

## Reviews/Comptes rendus

**The Prairies and the Pampas: Agrarian Policy in Canada and Argentina, 1880-1930.** Carl E. Solberg. Stanford, California: Stanford University Press, 1987; 297 pages; \$39.50.

*The Prairies and the Pampas*, by the late Carl Solberg, is the second book in the series Comparative Studies in History, Institutions, and Public Policy. Its purpose is to compare the development of the wheat economies that grew to dominance on the Canadian prairies and the pampas of Argentina in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, and to show how Canada was able to exploit a poorer location—in terms of both site and situation—and become a more successful wheat-producing nation than Argentina by the end of the study period. Solberg is generally successful in his aims; consequently this book should be required reading for any student of either of these two world regions. I have always been a strong proponent of the comparative method of study, as it can often help in bringing important insights to significant areas of scholarly activity, even for experienced students of those areas. Thus, for instance, the significance of the problem of agricultural debt on the prairies can be seen quite clearly by comparison with the pampas, where this situation was not nearly as severe. The problem of rural debt has been demonstrated by a variety of authors (such as Heather Robertson, in *Grass Roots*) but its origins in the system of prairie land subdivision and sale is nicely brought out in this comparative format. Similarly, even such eminent historians as Vernon Fowke can be seen as suffering “from a bit of myopia” with regard to the influence of farmers upon the prairie political scene, when these farmers are compared with the wheat producers of the pampas, who exhibit a much better example of true powerlessness.

*The Prairies and the Pampas* consists of ten chapters, including an introduction and a conclusion. Each of the chapters contains an excellent introduction and summary/conclusion, which makes them easy reading, even for one who may not have much prior knowledge of the two regions. The book also includes a statistical appendix to supplement the thirty-four useful and informative tables that are found in the

body of the text, several pages of endnotes, a bibliography that contains at least the major works on the topic, and a functional index. For my taste endnotes are never as useful as footnotes, especially when they are gathered together in one large block at the end of a volume, and these notes could have been extended in some instances and thus been of more value to the reader. Unfortunately, the endnoting format is one of those distasteful variations on the Chicago style that usually proves to be of the least possible value in return for the greatest possible work on the part of the reader.

The chapters are well organized into three major sections: the "Political and Economic" background of the two regions; their respective "Foundations for Agricultural Development"; and "Patterns of Agricultural Policy" in the prairies and the pampas from 1900 to 1930. The first chapters concentrate on showing the parallels and contrasts between the two regions. Although there are similarities to be drawn out in terms of the development of primary economies in each area and in terms of patterns of investment, contrasts are more apparent. Thus the development of political elites in the two countries took quite a different form, with the result that in Canada there was never a landed elite on the prairies. Rather, the elite was urban and merchant and eastern oriented, whereas in Argentina it was made up of large rural landholders who were generally conservative and anti-merchant. As the political traditions and political policies were so different in the two countries, the economic policies were also quite varied. It is this interaction of politics and economics that for the most part explains all other patterns in Solberg's mind, and usually his arguments are convincing. In addition to the chapters on economic and social factors, the author also details the variations in land tenure and settlement patterns that led to a settled population and economic landscape in the prairies, in contrast to the unsettled, largely rootless groups on the pampas. These differences also had important social and cultural implications—for instance, in the growth of a cooperative tradition in the Canadian context.

The different patterns of peopling of the two areas are also investigated. The prairies were mostly populated from Ontario, Western Europe (and particularly the British Isles), and the United States. Indeed this latter country proved particularly important in a number of patterns of diffusion and migration; for instance, being significant as the origin area of the Country (Grain) Elevator as well as many other features of the early grain trade—including some of the farmers' movements. There were important additions from Eastern Europe, but they were only of numerical significance in relatively small areas, and did not contribute significantly to the development of the prairie grain tradition. In Argentina, although there were some Western

European and Eastern European settlers, the vast majority of the people came from Southern Europe. Probably more important, remigration was of much greater significance in the context of the pampas, and this helped to prevent the growth of any rural consciousness of a comparable sort to that growing on the prairies. The differences were even reflected in the variable patterns of material culture, with the automobile, the telephone, and the Grain Growers' Guide (with a circulation of 120,000 by 1926), leading to vastly superior systems of communication within the prairie context. Contemporary observers made much of the ethnic variations between the two countries—usually in a racist context—but they were sufficiently different, and apparently of enough significance, to at least give fuel to an analysis that might make Max Weber proud.

