

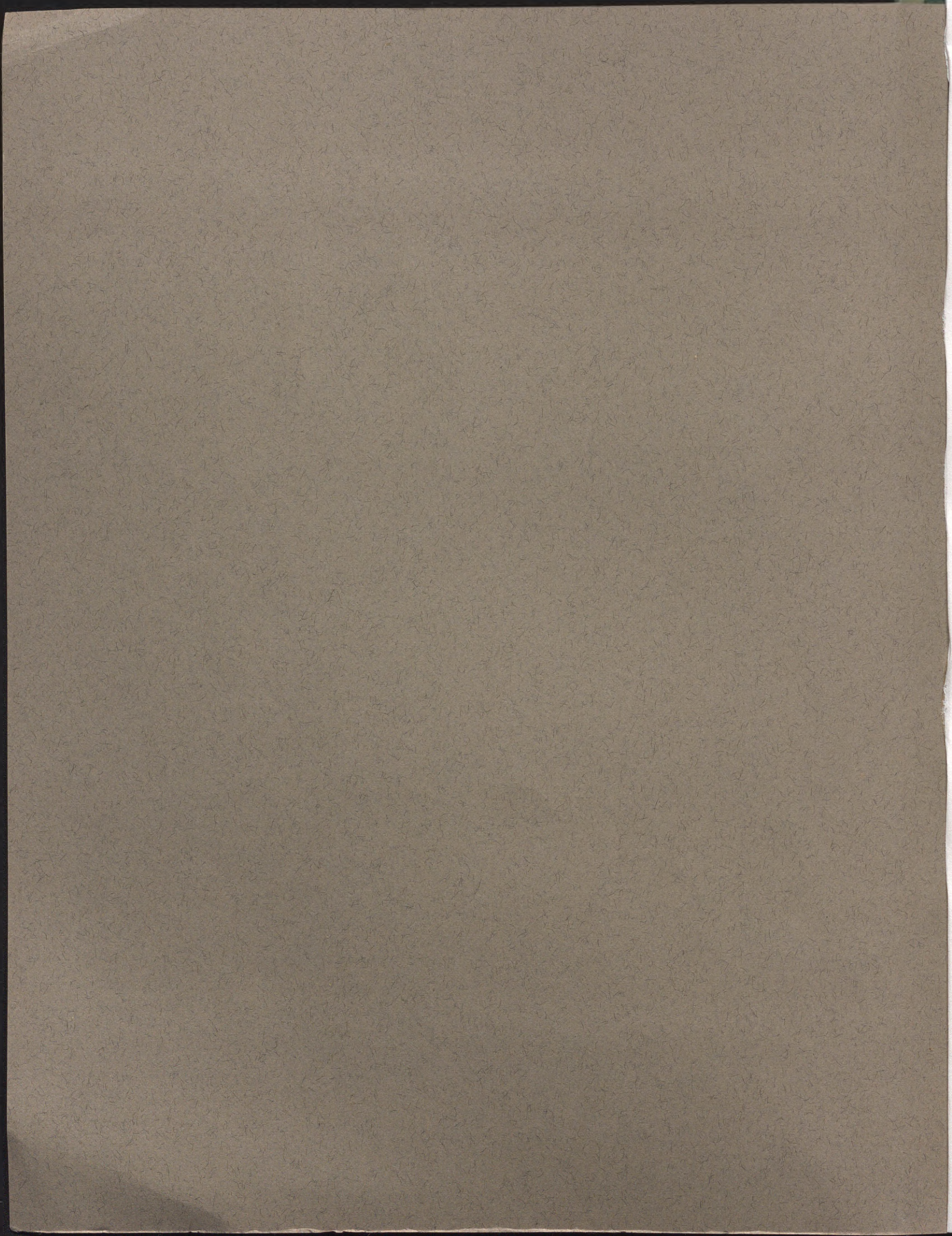
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Editors:

Rebecca Abers
Mirle Rabinowitz Bussell
Elwood Hopkins
Ute Lehrer
Cynthia So

Layout and Design:

Rebecca Abers
Mirle Rabinowitz Bussell
Cynthia So

Cover:

Elwood Hopkins

Special Thanks To:

Mary Jane Breinholt
Lee Burns
Andy Charnatz
Vanessa Dingley
John Friedmann
The Lewis Center For
Regional Policy Studies
Anastasia Loukaitou-Sideris
Victoria Santiago
Michael Storper

Inspiration:

Moira Kenny

Published by the Students of
the Urban Planning Program,
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Planning, University of
California, Los Angeles.

