

Chapter 7

**Planning Diffusion: Agents, Mechanisms, Networks and Theories**

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An important theme of planning history as a research field is how and why planning knowledge has circulated within and between countries, a process which planning historians have usually termed “diffusion” (Sutcliffe 1981, 163-201; Ward 2000). The work of the post-1970 generation of planning historians featured these information flows and their effects. References to how planning in one country or one city was informed and perhaps to some extent shaped by the experiences of other countries and cities had long appeared in many ostensibly local planning history studies. In this they were reflecting the reality that, from at least around 1900, there was wide and remarkably rapid dispersion of knowledge of models such as Parisian-style Haussmannization, the garden city, and practices such as zoning and town extension. A few historians identified a new and larger aspect of this: the existence by the early 20<sup>th</sup> century of an international urban planning movement, part of a wider “urban internationale” concerned with all aspects of city governance and cultural life (Piccinato 1974; Sutcliffe 1981).

As this chapter will show, planning historians initially focused on the earlier and most intense flows of planning and related urban knowledge within Western Europe and, increasingly, the United States. They soon extended their interest to countries more distant from these knowledge hubs, such as Japan or those of Latin America, and to the complex flows of knowledge and tangible planning activity within colonial empires. Recently there has been increased interest in international flows of planning knowledge and practice within the former Soviet world and between it and both the West and the former colonial world.

More generally greater attention is being given to the wider connections of this post-colonial world, not only with the traditional European and North American knowledge hubs but with other world regions and between post-colonial countries themselves. The multi-lateral circulation of planning ideas and practices, particularly involving international agencies, is also being subjected to closer examination.

Not surprisingly, given planning history's essentially empirical orientation, the label *diffusion* arose rather unconsciously, essentially for descriptive convenience. The term is used in the physical sciences to conceptualize the natural dispersal of, for example, gases or species from a zone of origin. Planning historians borrowed it from the innovation-diffusion theories developed around the mid-20<sup>th</sup> century within the social sciences, particularly economics and anthropology/cultural geography (Sauer 1952; Rogers 2005). Yet, as more work has been undertaken, the limitations of the term diffusion are being recognized and other labels are being increasingly favored, including *knowledge flows* or *knowledge circulation*, *knowledge exchange*, or *transnational* or *cross-cultural urbanism* (Hein 2016).

Planning historical work on diffusion also parallels more contemporary concerns, albeit differently conceptualized within different disciplines. From political science, come terms such as *cross-national learning*, *cross-national lesson-drawing*, and *policy transfer* (Rose, 1993; 2005). From urban geographers come *policy tourism* or *policy mobilities and urban relational geographies* (Ward 2011). Others, examining international movements of ideas and practices, especially those involving the colonial or post-colonial worlds, have referred to culturally constructed *imaginative geographies* of the places originating and receiving *traveling theories* which mutate in form and meaning on their journeys (Said 1978, 1983). Acknowledging these "culturalist" approaches, some architectural historians have also probed the material basis of movements of architectural ideas and forms, locating them within larger economic, technological and geo-political connections, and "interferences"

(Cohen and Frank, 2013). This diverse parallel work within other disciplines has spawned much of potential value to empirical planning historians in their own work on *diffusion*, opening up potential synergies, a theme addressed later in this chapter. First however, this chapter considers how this movement of ideas and practice actually occurred, examining its specific individual, network and governmental dimensions as well as possible structural relationships to the contours of global power.

