

Progressive Planning

The Magazine of Planners Network

The Myths of Bloomberg and de Blasio



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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

Don't Believe the Hype about Mike - Oops, I Mean Bill

Tom Angotti

BILL DE BLASIO swept the election for New York City mayor and this year replaces Michael Bloomberg, who held the position for 12 years. De Blasio ran as a progressive critical of Bloomberg policies that increased inequalities.

What will Bill de Blasio do? That question is churning around in the local press and on everyone's mind. Will he be a true progressive or just an enlightened pragmatist? Who will he appoint to key positions? Will he be aggressive in the pursuit of equality or stumble on the obstacles in his path? Will he stick by labor once he's on the other side of the bargaining table? Beyond the imaging and hype, will he be that much different than Bloomberg? Or as an article in one local paper put it, will de Blasio prove to be “an operative or activist?”

Interesting questions, but they're not the right ones.

The media and political establishment would have us believe that what really matters is the person in the top executive post. We are reminded that there are real obstacles in de Blasio's way – budget realities, the governor and legislature in Albany, the web of legal roadblocks, Bloomberg's commitments for megaprojects and contracting out that will be hard to reverse and the

sluggishness of the city's sprawling bureaucracy. But what's really important, they seem to say, is whether de Blasio stands tall.

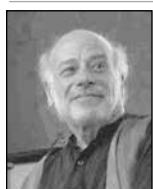
What this does is reduce local politics to a personality contest involving heroic figures. Missing in the picture: us, the working people, our neighborhoods and our community and labor organizations. The questions we should be asking now revolve around our role over the next four years. What should we do? The Bloomberg administration, one of the most imperial mayoralties in recent history, has created an illusion that the change in emperor is what really matters most.

The Bloomberg Legacy

Before we get to what does matter, we need to have a better understanding of Bloomberg's legacy, how it has changed the city and what that will mean for the next four years.

In 12 years as mayor, billionaire Michael Bloomberg was a champion of building the luxury city. He explicitly advocated the attraction of big real estate investments and wealthy individuals with the idea that more capital would bring jobs, services and money for everyone else – in other words, good old trickle-down economics. He was also intolerant of anyone who suggested that this ignored the critical needs of people struggling with wages below the poverty level, unaffordable housing and declining public services.

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Tom Angotti is Professor of Urban Affairs & Planning at Hunter College, co-editor of *Progressive Planning Magazine*, and author of *New York For Sale: Community Planning Confronts Global Real Estate*.

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ON THE COVER

Activists rally to hold the Yankees baseball club accountable for promises they made for the right to build a new \$1.5 billion stadium on public parkland, August 2009.
Photo: Adi Talwar, Bronx News Network

The Monumental Myths of Michael Bloomberg

Dan Steinberg

MAYOR MICHAEL BLOOMBERG, renowned as a pioneer in business communication, artfully constructed his national image as he contemplated a run for higher office. His projected identity blends the tradition of late 19th century reformers who sought to replace politics with the methods of business, with a post-fiscal crisis urban entrepreneurialism that made growth and physical development paramount to redistributive policy. At the heart of this public relations project are three specious claims: 1) that he is non-ideological and operates above the din of petty politics; 2) his policies represent a data-driven, evidenced-based approach based on “best practices;” and 3) he is an international leader in environmental sustainability.

In reality, the Bloomberg administration repeatedly compromised this composite identity in pursuit of “the Luxury City,” a reconfigured New York that caters to the interests and pleasures of the post-industrial elite in order to improve the city’s standing in the global competition for jobs, investment and residents abounding in human capital. By subsidizing stadiums, shopping complexes and glitzy office buildings, and rezoning over one-third of the land mass to encourage the proliferation of luxury condominiums and waterfront parks, the city itself was marketed as a high-end product and an urban brand.

Among the losers in this transformation of the urban landscape were small-scale industries and low-income

New Yorkers, including the ethnic food distributors in Bronx Terminal Market who were displaced by a city-subsidized mall; the independent retailers in Brooklyn’s Albee Square Mall who were evicted to make room for an upscale shopping and housing complex; the small manufacturers in Greenpoint-Williamsburg and other rezoned neighborhoods who could not compete with higher-rent uses; and longtime residents of many neighborhoods where gentrification was facilitated by public policy.

This agenda was not imposed without opposition. Contentious fights erupted around the Kingsbridge Armory in the Northwest Bronx, Hudson Yards on the Far West Side of Manhattan, Atlantic Yards in Brooklyn, and other redevelopment proposals. In some cases, the imperiled communities were able to deploy significant resources by partnering with corporate allies, hiring their own lobbyists and planners, featuring celebrity neighbors as spokespeople, and relying on established community organizations with political capital and decades of organizing experience.

Yankee Stadium: Political Manipulation, Public Subsidies, Environmental Impacts

South Bronx residents, who live in the poorest Congressional district in the country, did not have any of these resources at their disposal when city officials announced that the Yankees would construct a new stadium on 25 acres of public parkland. In planning for the new Yankee Stadium, the Bloomberg administration patently violated all three elements of his self-made image by 1) abandoning good government in



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favor of unsavory political maneuvering, 2) shamelessly fudging the economics of the project and 3) ignoring the dire environmental implications of needlessly facilitating car access to the stadium, destroying 377 mature trees, and replacing grass fields with artificial turf. The case of Yankee Stadium provides an unsettling look at what happens when a deeply disenfranchised community stands in the way of powerful interests.

Political Games and a Land Grab

For well over a decade, the Yankees coveted a new stadium. The historic ballpark where they had played since 1923 was not structurally deficient, but did not contain the luxury boxes, shopping options, and other lucrative amenities featured in the new wave of stadiums around the county. Renovating the current stadium was deemed a financial hardship by the Yankees since they would have to play elsewhere for several years (as they had in the 1970s). Once the West Side of Manhattan was ruled out, they cast a predatory eye on the parkland adjacent to their current location. The Yankees had little leverage in negotiating with city officials. They had just broken the American League single-season attendance record and Mayor Bloomberg publicly declared the Yankees had no intention of leaving New York.

However, New York State's rejection of financing for a Jets/Olympic Stadium on the Far West Side of Manhattan meant new stadiums for the city's baseball teams became crucial for the 2012 Olympic bid, which was the centerpiece of Bloomberg's ultimate

marketing campaign. In order to move swiftly, the administration worked with a cohort of ethically dubious politicians to coordinate one of the most blatant land grabs in the history of New York City.

In 2005, city and state officials quietly signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with the Yankees committing public land and subsidies for the stadium project. The officials agreed to make a "collaborative effort to seek State legislation as quickly as possible" authorizing the construction of the stadium and garages on the large swath of adjacent parkland, with the Yankees assuming "primary responsibility" for gathering the support of local elected officials and the city committing funds for replacement parks. Randy Levine, the President of the Yankees, previously served as Mayor Giuliani's Deputy Mayor for Economic Development. In order to convince the Bronx delegation of the State Assembly to quickly pass a bill that was needed to alienate the public parkland, Levine hired lobbyist Roberto Ramirez, himself a former Bronx Assembly Member and, more importantly, Chair of the Bronx County Democratic organization. Ramirez was paid \$301,900 by the Yankees, the single largest lobbying fee registered in the city that year.

The very weekend after the MOU was signed, parkland alienation bills were introduced in both houses of the state legislature. Within nine days, the legislature unanimously approved the bill sealing the fate of the parks. Neighborhood residents had not been informed that their parkland was at risk, and some legislators later admitted they were not fully aware what they had voted on



Yankee Stadium site before and during construction of the new facility.

given the deluge of bills that come down the pipeline in the final hours of session. There had not been any public hearings, nor had the local community board been consulted. Ironically, the state legislature was involved only because under law parkland is deemed too sacred to be disposed of by municipalities without oversight.

Without the parks as a bargaining chip, the community had little leverage when the project eventually triggered the city's Uniform Land Use Review Procedure, in which the local community board would eventually vote against the project through a resolution citing health concerns associated with increased traffic, lack of community input into the plan and the dangerous precedent of turning over public parkland for private use in the heart of a residential community. Board members also contended that not all 25 acres of parkland were slated to be replaced, and objected to 10 acres of replacement parks being located atop new parking garages. However, this vote was only advisory and the City Planning Commission elected to ignore the Board's position. A year later, Bronx Borough President Adolfo Carrión declined to reappoint the community board members who challenged the project.

The Numbers Game

Mayor Bloomberg once famously proclaimed, "In God we trust, everyone else bring data." Upon taking office in 2002, he insisted that the city could not afford stadiums, a position consistent with the overwhelming evidence from economists that new sports facilities, particularly replacement ones, drain city budgets without leading to measurable economic growth. By 2006, with the Olympics at stake, Bloomberg had changed his tune, asserting, "We don't do subsidies. The City is getting paid back at a profit." In order to substantiate this dubious claim, planners and economic development officials bent over backwards to "make the numbers work," relying on highly questionable assumptions and methods.

From the beginning, Bloomberg's math was patently wrong. A city-sponsored analysis not intended for public consumption revealed that the new stadium was expected to generate \$86 million in total tax revenue, far less than the cost of the replacement parks alone (putting aside a long list of other subsidies, including infrastructure work, tax-exempt financing and numerous other tax exemptions). Even the \$86 million revenue forecast turned out to be inflated, since the new stadium has drawn 1.4 million fewer visitors than the study projected.

When the Industrial Development Agency, which issued bonds for the project, eventually conducted its mandatory cost-benefit analysis, they departed from their own protocol by not accounting for the value of tax exemptions. Even more misleading, the IDA analysis included funds that would no longer be needed to make improvements to the existing Bronx parks as a \$25 million "benefit." This was an outrageous conjecture since the city had spent less than \$2 million on these parks since 1996 and had no plans to increase funding. In this and other respects, the analysis raises ethical questions pertaining to the manipulation of data. Indeed, an analysis mostly drawing upon data from the city's Independent Budget Office later concluded that the total value of public subsidies exceeded



Photo source: Bronx Council for Environmental Quality President's Website

Joyce Hogi, center, president of Bronx Council for Environmental Quality

a billion dollars, and the Internal Revenue Service was compelled to close a loophole that city officials exploited in order to deliver tax-exempt financing for the stadium.

Testifying before the City Council, octogenarian and neighborhood resident Albertha Hunter delivered a stinging rebuke to the administration's elaborate attempts to rationalize the project: "So I am here to say to you, that even if we don't have a PhD, or a G.E.D. or what have you, we have sense enough to know when we are being taken, or when we are ignored."

Parking Garage Fiasco, Environmental Blooper

Perhaps more than any other aspect of the project, the debacle around the new Yankee Stadium parking garages vitiates Bloomberg's image as a savvy executive and champion of the environment. City officials inexplicably caved to the team's demand that the project include a new 9,000 space parking system, even though the Yankees were unwilling to bear the risk of building and operating it.

Transportation groups such as the Straphangers Campaign and the Tri-State Transportation Campaign howled in disapproval, as did environmental justice advocates such as Sustainable South Bronx, who contended that the plan would needlessly encourage car trips into a neighborhood known as "asthma alley."

Since the garage system did not appear likely to generate enough revenue to cover its \$340 million cost, the city and state agreed to contribute a combined \$100 million. Deputy Mayor for Economic Development Dan Doctoroff assured the City Council that the garages were a sound investment and would eventually generate millions of dollars in rent and taxes for the city.

Meanwhile, city officials struggled to find a credible developer to take on the garage system. In order to sweeten the pie, the city's IDA designated it a "Civic Facility Project" in order to allow tax-exempt financing. Eventually, the bid was awarded to the shell creation of a national entity with a spotty track record. Good Jobs New York, advocates for accountability on public subsidies, revealed that the Community Initiatives Development Corporation had previously defaulted

on government-issued bonds in Syracuse and Monroe County, and voiced their concern that low neighborhood car-ownership rates and a new train station opening nearby would undermine overall demand for parking.

The new garages predictably resulted in the largest default on city-issued bonds since the 1970s. About 5,000 fans per game have been riding Metro-North, the suburban rail line, while the garages have occupancy rates around 30 percent. The firm owes the city more than \$42 million in back rent, taxes, and interest, yet as reported by *Daily News* columnist Juan Gonzalez, this did not prevent them from spending \$1.3 million on legal fees to former Governor Mario Cuomo's law firm and \$240,000 on security to former Mayor Rudolph Giuliani's consulting firm. In the final days of Bloomberg's tenure, city officials were scampering to close a deal on a new subsidized soccer stadium on the site of one of the bankrupt garages.

The Season's Loser: Social and Environmental Justice

The new Yankee Stadium violated basic notions of social and environmental justice, democratic planning, and the ethical application of expertise. Residents of a neighborhood with a poverty rate approaching 40 percent were systematically excluded from the planning process, all in the name of a project with grim fiscal consequences. With over 400,000 New Yorkers unable to escape poverty even while employed, the administration allocated precious public resources for the creation of more jobs that are notoriously seasonal and low-wage.

The new Yankee Stadium can hardly be justified as enhancing the city's "brand." New York was not awarded the Olympics, attendance continues to drop, and even Yankee legend Mariano Rivera quipped, "The other stadium was better." Perhaps more than any other project, Yankee Stadium stands as a monument to the contradictions between Bloomberg's vaunted principles of governance and his vain obsession with physical development. Let this be a cautionary tale as he prepares to become the "global mayor" through his consulting firm, Bloomberg Associates. Bloomberg promises to export his successful policies to other cities, but he is likely to replicate his failures as well, exacerbating the deepening inequalities that are the dark side of his legacy. **P²**

The Life and Death of Low-Income Co-ops in New York City

Oksana Mironova

MOUNTING property abandonment across the U.S. – a product of structural urban problems accelerated by the 2008 financial crisis – has resulted in a range of responses, from homesteading to municipal land banks. New York City experienced a major wave of abandonment after the 1970s fiscal crisis. As a result, the city became “the landlord of last resort” to thousands of occupied units and vacant lots. The city helped many of the buildings become low-income coops, but over the years only some of them survived.

What can we learn from New York’s experience with the nation’s largest municipal program for abandoned properties?

The Tenant Interim Lease Program

The administration of Mayor Ed Koch (1978-1989) played an active role in radically reshaping New York City through the disposition of city-owned land. While the majority of abandoned properties reentered the real estate market, some were transferred to organized tenant groups through the Tenant Interim Lease (TIL) program. Established in the late 1970s, during Koch’s first term, TIL was one of a number of programs that transferred city-owned properties to private entities. The program was supported by tenant advocates actively fighting wide-spread disinvestment and abandonment



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throughout the city. TIL created thousands of deeply affordable, tenant controlled units. As New York City rapidly transformed in the 1990s and 2000s, some former TIL buildings became stable bulwarks against displacement and gentrification, while others floundered and failed. The fate of former TIL buildings thirty-five years after the program’s inception highlights the need for long-term planning, tighter regulation and better oversight over the disposition of city-owned land.

