

# Critical Planning

**Journal of the UCLA Department of Urban Planning  
volume 6, spring 1999**

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# Critical Planning volume 6 spring 1999

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*Note from the Editors* .....1

## The City Traversed

- The Bus Stop: An Event by the BALAGSTAN Collective** Terry Valen ..... 5
- Rethinking Bus Stops** James T. Rojas .....7
- Teleurbanism and Los Angeles Free Calls All Weekend Long** Ted Kane .....14
- A Synergy of the Physical and the Social** Anastasia Loukaitou-Sideris ..... 21
- William H. Whyte: Seeing, Looking, Observing, and Learning from the City**  
Mustafa Dikeç and Liette Gilbert ..... 23

## The City Excavated

- People I've Been, Places I've Met** Seth O. Stark ..... 26
- Vizualization Tools and Public Participation: From Crayons to Computers**  
Kheir Al-Khodmany .....27
- Case+Study=Case Study? A Methodological Inquiry into Image Production at  
Potsdamer Platz, Berlin** Ute A. Lehrer.....36
- Planning Methods at the Onset of the 21st Century** Abel Valenzuela Jr. ....51

## The City Conceived

- Empire** Michelle Han Kim .....56
- Advocacy Planning and the Question of the Self and the Other** Orit Stieglitz .....57
- Transformative Community Practice: New Populism, Social Movements and  
Progressive Latino Politics** Marcos C. Vargas .....63
- Theories and Practices of Planning in Los Angeles** Michele Mc Grath ..... 76
- Beyond Outreach: A Model for University "Affirmative Investment" in Low Income  
Communities** Neal Richman .....78
- The Stimulus of Remembering** Edward W. Soja ..... 84

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## The City Transformed

<b>Building Images III</b> Evan Nisonson .....	90
<b>Urban Revitalization in an Ethnic Enclave: Huntington Park, CA 1965-1998</b>	
Robert J. Rodino .....	92
<b>A New Subdivision in a Chicano Barrio</b> Richard E. Martínez .....	104
<b>Gender Planning, Inside/Out?</b> Jacqueline Leavitt .....	110
<b>Planning and the Implementation of Welfare Reform</b> Paul M. Ong .....	114
<b>Six Easy Roads to Planning Perdition</b> John Friedmann .....	119
<b>Book Review: Roger Keil/Los Angeles: Globalization, Urbanization and Social Struggles</b>	
Julie-Anne Boudreau .....	123
<b>The Critical Planning Salons</b> Reuben De Leon .....	126



## Note from the Editors

At a time when the Department of Urban Planning at UCLA was still in its infancy, Harvey S. Perloff believed that learning was a life long process. Twenty-five years later, John Friedmann reiterated Perloff's thoughts in the pages of this journal's inaugural issue. At the editor's request, he reflected on the department's journey over the last quarter century. "Perloff's words," wrote Friedmann, "ring as true today as they did then and have become part of our legacy. Perloff admonished us to prepare students and faculty alike for a lifetime of learning" (1994: 33).

Five years later, we revisit this idea as the department marks its third decade in existence. What is the legacy of thirty years of Urban Planning at UCLA? What can be learned from this legacy, and what does the future hold in store? What lessons are being carried forward as we enter a new millennium? Continuity and change are evident as many generations of Critical Planning editors have joined the intellectual forum created by the journal. With a growing international backbone reflecting the intellectual wealth and diversity of graduate students in the Department, this issue offers each of us — authors, readers, and editors alike — an opportunity to embrace "a lifetime of learning."

This unique moment of growth and reflection is captured in this text, Critical Planning Volume 6, as the voices presented include students, faculty, alumni, and community members. This issue reads in a poly-rhythm of student poetry, essays and faculty reflections. The tempo is set by Terry Valen's piece titled *The Bus Stop: An Event by the BALAGTASAN*. The Philippine tradition of Balagtas invites participants to engage in a lyrical debate on various sides of an issue. Its question and answer rhythm offers a guiding pulse for further discussion on issues affecting planning education, practice and scholarship. The following articles in this volume flow through four movements expressing distinct themes: the City Traversed, the City Excavated, the City Conceived, and the City Transformed. Ted Kane's cacophonous photo collages punctuate each theme.

**The City Traversed** gathers essays on mobility, flows, chaos and dynamism while emphasizing points of anchor, interaction and communication in the city. Traveling in and through the city, and criss-crossing its social/cultural/political boundaries, are captured differently in the work of Valen, Rojas and Kane. Valen presents the bus stop as a metaphor of Filipino cultural production and activism while Rojas offers a critique of the bus stop as social site in the built environment. Kane reminds us that hyper-mobility is nevertheless grounded in urban time and space. Loukaitou-Sideris argues that the merging of social and spatial issues has created a distinct analysis of the built environment and community development at UCLA. Finally, in a short eulogy, Dikeç and Gilbert remind readers that exploration of the city greatly benefited the ethnographic work of William H. Whyte.

**The City Excavated** examines research and planning methodologies. What vehicles are used "On the Road to There," to quote from Stark's poem? Al-Kodmany discusses methods (from crayons to computers) that con-

vey communal ideas and needs in Chicago's redevelopment planning process. Lehrer evaluates the use of case study methodology in researching local and global forces in the city building and image production of Berlin's Potsdamer Platz. From visualization, to observation, to image production, this movement concludes with Valenzuela's reminder that planning's multi-disciplinarity demands a multi-methodological approach to research and teaching of the "multi-everything" city.

**The City Conceived** offers different conceptual paradigms for the city. Kim presents a short poetic warning that frameworks are resilient yet precarious. Stieglitz discusses power relations between the planner and the community that requires questioning the very notion of advocacy and "speaking for others." Examining social activism and political mobilizations, Vargas develops a theory of "transformative community practice" to challenge oppressive unequal relations of power. In a trio of 30th anniversary essays, Mc Grath first reflects on the impact of her planning education on her professional practice. Richman explains how our department's tradition of community-outreach has developed a specific model of "affirmative investment" working with low income communities in Los Angeles. Finally, Soja argues for the complementarity of social theory, professional practice, and critical spatial thought in learning from the city.

**The City Transformed** focuses on the changing urban and academic landscapes. The physiology of the city is depicted in Nisonson's poem "building images." Then, Rodino and Martínez comment on the redevelopment processes of two Latino communities. Rodino examines a case of "top down" redevelopment in a city with a Latino majority. While acknowledging certain successes, he recognizes the need for inclusiveness of ethnic difference and diversity. In a case study of the development of low-income housing in San Antonio, Martínez suggests that even good intentions can lack cultural sensitivity. He suggests that thorough knowledge of the socio-cultural dynamics of a place is a crucial element to community development. Drawing lessons from the international grassroots women's movement, Leavitt reminds readers that transforming gender relations in planning, as in society at large, requires "collective consciousness and action." This section concludes with Ong's analysis of welfare reform's mixed results, and reflects on the role of planners in the implementation and development of public policy.

Volume 6 ends on an optimistic note. In mapping "six easy roads to planning perdition," Friedmann's prose reminds readers of the multiple "seduction" of planning. Coming back to Los Angeles, a city of mixed seductions *par excellence*, Boudreau reviews Roger Keil's recent book *Los Angeles: Globalization, Urbanization and Social Struggles*. Finally, De Leon discusses student driven urban planning *salons* as a new departmental oral tradition; as a forum for the students of the city, and a way to expand the debates presented in this volume. These articles raise core contemporary issues about the education, scholarship and practice of urban planning. The large array of topics, styles and approaches suggest that one ought to be prepared for a lifetime of learning and action since the city is in constant flux.

The Editorial Collective  
May 1999



Terry Valen

James T. Rojas

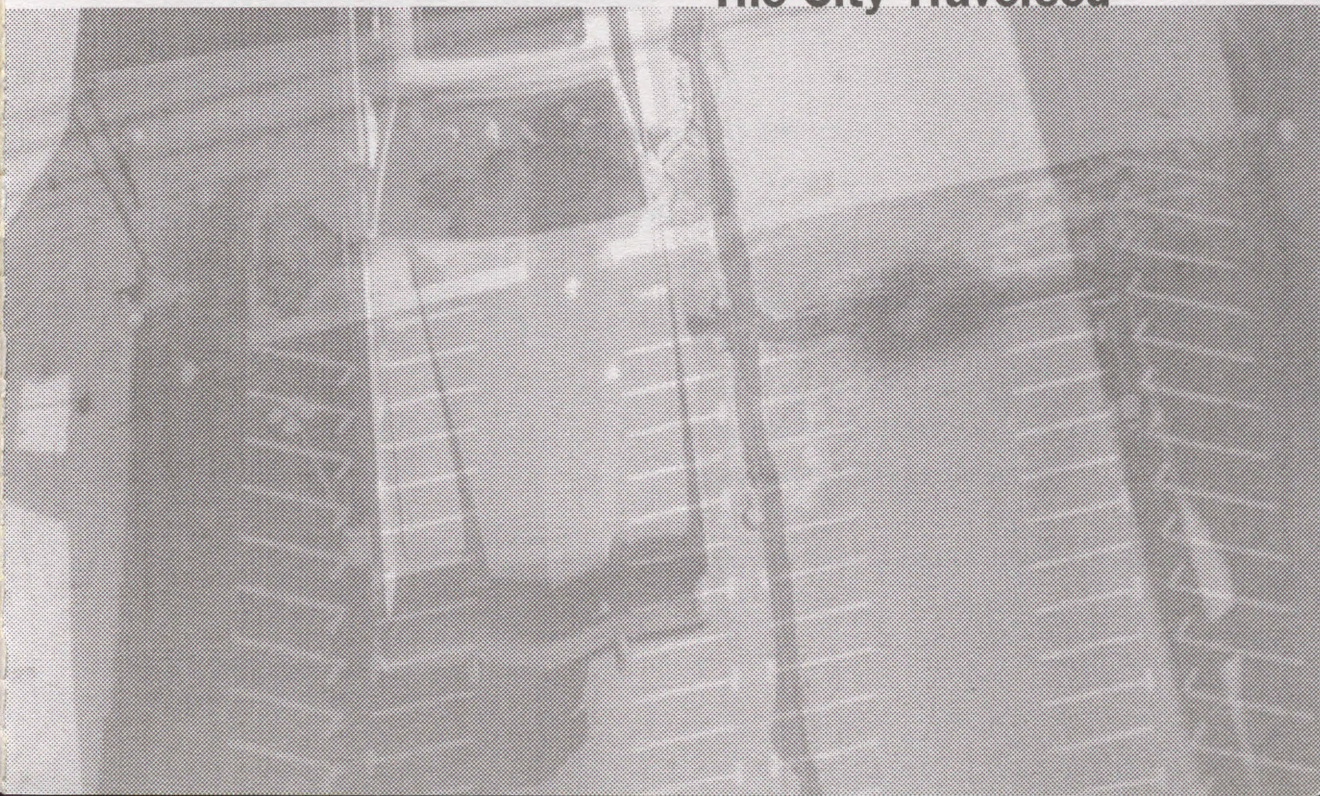
Ted Kane

Anastasia Loukaitou-Sideris

Mustafa Dikeç

Liette Gilbert

## **The City Traversed**







An hour late  
A broken sign post  
and Lola stands on one side of a chain link fence

# The Bus Stop:

## An Event by the BALAGTASAN Collective

**Terry Valen**

Finally, a #10 squeals, screeches and hisses to greet her  
So she steps forward  
Grips the handrail  
with the strength of the thousand women who came here before her  
She pulls herself up  
to the impatient grumbles and roars for her to move on.  
And she moves on.  
But even if the bus had never come,  
Lola would have been o.k.

Just on the other side of the fence  
in the heart of Pilipino-town  
on the corner of Temple and Robinson  
the BALAGTASAN Collective took The Bus Stop  
into the SIPA Community Center.

because "The bus stop is a metaphor for life."

## 1-23-99

visual artists/activists/students/workers/musicians/poets/performers gathered at "The Bus Stop"—an event organized by the BALAGTASAN Collective (BC). The BC is a recent creation in the Los Angeles Filipino community. On the frontlines of cultural activism, the group takes its name from a Philippine tradition in which participants debate, back and forth, two or more sides of an issue in lyrical form, sometimes rhyming, always freestyling in native tongues. This performance/practice is a pure example of what the group is about—artistic cultural expression to raise awareness or "community consciousness" about important political issues.

Organizers of *The Bus Stop* brought this Philippine tradition into the urban context of Filipino Los Angeles. Through poetry and spoken word; through graffiti art, photography and murals; and through turntablism, mc's, and live musical performance, the artists and performers were reaching out to Filipina/o youth. They tackled political issues ranging from personal and family struggles, to farmworker and bus-rider unions, to revolutionary movements in the Philippine countryside and globalization. The artists/activists reached across borders and cultures to connect the struggles of Filipina/os to Sri Lankan, African American and Chicana/o struggles. Taking cultural performance back into the heart of the

For a few hours on a Saturday night,

It was o.k. to miss the bus,

To stop and connect with the people around you.

The bus stop is a place from where the Bus Riders Union could be launched, and The Bus Stop is also the beginning of a new organization of LA's Filipina/o artists/activists—the BALAGTASAN Collective!

struggles of Filipino communities, the event organizers hoped to explore artistically the common grounds for political struggles at every level.

How do traditional forms of political organizing and community mobilization sometimes become the "politics of everyday life"? Are the politics of everyday life already revolutionary? How does artistic and cultural expression liberate, and why is it a necessary component of political mobilization for many communities of color? At *The Bus Stop*, the gathering of a standing-room-only crowd of Filipina/os (mostly youth) from all over California demonstrated the power of cultural forms of mobilizing youth in this different, but still "educational," setting. Besides featuring some of the up-and-coming, regional and national award-winning, young Filipina/o urban artists and performers from LA, *The Bus Stop* was also a performance space for inspiring and aspiring artists and performers. Ultimately, it was a cultural event for sharing stories and speaking truths about the possibility of connecting the individual and collective struggles of Filipina/os. The events to come will open these possibilities and foster the creative talents of visual artists/activists/students/workers/musicians/poets/performers/...

TERRY VALEN is a second-year doctoral student in Urban Planning at UCLA. He is an activist among Filipina/os on the campus and in the LA community.

# Rethinking Bus Stops

James T. Rojas

**Bus stops are ubiquitous elements of the American** urban landscape and are a critical link between the bus system and the built environment. They therefore provide a great opportunity for rethinking how we examine, use, and design communal urban space in the city. However, bus stops are frequently ignored, underutilized, and overlooked as a possible tool for improving public space for the transit-dependent people who depend on buses for their transportation needs.



Working for a transportation agency in Los Angeles, I have developed views and ideas of why bus stops are in their terrible state and how they could be improved. I believe that the bad condition of bus stops results from a lack of interest in them by the government and the general public combined with the complicated political nature of who owns and operates the bus stops and amenities.

The notion of a bus system being part of a community, and therefore having some responsibility to enhance that community, both socially and aesthetically, is not recognized as a valid part of the transit agency's "mission." For the transit operators, bus riders are mere on-and-off boarding per stop. While most transportation planners are concerned with reducing congestion through a systemic analysis, they often fail to understand or recognize the intimate relationship between bus riders and the places where they wait for, and get off, the bus. This condition reinforces the disconnect between land use and transportation policy, two spheres which ideally should be integrated. The "hand-off" from the transit agencies' jurisdictions to the cities' jurisdictions concerning bus stops is clearly disjointed. Transit riders are ultimately penalized, suffering from poor bus stops as a result of this policy. City officials and policymakers rarely understand these concerns because they are unlikely to ride the bus and are not "experts" in the transit business (Loui 1999).<sup>1</sup>

The lack of coordination between the city, transit operators, and contractors has resulted in a failure to locate bus stops in safe places. Transit operators are more concerned about bus stops meeting the place-

ment requirements for loading and unloading of passengers, getting through the intersection, and other similar criteria. Since the quality of the built form is never a critical issue, bus stops are often placed in not-so-comfortable and not-so-safe locations. According to Anastasia Loukaitou-Sideris, a professor of urban planning at UCLA, who has done extensive research on the environmental factors of bus stop crime in Los Angeles, there is a direct correlation between environmental factors and bus stop crime. Her study concludes that bus stops that have shelters are likely to experience less crime than ones without shelters (Loukaitou-Sideris 1998). Environmental factors, such as the condition of the surrounding buildings (occupied or vacant), land uses, amenities of the streetscape, circulation density, and street scale, can encourage or discourage public safety, yet they are generally not considered when bus stops locations are planned.

### **The Issues of Bus Stops**

Many issues explain the lack of attention and resources directed toward improving the bus stop in Los Angeles.

*Lack of Funding:* Government and private investors have been reluctant to adequately fund bus systems, especially bus stops, in comparison to other modes of transportation. Bus systems traditionally do not generate the same amount of economic return as other transportation-related infrastructure projects like railways and highways. This return on investment approach to the allocation of funds between the different transportation modes creates a sort of "transit apartheid" since bus riders are not

getting their fair share of transit funding. While much money is spent on the design and construction of subway and light rail stations, bus stops are generally limited to a post and a sign. This is often the case because most transit agencies do not have the same jurisdiction over streets as they do over fixed rail, limiting their ability to make bus stop improvements. While the temporal nature of a bus stop compared to a rail stop might be a reason why bus stops attract little investment, this is no excuse not to provide a comfortable and secure place to wait for the bus.

*Lack of Commitment Pressure:* Elected officials listen to the voices of their constituents, few of which are advocating for bus stop improvements, making this a low political priority. Since most trips of the urban and suburban middle-classes are by car, they may not see the necessity for bus stop improvements. According to 1990 census data, eighty percent of daily transit trips of Los Angeles County residents were made using single-occupancy vehicles, while only six percent of all trips were made using public transit. Clearly, people who use cars for their various trips have greater political power than do bus riders. Of the six percent who do use public transit, a 1996-97 survey by the Los Angeles County Metropolitan Transportation Authority (MTA) revealed that eighty-seven percent of the bus riders surveyed were "minorities," and of that eighty-seven, fifty-two percent were "Hispanic." Additionally, eighty percent of all the bus riders surveyed were below the federal and LA County poverty line.<sup>2</sup> In many cases, minorities and the urban underclass do not have

access to, or strong voices in, the political process to demand for the improvements of bus stops. Also, the improvement of bus shelters may not be a top priority for the urban underclass, given the other financial and social problems they are often faced with.

*The Transit-Dependent:* In many cities across the country, bus service is the only form of public transportation for the transit-dependent. In Los Angeles County, of the six percent of people who use public transit, fifty-eight percent have no alternative transportation options. Therefore, bus stops in these transit-dependent neighborhoods could assume a critical role in the creation and use of public space.

Based on my previous research examining the Latino use of public space in transit-dependent East Los Angeles, I found that bus stops are an integral part of communal public space (Rojas 1991; 1993). At many bus stops in eastside neighborhoods, bus stop locations become social centers of the community, a place where vendors will greet many people who board and exit the bus. Therefore, a bus shelter in a transit-dependent neighborhood like East Los Angeles has a greater use value than a bus shelter in a middle-class suburb.

*Improving Bus Stops:* The improvement of bus stops is a challenging process because it is difficult to define roles and differentiate responsibilities between the transit agency and municipalities. From my investigation, I find that most transit operators lack discretionary funding for the construction, maintenance, and improvements of bus stops and shelters. The transit agency is only responsible for bus stop loca-



tion and post and sign placement, while the local municipality has jurisdiction over the land where the bus stops are located. Municipalities are not in the transit business and generally do not have bus stop policies, though there are serendipitous occasions when the municipality serves as the transit operator, which can actually create a comprehensive approach to bus stop improvement. Normally, however, most cities lack funds to allocate for the construction and maintenance of bus stop amenities, leading many municipalities to contract out the construction, installation, and maintenance of bus shelters to private advertising companies.

A few large advertising companies have taken over bus shelter contracts for major cities. The company sells advertising space that pays for the installation and upkeep of the bus shelters and gives the city a percentage of the profits (Leovy 1998). Ironically, these bus shelters are placed according to where automobile traffic volume and income levels are high, and not according to bus patron needs or ridership levels. As a result, bus stops are often absent from where they are most needed—in lower income transit-dependent neighborhoods, which are generally communities of color.

In 1987 this problem first surfaced in a *Los Angeles Times* article illustrating this inequity (Connell 1987).<sup>3</sup> According to a more recent article in the *LA Times*, of the 9,010 bus stops in the city, only 994 have bus shelters (Leovy 1998). More affluent, busier locales such as Sunset, Santa Monica, Wilshire, and Ventura Boulevards are dotted with shelters because they are considered more likely to attract advertisers due to

their heavy traffic volumes. Thus, Leovy argues that bus stops are not always placed where they are needed. Meanwhile, transit-dependent areas such as East and South Central LA get very few bus shelters. To complicate the matter, many of the older inner city locations have narrow sidewalks that make it difficult to accommodate bus shelters.

*Token Amenities:* Not only is there a scarcity of bus shelters in certain areas, when bus shelters and benches are provided at bus stops, they can sometimes create a worse condition for the bus rider. Therefore, a bench located at the edge of the curb to increase its visibility to passing cars represents a precarious location for the users, whose feet are left dangling in the street and whose lungs are breathing in the carbon monoxide generated at street intersections along busy arteries. Many benches contain advertisements to exclusively attract cars. Moreover, when a rider sits on the bench, the bench is no longer “effective” as advertising. This ambiguity results in bus benches becoming token amenities to the user. These benches are often positioned far from the bus stop, in front of where people enter and exit the bus, or too close to a curb for a passenger to sit on the bench comfortably, thus promoting advertising of the bench and only the pseudo-comfort of the passenger (Loui 1999). When bus shelters are provided, they often fail to improve the rider comfort level because most are glorified billboards ultimately designed for passing cars. In many cases, people will stand and wait behind or on the sides of the shelter rather than inside it. The interior space created by the bus shelter is not very comfortable and sometimes does not provide adequate shade from the sun.



### **Design of Bus Stops and Amenities**

By examining the bus stop environment and how people use space while waiting for the bus, we can understand how to improve the bus stop. The geographic location of the bus stop and the waiting time vary from place to place and must also be taken into consideration. Bus riders are a diverse group of people with different needs. For example, a mother with children and groceries waiting for a bus would be concerned about adequate seating and a safe place for her children, while a commuter on his/her way home from work may be satisfied with just a leaning bar. At bus stop locations where boarding rates are high, people temporarily retrofit the adjacent area around the stop. I noticed at a heavily used bus stop that failed to provide enough seats for people waiting for the bus that many of the young men sat on the gas pump platforms located a few feet behind the stop. Bus riders will retrofit the space and make themselves comfortable in their environment around them, sitting on low walls or under trees, or standing in front of a wall or business. Bus stop amenities should therefore be designed to provide patrons with sitting and leaning options in addition to protection from changing weather patterns throughout the day and season (Rojas 1991). In Los Angeles, shade is a big concern for riders. In addition to providing the creature comforts, the bus stop at minimum should be a clean, safe place to wait for the bus and provide riders with trash receptacles, bus schedules and routes, and neighborhood maps. While bus shelters and other amenities will not make the bus come any quicker, they can at least make the wait more pleasant.

### **Enhancing Urban Form**

Transportation systems play an important role in the development of cities and their urban form. The urban development around transportation corridors integrates the transit system into the urban landscape and can ensure its use. In Los Angeles, urban development can be traced to trolley lines and the present-day freeways. Bus systems and bus stops have not been a crucial impetus for urban development. Some of the most heavily used bus lines in the city of Los Angeles today were previously fitted with streetcar lines, according to an MTA transportation planner, illustrating this integration (Brye 1999). Since bus lines and stops fail to create urban form, their integration into the city can sometimes be marginal and a missed opportunity to enhance communal public space. Careful planning and design of a transportation system into the urban form can create some of the most important public spaces in the city.

Like train stations and airports, bus stops are the "welcome mats" to the transit system and the communities they serve. The user is introduced to the transit system and the different communities and locations that the system serves through the bus stop. Bus stops can serve as landmarks for tourist and resident alike, providing the urban orientation needed to understand the urban form of a city. The bus stop should be designed and used as part of a comprehensive urban transportation system for understanding how to get around.

Bus stops and amenities can enhance the physical form of a city by creating an identity of place. The City of Hannover in Germany has successfully com-

missioned a team of architects to design different types of bus shelters throughout its territory (Webb 1995). The result has been bus shelters that enhance the public space and give the city civic pride and identity.

The ethnic and geographic diversity of US cities can provide a rich palette for the design and use of bus stops. No two bus shelters should be the same! By making the bus stop part of the community, people will have ultimate empowerment over the communal public space. The Los Angeles Neighborhood Initiative (LANI) organization attempts to empower twelve transit-dependent communities through transportation enhancements such as bus shelters, kiosks, landscaping, and urban design improvements. This program is successful in bringing together community members for a discussion of how to improve the public space.

Bus stops can offer a sense of well-being for the rider and can become social centers of communal public space by providing a place where people can come together and "speak to each other." In my travels, I have met so many people when I was waiting for the bus. It's a natural place for people to congregate and interact. Yet the present condition of bus stops makes people feel like, "I don't want to be here and talk to anybody."

People will come together and communicate if they have something to interact around. Public art, coffee machines, newsstands, vendors, and small kiosks can provide amenities people can use and communicate over while waiting for the bus. The posting of community events, local history, and works of local

artists can promote verbal exchange amongst bus riders. The ephemeral nature of people waiting for a bus provides a great audience for poetry-reading as experienced in Los Angeles through a "Poetry in Motion" reading project. (Pool 1999). As planners and architects, we should recognize and maximize the potential of bringing people together in communal public space.

