Urban Latin America : Violence, Enclaves, and Struggles for Land

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Introduction
Urban Latin America

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by
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A century ago Latin America was mostly rural. Today it is one of the most urbanized regions in the world. Over 80 percent of the population of Latin America and the Caribbean live in metropolitan regions and cities of more than 750,000, about the same proportion as in North America. Latin America boasts some of the largest urban regions in the world, including Buenos Aires, Mexico City, Rio de Janeiro, and São Paulo, each with more than 10 million people (UN Habitat, 2011).

Many discussions about urbanization in Latin America start with statistics showing how dramatically the region has changed from rural to urban, often accompanied by moral outrage denouncing the terrible living conditions and uncontrolled crime in giant "megacities" that are said to be "out of control." These discussions can lead to dire predictions of a catastrophic urban future or, alternatively, hope that by urbanizing Latin America will sooner or later converge with North America in a future of prosperity once there is order and economic progress. Both predictions force us to ignore the fact that miserable housing and living conditions and uncontrolled violence prevail in cities of all sizes and rural areas as well, that for decades the fastest-growing cities in just about every region of the world have been small and medium-sized, and that signs of a convergence between North and South are mostly limited to the exclusive elite districts that have been there, reproducing themselves, since the colonial period.

Both of these predictions—the pessimistic and the optimistic—fail to recognize the structural inequalities between urban and rural areas, within individual nations, and within and among metropolitan regions, to say nothing of the gaping inequalities between the Northern and Southern Hemispheres. These urban myths add up to the *urban fallacy*—the notion that the problem is with the city itself and not with the social relations that govern society. More significant, they tell us very little about the most important things in this historic transformation from rural to urban: the economic, social, and political implications of this change. What does urbanization mean for the everyday lives of people? If all of Latin America is urban, then how can we even talk about urban phenomena and issues as different from all the larger issues? In other words, Latin America is now urban—but so what?

The answers to these basic questions lie not in population counts or poverty levels but in the fundamental contradictions of capitalist development and the social and political struggles arising from these contradictions. Any in-depth

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discussion about urban Latin America needs to start with an understanding of the role of two key factors: *capital* and *land*. As global capital gained control over rural land over the course of the twentieth century—through purchase, expropriation, and the employment of violence—massive numbers of people who once lived off the land were forced to migrate to cities. Land, including communal holdings, was then valued for its capacity to produce commodities in the global marketplace, leading to the dispossession and displacement of the majority of the population. It was this gigantic land grab and not any "free choice" that produced urban Latin America.

At the same time, urban land became a new battleground for class warfare. Wealthy elites controlled the land in cities, but since they had little interest in accommodating so many new immigrants there were land invasions, overcrowding, and vast areas that lacked basic urban services such as safe water and sewers. This was the fundamental dynamic underlying "the urban question" in Latin America. Over the past century urban social movements arose through fierce clashes over access to and control over land. At stake, however, was not just the physical possession of land. If we understand land to embody not only physical space but a set of social relations—between individuals, classes, social groups, and the state—the struggles for urban land are fundamentally community and class struggles. Struggles over rural land continue, often unnoticed in the cosmopolitan world, but they are no less important if we consider the environmental and energy crises affecting urban Latin America in the twenty-first century, to say nothing of the devastation of rural resources and communities. Struggles for land are at the heart of both urban and rural questions, and in the coming decades, depending on the pace of global climate change, they will be part of the struggle for sustaining humans on the earth.

Much of what is written about cities in Latin America, particularly from the global North, evades the fundamental economic, social, and political questions. Violence is the most critical urban question today. The fallacy is that this is strictly a matter of violent cities; the truth is that the entire continent has been engulfed in violence supported and financed by the United States and its client states. The increasingly debated phenomenon of enclave urbanism—the division of urban space into physically and socially segregated areas with the development of malls and gated communities—is significant and often problematic, but it is not new, nor are the physical enclaves that are springing up everywhere necessarily imports from the North or automatic signs of social exclusion. There is a powerful pull in public and academic discourse about cities toward a crude dualism and what I call "urban Orientalism."

This introductory essay builds on two previous issues of *Latin American Perspectives* focusing on urbanization and my analysis in those issues (Angotti, 1987; 1997a), as well as my recent book, *The New Century of the Metropolis* (2012). The earlier essays examined the ways in which urbanization and urban policies are related to capitalist accumulation in Latin America. This one seeks to update and elaborate on the subject by taking into account new developments and future prospects.