Solberg also studies many of what might be called the patterns of infrastructure and documents further important variations between the two regions. The tariff policies, government support for rural research and education, and patterns of road and rail transportation development were quite different. As an example, but by no means a minor one, the grain elevator never successfully diffused to the pampas until the end of the study period in 1930. Jute bags were still the major means of grain storage and transport in Argentina, and these were more expensive and less efficient than the Canadian alternative. The prairie grain transportation system had eliminated bags almost completely by the turn of the century, and the elevator had, in fact, become the dominant feature in the prairie landscape long before this date.

The upshot of all of these differences was that the agrarian struggle that took place in the prairies differed quite considerably from that which occurred on the pampas. Between 1900 and the 1920s patterns of protest and organization on the prairies led to what Solberg terms "cooperative capitalism in the prairie grain trade", and nothing comparable happened in Argentina. Despite, and perhaps because of, the crises of these years, which included the First World War, prairie wheat growers took a lead over those on the pampas that was never relinquished, and the regional variations as we see them today were firmly established. By the end of the book the reader is surprised, not that there were differences between the two study regions, but rather, that there were any similarities at all.

*The Prairies and the Pampas* is thus a book well worth reading, but it is not without its faults. For instance the last chapter, on "Tradition and Innovation in the 1920s", is all too brief and only serves to whet the appetite. In addition, although Solberg does mention differences between the two regions in terms of climate and soils he does not stress the implications of these environmental factors for the produc-

tion of different wheat varieties. It might be true that "Argentina's Barusso wheat closely resembled Canadian spring wheat" but it *was* different, and one reason for the success of the Canadian wheat trade was that nobody else could consistently compete with "No. 1 Northern". More important, however, is Solberg's insistence that an understanding of the interaction of political elites and economic policy can answer all questions about the differential growth of the two wheat landscapes. Although such a knowledge is valuable, and perhaps invaluable, it should not come at the expense of all other models of explanation. For instance, the author dismisses dependency theory, which I believe can lead to valuable insights on the growth of both regions. Perhaps it is because, as is admitted in the "Foreword", Canadian history was a relatively new field for Solberg, that he failed to recognize that in many ways the establishment elite of "Central Canada" was simply an indirect extension of the economic core area of London. When seen in this light, the prairies were being manipulated by two core areas in a fashion that fits quite well with the ideas of dependency theorists such as Immanuel Wallerstein. In the early prairie context the grain traders, the banks, and the railways acted in unison to drain the relatively powerless prairie farmers of their wealth. The situation in Argentina, where the core-periphery relationship was much more direct and traditional, is a more classic case of dependency and does not require further elaboration at this point. Lastly, I believe that, although he repeatedly acknowledges it, Solberg gives too little credit to the gradual development of "farmer power" on the prairies and consequently too much credit to [Central Canadian] government. It seems clear to me, from the author's evidence alone, that the prairie farmer had to fight tooth and nail for whatever he received, and that the government was only concerned with the prairies when it needed its votes and its seats to get reelected. *The Prairies and the Pampas* should certainly be read by all students of both regions, but it should not be read in isolation.

John Everitt  
Geography Department  
Brandon University

**Population Structures and Models: Developments in Spatial Demography.** Robert Woods and Philip Rees (eds.). London: George Allen and Unwin (Publishers) Ltd., 1986; xxii + 417 pages; \$50.00.

*Population Structures and Models* "... argues the case for viewing demographic patterns, structures and systems from a spatial perspective. For by so doing new insights will be gained on the complex forms of human populations and more effective methods will be advanced to

monitor and forecast—even change—the growth and distribution of future populations" (p. ix). These sentences, taken from the "Preface," accurately summarize the purpose of the editors' work, and they have chosen to convey their message by drawing from both their own experience and the expertise of twelve other well-known researchers in the field of spatial demography. The end result is a volume of material representing what may best be described as the state of the art in this rapidly changing subfield of population studies.

The book comprises fourteen chapters. The first, which is coauthored by Woods and Rees, provides an overview of the field of spatial demography and serves as a general introduction to the material that follows. The remaining thirteen chapters are organized in three parts, each corresponding to what the editors call the three "strands" of spatial demography: (I) the analysis of spatial and temporal patterns, (II) modelling and forecasting in a multiregional framework, and (III) the estimation of regional demographic patterns from faulty or inadequate data.

