

Book Review: The State of the World's Cities 2004/2005: Globalization and Urban Culture

Teresa Trumbly Lamsam

School of Communication, University of Nebraska at Omaha, Omaha, NE 68182

UN-HABITAT (United Nations Human Settlement Programme). *The State of the World's Cities 2004/2005: Globalization and Urban Culture*. London: Earthscan, 2004. 198 pp. \$39.00 (paper).

The United Nations (UN) report *State of the World's Cities 2004/2005: Globalization and Urban Culture* had its world premiere September 2004 in Barcelona at the World Urban Forum. The Human Settlements Programme (UN-HABITAT) released the report as a 198-page, well-organized book. The book can be ordered directly through the agency's website www.unhabitat.org. Online book vendors have used copies available as well. Unfortunately, this is one of the main drawbacks of the otherwise valuable report—availability. The very nature of book publishing limits accessibility and forces marketing limitations upon a report that offers a unique, one-stop shopping opportunity for a world community. The purpose of the book—to be used in assessing and addressing “current challenges and create dynamic, multicultural and inclusive urban settings”—may fall short of the same type of inclusion when it comes to audience. The book was not available at the university or metropolitan libraries in my state of residence. Potential readers would have to know about the report. No doubt those in attendance at Barcelona and those connected to or interested in the UN Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) have been exposed to this report. But the world is larger than the reach of the UN and globalization pays no attention to organizational boundaries. The tireless efforts of so many individuals whose contributions culminate in the pages of *World Cities* deserve the attention of a truly global community. As UN Secretary-General Kofi A. Annan writes in the forward to the book, creating *cities of difference* requires the engagement of all stakeholders.

World's Cities 2004/2005 builds on previous publications targeting various aspects of the MDGs as related to urban areas. The current report addresses the uneven impacts of globalization in the world's cities and points to multiculturalism and inclusion as the hope of peace and the answer to enduring urban woes. At first glance, the information provided in *World's Cities* may appear uninviting in terms of the desolate picture it paints of our world, but those drab statistics are put into a context of hope. The book, which keeps culture front and center, also serves as a dissemination tool of Best Practices, the best feature of the book. These anecdotes appear as pull-out narrative boxes, 63 in all spread

out over seven chapters. From the mesmerizing rhythm of Hip Hop to the calm collaborating of participatory budgeting, Best Practice stories direct the reader toward an imagination of progress rather than simply noting abstract concepts and theories.

It is important to draw lessons from these experiences and learn how approaches that work well in one place may be adapted in other places that share similar problems. Such knowledge exchange may take different forms and holds potential for positive development. It encourages hope for progress. (p. 1)

The book's Overview sets the rationale for the urban focus—cities set the economic stage for a nation—and distinguishes four new dimensions of globalization: speed, scale, scope, and complexity. Technologies have brought the *speed* of global connections to a simultaneous level. No community is insulated from the *scale* of globalization. The multi-dimensional *scope* of globalization includes the cultural and social, as well as the economic and political. Dynamic interactions on a global level increase the *complexity* of embedding research and diverse ways of knowing into policy and practice.

Chapter 1 discusses the dimensions of globalization impacts on our world's cities and establishes the framework for the entire report. While acknowledging the conflicting rhetoric on the meaning of the effects, *World's Cities* posits that the interaction between the phenomenon and cities is not unidirectional: “it is not just that cities are affected by global forces, but that local economies, cultures, and politics also affect global patterns. Global factors become embedded in local culture, practice, and institutions” (p. 10). As such, culture is presented as a city's attitude, rather than a singular dimension, and thus the entry point for analyzing other dimensions of importance, which include economic, social, institutional, political and demographics. The chapter later incorporates the multi-dimensional impacts in the section “Challenges for Policy and Management” before leaving the reader with questions about defending public interest in the new era.

Chapter 2 enlarges culture as attitude and examines it from the material perspective of urban development and defines it as “the ideas and practices, sites and symbols, of the symbolic economy” (p. 32). Cultural capital becomes

redevelopment of urban spaces and a factor in employment growth. Two other sections discuss trends in urban culture industries and the spread of consumption spaces, such as the enclosed urban shopping mall. The chapter concludes by returning to the attitude of inclusive culture:

Often this combination of nerve, racial diversity and an impatient desire for new things explodes into an astoundingly uncivil society, characterized by oppositional cultures in which men and women speak frankly of their differences and struggle openly to protect their rights. This, however, is the price that today's global cities have to pay for creativity and cultural inclusiveness. (p. 47)

A multidimensional analysis of metropolitanization in Chapter 3 sets the context for six perspectives that offer a new descriptive and analytical approach for metropolitan phenomena. The new approach is then used as a lens to examine metropolitan development trends in developing countries, transition economy countries, and advanced economy countries. Chapter 4 ushers in a data-heavy, multifaceted analysis of international migration in a globalization framework. The occurring xenophobia of migration has produced claims—often unsubstantiated—of economic, cultural, political, and social distress from the recipient communities, now mostly located in the advanced economy countries. Therefore, migration must be considered in the contexts of both the migrants' and recipient community's sides. "In general terms, there is no doubt that the management of migra-

tion flows should not be unilateral. It should include international, national, and local bodies" (p. 83).

Chapter 5 presents new global data and the accompanying regional analysis of urban poverty. The chapter's strength is in the multi-platform presentation of the data and analysis. For example, narrative boxes set aside highlights that include trends in urban poverty in a regional presentation; five key dimensions of slums; and best practices. Chapter 6 overviews global crime trends before turning to a regional discussion of the safety and transparency aspects of urban governance. Solutions are articulated as the "globalization of norms of good urban governance," which are characterized for the first time in *World's Cities*. The report ends, rather than concludes, with the Changing Culture of Planning and an overview of the principles of a new urban planning culture with a focus on the dominant global cities. Chapter 7 defines the planning culture as the "both formal and informal [ways] ... in which planning in a given country and/or city is conceived, institutionalized and enacted" (p. 160).

World's Cities should be a reference book sitting on the desks of everyone from researchers and policy makers to journalists and practitioners in development. Its pages should be well-worn with turned-down page corners, highlighted text, and notes written in the margins. And for those of you in the United Nations sphere, think outside the box when it comes to the audience for this report. The copy used in this review is now on the desk of a Native American who specializes in tribal government media and rural community development.