

## **BOOK REVIEWS**

**Paul Chatterton**, 2018. *Unlocking Sustainable Cities: A Manifesto of Real Change*. London: Pluto Press.

According to the revised World Urbanization Prospects, 55 per cent of the world's population lives in urban areas. It is expected to increase to 68 per cent by 2050. 90% of this increase is going to take place in Asia and Africa (United Nations 2018). This trend of urbanization in coming years is crucial in order to manage successfully this urban growth and provide the inhabitants basic infrastructure (like housing, transportation), employment and services such as education and health care. Globally, one billion people live in slums, which is nearly one in every eight urban residents (UN-HABITAT 2016). In developing countries like India, one in six city residents live in slums, where they face lack of access to water, sanitation, sufficient living space, housing durability and security of tenure (Christ et. al. 2016). Moreover, persisting urban issues include pollution, traffic congestion and an overall crisis of drinking water, health and education.

It is undeniable that cities have become engines of growth but that this has induced inequality and a sense of fragmented citizenship is also a matter of contention. Hundreds of slums are demolished and residents are forcefully evicted in cities across the world. Many are stripped of their basic human rights. In such an alarming situation, Paul Chatterton succinctly underlines urban problems, searches for solutions and locates community-based initiative aimed to making cities inclusive, healthy and liveable for all. Chatterton focuses on small-level civic innovations

coming in forms of car-free days, parking activism, walk your city programmes, billboard activism, urban play boxes and urban consulates, which may not be immediate answers to rising urban inequality or climate change but represent a healthy and radical start to making cities sustainable. Most of the books I have read on cities seem to avoid such innovative approaches, rather seeking solutions from top-down models or radical- political- and policy-level changes. Instead, Chatterton's sees a constellation of connected experiments — from bottom-up to top-down.

Chatterton delves into the central question of sustainability. As he suggests, 'real sustainability can only be worked towards by embarking upon a deep and painful questioning, pulling apart, and reorienting of the dominant urban project of the human species during late capitalism's anthropocene' (p. 3). The book does not 'seek solution from top-down corporate-led, business-as-usual models, nor one that naively celebrates the power of small grass-roots projects, the power of resurgent radical local state or lone mavericks who can break through old paradigm. Rather, it seeks to explore the power of rapidly emerging constellations of connected experiments that sit between and within all of these' (p. 4). Chatterton skilfully fulfils his main goal of persuading the reader through a rich analysis of small-level civic innovations which he considers the key to unlocking the latent potential of cities to enriching urban life.

*Unlocking Sustainable Cities* consists of five chapters, each discussing a separate theme. In the first chapter, on Car-Free Cities, he examines 'a wealth of examples that point to unlocking a very different

approach to mobility’ (p.12). In chapter 2, he explores ‘Post-Carbon agenda beyond the geopolitical age of oil, gas and coal’ (p.13). The third chapter on the Bio-City, addresses the ‘lock-down of ecosystem degradation, resource depletion and commodification of nature and natural resources’ (p. 13). In chapter 4, Chatterton discusses ‘the idea of common city through innovations in community place-making, economics and democracy’ (p.14). The fifth chapter, titled Think Big, Act Small, Start Now, offers ‘some strategic reflections on issues of organization and questions of geography and scale’ (p.115).

As a researcher of urban studies, I found this work especially intriguing. It should be mentioned that Chatterton focuses on contemporary issues that cripple the city, reorienting the urban project with the idea of equality, prosperity and sustainability, with an emphasis on educating people and strengthening the idea that a small action can make a big difference. He focuses on ‘a new generation of civic leaders who are prepared to break from the status quo of big business, top-down politics, the corporate university and a withered civil society’ (p. 117). Chatterton cites several examples from different cities, including Detroit, Vancouver and Athens, where people are responding to the urban crisis by creating, resisting and intervening in the urban processes of change in different ways: running cooperative community centres for refugees; establishing centres of social activism, solidarity and community self-management; recycling of unwanted goods and contributing to the public good, and so on.

While the cases discussed in this book provide excellent illustrations of the

importance of making cities sustainable through public engagement and a new kind of urban management, obsession with ideas like smart city, world-class city, business city limits inhabitants’ participation in the making of the city. In this sense, Chatterton’s book reinvents the meaning of governance and urban management. Chatterton addresses the risk that small level intervention would have a meager effect on the rapid trend of urbanization through ideas like common economy through civic democracy, extra parliamentary activities, civil disobedience and direct action to keep check on unjust laws. This is a significant contribution of this book. He says: ‘History teaches us that the common has to be defended. The planet is riven by struggles to defend it; land occupations of Movement of Landless Workers in Brazil, the Zapatistas Autonomous Municipalities of Chiapas, Mexico, the South African Shack Dwellers Movement ... Moreover, struggles to create the urban common are evident in multiple of small moments of guerrilla or tactical urbanism, encompassing micro interventions such urban gardening, street art, road blocks, civic demonstrations, subverting or adusting corporate billboards, as well as more mundane everyday acts of kindness, social care and togetherness that form the basis for how commoners can enact the urban common in their everyday lives’ (p.113).