The first of the three parts, entitled "Spatial Variations in Demographic Structures", outlines several frameworks of spatial and temporal pattern analysis and their use in spatial demography. This particular approach in spatial demography is perhaps the best recognized, being firmly rooted in statistical techniques and taking advantage of increasingly comprehensive population data. Woods begins the section with an overview chapter describing the nature of spatial and temporal perspectives and the problems and limitations of taking such viewpoints. Chapters 3 through 5 illustrate the concepts of Part I with Woods' innovative examination of the demographic transition in the west, a contribution by Coward on regional fertility patterns, and a survey of rising fertility in developing countries by Dyson and Murphy.

The second part, "Modelling and Forecasting", takes the natural step beyond pure description and explains the techniques with which information is standardized and used both in static and dynamic models of demographic change. A strong emphasis is placed on migration as a process that ties together the spatial components of demographic systems. It becomes immediately apparent that Woods and Rees consider this second section to be of primary importance, and it is likely that most readers will also share the editors' feeling. The concepts of population accounts and data comparability in terms of age-time frameworks, for example, which are covered by Rees in Chapters 6 and 7, are not only critical to the development of accurate modelling schemes but fundamental to meaningful descriptive analyses and to the evolution of more appropriate theoretical foundations. A variety of modelling frameworks are reviewed in Rees's introductory chapter to this part, and several are more thoroughly illustrated in subsequent

chapters. Precise mathematical formulations that are extrapolative in nature are covered by Rees in Chapter 7, "Choices in the construction of regional population projections", by Stillwell in Chapter 8, "The analysis and projection of interregional migration in the United Kingdom", and by Willekens and Baydar in Chapter 9, "Forecasting place-to-place migration with generalized linear models". The remaining two chapters present examples of comprehensive models, with Clark's study in Chapter 10 linking demographic processes with household dynamics in a micro-simulation model, and with Madden and Batey developing in Chapter 11 an integrated input-output based model of the population and economy of an urban region.

Part III rounds out the book with three chapters focusing on techniques for estimating missing information, reconstructing demographic patterns, and evaluating projection models. The problems associated with inadequate or missing data—particularly migration data—often result either in the application of less than optimal modelling schemes or the decision to avoid modelling altogether. The material in Part III, therefore, introduces methods that will allow for the application of techniques covered in the first two sections to such data-sparse regions as are found in the Third World. In Chapter 12 Rees and Woods provide a review of estimation techniques, including, for example, methods of redefining transitions for appropriate age-time observation plans, attaining spatial consistency over time as geographic boundaries change, and estimating missing migration information using a multiproportional adjustment approach. In Chapter 13 Doeve addresses the procedures and problems of establishing a data base for Thailand, and in Chapter 14 Ledent and Rogers consider the process of urbanization in the Asian Pacific and evaluate the United Nations' projections for the region.

*Population Structures and Models* was not written as a textbook, and the majority of early readers will no doubt be from the research community. For these individuals the book provides a relatively thorough collection of techniques and illustrative applications, thus making it a useful tool in structuring and guiding new investigations. With the increasing trend towards studying the spatial dynamics of populations, however, particularly within a more rigorous modelling framework, we are experiencing rapid changes in the content of college and university population courses. Consequently, instructors should also find the book to be a valuable source of supplemental readings and exercises in the techniques of spatial demography.

In general, Woods and Rees have done an excellent job in pulling together and organizing a very large collection of work representing the foundations of spatial demography. Of equal importance, however, is the emphasis placed by the editors on deficiencies existing in

the current state of knowledge. Consequently, *Population Structures and Models* may be viewed both as a resource for building expertise and as a springboard for new work in an exciting and rapidly growing field.

John F. Watkins  
Department of Geography  
University of Kentucky

**Développement local et décentralisation.** Textes réunis par Bernard Guesnier, Paris, Éditions régionales européennes, 1986.

L'ouvrage, intitulé *Développement local et décentralisation* et publié sous la direction de Bernard Guesnier, de l'Institut d'économie régionale de l'Université de Poitiers, comprend un ensemble de textes en français et en anglais d'auteurs français, suisses, hollandais et norvégiens. Ces travaux portent sur un sujet passablement à la mode, soit le développement « par le bas », ou local, qui s'oppose au développement traditionnel « par le haut », ou centralisé. Ce livre a les qualités et les défauts de la plupart des recueils de textes. Il lui manque la cohérence que l'on retrouve généralement dans les oeuvres d'un seul auteur ou de quelques auteurs travaillant de pair, et l'on y retrouve des textes moins pertinents à côté d'autres de grande valeur, faisant le point sur l'état des connaissances dans cette nouvelle partie de l'économie régionale ou livrant des analyses empiriques.

