REVIEW ESSAYS

LATIN AMERICAN CITIES:
Internationally Embedded but Nationally Influential

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CARACAS: COMO LA VE SU GENTE. By Luis Alfonzo Mejías. (Caracas: Academia Nacional de Ciencias Económicas, 1992. Pp. 167.)

CARACAS: NUEVOS ESCENARIOS PARA EL PODER LOCAL. Edited by Marta Vallmitjana. (Caracas: Programa de las Naciones Unidas para el Desarrollo and Editorial Nueva Sociedad, 1993. Pp. 337. $28.50 paper.)

GERENCIA MUNICIPAL. Edited by Janet Kelly. (Caracas: IESA, 1993. Pp. 281. $26.00 paper.)

IN SEARCH OF A HOME: RENTAL AND SHARED HOUSING IN LATIN AMERICA. By Alan Gilbert. (Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 1993. Pp. 256. $45.00 cloth.)

LATIN AMERICAN URBANIZATION: HISTORICAL PROFILES OF MAJOR CITIES. Edited by Gerald M. Greenfield. (Westport, Conn.: Greenwood Press, 1994. Pp. 536. $115.00 cloth.)

MEXICO CITY: THE PRODUCTION AND REPRODUCTION OF AN URBAN ENVIRONMENT. By Peter Ward. (Boston, Mass.: G. K. Hall, 1990. Pp. 262. $35.00 cloth.)

POLICING RIO DE JANEIRO: REPRESSION AND RESISTANCE IN A NINETEENTH- CENTURY CITY. By Thomas H. Holloway. (Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University Press, 1993. Pp. 369. $45.00 cloth.)

RETHINKING THE LATIN AMERICAN CITY. Edited by Richard M. Morse and Jorge E. Hardoy. (Washington, D.C., and Baltimore, Md.: Woodrow

Wilson Center Press and Johns Hopkins University Press, 1992. Pp. 232. $27.50 cloth.)

THE MEXICAN BORDER CITIES: LANDSCAPE ANATOMY AND PLACE PERSONALITY. By Daniel Arreola and James R. Curtis. (Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 1993. Pp. 259. $35.00 cloth, $15.95 paper.)

URBAN LEVIATHAN: MEXICO CITY IN THE TWENTIETH CENTURY. By Diane E. Davis. (Philadelphia, Pa.: Temple University Press, 1994. Pp. 391. $49.95 cloth, $24.95 paper.)

WHERE NORTH MEETS SOUTH: CITIES, SPACE, AND POLITICS ON THE U.S.-MEXICO BORDER. By Lawrence A. Herzog. (Austin: Center for Mexican American Studies, University of Texas at Austin, 1990. Pp. 304. $24.95 cloth, $14.95 paper.)

Latin America emerges from censuses taken around 1990 as highly urban and urbanizing further. The expansion of capital cities slowed in the 1980s, but secondary cities grew explosively. Only fifty years earlier, most Latin Americans lived on small agricultural plots, in isolated villages, or near large plantations. Now in most countries in the region, the rural population has dropped to less than one-third.[1] In Uruguay and Venezuela, settlements with less than two thousand inhabitants now house less than 10 percent of the national population.

Earlier studies of Latin American cities emphasized their dependency.[2] The eleven recent volumes under review here confirm that external forces are still shaping the nature of urban life as well as the physical appearance of urban landscapes. Some of these works analyze the strategies and points of contact used by outsiders and identify the resources that attract them. Other studies break new ground by examining how locals parry pressures brought by outsiders, often persuading them to accept outcomes far different from their original intentions. In sum, this body of research finds Latin American cities to be arenas with significant endogenous capabilities for influencing and reshaping exogenous pressures.

This group of works, published between 1990 and 1994, constitutes

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1. For a detailed account of these trends, see United Nations, *World Urbanization Prospects: The 1994 Revision* (New York: United Nations, 1995).

