

BOOK REVIEWS*

J. Phillip Thompson 2006: *Black Mayors, Black Communities, and the Call for a Deep Democracy*. Oxford

J. Phillip Thompson has quite possibly written the best book yet on black mayors of American cities. *Black Mayors, Black Communities, and the Call for a Deep Democracy* is a well-written and wide-ranging analysis of figures as various as Carl Stokes in Cleveland, Kurt Schmoke of Baltimore, Richard Hatcher of Gary, Maynard Jackson of Atlanta and the infamous Marion Barry of Washington, DC. Its best, and longest, analysis centers on New York's David Dinkins, for whom the author toiled as a housing administrator. Having done a turn as top bureaucrat for New Haven's John Daniels in the same years, I entirely buy Thompson's strongest thesis: it is generally very difficult, and sometimes impossible, for black mayors to meet the expectations of those who elect them. Not difficult to meet *all* such expectations; difficult to meet *any* such expectations.

Black mayors are, in this critical respect, facing far longer odds than were confronted by their Irish and Italian predecessors. This is partly, of course, because, to repeat a famous title, the fundamental *American Dilemma* is race. Vulgar prejudice persists in pockets of every city; subtler bias is still commonplace. It is sometimes expressed in business decisions — plant locations, banking outcomes, perceptions of economic risk — and to a considerable extent cities are dependent on the goodwill of business in this the most capitalist of societies. It is also because unions — increasingly important in state and local government — are for the most part controlled by whites.

The obstacles facing black mayors, however, go well beyond race. With a few exceptions (Tom Bradley in LA most notably), blacks have won mayoral elections in places which are at or beyond the end of urbanism. Jobs are declining in number and quality. Retailing is being absorbed into corporate big-box structures administered from afar — in extremis, with Wal-Mart, from Bentonville, Arkansas. Civic organizations are shriveling. Crime is high, and made worse by the deadening *fear* of crime. School systems are in crisis. Tax collections are declining. Suburbs beckon those with good jobs, and exclude those with big needs for social services. City jobs — the great prize of the Irish ascendancy — are locked up in civil service protection and (equally hard to crack) union seniority rights. When black constituents imagine, for good historical reasons, that 'our turn' has arrived on election day, black mayors discover that only a few dozen worthwhile jobs are available to distribute as patronage — perhaps, in very big cities, a few hundred. For these and many more reasons, the privilege of being *elected* mayor is often far greater than the obligation of *being* mayor. For whites, the difficulty of delivering payoffs or policies worth having is nearly as great as for blacks. But, as a general rule, less is expected from late-arriving Irish and Italian politicians than from pioneering black politicians.

Writing about black mayors is not as difficult as being one, but it is more difficult than many subjects of social science writing. Thompson confronts the many challenges with spirited writing, and judicious synthesis of the best existing scholarship. His account of Dinkins is splendid, and his analysis of Harold Washington in Chicago is almost as good. His judgments are by and large balanced and sophisticated. There are moments when he seems less sure-footed, as when he repeats the now totally implausible claim that strengthening public unions will help the black urban poor. His angle of vision is, as would be expected, that of a political scientist, not that of an economic historian.

* Views expressed in this section are independent and do not represent the opinion of the editors.

He tells the reader the following: 'Big-city fiscal problems are traceable, above all, to the political isolation of the inner-city poor in the larger body politic' (p. 265). Both terms are correct — fiscal crises are real, and the poor are politically isolated. But the connection by which the second explains the first, is tenuous at best. The fiscal crisis of our cities began long before the isolation of the urban poor — most of all the black poor — was an important element in urban life. Its roots are in the disastrous flow of capital away from these old cities, beginning just after the second world war. But this is, in the scheme of things, a relatively minor flaw. This is a fine book, and all who would understand American race or city politics should read it.

Douglas W. Rae, Yale University

Yuri Kazepov (eds.) 2005: *Cities of Europe: Changing Contexts, Local Arrangements, and the Challenge to Urban Cohesion*. Oxford: Blackwell Publishing.

Western societies have undergone profound economic, social and cultural changes in recent decades. Economic and demographic developments have had a great impact on the social fabric of these countries, especially in cities. In the urban context these developments alter the social relations stemming from the preceding era most strongly, putting pressure on urban cohesion and leading to processes of social exclusion. This challenges local governments to formulate new goals, re-examine existing policies, and design arrangements matching current developments. The aim of *Cities of Europe* is to complement the debates on these subjects with an assessment of Western European cities.

The book is divided in three thematic parts preceded by two essays. In the first essay Kazepov stresses the importance of the understanding of contexts for the study of European cities: the nation-state and its institutions — especially the welfare state — and recent changes in these institutions. Although local governments have won regulatory autonomies due to devolution and decentralization in recent decades, it is argued that national institutions still filter most of the impact of economic, social and cultural changes on urban cohesion and integration in many European cities. European cities may differ because of their national and local idiosyncrasies, on this matter they have similarities quite distinct from cities in the USA.

Häussermann and Haila reconsider the concept of the 'European city' and discuss the usefulness of this neo-Weberian category with regard to more universal city concepts of other theoreticians. They stress that despite the convergence between West European and North American cities in recent decades, the concept 'European city' still is a useful analytical tool: cities in Europe have characteristic regulatory frameworks and political roles. The two introductory essays are well written, and very convincing in stressing the importance of a European outlook in urban studies.