Highlighting the importance of urban commons, social care and togetherness, Chatterton provides a baseline for an ‘urban revolution’. He suggests that public participation in decision making and civic engagement strengthens the idea of building a city where the stress is on equity and

diversity. He argues for civic participation in economics and the democratic process.

Chatterton's book suggests interesting links between big-ideas like civic democracy or public resistance and small ideas. Small-level civic innovations, he argues, have the potential to strengthen public participation and civic engagement to achieve shared goals irrespective of one's place in the city. For example, making car-free cities requires barring the use of fossil-fuel but it must be backed through promoting different modes of mobility like cycle lanes, pedestrian routes, rapid transport, and so on. Similarly, he invokes the idea of common city, where the common is 'a social relationship between commoners who build, defend, reproduce and collectively own it' (p. 95). Through these insights, Chatterton's approach — 'be realistic, demand the impossible' invites dealing with the contemporary urban crisis.

In sum, by highlighting ongoing small civic innovations that address the urban crisis around the world, Chatterton's work gives hope to urban scholars, policymakers, researchers, practitioners and ordinary city dwellers and encourages them to start there to aim for the goal of tackling bigger urban issues. I hope that, as it places idea of social justice and equality at forefront, this book will encourage a great dialogue between cities on the question of sustainability. It shows how small innovations can bring change and can be integrated for the betterment of the urban setting. making common city. My only reservation pertains the question, will acting small have potential to outpace the emerging urban challenges?

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**Judith Noemi Freidenberg.** 2016. *Contemporary Conversations on Immigration in the United States: The View from Prince George's County, Maryland*. Lanham, Maryland: Lexington Books.

*Contemporary Conversations on Immigration in the United States: The View from Prince George's County, Maryland* was not an easy book to review. For me, it was a fascinatingly very detailed and focused report that places in a national context the detailed stories of 24 immigrants who came to the eastern suburb of Washington D.C., Prince George's County, between 1968 and 2009. It begins with a detailed discussion of methods and by framing the 'issue', as opposed to the 'problem' of immigration in America, and more specifically in the context of the history of Prince George's County going back to before European contact. Additional data was gathered via a survey, (instrument provided in Index 1., that was

administered to a larger sample of 70 of interviewees. Of consequence, is the fact that the book is the result, perhaps the culmination, of a research program at the University of Maryland on immigrant life which the author founded in the year 2000. Therefore, it also offers a kind of blueprint for replication of the program in other venues. In regard to this, I highly recommend this book to those who have the inclination and especially the university, or grant, support and resources to use multi-methods and trained staff. The author notes in her Acknowledgments that the project also resulted in a mobile exhibit to promote public dialogue on immigration which is sorely needed in the United States of America today. One other fact in the *Front Matters* which I discovered, was that Professor Freidenberg is herself an immigrant which, as she describes the research experience, gave her the ‘impulse’ to write the book, and, I imagine, to develop her important program.

Topics that emerge from her extensive research and literature reviews are immigrant life courses, networks, life in the country of origin, during the journey, and settlement in the county. We learn how these newer immigrants from places like China, Nigeria, and El Salvador mimic the experiences of those who came before them in much larger numbers in their occasional reluctance, to accept the American Dream on America’s term, but regardless of this acceptance or rejection do their best, despite the odds to move up the ladder of economic and social success

Another aspect which is important for my work is her attention to their creation of immigrant spaces that nurtures their cultural well-being. By allowing her subjects to speak for themselves, she is able to reveal

the complexities of the county’s immigrants diverse personal, social, economic, and political life-worlds, which also helps to deconstruct the view that they, indeed all immigrants, can be categorized as homogenous. She also demonstrates the impact of native-born acceptance impacts the experience of immigrant providing insight into how the social issue of immigration became a social problem. Freidenberg makes another contribution to the literature by demonstrating the importance of local contexts and individual experience. Another is the way that she brings together historical data together with immigrant voices and local, as well mass, media. For example, in Chapter 2’s *The Media Project* she asks ‘How are the foreign-born in the County discussed in the Media?’ Then, she looks at, and historicizes, 19 newspapers and the 14 radio and television stations that cover Prince George’s County. It is clear, in all her many descriptions and analyses that national and state policy-makers should more closely tailor immigration reform to individual and group experiences to increase their effectiveness.

As a visually oriented social science, I appreciate the, albeit minimal, illustrations included and the video link for *Immigrant Voices of Prince George’s County* in Appendix 2, but I feel the value of the study would be greatly enhanced, and attract more attention, if it included more historical and contemporary photographs to give more life to the otherwise rich narratives such as that of Okoro ‘Then I moved to Virginia ‘cause...[I had a close relationship to my uncle’s ex-wife and her son]. When ...she [my uncle’s ex-wife] insisted I come and

visit her...she found out I could cook, and she worked a lot...so she convinced me to stay in Virginia and pursue my education there.’ (p.109).

