

# Joel Kotkin - Welcome To The Billion-Man Slum



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*dailybeast.com. August 2014.* As megacities (urban areas with more than 10 million people) mushroom across the globe, we need to start thinking about how to make cities better, not simply bigger.

When our urban pundit class speaks of the future of cities, we are offered glittering images of London, New York, Singapore, or Shanghai. In reality, the future for most of the world's megacities—places with more than 10 million people—may look more like Dhaka, Mumbai, or Kinshasa: dirty, poverty- and disease-ridden, and environmentally disastrous.

Harvard's Ed Glaeser suggests that megacities grow because "globalization" and "technological change have increased the returns to being smart." And to be sure, megacities such as Jakarta, Kolkata (in India), Mumbai, Manila, Karachi, and Lagos—all among the top 25 most populous cities in the world—present a great opportunity for large corporate development firms and thrilling treasure troves for both journalists and academic researchers. But surely there's a better alternative to celebrating misery, as one prominent author did recently in a *Foreign Policy* [article](#) bizarrely entitled "In Praise of Slums."

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