progressive
Planning

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New Urban Planning?

Ann Forsyth

ABOVE: *Skärholmen, Sweden.*

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The Seventh Generation

"In our every deliberation, we must consider the impact of our decisions on the next seven generations."

-From the Great Law of the Iroquois Confederacy

Contextualizing Radical Planning:
The 1970s Chicano Takeover in Crystal City, Texas

by JONATHAN THOMPSON

In 1970, radical Chicano activists swept into office in Crystal City, Texas, taking control of almost all of the institutions of local government in the small South Texas town. Part of a sophisticated political project by Mexican American Youth Organization (MAYO) activists, including José Angel Gutiérrez and María Luz Gutiérrez, the Crystal City victory drew on decades of local activism, connections with progressive labor unions in Texas and the Midwest and resources from federal civil rights programs and the Ford Foundation. Theories of internal colonization and cultural nationalism guided a strategy of grassroots mobilization and third-party political organizing. This approach initially showed great promise, allowing the activists to consolidate power locally in the face of intense opposition while expanding their political reach. Candidates running under the umbrella of the newly formed *La Raza Unida* party went on to win office in other nearby cities and counties, but ran unsuccessfully for state offices. While in power, the Chicano activists were able to desegregate the school curriculum and staff, bring large numbers of previously disenfranchised citizens into the political process and institute policies of community control of economic assets, including an attempt to municipalize nearby natural gas fields. By 1978, however, the Crystal City experiment was over, politically outflanked by opponents and crumbling internally from dissension and accusations of improper behavior.

Beginning in the late 1960s and continuing through the 1970s there was a broad national phenomenon of activists moving from anti-war, civil rights and pro-poor organizing into local government, successfully winning control of numerous cities and counties across the United States. Although activists of all backgrounds made this transition, they relied upon different theoretical frameworks, followed different trajectories and faced very different barriers and opposition. An unusual moment of overlap between radical black and Chicano activists on the one hand, and moderate, largely white and New Left progressives on the other hand, came through the Conference on Alternative State and Local Public Policies (CASLPP). The radicals provided a broad and comprehensive vision of a utopian future grounded in grassroots activism and the use of confrontation to gain control of the institutions of local government. The moderate progressives who predominated in CASLPP brought a pragmatic approach of compromise and coalition-building grounded in respect for the structures of local administration. The oral histories and archival collections located in the Cornell Progressive Cities and Neighborhoods Collection, Wayne State's Walter Reuther Library and university and city archives across Texas provide tantalizing glimpses into this rich historical moment of progressive local public administration.

The dramatic events in Crystal City remain one of the central moments in the history of radical Chicano activism. Although the *Movimiento* at various times had close ties with organized labor, African-American civil rights groups, liberation ⇨

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theologians, student New Left organizers and others, its history reflects the exceptional and ambiguous place of Chicanos in the U.S. The Gutiérrez organization in South Texas was the only one of the four main arms of the national Chicano *Movimiento* to make such a clear transition from mass mobilization into electoral politics. The *Movimiento* was never unified and cohesive, and at the end of the 1960s it was seen as centered around four charismatic men, each with a different organizing style: César Chávez's labor organizing in California; Rudolfo "Corky" Gonzales's youth and cultural nationalist organizing in Colorado; Reies López Tijerina's land rights activism in New Mexico; and José Angel Gutiérrez's electoral mobilization in South Texas. Tensions between these figures over strategy, prestige and identity politics contributed to the movement's fragmentation in the late 1970s, and in more recent years, feminist and queer scholarship within Chicano studies has brought into question the privileging of these men in the history of the *Movimiento*.

Lessons of the 1960s

The successful takeover in 1970 was made possible by lessons learned in the decade before. In 1963 a slate of five Chicano candidates won election to the city council after an energetic poll tax and voter registration campaign led by the local chapter of the Political Association of Spanish Speaking Organizations

(PASSO) and with help from the Teamsters. The fragile coalition fell apart, however, in the face of concerted resistance by Anglo citizens angry at the takeover who used economic pressure to punish the elected Chicanos. By 1965, a racially mixed and politically reactionary coalition was able to defeat the PASSO candidates. Despite the ephemeral results, the 1963 elections proved that it was possible to overcome the structural barriers to electing a slate of radical Chicanos in Crystal City.

In 1969, escalating anger among Mexican-American high school students and their families provided the political opening that led to the 1970 takeover. Although the student population was overwhelmingly Mexican-American, the student organizations were dominated by Anglos. Furthermore, dropout rates for Mexican-American students were many times that of Anglos. In 1969, anger crystallized over the highly symbolic and openly racist selection of cheerleaders and a homecoming queen. Mexican-American students walked out. Gutiérrez organizers and others from MAYO helped to provide focus to and support for the student protests, creating structures and accessing outside support to counter attempts at co-optation and demobilization by the Anglo elite.

Becoming a Movement

As Calvin Trillin wrote in the *New Yorker*, "The boycott became a

movement" that year. Carefully building support family by family, using children to radicalize parents and parents to support their children, the organizers focused anger about the school inequities into the electoral arena. In order to avoid a repeat of the 1965 losses, organizers formed a third party, *La Raza Unida* ("The People United"), which could provide structure and ongoing mobilization to support the candidates. A combination of class- and ethnic-based organizing was used to bring a majority of voters firmly within *La Raza Unida*'s umbrella, leaving its opponents isolated. The central innovation demonstrated by the Crystal City *La Raza Unida* was the combination of a focus on individual mobilization and voter discipline with a radical structural critique of society.

This structural critique was grounded in the ideas of internal colonialism and cultural nationalism, with the school system seen as a central instrument for maintaining the colonial relationship. When *La Raza Unida* candidates won a majority of seats on the school board and elected José Angel Gutiérrez chair of the board, they were able to bring aggressively decolonizing policies and practices, rather than gently reforming ones, to the monocultural curriculum and school staff. The substantive gains made in the school system became *La Raza Unida's* most significant accomplishment. In 1976, David Gelber noted in *Working Papers* that "since Raza took over the

school system, the drop-out rate for *third graders* has declined from 37.4 percent to 2.4 percent" (emphasis in original).

A focus on cultural nationalism permeated much of the Chicano *Movimiento*. Articulated in foundational texts such as *El Plan Espiritual de Aztlán* (1969) and Rudolfo "Corky" Gonzales's epic poem *Yo Soy Joaquín* (1968), Chicano cultural nationalism drew together ideas of identity, territorial control and class consciousness. For the Crystal City activists, seizing local political power was more than a way to redress local inequities—it was to be the first step in a long-term project of retaking *Aztlán*, the mythical Aztec homeland located in the U.S. Southwest. The idea of Aztlán overlaid language, territory, history and myth in order to reframe the identity of the Mexican-American as not subaltern or defeated, but proud *mestizo* inheritors of the land acquired by the U.S. in the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo in 1848. Beginning with "I am Joaquín, lost in a world of confusion, / caught up in the whirl of a gringo society," Gonzales's poem ends with "My blood is pure. / I am Aztec prince and Christian Christ." This stirring call for a militant Chicano identity was taken both figuratively and literally by activists; Aztlán was a radical utopian vision connecting social change, territorial control and ethnic identity.

By the mid-1970s, the faultlines that would lead to the fragmentation and failure of

La Raza Unida's governance in Crystal City were already apparent. The title of David Gelber's 1976 requiem for Crystal City in *Working Papers*, "Crystal City's Cracked Promise," suggests the intense disappointment felt by participants and observers as the radical regime devolved into accusations of nepotism,

Although the radical Chicanos in Crystal City had a far deeper structural critique, they were equally limited by the tools and mechanisms of local government

profiteering and worse. Coupled with severe external pressures, including investigations by the Texas Rangers, bitter feuds with Democratic Party officials and a disastrous showing in the 1978 gubernatorial election, *La Raza Unida* and the Crystal City experiment in radical Chicano progressive local governance fell apart. In 1979 the Gutíerrezes went into self-imposed exile in the Pacific Northwest, not returning to Texas until 1986.

Lessons from Crystal City

There were important theoretical, stylistic and strategic differences between the radical *Cristaleros* and the more moderate progressives in cities like Madison and Berkeley. The Crystal City activists based their approach on the radical systemic critique of internal colonization and cultural nationalism, and were willing to create dramatic confrontations and disruptions in the process of governance. They made little pretense of

trying to appeal to the average middle-American, and rather than seeking alliances with sympathetic politicians, they excoriated them as sellouts and worse. Most progressive city administrations were much more moderate and pragmatic, matching a limited structural critique of inequality and disempowerment with mechanisms available to state and local governments. A focus on public ownership and control was in line with historical examples in the U.S. as well as international examples from Canada and Europe. Although many progressive activists held deep critiques of the underlying basis of modern American capitalism and long-term goals to bring about systemic change, the core elements of their practice were real world compromises and alliance-building with mainstream politicians.

Although the radical Chicanos in Crystal City had a far deeper structural critique, they were equally limited by the tools and mechanisms of local government. Fundamentally, dilemmas posed by cultural nationalism and internal colonization could not be resolved from within the institutions of public administration in a small South Texas town. Just as with ⇨

radical Black Power activists in Oakland and elsewhere, the highly symbolic capture of territorial and institutional control was central to the

This third party approach was meant to be the bridge between the radical critique and the implementation of a radical agenda, but the external structural barriers, combined with internal dissent, were impossible to overcome.

project. And to the extent that local government had long been used as mechanisms of repression and emasculation, seizing control of these arms of the state provided a tremendous sense of empowerment. But unlike the white progressive activists, who were generally able to work effectively on the edges of local Democratic Party structures, the ongoing involvement of the local Democratic Party in maintaining structures of racial oppression led to the building of a third party base. This third party approach was meant to be the bridge between the radical critique and the implementation of a radical agenda, but the external structural barriers, combined with internal dissent, were impossible to overcome.

The brief overlap between the radical Chicanos in Crystal City and the progressives in the CASLPP suggests to me a "could have been" of local progressive politics in the U.S. rife with missed opportunities and the hints of a different future. The moderate progressives never acquired the grassroots sophistication of the Chicano *Movimiento*, while the *Movimiento* activists never gained the comfort the moderates had with compromise, coalition-building

and working within the institutions of government. In an alternate reality, the moderate activists would have learned the importance of sustained grassroots organizing and strategies for achieving this from the radical Chicanos, perhaps acquiring the tools to counter opposition from right-wing and business interests. The radical Chicanos, on the other hand, would have been able to connect their powerful utopian vision with mechanisms grounded in institutional realities. While the gains each group made were very real and should not be dismissed, the limitations of each meant that the real gains were more symbolic than substantive. And though both groups proved that change was possible, they failed to implement those changes on a national or regional scale.

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Supporting Resident-Led Revitalization in Librino, Italy

by KENNETH REARDON, FILIPPO GRAVAGNO, AND LAURA SAIJA

In the post-World War II period, following years of economic stagnation, physical destruction and fascistic rule, Italy faced formidable challenges. While the industrial areas located near many cities began to recover, many poor and working-class families were unable to secure housing to enable them to take advantage of the nation's economic recovery. In the late 1950s and early 1960s, progressive political forces, including the Community Party, Socialist Party and left-oriented Catholics, pressed the national government to take immediate action to address the nation's deepening housing crisis. In 1962, Public Law 162, which required a minimum "set-aside" of land to be devoted for the construction of public or affordable housing in every city, was passed. In Catania Italy, a modernist new town attempting to address the affordable housing issue demonstrated the dilemmas of top-down planning and the potential of community-university partnerships.

New Town Planning in Catania

While the overwhelming majority of Italian cities faced severe housing problems in this period, the problems of southern cities, especially those on the island of Sicily, were particularly acute. In Catania, one of Sicily's most important industrial cities, affordable housing became a

key element of the city's 1964 comprehensive plan prepared by Italy's famous master planner Luigi Piccinato. Approved in 1969, Piccinato's Catania Plan proposed several small-scale affordable housing projects within the city center as well as construction of the largest public housing project called Librino, conceived as a "satellite city" that would provide shelter for 70,000 residents.

Influenced by international debates about the optimal strategy for addressing the housing needs of poor and working-class families, Librino was ultimately conceived of as a "New Town" or *Villes Nouevelles*. Kenzo Tange, the Pritzker Award-winning architect, was chosen to design this important new community. In 1972, Tange presented his Librino plan, which featured ten residential districts reflective of Le Corbusier's design philosophy, first articulated in the Athens Charter (1933), that recommended the separation of sleeping, working, recreational and circulating functions.

