

Second Edition

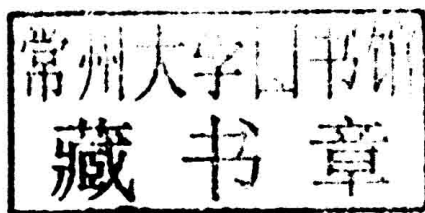
Lisa Benton-Short and John Rennie Short

Cities and Nature

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Second Edition

*Lisa Benton-Short
and John Rennie Short*



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Cities and Nature

Cities and Nature connects environmental processes with social and political actions. The book reconnects science and social science to demonstrate how the city is part of the environment and how it is subject to environmental constraints and opportunities. This second edition has been extensively revised and updated with in-depth examination of theory and critical themes. Greater discussion is given to urbanization trends and megacities; the post-industrial city and global economic changes; developing cities and slums; urban political ecology; the role of the city in climate change; and sustainability.

The book explores the historical relationship between cities and nature, contemporary challenges to this relationship, and attempts taken to create more sustainable cities. The historical context situates urban development and its impact on the environment, and in turn the environmental impact on people in cities. This provides a foundation from which to understand contemporary issues, such as urban political ecology, hazards and disasters, water quality and supply, air pollution and climate change. The book then considers sustainability and how it has been informed by different theoretical approaches. Issues of environmental justice and the role of gender and race are explored. The final chapter examines the ways in which cities are practicing sustainability, from light “greening” efforts such as planting trees, to more comprehensive sustainability plans that integrate the multiple dimensions of sustainability.

The text contains case studies from around the globe, with many drawn from cities in the developing world, as well as reviews of recent research, updated and expanded further reading to highlight relevant films, websites and journal articles. This book is an asset to students and researchers in geography, environmental studies, urban studies and planning and sustainability.

Lisa Benton-Short is Associate Professor of Geography at George Washington University (GWU), Washington, DC. An urban geographer, she has research interests in environmental issues in cities, parks and public spaces, and monuments and memorials. She is also Director of Academic Programs in Sustainability at GWU.

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To Bonnie and Harriet, again.

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Preface

The first edition of this book appeared in 2008, with most of the writing and research done in 2006/7. The subject of urban–nature relations has continued to develop robustly since then, with a substantial increase in the literature covering a range of topics from historical urban–environment relations to the recent development of comprehensive sustainability plans for many cities. The emergence and widening of such areas as urban political ecology, cities and climate change, and urban sustainability, as well as the new research in traditional areas such as urban hazards, air and water pollution, have all added a vast body of work to the theme of cities and nature that we considered in the first edition. A second edition allows taking stock of these developments.

The book is much expanded from the first edition. There are now 16 chapters in five sections, expanded from the 12 chapters in three sections. The second edition is organized around five central themes:

- 1 the urban environment in historical context;
- 2 contemporary urban environments;
- 3 urban physical systems;
- 4 urban environmental issues;
- 5 realigning urban–nature relations.

In Part I, the urban environment in historical context, we explore the pre-industrial and industrial city. The concerns of the industrial city provide the context for the urban environment regulatory framework that still exists today in many cities. In Part II, the contemporary urban environment, we consider global urban trends and then focus on the postindustrial city and the developing city. Part III focuses on urban physical systems with specific chapters on urban sites, hazards and disasters and urban political ecology. Important contemporary urban environmental concerns are examined in Part IV. A brief chapter introduces the recent emergence of an urban environment regulatory framework. Individual chapters then consider the case of

water pollution, air pollution, climate change and garbage. Part V, in a more normative approach, covers issues of urban sustainability and environmental justice. Urban sustainability explores the theories of sustainability and the ways in which cities are practicing sustainability—from light “greening” efforts such as planting trees, to more comprehensive plans that integrate the multiple dimensions of sustainability.

We have moved some material around from the first edition so that there is a cleaner narrative flow. New chapters include the postindustrial city, the developing city and climate change; we’ve added a new section in Chapter 16 on theories of sustainability as well. In all chapters the latest research is incorporated into the literature review and guides to further reading. The geographical coverage is extended to cast a wider net that includes many more cities in developing countries. The examples and case studies provide a more global coverage.

This second edition allows us to expand theoretical development and add breadth to existing chapters by considering non-US/EU cities; in particular increasing the representation of examples of developing world cities. We feel that the first edition concentrated too much on US/EU cities and the new edition provides an opportunity to offer a more global representation. The second edition also allows us to update data, legislation, examples and trends.

The reorganization of chapters, addition of new chapters and updates and improvements in all chapters allow us to more thoroughly document critical issues and trends that are at the cutting edge of this field of study. We have added new photographs, data sources, data and more recent legislative developments. In summary, the book is much expanded and, we think, much improved with greater theoretical depth and wider geographical coverage.

This second edition was prompted by a suggestion from Andrew Mould and shaped by three anonymous referees who took the time and no small effort to read through the previous edition, making many suggestions for revision, excision and addition. We thank you.

We were heartened by the very positive response to the first edition and wanted to expand, amplify and enlarge one of the most dynamic and exciting areas of intellectual inquiry, political importance and social significance. As we transition into a predominantly urban world the quality, sustainability, vulnerability and opportunities of the urban environment provides one of the most pressing human concerns. Not only a site of problems, the urban environment is also a platform for progressive social change.

Acknowledgments

We would like to first acknowledge that this second edition is the result of years of teaching the topic of “urban environmental issues” to undergraduates and graduates at the George Washington University and the University of Maryland, Baltimore County. In the process of teaching this course, and using the first edition, we found our students were invaluable in asking provocative questions and providing new and inspirational sources of material in their term papers and research projects. Notably, students in Lisa’s graduate seminar on “Urban Sustainability” in the spring of 2012 provided sources for updating tables and data, and suggested topics for us to consider including.

We would also like to thank Mike Mussman and Barbara Bridges, research assistants at UMBC, for their valuable contributions in this second edition. Thanks also to Becky Barton, Michele Judd, David Rain, Joe Dymond and Elizabeth Chacko for granting permission to reproduce images in this work.

Thanks go to three anonymous reviewers who provided thoughtful and important suggestions to improve this second edition. The increased size, scope and depth of the second edition are a response to their careful assessments.

Every effort has been made to contact copyright holders for their permission to reprint material in this book. The publishers would be grateful to hear from any copyright holder who is not here acknowledged, and will undertake to rectify any errors or omissions in future editions of this book.

Lastly, Columbus, Cosmo and Mackinder were frequent desktop editors and writers, and reminded us when it was time for dinner.

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