The design of bus stops and amenities must be competitive in attracting people out of their cars and into the bus system. Besides the bus system in Curitiba, Brazil, which acts like a typical urban subway, very few bus stops or bus systems meet this challenge (Major 1997). The automobile has unquestionably raised our level of transportation comfort and convenience. As transportation planners and architects, we have to incorporate this level of comfort and convenience into public transportation in order to sustain ridership and attract new users. It is important that government, transportation agencies, and the public come together to rethink bus stops and amenities. Rethinking bus stops can be part of an overall strategy to attract new riders, enhance public space, and improve the environment for everyone by creating healthy, social, and usable spaces.

## Endnotes

<sup>1</sup>Loui is an architect and member of the Southern California Transit Advocates. He works on transportation-related design projects and is actively involved with improving the transportation system in Los Angeles.

<sup>2</sup>MTA Staff (Fiscal Year 1996-97) conducted an MTA Bus On-Board Passenger Survey. This survey examined the economic levels and customer satisfaction of MTA service.

<sup>3</sup>Connell (1987) described the inequity of the bus shelter contract and financial trouble the company was having meeting the contract responsibilities.

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# Teleurbanism and Los Angeles: Free Calls All Weekend Long

Ted Kane

**“...structures are changing today; they are losing** their specific separate properties and are defined more by how they relate to the organization of the whole and how you relate to them; you zoom in to solids, you fluctuate along evanescent distances, space opens up around you; any variety of mutations are possible, all unquantifiable, orderless, dimensionless, happening in a fluidum” (Ben Van Berkel).

Calls made anywhere within our four-county coverage area using these area codes—818, 626, 323, 949, 714, 909, 213, 310, 562, 760 and some parts of 805—are all billed as local calls (LA cellular)

### **Los Angeles, Mulholland Drive, 5 a.m.**

Beyond the blue gray haze of predawn, the cellular phone network begins to slowly reveal itself.<sup>1</sup> A faint glimmer emerges from faux palm tree facades, rooftop stands and hilltop platforms. Obscured by the dramatic engineering of a concrete infrastructure, the transparent purveyors of a new teleurbanism fade into the background. Privately financed and mass-produced, this new infrastructure is in the process of being built out in stages; the first networks provide a thin coverage zone, which produces revenue to finance its own perpetual growth over successive stages. Representing the minimum-energy solution when a collection of tangent circles with flexible boundaries are subjected to pressure, the hexagonal grid of the cellular network is the utopian city of the teleurbanists—a world of perfect coverage.<sup>2</sup> On the everyday streets of Los Angeles the honeycomb overlays the urban fabric, transforming itself to the previously formed hierarchies of an automobile. Phone to ear, we follow the transient coverage maps, scanning the airwaves for the new voice of the city.

### **Burbank, Buena Vista Street, 9:10 a.m.**

Transmitting at the 824.040-880.620 MHz frequencies, the cellular network is the link holding together the individual goals of its citizens, creating an ephemeral urban identity in its airwaves. No longer

do we see physical territory, or socially engrained values, define a city, but rather it is the will of its citizens. As Albert Pope has stated: "The contemporary urban environment is composed and recomposed by each individual everyday around literal and virtual itineraries, and not in relation to a fixed arrangement of places" (Pope 1996:232). The traditional city of clean duality (figure/ground) has disappeared, to be taken over by a meshwork of interactions. In cities like Los Angeles, where the physical boundaries have become so expansive and invisible, it is often the telephone area codes that mark the psychic boundaries of the city. Like the individual who has a post office box in Beverly Hills for the prestigious 90210 zip code, we are also seeing call forwarding in order to capture the perception of being in the "city." Los Angeles' transformation from the center-dominated form of the 19th century, to a homogenized network of connections (or individual itineraries), has become a consistent development of post-war urbanism. The city changes daily, rearranging itself to the rhythms of its citizens, each creating their own city through the windshield, the computer monitor and cell phone.

### **El Segundo, 405 Freeway, 11:25 a.m.**

From its inception Los Angeles has been a city of outward expansion, but not until the construction of the inter-city freeways, beginning in the 1950s, did the center dominance begin to fade. Given the now familiar critique of the freeway as an instigator of sprawl, it is important to state that the freeways were a highly sought-after addition to the infrastructure,

connecting local communities together. The freeway can thus be seen more accurately as the effect of the citizen's desire for independence and movement, as opposed to a cause of outward flight. With the freeways, distance became a function of time, where increased speed translated into shrinking travel time. From 1950 to 1960 the area of land within a thirty minute drive from downtown rose 175%, and new high-speed connections joined the satellite communities of Pasadena, Hollywood, Glendale, Santa Monica, and Santa Ana, as well as the Los Angeles International Airport (Brodsly 1981). More than anything else the freeway became a product of the desire for individual choice, of the desire for a utopian alternative to the density and perceived dehumanizing nature of the city. Speed allowed a decrease in social dependence on the local community allowing for new settlement patterns outside the city center.

**Carson, Vermont Avenue, 1:47 p.m.**

The freeway formed a new trajectory of movement much different from the ubiquitous equality of the city grid. A new spatial hierarchy was unveiled, one in which neighborhoods became transformed by their connection to or separation from the transportation network. The linear pattern of the freeway created a hierarchy composed of off-ramps, linear strip roads, and private drives. Under this system the individual is elevated to a new position; as Albert Pope says, "everyone now lives, not on an anonymous grid coordinate, but at the end of a particular path, on the last driveway, on the last cul-de-sac, in the last development" (Pope 1996: 190). Each person is

made into the center of his or her own universe, at the end of a long telescoping progression from the anonymous city to the independent home. Given our society's bias toward individual identity, the widespread acceptance of the freeway is seen as very natural; its liberating functions celebrated the individual autonomy over the social network of the city. The egocentric homestead thus becomes an isolated module, as Jean Baudrillard has spoken: "Each person sees himself at the controls of a hypothetical machine, isolated in a position of perfect and remote sovereignty, at an infinite distance from his universe of origin" (Baudrillard 1983:128). This liberation experienced by the homeowner creates a tense equilibrium with the freeway, an entity that simultaneously acts a connector and separator.

**Long Beach, 7th Street, 3:14 p.m.**

Over three million citizens of the Los Angeles region are now connected to the cellular phone network, a number expected to double over the next few years.<sup>3</sup> The boundaries of the city are blurring further as the interactions that used to happen in face-to-face transactions have now been transplanted by distance-shrinking telephone conversations, e-mail and Internet connections. The cell phone has quickly moved beyond its status as novelty item ("guess where I'm calling from?") to an urban necessity, connecting family, friends, and work alike (Klein 1998). It is a utilitarian device, which obliterates all previous realities but its own, creating new spatial relationships and connections in its wake. It is also a network without blind spots, because to communicate



on the network is to locate and expose oneself. Communication companies, which already have access to our lives and habits, are now utilizing former military technology (Global Positioning Systems) in most new cell phones, enabling a cellular user to be located anywhere on earth to the accuracy of a few feet.<sup>4</sup> New terms of engagement are inherent in every call from a cell phone, where exposure is not only a risk, but a requirement of network operations. This fundamental subservience to the system was expressed by Jean Baudrillard:

the essential thing is to maintain a relational décor, where all the terms must continually communicate among themselves and stay in contact, informed of the respective condition of others and of the system as a whole, where opacity, resistance or the secrecy of a single term can lead to catastrophe (1983: 128).

To maintain privacy with this system is to terminate all communications. The power of the hexagonal cell is contingent on its ability to see its neighboring cells and in turn be seen by them, thus mapping the individual within this new transparent community, a willing prisoner of its total exposure, in exchange for a spatially liberating mobility.

#### **Paramount, 605 Freeway, 4:53 p.m.**

Today's infrastructure is being developed in the corporate offices of companies like AT&T, MCI, Sprint, Microsoft, and Disney—the leaders in the communication industries. There is an unquestionable faith in the free market's ability to respond to our needs,

which makes, by comparison, the happenings in government seem almost irrelevant. This change in the urban power structure towards competing private infrastructures is a troubling glimpse of the sovereignty now afforded to corporations in the planning of American cities.<sup>5</sup> Cities are now largely led by the itineraries of its private corporations, where citizens shape urban form based on their buying habits. We are seeing this in the hierarchy developing in the cellular coverage maps of Los Angeles, whose patterns display diminished access in neighborhoods not fitting the demographic profile sought by cellular companies. As the industry states in its own literature: "At \$500,000 per cell tower site, they have been judiciously placed where they provide the most return" (Drouillard 1998:1-3). In other words, entire parts of the city and the country may be passed over for new systems, if they do not contain the required subscriber base to financially obligate its construction. We can witness the network following the freeway and major surface streets where usage is heaviest, at the expense of the zones excluded by the transportation systems. That parts of the city remain victims of "swiss cheese" coverage will only become a concern when the density of lost calls and complaints in a particular area triggers a corporate response. Consumer polling, interest group research, and statistical data are used to understand the needs of the cellular citizens at the expense of the collective needs of the community. While the operations of a smooth corporate hierarchy are unquestionably more efficient, in the end, the corporation answers only to the stockholders and not to the needs of the citizens.

**Los Alamitos, Cerritos Street, 5:39 p.m.**

The city is now divided into different demographic groups, as the television audience before it, with the cellular commuter being the coveted target audience of middle-class professionals (Klein 1998).<sup>6</sup> Attracted to the mobile cellular consumer, Charles Schwab recently unveiled a telephone voice broker system for voice-activated stock quotes and ordering (Larson 1998). Other companies have also implemented driver-friendly automated phone ordering systems that allow commuters to purchase clothing, stocks, or airline tickets from their mobile phone, without the distracting need for push-button controls. Advertising has become a pervasive influence on the city, transforming the daily commute into a new experience no longer related only to the logistics of travel. Just as the thirty-second commercial has become a natural and expected part of television viewing, advertising's appearance is now an unconscious connector of daily life. The congested areas of the transportation network, where the commuter is found in mass, have become as valuable as advertising space. As marketing companies have come to understand the urban collective psyche of the city, they have also assumed the role of the influential urban thinkers of today. They possess a spatial command of the new city, dictated not only by the mapping of strictly physical space but the understanding of the collective desires of the consumer and the transient reality of the consumer's daily life. It is in this that we can find the potential for a new system of urbanism that accepts our society's increased preference for individuality and personal freedom, but

finds greater collective agreement beyond the strictly segregated hierarchies of the physical community. This does not mean that we abandon physical space, but rather that we come to understand it through the ephemeral relationships and events of the everyday world. It is in the world of billboards, bus stops, radio/TV coverage, freeways, gas stations, and advertising that the life experiences of the urban dweller are formed, and it is here that the urbanist can begin to explore a space that does not seek to segregate by demographics, but to find issues of collective interest and collaboration within the expanding networks of the city.

**Anaheim, Katella Avenue, 6:27 p.m.**

The sun slowly disappears on the horizon, only to be replaced by the linear white lamps and backlit signs of Katella Avenue. Through numerous area codes, city borders, and county lines, the car keeps going, pushing but not breaking the boundaries of the cellular and radio coverage zones. The contemporary city is now a matrix of communication systems that have propelled beyond the territorial limits of the city. The freeways, telephone and satellite networks, fiber optic cables, and radio and television frequencies each provide systems through which the everyday city flows and composes itself. What is to be made of architecture and urban planning in this dispersed city? Urbanism must come to grips with the new reality of mobile and malleable infrastructures. We must begin to compete with corporate telecommunications planners, creating malleable alternatives and subversive itineraries to their transparent

systems. Like the cellular towers themselves, today's teleurbanists must form connections between the communications networks and the everyday reality of the city, carving new systems of interaction and collective space from the smooth surfaces of corporate control.

### Endnotes

<sup>1</sup> The term cellular is meant here to include not only the analog cellular phones that have been associated with the term, but also the radio-based communication devices such as beepers, Digital PCS (personal communications services), and similar wireless devices that rely on the cellular phone towers for connection.

<sup>2</sup> The hexagonal grid is often referred to in the technical writing surrounding radio-based technology because it represents an ideal efficiency. The hexagon's symmetry means the distance between a given cell and its immediate neighbors is the same along any of the six main directions, thus it contains twelve-fold symmetry as opposed to the rectangle's eight-fold symmetry.

<sup>3</sup> I am referring here to the Los Angeles Cellular District as established by the Federal Communications Commission. This region is estimated to contain a potential of 13.6 million subscribers, of which the cellular industry claims a twenty-five percent subscriber base (approximately 3.4 million). According to the cellular industry, it expects to maintain a thirty percent annual growth in the customer base over the next five years (Zysman 1995).

<sup>4</sup> The Global Positioning System (GPS) is a worldwide radio-navigation system formed from a constellation of twenty-four satellites and their ground stations. Using the satellites as guides, the system pinpoints a target through triangulation. General Motors' new Cadillac and Buick models have GPS-equipped cell phones built in.

<sup>5</sup> This historical power shift from public corporations to private corporations has been discussed by Gerald Frug (1980). Frug reflects on our current legal system's propensity to ensure that private corporations are protected from state domination, while public corporations are subject to such domination. He traces the powerlessness of today's cities, and the subsequent rise in private corporate powers, to our legal system and its favoring of individual rights over state's rights.

<sup>6</sup> This demographic information comes from American Demographics Magazine (Klein 1998). Klein reports that households with the highest incomes of \$50,000 plus have the highest number of cellular users at 61.7 percent, compared to 43 percent for \$30-50,000 household incomes and 23.8 percent for households that earn less than \$30,000. 46.8 percent of households with respondents age 18-34 had cell phones, compared with just 33.8 percent of those aged fifty-five or older.

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**30 YEARS**

**URBAN  
PLANNING**

**UCLA**

**A Synergy of the Physical and the Social**

**Q: How do the built environment and community development merge into a new planning approach?**

**A: Anastasia Loukaitou-Sideris** Associate Professor

In many planning schools around the country, community development occupies a distinct and separate part of the curriculum from physical planning and urban design. In the UCLA Department of Urban Planning, we have brought these fields together in a unique synergy. The Built Environment area of concentration has been historically conceived to integrate social and physical issues, to examine how communities affect space and how, in turn, spatial attributes impact communities. This dialectical emphasis on communities and space breaks the artificial separation between the physical and the social, the aesthetic and the political, and gives us a more complete understanding of the city, the neighborhood, the block, and the household.

The work of the faculty and students in the urban design, housing, and community development streams is driven by certain axioms. We see community development incorporating both social and physical goals. Many student and faculty projects are driven by a desire to work with communities to create more meaningful places and social territories. But we know that meaningful places are culturally bounded; they are informed by past histories, but are also determined by present needs, realities, and

values. Meaningful places are never completely built or created, but can be changed, adapted, reused, and reconfigured by their users. Meaningful places establish links and connections to other places, neighborhoods, and communities. At the same time, meaningful communities can arise from conflict, negotiation, and mediation over use in a process where all the different stakeholders can participate.

The spatial emphasis of our work leads us to examine how space is produced, occupied, restructured, manipulated; how different needs and values are expressed in the urban form; how spatial attributes can support, enhance or inhibit social activities. The user-focus of our area of concentration urges us to work with various groups, learn from them, and in return, suggest ideas and ways by which space can better fit their needs. This philosophy of community involvement and empowerment is clearly at odds with the concept of the planner or urban designer as an expert.

The interrelation of the social with the spatial has led to a mutual appreciation of the different fields that inform our discipline. Those of us with design backgrounds have learned to evaluate the social and political impacts of our work. The social scientists have come to appreciate urban design and physical planning as tools for revitalization and the creation of humane environments. We would like to think that the complementarity of the built environment and community development informs a new approach to planning—at the very least this complementarity brings together the two focal components of our discipline: people and space.

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# William H. Whyte: Seeing, Looking, Observing, and Learning from the City

Mustafa Dikeç  
Liette Gilbert

**“If you can see, look. If you can look, observe.”**

This epigraph opens José Saramago's book *Blindness*. It could just as well have been the words of William H. Whyte, the “optimistic social thinker and urban planner” (as *Time* magazine called him) who passed away last January in New York City at the age of eighty-one.

Writing a eulogy for Whyte is not an easy task; there is so much to tell given his prolific writings and observations of the city. Rather than outlining the whole body of Whyte's work, we have decided to briefly consider Whyte's ideas in

the context of current debates on urban space. Whyte wrote many seminal works, launching his "urban career" with the implications of his book *The Organization Man* on 1950s sociology. Over the years, Whyte's has been an avid critique of the sociology of urban development, and his book *The Last Landscape* presented many of his pre-occupations. Later in his career, Whyte committed himself to studying life in cities by becoming a close observer of urban space, coming to see the street as the "river of life of the city" and the city center its downtown, as the "soul of the city."

The bulk of his "Street Life Project" was first published under the title *The Social Life of Small Urban Spaces*, which, despite a limited publication, quickly became a popular reference in urban design studies. Whyte espoused street life and city centers as stages for spontaneous and informal encounters. His urban ethnographic and behavioral studies brought our attention to street corners, sitting features, blank walls, sun and wind patterns, pedestrian skills, ordinary encounters, and street entertainment. In the opening lines of his book *City*, Whyte wrote:

For the past sixteen years I have been walking the streets and public spaces of the city and watching how people use them. Some of what I found out may be of practical application. The city is full of vexations: steps too steep; doors too tough too open; ledges you cannot sit on...It is difficult to design an urban space so maladroitly that people will not use it, but there are many such spaces (Whyte 1988: 1).

Was he too romantic or optimistic about streets and downtowns while more powerful forces were at work in the life and death (to recall Jane Jacobs) of the traditional city? Perhaps. Nevertheless, Whyte's efforts were aimed at reviving the use of urban space; he recognized the importance of the everyday spaces of the city for its residents. While Whyte called for the residents of the city to *live* in and use these spaces, he also cautioned designers and planners to think about what the city is and could be. The city, after all, had to give people a "place for dreams."

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Seth O. Stark

Kheir Al-Khodmany

Ute A. Lehrer

Abel Valenzuela Jr.

## **The City Excavated**



The people we meet in life are guests within our  
hearts like guests in a hotel:  
Acquaintances are just passing through;  
Friends are seasonal visitors;  
But the ones we love, move in and settle down  
for the duration

# People I've Been, Places I've Met

We rush, scurry and scamper about,  
On the Road to There, we try to make out.  
There is no map, there are no signs.  
There are no freeways, no double yellow lines.  
A hairpin here, a detour there;  
We continue on the Road to There.  
Some seek the structure, for its proven existence.  
While others freewheel it, on their own insis-  
tence.  
Always charging, wheels a spinning;  
Some are losing, is anyone winning?  
The Road to There. Should we step back  
and take a look?  
Or just put on the blinders, and really look.  
The Road to There. The most traveled highway.  
We are each the only ones who have chosen  
"my way."

## Seth O. Stark

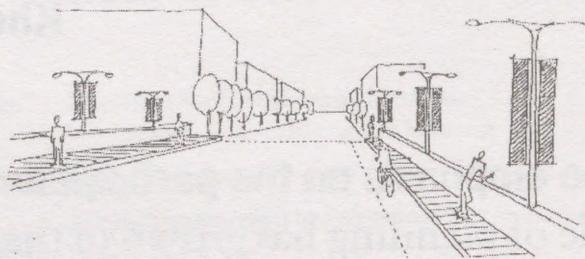
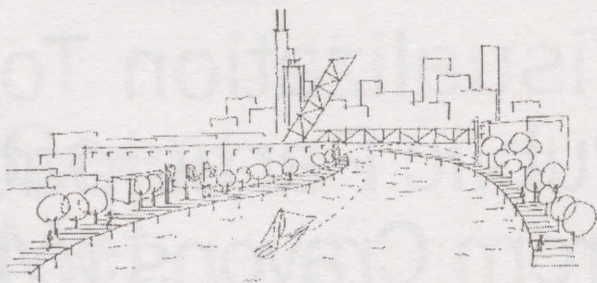
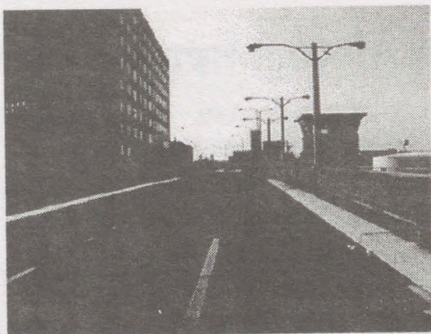
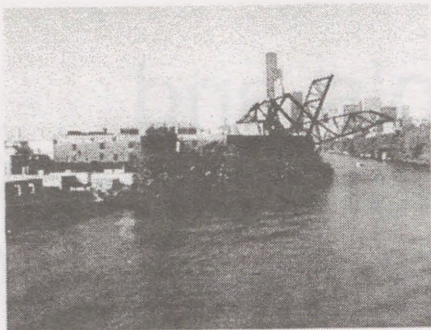
There are many kingdoms in the world,  
but this is the only one you have true  
sovereignty over.  
Some choose to rule it by being attentive  
to all the land,  
while others lavish praise and attention on one  
specific sector.  
No one else has a right to invade,  
that is a divine understanding.  
Yet when the invasion of another is committed,  
society often treats the victim as the guilty na-  
tion.  
Nations and individuals must have a respect for  
boundaries,  
violators must not be condoned.  
The kingdom of the body is our primary property.

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# Visualization Tools and Public Participation: From Crayons to Computers

Kheir Al-Kodmany<sup>1</sup>

**The emphasis on the participatory and communicative** side of planning has grown in the past decade, and planners have developed various theories to empower communities and increase communication (Healey 1992; Innes 1996, 1998; Talen 1999). Planners increasingly find that public participation is fundamental to develop appropriate and effective solutions for community design and planning problems. The benefits of broad-based community involvement in planning are widely documented.



They include: enhancing the capacity of citizens to cultivate a stronger sense of commitment, increasing user satisfaction, creating realistic expectations of outcomes, and building trust (for example, Alexander 1977; Altschuler 1970; McClure, Byrne and Hurand 1997; Sanoff, 1978, 1991; Smith 1993; Towers 1995). While planners bring technical skills and knowledge, citizens provide community history, local knowledge,

and an understanding of cultural values. These types of expertise complement each other and result in richer, more comprehensive planning and design solutions.

Too often, however, planners are not equipped with appropriate planning tools—in particular, visualization techniques—to generate meaningful public input. Stanley King and his co-authors (1989) suggest that



visualization provides a common language to which all participants, technical and non-technical, can relate. Consequently, an exploration of alternative visualization techniques could be a key to the promotion of a higher level of citizen participation in planning.

In this paper, we review a wide range of visualization techniques: from surveys, model-building, and creative drawings to computerized methods using geographic information systems (GIS), the Internet and computer simulations of the urban environment. We then present a case study of a community planning process in Chicago where a combination of high-tech and low-tech visualization techniques was used to enhance public participation. We conclude with an examination of the benefits and costs of developing these visualization tools.

### **Review of Visualization Techniques for Public Participation**

Visualization can play a key role in gaining meaningful public input in a planning process: it provides a focus for a community's discussion of design ideas, it guides community members through the design process, it raises their design awareness, and it facilitates better communication. Several types of visualization techniques have recently been developed to stimulate public participation in planning. These range from creative, hands-on activities to some newer methods that employ computer technology.

In his book, *Visual Research Methods in Design* (1991), Henry Sanoff presents several case studies where a variety of visualization techniques are used to expand

community participation in planning and design. One technique, called the "Activity Location Method," was used in planning the revitalization of Gibson, North Carolina (1970-1980). The organizers produced a workshop package for each participant that included a base map of the town, a set of activity charts that defined a variety of public and private uses for the vacant buildings with corresponding graphic symbols for each use, and a set of building survey sheets that described the size and condition of each building. The participants were randomly divided into teams with one designer who acted as facilitator for each team. In the first stage, each participant developed a downtown plan by placing his or her individual activity choices on a score sheet corresponding to the base map. Next, the team reviewed each score sheet. Then each team arrived at a consensus plan through discussion. When each work team arrived at an acceptable plan, the entire group reviewed each team's proposals.

Another planner who writes about visualization for public participation planning is Anton Nelessen. In his book *Visions for a New American Dream* (1994) he describes two visualization techniques—the Visual Preference Survey (VPS) and Hands-On Model Building—that he uses to promote democratic design and planning. These methods ensure that community preferences will be considered and help planners to create the types of places in which people really want to live. The VPS is a research and visioning technique that attempts to articulate community residents' impressions of their present community image and to build consensus for its future.

Community residents are asked to numerically rate images of their town and other places on a scale from +10 to -10. Once the VPS results are generated, the calculated image value is recorded on each image. The resulting product of the process is called the vision plan. Nelessen's second method, to be used in conjunction with the VPS, is the Hands-On Model Building activity. Participants begin by completing an exercise in which they place one model residence and one model garage on a parcel of land. They move the two pieces around until they are comfortable with the layout, draw lines around the base of the models, and complete the site plan using simple graphic notations. Following this exercise, groups of 8-10 individuals team up to create a small village on a site with various ecological constraints and road layouts. After the design group has agreed on a design and has penciled in the layout, the site plans can be analyzed to tabulate the necessary bulk, yards, setbacks, and road standards.

Wendy McClure and her co-authors provide us with a third example of low-tech, hands-on visualization techniques. In their chapter "Visualization Techniques for Citizen Participation" (in McClure, Byrne, and Hurand 1997), they describe several graphic visualization strategies for engaging citizens in the process of community decision-making: Citizen Murals, Color the Map, and Photo Portfolios. Their team used these three strategies in design workshops in small towns and neighborhoods in the Pacific Northwest. Citizen Murals are large, multimedia pictures that collectively represent citizens' thoughts, ideas, feelings, and suggestions about the future of

their community. Instead of the usual discussion format, people communicate information on large sheets of butcher paper using words, sketches, photos, cartoons, and symbols. The Color the Map technique involves the community in developing a set of alternative land use plans by having participants create their own maps. It uses simple tools to help citizens express the location and extent of land uses in their community. The Photo Portfolio technique is adapted from Nelessen's VPS but it is designed as a more focused group decision-making activity. Workshop sponsors compile a portfolio of images to address specific project-related issues. Through consensus building, participants select preferred images (or images that represent undesirable qualities) and organize them as a graphic, pasteboard display that reflects their collective priorities.

