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Why Unions Matter

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"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

Why Unions Matter

Defending the Equalizers

By Chris Tilly

For a few weeks in early 2011, Madison, Wisconsin, looked like our Cairo. Up to 100,000 protestors resisted the drive by Governor Scott Walker and newly elected Republican legislative majorities to pass legislation to gut public-sector collective bargaining rights. Some camped out in the State Capitol, Tahrir Square-style. Satellite protests sprouted in Ohio, Michigan, Indiana, Idaho, Tennessee and elsewhere as Republican lawmakers pushed similar measures wherever they commanded majorities. Egyptian dissidents saw the connection, holding up signs supporting Wisconsin unions and even sending the demonstrators solidarity pizzas.

The parallels should make us more than a bit uncomfortable. The United States looks more and more like a third world country. Workers' real wages have now been stagnant for four decades, while incomes of the rich have surged and those of the super-rich have skyrocketed. Because of the resulting lack of middle-class buying power, U.S. growth over most of the last three decades has been underpinned by borrowing and a series of financial bubbles; we are only starting to dig out of the devastating fallout from the most recent and serious of the burst bubbles. As in Egypt, vast disparities in wealth breed domination of the political system by moneyed elites, fertilizing crony capitalism in the commanding heights of the economy. As the sense of a shared future has frayed and an every-person-for-themselves mentality has grown, public investment in infrastructure, from roads to education, has slumped. Stark inequality and frustrated aspirations breed desperation at the bottom, but the main policy response has been beefing up public and private policing and an ever-expanding prison complex.

PN member **Chris Tilly** teaches urban planning and directs the Institute for Research on Labor and Employment at UCLA.

The Great Equalizers

That's why unions, despite only claiming one worker in eight as a member, are so important. In the midst of this growing inequality, unions are the great equalizers. This is true in three senses.

First, unions are income equalizers. Rutgers professor Jeffrey Keefe has demonstrated that, contrary to popular belief, public-sector workers receive on average lower compensation (including both pay and benefits) than private-sector workers once you control for education and other characteristics. But among both private- and public-sector workers, union workers *do* earn more than their non-union counterparts, helping to moderate slightly the growing gap between rank-and-file workers and managers and professionals. Interestingly, Keefe shows that more educated public employees earn *less* than their private-sector peers, whereas less educated public workers earn more. This tracks a general trend: the union wage advantage is strongest for those at the bottom. Women, people of color, immigrants and young workers benefit most from unionization.

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On the Cover
Participants in the Our Communities, Our Jobs March in Los Angeles, March 26, 2011.

Photo: © 2011 Marie Kennedy

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From and Toward a QUEER URBANISM

By Kian Goh

"The question of what kind of city we want cannot be divorced from that of what kind of social ties, relationships to nature, lifestyles, technologies and aesthetic values we desire."
—David Harvey,
"The Right to the City"

". . . Queer space finds in the closet or the dark alley places where it can construct an artificial architecture of the self."
—Aaron Betsky, *Queer Space*

"Our visions begin with our desires."
—Audre Lorde

Kian Goh, AIA, LEED AP, is an architect, educator and community activist, and a partner in SUPER-INTERESTING!, an architecture and sustainability consulting firm. She teaches design and sustainability at Parsons The New School for Design and the University of Pennsylvania School of Design. She is a former member of the board of directors of the Audre Lorde Project and collaborated with FIERCE on its Pier 40 campaign. She was also one of the organizers of the first LGBT contingent in the New York City Lunar New Year Parade in 2010.

In early 2008, a group of parents and children, parks advocates and lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) youth rallied together to protest the proposal for a large-scale retail and entertainment development at Pier 40, on Manhattan's Hudson River Park. The LGBT youth, led by community organizing group FIERCE, had been working since 2000 to keep the park and piers safe and accessible. Carrying signs that read "Save the Village" and "LGBT Youth and Little Leaguers UNITE!," queer youth and neighborhood advocates and residents formed an unlikely alliance of community opposition to large-scale privatized development.

For FIERCE, it was a particular triumph, a milestone to organizing work that had engaged and dealt with several years of tension between established West Village residents and the LGBT youth who call the piers home. From organizing in response to harassment and arrests of youth, to campaigning for later park curfew hours, to insisting on the right of queer youth to inhabit Village streets, FIERCE and their constituents fought for both a voice at the decision-making table and the right to public space.

Memorialized in the documentary *Paris Is Burning*, the piers at the end of Christopher Street have long been an epicenter of queer congregation. Like the bodies that inhabit them, the piers epitomize a wary comfort on the edge and, like so many edges, especially water edges, a place of possibilities. The crumbling infrastructure, left to rot after the city's shipping heyday, offered a perfect in-between space for those looking simultaneously for escape and belonging. The piers became not only popular cruising grounds, but important centers of community, where a boy or girl getting

off a bus after fleeing from far-away oppression could count on finding support and an extended family.

In recent years the piers and adjacent Hudson River Park have reflected the continuing demographic and economic changes in the West Village. Piers and park are now smartly landscaped with popular jogging and biking paths, nearby residential towers are home to some of the priciest square footage in the world and the Stonewall Inn, a few blocks down Christopher Street, is now a gay tourist destination, a mere symbol of an uprising. Many streets in the Village barely hold on to their bohemian, countercultural history, and the signs that remain are as much due to nostalgia as any kind of radical agenda. But still youth come to the piers, motivated by accounts they've read, watched, heard about or even something more intangible—a shared history, a cultural memory of those places of possibility.

In his book *Queer Space: Architecture and Same-Sex Desire*, historian Aaron Betsky explores the making of queer space. He describes a space "not built, only implied, and usually invisible . . . useless, amoral and sensual space that lives only in and for experience." Betsky's queers, almost exclusively gay white men, through opportunism, innovation and desperation, "queered" spaces using actions, signs and symbols, particularly interstitial spaces of the city, areas of informal gathering not often in view—discos and clubs, bathhouses, bars or sections of parks at night. Queers invented, with limited resources, ephemeral spaces of display and experience within the city, new spatial and cultural permeabilities.

Early queer spaces were necessarily interior, where darkness and seclusion offered possibilities for remaking both the spaces between and the bodies themselves. Stonewall and the Castro proved decisive breakout moments—not the invention of queer spaces but the spilling out of queerness into public streets.

Through the 1980s and 1990s, queers increasingly occupied and queered public space and public imaginations. Gay pride parades grew and multiplied, slowly making the transition from protest to celebration. Groups like ACT UP stormed streets and institutions at the height of the AIDS epidemic, making demands for not just public visibility, but acknowledgement of gay bodies and gay acts in a time of crisis.

And gays enthusiastically went about the creation of distinctly gay neighborhoods in large cities across the country. From the West Village to Dupont Circle and the Castro, gays proved incredibly adept at revitalizing urban spaces. Emblazoning the exteriors in ways that reflected past splendorous interiors, such gay facades indicated when neighborhoods were safe for

Present-day Hudson River Park, with luxury condo towers designed by Richard Meier.

Young people on Christopher Street Piers, with Pier 40 in the background.

Photos by Kian Goh

Photo by Kian Goh

Photo by ALP

Photo by Jefferson Siegel for *The Villager*

ABOVE

Activists led by Q-Wave organized the first LGBT contingent in the annual Lunar New Year Parade in Manhattan's Chinatown in 2010.

CENTER

Organizers from the Audre Lorde Project's Safe Neighborhoods campaign hold a rally in Union Square.

BELOW

LGBT young people led by FIERCE protest plans for privatized development at Pier 40.

further exploration by less brave and foolhardy groups, often with the effect of stimulating gentrification.

Recent mainstream gay activism has steered far from its spatial repercussions. Both the gay marriage and gays-in-the-military movements constitute a desire for stamps of approval. From interiority to parades and protests to, now, efforts to get to do just like everyone else, it can be argued that, historically, the mainstream gay agenda was largely an assimilative one. It is then no surprise that public queer spaces remain ephemeral—signs and symbols remain, but the critical agenda, the instrumentality of queerness, disappears, covered and recovered by years of cultural and physical renovations.

Re-Queering

With gay neighborhoods established, tightly and seamlessly woven into the urban fabric, and pride parades not just celebratory but wholly commodified, is there still the possibility of a queer urbanism? Do queer actions still have the ability to reformat urban space?

Clearly, the demarcation of queer public space has not ceased. Even while pride parades lose their ability to shock, drowned out in thumping club music and rainbow ad banners, a number of other queer marches have sprouted in place. The increasing prominence of dyke marches across the country and the Trans Day of Action march in New York City attest to a renewed queer claim on public space.

The recent queering of ethnic pride parades as well shows a fascinating confluence of often complex issues of identity, visibility and representation. In Manhattan's Chinatown, local organizers led by Q-Wave, a queer Asian women and transgender group, have successfully petitioned for and organized an LGBT contingent in the annual Lunar New Year Parade for two years running. Similar efforts are ongoing to ensure LGBT inclusion in the St. Patrick's Day Parade and India Independence Day Parade in the city.

Beyond parades and marches, we can also observe what could be called a conscious *re-queering* of spaces.

FIERCE's work on the piers is a primary example. Not content simply to ensure that successive waves of queer youth retain access to spaces of community and safety, FIERCE has held numerous organized events on the piers, including film nights and mini-balls, revisiting the days of "voguing" balls.

This kind of re-queering goes on every day, but is particularly evident in the hours after the annual gay pride parade, when thousands of young LGBT people of color flood the Hudson River Park. Kept from the piers by police barricades, young queers enact a parade of sorts along the promenade. Police control is particularly evident at these times, a reality that itself has spawned a community-based counter-movement, a cop watch project run by various local community groups tasked with keeping a record of, and hence a tether on, police harassment.

Radical Queer Urbanism

Even in the age of post-queer liberation, the work of radical LGBT activists constitutes a new *in-between* queer space, between the increasing invisibility of mainstream gays and lesbians of television and movies, of townhouses and magazines, and the violence and discrimination that still confounds LGBT people in many parts of this country.

Distinct from previous struggles, these activists work in a space that is still relatively new for LGBT movements, carving out new spaces not only of visibility, but of safety, resilience and in public urban space, oftentimes far from established gay centers. In New York City, in addition to FIERCE, groups like Queers for Economic Justice (QEJ), the Audre Lorde Project (ALP) and Make the Road New York work to address the most critical lapses of urban services and safety.

QEJ's Shelter Project organizers work in the city's homeless shelters, reaching out to homeless LGBT people, offering support and community, and making connections to additional social services. QEJ's work not only permeates the interior space of the shelter, but creates tangible connections to wider networks in the city. This work brings to light the issue of homelessness, a particularly fraught queer space all too prevalent among urban LGBT youth.