Following the approval of the Tange plan by local officials in 1974, a single-purpose construction firm, the STA Progetti, was formed to oversee Librino's development. In 1976, Fransesco Lo Guidice, a local engineer, was hired to modify Puccinato's plan and Tange's design to physically and socially integrate into the

overall Librino plan several illegal squatter settlements that had since emerged. These modifications did not, however, alter the basic elements of Tange's design, some of which are outlined below.

• Clusters of 6- to 10-story buildings within each of Librino's ten residential districts to maximize the preservation of the area's open spaces for historical, aesthetic and recreational purposes;

• A hierarchically organized circulation system that featured highways for regional travel, major roadways for citywide travel and pedestrian pathways for local travel;

• Appropriate and conveniently located public services within each residential district, including facilities such as primary schools, neighborhood libraries and small senior citizen centers;

• A city center featuring major commercial buildings to generate local employment and tax revenues and a municipal government complex housing important civic and cultural facilities;

•An organic street pattern that followed the area's naturally undulating topography while preserving historic views and landmark buildings;   ⇨

• High-quality municipal services, including water, sewage, sanitation, drainage, telephone and mass transit, which many city-dwellers living in northern Italy took for granted by the mid-1970s but many residents of Sicily did not, at that time, enjoy.

Problems Emerge

While Tange and his Italian collaborators sought to create a design for Librino that was environmentally sensitive and responsive to local needs, their plan was, from its earliest conception, strongly criticized by local planners, designers and activists on two grounds. First, Librino's location in a hilly area south of the historic city center—with unstable clay soils, noise pollution from the nearby airport and a microclimate featuring intense sunlight and minimal cooling breezes—was viewed by many as inappropriate for large-scale residential development.

Second, Tange's minimalist modern architecture was viewed as hostile to the communalist lifestyle of local residents who were accustomed to cities that featured elegant public squares, active commercial streets, quiet pedestrian alleys and well-designed public markets.

As Tange's Librino began to take shape, observers raised additional questions regarding its overall environmental impact. Contrary to its stated principles, the project, as built, significantly changed the area's historic landscape by paving large expanses of previously unimproved land, eliminating scores of surface drainage streams and polluting many historic downstream wells. While the plan stressed the importance of an integrated greenway system, little of this was actually planted. As a result, most of the area's unimproved natural areas were not used by local residents but instead attracted those

engaged in illegal dumping. In addition to these siting and design problems, Librino's development has been negatively affected by its dependence on municipal and national funding for basic infrastructure, community facilities and essential public services that have, during periods of economic and political instability, been delayed or cancelled. Today, many Librino residents live either without, or with poorly functioning, public services that most people take for granted. Another factor that has complicated implementation of Tange's Librino plan was its dependence upon private developers, worker cooperatives and Italy's national public housing authority (IACP) to build the mix of market-rate and affordable housing outlined in the plan. Uncertainty regarding public infrastructure investments and public housing subsidies has increased the risk of building in Librino for each of these

LEFT: *A view of the city of Librino capturing a historic village that was incorporated into the Tange plan as well as one of its ten more recently-constructed residential quarters with Mount Etna in the background.*

actors and, as a result, the pace of construction has slowed and the percentage of market-rate housing has increased.

As the development process slowed, small numbers of city residents living in poor-quality housing organized the illegal occupation of several buildings nearing completion. Many of those involved in Librino's squatters' movement were, in part, provoked by unscrupulous politicians who manipulated local public housing waiting lists, promising supporters Librino housing if they voted appropriately. This lack of fairness and transparency in the public housing authority's waiting list system also provided local criminal elements an opportunity to expand their influence. Criminal organizations offered families—many of whom feared the loss of their waiting list positions—the opportunity, for a fee, to occupy squatter buildings. Once families moved into such buildings, local politicians skillfully used their extra-legal status to pressure them into supporting incumbents for re-election. "If you and your family continue to vote for our party, I will make sure you are not forced out of your home."

The illegal movement of a significant number of families into the community before basic building and infrastructure systems were completed has caused serious ecological problems for many Librino residents. Squatters fearful of being evicted by local ⇨

ABOVE: *One of Librino's many public housing buildings where the majority of residents have enclosed their formerly shared balcony spaces to expand their families' private living areas.*

ABOVE: *An example of Librino's many environmentally challenged public spaces; this one is located below an entrances to one of the large family housing complexes.*

authorities have, with the assistance of local criminal organizations, denied municipal officials, housing authority managers and contractors access to buildings, transforming them into virtual gated communities. Many occupied buildings have been without basic services for more than thirty years, resulting in unimaginable environmental problems. In one building we visited, occupants were using garden hoses draped over outdoor patios as their primary water supply, disposing of household trash by placing it in a rodent-infested interior stairwell and paying young children to lower human waste from upper floors in buckets so it could be dumped in nearby streams. Today, while local authorities would 'like to address these long-standing environmental problems, they hesitate to negotiate with the illegal occupants for fear of encouraging similar takeovers of new developments by families desperate for decent shelter.

The longstanding abuses of ethically compromised housing bureaucrats and organized crime families has also forced a significant portion of Librino's residential population to live in buildings with serious life safety and public health problems and in neighborhoods lacking basic sidewalk, street, lighting, drainage, sewer, public school, health clinic, playground, park and public market facilities and services. While the severity of Catania's housing shortage has kept

ABOVE: *One of the many residual open spaces surrounding a cluster of high rise residential buildings. These underdeveloped public spaces are, in their unfinished state, quite pedestrian unfriendly reducing contact and interaction among residents of adjoining building complexes.*

ABOVE: *An example of Librino's many public markets which offer residents easy access to a wide variety of fresh meats, fruits, vegetable, cheeses, and other consumer products. Several times a week merchants assemble at a different location within the city to serve residents. While popular, the public markets offer shoppers few amenities such as shaded seating areas, water fountains, restrooms, merchants directories, or clear signage.*

occupancy levels relatively high in Librino and recently prompted several worker associations to construct new co-ops in spite of the many environmental challenges and public service problems, residents have become increasingly dissatisfied with existing conditions in what was envisioned as an innovative new town. During the past four years, a growing number of residents have organized to regain control over existing conditions and the future development of Librino.

Residents and the University

During the past year, representatives of *Librino Attivo*, an association composed of residents and supported by several labor-sponsored housing cooperatives, workers' unions and the city of Catania's Department of Public Works, initiated a series of meetings with faculty from the University of Catania's Department of Architecture and Urbanism to explore ways in which they might work together to address Librino's most critical environmental, economic and social problems. In the spring of 2006, the Laboratory for the Ecological and Environmental Design of the Territory (LaPEAT), coordinated by Professor Piera Busacca, Professor Filippo Gravagno and Lecturer Laura Saija, organized an urban design studio to collect and analyze data on several topics, including: ecological, economic and cultural history of Librino; origins, evolution, accomplishments and shortcomings of the Tange plan; existing physical and social conditions within Librino's ten residential neighborhoods; and residents', business operators' and municipal officials' preferred development scenarios. During the course of the studio, Barbara Lynch and John Forester,

RIGHT: *Professor Piera Busacca, (Director of LaPEAT), engineer Francesco Lo Giudice (Director of the SPA Projects Office -- responsible on behalf of the City for the implementation of the Librino Plan), and Antonino Drago (Commissioner of the City of Catania's Department of Public Works) respond to the University of Catania graduate architecture, engineering, and planning students' community revitalization proposals.*

two professors from Cornell University's Department of City and Regional Planning, visited to share their experiences working with community/university development partnerships in the United States.

Excitement generated by this process prompted leaders of LaPEAT to propose to *Librino Attivo* and the Department of Public Works a jointly sponsored summer workshop on participatory planning, design and development focused on the ecological, economic and social challenges confronting Librino. With the support of these local institutions, eighteen Ph.D. students in architecture, engineering and urban planning were recruited to participate in this "hands-on" workshop designed to elicit local stakeholders' views regarding existing conditions, needed physical improvements ⇨

and alternative development possibilities.

Working under the direction of faculty from LaPEAT, the Catania students designed and implemented an ambitious data collection effort that included physical surveys of a cross-section of Librino's neighborhoods, interviews with residents of several of the community's public housing and worker co-ops, focus groups with local elected officials and design consultants and research into best practices for resident-led revitalization. Preparing the students for these and other fieldwork activities was a small group of consulting planners from Rome, Bari and Torino as well as long-term PN members Tom Angotti and Ken Reardon.

On Friday, July 20, 2007, Professor Piera Busacca summarized the students'

major research findings and planning recommendations before an audience of some fifty local residents, planners and designers and municipal officials. Professor Busacca's report highlighted residents' strong attachment to Librino as well as their desire to see the community's long-standing environmental and economic problems addressed. The report identified a number of immediate, short-term and long-term improvements that residents of the community's public housing and worker cooperatives were eager to work on with the support of local officials and university students and faculty. Among these projects was the expansion of the active membership base of the *Librino Attivo*; creation of better designed and maintained public market spaces; establishment of more conveniently located bus stops; involvement of

area youth in environmental improvement projects; re-design and improvement of public open space immediately adjacent to occupied buildings; and construction of badly-needed youth and adult recreation facilities.

Residents, students and faculty attending the final presentation were thrilled when Commissioner Antonino Drago of the Department of Public Works encouraged LaPEAT's university team and their resident association allies to come to City Hall the following week to negotiate a framework to support collaborative planning and design activities for achieving the development goals and objectives featured in the students' Librino report. Within two weeks of the final presentation, an agreement had been signed pledging local residents, municipal officials

LEFT: *Professors Piera Busacca of the University of Catania and Tom Angotti of Hunter College listen to an initial summary of the Librino Workshop Students' preliminary assessment of physical conditions in select neighborhoods of Librino.*

ABOVE: *Two Workshop PhD students, Alessandro Macaluso and Giuseppe Pulvirenti, engage tenant leaders and union representatives in a preliminary discussion of their preferred revitalization strategies while Professors Busacca and Gravagno of LaPEAT and their students look on.*

ABOVE: *The student participants in LaPEAT's Librino Community Development Workshop pose for a photo along with Laura Saija, Lecturer in Urban Planning and Design (Center forefront), Professor Valeria Monno from Bari Politechnic (Seated behind and to the left of Laura), and PN's Ken Reardon (Left of tree) and Tom Angotti (Right of tree).*

and university students and faculty to collaborate on cooperative planning, design and development in Librino. Participating faculty are seeking funding to facilitate the exchange of knowledge and skills emerging from university involvement in resident-led revitalization efforts in Catania, New York City and New Orleans.

While large-scale approaches to solving problems of affordable housing have great potential, they are challenging to implement. Existing products of such approaches, however, many since deteriorated, are important resources for preservation and renewal. But in contrast to the large-scale demolitions of such products practiced in the United States, as in the case of the Hope VI program, participatory approaches have much to offer efforts for community renewal and empowerment.

Kenneth M. Reardon is an associate professor of city and regional planning at Cornell University and a long-time member of Planners Network. Filippo Gravagno is a professor of urban planning and design at the University of Catania where he serves as the scientific coordinator for the Laboratory for the Ecological and Environmental Design of the Territory (LaPEAT). Laura Saija is a lecturer in urban planning and design at the University of Catania and research fellow at LaPEAT, where she has undertaken several action research projects focused on economically distressed areas of Eastern Sicily.

Accommodating Social Diversity in the Gentrified City:
Making Space for Families

by MIA HUNT

Place diversity is a fundamental goal of contemporary planning practice. The prescription of mixed-use developments, socio-economic mixing in housing and ethnic diversity is illustrative of this movement. A range of age groups and household compositions yield diversity and contribute to the civic health of neighborhoods by creating more complete, sustainable communities. In most North American urban centers, however, there are fewer and fewer children in the downtown, as new and expecting parents leave the central core to raise their families. In the case of Toronto, proponents of downtown family housing fear that this trend will result in a complete absence of children. In order to make downtown family living feasible and combat negative perceptions about raising children downtown, the city must work to keep family units available, affordable and well-serviced.

