

Book Reviews



Las Vegas in Singapore: Violence, Progress and the Crisis of Nationalist Modernity. By Lee Kah-Wee. Singapore: NUS Press, 2019 (distributed by Univ. of Chicago Press Books). 352 pp., b&w illus.

Lee Kah-Wee's *Las Vegas in Singapore* comprises two parallel histories that figuratively and literally merge in the book's conclusion. A study of the normalization and sanitization of vice in two disparate cities, that were both largely created in the middle of the twentieth century, the result is a parable of early twenty-first-century globalization, digitalization and realpolitik. Lee has exhaustively researched his topic, and like any morality tale, it is a fascinating and titillating read.

It is not news that vices must be permitted to exist in every society; nor is it surprising to find tacit tolerance or even open collusion between the authorities and the criminals, provided everyone stays in their agreed places. Prohibition — whether of alcohol, opium, prostitution or gambling — is doomed to failure, only exacerbating and multiplying the evils it is supposed to prevent. Thus, Lee describes the ways Singapore has preserved an image of virtue while concealing ineradicable pockets of vice, in the process providing some surprising historical facts.

The story begins under nineteenth-century British colonial rule, when gambling dens were common and illegal, but the gamblers were rarely caught, and even then, only ineffectually prosecuted. Lee argues that this was a spatial and architectural issue. Gambling venues were barricaded against police raids, and difficult access to certain rooms within a private club became *de facto* proof of illegal activity (which was often ignored as long as it could be contained). Lee then outlines the measures taken by the colonial authorities to define temporary legal exceptions for gambling, making it controllable and taxable while preventing the contamination of society at large.

The astonishing speed with which Singapore transformed itself into a modern nation was predicated on the imposition of new social and spatial orders in the city. This coincided with a push to improve the moral and physical health of citizens: producing a new constitution, in every sense. As part of this process, many more-or-less trivial vices were outlawed, but gambling was not one of them. As Lee observes, "For the fledgling nation-state, gambling was not just morally reprehensible, it represented a seductive pool of revenue at a time when money was scarce." Thus, soon after Singapore became fully self-governing in 1959, it levied heavy taxes on gambling in private clubs.

In 1965, the year Singapore became an independent republic, Prime Minister Lee Kuan Yew gave his support to a proposal for a casino on Pulau Sejahta Island, but "charged Singaporeans to work and exercise hard while visiting Americans and Malaysians indulged themselves." Intended to have been a quarantined outpost for decadent foreigners, who would indirectly fund the development of the new nation, it was never built. Instead, most gambling was criminalized, and a national lottery was established as a government-controlled outlet for the urge to gamble, sustained by televised drawings and hundreds of ticket booths across the city. The official justification was that profits from the lottery could be used to fund construction of a National Stadium and other sporting and cultural venues. Though still regarded as iniquitous, gambling was therefore made to serve the nation's infrastructure and ideology via what Lee calls "moral laundering."

The narrative then shifts to the early days of Las Vegas. As the prototypical American casino evolved from a nondescript box to a spectacularly themed object (identifiable as a casino precisely because it looked like anything but one), casino design became a specialized architectural field that used scientific planning to manipulate behaviors and maximize profits. During the 1990s, digital technology further enabled the entire industry to become comprehensively rationalized and interconnected. Interestingly, this required a generational shift. Older gamblers did not trust mechanical card-shufflers and digital readouts, preferring slot machines with decorative spinning wheels, unaware that the innards of gambling devices had become entirely computerized. But a younger generation, raised on electronic screens, had no problem with the new systems, and indeed saw them as more trustworthy.

Las Vegas also eventually cleaned up its act, erasing the last traces of Mafia influence and pushing the sex trade outside the city limits. The casinos successfully attracted a broader public by adding all kinds of family-friendly activities — high-end restaurants, theatrical performances, childcare centers, and so on — prefiguring the so-called “integrated resort” where gambling is presented as merely one of many entertainment options.

It was this concept that finally led to renewed interest from Singapore. Following intense public debate, in 2005, the government approved two integrated resorts — one relatively isolated on Sentosa Island, but the other located right on the Marina Bay waterfront where it would contribute unavoidably to the city’s international image. The chosen developer, Las Vegas Sands CEO Sheldon Adelson, hired his preferred architect, Paul Steelman, for the project. But the first design was rejected by the Singaporean authorities for being too obviously a casino. Adelson was also talked out of his intended Venetian theme and compelled to call the project “Marina Bay Sands.” As Lee notes, this meant it would be the only Sands casino that did not have “Sands” as the first word in its name.

The commission to design the project also ultimately went to the Israeli-Canadian architect Moshe Safdie, who produced what is now one of the most recognizable icons of Singapore, a triple tower linked by a boat-like observation deck called SkyPark. The podium and adjacent volumes contain luxury shops and restaurants, facilities for concerts, conventions, and exhibitions, a lotus-shaped museum, as well as the discreet four-level casino itself. Utopian science-fiction stage-set, avatar of global capitalism, and symbol of modern, liberalized Singapore, the building is nonetheless intended as a tourist trap, so as to not corrupt the locals. Thus, while any adult may enter the casino, Singapore citizens must pay an “entry levy” intended to dissuade them from doing so.