Le livre est divisé en trois grandes parties; la première porte sur le bien-fondé de la nouvelle théorie du développement local, la seconde en présente diverses applications, la troisième traite des instruments théoriques ou réels susceptibles d'être mis à profit pour des actions locales ou territoriales.

La première partie critique le modèle classique du développement, basé fondamentalement sur la théorie des économies d'échelle ou d'agglomération, selon laquelle la concentration des ressources dans les grands centres entraîne, par effet de synergie, une croissance exponentielle qui, par la suite, se diffuse graduellement dans les zones limitrophes puis dans des zones de plus en plus périphériques. Ainsi, le premier chapitre, écrit par Antoine Bailly, montre qu'en ajoutant les objectifs de la qualité de la vie ou du bien-être social régional à la croissance purement économique retenue par la théorie traditionnelle, on fait apparaître d'autres avantages du développement par le bas. Le second chapitre, rédigé par Jean-Louis Guigou, continue dans le même sens en présentant les caractéristiques du développement local. Celui-ci repose principalement sur deux composantes, « une composante culturelle, ou la solidarité comme réponse à une agression extérieure (en particulier la grande entreprise) (...) et une composante économique, c'est-à-dire la réappropriation et l'exploitation des richesses locales ».

Deuxièmement, il suppose la décentralisation de l'État. Dans le troisième chapitre, Claude Jameux va plus loin, en abordant le problème du partage et du contrôle des pouvoirs. Enfin, Bjorn Asheim, dans le quatrième chapitre, discute de l'évolution des structures industrielles (délocalisation et déterritorialisation) à la lumière du changement technologique. Cette première partie se révèle particulièrement intéressante en faisant le point sur certains concepts encore mal définis ou mal utilisés dans la théorie du développement local.

La deuxième partie commence par une analyse de Michel Vate sur les faiblesses des mesures statistiques quand il s'agit de distinguer le développement local des développements régional ou central. Le chapitre suivant, de Johannes Kuiper, poursuit la réflexion sur les mesures statistiques, en particulier à partir des élasticités de localisation, sans toutefois nous convaincre que ces mesures s'appliquent particulièrement au problème du développement local. Enfin, le chapitre d'Olivier Godard et de Jean-Paul Ceron, sur les limites ou les stratégies de la décentralisation en France, tant du côté du pouvoir central que de celui des régions, pose tout le problème des enjeux et en même temps celui de la difficulté de prévoir l'issue de cette nouvelle politique.

La troisième partie traite précisément de ces enjeux à la lumière d'expériences réelles et des moyens mis en oeuvre pour favoriser ou soutenir la décentralisation. Le premier chapitre, écrit par Gérard Mérand, montre que l'expérience menée en Île-de-France n'est pas encore concluante : si la décentralisation fonctionne, elle continue d'être « surveillée » par des règles ou un encadrement national. Le deuxième chapitre, par Claude Lacour et Jean Dumas, souligne à bon droit que les efforts du plan pour tenir compte des besoins et des volontés territoriales se heurtent aux contraintes des équilibres nationaux sectoriels et financiers. André Piatier, dans le chapitre suivant, ajoute que les dirigeants locaux ou territoriaux sont limités, dans leur volonté de mieux défendre leurs points de vue face à l'administration centrale, par le manque d'information tant économique que sociale; il souligne que cette information est un préalable à toute opération de décentralisation. Ensuite, Mark Van Naelten montre que les ordinateurs vont permettre la décentralisation de l'information, ou du moins vont permettre de multiplier celle-ci de façon à tenir compte des particularités régionales. Enfin, dans le dernier chapitre, Michel Daynac, Antoine Millien et Federico Cunat posent le problème des limites de la décentralisation : si des régions sont particulièrement aptes à diriger leur développement, d'autres, en pleine reconversion industrielle, font face à d'énormes difficultés qu'elles ne peuvent résoudre sans l'aide du pouvoir central.

Ces différents chapitres abordent donc plusieurs questions encore mal connues de la théorie et de la pratique du développement local. Si

le développement centralisé peut s'expliquer en partie par le besoin des dirigeants centraux de gérer l'hypercomplexité des comportements hétérogènes des collectivités locales par des politiques générales et standardisées plus faciles à suivre et à évaluer, il n'est pas assuré que le développement local puisse s'imposer comme une panacée. Tout développement par la base encourage cette hétérogénéité et suppose la déstandardisation entre les territoires; mais en retour les différences engendrent des comparaisons et peuvent créer des jalousies ou des conflits évitables seulement par des transferts de ressources vers les zones plus faibles. Cela présente le danger d'un retour à des politiques générales ou standardisées. Ces conflits ressortent clairement dans le livre. Certains chapitres y répondent en partie, parfois de façon un peu rapide (les chapitres d'Asheim ou de Van Naelten) ou trop théorique (le chapitre de Kuiper). D'autres rappellent les possibilités mais aussi les limites du développement local (les chapitres de Guigou et de Jameux).

