

**Report from the 18th International Planning History Society conference
15–19 July 2018, Yokohama, Japan**

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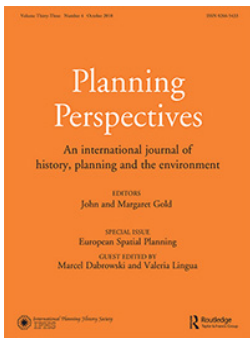
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Report from the 18th International Planning History Society conference: 15–19 July 2018, Yokohama, Japan


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The 18th biannual International Planning History Society (IPHS) conference took place 15–19 July 2018, in Yokohama, Japan. Themed 'Looking at the World History of Planning', the conference asked to enhance and promote the diversity of perspectives and narratives existing in the research of cities and their planning history (select full papers and abstracts are available for public access from the IPHS website: <https://planninghistory.org/conferences/yokohama/> and <https://journals.library.tudelft.nl/index.php/iphs/issue/archive>). The conference consisted of diverse events, which included a pre-forum, 3 keynote speeches, a Gordon E. Cherry Memorial lecture, 68 research panels of presentations, 7 round tables, 23 book talks, as well as short and long tours. Based on a selection of relevant panels and roundtables, this report explores three prominent themes discussed in the conference: intercultural exchange, intracultural exchange and global planning history. It lays out how planning diffusion among and within cultures influenced cities and their planning and emphasizes the importance of understanding planning history from transnational and global perspectives. The choice of Yokohama, a city which has a history that embodies the impact of globalization on planning exchange, corresponded with its goals, given that it was one of the first ports that opened to trade with Western nations under the so-called unequal treaties that ended the long era of Japanese seclusion. The conference took place in the Port Opening Memorial Hall, a Neo-Renaissance building located in the former foreign trade district opened in 1917 at the 50th anniversary of the city's port opening.

The global perspective promoted by the conference echoes ongoing research on transnational urbanism and cross-cultural exchange. This emerging theme has been discussed also in the 2014 special issue of *Planning Perspectives*,¹ and in the recently published book *Making Cities Global*, edited by Sandoval-Strausz and Kwak.² However, as stated by the editors, this approach still needs to be further developed, in order to lead to a richer understanding of the contemporary world society.³ The history of planning exchange within Asia, for example, has not been fully researched; the few studies that do exist are not available in English, or are inserted into the larger body of research on European, American or Australian transnational urbanism.

The 18th IPHS conference provided an opportunity to develop the cross-cultural discourse in planning history. Asian scholars constituted almost half of the attendees, enabling proceedings to

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¹See *Planning Perspectives*, Volume 29, 2014, Issue 2.

²Sandoval-Strausz and Kwak, *Making Cities Global*.

³*ibid.*

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focus on inter-Asian exchanges. Among the themes discussed in the different talks, three approaches stood out: *intercultural exchange*, defined as planning diffusion among different cultures, *intracultural exchange* defined as circulation of planning ideas within one region that has a similar cultural background and *global planning history*, considered here as a multi-regional perspective on cities and their development. These approaches are not important only for history's sake, as they enable us to comprehend the complexity of cities and their history, leading to a more accurate portrayal of the world we live in.

Framing the discussion for professionals and citizens: pre-forum and keynotes

The pre-forum launching the conference on the afternoon of the 15th aimed to insert the history of cross-cultural exchange into questions of contemporary urban development for local professionals and researchers. It was titled '*Re-evaluating the City from Life and Cultural Perspectives Program*' and was held in Japanese. Three lectures by Professors Nobuharu Suzuki (Yokohama City University), Kosei Hatsuda (Kogakuin University) and Carola Hein (Delft University of Technology) led to a discussion over the implications of Yokohama's future urban planning and a comparison to other development processes world-wide.