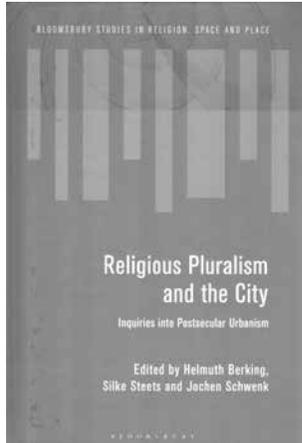
The majority of the integrated resort has no such restrictions. But the minimized presence of gambling is deceptive, to say the least. As Lee writes, “the casino occupies 3 per cent

of the floor area and 4 per cent of the construction budget, but represents 81 per cent of total projected revenue and 40 per cent of the jobs.” He thus counterintuitively describes Marina Bay Sands as an “exemplar of the aesthetics of effacement.” Indeed, the architecture is clearly something, but it is not clear what that something is. Vice is contained, attention is distracted, and everybody saves face.

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Religious Pluralism and the City: Inquiries into Postsecular Urbanism. Edited by Helmut Berking, Silke Steets, and Jochen Schwenk. London: Bloomsbury Academic, 2018. Xiii + 233 pp., b&w illus.



At the beginning of the third millennium, three major phenomena are relevant to any urban theory engaged with religion. First is that the majority (and constantly growing) of humanity is now residing in cities. Second is that, due to multiple globalization-related processes (immigration and mobility, growing income disparity, hyper-capitalism, etc.), cities are gradually becoming more vulnerable

to external forces of a multiscalar nature in tandem with mounting social and political unrest. The third phenomenon relates to the increasing influence and presence of religious components in the urban public sphere.

Arguably, one result of these forces is that the city is increasingly yielding to influence of religious politicization at various scales. Time and again this is also provoking public debate regarding the very definition of pluralism in the city and the contemporary postmodern era. And this involves questions regarding the role of religion in the contemporary politics of identity. Within academe, and more importantly in society at large, we are still debating if religion and religious communities are on par in this regard with secular mechanisms organized around nation, gender, economic status, and even ethnic affiliation.

This is the background behind this timely edited volume, in which the various authors/contributors tackle head-on these issues at the forefront of everyday urban life. The overarching argument of the book, as defined by its editors (Helmut Berking, Silke Steets, and Jochen Schwenk), accepts that the grand theory of the secularization of cities is no longer valid. Contemporary urban life does not so much herald a decline of religion, they claim, as a pluralization of religion (the simultaneity of secular and religious institutions) and the coexistence of different religious worldviews.

The main thesis of the book is that the constellation of these pluralisms is primarily taking concrete form in cities, and therefore merits discussion at the city scale. Indeed, considering the tidal rise of urban populations around the world, it is the city which today serves as the main arena, and surely the vanguard, of the most pertinent and relevant debates and cultural wars. And in many cases these concern the very essence of the right of religious groups to coexist with, influence, and (as the case may be) confront the secular. Yet this

pertinent and pressing discussion is still very much absent from contemporary urban theory. In its four parts and eleven chapters, this book sets out to meet this void and fill it both theoretically and empirically.

The book opens with a thorough, erudite and knowledgeable introduction (I would highly recommend it as mandatory reading for a variety of classes engaged in discussions of religion in modernity), which explains, in a very engaging way, the *raison d'être* of the entire volume.

Part one, "From Secularization to Pluralism," then consists of but one chapter, written by the late Peter L. Berger. This is, surely, a lovely and respectful commemoration by the editors of one of the most influential theorists in the field. In the chapter, Berger develops a theory of pluralism which, as he explained in his 2014 book *The Many Altars of Modernity*, is destined to replace his former take on secularization.

Under the heading "Between Fundamentalism and Postsecularism," part two then presents three different takes on the relationships between city, religion and modernity. First, Nezar AlSayyad promotes his fundamentalist-city theory, arguing that forces at different scales are currently shaping highly exclusionary patterns of urban space. Christopher Baker, searching for the good city, then promotes a postsecular theory which suggests that religion and religious groups can serve as valid coproducers and agents of a more enabling public sphere than that presently yoked to the logic of neoliberalism. And to complete the section, Stephan Lanz offers a postcolonial approach that takes issue with both preceding theories. This suspends older thematic attributions and promotes lived religion as a way to reconcile adherence to religious norms with modern urban life, as currently grounded in individualism, material consumption, and professional aspiration.

Part three is of a more empirical nature and allows us several vantage points on different cities around the world and the ways they negotiate conflicts and contestations of religious nature. Marian Burchardt, Irene Becci, and Mariachiara Giorda compare the strategies of religious groups in Barcelona and Turin. Martijn Oosterbaan brings to the fore his explorations of the global South, focusing on parades of Christian evangelical groups in Rio de Janeiro. John Eade explores migrant Romanian and Bulgarian communities in greater London and the ways religion is played out and utilized to settle (or be accepted) in the newly adopted megapopolis. Veronika Eufinger concludes this section by offering an analysis of the ways two major Churches in Germany perceive cities and interact with them apparently as the result of contested real estate markets.

