

URBANIZATION IN LATIN AMERICA: CHANGING PERSPECTIVES

- URBANIZATION, PLANNING, AND NATIONAL DEVELOPMENT.* By JOHN FRIEDMANN. (Beverly Hills, Calif.: Sage Publications, Inc., 1975. Pp. 352. \$12.50.)
- LATIN AMERICAN URBAN RESEARCH VOLUME 1.* Edited by FRANCINE RABINOVITZ and FELICITY TRUEBLOOD. (Beverly Hills, Calif.: Sage Publications, Inc., 1971. \$17.50.)
- REGIONAL AND URBAN DEVELOPMENT POLICIES: A LATIN AMERICAN PERSPECTIVE.* Latin American Urban Research Vol. 2. Edited by GUILLERMO GEISSE and JORGE HARDOY. (Beverly Hills, Calif.: Sage Publications, Inc., 1972.)
- NATIONAL-LOCAL LINKAGES: THE INTERRELATIONSHIP OF URBAN AND NATIONAL POLICIES IN LATIN AMERICA.* Latin American Urban Research Vol. 3. Edited by FRANCINE RABINOVITZ and FELICITY TRUEBLOOD. (Beverly Hills, Calif.: Sage Publications, Inc., 1973. \$17.50.)
- ANTHROPOLOGICAL PERSPECTIVES ON LATIN AMERICAN URBANIZATION.* Latin American Urban Research Vol. 4. Edited by WAYNE CORNELIUS and FELICITY TRUEBLOOD. (Beverly Hills, Calif.: Sage Publications, Inc., 1974. \$17.50.)
- URBANIZATION AND INEQUALITY: THE POLITICAL ECONOMY OF URBAN AND REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT IN LATIN AMERICA.* Latin American Urban Research Vol. 5. Edited by WAYNE CORNELIUS and FELICITY TRUEBLOOD. (Beverly Hills, Calif.: Sage Publications, Inc., 1975.)
- SQUATTERS AND OLIGARCHS: AUTHORITARIAN RULE AND POLICY CHANGE IN PERU.* By DAVID COLLIER. (Baltimore, Md.: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1976. Pp. 187. \$10.95.)
- POLITICS AND THE MIGRANT POOR IN MEXICO CITY.* By WAYNE CORNELIUS. (Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University Press, 1975. \$12.50.)
- THE MYTH OF MARGINALITY: URBAN POVERTY AND POLITICS IN RIO DE JANEIRO.* By JANICE PERLMAN. (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1976.)

The nine books reviewed here are a small but fairly representative selection of recent social science research on Latin American urbanization. Taken together, the collected essays of John Friedmann, the five annual volumes of *Latin American Urban Research*, and the individual studies by David Collier, Wayne Cornelius, and Janice Perlman provide a wealth of detailed information about cities and city dwellers in Latin America. But more than data is available to the careful reader, for these works hold a mirror to ourselves. Reading them as intellectual history, a record of urban research spanning the last two decades, one can see changing understandings of Latin America in general and of the urbanization process in particular, as well as a shift in many of the basic assumptions that shape research and inform the relation of the scholar to the subjects and communities under study.

Of course, this is how scientific disciplines of any kind progress. Theories are proposed, tested against reality, and then (hopefully) corrected and reformulated. But more is at stake here than a mere marginal correction of errors.

Rather, we are dealing with changing understandings of what constitutes proper and useful research in the first place. In the works under review here, change and questioning are particularly visible in terms of the basic epistemology and goals of research that, in turn, shape the methods used and the problems seen as important—the agenda of research in the field.

Attention to epistemological issues is central to any serious research, for the way scholars conceive of their work and of the meaning of the “data” they collect molds the questions asked, the results achieved, and the explanations advanced. The basic epistemological issues that concern us here center on the question of what one needs to know—and how best to learn it—to understand the “reality” of Latin American urbanization.

For present purposes, a general distinction can be drawn between positivistic research and work taking a more phenomenological approach (cf. Geertz Miller). By “positivism,” I refer to an orientation that concentrates on the external manifestations of behavior, such as voting, migration and residence patterns, or aggregate indices like literacy or income statistics. This kind of research generates a great deal of useful information but suffers from two notable problems. First, research questions are typically framed in terms of the needs and interests of the researcher alone. Hence, behavior is examined in essentially *external* terms—terms that may not match the *meaning* given to experiences by those undergoing them. Research framed in this way thus runs the risk of misstating the motives, intensities, and consequences of action. In addition, by focusing on externals, the parameters of the existing situation are typically taken as given, and attention then directed to the patterns of behavior they define and generate. Here the role of the scholar is to observe, explain, and record—all within the already established framework. But no particular form of social system is necessary; rather, all are contingent human creations, subject to change and evolution. By taking the existing parameters as given, positivistic approaches thus often inhibit the researcher from assuming a critical stance.

