**Urban Development
and Spirituality**

Editorial

Spiritualität ins Zentrum von Architektur, Stadtplanung und der internationalen Entwicklungszusammenarbeit zu rücken, ist nicht nur für TRIALOG ein Novum, sondern auch im Hinblick auf die Berufsfelder und Diskurse in diesen Disziplinen. Das Vordringen in unbekanntes Territorium ist immer eine Herausforderung, doch in diesem Falle ist es ein besonders gewagtes Unterfangen, da es sich hierbei um ein Thema handelt, welches weithin mit Attributen wie esoterisch, irrational, okkult, New Age oder ähnlichem als irrelevant abgetan wird. Ein Grund dafür ist sicherlich unsere mangelnde Vertrautheit mit Spiritualität, was noch verstärkt wird, wenn es darum geht, diese innerste Dimension unserer Existenz in die Öffentlichkeit zu tragen. Denn sind wir nicht seit unserer Kindheit und Jugend so enkulturiert worden, dass wir unsere innersten Erfahrungen und Emotionen von den äußeren Wirklichkeiten der Welt klar zu trennen versuchen?

Bislang wurde Spiritualität in der Stadtentwicklungspraxis und –theorie wie auch im Entwicklungsdiskurs praktisch kein Raum gegeben. Allerdings zeigt die Realität in Entwicklungsländern – sowohl im als „traditionell" empfundenen Dorfleben als auch im „modern"-orientierten urbanen Milieu – eine Vielzahl von empirisch belegbaren Beispielen für die Bedeutung von Spiritualität im Alltagsleben. Zusätzlich zu diesen Belegen für die Relevanz von Spiritualität scheint sich auch in der westlichen Welt eine Wiederbelebung von Spiritualität und Glauben zu vollziehen – oft als kritische Reaktion auf die Dominanz einer verwissenschaftlicht-materialistischen Weltsicht. Diese kritische Reaktion kann sich unter anderem auf Denkströmungen beziehen, die sich mit der Integration bzw. Vereinheitlichung unserer hochspezialisierten und fragmentierten Wissenssysteme beschäftigen.

*Dies ist der Ausgangspunkt des einführenden Artikels von **Christoph Woiwode**, der bezogen auf den urbanen Kontext versucht, einen breit angelegten Blick auf zeitgenössische Aspekte der Spiritualität zu werfen. In einem weiteren theoretischen Beitrag entwickelt **Marilyn Hamilton** einen höchst originellen Ansatz zum Verständnis einer urbanen Spiritualität, die von Spiral Dynamics und der Integralen Theorie des Philosophen Ken Wilber inspiriert ist. Im Gegensatz dazu nimmt **Carl Fingerhuth**, ausgehend von seiner eigenen Biografie, den Leser mit auf eine Reise durch die Welt und die Jahrhunderte, um in der von ihm so bezeichneten „Zeit jenseits der Moderne" die Notwendigkeit der Re-Integration von Spiritualität in das Denken und in die Leitlinien des Städtebau zu demonstrieren. **Gail Hochachka** präsentiert ein NGO-Projekt zur Entwicklung von Führungskompetenz in Nigeria. Aufbauend auf Habermas plädiert sie für einen post-säkularen Ansatz in der Entwicklungszusammenarbeit, der eine Integration der spirituellen mit der weltlichen Sphäre ermöglicht. **Lydia-Sophia Wilmsen** untersucht die Relevanz intentionaler spiritueller Gemeinschaften, wie etwa von Auroville in Indien oder der Comunidad Ecológica Peñalolén in Chile, für die Raumplanung und eine nachhaltige Lebensweise. Ihre Studie wird von **Aryadeep S. Acharya** thematisch fortgesetzt, der kühn für eine paradigmatische Führungsrolle von Auroville als universellem Stadtmodell argumentiert, und zwar nicht nur, um den Herausforderungen der indischen Städte zu genügen, sondern auch, um der globalen Urbanisierung angemessen zu begegnen. Eingebettet in einen historischen Kontext diskutiert **Genet Alem**, inwiefern in Addis Abeba Orte entweder als sakrale oder als öffentliche Räume angeeignet und genutzt werden. In seinem zweiten Artikel stellt **Christoph Woiwode** mehrere Fallstudien aus der ganzen Welt vor und wirft ein Licht auf die Rolle von Spiritualität in der Quartiersentwicklung und Planungspraxis sowie auf die Rolle der Planer.*

Damit ist deutlich geworden, dass diese Ausgabe von TRIALOG eine explorative Mission hat, die letztendlich wohl mehr Fragen als Antworten aufwirft. Der vordergründige Zweck dieser Ausgabe ist es denn auch, einen völlig vernachlässigten Aspekt der Planung im Bereich der Entwicklungszusammenarbeit zu thematisieren. Insofern muss erst die "Büchse der Pandora" geöffnet werden, um die Möglichkeiten, Potenziale und natürlich die Schwierigkeiten zu erörtern, die durch die Berücksichtigung von Spiritualität in der Stadtplanung und Entwicklungszusammenarbeit entstehen.

Putting spirituality at the centre stage in the context of architecture, urban planning and international development is new not only for TRIALOG, but also for the professions and discourses in these disciplines in general as well. Spearheading a largely unknown territory is always a challenge, but in this case it is also a particularly daring venture because we are dealing with a topic that has been and still is widely dismissed as esoteric, irrational, occultist, New Age, and so forth. One reason for this is the unfamiliarity most of us have with spirituality in general, and with elevating the interior dimension of our existence into the public realm in particular. Has our upbringing and enculturation not taught us to clearly separate our deepest inner experiences and emotions from the external realities of the world?

Hitherto, spirituality has been conspicuous by its absence in urban development practice and theory as well as in the international development discourse. However, the empirical reality in the developing world – both in the perceived "traditional" rural village setting and in the "modern"-oriented urban context – exhibits plenty of examples of the significance of spirituality as well as its importance to people. In addition to this empirical evidence that spirituality matters in people's lives across the world, there seems to be a revival of spirituality and faith (especially in the Western hemisphere) as a critical response to the predominance of the scientific, materialist perspective of the universe. This development is linked to philosophies and theories that emerge around the issue of integrating/unifying our specialised and compartmentalised knowledge systems.

This is the starting point of **Christoph Woiwode**'s introductory, conceptual paper that attempts to develop a broad perspective on contemporary aspects of spirituality in relation to the urban context and praxis. In another theory-based contribution, **Marilyn Hamilton** develops a highly original approach to urban spirituality that is inspired by spiral dynamics and philosopher Ken Wilber's Integral Theory. In contrast, setting out from his own biography, **Carl Fingerhuth** takes the reader on a global journey through the ages to demonstrate the need for a re-integration of spirituality in thinking and in the making of towns in what he calls the "time beyond-the-modern". **Gail Hochachka** presents an NGO project on leadership development in Nigeria and, by building on Habermas, makes the case for a post-secular approach in international development work bringing forth the notion of integrating the spiritual with the secular. **Lydia-Sophia Wilmsen** explores the relevance that intentional, spiritual communities such as Auroville, India, and the Comunidad Ecológica Peñalolén, Chile, could have for spatial planning and sustainable living. Her study is further emphasised by **Aryadeep S. Acharya**, who boldly argues for a paradigmatic leadership role of Auroville as a universal township model not only for the urban challenges faced by India but by the world. Embedded in a historical context, **Genet Alem** discusses how places are appropriated and contested either as holy places or public spaces in contemporary Addis Ababa. In his second article, **Christoph Woiwode** presents several case studies from across the world to throw light on how spirituality matters in neighbourhood development, planning practice, and the role of planners.

Obviously, this issue of TRIALOG is on an explorative mission probably producing more new questions than answers. Hence, the purpose of this TRIALOG is to introduce an altogether neglected aspect to planning practices in development. By considering spirituality in urban planning and development, this issue of TRIALOG rather opens a "Pandora's box" in regard to figuring out possible opportunities, potentials and, certainly, difficulties.

