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## Book Review

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**Planning Asian Cities: Risks and Resilience**  
**by: Stephen Hamnett and Dean Forbes**  
**Published 2011**  
**by Planning, History and Environment Series,**  
**Routledge, 711 Third Avenue, New York,**  
**NY 10017, USA, xiv, 330pp, \$84.49**  
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### *Global changes and planning and development of cities*

Since the beginning of the agricultural revolution, cities have always been the cradle of civilisation, innovation and productivity. Particularly as a result of the recent change factors effecting their (trans)formation such as globalisation, knowledge economy, technological advancements, climate change and so on, while in parts of the world some cities are rapidly growing, in other parts some are shrinking and their populations are aging. Even under the current pressure of constantly changing global conditions, the role of cities in influencing and partially shaping local, regional, national, supranational and even global level economy, society, environment and governance is undeniable. Global changes, while providing opportunities for cities and their administrations to reform and revisit existing planning and development processes and mechanisms, at the same time they are also challenging them in dealing with ever raising risks and establishing resilience.

Presently, more than half of the world population is living in cities and this figure is projected to reach to two-third before the end of the century. Not surprisingly as around two-third of the current world population resides in Asia, Asian cities are now at the heart of the urban planning and development discourse. This is to say, if we are looking for a panacea for problems aroused from industrialisation, urbanisation and other related developments, we need to definitely pay further attention to the fast developing Asian cities – especially considering their rapid adoption of knowledge economy and society concept and norms.

### *Planning and development of Asian cities*

This timely book on *Planning Asian Cities* aims to provide an overview of the significant Asian metropolises and their planning processes, with a particular focus on the critical issues of risk and resilience. Following to a lengthily introduction on the topic of risk and resilience and planning in Asian cities by the editors of the book, chapter authors reveal the urbanisation mechanisms of the following 12 Asian cities/metropolises and tell their

unique planning and development story: Tokyo; Shanghai; Beijing; Taipei; Seoul; Hong Kong; Singapore; Kuala Lumpur; Putrajaya; Jakarta; Bangkok and Manila.

Some of the chapter, authors seem to write about their city and metropolis from the inside looking out, casting a critical and informative eye over the development with their local knowledge. Other authors have a language that seem to look at the metropolis from the outside, combining their expertise as urbanists with general knowledge about the metropolis. Even though, each chapter covers some common ground, unfortunately chapters are not written to a template to provide an invaluable opportunity for comparison between the Asian cities and their metropolises investigated in the book. The other down fall of the book is the lack of a focus on the knowledge-based urban development processes of these Asian cities and metropolises – particularly considering Tokyo, Taipei, Seoul and Kuala Lumpur are being the leading technology, innovation and emerging knowledge economy hubs of not only Asia but also the world.

The chapters explore three main themes relating to each Asian metropolis. Firstly, planning and development histories provide a baseline for understanding the current urban morphology and the main social, political, economical and environmental events that have shaped the metropolis. Then, each metropolis's 'world city' role is described. Lastly, contemporary challenges and risks facing the metropolises and the varying strategies that governments and urban administrators have been developing to balance the growth and enhanced world city status with angles from environmental, social and economical are presented. The book reveals that in terms of scale and speed of urbanisation Asian cities and their metropolises show varying performances. Although there are some similarities exist between them, each of these metropolises has their own unique perspective in dealing with their planning and development dynamics and problems.

#### *Lessons for cities around the world*

Even if there is an extensive literature exists on Asian cities, this book is a key reference piece for students, planners, developers, urban administrators, regional scientists, and urbanists in general who are interested in obtaining a broad-spectrum view on the planning and development issues of significant Asian cities and their metropolises with some mentions on the risks and resilience. Although, the book is missing to provide an overview on future development directions for these Asian cities and their metropolises, and also lacking of drawing solid conclusions and lessons for the other cities around the world, it still is an important reading and invaluable contribution to the literature. I, therefore, highly recommend the book for the readers of the *International Journal of Knowledge Based Development*.