

## BOOK REVIEWS

### **Geography of Growth: Spatial Economics and Competitiveness**

Raj Nallari, Breda Griffith, Shahid Yusuf,  
The World Bank, Washington, D.C., 2012, 200 p.  
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**Reviewed by** MIRELA PARASCHIV, University of Bucharest, Romania

Urbanization represents an ongoing process that challenges both developed and developing territories to successfully manage its effects and to exploit advantages provided for future development. In this context, the book *"Geography of Growth: Spatial Economics and Competitiveness"* debates economic growth as a direct urbanization result. Discussion and data focus on territorial distribution and differentiations, and take into account classic and innovative literature, global comparisons and case studies to explain current correlations between urbanization and growth.

The eight chapters of the volume are gathered in a strong synthetic study about present urbanization features in developed and developing countries, but refer also to implications for the future.

After a short preface, the book starts directly with chapter one that explains the relation between urbanization and inequality through urban concentration and agglomeration economies. Economic activity tends to concentrate in certain places. Deviations in optimal primacy and government influence in activities' localization result in negative urban environments. Solutions to reduce urban primacy include democratization, fiscal decentralization and a good national urban infrastructure. Developing countries tend to control the number of primary cities through limiting internal migration (rural-urban movement) and urbanization. Based on core-periphery models analysis, authors propose another view to obtain economic

growth – governments should take advantage from spatial concentration and reinforce agglomeration economies.

Uneven growth and inclusive development complement each other through economic integration and mobility of labour and capital to fast-growing areas. The new economic geography contributes to economic research because it examines places and factors that influence the economic activity localization.

The second chapter analyses the United Nations data on urbanization, explains the data weaknesses (differences in the country-level data and the official UN data) and provides alternative measures of spatial concentration. The authors consider the agglomeration index (indicators: density, travel time, population size) as a better tool to investigate urban settlements and their environmental, social and economic impact. Comments identify also some disparities at global level, disparities resulted from cities' typology based on population size.

Chapter 3 examines the economic density in relation to urban transition and growth. Urban growth trends in developed and developing countries reveal a symbiosis between cities of different sizes. The primary city connects with other urban centres to result in a metropolitan area and secondary cities provide economic functions at regional level. Discussions concentrate on countries' typology derived from the agglomeration index conducted in the 2009 World Development Report. The economic density is differentiated territorially.

Results show that income and living standards inequality represent a concern for the first urbanization stage, like in developing countries, but it declines while urbanization generalizes. Developed countries plead for urbanization benefits through reduced rural-urban disparities. Data evidences that urbanization manifests differently in developing countries than in developed countries due to different starting points within the global context. Another topic debated is the squatter settlements that represent an important urbanization effect in developing countries. Authors argue that limitations in city size, affecting the formal housing sector, favour squatter settlements development. Economic growth in developing countries would depend on reducing policy support for primary city, modifying the context that results in squatter settlements and leaving open the internal people migration.

The fourth chapter considers urban specialization a result of economic spatial concentration in small and medium sized cities. Ongoing urbanization, specific for developing countries, maintains multiple specialized cities while urban territories in developed countries are highly specialized. Territorial specialization, economic structural change and globalization result in a new typology of cities that includes knowledge cities, creative cities, global cities, and green (eco) cities. The chapter details each urban category and it argues then in favour of living in dense and diverse urban environments.

Smart cities represent another city type generated by current urbanization features. Chapter five profiles smart cities as sources of innovation, based on the Chinese experience, and it explains the related growth policies. High-tech industries connected to research activity result in smart cities. The authors emphasize that smart cities should integrate four forms of intelligence for sustainable growth: human intelligence from knowledge networks; collective intelligence of institutions; the industrial production intelligence; and the artificial intelligence of digital networks.

The sixth chapter discusses about globalization and the influences in the creation of global urban regions. Clusters reflect the interactions between cities that develop as a result of advances in information, communication and transport technologies. Large city size, economic activity concentration, specialization, high productivity and industrial diversity represent the urban regions' characteristics. Specialized clusters support economic growth and governments try to emphasize their territorial distribution. Authors debate also the differences in starting and managing a cluster. Factors that result in innovation clusters include: urbanization; powerful education; business growth; economic growth; and good communication and transport infrastructure.

Chapter seven states five factors that foster urbanization and the economic growth. Demographic transition (reduced infant mortality, increased life expectancy, fertility decline), high-tech agriculture and industry, tertiarization, localization economies and urban innovation constitute urban environments advantages that reinforce economic growth within urbanization. The authors explain concerns related to cities that lack a good management of urban advantages. Instead, cities struggle under population growth's negative effects.