While the low-tech methods described above have proven effective in increasing citizen participation, there is a new frontier in the use of computers for realistic, powerful, and interactive visualization. The tremendous potential in this area is just beginning to be explored; for example, in the use of GIS, the Internet, and in urban simulation.

Emily Talen (1999) explains that grassroots and local organizations have started using GIS in a participatory setting. In Minneapolis, planners and geographers have sought to incorporate local knowledge in the building of GIS databases (Craig and Elwood 1998; Elwood and Leitner 1998). In Milwaukee, efforts have been made to maximize participation and the use of local knowledge (Myers, Martin, and Ghose 1995). Planners in Oregon have been working

on a public participation GIS that incorporates "traditionally intangible information," such as feelings about the uniqueness of a given area (Bosworth and Donovan 1998). In a neighborhood in Buffalo, New York, Krygier (1999) investigated ways in which residents can make sense of geographic information and created ways to learn about residents' perspectives. And in Boston, Michael Shiffer (1995) has augmented GIS with multimedia and hypermedia components for public participation.

In a recent paper, Richard Kingston (1998) outlined current research that examined the potential of the Internet as a means of increasing public participation in environmental decision-making. He considered traditional methods of public participation and argued that new Internet-based technologies have the potential to widen participation in the planning system. Recently, many geographic information systems have appeared on the Web (Carver, in press). These systems vary in complexity and functionality, but they are giving the general public, or at least those with a connection to the Web, access to a variety of both GIS and GIS data. Web-based GIS is a rapidly evolving technology with potential to promote greater public involvement. The combination of Web-based GIS and the proliferation of public access to the Internet open a potentially important avenue for interactive planning with the public. Planners and designers could communicate with large numbers of people to learn their preferences and to display their responses in a visually appealing format. This could be a highly useful tool for planners and designers in guiding city design and development in the future.

Urban simulators have just begun to be used in planning for public participation. These three-dimensional digital models provide a rich representation environment, where the relationships between information are shown simultaneously and dynamically. They enable viewers to perceive and interactively query and engage the place on their own terms. There is a latent egalitarian potential in these digital technologies since they allow community members to understand and relate to city design on their own, without interpretation by "experts."

This brief review has demonstrated the wide variety of visualization techniques that are currently available or in development. Which methods are chosen for a particular planning process will depend on the type of audience, the size of the geographic area being analyzed, and the resources of the leadership team. In the case study described below, we will show how a combination of high-tech and low-tech visualization techniques were successfully employed in a community planning process in Chicago's Pilsen neighborhood.

### **Case Study**

The following highlights key findings of a case that combines traditional and computerized visualization techniques. The University of Illinois at Chicago (UIC) is an urban campus whose mission includes building bonds of partnership and trust with neighboring communities. Invited to be part of a participatory community planning process in Pilsen, a community adjoining its campus, UIC planners and designers strategized to find visualization methods that would enhance public participation. Ultimately,



they decided to use a combination of high- and low-tech methods: a GIS and an artist. The GIS was selected because of its powerful spatial analysis and its interactive ability to illustrate the neighborhood's context—its geography, its cultural and architectural history, as well as its present condition. The system could also provide design prototypes to stimulate discussion and help participants create a vision for redevelopment. This technology was supplemented with a human artist whose drawing capabilities could quickly transform verbally expressed ideas into realistic drawings.

Like many other low-income neighborhoods, Pilsen is faced with a host of urban challenges, including heavy traffic, dilapidated and vacant buildings, and crime. Community residents were eager to harness their creative energies to foster the enthusiasm required for serious actions toward improving the neighborhood. The meaningful involvement of a broad range of residents would strengthen the overall sense of community, and a cooperative effort would help present a "unified front" when funding opportunities arose. A planning team was formed that included twenty-five community members, two architects, two planners, and a graphic artist.

The Pilsen planning process needed a system for illustrating a broad array of past and current community characteristics—its strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats—while fostering discussion about how the neighborhood might look five, ten, or twenty years into the future. First, the supporting database needed to illustrate the neighborhood context, including its history, geography, architecture, and

cultural values. An interactive GIS image database was developed, consisting of maps, images, tabular data, and textual information about Pilsen and the surrounding area. Thematic layers were created for land use, zoning, base and plat maps, historical fire insurance maps, and current aerial photographs. Historical photographs showing neighborhood features in various periods were collected; these were linked to corresponding historical maps. The images were coordinated with a key plan showing the position and alignment of each image, then overlaid on the historical maps. This arrangement was meant to serve as an orientation tool in the design process.

While this technology provided a strong contextual base of information, it did not have the capacity to transform ideas into conceptual designs. For this purpose, a highly trained artist was needed to quickly draw freehand sketches to capture community residents' emerging ideas. The UIC artist was trained to draw urban scenes—including streets, parks, plazas, and retail areas, as well as landscape and detail elements such as shrubs, street signs, benches, and chairs. She also depicted human activities in her sketches to bring a human scale to the drawings. With a few lines, this artist captured the salient features of an image. She used an electronic sketchboard—an easily erasable drawing board—from which sketches can be saved as electronic files in a graphic format.

### **Benefits and Costs**

The combination of the GIS and the artist had three primary benefits. First, the use of this technique pro-

moted strong community involvement in the planning process, which was a principal objective of the community and UIC. The GIS image database and the artist working in tandem helped community residents articulate their ideas in relation to neighborhood context. Together, they reinforced each other in creating a common visual language. While people not trained in the design professions sometimes have a difficult time communicating ideas about architecture and urban design, most people have definite design preferences. To draw out these viewpoints, the GIS image database contained examples of numerous developments near the neighborhood and throughout the city. Images that represented design examples and prototypes were used as anchor points for discussing development alternatives. As participants suggested solutions, the planner would display images on the large screen that most closely matched the participants' ideas. Design examples were used to probe and support the audience's ideas.

Second, the GIS helped highlight the importance of cultural values and history in planning the future design of the neighborhood. One of the major concerns of the Pilsen neighborhood is to preserve their cultural heritage as represented in the physical form. The GIS images reminded the artist, the planners, and the community residents of the cultural artifacts and environmental elements in Pilsen. These images supported discussion of cultural issues in the neighborhood. Images helped the artist to incorporate some of the cultural and symbolic features and artifacts into the new designs. Also, the GIS showed the

geographic distribution of these features so that it became clear to everyone which were areas of greater and lesser cultural and historic significance.

Third, and most importantly, the workshops and visualization tools helped to build a relationship of trust between UIC and the community. The GIS and the artist helped empower residents to plan and design for the future of their own community. The designs that were created reflected the community's wishes and input, and respected their cultural heritage. At the end of the process, the community felt that the purpose of the university was not to destroy their lifestyle but to revitalize their community. This helped to overcome some of the distrust problems experienced in the past.

Finally, a cost of this method must be discussed. Building the GIS database was a tremendous undertaking, requiring many months to complete. University planners and designers exceeded the budget for this project due to the labor-intensive activities required to gather and assemble the images, maps and historical data. However, the benefits of this system for UIC and the neighborhood far outweighed the expense. The visual context provided by the GIS image database was critical to the success of the project. Everyone on the planning team had access to the same contextual information and could formulate their ideas and designs accordingly. The expense of this project is further justified because the City Design Center, the Great Cities Institute, and the Urban Data Visualization Program at UIC have longer-term projects involving various types of visu-



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alization of the metropolitan Chicago urban environment.

### Conclusion

The findings of this research reinforce views about the importance of visualization in participatory design. Visualization is essential for drawing out maximum public participation because it is the only common language that all participants can relate to. The most important finding in our case study is how successfully the high- and low-tech components of the method intertwined and complemented each other. The sketching provided a way for residents' input to be immediately visualized and the GIS provided a powerful method of displaying the contextual information quickly in easily understood maps and images. This combination resulted in an optimal visualization environment.

In describing the workshop experience, this paper aims to reinforce the work of others in the field of visualization for public participation. By sharing our experience, we hope to further the search for better methods of cooperative community design, whether those methods are more or less technical. Clearly, the development of methods and skills in community design is still at the exploratory and discovery stage. While we see great value in the creative and hands-on methods being implemented, we look forward to further research into the development of advanced computer applications for community planning. This paper describes a step forward in the development of such methods and progress toward the art of designing for people.

### Endnotes

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# Case+Study = Case Study?

## A Methodological Inquiry into Image Production at Potsdamer Platz, Berlin

**Ute Angelika Lehrer<sup>1</sup>**

**Good research is not about good methods as much** as it is about good thinking (Stake 1995: 19). This paper was specifically prepared for the panel “Case Study as a Research Method” presented at the Association of Collegiate Schools of Planning (ACSP) conference in Pasadena, California in November 1998.<sup>2</sup> It examines selected findings of my dissertation on Potsdamer Platz and emphasizes the case study approach used for studying contested land use issues and the politics of city-building in Germany’s

new/old capital cities. The structure of this paper generally follows the questions raised by the panel organizer. While most of the questions deal with why and how to do case studies, more details about selected results of my research are also presented.

### **Background**

This case study started with the goal to combine issues on economic restructuring, land use, and urban design. During the process of defining the research agenda, increased attention was given to a particular case. Thorough research questions were developed only after the selection of the case Potsdamer Platz (see Yin 1993).

Potsdamer Platz, a deserted piece of land in the middle of Berlin, was just on the verge of being transformed into a glossy new center for offices, entertainment facilities, retail business, and some luxury apartments. Since World War II, this former "no-man's-land" located in the heart of Berlin had been dissected by the carceral landscape of the Berlin Wall. In the reunified Berlin, Potsdamer Platz had become the prime object of large-scale international investment and simultaneously the symbol of Berlin's search for a reinvented central-urban identity. Since the Wall came down, this prime area has attracted investors who have turned it into Europe's largest inner city construction site. In the early 1990s, the city-state of Berlin sold the land at Potsdamer Platz at market value to three multi-national investors (Daimler Benz, Sony, and A + T). A major controversy erupted not only about these land deals but also about the intended functions and the

proposed type of architecture. At the same time, the future land use of the site was decided through a series of ensuing architecture and urban design competitions.

While there had been certain planning traditions in place in both parts of the city, in the reunified Berlin city-building processes had to be renegotiated. This was particularly true because of the high interest of (foreign) investors who wanted to be part of Berlin's "Gold Rush" in the real estate market. Potsdamer Platz was the first, and largest, single-building project, and it was a test case for what role planning would play in the new Berlin. In addition, Potsdamer Platz represents mechanisms of city-building processes that are not necessarily unique to Berlin but can be found in other cities as well. The difference, however, is, that these transformations are more legible in a city that undergoes such rapid and dramatic changes as Berlin has since 1989.

Before the Wall came down, there were hardly any foreign companies interested in investing in the city. Berlin's only competitive advantage over other places in West Germany was that it was a highly subsidized city with generous package deals, including tax incentives, for corporations (Campbell 1999). After the fall of the Wall, this situation changed completely. The city became part of the capitalist marketplace literally overnight, and it was swamped with international real estate investors scouting out the territory for good opportunities.<sup>3</sup> While other cities had quite a bit of exposure to this kind of pressure during the eighties, direct foreign invest-



ment in the real estate market was fairly new to Berlin. Deregulation and increased flexibility and competition were also practices hardly heard of in Berlin until that moment. In other words, when most of the other (capitalist) cities in Europe already had felt the stiff winds of global competition, Berlin still lived its comfortable life as a highly subsidized city (both in East and West Berlin).

### Conceptual Framework

The conceptual framework of this case study is informed by two similar approaches that help us to integrate the city into a theoretical framework. The first one is what Rosalyn Deutsche calls an "urban-aesthetic" discourse (1996). In this approach, theories of the city, of social and public space, are linked to ideas of the arts, architecture, and urban design. Along the same line but more specific to urban planning is Robert Beauregard's concept of "city building processes" (Beauregard 1990). The advantage of this approach is that it does not reduce planning to mere physical issues or to a static entity but broadens the view to an integrative concept. City-building is a dynamic concept, intrinsically historical, easily traced to specific agents and forces, important for social well-being and public life, and the city as a place is a target for large-scale capital investment and disinvestment (Beauregard 1990: 212).

The guiding question of this case study is how the global economy articulates itself locally. In order to show this "global-local connection" (Beauregard 1995a), I investigated the politics of city-building as it is played out in the built environment at

Potsdamer Platz. In this analysis, the built environment is understood as a materialized place where planning processes are not only shaped by regulations and conventions, but also by local and global actors.

This framework led to a set of inquiries about: (a) the historical context of the place and its relation to current debates around issues of center and periphery; (b) the processes of deal-making and land use decisions; (c) the design/implementation process; and (d) the image production. The first three elements inquired about the evolution of the site as shaped by the internal and external tensions in the city; their various details are beyond the scope of this paper. I wish to explain and emphasize the last point about image production. By image production, I specifically mean the images produced in cities and by cities in a period of globalization. In understanding this project, images include three overlapping and communicating levels of visual, symbolic and metaphorical products and processes: the "image of a city" (Lynch 1970); images produced through and in the built environment (Sudjic 1992); and contested images of everyday life (Lefebvre 1991; Deutsche 1996).

At the core of this research is the assumption that the production of images has to be understood as a process through which members of society make sense of their individual worlds and of each other's discursive and visual contributions to the general process of communication in society (Habermas 1979; Young 1990). Images are treated as parts of the "materiality of the urban" (Prigge 1987), as substantial elements in the three-pronged spatiality

people encounter in cities—perceived, conceived, and lived (Lefebvre 1991)—and never as mere smoke screens in front of some “real” reality. In particular, my research approach is indebted to work on the special significance of image production in the most recent period of urban restructuring and globalization (Beauregard 1991, 1994; Duncan and Ley 1993; Haila 1997; Harvey 1989; King 1996a; Knox 1993; Shields 1996; Sorkin 1992; Storper 1995; Watson and Gibson 1995; Zukin 1991, 1995, 1996).

In Berlin, I reflected on the production of the image of the “service metropolis” and capital city between 1989 and 1998, which I consider the local versions of attempting to key the city into the global interurban competition accelerated by global city formation (Sassen 1991, 1994; Friedmann 1986, 1995; Friedmann and Wolff 1982; Knox and Taylor 1995; King 1990a). By using Berlin’s Potsdamer Platz as the case, I specifically analyzed the built environment as an expression of an imagery adopted by Berlin to (re)gain global status. Further, I looked at how the production of such images is articulated with virtual and real (economic, social, spatial) processes of global city formation. To do so, I investigated: (a) the activities and strategies by which hegemonic groups produce an “image” of Berlin and how this image is contested by other groups in urban civil society; (b) how particular images are produced through the built environment at Potsdamer Platz; and (c) how these images are challenged by the practices of everyday life.

### **Specific Research Methods**

Fieldwork was articulated around a combination of visual analysis rooted in the history of art and architecture and expanded in spatial theory (Sorkin 1992; Sudjic 1992; Lefebvre 1991; King 1996a, 1998), textual and communicative action analysis (Forester 1998; Flyvbjerg 1998; Schmals and Heinelt 1997; Healey 1997), and ethnographic research as discussed in current planning theory (Sandercock 1998; Jacobs 1996). Different interview techniques and photographic documentation of the construction site over time supported this extensive fieldwork.

Secondary sources were used for the description and the analysis of specific processes specific to Berlin’s formation as a world city (Rada 1997; Mayer 1997; Campbell 1999; Strom 1996a). My primary research builds on this literature while adding to it by providing a largely undocumented aspect that is a theoretical and empirical connection of political, economic, social, and geographical processes with questions of cultural and aesthetic production of images, art, and architecture.

### **Sources of Information**

The case study on Potsdamer Platz relied on three sources of information: interviews, archival research and site observations of the built environment.

#### *Interviews*

Given the plurality of opinions existing in Potsdamer Platz on issues of social impact, economic benefit, and spatial aesthetics, I applied a technique similar to investigative journalism



(see Fainstein 1994: 17). Based on the role of the interviewee within the city-building process, either open-ended or focused interview techniques were used to better understand different perspectives in the planning processes at Potsdamer Platz.

One of the main hurdles with the interview technique is to overcome the interviewer's own biases which result in the asking of suggestive questions. However, it is not only the interviewer who has the power to influence the outcome of an interview, but also the interviewee. By arguing for a certain course of events and against another, interviewees often try to rewrite a certain story or to support their current position on an issue.

A concrete example for this is the difference in recollecting the story about how and when the land deal between the city and Daimler-Benz took place. Michael Schreyer, who was the Commissioner for Urban Development and Environmental Protection for the Berlin government at that time, argued that in the Fall of 1989, the Senator for Construction and Housing, Walter Nagel, wanted to build social housing on parts of Potsdamer Platz. Schreyer's version of the story implies that there had been no real interest in Potsdamer Platz from the investor's side, since at a time this site was very peripheral to the rest of the city. When I confronted Walter Nagel with this proposition, he denied having suggested social housing on Potsdamer Platz.<sup>4</sup>

The timeline of the land deal between the city of Berlin and Daimler-Benz had been a key argument as for why the multinational investor had to pay a

relatively low price for the land. Since most of the negotiations about this site took place behind closed doors, Schreyer's recollection cannot be ignored, in spite of the lack of any supportive material.<sup>5</sup>

From this example, it is clear that when using interviews as empirical evidence, information should always be verified by other sources. Known as triangulation, this method is necessary to elucidate certain agendas. However, the fact that an interviewee's story does not stand up against the evidence of what everybody else is saying does not mean that the story being told is not valid. Of course, in the end it is always the researcher who has to decide whether it is fact or fiction. In the example presented above, I believe that the "truth" lies somewhere in the middle.

Since the planning processes around Potsdamer Platz were quite diverse—with various perspectives, recollections, and possible interpretations—I interviewed representatives from different interest groups: elected officials, investors, planning directors, public intellectuals, scholars, urban critics, and activists. Before I present their image of what Berlin is and what it should become, I want to discuss further sources of information used in this research.

#### *Archival Research*

To a lesser extent, I used public reports, announcements, and proposals. Due to the German practice of keeping reports, figures, and memoranda and the like closed to the general public (Strom 1996a), I concentrated on the reports of the print media for stories around Potsdamer Platz.<sup>6</sup> Despite attempts at



reporting events as accurately as possible, it is important to recognize that newspapers are not neutral observers of events. By advancing a certain opinion and condemning another, newspaper articles are (f)actors in the discourse of city-building processes.

In Berlin, the media has played a significant role in shaping, as well as in providing a platform for, public debate. This central role of the media became obvious during preliminary fieldwork conducted in 1996.<sup>7</sup> Through a close collaboration, media and public relations departments developed and implemented promotional strategies using the built environment for the redefinition of Berlin. I identified these strategies as part of an orchestrated effort to promote Potsdamer Platz as the central place of the new Berlin. I called these strategies the “spectacularization” of the building process. Hence, the research design expanded in that direction as well.

While most of the historical aspect of the case study came from current secondary sources, historical records were also used to locate maps of the area, illustrating the changes in the land—in terms of use, density, and ownership—over time.

#### *Site Observations of the Built Environment*

Another component of my case study approach rests on direct site observations. During the time of the field research from May 1996 to October 1997, I made several trips to the construction site at Potsdamer Platz, to the so-called Info-Box, and to other related significant places in Berlin. Site observations were casual visits and represented a wide span of activities ranging from “hanging out” to watching

the activities around the construction site. As a participant observer, I took pictures, visited the Info-Box, and took part in guided tours around the construction site. I documented the evolution of the construction by taking an extensive amount of photographs and fieldnotes.

The social laboratory of Potsdamer Platz is not enclosed, and as a result I had many informal encounters with Berliners, tourists, unionized laborers, and security patrol officers with whom I shared the space. Their views of the building process at Potsdamer Platz found its way into the study. Furthermore, by interviewing people at their workplace, I had the opportunity to gain more insight into the work environment of some of the movers and shakers of urban development in Berlin, as well as of other people critical of it.

During repeated visits to the site, different opinions about the kind of city that was going to be built were tested. For example, some of the critics were arguing that buildings at Potsdamer Platz were too high and the distance between the building blocks too narrow, not allowing enough sun on the streetscape. This opinion has to be understood as a response to those who advocated increasing height limitations in Berlin, arguing that buildings in New York were even higher. Visiting Potsdamer Platz on a sunny October day around noon, one easily experiences the geo-climatic particularities of Berlin as formulated by the critics in their argument of too-high buildings and too-narrow streetscape.

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### Case Study: Berlin between World City and *Posemuckel*

Berlin combines the disadvantages of an American metropolis with that of a German provincial town (Tucholsky in Bluhm and Nitsche 1996: 102).

Berlin is both open to the world and provincial, sublime and uncouth, inviting and distant, clumsy and agile, sentimental and heartless, brave and weakhearted, loudmouthed and buttoned-up, innocent and corrupt, glittering and shabby; it is Atlantis and sausage stand. The largest German city and the only one that fully fulfills the promise of the metropolis (Hassemer and Eckhardt in Rada 1997: 97).

In the following paragraphs I will present some actors and their opinions on how Potsdamer Platz can be or is being used in redefining the image of Berlin. As mentioned earlier, the research is based on a systematic review of newspaper articles, reports and other written documents, as well as interviews conducted between June 1996 and October 1997. "If only the city could speak, what would it say to us?" asks Robert Beauregard in an article about how the city is represented as the site of collective action (1995b: 59). To follow along the same lines: What would the city say about being the object of image production? Or put differently, how was Potsdamer Platz represented in the imagination of different actors?

#### *Pro-Potsdamer Platz Voices*

To Walter Momper, mayor at the time of the land deal between Daimler-Benz (one of the three multinationals occupying the site) and the city of Berlin, Potsdamer Platz symbolizes the reunified

Berlin/Germany and the reentrance of Berlin onto the global stage.<sup>8</sup> His vision for Berlin was very much the image of both a "capital city" and a "service center" on global stage. The term that he (and others) used for defining this new role was "Service Metropolis Berlin." Both service metropolis and capital city became the official image in politics.<sup>9</sup>

When planning processes at Potsdamer Platz did not go according to his agenda, Ernst Reuter, former CEO of Daimler-Benz and the single most important figure favoring the location of the multinational corporation at Potsdamer Platz,<sup>10</sup> made shock waves with his characterization of Berlin as a *Posemuckel* (back of beyond).<sup>11</sup> This image was so strong that in the following years, the question of Berlin's faith was discussed as either world city or "back of beyond."

Peter Martin, from the public relations agency *Partner für Berlin*, an agency founded specifically for the promotion of the new Berlin, saw Potsdamer Platz as the "heart" of the newly reunified and capital city Berlin, the symbolic center of Berlin's entrance into the service industry economy. Referring to Potsdamer Platz as a "viable animal," Martin argues that Potsdamer Platz would become a strong animal if "people give it a chance to get its first steps going."

#### *Planning Voices*

City planning director Hans Stimmann, a man with authority in Berlin, wanted to have a "European city" at Potsdamer Platz.<sup>12</sup> Stimmann believed that not only should there be no skyscrapers, building facades should be made of stone, not glass and steel. Because of pressure from the investors to build as much space as possible, Stimmann agreed to change

the height limitation from twenty-five meters (which corresponds to the traditional four- to five-story building block in Berlin) to thirty-five meters. Since thirty-five meters is the traditional height limitation in Milan, Stimmann could rationalize this change of policy by arguing that Milan is a European city. In addition, Stimmann was keen on following the urban fabric of the old Berlin with a parceled structure.

Dieter Hoffmann-Axthelm, a public intellectual who gave Stimmann the idea of the European city, is responsible for a number of images that were created during the past decade. Large-scale urban development was the antithesis of how he saw Berlin's thriving future, arguing instead for small-scale, diverse development with an architectural language representing the local traditions.

#### *Negotiation Voice*

When I interviewed Michael Schreyer, Commissioner for Urban Development and Environmental Protection and member of the Green Party, her power had changed from being in the executive seat to being in the oppositional seat within the city parliament.<sup>13</sup> She criticized the (process of the) land deal between the City of Berlin and Daimler-Benz, calling it a "prostration before big capital" (Schweitzer 1996). She also coined the term *Lex Daimler* (Daimler's *de facto* law) in reference to the bargain price paid by the investor. Schreyer argued from the very beginning that the future of Berlin was going to be decided at Potsdamer Platz, and she therefore continually insisted that the future layout of the site be determined through an open concept competition.

#### *Voices Contra-Potsdamer Platz*

The proposal for turning Potsdamer Platz into a major office and entertainment center was contested on a number of levels. In a book-length discussion, journalist Uwe Rada criticizes the official image generated by the politics of capital city and service metropolis (Rada 1997). Instead Rada calls the new Berlin the "capital city of eviction."

Wolfgang Kil, an urban sociologist from the former German Democratic Republic (GDR) and an active voice against the "western domination" of planning in the current Berlin, calls the whole City of Berlin a "single landed property."

Dirk Kaden, who grew up in the East, is an activist against a number of large-scale projects in Berlin (e.g., Citizen Initiative Alexanderplatz). He argues that Potsdamer Platz was perceived by the general public as fallow land, and therefore, to build anything on it would be seen by the non-involved majority as a positive thing. In addition, he points to the *Stadtforum* (city forum), which was introduced as a means of broad citizen participation in urban development, as a legitimization of Berlin's post-fall-of-the-wall urban politics. Therefore, he contends that the *Stadtforum* was nothing more than a "placebo."<sup>14</sup>

The urban historian Harald Bodenschatz, who was fighting against the spatial transformation of Berlin under the pressure of capitalism, sees Potsdamer Platz as a "laboratory product" and a "bridgehead of the West" (Schweitzer 1996: 109).



