

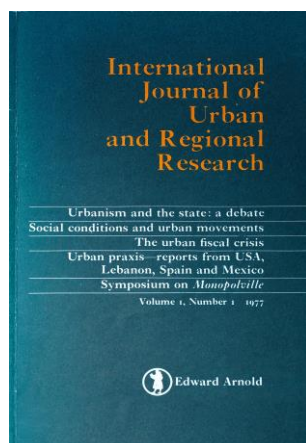
The decision to found a new journal in 1977, first proposed by Manuel Castells to his colleagues on the Board of ISA Research Committee on the Sociology of Regional and Urban Development (RC 21) a year or two previously, was the product of several factors and motivations. From the mid-1960s governments of every political persuasion invested heavily in urban modernization and funded extensive programmes of policy oriented research. At the same time a new and growing generation of politically engaged young social scientists, in Western and Eastern Europe and the USA notably, were being drawn into this work but rejected the uncritical and ideological basis for much of the pre-existing urban social science.

Out of this there began to develop an international network of critical urban research, much of it centred on the ISA RC 21 which was formed in the early 1970s. There followed an outpouring of new work, of conferences and publications. But, as the founders of IJURR recognized, most of this activity was based in a few countries in Western Europe and predominantly involved sociologists (developments in radical geography were also occurring but somewhat separately). The hope, and it was fulfilled, was that a new international journal would eventually draw in a far wider range of research, academic disciplines and geographies than the RC could encompass. It is also important to note that from the outset, as my original introduction to issue 1 noted, IJURR welcomed and aimed to publish the widest possible range of critical work on urban and regional problems. It was not intended to be the preserve of any particular theoretical or methodological orientation, nor was it. One other feature which didn't last deserves mention, at the outset IJURR was a bilingual publication (English and French).

Many of these aspirations for a truly international and multi-disciplinary journal took years to achieve and the contents of Volume 1 strongly reflect the, in retrospect, limited concerns and scope of the 'new urban sociology' (as it was loosely termed) of the 1970s. In particular, the state and policy centred origins of much critical urban research now seems more narrow in scope and focus than it seemed at the time. Nothing illustrates this more clearly than the opening pages of the first issue: a debate on urbanism and the state. Other key themes included work on urban social movements and urban politics, collective consumption, the urban fiscal crisis and capitalist landownership and rent. As these papers demonstrated IJURR began to draw in and so promote a more varied (by discipline and location) and theoretically diverse range of work, as intended.

What was less clear at the time was that by the late 1970s the era (in the West) of steady economic growth, rapid urbanization, expanding urban programmes and expanding funding for urban research had already passed. The consequences of all this, in the new era for states, economies and societies, soon became reflected in the subsequent pages of IJURR.

Michael Harloe
March 2017



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Michael Harloe

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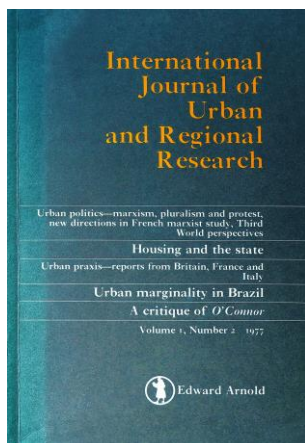
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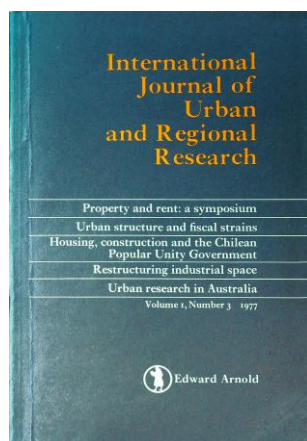
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