

and therefore the current owner is in control.

Rea demonstrates how ownership of land and story is an outcome of the historical process. For example, in the early history of the US, the vast expanse of land west of the Missouri River was unexplored and therefore unknown territory. Beginning with the Lewis and Clark Corps of Discovery, identity, meaning, and a narrative were attached to this land as the nation, through its explorer representatives, took ownership. The story was further embellished and became manifest with the additional knowledge gained from each ensuing exploration. But the story that emerged dismissed the fact that the land already had identity, meaning, and a narrative through the Native Americans who lived there. As Rea states: "Nowhere became somewhere; an unknown landscape became known, then owned . . . (but) nowhere had been somewhere all along" (p. 6). Later, the cattle ranchers created their own story that supported relentless land acquisition and with it control of water rights. Their story sanctioned the vigilante behavior of hanging a man and woman who threatened their control of the land and water.

Other stories came and went, and currently, the land around Devil's Gate is owned by the Mormon Church. The Mormons built a monument to their handcart immigrant ancestors, many who suffered and some who perished in the area in a late fall/early winter snowstorm during their trek to Utah in 1856. The Handcart Historic Site elaborately portrays the hardships of the handcart immigrants, but largely ignores the rich history before and after the passing of the Mormons through the vicinity of Devil's Gate.

Although the volume is not in the strict sense about community, it provides valuable lessons for the community development practitioner and scholar. It suggests that community developers need

to be wary of simply accepting a community's characterization of itself, or the image local leaders and institutions promote. The dominant community image may be dominant not in the sense of being the most widely accepted by local residents; rather it may be the image proffered by the dominant social class. It is too easy to accept as the commonly held image what is voiced by community leaders in venues such as city council and school board meetings, development offices, Chamber of Commerce literature, and local media. Furthermore, and this is the uniqueness and contribution of Rea's volume to community development, to really understand the nature and impact of the community image, we need to understand its development, that is, the story of the place. If developers in their work engage communities without critical examination and reflection on overt images the communities manifest, they may be engaging communities as snapshots, or still lifes, in a time-space continuum. To achieve holistic understanding of communities, development workers must be historically and geographically inclusive.

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**Boomburbs: the rise of America's accidental cities**, by Robert E. Lang and Jennifer B. LeFurgy, Washington, DC, Brookings Institution Press, 2007, 212 pp., US\$22.95 (paperback), ISBN-10 0815703031, ISBN-13 978-0815703037

*Governing the Metropolis* told us that "much of our present city is, in fact, caught in a conflict between the cities of the past and the city of the future" (Greer, 1962, p. 21). Almost 50 years later, Lang and LeFurgy remind us that

these conflicting views of the city persist. The overarching lesson of *Boomburbs* is to embrace this dialogue and draw from it to forge a more inclusive and sustainable form of community development. The authors tell us that “the rise of boomburbs challenges planners, developers, and policymakers to rethink what is urban.” I would add that the rise of boomburbs also challenges community development practitioners and scholars to rethink the venues and scope of grassroots organizing and advocacy in contemporary society.

Boomburbs are large, fast-growing cities that emerged during the last few decades adjacent to metropolitan centers. Cities examined in the book include Mesa, Arizona; Anaheim, California; Clearwater, Florida; Naperville, Illinois; Arlington, Texas; and Bellevue, Washington. Boomburbs are characterized by rapid growth, lower densities than older core cities, and sprawling development. Although their growth is fueled by highway expansion and master-planned subdivisions, they are not exclusively residential. Boomburbs are complex cities with residential, commercial, industrial, and recreational functions.

In their analysis of boomburbs, Lang and LeFurgy go beyond a description of urban versus suburban forms of development to examine multiple dimensions of what has become the dominant form of urbanization. Early chapters of *Boomburbs* describe the development of modern cities and the evolution of housing and business in the suburbs. These chapters are followed by descriptions of how new communities have absorbed a broader cross-section of society than earlier satellite cities. Although race and income segregation remains problematic in new communities, Lang and LeFurgy argue that these communities are moving toward levels of integration that parallel the larger society.