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**Erica Robb Larkins.** 2015. *The Spectacular Favela: Violence in Modern Brazil*. University of California Press.

Lawless zone, occupied land, movie set, or tourist trap? The national and international imaginations around Brazilian *favelas* have overdetermined how these sites are administered by the state and represented in the media. Colloquially, a favela describes an urban community with mostly auto-constructed housing, improvised (or absent) public utilities, often on abandoned or disputed land. Although the drug trade exists throughout Brazilian society (including elite neighbourhoods where drugs are often consumed), the favela is also the primary staging ground for violent disputes between Brazilian police forces and narco-trafficking organizations. As Erica Robb Larkins examines in *The Spectacular Favela*, Brazilian (and paradigmatically Rio de Janeiro’s) favelas loom large in the urban and national political imagination. While most favela residents carry out their daily activities such as school and work, Brazil’s middle and upper classes both fear and fetishize the violence they associate with the favela. In her book, Larkins argues that fear and fetish of violence are no accident. The ‘law of traffic’ that asserts an order to daily life in the favela is disrupted by militarized police

for middle class audiences. Repeating the oft-cited observation that violence in urban Brazil is pedagogic (Caldeira 2000), Larkins shows how violence in the favela is symbolic as much as it is material.

*The Spectacular Favela* is a community-based study in Rocinha, one of Rio de Janeiro’s largest favelas. Larkins takes the perspective of Rocinha residents who are under militarized state surveillance and the gaze of the culture industry. Larkins’s fieldwork took her to different sections of Rocinha, speaking with community members, traffickers, their intimates, NGO workers, and tourists. Although the book studies police interactions, Larkins had to study them at a distance, as she surmised that interacting with police would alienate and, in some instances, endanger her community contacts. Throughout the book, the author exposes the central tension as the favela is fashioned as a ‘state of exception’ by the constant low-intensity warfare between traffickers and state forces (police) and as a commodity for tourists and culture producers hoping to capitalize off of the favela’s reputation for danger. Larkins argues that treating violence like spectacle explains these contradictions. For the state, the trafficker is a pariah figure whose threat authorizes sustained violence made for the spectacle of middle-class belief in law and order. For global middle-class youth, the trafficker is a brand of rebellion. These images of the favela trafficker are at odds with the entrepreneurial self-fashioning of the traffickers themselves, who often participate primarily to acquire the kinds of goods that offer integration into lower middle-class life.

The chapter structure emerges out of the dual sides of the favela's spectacle. Chapters one and two on 'The Narco Traffic', and the 'The Penal Stat', examine the choreographies of violence, order, and spectacle between two sets of actors — the traffickers and the police. Larkins defines traffickers as violence workers, whose job descriptions are not unlike the police or soldiers who work on the socially legitimated side of social violence. Indeed, traffickers have complex career paths and are often former soldiers or local police. Her ethnography in this chapter revolves around 'Beto', a trafficker who is both realistic about his violence work but also expresses his desires for social mobility, marked by his new consumer goods and a girlfriend from a rich neighbourhood. In chapter two, 'The Penal State', Larkins's focus shifts to the police, which in Brazil are complicated affair. Police, as Larkins and many scholars of Brazil report, are divided into different units: civil police who investigate crimes, military police who maintain public order, and 'special units' (called BOPE in Rio de Janeiro), who conduct tactical operations. There is a cyclic character to the over-policing of Rio's favelas, argues Larkins. Military police who ordinarily patrol the community often engage in petty corruption and harassment. In this scenario, the traffickers offer order in the community. This détente between military police and traffickers is broken with the BOPE comes into 'clear' 'he area. Televised invasions of favelas searching for narco-traffickers (who have been tipped off and already fled) are a hallmark of the spectacular favela. In one of Larkins's most illustrative examples, fleeing traffickers leave a one-ton brick of marijuana is for BOPE, which is then lifted

out by helicopter for the television cameras to film. Such scenes fuel the cinematic imaginations that are the subject of the next part of the book.

In chapters three and four, Larkins shows how this violent relationship that the favela neighbourhood has with the state enters into the culture industry. While the traditional marketed stereotype of Rio de Janeiro are beaches and samba, the representation of favela violence has become the new stereotype of Rio. And this spectacle of violence is driving cinematic and tourist industries. Chapter three, 'Favela Inc.' interweaves readings of three fictional and two documentary portrayals of favela violence that have reached international fame. As a set, these films, Larkins shows, generate an aesthetic and moral grammar — distinguishing between 'good' traffickers and 'bad' traffickers, earnest and corrupt police, and lost childhoods of favela residents. Larkins also looks at the number of music videos and concert performances of U.S. musicians, who see the favela as an example of global black identity and resistance to racism. In a fourth chapter, Larkins addresses the much-hyped favela tourism. Organized tours of Rio de Janeiro's favela communities are now a staple of the city's tourist circuit. Owned by upper- and middle-class Brazilians to bring international tourists into these underserved neighbourhoods, scholars, activists, and journalists alike have critiqued this mode of tourism. Of the five companies operating in Rocinha during the author's fieldwork, some companies market a trip to the favela as a dangerous adventure, others market it as an act of solidarity. Larkins's ethnographic approach here is a refreshing addition to the largely

philosophical or text-based studies of the practice. The author's alignment with Rocinha's residents is clear, but her findings are surprising. Residents are frustrated with the linguistic barriers between them and the English-speaking tourists. They express to Larkins unease that tourists are being told false information about them. Alternatively, some residents express a genuine desire to talk with tourists and trade experiences. Discussing tourism from the standpoint of residents, Larkins flips the tourist gaze, and offers a rich portrayal as to how the favela neighbourhood is perceived differently by many actors.