One important measure by the city in response to abandonment was to reduce the time it took to foreclose on a property for non-payment of taxes. The intention was to incentivize delinquent landowners to redeem properties that were subject to *in rem* foreclosure (*in rem* refers to the interim status between private and public ownership). Instead, by the mid-1980s, the Department of Housing Preservation and Development (HPD) was managing thousands of units directly, many of which were in poor shape after years of owner neglect. According to Anne-Marie Hendrickson, HPD’s current Deputy Commissioner of Asset Management, HPD managed up to 100,000 units. In addition to the *in rem* properties, the City managed a significant number of vacant lots. Fires destroyed thousands of properties. Further, the city had used eminent domain to take over large portions of working class neighborhoods during the mid-century urban renewal wave. The fiscal crisis and changes in federal housing policy left the city unable to finance large construction projects that were still in their planning stages, resulting in acres of barren land.

The city, uncomfortable in its new role as a major landlord, sought to dispense with *in rem* proper-

ties as quickly as possible. According to Jacqueline Leavitt's and Susan Saegert's "Community Household: Responding to housing abandonment in New York City," about a third of all *in rem* properties were transferred to HPD's Division of Alternative Management Programs (DAMP), established in 1979. DAMP ran a series of programs that transferred city-owned properties to private entities, including the TIL program. The TIL program shepherded organized tenants associations through the creation of Housing Development Fund Corporations (HDFCs). The HDFC would then purchase the *in rem* building from the City, which would be converted to a low-income co-op. Tenants would be able to purchase their apartments for \$250 and in exchange for the below market sale price, agree to resident income caps and other stipulations set forward in the co-op incorporation documents.

DAMP also transferred property ownership to community based organizations, private landlords and the New York City Housing Authority. According to Christopher Mele's *Selling the Lower East Side*, the TIL program was a concession to an organizing effort by tenants and housing groups across the city. HPD worked closely with the Urban Homesteading Assistance Board (UHAB), a non-profit partner, in administering the TIL program, providing technical assistance and acting as an intermediary between HPD and the tenant groups.

Success and Failure of the HDFC

The TIL program produced around 1,200 HDFCs in the 1980s and 1990s. UHAB continues to provide technical assistance to the 1,000 HDFCs remaining today.

The transition from a foreclosed city-owned building to an HDFC was an incredibly complex and labor intensive process. It required that tenants establish a functioning self-management system, which usually took years. Susan Saegert's research on buildings in the TIL program during the 1980s shows that organizers were:

...frequently older women who have taken responsibility for friends and neighbors in the past. Some came from church organizing, civil rights, and a small percent from unions. Some

had minor roles in the Model City Program. They would put in a ton of work into the building – sweeping the stoop at 4 am, running off the drug dealers, getting to know everyone, putting social pressure on people to pay rent.

According to Saegert, buildings that succeeded in completing the TIL program had a strong internal structure, including regular elections, a budget circulated to all residents, and "extensive involvement with technical assistance groups and political advocates, and programs that legitimize and provide resources for indigenous leaders' efforts while reinforcing tenant participation."

Visnja Vujica, who worked with 76 HDFCs in the Bronx at UHAB in the late 2000s, found that buildings remained successful as HDFCs when they had functioning boards with circulating members and regular elections, quorums, good records and intermittent audits.

External support and technical assistance proved to be important for HDFC success after they left the TIL program. Today, the neighborhood of Hell's Kitchen has 110 HDFCs, the highest concentration in the city. According to Bob Kalin, who was been organizing in city-owned buildings in the neighborhood since 1981, the stability of some of these can be attributed to extensive support they received from the local community-based organization, Housing Conservation Coordinators (HCC), and the Community Board, which had an HDFC sub-committee. By partnering with neighborhood organizations, HDFCs in Hell's Kitchen were able to achieve a higher level of organization.

Problems in Regulation and Policy

Many experts I interviewed pointed to failures in regulation and policy at the onset of the TIL program for exacerbating already complex processes of obtaining full tenure and self-management. According to Kalin, "in the early years of TIL, HPD did not do a full gut renovation, and some HDFCs have used this as a justification to not pay taxes, because they had to do additional work on the building." According to Saegert, when she began studying the TIL program, the per-unit

allocation for renovation was averaging only \$4,000. Since many buildings were in serious physical distress, tenants' living conditions did not necessarily improve immediately after the building became self-managed. Responding to continuing physical distress in HDFCs, around the mid-1990s, HPD augmented the TIL program to include gut renovation for new buildings.

Difficulties with self-management mixed with a lack of oversight resulted in a return to foreclosure and distress for some HDFCs. As buildings proceeded through the TIL program, HPD and UHAB both provided co-op management training. However, according to Vujica, there was simply not enough staff to provide real technical assistance to every HDFC. The shift from organizing to take control of a failing building to running a co-op is a difficult one and requires a set of learned skills. In her work with HDFCs in the Bronx in the 2000s, Vujica found that many of the buildings under self-management "struggled to maintain budgets, keep records, or make sense of complex legal documents." Without the support and oversight needed to secure rent increases provided for in the bylaws, some buildings attempted to rely on stop-gap measures to meet repair needs and pay water/sewer and property taxes. Some HDFCs relied on rents brought in by commercial tenants. Others rented out a few apartments in the building for higher rents. Without a sustainable process for bringing in revenue to run the building year to year, some HDFCs would eventually re-enter the foreclosure cycle.

Gentrification Becomes Policy

HDFCs are a product of an earlier New York City, when land values in Hell's Kitchen, the Lower East Side, and Harlem were low enough that permanent affordability and market pressure were not an immediate concern. According to Andy Reicher, Executive Director of UHAB, HDFCs were central to the redevelopment of neighborhoods, "because that was what they were designed to do. For example as an HDFC in the South Bronx would fix its building, the building next door might get cleaner. You can watch the improvements spread."

Mayor Koch introduced his \$4.5 billion ten-year housing plan during his third term in 1986. According to Jonathan Soffer, in *Ed Koch and the Rebuilding of New York City*, Koch's plan was really an economic development program, created to stabilize neighborhoods with one-time subsidies. It stayed away from programs like low-income rental housing construction, which required ongoing operational funding from the City.

In effect, the Koch administration adopted gentrification as a policy. The transfer of public land to private developers, paired with tax breaks and other subsidies, accelerated market-driven redevelopment in neighborhoods that had experienced abandonment. According to Soffer, "New York City today, with its high housing prices, increasingly scarce vacant land and buildings... is in large part the result of economic development strategies that Koch's administration created and put in place three decades ago.

These policies continued to bear fruit as they were maintained by subsequent administrations."

HDFCs and gentrification

The city did not plan to maintain significant oversight over HDFCs once they left the TIL program, or for that matter over any housing supported by Koch's plan. Also, bylaws in many early TIL buildings were loose, without primary residency requirements or resale restrictions, leaving the properties open to speculation. Even though all TIL buildings have income caps, buyers with low incomes and significant assets can easily evade them.

In HDFCs located in neighborhoods that have gentrified rapidly, there is great internal and external pressure on cooperators to sell. Units on the West Side of Manhattan have sold for upwards \$1 million dollars each. According to Kalin, the *New York Times* has many HDFC listings for sale and there are number of real estate websites that focus on finding and selling HDFCs.

A study of the Hell's Kitchen area conducted by the Housing Environments Research Group at the CUNY Graduate Center, found that there were deep internal conflicts in many HDFCs about selling units at market prices. Some residents wanted to sell units for profit, while others wanted to keep the buildings affordable. Outside of the obvious profit motive, HDFCs that either depleted or never had reserve funds used revenues from sales to

perform capital repairs (most by-laws tax sale profits). Nevertheless, despite the strong pressure to sell, UHAB estimates that around 1,000 HDFCs still exist. This number is higher than most professionals anticipated, according to Saegert.

Over the years, UHAB has worked with HPD to tighten regulations in buildings going through the TIL program. Newer HDFCs frequently have bylaws with stricter resale restrictions. Further, UHAB and HPD work with HDFCs in distress on new 30-year cooperative agreements that tighten resale restrictions in exchange for the forgiveness of tax arrears.

There are very few new HDFCs in development today. In 1996, the administration of Mayor Rudolph Giuliani changed the city's tax policy to allow the sale of tax liens of non-distressed tax delinquent properties. Distressed tax delinquent properties are conveyed to a third party after a Court-rendered in rem judgment. Today, *in rem* properties quickly re-enter the private market. The pipeline of city-owned land and buildings, utilized by every administration starting with Koch, is almost completely dry.

Moving Forward

While New York City is no longer the landlord of last resort to a large number of properties and vacant lots, it is in the middle of an unprecedented spike in homelessness and a housing affordability crisis. The city missed an opportunity to require permanent affordability

and impose greater oversight over development on city-owned land during the 1980s. Even with TIL, a program developed as a concession to affordable housing advocates and tenant groups, the city stopped short of removing the opportunity for future speculation. Koch's market-oriented policies created a deeply fragmented, unequal environment, where the benefits of the city's revival are inaccessible to a large portion of the population.

Following the 2008 financial collapse and housing crisis, non-speculative housing development, including limited equity low-income co-ops, are options that can help prevent displacement. The TIL model is not perfect nor is it appropriate for all communities, but can fill an important niche in both affordable housing development and neighborhood stabilization. Intensive support is needed with property management and accounting. This can help avoid many of the pitfalls faced by HDFCs. **P²**

Editor's Note

The New York City chapter of Planners Network has published *Opportunities for a New New York*, with proposals from 27 contributors. We selected the following four proposals for this issue. The full publication is available at: OpportunitiesForNYC.org.

SAVE THE DATE

June 5-7, 2014

Planning at the Borders

*Planners Network
conference in
Ciudad Juárez,
México*

The Invisible Bicyclists

(Hint: you're not a white man!)

Dorothy Le and Helen Ho

“Only white people bike commute.... Bike lanes are going to gentrify my neighborhood.... Those people [delivery cyclists] need to learn the rules.”

THESE REFLECT common misperceptions about bicycling in New York City. We need to open our eyes and see that there is a large group of cyclists who have been ignored by planners and advocates. They are not white; they are not men; they are not economically privileged. These “invisible cyclists” must play a central role as we rewrite the rules of the road. Otherwise, the planning process will be skewed, and the benefits of safe bicycle infrastructure, education, programming, and advocacy will not extend to those who need them most.

That is why Biking Public Project (BPP) was formed in April 2012. BPP’s mission is to expand local cycling advocacy discussions by reaching out to underrepresented bicyclists, including women, people of color, and delivery cyclists.

Over the summer of 2013, BPP engaged with cyclists and community members in Jackson Heights and Corona, Queens, learning from a diverse group of cyclists and expanding their presence in the bicycle advocacy movement. We surveyed and photographed individuals in public plazas, bicycle infrastructure, parks, and community events, finding an enormous diversity among cyclists. For example, our outreach found a population of cyclists where more than 60% of

people speak a language other than English at home. If you change the survey methods, these undercounted cyclists are not hard to find.

In order to address inequalities on a citywide level, we must develop more representative community boards, with voting power and suitable budgets. Community boards are currently chosen by the City Council member and Borough President. Giving the deciding vote to the people of the community and recruiting for proportional representation—including renters, young people, local businesses and new immigrants--would remedy the situation. We will also need more diverse and multilingual community board staff, in order to create new methods to reach underrepresented populations.

Currently bike lanes are created for neighborhoods that show the most amount of support and the least amount of resistance. As a result, bike lanes are prioritized in well-organized, progressive, white neighborhoods. Rather than perpetuating this cycle and leaving many neighborhoods with poorly networked bike infrastructure, the public process at the community board level must be restructured, and city government must have uniform standards for how it engages with every neighborhood.

P2



Photo: Dylan House

Helen Ho co-founded the Youth Bike Summit, Tour de Queens, and Queen-eccotes: A Celebration of Biking in Queens.



Photo: Dmitry Gudkov

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Photo: Biking Public Project

BPP Outreach BPP members Le'alani Boykin and Mario Giampieri talk to and photograph passing cyclists on 34th Ave in Jackson Heights, Queens.

For a City Free of Gender Violence

Marly Pierre-Louis

A BETTER NEW YORK means a safer city for women and LGBTQ people. New York City must engage in a collaborative project with planners, community organizers, and women throughout the city that addresses street harassment and gender violence. In order for this to be an inclusive process that prioritizes the safety of the most marginalized women, the power of organizers on the ground should be increased and their access and role in forming policies and initiatives should be expanded. This requires a real commitment from city officials to support, collaborate with, and fund community work that not only organizes women but also critically engages men around issues of patriarchy and gender violence. The political power of those most impacted by gender violence, most often women, transgender, and queer persons of color must be increased and their work leveraged by the city.



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Comprehensive and long-term citywide policies must be created that are driven and informed by on the ground knowledge and experiences. The city should mandate and fund age and culturally appropriate curriculum development for children K-12 that address patriarchy and gender violence, so that from a young age kids learn positive ways to interact with each other. Police Department training should include education about the full spectrum of gender violence.

New policies must be implemented that develop a reporting system for local government, emergency dispatchers and police to receive, document and track reports of street harassment. City funds should create a community based accountability process that exists outside of the criminal justice system where those accused of harassment would hear from community members why street harassment is inappropriate and counter to a safe and whole community. Additionally, the city needs to fund bystander trainings that train average New Yorkers on how to safely intervene when they see someone being harassed or violated.

There must be a city wide, gender inclusive planning process that utilizes safety audits and mapping exercises to identify “hot spots” of street harassment and gender violence around the city. With this information, mixed-use zoning and multi-use spaces can be created that produce what Anastasia Loukaitou-Sideris refers to as a “critical mass of people in public spaces” and opportunities for “natural surveillance by neighbors.” Developing more sidewalk facing storefronts and buildings with street facing windows would also put more of what Jane Jacobs called “eyes on the street.” The elimination of empty alleys, fences and heavy landscaping that block sight lines would make the city feel safer. Subway stations and bus shelters should be placed in well-lit and open areas near businesses and heavy pedestrian activity. Underground pedestrian tunnels should be replaced with safe, ground-level crossings to reduce fear and feelings of unsafety. **P²**

Creating a City Wide Afterschool Initiative to Prioritize Diverse Learning Experiences over Test Prep

Tal Bar-Zemer

DURING HIS CAMPAIGN, Mayor Bill de Blasio called for an expansion of afterschool programs for all middle school students in New York City. This is a worthy goal: afterschool programs have a long history of providing engaging, safe, and constructive developmental supports for young people in this city. They are a place where students can access the kinds of experiences that other institutions no longer offer with any regularity, including quality arts education, regular physical activity, unstructured playtime, collaborative inquiry, and project based learning. They are a crucial educational and social bridge between school, home, and community.