Prospects for Downtown Family Living

While most parents are leaving the downtown core to raise their children, data from Statistics Canada suggest that some families are staying and that this trend may be increasing. Changing gender roles and the increased participation of women in the labor market may be causing families to reject suburban living. In Toronto, researchers Damaris Rose and Nathalie Chicoine found that the first urban parents were single mothers who lived in the center to retain proximity to work and childcare facilities. Other benefits of remaining in the downtown core include access to cultural institutions, the presence of urban vibrancy and the ability to retain social connections and community networks.

Other North American cities are beginning to witness similar trends of urban parenting, including New York, Chicago and Vancouver. Each of these cities has stipulations in their comprehensive plans for promoting a mix of housing types to maintain inner-city diversity. Although the Toronto Official Plan does not explicitly state the need to attract or retain families with children downtown, it does outline several relevant needs: to increase density in the downtown, to provide housing for downtown workers and to reduce inbound commuting. This focus on densification has been reinforced by provincial initiatives calling for infill development in response to new boundaries for urban expansion

in Southern Ontario. High density urban development is a result of these sustainable planning imperatives which seek to exploit the more efficient use of resources in dense areas. Densification can be further attained by establishing larger households in closer proximity to each other.

What's the Problem?

Like most major North American cities, Toronto has responded to the drive for density—as well as to market demands and the subsequent cost of land—with high-density office and condominium towers. Condominiums in particular are expected to dominate Toronto's downtown residential landscape. Developers have pandered to young childless couples and empty-nesters whose occupation of these units has fuelled the condominium boom. In one downtown ward, 8,000 condo units were built between 1998 and 2006. Within these developments a mere eighty-six units had three bedrooms. Developers are not building downtown units appropriate for families and cities are not providing adequate family services. Lack of appropriate units makes it virtually impossible for most parents to raise children downtown.

In order to cope with the scarcity of larger units, some families have reportedly bought multiple units and knocked down walls between them to create larger spaces. In more typical cases, parents may start their family in the city but move to a suburban neighborhood before their child is of school age or before the birth of a second child. The lack of family appropriate units is reinforced by limited demand, which is due to historical perceptions about multi-unit buildings as well as perceptions about the costs of city living in both monetary and social terms.

In Toronto, multi-unit buildings have historically been considered abhorrent—an attitude resulting

in bans on rooming houses and multi-family units in the downtown core beginning at the start of the twentieth century. City policy, fear of largely single and disenfranchised urban residents and media representations all affected perceptions of downtown living. For example, in a series of early twentieth century editorials, *The Globe*, Canada's national newspaper, claimed that the "plague of disease-breeding tenements" disguised under the name of "apartment houses" were threats to "morals as well as health" and that they would result in "a city of stunted children and unhappy adults." Real estate marketing strategies have also played an important

role in spatial branding and residential locational choices. This negative spin was encouraged by the divergent, healthful and positive image painted of suburban life by governments and developers in the middle of the twentieth century. In a legacy founded through these narratives, perceptions remain that raising children in the city is dangerous; that it robs children of services, playmates and opportunities for outdoor play; and that it exposes middle- and upper-class children to lower-class populations and deviant behaviors.

The perception of higher living expenses associated with downtown living also deters ⇨

RIGHT: *Though they face significant obstacles, urban parents are increasing in number and changing perceptions of raising children downtown*

families from the downtown core. In fact, the actual comparative cost between downtown and suburban units with the same number of bedrooms can be the same. Though cost per square foot is higher in a downtown unit, it may be offset by the reduced cost of commuting and transportation. Despite the fact that dwellings with the same number of rooms can be similar in cost in urban and suburban locations, the total average size in square feet is smaller downtown. Downtown units may also lack features associated with parenting and family life: a yard for the dog and kids, a back deck for neighborhood barbeque parties, a two-car garage for his and hers sport utility vehicles.

The footprint of suburban families has been growing, a result of suburban lifestyles. Despite dwindling family size, the average Canadian household in the 1990s consumed twice as much space as the average Canadian household in the 1950s. For those bent on achieving the kinds of spatial luxuries just mentioned, downtown spaces may be financially unattainable. For families comfortable with compact and efficient urban units, however, downtowns provide viable and more sustainable options.

Certainly both the needs of families and lifestyle ideals are changing, albeit slowly. While it takes time to change popular perceptions, a number of issues can be addressed to make urban living more attractive to families, whose increasing presence in turn will change the way urban living is seen. These issues include: the lack of family-friendly amenities; rental controls and affordability; and unavailability of family-appropriate units.

What's Needed?

The needs of families differ from those of young people, childless professionals and empty-nesters. Families require additional community services, parks and recreation facilities, day care facilities, schools and parking and storage, in addition to accessible transit, safe and active pedestrian environments and food security, which are important for all citizens. Creating larger units alone will not encourage families to reside in the urban core. Some newer developments are starting to include day care facilities in their plans to address present and forecasted needs. Planning policies and developments too often cater to the current demographic composition of downtown residents, instead of considering urban spaces as potential family neighborhoods.

Downtown residential diversity necessitates a degree of creativity and responsiveness on the part of planners to maximize spatial efficiency. For example, changing hard spaces to soft spaces—converting parking lots to parks and greening roofs, for example—would provide necessary play space for children. While downtown diversity is important, some uses conflict with family living. In Toronto, for example, one member of the city council has called for more control of the downtown's entertainment district to maintain the viability of surrounding residential neighborhoods. By including families, the downtown should not be forced to have its "lights out before 10:00 P.M.," but should be zoned appropriately and designed creatively to permit sharing.

Beyond availability and service requirements, families cannot reside downtown if units are beyond their financial reach. The potential cost of condominiums and depleting stock of subsidized and rental housing prevents family residence downtown. Given these constraints and considering the spacious suburban options available, many families are forced to leave the city core when they require more space.

Despite dwindling family size, the average Canadian household in the 1990s consumed twice as much space as the average Canadian household in the 1950s.

Many families are unable to afford to purchase a home, especially downtown, where down payments are often financially unrealistic. Difficulty securing permanent housing is compounded by expenses faced by most renting families. In Toronto, on average, renters pay much more of their income on housing than owners. To avoid housing stress, expenditures on housing should not exceed 30 percent of total income. In 2001, approximately 42 percent of Toronto families paid more. Rent control policies are essential to assist families, as is the continued availability of rental stock downtown. In Toronto, over one-half of households rent, yet no new rental housing is being constructed.

At least 30 percent of children in Toronto live below the low-income cut-off. The active waiting list for subsidized housing includes over 21,000 families. The income gap in the downtown core is growing, as are the costs of units. Respecting the 30 percent expenditure rule, a two-bedroom unit is unaffordable to a family earning an annual salary of $50,000. The supply of less expensive apartments, renting for under $800, decreased from 65 percent in 1996 to 20 percent in 2003. Accordingly, between 1997 and 2003, average rent rose by 28 percent. Toronto's Homelessness Action Task Force set a target of 2,000 new affordable units each year to address the forecasted demand. In 2000 through 2002 less than 300 units of affordable housing were built each year on average.

The affordable housing crisis has been attributed to rapid growth, inflated real estate markets, the disproportionate increase in housing prices to average household income and cuts to housing programs and controls, the latter of which ended completely in the mid-1990s. Despite the increasing privatization of the housing market and escalating costs, in the last five years there has been some renewed political interest in housing programs within government at provincial and national levels, spurred by governmental recognition that the private sector is not providing affordable options. These interests need to be pressed into much greater action.

Policy Potential

While acknowledging the shortage of family-sized units downtown, a famous ⇨

Mia Hunt

LEFT: *By using space efficiently and creatively, larger families can be accommodated in the downtown core*

Toronto condominium developer dismisses the need to provide them in his downtown developments. When one- and two-bedroom units sell like hotcakes, why include larger units? Policy decisions, in combination with the market forces the developer alludes to, have fuelled the current residential development trends. For example, in order to remain competitive, the city of Toronto has encouraged the arrival of young creative professionals in the downtown core—individuals affluent enough to demand few social services. Similarly, the Province of Ontario encouraged sprawl in the 1990s by downloading responsibilities to municipalities, encouraging low-density development to expand property tax bases.

The market has been unable to provide adequate family housing in Toronto's downtown. The problem of availability is exacerbated by a lack of affordability and family-oriented services. Policy interventions enforced at municipal, provincial and federal levels must promote mix and social equity, and encourage the production and retention of larger units in the downtown. Although Toronto's current planning framework does not permit putting positive demands on developers, the city controls the built environment and provides public amenities through height and density bonuses. When used, bonus deals should be increasingly leveraged to secure more family-friendly spaces, programs and services.

Families are part of healthy and sustainable neighborhoods. To preserve this asset and change perceptions about raising children downtown, cities must implement policies that encourage the creation of family units and community services, assist families in financing their downtown homes and uphold the value of residential diversity within the downtown.

Mia Hunt is a masters candidate at the University of Toronto. Michelle Drylie, Adam Molson and David Wachsmuth collaborated on the project on which this article is based.

Mia Hunt

LEFT: *Condominium towers, catering mainly to young professionals and empty-nesters, rise around inner-city parks*

Rendering the Invisible Visible: *Cultural Architecture and Predatory Planning in Atlanta's Sweet Auburn*

by **KENNETH BAILEY AND KIARA L. NAGEL**

In the process of rebuilding New Orleans, new challenges have arisen for both planners and organizers. Planners from across the country have been openly accused by indigenous New Orleans residents and organizers of overlooking sophisticated cultural infrastructure unique to the city. Whether builders with intergenerational knowledge of building materials or social and pleasure clubs with extensive networks for locating residents across the post-Katrina diaspora, local voices have been overlooked and underappreciated as outside "experts" have rolled in (see article by Neville and Irazabal in the Summer 2007 issue of this magazine).

When planning, we often pay attention to incorporating quality design, improving infrastructure and generating growth, but when we are in particular communities, we are intervening in the cultural infrastructure of that community. The Design Studio for Social Intervention (DS4SI) launched the Cultural Commons Project to connect cultural and community development practitioners and to generate new ideas for how to work within the cultural infrastructure. During the 2007 U.S. Social Forum in Atlanta, the Cultural Commons Project brought together practitioners from New Orleans to Albuquerque to Honolulu to share stories of their struggles as cultural practitioners contending with development. The process demonstrated that strengthening the cultural commons is vital to true community development.

Why Sweet Auburn?

The workshop centered on Auburn Avenue, a place and a neighborhood that once served as a backbone for the civil rights movement-building work. It was once considered the richest black street in the world, the epicenter of Atlanta's early black economy, a mecca for political organizing of all kinds and a thriving cultural commons.

Today, however, it takes a leap of faith to imagine what Sweet Auburn used to be like. On the one hand, it's now an international tourist destination. It's not uncommon to see Japanese tourists taking pictures or a sizeable group of American tourists checking out the many civil rights sites on Segways. On the other hand, it's a hyper-local site of Atlanta's excluded. Amidst the tourists it's not uncommon to see boarded up storefronts, run-down buildings and addicts smoking crack in broad daylight.

Further complicating this picture is all the new development. The neighborhood is far from immune to the gentrification and condo-mania sweeping Atlanta. When cultural infrastructure is affected by development, the artifacts may remain—often co-opted to make the neighborhood feel more authentic—but the culture itself can be threatened with extinction and displacement. As Mari Cowser of the Historic District Development Corporation (HDDC) wonders, "How do we make sure we still have fried green tomatoes and sweet peach tea down the street when all is said and done?" If history and culture is marketable, what happens when the capacity to produce that culture is removed to make room for redevelopment?

How Do We Define Predatory Planning?

One of the goals of visiting Sweet Auburn was to see if our practitioners could identify what we call predatory planning. Predatory planning is the intentional process of dispossession enacted through the simultaneous use of multiple, often globally powered, redevelopment tactics in the wake of trauma. I use the term to describe the new phenomenon emerging in the Gulf, especially New Orleans, in the wake of Hurricane Katrina. The fact that Shaw and Halliburton, companies contracted to handle rebuilding in Iraq, were also awarded mega-contracts to handle Gulf redevelopment is an indication that a new term is   ⇨

needed to understand what places are experiencing. Put a more colloquial way, this is not your backyard gentrification anymore. In the case of predatory planning, the speed, complexity and intentionality of development are heightened at the same time that a trauma or shock has diminished the capacity of residents to participate or resist.

