despite some of her own examples showing how self-provisioning reproduces the gendered division of household labor (e.g. throughout chapter 5). Additionally, there is limited acknowledgement of the larger (often racial) stakes of self-provisioning. The Detroit water shut-offs mentioned briefly in the conclusion point to the need to situate self-provisioning within the history of racial exclusion from state services and protection. Overall, Kinder's book is successful in charting the new geography of neoliberal DIY service provision. Future work should endeavor to build on this foundation.

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Rachel Weber 2015: *From Boom to Bubble: How Finance Built the New Chicago*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press

Weber's subject matter in this very good book is a phenomenon that has fascinated and vexed urban scholars and economists of various hues for at least a century: city-building booms and subsequent busts. Although at various points, especially in the book's final chapter, Weber observes and reflects upon the consequences of these boom-and-bust cycles—indeed in the same chapter she even boldly ponders potential 'solutions', in the form of possible methods of modulating these all-too-familiar development frenzies—consequences are not her main concern. Causes are what principally animate this book and its author. How, in short, can we explain the repeating tendency, particularly in the United States, for urban overbuilding?

Weber explores and attempts to answer this question largely through a marvelously informed and detailed case study of Chicago. She zooms in on a particular part of the city—the central business district (CBD)—and a particular building category—commercial, as opposed to residential, real estate—during a specific period—from the late 1990s through to the early days of the global financial crisis (which, remember, burst forth in the real estate sector) in 2008. And what an (over) building boom she describes, with total office space mushrooming by some 15% and vacancy rates doubling during the period in question.

I devoured this book: the writing, which is pristine and unfussy; the apposite and illuminating mix of qualitative—Weber interviewed professionals in construction and finance, planning and real estate brokerage—and quantitative data; the even-handedness (no stereotypes of wicked bankers or irredeemably complex financial instruments here); and above all the sheer depth of knowledge. Weber 'gets' real estate; she 'gets' finance; and, last but not least, she 'gets' Chicago, the place. It is a rare combination.

So what is her explanation for over-building? Weber argues for what she describes as an 'agent-centered' (p. 7) or 'decidedly institutional' (p. 30) approach. The best way of showing what she means is by starting with the two main sets of explanations that Weber attempts to distance her approach from. One is the 'demand-side' approach favored by mainstream economics, which posits that, at least in the long run, construction levels respond to the level of demand in the wider economy. The other is the 'supply-side' approach favored by critical political economists, especially of a Marxian ilk. When conditions of over-accumulation plague the production of everyday goods and services, surplus capital 'switches' instead into the (over) production of the built environment. According to this thesis, then, building booms are explained by the supply of capital, helping to soak up surpluses thereof; overbuilding is a 'spatial manifestation of the needs of capital accumulation' (p. 25).

Weber's quarrel with both approaches is that they are too abstract and thus ill-suited to explaining the detailed temporalities and spatialities of building booms such as Chicago's. Questioning the supply-side approach, for example, she observes that 'capital does not switch into all real estate assets to the same extent' (p. 62). This critique is similar to the oft-heard critique of the late Neil Smith's 'rent gap' explanation for gentrification: that rent-gap theory does not tell us which part of a city will gentrify, when and at what speed. In any event, seeking a more granular and malleable explanatory apparatus, Weber turns to 'the actual actors and institutions that mediate between demand and supply', identifying institutional incentives to overbuild and emphasizing the significance of 'social constructs, market devices, and political interventions' (p. 30).

Reading the book left me with one major question: does Weber successfully deliver this 'agent-centered' explanation? Well, she certainly delivers empirically, by which I mean that her main empirical focus is indeed on the local institutional actors, in particular real estate brokers and city governments, that help 'perform' building booms on the ground—in Chicago's CBD in the decade to 2008 in chapter 6, and more generically in chapter 3 (chapters 2 and 5 focus more on questions of financing—explicating the real estate investment trusts, commercial mortgage-backed securities and tax increment financings that crystallize building booms—while chapter 4 effectively demolishes the notion that Chicago's boom, traced in graphic detail, was demand-led).

But does she deliver analytically? I am not so sure. Local institutional actors certainly play (and, in Chicago, played) an important role. But for all her determination to offer an alternative to the Marxian supply-side explanation—and she claims hers is a 'novel framework', framed and figured '[i]n contrast to both supply- and demand-side perspectives' (p. 7)—Weber, on my reading, ultimately, perhaps even despite herself, falls back on precisely this supply-side conceptual logic; she embellishes it, assuredly, but she does not supplant it. And you can actually take her word for it, not mine. Chicago's building boom, in the final reckoning, was a function of the 'easy availability of cheap credit and equity' (p. 8). To be sure, the local institutions to which Weber devotes so much attention shaped the exact contours of the boom, the specific history and geography according to which it played out. But the principal, underlying, motive force was indubitably the force of (over-accumulated) capital: 'it was capital supply, *assisted*'—not, note, substituted—'by the professional conventions of intermediaries and the pro-growth policies of local governments, that drove the building boom' (p. 10, emphasis added). Why did developers act as they did? They did so 'because financial markets were making more capital available' (p. 2). To underline this point is not to gainsay the importance of Weber's contribution. But her contribution with *From Boom to Bubble* is a substantiation and evocation of the Marxian thesis, not something that takes its place.

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Michael Storper, Thomas Kemeny, Naji Makarem and Taner Osman 2015: *The Rise and Fall of Urban Economies: Lessons from San Francisco and Los Angeles*. Stanford: Stanford University Press

The book aims to provide a detailed understanding of regional economic divergence. For this purpose the authors draw on and evaluate well-established theoretical frameworks from development theory, regional science and urban economics, the new economic geography (NEG), institutional economics and economic sociology. In order to bring to bear such diverse theoretical frameworks to explain regional development in practice and evaluate the claims of those theories with richly detailed empirical data, the authors had little choice but to choose a comparative case study approach. More specifically, the book examines the divergent development trajectories