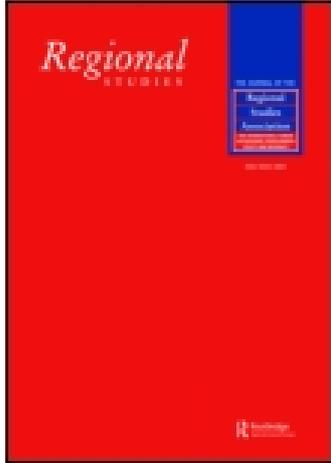


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Internet Alley: High Technology in Tysons Corner, 1945-2005

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Book Reviews

Edited by PÄIVI OINAS

The Ashgate Research Companion to Planning Theory: Conceptual Challenges for Spatial Planning, J. HILLIER and P. HEALEY (Eds), Ashgate, Farnham (2010), 501 pp. £75.00. ISBN: 978 0 7546 7254 8.

Few people grasp the essence of planning theory. Thus, I got curious enough to review this edited volume of many authoritative voices. It comprises an Introduction and three parts, each covering a variety of *challenges arising* from (spatial) planning. For anyone with research interest in planning, this book is exciting. Incidentally, an Italian colleague of mine spilled a glass of red wine over my copy in his enthusiasm!

Jean Hillier's Introduction brings up four contemporary planning topics: practice versus theory, internationalization, cross-disciplinarity, and power and politics. She shows that planning is a dynamic practice and about accumulating various, sometimes conflicting, understandings. She also reminds us about what is referred to as 'The Dark Side of Planning'. Hillier states the aim clearly (p. 20): the book is about critical debates.

Part One deals with *planning practice*. Patsy Healey explains that planning theory comes from understanding planning practice. Enrico Gualini argues that, like other new concepts, 'governance' needs to be put under scrutiny. Ananya Roy discusses informality of planning, with reference to Hernan De Soto and Pierre Bourdieu. After Roy's contribution a clear thread becomes visible: who has the right to planned space and what kind of such?

Richard Howitt and Gaim James Lunkapis demonstrate how planning interferes with indigenous people's customary laws, informal economies and cultures, using two country cases: Australia and Malaysia. Margo Huxley's *genealogical approach* is about encouraging critical thinking of past planning practices for the benefit of current ones. Wytske Versteeg and Maarten Hajer discuss politics in planning (that is, what seems to be the key topic of the book). When searching for more deliberative and democratic planning principles, the situation is not necessary better with collaborative network agendas, these authors warn. Tore Sager's chapter on the similarities and differences between New Public Management and Communicative Planning Theory illustrates how the two otherwise different models of governance share common ground, as they

both put more emphasis on user satisfaction (users as customers in New Public Management or citizens in Communicative Planning Theory) and less emphasis on techno-bureaucracies and traditional politics including unions; and above all, a shift towards local level decision-making. Louis Albrechts stresses the need of planners 'to think beyond customary job descriptions and traditional government structures' (p. 228).

Part Two deals with *planning theory*. Hillier welcomes a diversity of views and asks what kind of approaches might be relevant to planning. She ponders on philosophical questions in relation to ontology and epistemology, and makes a conclusion about many possible futures of planning theory. Manuel De Landa gives a historical account on morphology and land use. Joris van Wezemael looks at planning competitions as 'modulation of singularities'. He views urban areas through a relational perspective, but concludes that complexity is reality rather than merely our interpretation of reality.

J. K. Gibson-Graham (that is, the pen-name of the collaboration between the late Julie Graham and Katherine Gibson) and Jenny Cameron imagine 'alternative economic development pathways that are not reliant on the promises of capitalist growth'. Erik Swyngedouw delves into a cloud of tedious concepts such as 'inescapable performative effect' and 'proliferating sets of networked socio-natural assemblages'. John Pløger discusses 'urbanity', which, he stresses, refers to city-living experiences and is not a synonym for 'urbanism'. David Pinder's point is that utopias should not be forgotten – they should rather be contextualized, so as to offer some insight to their mental underpinnings. Pinder also echoes the concern of Huxley put forward earlier: planning histories tend to be told by winners.

Part Three deals with *planning in complexity*. Planning needs to be about fluidity and change, Hillier notes. She also claims that 'there can be no universally applicable theory [...] of spatial planning' (p. 370). At this stage complexity theories in the mould of Ilya Prigogine and Ludwig von Bertalanffy are brought in, which indeed has merit, given the ideas of *autopoiesis* and adaptability of social systems.

