



BOOK REVIEWS

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Urban Economics and Urban Policy: Challenging Conventional Policy Wisdom, by Paul C. Cheshire, Max Nathan, and Henry G. Overman. 2014. Cheltenham, U.K.: Edward Elgar. 238 + xii. ISBN: 978-1781952511, \$120.

Economists generally like to think of themselves as having an important role to play in the formation of public policies. For many, this is a principal reason for their interest in the discipline, and a quick review of the program at the American Economic Association (AEA) indicates that much of the research presented there has a fairly direct and explicit connection to public policy. It seems that economists love public policy.

Now in some areas of government, public officials love economics right back. Here at the Federal Reserve, economists and economic reasoning play a huge, perhaps even dominant, role in debate and discussion, notably over monetary policy. But in urban affairs and policy, economists’ love has largely been unrequited. It strikes me that the gap between what economists believe and what policy makers do may be larger in urban affairs than in other major policy arena. For example, economists don’t agree on a lot of things, but the ideas that rent control is a bad idea and land value taxation is a good idea are both shared by the vast majority of economists (Jenkins, 2009; *The Economist*, 2015). But, in the United States especially, rent control is fairly common and land taxes are quite rare.

Paul Cheshire, Max Nathan, and Henry Overman recognize the large disconnect between urban economics and urban policy, and their book is intended to help bridge that gap. It is the authors’ general contention that “urban economists have to date contributed very little to the development and evaluation of real-world urban policy” (p. 1). While I think there are some notable counterexamples to which I return below, I largely agree with this claim. In addition, the authors believe that urban economics, particularly modern urban economics, has much value to add to policy making. Here, I think the case is less clear-cut, but the authors present it well.

Given the authors’ purpose, readers of this book can expect a nontechnical summary of recent research in urban economics, with a clear and complete explanation of what it implies for urban policymaking. This is precisely what the authors deliver, so readers should not expect new findings from this extremely accomplished research team; instead they get careful synthesis, interpretation,

and policy recommendations. As such the book will be of most value to students and practitioners in fields that do have a lot of influence in urban policy, especially planning and government.

Following an introduction, the authors make their case in eight substantive chapters. The closely intertwined nature of land use, governance, and economic development in cities is underlined here by a bit of jumping around. After starting out with a discussion of urban development, the authors shift to a careful and comprehensive discussion of planning (land use regulation) in Chapters 4–6. The authors make a very strong case that ignoring the lessons of supply and demand (and of recent research conducted in the United Kingdom and elsewhere) leads to serious unintended consequences of land use regulation, namely high and volatile house prices. In addition, distortions introduced by regulation (to some degree these are intentional, of course) produce misallocations of land away from its highest and best use, with significant consequences for productivity.

The authors are quick to say that their criticism of how land use policy is currently conducted does not mean that the market must always be obeyed. Rather, the point that I took away was that ignoring the fact that *there is a market* will lead to inefficient policies that sometimes are self-defeating. The solution, the authors argue, is to make use of price signals in zoning decisions. The authors are masterful in their discussion and this case is made clearly and convincingly. It is a high point of the book, and is important reading for planners and regulators in the United Kingdom and elsewhere.

On economic development, covered in Chapters 2 (urban growth and decline), 3 (intra-city location), and 8 (evaluating urban policies), the authors are appropriately somewhat more humble. As they point out, economists know something about what makes a place grow—essentially having the right mix of people while effectively balancing agglomeration economies and congestion, but they know somewhat less about how policy can produce those conditions. Indeed, perhaps the main message of these chapters is that what we have tried does not seem to have worked well, in large part because it attempts to work against, rather than with, powerful economic forces that shape places. This logic leads to suggestions for managing decline in places whose time has passed, so that their inhabitants can make better lives elsewhere, but examples of “successful decline” seem to be scarce. The authors conclude that “place-based” strategies may be misguided altogether, suggesting that “people-based” policies are likely to achieve better outcomes. This can be seen as a rejection of the idea of urban policy altogether, because urban places are, of course, places.

In Chapter 7, the authors draw on theory and evidence from other countries to discuss devolution and governing institutions in the United Kingdom (The book overall has a distinct U.K. focus, but this chapter is really *about* the United Kingdom, rather than making general arguments using evidence *from* the United Kingdom.). The literature is not clear on how devolution—decentralized governance—affects important outcomes like economic growth and poverty, but the U.K. system is quite centralized and it is likely that some decentralization might provide some benefits.

When I arrived at Chapter 9, in which the authors offer a summary and their own conclusions, I was surprised that I had somehow overlooked the chapter on transportation policies. Upon reviewing the book, I confirmed that there was no such chapter. That is fine, of course, but for many people transportation and urban policy are quite closely linked. In addition, I think one could make the case that economics has had a bit more of an impact on transportation policy than it has on other place-based policies, as there is some evidence of interest in peak-load pricing and congestion charges, however crude. Nonetheless, even in the area of transportation, the authors’ main contention—that policymakers should come to love economists as much as economists love policy—is clearly relevant. Reading this book will be an excellent step in that direction.

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Global Handbook of Quality of Life: Exploration of Well-Being of Nations and Continents, edited by Wolfgang Glatzer, Laura Camfield, Valerie Møller, and Mariano Rojas. New York: Springer. 894 + xii. ISBN-978-94-017-9177-9; ISBN 978-94-017-9178-6 (eBook). Cloth, \$559.00.

