

Urban and Regional Planning and Development – 20th Century Forms and 21st Century Transformations, Editors Rajiv R. Thakur, Ashok K. Dutt, Sudhir K. Thakur, George M. Pomeroy, Springer International Publishing (2020). 546pp. \$199.99 (hbk). \$149.00 (ebook). ISBN 978-3-030-31775-1.

A curiosity to understand better current trends, methods and theoretical cross-fertilisation within urban and regional planning initially motivated me to review this edited volume. Having the possibility of comparing this book's remarks on urban forms and spatial transformations with those of prime classics in planning and regional studies was also exciting. I rhetorically asked. Have we become any wiser in the way we plan, engineer and govern our cities and regions? What are the key differences between planning agendas markedly influenced by the post-World War II, and the present day marked by private-led development, city networks, smart and circular urban development, city-regional imaginaries and grand societal challenges? The book does provide some evidence on how to deal with important planning and development issues, from Europe to Asia and from Africa to Latin America.

This book's storyline is a simple, yet novel one. It is a book edited to celebrate five decades of notable urban and regional planning scholarship of Dr. Frank James Costa. I would not have been able to propose other ways of celebrating his achievements, than bringing together about 60 scholars from around the world to share their experiences in addressing socio-spatial and spatial-economic issues as this book does. The work of James Costa connects intrinsically to the roots of urban and regional planning practice and education in the US, as the editors' debate in chapter 2. Leo Jacobson, James Costa's PhD advisor, was the mastermind behind a number of experimental learning processes in which students took a major responsibility in steering their own education trajectory. James Costa was concerned, among other subjects, with the role of values in public policy and their adaptive capacity to existing environments and demands. He was also a pivotal actor in designing the planning programs at the University of Akron, Ohio, US. It is not my intention here to provide a handy summary of the 34 chapters distributed through seven parts. I will engage, however, with debates I found timely yet seldom explored in the literature. Chapters are not dependent upon one another for understanding their argument. The different chapters of the book can be read independently, although there are many conceptual relations between them. These are those related with a shift from state-led planning, to market-driven land development or how urban governance has been shifting, not only in the regions of the global north, but also in newly emerging regions of Asia, Africa and Latin America.

The first part serves as a prelude to this volume and comprise theoretical overviews of urban and regional planning and development. The case-study research debunked in the book is particular appealing. While providing an account of the evolution of urban and regional planning in the US, chapter 3 engages with multiple planning theories, from Ebenezer Howard and the garden city movement, to Alfred Weber and the theory of industrial location. Both still are prime references in urban geography and regional studies. The authors then contrast these seminal theories with the work of Patrick Geddes and the idea of urban growth as evolution, or the studies of Ernest Burgess and the concentric zone model, associated with Chicago's urbanized landscape. As a reader, I welcome such comprehensive theoretical background. The editors bring up important debates on flagship planning and regional development theories against a timeframe that allows us to explore the case studies that follow in the book from a clear spatial and temporal stance. The innovative governance approaches undertaken to improve planning and support development in southern geographies such as regional

planning in Costa Rica (chapter 8), to participatory planning in Thailand (chapter 19) or tackling regional inequalities in India (chapter 26) impressed me. For example, chapter 4 focus on the transition of China's regional pattern from a 'belt' to a 'block' urban form approach. This means that regional plans started promoting a national strategy intended to develop cities as clusters (or blocks) instead of regional-based development belts. This shift affected China's urbanization since the opening-up in 1978 to the present day. This chapter on planning system in China contrasts with the challenges of informality associated with Botswana's urban landscape. With chapter 7, planners and geographers can learn from the efforts of Botswana's public authorities in preparing spatial plans. The main planning and spatial policy challenges in this Southern African country resonate with other urban realities in Africa that is lack of resources to implement plans. In this quest, the authors call for a better articulation between plan-making, local realities and policy instruments that could streamline plan-implementation. From chapter 11, I learned that social media footprints, as those generated via Twitter, provide the unique opportunity to study the social and temporal characteristics of how people use these platforms and thus support planners to model urban mobility patterns or support land management. In addition, the authors underline the usefulness of social media footprints in epidemiological models, which are important tools for guiding pandemic-mitigation interventions.

I found chapter 15 insight for practitioners involved in planning public-spaces. This chapter contributes to the increasing debate on geographies of women's safety, fear of crime and harassment by focusing on everyday challenges of Indian Women's. It provides a much-needed fresh take on the relationships between urbanization and neoliberal economic transformation with India women's mobility and the battle for gender justice and the right to the city. Cheerfully, planning methods enter the spotlight of the book as they integrate Part III. Chapters of this part bring examples from Ecuador's spatial inequality assessments (chapter 9), along with an analysis of urban crime rates in Houston, Texas, US (chapter 10). In chapter 17, the relationship between public and private space is discussed in light of prevailing commodification of the public realm in cities. The case study is Tres Cantos, a Spanish town that was planned during the Spanish dictatorship, but implemented in the early years of democracy. The chapter features a fascinating diagram on how planners envisioned Tres Cantos as a self-governed city or cooperative model of society and consumption, which could become useful in conceptual comparisons with circular urban metabolism. Urban inequality, social segregation, urban governance under neoliberalism, breathes through Part IV and V of the book infusing every statement and argument. For example, chapter 23 evidences that most of the urban plans in Bogotá, Colombia have heightened socio-spatial segregation due to zoning policies that respond to the interests of real estate developers. Chapter 25 raises questions about the value-laden nature of planning professionals and their entanglement in urban planning in Dhaka, Bangladesh. The authors claim that planners struggle to give voice to the most vulnerable groups due to top-down, highly bureaucratic ladder of planning decision-making. The book ends with a section devoted to planning sustainable urban futures (Part VII). Cases bring together important insights on how to drive inclusive, social, ecological and economic sustainable development in cities in the global south (chapter 31).

The book presents two drawbacks. First, more forward-looking concluding remarks in each chapter would have been helpful to position the discussions against current debates in not only the planning field but also regional studies and economic geography. Current debates on degrowth, slow innovation or the role of rural hinterlands in sustainable development would have been fruitful. Editors and authors could have been more audacious. In other words, they could have tried to envision beyond the engrained socio-spatial conditions and imagine how cities and regions in these planning-practice-

rich geographies might be otherwise. Secondly, the prohibitive price of the book, in particular for early career researchers and those based in low-income economies. This issue goes beyond the realm of decision of editors as it falls into the current academic publishing system. In spite of these weaknesses, this book's implications for the planning and governance of cities and regions globally are profound.

Eduardo Oliveira

Postdoc researcher at the Earth and Life Institute of the

University of Louvain, Belgium

email: eduardo.dasilva@uclouvain.be

<http://orcid.org/0000-0001-8838-2493>