### *Voice of Analysis*

Werner Sewing, an urban sociologist, sees Potsdamer Platz as a "dress rehearsal" for post-Wall urban development in Berlin. While in the beginning the city (i.e., politicians, city planners, and local architects) won out over the investors by insisting on a concept competition for the area, the investors later, with the help of some of the architects, got what they wanted. Further, Potsdamer Platz symbolizes, in Sewing's view, a battle of the "prima donnas" in architecture. He does not share the image of a service metropolis but instead calls Berlin the "East European Metropolis of the Poor."

### *Riding the Tiger?*

Why is it relevant to know about these different characterizations of Berlin? Images and their connotation were central in the debate about which direction the reunified Berlin should take. For example, when the concept competition for Potsdamer Platz was taking place and the winners presented an architectural language that did not seem to be attractive to the investor, the press representative of Daimler-Benz, Matthias Kleinert, was very outspoken:

Instead of "world city niveau," "a corporate business card for the investor/developer," or an "accentuated urban landscape," the jury's decision of the competition would represent the provinciality of its members. The trust of the investors would be over. And at a symbolic site...the anti-capitalist games of the walled-in idyll would be played (Kleinert in Rada 1997: 42).

In response to this judgmental statement from the investor/developer, the Commissioner for Urban

Development, Volker Hassemer, responded with a counter-attack arguing that from now on, the city would "ride the tiger."

This is just one of many examples of city-building processes in Berlin where images constantly were created and recreated. How does this image production help us to understand planning processes at Potsdamer Platz? As I argue in my dissertation, Potsdamer Platz was a means to debate the future role and identity of the new Berlin.<sup>15</sup>

But how can Potsdamer Platz work as an explanatory case for other situations? How can one generalize from the findings of this very specific case? To use Potsdamer Platz as a case study, embedded in city-building processes of the current political, spatial, economic, social, and cultural transformation of Berlin, not only adds to the history of planning processes, but—because Berlin is so exceptional—reveals the current underlying structures of city-building processes. Potsdamer Platz encapsulates the transformation of planning processes that can be linked to both local and global dynamics. In this transformation, the production of images and the discourse about it seem to have increased in importance. The description and the analysis of the specificity of Potsdamer Platz adds to the emerging literature on globalization and the built environment, where large-scale projects play a particular role (Fainstein 1994; Crilly 1993).

### **Advantage of Case Study over Other Research Methods?**

The advantage over other methods is that a case study approach is helpful when the research topic is

broadly defined, relies on several sources of evidence, and wants to cover contextual conditions (Yin 1993: 65-76; Stake 1995: 33). Because of the nature of the research interest, i.e., a "contemporary phenomena within real-life context" (Yin 1994:13), a case study approach seems to be the most appropriate method. This is particularly true for Potsdamer Platz, where city-building processes are still in the making.

Since individuals played a strong role in city-building processes at Potsdamer Platz, the case study method as an interpretive research approach allowed me to place a substantial emphasis on how actors in Berlin's city-building processes made sense of what was going on (Creswell and Miller 1997). Further, a case study approach was helpful because of its richness of different techniques for analyzing the city-building processes at Potsdamer Platz. It allowed me to draw from a variety of data collection methods that I had acquired in my previous professional life as a journalist and architecture critic. Furthermore, fieldwork took my research in a direction not previously anticipated. Since I used a case study method I was able to be flexible, re-adapt, and progressively redefine relevant issues (Stake 1995: 29).

### **The Use of this Case Study in Teaching**

Given the story about image production at Potsdamer Platz, what lessons can be drawn for planning practice and planning theory? (1) Image production is a practical means to discuss the future of a city. (2) Images give the opportunity to involve a broader audience since they are legible to non-professionals (at least they are more approachable than formal plans, evaluations, and reports). (3) Images also

can be used to cover up hidden agendas and to distract the general audience by having mock fights over what kind of image should represent the future of one particular city. (4) Planning is a practice where not just the "expert" has influence on the future shape of the city.<sup>16</sup> (5) The example of Potsdamer Platz shows that the dominant discourse is a discourse among the powerful, not among a broader range of society.

In spite of its uniqueness—or because of its uniqueness—the case study of Potsdamer Platz can teach the planning student a number of lessons. It tells a planning story, and therefore, adds to the knowledge production in planning history. Planning processes, which usually follow a standard procedure, were not routinized at Potsdamer Platz but were part of a negotiation process between different actors (such as investors, politicians, planners and architects, citizens, activists, and environmentalists). Thus, this case study demonstrates the obvious—not all actors have the same influence. What it also shows is how sophisticated, but also how simple and crude, can be the strategies actors employ at times, as well as how the influence of actors can change during the planning process. And lastly, but not finally, the example of Potsdamer Platz also can be used to demonstrate a different cultural and political context of planning—different from the one dominantly represented in the Anglo-American literature.

I do not claim that these conclusions are particularly original. Rather, I see these lessons confirming the recent approaches in planning theory and prac-



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tice that argue for a multiplicity of voices (Sandercock 1998). Planning, as I understand it, is a practice within society (Douglass and Friedmann 1998), therefore planning practice and theory should be related not only to professional planners, but also to a broad and diverse range of other participants in the urban discourse.

### Endnotes

<sup>1</sup> The author would like to thank the editors and anonymous reviewers for their encouraging comments.

<sup>2</sup> A preliminary version of this paper was presented at the 14<sup>th</sup> World Congress of Sociology (ISA-RC21) in Montreal (Summer 1998).

<sup>3</sup> This euphoria of foreign investors lasted for only about two years. Germany's planning regulations and Berlin's task to solve land claims after reunification, as well as reasons that were of an international and global nature, discouraged the "big boys" of real estate from playing their game in Berlin. To prevent international investment in Berlin was not the intention of city government. To the contrary, in order to make it easier for investors in Berlin, a number of institutions were established. One of them is the KOAI (see Lenhardt 1998).

<sup>4</sup> The differences in the two stories also have to do with the fact that the two interviewees were from two different parties within the governing Red-Green Coalition. This coalition lasted only from 1989 to 1990 and the break-up was due partly to major differences regarding how to proceed at Potsdamer Platz.

<sup>5</sup> Daimler-Benz originally paid only 1505 German Marks per square foot to the State of Berlin, half of the then-current market value of the land. The European Commission for Economy (*Wirtschaftskommission*) disqualified this land deal as an indirect subsidy to the multinational investor by Berlin and asked Daimler-Benz to pay an additional 33.8 million German Marks to the State of Berlin (Schweitzer 1996: 99-100). Up to this day, the full amount of payment was never publicly disclosed. When I inquired about this issue, a representative of Daimler-Benz was willing to give me the date but not the amount of money paid to the State of Berlin.

<sup>6</sup> Newspaper articles came mainly from two sources: (1) from a close reading of *tageszeitung*, a critical, leftist daily newspaper produced in Berlin with local bureaux in Hamburg and Bremen, and a German (and international) distribution system; (2) from an examination of the archival collection of newspaper clippings starting in the early 20th century at the *Zentrum für Berlin-Studien*.

<sup>7</sup> Preliminary research was made possible through a generous research grant from UC Berkeley, German and European Study Center.

<sup>8</sup> This image of Potsdamer Platz as the site of reunification is very much part of Momper's own history. When the first holes were cut into the Wall in November 1989, he was shown on television around the world standing next to the Wall at Potsdamer Platz, his red scarf waving in the wind.

<sup>9</sup> In the summer of 1998, this image was reduced to just capital city, since the service industry never really made its way to Berlin.



<sup>10</sup> Reuter saw Daimler-Benz as a modernizer of Berlin and part of the capital city.

<sup>11</sup> "Don't beat about the bush but roll up your sleeves. It is not about back of beyond." Reuter made this statement on April 1991 during the opening of the *Stadtforum*, a public forum on urban redevelopment questions in Berlin (see Rada 1997: 41ff).

<sup>12</sup> At a public event on Potsdamer Platz, Stimmann also said that "large scale projects always were developed undemocratically. It is an error to believe that through citizen participation, the city would look better" (Stimmann at "Potsdamer Platz: Vision oder Trauma?" discussion, Berlin, June 18, 1996).

<sup>13</sup> Michael Schreyer was the only interview partner who refused to allow the conversation to be recorded.

<sup>14</sup> Placebo is the term I used to best translate the views of Dirk Kaden.

<sup>15</sup> "Place Making by Design: City-Building Processes at Potsdamer Platz, Berlin," dissertation manuscript, Department of Urban Planning, UCLA.

<sup>16</sup> I want to argue that it is important for the discipline of planning to include also other active voices in the city-building process. For the case of Potsdamer Platz, therefore, it is helpful to define planning as a process where representatives of state, market, and civil society are negotiating with each other about the production of urban space, and to define planners as participants (with, of course, different impact) in this urban discourse.

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30 YEARS

URBAN  
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Planning Methods at the Onset of the 21st Century

**Q:** How are the social, political and economic changes in society shaping planning methodology?

**A:** **Abel Valenzuela, Jr.** Assistant Professor

In the middle of a frustrating session, trying to understand why Stata® (a popular statistical software program) would not read my complex data file on day laborers, I am reminded of my task to reflect on the meaning of planning methods in the context of social, political, and economic changes in the city. As my frustration with Stata® suggests, much of how we collect data remains the same. We are still undertaking costly surveys, developing complex statistical models to interpret our data, and coding our information so that we can create visually appealing and powerfully analytic displays of geography of varied social strata. We have also come to fine-tune the art of collecting data through archival research, conversation, observation, and participation. What then is new about planning methods? Perhaps more importantly, we should ask ourselves how planners and teachers of planning can better understand the "what" and "why" of social events in cities. Sound data collection often tells us "what" is going on and, depending on the utility and appropriateness of the method, answers the "why." Knowing your methods well continues to be central to good planning.

While collecting data has changed very little for planners and other students of social science, the art of analysis, interpretation, and presentation has developed significantly. I do not mean to suggest that data collection methods have not been refined, altered, or even discarded, but rather that we still rely to a large degree on surveys, polls, and interviews with little reflection on their utility and limitations. Often, "getting the data" takes precedence over, for example, theory-building to guide one's selection of method or regression model, or practical considerations like asking simple questions rather than a series of questions that only end up frustrating and confusing both respondent and analyst. Balancing how one collects, organizes and makes sense of and deciphers data is central to better planning and applied research.

But teaching research methods is often like following a recipe. A research question is posed, a method identified, and a chronological stepwise formula developed. Yet, urban phenomena are rarely ordered, so why should methods be likewise? Certainly, some research approaches need to follow prescribed protocols such as the development of models and survey instruments. Other approaches, equally powerful in their ability to analyze, are inductive. Understanding deductive or inductive research processes and which approach may best serve a particular project should be based on reviewing the large and rich literature on methodology, participating in seminar discussion on the topic, and undertaking other learning activities. When students and teachers of urban planning learn and teach methods, an equal amount of time has to be devoted to methodological theory.

Computer-aided analysis of data entered the 21st Century two decades ago and hasn't looked back—reaching fever pitch in the 1990s as new software versions regularly update older ones and new programs are released almost yearly. As a result, our ability to tease out complex urban findings has



increased ten-fold. No less surprising is our ability to mix methods that in past times were seen as distinctly separate. Today, still-imaging, geographic information systems mapping, multivariate modeling, and text analysis can all be interfaced not only on one monitor with one computer, and more importantly, integrated within each. This multi-methodological approach to research is entirely consistent with planning's multidisciplinary and challenges the dichotomous and parochial notion that methods are either qualitative or quantitative. The end result is a broader, more holistic approach to carrying out planning research.

UCLA's Department of Urban Planning is fortunate to be in Los Angeles for many reasons, not least of those being our ability to undertake inquiry in a metropolis unique in many ways. As a harbinger for cities elsewhere in the United States and the world, Los Angeles provides the planning field with a test of what applied and scholarly research is and what it might become. Developing theories that reflect on and help us understand poverty, regionalism, unemployment, trade, immigration, space and geography, zoning, public and private land use, transportation, and housing has produced a Los Angeles school of thought on these and other planning issues. What we have not done as well as a department is more fully integrate methods into our curriculum, degree requirements, and the general culture of our planning program. However, being able to train and develop a cadre of planning professionals and academicians to properly collect, analyze, and present data rounds out a planning education necessary to plan and teach about the multi-everything city.

Over the years, UCLA and indeed the planning field in general, has evolved for the better. As planning professionals and scholars, our scope of employment has expanded to the point where planners are found in most every sector of the "planning, policy, management, public" sphere. Planners are finding

themselves increasingly reliant on applied methods to better understand social, economic, political, and other urban issues that may not be easily explained by well-known and developed theories. Data, if properly collected, analyzed, and placed into its proper context, provides the confidence from which to refute and/or corroborate complex theories that attempt to explain perplexing issues. The answer to these difficult-to-explain social phenomena lies in our ability to fashion research questions balanced with sound theoretical and methodological applications. Planning for the city requires an approach no less serious or thorough - We owe it to future planners, planning academicians, and habitants of cities.

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## **The City Conceived**

Michelle Han Kim

Orit Stieglitz

Marcos C. Vargas

Michele Mc Grath

Neal Richman

Edward W. Soja



# Empire

**Michelle Har Kim**

Clenching you for generations  
creased new geography across these palms  
it chiseled over slow creeks and clear flocks  
prophesied among mines  
Glazing cities shouted  
ungnarled along their turnpikes  
wide lighthouses genuflected  
to artifices of exchange  
and all found cribs  
in the crypts of my lungs  
what a weird migration of things  
since I sold my Spring

Wretched of these atlas-hands  
I was my own foreign land  
to pry each village open  
for mild translation;  
since our past's mangled vein  
I have staved this pregnant thirst  
to jerk every natural wire  
harnessing the tempest that crushes across my  
schoolyard  
with crabs and young salamanders

*MICHELLE HAR KIM is a first year graduate student in the Comparative Literature Department, studying English and Spanish. She is a native of New York City.*

# Advocacy Planning and the Question of the Self and the Other

Orit Stieglitz

**Human beings are born different: we are** different in both physical appearance and social/cultural identity. This holds true for individuals, as well as for groups and communities. The concept of differentiation, which is the starting point of advocacy planning, is therefore central to planning. As originally defined by Paul Davidoff, “advocacy planning referred to the defense of excluded interests” (Fainstein and Fainstein 1996: 270), and “the concept of equity planning contains an explicit recognition of a multitude of conflicting social interests, some

of which may become irreconcilable" (Fainstein and Fainstein 1996: 270). The same concept of differentiation was applied to the shift from a federal policy of assimilation—the "melting pot" myth—to a policy that begins to recognize the separate historical and cultural identities of different groups in American society—the "salad bowl" myth.

Certain aspects of democratic theory in planning recognize and respect differences. However, many democratic theorists equate the "public interest with the interests of the public, or at least with those of the majority" (Fainstein and Fainstein 1996: 276), while advocacy planners emphasize more the sanctity of groups as separate entities and try to avoid majority decision-making. Freedom for separate groups in society is problematic: recognition of differences changes the notion of equality understood as the provision of the *same* treatment to all. Indeed, the idea of "difference" inherently implies different needs, different resources, and different planning practices. Susan and Norman Fainstein claim that maximizing individual freedom (in order to respect differences) in its application is beneficial primarily to privileged social groups (1996: 282). Therefore, "while the advocate planner could theoretically work for any social group, the term has generally been interpreted to mean advocate for the poor" (Fainstein and Fainstein 1996: 270).

Advocacy planners, according to Davidoff, should adhere to very high values in order to serve "disadvantaged communities" (1996: 307). Davidoff discusses planning as an interactive process between the planner and the community, requiring the *inclusion*

of citizens in the planning process. According to Davidoff, the community needs an advocate who will affirm the community's "position in language understandable to his client and to the decision-makers he seeks to convince" (Davidoff 1996: 307).

The counterpoint for this idea was expressed twenty-five years later by bell hooks, who criticizes the advocate point of view:

No need to hear your voice when I can talk about you better than you can speak about yourself. No need to hear your voice. Only tell me about your pain. I want to know your story. And then I will tell it back to you in a new way. Tell it to you in such a way that it becomes mine, my own. Rewriting you I write myself anew. I am still author, authority. I am still colonizer, the speaking subject, and you are now at the center of my talk (hooks 1990: 343).

This question of "speaking for others" and the relationship between the subject and the object—the self and the other—is one of the most complex issues currently discussed in planning and the social sciences. At the center of the debate is the impossibility of achieving objectivity or neutrality in any profession. Even Davidoff, in discussing planning, suggests that "it would become clear (as it is not at present) that there are no neutral grounds for evaluating a plan; there are as many evaluative systems as there are value systems" (1996: 310). Davidoff still gives the advocate planner—an individual with a personal value system—the authority and responsibility to decide what is proper for a certain community.



The issue of similarity versus otherness can be extended to all facets of social and professional life: Can a lawyer who is a black male represent a white woman? Can a male speak for feminism? In addition, the definition of community is fluid, and as Linda Alcoff (1995: 99) claims, there is always a narrower category. Accordingly, the definition of community could shrink to one individual. This leads to the question of *who* and *where* is the other? bell hooks refers to the marginal community and to herself as part of it as the other:

Those scholars, most especially those who name themselves radical critical thinkers, feminist thinkers, now fully participate in the construction of a discourse about the 'other.' I was made 'other' there in that space with them... In that space in the margins, that lived in segregated world of my past and present, I was not 'other.' They did not meet me there. They met me at the center (hooks 1990: 343).

If "they" meet in the other's space, as hooks suggests, the categories of "self" and "other" are subversively inverted. In its own space, the community is no longer the other, but rather it is the outsider who enters the margins and becomes the other.

Speaking for others—assuming the needs of others—is an inherited part of the planning profession. In order to be able to speak for others, one must learn about the other. Learning about the other, however, is not obvious, since the definition of who is and where is the other is changing, depending on the central subject. Foucault (1973) argues that in the

process of cumulating knowledge about the other, the central subject—the "knower"—is transformed. Henceforth, it is impossible to really *learn* to know the other. As Linda Alcoff claims, "the validity of a given instance of speaking for others cannot be determined simply by asking whether or not the speaker has done sufficient research to justify her claims. Adequate research will be a necessary but insufficient criterion of evaluation" (1995: 104). Alcoff, following Michel Foucault, describes these "rituals of speaking" as "politically constituted by power relations of domination, exploitation, and subordination. Who is speaking, who is spoken of, and who listens is a result as well as an act of a political struggle" (1995: 105). One can conclude that in order to avoid this conflict, the planner ought to be part of the community—part of the other.

To be part of the "other" community is a problematic requirement for the planner. It implies limitation on who can legitimately become a progressive planner. Should students applying to planning schools be part of certain disadvantaged groups, or agree to deal only with their own group? As an Israeli, I was born in a colonizing society that has deprived other communities of their basic rights. I criticize this domination and agree with bell hooks' writings, though there is no way I can change my "outsider-ness" among the suppressed/colonized groups.

I will also be the other—the outsider—among some communities I wish to work with, because of my status as a middle-class, well-educated, white woman. There is no way I can change either my affiliation, or the color of my skin, in order to be able to work with other communities if the basis for eligibility is similarity.

This basis for eligibility also brings with it the difficulty of determining to what extent one can be part of the community. bell hooks considers herself part of a marginalized community. She defines her community, her social identity, as "the site of resistance." hooks claims that if the scholars who considered her "other" would have met her in the margins, where she grew up, she would not have been other anymore. But is she still part of the margins? bell hooks is today a well-known scholar. She occupies a unique place in relation to the marginalized spaces of her upbringing. "Yet I want to talk about what it means to struggle to maintain that marginality even as one works, produces, lives, if you will, at the center" (hooks 1990: 341). If she claims to be in the center, hooks cannot play the same role in her marginalized community. Being in the center is a different position even if one grew up in the margins. Therefore, a professional planner from a marginalized background is not necessarily part of this community in the same way at a later time. S/he might be identified with the academic community, or the planning community. The professional planner becomes the other as well, even though s/he had the experience of being part of the margins and might know more than outsiders do.

I agree with Linda Alcoff's and bell hooks' critiques of the practice of speaking for others. To me, the solution is not in the delegitimization of the progressive planner who is not part of the margins, but rather lies in a revision of the *role* of the planner. This role should not be patronizing, nor should it repress the community from expressing itself. The definition of this role should stand in contrast with ideas of domination while serving the community and its needs.

Communities today have more power. Ethnic and cultural groups have different opportunities to affirm their cultural identities. Marginality is viewed as a site of resistance, not only of repression. Communities express their needs and pursue changes more assertively. Davidoff himself mentioned that "much work along the lines of advocate planning has already taken place, but little of it by professional planners. More often the work has been conducted by trained community organizers or by student groups" (Davidoff 1996:311). Grassroots organizations and urban social movements are now recognized as part of the formal planning tradition (Friedmann 1987). One can ask, therefore, whether planners are needed at all and whether the community can manage without professional intervention.

I argue that the planner's professional intervention is still needed. What needs to be changed is the power structure. The key to a balanced intervention is what Hindess, reflecting on Foucault's work, has called "relationships between 'power liberties'" (cited in Hindess 1996:99). The core of the new critiques of advocacy planning, including those of Alcoff and hooks, is in my opinion the patronizing approach, which implies subordination and domination. Drawing from Foucault, Hindess explains that "domination refers, in other words, to those asymmetrical relationships of power in which the subordinated persons have little room for maneuver because their margin of liberty is extremely limited" (Hindess 1996:102). However, more balanced power relations—or power liberties—leave open possibilities of resistance. Balanced power relations between the planner and the community can therefore be seen as positive and healthy.



While urban social movements and grassroots organizations may initiate social change, planners and other professionals have unique skills. As part of their expertise, professionals should have a larger perspective and a wider frame for analyzing actions. Therefore they can engage with communities from a broader perspective. In order to succeed in their endeavors, communities do not need a patron or an advocate to speak for them. Communities do need to understand and familiarize themselves with specific technical language; they need a consultant.

The title "consultant" implies a different set of power relations. It assumes that those seeking consulting advice are capable of making decisions themselves. They seek professional advice, not a representative who will take responsibility for decision-making. Thus, the planner defined as a consultant rather than as an advocate does not need to speak for others—those others can speak for themselves. This would establish a different power structure implying equal power to each partner, allowing for more balanced relationships between the community and the planner. Foucault termed it, "strategic games between power liberties" (cited in Hindess 1996: 99).

Defining the planner as a consultant allows him/her to live in peace with the issue of otherness. As a consultant, the planner *should* learn about the other in order to understand and to give better advice, not in order to represent or speak for others. The relationship between the planner and the community is not trapped in the frame of similarity and otherness anymore. In addition, this more balanced power structure (i.e. power relations that do not imply domination) does not tag the label of the other on either of

the planner or the community. The planner can be viewed as the other by the community and reversibly the community can be viewed as the other by the planner. If everyone can be the other and if power domination is out of the game, then there is no subject and no object. There is the self and the other, and those two labels are equally weighted and therefore can play "strategic games of power liberties."

Every community is unique, and as I have already discussed, planning cannot claim to be either scientific or neutral. Furthermore, it takes time to develop certain expertise in specific communities. Planning therefore must rely on the active participation of the community. A planner must work hand in hand with the community, and with experience, incorporate the past in order to understand present and future needs. Only active community participation can eliminate the unjust equation whereby the community is the passive object of research by knowledgeable outsiders who devise expert solutions. Community participation, which reflects a balanced power structure, should be based upon active cooperation within the planning process.

Under these conditions of equal power structure, even bell hooks welcomes the other: "Marginality as site of resistance. Enter that space. Let us meet there. Enter that space. We greet you as liberators" (hooks 1990: 343). As a professional and as the other, I accept hooks appeal as an invitation to participate in the process of liberation of the margins. The solution for this cooperation lies in crafting a different power structure. We need to arrive in the community as partners in order to work together. It is also a



matter of discourse: not to speak for others a discourse which "annihilates, erases," but to "move in solidarity to erase the category of colonized/colonizer" (hooks 1990: 343).

In my discussion of Davidoff's definition of the planner as advocate, I did not address the issue of the public arena (i.e., the situation of planners working for governmental agencies and other public organizations). In these arenas, my proposal to view the planner as a consultant poses some unresolved questions: How can a planner not be the other or how can s/he avoid using the power of domination, when s/he works for a governmental agency? What is the role of the planner when serving not as the consultant for the community, but as the consultant for the authority? Davidoff discusses plural and comprehensive planning processes. He limits the scope of these concepts to specific groups, because he challenges the existence of the general public interest. While all different groups need to be recognized as distinct, I would argue that these groups remain portions of the society as a whole. In the salad bowl image, it is possible to argue, without ignoring its different components, that the salad also exists as an entity. Likewise, planning is a comprehensive terrain and the professional planner must have the knowledge and expertise to tie specific communities with the society as a whole, without forsaking the uniqueness of each community (or of themselves). This calls for significant attention to professional ethics, its definition, and its roles, which I will leave for future discussions.

