BOOK REVIEWS

THE INTERNET CITY: PEOPLE, COMPANIES, SYSTEMS AND VEHICLES, By Aharon Kellerman, Cheltenham, UK: Edward Elgar Publishing, 2019, 224pp.

The Internet has been dominating the post-industrial society for over three decades. During this period it was transformed from a mostly unidirectional information transmission technology (IT) to a nearly ubiquitous sociotechnical information and communication technology (ICT) that, coupled with additional inventions—namely the mobile phone and the smartphone, allows almost anyone, anywhere and anytime near-instant connectivity in digital space. Nowadays, the Internet is pervasively transforming once more, with the Internet of Things (IoT), connecting between objects and people through ultra-fast telecommunication networks (fiber-optics and 5G) and enabling the proliferation of autonomous vehicles in the next decades (Ben-Elia et al., 2018). In every stage of its development new opportunities and threats have appeared, as well as new social practices and environmental challenges. Thus, the publication of the book is very timely.

The book is divided into three parts. Part 1 (three chapters) provides a broad introduction to connectivity and information activities and covers three chapters discussing the terminology, history and development of human telecommunications. Part 2 (five chapters) deals with applications—citizens, companies, urban systems, autonomous vehicles (AVs) and the theory of duality in space and society. Part 3 (two chapters) focuses on implications of these application—transitions and transformations in connectivity, movability, controllability and continuity—and provides a closure of the book in a concluding chapter. The foci of the book is the Internet as an emerging ubiquitous urban information and communication technology (ICT) connecting people, firms, agencies, utilities and appliances through an intricate web of code and devices which together co-produce a new form of spatial duality containing physical and digital space.

Chapter 1 provides a broad Introduction on the materiality of telecommunications. Starting with Information, it follows on the notion of virtual mobility where people connect and interact over wide distances complementing physical travel, and concludes with the definition of connectivity. The Internet has created a new form of person-to-person virtual co-presence which is carried out both synchronously and asynchronously, mediated by portable ICT devices (laptops and mobile phones). Chapter 2 includes a historical background of the development of connec-

tivity and information activities from the gossip at the Hellenistic theatre to more modern inventions such as mass printing, universities and technology such as the telegraph (aka the Victorian internet), the landline telephone, radio and television. Chapter 3 is dedicated to the story of the Internet materiality the Internet starting as a defense-research communication network (ARPAnet) protocol which later standardized TCP/IP internet transmission control, the browser, the web and the search engine. Social and spatial aspects of consumption and production of information activities were related to the birth of the smartphone, mobile broadband (3G) and Wi-Fi allowing migration from place-to-place to person-to-person connectivity. Lastly, Internet of Things (IoT) is integrating objects and people in intricate networks. Digital divides between the connected and the disconnected continue to sustain social gaps and disparities (Graham, 2011).

Opening Part 2, Chapter 4 provides an in-depth discussion of various electronically mediated user activities including: working from home or other locations, online shopping, e-government, online banking online travel, e-health, e-learning and social networking. While the reader will find much interest here, various critical aspects have been overlooked such as the role of social media in sustaining mass citizen engagement and protests over climate change, human rights (the Arab spring) and consumer power (occupy Wallstreet and the 99%), as well as the proliferation of fake news and the negative role of the Internet in promoting a discourse of extremism on social media platforms such as Facebook (Bright, 2018). Disappointingly, given the timing of the book, the major societal lifestyle changes brought about by the COVID19 pandemic – e.g. mass uptake of teleworking and e-learning via new Internet platforms such as Zoom (Musselwhite et al., 2021), are entirely absent. Thus, the reader will feel many critical contemporary issues absent. Chapter 5 seems somewhat disconnected dwelling on spatial theory and the socio-spatial forces and practices that constitute spatialities in the dual-space society. Various forms of spatialities are discussed including presence (e.g. the dual connotation of surfing), identity, status, experience, interaction, social networks and action. Chapter 6 moves on to cover companies which like individuals moved from simple connectivity activities, based on e-mail, to more complex interactions involving web presence towards customers and Intranet for internal telecommunications and productions issues. In addition, firms are also responsible for Internet technology innovation and production such as web design, apps, browsers, search engines, payment, cybersecurity, server farms, routers and fiber-optics. Once more, contemporary issues such as audiovisual and digital surveillance, Artificial Intelligence (AI), facial recognition and deep fakes, cyber-terrorism and hacking (Whyte, 2020), are missing. Chapter 7 covers digitization of urban systems and the smart city concept through the introduction of IoT. Various systems and infrastructures are discussed including utilities, transportation, environment, buildings and smart homes. However, a critical discussion of smart city applications is rather absent especially the production of asymmetrical power relations between local governments and private enterprise as well

