity to erode ethnic differences over time and alter how institutions like the extended family serve their members. In a general way, they lose some of their importance as people acquire a broader "sense of civic responsibility in both private and public life" through their contacts with other people and ideas (Hawley, 1981, pp. 324-325). The impact these changes might have is limited by the continuing and commanding presence of enclaves and extended family economic activities. But a reconciliation of the two approaches could be possible as well. "It does not follow that the juxtaposition of seemingly incompatible elements" always lead to tension and disorder, Hawley (1981, p. 330) reasoned. "Man has the happy facility of being able to live quite comfortably with inconsistencies in his culture." More generally, the pattern emerging in the expansion of urbanization in less developed countries does not necessarily mean an end, much less an abrupt end, to the continuing importance of ethnic ties and nationalistic sentiments among migrants. This is especially so when the people in question move to a new

country and try to establish themselves in it, as people in Western societies know from the immigrants who moved among them.

"Overall, the group-oriented approach in which the migrant relies on kin and community members for help in getting established in the city is most common among tribal and peasant migrants in the cities of developing countries" (Kemper, 2010). Migrants organize "voluntary associations" to satisfy their needs. Such associations are usually comprised of members of the same ethnic groups or sometimes just individuals from the same rural villages. They assume many of the functions that were performed by kinship groups in the migrants' home villages. In some respects, they operate much like the guilds of pre-industrial cities, giving migrants a sense of belonging, providing financial aid in times of need, and organizing recreational activities. They provide strong support groups that ease the migrant into the urban world.

In societies where there's a great deal of circular migration back and forth or transnational moves, migrants can "maintain a strong connection with their natal community, even when they are living far away." They are part of an "extended community" (Kemper, 2010, p. 283). Many of these communities in Central and South America, for instance, benefit from assistance provided by family members who have migrated to the United States. Remittance payments sent home certainly help individual families. But "hometown associations" have sprung up in many American cities and these organizations provide charity services, money when there has been a disaster of some kind, and even make investments back in their home villages. This is exactly what earlier immigrant populations in the United States did (Stack, 1979).

One thing that appears clear is that over a period of time, membership in organizations generally inspires people to become more politically self-conscious. They mobilize on behalf of both local and national issues concerning them as in the provision of better housing and public services. They also become more involved in union activities as more people acquired manufacturing jobs

(Gottdiener & Hutchison, 2006, p. 296). In this way, they mimicked the ways that “poor White women, African American women, Latino women, and multiracial alliances have moved beyond the family to participate in a variety of collective social movements: seeking better schools . . . preventing the removal of a local firehouse, strengthening the role of activist community organizations . . . and reinforcing tenant management in public housing” (Goode, 2010, p. 195).

While many new urban residents eventually become involved in human rights initiatives and political campaigns, it is not at all clear that they have much direct impact on the kinds of policies that officials pursue or on the quality of services they clamor for. At least in Africa, they would appear far more effective in inspiring people to participate more directly in politics than in the implementation of particular programs. The number and variety of clubs, cooperatives, unions, voluntary associations, political groups, and non-governmental press outlets in Egypt, for example, no doubt provided many avenues for people to express their “voice” on the replacement of their longtime leader. Figuring out what to do with the newly-reconstituted government was an entirely different matter.

CONCLUDING THOUGHTS ON URBANIZATION IN MORE AND LESS DEVELOPED COUNTRIES

Cities in less developed regions of the world, as we already noted, did not have the luxury of changing over a long period of time. They also have not had readily available networks of smaller and medium-sized towns and cities around them with which they had well-established trading arrangements by the time they began to grow dramatically. *People moved from rural areas to a big city without having the opportunity to live in places of intermediate size and complexity or the chance to find employment should things in the biggest city not work out.*

Advances in agriculture had created large and permanent surpluses in food and displaced workers in more developed parts of the world. Less developed regions have plenty of displaced agricultural workers but unpredictable food surpluses. To make matters worse, countries in less developed parts of the world don’t have enough manufacturing jobs ready for all these men and women to take. They also are producing more new babies in both rural and urban settings. Birthrates in less developed countries are not declining as they did in the West.

Acquiring the funds just to meet the current demands on the urban infrastructure in most developing countries has proven all but impossible. Administering such funds in a manner that actually produces useful outcomes for people has also been a singular challenge for city leaders in less developed countries. Probably no more or less corrupt than their 19th century American counterparts, municipal officials haven’t had nearly enough money to make a profitable career out of government service *and* meet all the demands put to them.

People in less developed countries have also made some of the social changes that new and established residents of Western cities made in order to settle in more securely. Other changes they have not made or the changes haven’t taken hold widely enough to catch the attention of social scientists and anthropologists.

Prominent among the omissions so far, it would seem, is much explicit attention on the part of city leaders that they need to do more to address the dramatically different life chances that poorer people and persons burdened with some sort of social stigmata have. The predictable and understandable pushback on this issue, of course, would be that leaders are overwhelmed with just trying to build their city’s infrastructure to the point that people can get basic services. Efforts to draw people from different social classes, religious affiliations, and ethnic or tribal backgrounds together in something approximating an effective union have been even less apparent.

