

Reviews

From the Review Editor

This is the second year that the *JAPA* review section acknowledges the finest book reviews published in the previous volume. Associate editors Chris Nelson and Rob Lang took on the task of evaluating all of the 55 reviews and essays published in Volume 72. They were guided by the following criteria, developed the previous year by Phil Berke at UNC–Chapel Hill and Alex Schwartz at the New School in New York:

1. Relevance to the *JAPA* audience (appropriateness for teaching and practice).
2. Clarity of main themes/theses.
3. Assessment of structure and content (major parts and chapters).
4. Assessment of organization and presentation of information (clarity of table of contents, usefulness of glossary, effectiveness of illustrations).
5. Intellectual rigor in analysis.
6. Lack of personal bias.
7. Quality of writing (clarity, style, wit).
8. Originality, insightfulness, creativity.

Nelson and Lang selected the following three reviews as the best in Volume 72:

Joseph Molinaro, review of *A Nation of Realtors®: A Cultural History of the Twentieth-Century American Middle Class*, Winter 2006, pp. 126–127.

John C. Schneider, review of *Citizen Hobo: How a Century of Homelessness Shaped America*, Summer 2006, p. 382.

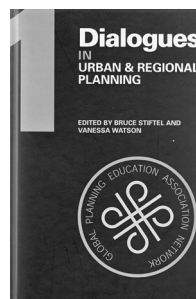
Terry Moore, review of *Zoned Out: Regulation, Markets, and Choices in Transportation and Land Use*, Summer 2006, p. 372.

I thank Chris Nelson and Rob Lang for their service to the journal. Thanks also to Joe Molinaro, John Schneider, Terry Moore, and all of the reviewers whose efforts are invaluable to the *JAPA* review section.

The review section is moving from Virginia Tech to the College of Architecture and Planning at the University of Utah in Salt Lake City. I will continue as the review editor while assuming the role of chair of the planning program at the University of Utah. The move will not involve any changes to the form or style of the review section. For any information or feedback about reviews or the review section, contact me at either japa@utah.edu or tom.sanchez@utah.edu. Mail books and other materials to be reviewed to the address on the inside back cover of this issue.

Thomas W. Sanchez

Planning Theory



Dialogues in Urban and Regional Planning, Volume 1

Bruce Stiffl and Vanessa Watson, editors. Routledge, New York, 2004. 384 pages. \$130.

Dialogues in Urban and Regional Planning, Volume 1 is the first book in an envisioned series of publications of an emerging global network of urban planning schools, the Global Planning Education Association Network (GPEAN). The network now consists of nine regional associations representing no less than 350 planning schools on six continents. The book is a collection of 13 articles, nominated by each of the nine member associations and then chosen by an international editorial board.

These articles are all award-winning papers, representing “a selection of the best urban planning scholarship from each of the world’s planning scholarship communities” (p. xiii). We can take this collection of articles, therefore, as a milestone in planning scholarship and ask ourselves some critical questions: Are we witnessing an upsurge of new insights, new ideas, new concepts, or new paradigms? Are new problems being identified and new questions being asked? Are we applying new methods of investigation? Are we putting stricter demands on research results? And, given the needs of practitioners, are we gradually putting together a body of planning knowledge and experience that can be widely applied in diverse environments?

Unfortunately, this reviewer cannot answer any of these questions with an emphatic “yes.” This is particularly worrisome in light of the serious global challenges facing urban and regional planning today, especially in the developing countries. The population of developing-country cities is expected to double between 2000 and 2030, from 2 billion to 4 billion, and the built-up areas of these cities are expected to triple. Can we expect the emerging next-generation cities to be better planned or is it going to be business as usual? Have we learned anything useful that we can now apply? Are we ready for a planet of cities?

One of the more insightful articles in the book is Sandercock’s thoughtful reflection on the importance of storytelling in planning practice. “Planning,” she tells us, “is a form of persuasive storytelling” (p. 311), and indeed, a number of articles use storytelling as a method to convey important messages and draw useful lessons, largely in the form of case studies. Zhang tells us of a number of attempts to conserve designated “excellent modern buildings” in Shanghai in the face of pressures for urban “regeneration,” that is, redevelopment. Bollens relates fascinating stories about the behavior of planners in three cities torn by conflict, Belfast, Jerusalem, and Johannesburg, and draws a series of good lessons for addressing ethnic and racial differences. Searle examines how Sydney’s Olympic stadiums, like many stadiums elsewhere, failed to deliver the prom-

ised returns. Acselrad delves into the worrisome militarization of zoning in the Brazilian Amazon. Gamal and his colleagues tell us about a successful process of fashioning a common vision statement among adversarial stakeholders in the Banff National Park in Canada. Unfortunately, while all these stories are quite persuasive, the reader is left wondering about how generally applicable the lessons are.