During the past 50 years an impressive amount of research has been devoted to improving the understanding of quality of life (QOL) issues. This *Global Handbook*, with some 60 contributors coming from 20 nations, offers a comprehensive, international overview of the mainstream literature on human well-being. In order, the volume's seven major sections address: long-term changes in QOL (4 chapters), subjective versus objective approaches (6 chapters), economic issues (6 chapters), social and demographic issues (4 chapters), national differences in well-being (11 chapters), monitoring and reporting (4 chapters), and emerging perspectives (5 chapters). The book's emphasis is clearly on current research and readers are advised to consult other sources for a richer historic perspective. The editors offer a very short introduction but, unfortunately, do not provide any closing remarks to assess the various contributions or target the outstanding questions for future research. Each chapter is self-contained, with its own substantial list of references, but not having either an author or a subject index for the entire volume proved to be very inconvenient. On the other hand, the discussion throughout the book is nicely complemented by a wealth of tabulated data and an abundance of informative figures.

The volume is particularly valuable for clarifying the various cross-national and cross-cultural differences that should be taken into account when addressing QOL issues. Different societies place much different emphases on such matters as materialism, trust, respect for nature, and public sector dominance and, in the spirit of Ronald Inglehart or Geert Hofstede, a few chapters actually attempt to classify societies accordingly. The volume is also useful for summarizing the properties of a wide variety of QOL indicators although, unfortunately, few attempts are made to evaluate these often competing indicators for their dependability, sensitivity, or flexibility. The volume is also reasonably successful in demonstrating how the very different subjective and objective approaches to well-being can be merged in order to shed more light on the innate complexities of QOL issues. But, for various reasons, the volume will likely prove to be of only modest interest to the community of regional scientists. Those chapters thought to be most relevant are now summarized and these comments should provide some idea of the great diversity of material in the volume.

Kenneth Land discusses the United Nation's well-known Human Development Index (HDI) in one chapter. This index, which reflects the efforts of Amartya Sen and Martha Nussbaum (among others) to develop a human capabilities approach to well-being, focuses on what humans can do as opposed to what they have. A capabilities approach also stresses that goods should be used in ways that are meaningful to humans. The simplicity of this index—it combines data only on life expectancy (health), schooling (education), and per capita income (living standards)—allows results to be updated fairly easily each year; however, the index has generated a fair amount of criticism because of its limited welfare domain. Moreover, the HDI was recently modified to address other concerns related to the sensitivity of the index to outliers in any one of the three performance areas. The UN has also adapted the logic behind the HDI to create other national indices that highlight income inequality, gender inequality, and the incidence of poverty. In another chapter Herman de Jong explores how price changes and the appearance of new goods have complicated the measurement of living standards ever since the Industrial Revolution. Technological improvements have not only allowed the purchasing power of an hour of work to rise in the developed economies but income-elastic leisure time has also risen considerably in those societies. Special attention is then given to recent work by Prados de la Escosura (2015) who, having recognized the asymptotic properties of the HDI sub-indices, introduced an Atkinson-type adjustment to create an overall index that is more useful for longitudinal studies. The new index shows that during the past century, in contrast to the usual finding, the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) nations have actually widened their development gap on the non-OECD nations. This new index shows promise for indicating whether per capita income is a leading or lagging indicator of general development, although examples are given where improvements in education and health seem to be independent of national income growth.

A short chapter by Richard Easterlin examines the current evidence on the controversial relationship between life satisfaction and economic growth. Most of the discussion deals with the so-called Easterlin paradox where cross-sectional studies indicate that happiness climbs with increases in per capita real gross domestic product (GDP) but longitudinal studies indicate that no such relationship exists. He reconciles these findings by arguing that fluctuations between happiness and income might occur in the short term even while trends between happiness and income do not occur in the long term. But it remains for a later chapter by Monica Guillen-Royo and Harold Wilhite to shed more explanatory light on this paradox. The authors point out that many subjective studies now indicate that people, at least in the richer nations, have become very concerned about such matters as environmental degradation and the poor quality of many consumer goods. They also point to Daniel Kahneman's work on relative income in arguing that ever-widening income distributions have become another concern for many of these same people. As a result it seems plausible that income and happiness are indeed related—but only up to some income threshold (perhaps \$75K in the United States) where necessary goods (culturally defined) are replaced by luxury goods. In a similar vein Duncan Campbell and Roger Porquet open their chapter by claiming that economic and social development must be inextricably tied together in any full discussion of QOL. They point out that excessive unemployment is widely accepted to be a great strain on society but it is less well known that fair and decent working conditions also contribute a lot to the valuation of personal well-being. Contemporary European data suggest that small income disparities and gender equality are better predictors of a worker's well-being than an involvement in collective bargaining or the region's unemployment rate.

Finally, Daphne Ahrendt, Hans Dubois, and Erika Mezger summarize in great detail the recent QOL experiences of Europeans. This chapter opens by mentioning several post-2000 commissions that recommended a shift in European values where less emphasis would be placed on measuring the economic production of firms and more emphasis would be placed on measuring the well-being of people. Surveys indicate that social democratic nations fare better than liberal or corporatist ones in terms of life satisfaction although considerable variety in satisfaction exists within each group. Nearly 30 different nations are regularly evaluated using surveys that address such diverse matters as living standards, housing quality, loneliness, and optimism. Countries like Denmark and Sweden not only exhibit high mean life satisfaction but the disparities in responses between the lowest and highest groups are rather low; other countries, like Bulgaria and Romania, not only have lower levels of life satisfaction but the satisfaction disparities across society are much greater.

