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**BOOK REVIEWS**

**Doris WASTL-WALTER (ed.), *Ashgate Research Companion to Border Studies*, Ashgate, Surrey 2011, 728 pp.**

The *Research Companion to Border Studies*, released by Ashgate in 2011, is presented as the first comprehensive volume on border studies, covering traditional aspects of the field as well as contemporary developments. The editor of this significant collection, Doris Wastl-Walter (University of Bern, Switzerland) notes in her introductory remarks to the volume that borders are ‘complex spatial and social phenomena which are not static or invariable but which must be understood as highly dynamic; this is similar to the field of border studies itself’ (p. 1), and that hence such an undertaking should reflect this level of dynamism and multi-disciplinarity. With 32 separate contributions from both established and newer scholars, divided between eight thematic sections, and spanning the globe in its scope, the *Research Companion* certainly sets out to reflect the dynamic and expansive nature of the field of border studies. While there are 40 individual authors involved in this volume, writing broadly in relation to borders and border studies, it is notable that the majority of these are specifically based in the discipline of Geography. This, however, is perhaps telling of the ongoing engagement with critical border studies within Geography (see for example the 2011 special on ‘Borders, Borderlands and Theory’ in *Geopolitics*; Kolossov’s 2010 article *Border Studies: Changing Perspectives and Theoretical Approaches*, also in *Geopolitics*; or Newman and Paasi’s review on border studies in political geography from 1998 in *Progress in Human Geography*).

The eight thematic sections of the volume do however attempt to ‘reflect the current main strands of the field’ (p. 3). These individual sections cover theoretical and conceptual themes of border studies, geopolitics, trade, labour and cross-border cooperation, identity, transgression, nature and the environment, and issues of inclusion and exclusion, moving between the scale of the bodily to the transnational. The volume also takes on the ‘recently emerging topics’ of the role of borders in a borderless world, the creation of ‘neighbourhoods’, and enforcement and militarization in the post-9/11 period, though it is likely that many would contest the assertion that these are recently emerging areas of study.

Wastl-Walter is clear from the outset that the intention of the volume is to act as a ‘textbook for students and scholars in related disciplines, for example political geography, international relations, political science, environmental studies, conflict studies, and history across the world’ (p. 1). While it could be perceived that this voluminous collection could act as a supplement for those freshly dipping into the rapidly developing and diverse field of border studies – namely undergraduate social science students – it is perhaps less likely that

scholars already working in the field would find this collection a necessary addition to their library, particularly given the familiar nature of pieces contributed by established border studies scholars (see in particular contributions by Anssi Paasi, David Newman, James Wesley Scott *et al.*). Wastl-Walter notes that regional planners and experts working around issues of cross-border cooperation 'should also be able to benefit from the concepts and case studies' (p. 1) discussed in the volume. Unfortunately no further information is given as to how this specific audience might engage with the pieces contained within; more could be done here to demonstrate the value of this rich collection to non-academic audiences.

The numerous and diverse contributions to this book, both theoretical and empirical/ethnographic, represent the depth and quality of research to be found in the field of contemporary border studies, however these are let down by the notably brief introductory chapter. Following a two-page discussion of the rationale of the volume, the remaining five pages mostly restate the table of contents, section-by-section. The outcome is a rather thin introduction that gives little guidance to the reader, and does even less to support the claim that it is 'an authoritative, state-of-the-art review' (p. 1). The reader is left asking what the wider goals or outcomes of the collection are, or why indeed such a significant undertaking is necessary at this particular point in time. Given that there are no further interventions by the editor between the eight sections, and that there is no concluding summary or discussion, there is little then to support the contributions other than their general thematic grouping. The opening contributions by Paasi, Newman and van Houtum in Part I, and Scott in Part II, do however stand-in here to 'provide an overview of the conceptual aspects of the multidisciplinary field of border studies' (p. 3) for the uninitiated border scholar. Furthermore, the index to the *Companion* is limited to place and person names, making finding specific concepts a difficult task.

It should be noted that at the time of writing this review, a similar contribution to the field of border studies is awaiting release under the Wiley-Blackwell 'Companions to Anthropology' series, titled *A Companion to Border Studies* (edited by Thomas M. Wilson and Hastings Donnan). This identically-named volume of similar length contains the exact same number of contributions, arranged into five rather than eight (albeit similar) thematic sections. This version also features several contributors found within the *Ashgate Research Companion* (Newman, Scott, van Houtum), and political geographers maintain a notable presence here also, though overall its contributors represent a stronger bent towards the discipline of anthropology.

