

REVIEW ESSAY

Power, Anne and John Houghton.

Jigsaw Cities: Big Places, Small Spaces.

Bristol: Policy Press, 2007.

264 pp.

ISBN: 9781861346582 (pbk); ISBN: 9781861346589 (cloth).

Hall, Sir Peter.

London Voices, London Lives: Tales from a Working Capital.

Bristol: Policy Press, 2007.

498 pp.

ISBN: 9781861349835 (pbk); ISBN: 97818613498429 (cloth).

These books are both by London-based scholars with wide experience of urban and regional development across the UK and further afield. All three authors have extensive experience of policy-related research and scholarship as well as wide international hands-on experience in urban policy arenas in the UK, the USA and elsewhere.

Anne Power is Professor of Social Policy at the London School of Economics and Political Science. She was a Sustainable Development Commissioner with responsibility for regeneration and sustainable communities as well as a member of the government's Urban Task Force. She chaired the Independent Commission on the Future of Housing in Birmingham and this latter experience is a major element of this book. John Houghton was seconded from a government post to work as her assistant when she was chairing that Commission.

Sir Peter Hall is one of the world's most distinguished urban scholars and activists with an extraordinary depth and breadth of publications spanning over 40 years. He is the Bartlett Professor of Planning and Regeneration at University College London. He has been a high-level policy adviser to Conservative and Labour governments in the UK and, as President of the Town and Country Planning Association, is actively involved in ongoing policy debates regarding urban and regional development. With such distinguished pedigrees, it might be hoped that these two books would provide a fine overview of urban policy and practice in the UK.

Jigsaw Cities certainly provides a 'big picture' perspective on urban policy in the UK. The authors say that they "use the metaphor of the jigsaw to capture the complexity and interconnectedness of modern British cities" (p. 2). The point and substance of this metaphor, sadly, remain unclear to this reviewer. The term appears to be more of a sound-bite than a meaningful addition to existing modes of urban description and analysis.

Part I of *Jigsaw Cities* comprises a review of the history of UK urban policy, especially housing and planning, drawing mainly on secondary sources albeit flavoured by the authors' advocacy of community-based perspectives. They state that housing "was to be a central plank of the new cradle-to-grave welfare state, one of the 'five giants' of [William Henry] Beveridge's post-war plan." Other scholars of housing history, however, have argued that housing was *not* a pillar of the British welfare state, or that it was a best

a very ‘wobbly’ pillar¹. The last chapter of Part I section introduces the authors’ work in Birmingham in which the authors enthusiastically endorse the 1972 shift from large-scale slum clearance towards policies of ‘improvement’ of homes and neighbourhoods. Power and Houghton claim that the scale of this policy “was almost on a par with the demolitions of the previous 20 years’ ‘Enveloping’, as the new plan to ‘mass improve’ terraced streets was called, salvaged thousands of homes without any displacement, and greatly improved the appearance of many areas” (p 94). My only difficulty with this is that it is not true. As my colleague Bob Blackaby and I have pointed out, ‘enveloping’ was not introduced until the late 1970s and was largely a response to the very slow rate of uptake of house improvement grants². My concern is not a narrow personal gripe that the authors of *Jigsaw Cities* overlooked our work, (as they also overlook much of the most substantial published work on UK housing), but that the picture they paint derives largely from ideological commitments to their perspectives on cities and urban policy.

The rest of *Jigsaw Cities* provides a distinctive perspective on cities in Britain, both assessing recent developments and considering future policy initiatives. They describe and critique the New Labour government’s policy turn relating to cities, introduced in the ‘Sustainable Communities Programme’. Some of this will be informative for a Canadian audience, especially the difficulties that governments face trying to deal simultaneously with high pressure and growth imperatives in some regions but decline and change in others. Other parts address narrow UK debates without reference to their wider international significance. Overall, then, I consider this to be an idiosyncratic book which may be of little use to oversea audiences.

