

Păceșilă M.

BOOK REVIEW: NONPROFIT NEIGHBORHOODS. AN URBAN HISTORY OF INEQUALITY AND THE AMERICAN STATE by Claire DUNNING

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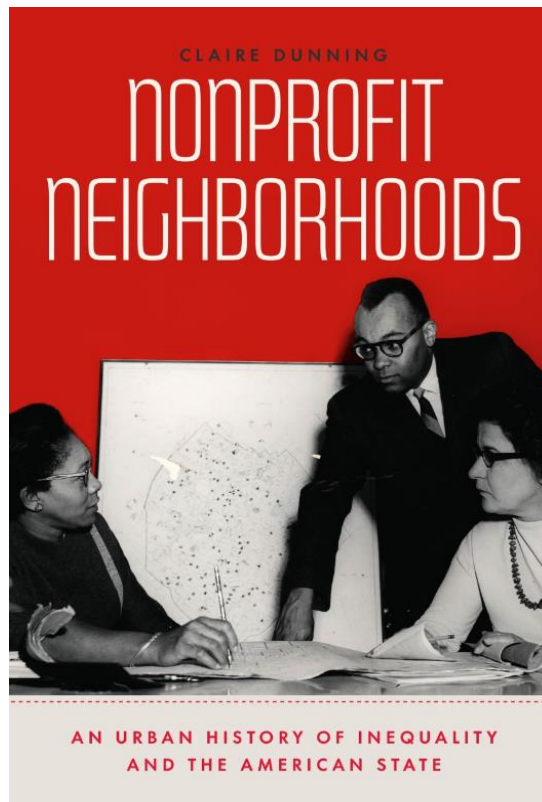
by Claire DUNNING

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Claire Dunning is associate professor within the School of Public Policy at the University of Maryland, College Park. Her areas of interest include the history of the United States of America in the 20th century, while her papers address issues related to the history of poverty, inequality, governance, as well as the development of nonprofit entities in American cities. Her papers are published in well-known journals in the field of history and nonprofit organizations, as well as in the American daily newspaper Washington Post. She got a PhD in history at Harvard University as well as a post-doctoral fellowship within the Center on Philanthropy and Civil Society at Stanford University during the academic years 2016-2018.

Her latest work, *Nonprofit Neighborhoods. An Urban History of Inequality and the American State*, was published by The University of Chicago Press in 23th June 2022.



Theoretical and Empirical Researches in Urban Management

Volume 19 Issue 3 / August 2024

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This book aims to provide thorough and comprehensive explanations of the efforts made by decision makers, philanthropic organizations, as well as nonprofits to reduce poverty in American cities, with a particular focus on Boston and its evolution after World War II, specifically between the 1960s and 1990s.

The book is organized into seven chapters where the author analyzes how public funds provided through government grants were used to facilitate urban renewal, which made necessary the collaboration between the agencies involved in urban renewal and the nonprofit entities operating in various neighborhoods of the city. The title of each chapter is suggestive, namely: The city, The grantees, The residents, The bureaucrats, The lenders, The partners, and The coalitions. Their content highlights the compromises made by policymakers and other actors of the time concerning inequality, discrimination, and racial segregation, as well as their role in the emergence and evolution of nonprofit neighborhoods.

The choice of Boston as the setting for this book was due to the author's residence and studies in the area, which facilitated access to archival documents (such as annual reports, meeting minutes, client surveys, funding requests, newsletters, etc.) at Northeastern University. Moreover, the challenges faced by this city in the postwar period raised several questions about its future in an era of deindustrialization and suburbanization, despite the fact that the federal government provided funding and powers to municipal decision makers to reshape streets and neighborhoods through urban renewal programs.

By describing the fears surrounding the emergence of an urban crisis in Boston as well as the frenzy to secure federal renewal funds to mitigate it, the author highlights how nonprofit entities began to dominate urban governance in the United States as the government shifted social responsibilities to nonprofit organizations. In her opinion, Boston is a model in terms of creating and developing nonprofit neighborhoods, which illustrates very well an urban governance system where social services are provided by nonprofit entities to which public funds are redirected.

This publication is an important read for both local and central decision-makers, as well as for professors, students, and practitioners in the public and private sectors, regarding how issues of poverty, racism, urban renewal, and the privatization of social services affect cities.