The final chapter emphasizes elements that ensure successful metropolitan regions. The criteria that have to be met include: 1. industrial activity and clusters; 2. connectedness; 3. compactness; 4. smart cities; 5. good governance; 6. sustainability; 7. resilience. Immediate growth, globalization and innovation effects, the focus on progress, quick policy implementation, inclusive and stable social and urban environment characterize powerful metropolitan regions and add arguments to the urbanization benefits.

Informative notes and literature references complete each chapter and provide a reliable support for further research. The text includes graphics and tables with data that underlies

the analysis or bring additional information to each subtopic. The volume ends with a set of annexes that reveal the country-level indicators and bring new insights to question.

The book would benefit from a revision to exclude fragments that repeat ideas within the same chapter and to add general introduction and conclusions to foster the main findings

and their significance in urban environments research.

*"Geography of Growth: Spatial Economics and Competitiveness"* completes the reference literature and raises interest to both researchers and urban planners through its positive approach on urbanization and innovative ideas promoted in the analysis.

**Evaluarea integrată a calității mediului în spațiile rezidențiale  
(Integrated assessment of environmental quality  
in residential areas)**

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Mihai Niță, Iulia Pătroescu-Klötz, Annemarie Iojă  
Romanian Academy Publishing House, Bucharest, 2012, 246 p.  
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**Reviewed by** HERMINA DOROBANȚU, University of Bucharest, Romania

The expansion of residential areas was made in an extremely fast way in the last years in Romania. This fact raises many problems as it leads to environmental degradation. The work *"Integrated assessment of environmental quality in residential areas"* was made in the project PN II IDEI Exploratory research projects, funded by the Executive Agency for Higher Education, Research, Development and Innovation Funding (UEFISCDI).

The book is structured in seven chapters. Chapter one shows the types of residential spaces and their characteristics, but also the factors that led to their expansion. The second chapter refers to the methods that can be used to assess the quality of the environment in the residential areas. The main feature of these methods is multidisciplinary. In the third chapter, we take a look at the factors that allow or restrict the location of residential spaces in a certain place. The fourth chapter refers to the sources of environmental degradation, in terms of residential space. Within the research, there were applied questionnaires to learn the behaviours of the in-

habitants. In the fifth chapter, the residential area is analyzed as the generator of environmental issues. In this chapter, it appears the concept of ecological footprint, a concept which is very used in the analysis of the environment, because it refers to how much land is necessary to ensure the proper functionality of a population, in terms of needs, but also in terms of the absorption of waste. In the sixth chapter are presented the issues that can appear in the indoor environment of the residential areas. For the analysis they have used questionnaires and direct measurements in some housing. In the last chapter, the authors wanted to create a link between global environmental changes and the changes that take place in residential spaces, and they propose solutions for a better living, but, in the same time, without more harm on the environment.

The information in the text is supported by tables and figures (photos, processed satellite images, maps made in GIS technique); a positive fact is that the images are in colour, which allows a better understanding of the

information presented in the pictures. These images and tables are counted at the end of the work. It would have been a plus if the pages where the tables and images appear would have been specified, in order to facilitate their finding by interested persons.

The book is completed with information about the project that conducted to this work and the different results obtained. The book also contains a 21 pages summary in English. Bibliography includes over 13 pages (scientific articles, as well as doctoral theses or books, from Romania and abroad), fact that reveals the good research that have been made; sources have been cited in the text. The

language that the authors used is a relevant and scientific one, but also can be understood by anyone interested in this issue.

Although they do a case study on Bucharest and its metropolitan area, the data presented in this paper is related to the international situation and it can be applied to any residential space.

This study can be useful as a guide value for all those who wish to carry out a study about the quality of the environment in residential areas.

### **The Historic Urban Landscape Managing Heritage in an Urban Century**

Francesco Bandarin, Ron van Oers, Ed. Wiley-Blackwell, Chichester, West Sussex, UK, 2012, 236 p.  
ISBN 978-0-470-65574-0

**Reviewed by** FLORENTINA-CRISTINA MERCIU, University of Bucharest, Romania

The book titled *The Historic Urban Landscape Managing Heritage in an Urban Century*, published in 2012, approaches a highly-topical matter: urban heritage. The analysis of the urban space from the point of view of the heritage is a challenge meant to indicate that cities do not stand exclusively for centers of economic concentration, competitiveness and technology, but also for territories with rich and diverse cultural attractions.

The book is organized into 6 chapters where the authors conduct a complex analysis of the urban heritage, blending traditional elements (conservation) with modern elements of heritage management, focusing on the analysis of the historical urban landscape. At the same time, the cultural urban heritage is viewed as a resource whose capitalization may contribute to the economic development of the cities.