An alternative, more phenomenological approach typically works with the concepts and categories that people use in their everyday lives, thus avoiding the temptation to reduce action and meaning to an externally imposed logic. By emphasizing the meaning of events and social processes to those experiencing them, a phenomenological approach makes more nuanced and careful judgments possible. Moreover, since the basic reference point of analysis is neither the scientific discipline per se nor the existing social system, but rather the patterns of meaning and significance of actual groups, the way is clear for a potentially more critical stance by the scholarly observer.

A good example of the impact of these different approaches on the study of urbanization lies in the treatment of migration and marginality. Initially, in the 1950s and early 1960s, large-scale migration to the cities was seen as a social problem of vast proportions: migration was growing rapidly and migrants themselves were seen as uprooted, anomic, and “marginal” to the larger society in economic, social, cultural, and political terms (cf. Nelson). The problem was seen as one of *integration*—reducing “marginality” by incorporating the migrants into the fabric of national society. But many of the key hypotheses derived from

this analysis have proven wrong. Migrants turn out to be neither especially anomic, alienated, nor psychologically “uprooted.” Even the cherished concepts of economic and political marginality proved hollow when examined more closely in terms of the meaning migrants gave to their own experiences. Thus, occupations seen as “marginal” from the point of view of national income statistics turn out to be closely regulated and often desirable ways of making a living for the urban poor. Moreover, political attitudes and behaviors seen as marginal (such as cynicism, withdrawal, or low efficacy) may also be interpreted as rational responses to weakness. So-called “marginals” then, are *already* integrated—on the weak side of the equation. Hence, the key lies not in increasing their integration into the system, but in changing its terms. In the works discussed below, Lisa Peattie, Anthony Leeds, and Janice Perlman have perhaps done the most to bring out the virtues of a more phenomenological approach to these issues.

The approach taken affects the goals of research and the stance of the scholar in subtle and often quite personal ways. After reviewing this enormous and ever-expanding literature, my impression is that scholars taking a more phenomenological stance display a greater personal involvement in the fate of their subjects, and a greater disposition to critical analysis of their situation. Why? I believe the reason lies in the link to a critical view of theory suggested earlier. Once the existing situation and *given* parameters and categories of analysis are no longer seen as necessary, the way is open to search for alternatives. Individual and macro-social patterns can then be connected systematically, by showing, for example, how what seems “marginal” is itself a product of a particular social structure and ideology.

The distinction I am drawing here is apparent when one compares the recent books by Wayne Cornelius and Janice Perlman. I will examine these works in detail below—here I simply wish to comment briefly on their tone and style. Perlman’s work is literally alive with a passionate concern for the lives of Rio’s *favelados*, and is suffused throughout with anger and outrage at their condition and at official and academic analyses that, in her view, mask its true character. This perspective shapes her work profoundly, not by turning it into a mere polemic (for it is a fine piece of scholarship), but rather by giving the research itself a goal and purpose beyond the testing of hypotheses of interest to social scientists. The whole apparatus of scholarly analysis is set in a critical vein, and the work is informative, exciting, and moving. On completing Wayne Cornelius’ admirable study, on the other hand, one is left feeling somewhat empty and disappointed. For the central thrust of this work is almost overwhelmingly “scientific.” Propositions are advanced, tested, and the results integrated into the literature with splendid erudition, but the exercise seems a bit arid in the end. For while we learn a great deal about how migrants to Mexico City shape up on indices of cognition, participation, learning, and the like, our sense of the communities as groups of real people rooted in a particular social system is less fully developed. Our contact with Mexico City’s migrants is thus rather one-dimensional and one-way as well, for the basic reference point of the work is social science—and not the communities themselves.

I do not wish to argue that scientific research and critical research are mutually exclusive. Quite the contrary! These are questions of emphasis and commitment. But the stance each author takes definitely gives a profound and pervasive tone to the work and to the understanding it provides. Hence it is worthy of our attention here.

