In this monograph Daniel Todd comprehensively examines changes in the size, scope, and performance of the manufacturing structure of Nova Scotia between 1960 and 1973. The rationale for the analysis rests on the conventional belief that the economic problems of regions such as Nova Scotia result in large part from structural and locational disadvantages facing manufacturing growth and that a full understanding of these impediments is necessary for the formulation of more effective regional policies and plans. Conceptually, the study has its roots in the closely related growth pole-growth centre theories of economic growth.

Growth pole-growth centre theories have been, of course, the source of much controversy in the regional growth and development literature. To some critics these theories provide nothing more than an amorphous bag of ill defined, poorly integrated concepts and have led to hypotheses and policies which by and large have been rejected. To enthusiasts such as Daniel Todd, on the other hand, explanation of structural change in terms of a set of polarization forces within economic, geographical, organizational, and planning spaces offers a framework which is at once analytical, comprehensive, dynamic, and pragmatic. Indeed, Todd variously suggests "polarization" as a paradigm, a theory of regional development, an analytical tool, and a policy prescription. Unfortunately, Todd's attempt to demonstrate the "flexibility of the polarization framework" is accomplished only at the expense of considerable conceptual and operational vagueness. As a result Polarization and the Regional Problem exemplifies rather than reduces the ambiguity associated with growth pole-growth centre concepts.

The monograph begins with a brief "theoretical statement", and is subsequently organized around a series of quantitative tests which progressively explore numerous hypotheses related to polarization trends occurring within Nova Scotia's manufacturing sector. First, at both provincial and regional scales, entropy measures are used to examine spatial polarization (or concentration) in manufacturing activities as a whole (Ch. II), and for industries classified as market oriented, resource oriented, or interdependent according to linkage information contained in the
found to be extremely limited in extent and noticeable only in proximity to the larger centres.

Following a summary of analytical results (Ch. VII) the final chapter (VIII) briefly compares regional development experience in several countries and then argues strongly in favour of a growth centre strategy for Nova Scotia. In particular, Todd suggests major industrial development in the Halifax-Dartmouth metropolitan area and, since spread effects are considered unlikely, support for various economic activities in so-called resource and services centres located throughout the province. Todd apparently sees no contradiction either in attempting to reverse structural trends by promoting growth in the Halifax-Dartmouth area or in the idea of substituting dispersed investments for spread effects within the context of a growth centre strategy.

In *Polarization and the Regional Problem* Daniel Todd demonstrates an impressive grasp of a variety of relatively sophisticated quantitative procedures as well as an awareness of a wide range of ideas within the conventional regional development literature. The analytical and policy implications of the study, however, are seriously marred by the loose and ambiguous interpretations attached to polarization. Thus polarization is interpreted as a cause of, and a solution to, Nova Scotia's economic problems as well as a synonym for concentration and is considered to represent the idea of dominance without much in the way of clarification. Similarly, there is no attempt to define and explore the intriguing and controversial relationships between dominance in geographical and economic (as well as other) spaces.

Of equal, if not greater, importance, in view of the empirical substance of the book, is the failure to properly define polarization in operational terms. The extent to which manufacturing is spatially polarized within the Nova Scotian urban hierarchy, for example, is analyzed without explicit definition (or discussion) of any spatial or industrial yardsticks by which to compare actual trends. In practice, although no more than a handful of urban places contained populations (1971) greater than 5000, all (297) locations at which the provincial manufacturing directories recorded an establishment are treated equivalently and concentration is said to occur simply whenever the number of establishments increased during the study period. It would surely have been more meaningful to have at least assessed polarization trends on the basis of the relative importance of *selected* centres in 1960 for manufacturing activities and their proportionate share of new manufacturing growth. In the absence of such criteria, Todd's equivocation as to whether manufacturing experienced concentration or dispersal is understandable if not excusable.

Apart from problems of definition and conceptual clarity,
some question marks regarding the quantitative methodology adopted also need to be raised. Thus an important implication of adopting the kinds of “macro-oriented” techniques used by Todd is that inferences made about behaviour at micro-levels necessarily involve assumptions whose validity is difficult to assess. Indeed, statements made concerning linkages within firms, around communities (spread effects), and between plants (agglomeration effects) must all be qualified on this basis. In the analysis of agglomeration economies, for example, the extent to which linkages between highly aggregated industries of the provincial input/output table are in fact replicated by specific plants in the same industry cannot be stated. Similarly, the conclusion that industry is dispersing (decentralizing) from Halifax is not based on any direct evidence with respect to firm/plant relocation.

