

Reviews

Growing up global: economic restructuring and children's everyday lives by C Katz; University of Minnesota Press, Minneapolis, MN, 2004, 311 pages, \$74.95 cloth, \$24.95 paper (£52.50, £17.50) ISBN 0 8166 4209 5, 0 8166 4210 9

Drawing upon a longitudinal ethnographic study of a village in rural central eastern Sudan, *Growing Up Global* charts the experiences of children born in the year that the village was incorporated into the large-scale Suki agricultural project. The particularities of their development into adults are highlighted by a 'countertopography' exploring the everyday lives of young people growing up within inner-city New York, which has also witnessed radical restructuring of its social, political, and economic makeup. Rather than providing a direct comparison, the aim of this countertopography is to "unhide the dispersed and seemingly discrete consequences of global economic restructuring", with the intention of constructing political alliances against cynical revanchist attempts to use the "shards of capitalist modernity ... as weapons" (page 259). Countertopographies are, thus, ambitious political endeavours.

One of Katz's objectives is to problematise the notion of 'development', as applied both to young people and to geographical spaces. Benjamin's conceptualisation of mimesis is pivotal to this critique of child development and economic development. Mimesis points to the revolutionary potential both of people and of history to be otherwise. This is just one of a multitude of stimulating theoretical and conceptual contributions that emerge from an engagement with an eclectic range of authors as apparently disparate as Marx and De Certeau, along with Benjamin, whose insights are interwoven with the empirical accounts. The result is a powerful critical exploration of the everyday lives of people, and responses to an ever-encroaching global capitalism.

Drawing upon this diverse theoretical repertoire, Katz elegantly traces some of the disruptions and dislocations heralded by the development initiative of the Suki agricultural project. Although marking a specific, evocative moment in the arrival of global capitalism, the project did not instigate a total political-economic transformation. Rather, the scheme represents an intensification, and institutional formalisation, of the increasing incorporation of the village into the globalised world. Katz highlights the differential effects of global capitalism on individuals, who were variously sociospatially positioned prior to the increasing incursion of global capitalism into their everyday lives.

In tandem with unravelling some common effects of globalisation, Katz charts how people negotiate such shifts. Her distinction between 'resilience', 'reworking', and 'resistance' is a useful counterpoint to the more typical labelling of all nonconforming action as resistance. More careful differentiation offers a valuable conceptual framework, potentially fulfilling Katz's objective of providing a tool to facilitate 'praxis'. Katz emphasises that the distinction between these three Rs is messy, given the interconnections between them. Arguably, such an avowedly grounded approach to theorizing places the author in a vulnerable position; readers can question, for instance, the interpretation of actions as resilience, reworking, or resistance. However, therein also lies the strength of such an approach. The explicit analysis of empirical material facilitates a high level of involvement and interpretation from the reader. Consequently, the book moves away from presenting the author as *the* authoritative voice and facilitates methodological reflexivity about a collaborative enterprise between author and readers, rather than erroneously assuming that the author can achieve a fully conscious reflexive analysis. Indeed, the weaving together of complex theoretical and conceptual debates and in-depth ethnographic material arguably underlies much of the power of this book.

Another crucial contribution of *Growing Up Global* is its simultaneous charting both of the specificities of places and individuals and of the outcomes of global capitalism common to both Howa and New York. By drawing such contour lines between Howa and New York City, Katz's countertopographies destabilise and demand a reconsideration of dualisms frequently

used to conceal interconnected processes of global change. Tracing the material impacts of globalised capitalism on the embodied, everyday lives of people in specific places fleshes out the political potential inherent in contesting a variety of powerful dichotomies (concrete–abstract, global–local, structure–agency), while simultaneously illuminating connections between ‘the Third/developing’ and ‘the First/developed’ Worlds.

Another key strength of the book was the reengagement with Marxist theory, tempered, as it was, by critical considerations of agency, influenced by De Certeau and Benjamin. Such a lens of enquiry contributes to refocusing academic gazes upon many types of materiality, including, although not limited to, the role of the political economy. Further, these theoretical lynchpins illuminate the complex and mutually constituted relationships between structure and agency, and global and local. Katz effectively draws upon Marx without reproducing the perceived limitations of structural Marxism. Indeed, history (including the ‘recent future’) is presented as open to a myriad of possibilities, and structure clearly is not rarefied above agency. Further, despite the focus on the social reproduction of the means of production, the study is certainly *not* economically reductionist; the analysis is sensitive to a variety of sociocultural differences, particularly gender.

Overall, this is an illuminating, engaging, indeed, even moving, account. It represents an innovative theoretical project that connects apparently disparate places within the globalised world, and emphasises both their specificities and the commonalities of processes of global capitalism that join them together. Such theorisations have the potential to build new political alliances among people in ostensibly distinct spaces, which are presented as ‘worlds apart’ in dominant discourses. One of the key resources available for challenging global capitalism is to build connections across borders by recognising commonalities along with differences and constructing empathetic relations. Katz begins this via her in-depth ethnographies.

