

BOOK REVIEWS

Social Capital and Urban Networks of Trust.

JOUNI HÄKLI & CLAUDIO MINCA, eds, Aldershot 2009, Ashgate, 300 pp. ISBN 978-0-7546-7319-4.

After almost two decades of intensive debates and publishing on social capital and development, writing an innovative book in this field is a challenge. Jouni Häkli and Claudio Minca managed it. They edited an excellent collection of theoretical and empirical papers which go beyond dominant accounts of social capital. Moreover, they challenge some other taken-for-granted assumptions and understandings in the fields of regional development and trust as well.

The book is divided into three sections, forming three basic pillars which hold this collection of papers together: from theories of social capital integrated to places ('Re-placing social capital') to case studies of both networks as structural aspects of social capital ('Grounding networks') and trust as a cognitive aspect of social capital ('Mobilizing trust') in Italy and Finland. Of course, these perspectives necessarily overlap.

The first chapter discusses geographies of trust and their consequences. In particular, statist understanding of societies in social science is questioned. Commonly, societies are studied as if they were clearly bounded by state borders, and, consequently, geography of trust is portrayed as if it could be measured in different spatial units as well.

As stressed by Mauro Cannone in chapter 2 of the book, popularity of social capital among researchers and policy-makers in last decades was related to few particular conceptions of social capital. However, the concept of social capital is much broader and not that unproblematic as suggested by Putnam or Coleman (and their followers). This book brings several theoretical arguments on weaknesses of this approach. Going back to Pierre Bourdieu, theoretical foundations of social capital are explored and used as a critique of some simpli-

fications of the concept by later scholars. In particular, de-politicising of social capital is questioned – social capital does not exist separated from conflicts in contemporary societies, used or misused by proponents of certain ideas. However, political conflicts are missing in conceptualisations of social capital by for example, Putnam or Coleman.

After questioning both trust and social capital, chapter 3 focuses on another provocative question: does it make any sense to talk about regional competitiveness? Paulo Giacaria questions beliefs on intra-regional unity and cooperation in order to compete with other units – it can be hardly found in reality. Stressing a regional/spatial perspective on 'who competes with whom' (is it all inhabitants of the regions or just elites who legitimise themselves by acting and speaking 'on behalf' of the region?) is a starting point for an alternative way of understanding of social capital and regional development.

After these three theoretical chapters, urban networks and trust are explored more deeply. What is common for all case studies is their excellent theoretical foundation and an implicit argument that urban networks of trust require much broader scale of understanding in a globalised world. Social capital can't be disconnected from political and economical interests and conflicts within the city as well as in national or global contexts. The presented case studies are far from common 'best practices' or successful cases which 'confirm' narrowed theoretical expectations.

Two chapters focus on Venice and two others deal with Trieste. In this way, alternative possibilities of understanding social capital (as discussed in theoretical parts) are showed in praxis. Already the first case study of Trieste's bid for organising the EXPO 2008 exhibition analyses the project which did not succeed. The study analyses networks, goals and narratives used on local, regional and national level and problems related to these different politics. The project suffered from lack of co-operation between different scales. Despite its failure,

experiences gained in the process were later very useful – different institutions are now performing better in other projects.

Social capital is connected to identity and place attachment. As Claudio Minca analysed, during more than two centuries, 'Triestino', a dialect spoken in Trieste, developed from a necessary *lingua franca* in a multicultural Mediterranean port, spoken by the elite, to a marginalised language of private communication which could not be used in public space for a long time in twentieth century, back again to a source of trust and place attachment in the city.

Two views on urban networks of trust in Venice focus on complex ways of negotiating future development trajectories of the city. Seen as just a tourist spectacle from outside, the city has actually a long tradition of international trade or innovative production. Despite these traditions and the city's location in northern Italy, used by Putnam as a paradigmatic region with well developed social capital, actual negotiations about the future of the port of Venice as well as about alternative ways of redevelopment in Arsenal, a former production site, were far from romantic stories of co-operation associated with social capital. Success was achieved only after intentional long-term activity which had to overcome initial barriers of co-operation between different stakeholders, it had to deal with opposing interests, path-dependent thinking and other issues which are often overlooked within 'success stories'

The case of eTampere – urban development strategy in Tampere, Finland, based on support of research and development of information technologies, is one of those which will probably never appear in economic development textbooks. Despite several strengths, the goal – making Tampere the world's best IT hub – was too ambitious. An elitist project could not get wider public support, as the core of active people was not able to incorporate wider networks of potential collaborators and share responsibilities between them.

