

Dialogues in Urban and Regional Planning, edited by Bruce Stiftel and Vanessa Watson. London and New York: Routledge. 2005. 355 pages. \$150.00 (hardcover). DOI: 10.1177/0739456X06288663

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That planning scholarship has evolved in recent decades to embrace a wide range of diverse pursuits—from ecological zoning in the Brazilian Amazon to architectural preservation in China—is vividly illustrated in this exciting collection of internationally award-winning papers vetted by the world's nine major planning school associations that today constitute the Global Planning Educators Association Network (GPEAN).¹ In their introduction, the editors trace the institutional histories of each of these associations, each an interesting story, culminating in the formation of GPEAN at the 2001 World Planning Congress in Shanghai. At Shanghai it became clear to the organizers of GPEAN that planning scholarship was operating in different and isolated regional domains. There had been little systematic contact between geographically separated planning communities, little comparative research, and limited opportunities for cross-cultural dialogue. The first in a proposed biennial series, *Dialogues* “seeks to offer a sampling of the best urban [and regional] planning scholarship from each of the world's regions” (p. xiii), and, in so doing, better integrate the world's different planning literatures.

There are twelve contributed chapters in this volume, all of which were previously published (between 2001 and 2003), that loosely pertain to three themes: (1) planning and economy; (2) planning and environmental conservation; and (3) planning process and decision making.

On the first theme, Jill Grant's paper, “Mixed Use in Theory and Practice” (chapter 2), describes the disappointing results of traditional neighborhood design and transit-oriented development in nine Canadian cities. Despite her somber assessment of mixed-use development on the ground, Grant thoughtfully articulates the beginnings of a “mixed-use theory” drawing upon Jane Jacob's work on “fine-grain” mixing of diverse land uses at the street scale, and her crisp description of the different levels of “mixing.” Glen Searle's paper, “Uncertain Legacy: Sydney's Olympic Stadiums” (chapter 3), critically

reflects on the risks of joint (public-private) development of special-event infrastructure (large-scale stadiums and “super domes”) and the realignment and expansion of transportation networks that they frequently necessitate. In “Land Markets, Social Reproduction and Configuration of Urban Space” (chapter 4), Juan Lombardo, Mercedes DiVirgilio, and Leonardo Fernández examine the mechanisms through which neoliberal policy initiatives in Argentina starting in the late 1980s privatized public transport, restructured urban land markets and credit access, and created a new social class of land developers who have significantly altered the morphology of metropolitan Buenos Aires, favoring construction of “high-end” planned gated neighborhoods.

The book's second theme (planning and environmental conservation) is addressed by three papers. In “Designing Whole Landscapes” (chapter 5) Paul Dolman, Andrew Lovett, Tim O'Riordan, and Dick Cobb advocate a collaborative bio-regional/landscape-level land-use planning strategy to produce a mosaic of private rural properties into a landscape consistent with ecological and aesthetic design principles. The “whole landscape” approach, they argue, would be preferable to the fragmented landscape resulting from individualized farm-level land-use decision making. Jiantao Zhang's case study of Shanghai, “Management of Urban Regeneration and Conservation in China” (chapter 6) examines the tension between traditional architectural preservation and urban redevelopment to accommodate China's booming economy. In Henri Acselrad's paper, “Ecological-Economic Zoning in the Brazilian Amazon—The Imperfect Panoptism” (chapter 7), regional-scale land-use plans predicated on such zoning, combined with advances in remote sensing technology, have become little more than a strategy for monitoring, controlling, and segregating the social spaces of the vast Amazon region.

The book's seven remaining chapters all seek to interpret planning practice at the theoretical level, the book's third theme—“planning processes and decision-making.” Karen Umemoto, in “Walking in Another's Shoes: Epistemological Challenges in Participatory Planning” (chapter 8), examines the epistemological differences separating a native Hawaiian homestead community from the official planners and planning scholars as they interact to envision the future, and poses several challenges to “culture-based planning.” Scott Bollen's “Urban Planning and Inter-group Conflict” (chapter 9) describes four models of planning intervention—“neutral, partisan, equity, and resolver”—as illustrated in three ethnically