I mentioned at the outset that the agenda of research on urbanization in Latin America has changed considerably over the last two decades. The questions that once dominated the field seem to have faded away, or more precisely, to have been reformulated in the light of new theories and approaches. Before looking directly at the works under review, it may be useful to indicate briefly the substance of these changes. In the mid-1960s, research focused above all on these issues: migration and marginality, urban culture and values, public policy in the cities, and the implications of urban space for other aspects of city development. These concerns were wrapped up in a generally optimistic faith in "modernization" and the efficacy of technocratic solutions to urban problems, with particular emphasis on planning. By the mid-1970s, a new agenda holds center stage: the forms of integration of migrants and the urban poor into city life (as opposed to marginality), urban poverty and its relation to structures of local, national, and regional power, planning considered as a complex political (more than technical) process, and finally a redefinition of spatial questions in dynamic social and political terms.

In more recent work, the city is seen as a social and policy field created not only by explicitly urban concerns and programs but also, and more fundamentally, by the unintended consequences of policies in other areas such as industrialization or agrarian reform. Underlying this broader view of policy in the city is a much-expanded concept of politics itself. Once limited in effect to programs and activities involving government in some way, the meaning of politics in later studies has grown to encompass a broad net of interconnected structures of economic, social, and explicitly "political" power that together shape urban life. Finally, as a whole, this package of interests comes wrapped up in a critical and fairly pessimistic vein—"modernization" has yielded center stage to "dependency."

With these general considerations in hand, let us turn now to consider the studies themselves, beginning with John Friedmann and the five annual volumes of the *Latin American Urban Research* series (hereinafter referred to as *LAUR*), and then turning to examine recent major works by Collier, Cornelius, and Perlman.

The work of John Friedmann spans the last two decades. Hence, a glance at his collected essays offers a convenient way in which to grasp the tone and orientation of much research on Latin American urbanization in the 1960s. The essays are grouped into three categories: theory, policy, and practice. While they vary enormously in scope and purpose, all are filled with an optimistic faith that the expansion of city life is central to the growth of democracy in Latin America. Friedmann believes strongly in the power of planning, properly formulated and executed, to reshape the urban scene in beneficial ways. But his view of plan-

ning is curiously narrow and mechanistic. Attention is focused on the manipulation of macro-level variables, with the assumption that these alone will have the desired effect. Thus, in one essay the author dismisses the activities of those small-scale local organizations that have subsequently become a major focus of research. Activity at this level is irrelevant: "There is no conceivable way by which these modest collective activities can be joined to matters that relate to life in the larger community—the city as a whole" (p. 125).

The logic of this dismissal seems to be that development is necessarily evolutionary, and hence involves questions of increasing scale, complexity, and broad integration into recognizably "modern" systems. Small-scale local activities somehow do not "fit." But a different view of city life with greater concern for micro-level experiences might give greater weight to such groups, both as the principal vehicles available to the urban poor, and also as key matrices in which migrants acquire experience in dealing with urban life—experience that provides models of action later transferred to other spheres of activity.

Friedmann's goal of combining a general sociology of urbanization with attention to planning and practice is fully visible in the first *LAUR* volume (1971) and in changing ways inspires the entire series. As a whole the series is clearly indispensable to any serious student of Latin American urbanization, and its very existence as a series will surely continue to spur research and reflection in this area.

Volume 1 is divided into four parts: urban migration and marginality, urban culture, governmental institutions and decision-making, and policy problems. This organization constitutes an implicit agenda for research, and it is interesting to consider how it has been followed up in later work. Consider the question of government, decision-making, and public policy. A strong interest in these themes is visible throughout the series, but its expression becomes considerably more complex and sophisticated over time. For example, comparing the works in volume 1 with later essays such as those in volume 3 on urban policymaking by Solaún, Cepeda, and Bagley, or those dealing with public policy, urban growth and regional development in volume 5 (e.g., Bergman, Webb, Roberts, Gilbert, or Barkin), one sees a vast expansion in the meaning given to "decision-making" and "policy problems."

In the earlier articles, policymaking is treated within a narrow theoretical and empirical focus, one-dimensional at best. Later studies, on the other hand, reveal a greater appreciation of the dialectical character of policymaking. Here, the legal and institutional structure of policy is set in a dynamic relation to the social, economic, and psychological context of urban life. In this way, the analysis of urban policy moves beyond the bounds of explicitly urban institutions and settings to incorporate the broader dimensions of structure, resources, and power within which the city is set.

