



Foundation for the Urban Environment (FFUE)

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The **Foundation for the Urban Environment Pierre Laconte** focuses on the interface and synergy between:

1. Land use and planning, including cultural heritage conservation and improvement.
2. Transport and mobility.
3. Environment, at global and local level (climate/energy/resources).

Pierre LACONTE (ed.) & Chris GOSSOP (co-ed.), *Sustainable cities. Assessing the Performance and Practice of Urban Environments*, I.B. Tauris, London-New York, 2016.

Main content

- **Part I** examines the built environment at three levels of observation – individual buildings, urban neighbourhoods and entire cities and towns. While charting the genuine improvements made, it also reveals the scale and complexity of the task ahead.
- **Part II** offers a critical assessment of the techniques used to assess global and local sustainability, including the measurement of greenhouse gas emissions, ecological footprint analysis, and the assessment of urban biodiversity. It proposes an alternative approach to CO₂, making the case for this greenhouse gas to be seen as a resource, rather than as a liability.
- **Part III** refers to a number of examples of urban good practice: Urban transport (Peter Hall's last paper), Waterfronts as a resource, Amsterdam's ring canals (World Heritage), London's King's Cross development, Hamburg's energy efficiency district, Lee Kuan Yew World City Prizes - Bilbao, New York and Suzhou, Singapore being their model, and the new university town of Louvain near Brussels.

Some conclusions

- Climate policies are strongly related to national geopolitics (e.g. in China, Russia, USA, Canada, Australia), while addressing common planetary issues. Policies affecting energy use are mostly determined at sub-national or local level, closer to citizens (with examples).
- There is broad agreement about greenhouse gases (GHG) measurement at planetary level, but not at the level of individual urban areas (e.g. the impact of GHG imports and exports). Connections can be made between energy use and the volume of emissions rather than attempting direct GHG.
- Sustainability is linked to circularity, i.e. the saving and reuse of scarce resources, including energy. Greenhouse gases can be recycled towards value-added secondary materials (with examples).

- Best practice in urban sustainability is linked to a space and time framework and to the assessment tools utilised. Examples show the need for good practices to be regularly revisited.
- Management of urban environments requires synergy between local measures affecting the different components of urban quality of life: air, water, soil quality, energy use, etc.

***“a masterpiece gathering the wisdoms of well-known experts
from different fields concerning sustainable cities”***

Chen Yulin, Jiang Yang - Review on “Sustainable Cities: Assessing the Performance and Practice of Urban Environments” in *China City Planning Review* vol. 26, No. 2, 2017, pp. 75-78.

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Pierre LACONTE (ed.)

Energy, resources and the quality of life: from global to local (2020)

This book, planned for 2020, will further explore the future of energy production and consumption at both the GLOBAL and the LOCAL level. The link between CO₂/GHG emissions and climate change is agreed by a majority of climatologists. One could describe this as the domain of “climatology”.

But all observers do indeed agree that fossil fuel consumption - the main source of emissions - is increasing instead of decreasing because production of such fuels is politically supported and heavily subsidised at country level.

Linking CO₂/GHG emissions, which are “planetary”, to energy policies, which are “localised”, is admittedly difficult, because there is no agreed way to quantify the emissions at the “localised” level. This raises a governance issue. The quality of the environment and the policies to achieve it are determined at the “localised” level. They are linked to energy provision. One could describe these as elements of “human ecology”.

The project for 2020 aims to cast some light on ways to reduce fossil energy consumption, in order to reduce both “global” GHG emissions which may affect the climate and “localised” pollutions and natural resources depletion, which increasingly affect the quality of life of human beings and threaten their natural and built environment.

Reducing the total energy consumption necessarily requires appropriate rules of public governance at all levels and of private corporate responsibility in saving resources.

As a case study the book focuses on the central Belgian conurbation, which is characterised by a dispersed system of governance favouring fossil fuel consumption and depletion of natural resources.