2. As examples, see David Collier, *Squatters and Oligarchs: Authoritarian Rule and Policy Change in Peru* (Baltimore, Md.: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1976); Susan Eckstein, *The Poverty of Revolution: The State and the Urban Poor in Mexico* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1977); Robert J. Ferry, *The Colonial Elite of Early Caracas: Formation and Crisis, 1567–1767* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1989); Alan Gilbert and Peter Ward, *Housing, the State, and the Poor: Policy and Practice in Three Latin American Cities* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985); Janice Perlman, *The Myth of Urban Marginality* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1976); "Dependencia, cambio social y urbanización en Latinoamérica," edited by Aníbal Quijano, a special issue of *Revista Mexicana de Sociología* 30 (1969); James R. Scobie, *Buenos Aires: Plaza to Suburb* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1974); and John Walton, *Elites and Economic Development: Comparative Studies in the Political Economy of Latin American Cities* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1977).

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a good cross section of 1980s research oriented toward cities. A total of seventy scholars and practitioners (Latin Americans, Europeans, and North Americans) contributed to these works, five of them written by single authors. Counting only primary authors or senior editors, I found six geographers, four historians, and one political scientist. Geographers and historians dominate the longer list of contributors, but it also includes anthropologists, sociologists, urban planners, architects, and practicing politicians. Economists are conspicuously absent, possibly reflecting a reluctance to research environments for which quantitative indicators are unreliable, scarce, or not fully comparable with existing data. The prevalence of geographers mirrors the importance that their discipline attaches to "location."

The information presented in these volumes clusters around three themes: the composition and consequences of resource movement into and within metropolitan areas; the character and repercussions of the city's built environment; and the nature and impact of city-shaping political influence. Each topic integrates action originating abroad, inside the country, and within the city itself.

Four central conclusions emerge from this research. First, although highly susceptible to outside pressure, Latin American cities display significant abilities to transform external forces once they enter the urban arena. Second, the historic primate city remains each country's most important economic, political, and cultural locus (except in Brazil).[3] Third, demands on government deriving from population growth, increased expectations, and new technologies have outstripped the capacity of central institutions to manage national, regional, and local development. In response, national leaders are conceding unprecedented city-shaping powers to municipal institutions. Finally, the huge size attained by Latin America's largest metropolitan areas has eroded the sense of urban community and fostered among city-dwellers a sense of alienation from their physical and institutional settings.

The following essay will examine these volumes as they address the three orienting themes identified. Attention will be focused sequentially on the international, national, and metropolitan dimensions of each theme. Finally, I will connect findings associated with each theme to the four major conclusions and discuss implications for future investigations.

Resource Movement and City Growth

Latin American cities and city systems display few pre-Colombian traits. Contemporary settlement patterns crystallized in the colonial era,

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3. The primate pattern of cities occurs when the major central place of a state or region is also its capital. This kind of center tends to dominate the state or region in such a way that the development of secondary centers is delayed and constrained. For more discussion of this topic, see S. N. Eisenstadt and A. Shachar, *Society, Culture, and Urbanization* (Newbury Park: Sage Publications, 1987), 39–49.

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as Iberian *conquistadores* located cities with an eye to control and exploitation. Colonial administrators mobilized forced labor to build cities and, when necessary, brought resources from overseas to construct environments that symbolized Spanish and Portuguese power. From the first days of Latin American incorporation into the European-centered international system, human beings, capital, and technologies from abroad shaped the hemisphere's cities. This pattern continues, even though the sources of foreign inputs into urban Latin America changed dramatically following independence and again in the twentieth century.

Latin American Urbanization: Historical Profiles of Major Cities, edited by Gerald Greenfield, profiles twenty-one country variations of this regional pattern. Greenfield underscores important commonalities without submerging significant differences. The contributors provide national urban histories, profiles of the major cities, and a basic bibliography. The essays vary in length, with more space allotted for the multifaceted city systems of the larger countries (Brazil, Mexico, and Argentina) than for single-city states like El Salvador, Uruguay, and Jamaica. An entirely descriptive work, *Latin American Urbanization* excels in assembling dispersed but related information in a single source. The contributions are strongest when profiling colonial urbanization and city-shaping trends since 1960 but distressingly brief when discussing urban change during the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Even the most cursory treatments, however, point to key developments that readers can research elsewhere in greater detail.