London Voices, London Lives is a very different take on contemporary cities, with a specific and unashamed focus just on London. The book derives from a collaborative research project undertaken with a team of colleagues in other British universities, which culminated in the publication of a substantial book on London’s political economy and contemporary life³. The book under review here provides in-depth insights into what contemporary Londoners think about their lives and the parts of London in which they live. It reports on interviews with 132 respondents – of many varieties – in a range of case study areas selected as broadly representative of different kinds of places. It provides marvellous insights into how people live in London and relate their places of residence to work. It is not directly focused on ‘policy’ but, with Peter Hall at his most ethnographic, shows clearly the diversity of experiences and processes of change affecting one of the world’s greatest cities. It paints both a big picture of changing regional economy and demography as well as the small intense locally-significant diversity of people and places. This book, in my view, is of relevance to anybody interested in the diverse realities of major western cities at the beginning of the 21st century.

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¹ See Malpass, P. (2005). *Housing and the Welfare State: The Development of Housing Policy in Britain*. Basingstoke, Hampshire: Palgrave Macmillan.

² Paris, C. & B. Blackaby. (1979). *Not Much Improvement: Urban Renewal Policy in Birmingham*. London: Heinemann.

³ Buck, N., I.Gordon, P. Hall, M. Harloe & M. Kleinman. (2002). *Working Capital: Life and Labour in Contemporary London*, London: Routledge.

BOOK REVIEWS

Goldman, Mark.

City on the Edge: Buffalo, New York, 1900-Present.

Amherst, NY: Prometheus, 2007.

423 pp.

ISBN: 9781591024576.

City on the Edge is Mark Goldman's third book of Buffalo history and his most hopeful treatment of that city's experience of decline. Indeed, it is Goldman's interest in that downward trajectory and what to do about it that links the three books.

High Hopes (1983)⁴ covered the full sweep of the city's history, from its founding in the early 19th century through its development as a commercial *entrepot*, to a center of heavy industry, and to its catastrophic decline in the early post-industrial era. *City on the Lake* (1990)⁵ zeroed in on the period after the Second World War and the community's struggles to come to grips with the interlocking dynamics of suburbanization, the rise of the automobile, racial migration and conflict, central city disinvestment, and finally the end of three quarters of a century of industrial prosperity.

City on the Edge overlaps – one must say oddly – with the two previous volumes, covering as it does the period from Buffalo's zenith as an urban center at the time of the Pan American Exposition to the beginning of the 21st century. Goldman organizes the book roughly by decades, and each chapter treats a series of topics: broad economic conditions, urban planning and policy, and the politics of the city.

Goldman also deals with two themes less familiar in city histories: the artistic and cultural development of the city and the history of public education in Buffalo, the latter of which is of interest because of Buffalo's ground-breaking efforts to engineer a solution to segregated schools. Yet it is the history of art in Buffalo that is really a delight, from Seymour H. Knox's curatorial genius as a patron of modern art and the embrace by others of the avant garde in mid-20th century music, to the assembly of University at Buffalo's famous poetry collection and the acquisition of the James Joyce papers, to the life of the University's legendary English Department (Barth, Fiedler, Creeley, and others).

Otherwise, Goldman hammers away on Buffalo's obvious failures in urban planning and development from the early hollowing out of downtown to make room for the automobile and the expansion of the highway network at the expense of priceless Olmsted Parks, to the siting of a new university campus in a swampy suburb and the forlorn attempts from the Urban Renewal era forward to somehow demolish and build a way out of decline.

However, Goldman shows little interest in either a substantive analysis of the roots of Buffalo's economic predicament or the way forward. Factories shut down and moved away; that's all we know. As for the future, concepts of the new economy, creative class,

⁴ Goldman, Mark. (1983). *High Hopes: The Rise and Decline of Buffalo, New York*. Albany: SUNY.

⁵ Goldman, Mark. (1990). *City on the Lake: the Challenge of Change in Buffalo, New York*. Amherst, NY: Prometheus.

and globalization are absent. Instead, Goldman moves from an appropriate critique of big-project redevelopment – “silver bullets” in local parlance – to a rhapsody about the power of community gardens, historic preservation, spontaneous redevelopment, and other grassroots initiatives. All of these things have made a positive impact on the city, but Goldman generally ignores the potential of developments in health care, high technology, and higher education to create a new era of prosperity. The power of place is important, as he argues, but so is a city’s place in relation to the economic power of the age.

Likewise, Goldman has no theoretical interest in the dysfunction of local politics. All the failures of recent Mayors were apparently personal ones. Thus, there is no prescription for a fundamental remedy to a political culture which most Buffalonians would agree has failed. Goldman is interested in citizenship but its practice doesn’t seem to include the ballot box.

