

# THE URBAN AGE

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Public Disclosure Authorized

## Karachi and the Global Nature of Urban Violence

by Arif Hasan

KARACHI. In 1991, according to official figures, 466 murders were committed in Karachi; there were 802 attempted murders; 421 cases of rioting, many of them against civic agencies; 103 rapes; 140 kidnappings for ransom; 12 of child stealing; 12 major armed bank robberies; 7,259 other robberies, including more than 1,200 car thefts, most of them at gun point; 1,019 burglaries; and 5,990 thefts. Among those murdered were 27 policemen, two judges, two customs officials, one member of an intelligence agency; three relatives of prominent politicians; two guards of local politicians; and six political activists. In the same year, 11 prominent journalists in the city were attacked. Double these figures (it is estimated that 50 percent of all crimes go unreported) and you have a picture of the savage effect crime and violence is having on Pakistan's largest city.

Such violence is not unique to Karachi. From Los Angeles to New Delhi, urban crime statistics reveal that not only is the incidence of violence becoming more frequent, but the nature of those crimes more vicious. In India, for example, women are being burned to death because they are seen as being promiscuous or too "modern" (see story, pg. 10). In South Africa 24,830 cases of rape (or one per 1,554 people) were reported in 1992; researchers estimate that 95 percent of rapes go unreported, implying that some 496,000 rapes were committed in that year. In Washington, D.C., there are currently as many as 250 to 350 shootings and stabbings a month (see story, pg. 16).

The consequences are particularly catastrophic for young people. Increasingly, teenagers feeling the impact of widespread unemployment, the breakdown in family structures, and the disintegration of traditional values find identity in joining street gangs or being lured into the drug trade. In Mexico City, there are a reported 1,500 street gangs (see story, pg. 14); in Rio de Janeiro, children are being used by drug dealers to spy on police and to even commit murders.

Such statistics raise the question of whether modern cities are inherently violent places to live. And if so, why? What lies behind the global increase in urban crime and violence? And how do those causes cut across developing and developed country lines?

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"Young Man in the Shadow of a Policeman," a mural painted on an abandoned garage in Mexico City, depicts the growing violence on urban streets all over the world.

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## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

We welcome your comments, thoughts, and criticisms on future issues of the *Urban Age*.

The following was received in response to the Winter 1993 issue on "Urban Entrepreneurs":

Editor:

The Winter edition of *The Urban Age* on informal activities encouraged me to suggest several reflections on such a multi-faceted and heterogeneous issue.

Informal activities might represent half of the incomes or more in many Third World cities, but no one knows how far they can expand. One answer is that they will continue to expand as long as there is a contraction in the formal economic sectors of a city's economy—meaning as long as it is needed. But I often wonder how long a city can grow and function under such an organization of labor. I fear that we are beginning to witness in many Third World cities that some informal activities are reaching a stage of saturation and that many people involved in them—especially children and adolescents, the elderly, and the disabled—will find it increasingly difficult to meet their most elementary needs. The run of bad luck for many poor households almost never ends.

Cities represent an enormous concentration of capital assets invested by a multiplicity of builders, some officially recognized but increasingly operating outside existing norms and regulations. In other words, the city is an unknown quantity. The contribution of multilateral and bilateral agencies to these tasks represents a very low percentage. Cities will have to be built with the resources each nation can afford. Quite often the poor who earn their incomes in informal activities are the principal investors. If we aim for cities where more human and equitable societies can live, inevitably we have to think of a change in attitude and sacrifices of the wealthy and powerful. The social debt that the rich in developing nations have toward the poor was inherited from our forefathers, but we have not done much to change this inheritance.

Jorge E. Hardoy  
*IIED—America Latina  
Buenos Aires, Argentina*

The following was received in response to the Spring 1993 issue on "Urban Infrastructure":

Editor:

I found your Spring issue on urban infrastructure very interesting, in particular the article in which Professor Akin Mabogunje wrote on the "Crux of Modern Urban Development" in the World View column. What Professor Mabogunje wrote about is a major problem affecting developing countries, particularly Nigeria. Residents are not fully informed of proposed development plans in the

city and therefore are not allowed to have a voice in the decision-making process.

In this regard I feel that there is a need for reorientation on the part of government.

Edward Ferri Ohinabousola  
*Akuri, Ondo State, Nigeria*

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## Editor's Note

Violence, whether it be in Mexico City or Washington, D.C., has a profound effect on the quality of urban life. In recent years it has seemed to escalate beyond control.

In this issue, through a series of snapshots from cities as far-ranging as New Delhi to Nairobi, correspondents have given us eye-witness accounts of violence in their cities. What these accounts show is that the causes of urban violence are strikingly similar all over the world. Ethnic strife and the integration of "second-generation" migrants in Karachi, Pakistan (lead story) are not very different from the problems of racial and economic inequality in Los Angeles, California. Frustration among low-income groups over the lack of basic services, such as clean water and adequate transportation, is causing tensions between city governments and residents worldwide. In rapidly urbanizing towns in India, for example, villagers are no longer willing to accept a lower standard of living when bombarded daily by advertisements touting the "advantages" of development. The resulting clash between modern and traditional values has led to horrible crimes against young women. And finally, the polarization of residents along economic, educational, and cultural lines is poisoning the melting pot that cities once represented. As Hector Castillo Berthier reports from Mexico City, cities have become "societies of exclusion," in which conflicts and violence are the natural result.

Perhaps most disturbing is the effect such violence is having on young people. To gain identity and respect, they are joining street gangs, being lured into the drug trade, or solving their conflicts with guns. Stories from Dakar, Senegal; Rio de Janeiro, Brazil; and Washington, D.C., confirm the effect urban violence is having on young people who see no hope in the future.

Although we offer painfully few solutions, we have nonetheless concluded that cities are not inherently violence places to live. Progress is being made by innovative mayors such as Rodrigo Guerrero in Cali, Colombia, and in communities and neighborhoods all over the world. As Paulo Sergio Pinheiro, who has run a center on urban violence for more than 20 years in Sao Paulo, Brazil, writes in his guest editorial, "It is not the city that generates violence; poverty, political and social exclusion, and economic deprivation" are what destroy the peaceful co-existence of city life. If we address these problems, our cities can remain the centers of social and economic well being they have been for centuries.

# Reflections on Urban Violence

by Paulo Sérgio Pinheiro

*Paulo Sérgio Pinheiro is professor of political science and director of the Center for the Study of Violence at the University of São Paulo, Brazil.*

It is held as a matter of common sense that the main cause of violence in society is urban development and the growth of huge cities. This conviction has deep roots that go back to the wave of urbanization that started in the twelfth century and the resulting polarization between town and country. But it is still surprising how the myth is constantly renewed and regenerated with such remarkable force.

This stereotype of the city as a locus of violence leads to the belief that urban violence has been increasing uninterrupted ever since. In reality, the state's growing monopoly on physical violence and the restraints city dwellers have imposed on themselves have led to a "pacification" of urban space. If levels of criminal behavior are taken as an indicator of violence, it is clear that violence declined from around the middle of the 19th century to the middle of the 20th; only around the 1960s did crime and violence begin to rise.

Crime as a whole became more violent in the 1980s; the murder rate in recent years has risen dramatically in both Rio de Janeiro and Washington (more than 70 murders per 100,000 inhabitants), putting the two cities more or less on a par with each other. But what is the nature of this violent crime? We must identify the different characteristics of urban violence, i.e., whether it is directed against life or property, the social context in which it occurs, and its authors and victims. Prominent among the assaults on life in the cities of the developing countries are traffic accidents and deaths, which should cause us to reflect on a category of violence meted out by the "educated" people. This suggests that any attempt to identify a causal relationship between economic or social factors and violence would be profoundly misleading.

What has happened? It is clear that the rapid growth of large cities and the cramming of their increasingly impoverished inhabitants into restricted areas has undermined sociability and increased the level of violence occurring in conflicts. Every human activity, every social relationship and interaction presupposes conflict. And to a greater extent than in any other arena of society, city dwellers are participants in networks of mutual dependency. The result, as Norbert Elias puts it, is that each individual action depends on a series of others, thereby modifying the very nature of social interplay. The city is the true locus of this interdependence, since the actions of every individual and of the public authorities affect the situation of everybody else (one need only consider infrastructure, housing, and transportation policies).

But rather than being a consequence of urban development, violence emerges in a setting of extreme economic and social inequalities, huge income gaps among countries, and growing disparities between rich and poor in every developing society. In 1989 the richest 20 percent of the world's population received 60 times as much as the poorest 20 percent. If national disparities were taken into account, the inequality ratio for the entire population of the world would probably be 150 to 1 (UNDP, Human Development Report, 1992).

In this context, in the developing countries, even in many democracies, violence is endemic and systemic, embedded in the system of social relations, affecting all of society intermittently but affecting the poor and miserable in particular. However, while violence and crime affect every social group, some groups suffer more from discrimination and violence than others, in particular blacks, women, indigenous people, young people, and children. In many

developing countries, the government does not respect its own laws and the equality of citizens before the law is undermined by the fact that some offenders may go unpunished. Rebellion against injustice now often takes the form of endemic violence, rather than of an organized movement to demand civil rights. The urban poor, especially around the outskirts of cities, exist in a relationship characterized by an acute ambiguity between the need for cooperation and the pressure of competition. The increased marginalization and lack of prospects of the most deprived segment of the population, especially the unemployed and the young, leads them to violence and illegal activities.

This social and economic deprivation is further aggravated by the fact that government agents continue to use illegal methods, such as torture in police stations and the killing of street children and young people, against the most destitute and defenseless section of the population without any fear of being caught, thus perpetuating the illegal cycle of violence. Policies for public safety in the city appear to be targeted at low-income neighborhoods, so as to prevent the poor, children, and young people from moving outside the areas in which they live or to keep them under close surveillance. It is no accident that 85 percent of the police shootings of civilians in the state of São Paulo, Brazil, occur in the periphery of the metropolitan region of São Paulo (population of over 15 million in 1991): in 1992, 1,470 of the region's inhabitants, mostly young, non-white, and innocent, were shot and killed by the police.

This rhetoric of social warfare goes hand in hand with societies that are extremely hierarchical and plagued by racism, with the dehumanizing of the poor, who are virtually identified as criminals. The killing of children and young people, which is becoming endemic in several cities in southern Brazil, can be explained by the perception of these children and youths as potential criminals who must be eliminated at any cost. The death squads which in the 1970s pursued political dissidents are now making these poor children, whether delinquents or not, their favorite target.

In practice, these problems relate to the issue of non-violence and not to the evils of the urbanization of society. Insecurity in today's cities, despite their level of violence, is considerably lower than in previous centuries. The reappearance of forms of endemic violence and crime raises the issue of the ways in which the State engages in violence, its public policies, and the pattern of individual avoidance of aggression in urban conflicts.

Life in the city, especially for the poor, is a constant battle disguised as competition. Solidarity cannot be constructed in an environment in which human rights are systematically violated and hardship undermines social systems, such as the nuclear family, thereby weakening organization and mobilization.

Having grasped these issues, we may perhaps be able to develop a more discerning view of the relationship between the city and violence, or between the poor and crime, which in turn will enable us to find solutions. It is not the city that generates violence: poverty, political and social exclusion, and economic deprivation are all working against the solidarity that would enable city inhabitants to live together peacefully despite their conflicts.

