

2017 CAN Summer Book Study

The New Urban Crisis

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Session #4 Study Guide – Chapters 9 & 10

Chapter 9 – The Crisis of Global Urbanization

In the 7th World Urban Forum in Medellin, Colombia, the Medellin Declaration was adopted. It argues that cities are central to addressing (pg. 167):

- climate change
- poverty
- job creation
- public health
- sustainable energy
- inclusive development

In the coming century, 7 to 8 billion people will move to cities, most in poorest reaches of the developing world. 60% of infrastructure that will be needed has not been built yet. (pg. 168)

The number of people who live in destitute conditions in world's slums is equal to the population of the U.S. and European Union combined. (pg. 168)

There are three waves of urbanization that are described. Urbanization in developing nations has already occurred. The other two waves have yet to occur. Wave 2 is the wave of urbanization of China (by 2025, China will have 200 cities with population of 1 million or more). Wave 3 is the urbanization of Africa and the rest of Asia. (pg. 169)

Cities of 1 million in population in 1800 (1), in 1900 (12), in 1950 (83), and in 2005 (400). (pg. 169)

Cities of 10 million in population in 1950 (2), in 2017 (28) and projected in 2030 (40). (pg. 170)

Claim: Urbanization has ceased to be a reliable engine for progress. (pg. 174).

Solution proposed: build skills & capabilities of new arrivals to urban communities (e.g., Liu Gong Li & Rio De Janeiro). (pg. 178-179)

Solution proposed: entrepreneurship (e.g. Panama). (pg. 180)

Solution proposed: enhanced connectivity (e.g., functional streets, public transit, etc.). (pg. 181)

Prerequisites to action: don't just need money, but also know-how, information and data. (pg. 184).

Discussion topic: How does the urban optimist or urban pessimist in you react to the global trends and the solutions presented in this chapter? Is it plausible for cities to serve the role that is outlined?

Chapter 10 – Urbanism for All

Martin Prosperity Institute has created a “new urban crisis index,” a composite index gauging:

- economic segregation;
- wage inequality;
- income inequality;
- housing affordability.

Table listing 10 cities with highest index scores is shared on pg. 187 (Austin is #9 on the list).

According to the information shared in this chapter, this index correlates positively with:

- size and density of metro area;
- the metro’s concentration of high tech industry;
- the metro’s share of creative class workers and college graduates;
- the metro’s level of economic output, income and wages;
- the level of political liberalism/conservatism.

Claim #1: The economy is failing to generate enough higher-paying jobs needed to restore the middle class. (pg. 189).

Claim #2: If the crisis is urban, then so is the solution. (pg. 191)

Solution suggested: Productive urbanism can take shape around 7 pillars (pg. 191 to 216):

- make clustering work for us and not against us;
- invest in infrastructure for density and growth;
- build more affordable rental housing;
- turn low-wage service jobs into middle class work;
- tackle poverty by investing in people and places;
- lead a global effort to build prosperous cities;
- empower cities and communities.

Discussion topic: Do you feel that the claim from the previous chapter (that urbanism has ceased to be a reliable engine for economic progress) is adequately addressed by the “urbanism for all” framework, generally? If Claim #1 from this chapter is true, then does the “urbanism for all” framework actually have a chance of success? How do you feel about Claim #2, given Austin’s situation? How do you feel about Claim #2, given the global urbanization crisis?