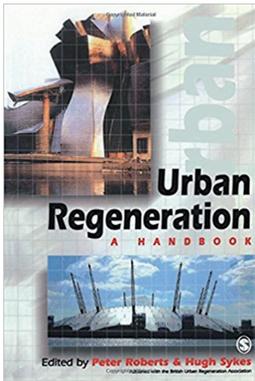


URBAN REGENERATION, by P. Roberts, H. Sykes, & R. Granger (Eds.)
London: Sage Publications, 2016.



Deindustrialization in postindustrial cities in Europe and North America has considerably shrunk the workforce and, in turn, contributed to stagnant economic growth due to socioeconomic problems and urban ruination. As such, many cities have initiated urban regeneration to neutralize deindustrialization and attract new investments to stimulate their economies. Urban regeneration has come to the fore as a political strategy using a whole range of planning regulations, and has a major impact on how the regeneration is delivered. It has a high uncertainty rate of completion and a high failure rate, and involves a chain of actions to improve “the economic, physical, social, and environmental conditions” of cities (Jones and Evans, 2013; Jung, et al., 2015).

The term ‘urban regeneration’, which is usually interchangeable with ‘urban renewal’, ‘urban redevelopment’, and ‘urban revitalization’, is a process that involves the rehabilitation of existing structures, redevelopment of buildings and sites, or reuse of urban land (Wang et al., 2014).

Evidently, urban regeneration is a complex and not isolated process by which deteriorated buildings or communities are improved through the implementation of numerous methods, such as modernization and redevelopment. In addition to improving physical buildings, urban regeneration, which is driven by a specific vision, also resolves urban problems, including congested traffic, inadequate open space, and poor urban infrastructure. Moreover, urban regeneration benefits economic and social developments by creating job opportunities, enhancing social networks, and prompting the active participation of vulnerable groups. Therefore, sustainability has been emphasized in the process of urban regeneration, which corresponds to sustainable development (Zheng et al., 2014).

Together with being a social, economic and environmental (physical) activity, regeneration is also a symbolic process that aims to foster a geography of hope. It carries an implicit message of resurrection, that ‘something new’ will be created, while simultaneously suggesting that a return to ‘better times’ is possible. The hope that is often conveyed in regeneration initiatives suggests that it may help to repair what has been ravaged by capitalist uneven development. But the paradox between stated strategic goals and ‘final’ delivery targets may explain why regeneration initiatives have long been criticized for failing to address deep-rooted structural issues (Pugalis & McGuinness, 2013).

Empirically, urban regeneration programs and area-based initiatives can be distinguished from other public policies because of their geographic focus. That is to say that particular places are designated for special forms of state assistance beyond the norm, i.e. urban regeneration sites. Although not always referred to as regen-

eration, such special assistance has been a defining feature of state policies around the world from the 1940s onwards. But the substantive form of regeneration has remained largely unexplored. It could be argued that a series of policies designed to achieve quick 'wins' have predominated over long-term strategic planning and spatially inclusive ideals. This reveals an underlying tension between more holistic targets that favor social objectives and those seeking narrowly to organize and control space to maximize economic growth that target areas of development and economic opportunity (Pugalis & McGuinness, 2013).

In the absence of a single accepted theory that is capable of explaining the entire range of issues related to the occurrence and the outcomes of urban change, the Second Edition of *Urban Regeneration* aims to correct that lacuna. The editors discuss and try to understand in depth the issue, theoretically and empirically. The book is fully revised with important new policy, case studies and international analysis. It is organized in a way that allows the reader to read the text in full or only the sections that are of particular interest.