The Audre Lorde Project's Safe Neighborhoods campaign is creating a network of safe spaces in the Bedford-Stuyvesant neighborhood of Brooklyn, without police intervention. In a country where one in every one hundred people is in the criminal justice system, ALP organizers are aware that the increased criminalization of young people of color helps no one. By establishing visible safe spaces among local businesses and gathering areas, and conducting trainings on homophobia, transphobia and ways to prevent violence without relying on law enforcement, the initiative attempts to create a new model of community accountability for safety and welfare in urban neighborhoods.

Make the Road New York's GLOBE initiative, working largely with immigrant communities in Bushwick, Brooklyn, engages neighborhood schools as partners in creating supportive environments for LGBT youth. Sited at the intersection of immigrant and LGBT rights and safety, the initiative negotiates and pulls apart spatial and social boundaries that are complicated and operate on multiple levels.

Each of these initiatives asserts that the safety and welfare of LGBT people in cities cannot be divorced from the social, economic and spatial conditions of urban environments. From direct acts aimed at changing discriminatory bureaucratic policy to the more consuming work of changing prevailing public opinion, these campaigns literally broaden the possibilities of movement for queers in the city. They map, both literally and otherwise, paths forward for urban social movements that are critically inclusive. P²

Challenging the Mixed-Income Housing Paradigm

Preserving Low-Income Communities through Non-Profit Development Initiatives

By Michael Pyatok

Recent federal housing policy and conventional wisdom among a new generation of housing professionals assert that, to overcome problems of poverty in lower income communities, those communities must either be dispersed among higher income neighborhoods or injected with a massive dose of higher income households so that the lower income households become a minor presence in a newly 'branded' or gentrified neighborhood. Presumably, disadvantaged children gain from their association with children in educationally enriched households that are headed by working adults. These efforts, however, destroy existing functional social networks and dilute cultural identities within lower income communities, and much like gerrymandering or colonial occupation, serve to weaken the community's potential political power.

Moreover, governments are increasingly looking to private developers to produce such 'mixed-income' neighborhoods, adopting inclusionary zoning strategies that require private development projects to include a certain percentage of affordable units. Yet these developments are generally guided by market criteria rather than the needs of low-income residents and can further aggravate the negative consequences associated with a 'mixing' of income groupings. When inclusionary policies are applied to older inner-city communities, where there is a long tradition of racially and culturally cohesive lower income neighborhoods with their own community-based development corporations, indigenous efforts can be undermined as governments shift some of the limited pool of public subsidies to private developers.

Locally-based non-profit corporations can often accomplish the goal of providing affordable housing in a superior fashion to private for-profit developers for five reasons. First, the term of affordability is long since non-profit corporations have no intention of cashing out or refinancing in the future. Private developers, in contrast, seek to make the term of affordability as short as possible. Second, the housing is often 'service-enriched,' providing childcare, family counseling, job training and other social services that meet the specific needs of lower-income households. In market-rate housing, by comparison, everyone is expected to blend into the majority population; special services required by low-income, minority populations are not considered. Third, the housing is managed by non-profit corporations or for-profit corporations with substantial experience in serving the needs of lower income households. Fourth, the process of designing the housing is often inclusive and participatory, since the organizations use it as a political and community organizing opportunity. Market-rate housing, on the other hand, is often undertaken behind closed doors, restricting community input to the minimum public hearings required by Environmental Impact Reports. Finally, the housing is often designed to express the specific culture and pride of the people it is intended to serve. This differs from market-rate housing, which will often project either a bland homogenous image to lure the broadest population, or a hip, modern expression to target a smaller, higher income class.

Michael Pyatok has been an architect and professor of architectural design for forty-three years. He is currently a professor emeritus at the University of Washington. Since opening his own office in 1984, he has designed over 35,000 units of affordable housing for lower income households in the U.S. and abroad, and developed participatory design methods to facilitate community involvement throughout the design process.

To help illuminate these points, three case studies are presented below of projects designed by the author's firm in Oakland, California. These projects illustrate how lower income communities, in collaboration with professionals, can organize their own non-profit development corporations and produce improvements in their communities that maintain income homogeneity. In the process, they produce places whose design character and programming maintain rich, diverse cultural identities that market-rate residential developments ignore, or even purposefully avoid.

Photo: Frank Domin

Fox Courts The north side, with a child-care center on the ground floor, faces the main plaza and park of a new market-rate development. The top floor contains lofts for singles and couples, including formerly homeless. The middle floors are 2-story homes for families.

Securing a Non-Profit Affordable Housing Alternative in a Climate of Pro-Market Housing Provision

In 1999, a national, for-profit development corporation wanted to build 800 units of housing in a downtown neighborhood. It voluntarily offered to include 20 percent as 'affordable' to households between 60 and 100 percent of the area median income (AMI). Then-mayor Jerry Brown believed that Oakland had too much affordable housing, so he actively discouraged the corporation from including any affordable units. The corporation's policy, however, was always to include about 20 percent 'affordable' units, more in the income range of 80 percent AMI. It did so partly to improve its chances of acquiring subsidies, not exclusively for the affordable component but to underwrite the infrastructure costs associated with the entire development, thereby improving the profitability of the market-rate units as well. The corporation sought about $64 million in local public assistance, yet they proposed only 160 affordable units among the 800 and made no provision for special services for lower income households.

In response to this, a coalition of advocates, the Workforce Housing Coalition, formed to challenge the proposed development. The coalition's activism stemmed from a long tradition of community-based non-profits successfully completing thousands of affordable units in Oakland, assisted by the city's tax increment dollars accrued from redevelopment efforts. They saw this form of inclusionary housing by a private developer as an incomplete solution if it produced only for households at 80 percent AMI and without services. Moreover, the project would drain limited local housing subsidies, which could be used to revitalize other low-income neighborhoods. So, the coalition demanded that the inclusionary component be increased to 30 percent, with the additional 10 percent (eighty units) built as a stand-alone affordable development that would be owned and managed by a local 25-year-old non-profit organization and would include social services, childcare and job training for residents.

After two years of applying constant pressure on the developer, the mayor and the City Council, the coalition succeeded. The resulting development of eighty units is on .9 acres, and families have their own two-story town homes stacked in four floors, so each dwelling has natural through-ventilation, with walkways only on every other floor

serving the living levels of the homes. A portion of the building has a childcare center on the first floor, with two-story homes above, and on the fourth floor are lofts and studios for very low-income singles and couples, some of whom were formerly homeless. All of the households are linked to a series of social service providers facilitated by the non-profit owner-developer.

As the development is located in an Art Deco section of downtown, the non-profit developer hired artists to work with the local arts high school to design murals depicting the youth culture of Oakland for the building. The non-profit developer also retained an artist who enhanced the lobbies with mosaic portrayals of life in Oakland, and a tile artist who produced custom tiles, located along the base, which depicted the flora and fauna of the region stylized in a manner that reflects Latino, Asian, African and Native American approaches to pattern design.

Converting an Abandoned Site into a Culturally Diverse, Low-Income Housing Project

The second case is a community-based effort in the 1990s to redevelop a site in East Oakland that was an abandoned supermarket, in an area long ignored by the private market. A 35-year-old non-profit corporation, primarily serving the Asian community in Oakland's downtown, recognized that many new Southeast Asian refugees were settling in East Oakland, where the African-American and Hispanic-American communities had settled over the last five decades. To achieve harmony between the racial groups, the Asian-serving non-profit elected to joint venture with a neighborhood-based non-profit that had primarily been serving the African- and Hispanic-American households in that neighborhood. Together they sponsored a series of participatory design workshops to include local participation in the project's planning and design.

The resulting project includes ninety-two affordable units as well as a childcare center, a community center and 8,000 square feet for small, incubating retail businesses. The elevator-serviced front boulevard buildings contain the smaller households with few or no children. The other half of the units, for larger families, have their own two- and three-story homes located at the rear of the site above a parking garage. The retail space was included as an economic development strategy to help spawn small local businesses that could also serve the community. The clients and design team applied for and won $50,000 from the National Endowment for the Arts to hire local artists from each of the racial groups living in the community. The artists embellished the development in a way that represented their histories and traditions.

The project, now fifteen years old, has won six regional and national design awards. It also required ten different funding sources, with a key source being the City of Oakland. If an "inclusionary zoning" requirement had been instituted at that time, this non-profit joint venture partnership would have been forced to compete with private developers, who typically contribute to local City Council and mayoral campaigns, for these local funds. A for-profit developer would have used the city funds to make just 20 percent of a market-rate project affordable, and would have served a higher income level. The housing would also not have been built in a low-income neighborhood, filling a vacant lot. Furthermore, there would have been no social services or childcare, no economic development component and no expression of a neighborhood's cultural diversity and local self-help pride.

A Native American Mixed-Use Complex

The third case concerns a medical and dental clinic in East Oakland that was founded by the Native-American community more than thirty years ago and by 2001 had outgrown its facilities and needed a new building. Recognizing the value of inner-city land, the community realized that a single-purpose building within blocks of a BART station and on a boulevard with several bus lines should be converted to a mix of uses: a clinic with housing above. With no experience in housing development, they formed a joint venture in 2002 with the East Bay Asian Local Development Corporation. Together they developed an infill parcel of .7 acres with thirty-six family units above a 20,000 square foot medical and dental clinic, and public spaces that served as a community center and forty-five car garage. While the

facility distinctly expresses the presence of the Native American community in East Oakland, it serves all residents of East Oakland in need of affordable healthcare. It also includes two courtyards—one on the ground for the clinic with a kiva-like talking circle for outdoor community meetings and ceremonial dancing; and one located above the clinic exclusively for the residents.

As difficult as it was to raise the funds to produce the clinic, the organization went further and raised several hundred thousand dollars more to pay for artists from the Native American and immigrant communities. These artists included major works expressive of the Native American presence in the community and what the Native Americans have done to help all those who came to the Americas later as immigrants. This dramatic cultural expression would never be expected from private developers because their intentions are to develop a mixed-income project that serves a broad public, and thus they would fear that any special cultural expressions, particularly on the part of minorities, might alienate the clientele they seek to attract. In such mixed-income developments, minorities must assume a subservient role and accommodate themselves in cultural expression of the dominant culture.

Conclusion

Many U.S. cities have proud, capable, lower income neighborhoods and networks of non-profits, both neighborhood-based and citywide. In Oakland, these non-profits are responsible for nearly all of the affordable housing produced in the last thirty years, many receiving national attention for their quality programs and designs. It is their successful performance that throws into question the assertion that such neighborhoods lack the ability to improve themselves unless higher income residents move into their midst in sufficient numbers to improve the neighborhood's quality of life. Yet their programs are undermined when the limited supply of subsidies is redirected to private developers for 'inclusionary' projects. If there is to be inclusionary zoning, private developers should pay for such housing primarily from their own profits or pay in lieu fees to local affordable housing trust funds at sufficient levels to accomplish the task. Other compensation can be granted for those obligated to include their fair share, such as expedited processing, fee reductions or waivers and density bonuses. The financial support for self-determination and capacity-building in the non-profit sector, whether from local or state sources, should not be siphoned off to assist for-profit developers but should be directed to those organizations that can best serve the needs of low-income populations. P²

Photo: Mike Pyatok

Seven Directions The entry into the medical and dental clinic is flanked by two totem poles carved by a member of Alaska's Tlingit tribe. They tell their tribe's story of the birth of their people.