### **Agents and mechanisms of mobility: the role of individuals**

Historical writing on flows of planning knowledge and practice has given much attention to the agents and mechanisms of knowledge mobility. A common approach has explored this through the lens of the careers of individual planners. Such figures are portrayed as both carriers of ideas and approaches to new locations and bringers of new knowledge from elsewhere which they then disseminate. In this view, key individuals become *intermediaries*, *missionaries* or *cosmopolitans* (Sutcliffe 1981; Tregenza 1986). Thus the British planner Thomas Adams, working in Canada and the United States during the years 1914-1938, carried British planning ideas and practice westward across the Atlantic and North American planning knowledge eastward (Simpson 1985). The French urbaniste, Jacques Grèber, worked on several occasions in the United States and Canada from 1910-1950, performing a similar role in relation to France and North America (*UHR* 2001); the American planner George Ford, closely involved in French post-1918 reconstruction planning, was another early transatlantic intermediary (Bédarida 1991). Interest in such Atlantic-crossing figures has grown since Rodgers' wider study of the American social progressives who drew on European reformism (Rodgers 1998). A recent special issue of *Planning Perspectives* on transatlantic urban dialogues post-World War II (Hein 2014) has taken this further.

Most countries with an urban planning tradition have comparable figures. Throughout the former Soviet bloc, individual architect-planners became the principal carriers of Stalinist socialist realist principles from the Soviet Union to their own countries in the late 1940s/1950s (Åman 1992), including Kurt Liebkecht (German Democratic Republic), Edmund Goldzamt (Poland), Imre Perényi and Tibor Weiner (Hungary) and Petur Tashev (Bulgaria). In a quite different context, the Japanese planners Uzô Nishiyama and Hideaki Ishikawa from the early 1940s brought relevant Western planning ideas to Japan from German and Anglo-American planning (Hein 2010).

There has been particular interest in planners who worked in countries other than their own (Ward 2005). Multi-skilled professional consultancies in construction, planning, and design are now familiar features of the global scene, but global planners have existed on a smaller scale since the early 20<sup>th</sup> century. The first generation of French urbanistes were well known as the most wide-ranging, including Henri Prost, Alfred Donat Agache, Ernest Hébrard and others who worked in many different countries, both within the Francophone world and beyond (Wright 1991). Soon, however, such figures were coming from a growing number of principally European countries. Notable German global planners included Werner Hegemann, well known for his work in the Americas (Collins 2005) and Hermann Jansen, whose interwar work in Ankara (Önge 2011) is best known; he also worked in several other countries, including Spain, Norway, Bulgaria, Latvia and Uruguay (Wynn 1984; Hass-Klau 1990).

Many worked in the major Empires, particularly in the British and French imperial worlds (Home 2013; Peyceré and Volait 2003). However, there were lesser-known figures such as Thomas Karsten in the Dutch East Indies (the present Indonesia) (van der Heiden, 1990; van Roosmalen 2004) and Yoshikazu Uchida in Manchukuo (Manchuria, within the present China) during the late 1930s (Tucker 2003, Hein 2003). Foreign planners also worked

between the wars in post-imperial territories such as Latin America, Turkey, and the Soviet Union (Almandoz 2002; Flierl 2011; Bosma 2014).

Some planners, such as Jews or those with left-wing views from Nazi Germany or other Fascist states, became political emigrés during the 1930s. Best known were those who moved to the United States (often via other countries), including Walter Gropius, Martin Wagner, Josep Lluís Sert, Victor Gruen, Hans Blumenfeld and many others (Ward 2002: 124-125). Lesser-known figures also played important roles elsewhere. The Hungarian communist Jewish planner Alfred Fórbat, for example, had worked in Germany but then went to the Soviet Union with Ernst May's group in the early 1930s. He finally migrated to Sweden in 1938 where he became a respected and influential planner (Folkesdotter 2000). Another Hungarian, Eugenio Faludi, who had worked extensively in Italy, exerted comparable influence in Canadian planning (Sewell 1993: 53-76). The Swiss architect-planner Hannes Meyer, former head of the Bauhaus-Dessau, worked for several years in the Soviet Union from 1930 before moving to Mexico in 1939 (Schnaidt 1965: 35-7). Others went to the emergent Jewish homeland in the British Palestine, strengthening the technical capacity of the future Israeli state (Troen 2003: 142-3). Britain, Turkey, India, China and Kenya were other destinations for these uprooted figures.