One of the more illuminating discussions in the book involves governance and politics. The authors describe how the growth of modern cities has been facilitated by a governance system based on decentralization and fragmentation. In the case of boomburbs, which cluster in the Sunbelt region of the US, government is characterized by small reform-style governments and the proliferation of homeowners associations. Although this approach to governance has facilitated the development of boomburbs, Lang and LeFurgy argue that urban growth and increased socioeconomic diversity places increased stress on this system. As a result, the public sector and neighborhood-based organizations are being asked to address a broader range of community and social welfare issues than in the past. The authors suggest that while, in some states, homeowners associations have been stripped of some of their formal legal powers, these organizations are now taking on broader political and social agendas.

The book addresses how boomburbs cope with growth constraints and the ultimate dilemma, buildout. These cities are aging, becoming more heterogeneous, and running out of land to annex and develop. They are also confronting external challenges linked to shifts in global finance and international production, the prospect that peak oil will destabilize automobile dependent communities, and the specter of global warming. In the face of these challenges, boomburbs have begun to rethink their development strategies and search for sustainable models for city building. Many have begun to expand rail and other forms of public transit. Others have become more densely developed and pedestrian friendly. Lang and LeFurgy argue that in the face of growth constraints and buildout, the interests of boomburbs have merged with older core cities. The convergence of interests raises the

prospect of enhanced intergovernmental collaboration across metropolitan areas.

*Boomburbs* is an important book for community development practitioners and scholars. It allows us to place community development into the contemporary trajectory of urbanization and think about how cities should look in the future. The field of community development has a great deal to contribute to this discussion, particularly in areas related to grassroots organizing, advocacy, social welfare, and equity planning. *Boomburbs* helps to shed light on the path contemporary urban development has taken. With a better understanding of factors influencing the development of past and contemporary cities, community development practitioners and scholars can have greater influence on their development in the future.

#### Reference

Greer, S. (1962). *Governing the metropolis*. Westport, CT: Greenwood Press.

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**From the ground up: translating geography into community through neighbor networks**, by Rick Grannis, Princeton, NJ, Princeton University Press, 2009, 242 pp., US\$37.50 (hardback), ISBN 9780691140254

*From the Ground Up* is captivating for readers who appreciate the intricacies of neighborhoods and the ever-present social dynamics that form community within those neighborhoods. Like many sociologists, the author concedes that interaction as well as geographic

proximity is central to neighborhood community. The main thesis of this work is that neighborhood communities emerge from neighbor networks and their corresponding interactions. “Neighboring” as Grannis refers to it, occurs in four superimposed stages: when geography allows residents to be available to one another (stage 1); when residents unintentionally encounter one another or engage in passive interactions (stage 2); when residents intentionally encounter and interact with one another (stage 3); and when residents engage in activities indicating mutual trust or a realization of shared norms and values (stage 4). It is crucial to Grannis’ thesis that each stage develops in a logical sequence, with lower stages preceding higher stages. Furthermore, these four stages of neighborly relations concatenate into four distinct stages of neighborhood community networks.

Grannis makes some major contributions in this work. First is the interplay between theory and empirical findings. Through empirical data collected in a gang barrio, 68 Los Angeles neighborhoods, and a college town, Grannis supports his theoretical framework with findings spanning nearly two-thirds of the text. Grannis offers t-communities as building block geographical facts that are crucial for passive interaction. These t-communities are “maximal contiguous networks of tertiary face blocks [face blocks strictly oriented to pedestrian traffic] and tertiary intersections [intersections with all contiguous face blocks being tertiary]” (p. 43). Grannis also shows that households make conscious decisions to locate based on who their immediate neighbors will be (stage 1 neighbors), and that residents influence one another through their social norms and personal values (stage 4 neighbors).

Grannis supports this framework with rigorous statistical analyses. Formulating theoretical frameworks is