None of the articles in the book was based on a rigorous statistical survey, involved testing of a hypothesis with the use of statistical methods, or involved the presentation of new quantitative data to debunk a commonly accepted truth. In that sense, no article included any controversial finding. Where quantitative data were presented, they were suspect, to say the least. In an article on recent transformations of the real estate market in Buenos Aires, for example, Lombardo and his colleagues rely on a newspaper report to arrive at the rather questionable conclusion that average profits on sales of 190km² of land were of the order of 365% and totaled some \$17.3 billion. They assert that segregation has increased, based on visual inspection of maps rather than on quantitative measurement. There are certainly a number of important planning questions that demand rigorous quantitative analysis, and it is a pity that the book does not address any of them at the present time.

One of the more enlightening articles in the book is Grant's assessment of the application of mixed-use zoning in Canadian cities, and the mixed results of that experience. Mixed-use zoning is certainly an essential building block of new urbanism, and Grant succeeds admirably in subjecting it to a rigorous historical and political analysis, exposing its limitations as well as its applicability in favorable circumstances.

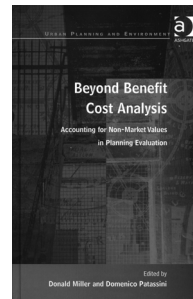
Finally, two critical reviews of planning theory, one by Watson on the applicability of prevalent planning theories to sub-Saharan Africa and another by Mäntisalo on critical planning theory, shed light on the limited application of such theories to real-world planning problems. Although several authors attempt to ground their discussion in some theoretical framework, the insights that can be had from subjecting particular issues to such frameworks remain rather disappointing.

If this is the best that the profession can do, we are not in the midst of a golden age of planning scholarship. Readers may benefit from the coverage of a large number of relevant topics, as well as from the extensive bibliographies appended to each chapter, but would be encouraged to moderate their expectations.

Shlomo Angel

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Methods, Information Systems, and Mapping



Beyond Benefit Cost Analysis: Accounting for Non-Market Values in Planning Evaluation

Donald Miller and Domenico Patassini, editors. Ashgate, Hampshire, England, 2005. 338 pages. \$99.95.

Despite the extensive body of criticism leveled against cost-benefit analysis in many public policy and regulatory settings, its narrow technical/economic calculations continue to dominate the evaluation of planning options. As implied by its title, this book's uniting theme is that good planning evaluation must go well beyond the strictures imposed by cost-benefit analysis to find ways that more fully incorporate nonmarket values into public decision-making processes: social equity, environmental values, and participatory values. This edited collection draws partly from papers presented initially at a two-day workshop on evaluation in planning, held at Ca' Tron, the home of the Planning Department of the IUAV University in Venice, Italy, in February 2003. In total, it represents a diverse range of approaches to the general problem of incorporating nonmarket values into planning evaluation.

The editors organized the individual contributions into four parts. Part I includes five chapters, each outlining an operational approach to dealing with nonmarket values in a fairly specific context. For example, in chapter 2, Voogd addresses the planning evaluation of accessibility for persons dependent upon wheelchairs, while Baycan, Levent, and Nijkamp explore alternative ways to evaluate urban green spaces in chapter 5. Each chapter in part I includes a case study to demonstrate how the approach works. Generally, the contributions appear to provide information sufficient to allow a prospective reader to assess the strengths and limitations of the application.

The contributions in part II "speak in broader terms than do the chapters in part I, since they deal more with methodologies than with discrete methods" (p. 6). The editors suggest that these methodologies can be viewed as complete evaluation frameworks that attempt to deal with the high levels of complexity characteristic of many urban planning/evaluation problems. Some of these contributions are not particularly detailed, a circumstance that perhaps largely reflects the intrinsic complexity of the problems being addressed, but nonetheless could detract from the value of the work for readers without specialized knowledge in planning evaluation. Part III focuses on scenario building as a more exploratory aspect of planning evaluation. These contributions emphasize "posing and comparing possible desirable outcomes, rather than designing specific planning or policy options and trying to estimate the performance of each of these" (p. 8). The final part of the book steps away from the explicit consideration of methods and methodologies, to address the role of the organizational and institutional framework in evaluation and policy decisions.