Consider the contributions of Webb and Roberts. Webb demonstrates how income redistribution policies in Peru affect almost exclusively the modern, urban sector, thus reinforcing the already existing rural-urban gap and indirectly contributing to further urbanization through migration out of the countryside. Webb's analysis is reinforced in the same volume by the work of Bryan Roberts,

who looks at the relations of center and periphery in Peru, finding not a lack of integration, but rather a particular kind of integration that disorganizes the periphery and strangles it. In both cases, urban planning, policies, and conditions are thus located in a broader context of national policies in other areas.

Issues of planning are also well-developed in volume 2, where particular attention is devoted to the parameters of regional planning. The emphasis here on the city as a spatial system is particularly useful, for in general social scientists (except for geographers) pay too little attention to variables of space and size. Unfortunately, in this volume the link between the two opening "theoretical" essays and the twelve case studies that follow is weak. Moreover, space is treated almost exclusively in physical terms, as a limiting condition for development of other kinds. The integration of physical and social space, for example in the complex relations between residential, occupational, recreational, and associational spheres that form a community, is not treated. Thus space remains a somewhat static variable.

In later volumes, other contributors take up the issue of space in more dynamic social terms. Here, the work of Anthony Leeds, on "Housing-Settlement Types, Arrangements for Living, Proletarianization, and the Social Structure of the City" (volume 4) is particularly useful in reorienting the treatment of space. Leeds shows how arrangements of physical space model the social order of the city. Since this social order is one that fosters proletarianization and a kind of common proletarian thread that runs through the city (cutting across its physical space), policies and programs that emphasize only a physical dimension simply do not work. Leeds' exceptional work here also contributes to clarifying the issue of housing. Much of the debate on migration has focused on housing policy, treating the housing created and used by migrants in more or less undifferentiated terms. But Leeds details a series of types of housing, which then permits analysis of the meaning and dynamics of movement from one to another: "Put in other words, the physical city is, to a great degree, a time-linked crystallization of the *total* social order of the city—of the interactions and interests of elites *and* proletariats. The physical city, seen on the ground, not on the planner's drawing board, is unintelligible without understanding the proletarianization process and proletarian action" (p. 91).

This general expansion of perspectives on urban power and policy is given a useful form and structure by the lead article in volume 5. Here John Walton sets Latin American urbanization squarely in the context of dependency analysis, systematically relating many characteristic problems of Latin America's cities to their place in the net of national and international economic relations in which the area as a whole is located. City life is thus integrated into broader social, economic, and political patterns.

A similar expansion and reformulation of the field of study is visible in the treatment given to urban culture, norms, and values. In volume 1, these questions are framed by the work of Richard Morse, whose essay reflects his special approach and contribution to the study of Latin American city life and the "idea of the city." For Morse, attention to urban culture requires analysis of the unique character of Latin American cities, stemming from their combination

of a bureaucratic, patrimonial, Catholic culture with a changing, expanding socioeconomic field. Here, as throughout his work, Morse stresses overall belief systems and their premises as a key to urban culture. For Morse, then, understanding the "spirit" of institutions is prior to analyzing its expression in particular ideologies, values, or policies.

This orientation to the study of urban culture finds little or no expression in the remainder of the *LAUR* volumes or in the other works to be considered here. Why? It is not that there is no concern for belief systems. On the contrary, a major focus of all the works on migration and "marginality" lies in the beliefs and "belief systems" of migrants. The answer, then, lies not in neglect, but in the evolution of a different perspective on beliefs and culture, one more concerned with micro-level experiences and individual values, focusing on sharply circumscribed sets of attitudes, than with the "spirit" of institutions. I believe that Morse's contribution is important, and as we shall see, it is approximated in a roundabout way by Collier and Perlman's work on changing official and upper-class images of migrants and urban policy in general. But even here analysis is more oriented to questions of social class and interest than to the "spirit" of institutions that, in a deeper sense, lies behind the orientations of legal structures and class issues.

I noted earlier that a good deal of the attention devoted to culture, norms, and values in the *LAUR* series finds expression in analyses of migration and marginality—surely one of the "master themes" of the entire series and of the recent study of Latin American urbanization in general. The issues receive a useful introduction through Cornelius' massive article in volume 1: "The Political Sociology of Cityward Migration in Latin America." Later volumes provide valuable insights into changing understandings of these questions, particularly in two brilliant contributions by Lisa Peattie: "The Concept of Marginality as Applied to Squatter Settlements" (volume 4) and "Tertiarization and Urban Poverty" (volume 5).

