

The Disengagement between Nature and Urban Modernism

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In Asian countries, commodities of nature are perpetrated by the pervasive impact of economic neo-liberalization. As this book illustrates, neo-liberalism can permeate into various political systems of a country, be it socialist or democratic. This ideology is increasingly consolidated into domestic trade and economic practices of a country, which subsequently impacts local cultural and social practices along with their relationship to the natural surroundings. In addition, social norms also experience a paradigm shift resulting from structures that are often dictated by capitalist rationality. This book is, on one hand, a cognitive ground-breaker to gain deep insights into the manner in which capital migration influences attitudes and behaviours of local communities in addition to deciphering the nuances of the state governments 'attitudes towards natural environment and its embodiment with an indigenous culture. All chapters are predicated on an interdisciplinary approach by engaging political science, history and literature, so that we can break through the boundaries about the triple helix relations between nature, government, and society. This book's analytical capability in viewing nature as a dualistic entity is unquestionable. Conceptually, it demonstrates nature being incarnate not only as an object but also as a subject, depending on the treatment of government and society. When leveraged to derive profits for the state government's revenue and exploited as an economic resource, nature is at unfavourable positioned as an object. The role of nature as a subject of universe can only be felt by humans in the event of natural disasters such as earthquakes and flood. However, humans

seem to be incapable of securing a halt to this phenomenon, despite the use of predictive technology. However, since the climate changes began to be introduced as a discourse since the 1960s, people began to realize that their anthropogenic actions can exacerbate the risk arising out of natural catastrophes. A nature anthropologist Arturo Escobar has long observed nature not in a biological perspective, but considers it 'what is natural is social'. In other words, nature will be construed and used to suit the interests of the ruling regime. In the eyes of capitalists, nature is like a source of profits that can be monetized, whereas in the eyes of indigenous people, nature is considered as the mother of earth to have overshadowed their journey. In this connection, by contextualizing the history of economic politics in Asian countries, this book attempts to critically examine how different societies and countries utilize nature in their urban space.

In an increasingly globalised Asian-urban scenario, the changing face of nature spawns across many new definitions related to sustainability. One example of this shift in natural authenticity is historically reviewed by appealing to the experience of Vinh City in Vietnam.

In the past, nature was still preserved by the socialist regime of Viet Nam as a unifying space for the community to socialize and exchange strategies pertaining to a post-war economic commodity. Through socialism, Vietnam government has developed a green space that can be used to meet the basic needs of rural people on a daily basis. For example, they grow fruits and vegetables for family meals every day; city parks are neatly assorted so that workers and other communities can exchange information and social networking. Sadly, this scenario is becoming a thing of a past. The ownership of green space now lies at the mercy of capital owners, who have built private apartments and shopping centres in the city. By sheltering behind the label 'green' and mobilizing the metaphor of 'green cities' under the veneer of environment protectionism, the industrialists seize the attention of people and then exploit them as consumers. The massive investments entering the country and the vicissitudes of market capitalist are destroying the cultural values of natural spaces. In addition, they also exacerbate the impact of environmental risks, such as increasing the amount of waste, urban diseases, and amplifying the consumptive lifestyles of society. This situation is exactly the opposite of when Vietnam was still going strong under the socialist government, as evidenced by the efficacy of its waste management, and the

availability of residential complexes with green parks and trees areas. Here, we can attribute the state's openness to economic globalisation to its willingness to accelerate the privatization of the cultural space while lowering the social quality of society. Furthermore, the emergence of the new middle class also looks striking along with the social segregation between rich and poor which transpires through controlled access to green spaces.

Having been converted into an exploitative area of capitalism, the city has also been transformed into an arena which can be commoditised by displaying the symbolism of local culture. The link between animal species and nature in Hinduism is monetized as an anesthetised attraction that can bring investors to the City of Bangalore. In other words, the state merely puts nature as an object of exploitation for the sake of promoting business interests. In the context of safeguarding nature, this effort has obviously brought no positive impact at all. Through 'eco-branding' has been promoted as a tourism slogan, nature is being ostracized in a grotesque manner.

Conservation areas play an important role in maintaining the sustainability of ecosystem services for nature as well as special species that are considered to be embedded as the country's cultural identity. However, the weakness of the state in creating a conservation area conservation management system and safeguarding the rights of rare species exacerbate the complexity of the situation for the surrounding community. As is the case in India, as witnessed in a case study of social conflict between Leopard and the local populations, the conservation arena was originally dedicated as a water reservoir protection area. The local forest and crop conservation was not preserved by the Indian government as an opportunity to improve urban environmental quality. Due to the demands of capitalism that use economic speculation to maintain the city's revenue, the government allows the housing construction to be adjacent to the conservation area. The cool air and abundant water supply are a key source of attraction for the upper middle class. In addition, those who want a decent life, but don't have the means to do so build houses and then produce slum areas with poor sanitation. Leopards have inhabited this conservation area since it was established. The decline in the amount of food for Leopard in this conservation area affects the dynamics of foodchain, which then requires them to find a feasible habitat. As described in

this book, upper middle class people who are exposed to modernity perceive the presence of Leopards as a threat and they do not think twice before killing it, which causes the animal to act aggressively unlike the Adivadis who have lived in this conservation area for a long time. Their respect for Leopard as a co-inhabitant of earth just like humans reflects the cultural engagement between nature and age-old Indian tradition. From this phenomenon, this book opens up a novel perspective that every social class in India has a distinguishable proximity to Leopard. The middle class movements in the style of social media campaigns seem to be failing as they do not pervade the logic of middle-class' way of thinking that has been contaminated by modernity which is flourishing at the expense of nature..

Cities with different political and economic interests should adopt a legal system that can draw a clear boundary between all the stakeholders. In fact, as critically examined in this book, the complexity of the legal system in urban areas has led the urban environment to be caught in an endless political debate, escalating social conflicts between unresolved interests. Yet, the environmental advocacy movement was entrapped in prolonged shortcomings due to the conflicting intricacies of political interests within the legal system as well as the obsequious discourse amongst emerging actors. Therefore, this book is a must-read for researchers and scholars who are studying urban history and ecology, architecture, urbanity, and urban planning as one of the most reliable references.