Christoph Woiwode and Wolfgang Scholz

Urban Development and Spirituality

Volume Editors: Christoph Woiwode and Wolfgang Scholz

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Town Planning for Transforming India into a "Right Kind of Giant" – A Study in Sri Aurobindo's Light

Aryadeep S. Acharya

Stadtplanung für die Transformation Indiens in einen "Giganten wahrer Größe" - eine Studie im Lichte Sri Aurobindos

Dieser aus zwei Teilen bestehende Beitrag befasst sich mit einem der nach Ansicht des Autors wichtigsten Politikbereiche, in denen Indien ein umfassendes, weitsichtiges, mutiges und entschlossenes Vorgehen benötigt, um sich in der Welt als aufstrebender "Gigant wahrer Größe" zu entwickeln, nämlich der Stadtentwicklung. Der erste Teil der Arbeit wirft einen kurzen Blick auf das zukünftige urbane Szenario in Indien und zwei als wesentlich erachtete Grundsätze für die Gestaltung urbaner Zentren: die Notwendigkeit exemplarischer Stadtmodelle sowie der Fokus auf Klein- und Mittelstädte. Der zweite Teil präsentiert eine Idee für die Richtung zukünftiger Stadtentwicklung Indiens, die aus Sicht des Autors notwendige Bedingungen für Indiens Aufstieg generieren könnte. Dabei wird Auroville als spirituelle, evolutionäre Modellstadt vorgestellt und auf die Lehren Sri Aurobindos zurückgegriffen, dem berühmten Mystiker, Philosophen und Visionär einer neuen spirituellen Evolution der Welt sowie seine Mitstreiterin Mirra Alfassa, allgemein als „die Mutter" bezeichnet..

In March, 2003, a prominent Indian news magazine, India Today, organised at New Delhi a conclave, "India: Global Giant or Pigmy?" Among the eminent economists, thinkers and futurists, business and political leaders who were invited to speak at the conclave was William Jefferson Clinton, former President of the United States of America, who gave the keynote address. Speaking via satellite from New York, Mr. Clinton began his speech by saying "The world cannot afford for India to be a pigmy. You have to be a giant and the right kind of giant" (Clinton 2003: 22).

This paper, in two parts, addresses one of the major areas in which India will need to develop a comprehensive, far-sighted, bold and determined approach to emerge in the world as a "right kind of giant"; namely, the planning of her cities going forward and the remodelling of the existing ones. The first part takes a brief look at the emerging urban scenario in India and at two of the essential principles for designing the urban centres. The second part presents an idea for India's urban development which, in my view, could create conditions for India's emergence as a "right kind of giant". In doing so, I will primarily draw upon the guidance of Sri Aurobindo (Figure 1), the renowned mystic, philosopher and visionary of new spiritual evolution of the world, and his collaborator Mirra Alfassa (Figure 2), known universally as the Mother, who envisioned a new India founded on her true national individuality and genius, and dedicated to her true role in shaping the human destiny.

Part 1
The Emerging Urban Scenario in India

India is regarded as a developing country. This means that compared to the widespread prosperity and affluence of the developed countries, India lags behind and is striving to catch up. This is primarily understood in the context of the economic, technical and material development of the country, and the attitudes, institutions and infrastructure required for such development. Worldwide, one of the major results of economic development has been the migration of people from rural to urban agglomerations. "Urbanisation is the sociological and spatial counterpart to economic processes that shift workers away from subsistence agriculture to more productive sectors" (Sanyal 2008: 166).

According to the *Provisional Census July 2011* released by the Government of India, nearly 70 percent of India's 1.21 billion population lives in rural areas, mostly in hamlets and villages with a population of less than 5,000 people. However, the census also noted that "for the first time since Independence, the absolute increase in population is more in urban areas than in rural areas" (Chandramouli 2011:05). This trend, in the wake of the economic growth of the country, is going to increase. It is estimated by some economists and urban systems researchers that

Figure 1: Sri Aurobindo, 1950

Figure 2: The Mother

nearly half of India's 833 million rural population – some 400 million people, a number equal to the population of the USA – will migrate to cities in coming decades! (See website of IIHS.) Moreover, India will also need to rehabilitate its slum dwellers – "170 million, which alone surpasses all but five countries in the world" (Nilekani 2008: 220) – if she really seeks to be called a developed nation. "The challenge of scale" (Nilekani 2008: 231) is immense, but so is the opportunity for bold experiments to build a new India, new urban forms of life, a new future, not only for herself and her people but, because of the nation's sheer size and strength, for the entire world. The phenomenon of India's urban development is going to be so vast, so radically transforming to the Indian landscape, so consequential for India's future, that it can rightly be termed as "India's approaching urban revolution".

Need to Develop Exemplary Models of Urban Development

It is high time that we – all those who are interested in India's future – ask ourselves some fundamental questions. The answers may help us develop an understanding of the most appropriate urban development for the country.

What should be the central purpose of organised human settlements? Progressing from a prehistoric nomadic life to the Agriculture Age, which gave rise to hamlets and village settlements, then to the Industrial Age, which transformed those early forms of human settlements into modern metropolises, what should be the next mode and purpose of the organised human habitation in the post-industrial era?

The predominant element of agricultural society was matter: it lived primarily on the physical level. The predominant element of industrial society was life: it lived primarily on vital level i.e. at the level of life itself. The predominant element of the digital age is mind: it lives or seeks to live primarily by ideas, information and innovations (Malik 2009: 51-51). The knowledge society talked about by futurists and management thinkers is the result of this development. Writes Peter Drucker in *The New Realities*: "This is a logical result of a long evolution in which we moved from working by the sweat of our brow and by muscle to industrial work and finally to knowledge work" (Drucker 1994:173). Could it be that the knowledge society is only a stage and a preparation for something beyond it – a still greater cycle of human progression awaiting its hour?

According to Sri Aurobindo, these three – body, life and mind – are like ministers, while the King – or, in the terminology of his Integral Yoga, psychology and philosophy, the psychic being or soul personality, which is an evolving entity in human beings – dwells deep inside, almost exiled from its kingdom.

Sri Aurobindo: "If the psychic entity had been from the beginning unveiled and known to its ministers, not a secluded King in a screened chamber, the human evolution would have been a rapid soul-outflowering, not the difficult, chequered and disfigured development it now is; but the veil is thick and we know not the secret Light within us, the light in the hidden crypt of the heart's innermost sanctuary" (Aurobindo 2005: 925).

What little influence the "King" – the soul or the psychic entity – exercises in human life is indirect and in proportion to what the three "ministers" allow. Could we build cities that not only facilitate the well-being and prosperity of all the peoples but also foster the emergence of the psychic being of the people – cities that help in the coming forward of the "King"; cities that help to thin the veil between man's external being – a construct of nature – and his inner being, which contains his true individuality and its spiritual potentialities?

The question is all the more important for India because India has, from the early dawn of its civilisation, a profoundly spiritual constitution ingrained in the very marrow of its being. The following extracts from a conversation with Sri Aurobindo explains this vividly:

> **"Disciple:** Do you think that it is easier to live a spiritual life in India than in any other country?
>
> **"Sri Aurobindo**: It is not a question of my thinking, it is a fact. Because we have been doing that work for the last four to five thousand years the whole past is living in a remarkable way, so that the slightest touch can open a man to it if he has anything in him which supplies the necessary material.
>
> **"Disciple:** Why is it that the spiritual life is more difficult in Europe than in India?
>
> **"Sri Aurobindo**: Firstly, because the Europeans never had it in such a degree as the Indians; and secondly, what they had is far away from their mental and vital life, and so it has receded behind. Perhaps it is coming back now there as well. That is why Europeans who have got a spiritual aspiration turn to India. It does not mean that they turn to Indians, but to the accumulated spiritual force that is here…
>
> **"Disciple**: Are Indians more spiritual than other people?
>
> **"Sri Aurobindo**: No, it is not so. No nation is entirely spiritual. Indians are not more spiritual than other people. But behind the Indian race there is a past spiritual influence" (Aurobindo 1995: 402).