Cross-border co-operation in a twin city Haparanda–Tornio in Sweden and Finland is another example. Developing close to each other but without much co-operation for nearly two centuries, the cities tried to build trust in

each other and materialise it by a common urban development project exactly on the border on a previously unused place between these two cities. Good will from both sides of the border had to deal with many unexpected obstacles and multiple interests. At the end, the decision of a multinational corporation to locate its store in the newly constructed zone seems to have saved the project as it can bring together people from both sides of the border.

In the concluding chapter, the issue of civic organizations, their membership, activities and development in the Finnish city Jyväskylä is raised. Martti Siisiäinene asks questions far beyond the usual focus on numbers of organisations and their members. Civic organisations are not studied *per se*, but in a close relation with the development of the welfare state and its activities. Focusing on the last decades, some changes of civic organisation activities, goals and attitudes are pointed out. Despite having similar amounts of members as in the past, civic organisations are different in several ways nowadays: they are not exerting pressure on the state to perform better in satisfying certain needs but rather ensuring some of public services which are privatised or out-sourced by the state. Civic organisations are also generally more focused on narrow goals of leisure or sport, unlike traditional broad-scoped movements.

While reading this book from the beginning to the end, one can go through a process of destruction (of old ideas how social capital works in urban development) followed by a process of creation (of new/changed understanding of the field). I enjoyed going through these processes. The only thing I missed in the book was a conclusion, summary or a kind of synthesis of the rich knowledge base presented in all chapters.

Social Capital and Urban Networks of Trust is an exciting book, that not only goes deep into 'grey theories' (which are presented in an interesting way), yet sensitive to the 'ever green tree of life', showing a colourful picture of social capital, networks or (mis)trust in urban development. It shows many stories of good intentions, personal efforts, successes and failures.

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Worlding Cities: Asian Experiments and the Art of Being Global.

ANANYA ROY & AIHWA ONG, Malden, MA, 2011: Wiley-Blackwell, 352 pp. ISBN 978-1-4051-9277-4, \$76.99

Ananya Roy and Aihwa Ong's *Worlding Cities: Asian Experiments and the Art of Being Global* is a timely intervention in the hegemonic discourses surrounding the epistemologies and methodologies of urban studies. The authors take the position that dominant theories of globalization or post-coloniality are over-determined in their privileging of capitalism and class struggles in the analysis of urban problems in emerging world regions. Rather, Roy and Ong assert that the city is a milieu in constant formation due to the interplay of disparate connections, as well as the national and global forces intersecting it. However, Roy and Ong steer clear of romanticising the role of subaltern peoples in shaping the 'worlding' city, and thus break with ontological and topological understandings of subaltern subjects and spaces. Instead, the authors demonstrate the limits and alternatives to what they call 'subaltern urbanism'. Most importantly, Roy and Ong pay attention to an eclectic mix of often overlooked urban initiatives that attempt to achieve 'world recognition in the midst of inter-city rivalry and globalized contingency' (p. 3). They adopt a relational framework that views the metropolis not as a fixed locality, but as a heterogeneous assemblage composed of situated and transnational discourses, institutions, actors and practices that come together to achieve particular outcomes.

Worlding Cities is structured around three main themes: modelling, inter-referencing practices, and new solidarities. Though not unique to Asia, these three themes were selected by the authors as they are distinct forms of worlding that characterise urban development in the region. The book is split up into three sections named after each of these themes, and the essays are organised to fit into one of the three sections. These sections are bookended by an introduction on 'Worlding Cities, or the Art of Being Global' by Aihwa Ong, and a conclusion on 'Postcolonial Urban-

ism' by Ananya Roy. Roy and Ong bring in different theoretical perspectives and critiques in to their respective editorial essays, and focus on different geographical regions within Asia. This mix of perspectives gives the book a good level of theoretical multiplicity and situates the productive concept of 'worlding' in the context of inter-Asian urban competition and inter-referencing practices, which is one of the main themes and *raison d'être* of the book.