This book is likely to be viewed as a landmark text within a host of areas of research interest, including the vibrant subdiscipline of geographies of children and young people. Despite its evident contributions, my minor quibble is that the book could perhaps engage in a more sustained dialogue with a broader range of texts within this area of interest. Nonetheless, given the accessible and lively style of the book, I anticipate that *Growing Up Global* will prove to be a significant resource for academics and students at a variety of undergraduate and graduate levels, studying a range of substantive areas, including geographies of young people.

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As borders bend: transnational spaces on the Pacific Rim by Xiangming Chen; Rowman and Littlefield, Lanham, MD, 2005, 331 pages, \$98.00 cloth, \$36.95 paper (£68.00, £26.60) ISBN 0 7425 0093 4, 0 7425 0094 2

Political borders (between states and between substate jurisdictions) have both bridging and barrier roles. This was already recognized in the original (now ‘classic’) early and mid-20th-century research on borders. At the same time that globalization and regionalization proceeded in the closing years of the 20th century, critical social science literatures on borders and cross-border regions proliferated and broadened. In these contexts, Xiangming Chen’s book is a landmark statement drawing on examples from East and Southeast Asia. On the blurb and front cover, Saskia Sassen says that *As Borders Bend* is “A brilliant deciphering of the meaning and agency of borders.” She is right.

The main argument is fairly simple. Chen describes how the complex relationship between bridging and barrier roles—debordering and rebordering—has undergone some marked shifts:

“In contending that the bridging role of borders has become stronger than at anytime before, and that the bridging role is now stronger than the barrier role, I focus on extensive de-bordering in terms of strong links and heavy flows across a large number of international boundaries in several subregional settings. The links and flows in turn usher in a rebordering process by connecting border cities and their hinterlands into a transnational spatial network that spans multiple boundaries and beyond” (page 14).

However, in tracing these networks, the arguments necessarily become quite complex. Beyond much broader intellectual scene setting and review of relevant literatures, the book comprises seven case studies of Asia-Pacific transborder regions. Three of these constitute the primary studies and have a chapter each: Greater Southeast China (this includes the Pearl River Delta and both sides of the Taiwan Straits), the Bohai/Yellow Sea (this includes much of the Korean peninsula, the southernmost Japanese prefecture of Kyushu and Beijing), and the Greater Tumen subregion (of the China–Russian coastal border). The other cases are Southeast Asian: the Greater Mekong, the Indonesia–Malaysia–Singapore Growth Triangle, and (this is its official title) the Brunei–Indonesia–Malaysia–Philippines East ASEAN Growth Area. As will be immediately evident, the degrees of formalization, economic connectivity, and significance of these cases are enormously variable. To Chen’s eyes, however, these transborder regions “wedge new economic and social spaces between the borders of three or more states” (page 34). Thus

“Relational change is a constant in this multilayered network. Shifts in the relative positions of the constituent units and strength of ties among the latter may lead to strong integration at one level (within a transborder subregion) and potential fragmentation at another (between intra-national areas that are part of a transborder subregion and areas that are not)” (pages 23–24).

This is a relatively concise way of summarizing the complex and dynamic interplays of uneven development and reworkings of sovereign practices. Moreover, viewing these interplays and reworkings at borders offers methodological originality. Chen claims that:

“Methodologically, the formation of a globalized subregional transborder economic space offers a distinctive alternative to the nation-state as the accepted unit for studying the relationship between global economic interdependence and national political change” (page 34).

From his case studies and some comparisons with Europe and North America, Chen is able to describe what is distinctive about East and Southeast Asian cross-border regions. First, geopolitics is an important part of this. For whilst the acute Cold War division of the region thawed quickly in Southeast Asia, it has proven more enduring in East Asia. Second, Asia-Pacific cross-border regions tend to overlap multiple subnational jurisdictions (rather than entire nation-states). They are also relatively weakly institutionalized, especially in comparison with the many cross-border agreements within the EU, and usually lack the density of transportation networks that is found in many of Europe’s cross-border regions.

As the case studies proceed, their manifest complexity and diversity seem to be mirrored in the narrative. The book moves between case studies and comparisons, including a whole chapter that compares and contrasts the Asia-Pacific with transborder links and dynamics in North American and European settings. In a recent study of cross-border governance in southern China, Chun Yang (2006, page 833, italics in original) concludes that “power relations in cross-border regions demand more empirical investigation and *comparative studies*”. Whilst it can only go so far (the treatment of European cases is brief), *As Borders Bend* points the way. The last chapter reiterates the theoretical contribution and practical challenges; these include questions about how transborder regions and their constituents relate to each other, to other transnational structures, and to cities and nodes elsewhere. The 300-plus pages of the book enable Chen to develop and sustain a significant contribution. And, for Chen, the seven transborder regions described in the book enable us to:

“almost imagine a reconfigured Asia-Pacific in which the bulk of the population and territory falls into the boundaries of the transborder subregions ... [forming] a distinctive layer of geographic links above and below almost all the major Asia-Pacific countries and across and through their crucial land and sea boundaries” (page 272).

