

way to an ideological framework not foreseen in the days when challenging lenders seemed to be a way to save cities. Now it seems that fair lending is about getting lenders to legitimately loan money to minorities so minorities can save cities all by themselves—as long as the lenders can make their profits. And fair lending, without attention to a community reinvestment agenda that focuses on place-based community economic development as well as institutional sources of disinvestment, will not get cities very far.

The Color of Credit is an important book on the economics of lending discrimination. It does not address all aspects of mortgage discrimination, as the book's subtitle would presume. Note: the word *racism* never appears in this book.

If minorities (and everyone else) are to be encouraged to buy homes, we should develop better policies to create added value to their housing investments by maintaining strong urban housing markets, quality urban services such as schools, and safe, aesthetic neighborhoods. Outside of cities, we call these suburbs. In cities, we call it community reinvestment. Or am I just an American dreaming?

► Reference

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Downhill Slide: Why the Corporate Ski Industry Is Bad for Skiing, Ski Towns, and the Environment, by Hall Clifford. San Francisco: Sierra Club Books. 2002. 256 pages. \$24.95 (hardcover).

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In *Downhill Slide*, Hal Clifford offers us a hard-hitting criticism of the manner in which publicly traded corporations have gained control of small ski resort towns. Why is a book detailing the ski industry of interest to planning educators? As Clifford explains, many of the aims and decisions of ski corporations have had detrimental affects—on the environment and the character of the individual towns (as well as the ski industry)—all in search of short-term profits. The tensions brought forth in this book are ones that planners wrestling with concepts such as sustainability and ecologically sensitive planning address on a daily basis.

This book could be viewed through a variety of lenses. A first lens is from the perspective of a planner in a small mountain town; a second is as an avid skier concerned about the doom Clifford forecasts. But a third lens (and the focus of this review) is as an educator seeking research on small-town planning and case material for use in a planning or environmental studies curriculum. *Downhill Slide* offers the reader a host of matters for students to chew on. Each chapter picks off different parts the problem—for example, the corporatization of ski towns, the price tag to the environment, marketing such towns, the politics of regulation and permitting, and the ousting of the locals. The book chronicles the “collision between Wall Street’s demand for unceasing revenue growth and the fragile natural and social environments of small mountain communities” (as proclaimed by the liner notes).

This work is not objective; it is not intended to be. Clifford is a journalist, and his research is more than sufficient for such a journalistic account. His information is based chiefly, though not entirely, on observation, data scoured from secondary sources (e.g., public reports, plan proposals, permit review processes), and interviews with top-level resort personnel. At times, I was left with the impression I was reading a more confined version of a work familiar to most of us, Jim Kuntzler’s (1993) *The Geography of Nowhere*. Clifford’s rhetoric eloquently describes deficiencies with the existing situation and provides adequate support explaining the dreadful outcome of such decisions.

He lambastes the ski industry for pursuing a “ski-facility” arms race at the expense of what is best for the town. The social scientist in me was a bit unsettled, questioning the degree to which that research protocol was possibly too biased. Clifford presents information in a manner that vilifies the ski industry from the get-go. This bias ran throughout the book, at times interfering with the objectivity of the subject matter. I found myself continually yearning for the other side of the story, but then again, it is intended to be more of an advocacy work than a research document.

The quality of the writing was exceptional and at times entertaining and refreshingly witty. Clifford never once missed an opportunity to attack (even in passing) the hypocritical actions of the ski industry (e.g., touting environmentally friendly, solar-powered kiosks amid developed areas of an endangered lynx habitat). His biting cynicism—while humorous most of the time—became overpowering and overdone.

After ten chapters of diatribe, Clifford prescribes little in the way of remedy. His lackluster recommendation urges a return to the way things were, urging ski-coops to burgeon as a solution to a formidable problem. My difficulty is not with the proposed solution (I happen to agree) but rather with the manner in which it is cavalierly proposed. I found myself

asking much more from the final set of recommendations he prescribes. He spends nine chapters painstakingly wrestling with and describing this multiheaded problem and then roughly the same number of pages calling for smaller scale, cooperatively owned ski resorts.

But this is exactly where this work may be useful for graduate planning education. The crowning achievement of this work is that it raises one's level of consciousness about the difficult issues at the heart of dilemmas inherent to sustainable decision making and describes their genesis with respect to ski towns. The relatively lackluster conclusion provides students with a case study prompting them into a decision-forcing situation or an opportunity to create a set of recommendations. What better alternatives exist for a community, struggling with the possibility of economic decline, than to bow down to the economic engine of the community? What possibilities should be pursued and how? The individual chapters are exceptional accounts that elucidate dimensions and tensions inherent to difficult small-town planning decisions. The tensions that Clifford aptly describes are real and deserve attention. He boils the issues and the difficult decisions (albeit unabashedly in a biased manner) down to succinct issues. He describes how the ski industry often bullies its way to reconcile judgments in its favor.

I could see this book (in whole or in part) useful as primary reading for seminar courses designed to cover topics including but not restricted to (1) resort, tourism, and/or small-town planning; (2) preserving community character in the face of corporate takeover; or (3) uncovering applied strategies to pursue sustainable town planning. Throughout, Clifford sufficiently describes tensions between each element of the sustainability tripod for ski towns (economic growth as the bottom line, the environmental price tag, and the resulting repercussion of inequity). This detailed perspective may have somewhat limited application, but adequate descriptions of real-life case studies are difficult to uncover. If resort/mountain towns are your particular focus, this is the book for you. Further discussion of some of the described scenarios would work well if adapted for case study use in the classroom.

Throughout the text, Clifford sprinkles references to planning concepts such as externalities, cooperative housing, visioning, wildlife corridors, and pedestrian-friendly urban design. In addition, several analogies and links to mainstream planning matters provide interesting parallels. For example, in what ways are resorts engaging in an arms race for improved ski facilities akin to different cities competing for new engines of economic development (corporations), new light-rail systems, or stadiums? What is the purpose of public land, who is to decide, and for how much should it be leased? What can planning commissions, zoning boards, and local legislative bodies

learn from the high-stakes (and, as Clifford contends, corrupt) and abused approval process?

Overall, Clifford provides us with an insightful and entertaining account of the ski industry, its role in influencing small mountain towns, and how they are destined for ruin. A potential unintended contribution of this work is that it implicitly begs readers to think about their role in furthering some of the problems that plague such resorts. Are our actions (as consumers) and resulting support of the ski industry contributing to the problem? How can this be mitigated? I found that a looming message in this work implies change by asking, "Hey skier, how could you think about supporting such an industry?" This works as well as "asking Americans to stop driving their cars because it is bad for the environment and creates traffic congestion"—that is to say, it doesn't. Nonetheless, this book helps bring important planning issues to a broad cross section of the population in an easily digestible manner. Recognizing its limitations, it serves to better support understanding about the need for a paradigm shift in the way mountain and resort planning is approached.

► Reference

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More than three decades ago, the integration of ecology into planning and landscape architecture received an unparalleled boost from the introduction and widespread dissemination of Ian McHarg's (1969) seminal book *Design with Nature*. There is no doubt that the ecological inspiration and enlightenment delivered by this work has had a significant and lasting impact on the teaching and practice of both disciplines. Its primary focus on regional planning, however, had the unintended consequence of hindering the application of ecology in planning for the urban (built) environment, and despite the irony of its title to the contrary, its emphasis on quantitative analysis unfortunately helped to further the separation between the "art" of design and the "science" of nature (