Photo: Mike Pyatok

Hismen Hin-Nu Terrace The central court is shared by families in townhomes, and singles and couples located in the elevator-served, stucco-clad buildings. A child-care center and community center open onto their own fenced areas.

Growing Greener in the City

Open Space Advocacy for Environmental Justice in Jackson Heights

By Donovan Finn

Definitions of environmental justice have traditionally focused on racial and ethnic minority populations and their tendency to be located near toxics and other environmental harms. But more recent conceptions have begun to consider income, social class and lack of access to municipal resources such as parks and transit. The New York City neighborhood of Jackson Heights, in northwestern Queens, is by New York standards a middle-income community. It is also the city's most diverse neighborhood and among its most park-starved. In the last two years, a loose coalition of local activists, planners and politicians have advanced an environmental justice message and worked to create more open space in this dense urban community, even at a time of deep fiscal retrenchment by the city.

Platted in 1910 as a working-class community of large cooperative apartment buildings, Jackson Heights is today considered possibly the most diverse neighborhood in the world. The current population is two-thirds foreign born, over half Latino and also heavily South Asian, with non-Hispanic whites comprising less than a quarter of the population. Combined with the neighborhood's proximity to LaGuardia Airport and the Brooklyn-Queens Expressway, and with one-quarter of neighborhood residents' incomes below the federally defined poverty level, the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation (NYSDEC) officially listed Jackson Heights as a "Potential Environmental Justice Area" in 2007.

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Based on this designation, in 2008 the Jackson Heights Beautification Group in partnership with the non-profit social service provider Queens Community House received a $25,000 NYSDEC grant to create a community-based sustainability plan. *A Green Agenda for Jackson Heights* was completed in June 2010 in partnership with the Pratt Center for Community Development after three large public workshops and fourteen "mini visioning sessions." Volunteer working groups are now strategizing implementation and the city has promoted *A Green Agenda* as a replicable model for other grassroots sustainability plans.

A Greener Jackson Heights

Concurrent with *A Green Agenda,* other local efforts have also invoked environmental justice rationales. Jackson Heights is woefully lacking in public open space. The non-profit New Yorkers for Parks ranks New York City Council District 25 (which includes Jackson Heights) 49th out of 51 districts in parkland acres per resident. The neighborhood contains only one park—a heavily utilized, fully paved 1.92 acre playground called, erroneously, Travers Park. In a dense neighborhood with 21 percent of its population under the age of 18, open space needs are palpable. The issue is not new. In 1971 a neighborhood leader said in the *New York Times* that Jackson Heights was "a lousy place for children," with "no play streets, no ball fields, no bike streets." Given the area's demographic makeup, advocates have long argued that this lack of open space is a form of environmental racism.

The neighborhood has relatively few empty lots or development "soft sites," but in early 2008 a coalition

of neighborhood advocacy groups (including professional planners, academics and planning students) representing the Western Queens Neighborhood Association, Friends of Travers Park, the Jackson Heights Beautification Group and the Jackson Heights Green Alliance began meeting to strategize low-cost and bureaucratically expedient solutions. NYC Department of Transportation (DOT) officials suggested that the groups apply for semi-permanent closure of a neighborhood street through the DOT's NYC Plaza Program or Summer Streets/Weekend Walks program. Although these programs are mostly designed for commercial corridors, residents proposed a variation whereby the community would operate a volunteer-run play street on 78th Street between 34th Avenue and Northern Boulevard (adjacent to Travers Park)—like the Police Athletic League of New York City has been running since 1914.

The first 78th Street Play Street operated on Sundays from July to November 2008. Volunteers moved traffic barricades into place at 6:00 A.M. on Sundays, monitored and cleaned the street and removed traffic barricades at 8:00 P.M. Instantly, residents accustomed to an overcrowded park filled the carless street with activity. The weekly Greenmarket expanded around the corner, children rode bikes and played games and adults socialized. Organizers scheduled free events aimed at the neighborhood's diverse population, such as a "learn to bike" clinic, fire department safety demonstrations, exercise and dance classes and concerts and theater performances. Thousands of people used the street over the five months of Sundays while extensive press coverage generated calls to organizers from groups hoping to replicate the program in other neighborhoods.

"We Want the Play Street!"

The 2009 Play Street saw a marked increase in users, and at a community visioning workshop that spring, participants' top request was expanding the program's days and hours. Working with the DOT and newly elected city council member Daniel Dromm, organizers developed a more ambitious plan for 2010 to restrict traffic completely from July 1 to August 31 in addition to Sunday closures in the spring and fall. Dromm also secured funding for Queens Community House to hire two attendants through the city's Summer Youth Employment Program (SYEP).

Despite DOT support, the plan still required approval from Queens Community Board 3 (CB3), one of the city's fifty-nine appointed advisory boards

Photo: Will Sweeney

Happy Play Street users.

for local issues including land use, zoning and service delivery. CB3's Transportation Committee voiced strong hesitation over the initial proposal, including concerns about emergency vehicle access and crime and gang activity, and the committee ultimately voted to recommend that the full board deny the application. Galvanized by this setback, organizers worked feverishly before CB3's meeting in May to address the Transportation Committee's concerns and acquire letters of support from all of the neighborhood's city, state and federal elected officials. Additionally, two hundred people attended a public forum about park issues, petitions circulated and a letter-writing campaign was undertaken. On the evening of the May 20th Community Board meeting, over 150 residents rallied at Travers Park and marched more than a mile to the meeting, chanting, "We want the play street." After a marathon meeting including passionate speeches in English and Spanish on both sides of the issue, the board voted to approve the Play Street application despite the reservations of the Transportation Committee.

The ribbon cutting for the 2010 Play Street was held on July 1 with over 500 people in attendance. Over the summer, local businesses and residents donated art supplies, toys and sports equipment, all of which was stored in a portable storage locker onsite. Volunteers and SYEP workers organized games and art projects, kept the street clean and turned on the adjacent fire hydrant on particularly hot days. Even community board members that had spoken in opposition were seen using the street.

Organizers continue working toward their ultimate goal to create a permanent public plaza on 78th Street, and this year hope to replicate 2010's two-month car-free Play Street, with various improvements. Fundraising is underway to provide more shaded seating options for elderly residents and to provide a wider variety of recreation opportunities that respond to the diverse racial and ethnic groups that utilize the Play Street. Organizers have recently met with the New York Civic Participation Project (NYCPP), an advocacy coalition of six local labor unions focused on immigrant issues, to strategize ways to publicize the availability of the Play Street for recreational uses and plan free events that would be of particular interest to the NYCPP's immigrant constituency.

Concurrently, play streets have become a focus for transportation and open space advocates citywide. The NYC Department of Health and Mental Hygiene and the Strategic Alliance for Health are promoting a summer 2011 play street initiative. Furthermore, the advocacy group Transportation Alternatives has made play streets a prominent tactic, publishing a 2011 *Play Streets Best Practices* manual among other efforts.

Grow a Park

Though the Play Street has been a low cost solution to expanding open space access, other solutions are needed. Located conveniently across 78th Street from Travers Park, the Garden School is a private K-12 school founded in 1923. The Garden School has faced decreasing enrollment for the last few years, blamed mostly on a faltering economy that has made it difficult to recruit students in a borough with few wealthy residents and relatively good public schools. To continue operation, the school has taken on a series of high-interest loans, currently totaling over $5.3 million.

In the summer of 2010, the school approached council member Dromm with an offer to sell the school's 29,000 square foot asphalt playfield to the city. Seizing the opportunity, Dromm secured $5 million for the purchase—the school's asking price at the time—in the fiscal year 2011 budget. But in late 2010, the school announced that it was putting the lot and the excess air rights from its existing building on the open market. Needing $500,000 almost immediately to cover operating costs, the school's board members explained that fiscal needs outweighed their desire to maintain the neighboring parcel as open space and that the city's mandatory Uniform Land Use Review Procedure (ULURP, required for city land purchases) would take longer than the school could afford to wait.

The Department of Citywide Administrative Services (DCAS) had already committed to the purchase and was undertaking the necessary due diligence. The city, however, unlike a private buyer, does not pay a deposit upon signing a real estate deal and only makes a full payment upon completion of ULURP, which can take a year or longer. The city's official offer letter was insufficient to help the highly leveraged school

Photo: Anna Dioguardi

In many New York City apartments, even playing with a train set inside is a frustrating activity. These Play Street users take advantage of the available space.

attain the additional bank loan or line of credit it needed to stay solvent in the meantime. Ironically, the lengthy ULURP process is designed, at least in part, to assure opportunities for community comment in the city's land development process, offering some level of protection against capricious development. Though many high profile urban renewal projects and rezonings have still been approved despite enormous public opposition, in this instance ULURP was the only identified obstacle in a project with little opposition, and in fact enormous community support.

Motivated by the failure of initial negotiations, residents began exploring other solutions. Planners living in the neighborhood offered to conduct the required environmental reviews *pro bono*, avoiding mandated competitive bidding and shortening the ULURP timeline. A "kids' letters to the mayor" project in support of the purchase collected over 650 letters. Finally, a community meeting was held with just thirty-six hours notice during a January blizzard where over 150 local residents expressed outrage at the Garden School board members for their shortsightedness and fiscal mismanagement.

By the end of that meeting a rough plan had been formulated: the community would attempt to raise

Photo: Donovan Finn

New York City Council member Danny Dromm, Council Speaker Christine Quinn, New York State Senator Jose Peralta and other dignitaries (and dignitaries-in-training) open the 2010 Play Street at a July 1, 2010 ribbon cutting.

$500,000 in microloans from neighborhood residents, ultimately aggregated as a bridge loan to fund the Garden School until the conclusion of ULURP. No official deal was struck, but the plan gave residents hope that the community's $500,000 no-interest loan and the ability to have a park next to their school, instead of an eight-story condominium, would convince the school to finalize a deal with the city. As of this writing, the Grow a Park campaign (*www.growapark.org*) has raised over $450,000 in pledges from 286 neighborhood residents, and while the city and the school are still negotiating, residents are optimistic a deal will be reached.

Photo: Donovan Finn

One of the most popular aspects of the Play Street was this small patch of Astroturf, bought on Craigslist and placed on the street. Travers Park, despite the name, has no grass or turf anywhere in its 2-acre footprint.