The most disappointing feature of the volume is the minimal attention devoted to an array of methodological concerns; however, this is not surprising in that the editors aimed for width and not depth in their coverage. A fair amount of redundancy also crept into the volume and a somewhat different format—perhaps one where each section dropped one chapter but added a critical summary—might have enhanced the analytical quality of the general discussion. For example, Richard Estes provides the 16th in a series of studies on worldwide social development where, to his credit, factors like gender equity, defense spending, and environmental emissions are recognized. But several of these factors are known to suffer from the free-rider problem and this issue is not taken into account (or even mentioned) when generating international rankings. Moreover, it is somewhat debatable whether the same percentage weights should be placed on the three sub-indices of general welfare, defense, and environment over such a long period of time. Furthermore, most regional scientists will simply not be interested in those several chapters that explore the psychological bases of different subjective indicators, even though some of the contributors have been pioneers in this literature. Nevertheless, regional scientists should take note of certain aspects of the (largely European) literature on life satisfaction for, as Duncan Campbell and Roger Porquet emphasize, personal evaluations of well-being are intimately tied to macroeconomic conditions like unemployment and inflation and to place-specific conditions like social capital and levels of pollution. In fact, helping different communities situate accessible, high-quality public goods is one area where regional scientists can certainly make useful contributions to QOL public policy. Another general area of disappointment related to the paucity of material in the book on city-related issues. The world's population is now more than half urbanized but the volume only obliquely recognizes the

litany of urban problems that can now be found in both the developed and developing nations. Moreover, fundamental questions regarding how to value urban amenities like museums and public transportation are not adequately addressed. Finally, many life satisfaction concerns of urbanites involve local or neighborhood conditions (e.g., crime, land use, building conditions) and nothing is mentioned about how their assessment can now make use of Geographic Information Systems (GIS) or other technologies. As Marans and Stimson (2011) have recently pointed out, many challenges still remain in associating subjective and objective indicators in the hopes of improving urban well-being.

In these times it seems self-evident that QOL issues should be of central interest to regional scientists. Economists, geographers, and planners can all make significant and unique contributions to the well-being literature given their special interests in space, location, scale, and place. One topic deserving their attention concerns the range of activities to include in the QOL index. While it is well known that the choice of variables will reflect the ideological stance of the practitioner, it is less well known that this choice will affect the spatial properties of the findings. Consider the alternative rankings of the American Human Development Index (3 variables) and David Smith's index of well-being (47 variables) in the year 2000 (Smith, 1973; Mulligan and Burke, 2002; Measure of America, 2015). Although the correlation ($r = 0.90$) between the two rankings of U.S. states is high, some large discrepancies occur in those rankings outside the two tails of the alternative QOL distributions. Here many of the Sunbelt states, like Arizona and Florida, rate much higher on the AHDI because factors like alienation and social disorganization are not addressed; likewise, a number of other states with no large cities, like Wyoming and Montana, rate much higher on Smith's more comprehensive index. Clearly a number of spatially-embedded social and economic processes are simply not captured by the AHDI. Further analysis with Getis-Ord statistics would clarify how the geography of hot spots and cold spots is also tied to the composition of the QOL index. The community of regional scientists could also make important contributions in the area of indicator convergence. Using Barro-type or other econometric approaches, they could gauge whether regions or entire nations were converging slowly or rapidly on different attributes like education or health (Tondl, 2001). Research of this nature might shed more light on whether GDP per capita is a leading or lagging indicator (see above) in regional or national development. Of course, the convergence speeds for these various indicators could be adjusted for neighborhood effects or geographic nearness by recognizing the existence of dependency or heterogeneity in the spatial regressions. As a final note, some of the recommendations recently made by Marans and Stimson (2011) are restated: given their skills and interests, regional scientists could improve our understanding of human well-being by replicating the most important QOL studies in space and time, by showing how well-being systematically varies across different spatial scales, and by developing spatial models that capture the various interrelated processes that affect quality of life in our different societies.

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Detroit: Three Pathways to Revitalization, by Lewis D. Solomon. 2014. New Brunswick, New Jersey and London, U.K.: Transaction Publishers. 156 + xv. ISBN: 978-1-4128-5196, \$31.46.

In an article titled “The Post-Post-Apocalyptic Detroit” in the *New York Times Magazine* last summer (2014), author Ben Austen wrote, “If the scale of Detroit’s failure is unprecedented, then so (the local reasoning goes) is the scale of its opportunity. In the process, the Motor City has become the testing ground for an updated American dream . . .”

The scale of decline has indeed been grand. Between the 1950 and 2010 census counts, Detroit’s population declined from a peak of 1.8 million to approximately 714,000, a loss of about 60 percent. This deep and on-going population loss has had many consequences, one being fiscal distress. In 2013, Detroit became the largest U.S. city ever to file for bankruptcy. This was also the largest municipal bankruptcy case in U.S. history by debt. Estimated at \$18 billion, it far exceeded the previous record holder, Jefferson County, Alabama, which had filed in 2011 for \$4 billion. The population loss also had a profound impact on the city’s physical fabric. A 2014 survey by the Detroit Blight Removal task force, considered the most detailed survey of blight conducted in any American city, found that of the city’s approximately 377,000 parcels, 114,000 or about 30 percent were vacant and 79,000 buildings, about 30 percent of the city’s building stock, were blighted or otherwise in need of demolition. More than 90 percent of publicly held parcels were considered blighted.