In a fifth and final chapter, Larkins disentangles the tense politics of the favela pacifications before the Rio World Cup and Olympics. Beginning in 2008, the Brazilian government began a program of 'pacification' of Rio's favelas. Public distrust of corrupt police led authorities to bring in military units. In this last chapter, Larkins documents structural effects of pacification. While this chapter has the feel of 'the return trip' in ethnographic research, it provides a crucial update of how the violent reorganization of favelas continues to produce spectacular representations for Brazilian modernity and progress.

Published in the California Series in Public Anthropology, *Spectacular Favela* is a captivating read for undergraduates and for graduate students; a demonstration of how rigorous and ethical ethnographic research is done. This book-length study of the experience and representation of favela violence is a welcome addition to Brazilian studies. It is not easy to write about the place where violence and commodification meet, especially in urban Brazil. Longstanding tropes simultaneously paint

Brazil as tropical paradise (a racial democracy and sexual Eden) and as corrupt, ungovernable and violent. As the chapter on 'Favela Inc.' makes clear, such tropes have become the ideological stuff of national and international circulations. By leaning into the spectacle rather than trying to unmask it, Robb Larkins has given a vivid account of the half-truths about Brazil that Brazilians across the economic and racial hierarchies come to half-believe. *The Spectacular Favela* contributes most to growing literatures around violent policing and anti-blackness, while also asking Brazilian media studies to step up their game. The book also provides a solid read for an urban studies audience. Anyone interested in urban inequalities will see the clear connections between Rocinha and other under-resourced, and over-policed communities. North American audiences in particular will be keen to see similarities and differences in urban inequalities between the U.S. and Brazil.

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**Ugo Rossi.** 2017. *Cities Under Capitalism*. Cambridge: Polity Press.

Ugo Rossi is not the first to probe the nexus of cities and capitalism, but he does so in a way that is refreshingly interdisciplinary and timely, bridging economic, political, and cultural approaches to theorization of the ruins of capitalism that haunt the urban landscape. Rossi's exploration is an

ambitious and wide-ranging dissection (and useful critical synthesis) of the origins, transformations and manifestations by and through which capital and city make and remake each other. The book weaves together theoretical debates from urban, cultural and economic geography, political economy, state theory, and other disciplines into a coherent tapestry that is both theoretically rich and approachable to readers from various disciplines.

Rossi presents the book's key question as, 'Why have the fates of cities and capitalism become so inextricable in times of globalization?' (p. 2). This question is so often taken as a given, but rarely disentangled, as Rossi successfully does in the book's ensuing chapters. The 'revanchism' of the city by capital and capitalists (in Neil Smith's 1996 framing) is much-explored, but the question of why the city has such a powerful pull for capital is often split into disparate conversations within different schools of geography (gentrification, political economy, political geography, economic geography, cultural geography, urban planning) and thus, Rossi's streamlining, bridging together, and updating of urban theory given recent global developments, is welcome.

Containing 7 chapters, the book is primarily a literature review, which has notable use as a teaching tool or a primer on the condition of (post)modern urban neoliberalism. The introductory chapter's review of the evolution of urban theory would be a welcome addition to any urban geography syllabus, given its approachability and legibility for both inside and outside audiences. Each of the book's chapters tackles particular moments

through which Rossi proposes cities have 'become enmeshed' in global capitalism.

These include the emergence of financial networks, entrepreneurialism, and cognitive capital (Ch. 1); the 'extensions' by which cities are linked to globalization and global processes (questions of relationality, networks and the advent of planetary urbanization), in Ch. 2. Chapter 3 ('continuities') explores neoliberalism and its 'immanence', or almost divine, omnipresent and self-perpetuating characteristics, such as the way neoliberalism has swallowed social phenomenon such as creativity and culture. Chapter 4 looks at 'diffusions' of capital through a postcolonial and comparative lens, things such as 'McDonaldization' or 'Disneyfication', those urban environments replicated and repeated albeit by and through site specific and context dependent processes — a sort of colonization. The fifth and final chapter looks at alternative pathways — the 'variations' of the global capitalist city in the contemporary era, both before and after the turning point of the late-2000s global crisis. These variations include the 'socialized city' (a post-Fordist workforce); the 'dispossessed city', a new normal where austerity becomes a permanent 'state of exception'; and finally the 'revenant city', in which life itself merges with the digital circuits of capitalism unleashed through 'Web 2.0', and urban residents become both the victims, and victimizers, in the process of survival.