Niraj Verma looks at the meaning of the term 'good governance'. Luca Bertolini deals with uncertainties using an evolutionary approach, which implies finding problem solution combinations. If diversity ought to

be embraced so as to give favourable preconditions for an iterative process of variation and selection – this is the cornerstone of the evolutionary approach to urban development – the role of planning here is to set up and govern these processes, Bertolini suggests. Nikos Karadimitrou points out that planning can still influence the trajectory and evolution of socio-spatial systems, and then propagates cybernetics to manage the complexity. He argues that while any attempt to control spontaneous social and economic city processes inevitably results in failure, small alterations of a system are possible – this is what he calls ‘variety engineering’. In the last chapter Hiller concludes that planning theory and practice comprise an ‘ocean of stories’. She nevertheless underscores a number of key issues that have the potential to shape the planning paradigm, such as the complexity perspective and the need to think transversally rather than hierarchically.

In my view, the book has a number of shortcomings:

- Many chapters pack too much information into footnotes.
- One chapter is written without headings; and another chapter contains no other headings other than an Introduction.
- The style is uneven as some contributions have clearer arguments than others.
- The book avoids the sustainable development discourse until Swyngedouw’s chapter.
- A glossary is missing.

One is left pondering as to the degree of tensions between deliberative democracy and traditional planning. And the poststructuralist jargon aside, how accepted approach to planning really is the cultural turn today in global terms? Nevertheless, I agree with the proposition of the earlier parts that values should be challenged, and this goes for neo-liberalism, communicative planning and paternalistic welfare state alike. I also agree on the latter proposition of the book: the need to foster diversity that might generate evolutionary processes and the selection of best trajectories. All in all, this book was a thrilling experience to read, and while it did not manage to lift me onto a higher level of consciousness, the wine stains remain.

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Business Clusters and Industrial Districts. The Governance of the Global Value Chain, FIORENZA BELUSSI and ALESSIA SAMMARRA (Eds). *Regions and Cities Series*, Routledge, London (2010). 413 pp. ISBN 978 0 415 45784 2.

This book, edited by Fiorenza Belussi and Alessia Sammarra, is a much-needed contribution to current

debates on economic geography, knowledge creation and globalization processes. Contributions in this area are needed in order to advance our understanding of the disruptive changes imposed by the growing interdependence between the ‘global’ and the ‘local’, where localized production systems increasingly correspond to globalized systems, and where the potential dynamic advantages of clustering for global firms represent, at the same time, important growth opportunities for local and regional environments. This volume offers a large and rich helping of empirical evidence to stimulate further thinking on this topic. It persuasively shows how the mix of local and global patterns of learning is crucial to unfolding the evolution of industrial agglomerations across regions and sectors.

The book is organized into four sections. The three chapters in the first section, conceptual in nature, highlight the critical combination of absorption capacity and internal and external linkages for the sustainable transformation of industrial districts and clusters over time. On the one hand, from the literatures on global value chains and multinational enterprises some key insights are extrapolated to understand how global knowledge is embedded and accessed locally. The two-way link between local and global is captured by stressing the importance of ‘openness’ of local systems, which may acquire valuable tangible and intangible assets by *both* delocalizing activities abroad and attracting multinational enterprises in their own territory. On the other hand, it is convincingly argued that the evolution of spatial agglomerations is strictly related to the ways in which knowledge is endogenously created *and* accessed from sources outside the local system: the heterogeneity of firms’ strategies is coupled with that of local contexts, generating a variety of impacts and responses of/to globalization that generates the well-known difficulties to devising standardized policy schemes to sustain the development and adaptation of regional capabilities.

The seven chapters in the second section are dedicated to exploring one of the most emblematic cases of industrial agglomeration: the Italian industrial district. Global challenges have forced industrial districts to reorganize both production and learning patterns. The remarkably rich collection of in-depth case studies shows that industrial districts’ success or failure depends on striking the right balance between internal and external forms of learning. One of the most clear-cut results is that, as it emerges from the delocalization of some Italian industrial districts’ operations in Romania, shifting manufacturing activities abroad does not automatically imply ‘shifting knowledge’: internationalization and foreign direct investments are neither a necessary nor a sufficient condition for the development of endogenous capabilities in host regions. The case studies present a variety of trajectories that go from ‘transformation without evolution’ – as in the case of Verona’s footwear’ industrial district, with moderate innovation and upgrading and the typical shift

from local outsourcing to off-shoring – to dynamic patterns of structural change – as in the case, for example, of Montebelluna's sport system, characterized by international relocation linked with impressive product and technology diversification and growth.