It is because of this "accumulated spiritual force", which is "living in a remarkable way" "behind the Indian race", that Nolini Kanta Gupta, an Indian philosopher and a foremost disciple of Sri Aurobindo, writes: "Other peoples may be the arms and the feet and the head of humanity, but India is its heart, its soul…" (Gupta 1988: 160). This also explains the Mother's answer when asked to sum up in one sentence her vision of India's future: "India's true destiny," she wrote, "is to be the *Guru* of the world" (Mother 2004: 358).

The original sense of the Sanskrit word "guru" means one who has evolved into "a true consciousness that is aware of the Divine and the Truth and does not look at things from the Ego – it is wide and calm and strong and aspires to union and surrender – it is many things besides but this is the essential" (Aurobindo 1978: 170). Such a person, then, is in a position to inspire and guide those who seek that same consciousness. If India is to emerge as the guru

of the world, the collective consciousness of the country should have pre-dominantly psychic characteristics (Mother 2004: 370).

Sri Aurobindo: "The psychic part of us is something that comes direct from the Divine and is in touch with the Divine. In its origin it is the nucleus pregnant with divine possibilities that supports this lower triple manifestation of mind, life and body" (Aurobindo 1978:120).

The predominantly psychic characteristics of people would gradually generate in the country the attributes of the psychic being – the nobility and purity of character, of thoughts and outlook and understanding and action; the realisation of "Freedom, Equality, Fraternity" (the three great "cries" of the French Revolution); the inner sense of solidarity with fellow human beings and with all creation; selfless love, right thought, right feeling, right perception, right attitude in all things, turning of all life into a field of learning, progress and transformation on the foundation of "sincerity, will and perseverance" (Mother 2004: 254). Also, it is through the psychic being that one discovers the true national genius, identity and individuality (Mother 2004: 370).

Of course, such a generalised collective evolution into a predominantly psychic consciousness depends upon the appearance of an increasing number of individuals who are TRULY led by their psychic and spiritual consciousness and who, by their example and inspiration, nurture the collective environment for such an evolution in all aspects of human life – art, culture and literature, education and economy, architecture and town planning, social sciences and polity. It is only then that India will qualify to lead the world to the world's luminous destiny and fulfil her mission.

Sri Aurobindo: "The free rule, that is to say, the predominant lead, control and influence of the developed spiritual man – not the half-spiritualised priest, saint or prophet or the raw religionist – is our hope for a divine guidance of the race" (Aurobindo 1997: 182).

Fundamentally, the human imperfections are the result of the incomplete emergence of consciousness. Thus, one of the essential tasks faced by the responsible and forward-looking individuals of the country would be to develop urban models which, besides securing economic, material, social, cultural and political well-being of all its citizens, would also create conditions for the growth and emergence of true consciousness. Such exemplary urban models would then become a source of inspiration for the rest of humanity.

"*Small-town India Holds the Key*"

This is the title of an article by Sanjeev Sanyal, an Indian economist, urban systems theorist and author of *The Indian Renaissance*. In this and in his other articles, Sanyal advocates reviving the small towns and building new ones for "inevitable urbanisation" of the country (see Sanyal 2009, also Sanyal 2008: 165). But Sri Aurobindo, too, basing himself on human history, advocates relatively small human communities for a healthy, happy and progressive human civilisation, as the following sequence of quotes demonstrates:

"[C]ollective life is more at ease with itself, more genial, varied, fruitful when it can concentrate itself in small spaces and simpler organisms" (Aurobindo 1997: 281).

"If we consider the past of humanity so far as it is known to us, we find that the interesting periods of human life, the scenes in which it has been most richly lived and has left behind it the most precious fruits, were precisely those ages and countries in which humanity was able to organise itself in little independent centres acting intimately upon each other but not fused into a single unity" (Aurobindo 1997: 281).

"The small human communities in which all can easily take an active part and in which ideas and movements are swiftly and vividly felt by all and can be worked out rapidly and thrown into form without the need of a large and difficult organisation, turn naturally towards freedom as soon as they cease to be preoccupied with the first absorbing necessity of self-preservation" (Aurobindo 1997: 358).

"A certain democratic equality is almost inevitable in a small community; ..." (Aurobindo 1997: 359).

"[E]verywhere the root of this free, generalised and widely pulsating vital and dynamic force … was the complete participation not of a limited class, but of the individual generally in the many-sided life of the community, the sense each had of being full of the energy of all and of a certain freedom to grow, to be himself, to achieve, to think, to create in the undammed flood of that universal energy" (Aurobindo 1997: 361).

In the light of these words from one who envisions a new dawn of human civilisation; who is widely regarded as a forerunner, as a "teacher of mankind" (Singhvi 1999: 3); who has, in the words of Dr. Helmut Kohl, the renowned statesmen and former Chancellor of Germany, "successfully synthesised matter with spirit" (Kohl 1990: 36), the importance of small towns or "little independent centres of life" for India's urban development cannot be over-emphasised.

Part 2
Auroville – A Spiritual Township: An Idea for the Ideal Urban Development of India

"Just imagine, 20,000 full-grown Aurovilles would be enough to contain India's entire population while occupying not even 20% of its territory; the country would look quite different then – no urban sprawl, no slums, and a lot of space for nature reserves!"

The above statement, posted in October 2006 on Auroville Intranet, the internal website of Aurovilians and close associates of Auroville, comes from Christoph Fischer, a sociologist and former resident of Auroville, currently residing in Tuscany, Italy. It was written by way of comment to an article on Auroville's planning and development by Paulette Hadnagy, a senior Auroville resident and multifaceted researcher from the same country, Italy.

The statement drew my attention because, having lived in Auroville for 21 years and having seen things from close quarters, I am convinced of the immense and unparal-

leled relevance and potentiality of Auroville for India. Living in Auroville, in close proximity to people from some 40 countries, I feel as if I am living in an international army headquarters of India! Not an army that fights at the physical frontier of a country, but the one which, within its very humble means, resources, capacity and size, fights virtually at every other frontier: the frontier of economy and business, the frontier of art, culture and literature, the frontier of education, social change and evolution, rural development and, above all, the frontier of intellectual, psychological and spiritual strength and stamina of the country! This is so because the international population of Auroville has, to a varying degree in varying individuals, imbibed the influence of two visionary leaders who stand not only for world progress, world evolution, world transformation, but also for India's progress, India's evolution, India's transformation. "Sri Aurobindo represents Indian philosophical thought as it has developed over thousands of years in its most modern form and concept" (Malhotra 2000: 04). The vision of Sri Aurobindo and the Mother is like a double-edged fire – one edge for the world renaissance and the other for the Indian renaissance, which must precede the world renaissance. Consequently, "what Auroville represents in the earth atmosphere" (Revi 2007: 03) has also its double-edge, a double-poled mission: one aims at human advance towards its highest destiny and another at India's advance towards her highest destiny.

The Mother: "And the clear vision: the same thing which in the history of the universe made the earth the symbolic representation of the universe so as to concentrate the work on one point, the same phenomenon is now taking place: India is the representation of all human difficulties on earth, and it is in India that the ... cure will be found. And then, that is why – THAT IS WHY I was made to start Auroville" (Mother 1981:41).

I regard it as my sacred task to communicate the relevance and potentialities of Auroville to those concerned about India's future. I was and am still researching and writing a book in this context and have been developing my ideas – "my dreams" – for realising Auroville's potentialities. However, that the Auroville township model itself has such an extraordinary relevance for India's urban development was something completely new to me. I have been therefore enquiring into it on and off over the course of the last five years and, in this part of my paper, present some of my understandings. In doing so, my stress will be on examining the validity and value of the idea rather than on developing an action plan for its implementation.

Elaborating the Idea

To begin with, I asked Christoph Fischer to elaborate his statement of 20,000 towns based on Auroville model. Below I quote from his email reply to me.