THE URBAN FALLACY

"Urban professionals"—architects, urban planners, urban geographers, sociologists, anthropologists, indeed, everyone qualifying his or her credentials

with the adjective "urban" (full disclosure: I am one of them)—too often fetishize the spatial geography of cities and abstract pieces of urban reality from the environment without connecting them to any systemic analysis. The urban disciplines continue the excessive specialization within the academy, fragment reality, and produce what C. Wright Mills (1959) denounced as "abstracted empiricism." Manuel Castells (1977) challenged the professional urbanists with his critique of the urban fallacy—the tendency to attribute to the city fundamental economic, social, and political problems that are structural and span different geographic scales. Within the urban planning and design professions, there is also a long history of physical determinism, which not only explains economic and social problems as the consequence of the built environment but aims to solve these problems by simply changing the physical environment. Thus, malls and gated communities are blamed for causing segregation and inequality, and it often follows that the solution is to tear down the physical barriers to promote equity and inclusion. This determinism has deep roots in European and U.S. urban policy.[1]

The urban fallacy leads us to ignore the origins of Latin America's urban problems, which are imbedded in the injustices of the colonial and postcolonial history of the region. The colonization of Latin America and the Caribbean set the pattern for dependent capitalism, creating local economies that relied on the export of primary goods. The European powers established cities at strategic locations that would facilitate the export of precious minerals and agricultural products and maintain political and military control over their territories. Many of the largest cities were located along the coasts and at key inland junctions, near extractive industries, but urban population was limited because the local economies were relatively undeveloped. The colonists planned their cities for themselves and not for the rest of the population. This pattern remains imprinted on today's maps of the region and is constantly revised and reproduced.

After formal independence in the nineteenth century, many of the export-based economies flourished, and cities grew as the new ruling elites reinvested larger proportions of their surplus earnings from trade in cities. This produced new examples of civic building that followed models adapted from Europe, such as the Paseo de la Reforma in Mexico, inspired by the monumental Champs-Élysées in Paris. Independence strengthened the urban base for national political power, even though there were many examples, even into the twentieth century, of local rulers and movements with powerful rural roots who distrusted the cities and government bureaucracies. In any case, the formally planned parts of the city remained enclaves of the rich and powerful, and the majority of the labor force was left to build and provide services on its own.

In the twentieth century, trends toward endogenous economic development were thwarted by the dramatic rise of U.S. hegemony in the Americas and throughout the world. Multinational corporations based in North America extended their reach throughout Latin America, dramatically expanding exports from plantation agriculture, mining, and outsourced industries. U.S. dominance was violently enforced by direct military intervention, the financing and training of national armies and police, and outright support for military coups (Galeano, 1973; Grandin, 2007). Despite many attempts at import substitution, the fundamentally dependent character of economic growth did not change.

Thus, over the span of a century one of monopoly capital's most dramatic legacies was the massive displacement of population from rural to urban areas. Export-oriented industrial agriculture devastated traditional farming much as it did in North America, producing food insecurity for many in nations that once produced enough to meet local consumption needs. Rebellions in rural areas and national attempts at agrarian reform were repressed, often violently, further encouraging migration to cities. Industrial enclaves in and around cities, in "free-trade" zones and *maquiladoras*, also spurred the movement of masses of people to cities, which became giant labor reserves for global and local capital. The value of massive urban poverty to capital was huge; miserable living conditions in cities lacking basic services reduced the cost to capital of reproducing labor. Transnationalized labor was tapped for occasional use in North America both to meet the need for new labor and to suppress the overall cost of labor, and it was a boon for Latin America's rising entrepreneurs. However, despite the recent growth of national economies in Brazil and Argentina, for example, and the loosening hold of the United States on the political agenda of the region (as was evident at the 2012 Summit of the Americas, where the United States came in for some unusual criticism) with the entrance of China and other economic giants in Latin America, it remains to be seen whether Latin America's dependent development and unequal urbanization will change in any fundamental way.

In "The Urbanization of the Countryside: Depoliticization and the Production of Space in Chiapas," Japhy Wilson reminds us that the urbanization of the countryside is an essential element of capitalist development and that the Mexican state and neoliberal policies combine to combat resistance to large-scale development in the Zapatista autonomous territories. Wilson's analysis also underlines that the contradictions between urban and rural are no less dramatic in today's urbanized Latin America and in some ways have become more pronounced.

In "Mining and Tourism: Urban Transformations in the Intermediate Cities of Cusco and Cajamarca, Peru," Griet Steel takes us to smaller cities in Peru, where the contradictions generated by recent investments by globalized capital are increasing inequalities and generating resistance. These cases bring us away from the overwhelming focus of urban experts on the very largest metropolitan regions and force us to pay attention to the many more cities that today are growing faster and are much more attractive to global capital for their lower labor and reproduction costs.