Given this almost simultaneous release, it is worth asking why two such substantial volumes on the field of border studies have appeared at this time. Further, Oxford is soon to release a *Borders* contribution to its *A Very Short Introduction* series in 2012 (authored by Diener and Hagan). Wastl-Walter asserts that 'a new multidisciplinary generation of border scholars [has] emerged' (p. 2) out of the past fifteen years following the end of the Cold War and the subsequent proliferation of state boundaries seen thereafter, along with the development of border studies research centres, particularly in North America and the EU. This could also be coupled with the existence of dedicated research bodies such as the Association of Borderlands Studies and its related journal publication, as well as established global conferences including the *Border Regions in Transition* gathering, amongst many others. Certainly the field of contemporary border studies appears prominent enough to justify such attention.

It would be hard to dispute Wastl-Walter's assertion that this volume covers much of the wide-ranging field of border studies (though perhaps not 'all aspects of borders and border research' as the publisher asserts in its introduction to the volume), and she is correct in her argument that border scholars conceptualize borders as more than physically locatable phenomena, considering also the 'social, political or economic expressions' (p. 2) of borders and bordering (see for example the contribution from Bäschlin and Sidati on nomadic understandings of territory and boundaries in Western Sahara). Efforts are also made to consider the more technical aspects of border making and maintenance, often passed-over or little understood in contemporary border studies, as seen in contributions by Ackleson on border management, Heininen and Zebich-Knos on polar territorial sovereignty/conflicts, and Schofield regarding maritime boundary delimitation. While the editor mentions a specific effort to 'achieve a gender-balanced selection of contributors' (p. 1), there is however a notable gap regarding the growing and essential focus of gender within border studies, the notable exception here being Kron's use and exploration of 'border feminism' as methodological tool, and Raghuram and Piper's contribution, 'Women and Migration in Asia'. Recent collections such as *Gendering Border Studies* (Aaron *et al.*, 2010) suggest there is a substantial contribution to the field being made here, and this could perhaps have received a more thorough engagement in this volume.

Others delving into this volume may note similar gaps in other fields of inquiry within contemporary border studies, however the goal of total coverage is certainly an unrealistic and unnecessary one. Similarly, as both Paasi and Newman note in their opening contributions regarding the possibility of developing an overarching 'border theory', '[this] would seem in many ways unattainable, and perhaps even undesirable' (Paasi, p. 27). There is great value to be found in this book through the individual contributions, particularly those that take an empirical and ethnographic approach, demonstrating the multiplicity of methods within contemporary border studies (see for example Dean on the Thai-, Sino-, and Indo-Myanmar boundaries; Choi on North Korean border-crossers; and Peristianis and Mavris on the 'green line' of Cyprus). However, given the nature of such large collections, and the impossibility of encompassing such a vital and diverse field of study in one volume, the *Companion's* primary function will remain as an introductory source rather than a vital reference point for border studies scholars.

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**Michael MURRAY, *Participatory Rural Planning. Exploring Evidence from Ireland*, Ashgate, Aldershot 2010, 164 pp.**

Recent decades have witnessed an apparent turn towards more participatory approaches in the arena of rural development. There has been a recognizable shift from the imposition of top-down development strategies towards the promotion and encouragement of local and community involvement. Consequently, ideas of partnership, participation and empowerment abound within the rural development discourse. The importance of participation is frequently

stressed and this is underpinned by an espousal of community involvement, empowerment and local capacity-building. Within Europe this has been evident both at EU level and through policy formulation and implementation by national governments. This seemingly more people-centred approach has been the subject of much academic scrutiny and evaluation. Michael Murray's book explores various dimensions of this trend using case study material from Ireland. The book does not advance a single overarching thesis but rather endeavours to present insights drawn over a number of years from the author's engaged activity, fieldwork and critical reflection. The examples used relate to government planning policy for rural areas in its more 'macro' forms, specific strategies with respect to rural housing and village plans, and a more detailed account of the operation of a citizens' planning group. In this way, very different (though connected) elements are brought together. This breadth is furthered through the use of material derived from two political jurisdictions: Northern Ireland (part of the United Kingdom) and the Irish Republic.