The 16 chapters, written by leading experts, are organized into four parts: Part I: THE CONTEXT FOR URBAN REGENERATION: Chapter 1: Introduction to the origins, challenges, and purposes/ Peter Roberts Hugh Sykes Rachel Granger; Chapter 2: The Evolution, Definition and Purpose of Urban Regeneration/ Peter Roberts; Chapter 3: Strategy and Partnership in Urban Regeneration/ Andrew Carter Peter Roberts. Part II: MAJOR THEMES AND TOPICS: Chapter 4: Funding Economic Regeneration/ Nigel Berkeley David Jarvis David Noon; Chapter 5: Physical and Environmental Aspects/ Paul Jeffrey Rachel Granger; Chapter 6: Social and Community Issues/ Rachel Granger; Chapter 7: Employment and Skills/ Trevor Hart; Chapter 8: Housing Development and Urban Regeneration/ Martin McNally Rachel Granger. Part III: KEY ISSUES IN MANAGING URBAN REGENERATION: Chapter 9: Regeneration by Land Development: The Legal Issues/ Amanda Beresford Richard Fleetwood; Chapter 10: Monitoring and Evaluation/ Rod Spires Barry Moore; Chapter 11: Organization and Management/ Dalia Lichfield. Part IV: EXPERIENCE ELSEWHERE AND A VIEW OF THE FUTURE: Chapter 12: Transatlantic Policy Exchanges/ Rachel Granger Martin McNally; Chapter 13: Urban Regeneration: Experiences and Insights from the Celtic Fringe/ Deborah Peel Greg Lloyd; Chapter 14: European Experiences/ Paul Drewe; Chapter 15: Urban Regeneration in Australia/ Peter Newton Giles Thomson; Chapter 16: Current Challenges and Future Prospects/ Peter Roberts Hugh Sykes Rachel Granger.

Chapter 2 provides an introduction to the individual topics that are considered in part II. The discussion in chapter 3 attempts to identify common elements which help bind together the diverse subjects that are contained in the following chapters. It introduces the management issues contained in part III. Part IV offers an insight into some of the major features and important characteristics of efforts to promote urban regeneration in cities of Europe, Australia, North America and the UK. The

final chapter attempts to filter the major lessons from the experience of the issue, to identify the sources of strength and weakness which come out of this experience and to propose an agenda to the future.

The present text *Urban Regeneration* can be defined as (p. 315): "comprehensive and integrated vision and action which seeks to resolve urban problems and bring about a lasting improvement in the economic, physical, social and environmental condition of an era that has been subject to change or offer opportunities for improvement."

Though a wide definition, it helps to establish criteria by which to observe and criticize any plan or action towards urban regeneration. It means that three issues should be included in any evaluation of each and every urban regeneration initiative: the challenge, the approach adopted to meet this challenge, and the outcomes of all these. Generally, these issues address problems such as: rapidly changing economic environment; the loss of well-paid manufacturing jobs and growing socio-economic gaps; demographic and traditions that cause social change; and the uneven impact that shifts in urban areas from the modern to post-modern.

The last chapter raises few thorough questions: what is the wider contribution of urban generation? What is the added value, strengths and weaknesses of urban generation? What is its role? It also tries to forecast future challenges and choices. By doing this, the book contributes to the further development of urban generation.

To sum up, this is an essential handbook that provides skills and knowledge for practitioners involved in regeneration: planners, urban researchers, geographers, architects, urban activists and entrepreneurs. It includes boxes that break out of the main text - definitions and explanations; and key points and actions at the end of each chapter.

However, this eminent work is based on empirical sources that put the focus on the western world while considerable contemporary research deals with Asia (Turkey, Hong-Kong, Korea, China, etc). As such, the insights and conclusions lack a comprehensive view, and miss the opportunity to correct and be precise as for the theoretical platform of urban regeneration for the global south.

As the editors write (p. 4): "Even though the scope and content of this book is wide-ranging in an attempt to provide a comprehensive treatment of the field of urban regeneration, it would be wrong to suggest that it is a complete treatment of a subject that is extensive in terms of its practices and applications. Because urban regeneration is by its very nature a dynamic phenomenon, it is impossible to capture all of the features of current practice or to predict the future evolution of the subject."

REFERENCES

- Jones, P., & Evans, J. (2013) *Urban Regeneration in the UK: Boom, Bust and Recovery*. London: Sage.

- Jung, T. H., Lee, J., Yap, M. H., & Ineson, E. M. (2015) The role of stakeholder collaboration in culture-led urban regeneration: A case study of the Gwangju project, Korea. *Cities*, 44, 29-39.
- Pugalis, L., & McGuinness, D. (2013) From a framework to a toolkit: Urban regeneration in an age of austerity. *Journal of Urban Regeneration & Renewal*, 6(4), 339-353.
- Wang, H., Shen, Q., Tang, B.S., Lu, C., Peng, Y., Tang, L. (2014) A framework of decision-making factors and supporting information for facilitating sustainable site planning in urban renewal projects. *Cities*, 40, 44-55.
- Zheng, H.W., Shen, G.Q.P., Wang, H. (2014) A review of recent studies on sustainable urban renewal. *Habitat Int.*, 41, 272-279.

Batya Roded
Ben Gurion University of the Negev