Contributing to the book's second theme of the environment and conservation, Chapter 5 addresses farmed landscapes through a study of 31 neighbouring farms in west Oxfordshire, England. Using three-dimensional visualizations for key regions within the study area, the study demonstrates the utility of global information systems (GIS) and visualization tools for landscape analysis and generates a 'collective sense of stewardship' among the farm owners (p. 121). Chapter 6 examines urban regeneration and conservation in Shanghai, China, and finds, among other deficiencies, a lack of any coherent planning strategy and an insufficiency of planning tools. The application of ecological-economic zoning in the Brazilian Amazon in response to disastrous projects funded by multilateral organizations is discussed in Chapter 7.

The third theme of communication and consensus begins in Chapter 8 with an analysis of the epistemological challenges that increasing cultural diversity brings to participatory planning. Through a case study of the Hawaiian homestead community of Papakōlea, the challenges of planning in communities with non-Western cultural identities and the associated need for community-led planning processes are highlighted. Chapter 9 examines urban planning and inter-group conflict through an investigation of various planning intervention strategies in Belfast in Northern Ireland, Jerusalem in Israel, and Johannesburg in South Africa. Chapter 10 details use and development conflicts resulting from increasing international tourism to Banff National Park, Canada, and advocates a neopragmatic approach in which labels are replaced with dialogue in order to reduce contention and enable collaborative planning. In Chapter 11, three well-known theories of normative planning are analysed for applicability to the increasing inequality exhibited in cities of Sub-Saharan Africa.

One admittedly minor concern relates to the final two chapters of the book. Chapter 12 highlights the importance of storytelling, particularly in the case of multicultural planning; while Chapter 13 takes a critical stance towards Critical Planning Theory and details the need for auxiliary theoretical sources. Unlike the case study research that structures the rest of the book, these chapters are inherently theoretical and fall outside the scope of any of the three themes identified by the Editors. As a result, the flow of the book becomes somewhat disjointed. Another relatively benign issue is that due to the independent selection process, chapter lengths are fairly disparate and range from 22 to 38 pages in length. Additionally, while the black-and-white reproduction of the graphics is no real detriment, the use of colour would certainly have been more aesthetically appealing, particularly for the three-dimensional landscapes displayed in Chapter 5.
Comprised of award-winning papers that have previously been published in leading planning journals from around the world, this book offers little of which to be critical. The overwhelming result is a book that is international in scope and one that fills a significant void in the planning literature by providing, in a single source, scholarly work that would be otherwise unattainable on so widespread a basis. This archetypal benefit all students, scholars and practitioners of planning who heretofore have been hindered by an inaccessibility to scholarly work from globally disparate sources. Of particular value to a graduate course based around comparative planning strategies, all scholars seeking to improve their personal research prowess would benefit from the rich methodologies, strong theoretical underpinnings and global content found in *Dialogues in Urban & Regional Planning*.

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Poverty and income inequality within and between countries has become tragically axiomatic. The growing disparity between the world’s more and less developed countries is generally considered unhealthy for the global economy and raises issues that are both practical as well as moral, and thus a topic worthy of attention. I tend to think about these issues on three levels: deductive theories, empirical research and common sense. Deductive theories of development tend to be normative and focused on economic variables; but due to their many limiting assumptions, the outcomes are not very good at reflecting the real world. Common sense tells us that policies that expand education, promote gender equality, and stimulate incentives for labor will promote growth and reduce income inequality. Empirical studies fall between these extremes. They are usually robust statistical exercises that rely on survey data; they either reveal or suggest complex underlying structures in the political economy; and they may help governments to fine-tune development strategies.

The Microeconomics of Income Distribution Dynamics in East Asia and Latin America is a collection of empirical studies that used microeconometrics to learn ‘not only how total earnings to household income distribution’ (p. 11). If the distribution undertaken in this book is to generalize the counterfactual simulation approach to distributional change from earnings to household income distribution’ (p. 10). Chapter 1 introduces the research methodology, its strengths, limitations and goals, in intelligible prose. Chapter 2 is the highly technical and mathematical description of the methodology, a step-by-step explanation of the calculus associated with the decomposition techniques used in data analysis. Chapters 3–9 cover the seven separate projects, respectively: Greater Buenos Aires in Argentina; Urban Brazil; Colombia; Indonesia; Malaysia; Mexico; and Taiwan, China. Chapter 10 is a synthesis of results.

One of the conclusions drawn from a comparison of the research over these distinct geographical regions is that the counterfactual microsimulation methodology is a useful analytical tool. Another ‘main conclusion’ is perhaps consummately without the complex analysis, i.e. that each country experiences its own path relative to the dynamics of inequality and poverty, confirming that ‘Grand theories about universal laws of how inequality behaves over the process of development are probably less useful than the profession once thought’ (p. 399). Other observations suggest that reducing gender and education inequalities will have a salubrious impact on reducing income inequalities.

Anyone in development economics with a background in something less than advanced inferential statistics will find this book a hard read. We can take the Editors at their word when they conclude that ‘the most important methodological contribution undertaken in this book is to generalize the counterfactual simulation approach to distributional change from earnings to household income distribution’ (p. 11). If researchers, policy-makers and graduate students understand that statement, they will no doubt enjoy the technical aspects of the authors’ work. Yet, their use of tables, tabularized summaries by country and decipherable prose synopses enable other informed readers to appreciate the gist of their work. Readers who skip over the esoterics and focus only on the vernacular descriptions of the places studied will still acquire an appreciation for the diversity and specificity of place.

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