Photo: Anna Dioguardi

The 78th Street Play Street program in Jackson Heights is in its third year. For 2010 organizers closed the street to traffic for all of July and August, the duration of the NYC public school summer break.

Lessons Learned

Rallying a coalition of local actors behind the issue of open space access by framing it as an environmental justice issue, advocates in Jackson Heights have combined planning and activist approaches, pushing this issue to the forefront of local policy. Based on input from over 400 participants, seven of the *Green Agenda*'s forty-two goals are under the heading "green spaces," aimed at increasing the amount and quality of open space in the neighborhood. Publicity around this plan has also helped engage the city's Office of Long-Term Planning and Sustainability, which is now assisting *Green Agenda* organizers with implementation.

The Play Street illustrates that creative approaches to land use and transportation planning can be promoted from the grassroots, even in dense urban neighborhoods. The city still does not have a codified system for working with neighborhood groups to create temporary play streets. The Jackson Heights coalition, however, leveraged planning skills (analysis, design, visioning workshops, etc.) and demonstrated capacity to manage the project despite a lack of paid staff. DOT staff and a receptive city council member were important, but community organizing approaches were also employed to overcome initial Community Board hesitation.

Advocates in Jackson Heights have thus far successfully employed an ad hoc approach to open space expansion, though facilitating city purchase of the Garden School athletic field would be a substantially more important achievement. While the Grow a Park campaign perhaps sets a dangerous precedent by asking neighborhood residents to subsidize park expansion, the microloan scheme may nevertheless eventually facilitate conversion of the last remaining parcel of private undeveloped land in Jackson Heights to public use.

It should be acknowledged that Jackson Heights also has access to a kind of social capital that many other neighborhoods fighting environmental justice battles lack. Owing to its relative affordability and quality housing stock, a critical mass of Jackson Heights residents have creative and non-profit backgrounds—academics, planners, legal aid attorneys, social workers, journalists, independent filmmakers. These skillsets have been important, but only because advocates also harnessed community participation and direct action in creating not just successful projects but a movement around open space issues and their environmental justice implications. P²

Why Unions Matter: Defending the Equalizers

By Chris Tilly

continued from page 2

Second, unions are economic voice equalizers. While owners and managers have a built-in voice under capitalism, workers do not, except when a collective organization like a union gives them one. The International Labour Organization (ILO), the labor arm of the United Nations, defines "freedom of association"—the right to organize—as one of four core labor standards (along with bans on forced labor, child labor and discrimination). One hundred and eighty-three ILO member countries, including the United States, have in theory signed on to this basic human right. But potent union-busting techniques have increasingly turned the right to organize enshrined in U.S. labor law into a dead letter in private businesses. Now legislation like that adopted in Wisconsin seeks to do the same in the public sector.

Third, and very importantly, unions are political equalizers. The Right complains that public-sector unions can use their dues to help elect their bosses. This is indeed a problem, but is it any bigger than the problem of businesses using their profits to elect their regulators, or wealthy individuals using their riches to elect the people who write tax laws? In a political system where money plays an increasingly unbounded role, unions are the only large-scale donors who are accountable to working people, and knocking out their ability to fund campaigns will clear the field for big business and the rich. Moreover, unions, unlike corporations, also bring members to the table, providing electoral foot soldiers that have often tipped elections toward the progressive candidate. And at their best, unions have mobilized money and members to support broader progressive causes, including civil rights and immigrant rights as well as economic protections like the eight-hour day, minimum wage and social safety net.

Photo: Marie Kennedy

Our Communities, Our Jobs March in Los Angeles, March 26, 2011.

Never Let a Good Crisis Go to Waste

The Republican lawmakers currently on the warpath against unions understand all this very well. They also are familiar with the math of unionization: as union-busting has eroded private-sector union membership to its current level of 7 percent, public-sector membership has held its ground, to the point where last year for the first time the number of public-sector union members exceeded the private-sector tally. The laws currently in play in the Midwest are carefully targeted to do the

most damage possible. Provisions include forbidding union contracts to require union membership as a condition of employment (these are the "right to work" laws that have kept unions to a minimum in the South), banning employers from withholding dues from paychecks on behalf of the union (forcing unions to expend large amounts of resources on collecting dues, or else to forego dues), compelling unions to re-win a union election each year (again, forcing them to devote massive resources to fending off anti-union campaigns, or else shrink) and, of course, banning public-sector collective bargaining altogether or radically narrowing its scope and force.

Heeding Rahm Emmanuel's injunction to "never let a good crisis go to waste," Republicans are taking advantage of the current economic slump, which has pushed state budgets deeply into the red all over the country, to argue that states can't afford the wages and benefits of public employees. The illogic of this argument is breathtaking: not only does it blame long-standing compensation arrangements for deficits that actually result from a short-term shortfall in aggregate demand, but it then proposes to solve the problem by further depressing aggregate demand via wage cuts and layoffs, along with cuts in social programs (it's important to keep in mind that the second "dip" of the Great Depression, in 1938, resulted in large part from state budget-cutting that neutralized federal New Deal stimulus spending). It then takes an additional illogical step by asserting that the only way to cut spending on public employees is to destroy or hobble unions—even though public-sector unions, able to do the budget math themselves, have been making major concessions across the country.

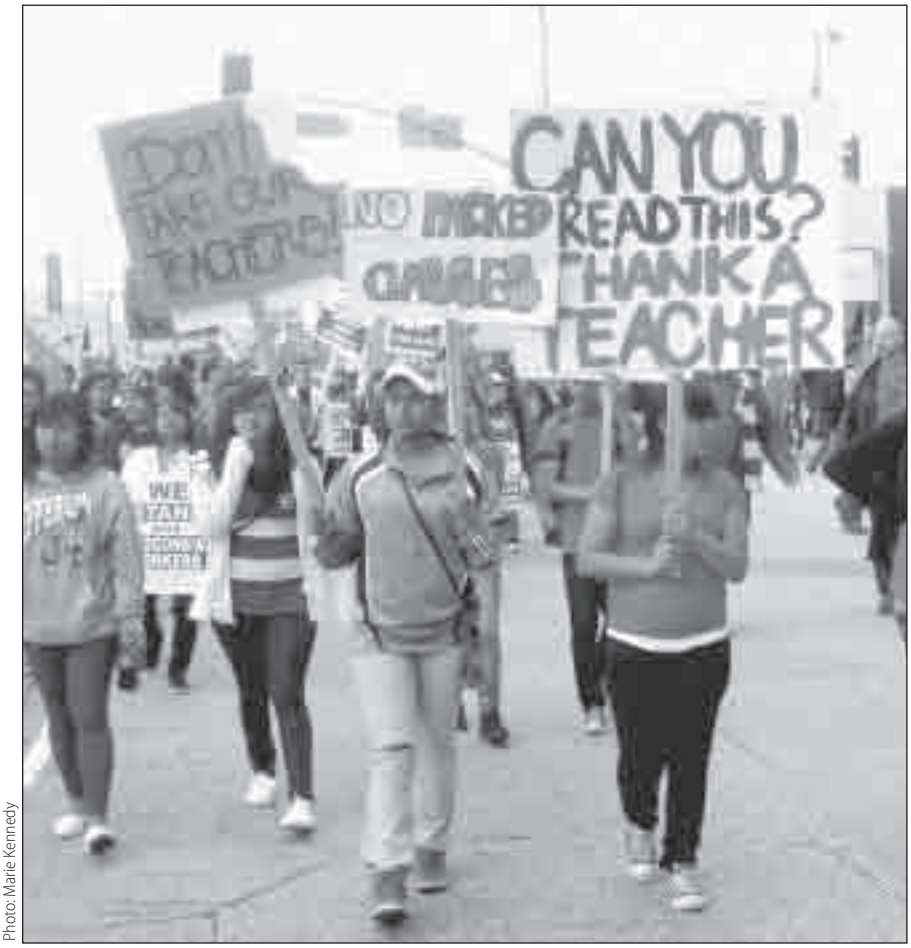

Photo: Marie Kennedy

Our Communities, Our Jobs March in Los Angeles, March 26, 2011.

Which Kind of Turning Point?

Will the current anti-union offensive succeed? Certainly some of the union-busting laws will be enacted, as the one in Wisconsin already has. But the confrontation in Wisconsin has the potential to mark a turning point. It may be a turning point like the 1981 air traffic controllers' strike, when President Reagan's firing of the striking controllers signaled a shift in federal government sympathies and opened the door for private businesses to also start permanently replacing strikers, crippling the strike as a labor strategy. Or it may be a turning point like Martin Luther King's 1965 Selma march: though the marchers were beaten and routed, the event aroused the conscience of the nation and led to the passage of the Voting Rights Act.

Americans' split consciousness makes it hard to guess what longer term lessons public opinion, and policymakers, will draw. Americans hate government, but love government services. To take one example, we hate school systems, but (mostly) love our kids' teach-

ers. Majorities in Wisconsin and nationwide support unions' right to organize and similar majorities approve of unions in general, but unions' approval ratings stand at historically low levels (driven down in large part by public perceptions of the auto company bailouts).

Given this public ambivalence, the strategies of the adversaries matter greatly. It will be tempting for Republicans with new majorities and governorships to overreach. Already, Missouri Republicans seeking to overturn the minimum wage law passed by popular referendum in 2004 have been classified as part of the legislative "Mean Girls and Boys Club" by the *St. Louis Post Dispatch*. But it would be unwise for the labor movement to wait for the pro-business Right to trip itself up. Unions, given that they claim only 12 percent of the workforce, have to do two things to broaden their base of support and hold off the assault. First, they need to build broad alliances—like those with farmers, students and progressives in general that were visible during the standoff in Madison. Second, and even more crucially (and a precondition for the first), they need to clearly project an agenda that goes beyond defending their members to speak to the broader interests of working people. That means standing up for groups of workers who are not and may never be unionized—as unions have done, for example, in supporting the Domestic Worker Bill of Rights laws recently passed in New York and currently being debated in California. It means leading the fight to maintain public services, even when maintaining those services requires sacrificing short-term interests of public employees.

The future of America's great equalizers is at stake. P²

Photo: Marie Kennedy

Our Communities, Our Jobs March in Los Angeles, March 26, 2011.

Social Housing in Chile

Quality and Inequality

By Claudia Huerta and Tomás Errázuriz

President Sebastián Piñera of Chile announced that between 2010 and 2014 the government would eradicate Chile's 533 slums and provide 600,000 housing units. While his plan would add 130,000 units to the more than one million built in the last two decades by June of 2012, this is the first time that an incoming administration has announced plans to demolish a significant number of social housing units.

Even though Piñera's housing policies emphasize the size and quality of new housing, they follow the same laissez-faire approach of previous governments, which let the market drive the location of social housing. Since the early 2000s, many researchers and specialists have criticized the claims of success about social housing policies in Chile, citing increasing social segregation, urban isolation and lack of opportunities for residents of the new housing projects.

