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Book Review: *Dimensions in Urban History: Historical and Social Science Perspectives on Middle-Size American Cities* by J. Rogers Hollingsworth and Ellen Jane Hollingsworth

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tions. Farming became highly productive, assuring the urban population a plentiful supply of cheap food.

These changes took place in part because of the efforts of urban reformers interested in creating a better organized and more efficient agriculture. The reformers made up what has long been called the Country Life Movement. Some of them were appointed to the Country Life Commission, the report of which became a guidebook for reform. Danbom refers to the reformers as "Country Lifers."

The general reforms proposed by the Country Lifers were opposed by many farmers who were prosperous, contented, and distrustful of urban motives. Even when the reforms led to more readily available medical services, improved transportation facilities, education beyond that available in one-room schools, and agricultural technologies that reduced the back-breaking toil usually associated with farming, farmers were reluctant to change their traditional methods and their lifestyles. The forces of change, however, were such that "the relatively self-sufficient and independent yeoman of 1900 had by 1930 become a businessman striving for efficiency, dependent upon suppliers and consumers to fill his needs and wants and buy the surplus he had to sell to survive."

The villains were the Country Lifers and the federal bureaucrats. They were devoted to reform for the sake of reform, but, even more, they were devoted to reform that would support the emergent industrial economy with an abundant supply of cheap food. Their efforts generally failed until World War I brought economic, technological, and social shifts that enabled the Country Lifers and the bureaucrats finally to industrialize American agriculture.

This brief and perhaps inadequate summary of Danbom's study is no substitute for reading the volume. It is well written and closely reasoned. It seems to me, however, that the volume is based upon two premises that must be accepted as valid if one is to accept the validity of the conclusions. First, one must believe that farmers as a whole in 1900 were prosperous and contented. It is easier to believe that they were distrustful of the motives of urban reformers. Second, one must believe that the major goal of most of the Country Lifers was to assure a cheap supply of food for the cities in order to encourage continued industrialization. I find this difficult with respect to most of the members of the Country Life Commission. Even given these problems, the book is valuable in encouraging historians to reexamine their beliefs regarding the Commission and the Country Life Movement as a whole.

The volume is a social rather than an economic history. Nevertheless, the author's revisionist interpretations of the causes and results of increased productivity are worthy of the close attention of economic historians. His primary thesis that the changes had an adverse effect upon the quality of life for farmers is difficult to measure in quantitative terms and is, indeed, difficult or impossible for at least some of us to accept. The problem of the impact of economic change on social structure, however, is one that a few economic historians are beginning to consider and one that is worthy of much broader study than it has so far received.

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Dimensions in Urban History: Historical and Social Science Perspectives on Middle-Size American Cities. By J. Rogers Hollingsworth and Ellen Jane Hollingsworth. Madison: The University of Wisconsin Press, 1979. Pp. viii, 184. \$19.50.

The urbanization-city development process in American history has been the focus of numerous scholarly investigations. Economic historians in particular, bringing the perspective and methods of economics to bear, have made significant contributions to this burgeoning literature. In *Dimensions in Urban History* the Hollingsworths propose a broader, more ambitious undertaking: the application of the wide panoply of social sci-

ence concepts and theory to understand better the historical process of urban development. As such this book lays claim to a wide potential readership.

The text is divided into a brief introduction and four chapters. The introduction and first chapter form the core of the authors' treatise. In these 56 pages the authors first restrict their analysis to "middle-sized" cities containing between 10,000 and 25,000 inhabitants in 1900 and not exceeding 250,000 during the entire period since 1870. Second, and more importantly, utilizing concepts from various social sciences they attempt to identify certain "ideal types" that both differentiate middle-sized cities at a point in time and explain their development over time. The goal in developing their typologies, as in all social science theorizing, is to simplify or abstract from reality in order better to explain reality. The reality they seek to explain is "... the way in which social and economic structure become intertwined with political structures, political culture, and situational factors, for it is the variation in the interaction of structural, cultural, and situational factors which is responsible for the diverse urban configurations which exist" (pp. 12-13).

As the above quote suggests, the typology developed rests on the structural, cultural, environmental, and situational characteristics of an urban area. These characteristics in turn dictate the degree of vertical differentials (for example, the socioeconomic stratification system), horizontal differentials (for example, diversity in structure), and community autonomy. These three dimensions are used to develop the ideal types: (1) autocratic, (2) oligarchic, and (3) polyarchic communities. At the risk of oversimplifying what is a relatively rich typology, the basic tendency is for vertical differentials and community autonomy to decrease as one moves from the first to third type community, while horizontal differentiation increases.