The first part of the book — The Changing Concept of European Cities — contains four essays that lead to the same conclusions: social and socio-spatial changes in recent decades have led to a growing divergence *and* importance of European cities. All authors stress that these cities together still differ from North American cities because welfare state regimes and town and country planning regulations make them partly inert to great changes. Still, this divergence makes local adapting strategies inevitable.

Mingione argues that economic restructuring and altering welfare arrangements lead to different outcomes as regards the way cities can stay economically viable, and keep welfare arrangements tenable. Martinotti puts emphasis on the consequences for policy-makers and urban scientists of changing urban landscapes in combination with the spatial distribution of categories of citizens. Sennett argues that flexible capitalism creates superficial disengaged relations in a city, leading to less attachment to place, and even to a withdrawal from the civic realm. Kesteloot claims that social relations come under pressure if the interplay between categories of citizens weakens due to the spatial

position of these categories in relation to public spaces. All four essays are written in an engaging style, with a clear argumentation, and give a good impression of the consequences of macro-developments for urban social fabric.

The authors of the essays in the second part — *The Spatial Impact of Ongoing Transformation Processes* — are sceptical about certain assumptions in urban studies, and temper existing expectations of policy measures. Murie analyses welfare institutions in relation to the concept of ‘social exclusion’, and argues that one should take into account the marked differences in character and accessibility of decommodified services. These services will not only reduce inequalities, but contribute to them as well. Musterd and Ostendorf assess the assumed aggravation of social exclusion due to spatial clustering of socially excluded people. Their empirical analysis does not confirm this relationship. What’s more, mixed-neighborhood policies seem to have perverse effects. Van Kempen tries to characterize and explain the segregation and bad housing conditions of immigrants. He stresses that the socio-economic position of these migrants, and the supply and accessibility of dwellings seems to have more explanatory power than their personal preferences. Simon analyses social interaction in gentrified neighborhoods. The author argues that the often assumed benefits for deprived populations are limited.

The last part — *Social Exclusion, Governance, and Social Cohesion in European Cities* — contains four essays in which the authors look from different angles at local policy measures to promote urban cohesion. Le Galès argues that urban policies in Europe are still determined at the national level and concentrated on national issues, only recently complemented by local policies to stimulate competitiveness — which makes European cities more similar to cities in the US. Vranken critically assesses area-based policies in relation to questions of cohesion and solidarity, and warns of their displacement effects. The essay by Morlicchio contains another warning: the overlooked dissimilarity between Northern and Southern European cities. The latter show different processes of social exclusion from the former because of a different allocation of welfare arrangements and the central role of the family in cushioning economic hardship. García focuses on the implicit definitions of social justice in European welfare measures, and argues that there is a strong need for local collective debates on these definitions. Unfortunately, this part of the book is not as coherent as the first two. Although the essays are fine in themselves, they differ markedly in scope and style, giving this part an artificial character.

Overall, most of the arguments in *Cities of Europe* underline its relevance: the need for a European research agenda for the study of urban change. It should be given credit for initiating this agenda in a field relying heavily on theories and concepts made for Anglo-Saxon contexts. This brings this collection of essays into concordance with the aim of the *Blackwell Studies in Urban and Social Change* of which it is part: to advance theoretical debates and empirical analyses stimulated by changes in the fortune of cities and regions across the world. This goal has been met. But, to paraphrase from one of the contributions, to fully understand the local trajectories of change the task of an international comparative analysis should be faced (p. 86).

Jeroen van der Waal, Erasmus University, Rotterdam

Setha Low, Dana Taplin and Suzanne Scheld 2005: *Rethinking Urban Parks. Public Space and Cultural Diversity*. Austin, Texas: University of Texas Press.

Social science research on urban themes is often concerned with open public space: parks, streets and squares. The city has to be an open and democratic environment for all people. The tendency in this kind of literature is to chart the decline of public space. The perspective is a political and democratic one with a focus on social injustice, the social position of minorities and exclusion. This book shows the same concerns. Five major urban parks — New York City’s Prospect Park, Orchard Beach in Pelham Bay

Park, Jacob Riis Park in The Gateway National Recreation Area, the Ellis Island Bridge Proposal and Philadelphia's Independence National Historical Park — are studied using anthropological methods. The connections between cultural groups and the spatial environment form the core, and therefore this work can also be situated within the renewed interest in notions such as space and place in social sciences from the 1990s onwards.

The authors are concerned with social processes that make spaces into places, with conflicts over access and control, and with the cultural values people attach to places. Patterns of design and management (deliberately or unintentionally) can result in the exclusion of some people (poor people, people of colour) and the enabling of others (tourists, white middle- and upper-class groups) to avoid litter and smells, social injustice and the multicultural muddle. These processes of homogenization in large urban spaces are also strengthened through increased surveillance and other security measures in the post-9/11 era and enhanced by the fact that the responsibility for maintenance is taken over by private groups. The study not only presents 'thick' descriptions of social relationships in parks but also offers concrete lessons and practical tools (for instance REAP, Rapid Ethnographic Assessment Procedures) to protect and sustain an urban public realm that attracts, supports and expresses cultural diversity.

