

same time that we bring in their uneducated to compete with our citizens who are left untrained; the demonstration that what was(or may have been) true, e.g., that America can take in more people with ease or that immigration was not a problem in the 19th century, is now no longer true, so that we have to re-think our policies; and that a solely economic model, one that disregards environmental concerns, is harmful.

For those of us who are concerned about and are willing to take responsibility for the future, however, Daleiden's proposed solutions, culled from a vast array

of rich sources — economists, philosophers, ecologists, etc. — are well worth implementing wherever possible. And the fact that all this copious material is collected in one place is extremely valuable. Most important of all, for me, and I wish he had emphasized this more, is his argument that “radical reforms,” even a moratorium on immigration, must be sought now. The book is an information “mall” and more. We should all see more deeply the ramifications and implications of the issues Daleiden discusses and with the ideas he presents. And we should act now.

TSC

# How Much Does Growth Cost? Worth the Price?

**Book Review by Sharon McLoe Stein**

American attitudes toward growth reflect a great deal of ambivalence. Many see economic and population growth as good business, more consumers, more workers, more prosperity — a rising tide that lifts all boats. For those who directly profit, growth is an engine of expanding wealth and power, with many politicians seeing it as the ticket to re-election and just as importantly a well-funded war chest. For most others, growth is a fact of life, something to be endured, the inevitable price of progress. For most ordinary American families living in sprawl ravaged communities, however, growth has a dark underside that has, until recently, received far too little exposure.

Now, Eben Fodor, who describes himself as a “public interest community planning consultant (i.e.,

not a development planner),” has written a book for those who want realistic alternatives to the prospect of never-ending growth. *Better Not Bigger* is a thoroughly accessible, information-filled, action guide that definitively exposes the myth that growth is an unalloyed good. His analysis of the money, economic

forces, and political alliances that drive growth clearly delineates who are the real winners and losers. As Fodor follows the money, we find that it is not the long-term well being of American communities but an unwritten and too often unexamined mantra “In Growth We Trust” that drives the local politics of growth. Whether it is community activists or the increasing number of

local decision-makers who are looking to battle the powerful and well-funded development interests, this is a book that provides the answers and arguments necessary to be an effective advocate for rejecting the growth imperative and moving toward truly sustainable communities.

Just as growth consumes communities piece by piece, Fodor meticulously takes apart the growth machine and exposes its inner workings. At the heart

**Better Not Bigger:  
How to Take  
Control of Urban  
Growth and  
Improve Your Community**

by Eben Fodor  
New Society Publishers  
176 pages, \$14.95



*Sharon McCloe Stein is executive director of Negative Population Growth (NPG). This review is reprinted, with permission, from their newsletter.*

of this machine are what he describes as the “The Twelve Big Myths of Growth.” One by one, he addresses and carefully provides a detailed refutation of growth's core ideology, myths such as: “growth provides needed tax revenues, we have to grow to provide good jobs, we have to ‘grow or die.’”

Fodor pays special attention to one of today's most prevalent myths — that “smart” growth is the answer. If only we do a better job at planning, create some green space, revitalize the urban cores, “smart growth” can provide it all, good jobs, affordable housing, an increased quality of life and a healthy environment. He calls this “The Catch 22 of Growth: the better you make your community, the more people will want to live there, until it is no better than any other community.” Far too many communities have been seduced by the belief that they can have their cake and eat it too, that they can somehow manage growth, mitigate the worst impacts of sprawl and still preserve quality of life and the environment. This book is a powerful exposition of the fundamental contradictions that underlie the rhetoric and often self-serving promises of smart growth apologists.

Much of the hard-hitting analysis on the costs of growth came from a groundbreaking study that Fodor did on the infrastructure costs to local communities of single family homes in Oregon. In what is perhaps the best in-depth examination of the costs of growth to local communities available, Fodor's detailed analysis is a virtual activist primer on determining the costs of growth to any community across the country.

This book is far more than just a critique of growth. Its greatest value is to grassroots organizers, environmentalists, and other activists who want to get involved and do something to help their local communities put the brakes on growth. Much of the latter half of the book is a detailed nuts and bolts look at what local communities can do to control and in many cases stop growth on the local level. Unlike the growth accommodation masquerading as smart growth so fashionable among some national and state political leaders, Fodor recognizes that simply making the best of a bad situation is not enough. He is keenly aware

that the main battles over growth are won and lost in thousands of local communities across the nation. This book also provides the analysis, information and resources to successfully take on the growth machine.