The first part on 'Modeling' refers to the circulation of urban models that have become established as desirable and achievable throughout the developing world. The authors note that Asia's world cities like Singapore, Shanghai and Hong Kong have taken over traditional global cities like New York, London and Paris as examples of new standards for urban normativity and design. This section opens with an exploration of how cities like Singapore are exporting their urban planning models and expertise abroad to emerging cities that hope to use this expertise to move up on the global ranking of 'world class cities'. Other chapters in this section trace the influence of the Singapore model to countries and regions elsewhere in Asia, like Dalian, China and Manila, Philippines. An overarching critique of these modelling practices that are raised by the various authors is that they are often politically or economically motivated, while tending to overlook questions of whether one city can truly replicate a particular model that works elsewhere in different social, political, economic and environmental contexts.

Similar to the theme of 'Modeling', the second part on 'Inter-referencing' refers to the practice of transforming cities so as to replicate and out-perform urban centres elsewhere. The authors distinguish inter-referencing from modelling because it captures broader practices of allusion, aspiration, and competition in the development of cities. The essays in this section explore the effects of inter-city referencing and urban planning projects on the inhabitants of those cities. Dubai figures prominently in these essays, as we learn how the city is becoming a much larger destination on the map for skilled and unskilled migrant labourers. The essays explore the lived experience of these workers in Dubai, *vis-à-vis* conditions in cities like Hong Kong, Shanghai or New Delhi.

The effects of grandiose 'hyberbuilding(s)' on the lived experience in cities like Beijing and Dubai are also explored, as planners in these cities are experimenting with architectural designs imported from elsewhere. We see that the perceptions, ambitions, and identities of urban inhabitants in these emerging 'worlding' cities are often affected by extra-local flows of heterogeneous materials, peoples and discourses in quite sophisticated and complex ways.

The final part on 'New solidarities' explores new forms of governmentality in South Asian Cities. The contributors to this section testify to the norms and forms of neoliberal techniques emerging in urban governance in the region, and how a side effect has been the dislocation of many of the city's inhabitants to make way for mega-project development. However, the contributors are careful not to rely on dominant discourses and critiques of neoliberalism, but rather investigate ethnographically the unique styles of neoliberalism emerging as South Asia's cities strive to become 'world class'. Specific examples are the boosterism and 'transnational urban policy' that are being deployed in Bangalore, India to make it the next Shanghai or Singapore; the New Delhi government's rationale of clearing slums and resettling residents in Singapore-style resettlement plots in order to make the city 'world class', and; an analysis of the linkages between India's economic development and how it uses methods of urban renewal projects, peri-urban development and the construction of special economic zones in order to make a series of 'world class cities' and foster a population of 'Global Indians'. This section is valuable in that it explicitly shows how a variety of actors and discourses are involved in the reconfiguration of 'the social' in South Asian cities in order to make them more competitive on a world stage.

Ananya Roy and Aihwa Ong's *Worlding Cities: Asian Experiments and the Art of Being Global* provides a thorough and much-needed critique of the 'law-like' nature of the concepts and epistemologies that have historically been used in urban studies (p. 5). These types of analysis can 'never fail to be wrong', as they construct the very phenomena that they purport only to describe (Latour 2004, p. 242). Rather, Roy and Ong stitch together a series of dynamic

essays from a diverse and respected range of scholars with varied backgrounds to tackle the complex issues of capital, culture and 'worlding' in contemporary Asian cities. One oversight of the book that I would have liked to have seen addressed was the lack of attention to issues of gender in the 'worlding' city. Though we are given a thorough portrayal of how urban planning practices in Asia affect the identities of urban inhabitants throughout several of the essays in this book, these portraits lack any ways in which gender identities are impacted by city worlding. Though perhaps beyond the reach of undergraduates, this book should not only be read by urbanists focusing on Asian regions, but by anyone interested in the dynamics of urban planning, boosterism and social change in developing regions worldwide. To be sure, this is a timely and productive intervention in academic understandings of the cultural connections and relations betwixt and between Asian cities that transgress traditional boundaries of race, class, city and nation.