How far such an imaginary will displace or entwine other national-state imaginaries is an open question. No doubt, though, Chen’s book considerably finesses the agendas for critical social science accounts in and of Asia-Pacific cross-border regionalism. It deserves a wide readership there and (given the growing fiscal, commodity trade, and geopolitical impacts of the Asian Pacific Rim) everywhere else.

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Strategizing, disequilibrium, and profit by J A Mathews; Stanford University Press, Stanford, CA, 2006, 280 pages, \$65.00 cloth, \$24.95 paper (£45.00, £12.73) ISBN 0804752540, 0804754837

The behaviour of capitalist firms and their relationship to the wider economy have always puzzled economists, management scholars, sociologists, and economic geographers. In mainstream (neoclassical) economics, the firm and its behaviour in the real world have received only limited analytical attention. For those economists who subscribe to the general equilibrium model, there is no question that the firm conforms naturally to the price mechanism underpinning the capitalist free market. In this dominant logic of market equilibrium, the firm has no place because it is seen as simply a 'black box' that reacts passively to market signals. Its role in the economy is to produce goods and services according to its production function.

In *Strategizing, Disequilibrium, and Profit*, John Mathews has skilfully developed an alternative argument: that the firm is an economic agent capable of strategizing for profits in a condition of market disequilibrium. The key actor central to such a strategizing act is the entrepreneur. In many ways, Mathews's thinking about the firm and the economy has fundamentally challenged neoclassical economics. By focusing on entrepreneurship, evolutionary dynamics, disequilibrium, and strategizing behaviour, he has developed an elegant and yet sophisticated framework that explains the dynamics of market formation and firm behaviour. Mathews terms this framework RARE because it encompasses firm behaviour in relation to its Resources, Activities, and Routines in an Entrepreneurial setting. To Mathews, this RARE framework has three accomplishments. First, it can provide a 'positive theory' offering positive advice to managers. This is an important task as "[m]any of us have simply lost patience [with neoclassical economics] and are looking elsewhere for a more credible and realistic account of business processes" (page 7). Second, it can integrate useful analytical insights on the firm from a variety of heterodox economics and strategic management theories, such as the resource-based view, the activity-based view, and the dynamic capability perspective. Third, it can provide a conceptual platform upon which functional disciplines in management can be comparatively developed.

Needless to say, it is quite a tall order to substantiate his three major claims about the advantage of the RARE framework. In the space of eight chapters, Mathews meticulously and systematically develops his case, which represents a most impressive attempt to mount a serious challenge to neoclassical thoughts on the firm and the economy. In the first four substantive chapters, he has successfully grounded his arguments in the intellectual traditions of such giants as Joseph Schumpeter, Frank Knight, and Edith Penrose. In these chapters, he has established the analytical arguments for understanding the capitalist economy as a dynamic system, the role of disequilibrium in entrepreneurial profits, and the central role of the firm as the agent of strategizing in such a dynamic market economy in search of entrepreneurial profits.

In the subsequent four chapters, Mathews expands his arguments on the entrepreneurial firm to theorize about (1) the role of networks as firm-specific strategizing in search of complementary resources and (2) the evolutionary dynamics of the economy as a collective outcome of such firm-specific strategizing. He then compares his RARE framework with existing comparative static equilibrium frameworks in neoclassical economics and strategic management. In the final chapter, he showcases explicitly how his framework can bring analytical purchase to such functional areas in management as marketing, procurement and supply chain management, and product development.

While this is not the first time I have read and reviewed Mathews's work—something I have always enjoyed doing in the past—I must say this is definitely his best work for the following reasons. First, his reasoning is very solid in terms of both its exposition and its intellectual grounding. There is never a sense of mystery in his almost crystal-clear writing.

