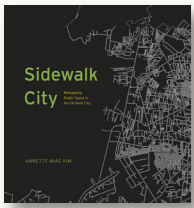


SIDEWALK CITY: REMAPPING PUBLIC SPACE IN HO CHI MINH CITY —



By Anette Miae Kim.

The University of Chicago Press, 2015

264 pages, 52 images. \$45.00, hardcover.

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Review by: Fábio Gil Rodrigues, University of Lisbon

Anette Kim's *Sidewalk City: Remapping Public Space in Ho Chi Minh City* presents narrative research on sidewalk life in that Vietnamese city. Dr. Kim is the Director of the Spatial Analysis Lab (SLAB) at the Sol Price School of Public Policy of the University of Southern California and an Associate Professor at the same University, as well as a researcher at Peking University. She holds a Ph.D. in City and Regional Planning from the University of California, with several published papers and books about public spaces uses, regulation and urban planning practices, spatial ethnography and critical cartography, with a focus on emergent Asia.

Sidewalk City takes the reader on a journey throughout the author's framework analysis of public spaces—namely the sidewalk—from a historical and geopolitical contextualization, to a critical analysis of the results, to visual narratives and further applications. It is important to bear in mind the differences between West and South East Asia when it comes to spatial planning and urban design.

In her first chapter, “Seen and Unseen: Ho Chi Minh City's Sidewalk Life,” the author writes about her return to Ho Chi Minh City and frames for the reader the reality of the city and the importance of the life on the sidewalks, taking them to the origin of the book's theme and forming a solid theoretical background. The author clarifies her definition of public spaces and compares several authors'—however, those definitions neglect the importance of sidewalks.

As she compares analytic reviews of public spaces, such as Kevin Lynch's cognitive map or William Whyte's Street Life Project, Kim's major critique becomes apparent: public place analysis consists of spatial ethnography, property rights of public space, and critical cartography—but these have never been used together, creating a gap between social sciences and urban design.

Spatial ethnography conceptualizes the everyday challenges of people within the “spaces” that urban designers have created. Likewise, the importance of examining property rights on sidewalks is clear, including the usage of sidewalks and shared space, and issues of ownership and negotiation. These two concepts lead to the final important subject listed by the author: critical cartography and the creation of “lines of power and sovereignty.” Maps empower ownership and create a narrative upon the land, bringing comprehension, awareness, and spatial relationships upon mapped elements or objects.

In the second chapter, “Tropical Paris and Chinatown: The History and Resilience of Ho Chi Minh City's Sidewalk,” Kim provides the reader with a historical background, covering the transformation of the region during recent centuries and the social, cultural, and psychological heritages coming from those transformations. She writes that “sidewalks are physical and cultural legacies that we live with today” (28).

Kim takes the reader through Ho Chi Minh City's origins as the two physically separated cities of Saigon and Cholon, and continues with the growth of the kingdom and the differences in both cities up until colonialism. She then covers the predictable human behavior of Saigon under French regulation and the “vibrant sidewalk life” (30) of Cholon under Chinese regulation, followed by war and later independence. Each of these heritages have contributed to the city's design and the changing uses of the sidewalk, due to economic, political and social factors which have influenced society and people.

The third chapter, titled “Looking Again: Power and Critical Cartography,” covers the importance of maps and mapping. The author defines critical cartography as “the subset of mapmaking that aims to bring to the fore issues of power” (56), claiming that maps are both a result and an origin of power. Representing more than a point of view, maps play a major role in knowledge, place identification, and shaping and sharpening regions and societies.

The author reviews the cartographic history of the development of Ho Chi Minh City, while also discussing and criticizing current views on critical cartography. She divides the history of critical cartography into two generations. The first focused on how colonial and imperial

mapmaking evoked power and privilege; maps' economic purposes and roles in legal and property disputes; and their role in solidifying a society's concept of its empire and colonies. Kim describes the second generation as understanding the role of the map in society. New mapping software offers tools and techniques that allow the critical deconstruction and reconstruction of the map through the re-arrangements of visual elements. The role of maps in society keeps changing, shaping and sharpening it.

Throughout the text, the contemporary evolution and development of mapmaking in Ho Chi Minh City is also seen, as the author illustrates many points with concrete examples.

The fourth chapter, "Mapping the Unmapped: Mixed-Use Sidewalk Spaces" is divided into two parts: (1) a description of the methodology used for gathering data for the project, and (2) the creation of maps that empower the sidewalk—unveiling its life, and revealing a new paradigm from the study's findings: the mixed-use spaces of the "sidewalk life" (147).

The author's study was conducted in two neighborhoods of Ho Chi Minh City: District 1 in the former Saigon portion, and District 5 in the former Cholon portion. Those neighborhoods were later delimited at the ward level, starting in January 2010, comprising 165,141 square meters of analyzed sidewalk space, and 6490 counted people.

The author began by observing the surrounding space in order to understand the spatial ethnography of the sidewalks in her study. Then, she carried out a physical survey, geolocating 3876 observations of vendors on the sidewalks, organized by category and gender. 270 vendors were interviewed and more than 3000 photographs were taken.

The resulting visualizations provided qualitative information about the vendors, commuting and living in the city, as well as ten beautiful and well-conceived maps and map metaphors about life on the sidewalks. Additionally, as a result of interpreting this study, the author stumbled upon the paradigm of mixed-use sidewalk vendors.

