
Green CITYnomics: The Urban War against Climate Change. Edited by Kenny Tang. Greenleaf Publishing. 2009, 298+xivpp, ISBN 978-1-906093-22-8, £35.00

How to tackle climate change is an issue dominating much popular and academic writing, and a debate that received particular attention in 2009 under the spotlight of the United Nations climate change conference in Copenhagen at the end of the year. Despite the myriad publications, *Green CITYnomics: The Urban War against Climate Change*, published in the same year, offers a useful addition to the subject area. The volume is edited by Dr Kenny Tang (with special assistance from Lorraine Tang) and presents fifteen chapters over four sections, which the forward states: 'provides a compelling manifesto for the world's cities in their Urban War Against Climate Change' (p. viii). Presenting work from 44 authors, this book explores some of the complex issues on the interface of cities and their surrounding regions; including CO₂ management, health governance, solar heating and building design. Overall, *Green CITYnomics* provides a unique assessment of how the impact of climate change can be tackled on a city by city approach.

The inherent value of this book is the attention that it draws to the importance of cities (and the region in which they are situated), and their localized responses to climate change. In particular, *Green CITYnomics* highlights the complexities of developing a response to climate change within the confines of existing political boundaries and physical infrastructure. This is an important contribution to wider debates around climate change that often focus either on national responses (particularly within a global context) or the practices of the individual. In particular, several of the authors note the critical role of local government and stakeholders, which all too often is absent. *Green CITYnomics* illustrates a strong sense of geographical differentiation through a series of case studies, situated in city-regions across the globe. In particular, the book makes an important contribution to urban geography by bringing together interdisciplinary work that explores the boundary between the

physicality of the city (i.e. the physical geography on which it is built and existing infrastructure), its inhabitants and the political structures in which they exist. In doing so, it notes the importance of the wider region in supporting cities with resources.

The use of (what the editor terms), 'micro-case studies' adds an important empirical dimension to this book, and in turn allows the authors to describe and assess environmental management techniques such as Municipal Adaptation Planning (see chapter 5) or Clean Development Mechanism (see chapter 9). By including case studies from diverse locations such as Mexico City, Dresden, the Baltic Sea region and Doha (amongst others) the book highlights how place is a key factor in developing a response to climate change. The wide range of case studies has been made possible by the considerable number of contributors, the notes on which gives the reader a sense of the diverse disciplinary inputs important to the subject area. For those who wish to research the impacts of climate change on the city, this gives a sense of the broad range of disciplines that may be key to enhancing understanding of the subject matter. The final chapter makes a strong argument for urban scholars to communicate their research is through teaching to ensure that future urban professionals are equipped with the skills to ensure urban sustainability. Although this may apply more to those teaching urban design, planning or engineering, I found this chapter led to personable reflection on how I communicate my own urban geography research in the light of the climate change crisis.

Green CITYnomics has been written in a very accessible style, with much of the information broken down into bullet points alongside succinct conclusions at the end of each chapter. This makes the book eminently readable and is likely to appeal to policy makers as it allows the reader to quickly get a grasp of the empirical evidence, the arguments of the authors and the policy recommendations made. However, I fear that detailing the empirical research in this way may leave some academic readers wanting. There is very little

engagement with broader theoretical conceptualisations of city-regions and their governance, which in turn could have added considerable depth to the policy recommendations. Stylistically, all the chapters contained within this volume could stand alone, which will benefit readers seeking particular specific information, but it ultimately sacrifices a coherent argument across the volume. For example, many of the chapters commenced with an introduction to climate change, which I felt did not need continually repeating as this has already been summarised in the introductory chapter, especially as the authors frequently referred to the same IPCC (2007) report.

The lack of integration between chapters limits the contribution that *Green CITYnomics* can make, which I feel is an opportunity missed. Given the breadth of subjects that this book engages with, in a considerable number geographic contexts, this volume could have made a stronger argument through greater deduction. In particular, the policy recommendations that feature heavily throughout the volume could have far greater impact if synthesized, particularly with respect to wider theoretical debates. In turn, this would have strengthened the editor's argument that the work presented demonstrated evidence of a 'war against climate change'.

Notwithstanding these limitations to *Green CITYnomics* I see this volume as a welcome and important contribution to urban studies. Although not the explicit intention of the authors, *Green CITYnomics* draws attention to the differentiation of cities through the impacts of climate change, arguably in sharp contrast to understandings of the city that homogenize their nature, such as the globalised, paradigmatic or revanchist city. Instead, *Green CITYnomics* demonstrates how urban geography as a research area, needs to further engage with how our urban spaces are likely to evolve as cities (and their surrounding regions), as they are forced to adapt to local specificities induced by global climate changes. The book also serves as a timely reminder of the responsibility of urban geographers to engage with understanding of the impacts of climate change in order to communicate to students, policy makers

and practitioners ways of developing localised city responses to climate change. Thus, *Green CITYnomics* is a brave and ambitious book that provides a positive assessment of how cities can tackle climate change with specific recommendations for practitioners and policy makers. For urban geography, it demonstrates the need to engage with how climate change will shape and change our cities differentiated by their physical geography and existing urban infrastructure.

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