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# Transformative Community Practice: New Populism, Social Movements, and Progressive Latino Politics

Marcos C. Vargas

**The 1998 elections marked a dramatic shift in the political terrain** by significantly opening the political space for a more progressive politics. Curtailing the neo-conservative and religious right's political hegemony which had dominated state and national politics since the early 1980s, new progressive representatives were elected (including the first openly lesbian to the House of Representatives), and minority voters were mobilized in record numbers.<sup>1</sup> In California, the election of the first democratic governor in

two decades and the massive increase in Latino voter participation, which jumped to thirteen percent from eight percent in 1994, marked important victories (Martínez 1998). The role played by Latino representatives to support successful Democratic campaigns state-wide (notably by Speaker of the Assembly Antonio Villaraigosa) and the dramatic jump in Latino democrats and republicans elected to state offices (including the election of Cruz Bustamante to the post of lieutenant governor) represent a shift away from the dominant wedge issue politics of recent years. Of particular significance in the development of a new California politics of positive social change, is the merging of an evolving Latino politics with progressive local and regional politics. This is exemplified in the increasing effectiveness of new popular social movements for economic and social justice, as seen in the progressive, coalition-building style of Speaker Villaraigosa and representatives Gilberto Cedillo and Gloria Romero. These Latino elected officials represent a new breed of Latino and California politicians who have had extensive experience in grassroots community and labor struggles, and are more in tune with concerns of working people.<sup>2</sup>

While the implications of such dramatic political change on the prospects for a more progressive California remains to be seen in the months and years to come, the advancement of an effective and sustainable progressive political agenda raises a multitude of important questions. How best do we engage an emerging population of historically oppressed groups in a broad political project of democratiza-

tion and positive social change? What should be the role of progressive social movements in influencing state legislation and the political system from within, as well as oppositionally from without? How can this apparent shift toward a more inclusive and populist community and state-wide politics be transformed into a progressive multicultural movement for change? What should the role of progressive planning and transformative community practice be in drawing from these changes and in furthering the expansion of democratic political space at the community level? Looking at new populism as an emerging ideology, political philosophy, and organizing approach, this essay investigates the significance of populism in the state's Latino community since the 1950s and its development toward a contemporary new Latino politics in tune with a larger progressive agenda for social change.

### **New Populism**

Grounded in the American democratic traditions of grassroots democracy and the egalitarianism of the late nineteenth century populist movement, the emergence of new populist forms of social mobilization in the late 1960s continue to play an important role in informing the practice of progressive social change. Authors such as Carl Boggs, Harry Boyte, and Frank Reissman have contributed much to the understanding of populism's potential for advancing such emancipatory ideals while also illuminating its potentially oppressive side (Boggs 1986; Boyte, Booth, and Max 1986; Boyte and Riessman 1986; Evans and Boyte 1986). As a result of a growing fiscal crisis and state bureaucratization associated



with the erosion of the Keynesian welfare state and the rise of neo-liberalism in the 1970s, populism emerged from both the right and the left. Calling for government decentralization and a restoration of civic participation, right wing populism's glorification of individualism, free-market capitalism, and the defense of white cultural dominance catapulted Ronald Reagan into the presidency and solidified conservative political hegemony for years (Boggs 1986). In the context of a comparatively weaker and more fragmented populism from the left, right wing populism's appeal stemmed from its ability to address the everyday concerns of common people, representing them as victims of the state and of liberal social forces which threatened their way of life (Boggs 1986; Boyte, Booth, and Max 1986). "Populist rhetoric from the right," writes Boyte, "conveys, most basically, a sense of hopelessness about prospects for real democratic self-government. It sees government as simply the enemy, not the instrument of citizens joining together for the common good. It breeds fear, suspicion, and a sense of unbridgeable difference" (1986: 12-13). Contemporary examples of such divisive populism in California include the passage of a series of propositions (185, 187, 209, and 227). These measures serve as examples of the right's effectiveness in exploiting the socio-economic frustrations and fears of predominantly white middle- and working-class residents through the scapegoating of communities of color and immigrants.

In contrast to this image of conservative populism, progressive or new populism envisions the creation

of a more egalitarian society based on ordinary people having a voice in matters affecting their lives. In their efforts to forge a populist movement relevant to both the concerns and aspirations of ordinary people, advocates of new populism embrace a vision of democratic pluralism while emphasizing commonly shared values (family, community, religious traditions), and the common heritage of oppressed social groups (Boyte 1986; Ansara and Miller 1986). Furthermore, like earlier American populists who challenged the excessive power of American corporations at the turn of the century, a dominant theme in new populism remains the struggle for economic and social justice.

#### *Transformation of Unequal Relations of Power*

Grassroots democratic participation and citizen action aiming to transform unequal relations of power have been at the core of new populism (Boyte 1992). New populism draws extensively from examples of recent grassroots struggles: from low-income communities fighting for basic municipal services and local political representation, to coalition-building by community and labor groups to maintain jobs, to the formation of multi-racial environmental coalitions across income classes. New populism emphasizes how mobilizing diverse peoples around common concerns can give them greater control over their lives while building their democratic participation and transforming oppressive structural formations in society. Boyte advances a more complex and multidimensional analysis of power than that generally offered by structuralist social theory with his contention that unequal power relations are not rigid,

but are always contested, and therefore mutually transformative. In an effort to transcend the debilitating "politics of victimization," Evans and Boyte believe that:

One never simply 'acts on' another—any process of action always has reciprocal moments, changing both partners in the drama. Groups of people in society are never simply or completely 'powerless;' therefore there are always resources, stratagems, and social and cultural maneuvers available to and used by even those who seem at first appearance most unambiguously victimized (1992: xvii).

#### *Community: Arena for Action and Source of Power*

Recognizing the importance of social relations at the level of community in the daily lives of most people, particularly low-income people, new populism stresses community as an arena for action and a critical building block toward democracy. In describing the importance of community in making the populist democratic vision relevant to poor and working people, Michael Ansara and S.M. Miller contend that "community takes the theme of empowerment and gives it a place, a concrete location. Further, it links the democratic impulses of the 1960s with the history and traditions of mainstream and particularly blue collar culture" (1986: 147). New populism posits that drawing from communal traditions, common interest and concerns is significant because it has the great potential of generating progressive values and building solidarity (Ansara and Miller 1986; Evans and Boyte 1992). In recent years, progressive mobilizations have included direct challenges

to transnational corporate capital and city economic development policies, such as campaigns to adopt city-wide living wage ordinances (Conrad 1997; Pollin 1998), and demands for city and corporate accountability over subsidies and concessions granted to corporations (LeRoy 1994; Squires 1992).

#### *New Populism and the State*

In setting out to fill a void in American politics created by the erosion of welfare state liberalism and the marginalization of the Marxist left, new populism focused on social change within the political arena (Boggs 1986). While adhering to no single ideology of social transformation, new populism has sought to transform the American political terrain by achieving popular control of public policy, and therefore greater control by common people over their lives through democratic participation. Progressive or new populism, with its emphasis on the struggle of common people over oppressive effects of existing social and economic realities, is not about politics as usual. As Ansara and Miller write, new populism "demands that we not see politics as simply the changing of leaders, the pursuit of power, reactions to inevitable economic collapses... [but that it] must be about transforming social relationships, developing popular consciousness, enhancing people and their everyday lives" (1986: 145). The transformation of the political arena, as proposed by new populists at the state and national level, would require the formation of an inclusive, broad-based, and democratic organizational structure, a legislative commitment to democratization of the current corporate dominated electoral system, and a clearly articulated progressive



platform. At the local level, this would most certainly necessitate the development of popular consciousness based on socio-economic access and political accountability. Such consciousness-raising strategies could include grassroots forms of citizenship training, popular education, and critical pedagogy.

### *Prospects for a New Populism*

A critical look at new populist rhetoric, as well as its effectiveness in transforming unequal relations of power, reveals progressive populism's potential to transform multiple forms of structural oppression. Iris Marion Young's multiple dimensions of oppression (1990), transmits the potential of new populism to challenge cultural imperialism, exploitation, marginalization, powerlessness, and violence. As stated above, one aspect of oppression directly addressed by new populism is the question of powerlessness. Young defines powerlessness as a severe limitation in a group's structural position toward "making decisions that affect the condition of their lives and actions" (Young 1990: 53). Thus, new populism's emphasis on organizing disenfranchised groups toward their political inclusion and political empowerment through collective action directly challenges structures of oppression and domination.

New populist political strategies to empower the disenfranchised include voter registration, the building of sustainable democratic organizations, participatory research, economic boycotts, lobbying, and other organized means of raising public awareness and pressure on policymakers. However, one of the clear weaknesses of populism lies in the perpetuated traditions of racism, sexism, and homophobia

(Ansara and Miller 1986; Boggs 1986; West 1986). This populist "cultural conservatism," is deeply grounded in oppressive social formations specific to the American liberal and neoliberal socioeconomic experience, but is reinforced by the populist emphasis on community homogeneity and a tendency toward social and geographic isolationism.<sup>3</sup> Cultural conservatism, generally associated with the American traditional values of European settlers, is not limited to oppressive traditions established by these first immigrant colonists, and in fact is prevalent among new immigrant communities as well. Along with positive cultural traditions of contemporary immigrant groups (e.g., cultural values of familial and communitarian mutual aid) cultural formations also include oppressive social formations grounded in traditional values related to their society of origin. Despite the American populist quest for mainstream appeal, new progressive populist literature and practice have extended their focus on the struggles of subordinate groups. This commitment to social justice and democratic pluralism, while significant to the building of movements toward the transformation of class-, race-, gender-, and sexuality-based oppression, requires a struggle over culture as well. This struggle over culture must be based on the ideological development of populism as an awareness of the multiple dimensions of oppression, and the engagement of strategies of cultural construction.

### **Latino Populism and the Potential for Progressive Latino Politics**

Demographic research on the over-representation of "minorities" among the nation's socio-economically



disenfranchised has emphasized the growing importance in community organizing among communities of color across group differences. In California, the recent increase in Latino political participation has further illustrated the need for greater attention to the significance of this expanding political terrain. The following section emphasizes several key periods in the development of Latino politics in California which have significantly contributed to the development of an emerging Latino progressive politics and consequently to a new era in progressive populism.

#### *Community Politics of the 1950s and Early 1960s*

Increased urbanization and post-war prosperity throughout the late 1940s and 1950s resulted in the growth of a highly skilled middle-class population. During the same period, a number of Mexican American leaders and organizations in California emerged, modeled on the populist grassroots community organizing of Alinsky's *Back of the Yards* mobilizations in Chicago (Acuña 1988; García 1996). Earlier organizing efforts by Civic Unity Leagues in communities such as East Los Angeles, Chino, Ontario and Pomona, provided much of the groundwork for larger scale and more coordinated efforts associated with the Industrial Areas Foundation's (IAF) organizer Fred Ross. Evolving from a labor and community collaboration between Mexican American steelworkers and volunteers, the Community Service Organization (CSO) was founded (and eventually merged with the IAF) according to Alinsky's vision to organize separate councils of whites, Mexican Americans, and Blacks that could nevertheless be unified to create a power-

ful citywide coalition (Reitz and Reitz 1987). Under Ross' influence, the CSO registered 12,000 new voters while Ed Roybal's election to the city council provided the momentum to organize around issues of housing discrimination, police brutality, school segregation, and continued efforts to register 32,000 new Mexican American voters during a three-month period in 1950 (Acuña 1988).

The success of the CSO's grassroots organizing work spread to Mexican American communities throughout California. Joining Ross, César Chavez was hired by Alinsky as an organizer for the CSO in 1953. Describing the CSO's organizing methodology as being rooted in concerns of community residents and the resource potential of existing community institutions, Reitz and Reitz write that:

The basic pattern was for Ross and/or Chavez to enter a town with a large Mexican American population, meet local leaders, set up a CSO chapter, and move on to the next town. Typically, the organizer would enter a new community with a set of names and contacts obtained from CSO members in nearby towns. Chavez and Ross would begin by studying the community, listening to residents, and interviewing key people, such as the local priest, voluntary association leaders, and respected members of the community. An interested resident would then be asked to call a house meeting and invite friends and neighbors to discuss the community and its problems. The organizer would describe CSO voter registration drives in other towns and how an organized community can marshal its resources to

exert influence on city officials and begin to attack common local problems (1987: 209).

Once enough community residents were committed to establish an organizing committee and recruit new members under a coordinated membership drive, a convention would be held and officers elected. Ross' departure from Alinsky's "organization of organization" approach and his alternative focus on the organization of membership, proved to be more effective in mobilizing broad constituencies (Reitz and Reitz 1987; Tjerandsen 1980).

The success of the CSO in expanding the political power of the disenfranchised Mexican American communities throughout California represents a significant development in the political strength of California's Latino community. Chavez left the CSO in 1962 to organize Mexican American farmworker communities and formed the National Farm Workers Association that eventually became the United Farm Workers (UFW). The initial efforts of Chavez focused on organizing a host of community services and building strong community support for the union and its demands. These organizations served as a symbol of resistance and hope for the Chicano movement. Over the years, it served as a model of community and labor organizing. All in all, the work of the CSO (and later of the UFW), and its use of populist-oriented grassroots organizing, prepared the ground for major socio-economic and political demands by Mexican Americans in California (Reitz and Reitz 1987; Martínez 1998).

#### *Chicano Social Movement of the Late 1960s and 1970s*

Firmly grounded in the post-war grassroots community organizing work of the CSO, the Chicano Movement of the late 1960s and early 1970s represented a pivotal period in the development of Latino politics. More than emphasizing community political organizations, the Movement articulated issues of cultural consciousness and identity. The Chicano movement gave new meaning to community. Understanding the place of their community within the larger society, Chicanos/as express their particular experiences of oppression and domination. In response to decades of assimilation established on a racial Black-White paradigm, young activists rejected the "Mexican American" identification for a new "Chicano" identity, much like "Black" consciousness sought to redefine the "Negro" experience during that same period. Describing the significance of the movement's cultural construction of identity, Elizabeth Martínez writes:

Calling oneself Chicano served as a proud response to the confusion and racist feeling of inferiority that could flow from being a people whose cultural wealth and uniqueness had been brutally negated. Identified with both Mexico and the United States, and with neither, Chicanos felt they should have a new name that expressed their very particular reality. This identity served as a major, anti-racist motor of the *movimiento* and led to the establishment of Chicano Studies, bilingual education and affirmative action in the 1960s (1998: 200).



Chicano identity represented resistance to cultural oppression through its assertion of cultural determination. Through a reconstruction of identity based on the Chicano historical experience within American society (including cultural attributes such as language, customs, value systems), Chicanoism fostered cultural pride, awareness, and a sense of solidarity among group members—all of which were critical to Chicano political mobilization and sustained struggle (García 1996). Motivated by a sense of resistance, self-determination and a basic distrust of dominant white institutions, the Chicano community looked inward for leadership and organizational structure. Numerous local and neighborhood-based organizations were formed to empower and “liberate” the Chicano community from oppressive social formations of exploitation and social inequality. Chicano organizational models such as the UFW, Corky Gonzalez’s Crusade for Justice (based in Denver), community self-help service organizations, community schools, cultural centers, and political organizations such as El Partido La Raza Unida party, dramatically changed the social and political landscape providing leadership and an environment for a new Latino political and cultural activism.

*Latino Politics and Inclusion: in the Late 1980s and 1990s*

Global economic restructuring reduced the Mexican American middle-class in the late 1970s and 1980s and substantially increased immigration to the US from Mexico and the rest of Latin America. Chicano social consciousness and activism shifted away from a community-based orientation toward business and

professional Hispanic “brokerage politics” (Acuña 1988; Martínez 1998).<sup>4</sup> Successful voting rights challenges by the Mexican American Legal Defense Fund (MALDEF) and the Southwest Voter Registration and Education Project (SVREP) opened the doors for increased Latino participation in electoral politics at all levels of government (Lopez-García 1992). However, despite these advances toward greater political inclusion, Latinos continued to struggle to find political representation proportional to their growing numbers, and therefore remained a people “on the outside of the political system looking in.” As late as 1988, for example, while Latinos made up twenty-seven percent of California’s residents, they made up only eight percent of the voting electorate (Armbruster, Geron, and Bonacich 1995). Although the number of Latinos elected at the local and state level increased from 1984 to 1994 (particularly in municipal, county, and school board offices), they nevertheless remained significantly under-represented in elected and appointed posts (Latino Issues Forum 1997).

Efforts by various Latino community-based organizations (CBOs) to increase Latino voter participation resulted in gradual increases in Latino voting participation throughout the late 1980s and early 1990s. In the elections of 1994, these efforts yielded substantial gains. Latino voter participation increased from 7.9 percent of the total vote in the 1988 presidential election to 9.6 percent in the 1994 mid term election (Latinos Issues Forum 1997). These gains rose to eleven percent in the 1996 presidential election, and to thirteen percent in the 1998 California gubernato-



rial election (Latino Issues Forum 1997; Rohrllich 1997; Rodriguez 1998). These most recent voting turnouts were in large part seen as a response to California's rise in anti-immigrant sentiment orchestrated by former Governor Pete Wilson under Proposition 187, which eliminated public services to both legal and undocumented immigrants (Armbruster, Geron and Bonacich 1995; Del Olmo 1998). Tapping into the political backlash of Proposition 187 and similar policies, Latino CBOs and immigrant rights and service organizations (IRSOs) expanded their naturalization and voter registration services (Estrada and Vargas 1997).

The large population of Latino residents whose non-citizen status prevents them from voting has historically been a significant barrier to Latino voter participation. Latino political organizations, such as SVREP, the National Association of Latino Appointed and Elected Officials (NALEO), and many local Latino organizations have historically encouraged Mexican nationals and other Latino immigrants to naturalize and become voting citizens. Due to the difficulties in negotiating the Immigration and Naturalization Services (INS) bureaucracy, naturalization rates throughout the 1980s and early 1990s remained relatively low.

The passage of the 1986 Immigration Reform and Control Act (IRCA) and the efforts by many CBOs to enact legalization provisions set the stage for a massive increase in new Latino voters. IRCA increased sanctions for employers who knowingly hired undocumented immigrants and offered am-

nesty to an unprecedented 2.65 million undocumented immigrants, the majority of whom resided in California (Defreitas 1994). Many IRSOs were effective in developing a network of community legalization service centers, and providing assistance to qualifying IRCA applicants. Grounded in the political consciousness and mobilization of the Chicano Movement, many grassroots organizations (One Stop Immigration, Hermandad Mexicana, and El Concilio del Condado de Ventura) established an English/civics curriculum and other educational programs for those eligible for naturalization. The combined efforts of Latino political organizations (such as SVREP and NALEO), and various community service agencies (e.g. health clinics, legal centers, social clubs, and labor groups), resulted in a dramatic increase in naturalization applications, from approximately 250,000 in 1990, to well over one million in 1995, and an estimated 1.3 million in 1996 (Latino Issues Forum 1997). In a continuation of the grassroots populist approach employed under IRCA, naturalization service providers encouraged civic involvement while organizing bus transportation to citizenship swearing-in ceremonies, distributing voter registration forms, and assisting first time voters in understanding the voting process.

#### *New Dimensions in Social Movements and Organization*

Latino politics in the last decade represents a merging of contemporary progressive social movements that have emphasized economic and social justice, multicultural coalition-building, and a renewed importance of culture. As one of the communities

most negatively impacted by global economic restructuring, Latinos were instrumental in establishing multiracial coalitions and new progressive social movements in Los Angeles. Alliances were forged among CBOs around issues of community economic development, living wage ordinances, and labor groups associated with militant organizing campaigns targeting predominately Latino low-wage workers and recent immigrants. An example of this new progressive labor/community alliance is the LA Alliance for a New Economy (LAANE), responsible for the Los Angeles City Council's passage of the living wage ordinance in 1997. Challenging the dominant economic development paradigm which prioritizes support for free market economic growth, the organizing campaign for a living wage brought together community and labor organizations concerned about the low-wage of immigrant workers (Pollin 1998). Labor organizations most active in the living wage campaign have been the Hotel Employees and Restaurant Employees (HERE) and Service Employees International Union's (SEIU), who in 1995 spearheaded the successful Justice for Janitors campaign (Conrad 1997). These and other militant labor organizations have emerged as important players in engaging Latino and immigrant workers, multiethnic community based organizations, and other progressive sectors of the community in struggles for economic rights.

### **Conclusion**

The development of Latino politics in California indicates the important influence that new populist

themes have had on the development of community politics. No emancipatory struggle develops in a historical vacuum. Yet, the political capacity and consciousness of Latinos develop over time as a result of new and old forms of politics. During eight years of effort as the executive director of a progressive Latino community-based organization, I saw how the organization's political capacity and consciousness were influenced by the protest and cultural politics of the Chicano movement, and the subsequent more mainstream Hispanic broker politics and advocacy approaches to community issues and organizational development. I also recognized how important other established sister-organizations and coalitions of organizations were as resources and sources of solidarity.

Overall, the development of Latino political capacity and consciousness over the last fifty years represents the merging of a number of important themes for social action. They include populism's emphasis on grassroots organization and democratic participation, the focus on community organizations and cultural activism, and the expansion of Chicano politics into pan-ethnic Latino agendas and inter-ethnic coalitions. Drawing from the constant theme of epistemological challenges to the dominant neo-liberal hegemony, and other forms of structural oppression, people are beginning to forge a transformative community practice that challenges unequal relations of power, and deconstructs old paradigms to reconstruct new visions of democracy, community, identity, citizenship, and progressive change.

## Endnotes

<sup>1</sup>Nichols (1998) finds that union household voter participation rose from fourteen percent in 1994 to twenty-two percent in 1989, and that Black and Latino voting rates increased to sixteen percent from twelve percent for the same periods.

<sup>2</sup>Villaraigosa was a Chicano student and community activist, militant labor organizer for the United Teacher-Los Angeles, and board member of the American Civil Liberties Union before his election to the Assembly, where he has continued to fight for the rights of immigrants, low-wage workers and the poor, while breaking new ground in building alliances with diverse constituencies. Cedillo, also a product of the emerging militant and grassroots labor movement, served as President of the Services Employees International Union (SEIU) Local 660, and was active in Los Angeles' campaign for a living wage ordinance, "Justice for Janitors" mobilization and the environmental justice movement. Gloria Romero is a college professor and Chicana community activist who has been an effective community advocate for police reform.

<sup>3</sup>Cornel West's critique of American populism's tendency toward "cultural conservatism" includes not only that associated with American cultural traditions and community geographic isolationist tendencies, but also a socialist critique based on mainstream American dependence on economic growth.

<sup>4</sup>For an interesting discussion of this period including an analysis of Latino politics, see Acuña 1988: 363-403

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MARCOS C. VARGAS is a doctoral candidate in the Department of Urban Planning at UCLA. His dissertation examines organizational adaptation of California-based immigration rights and service organizations in response to anti-immigration sentiment and public policies.

**30 YEARS**

**URBAN  
PLANNING**

**UCLA**

Theoretical Underpinnings of Urban Planning Practice

**Q: Building on the legacy of this department, and looking into the future, what can we learn from UCLA?**

**A: Michele Mc Grath** Urban Planning Alumni Association

I was asked as an alumnus of the UCLA Graduate School of Architecture and Urban Planning (GSAUP) to write a reflective short essay on the legacy of the UCLA urban planning program, particularly the role of the program in shaping new approaches and practices of planning in Los Angeles. For me, this is what has made the UCLA urban planning program special and has set it apart from other programs: a focus on the theoretical underpinnings of urban planning as well as on provocative new ideas that students then synthesize and put into practice, with the goal always to improve peoples' lives. That may sound idealistic, but it is this idealism—that seems to come so much more easily when one is a student—that one can always draw from later when purpose and reason become muddled.

I recall students sometimes grumbling that we were not learning the practical skills needed to work as planners. I am now able, however, to more fully appreciate the urban planning education that I received at UCLA. I have since learned that one quickly picks up the basics (zoning codes, general plans, pro



formas, meeting facilitation). The broader theories which the program at UCLA emphasizes provide students with a valuable foundation that is not easily picked up on the job. It has made my work more effective and enjoyable. Because I better understand the why of planning, I believe I have been able to make a more valuable contribution to the profession. Others are interested in my views and are more likely to seek me out to discuss more general issues, partly, I feel, as a result of my educational background.

Key to my ability to synthesize what I learned at UCLA with my work experiences was the opportunity to share with many professors the passion for putting theory into practice. In my experience, most UCLA urban planning graduates have gone on to work in the "real world," as opposed to academia. But this distinction at UCLA is blurred, since so many professors also work in the "real world." The experience of working on projects that actually affected the lives of real people has proved invaluable to many alumni.

The UCLA urban planning program's approach of applying broad theories to pressing public problems has influenced planning in Los Angeles and will continue to influence it as our graduates rise to positions of greater influence, bringing with them their unique perspectives on the pressing issues of the day.

*MICHELE MC GRATH is president of the UCLA Urban Planning Association. She graduated in 1990 and is now a community development specialist with the City of Beverly Hills.*

**30 YEARS**

**URBAN  
PLANNING**

**UCLA**

**Beyond Outreach: A Model of University "Affirmative Investment"  
in low income communities**

**Q: How is the Department's  
community-outreach approach  
contributing to change in  
Los Angeles?**

**A: Neal Richman** Lecturer

Increasingly, the term community outreach is used on the UCLA campus as a descriptor for initiatives that seek to expand student diversity in an era when affirmative action has been outlawed first by the UC Board of Regents, and, following that lead, the state electorate in Proposition 209. While for the Department of Urban Planning community, outreach has included recruitment of students of color, we have viewed such activities as a necessary but not fully sufficient program for equalizing opportunities in society.

It was none other than Abraham Lincoln who, in signing education legislation in 1862, defined the responsibility of land grant institutions of higher learning as promoting "the liberal and practical education of the industrial classes in the several pursuits and professions in life." Surely, one hundred years later, when UCLA, as a land grant university, began creating a new planning program in response to wide scale urban unrest, this new program had to do more than provide access to higher education to "the industrial classes."

I have often used the term "affirmative investment" to describe the many ways in which faculty, students, and administrators at the UCLA Department of Urban Planning have turned resources outward to communities in need within our region. If one views the resources of the university like those of a bank, its infrastructure (intellectual, physical, and economic) represents our treasury from historic social investment. This treasury can and should be utilized in ways that contribute to promoting and equalizing local development.

