# Cities and Communities Beyond COVID-19 Robin Hambleton, Bristol, Policy Press, 2020, 171 pp, £7.99 (pbk), ISBN 9781529215854

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# Book Reviews

**Transit-Oriented Displacement or Community Dividends? Understanding the Effects of Smarter Growth on Communities**, Karen Chapple and Anastasia Loukaitou-Sideris, *Cambridge, MA, MIT Press, 2019, 369 pp, $40.00 (pbk), ISBN 9780262536851*

Can there be development without displacement? This question keeps many contemporary planners awake at night, and is at the crux of the debate driving *Transit-Oriented Displacement or Community Dividends? Understanding the Effects of Smarter Growth on Communities*. In this book, authors Karen Chapple and Anastasia Loukaitou-Sideris interrogate the complex dynamics between development, gentrification and displacement in what they term 'transit neighborhoods', drawing on extensive empirical research conducted in the Bay Area and Los Angeles.

One of the ways the book contributes to the discourses on growth and 'smart' strategies like transit-oriented development (TOD) is in its meticulous presentation of mixed-methods research in these local contexts. Chapple and Loukaitou-Sideris clearly outline their stance that any growth should acknowledge the racist legacy and structural inequality of the built environment, seeking to better produce dividends for existing and vulnerable communities. The book is thus a valuable resource for a broad audience, from academics to practitioners and policy makers, extending the critical discussions on equitability, communication and collaboration that have shaped planning theory over the past several decades (cf. Campell and Marshall, 1999; Healey, 1997; Innes and Booher, 2018).

The work behind this book began more than ten years before its publication: first, as a gentrification mapping project, then as a comparative research project by Chapple and Loukaitou-Sideris (ix–xi, 6). Their findings indicated a striking correlation between gentrification and newly constructed light-rail stations, leading them to engage with dozens of community-based organisations and conduct extensive research in 12 neighbourhoods. This empirical work informed one of the book's primary theses: that while the terms are often used interchangeably, there is an important difference between gentrification and displacement.

The first aim of the book is to provide a literature review on gentrification and displacement, including an overview of global topics and a deeper focus on the Californian context. Chapter 2, for example, introduces TOD and compact growth as key tenets of the sustainable development movement; its origins in places like Copenhagen and the much-celebrated bus rapid transit lines of Curitiba are discussed; and then the inter-relatedness of the TOD, new urbanism and smart-growth movements emerging in the 1990s in the United States receive particular focus (14–16). These discussions reveal how TOD can drive what Chapple and Loukaitou-Sideris term the 'dark side' of development, further embedding racism and income inequality in the urban fabric. Chapter 3 continues this logic, explaining how gentrification and displacement are distinct processes resulting from a common denominator: capital accumulation, in which state actors are complicit, and in which smart-growth policies often intensify the speed of change and related exclusionary processes (40–45). Thus, they frame public investment, such as infrastructure or public space, as the 'missing story' in the existing body of literature on gentrification and displacement (69).

The second aim of the book is to embed 'the topic of existing communities' (3), with particular emphasis on long-term residents and people of colour, in the body of literature on smart growth, transit and regional

planning. The book critiques both terminologies and topics in this body of work; the authors cite methodological inadequacies as well as a failure to understand context and scale across planning-related disciplines. The empirical work by Chapple and Loukaitou-Sideris aims to counter this, utilising mixed methods and long-term, neighbourhood-scale analysis, to probe who benefits and who suffers from the compact strategies and TOD often simply equated with sustainable development today.

The authors illustrate this point by showing how neighbourhood change is intertwined with racialised and uneven patterns of urban development. They present a novel methodological approach of 'groundtruthing' (73) that triangulates neighbourhood data and integrates local knowledge, primarily through interviewing, resulting in a richer understanding about the kinds of change occurring. The case study neighbourhoods they discuss in the Bay Area (Concord) and Los Angeles (Chinatown) confirm gentrification as an encroaching process – contextually unique, and difficult to pinpoint precisely – but what is consistent is people's fear: the fear of change, loss of livelihoods and affordable housing for vulnerable populations. Chapters 5 and 6 provide meticulous details of how this finding was constructed through the empirical research into several different transit neighbourhoods (115–19) and the essentiality of complementing quantitative data with qualitative methods (159–65). As the authors proceed through their empirical work in California, a strong narrative emerges about the conditions under which development occurs, and what the outcomes are for transit neighbourhoods.