The book is organized in six chapters. The first provides a useful theoretical overview of shifts from a more top-down approach to rural planning and development to a more bottom-up one. It outlines an analytical framework for examining participatory approaches. Murray's objectives are to explore the benefits of collective capital (linked to ownership, identity and trust), the promotion of meaningful dialogue (as distinct from adversarial posturing), the potential to bridge relationships rather than simply co-opting or incorporating local views, and the value of recognizing and developing new knowledges within these expanded spaces of governance. The second chapter presents a review of the relevant spatial planning policy context on both sides of the Irish border, with particular reference to the extent and means of citizen engagement in processes of policy formulation. These chapters raise important questions about the disjuncture between the desires of local residents and the needs of statutory organizations and point to tensions between genuine dialogue and tokenism and the distinction between consultation and participation.

Chapters 3, 4 and 5 are designed to investigate participatory planning in action through an exploration of housing policy in Northern Ireland, village planning on both sides of the border and, finally, a focus on European citizens' panels. Chapter 3 reviews the nature of official policy consultation in Northern Ireland in relation to rural housing and goes on to examine a specific 'unofficial' pilot project. Chapter 4 highlights the difficulties and time needed for facilitating meaningful participation focussing on the formulation of village plans and an examination of specific village planning projects. Chapter 5 discusses the EU active citizenship agenda with emphasis on regional citizens' panels. The chapter explores the issues in more detail through a focus a panel straddling the Irish border region. The final chapter presents an appraisal of the limits and potential of more participatory approaches.

Although this is a relatively small volume that ranges over rather disparate examples, it manages to weave a narrative that draws together issues of governance, spatial planning, rural development and community involvement. In some ways Murray's book works better as an overview of trajectories in rural development rather than an in-depth assessment of participatory methods. While there is clearly a case to be made for more genuinely participatory approaches, Murray acknowledges the numerous difficulties associated with it and, importantly, the resistances to it exhibited by statutory agencies. He points to some of the merits and potential of widespread participation but also reminds us of the problems of operationalizing this, the difficulties of fostering genuine engagement and the political

context which might be seen to be rhetorically supportive but structurally resistant. As Murray himself states early on in this book the problem remains of ‘the extent to which participatory arenas of engagement can champion negotiating practices that move citizens closer and into the loci of power, or merely place them on the fringes of polite advocacy’ (p. 14). Murray argues that government at a variety of spatial scales may promote participation but primarily for functional means. Additionally, in so far as some useful progress is made in relation to bridge building and so on, this may suffer from the time-limited dimensions of funding conditions and related constraints. While Murray concludes that there is an enthusiasm for these approaches, his work paradoxically demonstrates that there remain problems with getting people more actively and meaningfully involved.

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**Barbara E. HENDRICKS, *Designing for Play*, Ashgate, Farnham 2011, 260 pp.**

Public playgrounds have been part of western cities for a little over a hundred years. Barbara E. Hendricks asks in her book *Designing for Play* why this aspect of public provision has changed so little over the century and how public playgrounds can be made better for children. The book aims ‘at bringing the issue of designing for play up to professional level – a subject for designers about design’ (p. 2). It means that Hendricks writes about the topic with passion and professional perspective, presenting several examples of outdoor children’s playgrounds in western world. The book is well structured into fourteen chapters addressing different aspects of the topic. The intercultural differences and historical changes find some attention in the chapters as well.

Hendricks writes that the provision of public play facilities was part of the Reform Movement – an attempt to improve the living conditions of workers in the rapidly growing and very polluted industrial cities of the 19th century. The author makes some historical associations between play facilities and gardens and later playgrounds for children. For example, kite flying began as an activity for adults, and Chinese history records the use of kites as far back as the Han Dynasty (206–224 BC). Water gardens were built by the wealthy in the 16th and 17th century – such as the gardens at Versailles in France, where adult playgrounds were built for the wealthy to show to the world their power and wealth. The royal gardens were opened to the public in the 19th century. At this time public parks and gardens were not for pleasure but for promenade ruled by particular fashion codes and habits. Hendricks argues that during the Victorian era, however, few wealthy people were constructing adult playgrounds – the public garden became a place for airing and dressing up in fancy clothes. At about the same time gardening became a popular pleasure in itself for the wealthy who had the land and the staff (p. 19). Playthings adopted from the entertainments of the wealthy were the swing, the seesaw and the wading pool.