Otherwise, a reader familiar with Buffalo and its history will be unnerved by the frequency with which Goldman misspells names and mangles chronologies. For academic and intellectual rigor more generally, the two earlier books are to be preferred. Yet *City on the Edge* contains material that the reader is unlikely to find elsewhere, on the flowering of the arts in Buffalo and the more recent neighborhood renaissance.

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Hanley, Lisa, Blair Ruble, and Allison Garland (eds).

Immigration and Integration in Urban Communities: Renegotiating the City.

Washington D.C. and Baltimore: Woodrow Wilson Center Press and The John Hopkins University Press, 2008.

336 pp.

ISBN: 9780801888410.

This book challenges the prevailing, counterpoising paradigms of immigration studies and integration strategies – multiculturalism and assimilationism – by noting that “host communities are not as static and migrants are not as passive” as these positions would suggest (p. 2). Instead, communities and migrants are constantly evolving, reacting and adapting to each other. The book explores these negotiations in the physical realm of cities, questioning notions of citizenship and membership in society. In the introduction, Ruble, Hanley, and Garland advocate for nuanced approaches that view “societies as more variable, migrants as more proactive, and cities as more meaningful” (p. 3). They stress the global scale and increasing pace of migration around the world, and the determinate role of cities as units of analysis and settings for integration. The book’s chapters cut across disciplines, with lessons for planning from anthropology, law, political science, and geography. They are illustrative snapshots that “alert the reader to today’s profound recalibration of urban life” (p. 13).

The book is divided in two parts, the first being the Renegotiation of Urban Space, while the second addresses the Renegotiation of Urban Citizenship. Part I begins with

Michael Jones-Correa discussing new trends of spatial distribution of migrants in the United States and their implications for governments and communities, demonstrating through a case study in Washington D.C. that suburbanization of immigration lends itself to different dynamics of racial sorting, ethnic organization, and government response than those assumed in the past. Rhacel Salazar Parreñas analyzes the placelessness and exclusion of Filipina domestic migrants in Rome and Los Angeles. These phenomena are explored in both the private sphere of the workplace and the public sphere of these two cities, revealing the centrality of race and class in women's migratory experiences. At the rarely-explored micro scale of household and other everyday spaces, Serin Houston and Richard Wright uncover the struggles of ethnic mixing in Seattle. Particularly revealing is their consideration of household "as a geographic scale, a collectivity, and a set of practices, rather than just a mark of location and residence" (p. 74). The approach opens up a new arena of research that focuses attention on relationships between individuals for the study of displacement and belonging. Chantal Saint-Blancat discusses the multifaceted challenges of the construction of mosques and the particular demands and public space visibility strategies on the part of young Muslims in Europe. The author discusses how mosques crystallize a new way of social interactions in public space and explains that, depending on context, factors such as misunderstandings, lack of communication, and political ambiguity slow down the institutionalization of Islam in European public space. Next, and drawing on the experience of the Congolese diaspora in Johannesburg, AbdouMaliq Simone argues that life in Africa revolves around migration and that there is an inextricable and dynamic relationship between urbanization and migration. He captures phenomena that are largely taking place outside the purview of the state, challenging conventional paradigms of urban governance and planning.

Part II also has five chapters. Caroline Brettel discusses migrant incorporation in cities and suburbs in the context of the Dallas-Fort Worth emerging gateway region, giving continuation to issues explored by Jones-Correa. David Ley's portrayal of the controversies regarding big ("monster") houses in Vancouver, which pitched wealthy Asian migrants against local preservationists, reveals less-discussed aspects of the challenges of multicultural planning. Jason Pribilsky's examination of health care among Ecuadorians in Rockland County, New York, highlights how transnational dynamics subvert conventional spatial and temporal dimensions of public health practices. Barbara Schmitter Heisler's comparison of immigration policies in Stuttgart and Munich vindicates the potential of cities, even within strong nation-state regulatory systems, to advance migrant-friendly policies and programs. The book closes with Dickson Eyoh's ambitious piece on urban citizenship and the disenfranchisement of migrants in Africa over three periods of history – the colonial era; the postcolonial era until the 1980s; and the post-1980 period.