Thomas Holloway, in contrast, provides an in-depth look at a seldom studied but critical city institution in *Policing Rio de Janeiro: Repression and Resistance in a Nineteenth-Century City.* His research presents and analyzes new data on the transfer of institutions, individuals, and technology from the nineteenth-century world capitalist system to the Brazilian imperial capital. Holloway also traces reciprocal linkages between the imperial Brazilian state's police forces and their counterparts in Rio. Holloway begins by analyzing the transfer of policing institutions that originated in the enlightened despotism accompanying the arrival of the entire Portuguese court in exile in 1808. He establishes that these transplanted institutions seldom operated in Rio as they had in Lisbon. By 1900, Rio's military-dominated police forces reflected local conditions (p. 280).

The ability of local conditions to alter foreign institutions and objectives is a theme that also permeates Lawrence Herzog's *Where North Meets South: Cities, Space, and Politics on the U.S.-Mexico Border,* a study of metropolitan Tijuana–San Diego. Herzog starts from Immanuel Wallerstein's view that late-twentieth-century changes in the world economy have created a growing complementarity of interests among nation-states. Herzog accepts the idea that complementarity was necessary in trans-

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forming the Mexican borderlands from an isolated buffer zone into a highly urbanized region, but he portrays the evolution of Tijuana–San Diego as resulting from forces native to the production of urban space on each side of the Mexican-U.S. border. Like Holloway, Herzog views the intra-urban movement of resources originating abroad as a process best understood in its own terms (p. 87). International influences change a city, but city-specific conditions remake foreigners and modify their re-sources. In Latin America, one such city-specific condition is the presence of national and local elites living in one influential site, the primate city.

The works under review also show Latin American cities trans-forming humans, capital, and culture attracted from elsewhere in the country. Competition between primate and "interior" cities for resources orients Diane Davis's carefully crafted study of Mexico City's emergence as a gigantic and overpopulated politico-industrial center. In *Urban Leviathan: Mexico City in the Twentieth Century*, Davis weaves a tapestry from interviews with elite members, archival documents, and popular culture to support her view that political struggle between local and national actors has driven Mexico City's concentrated urban growth. Local elites prevailed in competing for resources with other cities and peasant orga-nizations until the early 1980s. Yet the coexistence in the same place of local elites focused on the capital and national elites oriented toward the nation as a whole ultimately gave national elites more control over re-source use in Mexico City than in secondary cities like Monterrey and Guadalajara (p. 5). Alan Gilbert's *In Search of a Home: Rental and Shared Housing in Latin America* provides issue-specific case studies of resource use in Mexico City, Caracas, and Santiago de Chile being overseen by national institutions. Former Lima Mayor Abelardo Sánchez León's con-tribution on Lima street children to the volume edited by Richard Morse and Jorge Hardoy also reveals tensions between national and local elites in a primate city over resource use. As in Mexico City, Caracas, and Santiago, constraints on local institutions in Lima derive from national elites' desire that activity in the primate city reinforce their own power.

Latin American secondary cities gained political influence in the 1970s and 1980s when their advocates learned to harness resentment against resource consumption at the center. In addition, the return on investment in most primate cities diminished during this period. Herzog portrays Tijuana's local elites as lobbying national policy makers with considerable success in competing with their rivals in Mexico City, and Tijuana elites appear more effective in controlling the resources allocated. But the tradition of central control continues to permeate Latin America. In comparison with their San Diego counterparts, Tijuana policy makers remain highly dependent on the national government, as do local politi-cians in Venezuela (see Kelly, chap. 1).

A shortage of trained local administrators, even in the most ad-

vanced secondary cities, surfaces as an another roadblock to strengthening municipal government. Several contributions to Janet Kelly's *Gerencia municipal* analyze recent efforts to decentralize and upgrade the capacities of municipal institutions, especially the essay by Rosa Amelia González Pacheco on municipal finances and the one Kelly coauthored with Antonio Cova and Víctor Calzadilla, "La burocracia municipal: Amansando al monstruo para servirle mejor a la gente." Successes associated with these efforts give hope that Venezuelan secondary cities are becoming more capable of employing the resources they receive to advance local priorities. To summarize, several volumes present evidence that elites in secondary cities have increased their leverage in the three-way struggle with primate city and national elites to acquire resources. The new balance reflects altered relationships between local and national institutions, in which local entities seem increasingly critical in the exercise of economic, political, and cultural power.

