

THE CITY BEAUTIFUL AND THE GLOBALIZATION OF URBAN PLANNING

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BOOK REVIEW OF

Morley, Ian (2025). The City Beautiful and the Globalization of Urban Planning. Cambridge University Press, Cambridge.

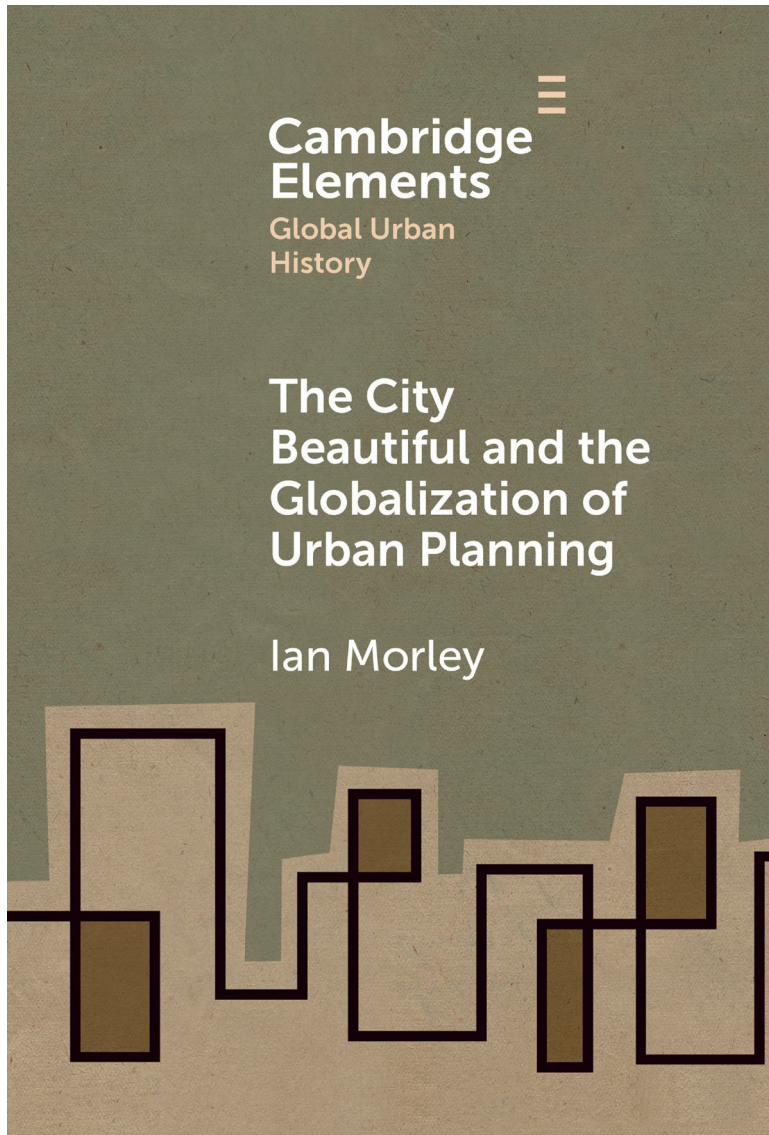


Figure 1. The City Beautiful and the Globalization of Urban Planning (Cover), by Ian Morley, 2025, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

The *City Beautiful and the Globalization of Urban Planning* by Ian Morley examines in detail how the City Beautiful movement spread beyond the American borders and influenced urban planning internationally. Although the movement is often perceived as an American-centric phenomenon, Morley strongly argues that its aesthetics and principles were adapted by urban planners all over the world with different cultural and political structures. The book investigates the impacts of this phenomenon in various urban designs of dissimilar cultures and climates, while placing it in the context of broader history, politics, and ideologies. (Morley, 2025)