VIOLENCE AND EVERYDAY LIFE IN URBAN LATIN AMERICA

Violence is a fundamental part of daily life in Latin American cities. To understand why, we need to place it in the context of the violent history of the continent starting with the mass murders of the conquest, the brutality of slavery, and the death squads, state-sponsored terror, and military machines financed and supported by the United States over the past century. Latin America's own oligarchies have proven themselves capable of independently using terror through their police and military, but they would not be as powerful as they are without the training offered at the School of the Americas and

the material support of the Pentagon. Today they are using terror on a mass scale under the rubric of and with the support of the heavily militarized U.S.-led "war on drugs" (Karlin, 2012). It is a one-sided war that uses violence to try to cut off the supply of drugs while doing nothing to reduce demand within the United States. The cold war is over, and with a few exceptions the popular insurgencies of the twentieth century have ended. The war on drugs and the ancillary and overblown "terrorist threat" have become the leading rationale for U.S. military dominance.

The victims of the drug war in Latin America are legion—some 40,000 in Mexico alone over the past five years. Related but not dependent only on the drug war is the escalation of violence against women, for example, the widespread femicide in Ciudad Juárez and other Mexican cities, unchecked by the state (Bowden, 2010; Vázquez-Castillo, 2006). In the cities of Brazil, Colombia, Venezuela, and other countries, assaults on the streets and in homes are a part of everyday life. Fear of violence is normal, but among the propertied classes it has produced an epidemic of paranoia conditioned by ancient notions of superiority based on class, ethnicity, and gender. The important work of Loïc Wacquant (2009) demonstrates that the criminalization of everyday life in many Latin American cities is conditioned by class and racial divisions and that imprisonment has become the preferred option for systems incapable of solving the most basic problems of urban security.

The climate of violence builds on the fears of native peoples promoted by the colonizers, the domestic and imported fears of Afro-descendent people, and the growing fears of landless immigrants who increasingly cross the continent's national boundaries seeking work. In the United States the victims of the war on drugs are almost entirely black and Latino people (many of the latter forced to migrate from rural areas and cities in Latin America) while the majority of drug users, who are white, are allowed to go free (Alexander, 2012).

In cities, the "other" has become the necessary and logical foil for increasingly armed and fortified enclaves. Like the traditional Plaza de Armas, every public place must now be a secure haven for the mustering of uniformed personnel to protect private property and promote consumption. As a result, there can be no truly public places even if they happen to be owned and operated by public entities. Every private condominium complex must have protected parking, electrified fences, and 24-hour security guards and cameras. Neoliberal urban policies have ushered in new formulas for insuring private dominion over public space, and the difference between public and private is shrinking. Excluding the "other" is essential to the growing centers of financial capital in Latin America's major cities.

The favelas, *barriadas, villas miserias*, and other working-class neighborhoods where the majority of Latin Americans live more often lack the resources for building fences and barricades and are easy targets for violence. Police go after low-level drug dealers and users and arrest, murder, or imprison them so that they can show a scorecard proving that the "war" is being won—though it never is. The result of this political-military strategy is to reinforce the transformation of metropolitan regions into a collection of fortified havens for the relatively privileged and besieged ghettos for the rest of the population. The war on drugs is not the only major cause of the social fragmentation of the metropolis, but it is the most dramatic evidence of the larger class war that affects the way people live and die in cities today.

In "Urban Surges: Power, Territory, and the Social Control of Space in Latin America," Alfonso Valenzuela shows how local and national government policies in Brazil, Colombia, and Mexico reinforce institutional violence but weaken the institutions that might otherwise be capable of improving conditions. María Cristina Bayón and Gonzalo Saraví, in "The Cultural Dimensions of Urban Fragmentation: Segregation, Sociability, and Inequality in Mexico City," demonstrate with evidence from everyday lives in Mexico City how social and spatial divisions work to exclude the "other." In "Zero-Tolerance Policing, Stealth Real Estate Development, and the Transformation of Public Space: Evidence from Mexico City," Diane Davis shows how the "broken-windows" and "zero-tolerance" approaches to local policing were adopted in Mexico City and discusses the political context and real estate interests that led the city's avowedly leftist mayor to invite as a consultant Rudolph Giuliani, a notorious ultraconservative who as mayor of New York City pitted the police against black and Latino neighborhoods. Anne Becker and Markus-Michael Müller, in "The Securitization of Urban Space and the 'Rescue' of Downtown Mexico City: Vision and Practice," discuss both the general context of neoliberal visions of urban development and a particular case study, the working-class neighborhood of La Merced, where the contradictions facing the neoliberal and zero-tolerance approach are substantial, including resistance from local merchants and residents. The struggles for La Merced make evident that the tourist industry is invading cities all over the hemisphere to establish commercial enclaves separate from the surrounding city but filled with symbolic remnants of local culture that are passed off as authentic.