The book brings up the problem that nowadays many city children are cut away from the rhythms of the planet and from living experiences. The variety of amusement facilities

has become diverse, but many children have access only to limited activities located in supermarkets. Playing generally enables 'to test actions and emotions that would be too dangerous in real life' (p. 11). The outdoor playgrounds are important to learn about the surroundings and living things. Hendricks writes that current urban planning is trapped by the cave-man heritage. But 'much of human history and culture has been touched by our very human dream and longing for Paradise, and Paradise is always a garden, never a building' (p. 222). This argument nicely articulates the problem that often convivial dynamics and public space between the buildings gets little attention in the spatial planning. I would argue that public playgrounds may also indicate particular layers of landscape that become visible only after accidents. For example, Soviet-time playground installations are still present in several day-care centres and house yards. Some of these metal ladders may cause injuries for children and thus require revision and new design solutions.

The author writes about the nature playground approach, which is based in the environmental movement, the green cities organisations and in a pedagogical concept that nature is best for children. Hendricks writes that 'nature is eternal politician – she is anything and everything the person wants her to be. Therefore nature has many different disguises but we must accept the fact that nature is a cultural invention and that our culture forms our attitudes toward nature' (p. 188). It means that there exist multiple connotations for such distinctions like town and country, or culture and nature in different countries. Thus it is that the nature playground movement will find much foothold in western Canada in the form that it is practised in Denmark for example. There exist also differences in how children and adults perceive surrounding nature. I would argue that social dimensions of nature could be theoretically more elaborated in the book by focusing on fewer contextualised case studies.

The author writes that life and movement are interchangeable for children. Many photographed examples in the book present children within their activities on the outdoor playgrounds. Usually the concrete site of the photography is not mentioned and has to be guessed by the reader. The book gives several practical tips for designing particular sites, e.g. school yards or pre-school institutions. This book can be recommended mainly to landscape architects, town planners and designers to contribute to better worlds.

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**Steven MILES, *Spaces for Consumption*, Sage, London 2010, 209 pp.**

This book examines the ideological nature of consumption in urban spaces and the ways in which society relates to and consumes the surrounding urban landscape. It also addresses the impact of consumption upon the city and how the public realm is transformed as a result. The book is divided in nine parts and covers a range of topics based on consumption, such as the importance and the role of the shopping mall to the consumption at mega-events. Through such examples Miles shows that the city as a space of consumption and the expectations and presumptions that consumers take with them creates a less authentic experience of urban life.

Chapter two, *The Individualised City?*, presents the theory necessary to understand the relationships between individuals and the public and their relationship with the urban environment. Here Miles argues that the world has become a privatised sphere. Therefore one city becomes a blueprint for another, resulting in a disconnection between people as a society, a disconnection with the city and a rise in dominance of the consumer society. This leads to the design of cities being designed for such a purpose of high consumption with the building of shopping malls, thereby intensifying the superficial sense of social interaction. Using the example of the airport Miles illustrates the airport is no longer merely a space where travellers pass through, but a space in which people spend time in consuming objects and to an extent culture. Airports incorporate spaces of eating and retail, which perhaps started as small diners and small duty free shops, however overtime these spaces have grown, with luxury brand retailers renting space, thus serving the dual purpose of being an airport, its primary purpose; and a shopping mall, its secondary purpose.

Having provided the foundation for the third chapter, *Creating Cities*, where Miles considers the role of creative cities, in particular entrepreneurial cities and the impacts of their conception has on as a space for consumption. He argues the change in urban governance has led to, as he quotes Hall (1997, p. 65 cited by Miles, 2010, p. 35): 'places are now commodities to be produced and consumed'. This means that cities market themselves as being 'world class cities' in order to attract tourists. Cities are spaces of performance and symbolic consumption, and are therefore spectacles and culture is needed for post industrial cities to survive. This chapter shows the importance for cities to brand themselves in globally competing market, with campaigns such as Glasgow's Miles Better initiative. However, it is not possible to create an authentic creative city, as the image of the city becomes manipulated and crafted around social and economic standings, thus splitting the social fabric of the city. For example, social groups such as the homeless do not fit with the image of 'world class', and are therefore 'actively excluded from the spaces of consumption that a place marketing model of the city implies' (p. 49). City branding normally relies upon its unique cultural entities placing a high emphasis on the visual aspects of the area. For instance during the Vancouver 2010 Winter Olympic and Paralympics Games, Olympic organizers, the City of Vancouver, and the province of British Columbia appropriated the elements of Aboriginal culture and the magnificent natural beauty of the landscape to promote Vancouver, British Columbia, and the Games as being unique.