As Chapple and Loukaitou-Sideris cover significant ground – from theory to methodologies to proposal-making – they invite us to delve further into the cases they raise in

rapid succession. For example, reading about the Fruitvale Transit Village in Oakland (101–2) reminded me of the complex negotiations that yielded mixed-use, affordable TOD housing in the Fleurhof development of Johannesburg, South Africa (Ballard and Rubin, 2017). Like the case study areas in this book, greater Johannesburg has pockets of TOD-related neighbourhood transformation with a wide range of outcomes. There, housing affordability is often threatened by increased accessibility (cf. Todes and Robinson, 2019), and policy intended to provide access is instead increasing land values and generating chains of displacement (cf. Marcuse 1986). Comparing such contexts in detail would thus be a particularly interesting extension of the authors' work in the future.

Development may inevitably lead to forms of gentrification and a shifting of identities on the neighbourhood scale. However, if planners have deep enough local knowledge, they can aim to prevent displacement: first by asking where resources, rights and opportunities are, and then proposing how vulnerable populations can be connected to them (cf. Jennings, 2020). The book concludes that a multi-scalar approach is necessary to understanding development, gentrification and displacement, if transit-oriented growth can become an opportunity to create such community dividends. Chapple and Loukaitou-Sideris thus call upon us to investigate sustainable growth further in an intersectional sense, seeking a more inclusive process that acknowledges structural spatial inequality and confronts the legacy of racism. In the face of multiple crises – from climate change to the pandemic, with tens of millions of job losses in the United States alone in 2020 – protecting the vulnerable from eviction and displacement remains more urgent than ever. Indeed, as the authors

conclude, 'embracing that obligation should only make smart growth smarter' (269).

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**Cities and Communities Beyond COVID-19**, Robin Hambleton, *Bristol, Policy Press, 2020, 171 pp, £7.99 (pbk), ISBN 9781529215854*

It is nearly a year ago that I began to write my viewpoint article on planning and pandemics in response to the *Town Planning Review*'s call for papers on COVID-19 in the wake of lockdowns being introduced in many countries around the world (Goode, 2021).[1] With over 130 days of a 'stay-at-home' message with only one form of exercise a day permitted between now (March 2020) and then (March 2021) in Britain and many other countries experiencing similar restrictions, Hambleton's book on place-based leadership is very relevant and timely in the emerging scholarship on the pandemic. In fact, the book was published in October 2020, just before the tier system was introduced in England which raised many governance tensions between central and local government, especially the clash between the Greater Manchester mayor Andy Burnham and central government over going into tier 3 (Stewart et al., 2020).[2] Indeed, in many ways

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[1] These academic contributions are in volume 92.

[2] The tier system included having different levels of restrictions around England based upon the severity of COVID-19 in a local area. It began in October 2020, was replaced by national lockdown

the book has become increasingly relevant since its publication.

It is full of Hambleton's vast knowledge of place-based leadership around the world. Refreshingly, Hambleton focuses on how the experience of COVID-19 and lockdown can be a force for positive good and change as having underlined the importance of place-based leadership and civil society. Hambleton acknowledges the challenges upfront and throughout of what he calls 'placeless' power (7, 157), including the centralised nature of many states, especially the British state, and the power of wider, multi-scalar economic and social forces, especially multinational corporations. However, the book makes a convincing case for the potential of place-based civic leadership whilst helpfully outlining the necessary changes in the ideology and practice of how we are governed.

