

Afterword

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Researchers and policy planners have placed increasing prominence on the history of the diffusion of ideas and models that shaped planning systems and environments, as well as the ways these ideas and models turned into reality. When these studies have focused on the diffusion that has occurred within the sphere of the so-called developed world, the participant stakeholders are considered to be relatively equal partners. When this diffusion takes place between the developed and the developing world, however, these exchanges are often considered to be a one-way imposition where the recipients are silent or oppressed. After World War II, and after the coming decades where colonialism and colonial processes came to an end, a whole new space for the diffusion of ideas and models emerged. International cooperation agencies became the main drivers in providing support to the developing world for turning new projects into reality and, consequently, scholars have begun to explore the outcomes of such processes in more complex and multidirectional ways.

Among these emerging ideas and models, land readjustment has been practiced and disseminated for more than 100 years and the last decade has witnessed unprecedented academic and practical interest in land readjustment as an urban planning instrument. On the negative side, experience has shown that, in practice, the land readjustment instrument is not easy to adapt and implement. It faces numerous challenges, such as existing path dependent planning policies, the correction of coordination failures, and necessary institutional improvements and reconfigurations. Also, as more collective actions are needed, the more complex and complicated its application becomes. Moreover, its application may not serve the same goals in different economic and social contexts under the penalty of misplaced ideas.

On the positive side, land readjustment has enormous potential to contribute to the achievement of fundamental democratic principles. This could include promoting the just use of government power based upon the consent of the governed, political equality through the fair distribution of costs and benefits of urban development, and transparent decision-making processes through fair elections of the representatives in charge to implement the project. By investigating the adaptation and implementation processes of land readjustment in the developed and developing worlds, this volume makes an important contribution to the international literature on land readjustment as it consistently exposes the difficulties involved in applying it. The urge to provide an overly

idealistic picture of land readjustment would be misleading, both because it becomes more difficult to understand the opposition found in many places – even in Japan where most modern expertise comes from – and because it hides the efforts of governments and civil society to overcome multiple obstacles in order to undertake successful projects.

Nowadays, there is significant international interest regarding the reorganization of urban properties and control of urban growth. This is related to the promise of more efficient and less costly urban systems and planning methods, as well as expectations of better and more qualified services with greater public control, financial accountability and more transparent government. Even in situations of economic crises and stagnation, the demand for urban transformation still persists and many countries in the developing world are taking the opportunity to introduce real transformations and improvements in their urban and rural environments with land readjustment. In addition to all questions related to land readjustment implementation as an innovative element – considerations that are a key focus of this book – there is no doubt that governments and the civil societies might focus on quality growth to upgrade their urban development processes by using better mechanisms for land reorganization and further construction of collective spaces.

Takeo Ochi

When I think about land adjustment in various countries, two photographs come to mind. The first was taken in Thailand and the second was taken in Nepal. The Thai picture shows a ceremony handing over the land title deeds for a land readjustment project site. The government officials standing side by side are giving the title deeds to landowners simultaneously. Both those who are receiving the titles and those who are handing them over show happy smiling faces. Even though various kinds of opposition and conflict had occurred during the project, in the face of a well-developed urban infrastructure and living environment, all parties were eventually satisfied with the finished project. Based on my long experiences with land readjustment projects, I can definitely say that this was the case. The Nepali picture is an aerial photo of Kathmandu Valley. We can easily identify the completed land readjustment project areas in the picture. The areas in the photo that show a dense road network, are all land readjustment project areas. A picture is worth a thousand words. The photograph reflects the great endeavor and achievements of the Nepali land readjustment experts.

During the annual two-month long JICA land readjustment training program, we always discuss the definition of land readjustment in the first session. I tell the participants that if development involves the following three elements, we can call it land readjustment:

1. It is an urban development method through conversion of land and building rights;
2. It has a distribution mechanism for the fair sharing of costs and benefits; and
3. It has a mechanism for the participation of property rights holders and concerned citizens within the project.

Based on these three elements or principles, countries can make use of land readjustment in a flexible manner according to the situation in their own countries. Land readjustment is pre-eminently an instrument for diverse urban development. In other words, land readjustment requires our creative ingenuity. In Chapter 4, I introduced land readjustment practices in Thailand, Nepal, and Colombia. I can say that those practices are the results of their ingenuities. Land readjustment can be used for development of urban infrastructure, conversion of urban function, reconstruction of disaster-hit areas, the supply of houses and residential land, redevelopment of an unplanned urbanized area, guaranteeing people land, consolidation of fragmented land, and the elimination of dead end roads, etc. Let us apply land readjustment wisely to address a wide range of urban problems.