Looking closely at the relevance of "marginality" for the study of squatter settlements, Peattie argues that the very notion is invalid since it runs directly counter to the idea of a complex social system with patterned inequalities. She argues persuasively that the idea of "marginality" takes the perspective of dominant sectors for granted, making others marginal to them, although not necessarily marginal in any of the ways proposed by earlier theory. The policy consequences are considerable: "If we conceive of the city—as some Latin Americanists have done—as a kind of fortress of high culture, European and elitist, in an Indian or peasant hinterland which it dominates, we will tend to move toward certain kinds of public policy. We will tend to perceive large in-migrations to the city from the rural hinterland as an 'invasion'. We are led to think of the problems of urbanization basically as pacification efforts" (1974, p. 108).

Peattie's article in volume 5 is complementary, for it explores in depth the idea of a "tertiary sector"—that residual category of supposedly unskilled, easy-entry, and low productivity jobs (e.g., street vending), which for many defines the tenuous economic basis of marginality. Peattie shows clearly that these occupations, contrary to popular mythology, are stable and steady, not easy to

enter at all but rather entangled in complex nets of licensing, regulation, and distribution, and finally, not even marginal to economic growth as they contribute to important and otherwise unattended sectors of the market.

Peattie's work has theoretical and methodological significance, for her conclusions derive from an explicitly "phenomenological" look at tertiary occupations. By examining these activities in light of the role they play in the local economy, and seeing them in terms of the motivations and experiences of small-scale entrepreneurs (not solely in terms of the categories of national income statistics) she is able to understand their significance much more fully. Several other essays complement these insights, most notably those by Bryan Roberts and Susan Eckstein in volume 5, and Larissa Lomnitz' work on "The Social and Economic Organization of a Mexican Shantytown" in volume 4. Lomnitz' essay is particularly interesting for the way in which she describes the relation between the economic opportunities available to migrants and the patterns of social relations they build in a search for personal and group security. The urban poor can not depend on the market alone, or on the "official" institutions of the city. Hence, they build alternative nets of friendship, kinship, and mutual obligation on which to depend in case of emergency (pp. 153–54).

A final aspect of urban culture and values involves, of course, their diffusion from the city to surrounding areas. Returned migrants are often central to this process, and their role is examined well by Kemper and Foster in their study of Tzintzuntzan (volume 5) and in B. J. Isbell's work on the impact of returned migrants on traditional social and political concepts in rural Peru (volume 4). The Kemper-Foster study takes an unusually long-term view, stretching over thirty years of research on Tzintzuntzan. In the process, one can see a gradually increasing penetration of the village by patterns of city life. The primary vehicles of this penetration have been governmental policies and returned migrants, and the results are visible in higher levels of living, growing social differentiation within the village, and a gradual decline in the old peasant mentality epitomized by Foster as the "image of the limited good." With increased openness, things in Tzintzuntzan no longer seem necessarily limited. Hence, change is less threatening. The very rich article by Isbell examines the impact of returnees' new ideas of social space, time, group relations, and economic activity in their village of origin. Returned migrants are clearly important cultural brokers, sources of money and contacts who often clash openly with traditional local elites, as they carry the city with them to their old homes.

Working through the *LAUR* volumes, then, early concepts, theories, and concerns are gradually transformed. The result is a much more complex and sophisticated vision of urbanization in all its facets, from policymaking to culture, migration, and marginality. The change, I would argue, is particularly striking in the area of migration and marginality, and the dynamics of the development of urban neighborhoods and squatter settlements. A fuller exploration of these themes brings us to the three recent studies examined in the remainder of this essay.

The preceding discussion suggests that adequate understanding of the urbanization process requires a continuous dialectic between institutional and individual levels of data and analysis. Knowledge of the institutional setting is required to set the frame of policy and identify the broad social and economic forces that shape city life, while attention to individual experiences is necessary if we are to comprehend the sources, direction, and meaning of behavior. The analytical problem, of course, lies in devising linkages between the two, so that valid inferences can be drawn from structure to behavior, and vice versa. The three books reviewed in this section approach the problem in different ways, each contributing an important part to the whole. Collier is the most institutional, Cornelius the most individual, and Perlman the most sustained attempt at a synthesis of the two levels. Let me review them in turn.