A second criticism that needs to be levelled at the quantitative procedures chosen by Todd is that the application of the different tests apparently necessitated an unusually large variety of units and scales of investigation. Thus information was (variously) analysed in terms of four levels of industrial aggregation and five spatial scales. Indeed, with respect to the community scale alone, information is tabulated for 11 (p. 50), 20 (p. 26), 39 (p. 59), 34 (p. 138) and 29 (p. 136) towns, while data were collected for 297 settlements. The author is not unaware of these and other limitations of his chosen methodology. It seems legitimate, however, to at least raise the question as to whether a direct survey of sampled plants would have provided a more consistent, relevant, and reliable data base than that offered in input/output tables, the census, and manufacturing directories.

For those who search for solutions to regional economic problems through technique and the testing of hypotheses, Polarization and the Regional Problem will at least be regarded as consistent with the faith. In fact, in the use of a range of relatively sophisticated technical procedures the author reveals dexterity and imagination. For those interested in the factors that made manufacturing developments in Nova Scotia during the 1960s distinctive and controversial, however, the book is disappointing. Indeed, confusion over concepts and methodological limitations severely circumscribes the study’s value in terms of understanding Nova Scotia’s economic problems and of contributing towards more effective development policies.

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Housing Programs and Income Distribution in Ontario, by George Fallis. Ontario Economic Council Research Studies #17, University of Toronto Press, Toronto, 1980; 184 pp., tables, figs., bibliog., appendices.

This study is a welcome addition to the modest but growing literature that attempts to deal with housing policy in a serious yet comprehensible manner. The social significance of housing has made it the subject of unending commentaries, more notable for their colourful prose than for their comprehension of the issues involved. This tendency to avoid tough analysis has coloured the formulation of housing policy as well, the sorry consequences of which are clearly documented in Fallis’ work.

The author’s intentions are appropriately modest: they are to evaluate key housing programs of the past few decades, particularly in terms of their impact on income distribution. It is true that housing policy has had many other goals, such as macroeconomic stabilization and microeconomic efficiency of land and housing markets. Since the most widely proclaimed rationale for postwar housing policy has been the amelioration of income inequalities, it is reasonable to begin by testing its efficacy in that sphere. One hopes that future studies will examine the efficacy of housing policy in the other, no less important, spheres.

The analysis of distributional consequences is based on the practical methodology of differential incidence analysis. The benefits from each of the programs studied are estimated by means of imaginative and clearly specified applications of the conventional microeconomic model of housing choice. The benefits received by each of the target groups identified (income class and age group) are contrasted with those that would obtain under “neutral” alternative policies in order to assess the net advantage of the particular program for those groups.

By demonstrating the use of analytical methods to gain insights into complex issues, the author has rendered a particularly valuable service. He has discredited the many exercises in casual empiricism that purport to explain our housing problems. And he has made available to a wide audience the kinds of techniques that yield more fruitful insights.

The housing policies examined intensively include rental programs (public housing, non-profit housing), ownership programs (residual lending, Home Ownership Made Easy, (HOME), Assisted Home Ownership Program (AHOP) ) and income tax treatment (imputed income and depreciation of rental units). Other related policies are discussed in passing, but with substantial insights (rent control, capital gains treatment, RHOSP). The basic details of the
programs are discussed in the text and some elaboration is provided in Appendix A.

The findings are important less because they are unexpected than because of what, in the aggregate, they demonstrate. Thus, the programs are progressive (redistribute to the poor) but only in the particular context of the alternative chosen (a distributionally neutral equivalent cash grant). Compared to a widely advocated alternative, a shelter allowance, every program except public housing is regressive, and the most generous programs are the most regressive. Moreover, the programs tend to be inefficient, in that the value to recipients is substantially lower than the cost to government in providing it. This is particularly so in the case of homeownership programs.

No less serious is the problem of exclusion. The proportions of each income group participating in each program tend to be small, and often lowest for the poorest groups. Hence inequities both of a horizontal and vertical nature dominate housing policy.