polarized settings: Belfast, Jerusalem, and Johannesburg, providing a very informative, comparative argument. Tazim B. Jamal, Stanley M. Stein, and Thomas L. Harper, in their paper “Beyond Labels: Pragmatic Planning in Multi-stakeholder Tourism-Environmental Conflicts” (chapter 10), challenge us to interrogate the essentialist and metaphysical assumptions in such categories as “environmentalist” and “ecological integrity” that impede collaboration among divergent stakeholders with conflicting interests in the Banff National Park in Canada. Instead they offer a “neo-pragmatic approach.” Vanessa Watson (chapter 11) challenges the usefulness of three currently popular Western planning discourses—communicative planning (Forester, Healy, Innes), “Just City” (Fainstein), and multicultural planning (Sandercock)—to a sub-Saharan African context, that have elevated civil society at the expense of formal governance institutions, emphasized cultural identity and diversity as celebratory concepts transcending social cohesion and national unity, and promoted the primacy of locality over the global. In “Out of the Closet” (chapter 12), Leonie Sandercock invites us back to stories and storytelling not only as an approach to broadening participation, but also as catalysts for articulating cultural identity and empowerment. The book’s final chapter, “Dilemmas in Critical Planning Theory” (chapter 13), by Raine Mäntysalo, raises several challenges to a Habermasian critical theory of planning that will be of some interest to planning theoreticians doing communicative/collaborative planning research.

What common characteristics do these diverse papers share? First, planners worldwide continue to rely on case-study methods in a variety of ways to tell their stories and illuminate the issues that interest us. On one hand, it is heartening that the focus of planning research remains grounded in the realities of people and their places. On the other hand, it is somewhat surprising that the “best of planning scholarship” (with some exceptions) has not significantly pioneered new applications of existing technologies in analytical research on land-use and land-capability modeling, simulated scenario visualization and evaluation, or advanced GIS applications. The “digital divide” or “technology gap” that separates planning practice and research from some of its cognate disciplines (e.g., geography, real estate development, environmental modeling) seems to be widening, if the papers presented here are representative, and that should be of some concern to us.

Second, planners around the world remain concerned about social equity, multiculturalism, and justice issues often arising from the conflicting demands of rapidly growing (and predominantly low-income) urban populations and global economic restructuring. Several of these papers speak to a growing and alarming internal fragmentation of societies around the world under the forces of globalization, physically

manifest in the changing morphologies and spatial segregations of metropolitan and natural landscapes everywhere.

Third, few of these papers openly embrace a postmodernist perspective that is of current interest among some planning theorists in the United States and England. Most of the papers included here are, at some level, concerned with issues of *identity, conflict, and accommodation*. This penchant toward a basically Hegelian dialectical epistemology (if my interpretation is correct) suggests that planning scholars worldwide may be returning to the framing concepts of the nineteenth century, rather than pioneering a new postpositivist perspective. It is interesting that, as we seek to redefine ourselves as planners, this exemplary collection of planning scholarship draws life-giving breath (epistemologically) from the past.

I offer only three criticisms of this book: First, although the collection is presented as the “best urban and regional planning scholarship,” and despite a complex and multi-tiered editorial review process, and, allowing for some disparities in foreign language translations, the quality of the research presented in these papers is uneven. This is not surprising given that each planning association in GPEAN used its own criteria and process to select the finalists. Second, the framing of the book around three “global themes” in the introduction was insufficient to guide this reader confidently through the book’s wide-ranging subject matter. The themes are not adequately defined and the reader leaves the introduction unprepared to recognize how the specific jewels of insight that most of the papers offer in their own ways can be connected to larger issues of concern to the planning profession. Finally, the term “dialogues” implies a coherent conversation on a specific topic. Yet, despite certain common concerns, none of these papers really speak to each other. Given the absence of “dialogue” in these *Dialogues*, the reader here deserves a synoptic conclusion chapter from the editors that pinpoints the cutting issues and highlights the major emergent trends in contemporary planning scholarship represented here. For these reasons, I suspect this fascinating book will have limited general appeal as a classroom text, although several of the publications assembled here have undoubtedly found their way already into the graduate core curriculum, and justifiably so.

The editors deserve our gratitude and praise for their valiant efforts to produce a volume that reflects exemplary planning scholarship across the world’s regions. I enthusiastically encourage them on, and certainly look forward to the next edition of this exciting and ambitious initiative. I also hope that the subsequent editions will be not only wonderful celebrations of the intellectual diversity of planning scholarship, but also real dialogues on specific global planning issues.