Capital and population already in metropolitan areas constitute a third source of city-shaping resources, one that only Gilbert's three-city study of housing evaluates. His *In Search of a Home* focuses on the post-1980 dynamics of finding affordable housing for Latin America's urban poor. He argues that national governments have long assumed that homeownership encourages political stability and therefore channel marginal populations into "approved sites" where they acquire their own residences. Thus in Santiago, General Pinochet relocated slumdwellers from the historic core to the outskirts. In Mexico City, entrepreneurs linked to the ruling political party profited from providing goods and services to approved sites. In Caracas, meanwhile, an affluent central government constructed high-rise apartments for cooperative marginals, while others gravitated into protected shantytowns. By 1980 in all three cities, most available sites for additional low-income housing projects and self-help construction areas were located around the metropolitan fringes, far from work and on unstable terrain. This inaccessibility, coupled with the increased costs of building materials, intensified pressures on governments to rethink urban housing policy.

Gilbert argues that for Latin American cities to provide acceptable housing for existing populations in the twenty-first century (let alone accommodate natural increases and migrations), resources already present in metropolitan areas must be used far more efficiently. The surveys he undertook in Chile, Mexico, and Venezuela found that renters do not perceive their status as demeaning and that renters and apartment owners usually get along well. These findings lead him to advocate incentives for owners to remodel and rent and for contractors to build rental units. Both approaches would allow cities to expand their supply of housing without costly investments in constructing public projects or extending services to burgeoning squatter settlements.

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Gilbert's efforts to rehabilitate rental housing coincide with renewed interest in entrepreneurial activity and local empowerment. But as he points out, the laws in most countries afford so many protections to renters and so few to landlords that individuals with capital seldom invest in rental units (p. 160). The legal changes required to provide the necessary incentives contradict prevailing ideologies that paint landlords as exploitative. Gilbert does not explain how, given this prejudice, politicians might be convinced to legislate changes that would increase the attractiveness of rental housing.

Built Environment: Process, Structure, and Consequences

The structure, evolution, and impact of the built environment, long the preserve of architects and urban planners, increasingly interest social scientists and historians. Geographer Jorge Hardoy's important essay in *Rethinking the Latin American City*, the volume he coedited with Richard Morse, examines transfers between 1850 and 1930 by European city planners of concepts that continue to influence Latin American urbanism. Until recently, Latin America's small community of city planners and architects resided in primate cities, the principal gateways for resources from abroad. They created physical environments that mimicked Paris, London, and New York as part of official efforts to attract foreign capital and technology. Construction of European and North American landscapes in Latin American primate cities excited envy and resentment among nationals in the interior, however, not unlike the sentiments that fueled clashes between central authorities and regional caudillos in the decades following independence. Of the authors reviewed here, two historians and several geographers discuss how Europeanized environments in primate cities reflect the cultural differences underlying tensions between the center and the periphery. Others examine the independent impact of that environment on human beings.

Overseas forces as shapers of city landscapes become a central concern in *The Mexican Border Cities: Landscape Anatomy and Place Personality*. In it, Daniel Arreola and James Curtis study six Mexican border cities: Ciudad Juárez, Matamoros, Tijuana, Reynosa, Nogales, and Camargo. They test the thesis that U.S. influences have created fundamentally non-Mexican settlements exhibiting a new border culture that is neither Mexican nor Anglo-American.[4] After examining all six physical landscapes, Arreola and Curtis find that Mexican frontier cities possess certain structural characteristics that may be distinctive to the border region, such as tourist districts, *maquiladora* industrial parks, and highly centralized arterial street networks oriented toward ports of entry. But the au-

4. This hypothesis was advanced in a 1986 CBS television documentary hosted by Bill Moyers, "One River, One Country: The U.S.-Mexico Border."