If one counts just direct funding at UCLA, not the value of the physical assets, or the economic reserves, or the spillover economic effects, the annual budget exceeds \$1.5 billion, coming from a variety of sources: government, philanthropic gifts, student fees, and so forth. Nor does this figure consider the important value of the technical innovations that are produced here. UCLA is indeed, as one campus publication states, one of the largest smokeless industries in Los Angeles. It has the responsibility of being a public servant, and as "UCLA, Inc.", a responsible "corporate" leader.

So, as we review some of the initiatives undertaken in the Department of Urban Planning over the past thirty years, we must encourage the campus as a whole to follow some of the tracks that have been laid down. The best community outreach program for student recruitment is one that works with whole communities to bring them expanded opportunities and, correspondingly, wider representation on this and the other UC campuses. Poorer communities are gaining political power in Sacramento, suggesting that this broader "outreach" agenda is likely to become more salient in the years ahead.

Most of the "affirmative investment" from the Department of Urban Planning has come from faculty, students, and administrators utilizing their daily work in ways that have benefited low-income communities. Only very rarely have special outreach funds been made available. Research became action research incorporating political actors into the plan of study. Teaching became participatory studio



projects in which communities were directly engaged in framing research questions and working with students to find answers. Service meant direct engagement in processes of policy formulation and implementation, supporting the establishment of new, accountable institutions for local social action. Each member of the Urban Planning faculty has made important contributions, using such approaches as described below.

The sleeping giant of Latino political mobilization only appeared dormant because there was so little electoral space permitted for free, unencumbered movement. Working with the Mexican American Legal Defense Fund (MALDEF), Leo Estrada played a major role in re-writing the city's political map, carving out space for Latino representation among LA's gerrymandered council districts. This re-writing was achieved in two significant ways. In an effort to bring more visibility of the Census' under-enumerated groups to the attention of local, state, and national leaders, Estrada managed the 1980 Census and evaluated the 1990 Census for undercount while also serving as an expert witness in the federal undercount case. Although the undercount was not recognized, the methodology for establishing undercount and for adjusting the original census data was solidly established. Moreover, that census data was used for redistricting. In legal challenges by MALDEF to county supervisorial and state redistricting, Estrada re-configured the ten school districts and five city councils, and provided support for other cases nationally. Delivering numerous presentations on Latino demographics, Estrada has become well-known for anticipating California's demographic future. From dormant beginnings, the giant's thundering footsteps now echo through the halls of the State Capitol.

Long before the Metropolitan Transit Agency (MTA) scandals erupted, Marty Wachs and Brian Taylor raised important technical as well as ethical questions about the MTA's headlong pursuit of under-

ground transit above other alternatives. These questions evolved into expert witness testimony that helped the Bus Rider's Union and the NAACP legal defense fund win a favorable consent decree in a federal civil rights lawsuit against the MTA over proposed fare increases. This groundbreaking consent decree mandates the inclusion of the Bus Rider's Union in MTA planning, lowers fares, increases in central bus service, and shifts MTA policies to more fully consider the needs of transit-dependent populations.

Through the mid-1980s, the City of Los Angeles housing policy was a simple one: provide the most powerful private developers with tax-exempt bond financing and development subsidies and hope in vain that some affordable dwelling units come out the back end. Allan Heskin introduced to LA the idea of using community development corporations as a vehicle for housing rehabilitation and production. He started the Route 2 Community Housing Corporation and Community Corporation of Santa Monica. Over the past fifteen years, his students have come to occupy almost every housing leadership position in local government and the non-profit sector.

The Practice-Centered Faculty, with very little university commitment, have used their courses and research to further the Department's "affirmative investment" program. For example, the skills of sectoral business analysis, taught in the courses of Goetz Wolff, have become critical tools for the organizing campaign of the LA County Federation of Labor, which recently has hired Goetz as its chief economist.

With a tiny planning grant from the Rockefeller Foundation, the Community Scholars Program was started almost a decade ago. Bringing together local labor leaders, neighborhood activists, and urban planning masters students, Community Scholars has shaped the economic policy agenda from the grassroots, that is economics as if people mattered. The topics have varied, ranging from analyses of policies such as redevelopment and community reinvestment, to popular education as a vehicle for technical assistance.

Nonetheless, the pedagogic/research approaches utilized by Gilda Haas have demonstrated some underlying consistencies. Methods have included: Community involvement in problem identification; utilization of graphic and visual techniques for learning and planning together with an engaged community; simultaneous translation of workshops into one or more languages, as necessary; bridge-building among organizations that have not previously worked together, resulting in long standing coalitions and/or institutions; and facilitation of retreats that permit time for dialogue and relationship-building.

More than formulating new economic development policy, Community Scholars has given birth to new institutions that have taken the agenda from the program and moved it forward. From the Tourism Industry Development Council, an early Scholars' project, came the Los Angeles Alliance for a New Economy (LAANE), which led the successful "Living Wage" campaign.

Under the leadership of Jackie Leavitt and funding from HUD, the UCLA Community Outreach Partnership Center (COPC) was established about five years ago. It was perhaps the first time that Department teaching and research initiatives were coordinated into a comprehensive revitalization program. Through this Center the Community Scholars gave birth to SAJE (Strategic Action for a Just Economy) House, a popular education center that has become a center for labor/community organizing throughout the region.

The COPC also laid the groundwork for the community technology program now being undertaken by the UCLA Advanced Policy Institute (API). Under the leadership of Gene Grigsby, API is the outreach, technical assistance, and training center of the new School of Public Policy and Social Research; hence, API can draw upon faculty and student resources from Social Welfare and Policy Studies, as well as Urban Planning. API's flagship project is Neighborhood Knowledge Los Angeles (<http://nkla.sppsr.ucla.edu>), which provides online information around issues of disinvestment and neighborhood improvement. The Internet site is a vehicle for pinpointing processes of neighborhood



## ERRATUM

The following paragraphs have been omitted from Dr. Richman's original text. We apologize for this error. Page 83, line 9: The text should read:

*"...This approach has been widely eschewed here."*

However, dilemmas remain in carrying forward the Department's tradition of "affirmative investment".

*Research:* Despite the rising post-modernist discourse, academic journals remain mired in neo-positivism, or in the well-chosen phrase of C. Wright Mills, "abstracted empiricism," statistical analyses that are untethered to experience-based understandings. Many more publications can be produced by faculty who avoid direct contact with the city, and spend their days doing regression analyses with large data sets. Moreover, research that involves local political participants in shaping questions for study is too often dismissed as advocacy work by reviewers.

*Teaching:* Using participatory research methods in open-ended courses is certainly more difficult than bringing out the old 3 x 5 index cards and reciting that same old lecture program with a few new tweaks. Courses are counted the same institutionally regardless of whether they are pre-packaged, or genuinely exploratory and innovative, bringing the community into the classroom. Furthermore, even when faculty make such a personal commitment to studio-based classes, the interaction with the community is short, intensive, and often without the institutional capacity for follow through. Accordingly, thirty students in a studio descend on a low income neighborhood and one can bet they will all be gone within ten weeks.

*Service:* If there are few institutional incentives for community-based teaching, there is even less for service activities. I have yet to hear of a tenure case in Urban Planning that gave significant weight to a faculty member's community service track record, despite all the rhetoric about research, teaching and service representing the three pillars of our institution.

*"As we look towards the future..."*

profit initiatives for revitalization.

it" have emerged over the last thirty years for examples that are cited here include some of region. Besides the "good" that has come from a few examples of the "bad" one can find. All turned into "data strip mining" of the local community research used for publication or for grant-based justifying communities in order to produce yet widely eschewed here.

turn to the origins of our common enterprise at its and its first buildings, John Dewey, America's with these words:

ences cannot be recorded in statistics of the territorial changes. But in its slow and imper- and for the pushing back of the boundaries that of these buildings is but the symbol of a more engage anew and with renewed faith in the great- he end that all human beings may lead the life

gle, supported by a broader campus-wide commit-

ing ethics, real estate development and finance, searching community development and the use of new

Nonetheless, the pedagogic/research approaches have been consistent. Methods have included: Continued use of graphic and visual techniques for learning and teaching; translation of workshops into one or more institutional settings that have not previously worked together, such as the use of the Center for Community Studies and facilitation of retreats that permit time for dialogue and reflection; More than formulating new economic development strategies, the Center has supported the creation of institutions that have taken the agenda from the pre-1980s to the present. For example, the Center's Development Council, an early Scholars' project (LAANE), which led the successful "Living Wage" campaign; Under the leadership of Jackie Leavitt and funding from the Center for Community Studies, the Center for Community Studies (COPC) was established about five years ago. Under its leadership, teaching and research initiatives were coordinated and expanded. At this Center the Community Scholars gave birth to the Center for Community Studies, a popular education center that has become a center for research and teaching. The COPC also laid the groundwork for the community studies program at the UCLA Advanced Policy Institute (API). Under the leadership of Jackie Leavitt, technical assistance, and training center for community studies research; hence, API can draw upon faculty and staff from the Center for Community Studies, as well as Urban Planning. API's flagship project is the Center for Community Studies (http://nkla.sppsr.ucla.edu), which provides online information and resources for neighborhood improvement. The Internet site is a

decline and linking together public, private, and non-profit initiatives for revitalization.

Again, too many examples of "affirmative investment" have emerged over the last thirty years for this article to include a representative inventory. The examples that are cited here include some of the projects that are still evolving and shaping the region. Besides the "good" that has come from the Department's work, it is valuable to consider how few examples of the "bad" one can find. All too often, University-based planning research has turned into "data strip mining" of the local communities. Under the guise of technical assistance, research used for publication or for grant-based purposes ends up demeaning, exploiting, and objectifying communities in order to produce yet another "poverty study." This approach has been widely eschewed here.

As we look towards the future, perhaps we should return to the origins of our common enterprise at UCLA. Speaking at the dedication of our new campus and its first buildings, John Dewey, America's great pragmatist philosopher, ended his address with these words:

The struggle is not with arms and violence; its consequences cannot be recorded in statistics of the physically killed and wounded, nor set forth in terms of territorial changes. But in its slow and imperceptible processes, the real battle for human freedom and for the pushing back of the boundaries that restrict human life are ultimately won. The dedication of these buildings is but the symbol of a more profound dedication in which we pledge ourselves to engage anew and with renewed faith in the greatest of all battles in the cause of human liberation, to the end that all human beings may lead the life that is alone worthy of being entitled wholly human.

I look forward to the Department continuing this struggle, supported by a broader campus-wide commitment to these aims.

*NEAL RICHMAN teaches professional practice and planning ethics, real estate development and finance, housing policy, and non-profit development. He is also researching community development and the use of new technologies.*



**30 YEARS**

**URBAN  
PLANNING**

**UCLA**

**The Stimulus of Remembering**

**Q: How is the restructuring of Los Angeles' city-region changing the theories and practices of planning?**

**A: Edward W. Soja** Professor

I joined the Urban Planning faculty in 1972. What attracted me most as someone trained in geography was a distinctive feature of the School of Architecture and Urban Planning (SAUP, later GSAUP) that continues to this day. More than any other Urban Planning program in the country, then and now, the curriculum and the faculty accepted the central importance of a spatial or geographical perspective in planning education, research, and practice. While I would spend the next three decades trying to convince everyone else of the importance of critical spatial thinking and analysis, there was no need to do so "at home" in Urban Planning at UCLA. We were, among other things, spatial thinkers and actors right from the start.

What was most different here, in contrast to teaching in a department of Geography, was the exciting synergy that had been created between theory, empirical research, and practice. It was not that we did any one of these three so much better than others, but rather that, collectively at least, we kept them vitally interconnected, believing in what today would be called their synergism. It did not matter that some focused on local community development and the built environment, others on larger scale

regional planning and national development. The most theory-oriented faculty deeply respected and learned from the most practice-oriented, and vice versa.

What developed under these unusual conditions might seem paradoxical to the rest of the world. A professional school, with its commitment to practical applications, became a leading center for the community, urban, regional, and international development theory. Let me illustrate from my own personal experience, research, and writing—and from the role played by Urban Planning at UCLA in the development of Los Angeles-based urban theory—why this is not as paradoxical or surprising as it might initially appear.

One of my earliest teachers once told me that there was nothing more practical than good theory. What he did not tell me was that the relation between the theoretical and the practical was a two-way street, a creatively dialectical relationship in which each fed and stimulated the other. Being a theoretician was not simply a matter of autonomous invention and visionary breakthrough, it required not just thorough empirical research but even more so the constant pressure of the “so what?” Being in a Social Science or Geography department, one could theorize and do empirical research (and get tenure) in splendid isolation from practical applications. But this was not so easy in Urban Planning at UCLA. My greatest challenge in moving from Geography to Urban Planning was dealing with pesky and insistent students who demanded of even my most elegant spatial theorizations an extended discussion of how they could be used tomorrow in Santa Monica or Watts, Africa or Latin America. At first I resisted such utilitarian urgencies, but slowly learned that such insistent pressures were vital for the construction of “good theory.” Today, I look back convinced that I am a much better theoretician for having taught in Urban Planning rather than Geography or Sociology. And I am also convinced that the best social, economic,

political, cultural, and spatial theory in the future will come from professional schools such as ours, where theory-research-practice are synergistically interwoven.

At UCLA, I shifted my primary research interests from African and Third World development issues to studying Los Angeles. I retained my spatial and, particularly, regional and political perspective, but now grounded my theoretical work in trying to make practical sense of what was happening in this remarkable urban setting. A key turning point came in the early 1980s when a group of Urban Planning faculty and students, including myself, Rebecca Morales, Goetz Wolff, Marco Cenzatti, and others responded to a call from a union-based organization called the *Coalition to Stop Plant Closures* to help them in organizing workers to resist what would later be called the "deindustrialization" of Los Angeles. In the early 1980s, Los Angeles lost more than sixty thousand jobs as automobile, consumer durables, steel and related industries shut down their factories. The Coalition, composed of unions, religious organizations, and community groups, was finding it hard to organize workers to stop these plant closures, especially with overall job growth booming in the region. Why fight and threaten job security when there seemed to be so many other jobs available?

The Coalition turned to us with a very practical yet theoretical question: what is happening to the Los Angeles economy and labor market to produce this peculiar situation and how might a better understanding of these changes help workers and communities deal better with the devastation caused by deindustrialization amidst robust overall job growth? We produced several reports and pamphlets for the Coalition (with little effect, as plant closures continued), but out of this project came a number of important developments within Urban Planning at UCLA. Beginning with an article by Soja, Morales, and Wolff published in 1983, the department (then program) became an important center for the study



of what we called *urban restructuring* and, as the article was subtitled, the analysis of social and spatial change in Los Angeles. In conjunction with this work, Urban Planning at UCLA developed a wider specialized interest in labor and labor organizing issues, as well as in the study of urban labor markets, than most other planning departments in the country. This relatively forgotten constituency of planning was not only given attention in the Urban and Regional Development (later RID) area of concentration, but also in Environmental Analysis and Policy (EAP), Social Policy and Analysis (SPAN), and the Built Environment (BE). It also increased ties between Urban Planning and the Institute of Industrial Relations (now housed with us in the School of Public Policy and Social Research) and with the Geography Department, where related research on economic restructuring in Los Angeles was being done.

Over the past two decades, this research on urban restructuring in Los Angeles has expanded in many different and productive directions and has become one of the most widely recognized achievements of the department, both locally within Southern California and internationally as well. With Urban Planning as the core, and stimulated further by the development of the Lewis Center for Regional Policy Studies, a much wider network of scholars has coalesced around making practical and theoretical, as well as social and spatial, sense of the urban restructuring process in Los Angeles and in extending this knowledge base to understanding similar changes taking place in urban regions around the world. A good portion of this now very diverse and eclectic work was captured in *The City* (1996), co-edited by Scott and Soja, with its ambitious and symbolic subtitle, "*Los Angeles and Urban Theory at the End of the Twentieth Century.*" In addition to chapters by the two editors, there are contributions from many past and present lecturers and professors of the Urban Planning Department: Paul Ong, Evelyn Blumenberg, Marty Wachs, Margaret FitzSimmons, Bob Gottlieb, and Mike Davis; as well as UCLA colleagues Richard Weinstein, Charles Jencks, and Ray Rocco.

In closing this short reminiscence, I want to re-emphasize the importance of maintaining the vigorous links between social theory, empirical analysis, professional practice, and critical spatial thinking, especially as we deal with both the painful losses and new opportunities associated with our transition to the School of Public Policy and Social Research. We must try to avoid compartmentalizing these four arenas into specialized and separated domains. In particular, we must continue to recognize the key role played by our teaching and writing in the integrative field we have called Planning Theory, which for thirty years has been providing the most effective glue keeping all four of these vital arenas together.

*EDWARD W. SOJA has written extensively on spatial theory and the urban restructuring of Los Angeles. He teaches critical urbanism, regionalism, and planning theory.*

Evan Nisonson

Robert J. Rodino

Richard E. Martínez

Jacqueline Leavitt

Paul M. Ong

## **The City Transformed**





# Building Images I-III

**Evan Nisonson**

Sunk in cement, clawing hold,  
hammered I-Beams in cold earth  
give grounding in ground.

Jointed girders lift floors boasting:  
head held haughty.  
Windows pebble an ashen patina like pores.

Iron ribbing trimming edges,  
cuts sky, scrapes the scape of siblings  
rivaling for breathing space.

Aluminized spire capping steel stone juts.  
At top, a blue-light beacon proclaims the  
new Adam.

||

At the center of the square,  
stands the Arc.  
A geometric gateway in and out  
rarely used for either;  
where chessmen in *cheque*  
duel upon a crosshatched board,  
and junkies  
re-trace their steps,  
zagging on a hopeless,  
dotted line,

A solitary strut,  
supporting nothing.  
An engineering marvel  
no more.

Mottled lime-stain and  
patched paint scrawl,  
streak grey marble  
modeled after its grander cousin.

Host to a smoothed-out mythic drama:

Vacant-pupil profiles of patron saints pray beneath  
soot-stained clouds tooled with *Putti* framed by a  
faintly etched egg-and-dart.

A pagan feast revels near the base:  
goat-legged men leech on loose-frocked women with  
rain-worn looks; laden with wine casks, split-hooves  
mounting upon a Byzantine  
motif of grape clusters.

Gabled with a foreign frieze of some  
calamity of state, some  
urgent past, it  
heralds triumph.

### III

Silent siblings swaying slightly:  
sentinels of the city.

Coinage and currency course  
thick through their walls.

They gaze north taking cold air blasts  
square in the face flinching little.

At top all is wind and the sound of wind.  
At bottom, a mass of babble.

*EVAN NISONSON works in Comparative Literature, where his scholarly interests include understanding a poetics that is influenced by technology. He also devotes his time to exploring the potential of instructional technology in higher education.*

# Urban Revitalization in an Ethnic Enclave: Huntington Park CA 1965-1998

**Robert J. Rodino**

**Huntington Park, California is an excellent example of** contemporary urban revitalization in an ethnic enclave where the population has become predominantly Latino (ninety-six percent, of which nearly sixty percent are foreign-born), while all the decision-makers, including City Council, senior city staff, developers, architects, and lenders, have been Non-Latino. As such, it is also a typical case study of the strengths and weaknesses of using a “top-down” planning approach while dealing with issues of



deterioration of the built environment and cultural marginalization.

Located approximately eight miles south of downtown Los Angeles, with its western boundary just to the west of Alameda Street, Huntington Park underwent dramatic demographic and employment changes from the mid-1960s through the 1980s, caused by a combination of local and global forces. The population changed from white, middle-class, blue-collar, and service workers, to a primarily Mexican-born immigrant population with low skills and low wages. Once a thriving community in the center of a huge industrial manufacturing area that provided high-skilled, high-paying jobs, Huntington Park witnessed rampant housing abandonment and retail blight.

As the Latino population moved to Huntington Park and its surrounding area, into what became highly available and very cheap housing, in numbers much larger than the non-Latinos they replaced, a new consumer base for housing, retail, and low-skilled manufacturing and service jobs developed. The city's political leadership capitalized on this growing demand by launching an ambitious redevelopment program to demolish blighted properties, develop new housing, retail, office, and industrial properties, and to rehabilitate a great deal of the existing built environment.

One side of this redevelopment effort is the success of the city council members, their successors, and the then-new redevelopment director, who prevailed in rebuilding a highly deteriorated environment. I will

discuss this effort in some detail. There is another dimension to this story, however, that I would also like to pursue, one that I believe is in the process of being repeated again, in the new ethnic enclaves throughout California, and doubtlessly, throughout the world. It is a story of cultural marginalization, and it is not a case that is easy to make in light of the success of Huntington Park's physical revitalization. It involves questions of who was included in Huntington Park's success, who was left out, and what lessons can be learned from this case study about urban revitalization, "top down" planning, and inclusionary planning in ethnic communities. Given the economic and cultural globalization of the world's city-regions, and the flow of people and jobs across borders, the corresponding growth of ethnic enclaves will be even greater in the decades to come than occurred in the past. Therefore, how planners deal with those contemporary issues in their planning process becomes more urgent.

#### **Redevelopment in an Ethnic Enclave**

The redevelopment of the built environment in Huntington Park has been a large success in constructing new ownership housing and senior citizen residences, as well as creating business facilities for retail, office, and industrial uses. What has been lacking is the creation of sufficient numbers of needed rental housing units for large Latino families, especially for the poor.

The assumptions of Huntington Park's revitalization strategy can be viewed on two levels. The first is at the level of real estate redevelopment, in which it

was presumed that the rebuilding process could be stimulated through a combination of economic incentives, aggressive marketing of redevelopment opportunities, and innovative financing techniques. These assumptions were later verified and provide us with important lessons about the physical revitalization process.

Beyond this, however, there were several ever-present, underlying but unspoken, assumptions of Huntington Park's redevelopment efforts. The first was that the needs of the largely Mexican-born, recently-arrived immigrants were basically the same as those of the middle-class, Anglo residents they replaced. The second was that whatever needs this community had could be ascertained either through the knowledge of the decision-makers themselves, or through the usual methods of public hearings, questionnaires sent out in Spanish and English, and meetings with business and citizen groups. These assumptions follow the standard logic in real estate development in the 1970s when Huntington Park officials' actions had to be taken expeditiously. They are fraught with danger, however, when attempting long-term community rebuilding.

How did Huntington Park respond to a deteriorated built environment and an unprecedented population change? How did the mostly Non-Latino decision-makers include the largely Latino community in this response? What lesson does this offer planners in a culturally diverse society?

#### **Formation of an Ethnic Enclave: 1965-1990**

Over a period of fifteen years, the City of Hunting-

ton Park was transformed, by a combination of domestic and global forces, from a white, working-class community to a Latino enclave. The concept of an "enclave" denotes a distinct cultural group living within a larger dominant group. In this case, "living within" refers to "within" in the political sense. Geographically, Latinos had already surpassed the Anglo population to become the larger ethnic group in the city, and even within the region as a whole. Politically, however, the Latinos in Huntington Park "lived within" the jurisdiction of white and Non-Latino decision-makers.

#### *Local Forces*

The Los Angeles region in the 1960s experienced suburbanization as white, middle-class residents left the central area. At the same time, however, the attractiveness of Southern California to businesses and residents exercised a countervailing trend. Therefore, when people moved to the San Fernando Valley, the San Gabriel Valley, and Orange County from Central Los Angeles, Huntington Park still maintained a slow but steady population growth. Its population in 1930 was nearly 25,000 and thirty years later, in 1960, it was only 29,000 (City of Huntington Park 1986), with only about six percent having "Spanish surnames" (U.S. Census 1960). Huntington Park's promotional videotapes point to suburbanization as a factor in its population change. However, it was not until several other events took place that rapid change occurred. One significant event was the Watts riots of 1965. At least one researcher and two people interviewed claimed the riots had a chilling effect on the whites then living in Huntington Park (Fulton

1997; Funk 1998; Watson 1998). Watts is a fairly short distance to the west, across Alameda Avenue, and about a mile to the south. Fulton described how the line-up of Southern Pacific railroad cars along Alameda Avenue was used to keep the rioters out of Huntington Park (Fulton 1997: 76).

The second domestic event that impacted population change is the Hart-Celler Immigration Act of 1965. The national immigration act abolished the old country-of-origins quotas, established family ties to citizens or residents as a criterion for entrance, and increased the total number of immigrants to be admitted to the United States. Newcomers admitted under the newly liberalized system came from Asia, Latin America, and the Caribbean (Waldinger and Bozorgmehr 1996: 9). Mexicans, with their long-existing relationship to California, settled in record numbers—about 700,000 in the Los Angeles region from 1965 to 1980, and another one million in the 1980s (See Figure 3.5 in Sabagh and Bozorgmehr 1996: 91). Huntington Park's Latino population reached eighty-one percent of the total population by 1980 (U.S. Census 1980).

#### *Global Forces*

The communities to the south and southeast of downtown Los Angeles had been part of the region's industrial might. With the rapid industrialization that occurred nationally after World War II, the area around Huntington Park became home to giant auto and tire plants. These included a huge General Motors plant in Southgate, the Bethlehem Steel plant, and the Samson Tire and Rubber plant

(eventually the Uniroyal Tire plant) in the City of Commerce, and numerous smaller manufacturers related to these industries (Fulton 1997; Soja 1996). Employment, wages, and benefits for blue-collar workers were high, and unionized jobs were secure.

During the 1970s the world economy underwent a structural change. Industries like the auto and steel industries shifted from a fordist to a flexible production mode. Some cities such as Los Angeles, which had served as a single site of mass production, were transformed into a nodal point of the commodity-chain of production. Much of the work of mass production factories was transferred to the peripheral areas of the region and the world, with only small portions of the original manufacturing process left behind. The economic "stagflation" of the 1970s and subsequent advances in telecommunications and transportation contributed to this economic restructuring (Scott, 1998; Sassen 1994; Soja 1996). Huntington Park and its neighboring communities in the inner city suffered from a loss of thousands of high-paid manufacturing jobs. And with this job loss, the flight of the white working-class residents accelerated.