Under the title "Changing Urban Imaginaries," part four concludes by offering three hermeneutic discussions of the urban and its encounters with religion. Tulasi Srivinas looks at Bangalore; Tovi Fenster discusses religious groups' imagination of Jerusalem; and Eva Kanchik-Kirschbaum challenges scholarly views on the pivotal role of religion in the ancient Sumerian temple city.

This book provides a wonderful addition to the growing field of urban religion, religion(s) in cities, and surely religion in the postmodern era. The chapters are rich and well informed, and the scholarship is of the highest standard. This is no small accomplishment in a volume that has no less than 17 authors all working around one overarching agenda, formulating a framework concerning the relationship of city and religion, while simultaneously keeping in mind the links between urban theory and religious studies.

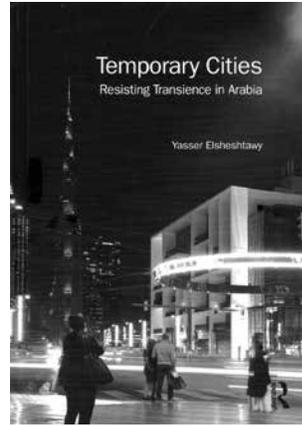
I want to conclude by raising two nagging points for reflection, however. The first involves the use of the word “postsecular” in the title of the book. As Lanz (in this very book) and others have already commented, Jürgen Habermas and his followers who have promoted the idea of the postsecular have fallen short of providing an answer to why it helps us think critically about contemporary cities. And, surely, if secularization theory has by and large been refuted, are cities to be found in the “postsecular,” if they were never really secularized?

The second point is the idea, mostly prevalent in the introductory parts of the book, that urban theory of religion is also about finding ways to coexist in contemporary cities. I, for one, am not convinced that this is the role of theory — that is, a shift from explanatory mode to a more engaged one. And if this is the case, we need to be working (writing as well) closely with activists, organizations operating in cities, and surely municipalities and religious communities — something that is in short supply in this highly important book.

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Temporary Cities: Resisting Transience in Arabia. By Yasser Elsheshtawy. Abingdon, Oxon., and New York: Routledge, 2019. 298 pp., 100 b&w illus.



“Can transience be inscribed into the built environment, and what tactics are employed by residents to overcome this?” This the central question posed by Yasser Elsheshtawy in *Temporary Cities: Resisting Transience in Arabia* (p.6). The resistance alluded to includes the marks of the disenfranchised etched into the earth between the shining structures of global capital that adorn contem-

porary cities. Elsheshtawy focuses on the extreme cases of Dubai and Abu Dhabi, and on the activities of low-income, transient workers who comprise the invisible majority of their populations. Elsheshtawy also highlights the plight of Emirati society’s lower echelons, describing how state-provided public housing is adapted and appropriated. This foregrounding of the lives of the subaltern, looking for homes in the innocuous face of globalization’s transience, is the book’s most valuable contribution.

Yasser Elsheshtawy is a pioneer among scholars of urbanism in the Arabian Peninsula, and *Temporary Cities: Resisting Transience in Arabia* adds to his accomplished and productive repertoire. The book also sits among a growing genre bringing to the fore the lives of the subaltern, that includes Andrew Gardner’s *City of Strangers*, Deepak Unnikrishnan’s *Temporary People* (which Elsheshtawy cites), and, more recently, Florian Weidenman and Ashraf Salama’s *Building Migrant Cities in the Gulf*. It also complements recent Emirati-centered books such as *The New Arab Urban: Gulf Cities of Wealth, Ambition, and Distress*, edited by Harvey Molotch and Davide Ponzini, as well as Todd Reisz’s *Showpiece City: How Architecture Made Dubai*.

Temporary Cities is arranged in two parts. Part one illustrates how resistance to urban transience is represented through photography, film and video, and literature. Here an entire chapter, “Forming an Urban Imaginary,” offers a striking essay of Elsheshtawy’s photographs, which juxtapose low-income workers against the shiny cities they build and the dusty landscapes they inhabit. Elsheshtawy presents these images as a binary of “spectacular” versus “migrant” landscapes. The former are photographs of shiny cities taken from a distance, spaces under construction, and empty structures. The latter are less dramatic: they show expatriate workers playing cricket on vacant sites, having picnics along highways, and just standing along the street passing the time

— “resisting the temporary city by the very act of standing on a street corner” (p.132). Deprived of formal spaces in the cities their labor is being used to build, the low-income workers and their small acts of resistance are at the center of these remarkable and disturbing images. The photographs are unnerving because they show the city’s backstage, how cities are inhabited, over and above more familiar formal representations.

Elsheshtawy’s field observations on four different spaces in Dubai and Abu Dhabi comprise part two. Here he combines his training in architecture and the built environment with inspiration from urban sociology and William H. “Holly” Whyte. Whyte was perhaps most famous for his interpretation of time-lapse photographs of small urban spaces in New York and his acclaimed 1980 film and book *The Social Life of Small Urban Spaces*. Elsheshtawy uses similar methods to describe urban landscapes eked out by the low-income workers in these cities built for the hoarding of capital.