Predatory planning's impact encompasses a traumatic stress reaction involving root shock and destruction of the cultural commons. Root shock, the collective trauma left behind when communities are uprooted, is described in Mindy Fullilove's book *Root Shock* (2004). It can result in decimated communities with rising rates of HIV, drug addiction, depression and stress. It can also impact the cultural commons in the form of social networks and cultural traditions, as seen, for instance, in the second line tradition of New Orleans jazz funeral processions or in Hawaii's master hula dances. These are cultural practices tied to a locale, connected to a specific intersection of place and culture, and can often buffer the brute impact of root shock for a community. Even outside of catastrophic events, the cultural commons often rely on—and point to the significance of—people who may not have much monetary value to the market, whether it be a prodigious young spiritual healer or an elderly man who teaches local surfers the roots of their craft. Their presence of such leaders makes their

communities richer and healthier; their absence makes communities even more vulnerable to predatory planning.

Walking Sweet Auburn

There really is no better way to understand place-based struggles than to get out and walk in the community with the people who know it best. At the U.S. Social Forum workshop, we asked four local organizers and residents, Mari Cowser, Charles Johnson, Saudia Mawwakkil and Gerry Hudson, to lead us on a tour of Auburn Street as a way to orient cultural practitioners from specific place-based struggles around the U.S. to the larger forces affecting all communities. We wanted participants to engage in the experience and build solidarity across locales. The familiar cycle of abandonment and reinvestment is highly evident in Sweet Auburn, with the neighborhood experiencing many

of the building blocks of predatory planning: redlining, Jim Crow, urban renewal, slum clearance, federal highway programs, planned shrinkage and eventual gentrification and redevelopment. Today the community's struggles are both residual and new.

At 2:00 P.M., the group emerges from Historic Ebenezer Baptist Church and is welcomed by Saudia of the Martin Luther King, Jr., National Historic Site. Moving down the block, we gather around the statue of John Wesley Dobbs, grandfather of the first black mayor of Atlanta who coined the phrase Sweet Auburn to describe how African-American money "ran like honey." Charles Johnson, president of the Sweet Auburn Fest, which draws over 100,000 guests to the neighborhood each year, explains how the street was lined with restaurants and businesses during its heyday: black-owned insurance companies, a grand hotel, a tailor shop, and

Kiara Nagel

around the corner the Butler Street YMCA. The Royal Peacock Club was just one of several nightclubs in the neighborhood. "You really need to ask some questions here," Johnson says. "This used to be one of the richest black streets in the country and why does it look like this now when we been under thirty years of black administrations? We need to have some honest conversations about what's really going on."

While Johnson points out the intricate stonework detail decorating the Prince Hall Masonic Lodge, cultural practitioners from Honolulu duck into the Sweet Auburn Bread Bakery. Vicki Takamine emerges with sweet potato pie to share with everyone. You have to use all your senses to understand and appreciate the cultural commons! When we visited Hawaii, Vicki took us to sacred sites and explained the rootedness of native cultural practice in the land, a lesson given

on the way to a legendary shrimp truck that served us plates of buttery shrimp and rice. How can you be allowed to plan a whole community without visiting the local rib shack?

Across the street is a boarded up house, with several men hanging around out front. A woman approaches us, crack stem in hand, requesting financial assistance. "Let's move along," one of the tour guides urges. "That's enough of that." "We have a lot of pain in our communities," Hina from Hawaii offers. Rick from New Orleans responds, "They going to clean that up so fast. Once that development goes in, all them people are gone."

The experience of root shock caused by dislodging people from social and cultural networks is well known by marginalized communities around the country. Tour guide Mari Cowser agrees: "We've all suffered from

Model Cities, urban renewal, empowerment zones. I call them the delayed triplets. There is usually a pattern and what you have to do is better familiarize yourself with the past to understand what is happening. We are experiencing the same thing all over the country. There's already been a plan. We've just not been part of it."

We approach a monstrous cement structure, the I-85 overpass. "This is what divided this community," Johnson shouts over the traffic. Rick Mathieu knows this story well. His New Orleans neighborhood of Treme, another site for civil rights organizing with a strong black economy and vibrant culture, is still reeling from the I-10 expressway that dissected the neighborhood's core decades ago. As the group lingers in the dead space under the highway, the dank smell of urine and trash is as hard to ignore as the roaring sound of eight lanes of traffic overhead.   ⇨

LEFT: *Welcomed by local hosts outside Ebeneezer Baptist Church, practitioners fom Atlanta, New Orleans, Hawaii, Atlanta, and beyond prepare for a walking tour of Sweet Auburn.*

RIGHT: *The I-85 overpass bisects and divides the Sweet Auburn neighborhood.*

Kiara Nagel

Sweet Auburn's Lessons

The cultural infrastructure that existed alongside the black civic infrastructure is now difficult to trace. It's fairly easy to say that the area was, and still is, staggering from the effects of root shock, a shock that happened years ago from the building of the highway, urban renewal and economic fallout. We also assert that the people showing the effects of that shock the most, who are reeling from hereditary trauma, are also currently being used to justify the neighborhood's upcoming "clean up." We would classify this strategy—the turning of the results of prior trauma into a development tactic—as part of the new predatory planning. Sweet Auburn had the potential to become a vibrant site-specific cultural infrastructure, but it was stopped before it had a chance to fully grow.

We have opportunities to prevent this in places still fighting for their cultural lives. We also have plenty to learn from such places about what it takes to construct viable civil societies. So how do we stop what seems to have happened to Atlanta from happening in New Orleans and other places?

Trans-Local Dialogue

During our time in Sweet Auburn we shared stories with one another. Rick Mathieu traveled from New Orleans with his two sons. He shared his family's experience of surviving the flood by drawing from its cultural commons. Now he is seeing complete abandonment of certain areas of the city coupled with massive investment in others.

Vicki Takamine from Honolulu spoke about her community's struggles with the enclosure of sacred sites and the impact that tourism and development are having on cultural practices.

The state constitution guarantees the rights of native Hawaiians to exercise their traditional and customary practices on ancestral lands, whether they own that land or not and this includes gathering rights…. In order to preserve my rights to gather native plants and resources, I was told I had to prove every leaf and fish that my great great grandparents went to gather. This policy was clearly set up for us to fail. Our response: forty drummers, hundreds of dancers, and over 1000 people gathered at the demonstration and shut the capital down to protest around the gathering rights! Their action interrupted the passing of the bill and they became cultural policymakers.

Ayinde Summers is a cultural practitioner and youth worker from Atlanta. After hearing Hawaiian practitioners speaking about cultural charter schools and the intentionality of intergenerational work, he drew connections to his work with youth on the Gulla Islands off the coast of Georgia and their struggles to maintain culture.

It's nearly 5:00 p.m. when we make it back up the hill to Ebenezer Church. The afternoon sun and the sites have drained our energy, but Ms. Cowser offers cold drinks up the block at the HDDC offices across from Dr. King's childhood home. We clearly have only begun to build together, and it's a long way to beginning to develop strategies for resistance to predatory planning.

Implications for Planning

Predatory planning provides a framework for understanding the new era we have entered—an era marked by globalized redevelopment forces, an increase in the number of severe natural disasters and the existence of widespread trauma and disaster capitalism. Today's realities render our old planning terms out of date. Gentrification used to take years to flip a neighborhood. Today we have seen how it can happen in a matter of months or, in the case of Katrina and other atrocities, almost immediately. As the tools of dispossession increase in power and complexity, organizers are left wondering if their old tactics will still be effective. As best said by Mindy Fullilove and the Root Shock Institute, asking grassroots efforts to stand up to global regimes is rude. As organizers stretch to respond, so must planners. Our strategies for intervention are, at best, missing a critical piece of inquiry. At worst, they are becoming obsolete.

As planners, we are not necessarily equipped with tools needed to both recognize and work with local cultural infrastructures. It's not enough to land in a new place and start to look for cultural infrastructure. We must begin by making sure that cultural architects are a part of our conversations about placemaking, arts-based redevelopment, culturally-based tourism and other strategies for progressive community development. We must also realize that these conversations are urgent. The cultural commons is endangered. Sweet Auburn was listed as one of America's most endangered places by the National Trust for Historic Preservation. Recent attempts to genetically patent traditional sacred Hawaiian poi plant are moving forward. New Orleans is circulating a new petition to make social and pleasure clubs submit permits for second line parades. Our cultural commons are under attack. Predatory planning is occurring, for the most part, unchallenged. As progressive planners we must join community organizers in creating processes and structures to support vitality of place and learn to see cultural architects as vital to community development—or else fail to see communities as vital.

Kiara Nagel

LEFT: *Luxury condominium development underway along Auburn Avenue co-opting the Sweet Auburn name.*

RIGHT: *Low-income housing slated to be cleared for redevelopment.*

Kiara Nagel

From Political Protest to Housing Activism: *The Association of Mothers of Plaza de Mayo in Buenos Aires, Argentina*

by **ALEJANDRO ROFMAN**

In 1977, in the midst of Argentina's military dictatorship, a group of mothers of young people who were disappeared by the military began to raise their voices, demanding to know the whereabouts of their children and to reintegrate them into society. The children were political and social militants captured by the armed forces during the long night of a brutal repression and no one knew whether they were alive, and if so, where they were being held as prisoners. The site for their protest was the Plaza de Mayo, right in front of the Presidential Palace in Buenos Aires. Once a week, every Thursday, a group of mothers put forth their demands, challenging the dictatorship, exposing themselves to possible arrest and, as happened with two of the founders, risking their own disappearance.

Over time, the mothers were joined by many other women. From the time the mothers first made their demands, which were never answered, to the reestablishment of democracy at the end of 1983, their protest was a valuable model for exposing the bloody dictatorship and the violations of basic human dignity. The experience, which did not include a single shout or aggressive action, became the silent and permanent voice for denunciation of the military government.

The demands began to change during the democratic period. Besides demanding the return of the tens of thousands of detained and disappeared, the mothers demanded, during their weekly meeting and elsewhere, that those responsible for torture, disappearances and crimes against humanity be brought to judgment.

At the beginning of the current decade, the mothers put forth another new demand. They decided to establish a Popular University that would create graduates dedicated to affirming the importance of human rights as defined by the United Nations. In 2006, the university was officially recognized by the government and is now graduating specialists in diverse disciplines in programs that are closely tied to the principles that the mothers have defended. At the same time, the national government gave the mothers permission to establish an AM radio station. And this year, the association, which has continued to struggle actively for prosecution of all those responsible for the dictatorship's genocide, added a new dimension to its important work: collaborating with community organizations to transform the urban habitat.

In a public competition, the association won the right to build a housing complex for residents of slums and marginal housing in Buenos Aires. Working in solidarity with the residents of the neighborhood, they were trained in construction and, together with specialists from the university, are building 432 housing units at a much lower cost than traditional contractors, and with the full participation of the future residents, who are organized into a cooperative. By the end of 2007, the association had contracted for a total of 1,500 single-family housing units and developed plans for schools, day care centers and recreation centers. Agreements with national and local governments incorporate training in construction skills, which allows future residents to discuss and decide on the design and to be paid for their labor.

The program is participatory and non-profit—it does not exploit labor as self-help programs usually

Asociación Madres de Plaza de Mayo: *De la Protest Política a la Acción Social en el Habitat Popular*

por **ALEJANDRO ROFMAN**

Es bien conocida la trayectoria de la Asociación Madres de Plaza de Mayo en la Argentina. Actualicemos, brevemente, su historia. A mediados del año 1977--hace una década--en plena Dictadura Militar en la Argentina, un grupo de madres de jóvenes desaparecidos por los represores de dicha Dictadura, comenzaron a reclamar de viva voz que se conozca donde estaban y se los reintegre a la sociedad. Eran militantes políticos y sociales capturados por miembros de las Fuerzas Armadas en la larga noche de la sangrienta represión de la Dictadura, de quienes no se conocía si estaban vivos y en dónde se los mantenía apresados. El escenario del reclamo era la Plaza de Mayo, enfrente del Palacio presidencial, en la ciudad de Buenos Aires. Una vez a la semana, todos los jueves, un grupo de madres comenzó ese reclamo, desafiando el poder dictatorial y exponiéndose a ser detenidas y también desaparecidas, como ocurrió con dos de sus fundadoras.