The number of global planners grew dramatically after 1945, operating especially within the late- and post-colonial world (Ward 2010a). More recently, globalization has seen more transnational figures from countries other than the original European or American heartlands. By the 1950s and 1960s, more planners from other continents were working internationally, including Oliver Weerasinghe from Ceylon (now Sri Lanka) and Joseph Crooks from Trinidad (Watts 1997). The knowledge flows associated with international figures also became more subtle over time. Whereas the first global planners usually put their

own national stamp on places they planned, later planners offered a more consciously international planning repertoire. Today, major international development and design consultancies, often headed by globally known architects, are signifiers of the desired global perspective being sought in the world's major cities (Olds 2001).

Alongside actual planners and designers, investors and developers have also become major agents of the international planning flows. Although developers are often faceless organizations, such as those investing in Chinese real estate development during the early 20<sup>th</sup> century (Cody 2003), a few individuals have major public profiles. The best-documented example was the American, James Rouse, who was prominent in developing and circulating the Baltimore model of waterfront development to other American cities and beyond, including Sydney, Rotterdam, Osaka and Barcelona (Olsen 2003). **INSERT WATERFRONT DEVELOPMENT COMPOSITE IMAGES ABOUT HERE**

### **Agents and mechanisms of mobility: the role of reformist, technical and philanthropic bodies**

Planning historians have also emphasized reformist and technical milieus - essentially network organizations for particular professional, pressure, or interest groups - as agents circulating planning knowledge. Many individuals discussed in the previous section were important actors within these networks of interest: it seems unlikely that they could have been influential without them. The specific activities that these bodies organized, and the outputs they produced and distributed, were themselves mechanisms of circulating knowledge: lectures, field visits, conferences, exhibitions and journals, websites, and other publications. Such dissemination mechanisms directly contributed to international planning knowledge flows, identifying which exogenous knowledge was most important and also adapting, hybridizing or synthesizing imported ideas and practice into something more locally relevant

and usable. These network organizations were contact points for potential foreign visitors who imported ideas and practices, among other things welcoming them and organizing visits to key sites.

The most significant of these groups helped create national planning movements: in Britain, these included the Garden City Association (created 1899), the National Housing Reform Council (1900) and the Town Planning Institute (1914) (Cherry 1974). The first particularly adopted an expansive, outward-looking stance in its early years, spurring the creation of cognate organizations elsewhere in the world (Hardy 1991). **INSERT 3**  
**MAGNETS – 4 LANGUAGES FIGURE ABOUT HERE** In the United States, influential bodies of this type included the Committee on the Congestion of Population (1907), the American City Planning Institute (1917) or the Regional Planning Association of America (1923) (Kantor 1994; Scott 1969; Spann, 1996; Dalbey 2002).

Some local reformist organizations were also important, especially in the United States. Progressive groupings of local business, philanthropists and prominent citizens notably in Chicago and New York became significant wider disseminators and receivers of planning knowledge. Thus the Regional Plan Association in New York, funded by the Russell Sage Foundation and responsible for the Regional Plan of New York and its Environs during the interwar years, had a remarkable global impact, its work distributed to major cities in all continents (Johnson 1996). Other American philanthropic bodies circulated planning knowledge globally, especially after 1945 (Saunier 2001; Clapson 2013); in particular, the Ford Foundation funded major planning and research exercises in India, and it operated elsewhere, especially in the developing world (Emmett 1977).

Some reformist and technical organizations have been explicitly international in their structure, membership, and scale. Though most have not been wholly planning-focused (Saunier and Ewen 2008), they started to appear as modern urban planning was emerging.