Set squarely in the context of Detroit’s depopulation and the consequent challenges to elected officials, civic leaders, policymakers, and residents, Lewis Solomon in this volume looks both to history and toward the future, making a useful and timely contribution to the study of Detroit. He sketches out three themes: first, that in the context of Detroit’s history, there is an urgent need for broad public sector reform. Second, that economic growth and job creation will be fueled by largely by the private sector, whether corporations, entrepreneurs, or the creative class and that these efforts should be supported by public policy. Third, he suggests a radical new vision for Detroit—a city-wide, community-driven economy, including ideas for a local currency, at least to meet basic needs. Together, he argues, a right-sized public sector, a resurgent private sector, and the new community-based entities like cooperatives would function as an “overlapping, tripartite political economy” (p. x).

Solomon grounds his ideas in the city’s historical context. He notes the city’s assets, including location, some strong neighborhoods, committed anchor institutions, and an engaged foundation community. He also notes the city’s challenges, including population loss and the changing racial composition of the city, deindustrialization, high rates of joblessness, and persistently high levels of poverty. With this as background, he expands on his first theme, public sector reform, by focusing on three “pathways” to revitalizing Detroit. These are, dealing with the city’s fiscal crisis; “rightsizing” the public sector so that city services are provided to match a much smaller population spread thinly and unevenly across the city; and, ensuring the fiscal health and improving the academic performance of the city’s public schools.

Using a wide variety of sources, Solomon tells an engaging story about each of these pathways. Addressing the city’s fiscal crisis first, he draws a quick sketch of the politics of balancing budgets, tensions between the city and state, as well as between the Mayor and his Council, the impact of the Great Recession, a growing financial crisis, and with falling population, falling revenue. Public school reform took a similarly tortuous path, with the appointment of a state-appointed emergency financial manager in 2009, and emergency manager in 2011. Population loss led to lower enrollments, therefore lower state funding, which led to school closings and higher deficits. Financial re-structuring, academic changes, and organizational re-structuring were all very hard to implement.

The most interesting and best known of the three pathways is the resizing of the public sector to provide city services efficiently in a city facing geographically uneven population loss. Following physical and market analyses, the city presented a short-term intervention strategy. Neighborhoods were divided into three market types—steady, transitional, or distressed—which determined the level of city services each received. A long-term plan, finalized in late 2012, based on an intensive community engagement process, categorized neighborhoods into three “framework zones” based on property condition and level of vacancy. Land use, economic development, and service delivery policies in a neighborhood were based on the zone to which it belonged. This was a widely praised plan, but in the end lack of funding and the city’s fiscal crisis halted any hope of implementation.

The second theme is the role of corporate relocation, and providing incentives for employees and others to live in Detroit. Public–private investments for economic development may have some impact on repopulating downtown and mid-town Detroit, but there is some doubt whether such investments will make a difference to residents in the city’s neighborhoods. Solomon’s most intriguing idea is his proposal for a community-based economy that leverages two key city resources, vacant land and under-utilized human capabilities. He envisions using vacant land in the city for community gardens and urban agriculture so the city can be self-sufficient in food. He even suggests a local currency, Detroit Dollars, to broaden this self-sufficiency. “A community-driven approach could serve residents’ basic needs . . . Residents could create a less-consumption-oriented lifestyle and a more self-sufficient pattern centered on local production and distribution of goods and services. They could create a model of urban sustainability, far less reliant on the public sector” (p. 125).

Solomon has written a rich and detailed case study on Detroit, including many features that are rare in case studies on shrinking cities. For example, he highlights the individuals who have played important roles in Detroit’s recent history, including governors, mayors, businessmen, urban planners, and even the state-appointed emergency manager of the city’s public schools, discussing the constraints they faced, the reasons for their successes and failures, and their overall effectiveness. He discusses in detail the messy politics of plan-making and implementation. While case studies on shrinking cities tend most often to focus on population change, policy/planning issues, or urban form—although there can be some overlap in these categories—he addresses all three in this book. Perhaps, most importantly, Solomon makes numerous references to the issue of race in Detroit, including white flight (p. 3), the racial history of planning in the city especially during urban renewal (p. 52), the tension created by a largely white “creative class” in a largely black city (p. 116), and resistance to “the takeover of a majority black city with a black mayor and city council by an unelected emergency manager appointed by a white governor” (p. 28). Early in the book he says that race and class “underpin any analysis of Detroit’s challenges and its potential prospects” (p. 3). This emphasis on the racial and social implications of population loss distinguishes this book from much of the shrinking city literature.

Given this wide-ranging and well-researched case study, and Detroit’s very prominent place among shrinking cities worldwide, some commentary on shrinking cities in general would have been welcome. Perhaps the book’s shortcoming, if any, is that Solomon does not directly address the broader themes or theoretical discussions in the shrinking cities literature, using Detroit as a lens. But it is clear that this is not a book written for scholars of shrinking cities as much as for anyone wanting a thoughtful guide to Detroit’s recent history and wondering about the city’s future.

Writing before Detroit went into bankruptcy, Solomon ends his book sounding more cautious than optimistic, noting that the city faces “massive human capital and labor-market challenges” (p. 146). He also writes, “The development of communities rests . . . on residents’ determination and involvement, both of which remain very uncertain” (p. 147).