The introductory keynotes on the first full conference day further developed the question of cross-cultural planning practices and global planning history through the lens of Yokohama and Japan's planning history. Nobuharu Suzuki discussed the repeated destruction and reconstruction history of Yokohama city, exploring notably the history of the Nihon-ōdōri (日本大通り) boulevard. As a planner of the city, Suzuki concluded that designers need to understand the consecutive urban development in Yokohama as an important foundation for new interventions. In the second keynote, entitled '*Connections and Identities of Planning History of Japan: Looking into World History of Planning*', Fukuo Akimoto, Professor Emeritus of Kyushu University further emphasized the necessity and difficulty of mutual understanding.

A third keynote lecture, by Professor Yukio Nishimura (Kobe Design University), addressed the multiple identities of Japanese port cities that were formed through cross-culture planning practices. Entitled '*Socio-cultural Background of City Form in Japan*' this keynote presented seven typical typologies of diverse urban configurations, including ancient towns, castle towns, post towns, port towns, temple towns and modern towns. According to Nishimura, Japanese towns and cities have long resulted from intra and inter-cultural exchanges. Through their intriguing history, he claimed that they are largely ignored by planning historians. Nishimura then ended with calling for a better analysis of varied cities in order to understand their diverse identities, benefiting contemporary and future urban practices.

The Gordon E. Cherry Memorial Lecture by Professor Dirk Schubert, the outgoing president of the International Planning History Society, echoed the theme of the Yokohama conference as it explored the paradigm shifts of planning in the context of social change since the nineteenth century, from top-down planning to civic participation⁴.

Intercultural exchange

The study of *intercultural exchange* concentrates on the diffusion and implementation of planning practices from one culture to another. This includes the export of ideas and methods by colonial

⁴Full text forthcoming in *Planning Perspectives*.

powers, or through the influence of professionals, scholars and theorists. Though often understood as a process of westernizing or modernization, the *intercultural* perspective is much more complex, as exporters and importers constantly adapted the concepts to their new environments.

Several panels at the 18th IPHS 2018 addressed the issues of intercultural exchange. These panels discussed planning practices in the era of colonialism, the influence of global trade, exchanges between distinct political systems and the circulation of knowledge through individual experts. '*Colonial Planning in Asian Cities*' for example, moderated by Nadine Hindi (Notre Dame University – Lebanon), focused on colonial planning practices. Regina Campinho (University of Coimbra) studied the planning progress of three projects of Macao's inner harbour improvement, guided by the Portuguese central government between 1884 and 1919. Hindi examined the intersecting impacts from both the late Ottoman Imperialism and the early French one. Claudia Isabelle Montero (Chinese University of Hong Kong) explored the legacy of the '*Intramuro*' plan in Manila during Spanish Colonial era since the 16th century, while Nurul Azlan (Delft University of Technology) presented the planning practice in Malaysia since the British colonial period. These presentations illustrated how colonial concepts effected the local planning practice, and how it continued to independently develop over the years.

Other individual scholars highlighted intercultural exchange in their own presentations, illustrating how it led to the formation of hybrid local cultures and identities. Han Lin (Hangzhou Normal University) introduced the extent to which intercultural exchange shaped the built environment and lifestyle in Shanghai. Lin claimed that the distinct 'Shanghai identity' was formed by the local Chinese community and western foreigners alike. Jessa Dahl (University of Chicago) explored both the physical and social development of Nagasaki, and how these developments interacted with and influenced each other in the networks of transnational exchange.

The panel '*Transnational Planners and Engineers*' identified a variety of so-called 'travelling planners' and engineers, that is individuals who were involved in transnational planning processes. Clement Orillard (Ecole d'Urbanisme de Paris) illustrated the influence of the *Institut d' Aménagement et d' Urbanisme de la Région Ile de France* (IAURIF) on metropolitan planning documents in many parts of the world. Kazumasa Iwamoto (Kyoto University) presented the story of the Dutch civil engineers' involvement in the development of Japanese ports, identifying three types of intercultural engineering exchanges of building a new port, improvement of port function and development of the port respectively.

