

FOREWORD

Urban and regional questions have become crucial to understanding the present condition. From the World Bank's 'rediscovery' in its 2009 Report of the potential of cities in encouraging economic growth, to the multiple ways in which cities are being drawn into the processes of neo liberalism, to the dynamic growth of cities in developing countries in Asia far out stripping the scale of cities in the older urbanized nations - everywhere there are signs of a rapidly changing urban condition. The same is true for regions where 'old questions' of regional economic disparity and uneven development are being given a new twist as economic globalization impacts in national and local arenas.

JURA, the Journal of Urban and Regional Analysis, is being launched as a response to the exciting world of urban and regional research that is emergent in response to these changes happening in the real world. It is the initiative of the newly established Interdisciplinary Center for Advanced Research on Territorial Dynamics at the University of Bucharest working in collaboration with Ronan Paddison at the University of Glasgow.

While the intention is that articles published by JURA will draw on examples throughout the world, particular emphasis will be given to urban and regional change as it is being experienced in Eastern Europe. Transitional economies, urban and regional shifts in the region since the end of socialist regimes have been profound. The socialist regime had its particular effects on the regional economy and the cities, linked with structures that in many ways were very different from the trends apparent in Western Europe in the post-World War II period.

Since 1990 change has been swift, challenging our theoretical understanding of the processes; for example, it is plausible to transport theories of contemporary urban change under neoliberalism developed in the advanced economies to the transitional economy. The legacy of the socialist regime, its imprint on the city physically and socially, provides further reason to suppose that urban (and regional) development in transitional economies is distinctive. These differences re-emphasise a consistent axiom underpinning the study of cities and regions: that if it is possible to point to broad theories that apply across different regions of the world, they often need to be modified to take into account local conditions. Though JURA is primarily concerned with looking at urban and regional change in the transitional East European economies, case studies exploring similar problems but in other parts of the world are certainly parts of the journal's agenda.

The remit of the journal is emphatically interdisciplinary. Analysis of the urban and regional condition needs to be interdisciplinary. In reality, urban researchers usually tend to belong to a discipline reflecting their training whether as sociologists, geographers, planners or any number of subjects concerned with the study of space and place. Our training very often endorses an appreciation of how other disciplines explore the city. For the journal, the acknowledgement of the many disciplines that are concerned with understanding cities and regions will be indicated by the different disciplinary backgrounds reflected in the papers published. Articles will be published by geographers, sociologists, planners, economists, political scientists, to mention just a few of the disciplines involved in urban and regional study.

JURA plans to be a key outlet publishing topical articles dealing with cities and regions. In later issues we plan to include sections devoted to notes and comments as well as a policy section outlining and discussing state and non-state initiatives aimed at improving cities and regions, together with the problems confronted by their implementation.