Ascribing anatomical and even divine characteristics to urban capitalism, Rossi puts capital into motion, portraying it as space of flows (Castells, 2012) but simultaneously spatializing these flows by placing them firmly in the urban landscape.



Rossi challenges territorially-based explorations, but also notes the importance of territory, as sites of capitals' differentiation, variegation and daily operation. Rossi's language is frequently floral and poetic — for example 'urban Fordist cathedrals, such as Turin, Glasgow, Cleveland' (p. 4) — a welcome departure from the sometimes dry and jargon-filled rhetoric of economic and political geography. Rossi's metaphors, evocations and tableaux bring the topic, and the capitalist city, to life, and give some colour to technocratic phrases such as 'deep socio-spatial restructuring' (p. 4). The spectral and divine attributes ascribed to urban capitalism appear as unifying motifs throughout the work, concluding in the concept of the 'revenant city', brought back from the dead like Lazarus (or Leonardo di Caprio, in the 2015 film 'The Revenant', clearly on Rossi's mind at the time of writing).

By organizing the chapters as thematic, rather than historical or case-study based, Rossi joins past and present in a dynamic way. One of the pitfalls of this type of organization, however, is the overlap and repetition between chapters. For example, the 'cognitive-cultural economy' and the 'policy-mobility paradigm' show up repeatedly. This is perhaps a deliberate way of highlighting the linkages and bridges between capital, time, space and place, and as such is useful at the same time that it is over-repetitive.

Rossi may be reaching slightly in his opening claim that the 'close link between cities and capitalism is a relatively recent acquisition' (p. 1) — one might think of Jane Jacob's seminal *The Economy of Cities* (1969) as a highly developed and much

earlier linkage, or even earlier, the discussions on modernism and urbanity around 1900 (Georg Simmel, 2012[1903]) which made the link clear, even if not stated explicitly. But Rossi is right to re-assert this linkage given the reality of planetary urbanization. Coupled with the rise of digital technology's hyper-speed and hyper-scale, Rossi's exploration is timely and there is, indeed, a need for such a forcible presentation of cities and capitalism joined at the hip. Rossi understands global urban capitalism not as a linear trajectory as sometimes proposed in critical geography but rather an 'intricate process of spatio-temporal stratification, characterized by the juxtaposition of a variety of development pathways, hegemonic projects, forms of life and historical temporalities' (p. 13), drawing upon the Foucauldian notion of the 'history of the present' / 'present as history'. Rossi then, through this lens, presents what he refers to as the city-capitalism nexus at a 'time of biopolitics' (p. 14) where 'life is central to the dynamics of cities, capitalism and their mutual dependence' (p. 14). Rossi is right to note that 'in contemporary capitalism, the economic becomes inextricable from the cultural, the institutional, the social and the biological' (p. 16).

Thus, the book challenges some key preconceptions in urban theory. One is the perception that contemporary global [urban] capitalism stems from, or can be reduced to, the Anglo-American institutional framework (the policy-mobilities discourse), circulated outward. Rossi suggests the origins lie not in élites propagating market principles globally, but in individual subjectivity and biopolitics merged with specific institutional and

politico-economic strategies and moments. Secondly, Rossi takes the focal points of gentrification (Smith 1996, Zukin 2010); financialization (Harvey 2012); and the creative/cultural economy (Florida 2012) and puts them back on the bookshelf, organized into the larger, wider volume of capitalism itself. This is an attempt not to over-emphasize capitalism's multifaceted nature as manifesting any one of these areas, but rather, the way urban capitalism unspools in context-dependent, highly variegated ways, or the 'plurality of socio-economic forms characterizing global capitalism' (p. 16).

The very broad swathe the book attempts — mostly successfully — to cover in a single volume is a key strength, as well as a weakness. It is ambitious to cover the roles played by '...financialization, institutional capacity, innovative entrepreneurship, the housing sector, consumption, technology, and the cultural economy' (p. 15). Any of these could comprise an individual volume; woven together as such, explored with such force and rapid speed, at times reads like an over-stuffed buffet rather than a plated meal. At the same time, a key strength of the book is its willingness to engage across these areas, which often find themselves at distinct ends of geographic literature. David Harvey, though, offers one such multifaceted exploration of capital's anatomy in his 2014 'Seventeen Contradictions', a reference that Rossi seems to have surprisingly omitted.

The book's most novel theoretical offering comes in Ch. 5 with the critical engagement with state theory. In particular, Rossi seeks a middle ground between the territorially-restricted approaches to state-capitalism explorations ('methodological

nationalism') and moving too far away from state and territory. This approach brings into focus, and usefully builds upon, Bob Jessop's (1990) 'strategic-relational' framework in state theory as well as Agamben's (e.g. 2016) musings on being and 'forms of life'. Rossi's portrait of global urban capitalism, then, is one that is deeply attached to human beings and all forms of life, constantly mutating and attaching to various and variegated built environments; the digital realm; and the circuits in between. Enclosed is a deeper look at financialization and the degree to which capitalism has both instigated, and survived, recent global crises (pre and post-2008). This is a welcome recap of the past decade, a decade that continues to send theorists scrambling as the social, political, cultural and economic dust from the crises' fallout has yet to settle.

