

Gertler, Len. *Habitat and Land*. Human Settlement Issues 1. Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 1978. Pp. xi, 42. Tables, illustrations

Seidler, Harry. *Planning and Building Down Under*. Human Settlement Issues 2. Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 1978. Pp. x, 37. Illustrations

Anthony, Harry Antoniadis. *The Challenge of Squatter Settlements, with Special Reference to the Cities of Latin America*. Human Settlement Issues 3. Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 1979. Pp. xi, 76. Tables, figures, illustrations

Lichfield, Nathaniel. *Settlement Planning and Development: A Strategy for Land Policy*. Human Settlement Issues 4. Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 1980. Pp. 52. Figures, illustrations

Robinson, Ira M. *Canadian Urban Growth Trends: Implications for a National Settlement Policy*. Human Settlement Issues 5. Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 1981. Pp. xvii, 154. Tables, figures, illustrations

Jacobs, Peter. *Environmental Strategy and Action: The Challenge of the World Conservation Strategy*. Human Settlement Issues 6. Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 1981. Pp. xviii, 99. Maps, illustrations

Peter McGahan

Volume 11, numéro 3, february 1983

URI : <https://id.erudit.org/iderudit/1019020ar>

DOI : <https://doi.org/10.7202/1019020ar>

[Aller au sommaire du numéro](#)

Éditeur(s)

Urban History Review / Revue d'histoire urbaine

ISSN

0703-0428 (imprimé)

1918-5138 (numérique)

[Découvrir la revue](#)

Citer ce compte rendu

McGahan, P. (1983). Compte rendu de [Gertler, Len. *Habitat and Land*. Human Settlement Issues 1. Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 1978, Pp. xi, 42. Tables, illustrations / Seidler, Harry. *Planning and Building Down Under*. Human Settlement Issues 2. Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 1978. Pp. x, 37. Illustrations / Anthony, Harry Antoniadis. *The Challenge of Squatter Settlements, with Special Reference to the Cities of Latin America*. Human Settlement Issues 3. Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 1979. Pp. xi, 76. Tables, figures, illustrations / Lichfield, Nathaniel. *Settlement Planning and Development: A Strategy for Land Policy*. Human Settlement Issues 4. Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 1980. Pp. 52. Figures, illustrations / Robinson, Ira M. *Canadian Urban Growth Trends: Implications for a National Settlement Policy*. Human Settlement Issues 5. Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 1981. Pp. xvii, 154. Tables, figures, illustrations / Jacobs, Peter. *Environmental Strategy and Action: The Challenge of the World Conservation Strategy*. Human Settlement Issues 6. Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 1981. Pp. xviii, 99. Maps, illustrations]. *Urban History Review / Revue d'histoire urbaine*, 11(3), 82–84. <https://doi.org/10.7202/1019020ar>

All Rights Reserved © Urban History Review / Revue d'histoire urbaine, 1983

Ce document est protégé par la loi sur le droit d'auteur. L'utilisation des services d'Érudit (y compris la reproduction) est assujettie à sa politique d'utilisation que vous pouvez consulter en ligne.

<https://apropos.erudit.org/fr/usagers/politique-dutilisation/>

Érudit

Cet article est diffusé et préservé par Érudit.

Érudit est un consortium interuniversitaire sans but lucratif composé de l'Université de Montréal, l'Université Laval et l'Université du Québec à Montréal. Il a pour mission la promotion et la valorisation de la recherche.

<https://www.erudit.org/fr/>

Travellers suggests that scholars must look beyond the boundaries of cities to appreciate the real meaning of “urban” as it developed in the nineteenth century. In this sense, Gagan’s regional perspective should spark debate among urban historians and, as with all fine books, *Hopeful Travellers* should stimulate a flurry of new studies. In the current context, these results would be welcome indeed.

Chad Gaffield
Department of History
University of Victoria

Gertler, Len. *Habitat and Land*. Human Settlement Issues 1. Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 1978. Pp.xi, 42. Tables, illustrations.

Seidler, Harry. *Planning and Building Down Under*. Human Settlement Issues 2. Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 1978. Pp.x, 37. Illustrations.

