

Urban Affairs Association

44TH Annual Conference

San Antonio, Texas | March 19-23, 2014

Special Track – Call for Participation

Urban Issues in Central & South America and the Caribbean

Track Co-Chairs:

Cecilia Giusti (Texas A&M University, US), Janina Leon (Catholic University, Lima, Peru),
Liliana Meza (Universidad Iberoamericana, Mexico City, Mexico), Heywood Sanders (University of
Texas at San Antonio, US), Flavio de Souza (Federal University of Pernambuco, Brasil),
Dr. Mercedes Di Virgilio (Universidad de Buenos Aires, Argentina)

Central and South America, along with the Caribbean Islands, face unique urban challenges. From being the center of “economic miracles” in the 1950’s through the so-called “lost decade” in the 1980s, this global region is now showing signs of economic recovery. Politically, it has faced challenges, from mainly dictator regimes mid last century to more democratic regimes at the beginning of the twenty-first century. Severe poverty has been a persistent concern as well as unequal income distribution. Urbanization patterns have exacerbated these problems. As primate, mega cities grow, low income settlements multiply on the urban fringe, making evident the divided lives that modernization has fostered among urban populations. To address these issues, several policies have been implemented with mixed results, from a “quasi” formalization of the informal sector, like incremental construction, to microbusiness development, and strategies for active political participation. At the same time, in the last decades, there has been a proliferation of NGOs working with local communities in need, with diverse results within countries in the region. Government officials, policy makers, planners, and NGOs have encountered political, fiscal, social and cultural barriers in the struggle to improve living conditions for the majority within urban areas. In response to these challenges, innovative policies and experiments have been launched in metropolitan governance, coordinated urban-rural development, regional planning, new town development, sustainable and carbon-neutral urbanization, and other proposed solutions to urban problems. The lessons and outcomes of these initiatives are of critical importance to the people and leaders of these regions, but equally of interest and concern to the rest of the global policy community.

The Urban Affairs Association (UAA) is North America’s leading urban policy research association engaged in understanding emerging issues and looking for feasible solutions from a multidisciplinary perspective. For more than forty years the UAA has brought together social scientists, public administrators, planners, and others interested in urban affairs to exchange information, experiences, and ideas on the most important urban issues. In light of the growing importance of Central/South America and the Caribbean Islands, and the proximity of the conference location in San Antonio, the 2014 UAA conference will include a Special Track on Urban Issues in Central/South America & the Caribbean Islands.

Proposed themes in this track include, but are not limited to:

- Government and governance: public services, equity, financing local governments
- Housing: housing quality, financing, role of the states and markets, substandard settlements
- Labor force: employment, underemployment, informality and salaries and labor condition
- Microfinancing: microbusinesses and entrepreneurship, access to multipurpose credit
- Poverty: income inequality, income distribution, social justice
- Gender: rights and discrimination, access to employment and services, women's movement
- Migration: urban-urban migration, mega-cities, slums and living condition, urban violence
- Public spaces: use of public-private spaces, place-making, role of public sector
- Citizen's participation: political involvement, democracy and grassroots organizations, NGOs.
- Cities and the environment: pollution, air and water, vulnerability, preparedness for disasters

The UAA encourages empirical and theoretical papers on urbanization processes, governance, public administration, planning, urban design, rural-urban migration, immigration, inclusion/exclusion, and related topics of importance to cities and metropolitan areas. Policy related papers on housing, education, employment, welfare/family security, transportation, economic development, infrastructure, environmental protection, historic preservation, provision of social services and other topics are all appropriate. Papers on developed and emerging urban agglomerations are of particular interest. We encourage the participation of all professionals (from public, private, nonprofit sectors) committed to sustainable and equitable urban development as we seek innovative policies and solutions.

ABSTRACT/PROPOSAL SUBMISSION SITE OPENS: JUNE 1, 2013 ***Please read all submission and conference policy guidelines (provided on the UAA website) before submitting your proposal or abstract.

DEADLINE FOR ABSTRACT/PROPOSAL SUBMISSION: OCTOBER 1, 2013

WEBSITE OF THE EVENT: www.urbanaffairsassociation.org

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