In contrast, land readjustment projects are often criticized for being too lengthy. Coordination and negotiation with rights holders is time consuming. These complaints are similar to those that say that democracy requires significant costs and time. However, we know empirically that once consensus among the parties concerned has been reached, the project goes smoothly; ignoring the voices of rights holders often stops the project for long periods of time. We always need to return to the questions of what and who the development is for.

The network of alumni of the JICA land readjustment training programs are a valuable asset to me. I am glad that they have grown and now play an important role as regional leaders in land readjustment. Colombia is now a leader within Latin America and continues to support Brazil and Costa Rica to apply land readjustment in their countries. Thailand is becoming the center of land readjustment dissemination within Asia. A new global network of land readjustment experts who contributed to Chapter 3, was also formed through the creation of this book. I do hope that this book will contribute to strengthening the bonds between land readjustment experts and practitioners throughout the world and will promote a new human network of land readjustment.

Akio Hosono

Over the past few years, “quality of growth” has been receiving increasing attention in academic and policy communities, particularly in terms of its connections to inclusiveness, sustainability, resilience and other key areas. In Asia and the Pacific region, Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) leaders agreed on an “APEC Growth Strategy” in 2010, and stressed that “quality of growth” needs to be improved. In 2015, the Japanese government released its “Development Cooperation Charter,” emphasizing that one of the most important challenges of development is “quality growth” and poverty eradication through such growth.

At the same time, “economic and social transformation” has featured more prominently in recent policy debates on growth and development, including the post-2015 “Sustainable Development Goals” (SDGs) discussions. Focusing on economic transformation, the Asian Development Bank’s flagship report 2013 establishes a distinction between development and aggregate growth, arguing that aggregate growth can occur without significant transformation, as has happened in some oil-rich economies. This report highlights five key components of structural transformation. One of them is urbanization.

As discussed in the Foreword by Dr. Naohiro Kitano the urbanization component is articulated in Goal 11 of the SDGs, which calls on governments and other stakeholders to “[m]ake cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable.” This goal matters significantly in efforts to achieve quality growth, especially for developing countries, because accelerated urbanization will continue to take place in developing countries over the coming decades. According to United Nations’ estimations, the global urban population will grow by an additional 2.5 billion people by 2050, with nearly 90% of that growth occurring in Africa and Asia. The “World Development Report 2016” states that rapid urbanization in the developing world “creates urgency to get our cities ‘right’ because global response to our most pressing challenges – from climate change to rising inequality – will likely succeed or fail in cities.” We could consider this concept of getting cities “right” as realizing “quality urbanization.”

In this context, land readjustment could provide an effective approach toward realizing “quality urbanization” and attaining Goal 11 of the SDGs. However, land readjustment alone is unlikely to achieve the expected outcomes. As the Introduction and Chapter 4 of this volume have shown, land readjustment should be applied comprehensively and strategically in addressing the issues that face developing countries. This includes not only infrastructure development, slum upgrading and the guarantee

of property rights but also urban management, urban governance, climate change mitigation/adaptation, and so forth.

In this regard, it is critical to envisage comprehensive ways of achieving “quality urbanization” that can be adapted to the many diverse realities of developing countries. Further in-depth study is needed, drawing from theoretical and empirical analysis of past experiences. This volume has provided some substantial insights into recent initiatives and their outcomes. For example, land readjustment in Medellín, Colombia, applied to urban slums, together with several measures implemented in the same period, has achieved substantial improvements within informal settlements in high-risk areas. In general, pro-poor policies, infrastructure for better access to jobs, education and health, and land readjustment could produce synergies and effectively address the challenges faced by urban slums.

Since the mid-2000s, several “smart city” initiatives have been carried out to make cities more sustainable. It is important to note that smart city development projects have recently emphasized both sustainability and inclusion. The “World Development Report 2016” identifies three exemplary practices for smart cities: using data to address the most vulnerable populations (e.g. São Paulo), opening up data to promote accountability (e.g. Nairobi), and using mobile connectivity to enhance civic participation (e.g. Philippines). The alignment of land readjustment projects to these and other initiatives of smart cities appears to constitute a very promising approach.

In summary, land readjustment could provide an important instrument for development and redevelopment of urban areas, and potentially for “quality urbanization” which is essential for quality growth in the contemporary developing world. I strongly hope that this volume has offered meaningful insights into inclusive, sustainable, and resilient urbanization by identifying the advantages and challenges of land readjustment, and hence, helped to identify steps that can be taken toward the attainment of quality growth and poverty reduction through such growth.

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