Anthony, Harry Antoniadis. *The Challenge of Squatter Settlements, with Special Reference to the Cities of Latin America*. Human Settlement Issues 3. Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 1979. Pp.xi, 76. Tables, figures, illustrations.

Lichfield, Nathaniel. *Settlement Planning and Development: A Strategy for Land Policy*. Human Settlement Issues 4. Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 1980. Pp.52. Figures, illustrations.

Robinson, Ira M. *Canadian Urban Growth Trends: Implications for a National Settlement Policy*. Human Settlement Issues 5. Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 1981. Pp.xvii, 154. Tables, figures, illustrations.

Jacobs, Peter. *Environmental Strategy and Action: The Challenge of the World Conservation Strategy*. Human Settlement Issues 6. Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 1981. Pp.xviii, 99. Maps, illustrations.

The United Nations Conference on Human Settlements – Habitat ‘76 – held in Vancouver in June 1976 represented an important event in the history of urban policy development. The “Declaration of Principles” and more specific recommendations that emerged from this conference dealt with a variety of issues affecting human settlements throughout the world. To encourage continued research on and discussion of these issues, the University of British Columbia established a Centre for Human Settlements and commenced publication of its proceedings and the work of its scholars-in-residence in this *Human Settlement Issues* series. The set of monographs

by these planners and architects forms a valuable contribution to the general debate over the types of urban policy and planning that are necessary for regulating current and future settlement trends. These provide us not only with succinct statements of urban land and development issues, but wisely remind us of the benefits to be gained from examining how these issues have been addressed in a variety of countries and cultures. On-going experiments in urban planning elsewhere in the world can furnish us with valuable suggestions of how we might improve the planning process here in Canada. Each monograph is relatively short and is generally free of unnecessary jargon. The series as a whole can be of much use in courses in urban studies and to those who wish brief overviews of some of the debates and experiments in settlement planning.

The first volume in the series, by Len Gertler, focuses on land policy and compares how such countries as Great Britain, the United States, France, Australia, Sweden and others have dealt with the issues of land resource management, control of changes in land use, recovery of the unearned increment in land values, and public vs. private ownership of land – issues that Habitat ‘76 vigorously debated. The great diversity of policy responses to the problems of urban sprawl, overconcentration and land speculation is clearly evident. Attempts to frame comprehensive policies at the national level are found especially in societies where resolution of these issues is paramount, such as Singapore. In Britain land policy has been improved greatly with the Community Land Act of 1975 and the Development Land Tax Bill of 1976, which seek to establish successful land development and management on a national level and in the public interest. France’s even more structured strategy contrasts greatly with the *laissez-faire* approach in the United States, where private control over land remains a central value. Gertler does not deal with the Canadian context directly, but most of the countries he examines show greater sophistication in dealing with land problems than does Canada, a fact that is, indeed, “cause for great concern.” He reiterates how we need to explore more fully this “international pool of experience” in policy making and select those elements congruent with our governmental and cultural systems.

Much can be learned, for example, from the Australian efforts since 1972 to devise a national population settlement strategy, which Harry Seidler outlines in Volume 2. To reduce overconcentration in Australia’s major urban areas, a growth centre programme has been developed. Regional growth centres (located at significant distances from metropolitan communities) and metropolitan growth centres (planned as self-contained not dormitory communities) are being encouraged through this programme. Seidler illustrates the nature of each by describing the essential characteristics of Albury-Wodonga,

Australia's first regional growth centre, and Campbelltown, within the Sydney region. Among the innovations noted, from which we might benefit, Australian new town development initially emphasizes providing places for work rather than housing. This is done with the expectation that the private sector will furnish subsequent housing and commercial development, thus sustaining growth in these centres. The goal is to achieve in places like Campbelltown a wide array of employment opportunities, social facilities and housing densities. Seidler shows the advantages of initial public ownership of land in general for effecting such a strategy and for insuring, through long-term leasehold, that significant increases in value due to development or change of use are reserved for the wider community. The failure to establish public ownership in inner city areas, he argues, is one of the reasons for the fragmentary pattern of redevelopment there. Seidler, like the other authors in this series, comments critically on the consequences for our cities and environment of the continued single-minded pursuit of economic growth.

