



Ordinary Cities: Between Modernity and Development (Questioning Cities)

Jennifer Robinson

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With the urbanization of the world's population proceeding apace and the equally rapid urbanization of poverty, urban theory has an urgent challenge to meet if it is to remain relevant to the majority of cities and their populations, many of which are outside the West.

This groundbreaking book establishes a new framework for urban development. It makes the argument that all cities are best understood as 'ordinary', and crosses the longstanding divide in urban scholarship and urban policy between Western and other cities (especially those labelled 'Third World'). It considers the two framing axes of urban modernity and development, and argues that if cities are to be imagined in equitable and creative ways, urban theory must overcome these axes with their Western bias and that resources must become at least as cosmopolitan as cities themselves.

Tracking paths across previously separate literatures and debates, this innovative book - a postcolonial critique of urban studies - traces the outlines of a cosmopolitan approach to cities, drawing on evidence from Rio, Johannesburg, Lusaka and Kuala Lumpur. Key urban scholars and debates, from Simmel, Benjamin and the Chicago School to Global and World Cities theories are explored, together with anthropological and developmentalist accounts of poorer cities. Offering an alternative approach, *Ordinary Cities* skilfully brings together theories of urban development for students and researchers of urban studies, geography and development.

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