But the news since has not been all bad. In December 2014, Detroit exited bankruptcy and the state-appointed emergency manager who had overseen the bankruptcy-related restructuring resigned, handing control of the city back to the elected Mayor and City Council. The city’s employees and pensioners gave up a lot in the process, as did bondholders. The negotiations centered around the so-called “Grand Bargain” under which foundations contributed money to preserve the Detroit Institute of the Arts as an independent nonprofit institution and to reduce the pension cuts. As the city and its creditors made their closing statements and brought the bankruptcy trial to a close, Judge Steven Rhodes, who had overseen the proceedings, said the agreement “borders on the miraculous.” On February 10, 2015, in his first State of the City address following Detroit’s exit from bankruptcy, Mayor Mike Duggan touted many accomplishments, including a brisk pace in blight removal, steadily improving city services, investment in jobs and economic development, and, for the first time since 2002, a balanced budget. Perhaps the Motor City will indeed become the testing ground for an updated American dream.

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Austen, Ben. 2014. "The Post-Post-Apocalyptic Detroit," *The New York Times Magazine*, July 14, 2014 (www.nytimes.com/2014/07/13/magazine/the-post-post-apocalyptic-detroit.html?_r=0).

Regional Problems and Policies in Latin America, edited by Juan R. Cuadrado-Roura and Patricio Aroca. 2013. Series: Advances in Spatial Science. Heidelberg, Germany and New York: Springer. 569 + xix. ISBN: 978-3-642-39673-1, \$229.

This book offers a detailed analysis of territorial problems and regional policies in Latin America (LA). As the editors explain, despite the increasing number of international studies on LA in recent years, the majority of research is in Spanish and Portuguese. Hence, this collection of studies is a proper base to share knowledge with international researchers to facilitate the discussion about whether, and under what conditions, liberalization, internationalization, and decentralization of economies affect regional performance and territorial inequalities in LA. It may also prompt discussion regarding the type of regional policies that should be enacted to reduce disparities and on the possible effectiveness of those policies.

The volume is organized into three main parts. The first part offers an overview of the evolution of economic performance, disparities, spatial concentration, and regional policies undertaken in Latin America as a whole and in select countries. The second part focuses on seven countries: Argentina, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Ecuador, and Peru. Finally, the third section investigates topics related to regional development, such as population, human capital, migration, poverty, and policies covering decentralization, government transfers, and foreign direct investment.

Although the various LA countries have followed different historical and political courses, they are facing some problems also common in developed countries linked to economic transformation and advancing urbanization. However, unlike in their North American and European counterparts, in LA countries, those changes occur in a relatively short time, and therefore the scale of subsequent problems also differs widely. As Cuadrado-Roura and Aroca (Chapter 2) explain, since 2000, the continent has experienced positive economic growth, with particularly good performance from Brazil, Chile, Mexico, Peru, and Uruguay. Despite this, strong polarization of economic activity and population and sharp inequalities remain dominant features of the region. As found by Cuadrado-Roura and Gonzalez-Catalán (Chapter 5), strong disparities are detrimental for regional economic growth in LA. The interesting work of Cuervo and Cuervo finds confirmation of "the cyclical behavior of primacy, forecast by the theory and by statistical research," and that the majority of countries investigated are approaching saturation (Chapter 7, p. 147). Furthermore, they do not find a significant correlation between urban primacy and regional disparities. Using other indicators of primacy, they highlight the challenge of future research "to form statistical series over a longer period of time." Atienza and Aroca show (Chapter 6) that spatial concentration and urban primacy might hinder national economic growth when countries reach certain income thresholds. They identify two specific areas of the continent that have achieved this limit: the Southern Cone (including Argentina, Chile, Peru, and, to a lesser extent, Uruguay and Paraguay) and Central America. Internal migration toward larger cities is considered a determinant of spatial concentration. By analyzing this determinant, Aroca and Rodriguez (Chapter 15) find that migration responds positively to market signals but only in some countries (Argentina, Bolivia, and Brazil), while the more statistically robust pull factor is the availability of public goods. As confirmed by Rowe in Chapter 17, the presence of public goods alters the geographic distribution of human capital in LA and Caribbean countries.

As far as regional policies are concerned, one of the book's main findings is the failure of territorial policies in reversing regional problems (see, among others, the interesting analysis by Boiser in Chapter 4). The wide range of explanations includes the "discontinuities" of political and economic policies experienced since the mid 1970s, and also the idea of progress based on economic growth rather than development. Governments rely on the rebalancing power of the market as a means to reduce income gaps and disparities (see, for example, the analysis for Colombia by Galvis and Meisel in Chapter 9), and policy interventions adopt a top-down approach or policies based on "assistentialism" (see the study on Mexico by Quintana-Romero and Asuad-Sanén in Chapter 8). Many authors advocate the use of long-term policies designed by utilizing input from

stakeholders and local communities. Gallo-Riviera, Garrido-Yserte, Olarte, and Pozo-Segura's study (Chapter 13) shows that the effect of the recent "Peruvian miracle" on inequalities is negligible due to the country's economic growth based on the mining sector—which generates employment with low productivity and low real salary. Hence, the authors point out the importance of promoting "quality in growth" (p. 295). The quality of long-term growth depends on the level of education and skills of the population. Mendoza-González, Valdivia-López, and Isaac-Egurrola (Chapter 16) show that education represents a necessary, but not sufficient, condition if workforce skills rely on "processes of technological imitation rather than innovation," as is the case in LA countries (p. 375). The comparative study by Ruiz-Duran on Argentina, Brazil, and Mexico on political, fiscal, and financial decentralization (Chapter 19) identifies a reduction of disparities in those countries, but it recognizes that unconditional transfers might have fostered excessive reliance on government interventions.

