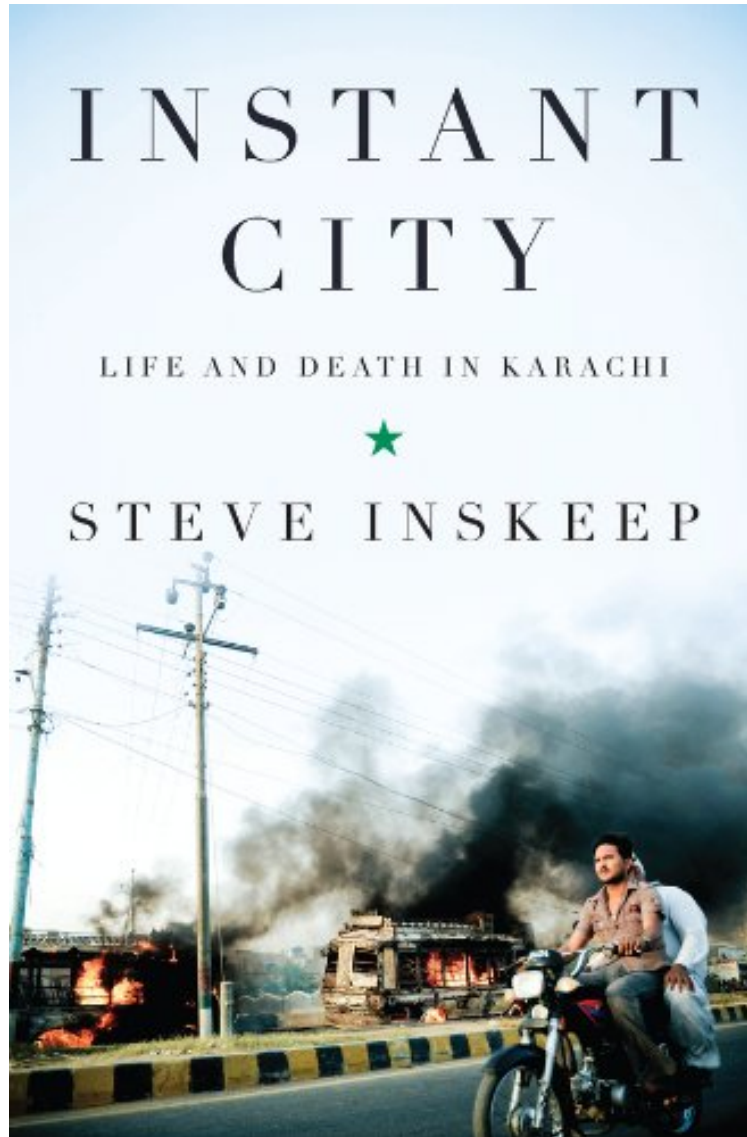


(Pdf free) Instant City: Life and Death in Karachi

## Instant City: Life and Death in Karachi

*Steve Inskeep*

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**Steve Inskeep : Instant City: Life and Death in Karachi** before purchasing it in order to gauge whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Instant City: Life and Death in Karachi:

5 of 5 people found the following review helpful. An objective overview of KarachiBy Mansura Minhas`Instant City' captures the essence of Karachi. It takes the readers into the history and transformation of Karachi as it details the events of a horrendous day in the aftermath of a terrorist attack on a religious procession. Karachi is no ordinary city and it's impossible to encapsulate its complexities in a mere 200 pages. However, Inskeep does justice to the subject matter. Instant City is a wonderful book and a must read for those who wish to broaden their understanding of the

developing world. Karachi is the backbone and melting pot of Pakistan - a country riddled with uncertainties and one at the nexus of modern day geopolitics. Another aspect that renders credibility to this book is the authenticity and nonpartisan approach of Steve Inskeep. Inskeep's fascination and intrigue with Karachi is apparent and his outstanding ability to present facts objectively is ever present in his interviews with personalities from varied backgrounds. This is crucial to understanding Karachi's diversity and how its multilayered outlook shapes its destiny. In addition to delving into the historical, cultural and political transformation of Karachi, *Instant City* explores its mammoth growth. It is interesting to read how the city owes its sustenance to improvised mechanisms that somehow defy the conventional wisdom of urban planning. As a Karachite, I am extremely fascinated and excited about this book and feel sincerely indebted to Inskeep for this wonderful effort. He is a wonderful reporter and has convincingly demonstrated his writing skills in *Instant City*. It is a fabulous read and highly recommended.

