

Kross, Jessica. *The Evolution of an American Town: Newtown, New York, 1642-1775*. Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1983. Pp. xviii, 335. Tables, maps, index. \$34.95 (U.S.)

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political entrepreneurs, mostly Republicans. Second, the Democrats' urban liberalism has failed to satisfy all disparate elements of the party's constituency; many programs have worsened rather than bettered conditions of poor, central-city residents, especially racial minorities. Third, private-sector decision makers have reacted against tax-heavy Democratic programs by shifting investment away from older cities to the Sunbelt, where a more conservative brand of progrowth politics prevails. Thus the problem facing urban America, as Mollenkopf sees it, is how to overcome these conflicts and reconstruct new coalitions.

Much of the book traces the course of federal urban policy from the origin of the Democratic-inspired progrowth coalition in the New Deal through the Fair Deal administration of Truman, the Great Society programs that emerged during the Kennedy and Johnson years, and the uncertain policies of the Carter administration. Counterbalancing the Democratic urban programs were the conservative responses of the Eisenhower, Nixon, and Reagan administrations, which Mollenkopf analyses in depth. He also devotes a fascinating chapter to the formation and consequences of progrowth coalitions at the local level, using Boston and San Francisco as case studies. He then presents his own version of a very hot issue, the Frostbelt v. the Sunbelt, and draws some surprising conclusions about the future of cities in both regions.

Mollenkopf's analyses are refreshing, measured, and provocative, and they are bound to kindle much controversy. Though he is convincing, a couple of nagging problems pervade the book. First, some historians would take issue with his assertion that Franklin D. Roosevelt "invented" national urban policy (p. 55). Such a conclusion, as well as others throughout the book, impute motives to individuals on the basis of outcomes of a complicated series of events and exigencies. Such reasoning fits Mollenkopf's thesis about political entrepreneurship but needs more direct evidence to be effective. Second, some readers will be disappointed by Mollenkopf's failure to make solid recommendations for overcoming the conflicts resulting from postwar urban policies. His identification of what has happened is strong, but his recommendation for a new consensus is a bit too simplistic and general. Nevertheless, *The Contested City* is the kind of book that deserves consideration by both specialists and general readers.

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Kross, Jessica. *The Evolution of an American Town: Newtown, New York, 1642-1775*. Philadelphia: Temple University

Press, 1983. Pp. xviii, 335. Tables, maps, index. \$34.95 (U.S.).

This monographic study of a small English colonial village near what is now LaGuardia Airport was undertaken with two explicit goals. First, the author aimed to trace the changes in Newtown's political, social, and economic arrangements from its first settlement through to the American Revolution. Second, Kross intended to place these changes in a larger comparative context — the first such attempt, according to the author — in order to combat the tendency of colonial historians to claim uniqueness for their own small parts of the continent. Unfortunately, the author did not entirely succeed, and the book will be of limited use either to students or specialists.

Kross divides the 133 years up to 1775 into four periods. One chapter in each period covers the town's governmental institutions. Another covers social and economic life; the last period, however, requires two chapters to cover these topics. The first period, 1642-1664, Kross sees as characterized by the establishment of a typically English enclave on eastern Long Island, granted considerable liberty by the Dutch. The second period, from the English conquest up to 1692, saw the town's face-to-face communal structures of authority and discipline begin to erode, partly under pressure from the provincial and imperial governments and partly because of the influence of the emerging Atlantic economic net. In the third period, up to 1723, Newtown ran out of land to distribute, and its agriculture and land market settled down to an equilibrium. Residents also struck a balance between their own localistic interests and the requirements of the province, and between their individual interests and that of the community. This balance tipped in the town after 1724 as residents increasingly appeared willing to act as individuals distinct from the town, with ties to groups outside; Newtown was obliged to act as part of a larger unit in response to increasing provincial and imperial demands on its citizens and their resources. Change in all areas of life moved toward more complexity, greater specialization, and widening choice.

Kross's first aim, to delineate the process of change in the town's living arrangements, is carried out reasonably well considering that the sources used, along with Newtown's small size, do not seem to have allowed much room for aggregation. The book is best in dealing with the context within which the town's political institutions developed. It deals less successfully with factors behind social and economic changes, in a large part because small pieces of evidence had to be explicated by reference to the work on New England with which Kross's results were to be compared. The overall direction of change which Kross found does accord with other studies.