Despite Rossi's proposal to survey the 'global', he still draws largely (if not exclusively) upon Anglo-American and European authors, policies, examples and case studies (especially Western Europe and the United States). China and East Asia are referred to in passing, and Africa is completely missing. It would have been interesting to have read at least a few of Rossi's thoughts on the penetration of late capitalism into Africa's cities (grouped in the book into the broader category of the global south). Rossi is certainly not to blame for the lack of parity between women and men in mainstream urban geography (especially in Marxian literature), but it was still somewhat surprising not to see some seminal names mentioned (Doreen Massey on global v. local place/space; Loretta Lees on global gentrification and dispossession, just two gaps). Finally, the multi-directional

flows within the cognitive-cultural economy seem under-discussed: examples like K-Pop or the global proliferation of the Korean beauty industry, or even the way Southeast Asia's food scene has become a global capitalist imaginary, would have added some cosmopolitanism to Rossi's arguments and strengthened his critique of policy mobilities literature.

'Re-politicizing urban life along emancipatory lines is therefore essential' (p. 181), Rossi argues in the final paragraph. Rossi illustrates, convincingly, why such an emancipatory re-politicization is necessary, but leaves it to others to outline how that may occur.

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- A.K. Sandoval-Strausz and Nancy H. Kwak** (eds) 2018. *Making Cities Global: The Transnational Turn in Urban History*. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press.

In the contemporary urban literature, cities are portrayed as the nodes of global trade, the sites of multi-national corporations and the many homes of the super-rich, and destinations for migratory flows of both educated labour and those fleeing countries in disarray. Enclaves of financial service firms, diasporic communities, and wealthy transnational élites are the geographic indicators that a city has attained global status. This globalization argument looks outwards to the world and, as importantly, inward to the many ways that transnational forces shape the economies, governance, and physical form of cities. Numerous questions subsequently arise as to what globalization means for cities caught in its web. To what extent does the purchasing of luxury homes by global élites distort the local market for affordable housing? How does international financing influence what infrastructure is built? What effect does circular migration have on civic participation?

In this edited volume, A.K. Sandoval-Strausz (University of New Mexico) and Nancy Kwak (University of

California — San Diego) have brought together ten urban historians who think about these types of questions. Rather than treating cities as wholly regional and national phenomena and confining their investigations to political and economic relations within these state spaces, they situate cities in a network of influences that pass over territorial as well as cultural and linguistic borders. Each contributor reveals how these influences have impinged on and transformed the cities on which they have landed. Of the eight empirical chapters, all focus either on the United States as a transnational force acting elsewhere (mainly in South Asia and South America) or highlight transnational influences in North America cities (specifically, Toronto, Los Angeles, and Chicago). The overall intent is to overcome the nation-state bias that often characterizes urban history.

The book's dominant theme is the urban built environment. After World War II, the U.S. government was fixated on the spread of communism and, as part of its foreign policy, directed housing assistance to countries where communism might take hold. Through the Alliance for Progress and the Agency for International Development, and drawing from lessons learned in Puerto Rico, the U.S. government channelled funds and expertise to national governments in countries deemed vulnerable to aligning with the Soviet Union. This assistance, however, came with the requirement that homeownership be prioritized over public housing. Through homeownership, people's need for shelter would be satisfied. Even more importantly, homeownership would engender a preference for political stability and regimes favoured by the United States.

Three chapters consider this type of U.S. influence. Amy Offner presents the case of the Ciudad Kennedy housing project in post-war Bogotá. There, self-help housing served both U.S. political goals and Colombia's fiscal constraints. Leandro Benmergui discusses U.S.-subsidized governmental initiatives in Rio de Janeiro in the 1960s designed to eradicate favelas and provide housing for displaced families. And, Nancy Kwak documents slum clearance in Greater Manila involving international non-governmental organizations, informal slum-dweller associations, the Filipino government, and the World Bank. (Kwak deftly explore these themes across multiple countries in her *A World of Homeowners: American Power and the Politics of Housing Aid*. University of Chicago Press, 2015). The overall impression is one of a U.S. policy more concerned with American values than local issues and foreign governments willing to accept U.S. aid despite its restraints.