Currently afterschool programs are facing deep constraints. They are being asked to do more with less, and are forced to work within increasingly inappropriate parameters. As standardized testing has become central to school reform



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platforms, afterschool programs for “at risk youth” have been treated as another chance to boost scores. This is not what afterschool should be about. Research consistently shows that afterschool programs are better suited to meet individual social/emotional needs than to raise achievement on narrow academic measures. So far, this evidence has not deterred funders and policymakers from holding afterschool programs more responsible for achieving academic results, often to the detriment of programs that are successful in meeting more appropriate goals.

We must bring educators, youth, parents, community institutions, and funders into the same conversation. We must build a strongly linked and coordinated network of providers to develop and disseminate best practice for high engagement and retention of youth and staff, and to deepen opportunities for family and community engagement. Afterschool cannot in and of itself surmount the harmful effects of poverty, violence, failing schools, and a diminishing social safety net. However, if it is treated and funded as a crucial part of the effort to support youth and families, it can

promote participation and engagement. It will support academic learning; it will provide meaningful learning experiences grounded in relationships among students in shared communities of learning.

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“...we are ready for new solutions and approaches that work in and beyond the school day to support the development of engaged thinkers, learners, and citizens.”

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It will connect youth to adults who are committed to their holistic development and significantly alter students’ learning trajectories.

After ten years of education policies that co-opt the language of opportunity and safety while disproportionately penalizing and alienating students who have the greatest unmet needs, we are ready for new solutions and approaches that work in and beyond the school day to support the development of engaged thinkers, learners, and citizens. **P²**

Homes For All

Picture the Homeless Housing Committee

DURING MICHAEL BLOOMBERG'S tenure as mayor, the homeless population in New York City has skyrocketed by 61%. The number of homeless families has risen 73%. In total, there are over 52,000 people currently in the shelter system, including 22,000 children. The Housing Committee at Picture the Homeless organizes homeless and formerly homeless people to fight for decent, truly affordable permanent housing – not shelters.

It costs anywhere from \$3,000-\$4,000 per month to put one person through the shelter system. Using existing funding from the current budget for the Department of Homeless Services – upwards of \$900 million – we propose replacing temporary shelters with permanent, subsidized housing for low- and extremely low-income individuals and families. This money could be better utilized – and even save the taxpayer money. In our report, *Banking on Vacancy: Homelessness and Real Estate Speculation*, we illustrated that there are enough vacant

Picture the Homeless Housing Committee organizes homeless and formerly homeless people to build grassroots power and challenge existing housing policy.
www.picturethehomeless.org

buildings and lots to house nearly 200,000 people in only 1/3 of the city's community boards. In particular, diverted DHS funding should be reserved for organizations that fight for permanently affordable and resident-controlled housing, like Community Land Trusts and Mutual Housing Associations.

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Using existing funding from the current budget for the Department of Homeless Services – upwards of \$900 million – we propose replacing temporary shelters with permanent, subsidized housing for low- and extremely low-income individuals and families.

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The federal benchmark governing income eligibility for affordable housing should be reformulated. New York City's Area Median Income formula encompasses New York City and some surrounding counties. This calculation has failed to facilitate housing development for those on fixed-income and

other low-income people. Housing should be built according to a Neighborhood Median Income calculation, based on local incomes, ensuring that neighborhood residents can afford the newly constructed housing. This calculation would take into account the local needs of each community, stemming displacement and unfettered luxury development. This change would have to occur on the federal level, but we're confident it would help low and extremely low-income people in New York and other cities across the country.

The federal government also needs to unfreeze and expand funding for Section 8 Vouchers or provide funding for another type of New York City-based rental subsidy. This year's budget cuts led to a \$35 million cutback to the city's Department of Housing Preservation and Development's budget. These cuts hurt those who are in most need federal, state, and city aid. They are antithetical to the goal of reducing homelessness and scaling down the shelter system. In addition, if we are to prevent homelessness, we propose the overhaul of the local Rent Guidelines Board so that it is democratically and majority run by rent-stabilized tenants to ensure their housing security. **P²**

A Just Code of Ethics for Planners

A Priority for Planners Network

Peter Marcuse

Editor's Note

In 2013 the Planners Network Steering Committee decided to focus on the serious lack of enforcement of planning ethics, particularly when it comes to issues of social justice. The editors of *Progressive Planning* invited Peter Marcuse and Harley Etienne to start a discussion and debate about planning ethics. Their contributions follow. We invite responses from readers and other contributions so that we may keep the issue alive and help inform future action by Planners Network.

PLANNERS NETWORK is in a unique position to press for a much needed change in the A.I.C.P. Code of Ethics. The current code fails to clearly formulate a critical social justice principle. It makes a spurious distinction between principles that planners should aspire to and those they should be held accountable to by the code of conduct. This makes it extremely difficult to hold anyone accountable to fundamental principles of social justice.

The Context: Currents in Urban Planning

There have always been conflicting currents in the theory and practice of planning:

- A *technocratic* current, deferential to the existing structures of power. This sees planning simply as a tool to achieve goals that are given it, in as efficient manner as possible;
- A *liberal reformist* current, moving generally within existing

relationships of power, using planners' influence to move plans towards their more liberal and justice-respecting ends;

- A *transformative* critical current, more radical and closer to utopian, holding that planning, as an activity dedicated to the application of reason to physical and social relations necessarily implies a set of its own values, that might well lead it into a critical stance favoring social justice.
- A *utopian* approach, not practical in the present but with radical implications for an alternative vision it creates.

Planners Network was founded in opposition to the technocratic current. It has recognized that, following a deferential technocratic (if not reactionary) logic, too many planners have been instrumental in the creation, solidification, and perpetuation of segregation and exclusion in U.S. cities and suburbs, with the attendant oppression of minority groups, prominently African Americans. Technocratic planners have put forward zoning plans and principles that ignore their racial impacts; incorporated racist considerations



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in the housing policies they have drafted, developed transportation plans, environmental regulations, subsidy schemes, criminal justice rules and health and educational plans that, by act and omission, have sustained and exacerbated inequality and injustice. Their actions have supported what Israeli scholar Oren Yiftachel has called the “dark side of planning.”

Planners Network has worked within the liberal reformist current of planning in opposition to this technocratic direction. Many of its individual members would undoubtedly see themselves as promoting the more radical transformative current, including a deeper critical stance to the prevailing order, but understand that radical change is not on the immediate agenda and must be pursued by more reformist policies that are practically winnable and have longer-term transformative potential. Thus, they take a critical approach.

Handling the racial implications of zoning plans affords a classic view of the distinction between the different currents in planning. In times past some planners consciously prepared and supported explicitly racist plans. Today, presumably, few would. Yet the mainstream of the profession today, situated towards the liberal end of the technocratic approach, has not taken a firm position on whether, for instance, planners have an affirmative obligation to present and argue for an inclusionary zoning pattern, even against a client’s wishes. Planners Network, I would argue, could take that position, holding that planners must be charged with the responsibility to address directly the racial impacts of what they do. The organization should strongly encourage a movement in a more progressive direction, consistent with the best of its the history in grappling with issues of social justice and racial discrimination.

The profession’s Code of Ethics is, or ought to be, a clear site for the formulation of planning policy on racial and ethnic justice. But the recent revision of AICP Code studiously avoided this. And it is a battle that Planners Network ought to take up aggressively. This would not only clarify where planning stands on issues of racial justice, but also have an immediate and salutary impact on some very practical and important issues.

Few would question that planners should know whether the results of proposed zoning, land use, and housing

actions and inactions will be discriminatory. It logically follows that what planners do with that knowledge should as well be spelled out in the professional Code of Ethics. However, that is not now the case. Making that happen should be a high priority for Planners Network.

The History and Potential of the Code of Ethics

Members of the American Planning Association (APA) and American Institute of Certified Planners (AICP) are required to be guided by the APA/AICP’s Code of Ethics and Professional Conduct, and have the responsibility to “seek social justice by working to expand choice and opportunity for all persons, recognizing a special responsibility to plan for the needs of the disadvantaged and to promote racial and economic integration.” (<http://www.planning.org/ethics/conduct1991>) They are required to know whether the results of zoning, land use and housing actions and inactions will be discriminatory.

The original Code of the AICP, from the time of its formal constitution in 1978, contained the following provision, under the heading: “The Planner’s Responsibility to the Public:”

A planner’s primary obligation is to serve the public interest. While the definition of the public interest is formulated through continuous debate, a planner owes allegiance to a conscientiously attained concept of the public interest, which requires these special obligations:

Under that heading, for instance, these include the following responsibility:

A planner must strive to expand choice and opportunity for all persons, recognizing a special responsibility to plan for the needs of disadvantaged groups and persons, and must urge the alteration of policies, institutions and decisions which oppose such needs.

Wanted: A clear formulation of a critical social justice principle

That provision was in the Code for a long time, as the first of a long list of ethical precepts (along

with provisions about disclosure, appropriate forms of competition, professional relationships, honesty, confidentiality and loyalty in relations with a client, and conflicts of interest). But it was not enforced or spelled out in detail. At the height of the Civil Rights movement in the 1960s, *The Planner's Responsibility to the Public: a Statement on the Social Responsibility of Planners* was proposed for adoption by the American Institute of Planners (the predecessor to APA) but not incorporated into its Code. Thus there was no differentiation between the general requirement for a critical social justice approach to planning and the requirements for professional conduct along deferential technical lines. Both were left very vague.

In addition to being vague, the Code had no adequate enforcement mechanisms. That problem led the AICP to undertake a thorough-going revision of the Code. As it stands since October 3, 2009, it follows what the lawyer charged with the drafting proposed, that the new code should separate out the “public interest” provisions to make them an “aspiration” and not binding, while the other “rules of conduct” should be binding on members.

The distinction between aspirations and rules of conduct

The revised code was adopted and made the distinction between aspirational principals and rules of conduct, as follows:

Section A contains a statement of aspirational principles that constitute the ideals to which we are committed. We shall strive to act in accordance with our stated principles. However, an allegation that we failed to achieve our aspirational principles cannot be the subject of a misconduct charge or be a cause for disciplinary action.

Section B contains rules of conduct to which we are held accountable. If we violate any of these rules, we can be the object of a charge of misconduct and shall have the responsibility of responding to and cooperating with the investigation and enforcement procedures. If we are found to be blameworthy by the AICP Ethics Committee, we shall be subject to the imposition of sanctions that may include loss of our certification.

The following was consigned to an “aspiration” under Section A, not as a Rule of Conduct:

f) We shall seek social justice by working to expand choice and opportunity for all persons, recognizing a special responsibility to plan for the needs of the disadvantaged and to promote racial and economic integration. We shall urge the alteration of policies, institutions, and decisions that oppose such needs.

Arguably this relegates the concern of social justice planning to a less important concern of the profession, something hoped for but not considered essential. In such a reading, good deferential technical planning is required of all planners, but commitment to social justice values are only aspirations, not requirements.

Admittedly, the precise definition of “social justice values,” and “the public interest,” as used in the 1978 Code, is a difficult one, and in need of much discussion. There would probably be a large consensus around a ban on actions that have adverse racially discriminatory results; whether a similar ban on gender discrimination would meet with wide approval is perhaps another question. Or should we push for color conscious and/or affirmative action to be parts of the definition of social justice? Such a debate would have been an extremely healthy undertaking for the profession.

Unfortunately that opportunity was lost. Instead, all social justice values were simply assigned the vague “aspirational” label, and that was that.

The big argument against enforcing a requirement that a planner should promote social justice might be that you can't tell whether a planner might have wanted to do so and intended to do so, but was prevented from doing so by the realities of the situation in which the planner was working. A planner should not be penalized if, despite good intentions, he or she was not able to do more to implement them. And how are we to judge a planner's “intent”?

But is it “intent” in the psychological sense that's involved here? Or is it rather the same kind of “intent” that's involved in most tort and many criminal cases in ordinary law. This holds that, absent countervailing

evidence, a person is presumed to have intended the reasonably foreseeable results of his or her actions.

How would such an approach work in a planning Code of Ethics?

In several recent cases involving charges of racial discrimination, one of which is still pending as this is written, the application of strict and enforceable ethical standards might be hypothetically thought through.

Under the Fair Housing Act, local government actions having a disparate impact on race have been held a violation of the Act, whether or not that impact was intended. That rule on the sufficiency of a disparate impact has been challenged with the argument that a finding of “intent” to discriminate was necessary before a violation could be found. But how can that intent be demonstrated in a court of law? It is, after all, the intent of an official body, often in fair housing cases a planning commission, and its members are hardly likely to state on the record a desire to discriminate against a minority group. At most, euphemisms might be used, such as the desire to “preserve the character of the neighborhood.” In a recent case in which I filed an Expert Report at the request of the plaintiff, the euphemisms argument was in fact made: *MHANY Mgmt Inc. v. Incorporated Village of Garden City*, 2013 WL 6334107 (E.D.N.Y. 2013). The court however found other sufficient evidence of intent from the public hearings and history to sustain a finding of violation of the Act.

Suppose a professional planner had been consulted by the relevant commission, as would typically be the case. Suppose the planner’s analysis showed a given zoning proposal would in fact have a disparate impact, for instance by excluding multi-family or small lot inexpensive single family housing, where there was significant demand by members of minority groups for such housing in that community? Suppose the planner, although realizing that fact, decided there was no point in raising it to the commission because they were obviously not going to follow a recommendation for inclusionary, non-discriminatory housing since the neighborhood was 97% white. The planner might suggest multi-family housing as one among other options, without mentioning racial impact,

but might well not go further despite his or her own pro-integration values, to not risk alienating his or her client. This is certainly not an unusual scenario.

But suppose the Code of Ethics had a clear and enforceable mandate requiring a planner to

... promote racial and economic integration [and] to plan for the needs of the disadvantaged [and] to urge the alteration of policies, institutions, and decisions that oppose such needs.