Critical Planning
Perloff Hall

University of California at
Los Angeles
405 Hilgard Avenue
Los Angeles, CA 90024-1467
Tel: (310) 825-8957
FAX: (310) 206-5566

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A Note From the Editors ii

ARTICLES

Under the Sign of the Sombrero 1
Mexican Restaurants in Southern California
by Jean Gilbert

Get the Point 12
Mutual Learning and the Clean Needles Now Project
by Stephanie Klasky Gamer

The Problem of Self-Reliance 18
International Development and Democratic Theory
by Rebecca Abers

A Quarter Century of Progressive Planning Education 32
A Retrospective Look at UCLA's Urban Planning Program
by John Friedmann

VISIONS OF PLANNING

Private Memories and Public Spaces 42
Remembering Rexall Drugstore
by Ethusian Cynthia Exum

A Personal Manifesto 45
by Jim Gilbert

**A First Year Student's Vignette on the Future
of Los Angeles' African American Community** 48
by Lezlee Hinesmon

What Should Urban Planning Theory Do? 49
by Lewison Lem

Another Dreamer of the Golden Dream 53
by Jan Mazurek

BOOK REVIEW

The Historical Foundations of American City Planning 57
by Mark Garrett, J.D.

FICTION

Making a Killing in the Southland 66
A Planning Mystery in Seven Innings
by Dora Epstein

A Note From the Editors

This year, as the Urban Planning Program at the UCLA Graduate School of Architecture and Urban Planning celebrates its 25th anniversary, we find ourselves at a crossroads. While we commemorate our past accomplishments, we are, at the same time, unsure of our future.

Our track record is impressive. Simply pick up a copy of any major planning or planning-related journal and you are likely to read about the research of our faculty members. Or, read about planning practice in Los Angeles and beyond and you are likely to find that our alumni are leading the way in innovative projects. Even before they graduate, our students are just as active in scholarly and practical work. Yet often student endeavors go unnoticed.

Critical Planning arose out of the concern of a group of students who felt that a forum was needed for sharing the high quality of written work done by our peers. This is especially important as we enter this time of transition. Student's ideas have always shaped the growth of our program. So by documenting some of their projects and ideas, perhaps we can gain some insight into our future.

Our first issue contains a collection of short essays, articles and a piece of fiction. Mostly written for courses in the Urban Planning Program, the articles focus on topics ranging from grassroots AIDS prevention to democratic theory. They include a specially commissioned contribution by the current Program Head, John Friedmann, that takes a retrospective look at Urban Planning at UCLA. In response to the forthcoming changes in the program, we also solicited a number of statements by students on what planning personally means to them. These essays are included in the section titled "Visions of Planning". The section following contains a book review on urban planning history. Finally, reflecting the whimsicality that has always characterized our program, we include a short story.

This journal has only been possible because of the help of many people. In particular, the financial support of the Lewis Center for Regional Policy Studies made the production and publication a reality. Also, all of the faculty members who knew of our efforts provided encouragement and logistical assistance. John Friedmann and Lee Burns were especially supportive.

We hope that this issue of *Critical Planning* will begin a new tradition in Urban Planning at UCLA.