as the disturbing role of surveillance technology and AI and the breach of personal privacy (Zuboff, 2015). Chapter 8 transcends to autonomous vehicles and drones (AVs) as a major IoT application. Like the previous chapter, it dwells on the technical aspects of the 5-level SAE automation scale. In addition, some pitfalls and prospects of AVs are discussed. However, I missed a critical review of the systemic and societal potentials and risks e.g. the negative explosive nature of AV proliferation on the motorization rate vs. the positive ability to establish a new form of acceptable and spatiotemporally flexible public transportation at low costs and minimal externalities (Gkartzonikas & Gkritza, 2019).

Chapter 9 opens Part 3 on Internet-based cities and the transformation of urbanities, by coining the concept of the Internet-of-Everything or IoE which connects people, machines and data through four operational features: connectivity, movability, (dis)controllability and (dis)continuity. Transitions in the land use of the autonomously mobile city are discussed mainly in the context of AV expansion and decline in physical retail and parking space demand. However, the discussion of AV impacts as reducing the numbers of cars, appears overly optimistic, in my opinion, neglecting potential risks for increase in the personal motorization rate to non-driving sectors such as the young, the old and disabled, as well as the negative impacts on public transportation ridership and its resilience. Chapter 10 closes the book with a summary and a discussion of the Internet as a 21st century general-purpose technology (GPT) similar to the automobile. Electricity and the Internet are noted correctly as closely bounded. However, the major energy and environmental predicaments posed by its expansion—storage, processing and connectivity—possibly a post-modern Malthusian dilemma (Montano & García-López, 2020)—and the challenges of overuse e.g. for cryptocurrency mining are not discussed.

To conclude, this is a fascinating book which opens to the reader a wide view of the Internet development, applications and potential impacts on urbanities. At the same time, the book tends to see the positive aspects of the Internet's development, while downscaling the potential threats it carries with it to privacy, security, sustainability and societal resilience.

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COMMUNITIES, LAND AND SOCIAL INNOVATION: LAND TAKING AND LAND MAKING IN AN URBANISING WORLD, Edited by Pieter Van den Broeck, Asiya Sadiq, Ide Hiergens, Monica Quintana Molina, Han Verschure & Frank Moulaert, Cheltenham, UK: Edward Elgar Publishing, 2020.

Communities, Land and Social Innovation is a series of chapters dealing with various issues of urbanization, mainly in the Global South, particularly those concerning the urban poor, informal housing, and struggles over land possession, planning, and tenure. The important and welcome contribution of the book is in enriching the studies of the politics of urbanization with multiple new case-studies from under-studied locations. This comes as part of the last decade's endeavor to bring forward issues from the urbanizing Global South. It is the area inhabiting most of the worlds' people but that is least represented or theorized in urban studies. The field, historically and today also, rises from and centers on the cities of the Global North (Yiftachel, 2006; Roy, 2009) but the push to enrich the discipline from other geographies and ontologies (and by Southern authors), in books and papers such as this, is now salient. The research locations presented in the book are abundant. They range from Brazil or Mexico to India or Ghana, from urban settings to rural-urbanizing ones. Such a diversity enables us to explore various points along the spectrum of issues of community, housing, and land that characterize so much of the current urban processes.

   The emphasis of the book's chapters is on what it terms as "land taking" and "land making." The first concept refers to the already well-known phenomenon of struggles of the growing population of the urban poor over access to land, housing, and

services. These struggles often end up with harsh consequences such as service dep-rivation, unfit conditions of habitation, environmental degradation, or evictions, whether due to bureaucratic constraints or to land grabbing by governments and speculators. With that, there is a growing scholarly awareness of the creativity and potency of local organizations, movements, and networks in their demand for "the right to the city," their success in attaining land and services, provide for themselves or pressure the government to supply (e.g., Dekel, 2020a; Miraftab, 2009), as the concept of "land making" implies.