Collier's *Squatters and Oligarchs* puts the formation of squatter settlements, often thought of as somehow "spontaneous" and uncontrolled, squarely in the context of general policy questions in Peru. The interaction of squatters with the various groups (each with its own guiding ideology and political style) that have dominated national government in Peru lies at the heart of this intelligent and innovative work. Throughout, Collier is sensitive to the political and policy dimensions of settlement formation. In a useful general review of the evolution of settlements in Lima, the author lays out the major issues involved and links the growth of settlements firmly to the general growth of Lima itself. These considerations lay the basis for a more general treatment (chap. 3) of the evolution of government support for settlement formation. Important distinctions are drawn (pp. 41–42) between types of settlement formation (by invasion, gradual accretion, and government authorization—the cases are about equally divided among the three) and the nature of government intervention is reviewed.

The core of the book lies in chapters 4 through 7, where changing official attitudes towards settlement formation are explored in the regimes that have held power since World War II. Collier shows how each regime encouraged settlement formation working with a style attuned to its own guiding ideology. The goal in each case was to secure support, incorporating the urban poor into the base of the system, while above all inhibiting their capacity for autonomous action. In the Odría regime (1948–56) this meant extending a net of personal, paternalistic ties in which satisfied squatters became directly dependent on and grateful to the president himself. For the government of Prado (1956–62), inspired by a philosophy of classical liberalism, official policy emphasized self-help projects among the poor, mobilizing their own resources with minimal official help. Demands were thus satisfied at low cost and with minimal popular mobilization. In the period of party competition under Belaunde (1963–68), a more straightforward exchange of electoral support for benefits appears. Finally, in the early stages of "revolutionary" military rule under Velasco, the regime strove, above all, to build a comprehensive system of control and regulation in the settlements, working primarily through the official mobilization mechanisms of SINAMOS.

Each kind of regime thus encouraged settlement formation, but with different style and goals. The overall pattern is much like a game—a game

played between shifting elites in national government and groups of squatters with highly specific needs. The squatters want land and security; elites want to acquire support and avoid uncontrolled demand-making. The interest of the story lies in the similarity of the threads linking experiences, which at first glance seem so different in style and motivation.

Collier shows further that official policies favoring settlement formation do not arise from governmental liberality—the goal is not redistribution. Rather, such policies must be placed in the broader context of general attitudes to land use in Lima and agrarian reform in the nation as a whole. Squatters were often evicted from downtown areas and encouraged to settle on peripheral lands, while the downtown areas were then cleared for more profitable uses. In this way, both squatters and landowners came out ahead. Moreover, Collier demonstrates that the encouragement of settlement formation was part of a range of alternatives to agrarian reform in pre-1968 Peru, a way of handling the continued exodus to the cities without touching the structure of rural property in any significant way.

Collier's work is a major contribution, especially in the way it sets the entire process of settlement formation in a broader context of policy and of the "game" of politics. But the formation of *barriadas* and the life experiences of migrants can not be completely captured by the metaphor of a game. For there are many kinds of settlements and different motives lead to their formation. Squatter settlements are not an undifferentiated category, nor can they be seen as wholly passive or manipulated, although they are clearly weaker than their opposite numbers in the game Collier describes. The problem in differentiating among types of settlements and patterns of motivation and experience lies in the fact that the variables that may make a substantial difference at this level may not be readily apparent when the *barriadas* or *favelas* are viewed as units interacting with others on a larger stage.

To grasp more fully the dynamics of settlement formation, the nature of migration, and its impact on the social and political life of migrants, we must turn to Cornelius and Perlman. The two books complement one another well. Both explore the social psychology of the urban poor in the context of settlement formation, both deal with major cities and countries, and taken together, they provide an indispensable base for understanding and for future work in this area.

Cornelius is basically concerned with the nature of political learning among the migrant poor, and the extent to which such learning and patterns of action are shaped by the context of the specific communities in which migrants find themselves. The tone is set early in the Introduction where the author points out that the fact that migrants are not particularly radical (contrary to earlier belief) does *not* mean that political learning is not going on. These are *general* processes, and learning about and becoming involved in politics is of course much broader than radicalism alone. Variations in context are particularly important to this process, and Cornelius is sensitive to nuance and variation. Thus, the goal of his work is *not* to see how city life affects a representative sample of the urban poor: "Rather, my goal has been to understand how par-

ticular kinds of urban dwelling environments with different sets of characteristics and historical experiences affect political attitudes and behavior among such people" (pp. 37–38).