"If this idea should have any real impact on India's future urban and social development, it has to offer some very practical, innovative and attractive solutions for the social and environmental problems the country is facing. Personally, I have no doubt that Auroville is meant to be a model city, to be replicated all over the country, first of all as a solution to accommodate in a beautiful and pleasant way the enormous demographic growth, which would

otherwise be flowing into ever larger areas of almost uncontrolled urban sprawl. Secondly, these cities would be an excellent instrument to achieve and maintain a positive oxygen-CO2 balance of the country through the green area that surrounds the city-centre. Thirdly, an economic system centred on basic needs satisfaction should serve as a tool to eradicate totally poverty and underemployment. Last, but not the least, an administrative system to organise the collective affairs will allow and encourage the participation of as many citizens as possible.

"Channelling the urbanisation of India into the planned creation of many small townships could help solve the crucial problems concerning population, poverty, pollution and participation. I call them the four crucial Ps, which have to be solved if the course of human evolution is to be put on a right and sustainable track."

It must be mentioned here that four months after Christoph Fischer mooted the idea, one of the foremost Indian development planners and the director of the prestigious Indian Institute of Human Settlements (IIHS), Aromar Revi, echoed it out of his own vision of things in his brilliant research paper on Auroville, *Auroville Mission Note (12th Feb. 2007)*: "Very few settlements have been created to serve as vehicles for evolution. Auroville is one of them. It is therefore, both a living system and an evolving one... It is anticipated that other networked towns of similar size could develop based on the principles and processes that are materialised and tested in Auroville" (Revi 2007: 03-08).

Three Clarifications

Before we proceed to study the concept and the impact of the Auroville Universal Township model for India, I would wish to make three brief but important clarifications.

At first glance, the idea may appear to some as creating uniformity in the design of town planning and demographic set-up, thus undermining the diversity in human settlements. While a deeper inquiry into the idea will reveal a picture far better than what has emerged so far in terms of urbanisation, still it must be made clear at the outset that the idea in itself is only a broad pointer to a bright possibility. Wherever necessary, it can and must modify itself, adjust itself to ground realities, integrate experience and insights from other urban systems researchers, town-planners and architects who have a comprehensive and long-term view of the country's future. For, the goal is not to realise an idea but to realise the noble aspiration and vision behind it: the aspiration and vision of a beautiful and bountiful country – open, bright, vibrant, forward-looking, free from the bondage of tradition yet retaining its best elements, a country that offers innumerable opportunities and the environment for a free, healthy, happy, energetic, creative life for all its citizens.

Secondly, the idea of 20,000 towns should not be taken as a fixed number, a numerical target. It is being put forth as a concept and principle worthy of study and exploration, primarily for the fresh overall urban development of the country.

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Thirdly, the concept of zones in the Auroville township model is not a rigid compartmentalisation of life. It is a flexible concept which incorporates apparently non-zone-related but relevant activities and developments – a "mixed land use" system (Murthy 2009: 105) – within the framework of an urban set-up that itself is a close web of walkable or easily reachable places of work, living, education, industry, recreation, etc.

Understanding the Concept by Imagining the Idea

"Just imagine" – these are Christoph Fischer's opening words. Let us follow in their wake to grasp the concept of Auroville township model and the implications of the idea. For, as Paul Romer, the founder of Charter Cities, puts it: "There's no impediment, other than a failure of imagination, that will keep us from delivering on a truly global win-win solution" (Romer n/d).

Imagine that there are 20,000 towns in India based on the Auroville model, with each having its inspiring charter that embodies the highest dreams, aspirations and values of its collective existence!

Imagine that there are 20,000 towns, each having an area of about 20 sq. km., with an urban area of 5 sq. km. and 15 sq. km. as greenbelt, each having a population of about 60,000 people, and that all these 20,000 towns could accommodate India's 1.21 billion population while occupying less than 20 percent of India's 3,277,590 sq.-km. territory! What an all-round rejuvenating transformation of the country they could bring about!

Take, for example, the impact on energy usages – a vital ingredient for healthy ecology. Speaking about the greatly beneficial impact of the well-designed and compact urban density on energy savings, Sanyal writes:

"The problem with so-called green codes is that they exclusively focus on maximising the efficiency of individual buildings whereas the real gains come from the overall design of the city: Is the city dense or sprawled? Do people live in apartments or free-standing houses? Is the city designed for public transport? For instance, energy use drops by over 30 percent just by moving people from houses to apartments even if we ignore the green codes. Similarly, public transport systems do not work efficiently when the city is spread out and commuters cannot easily walk to the bus/metro stop.

Atlanta has a metro network of 74 km while Barcelona's is 99 km. These may seem comparable, but per capita CO2 emissions for Atlanta are ten times Barcelona's. The difference is mostly explained by urban form. Barcelona is compact and dense, while its American rival is spread out. The longest possible distance within the latter city is 137 km, while in Barcelona it is only 37 km. As a result, less than 4 percent of Atlanta's population lives within a reasonable walking distance of a metro station compared to 60 percent for Barcelona. Not surprisingly, a large proportion of Barcelona's citizens walk or use public transport while in Atlanta one is forced to use a car.

Interestingly, the very same factors affect environmental, economic and social sustainability. Manhattan is not just the densest urban area in the US, it is also an economic

powerhouse, a lively socio-cultural centre and has the lowest per capita ecological footprint in North America. In Asia, we see the same factors at work in Tokyo, Hong Kong and Singapore" (see Sanyal 2009).

Imagine that there are 20,000 residential zones in 20,000 towns of India providing a refreshing and integrated living environment, easy access to places of work and worship, utilities and services, sports and recreation, health and hygiene to all the citizens. What a gain it would be for a happy and healthy, efficient and energetic India!

Imagine that there are 20,000 industrial zones in 20,000 towns producing things for a bountiful and beautiful human existence while encouraging "local businesses that honour community values and serve community needs" (Korten 2009). What an inspiring environment it could generate for the flowering of the entrepreneurship, which in turn would open up vast opportunities for worthwhile employment for millions of youth about to enter the Indian stage in the coming decades!

Imagine that there are 20,000 cultural & educational zones in 20,000 towns of India dedicated to the integral growth of the students and the teachers. What a gain it would be for developing a learning society, a knowledge society!

Imagine that there are 20,000 national & international zones in each of the 20,000 towns of India researching and encouraging all that is best and unique in other states of India and other countries of the world. What a gain it would be for national and international goodwill, mutual understanding and appreciation and unity on the foundation of a rich vibrant diversity!

Mrs. Indira Gandhi, former Prime Minister of India: "Auroville is an exciting project for bringing about harmony among different cultures and for understanding the environmental needs for men's spiritual growth. May Auroville truly become a city of light and of peace" (message on the occasion of the Auroville foundation on 28th February 1968).

Imagine that all the four zones of the 20,000 towns of India are surrounded by green belts providing health-enhancing organically grown fruits, vegetables, grains and dairy requirements of the town as much as possible while offering at the same time forest and parks for recreation. There will be clean air, a clean environment, a healthy ecological balance and opportunities for developing the resources for a sustainable society.

Imagine that all these 20,000 towns have at their centres 20,000 sublime buildings – the souls of the towns: they may be called "Pavilions of New Consciousness" or "Pavilions of Mother India" or "Pavilions of Perfection" or "Temple of True Life" – surrounded by equally sublime gardens and a lake which not only adds to the aesthetic charm of the township but also meets the water needs of the town! How their silent, majestic and inspiring presence will slowly penetrate people's deeper understanding of life, its raison d'être, and broaden their outlook on things.

Sri Aurobindo: "In ancient India the temple and all the communal things were at the centre – and the whole

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Figure 3: Diagram of Auroville Universal Township (Source: Auroville Universal Township Master Plan 2025, Auroville Foundation, <www.auroville.org/av_brief.htm>) ▼

town was so arranged as to have easy access to the centre" (Aurobindo 1986: 40).

Imagine there are 20,000 empowered municipalities with 20,000 elected mayors – a nimble administration reaching out easily and efficiently with its helping hands to all the people of the town.