*The ideas expressed in "World View" are not representative of any agency or organization, but reflect the personal comments of each author. They are included to stimulate lively debate and interaction on various issues in the developed and developing worlds.*

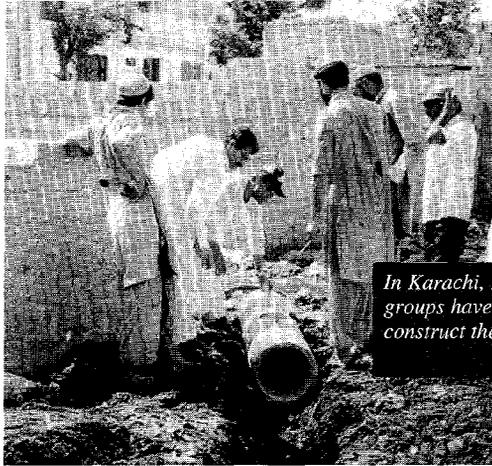
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## Karachi: Reflection of a Global Crisis

**4** In Karachi, the reasons for urban violence mirror those found in many developing and developed cities: ethnic conflict; political disagreements between the interests of the city and the province; the absence of basic physical and social infrastructure; social and economic pressures; poor public administration and corruption among city planners; and the coming of age of a "second generation" of squatter settlers in informal areas who are alienated from the mainstream of urban life. Each of these causes is closely related and cannot be looked at in isolation.

For example, it is impossible to understand the current conflicts in Karachi without studying the history of migration that began in the late 1940s. Between 1947 and 1949, 600,000 Urdu speaking refugees



*In Karachi, Pakistan, community groups have joined together to construct their own sewage system.*

migrated from India and settled in the city, changing not only the culture and language of Karachi but also marginalizing the local population.

In the 1950s and 1960s, the government's green revolution program and industrialization policy resulted in a second major migration of Pushto-speaking migrants from the northern provinces. These migrants brought with them strong tribal traditions, institutions, and support systems. Through political patronage and the political and financial power of the northern provinces they were able to dominate the transport sector and made up the majority of the working class. Their political loyalties were with their own provinces and not with the local Sindh population. In addition, their tribal structure, cohesion, informal credit systems, and energy made them a state within Karachi.

### A Second Generation of Migrants

The kind of melting pot created by emigrants to Karachi is similar to many cities where the huge influx of rural people has created tensions between not only economic classes, but ethnic and cultural ones as well. What is striking about Karachi—because of the migrations of the 1940s, 1950s, and 1960s—is that a second generation of refugees has grown up in the city (almost 70 percent of the population is Karachi-born). This group of second-generation migrants sees Karachi as its home; they have a more vested stake in the running of the city and feel entitled to a say in local politics and administration.

Second generation slum and informal settlement dwellers throughout the developing world are not like their fathers. Most of them are educated, have broken away from their traditional clan and rural structure, and have a need to identify with urban institutions and political processes. They often feel excluded from decision-making, which they see as controlled by the "elite" of the city. Thus they are alienated from the mainstream of political and

social life. Their attempts to rectify the situation through dialogue and the political process are almost always thwarted, leading to violence and class and ethnic clashes.

In addition, the second generation in Karachi has supported the federal government in federal-provincial conflicts, which are a common occurrence in Pakistan. Because of this support they are often at odds with political forces representing Karachi's surrounding areas and the city government. Although representatives from the rural areas still have more votes in the provincial assembly, they fear this new group of second-generation immigrants and their entrepreneurial spirit.

To protect the local inhabitants from being further marginalized, the provincial government has established a quota for Sindhs within the government and educational institutions. As a result, the Sindhs are guaranteed jobs and most of the provincial bureaucracy is non-Karachiite. To the growing number of second-generation refugees this is an inequitable system; in opposition that have formed armed groups and in many cases violence replaces the ballot box when local questions are being decided. As a consequence, Karachiites have not been able to develop an independent and representative political structure for their city.

Not only is much of the bureaucracy in Karachi non-Karachiite but until recently the entire police force was drawn from the northern provinces of Pakistan. Given the constant struggle between the police and Karachi residents, this fact raises tensions even higher. Young Karachiites have composed poems, calling policemen "rural savages," referring to them as "touts of the feudal system." The police on the other hand consider the Karachiite as a troublemaker and a coward who "strikes from behind." As such, the battle lines are clearly drawn.

### The Conditions of Urban Life

A second factor leading to urban violence and crime is that the local government and development authorities, as in many developing country cities, are simply unable to provide residents with the basic services required for urban life.

It is estimated that over 4.5 million inhabitants of Karachi's 10 million are living in informal squatter settlements, and that by the year 2000, seven million of Karachi's 12 million population will be living in informal areas. These residents lack water supply, sewage, electricity, and health and education facilities. They live far away from their places of work and depend on an inhuman and inefficient system of transportation to get to and from their jobs. Many squatter residents spend five to six hours travelling to and from their work. During this time they are pushed around, packed like sardines into buses, and subjected to severe noise and air pollution. Parents have little time or energy after the work day to care for their children; cases of wife and child beating are the unfortunate results.

Housing is also in critically short supply. In the 1960s and 1970s the average annual demand for housing in Karachi was 40,000 units, most of them for low-income communities. The state could only provide about 5,000 plots or units per year. Even these could not reach the target groups due to their high cost, complicated procedures of allotment, and long delays in development of services. To compensate for this, an informal system of illegally occupying and subdividing state land and then selling it to low-income families developed. This process was managed by middlemen and supported by corrupt government officials who violated and defied state rules and regulations. Over the years these land grabbers have become so powerful that government officials have now become their junior partners.

The informal transportation industry is another major issue. Of the 13,622 buses and minibuses operating in Karachi, only 1,800 belong to

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the state. The rest belong mostly to individual owners who have taken an informal loan to purchase them. The loans are given by tribal chiefs and professional money lenders from the north and only to people from their own areas. The loans carry a high rate of interest and the owners have to work day and night in order to make their payments. To repay the loans, operators have to violate traffic rules, illegally change their routes, and put pressure on and mistreat their passengers. To continue along these lines, they seek and pay for police protection.

The result of such stress is that many of Karachi's major ethnic conflicts have been the result of fatal accidents caused by minibuses. After a fatal accident, mobs set the minibus on fire, often killing the driver and then attacking police stations. Since the minibus operators all belong to one ethnic group, the conflict acquires an ethnic coloring and spreads like wildfire. The police, according to Karachiites, support the operators because they receive money from them. Despite claims from local authorities that they have plans for phasing out the minibuses, recent surveys show that 3,000 minibuses are operating in Karachi without route permits in violation of all laws and with full protection of the police authorities.

The city also faces an acute shortage of electricity and water supply. The more powerful and enterprising localities in the city manage to bribe or pressure civic agencies into better serving their areas. This is resented by those living in less fortunate areas who have no means of voicing their resentment and anger. In recent years, attacks on the offices of the Karachi Electricity Supply Corporation and the Karachi Water and Sewerage Board and the beating up of their staff have become a common feature, not only in low income but also in lower middle income areas. These attacks are followed by

## The Globalization of Los Angeles

The following is excerpted from "L.A. Was Just the Beginning: Urban Revolt in the United States: A Thousand Points of Light," by Mike Davis. Open Magazine Pamphlet Series, P.O. Box 1716 Westfield, New Jersey.

"Too many people have been losing their jobs: their *pinche* \$5.25-an-hour jobs as seamstresses, laborers, busboys and factory workers. In two years of recession, unemployment has tripled in L.A.'s immigrant neighborhoods. At Christmas more than 20,000 predominantly Latina women and children from throughout the central city waited all night in the cold to collect a free turkey and a blanket from charities. Other visible barometers of distress are the rapidly growing colonies of homeless *companeros* on the desolate flanks of Crown Hill and in the concrete bed of the L.A. River, where people are forced to use sewage water for bathing and cooking.

As mothers and fathers lose their jobs, or as unemployed relatives move under the shelter of the extended family, there is increasing pressure on teenagers to supplement the family income. Belmont High School is the pride of "Little Central America," but with nearly 4,500 students it is severely overcrowded, and an additional 2,000 students must be bused to distant schools in the San Fernando Valley and elsewhere. Fully 7,000 school-age teenagers in the Belmont area, moreover, have dropped out of school. Some have entered the *la vida loca* of gang culture (there are 100 different gangs in the school district that includes Belmont High), but most are struggling to find minimum-wage footholds in a declining economy.

The 1992 riot and its possible progenies must likewise be understood as insurrections against an intolerable political-economic order. As even the *Los Angeles Times*, main cheerleader for "World City L.A.," now editorially acknowledges, the "globalization of Los Angeles" has produced "devastating poverty for those weak in skills and resources."

## Global Facts and Figures: Urban Violence

**Since 1991, Rio de Janeiro's authorities have jailed 98 death squad members; 38 of these were military policemen.**

**In Russia, 80 people are reportedly murdered everyday, making the homicide rate twice that of the United States.**

**There are five times more privately paid guards than regular police men in Bogota, Colombia.**

**In 1990, 22 people were killed by handguns in Great Britain, 13 in Sweden, 91 in Switzerland, 87 in Japan, 68 in Canada, and 10,557 in the United States.**

**About one in five students in the United States now carries a firearm, knife, razor, club, or other weapon on a regular basis.**

*see pg. 20 for sources*

violence against the police force, who intervene to protect the offices and the utility company officials.

In the 20 to 25 years that it takes a squatter settlement to overcome these problems, a whole generation of angry young men and women have grown up in conflict with the establishment. During the early years, they are continually fighting the establishment, catering to its corruption, negotiating with it as an unequal, and suffering as a result. This suffering may mean having your home demolished, your children beaten up during the bulldozing of a settlement, being arrested, having your valuables taken from you, and living without sufficient water and sanitation. The generation that grows up in this environment hates the establishment, especially the police. Any political organization that attacks the establishment is supported by this group—a situation common to most if not all developing countries.

### A New Way of Life

The psychological and social strains on migrants coming from the rural areas also cannot be underestimated. Migrants enter a new form of life when they arrive in Karachi and settle in informal settlements. Traditional values must be compromised; women have to work; and children grow up in an environment that fosters attitudes in conflict with traditional values. Often the family breaks up once children become old enough to leave home. When family conflicts are not managed properly—and they seldom are—angry young rebels are created who become the potential muscle power of the mafia and extremist political parties, or neighborhood toughs and petty criminals. Case studies show that many young men who are forced to give up their education for economic reasons often take to violence or to crime.

In addition, many migrants now coming into the cities are met by middlemen—rather than relatives and their families—who put them up in vertical slums in the center of the city. Here they live as day-wage laborers in small rooms that are often shared by between ten and twenty people living in shifts. The result is that the area around the city center and central port has become a "male only" neighborhood, jammed with "adult" entertainment. Much of the entertainment is arranged through drug money and violence in the area is rampant.

A major casualty of such violence is the educational system. Apart from long periods of being closed, universities and professional colleges have become armed strongholds of warring actions. The army had to disarm these

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factions and move into the university campuses last year. Universities and colleges in Karachi are now surrounded by high walls; entrances are guarded by army and para-military forces; people can only enter if they can prove their identity and are searched. Cultural and extra-curricular activities have become non-existent. Cheating on exams has also become common, and those administering the exams are often threatened at gun point. Para-military forces are stationed at all examination centers to protect staff. As a result, many people now send their children to study abroad. Expensive educational institutions are being developed in the private sector whose high fees are beyond the reach of lower income or lower middle income groups. These institutions are drawing away the better teaching staff from public sector institutions. Universities and institutions of higher learning are ceasing to be a place where Karachiites of all classes can meet and grow together; education is now segregated according to economic class. Nothing could promote polarization and conflict more than this segregation of the city's youth.

## The Consequences: Violence Takes Hold

In 1987 violence escalated in Karachi as those operating the transportation systems and refugees fought each other. The conflict acquired an ethnic coloring; a number of ethnic parties surfaced and existing ones became more powerful. Guns were used in the conflict, and the city was put under long periods of curfew. Kidnappings for ransom, car thefts at gun point, and indiscriminate rifle fire became a daily occurrence. Most of the political activists who were involved in this conflict were second generation informal settlement dwellers. This conflict had severe economic consequences. Day wage labor could not be earned because of curfews. The port and industrial areas were closed for days on end. Police and army pickets searched cars and buses and a large number of people were arrested. As a result, businesses closed down and industrialists started to invest in cities in the north. Many rich migrants, mostly businessmen, went back to and invested in their provinces. As a result, unemployment increased suddenly.