The earliest included the Permanent International Association of Road Congresses (formed 1909) and two bodies founded in 1913: the International Union of Local Authorities and the International Garden Cities and Town Planning Association (now the International Federation for Housing and Planning) (Geertse 2016; Wagner 2016). Many others have followed, including the CIAM (Congrès Internationale d'Architecture Moderne) in 1928 and Metropolis in 1985 (Mumford 2000; Ward 2013). All have regarded international knowledge dissemination, mutual learning, and the promotion of international discourse as key tasks.

These cross-national network organizations have focused on the original European and North American heartlands, but other network organizations now operate in closely cognate fields in the post-colonial developing and emergent world (Sharp and Briggs 2006). The Slum/Shack Dwellers International formed in 1996 has active members in 33 countries including Brazil, India, and South Africa (<http://www.sdinet.org/>; McFarlane 2006). At best, these bodies give voice to genuinely marginalized groups within nascent civil societies, offering them the possibility of transcending lingering post-colonial deference to foreign professional knowledge, and of using it but selectively, critically, and synthetically with local knowledge and experience.

### **Agents and mechanisms of mobility: the role of governments**

Much active circulation of planning knowledge, particularly that applied to actual planning policies in a new setting, can be attributed to national or various sub-national governments and agencies. Many instances were apparent even in the early history of modern urban planning. Thus the Birmingham City Housing Committee dispatched a delegation to Germany in 1905 to study town extension planning, and subsequently synthesized such planning in city and national policies (Nettlefold 1914; Sutcliffe 1988). In Lyon, civic leaders



and officials sought and contributed to “urban international information” during 1900-1940 (Saunier 1999).

The search for such knowledge has often involved specific official inquiries, policy uncertainties, or shifts in policy. From the mid-1950s, for example, policy changes under Soviet leader Khrushchev pushed many Soviet architects, planners and engineers to study Western experience (Ward 2012b; Cook, Ward, and Ward 2014), particularly interested industrialized housing construction (especially in France) and satellite town planning and development (especially in Britain and the Nordic countries). In the 1960s, the team preparing the Paris Regional Plan of 1965 and planning for Paris’s new towns investigated new town planning in Britain, Sweden, Denmark, Finland, the Netherlands, Poland, Hungary and the United States (Merlin 1971).

Recently, planning historians have explored contacts orchestrated by governments within the former Soviet world and between its various constituent nations and the wider post-colonial world, particularly Soviet-bloc international technical aid and professional training (Stanek and Avermaete (eds) 2012). City-based groups of planners like Miastoprojekt Krakow worked extensively in Iraq and elsewhere (Stanek 2012); a planning team from Leningrad (St Petersburg) worked in Hanoi in (North) Vietnam (Logan 2000) and one from the German Democratic Republic in Zanzibar City (Myers 1994); there are other examples of Soviet-related planners working in other African countries (Ward 2010a).

Some governments, particularly the mother countries of foreign empires, also directly intervened in other countries (Wright 1991; Home 2013). Both general governmental assumptions and specific decisions framed in London could affect the planning of New Delhi or Nairobi: imperial authorities could determine local planning agendas, legal bases for planning action in its imperial possessions, who might undertake key planning tasks, and what kind of planning outcomes would be acceptable. Since the colonial era, development aid

policies have reproduced some of this relationship, but decolonization also meant that newly independent countries might receive technical assistance from several sources, not solely from a former imperial power (Ward 2010a). Tanzania, for example, turned to a variety of donors from both the Western and Communist worlds, deliberately favoring those without a recent colonial tradition (Armstrong

International governmental organizations also transmitted planning knowledge in the post-colonial era. The most important was the United Nations Center for Housing, Building and Planning, formed (under a slightly different name) in 1951 and rebadged as UN-Habitat in 1978 (Ciborowski 1980), which encouraged “good practice” in development-related planning in the former colonial world (Watts 1997). It has directly undertaken planning advisory work but also co-ordinates technical aid from donor countries and matches planners with appropriate skills to developing countries. Over time, its role has shifted, as thinking changed about planning forms appropriate to the Global South and more experienced professionals emerged from within these regions.

