



# The Informal American City: Beyond Taco Trucks and Day Labor (Urban and Industrial Environments)

By Vinit Mukhija, Anastasia Loukaitou-Sideris

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**The Informal American City: Beyond Taco Trucks and Day Labor (Urban and Industrial Environments)** By Vinit Mukhija, Anastasia Loukaitou-Sideris

Every day in American cities street vendors spread out their wares on sidewalks, food trucks serve lunch from the curb, and homeowners hold sales in their front yards -- examples of the wide range of informal activities that take place largely beyond the reach of government regulation. This book examines the "informal revolution" in American urban life, exploring a proliferating phenomenon often associated with developing countries rather than industrialized ones and often dismissed by planners and policy makers as marginal or even criminal. The case studies and analysis in *The Informal City* challenge this narrow conception of informal urbanism. The chapters look at informal urbanism across the country, empirically and theoretically, in cities that include Los Angeles, Sacramento, Seattle, Portland, Phoenix, Kansas City, Atlantic City, and New York City. They cover activities that range from unpermitted in-law apartments and ad hoc support for homeless citizens to urban agriculture, street vending and day labor. The contributors consider the nature and underlying logic of these activities, argue for a spatial understanding of informality and its varied settings, and discuss regulatory, planning, and community responses. **Contributors** Jacob Avery, Ginny Browne, Matt Covert, Margaret Crawford, Will Dominie, Renia Ehrenfeucht, Jeffrey Hou, Nabil Kamel, Gregg Kettles, Anastasia Loukaitou-Sideris, Kate Mayerson, Alfonso Morales, Vinit Mukhija, Michael Rios, Donald Shoup, Abel Valenzuela Jr. Mark Vallianatos, Peter M. Ward

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## **Editorial Review**

### **Review**

This distinguished collection is the new benchmark volume on informal urbanism. It provides a thorough and penetrating interpretation that challenges basic assumptions and will reorient scholarship for years to come.

(Mitchell Duneier, Princeton University, author of *Sidewalk*)

Covering the myriad manifestations of informal urbanism in US cities today, from garage sales to outlawed garage conversions, and spanning street vending, sidewalk life, day laborers, and community gardens, this valuable volume prompts us to think about how urban informality permeates life in cities. Neither romantic nor neoliberal, this important collection moves us toward recognition of creative urban life lived in the margins of regulations and offers concrete planning and policy suggestions for how to support it.

(Pierrette Hondagneu-Sotelo, author of *Paradise Transplanted: Migration and the Making of California Gardens*)

Through a global comparative analysis of the spatial origins and contributions of urban informal activities, this book challenges a fundamental bias in modernist notions of what constitutes a good city. A must-read for urban designers, policy planners, and critical urban theorists who dare to question conventional imagery of urbanism.

(Bish Sanyal, Ford International Professor of Urban Development and Planning and Director of the Special Program in Urban and Regional Studies/Humphrey Fellows Program, MIT)

In *The Informal American City*, Mukhija and Loukaitou-Sideris bring together in one accessible volume a highly recommended set of essays that create a wonderful platform for more studies of informality, and its relationship to formality. I strongly encourage you to read them.

(*Journal of the American Planning Association*)

### **About the Author**

Vinit Mukhija is Associate Professor in the Department of Urban Planning at UCLA and the author of *Squatters as Developers? Slum Redevelopment in Mumbai*. Anastasia Loukaitou-Sideris is Professor in the Department of Urban Planning and Associate Dean of the Luskin School of Public Affairs at UCLA. Her books include *Urban Design Downtown, Jobs and Economic Development in Minority Communities*, *Sidewalks: Conflict and Negotiation over Public Space* (MIT Press), and *Companion to Urban Design*.

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**Christopher Morton:**

The Informal American City: Beyond Taco Trucks and Day Labor (Urban and Industrial Environments) can be one of your beginning books that are good idea. We recommend that straight away because this publication has good vocabulary that can increase your knowledge in words, easy to understand, bit entertaining but still delivering the information. The author giving his/her effort to get every word into satisfaction arrangement in writing The Informal American City: Beyond Taco Trucks and Day Labor (Urban and Industrial Environments) nevertheless doesn't forget the main place, giving the reader the hottest as well as based confirm resource information that maybe you can be certainly one of it. This great information may drawn you into brand new stage of crucial pondering.

**Ariane Swanson:**

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