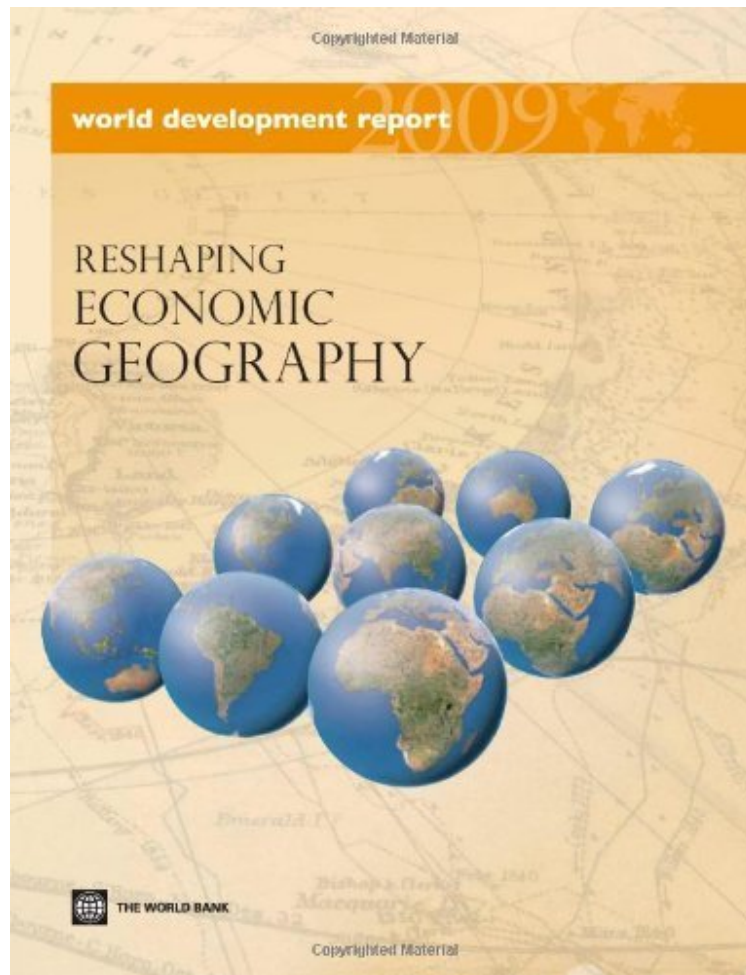


World Development Report 2009

World Bank

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World Bank : World Development Report 2009 before purchasing it in order to gauge whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised World Development Report 2009:

0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Scientists won't like it, but Belgians might be amused about this collection of buzz words. By Bertrand A. Consider the fancy "Geography in motion" chapter were to be taken for granted: you could start reading ("navigating") any of the following chapters independently ("vertically"). This is what I did. I am a total neophyte to both economics, and economic geography, but neither to general geography, nor to science in general. Because I wanted to become more acquainted with the facts behind development politics, I considered this lavishly illustrated book a good choice. In short: I was strongly disappointed, and after only a few chapters, I will not continue (and definitely not recommend!) this sloppily written and/or edited oeuvre, unless anyone tells me that there are paragraphs in this book that worth it. Consider you start reading this book on p. 50 (Density). This is a fantastic two-page spread for curious people in general and for scientists and Belgians in particular: curious people will learn in a lengthy paragraph, that "The primary city is often but not always the national administrative center and the seat of

political power: Cambodia's Phnom Penh, Cameroon's Yaounde, and Colombia's Bogotaacute;. A country's leading city also tends to be its most diversified, both in the provision of goods and services and in cultural and other amenities. For the cultural amenities, think of Broadway in New York City, the Opera House in Sydney, and the Louvre in Paris. But think also of Trinidad and Tobago's Port of Spain, famous for the annual carnival that attracts large numbers of visitors."Thank you, World Bank authors, for this valuable information which will definitely help "Reshaping Economic Geography"!Scientists will be interested in Figure 1.2 on that same page, which shows "Log of rank" vs. "Log of population" for the relative size distribution of settlements. Guess what? Not only the scale runs to more than Log 10 (ten billions), but the graphs display tenths of dots near that figure and... beyond! Where on Earth are those totally overlooked Tera-Cities? The figure caption states that this is "almost a law", so please - this is not the place for doubt.Let us now come (almost) home: Belgium. Brussels, or, it's "average square kilometer", to be precise, "has more than 2000 workers...". Two sentences later, we learn "For the sake of comparison, the population density of London and Madrid is about 5,000 people per square kilometer". I am convinced that these slightly different categories (workforce density/population density) do share, indeed, something comparable.Sorry for these subtleties, Belgians, but how about this one: "In the Flemish Flanders (...) area,"! You see: there were experts at work. And if I am not wrong, then this is a very, very sloppily made book that is riddled with buzz words. I would have preferred a more rigorous treatment of the contents than the notorious use of figurative language for even the most trivial issues. Was there any review process before that manuscript was presented to the general public? Judging from just this two-page spread, I seriously question this.Since I am new to all of this, could anybody help me with answering whether or not it makes sense to continue reading this book?2 of 3 people found the following review helpful. A superb introduction to economic geographyBy J. B. WightIn this relatively short book the World Bank writers argue that cities matter more than people have thought. The world is NOT flat, as Thomas Friedman alleges because location still matters greatly. Conglomeration allows for both internal and external economies of scale. Hence, most of the world's income and wealth is tightly clustered around the major cities of the world.Some of the graphics are stunning. This is one of the best WDR's in many years, and coincidentally was released the year that Paul Krugman won the Nobel Prize for economic geography and trade.

Rising densities of human settlements, migration and transport to reduce distances to market, and specialization and trade facilitated by fewer international divisions are central to economic development. The transformations along these three dimensions—density, distance, and division—are most noticeable in North America, Western Europe, and Japan, but countries in Asia and Eastern Europe are changing in ways similar in scope and speed. 'World Development Report 2009: Reshaping Economic Geography' concludes that these spatial transformations are essential, and should be encouraged. The conclusion is not without controversy. Slum-dwellers now number a billion, but the rush to cities continues. Globalization is believed to benefit many, but not the billion people living in lagging areas of developing nations. High poverty and mortality persist among the world's "bottom billion", while others grow wealthier and live longer lives. Concern for these three billion often comes with the prescription that growth must be made spatially balanced. The WDR has a different message: economic growth is seldom balanced, and efforts to spread it out prematurely will jeopardize progress. The Report: bull; documents how production becomes more concentrated spatially as economies grow. bull; proposes economic integration as the principle for promoting successful spatial transformations. bull; revisits the debates on urbanization, territorial development, and regional integration and shows how today's developers can reshape economic geography.