Most of the violence in Karachi is supposed to be the work of the unemployed educated young men who are also political activists and belong to the lower middle classes. Violence has also affected the more affluent classes. Years of violence has closed down cinemas, made travel to beaches and the countryside difficult, kept universities and colleges closed for months, and brutalized society. As a result, idle rich young men and women, who have no access to entertainment of any kind, have taken to crime and violence.

The violence in the city and the administration's failure to stem it have led to a general feeling of insecurity. Security companies have arisen in the private sector that cater to high-income groups. Computerized burglar alarms, security guards linked by wireless to mobile armed vehicles, collective compounds, and gunmen on the front seats of expensive cars are becoming more frequent. The rich are now living in secluded urban ghettos; they do not visit the city center or the old shopping areas. Their children do not go to the museums or to the zoo. The city's historic and civic institutions have become run down, as is the city center. Libraries, art galleries, spa facilities, and entertainment areas are now being developed in elite suburbs. Yet despite their security measures and seclusion in ghettos the most violent and major robberies are committed in the elite areas of the city, and it is the elite that are kidnapped for ransom.

## New Directions

The description I have given of Karachi seems hopelessly pessimistic. Yet there are signs that conditions will improve. In the past few years a number of groups and people have emerged to fight against the deteriorating situation in the city and to mitigate the social, economic, political, and psychological

damage that has been done. These include the Edhi Trust, a large relief organization that operates ambulances and rehabilitation centers for drug addicts; provides help and assistance to victims of riots and natural calamities; runs blood banks; and helps in looking after and rehabilitating destitute children and women who have been subjected to violence, rape, and mental cruelty. Without the Edhi Trust one does not know how Karachi would cope with its victims of violence.

Then there is the Orangi Pilot Project (OPP) which has developed models of infrastructure provision, preventive health programs, and income-generation credit systems for low-income settlements. The OPP programs overcome the financial, technical, and administrative constraints that the state faces in upgrading and supporting informal settlements. The work of the OPP is expanding fast. There is also the Urban Resources Center (URC) that informs communities and groups about local government schemes for Karachi as a whole and in the process makes them aware of how government planning will effect their neighborhoods and their lives. This mobilizes them for action.

The Citizens-Police Liaison Committee (CPLC) is another organization. Citizens who have problems in dealing with corrupt police practices are helped and supported by the CPLC. There is also talk of establishing a Citizens-Minibus Operators Liaison Committee to improve the minibus service. The recently formed Concerned Citizens Association has filed public interest cases in court against the Karachi Electric Supply Corporation, Karachi Water and Sewerage Board, and the Pakistan Telecommunications Corporation.

But the solution to Karachi's violence can only develop if the continuing horizontal and vertical polarization of the society is arrested and reversed. This requires political vision and will; new and innovative planning and implementation strategies that are compatible with the culture, economics, and sociology of low-income groups; and the active promotion of institutions and attitudes that support urban values and culture as opposed to the feudal one that still dominates the media and political life in Pakistan.

Other solutions include creating a city government that represents the people, giving them a say in setting priorities. If this is allowed to occur there is no reason for the city not to be able to raise its own revenues—a factor essential to unifying different groups in the city. Likewise, committees made up of community members and city officials could liaise on a regular basis concerning planning, maintenance, and operational problems.

In response to the question of whether cities are inherently violent places to live, I think the answer is no. Karachi, like cities and towns all over the world, is struggling to adjust to massive immigration, a faltering economy, and an overburdened administrative system. If a renaissance of urban culture and values is allowed to flourish cities can overcome their problems. The culture of second-generation dwellers, if recognized, could contribute to the planning of a city—a situation much better than that of the city imposing its plan of development on an unknowing and unwilling public. Through this, members of the informal sector, who make up an increasing percentage of residents, could be better understood and institutions supporting them developed and sustained.

These solutions are not unique to Karachi—they apply to cities throughout the developing world.

*Arif Hasan, a member of the Executive Committee of the Editorial Board of The Urban Age, is an architect and planner living in Karachi, Pakistan.*

# Dakar: Youth Groups and the Slide Toward Violence

by Mademba Ndiaye

*Mademba Ndiaye is a journalist working in Dakar, Senegal. He recently interviewed members of youth groups in Dakar.*

DAKAR. They live in the center of Dakar and range in age from 13 to 20. The last lessons they learned at school are long since forgotten and gratuitous violence has become their main way of life, by day and by night, but always in groups.

The city of Dakar has, since the early 1990s, been experiencing a new form of violence, whose origin is still a topic for debate today. Sociologists and psychologists attribute it primarily to the crisis of the urban family, parents point an accusing finger at the education system, and the police inspector blames television. But all agree on one thing: this phenomenon of violence is first and foremost a product of the economic crisis.

To give themselves an identity, the groups have adopted names, whose meanings they do not even understand, from American television series and movies, such as "New Jack City."

So it is that a group of young fishermen, who spend their days at sea and their nights on the streets of Dakar, call themselves simply—but proudly—"The Hooligan Boys." There is a group known as "Vietnam City." There are also "The Black Boys," "The Mafia Boys," and even "The Odio Boys." There is also a gang called "The Eagles," which has managed to weave legends about its exploits, arousing the admiration of other groups in the central Dakar area it frequents, such as "Les Boys du Plateau."

There are different groups of young people who dream of peace and tranquility, such as the "Helion Boys" of Rebeuss, a densely populated and poverty-ridden neighborhood nestled at the foot of the beautiful edifices of the city center. Members of this group also dream of America, but this time it is the America of Michael Jordan, the basketball star, whose walk they imitate, or the America of

Michael Jackson, whose dance-style they copy.

Having seen the riots in Los Angeles and documentaries on areas of poverty in the United States on their television screens, these Dakar-based groups have also carved out their own territory, in which they impose a reign of terror during the hours of darkness.

According to Alioune Fall, a young member of "The Helions," who clearly has little sympathy for violence, "The Hooligans" are the most dangerous. Their battle weaponry is impressive; they are armed with clubs, knuckle-dusters, tear gas grenades, and knives, all carefully hidden in their clothes. The young "Hooligans" are known throughout the district of Medina (a densely populated area at the entrance to the city center) for the violence with which they create havoc at dance parties organized by other young people. As if turned on by the desire to disturb the "bourgeois" calm, they noisily burst into dances and spray people with tear-gas—all with complete impunity.

Displaying great creativity, they have also developed a kind of violence market, which enables them to "buy a fight." The process is simple: as soon as they see two groups fighting, they offer to fight instead of the group they think is the weakest. This type of honor code only serves to strengthen the admiration which the neighborhood youth feel for these "hooligans," who tend, to the great disgust of both parents and policy, to become role models.

Unlike "The Hooligan Boys" who fight anywhere and at any time, "The Eagles" are more selective. As for timing, they only appear during special holidays and festivals—15 nights per year in all. The rarity of their appearances is their strength, because they give the impression of being super-organized and are therefore more feared. They only attack city-

center night clubs, taking care to dress up like "Princes" and to walk down the middle of the street, as if to flout the policy, followed by a flashy American automobile. In fact, "The Eagles" seem very anxious to perpetuate the legend that they operate under the protection of a millionaire who lives in the West, who refuses them nothing, particularly money. This belief, which is undoubtedly unfounded, is reinforced by the fact that most of the original members of "The Eagles" have left Senegal to seek their fortune in Europe, this being the dream, amidst the country's economic crisis and unemployment, of all out-of-work youngsters.

The emergence of this phenomenon of violence, which differs from class banditry, can be dated to 1990. After the post-election riots of 1988 and the bloody violence of the Senegal-Mauritania conflict in

April 1989, a remarkable popular movement emerged known as "Set setal" (which translates as "be clean and make clean" in the Wolof language). The young members of this movement would commandeer the streets and behave as if they owned them, forcing motorists who drove down those streets that they had cleaned to pay a fee. If motorists refused to pay and turned to the police for help, the policemen would demand that they pay. The youngsters had become the kings of the city of Dakar.

The Senegalese psychologist, Serigne Mor Mbaye, interprets this phenomenon of Set setal as follows, "There is an enormous amount of aggressiveness among young people, which is not necessarily synonymous with violence, since it can sometimes be channeled into positive pursuits." However, he wondered about the

*continued on page 8*



*In Dakar, Senegal, many former youth groups often are involved in community improvement projects before turning to violence.*

future of the movement, "isn't there a risk that these young people, who clean up their

neighborhoods, will one day form rival bands and become involved in warlike confrontations?" The psychologist's fear became a reality as soon as the youngsters put an end to Set setal to avoid its political exploitation.

It should be stressed that the reason why there is no public repression of these young spreaders of violence is because they also play a role that should really be performed by the police force. In Dakar, "The Hooligans" and other similar groups are now taking care of the security of their neighborhoods by turning themselves into grassroots militias responsible for flushing out thieves and immediately applying their own kind of extreme swift justice. As a result, it is becoming increasingly common in early morning to find people lying in the streets in extremely bad shape after being beaten during the night by the neighborhood militia. Silence surrounds this violence and the police pretend not to see anything, while parents approve of the fact that these youngsters are providing security in the areas in which they live and close their eyes to the unnecessary violence involved. When this "benign" violence explodes, as it surely will, it will be hard to handle, because, as a printing plant worker claimed when questioned during the heyday of the Set setal in 1990, "these young people have grown accustomed to being obeyed by others and tomorrow, when they get it in their heads to do something different, nobody will be able to stop them." That tomorrow is now today in Dakar: Who, between "The Hooligans" and "The Helion Boys," will have the last word?

## City Residents Meet in Nairobi

by Otula Owuor

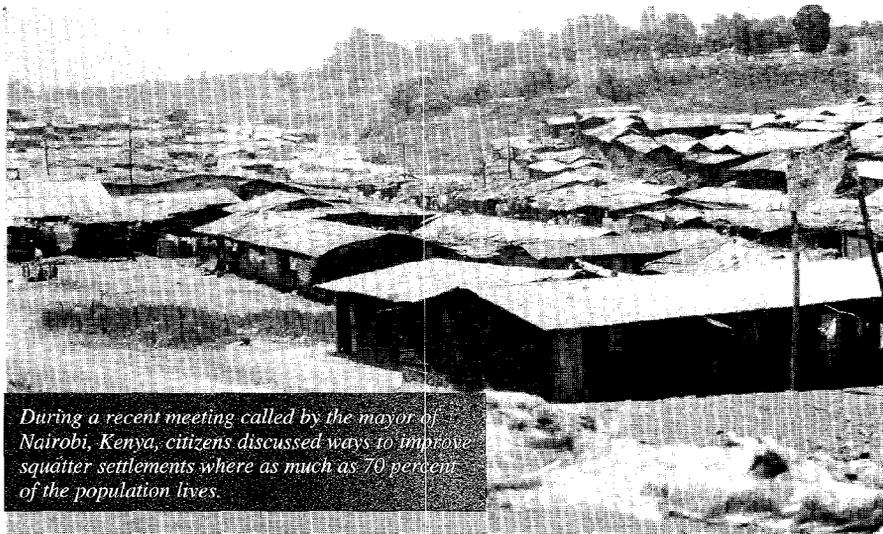
*Otula Owuor is a Kenyan journalist who regularly writes for the Nation newspaper in Nairobi.*

NAIROBI. Nairobi, Kenya's capital, boasts of many things. The latest is a convention of the city's residents called "Nairobi We Want," the brainchild of its energetic new mayor, Steve Mwangi. The meeting, held July 27-29 in Nairobi, brought together citizens to discuss the problems of Kenya's largest city. Marketed as the "Green City in the Sun," Nairobi claims to be the only capital in the world where a five kilometer drive into the outskirts of the city ends in a national park with lions, leopards, giraffes, zebras, buffaloes, ostrich, antelope, and other wildlife in abundance. But

virtually non-existent; residents often have to cross open sewers to reach their houses.