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thors uncover more structural similarities between the six border cities and urban places elsewhere in Mexico and throughout Latin America (p. 70).

A methodological focus on city form (or urban morphology), which identifies the forces shaping urban landscape and its influence on inhabitants, underpins the Arreola and Curtis study. For these geographers, border-city landscapes can be both dependent and independent variables, and in analyzing them, Arreola and Curtis draw on data sources such as land-use surveys, town plans, and architectural types. They reason deductively, in the tradition of the Chicago School of Urban Sociology with its emphasis on isotopic plan and incorporating rings. Arreola and Curtis conclude that given the demonstrated capacity of border-city landscapes to resist foreign influence, Ciudad Juárez, Matamoros, Tijuana, Reynosa, Nogales, and Camargo will all remain fundamentally Mexican.

The theme of national forces shaping urban landscapes permeates several other volumes under review. Davis's accounts of struggles between local and national elites in Mexico City in *Urban Leviathan* portrays national elites imposing landscape changes opposed by local elites. For example, in the race to complete the Mexico City subway prior to the 1969 Olympics Games (a goal intended to showcase the modernization of "Revolutionary Mexico"), President Gustavo Díaz Ordaz destroyed a popular mayor and overrode the preferences of Mexico City's business and middle classes (pp. 164–73). Yet over more than four decades, these same local interests succeeded in preserving the city's urban core as a low-density landscape supportive of their lifestyle. Along the way, they forced Mexican presidents to shelve plans by national-level entrepreneurs and bureaucrats to construct high-rise towers. Elsewhere in Latin America, the urban poor have caused national elites to alter their plans for city landscapes, an exercise of influence recounted in Rexene Haynes de Acevedo's study of resource mobilization in poor Venezuelan neighborhoods (in the Kelly collection, pp. 188–90). This case is the exception, however. John Friedmann in Morse and Hardoy's *Rethinking the Latin American City* finds Latin American barrio landscapes "deficient" in that they reflect powerlessness (p. 108).

Peter Ward's *Mexico City: The Production and Reproduction of an Urban Environment* (part of G. K. Hall's World Cities Series) examines the reasons why urban physical structure exists in the first place (p. xviii) and analyzes the message it carries. Taking a Marxist approach, Ward assumes that Mexico City's rapid growth, uncontrolled spatial expansion, and resulting segregation of rich and poor is a product of the international class struggle. But his specific interest lies in international capitalism's engagement with local economic, political, and social structures, which he views as "all-important" in determining the shape and nature of dependent urbanism (p. 2). Ward therefore focuses on how Mexico's

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post-1917 "revolutionary elites" have shaped the Mexico City landscape in ways that legitimated their political status quo. From the 1930s onward, national governments directed Mexican urbanists to design ground plans and architecture for the capital that would affirm a new national zeitgeist or spirit of the times (p. 178).

Ward breaks new ground in explicitly addressing how an existing landscape reproduces social relations within the city. For example, he identifies four ways in which the physical design of self-help housing in Mexico City shantytowns reproduces inequality: by romanticizing the realities of slum life, by locking workers into locations where they are expected to provide cheap labor, by integrating inhabitants into a money economy dominated by powerful interests, and by creating a petit-bourgeoisie attitude that supports the political status quo (chap. 7). Here Ward's discussion of assumptions that ownership of an "improved dwelling" strengthens petit-bourgeoisie orientations recites arguments called into question by Alan Gilbert's study of rental housing in three cities, *In Search of a Home.*

Perceptions derived from urban landscape orient Luís Mejías's research into how residents of the Venezuelan national capital view their city. In *Caracas: Cómo la ve su gente,* Mejías takes a different approach from that of Ward in researching public opinion to understand better this kind of cognitions. Respondents to Mejías's questionnaire identified 214 elements of urban geographic space and form in Caracas but lacked precise knowledge of their city's boundaries. Two physical features orient most of their perceptions of Caracas: the freeway system and the towering mountain, Pico Avila (p. 71). Unfortunately, Mejías fails to clarify the meaning of this finding or of respondents' identification of the other 212 city landmarks. Given a total of a mere twenty-six respondents, a dubious methodology for selecting samples, and only basic frequencies reported, the significance of this study is questionable. What might have been a pioneering effort to employ new methodologies developed by geographers for constructing a cognitive map of Caracas residents and its implications for urban behavior ends up being an exasperating curiosity.

