

Part three deals with empirical issues on the usage of computer visualization in planning such as decision making and participation. Using case studies, it is well described and easy to read. This section draws from the work in previous chapters, indicating how/ where to use the technology in planning.

This book is a good introduction to computer visualization employed in the planning process. It analyses current issues, reveals technology adaptations, and describes various implications in planning. I would recommend this book to anyone interested in computer visualization; it is well organized, clear, and summarizes major areas of work on visualization in environmental planning.

*Kyungjin An*  
*University of Newcastle upon Tyne*

### **Dialogues in Urban and Regional Planning**

Bruce Stiftel & Vanessa Watson (Eds)

*London, Routledge, 2005, ISBN 0415 346 932*

This volume is an anthology of recent award-winning papers in planning from researchers from around the globe. The motive behind the book was the belief of the editors and some of their colleagues that planners in different parts of the world do not talk enough with one another nor know enough about one another's activities. The papers in this volume were chosen by an international editorial board from the submissions from nine planning school associations, which selected these papers based on regional competitions, including those in the US, Canada, Europe, Australia and New Zealand, Africa, Latin America and the Far East.

In the past decade we have witnessed increasing efforts to promote international exchange in planning scholarship, stemming from the growing awareness of planning educators that urban planning scholarship suffers from a lack of communication, integration and cross-connection worldwide. There are generally two reasons for this: first, communication and integration are limited by language barriers. Second, the planning profession is characterized by broad interdisciplinary connections and significant differences across national boundaries based upon national legal and institutional structures, as well as cultural and social considerations. Global co-operation among planners could enable national communities to learn from each other and to foster planning as a discipline. This book is an important step in enhancing communication among urban planning educators, researchers and professionals worldwide. It intends to be the first in a series of books presenting selections of quality urban planning scholarship from each of the world's regions.

The book opens with an interesting and informative introductory chapter that reviews the history and the development of the Planning Schools Movement. It surveys the efforts that have been made since 1960 to create communication among urban planning educators, first nationwide and then worldwide. The growing emphasis on building global integration and international co-operation in planning scholarship is represented as an important step to meaningful improvements in research, quality of theory, expanding ideas and enriching debates in the field. The editors identify three ad hoc themes for the collection in this anthology:

the relationships between planning and the economy; environment and conservation; and the nature of planning processes and decision making.

However, within this framework the individual chapters explore an eclectic mix of issues from very different urban settings around the world. These include the implementation of mixed use principles in Canada; public-private partnership and urban development in Sydney, Australia; structuring of urban space and the land markets and social relations that support it in Buenos Aires Metropolitan Area (an in-depth analysis mixed with political-philosophical commentary); a whole-landscape approach (which is an emerging discipline of landscape ecology) implemented to rural management in farms in Oxfordshire, UK, ensuring conservation and enhancement of biodiversity; the management of urban regeneration and conservation in Shanghai, China (a paper that was originally written in Mandarin and was translated into English); ecological and economic zoning in the Brazilian Amazon region; participatory planning in Hawaii; the role of urban planners in ethnically or racially polarized societies with inter-group conflict (investigating the cities of Belfast, Jerusalem and Johannesburg as case studies); collaborative planning and multi-stakeholders in tourism-environmental conflict in Banff National Park in Canada; and revealing the ideological conflicts behind collaborative planning and normative theories of planning in the context of Sub-Saharan, Africa. Only two papers deal with theoretical issues exclusively without reliance upon specific urban setting or case studies. These are Sandercock's paper on the work of stories and storytelling in planning practice, and Mantysalo's paper on dilemmas in critical planning theory, both excellent papers that have implications for theory as well as for practice.

All the papers deal with contemporary and pressing issues in planning. They demonstrate an excellent knowledge of the relevant literature, thus presenting the reader with an informed background about the specific subject, and they link analysis of a specific practice to broader theoretical debate. In most cases this linking yields a new understanding of either theory or practice, overcoming barriers of language and geography.

Several chapters in the book demonstrate this link. 'Mixed Use in Theory and Practice' by Jill Grant is an in-depth analysis of 'New Urbanism' in Canadian cities. She reviews extensive literature on Canada, and describes the experiences across Canadian cities, which are highly varied and reveal subtle problems. Glen Searle's article in the volume is a scathing analysis of the planning failures surrounding the Australia Olympic Stadium in Sydney, which has emerged as an enormous money-losing 'dinosaur'. Interestingly, the project had been a partnership between the private and the public sectors, and the paper shows that such partnering hardly ensures success. A fascinating paper by Scott Bollens on problems of planning in cities undergoing intense ethnic-racial conflicts is yet another one.

The chapters in this volume draw primarily upon local sources. This is both a strength and a weakness. On the one hand, it allows us to understand better the complexity and diversity of the situations in which planning operates, the wide range of ideas and debates in the field, and shows that we deal with practically the same dilemmas worldwide. On the other hand, it is apparent that there is lack of integration, while the book's identification of 'common themes' is rather weak.

Nevertheless, the book gives us the opportunity to contemplate this wide range of ideas and debates in a variety of urban settings around the world. Most of the papers develop methodological frameworks or explore these through a specific local case study. Thus researchers as well as practitioners will enjoy it and find it useful. The 'Dialogue' project is, as its editors put it, "a step toward remediation of global isolation in planning scholarship" (p. 9). It has the potential of strengthening the planning discipline and planning education and of enhancing improvements in research design and quality of theory. The volume will no doubt be regarded as a 'must' for the shelf of every serious planning library.

*Pnina O. Plaut*  
*Faculty of Architecture and Town Planning*  
*Technion – Israel Institute of Technology, Haifa, Israel*