Perhaps nowhere is there a more desperate need for coherent and sophisticated land and settlement policies than in Latin America. By 1990 the total population in Latin American cities over 20,000 will be 220 million, of whom one-third to two-thirds will be squatters (those illegally occupying public or private land or buildings). The squatter population is growing much more rapidly than the total population. In about ten years, for example, three-fourths of Lima's residents will be living in *barriadas*. Most of the squatters are rural migrants seeking to improve their chances for employment. Harry Anthony in Volume 3 of this series summarizes the immense social, economic and environmental problems they encounter in their "spontaneous settlements." The initial response to these settlements was one which reflected the distribution of power and wealth in these societies. Squatters were viewed as "parasites"; their communities were demolished and the residents were relocated in public housing on the periphery. This only compounded the problem. The stock of low-cost housing was eroded even further. The resettled squatters faced increased family expenditures, unacceptable distance from work and greater alienation from the wider society. More realistic and sensitive experiments have been mounted in Columbia, El Salvador, Uruguay and elsewhere to provide adequate housing and skills for the squatters. These projects seek to allow residents to acquire legal title to their land – an important prerequisite to community stability. Through various self-help and mutual help schemes the squatters are able to contribute to the upgrading of their settlements themselves. The extent to which these efforts will successfully meet the needs of this growing population is unclear. Anthony calls for a change of attitude on the part of more established and affluent residents towards these urban newcomers – a

greater willingness to share. How realistic this is remains doubtful, however, in these highly stratified societies.

Human settlement planning must take into account the specific needs and resources of particular countries. The infrastructure provided in squatter settlements cannot be of the same standard as that adopted in industrialized societies. Instead, Anthony argues for modest, but financially feasible, forms of housing and services. This need to adapt planning to the specific context is a major theme in Nathaniel Lichfield's review of the nature of land policy in general. Like Gertler, Lichfield emphasizes how the use of land shapes so fundamentally the development of human settlements. Noting again how land policies vary in scope, content and links to other policies, he briefly examines the Habitat land recommendations (land resource management, control of land use changes, recapturing plus value, public ownership, and patterns of ownership) in terms of some of their ambiguities. For example, how competent are public institutions to administer the assembled land for human settlement planning?

Perhaps the most provocative monograph in this series is Ira Robinson's analysis of the policy implications of recent Canadian urban growth trends. Robinson attacks those who assume a national policy of deconcentration is necessary to offset the projected overconcentration of population in Canada's largest metropolitan centres. Such "conventional wisdom," he asserts, is increasingly inaccurate. Using more recent demographic data, Robinson skilfully demonstrates how Canada's rate of urban growth is slowing down, the concentration of population in large centres is slackening, and smaller communities, in contrast, are experiencing rapid rates of increase. The basic feature of Canada's emerging settlement pattern is, therefore, variability of individual community growth rates. Robinson urges a national settlement policy be framed that will take this diversity into account, that will be oriented to all aspects of settlement change. The difficulty in achieving this, he recognizes, is considerable (it will require, for example, some level of federal-provincial consensus). Robinson's monograph, however, will reopen the debate on the settlement policy most appropriate to Canada. In addition, he correctly notes the need for much more detailed research on the nature of and reasons for changes in settlement distribution, and whether these trends will continue in light of the energy crisis, mortgage financing difficulties and fundamental attitudes and values of Canadians on a variety of issues. Robinson's speculations, though at times open to challenge and substantial debate, are intelligently phrased and refreshingly critical.

No matter what type of settlement policy is pursued, however, the previous assumption that conservation and

development are mutually exclusive processes must be rejected. Peter Jacobs, in the sixth volume of the series, forcefully argues that conservation must guide development ("eco-development"). If human settlements are to survive in both developed and developing societies, renewable resources must be exploited on a sustainable basis. Jacobs calls for a more adaptive environmental management process, one that involves what he terms "anticipatory planning" – seeking a desired future state of the environment by actively and forcefully manipulating present conditions. That this requires a coherent set of policies, a recognition that human settlements can only be improved if a *laissez-faire* approach to their development is abandoned, and the wisdom to see that land, housing and urban problems are closely linked, is perhaps one of the fundamental themes reappearing throughout all the volumes of this series.