If we look at the history of social housing in Chile, we find some improvements but also some backward steps over time. While an unprecedented number of people now have access to housing, the design of these homes and the urban conditions surrounding them are worse than they were a century ago. The political motivations behind housing policy have also changed. In the last three decades, the mass production of housing projects driven by a neoliberal economic system has diminished the weight of social and cultural values. Today, cost, efficiency and productivity are the major elements framing policy.

Below, we look at these changes over three main phases of Chile's history.

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Turn of the Century: A Home for Body and Soul

In the final decades of the nineteenth century there was an influx of people from the countryside who were attracted to Santiago, Chile's largest city, by the promise it held for finding a job and achieving prosperity. The population of Santiago doubled between 1875 and 1895. As with many other growing metropolises of the time, population growth was not accompanied by a transformation in urban infrastructure. Consequently, by the turn of the century, thousands of people were living in deplorable conditions in overcrowded tenements or slums.

Social reformers at the time highlighted the need to improve both moral and physical conditions in cities by providing better housing and public hygiene for the working class. They believed that by demolishing slums and relocating residents to modern single-family houses they could stop dangerous diseases, reduce alcoholism and promiscuity and even prevent the spread of socialist ideas. The new houses featured significant improvements. They were built of solid materials (concrete or brick), had access to electricity and gas and were connected to the public water and sewer systems. Many of them even incorporated an

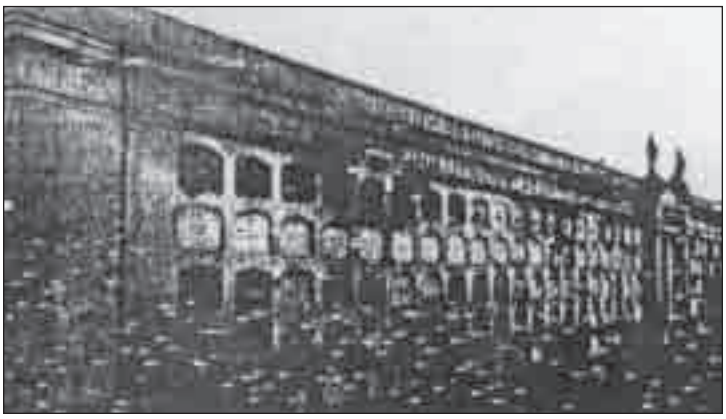
interior bathroom. The new housing was also served by transportation systems—streetcars, buses and, in some cases, the train. Social reformers and planners firmly believed in the ability to strengthen community values, citizenship and religious beliefs by creating new buildings and spaces where residents could meet, play, learn and pray. As a result, these new housing units were not only associated with physical improvements but also with psychological and moral well-being.

Between 1890 and 1920 Catholic associations built over 717 new dwellings in Santiago. In 1906 the Chilean parliament approved the first law that allocated public funds for social housing construction. As a result, government built 4,128 units between 1910 and 1925. This same law, however, allowed public authorities to demolish 1,626 tenements containing 16,713 dwellings. While a few inhabitants benefited from the new homes, most continued to live in appalling conditions and were exploited by landlords.

Post-World War II: Houses for the Masses

During the 1950s, Santiago's population grew exponentially due to migration from the countryside. In 1952 the housing deficit was 156,204 units and by 1960 it had increased to 454,000. As a result, vacant land was illegally occupied by groups of people without homes. In 1953 the Chilean government undertook a national housing plan that acknowledged responsibility for providing inadequate solutions to the housing problem, especially for the poor, and gave government more power to raise funds and secure construction industry participation. That same year a housing corporation, the *Coorporación de la Vivienda* (CORVI), was created and given unprecedented power to facilitate mass housing production with increased efficiency. By 1960 CORVI became a state-owned company and the right of every citizen to housing was considered a priority among political and social leaders. Between 1954 and 1964, CORVI generated more than 210,000 new dwellings in Chile.

During the 1950s and 1960s, a variety of housing solutions were undertaken to address the housing deficit. Many of them continued the tradition of single-family houses and incorporated self-building strategies in order to lower production costs and increase the



Houses built by the Catholic association **Sociedad Leon XIII** in the north of Santiago. In addition to the group of houses, the society built a theater, church, school and a mausoleum for all residents of the community. Most of the houses remain intact and are now occupied by middle-income groups.

Población Huemul built between 1909 and 1918 by the **Caja de Crédito Hipotecario** in the south of Santiago. It includes 157 houses of ten different sizes (ranging from one to five bedrooms), a school, church, hospital, public library, theater and a savings bank. Most of the houses remain intact and are now occupied by middle-income groups.

number of dwellings. Following a global trend, several large-scale housing projects were also built in Santiago. Through an open public bidding process, government received proposals from renowned architectural firms, which helped to elevate the importance of urban planning criteria in building public housing. Many projects were designed using the architectural and planning principles of the modern movement established by C.I.A.M. and the Athens Charter.

Although many of the social housing projects built in this period are located in peripheral areas of Santiago, they are not necessarily concentrated in the poorest districts. Some of the biggest housing interventions, such as *Unidad Vecinal Portales, Villa Olímpica,* and *Unidad Vecinal Providencia,* are located in developed urban areas not far from the city center. Today most of these projects are still in place, have been fully incorporated into the urban grid with their houses sold in the local housing market.

Large-scale housing projects

LEFT

Unidad Vecinal Portales, built in Santiago between 1954 and 1966 to accommodate nearly 3,000 families.

RIGHT

Unidad Vecinal Providencia was built years later and accommodated 1,493 families and 115 retail spaces, with a density of 647 persons per hectare. Both projects included large public/green areas and had public art by renowned artists.

LEFT

Población Chinchorro, finished in the early 1960s in Arica, a small town in the north of Chile.

RIGHT

Población Santa Adela, built in southwest Santiago during the same decade.

Photos: Luis Ladrón de Guevara

Neoliberalism: The Marketing of Social Housing

With the onset of economic liberalization under Augusto Pinochet's dictatorship at the beginning of the 1970s, social housing took a new direction. In 1979, the government called for the liberalization of urban land markets. It justified this by suggesting that increases in the supply of urban land would reduce the cost of land for social housing projects. Instead, liberalization resulted in price speculation and an increase in the cost of the land as well as the displacement of almost 30,000 families in six years. These families were moved from land that was in high demand to poor areas at the urban fringes, which were highly segregated and frequently lacked urban infrastructure and basic services.

Although the government provided almost 300,000 new housing units between 1973 and 1989, by the early 1990s the overall deficit was close to one million. By this time there was a real fervor to provide housing for all, which drove social housing policy. This new direction in housing policy taken by democratic governments following Pinochet facilitated a rapid increase in the number of new housing units. Between 1990 and 1999 the state built more than 800,000 new dwellings.

Quality, Inequality and Supply

Since the housing problem was seen as a lack of supply, reducing the housing deficit was considered to be a major part of the solution. Successive administrations have measured the success of social housing policy by the number of units built, however, they have neglected to consider the quality of the units and whether inequality has been reduced. Furthermore, the magnitude of the new demand in the sprouting communities has placed a burden on basic services

such as education, health care, transportation and local retail. Chile's social housing policies have resulted in more homogenous neighborhoods that are separated and segregated by income. While there are basic housing standards, for the most part, poor materials have been used to construct small living spaces. Walls are so thin that it is hard for residents to ignore the intimate moments of their neighbors' lives, and some roofs have not been able to resist more than a few hours of rain.

Another problem is the lack of adequate public spaces in these communities, making it difficult to develop the relations that are crucial for civic and neighborhood pride, quality of life and public safety. One 2004 study found that over 65 percent of residents were unhappy with their housing and would prefer to leave, citing as the main reasons for dissatisfaction privacy issues, neighborhood perception, public safety and crime and drugs. This implies that in pursuit of quantitative outcomes, housing policy has compromised on qualitative measures like materials, size of housing units, community values and public safety. These conditions are further exacerbated because people living in social housing have relatively few prospects for residential and social mobility.

Another recent study highlights another deficiency in the government's housing solution: housing location. This study notes that slums have a locational advantage over social housing and thus persevere. People living in slums do not reject social housing solutions, but rather the ghetto conditions with which they are associated. A recent study by the Ministry of Housing and Urban Planning revealed that even though the government has built more houses than ever before, the number of families living in slums increased from 8,493 to around 37,000 between 2009 and 2011.

In the early examples of Chile's social housing programs, the focus went beyond just putting a roof over peoples' heads. Government was also trying to provide a comprehensive solution to improve quality of life and support upward social mobility. Today, with the new urban ghettos created by free market social housing policies, the picture is much starker. While these policies have increased the number of homeowners among the low-income groups, they have also resulted in greater social segregation and a widening of the gap between rich and poor.

Today most Chileans have a legal roof over their head, which was not the case at the beginning of the twentieth century. Social housing, however, should be evaluated using the lens of quality, including location, connectivity with economic opportunities, neighborhood character, unit size, architectural design, building materials and resale values. The quantity metric is not comprehensive enough to address pressing problems of inequality. If at the beginning of the century the hygienic house and neighborhood were considered a powerful means for moral and physical salvation, today for many living in recently built social housing the biggest change is not necessarily an improvement in quality of life, but only in land ownership and legal recognition.

The Ministry of Housing and Urban Planning needs to restructure its thinking and objectives beyond just building housing to meet a housing deficit. They need to reflect upon the role of the current ideologies and strategies in housing policy and change the role of social, cultural and economic factors in social housing policy. They must rethink housing solutions as a mechanism for social justice with the goal of reducing social inequality and go beyond current poverty reduction strategies.

Photo: Rodrigo Salcedo

Villa el Volcán, 2006. Housing blocks built during the period 1994-2000 in the southern periphery of Santiago.

LEFT

Some projects abandoned due to structural defects.

RIGHT

Some blocks of the same group of houses repaired in 2005.

Reconstruction in Chile

Lessons Learned from Behind the Scenes

By Paola Siclari

At 3:34 a.m. on a warm summer night on February 27, 2010, an earthquake measuring 8.8 on the Richter scale shook the south of Chile. It was followed by a tsunami. The regions of O'Higgins, Maule and Bío Bío were worst affected: the entire metropolitan area of Concepción; five cities with a population of more than 100,000; forty-five towns with a population of more than 5,000; 900 towns with a population of less than 20,000; and 1,500 kilometers of coast suffered massive destruction.

Five hundred and fifty fatalities were recorded, with around 200,000 homes completely destroyed and another 200,000 partially destroyed or damaged (of a national total of four million homes). Buildings made of traditional *adobe* (mud and straw) were completely obliterated. Nine hundred colonial churches were rendered unusable in the O'Higgins region, while 4,500 schools were partially destroyed and 150 hospitals suffered severe damage. The housing deficit rose again to levels last seen in the 1990s. Losses were estimated at US$30 billion.