For the post-industrial city cultural consumption generates large revenue for the city's economy, and therefore many cities such as Boston are dependent on cultural tourism. Miles argues that tour operator provide tourists with environments and experiences that they seek out, questioning the authenticity of the urban experience. In relation to this are the architectures of the city, as they are beacons of symbolic power of consumption. For instance Paris has the Eifel Tower, while Dubai is home to the Burj Al Arab hotel. Miles acknowledges Dubai for being a mega-architectural city, reflective of its consumer driven society. What is termed as 'the Bilbao effect' has resulted in the movement of having monumental architecture, with each city aspiring to have its own Gehry like creation.

Shopping is a word most associated with the term consumption. Shopping is a physical act of consumption where money is exchanged for commodities. In the case of the shopping centre, for some cities the shopping mall is like its Guggenheim, with the architecture being grand, such as Galleries Lafayette in Paris, and West Edmonton Mall,

Edmonton, Alberta, Canada, thus becoming a space for ‘a memorable experience that incorporates a sense of place’ (p. 100). For example, the West Edmonton Mall has spaces which have theme areas, like Europa Boulevard themed after European cities where luxury brand stores such as Versace are located. However not all shopping activities take place in the mall, in many European cities such as London and Paris many of the well-known centres for retail are on the street, such as Bond Street and Avenue des Champs Élysées respectively, therefore the experiences consumption differ. Integral to the theme of shopping for dreams (chapter 6) is the work of Walter Benjamin and the arcades of Paris where people could look in through the glass, simultaneously offering protection from the elements. Shopping malls are controlled spaces where poverty and other social disparities are erased, creating an urban fantasy.

It is widely acknowledged that hosting a mega-event, such as the Olympic Games is not only considered an honour, but also a chance for marketing. The Olympic Games are an international modern spectacle hinging on, and being indicative of, issues such as political power. Miles argues that ‘urban spectacles cannot be analyzed in isolation. They are, by their very nature, complex, multi-faceted entities that above all else demonstrate their inherent complexity and apparent contradictions of life in the contemporary city’ (p. 122).

In this section of the book, Miles successfully demonstrates the importance of hosting mega-events to the city in terms of fiscal gain, relying largely on symbolism and cultural capital, to obfuscate the social and political conflicts occurring between various groups. Miles concludes that for the individual the experience of the spectacular is good enough, and the realities of everyday do not matter at this moment in time.

Covering a range of themes, Miles illustrates that consumption is driven by desire and expectations of utopia. For Miles, as consumption is an individual experience he argues that there is a disconnection between people, thus individualism is being encouraged. Spaces for consumption no longer serve a single purpose; they are multifaceted where all activities take place. He believes that privatised spheres such as malls and museums make people weary of the street. Miles does not merely demonstrate how we consume the city and its commodities, but we also aid in defining cultures and are complicit in them. He concludes that cities are theatres where the performances emotions, dreams and tragedy occur. Cities are spaces where the ideological dominance of consumption takes place, and that the ways in which individuals act should not be misjudged.

On the whole, this is a well written and accessible book that would appeal to both faculty and students alike. This book provides the basis of discussions that are important in debates in the disciplines of geography and urban studies for example. Miles provides the reader with engaging arguments which probe further question, by drawing upon the work on renowned scholars in specific fields of consumption. The examples Miles chooses to validate his argument are also analyzed in great detail, and are varied, making for an interesting read. This book makes a valuable contribution to the scholarship on consumption by highlighting the dependency of culture in a post-industrial world, and the changing relationships between people, and people and the urban environment.

