The title is to die for. Authors and editors lie awake at night dreaming up a title as wonderful as Planning Ideas That Matter. But, as a reader (who, by the way, recommends this book to planners everywhere), I question whether these ideas are the ones that matter most to me. Personally, of the four big ideas presented here, one matters most. The other three certainly matter to me, but not the most.

The four planning ideas that matter, according to editors Bishwapriya Sanyal, Lawrence J. Vale, and Christina D. Rosan, are livability, territoriality, governance, and reflective practice. The book grew out of weekly symposia commemorating the seventy-fifth anniversary of city planning at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT). This is no razzle-dazzle, self-congratulatory, promotional anniversary book. Rather, the authors provide a deep dig into these four important ideas. The conversations about these ideas include several notable non-MIT voices (Timothy Beatley, June Manning Thomas, and Robert D. Yaro). This does much both to broaden the scope beyond Cambridge, Massachusetts, and to reinforce just how influential and significant their largely, but not exclusively, MIT-generated ideas have proven to be.

The editors organize thoughtful, insightful essays around the four themes, with Gary Hack, Robert Fishman, and Beatley taking on livability; Michael B. Teitz, Yaro, Neil Brenner, and David Wachsmuth territoriality; Mohammed A. Qadeer, Lynn B. Sagalyn, Merilee Grindle, and Peter M. Ward governance; and Raphaël Fischler, Patsy Healey, and Thomas professional reflections. Two ideas are mostly closely linked with MIT: livability from Kevin Lynch and reflective practice from Donald Schon. John Friedmann who, with Clyde Weaver, introduced the notion of territoriality, taught at MIT in the early 1960s. Ideas about governance are prominent in all academic planning programs, including MIT. The editors did not seek consensus, but rather different points of view and perspectives. They are successful in achieving this goal.

While grounded in North American (mostly U.S.) planning, the authors offer delightful, broader, international perspectives. For instance, in his discussion about the role of greenbelts in shaping urban form, which is replete with Canadian examples, Hack notes that one of the earliest greenbelts was “the seventh-century decision by Mohammed to prohibit the cutting of trees in a twelve-mile-wide band around Medina” (p. 40).

The New Urbanist movement has also advocated links between urban form and livability. In his engaging chapter, Fishman aptly points out that there is no single New Urbanism. The West Coasters (such as Peter Calthorpe and Douglas Kelbaugh) favor planning, participation, and ecology. The Easterners, most visibly André Duany, are well known for their strident criticism of planners and environmentalists as well as their penchant for formal, neotraditional architectural design. Fishman, who calls New Urbanism “an unexpected synthesis of Jane Jacobs and Ebenezer Howard” (p. 65), uses Calthorpe’s transit-oriented development to support this assertion.

Fishman and several of the other contributors provide succinct, yet comprehensive, reviews of ideas. These retrospectives will be foundational sources for years to come, especially Beatley’s on the “arc and trajectory” of sustainability, Teitz’s on regional development planning, Yaro’s on metropolitanism and the Regional Plan Association of New York, Qadeer’s on urban development.
in the First and Third Worlds, Ward on self-help housing ideas in the Americas, and Thomas on the influence of the Civil Rights era on responsible practice.

The planning idea that matters most to me is reflective practice. As a product of the University of Cincinnati’s co-op program, the concept that we “learn from experience” was deeply ingrained before Donald Schön defined it in the 1980s. As Fischler explains, reflective practice “is a form of professional activity in which the practitioner assesses her own experience critically and submits it to the scrutiny of others” (pp. 313–314). Although Schön had yet to define reflective practice when I studied planning at the University of Cincinnati in the early to mid-1970s, his “theory in practice” concept (with Chris Argyris) was strongly present in a program devoted to organizational behavior and organizational learning.

Reflective practice provided an identity to the approach to planning undertaken by the professors I admired most at the University of Pennsylvania (Ann Strong, John Keene, and Ian McHarg). In addition, Schön’s approach embodied the pragmatic philosophy of Penn’s founder, Benjamin Franklin. For me, reflective practice made more sense for what I was doing as an academic planner than other social science methods consuming the discipline at the time. As an academic, I had the freedom to undertake the projects of my choosing. I also had the responsibility to use that experience to advance planning through what Healey terms “critical pragmatism.”

