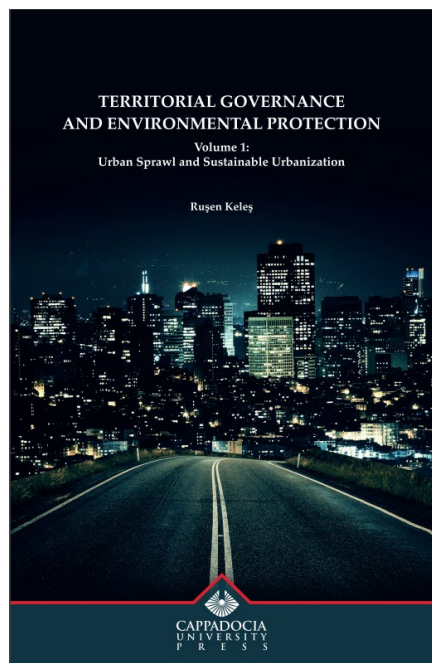

Book Review



Territorial Governance and Environmental Protection Volume 1: Urban Sprawl and Sustainable Urbanization

by Ruşen Keleş, *Cappadocia University Press, 2022, 525pp, ISBN: 978-605-4448-31-9 (electronic)*

Environmental protection has become a pressing global concern driven by the impacts of development and industrialization in urban areas. Housing, marketing, and territorial governance, among other activities, wield significant influence over the environment. In *Territorial Governance and Environmental Protection Volume 1: Urban Sprawl and Sustainable Urbanization*, Ruşen Keleş addresses the issue of urban sprawl, formulating policy solutions guided by principles of sustainable urbanization, Ekistics, and subsidiarity. The book is divided into two parts: Part I, focusing on Urban Sprawl with 9 essays, and Part II, which delves into Sustainable Urbanization with 11 essays. These essays form a compilation of papers presented by Dr. Keleş at international conferences, symposia, and panels. Throughout the book, there is an embedded, rich, and plentiful review of literature, policies, and first-hand accounts of territorial and international milestone events. Keleş presents governance at every scale concerning environmental protection. He holistically addresses the relationship between nature and human habitat with the inclusion of case studies from Turkey, Russia, and the Mediterranean Region adds a layer of depth and real-world context to the book's overarching themes. For instance, he explores growing ecological concerns in world capitals, examines the effects of urbanization and squatting on Turkey's agricultural lands. This outlines a robust framework for international

cooperation on sustainable urbanization, land-use management principles, and policy implementation.

The first part of Volume 1, Keleş introduces the concept of urban sprawl, emphasizing its unplanned and haphazard expansion and its significant impact on natural resources, particularly fertile agricultural lands. Keleş further explores the inevitable threats posed by short-term, profit-oriented market forces to long-term sustainability, using Turkey as a case study due to its lack of comprehensive state policies and the urgent need for an efficient, integrated, multidisciplinary, and dedicated approach. The book introduces a crucial argument in environmental ethics, focusing on determining moral correctness or corruption based on the impact on human beings, other living entities, and the ecology. In discussing environmental concerns in low-income world capitals and their associated hardships, Keleş's reference to Indira Gandhi's words, "Aren't poverty and unmet human needs the most important kinds of pollution?" (pp. 54) opens doors to a broad recognition of the necessity for a quality of life and a healthy environment. A healthy and affordable urban habitat, living with dignity, education, and awareness are essential for sustainable development, benefiting both the environment and humanity.

A significant portion of the book is devoted to the exploration of United Nations and European institutions,



along with independent and volunteer organizations like the World Society of Ekistics. It provides a historical context and evaluation of environmental protection and the quality of life in relation to their conferences, declarations, principles, and policies. Key documents emphasized by Keleş include The Universal Declaration of Human Rights (1948), Declarations of Delos Symposia (1963-1975), Stockholm Declaration (1972), Brundtland Report (1987), Rio Declaration (1992), Aalborg Charter (1994), UN Millennium Development Goals (2000), Valencia Declaration (2007), UN Sustainable Development Goals (2015), HABITAT III (2016). The background to contemporary environmental concepts, policies, principles, and actors provided by Keleş in this book, is clearly intended for an educated and highly aware reader.