Public space but also diversity is embedded with political meaning. Diversity is important for the city dwellers themselves, especially for those whose voices are not heard. Diversity has to do with cultural property rights and ethical concerns about whose history should be interpreted in a park landscape. It also refers to the fact that people whose lives are directly affected should be consulted about renovations to the parks. Community participation is a basic component of creating citizenship and political entitlement. Heritage — and many other aspects of the landscape and built environment — often reflects only the dominant culture. The negotiation of dissonant meanings and their resolution in forms representative of all cultural groups and communities, however, is the ideal. Last but not least, diversity is about cultural values which refer to the shared meanings associated with people's lives, environments and actions. Living in a place for a long period of time, working in a place, narrating stories and telling myths about a place generates a relationship between a group and a particular location. In sum, a cultural place attachment emerges. To discount diversity it is essential to understand relationships between (ethnic) history, values, cultural representation and park use in any culturally diverse context.

Through the ethnographic case studies different factors are uncovered that can limit park use. African Americans are not visiting Philadelphia's Independence National Park frequently. This cultural group shows a consensus that the park does not represent their black history. If people are not represented and their history is erased, they will not use the park. Another lesson is that income and visitation patterns need to be taken into account if you want to provide access for all people. The analysis of Ellis Island shows that poor people are underrepresented although they live nearby, in comparison with the presence of middle-class people who live far away. The ferry fare to get there is expensive, however, and forms a significant barrier. Park rules can also restrict ethnic activities when there is a mismatch between vernacular activity and the prescribed use of the area. In Prospect Park volleyball playing is curtailed, a favourite activity of Mexicans as part of their picnic scene. Symbolic ways of communicating cultural meaning are an important dimension of place attachment. The symbols themselves are typically balloons or banners put up by visiting parties for the duration of their visit. Through these symbolic representations they communicate a shared identity to friends and in many cases to strangers. It is also important that user groups can make permanent material changes to the park space and that the control over symbolic resources is not only maintained by park management.

Within anthropology a hierarchy in the purity of the field existed for a long time. The field consisted in studying one group in one far away, often rural, location over a long period of time. The virtue of this study is that the researchers are studying different

cultural groups in five locations in their own society and that they use 'rapid' ethnography (no long time stay). They are also part of a multidisciplinary team. Although breaking with one hierarchy, the authors create a new one. Only places that are completely public count as truly public spaces. They contrast this purity with private spaces, which they inject with notions such as conspicuous consumption, seductive spaces, restricting self-expression and social relationships. According to De Solà-Morales (1992: 3–8) one cannot neglect the development of collectively used spaces like the metro, railway, shopping malls and amusement parks. These collective spaces are not necessarily public but are experienced and used by people as public space (Reyndorp and Hajer, 2001: 48) and can be important for learning, intercultural matters and community (Soenen, 2004: 16–17).

Anthropologists, according to Lofland, love the '*parochial realm*' (1998:10) in which relationships are characterized by a feeling of communality, by in-depth relations. The focus of Low, Taplin and Scheld on cultural groups and on cultural place attachment shows a parochial interest. Their analysis does not include the '*public realm*' (*ibid.*), with its more limited relationships between strangers. The continuous succession of small interactions between strangers, however, has an effect on the city's larger system (Jacobs, 1972: 454). By dismissing other fields (collective spaces) and themes (the world of strangers) in advance because they don't seem to be directly connected to ethnicity, race and class, the authors are not yet fully embracing the complexity of the metropolis.

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De Solà-Morales, M. (1992) Openbare en collectieve ruimte. De verstedelijking van het privé-domein als nieuwe uitdaging [Public and collective space. The urbanization of private space as a new challenge]. *OASE* 33, 3–8.

Jacobs, J. (1972) *The death and life of great American cities. The failure of town planning*. Pelican Books, Harmondsworth.

Lofland, L. (1998) *The public realm. Exploring the city's quintessential social territory*. Aldine de Gruyter, New York.

Reyndorp, A. and M. Hajer (2001) *In search of a new public domain*. NAI Publishers, Rotterdam.

Soenen, R. (2004) A relational approach on children in the city: the importance of public space, non-places and ephemeral relationships for learning. In G. Troman, B. Jeffrey and G. Walford (eds.), *Identity, agency, and social institutions in educational ethnography*, Studies in Educational Ethnography, Volume 10, JAI Press, London.

Michael Flamm 2005: *Law and Order. Street Crime, Civil Unrest, and the Crisis of Liberalism in the 1960s*. New York: Columbia University Press.

In this engrossing investigation of how liberal values lost on the issue of law and order in the 1960s, the author offers a plausible argument. The amorphous quality of the issue enabled conservatives addressing the 'forgotten Americans' to combine fears about riots, disgust at anti-conformist student demonstrations and alarm at rising crime into a powerful denunciation of the liberal state. As they succeeded, the optimism of the early 1960s was replaced by disenchantment at the end of the decade. In 1968, a white father of five expressed his view of the state of the nation with these words: 'I am sick of crime everywhere. I'm sick of riots. I'm sick of poor people demonstrations (black, white, red, yellow, purple, green or any color) . . . I am sick of the lack of law enforcement . . . I am sick of hippies, LSD, drugs and the promotion the news media give them. But most of all, I am sick of constantly being kicked in the teeth for staying home, minding my own business, working steadily, paying my bills and taxes, raising my children to be decent citizens, managing my financial affairs so that I won't become a ward of the city, county, or state and footing the bill for all the minuses mentioned herein'. This is how

the book starts and step by step in nine chapters, it unrolls the liberals' inability to grasp the depth of emotions leading to moral panics.