However, Fischler warns that although “planning academics cite Schön’s writings . . . quite frequently, most pay lip service to his ideas” (p. 322). Fischler’s chapter certainly prompted me to reflect and hope that I pay more than lip service to Schön. In any case, Fischler provides a wonderful overview, analysis, and update to Schön’s masterpiece as well as the works that predated and followed it.

For me, the planning ideas that always mattered most are those that value, to borrow from Fischler, “reflection-on-action” over “reflection-in-action.” In that regard, the ideas that matter most are Paul Davidoff’s advocacy planning, Herbert Gans’s educator as activist, and McHarg’s design with nature. All three emphasize action (for those who believe McHarg was only about maps, see his marvelous “planner as catalyst” essay). Davidoff is mentioned frequently by the authors in Planning Ideas That Matter, Gans appears twice (in Ward and Thomas), but McHarg is curiously absent, even though the possible role of ecology is noted by several authors (explicitly by Beatley and Teitz, indirectly by Hack, Fishman, and Yaro).

Even though I longed for more Davidoff, Gans, and McHarg, there is much to recommend in Planning Ideas That Matter. While I wish the editors would have reduced the overused term “paradigm,” this is a well written and carefully edited book. The editors bring together important planning ideas that really do matter, in an interesting, thoughtful book that should be read by students, scholars, and practitioners.

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Andrew Deener, Venice: A Contested Bohemia in Los Angeles (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2003).

Tobacco heir Abbot Kinney originally envisioned the Los Angeles beach community of Venice as a high-culture resort for the creative and intellectual elite. Built in 1905 to resemble the Italian city, complete with canals, Venice soon became a pleasure ground for the masses, the “Coney Island of the Pacific.” Venice went into decline during Prohibition and the Great Depression and served as a seedy backdrop for film noir after the war. Venice also attracted successive waves of bohemian residents as well as African Americans, immigrants, and the homeless in the postwar period. Slowly rediscovered by the wealthy, Venice found itself redefined as “the slum by the sea” and the coveted object of urban renewal by the 1960s.
Deener’s study of this contested bohemia begins with a walking tour through five districts: Venice Boardwalk, with its raucous Free Speech Zone; Rose Avenue, where many of Los Angeles’s homeless live; Oakwood, ethnically mixed but known as a black neighborhood; Abbot Kinney Boulevard, an exclusive yet bohemian shopping district; and the Venice Canals, an exclusive residential district. The tour highlights visual cues and distinctive public cultures that guide urban development in each area, promoting either diversity or exclusivity. In diverse neighborhoods, newcomers bring competing conceptions of the uses of shared spaces that remain salient, while in exclusive neighborhoods newcomers complement an existing emphasis on property and order that, when linked to legislative and police power, crowds out competing interests.

Oakwood’s largest ethnic group (45%) in the 1970s, African Americans shaped the neighborhood through a network of churches, nonprofits, and political organizations. After the Watts riot (1965), they secured private and public resources to construct fourteen subsidized housing projects in Venice. Even as the black percentage of Oakwood’s population declined to 16% by 2000, African Americans dominated a public culture of street-level socializing and politicking. On the other hand, white gentrifiers, attracted by low housing prices in the 1970s, favored a culture of privacy. Conflict centered on Oakwood’s drug trade, as blacks attempted to deal with problematic individuals while whites looked to city officials to deal with a systemic “black” problem involving the uses of Oakwood Park and the housing projects. Latinos, the largest ethnic group (48%) in 2000, but less visible in part for fear of official harassment, complemented neither side and so conflict and diversity persisted.

Similarly, along Rose Avenue diversity and conflict persisted between the housed and the homeless despite legislative and policing strategies, favored by the housed, that stigmatized and harassed the homeless. The homeless maintained their place by linking themselves to the bohemian past and through support from social service agencies and the egalitarian-minded California Coastal Commission’s commitment to public access to the beach. The Venice Boardwalk remained the most contested and diverse area, where rent-paying retailers resented the use of the free speech area by itinerant entrepreneurs even as they banked on the crowds they attracted.