Last, but not least, imagine the vast areas of the country that would become available for large-scale production or for heavy industry, for agriculture, for higher and specialised education, for defence, environment and forestry.

Sri Aurobindo: "Poverty of the people can be removed only by a large-scale production. Big machinery does not necessarily mean all the evils of industrialism. … New forms of social organisation will rise with the advent of large-scale production. The evils of industrialism are bound to disappear. The different ideas and schemes suggested in Europe show that people are trying to correct the defects. Unless one enters into it, how can the evils be overcome? ... Why should India wait (for industrialism) until other countries have solved the problems so that they (Indians) might imitate them afterwards? … Let them (Indians) acquire wealth – without wealth they cannot expect to make any progress?" (Aurobindo 1986: 39).

The Structure of the Auroville Universal Township Model

It must be clear by now that the Auroville township model has two major components: the urban area and the green belt. The urban area is constituted of four zones and a centre called Peace which contains the Matrimandir – "the soul of Auroville", "a place for concentration", "a place ... for trying to find one's consciousness" (Mother 1970: 281-289) – while the green belt encircles the urban area as shown in Figure 3.

The city area has a radius of 1.25 km. (491 hectares or approx. 1200 acres) which comes to 5 sq. km. while the surrounding green belt has a radius of another 1.25 km
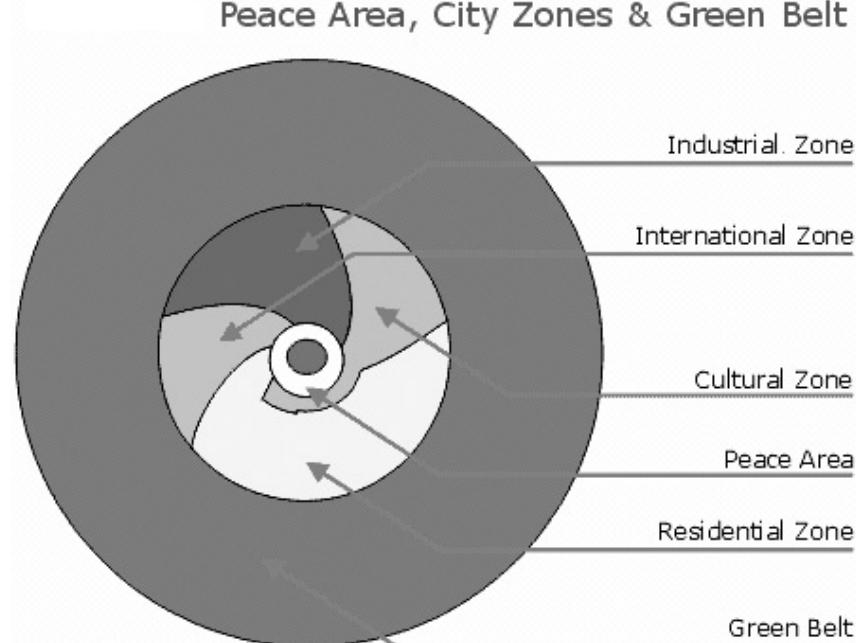
(1090 hectares, approx. 2700 acres) which comes to 15 sq. km. Thus, a radius of 2.5 km. from the centre creates a town of a little less than 20 sq. km. (1581 hectares, approx. 4000 acres) for a targeted population of 50,000 people.

The township has an in-depth, inspiring and comprehensive body of thought, visions, ideas and ideals – all coming from the world-view and life-view of Sri Aurobindo and the Mother (Figure 4). I mention below one of the texts, the Charter of Auroville, with a display of the Auroville Galaxy plan (Figure 5), a close-up of the central building Matrimandir (Figure 6), and the plan of its gardens (Figure 7).

Charter of Auroville

1. Auroville belongs to nobody in particular. Auroville belongs to humanity as a whole. But to live in Auroville one must be a willing servitor of the Divine Consciousness.

2. Auroville will be the place of unending education, of constant progress and a youth that never ages.

3. Auroville wants to be the bridge between the past and the future. Taking advantage of all discoveries from without and from within, Auroville will boldly spring towards future realisations.

4. Auroville will be a site of material and spiritual researches for a living embodiment of an actual Human Unity.

Commenting on the structure of Auroville township plan, Aromar Revi writes:

"Many cities, temples and monuments have been built in history to symbolise, mirror or amplify the power of a sacred geometry and an aspired timelessness. Most have quickly returned to the dust that they were built from. Others have become ossified shadows of the aspiration that created them… Auroville's galactic symbol; the material celebration of the emergence of the supramental from the subconscient; the four aspects of the Mother; her crown and lines of force provide an arena in which many forms of the music of transcreation will be played over this century… The challenge will be to build a bridge between inner and outer education and not being captured by the deeply entrenched culture of mediocrity in the contemporary Indian bureaucracy and academia" (Revi 2007: 08-09).

Could the Auroville Township Model Make India a Developed Country?

I will try to answer this question briefly from four angles:

1. Mindset for a developed country

2. Education and motivation

3. Administrative efficiency

4. Role of middle class

Peace Area, City Zones & Green Belt

- Industrial. Zone
- International Zone
- Cultural Zone
- Peace Area
- Residential Zone
- Green Belt

Mindset for a developed country

Economist C. K. Prahlad once said to N. R. Narayan Murthy, the founder of the renowned Indian multinational software company Infosys, "Being a developing country is just a mindset" (Murthy 2009:11). It is my humble contention that anyone who takes sincere trouble to understand the Auroville township model together with its vision content will acknowledge that it helps create a mindset for things Mr. Murthy regards as indispensable for India's emergence into a developed nation: "high aspirations" which "energise … to overcome limitations … engender and sustain hope, the main fuel for progress" and "build civilisation", "openness to accept, evaluate, adapt and adopt new ideas", freedom from "ego, vanity and contempt for other people", "work ethic" (Murthy 2009:12-13). The Auroville township model ignites the human imagination for an ideal human collectivity. It is a summons to man's love for progress, for an uplifting and enriching culture and creativity, for cultivating sincerity in actions and aspirations, for the growth of solidarity with fellow human beings on the basis of new consciousness where such a solidarity is self-existent.

Education and motivation

In his book *Nature of Mass Poverty*, the renowned economist John Kenneth Galbraith points out with penetrating case studies how education and motivation are the two major ingredients that propel people to strive for prosperity. The Auroville township model is a small-town model geared towards making the life of its residents a field of "unending education" and "a youth that never ages". The combination of these two factors – small town with a broad and inspiring vision – generates the quality and quantity of a "free, generalised and widely pulsating vital and dynamic force" (Aurobindo 1997: 361) of individual and collective life. Such a model motivates its citizens to strive for innovations, for creative imagination, for learning new skills and producing new and better things, for making new experiments in economy, in art, culture, literature and education – a celebration of life, of life's fullness, progress, prosperity and perfection.

Dr. Karan Singh, an Indian savant, statesman and the current Chairman of the Auroville Foundation, was so impressed by the pulsations of creative life-force in Auroville that he once observed: "Auroville has a population of about 2000 people but the creativity of 20,000 people." This supports Sri Aurobindo's point about "small but free communities" generating a "full vigour of the common life".

Administrative efficiency

Another important result of India's urban development based on Auroville township model will be the ease in disseminating benefit programmes and projects meant for the underdeveloped or poorer sections of society.