La ronda semanal de las Madres se fue nutriendo de muchas más mujeres, en el tiempo, y en los seis años que mediaron entre el inicio del reclamo, nunca satisfecho, y el restablecimiento de la Democracia, a fines de 1983, constituyó el ejemplo de una experiencia tenaz y muy valiosa para demostrar el perfil de una Dictadura sanguinaria y violadora de los más elementales principios de la dignidad humana. Esa experiencia, que no contenía ningún grito ni expresión agresiva se convirtió en la voz silenciosa pero permanente de la denuncia del régimen militar.

En democracia, el reclamo se transformó. Además de exigir la restitución con vida de decenas de miles de detenidos-desaparecidos se exigió, por medio de la reunión semanal y otras expresiones, el juicio y castigo a los culpables de la tortura, las desapariciones y los crímenes de lesa humanidad.

Hacia principios de esta década, una nueva forma de insistir por los mismos ideales de justicia para todos que defendieron sus hijos, surgió en el seno de las Madres. Decidieron, primero, instalar una Universidad Popular, para formar graduados imbuídos de la necesidad de afirmar, en toda circunstancia, la vigencia plena de los Derechos Humanos consagrados por las Naciones Unidas. Esta Universidad, en el año 2006, fue reconocida oficialmente por el gobierno nacional y hoy gradúa especialistas en muy diversas disciplinas, con programas estrechamente vinculados a los principios que siempre defendieron y defienden las Madres. Ese mismo año, el Estado nacional les concedió permiso para instalar una emisora radial, que emite en forma abierta en AM. Y este año, la Asociación, que siguió peleando activamente por el juzgamiento de todos los responsables del genocidio de la Dictadura, agregó una nueva dimensión a su valiosa tarea: la de cooperar con sectores populares en la transformación de su habitat urbano. Obtuvieron, así, en un concurso público, el derecho a construir un conjunto de viviendas para habitantes de tugurios y barrios de residencias precarias, en una zona degradada de la ciudad de Buenos Aires. Se organizaron en forma solidaria con los mismos habitantes del barrio, los entrenaron en la actividad de la construcción y, con ellos, y el asesoramiento de especialistas de la Universidad, están construyendo 432 viviendas, a mucho menor costo que el requerido por las empresas tradicionales y con plena participación de sus futuros moradores, agrupados en una cooperativa de trabajo. Ahora, a fines del año 2007, ya han obtenido otros contratos ⇨

por un total de 1.500 casas unifamiliares, con proyectos que incluyen escuelas, guarderías infantiles y centros de recreación y deporte. Los acuerdos con el gobierno nacional y el de la ciudad de Buenos Aries incorporan la capacitación de los vecinos de los barrios precarios para la construcción de las viviendas, lo que les permite que sus futuros moradores discutan y decidan sobre el perfil del habitat y reciban una remuneración acorde con su esfuerzo laboral.

El programa altamente participativo, sin fines de lucro--que no explota fuerza de trabajo como la autoconstrucción asistida tradicional--tiene excelentes perspectivas para los años por venir. El proyecto global más importante supone construir mediante esta metodología cooperativa y solidaria no menos de 5.000 viviendas con su correspondiente equipamiento en toda la zona más relegada socialmente de la ciudad de Buenos Aires.

Este esfuerzo asociativo se constituye en el jalón más reciente de un proceso de transformación de la Asociación Madres de Plaza de Mayo--que dirige Hebe de Bonafini--de una institución de perfil político de reclamo por la vida a una organización social que construye otra sociedad urbana. Es, entonces, una demostración de la capacidad de realización de los sectores populares cuando se plantean transitar un camino diferente al de la acumulación capitalista en el objetivo de proveerse de un bien público indispensable: el habitat popular.

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Rofman, cont. from p. 24

do, and it has excellent prospects for the future. The most significant long-term program calls for building at least 5,000 housing units using this cooperative model in the most depressed area of Buenos Aires.

This cooperative effort is the most recent advance in the process of transformation of the Association of the Mothers of Plaza de Mayo, led by Hebe de Bonafini, from a political organization to save lives to a social organization that builds a new society. Thus it demonstrates what people can achieve when they decide to take a road distinct from capitalist accumulation in order to provide an essential public good—habitat for people.

Alejandro Rofman is professor emeritus at the University of Buenos Aires, Argentina.

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Progressive Planning Profile: *Jacqueline Leavitt*

Note: With this profile of Jacqueline Leavitt, Progressive Planning Magazine *starts what will be an ongoing series examining the work of progressive planners.*

Jacqueline Leavitt, a long-time Planners Network member, is professor of urban planning at the University of California, Los Angeles (UCLA). Since 1999, she has also been director of the UCLA Community Scholars Program, co-sponsored by her department and the UCLA Center for Labor Research and Education. She is a planner who has integrated her commitment to social justice and gender issues into her teaching, research and work with community-based organizations. She writes, teaches and lectures nationally and internationally on housing, gender, labor and community development.

Leavitt received her political science degree from Pennsylvania State University (1961) and both her master's degree (1965) and Ph.D. (1980) in urban planning from Columbia University. Even though she was interested in architecture, she chose to study planning because of its greater focus on people and its interdisciplinary nature. Within the context of the 1960s anti-war, civil rights and women's movement, Leavitt worked with residents of West Harlem on housing issues while on staff at the Architects Renewal Committee in Harlem (ARCH). Immediately after completing her master's degree, the National Committee for Full Employment (NCFE), including past PN members Robert Heifetz and Walter Thabit, offered her an opportunity to be a resident planner with the Newark Community Union Project (NCUP) in Newark, New Jersey. NCUP was a part of the Economic Research and Action Project (ERAP), which sought to build a base movement of the poor. Leavitt juggled this with a full-time job with Candeub Fleissig & Associates, a private firm, until she joined Walter Thabit to work on updating the Cooper Square Advocacy Plan and advancing the Model Cities initiative in East New York. While working with Walter, she became a co-organizer of The Urban Underground, a group of progressive planners who testified at public hearings and questioned planning priorities of the city, among other activities, and was part of the Movement for a Democratic Society (MDS).

In the early 1970s, having moved to Los Angeles, Leavitt worked at UCLA with Don Hagman from the School of Law on land use and annexation issues and on a land and water resource study that Dean Harvey Perloff of the School of Architecture and Urban Planning (GSAUP) secured money for. It was then that she met Peter Marcuse. On her return to New York in the mid-1970s while working for the Housing and Development Administration (now HPD) of NYC, first full-time and then as a consultant to the Community Management Program, she joined the Ph.D. program at Columbia University, then chaired by Marcuse. Leavitt started teaching at Columbia University while in graduate school and also taught at the summer Progressive School at Cornell University. Leavitt moved to UCLA in 1986.

That same year, Leavitt received the APA Diana Donald Award for her "substantial contributions to the planning profession through her teachings and writings and that these actions helped further the advancement of women in the planning field." Leavitt had been a pioneer in research about gender and community development and one of the founders of the APA Planning and Women Division in 1978. Her dissertation, *Planning and Women, Women in Planning* (1980), funded by a HUD grant, provided a critique of "the relationship between the planning profession's impact on women planners and women planners' impact on the profession and its products." ⇨

Lydia Avila-Hernandez

She has continued to write extensively, not only about gender issues in planning practice and education, but also about the key roles low-income women's groups play in the development of their communities. *From Abandonment to Hope: Community-Households in Harlem* (1990), the book Leavitt co-authored with Susan Saegert, describes the leadership roles of women tenants and activists in empowering and improving their communities within the context of landlord abandonment and subsequent city programs. In a review article for *Signs* in 2003, "Where's the Gender in Community Development?," Leavitt criticized the continuing invisibility of women in community development literature.

In addition to her work on gender, Leavitt was also recognized for her work that looks at the intersection of housing policy and design. She received a first place design award with Troy West

in 1984 for the "New American House" national competition, sponsored by the Minneapolis College of Art and Design and the National Endowment for the Arts, and a second place design award in 1992 with Judith Sheine and Carol Goldstein for "The New Urban Housing" national competition sponsored by the Community Design Center of Pittsburgh. In her later work, Leavitt provided a critique of the HOPE VI housing policy for its site planning and architecture as it impacted residents at Pico Aliso and other public housing projects in Los Angeles.

In the mid-1990s, Leavitt started doing more comparative and international work. In 1995, after publication of her second book, *The Hidden History of Housing Cooperatives*, with Allan Heskin, she received a Fulbright fellowship to study the roll back of the state in housing in New Zealand. And since 1999, Leavitt has been

working closely with the Huairou Commission, an international network of grassroots women's organizations. She co-documented and analyzed the evolving structure of the commission and its peer learning and partnership-building strategies around the Grassroots Women's International Academy. At the World Urban Forum in Vancouver in 2006, Leavitt presented a report that analyzes community-based land tenure systems and housing development by women's groups in Africa.

Through the Community Scholars Program at UCLA, Leavitt expanded her interdisciplinary research to cover labor issues and coalition-building in community development. As described in her article with Kara Heffernan on the origins and history of the Community Scholars Program published in *From the Studio to The Streets* (2005), each year the program recruited a number of

community and labor activists to work with an interdisciplinary group of students on projects related to coalition-building and organizing, hence extending university resources into the community and enabling students to link with community- and labor-based practitioners. The project on the homecare workers campaign in 2000-2001 received the 2002 APA Local and State Chapter Award. After that project, Leavitt continued to work and write on the homecare workers and their housing conditions and with Teresa Lingafelter, published a piece in the 2005 collection *Jobs and Economic Development in Minority Communities: Realities, Challenges and Innovation* (Paul Ong and Anastasia Loukaitou-Sideris, eds.) that explored community benefits agreements in Los

Angeles and how labor unions could promote housing as a campaign issue. In 2007, Leavitt co-taught a class with Gilda Haas on the topic "Right to the City" and attended the founding meeting of the Right to the City Alliance. As Leavitt explains,

I entered urban planning believing in its ability to support social movements through both rigorous research and ethical practice. In a country where rights are being usurped, and where the government has an ability to demolish public housing as in New Orleans when the need for housing is so great, I still hold to beliefs for social and economic justice and have tried to develop ways to bring those themes into

my classrooms, not as an afterthought but an integral and basic goal.

Through the Community Scholars Program, Leavitt has been able to develop and maintain strong relationships with a network of community and labor groups. She is co-author of the first study on the taxi industry from the perspective of taxi workers in the City of Los Angeles. She works with Union de Vecinos, an organization that began with residents at Pico Aliso housing protesting demolition of public housing and has expanded into the surrounding Boyle Heights community. She has worked with the Los Angeles Alliance for a New Economy (LAANE) and the Community Institute for Policy, Heuristics, Education and Research (CIPHER). Her most recent writing on housing in Los Angeles is in the *State of the City 2007*, published by the Pat Brown Institute of Public Affairs.

Over the years, Leavitt has also been sketching and doing water colors, documenting the people and the places she has encountered. She has taken seriously urban planning's interdisciplinary roots and has combined this with activism in a career that reflects how it is possible to integrate politics and scholarly work in the academy.

Leavitt's dissertation, *Planning and Women, Women in Planning*, is available online at http://digitalcommons.libraries.columbia.edu/dissertations/AAI8104944/.

FAR LEFT: From Abandonment to Hope: Community-Households in Harlem (1990), *with Susan Saegert.*
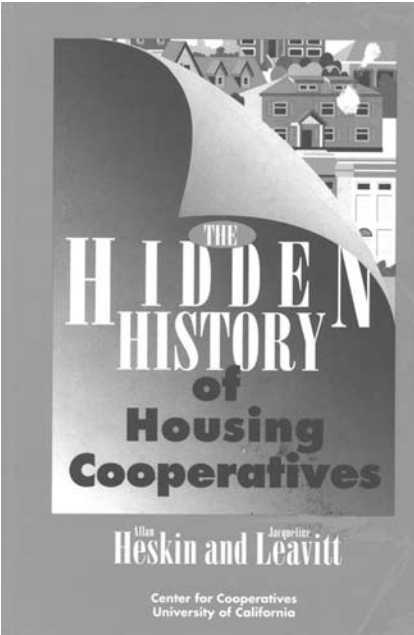
NEAR LEFT: The Hidden History of Housing Cooperatives (1995) *with Allan Heskin.*

In her own words: Jacqueline Leavitt

"Women were a minority in my master's class at Columbia in the mid-1960s. By the time I worked on my dissertation, the numbers had gone up, an interest group had formed within the American Planning Association and later, a faculty women's interest group. What has changed the least is the ways in which gender is integrated into planning substance and the wage discrimination that women educators and practitioners still face.

