

Since Megalopolis

The Urban Writings of Jean Gottmann

In 1961 Jean Gottmann published his pioneering study of urban sprawl along the Boston-Washington corridor. The book's title soon became a household word, and its author gained worldwide acclaim for his insights into the dimensions of urbanism. Since writing *Megalopolis*, Gottmann has published more than eighty articles on the urban scene. Now, for the first time, the best of that work is available in a single volume. Since "*Megalopolis*" treats urban questions from the ancient and modern worlds alike. What can today's planners learn from the ancient Greek city of Miletus? What do the shape and placement of the world's capitals tell us about their function? How large can our cities grow before suffocating in slums, pollution, and crime? Gottmann offers a hard-headed argument on the economic value of city parks—and a utopian vision of Manhattan auto traffic speeding through subway tunnels. He examines Tanaka's Tokyo and Solomon's Jerusalem—and tells why the king's wisdom did not extend to urban planning. In an introductory essay new to this volume, Gottmann draws a lesson from an earlier megalopolis. "In antiquity," he writes, "a great city flourished for 600 years on the small and craggy island of Delos in the Aegean sea. When circumstances excluded it from the predominant networks, it fell into ruins. Now an archaeological museum, Delos reminds us that cities are human artifacts and exist by participating in systems of relationships, not just as eagle nests."

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