Political Influence: Possession, Process, and Consequences

A third theme in the works under review emphasizes Latin American cities as arenas of competition among foreigners, national elites, and influential individuals who control local goods and services. Foreigners receive surprisingly little attention in this context. One exception is Lawrence Herzog's pessimistic account of the prospects for managing transborder problems cooperatively in the Tijuana–San Diego metropolitan area. The other is Davis's analysis of negotiations between foreign business leaders and Mexican bureaucrats, which redirected capital flows

from central Mexico to cities along the U.S.-Mexican frontier. Otherwise, this group of books views Latin American cities as ports of entry through which foreigners pass to defend their local investments and other in-country interests and assumes that foreigners interact with national elites rather than with local ones. These presuppositions are never examined, nor does anyone explain how foreigners translate their assumed influence into action.

In these studies, the issue of how national forces structure urban political life takes center stage. The authors uniformly view domination by the primate city (an important common thread) as undesirable. For example, from the 1930s through the early 1980s, international sales of petroleum increased the revenues of the Venezuelan national government. Regional leaders moved to Caracas in order to influence the centralized allocation of resources, and eventually, long-term residence in the national capital made them supportive of its modernization. The widening gap between living conditions in Caracas and those in the interior fueled periodic movements to end "subsidies for Caracas." But ample petroleum revenues afforded decades of leverage to override dissatisfaction until world energy prices began to decline in 1982. Marta Vallmitjana's edited volume of new scenarios for local government in metropolitan Caracas, a report of the Venezuelan government's Comisión Presidencial para la Reforma del Estado (COPRE), reflects this change. Despite Vallmitjana's focus on empowering local political institutions, the impetus for *Caracas: Nuevos escenarios para el poder local* derives from long-standing antagonism toward primate-city privilege and also from national impoverishment. COPRE's advocacy of decentralization assumes that in order for Caracas residents to retain their subsidized living standards, municipal politicians will be forced to levy and collect new taxes.

The other volumes also confirm that elsewhere in Latin America, antagonism toward central political control runs deep, financial pressures on national governments are mounting, and public-sector management of economic development has been disappointing. Davis and Ward explain how economic austerity in the 1980s led the Mexican national government to restore the capital's municipal council and to design programs that would modernize local bureaucracies. Architects Mariano Araña and Fernando Giordano, in their essay in the Morse and Hardoy collection, trace the debate over how best to empower Montevideo's city government to failures in the Uruguayan centralized welfare model. Jordi Borja's essay in the same volume speculates that concessions of power by national leaders to local governments has become a regional trend. Yet powerful limits constrain the extent to which central institutions are willing to relinquish their city-shaping powers. Arreola and Curtis describe Mexican national elites laboring to prevent the urban landscape along the frontier from becoming more like the

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United States (p. 219). For example, the national government's amply funded Programa Nacional Fronterizo has erected statues of national heroes and set up programs to inform border-city residents and tourists about Mexican culture and history.

In primate cities, the physical security of government installations and the maintenance of order are such sensitive concerns that national leaders seem unlikely to transfer authority over these issues to municipal governments. This message permeates Holloway's study of policing imperial Rio de Janeiro and surfaces in Gilbert's account of General Pinochet overseeing efforts to eradicate slums in Santiago de Chile (p. 158) as well as in Vallmitjana's recounting of how reform legislation designed to strengthen local government in Caracas retained presidential control over the police forces (pp. 66–70). Even in issue areas posing less immediate threats to political order, such as the delivery of services, two contributions to the Kelly volume (by González de Pacheco and by Hanes de Acevedo) suggest that pressures to empower municipal institutions may not convince central governments to surrender their prerogatives. Also, national elites stand prepared to intervene if pivotal services begin to collapse, at least in primate cities. They find living amidst decay intolerable and also fear that breakdown of the primate city will discourage foreign investors (Ward, pp. 232–37, Araña and Giordano, pp. 149–61).

