

Dickerson, M.P.; Drabek, S.; and Woods, J.T., editors. *Problems of Change in Local Government*. Waterloo: Wilfrid Laurier University Press, 1980. 249 pp. Tables, graphs

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Volume 11, numéro 1, june 1982

URI : <https://id.erudit.org/iderudit/1019070ar>

DOI : <https://doi.org/10.7202/1019070ar>

[Aller au sommaire du numéro](#)

Éditeur(s)

Urban History Review / Revue d'histoire urbaine

ISSN

0703-0428 (imprimé)

1918-5138 (numérique)

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Citer ce compte rendu

Graham, K. A. (1982). Compte rendu de [Dickerson, M.P.; Drabek, S.; and Woods, J.T., editors. *Problems of Change in Local Government*. Waterloo: Wilfrid Laurier University Press, 1980. 249 pp. Tables, graphs]. *Urban History Review / Revue d'histoire urbaine*, 11(1), 60–62. <https://doi.org/10.7202/1019070ar>

papers. An in-depth survey of an anglophone paper might have provided more insight into ethnic involvement in real estate. Also, one aspect of the presentation of materials is bothersome. Whereas tables are well integrated with the text, pictures and maps are poorly placed. This is unfortunate since the illustrative materials are interesting.

In his conclusions Linteau shows that Maisonneuve's development was dominated by a francophone bourgeoisie. More evidence is needed to assert conclusively that the francophone bourgeoisie had a special entrance point into capitalist activity through land development. Furthermore, although his conclusion that landed and industrial capital were closely linked in Maisonneuve is important, it is not clear which faction he considers dominant or even if this is a significant question. Nevertheless while having these shortcomings, the work is both useful and an important contribution to Quebec urban history.

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Dickerson, M.P.; Drabek, S.; and Woods, J.T., editors. *Problems of Change in Local Government*. Waterloo: Wilfrid Laurier University Press, 1980. 249 pp. Tables, graphs.

Perhaps the most prominent characteristic of this book is that it illustrates the difficulty in producing a coherent volume from the proceedings of a conference on local government. *Problems of Change in Urban Government* had its origins in such a meeting on alternate forms of urban government held in 1974. Participating in that conference were academics and practitioners who were brought together to discuss the then recent literature on, and experience with, local government reform in Canada and to establish the need for future research and action. As the editors say in their preface, this volume "grew out of" that conference and is not simply a reflection of the proceedings there. The pattern of this growth is somewhat unclear other than it took seven years to complete. They claim that most of the papers have been updated or reconsidered. In addition, they have added material to supplement the papers presented. However, most of this material dates from the mid-1970s. Also, it would seem that some of the papers presented at the 1974 conference (for example, the paper by D. Saunders referred to on page 231) were not included in the volume for reasons left unknown to the reader.

The book is divided into four parts with an overall introduction and an introduction to each part by the editors.

The general introduction has a hortatory tone. It attempts to set out the big picture with respect to urban problems in Canada, at least as the authors saw them in 1974. On page 2 of the introduction, the authors state, "the perspective adopted for the conference and for this volume places the elected official at centre stage." However, it is not at all clear that, once placed at centre stage, the elected official succeeds in holding that ground. In short, the volume drifts. This occurs despite the editors' attempt to organize the book according to three elements which they feel limit politicians' scope for positive action: the structure of urban government; the financial base of local government; and the need for citizen support.

Part I presents three papers dealing with the general topic of "Public Involvement in Urban Government." The first, by Paul Tennant, focuses on what he sees to be the unique nature of Vancouver city politics, especially its civic parties. Steven Clarkson proceeds to take on the discipline of political science as having inadequately addressed the question of redistributive impact of what he describes as the "new citizen participation in urban politics." The paper by Tennant provides some interesting descriptive material and observations on Vancouver city politics but does not really pursue its most interesting observation; namely, "the irony of prominent self-styled reformers on behalf of the people who deny the validity of the plebiscitarian tradition" (page 15). Clarkson's paper must have left some of the practitioners at the conference befuddled as to why they were there.