Along the two remaining Venice Canals, however, visual cues and public culture encouraged exclusivity. In the 1970s and 1980s, clean-up efforts and sidewalk repairs attracted upscale developers. As conflict escalated between developers and the counter-cultural residents who wanted to maintain cheap rents, middle-class newcomers moved into the area. While putting a more humane face on development by their willingness to accept and even appreciate unconventional neighbors, the newcomers nevertheless moved the public culture of the area toward an emphasis on order and property. Complementing the agenda of the developers, the newcomers helped define the older counter-cultural residents as out of place. Similarly, along Abbot Kinney Boulevard a fashionable bohemia replaced the grittier, diverse shopping street of thirty years earlier. An exclusive clientele enjoyed ethically produced and “non-corporate” food, drink, and craft items, while visual cues and a public culture of hip cafes, high-end shops, and multi-million-dollar artists’ lofts squeezed out the less affluent.

Deener’s study would work well in a variety of urban-oriented classes. If one delves into his footnotes, he also provides a useful perspective on competing schools of urban studies. Following the early twentieth century Chicago school urban sociologist Robert Park’s admonition, Deener spent several years immersed in Venice, watching and talking. He also adopted the Chicago school’s ecological approach, paying close attention to relationships in urban places undergoing constant change. But he also explored the internal dynamics of neighborhoods, rather than assuming that, when an invasion of newcomers reached a critical mass, succession automatically followed. And he refused to treat race and ethnicity as static, unchanging determinants of neighborhood succession, recognizing them as contested terms that are part and parcel of neighborhood change.

Deener also employs and amends the postmodern Los Angeles school of urban studies. Acknowledging the role of the global forces of immigration, homelessness, and gentrification in Venice, he nevertheless challenges the view that all urban places are mere variations on a theme park, shaped by outside forces with no connection to the locality. While acknowledging that urban troubles transcend local and short-term solutions, Deener insists that locality, collective action, and even history remain important factors in how neighborhoods change. Even in a community that often seems like a theme
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Although not about urban sustainability, Deener’s study addresses a related central issue: how do we make cities hospitable to upper-income groups while maintaining the socioeconomic diversity that is part of the city’s attraction and essential to our aspirations for justice? Even as gentrifiers value diversity, they support aesthetic standards, political organizations, and attitudes to public space that discourage diversity. Gentrifiers have legitimate concerns for quality of life and personal safety. Non-corporate entrepreneurs and environmentally conscious consumers are not the sources of economic inequality; however, like gentrifiers they often unintentionally exacerbate it. Meanwhile public officials, in an era of declining budgets, embrace short-term fixes that reinforce the idea that urban inequalities can be remedied at the local level. Deener does not tell us how to tackle the larger sources of inequality. But his account of local struggles for diversity and decency, their failures as well as their successes, should turn us back to that task.

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Richard E. Ocejo (Ed.), *Ethnography and the City: Readings on Doing Urban Fieldwork* (New York: Routledge, 2013).

There are a great many books and readers on the topic of urban ethnography. Richard Ocejo, a sociologist on the faculty of John Jay College of Criminal Justice (CUNY), has produced a new edited volume that competes well in this crowded field. It offers a judicious selection of short pieces that illuminate the workings, limitations, and virtues of ethnographic research. It is more about why to do ethnography than how, although practical and ethical challenges of field work are addressed. The geographic and demographic focus is somewhat narrow. All but one of the 20 entries are situated in the United States, most in Chicago and none in cities of the South or West. The groups in these studies are mostly lower income ethnic minorities. Nonetheless, or perhaps as a consequence, there is continuity and cohesion among these entries.

Ocejo has written extended, and very intelligent, introductions that nicely frame the whole collection and each of the subsections. He pays due homage to the early Chicago School ethnographers, who were his academic ancestors. The University of Chicago produced a disproportionate share of the contemporary authors represented here, with a palpable influence of William Julius Wilson. Only a few anthropologists are represented (Carol Stack, Eliot Liebow, Philippe Bourgois) and the contributions of their ancestors are given slight mention. This is a reader that would be an appropriate supplement for upper-level undergraduate courses in urban sociology, urban anthropology, criminology, and qualitative research methods. It is also suitable for use in graduate courses on the same topics.

The volume is divided into two main parts, “Data Collection Strategies” and “Relationships with Participants.” These in turn are divided into subsections. The first among the data collection strategies is labeled “Being There, Up Close.” Included are five selections beginning with Herbert Gans’s musing on the failure of 1950s West Enders to defend their Boston neighborhood from urban renewal, Philippe Bourgois’s painful account of 1990s life in a New York crack neighborhood, and Mary Patillo’s study of recent black-on-black gentrification in Chicago.