My overall opinion is that the book contributes to the international debate. I appreciate, in particular, the efforts required to critically analyze LA problems by way of theoretical and empirical literature (as in the chapters by Atienza and Aroca; Cuervo and Cuervo; Cuadrado-Roura and Gonzalez-Catalán; Galvis and Meisel; Rowe; and Márquez, Fernández, and Ramajo). An element of originality is the discussion of themes related to political, fiscal, and financial decentralization, which are currently debated in many countries worldwide.

Nevertheless, some weaknesses emerge, as the inclusion of 24 chapters represents an editorial challenge. The sequence and the purpose of the chapters are not always clear, and might puzzle the reader in some cases. For instance, the first part analyzes regional problems and policies in LA as a whole and in selected countries, but it is not clear why the chapters discussing decentralization, government transfers, and even regional policies in the Andean Nations are not included there. Moreover, case studies focusing on individual countries rather than the central region should be placed at the end of the book as specific focuses. Some definitions are repeated and explained in different chapters. Finally, the conceptual links between chapters should have been reiterated in the introduction of each chapter to demonstrate the logical sequence. However, I really believe this book will be successful in stimulating scholars' and post-graduate students' critical thinking.

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Modeling of Land-Use and Ecological Dynamics, edited by Dan Malkinson, Danny Czamanski, and Itzhak Benenson. 2013. Series: Cities and Nature. Heidelberg, Germany and New York: Springer. 193 + viii. ISBN: 978-3-642-40198-5, \$129.

Three and a half billion people, representing approximately half of the world's population, currently live in cities. By the year 2050, this number is expected to both double and become increasingly concentrated in space. Already, urbanization processes and patterns have placed significant pressure on natural ecosystems; however, impacts are expected to soar under future projected scenarios. What's more is that expected losses in biodiversity and ecological functioning will have devastating consequences for human wellbeing. Tropical deforestation, for example—a leading cause of anthropogenic climate change—poses significant risks to human physical and mental health globally. Sustaining human wellbeing will therefore hinge on a comprehensive understanding of urbanization trajectories, and effective management of their impacts on nature.

In their recent publication, "Modeling of Land-Use and Ecological Dynamics," Malkinson, Czamanski, and Benenson argue that too often common theories of urban–nature spatial dynamics are not rigorously confronted with empirical evidence. The authors suggest this is especially true in the context of our increasingly urbanized world, where "there is already massive factual

evidence that does not accord well with some of the accepted theories" (p. 4). Within this context, their new book aims to: present empirical evidence of urban–nature dynamics, identify theoretical constructs that should be abandoned in light of this evidence, and propose dynamic processes that both conform well to evidence and are useful for urban land management. To do this, they present a series of case studies from around the world, which draw on field observations, remotely sensed data, and simulation models to investigate urbanization and its impacts on nature over space and time.

Collectively, the case studies make three contributions. First, the studies show that urban spatial dynamics evolve over time. For example, Chapter 3 provides evidence that cropland expansion in the Netherlands was explained by distance to markets between the years 1900 and 1960, but not between 1960 and 1990; and Chapter 8 shows how dynamic feedbacks between land use and land cover drive future patterns of land use change along the urban fringe in Israel. Second, the research indicates that urban–nature relationships are also dynamic. Chapter 6 suggests that distance to cities no longer explains the level of biodiversity (i.e., plant species richness) contained within open space patches in Germany and Israel; and Chapter 7 shows that urban lawn expansion in New England poses new water scarcity risks. Finally, and possibly most importantly, included case studies suggest that land management policies can shape patterns and processes of urbanization and associated impacts on nature. Chapter 2 shows that spatial zoning policies in the Netherlands shifted urbanization and reduced impacts on open spaces; Chapter 5 suggests the global structure of an urban street network in Portugal can be steered toward more desirable goals through strategic local interventions; and Chapter 4 provides evidence that policies that both protect sensitive areas and increase residential density in Canada have reduced environmental impacts of urban sprawl.

While this book is certainly not comprehensive, it does illustrate many topics covered by those interested in urban–nature spatial dynamics. It is particularly strong in illustrating the suite of methods available to urban researchers, both in terms of modeling tools (e.g., the detailed cellular automata example provided in Chapter 4) and indicators available to measure impacts (e.g., Chapter 9's review of the use of lichens for monitoring human–nature interactions). The work presented also illustrates many of the current challenges faced when investigating land use change over large spatial and temporal scales. Some authors overcome these challenges by developing new data and models. For example, Chapter 7 presents a method to quantify and simulate high-resolution urban lawn expansion, and Chapter 5 addresses an analytical challenge of contemporary suburban areas by developing an indicator of street network structural cohesion. However, others case studies simply allude to these challenges, even when more sophisticated methods are available and could have aided investigation.

In the opening chapter, the authors make many bold claims to both identify outdated theories and propose new processes that better support empirical evidence. Unfortunately, individual chapters do not live up to these promises. Many lack a discussion of results in the context of pre-existing, potentially outdated, theories. However, this is not to say the book itself is not useful. The ideas proposed in the initial chapter will stimulate new debates and efforts to test urban spatial theories with empirical data, especially within the context of global urbanization. Additionally, many of the individual case studies will be of interest to urban land use modelers, specifically those interested in urban–nature interactions. This includes those working in the fields of urban ecology, urban ecosystem services, and spatially explicit socio-ecological (human–environmental) interactions and dependencies. The more applied results may also interest urban planners and practitioners.

