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**Theme Issue:**

**URBAN DEVELOPMENT AND URBAN GOVERNANCE**

Edited by Jerzy J. Parysek and Alexander Tölle

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## INTRODUCTION

This volume is dedicated to the issue of urban development and urban governance. Current urban development processes occur predominantly in three characteristic forms of urbanisation: suburbanisation, deurbanisation, and reurbanisation. However, the predominant form, at least in Poland and other post-communist countries, is suburbanisation, in other words, urban sprawl. These processes are often beyond the reach of city authorities and therefore only insufficiently controlled. They are detrimental especially from a societal perspective, and therefore methods of their control and regulation need to be found. Ideas, guidelines, planning models and concepts may be helpful in this, yet their implementation requires a consensus between the participants in the 'spatial game', i.e. between local authorities, inhabitants, business representatives, land owners, and investors. It may well be for that very reason that urban governance appears to be a way to resolve spatial conflicts and find compromises, and therefore to hamper unwanted developments such as notably the suburbanisation process. At the heart of the matter lies the ability of actors – or potential sides of a conflict – involved in spatial development to understand development processes, their spatial consequences, and above all the fact that acting for the common interest in a local living environment is a matter of highest importance.

The notion of 'urban governance' in its literal sense stands for the process occurring in urban areas of coming to a political decision and then its implementation. In the Anglo-Saxon discourse, however, it is being used to describe a new, modern form of governing cities and regions which can be summarised as a kind of cooperative spatial development policy aiming at a municipality-led decision-making process by a consensus between organisations and institutions, social bodies, inhabitants, and investors. Decisions are to be taken within an arrangement of formal structures and informal relationships, and their effectiveness relies on putting together different resources in order to solve specific problems. It stands for new, soft forms of networking beyond the traditional 'government' structures; notably new networks between the political and administrative sector, the private business sector, and civil society. It is sometimes described as a shift from 'government' to 'governance'. However, this short attempt to characterise urban governance is bound to remain incomplete, as there does not exist a broadly accepted definition of this term. It is used in different contexts, ranging from analytical frameworks of decision-making to the description of target structures for effective development. The only consensus one might detect is about the all-embracing specific notion of 'good governance', which covers measures taken to ensure sustainable development by bringing together its economic, social, environmental, and democratic aspects. The range of uses of the term 'urban governance' has become even larger and its meaning wider after it has been adopted in the national discourses of different countries, and there usually does not even exist an equivalent in the respective language. In Poland as in other countries east of the former Iron Curtain confronted with the task of creating efficient local government structures, urban governance is usually used as a catchword for describing modern structures to be achieved, structures of deregulation and privatisation that may help to overcome local political blockades. However, research on the existing forms of this kind of governing territories is rather scarce.

The contents of this new volume of the journal *Quaestiones Geographicae*, the second in its still young Series B "Human Geography and Spatial Management", are therefore kaleidoscopic: to form a picture of the concepts of urban development and urban governance in the context of different European territories by selected contributions from Western as well as from Central and Eastern Europe. The focus is on the interaction between new forms of governance and new tasks and chal-

lenges for urban development. As JERZY J. PARYSEK argues in the opening article, urban governance may be understood as a way of reacting to the current trends of urban development in replacing traditional ways of physical planning by procedures based on negotiations and consensus-building. JÁN BUČEK points at the positive influence that strategic urban planning has had on Slovak cities concerning their functioning and the improvement of local life, while it has also helped to build links between the local municipal economy and the local society. The following two contributions have a clear post-communist perspective: they deal with the impact of market economy structures on the governing of cities east of the former European divide. With the cooperation of public and private partners at the core of urban development structures, this issue is vital for the question of the creation of urban governance in East-Central European territories, where deals between the official municipal side and private business may be seen as an immanent danger of bypassing and thus weakening the worked-out democratic procedures. MAGDA WADOWICKA looks at the influence of trans-national companies on city governance in the new European Union member state of Poland. Yet in her article on cities in the Ukraine, a former Soviet republic and outside the enlarged European Union, OLGA MRINSKA pictures rather bleakly the various difficulties in adjusting cities and local governments to the realities of a market economy. JEAN-YVES TOUSSAINT and SOPHIE VAREILLES discuss the issue of democratic legitimacy and public participation in governing urban development processes on the example of public space in Lyons (France). They argue that by reducing the gap between the public and the policy makers, the distance necessary for the citizens to control those that govern them is lessened, which in return alters the democratic decision-making process in urban development. The emergence of new territories as a consequence and a prerequisite of modern forms of urban development and government is the underlying topic of the next two contributions. ALEXANDER TÖLLE looks at governance structures to implement joint cross-border projects in the German–Polish twin cities of Frankfurt-upon-Oder and Słubice, where the difficulties inherent in official cooperation have led to different forms of cross-border structures at various levels, however usually excluding the milieu of local inhabitants. Using the example of the Dutch path from pillarised politics to metropolitan regionalism, FRANK ECKARDT demonstrates that urban governance does not only stand for a shift in existing democratic structures and territories – here seen from the consensus- and participation-based pillar system of the Netherlands – but also creates new territories that would not be governable in hierarchical structures. The case study of the East German city of Leipzig has been chosen by ADAM RADZIMSKI to discuss the emergence of urban governance structures through housing policy reforms. New strategies to tackle urban decline under the conditions of shrinking have led there to a local government reform offering possibilities for new forms of cooperation. Our volume closes with two studies on the issue of emerging metropolitan territories. First the article by JERZY J. PARYSEK gives a concise overview of the metropolitanisation process in Central European cities, then TOMASZ KACZMAREK and ŁUKASZ MIKUŁA focus on the Polish case showing that in Poland the creation and governing of metropolitan areas only takes its first steps and faces numerous difficulties ranging from missing legislative and formal frameworks to cooperation problems between municipalities. We shall be grateful for any comments and discussion that the contributions in this volume may inspire.

*Jerzy J. Parysek; Alexander Tölle*  
Editors