

Book Review: Pineda, Victor Santiago (2020). Building the Inclusive City: Governance, Access, and the Urban Transformation of Dubai.

Cham, Switzerland: Palgrave Pivot. pp. 175. €49.99, US\$59. ISBN 978-3-030-32987-7, ISBN 978-3-030-32988-4 (eBook), doi: 10.1007/978-3-030-32988-4

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The current review investigates equity-justice-oriented values which are applied to sustainable urban development. Moreover, it has been demonstrated in Dubai: a wealthy, world-class, business, and dynamic autonomous city. It reconceptualizes the physical and mental disabilities of differently abled persons and delves them into the mission of making Dubai one of the most accessible and inclusive cities. Also, it is aimed to rebuilt and reestablish Dubai with more innovative, inclusive, rights-based, barrier-free strategies and tactics. The monograph is an anthropological study of urban areas of Dubai through first-hand sources. Whereas, these research sources include the author's personal experiences, observations, focus groups, and semi-structured interviews. Along with it takes stakeholders, surveys, literature reviews, content, and media analysis. Furthermore, the author embraces multiple roles played by urban planner who is already living and working in the United Arab Emirates. The author appreciates a common man of this country who is a differently abled person having special skills and who contributes to their country inspite of their disabilities.

This book exhibits a series of events that illustrate the story of being differently abled in Dubai. It discusses the legal, institutional, physical, and social reforms that a person performs at an individual level in the country. Eventually, it led to the stipulation of a law (Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities and UAE Federal Law No. 29), which protects the rights of individuals with disabilities. However, this change seeks social inclusion and integration through political commitment, planned mechanisms and institutions, and community awareness. In addition to it, the author addresses the importance of leadership through executive and budgetary support, building administrative and coordinating capacities of

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institutions, reforming attitudes and beliefs, and refining the narrative to improve equity and access in Dubai.

The book advocates a holistic and conceptual framework for urban planning of a country. A development-based approach is fundamental for inclusive policymaking, which contains four basic functionings and five freedoms, achieving social protection. In this case, the former refers to health, rehabilitation, education, and employment. While, the latter adheres to mobility, accessibility, inclusiveness, political and public participation, and awareness cultivation. Besides, the book also underpins the idea of spatial justice, which examines the dynamics between social justice, organizations, and the utilization of physical space. This framework sheds light on forming a deliberative democracy, which constitutes a process of joint planning, problem-solving, and strategizing, and strengthens the interaction between top-down planning and bottom-up initiatives. Moreover, it complies with cultural coherence and societal proclivities to adopt international human rights norms from a local and non-western perspective.

In this respect, urban planning is a multi-disciplinary study. The book translates this body of knowledge into building Dubai as a “Smart City” (p. 157), including philosophy, public affairs, public finance, urban development, medical systems, social welfare, social justice, inclusiveness, moral values, cultural studies, the legal system, human rights, individual empowerment, community, and human development. If Dubai is to prepare for a disability-friendly environment in domestic and globalized contexts, psychology is indispensable. Also, the book could have discussed in greater depth the notions of respect, dignity, freedom, compassion, empathy, empowerment, and social cohesion.

In this review, the author advocates for a resourceful and participatory society, which proposes a “City of Everyone” (p. 68) that optimizes social capital. Thus, a disability-responsive development policy is promoted to formulate the creative and innovative measures. In addition to advocating for the use of technology, the book could have probed implementing other instruments, that is, animal-assisted therapy for people who face mental health challenges and guide dogs for the blind to accommodate special needs individuals to carry on productive lives.

Bias and discrimination harm differently abled individuals. Implicit biases about persons with disabilities are pervasive and people in contact

with disabled individuals have lower prejudice against them. However, positive discrimination might also concern recipients if they feel over-protected or cared for unduly. The book seemingly overlooks this issue which may reduce de-stigmatization and promote equal opportunity in a caring civil society for the disadvantaged with physical and mental health limitations. This review suggests deeper discussions on fair treatment to increase self-sustainability, self-determination and autonomy for differently-abled individuals.

Nevertheless, special education equips differently abled individuals with more updated knowledge and endows them with personal development skills. In similarly prominent ways, general education and health promotion are critical for public awareness to understand the physiological and emotional characteristics of people with impairments. Besides, special education trains them for how to live in a diverse community where people are coming from different backgrounds. Mutual-aid groups contribute to differently abled persons' mental wellbeing by enhancing a sense of control in them, by increasing resilience, and by fostering mutual help in them. As it builds a platform for individual and community wellness. The book perhaps could have looked into such an area to facilitate Dubai becoming a "City for Tomorrow" (p. 68).

In this regard, an integrated social model that includes a rights-based model exhibits a humanistic premise with a more progressive capacity than that of the bio-medical model. The author suggests six dimensions and guides the ways to treat people with disabilities, fairly including economy, living, governance, environment (coupled with the utilization of public facilities), interpersonal relations, and mobility. Since, the author demonstrates the contributions of marginalized groups towards increasing the overall productivity of the country after experiencing health equity. In short, the book offers an insightful and practical overview for those people who are interested in supporting and provoking a society full of justice that celebrates diversity and social inclusion.