Reference

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Social Geography: A Critical Introduction.

VINCENT J. DEL CASINO JR., Chichester: 2009
Wiley-Blackwell, 319 pp. ISBN: 978-1-4051-5500-7,
£62.50.

Upon first glance, Vincent J. Del Casino Jr.'s book *Social Geography: A Critical Introduction* appears to be miss-titled, offering a somewhat selective view of the expansive field of social geography studies. Indeed, by not taking the well-trodden route of segmenting discussions of social geographies of gender, race, age, sex and so on, he is breaking the mould; this proves to be most certainly for the better. In actuality

he is offering something far superior, Del Casino is proffering a new inclusive narrative displaying the intertwined nature of social geographical research. It is only upon more meaningful engagement with the text that one appreciates the true value of this book. The book is divided into four sections; Part 1, offering a discussion of the nature, history and methodological underpinnings of social geography research; Part 2, presenting an intricate consideration of inequality and difference and their associations with community, organisations and belonging, introducing the reader to the possibilities for action and justice; Part 3 focuses on the life course, looking at the tripartied geographies of youth, mid-life and aging; while finally Part 4 offers conclusions and a presentation of a hopeful future for the sub-discipline.

This work is very accessible and student-friendly, but should not be viewed as a student-only publication. Del Casino's personalised and affable narrative illuminates the text and brings the reader on a journey through the multifaceted and complex issues under analysis. The often-times tedious and complicated debates of theoretical perspectives presented in academic tomes is avoided here, as Del Casino presents a straightforward and interesting discussion of the theoretical signposts a student may engage with along the social geography path. This is by no means cursory; chapter 2 presents an innovative and in-depth analysis of the changing ideas, advances, challenges and priorities in social geography throughout the last century. It illustrates the encompassing nature of the sub-discipline. If certain theorists at first seem glanced over, it is later discovered that they are discussed in more detail as the subsequent chapters are developed. It is in chapter 2 that we are first presented with Del Casino's thoughts on the inherent value of studies of the relations between the human and non-human realms, a concern that is to become the backbone of this work.

Chapter 3 signposts the methods linked to various perspectives in social geography, providing clear diagrams and tables of the variety of investigatory routes that can be taken. This however, is not a how-to chapter, its greatest value lies in the provision of insights into the frameworks behind certain methodological

perspectives, rather than the provision of a methodological agenda itself. This chapter should be read in association with key texts on methods and research practice. It presents a variety of standpoints, following on from the ideas exhibited in the previous chapter, illustrating a broad repertoire of past social geographical analyses, peppered with evidence from preceding studies. It shows students that they do not need to tie themselves to one theoretical agenda, and highlights the multiplicity of perspectives that can be drawn from in any single study. Del Casino emphasises certain challenges to understanding specific methodological approaches (moving from discussions of qualitative, quantitative, to mixed method and PAR) and usefully flags further reading throughout, to allow for the adaptation of the basics of methodological practice in the field. In this chapter we see the author's proclivity towards proactive inquiry and the import he places on research which makes a difference beyond the academy.

Part 2 begins with a discussion of how all social geography studies are in some way associated with geographies of health. I am not completely convinced by Del Casino's argument here and feel that greater elucidation is required. In any case, this section of the book covers a vast array of dense and complex concerns in an uncomplicated and forthright manner, exploring the multitudinous factors that impact upon social geographical issues. Taking examples of diseases from AIDS, to dysentery, to SARS, Del Casino illuminates the complex interplay of social, economic, political and environmental factors, which provide challenges to satisfactorily completing an investigation of the social geography of any one subject. He proceeds in chapter 5 to tackle issues of belonging and community, using the analogy of the rhizome and the tuber to show the multiplicity of agents and phenomena in play when interrogating the characteristics of the social. The importance of action research and processes of resistance and opposition to the norm are again to the fore here. His critique of organisations is essential for any student to comprehend the contested nature of society, and the importance of problematising the world's social frameworks if true critical analysis is to take place. He leads the reader to be cognisant of

both the overt and covert beneficiaries of organisations that profess themselves to be supportive, and in many respects, impartial.