Drawing upon Ekistics (the science of human settlements) principles and the Declarations of Delos Symposia (1963-1975), Keleş reflects on their enduring influence and relevance to contemporary spatial issues. He asserts that Ekistics principles and the concept of "harmonious urbanization" remain highly valid for understanding and addressing present territorial and urbanization challenges. These challenges encompass issues related to rapid urbanization, environmental sustainability, regional development, social justice, immigration and more. Consequently, participants in the Delos symposia have played a significant role in shaping international legal instruments and policy frameworks, significantly contributing to the establishment of the United Nations Center for Human Settlements (UNCHS).

Part II places significant emphasis on Turkey as a case study through various essays, offering a nuanced exploration of aspects such as the culture of urbanization, urban governance, environmental policies, pessimistic scenarios, periphery political features, and policy implementations for sustainable urbanization. Keleş paints an extensive portrait of how Ernst Reuter has influenced Turkish urban planning, preservation, transportation, social justice, and modern town planning principles. He provides diverse insights into the critical role of public involvement, informed decision-makers, and planning, emphasizing the need to counter the growing anti-planning sentiment and market-driven urban development trends for environmental protection and sustainable urbanization. Additionally, he underscores concerns about global population growth, squatter settlements, and the socio-political environment, all of which could potentially undermine future sustainable development efforts.

While some of Keleş's pessimistic scenarios for 2000, that made in 1975, are no longer applicable to present-day Turkey, others remain relevant. For instance, his foresight into population concerns aligns with the current situation, although it is now driven by external factors such as the political conflicts in the Middle East and the Ukrainian-Russian War, leading to millions of immigrants to Turkey. Urban polarization has shifted from squatter settlements to a division between Turks and recent immigrants. Keleş also highlights the need for upper structure and infrastructure in Turkey. However, since 2004, Turkey's economy has been heavily dependent on construction,

resulting in questionable, unnecessary, unfeasible, surplus roads and bridges across the country. The efficiency and safety of these developments are still questionable, as evidenced by the South Anatolian Earthquake on February 20, 2023. This event raises concerns about the sustainability and safety of Turkey's construction-dependent economic model, emphasizing the importance of reevaluating infrastructure development strategies for the future.

Christopher Newbury, Knud Andersen, and Ruşen Keleş examine similar concepts in a different case: Russia. They highlight challenges related to governance, including corruption, legal protection, and land ownership in Russia's local self-government systems. The Russian case study reveals valuable lessons for local self-government, emphasizing the need for the necessary financial resources for local authorities, new mechanisms for decision-making to reduce corruption, and training local officials.

Keleş further broadens the discourse by discussing the significance of cooperation and collaboration among nations for environmental protection and sustainable development, using the Mediterranean Region as a case study. The region confronts rapid urbanization, which affects soil and water resources due to urban growth, industry, and tourism. Keleş highlights why relying solely on market solutions is insufficient, emphasizing the necessity for regulatory measures by local authorities and NGOs. He explains the importance of directing attention to medium-sized cities and heritage management, ensuring proper implementation of international agreements, and strengthening local authorities to reduce resource wastage and promote democratic engagement. Keleş emphasizes subsidiarity (set of principles to balance centralization and decentralization in political systems) as a key concept.

Territorial Governance and Environmental Protection Volume 1: Urban Sprawl and Sustainable Urbanization demonstrates that numerous environmental issues pose challenges to international, national, and local governments worldwide as they strive to achieve sustainable development goals. These issues encompass sustaining a quality of life and human rights for all individuals, managing urban sprawl according to ekistics principles, achieving subsidiarity, effectively implementing international policies, empowering local authorities, and increasing public awareness to ensure sustainable environmental protection. Keleş argues that addressing these formidable tasks requires cooperation and collaboration among and within nations, as emphasized in this book. Overall, the book provides an in-depth exploration of why territorial governance is essential for environmental protection and outlines the path toward sustainable development.

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