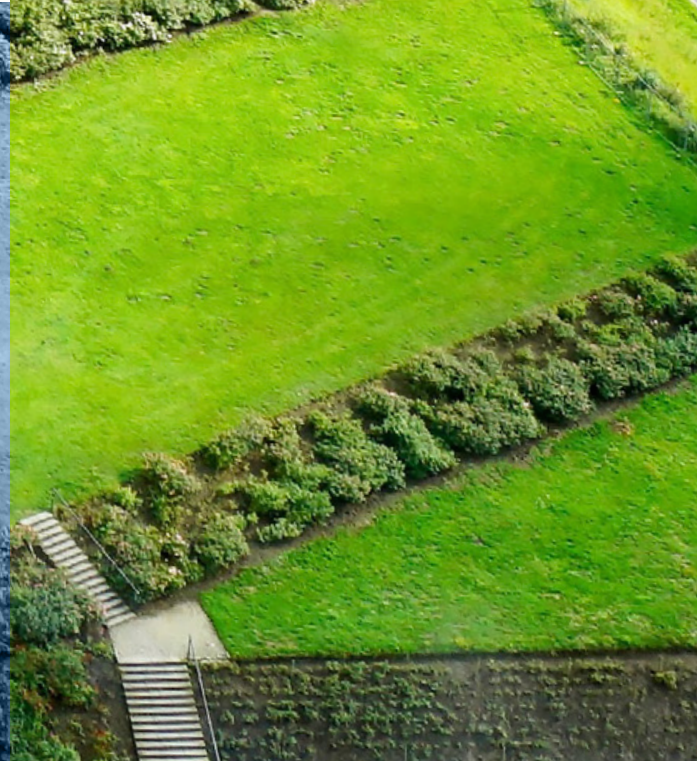
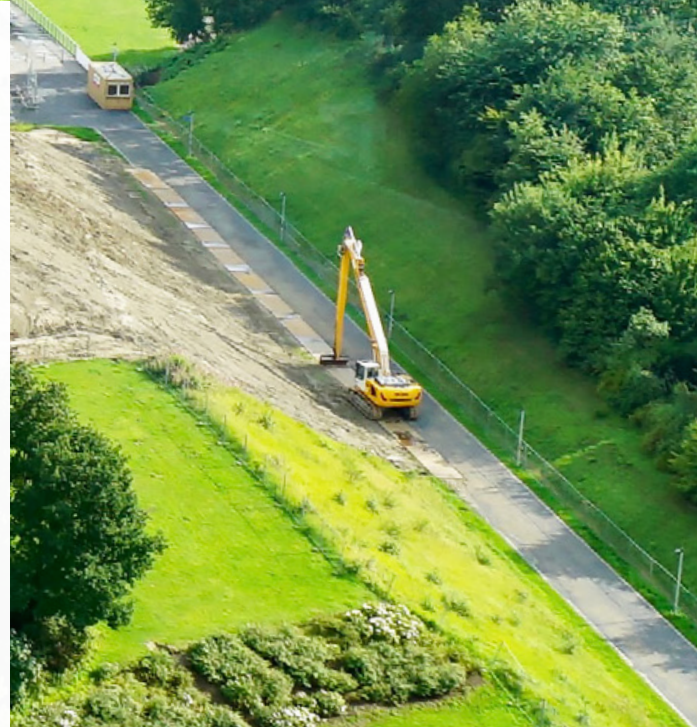




Mengyixin Li

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Foreword

Did you say large parks?

The word *park*, which maintains the same root in most parts of contemporary European languages, is relatively new. It was born in the Middle Ages and derived from the proto-German **barō*, which meant barrier. This barrier was a hunting enclosure, a privilege of the patrician families of the time. In northern Italy, we have many toponyms that recall the existence of *barcos* in areas that were once lush with woods and forests because hunting, understood as noble leisure, required an ideal environment, a perfect and uncontaminated place that proved that one had total control of nature. The *barcos* were the first large parks, and even if they were hunting reserves, they had many similarities with our contemporary parks, especially urban ones, which we frequent daily. Regardless of their appearance, current urban parks reflect a domesticated naturalness and the fundamental human need to experience a moment of diversion and entertainment. The urban public park in Europe developed in close coordination with industrialization when the overwhelming growth of cities began. The public gardens first and then the urban parks were open spaces that allowed an ever-increasing part of the population to freely spend their resting time, granted to workers of all classes, from the workforce to the bourgeoisie.

For this reason, public parks are also a quantifiable indicator of social policies and their evolution over time, so much so that they have become an indicator of healthiness in the rankings that evaluate our contemporary cities. Metropolitan conurbations, in the last fifty years, have been going through a new transformation, marked by the relocation of former industries and the technological–information transformation that has initiated the post-modern phase of ‘non-work’, understood as the end of hard work. Over the years, the closure of industrial plants, which started in North America and then spread to Europe and the Far East, has highlighted the problem of reactivating these abandoned areas, which have become integral parts of the city’s urban fabric. A series of temporal synergies such as the birth of ecological awareness, the growth of policies for sustainability, the changing times of the city, the attention to health and the demands of citizens, increasingly attentive to environmental issues and the use of own time, have contributed to the excellent decision to transform many of the black holes resulting from deindustrialization into new urban parks, the large parks covered by this publication.

Mengyixin Li skillfully traces the history of large-scale parks by describing both the political strategies and the system of theories that, over time, have formed the basis of this process that has recently changed not only our cities and our metropolises but also the mentalities of our designers. The author, through the analysis of projects planned and built on abandoned industrial areas, allows us to understand this still-moving picture in all its peculiarities and facets, demonstrating how the theme of environmental redevelopment in urban areas is not one of the themes of contemporaneity, but *is* the theme.

Furthermore, this volume proves to be fundamental for the original plot that manages to weave between Western and Eastern specificities, specifically the Chinese ones, where environmental design combines with a millenary vision of balance with nature, which must be recovered and adapted to contemporary times.

Taking up the incipit of this introduction, Mengyixin Li leads us to understand and deepen the cultural and theoretical bases that underlie the new barcos: the new contemporary urban places where the topics of urban sustainability merge with landscape architecture and with the renewed need to reconnect with nature, even if tamed, during our leisure time as citizens.

There is a need to design new large parks without barriers and tailored to our large communities.

Luca Maria Francesco Fabris
Politecnico di Milano—BUCEA Expert
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Rapid urbanization and expanding urban areas bring not only opportunities, but also significant challenges to urban spatial structure, society and ecology. Large-scale urban parks, a fundamental concept within landscape planning and design, are inextricably linked to contemporary urban development and the conception of urban landscapes.

This book analyzes the various design models of large-scale urban parks in three regions: North America, Germany, and China. Through an in-depth cross-cultural analysis, the text explores pluralistic understandings of contemporary urban landscapes and the diverse urban parks regenerated from industrial wastelands with organic, structural, and shan-shui identities, revealing the reimagination of expansive parks, urban nature, and contemporary cities through urban regeneration and the transformation of post-industrial sites.

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