



## DIALOGUES IN URBAN & REGIONAL PLANNING (VOL. 1)

*Dialogues in urban & regional planning*  
(vol. 1)

Editors: Bruce Stiftel and Vanessa Watson  
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Dialogues in urban and regional planning offers a collection of twelve papers, where both established planning academics and less well known authors write about the various urban and regional planning issues currently on the agenda internationally.

The book stems from the relatively newly established co-operation between regional associations of planning schools around the world, and is presented as the first in a biennial series where prize winning papers from the world's planning school associations will be presented.

In an introduction to the book, the editors, Bruce Stiftel and Vanessa Watson, describe what they call the process of "building global integration in planning scholarship", where they tell the story of how planning academics have increasingly been getting together and forming associations and forums for dialogue all over the world, leading up to the first world planning schools congress in Shanghai in 2001, and the birth of the global planning education association network (GPEAN) and hence, to the publication of this book.

The twelve papers presented in the book cover a wide range of topics, representing the broad subject area of urban and regional planning. The papers can be roughly categorised into three groups. The first three papers deal with planning and the economy; tou-

ching on as diverse issues as mixed land use in Canada, partnership developments of Olympic stadiums in Sydney, Australia and an analysis of the shaping of urban space in the Buenos Aires Metropolitan Area in Argentina. The three following papers deal with planning and environmental issues in one way or another; from a discussion on the ecological and socio-economic aspects of "whole landscape planning" in Oxfordshire, UK, and the development of methodology and the analysis of case studies on urban regeneration and conservation in China, to a discussion on ecological-economic zoning in the Brazilian Amazon region. The final six papers deal with the planning process itself, and with theories on planning processes and decision-making. The papers discuss various aspects of planning in a multicultural setting (or cultural settings other than that of the Western world) and how communicative planning theory is, or is not, sufficiently able to deal with that reality and the accommodation of such ethnic and cultural differences; as well as discussing the importance of stories and storytelling in planning practice.

It is rightly pointed out by the editors how important it is for a relatively small profession, like urban and regional planning, to form networks – not just nationally and regionally, but also globally, thus producing richer debates informed by a variety of perspectives and many active research projects. This is not only important for the academic arena as such, but also for planning practice, as the academic arena serves it both as a platform for critique and for the development of new ideas – to be applied in policy-making and planning practice.

The birth of this biennial series is a welcome addition to the international planning literature – for planning students and academics as well as for planning practitioners. This particular collection of papers has been carefully chosen to represent what is currently going on at the top of current planning dialogue worldwide, echoing what issues are seen as relevant in the current planning debate around the globe.

As noted previously, the papers cover a wide spectrum of issues, as indeed does the field of urban and regional

planning itself. Naturally, some of the papers deal with particular cases or national contexts, with a varying level of direct relevance for other contexts or circumstances, but they do all provide a worthwhile and valuable read as important subjects for planners and policy-makers in the real world. Indeed, this point is also made by the editors who note that:

"As a profession with widely disparate traditions and broad interdisciplinary connections, we have significant differences across national boundaries. International comparisons force us to re-evaluate our national decisions about the structure and nature of our discipline and to understand better why we choose to do what we do, and the way we do it." (p. 8)