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**Giovanna SONDA, Claudio COLETTA, Francesco GABBI (eds.), *Urban Plots, Organizing Cities*, Ashgate, Farnham 2012, 178 pp.**

At the crossroads between organization and urban studies, the research project at the origins of the volume *Urban Plots, Organizing Cities* – edited by Giovanni Sonda, Claudio Coletta and Francesco Gabbi and published by Ashgate – aimed at showing ‘the potential of addressing urban complexity by considering the action net embracing artifacts, practices and narratives’. The ‘urban plots’ arising from this triangulation are here proposed as privileged entry points for the analysis and representation of what really cities are: states of permanent reorganization. Reorganization is seen here as both an outcome of organizing processes and a fundamental quality of those ‘action nets’ that are taken as basic social objects in urban life. This theoretical approach allows the editors to travel through the contemporary urban experience through the construction of different ‘urban plots’, ranging from reformulations in the field of public policy discourse to stories of contentious representations of public housing projects, from analysis of governmental strategies in public transport systems to the shaping of a cultural turn in urban policy. Jerome Denis and David Pontille analyze change and evolution in the Parisian subway signage system, considering it an effective example of how cities are made of semiotic landscapes in which are deeply embedded patterns of expected behaviours and frameworks of action. Recent changes in the RATP signage policy reveal the rise of the habit of the ‘informed citizen’, a monadic and self-reliant individual who is capable of controlling his displacement in the urban environment. Following the spread of GPS – global positioning systems – these changes set ‘the basis for public spaces where the dwelling together counts less than successfully navigating side by side’. Examining the case of contested representation and policy interventions in a public housing estate in Athens, Stavros Stavrides discusses the Lefevrian concept of the right to the city proposing a change of emphasis from a quantitative approach – essentially, ‘political action conceived as demands for a redistribution of urban goods and services’ – to a qualitative one. Urban forms, in which are embedded ‘emancipative’ urban practices, must be taken in account while analyzing urban struggles. In the case examined, it is ‘urban porosity’ to be the quality giving strength to a different discourse about the city able to embody a sort of qualitative and discursive turn in the research line of the ‘right to the city’. In the contribution of Massimo Bricocoli and Lavinia Bifulco, the crisis of public housing in Italian cities emerges as an opportunity for reshaping highly routinely public policy. Examining the case of the programme *Contratti di Quartiere* in Milan and of an innovative public health policy in Trieste, the authors analyze significant evolutions in the treatment of local problems thank to a more transparent scrutiny that allowed participants to open ‘the black box of housing management’, connecting problems that had been treated individually. The aim of this kind of policy innovation can be conceived as the reorganization of the urban space through the production of social organization: an ambitious goal that is achievable only if institutional rules and self-regulating social forms are optimally combined through public action. In the case of the city of Medellin, Beatriz Acevedo and Ana Maria Carreira, underline as the interplay between modernizing plans and policies implemented by city government and the residents’ vernacular culture and social practices created the setting for the raise of a new hybrid urban culture. Building on

the inheritance of South-American patterns of cultural hybridization developing through the colonial and post-colonial era, the authors analyse cases in which 'urban projects are transformed aesthetically, functionally and symbolically through the narratives of local communities, linked to religion and baroque imagery'. In the context of shifting urban culture policies and governance, Claudia Meschiari and Vando Borghi examine the case of a culture-driven urban renewal programme implemented in a former industrial site in the city of Modena, Italy. Through a participative process, the city was able to turn what might have risked to be a routinely and highly private management of a land-use change into a more vibrant occasion of local sense-making at the crossroads between local collective memory and hidden development potentials. Memory is a matter of concern also for Barbara Gruning's contribution focusing on the politics of urban memory in post-reunification German cities. Defining the reality and potential of a narrative space, the author underlines how a counter-hegemonic exploration of urban memories need to rely on traces framing an incomplete, doubtful and a teleological understanding of history. Theoretical assumptions formulated by the editors suggest how the analytical triangulation between artifacts, practices and narratives they propose can be useful in understanding significant episodes and processes of urban change occurring in cities across the globe today. Even more important, effective urban policies need to take in account the strategic role played by 'urban plots' in promoting change. At the same time, the lesson contained in the book can be fully productive only if deeply connected with serious analysis of structural processes affecting urban societies in this time of change and crisis.

