

Introduction

There are at least three reasons to look at urban public space from economic and management perspectives. Firstly, contemporary urban public spaces cope with pressure of functional and organizational transformations that accompany more general changes currently taking place in urban areas. On the one hand we can observe the processes of privatization and commercialization, leading to reduction of traditional public spaces, on the other hand some local governments make efforts to create new representative sites which are often called “iconic”. At the same time it should be noted the lack of clear and comprehensive assessment of these transformations in terms of costs and benefits.

Secondly, there are many scientific studies on the public spaces in the field of urban economy (*i.e.* papers of JunJie Wu and Plantinga [2003] or Pugalis [2009]), urban planning, architecture such as work of Gehl [1987], Gehl and Gemzøe [2000] or Madanipour [2003] and urban sociology such as text gather in book edited by Orum and Neal [2010]. However we notice the lack of theoretical basis with roots in economics science. Therefore, there is a need for synthesis of research achievements in: urban economics, the economics of urban public sector and land use planning. In this case we have to answer the research question about the role of contemporary urban public space as a factor influencing the urban development dynamics and determining spatial structure of cities.

The last but not least management of urban public space is fragmented. It focus on narrowly defined functions, such as street lighting, cleaning or public safety. There is no integrated approach to management of urban public space, which assume multi-stakeholder involvement. We need to develop strategies and tools that will contribute to better management of urban public space and improve the effectiveness of use this kind of sites.

This book consists of both theoretical and empirical papers on urban public space economics and management. As an introduction A. Polko presents short overview of study approaches in urban public space economics and discusses the key challenges of urban public space management. Next C. De Magalhães identifies the challenges to Business Improvement Districts (BIDs) as public and private stakeholder-led instrument for the management of the public realm of town centres and commercial and industrial areas, and draws lessons for the future. L. Pugalis through the case of Sunnyside in the north east city of Sunderland, England examines the nature, scope and role of place quality as a vehicle for neighbourhood revitalisation. Then there are two articles focusing on urban public space valuation. A. Ardeshiri presents the outcomes derived from applying hedonic price and life satisfaction methodologies

to provide such valuation for Shiraz city (Iran) case study. Then A. M. Kowalczyk presents the examples of the valuation and valorisation of the landscape in the city of Olsztyn in North-eastern Poland. In the next paper R. G. de Paoli focuses on the connection between urban public spaces and emergency with particular attention to the safety and quality requirements definition. The last but not least K. Bierwiazzonek and T. Nawrocki present paper on urban public space in Katowice and Gliwice. They focus on both traditional public realm and shopping malls. These two types of places compete about users of space, so comparison of its functions seems to be the important issue to understand contemporary cities processes.

References

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