Some notable examples from the book are Peek et al., who portray the long-last-ing and ultimately successful struggle of the inhabitants of a suburb of Guayaquil, Ecuador, to gain formal status to their informally occupied settlement; or the de-scription of Ahmed et al., of how in Karachi, Pakistan, there are multiple overlap-ping power structures – local mafias, neighborhood committees, religious organiza-tions, and "Bararadi," a grouping based on tribal-ethnic affiliation. They operate beyond the government's scope and are the effective units that decide on the al-location of land or acceptance of new residents. The analysis of Accra, Ghana, by Gbeckor-Kove is also intriguing. It explains the disjuncture between two officially recognized tenure systems – the formal and the customary. This leads to overlapping land deals and non-cooperation of land users with land-use regulation. Such exam-ples further our understanding of the complexities of the South's urban settings and the difficulties for one-dimensional policies to overcome issues of informality, urban poverty, or housing supply.

With that said, many of the book's chapters portray some of the disturbing trends within the current literature of the Global South's cities. To begin with, the chapters refrain from choosing one of two options: either to provide a deep empirical enquiry of the case-study (location) or to develop a sound theory of urban politics (naturally, they could have even chosen to combine the options and provide us with a new theoretical endeavor based on one or more case-studies). The third choice, taken by the book's contributors, is to provide us with shallow empirical research, based on scant evidence, references, and sources. The cases are portrayed briefly, with no or little new collected data, what leaves the reader mainly with anecdotes about the struggles waged by the communities at hand. This might have been understood as an attempt to supply the readers with a wide review of cases, at the expense of depth, hadn't there been a parallel attempt to make the jump into far reaching theoretical assertions based on these insufficient foundations.

I will provide two examples. Estrada and Miranda explore the urban poor liv-ing on the hillsides of Lima, Peru, who are driven by the neo-liberalizing housing market to establish their habitat on remote and risky terrain. The "land making" of these areas is led by land traffickers. These local gangs collaborate with leaders of communities in search for new residence near the city. They arrange land invasions (often leveraging on the loopholes in the formal tenure definitions and the dire need of villagers to sell their land to them) and then develop, allocate, enforce, and even

provide services. The urban development of risky areas is thus perpetuated by the interests and actions of multiple actors without the needed institutional coordination or supervision. It is an intriguing picture, though barely supported by evidence or reference to data sources. The authors then continue to a far-reaching conclusion that the government is risk tolerant and unsupportive of the poor's needs. They state that the hillside urbanization forms a "vicious cycle of social construction of disaster" which must be approached with massive government investment, land-use regulations, and so forth. Even if the findings were based on sufficient empirical evidence, it is extremely presumptuous of the authors to unravel such a policy agenda. Further, by depicting the fragile and incompetent nature of state regulation, and the crucial position of local actors and their networks, the paper actually implies the opposite conclusion. In line with the institutionalist perspective on informal housing (see Dekel, 2020b), it reveals the incapability of weak institutions to control the urbanization process that is led by the grass-root networks of inhabitants and organizations. The authors' demand for vast government intervention is thus utopian, or worse, an empty gesture - a critique for the sake of critique.

In another example, Hasan presents the case-study of the informal settlements (Katchi Abadis) of Karachi, Pakistan. He explores some statistical data and the processes of population growth and land demand. Under a market-oriented government, these processes end up in harmful densification, impoverishment, congestion, hazardous drainage development, or evictions, all caused by the push of developers to build for the elite and the government's apathy to the poor's needs. This is an important overview, but it lacks depth, and the interpretation of the findings is barely supported by empirics. The accusation of "neoliberalism" as the catalysis of all harmful urbanization and the leap into the concluding proposed list of specific reforms are read more like a personal (anti-market) agenda of the author than a research conclusion.

The above examples portray to a high degree a recurring theme of post-academic scholarship within urban studies. In it, scholars often feel comfortable to represent a social movement or a political idea in their studies while paying less attention to supporting them with sound theoretical and empirical foundations. By-and-large, the underlying agenda is a post- (post-modern, post-colonial, etc.) one, criticizing the institutions of the "state" and "market" and painting a simplified picture of bad vs. good. The intellectual environment in which they research is clearly supportive of these ideas and fails to demand neutrality, the use of sufficient evidence to base the conclusions, or even a reasonable attempt to test the proposed alternative – if such is presented (Dekel, 2021). This is perhaps one of the crucial problems of current research: a recycled critique of the code concepts "neoliberalism" or "colonialism" that is coupled with a profound lack of practice-oriented research with concrete and scientifically tested policy prescriptions. On and on, we read of the global explosion of slums, evictions, gentrification etc., but the critical literature refrains from providing viable solutions – only agendas. It is time for urban scholars to leave the

comfort of criticism for the sake of criticism and to take the harder route of findings innovative scientific solutions for these colossal problems.

