Carlos J. L. Balsas. Walkable cities: revitalization, vibrancy and sustainable consumption

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The author uses extensive interviews, actual personal field observation plus literature review to document the case studies embedded with the book chapters. The qualitative scholarship approach plus the focus on pedestrian level livability reminds the reviewer of the books by Jane Jacobs' (1961) *The Live and Death of Great American Cities*, Donald Appleyard's (1982) *Livable Streets*, and Hester Jr.'s (1975) *Neighborhood Space*. The other more recent comparable book is Moudon's (1987) *Public Streets for Public Use* and Jeff Speck's (2012) book *Walkable City: How Downtown Can Save America*.

Following the introductory chapter, chapter 2 analyzes pedestrian areas within four medium-sized cities in Portugal and Spain with the focus of the impact of commercial urban improvements on resident livability. Chapter 3 analyzes four urban walk-only commercial areas in Latin American cities, focusing on the role of governance decisions and promotion of a "culture of walking" (Balsas 2019) affecting sustainability and urban vibrancy.

Chapter 4 uses Phoenix, AZ, as a case study to view the cycles of growth, decline, and revitalization with a specific focus on policies affecting homelessness within the context of revitalization. Chapter 5 again uses Phoenix, AZ, metropolitan area as a geographic locale to examine the impact of four commercial development projects from sustainability and quality of life perspectives.

Chapter 6 examines the walkability improvements to New York City's Times Square in regard to motivation, design, and expectations of public spaces with special attention to comfortable walking environments versus transportation-driven design.

Chapter 7 addresses the question of whether cities can develop endogenous tourism while minimizing volatility of outside

forces impacting urban quality of life. The case study used in Figueiro da Faz Portugal where traditional "sun and sea" tourism has had to be reinvented as more sustainable tourism.

Chapter 8 addresses public spaces, increased consumption levels, solid waste generation, and climate change issues. The chapter also discusses the relationship between Portuguese merchant's perception within commercial urbanism projects and waste generation in four regional areas. The chapter includes recommendations for sustainable consumption and waste management reduction. Within the conclusion chapter, the author argues for more sustainable consumption practices that improve urban quality of life.

The writing is engaging while figures and photos are supportive. The overall scholarship for urban sustainable practices is good and is well supported by the author's fieldwork. It is unusual for such a book to cover urban livability and sustainability plus commercial economic development. The author, at times, is a little too prescriptive with some of the recommendations. This book could be used as a textbook for urban sustainable planning or policy courses.

References

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