This set of articles on Mexico City suggests that the management of violence is an essential part of the political-military-planning establishment in the very powerful business enclaves housing the institutions of globalized monopoly capitalism. Central business districts, including those of São Paulo, Buenos Aires, Bogotá, and almost every national capital, are built on a blend of global and local capital. Global investors are increasingly looking for safe havens for their excess capital in central business districts, and they need local partnerships that guarantee a secure environment for their investments. In Mexico City, Carlos Slim, one of the wealthiest men in the world, is investing in his own backyard and personifies the growing integration of global and local capital and its increasing control over urban land.

The prices of land in the central business districts of Latin American cities are astronomical, and therefore property owners are especially committed to protecting their investments by using public and private resources. Investors in new office complexes can afford to buy world-class design and technology to safeguard their wealthy enclaves. But they are also dependent on local governments to police the public spaces—streets, sidewalks, parks, markets, etc.—necessary for the reproduction of profit and the reproduction of the labor force they depend on. A neoliberal transformation of the local state was therefore necessary to insure control over these spaces. Public-private partnerships, professionalization of local government, enhanced security, and a host of other changes insure that the interests of the powerful remain paramount.

However, the neoliberal state is fundamentally unable to solve the problems of the mass of urban residents and businesses, and the resulting contradictions produce and reproduce local resistance. The rule of the powerful is conditional,

and the diverse working-class communities are able to set limits on the urban land grabs promoted by speculators both global and local. Leftist local governments have instituted many progressive reforms (Chavez and Goldfrank, 2004) and some, such as the participatory budgeting introduced by the Workers' Party in Brazil, have spread throughout the world. In Mexico City, the left's achievements have been constrained, but some have also been underrecognized and obscured, among them the advances in gender equity under Mayor Rosario Robles a decade ago (Angotti, 2000). Robles argued that "the street belongs to everyone," including women, and introduced community policing, a strategy that was later attacked by the advocates of zero tolerance in much the same way that Giuliani undermined the community policing that had been instituted by his predecessor, David Dinkins, New York City's first African-American mayor. On Sundays, Mexico City's Paseo de la Reforma, the wide avenue running through the heart of the downtown financial district, is closed to traffic, and people from all over are invited to romp on bicycles and skateboards and roam the streets on foot. In Bogotá, the progressive mayor Antanas Mockus used nonviolent methods to make public places safer. However, in both of these cases, capital appropriated the less-violent spaces to enhance the value of its investments and promote new real estate ventures, leaving the rest of the city to survive on its own. Indeed, the historic goal of modern urban planning and management since the Victorian era has been to introduce discipline and order and the "rational" use of public space according to the norms of the ruling elites. These urban pacification programs aim to neutralize the potential for protest and working-class independence. Without a fundamental change in the regime of economic power, the potentially modernizing and liberating urban innovations introduced by reformers tend to close the circle on newly formed urban enclaves of the powerful and exclude the powerless. In the end the powerful are protected from the violent metropolis they have helped to create.

ENCLAVE URBANISM

The production and reproduction of urban inequalities is not simply the by-product of an unequal economic system. It has a life of its own and involves the conscious and sometimes creative intervention of individuals and social groups. Enclave urbanism is the conscious design and development of fragmented cites and metropolitan regions. It contributes to the fragmentation of urban space into exclusive, elite residential enclaves and ghettos, malls, and business districts. This pattern of social and spatial inequality continues the historic divisions of territory established in the colonial era and reinforces class, racial, gender, and other divides. Enclave urbanism may describe the way cities are organized, but the organization is the result of prescriptions that architects and urban planners promote in response to demands by their clients and the public for the protection of private property. Neoliberal urban reforms have strengthened enclave urbanism by legitimizing the use of an array of techniques such as decentralized governance, separate tax districts, public-private partnerships, and the privatization of public services. However, this is not simply a "cookie-cutter" approach to making cities but a complex phenomenon with many contradictions and complexities (Caldeira, 2000).