The chapters on political involvement, community leadership, and political demand-making (4, 6, and 7, respectively) are particularly noteworthy. Political involvement is defined quite broadly, encompassing many kinds of organizations and behavior relevant to problems and problem-solving. All in all, Cornelius finds only a small proportion to be "marginal" (in cognitive or behavioral terms) to the political process. The majority are aware and involved in some way.

Cornelius' findings confirm generalizations advanced in Goldrich's earlier work on Chile and Peru, to the effect that participation in *any* organization helped stimulate demand-making among the urban poor. Among those studied in Mexico, migrants who participate in local improvement organizations are five times more likely to have engaged in general demand-making than nonparticipants. Organization thus undoubtedly provides a sense of mutual help that aids in the conversion of private troubles to issues of political action. In any case, as Cornelius notes, for most migrants the conceptual leap from individual needs to political issues is difficult at best. Most migrants believe that such needs should be satisfied by personal action and do not form part of a more general class of political problems.

All in all, the political orientation of migrants is keyed to short-term defensive manipulation of the system. Working through its chinks and cracks, they seek specific and highly concrete benefits. Radicalism is rejected, on the whole, not on ideological grounds, but as part of a practical accommodation to the realities of Mexican politics: "not simply out of deference to authority or fear of government retribution, but out of a deeply held conviction that it is more productive to try to manipulate the system to satisfy needs, than to confront it or overthrow it" (p. 233).

Perlman's study of the urban poor in Rio is comparable to Cornelius in scope, care, and importance. She is also self-consciously theoretical; but as noted earlier, her stance is decidedly critical, seeking to unmask the "myth of marginality." Like Cornelius, the book is extremely well-produced, although here the photographs are interspersed throughout the text and come, after a while, to form an integral part of its impact.

The book is organized into three main parts: the setting and the people (chaps. 1–3); the myths of marginality (chaps. 4–6); and the power of an ideology (chaps. 7–8). The discussion of marginality is so central to the purpose of Perlman's work that it is well to begin here, for the author's overall attempts at synthesis come through her concerted attack on marginality theory and her attempt to locate the roots of such theory in power relationships and social structure.

If one's faith in the utility of "marginality" as a focus for analysis had not been shaken by Peattie, it surely must be destroyed by Perlman's multifaceted and extraordinarily thorough onslaught. In a series of chapters, the idea of marginality is examined in all its possible manifestations—psychological, social,

economic, ethnographic, architectural-ecological, political, and so forth. The brunt of Perlman's critique is that marginality theory distorts reality by looking at the poor only from the perspective of dominant classes, values, and institutions. Indeed, the attack is so thorough, and (to this reviewer) so convincing, that one wonders occasionally if we are not seeing a case of intellectual overkill. It is hard to believe that marginality is still the "key social science issue in Latin America" (p. 91). The point, however, may be well-taken in the extent to which theories and models developed and later abandoned by intellectuals tend to live on in policies and programs. In this sense, Perlman points out that implicit notions of marginality that manage, in a nutshell, to blame the poor for their situation, continue to guide official policy. Marginality remains a powerful myth because, "Like the evil queen in the story of *Snow White*, the upper sector of Brazilian society looks into the mirror of social theory, which reassures it of its perfection and beauty, affirming that it is the fault of the marginal population that it does nothing to overcome its marginality" (pp. 247–48).

A central purpose of Perlman's work is thus to break what she describes as the "theoretical logjam" that permits government policy to be carried out at the expense of the favelados (pp. 128–31). While the goal is admirable, one wonders if this does not oversimplify the problem. Will policymakers in Brazil, duly informed of the shortcomings of marginality theory, alter policies accordingly? One doubts it, since in addition to ideologies and myths, policies respond to economic and political interests. These interests, and the political formulae that accompany them are mutually supportive. Hence one suspects that the myth is likely to live on despite its apparent empirical and theoretical shortcomings. But this is really a quibble. The scope of Perlman's review of this literature is vast, her arguments compelling, and her anger surely justified.

