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Bertolini, Luca

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To the inattentive eye, the four-pronged city typology may seem the result of a personal attempt at informing not only the students in his Global Urbanism module at the University of Michigan, Ann Arbor, but also those who accompanied him on field trips through the shrinking cities of upstate New York, the U.S. Midwest, the major cities of Europe and Asia, and the sub-Saharan regions of the developing world. Obviously, most authors who contribute to some of the most recent and vivid debates on planetary urbanization tend to do it from the vantage points of their most recent locations and research engagements. Nonetheless, the four ideal types of city-building at the start of the 21st century appear neatly synthesized and extensively discussed according to five-fold criteria consisting of functional characteristics, metaphorical expressions, morphological features, aesthetics, and governance.

While it is difficult, if not impossible, to escape the book's categorizations and the comparisons needed to wrap our heads around such complex and contradictory tendencies, occurring simultaneously in globalizing and struggling postindustrial cities, as well as in unplanned and highly master-planned developments of instant urbanism on a grand scale, the author's clear theses, extensively elaborated and highly sourced justifications are paradigmatic examples of the use of heuristics in urban studies, regional development, and city building.

Had the detailed notes and annotations been placed at the bottom of each page, one would equate the book with a law treatise. Moreover, the extremely expressive photographs throughout the book, many taken by the author himself during multiple study visits throughout the world regions named above, are likely to create awe and entice readers to visit those places themselves. *Many Urbanisms: Divergent Trajectories of Global City Building* will be invaluable to researchers, students, and those offering modules in urban studies, global urbanism, cities, and even international planning studies. Don't believe me?! If as the adage says, the proof is in the pudding, you ought to purchase it for your neighborhood library and savor it yourself.

Carlos Balsas
Ulster University
c.balsas@ulster.ac.uk

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Mobilities in a turbulent era, by Antonio Ferreira, Northampton, MA, Edward Elgar Publishing, 2024

Mobilities in a Turbulent Era challenges us to fundamentally reconsider how mobility impacts our lives and societies and formulate much more nuanced policies. Mobility is defined in a broad sense (hence the plural in the title), including physical movement, travel, residential mobility, and tourism. The recurring point is that in all these cases, even when the direct benefits of mobility seem apparent, there is always a great deal of cost-shifting: to other life dimensions, and to other people, places, or domains. In the words of the author, the book "is intended to promote debate and generate controversy" (p. 6). We need both, he contends, if we are to address the daunting challenges and wicked problems with which mobility confronts us. Without debate and controversy, we will keep repeating the same mistakes and falling into the same traps, despite the best intentions.

The book starts by discussing the persistent dilemmas that mobility presents and that we have come to appreciate more and more. Mobility is double-edged. It is good and bad at the same time, and there

seems yet no way out. Mobility—physical mobility, travel, transport, residential mobility, or tourism—is "a promise, a danger, a solution, and a problem *in one*" (p. 45, emphasis added). Ferreira unpacks this paradox in one domain after the other. Is physical mobility good for health and personal transformation? Is sustainable mobility good for welfare and economic growth? Is residential mobility good for material well-being? Are ecotourism and green getaways good for self-regeneration? The answer to all of these questions is yes, maybe, to a certain degree, but mobility might also prove counterproductive. It might also produce perverse effects, to the point of making us wonder whether it is worth pursuing at all. The empirical arguments are rich and convincing and supported by a generous set of references.

How should we cope with this by-now-well-recognized, double-edged nature of mobility? It is here where the book takes a more surprising turn. What some readers might expect at this point, as they find in other books on mobility, are ready-to-use concepts (such as "sustainable mobility") and practices (such as travel reduction or shifts to more active modes of travel) for achieving a better balance between the costs and the benefits of mobility. However, you will not find these in this book, at least not in the form you might expect them. And the reason Ferreira advances is straightforward: we have been trying this balancing act between the benefits and costs of mobility for a long time, and it has simply not worked. It is time to acknowledge this failure and to fundamentally shift perspective, letting go of existing views and daring to explore new ones, because "thinking about mobility requires a mindset that allows for *intellectual* mobility" (p. 6, original emphasis), and this is the one mobility we have *not* yet embraced. Ferreira dares us to question deep-seated assumptions about mobility. For instance, we are invited to accept the notion that the pursuit of speed, convenience, and efficiency underlying much mobility policy might be the very problem. Instead, we may need to foreground radically different aims, such as the pursuit of meaningful experiences, or the pursuit of emotional connections to other people and places.