Frequent visitors from the North to Latin American cities cannot avoid noting the rise in recent decades of separate enclaves, including gated communities, U.S.-style shopping malls, and exclusive downtown districts, accompanied by the displacement of working-class neighborhoods that happen to be in and near the areas targeted by investors for new development. Some of these are direct imports from the North. Designcorp, a Canadian multinational, built megamalls in Brazil and Colombia after the Canadian market was saturated (Coy, 2006; Coy and Pholer, 2002). The British company Squarestone is expanding its Golden Square shopping mall in the suburbs of São Paulo. However, most U.S.-style malls are joint ventures melding global and local capital and a variety of styles. Gated residential communities are growing everywhere, but Brazil and Argentina, two of the most urbanized nations, are among the leaders in the field. Gated communities are not necessarily confined to the largest metropolitan regions; they can be found, for example, in Mendoza, Argentina (Roitman, 2005), and Curitiba, Brazil (Irazábal, 2005). In some wealthy neighborhoods, residents independently erect barriers and hire security guards to convert theirs into a gated community; many older homes and apartment buildings are equipped with high fences and electrified perimeters, and where possible underground parking insures that residents never have to set foot on the street or sidewalk. New projects are invariably designed with walls, fences, and maximum security in mind.

To be sure, many of the patrons of these enclaves are elites, foreign visitors and investors who bring with them the ideologies and practices of separation and superiority flowing from Eurocentric cultures. There is a tendency to see these new enclaves as strictly foreign imports and copycat designs. However, while gated communities may be encouraged by and fit in with elite philosophies of exclusion and neoliberal policies of reducing public expenditures, this may not always be the case in practice. They are not necessarily the exclusive products of multinational investors or powerful national investors. Nor are they designed as automatic reproductions of the North American dream. There are deeper roots of enclave urbanism in Latin America's colonial and neocolonial history, and Latin American capital is deeply involved in shaping its own particular version of the fractured metropolis that has emerged from deep colonial and neocolonial roots (Caldeira, 1999).

The Laws of the Indies promulgated by the Spanish crown set the standard for physically separating the centers of colonial power from the masses of indigenous people. Even so, the established principles had to be interpreted and applied under vastly different circumstances. After independence, many architects and urban planners carved out new, separate enclaves for the wealthy, and while their designs were inspired by ideas and practices from the elite enclaves of Europe and North America they often produced entirely different results. For example, the 1939 Plan Rotival for Caracas, designed by a French architect, is famous as much for what was not implemented as for what was. Arturo Uslar Pietri noted that the original plan was flexible enough to allow for the construction of some buildings designed by Venezuela's leading architect, Carlos Raúl Villanueva, using the local vernacular, but Rotival's plan eventually was not followed (Uslar, 1991: 8):

> Later, the gush of petroleum wealth, the lack of vision of government leaders, the unbridled zeal of land speculators, whose proliferation was tolerated and even stimulated by the clumsiest and most irresponsible demagoguery, ended up filling in the whole area, both urban and natural, with an inhuman jungle of concrete and steel towers and bewildering layers of improvised dwellings lacking any possibility of services and urban order.

Along the same lines, malls inspired by the prototypical U.S. shopping center, even when financed with U.S. capital, often end up functioning much differently in Latin American cities. Areas designed for public use and parking may be taken over by itinerant merchants when the exclusive clientele that was hoped for does not materialize. Local merchants and customers with different ideas, traditions, and practices about the use of public space may change the paradigm, producing a much higher degree of socialization in private malls than originally anticipated. One study, for example, found a diversity of approaches to malls in Santiago, Chile (Stillerman, 2006). In Buenos Aires, less affluent municipalities have embraced gated communities not as a form of social exclusion but to encourage the private provision of public services where they have been sorely lacking (De Duren, 2006; 2009)

A more detailed analysis that takes into account the diversity of local conditions may be found in the articles from this issue by Zaire Dinzey-Flores, Fatimah Williams Castro, and Lawrence Herzog. In "Islands of Prestige, Gated Ghettos, and Nonurban Lifestyles in Puerto Rico," Dinzey-Flores draws a clear distinction between public and private housing developments in Puerto Rico in the way gating occurs. In "Afro-Colombians and the Cosmopolitan City: New Negotiations of Race and Space in Bogotá, Colombia," Castro's story of her exclusion from a Bogotá nightclub reminds us that enclaves do not necessarily rely on physical barriers and design to keep people out and that private policing of private places reinforces deeply imbedded patterns of racial and class oppression. Lawrence Herzog's "Barra da Tijuca: The Political Economy of a Global Suburb in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil" brings into focus the question whether the planning of new urban development in Latin American cities is the result of conscious emulation of Northern models or evolves out of Southern structures and processes. As Herzog explains, Barra is actually a product of the tensions and conflict between the two. The market-driven conception of the new Rio suburb as an exclusive enclave for people of means clashed with the socialist-leaning ideals of the architect-planner Lucio Costa, whose public architecture was intended to place modernism in the service of progressive social and political goals.