1. The nine member associations of GPEAN are: The Association of African Planning Schools (AAPS), the Association of Collegiate Schools of Planning (ACSP) in the United States, the Association of Canadian University Planning Programs (ACUPP), the Association of European School of Planning (AESOP), the Association of Latin American Schools of Urbanism and Planning (ALEUP), the National Association of Urban and Regional Postgraduate and Research Program (ANPUR) in Brazil, the Australia and New Zealand Association of Planning Schools (ANZAPS), the Association for the Development of Planning Education and Research (APERAU), and the Asian Planning Schools Association (APSA).

Planning, Public Policy & Property Markets, edited by David Adams, Craig Watkins, and Michael White. Oxford, UK: Blackwell Publishing. 2005. xx + 280 pages. \$85.00 (paperback).

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This book is part of the Real Estate Issues Series published by Blackwell in collaboration with the Royal Institution of Chartered Surveyors. Like many of the books in the series, this one is of particular interest to urban planners. Other volumes include titles such as *Economics & Land Use Planning*, *Urban Regeneration in Europe*, *Housing Economics & Public Policy*, and *Greenfields, Brownfields & Housing Development*.

The focus of this book is the intersection between the state and real estate markets. Given this broad scope, the editors acknowledge in an introductory chapter that the book is not comprehensive. Most of the chapters were presented initially at a seminar at the University of Aberdeen's Department of Land Economy in 2003. Generally, the subject-matter coverage suggests that authors were given relatively free rein. As a consequence, the book is fairly diverse in terms of topics addressed and methods employed, and it is not easy to draw general conclusions. Nevertheless, the editors make a good effort to do so in their concluding chapter.

The core of the book consists of two parts that address conceptual issues and empirical analyses, respectively. Part 2 includes three chapters that explore aspects of economic theory and also provide a typology of policy or planning tools. Chapter 2, by David Adams, Neil Dunse, and Michael White, provides an overview of neoclassical economic approaches to property market analysis. The authors cover familiar ground, noting the aspects of property markets that do not satisfy basic neoclassical assumptions and the limitations of welfare economics as a basis for empirical (as distinct from theoretical) analysis. Chapter 3, by the same authors, focuses on institutional economics, including theories of transaction costs, property rights, and public choice. Unlike welfare economics,

these theories tend to suggest greater skepticism about the efficacy of governmental intervention in property markets. Institutional economics helps to provide a more nuanced theoretical understanding of the intersection between states and markets, but (like welfare economics) it does not necessarily provide clear empirical alternatives to neoclassical approaches to property market analysis. Chapter 4, by Steve Tiesdell and Philip Allmendinger, oddly repeats some of the material covered in the two previous chapters and then outlines a range of planning tools, which are then discussed in terms of the ways they affect markets.

The empirical chapters in Part 3 begin with a model of local housing-market adjustment in England (Chapter 5), by Glen Bramley and Chris Leishman. Their simulation model includes five equations that estimate the impacts of policies and other factors on prices, new supply, in-migration, out-migration, and private-sector vacancy rates in local housing markets across England. They note the difficulty of accurately measuring planning constraints in econometric modeling, particularly in a time series context, but they do include a couple of proxies for planning constraints in their supply equation. The model is then used to simulate the impacts of hypothetical policy and market changes, such as increases in the amount of land with planning permission or increases in the unemployment rate. It would have been useful to first test the model to determine how well it can predict what actually happens in English housing markets; if the model is fairly accurate, then one would have more confidence in the simulations of the impacts of hypothetical changes.

In Chapter 6, John Henneberry, Tony McGough, and Fotis Mouzakis undertake a cross-sectional analysis of the relationship between the "planning regime" and local economic activity in commercial property markets. The planning regime is measured as the proportion of planning applications approved. The authors observe a positive and elastic relationship between planning permissiveness and local economic activity in the office and industrial sectors, for example. Thus the local planning regime can have a significant effect on economic development.

Chapter 7 examines the impacts of the motorway system on development in Glasgow, using a hedonic modeling framework. In their analysis, Neil Dunse and Colin Jones focus on measuring the effects on rents for industrial properties of distance to motorway junctions and interchanges. The authors find, not surprisingly, that rents decline with distance to junctions and interchanges. The chapter would benefit from greater clarity in the discussion of the distance measures as well as inclusion of sample and diagnostic statistics (at minimum, R^2) that usually accompany reports of regression analyses. As the authors note, the hedonic analysis does not really answer the research question posed at the beginning of the chapter, because the results say nothing about how highway policy has affected industrial location choices over time.