

growth of interest in the local diffusion of foreign-developed planning models and ideas but also underlines the relevance of the work in itself. The book focuses on the planning history and urban modernization of Buenos Aires, Rio de Janeiro, São Paulo, Santiago de Chile, Mexico City, Lima, Havana, Caracas and San José as part of a series dedicated to 'capital cities'. Previous volumes studied the planning processes of European, Middle Eastern, and twentieth-century capitals, and recently included the capitals of central and south-eastern Europe and Pacific Asia.

Concentrating on a key phase of the post-colonial period, when the predominance of the United States in technical and cultural terms was incipient and urban reforms and development plans mirrored European ideas, *Planning Latin America's capital cities* deals with the modernization of important capital cities and looks back at the transfer of modern ideas that led to the local crystallization of planning and its institutionalization in Latin America. Notwithstanding that the political independence of Latin American countries occurred a few decades before the period covered by the book, *Planning Latin America's capital cities* avoids simplistic attributions of their characteristics to the effects of external economic dependence. The form of Latin American cities is explained not only in terms of the interests of foreign investment but also by the attitude of Latin American elites. From a cultural perspective Latin America's adoption of foreign planning ideas is understood as part of native aspirations for national identity and modernization, and the dream of transforming the colonial-city image into a somewhat European-like civilized urban environment. Stating that 'every city has once wanted to be another' (p.109), the book has made a significant contribution to the debate on the diffusion mechanisms of planning. It deals with the dynamics of the process, and in places unveils a very creative nature in the attempt to adapt the importation of foreign spatial models to specific contexts and incorporate local elements.

Whilst British participation in the post-colonial Latin American urban economy was predominant, French urban prestige was conspicuous as Second-Empire Paris became the paradigm of 'civilization' and 'refinement'. Haussmann's diagonal system of boulevards and tree-lined avenues, together with Beaux-Arts architecture, became a modern sign of urban quality, both in technical and aesthetic terms. Not surprisingly, 'Paris goes West' was once under consideration as a possible title for the book. The term 'urbanism', commonly employed by the

authors, affirms the French planning tradition in Latin America and only in later times, when the presence of the United States could be felt, did the word 'planning' become more popularly used.

Under the editorship of Arturo Almandoz, an Associate Professor of the Urban Planning Department at Simón Bolívar University in Caracas, and himself a notable researcher and authority on Latin American planning history, scholars from different backgrounds manage to 'combine ingredients relating to urban history, urban culture and its representation, the emergence of planning and the transfer of urban ideas and models' (p. 10). Almandoz is himself responsible for the lively introduction and initial chapter, presenting a strong theoretical framework for, and good articulation with, the subsequent series of case studies. The well-structured sequence of chapters leads to the conclusion that the diffusion of European urban models and planning ideas was uneven in Latin American capitals and less evident in the smaller cities. Some of the capitals acted as intermediaries in the diffusion process. One is left in no doubt as to the richness of the theme of internationalism within urban history.

To sum up, *Planning Latin America's capital cities* reveals undeniable expertise, brilliant and comprehensive analysis, and an impressive myriad of sources. Extensively illustrated, it makes a remarkably innovative contribution to the documentation and understanding of the building of Latin America's capital cities. Moreover, it is a fundamental piece of urban history both for local urban morphologists and historians and also for those researching the development of non-capital and hinterland towns, many of which have taken their capitals as role models.

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**Planning Europe's capital cities: aspects of nineteenth century urban development** by *Thomas Hall*, Routledge, Abingdon, UK, 2010, 408 pp. ISBN 978-0-415-55249-3.

Originally published in hardback in the late 1990s, Thomas Hall's *Planning Europe's capital cities* was described then as 'a remarkable achievement' (Fehl, 1998, p. 119) and as providing 'a convincing

argument for the emergence of systematic planning theory' (Maiershofer, 1999). It has now been reprinted in paperback form, making it more affordable and accessible to both scholars and students interested in the design of urban environments and the evolution of urban planning in Europe. With a foreword by renowned urbanist Sir Peter Hall, the republication in 2010 must be appreciated for its rich account of city planning within Europe's most politically significant settlements during a time of great social, environmental, economic and cultural change; a time noted as the continent's 'first golden age of planning' (p. vii). Incorporating topics such as political power and governance, public health, finance, legal structures, transport technologies and demographic growth – subjects that will already be familiar to those interested in Europe's urban past – *Planning Europe's capital cities* provides an analytical approach to urban places during the nineteenth century, when the arranging of towns and cities was thought to be a technical issue 'in which the functional coincided with the beautiful' (p. 330).

Hall investigates both celebrated cities such as Berlin, London, Paris and Vienna, and lesser-researched settlements, including Budapest, Christiania (Oslo), Copenhagen and Stockholm. He sheds light on the greatest planners of the nineteenth century such as Georges Haussmann in Paris and John Nash in London, and lesser known or lesser respected individuals who contributed to Europe's urban development, for example James Holbrecht and his 1862 plan for Berlin (p. 195) and Ildefons Cerdá whose extension scheme for Barcelona is described as 'one of the most remarkable urban development projects of the nineteenth century' (p. 133).

Hall offers a breadth of exploration rarely evident in books investigating the European city of the nineteenth century, providing both a truly comparative and continental-wide review. Despite the coverage of individual cities varying in depth and length, with chapters ranging from eight to twenty-nine pages in length, what Hall dexterously manages to reveal is the similarity of challenges faced within Europe's cities even if the responses, that is the public plans created and implemented, had a character that depended upon local or national circumstances. The planning practices that were developed in the nineteenth century radically transformed Europe's capitals. City walls, for instance, a prominent earlier feature, were in numerous places removed (p. 45) so as to allow settlements to spill out in a controlled manner onto

hitherto greenfield sites and ameliorate the effects of confined urban living (pp. 335-43). However, as Hall demonstrates, earlier traditions associated with arranging urban environments were maintained within many cities after 1800, including the tradition of allowing urban growth to take place bit by bit (p. 124). He reaches such conclusions based on exhaustive use of source materials. Furthermore by utilizing a variety of primary and secondary sources he is able to deduce that prominent late-nineteenth century theorists such as Sitte, Stübben and Unwin, individuals who had a massive impact on formative modern planning, sought to systematize many of the nineteenth-century capital city planning experiences so that they could create new social structures (p. 362).

For scholars seeking to inform their students of the nature of nineteenth-century urban plans and the ordering of nationally and internationally significant settlements, Hall's work has great merit. It is easy to read, and incorporates a large number of illustrations. For teaching students when and why planning emerged, what it sought to solve, what ideas it sought to express, what similarities or differences European plans had, how they compared to earlier urban design schemes and how they affected the subsequent evolution of planning, there are few better starting points.

#### References

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**Multiple city: urban concepts 1908/2008**, edited by *Sophie Wolfrum, Winfried Nerdinger* and *Susanne Schaubeck*, Jovis, Berlin, Germany, 2008, 344 pp. ISBN 978-3868-59001-2.

During the first decade of the new millennium, richly illustrated voluminous books on newly