Chapter 1, "Urban Conservation: Short History of a Modern Idea", approaches the topic of the preservation of the urban heritage. A brief historical overview of this process is presented, a process that initially involved taking steps towards the preservation of historical monuments on an individual basis. Later, when the concept of historical center of a city had been defined, viewed as "historical continuum", or as a micro-system of a city. Urban planning studies were centered on the analysis of that concept within the geographical context where it is located, with references to the morphology of its specific urban fabric, and then yet later on the analysis focused on the means to capitalize on the historical center as a whole or as a sum of historical monuments; thus, conservation of the urban historical center also serves as a factor for the development of the modern city. In time the concept of historical center acquired new meanings, being no longer

perceived as an inert part of the city. This allows the accumulation of new functions compatible with its traditional morphology. Its aesthetical value gains increasing prominence, reinforcing that purpose and at the same time serving as the foundation for the establishment of a hierarchy as well as a dialogue between a city's old and modern forms.

In chapter II, "Urban Conservation as International Public Policy", the authors individualize the measures taken at international scale to conserve the urban heritage in the wake of World War II, which had caused large-scale heritage losses. Starting in the 1950s, various institutions were created that were actively involved in ensuring the measures to protect the cultural heritage at global scale (UNESCO, the International Council on Monuments and Sites-ICOMOS, the International Council of Museums-ICOM, the International Centre for the Study of the Preservation and Restoration of Cultural Property-ICCROM). These specialized institutions create a system of guidelines and measures related to the preservation of the urban heritage by means of various charters; these charters serve the purpose of standards that have to be strictly fulfilled by the countries that signed the respective agreements.

The wider context of the management of urban heritage is debated in the book's chapter III (entitled: "The Changing Context of Urban Heritage Management"). The analysis on the cultural heritage assets is conducted both from the point of view of urban development and from the point of view of environmental matters: for instance the way how various processes (for instance climate changes) may influence man-made urban heritage, or the influence of economic enterprises (tourism as the main tool to capitalize on cultural attractions). These factors create a complex and dynamic context for the preservation of the urban heritage that presupposes an increase in the involvement of stakeholders, too. At the same time, in numerous parts of the world, the responsibility for the preservation actions has been relocated from

national level to local level, as the economic role of the cities and regions grew stronger, and they are directly involved in establishing priorities in the process of development. Mention can also be made of the direct and indirect effects of the smart capitalization on the urban heritage as part of the programs dealing with territorial planning and integrated development. In the book authors' opinion, cultural "works" indicate a high degree of economic performance and human development, taking into account that cultural resources have a practical creative potential. At the same time, the authors consider the urban heritage to be part of the infrastructure of a city, the same as healthcare infrastructure or transport infrastructure.

In chapter four are identified by the authors the agents involved in the management of the urban heritage (governments, public service providers, private sector, international organizations, national and international non-governmental organizations). In this section of the study, the authors summarize several innovative approaches that emerged, at international level, in the field of urban planning and urban preservation, designed by specialized agencies as part of the United Nations' programs (for instance promotion of urban governance and finance, reduction of poverty). In this context it is necessary to create a regulatory framework enabling the intervention of incentive instruments so that the urban heritage would retain its cultural value, while also acting as a catalyst for socio-economic development by way of tourism and trade. In this context, an especially important role is assigned to public-private partnerships.

Expanding the toolkit for management of the urban environment is the topic of the fifth chapter of the book. The authors direct the readers' attention to the instruments linked to the management of the urban heritage (for instance regulatory systems, community engagement, technical analysis, financial tools). In the authors' view, these are instruments that may be used by means of adaptation to the local context and that may

ensure a higher degree of coherence to the planning and management of urban processes and also based on spatial and social integration and on involvement and collaboration of civil society members.

The last chapter of the book, titled "The Historic Urban landscape: Preserving Heritage in an Urban Century", summarizes the role and importance of the preservation of the historical urban heritage as lying at the crossroads of planning, architectural debate and public policy. In the past 50 years the preservation of the cultural heritage has held a central spot in the implementation of urban policies, partly as a result of the involvement of specialists in the fields of architecture and culture, among others, joined by the members

of civil society. The actions launched by them brought about both positive effects and important losses. These concerted efforts have, however, been able to save only parts of world's urban heritage: most losses were caused by geo-political conflicts, speculative urban development, or the public authorities' low interest. The authors of the study suggest a harmonious combination of the theory and practice of heritage preservation within a wider framework of urban planning, the integration of heritage preservation into urban development, designing the future of a city, in the context of globalization, that would take into consideration the historical urban center; in this context, historical cities may become the driving force of economic development.