Now the planner can and should come before the commission and say: “honored commission members, it is my painful duty to tell you that this zoning plan you are considering will have a specific and negative disparate impact on minority group members who live in your community or might want to live there, and my studies suggest there is considerable demand by them. But if you limit permissible uses as this proposed plan does, you will have a disparate and negative impact on such members. I regret having to tell you this, because I know that some of you, and certainly some of your neighbors, would like to see this plan in effect even if it should have such a disparate impact. But unfortunately I have to say this to you, and to urge you to change the plan. Because if I did not so inform and urge you, I would lose my professional status as a planner and member of the American Institute of Certified Planners, and you would be hard pressed to find a certified planner to take my place. I urge you to withdraw the plan, but of course the decision as to whether you adopt it or not is up to you.”

Now, if the commission decides to go forward with the plan, it can certainly be dealt with as having intended the known consequences of its action. The planner cannot get into trouble with his or her profession because of working on a plan having a disparate impact, because there is clear countervailing evidence that that impact was not intended on his or her part. The purposes of the Fair Housing Act will have been well served, in accordance with the values and aspirations of the planning profession.

Planners Network should urge the AICP and the APA to change their ethical codes accordingly. **P²**

What is Consistent with the Public Interest?

Rethinking Planning Ethics for the 21st Century

Harley F. Etienne

NO CASUAL OBSERVER of urban places can escape the reality that real estate development continues to define who lives in, has access to and enjoys urban life. In the wake of the housing crisis that started in 2007, economic inequality has grown in many cities. While we could easily agree with the hypothesis that this is simply the market at work and that we would be irresponsible (perhaps even criminal) to inhibit the exuberance of the real estate markets, we must ask ourselves as planners whether increasing economic inequality that is facilitated by real estate development is *consistent with the public interest* and what role we have played in creating or mitigating it.

The *Ethical Principles for Planning* published by the American Planning Association in 1992 treats social justice, civic participation, and

fairness in a planning process as key to the field's ethics. One of the central ethical principles for actors states that planners should, "...serve as advocates only when the client's objectives are legal and consistent with the public interest." I want to suggest here that there might be a great deal of room between the legality of a client's objectives and the public interest. Moreover, there is a great conflict for any planner who tries to mediate those two divergent goals in practice.

Real estate development in the United States depends on a basic microeconomic principle of "first-mover advantage." As a developer, I profit the most from being able to exploit demand in the market, for housing, services, amenities, etc. And, the fewer parties who know about the opportunity I have to construct new housing/office/retail space the better—lest they drive up the costs of doing business by competitively bidding against me on land and property. I may profit if I come in shortly after the first-mover or at least before the market demand has not been so satisfied that profit is no longer possible. This gamesmanship depends on asymmetrical information to operate. Cynically, there is

no democratic process that can even the playing field between the owners of that information and the public.

In our post-*Citizens United* world, corporations are now legally classified as people. The asymmetrical information they wield about policy, politics and their own profits and interests muddy the waters on what we might attempt to know about the public interest in our present day and age. Given the increasing levels of social inequality in the United States, it is time to revisit and refine how we are defining the public interest, but more importantly we need to examine whether our current code of ethics can be operationalized in practice. Planners who work for or with developers to build their mixed-use communities, multi-family high-rises, shopping centers, and office parks must necessarily use the language of profits, first-mover advantage and asymmetrical information.

- It is not that they did not learn about planning ethics in graduate school. I would like to suggest that there are three things that can and should occur.
- First, the *Code of Ethics*, while good, may need some refine-



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7th Generation: Don't Believe the Hype about Mike – Oops, I Mean Bill

By Tom Angotti

continued from page 2

ment to be useful in our current political context. The power of money in politics is evident to most and does affect how planning operates at local, state and federal levels.

- Second, our current system of planning education needs to consider the gulf new planning school graduates must cross between the world of theory and design and competitive development and aggressive market forces. We do our students a disservice to leave them unprepared and ill-equipped to engage in these practical and ethical dilemmas.
- Lastly, progressive planners would do well to launch a campaign to engage in public scholarship that examines and documents how contemporary planning practices contribute to and exacerbate the growing social inequalities we see so present in American society today. If we do not, we risk becoming less relevant as a field to the American public that is surely better versed in the day-to-day experience of economic injustice than we have proven to be.

P²

The press, led by the three major daily newspapers and major network and cable news channels, pumped up Bloomberg's image, calling him extremely popular, a paragon of efficient government, a global leader in public health and the environment and incorruptible. He benefited from a well of civic pride following 9/11 and from a widespread relief that he turned away from former mayor Rudolph Giuliani's racial and political intolerance. But Bloomberg's halo didn't get tarnished until the remarkable landslide for de Blasio, who ran against Bloomberg's legacy of "the tale of two cities." De Blasio clearly struck a chord in an electorate that had not bought the hype about Mike.

What Bloomberg actually did could not be farther from the public image created in City Hall and on Madison Avenue. To build the luxury city, he rezoned around a third of the land in the city, creating huge increases in land value that land owners cashed in on by building mostly luxury housing and office space. While the rezonings also protected middle- and upper-income enclaves from new development, thereby gaining a measure of consent, their main impact was to spur gentrification and the displacement of lower-income working people and locally-owned businesses. At the same time, Bloomberg generously offered subsidies and tax breaks to real estate developers. He focused on the big-

gest real estate plums in Manhattan, like the Hudson Yards, but also targeted downtown Brooklyn, Long Island City and other hot spots in the outer boroughs – places like Williamsburg, Brooklyn, which in a half decade began to look more like Manhattan than a historic industrial, working class neighborhood.

Bloomberg dismissed charges that he was responsible for gentrification in Harlem, the Lower East Side and other development hot spots. He pointed to his program to create 165,000 units of affordable housing (mostly accomplished) and the use of inclusionary zoning in areas being rezoned, which created the possibility that 20% of new residential units would be affordable. Never mind that the definition of affordability was pegged so high that most people living in gentrifying neighborhoods could not afford them. Or that only a handful of developers opted for the 20% affordable units.

Bloomberg used his last term in office to cement his "legacy" by getting approvals and signing contracts for new development schemes that the next mayor will have a hard time reversing or slowing down. He contracted out many services, undermining city agency workers, and balanced the budget without negotiating expired labor contracts or setting aside a penny for pay increases once the contracts are settled. In a scandal that none

of the newspapers has dared to approach, Bloomberg ran his private charity out of City Hall to shape city policies in ways he would not be allowed to under the City Charter. And his much-heralded reputation for efficiency conceals some pretty big conflicts of interest and scandals, like the one around the CityTime contract. He widened the huge well of discontent with the distance of government from the neighborhoods, which was clearly reflected in the results of the last election.

Then we have Bloomberg's policing policies – the notorious stop-and-frisk that targeted black and Latino men. His Draconian housing policies brought over 50,000 people to homeless shelters, the highest ever, and under his watch the number of people requiring food assistance went up dramatically while the already-underestimated unemployment rate remained high.

Finally, Bloomberg's image as an advocate for all that is "green" and "healthy" does not square with the facts. His PlaNYC2030, presented as a long-term sustainability plan, is really a short-term growth plan to justify new real estate development and a few greening projects that help support it, and is not the first of its kind. While Bloomberg created bike lanes and banned smoking, so did mayors all over the U.S. and Europe. While some gains were made in fuel efficiency, New York is still far behind other cities in waste management and recycling.

Lessons from the Dinkins administration.

Will the next administration be able to stop Bloomberg's luxury city? To help answer this question, let's look at the last time grassroots communities helped elect a mayor. David Dinkins, the city's first African American mayor, was elected in 1990, following 12 years of Ed Koch, a law-and-order man not popular in communities of color or with labor.

Dinkins welcomed progressives into his administration (including de Blasio), but from the first day he entered office Dinkins faced a backlash in the press and the most reactionary outposts within government, especially from within the Police Department. This opened the door for the revanchist putsch of Rudolph Giuliani,

who exploited a racial confrontation in Crown Heights (Brooklyn), joined racist cops demonstrating against community policing and went on to win the next election. The progressives, dispersed and disarmed, were unable to advance their social agenda and stop Giuliani.

De Blasio is not likely to face a similar backlash. He will replace Bloomberg's all-white City Hall with a more diverse staff in a city in which U.S.-born whites are a minority. Bloomberg has effectively lost on stop-and-frisk and many even in the NYPD are relieved. But the new mayor will face a host of other obstacles.

The Permanent Government

Even without a backlash, the formidable army of lobbyists working for Wall Street and the real estate industry will already know where the levers of power are and how to pull them to get to de Blasio. They are going to do all in their power to insure that their greatest achievements under Bloomberg will be sustained. And de Blasio has been careful to not provoke them.

The first item on their agenda is to preserve the real estate boom that Bloomberg presided over. *On this score, de Blasio has already declared "no contest."* In the City Council and as Public Advocate, he firmly supported new development as long as it included some measure of affordable housing. The problem is that under Bloomberg new development displaced more affordable housing than it created. De Blasio did not oppose the instant gentrification sparked by Bloomberg's 140 rezonings. He now promises only that the 20% affordable housing be required and not optional. This means that 80% will continue to be luxury housing, which still drives up land values and rents and forces out existing residents. So de Blasio may give us more "affordable" housing, just like all the previous mayors did, fiddle with the percentages to get a little more of it and do nothing to stop gentrification.

To his credit, de Blasio said he would not support some of Bloomberg's most egregious attacks on public and middle-income housing. For example, he said he would not approve the New York City Housing

Authority's proposal to build luxury housing on the site of eight Manhattan projects. However, he has not objected to the authority's other moves towards privatization and did not rule out coming up with different plan to build on Authority land. Will de Blasio be the mayor to realize the dream of big real estate – to get their hands on public housing's most valuable land? In the midst of budget negotiations, will our next mayor cave before those who argue the best way out is to sell off these and other public assets?

One small indication of where the new mayor might go is his proposal to tax vacant land to encourage housing development. This evades any role for the people who live in areas that have been plagued with vacant lots as dumping grounds. They should have a say. Maybe they would prefer parks or community gardens to new housing? Taxing the land might be a good solution for developers and help fuel gentrification. Is that a progressive solution?

The second big item on the business agenda will be the budget and negotiations with unions. Here the one percent only has to let de Blasio take the hit for extracting concessions from his union supporters and for cutting funds for vital services. Let de Blasio be the one to convince workers to be "realistic" and accept the inevitable. What we will not hear about is that the city's billionaire bondholders, Wall Street firms and powerful real estate investors will not be asked to share the pain. The mayor will try to raise taxes, but even if he were to succeed in Albany, which must approve the changes, it would not be enough.

Build the Dream

Bill de Blasio's history as a Democratic Party operative and pragmatist and his support for development must be understood along with his progressive credentials and outspoken criticism of inequality. But with the election behind him, who will put the brakes on the pragmatist?

The most important thing we can be doing now is to sustain and build independent voices outside City Hall and not depend on the insiders. Here's an agenda

to start with, but there's certainly much more:

- We already won on stop-and-frisk; now let's restore community policing.
- We slowed down the creation of new charter schools; now stop subsidizing them, remake the Department of Education with professional educators, and establish functioning parent councils.
- Bloomberg built a lot of "affordable housing" but too much of it isn't truly affordable and a lot of it contributes to gentrification and displacement of our neighborhoods. Let's preserve existing affordable housing by backing stronger rent laws, stopping the privatization of Mitchell-Lama (middle-income) and public housing, and preserving affordable housing in land trusts.
- Bloomberg built many bike lanes, public plazas and the High Line. Now reduce traffic everywhere and bring these public benefits to all neighborhoods.
- After Superstorm Sandy, Bloomberg changed the building and zoning laws to protect new buildings on the waterfront. Now let's have a new waterfront plan that will prevent our most vulnerable land from becoming exclusive upscale enclaves, and let's support working class tenants and homeowners stuck in the flood plains.
- Bolster the city's 59 community boards by drastically increasing their power, funding, and ability to plan while also making them more representative.
- Submit the city's capital budget to the participatory budgeting process.

Yes, of course, we have our organizations and representatives that will work for us, lobby the mayor and stick up for our interests. Some will get into City Hall with de Blasio and advocate for our causes. But without active, vocal movements pressing from the grass roots, don't expect a lot from the new administration. **P²**

Planning Withers Away in Crisis-ridden Greece

A discussion initiated by Reggie Modlich

With Dina Vaiou, Rena Klabatsea, Maria Markou, Irimi Micha, Thanos Pagonis, and Fereniki Vatavali

IN GREECE, the Troika made up of the International Monetary Fund (IMF), the European Community Bank (ECB) and the European Union (EU) is forcing the Greek government to reduce its debts and make usurious interest payments that have resulted in an unprecedented and brutal austerity. Unemployment is at 27.6%, including almost half of the country's youth. The economy is grinding to a standstill: school, health and public service budgets are being slashed; pension cuts measure over 50%; increasing and new taxes polarize rich and poor, left and right and have triggered an ominous and murderous fascist movement. Official planning has been gutted by reforms that encourage private development.

The discussion below looks at the effects of the crisis on planning. It includes Dina Vaiou, professor in the

Department of Urban and Regional Planning at the National Technical University of Athens; her colleagues Rena Klabatsea, Maria Markou, Irimi Micha, and Thanos Pagonis, assistant professors in the same department, and Fereniki Vatavali, Dr architect-planner and consultant to the Municipality of Hellinikon-Argyroupoli, where the former airport of Athens was located. Reggie Modlich, a retired planner from Canada, initiated the discussion.

Reggie: Can you briefly summarize the Greek planning context?

Maria: The Constitution of 1975 introduced environmental protection and spatial planning as responsibilities of the state. It prioritized improvement of the quality of life and protection of rights and public interest over economic growth. Basic regulations for land management as well as processes for adoption and approval of urban plans were introduced.

Thanos: Planning in Greece falls into two separate yet related fields: *Development Planning and Urban Planning*. *Development Planning* has been traditionally the responsibility of the Ministry of Economics. Its main aim is the identification of future development priorities and allocation of government budgets and resources based on 5-year time spans, based on the cooperation among various levels of government and public interest institutions. *Urban (and Regional) Planning* involves the preparation of statutory town plans and regulations, a process that was the responsibility of other government departments, with limited active state involvement in the operation of the land and property markets and the production of housing. After 1980 and the



FROM LEFT TO RIGHT:
Maria Markou, Thanos Pagonis, Dina Vaiou, Reggie Modlich, Rena Klabatsea, Irimi Micha. Reggie Modlich (rmodlich@evdemon.ca) is a retired feminist urban planner and activist.

accession of Greece in the European Union, both processes were structurally reformed, yet remained separate. Despite inherent problems, this bureaucratic planning process enabled a certain degree of democratic involvement of a wide spectrum of social actors and stakeholders. They represented their views and interests across the various stages of the formal decision making processes. This planning system had a public interest orientation marked by the clear separation of public and private domains.