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KILLER CITIES, by Nigel Thrift. London: Sage, 2021.

In his intellectually-stimulating *Killer Cities*, Nigel Thrift conceptualizes cities as 'tyrannosaurs rampaging around the globe,' aggressive, 'carelessly trampling on everything that should be held dear,' cruel, mortal, and destructive organism. This book is on how cities have become killers through their territorial, spatial, economic, and environmental untamed consumption since the rise of modernity. It is about the cruel role taken by cities in the Global South and Global North and a cry to hail cities and the world from itself and save them.

   Cities are killers because they rely on dirty energy sources that poison the earth and kill its organism: human and non-human. Cities produce waste in profusion, smear the oceans with their rubbles, and kill as many as 72 billion land animals for meat each year, as well as many wild animals and aquatic dwellers. Cities, which have been represented as one of the greatest of modern humankind's achievements, "exist only on the back of the death, often in pain and agony," and become "the climax predators on the planet."

   The book's central argument seeks to shatter the anthropocentric philosophy that has dominated city planning, design, and urban environmental policy. Accordingly,

Thrift argues that "the very foundations of the category we call 'human' have been unsettled as we confront the limits of what we understand as thinking, and very likely that sense of certainty about what's what will never return in its…most confidently species-centric form in which theory is still often made manifest."

Building on Latour, Thrift seeks to construct a 'process of human development as neither liberation from Nature nor as a fall from it, but rather as a process of becoming ever more attached to, and intimate with, a panoply of nonhuman natures' (Latour, 2012). In an intelligent theoretical move, Thrift expands the definition of humanity and includes within it the city, which becomes an inclusive part of human aggression. Thus, Thrift takes the city as an inclusive organism of both human and nonhuman organisms, to become an organism by itself, but not only metaphorically. He redefines "not just what it means to be human but what can be counted as human." His approach is to understand humans in an expanded sense and goes beyond the modernist ecology and human geography thoughts. Thus, people and cities belong to the same order. He argues that the history of who is human has been changed along with the history and determined through the power of 'we.' Thus, until quite recently in many cultures, "enslaved people were regarded by many 'men' as being outside the pale of thinking humanity. So were women. So were colonial peoples. So were indigenous peoples. So were a multitude of different ethnicities who could be fashioned as barbarians or worse. So were all kinds of people who were regarded as disabled." The rejections of 'others' from the world of 'really human' humans were able to be subjected to brutal violence and hatred in the name of civilization (Mbembe, 2019). The style of *Killer Cities* is a combination of social theory, polemic, and dramatic empirical detail to tell how cities become killers and why they cause mass destruction of the planet.

This book consists of eleven chapters. After the introductory chapter, the second chapter surveys what the urban planet, the cities, are doing to all the human and non-human inhabitants of the planet. This chapter guides us where to go if we want our cities to become safe space for all beings rather than a killer. The third chapter presents the various approaches of philosophy and social theory in which animals and non-humans have been conceived. It aims to dismantle the conception of human exceptionalism toward a concept of cooperation. Accordingly, it proposes the alternative way of thinking through 'a symbiosis,' which proposes that interactions among humans and nature, and among various organisms, should not be antagonistic, competitive, and parasitic. The fourth chapter illustrates that animals are not just 'scaled-down versions of ourselves' (Godfrey-Smith, 2018: 10). Rather, they should be considered as different forms of thinking beings. Thus, we need to reach the convention that 'we' are more like 'them,' than we had imagined for centuries.

When we reimagine that the non-humans have some ability to cognize, we may change our perceptions towards nature and our relations to the death of animals. The fifth chapter reinterprets how we think about cities and suggests considering their inhabitants as inclusive pas of common humanity, which is no longer con-

cerned with just one kind of thinking being but considers all as organisms. Chapters six and seven outline the record of the massive animal death in and because of cities. Cities, since the industrialization and urbanization processes are conceived as 'mincing machine,' which is part of the reproduction of cities. Accordingly, cities kill animals for sport, laboratory experiments, wildlife trafficking, and infrastructure. Cities have been planned and designed without animals in mind. As a result, cities' infrastructure becomes traps of death for animals. Chapter eight demonstrates that cities tend to be hostile environments for many animals; however, some animals have been able to adapt and make parts or even the whole of the city into a reasonable space of living. The ninth and tenth chapters look at how cities suggest alternative ways of thinking the urban politics and design and promoting mutual inclusion and mutual survival. Instead of mass killing of animals to reposition them with the same fate of humans. These chapters offer practical solutions, minimum necessary if our cities want to become 'more than a self-serving law unto themselves.'

