

Séverine Deneulin & Roy Maconachie - Gated Communities Lock Cities Into Cycles Of Inequality



Photo: en.wikipedia.org

theconversation.com. November 2014. In recent years, many films have portrayed the landscape of urban marginality and inequality in Latin America. Brazil Central Station and City of God were both popular, but few can rival the Mexican thriller, *La Zona* (the Zone), in depicting the disturbing panorama of inequality in Latin America's megacities and the consequences of socially and economically divided cities.

The film is set within the confines of a gated community in Mexico. High security walls and guards encircle a hundred or so large houses with lush, evergreen gardens. The residents have their own council and make their own rules and regulations.

One night, a group of outsiders infiltrates the fencing through a domestic service entry loop. They break into a number of houses and kill one resident. A skirmish ensues between the residents and the infiltrators, and all the intruders are killed except for one, a young adolescent boy who manages to escape but is trapped within the gated community.

Read more: <http://theconversation.com/gated-communities>

Stefanie Spear - Transitioning To Urban Resilience

If current trends continue, by 2050 70 percent of the world's population will live in cities, according to the [Action4Climate video competition](#) film Rotterdam—The Transition to Urban Resilience. Filmmaker Lieke 't Gilde says it's time to recognize the city as a natural ecosystem in order to meet human needs now and in the future. Gilde says that “nature-based and innovative solutions are essential for a sustainable future for cities all over the planet.”

The film takes place in Rotterdam, the second-largest city in the Netherlands and one of the largest ports in the world. It introduces the URBES project—Urban Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services—which is a partnership that develops ideas, tools and knowledge that are shared and co-created with cities in Europe.

Check out this inspiring film to learn about the sustainability projects that are transitioning Rotterdam to a resilient city.

Read more: <http://ecowatch.com/2014/10/29/transitioning-urban-resilience/>

Ansuya Harjani - World Faces \$650 Billion Housing Problem



Nigde

A staggering 330 million urban households around the world live in substandard housing or are so financially stretched by housing costs they forgo other basic needs like food and health care, according to McKinsey.

Urban dwellers globally fork out \$650 billion more per year on housing than they can afford, or around 1 percent of world gross domestic product (GDP), McKinsey estimated in a new report, highlighting the enormity of the affordability gap.

More than two-thirds of the gap is concentrated in 100 large cities. In several low-income cities such as Lagos and Mumbai, the affordable housing gap can amount to as much as 10 percent of area GDP.

Read more: <http://www.cnbc.com/id/102117275>

Euronews ~ Sustainable Habitat In Colombia: Building Homes With Plastic Bottles



Photo: greendiary.com

Building homes using recycled plastic bottles – that’s the innovative idea of a design school in Colombia specialised in sustainable habitat.

The inspiration came from the ancient “wattle and daub” housebuilding technique: the idea is to stack recycled bottles filled with sand and earth.

The design school offers courses to teach students how to empower communities by using alternative and accessible technologies.

“The idea is to create cyclical behaviour consistent with the environment we live in, to understand how we interact. Whether it’s consumer-waste, linear behaviour, or whether we can understand how we consume and discard and incorporate that into the cycles around us,” says Ana Maria Gutierrez, the director and founder of the design school, Organizmo.

The idea is to recycle building techniques of the past in order to minimise environmental damage.

Read & see: <http://www.euronews.com/building-homes-with-plastic-bottles/>

Journeyman Pictures ~ Lagos Rising: Nigeria’s Capital Is The

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Lagos is the world’s fastest growing megacity, riding on a lucrative oil industry and expanding economy. But while skyscrapers furnish the business elite, millions in the city’s slums wonder if they will benefit.

“Lagos will become the financial hub for the continent of Africa”, says David Frame, the managing director of Eko Atlantic. He is in charge of building an 8km sea wall and dredging the Atlantic ocean, creating a new foundation for a business waterfront. The audacious plans may seem the stuff of fantasy, but a lot is staked on the success of the new development, to be finished in 2019. “The evolution of Eko Atlantic will change the face of Lagos, and open a new gateway to your success in Africa”, booms an advertisement. As forecasters anticipate the expansion with glee, the nearby fishing community of Makoko remains beset by Third World problems. The town’s Chief Francis begs for aid. “The government should reconsider us as human beings and help us for improvements of this community”, he says.

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Jesse Honsa ~ Istanbul's Fading Metabolism



Fikirtepe urban redevelopment.

Image: Bülent Kılıç

As Istanbul undergoes a process of “Urban Transformation,” the plight of dispossessed residents and the bulldozing of historic UNESCO sites are apparently small trivialities. Human rights, historic preservation and even ecological sustainability are strange, unquantifiable concepts compared to the fruits of economic growth. So let us forget these elitist European ideals for a moment, and discuss the economic cost of urban transformation through the lens of an Asian urban concept: Metabolism.

While the Japanese Metabolists’ design work of the 1960’s failed to offer the rapid flexibility it promised, it still serves as an analogy for an adaptable urban form. Istanbul’s historic pattern of differentiated land ownership has been the DNA behind its adaptability, the crucial attribute needed for survival. A shish kebab of various programs, architectural styles and building heights skewered to the street, this dense and pixellated urban form can easily absorb shifts in the economy. But the current process of urban transformation consolidates these cells into monopolies. Like dinosaurs, they are large, slow beasts, unable to evolve under a changing environment.

Read more: <http://www.failedarchitecture.com/istanbuls-fading-metabolism/>