In summary, Malkinson, Czamanski, and Benenson hypothesize that contemporary urban–nature spatial dynamics have evolved in response to our increasingly urbanized and globalized world. Their book offers a refresher on traditional spatial theories of urban land use change, and provides a collection of methods and models used by those working in related research fields. It also presents case study evidence to illustrate contemporary urban–nature spatial dynamics, some of which no longer align with traditional theoretical constructs. While their science is not ground breaking, the authors' call for increased reflection on traditional theories in the context of contemporary evidence will resonate with many readers. They present a compelling argument for why common theories describing urban–nature dynamics should be revisited, and suggest that failing to do so limits our

ability to effectively manage future urbanization trajectories and associated impacts on nature and human wellbeing.

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Strategies for Sustainable Mobilities: Opportunities and Challenges, edited by Regine Gerike, Friederike Hülsmann, and Katrin Roller. 2013. Farnham, U.K. and Burlington, Vermont: Ashgate Publishing. 270 + xviii. ISBN: 978-1-4094-5489-2, \$107.96.

“Strategies for Sustainable Mobilities: Opportunities and Challenges,” edited by Regine Gerike, Friederike Hülsmann and Katrin Roller, is a collection of papers from the international scientific conference “mobil.TUM 2011: Making Sustainable Mobilities – Interdisciplinary Perspectives” held in Munich, Germany in April of 2011. The interdisciplinary nature of the conference provided an opportunity for contributors from a range of disciplines such as: geography, planning, engineering, economics, sociology, law, anthropology, and architecture, to name all but a few. The range of disciplines is impressive and fit well with the goal of the conference to extend the field of sustainable mobility beyond the typical economic-engineering dichotomy. The content of the conference presentations fell within three focus areas: (1) different conceptualizations of sustainable mobility across the disciplines; (2) strategies and instruments; and (3) institutions, policies, and governance. Most of the chapters address the second focus area, hence the title. Together, they provide a window into how context affects mobility and the kinds of strategies that might be developed to keep people mobile in the future.

The major contribution of this volume to the sustainability literature, more broadly, and to the sustainable transportation literature, specifically, is to contextualize sustainability. This context is rooted in the mobility needs of people and all of the factors which influence their mobility behavior. While understanding all of these factors and bringing them together is daunting, it is important to extend our knowledge and to make sustainability goals a reality in the transportation field. It is also highly illustrative for teaching purposes. Suffice it to say that it is very difficult to find scholarly content which is not anecdotal, but provides the necessary background, or context, for people’s mobility behavior. It is also difficult to find scholarly content on such matters which does not fall somewhere between the economic and the engineering approaches to promoting sustainable transportation. Particularly from the economic perspective, the components of behavior which seem to be given the most attention have to do with pricing. While it is difficult to argue that pricing is not important to individual decision making about mode choices, for example, certainly social factors are also important. But, here in this conference volume, the editors have brought together some highly topical chapters which readily move the context for mobility behavior from the individual to the household. They also provide a chapter which provides for an international comparison. These kinds of comparisons are interesting for students because they spark their natural inclination to compare what they know with that which is occurring in other contexts internationally.

Regarding the future of sustainability, the focus on the interactions between individual mobility behavior and its household context hold the most promise for effective strategizing. The content in this conference volume and elsewhere which uses time-use microdata to explore the dynamics of individual-household interactions extends our understanding of present and future demand. Usually, questions of equity emerge and the roles that people play in their respective households are the baseline for the research questions. Certainly, understanding changing gender roles between home and work are vital to understanding mobility behavior. It is vital, however, that this research continues to evolve to better understand how mobility is socialized into children, both girls and boys. The work world is changing very rapidly, as is how family is defined. The old mantra was that family formation led to the accumulation of private vehicles at the household-level and

ultimately the need for more square footage of residential improvement to accommodate the living space requirements for these nuclear units. Because land was cheaper in more far flung locations where economies of scale in residential development could be realized, families tended to move away from the core because it is what they could afford. Unfortunately, this trajectory may not be the norm going forward in the United States and elsewhere. The empirical evidence on the delayed onset of gaining driving credentials and delays in purchasing private vehicles suggests that family formation may not provide a convenient proxy for understanding individual mobility behavior in the future. This is where the chapters on context can make the biggest impact on readers preparing for a scholarly discussion—such as in a graduate seminar on sustainable transportation.

Finally, the chapters on context in this conference volume are well suited to sparking discourse in the transportation field on whether or not individual mobility or individual accessibility ought to be optimized from a system perspective. A similar conference volume which addressed the pros and cons of both approaches would be well-received by both researchers and teachers who study sustainability issues.

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Qualitative Research Methods for Community Development, by Robert Mark Silverman and Kelly L. Patterson. 2015. New York: Routledge. 126 + xii. ISBN 978-0-415-74035-7, \$190 (cloth); ISBN 978-0-415-74036-4, \$49.95 (paper); ISBN 978-1-315-79776-2 (ebook).