The intercultural perspective was not limited only to exchanges between different geographical areas, but extended to ones conducted between different, and sometimes even opposing, political and social ideologies. In the panel '*Adaptation and Resiliency of Socialist Planning in Transitional Economies: China, Hungary, Poland, and Russia*', scholars including Piotr Bujas (TRACE – Central European Architectural Research Think-tank), Li Hou (Tongji University), and Łukasz Stanek (The University of Manchester) presented the planning influences between Poland and China, illustrating the exchanges between two socialist countries in the 1950s and 1980s. They argued that Polish urban planners transferred not only a specific socialist model of development but mediated between international and Chinese planning cultures. Moreover, this session dealt with the Soviet legacy in common trends and challenges in urban development in China and Russia as well. One intriguing story was that of Piotr Zaremba, a Polish urban and regional planner, who played a major role in actual planning processes as well as in education in China. In another panel '*Planning Connections through the Iron Curtain: Phases, Themes and Impact*' Stephen Victor Ward (Oxford Brookes University) and Laura Kolbe (University of Helsinki) discussed the links between Western countries and the USSR. Ward presented the 'Moscow experience' and the Soviet influence on British planning thought and

practice, while Kolbe explored the collaboration between Finland and the USSR through the model of friendship towns.

A group of other panels and papers addressed the concept of intercultural exchanges from various additional perspectives. The Panel ‘*A Global Approach to Urban Design: MAKI Fumihiko, Group Form and East–West Dialogue*’ discussed the manner in which cross-cultural exchanges shaped Fumihiko’s idea of ‘*Group Form*’. Specifically, exploring to what extent his education and working experience in the US influenced his planning concepts. The round table ‘*Creative Port Cities: Transitional Spatial Practices and Cultural Exchange*’ highlighted the importance of creativity for future developments of ports and port cities. The roundtable explored the theme of planning the public sphere, and cross-national exchanges among various port authorities and local municipalities. Yoshie Ota from the Spiral/Wacoal Art Centre in Yokohama showed how the port of Yokohama increased international cultural exchange by inaugurating the ‘Port Journeys’ program in 2011, a collaboration of world port municipalities. Ota explained how Yokohama’s port redevelopment process was accompanied by a discussion among the developers, artists and the general public. Jan Derk Diekema (Director of HaVik, Groningen) and James Enos (University of Georgia) claimed that community-based experience is becoming a tool for public participatory and performances, engaging social learning, ethic, political and economic networks.

Overall, the presentations included largely unknown stories and very intriguing case studies. However, the majority of the projects still focused on a one-sided flow of ideas; further investigation into multi-sided flows of ideas would help expand this important scholar discourse.

Intracultural exchange

The *Intracultural* perspective presented in the conference focuses on the exchange of planning ideas and methods between countries and communities in a similar given area, with a similar cultural background. Through the focus on a specified area, it is possible to develop a regional research framework, which would also contribute and expand the larger global one as well.

The intra-Asian exchange was presented and discussed by local and foreign researchers alike. In 2016, at the 17th IPHS in Delft, Shun-Ichi J. Watanabe (Tokyo University of Science) presented the upcoming centennial anniversary of the Japanese 1919 City Planning Act as a moment to reflect on its regional diffusion and assimilation. In 2018, he chaired key panel titled ‘*The Japanese 1919 City Planning Act System in the World History of Planning*’. Watanabe, who won the Sir Peter Hall Award at this conference, started the panel with an overview of the 1919 City Planning Act System. He then highlighted its ‘*bureaucratic professionalism*’ as reflecting the strong tradition of centralized bureaucracy in East Asia. Carola Hein explored different debates by European and American scholars of the 1919 Act and discussed how Japan imported and exported planning ideas in an intra-Asian context. Hein, whose edited volume *The Routledge Handbook of Planning History*⁵ won the Special IPHS Book Prize at the conference, addressed the 1919 Act’s centennial anniversary as well. She stated that the IPHS conference in Yokohama is a good opportunity to celebrate the historic planning act and to reappraise ‘the constellations of ideas and policies that link Japan to other countries in the East Asian region and beyond’.⁶

This Intra-Asian connection was further discussed by Shulan Fu (Zhejiang University), who explored the modern planning law system in China. Focusing on two planning acts formulated in

⁵Hein, *The Routledge Handbook of Planning History*.