His endnotes also demonstrate the superior command he has of the relevant literature in economics, management, sociology, and other social sciences. This book is certainly a tour de force in evolutionary economic thinking about the firm and market dynamics. Second, the book is challenging because it takes on the received wisdom on the firm in mainstream economics. And yet it sings the opposite tune very well by establishing firmly the role of dynamics, disequilibrium, and entrepreneurial behaviour in the understanding of real-world business and management. It opens up an entirely new horizon of possible future research into the firm and strategic management. This is no small feat for a book in the now crowded field of industrial organization and managerial economics. Third, Mathews is extremely well known for his empirical research into industrial dynamics and economic development in East Asian economies. While this theoretically oriented book does not allow for much of this material to be incorporated, one can be assured that his real-world research has provided the empirical foundation for many of his thought-provoking theoretical arguments. To sum up, I have no doubt that *Strategizing, Disequilibrium, and Profit* will become a classic in the field of strategic management, industrial organization, managerial economics, evolutionary economics, and business studies. I strongly recommend it to colleagues, researchers, students, and practitioners who continue to be fascinated by today's global world of economic change and firm dynamics.

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Cities and complexity: understanding cities with cellular automata, agent-based models, and fractals

by M Batty; MIT Press, Cambridge, MA, 2005, 565 pages, \$60.00 cloth (£38.95) ISBN 0 262 02583 3

This is an attractively packaged and well-priced book that anyone interested in developments in urban modelling should read, and which those more closely engaged in teaching or researching the topics covered should certainly find a place for on their bookshelves.

In the introduction, Mike Batty identifies Jane Jacobs's (1961) *The Death and Life of Great American Cities* as his inspiration. That book provided, "so we thought, broad support for ... top-down, centralized planning" (page 1), which Batty suggests must now be seen as a mistaken reading, to be replaced with "a culture where planning and design emerge from the bottom up" (page 2). This dichotomy, the contrast between top-down approaches to how cities work and understanding their operation "in terms of how individuals behave and the processes that they use to develop their environment" (page 3), frames what follows, and also brings us to the sciences of complexity, which Jacobs was among the first to suggest are relevant to any adequate understanding of cities. The real setting off point for the book (as the title makes clear) is complexity theory and particularly the dynamic and decentralized models of interaction among numerous elements that so dominate discovery in this field.

From here, the book settles into a well-organized sequence of chapters lucidly exploring the application of complexity science in a variety of urban settings. In the first chapter, classic complexity models examining, in turn, sensitivity to initial conditions, bifurcation and chaos, phase transitions, historical accident and positive feedback effects, local diffusion and contact, self-organization, and complexity and emergence are reviewed, and the lessons they hold for understanding cities are considered. This account clearly establishes the physical sciences emphasis of the book. Chapter 2 is the first of three applying progressively more elaborate cellular models to the simulation of urban growth and changing urban form. As elsewhere, some (but not all) of the material is familiar from published literature, although the treatment here is generally more 'user friendly' in tone.

The limits of cellular models exhausted, in chapter 5 the discussion moves on to agent-based approaches where mobile agents move around in simulated spatial environments, where they "act and interact with one another as well as with the environment" (page 209). As before, progressively more elaborate models are developed exploring the development of settlement systems in the context of unevenly distributed resources. In chapters 6 and 7 these ideas are applied in the more concrete setting of localized movements of individuals in complex buildings or, more broadly, in urban street networks.

The abstract treatment of the earlier chapters returns in the next section, where 'active walkers' or agents able to modify their environment are used to simulate the evolution of urban regions (chapter 8), urban growth is modeled as an 'epidemic' process (chapter 9), and the author begins to relate the ideas in these chapters to earlier work on the 'fractal city' (chapter 10). Relationships between complex dynamics and resulting fractal morphologies are explored further in the closing chapter, where the origins of the familiar rank-size distribution of cities are sought.

Thirty years on from a very different book (Batty, 1976), this volume provides a wide-ranging overview of foundational developments in the simulation of urban phenomena. In truth, the timing of the earlier book was unfortunate, appearing as it did hard on the heels of Douglass Lee's (1973) 'requiem' for urban models, and in the same year as Andrew Sayer's blistering critique of the field (1976). It is reasonable to read the present volume with those critiques in mind, the implicit question being, "what progress has been made in thirty years of urban models?"

Rather predictably, the answer has to be "it depends what you mean by progress!" On the one hand, Sayer's concerns that urban models are not based on realistic theories of individual or collective behaviour are not addressed. The exception is in the constrained setting of pedestrian movement models in chapters 6 and 7. Elsewhere, abstract processes such as diffusion-limited aggregation or spatial epidemics are deployed, which might easily be seen as little more than an 'upgrading' of the physical analogies from the previously popular gravity model. On the other hand, the capacity to develop models with interesting behaviour, which are useful provocations to thought, is amply and elegantly demonstrated throughout. Further, the abstract models presented here do not aim for the "hypercomprehensiveness" that was Lee's (1973, page 164) principal target. Batty is unapologetic about this, arguing in his conclusions that simple models, "simply provide ways of thinking about cities, using computers to experiment with our thinking" (page 517). In closing, Batty emphasizes the importance of incorporating network structures into models. I would add to his suggestions that more realistic representations of human individual and collective behavior are also called for, if real progress is to be made in understanding cities and their complexity.

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