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**Margaret GRIECO, John URRY (eds.), *Mobilities: New Perspectives on Transport and Society*, Ashgate, Surrey 2011, 163 pp.**

The volume *Mobilities: New Perspectives on Transport and Society* is another demonstration of the mobilities paradigm consolidation in social sciences. By gathering a total of 17 contributions, mostly from UK academics, this book edited by Margaret Grieco and John Urry represents a great guide for those that would like to study mobilities challenges in depth. Given the amount of chapters and topic overlapping of some of them, this review will not be chapter by chapter, but it will rather comment on some of the most noteworthy elements that are present across the book.

The volume shows a clear agenda for the mobilities turn around the concepts of social and environmental transport justice, information technologies and behavioural change. The latter idea, although not being specifically quoted in all chapters, is present throughout the book and could be considered the most significant governance challenge for the coming decades. Changing the behaviour of people is a difficult mission, as it requires cultural and conceptual changes that need time and generations in order to be effective. It is about intervention to resolve some social dilemmas (chapter 8 by G. Lyons) when all

lose out through selfish behaviour. Also, since people act at the local level, but demands are coming from regional, national and supranational levels, and the consequences of the climate change are at the global level, this kind of governance requires a multi-scalar or multi-level perspective. While reading this book one feels the urgency of the behavioural change debate, given that the increasing mobility of those in the global north and in the global south offsets the technological efficiency improvements (chapter 15 by C. Divall) and the rising threat from climate change and the unstable market dynamics in relation to fuel scarcity (chapter 1 by J. Urry; chapter 2 by J. Hine). In this regard, chapter 5 by K. Götz and T. Ohnmacht makes a proposal for the definition of lifestyle profiles for developing target group specific motivational factors for behavioural change. In a more descriptive fashion, chapter 9 by P. Jones *et al.* looks into the socio-demographic profiles of commuters in Paris and London.

Social exclusion, lack of access and how this can impact on personal life dimensions are the central topics of a substantial amount of the chapters. Authors agree that measures to tackle transport disadvantage should go beyond transport itself and integrate land-use policies (chapter 2 by J. Hine), public facilities planning (Epilogue by M. Grieco), personal domains (chapter 4 by G. Porter *et al.*), cultural landscapes (chapter 14 by M. Sheller) and, overall, a multi-dimensional and contextualized understanding of the underlying factors which cause transport-related exclusion (chapter 10 by K. Lucas).

In this line, some chapters deal with path-making and path-shaping, and the encounters in the context of walking. Chapter 3 by F. Hodgson deals with the case of Leeds, chapter 4 by G. Porter *et al.* is centred on young people's mobility in Ghana, Malawi and South Africa and the impact of security and violence issues on walking routes, which show important gender differences. Taking a historical approach, chapter 13 by C.G. Pooley also analyses the everyday mobility of children from Manchester and Lancaster, and suggests that there is important path dependency in their mobility as much has remained the same. Although it is not dealing with daily path-making, chapter 16 by F. Rajé critically analyzes aviation links between and mobility patterns of migrants originally from the Caribbean region, finding that traditional sun-sea-sand tourism is not the main explanation of some airline routes configured in the Caribbean. On a different matter, chapter 12 by C. Licoppe and C. Levallois-Barth analyzes the process of configuring an interactive advertising system in the Paris underground and discusses the tensions associated with this intrusive advertising method in the path of underground users.

In this regard, the smart and technological debate is also present in the volume. Chapter 7 by M. Büsher discusses how human sense-making could be integrated with smart transport and shows concerns about the democratic values of some smart technologies. In relation to this, chapter 8 by G. Lyons argues that there is too much attention on the technology fix and the priority of accommodating demand, when there are important opportunities for behavioural change. Yet, chapter 17 by J. D. Nelson and P. T. Aditjandra presents a survey that shows that some European stakeholders see Intelligent Transport Systems (ITS) as key for efficient and clean road transport. From another perspective, chapter 11 by E. Laurier and T. Dant debates on some of the benefits that the driverless car could bring.

Something worth highlighting from this volume is the methodological diversity of the chapters, which can certainly be very useful for young researchers and for those that are in the stage of designing a new research project in this field. Some chapters focus on different

qualitative methodologies (e.g., non-structured interviews, surveys etc.) and others apply unorthodox methods, such as video recording of drivers (chapter 11 by E. Laurier and T. Dant on the driverless car) or product experimentation (chapter 12 by C. Licoppe and C. Levallois-Barth on Bluetooth interactive advertising). Also, the volume has chapters with a strong methodological emphasis, such as chapter 6 by E. Horizons and B. Them on snowball sampling.

