



Urban Economics and Urban Policy: Challenging Conventional Policy Wisdom

Paul C. Cheshire, Max Nathan, Henry G. Overman

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In this bold, exciting and readable volume, Paul Cheshire, Max Nathan and Henry Overman illustrate the insights that recent economic research brings to our understanding of cities, and the lessons for urban policy-making. The authors present new evidence on the fundamental importance of cities to economic wellbeing and to the enrichment of our lives. They also argue that many policies have been trying to push water uphill and have done little to achieve their stated aims; or, worse, have had unintended and counterproductive consequences.

It is remarkable that our cities have been so successful despite the many shortcomings of urban policies and governance. These shortcomings appear in both rich and poor countries. Many powerful policies intended to influence urban development and spatial differences have been developed since the late 1940s, but they have been subject to little rigorous economic evaluation. The authors help us to understand why economic growth has emerged so unevenly across space and why this pattern persists. The failure to understand the forces leading to uneven development underlies the ineffectiveness of many current urban policies. The authors conclude that future urban policies need to take better account of the forces that drive unevenness and that their success should be judged by their impact on people, not on places - or buildings.

This groundbreaking book will prove to be an invaluable resource and a rewarding read for academics, practitioners and policymakers interested in the economics of urban policy, urban planning and development, as well as international studies and innovation.

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