⁶Hein, “Idioms of Japanese Planning Historiography”.

the 1930s with the introduction of foreign experiences and techniques, Fu explored the impacts of the Japanese 1919 City Planning Act on the Chinese 1936 Planning Act. Andre Sorensen (University of Toronto) examined the 1919 Act from a historical institutional comparative perspective, explaining how it became a major critical juncture in Japanese planning history. By examining the 1919 Act as a typical example of intra-Asian exchange, the panel not only contributed to historical and theoretical approaches and methodologies in the research of Asian planning history but, most importantly, showed the significance of planning diffusions within Asia. This panel also showed the need for further research of this subject, with collaboration of Western and Eastern scholars, from both regional and global perspectives.

Japanese colonial planning is an integral part of the intra-Asian exchange discussion, of which the planning practices composed a local planning network led by Japan. The panel '*Rethinking of Japan's Oversea Concession*', moderated by the convenor of the conference, Naoto Nakajima (The University of Tokyo), examined Japanese colonial planning practices in Asia. Challenging the perception of western monopoly of colonialism, this panel specified how Japan exported its planning ideas, including ones it imported earlier from Western powers, to other Asian countries. Nakajima examined the publications of the Japanese planner Eiyo (Hideaki) Ishikawa on his travels in Korea and China in the 1930s. Yasushi Goto (Yokohama Municipal Government) compared the city planning systems, particularly the planning laws and orders, in Taiwan (for the years 1895–1945) and Korea (for the years 1912–1945) under Japanese rule. Masaya Sammonji (The University of Tokyo) followed up with a discussion on red-light districts (*Yukaku*) and city planning in Taiwan under Japanese occupation. Closing the panel, Yuan Sun (Beijing Jiaotong University) introduced the planning and construction of Yamato Park during the Japanese concession of Tianjin and revealed its similarity to the Hibiya Park in Japan, illustrating the introduction of park planning ideas from Japan to Tianjin. The issue of Japanese colonialism was further discussed in another panel, which explored urban transformation in post-war regions. Toby Lincoln (University of Leicester) claimed that the Sino-Japanese war was a moment which brought the history of China's urban planning into global narratives and circles. Koji Hirata (Stanford University) and Liza Wing Man Kam (Georg-August-Universität Göttingen) discussed urban transformation caused by the changes of political environments in former Japanese colonial regions, such as Anshan of Manchuria (Northeast China) and Taiwan. These panels showed that both the Japanese planning during its colonial period, and the postcolonial planning challenges are worth more attention and further study.

Some presentations of other panels reflected on the intracultural exchange in Asia caused by individual migrants, including professionals and non-professionals. Taking the 1929 Taihu National Park Plan as a case study, Kailai Wang (Tianjin University) discussed how the Japanese-trained Chinese professional, Zhi Chen, introduced Japanese and American park planning ideas into projects in China. Moreover, Tomoko Matsushita (The University of Tokyo) presented a comparative study of planning history, spatial development and sociological significance of the back alley in Yangon and Singapore. Illustrating how planning methods from Singapore were adapted in Burma, through professionals that imported these ideas from one place to the other. These presentations showed that individual migrants had played a key role in the planning diffusion from Japan and Singapore, which were the first to adapt Western planning ideas in Asia, to other countries in the area.

Global planning history

The general theme of the 18th IPHS, 'Looking at the World History of Planning', invites scholars to focus on the role of cities in the wider global context, and as a part of a greater historical perspective.

Such a research program requires extensive multi-cultural and multi-linguistic knowledge, as well as a collaboration among scholars from around the world who have developed common approaches and methodologies. The IPHS with its long-standing international membership is uniquely positioned to develop such a perspective.