In "Sustaining Mobility: Bus Rapid Transit and Local Politics in Bogotá's Transportation Networks," Thomas Bassett and Andrea Marpillero-Colomina analyze the innovative bus rapid transit project introduced by the Bogotá mayor Enrique Peñalosa. The Transmilenio, as it is called, has in some ways united a fragmented city of separate enclaves and brought needed infrastructure to relatively isolated areas. However, its success can also be understood as a perfect scheme for increasing and capturing potential land values around its stations and encouraging displacement and greater segregation in the long run.

It has also helped reduce the size and power of the "informal" system of private transportation dominated by operators not easily controlled by elites. The authors emphasize the social benefits of the Transmilenio but also discuss a recent proposal by the conservative mayor Samuel Moreno Rojas to build a subway in Bogotá; while this would have been a magnet for global capital investment, the proposal failed, suggesting the extent of tensions and contradictions between global and local.

In "Housing, Security and Employment in Post-Neoliberal Buenos Aires," Matthew Benwell, James Haselip, and José Antonio Borello show that while neoliberal reforms led to severe cutbacks and shortages as well as protest and resistance, a formal reversal of neoliberal policies has yet to produce significant improvements in living conditions. This raises the larger question of the extent to which reforms in local government can impact national and global trends.

DUALISMS AND ORIENTALISMS

One of the greatest barriers to both understanding the urban question in Latin America and formulating strategies for action is the deeply ingrained dualism that lies at the heart of the social science and professional epistemologies of "urbanists." Too often urban experts fail to move beyond the simplistic discourse advanced in press exposés of Latin America's slums, which they consider a wasteland of uniform poverty and desperation that is overrunning the world. For example, *Forbes* declared bleakly that "the future of the city is a vast Third World slum" (Eaves, 2007). In a *New York Times* story, "Squalid Slums Grow as People Flood Latin America's Cities," an urban scholar refers ominously to Lima, Peru: " The city has grown like a wild animal without any kind of planning. . . . Lima is a time bomb" (Nash, 1992). Even the more sophisticated and authoritative accounts start from the assumption that the fundamental problem is the slums (see, for example, UN Habitat, 2003). The dreaded slums are considered the "informal city" and contrasted with the "formal city," which is "modern," "civilized," and "planned" (for serious and critical discussions of "informality," see Bromley, 1979, and Roy and AlSayyad, 2004). Janice Perlman's (1976; 2010) important studies of a favela in Rio de Janeiro challenged the "myth of marginality" by revealing the complexities within and among favelas that are obscured by orthodox social science myths.

Amidst the rhetoric and myths, the slums always turn out to be the problem. The "rational" solution, therefore, is getting rid of them. If the informal city is the problem, then the formal city is the solution. According to the dualist paradigm, the answer to Venezuela's chaotic *barrio* is to be found in the tranquility of the country-club neighborhood on the other side of town. Achieving the necessary transformation from informal to formal city and integrating the marginal are the jobs of the urban planners, the professional and managerial class, the rational technocrats, whose class loyalties have been cemented in elite institutions of higher learning both in Latin America and abroad. They may propose massive demolitions, evictions, and redevelopment schemes by either public or private developers. They may follow the classical dualist paradigm initiated by the first modern town planners in late-nineteenth-century Europe: Eugene Hausmann's plan for Paris, which wiped out central city working-class

neighborhoods and used the land for monumental avenues and civic buildings, all under control of a monarchy threatened by rebellious workers who were capable of taking over the city and creating their own regime (which they did with the Paris Commune in 1871). Shortly after this, in England, new comprehensively planned suburban towns were conceived as alternatives to the teeming central city slums and miserable factory housing. Into the early twentieth century, capitalism's solutions to urban problems were promoted by a technical/managerial class including urban planners and public health professionals, who designed sanitary sewers, housing, and health regulations as solutions to urban problems. Surely they vastly improved the quality of life for many in the city, but just as certainly they displaced many people and reproduced in different forms the more profound problems of human exploitation and inequality. They may have eliminated a good part of the "informal city," but they also reproduced urban inequalities, which in turn reproduced new dualist epistemologies.

In the face of massive resistance to monumental redevelopment schemes by urban social movements, more sophisticated formulas for the elimination of "informality" emerged in the twentieth century. Use of the urban renewal bulldozer to promote real estate speculation triggered massive resistance to government and private redevelopment schemes, particularly in the period of radical and revolutionary political awakenings starting in the 1960s. Urban social movements in all of the major urban nations flourished, and some became the political basis for new democratic coalitions—as in Brazil, for example, where urban social movements were one of the major pillars of the Workers' Party and Lula's campaigns for president. The World Bank and multilateral aid programs now shy away from funding giant "slum clearance" projects because urban social movements have proven to be formidable obstacles. Instead, using the dualist framework, they promote "pro-poor" policies that "empower" slum dwellers to be active participants in the transformation from the informal to the formal city. "Participatory planning" through decentralized government, a neoliberal favorite, is presumed to be more democratic, and it may be, but too often it obscures an underlying dualism that still presumes that the slums have to go, with or without the participation of local residents and businesses. At the same time, democratic decision making has been part of progressive attempts to consolidate the political power of urban social movements; these are not the same as the manufactured consent advocated by the most powerful institutions. However, as is pointed out in Josh Lerner's article "Playing With Power: Participatory Games in Rosario's *Villas*," left local governments that are committed to alternative approaches confront numerous complexities and contradictions along the way.

