

**Review: Small, Gritty, and Green: The Promise of America's Smaller Industrial Cities in a Low-Carbon World**  
By Catherine Tumber

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Tumber, Catherine. *Small, Gritty, and Green: The Promise of America's Smaller Industrial Cities in a Low-Carbon World*. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press. 192pp. ISBN 9780262016698. US \$24.95, hardcover.

The decline of industrial cities in the United States since the mid-twentieth century, triggered by a global shift in manufacturing, is a well-studied phenomenon. Not surprisingly, many strategies have been proposed to revive the Rust Belt. Tumber's agenda in *Small, Gritty, and Green: The Promise of America's Smaller Industrial Cities in a Low-Carbon World* is to advance a set of revival strategies for these beleaguered cities in the emerging context of a low-carbon economy. Through invoking a mixture of historical studies, original interviews, and urban planning theories, she looks at the possibilities of a low-carbon future for these cities from five different perspectives: urban planning (chapter 1), transportation planning (chapter 2), agriculture (chapters 3 and 4), manufacturing (chapter 5), and education (chapter 6).

Although the author describes her book as "a hopeful vision for America's small-to-midsize industrial cities" (p. xxi), the book does not originate from utopian dreaming, but solid empirical research—the greatest strength of the book. Tumber traveled to twenty-five cities, where she interviewed local elites (e.g., urban planners and property developers) as well as the relatively disempowered (e.g., community activists for sustainability and farmers). With regard to the selection of cities, Tumber candidly admits that she was sampling by convenience. Because of the large number of cities studied, however, there is good diversity: cities in different geographic locations, of different sizes, of different economic fortune. For example, Tumber visited old industrial cities that have successfully reinvented themselves and also those that are less fortunate and join the rank of "shrinking cities." It would be interesting to learn the differences between these cities in regard to their actions toward developing a low-carbon economy. Unfortunately, this aspect of comparative study is left underdeveloped in the book.

Tumber skillfully weaves together historically significant development that influences the fate of cities today with contemporary stories of contested urbanism. For example, the interstate highways built through a formerly urban slum in Hartford in the 1950s played a lasting role in promoting urban sprawl, whereas in Janesville, local activists and farmers are locked in a fight against the pro-growth alliance's desire of promoting economic development through property-driven urban expansion. The most interesting, and potentially most impactful, story is the creation of a wind-focused renewable energy cluster in Greater Muncie, driven by the relocation of the German gearbox maker Brevini from Chicago to Muncie. Tumber argues that the success of Muncie in attracting Brevini was at least in part because the skills in gear making were already in place, given the city's economic history as a manufacturing hub, as was the availability of inexpensive land relative to big cities. Another interesting story comes from the city of Flint, where local residents convert derelict city blocks into urban farms. The author admits urban agriculture "would not be the economic engine that GM once was" (p. 72) but certainly can contribute to the diversification of the local economy. These stories lend substance to the book's central argument that Rust Belt cities can thrive in a low-carbon context because of two resources in abundance: inexpensive land assets that can be used for agricultural and

industrial purposes, and manufacturing infrastructure and labor skills that can be retooled for the production of clean technologies.

Overall, this book is a welcome addition to the literature of low-carbon cities because the role of post-industrial cities in the United States has not been adequately studied. One of the main contributions of this book, then, is to attract scholarly attention to these cities that have been forgotten by the research community and the media. This book should be of interest to students, practitioners, and researchers who wish to gain an understanding of the challenges and opportunities of addressing climate change at the municipal level.

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