Elsheshtawy lived in the United Arab Emirates for about twenty years. This proximity allowed him to perform field research over extended periods, what he calls “prolonged exposure” (p.107). The book is based on considerable field documentation; and, commendably, Elsheshtawy clearly describes his methods for each case study, which he adapts for the specific conditions, opportunities and limitations presented by each site. Typically, Elsheshtawy set up his camera on a tripod and produced his time-lapse imagery while he sat in a chair, sketched, and took notes. His written descriptions of these spaces are thick with detail. The time-lapse photographs capture spatial use from early morning to late at night. And he interprets and complements this record through drawings, field notes, maps, and spatial analyses. From a purely methodological perspective, the book will thus be of interest to anyone who conducts field research in any part of the world, even if they have limited interest in the Arabian Peninsula.

The four case studies that comprise part two are of sites that are mostly “hidden” or “unseen” to city officials. They are Dubai’s Hor Al Anz Street and Nasser Square, Little Bangladesh in Abu Dhabi (otherwise known as The Square with the Tree), and the Emirati *Sha’bi* or “national” house. Drawing from an impressively wide literature, Elsheshtawy examines each of these spaces through particular theoretical frameworks such as transience, *terrain vague*, disruption, cosmopolitanism, and localism.

While valuable reflections in their own right, one is left wondering whether the study of these spaces could help decenter Western categories rather than reinforce them. More than this, one wonders whether these specifically Emirati cases are really so illustrative of Arabia, as the book’s title suggests. While the phenomena are similar across Khaliji cities, the U.A.E. has an especially high ratio of low-income workers, greater than say Bahrain or Saudi Arabia.

However, the core of Elsheshtawy’s argument is that Khaliji cities are temporary (p.10); and that transience in turn leads to a loss of distinction (p.260). Paradoxically, the

low-income workers, themselves transient, are the main sign of resistance to transience. The workers resist transience when they leave their footprints in the sand and utilize temporary spaces, such as cricket fields in vacant lots, that add resistance to the temporality. One is left with questions over complexities of transience and the relationship between the temporary and the transient.

As a rumination on temporality, the book could go much further than it does. Aren’t all cities temporary in one way or another? What is the time period through which we understand temporalities? One thinks of Rahul Mehrotra’s work on ephemeral cities, for instance, and what he termed (in his 2011 *Architecture in India since 1990*, for example) sites of “impatient capital.” Speaking of cities such as Dubai, Mehrotra also observed in a 2012 article on the future of the city for *Journal of International Affairs*, that “impatient capital deploys modes of construction that are predictable and quantifiable, and that often have nothing to do with the climate, landscape or light of a city, among other things. Cities are physical artifacts, and culture and place are what give them expression.”

One of the most powerful sections of the book is when Elsheshtawy invites the reader to participate in a thought experiment imagining Gulf Cities without the transient workers (pp.253–54), one where entire cities stop and “lightness is replaced by darkness” (p.254). We thus see how central the transient workers are to these transient cities. A hundred years ago, who could have predicted the cities that currently line the Gulf? Now, Elsheshtawy predicts they will be uninhabitable by 2050. He tells us that the future of Khaliji cities is by no means certain. One is reminded of Abdelrahman Munif’s magnificent 1984 novel *Cities of Salt* (translated into English by Peter Theroux in 1989). Transience is transient.

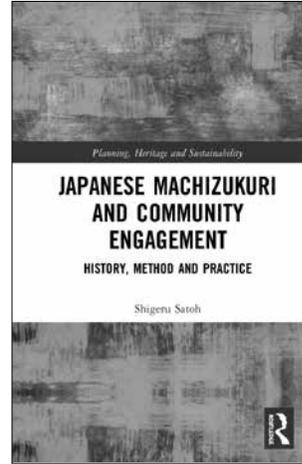
Temporary Cities highlights the chasm between the capital that shapes cities and the people that build them and live in them. In the “Spectacular Landscapes” photographs of Chapter 2, the spaces of capital are shown as highrise, glass-clad buildings in the far distance, with low-income workers in the foreground. The reader never really gets much closer to these transient spaces of capital; they remain as elusive as the transient workers themselves, and this is the book’s main shortcoming. Apart from a brief visit to a bagel shop, we never get close to the spaces of capital or the elites who commission and purchase them. As vortices for international exchange, surely, they are essential for the understanding of capital? Likewise, despite the various forms of representation employed in the book, we never get all that close to the subaltern either — the resisters of transience. We encounter the resisters through Elsheshtawy’s words, opinions and photographs, but rarely in their own right, even though Elsheshtawy has clearly interacted with workers over long periods.

Elsheshtawy writes in the first person, putting himself firmly at the book’s center as a master narrator and observer. The authorial centrality is fine, and important to acknowledge, but the analyses are usually from a distance. Apart

from a few vignettes, including one tale of the author speaking with a Pakistani through broken Urdu (p.126) and a powerful vignette in the epilogue (pp.269–70), the voices of the voiceless remain silent. To really understand urban temporalities and transience, we need to understand its shapers as well as its resisters.

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Japanese Machizukuri and Community Engagement: History, Method and Practice. By Shigeru Satoh. London and New York: Routledge, 2020. 270 pp., b&w illus.