It's fair to say "regional science" doesn't rely much on "qualitative methods." I refer to ethnographic observation, interviews, focus groups, photography, videos, and content analysis of secondary sources, which are the methods Robert Silverman and Kelly Patterson cover in their book. This journal's authors seldom employ those methods. However, some readers are geographers or planning academics whose backgrounds make them more favorably disposed than, say, economists or operations researchers, or they have colleagues who use qualitative methods. Other readers may be just plain curious. For all those reasons, I volunteered to review the book.

Before reading it, I'd often seen the phrase "qualitative methods" (and "mixed methods") in the geography and planning literatures, but had only a hazy notion of what that meant. I found Silverman and Patterson a useful and provocative introduction, answering some questions but raising some others, which of course is what one hopes for. I found myself frequently comparing qualitative methods to the quantitative methods I'm familiar with, and I think I got a better grasp of both. I recommend the book to readers who are not well versed in the subject but want to learn more.

Both authors are at the University at Buffalo, Silverman in planning and Patterson in social work. They clearly are targeting community practitioners and beginning students, and they say they deliberately focus on "nuts and bolts" (p. 19). They give us many concrete examples of nuts and bolts. There are field notes from participant observation of Buffalo's light rail system, and also "analytic memos" one might insert in the raw notes as the first stage of analysis (they are "asides," "commentaries," and "methodological memos," pp. 55–57). We see examples of a researcher's coding of interviews with leaders of organizations (a nonprofit social welfare organization and a community development corporation). We find similarly really basic stuff on constructing a table of data, the pitfalls of PowerPoint, and eight cues (verbal and nonverbal) to stop an interviewee from talking. However, there is also a vigorous introductory chapter on general philosophy, which probably will be new and challenging to beginning students and to academics and practitioners who have different perspectives on research.

The book has three parts. In the first (chs. 1–2), Silverman and Patterson (henceforth, SP) lay out their philosophical approach to qualitative methods and their goals for the book. They describe five theoretical perspectives: ethnography; grounded theory; case studies; mixed methods; and participatory action research. They also explain the practice of coding field observations and other material. In the second part (chs. 3–6), they describe particular methods of collecting data: field observations and field notes, based on participant observation; interviews of individuals; discussion in focus groups; and content analysis of secondary data. The third part is a chapter on effective dissemination of results, with special attention to documentation, presentation, and ways to overcome the skepticism that academic and professional audiences often have about qualitative methods.

As one expects, SP give a lot of advice on how to do things right. It often occurred to me that their advice is good advice for a quantitative researcher, too. Certainly there are great differences, but I kept thinking of similarities between good qualitative researchers and good quantitative researchers. Both see a project as an iterative process of theorizing, collecting data, more (or different) theorizing, collecting more data. Both should have “reflexivity,” a favorite term for SP and other qualitative researchers. For SP, reflexivity “involves being vigilant about identifying ways that personal biases influence, frame, and potentially constrain the scope of analysis” (p. 23). I also like how another author, medical school professor Kirsti Malterud, puts it: reflexivity is the “knower’s mirror,” an “attitude of attending systematically to the context of knowledge construction, especially to the effect of the researcher, at every step of the research process” (2001, p. 484).

Of course the good *quantitative* researcher is reflexive, too. Maybe that goes without saying? Maybe not, by which I mean that many quantitative researchers need to be *reminded* to be reflexive. From many economists’ seminars, including faculty candidate job talks, I can testify to that. The luxuries of prepackaged (rich) datasets, standard models, statistical packages, robust standard errors, and the like may lull some into forgetting they are always making choices.

In the first chapter SP say, “we see the researcher as a change agent in society” (p. 4). They want to show how qualitative methods can foster civic engagement and citizen empowerment in community development by being more accessible to practitioners and the public than quantitative methods. It’s easy to make the case for accessibility: a lot more people can understand and use the tools SP describe than can understand, say, the generalized method of moments. But I can’t agree with their further claim that qualitative methods have the great advantage of being easy to “replicate” (pp. 2, 3). They seem not to be using “replicate” in the usual sense of the word. Indeed, the claim flies in the face of their own concern for reflexivity, since much of the book reveals how evidence and analysis presented to the public reflect individual researchers’ field notes, questions in interviews, and coding.

In the chapter on field observation, SP offer the eminent ethnologist Clifford Geertz’s “thick description” (1973) as an ideal for a researcher’s field notes, which should allow a third party to “understand and interpret [events] as vividly as the observer” (p. 54). I really doubt someone else would have described and interpreted events exactly as I did, no matter how thick my notes. In the chapter on interviewing, SP dramatize the importance of reflexivity, saying that moving from participant observation to interviewing is a “moment of singularity” in data collection, because interviewing “irreversibly alters the relationship between the researcher and individuals being studied” (p. 60).

One of the more interesting discussions is on dissemination. SP recommend presenting a “natural history of the methodology” (p. 108) that conveys the systematic nature of the research, documents methods, and reveals “reflexive insights” (ibid.) about major decisions. Such a natural history is often written in the first person, though SP don’t suggest that is necessary. I note that quantitative researchers don’t routinely include such a narrative in publications, but they often do so in oral presentations, especially among friends.

It’s the sort of book that may warrant a second edition, for which I offer some suggestions. Say much more about sampling. The qualitative researcher must use samples—rail cars to ride in, people to interview, objects and behavior to photograph. The book has too little on sampling, especially for one that stresses the effect of researcher discretion. Describe a hypothetical research project and how (good) quantitative type X and (good) qualitative type Y would approach it differently. Report more

examples—there are not many now—of how qualitative methods really did empower community groups.

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