The final chapter frames killing cities primarily as an exercise in 'alter-politics', which seeks necessarily alternatives as an outcome of the sense of 'ontological emergency' or 'urban ontological security' (Jabareen et al., 2017). Accordingly, cities should be an inclusive space for all, human and non-human. Instead of being the Master of Cities, to share their fate with the less fortunate 'others' non-humans. Thus, this line of thought suggests abandoning all manner of oppressing practices, slavery, and torture 'others': humans and animals. We need to change how the world can turn up to us and, in that process, save both ourselves and the other beings that compose the planet from being exiled.

Many different political interventions need to be made to get even halfway to such a point. However, this book seeks to enable new forms of alter-politics to come into being, politics that do not arise from an anti-politics, aimed at opposing what exists so much as from imagining alternative ways of being and fostering their potentialities by emphasizing partial connections between worlds that seem incommensurable. It is 'alter' rather than 'anti' because it is not just a mere negative opposition (a conformation based on certain forms of oppositional thinking which have turned out to share rather more in common with their targets than was originally thought) but rather a positive reimagining and pursuit of radically other alternatives and possibilities. In other words, the task is not just to provide ammunition for one side or another, but rather to provide another view that can come from outside of any expected political position and which might provide something like an enjambment, the political equivalent. In other words, I see both forms of politics, anti- and alter-, as necessary but neither as being sufficient by itself. However, bound together, they can provide the churn we need to make the reconciliations that have so far eluded us, using the city as our template, a city which is both the problem and – just maybe – a solution to the exclusions that have blinded us to what the earth could contain.

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A RESEARCH AGENDA FOR MILITARY GEOGRAPHIES, Edited by Rachel Woodward, Edward Elgar Publishing: Cheltenham, UK and Northampton, MA, US, 2019

Fans of military geography have earned a unique addition to the bookshelf in the past year. The book: *A Research Agenda for Military Geographies*, edited by British geographer Rachel Woodward, brings with it a significant news in two different ways. First, it compiles an impressive collection of fourteen articles in the field of military geography, from different writers, different countries and different disciplines. Second, and even more significant, the book outlines an innovative and fascinating perspective on the direction in which military geography should develop.

As a background to this it would be appropriate to mention the traditional roles of military geography. These were reflected in the military analysis of the geographical-physical space, in its implications for the military in routine and combat, and in the civilian implications arising from the military confrontations regarding the occupation of territory. However, beginning in the early twenty-first century, significant changes in the focus required for this discipline began to emerge and this book came to illuminate them and chart for them new avenues in which it would be appropriate to focus in the future.

Here it is also worth noting the background of the editor in the context of the issue of military geography. Rachel Woodward has been involved in the relationship between the military and space for over two decades during which she has published a respectable number of scientific publications. Among the most prominent is her book *Military Geographies* (Blackwell Publishing, 2004) in which she pointed out new lines for the study of military geography. The focus of that book was on the

military effects on space in a wide range of areas that go beyond the classical effects of wars and battlefields.

The current book would be right to view not only as a continuation of the previous book and as an extension to the concept of military geography but more as an innovative development and a new path for those who engage in it. The book opens with the editor's article in which she presents the changes that have taken place in military geographical research and the way in which, often, security aspects in general and military in particular, are actually engraved on space, shape its landscapes, and make its voices heard. The continuation of the book, as mentioned, is a collection of thirteen other articles written by various authors. Any attempt to try and classify these articles into common categories is doomed to failure because the variability between the topics of the articles and their research approach is considerable.

Another chapter in the book, which serves as a secondary introduction and provides a comprehensive overview of old and modern military geography, is the article by Andrew Lohman and Christopher Fuhriman: *Approaches to researching and teaching military geography.*

The punch line of the summary of the article, according to which wars should not be expected to disappear from our world in the future, presents, as expected, a gloomy forecast, but at the same time clarifies the importance of dealing with the issue. In this context, the authors make it clear that military geography is engaged in a constant race against military technological developments, evolving combat doctrines and the changing of the modern battlefield. As part of this, the authors argue, geographers should refrain from confining themselves to the study of wars alone and expand their preoccupation with additional military influences, including geopolitical and foreign policy issues

The continuation of the book brings many more aspects of military geography in the fields of military-spatial law, the feminist perspective, resource scarcity and denial of minority rights to the point of genocide, and the uniqueness of nuclear warfare which is in fact a form of destructive warfare with no clear boundaries and more.