It was during the 1960s that American urban dwellers became alarmed by their unsafe streets. Although the FBI statistics are to be taken cautiously, they indicate that: violent crime doubled in the country between 1960 and 1969 (p. 2); the rate of property crime rose by 73% in seven years; in New York City the number of robberies was multiplied by 12; and in Washington DC assaults against persons were four times the national average (p. 42). Although crime per capita was highest in urban centers, it grew fastest in small towns and rural areas. The possibility of a woman being raped by a stranger was as likely then as that of being hit by lightning. America was much safer in 1964 than in 1930 (the murder rate had decreased by 50%), but it did not matter. Fear was real. Both George Wallace and Barry Goldwater and later Richard Nixon made use of the issue to undermine the Johnson administration. Moreover, in their campaigns, law and order became a form of racial code.

Flamm points out that a memorandum by the Department of Justice entitled 'Riots and crime in the 1960s' anticipated the kind of political exploitation the context of unrest could lead to in 1964 (p. 46). Street crime was a real threat for many, it said, not a political smokescreen. Demographically, the number of young men was increasing at a faster rate than the general population, and anti-crime programs had to be strengthened. It advocated the creation of a Crime Commission, a step taken in 1965.

A 'dreadful' mistake the Johnson Administration made was to announce a War on Crime linked to the War on Poverty (p. 55). Not only was the link between reducing poverty and reducing crime dubious, but such a war could never be won: crime could never be 'banished', although the President pledged to do this. It gave a major importance to the issue and allowed the conservative opposition to run ads showing a white woman walking a dark and deserted street while statistics on crime were announced. Although race and crime were not identical, because the protection of women and children was frequently portrayed as protection against a black mugger, in conservatives' campaigns they overlapped. The Crime Commission's report made 200 recommendations which today are ignored. They show that, at the time, American society was concerned by violence and debating how and why such violence occurred. Was America a sick society, as Bob Kennedy bemoaned, glorifying killing on movie and television screens and calling it entertainment (p. 142)? Was it a civilized nation? William Buckley protested: 'In civilized nations of the past, it has not been customary for parents to allow their children to do what they feel like, for students to seize their schools and smash the equipment, for police to be ordered to stand by, while looters empty stores and arsonists burn down buildings . . . It is not expected that public figures should be considered proper targets for casual gunmen' (p. 153). It is worth remembering because the type of societal debate which was reflected in the Crime Report has currently disappeared in the US. The use of the legal term *crime* has externalized the issue, connected it to 'dangerous classes' in specific places and to an underclass (i.e. black) which is not part of 'us'.

The context of riots destabilized the Johnson Administration ('each riot costs me 90,000 votes', the President said [p. 37]), which was blamed for pushing its liberal programs as an adequate solution to civil unrest. The political world was dominated by television soundbites that reduced complex questions and sensationalized events. In 1967, riots had become the most important issue in many people's minds, and Americans worried about their personal protection. Liberals were caught in a quagmire (Chapter 6), trying to avoid blaming black agitators and muggers, meeting statistics with disbelief, unable to make their case. The Humphrey campaign in 1968 reflected this dilemma and, arguably, law and order was the decisive factor in Richard Nixon's narrow triumph.

The investigative work of the author and his use of primary sources are impressive. Here and there, a failure to master the construction is noticeable and dates going back and forth put the reader on a roller-coaster (pp. 54, 76, 138). But this is a minor problem.

With a brisk tone and apt quotations, the book is a must for those interested in the dramatic changes which took place in the American culture of control in the 1960s and which marked the subsequent decades.

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David Byrne (2005, second edition): *Social Exclusion second edition*. Milton Keynes: Open University Press.

I was hesitant about accepting the journal's invitation to review this book. Reviewers typically leaven their criticisms with praise (or, sometimes, vice versa). I only have the latter. I had read the first edition of *Social Exclusion*, published in 1999. It has become one of that small number of volumes that I refer to repeatedly — and in humbly admiring tones — in my own writing and talks about this subject. That was a fantastic book and so is this updated version.

In 1998, Jane Marsh and myself commenced a research project about young people, youth transitions and social exclusion. We didn't really know what the last of those terms meant, but it seemed to be an increasingly fashionable concept (and apparently more palatable than 'underclass' theories and labels which were prevalent in our own field of empirical study). Jane, being the full-time researcher, was charged with finding out. Several months and several hundreds of items of reading later we were little the wiser. In the UK over the past ten years there has been a veritable avalanche of policy and academic writing on social exclusion. Reports and studies generate multitudinous, competing definitions of and insights into the concept and some give none. If we had had the benefit of Byrne's book at that point, much time and head scratching would have been saved. As it turned out, the volume that eventually emerged from our research — *Disconnected Youth? Growing up in Britain's Poor Neighbourhoods* (MacDonald and Marsh, 2005) — is one that pays a debt to Byrne's work. His broad-ranging, expert review and argument helped give theoretical shape to our empirical findings.