Given the growing class apartheid, I hope that more people in planning education and practice will turn their attention to the multiple roles of women in their households and in the growing low wage end of the service sector. This can be done in any number of ways, including inviting women to speak in classes and paying them honorariums; identifying research agendas that include women's multiple roles, such as home health care workers, workers and residents in the community; and co-producing documentaries of women's roles in community organizations and at all levels of government."

Venezuela's Communal Councils and the Role of Planners

by CLARA IRAZÁBAL AND JOHN FOLEY

The December 2007 referendum proposing constitutional reforms in Venezuela, discussed in the Fall 2007 issue of *Progressive Planning Magazine*, was defeated by less than 2 percent of the vote. Some of these reforms would have strengthened grassroots power and the role of neighborhood-based communal councils. The effect of this defeat will be to heighten the role of these councils as strategic sites of struggle in the ongoing saga for a participatory socialist democracy.

The government led by Hugo Chávez initiated a political process that is attempting to transform the inherited bureaucratic governance structure into a participatory socialist democracy. In making this transition, grassroots power is being exercised by local communal councils with support from the national government. This is considered a necessary factor in consolidating a participatory socialist democracy in Venezuela. Planners can be allies in the grassroots processes of empowerment and self-determination of local communities and active agents in the "trickling-up" of participation to upper levels of government. The Chávez regime is attempting to install a revolutionary government in which central state policies

aim to improve the conditions of the poor, while recognizing the importance of working upwards from and with local communities. This ongoing transition is enmeshed in many complexities and contradictions. Community organizing was institutionalized by means of key legal instruments, including the 1999 Constitution of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela—written by a Constituent Assembly and voted on by Venezuelan citizens. After the failed referendum last year, however, the fate of local organizing remains unclear.

Resistance of Local Authorities

Although most municipal officials take part in the discourse of participatory democracy, they are often unwilling to relinquish their power over resources. Due to the frustration caused by the slow pace of democratization at the municipal level, and in some cases the delays between financing municipal public works and their execution, President Chávez declared that communal councils should be more independent of the municipal authorities and receive direct financing from the central government. This process was formalized in the Communal Councils Law approved by the National

Assembly in June 2006. The law creates virtually a parallel system of local organizations directly linked to the central government and not, as had been the tradition, to the municipal authorities. The intention is to foment direct peoples' power over public policy making and implementation and to generate local projects that satisfy community needs and aspirations.

Communal councils contain between 200 and 400 families in urban areas, and over twenty families in rural areas. All persons over 15 years of age may participate and be elected representatives. Once legally formed, these councils may obtain up to 30 million Bolívares (almost $14,000) to finance small production or service projects in the community. Less than a year after the law was passed, Josh Lerner reported in *Z Magazine* in March 2007 that there were over 16,000 councils throughout the country, and 12,000 of them had received funding for community projects—including almost 300 communal banks for micro-loans as well as for thousands of other projects, such as street paving, sports fields, medical centers and sewage and water systems.

The council initiatives are a reflection of the "participatory, democratic and

strategic planning with open consultation" called for in Article 299 of the new Venezuelan Constitution. Thus, planning in the current Venezuelan context is conceived of as thoroughly enmeshed with the processes of grassroots political organizing and mobilization. Popular participation is not considered something "outside" of governance, but an integral part of it. This is not easy to implement, however, and at certain points may even be counterproductive, as many would argue that grassroots organizations ought to be outside the purview of the state so as to provide a mechanism of checks and balances.

Challenges for Community Organizing

In the effort to solve problems, the government-led push to create communal councils could stymie emergent social movement organizations that advance novel approaches to organizing and creative forms of problem-solving at the local level. There is also the issue of compensation for participation, because there are stark inequities between the salaries of government officials and unpaid community participants. Significant time commitments are expected of participants in councils, and although this is an area that has begun to be explored with some employers, they have yet to give time off for community council work (the failed constitutional reforms included a reduction of the workday from eight to six hours).

More critically, community participants engaged in hands-on construction of public works in their communities (particularly in poor communities) are not paid by the government, while contractors get paid for equivalent work.

The communal councils were formed to permit direct financing from the national government,

the government-led push to create communal councils could stymie emergent social movement organizations that advance novel approaches to organizing and creative forms of problem-solving at the local level.

bypassing the municipal government level, however, many local institutions have been involved in this process and each has a different approach to local grassroots power. At times, this creates confusion in the councils as they decide on the spatial boundaries of the district, set priorities and develop procedures for electing their representatives. While guidance from municipal and metropolitan governments can help reduce confusion, it can also lead to undue influence over the communal councils.

Some local activists have expressed disagreement with the way current political parties, supporters of the government, impose their representatives on local organizations, and activists are taken out of their communities and "neutralized" when employed by state institutions. Frictions occur

between the structures created by representative democracy and its predominantly individualistic ethic (which has been dominant for the last forty years of the previous regimes in Venezuela) and the emerging, more direct democracy, with its attempt to promote solidarity and the consolidation of community power. Another problem is that there are frequent changes in

the legislation and differing interpretations of these changes by multiple stakeholders. There is a tension between those who consider the law to be leading the participatory process and those who assume it ought to respond to the initiatives of organized groups, creating a legal framework that institutionalizes their practices. A similar controversy pits those government representatives who conceive of the communal councils as the base of a political pyramid, with the district, municipal, state and national levels of government on top, against others who would like to see the councils totally replace city and state governments.

Since project proposals by communal councils go directly to the Presidential Commission of Popular Power, critics of the government see the bypassing of the intermediate levels   ⇨

of government as a dangerous reinforcement of government centralization, particularly because it enhances the role of Chávez. Critics also complain that the councils suppress dissent and are pro-Chávez—and that the ones that are not will have a difficult time getting funding. Lastly, if legislation is complied with and the vote of the majority in councils is respected, some decisions and policies that are not in the public interest (e.g., traditional NIMBY [Not In My Backyard] decisions such as preventing the construction of working-class housing in affluent neighborhoods) may be enacted, reproducing the persistent dilemma between democracy and equity prevalent in urban planning processes.

Despite these limitations, the communal council project has generated a great deal of enthusiasm and participation in the nation at large. It is perceived as opening an alternative channel of communication and assistance that is less dependent on municipal authorities or political parties, which are often viewed in a negative light at the grassroots level. The fact that communal councils open a small direct conduit to President Chávez, who maintains contact with grassroots groups throughout the country, is also appreciated by many communities. Notwithstanding the risks associated with inflating the figure of the president-leader too highly in this process of political transition, many supporters of the government feel that their direct access to and support from Chávez can help them bypass bureaucratic delays and sabotage, and in turn empower communities.

The Role of Progressive Planners

Venezuela still has a planning system where decisions are mostly hierarchical and top-down. What is more, national and regional planning tends to be dominated by rational-technical approaches, whereas local participatory planning tends to be more influenced by pragmatic and problem-oriented approaches. In this context, there is a need to unravel what happens when the two systems meet, and devise ways to achieve greater participation at the national and regional levels while protecting local processes from control by upper levels of government. Local groups need to be wary of the usurpation of grassroots power by municipal authorities and national political parties, especially in a situation where it is still not clear how the new planning

structure should function. These are problems encountered in managing a relatively peaceful transition from representative to participatory democracy and from a capitalist to a socialist regime that, to a large extent, uses the inherited bureaucratic structure from the previous system.

What is the role for planners in this transition? Many planning professionals in Venezuela do not support the political transition to an inclusive socialist democracy as conceived by President Chávez. Many planners from the socio-economic elite, and those who identify with its values, do not support the current regime and its calls for a new approach to planning policy that disrupts models of professional expertise and demands that planners learn from the people. Although some planners in Venezuela have indeed embraced the spirit of this new approach,

often they fail to bridge the gap between theory and practice. Many practitioners still cling, consciously or unconsciously, to the notion of the exclusive value of expertise, and hence do not validate the knowledge of residents, their right to self-determination or even the larger socialist political project at play in the current Venezuelan process. Most professional planners in Venezuela were formed within the rationalist paradigm, even if they identify with communicative planning approaches. In these circumstances, there is a great need for progressive planners to form and expand alliances with locally organized peoples' power. However, planners are often afraid of taking risks, experimenting and understanding and trusting in popular reasoning.

Given the stakes, progressive planners need to consider

supporting community decisions even in the face of uncertainty. Opportunities can quickly disappear, and not acting can reverse progress in the transition to a more equitable and participatory democracy. In transitional and difficult processes, like those occurring in Venezuela, which face opposition at national and international levels, planners' conservatism or dogmatism can work against the consolidation of peoples' power and the advancement of a socialist participatory democracy.

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Gabriel Fumero

LEFT: *W omen voting during a meeting. Communal Council Nueva Catia in western Caracas, June 2007.*

Gabriel Fumero

LEFT: *Getting ready for a meeting in a community center. Communal Council Nueva Catia in western Caracas, June 2007.*

Can We Reinvent Planning?

by **CLIFF HAGUE**

Debates and initiatives aiming to advance progressive planning ideas and practices tend to be surprisingly parochial. Unless progressive planners grasp the global dimension of the crisis in planning—and act together to address it—they are likely to compound the broader patterns of inequality that exist at all spatial scales. This article reviews the case for "reinventing planning" that was advocated and widely supported at the third session of the UN-Habitat World Urban Forum in 2006. It addresses critiques of this stance and calls for international support from progressive planners for New Urban Planning and a new planning professionalism.

The nadir for planning internationally was in 2005 when the Zimbabwe government used planning legislation, the Regional Town and Country Planning Act of 1996, to justify "Operation Murambatsvina/Restore Order" (OM/RO). The result of this order—and in the name of cleaning up "filth"—was the forced eviction of some 700,000 poor people. An investigation into the evictions was undertaken by the executive director of UN-Habitat. Her report, widely quoted, included the following observation: "There is the Regional Town and Country Planning Act, and attendant municipal by-laws emanating from the colonial era, meant to keep Africans out of the cities by setting very high housing and development standards beyond the reach of the majority of the people." In executing OM/RO, planners at minimum failed to make clear that proper legal procedures under the act were not followed in important respects. Some saw the role of planners as far less benign. In an article in *International Planning Studies* in 2007, Amin Kamete damned the role of the planning profession in OM/RO, calling planners "cold-hearted, negligent and spineless."

The combination of a repressive government and colonial planning legacy is not necessarily unique to Zimbabwe. The painfully slow and technocratic process of drawing up a master plan that specifies in detail the land use for some 20-year future horizon is all too familiar in the developing world. These dinosaur plans were cast around physical, functional and architectural preconceptions of how settlements needed to be designed. Typically the plans were outdated before they were even completed and ignored by everyone but the planners, who struggled with the unenviable task of trying to implement them. To the degree that planning was sidelined in the 1980s, it was not just a result of the neo-liberal ascendancy; planning was indeed broken in many places.

Little of this was of concern to planners, planning academics, students and planning activists in rich countries like the U.S. In regard to the risks of paternalistic or neo-colonial stances to the problems of other countries, among planning groups in the U.S., at worst there was ignorance, at best sensitivity. In a globalized world, planners remained resolutely focused on their own backyard; civil society organizations contested issues like evictions or environmental destruction in the developing world; charities sought to rebuild communities after natural or human-induced disasters; and the UN developed its program for human settlements. Still, these were rarely matters that stirred actions of solidarity, even from progressive planners. This has to change. ⇨

New Urban Planning?

ABOVE: *Tsukuba, Japan*

Ann Forsyth

Why We Need Planning

In being rightly critical of planning institutions and the ways in which much planning is practiced, there is the risk that progressive planners and planning educators throw out the baby with the bath water. In effect we are already witnessing an experiment in "non-planning" across much of the developing world. Every day there are an additional 190,000 people

There can be no sustainable development without sustainable urbanization; and there can be no sustainable urbanization without effective, pro-poor planning.

living in the world's urban areas. The rate of new slum formation is outstripping the rate of slum upgrading. Basic water and sanitation services are lacking. The poorest people settle in the areas must vulnerable to environmental hazards and become the main victims of crime and insecurity. Traffic crawls in perma-logjams; there are no cycleways, often no sidewalks. As a result of non-planning we have grotesque disparities in illness and mortality between slums and non-slum areas, and between cities and rural areas.

