

The Urban Politics Reader. By Elizabeth A. Strom and John H. Mollenkopf, London: Routledge, 2006. 354 pages \$ 56.95 (Paperback)

The Routledge Urban Reader Series has a knack for successfully combining seminal pieces in urban studies; and *The Urban Politics Reader* is no exception. Undoubtedly, it will assist researchers of all backgrounds and levels in finding their footing in urban politics debates and trends. Thus, the reader serves as an excellent point of departure. Each chapter features an editor's introduction, contextualizing the authors and time of publications, as well as offering further reading suggestions on the topic of discussion. While political scientists dominate, the reader also includes the work of journalists, writers, policy makers, and other social scientists.

The reader is divided into six parts, beginning with the social and economic context of urban politics, then reviewing the roots of urban politics, understanding urban power, followed by the urban political economy, race, ethnicity and gender in the urban context, and finally cities, regions, and nations.

In the social and economic context of urban politics, the reader is first given an overview of demographic and economic trends in US cities in the latter half of the twentieth century (Elvin K. Wyly, Norman J. Glickman, and Michael L. Lahr), and then, political scientist Margaret Weir explores why the US has failed or refused to build a social welfare net similar to other industrialized countries. Next, the reader receives a sound introduction to Saskia Sassen's urban polarization argument under the condition of globalization; usefully, her arguments are juxtaposed with geographer Chris Hamnett's research in Europe. His findings suggest that not all polarization is equal and certainly not occurring to the same degree in the European urban context.

Then, the reader turns to the local political experience in the United States, how local politics are performed, lived, and interpreted. New York City (Richard Croker) and Chicago (Milton Rakove) serve as illustrative examples. Urban regime structures and their manipulation is the topic of Amy Bridges and Richard Kronick's article about the variety of rules employed to change urban voting participation. In the late nineteenth as well as throughout the early and mid twentieth century, the "political machine" relied on the mobilization of immigrant

groups, and politicians in both cities espoused in-group favoritism. Nevertheless, the reliance on immigrant groups forged more social cohesion, making newly urban immigrants more American (Raymond E. Wolfinger, Michael Jones-Correa).

Part 3 looks more closely at who governs cities and the evolution of urban power in the United States. Political scientist Robert Dahl's pivotal study of New Haven, Connecticut politics in the late 1950s refuted the perception of one particular, elitist group dominating local politics, instead, he and his researchers found a pluralistic local political scene. However, Dahl's pluralistic findings are not echoed in Clarence N. Stone's research in Atlanta. Stone contends that business interests are typically involved in local government and the direction of local policy. Thus, he argues that participation by all interests in local politics is highly unlikely and that the business community has more access to local government than other interest groups. The final chapter of part 3 looks at Berlin and its redevelopment boom after the fall of the Wall in 1989. The piece introduces the difficulty that comparative studies present, as political scientist Elizabeth Strom's "American" expectations for Berlin, based on US urban redevelopment experience, i.e., letting the private sector dominate the redevelopment process without much public or expert interventions, were not confirmed.

Next, the reader focuses on the political economy of cities and communities, with contributions by John Mollenkopf on top-down US urban renewal programs and how they displaced the poor and pushed them into even deeper poverty. Fellow political scientist Martin Shefter again draws on New York City's experience during its near financial collapse in the mid 1970s to exemplify the strains on cities as providers of services. The contribution by H. V. Savitch, Paul Kantor, and Selena Vicari looks at how different US and European cities leverage their influence on economic development based on their urban regime structures. Subsequently, Peter Dreier discusses community-based development, as citizens organize to respond to cuts in public services. He stresses that through partnerships and coalitions, community-based organizations stand to be more successful, as they are able to attract more funding opportunities. However, coalition-building requires more training and professional management of these groups, which, he further argues, should be made possible through federally funded training programs. Amy Lind's article, in turn, focuses on women-initiated and organized grassroots organizations in Peru and Brazil.

Race, ethnicity and gender are the themes of part 5. Rufus P. Browning, Dale Rogers Marshall, and David H. Tabb open the section with their article on the struggle of minority empowerment in ten northern California cities over a twenty-year period, as demographic changes made the need for more inclusive representation a necessity. Adolph Reed Jr.'s contribution reveals that once elected, minority groups frequently demobilize and the status quo becomes more entrenched. Michael Jones-Correa's second article hones in on Latin American women immigrants and how they attempt to access local politics. His research found that Latino women voted far more regularly than their male counterparts, showing that their more extensive contact with the state encourages them to participate in greater numbers. Finally, Scott A. Bollens' article sheds light on the politics of planning and urban policy in divided and polarized cities, Belfast and Johannesburg.

Cities, regions, and nations rounds out the reader, with reviews of federal policy toward big cities, in particular, place-based federal aid (Alice O'Connor), the urban electorate in presidential elections between 1920 and 1996 (Richard Sauerzopf and Todd Swanstrom), recent mayoral politics in Philadelphia (Buzz Bissinger), the rise of the metropolitan region (Peter Dreier, John Mollenkopf and Todd Swanstrom), urbanization patterns in Europe and the US (Pietro Nivola), the effects of terror on US cities (Peter Eisinger), and finally, a look to the future of US metropolitan areas (Bruce Katz).

Clearly, *The Urban Politics Reader* offers a very broad yet compact overview for urban scholars, and succinctly presents the debates and trends affecting urban policy throughout the twentieth century and into the present. Because the US context dominates, the comparisons with European urban experiences are more sharply focused and distinct. Minimally, *The Urban Politics Reader* will inspire urban scholars to reexamine their theoretical approaches and motivate further research to contribute to the complex composite that constitutes the urban experience.

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