This event has forced us all to reconsider the planning, development and resilience of urban and rural areas and to make some important changes. Following are six lessons which I believe we have learned, along with the challenges posed by the reconstruction process. These come out of the work being led by the Ministry of Housing and Urban Planning in Chile, where I work.

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1. **Fifty-five percent of the world's seismic activity is concentrated in Chile. It is essential to consider this when establishing prevention policies and training in risk and post-disaster management.**

The convergence and overlapping of the Nazca and South American plates very close to Chile is responsible for large earthquakes in the area. The interface is located 100 kilometers from the coast, and at a depth of five to seven kilometers. The plates are in constant motion against each other; once the accumulated energy exceeds the resistance of the interface, a seismic movement is generated where the plates overlap, and one of the plates is pushed under the other. This means that there is an earthquake of grade 7 on the Richter scale every ten years, an earthquake of grade 8 every 130 years and continuous tidal waves (tsunamis). Since 1562, twenty-eight tidal waves have been recorded.

In Chile, responsibility for the early warning system lies with the National Emergency Office (ONEMI, part of the Interior Department) and other agencies. On the day of the 2010 earthquake ONEMI had no active mobile phones. This, together with poor coordination between the responsible agencies, resulted in a series of mistakes and omissions. In addition, schools and other academic institutions in Chile do not train people in prevention, emergency management and resilience; there are simply no courses in these subjects. Professionals and academic specialists in these areas must train overseas and the Ministry of Education has no plans to educate people in Chile. This year, the principal agency responsible for training public workers in seismic events has been the Agency for Japanese Cooperation.

2. **While the U.S. alerted people to the forthcoming tsunami, ONEMI ignored the alert. Effective early warning systems as well as post-disaster procedures are needed.**

On the day of the earthquake the ONEMI director was aware that an earthquake of over 7.5 on the Richter scale would produce a tsunami, but since the agency had no mobile phones the alert that a powerful earthquake had occurred never arrived at the ONEMI office. That is why, at 5:35 A.M. Chile's president, Michelle Bachelet, made a national announcement that there was no risk of a tsunami. Around 150 people subsequently lost their lives. These deaths could have been avoided if correct and timely information had been available. The early warning system is now under investigation on political, criminal and administrative levels.

As a result of these errors, in February of 2011 President Sebastián Piñera signed a bill creating the National Civil Protection Agency to replace ONEMI. Among the changes made was the establishment of a special protocol to permit the armed forces to intervene even in the absence of a national state of emergency. On the day of the tsunami, then-president Bachelet was only able to fly over the affected areas a full six hours after the disaster occurred because a state of emergency had not yet been declared and the armed forces had not been empowered to act. The civil unrest following the disaster went unchecked, with widespread looting of shops and theft of food and domestic equipment. This was compounded because the president stalled in announcing a national state of emergency in an attempt to avoid the perception that the armed forces would take control of the country, recalling the 1973 military coup that overthrew elected president Salvador Allende.

The National Civil Protection Agency was created as a multisectoral agency responsible for advising in the elaboration of a national civil defense strategy. Civil protection committees may be formed at local, regional and national levels. A national fund for civil defense will provide financial support for public services, municipalities and civil society organizations and for prevention and emergency response. The bill formalizes the roles and participation of the Chilean armed forces and police. In addition, it establishes two levels of emergency to be declared by the president.

3. **Many people died or lost their homes because they were living in high-risk zones under illegal tenure conditions. In 55 of the 239 counties affected, it is urgent that local risk management plans be updated.**

Approximately 90,000 of the 400,000 dwellings affected by the earthquake and tsunami were located in high-risk or uninhabitable zones. Furthermore, 55 of the 239 regulatory plans covering the affected residential areas—twenty-seven of which were on the coast—were out of date. A few days following the catastrophe the Ministry of Housing and Urban Planning launched a national reconstruction plan with an investment of US$2.5 billion. This has two elements, a housing plan and an urban action plan, through which the land use plans will be updated to take into account current risk assessments. New urban planning tools were created (*wwww.presconstitucion.cl*). In addition, a heritage recovery plan was created to fund repair and reconstruction work on buildings in preservation areas and declared heritage sites.

4. **A year following the earthquake, the reconstruction process has been slow getting started. To speed up the housing production process there need to be improvements in housing finance and support for developers and builders. Alternative means of producing housing need to be legitimized.**

In addition to the slow start, reconstruction since the earthquake has also been in some aspects lacking in innovation. The reconstruction process has been politicized; the local councils of the new opposition government do not facilitate the approval of new projects. In practice, though homeless people may be eligible for subsidies, building projects are on hold, bottled up in the offices of municipal development, the organizations that authorize and oversee their construction. The most challenging problem is reconstruction of individual homes on dispersed sites for some 75,000 families.

Direct reconstruction by government would be more effective, especially in exceptional circumstances such as in the colonial towns that were completely destroyed. Even when the Council for National Monuments declares

a building worthy of preservation, the means for accomplishing this are not included. Thus the owners of these properties often request removal of preservation status so they can repair and rebuild these buildings without restrictions.

5. **The lack of information transfer across different sectors of society and between local areas hinders knowledge about emergency response and support. A centralized online information system is urgently needed.**

Some of the temporary villages that have been created by displaced people have received offers of help from up to sixty international non-governmental organizations (NGOs). In some cases this has swamped the residents and been counterproductive. This situation is repeated to a lesser extent with the package of services and national public and private benefits which have been made available to facilitate the rebuilding process. The construction of an online database identifying all programs would help avoid duplication.

6. **Creativity in adversity, and other outstanding issues.**

In September 2010, under the auspices of the United Nations Human Settlements Programme (UN-HABITAT), six Chilean institutions announced the creation of a resource center for reconstruction. The center will respond to requests for technical support to the most vulnerable municipalities and provide forums for conflict resolution and training in prevention and local sustainable development. A program to provide funding to preserve historic buildings was also started (*www.monumentos.cl*). A fund for building materials was established by the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies. For the first time in Chile, vouchers were distributed for purchasing materials. This directly benefitted 10,200 families in affected areas with a value of US$350 each and helped to reduce storage and distribution costs of materials, which in turn permitted an additional 10 percent of families to benefit.

Earthquake damage, Concepción, 2010

Today, a year since the earthquake and tsunami, illegal situations still exist: unpaid insurance, people ineligible for credit, households with substantial debt and uninhabitable homes, and, worse still, bribery of builders of new buildings that have inadequate protection against seismic activity. Another issue concerns land: who, and under what conditions will land be made available in order to build new homes for displaced people?

Over the course of this last year I have attended more than thirty technical meetings and discussions of post-disaster responses. At none of these have there been serious discussions of what kind of cities we really want. Issues such as sustainability, changes in the energy mix and resilience have either not come up at all, or they are only just beginning to be mentioned.

Although I have offered some constructive criticism of the reconstruction process, I prefer to end with a phrase used by a worker from the United Nations as she stood looking at the *Alto Río* building in Concepción (a 15-story block on the bank of the Bío Bío river which split in two, and whose image was seen throughout the world): "What has fallen is impressive, but more impressive is what has *not* fallen." All things considered, what was saved makes us proud and it gives us strength to move forward. P²

The Case for Neighborhood Reinvention in Kuwait

By Mark J. Olson

Kuwait City, like the other urban centers in Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) countries, continues to undergo monumental changes. Since the 1940s and 1950s, the city has lost swaths of historical, traditional and later architecture to demolition carried out in the continual reconstruction of the cityscape. The result is that, with the exception of Ahmadi, an oil town built by British oil interests, there are few intact blocks with buildings that predate thirty years ago. In response to this situation, Victoria W. Otero, a local observer, offered this critique: "[not stemming] from . . . whether Kuwait should modernize or not, but from two simple questions: why are there no historical districts in Kuwait and what influence would this missing aspect have on generations too young to remember anything but the post-war, modern Kuwait?"

The demise of historic districts and landmarks in the push to urbanize is likely common to most oil-producing GCC countries in the peninsula. Some accounts attribute this to Wahhabi traditions in Saudi Arabia that view historic preservation as akin to idolatry. More compelling explanations focus on the growth of the *rentier* state which has been, with some notable exceptions, characterized by unsightly urbanization. Lacking tangible, historic structures to preserve, some urban activists are now calling for retrofitting residential areas through architecture to reclaim Kuwait's cultural past, public space and local neighborhood identity.

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Watercolor illustrations by **Sarah Yaser Sharak**

The Demise of Kuwait's Urban Past

Kuwait was among the first of the Emirates to benefit from the influx of oil monies and also to cope with rapid urbanization. Prior to oil, income was derived mainly from trade in pearls, wood, spices, dates and horses. Kuwait's name in Arabic, "fortresses by the sea," suggests the main elements of the country, which included a port, marketplace, mosques, residential areas and a walled city gate which was extant until 1954.

In form, Kuwait resembled a honeycomb of close-knit buildings, narrow alleys and high walls that afforded shade, permitting people to walk in places where temperatures can exceed 122 degrees Fahrenheit in the summer. Interior courtyard entrances of residences allowed their occupants to readily communicate with relatives and neighbors. Wind towers were used for cooling down structures with convection currents. Traditional architecture and design contained Arabic, Indian and later, British influences, replacing Ottoman styles.

The transformation of this mud brick port town of roughly 35,000 in the early 1900s to over two million

inhabitants today began in the 1940s. The first master plan in 1952 established the current road system and set up land use zones. Its implementation resulted in the demolition of the high walls and whole sections of the old town that contained historical areas and traditional homes. In 1995, two urban plans later, over 72 percent of any remaining old buildings were slated for demolition. The process not only ushered in new infrastructure and neighborhoods patterned along western lines, but also the demise of traditional architecture and arguably, a sense of neighborhood identity and public space.

Accommodating the rapid population increase was no mean feat with a demographic that almost doubled every decade following nationhood from 1965 to 1985. The dramatic growth came from several factors: population fecundity, rural-to-urban transitions, the granting of citizenship to select Bedouin tribes and the importation of an ever-expanding expatriate labor force. In 1957 the population of Kuwait City was nearly 300,000, and by 1985 it was over five times this size. Due to unprecedented growth, land became the sole medium by which: 1) much of the oil income was transferred into the economy; 2) additional income was generated in the form of rents; 3) segregation of population segments (both Kuwaiti and non-Kuwaiti) was carried out; and 4) the government exerted political control through the configuration of election districts.

As a result, public space, neighborhood aesthetics and amenities became secondary to considerations of income generation, maximum use of increasingly expensive land and preoccupation with the state's hegemony. The tangible outcomes of this process include the demise of pedestrian walkways, insufficient parking, open tracts of land followed by densely populated areas, the absence of building setbacks and ill-considered building designs coupled with the use of poor-quality materials and shoddy construction methods.

