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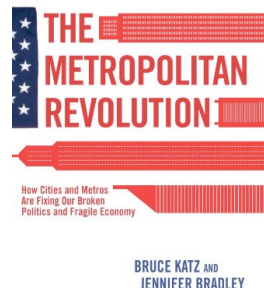
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The Metropolitan Revolution, How Cities and Metros are fixing our Broken Policies and Fragile Economy. By Bruce Katz and Jennifer Bradley
Published by Brookings Institution Press, 288 pages

Reviewed by Miriam Fitzpatrick, 28.07.2014



Does a good Mayor improve a place? It certainly seems so from the recommendations of urban researcher, Bruce Katz, in his RTE radio interview for post-Dublin-Mayor-election naysayers. A mayor, Katz attested, is someone who thinks for a city as a whole; they co-ordinate a narrative for a city. *'The Metropolitan Revolution'* his latest joint publication with Jennifer Bradley for the US think-tank, the Brookings Institute, lucidly supports his opinion.

Outlined in this lively book is a radical relook at the geography of jobs and networks reminding readers of the worldwide trading power of city-states once enjoyed by the Hanseatic League, which by their mix of modernization and trade meant that they dominated Europe by the 14th century. Likewise cities, today, have a multiplier effect on innovation and exchanges; *'300 of the largest metros in the world, are home to 19% of the world's population yet generate 48% of its GDP'*. The book defines 'metro' as shorthand for a metropolitan area or region and *'is made up a collection of municipalities that together form a unified labour market and is often defined by the commuting patterns of its residents between home and work.'*

Partly in reaction to the Great Recession, the stasis of government and its administrators has meant that metros and cities have, in effect, been doing things for themselves. The result is an inversion of power from cities as subjects, to cities as actors but, critically, they operate as collaborative communities of pioneers attune to locally responsive initiatives. Ultimately, if you hold back on the growth of a metropolis, such as greater Dublin, you hamper the growth of a nation.¹

With its declaration of a revolution in its title, the rhetoric is overwhelmingly persuasive. Trailing a genre of pro-urban manifestos, its message is logical and urgent. The book recalls the resolve of *'Ed Glazer's 'Triumph of the City'* but its scholarly, synthesis of up-to-the-moment-facts and its vanguard quality is closer to Jane Jacob's *'Death and Life of American Cities'*. In any case, its scholarly insights have caused a ripple among urban thinkers, especially Mayors, for its transformative, bottom-up polemic.

The spatial implications of metros as *'humanities greatest collective act of invention and imagination'* and the book's twinning of designers with innovation and intelligent infrastructure, makes *'The Metropolitan Revolution'* an essential read for any architect wishing to be informed about the trajectory of cities or even curious about where new commissions might germinate. For any radicals, the publication (and its blog metrorevolution.org) is fuel for their ascendancy.

¹ According to Dublin Chamber of Commerce, the Greater Region of Dublin while being home to 39% of the Nation's population generates 48% of our GDP. San Paulo houses 10% of Brazil's population but generates 20% of its GDP, states *'The Metropolitan Revolution'*.