Peter McGahan
Department of Sociology
University of New Brunswick

Artibise, A.F.J., ed. *Town and City: Aspects of Western Canadian Urban Development*. Canadian Plains Studies, Volume 10. Regina: Canadian Plains Research Center, University of Regina, 1981. Pp.xix, 455. Tables, figures, maps, illustrations. \$15.00

This hefty volume is divided into four sections. The first contains two essays on the economic framework and urbanization of the Prairies and British Columbia respectively. Parts two and three deal with the establishment and growth of towns and cities. These two sections, containing eleven papers, form the bulk of the volume. The concluding section, "Urban Social Problems," scratches the surface of this large topic with two articles. All articles in the volume are competent both in style and substance. All go well beyond the antiquarianism which the editor, Alan Artibise, suggests has dominated writings on western Canadian urban history.

No brief review can do justice to all the articles in the volume. Readers may well find interesting and useful the papers that I will ignore, such as R.A.J. McDonald on pre-World War I development of the economic system of B.C. with particular reference to Victoria and Vancouver; Selwood and Baril on "The Hudson's Bay Company and Prairie Town Development, 1870-1888"; Bill Brennan on the mixed blessing of business-government involvement in the early development of Regina and Moose Jaw; C.N. Forward on Victoria's functional character; P. Roy on pre-Depression Vancouver as "The Mecca of the Unemployed"; and L.H. Thomas on Saskatoon to 1920, an attractive, clearly presented paper, written by one of the

fathers of Prairie historiography nearly four decades ago but previously unpublished.

Paul Phillips' paper, "The Prairie Urban System, 1911-1961: Specialization and Change," is both interesting and frustrating. It has the advantage of surveying a long period of time and presenting a variety of economic and demographic statistical indices. The resultant interpretation, which concentrates on the rise and decline of the commercial empire of Winnipeg, is plausible but not entirely convincing. Statistics do not, of course, speak for themselves and careful readers of Phillips' essay will find themselves questioning the author's interpretation of the statistics, developing alternate hypotheses, and wishing for complete (rather than broken) statistical runs. Moreover, readers may also find themselves desiring a less dominant Winnipeg focus (indeed wishing for some examination of urban centres other than the "Big Five"). In short, this article engages the reader, not because it is perfect but because it is stimulating.

Another stimulating but more satisfying article is Carl Berke's "The Original City of Edmonton: A Derivative Prairie Urban Community." This conceptually advanced paper not only presents much good and useful information about Edmonton to 1906 but also adopts an approach that could be applied to other locations. Berke argues that a centre becomes a city when individualism is replaced by community in terms of its social interaction: "individual pursuits and the quality of individual lives [come] irreversibly to depend on the quality of the urban organism. A tyranny of community [is] exerted in which it becomes unimaginable to live without it" (p.306). By examining such topics as demographic patterns, the urban élite, the provision of civic services, efforts to increase economic prosperity, professionalism in civic administration, voluntary associations and recreational activities, Berke convincingly demonstrate that by 1906 Edmonton was indeed a city in reality as well as in law. The article thus presents not only a useful model but also a fine example of how to apply the model. Some caution must be exercised, of course, for as Potyondi's article on Minnedosa (population 1,300 in 1906) indicates, even small centres might have amenities and organizations similar to those of major urban places. Moreover, the concept of a transition from individualism to community lacks precision. Does community not exist in rural areas? But these are quibbles with a fine paper.

The subject-matter of Henry Klassen's "In Search of Neglected and Delinquent Children: The Calgary Children's Aid Society, 1909-1920" is fascinating. Klassen's perspective is almost exactly the one promoters of the Children's Aid Society would have wished for. A quite different approach could have been adopted, one that stressed social control by the élite rather than altruistic *noblesse oblige*. And what control!