Finally, concern over linkages between urban class structure and the ability to turn influence into action surfaces in several works. Middle-class efforts to influence government in competition with political demand making by the urban poor and by industrial workers attracts the most attention. For example, Davis concludes that the success of the Mexico City middle class in influencing the central government between 1940 and 1980 contradicts the assumption that autonomous national bureaucrats have charted the course of Mexican political development (p. 308). She hypothesizes that the crux of Mexico's current crisis derives from the uneasy fit—among corporatism, rapid and uncontrolled urbanization, concentrated industrialization, and one-party rule—that broke down as expectations rose and government revenues per capita declined. The system crumbled first at the geographic center, where class struggle proved most intense. Other of these works profile similar breakdowns in the urban cores of Venezuela, Uruguay, Peru, Chile, and Brazil.

Tales of conflict and cooperation between and among local institutions also pervade these accounts of urban political influence. Holloway asserts that rivalries like those that reverberated in the imperial Rio police system persist to this day, as do patterns of cooperation that linked the imperial police to the local courts. In the nineteenth century, however, civil servants supported a regime-legitimating ideology that contemporary Brazilians do not share. Analyzing the consequences of that ideology on policing is one of Holloway's most important contributions. It enabled

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police forces in Rio to seamlessly associate behavior involving universally condemned actions (like theft and murder) with the victimless transgression of arbitrary rules (such as violating curfew) or with symbolic defiance of authority (disrespect), without differentiating between any of them (p. 9). Policing in twentieth-century Mexican border cities also suppresses the poor, but on the frontier, authorities overlook rule violations that they would find threatening in more settled locations. Arreola and Curtis as well as Herzog describe a border culture in which reactive nationalism is the only shared political ideology, municipal bureaucrats interpret inconsistent centralized directives to their personal advantage, and corruption undermines civil society.

No Latin American primate city bestrides an international boundary, but accounts of influence-wielding bureaucrats in contemporary capitals suggest similarities with their counterparts in Tijuana, Ciudad Juárez, and Matamoros. With the possible exception of Havana, local institutions in primate cities also lack a unifying political ideology to guide urban development.[5] As in border cities, periodic interventions by national authorities encourage duplicity by local politicians, and corruption is widespread. Yet most of these analysts believe that Latin American primate cities are better governed now than at midcentury and that municipal institutions will continue to improve. Accountability is increasing, and local governments in primate cities operate among Latin America's most skilled populations. Nothing in these studies suggests, however, that empowered municipal institutions will decrease the influence of primate cities. To the contrary, the implication is that structural primacy will continue to characterize Latin American city systems well into the next century.

Conclusion

Latin American cities appear in this body of research as strongly influenced from abroad but possessed of transforming capabilities that tailor external pressures to local conditions. These works also find continuing dominance by primate cities, empowerment of local institutions, and alienation. Data supporting these findings cluster around the three themes identified at the outset of this essay: urban resource movement, the built environment, and political influence. The internationally embedded but nationally influential status of Latin American cities is reflected in all three themes. Latin American cities attract international attention because foreigners expect to benefit from resource transfers. Foreigners who wish to channel resources into Latin American cities typically negotiate with national elites to set conditions for their involve-

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5. Little information is available on Havana's development since 1959.

ment. But once foreigners begin to move resources around in the urban arena, new dynamics lead indigenous interests to demand modifications of previously negotiated agreements. Foreigners who refuse to renegotiate eventually lose their capital and influence. Thus transferred institutions that prove inflexible disappear. Urban landscape, especially in primate cities, also reflects tensions among foreign, national, and local forces. National forces that seek to make their city resemble prestigious cities overseas inevitably clash with nativist forces. If a planned landscape change seems too foreign, nativists react with hostility and label the project as "cultural imperialism." Frequently, nativists succeed in blocking full implementation of an initial design, and when the truncated project is completed, it functions poorly. For nativists, this outcome confirms that "the import" was inappropriate, while foreigners view failure to implement the original design as evidence that Latin Americans are incapable of modernizing.