Kross's second aim is approached in detail using explicit comparisons throughout the book with several New England

towns, particularly Dedham, Andover, Rowley, Hingham, Northampton and Ipswich. But a convincing argument never coalesces around these comparisons. The starting point — a shared institutional experience across what appear to be widely different contexts — is promising, though flawed; it is not clear that Newtowners' ideas of town life differed significantly from those of New Englanders. Most of the town's settlers seem to have migrated from Connecticut, and it might be argued that residents developed a sense of community in the town's early years because the Dutch treated Newtown as a specially privileged foreign enclave.

More important, the explanatory device cannot bear the burden placed upon it. Kross presumes because of these different contexts, that there was a great difference in the purposes of and approaches toward town life in Newtown and New England. She attempts to explain the similar course of institutional development in both places by residents' adherence to a common English value system built around "liberty, the sanctity of private property, the legitimacy of profit, family, and harmony" (p. xv). This belief systems seems to have remained a constant throughout the period the author discusses. Kross's references to it, however, appear sporadically and are insufficiently supported and elaborated upon to achieve sustained force.

Overall, the book suffers from a lack of rigor in maintaining the necessary distinctions among the institutional course of town life in Newtown and New England, ideas about town life in each place, and presumably-shared general ideas about life in society and polity. Constant reference to the New England literature at all three levels confuses the reader, and the invocation of early modern English ideology is poorly integrated and supported. Therefore, while Kross's conclusions regarding Newtown's institutional patterns are unexceptionable, her comparison of Newtown with New England towns is unfortunately not as rewarding as it might be.

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Gabaccia, Donna. *From Sicily to Elizabeth Street: Housing and Social Change Among Italian Immigrants, 1880-1930*. Albany: State University of New York, 1984. Pp. xxi, 167. Tables, index. \$34.50.

No previous histories have dealt with the precise management of living space in the lives of immigrants. This former doctoral dissertation focuses upon how environment, block by block, and house by house, affected a small group of

Sicilians who settled in a particular New York City neighbourhood. Gabaccia deals as well with the changes in social attitudes that occurred after they left their homeland. She has also scrupulously examined living arrangements in the small rural villages which they abandoned in favour of life in crowded tenements. In presenting a mass of statistical demographic data, she has attempted to humanize the material within a systematic sociological framework, making good use of manuscript census and municipal records.

Gabaccia compares the agrotown of Sambuca in western Sicily to the Sicilian neighbourhood along Elizabeth Street on New York's Lower East Side. She regrets the adjustments which every immigrant group, not merely Sicilians, had to make in a harsh new tenement environment. She sees the resultant experience as *mezzo amare e mezzo dolce*, half bitter, half sweet. On this score she seems to have ignored the findings of a book whose theme this is: *The Italian Americans: Troubled Roots* (1981).

Finding the right niche in America included confronting poverty, hunger for success, feelings of exclusion, and all those internal hatreds directed against one's foreignness. These disabilities were reflected in clashes within the immigrant family that appear and reappear in the writings of Italo-American novelists.

Former peasants who suffered lost feelings of anomie scarcely realized that part of their unease also lay in the provincial life from which they had only recently emerged. Deprivations suffered in Italy's *Mezzogiorno* had masked insecurities that came alive in new forms within America's so-called melting pot.

We need more volumes which speak with new authority and independence as compared with the hackneyed clichés of the old immigration history perpetuated by Oscar Handlin's outmoded volume *The Uprooted*. This is one of them.

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Hirsch, Arnold R. *Making the Second Ghetto: Race and Housing in Chicago, 1940-1960*. Cambridge, England: Cambridge University Press, 1983. Pp. xv, 362. Maps, illustrations, tables, notes, index. \$24.95.

Most of the significant histories of Black urban communities begin in the 1890s and conclude at the onset of the Great Depression. In the study of the "Black ghetto," as in many other areas of Afro-American history, the immediate post-World War II period has remained, in Richard Dal-