As the world tips from being a majority rural planet to a majority urban planet, it is the urbanization of poverty that defines the new urban condition—even in the rich countries. There are a billion slum dwellers today, which, if today's trends continue, will double by 2030, when one person in three will live in a slum. Rampant metropolitanization—with all its technical and equity challenges—is pervasive, and though it will only become more so, it is still largely ignored. Furthermore, the spread of the slum city extends the ecological footprint. Unfortunately, planners, perhaps the only professionals who might notice metro-scale development and have something to say about how to manage it, are otherwise occupied.

Yes, civil society organizations have a vital part to play the nature of development. Some, like Shack Dwellers International, have done heroic work in helping the poorest of the poor to improve their housing conditions. Yes, there are limits to what plans and planners can do—there are huge issues about finance and implementation, as already noted. But do these caveats justify the studied disengagement of planners and their educators and professional bodies from a humanitarian tragedy that is already with us, and which threatens the future of the planet as surely as does climate change? Planners need to say it loud and say it often: "There can be no sustainable development without sustainable urbanization; and there can be no sustainable urbanization without effective, pro-poor planning."

Reinventing Planning: What Pro-Poor Planning Might Look Like

A group of planners, including persons in prominent positions in major planning institutes such as the APA and the Royal Town Planning Institute, worked closely together and in liaison with UN-Habitat in the run-up to the 2006 World Urban Forum. Several products resulted. A book, *Making Planning Work: A Guide to Approaches and Skills,* was published. Using case studies, the book showed that progressive practices are happening, though not always through the work of professional planners. The Vancouver Declaration, signed by approximately twenty planning institutes from very different countries, put issues of rapid urbanization and inclusive planning at the center of its agenda. A much fuller paper, *Reinventing Planning*, took these ideas and made them more concrete, spelling out a list of ten key principles which should drive and underpin New Urban Planning. They are, in edited form:

1. *Sustainability*

   This is not an exclusive preserve of planning. The special contribution that New Urban Planning makes, however, is its practical focus on reconciling and integrating social, economic and environmental considerations in human settlements development.

2. *Integrated Planning and Budgeting*

   New Urban Planning is integrated planning, not just economic planning or physical planning or environmental planning. Set in a favorable institutional framework, integrated planning and action can deliver efficiency and effectiveness by adding value through policies that support, rather than undercut, each other. In order to ensure integration, plans need mechanisms that ensure effective linkages to private and public budgetary processes. Alone, neither plans nor unregulated market processes can deliver more sustainable settlements.

3. *Planning with Partners*

   New Urban Planning is a means of negotiating where and how development happens. It is about planning with all sectors of the community that have a stake in the place—not only governments, but also private sector organizations, voluntary agencies and civil society. New Urban Planning fosters voluntary collaboration amongst all these actors. Planning that responds to and works with—not manages or directs—the initiatives of non-governmental actors will produce better outcomes. This is a departure from the notion that planning is the impartial arbiter of the public interest.

4. *Transparent and Accountable Planning*

   New Urban Planning is less an instrument of government and more a process of good governance aimed at delivering quality and inclusiveness in decision-making and creating a sense of public ownership of the outcomes. New Urban Planning is always seeking new and better ways of making city development more participatory. Information and consultation are not enough. Planning must be made accountable to the public, with all activities open to public scrutiny and oversight through mechanisms such as public hearings and integrity pacts.

5. *Subsidiarity*

   The subsidiarity principle should be paramount in deciding where roles and responsibilities are lodged in New Urban Planning. National governments have important roles in setting national urban development policies and fostering national (and international) infrastructure networks that will guide development patterns. There needs to be decentralization, however, with local governments playing a leading role and community-based organizations empowered to address neighborhood-level matters. Integration of policy across scales creates efficiency and effectiveness.

6. *Market Responsiveness*

   New Urban Planning understands market demand, particularly in land and property markets, and is aware of the dynamics and potential of the informal sectors. It is responsive, but not reactive, and acknowledges that not all development is good development. Plans backed by public investment can create confidence in areas where assets are threatened by weak demand and disinvestment.

7. *Access to Land*

   A supply of land in safe and accessible locations to meet the needs of all sectors of society is fundamental to achieving efficient and equitable settlements. Traditional town planning too often has underestimated needs, particularly those of the poor. Consequently the least advantaged sectors of urban society lack security and often live in hazardous ⇨

locations. Equitable systems of land ownership and land management need to underpin New Urban Planning. Plans must recognize the reality of existing slums and informal settlements and the rights of their residents, fostering strategies that facilitate upgrading and/or negotiated relocation.

8. *Appropriate Tools*

Control of development should be strategic, affordable and effective, sensitive to the needs of the poor while conserving essential ecological resources—this as opposed to micro-managing land use change and small-scale development. Thoroughgoing land use control is probably only affordable in wealthy economies with highly developed legal systems and a plentiful supply of trained professionals, or in situations of especially pressing need, such as areas at high risk for natural disasters. Indeed, land use control is only one of the tools, albeit an important one, available to implement integrated, strategic planning. Land use controls should never be used as a pretext for forced evictions of the urban poor in long-established communities.

9. *Pro-Poor and Inclusive*

New Urban Planning is inclusive and pro-poor. It recognizes diversity and promotes equality. Plans can and should be driven by the objectives and priorities expressed by all groups in the city. Planning is about finding ways to reconcile the priorities of diverse groups, now and in the future. Particular attention needs to be given to those whose voice has often not been heard in conventional public policymaking, e.g., the elderly, children, those with disabilities, women, ethnic minorities, the homeless, those with low incomes. All have an equal right to the city and to be consulted, especially

about developments that will affect them. New Urban Planning is sensitive to the differential impacts of plans on these different groups.

10. *Cultural Variation*

Cultures of governance and the resources that can be invested in governance vary among different countries. Interpretation of the principles of New Urban Planning will inevitably be influenced by such differences. New Urban Planning allows for a variety of outcomes according to cultural priorities and preferences. This contrasts with the uniformity imposed by the old master planning model. Outdated legal regimes and traditional bureaucratic cultures, as well as shortages of skilled personnel and responsive institutions, are barriers to realizing the benefits of New Urban Planning.

A Critical Conclusion

Some have argued that there is nothing new in all this: Good planners are already practicing *Good Urban Planning*. Others say that planning should never be rehabilitated, that planners are irremediable elitist technocrats, that all professional structures are conservative. Radical progressive reconstruction of what planning is and does is a deeply problematic project—but also an ethical and practical necessity. A start has been made; "Participatory urban planning, management and governance" is now one of six "mutually reinforcing focus areas" in the new 5-year strategy adopted by UN-Habitat in 2007. Bringing planning in from the cold was a necessary first step. It's now about heating it up!

Cliff Hague is professor in the School of the Built Environment at Heriot-Watt University, Edinburgh. More information on the book Making Planning Work: A Guide to Approaches and Skills *is available at: http://www.communityplanning.net/makingplanningwork/index.htm*

What About an Anti-Imperialist, Anti-Corporate Planning?

by **MARIE KENNEDY**

In answer to Cliff Hague's question, "Can we reinvent planning?," I would say yes we can, but while the New Urban Planning principles in the position paper on which Hague bases his article are a starting point, to make real changes planners will need to do much more. Perhaps the most important aspect of this position paper, which claims to outline "key principles of a new paradigm for managing human settlements [called] New Urban Planning," is that representatives of a number of mainstream northern planning organizations signed it. In doing so, they have caught up in part to where advocacy planning was in the 1960s and 1970s—endorsing public participation and taking a stance in favor of the needs of the poor. Many grassroots organizations and planners in both the North and the South, however, have long since moved beyond this limited vision.

Missing from the foundation principles of New Urban Planning is the economic and political context in which planning and development take place. While the Washington Consensus, which saw the unfettered market as the driver of development and rejected economic strategies involving heavy participation by government, appears to be crumbling, what Nobel Laureate economist Joseph Stiglitz disparagingly calls the Washington Consensus Plus appears to be alive and well. The Washington Consensus Plus takes the position that market reforms, while crucial, are not enough—market reform must also be accompanied by "good governance" and policies to "develop human capital." Desperate to win credibility among civil society groups, U.S.-dominated multinational organizations such as the World Bank have co-opted the term "participatory planning." But, like the principles of New Urban Planning, the World Bank fails

to specify who is to participate and with what decision-making power.

It is stated in the "planning with partners" New Urban Planning principle that "planning with all sectors of the community with a stake in the place…is a departure from the notion that planning is the impartial arbiter of public interest." The kind of participation outlined in this principle, however, embodies the liberal notion that if we planners just hear from all the stakeholders we can figure out what's best for everyone. As I've recently written in the pages of this magazine, by ignoring power disparities, participation becomes a smokescreen behind which real decisions are made by those who always made the decisions. In order to make the principle of "pro-poor" planning mean something, the planner has to take a class position and figure out ways to actually empower "the poor" to make decisions directly on the basis of an understanding of the trade-offs involved in choosing one path or another.

Frequently effective "pro-poor" planning means working in alliance with social movements, but the principles are silent on some of the most important issues affecting urban planning being taken up by social movements in developing countries, e.g., privatization. Aid from the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund, as well as from the newer U.S. neoconservative neoliberalism-inspired debt relief and grant aid, is conditional on the privatization of state-owned industries, natural resources and services and utilities. In Latin America, as Naomi Klein recently noted in *The Nation* (11/26/07), "since the Argentine collapse in 2001, opposition to privatization has become the defining issue of the continent, able to make governments and ⇨

break them." As Latin American countries like Argentina, Bolivia, Brazil, Nicaragua, Venezuela and Uruguay free themselves from Washington's financial institutions—creating their own institutions and agreements such as the soon-to-be-launched Bank of the South and the fair trade agreement Bolivarian Alternative for the Americas (ALBA)—they are reversing privatization and focusing on development that promotes equality. Neoliberal forces, led by the U.S., are fighting tooth and nail, overtly and clandestinely, against these anti-imperialist movements. Progressive planners should be explicitly in the anti-imperialist camp.

Economist Jeffrey Sachs celebrates the New Urban Planning in the November 2007 issue of *Development Outreach* (a publication of the World Bank Institute) as well as the fact that the world is now more than 50 percent urban, claiming that "urban areas have outperformed rural areas during the last century on almost every dimension of economic development." He particularly highlights China's economic development as "spectacularly successful." In the longer position paper from which Hague draws his article, New Urban Planning practices are credited with facilitating Asian growth. Neither Sachs nor the position paper, however, acknowledge the very considerable downside of the type of growth experienced in China (and other Asian countries such as South Korea), where inequality has grown at an even greater rate than growth. In a talk at Boston College in December, alternative development advocate Walden Bello noted that China is now one of the most unequal countries in the world, and when I visited South Korea last summer, all that progressive academics and labor activists wanted to talk about was how to stem the increasing gulf between the haves and have-nots. Progressive planners should question the knee-jerk maxim that all growth is good. We need to ask what kind of growth and who benefits.

Movements such as the Brazilian Landless Workers Movement (*MST, Movimento dos Trabalhadores Rurais Sem Terra*) and *La Via Campesina*, a coalition with

partners in more than sixty countries all over the world, offer another vision of development. They do not see increased urbanization as "one of the most promising aspects of global economic development" as does Sachs. Instead, they are building vibrant rural communities based on food sovereignty and local production rather than an extractive or export economy. In fact, many of those dwelling in urban slums are displaced rural workers who would

As we seek solutions to pressing urban problems, we need to be searching out and supporting experiments ... working to unleash the creative energies of the people who are most directly experiencing the problems to be solved.

happily leave the city if there was effective land reform. The roughly 2 million Brazilians of the MST have done just that. They are building communities with schools that they control, with health care that exceeds in quality that accessible to the poor in many cities, with sustainable agricultural technologies, with radio stations, entertainment centers and more. They are not concerned with growth for growth's sake; rather they are concerned with creating sustainable development that meets the physical, economic and social needs of people based on the local environment and culture. Maybe we shouldn't focus only on urban solutions to urban problems. Rather, as we seek solutions to pressing urban problems, we need to be searching out and supporting experiments such as those in Brazil and working to unleash the creative energies of the people who are most directly experiencing the problems to be solved.

Marie Kennedy is professor emerita of community planning at the University of Massachusetts Boston. She recently returned from facilitating a participatory planning project in a rural community in Tlaxcala, Mexico. She is the co-chair of the steering committee of Planners Network and on the editorial committee of Progressive Planning Magazine.

