

commonly employed for place branding and commodification, a phenomenon observed worldwide and powered by hypercapitalism. While similar social issues, such as gentrification and stratification, are observed in China, the Chinese pursuit of globalization differs from its Western counterparts owing to the particular power geography in current society, as Ren vividly explains. A comparative perspective is often offered in the three case studies to clarify similarities and differences of various social phenomena in the Chinese and Western contexts. At the end, it is suggested that the current spatial strategies in Chinese cities produce 'vast discontent and inequality' (p. 177). For audiences who are interested in postmodern urbanism, post-industrial regeneration and globalization, this book provides important local insights that are relevant to the study of the global urban future.

Building globalization pays attention to the searching for national identity by China's urban elites and the state party in the global context at a critical moment of history. It reminds Chinese citizens of a similar attempt pursued by the first generation of Chinese architects and social elites under passive Western influences in the early-twentieth century (Esherick, 1999). The question of what is Chinese has always been controversial and changeable. In relation to the current debate, the idea of Critical Architecture is reintroduced, which should challenge current ideology and social injustice in China. For an architectural audience, Ren poses an essential concern for the social responsibility of the profession in the market-driven environment. National identity does not only lie in the image representation of architecture, but also in socially responsive spaces that support the wellbeing of all social classes. The debate on eye-catching shapes or 'traditional skins' of architecture is rather superficial. More consideration needs to be given to the social dimension. This point of view echoes Cuthbert's (2007) claim that the design profession should engage with solid theory, linking sociology, geography, and economics for instance, so that urban form, meaning, and function are embraced in design as well as context. In this respect, for decision-makers, the choice over domestic or reputable international architects should not be driven by either conservative nationalism or global liberalism, but by creating socially sustainable spaces for Chinese citizens.

From the urban design point of view, current practices by the new generation of Chinese architects and planners are sophisticated in the generation of forms, but lack understanding of the

social foundations. This book offers good practice that potentially has wide applicability to help tackle issues of social sustainability in design processes. However, this advantage is limited, since the book is structured in terms of individual urban projects and lacks a consistent conceptual framework to map complex social relations. Ideas are introduced and independent arguments are stated regarding each project, which weakens the main argument and is an obstacle to further exploration. Furthermore, the book does not discuss how architectural images of the three projects are deliberately created and remotely consumed through the media by world consumers, thus failing to strengthen the idea of the symbolic power of architecture.

References

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Dominion geometries: colonial construction and postcolonial persistence of the 'imperial' in the New Delhi Plan by *Anubhav Gupta*, VDM Verlag Dr. Muller Aktiengesellschaft, Saarbrücken, Germany, 2011, 136 pp. ISBN 978-3-639328-95-0.

This is a considerably slimmer volume than most that reach a scholarly bookshelf today, and leaves us wishing for more. Few observers, scholarly or otherwise, of New Delhi's planning and civic shortcomings would disagree with the title and hypothesis of Gupta's work. It is a praiseworthy effort, seeking to go beyond existing scholarship to examine in detail various spatial issues associated with British imperialism and its post-colonial Indian context, both in terms of design and meaning. But much more remains to be done.

Early on, Anubhav Gupta quotes the descriptions of Delhi by two of its most famous residents, Mirza Ghalib and Khushwant Singh (p. 33). Their contrasting views serve as bookends to

his quest for why New Delhi's planning made it so out of touch with citizenry needs, both in British India and as capital of present-day India. Mirza Asadullah Ghalib, South Asia's beloved poet, lived in Delhi from 1810 until his death in 1897. He missed, by a few years, the foundation of New Delhi in 1911 as the seat of the Viceregal government. Ghalib grew to manhood in a late-Mughal Delhi that had borne successive vicissitudes. But under the penultimate Mughal Emperor and the British Raj, the city recovered some prosperity and security, prompting Ghalib's comparison of Delhi to the pure soul of the world. More than a century later, yet another raconteur, Khushwant Singh, lived in Delhi. He was the son of Sir Sobha Singh, the contractor who built much of New Delhi. Khushwant Singh's magnum opus, at the end of a long writing career, was a Rabelaisian novel in which he characterized Delhi as a beloved, aged-and-diseased ravaged mistress.

It is unfortunate that the colourful history and politics that lie in-between Ghalib and Singh's oeuvres, almost 4 centuries of documented urban planning from Mughal to British to a post-colonial metropole, have not provided a more successful frame for Gupta's subject. His negative characterization of 'the Mughal occupation of India' (p. 17) is a fundamental and alarming misunderstanding of the city's, and India's early modern history. Gupta elides the Delhi of Ghalib and Singh for a narrower focus on the plan of imperial 'Rome' that the British built as their capital of New Delhi. He marshals a number of urban theorists, from his mentor Laurence Vale to Narayani Gupta and Robert Irving, to prove his hypothesis of New Delhi's continuance as an imperial urban artifact of British colonialism, unresponsive and even obstructive to post-colonial India's demographic and urban concerns. He seeks the reasons why, in Vale's words, New Delhi remains a type of overgrown capital complex, resolutely detached from the rest of the city. The tripartite scheme of needs that New Delhi perforce serves in post-colonial India – that of a ceremonial precinct, an elite residential enclave, and a central business district – goes far and yet not far enough.

In the first half of the book, Gupta summarizes scholarship on the well-known story of the building of imperial New Delhi and its imagination as the modern era's New Rome. He discusses how the imperial planning and evolution of British Delhi intentionally segregated what Anthony King called 'the colonial urban settlement' from 'the native city' and how, a century later, that segregation of

rulers and ruled continued apace. The huge influx of refugees into Delhi after the hasty partitioning of British India into the sovereign nations of India and Pakistan in 1947 led to the new Indian state adopting piecemeal measures to cater for the city's immediate needs even as a Master Plan was formulated in 1961. That ad hoc approach to urban planning, coupled with the continued state determination to maintain New Delhi proper's low density and elite bias, set the direction for Delhi's future journey. Unfortunately, the second part of the book, is rather frustrating, since it provides only sketchy outlines of post-1947 Indian governmental policies and the stark gaps they created between ceremonial capital investment and wider civic sustainability, and gives little attention to wider context.

As an academic who teaches a course on Delhi in which it is often a challenge to introduce students to the considerable amount of scholarship by architects and planners on New Delhi, my first thought was that this work serves as a useful overview and introduction. However, in seeking to advance this work's credentials to those of a full-fledged scholarly monograph on post-colonial urbanity, the author's remit promises much that it does not deliver. The author would have been well advised to move beyond the limits of the New Delhi master-plan and policy shortcomings to some consideration of how key events displayed continuity with the imperial arrogance of Delhi's masters. These events include the emergency 'slum clearances', 'Sikh pogroms' and subsequent 'resettlement colony' locations on the city margins, the Indian state's urban reshaping for the Asian and Commonwealth Games, and the recent judiciary-led environmental campaigns to 'clean' the city. It would also have been valuable to have had discussion of the dubious impact of these measures upon the 'true democracy' that underlies future directions for urban research and planning that the author sets out. Thus, the book would be of more use to scholars and planners had Gupta accessed some of the cutting-edge scholarship on Delhi recently emanating out of scholar/activist organizations such as SARAI, and a wider selection of newer, politically engaged and astute works by social scientists and commentators such as Vijay Prashad, Emma Tarlo, Ranjana Sengupta, Ravi Sundaram, Deepu Sharan and Bharati Chaturvedi.

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