Pressure to renegotiate the terms governing foreign participation and clashes between foreign-oriented and nativist groups intensify the longer a project remains unfinished or a profitable activity retains high visibility. This tendency is especially true of public-sector activities that shape the urban landscape, especially in the implementation stage, when local forces possess the greatest influence. National entrepreneurs also experience pressures to renegotiate. A business group that is given free reign by one political regime often encounters difficulties when a new government takes power. Skill in orchestrating a different political environment to elicit favorable actions is critical to the project's profitability. Moreover, ineptness may lead to outright confiscation. This uncertainty favors ventures that can be completed while those letting the contracts remain in power and discourages long-term undertakings.

Confirmation of urban primacy is not unexpected. In the smaller and less-developed countries, where nation-dominating powers bestow special characteristics, primate cities appear more like second- or even third-order urban poles when compared with settlements around the North Atlantic. The ability to control resource movement within the country, regardless of its size, surfaces as critical to primate-city dominance. In this context, even rapidly growing secondary cities seem regional, and differences between their urban landscapes and those of the primate city reinforce perceptions of secondary cities as part of "the interior." Primate cities boast unequaled monuments to national identity, the most modern service infrastructure available, and architecture more like that of European and North American cityscapes than that typical of the country. These privileged landscapes provide clues to the national power of the primate city's local elites, but earlier research overlooked the negotiations between local and national elites that often set the direction for the whole nation. The studies reviewed here found the two elite factions engaging

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periodically in direction-setting negotiations, and local elites becoming more assertive.

While added demands on national elites have provoked political decentralization, central institutions continue to dominate the allocation of urban resources. National bureaucracies retain control over policing and technologically sophisticated services that require massive invest-ment, like rapid transit and freeway construction. Less-monumental activ-ities, such as garbage collection and fire fighting, remain in municipal hands. National governments seem inclined, where possible, to transfer services like water and electricity to the municipalities or to private en-terprises. Trends favoring direct election of municipal officials have made city governments and national bureaucracies more sensitive to citizen preferences in delivering urban services. But the powers gained by mu-nicipal institutions carry additional responsibilities, especially financial ones. This body of research presents no evidence that local leaders have experience with the political consequences of forcing their constituents to pay the true costs of the goods and services they consume.

The fourth finding, pervasive alienation deriving from giganti-cism, was until recently a problem only in the most populous cities. These volumes show that it has spread as stressed urban infrastructures per-form poorly, making everyday tasks and activities frustrating for all. Moreover, few residents of Latin American cities of a million or more exhibit any grasp of city boundaries, most identifying instead with their immediate surroundings or with zones dominated by individuals of the same socioeconomic stratum. Striking differences in the landscapes of upper-, middle-, and lower-class neighborhoods inhibit the development of a citywide sense of community and weaken any existing sense. Alien-ated from their surroundings and frustrated in their hope for a better life by economic decline, many slumdwellers in the 1980s turned to crime. On more than one occasion, these frustrations crystallized into riots that weakened or even toppled national governments. Persistent alienation thus raises the stakes when a government attempts to address even every-day problems. Seemingly minor miscalculations may fan underlying ten-sions into flames of rebellion.

Finally, although these eleven works present significant findings, they also illustrate the failure of urbanists concerned with Latin America to theorize comparatively. Several authors explore issues in more than one city, but none attempt regional comparisons of city-shaping struc-tures or processes. This approach precludes system-level theorizing. Yet these volumes present data that could be reworked into middle-range theories about urban behavior. Each of the three themes identified here—resource movement into and within cities, the impact of physical land-scape, and the exercise of political influence—can be employed to deter-mine which Latin American cities could profitably be compared and

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contrasted. Additional "islands of theory" suggested by this research focus on the maintenance of order, the impact of national city systems, characteristics dependent on level and type of economic development, and the consequences of local empowerment. Research in this comparative mode is the next step beyond the approaches reviewed here.

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