

on the plot (*a parcela*) presents two cases of national road development under the contemporary pressure of urban sprawl. Chapter 8 considers a number of ambitious projects, some completed and others only partially so, that present cases for the transition from design principle to built form. The final chapter explores tenements in Lisbon. It is arguably a little short considering the extensive prevalence of tenements following the 1755 earthquake. It presents three main types and their relationship to the urban block and the street. The detailed interior floor plans, and the underlined components highlight both recurring and changing features in residential design.

This book is an outcome of a much larger research project on the urban morphology of the Portuguese city. It compliments an exceptional book on the urban square *A praça em Portugal: inventário de espaço público* by the same author, published in 2007. Three other books still to come are on the evolution of urban form (*O tempo e a forma*), the city's representation and assessment from different viewpoints (*Outros abordagens*), and concepts and methodologies for morphological research implemented in Portugal (*Conceitos e metodologias*).

Os elementos urbanos is a useful reference even if one's ability to read or decipher the Portuguese language is minimal. It provides a model for morphological analysis, from an understanding of the wide range of influences and models inspiring urban and architectural concepts to the implementation of projects under local conditions in which space, time and culture are critical.

François Dufaux, École d'architecture, Université Laval, 1, Côte de la fabrique, Québec G1R 3V6, Québec, Canada. Email: francois.dufaux@arc.ulaval.ca

The Chinese city by Weiping Wu and Piper Gaubatz, Routledge, London, UK, 2013, 298 pp. ISBN 978-0-415-57574-4 (hbk), 978-0-415-57575-1 (pbk), 978-0-203-85447-1 (ebk).

Chinese cities have undergone rapid growth and change in the last 30 years. The unprecedented urban transformation has been underpinned by rural-urban migration, economic globalization, changes in the urban administrative systems, urban spatial reorganization through land-use change, and

suburbanization associated with new housing development. The increasing tensions between equality and efficiency, power and democracy, and economic development and urban ecology and social welfare, are particularly evident in contemporary Chinese cities. Not surprisingly, the new challenges for the understanding and management of urban development have stimulated the rapid growth of research on Chinese cities both in China itself and in other parts of the world.

Published books that focus on the Chinese city are related to a wide range of academic interests and topics. They include urban political economy (Logon, 2002; Zhu, 1999; Wu *et al.*, 2013), land-use reforms and housing commercialization (Ding and Song, 2005; Pow, 2009; Zhang, 2010), urban planning principles and practice (Sit, 1995) and the historical development of Chinese cities (Xu, 2000). However, widely-inclusive and up-to-date publications that can be used as textbooks for courses on urban China have been particularly rare. Weiping Wu and Piper Gaubatz's book, *The Chinese city* aims to provide a comprehensive and systematic study that can serve as a basic textbook for teaching urban China in programmes of geography, planning and environmental studies. This book not only makes a timely contribution to the provision of teaching materials, but also offers critical perspectives on the urbanization process in China against a backdrop of urban theories developed elsewhere in the world.

The book is divided into four parts including a total of thirteen chapters. Part 1 describes China's geographical environment, historical urban system and traditional urban forms. Part 2 focuses on the urban system since 1949, the rural-urban divide and migration, and interactions with the global economy. Part 3 outlines the specific sectors of urban development, including economic restructuring, social-spatial transformation, urban infrastructure, and urban land and housing. Part 4 showcases urbanism through the lens of the urban environment, lifestyle and social change, and urban governance. Central to the book is the examination in a historico-geographical context of how current social and economic development is transforming the fundamental nature and structure of Chinese cities. Arguably this is the most comprehensive and integrated coverage so far in the English language of modern changes to Chinese cities and their relationship to earlier urban development.

A number of chapters are of particular interest to urban morphologists in that they are more concerned with the physical aspect of cities, and the linkages between culture, ideology and economy

and the built form of the city. In particular, chapters 3, 8 and 12 deserve a more detailed review. Chapter 3 investigates traditional urban forms in China. Relying on field-based research, it especially investigates the foundation, development and distinctive forms of traditional Chinese cities. Chapter 8 mainly describes changes to Chinese urban form in the second half of the twentieth century. Centred on the theme of social-spatial transformation, it outlines the alteration of urban neighbourhoods, employment-housing linkage, travel modes and urban spatial configuration. The fundamental premise is that new Chinese urban development has followed a strategy of increased spatial and functional specialization shaped both by continuing socialist and Chinese cultural ideals and by dynamically emerging domestic and international market forces. Chapter 12 is concerned with how urban spatial development has influenced lifestyle and social change. Changes to shopping, use of public spaces, aging society and urban crime are explored in this chapter.

What distinguishes this book is that it is inclusive and approachable. Illustrated by both historical and contemporary examples drawn from previous research, it focuses on fundamental themes in urban geography and planning and the evolutionary process of urban activities. While it deals with a wide variety of academic interests, it is particularly concerned with understanding the new dynamics of urban transformation in relation to the continuity and persistence of the socio-cultural traditions of Chinese cities. A successful attempt has been made to link micro and macro approaches to spatial characteristics of the city, political-economic analyses and urban development, and static models and dynamic analytical processes. The cross-regional and interdisciplinary links inherent in the book will stimulate recognition of its wide geographical relevance, and its significance across disciplines.

In conjunction with suggested further readings, this book seeks to be intelligible and relevant to a wide audience: scholars and professionals who are interested in China, and students seeking a wide understanding of Chinese cities in the context of rapid change. The objective and accurate writing style has made complex ideas readily understandable. Frequent cross-references have been made throughout the book. Clearly presented tables, graphs, photographs and maps have helped to make concepts clear.

The authors are prominent scholars in research on Chinese cities. Many of their research publications are significant and have been frequently

cited. This new book, which contains a wealth of up-to-date statistical information and case studies, demonstrates effectively their research achievements and experience. In particular, the introduction and conclusion of the book provide deep insights into the era of market reform and globalization, inherent strengths and weaknesses of urban transformation, and new processes of human-environment interaction in China. The authors have paid particular attention to the complexity of Chinese urban development which in some ways conforms to established conventional urban theories and experience and in others defies them.

The outcomes and forms of urbanization and modernization in China following the reforms and opening up of communication in the late 1970s have attracted extensive attention and competing interpretations. However, a textbook on Chinese cities, which is well grounded in established and authoritative research, has hitherto been absent. Wu and Gaubatz have rectified this. Research on Chinese cities, as an emerging subject, needs interdisciplinary co-operation and international comparative study to reach a more integrated framework for analysis. In conjunction with the findings of studies of cities in other parts of the world, this book is bringing great opportunities for cross-cultural comparisons and the cross-fertilization of research ideas.

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