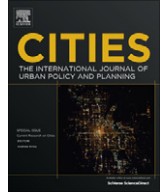




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## Cities

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### Editorial

## Introduction to a new meta-journal in urban studies

You are reading the first issue of *Current Research on Cities* (abbreviated to CRoC). The first four issues will all be supplements to the journal *Cities*, prior to an independent launch in 2014.

Although *Current Research on Cities* has much in common with *Cities: the international journal of urban policy and planning* (indeed, the title was in part chosen to build on the latter's reputation, developed over three decades), it is also a departure in terms of its aims and its content. It is designed to be the first meta-journal in the field of urban studies, and in much the same way that meta-analysis draws on existing research to synthesize and project what is known on a topic, a meta-journal pulls together what we know about a field and keeps researchers up to date.

These kinds of publications are not entirely new. In some of the life and physical sciences, the output of material is so vast that it would be a full time job just to keep track of what is being published. Urban studies may not be the kind of discipline in which immediacy is paramount but it is, nonetheless, a vast field. In 2010 alone, there were nearly 40,000 papers containing the keywords 'city', 'cities' or 'urban' added to the SciVerse-Scopus database (Kamalski & Kirby, in press). At one end of this continuum are the physical sciences such as geology, meteorology and climatology, and ecology. In the social and behavioral sciences, subfields such as urban economics and urban politics are quite visible, but many other disciplines also contain an active urban focus, including law and psychology. There are many methodological papers, focused upon GIS, urban ecology and regional science. There is also all the research and publication that can be subsumed under urban policy, which ranges from innovative city governments (passing ordinances dealing with climate change) through to national governments throughout the world (many of which have sustainable city initiatives) and then the global entities such as the UN and the World Bank that have taken leadership roles in focusing on urban affairs. This spectrum then continues towards the work of the humanities, which too contains a vast amount of material, some academic (including philosophical discussions of the city and historical analysis of urban development) and some relating explicitly to the urban experience, manifested in written form, video and music.

No individual could be in control of more than a fraction of this material. However, a network of Associate Editors and I will be able to find the very best people to summarize what is happening in all of these arenas and to maintain a synthetic and analytic record of what is being published. Our goal is that this meta-journal will not merely summarize the field for its active members, but will also supply material for researchers looking to find current thinking on urban concepts—such as neighborhoods or sustainable design—as they formulate their own projects. The same is true of applications of techniques such as GIS or remote sensing.

### The structure of the journal

This initial issue of the journal necessarily lays out why this new venture is adding to the 200,000 journals that already exist (Kähler, 2010). In addition to the current Introduction, there is a more detailed overview of the field, of bibliometrics, and of our editorial process (Kirby, 2012). We have in addition six papers in this issue. The first is by Mike Batty and it lays out an important overview of what he terms a 'Science of Cities' (Batty, 2012). This contains themes that are also developed by Brian Berry and Adam Okulicz-Kozaryn in the context of the statistical relations between urban populations (Berry & Okulicz-Kozaryn, 2012). One aspect of this is also addressed in a posthumous piece by Vias (2012), which reviews the emergence of the 'micropolitan' area as an analytical unit, while our last contributor, Richard Morrill, provides a deft overview of the urban changes that have occurred over the last half-century in the US (Morrill, 2012).

We also have two invited pieces, the first of which is 'Disaster and Emergency Management Systems in Urban Areas' by Naim Kapucu, which was commissioned by Associate Editor Rick Feiock who oversees Governance (Kapucu, 2012). This is paired with 'Land Use Regulation: Where Have We Been, Where Are We Going?' by Ralph B. McLaughlin, commissioned by Associate Editor Gordon Mulligan, who is responsible for Economic research (McLaughlin, 2012).

### Future issues

We plan to have another issue of CRoC available later in the spring, and of course papers 'in press' will be immediately available on ScienceDirect once they have passed through the editorial review and production processes. We have commissioned review articles on a range of topics, including ecological metabolism; high speed rail networks; governance; urban health; and innovation. In addition, there is a blog focused on urban issues ([www.CurrentResearchOnCities.com](http://www.CurrentResearchOnCities.com)), while our social media site offers daily updates on conferences, reports and so forth (<http://www.facebook.com/#!/pages/Current-Research-on-Cities/243762182308851>).

We hope that our readers are as excited with the journal as we are as Editors and authors. We very much look forward to your comments and while we shall continue to solicit the bulk of our material, suggestions and manuscript submissions are always going to be welcome if they conform to the aims of the journal (which are elaborated in greater detail in the Guide for Authors, which is available from the Editor or the ScienceDirect site).

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