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explain urbanization first, with implications for planning being derived from the analysis of urban processes.

The editors' expressed intention is to provide an overview of the "new urban theory" and a dialogue over the range of urban political economy without necessarily formulating a unified theory. The participating authors could all be classified generally as radical political economists but they come from a number of orientations. Some are explicitly Marxist, others use some Marxist concepts but without a fully developed framework, still others eschew Marxist categories while still operating within a compatible set of assumptions. This does not detract from the usefulness of the book but rather gives it an interesting diversity and internal debate.

The main strength of Urbanization and Urban Planning in Capitalist Society is its comprehensive scope. Several other collections and monographs have been published in the area of urban political economy since 1973, notably those by Pickvance, Tabb and Sawers, Harloe, Harvey, and Castells. Unlike those works, however, Dear and Scott's compilation attempts to set out first principles of epistemology and theory as well as application in specific empirical contexts. In that sense, it is more of a text than—as the previous works tend to be—a collection of important articles. If the publication of the previous works marked the watershed of respectability for urban political economy, this book has marked the coming of age of the field in attempting a more systematic approach to the questions addressed.

This volume shares a strength with the field of urban political economy in general, namely, its interdisciplinary nature. Although the title mentions planning, the book is actually less a discussion of planning than a background for planners and other urbanists to understand the urban process. Thus it could be used as a text for graduate courses in any discipline incorporating a critical approach to urban phenomena. Although there are few authors included who would be primarily identified as sociologists, this book will be extremely valuable to any urban sociologist interested in relationships among urban structure, economic processes, and the role of the state. These interrelationships have traditionally been slighted within urban sociology; Dear and Scott's book is helping to provide a corrective to that void.


In the Housing Act of 1949, Congress declared the national goal of a "decent home and suitable living environment for every American family." National leadership has retreated from this goal, and the cost of metropolitan housing and interest rates have frozen most young families out of home ownership, but over the last thirty years the majority of the white middle class has been able to buy homes of reasonable quality on affordable terms. In fact, home ownership has been one of the few possibilities for capital accumulation by the middle class. This progress has been achieved only through massive governmental intervention, of which the major ingredients have been easy access to long-term credit and financial support for suburban development—highways, and water and sewage systems. This growth and expansion to the suburbs has had significant effects on older neighborhoods, especially those in central cities, and pervasive discrimination in both public and private institutions has restricted housing opportunities for minorities, especially blacks. The two books reviewed here provide background for understanding the dynamics of postway metropolitan development and its uneven effects.

Downs's Neighborhoods and Urban Development is a fairly brief and very readable primer. Downs convincingly argues that deteriorating neighborhoods in some part of the metropolitan area are an inevitable consequence of growth and development of housing in other parts of the area. Given a substantial degree of poverty, the refusal of local, state, and federal governments to provide adequate housing subsidies and the existence of zoning laws that restrict the construction of cheap housing in most sections of the metropolitan area (especially where the middle class lives), low-income people are forced to live in declining areas, and because they lack money to
improve their housing the neighborhoods deteriorate further. Rather than uplifting the incomes of the poor or subsidizing housing costs, organizations that represent the "middle class" (including city and suburban governments) have sought to segregate low-income people and minorities of all economic levels in neighborhoods distant from their own suburban residences. While this is an oversimplified view of many complex processes—and Downs is sensitive to the many variations in different settings—I think it captures the essentials. Downs's work is written in the policy mold, with lots of insight for and advice to those who would like to improve neighborhoods and cities. His heart is with the reformers, but he advocates policy initiatives that are tempered with the realism that only a modest degree of social engineering is possible in the American polity.

Lake's *The New Suburbanites* is an important empirical study of the recent entry of blacks into suburban areas. A number of academic and journalistic accounts have suggested that the substantial increase of blacks in suburbs during the 1970s marks a historic turning point in the integration of the black middle class into the mainstream of society. The heart of Lake's study is an analysis of interview data of recent movers (black and white) into five suburban areas in New Jersey. A subset of those interviewed was brought together for open-ended discussions (with trained group leaders, and videotaped for analysis). Lake concludes that most black movers encounter a different housing market and web of social relationships than do whites; there are few signs of integration. Because white demand for housing in integrated areas is close to zero, black suburbanites experience little capital accumulation through home ownership (in marked contrast to whites in white neighborhoods). Perhaps Lake's most important contribution is his analysis of the attitudes and practices of real estate brokers. Because the field is very competitive and local ties are their most valuable resource, brokers see racial steering as the only strategy for commercial success.

Because the price of Lake's book will restrict its widespread use in the classroom, I hope that a good extract will find its way into undergraduate readers on urbanization, race relations, and social problems. And let us hope that the commitment made in 1949 for decent housing for *every* American will someday be more than a promise.


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This collection of nineteen articles provides a longitudinal view of urban politics. The sequence of five sections begins with studies of political machines and reform movements. These are followed by papers concerned with the structure of power and democracy in American cities. According to the editors, the shift in analytic focus was prompted by the concern that, with the destruction of old-style political machines, cities had substituted economic elites for political bosses.

By the early 1960s the economic bases of major cities had declined dramatically while their dependent minority populations had increased vastly. These developments promoted dependency of the cities on outside resources, and shifted interest from the distribution of community power to more policy-related concerns. The change is reflected in the third section, which contains articles on the delivery of urban services; interests center on actual patterns of benefits, costs, and sanctions, and on the ways in which distribution decisions are made.

During the 1970s interdependence among governmental units increased, distinctions between levels of government became less clear, policy affecting the cities was made with increasing frequency in Washington, and there was a tremendous growth in the amount of fiscal assistance required by urban areas. Such changes focused attention on the politics of intergovernmental financial aid and federal program implementation. Papers in the fourth section of the book explore related problems, such as conflicts between elected general officials and program-specific bureaucrats.

The final set of papers presents speculations about the future of American urban politics. These include the possibilities of alternative bases for service-delivery systems, and the likelihood that program professionals with ties to Washington and bankers will become even more important in urban political life.

Many of the articles in this reader, such as Long's on the local community as an ecology of games and Lipsky's on street-level bureaucracy are classics. Those new to the study of urban politics will find much of value. How-