Even more startling is the increasing incidence of urban crime, including pickpocketing, robberies, muggings, motor vehicle thefts, burglaries, local and international drug peddling, and even murders. Many parts of the city have become dangerous after 8:00 p.m. when fear grips the city's residents. Crime, especially drug peddling and car thefts, is linked to Kenya's having too many legal and illegal refugees from neighboring states, while international drug traffickers have identified Nairobi

to ensure that the action plan was merged with the city's development plans. The implementation of the plan depends on decisions by elected civic leaders who come from four of the country's political parties. Nonetheless, the national Ministry of Local Government will have a major say in the final decision making. According to Nairobi's 56-year old Mayor Mwangi, the problems haunting the city can be solved if people have "faith and resolve." Mwangi has made a strong impression among city residents, experts, and even the donor community as a serious and



*During a recent meeting called by the mayor of Nairobi, Kenya, citizens discussed ways to improve squatter settlements where as much as 70 percent of the population lives.*

despite this apparent glitter, Nairobi is "dying." Barely four kilometers from the city center are some of Africa's largest slums. Up to 70 percent of Nairobi's residents dwell in these slums, with Kibera, Mathare, and Kawangare being the largest. According to Davinda Lamba, the executive director of the Mazingira Institute, a Nairobi-based non-governmental organization, 80 percent of Nairobi's population are now low-income earners. The 20 percent of the population that are high-income earners occupy 60 percent of the city's land. Two-thirds of the population does not have access to clean water, and water shortages haunt city residents. In low-income areas, sanitation systems are

as a major regional hub for those operating from Asia

The July "Nairobi We Want" conference mobilized the city to begin fighting these problems. Seventy professionals volunteered to work for three months planning the conference, which was attended by more than 3,000 participants representing a wide range of interest groups. Seventeen expert groups convened during the meeting, which ended with a "Nairobi Plan of Action" aimed at improving services and restoring the city's tarnished image. The action plan was handed over to city officials in mid-August and a second workshop was held for city councillors, administrators, and the expert group leaders in late August

committed leader who is determined to wipe out the "administrative and professional decay" that is killing the city. "The greatest achievement of the convention," said Mwangi in an interview following the two-day meeting in July, "is that for the first time city residents who had lost faith in City Hall had that faith restored. I want people in Nairobi to see it as their real home and not just a place for them to work or make money, and then retire to other places" he said.

# Drug Markets and Urban Violence In Rio de Janeiro: A Call for Action

by José Carvalho de Noronha

José Carvalho de Noronha is director of the Institute of Social Medicine and executive coordinator of the Center of Studies and Research on Rio de Janeiro of the State University of Rio de Janeiro, Brazil.

**"They have to pay for what they did. We live in the streets, but we are human beings and we are not to be treated like that."**

Vagner dos Santos, survivor of the Candelaria massacre, July 26th, 1993, Rio de Janeiro, Brazil.

RIO DE JANEIRO. By the time I had started writing these notes eight street children had recently been murdered in Rio de Janeiro. They were slaughtered in front of the Candelaria Church, in the heart of the business district in the city center. They belonged to one of several groups of children who earn their living from the streets. Small thefts, peddling, paper grabbing, begging, drug or candy selling, police watching, and prostitution are among the ways they survive. Most of them have families and homes they left a long time ago, and to which they will eventually return. They had been awakened in the middle of the night with yells and shots. It seems that the police or a "death squad" shot them to death for no apparent reason. On the same day, 12 other people had been killed, according to the newspapers.

The recent killings of street children are the latest disturbing incident in a long-term trend. Since the 1960s the leading cause of death among people under 50 years old in the state of Rio de Janeiro has been "external causes," with the number of homicides exceeding deaths from transportation accidents. In 1990, the last year to have revised mortality data, 3,391 people died from transportation accidents compared to 6,011 who were killed in homicides. If you include 1,372 deaths from firearms not explicitly classified as homicides, a total of 7,383 deaths a year, or more than 20 a day, are due to such "external causes." Eighteen percent of the

deaths occurred among young people between the ages of 10 and 19.

What lies behind such violence? Alba Zaluar, in the journal *Revista de Rio de Janeiro*, identifies two schools of thought. The first is a belief shared by the "apocalyptic" who feel Brazilians face a kind of civil war or unsolvable conflict, "Without a chance to negotiate or if institutional reform or adjustments are impossible, the Brazilian state will become bankrupt. Some people live in complete chaos, with an unbearable increase in absolute misery. This underlines the insurmountable differences among groups, categories, and social classes—differences that justify the violence being used. The opponents in this civil war are never clearly identified, nor are the questions behind the fight explained. But there is always the impoverished classes on one side and the oppressive State on the other."

The second theory is proposed by the "optimistic integrationists" who believe that the current state of violence is the brainchild of the upper classes, who have created a non-existent danger by emphasizing the differences—both in the living environment and culturally—among social classes. They thus create a fear of the poorer classes. Zaluar believes that both the "apocalyptic" and the "optimists" ignore recent changes in the form of criminality. This new modern form operates according to the *rules of the market* and the *defense of economic interests*, but it does so without legal protection

and even outside of the law. In such a scenario, gambling, drugs, and entertainment—symbols of economic gratification—become the main objectives of life.

This new modern criminal order places homeless children in tremendous danger. The drug lords establish their retail centers in the shanty towns (favelas) of the city, which in Rio are often interspersed with middle-class areas. The "consumers" (and victims) therefore live close to such drug centers. These centers contract children to sell drugs and watch for the police. In the poorer areas of the city, there is less public (governmental or non-governmental) intervention. There the drug dealers deliver "philanthropic" action to counterbalance the terror they themselves institute.

Hidden by the particular architecture of the favelas and by the fear of its inhabitants, the drug lords have established a new legal order, known as "The Law." They recruit soldiers for a war, a war against the police, a war against their rivals, a war that organizes "death squads" to fight their opponents. A war, again quoting Zaluar, that "begins with individual proposals of fast enrichment and unrestrained search for pleasure, but that ends in the interminable

circuits of personal revenge, of the pure pleasure in dominating, killing, or making somebody else suffer." This particular market has no institutional control. It is regulated and enforced only by "The Law."

Unfortunately, big metropolitan regions such as Rio cannot profit from localized action alone. They need global and universal policies to face their challenges. If global strategies of increasing urban productivity (as part of a global economy) and of alleviating urban poverty are not implemented, it is impossible for any anti-violence initiative to succeed. It is worthwhile to raise funds and launch campaigns to condemn massacres such as the Candelaria slaughter, which make every Brazilian sick. But unless we can restore the path of development so that it includes social issues as a central component, and establish sound, long-term, and universal social policies, we will not be able to overcome this new form of criminality. The strong, and very well-organized economic, social, and political forces that push violence as a standard pattern of life in our big cities will continue.

## Invisible Action: NGOs at Work in Rio de Janeiro

*Invisible Action* is an enlarged and updated version of a book originally published in Portuguese, which looks at the issue of private social assistance in metropolitan Rio de Janeiro. According to the book, about 620 different non-governmental projects are providing assistance and services to poor children and adolescents in the Rio metropolitan area (about 9 million people). Of the 620, the majority, about 577, are designed

for children with an address, living with their families in poor neighborhoods. The other 43 have been specially designed for street children who are on their own. Copies of *Invisible Action* are available from IUPERJ, Rua da Matriz, 82, Rio de Janeiro, 22260-100, Brazil.



# Escalating Violence Against Adolescent Girls in India

by Usha Rai

*Usha Rai is an urban affairs columnist for the Indian Express. Prior to joining the Indian Express in 1991, she worked for 27 years with the Times of India, another major Indian newspaper.*

NEW DELHI. Maharashtra in southwestern India, is one of the country's most socially and economically advanced states. Its capital, Bombay, is the business hub of the country. As India's film center, it is popularly referred to as "Bollywood," where more than 700 films are churned out annually.

Indian films are a mix of sex, violence, and love, and it is difficult to tell if the films imitate life or life is now drawing its inspiration from films. As Bombay's wealth and Bollywood's influence spread into adjoining rural fringes, the traditional values and morés of the middle class are being jolted. Small towns, aspiring to become big overnight, are witnessing an ugly new phenomenon—growing violence against adolescent girls.

At least a dozen cases of brutal murders of adolescent girls have been reported in the last three years in the small towns of Maharashtra. Similar incidents have been reported from other parts of India, but not of girls so young. These deaths reflect a new trend—a new sense of frustration among young men who do not hesitate to kill a girl if she does not respond to their overtures.

Shruti Tambe, a college lecturer from Pune, and representative of the Saad Yuvali Manch (Saad's Platform for Youth), has been studying this trend. She maintains this new cult of violence began with the ghastly murder of Rinku Patel, a 16-year-old girl. Tambe traces the cult of violence to the rapid industrial growth in towns and villages of Maharashtra, and exposure to films where violence dominates.

## Woman Burned

Rinku Patel lived in Ulhasnagar, a suburb of Bombay. On March 30 at 11:30 a.m. Rinku,

the daughter of a semi-government employee, was taking her final examinations in the school campus. Four armed youths in their early twenties went up to her and, in the presence of several students, teachers, and the policemen on duty, poured kerosene on her and burnt her to death. The girl died on the spot, and the boys left without anyone trying to stop them.

The incident paralyzed the tiny



suburb and shocked the nation. Two of the suspects were caught the same day. The main suspect, Harish Patel, was found dead on the railway tracks by the police on the third day.

According to Harish's friends, Harish thought that Rinku had been disloyal to him. The two had married secretly in a temple when she was 14 and he was 20, but since she was a minor she continued to live with her parents. When the father learned of the relationship he forced Rinku to sever the ties since he wanted her to marry someone of their caste. Harish had no job but he is said to have had links with smugglers.

Media reports described Rinku as coquettish, an "oversmart" girl who got the nemesis she deserved. Harish was portrayed by the media as the jilted lover. Alarming, other young girls began to receive threats from young boys seeking friendship with them: "Tumhara

Rinku bana denge" (We will do what was done to Rinku) if you spurn our advances.

In September 1993, a crime with shades of Rinku's death occurred in the village of Ahmedpur taluka of Latur district. Few girls from the village were in college, and they were looked on with suspicion. A girl progressive enough to acquire a college education was seen as being liberated and promiscuous.

Satvanguni Jadhve, 19, the daughter of Professor Jadhve from Mangeshkar College was a first-year undergraduate science student. A group of boys continuously teased, taunted, and followed Satvaguni in and outside the college. They wanted to get "friendly" with her and Satvaguni spurned their overtures.

When the pestering became intolerable, Satvaguni complained to her father and he lodged a complaint of harassment with the police. The boys, sons and brothers of the local elite including the brother of a police sub-inspector posted in the village, were annoyed that a mere slip of a girl had the audacity to complain against them and they decided to take revenge.

So on a full moon night when Satvanguni, her younger sister, 12-year old brother, and a servant boy were alone in the house, the youth arrived totally drunk to seek vengeance. They scaled the walls of Satvaguni's house, dragged her from the room where she was sleeping with her sister, took her to an adjoining room and gang-raped her, then burnt her to ashes. Because of the clout the boys enjoyed, it was initially registered as a case of suicide. After a great deal of struggle, the father was able to get the case registered as a murder. The case is still in process.

## New Phenomenon

Dowry death, the phenomena of young brides being burnt to death for not bringing enough dowry (cars, refrigerators, television sets, scooters, and other trappings of modernization demanded by greedy in-laws) is now a well established fact of life in India. The burning of young brides is done within the confines of the four walls of a home and there is little chance of the girl getting any help. In Maharashtra between 1990 and 1992 there were 2,000 cases of dowry deaths.