This volume excelled at the ultimate classroom-applicability test: it was used as required reading for a course on planning and migration which I taught in Darmstadt, Germany, in May 2009, for an audience of master of planning students representing twenty four different nationalities. Because of the variety of case studies offered, most students could find both familiar and new migratory and planning conditions from which to relate and learn. The book also highlighted to them the importance of context sensitivity for appropriate urban analysis and proposal making.

Immigration and Integration in Urban Communities is a valuable resource for policy makers, academic analysts, and students of urban migration.

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Moore, Paul S.

Now Playing: Early Moviegoing and the Regulation of Fun.

Albany: State University of New York Press, 2008.

250 pp.

ISBN: 9780791474181.

It is difficult to disentangle the development of the twentieth-century city from that of film. Perceptions of the city were powerfully shaped by and mediated through film, and throughout its history, film has been profoundly influenced by the shifting nature of urban spaces and urban experiences. Moreover, changes in the moviegoing experience have reflected and shaped changes in cityscapes (e.g. the shift from stand-alone, neighbourhood or downtown cinemas to suburban multiplexes). In *Now Playing: Early Moviegoing and the Regulation of Fun*, Paul S. Moore examines this relationship with a detailed discussion of the development of cinemas and the moviegoing experience in early-Twentieth Century Toronto.

Moore demonstrates how local practices of moviegoing in Toronto played a key role in the development of moviegoing as a mass practice. “Film,” he argues, “had first to be integrated into the culture of particular cities to become a national or global practice” (2). Moore examines the role of municipal and provincial regulation (from fire-safety regulations to the creation of formalized censorship), showmanship (the promotional and other practices of the theatre owners), and promotion and journalism (both in terms of advertising in newspapers and the related development of journalistic interest in film and moviegoing) in transforming moviegoing into a mass practice in the Toronto of the period. Moore’s extensive archival research and attention to detail effectively illustrate his claims, in the process revealing fascinating local particularities to early moviegoing in Toronto, such as the surprising role of fire-safety regulations (and the legitimate fear of fire in public spaces), for example, in formalizing and legitimating moviegoing. If at times lacking in memorable anecdotes and a bit bogged down in minutiae, *Now Playing* provides a thorough discussion of a fascinating topic, and will be invaluable to all readers interested in early moviegoing or Toronto during this period.

It is probably of less value, however, to urban studies scholars. Despite Moore’s frequent references to the essential role of urban cultures in the transformation of moviegoing into a mass practice, particularly in the introduction, that is not really the focus of the book. Rarely does Moore focus on how the city as such, or practices and experiences particular to cities, shaped the practice of moviegoing, nor does the book have much to say about the role of moviegoing in the development of the modern city. Moreover, although he does cite some of the obvious contemporary (more or less) scholars on the modern city (e.g. Simmel, and Wirth and others in the Chicago School),

Moore does not really engage with the wide range of potentially relevant authors in urban studies, particularly those who have critiqued or further developed the work of those scholars he does cite. This is not really a criticism, however, simply a recognition that *Now Playing* is primarily situated in and of relevance to film studies rather than urban studies.

On a more critical note, *Now Playing* is much better at providing detail than it is at broader analysis; or – perhaps more accurately – it suffers from a tendency to make broader claims that do not reflect the book’s actual focus. For example, the book’s suggestive final sentence is “[w]atching movies, we became a city, and then a nation, together” (224). Disregarding the misleading ‘we’ (neither Moore nor his readers were part of the moviegoing audience being constructed during the time covered by his study), the problem is that although *Now Playing* does discuss citizenship in its final chapter, it does not focus on how moviegoing produced a coherent sense of civic or national identity. It is as if this final sentence, and others like it throughout the book, refer to another book, one that could have been written but was not. Similarly, the subtitle’s reference to the “regulation of fun” suggests a discussion in which the book does not really engage. Of more minor concern, *Now Playing* is repetitive in places, with similar or nearly identical sentences being repeated on a number of occasions, and marred by a tendency toward irrelevant and distracting localism in places (e.g. not infrequent references to the present status of stores or buildings referred to in passing).

Despite these concerns, I would recommend *Now Playing* to anyone interested in early moviegoing or in life in Toronto in the first two decades of the Twentieth Century.

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Schrank, Sarah

Art and the City: Civic Imagination and Cultural Authority in Los Angeles.

University of Pennsylvania Press, 2008.

224 pp.

ISBN: 9780812241174.