0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Unique stories about the real people of Karachi

By Biochem Student

Instant city is about the real Karachi, its people and their local stories. The book begins with the bombing of the Ashura procession of 2009 and the author begins to explain through a historical story of how the city reached such levels of violence. It starts with Karachi as a religiously diverse city before partition. The founding of Pakistan, the expectations and dreams of the "Muhajirs" and the concerns of non-Muslim "natives" are made clear within the first few pages. The development of housing projects by a Greek architect and a diagram of these houses reminds one of homes which still stand in Karachi and parts of Sindh. After the Generals you get Bhutto and the secession of Bangladesh. The book does not go into detail about the wars with India or Pakistani political figures. Rather it focuses on people in the city. One segment highlights a local neighborhood organization which began digging its own sewers and putting up its own electrical poles because the government wouldn't do so. We also meet Tony Tufail an entrepreneur who constructed the biggest Casino in South Asia to attract Gulf Kings but was eventually shut down by Zia. The book also gives the story of Sattar Ehd throughout, from his humble beginnings of selling pan on the streets to owning a small pharmacy and eventually providing lifesaving services to the city. The stories are very personal as the author developed good relationships with people he interviews. Another account is of Dr. Seemin Jumali the women in charge of the Jinnah Hospital ER which was bombed after receiving victims of the Arbaeen bombing. Dr. Jumali recounts how after the bombing she went home and wrote her will and explained to her children what to do if one day she doesn't return from work. Dr. Jumali also states her desire to stay in Karachi and sees it as a personal goal to serve the city. MQM is not left untouched by the author, not only does he develop a relationship with Mustapha Kamal but also victims targeted by MQM. One story being of Nasir Baloch a neighborhood activist and volunteer tutor. Baloch was fighting to prevent the construction of houses in his neighborhood park and in the process explicitly blamed MQM for being behind the land grab. This eventually leads to his death. Amber Alibhai is another individual introduced as the private "parks and recreations" committee who was working with Baloch and works throughout the city to preserve parks. Overall this is a superb book on Karachi and its inhabitants. The author talks to a variety of real people, some being poor activist, some being doctors, some high ranking MQM officials, some working to better the city and some even calling for a constitutional edict labeling Shias Kafirs.

0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. A Trend in Cities with Multimillion Populations

By Neil Sclater

Steve Inskeep uses Karachi, Pakistan, as a stand-in for the rise of super "Instant" cities with populations exceeding 10 million since the end of WW II, particularly in Asia. He points out that many have grown without master planning and sensible government regulation in matters such as sanitation and public safety. In the Karachi example, population expansion increased government corruption and indifference as well as conflict between Hindus and Sunni and Shiite Muslims. Poor newcomers escaping dangerous regions were forced to illegally squat on government land. Moreover, they had to provide their own materials and build their own inferior and closely packed houses as well as dig their own sewers. The result was even more conflict and chaos. But the good news was private citizens emerged to provide needed medical, ambulance, and other critical civil services to compensate for Karachi government stalling. I rated this book four stars because the topic may not be of wide general interest. However, it should be of value to readers who want to understand this ongoing trend toward ever larger "Instant Cities" in places like China and India.

From the host of NPR's Morning Edition, a deeply reported portrait of Karachi, Pakistan, a city that illuminates the perils and possibilities of rapidly growing metropolises all around the world. In recent decades, the world has seen an unprecedented shift of people from the countryside into cities. As Steve Inskeep so aptly puts it, we are now living in the age of the "instant city," when new megacities can emerge practically overnight, creating a host of unique pressures surrounding land use, energy, housing, and the environment. In his first book, the co-host of Morning Edition explores how this epic migration has transformed one of the world's most intriguing instant cities: Karachi, Pakistan. Karachi has exploded from a colonial port town of 350,000 in 1941 to a sprawling metropolis of at least 13 million today. As the booming commercial center of Pakistan, Karachi is perhaps the largest city whose stability is a vital security concern of the United States, and yet it is a place that Americans have frequently misunderstood. As Inskeep underscores, one of the great ironies of Karachi's history is that the decision to divide Pakistan and India along religious lines in 1947 only unleashed deeper divisions within the city—over religious sect, ethnic group, and political

party. In *Instant City*, Inskip investigates the 2009 bombing of a Shia religious procession that killed dozens of people and led to further acts of terrorism, including widespread arson at a popular market. As he discovers, the bombing is in many ways a microcosm of the numerous conflicts that divide Karachi, because people wondered if the perpetrators were motivated by religious fervor, political revenge, or simply a desire to make way for new real estate in the heart of the city. Despite the violence that frequently consumes Karachi, Inskip finds remarkable signs of the city's tolerance, vitality, and thriving civil society—from a world-renowned ambulance service to a socially innovative project that helps residents of the vast squatter neighborhoods find their own solutions to sanitation, health care, and education. Drawing on interviews with a broad cross section of Karachi residents, from ER doctors to architects to shopkeepers, Inskip has created a vibrant and nuanced portrait of the forces competing to shape the future of one of the world's fastest growing cities.