Moving away from low-income housing, Margaret O'Mara explores high-tech corporate campuses and their adjacent middle-class suburban housing estates. She tracks the flow of influences from Silicon Valley in California to France and, via the Jurang Town Corporation (a spin-off of Singapore's Economic Development Board), from Singapore to Bangalore. Matt Garcia's chapter also has place as a focus. His case is the Mexican barrio of Arbol Verde in Pomona, California, on the edge of metropolitan Los Angeles. First established as a 'citrus colonia' in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, it later housed many of the service workers for the adjacent Claremont Colleges. The Colleges' quest for international prominence and subsequent increase in international enrolments led to the

displacement of low-income Mexican households from the neighbourhood and their replacement by college professionals and foreign students. Last, as regards place, is Nikhil Rao's investigation of the development legacy of colonialism. Despite British attempts to export garden suburbs to India, the Indians rejected low-density, suburban development and substituted multi-family housing in high-density estates. They did, however, adopt land acquisition practices and cooperative housing from the British.

Shifting the built environment focus further away from housing, Erica Allen-Kim delves onto the origins and evolution of retail condominiums in metropolitan Toronto. Spurred by Chinese capital leaving Hong Kong and facilitated by Canadian immigration policy regarding minimum investment requirements for citizenship, the city's retail landscape diverged sharply from the traditional, North American mall. And, in a chapter focused on public space, Arijit Sen documents the many ways that South Asian parades in Chicago celebrate transnationalism while simultaneously strengthening attachments to the neighbourhood.

Three, additional chapters are essays rather than empirical studies. Carola Hein provides an overview of how multinational corporations, urban scholars, and migratory planning consultants spread ideas about urbanism. She helpfully points to how the word 'transnational' directs our attention to national boundaries and turns it away from linguistic, cultural, and historical boundaries. In his essay, Carl Nightingale encourages transnational historians to adopt the method of digital visualization. Doing so, he believes, could change the 'textural and authorial genres' of urban history. One

of his concerns, as with Hein, is the need to transcend the dominance of national borders as an organizing device. Lastly, Richard Harris argues for greater attention to the ways that words travel from one place to another and, once there, are rejected, transformed, or adopted for other purposes. He is particularly interested in the term 'suburb' as it has entered into professional, governmental, and vernacular discourses in India.

This is an outstanding collection. The transnational theme is emphasized throughout, providing consistency from one chapter to the next, and the quality of the research and the writing are high with each empirical case richly detailed. That said, I do have two, minor concerns. The first has to do with urban theory. All of the authors are historians and hardly obliged, as are urban theorists, to draw generalizations and set them within broad arguments. A number of the authors hint at theoretical generalizations. Still, a last chapter reflecting on connections across cases would have been welcomed.

The second concern is the dominance of the United States in this book and elsewhere in the urban transnational literature, Britain, Singapore, and China are mentioned here as sources of additional transnational influence, but the field of transnational actors is much larger. As we explore additional literatures, other countries come to light. The literature on colonialism gives us Germany, Belgium, Japan, France, The Netherlands, Italy, and Portugal. A glance into the world of development assistance uncovers Sweden and Canada. Going beyond countries (actually, national governments) to other transnational actors, we find a vast array of multi-national corporations, humanitarian and religious

organizations, professional associations, and even terrorist groups. Transnational scholarship needs to recognize both multiple boundaries and multiple actors.

The contribution of *Making Cities Global* is to point urban scholars to the extensive influence that transnational actors have on life in cities. This is a valuable perspective on globalization. We also need more of these studies and, along with them, more attention to thinking theoretically about the porous boundaries of the urban world.

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**Francesco Vecchio.** 2015. *Asylum Seeking and the Global City*. 1<sup>st</sup> Edition by Abingdon, Oxon: Routledge.

Given the current, and extremely contentious, refugee and asylum crisis on the southern border of the United States of America, Francesco Vecchio's excellently researched and written study *Asylum Seeking and the Global City*, which is centred on Hong Kong, ironically is very 'close to home'. In addition, given my own extensive visual research on immigration as well as migration around the world in both global and not-so-global cities, his close attention to ethnography that enhances our understanding and appreciation of data and insights gathered through other published sources was most welcome. Giving the reader sensitive, close-ups of those on the social margins of the city's vivid daily life, is one general example of ethnographic illumination. Within publications on immigration, readers are primarily treated only with mono-methodological and theoretical approaches that tend to avoid,

even ignore, other ways. More qualitative, ways of seeing what is happening on the ground. In my experience, the parallax of bird's eye views and worm's eye views is best for locating such complex research targets.

By doing so, Vecchio's ethnography firmly places his subjects within an intricate web of transnational asylum seekers and refugees who employ their own local and global migrant networks to develop mechanisms for maintaining themselves, for example, as informal workers or entrepreneurs in Hong Kong's multifaceted economy. His observations are of special interest to me, as one who has also researched how refugee as well as 'normal' immigration policy creates and effects local community life in Brooklyn, New York. In this regard, *Asylum Seeking and the Global City* clearly demonstrates how both local and global forces effectively collaborate through their often-harsh, and always insensitive, control policies to make their struggles even more difficult than they need to be. Hong Kong's economy needs, even demands, low-wage workers and, globally, irregular immigrants and other desperate newcomers are perfect victims for such exploitation. I should note at least one of the many especially interesting topics richly described and analysed by Vecchio such as the vast and extremely profitable electronic waste recycling that takes place in huge scrapyards in Hong Kong's northern New Territories. There vulnerable asylum seekers compete with equally desperate elderly Chinese residents for survival wages. In a way, Vecchio's previous NGO work experience in Hong Kong primed him for this empathetically insightful description and analysis of their struggles. Although being close to one's subjects is

often criticized in social sciences, it is in fact the only way to reach the core of the human experience. In this kind of work, empathic understanding (*verstehen*) is a major asset and not a liability. Also, from a practical point of view, Vecchio's legal aid experience allowing him to more accurately depict Hong Kong's legal landscape, that refugees and asylum seekers have to navigate, is a major benefit for students and practitioners.

