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Thomas BORÉN, *Meeting-places of Transformation: Urban Identity, Spatial Representations and Local Politics in St. Petersburg, Russia*, Department of Human Geography, Stockholm University, Stockholm 2005, 221 pp.

Borén's engaging study provides a primer for geographers interested in the application of phenomenological and hermeneutical approaches to urban observer-participant fieldwork. *Meeting-places of Transformation* is in some respects a groundbreaking piece of research, as examines issues of local politics, urban identity and spatial representations in post-Soviet Russia. The study is based upon Borén's long-term fieldwork in a high-rise residential district located outside of Sankt-Petersburg (St. Petersburg) named Ligovo/Uritsk. The general aim of the study is to come to an understanding of how meeting-places in this district, founded in 1970 are constructed, and to trace the transformation of the particular urban space of Ligovo/Uritsk from Soviet times to the present day. Borén's study incorporates Torsten Hägerstrand's time-geography, and considers three codes used to construct the image of Ligovo/Uritsk in relation to its pre-revolutionary history. An interesting discussion on Soviet cartography is found in Chapter 6: *Secret Space, Mental Maps and Stiff Landscapes*. Borén gives evidence that the general Russian public formed better mental representations of the space they inhabited due to the lack of correct maps under the Soviet regime, which falsified and distorted map features as part of its cold-war strategy.

The study opens with scene that could be found in a work by Dostoevsky, with Borén's host Elena Alekseevna sitting on a stool chopping cabbage into salad, whilst newly fallen snow drapes the worn Ligovo/Uritsk high-rise buildings outside her window. Borén recognises that in the lifeworld of this district he is considered a *inostranets* (foreigner) and states early on in this study that his experience of field work falls under James Scott's conception of *mētis*. He writes

*Mētis* comes from living in, and with a certain environment, and is the opposite of generalised knowledge and scientific theories. It is localised and a form of reasoning most suited to.

Borén writes citing Scott

... [the] complex material and social tasks where uncertainties are so daunting that we must trust our (experienced) intuition and feel our way.

Drawing upon his fieldwork Borén provides a sketch of the Soviet type high rise district in which he is studying, and then considers the region of Sankt Petersburg as a spatial text and juxtaposes its symbolic landscape with what he considers Ligovo's *genius loci*. He further considers the role of political structure, communication and local media in the inhabitants of Ligovo/Uritsk's construction of place.

Borén concludes his study by writing

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His model ca theoretical applic comes into cont 'Uritsk') from a thinking intent ir ontology, of time provides a means space as a meeti Russia, as its inh closes his worth; Vsevolod Anuchin

... without specific no geography.

In *Meeting-Pl* Anuchin's observ Russia, drawing up regards to contemp

David ADAMS, *Public Policy a* xx + 280.

As Henry Wai-chu new economic ge methodologies and claims would app particular strand quantitative meth deterministic relati are widely used, motivations of pro quantify. This book state in the first cha

... that the construction of space is understood on the basis of a model that secures the geographical understanding of this construction in relation to scale-dependent factors of space and time.'

His model can be found in the intersection of a 'double hermeneutic' circle in which theoretical applications (e.g. Jürgen Habermass's reading of lifeworld) of the first circle comes into contact with empirical evidence (e.g. the *Munitsipalnyy okrug*, No 40, 'Uritsk') from a second circle within the space of his model. Borén writes that 'the thinking intent in the model contains the funnelling of focus from the worldview, or ontology, of time-geography via its epistemological landscape equivalent'. This model provides a means to explore the phenomena of spatial change and the constructions of space as a meeting place from the perspective of a marginalised corner of suburban Russia, as its inhabitants adapt to the transformations of a post-Soviet landscape. Borén closes his worthy and invaluable study with an epigraph from Soviet Geographer Vsevolod Anuchin, which states

... without specific works representing the local characteristics of countries and regions, there is no geography.

In *Meeting-Places of Transformation* Borén has illustrated the significance of Anuchin's observation, as well providing an invaluable piece of fieldwork in post-Soviet Russia, drawing upon theoretical frameworks, which need to be seriously re-examined in regards to contemporary approaches in humanistic geography.

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**David ADAMS, Craig WATKINS and Michael WHITE (eds), *Planning, Public Policy and Property Markets*, Blackwell Publishing, Oxford 2005, xx + 280.**

As Henry Wai-chung Yeung states in his recent thought-provoking articles, practising new economic geography necessarily entails a critical re-evaluation of different methodologies and merging of different methods. It could be reasonably argued that this claims would appear to be important in property market studies. Currently, in this particular strand of economic geography, there is a marked tendency to deploy quantitative methods stemming from neo-classical economies. Models implying deterministic relationships expressed usually by different kinds of regression equations are widely used, however. There are some aspects of public policy, as well as motivations of property market actors, that are very difficult (if not impossible) to quantify. This book, at least in part, escapes the above-mentioned pattern. As the editors state in the first chapter (an introduction and the book's general overview):