Whatever the planning method, the whole approach of improving cities by moving from informality to formality tends to free the land from the possession of the people who occupied and developed it and place it in a land market that responds to capitalist principles. Most important, the land is made available to large-scale investors, particularly in the large cities, who are closely allied with banks, insurance companies, equity funds, and real estate investment trusts that are increasingly global in nature. This is why introducing individual property ownership, and along with it bank financing and insurance, has become global finance capital's favored urban strategy. Once there is clear title to land,

it can be bought and sold in the marketplace. Hernando De Soto's (2003) market "solution" to the slums famously claimed that making everyone a property owner would be the key to the end of urban poverty. While this may be a libertarian dream, it is also the way that finance capital hopes to appropriate the use value of the self-built slums and place it in the circuit of global capitalism. Just as capitalism expanded dramatically after the collapse of the Soviet Union and the socialist camp by appropriating the labor, land, and value that were previously unavailable to it, the slums remain a tremendous asset to be converted to coin. This is monopoly capitalism's strategy for urban development and poverty elimination through trickle-down economics.

Dualist urban myths typically target the "other" as a major source of the urban problem. In the context of colonial and postcolonial urbanism this "othering" is an example of what I have called urban Orientalism—the tendency of experts at the center of global power to present their own subjective, culturally biased views of the rest of the world as if they were fact (Angotti, 2012: 16–17, 26–40). This follows Edward Said's (1979) pathbreaking discussion of Orientalism in the British Empire. Since the hegemonic theories and practices of urban planning in Latin America have their roots in Europe and North America, the slums and informality continue to be seen from the distance of the masters, as objects to be managed, inhabited by people who are indiscriminately homogeneous and in any case incapable of having control over their own communities—unless, of course, they are "educated" in the ways of the "civilized" world.

In "A Struggle Larger Than a House: *Pobladores* and *Favelados* in Latin American Social Theory," Alexis Cortés shows that the hegemonic notions of the slums and marginality among social scientists in Chile and Brazil are conditioned by deeper historic and social currents and played out in distinct reactions to the military dictatorships in the two nations. He reveals that these notions emerge from urban social movements, producing a pragmatic, utilitarian strategy in Chile and a more radical class-based strategy in Brazil.

Daniel Renfrew, in "We Are Not Marginals: The Cultural Politics of Lead Poisoning in Montevideo, Uruguay," uses a case study of lead poisoning in a poor neighborhood to illustrate how dualist notions of marginality are often assimilated and internalized within these neighborhoods. The case also reveals that environmental and public health issues are intimately related to questions of class, land development, and the manufacture of the "other." It suggests that the leading ideologies used by urban experts and professionals are not simply imports from the North or Orientalist hybrids that are internalized at the local level but have powerful local roots.

HOPE FOR CHANGE: URBAN-RURAL TRANSFORMATIONS IN THE TWENTY-FIRST CENTURY

Latin America is urban—so what? Does it mean that, given increasing integration with global capital, Latin America is becoming like North America and will inevitably expand into a single homogeneous urban future with all the enclaves, inequality, and violence that go with it? Will giant schemes like Plan Puebla Panamá prevail and empty out what is left of rural Latin America? Most

important for progressives and the left, what are the alternatives? Indeed, with the collapse of "really existing socialism" in the twentieth century, are there any real alternatives? Is urban Latin America as we know it all we can expect or hope for?

These questions certainly require much more discussion and debate than is possible here. To make it more difficult, however, much larger questions that we have barely touched on will in the end determine the fate of the urban question. By the end of this century, if trends continue unabated, the entire planet will be urbanized. The most urbanized nations today are the largest producers of greenhouse gases and continue to develop cities that consume more energy, produce more waste, and contribute to global warming both in total and on a per capita basis. This will exacerbate a growing ecological crisis, and many parts of Latin America will be vulnerable. Most of Latin America's largest cities are on bodies of water that will experience increased flooding from sea-level rise. More erratic climate events and increases in urban temperatures will place stress on urban centers, increase food insecurity, and threaten the viability of some cities. The melting of the polar ice caps will make things worse. As Brazilian settlers continue to carve up the Amazon, as North American mining companies devour more rural areas in Chile, Peru, Ecuador, and other countries, and as a new developmentalism emerges across the region, Latin America has become a charter member of the global pro-growth bloc that is quite content to let global climate change play itself out. This includes governments nominally critical of global capitalism. Indeed, the continent's governments seem to be either blind to the long-term environmental consequences of their actions or unable to make any major changes without jeopardizing the stability of their regimes.

