

Janine Di Giovanni - The Problem With Cities

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If the protests in Brazil are about any one thing, it's the agony of urban poverty. And it's not just Brazil. Janine di Giovanni on the looming crisis facing global cities.

Brazil is on fire, with hundreds of thousands of people hitting the streets to vent their anger and rage at corruption, the high cost of living, and proposed hikes in bus fares. Protests in Istanbul are still raging after nearly a month. Even Stockholm was raging in the recent weeks.

Welcome to the first truly urban century. It's not going to be pretty. Reasons for these protests are nearly impossible to define, even on a superficial level, but one through line is clear—these are cases of city dwellers being plain fed up.

In Brazil, bus fares and corruption were only superficial catalysts for the rage in the streets. The underlying cause is an urban nation that is split neatly between the haves and have-nots. In economic lingo, Brazil is one of the BRIC countries—Brazil, Russia, India, China—a block of nations with rapidly advancing economies. But while the wealthy flaunt their excessive lifestyles in Rio and São Paulo, life in the *favelas*, or shantytowns, is murderously hard.

The *favelas*, founded by soldiers with nowhere else to go, have been around for hundreds of years. By the 1970s, as urbanization became a lifeline for impoverished Brazilians looking for work, they became breeding grounds for violent gangs, drug dealers, and dirty politics. The most realistic portrayal of life in the *favela* was Fernando Meirelles's extraordinarily graphic and disturbing 2002 film *City of God*. In it, Meirelles exposes the horrors of poverty—all while golden riches lay a few miles away.

Read more: <http://www.thedailybeast.com/the-problem-with-cities.html>

Vanessa Watson: Conflicting Rationalities In Cape Town: Power At The Interface

Lecture by Prof. Vanessa Watson, University of Cape Town.

International workshop on 'Changing socio-spatial configurations of inclusion and exclusion: planning and counter-planning in the African city', 7-8 March 2012
Uppsala, Sweden.

Ananya Roy: Making Postcolonial Futures: The 'Slum-Free' Cities Of The Asian Century

Lecture by Prof. Ananya Roy, University of California.

International workshop on 'Changing socio-spatial configurations of inclusion and exclusion: planning and counter-planning in the African city', 7-8 March 2012
Uppsala, Sweden.

South African History Archive

(SAHA) - Housing Workshop Feedback

Housing sector participants give feedback on Promotion of Access to Information Act (PAIA). They share what they have learnt and how they will apply PAIA in their communities.

Audio Lecture Dr. Kamna Patel - Challenging Conventions Of Slum Upgrading: Lessons Learnt From A Study Of Upgrade In South Africa

Listen: <http://sms.cam.ac.uk/media/1438820>

Dr. Kamna Patel (Lecturer in Development Administration, The Bartlett Development Planning Unit, UCL)

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Abstract

The *in situ* upgrade of slums is widely considered global best practice in approaches to urban poverty management. This paper presents some of the findings of an investigation into the effects of *in situ* upgrade on conceptions of tenure security and insecurity, and practices of access to land and housing in low income settlements in Durban, South Africa. Drawing on the grounded experience and lived realities of 24 shack dwellers, and the creative uses of aspects of their identity and social relations, the paper argues the conception and execution of slum upgrading in South Africa reveals two major flaws in upgrade convention.

The first flaw is that tenure security can be conceptualised in a way distinct from other securities that affect claims to property, and the second, that slum upgrade can forge a basis on which to renegotiate relations between (informal) citizens and (the formal) state. These findings have wider implications for current trends in urban poverty management.

Tim Smedley - Sustainable Urban Design: Lessons To Be Taken From Slums

guardian.co.uk. Jun 5, 2013. We should not romanticise slums, but informal settlements can teach us a lot about society and the economy of resources.

Alfredo Brillembourg is enthusing about Zurich's blue recycling bags. "They are an incredible thing," he says, his accent revealing his Venezuelan roots. The architect and former Columbia University professor talks at a breathless pace, most sentences ending in exclamation marks. "Zurich is an incredible city for recycling! Not only that but they figured out how to finance the whole thing, everyone is obliged to throw their garbage out in one type of bag, the Zuri-bag. That bag is more expensive than a normal plastic bag, you get fined if you don't use it so the price of the bag includes the cost of collection and an incentive to reduce waste."

However, we're not here to talk about Zurich, the latest home for his urban design practice Urban Think Tank, jointly run with co-director Hubert Klumpner. Rather, our conversation regards slums. The informal settlements of the global south, off the map and off the grid, which could not be further removed from the Swiss financial capital. But the Zuri-bag offers an interesting contrast - recycling is something that slum inhabitants do naturally, without expensive schemes. And Brillembourg is one of a number of urbanists who believe we can learn a lot from slums.

Read more: <http://www.guardian.co.uk/sustainable-design-lessons-from-slums>