Is the New Urban Planning New?

by **MARÍA TERESA VÁZQUEZ-CASTILLO**

I read with interest the piece by Cliff Hague entitled "Can We Reinvent Planning" since the first sentence in his paper was provocatively arguing that the "[d]ebates and initiatives aiming to advance progressive planning ideas and practices tend to be surprisingly parochial." Motivated by the boldness of the first sentence, I read on to find the new and innovative alternatives to the "parochialism" that he criticized in progressive planning. When I finished reading the article, I was convinced that his piece had nothing to do with its first sentence. Rather, Hague's article combines already well-known progressive, and not so progressive, arguments to conclude that "[p]articipatory urban planning, management and governance" are the option, and to recommend his co-authored book on the topic.

Real solutions need to move beyond generalities. For example, Hague starts by warning that "[u]nless progressive planners grasp the global dimension of the crisis in planning—and act together to address it—they are likely to compound the broader patterns of inequality that exist at all spatial scales." What does he mean by "the crisis in planning?" What is, according to him, the global dimension of that crisis? What are the broader patterns of inequality to which he is referring and that progressive planners will compound? Proper definition and backing would have clarified these arguments.

I began wondering if the ideas and practices of progressive planning—affordable housing, medical insurance, adequate public transportation, living wages, clean environments, access to education, open spaces and healthy food and other rights advocated by progressive planners—were indeed parochial. I found myself disagreeing with Hague and endorsing the currency of such progressive ideas and ideals. What is the parochialism of such human rights? It seems to me that there are plenty of examples around the world that attest to the need for such ideas. Even some strategies to

practically work for those ideals are in the making, as those who support them believe that another world is possible.

I believe that if any crisis should be exposed, it is the crisis of our global economic system—which is dispossessing the less privileged ones of a dignified life, from access to decent and affordable housing, from medical insurance and safety, from mobility and public transportation, from living wages, from clean environments, from education, from open spaces and healthy food and even from their culture and traditions.

Are Progressive Planners to Blame?

Although progressive planners should always be in constant reflection and action, I wonder about the usefulness of pointing the finger at progressive planners, their ideas and their initiatives. In these times when progressiveness is attacked in different settings—from planning offices to international organizations and even in the planning academia—equating progressive ideas and practices with parochialism might well divert attention from the real issues. I believe that attention should be focused on the real "patterns of inequality" that are being reinforced and expanded in every corner of the world by economic corporations and global capital.

Global capitalists under old and new guises are taking property, displacing the poorest and gentrifying the world. These are practices that are causing, broadening and reinforcing patterns of inequality at all levels. The public interest purpose of eminent domain has been blatantly substituted by a private interest purpose. Eminent domain has been successfully misused in different countries to favor the transfer of land to global capital. Also, unfair free trade agreements are making it impossible for certain farmers to remain on their lands. These are only two of the processes displacing either rural ⇨

or urban low-income communities in the affected countries. The practices of non-progressive planners that support the efficient location and functioning of global capital are contributing to the different layers of inequality. Thus, progressive planners should be actively addressing both global capital and their non-progressive peers, but they are hardly to blame.

Globalization is a Local Issue

Hague also accuses planners (progressive?) of "remaining "resolutely focused on their own backyard." He criticizes civil society, charity organizations and the UN for failing to stir "actions of solidarity." Nowadays, however, even one's own local backyard is globalized. The global is at home, and planning practice and actions of solidarity for progressive causes should acknowledge it.

It is true that some planners remain focused on their own backyard with negative effects that reach far beyond. For example, some local planners in the U.S. are contributing to the pushing out of an unregulated global labor force, or what the media portrays as "illegal immigration," by designing and approving anti-immigrant measures that make difficult the survival of certain immigrant groups in U.S. urban, suburban and rural areas. Thus, there is an urgent need for U.S. planners—progressive or not—to learn from progressive planners and communities from around the world. Otherwise planners would continue dealing with the global, in their own backyards, in clearly—now the word is appropriate—parochial ways, reproducing old forms of discrimination under new planning façades, and imposing planning ideas and practices on other countries. Perhaps these kinds of interactions are what Hague's actions of solidarity are?

New Urban Planning Is Not So New

Hague also indicates that his "article reviews the case for 'reinventing planning' that was advocated and widely supported at the third session of the UN-Habitat World Urban Forum in 2006" and "calls for international support from progressive planners for New Urban Planning and a new

planning professionalism." The problem is that "a new planning professionalism" is not defined or explained, so it isn't possible to discern its innovativeness. In addition, it would be helpful to know who the author(s) and supporters are and whether or not the UN's leadership had supported this document. This information would allow the reader to contextualize his work.

Furthermore, it is evident that disparities in developing countries are not new at all, and that they are not exclusive to developing countries. The Katrina tragedy blatantly showed that those disparities also exist in the richest economies of the world. Thus, when Hague's article emphasizes as solutions sustainable development, sustainable urbanization and pro-poor planning, one wonders what the twenty planning institutes signing the Vancouver Declaration (mentioned by Hague) were doing over the last thirty years when the discussions about and advocacy for sustainability started.

New Urban Planning is, however, defined. Hague lists ten principles, which are hardly innovative, having been widely discussed among planners, communities and international organizations. The discussion today should probably focus on identifying the different layers of the local and global conditions that could underpin pro-poor planning and the institutional framework that would make those conditions possible. If an institutional framework is going to be worked out, however, whose agenda and whose guidelines will be followed? Are those twenty planning institutes that signed the Vancouver Declaration, mentioned by Hague, progressive? This is the first time I have seen APA classified as a supporter of a radical progressive agenda in planning. Recall, the APA/AICP code of ethics has only recently loosened its commitment and responsibility to the public good, stating "an allegation that we failed to achieve our aspirational principles cannot be the subject of a misconduct charge or be a cause of disciplinary action"

Although I find commendable that Hague tries to reinvent planning by proposing those ten principles, I also find that his criticism of

progressive planning ideas and practices as parochial does not hold. Living in Los Angeles, the "city of the homeless," as a radio commentator calls it, I am convinced that the ideas and practices of progressive planning are urgent and current as always. Affordable housing, medical insurance, adequate public transportation, living wages, clean environments, access to education, open spaces and healthy food and other rights advocated by progressive planners are not parochial. Social justice is not a parochial idea either.

Private Sector Interests

Finally Hague emphasizes the inclusion of private interests in planning. It is the private sector that has speculated with land and housing, that has privatized services, that has diminished rights to the city. Private economic and political interests are at the forefront of the design and imposition of the planning agenda in Los Angeles, in the United States and across the world. This is another angle of the global dimension that progressive planners need to always keep in mind. The inclusion of the private sector in planning and budgeting might further advance and benefit its own private interests, as is already happening through the securitization of city subsidies for pro-affluent development.

It is the private sector that portrays gentrification as a beautification process, hiding the human, economic and social aspects of this process. Inequality in the city and in the world has been

disguised and concealed, in spite of the increasing number of disenfranchised populations. Meanwhile, the economic and political elites, like global *latifundistas*, have secured new spaces on the lands of the evicted poor. When those displaced communities migrate, trying to preserve their lives, their history and their cultures, they are denied full citizen rights. We need to remember that the private sector has not and does not plan for the public. Of course, planning can be reinvented—by planning democratically. This means taking care of everybody and not only of those who are already rich.

If an "action of solidarity" could be proposed, what about supporting the displaced people of China, victims of private investment for the Olympics? Could the planning institutes that signed the Vancouver Declaration begin by showing solidarity with the poor and displaced by not holding their next meeting in China, by denouncing unjustified and unfair violent displacements and by advocating for dignified relocation and fair compensation for the affected ones? If there is a commitment to pro-poor planning and to rejecting the creation of more slums, this solidarity measure would be a good opportunity for planners participating in those institutes to raise their voices against the old injustices, which somehow are permanent and recurrent, in spite of being considered "parochial."

M. Teresa Vázquez-Castillo is an assistant professor at the California State University of Northridge.

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Reinventar El Planeamiento o Reinventar Las Ciudades?

por **CARLOS GARCÍA PLEYÁN**

"No hay desarollo sustentable sin urbanización sustentable y no hay urbanización sustentable sin el planeamiento a favor del pobre."

Es evidente que un planeamiento moderno, dirigido con prioridad a favor de las clases más pobres, debe ser un planeamiento sustentable, integrado a los presupuestos, participativo y transparente, descentralizado, estratégico, efectivo, inclusivo, etc. Pero el problema del desarrollo urbano no solo está en definir los buenos objetivos, sino en hallar los medios y las vías para llegar a ellos. Es verdad que es un largo camino el que ha habido que recorrer desde el planeamiento tradicional y tecnócrata de los Master Plan hasta las soluciones más avanzadas, pero ello no asegura en absoluto mejores resultados en la transformación de las ciudades. Además, los enormes problemas a los que se enfrentan las ciudades del mundo en desarrollo sin recursos económicos ni humanos, tienen ya poco que ver con las condiciones en que se piensa y actúa el planeamiento europeo o norteamericano.

El propio autor del trabajo acepta que "Outdated legal regimes and traditional bureaucratic cultures, as well as shortages of skilled personnel and of responsive institutions, are barriers to realizing the benefits from the practice of New Urban Planning." "Los sistemas legales superados y las culturas burocráticas tradicionales, y también la escasez del personal abilitado y las instituciones responsables, son barreras a la realización de los beneficios de la práctica del Nuevo Planeamiento Urbano." Estas son, sin duda, barreras técnicas que habrá que superar para poder poner en marcha el nuevo planeamiento, pero no las únicas. Es imprescindible una clara voluntad política de parte de las autoridades públicas para involucrarse en operaciones que no solamente no son financieramente rentables, sino que enfrentaran duramente intereses mercantiles. Los problemas urbanos no son solo problemas técnicos sino, fundamentalmente, políticos. Es necesario superar discursos ambiguos como el del desarrollo sustentable. Actualmente utilizada para intentar conciliar crecimiento de la producción, lucha contra la pobreza y respeto de los recursos naturales, la noción de « desarrollo sustentable » tiene la difícil misión de gestionar, a través del discurso ideológico, una de las contradicciones mayores de las sociedades contemporáneas. Lo mismo le puede ocurrir al discurso del Nuevo Planeamiento Urbano."

Carlos García Pleyán, Ph.D., está de la Agencia Suiza para el Desarrollo y la Cooperación Oficina de cooperación en Cuba (COSUDE).

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Reinventing Planning or Reinventing Cities?

by **CARLOS GARCÍA PLEYÁN**

"There can be no sustainable development without sustainable urbanization; and there can be no sustainable urbanization without effective, pro-poor planning."

It is obvious that modern planning that gives priority to the poorest classes ought to be sustainable planning, with integrated premises and participatory, transparent, decentralized, strategic, effective, inclusive, etc. However, the problem of urban development is not only in defining good objectives but also in finding the means to achieve them. It is true that the distance travelled from traditional technocratic planning has been a long one, but this does not guarantee the best results in the transformation of cities. Besides, the enormous problems faced by the cities of the developing world, which lack economic and human resources, have little to do with the conditions out of which European and North American planning are conceived and practiced.

The author accepts that "outdated legal regimes and traditional bureaucratic cultures, as well as shortages of skilled personnel and responsive institutions, are barriers to realizing the benefits of New Urban Planning." No doubt there are technical obstacles that have to be overcome to be able to implement the new planning, but they are not the only ones. A clear political will is needed on the part of public authorities to engage in actions that are not only not profitable but that directly confront commercial interests. Urban problems are not only technical; they are fundamentally political. It is necessary to go beyond ambiguous discourses like sustainable development, a term used to try to reconcile growth in production, the fight against poverty and respect for natural resources. It has the difficult mission of managing, through an ideological discourse, one of the major contradictions of contemporary society. The same can be said for the discourse on the New Urban Planning.

Carlos García Pleyán, Ph.D., is at the Cuban Office in Cooperation with the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (COSUDE).

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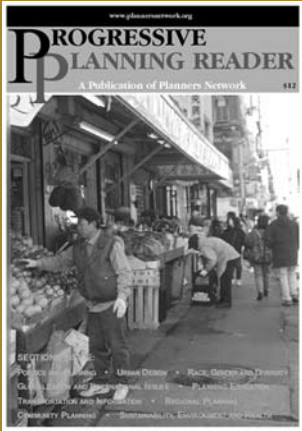
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