The demolition of old Kuwait was a response to demands wrought by rapid socio-economic change on the one hand, and the desire to foment economic development on the other. The practice of razing instead of rehabilitating structures has continued during subsequent phases. The wholesale razing of areas stems from various considerations reflected in policy justifications: competing land uses, decaying urban infrastructure, inadequate parking, invasion of public space, the need to increase density and poor traffic circulation, among other reasons. To date, historical preservation, public space and neighborhood identity have been rarely singled out as major concerns by public figures.

Kuwait's Malls as Commercialized Neighborhoods

Kuwait's first mall, Khaleejia, was not well received in the mid-1980s and was re-opened as office space. But malls are now ubiquitous in the Gulf, with Dubai being the most well-known shopping destination in the region. There is no accurate census as to the number of malls

operating in Kuwait, but over forty malls are listed on the internet, and their numbers probably far exceed this—depending on the qualifying criteria used to identify a mall. Mall popularity, as in other parts of the globe, derives from their sociocultural and economic functions.

With open mingling of the sexes being generally discouraged in the Gulf, shopping malls have become a socially acceptable alternative. *The Virtual Tourist,* a local blog, called malls "…the country's equivalent of café culture in the Mediterranean; people-watching is done indoors rather than outdoors." Kuwait malls take on added importance given their role in facilitating contact with the opposite sex in the absence of other courtship alternatives, such as bars or hot spots. (A flirting etiquette has evolved that includes casually dropping a piece of paper with a cell phone number, a practice reportedly being replaced by Bluetooth technology.) A Kuwait daily newspaper reported that an all-female morality police was created to protect residents from immoral practices like the flirtatious behavior of young men and women and other "objectionable" behaviors, such as begging, rowdiness and cross-dressing.

The malls also constitute an urban design and planning opportunity: what goes un-remarked is that malls provide one of the few opportunities for social interaction in the absence of accessible, shared neighborhood public spaces. In this sense, sociocultural needs have been adapted to the mall environment. Ideally, urban design should reflect and

incorporate an awareness of local culture, traditions and aesthetics. Design becomes the collective consciousness, social legacy and historical memory of its surroundings.

While far from a hue and cry, there is a growing voice for establishing alternatives in which there is a sense of human scale and ambiance where residents can comfortably congregate. The catchphrase that circulates today in many urban planning commentaries in Kuwait and other Gulf countries is "environmental sustainability," however, it is less common to find any commentary that invokes "cultural sustainability." As Victoria W. Otero noted, "Municipal planners are repeating the past's mistakes due to an inability to refurbish the past and link it actively to the present."

Retrofitting Kuwait's Neighborhoods

Kuwait urban architect Barrak Al-Babtain comments in a blog post:

> Most residential neighborhoods in Kuwait have lost all sense of character and have become glorified parking lots for bigger and bigger houses. Cars fill the sidewalk entirely. …There is simply no public space anymore, no invitation to linger and stroll. Neighbors have become anonymous to each other as there is no shared space for them to meet and for their children to play.

He goes on to suggest a Duany Plater-Zyberk–inspired new urbanism scenario for Kuwait, where pedestrian-friendly neighborhoods

contain a range of housing and employment. The centerpiece for a neighborhood would be a main mosque that has been adapted to also be used as a community center and to include a playground, learning center and library. This, in turn, would be surrounded by dense shopping and landscape architecture.

Neighborhoods would be transformed into mixed-use spaces through rezoning, the introduction of row houses and ancillary garage apartments that could function as workshops, side businesses inviting to younger Kuwaitis. Al-Babtain's proposal also calls for 2- to 3-meter-wide sidewalks along tree-lined streets to permit pedestrian traffic. Not surprisingly, a parallel approach has been proposed, by Dr. Yaseer Mahgoub at Kuwait University, for downtown development with the renovation and reconstruction of badly damaged traditional buildings, the development of mixed uses for downtown development, the provision of housing to attract Kuwaitis and improved integration of housing and commercial activities.

The successful implementation of either plan would entail changes in building regulations, especially in floor area ratios and setbacks, neighborhood design, zoning regulations, improved mass transit with popular appeal, corresponding reduction in private car use and changes in both materials and construction methods. A metro train system has been reportedly in its initial planning stages for several years. All of these changes could involve substantial public cost.

Kuwaitis and expatriates share public space in areas along the seafront, such as the Corniche, and in malls and parks. Locals, in greater numbers, are subletting apartments in their homes to higher income expatriates. An unaddressed question is whether the call for neighborhood reinvention would be extended to expatriate areas, especially those containing substandard housing. The above practices notwithstanding, precedents suggest that this vision is limited to Kuwait's citizens. Currently, foreigners cannot own real estate and foreign businesses must have a Kuwaiti partner with a 51 percent vested interest. Expatriates comprise around 50 percent of the population in Kuwait and do most of the manual and other forms of labor, as in other GCC countries.

Neighborhood Reinvention Revisited

Otero raised two questions concerning the reasons why no historical districts exist in Kuwait and the influence that this would have on future generations. With respect to the first question, the razing of old Kuwait City and its subsequent development were intended to foster development and legitimate governance while maintaining hegemonic control by the state. Motives stemming from an admixture of haste and necessity, coupled with profit motive and tribal affiliations, combined to create present-day Kuwait. In the process, Kuwait urban history was relegated to photo exhibitions in museums.

Taken in this context, interest in the reinvention and retrofitting of established neighborhoods is one of the few remaining responses to the second question. However, comparing the original layout of Kuwait City and any notions of retrofitted neighborhoods suggests little correspondence to actual history, but rather a modified new urbanism that invokes romanticized Kuwaiti cultural themes. What translates as neighborhood reinvention, if ever implemented, may well end up as disguised consumerism that appeals to vague notions of Kuwait aesthetics.

Overlooked are certain realities of urban development. Most telling, in this case, is that no new power stations and water generating facilities have been constructed in over twenty years. Other plans for developing and renovating Kuwait, such as Project Kuwait, Silk City (Madinat Al-Hareer) and Kuwait Metro Project, continue to languish in the planning stages for years. More to the point, it may be wishful thinking to believe that residents will be open to changing their lifestyles for the sake of neighborhood retrofitting, especially in light of planning's own inactivity.

The paradox of neighborhood reinvention is that this could also be an opportunity for the state to legitimize itself by completing old projects and focusing on new public investments that service and address growing urban public needs. If calls for democratic reform continue unabated in surrounding countries, neighborhood reinvention may become a vision for Kuwait's urban activists rather than an issue of idle speculation for Western onlookers. P²

You Are What You (Plan to) Eat

By Andrew Turner

Planners and organizers serve food at meetings to encourage attendance and increase involvement. But what if we only provided food that was not derived from animals? Not only would we incorporate mainstream religious requirements, such as halal and kosher, and satisfy the moral palate of vegetarians and vegans, we would help achieve the health benefits of a meat- and dairy-free diet.

The omission of meat, however, could be seen as elitist and contrary to some cultural norms. Although theoretically all-inclusive (everyone eats plant-based foods), vegan food could alienate any group that sees meat as part of its ethnic identity. This could, in turn, inhibit participation.

> Vegan, Western vegetarian, kosher, Eastern vegetarian, organic, Paleolithic, locavore, low-fat, hallal, lactose-free, gluten-free, rawist — what's for dessert?

It is essential, therefore, that organizers know the community's demographics so they can maximize participation and inclusion. Vegan, vegetarian and meat options should be made available, and efforts should be taken to meet any special requirements of large populations with specific dietary needs.

Understand Your Goals

As sustainability becomes more entrenched in good planning practice, organizers need to be aware of the environmental consequences associated with their food choices. On a global level, non-organic meat is a major environmental issue. Intensive livestock and poultry farming are synonymous with greenhouse gas emissions, land degradation, deforestation, desertification, soil erosion and nitrogen runoff. Organic meat should always be chosen over non-organic meat. This decreases the ecological impact of the food served while having no affect on the inclusionary nature of the process.

In practice, however, organizers face budget constraints when providing food for planning meetings. Non-organic meat could be justified, therefore, if the goal of the meeting is simply to increase attendance. When organizers are faced with budget issues, they need to fully understand the goals of the project and prioritize food choice accordingly. For example, if they are involved in an environmentally sensitive project, reducing costs would be more ethical by providing smaller portions of organic meat.

Andrew Turner is a graduate from the master's program in Community Planning at the University of Cincinnati.

Purchases supporting industrialized agriculture have a more detrimental environmental impact. Gender and race issues are more prevalent in industrialized agriculture as immigrants, people of color and women are disproportionately represented among its low-paying menial jobs. But buying local doesn't necessarily mean you've made a more ethical or more sustainable choice.

Transparency Is Key

Consideration of the sustainability of food choice raises a rather ambiguous quality versus quantity argument that has implications which extend beyond the meat industry. If we examine a vegetarian and vegan diet, it is clear that fossil fuels are needed to produce, procure and prepare even these foods. Thus, the real impact of food choice is associated with a myriad of factors hidden within our food systems.

In general, purchases supporting industrialized agriculture have a more detrimental environmental impact. The increased use of synthetic pesticides and fertilizers, compounded by high transportation costs, is not sustainable. This has given rise to "Buy Local" campaigns led by food activists. This slogan unfortunately disregards the complexity of food production. Just because produce has come from a local farm does not mean that it has a smaller carbon footprint or is a more ethical purchase. Without transparency, it is difficult for organizers to make informed food choice decisions, jeopardizing the integrity of the planning process.

Increased transparency in the food system can highlight other concerns. Traditionally, gender and race issues are more prevalent in industrialized agriculture as immigrants, people of color and women are disproportionately represented among its low-paying menial jobs. Furthermore, government subsidizes and promotes agribusiness as politicians are aggressively lobbied and have vested interests in the industry's conglomerates.

The Role of Education

Planners should encourage transparency in the food system to ensure informed food choices and advocate for the sustainability and well-being of communities. In many cities there are efforts to create regional foodsheds and promote food charters, urban gardens, farmers markets, community supported agriculture and alternative food systems that emphasize seasonal and organic produce. These initiatives can empower citizens and highlight food security issues.

Organizers can also promote transparency through education. Representatives from within the alternative food systems can attend meetings and discuss their relationship to the food served, talking about how to produce and prepare food. Literature can be made available explaining the socio-political, environmental and nutritional benefits of promoting the local food system, justifying the organizer's food choice. Local restaurants or caterers can be invited to supply the food at a discount and in turn promote their businesses.