The third and fourth sections of the book comprise four chapters each and look respectively at cluster evolutions in traditional sectors and high-technology industries, illustrating the importance of external knowledge in very different settings in Europe, Brazil, China and India. Here the heterogeneity of evolutionary trajectories of local specialized systems is probably too wide to extract common denominators and consistent lessons. The case studies differ vastly in their focus. For example, the ways in which multinational enterprises contribute to new learning possibilities as they penetrate clusters in emerging countries are explored, as in the case of machinery acquisition of the ceramic tile industry in Brazil. The combination of scientific and practical knowledge in processes of international division of labour are also taken into account, as in the case of the integration of activities of Italian and Dutch ornamental horticulture industry. The discussion of the role of institutions and policies in shaping internal and external patterns of learning spans several chapters, from the case of clusters based in developed countries (for example, France, Germany, Denmark and Sweden) – illustrating that several combinations of internal and external learning are possible in the presence of strong local knowledge bases – to that of Bangalore, where the focus is more on the stages and processes that enable, through supportive policies, the development of endogenous capabilities.

Overall, the most striking and highly commendable feature of the book is its spread of fresh empirical evidence, all presented by assuming a historical and evolutionary perspective. The Italian industrial districts chapters – many written by the editors – are indeed admirably chosen and detailed, and really offer very original insights that in many cases go against conventional discussions and stereotypes on the 'industrial district model'.

While its merit, the variety of case studies is perhaps also the main weakness of the book. The cases explored – particularly those in the third and fourth sections of the volume – are very different from each other (in terms of the industries, and institutional and historical settings they relate to), and it is difficult to frame them in a consistent theoretical and/or empirical framework. Indeed, many of the powerful concepts adopted in the volume (such as *learning at the boundaries* or *organizational proximity*) are neither developed to their full analytical potential, nor even applicable in many of the empirical studies. At the same time, whilst the first chapter states that the literature on global value chains and multinational enterprises are at the foundation of the book, many of the insights of these bodies of research relevant for some of the evidence presented are not explored. For example, the social and distributional implications of global value

chain governance types are not taken into account, despite their recognized influence on learning patterns.

This is, however, an ambitious project, and it succeeds in strengthening the debate on clusters and industrial districts, elaborating on the critical balance between internal and external learning at the core of their evolutionary path. This book is, therefore, a must-read for those involved in research and policy on industrial and local development. Indeed, it is strongly hoped that the book will trigger further theoretical and empirical efforts in this crucial field of research.

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Internet Alley: High Technology in Tysons Corner, 1945–2005, PAUL E. CERUZZI, MIT Press, Cambridge, MA (2008). 192 pp. US\$29.95 (hbk). ISBN-13: 978 0 262 03374 9.

I am inspired by Paul Ceruzzi's book to think of the biography of place. Biography is a vehicle for understanding the lives of individual people. The astute biographer places their subject in an historical context and provides an understanding of how the subject both shaped and was shaped by events and larger societal forces. Reading a good biography, we become acutely aware of what motivated the subject and how their thought processes, values, and behaviour evolved over time. We gain an appreciation of the individual's life that is interpreted in a meaningful way as a function of a mix of both internal and externally determined factors. As a result we are able to appreciate the individual's life and its meaning and to preserve some meaning of the importance of that individual.

Analogously, the biography of place is becoming a vehicle for illuminating the developmental trajectories and idiosyncratic natural environment. Exploring the nature environment, the built environment, the social and economic history of one place, this type of biography digs down to define the life of a place. JANE JACOBS certainly wrote the more generic version of this genre when she wrote *The Death and Life of American Cities* (1961) using New York as an exemplar of urban life. The newer variation considers specific places, telling the story of how a place came to be what is now observed, including roles for a memorable cast of characters. The storylines move across overlapping circles of connection between people and place, internal and external forces, and events. The end result is a greater understanding and codification of the human experience and the factors that differentiate one place from another.

By exploring one place in detail, this genre illuminates how the past influences the present, and shapes the future. Indeed, we may argue that without an

appreciation for the past experience of a place, present outcomes cannot be fully understood or appreciated, and potential future actions may be misguided or doomed to fail to achieve their desired results. Without a biography of place we are left assuming that places are more or less homogenous, only differentiated by the most banal of characterizations that dismiss the richness of human experience. The biography of place offers a pleasurable, novel means to understand the social and built landscape.