Thus, a first achievement to note is his accomplished survey and interrogation of the ways in which 'social exclusion' and 'the socially excluded' have been talked about, defined and theorized. His scope is historical and comparative, reviewing in detail in early chapters the political and philosophical pedigree of contemporary usage and debates — particularly as they play out in different nation states (with illustrative case material and comparison throughout the book from the US, UK, France and Poland in particular).

Byrne usefully makes clear at the outset the difference between 'strong' and 'weak' definitions of social exclusion. The 'weak' version is the approach that one comes across most often and which is to the fore in policy thinking (even if this understanding is rarely stated explicitly). The excluded are so by fault of their deficits. The task of social inclusion is to remedy these deficits (for example, by making the unemployed more 'employable'). Byrne's argument is based upon a 'strong' conceptualization of social exclusion; one that draws attention to the dynamic processes whereby people are made to be excluded. The task of social inclusion, then, is to confront the social and economic interests that create exclusion. Thus, *Social Exclusion* presents a deeply political and, to use Byrne's own phrase, 'unashamedly old-fashioned' approach to understanding how 'social exclusion derives from inequality... [from] a postindustrial social order dominated by globalizing capital and the superclass associated with that globalizing capital' (p. 182). This excerpt perhaps veers toward the polemic that Byrne explicitly reserves for the conclusion of the book. It is followed by a nice line about 'watering the fields with the blood of the superclass'. My judgement is, though, that he has met his aim of writing 'primarily in academic mode' (p. 4). This is a work of true scholarship and erudition. It is also one of political passion and commitment, and all the better for that.

What is new in this second edition? It took a little bit of digging and direct comparison of the two texts to be clear. Obviously, the 2005 version updates the empirical data and research literature. So whilst many if not all of the same themes and issues are examined, Byrne is now armed with more and in some cases better evidence. His discussion here of youth experiences of exclusion is enhanced, for instance, by recent research by Ross Fergusson on the instability and flux of 'school to work careers'. Byrne rightly rolls up findings like these into a broader critique of the futility of policy approaches to the problems of young people 'not in education, employment and training' that rely — as they do — on rigid, snapshot categorizations of the excluded/included.

There is a new chapter (Chapter 3) on 'the language and social science of social exclusion'. This presents a fascinating, critical discussion of the way that exclusion and the excluded are talked about in political discourse and theorized, analysed and measured in important, recent social science research. Byrne's stress on the dynamism of processes of social exclusion is evident here (as is his fascination with complexity theory). Another new one (Chapter 7) has the subtitle 'exclusion in everyday life'; in it Byrne focuses on the themes of education and social mobility, exclusion and health, and cultural exclusion. The strong emphasis on the spatiality of social exclusion — particularly the significance of the city and region — present throughout Byrne's book, is illustrated by his discussion of cultural exclusion. Here, critical attention is given to the promotion of a debased, commodified version of culture in the post-industrial city. Those whose job it is to promote 'Cities of Culture' will not find this pleasant reading. One feature of the book is the inclusion of local exemplars — case studies, personal experiences and observations rooted in political participation — with which to illustrate broader trends and arguments. A good number of these are drawn from the North East of England (where Byrne has lived and worked and been politically involved for many years). Readers from that place (like this reviewer) will find Byrne's grounded approach particularly exciting. He knows what he's talking about. Those from further afield will, I'm sure, also see the value of observations drawn from a locality that provides for particularly rich reflection on the central questions of the book.

Perhaps the most significant new material comes with Byrne's critical interrogation of New Labour's social inclusion policy (in Chapter 8). In 1999 it was perhaps too early to do more than engage in political and philosophical speculation about the policy consequences of the 'third way' in general terms. Now we can more easily assess these effects. Byrne reviews the nature, range, characteristics and development of the main policy agencies and programmes (e.g. the Social Exclusion Unit, Sure Start, New Deal for Young People, Connexions, Local Strategic Partnerships, New Deal for Communities). His critical dissection and demolition of the voguish concepts of 'partnership', 'community' and 'empowerment' in 'New Labour think' stand out. His bullet-point list of the problems of exclusion that third-way politicians are required to manage, under the post-industrial period, is brilliant in its precision and its concision (see p. 152). This chapter will be a particularly useful one for students and teachers of students, even if for reasons of space he is unable to get into more detailed policy analysis and close consideration of the mass of research and evaluation reports that now exist for each policy area. The book as a whole pays greater attention to the UK case than did its 1999 predecessor. Byrne's defence against a potential charge that it therefore has less general relevance would be that the UK Blair governments provide, in fact, a particularly clear, telling example of 'third way' approaches to the political management of post-industrial capitalism that are shaping up globally.

The concluding chapter, which follows, imagines an alternative approach to social inclusion, an alternative politics. This is based on a threefold reading of social structure. We have the currently excluded; those confined to poor, excluded places and lives revolving around poor work and benefits. Above them is a large middle-mass who tend to have 'normal' work and standards of living but whose situation is now marked by increased insecurity (and the threat of downward mobility to 'the excluded'). Finally, there is a small, affluent, privileged 'superclass'. In short, if I understand it properly,

Byrne's answer blends the need for a broad front of those who would benefit from real political change (the first two groups above), the participatory politics of Paulo Freire, a stress upon the significance of the city/region as a site of political struggle and an emphasis upon (class-based) cultural politics as the most promising forum for transformative change.

