in confidence and an increase in people's insecurity about their own self-worth. These processes are particularly important not only because a large proportion of the population feel they lack confidence, but also because income and status are so often seen as marks of personal worth.

The failure of the authors to recognise these consequences of inequality is surprising given that they recognise similar psychological issues round black-white status difference and see them as relevant to the fact that deaths of despair are so much greater among the whites than African Americans. When they say that "White workers perceive black progress as an unfair usurpation" which has led to a white loss of sense of racial privilege, the basic issue – of who is better or worse than whom – is exactly the same territory as makes inequality so powerful. And Case and Deaton quote opinion polls to the effect that "more than 50 per cent of white working-class Americans believe discrimination against whites has become as big a problem as discrimination against blacks and other minorities".

At bottom it is about whether people feel valued or devalued. Whether that sense of being valued comes from a network of friends or from social status and income, research shows that these are among the most highly protective influences on health we know of. But instead of pointing in this direction, the book ends by naming the soaring costs (from 5 to 18 per cent of GDP between 1970-2018) of American medical care as the 'leading villain'. For Case and Deaton the problem this creates has nothing to do with the quality of, or access to, health care; it is instead that because employers pay many people's medical insurance, the burden of rising costs will have prevented employers increasing working class incomes faster. But if medical care costs have been the chief villain, then surely there should have been at least a mention of their accomplices: among the biggest 350 US companies the 40-fold pay differential between production workers and CEOs expanded over the period 1980-2005 to something like a 300-fold differential (Mishel and Sabadish, 2012).

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Barbara Norman (2019), *Sustainable Pathways for Our Cities and Regions: Planning within Planetary Boundaries*, Routledge Studies in Sustainable Development, Abingdon: Routledge, £36.99, pp. 190, pbk.
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I started reading this book whilst flying over the snowfields and glaciers of Greenland. This backdrop was a timely reminder of the impact of climate change, with visible reductions in the coverage of the immense, magnificent landscape from that of the year before after the nation had endured its warmest year on record. I was also acutely aware of my own contribution to climate change as we spewed out aviation fuel into the atmosphere. I had departed from

Reykjavik where 60 per cent of the island's population resides and which has experienced population growth rates of as much as 4 per cent since 1960, heading to the sprawling metropolitan area of Denver Colorado, one of the fastest growing cities in the USA, with population densities nearly four times that of the Icelandic capital.

It was thus apposite that Barbara Norman's latest book is a 'call to arms' – one that recognises that successful climate action will be dependent on how action and change is implemented in cities and city regions as disparate as Reykjavik and Denver, and how such change will be shaped significantly by those managing cities and by citizens' behaviour.

As the title suggests, this text takes a global perspective, seeking to address the need to work within the limits of the planet, whilst also addressing the needs of those living in cities. Although the author suggests that "four key cities are the foci of the book" (p. xvi), the experiences from them (Copenhagen, Canberra, Kuala Lumpur and New York) do not feature prominently and other cities are cited to help make this a global text.

Sustainable Pathways for our Cities and Regions offers seven chapters clustered around three parts. The first part acts as an introduction of the key themes: of sustainable pathways (Chapter 1), the notion of planning within planetary boundaries (Chapter 2) and a review of the main challenges of twenty first century urban living (Chapter 3). In the second part, the next two chapters, it turns to explore some of the innovations, inspirations and implantation plans which offer insights to work towards a more sustainable urban future. The book's final two chapters form the third part of the text, with chapter 6 discussing possible sustainable pathways for cities, and summarising the key messages from the case studies to help future implementation (Chapter 7).

Norman's passion and experience as a planning practitioner for fostering a more sustainable future for cities is palpable throughout the book. She draws heavily on key events in which she has participated, many of which led to important reports and recommendations for future actions. And the authenticity of the appeal is reinforced by the collation of ideas from those she has worked with on the way, including more than 20 interviews specifically for the book. It is also strongly framed within the notions of urban futures set out by the United Nations, especially their Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), and from her collaboration with other global agencies such as ICLEI, Local Government for Sustainability. Together these make this book a positive contribution to the debates over urban futures.

Despite these contributions, this book is also frustrating. The central arguments that Norman is making around planetary limits and the need for planning pathways are revealed and replayed all too often throughout the book. In part this reflects poor editorial practice. The preface and introduction cover much of the key arguments made elsewhere in the book, for example, and links between chapters tend to be repetitive. Narratives are constructed around often different and local examples but lack details. The four cities which she indicates were key contributors to her notions of pathways are not deeply interrogated, with the reader left frustrated over the lack of a real sense of how their pathways have been planned, evolved and shaped. You are left intrigued to know more, for example, about how pathways evolved into agile cities, or which actors led to the development of New York's journey towards sustainable planning.

But for me the biggest frustration lies in the final section. After all the promises to show the pathways and to provide "a guide for urban decision makers and communities leaders involved in making and implementing more sustainable urban and regional futures" (p. 145), the suggested pathways in Chapter 6 are little more than summaries; useful summaries but not wayfinding tools to help other cities to move towards sustainable planning. In short, they do not really do justice to the rest of the book. This is a shame, as Norman's case for a more collaborative and systematic approach to urban planning is well made. It is to be hoped therefore that readers seeking to find ways for a sustainable urban future read through

the earlier chapters and do not plunge straight to the promised (but unfulfilled) guides in the final chapter.

There is an assumption, made explicit in the book, that a growth in global population and especially urban population forms the context for a growing concern about urban sustainability. Intriguingly, and probably much like the forthcoming COP26 summit, discussion on whether such population growth is itself sustainable or desire is not addressed!

I finished reading Norman's book on my return to my home city of Glasgow, soon to be host to the COP26 summit where world leaders will congregate to report on their progress to the Paris Accord of 2015 and consider the next of their responses to climate change. It would be good if on their travels from across the globe, many of them and their advisors also take the time to read this book.

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The former Irish Prime Minister, Dr Garret Fitzgerald, a distinguished academic and public intellectual, commented on the paradox of Irish development: 'the contrast between our new-found wealth and pathetic inadequacy of [health] and other public services is frankly disgraceful' (*Irish Times 11th October 2008)*. The failures of the Irish Welfare State, notably in health and housing, dominated the 2020 General Election. The perennial question is: 'How can such a wealthy society justify a residual welfare state regime'?

Anthony McCashin's book is a welcome invitation to view the Irish Welfare State through the prism of social security. The book adopts a broad canvas in three-dimensional form: (1) a historical overview of the evolution of the Irish Welfare State; (2) Ireland's comparative location within the diversity of European welfare regimes and models, and (3) a detailed analysis of the Irish social security system between 1981-2016. McCashin is an acknowledged expert on the topic of social security, dating back to his role in the Commission on Social Welfare, 1986.

The author was faced with a challenging task because the Irish Welfare State model is difficult to define and locate. The National Economic and Social Council, in 2005, commented that the Irish Welfare State is both 'hybrid' and 'complex'. NESC's penetrating observation is the nub of the intellectual challenge that faced the author of this book. It is a task analogous to resolving a riddle within an enigma. At the core of this enigma is the historic failure to achieve separation between Church and State, the acid test of a functioning modern Western democracy. The Catholic Church continues to control over 90 per cent of schools in Ireland, which has become a multicultural society since joining the European Union in 1973. A recent dispute over the location of the new National Maternity Hospital on the site of Church-owned land, involving sensitive issues regarding the protection of reproductive rights, remains to be resolved. The impact of historic child abuse scandals, in which a series of inquiry reports have exposed the dark side of institutional care of vulnerable children and single mothers, has greatly diminished the moral authority and spiritual power of the Catholic Church.