Adopting this genre, a number of recent books have told the stories of specific places, providing rich contexts and informing our understanding not only of how the places developed, but also how the histories of the places and the technologies that developed there are intertwined.

The popular book *Start-Up Nation: The Story of Israel's Economic Miracle* (2009) by DAN SENOR and SAUL SINGER is one example of an investigation of a specific place and the factors that have shaped its economic fate. In this case the unit of observation is a nation and the authors provide a readable account of how geo-political factors craft a national strategy that favours the conditions to support entrepreneurship. The smallness and isolation of the country promotes global tourism, which favours networking and realization of new opportunities. The lack of natural resources creates a reliance on developing and employing human capital. Military threats provide the basis for technology-based defence and creates elite teams with deep trust and mutual understanding. This book provides an example of the type of bottom-up, complex self-organizing process that provides the basis for successful places.

Another example is CHRISTOPHE LÉCUYER's *Making Silicon Valley: Innovation and the Growth of High Tech, 1930–1970* (2007). You may think that you already understand Silicon Valley and know the story, but Lécuyer provides fine technical detail, woven with institutional understanding. This book is a major contribution to the understanding of the emergence of industries in specific places. Silicon Valley is the result of the development of unique competencies in manufacturing, product engineering and management. Lécuyer documents how entrepreneurs adapt and develop incentives to attract and retain a skilled and motivated workforce. As a result, the conditions we observe in Silicon Valley and that are often heralded as the recipe for industrial success, co-evolved and are endogenous to the system that developed over forty years ago.

Following this genre, Ceruzzi's *Internet Alley* tells the story of Tysons Corner: the centre of the corridor that extends west from Washington, DC, toward Washington Dulles International Airport in Northern Virginia. The development of Tysons Corner is intertwined with the development of the Internet, and it is where much of the world's Internet management and governance is concentrated along with much of the United States' military planning and analysis. Once dominated

by dairy farms and gravel pits, the area is now populated by government contractors and high-technology firms like DynCorp, CACI, Verisign, and SAIC. New entrepreneurial firms are attracted to this area conveniently located off the Washington Beltway and I-95, the major North–South highway along the East Coast. Ceruzzi examines this compact area of intense commercial development and describes its transformation into one of the most dynamic and prosperous regions in the country.

In Tysons Corner, clusters of sleek new office buildings filled with high-technology companies stand in contrast to the suburban landscape of strip malls. The glittering upscale shopping area of Tysons Galleria Mall is adjacent to a government-owned radio tower marked by a sign warning visitors not to photograph or sketch it. Over the last half of the twentieth century, Ceruzzi documents changes in federal support of scientific research and the shift of government activities to private contractors along with the local politics of land use, and post-war suburbanization that play out in this location. Ceruzzi explains how a concentration of military contractors carrying out weapons analysis, systems engineering, operations research and telecommunications combined with suburban growth patterns to drive the region's development. Ceruzzi looks in detail at the nature of the work carried out by these government contractors and how it can be considered truly innovative in terms of both technology and management. He argues that a mix of specific individuals and businesses, along with some fortuitous geographical circumstances, granted Tysons Corner a privileged economic position as a technology hub.

JOEL GARREAU first wrote about Tysons Corner in the *Edge City: Life on the New Frontier* (1991). Defined as those places that exist on the transportation arteries surrounding major cities, edge cities are places that become important economic centres in their own right. According to the 2000 Census, Tyson's Corner is a census-designated place (CDP) in Fairfax County, Virginia. The population was 18 540 as of the 2000 Census, making it the twelfth largest business district in the United States. Ceruzzi does not agree with Garreau's assessment of Tysons Corner as an edge city, choosing instead to agree with Robert E. Lang's view that Tysons Corner is an example of a type of edgeless city that has come to characterize modern suburban development (LANG, 2003). Ceruzzi considers the development of the transportation network, but provides little of the broader social and economic context of suburbanization of the Washington, DC, metropolitan area. Ceruzzi marginalizes the social and cultural pull around Washington, DC, and the ways in which telecommunications technologies fostered new suburban patterns of interaction. A more comprehensive coverage of the factors at play would be required of a successful biography of this city and region, undeservedly understudied to date.

The biography of place as exemplified by Ceruzzi's volume and others should be encouraged and pursued further because there is much to learn and to preserve. In the future, it is critical, however, that biographies of place include maps to help the reader understand the complexity of the place-specific phenomena. There is no excuse since geographical information systems have made it easy to visualize data.

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