Chapter 6 focuses on questions of morality and ethics, examining the geographies of social movements, active engagement, and integrity. He starts this discussion by placing responsibility right at the door of academia; arguing that education needs to be more comprehensive and that greater commitment to real change and alternative ways of seeing must to be applied. It is stressed that the subjects of social research need to be more inclusive players in the research process, and tools of research ought to become more accessible and malleable to achieve maximum impact, through a variety of broader outputs. Alternative understandings need to be mobilised through complementary responses and practices, to allow for movement away from what prevails as normative and patriarchal. These chapters illustrate the vibrant and multi-faceted nature of the sub-discipline in an uncomplicated manner; highlighting the complex, yet intricate and dynamic research that can be achieved.

Part 3 focuses attention on geographies of the life-course and the challenges one faces when trying to differentiate between certain periods in the aging process. Beginning unsurprisingly with the geographies of youth, Del Casino again points the reader through a variety of theoretical understandings examining the work of Bunge, Katz and Aitken. The discussion underscores both the efforts made in different ways to make the forgotten visible, but also stresses the variety of avenues which geography affords the reader to give any marginalised group a voice. Discussions centre on topics of play and performance, the heteronormativity of teenage life, the association between youth and spaces of fear, and the ethical issues with respect to children on a global scale. Chapter 8 gives consideration to the relationship between identity and social production/re-production, taking examples from both the spaces of work and the home, examining the intricacies of social value, behaviour and performance. It moves on to explore spaces of consumption, illustrating how they are implicit in both production and reproduction. The reader again grasps the sophisticated and

dynamic nature of social geography research here, as the discussions exemplify the range of perspectives that both impact on the topic in hand and the researcher themselves. Chapter 9 begins by asking is there a geography of aging? The reader is left with no doubts, as we are shown the vast array of research that is required to understand the practices of aging, the processes of re-construction of the body and the attendant idea of 'normal' that is attached to this, the material and emotional challenges that need to be faced, and the spaces of care that may marginalise or provide autonomy. This section is focused on how certain practices are normalised in space and over time, how bodies are regulated, and how performances actualise, reproduce and normalise difference, at all stages of the life course.

This is a book which any reader can delve in and out of, the chapter titles do not do justice to the multitude of issues which are presented and interrogated within their pages. The 'text-box' system employed in the book is arguably the best tool of this work. Not only does it explain selected research in more detail, it also allows for the organisation of central concepts, and indeed brings the student on a journey through the research process, from literature review, to data selection, critique and rationalisation. The attendant exercises are critical, informative and easily applied in the classroom, for both clarification and assessment purposes. These have the ability to stand alone as key implements in any lecturer's toolkit, as they coax the student to critically interrogate social practice.

The myriad of methodological perspectives and theoretical influences becomes clear throughout this book. The central question posed at the beginning of the book with respect to human and non-human properties of the world was addressed again in the closing chapters. At this point it is inconceivable to envisage a successful social geography study that does not take into account both the human and non-human actors and pressures. It is clear that what are seen as non-human phenomena are features apparent and complicit in all human activities, and geographers need to be more mindful of these if they are to achieve richer, deeper and more fruitful encompassing critical engagements. The relations of power between both aspects need to be addressed to fully

understand that these are not separate unrelated phenomena. Students must begin to engage with and investigate the crossover, the linkages, and the permeable nature of these supposed dualist delineations, to better appreciate their mutually beneficial and destructive qualities. Chapter 11 stresses again the significance and value of critical social geography research, the multiplicity of perspectives it affords, and the ultimate need for response and action. There is an impetus in the chapter to push for constant critique and questioning

active engagement. It concludes on an optimistic and buoyant tone, both stressing that the future of social geography lies within creating geographies of hope and encouraging the reader in a call for action and change. Del Casino has indeed left us on a truly expectant note, he has bought the reader on a voyage throughout the text, and at this point his call for reaction has power to compel greater commitment to critical study within the field.

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