But this ugly form of burning to death of adolescent girls who spurn offers of "friendship" or "love" is a comparatively new phenomenon. Unlike dowry deaths, it often happens in full public view with no one coming to assist the young girl. Paralyzed by fear, the others seem to be holding back.

For example, in 1992, Shobha Tandale, 19, an undergraduate student in the small town of Islampur in Sangli district, was violently killed. She too had not responded to male suitors, and was chased by boys with knives, who stabbed her to death. The incident happened in the middle of the day. Shobha kept knocking on the doors of houses on the street on which she was stabbed, but no one would open one for her.

## Changing Values

India, despite modernization in the big cities, is still intrinsically traditional. Indian films have tremendous influence on young minds, especially on those who do not have much education, or move to the cities from rural areas. There is far too much violence in the popular Hindi films. Young men tease girls, get fresh with them, and

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often get violent when rejected. In several Indian films, when a heroine has the audacity to slap a boy who is harassing her in college or at work, the boy and his friends think of revenge. This invariably takes the form of rape or gang-rape, or stripping the girl of her clothes and humiliating her.

So in a film called *Tezab* (which means acid), when a husband, a percussionist, finds his wife, a dancer, getting more famous than himself, he throws acid on her face. In another film, *Insaf ki tarazu* (the scales of justice), a model who spurns the overtures of friendship of an affluent man is raped by him. In *Damini*, a maid servant is gang-raped by the master of the house

and his friends. A young lady of the same family who witnesses the rape tries to help the maid servant. But in court, the lawyers try to justify the rape on the grounds that the maid servant is of loose character.

Young boys are being influenced by Bombay films as well as the foreign films and soap operas being shown on satellite channels, where kissing and sex are treated as casually as shaking hands. While violence against girls is not condoned by the educated and socially conscious society, these films obviously have the approval of the censors. Undoubtedly, violence and rape are used as weapons to subjugate women. Young boys, trying to imitate their matinee idols, are eager to develop

friendships with girls as a sign of their machismo.

The trend of violence against young girls is primarily found in the middle class and lower middle class, and is also a problem of the newly-rich. But the behavior is not always related to class or status. Girls who go to college, move around freely with boys or talk to them are the envy of other girls. However, society in general and immature men in particular, see them as promiscuous. There are not enough youth clubs and other ways for boys and girls to meet and be friends without sexual overtones.

Mentally, young men are still conservative in their thinking. They cannot take in their stride the new woman who wants to work, get

an education, but does not want to be sexually harassed. The girls are not necessarily promiscuous, but the boys think they are.

As the economy improves and sleepy villages are jolted into urbanization, new values are replacing the conservative mores of the past. With the spread of education, girls are coming out of their sheltered existence, but the young men are not ready for liberated women.

Neither the police, nor the public at large, have realized the seriousness of the situation. Most families try to hide these brutal crimes as if they are a blot on the family. Rural India could well become another New York.

### ROUNDTABLE

With this edition we launch a new feature of *The Urban Age* called "Roundtable," in which we present several questions to prominent people on the topic being discussed in the issue. The purpose is to create a forum for interchange and debate among people with opposing points of view. Our hope is that readers will find it a starting point for generating their own discussions, both within their cities and in response to the *The Urban Age*.

In this roundtable, we approached Ved Marwah, research professor at the Centre for Policy Research in New Delhi. Mr. Marwah is a former police chief of New Delhi and has held numerous positions within the government of India. He is joined by Usha Rai, author of the above article on violence against adolescent women in India. Ms. Rai is an urban affairs columnist for the *Indian Express* and for many years wrote for the *Times of India*.

**UA:** *What is the nature of urban crime in New Delhi and other large Indian cities? How does it differ from urban crime and violence in other countries and regions of the world?*

**Marwah:** The statistics on crime are not always reliable, but both official and unofficial reviews have stressed that violent crime is on the increase, although it is still much lower than in many parts of the world, including most cities in the West. The increase in crime is largely due to an increase in public disorders.

Political, social, and economic conflicts are getting sharper and tend to frequently explode into violent situations. The democratic institutions and administrative structures are not strong enough to contain them. Glaring inequalities, non-existent social support systems, terrible living conditions—almost inhuman—are all providing a fertile ground for an increase in violence.

**UA:** *Does poverty lead to violence? What is the relationship between development and crime?*

**Marwah:** Poverty may not necessarily lead to violence, but it does create an environment in which violence can flourish. In cities like Delhi, where a large segment of the population lives in slums and sub-human conditions, it is not surprising that relatively minor incidents can lead to serious violent eruptions. Crimes against individuals are not fewer in low-income neighborhoods, but they are not always reported to the police.

**UA:** *What is being done to decrease the incidence of crime? Are the police doing enough?*

**Marwah:** A lot of things are being done, but, I am sorry to say, only on paper and not enough on the ground to reduce the incidence of violence and crime by young people. There is little political and administrative will to implement these schemes.

**Rai:** In New Delhi and other large Indian cities, murder, theft, burglaries, rape, dowry death (killing of young wives for dowry) is on the increase.

We don't have the muggings one hears of in New York and other American cities, nor is there the same kind of child abuse. What we do have is an increasing incidence of violence against women. Between 1987 and 1991, while the number of rape cases went up by 26 percent, there was a 27 percent increase in molestation cases and a 38 percent increase in cases of cruelty. There has been a shocking 170 percent increase in dowry deaths.

**Rai:** Yes, poverty does lead to violence—particularly in urban areas. But more than poverty I think it is the poor urbanite's exposure to a better lifestyle and to the merchandise shown on television, and their inability to get those things. This creates frustrations that manifest themselves in violence. From being a land of simple living, India is becoming a highly consumer conscious country.

**Rai:** Not very much. The government is so busy fighting for its survival and pushing its policy of economic liberalization that it has not been able to concentrate on tackling violence by young people. Our homes for young people are packed. The government does not have the resources for proper rehabilitation of young juveniles, who, when released, are sucked back into a world of crime.

# Cali's Innovative Approach to Urban Violence

by Rodrigo Guerrero



Rodrigo Guerrero, a physician and Ph.D. in public health, is a former executive director of the Carvajal Foundation in Colombia. He has been the mayor of Cali, Colombia, since June 1992.

CALI. Violence. A word that means murder, mugging, terrorism, gang crimes, fear, death, pain, sorrow, widows, and orphans. A word that has a special meaning in Colombia, a country with one of the highest murder rates in the world. Cali, its third largest city with 1.8 million people, has a murder rate of 87 per 100,000 per year, and public safety is the number one concern among citizens, regardless of social status.

Murder is the most frequent cause of death for the general population in urban areas of Colombia, including Cali. Prevention of crime has never been a public health priority, probably because violence has been looked at with a somewhat fatalistic attitude. Attempts to curtail it have focused exclusively on the police force, without facing the problem from both a scientific and holistic approach. To address this, the city government has designed a program to reduce crime rates in the city, focusing on murders as a first step.

The program, called DESEPAZ (Development, Security, and Peace in Spanish), is based on the assumption that violence is a preventable social disease. As such, methods of descriptive epidemiology can be applied to study crime and get information as to where and when it takes place, who are the victims and aggressors, and what the factors are related to violence. Besides linking research to crime prevention and control, the program assumes that violence is a multi-causal problem that requires multiple interventions, such as social development, promotion of values, and healthy patterns of social behavior, in addition to law enforcement. Finally, the program assumes that public safety cannot be achieved without the commitment of all citizens.

DESEPAZ has three main areas of action: law enforcement, education for peace, and social development. Law enforcement goes beyond increasing the police force, because it attempts to restore trust and mutual cooperation between citizens and the police. Several projects are part of this effort. These include modernization of the courts; computerization of police precincts; and better living conditions for police agents through low-cost housing, educational opportunities, and courses about human and constitutional rights. The most important strategy for law enforcement is community participation through "public safety counsels," in which local leaders meet with their authorities to discuss and deal with crime in their neighborhoods. Personal contact and exchange of information between people and authorities, as well as among the different government institutions that deal with violence, has been most effective in crime control.

Social development is achieved through micro-enterprise development, such as self-built housing, efficient food marketing, primary health care, education, environmental protection and recycling, and availability of basic social services. The city's micro-enterprise development program is diverse to suit the needs of specific groups, such as street vendors, youth groups, and women heads of households. This has allowed the program to meet the needs of a larger segment of the population. In addition, the methodology of self-built housing has allowed the city government to develop 25,000 lots and services for minimum wage families, which will soon

## An Interview with Rodrigo Guerrero, Mayor of Cali, Colombia

**UA:** *Whether it is true or not, Cali, along with other Colombian cities, has a reputation for being somewhat violent, an image that is mainly associated with the drug trade. How true is that image? How much of the violence you see is related to the drug trade and how much is due to other causes?*

**Guerrero:** It is true that Cali is a very violent city and has a particularly active drug cartel. However, I only started to study the causes of violence a year ago, and the results are not yet available to determine the participation of drug dealing in the overall problem of violence, nor to relate different kinds of crime to specific socio-economic strata or population groups. I do believe, however, that many factors lead to violence, such as poverty, drug trading, unemployment, drinking, family disintegration, child abandonment and abuse, violent television programs, and the breakdown of values. Hopefully, we will soon have a clearer picture of the problem.



Cali Mayor Rodrigo Guerrero (seated center) with his wife and cabinet at a public community-government counsel meeting.

**UA:** *How high a priority are concerns about personal safety, crime, and violence among city residents? Do these priorities differ among income groups?*

**Guerrero:** While I was campaigning, people of all socio-economic strata put safety as their most urgent and important need. This was so even in the poorest squatter areas, where the most basic needs, such as running water and sewerage, are not being met.

**UA:** *As a concept, do you think that cities are inherently a violent place to live?*

**Guerrero:** I think that the disorderly growth of urban areas and their failure to properly absorb immigrants creates a social environment particularly prone to violence; however, it is also true that the prevalence of crime is not the same in all poor urban settlements. In Cali, for example, we have observed differences in crime rates among similarly poor communities; the same thing applies to similarly poor countries. Therefore, more social research is needed to answer this question.

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## CALI'S INNOVATIVE APPROACH

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become the largest public housing project ever built in Colombia.

The slogan of DESEPAZ is, "Peace is respect of other people's rights." In other words, peace is a lot more than absence of crime; it is the result of people's positive social behavior. Therefore, peace can only be achieved through education to restore ethical and social values that lead to tolerance and peaceful living. This is why the most important of the program's fields of action is the promotion of a peaceful culture through education. This is achieved through several projects: volunteer peace promoters, conciliation centers, the promotion of a healthy family life (see data on domestic violence), the teaching of values in the school system, as well as education through the mass media to improve tolerance, rehabilitation of youth gangs, and community participation in city issues.

Peace promoters are young people who receive basic training in human rights and peaceful conflict resolution. Their job is to promote human rights and guide people in conflict to the proper authorities or conciliation centers. These centers exist within and are well-accepted by the community, and are legally entitled to provide conflict resolution counseling.

The importance of the family as the basic social unit is well recognized by social scientists. A project has been designed to train couples in the enhancement of their own relationship as well as in parenting and value teaching skills. Shared recreation and table games are encouraged to reinforce personal interactions among family members. In addition, a methodology is being designed to improve the school's capacity to develop a child's personality and moral standards.

Social marketing techniques are used to promote positive social behaviors through the mass media. TV ads on tolerance, responsible driving, and weapon carrying are also being broadcast. A campaign inviting children to give up their

war toys in exchange for an ID card that gives them free access to recreational facilities all over the city has proved to be effective in raising awareness of the relationship between weapon carrying and crime. As a result, one of the main department stores in town decided to withdraw war toys from its toy department and four gangs gave up their real weapons and signed formal commitments to become involved in a social rehabilitation process.