Perhaps the most profound symptom of the ecological blind spot affecting the continent and the planet is the long-standing and widespread lack of interest in the impacts of human activity on other living things in our ecosystems. This is in tune with Simón Bolívar's classical assertion of human superiority, "If Nature is against us, we shall combat it and make it obey." This is a fitting homily for the capitalist growth machine, not a prescription for liberation.

This may be only wishful thinking, and I surely risk being discounted as romantic and irrational, but I truly believe that the best hope for resolving the urban questions of violence, inequality, and fragmentation is to be found in the resistance movements from rural and urban peripheries, precisely because they are not compromised by the global capitalist growth machine. These movements include, for example, the Zapatistas in Mexico, Brazil's Movimento Sem Terra (Landless Workers' Movement—MST), Bolivia's coca growers, organic urban farmers in Cuba, and indigenous people throughout the continent. Imbedded in the demands and proposals of these "others" lie possible solutions to the economic and environmental problems that threaten the sustainability and resilience of cities in the twenty-first century. They are more connected to the land—not as a commodity but as a space for improving relations among people and with the rest of the natural world. They certainly do not have, individually or collectively, the ability to stop the continuing destruction of rural life or to transform urban life, but they may represent the greatest resistance to the final disappearance of rural Latin America and the ultimate degradation of urban Latin America.

The MST is the largest popular movement in Latin America linking dispossessed rural and urban workers. Its strategic focus is on land as a resource and not a commodity. It is the leading voice in Via Campesina, a global network promoting agrarian reform and a just food system for both urban and rural workers. The coca growers and indigenous people of Bolivia have led the hemispheric fight against the war on drugs and seek to reclaim control of their land. Beyond the reform government of Evo Morales, indigenous Bolivia may be able to realize the promise of the nation's new constitution and laws and guarantee the rights of nature (Global Exchange, 2011). Perhaps they will become stronger if the Zapatistas and the dispossessed peoples of Ecuador, Chile, Venezuela, and other nations advance so that they can help to develop new relationships between the human race and other species and alternatives to global climate change. Perhaps they will find new allies in the progressive local and national governments seeking alternatives to neoliberal theories and practice. Finally, there is the hope of Cuba, whose very survival after more than 50 years of imperialist aggression is already proof that another world is possible. The nation that instituted the most thorough agrarian reform in Latin America is now pioneering the largest experiment in organic urban agriculture (Altieri and Funes-Monzote, 2012; Funes et al., 2002).

Each of these rays of hope, however, comes with serious portents of doom. The MST is but a minority in Latin America's most formidable economic giant, Brazil. The Zapatistas have withdrawn from the frenetic contests for urban power bases. Bolivia is a small nation. And it is by no means certain that Cuba's attempts at food sovereignty will survive the nation's growing integration into the regional and global marketplace or the efforts of some of its own economic experts to use the surplus from expanding trade to buy cheaper imports. All of the counterhegemonic forces together are weak, and when they come together they do so with difficulty, as is indicated by the experiences of the World Social Forum. However, as the world faces a global future of continuing capitalist crises, potentially catastrophic climate change, food shortages, and environmental destruction, these fragments of hope are perhaps the best chance for a different long-term scenario that is both just and sustainable, both urban and rural—a scenario in which human settlements are socially just and land is part of the commons.

NOTE

1. For example, in the United States "slum clearance" was a giant post–World War II liberal program claiming to eradicate poverty in central cities by demolishing slums and building better housing. It displaced millions of people with low incomes, disproportionately African Americans, and replaced their homes with luxury office and apartment buildings (and in some cases the land remains vacant to this day). Public housing was one alternative for displaced poor people, but it is now being privatized and demolished (with the support of both liberals and conservatives) on the assumption that it was poorly designed and produced racial and economic segregation. These are two sides of the same coin; the urban fallacy sees the "problem" as the slums and public housing. In the reality of U.S. politics, however, the problem isn't really with the built environment, it's with the people living in the slums or public housing, who happen to be sitting on potentially valuable real estate and need to be removed to facilitate upscale development (Angotti, 1997b; Ross, 1997). By the same token, the problems of Latin America's cities are often cast as the result of poor housing and planning and the solution as "good" housing and planning.

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