

BOOK REVIEW ON ELEMENTS OF URBANISM

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In september 2008 has been published at Universitaria Publishing House of Bucharest, Romania, the book „Elements of Urbanism”, written by Cristina Alpopi.

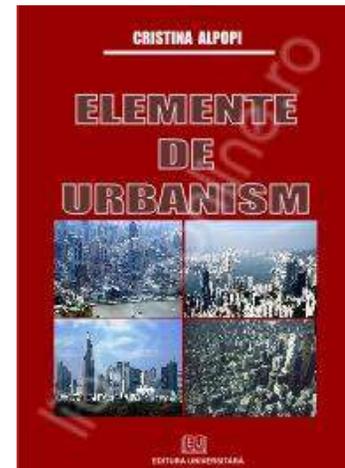
Cristina Alpopi, Associate Professor at Academy of Economic Studies, Bucharest, Romania, is a dedicated researcher and a prolific author of articles and papers in the field of Urbanism.

The book contains 8 chapters very rich in concepts, theories, ideas, representing a contribution to the development of the literature in the field of urbanism.

Chapter 1 covers the history of the urban environment—its form, meaning, function, and representation—from ancient times until present, addressing cultural/economic/natural factors, settlement patterns, structure, elements, typologies, design, planning, and theories of urban form

The second chapter does an excellent job of defining the concept of urbanism. Emphasis is placed on theories and practical techniques useful for understanding urban patterns and for developing solutions to urban problems. A theoretical approach to spatial organisation of urban areas is clarified by studies at international and national levels.

The third chapter introduces the landscape theory and empirical studies incorporating landscape in relation with urbanism. It investigates the potential of landscape as an instrument for new urbanization.



The fourth chapter presents the philosophy, theories and principles involved in the planning of urban areas. The covered topics include: an introduction to urban policy and urban planning, planning concepts and principles, discussion on the development of urban planning and its role in shaping the urban environment, etc.

The magnitude and dynamics of urbanisation place an enormous burden on organisations responsible for the management of urban services. In this context, the fifth chapter addresses the management of urban services, including roads, traffic and transport, utilities, services and waste disposal.

The sixth chapter provides an introduction to housing theory, socio-economic aspects related to housing, alternative approaches to housing policy and housing problems. This covers analysis of housing design, classification of housing types, data gathering on housing, neighborhood theory as a housing concept, structure of housing area as criteria for the design of housing, construction technologies, materials, cost and climatic conditions .

The seventh chapter provides an understanding of the need for effective and efficient land administration systems and spatial data infrastructures. Topics covered include: land administration and cadastral trends in the context of global drivers of sustainable development, the cadastral concept and legal, fiscal and multi-purpose cadastres, etc.

The last chapter introduces concepts and doctrines relevant to the use and protection of natural resources, ecosystems, in relation with urban development. Environmental protection and conservation are of utmost importance to many planning systems across the world. This correlation was necessary because new needs are appearing in terms of services : water and its treatment, fighting pollution, waste disposal, energy distribution systems, communication and transportation networks.