My major suggestion for Vecchio's future works, but not a criticism of this one, is to note that his excellent treatise would have been even further enhanced with images. Related to my work on immigrant and other vernacular landscapes, I have photographed those in Hong Kong and nearby Shenzhen and think that for example, a few photos of the e-waste scrapyards and general residential spaces of his subjects would increase the value of his already valuable work. In general, I recommend *Asylum Seeking and the Global City* by Francesco Vecchio for all those scholars and students in the fields of urban studies, immigration, migration, and globalization. Finally, I also especially recommend it to those looking for examples of the value of multi-research methods on these and a wide variety of other related topics.

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**Corine Védrine.** 2019. *The Spirit of Capitalism According to the Michelin Company. Anthropology of an Industrial Myth.* New York: Palgrave-Macmillan

This monograph by Corine Védrine tells a story about two simultaneous processes;

that is, the birth (1832), development and evolution of the Michelin company which has grown along with the urban planning of the city of Clermont-Ferrand of France, in the Auvergne-Rhône-Alpes region, with a population of 141,569 (2012). It is about an urban case reminding the classic analysis of Engels who was among the first scholars to argue about the centripetal tendency of capitalism; in other words, he put forward the view that where an industrial organization sets up, a population is established around it, creating the necessary workforce for it — a population which abides and succumbs to the organizational culture it creates. So, the book is not only or simply about a classic case of urban history; it is also about the life trajectories of those whose urban lives connected with it. Védrine examines not only the evolution of the relationship between the company, the people and their urban interconnectivity but also the ways in which the local economic activities have been transformed throughout the years and the ways in which local people accepted, rejected and managed the company's spirit of capitalism. The author examines the progression from one kind of urban planning to another, which has taken place in line with the transformation of local capitalism. Hence, she focuses on the progression from an industrial and disciplinarian town to an urban setting that encourages enjoyment.

According to Védrine, Clermont-Ferrand makes an interesting case study for urban anthropology because the city does not suffer from unemployment. Indeed, the reduction in available jobs has not caused any layoffs; those who are retiring or being retired are simply not replaced. Unlike other French cities, such as Saint-Etienne, Clermont-Ferrand has not been a victim of

deindustrialization. Instead, it bears witness to the evolution of capitalism. The Michelin Company continues to be the foremost local employer, property owner and taxpayer. The passage from a paternalist city marked by the Michelin industrial culture to the new spirit of capitalism has grown stronger throughout the years especially because it is based on an ideology that justifies capitalism by bolstering it with ethical arguments and evolves with it, giving the workers a reason to feel involved in the firm and remain faithful to it. In the Michelin Company, these reasons are economic, moral and social, while also including security. They are defended in a strict spirit and built around norms linked to secrecy and asceticism, as well as Christian moral values that are still guaranteed by a paternal figure, as incarnated by the founder, François Michelin. What does this spirit consist of? According to the founders of this concept, Luc Boltanski and Eve Chiapello (2005), it consists of an ideology that justifies people's commitment to capitalism, and renders this commitment attractive. The spirit of capitalism, far from being a simple adornment or a 'superstructure' (as Marxist ideology would have it), is central to the process of capitalistic accumulation that it serves because it applies constraints to this process. If one were to take these explanations to their logical conclusion, then not all profit would be legitimate, not all enrichment fair, not all accumulation (however significant and rapid) legal. Actors' internalisation of a particular spirit of capitalism thus serves in the real world as a constraint on the process of accumulation. A spirit of capitalism approach provides a justification both for capitalism and for the criticisms that denounce the gap between

the actual forms of accumulation and the normative conceptions of social order. In this framework, Védrine's study is an extremely valuable case study that shows how an industrial adventure forms people's lives in a culturally defined manner. Drawing on strong ethnographic, historical and on-the-ground data, the author offers an astonishingly subtle analysis that explains in great detail the local impact of the development of capitalism and its spirit along three main lines of enquiry. The first concerns the mobilization of heritage to reassess the industrial myth in a national and international perspective. The second examines the change of Clermont-Ferrand spaces throughout the evolution of Michelin history. The third addresses how, in order to attract and keep the new industrial forces which equal the new service class, the municipality has worked on its image in partnership with Michelin company. This study opens the way for further exploration of the new figure of worker or employee that is being formed and of the manner in which capitalism gains the ability to lift its face by renewing its 'spirit'.

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