“Being on the Job,” the next section, includes a selection by Mitch Duneier about sidewalk vendors in New York during Giuliani’s broken windows campaign, Peter Moskos’s “Cop in the Hood” about Baltimore policing, and others about saving souls and finding identity in blues clubs. Lucia Trimbur’s account of youth role models in an urban boxing gym offers stunning insight. A very interesting piece by C. Bender relates the messages of urban tour guides as storytellers.
The other half (Part II, “Relationships with Participants”) is divided into two subsections. The first, “Crossing Boundaries,” explores the difficult task of gaining trust and a comfortable role in the field. Six selections portray early and contemporary solutions. Pioneering urban participant observation includes how William F. Whyte befriended Doc and his boys, Eliot Liebow found a place on Tally’s Corner, and Carol Stack gained the trust of Ruby and her friends and kin in the “Flats.” Three more current selections by Venkatesh, Cavan, and Auyero describe gang entry, neighborhood bar hanging, and the circulatory lives of Puerto Rican immigrants.

The final section in this part is called “Doing the Right Thing.” Three selections reflect ethical quandaries that ethnographers sometimes confront, illustrated in work that seems to go over the line—the classic “Tearoom Trade” study that spied on gay men in public bathrooms in the 1970s, an outlaw graffiti artist from the early 90s, and witness to contemporary violent drug crimes involving exploitation of women. Although extreme examples, these selections highlight the allure that “deviant subcultures” have held for Chicago School ethnographers over the past century, analogous to anthropological fascination with the “exotic.” The capacity to gain intimate and fully rounded understanding of the lives of stigmatized and exotic people, to humanize and contextualize their challenges and achievements, to peel back artifice and reimagine hierarchies, constitute the essence of what ethnography is good for.

These final entries, and most of the rest of the selections in this volume, are likely to provoke considerable thought and discussion.

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Book Review Editor’s Note: Because of the importance of Ed Goetz’s book, New Deal Ruins, I have sought out and JUA is publishing two somewhat contrasting reviews. Where it is appropriate and feasible in the future, JUA will publish multiple reviews of the same book. I welcome your comments.

Edward G. Goetz, New Deal Ruins: Race, Economic Justice, and Public Housing Policy (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2013).

Edward Goetz understands the American public housing program and related urban issues perhaps better than anyone else alive. Therefore, as a follow-up to his excellent Clearing the Way: Deconcentrating the Poor in Urban America, the appearance of this book is most welcome. As Goetz points out at the outset (p. ix), New Deal Ruins focuses on “only one element of deconcentration policy, the dismantling of old public housing communities and their frequent . . . replacement by mixed-income developments” (done mostly over the past two decades via the HOPE VI program). As a result, his new book has “in many ways a more narrowly constructed focus.” Yet, as he also astutely recognizes, the dismantling of public housing “has very broad implications” as this “radical remaking of public housing” represents “an important watershed moment in American domestic policy;” namely, “the repudiation of a New Deal policy orientation.” Framed in this way—as a requiem for twentieth-century America’s tentative embrace of the positive state—New Deal Ruins is indeed quite expansive in both its scope and its wider implications.

In this regard, Goetz positions his story as part of the broader rise of neoliberal ideology and policy practice, which “privileges market initiatives and reduces the reach of state intervention” (p. ix). In fact, for Goetz, the dismantling of public housing stands as an effort to end “the welfare
state approach to housing assistance” in favor of market-oriented, less interventionist policy efforts (p. 5). He is struck—even astonished—to report that over “a quarter million units have been demolished or sold off” (p. 2), something that for him clearly signals the near-total triumph of neoliberalism.

Goetz begins by providing concise histories of both public housing itself (from its Progressive Era roots through its genesis in the New Deal and subsequent struggles), as well as the process of its dismantling (especially from the early 1990s onward). To better understand this dismantling, he explores the role of gentrification pressures and race in determining where public housing transformation was most aggressive. He usefully adds case studies of Chicago, Atlanta, and New Orleans—three cities at the forefront of this transformation—to give the analysis political and historical grounding.