Perhaps inevitably, this — for me — was the most speculative part of the book. I'm not sure I was persuaded. That said, I know I don't have any better answers. Byrne is to be applauded for at least attempting one and for writing what, in my experience, is the most compelling and convincing account of this subject.

Robert MacDonald, University of Teesside

Jason Corburn 2005: *Street Science: Community Knowledge and Environmental Health Justice*. Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press.

Corburn's central concept of street science links local knowledge in a community of Brooklyn, New York to national and global issues of environmental health and social justice. The science studies by the experts trace health risks and pollutants by the effects on individuals or large aggregated populations. These studies ignore local knowledge, by missing or negating the context, the cultures and the experiences of specific groups of people most affected by pollution. When helped by intermediaries able to translate local knowledge into street science, environmental justice movements could transform how the issue was framed, what was studied, and how it was studied. Corburn's cases demonstrate the critical value of ethnographic approaches at several stages in research on environmental health. His thesis that local activists trained as street scientists can make environmental research more accurate and fair, to the benefit of much larger populations and regions, raises critical questions for the current crisis over global warming.

Corburn carefully builds his argument through four case studies in Greenpoint/Williamsburg and Brooklyn, New York where activists first use their local knowledge to confront scientific experts then incorporate enough science to change the scope, methods, models and sometimes the conclusions of professional science. The case studies of the environmental justice movement vary widely in bringing the unequal burdens of pollution on poor and minority neighborhoods to bear on the calculations and assessments of the state Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) and the federal Environmental Protection Agency (EPA).

The case of subsistence anglers forced the DEP, unaware of the population eating contaminated fish, to shift from risk assessment of one pollutant at a time, which ignored cumulative risks, to a method that considered the cumulative effects of air, food and water on a neighborhood, street by street. Only trusted locals could conduct the surveys of immigrant anglers. The conclusions did not entail political costs because the recommendations sought to modify the anglers' behavior, not clean up the river.

In the second case study, experts undertaking asthma studies of Greenpoint/Williamsburg failed to talk to residents to learn how widespread the disease was or that the hospital they used as the basis for their study was avoided by residents who sought treatment elsewhere. A Latino community-based organization, with its newly founded high school, trained volunteers to conduct surveys that showed much higher levels of asthma than the municipal experts found. They developed multiple techniques in Latin American traditions of participatory action research and education for social transformation, studying not only the extent of the disease but also the use of folk remedies.

The community in the third case mobilized coalitions to suspend the sandblasting of lead-based paint on the Williamsburg Bridge through legal challenges, but could not form united coalitions nor communicate with experts to make the city's experts study

local levels of lead poisoning linked to the bridgework. The experts and the residents failed to translate local knowledge into street science, the movement splintered, and the city resumed sandblasting with token gestures of containment and remediation.

Corburn analyzes mapping as a tool of street science in the fourth case. Latino high school science students used comic book graphics in a 'community risk map' to raise awareness of local hazards and organize a movement. Unlike the second and third cases, the Latino community was able to enlist the Hasidic, African-American and Polish communities to join a successful fight against a proposed municipal waste incinerator near an existing incinerator. Later, the students produced low-tech maps to identify multiple sources of pollution in the neighborhood that were translated into community-based geographic information system (GIS) maps by the newly-formed Watchperson Project partnering with Hunter College. These high-tech maps challenged the city maps used to justify a waste transfer station by zoning criteria. The EPA dismissed local maps in their aggregate environmental impact studies (EIS) used for permit applications but after they toured the neighborhood, acknowledged that local sources previously ignored, particularly dry cleaning businesses, contributed significantly to the aggregate. Despite their new awareness, the EPA decided not to adapt their model to reflect local sources.

These cases illuminated both how experts and professional science resisting the input of local knowledge serve the political-economic interests of powerful players and how local knowledge, when combined with scientific methodology and political organizing, can prevail to change the practice of science. Anthropologists can only shake their heads both in frustration at the resistance of the experts to the import of ethnographic research, and in amazement at the persistence of community activists in asserting their legitimate concerns.

It would help, first, to have a glossary of the acronyms used for scientific groups, methods and models, and, second, to hear more about the intermediaries, the leaders, university partners, judges and lawyers who were critical in translating between the scientists and the distressed communities. Only when those with 'double consciousness, cultural capital, and language skills in both worlds' (p. 209) could find ways to frame community perspectives in the epistemology of science and to explain scientific and legal findings in street language did the outcome reconcile state and municipal projects with social and environmental justice. Corburn's analysis raises two questions for another study. Would the scientific community join forces with the environmental justice movement? By deploying street scientists to organize coalitions, record local knowledge, and translate street science into formal scientific proof, could they together overcome the political denials that economic forces accelerate global warming?

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John I. Gilderbloom and R. L. Mullins, Jr. 2005: *Promise and Betrayal: Universities and the Battle for Sustainable Urban Neighborhoods*. Albany: SUNY Press.

This book represents an extended argument for research universities in the United States to form community partnerships and engage in civic activities. The university can have three roles: (1) facilitator, (2) equity partner and (3) technical resource. The authors are sociologist John Gilderbloom, professor of urban and public affairs at the University of Louisville (Kentucky), and Dr. R. L. Mullins, Jr., a graduate of that university. They argue that universities like theirs need to make a commitment to their communities and cite several universities that have done so, e.g. the University of Illinois-Chicago, University of Pennsylvania (Philadelphia), and Marquette University (Milwaukee, Wisconsin). I would add to that short list the University of California at Berkeley–Oakland Metropolitan Forum initiated by the Institute of Urban and Regional Development at the College of Environmental Design (Rubin, 1995). Others have called for the same kind of university civic engagement (Rubin, 1998; Ostrander, 2004;

Alperovitz and Howard, 2005). Service learning programs for students, discussed by Gilderbloom and Mullins, are a popular form of civic engagement for many universities.

