
This book purports to discuss "the direct or latent effects of public policy on urban growth in Latin America" and to provide "recommendations for evaluating the impact of specific public policies on urbanization in two small Latin American countries" (p. 1). Yet since it is merely a collection of conference papers, the work is far less unified than its title would imply. Three themes are involved: urban development, public policies, and models, but the connections between the three remain disappointingly vague.

The city is the focus of three chapters, dealing respectively with Santo Domingo, San José, and (in spite of the book's title) Lima. Urban amenities are described, as are some aspects of government expenditure and political organization; the story is a familiar one.

More innovative are the discussions of public policy. The view that it is unrealistic to separate urban from national policies appears in two chapters. In one of these, Francine Rabinovitz and Robert Fried assert that, in any case, such policies have had little effect on urban growth; real progress will require more knowledge of the urban phenomenon. In the other, Fuat and Suphan Andic assign to the city per se a secondary role, and stress sectoral elements such as industrialization, employment, and capital formation. However, Jorge Hardoy, in his comparative study of Mexico, Cuba, Jamaica, Haiti, and the Dominican Republic shows that in Cuba, at least, public land use policies have, in fact, directly influenced urban growth.

Two chapters discuss models, clearly and conventionally, but with no adjustments to the Latin American situation. Indeed Oscar Yujnovsky cautions against the "mechanical transplantation [to Latin America] of methods and techniques" (p. 208).

A concluding chapter of discussion notes suggests that the conference participants actually understood rather well the problem with which they were confronted, despite the fact that they were unable to analyze it comprehensively. For this reason the book is worth reading, but the reader should be bilingual, as two chapters are in Spanish.

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