Other agencies of international governance, such as the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development, have promoted “good practice” in urban planning, compiling comparative statistical indicators is important to highlight countries which perform “best” and to pressure “worse” performers to follow suit (Theodore and Peck 2012). The European Union has, since around 1990, encouraged a common understanding and discourse of urban planning among its 28 member states, again fostering common ideas of “good practice” (<http://urbact.eu/key-facts-figures>). In 2003, for example, its URBACT program was established with the aim of building multi-national networks of cities to work on common urban problems - for example, urban regeneration, public space, waterfront development, citizen participation - and promote mutual learning.

## **Change and adaptation in knowledge circulation and transfer**

A major concern in planning history diffusion research has been how and why ideas and practices change in their movement. Initially those documenting this phenomenon took purist positions, seeing mutations during the journey of a planning concept (such as the garden city) as misunderstandings or misinterpretations (Ward 2015). Now diffusion is usually accepted as, in effect, a process of partial re-invention.

### **GARDEN CITY COMPOSITE IMAGES REMOVED DUE TO COPYRIGHT**

Thus foreign variants of the garden city, such as *gartenstadt*, *cité-jardin*, *tuinstad*, *den-en-toshi*, or *cidade jardim*, are viewed as perfectly valid, simply different expressions of the garden city idea in new settings.

One result is that such re-interpretation looks in part like a consciously selective process, reflecting explicit decisions in different circumstances. For example, British planners in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century borrowed the Germanic concept of town extension planning (Sutcliffe 1988). Yet they rejected the original emphasis on apartment living, favoring a hybrid of town extension with the “home-grown” low densities of the garden city. French reformers and urbanistes initially adopted this British variant but soon used apartments instead of cottages (Gaudin 1992); they borrowed the garden city’s cohesive social model to enrich local services and community life rather than copying the British physical formula.

In some cases, foreign examples might simply have been a smokescreen that planners introduced to legitimate courses of action with essentially indigenous roots. Land readjustment policies that became embedded in Japanese practice from 1919, though ostensibly introduced from Germany, were arguably also rooted in traditional local agrarian practice (Sorensen 2002). Other changes to received ideas and practices result less from

conscious evaluation than pre-existing differences in legal or governmental systems. These can limit what can be adopted in an unmediated form from other countries. In Britain, for example, it was impossible fully to emulate the local business policies of many cities in the United States or elsewhere in Europe because of legal restrictions on raising and spending local revenue (Ward 1998).

Deeper economic, social and cultural differences can also shape this process even less consciously, as when expensive planning approaches from the West or the Soviet bloc were exported to poorer, post-colonial countries which lacked the technical and financial resources to accomplish or maintain them. Familiar concepts such as *development planning* or *housing policy* assumed quite different meanings in the affluent and developing worlds.

Contextual and structural factors have shaped the flows of knowledge within and between specific linguistic realms. Some planning historians have given such factors and the uneven distribution of global power an important role in shaping flows of planning ideas and practice. King (1980) has described the developed world affluent world ‘exporting’ planning to the less developed poorer world. Reflecting similar thinking, Ward (2012a) has proposed a more elaborate typology of diffusion episodes, shaped in larger measure by the “power relationship” between the countries involved (Fig. 1). Three types of planning diffusion are perceived as forms of imposition (*authoritarian*, *contested*, and *negotiated*) with varying degrees of local mediation. He distinguished these from diffusion through three types of borrowing (*undiluted*, *selective*, and *synthetic*) where decision-makers in receiving countries can exert progressively more control over what is adopted.