However, many universities are reluctant to become seriously involved. The authors identify several practical problems preventing this: (1) lack of money, (2) the possibility of adverse publicity, (3) fear of failure and (4) lack of a university-wide commitment (as opposed to a commitment by an academic department or college) (pp. 114–16). In some cases, universities are forced into such partnerships through political pressure. A well-documented case is the East St. Louis Action Research Project of the University of Illinois and its Department of Urban and Regional Planning (Reardon, 1999).

As Gilderbloom and Mullins note, university programs to revitalize neighborhoods on their doorstep to improve the university's image and serve their own students often represent a more self-serving motivation. The examples of Marquette and the University of Pennsylvania are cited as examples of this kind of engagement. Here in Ohio, such efforts have been undertaken by the Ohio State University in Columbus (Dixon and Roche, 2005) and the University of Akron, among others. University expansion into adjoining neighborhoods, whether to expand its campus or provide student and faculty housing, often generates 'town-gown' conflicts. A recommended companion book to this volume is a collection of case studies of universities as developers which provides an excellent overview of this dynamic (Perry and Wiewel, 2005).

In contrast, this book highlights the authors' involvement in a project to improve an impoverished, mostly African-American neighborhood (Russell, which was home to a young Muhammad Ali, the heavyweight boxing champion) which is not adjacent to the University of Louisville campus. Gilderbloom and Mullins provide five reasons for such an undertaking: (1) to overcome faculty ignorance of approaches to urban revitalization; (2) to focus additional minds on urban problems; (3) to provide a reality check; (4) to diminish a university's past reputation as exploiter; and (5) to ensure the long-term viability of the university (pp. 17–18). They see university–community partnerships as a positive benefit, as does former Secretary of the US Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) Secretary Henry Cisneros, who wrote the Foreword to this book.

Much of the book is devoted to a description and analysis of the two programs which were developed to help revitalize the Russell neighborhood: HANDS (Housing and Neighborhood Development Strategies), funded by a US Department of Education Community Service grant, and SUN (Sustainable Urban Neighborhoods), also funded by the US Department of Education and HUD's Community Outreach Partnership Program. The accomplishments of both are described, including a 1996 evaluation of HANDS. However, the authors also admit to shortcomings, for example, of the community design team. Overall, they see both programs as successes attributable to resident participation and believe that the Russell neighborhood revitalization project is a national model. Based on this, they offer ten principles of success (pp. 101–3) (see Rubin, 2000).

Yet, despite this upbeat analysis, the last chapter is entitled 'Betrayal by the Universities'. Here, we learn that in 2002 and 2003, despite strong community support and the university president's express support for HUD's Community Outreach Partnerships Centers, the leadership of the University of Louisville's College of Business and Public Administration refused to allow the partnership to apply for continued HUD funding of the SUN program, effectively limiting its previous efforts. In the wake of this development, about which they say no more by way of explanation, the authors conclude:

We hope and pray that this book will change the minds of administrators at many colleges and universities that do not get involved in community problems. We want to see a revolution, where colleges become partners via community service (p. 167).

So, this is a case study of both success and failure. In the Perry and Wiewel book, there is a case study of the University of Louisville's role in its failure to collaborate with the

city to entice a professional basketball franchise to relocate in downtown Louisville (Cummings *et al.*, 2005). Such contrasts characterize other urban universities and provide valuable lessons, as does this book.

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- Cummings, S., M. Rosentraub, M. Domahidy and S. Coffin (2005) University involvement in downtown revitalization: managing political and financial risk. In D.C. Perry and W. Wiewel (eds.), *The university as urban developer: case studies and analysis*, M.E. Sharpe, Armonk, New York and London.
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- Ostrander, S.A. (2004) Democracy, civic participation, and the university: a comparative study of civic engagement on five campuses. *Non-Profit and Voluntary Sector Quarterly* 33.1, 74–93.
- Perry, D.C. and W. Wiewel (eds.) (2005) *The university as urban developer: case studies and analysis*. M.E. Sharpe, Armonk, New York and London.
- Reardon, K. (1999) East St. Louis, Illinois: promoting community development through empowerment planning. In W.D. Keating and N. Krumholz (eds.), *Rebuilding urban neighborhoods: achievements, opportunities, and limits*, Sage Publications, Thousand Oaks, CA and London.
- Rubin, V. (2000) Evaluating university–community partnerships: an examination of the evolution of questions and approaches. *Cityscape: A Journal of Policy Development and Research* 5.1, 219–30.
- Rubin, V. (1998) The roles of universities in community-building initiatives. *Journal of Planning Education and Research* 17.4, 302–11.
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C. Greig Crysler 2003: *Writing Spaces: Discourses of Architecture, Urbanism, and the Built Environment, 1960–2000*. New York and London: Routledge.