Restructuring brought with it a change in the employment opportunities in Los Angeles' inner city communities. Craft industries such as garment, furniture, and jewelry manufacturing, as well as food processing, toy manufacturing, and warehousing and distribution industries, grew at a rapid rate. The City of Vernon, located on the northern border of Huntington Park, lost a great number of high-wage manufacturing jobs during the 1970s and 1980s,



while its low-wage sector (primarily garment) expanded by 8,000 to 10,000 jobs (Rocco 1996). These low-skilled and low-wage jobs created a double dynamic. Industries were attracted to the area due to the availability of low-wage labor, and immigrants were attracted by the low-skilled jobs industries provided (Soja 1996). Combined with ongoing economic and political turmoil in Mexico, the industrial restructuring in Los Angeles continued to attract new immigrants across the US-Mexican border. Cheap and available housing, vacated by the fleeing white population, and its spatial proximity to the industrial area made Huntington Park a popular destination for newly-arrived immigrants.

The remaining white residents disproportionately controlled the political destiny of the city. Since the recently-arrived residents were not yet citizens, they had no voice at the ballot box. In this case, the new immigrants, who had poor language skills and a history of mistrusting government, did not seek avenues of political expression. Thus, was borne an ethnic enclave. Albeit numerically dominant, Latino residents are politically powerless.

### **The Response to the Built Environment**

During the late 1960s and through the 1970s, residential housing abandonment and deterioration along with retail vacancies became commonplace in Huntington Park. By 1978, retail vacancies along once thriving Pacific Boulevard reached thirty percent (Funk 1998). Much of the housing stock was already forty to fifty years old by the mid-1970s, and industrial plants were either abandoned or experiencing

serious deterioration. Real estate developers, lenders, and major retailers avoided Huntington Park. Physically and economically, Huntington Park was in a downward spiral.

### *Redevelopment*

In 1976 the City Council created the Huntington Park Redevelopment Agency, and in 1978 hired a thirty-two year old planner from Downey, James G. Funk, as its executive director. With little to lose and everything to gain, Funk and the City Council created an ambitious strategy to redevelop the built environment of the city, create jobs, and restore the city's tax base. The strategy was developed along classic real estate development logic; it combined city revenues and federal grants with financial incentives to developers, aggressive marketing of development opportunities, and innovative financing techniques. In the process, the city created between 4,000 and 7,000 jobs (Huntington Park Redevelopment Agency 1987; Funk 1998).

The first priority of the Agency was to rejuvenate the central business district along Pacific Boulevard, a mile-long, seven block strip of stores and small office buildings from Slauson Avenue on the north to Florence Avenue on the south. A Victor Gruen report prepared in 1968 recommended that the seven blocks be given anchors at the north and south ends, and broken up with passageways to rear parking lots, since they were too long for shoppers to traverse comfortably. Both design recommendations have since been implemented.

In 1976 the Council began a multi-million dollar reconstruction and modernization program for the boulevard, which began with the allocation of "hundreds of thousands of the City's dwindling reserve dollars" (Huntington Park Redevelopment Agency 1987: 1) in conjunction with a similar amount from merchants along the Boulevard who committed to refurbishing their stores. The streetscape was improved: bus stops were enhanced through sidewalk widening to create a plaza-like waiting and socializing area, and decorative bus shelters were installed, for example. The city obtained a federal Economic Development Administration (EDA) grant of \$2.4 million to repair roadways and sidewalks throughout the city, some of which was used in the central business district. Several million dollars in grants were obtained from various federal agencies to repair miles of city roads and sidewalks, acquire land for the Westside City Park, and initiate home rehabilitation programs. By 1980, according to the Redevelopment Agency's description of a story in the local newspaper, the *Huntington Park Signal*, business along Pacific Boulevard was "booming" and there were no retail vacancies.

The city embarked on a tough and expanded housing code enforcement program, increasing from two to four the number of code enforcement officers. Undertaken partly to address code violations and partly to provide the city with the legal grounds to demolish hundreds of sub-standard housing units, the way was cleared for new developments. Code citations increased from 300 per year to 5,000, forcing the demolition of more than 150 sub-standard

dwelling (Huntington Park Redevelopment Agency 1987). In all, the city demolished about 2,000 dwelling units to make room for new housing and commercial developments (Funk 1998). Each resident displaced through demolition was provided with a relocation payment of \$4,500 for tenants or up to \$16,500 for owners (in addition to the appraised replacement value of the property)—if the owner would buy into the replacement housing. Renters were encouraged to use the relocation payment as a down-payment on the ownership housing that was to be built. About twelve to fourteen percent of the displaced renters became homeowners through this procedure.

The first group of redevelopment projects completed were industrial parks west of Alameda. The Agency initiated the development of five industrial park projects ranging in size from 9,000 square feet to 118,000 square feet, with a total estimated market value of around \$20 million. The Agency's function was essentially to demolish deteriorated industrial buildings, assemble parcels through acquisitions and then sell to developers or users, and provide public infrastructure. As a result of redevelopment, 660,000 square feet of industrial space was developed by 1987, a number that reportedly rose to 1.5 million through the 1990s (Funk 1998).

Following closely behind industrial development was the construction of new ownership housing units, particularly townhomes, adjacent to the downtown area. While all the redevelopment projects required considerable salesmanship and arm-twisting to convince developers, lenders, and buyers to coop-



erate, ownership housing around a reconstructed central business district, with selling prices ranging from \$94,000 to \$115,000, was probably "the path of least resistance." The first project, Park Villa, twenty-eight townhomes located one block east of Pacific Boulevard, was completed in 1985. Following this was a series of townhouse and apartment-style condominiums, single-family homes, multi-family apartments, rehabilitations, and senior citizen apartments. In total, 2,371 residences were built throughout the city, and 397 homes were rehabilitated. Of these, only 160 were apartments, with an additional 440 in the downtown area under negotiation in 1998 (Wong 1998).

A consistent issue with Huntington Park's housing program during this period is the question: To whom was this program targeted? The Agency's report does not provide rental rates on the apartments, but there is no indication that these were for low- and moderate-income residents. In 1980, median household income for Huntington Park was \$11,466, rising to \$23,582 by 1990. This translates into housing affordability ranging from about \$38,000 to \$79,000 during this period, well below the cost of even the townhome condominiums built in Huntington Park early in the redevelopment period. Clearly the target was not the existing, largely Latino, non-voting, non-participating resident. Furthermore, the huge number of senior citizen apartments built (1,295), while showing empathy for seniors, is inconsistent with the young age of the city's population; only 8.8 percent were sixty-five or older in 1980, falling to 5.6 percent in 1990.

As townhomes were built and sold, retail developers and retailers were pursued by the city with vigor. Almost every retail developer in the greater Los Angeles region was contacted, each promptly turning down the invitation to build. After undaunted efforts, the city secured a developer for the first shopping center built under the redevelopment program, the Pacific Center, a 166,000 square foot anchor for the north end of Pacific Boulevard at Slauson Avenue. The Center brought in the area's first major new supermarket in Boys Market, which later became Ralphs, and then went dark in 1996. The vacant Ralphs is now being replaced by an electronics and furniture retailer, La Curacao (owned by two Israeli brothers).

After about two years of diligent pursuit, Funk convinced developer James Watson of Watson & Associates to purchase, under a city cost write-down, the property at the southwest corner of Slauson Avenue and Pacific Boulevard. The result was Lugo Plaza, a mixed-use retail and office property. Watson became one of the city's most important developers, building about fourteen projects, mostly retail, but with some office developments on Pacific. A notable Watson center is Plaza de La Fiesta, at the now "100 percent occupied" location in Huntington Park, at the northeast corner of Pacific and Florence Avenues. The center is anchored by El Gallo Giro, a Mexican-American owned chain of Mexican restaurants that incorporates a bakery, a butcher shop, and a tortilleria. The center is notable because it is one of the few in Huntington Park that is overwhelmingly Mexican-American, incorporating a Mexican cultural reference in its architectural design. El Gallo Giro also pro-



vides outdoor seating for its restaurant patrons and the center is a general place to "hang out" in the central business district.

The most recent retail development in the works is a movie/retail complex to include a sixteen- to eighteen-screen theater and 122,000 square feet of retail space. To be located at the northeast corner of Zoe Avenue and Pacific Boulevard, the development will further contribute to the retail and recreational amenities in the central business district (Wong 1998). In all, redevelopment resulted in the construction of between 1.0 and 1.5 million square feet of retail space throughout the city. Most of the centers built were in typical suburban style, with a large parking lot in front and a parking ratio of four spaces per thousand square feet of retail space. This ratio is consistent with auto-oriented suburbs, but inconsistent with a city like Huntington Park, where low incomes preclude many people from owning a car. It does not appear that there was an effort made to vary from the standard parking ratio to which most developers build or to consider replacing it with a transportation plan more conducive to the needs of residents.

#### **Inclusionary Planning Amid Cultural Diversity**

Empirical material (personal interviews, city promotional videotapes, the current General Plan, and the city's *Consolidated Plan for 1995* submitted to the US Department of Housing and Urban Development) shows no specific attempt to view Huntington Park's constituents as "Mexican-American" or "Latino," that is, as a community that may have had different needs and demands than the Anglo population it

replaced. The presumption has been that the city's constituents are not much different than the Anglo middle- and working-class population that departed in the 1960s and 1970s. Perhaps this was just a reflection of political realities. Given the low voting record of the largely immigrant population of Huntington Park, the now-rarefied, non-Latino population was the city's effective political constituency during its redevelopment heyday. At any rate, the city's decision-makers (City Council, senior staff, developers, architects, and lenders), overwhelmingly non-Latino, were content to be ethnic-blind.

The problems created by ethnic-blindness exist on many levels. Firstly, there is the exclusion of ethnic consciousness from the planning process. Induced to move to Huntington Park by industry's need for low-wage, unskilled labor, and the availability of cheap housing, the low-income Latino population, like many other immigrant groups in the United States, found itself on the outside looking in on the revitalization process (Ortiz 1996). The city pursued community participation through the usual channels of public hearings, questionnaires sent to thousands of households, and meetings with the Chamber of Commerce and other groups. The problem with this process in Huntington Park is that it fails to reach the neediest families, who are either culturally too intimidated to participate and/or have little or no political power at the ballot box. Not surprisingly, the revitalization process will give short shrift to their needs for low-income family housing, childcare facilities, job training programs, healthcare, and the like. Social justice requires that city leadership conduct outreach

through non-traditional means—through Latino churches, in small group meetings in people's homes, at hometown clubs, on the streets. This process of participation among the neediest in a social learning context provides for learning by both the "leader" and the participant in ways, and on issues, that cannot be anticipated ahead of time. A process of community-building is created through dialogue that lasts far beyond the actual construction process. "In other words, participation seems to bring with it transformative powers at different levels, from individual to collective behavior, and even to improve the performance of public agencies" (Sandercock 1998: 151).

Secondly, there is the question: what is the fundamental purpose of a revitalization effort? Is it solely to reconstruct the city's infrastructure? As difficult as this task is, real estate redevelopment is the easiest part of community revitalization. Community-building, which seeks to satisfy human needs and create a viable community in the long-term, goes much further than reconstructing dilapidated properties. Accordingly, Huntington Park's *Consolidated Plan for 1995* reports that: "[c]ommunity identifies its needs as a declining industrial/business base; low skill levels in the work force; crime; overcrowded public schools; limited information available on medical services; scarcity of affordable housing; and an inadequate transportation system" (1995: 14). Granted, all of these problems contain dimensions that are outside one jurisdiction's control. However, an effort as ambitious and innovative as the Huntington Park redevelopment effort, focused centrally

on the needs of its neediest, *as voiced by the neediest*, might have resulted in a different statement of conditions than the one just quoted.

An inclusionary planning process that recognizes and makes visible the cultural qualities of ethnicity and its derivative needs, preferences, and memories, may turn up some startling discoveries. It may identify a need for low-income rental housing or childcare centers, which might be a complete change in strategy from building another shopping center. Or, if a shopping center was identified as a need, it might be designed with store fronts at the sidewalks to accommodate a culture that is accustomed to socializing in public areas. The center might be built more cheaply and consume less land if parking requirements were reduced to reflect a public transit-dependent consumer. Possibly, it will be found that the home rehabilitation loan program ought to be combined with technical assistance and code changes that make it easier to build out a garage as an additional bedroom in a manner that respects safety and sanitary issues. Maybe the "image" of the city, called for in the urban design section of the city's General Plan, should incorporate some meaningful references to the Mexican culture to celebrate the population's heritage and instill pride in "their" community.

The point here is that "top-down" planning or, we may say, "decision-maker centered" planning in an ethnic community does not work when the decision-makers come from one ethnic group and the majority of residents from another ethnic group—inclusiveness in a true and profound sense is required. Indifference to ethnicity is not constructive. It makes



people invisible, marginalizes them, harms their self-identity, and makes it harder to create a harmonious society that seeks a common ground *while* still celebrating diversity. Taking an ethnographic approach to developing an understanding of a community's culture would facilitate this process, particularly when all the decision-makers are ethnically outsiders or socio-economically privileged. How culture gets translated into a revitalization effort is not an easy issue to address, particularly in a market-driven, profit-oriented system. But this issue is critically important, and the only way to grasp its complexities is to make ethnicity visible, and incorporate it into planning process. Physical space should not be looked upon solely for its exchange value—how much profit it will return to a developer, a retailer, or to the city treasury, as important as these considerations are. Particularly in low-income communities, physical space has extremely important use values—social values that people impart to an environment by their behavior and perception of the physical space. The approach of revitalization efforts should be to try to understand this process, instead of getting in its way through inappropriate programmatic assumptions. In fact, revitalization efforts should seek to encourage the social use of space in politically constructive and culturally appropriate ways.

The response of decision-makers, in implementing a highly successful program to revitalize its built environment and create jobs, is not atypical, and my purpose is not to point a finger of blame, so to speak. In fact, it is clear that Huntington Park is a better place today for all residents than it was in its deteriorated state of the 1970s. Along with the continuing

globalization of California's (and the world's) economy, the problem in Huntington Park's case is that planning in ethnic enclaves needs to operationalize the notion that ethnicity not only matters, but that it is essential to the planning process. A failure to be inclusive of ethnic difference will not only undermine efforts to revitalize the built environment in the long run, but will also make it harder to achieve the goal of democracy in a multicultural society.

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# A New Subdivision in a Chicano Barrio

**Richard Edward Martinez**

**In 1996, after graduating with a Master's degree in planning from the University of Iowa, I returned home to San Antonio, Texas. Within weeks I found myself working for Habitat for Humanity as a VISTA Volunteer. There I soon discovered that low-income housing is not just about hammers and nails. This paper is based on a nine-month undercover investigation of Plaza Florencia, a controversial low-income subdivision.**



In 1996, in a crime-ridden section of San Antonio's predominantly Chicano mid-westside,<sup>1</sup> the local chapter of Habitat for Humanity turned a vacant lot into a 41-home affordable subdivision.<sup>2</sup> Habitat, a non-profit housing developer, helps low-income families become first-time homeowners.

But soon after moving in, residents became unsettled when their private recreational facilities—a playground, park, and pavilion in the center of the compound—became a haven for local gangs. "They come in at all hours, and they smoke pot and drink beer," said Missy Caballero (fictitious name), who bought a house next to the playground. "I don't feel safe...I'm scared for my children." Many residents worried that the subdivision's long, straight-a-way design would encourage drive-by shootings. Some privately blamed Habitat.

The situation surprised Habitat officials, who responded by telling residents to call the police. But many residents rejected their suggestion, arguing that the police had always been unresponsive. Said one anonymous resident: "I'm from the westside. And the police never come...unless someone gets killed." Several residents said they would not call the police because they feared gang retaliation. Habitat officials, who lived in affluent areas of the city, dismissed these fears, calling them trivial.

In early 1997, residents formed a homeowner's association. At one meeting, while discussing safety issues, residents unanimously agreed that the recreational facilities should have been located outside of the subdivision, or not built at all. They also agreed

that speed humps should be installed to deter future drive-bys.<sup>3</sup>

While observing these developments as they unfolded, I became completely fascinated. How could so much money, time, and good intentions end in such a mess? Determined to find out what went wrong, I started piecing together what happened during the planning process, which occurred prior to my arrival.

### **The Planning Process**

The Planning Committee, which met monthly for over a year-and-a-half, was composed of a diverse group of people. Among the members were ten Chicano families, a few of whom were living on the subdivision site at the time. Homes for these families were built and occupied first; the rest would later move in after completion of the subdivision. Other members of the committee included: two Habitat board members (a former board president, white male; a current board member, Mexican American female, bilingual); Habitat's executive director, a construction specialist (white male); two local architects (white males); one local geologist (white female); and one local sociology professor (white male).

As I discovered, the call for the recreational facilities came from the ten families themselves. Families said they wanted a place, not far away, where their children could play and adults could meet and socialize. This sat well with Habitat planners, who wanted to give families a large voice in the planning process.

But a crucial error was made when Habitat planners,

who led the process, failed to adequately assess the potential impacts of the recreational facilities. They did so by omitting the following key questions: What people would recreational facilities attract after they are built? Would they attract gangs? Would the design of the subdivision facilitate drive-by shootings? Should defensive architecture and landscaping be included in the design to prevent drive-by shootings? Do barrio residents have faith and trust in the police's ability to help in an emergency? If no, why?

Adequate answers to these complex questions require an in-depth understanding of barrio social dynamics; and none of the committee members, including the ten Chicano families, seemed to possess such insight. Nor did anyone seem to appreciate the dangers of omitting these questions. So, it follows that at least one key participant was absent - a barrio planner.

In brief, a barrio planner is a planner with expert understanding of and sensitivity towards the barrio and its residents. This planner is intimately familiar with the language and culture of the people, and is able to negotiate through possible class barriers. He or she must understand how, in the barrio, the spaces we create play on the spaces that already exist.

In the case of Plaza Florencia, a bilingual barrio planner was needed to facilitate the ideas of the families as they developed. Also needed was a discursive space, which would have allowed for expression in both Spanish and English. And the meetings, which were sometimes held at the architect's office, should

have been held in a place the families were familiar with and comfortable in.

### **In the Absence of a Barrio Planner**

What influenced Habitat planners to treat the barrio with such benign neglect? Among the many possible factors, I argue that the planners' deep-seated attitudes towards the people they served are worth examining.

At first I was amused to learn that the planners (the key decision-makers) within the organization were not necessarily the individuals with the most knowledge about housing; rather, they were the ones who donated the most money. I was not so amused, however, when I learned about the attitudes of these planners, all of whom were well-educated white males, many of them quite wealthy.

On several occasions, one planner expressed the belief that Mexican Americans possessed inferior intelligence. Others expressed intolerance of the Spanish language. Over and over I overheard outrage against affirmative action, even though I was conducting my study in the wake of its defeat in Texas. At one point during my study, Habitat and Congressman Henry Bonilla (R-Texas) staged a joint media event at the subdivision site with then-Speaker of the House Newt Gingrich serving as guest of honor. With a subdivision full of low-income minority families with children, several of whom were Mexican immigrants, the event sent a provocative message, considering Gingrich's stance on minority issues.

Apart from the bigotry, I detected a resounding Eurocentrism—perspectives that reinforce the normalization of white culture and values (Shohat and Stam, 1994). In part, this was exemplified in the following ways: a staggering lack of awareness about and antagonism towards Chicano history and culture, a privileging of white political perspectives, and an inability to acknowledge and validate the perspectives of Chicanos from the barrio.

Several of my key informants (homeowners) said there was widespread anger among homeowners over mistreatment by Habitat, but many felt reluctant to protest for fear of losing their house. Habitat holds a twenty-year mortgage on the properties.

Ironically, Habitat served San Antonio's minority clientele, with Chicanos and African Americans comprising eighty-five percent and fifteen percent of homeowners, respectively. A considerable number of these Chicanos were immigrants who spoke only Spanish. The communities in which Habitat built its housing, and hence where its clientele resided, were low-income minority neighborhoods.

In contrast to the clientele, Habitat's permanent office staff was predominately white. Until April 1997, when Habitat hired its first African American executive director, only one out of eight directorship positions had been held by a non-white person. Sources inside Habitat said the 1997 hiring was largely a token gesture aimed at mending relations between Habitat and the African American eastside and that the new director knew close to nothing about housing. Habitat's Board of Directors, in contrast to the staff,

was quite diverse. About half of the members were minority, yet the people on the Board with the most political pull were white.

### **So What?**

What we see here is a suspicious correspondence. On the one hand, a controversial plan. On the other hand, planners with controversial beliefs and attitudes. Did the latter cause the former? No, I would not say that, for a variety of other factors need to be considered.

I would say, however, that the planners' beliefs and attitudes could have played a partial role in influencing their behavior. That is, potentially, these beliefs and attitudes could have been barriers to gaining a greater and more appropriate understanding of the barrio and its residents. After all, how can we treat a diamond like a diamond when all we see is a lump of coal?

### **Conclusion**

Even though the homeowners themselves requested the recreational space, Habitat planners should have been aware of the dangers. I suggest that the problems with the subdivision's recreational facilities stem directly from an inadequate impact study. Yet, indirectly, these problems have their roots in deep-seated attitudes of the planners. Such problems could have been avoided by including a credible, knowledgeable barrio planner in the planning stage.

The most important point here is that housing developers do not just build houses, they create new social relations. The success or failure of future barrio



subdivisions may depend upon the extent to which planners consider the potential dynamic interplay between the proposed project and the pre-existing social relations, as well as their own fundamental beliefs.

### **Epilogue and Methodology**

In doing this study, I gathered most of my information through informal conversations. Inside Habitat, I spoke with planners, staff, and some of the board members. Conversations took place in the lunchroom or at local bars after work hours. Only one co-worker knew I was conducting a study, a tactic that was necessary due to the perceived hostile political climate within the organization.

Outside Habitat, I spoke with the homeowners themselves. This went slowly at first, but as time went on I earned the trust of three homeowners in particular, and they became my key informants under conditions of anonymity. Knowing Habitat's plans to build future subdivisions, the homeowners strongly encouraged me to share my findings so that the problems with their subdivision not be needlessly repeated. As one informant put it: "Use us as guinea pigs...Just make it better next time."

One factor worth mentioning is my ethnicity. I am Chicano. And while I am sure this had a lot to do with what was said around me by Habitat's mostly white staff, frankly, I was shocked and amazed at what I was allowed to hear.

Looking back, I think the hardest part of my research was keeping my composure while witnessing much bigotry and benevolent treatment. By benevolent

treatment I mean whites treating Chicanos like children—"talking down to" is the common street term. These subtle displays of indignity hurt me deeply. What is more, I saw working-poor Chicano families trying to better their children's lives in the face of all this. They too had to keep their composure, which meant playing the role of the quiet, obedient Mexican, always careful to remain within the boundaries prescribed to them. To a large extent, I must admit, this was also my strategy. I, the self-described radical Chicano, had to keep my mouth shut, for I needed data that could only be gotten by letting people feel comfortable enough to just let it out. In other words, I needed to stay on the good side to get the good stuff, so to speak.

I lost my composure only once, in the final month of my study. One of the new homeowners called the office with questions concerning electricity hookups and wanted to know where to find information in Spanish. After the matter was taken care of by a bilingual staffer, the lead planner, a white, monolingual man who was also a big financial contributor, stood up and said, "Spanish. Damn, we're trying to run a legitimate business here." At this point, I had had enough. Quickly, on a piece of paper, I wrote, "Trying to run a legitimate business? You're in San Antonio. Learn Spanish, gringo!!!" I put the note inside this individual's office mailbox. Later in the day, word got out, and several white staffers in the office expressed shock at the note, wondering who had written it. I took the blame and gave a small lecture on cultural respect. The lead planner did not speak to me after that. No matter. By then I had

gotten all the information I needed from this person. To this day, I remain surprised that this was the only rebellious act on my part.

### Endnotes

<sup>1</sup> Throughout this text, Chicano and Mexican American are used interchangeably.

<sup>2</sup> The subdivision is located within census tract 1714, which has a population of 6,100 persons according to the 1990 Census. Approximately ninety-five percent of the population is of Hispanic descent, thirty-five percent live below poverty-level, and the median family income is just below \$18,000. Out of the forty-one families in the subdivision, forty were Chicano and one was white. Of the Chicano families, about fifteen were Mexican immigrants.

<sup>3</sup> While the gang activities were met by a resounding "keep out" by residents, the subdivision was not completely exclusionary. In fact, one highly

inclusionary feature distinguishes it. At least four out of the forty-one homes are cottage-style, one-bedroom homes. These small houses were sold to low-income older couples who wished to spend their retirement years in decent housing. This is significant for two main reasons. First, reportedly, it was the Mexican American homeowners who, during the planning process, requested that elders be included in the subdivision. Second, this reflects a resistance to age segregation. Traditional Mexican cultural practices, e.g., living arrangements and celebrations, typically involve all ages. Elders are highly respected and are central to the concept of family. The inclusion of elders in the subdivision is a reflection of this cultural trait.

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30 YEARS

URBAN  
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Gendered Planning, Inside/Out?