<<Fig. 1 near here, caption: Typology of planning diffusion.>>

Although a typology rather than a full-blown theory of international planning flows, this approach implies a structure-agency binary, one decreasing as the other increases. Thus human agency in the receiving country has the greatest importance in types of borrowing,

especially the most critical and deconstructive form of synthetic borrowing. In contrast, structure makes its biggest impact where exogenous planning arrives by imposition, ostensibly suppressing all indigenous agency in its most authoritarian variant. The typology has some value in formulating analytical expectations, attracting some interest amongst planning historians and theorists. Yet it has many limitations as a rather static conception tending to underestimate how far those in receiving countries can affect the realization of plans (Nasr and Volait 2003). And it is by no means the only move towards theorizing this subject.

### **Theorizing the circulation of planning knowledge**

A few planning historians, especially those working on developing and emergent world regions, have drawn explicitly on Edward Said's work in cultural theory to explore this phenomenon of change and adaptation. Often they refer to Said's discussions of post-colonialism itself (Healey and Upton 2010). However, Said also introduced the notion of *traveling theories* that originate in one setting but then, as they are received into new settings, are re-contextualized, acquiring new meanings and different usages (Said 1983). This idea gives a point of departure for Lu (2006), in her work on post-1949 Chinese urban form in relation to the neighborhood unit as a *traveling urban form*. Others show some similarity of terminology, suggesting that they may perhaps also have been more indirectly touched by Said's work (Tait and Jensen 2007). Lu notes how, from American origins, the neighborhood concept was circulated in Europe via CIAM and garden city movements, extensively used in postwar planning in Europe and in Australia, Israel, Brazil and India (see also Schubert, 2000). Japanese planners, having only recently received it from the United States (see also Tucker 2003), introduced it into Manchuria under the post-1931 colonial administration (or

pre-1949 China). Thereafter Chinese planners began to interpret the concept themselves, though it was sidelined under Soviet influence in the late-Stalin era. However, the Soviets brought it back in the later 1950s in the guise of the mikrorayon (micro-district); thereafter it was reworked within China to reflect various turns in national policy, through Maoist cultural revolution and increased marketization. Lu concludes that the neighborhood unit has been “far more than a sign of globalized repetition” but instead something “constantly tamed into different programmes of modernization in new times and places” (Lu 2006: 46).

A more obvious theoretical connection with the issues of adopting and adapting planning knowledge, partly because it mirrors the implicit explanatory frameworks which many planning historians follow, is with actor-network theory (ANT). As its name suggests, ANT emphasizes the role of actors (usually human actors but also inanimate things, such as plans or texts) and networks (the linked groups of actors forming around particular ideas or practices). How long such ideas and practices persist, and how they change over time and space, are seen as a direct function of the actor-networks which form and re-form around them. In relation to their spatial movement, ANT emphasizes *translation*, whereby a planning idea or practice is displaced, altered and reconfigured, with related change to actor-networks. *Intermediaries*, such as documents, plans, books and professional practices, are ways of moving planning models into new policy settings and diverse locations. Tait and Jensen (2007) are unusual amongst planning historians in making explicit use of ANT to examine how the concepts of urban villages and business improvement districts, shifted from the United States to Britain and within Britain. Planning and geography researchers are also adopting the approach to investigate current transnational flows of urban policy ideas and practices (Clarke 2012; Healey 2012, 2013). Although planning historians are, on the whole, more coy about showing the theoretical roots of their work (or simply less conscious of

them), signs at least of ANT terminology do appear in some studies (Hebbert and MacKillop 2013; Orillard 2014).

### **Rationality or imagination?**

Nor are these the only theoretical possibilities. There has been much work on cross-national flows of policy knowledge from the so-called policy transfer school within political science (Dolowitz and Marsh 1996; 2000; Rose 2005). Their earliest work did actually focus on policies supposedly being transferred but soon shifted to *cross-national learning* and *lesson drawing*. These terms acknowledged a more complex process of first gaining exogenous knowledge, then deriving policy significance from it to adapt it for its new setting. The approach has been employed in some geography and planning work on international flows of urban policy knowledge. It has also occasionally been adopted in historical studies of international planning diffusion. Ward (2007), for example, used it to examine three important official British investigations, the Barlow, the Buchanan and Rogers Reports, between 1940 and 1999.