Community participation is ensured by establishing direct contact between the city government and the people. Once a week a Community Government Counsel takes place in one of Cali's twenty communes (political sub-divisions of the city); this two-hour meeting of the mayor and his full cabinet with local leaders takes place in public. A previously discussed agenda allows for flexibility so that timely and relevant issues can be brought up. Neighborhood security counsels and public forums on specific issues are other ways of promoting personal contact and direct communication between political authorities and the people.

It is too soon to measure the results of DESEPAZ. The program started in June 1992 with the collection of statistical data, which soon showed three particularly violent communes of the city. One of them was chosen, in which the multiple interventions described were applied with special emphasis; as a result, crime rates decreased significantly in the commune. Other effects of the interventions are equally important: people have learned that peace is not "provided" by the government; instead, they know it is the result of everyone's involvement and effort.

## Domestic Violence and its Economic Causes

Longitudinal research (conducted through surveys in 1988 and 1992) on the effects of changing economic conditions on urban households in Quayaquil, Ecuador, raised the following issues concerning domestic violence:

"The 1988 sub-sample results challenged the view that economic crisis *ipso facto* increases domestic violence by showing a more complex picture. In that study, 18 percent of women said that there had been a decrease in domestic violence. These were mainly women earning a reliable income, who identified more respect from their male partners as associated with greater economic independence. While 27 percent said nothing had changed, 48 percent said there had been an increase in domestic violence, identifying this as the direct consequence of lack of sufficient cash, stating that it always occurred when the woman had to ask for more money. A distinction was made between those men who became angry out of frustration from not earning enough and those who became angry because they wanted to retain what they did earn for their personal expenditures, identified as expenditures on other women and alcohol. In both cases however the consequence was the same and men beat their women.

The same issue was explored in 1992 to provide a comparative longitudinal perspective. In this survey, fewer women perceived

that domestic violence had increased than had been the case in 1988 (dropping from 48 to 22 percent). The reasons given related to women's increasing assertiveness, "women now defend themselves;" "now the women do not let themselves be beaten," rather than to conscious changes in male attitudes. Interestingly enough, in a number of cases this decline was attributed to "liberacion feminina." As one woman stated, "Because of women's liberation, there is less domestic violence. Women are now less dominated." Probably the most revealing information was the fact that overall, half the women said the amount of domestic violence was the same as before (48 percent in 1992 as against 27 percent in 1988). Thus, domestic violence is still a widespread phenomenon, and one which women universally abhor. "The man who beats his wife is not much of a man" is the type of comment elicited. Male inadequacy outside the home results in violence within it. "Because he doesn't feel like a man in the street, in the home he vents his anger." In no case did women see domestic violence as the fault of women. Despite the small sample size, the data show two overwhelming reasons for wife beating—alcohol and jealousy."

Caroline O.N. Moser  
*Ecuador: Longitudinal Evidence on Coping Strategies of Low-Income Urban Households*, forthcoming.



In Quayaquil, Ecuador, researchers interview women about the causes and incidence of domestic violence.

# Popular Culture among Mexican Teenagers

by Héctor Castillo Berthier



**4** Héctor Castillo Berthier is a sociologist and musician working as a researcher for the Institute of Social Research of the National Autonomous University of Mexico City. For five years he has been working on a research project to promote the culture of street gangs in Mexico City.

MEXICO CITY. In 1987 Mexico City was being “bombarded” daily by the mass media on the topic of violence among youth and street gangs. Drug addicts, murderers, petty thieves, rapists, alcoholics, perverts, vagrants, or gangsters were some of the epithets used by the press and television for a vast segment of our society, teenagers from working class areas better known as “chavos banda” or gang dudes.

Repression in the working class and poor areas of the city is more or less a permanent situation, which ebbs and flows in response to the pressure of various social groups (parents, businessmen, neighbors) or negative reports in the mass media. On Friday and Saturday evenings, the police hold raids or “dispan” operations (*dispersion de pandillas*, i.e. “band dispersions”) to “detain a few to

members, and public action to grapple with the situation was minimal, as evidenced by the countless efforts by the authorities that came and went without having any impact. There was an additional problem: how to infiltrate the youth street gangs without frightening the boys? How to win their confidence to begin to understand their environment and their universe?

We did so little by little, using rock concerts as a rallying point, thus beginning to get to know various groups of teenagers in different parts of the city. In our frequent contact with the boys, on their turf, and in organizing the rock concerts, we began the first phase of our “Diagnostic Study of Teenage Street Gangs in Mexico City.”

Some of the findings of our research were straightforward. Within the social and territorial universe of the working classes, the young acquire new ways of life and expressions. School, the institution that had previously generated expectations of upward social mobility, has proven to be limited in its ability to achieve this objective. Nor does the world of employment offer a broad range of occupational alternatives; on the contrary, it severely constrains young people with limited or no manual or occupational skills in finding a niche in an ever-shrinking market. Additionally, traditional culture, values, and social behavior are alien to them, as they no longer embrace them as previous generations did. The family seems to be weakening from its failure to give its young members the opportunity for the strong, restraining, guiding primary socialization traditionally offered during one of the most difficult stages of life—childhood and adolescence.

Mexican working class teenagers have been developing

their own way of life and forms of economic and social survival. Dress, language, use of inhalants and other drugs, a taste for Mexican rock music, and their efforts to organize themselves into street gangs and larger associations are “news” reported daily by the mass media.

In reaction, the middle classes have become apprehensive about these young people and tend to compare their existence to a modified and expanded version of the feared “gangs” of past decades. The presence of these teenagers is perceived as threatening, ultimately resulting in requests for beefed up public and private protection to guarantee law and order, and penalties for the crimes committed or supposedly committed by the street gangs. However, the underlying causes—namely social injustice and extreme poverty—are rarely mentioned.

One of the main characteristics of the gangs in Mexico City is to “be seen,” to “be there” and to sound out outsiders who appear from time to time in their neighborhoods. It was therefore not difficult for various emissaries of the city government to enter areas of the city to organize more formal political groups (popular youth councils), which now exist, although their prestige among the teenage population is minimal, as is their power of assembly.

One year after we began our work (December 1988), the diagnosis was completed. More than 1,500 street gangs in the city, organized by territory, appeared in our report. One interesting finding was the tendency of the street gangs to give themselves names and self-deprecatve attributes that set them apart from conventional society: *Mierdas Punk* (Punk Shit),



“Young man sitting on a rain of bombs,” part of a mural of more than 40 paintings promoted by a rock radio station in Mexico City. Young people seized abandoned walls to do the paintings, which are an expression of the city’s gang culture.

We began the first phase of our research at that time with crystal-clear objectives: first, to measure the real number of gangs and geographically plot the “most violent areas”; secondly, to seek to curb the brutal repression exercised by the police against the gang members.

frighten the larger group.” A survey of 16 police chiefs in Mexico City bore this out: the police and local authorities considered gang members as no more than criminals or drug addicts and as such felt they had to be regularly kept in check.

These raids created an extremely tense situation, with the repression triggering more violence in a vicious circle. No firm contact was established with the gang

<sup>1</sup> “Chavo” is a synonym used colloquially to designate “youth”; “banda” is similarly used to designate a street gang.

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*Mugrosos* (Greasers), *Sátiros* (Satyrs), *Vagos* (Vagrants), *Verdugos* (Executioners), *Picudos* (Grubs), *Nazis*, *Virgindad* (*Sacudida* (Shattered Virginity), *Ratas Punk* (Punk Rats), *Malditos Punk* (Wicked Punks), *Defectuosos* (Bad Seeds), *Anfetaminas* (Amphetamines), *Niños idos* (Bad Boys), *Sex Leprosos* (Leprous Sex), *Apuestos* (Stinkers), *Gusanos* (Worms), *Reos* (Criminals), *Cuaterros* (Horse Thieves), *Patanes* (Uncouth), *Vascas*, *Chemos*, *Mocos* (Snots), *Sapos* (Toads), *Cerdos* (Pigs), *Bastardos* (Bastards), *Amibas* (Amoebas), *Funerales* (Funerals), *Sex Capadoras* (Sex Capades), *Manchados* (Eyesores), *Solitos Punk* (Punk Loners)...each accompanied by their "diaper brigade," a sort of "minor league" for children under 12 years of age.

Another characteristic of members of the groups is a lack of hope about the future; apathy that comes from surviving in a situation of economic destitution; individual refuge in the collectivity of the gang (that still does not prevent introversion); personal crisis, use of drugs, and criminal behavior that often makes them their own worse enemies.

But not everything we found involved drugs, violence, and crime. There was a positive side to gangs that was linked to the family, creativity, use of free time during which they rebuilt values, and identities that had been apparently lost. We found an enormous, virtually hidden lode of creativity among the gangs, from which we learned about their music, writings, murals, poetry, traditions and, in particular, their enormous desire to be heard.

We then began a second phase of research (1989-1992) focused on rescuing the main forms that their expression took. We began in three areas:

- A weekly radio program on Saturday evenings to play their music, read their prose and poetry, and put them in front of the microphone so that they could speak openly about any topic of

## A Plea for Children and the Future

In many ways money has become the main value of our society, and not having access to money or having very limited access to it fosters isolation, exclusion, and loneliness. It is precisely this economic/emotional perspective that we find as one of the main causes for the development of violence among young people. Children make their own decisions, but they are clearly influenced by those with whom they come into contact; while for some this is the basic unit of the family, for others it is the street gang, ghetto, or the underworld.

Children who grow up in families where they are exposed to abuse and mistreatment or who suffer from violent behavior learn from the time they are little to respond in the same way when they are frustrated or angry. But those who are born into adverse conditions have a double battle from the beginning of their lives: first, against their environment, and second, against the society and the rules of the system.

There are many legends about violence, primarily about violence that occurs in slum neighborhoods. It is often said, for example, that it is logical for those living in

poverty, who have parents who have not finished elementary school and who live "miraculously" in the informal sectors, to be more likely to have delinquent children. But this is only one side of the problem.

Recently in San Francisco, a businessman entered a building in the downtown area, went up to the 32nd floor, and with a machine gun killed eight attorneys in cold blood before turning the gun on himself. This event received global attention—the media seized on it and spread news of it throughout the world. My question is "How many lawyers will have to die before we take violence in the slums seriously? How many more victims of a certain social class will have to die before laws and policies are made to deal with the negative effects of economic liberalization on those living in cities?" There is no answer, only a thunderous silence.

The society of exclusion has been taking over our cities and is increasingly present in our lives. The effects of this seclusion can be seen in virtually all societies and in developing countries going through economic and social crises. In developing countries, these result in a high percentage of adolescents and children living in the society, in extremely low levels of education, and

in high rates of unemployment and underemployment. These crises separate people as if they were water and oil. They create a perfect breeding ground for discontent and violence.

Children and adolescents are the future. Yet today children seem not to have before them the wide range of possibilities that enabled other generations to improve their living and working conditions. To the contrary, many of them seem to be living more outside of the concept of social development rather than playing a predominant role in the future.

In urban neighborhoods and on city streets young people are doing their part. They are developing a popular culture of their own, with traditions and values that have been reborn and metamorphosized under new and different points of view. For us the task is to recognize these efforts, to understand the thinking of these young people, their rejections, and their needs. It is then that we can begin to help them believe in a better future.

—Hector Castillo Berthier

interest (AIDS, repression, sexuality, authoritarianism, etc.).

- During the week we visited areas identified by our broadcast audience to obtain more material and make contact with new groups.

- We set up an independent production company, "Circo Volador" (Flying Circus), a type of NGO, that would organize rock concerts, publish a fan magazine, and organize various archives (photography, poetry, literature, etc.).

We transmitted live the "Only for Street Gangs: Beyond Rock" program on 144 Saturdays, until some newspapers, frightened by the "indecent" language used on the program, began to call us "rebel radio" and charged that we were agitating and trying to subvert the young.

The manager of the station began to fill up our commercial time,

recruiting for the army and presenting a 30-minute taped news broadcast.

Mid-way through the program we had to play the national hymn, and access by our guests to the broadcasting studios was curtailed.