Chapter 1 presents an analysis of development, broadly defined, on urban type. Although the basic tendency is for cities to move from autocratic through oligarchic to polyarchic forms, such progression is neither automatic nor mechanistic. The chapter also investigates the relationships between community type, political culture (traditional versus legal-rational), and public policy (caretaker services, amenity provision, maintenance of community morality and order, and promotion of economic growth).

The final three chapters elaborate the conceptual framework advanced in the initial chapter. In chapter 2, three Wisconsin cities, Eau Claire, Janesville, and Green Bay, are analyzed over the 1870-1900 period. For each city a common approach is used. First, the structural characteristics (economic, social, and political) are investigated. Emphasis on horizontal and vertical differentiation is combined with environmental and situational characteristics to evaluate the typology (all oligarchic) and unique aspects of each community. Second, the political culture of each city is explored. Finally, the preceding analysis is combined to explain the content of municipal public policy. For all three community structures, processes and policies both exhibited the characteristics and changed in directions consistent with the model advanced in the preceding chapter.

Chapter 3 investigates, for 278 middle-sized cities in 1900, the impact of various aspects of voting behavior and community socioeconomic characteristics on late-nineteenth-century public policy. Although the authors do not suggest that these two community dimensions have no impact, they argue strongly in favor of a more eclectic approach, such as that outlined in chapter 1, in understanding the nuances of policy formulation.

In the final chapter the authors develop a classification scheme based on their conceptual apparatus for middle-sized cities during the period of early industrialization (1870-1900). Unfortunately, data limitations force exclusion of certain characteristics such as political culture and political and economic autonomy, thereby restricting the analysis to two dimensions: socioeconomic structure and governmental activity. For each dimension several indicators are chosen, scored, and averaged, and then each city is ranked as being high, medium, or low. The result is a 3×3 matrix classifying 278 observations. For comparative purposes each community is also assigned one of seven economic-base identifications (for example, manufacturing, diversified, commercial). Although a significant por-

tion (46 percent) of the entries fall along the diagonal cells (for example, low socioeconomic status/low government activity), each cell contains at least fifteen observations. Certain common and intriguing patterns do emerge, but equally notable is the mixture of economic-base "types" in each cell as well as the lack of correlation between region and matrix location (for example, New England cities appear in all nine cells).

Any book such as *Dimensions in Urban History* that adopts such a theoretic yet catholic approach to urban dimensions and development is bound to have shortcomings. The crucial question, however, remains: is the book's claim to a wide readership justified? To this question the answer must be affirmative. It is a well written, broad ranging, and thought provoking treatise. Ultimately I must concur with the authors' assessment of their own efforts: "[w]hile each reader may have some disagreement with this type of . . . analysis, we hope he will also find his imagination stimulated by our efforts" (p. 173).

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Fertility and Scarcity in America. By Peter H. Lindert. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1978. Pp. xi, 395.

The two chief concerns of this book are the determinants of American childbearing since 1900 and the effect of fertility on the distribution of income and wealth. A brief review cannot do full justice to such an ambitious study, but let me try at least to suggest its scope and some of the contributions.

The most important single contribution is the analysis of cost of children. Here one will find not only an excellent presentation of contemporary theory on child costs, but—what is more important and almost totally lacking in the literature—an impressive attempt to estimate trends and differences in child costs by rural-urban residence, socioeconomic status, and size of family. In itself this would have been enough to justify the volume, but it is only the beginning.

Another important contribution is the analysis of intergenerational influences on fertility determination. Lindert theorizes that when a couple is contemplating childbearing its judgment of the economic resources available depends, not only on prospective market conditions, but on previous inputs such as health and education into the husband and wife during the couple's pre-adult years. More importantly, the previous generation also influences a young couple's current behavior through transmitted tastes, especially tastes for a material lifestyle. This view—commonplace enough in sociology—is not only generally absent from the economics literature but is vigorously resisted by some economists. Lindert's discussion of the mechanisms of taste formation is one of the best available in the economics of fertility literature, and his econometric model of fertility behavior is distinctive in incorporating measures of both tastes and costs.

With regard to the empirical explanation of fertility, Lindert finds that increasing child costs are chiefly responsible for the declining secular trend since 1900. Intergenerational influences win out in the explanation of fertility swings and differentials, however. In my opinion, his results constitute an important advance in the state of empirical knowledge about costs and intergenerational influences, although important issues remain unresolved. For example, there is little or no discussion of the effect of immigration on fertility, of the influence on childbearing of the striking twentieth century changes in infant and child mortality, or of the extent to which historical fertility was deliberately controlled in the population.

In turning to the subject of inequality, Lindert takes up first the question of how family size may influence parental inputs into children—whether the children of larger families suffer a competitive disadvantage because of fewer inputs per child—and concludes from an analysis of microevidence that this is indeed so. He also finds that the post-World War II baby boom adversely affected society's expenditures on education per child.

In the concluding chapter Lindert seeks to demonstrate how demographic factors have