Sri Aurobindo: "[T]he active and stimulating participation of all or most in the full vigour of the common life, which was the great advantage of the small but free earlier communities, is much more difficult in a larger aggregate and is at first impossible. In its place, there is the concentration of the force of life into a dominant centre or at

THERE SHOULD BE SOMEWHERE ON EARTH A PLACE WHICH NO NATION COULD CLAIM AS ITS OWN, WHERE ALL HUMAN BEINGS OF GOOD WILL WHO HAVE A SINCERE ASPIRATION, COULD LIVE FREELY AS CITIZENS OF THE WORLD AND OBEY ONE SINGLE AUTHORITY, THAT OF THE SUPREME TRUTH: A PLACE OF PEACE, CONCORD AND HARMONY.
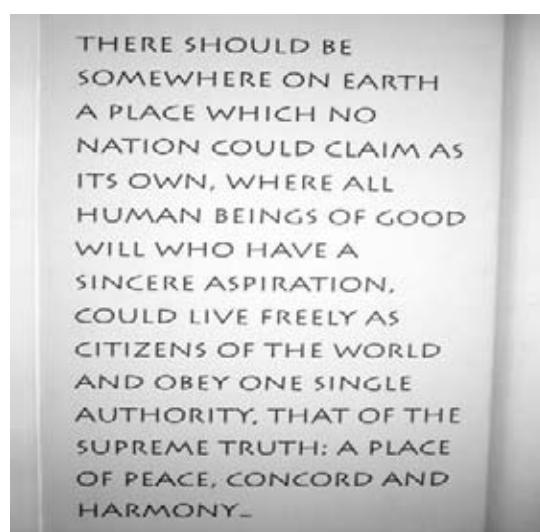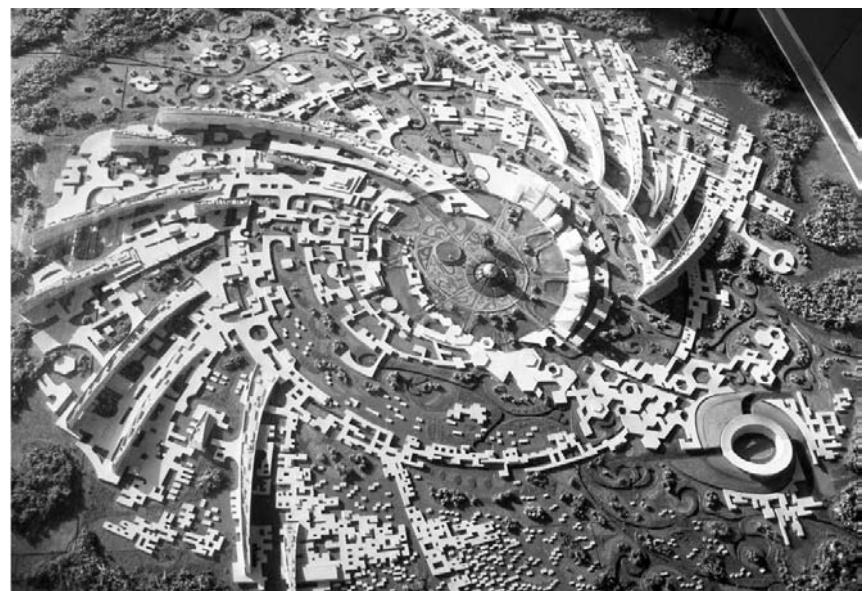
Figure 5: Galaxy Model of Auroville's Urban Area (Source: Auroville Universal Township Master Plan 2025, Auroville Foundation)

Figure 6: Matrimandir – "The Soul of Auroville" (Photo: C. Woiwode)

Meditation rooms in the 'petals'

1 Sincerity
2 Humility
3 Gratitude
4 Perseverance
5 Aspiration
6 Receptivity
7 Progress
8 Courage
9 Goodness
10 Generosity
11 Equality
12 Peace

Gardens
A Existence
B Consciousness
C Bliss
D Light
E Life
F Power
G Wealth
H Utility
I Progress
J Youth
K Harmony
L Perfection

* Viewing Point
Map of the Park of Unity
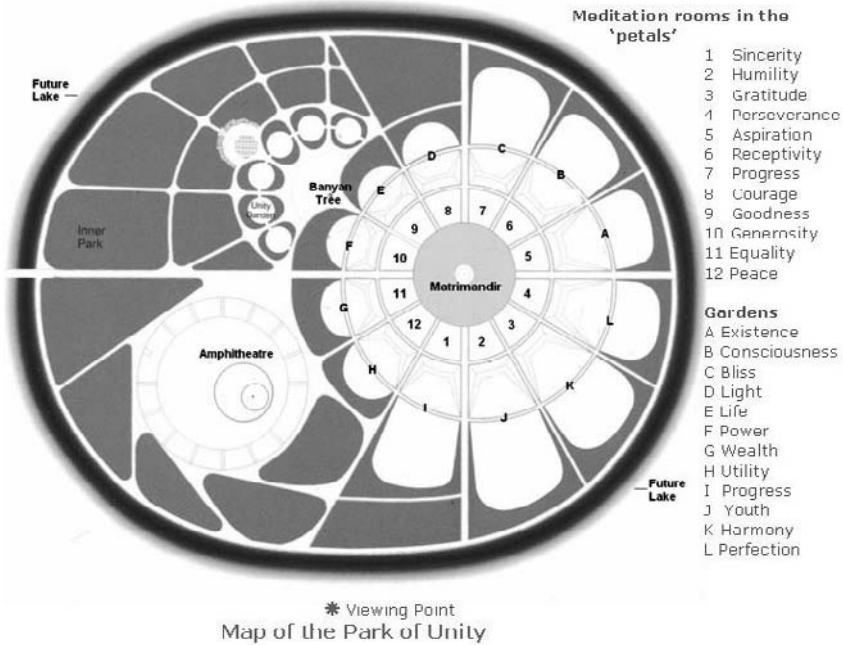
▲
Figure 7: Layout of Matrimandir Gardens (Source: <www.auroville.org/thecity/matrimandir/mm_access_nov08_it.htm>)

▲
Figure 8: Louis Building, Auroville

▲
Figure 9: Agni Jata Building, Auroville

most a governing and directing class or classes, while the great mass of the community is left in a relative torpor and enjoys only a minimum and indirect share of that vitality in so far as it is allowed to filter down from above and indirectly affect the grosser, poorer and narrower life below" (Aurobindo 1997: 358).

Role of middle class

A century ago, in 1909, Sri Aurobindo foresaw the crucial role the Indian middle class must play in shaping the country's future:

"For good or for evil the middle class now leads in India, and whatever saving impulse comes to the nation, must come from the middle class, whatever upward movement begins, it must initiate and lead. But for that to happen the middle class must by a miracle be transfigured and lifted above itself; the natural breeding ground of the bourgeois, it must become the breeding ground of the Samurai. It must cease in fact to be a middle class and turn itself into an aristocracy, an aristocracy not of birth or landed possessions, not of intellect, not of wealth and commercial enterprise, but of character and action. India must recover her faculty for self-sacrifice, courage and high aspiration…" (Aurobindo 2005b: 1108).

Today, the Indian middle class is a widely recognised and emerging social and economic phenomenon and force. Economists, business and political leaders are counting on it for India's resurgence. But, as Sri Aurobindo pointed out, unless the middle class becomes a bearer and an embodiment of "character and action", of "self-sacrifice, courage and high aspiration", it can easily turn into "a breeding ground" for a way of life which, to say the least, would be far from inspiring or uplifting.

On an infinitesimal scale, I have seen the middle class in Auroville and among Auroville associates, and I am reminded of what Sri Aurobindo wrote in The Human Cycle while discussing "conditions for the coming of a spiritual age":

"[E]ven if the condition of society and the principle and rule that govern society are opposed to the spiritual change, even if these belong almost wholly to the vital, to the external, the economic, the mechanical order, as is certainly the way at present with human masses, yet if the common human mind has begun to admit the ideas proper to the higher order that is in the end to be, and the heart of man has begun to be stirred by aspirations born of these ideas, then there is a hope of some advance in the not distant future" (Aurobindo 2005ª: 248).

Auroville stands for "ideas proper to the higher order", while Aurovilians, in my view, represent, in a miniscule and symbolic way, humanity. The members of this Aurovilian humanity have, to a varying extent, admitted to their minds the "ideas proper to the higher order". To a varying level of intensity, their hearts, too, have "begun to be stirred by the aspirations born of these ideas". As a result, I see in Auroville a hope for "some advance" towards what Winston Churchill said in one of his World War II speeches: "broad, sunlit uplands" of the human civilisation (Churchill 1940). In other words, I see in Auroville a

distinct possibility of the gradual emergence of a spiritually inspired and evolved human society.