Of all the chapters in the book, it would be appropriate to highlight two particularly breakthroughs articles. The first is an article by Alison Williams: More Blue, Less Green: Considering What an Aerial Perspective Can Bring to Military Geography Research. In this article, the author opens and notes that while every terrestrial military space has some mark in the landscape in the form of a sign, a fence or a structure, the aerial dimension usually has no such sign. At the same time, its effects on geographical space are enormous and even greater than the sum of its parts. Also, this phenomenon is unfamiliar to most citizens, who periodically see an aircraft in the sky, without being exposed to the air traffic artery network, the aviation restrictions that apply to planning and construction, the training safety ranges and the low flight corridors. All of these literally shape geographical space for generations. A good example can be found in the process being conducted in Israel over the past decade with regard to examining the location for the construction of a

new international airport as a complementary field to Ben Gurion Airport. In this case, there is a significant discrepancy between the ground data and the aerial data. This means that the ground space with the highest availability for the construction of a new airport is in the south of the country, but the air space in this area is full of Israeli Air Force activity and therefore difficult to accommodate additional air traffic. Here, precisely, is the role of the geographer who studies the relationship between the military and space. Other examples that are reflected in William's article deal with the technological developments of the airport and especially on the issue of the use of unmanned aerial vehicles, with an emphasis on drones. These produce more reciprocity than in the past between ground space and air space, since the medium in which they operate is more limited in relation to the traditional aircraft that usually flies high.

Another breaking through article is that of Emily Gilbert: Military Geoeconomics: Money, Finance and War. Here, too, one can see how a different perspective on space reveals a revolutionary forecast (and in some places it is already an existing reality) regarding the manner in which future wars will be conducted. This means that from the end of the twentieth century and even more so during the twenty-first century, the world has experienced a significant change in terms of the tools available to the advanced nations. During this period, powerful economic means, developed at the disposal of countries, sometimes replacing the need for the traditional use of traditional lethal weapons. To this end, Gilbert defines four main arenas of action: the United States, Russia, China, and the concentration of Far Eastern countries - Taiwan, Japan, and South Korea. She also reminds that in the past, too, economic means played a role in the international arena in a way that sanctions, embargos and subsidies served as a diplomatic tool. However, nowadays, this tool plays greater role, and being used against a variety of entities, sometimes making the traditional military involvement unnecessary. This opportunity requires states and armies to develop new tools in the international field. Gilbert goes even further and argues that these processes can be defined as a new military turning point that includes the ability to conduct a financial attack on a rival entity – at the national or local level, sometimes even against private institutions or persons. However, those measures cannot be developed or used independently by armies as in the past. Therefore, it compels armies to rely increasingly on private companies and technological developments available in the private market. This, she says, leads to the rise of a new socio-economic group or rather to a modern economic-military complex. Examples of this can be found especially in the US war campaigns in the Middle East - in Iraq and Afghanistan, which have required greater involvement of the private sector than in the past, along with reducing the use of traditional weapons. At the same time, the withdrawal of the US military from these countries in recent years is not expected, according to Gilbert, to lead to a reduction in the use of economic tools. On the contrary, the experience gained there is only expected to be used to strengthen the

use of economic tools and to develop specific combat theories aimed at conducting a financial campaign against a rival entity.

To summarize, some criticisms can be added. The range of topics covered by the book is varied and therefore it may have been appropriate to divide the book into several categories with certain contexts. Also, the chapters of the book rarely use illustrative means such as graphs, maps and diagrams. This might have slightly simplified the complexity of the issues and clarify salient aspects to the reader. At the same time, it is important to note that these points do not detract from the book's break through research value and from the significant insights its authors share with the readeres.

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HANDBOOK ON THE CHANGING GEOGRAPHIES OF THE STATE: NEW SPACES OF GEOPOLITICS, Edited by Sami Moisio, Natalie Koch, Andrew E.G. Jonas, Christopher Lizotte and Juho Luukkonen, Cheltenham, UK: Elgar Publishers. 492 pp.