This emphasis on the local is both a strength and weakness in the book's approach to growth issues. If there is a shortcoming, it is in a failure to put local growth control efforts in the larger context of national economic and population growth. While he details effective strategies and tactics for controlling or stopping growth on the local level, Fodor never quite comes to grips with the extent that national population growth drives both economic expansion and ultimately growth on the local level. As long as the national population keeps growing, the additional people will need jobs, houses, transportation and resources to consume. Populations may grow nationally, but they impact is most acute in the local community. No matter how well you manage, mitigate or minimize, additional humans means additional impacts on quality of life and on the environment be it locally, nationally or globally.

Likewise, Fodor never really examines how much more effective the measures he advocates would be if population growth pressures were alleviated. Good planning and design, economic and tax incentives, effective and innovative land use regulation, preserving undeveloped land, and citizen involvement are all important parts of controlling growth and moving toward sustainability. But, no matter how effective these measures are they are not by themselves sufficient for lasting gain. From a long-term perspective, the only sound foundation for ending growth is a stable and stationary national population, ideally at an optimum level much smaller than today's. *Better Not Bigger* gives much needed insights, analysis, practical tools and activist resources for those working for “smart” growth. Were these efforts combined with national efforts to lower immigration and eventually stop national population growth, the approaches presented in this book could be the basis for achieving truly livable and sustainable communities.

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# Privacy: A Privileged Right?

## Book Review by David Simcox

Only a consummate intellectual such as Israeli-American sociologist Amitai Etzioni could argue that personal privacy has gone way too far in super-individualistic America, and be heard without jeers.

Etzioni, today's leading communitarian thinker, presents the case that the common good, a suspect value in a society that prizes autonomy, has suffered in many spheres from the enthronement of personal privacy. He admits — perhaps too cursorily — that the common good is an elusive concept: prescriptions about what the common good might require in a specific situation are usually profuse and conflicting. Most, for example, would agree that the environment is a common good that must be protected, but disagree where and how much it is threatened, and by what or whom? The current deadlock over whether there is global warming and what to do about it is another striking reminder that the common good is far from obvious. The author stresses that the common good defended in this particular book is above all the protection of public health and safety.

The author finds that privacy has become a “privileged” right, assumed to trump all others. For communitarians, however, all rights are subject to reasonable limitations in the interest of other rights of equal or greater value and of the common good. So, as his book title suggests, there must be limits on privacy rights: but how much, in what circumstances, and with what safeguards?

Etzioni offers four criteria for considering the best balance between the common good and the demands of individual privacy. He then applies those criteria in

five case studies of major recent and current privacy issues: Megan's Law for disclosure of child molesters, the anonymity of HIV-infected mothers, public power to decipher encrypted private messages for crime control and security, the need for a national ID card, and the use and misuse of individual medical records.

In each of the five cases he applies his four-criteria test. First, is there a “well documented and macroscopic threat to the common good, not merely a hypothetical danger?” If so, what are the available options for dealing with that danger without first resorting to restrictions on privacy? The third criteria is: what can be done to make any needed curbs

on privacy as unobtrusive as possible? And finally, what are ways to treat the undesirable side effects of the restrictions on privacy?

In the case of HIV infected mothers, Etzioni's four-point test convinces him to support mandatory testing of all newborns for the HIV virus, requiring disclosure of the

results to the mothers. Existing arrangements permitting only consensual testing of infants, or “blind testing” with no disclosure of individual results, present a clear danger to the common good — the suffering and death of considerable numbers of children that their parents and society could easily avoid with proper knowledge. The author reasons that the right to life outweighs any increase in the risk of the mothers' being stigmatized and discriminated against by a fearful community, although this risk must be recognized and alleviated. His third and fourth criteria require new and tighter measures to sharply restrict access to the test results to the medical professionals immediately involved and to increase the penalties for those misusing the information or discriminating against HIV-positive persons.

Looking at the state of health records, Etzioni finds a paradox in the well documented abuse of personal medical care data by the “privacy merchants”

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**The Limits of Privacy**  
by Amitai Etzioni  
New York: Basic Books  
280 pages, \$25.00

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*David Simcox is chairman of the Policy Board of the Washington-based Center for Immigration Studies, which he served as its first executive director.*