We dedicated the last program aired to authoritarianism and the enormous obstacle that this represented for democracy and the free expression of specific problems such as ours. Following this, the Secretariat of Governance drafted a paper that extracted from more than 50 programs "phrases," "bad words," and "examples of subversion," from our shows which were circulated among public officials and journalists.

Off the air and without having planned, we gradually began to receive calls and visits from many of our radio listeners, who brought materials and offered

their unconditional help in finding a new forum.

Fourteen months have elapsed since the end of the program. We have reorganized the archives and are now about to launch a third phase: "Youth Musical Culture in Mexico," with a clearer and longer-term idea for validating the work of the gangs, while still conserving its essence.

The research is continuing, but with a clear activism component. This has been possible only due to the mutual trust that has grown between the gang members and the researchers, between reality and theory. It is still a bit premature to write the end of the story.

# The Disease of Violence

by Beverly Coleman-Miller



**B** Beverly Coleman-Miller is a physician who works in the area of urban health care, specifically violence prevention and its effects on children. She has held numerous positions with the government of the District of Columbia and is currently president of the BCM group in Washington, D.C. This article is based on an interview conducted with Coleman-Miller by The Urban Age.

WASHINGTON, D.C. America and the world have adjusted to the sight of blood-stained pavements, stretchers covered with sheets and children, wide-eyed and tearful. The sounds of families covering their faces and wailing in grief over the rat-a-tat of machine guns has become a common sound—reporters can even duck as bullets fly and they continue to speak with no hesitation. Violence on the planet is not an emergency which requires immediate intervention. Violence has become a human condition. We, as citizens of the world, have adjusted our eyes and our hearts to the ravages of violence on our televisions, in our streets, and in our living rooms.

I am noticing a rather sharp distinction between the parish (or neighborhood/community) level reaction to violence and the reaction to violence on a national/legislative level. Our national leaders have other issues that seem to transcend violence and its impact on society; indeed, it is their job to make their concerns appear to carry the same weight and magnitude as random deaths in the street.

For example, in the same month that Clarence Thomas was going through his confirmation hearings for the U.S. Supreme Court and arousing a lot of discourse and concern across the country, 53 young black men in Washington, D.C.—within five miles of the president's house—died from gunshot wounds and stabbings. Yet there was no outcry over their deaths, no one wrote their congressman, no one staged an outright protest. Because at the national level there is a tolerance for this human condition, it must be terribly confusing for young people to understand what is considered legitimate violence and what is not.

There are countries that have known peace and they are very different from us. We have never had a war on our land during our lifetime, but when we compare what is happening to the children of Bosnia and what is happening to children in many of our urban centers, we can say that the children in Bosnia are growing up having known peace. Before the war they lived in peace, and they can see an end to the current violence if just the peacemakers came together at the table. That is very different from the mindset that our children in southeast Washington D.C. have, who have never known peace. Since they have lain in their cribs and gone out on walks they have had to be protected from sniper fire, from beatings and assaults, from the effects of drug-related crime in our cities, from the effects of high stress, and from abuse. So our children in parts of D.C. have witnessed violence all their lives.

Having never known peace it is difficult for them to come to the resolution that this is *not* a human condition, that this is something that can be fixed. As a scientist I wonder what it's like for a child of 11 or 12 to witness his or her own mortality—for a 14-year-old to go to three funerals a week and see what appears to be their own body in the casket.

My theory is the following. You see these kids on the street in expensive running clothes and sneakers, with big cars—and they are acting exactly like terminal patients in the way they behave—they have no concept of the *possibility of a future* and so they are making the choices of someone who has no future; that to me puts a huge percentage of our population into a terminally ill posture. When we have 14 year olds that are

terminally ill, we have a phenomenon that must be addressed—their choices will all be wrong, based on the fact that they have no future.

There is a natural history to this disease process. A segment of our society started selling drugs. This segment, or those people “over there” access things differently than we do, just like the person who sells cars can access car radios and antennae differently than we can. We allow certain people to continue to access car radios and antennae because when we buy a new car we expect it to have an antennae on it. Now the same thing is happening in an area of Washington, D.C. Those people “over there” were allowed to first sell drugs without it being published everyday in the *Washington Post*. So just like a car salesman can get antennae, they can “access” guns, and we allowed them to get the guns and shoot each other. For years the drug-related crime continued and because none of the people writing the articles and reading the *Washington Post* had any bullet holes, the killing was allowed to continue.

So we allowed this disease process to progress all the way up to the semi automatics before somebody got shot out on the highways that link the city with the suburbs. Then we said “Wait a second—this disease process is spreading our way, we've got to do something.” For years we never took responsibility for stopping it before it got out of control. Now we have a situation in which 1 in 20 kids go to school with a gun in the United States. Between 250-350 shootings and stabbings a month occur here in Washington, D.C., where we have had a 1500 percent increase in penetration injuries (gunshot wounds) among little children going into childrens' hospitals.

When you live in a world in which you are disenfranchised and where your level of power is so low that the ability to change things with a machine gun becomes a very attractive resolution, then your question is not why should you shoot somebody, your question is why *shouldn't* you.

*In northwest Washington, D.C., children gather outside a United Way clubhouse. A recent survey showed that more than one-third of U.S. students between the ages of 12 to 18 thought that guns made it unlikely that they would live to “a ripe old age.”*



We actively seek our developing country readers' input for this section. Our intention is to broaden our network among developing country city managers and their urban representatives.

## CALIFORNIAN CITIES STUDY AND RESPOND TO VIOLENCE

*Contacts: Dr. Caswell Evans, Jr., Los Angeles County Department of Health Services, 241 North Figueroa St., Room 347, Los Angeles, CA 90012, USA. John C. Martin, Deputy City Manager, 333 90th St., Daly City, CA 94015, USA, Tel.: 415-991-8127.*

Mention urban crime in California, and most people think of the Los Angeles riots in 1992. But other smaller cities in the state are also beset by gang violence and other crimes.

### Los Angeles builds a coalition

Los Angeles has the highest mortality rate of any U.S. city. Injuries caused by interpersonal violence are the leading cause of death for minority youth in the city. In 1991 there were 2,062 homicides and the majority of victims and perpetrators were minority males between the ages of 15 and 34. An increasing share of this violence is related to urban street gangs. More than 2,000 visits to emergency rooms occurred as a result of the L.A. riots.

In response to the city's public health crisis due to violent injuries, the Los Angeles County Department of Health Services Injury Prevention and Control Project formed a coalition of experts on violence prevention. Known as the Los Angeles County Violence Prevention Coalition, the group consists of community members, local businessmen, medical doctors, public health officials, police, school officials, and state representatives. Their goal is to quantify the magnitude of the problem and to develop effective prevention programs.

The coalition has formed five subcommittees: (1) violence in education, (2) policy and planning, (3) the media, (4) epidemiology, and (5) community mobilization and resource identification.

### Daly City's flexible response

Daly City, close to San Francisco, has experienced an increasing number of youth-related violent incidents ranging from assaults to stabbings, armed robberies, drive-by shootings, and a torture murder of a teenager. Most of these incidents were incited by tensions among juvenile gangs formed primarily along racial, cultural, and ethnic lines.

After a traditional response of stepped up police enforcement in areas frequented by gangs failed to prevent the gruesome revenge killing of a teenager, the city council supported the mayor's appointment of an anti-gang task force. Out of this several programs were implemented including a youth advisory committee that initiated a parent awareness campaign and which provides support for parent education workshops. Other initiatives included an anti-gang education program in the elementary and middle schools and a restructured juvenile diversion program.

With limited resources, city officials have worked closely with non-profits, local businesses, and the state to use an integrated service delivery approach. This was accomplished through the FUTURES project, which established on-site, school-based social service offices to deal with the needs of at-risk youths. The program fills a major gap by providing early intervention for at-risk youth and deals with many of the causes of youth violence. Five FUTURES offices have been established within the community and within eight months of its inception, more than 800 cases have been processed.

## CALI COPES WITH GANG VIOLENCE, HIGH MURDER RATE

*Contact: Rodrigo Guerrero, Mayor of Cali, Cali, Columbia.*

Cali, Colombia, is coping with widespread gang violence through a program that rehabilitates gangs. Launched in 1992, the program set out to tackle the daunting problems wrought by the estimated 8,000 young men and women, organized into 136 gangs, who have been responsible for much of the city's crime.



The city government has initiated or supported a range of community-based initiatives to eliminate gang violence. First, gang members sign a commitment and hand in their weapons in a special ceremony. In exchange they receive job training and continuing education. Youth houses provide both recreational and other services, such as information on job and educational opportunities, and micro-enterprise training. Today, just one year after the program was launched, 34 of the gangs (constituting 1,200 members) are participating.

## OTTAWA-CARLETON REGION—YOUTH AND VIOLENCE INITIATIVE

*Contact: Don Wiseman, Chief of Social Services, Ottawa Board of Education, Ottawa, Canada. Tel: (613) 239-2748.*

The Ottawa-Carlton region has a population of over 75,000 persons residing in the national's capital, Ottawa, and a number of rapidly growing neighboring cities and communities. The area is well off economically; major employers include the federal government, service organizations, and high technology firms. In recent years, the community has been involved in addressing youth at risk through a program that includes the following: organization of a community-wide conference on youth and violence attended by over 500 people representing local agencies, services, and youth groups; establishment of a community research/organizational process designed to determine the extent of and types of violence and to develop a community response capacity; and development of a community-financed strategy for addressing specific problems such as racial violence, violence in malls, and juvenile delinquency.

## Urban Crime: Global Trends and Policies

by *Hernando Gomez Buendia (ed.)*,  
*The United Nations University*,  
*Toho Seimei Building, 15-1*  
*Shibuya 2-chome, Shibuya-ku,*  
*Tokyo 150, Japan, 1989. ISBN*  
*92-806-0679-3.*

Crime is a pressing threat to life, personal integrity, and property in most cities of the world. Its high incidence in urban environments not only challenges the very foundations of the social order but carries with it a heavy toll of human suffering, economic waste, and general deterioration in the quality of life.

Economic development, along with the material benefits it brings, generates urbanization and social

and occupational changes which can erode the cohesiveness of traditional societies. One result is that, in many societies,

economic growth correlates to increasing crime rates. The phenomenon is global in scope, touching the lives of citizens of most of the world's large cities.

Yet urban crime is seldom a consideration in national development plans, and government policies and action are often inadequate, underfunded, and poorly administered. Very few cross-cultural studies of urban crime have been attempted, especially with regard to the special needs and conditions of developing countries.

This book presents case studies from eight cities: Bangkok, Bogota, Lagos, Nairobi, San Jose, Singapore, Tokyo, and Warsaw. The cities represent a broad range of regional differences, differences in cultural and legal traditions, in political and socio-economic systems, and in levels of criminal incidence. For each, a detailed analysis of crime trends, the public policy measures have been most

successful in crime prevention and control, how criminal justice systems function, and the situation of juvenile delinquency are presented.

The findings and alternatives are meant to be of interest and value not only to scholars of criminology, but also to policy makers and community leaders concerned with ordinary crime prevention and control.

## Children of the Cities

by *Jo Boyden with Pat Holden*,  
*London, Zed Books, 57 Caledonian*  
*Road, London N1 9BU, England,*  
*1991. ISBN 0-86232-957-4*  
*(paperback).*

Nearly half the world's population lives in towns. Some 400 million children live in developing country cities alone. Their poverty and struggle for survival are paralleled in the homelessness, unemployment, and exposure to drugs faced by so many young people in developed countries. *Children of the Cities* gives a thorough account of the abuse and exploitation experienced by the urban young worldwide. It is critical of policy makers who have neglected the needs of young people. Yet it also highlights the strengths of urban children and the positive developments in child welfare.

The book draws on evidence from children themselves, describing what life in the city is like—the work they do, their leisure time, schooling, home life, health and nutrition, and their new vulnerability to the AIDs epidemic and drug culture. It looks at the physical hardships that many of them face, as well as the emotional and social consequences of urban life.