Irini: During preparations for the 2004 Olympics, planning became more “development-oriented” and adopted a different approach to the utilization of public assets. This was supported by top-down schemes initiated by central government and by the emergence of big private capital as a privileged voice in the design and implementation of spatial policy to reflect entrepreneurial urban strategies.

Thanos: At that time, public-private partnerships appear in joint decision-making and funding schemes.

Dina: This continued until 2010, when the Greek government signed the first Memorandum with the IMF, EU, and ECB. Following that, the “Emergency Implementation Measures for the Mid-Term Fiscal Adjustment Strategy 2012-2015” passed the Greek Parliament in June 2011, rather inconspicuously. Among its many provisions is a section which refers to the “maturing of planning” and the necessary adjustments and regulations for the sale of public property.

A first step, the foundation of a limited liability company named “Hellenic Republic Asset Development Fund” (the acronym in Greek is TAIPED – www.hradf.com) has already been implemented. All public property and companies included in the privatization program are now under TAIPED jurisdiction and have to be listed and mapped. After that, *Special Spatial Development Plans* have to be drafted, for which a major criterion is cost efficiency of potential investments. Local, urban, regional and national levels of government can modify and grant all kinds of exemptions from existing spatial plans, often overruling existing planning laws. Even sites under archaeological or environmental protection may be “developed” under certain conditions.

Property, outside of statutory urban plans may be used for tourist, recreation and commercial development, such as large scale commercial malls, tourist complexes with or without golf courses, as well as for infrastructures (airports, heliports, marinas, port zones, etc.). In all these cases, land use and building regulations may be overridden if “architectural or other technical studies can document that the exemptions” are necessary to make the proposal profitable. Exemptions then become the rule, since it is possible to design a particular regulatory framework (land use, building regulations, environmental restrictions, etc.) to make every piece of property attractive to private investors. Existing legally approved Master Plans and other spatial plans have to be modified if they inhibit “integrated and efficient development.”

Rena: Two additional elements characterize the “new planning.” First, the acceleration of plan preparation processes and second, the elimination of time for consultation. *Fast tracking* is said to be needed to effectively facilitate “development.” Several planning regulations, mainly to protect the natural and cultural environment, as well as planning jurisdictions and processes, have been abolished or, at best, suspended.

Maria: A regulation which is new in the Greek legal tradition introduced the new term, “right to the surface,” which grants to persons or legal entities temporary development rights to state-owned properties. Investors who acquire this right may then sell, build, or mortgage the property for a period of 5 to 50 years, extendable up to 100 years. This new regulation bypasses the law that prohibits the state from selling its land if it has been designated for public use, such as beaches, riversides, roads, squares and parks, is under natural or cultural protection or serves a public purpose, such as a school. It also opens the door for tourist development in coastal areas – traditionally publicly owned for public use, and forest areas, important for the protection of the water table. It also facilitates the privatization of port zones.

Reggie: Can you enlarge on what public property can or has been sold?

Dina: All types of state property are transferred to TAIPED, not only real estate, but also public utilities

and their assets. In effect, anything and everything can be sold: urban and rural properties, public corporations (electricity, water, railways, coastal areas, parks, heritage sites) and the property of local government and other public entities (including universities). The Acropolis of Athens will probably not be up for sale – I hope; however, the right to collect the revenues from the tickets paid by visitors to the Acropolis can in fact be sold.

Maria: The *Implementation Law* refers explicitly to state owned property from which the state draws economic benefits and can be sold, the so called “private property of the state,” distinct from “public property” which includes properties that serve the public interest, do not necessarily yield economic return and cannot be an object of transaction, according to the Greek Law and Constitutional provisions.

Thanos: The top-down introduction of rules and regulations are totally alien to existing planning philosophy and law. It attacks directly the framework of land use regulation and development control established over the last 30 years. This has two implications for planning: first, the privatization of state land and property assets, second, the privatization of public companies, such as utilities and public infrastructure providers. This is a complex process, part of the broader discussion about the reduction of the size of the public sector. Land use planning is affected indirectly, through the privatization of public assets but this is not the only issue.



Fereniki: The 620 hectare site of the former Hellinikon airport and the Agios Kosmas beachfront in Greater Athens, constitutes the symbolic peak of the privatization program currently under way. The decision to relocate the Athens international airport to its present position in Spata was made in 1991. A short while later the old airport site was designated as a “metropolitan green zone.” However, through a series of exceptions adopted around the time of the Olympic Games, a new planning framework was developed that designated the site as the second largest Olympic cluster in Athens. This happened despite opposition by the local community, professional bodies and environmental

organizations. The operation of the airport stopped in 2001 and a number of Olympic installations were built on site without any provisions for their post-Olympic use. After the Games, a series of unsuccessful attempts were made to put the Olympic facilities on the market, when the government decided to develop the site.

The outbreak of the crisis led to the re-definition of priorities and made privatization of the site a primary goal. A new set of regulations for intensive development were drafted including permitted land uses, floor area ratios and bulk densities. Approval processes and new decision-making bodies were established that would support the privatization process. The *Integrated Development Plan for the Metropolitan Pole of Hellinikon-Agios Kosmas* contravenes existing land use and environmental regulations that apply to the site, ignores the proposals for the creation of a Metropolitan Park supported by the local government and urban movements, bypasses the consultation and participation process and annuls the public-use character of the sea-front and beach, which is handed to the investors. The priority is to create a flexible framework that guarantees the profitability of the real-estate investment through multi-functional large-scale urban development projects. The government formed and registered a company, Hellinikon SA, to manage and develop the property with the option to participate as a partner in the ensuing investment scheme. Hellinikon SA, together with TAIPED, can bypass or overrule existing plans and decision making processes.

Reggie: Does this mean planning departments have been shut down, planners, building and environmental inspectors dismissed?

Rena: Planning agencies, public administration departments, other institutions, and planners have shrunk both quantitatively and qualitatively. Understaffing of planning departments and supervisory committees is not the only problem. The tendency to grant exceptions, gradually “privatize” control processes and the still ill-defined responsibilities of local government in the domain of planning, further curtail planners’ ability to intervene in the public interest.

Yet, a new market for private consulting services seems to emerge, around TAIPED and prospective investors in public property; their job seems to be to advise on how to ensure approval of investment proposals and to prepare the necessary documents.

Irini: Planning entities do not close down but are often circumvented or lose their jurisdiction. Apart from the more powerful role accorded to private capital and to strategic investors, public bodies/sectors of the administration which had no connection to planning until recently, now assume central roles. The involvement of the Ministry of Public Order and Citizen Protection in drafting a “Strategic Plan for the historic centre of Athens” shows this. Here, safety is promoted as the prime goal of urban planning – safety in the sense of ensuring “law and order,” legal prosecution, deepening repression and police control. Thus, the Ministry of Public Order coordinates programs of local interventions but also broader planning directions.

Reggie: Are various sectors of Greek society, affected differently i.e. immigrants, labour, islands, youth, seniors, women.

Irini: Obviously the economic crisis, and the practices to overcome the crisis, affect different social groups differently. Exclusions and inequalities relate not only to class, but also gender, race, ethnicity, age, family composition, sexuality – and their complex combinations. Such issues never surface, however, because they do not support the dominant discourse. Thus, equality is collateral damage generating an extremely nationalistic, racist, sexist and even religious fundamentalist discourse which claims space only for those deemed “normal” workers and “appropriate” residents. This is probably the most frightening stake in the present conjuncture.

Dina: As far as planning is concerned, it has so far addressed different groups or sectors of society only as part of “projects” (short- or medium-term). Such projects are financed by the European Funds, which from time to time had specific foci, i.e. women and equality, immigrants, disabled people, full-day child care or elderly care, border regions including the islands, etc. Beyond those “projects,” there are very few cases where longer-term provisions have been

integrated in the mainstream planning process such as regional centres for women victims of violence.

For example, the restructuring of sea transport and the decrease in boat connections between the islands and the mainland, in a country with more than 200 inhabited islands, is not just an issue of facilitating tourist itineraries during the summer. It limits the access of island residents to health services and makes transactions with public administration difficult and costly. Residents may have to spend one or more nights in a hotel to take care of business with tax authorities or to get a birth certificate. It restricts access to education, if you take into account the parallel “restructuring” and closures of schools. Many islands which happen to lie out of the main tourist destinations have become more isolated. Similar observations can be made for mountainous villages and towns.

Similarly, the reduction of social services impacts women, mainly, but not exclusively in cities. The state and local governments no longer offer a safety net for low-income households to cope with salary and pension cuts, but proceed to cut further the scarce and poor services they used to provide. These include places in childcare, nursing jobs in hospitals, full-day programs in schools, subsidies to homes for the elderly, etc. Thus the burden of care falls back on local women, since men do not seem eager to get involved. At the same time thousands of “women’s jobs” have been cut, since those services concentrated 79% of women’s employment until 2009. On the urban scene, a lot of local activity and social heterogeneity, associated with the operation of those services, a wealth of everyday life, is disappearing, while many buildings lie idle – in “good company” with the closed shops – perhaps waiting to be “developed” by the TAIPED.

Maria: One very visible impact of the crisis on the cityscape affects primarily the vulnerable social groups and a large part of the middle class. These are the fast spreading poverty clusters particularly in the centre of Athens. One can notice deepening disparities between neighborhoods suffering effects of unemployment, income insecurity, exposure to worsening public health and criminality. The racist attacks in western Athens and Piraeus where clearly the effect of industrial decline. **P²**

Labor-Community Coalitions Beat the Odds in the Philippines

Jacqueline Leavitt

IN 1983, in a direct challenge to the long-running dictatorship of Ferdinand Marcos, opposition politician Benigno “Ninoy” Aquino II returned from exile to launch his run for president against Marcos. This was not to happen, as he was shot upon leaving the plane. It took several years, but millions of Filipinos responded in 1986 with the People Power Revolution that improbably toppled Marcos and restored electoral democracy. Ninoy’s wife Corazón “Cory” Aquino, the symbolic leader of the revolution, was elected president.

Fast-forward to 2010. Several peaceful presidential transitions later, Ninoy and Cory’s son Benigno “Noynoy” Aquino III was elected president. If, like most outside the Philippines, you follow the big world headlines but not the details, you might conclude that democracy is working. You might suppose that labor and community organizations, while they might confront problems of poverty, corruption and corporate power, would at least enjoy a well-established democratic space to press their demands.

You would be wrong. This country of 106 million is a deeply imperfect democracy, where grassroots leaders who pose a threat to established interests often end up jailed or dead. But you would also be right, in the sense that labor and community organizations have created their own democratic space with creative organizing and protest tactics.



Jacqueline Leavitt, a founding member of Planners Network, teaches housing and community development in Urban Planning at UCLA. She visited the Philippines in July 2013.

This article highlights the work of two labor-community coalitions. The experiences of these coalitions highlight the importance of local allies and organizational and strategic flexibility.

It is partially based on my participation in two workshops on trade unions and human rights held in the Philippines, and visits to residential communities organized by DAMPA, an organization that belongs to the Huairou Commission, an international NGO that I have worked with for over two decades. I also rely on two excellent studies that preceded my visits.

An imperfect democracy: poverty and repression

The population of the Philippines splits roughly 50-50 between urban and rural areas. The United Nations estimated in 2006 that half the population in urban



Photo: Jacqueline Leavitt

An on-site titling is underway after years of discord where some families have lived for 30 years; titling is expected in about two years.

areas was living in slums. In 2009, 44% of the urban workforce toiled in the informal sector that has no social protections. Though over the last two years the economy has grown at an unprecedented 7.3% rate (compare this to the US, laboring to exceed 2%), the booming economy exists alongside extreme conditions of poverty. In 2013, 12 million people were jobless. The only reason it is not higher is that the Philippines has become a champion exporter of people, with about one tenth of the population currently working around the world as Overseas Foreign Workers, or OFW, the acronym every Filipino knows. Remittances from this formidable corps of OFW exceeded \$21 billion in 2012.

A 2011 report estimated it would take 14-15 million quality jobs in order to cover “jobless, underemployed, and returning overseas workers.” In March 2013, the current Aquino in power vetoed

the Magna Carta for the Poor, pleading state poverty: socialized housing alone would require 2.3 trillion pesos (\$56.8 billion), a sum higher than the national budget.

Meanwhile, the Global Peace Index ranks the Philippines and Myanmar as the least peaceful countries in Asia, based on 24 characteristics summarizing “ongoing domestic and international conflict, societal safety and security and militarization.” Characteristics earning the Philippines other negative evaluations include demolition of informal settlements and displacement to resettlement areas that are ill-equipped to meet residents’ needs for schools, paved roads, commercial facilities and jobs.

In the face of these conditions, civil society continues to bubble up from below. We can learn important lessons from two examples: the first mobilizes workers and community in an Export Processing Zone

(EPZ) and the second draws on place- and issue-based topics in order to create networks of solidarity among women.

Organizing in the Cavite Export Processing Zone

Steve McKay, a sociologist at the University of California Santa Cruz, analyzed the creative social movement unionism in the Cavite Export Processing Zone (CEPZ) in a 2006 *Labor Studies Journal* article. This EPZ in Rosario, Luzon, located south of Manila, is the largest Economic Zone with 382 companies, mostly multinational electronics firms, with a largely female workforce. One CEPZ competitive advantage lies in its location near South Manila Bay and Aquino International Airport.

From the beginning, labor and community issues were stifled. A 1996 paper by Elizabeth M. Remedio for the International Labor Organization (ILO) attributed the CEPZ’s popularity to never having had a strike. McKay points out that a former governor declared the entire province an industrial peace zone. Under this mantra, zone administrators set up Labor-Management Committees (LMCs) and fostered an environment of fear. As of the mid-1990s, labor leaders had disappeared, wages were below the minimum, and by mid-2000, the local zone, in McKay’s words, were what “planners had hoped to avoid – a dense community of workers with many shared grievances” including housing, water pollution, lack of sewerage and increased crime.



Photo: Jacqueline Leavitt

Attendees at panel that I was on at the International Conference for Human Rights and Peace in the Philippines, the older women in second row is the head of one of the groups.

The initial impetus for organizing came in 1995 with a change in government and the election of a pro-labor government in the province. The new parish priest, Father Jose Dizon, brought his experiences in successfully organizing workers at a multinational wire-harness firm. Dizon and the budding worker organization started out with “prayer meetings, a workers’ mass, and a choir. . . social events like beach outings, discos, and birthday parties.” A Workers Assistance Center (WAC) was established and registered in 1997. Under cover of the church, an organizing group consisting mainly of women without organizing experience and not in trade unions proved most effective in gaining access to women workers via night visits to the scattered boarding houses where they lived.