Food choice is a complex issue and transparency in the food system is the key for organizers to make informed decisions about the food served at planning meetings. With limited transparency, planners can assume that by providing vegan, vegetarian and organic meat options, they are maximizing inclusion and participation without creating any additional environmental impacts. P²

Rethinking Feminist Interventions into the Urban

By Reggie Modlich

If mainstream thinkers, decision-makers and doers just paused to listen to where women are at, it would greatly enhance current understanding of and prospects for the world and its cities. The recent workshop, "Rethinking Feminist Interventions into the Urban," held at York University in Toronto, aimed to do just that. The main thrust of the workshop was a feminist challenge of the binaries in "modernist/developmentalist" thinking, especially the North/South binary. Other binaries are urban/rural, male/female, public/private, individual rights/social responsibilities. This way of thinking is deeply embedded in the history, culture and consciousness of the Global North, yet it sloughs over critically important realities, linkages, graduations and interdependencies.

Wide-ranging women's realities were presented, including the dilemmas of Filipino nannies in Canada and East European elder caregivers in Athens. By economic necessity, these women are torn between jobs far away and the needs of their own families in the Philippines, or Eastern Europe. Yet, the Greek and Canadian women gain freedom from traditional caregiving duties to pursue agendas with high enough pay to allow them to afford caregivers, while remaining close to their families. Other presentations focused on male violence, both public and domestic. Women are trapped between jobs in the formal economy of Rio de Janeiro and their dwellings in *favelas*, run by gangs and the "informal" economy. In Ciudad Juárez, Mexico, women are faced with increasingly common femicide, caught in the crossfire between the drug cartels and the military or police. These realities effectively destroy women's access to the public realm and with it a crucial element of democracy. One paper described the jet-setting lifestyle of China's richest woman, Zhang Yin, and the material aspirations of a Chinese corporate secretary, while another outlined the debate among African women about what feminism does and should mean in the African context.

Reggie Modlich (rmodlich@evdemon.ca) is a retired feminist urban planner and activist. For further information about the workshop or publication of papers, contact Professor Linda Peake (lpeake@yorku.ca).

The following binaries and issues related directly to planning practice:

North/South Binary

This common binary juxtaposes instead of raising the commonalities, interdependencies and transitions that North and South increasingly share with each other. The rapid urbanization of the globe strains infrastructures everywhere. Crises—economic, social and environmental—wars and conflicts dislodge populations from rural and disaster areas to cities in the Global South and North. These upheavals in both north and south hurt women and children the most. As women come to represent half of the planning profession in ever more countries, planners' recognition of and efforts to address social, economic and environmental injustices can help mitigate, even prevent, such crises.

City/Region Binary

Increasingly we accept that cities and regions must be seen and planned as an interdependent unit. Gerda Wekerle pointed out how social reproduction has so far been totally ignored in this context and

how neoliberalism considers caregiving to be a non-issue for planning policy or social responsibility. "How can we study absences?" she asks. Older and generally denser inner cities tend to have a network of social service, transportation and affordable housing infrastructure, yet newer suburbs and exurban developments lack such facilities and have too low a density to make such facilities viable. Regional planning documents may address transportation, economic and physical infrastructure, and even food production, yet they focus on men's jobs and needs with no consideration for the special needs of the multi-tasking women in the labor force or the young and aged who depend on their care. Affordable and accessible provision of social services, health, child, and elder care have to be addressed and provided for in planning policies and plans, especially as urban peripheries are developed.

Caregiving

Once born, every human being depends for many years on care from others and most do so again before death. This care is un- and under-valued and un- and underpaid. Women are expected to fulfil this fundamentally important role in practically all societies. The neoliberal economy requires women to be in the paid labor force to cheaply produce and then consume. The planning challenge is to create cities where caregiving is valued and serviced so that both men and women can equally share in it. Neither "microcredit" entrepreneurialism nor telecommuting have so far provided adequate solutions. Isolation, inappropriate space and design in the home and outdated, restrictive zoning designations render multitasking stressful. Rigid, traditional land use designations need to be replaced by generalized intensity and sustainability criteria.

Polarization

This is a concept that embodies dualities yet is filled with interdependencies, social, environmental and economic unsustainability and injustice. Cities in both the Global North and South are polarizing into extreme wealth and extreme poverty—gated neighborhoods and homeless people on public streets, the formal economy with all its institutions in conflict with the illegalized "informal" economy. Both are intertwined by grotesque linkages. *Asfaltos* and *favelas* they call it in Rio de Janeiro. David Hulchanski has recently published research attesting to the disappearance of diverse, middle-income neighborhoods in Toronto in favor of very rich and very poor areas. Meanwhile gang and gun violence continues. Many middle-class professions such as teaching, health care and public service, which are also predominantly female, and the unionized working class are in jeopardy from outsourcing, cutbacks and privatization. Unless there is a serious commitment, through planning and budgeting, to everyone's right to affordable shelter, water, education, health care and food, this polarization will increase and result in further alienation, deprivation and violence. P²

Activists in City Hall

The Progressive Response to the Reagan Era in Boston and Chicago

Review by Stephen E. Barton

Activists in City Hall
The Progressive Response to the Reagan Era in Boston and Chicago
Pierre Clavel
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Stephen E. Barton, Ph.D., has worked in the progressive city of Berkeley for the past twenty years and is currently deputy director of the Berkeley Rent Stabilization Board.

Do you dream of a community-based movement that gains the support of the majority of the people and takes control of local government, opening it up to greater public participation, using its resources to respond to community needs and to increase social justice and environmental sustainability? Do you wonder how much such a movement could do in the context of a much more conservative national government and a globalizing capitalist economy? How much of its accomplishments would survive after the inevitable change in administrations? There have been and are such local governments and there is much to be learned from their experiences.

In his earlier book, *The Progressive City: Planning and Participation, 1969–1984,* Pierre Clavel told the story of progressive planners and activists who worked with progressive mayors and city councils in Hartford, Cleveland, Berkeley, Santa Monica and Burlington. In *Activists in City Hall,* Clavel tells the story of the progressive activist-intellectuals who moved into city halls in 1984 after the election of Ray Flynn in Boston and Harold Washington in Chicago. National politics had moved substantially to the right with the election of President Ronald Reagan, but in a number of large cities the social movements unleashed in the 1960s and 1970s were still gathering strength. Clavel gives us a complex picture of the state of progressive organizations, their role in broader political coalitions divided by issues of race and class and the effort to use the powers of local government to create greater economic opportunity and equity within a capitalist economy that was moving wholeheartedly in the opposite direction.

Clavel describes the state of progressive organizations, their leadership and their work prior to the elections. These organizations provided the programmatic ideas that progressive leaders and activists would bring into the campaigns and the new administrations. He describes the complex and politically difficult coalitions which the progressive mayors put together in order to win elections, coalitions the activists then had to work within if they were to gain support for their programmatic ideas. Clavel goes on to describe the implementation of these ideas, how they changed as they began to be implemented and what survived

into new administrations after the departure of Ray Flynn in 1993 and the death of Harold Washington in 1987. He also provides an update on the cities featured in his earlier book and adds a few paragraphs on progressive city governments in Madison, Santa Cruz and San Francisco, but these vignettes are too short to give a clear picture of what has happened in those cities.

Clavel sees the common threads of progressive planning in the efforts to open up the policymaking and regulatory processes to greater public participation and to use the powers of local government to increase economic equity in a capitalist economy that generates increasing inequality.

Clavel's strength is in providing an organized history of the progressive mayoralties in Boston and Chicago and bringing alive the stories of progressive planners and activist-intellectuals when the doors of city hall were opened to them. Faculty moved from occasional consulting to running programs, staff of citizens organizations moved from opposition to implementation, activists came back with new master's degrees in city planning and moved into city halls that welcomed their ideas. Clavel's overview of planning-related programs that were developed under Flynn and Washington is accompanied by quotes from interviews and writings that show how the activist-planners experienced it, what they were trying to accomplish and how they felt about their efforts in later years. Clavel interviewed most of the leading activists personally and some also wrote articles and books about their experiences. He shows us the difficulties of putting ideals into practice, and the many tensions the arose: the desire for open, participatory planning processes versus the desire to respond quickly and creatively to changing situations and new opportunities; the desire to bring activists who had a background in low-income neighborhoods into city hall versus the concern that this may weaken the neighborhood movement; and the desire to confront issues of racial inequality versus the pressure to keep the focus on class issues that could draw people into the governing coalition across racial lines.

The focus of progressive efforts in the two cities was quite different. In Boston, progressives accepted the structural changes in the economy and focused on "linkage" strategies, using exactions to transfer increased land values accompanying the city's office development boom into improved transit, employment programs and affordable housing, often produced by neighborhood-based community development corporations. In Chicago, progressives focused on preservation of manufacturing jobs in the face of deindustrialization. Here the office boom threatened to destroy areas with valuable concentrations of small manufacturing businesses that provided thousands of blue-collar jobs to city residents. While this close proximity created synergies greater than the economic value of any individual firm, this value was not recognized by "the market." To address this and to protect the small manufacturing businesses, the Washington administration used zoning to create "planned manufacturing districts," an approach that was later retained by the Daley administration as an "industrial corridors" program.

Clavel sees the common threads of progressive planning in the efforts to open up the policymaking and regulatory processes to greater public participation and to use the powers of local government to increase economic equity in a capitalist economy that generates increasing inequality. Clavel concludes that "both city halls found it easier to promote concretely materialistic redistributive measures than to share power." He further concludes that progressive city governments needed a strong neighborhood movement to sustain political support for a progressive agenda but that "neighborhood interest and organization was often fragile." The transfer of leadership to city hall and the flow of money to neighborhood groups could strengthen groups and turn housing or job training organizations into an

industry with a strong institutional presence. On the other hand, the new resources could also co-opt the groups or create conflicts over who was hired that harmed the neighborhood's ability to organize themselves independently or, though Clavel says little about this, leave behind a more conservative set of leaders who were more concerned with exclusion than equity. Clavel's focus is on the activist-intellectuals and their programmatic ideas, not on the neighborhood organizations as such.

There are definite weaknesses in the book, some substantive and others in editing—there is a lot of repetitious summarizing. Among the substantive problems, Clavel's brief overview of developments in Berkeley claims that the 1986 change to election of the City Council by districts rather than citywide was responsible for "turning voter interest from citywide to neighborhood issues." No effort is made to reconcile the suggestion that Berkeley's turn toward neighborhood issues was a turn away from progressive principles with the book's strong argument for the importance of a neighborhood movement in sustaining progressive city government in Chicago and Boston. The discussion of "linkage" and "industrial policy" is descriptive, and while Clavel states that they have a similar "underlying logic," there is no serious effort to explain what that logic is.

Clavel is well aware of the limitations of the book, noting that he was not able to spend sufficient time on cities as complex as Boston and Chicago—"I liked the stories my informants told, however, and finally decided they ought to see the light of day." I for one am glad he made that decision. If you ever wondered what would happen if the "guerrillas in the bureaucracy" and their community allies won the political war and got to run the show for a while, you will enjoy this book, learn from it and undoubtedly argue with it. P²

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