

Marc Howard Ross (edited by Remi Clignet and Edward W. Soja), *THE POLITICAL INTEGRATION OF URBAN SQUATTERS*. Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 1973. 228 pp., bibliography, index, (cloth) n.p.

A major portion of the contemporary, world population can be classified as "urban." The percentage of persons claiming some urban experience increases the above classification significantly. As a result, anthropologists have reluctantly begun to focus their attention and talents on today's urbanites, despite their often being considered unwelcomed guests in a realm belonging to the "other" social sciences. As a means of justification, many anthropologists have concentrated on intensive analyses of small segments of the city, leaving the whole picture of the community up to the readers' imagination.

Criticisms have been leveled against this approach to urban analysis, but suggestions of a more eclectic methodology (in the sense of utilizing a mixture of social science knowledge) are frequently avoided — perhaps being viewed as too involved or unfamiliar to the researcher. Thus, many urban studies do not lend themselves to cross-cultural comparative analysis.

In contrast, Ross's book on political integration of urban squatters is a good example of a useful, multi-disciplinary analysis of this urban phenomenon. Though not an anthropologist, Ross has incorporated both his political science and anthropological knowledge in providing a general political integration theory concerning urban squatters. While he focuses mainly on Mathare 2, a community fringing Nairobi, Kenya, his research lends itself to comparative analysis. Facilitating this methodology, Ross skillfully assimilates various urban studies on Asia, Africa and Latin America to strengthen his hypotheses.

The perspective begins with general information and assumptions. The concept of community is defined and the idea of local political integration is approached. Ross suggests two variables affecting the level of integration in urban areas, i.e., a sense of community and the presence of strong institutions of social and political control. Examples of urban squatter settlements are provided with certain explanations of "push" and "pull" factors prompting movement to squatter areas

The community organization and level of integration of these settlements becomes the overriding theme of the rest of the study. Eleven variables are given in general application and then with specific reference to Mathare 2, as a means of identifying the degree of community integration. These variables include: the perceived importance of the community in the people's lives, threats to community membership and participation, the number and strength of affective symbols associated with the community, the social and cultural homogeneity of the community, the proportion of interactions taking place within the community, and so forth. These factors are used to determine the sense of community and the strength of institutions in Mathare 2.

This approach of stating the variables necessary to the study and then utilizing these indicators is quite thorough and highly effective. Mathare 2 is shown to be exceptional in that it ranks medium to high in most of the eleven listed factors.

Ross doubles the effectiveness of his methodology by correlating his finds and establishing hypothesized phases in the community formation process at Mathare 2. In so doing, he provides a useful model for analyzing urban growth in other developing nations.

Ross's analysis should be read by all scientists interested in the organization, growth and operation of urbanization in developing nations. His comprehensive technique profits not only the social researcher but also yields important data to the leaders of such nations in their task of responsible decision-making.

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