The gleaming Guggenheim Museum Bilbao has put the Basque capital on the map of world cities and has exacerbated optimism among public officials worldwide about the role of spectacular architecture in urban renewal. This book - a theoretically-informed case study and a major synthesis of Bilbao's developments through the lens of globalization – analyzes the Guggenheim project as the latest of Bilbao’s globalization efforts, puts the project in the context of Bilbao's decades-long transformation and contends that Bilbao’s positive economic performance since 1994 is not fundamentally due to the success of Frank Gehry's building, but rather to a complex array of causal processes that must be understood in the context of Bilbao's connections with the world economy and a changing world-system. The author argues that globalization processes in Bilbao are as old as the city itself and that the role of the State must be taken into account in order to explain the city’s changing fortunes throughout the years. Globalization itself ought to be understood as a complex and variable network-like process with multiscalar nodes, an approach which is carefully theorized and empirically developed in this book.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Gerardo del Cerro Santamaria, born in Spain and a long-time observer of urban and Basque affairs, teaches at The Cooper Union for the Advancement of Science and Art in New York City. He specialized in urbanism and political economy with Janet Abu-Lughod, Manuel Castells, and Diane Davis, holds Ph.D.’s from the New School for Social Research and the Universidad Autonoma de Madrid, and has published on urban issues in Spain and the United States.

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