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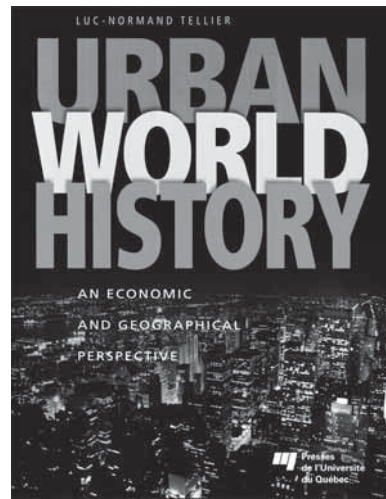
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Les chapitres suivants sont plus édifiants. Des éléments de la riche histoire urbanistique barcelonaise y sont saupoudrés. Une partie des propos porte sur les aspects techniques et administratifs des interventions urbaines alors que les autres sont plus franchement sociopolitiques. Les premiers, qu'on trouve dans les chapitres *Optimisme et réalisme*, *Concurrence internationale et interventions urbanistiques*, *Rôle des techniciens et commandes à des architectes célèbres* et *Les appels d'offres*, permettent de bien identifier les acteurs politiques et économiques et de faire ressortir les objectifs et stratégies de chacun.

Pour le chercheur qui s'intéresse à la métropolisation au Québec, la lecture sera riche d'éléments permettant la comparaison. Notamment, l'auteur critique la gestion de projets en partenariat public/privé, souligne les limites des consultations publiques, et surtout de leur suivi, et fait ressortir, dans le chapitre *Ville compacte contre étalement urbain*, des tensions semblables à celles qui rendent difficile l'élaboration d'un schéma métropolitain d'aménagement dans la grande région montréalaise.

Les propos plus directement sociaux sont abordés dans plusieurs chapitres (*Places, jardins, parcs urbains et métropolitains*, *Équipement tertiaire*, *Nouvelles centralités et mobilité*, etc.) Là encore, les questions soulevées par l'auteur transcendent la seule évolution de la ville de Barcelone. Le modèle Barcelone constitue peut-être alors moins un modèle à suivre qu'une occasion de réflexion. Le titre du chapitre cinq le déclare d'emblée : « Il n'y a pas de modèle, mais des leçons éducatives. » Celle de Barcelone décrite par Capel en est une.

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One cannot paint a fuller picture of the urban phenomenon than *Urban World History*. It literally covers the entire history of this phenomenon throughout the world. But the book has a loftier ambition: Its objective is not only historical but also to test and formulate laws of spatial economics. How better to verify and improve the explanatory power of these laws than by exposing them to the ultimate empirical evidence – the worldwide history of urbanization? Everything about *Urban World History* is writ large: its historical narrative, its conceptual aspirations, its size.

Tellier takes us from the appearance of the first urban settlements in the Sumer Region around 3,200 BC to the present urban context, marked by the dominance of New York, London and Tokyo, and the sprouting of massive metropolises in the developing world. The historical narrative describes the economic, political and demographic circumstances associated with the different waves of urban development throughout history. The reader witnesses the rise and fall of urban systems as empires, nations and trading blocs emerge and vanish. The urban contexts of different

periods are described with remarkable precision and even estimates of the populations of individual cities at different times in history are included.

In a sense, although *Urban World History* is an echo of Mumford's *The City in History*, it proceeds more systematically through the different periods of history. Like *Guns, Germs, and Steel* by Jared Diamond, it also touches on the derivation of general laws in its broad historical sweep.

Urban World History is at its best when it narrates the different phases of urbanization. It also describes the propulsive and repulsive forces shaping urban trends within various space-friction conditions, themselves the outcome of different transportation and political contexts. To this end, Tellier introduces concepts such as "urbexplosion" and "topodynamic theory". The first concept refers to the expansion of the zone of influence of rising cities and the spawning of new centres therein. Topodynamic theory provides a perspective on the urban evolution of the world. These concepts, which draw on the laws of spatial economics, add consistency to the wide array of historical factors of urbanization related in the narrative. Yet, at the same time, it is difficult to avoid the impression that the conceptual interpretations fail to do justice to the richness of the historical circumstances related in the book.

One perspective borders on the occult. This is true of the topodynamic corridors, the conceptual lynchpin of this work, whose graphic representation is repeated throughout the book. Topographic corridors are a planetary transposition of a concept that was developed at a regional scale. According to this view major urban centres both emerge within, and contribute to the existence of these global axes of development. There is no doubt that trade routes and sea currents, the core of this concept, are significant factors of development, but what of other elements accounting for the concentration of economic, demographic and urban growth? Given its

importance in the book, the concept of global corridors deserved much more development to avoid the possibility of spatially deterministic interpretations.

In sum, *Urban World History* presents an impressive history of the urban phenomenon, but its conceptual contribution is less marked.

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