

Hurol, Y., (2010) "Planet of Slums." *Open House International*. 35(4). p.85.

Book Title: Planet of Slums
Author's Name: Mike Davis
Publisher's Name: Verso
Reviewer's Name: Yonca Hürol
ISBN Number: 13: 978-1-84467-160-1
Dimensions of the book: 13-20 cms.
Hard or Soft Cover: Soft
Number of Pages: 228
Order Address: www.versobooks.com
Price of the Book: 9.99 GBP / 19.95 USD
Number of Illustrations: None

Keywords: Urban Poverty, squatter housing, illegal sector, megacities, disasters.

"Planet of Slums," which was published in 2006, presents a documentary research, which is based on a very rich analysis of empirical research about urban poverty. Thus, it is very well referenced. The objective of the book is to develop a healthy understanding of the concept of "urban poverty" by presenting the conditions in which the 21st century poor live, their place within the city, the political causes behind this growing problem, problem's history within 20th and 21st centuries, scale of the problem, and relationship of the problem with various disasters. The book fully achieves its objectives and presents a very successful picture of urban poverty, and contemporary cities which conceal urban poverty.

The first part of the book gives information about the conditions of contemporary cities in relation to the change in their population. The second part describes where do poor people live, proportion of squatter districts within the city, and the political and economical changes that has happened in squatter districts since 1960's. The third part of the book explains the state's role in this change. The fourth part gives information about the myths and illusions about squatter housing and makes the final political situation explicit. The fifth part explains how the squatter districts are criminalized and cleared out for the sake of achieving beautiful cities. The sixth part describes the affect of disasters on squatter districts and poor as well as the very bad health conditions in these districts. The seventh part discusses and questions the recent political trends in solving the problems of urban poverty. A very recent example for this can be the protests made in front of Pakistan parliament at the end of August 2010 in order to ask IMF to cancel the payment of country's debt because of the flood, which left 5 million people homeless and 17 million people affected badly from this situation. According to Davis such payments of poor countries are important barriers in front of their struggle against urban poverty. The eighth part gives information about the informal sector and its current political economical role. The last part contains the worries of Davis about urban poverty.

The book can be very useful for professionals, such as city planners, architects and sociologists. However anybody who wishes to know what is happening on our planet should also read it. Although the book does not contain any illustrations, it makes the imagination work, so that the reader can easily imagine the physical world of the poor, as if s/he is reading a classic novel.

Whilst reading the book one might find out that his/her conception about poverty is seriously wrong. Tens of people living in a room; People paying the highest prices for the metersquare of these poor rooms, for private toilets (if they exist) and for clean water to drink; People selling their organs or children; People starting to think that their children are witches... It really gets crazy...

There is not any shortcomings of this book and this success is expected from Mike Davis, who is one of the editors of New Left Review. Some of his other successful books can be listed here as: "City of Quartz: Excavating the Future in Los Angeles," "Beyond Blade Runner: Urban Control, The Ecology of Fear," "Ecology of Fear: Los Angeles and the Imagination of Disaster," "Magical Urbanism: Latinos Reinvent the US City," and "Dead Cities and Other Tales."

Planet of Slums © M I K E DAVIS V VERSO London © New York First published by Verso 2006 © Mike Davis 2006 All rights reserved The moral rights of the author have been asserted 3 5 7 9 10 8 6 4 Verso UK: 6 Meard Street, London W1F OEG USA: 180 Varick Street, New York, NY 10014-4606. www.versobooks.com Verso is the imprint of New Left Books ISBN 1 - 8 4 4 6 7 - 0 2 2 - 8 British Library Cataloguing in Publication Data A catalogue record for this book is... "Planet of Slums"™ is about this new situation of mega-slums whose inhabitants are largely outside the global circuits of production and what this might mean for the class struggle. Davis writes: "The global growth of a vast informal proletariat, moreover, is a wholly original structural development unforeseen by either classical Marxism or modernization..." 228 pages : 20 cm. According to the United Nations, more than one billion people now live in the slums of the cities of the South. In this brilliant and ambitious book, Mike Davis explores the future of a radically unequal and explosively unstable urban world. From the sprawling barricadas of Lima to the garbage hills of Manila, urbanization has been disconnected from industrialization, even economic growth. Davis portrays a vast humanity warehoused in shantytowns and exiled from the formal world economy. - Planet of Slums. © MIKE DAVIS. VERSO London © New York. First published by Verso 2006 © Mike Davis 2006 All rights reserved. The moral rights of the author have been asserted. 357910 8 6 4. 12 planet of slums. cities i n 2005 (as compared t o only 9 US cities) had populations of more than 1 million.35 Industrial boomtowns such as Dongguan, Shenzhen, Fushan City, and Chengchow are the postmodern Sheffields. and Pittsburghs. Planet of Slums has several arguments but I would distill the primary ones as follows: 1. The end of the Cold War "liberated" capital to spread to all those portions of the world formerly dominated by the Soviet Union and its allies. Parallel to this economic theories known as "neoliberalism" arose in the 1970s and became dominant by the 1990s.