The themed panels on the *Global Petroleumscape* (building on a concept introduced by Carola Hein) explored trade and commodity flow as major triggers of planning exchanges. The two panels presented the rich dialogues of the globally spatial impacts and their representations in line with the petroleum industry. Planning ideas brought by the western oil companies became key factors in spatial practice in the case of Indonesia and Iran. Ben de Vries (Cultural Heritage Agency of the Netherlands) introduced the story of the Dutch East Indies (Indonesia) since the mid-1880s and the discovery of the first oil well. Stephen Ramos (University of Georgia), Rezvan Sarkhosh, Elmira Jafari and Mohamad Sedighi (Delft University of Technology) discussed the formation of the Persian Corridor. Li Hou and Penglin Zhu (Delft University of Technology) presented the consecutive spatial transformations in the specific Chinese oil city of Daqing since the early-1960s, exploring the manner in which national policies and strategies dictated its planning and development. Their presentations dealt with the transnational oil ventures and how they influenced the local architectural and urban planning ideas. In the last presentation, Carola Hein introduced the concept of the global petroleumscape as a potential tool to study the transitions of both spatial practices and spatial representations, and how they were influenced by transnational planning ideas.

The opportunity of collaborating scholars was further reinforced through a collaboration with the newly established Global Urban History Project (GUHP), a group of scholars who specifically aim to promote the study of cities as creations and creators of larger-scale phenomena⁷. Identifying with the main theme of the conference, the GUHP sponsored 12 panels that examined planning history from a global perspective as part of contemporary and historical urban processes (some of the sponsored panels are already mentioned above). In their panel '*Historicizing the Global City*', Sebastian Schmidt (Rice University), together with Carl Nightingale (University at Buffalo), introduced the group and its main ideas. Schmidt highlighted the importance of such a network, describing it as an attempt to connect between scholars focusing on the same issues in different areas around the globe. Schmidt also stated that such a collaboration could expose scholars to various research methods, enabling them to develop their research respectively. This panel, which focused on colonial and de-colonial planning in Japan, the Caribbean islands and other Spanish colonies, emphasized the need for a dialogue between scholars from various backgrounds.

To encourage participation among young scholars, the GUHP granted several non-tenured researchers traveling grants, enabling them to take part in the conference and to enlarge its developing network. During the three days of the conference, the 11 awardees of the GUHP, were highly active, promoting the network's membership, interviewing and videoing other participants of the conference, broadcasting the projects through social network and encouraging other scholars to develop new perspectives on global planning history. However, their contribution was far from being only technical, as the research they presented dealt with several under-researched topics, such as the influence of the global oil network and the cold war on cities globally.

In order to promote the global planning perspective, it is necessary to form a multi-regional network, which will expose scholars to relevant ongoing research and expose their research to others. The IPHS and its biannual conferences are an excellent opportunity to foster this sort of network, and the collaboration with the GUHP has the potential to enhance it and develop it further.

⁷Global Urban History Group official website: guhpc.clubexpress.com.

Conclusions

In order to understand the complexity of the present and to shape the future, we need to illustrate a comprehensive picture of the past. This is possible only by bringing forward diverse historical narratives and perspectives. As planning historians, our main mission is to make sure that history is not controlled by one narrative or perspective that is dictated by the victor. As claimed by George Orwell in his famous, and sometime overused quote from '1984': '*He who controls the past controls the future. He who controls the present controls the past*', emphasizing how a limited and one-dimensional understanding of the past will eventually lead to a one-dimensional future. Thus, in order to promote a more inclusive and open future, we must enable a multi-dimensional and open historic discourse. This discourse should rely on a variety of narratives and perspectives, embracing complexity and diversity, and this is precisely the main mission of the IPHS and its biannual conferences.

During the 18th IPHS, several under-researched narratives were brought forward, contributing and the multilateral story of planning history. The multi-dimensional history of cities and their planning can be further developed at the IPHS 2020, which will take place in Moscow, focusing on the theme of '*City Space Transformation: Renovation of The Urban Environment*'.

Disclosure statement

No potential conflict of interest was reported by the authors.

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