In *Art and The City*, historian Sarah Shrank explores the importance of public art and the city’s artistic subcultures in influencing civic culture. By illuminating interactions between city boosters, official arts organizations, various social groups, and individual artists between 1903 and 2005, Shrank illustrates the complicated struggles over representation in a nascent city striving to develop, project and maintain its own cultural pedigree. Shrank reveals the multifaceted ways these uneven representational politics have played out through the century: hip sporty bohemian cliques of white men garner cachet, while women and artists of colour are sidelined; middle class white art students and African American communities collide in their attempts to preserve community art; and women artists challenge exclusionary commercial galleries and sexist media representations.

Shrank begins by explaining Los Angeles early growing pains. The emerging metropolitan paradise grew up out of the desert and early boosters – Chamber of Commerce representatives and investors – were absorbed with cultivating an appealing civic image to lure new middle class residents to the area as early as 1903. These groups collaborated with the newly formed Municipal Art Commission to create an official, marketable urban aesthetic. In the following four chapters Shrank draws on examples to illustrate the contested role the arts have played in the city's growing identity.

Chapter 1 maps the development of promotional civic arts in the 1920s and 1930s which were favoured by elite boosters. In this same time period, avant-garde, modern art practices also proliferated, although these paintings and sculptures frustrated the more conservative boosters who favoured landscape paintings and what they considered more conventional artistic practices. Shrank continues this story about the emergence of modernism in chapter 2 where she interrogates the complicated relationship boosters and social justice advocates had with communist muralist David Alford Siqueiros. Eventually deported for his political beliefs, Siqueiros carved out space for non-white, ethnic, and modernist artists; meanwhile anti-modernists and boosters also tried to instrumentalize his work that animated everyday street spaces.

Chapter 3 follows the story of modernism in Los Angeles. Shrank discusses how boundary-pushing artistic practices were attacked. Unconventional and political artists were stereotyped as harbingers of socialist and multiracial policies, flaring cold war anxieties and red baiting. Chapter four tells the story of the rise of 1960's bohemian arts culture including coffee houses and beach bongo parties. In this decade, Venice Beach and West Hollywood male artists cultivated images Los Angeles boosters were eager to market; in their promotional materials they celebrated cars, surfing and sex. Finally, chapter five portrays the complicated relationship amongst preservationists, Latino and African community members and city officials over Sabato (Sam) Rodia's Watts Towers, an impressive example of creative, indigenous folk art.

Each story traces the artists' struggle for identity and space in a rapidly transforming city; Los Angeles grew into a key financial hub and global city by the 1980s. Displayed in hip commercial galleries, respected municipal art museums and everyday urban spaces, the political murals, graffiti, neon-sculptures, collage, paintings and prints illustrated in these chapters are all implicated in their struggles to assert their distinctiveness as the city shifted around them. Some of these artists were intentionally political in their artistic practices, raising important race, class and gender issues. Meanwhile, other artists created work that firmly established their role in hip scenes, increasing their notoriety.

Throughout the book, Schrank provides examples where municipal authorities attempt to instrumentalize an artist's practices to promote a creative, distinctive and marketable Los Angeles. She also reveals how these networks police and censor artistic work deemed too unruly and political. Unstable and contested, these value judgments shifted along with different political moments in the city. For example, 1960s Venice Beach notorious coffee houses were contradictorily seen as quirky meeting places that were highlighted in tourist guidebooks as distinctive destinations, but were also raided by police aiming to catch pot dealers, quell undesirable behaviour and monitor 'communists.'

Shrank touches on the role of various city boosters – real estate developers, policy planners, Chamber of Commerce and Olympics planners – in defining the role of culture in Los Angeles. In order to provide more insights for scholars interested in urban politics, Shrank could have focussed more on the influence of these networks, especially in the chapter that discusses the city's shift to financial centre or world city status in the 1980's. Overall, *Art and the City* is an important book for outlining the contested role of image production and aesthetics in Los Angeles's history. As civic boosters throughout the world jockey for recognition and cultural capital with arts festivals and Richard Florida style 'creative city' planning, Shrank's book reminds us that this race for identity and attention is not a new trend. The case studies in these chapters also alert us to the uneven race, class, gender and ideological tensions that exist between urban elites and the everyday people that bring vibrant cultural practices to city spaces.

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