“It is not uncommon for the Japanese language to refer to a whole sophisticated idea by creating an inexplicit and vague expression,” writes Shigeru Satoh in his introduction to *Japanese Machizukuri and Community Engagement*. Indeed, as Satoh and his sixteen collaborators explain in the chapters that follow, the concept of *machizukuri* is full of nuances which have evolved over time into a theory that has enriched professional

design practice in Japan, South Korea, and Taiwan.

The concept of *machizukuri* is described by two characters in the Japanese written language. When directly alphabetized the two characters read as *machi* and *zukuri*.

Originally, the first term, *machi*, defined a spatial unit, originally a square of arable agricultural land that could be cultivated by a single adult. The term was widely used throughout Japanese history — as it was by cultures outside of Japan. In the Chinese language, the unit is known as a *chou*, which, as in Japan, contains a surface area of 110 by 110 meters.

In Japan, use of the term later expanded to describe areas of land where certain commercial activities took place. For example, in the historic layout of cities like Kyoto the term described a city block where members of a certain trade group worked. Thus, prior to the fifteenth century, a *machi* referred to the interior of such a block reached through gates in the block’s perimeter. But later, the term also came to describe commercial activities centered on a street. In this use, the suffix *machi* referred to both sides of a street, like the street of the *tatami* makers. Gradually, however, as residences mixed with commercial activities, the concept of *machi* evolved from a spatial unit to a social unit defining a community.

The second symbol, *zukuri*, literally means “making” — but not in the sense of fabricating something new; instead, it refers to making improvements to something that already exists, such as by cultivating land or actively caring for something with recognized value. As the term *machizukuri* came to be used by planners and designers, the concept further translated into community design through place-making. However, such concepts also exist in the professional language of designers in Japan. The concept of *machizukuri* is thus best explained when understood in contrast to the established, top-down decision-making that is dictated by uniform planning practice nationwide, generally referred to as *toshi-keikaku*.

During the rebuilding of cities after World War II, urban planning in Japan relied on land readjustment, through which the government assembled various privately owned parcels in a given area to provide a field for new land-use plans. The intent of this practice was to sanitize rows upon rows of small-scale wooden houses in low-income neighborhoods and superimpose new roadways on them subject to uniform standards.

In contrast, *machizukuri* empowers residents through their involvement with local government to shape the future of communities not just physically, but with regard to all aspects of living together, including the care for the elderly, the very young, and the needy. In many instances the work has also addressed public spaces, like parks or streets, which need improvement to make the places surrounding them more livable.

Of interest to readers outside Japan is the force that *machizukuri* brought to bear on urban planning practice. To become widely recognized as an alternative to top-down *toshi-keikaku*, a city design process like *machizukuri* had to gain legitimacy. To no small extent, this has been the contribution of the book's principal author, Satoh, a professor at Waseda University in Tokyo. His first step was always to initiate a shared responsibility for planning and design between the government and the community.

Although previous governments of Japan have made attempts to decentralize planning authority to Japan's 47 prefectures, Japan remains a unitary state as opposed to a federation of regional government entities. Planning authority continues to be under the purview of the central government. It took forceful opposition to the neoliberal policies of the government in the 1960s to establish the 1968 New City Planning Act. At that time, growing concern for environmental degradation and loss of heritage combined with anger over the displacement of residents and businesses to trigger concern for social equity. This forced the central government to grant planning authority to prefectural and municipal levels for designated areas. Under the 1968 law, however, such authority could be granted upon request, but it could also be revoked at will. And although the 1968 act introduced public hearings where a review of government plans might take place, such reviews did not initially give power to local communities. It was only after amendments to the planning act, in 1992, that it became possible for municipal governments to conduct meaningful public consultations prior to the adoption of designated area plans.

Satoh refers to a parallel evolution of *machizukuri* methods and practices. This occurred in phases, which Satoh calls generations. In the first generation, the relevance of *machizukuri* had to be established through trust among community groups and local authorities. Thus, during the 1970s and 80s, Japanese literature widely acknowledged *machizukuri*'s positive role in the Mano district, a highly polluted, low-income neighborhood, mixed with industry, in the

city of Kobe, near Osaka. Kobe was the first city to pass a *machizukuri* ordinance, in 1982. And, rather than initiating large-scale land readjustment for the Mano district, the mayor at the time recognized its *machizukuri* community council as an official local representative body. With the support of experts and city staff, the council made its own decisions and produced a Mano district improvement plan. The proposed plan was then presented to the mayor, and the mayor was obliged under the ordinance to assist in its realization.

When in 1995 the Hanshin Awaji Earthquake destroyed sections of Kobe, trust in *machizukuri* was sufficiently established to launch a second generation of practices that included establishment of a *machizukuri* council for each designated area. Several such councils formed among representatives of community groups, who each took responsibility for managing a designated neighborhood planning effort in coordination with the municipal government. The local government now exercised the authority that earlier the central government had reserved for itself.

Reconstruction in Kobe also triggered the need for improved public communication. Responses to the vast scale of the destruction made it necessary to clearly articulate the implications of decision-making. *Machizukuri* practitioners who worked with community groups thus faced the challenge to explain the consequences of decisions in physical as well as social and economic contexts. They did so at first with words and numbers, but quickly recognized the need to communicate changes more concretely through simulations of future rebuilding scenarios.