**Q:** How are gender struggles for equity here and abroad “radicalizing” planning?

**A:** **Jacqueline Leavitt** Professor

The editors' question prompts another inquiry. One, inspired by Wendy Brown's essay about women's studies, reads: "Does gender in planning within the urban planning program at UCLA secure a crucial political space in male-dominated academia and practice?" For much of its thirty years, this program has led others in acknowledging the legitimacy of gender and planning classes in its professional and doctoral curricula. Associated with this: six women (four full professors, two of whom are joint appointments) make up forty percent of the full-time faculty of fifteen; more than one graduate and undergraduate class with gender or women in the title is offered on a regular basis; past and present women faculty have published award-winning books and articles; current and past students have produced similar cutting-edge work; conferences and lecture series have attracted local and international audiences; and two faculty women sit on the advisory committee to the University's Center for the Study of Women. Yet a single program, however singular it may be, does not wield that much power in other realms of academia, and the record is blemished. There is only one faculty woman of color, and the influential student group, Feminist Planners and Designers (FPD), has not functioned for about a decade. Related or not, FPD's demise also meant the loss of gender-related conferences held each year



from 1979 to 1985, and again in 1987 and 1988. No faculty women (albeit they may have chosen this path) have ever been Department Chair. As clearly, an oasis has been created within UCLA in urban planning, and this has been a bridge to others throughout the University with gender interests.

The more difficult questions persist outside academia and where the gender challenge to traditional planning knowledge and practice seems in a state of arrested development. To understand the reasons for this and to connect that to accomplishments noted above, I turn again to Wendy Brown and ask: "What is the relationship between gender and planning as to a political and intellectual mission(s)?" My response here is informed by the following assumptions:

- Teaching/learning gender may be embraced as *de facto* or passive political frameworks that relate to social change, but disparate classes do not advance collective consciousness and action;
- Without collective consciousness and action, institutional requirements and norms—in universities, organizations, and bureaucracies where students find jobs (forty-five percent of recent alumni responding to a survey report work in government)—will be likely to constrain subsequent activities around gender;
- This can be mitigated to the extent of partnering with internal and external constituencies (such as alumni, "progressive" and/or professional organizations or caucuses) who may have vague, *de facto*, or well-formed theories and practices about gender and planning;
- Developing collaborative analyses (e.g., in client or class projects) can assist in integrating gender into planning practice and informing a grounded theory of gender.

The links to action and partners outside academia are, I believe, critical. None of the questions posed above—even ones that seem internal—can be fully answered by intellectual confinement to planning's

(inter)disciplinary boundaries. Stepping outside boundaries, adapting theories from other disciplines and from practice—about the intersectionality of race, ethnicity, class, and gender, and/or forging non-typical planner-community relationships so as to hear otherwise unheard voices—are integral contributions to the institutionalization of gender in planning in UCLA's program.

Let me close with one example of connection-building to some of the most compelling gender struggles, and which also occurs at the intersection of micro-local, local, national, and international levels. The Huairou Commission was created in 1996, an outgrowth of the United Nations Habitat II Conference in Istanbul, to ensure participation of grassroots women and the inclusion of gender equality in the Habitat Agenda. Through the Huairou Commission, multiple networks are being created—practitioners, community leaders, researchers, academicians, donor agencies—in learning and exchange projects about practices that work to sustain and advance women and support community strengths in their transformations. The first meeting I attended of the Task Force on Our Best Practices of the Huairou Commission included representatives from Bangladesh, India, Nepal, Kenya, Uganda, Zimbabwe, the Philippines, Papua New Guinea, Indonesia, Tanzania, Germany, the Czech Republic, Turkey, Costa Rica, Canada, and the US. Issues included a range: building coalitions, creating safe spaces, holding dialogue workshops with bureaucrats, developing documents for achieving citywide gender equality, training local resource teams, passing electoral quota legislation to ensure women's representation, preparing toolkits for savings and credit groups, sharing community solutions to meet needs for sanitary facilities. The strength of individual women and groups represented, authenticity of grassroots women's voices, ongoing discussions about what works and doesn't work in each locality and cross-localities/regional organizing . . . all provide a continuous series of entry points for **Re**looking and **Re**visioning and **Re**vitalizing action in any number of disciplines. As for connections to Our Planning, where interdisciplinary conversations

are uneven, let me suggest a baby step, that is, transforming the Department's orientation from "a faculty show and tell" to "an inclusive exchange of ideas." Roundtables can be developed and facilitated by students, invited guests, staff, and faculty in settings outside the campus—not only in grassroots communities to which I am partial but in the boardrooms of media, finance, and politics—and these *Critical Planning* essays might be the bases for discussing and listening. Adapting learning exchanges from the international grassroots women's movement may provide more options for advancing and linking planning to equity struggles that have more than one face.

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JACQUELINE LEAVITT teaches housing, community development, and gender at the Department of Urban Planning. Her research include work with resident leaders in public housing, homelessness and the meaning of home.



**30 YEARS**

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**Planning and Welfare Reform**

**Q: What is the role of planning research in shaping public policy?**

**A: Paul M. Ong** Professor

One unanticipated impact, admittedly a relatively minor one, of the Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunities Reconciliation Act of 1996 is a revitalization of the role of urban and regional planning in the area of social policy. The 1996 Act is the culmination of years of heated political debate over America's basic social policy. For decades, the prevailing approach had been providing income support for the "deserving poor," with Aid to Families with Dependent Children (AFDC) serving as the single largest public-assistance program and with female-headed households comprising an overwhelming majority of the caseload.

Conservative critics branded the program a failure by its creation of inter-generational welfare dependency. Moderates and some liberals faulted the program for failing to promote economic self-sufficiency. The election of William Jefferson Clinton to the presidency opened the way to a bi-partisan compromise in keeping with his campaign to end welfare "as we now know it." The 1996 Act killed welfare as an income-maintenance program, replacing it with the Temporary Assistance to Needy Families (TANF). The "Temporary" in TANF refers to two features, a two-year limit to benefits to any one

welfare spell and a five-year lifetime limit on total benefits. The goal is to transition recipients to work. Many advocates have blasted the time limits as unrealistic and have argued that few will achieve the economic self-sufficiency espoused by the proponents of the legislation. These criticisms have merit but do not diminish the daunting challenges imposed by the Act.

Under the new policy, service providers must establish programs to help welfare recipients move off public assistance and into the labor market. This transition is no small problem. The adopted timetable requires states, which are responsible for administering the decentralized welfare system, to have half of their welfare caseload employed in 2002. According to this schedule, over three-quarters of a million welfare recipients would have to enter the US labor market between 1997 and 2002. To meet this deadline and to accommodate the initial two-year limit, administrators have abandoned reliance on voluntary participation of recipients in skill-building and educational programs that take years, and they have adopted mandatory enrollment in jobs-first programs designed to quickly place people into employment. Unfortunately, a majority of welfare recipients have very few skills, no more than a high school education, and little work experience. With these characteristics, the jobs within reach offer low wages and few benefits. These realities mean that the transition for many is from welfare poverty to working poverty. Nonetheless, the 1996 Act forces recipients to accept available employment as soon as possible. The alternative is to fall into even more abject poverty.

The shift to jobs-first opens the door to meaningful participation by urban and regional planners. When employment strategies centered on improving human-capital, planners offered little more than indirect support. Now, the situation is very different. The success of jobs-first hinges upon spatial access to employment opportunities, an issue very much within the planner's purview. The profession has struggled

with, and perhaps contributed to, an evolving regional structure that creates a spatial mismatch for those left behind in the inner city. Automobile-oriented development and suburbanization have created land-use patterns that have progressively increased the distance between home and work for everyone. Most of the population has the means (car ownership) to overcome this distance, but minorities and other disadvantaged populations often do not. These populations are concentrated in ghettos and barrios by housing discrimination, earn a limited income by which they can attain shelter, and face institutionalized practices that preclude subsidized housing in suburbs. With no access to an automobile or with access to only a marginally functioning vehicle, these residents find it difficult to traverse the regional terrain to access employment opportunities. Planners have long identified three strategies to overcome this geographic isolation: 1) moving jobs into the job-poor neighborhoods through community economic development; 2) relocating people to outlying areas with rapid job growth through fair-share and open housing programs; and 3) improving transportation access through better public transit and alternative systems that support reverse commuting. While not developed specifically for welfare recipients, these strategies are nonetheless highly relevant to implementing the 1996 Act. Each offers different potentials over disparate time frames. Community economic development and the relocation of people to outlying areas are likely to have only minor impacts for a relatively small number of recipients over the short run, while improving transportation access is likely to have the most immediate impact. Despite these differences, all three approaches must be pursued, for no single strategy is a panacea.

While planners can contribute to the implementation of welfare reform, that contribution will not come easily. The radical change in social policy generates a set of fundamentally disparate tasks and



responsibilities for a myriad of public, private, and social institutions. Planning is no exception. The profession's effectiveness in facilitating welfare-to-work depends on how well the profession redefines its practices and operations in ways that were unthinkable just a few years ago. Within a new paradigm, planning must clearly understand and utilize its unique strengths and at the same time acknowledge its serious limitations. Federal welfare-to-work programs and funding require collaboration and coordination with social and job service agencies, public housing agencies, and non-profit organizations. Joint efforts are materializing, but there is still a tendency for planning-related agencies to see the issues from their narrow agenda, whether it is housing, economic development, or transportation. What is still missing is an ethos that places the well-being of recipients first. Such a philosophy will develop, but it will require considerable intellectual debate and political struggle within the profession, and within the professional schools.

Even with the best possible efforts, the results of welfare reform will be mixed. It is naive to believe that most recipients will achieve economic self-sufficiency within the time limits of the 1996 Act. This nation would be fortunate if a majority of those leaving welfare can move into the ranks of the working poor. Even this modest objective depends on a robust economy, and this country has so far lived a charmed life by enjoying an exceptionally long economic expansion. The modest successes of ex-recipients employment will require of us to focus on public policies to assist the working poor. This means continuing the Earned Income Tax Credit for the working poor, establishing training programs to promote employment stability and mobility, and creating a safety net because of the paucity of employer-provided benefits such as health insurance. While these former recipients will not move into the middle-class, even with additional support for the working poor, their transition should be seen as progress, both for the individuals

and their families, and for society as a whole. Addressing the concerns of those entering employment, however, constitute only the filled portion of a half-full and half-empty glass.

The hundreds of thousands forced off public assistance but unable to find work will collectively constitute the failed half of welfare reform. As this becomes more apparent when more exceed the time limits, there will be increasing political pressure to revisit the current social policy. The change in the political winds, however, will not come just from those most passionate about the emerging crisis. Today's public policies inevitably come under scrutiny tomorrow with the cyclical swings in political ideology. Sometime in the future when conditions are right, welfare reform will once again be debated in earnest. It is likely that this nation will not return to a simple income transfer program without limits, despite the flaws in the current policy. Hopefully, there will be a serious search for a better approach, one that has at its core the well-being of people. For this to happen, planners and planning educators must position themselves to participate effectively in that future debate and to help formulate a new social policy when given the opportunity. The profession must start preparing today for tomorrow by pursuing active research and reflective practice. UCLA's planning program is very much at the center of these activities.

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30 YEARS

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Six Easy Roads to Planning Perdition

**Q:** From both your knowledge of UCLA and your new perspective “down under,” how do you see planning?

**A:** John Friedmann Professor Emeritus

**1. The seduction of “being parochial”**

The Great Seducer murmurs into your ear: *Think local, act local. All the universe is in a grain of sand. Los Angeles (or name any other city) is a huge laboratory for aspiring planners. Work in it. Discover it. Why bother with anywhere else? There is so little time.*

And Old John replies: *Time is scarce, but the world is wide. Los Angeles is only one dot on the map and doesn't foreshadow what's in store for any other city. Look beyond the horizon if you want to know your own backyard. Without knowing about other places, and how they are different from where you live, study, and work, you lack perspective and your capacity for innovative thinking is restricted to what's before you. Learn about planning cities and regions in Asia, for example, where most of the world's urbanization will take place in the coming century. Then return to look at Los Angeles with new eyes, with a vision trained to see differences and similarities. Planning is increasingly a cosmopolitan profession.*

**2. The seduction of “community”**

The Great Seducer murmurs into your ear: *Work in the community, for the community, become a part*



*of it. This is how you can be a radical planner. Think people; think small; build communities. Don't be a patsy to Big Capital.*

*And Old John replies: You don't build communities with only people. And the city is more than a mosaic of neighborhoods, each separated from its surroundings by a moat. If you want to fight poverty, you've got to think beyond the locality to the region which supports it. Impoverished neighborhoods—communities—can do a few things for themselves, but they can't create paying jobs, they can't substitute for services which only the city can provide. Discover how the regional and the local connect; learn how region connects to region in a global system; find out the dynamics of regional change. Planners must learn to think and work at different scales. No single scale is sufficient unto itself.*

### **3. The seduction of "learning by doing"**

*The Great Seducer murmurs into your ear: Get out there and practice; get real. That's the only way you ever learn anything worthwhile. Forget about books. Practice is all you need. Do projects; and when you've done one, do another and another. Until you master the art of city planning.*

*And Old John replies: Practice-based planning education can take you only part of the way to where you want to go. You need theoretical understandings, too. You need to get to know the tacit theories that inform your and other planners' practice. You need to find out how people elsewhere have confronted problems different from those you want to solve. Some ways of posing problems are better than others. There are principles to be learned. The issue is how to find the right balance between theoretical learning and practice.*

### **4. The seduction of "unreflected practice"**

*The Great Seducer murmurs into your ear: Don't bother with planning theory; that's nothing but blabber, a bunch of overage white academics writing to entertain each other. No practitioner can afford to waste*

*time reading them. Just go out and practice; you'll be all right.*

*And Old John replies: How do you know what is good practice? Have you thought about the different practices of planning? Have you already figured out how planning relates to other knowledges and practices? Do you understand how knowledge is created and legitimized? And think about this. What ethical norms should guide you as a planner? Why are theorists talking about the "communicative turn" in planning? And when they do, what are they leaving out? What does it mean to be reflective about one's professional practice? And how shall we reflect on it? Planning theory (and the history of planning properly understood) provides a forum for rethinking a practice that should never be applied as if all the routines of planning were already settled. Can you learn to be a good planner by reading only a textbook of planning?*

#### **5. The seduction of "methods"**

*The Great Seducer murmurs into your ear: You are insecure. You ask: Do I have a future in planning? And so, because you feel insecure, you have a hunger for skills that will get you your first job. You want to learn the skills that are prized in the marketplace. You're right. Load up on them: do stats and modeling and GIS and social surveys. Go and study finance and learn how to put a budget together and how to finance big real estate operations. Don't waste your time in seminars discussing theories that have only fuzzy answers, if they have any at all. It's hard methods that will get you ahead in the world.*

*And Old John replies: Don't be fooled by this craze for "how do I do this or that." What's the good of knowing "how" if you don't know the "what" or "why" of practice? Indeed, what is the problem to be solved? What are the different readings on it? Who wants it solved? And why? Is it the planner's job to second-guess the market, to build in advance of the market, or what? Methods are the least problematical aspect of planning. You can run statistical regressions until you drop and still not know what the*

*problem is, what should be done (if anything), and why taking on this problem is important. There are generic skills, like writing, public speaking, doing graphics, working with people in small groups, and mediating conflicts, which are useful in all situations planners are likely to face. But beyond that...go slow on methods until you know what problems you want to solve. Your time might be better spent on all those fuzzy theories that give you a headache, worrying about the what and the why.*

#### **6. The seduction of "theory"**

*The Great Seducer murmurs into your ear: Theory is what the smartest people do. It's a game you, too, will enjoy. We can spend hours, weeks, months, a lifetime talking about words: lifeworld, simulacra, thirdspace, deconstruction, discourse analysis, untraded interdependencies, flexible accumulation, communicative action, heterotopia, habitus, epistemology, différance, embodiment, and so on and so forth in an endless stream of infinitely fascinating writings. Without them you are truly lost, can't find your way. Planning you can always learn on the job. While you are studying, it's theory you should go for.*

*And Old John replies: Theory is good, but practice is also good. You must have both if you want to be a planner. Theory informs practice and vice versa. Without the synapse to practice, theory is an addiction. The test of a good theory is: will it help me in my practice? If it doesn't, leave theory to the social, human, and cultural sciences. Planners need good theories to think about cities and regions as well as about their own practice. The trick is to connect them to the objects of planning.*

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BOOK REVIEW

# Los Angeles: Globalization, Urbanization & Social Struggles *Roger Keil*

**Julie-Anne Boudreau**

"It is always important to explain where one comes from when talking about Los Angeles. The city has no end, no middle and no limits... Much writing on Los Angeles has an automatic starting point at LAX, the giant airport by the Pacific Ocean where pundits and philosophers of the *fin de siècle* tend to land before immersing themselves into Lalaland... Whereas Europeans and New Yorkers have still the upper hand in claiming Los Angeles as the ultimate exotic wonder of the world, Westsiders have put many local spins on a local historical geography from their class and often gender-specific (meaning white and male) points of view." (Keil, 1998: xv)

## **Who writes Los Angeles? Who reads it? Who lives it?**

The "LA School," an informal grouping of scholars working in and on Los Angeles, has produced good analyses of processes of restructuring. Nevertheless, a recent issue of *Antipode* featured a debate on this work.

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Los Angeles: Globalization, Urbanization & Social Struggles Roger Keil. John Wiley & Sons, Chichester, U.K. 1998. 296 pp. ISBN 0-471-98352-7

Similarly, the publication of Mike Davis' *Ecology of Fear* prompted a ridiculous controversy in and outside Los Angeles. What is it about Los Angeles that provokes so much fear, fascination, and struggles? Whether the city is considered an exception in the history of urbanism, or whether it is considered to be the new model for all cities, no one will ignore Los Angeles' central role in a globalized world. Roger Keil's new book is inscribed in this context of intellectual debates and efforts to understand the deep restructuring processes taking place in and through Los Angeles. It proposes a much-needed political outlook on the city. Keil's book is a laudable project offering a different narrative of the "sixty mile circle" city, a narrative that perhaps could help understand not only processes of restructuring, but also the motives behind the controversies surrounding recent literature on Los Angeles.

Keil grounds his work in three main theoretical discourses: the French Regulation School, the literature on urban regimes and growth machines, and the work of Henri Lefebvre and David Harvey on the production of space. Within the tradition of the "LA School," Keil examines the processes by which Los Angeles evolves as a world city. His specific contribution to the wealth of literature on Los Angeles lies in his comprehensive effort to explain concretely the political maneuvers behind world city formation. "The simultaneity of congealed past local struggles and the realities of a constantly revolving, globalized urban world," he writes, "is the topic of this book" (1998: xxxvi). Keil

unveils the processes by which the city's physical landscape and symbolic images were built. The book convincingly articulates the impact of the city's growth machine, place entrepreneurs and boosters, with the actions of grassroots organizations as well as progressive middle-class activists.

The general argument of the book is that in a globalized world, world cities like Los Angeles take shape through local politics. Keil demonstrates that world city formation is "globally induced" and "locally contingent" by posing four premises: 1) globalization creates many contradictions which clash in the local political sphere; 2) the world city is an important site to shape globalization; 3) the positioning of a world city is dependent on local political struggles; and 4) given this position in the global urban hierarchy, local politics is place-specific (1998: 13). Thus, world city formation is not simply an inevitable historic-geographic process of restructuring. It is as well, the result of purposeful actions conducted in the local political sphere. The book's most important contribution is to document these political processes in Los Angeles.

In a dynamic writing style, Keil begins with a series of maps of Los Angeles. On decisively spatial grounds, he discusses the many representations of the city, its size, its jurisdictions, its economic radius, its population, and so on. With these "scalings" in mind, the reader is then transported from reel images, "Wannabe-Utopias," and theories into the urban reality of the city. Keil is quite successful in articulating these different images and discourses on Los Angeles with their impact on people's everyday

lives. He continues with an analysis of the "(un)making" of a Fordist city, with a particular emphasis on mayor Tom Bradley's role. The remainder of the book explores the restructuring of Los Angeles through the lens of its different actors. From boosters, place-entrepreneurs, and transnational real estate agents, to local politicians, the Community Redevelopment Agency, and middle-class activism, Keil weaves a powerful account of the development of LA's physical and political landscapes. The reader travels through Bunker Hill, Carson, West Hollywood, and Santa Monica to discover "how class hegemony is formed in and through space" (1998: 146).

From another perspective, Keil delves into the labor/community strategies to cope with desindustrialization and into the many "immigrant worlds" of the city-region. In the course of this journey, the reader is reminded that the formation of a world city is much more than the influx of foreign capital and the fulfillment of specific functions in the global economy. World city formation is also the internationalization of the population and the destruction and reconstruction of communities. Warning the reader against the pervasive tendency to equate Los Angeles' sprawled and suburbanized urban form to a lack of urbanity and civil society, Keil digs into the many strategies deployed by

Angelenos to cope with basic needs, police brutality, and welfare. "In Los Angeles," he argues, "progressive politics has been the attempt by displaced industrial workers, impoverished and marginalized citizens (and noncitizens) and radical activists to fight the wave of Republicanism and globalization that threatens to wipe them from the landscape of their city" (1998: 222).

Keil's book is a charm to read, replete with photographs, maps, and behind the scene details about the making of a world city couched between the Santa Monica and San Gabriel Mountains, the Pacific coastline and the desert. It is a journey through city hall, passing by taco trucks, ethnic supermarkets, and minimalls; stopping by Compton, the center of world gangsta rap; climbing the corporate towers of Bunker Hill and the offices of Rebuild LA. Albeit at times perhaps a little too optimistic, it is a much-needed account of local politics to complement the work on economic restructuring and cultural studies offered by students of the City of Angels.

## References

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- Davis, Mike. 1998. *Ecology of Fear: Los Angeles and the Imagination of Disaster*. New York: Metropolitan Books.

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30 YEARS

URBAN  
PLANNING

UCLA

The Critical Planning Salons

Q: How can we continue  
this discussion?

A: **Reuben De Leon** Graduate Student

Members of *Critical Planning* have initiated a forum to discuss many themes within the planning discipline. In a diverse and multidisciplinary department, the monthly *Salons* provide an avenue for planning students from different backgrounds and perspectives to come together to share ideas and discuss important issues facing the profession. From the *Salons*, it has become apparent how much impact the power of the spoken word has on understanding the contemporary issues that planners face in society. And, the *Salons* indicate the passion that UCLA urban planning students have for improving the quality of life of individuals, as well as demonstrating the intelligence to put their ideas into practice.

As the UCLA Urban Planning Department celebrates its 30th anniversary, the *Salons reflect* on many of the difficult questions in society that have challenged this department and the profession. These Critical Planning *Salons* are an invitation to UCLA planning students and their friends to partake in the discussions, to contribute to the oral tradition of this department, and to learn from each other.

*REUBEN DE LEON is a UCLA graduate student in Urban Planning. Reuben has been involved in community development and cultural planning for several years, and he is particularly interested in the impact of cultural organizations in communities of color.*

# Call for Papers

volume 7 spring 2000

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*Critical Planning* is a student journal established in 1993 by students of the UCLA Department of Urban Planning. The journal serves as a forum for the urban planning and public policy communities at UCLA, particularly students, to present current research interests and debate timely issues. We welcome submissions from graduate students, faculty, and alumni.

## Guidelines for Article Submissions

1. Submissions should not exceed 25 double-spaced pages (including 100-word abstract, tables, illustrations, endnotes and references).
2. Place the author's name, phone number, e-mail address, a brief biographical sketch, and title of submission on the cover sheet. The first text-page should contain the title of the article, without the author's name, as a means of identification.
3. Contributors must submit FOUR copies of the article and one version of the exact same paper should be sent as an attachment to [critplan@ucla.edu](mailto:critplan@ucla.edu) using MSWord 6.0 or higher.
4. Tables, illustrations, and photographs should be titled, referenced and numbered. Prints or Photoshop files should be submitted with articles for review. Electronic version of tables, figures and illustrations must be in separate files, not within the text document.
5. Endnotes should be typed at the end of the manuscript. Length and number should be kept to a minimum and should not be used for the purpose of citation.
6. References should be cited in the text using the author's last name, year of publication, and page numbers when appropriate. All works cited with complete references should be listed alphabetically at the end of the article.
7. Submissions must follow the style and spelling requirements of the *Chicago Manual of Style*, fourteenth edition (University of Chicago Press 1993).
8. All submissions are reviewed in an anonymous process by the Editorial Review Board. Submissions will be evaluated according to the following criteria: clear statement of thesis and objective; relevance of the project matter; clear development of ideas; clear and concise writing.
9. All submissions are subject to editing by the Editorial Review Board and the style editors. Authors will be given the opportunity to review the final edited version of their paper prior to publication. The editors, however, have the final authority on the publication-ready version of all submissions.

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Submission Deadline **January 17, 2000**



## The City Traversed

- Valen** The Bus Stop  
**Rojas** Rethinking Bus Stops  
**Kane** Teleurbanism and Los Angeles  
**Loukaitou-Sideris** A Synergy of the Physical and the Social  
**Dikeç/Gilbert** William H. Whyte

## The City Excavated

- Stark** People I've Been, Places I've Met  
**Al-Khodmany** Visualization Tools and Public Participation  
**Lehrer** Case+Study=Case Study  
**Valenzuela** Planning Methods at the Onset of the 21st Century

## The City Conceived

- Kim** Empire  
**Stieglitz** Advocacy Planning and the Question of the Self and the Other  
**Vargas** Transformative Community Practice  
**Mc Grath** Theoretical Underpinnings of Urban Planning Practice  
**Richman** Beyond Outreach  
**Soja** The Stimulus of Remembering

## The City Transformed

- Nisonson** Building Images I-III  
**Rodino** Urban Revitalization in an Ethnic Enclave  
**Martínez** A New Subdivision in a Chicano Barrio  
**Leavitt** Gendered Planning, Inside/Out?  
**Ong** Planning and the Implementation of Welfare Reform
- Friedmann** Six Easy Roads to Planning Perdition  
**Boudreau** Book Review: Roger Keil/*Los Angeles*  
**De Leon** The Critical Planning *Salons*