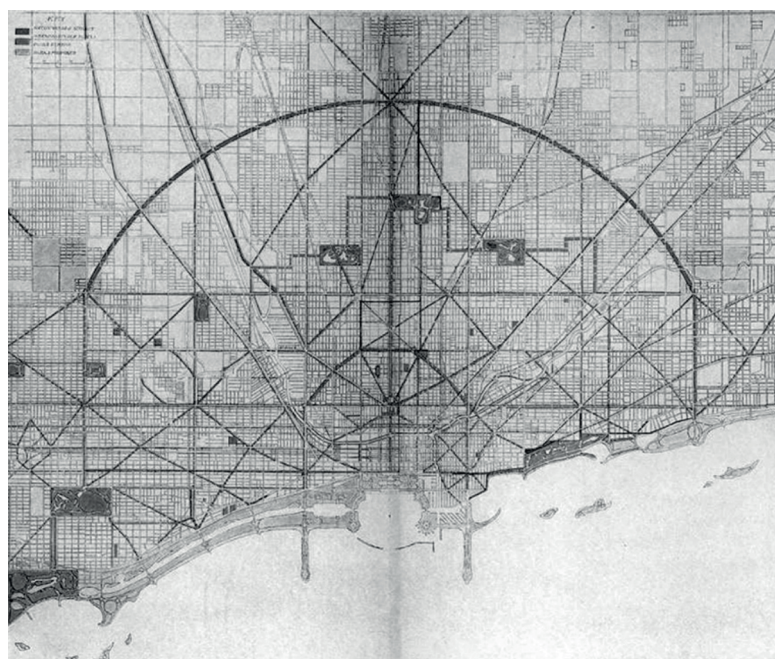
The book, which emphasizes the spreading of planning models globally, magnificently expands on the studies of Robert Freestone (2007, 2023), Gilbert A. Stelter (2000), and Daniel T. Rodgers (1998). It argues against the widely held belief that the City Beautiful movement was limited to North America by demonstrating how its principles were dissemi-

nated worldwide. To reveal how planners in different regions integrated elements of the movement into their own urban designs, Morley offers case studies from cities throughout Europe, Asia, and Latin America. To examine how planning principles were used in diverse regions, such as Asia and Australasia, the examination goes beyond individual cities. The book effectively illustrates the spreading of planning knowledge circulated through exhibitions, publications, professional organizations, and the global movement of planners like Daniel Burnham. Moreover, this study raises critical questions regarding the intersection of urban design with authority, governance, and identity.

In addition to aesthetics, the City Beautiful ideals encompassed social order and civic involvement. Morley points out that the urban designers considered grand boulevards, monumental architecture, and public areas as means of fostering social cohesiveness, civic pride, and even political legitimacy. The City Beautiful movement was modified to fit local circumstances rather than being a strict model. Morley describes how planners in many countries adapted the ideas of this movement according to political systems, cultural preferences, and the resources at their disposal. He looks at how the movement's components were blended with local architectural traditions in places such as Manila, Buenos Aires, and Delhi.

The City Beautiful movement faded in its origin by the middle of 20th century, the author discusses that the movement's impact persisted in several international contexts. Long after it lost favour in the United States, many cities kept up its

*Figure 2. The 1909 plan of Chicago with street and boulevard, and park systems, Burnham and Bennet, 1909. Reprinted from *The City Beautiful and the Globalization of Urban Planning* (9), by I. Morley, 2025, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.*



ideals, which helped people learn about the urban planning history. He connects these early planning efforts to later developments in modernist urban design as well as contemporary urban revitalization projects.

This book is a valuable contribution to urban history and planning studies. Morley's study is well-supported by archive materials, historical photographs, and urban planning documents. The book effectively connects the gap between architectural history and urban studies, making it relevant to scholars, planners, and policymakers. However, the book convincingly establishes the global influence of the City Beautiful, it could further interrogate the local adaption and resistance to these planning models. How did non-Western societies reinterpret or resist the aesthetics and ideologies of this movement? The analysis would be strengthened by a closer examination of native planning customs and how they interact with imported models.

The City Beautiful and the Globalization of Urban Planning, expands our understanding of the City Beautiful movement by representing its permanent impact beyond the United States. This book is a noteworthy resource for historians, architects, and urban planners seeking how aesthetic and social principles formed cities worldwide.

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