

The Future of Post-Human Urban Planning: A Preface to a New Theory of Density, Void, and Sustainability

Peter Baofu



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Why should urban planning in our time be obsessed with the issue of sustainability? Or differently put, is sustainability really as desirable and possible as its proponents in urban planning (and other related fields like economics, political science, environmental studies, architecture, and so on) would like us to believe? Contrary to the conventional wisdom held by many since the modern era, the concern with sustainability has been much exaggerated and distorted, to the point that it is fast becoming a new intellectual fad, so that its dark sides have been unwarrantedly ignored or downgraded. This is not to say, however, that the literature on sustainability in urban planning (and other related fields) hitherto existing in history has been full of nonsense. Indeed, on the contrary, much can be learned from different theoretical approaches in the literature. The important point to remember here, however, is that this book provides an alternative (better) way to understand the nature of sustainability in urban planning (and other related fields), which learns from different sides of the debate but in the end transcends them all. The urgency of this inquiry should not be underestimated, as it concerns not only urban planning (as a case study here) but also other highly related yet very serious challenges in our time (e.g., ecological, economic, demographic, technological, moral, spiritual, political, and the like). Therefore, if true, this seminal view will fundamentally change the way that we think about the issue of sustainability, with its enormous implications not only for understanding the future of urban planning, in a small sense - but also for predicting the relevance of sustainability in relation to the entire domain of human knowledge for the human future and what I originally called its 'post-human' fate, in a broad sense.

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