Having a consolidated body of literature and a considerable number of scholars, probably, one of the coming challenges is achieving that policy makers translate all the accumulated knowledge into real policies addressing social exclusion, achieving behavioural change at a considerable scale, and safeguard democratic and privacy rights in relation to the implementation of smart technologies. Hence, this book is not only worthy of scholarly reflection, but could also be useful to transport and urban policy-makers.

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**Daniel A. BELL and Avner DE-SHALIT, *The Spirit of Cities*, Princeton University Press, Princeton–Oxford 2011, 347 pp.**

This interesting and stimulating book presents a new approach to the study of cities in which the focus is placed on a city's ethos, defined as a set of values and outlooks that are generally acknowledged by people living in the city. Bell and de-Shalit revive the classical idea that the city expresses its own distinctive ethos, and explore how this classical idea can be applied to modern cities. Moreover, the authors explain why philosophy and the social sciences need to rediscover the spirit of cities.

The book is focused on cities that authors could write about from personal experience, but the choice of cities was also determined by more objective concerns – the authors chose cities that relate to key themes in contemporary political thinking. They begin with the cities that have done most to shape their identities (Jerusalem and Montreal) and then move on to the cities that have played important subsequent roles in shaping their identities (Singapore, Hong Kong, Beijing, Oxford and Berlin). The last part of the book discusses cities that did not contribute so significantly to their personal identities (Paris and New York).

Following an introduction, which briefly outlines the structure and contents, the book is divided into nine chapters, each devoted to a particular city. Chapter 1 is focused on Jerusalem and discusses religious conviction. The second chapter, devoted to Montreal, considers the value of language in economic and psychological sense. Chapter 3 deals with Singapore, which, being the only large city that is a separate state, had to engage in nation building since it was expelled from the Malayan federation in 1965. The fourth chapter discusses the special administrative region of Hong Kong, which is due to its free-market ideology. Chapter 5 is focused on Beijing, which has long prided itself on being a political city. The sixth chapter deals with Oxford and its one of the oldest universities in the world in terms of the ethos of learning. Chapter 7 discusses the case of Berlin and

ideas of tolerance and intolerance. In the eighth chapter the authors consider the idea of Paris as a romantic city (which is actually rejected by Parisians) and conclude with some reflections on the tension between the pursuit of romance and the pursuit of morality. The last part of the book turns to the 'capital of the world' – New York – which became so important in the field of finance or culture mainly due to the ambitions of immigrants. The cities under consideration are presented with an innovative and engaging mix of history, personal anecdote and also the theoretical reflection.

Bell and de-Shalit draw upon the richly varied histories of each city, as well as novels, poems, biographies, tourist guides and architectural landmarks. The authors rely in this book mostly on qualitative methods of research – they visited particular cities of interest and conducted interviews with their inhabitants (e.g. a college president in Oxford, a writer in Paris or a young political activist in Berlin). They also employ strolling as a method of research drawing on the experience of Walter Benjamin (1898–1940), who was walking through the streets of nineteenth-century Paris and contemplating the rise of capitalism and consumerism in this city (it is also worth mentioning that the idea for this book came to the authors when they were walking the streets of San Francisco). The application of the methods mentioned above stems from the authors' conviction that much can be learned about cities and their values through strolling and spontaneous interviewing.

The authors of *The Spirit of Cities* are aware that cities sometimes have more than one defining ethos, and that ethoses vary substantially by social class, location or by religion within a particular city – for this reason they focused on ethoses shared by ethnic groups, social classes and genders by interviewing members of different groups as well as referring to literature.

The book is extremely interesting and entertaining for lovers of cities all over the world, and perhaps even for those who are not, because *The Spirit of Cities* is quite insightful and takes the reader on a thought-provoking personal journey. Moreover, the style of the book is attractively conversational (even autobiographical) and far from social science positivism. It is also worth mentioning that *The Spirit of Cities*, combining strolling and storytelling with cutting-edge theory, encourages debate on new ways of inquiry in the social sciences.

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