Compte tenu des réserves émises plus haut, cet ouvrage demeure tout à fait pertinent. Il peut constituer une base de référence importante tant pour les chercheurs que pour les étudiants qui s'intéressent à ce domaine encore trop peu connu.

Pierre-André Julien  
GREPME

Université du Québec à Trois-Rivières

**La PME dans un monde en mutation**, sous la direction de Pierre-André Julien, Joseph Chicha, André Joyal. Presses de l'Université du Québec, 3e trimestre 1986, Québec, Canada, 445 pages.

Ce recueil de textes constitue un compte rendu des actes du colloque international sur la PME (petite et moyenne entreprise) tenu à l'Université du Québec à Trois-Rivières en octobre 1984. L'ensemble des textes offre un panorama fort varié d'éléments de réflexion ayant comme thème la PME et son environnement.

Le livre comporte trente textes d'auteurs européens et nord-américains, certains textes étant en anglais. Ces textes sont regroupés selon cinq thèmes : 1. L'économie en mutation, 2. Les impacts de la mutation sur la PME, 3. Réactions et comportements de la PME, 4. Les émergences et les adaptations : nouvelles entreprises et nouvelles technologies, 5. Quel espace économique pour la PME ?

Bien que la cinquième partie du livre s'intitule « Quel espace économique pour la PME ? », seul le premier texte de cette partie traite des facteurs de localisation de la PME. De façon générale, la notion d'espace économique n'est pas prise dans le sens spatial mais plutôt dans le sens de la place qu'occupe la PME dans l'activité économique.

Ainsi, le spécialiste des sciences régionales ne trouvera pas dans ce recueil d'articles beaucoup d'éléments de réflexion sur les problématiques régionales ou spatiales.

Par ailleurs, si les différents thèmes qui constituent les cinq parties du recueil font apparaître une certaine cohérence eu égard à la problématique clairement résumée dans le titre du livre, les textes rassemblés sous chacune des parties ne se rapportent pas toujours au thème constitutif. Il est sans doute fort difficile de donner une cohérence *a posteriori* à un ensemble de textes produits dans le cadre d'un colloque. L'effort des éditeurs à cet égard est fort louable, mais l'objectif d'une certaine cohérence n'est pas adéquatement réalisé. On aurait pu éventuellement sacrifier la diversité des sujets traités afin de mieux circonscrire les propos autour des thèmes suggérés. À défaut d'une telle approche, les éditeurs auraient dû être moins ambitieux dans leur effort de rassembler des textes d'une trop grande diversité sous une thématique qui finalement se dilue dans la disparité.

Malgré ce défaut de cohérence qu'ont beaucoup de recueils d'articles, ce livre a le mérite de faire connaître un ensemble de préoccupations extrêmement diversifiées en ce qui concerne les PME. Il intéressera quiconque aime retrouver dans un même ouvrage des préoccupations et des perspectives d'analyse souvent non conventionnelles ou qui, à tout le moins, ne constituent pas les courants dominants de la science économique. Plusieurs textes offrent des résultats d'études empiriques portant sur la réaction des PME dans un contexte de récession économique ou de changements technologiques. D'autres textes, uniquement de nature spéculative, proposent une lecture généralement systémique de la PME, qu'ils présentent comme un agent économique particulier dont ils tentent de caractériser les comportements et les spécificités.

Ces textes ayant été produits pour la plupart en 1983 et en 1984, la forte récession économique qui venait de secouer l'ensemble des pays industrialisés a amené un plus grand nombre d'économistes à dépasser la lecture purement conjoncturiste pour parler vplutôt d'un phénomène de crise économique. C'est ainsi que le fil conducteur suggéré dans ce livre est la crise économique et la capacité d'adaptation des PME, sinon leur rôle comme élément régulateur. Heureusement, ce ne sont pas tous les articles qui prônent ce credo. Beaucoup de textes ont une portée moins ambitieuse et, par des approches plus empiriques, tentent de comprendre la dynamique d'évolution des entreprises, en particulier dans leur phase d'émergence, c'est-à-dire lorsqu'elles sont des PME.

Christian Lafrance  
Économiste

Conseil de la science et de la technologie