The most disappointing contribution to this section is by the editors themselves. In a paper entitled, "A Performance Approach to Urban and Political Analysis: The Calgary Case," which was not presented at the conference but which was added to this volume, Dickerson, Drabek and Woods begin with a series of unsubstantiated broadsides concerning citizen dissatisfaction with local government. They then argue for a shift in analytical emphasis to determine the roots of this alleged dissatisfaction. The second section of this paper presents the results of a citizen survey dealing with participation in and satisfaction with Calgary urban government. Although the authors admit the limitations of the data and conclusions presented from this survey (page 77), they nonetheless press on in their call for new approaches to performance analysis of urban government. The lack of substantiation for the general criticisms raised in the first part of the paper plus the tentative results presented in the second left this reader with an uneasy feeling.

In summary, the first part of this volume embodies some of the very problems which plague the whole book. At the most basic level, one has to wonder what the broad purpose of all of this effort is. We are presented with a series of papers which have a rather scattered approach to

one particular subject area, public involvement in urban government. Tennant's paper is a review of the real politics of one Canadian city, and Clarkson's deals with research issues and methodological questions. Although the final paper in this part deals with both research issues and mainline empirical research, it does nothing to synthesize the first two.

Part II presents a series of papers on structural alternatives. These papers were all presented at the conference itself and deal with structural change on a general and specific level. The first paper in this section, by Tom Plunkett, provides an overview of the institutional framework of Canadian local government and makes the basic point that while "urban issues" abound, the political and administrative structure of most Canadian cities is not designed to deal with them.

A paper by Lloyd Axworthy attempts to assess the Unity reforms in Winnipeg in light of the conventional wisdom that the best way to deal with functional urban problems is through an institutional response. His main point, which is later picked up by Meyer Brownstone, is that reliance on institutional change, without attention to the political process results in unintended outcomes. He cites the case of Winnipeg as evidence of this.

Louise Quesnel-Ouellet provides a detailed description of attitudes toward the Quebec Urban Community at the time of its creation and during its early years of operation. Although mostly descriptive, her paper contains some interesting concluding remarks which are provocative when considered in light of some of the comments made in Axworthy's paper. This is particularly true, in the case of her observation on page 141, that the changes in the actors involved and their attitudes have significantly affected the evolution of the Quebec Urban Community.

Part II hangs together somewhat better than the first part of this book. This is particularly true when the papers by Axworthy and Quesnel-Ouellet are matched. Instead of the initial broad overview by Plunkett, which is somewhat similar to that which can be found in many of Plunkett's other writings, it might have been more productive in this case to have Plunkett do a critique of both Axworthy and Quesnel-Ouellet's papers which would synthesize some of the ideas in them and enable Plunkett to comment in light of his own involvement in the Winnipeg case and his extensive participation and interest in Quebec urban government.

Part III deals with the issue of municipal finance. It contains one paper presented at the conference by J.A. Johnson, an economist from McMaster, a reprint of a paper by Tom Plunkett which was published in *Canadian Public Policy* in 1976 and a reprint of "Puppets on a Shoestring," the polemic published by the Federation of Cana-

dian Municipalities which contributed to the collapse of tri-level discussion in 1976.

Johnson's paper focuses on an evaluation of different methods of reducing local deficits. Drawing mostly from American examples, he provides a sometimes interesting discussion of the impact of different tax structures on local governments and localities. Plunkett explores the role of the property tax in supporting the property-related and non-property-related responsibilities of local government. He criticizes local reluctance to assume responsibilities beyond those related to property and makes a plea for recognition of greater financial responsibility and accountability at the local level.

The authors themselves describe "Puppets on a Shoestring" as having a strong bias. In fact, it is a polemic which served to discredit the municipal position at the time of the release of the Tri-level Task Force Report on Public Finance in Canada. Other than providing a service to those who want to refer to this work in the course of their own efforts, it is a contribution of dubious merit in this volume.

Part IV is entitled "Conclusions." It contains the previously-printed article by Allan O'Brien entitled "Father Knows Best." In addition, there is a truncated summary, apparently prepared by the editors, of a paper presented by Jim Lorimer at the 1974 conference. (We are given no idea why the full paper is not presented, or why Lorimer himself did not undertake any alterations.) In addition, there is a second contribution by Lorimer in the form of his retrospective on the conference, reprinted from *City Magazine*. In this retrospective, he describes with considerable pleasure how he was able to break up the seemingly comfortable unanimity of opinion and satisfaction among conference participants by pointing out ideological differences between the majority of those present (described variously as the "liberals" and the "red Tories") and his own view of the property-based roots of urban government and its continued control by big property interests. The final contribution to the "Conclusions" section is by Meyer Brownstone who was designated to act as *rapporteur* for the 1974 effort. His comments provide an accurate summary of three areas of discussion which appear to have emerged during the conference: the ideological debate concerning urban government; the distinction between non-political and political forms of urban government reform; and the problems of transition from one form of urban government to another. Unfortunately, as with the first Lorimer contribution, Brownstone himself did not have any editorial role. He might have made a useful critique of all of the contributions to this book.