According to the author, children depend on several institutions for their welfare: their family, the community, and government. In terms of the

family, Boyden argues that the promotion of Western values such as the nuclear family may be countercultural and not an effective survival strategy for the urban poor. Extended families serve as a necessary support network, especially in an economic climate where women are critical if not the primary breadwinners. The issue of single-headed households, principally by females, places an incredible burden on poor urban single mothers.

Boyden acknowledges that investments in children must make both human and economic sense. In this regard, health and education are two principal responsibilities of government to guarantee an acceptable level of protection for children. The first line of protection is against child abuse; the second against exploitation of children in the child labor market. The exploitation of children in the labor market, according to Boyden, has been a distinct feature of the process of industrialization. Children represent the lowest wage earners in society. Since in many countries their employment is illegal, the children implicitly give up labor rights. In some respects, children are the "illegal aliens" or the undocumented workers within their own third world economy.

In the final chapter the authors synthesize their findings and propose the following actions: 1) services to urban youth should be demand driven; 2) increased levels of funding for services for children is essential; 3) international standards of care and treatment should be developed for children and young people; 4) children and young people should be represented in government; and 5) solutions to poor children, and children at large, demand more community participation and a greater role for local government.

## Resources

*Agenda*, A Journal About Women and Gender, "Violence in Focus," No. 16, 1993.

"Children of Single Parents in a Slum Community," by Shalini Bhurat in *Indian Journal of Social Work*, 1988, 49, 4, October 1988.

"Delinquency and Substance Abuse in India and the United States: A Test of Strain, Control, and Social Learning," by Seha Rajani and Kumari Kethineni, UMI Dissertation Service, Ann Arbor, Michigan, 1992.

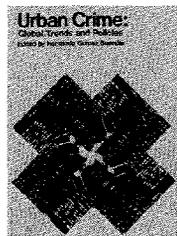
*Gender Planning and Development, Theory, Practice and Training* by Caroline O.N. Moser. London: Routledge, 1993.

"Report of the Expert Group Meeting on Adolescence and Crime Prevention in the ESCAP Region," Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific, Proceedings of conference, 1989.

*The Violence of Development* by Joke Schrijvers, Institute for Development Research. Utrecht, the Netherlands: International Books, 1993.

*The Built Urban Environment: The Sociology of Urban Space* by Libardo Leon Guarin (in Spanish). Bucaramanga, Colombia: Publicaciones UIS, 1992.

*Death Without Weeping: The Violence of Everyday Life* by Nancy Scheper-Hughes. Berkeley, Calif.: University of California Press, 1992.



Below is a list of urban events and training courses culled from *The Urban Age's* current files. We regret that more events from developing countries are not listed. If you would like your event to be included, please send announcements to the Editor, *The Urban Age* Rm. S10-108, The World Bank, 1818 H Street NW, Washington D.C. 20433

## Conferences

**Havana, Cuba**—October 12-29, 1993. **Principles for the Urban Preservation and Zoning of Historic Sites.** For more details contact: Zoila Cuadras Sola, Centro Nacional de Conservacion, Restauracion y Museologia, Convento de Santa Clara, Calle Cuba No. 610, La Habana Vieja, 10100, Havana, Cuba, Tel.: 53-7-61-2877/61-3775, Fax: 53-7-33-8212/33-8213

**Antwerp, Belgium**—October 25-30, 1993. **Global and European Forum on Urban Environment—Social Issues and Health in Cities.** For more details contact: The Society for Research on Environment and health, c/o Community Health Services, Uitbreidingsstraat 506, B-2600 Antwerp, Belgium, Tel.: 323-230-92-32, Fax: 323-230-16-44.

**Calcutta, India**—November 4-6, 1993. **Seventh International Congress on Human Settlements in Developing Countries—Rent, Income and Affordable Shelter in Developing Countries.** For more details contact: Prof. K.P. Battacharjee, Centre for Human Settlements International, 27 Netaji Subhas Road, Calcutta 700001, India, Fax: 91-33-2486604.

**Manizales, Colombia**—November 12-15, 1993. **Latin American Seminar on Cities and the Urban Environment.** For more details contact: Luz Stella Velasquez, Instituto de Estudios Ambientales, Universidad Nacional de Colombia, Seccional Manizales, Carrera 27 No. 64-60, Apartado 127, Manizales, Colombia, Tel.: 968-810000, Fax: 968-863220.

**Nairobi, Kenya**—June 13-16, 1994. **International Seminar on Gender, Urbanization and Environment.** For more details and a call for papers form, contact: Diana Lee-Smith, Mazingira Institute, P.O. Box 14564, Nairobi, Kenya, Tel. 254-2-443219, Fax: 254-2-444643.

**Colombo, Sri Lanka**—August 21-26, 1994. **Twentieth WEDC Conference—Affordable Water Supply and Sanitation.** For more details and a call for papers form, contact: John Pickford, Water Engineering and Development Centre, Loughborough University of Technology, LE11 3TU, United Kingdom, Tel.: 44-509-211079, Fax: 44-509-222390/1.

## Education Programs and Courses

**Istituto Universitario di Architettura di Venezia**—Urban Planning in Developing Countries, two year postgraduate program offered in Italian beginning every March. For more details: Segreteria, Scuola di Specializzazione PVS, Palazzo Tron, S. Croce 1957, 30127 Venezia, Italy, Tel.: 041-796-218, Fax: 041-524-0807.

**Oxford Brookes University**—MSc. and Diploma programs are offered in Development Practices. For more details contact: Kay Chamberlain, Administrator, Centre for Development and Environmental Planning (CENDEP), School of Architecture, Oxford Brookes University, Gypsy Lane, Headington, Oxford OX3 0BP, United Kingdom. Tel. 0865-483413, Telex: G83147 VIA.

**University of Central England in Birmingham**—Msc. and Diploma programs are offered in Housing and Project Management in Developing Countries. For more details contact: Dr. Hohsen Aboutorabi, Birmingham School of Architecture, Faculty of the Build Environment, Perry Barr, Birmingham, B42 2SU, Tel.: 021-331-5115, Fax: 021-365-9915.

**The University of Birmingham**—MSc. and Diploma programs are offered in Development Administration. Other M.Sc. programs are offered in Public Economic Management and in Health Care Management for Developing Countries. Diplomas are offered in Development Management, in Information Management for Development and in Local Government Management. For more details contact: Development Administration Group, School of Public Policy, The University of Birmingham, Edgbaston, Birmingham, B15 2TT, United Kingdom, Tel. 021-414-4987, Telex: 333762 UOHAMG, Fax: 021-414-4989.

## Newsletters

A selected list of newsletters and journals carrying information on urban development issues

ACCION INTERNATIONAL BULLETIN  
130 Prospect Street  
Cambridge, MA 02139  
USA  
Tel.: 617-492-4930  
Fax: 617-876-9509

ASIAN JOURNAL OF ENVIRONMENTAL MANAGEMENT  
Centre of Urban Planning and Environmental Management  
The University of Hong Kong  
Pokfulam Road  
Hong Kong  
Tel.: 852-859-2720  
Fax: 852-559-0468

CRDA NEWS  
Christian Relief and Development Association  
P.O. Box 5674  
Addis Ababa  
Ethiopia  
Tel.: 65-01-00  
Fax: 65-22-80

FIRST CALL FOR CHILDREN  
3 UN Plaza  
H9-F  
New York, NY 10017,  
USA  
Fax: 212-326-7768

HEALTH ENVIRONMENTAL  
Division of Environmental health  
World Health Organization  
1211 Geneva 27  
Switzerland

SPACE AND ENVIRONMENT  
Korea Research Institute for Human Settlements  
272 Youido Dong  
Yongdondpo-gu, Seoul  
150-010 Korea  
CPO Box 9016  
Fax: 82-02-782-3807

WORLD OF WORK  
ILO Publications  
International Labor Office  
CH-1211 Geneva 22  
Switzerland  
Tel.: 022-799-6575  
Fax: 0041-22-788-3894

## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

continued from page 2

Editor:

The article entitled "The Changing Nature of Infrastructure" in your

Spring issue is a very effective treatise on how infrastructure policy must be structured in both developed and developing countries if future infrastructure service needs are to be met. This concise statement is important reading for all infrastructure policymakers. The emphasis in the article on sustainable service delivery, operations and maintenance, appropriate incentive structures, and meeting actual service demands rather than building facilities are very timely and represent essential issues in effective infrastructure delivery.

Several points made in the issue should be emphasized and extended. First, understanding the types of infrastructure demanded and the level of demand are keys to avoiding wasted infrastructure investments. Efficiency in the use of resources requires that infrastructure be provided only where an effective demand exists. Measurement of demand can be difficult, particularly in places where no broad-based service delivery has previously existed (such as improved water on the urban fringe) or for new infrastructure types (such as sophisticated

telecommunications systems), but the opportunity cost of resources is too great not to make the effort. However demand is measured, the goal is to ensure that service delivery is consistent with local needs and wants. As discussed in the issue, participatory planning is one way to confirm that infrastructure investments are consistent with local needs, but participation may not be necessary in a narrow sense. Privatization can be an alternative means for demand revelation if proper incentive mechanisms are in place, and little participatory involvement may occur.

Second, local financing is essential to sustainable infrastructure services. Local finance must be the source of funding for operations and maintenance, and, where possible, the initial investment. The national government has not been a reliable, consistent source for underwriting ongoing delivery of services in the developing world (and seldom in the developed world). National government's promises to provide revenues for local uses have failed to materialize again and again. Wherever feasible, user fees should be imposed and the revenues should be placed in a carefully earmarked account. Major benefits of user fees include that they are a

means to generate revenues, ration consumption, and achieve equity from a benefits perspective.

However, user fees should not be expected to generate revenues beyond what is necessary to provide the infrastructure service for which they are imposed.

William F. Fox  
Professor and Head  
Center for Business and  
Economic Research  
College of Business  
Administration  
University of Tennessee

Editor:

I congratulate you on your new publication. I think it will fill a gap now existing on up-to-date information on urban areas. As possible subjects to be analyzed, I would like to suggest the development of "Private Urban Road Projects," financed by private enterprises and urban tolls. Another subject is the issue of urban planning in democratic systems, through which community development plans or community regulations must be approved by the people. This system is similar to the old Cabildos Abiertos (Open Town Halls) of colonial times. Although it is good to have a democratic system, we have begun to

see that this process can obstruct the development of urban plans due to the public's lack of technical knowledge; private interests can also become involved to the detriment of the plan.

Jamie Inurriaga  
Geographer  
National University Andres  
Bello  
Santiago, Chile

Editor:

I would be interested in knowing more about how to establish the English equivalent of the AGETIP Public Works Execution Agency, mentioned in your Spring issue. The labor-intensive method of executing works is a welcome development, particularly in Nigeria where both the purchase and running costs of construction equipment are on the rise.

Mike Dike  
Anambra State Water  
Corporation  
Enugu, Nigeria

To receive *The Urban Age* please fill out the information below and return to The Editor, *The Urban Age*, Rm S10-108, 1818 H Street NW, Washington, D.C. 20433

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A fee of \$40.00 per year will be charged to developed country subscribers.

## Future Issues

In late June members of the executive committee of the *Urban Age*'s editorial board met in The Hague to discuss the journal's first year of operation and to "brainstorm" on topics for future issues. The meeting was lively and creative, with no less than 35 topics being suggested. In narrowing down potential topics, the committee decided on "Urban Transportation" for the Fall 1993 issue, and "Politics and the City" for its Winter 1994 issue. We look forward to receiving your comments and thoughts on these upcoming issues.

Sources: *The Economist*, July 31, 1993; *Urban Crime: Global Trends and Policies*, 1989; National Public Radio, August 17, 1993; *The Washington Post*; U.S. Department of Education.



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