

The cryptic approach of the book also leads to scientific insufficiency. It often feels as if one is reading through lists of measures and institutions or, when theoretical reflections are made, as if one is being speeded through enumerations of concepts that are insufficiently explained and superficially hooked-up to theoretical arguments. Obviously, a book review is not the place to scrutinize chapter by chapter what has gone wrong in the analysis. But by way of illustration of what went wrong let us look at the debate on the concepts of region, territory and place in Chapter 1. Some authors who have contributed to this debate are pinpointed. But the rich tradition of debate throughout the world (Latin America, USA, France) about, for example, territorialization, space and social space, regionalization and regionalism is not summarized and put into context. Authors like Markusen, Lipietz and Corraggio are not cited although they played a key role in the international debates back in the 1980s or before. Another example of analytical failure is in Chapter 6 and concerns the political economy of regionalism. Only authors of the new regionalism school and the social capital debate are cited here. These represent only some sides of the picture. Unfortunately, the political economy of regional development (Lipietz, Massey, Hudson, e.g.) does not play a significant role in this chapter. Authors of this school or current of analysis have shown that the first process of regionalism is that of regional segmentation in the production system, uneven regional development, and therefore the impossibility of 'a' new regional development paradigm. Regional development is not the same for winning and losing regions, and many more territorial distinctions must be made before we can speak about a regional development model and strategy for a specific region. Of course Mick Dunford's analysis of uneven regional development is cited elsewhere in the book, but the consequences of his analysis for regional development have not been drawn; a missed opportunity.

By seeking to be thematically exhaustive — few themes in the regionalism debate are not named — in the space of a short book, Michael Keating only exceptionally reaches the stage of analysis. As a consequence, it is very hard to find intellectual satisfaction in reading this book. It needs discipline to follow analytical arguments that remain often embryonic, while the institutional and historical information is too limited to be useful and can better be pursued from other sources such as legal texts and history books properly speaking.

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Roger Keil 1998: *Los Angeles: Globalization, Urbanization and Social Struggles*. New York: John Wiley & Sons (World Cities Series).

How can research on world city formation adequately account for and encourage local intervention? For Keil this problem requires attention to the diverse social and political struggles over city development policies — these conflicts mediate global forces, translate them into built form within local milieus and dialectically reconstruct globalization discourse. Using Los Angeles to expose this process, this book provides an impressive review of current writing on the region and a selective overview of the region's political history over the past 30 years. The book also communicates a sense of place through 60 photographic plates scattered throughout the text, depicting everything from downtown architecture and traffic to street vendors and organized labour protests.

Keil's focus on political, agency serves as an important counter to deterministic interpretations and justifications of global restructuring in large metropolises. For instance, throughout the 1970s and 1980s, Los Angeles mayor Tom Bradley chose to postpone dealing with the Fordist growth-induced crises of economic recessions and urban uprisings through an overt internationalization of the city. This included the creation of foreign investment incentives, an accommodating transportation infrastructure for imports, and a world-city image that culminated in the successful hosting

of the 1984 Olympic Games. In this context, Los Angeles became a 'testing ground for post-Fordist innovation' (p. 99), characterized by the deindustrialization of factories, the reindustrialization of craft production, and the emergence of a vast yet polarized service sector.

The internationalization of Los Angeles has not simply established a hegemony of global capital and anti-urban economic development, Keil argues. The growth process has simultaneously catalyzed *insurgent civil societies* that have successfully agitated for social, environmental, and political change across disparate communities and interests:

the hundreds of thousands of working-class Angelenos, most of them people of color (who are a majority in the city), have begun to claim spaces of alternate civility that represent a major challenge to the Anglo, middle-class society Los Angeles was believed to be. Excluded from the benefits of world city formation, these communities have started to build a civil society from below: in churches, labor unions, political organizations, environmental groups, neighborhood associations and other forms, the poor and disenfranchised of Los Angeles have created a network of democratic self-organization (p. 35).

This concept of alternate, tactical networks operating within the cracks of world city restructuring is a salient and optimistic contribution to globalization and urban theory. One expects Keil to connect detailed examples of these insurgent civil societies to his larger claims about the mediating functions of political struggles. Instead, readers are led through several cursory summaries of grassroots political action and told that important links do exist. For example, in the brief chapter entitled 'Redevelopment', Keil narrates a history of partial successes in opposing the destructive plans of Los Angeles' Community Redevelopment Agency in Little Tokyo, Chinatown and Hollywood, and then concludes: 'The resistance of community activists and labor organizers to the dictates of the internationalized restructuring proved partly successful and stood as testimony that the internationalization of space in Los Angeles occurred in a context of struggle' (p. 170). Unfortunately, this is the closest Keil comes to achieving the book's promise of articulating how local political conflicts mediate larger processes of globalization — the thesis is compelling but not substantiated in this text.

There is a tense theoretical undercurrent felt throughout *Los Angeles* that may explain, in part, the elusiveness of the book's promise. Keil clearly positions himself in the neo-Marxist camp of Mike Davis, David Harvey and Henri Lefebvre, which ideally suits his macro-spatial and -economic critique, but he problematically dismisses everyday practices, cultural experiences and postmodern sensibilities in the process. Keil writes: 'Everyday Los Angeles, first and foremost, is a result, terrain and origin of political and social struggles . . . While the street serves as the classical stage for the everyday, there is more to this dimension than the occupation with sidewalks, asphalt and chance encounters' (pp. xxiv–v). Such formulations intimate that the everyday is always *only* political, and that meaning-making practices are secondary to and separate from social struggles.

Keil then takes this position one step further to suggest that researchers who pursue the theoretical complexity of cultural experiences and everyday life in world cities are unwittingly serving the interests of global capital: 'Authors like Michael Dear and Edward Soja have deconstructed Los Angeles into a fragmented pattern of places and temporalities in a way that suggests the existence of a total(itarian) synchronicity' (pp. 6–7), and 'the neo-conservative celebration of pluralism and fragmentation . . . is a thin veil in front of deregulation and privatization' (p. 232). In this case, it seems that Keil has extended his interest in political opposition to the theoretical realm and has constructed artificial oppositions, rather than mediations, between different approaches to scholarship. As a consequence of Keil's aversion to theories of the everyday, the rich ethnographic detail present in this book's photographs never finds any voice in textual description, and readers are left with summaries or interesting events but not the palpable flavour of political action in Los Angeles.

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