In summary, four basic criticisms can be made concerning this book. These all stem from the fact that it does not hang together particularly well. The papers are of mixed

origin, some being drawn from the conference and others being drawn from elsewhere. The original notion that the "politician is at the centre" does not seem to have been sustained as the central focus of contributions to the volume. A number of the papers appear to be elaborations of ideas which have been raised and discussed elsewhere. For example, both of Plunkett's papers are good summaries of some of his other writings; Lorimer's thesis can be found throughout his publications and Axworthy's paper reflects some of the research published by his Institute of Urban Studies in the mid-1970s. The papers themselves are uneven, providing a range of theoretical or methodological criticisms of the study of urban government in Canada (Clarkson, Dickerson, *et al*) juxtaposed with very descriptive papers, such as those presented by Quesnel-Ouellet.

Having said all this, there are perhaps two points in favour of the volume. First, it is refreshing in that it is not Ontario-centred. Indeed, western cities seem to be the most prominent subject of discussion. Secondly – and this is a positive contribution derived from the very deficiencies in the volume cited above – this book prompts suggestions concerning how to generate a coherent publication from a thematic conference. Perhaps the best approach is to have a set of pre-arranged themes and approaches which provide a point of departure for participants who prepare papers. By having all participants agree upon an approach, the themes and papers can be diverse but still make for a coherent whole.

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Pred Allan. *Urban Growth and City-Systems in the United States, 1840-1860*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1980. xviii, 282 pp. Figures, index, tables.

The idea that the growth of a city is explained by the structure of its relations with other cities, that its role as a part of an interdependent system of cities determines its economic performance, has been explored by Allan Pred in a series of studies of the United States from the late-eighteenth to the early-twentieth century. Pred has sought to articulate a general theory capable of encompassing relations among cities in the urban system throughout this entire period of dramatic change. This theory he uses to generate more particular models by which he explores the significance to the urban system at given periods of such processes as industrialization, urbanization, and technological change. While the period from 1840 to 1860 was one of very rapid population growth,

the author considers it important also because it presaged the rise of industrial urbanization and marked the decline of mercantile-based growth. He poses four questions at the outset (page 3):

How simple or complex were the economic interdependencies of major centers within the U.S. system of cities and its various regional city-systems during the 1840-60 period? How did the economic interdependencies of that period interact with the feedback processes that apparently affected population growth within ... cities? How can those same interdependencies be related to the ongoing processes of ... city-system growth and development? Why was major-center rank stability solidified or maintained during these two decades ...?

The book contains three substantial empirical investigations. The first is a discussion of the pattern of urban growth where the principal concern is to document the continuing lead enjoyed by long-established cities during a period of rapid city founding. Acknowledgement of the expansion of the system comes in the consideration given to several rising cities of the mid-west. The argument is based on manipulation of statistics of urban population by date of entry into the census and by region.

Second, the author presents a wealth of fresh evidence of the economic ties that bound cities together in a complex web of relations. His focus is always on the largest cities and on their specialized trading patterns. He most elaborately documents commodity movements from or through Boston, Philadelphia, Buffalo, Cincinnati, and Charleston. Boston's trade he examines with particular attention to detail. Evidence for that city includes its trade in boots and shoes and in ice, and its non-local investments in railways and insurance. He supports his text with a substantial appendix of maps and tables. Pred intends the "snapshots" he offers the reader to be representative rather than definitive examinations of the larger pattern of interurban economic relations and to indicate the complexity of interactions already existing by 1860.

In another, briefer chapter Pred examines spatial biases in information contained in the newspapers of the period. He chose to itemize place specific non-local economic information appearing in several issues of the daily papers published in nine large cities in 1851 and in two cities in 1860. His utilization of consistent data series for each of the cities makes the evidence comparable over time and space, and it is here that he discusses the relevance to his findings of the organization of the post office and the telegraph systems.

The reader will find the theoretical statements in this book less novel than the empirical sections. The model will be familiar to those acquainted with Pred's writing. The model is a loosely structured argument expressed in