Of course, many would say this is more easily said than done and I will not disagree. Earlier in this paper I said that living in Auroville I feel as if I am living in an international army headquarters of India, but this does not mean that the imperfections inherent in human nature are not be found in Auroville. It is something like a great composer composing an inspired music, but if his/her orchestra is just at the level of an apprentice, the music will not be that great and divine. It is something like climbing the Mount Everest collectively – "a city upon a hill" – you cannot expect to climb at one go. An Aurovilian writer once called Auroville "the spiritual kindergarten" (Herbert 1993: 9). That says it all. However, the vision, the roadmap, the inspiration for advance towards "a high school, a college, a university of spirit", are very much there. The challenge before Aurovilians and the friends of Auroville, then, is to keep intact the vision, the roadmap, the inspiration to the "core of their consciousness" (see Singhvi 1999: 3) and never give up.

One of the results of India's urban development based on Auroville Universal Township model would be that the middle class would become "a breeding ground" for nurturing "Samurai": the aristocracy "of character and action". It would help them "recover … faculty for self-

sacrifice, courage and high aspiration". Such an inspired middle class would put its strengths and resources behind those efforts and actions and dreams which would make India a developed country. It would support progressive individuals and movements, reject beliefs and systems that hamper growth, reform the obsolete social institutions, create new institutions of vision, efficiency and innovation, and wipe out mass poverty. India would then emerge as a "right kind of giant": there would be a glorious renaissance of the spirit of this ancient country in "a new disposition of the life plan", a "fresh creative activity" spoken of by Nolini Kanta Gupta in the following quote:

"We do not believe that India was ever completely dead or hopelessly moribund: her soul, although not always in front, was ever present as a living force, presiding over and guiding her destiny. That is why there is a perennial capacity for renewal in her and the capacity to go through dire ordeals. And to live up to her genius, she too must know how to march with the time, that is to say, not to cling to old and past forms – to be faithful to the ancient soul does not mean eternising the external frames and formulas that expressed that soul one time or another. Indeed the soul becomes alive and vigorous when it finds a new disposition of the life plan which can embody and translate a fresh creative activity, a new fulfilment emanating from the depths of the soul" (Gupta 1978: 199).

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Figure 10: Auroville Visitors Reception Centre

Aryadeep S. Acharya

Originally from Ahmedabad (Gujarat, India), discovered his inspiration in the vision and teachings of Sri Aurobindo and the Mother in his early youth and became a resident of Auroville Universal Township (www.auroville.org) in 1990. There he managed certain small productive units, and has written several papers and many smaller articles on Auroville. In 1997, he started the newsletter COLAAP ("Collaboration for Auroville Area Protection"). Contact: <aryadeep@auroville.org.in>

Book Reviews / Neue Bücher

Stadt und Spiritualität

Justin Beaumont, Christopher Baker (Eds.). Postsecular Cities: Space, Theory and Practice. 276 S., ISBN 978-1-4411-4425-6. Continuum International Publishing, London and New York 2011.

Diese Publikation widmet sich dem zunehmend relevanten Thema der Wiederkehr von Religion in das öffentliche Leben. Mit der postsäkularen Stadt, so die beiden Herausgeber in der Einleitung zu dem Sammelband, wird der erstarkenden Bedeutung von Religion, Religionsgemeinschaften und spirituellen Werten in Politik, Regierungsführung und sozialer Identität Rechnung getragen, denn „rapidly diversifying urban locations are the best places to witness the emergence of new spaces in which religions and spiritual traditions are creating both new alliances but also bifurcations with secular sectors". „Postsäkular", ein von Jürgen Habermas geprägter Begriff, verbindet das Säkulare mit dem öffentlich Religiösen, und markiert damit einen deutlichen Gegensatz zum vergangenen, säkular-rationalistisch-naturwissenschaftlich geprägten Jahrhundert, so die grundlegende These des Buches. Die insgesamt vierzehn Beiträge dieses Bandes sind gekennzeichnet durch ihre idiosynkratische Vielfalt an Blickwinkeln und Fallstudien, was als Beleg für das bisherige Fehlen einer gemeinsamen Herangehensweise an den Themenkomplex interpretiert werden kann. So ist denn auch der erste, explizit theoretische Teil des Buches mit einem einzigen Beitrag der dünnste, wiewohl der Autor Gregor McLennon mit seiner Analyse einen interessanten Streifzug in von Planern teilweise wenig beachtete Theoriefelder wie Roy Bhaskar's „Critical Realism" unternimmt.

Teil 2 „Competing Experiences of Postsecular Cities" befasst sich mit mehreren Spannungsfeldern wie Postkolonialismus und Religion (Baker und Beaumont), Markttheorie und Theologie (Goh) und einer feministischen Kritik der postsäkularen Stadt (Greed). Besondere Erwähnung verdient der Artikel von Sandercock und Senbel über Spiritualität, urbanes Leben und die Profession der Stadtplaner. Obwohl die Publikation angibt, nicht nur Religion im Fokus zu haben, kann man kritisch anmerken, dass kaum ein Versuch unternommen wird, systematisch Religion von Spiritualität zu unterscheiden. Auch die Diskussion um die „urban professions" sehe ich als zentral im Umgang mit dieser öffentlichen Religion/Spiritualität an, da sie die grundlegende Frage aufwirft, wie denn damit in der Stadtentwicklungsplanung umgegangen werden kann.

Die beiden folgenden Teile „Postsecular Policies and Praxis" und „Theological and Secular Interpretations" widmen sich zum Teil bekannteren Themen wie Multikulturalismus (Eade) bzw. der Frage, welche Modelle des Managements in pluralistischen Gesellschaften verfolgt werden können (Ashworth).

Aus meiner Sicht können zwei zentrale Kritikpunkte zu dieser Publikation vorgebracht werden. Zum einen wird durch die Wahl des Titels sowie die behandelten Fallstudien (Amsterdam, Jerusalem, Sydney, Tokyo, Vancouver) mit einem Schwerpunkt auf britische Städte eindeutig eine Eingrenzung auf westliche Gesellschaften vorgenommen, ohne dass dies notwendig wäre. Vielleicht aus eben diesem Grunde muss man zum anderen die unterbleibende Differenzierung von Religion und Spiritualität bemängeln, einem Aspekt dem in unserer heutigen Zeit jedoch enorme Bedeutung zukommt, wie u.a. das vorliegende Trialogheft zu zeigen versucht. Trotzdem kann die Veröffentlichung als Beleg für die Aktualität dieser Thematik betrachtet werden, was in der zunehmenden Anzahl von anderen Publikationen zu erkennen ist (s. Buchbesprechung „Urban Prayers"). Sie ist auch deshalb als Einstieg sehr empfehlenswert, da die beiden Herausgeber durch frühere Publikationen ausgewiesene Fachleute sind.

Christoph Woiwode

metroZones (Hg.). Urban Prayers: Neue religiöse Bewegungen in der globalen Stadt. 277 S., ISBN 978-3-935936-78-1. Assoziation A und metroZones, Hamburg und Berlin 2011.

„Urban Prayers" ist gewissermaßen das nahezu zeitgleich erschienene deutschsprachige Pendant zu „Postsecular Cities", und setzt sich zugleich in mehrerer Hinsicht deutlich von diesem ab: 1. durch den Schwerpunkt auf neue religiöse Bewegungen und deren globaler Einbettung, 2. einer stärkeren Betonung der politischen Dimension von Religion und des Engagements von Religionsgemeinschaften, wie sie sich in Städten manifestieren, und 3. durch eine alle Kontinente abdeckende Auswahl von Fallstudien, die explizit die Entwicklung in nicht-westlichen Gesellschaften thematisiert. Trotz einer kurzen Diskussion und des Verweises auf den Begriff der postsäkularen Stadt in der Einleitung wird dieser Unterschied unter anderem auch dadurch ersichtlich, dass z.B. Habermas in keinem Artikel als Quelle genannt wird.