Another “non-threatening” initiative, a Solidarity of Christian Workers (SCW) was organized



Photos: Marya Salamat in Buranlar

The Center for Trade Union and Human Rights demonstration in support of workers.

and explicitly registered as an NGO to support “plant-level union formation.” Drawing on regional groups of NGOs that “worked among the urban poor, women, fisherfolk, and landless agricultural workers,” SCW convened a provincial forum in 1999. Support also came from international donations that helped to build a Workers’ House where the community could see the tangible results of their coalition building. A turn toward militancy and an anti-imperialist position came when the workers wanted to gain collective bargaining rights.

Using the same acronym, the SCW reorganized as the Solidarity of Cavite Workers, registered as a labor alliance, and openly began to work on union organizing and project agreements by 2002. McKay emphasizes the different scales at which the SCW worked, from individuals to groups in a plant to multiple plants in local zones, to regional, provincial and international linkages as they built solidarity. The Workers Assistance Center remained an NGO and “concentrated on workers’ rights, education, union training, legal assistance, and international solidarity work.” McKay wrote, “By 2002, SCW had helped organize and register twenty-two affiliated unions with over two thousand members, making it a major force in the provincial labor movement.” The results may look like conventional union organizing, but these impressive gains were only won by building broad community organizations and coalitions. In addition, the organizations were highly attentive to building women’s leadership.

As of McKay’s 2002 case study, the leadership of SCW included a woman president and women were “over half of the fifteen members of the Council of Leaders.”

Makalaya: Organizing women by work sector and community

The second example, Makalaya (Manggagawang Kabaihang Mithi ay Paglaya) is a women’s solidarity organization. Mylene Hega drew on Makalaya’s work and raised questions for future labor community coalitions at the 2003 Alice Cook Discussion Forum at Cornell University. The organization was started in 1998 by women in trade unions who wanted to challenge conditions like sexual harassment and differential pay of unionized women, and realized that a solidarity network could “enhance community/union connections as it struggle[s] for women’s empowerment”.

Makalaya’s twofold strategy recommended “vertical” organizing by sector of employment with “horizontal” community organizing. The horizontal geographic axis groups its members “regardless of individual classification as workers. . .to actively take part on community issues and to develop their sisterhood,” and “helps surface workers’ problems that are not traditionally being taken up by the unions.” Specifically, “The issues covered, aside from employment issues, should be those related to social services, housing problems and other related problems.”

Whereas McKay analyzes a set of organizational responses to

repression against workers who also face community problems, Hega argues that the rise of contingent and short-term workers “has reduced the efficacy of unions as a vehicle for representation. In many cases, workers in irregular employment are organized as either [a] community organization or as an organization of mutual assistance without the capacity of formal collective bargaining” – a pattern also observed in the US with the growing importance of alternative organizations such as worker centers. Hega, like McKay, emphasizes the value of social movement unionism but also speaks of “community unionism” that embraces a spatial area as opposed to the workplace- or trade-based organizational model of a traditional union, and crosses over between formal and informal work and between public and private sectors.

Organizing in an imperfect democracy

Conditions in the Philippines are tough for activists, but coalitions like SCW and Makalaya have nonetheless built strong organizations and mounted effective campaigns. What can we learn from these successes, and from the broader landscape of movements in the Philippines?

One key lesson is the role of local allies. As one worker said to me at the Center for Trade Union and Human Rights’ workshop on freedom of association in July in Manila, “the worker lives in the community.” In the highly Catholic Philippines, the local Catholic Church can be a particularly important ally.

A second lesson is the importance of organizational and strategic flexibility. Organizing may have to go underground or take on different organizational forms, as McKay describes in the CEPZ case. Over the long term, the nature of organizing will by definition change due to shifts in elected officials, government appointees, developers’ rapaciousness, and human-made physical conditions including climate change and environmental degradation.

The threat of violence cannot be overemphasized. In the Cavite Export Processing Zone, for example, the Solidarity of Cavite Workers is, as McKay writes, limited from becoming “a full-fledged labor feder-

ation” by employer-led anti-union actions “including violence, threats, bribes, forced lay-offs of union leaders, forced temporary shutdowns of entire plants, and forced retrenchments coupled with a shifting of production to non-unionized firms.” This requires keeping some activities low profile or even underground and building the capacity to attract national and global attention and support. In this climate of terror, organizing wives has also become necessary as male activists are killed, jailed, or driven into hiding.

Broadening the reach of movements is difficult anywhere – with the broad scope of community unionism particularly challenging – but also profoundly important. In the Philippines and elsewhere, within the community development field, community organizations that focus on one issue area need to embrace a more comprehensive vision. Linking plant-level and neighborhood-level mobilizations to local, regional, national, and international solidarity may require progressives and community organizers to move out of their comfort zone of expertise. The flip side is that practicing planners, academics, and students in other countries – we – must find ways to connect and offer assistance. The uphill battles the urban poor are fighting in the Philippines are necessary to perfect the country’s imperfect democracy and win a greater degree of economic and social justice; they are also an invitation to cross physical and intellectual borders in order to make new global connections. **P²**



Photo: Josephine Castillo

Women members of DAMPA association.

NIMBYs or Concerned Citizens?

Responding to Shale Oil and Gas Development

Susan Christopherson and Ned Rightor

PLANNERS, policy makers and citizens in US states where “fracking” for natural gas and oil is occurring have to sort out conflicting narratives about the development of these fossil fuel resources. In one narrative, people who raise questions about shale development are frequently described as NIMBYs: people who want the resource to be developed and will use it, but don’t want it developed near them, i.e. “Not In My Back Yard.” The NIMBY label is pejorative, intended to depict people who raise questions about shale development as selfish and uninformed.

But an examination of the concerns raised during local policy making in communities that may be affected by shale oil or shale gas development indicates that the NIMBY label is unwarranted. Questions about the costs and trade-offs involved in shale development are substantive and informed by evidence. They raise issues about the economic and social viability of places where this type of resource development occurs, the policy-making process, and the ability of

communities to control their own future. A sizable subset of shale development opponents resist fossil fuel development generally and favor more public and private investment in distributed, renewable energy. To caricature resistance to shale resource development as NIMBYism misrepresents the public response.

Long Ago and Far Away?

When Americans think about resource extraction industries, they think of places that are sparsely settled and far from cities. Although the US has a rich lore of “boomtowns” and “ghost towns”, Americans rarely connect this history – and the boom-bust cycle it depicts – to contemporary resource development. The disparity between resource extraction realities and public perception is widened by a pervasive sense that dirty, dangerous industries are a thing of the past and have been replaced by service industries – “Eds and Meds.” Thus, the development of shale resources has taken many Americans by surprise.

The development of US shale plays is both similar to and different from our historical experience. The technology – combining horizontal drilling and high volume hydraulic fracturing (commonly referred to as *fracking*) – may be new, but like all resource extraction industries, fracking is both dangerous and dirty, and it will produce the same cycle of boom and bust that is so much a part of the history of American mining towns.

This has particular importance for planners because it is their role to anticipate and address the long-term implications for land use and the health and welfare of communities.



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What is different about the current shale boom, and the industrialization that accompanies it, is its scale. Prospective drilling sites alone raise policy issues for at least 28 states, thousands of local governments, and for the federal government as well. Drilling is occurring or may occur in a wide variety of landscapes – in or near major cities, in residential neighborhoods, in semi-rural environments, and in isolated rural communities. And the risks of shale development extend outward, to communities from which drilling inputs (sand, chemicals and water) are drawn, or on the roads and rails en route to the drill sites, or through which wastewater is transported for disposal and the gas and oil flows to market.

Understandably, because a wide range of communities may be impacted by shale development, responses have varied. Regulation is primarily a responsibility of state government, and local responses are affected by state law, politics and history. States with a history of intense resource development such as Texas, the headquarters of the global oil and gas industry, have responded differently than states such as Michigan or New York, for whom this sprawling heavy industry is a recent phenomenon.

As local concerns about shale development have been voiced, industry officials have resorted to characterizing those who raise questions about the costs and trade-offs as NIMBYs: people who want the resource developed and will use it, but don't want it developed near them. Responding to what they call NIMBY "activist" resistance to fracking, industry representatives acknowledge that fracking causes problems, but they contend that the industry has long experience in addressing any and all concerns. Then they concentrate on the technical issues, including water contamination, toxic water disposal, and earthquakes from injection wells. According to one industry observer in *Crain's Cleveland Business*:

"So if none of these problems are new, why all the uproar now? ... For the first time, we are seeing oil and gas developed in densely populated ... areas that have not in modern times had to endure the inconvenience of oil and gas development."

For localities, however, this is much more than an inconvenience.

Are Concerns Real or Imagined?

While much is made of the economic benefits of shale development, seldom is the other side of the ledger mentioned: the costs to states and local communities. If we look at the types of questions raised in communities that may be affected by shale gas and oil development, citizens and policy makers are concerned about the health, safety, quality of life, short-term public costs and the long-term economic future in their communities, not just the technical/environmental impacts of fracking. Their questions about the trade-offs involved in shale development are substantive and informed by evidence.

As shale development has proceeded across US states, more information has become available about its short-term and long-term costs and reported benefits. This information is rarely systematic because states do not collect baseline data before permitting drilling, nor do they collect information on what happens in the communities where it occurs. But over time, a national network of local sources has assembled evidence about the downside, while news stories and case studies in places like Bradford County, PA and Williston, ND have provided a fairly comprehensive picture of what can happen.

Certainly a few people benefit, notably resident and non-resident landowners with enough desirable acreage to lease to drillers and obtain royalties. There are also a lot of losers – renters, small property owners, people without mineral rights, and businesses crowded out by a drilling boom.

Although environmental issues usually predominate among community concerns, local governments are concerned about public costs. Most visible to local officials are the likelihood of increased traffic and road damage, possible increases in crime, dangerous industrial accidents, and the need for more professional emergency responders. There are documented impacts on hospitals, adverse effects from the skyrocketing cost of living in boomtowns, and the realization that the "community" may never be the same, as long-term residents tend to leave these newly industrialized areas because of those costs and disruptions. Once the boom ends, a drilling region may have a smaller population and less diverse economy than before the boom began.

These local and regional costs have been almost completely ignored by federal and state policy makers and the industry, who continue to use projected job numbers to promote shale development, despite evidence that actual job numbers have been much lower. At the grassroots, however, both skepticism about the economic benefits and a growing understanding of the true costs are important to how local policy makers and citizens view shale development.

These very real concerns are not captured by a NIMBY label. Indeed, Matthew Cotton, who has studied the origins of negative community reactions to energy facility development in the US and UK, asserts that to describe opponents as NIMBYs is not only ineffective, it is also wrong.

What Public Officials Told Us About Community Perceptions of the Risks

In 2012, we developed a database and conducted a systematic study of local governments that had passed resolutions or legislation on shale gas development in the Marcellus Shale states. 266 of them were in New York (which has not yet authorized HVHF shale gas development) and Pennsylvania (where HVHF drilling has been underway since 2008). We selected a stratified sample of those communities and conducted structured interviews with the highest-ranking public official or his or her designee in each. These 53 interviews obtained

information on the process of decision-making, the critical issues discussed in public meetings, and community expectations regarding oil and gas industry practices and State regulation/monitoring of the industrial activities associated with shale energy development.

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The ability to control the pace and scale of oil and gas development, and to find ways to capture and extend private investment beyond the boom phase of the cycle, are critical to long term sustainability.

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Although environmental issues topped the ranking of community concerns, particularly effects on water supply and water quality, localities that had taken legislative action were also concerned about economic consequences, public costs associated with increased traffic and road damage, and a variety of disruptions to local life. However, beyond their perception of specific environmental, economic and social risks lies a concern that those responsible for assessing, monitoring, and ameliorating any damage may be unwilling or unable to do

so. Of 48 or more respondents to each survey question, the majority consistently expressed concerns about the ability of either the oil and gas industry or government to protect the environment, their health, and their communities.

- Sixty five percent (65%) of respondents rated their confidence that the natural gas industry will protect the environment, health and safety of affected communities as low or not at all confident.
- Sixty five percent (65%) of respondents rated their confidence that the natural gas industry will protect the economic and social stability of affected communities as low or not at all confident.
- Sixty two percent (62%) of respondents rated their confidence that their State has the capacity to enforce environmental, health and safety regulations to protect affected communities as low or not at all confident.
- Sixty seven percent (67%) of respondents rated their confidence that their State will regulate drilling activity effectively to protect the economic and social stability of affected communities as low or not at all confident.

A lack of trust in those responsible for creating these risks and dealing with the harms is as much responsible for local community responses as fear of the risks themselves. This lack of trust needs to be addressed at all levels of government, and by the industry. Industry officials have contributed to a lack of confidence

in their accountability by repeated attempts to create “wobble room”. They say that shale drilling will not cause problems “if done right” by “responsible firms”. Given the number of operating companies in any shale play, each working through an array of subcontractors, this is an empty promise that provides ample opportunity to shift blame when accidents occur.

What Do Planners and Policy Makers Need to Consider?

To secure the long-term sustainability of regions and communities affected by shale resource development, state and local planners and policy makers need to address the risks in several ways.

First, policy makers need to conduct a thorough analysis of how their state, region, or community may be affected. Economic benefits may accrue to some, but not to the majority. Social disruption, economic burdens and environmental damage may be localized, or spread across whole regions, or appear in places remote from the well sites.

Next, officials need to anticipate the boom phase that accompanies resource development, and its potential for social and economic disruption. This includes identifying and mitigating the impact on existing local employers, and dealing with the increased pressure on services and facilities, both public and private. Well-documented baseline data on all facilities and services that may be affected during the

boom phase is a necessary prerequisite for local, county, or state governments to “price” the additional cost of shale development.

During the boom, drilling regions may not have sufficient capacity and revenue to meet the demands on police and fire, schools and housing assistance, road maintenance and traffic management, or hospitals and emergency response, so policy makers need to develop new revenue sources or revenue sharing mechanisms that compensate communities for the uptick in demand for facilities and services. Then, when new drilling falls off and as production declines – and tax receipts, royalty payments, business income, and jobs with it -- boom regions may find themselves in a period of steep decline in population and tax base, or simply one of significantly slower growth. Foresighted infrastructure planning and financing, and flexible fiscal tools, can help localities or a state to accommodate fluctuating revenues and service demands, as well as moderate overcapacity. Budgeting to build reserves and support economic development will be needed to weather the period after extraction ends.

