

"Urban Development in Latin America: A Special Issue."
Comparative Urban Research, Vol. 7, No. 1 (1980). Pp. 134.

Jacques Barbier

Volume 11, Number 3, February 1983

URI: <https://id.erudit.org/iderudit/1019024ar>

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.7202/1019024ar>

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Publisher(s)

Urban History Review / Revue d'histoire urbaine

ISSN

0703-0428 (print)

1918-5138 (digital)

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Cite this review

Barbier, J. (1983). Review of ["Urban Development in Latin America: A Special Issue." *Comparative Urban Research*, Vol. 7, No. 1 (1980). Pp. 134.] *Urban History Review / Revue d'histoire urbaine*, 11(3), 86–87. <https://doi.org/10.7202/1019024ar>

"King of the Workers." The authors naturally rely a great deal on the Royal Commission that reported in 1905 on the practices of immigrant labour agencies.

Ramirez and Del Balzo's study was first given in Toronto at the "Little Italies in North America" conference sponsored by the Multicultural History Society of Ontario. All the papers presented there, including this one, appeared in the society's 1981 volume. The authors justifiably pay tribute to the work of Robert Harney, the guiding spirit of the society, whose major work on the Italians in Canada is eagerly awaited.

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Person, Dennis, and Routledge, Gavin *Edmonton: Portrait of a City*. Edmonton: Reidmore Books, 1981. Distributed by McClelland and Stewart Limited. Pp.240. Illustrations. \$29.95

This work is not intended to be a comprehensive, analytical history of the city. It is a pictorial volume, containing over 400 photographs and enough text to explain each photo as it illustrates some aspect of Edmonton's history. Edmonton is more fortunate than most cities in having its past well photographed almost from its origins. Hence, beginning with an 1871 photograph of Fort Edmonton, this attractive volume documents Edmonton's transition from a rough-hewn fur-trading post to a modern, regional metropolis.

The volume is organized chronologically into eleven chapters: Fort Edmonton (1795-1870), Beyond the Fort (1871-91), Birth of Strathcona (1875-1911), Edmonton: The Town (1892-1903), City and Capital (1904-11), Amalgamation and Boom (1912-14), War, Women and Wings (1915-29), Depression and War (1930-46), Oil Capital (1947-57), Growing Up (1958-70), and Metropolis (1971-81). Each chapter has a short but useful introduction and virtually all the annotations are detailed and perceptive. The book also has a good index, a rare tool in such a volume. It is highly recommended as a useful, entertaining and well-produced volume.

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This special number contains six articles drawn from papers presented at an urban studies symposium of the 1976 International Congress of Americanists (ICA) in Paris. This symposium was one of seven held between 1966 and 1979, a series which is to be continued at the 1982 meeting of the ICA in Manchester. Richard Morse's effective introduction, besides providing background needed by non-specialists and explaining the intent and content of the volume, also includes a bibliographical appendix allowing the reader to locate the nearly 140 articles making up the broader effort.

The articles fall into two categories. The first four (by Gasparini and Margolies, Borah, Brading, and Browning and Roberts) provide chronological overviews, and the last two (by Gilbert, and Clarke and Ward) deal with present-day dilemmas. Of the first group, that by Graziano Gasparini and Luise Margolies, "Urban Settlements of the Incas," is clearly the least satisfactory. Largely limited to a discussion of settlements as physical entities, this article barely touches their economic, social and political functions. Although regrettable, the authors' caution may be well founded since they deal with an era for which sources are either archaeological or unreliably literary.

Woodrow Borah's "Demographic and Physical Aspects of the Transition from the Aboriginal to the Colonial World," which is largely concerned with meso-America, is more useful. For that region, of course, archaeological and literary sources can be supplemented with Indian and Spanish archival material. In any case, Borah presents a stimulating overview of the literature, focusing particularly on the interplay between the aboriginal condition and Spanish desires in the creation of a new urban framework. Harley L. Browning and Bryan R. Roberts' "Urbanization, Sectoral Transformation, and the Utilization of Labor in Latin America," although more theoretical in its orientation, comprises none the less a fine companion piece to Borah's effort. The emphasis here is on the impact on the urban milieu of the shift from British to American hegemony. For Browning and Roberts, that shift had important consequences for the Latin American city because of the profound differences between the U.S. and U.K. economies. Wedged in between these two fine overviews is David A. Brading's "The City in Bourbon Spanish America: Elite and Masses," a pithy account of conditions in that period which reminds the reader that "it was the base rather than the apex of urban society that defined the individual characteristics of each city" (p.81).