Die zehn Beiträge des Bandes wollen „die Relevanz neuer religiöser Bewegungen für aktuelle urbane Konflikte und Transformationen in verschiedenen Städten und im globalen Zusammenhang" erkunden und verstehen. Darüber hinaus ist neben dem eigentlichen Inhalt auch die methodische Vielfalt bereichernd, da zusätzlich zu Artikelbeiträgen auch Interviews abgedruckt sind, die den Themen eine erhöhte Authentizität verleihen. Insgesamt wurden drei Gespräche geführt, mit Enrique Dussel über Pfingstkirchen und Befreiungstheologie, Julia Eckert über die Hindu-nationalistische Partei Shiv Sena in Mumbai sowie mit Leo Penta und Werner Schiffauer über Politik und Praktiken religiöser Gemeinschaften in Berlin. Diese allein geben bereits einen Eindruck

von der möglichen thematischen Bandbreite, mit der eine solche Publikation konfrontiert ist. In ähnlicher Weise beeindrucken die anderen Beiträge, von denen drei sich den schnell ausbreitenden Pfingstkirchen widmen, diese jedoch in sehr unterschiedlichen gesellschaftlichen Kontexten in Lagos (Ukah) bzw. Rio de Janeiro (Birman) und Buenos Aires (Semán) betrachten. Während in Nigeria die Religion das andauernde staatliche Machtvakuum zunehmend ausfüllt, wird in Lateinamerika die Ausbreitung der Pfingstkirchen in Beziehung zur weitverbreiteten urbanen Armut untersucht. Einen Fokus auf städtische Armut stellt auch der Beitrag von Klaus Teschner dar, der als einziger Autor den Diskurs über für das Thema zentrale Begriffe wie Säkularisierung, Moderne, Religion und Fortschritt/Entwicklung führt, um dann Religion und städtische Bewegungen in Nairobi und Durban zu analysieren.

Trotz des (beabsichtigten?) Schwerpunktes in dieser Publikation auf die Pfingstkirchen gibt es zwei Beiträge über den Islam. So schreibt Bayat über islamische Gruppierungen in den Armenvierteln Kairos und Teherans und Hussain über die Islamisierung der Bangladeshi-Communities in London. Doch ist es schade, dass in diesen beiden Artikeln und jenen anderen, die sich mit Hinduismus befassen (Arif; Eckert), vordergründig die negativen Effekte der radikal-fundamentalistischen Strömungen behandelt werden. Diese Aspekte urbaner Ethnizität/Religiosität sind nicht unbedingt neu (ebenso nicht die Hindu-nationalistische Bewegung mit ihrer „Hindutva"-Ideologie, zu der die Shiv Sena im engeren Sinne jedoch nicht zählt, da sie mit ihrem regionalspezifischen Marathi-Patriotismus hauptsächlich in Mumbai verankert ist). Auch ist es verwunderlich, wenn nicht gar irreführend, die Shiv Sena als eine politische Partei im Kontext religiöser Bewegungen zu diskutieren, obwohl es offensichtlich ist, dass diese Religion lediglich als Vehikel für ihre Zwecke instrumentalisiert. Im Umkehrschluss wäre das in etwa so als bezeichnete man die Pfingstkirchen als politische Parteien; hier werden Äpfel mit Birnen verglichen. Gerade in Indien haben sich jedoch innerhalb des Hinduismus moderne religiöse/spirituelle Bewegungen um charismatische Yogis wie Baba Ramdev gebildet, die weite Teile der indischen Bevölkerung, besonders jedoch die indischen Mittelschichten, über das Fernsehen mit Wellness, Yoga- und Meditationsangeboten erreichen. Auch diese greifen zuweilen politische Diskurse auf, wie im Falle Baba Ramdev's die Korruption. Hier hätte sich eine Möglichkeit angeboten, neue religiöse/spirituelle Bewegungen im indischen Kontext des 21. Jahrhunderts zu untersuchen. Dass dies nicht geschehen ist, liegt vielleicht einerseits an dem explorativen Charakter, den diese Publikation hat, und andererseits, dass wie in der vorhergehend besprochenen Publikation ebenfalls Religion und Spiritualität weitestgehend undifferenziert synonym verwendet werden bzw. letztere in erster Linie als Teil von Religion wahrgenommen wird.

Trotz dieser Kritikpunkte lohnt sich die Lektüre, weil sie neues Territorium erschließt und u.a. der planungspraktische Bezug nicht gänzlich außer Acht gelassen wird, z.B. im Hinblick auf das Verhältnis religiöser Gemeinschaften als aktive zivilgesellschaftliche Akteure (Penta's „community organising") mit Stadtentwicklungsprogrammen und Behörden. Abschließend bleibt zu erwähnen, dass die Veröffentlichung im Rahmen eines von metroZones initiierten Forschungs- und Kulturprojektes „Global Prayers - Redemption and Salvation in the City" entstanden ist. Es bleibt also zu hoffen, dass es in Zukunft mehr darüber zu lesen gibt. Mehr Informationen sind zu finden unter <www.globalPrayers.info>.

Christoph Woiwode

Stadtentwicklung

Smith, Cynthia et al (eds.) Design with the Other 90%: Cities. 234 S. Smithsonian Cooper-Hewitt, National Design Museum, New York 2011. <www.cooperhewitt.org>

Bereits im Jahr 2007 hatte das Smithsonian Cooper-Hewitt Nationalmuseum für Design in New York eine Ausstellung und Publikation zum Thema "Design with the Other 90%" vorgestellt, die sich auf für die Armen in Entwicklungsländern entwickelte „innovative Gebrauchsgegenstände" (z.B. Solarkocher, Wasserfilter, Solarbeleuchtungen) ausrichtete. Es war ein gewagtes Thema in einem primär auf die Erste Welt hin orientierten Kulturbetrieb der Weltstadt New York. Vier Jahre später wurde die zweite Phase dieses Projektes vorgestellt: Der Bau von Städten, gebaut durch die städtischen Armen, zumeist unter informellen Bedingungen. Die Kuratorin des Museums hat einige der bekanntesten Siedlungsprojekte in Brasilien, Indien, Thailand, Kolumbien, Südafrika und Venezuela besucht. Es handelt sich um eine Auswahl der progressivsten Siedlungsprojekte des letzten Jahrzehnts, u.a. von CODI in Bangkok, die Arbeit der Shack/Slum Dwellers International, die Arbeit von praxisorientierten Architekturschulen (z.B. in Buenos Aires), Starterhäuser in Chile, innovative und alternative Billig-Bautechnologien (Plastik-Formmaterialien für Betonhäuser; ungebrannte Ziegel, Bambus-Baumaterialien), dazu immer wieder neue Technologieprodukte für Wasserversorgung, Energieerzeugung, intensivierten Gartenanbau, bis hin zur hochmodernen Seilbahn, die vormalige Armutsgebiete im Nordostens der Stadt Medellín, Kolumbien, erschließt. Dem Ideenreichtum sind keine Grenzen gesetzt. Die Bedeutung dieses Buches liegt auf der Hand: es handelt sich hier um die Zukunft unserer Städte. Etwa 1 Milliarde Menschen leben heute bereits in Slums und im Jahr 2030 könnten dies nach Schätzungen bereits 2 Milliarden sein. Darum sind sozial akzeptablere, besser geplante und besser gebaute menschliche Siedlungen ein wichtiges Ziel. Das Smithsonian Cooper-Hewitt Hewitt Nationalmuseum für Design demonstriert mit dieser Ausstellung und mit der gut illustrierten Publikation, dass ihm an dem Entwurf von "Inclusive Cities" gelegen ist. Eine ernstzunehmende Herausforderung für alle Berufsparten, die mit der Zukunft der Städte zu tun haben.

Florian Steinberg