

## ABSTRACTS

### Shanghai's Changing Fortunes: Colonialism, Revolution, and Modernization

RHOADS MURPHEY

SHANGHAI HAS BEEN CONSIDERED AS one of the world's largest cities since the First World War. Although its origins as a regional port and trade center is quite remote, its major growth took place, and its present character was formed, only under the semi-colonial conditions of the treaty port system established in the middle of the 19th century. Thus, Shanghai represents not only an ecological anomaly for Chinese urban planners, but also a symbol of past imperialist oppression.

The Chinese government has attempted to control the city's growth in various ways since 1949 and, at one point, there was even talk of dismantling it as a major urban center. However, this policy has not met with the desired results due to the continuous attraction that large cities, with their comparatively higher standard of living, have for the rural population in China. On the other hand, Shanghai has played an important role as the principal centre for development in China because of its geographic location, its infrastructure leftover from its semi-colonial past, and the concentration of skilled man power within the city.

At present, the city's enormous problems include the inadequacy of its facilities as a main harbor, the shortage of housing, and increasing environmental pollution. The establishment of satellite centers to the south and west of the urban area have helped alleviate the problems to a certain extent, but in no way have they been resolved. The housing crisis has been somewhat regulated by controlling the city's growth since 1959. As for the problem of pollution, a national environmental protection law was adopted in 1979 and the Ministry of Urban and Rural Construction and Environmental Protection was established in 1982. However, the laws tend to be rather general in scope.

The new Chinese policies may restore Shanghai's role as China's "window to the world" and as the moving force for development, thus setting the challenge for Chinese planners to resolve its parallel problems of housing, pollution, and inadequate services.

## Calcutta: Residents' Ways and Decision-Makers' Strategies in a City in Crisis

JEAN RACINE

THIS ARTICLE DESCRIBES THE WAYS through which a city, considered sometimes as the symbol of urban disaster in the Third World, survives and functions. Calcutta's urban problems may be summed up in three critical points, all of which have profound historical roots: 1) the widespread poverty which affects half of its population; 2) the economic stagnation that discourages big investments; and 3) the urban crisis, *per se*, which is a product of an anachronic urban structure and uncontrollable hypertrophy.

Until 1971, urban planning in Calcutta involved basically only the old English sections, so that dwellers of the more populated areas had no choice but to adjust to the urban crisis. This adjustment has brought about individual as well as collective responses.

Moreover, the Leftist local government headed by the Communist Party, has had a limited success in its actions concerning urban policies due to the conflicting interests involved in the process of decision-making.

## Revolutionary Habitat: Teheran, 1978-1982

BERNARD HOURCADE  
FARHAD KHOSROKHAVAR

THE HOUSING PROBLEM PLAYED A very important role in the Iranian revolution, where the "roofless" population constituted an important sector of the disinherited that supported the new Islamic regime. The first impulses to respond to these demands had a clearly spontaneous character, as a crisis phenomenon, with only a passive participation of the revolutionary government. Insofar as the new regime has gradually consolidated its power, we are now witnessing a progressive slow-down and a freezing of the experience of the so-called "revolutionary habitat."

## **Bangkok: The Exclusion of the Poor**

ALAIN DURAND-LASSERVE

THIS ARTICLE OFFERS THE RESULTS of research into the ways in which the government has controlled and regulated property transactions in an ultraliberal political and economic context: Bangkok in 1982.

It analyzes the stages in the process of appropriation-redistribution of land where government intervention would be necessary, rather than going into the technical mechanisms needed to be applied in such cases.

In identifying the main actors of the property market and in studying their practices during the sixties and seventies in Bangkok, two periods may be established: one that began at the end of the fifties, dominated by "real estate agents;" and the other that came about in the mid-seventies, with the novel appearance of "building sales agents."

The article emphasizes the insufficient and belated intervention of the state in the regulation of building and real estate markets, which emphasized primarily the building sector.

## **Urban development and policies on land and housing in Africa: The case of Abidjan (Some comparisons with Mexico)**

MARTHA SCHTEINGART

THIS ARTICLE EXPOUNDS SOME OF the characteristics of urban development in Abidjan (Ivory Coast), giving emphasis to the manner in which peripheral collective lands have been incorporated into the dynamics of spacial structure and consumption habits of the different sectors that make up urban society. State policy within these processes and its importance in the orientation of city development are also revealed in this analysis.

The special aspects of the African urban situation are explained in the context of the development model chosen for the country, the type of State it constitutes, and the pre-colonial and colonial backgrounds that have determined its present condition.

Some characteristics of Mexico City are summarily presented at the end of the article. Certain comparisons are made between the two cases, basically to show the possibilities and the limitations of state policy in this field and

in the attempt to dismythify some propositions or proposals that sometimes arise from individual study.

The analysis of the use of urban land, as it is seen in this article, is important not only because it helps us understand the processes of spacial structure for different social strata within the city, but also because the actions or practices of the use of urban land contribute significant elements toward the better understanding of society.

## **Spontaneous Urbanization or Clandestine Official Urbanization. The Case of Algiers**

DJAFFAR LESBET

ALGERIA'S IS A CASE WHERE the urban crisis linked to the housing problem is set in a country in which urban tradition was practically non-existent among most of the local population. Urban development was mostly a colonial phenomenon that set this population into a process of urbanization within an extremely short time-span. This is the historical background for a process of spontaneous urbanization that is marginal to the state-supervised construction programs, which have responded insufficiently to the housing demand. Spontaneous habitats seriously challenged the most important state-endorsed programs of urban redevelopment.