The ability to control the pace and scale of oil and gas development, and to find ways to capture and extend private investment beyond the boom phase of the cycle, are critical to long term sustainability. Local zoning regulations, state permitting regulations, and comprehensive planning requirements such as those currently proposed by the State of Maryland can limit

the pace and scale of drilling while not preventing shale development. (Maryland’s *Recommended Practices for Marcellus Shale Drilling Released for Public Comment* is available at: http://www.mde.state.md.us/programs/Land/mining/marcellus/Pages/MSReportPartII_Draft_for_Public_Comment.aspx)

Policy makers at all levels of government and other stakeholders must work together to ensure that the full range of social and economic risks are identified and acknowledged, and that policies to mitigate those risks, and the means to implement them, are in place. All parties need to be engaged in the process, and emerge justifiably confident that the benefits and costs of shale resource development will be appropriately and equitably distributed. To label people with legitimate questions as NIMBYs is no substitute for good governance and fair business practices.

Full reports on these issues are available at: www.GreenChoices.Cornell.edu.

P²

Many Hands Together Make a Home

The Co-Production of Tiny Houses

Sijia Zhang, Noah Phillips, Riley Balikian, Giri Venkataramanan, and Alfonso Morales

TO SOME PEOPLE, particularly those who can afford to live in a well-furnished and spacious house, the story of housing co-production to help alleviate the plight of homeless people in Madison, Wisconsin



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may sound marginal and novel. However, to the people in Occupy Madison (OM), it is a reality in their everyday lives.

The situation of this community of largely homeless people in Madison and their search for a place to live has led to our current undertaking to coproduce “tiny” houses for the homeless. Other successful encamped communities have transitioned from living in temporary dwellings to more permanent tiny houses. From the lessons learned in these other cities and through OM, we conclude that providing housing for homeless individuals is a social and political endeavor that requires the attention and effort of government, the private sector, the wider community and homeless people themselves. A home is a place with safety, dignity and community best understood in terms of the process by which these are obtained as well as the final product.

Homelessness and Housing

For most people, the first thing that comes to mind about the Occupy movement is the Occupy Wall Street protest against social and economic

inequality in America today and the greed and corruption that have caused it. When the movement made its way to Madison, protests began to unfold here. However, the movement here confronted different issues than the original protest in New York City. In solidarity with national Occupy, on October 7, 2011, a group of activists in Madison established a tent camp in an empty lot near the capitol, initiating a crusade that continues today, but on very different terms than these activists likely foresaw. As the camp became more established, an increasing number of homeless people were attracted to the new makeshift community. Soon, the number of activists and academics living in this temporary encampment dwindled, and they were replaced by dispossessed homeless individuals. The OM encampment gradually developed from a symbolic exhibition to a real homeless dwelling site.

While the nation's homeless population decreased by 0.4 percent from 2011-2012, or about 2,235 people, an annual survey last conducted in January 2013 shows that Madison's homeless population has grown about 10%, to 732 sheltered and 99 unsheltered people. Many or-

ganizations are working to mitigate the effect and extent of homelessness in Madison and surrounding areas of Dane County, Wisconsin. Dane County Homeless Services Consortium (DCHSC) is an ongoing collaboration of public and non-profit agencies, funders and advocacy groups working to meet the needs of homeless persons and those at risk of homelessness. Several city agencies have contributed as well.

Allies and Opposition

The OM encampment found allies in the City Council. In April 2013, a group of city council members suggested that OM receive a temporary extension for its encampment on the 800 block of East Washington Avenue, a parking lot near the capitol building. Mayor Paul Soglin had been strongly opposed to this encampment, saying it would draw more homeless people to the area and create a burden on the city. “At some point, people have got to understand, Madison, Wisconsin, despite all the good intentions of the progressive people of this city, does not have the resources to serve the homeless from our city, the rest of the county, the rest of the state,” he said. From Soglin’s view, a homeless encampment is not the proper solution. For him, the fundamental answer to homelessness is to combat poverty and dedicate more resources to the development of programs to help homeless people escape their instable state.

Besides opposition from the mayor, the OM encampment was further fettered by city ordinances.

According to local law, a “campground” can only be a parcel or tract of land in the town owned by a person, the state, or a local government that is designed, maintained, intended, or used for the purpose of providing sites for non-permanent overnight use by four or more camping units, or by one to three camping units if the parcel or tract of land is a campground. It is illegal to use public open land as a campground when it has not been designated for camping, and many of the locations OM has used for camping do not qualify as campgrounds. However, there are many sites that OM has used for camping that are legal campgrounds and are owned and managed by the Dane County Park Division, such as Token Creek County Park and Lake Farm County Park. Yet, even these sites provide for little more than temporary alleviation of a chronic problem.

OM must also conform to county laws. According to Dane County ordinance, no camping unit may be registered for more than fourteen consecutive days at any one park and camping units must be removed from the park for at least forty-eight consecutive hours before being eligible for an additional fourteen days. OM attempted to follow city and county rules by paying the \$17 daily campsite fee (about \$500 per month), but when they tried to stay more than 14 days at one site, they were challenged. To try to lower costs, OM entered into negotiations with Dane County Parks officials about the one tent or camper per campsite rule, but with few results. Due to these

rules, the number of campers and OM’s limited budget, OM participants had to repeatedly migrate between different campgrounds.

Thwarted by city and county governments, more radical measures were needed. Self-help housing was the next best step. Self-help housing, as its name implies, is a process by which those in need of housing work with groups such as OM to build their own homes. OM supporters sought to establish a self-sufficient and stable community, and developed supportive relationships with local academics while scanning the nation for inspiration. OM adopted the idea of tiny houses, structures of less than 100 square feet made from recycled materials. OM initiated a subsidiary organization, Occupy Madison Build (OM Build), to create the structures associated with the OM vision of a community or eco-village of tiny houses.

A Lesson from Coproduction

Occupy Madison is not the first group to decentralize the housing process by building their own shelters. Tiny houses and eco-villages have been planned, constructed, completed and occupied in other cities in the United States. Housing experts such as John Turner have pointed out the inefficiency of housing policy centralized at the state-level. Turner claimed that “the larger an organization, the less concern it will have for individual and small-community demands...it always seems more profitable, or anyway less troublesome, to deal with a few large developers.” He advanced

this theory in the difficult housing economies of the United States during the 1973-1974 stock crash and the stagnation in the United Kingdom's housing sector. He believed that a house is best built by its dwellers so that they can control the major decisions. They would therefore be free to make their own contribution to the design, construction, and management of their housing, which would lead to greater personal investment in the housing. As he put it, "Deficiencies and imperfections in your housing are infinitely more tolerable if they are your responsibility than if they are somebody else's." Turner also believed in

coproduction and partnerships in developing homes and communities.

Dignity Village a Model

OM Build followed the example of Dignity Village, a homeless self-help housing village established at Sunderland Yard in Portland, Oregon in 2001. Village members worked with a group called City Repair to build portable, well-insulated houses out of repurposed wood, straw and clay for about \$500 each. All 50 family structures at Dignity Village are code-compliant 10'x10' houses made of recycled

materials. After three years of negotiations and deals with the city, Dignity Village was eventually given permanent-camp status in the City of Portland and became a city-recognized encampment of about sixty homeless people. They share the same dream as OM Build, which is "to purchase a patch of land and establish a permanent, environmentally friendly camp." Dignity Village has telephone and internet service, propane-heated showers, a library, administrative offices and a shared kitchen, amenities that are all accessible. Bus service is nearby, and various charitable groups provide a variety of social services at the camp. In 2006 alone, one hundred people transitioned out of the camp into permanent housing, and in 2012 the Portland City Council advanced a three-year contract extension with Dignity Village.

Successful self-help homeless encampments require government support and sustained efforts from private partners. Partners including volunteer architects and builders produced illustrative plans for Dignity Village, assisted in construction and helped tie the new neighborhood into the larger community. Village housing includes a shared kitchen and dining area, bathrooms with showers, a gathering space for meetings, and spaces for gardens and micro-businesses. In Madison, OM made careful plans for a village before any tiny houses were constructed, knowing that a good project design can save time and money and realizing that a detailed plan can support negotiations with government.



Photos: The Oregonian



Dignity Village, Sunderland Yard, Portland, Oregon

A House Is a Process, Not a Product

On June 10, 2013 OM Build signed a one-year lease for a warehouse that it uses as a construction workshop. Construction began on several Tiny Houses. Every month, a sign-up sheet is provided to OM members to involve and schedule all those interested. Every day eight people, homeless and volunteer professionals, work together from 9 am to 5pm, one hour each. OM Build operates on a “sweat-equity” model where owners must work to “buy” their own housing. According to Noah Philips, a board member of OM build, the organization requires that an individual work 300 hours at the workshop on other houses before they are allowed to work on their own house.

By the end of summer 2013, a 98 square foot house was finished. At the time of writing, the home is being equipped with a microwave, refrigerator, and heating. Because no land has yet been obtained for

the houses, they are built on wheels and will have to be moved every 48 hours to circumvent the city’s parking codes, which prohibit trailers from staying outdoors on the same location for more than two days. Still, this house will provide shelter for a homeless person and stands as a reminder to the city that there is an alternative approach to homelessness in Madison.

Self-help housing opportunities are provided to alleviate some of the fear and uncertainty surrounding the homeless community. According to Bruce Wallbaum, a board member of OM Build, “People are fearful of people living in tents, and I think that a home sort of takes away that fear.” Still, Tiny Houses challenge current City ordinances. In October 2013, OM achieved a small victory by successfully amending a local zoning ordinance. The updated zoning law allows overnight sleeping in tents or other temporary portable shelters on property owned by religious

institutions or other nonprofit organizations who assist the homeless.

A house is a process, not a product. As one member in OM said, “We do not simply need a shelter, we need a sense of community.” From the perspective of OM, the old adage seems to be true, that “many hands together make a home.” OM is playing a role in this home-making process by fostering self-help housing. However, to have a lasting effect requires the support of the law and the community, which is where OM has most recently been focusing its efforts. The city, community organizations, and citizens are taking the tentative steps to build houses and homes for people in Madison who have lived too long without either. **P²**

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Photo: Wisconsin State Journal

A Knowledge Worker-Low Wage Worker Coalition in Ithaca, New York

Pierre Clavel

IT'S BEEN A LONG TIME since anyone thought Ithaca, New York, was a working class town, but the past decade has seen new levels of organization among workers, adaptations to the changing structure of the local economy – not least the Tompkins County Worker Center (TCWC).

Ithaca Background

When Ezra Cornell founded a university there in 1865, the city was rife with entrepreneurs and a number of factories developed alongside the university. While the university grew, the manufacturing economy did as well. Branch plants of major corporations like General Electric hung on through the 1960s and 1970s, carrying with them a union presence. Manufacturing contributed roughly 6500 of the 31,000 labor force as late as 1980. By then, there were forebodings of labor decline, but there was also activism, and the United Auto Workers (UAW) carried on a series of organizing campaigns at Cornell through the 1980s.

Overall, liberal politics and activist networks flourished. The university had seen a significant presence of student radicalism in the 1960s; communes and self-managed businesses appeared in the 1970s; activists of many stripes found a home under the supports offered by liberal elements at Cornell and fast-growing Ithaca College. And outside the universities, Ithaca and Tompkins County were increasingly “liberal.”



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The economic base was changing, however. Even as the area lost manufacturing jobs, new start-ups – small and mainly non-union shops – spun off from university research activities. But the main growth was in the service economy. As Cornell and Ithaca College grew, they contracted out for housing, dining, and many personal and business services.

The labor movement did at least maintain its presence. The UAW succeeded with the janitors and maintenance workers at Cornell and maintained an Ithaca office. Labor activists established the Tompkins-Cortland Workers Coalition, which eventually received AFL-CIO certification as a regional labor council. And local politics turned to a center-left position, with the Democratic Party dominating the city and achieving majority status on the Tompkins County Board of Representatives in 1994 – in part by tapping the emerging, underemployed but relatively liberal and younger populations, often with families, getting by on part time and marginal jobs and attracted to the amenities available in a university town.

The Living Wage Campaign

Perhaps it was a natural outgrowth that Carl Feuer, who had been active in the area labor movement since the 1980s, saw the potentials in connecting the interests of the lowest paid workers to this emerging increasingly straitened lower middle class. In 1997 Feuer approached a group called Justice for All, mainly non-academics who had formed around former socialist mayor Ben Nichols, and it formed the Tompkins County Living Wage Campaign. Local institutions were receptive. The Alternatives Federal Credit Union began publicizing a “living wage” in 1993, and the

new campaign got the County Legislature to enact a small program (\$37,000 in the first year) to provide additional funds to agencies on county contracts to ensure that no human service worker on those contracts would be paid less than a Living Wage.

There was a hiatus, but by 2001 Feuer had been joined by human services worker Pete Meyers, and they revived the “Living Wage” idea as the Tompkins County Living Wage Coalition (TCLWC), seeking partnership with many other organizations. Their first major public effort was when they joined with the Ithaca Paraprofessionals Association (NEA) in a successful year-and-a-half campaign to win a “Living Wage for the Paras” from the School District. A highlight of the campaign was a march through the City of Ithaca demanding a Living Wage for Paras – 200 teacher aides, teacher assistants, bus aides and family liaisons. In the end, the School District agreed to raise Paras to a minimum of \$9.50/hour (from \$6.72/hour). It was then possible to convert the Coalition from a volunteer to a core professional staff. By 2002, TCLWC had grant funds from Cornell’s Center for Religion, Ethics and Social Policy (CRESP) that gave them office space and funds for one coordinator position, which Feuer and Meyers shared. From then on TCLWC developed in a series of steps:

- The Living Wage issue had the potential for longevity and to branch out to different types of activities. One feature was a wide range of coalition partners. Including the paraprofessionals campaign, TCLWC reported 31 partner organizations.
- TCLWC also found itself with a variety of memberships: on the one hand workers at the lowest range of the wage scale; on the other a set of volunteers and supporters drawn from university faculty, local business people and entrepreneurs, and socially oriented professionals. This combination offered a tantalizing spectrum of capabilities, but it was also a challenge – including the difficulties of speaking across class boundaries.
- One of the main services needed by the low wage and temporary workers was information: when issues arose at work, what were their rights? What was a legitimate grievance? What remedies were available. In 2003 TCLWC established a Worker Rights Center, and won a first major case: collaborating

with the NYS Attorney General’s office to win back wages and other workplace reforms at a local pizzeria.