For Goetz, “the current rounds of demolition and the HOPE VI program in particular has been an updated version of Negro Removal” (p. 121), the infamous name given to the urban renewal program of the 1950s and 1960s. Yet, he also tells us that whether or not the disproportionate displacement of African Americans under HOPE VI was indeed “malicious” (p. 122), as many claim, is an open question. The crucial issue for Goetz is whether or not these former public housing residents actually benefited (by escaping dangerous neighborhoods and moving to areas with greater opportunities, for example). It turns out, however, that they largely did not, as he painstakingly reports. In fact, in some places “residents are as a whole arguably worse off” (p. 150). As for the neighborhoods where public housing once stood, he finds that, while some have clearly gentrified, others have not.

So, in light this highly critical analysis, what does Goetz believe should be done? On this front, he bemoans the “false choices” often posed by “advocates of displacement, demolition, and dispersal,” who commonly “confuse criticism of demolition with defense of the status quo in public housing circa 1995” (p. 184). Our choice was (and still is) not between these 3Ds and that status quo. Rather, there is another alternative—neglected now for two decades—focusing on “rehabilitation and replacement.” Goetz powerfully points out that, seemingly, “off the table altogether” is any possibility of a very different sort of transformation, one providing public housing with “excellent property management, good schools nearby, high quality public services, engaged and informed public-sector supervision of housing authorities, and private-sector investment providing jobs and retail opportunities for residents.” This other world is indeed possible, he argues, as “there is very little inherent in the public housing model that precludes these outcomes.” Past failures were not inevitable but rather caused by how “public and private institutions” responded to public housing (p. 185). Conceivably, then, a different set of responses could engender a different (and better) range of outcomes.

Regrettably, Goetz only hints at what these responses might be, something that is perhaps the subject for a future book. Instead, he offers a more limited set of “reasonable policy options” that “could and should be initiated immediately.” This “new direction for public housing policy” would be designed to “put resident concerns at the forefront” by protecting remaining public housing from demolition, minimizing forced displacement, and even expanding the stock of public housing through new construction. Most interestingly, Goetz advocates a massive expansion of voluntary mobility programs like Moving to Opportunity (MTO), so that those wishing to flee can do so, something that would in turn “make room for the thousands of others who clog the waiting lists for public housing in city after city” (p. 189).

Considered in total, Goetz has accomplished much in _New Deal Ruins_. And he has done so in a manner accessible to a wide audience, including undergraduates. Given that the book engages a number of important topics beyond housing policy—including issues of race, the history of federal urban policy, and the dynamics of central city development (especially gentrification)—it can serve as a good general introduction to the study of American cities.

Yet, despite the book’s many strengths, it leaves some major questions unsettled. Most notably, while Goetz admirably defends the public housing program against the neoliberal onslaught, one wonders whether he has posed his own false choice: Are our only alternatives the market fundamentalism of neoliberalism or the centralized statism of New Deal liberalism? What about a third way, rooted in a critique of both the market and the state, based on decentralization, community control, and collective ownership? (See, for example, James DeFilippis’s excellent book, _Unmaking Goliath_, for a discussion of limited equity coops, community land trusts, and mutual housing associations). If
the only option is the displacement, demolition, and dispersal of neoliberal urban policy, then Goetz’s spirited, even passionate, apologia of public housing does us a great service. If, however, there are superior institutional and policy designs waiting to be born (and nurtured to scale), then perhaps it is better to let the old die off without lament, and instead refocus our intellectual and practical energies on developing more promising alternatives.

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Edward G. Goetz, New Deal Ruins: Race, Economic Justice, and Public Housing Policy (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2013).

When the City of St. Louis demolished Pruitt Igoe in 1972, it sounded the death knell for public housing. In the public eye, the high-density, modernist towers no longer fulfilled the affordable housing needs exposed by “housers” during the 1930s; they were dense islands of crime and poverty, as epitomized by the popular press, entertainment media, and political rhetoric. In New Deal Ruins: Race, Economic Justice, and Public Housing Policy, Edward Goetz gets to the heart of the powerful transformation of public housing, exposing how troubled high-rise projects, emblematic of the program, have been used to dismantle the national supply. Although Goetz frames his book narrowly, limiting his focus to the deconcentration and reconceptualization of public housing through HOPE VI, his work serves as a platform for addressing housing policy issues more broadly.

The central thesis of New Deal Ruins is that public housing has been shaped by a “discourse of disaster,” wielded in such a way as to undermine the program itself. Despite a number of acceptable, if not outright successful, projects, those judging public housing have placed “an exaggerated focus on the problems of public housing, a somewhat myopic focus on the worst cases without an appreciation for the fact that . . . [the worst cases] were not universal, and in fact did not characterize the majority of public housing” (p. 47).

