

Whose Urban Renaissance? An international comparison of urban regeneration policies Edited by Libby Porter and Kate Shaw

The desire of city governments for a 'renaissance' of their inner cities has become a defining feature of contemporary urban policy. From Berlin and Toronto to Johannesburg and Beijing, government policies are succeeding in attracting investment and middle-class populations (back) to their inner areas. Cities undergoing regeneration – or gentrification as this process can often become – produce winners and losers. There is now a substantial literature on the inequitable effects of rent increases and displacement, for example, and even more on the global and local contexts for urban regeneration and the reasons governments encourage it.

But there is very little exploration of the policies used to drive regeneration. *Whose Urban Renaissance* expands understandings of who participates in and benefits from the 'urban renaissance'. Edited contributions from researchers and activists in 21 cities across Europe, North and South America, Asia, South Africa, the Middle East and Australia examine specific cases of urban regeneration. They focus on the policies driving the regeneration process and their effects, on local contingencies that influence the way these policies work, on instances of opposition and active struggle and on the occasional policy interventions that are used to ameliorate the negative impacts of gentrification. The editors develop a comparative analysis of these policy drivers, constraints and responses in the concluding chapters. These chapters provide both a critical, comparative assessment of existing policy as well as a significant contribution to more equitable policy approaches for the future.

This book takes the first detailed look at the policies used to drive regeneration, how they work on the ground, their effects, and the extent to which varying levels of 'success' are contingent on local conditions. A unique focus of the book is on instances where policy has been used to achieve more socially equitable outcomes – harnessing the benefits of regeneration without displacing or excluding vulnerable residents. The book is targeted at scholars, students, practitioners and activists: its constructive policy emphasis and geographical breadth is unique;

Whose Urban Renaissance offers a succinct, critical and timely exploration of urban regeneration.

'This is an exciting and thought-provoking collection. It combines a critical review of the international practice of urban renaissance and urban regeneration, with a profound and sympathetic understanding of local experience. It's exciting because it brings together evidence and ideas from across the world and thought-provoking because it points to a range of alternative futures. It is explicitly focused on the ways in which contemporary urban policy helps to generate inequality, but also looks for ways in which dominant approaches can be challenged. The stories told in its case studies are stories of possibility as well as stories of top-down neo-liberalism. Instead of presenting policy as something that is simply handed down to a passive population, these stories offer the prospect of a world in which active engagement can generate positive outcomes. This is a book that should be read by planners and policy-makers, academics and activists, students and teachers. It undermines old certainties and encourages new ways of thinking about old problems'.

ALLAN COCHRANE, Open University

'Appropriately critical, this wide-ranging and well balanced collection moves beyond the simplistic caricatures of urban regeneration as all good or all bad that have dominated the literature for so long. In so doing it keeps open the possibilities of urban regeneration for creating a socially just city'.

LORETTA LEES, King's College London

'This is an extraordinary and much-needed collection. Porter and Shaw have assembled a truly international cast of critical urban scholars, and their editorial skills have resulted in a book that will surely become the definitive resource for anyone interested not just in the dark side of urban regeneration, but - more importantly - what might be done about it.

Any quick skim of the book will be arrested by essays that are truly riveting. The courage, the honesty, and the genuine optimism of the contributors that there can be something other than gentrification will create and enliven debates for years to come'.

TOM SLATER, University of Edinburgh

'This book will be hard to ignore'

JOHN FRIEDMANN, University of British Columbia