The more empirical sections of the book are equally interesting. Chapters 2 and 3 provide, respectively, a discussion of the research sites and a "collective portrait" of the migrant, which are among the best I have ever seen. Her research methodology is also worthy of note. As described in chapter 2, it combined standard political science methods such as surveys, policy analysis, and the collection of documentation and appropriate statistics, with more informal small-scale methods. Thus Perlman and her collaborators went to the depots and stations, watched migrants arrive, and traced their paths in search of shelter, jobs, companionship, and the amenities of urban life. The route of migration was also, in several cases, followed back to the village of origin. This combination of perspectives helps bring the favela to life, and gives the reader a rich appreciation of the texture and variety of this human experience. Indeed, bringing the favelas to light is one of Perlman's major goals:

It is especially important, given this repression and the fact that the favelados cannot defend their own interests even when these are abundantly clear, that the realities of their lives be brought to light. Stereotypes of favela parochialism and passivity are reinforced in the absence of free expression or objective research. Even the most basic facts—such as who the migrants are, where they come from, and why and how they come—are little known, which

allows existing misperceptions and erroneous assumptions to go unchallenged. (pp. 56–57)

The treatment of political activity, particularly in chapter 6 (“Political Marginality: Participation and Radicalism”) and chapter 7 (“Favela Removal: The Eradication of a Life Style”) deserve special attention. Perlman’s discussion of political marginality reveals the virtues of a phenomenological approach, for she points out that the idea of marginality does not do justice to the nuances of political awareness in the favela. Many are quite aware of politics although their levels of explicitly political discussion or action may remain quite low. She argues here for great care in the selection of indicators, seeking measures relevant to the people involved, and not simply of interest to professors or students. Thus, she focuses on issues close to home, such as favela removal, and notes, in a telling point, the weakness of measures such as “efficacy” (often a favorite in such studies). In her view, a favelado who sees himself as efficacious is not more “modern” or more “participant”; rather he is a fool (p. 190).

The discussion of favela removal in chapter 7 is an excellent case study of government policy, its justification, and impact. It is also an object lesson in human tragedy, for the removal was forced, and the consequences disastrous for the inhabitants. In economic terms, they had to move far from their work and come up with regular monthly rent for government-provided housing. The result, in precarious domestic economies, was a rash of defaults and evictions. In social terms, removal destroyed the support structure of the favela with visible consequences in increased crime and mutual distrust. In political terms, the favelados were now quite isolated, and even in terms of physical housing, presumably a major reason for the shift, they were not much better off as the stock of new dwellings was of poor quality and decayed rapidly.

Marginality, then, as a myth and as a reflection of a set of interests survives and continues to orient policy in Brazil and elsewhere, to the detriment of those described as “marginal.” Ironically, as Perlman’s study of favela removal shows, the theory is self-fulfilling. For by assuming that economic, cultural, social, political, and ecological marginality go together, and therefore seeking solutions akin to “favela removal,” the theory and its attendant policies do much to bring this result into being, by destroying what are often vital and long-standing communities.

In this vein, Perlman argues in a final, ironic section that favelados actually “save the system” in economic, social, and political terms. Economically, they take bad jobs, accept low wages, and perforce consume the poor quality goods and services available. Socially, they provide a convenient and indispensable scapegoat to account for crime and social deviance. And finally, in political terms, their lack of radicalism and pervasive personal orientation to politics makes them, in effect, supportive of the system. They are so divided and ineffective, and so much in need of short-term help, that they provide a ready and easily available base of support for politicians and governments.

Taken together, the works of Collier, Cornelius, and Perlman provide an integrated set of perspectives on the meaning of urban “marginality” in Latin America, and on the forms in which it is expressed in policy, politics, and

personal life. Such studies have brought us a long way from the perspectives of the early 1960s, which saw the process of migration and settlement formation as largely undifferentiated developments that in the short term threatened radical explosions of discontent. We now know that such outcomes are rare indeed, and we have a fuller understanding of the broad social and political dynamics of urbanization that make it so.

Of course, politics is not all there is to the urbanization process. That is why combining these works with the varied perspectives of the *LAUR* volumes is so important. But while politics narrowly defined does not capture the full reality of urbanization, if we think of "politics" in a broader sense, as concerned with structures of power and privilege and the intersect of ideologies, institutions, and interests, then politics is clearly an indispensable and ever-present component of the urban process in Latin America today, in terms of the nature of issues and patterns of conflict, the resource base available, and the life experiences of city dwellers, old and new.

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