The book, whilst reflecting Hambleton's international experience, draws upon the case of Bristol, where Hambleton is based, with a Foreword by the mayor of Bristol, Marvin Rees, calling for more decentralisation and resources. Chapter 1 outlines how COVID-19 has created the conditions, like those after the Second World War, where there can be 'no going back' to the traditional centralised way of governing and he sets out the book's central claim: 'the key driver for this societal change can only be local' (1–2). His arguments include that place-based leaders are much more likely to understand their local areas than placeless leaders, and that the potentiality of inclusive place-based leadership, the ethics of care and the power of civic society have been exemplified by

in November 2020 and then returned in December 2020, before being replaced by national lockdown again in January 2021. There were initially three levels of tier, then expanded to four.

the remarkable demonstrations of human kindness during COVID-19. Although place-based governance is 'framed' by wider sociocultural, governmental and economic factors, during COVID-19 the 'upswing in social solidarity is almost wholly place-based' (9, 11). He also argues that the local defines our identity, and is marked by spatial variability and the spatial unit for the exercise of democracy. As the book is focused on leadership, he contrasts the traditional 'top-down', heroic vision of leadership with 'facilitative' or 'adaptive' leadership whilst developing his own helpful definition of leadership as 'shaping emotions and behaviour to achieve common goals' (15–16). Chapter 2 turns directly to COVID-19 and, alongside charting its global spread and acknowledging the serious and complex dilemmas it has presented, Hambleton argues that many national governments, like the UK, were ill-prepared for the pandemic and have generally handled the pandemic poorly. Chapter 3 focuses on improving progressive governance, and Hambleton argues that COVID has opened a new political 'window' for opportunities, like that when the NHS and welfare state were created (67). He argues that the mixed success of national governments in handling the pandemic contrasts with local leaders who have generally responded well to COVID-19 through successful 'collaborative' or 'civic' leadership (76). Hambleton locates this within the broader shift from 'government' to 'governance', with recognition of the interrelationship between civil society, markets and the state, and contrasts the concept of the inclusive city with the logic of neo-liberalism which has restricted the 'window' of progressive possibilities for governance since the 1980s (63). Indeed, Hambleton argues that the core of progressive governance should be 'caring for people and the planet' (66).

Chapter 4 outlines his concept of 'New Civic Leadership', which, as emphasising empowerment, democracy and treating people as 'citizens', is juxtaposed to both New Public Management and traditional public-sector models of treating service users as 'clients', 'customers' or 'consumers' (89–96). This can be seen in approaches like citizens' assemblies and participatory budgeting, with COVID-19 demonstrating the power of 'civic altruism' and 'civic' purpose (79, 80). New Civic Leadership involves place-based leadership, drawing on the key 'realms' of civil society, including politics, the public sector, community, business and trade unions, with innovation rather than improvement being at the heart of policymaking (94, 99). Chapter 5 then explores how the concept of New Civic Leadership was put into practice in Bristol, as reflected in the City Office and One City Approach/Plan and the facilitative leadership of its mayor, Marvin Rees. Hambleton argues that this ensured that Bristol was much better prepared for COVID-19 as, during the pandemic, there has been effective partnership working and clear communications (116). Hambleton also reflects on the mayoral system of governance in Bristol and the city's management of the Black Lives Matter protests and the toppling of the statue of the slave trader Edward Colston. Chapter 6 develops an international perspective emphasising the importance of collaborative lesson learning and sharing between city mayors, including several case studies. The final Chapter 7 draws out further lessons for the future by returning to the central theme of the book that the fundamental question which COVID-19 has raised is how we are governed and democracy itself (154). Hambleton recommends more responsible capitalism, properly resourced and effective place-based power, and a constitutional convention in Britain. More broadly, Hambleton argues for cities and leaders to move towards an ethic of care with recognition of the potential of civic leadership.

The book is refreshingly readable, and Hambleton is an engaging and positive writer. My main concern with the book was initially the degree to which place-based leaders have autonomy given the multi-scalar, structural constraints of social and economic forces, but Hambleton acknowledges these throughout and makes a convincing case for place-based leadership. Another concern was the importance and challenge of strategic planning to deal with larger-than-local issues, like housing, transport and environmental and climate change, and the relationship of strategic planning with the local. However, to be fair, the focus of the book was on the local. Another minor quibble was the footnote system of referencing and not being able to see which author was being referenced directly in the text. However, overall Hambleton's book is thoroughly recommended for scholars interested in COVID-19 and leadership whilst being eminently readable for students. I am certainly using it in teaching my undergraduates this year.

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