The second group of articles is oriented to the present. Alan G. Gilbert, in "Planning for Urban Primacy and Large Cities in Latin America: A Critique of the Literature," raises questions about the literature's prevailing hostility to primate cities. The treatment is interesting and may be of particular interest to Canadianist scholars. Lastly, Colin G. Clarke and Peter M. Ward examine the

living conditions of the poor in "Stasis in Makeshift Housing: Perspectives from Mexico and the Caribbean."

Collections such as the present one are always difficult to evaluate, for the quality of the articles is rarely uniform. None the less, this special issue is of definite interest, not only because it contains several papers of high quality, but also because it calls attention to the ongoing contributions of the ICA's urban studies symposia.

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Hershberg, Theodore, ed. *Philadelphia: Work, Space, Family, and Group Experience in the 19th Century – Essays toward an Interdisciplinary History of the City*. Toronto: Oxford University Press, 1981. Pp.xviii, 525. Maps, tables, appendices. \$15.50

History has been one of the bulwarks of scholarly attachment to disciplinary segregation. This phenomenon might be considered ironic since the discipline of history is not associated with particular theories and methods which could be held responsible for a particular sense of self-identity. However, it is precisely a lack of definition which draws together the historical profession. In history, scholarly inquiry thrives on the specific, on the unique, on anomalies; historians seek out nuance and complexity. As a group, they see other researchers as uncritical in assessing data and naïve in understanding human thought and behaviour. In their hearts, historians believe that they comprehend social interaction better than sociologists, governmental issues better than political scientists, ecological factors better than geographers, mental processes better than psychologists, and so on. For these reasons, historians have usually been reluctant participants in interdisciplinary efforts and have rarely engaged in sustained debate with other scholars.

Theodore Hershberg is convinced that this situation has never been justifiable. Hershberg argues that "scholarship" is inherently political. The tools of the social scientist are not – any more than is the technology of the engineer – neutral. The assumptions and world views of the various disciplines are the source of much conflict. Socialization has created an internalized set of values that make achievement in scholarship almost synonymous with individual effort. Our educational experiences leave all too many of us ill-prepared to undertake team research" (p.492). As a result, Hershberg perceives a "fragmentation of knowledge" which has generally hindered true conceptual headway. This perspective has provided the theoretical underpinnings of the Philadelphia Social His-

tory Project which Hershberg began in 1969. The project was both revolutionary and straightforward. With nineteenth-century Philadelphia as a research focus, Hershberg began constructing a computerized data base which was then made accessible to scholars from a variety of disciplines. Over time and under Hershberg's enthusiastic leadership, the project enlarged the data base and invited historians, economists, demographers, sociologists and others to examine the files. Hershberg strove for true interdisciplinarity rather than multi-disciplinary, and the project's ambition became no less than a coherent explanatory synthesis of urban development in a major metropolis.

Philadelphia: Work, Space, Family, and Group Experience in the 19th Century represents a decade of research and is a landmark publication. The book includes a group of previously published articles as well as some additions. The topics covered include such diverse issues as the production functions of various industries and migration patterns, while the approaches range from basic description to sophisticated theorizing. As the subtitle indicates, the volume is divided into four main sections which encompass twelve chapters. A final section is entitled "Urban as Process and History and Policy" and highlights "A Tale of Three Cities: Blacks, Immigrants, and Opportunity in Philadelphia, 1850, 1880, 1930, 1970," an article which first appeared in 1979. This article is not used as an overall synthesis of the book but rather emphasizes the dominant focus of the project on the interrelationships of "the experience of a city and its diverse peoples." *Philadelphia* also includes a directory of researchers who have used the project's data and a bibliography of completed work. Considered together, these components reflect the major research effort which Hershberg has spearheaded since 1969.

At the same time, however, *Philadelphia* also confirms that Hershberg's ambition has not been fulfilled in at least two important ways: interdisciplinarity has not been achieved, and a synthetic understanding of the urbanization process has only been sketched. In his well-known piece, "The New Urban History: Toward an Interdisciplinary History of the City," which has been revised to form the introduction to the book, Hershberg argues that the "experience of the P.S.H.P. suggests that it is possible to construct and operationalize the needed mechanism" for interdisciplinary research. In the epilogue to *Philadelphia* Hershberg admits that this goal was not reached. He blames the larger university structure and the "system of rewards that controls hiring and promotion in our institutions of higher learning." This system is based on individual research and "disciplinary purity" at the expense of the "pressing intellectual questions." As a result, the project has tended to be multi-disciplinary rather than interdisciplinary and this tendency is reflected in the chapters of *Philadelphia*.