

forms informs projects and movements of resistance. Castells postulates that in the network society (our world and societies in the late modernity) meaning is organized around a primary identity, which is self-sustaining across time and space. Since identity is always formed through the context marked by power relation and in a concrete place, three forms of identities are to be found in the network society: legitimizing identity, resistance identity, project identity. The book deals through its different parts with identity formation and identity projects around the world, aiming to describe and uncover the tensions and discrepancies between the self, state and the net (global). The empirical data was collected for nearly three decades and Castells supplies the reader with ample examples stretching from Islamic fundamentalism to social movements, from environmental action groups to new types of family in the Information Age, going even as far as exploring the state of democracy world wide. These are all samples aiming to show how identity is used within the new global network society to invert the terms of oppressive discourse and hence explain why they are all expressions of the exclusion of the excluders by the excluded. Castells' conclusion is that the key features of the social structure in the Information Age are no longer a product of civil society as in modernity but rather products of new forces that have ultimately lead to the becoming of the net and the network society. These characteristics of our era of late modernity (post modernity for some) are indeed the sources of the crisis of the state and of civil society which inform and enable those new forms of identities and identity projects world wide.

It is indeed an overwhelming work in the sense that one may be lost with the endless examples bringing a worldwide view of various identity projects opposing the global forces of the net. This may be a blessing in disguise as it presents most cases not as people and individuals as instigators of their identity but mainly as part of a process of reactive identity doing the work against the global forces. Indeed, there are still corners of the world where human strive for identity (be it religious, cultural or even national) as a way of connecting to their fellow humans and of having a sense of place as a way of making sense of their lives. Having said that, Castells' trilogy and in particular *The Power of Identity* is a challenging and inspiring work that forces one to rethink one's understanding of one's life and world.

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RESHAPING REGIONAL PLANNING: A NORTHERN PERSPECTIVE, edited by Folke Snickars, Brita Olerup and Lars Olof Persson. Aldershot: Ashgate, 2002.

Contemporary regional planning faces enormous new challenges, affecting both developed and developing countries alike. One such challenge is the process of

economic globalization. This process not only influences the socio-economic performance of individual countries but also exposes their regions to international competition. As post-war Fordist economies have been gradually replaced by the 'new-age' post-Fordist systems, the whole paradigm of traditional regional planning has quickly become obsolete. Due to globalization, many regions, traditionally enjoying tariff protection and secure markets, lost their competitive advantages and sources of income. As a result, funds previously available for the implementation of long-term regional development programs have gradually dwindled or even disappeared. In parallel, the interregional gap in the levels of development and incomes between economically leading (core) regions, specializing on services, high-tech industries and communication, and economically lagging peripheries, specializing on labor-intensive production, has been constantly growing. Regional gaps have rapidly developed even in the previously 'egalitarian' Nordic countries, such as Sweden, Norway, Finland and Denmark. Another recent development, which has dramatically affected regional planning, is the ongoing reduction of the involvement of the central governments in regional development programs. The deterioration of the global environment and growing public awareness about environmental issues added another important facet to the traditional planning paradigms.

The present book attempts to investigate these new challenges in depth, using a variety of examples drawn (mostly) from the Swedish planning practice. However, as common for many (if not most) collective volumes, the book suffers from lack of cohesion. In fact, it is a mosaic of papers seemingly written without any coordination with each other and without any common methodological approach. At least in part, this methodological disunity results from the lack of a proper theoretical framework, which should have been established in the introductory sections of the volume. Instead the introductory chapter (by Snickars, Olerap and Person) merely sketches out the volume's structure and briefly abstracts its chapters.

The book consists of five parts: Challenging the Scope of Planning (Part I); Emerging Issues for Planning Actions (Part II); Professional Cultures (Part III); Reshaping the Tools for Regional Planning (Part IV), and Regional Evaluation of Policy Process (Part V). In the rest of this review I shall discuss in some detail only two of the volume's 20 chapters, which may represent particular interest for the professional audience.

The chapter on the regional planning in Sweden (Alfredsson and Wiman) is a comprehensive and professionally written description of the planning process in Sweden: division of responsibilities, planning legislation, and approval stages of planning documents. As in many other countries, planning decisions in Sweden are taken in two stages—comprehensive planning (general use of land and water resources) and detailed development plans (building, zoning and infrastructure). However, the considerable autonomy of the local municipalities and public participation in planning decision-making, characteristic of Sweden, is highly atypical even by the western standards. For instance, I was surprised to discover that the local

residents may appeal any municipal planning document to the county's planning board, causing a municipality's decision to be reviewed, if found that it jeopardizes public interests.

The chapter dealing with the local authority districts in Sweden (by Axelsson) is another central paper in the volume. Municipal fragmentation is an acute problem commonly recognized in Sweden. Until the early 1970's, most municipalities in this country were small, consisting of a few thousands or even hundreds of residents. This municipal fragmentation resulted in acute problems associated with provision of services and inefficient financial management. However, the problem of municipal fragmentation was solved in Sweden both promptly and efficiently. According to the 1973 legislation, the minimal size of a municipality was set to 10,000 residents. Municipalities below this size were allowed to choose neighboring local authorities with which they wanted to be amalgamated. No governmental dictate was applied to influence the municipalities' choices. However, the process of "deliberation" was limited by a short "grace" period, after which governmental grants to "indecisive" municipalities came to a hold. The legislation was thoroughly enforced leading to the reduction of the total number of municipalities from 1031 in 1960 to 290 in 1999. Due to the economies of size, management efficiencies and services improved, while the government's transfer of funds to the local municipalities reduced dramatically.

Unfortunately, the quality of many other chapters in the volume is more inferior. One chapter, for instance, develops a whole "theory" based on the interviews of two (!) randomly chosen planners, whose opinions are used for wide-ranging generalizations.

Lastly, I shall note that the book's sub-title (i.e.: *A Northern Perspective*) is somewhat misleading. Nearly 90 percent of the book's chapters deal solely with Sweden, while only two chapters address planning issues in other countries—the international trade in the Baltic region (Aberg) and reconstruction challenges in Bosnia and Herzegovina (Hasic). Unless the latter country can be considered as a part of the Nordic group of nations, the more appropriate subtitle for the book would thus be "A Swedish perspective" or "A European perspective," perhaps.

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HUNGER: THEORY, PERSPECTIVES AND REALITY by Amitava Mukherjee.
King's SOAS Studies in Development Geography, Aldershot: Ashgate, 2004.

The increase of food production in a country to the level required by the population constitutes an important basis for enhanced food security on a national scale. India managed to achieve such growth in cereal food production, as a result of govern-