What might (and often does) happen if we do not ask these more fundamental questions can be seen through an illustrative example, among many in the book: the promotion of cycling highways and e-bikes. Cycling has multiple benefits, and on this most seem to agree. It is environmentally sustainable, affordable, good for physical and mental health, enabling of social interaction and environmental immersion, and more. What can be wrong with promoting it by any means? What can be wrong with cycling highways and e-bikes? Quite a lot, explains Ferreira. The problem with cycling highways and e-bikes is that they do not challenge but rather uncritically embrace the dominant mobility paradigm that prioritizes speed, convenience, and efficiency. The result? As the emerging evidence is already showing, cycling highways and e-bikes might make cycling faster, more convenient, or more efficient for some, but might also make cycling more dangerous, both for cyclists and for others, while—crucially—its convivial, immersive, and relaxing qualities are greatly diminished. The example of cycling highways and e-bikes, and the other examples discussed in the book, lead to the same questions: why not *slow down* instead? Why not *value* the physical and mental challenges of moving? Why not *accept, or even enjoy* the friction of distance? Why do we need ever-increasing speed, convenience, and efficiency? Why are we in such a trap, and how do we break out?

These are the kind of questions, contends Ferreira, that we must ask if we want to get out of the vicious cycle in which our speed, convenience, and efficiency-driven mobility has entrapped us. And if we ask these questions, we must also follow the thread through and ask even more fundamental ones, reaching beyond mobility: why should we be worried about efficiency and productivity in our lives and societies? Aren't there more meaningful purposes to espouse? These questions reach deep, and inevitably clash with individual and collective ways of thinking that are just as deeply ingrained. We can only answer them, advises Ferreira, if we are able to truly open our imaginations, "allowing our minds to enter altered states of consciousness on a daily basis" (p. 149).

At this point, I suspect, you might be thinking, what is this all about? I want to hear about viable solutions! I want to hear about mobility innovations and policy interventions that work! I want concrete examples and best practices to follow! It is of course your full right to want all this, but you should also accept that you might be missing the point and risk remaining trapped in well-meant but, in the end, ineffective attempts to make mobility sustainable. Remember? We have been trying this for decades, and there are still no signs of real change. If you want to move forward, read this book!

Luca Bertolini
University of Amsterdam
l.bertolini@uva.nl

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The Beaches: Creation of a Toronto neighbourhood, by Richard White, Toronto, University of Toronto Press, 2024

Richard White's *The Beaches: Creation of a Toronto Neighbourhood* is a thoroughly researched and richly detailed exploration of one of Toronto's best-known neighborhoods. This book provides a comprehensive historical account of the Beaches, tracing its evolution from a colonial settlement to its emergence as a vibrant urban community on the north shore of Lake Ontario, in the eastern end of Toronto. The book debunks the idea that the Beaches mainly consisted of cottage developments along the Lake Ontario waterfront, which was a widespread urban myth among Torontonians. White demonstrates instead that the Beaches are a classic streetcar suburb, in the tradition of Sam Bass Warner. The early 20th century streetcars along Queen Street East and Kingston Road stimulated the redevelopment of farm lots and amusement parks into blocks of homes for commuters to Toronto's downtown.

White begins by situating the Beaches within the broader context of Toronto's urban development. He traces the neighborhood's origins back to the early colonial period, highlighting the initial land grants and settlements that created the framework for future growth. The book delves into the various phases of urban development, from the establishment of recreational facilities and transportation infrastructure to the rise of residential and commercial areas. White weaves together multiple strands of planning histories. He examines the role of real estate development and land speculation in shaping the Beaches, providing a nuanced understanding of how economic forces influenced the neighborhood's growth from 1860 to 2000. White also explores the impact of urban planning and municipal policies, shedding light on the complex interplay between public and private interests in the development process.

The author is one of Canada's leading planning historians and has lived in the neighborhood for over 25 years. White's rigorous research methodology and extensive use of primary sources are key strengths of the book. He draws on a wide range of archival materials, including city council minutes, newspapers, subdivision plans, photographs, and personal letters to provide a detailed and nuanced account of the Beaches' history. White's meticulous research is evident in the depth and breadth of his analysis, which offers a comprehensive understanding of the neighborhood's development. The extensive research documentation is concentrated in 30 well-organized pages of endnotes, which leaves the heavily illustrated 200-page main text quite readable for non-academic audiences. The book also benefits from White's interdisciplinary approach, which combines elements of planning history, urban studies, and human geography. A useful appendix describes how he used Richard Harris's