Design communication thus became the focus of the third *machizukuri* generation. During earlier phases, *machizukuri* practitioners had experimented with gaming techniques. This chiefly meant using scale models to gather stakeholders and invite place-specific comments and suggestions that could be executed on the models in front of them. In the third generation of *machizukuri*, greater focus was given to developing such modeling and visualization techniques. After experiencing visual simulation at the University of California at Berkeley in the 1970s and 80s, where a laboratory was equipped with a computer-guided camera to create eyelevel views of walks or drives through models, Satoh replicated this capability at his Waseda University Laboratory. A simple device consisted of a microscopic camera that was carried to gaming sessions, where participants could create alternative model scenarios and watch the resulting eyelevel images on computer screens. In a more elaborate setup, the camera was attached to an assembled frame to create recordings of walks through models that could be shown to larger audiences. Because the equipment was portable, it could also be taken to community assemblies. In ongoing workshops, government officials, residents and developers could then meet in the studio setting at Waseda University to discuss the implications of an evolving plan for a designated district.

In general, but especially in the aftermath of a disaster like the Kobe earthquake, local government depends on collaboration with residents. In such settings, property owners expect transparency, developers will argue for their economic interest, and residents will express what is of value in their neighborhood and what is not. These workshops do not automatically lead to consensus. But the modeling and simulations allowed all participants to gain a shared understanding on which to act.

The current, third, *machizukuri* generation has also been fueled by an increase in the number of community associations in Japan in the last two decades. This cultural change is significant indeed, and points to a shift in society, where citizens may now take collective responsibility for decision-making at the local level. For individual citizens, the effort takes time and resources; but for local governments, *machizukuri* has opened the possibility of gaining a level of autonomy in local planning, taking some decision-making control away from centralized authority. But, as Satoh and his collaborators point out in this book, *machizukuri* community engagement is not ubiquitous. Often, residents have no power to influence planning outcomes; and to a great extent the old top-down city-planning system remains intact in those contexts (see, for example, the discussion on pp.269–79 of André Sorensen and Carolin Funck’s 2007 edited volume *Living Cities in Japan*).

While a shift to local control is not generally observed across all of Japan, the shift has been especially relevant for local governments of coastal cities destroyed by the Great East Japan Earthquake of March 11, 2011. The devastation caused by this seismic event, which triggered the tsunami that destroyed the Fukushima Daiichi Nuclear Power Plant, created a need for multilayered decision-making in the coastal communities during the years that followed. Among contributors to this book, Yosuke Mano and Akihiro Noda, who worked in one of the hardest-hit towns of Ishinomaki, thus observe: “while the [central] government and local authority had overwhelming jurisdiction in consensus building with regard to urban planning, the restoration of functions other than the development of such infrastructure as the seawalls and roads, was in large part left in the hands of the local communities.”

Satoh’s *Japanese Machizukuri and Community Engagement* tells a uniquely Japanese story for an English-speaking audience. It also references a wealth of Japanese literature that would otherwise have remained inaccessible for most readers. Beyond the Japanese context, the importance of the book lies in its beginning. As Satoh explains, this concerns how a highly ambiguous term became a powerful force to give voice to values held by local communities about their heritage and about new ways to shape a sustainable future.

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Chinese Urban Transformation: A Tale of Six Cities. By Chen Yuanzhi, Alan Hudson, and He Lisheng. London: RIBA Publishing/Taylor and Francis, 2019. 240 pp., b&w and color illus.



This book offers an overview of urban planning and social policy in China. The outcome of work by the Oxford University-CELAP Joint Centre for Urban Studies, supported by the Chinese Fund for the Humanities and Social Sciences, it presents the dramatic development of Chinese cities to architects, planners, and others involved in the design of the built environment.

The book is organized in two parts, each with six chapters. In the first part, Chapter 1 describes the processes and orientation of and major challenges to China’s urbanization. Among the challenges it discusses are resource distribution, ecological impact, social conflict, and rural-urban migration. Chapter 2 delves into the relationship between economic function and urban spatial configuration. Chapter 3 describes patterns of landownership and property regulation, including the national land administration law. Chapter 4 takes up the issue of community governance by describing the transition from the street and residence system planned economy to the market economy’s community administration system. Chapter 5 outlines the impact of ecological thinking on Chinese cities, including the development of eco-city models and definitions and frameworks for urban sustainability. And Chapter 6 comprises a literature review of the impact on urban thinking in China. Closing out the first section, it also includes the results of a survey conducted by the CELAP researchers, which is used to establish an urbanization index for Chinese cities.

Chapters 7 to 12, which comprise part two of the book, then present case studies of six Chinese cities: Shanghai, Nanchang, Qingdao, Hangzhou, Chengdu and Hefei. The cities were selected to exemplify the key priorities in different development models. They also demonstrate the range of experiences, issues and challenges confronting Chinese cities.