Writing Spaces is an interesting and provocative account of how ‘spaces of knowledge’ regarding the built environment are constituted. Ascertaining that scholarly discourses are still framed by disciplinary boundaries, and that scholarly journals are both representations of academic institutions and knowledge institutions in themselves, Greig Crysler accomplishes this task by reviewing five leading English-language journals. The *International Journal of Urban and Regional Research (IJURR)* is one of the journals under review. Written in a critical mode, the book gives a selective overview of several important academic debates of the past four decades. The aim is to rethink relationships between academic disciplines and canons, and to explore how and why discourses change or remain fixed. Crysler argues that contemporary critical spatial theories should pursue forms of writing and research that are inherently interdisciplinary. He aspires to contribute to a model ‘that takes account of the spatial relations between disciplines, and with other spheres outside the academy, including professional practice’ (p. 24). Crysler provides valuable insights into a number of mechanisms that underlie the rise and fall of discourses on architecture and urban space. I concur that the relevance of journals ‘as resources for understanding the shifting terms and conditions of discourse’ (p. 11) has generally been overlooked. Embedded as we are in a system of ‘publish or perish’, this book can be of relevance to anyone involved in scholarly publications on architecture and urban space.

As a dissertation project the study started off on a much larger scale. It was narrowed down by the selection of five journals connected to different academic communities which, besides the *IJURR*, include the *Journal of the Society of Architectural Historians (JSAH)*, *Assemblage*, *Traditional Dwellings and Settlements Review (TDSR)* and *Environment and Planning D. Society and Space*. In the preface, Crysler acknowledges the impossibility of giving a generalized overview of all debates published in those journals during 40 years. The selection he made is a cross-section of four decades of published work as well as a reflection of the author's academic life (a professionally trained architect with a PhD in architectural history and theory). His attention is primarily devoted to architectural theory and history. One of the reasons for selecting the five specific journals is that all of them started as critical reactions to existing fields of knowledge. In his examination of the published debates, Crysler addresses three overarching themes. First of all, he examines the occurring paradigms and the way in which scholars treat matters of scale, historical periodization and spatial categories. Second, he analyses the ability of writers and editors to be self-reflexive both within and outside the boundaries of their own discourse (interdisciplinarity), and their ability to overcome ethnocentrism in the choice of participants, written representations and spread of the debate. Third, he evaluates the balance between scientific and social relevance, and the extent to which the use and abuse of theory in everyday practice has been taken into account.

Crysler describes how some of the journals have developed into versions of what they criticized, becoming 'worlds unto themselves', while others have managed to become flexible platforms for discussion. Owing to their capacity to avoid fixing the objects of analysis, methodologies, participants and vocabularies, these have been the 'leaky habitats' that he regards as most appropriate for critical spatial-theory building. The first category includes the *JSAH*, *Assemblage* and the *IJURR*. Crysler concludes that the *JSAH* and the *IJURR* have been the most static in their assumptions, methodologies and forms of writing, and as a result they ended up 'on dry ground' (p. 191). Although the present journal and the *JSAH* are in many respects each other's opposite — the *JSAH* focuses on individual buildings and architects in past times, whereas the *IJURR* takes the neighborhood or urban district as smallest scale of analysis and contemporary world-spanning processes as object of study — they are said to represent similar scholarly worlds. Both hold on to predefined classification systems and maintain a rather Eurocentric outlook. According to Crysler, the *JSAH* and the *IJURR* have become too self-affirming to be able to respond to a growing need for interdisciplinarity. Nevertheless, of all five journals only this journal and *JSAH* have succeeded in linking theoretical debates to professional practice, be it temporarily (as in the former 'Praxis' section in this journal) or in an abstract way.

Although *Assemblage* was established to offer a platform for critical thought on architectural theory, the editors and authors have not succeeded in stepping outside their own discourse. Their destabilizing post-structuralist writing practices have only led to a reorganization of existing theoretical categories. By the time *Assemblage* ceased to be published (in 2000), they employed the same modernist and hierarchical forms of writing they set out to challenge. According to Crysler, the *TDSR* and *Society and Space* have been most successful in accomplishing the critical task formulated by their founders. They have become 'leaky habitats' that have managed to avoid becoming self-referential, fixed or internalized. In spite of this flexibility, they have not succeeded in bridging the gap between theory and practice, nor have they overcome the limitations of scale (e.g. they hardly publish articles on individual buildings). Overall, Crysler regards their specific editorial politics as successful strategies in guaranteeing a critical and flexible position necessary in a changing academic world. Indeed, the book's main ambition is to arouse awareness that scholarly discourse risks decay as soon as it becomes 'normal' (p. 190).

I agree with Crysler that we need a thorough understanding of how, why and by whom knowledge in the built-environment disciplines is constituted, in order to make sense of the 'material spatial practices' (Henri Lefebvre) in cities. My main point of

criticism, however, concerns the way he substantiates his argument. In accounting for the limitations of his own study, Crysler states that he regards the professional realm of architects and planners as a separate domain of study, constituted by different forms of communication (such as the use of images instead of written texts) and with its own platforms of discussion. Whereas he himself excludes this field of knowledge from his study for methodological reasons — and as a consequence emphasizes the divide between theory and practice — he calls on other scholars to bridge the gap. Despite this omission, I feel Crysler's book is a valuable contribution to discourse on built forms, thanks to the critical questions he raises.

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