The concept of geopolitics has changed over the years, from the dark days of the applied geopolitics adopted by the Third Reich Haushoferian school, to the post World War II boycotting of the concept, to its return through the guise of critical geopolitics from the 1980s onwards, and on to its use as an alternative label for political geography during the past two decades. The establishment of the journal, Geopolitics – originally established under the name Geopolitics and International Boundaries as a means of softening its return to academic discourse – has proved to be an important means of wide ranging geopolitical analysis, starting from three small issues a year in the mid-1990s and now to 5-6 larger issues per annum and situated, appropriately, at the very border (boundary) between the neighbouring academic disciplines of geography, political science and international relations .

Unlike political geography which encompasses varying scales of analysis, from the local and the micro and up to the global, geopolitics focuses more strongly on the role of the state within the global system – although there have been recent important studies under the label of urban geopolitics. Central to this discourse is the role of the State in a dynamically changing global system, one in which borders and boundaries have become much more fluid, in some cases crossed at will by cyberspace or by ballistic missiles, in other cases re-sealed and re-fortified as states have sought to prevent the movement of terrorism, violence and/or illegal immigrants from entering their sovereign space. Indeed, much of the critical geopolitics school of thought has challenged such traditional notions of state sovereignty, along with a wide ranging and contested discourse about the nature of borders – from a borderless world of globalization to a refenced world of homeland security.

Within this context, the set of essays brought together by a leading group of Geopolitical scholars, under the title Changing Geographies of the State: New Spaces of Geopolitics, is an important addition to this ongoing discourse. As has become increasingly common within the academic literature of the past decade, a handbook comprising over forty chapters has been compiled, divided into seven sections, ranging from the conceptual to a critical discussion of key sub areas within geopolitics, including Nationalism, Identity and the State; Political Economies of the State; Energy and Environment; Security and the State; Territory, the State and Urban Development, and Spatial Planning and the State, ranging across the scales with a combination of top-down and bottom-up approaches to the changing dynamics of the State in the contemporary world.

What is particularly welcoming is that almost all of the 42 contributions have theoretical focus and do not get lost within a long list of case studies which loosely relate to a single theoretical frame which has been outlined in an introductory chapter. The first section of the book, Conceptual Points of Departure, does exactly that, providing a range of conceptual issues which present a comprehensive analysis of the spatial transformation of the State to which authors in each of the sections can relate to as they weave their way through the changing spatial practices and expressions of political power over time. Many of this wide range of authors, almost all of whom are political geographers along with some planners, rather than political scientists, draw in many of the more recent ideas relating to environment, gender and urban themes, distancing themselves almost entirely from the more traditional topics of geopolitics as they focused on military strategies, the contestation of global power, with the possible exceptions of some of the contributions in Section V which directly deals with notions of Security and the State.

It would be unfair to select any two to three authors out of this long list of exciting new scholarship other than to note some of the challenges which are highlighted in the Introductory Chapter (each section also has its own theoretical introductory chapter). It brings together past scholarship on the social theoretical geographies of the State before developing a strong theoretical framework for focusing on the State as a socially constructed and gendered phenomenon against the background of a neoliberal world. The editors note the difficulties of studying the state within any single framework, and posit ideas relating to the future spaces of geopolitics as outlined in greater detail by many of the individual contributions. Although the book must have been planned well before the outbreak of COVID19, the editors have managed to add a few comments relating to the way in which such a global pandemic is an inherent part of the way in which we understand the world as part of a global network rather than through the traditional prism of fixed, unmovable, territorial compartments.

If there is perhaps one area which is missing it is the way in which states are represented through a range of images, including a critical cartography, popular images, social media, literature, films and even caricatures. The cover of the book is itself an

important image of the fractured nature of State power, looking beyond the state as much as it looks inside.

One of the problems with many of these companion books is that they are neither entirely for a research or for a student audience. Teachers of courses in political geography and geopolitics have to carefully select the chapters which are of relevance to their students and provide them with the background from which they can develop a more critical understanding of the way in which territory is managed, controlled and contested. Notwithstanding, it is an excellent collection of contributions, drawing together many parallel streams and deserves to be on the reading agenda of researchers and students – perhaps more advanced students – alike.

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HANDBOOK ON THE GEOGRAPHIES OF CREATIVITY, Edited by Anjeline de Dios and Lily Kong, Cheltenham, UK: Edward Elgar, 2020.

