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Driedger, Leo. *The Urban Factor: Sociology of Canadian Cities*. Toronto; Oxford University Press, 1991. Pp. xvi, 319. Maps and figures. \$19.95 (paper)

Allan Steeves

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Driedger, Leo. *The Urban Factor: Sociology of Canadian Cities*. Toronto: Oxford University Press, 1991. Pp. xvi, 319. Maps and figures. \$19.95 (paper).

Leo Driedger's book entitled *The Urban Factor* will find much favour and be very useful as an introduction to the study of the sociology of Canadian urban life. The book covers an extremely wide range of urban material, from the origin and development of cities to contemporary problems of urban planning. It contains useful summaries of the contemporary sociological literature on Canadian urban demography, urban ecology, ethnic mosaics in Canadian cities and their distinctive patterns, the character of work and leisure, patterns of power and municipal politics, and the nature of family networks in urban communities. All this is done with an insistence upon being thorough and fair while at the same time hesitating to draw creative interpretations from the diversity of findings. This insistence on presenting a wide range of findings sometimes limits the depth with which material can be presented. As a result, in some cases, I would have personally preferred to see some of the discussions presented in more depth than the somewhat superficial treatment given them in the text. But this concern is really a personal preference, one which the author and editors obviously have considered and decided against.

Urban historians, I'm afraid, will be impatient with the book. It fits too much the traditional sociological pattern of opening a discussion of a subject with a "historical throat-clearing," and then never referring back or informing the later discussion with the historical material. This book begins with a very informed discussion of the origin of pre-industrial cities, but then never gets around to informing us as to how these patterns of settlement constrained or facilitated the growth of Canadian cities during the nineteenth and twentieth

centuries. While it deals with the "fertile crescent" patterns of origin, it never informs us as to whether the development of agriculture is a necessary prerequisite to urban development, or whether the development of commerce is sufficient. Historians, I should think, would find it important to participate in this debate, and as I read the literature, are increasingly coming down on the side of those who argue that the development of commercial trading cities existed prior to the development of cities based upon irrigation agriculture.

The book then introduces, in Chapter Two, a very informative comparative discussion on contemporary metropolitan development, but fails to order the findings in terms of a clear analytical use of a global dependency framework which, I would suggest, might have helped order the findings. In some ways, because of this weakness in this Chapter, the discussion fails to distinguish between the different types of industrialization or the lack of it that now very much determine the patterns of urbanization in the "developing nations" of the world. In short, what I'm arguing for is a discussion that enables the student to see very clearly how theoretical models inform conclusions, rather than presenting a range of empirical studies and then requesting that the students more or less draw their own conclusions. The latter approach, rather than the former, appears to inform many of the discussions in this book.

But make no mistake. This is a useful book. It replaces a number of more dated texts in the field. It usefully structures the domain in a number of ways instructors will find useful. And in this sense, many historians, geographers, political scientists and sociologists will find it an extremely useful book to assign either as a text or a supplementary text in

courses that attempt to understand contemporary Canadian urban life.

Allan Steeves
Sociology
Carleton University

Quesnel, Louise, and Belley, Serge (with the collaboration of Jacques Lévêillé). *Partis politiques municipaux: Une étude de sociologie électorale*. Montreal: Editions Agence d'Arc, 1991. Pp. 285. Illustrations. \$36.00 (paper).

For good or ill, Paul Peterson's *City Limits* has been the most influential book published in urban politics in the last decade. In it he states: "In short, local politics is limited politics. Its issues are not great enough to generate its own partisan political life. As a result, national political parties easily eliminate any ratepayers' associations, good government leagues, or other independent groups seeking only local power."

When *City Limits* was published in 1981, Jean Drapeau's Civic Party had controlled Montreal's municipal council for twenty-one years; in Quebec City, the *Progrès civique de Québec* had been equally dominant for sixteen. By the late 1970s, viable opposition parties had emerged in both cities; elections were clearly local partisan events; and the Quebec National Assembly had provided for government recognition and funding of local political parties. Unfortunately, Peterson makes no reference to either city in any of his pronouncements about limited city politics.

Just as unfortunately, *Partis politiques municipaux*, a valuable new book about Quebec City, makes no reference to Peterson's claims that such parties have little, if any, chance of surviving. This well-researched, thoughtful study places these parties, and the fascinating election they fought in 1989, in the theoretical