Using a quantitative evaluation model as a framework, *Chinese Urban Transformation* is intended to demonstrate the transformative potential of cities. Designed as a textbook for practitioners to “better understand the environment in which they may come to work,” each chapter has a clear didactic focus. The authors thus identify how three distinct metropolitan regions — Beijing-Tianjin-Hebei, the Yangtze River Delta, and the Pearl River Delta — together account for 38 percent of national GDP. And they describe how this constitutes the

pattern of current urban development in China, as this typically features one or more big cities surrounded by smaller cities and towns.

In one of the more interesting discussions in the book, in Chapter 6, the authors examine China's process for redefining urban areas through "branding." Here they observe that most studies on urban sustainable development "are focused on the analysis of urban industrial structure, are descriptive, and lack in-depth empirical analysis." In response, the authors develop an index system that seeks to build on existing research on urban transformation and upgrading. Incorporating peer reviews collected from a survey, they establish a matrix with standardized data variables for 22 indicators, and then process this information for 287 cities using a statistical software package. The result is a ranking of cities according to their urban transformation and upgrading capability from 2012 to 2014. The top three cities for urban transformation and upgrading are found to be Beijing, Shenzhen and Shanghai — each a center of regional urban development — in the Beijing-Tianjin-Hefei, Pearl River Delta, and Yangtze River Delta regions, respectively.

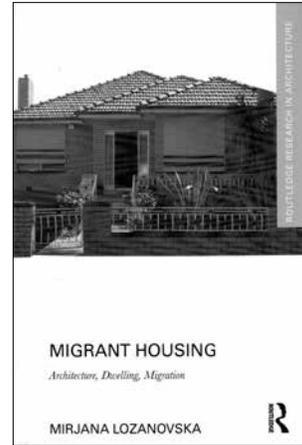
In the conclusion, the authors highlight "liveability" (how people experience urban life) as a priority in determining the infrastructure and economy of place. They also reiterate the importance of evaluating each city's specific experience in relation to general models of urban change and its dependence on local natural, historical, spatial and economic features — as well as its relation to a dynamic national strategy. They acknowledge that different development models are needed due to disparities in the level of urbanization between cities in different regions. Yet, even if there are diverse factors at play in the transformation of various cities, they observe that all Chinese cities seek to deliver environmental protection, economic efficiency, and social justice, which are defined as the interwoven and fundamental goals of Chinese urbanization.

This book raises a plethora of challenges confronting Chinese cities. Yet its broad review of urban development in China and its focus on demonstrating the evaluative capacity of its statistical model mean that the diverse issues it raises in descriptions of contexts, processes, potentials and plans will require further interrogation beyond its pages.

Of crucial importance is the situation of migrant workers, who lead urban lives but are not a part of "a real urban population." How migrancy is managed on the national and regional levels is closely related to urban spatial structuring, particularly as this relates to land administration, industrial zoning, and new-town building. Apropos of this, the relationship between social justice and spatial planning — one of the key goals of Chinese urbanization — remains a paramount challenge to the architects and planners who will participate in making the new Chinese city.

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Migrant Housing: Architecture, Dwelling, Migration. Mirjana Lozanovska. London and New York: Routledge, 2019. 242 pp., b&w illus.



At its core, Mirjana Lozanovska's *Migrant Housing: Architecture, Dwelling, Migration* examines the processes of migration and resettlement as specifically inflected by the making and remaking of the dwelling unit. And in her morphological analysis of these accretive and incremental settings, Lozanovska meticulously collates observations on two cultural, trans-geographical locations

— substantially removed yet implicitly connected via the mobility narratives of migrant populations. The palimpsest of housing stories begins in the village of Zavoj (in what was once known as Macedonia but has now been renamed the Republic of North Macedonia) — the site of emigration and departure. It ends in the city of Melbourne (Australia) — the site of immigration and arrival. In its innovative combination of methodologies emerging from the fields of morphology, migration, and vernacular studies, the book's specific focus on migrant housing and the house in the postwar epoch is rich and topical.

The discourse is divided into three distinct parts that capture the synchronic and diachronic perspectives employed in the analysis. Titled "Histories and Theories of Post-War Migrant Housing," the first constructs the historiographic framework within which the author positions her personally nuanced perspective on "migrant mobilities." This section further posits the importance of patterns of postwar labor migration to the comprehension of migrant homes, wherein linguistic, cultural and physical separation parameters are processed and encoded.

Building on this overview, part two, titled "House/Home," elaborates on the need to recognize a "new ethnic aesthetic and spatial organization" falling within the production processes that characterize migrant housing in émigré cities of arrival. Here, the dwelling is conceived as a cultural terrain of sorts — one that effectively negotiates between the purported permanence of assimilation and the self-conscious tenacity of sedentarizing migrants to hold on to a real, yet sometimes imagined past.

The third part of the book, "Mapping Migrant Spaces of Home," includes the author's extensive field documentation and mapping of Zavoj and its "migrant trajectories to destination cities" worldwide. The map on p.160 is particularly indicative of how the multiple stories of similar "journeys"

still patiently await introspective writing, several intertwined with Lozanovska's vignettes and others culturally removed. In this concluding part, the author also introduces the idea of the "twin house," explained as a "duality of migrant and vernacular housing" in the village landscape, resonating with the "duality of the migrant house and the conventional mainstream" within the context of the city.

