BOOK REVIEW

Burayidi, Michael A. Editor.
Cities and the Politics of Difference: Multiculturalism and Diversity in Urban Planning.
University of Toronto Press, 2015.
424 pages.
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Cities and the Politics of Difference provides an ethical and pragmatic discussion of the changing characteristics of urban communities in the twenty-first century—particularly in light of demographic changes of resident populations, advances in communication technology, the prominence of a global free market system, and social attitudes towards diversity. Editor Michael A. Burayidi introduces the publication by affirming that the globalization and diversification of cities has critical implications for planning practice that extend beyond economic and social issues, but also influence the design, purposing, and regulation of the urban built environment.

Burayidi's introductory discussion situates the collection of essays within broader theoretical and practice-oriented discussions of equity and diversity issues in planning. Burayidi asserts the field of planning must acknowledge social diversity and cultural differences as central to its practice in order to be a relevant and effective in current urban environments. Understanding the implications of diversity is most important to municipal practice. It can be difficult for practitioners to respond to growing diversity in resident populations, he explains, because the notion of difference at odds with planning rhetoric such as "serving the public interest" and equal treatment. However, Burayidi contends that a multicultural approach is needed in planning due to normative practices and cultural beliefs that support discriminatory treatment.

The book proposes multiculturalism as a framework to describe the current state of urban communities, as well an approach to planning and policymaking in the twenty-first century. Buraydi defines multicultural planning as a "continuous adjustment of planning practices to ensure parity in access to and the effective delivery of planning services to those ethnic, cultural, and demographic groups that have been traditionally marginalized or discriminated against by the planning process." Consequently, multicultural urban policy must recognize cultural differences, support the full participation and protection of marginalized citizen groups, proactively address effects of racism and social and economic disadvantagement, and reflect diverse native born and immigrant cultures when establishing an identity for a place.

Buraydi's conceptualization of multicultural planning sets the stage for a collection of essays that provide theoretical reflection on the current state of the field and prescriptive solutions for practice. The book is organized into five sections: (1) multiculturalism in democratic society, (2) planning for sexual minority groups and Native Americans, (3) strategies for proactively support immigrant populations, (4) implications of physical design for diversity, and (5) cultural competency in planning education, training, and practice.

A number of the authors articulate the need for multicultural planning to urge practitioners to focus on the complex needs of resident populations and assert the need for diversity-oriented discussions to extend beyond issues of race, culture, and ethnicity. Petra Doan positions the LGBT community as currently an underrepresented stakeholder group and demonstrates the complex implications of planning practice for sexual minorities living in and outside of LGBT neighbourhoods and to different segments of this population. Doan provides guidance for planners to address the needs of a spectrum of non-normative population as part of their work. Nicholas C. Zaferatos offers a related discussion of Native Americans, describing how an increased attention of professional planners to tribal planning could help support further autonomy for these groups. Other chapters focus on cities that implement efforts to recognize non-native populations by supporting resettlement efforts and promote "immigrant-friendly" communities.

In addition to advocating for recognition for underrepresented stakeholder groups and proposing new substantive issues, contributing authors consider how a multicultural framework relates to training/education

and methods for engaging citizens in the planning process. The unifying theme of these discussion purports for an increased cultural competency within the field. Kelly Main and James Rojas discuss limitations of outreach and participatory methods heavily reliant on verbal communication, creating divides between practitioner and citizen and native and foreign language and discuss alternative methods, such as Photovoice and Placeit that deemphasize language and focus on visual communication. Siddhartha Sen, Mukesh Kumar, and Sheri L. Smith describe the educational philosophy of planning programs at three historically Black colleges and universities to demonstrate opportunities to cultivate a multicultural focus as part of professional training.

Cities and the Politics of Difference is relevant to a number of audiences, increasing its contribution to the field. It is well balanced, providing both an ethical reflection of the recognition of diversity in research and disciplinary thought and practical support for practitioners.

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