A key aspect of the approach has been the quest for a rational process of cross-national policy learning for those actively engaged in policy-making. Its priority is to derive useful knowledge from other countries that can be reliably distilled into “good practice” within a new setting. Not alone amongst many policy researchers, planning historians are likely be wary of the concept of “good practice.” A sobering lesson of planning history is how easily one generation’s “good practice” can become the next’s “bad practice.” Nevertheless, this whole approach permits very useful insights into transnational policy knowledge flows, unpicking planners’ processes of sifting and evaluating, filtering and naturalizing received ideas and practices into new settings.

Not least of these insights is where policymakers seek ideas and practices. Rose (2005) has identified four types of places from which governments learn: *neighbours*, *distant friends*, *useful strangers*, and those *too big or too good to ignore*. The first names simple proximity while the second refers to more distant places with which there is some linguistic, cultural, legal or other affinity that has created a habit of contact. *Useful strangers* are places lacking these or proximity but whose very difference itself brings something fresh and important to thinking. Finally, there are the examples where scale and reputation mean that they really cannot be overlooked.

Against this way of thinking another can, however, be counter-posed, where cultural imagination rather than positivist rationality dominates. It involves how an external observer perceives otherness, less a literal perception than a culturally constructed imaginative geography. This thinking also derives from Said, specifically his work on Orientalism, that is, western perceptions of “the Orient” and specifically the Arab world (Said 1978). The French architectural historian Jean-Louis Cohen (1995) has applied this thinking to European architectural perceptions of the United States, referring to *Americanism* as a powerful 20<sup>th</sup> - century imaginary signifying a dynamic, technologically progressive, and seemingly inevitable future. As such, it became an inspirational vision, capable of mobilizing European decision-makers to reshape their own cities.

It is a way of thinking which could usefully be applied more widely. Ward (2010b), for example, has used it in an account of British perceptions of Germany as a possible source of planning ideas and practices. *Germanism* in planning history has signified positive qualities of order, efficiency and thoroughness but these are negatively tinged with authoritarianism, relentlessness and even ruthlessness. The approach ultimately becomes a somewhat different theorization of planning’s diffusion, as less an import/export trade of tangible ideas and practices and more an international interchange of symbolic knowledge. In



this vein, Lieto (2015) advances the challenging view that traveling planning ideas are actually a cross-border circulation of *myths*, notions that are little more than fanciful aspirations, even in their original setting, which become so decontextualized in their mobility as to be empty of rational meaning.

### **Conclusion**

Whether planning historians approve or not, these various theorizations within other disciplines that seek understanding of a contemporary phenomenon are being drawn into historical studies. Thus far, the pace in this is definitely being set by the theorists rather than the historians. But the depth of historical knowledge and understanding about how planning has circulated internationally is such that planning historians have more to contribute to this debate. Their methods - identifying and mining archival sources, seeking out and interviewing those involved in the recent past in circulating and receiving planning knowledge - afford rich possibilities. Planning historians can play a central part in addressing this wider problem, bringing the vital aspect of time into consideration. This allows them to examine the longer-term persistence of introduced ideas and practices and of the subsequent connections as they flow around the world.

As this chapter has shown, international knowledge circulation has been a key part of the modern urban planning movement since its inception. It is a subject with intrinsic interest that offers rich possibilities for planning historians around the world to work together, pooling skills and knowledge. As this chapter has suggested, it also has the potential to put planning history at the very heart of urban and planning studies.

## Related Topics

Monclus, Diez: *Urbanisme, Urbanismo, Urbanistica*, Latin European Urbanism

Orillard: Urbanisme and the Francophone Sphere

Kress: The German Traditions of *Städtebau* and *Stadtlandschaft*

Taylor: Planning History in and of Russia and the Soviet Union

Schubert: Ports and Urban Waterfronts

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