A class of merchants that might become the backbone of a newly emerging middle class inside cities has not been created, so far as we can tell. If one has been growing, it would not seem to be so large and muscular that anyone has noticed. What has been observed, on the other hand, is a growing collection of middle-class people who work in government or as professionals in the service sector of their economy. This situation is comparable to the one seen in the United States. A robust, articulate, but decidedly nonentrepreneurial Black middle class here has been built on the back of professionally trained men and women who have made good careers for themselves working in nonprofit organizations and government.

Importantly, as Amos Hawley noted decades ago, these aren't people who are practiced in the kind of risk-taking or playing in the rough-and-tumble world that business people operate in every day. Nor are they the kind of people who are in a good position to create a host of private organizations through which merchants in the West developed a common view of their world and how they wanted to shape it (Monti, 1999).

Ethnic groups have emerged and they have helped migrants settle into their new surroundings. It is not clear yet, however, how much these ethnic groups have managed to bring together persons from the same background but different social classes into an effective and lasting social union. Differences among people based on their religion and tribal or ethnic background still matter a great deal when it comes to how these people treat each other in the political and larger public arena. On the other hand, other important institutions such as the family and schools have changed in ways that are helping their members adapt to the urban world they've inherited and shape it to meet their needs.

This picture of the urban world, like many others, isn't as full or clear as we might like. Given the speed at which urbanization has taken hold in less developed parts of the world, however, we probably should be surprised and pleased at how quickly people in these cities have adapted. Like

previous migrants who made the tough transition to full-time urban residents in the 19th and 20th centuries, contemporary migrants in developing countries are learning to adapt and doing so under less than optimal conditions.

QUESTIONS FOR STUDY AND DISCUSSION

1. Cities in more and less developed countries emerged under quite different economic and political circumstances. What are some of the more important differences?
2. In what ways have cities and urban areas in less developed countries begun to copy the pattern of development evidenced in Western societies?
3. Do cities and urban areas in the West show some of the signs of overurbanization and "urban primacy" apparent in less developed countries?
4. What kinds of social roles and groups have emerged in the cities of less developed countries to facilitate the adaptation of people there to their new urban surroundings?
5. Are there parallels between the ways urban dwellers in the West and in less developed countries have organized themselves socially?
6. Is there a distinctive "urban way of life" and to the extent that there is, what are its main features?

INTERNET MATERIALS

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NOTES

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- 4 Ibid., pp. 24–25.
- 5 Ibid., p. 36.
- 6 See “India’s Cities Buckle Under the Strain of New Arrivals” in the December 1, 2010, edition of *The New York Times* for further evidence of the problems faced by rural migrants to Indian cities. One of the more intriguing and disturbing features of life in some of India’s regional urban centers like Mumbai is that they have become centers of political corruption in ways oddly reminiscent of what happened in some bigger U.S. cities after the Civil War. The upper-caste people who once ran these cities no longer did. The political empowerment of lower-caste people had a surprising and disturbing effect on the quality of life in these places. It turns out that people still voted on the basis of their caste, and the diminished power of upper-caste elites and professionals who had benefited from government corruption in the past

were replaced by lower-caste crooks and political hacks. Upper-caste families lost more than their political clout, however. They also lost control over their daily lives. Lower-caste politicians and criminals, often one in the same, have run “kidnapping rings” that “targeted mostly affluent, largely upper-caste neighborhoods.” The first families hit were those of business people. Later, as business people bought off politicians and hired more guards, the targets became professionals such as doctors, teachers, and engineers. Kidnapping them declined only when other members of their important professions refused to work unless victims were released (Witsoe, 2010, pp. 270–272).

- 7 Rapid urbanization in China as in most countries has compelled people to change the way they thought about each other and treated each other. In the presence of so many new people they didn’t know personally or even in terms of where they’d come from and their social class, formerly polite interactions with one’s neighbors were replaced by “indifference.” “Neighborhood obligations,” Janowiak (2010, p. 267) has observed, have been discarded in favor of other forms of connectivity” including ties based on school affiliation, “work contacts, association with places of origin, friendship bonds, and close family relationships.” Secret societies, guilds, and “common ethnic and/or religious affiliation” have also become more important. “Taken together, ethnicity, religion, and native place associations serve as essential bases for the formation of social connection or kinship ties” in contemporary China (Jankowiak, 2010, pp. 260–261). Urban “kinship” ties have become more elaborate in Chinese cities. “Individuals who are outside the formal (e.g., bilateral or patrilineal) genealogical systems are frequently transformed from casual friends into close quasi-kin,” Jankowiak (2010, p. 262) argues. Bilateral grandparent ties also have become more important as China’s one-child policy took hold and more parents needed help with child-rearing duties. However, the emerging “bilateral multigenerational family is a fragile institution” (Jankowiak, 2010, pp. 265–266).