Beyond providing a nuanced account of migrant mobilities, Lozanovska's scholarship is globally relational and culturally introspective. It explores how directional indigenities of passage carried over the course of migrant journeys may not only prove agential at the sites of arrival, but also inform the origins of these individuals and communities: "both ends of the trajectories of migration," in the author's words. *Migrant Housing* suggests a specifically "diasporic process and aesthetic" occurring at migrant sites on multiple scales following the disrupted lives of resident populations.

Dwellings, then, may serve both as cultural mnemonics and as horologic devices, imbibing innovation while preserving traces of the socio-spatial pasts. In this regard, Lozanovska's charting of the Zavoj-Melbourne story evocatively frames the larger picture of postwar migrations from Zavoj and other parts of Southern Europe not only to Australia, but additionally to other receiving destinations interspersed across North America and Western Europe.

At the other end of the scale, the author also suggests that a similar "diaspora aesthetic" is enabled in houses built or adapted by European migrants in Melbourne's suburbs after the 1940s. And the organization of these dwellings — large terraces, inner spaces, and gardens modeled on traditional English outdoor green spaces — were better adapted to the Australian conditions than the colonial-influenced homes of people whose families had been in the country for multiple generations already.

Migrant Housing also uncovers how immigration altered the nature of residences in the homeland left behind by the mobile diaspora. Post-emigration homes in the village of Zavoj were often fragmentary, reflecting aspirations to return, the economic opportunities opened up by incoming remittances from the departed diaspora, and a seeming disconnect from the everyday needs of dwelling. This extremely telling (yet invariably missed) "double identity" is also discussed in Samia Khatun's *Australianama* (2018). By extrapolation, Lozanovska's arguments are thus applicable to a wider set of geographies, including Iran, India and China, where "double identities" are embedded in the social habitus of constantly displaced populations.

Migrant Housing succeeds on multiple fronts. First, it makes an important contribution to the scholarship on migrational processes and architectural constructs, determined by migrant taste with socio-cultural conditions of arrival points. Given her observations on the house-building practices of migrants, Lozanovska presents migrants as "performative subjects" in the way they inscribe cultural identities

on the physical structures of the urban neighborhoods they occupy. Within the broader discussion on the politics of recognition and social justice, this resistance to assimilate could also be viewed as a "new form of social resistance" — a bulwark against the residential dwelling's influential role in shaping the acculturation experience of immigrants and minority groups in Australia.

Lozanovska's observations make a unique and seldom-studied case for the "cultural group dynamics" that migrants carry (and suitably enforce) at sites of settlement. Within the scenario of cross-cultural contact between heterogeneous cultures in Australia inducing the process of acculturation, it appears that two principal factors come into play. In John Berry's words, while the first is *cultural maintenance* (the degree to which ethno-cultural individuals and groups maintain their original cultures), the second is *contact and participation* (the extent to which ethno-cultural individuals and groups engage with the larger society and other ethnocultural groups). Yet, quite paradoxically, this "resistant architecture" in return also appears to inform "migrant identity." It thus expresses the character of the ghetto and the "immigrant enclave," with its cultural idiosyncrasies and cultural trappings, as perhaps best exemplified in the filmic comedy *My Big Fat Greek Wedding* (2002). However, when viewed as a continuing cultural process, the so-called migrant house created by these populations could also be considered as a future player within the ongoing processes of the Australian vernacular. Lozanovska's observations suitably strengthen this rarely studied aspect, and deserve commendation.

By initiating a discussion on migrants, the work also draws attention to the journeys to and housing of refugees in Australia. In fact, while trans-geographical migrants are not necessarily refugees, their passages do certainly imply a voluntary or enforced separation from homeland. On this front, how new dwellings and lifestyles are enabled remains of critical importance, in ways that mark the making and remaking of new cultural identities in a new landscape. Lozanovska's study could, therefore, extend our insights into how housing plays a fundamental role in the journey of refugees following resettlement in a host country, offering not just shelter and security, but also providing a base from which both community and social connections may be reformulated. The book, therefore, responds well to the identified lack of scholarly studies focusing on the residential experience of ethnic minorities in the Australian context — and, in particular, on investigations into how migrant and ethnic communities use their domestic spaces to accommodate their cultural needs within the framework of mainstream Australian housing types.

Contemporary migrational processes are incredibly fragmented and vary tremendously across different global contexts. Although somewhat beyond the scope of this project, it would have been instructive if the author had packaged her evident strengths in mapping, mixed-method data collection, and micro-analysis of contexts into a methodology of sorts

for future researchers. Also, readers would certainly appreciate a selection of slightly larger images to peruse (especially on pages 77, 126, and 145), in addition to a pithy concluding chapter to recenter all the stands of inquiry. This aside, *Migrant Housing: Architecture, Dwelling, Migration* makes an important contribution toward reimagining a multivalent history of migrant architecture created in response to the particularities of place and determined by the agency of the actors who produce it. Its fine-grained research, employing a diversity of “systems of knowledge,” serves as an exemplar for high-quality writings on the built environment, self-consciously disassembling the purported certainties of more simplistic morphological readings.

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