The *Handbook on The Geographies of Creativity*, edited by Anjeline de Dios and Lily Kong, is published in a time of transition. It was published at the middle of a global pandemic while many countries and cities throughout the world halted most of their public gatherings. Within these the art and culture public activities and institutions were probably and most commonly the first to stop and the last to reopen. But the book is following a different kind of transformation and follows its intention to present in an affirmative manner "other geographies of creativity excluded or even silenced by the dominant 'creative turns'…" (p. 1).

The book is organized into 7 parts: 1) Creativity as imaginary; 2) Creativity as locality; 3) Creativity as mobility; 4) Creativity as labour; 5) Creativity as culture; 6) Creativity as intervention; 7) Creativity as method. Each part includes 2-3 chapters that are rather short and mostly fluent. This thematic organization was chosen by the editors as they intended to provide "a different lens to creativity", demonstrating the "shifting contexts" of the field (p. 2). It could have been possible to organize the book according to the scale, from the highly localized scale of neighborhood to the global, or according to sites or types of intervention, but the editor's decision seems to be fruitful as it enables fresh and generative perspectives within each context and overall. The focus on these specific themes is justifiable since it resonates the core issues under debate on creativity.

The sections are well structured both within each one and the book as a whole. The first part is, as the editors write in their introduction, more programmatic. In the following section, some chapters are more conceptual while others present rich empirical case studies demonstrating different aspects of creativity and its transformations over time and space. The fact that most of the contributors combine

research and practice is clearly evident throughout the book, and it is one of its strengths as it allows interested readers, practitioners and researchers, to get deep ingrained descriptions of the field while maintaining strong linkage to conceptual and theoretical dimensions. Practitioners will find in the book new directions for intervention as for example the "ambient culture" concept presented in chapter 15 and deals with the growing trend of open spaces outside the closed "transcripted" sceneries of art as museums, galleries and concert halls by analyzing a specific case study. These new directions are most commonly critically analyzed with the diverse insights that were elaborated at the opening chapter and the first section. Researchers may find descriptions of upcoming trends in the field within different geographic and cultural contexts. The last section "Creativity as method" invites researchers to critical reflexive analyses of new methodologies, which are, as the name of the chapter points out, based on creative art practices.

There are several indications throughout the book for its intention to present conceptual transformation or 'revised vistas'. One of the most pronounced is the fact that the section dealing with labor (Creativity as labour) neither explicitly nor implicitly deals with what was derived from the concepts of 'creative class' as a set of occupations that put together scientists, engineers and similar others together with various sorts of artists. Instead and even more demonstrative of the editors intention, is the fact that the chapters within this section remove the whole mythic glorification of creative labour which was very common at the hype of the creativity paradigm and adopt a more grounded approach in which the precarious state of creative labour is analyzed. Another good example lies within the "creativity as locality" part (chapter 6). The local scale is one of the most prominent hallmarks of the dominant frameworks of creativity. Here it is first critically analyzed and then discussed with a new set of alternative notions. Overall, and given this section as an example, this is an important feature of the book as it does not lean or stay within the critical assessment, but also takes it several steps forward in a more grounded and reflexive manner.

The diverse cultural political contexts presented and analyzed throughout the book is an important strength. Creativity is too often discussed and practiced differently within these different contexts and thus although the book does not explicitly adopt a comparative approach, it invites readers to get more acquainted with the ways in which these different contexts enable different interpretations of the creativity concept.

Although the structure of the book is as mentioned above fruitful and generative, it may pose some limitations as well. For example, read policy issues are spread over various chapters rather than collectively analyzed in one section focusing on creativity policies. While this structure allows readers to get some policy (or other relevant themes) context within different dimensions of creativity, it does not necessarily screen the whole array of these themes within each dimension. An example is the absence of a critical analysis of creativity indices as one predominant policy

tool which flourished extensively in the last two decades or so. The indices and mainly those that were linked with the concepts of 'creative class' were one of the main vehicles on which dominant neoliberal conceptions of creativity have moved (see chapter 3 on 'fast policy') from place to place. Its objective technocratic facade masked some of its underlying normative assumptions and the practices and policies that were attached to it.

The book is published as a handbook. This format commonly intends to briefly present main insight over a field of inquiry. The book does that well but as the editors justly claim, it also presents a reflection on the transformations of the field as these were quite dramatic in the last two decades. As mentioned in the opening statement of this review, it seems that we are in a time of dramatic changes following a global pandemic, climate crises and others. How these transformations may collide with creativity as it is analyzed in the book remains to be seen and critically assessed in possibly future editions of this book.

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