In the first chapter, Goetz describes public housing as mired by controversy from the outset. He traces the arguments put forth by both proponents and opponents, showing how the more powerful opposition diminished the program’s potential from the start. These initial compromises sparked a chain of events that would later reinforce the public housing failure rhetoric.

Beginning with President Nixon’s 1973 moratorium on new federal projects, Goetz dissects the physical and intellectual dismantling of public housing in Chapter 2. As he makes evident, there was no single problem or policy that led to the program’s undoing. Instead, a confluence of factors—neoliberal politics, economic revitalization in cities, and programmatic challenges for public housing authorities—came together to disassemble public housing bit by bit. With highly visible failures held up as representatives of a fundamentally flawed program, it was possible for policy makers to attack not just the worst offenders, but public housing at large.

As Goetz tells it, the physical dismantling of public housing began slowly with the “thinning” of a project’s uninhabitable units. However, it picked up momentum as public housing authorities adopted “de facto demolition” policies, withholding maintenance and increasing vacancies to induce property disinvestment. By the time the National Commission on Severely Stressed Public Housing issued its 1992 report, there was already a strong bias towards demolition. Congress largely rejected the report’s recommendations for rehabilitation and resident support services in favor of a “clean slate” approach. Reminiscent of urban renewal and slum clearance, HOPE VI prioritized physical changes and demolition over management and social support solutions; it also substantially reduced the number of public housing units through a mixed-income redevelopment preference.

The remaining chapters of New Deal Ruins move past a retelling of historical influences and policy intentions to offer insight into the implementation of HOPE VI. In contrast to HOPE VI policy
evaluation literature, Goetz’s book contributes a systematic and varied examination of the policy’s effects on the national and local public housing stock (Chapters 3 and 4), public housing residents (Chapter 5), and revitalized communities (Chapter 6).

In Chapter 3, Goetz uses case studies to contextualize the transformation of public housing. Through the experiences of Chicago, New Orleans, and Atlanta, he illustrates how very different public housing sites and diverse political and economic circumstances interacted to produce similar outcomes—namely demolition in the name of “revitalized” HOPE VI projects.

Subsequently, Goetz does a convincing job using both quantitative and qualitative analyses to uncover the consequences of HOPE VI for public housing projects and residents. In Chapter 4, he illustrates how African Americans have borne the brunt of demolition and redevelopment. Through a close evaluation, Goetz maintains that HOPE VI has become a new form of “negro removal,” not just in highly troubled projects or cities with significant minority public housing populations, but across the board and at a disproportionate rate. Chapter 5 incorporates interviews to document the wide range of expectations and experiences public housing residents had regarding HOPE VI, which stand in contrast to the conventional policy assumption that residents will be “better off.” To round out his assessment, Goetz considers the benefits communities stand to gain in Chapter 6. He asserts that, through demolition, local neighborhoods have realized the most benefit from HOPE VI, unlocking development demand previously dampened by public housing sites or catalyzing new potential with revitalization.

Goetz concludes his book with a return to the 1992 Commission’s recommendations, which he sets against the implemented HOPE VI program. In doing so, he highlights the justifications used and false choices presented for the program—principally that the only options available for public housing were the “failed” status quo or displacement, demolition, and dispersal. Goetz rejects this dichotomy and proceeds to offer a modest, but pragmatic, set of recommendations for correcting the mismanaged perception of public housing and retooling the policy to do what it was supposed to do: provide affordable housing for very low-income households.

In this final chapter, *New Deal Ruins* suffers from a common flaw, in that the recommendations for a future public housing policy are modest and limited to the existing political paradigm. However, Goetz can hardly be faulted for this, as the alternative, radical change, is dependent on an unlikely overhaul of political and/or economic structures. Further, despite the pragmatism of Goetz’s proposal, it still represents a formidable challenge that will require a significant shift in the popular perception of public housing.

Overall, Goetz develops a cogent argument for reconsidering public housing, which he supports with a systematic evaluation of the factors that have shaped the perceptions and reality of the program today. *New Deal Ruins* is an accessible and well-written book that, like Nicholas Dagen Bloom’s *Public Housing That Worked* (2008), pushes readers to move beyond the surface level of public housing to develop a more nuanced understanding of both the policy and its outcomes.

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