

# Alan Durning - Bring Back Flophouses, Rooming Houses, And Microapartments

*mobile.slate.com*. Dumb urban policies wiped out the best kinds of housing for the poor, young, and single. But they're finally making a comeback in smart cities.

This article is adapted from Alan Durning's new book, *Unlocking Home: Three Keys to Affordable Communities*.

*"[A] good hotel room of 150 square feet—dry space, perhaps with a bath or a room sink, cold and sometimes hot water, enough electric service to run a [light] bulb and a television, central heat, and access to telephones and other services—constitutes a living unit mechanically more luxuriant than those lived in by a third to a half of the population of the earth."*

—Paul Groth in *Living Downtown: The History of Residential Hotels in the United States*.

Most Americans live in houses or apartments that they own or rent. But a century ago, other less expensive choices were just as common: renting space in families' homes, for example, or living in residential hotels, which once ranged from live-in palace hotels for the business elite to bunkhouses for day laborers. Working-class rooming houses, with small private bedrooms and shared bathrooms down the hall, were particularly numerous, forming the foundation of affordable housing in North American cities. Misguided laws and regulations almost wiped out these other kinds of housing, with disastrous consequences, but now there's a chance for them to come back, helping those who are young, single, or on the lower rungs of our increasingly unequal society.

Read more: <http://mobile.slate.com/>

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# Gregory Warner - In Kenya, Using Tech To Put An 'Invisible' Slum On The Map

✘ *npr.org*. July 17, 2013. If you were to do a search for the Nairobi city slum of Mathare on Google Maps, you'd find little more than gray spaces between unmarked roads.

Slums by nature are unplanned, primordial cities, the opposite of well-ordered city grids. Squatters rights rule, and woe to the visitor who ventures in without permission. But last year, a group of activist cartographers called the Spatial Collective started walking around Mathare typing landmarks into hand-held GPS devices.

In a slum with no addresses and no street names, they are creating a map of what it's like to live here.

*Read* *more:*  
<http://www.npr.org/in-kenya-using-tech-to-put-an-invisible-slum-on-the-map>

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## Book Review: Ayona Datta - The Illegal City: Space, Law And Gender In A Delhi Squatter Settlement

<http://blogs.lse.ac.uk>. The Illegal City explores the relationship between space, law and gendered subjectivity through a close look at an 'illegal' squatter settlement in Delhi. Since 2000, a series of judicial rulings in India have criminalised squatters as 'illegal' citizens, 'encroachers' and 'pickpockets' of

urban land, and have led to a spate of slum demolitions across the country. This book argues that in this context, it has become vital to distinguish between illegality and informality since it is those ‘*illegal*’ slums which are at the receiving end of a ‘*force of law*’, where law is violently encountered within everyday spaces. **Ayona Datta** does not shy away from asking difficult questions, writes Alex Vasudevan.

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<http://blogs.lse.ac.uk/the-illegal-city-space-law-and-gender-in-a-delhi-squatter-settlement/>

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## **The #GlobalPOV Project: “Are Slums The Global Urban Future?”**

Welcome to the world-class city. It has towers, expressways, shopping malls, airports, private schools, and gated condominiums with golf courses, swimming pools and tennis courts. It has no slums, but the world-class city is built by slums — a paradox isn’t it? To see the city from the slum provides a different view, a view of the global urban future. □□Based on Prof. Ananya Roy’s popular Global Poverty class at the University of California, Berkeley, The #GlobalPOV Project video series combines critical social theory with improvised art and live-action sketch to explore issues of global poverty, development and foreign aid. □□The #GlobalPOV Project is a program of the Global Poverty and Practice (GPP) Minor. Based at the Blum Center for Developing Economies, University of California, Berkeley, the GPP Minor creates new ways of thinking about poverty, inequality and undertaking poverty action. □□Join the #GlobalPOV conversation on Twitter.

*Website:* <http://blumcenter.berkeley.edu/globalpov> □

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# Richard Palmer- Part 1: An Innovative Approach To Sanitation In Cape Town?



Photo from the Gates Foundation

*Future of Cape Town*. July 12, 2013. The ‘poo wars’ are taking Cape Town by storm... again. They are politically charged, indelibly tied to Apartheid planning but ultimately about giving people (yes, people) the dignity to poo; safely, in private and without compromising the health of their community – something most people reading this blog take for granted.

On current evidence, it seems the truth of the matter is that providing basic sanitation services to South Africa’s poor seems too big a challenge for our major cities, regardless of who governs them (unpalatable as that might be to many DA supporters). In their defence though, delivering effective sanitation services to informal settlements is a tough ask, with few successful precedents globally.

This post is a response to a ‘*conversation*’ with WC premier, Helen Zille on Twitter (@helenzille) about the failure of The City of Cape Town to commit to a process of getting the problem solved. My biggest grievance is that the current approach has not even begun to test the possible innovative options and is desperately lacking in compassion – neglecting the dignity granted to all people by the bill of rights.

Informal settlements – slums – are a feature of nearly every emerging city. In many ways they provide an optimal, self-organising strategy for allowing people to escape rural poverty within whatever means they have and access the social and economic opportunities of cities. Slums are not, in and of themselves, a problem.

But they are devilishly difficult to service with municipal infrastructure – water,

sanitation, waste collection and transport. They're also a challenge for essential services like health, education and security. In essence this is because our traditional approach to delivering services is that infrastructure comes first and people come later. When dwellings come first, we don't have good models for fitting infrastructure in afterwards.

*Part*

*One:*

<http://futurecapetown.com/an-innovative-approach-to-sanitation-in-Cape-Town>  
[Part One](#)

*Part*

*Two:* <http://futurecapetown.com/an-innovative-approach-to-sanitation-in-Cape-Town>  
[Part Two](#)

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## **Parul Agarwala - Is Upgrading Informal Housing A Step In The Right Direction?**

✘ *Worldbank.org*. July 9, 2013. Submitted by *Parul Agarwala*, co-author *Syed Usman Javaid*

Within the next 30 years, urban populations in developing countries will double and UN-Habitat estimates that around 3 billion people will need housing and basic infrastructure. Already, 70% of existing housing in developing countries is built informally without appropriate structural standards. Thus, the challenge lies in reconciling informal settlements with existing and future planned environments.

In light of these challenges, the South Asia urban team at the World Bank, as part of its urbanization webinar series, organized a discussion on "*Upgrading Housing in Informal Settlements*." This webinar highlighted the challenges of upgrading housing in informal settlements, and shared lessons from around the globe where

targeted policy interventions and grassroots movements have mobilized resources to create success stories. Guest speakers and experts around the world joined the discussion on informal settlements.

*Read*

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<http://blogs.worldbank.org/upgrading-informal-housing-step-right-direction?>