The author rightly despairs of this situation. It reflects policy making of the most primitive sort; the goals are confused and disingenuous (solving everyone's housing "needs"), and the understanding of the problem is simplistic, as seen both in the manner of formulating solutions, and in evaluating outcomes. As a result, policy is judged essentially by inputs — how much is spent, how many units built, etc., — rather than by its consequences on income distribution, efficiency, and so forth. This approach has permitted the layering of one program on top of others with no need to test for desirability or even consistency of outcomes. Gimmicks can be put forward as serious and expensive policy efforts and criticism merely leads to frequent substitutions of one (ill-considered) initiative for another.

The current retrenchment in government spending may actually be a blessing in disguise. If it forces the housing bureaucracies genuinely to reformulate their role, we might still be able to achieve most of our worthwhile housing goals despite lower resource availability. Demonstration that housing policy can be sharply focused on important needs and that programs can be developed that are at once simple and effective is the significant message of this book. Its contribution will be enhanced greatly if it receives the wide distribution and public discussion it deserves.

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Urban Transportation Economics, by Mark Frankena. Butterworths, Toronto, 1979; viii + 141 pp., figs., tables, appendices.

This book is an introduction to the policy issues, analytical methods, and practical solution methods in the field of urban transportation economics. Its focus is on Canadian cities.

The first substantive chapter (Chapter 2) gives some background information on urban travel in Canada: the relative importance of peak hour traffic, the choice of mode observed in the major Canadian cities, and the quality of service provided by the different modes. Chapter 3 states the determinants of modal choice as well as the analytical approaches for explaining and predicting it: for instance, a section is devoted to the measurement of the value of travel time and another section to the definition of different types of elasticities, as well as to their numerical values, based on some empirical studies done in Canada. Chapter 4 is concerned with the efficient pricing of roads, parking space, and public transit. It is particularly devoted to the traditional textbook approach to congestion charges; the author explains in detail how the principle of marginal social cost pricing, which is stated very clearly in an appendix for the reader without an economics background, can be applied to the determination of a congestion charge on a single link. In Chapter 5, the different reasons for subsidizing urban transit are enumerated and the practice by different Canadian provinces is summarized. Chapter 6 describes and evaluates several regulatory policies in urban transportation such as direct controls over the density of traffic on expressways, preferential measures for buses and car pools, restriction on the use of residential streets by trucks, automotive emission controls, barriers to entry into the taxicab and "for hire" trucking industries, and diverse regulations to conserve energy, certainly a timely topic. Chapter 7 presents and illustrates the basic concepts of cost-benefit analysis, as applied to investment projects such as the widening of roads, or the construction of rail transit lines or new expressways. Chapter 8 (which contains only two pages) is presented as an evaluation of the practice of urban transportation planning in Canada.

This book certainly fills a gap in the literature. Until its publication, to the best knowledge of this author, there was no introductory book in urban transportation economics centred on Canadian policy issues. Urban transportation specialists with a training in fields other than economics (urban planners, geographers, engineers) may find this book useful in understanding the economic issues and the economic vocabulary arising in the urban transportation field. Similarly, undergraduate students in economics can find in such a book an interesting application of
microeconomic tools to the analysis of practical policy issues, in a manner sufficiently close to that of introductory textbooks in microeconomics.

This book has some weak points and some strong ones. It is rather sketchy on methodology, and the bibliography is sparse. In the chapter devoted to modal choice behaviour, no choice models are described. In the chapter on pricing, no mention is made of how one could determine optimal user charges when the assumption of a single link is replaced by the assumption of a road network, and more generally, no mention is made of the concept of a road network equilibrium. Given that no city has only a single road link, the importance of treating networks is far from being purely academic. The presentation of cost-benefit analysis is also rather sketchy. The concept of consumers' surplus is nowhere introduced, a surprising fact even in an introductory book. The chapter on urban transportation planning in practice is very short and clearly does not do justice to what has actually been accomplished in the practice of urban transportation planning in Canada. The strong points of this book are a good qualitative discussion of policy issues and of practical solution methods to urban transportation problems and its pedagogical qualities. It is clear and readable and defines most of the microeconomic concepts it uses, such as elasticity rate of discount and marginal social cost or benefit.

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