Chapter 5, "Drawing New Lines on the Pavement: Street Vendors and Property Rights in Public Space," reveals the importance of understanding the background of street policies in Ho Chi Minh City; the protection and regulation of street vendors plays a role in safety, public health, and

discrimination. However, creating such regulations can be a very arduous matter, a process made difficult mainly because, as the author writes, local authorities and society have drifted apart; Kim appeals for discussion.

The final analytic chapter, Chapter 6 — "The Tourist Map: Altering Visions of What Sidewalks Are and Could Be" — features the author's proposal for a visual representation of their collected data that might interest both local authorities and sidewalk vendors. Kim advocates for a discussion among several institutions for effective policies on sidewalk life, guided by visual information which helps illustrate theories that might, on the one hand, improve sidewalk vendor legislation and, on the other hand, boost the growth of tourists that influence the local and regional economy. By creating adequate measures and strategies for valuing the opportunities of the city's life, the use of the sidewalk is legitimated and becomes part of a multi-level social consideration.

The final chapter, "Reconsidering Sidewalks as Public Space," is presented as a reflection. Here, the reader is invited to ponder the importance of the shape of the space itself, the methodology used, the data collected, and the issues that arose while understanding local policies and property rights. It summarizes the entire text in a succinct format, while highlighting every important aspect of the author's theoretical framework, as well as her praxis.

ANALYSIS & VERDICT:

Prior to the text, the chapter index would be better off including a listing of subchapters. Additionally, the length and verbal complexity of the chapter titles might end up confusing readers or lead them to misinterpretation.

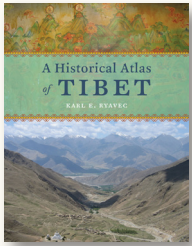
The journey of the initial chapters, in which the author led us throughout the history of Ho Chi Minh City and the theoretical concepts of spatial ethnography, legislation and policy of property rights, and critical cartography, provided a solid framework for understanding the issues found later in the book; it made possible an easy reading of her logic. Kim's combination of various social science and urban design methodologies reveals her broad knowledge, and also offers evidence that these fields are not isolated from one another.

Her usage of several data collection methods, such as surveys, interviews, and physical observations, as well as

employment of a multi-cultural team, are revealed to be effective yet time consuming. However, overcoming a reliance on GPS data extraction by using a paper map and pen could enhance error propagation.

The author makes understandable and coherent the dilemma of how to classify and measure mixed-use spaces, as well as how she overcame it. She also discusses the biases in measuring both the surface area occupied per vendor and the number of entrepreneurs, due to the over- and undercounting of both variables. Her explanations further clarify analysis of the results and strengthen the argument for her choices.

A HISTORICAL ATLAS OF TIBET



by Karl E. Ryavec

University of Chicago Press, 2015

216 pages, 121 color plates. \$45.00, hardcover

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Review by: Mark Denil

Tibet is one of those places that conjures visions of the sublime; the so-called “roof of the world”: remote, insular, hermetic, forbidding (and forbidden), mystic, magical, and far, far away. For many, it is the land of the Lost Horizon of *Shangri-la* (that Hugh Conway first fled, then sought to re-find), or of *Khor-Biyong* (where Tintin found refuge), while for others it may be the terrestrial kingdom of the exiled Dalai Lama, or perhaps the locale of the northern half of that peak in the Mahalangur mountain range known as Chomolungma, where, in 1924, George Mallory and Andrew Irvine disappeared into the clouds. Whatever else it is, it is an area that has seen tens of thousands of years of human habitation; an area that has nurtured native cultures, and has absorbed and changed invasive ones. It has been a crossroads of trade and a wellspring of spirituality, and it has been both the seat of some empires and the back-country hinterland of others.

Two things, however, that Tibet has hitherto lacked have been a seacoast and a historical atlas. While there seems little prospect for the former, Karel R. Ryavec, of the University of California, Merced, has toiled for

As a final verdict, this book may become an essential reading when analyzing public spaces. Every chapter of the book introduces an important step for their analysis, whether the subject is sidewalk living areas or public spaces at another scale. It is important to understand the connection people have to the space and place itself, in order to create bottom-up policies and regulations that fulfill the population’s needs. Mitigating gaps among social groups requires creating links between policy makers, authorities, and these social groups.

twenty years to supply us with the latter. Thus, in 2015, the University of Chicago Press presented us with the fruit of that labor: Ryavec’s *A Historical Atlas of Tibet*.

The volume itself is a typical University of Chicago Press product: smooth, high-quality pages firmly bound between solid boards covered with green cloth, and sporting a matte-finish dust cover. Internally, it is organized around its 49 constituent maps, grouped into six sets or parts, and each map is supported by an expository chapter.

The *Introduction* contains eight maps that focus on general cultural, geographic, and other overview topics.

Part 1: *The prehistorical and ancient periods, circa 30,000 BCE to 600 CE*, is concerned with the earliest and least well-known time periods. It has only two maps.

Part 2: *The Imperial Period, circa 600–900* represents the first records of Tibetan governance events. Four maps cover this period.

The largest group of maps is found in Part 3: *The Period of Disunion, circa 900–1642*; here the turmoils and travails of over 700 years fill 18 maps.

Part 4, which follows, is also a sizable block: this time of 13 maps. These cover what is called *The Ganden Podrang Period (Kingdom of the Dalai Lamas)*, some (but not all) maps of which bring us up to about 1959.