- In 2005 TCLWC supported a year-long Wal-Mart Workers Living Wage Campaign, helping generate widespread community support and over 5,000 petition signatures seeking fair wages and working conditions for workers at a new Wal-Mart store in Ithaca.
- Also that year, an Immigrant Rights Center was started as a project of the TCLWC in collaboration with the Latino Civic Association and the Ithaca Asian-American Association.
- In 2006, the organization established the Living Wage Employer Certification Program, the first of its kind nationwide. Modeled on Fair Trade Certification, the Living Wage Employer program was designed to reward local businesses who “do right by their employees and pay a living wage.”

Worker Center Established

Reflecting the common thread of these initiatives, the organization changed its name to the Tompkins County Worker Center in August 2006. By this time, Feuer and Meyers had momentum from success in coalition-building that reached out from its initial base – essentially the Labor Coalition and the UAW – to the larger network of social agencies and political interests in the city and county. Several key steps and initiatives reflect this.

- TCWC continued its support for specific labor actions and support needs: a settlement for back wages and hours violations with a local restaurant, then getting the state Department of Labor to do a “sweep” of restaurants for wage and hour violations resulting in the discovery of nearly \$90,000 owed to 93 workers in 22 restaurants and support for workers seeking to form labor unions in several places.
- The Worker Rights Center had created a “hot line” so that workers seeking information about grievances could quickly get confirmation of whether specific events were actionable. This initiative, easily replicable and expanded to larger agendas, became one basis for periodic meetings with activists in

other upstate cities to discuss a regional grouping of worker centers.

- In a kind of payoff to the early and ongoing union support, the Workers Center was beginning to operate as a bridge to union revival. In 2012 workers at Tompkins Community Action called the Worker Rights Hotline reporting several grievances. The center advised the complaining workers to consider getting majority support for unionization. Because of their union contacts, TCWC was able to put the group of 70 Head Start workers in a local community action agency in touch with Painters Local # 4, and a majority vote won certification. Another case was the New Roots Charter School, whose thirty workers contacted the Worker Center through the Hotline. The Center quickly connected them with organizers from the New York State United Teachers, and the result was an agreement from the school's governing board and management to "voluntarily recognize" the union without a vote.
- The Living Wage remained a central theme for the Worker Center, and they pressed it on both city and county governments in 2013. The mayor had agreed to support the Living Wage for city workers, but resisted TCWC's advocacy of a living wage as a condition for a tax abatement for a luxury hotel proposed in the downtown. The city council had accommodated a construction boom in part by easing the conditions for tax abatements and the mayor, in a recent op-ed, called Meyers and the Workers Center "naive" in their demands. There is no sign this will end the debate. The Workers Center pressed the county as well – it asked the County Board to phase in a living wage requirement on contractors whose work was essentially subsidizing what had been higher paid work on the county payroll.

By 2013 the Tompkins County Worker Center had 860 formally signed up members, a combination of roughly 340 low wage workers and 520 volunteers and supporters. Its constituency is much larger – for example it can claim ninety "Certified Living Wage Employers" with 2,476 workers making a Living Wage. It had begun to facilitate unionization in response to hotline inquiries, and it was the dominant actor in the local labor scene.

The Balancing Act

Meyers thought it was not a bad thing that other worker centers focused almost exclusively on low wage workers, often defined by occupation (e.g., janitors, restaurant workers, car wash workers, etc.) and these might find common cause as immigrants or by ethnicity. But in Tompkins County the low wage workers were not definable by skills or by industrial sector, were spread among a large number of workplaces and had varied ethnicities. But TCWC also generated a support base and membership drawn from workers – often not low wage – at Cornell and Ithaca College, and from a varied group of entrepreneurs, socially oriented professionals and the self-employed and retired. TCWC was playing to two different constituencies: the low wage workers in their membership and the support base.

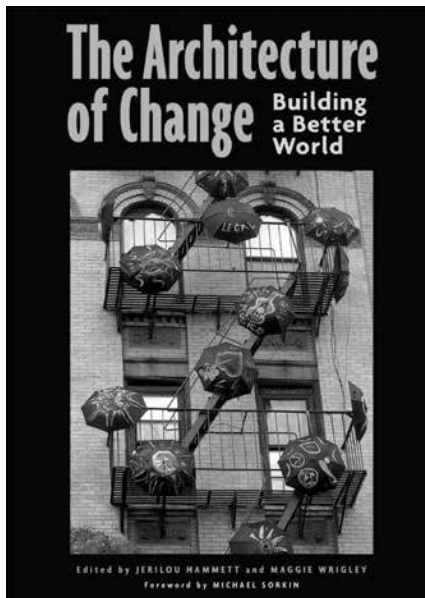
Meyers saw potential in maintaining the balance between the two sets of members. He saw that they needed both: the problem was how to generate problem solving from workers while maintaining the participation of a wider public. He saw this as a tight-rope, partly a class thing. He thought Ithaca was an extreme case: the low wage workers "were not really wordsmiths," and saw the "living wage" in terms of bread and butter issues. The other constituency was the volunteers and contributors from the community, who tended to support the "living wage" concept in principle and were more likely to tie it to the general structure of the local economy as well, potentially bridging the low-wage workers to a wider constituency. They could dominate the meetings and drown out the workers. Meyers needed both groups.

But Meyers and Feuer have been at this for a decade or more, and the combination is bearing fruit. What is emerging is a basis for organizing the community's "have nots" different from the old formula for working class formation and consciousness based on a common experience in large and concentrated work sites – e.g. the mine and the shop floor. In Ithaca and Tompkins County and wide swaths of the nation, there are few such sites anymore. Instead, there are a myriad of smaller private and non-profit workplaces, with many owners and managers (like Ithaca's "certified employers") whose own issues may play a major role as community attempts to win benefits for local labor play out.

P²

The Architecture of Change: Building a Better World

Reviewed by Anthony Schuman



The Architecture of Change: Building a Better World

Edited by Jerilou Hammett
and Maggie Wrigley

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Photo: Peg Seip

THE Architecture of Change: Building a Better World is an homage by Jerilou Hammett to her late husband, the writer, journalist and social activist Kingsley Hammett, who died unexpectedly in 2008. It is an altogether fitting tribute, for in reminding us of Kingsley's humanity, it also spotlights his skill as a reporter and writer.

The book consists of 36 articles gleaned from the pages of *DESIGNER/builder* magazine, the ambitious publication that Kingsley and Jerilou produced for fifteen years starting in 1994. It was a two person operation – published and largely written by Kingsley and edited by Jerilou, who assembled the present anthology, together with Maggie Wrigley.

The Architecture of Change documents efforts by community-based individuals and organizations, sometimes assisted by design professionals, to change the world, for that was the unabashed project of *DESIGNER/builder*. Although the book is composed of discrete chapters, each chronicling a particular project or, in some cases, personal profile, the cumulative weight of the volume goes beyond the anecdotal and episodic to create a rich picture

of the theory, history and practice of grass-roots activism. Along the way it touches on matters of art, education, housing, aging, accessibility, planning, health, economics and nutrition. It is the combination of facts on the ground with the human element – the essence of good journalism – that makes the stories come alive. Kingsley Hammett was a very good writer, and the book, in addition to being informative and provocative, is a pleasure to read.

Community Movements as Protagonists

The heroes of these stories are not the architects, planners and landscape architects who figure in many of them, but the larger community efforts of which they are part. In this sense it presents the converse side of the exhibit “Small Scale, Big Change: New Architecture of Social Engagement” at the Museum of Modern Art in 2010-2011, which focused precisely on the role of the architects and their creations as catalysts of change. Here the target is the base, the popular movements that have the power to transform lives locally in ways that are replicable and, in some instances, scalable to wider applications.

The articles are striking both for their geographic reach and their immediacy. The chapters take us from street furniture and grocery vans in West Oakland to a hip-hop high school in St. Paul, to a variety of stories in New York City with stops along the way in Santa Monica, Chicago, Kansas City, Philadelphia, Washington DC, Richmond, VA, and Trenton. International stories include interfaith community building in El Salvador, a children's playground in Thailand, housing construction in Afghanistan, design/build in Mexico, and the galvanizing potential of art in a squatter settlement outside Nairobi. Each of these stories is rendered with a keen eye for detail, a remarkable feat given that the authors did all their writing from their base in Santa Fe. The secret of the intimacy of these accounts is the careful preparation in locating key people to talk to and then cultivating a relationship with them through many phone conversations before framing the story and asking the most germane questions. (I know this first hand as the subject of a profile in the magazine in 2000.)

Individual Profiles

The focus on place-specific grass-roots efforts is balanced by a series of in-depth profiles that also focus more on issues. "The Evolution of Universal Design", for example, traces the pioneering work of Elaine Ostroff in this field. Starting with questions about the impact of physical design in learning environments for children with developmental disabilities, she extended this inquiry into a broader concern for people with other disabilities in the general population, a field that has come to be known as universal access or universal design. The subject of universal design is also the focus of a profile of Patricia Moore, a gerontologist/sociologist who went underground (in disguise) to experience firsthand the treatment of the aging and to bring these findings to the attention of her sometimes tone-deaf colleagues. Indeed, aging, along with various housing issues, receives a particular emphasis in this volume, with four separate articles devoted to it. (Housing receives the most attention with eight.)

Sometimes the articles yield unexpected rewards. For example, the interview with Fredda Vladeck, conducted jointly by Jerilou and Kingsley, is centered on her work in establishing programs in New York City to

assist seniors who are aging in place; that is, staying in their long-time residences as they age rather than retiring elsewhere, a phenomenon that produces NORCs (Naturally Occurring Retirement Communities). Working initially at Penn South Mutual Housing Corporation, a union-sponsored limited equity housing development just south of Penn Station in New York, Vladeck found an enthusiastic ally in David Smith, the longtime president of the cooperative. Together they crafted a program which became a model not only for New York City, but one that was duplicated across the country. The unexpected nugget is that Fredda Vladeck was related through marriage to Baruch Vladeck, an early housing advocate who, in her recollection, convinced Mayor Fiorello LaGuardia to go to Washington to persuade President Franklin Roosevelt to fund public housing in New York City, the forerunner of the national program. Thus an article about seniors aging in place suddenly connects us to the origins of public housing in New York and the nation.

This topic recurs in one of the most compelling articles in the collection, the story of the founding of the National Museum of Public Housing in Chicago. The Museum is the brainchild of Deverra Beverly, a longtime public housing resident who was president of the tenants' council at ABLA Homes and a Commissioner on the Chicago Housing Authority. The goal of the museum is to disprove the notion that public housing was a failure, and especially not a failure on the part of the residents, as it is often portrayed. Beverly describes the rich sense of community that imbued public housing in the early days, before mismanagement, policy changes, and drugs ripped the heart out of the enterprise. As she says, "Without this museum we'll have grandchildren and great-grandchildren who never know that public housing existed in any meaningful form." The article contains extended comments by Roberta Feldman, an architect and educator who has worked with the women in Chicago's public housing for a long time. The article highlights the intelligence, ingenuity and perseverance of these women, providing along the way a capsule history of public housing. It is an example of both the reach of these articles and the way in which people of color are given foreground treatment in their pages. The focus on Ms. Beverly will remain as a tribute, as she died in November, 2013.

Beyond the geographical diversity and human intimacy of these stories is the link they make between theory and practice, a link that will be apparent to informed readers but is not made explicitly in the writing. This is journalism, after all, not academic discourse or professional jargon. For example, the lead article in the collection, “Sidewalk Living Rooms,” describes how street furniture in West Oakland both accommodates and makes visible the working class Latino population of the neighborhood so that, as Hammett succinctly observes, “neighbors can claim their right to public space while at the same time discouraging those who would like to see them gone altogether.” Informed readers will hear echoes of “the right to the city,” whether their point of reference is Henri Lefebvre, David Harvey, or the current Right to the City movement.

Gentrification and Planners in Toronto

Two articles on Toronto reference Planners Network and Planning Action, an organization that grew out of the 2000 Planners Network conference organized there by PN stalwart Barbara Rahder who is pictured in the first article. The theme of that conference, “Insurgent Planning, Globalization and Local Democracy,” signals the opposition by local planners and activists to a master plan aimed at intensification of the city center to attract the “creative class.” This put them at odds with Jane Jacobs, who backed the plan. As urban geographer/planner Deborah Cowen notes, “In some ways it can be difficult to distinguish within the urban planning community between a gentrifying impulse and a social impulse because they are so entwined here due to Jacobs’ legacy.” The second article profiles Doug Young, an architect turned planner and founder of Planning Action who has elaborated a critique of urban life under conditions of late capitalism. While no explicit reference is made to Saskia Sassen, Manuel Castells or others who have written in this vein, PN readers familiar with the “dual city” theory will easily interpolate the theoretical underpinnings. Readers long in memory may also hear echoes of James O’Connor’s work in legitimation theory.

Sometimes these underpinnings are referenced explicitly in the article itself, as in the case of David Ellis and the High School for the Recording Arts in St. Paul, which draws on the multiple intel-

ligence theories of Howard Gardner to create new avenues for motivating and educating urban youth. But familiarity with theoretical writings is not necessary for an understanding of these stories, and that is the great accomplishment of the book. The stories speak for themselves, without need of academic undergirding or editorializing.

Jerilou and Kingsley Hammett shared a goal: “building a better world.” Their vehicles in this quest are the people slugging it out in the trenches, making a difference in their communities and neighborhoods. The stories they report are inspirational, often the last bastions against the onslaught of global capitalism that holds sway both at home and abroad. They provide glimmers of optimism for those trying to link local struggles to national movements capable of bringing about the systemic change that can create a societal framework worthy of these efforts. **P2**

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We believe that planning should be a tool for allocating resources and developing the environment to eliminate the great inequalities of wealth and power in our society, rather than to maintain and justify the status quo. We are committed to opposing racial, economic, and environmental injustice and discrimination by gender and sexual orientation. We believe that planning should be used to assure adequate food, clothing, housing, medical care, jobs, safe working conditions, and a healthful environment. We advocate public responsibility for meeting these needs, because the private market has proven incapable of doing so.

We seek to be an effective political and social force, working with other progressive organizations to inform public opinion and public policy and to provide assistance to those seeking to understand, control, and change the forces which affect their lives.

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- **New York City, Bloomberg and de Blasio**
- **Planning Ethics**
- **Labor and community in The Philippines**
- **Review of *The Architecture of Change***

Photo: Biking Public Project

Russell and Jamie pop wheelies after Hurricane Sandy in Red Hook, Brooklyn. With no mass transit after Superstorm Sandy, bicycling was the most efficient and inexpensive means of transportation around New York City.

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