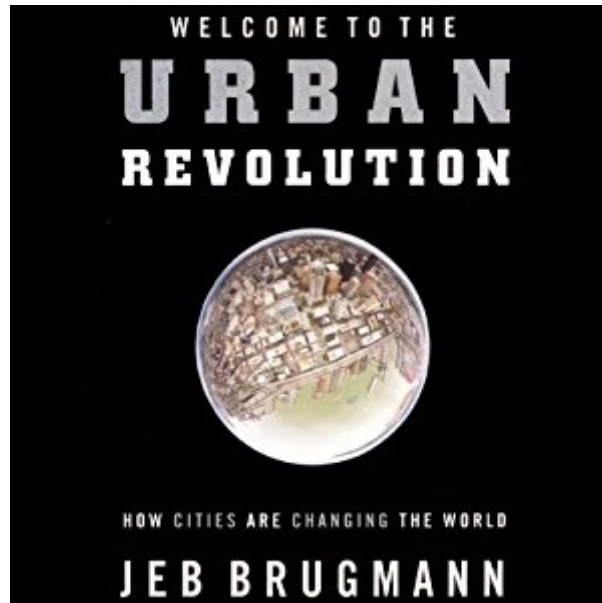


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# Welcome To The Urban Revolution: How Cities Are Changing The World



## Synopsis

The revolutions that have taken place around the world during the last 50 years - the ousting of Marcos and the Shah of Iran; the fall of communist regimes in Eastern Europe; the end of Apartheid in South Africa; and, indeed, the civil rights revolution in America - were fundamentally urban revolutions. They were the revolutions of Manila, Teheran, Gdansk, Leipzig, Berlin, Johannesburg, and Detroit, muscular assertions of new classes of city-dwellers intent on ending their marginalization as they struggled to build their new livelihoods, freedoms, and communities in cities. In *Welcome to the Urban Revolution*, Jeb Brugmann argues that the city itself had become our era's medium for revolutionary change: not only political, but technological as well. Though we think of them as a hotbed for poverty and crime, cities are not just a source of problems and conflict. They can also be a source of solutions to the major problems of our day: poverty, social inequality, and environmental sustainability. Brugmann here explains what is unique and important about cities and how they grow, the ways global issues are being solved in individual cities, and how real people are living with urban migration, day in and day out.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

Jeb was part of a discussion panel along with Richard Florida, Roger Martin and David Miller (The Mayor of Toronto). I was impressed by his experience and clarity - even when compared against these other high calibre communicators. Jeb's book is new territory for me. I have not read any

others on city planning and urbanism and regard myself as a granola-crunching anti-urbanite. Yet it made me realize just how urban I am - along with over half the population of the world. Whenever I travel I gravitate to the cities; when in Argentina I don't go to the Iguazu Falls but stay in Buenos Aires, when in Cuba I get bored at the beach but appreciate Havana. That is because cities are concentrations of human interest and they are stimulating. This book is a celebration of urbanism and it reads like the cities it describes; rich in anecdote, busy, enthusiastic, provocative and multi-faceted. Who should read it? City planners, architects, politicians, business people, educators... and anyone who loves (or hates) cities and wants to learn about the biggest mass migration of humanity in history.

Jeb Brugmann has researched the growth, and sometimes decline, of cities throughout the world, from his native Toronto through Chicago and Detroit, then on to Curitiba, Brazil and a squatter city adjacent to Mumbai, India. He is a "fan," to use an imprecise word, of the future of cities. He touts a plan-based urbanism, but one that reflects native strengths of individual cities and metropolitan areas, contrary to a New Urbanism that may be formulaic at times. He acknowledges the need to address energy use and other issues of urban areas, while adding that the world is going to continue to urbanize, planning or no. The one disagreement I had with him was his claim that urbanization will lead naturally to democracy. The verdict is still out on China, to be sure. It's iffy on other countries that may move in the direction of oligarchy. As for the past, whether or not urbanism contributed to the fall of the Iron Curtain, Hitlerite Germany was an already-urbanized nation.

I think Jeb Brugmann has some interesting ideas that are very important to the future vitality of our way of life. His ideas and observations about what does and doesn't work in cities and neighborhoods around the world should be required reading for anyone in the urban planning/public policy field. This is a great book on the city based view of globalization. It is also well written and a pleasure to read.

As an architect, I had the pleasure of meeting Jeb Brugmann this spring at a ULI meeting in Kansas City and then read his brilliant book. His theory: the best cities emerge from a way of life more than a system of speculative land development, that is, from "strong traditions of urbanism". In good examples, a city or community has a unique sense of who it is, its problems, and the best solutions. They tinker with development as an outgrowth of community, the "chaotic complexities," rather than impose master plans for the sake of development. In particular, his typology of cities appealed to me:

Crisis Cities (which have competing purposes), Great Opportunity Cities (incoherent growth), and the best ones -Strategic Cities. By working at conceptual and particular levels simultaneously, he effectively contrasts planned cities versus ad hoc cities. In many ways, this approach parallels a triple bottom line method that considers social, economic, and environmental purposes. Brugmann bounces around the globe from Mumbai to Chicago and sees systematic answers, or as he calls them, citysystems or ecosystems. here's an interview with Brugmann that summarizes many of the ideas in the book. [...]

Jeb Brugmann does an excellent job introducing the paradox of urbanization (concentration of population in cities) and globalization (expansion of civilization around the world) working together. Brugmann has ample experience through many years of studying urbanization around the world so his examples are more than anecdotic they are based on a deep analysis of data. This is an excellent treaty for use as text in any Urban Studies program.

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