The Editors
June 1994

Under the Sign of the Sombrero: Mexican Restaurants in Southern California

by Jean Gilbert

Restaurants are an integral part of the urban landscape. Whether it's a unique sign or facade, the chairs out front filled with diners, an especially inviting window, a familiar corporate logo, an exotic-sounding menu, or an anonymous exterior that belies the delights to be found within, the many faces of eateries punctuate the skyline of streets and highways everywhere. They appear in an array of shapes, sizes, and concepts - from very commonplace, standardized versions of a franchisor's formula for success, to temples of cuisine for a small but devoted audience. Through their exterior and interior architecture, whether lavish, outlandish, ultra-chic, homey, kitschy, or nondescript, they often reflect the culture and personality of the owners. By visual strategies, they all try to woo those on the outside to come in and try the day's specialties - a victory in the often fierce battle for customers.

Eating, of course, is an imperative, a universal activity of all living beings. However, there's much more to food, and its social and symbolic meanings are worth considering. Methods of food preparation give clues to a society's adaptive behavior. For example, maize for tortillas has been prepared for centuries by soaking it in water that contains dissolved limestone. Studies have shown that the limestone multiplies the calcium levels found in maize, and possibly increases the availability of certain amino acids - important because many

regions of Mexico were scarce in animal foods (Farb, 1980). The act of eating itself extends beyond the boundaries of mere nutrition, and is an intimate link between human behavior and cultural institutions (Ibid). Barthes has described food as a 'system of communication', 'a body of images', and 'an intimate part of the protocol of social life' (1975: 50). Eating is a way of initiating and maintaining human relationships, whether the ties are commercial, familial, or platonic. The particular foods eaten and the setting they're eaten in reinforce social, religious, and ethnic identities. Persons affirm their identities and lifestyles through the choice of certain foods - they might be vegetarians, epicures, or even food faddists. Food-related images of different groups are developed by outsiders as well, illustrated, for example, by North Americans' metaphorical references to ethnic groups as "krauts", "cabbage-eaters", or "beaners" - disparaging terms for Germans, Koreans, or Mexicans.

Significant meanings, symbolisms, and differing perceptions are also attached to places, just as they are to food and eating. Restaurants can be considered as "other" places - not home, not work, but public, even social spaces, where human exchange happens. In the ethnography of urban behavior, the eating place has a central role (King, 1980). Patterns observed in restaurants - from the various images projected by interiors and exteriors, to the different social

groupings in which restaurant patrons eat and drink, speak volumes about society, class, gender and ethnic distinctions, taste, popular culture. Looked at from another angle, dining out is a means by which personal desires find their shape and satisfaction through prescribed forms of public conduct. The essentially personal, private pleasures of eating are acted out in a public setting where it's perfectly alright to do so, much like going to the movies, gambling in a casino, or lying on a crowded beach.

In Finklestein's rather dim but revealing view of eating out, to see dining out in this way is to see how human emotions become commodified. Dining out has the capacity to transform emotions into commodities which are made available to the individual as if they were tangible items (1989: 14). Restaurants offer people the opportunity to act and temporarily exist in ways that are removed from the actualities of the everyday. The practice of dining out can thus become a "passageway to a world without continuous form, a world which may be lavishly endowed with the fabulous, the desirable, the luxurious and the exciting" (Finklestein, 1989: 15), whatever the diner wishes - he/she must only choose the place. Ethnic restaurants, especially, can be seen as a form of armchair travel, transporting people to exotic places, if only for one meal.

Sennett (1976) has noted that

"the growth of the middle class has been accompanied by psychologically problematic social relations. The solution to the problem has been for social relations to be constrained by rules of performance which allow individuals to conceal themselves within an accepted social role and engage the other through these roles."

Finklestein notes that "Thus it follows that the habituated roles and performances associated with dining out become devices which are

effective as the means for bridging the existential gap thought to separate us all" (Finklestein, 1989: 16). Built forms of restaurants are mediators for all these social behaviors. Can changes in social functions and divisions be deduced from evolutions in the interior layout and design of restaurants or in their spatial distributions? How are the characteristics of a social area, city center or commuter suburb, or the changing day and nighttime clientele mirrored in the design and layout of restaurants? Can one group's perceptions of another be read? While this paper does not attempt to be a treatise on the sociology and anthropology of restaurants, perhaps through looking at the built forms and uses of Mexican restaurants in Southern California a few insights can be gained into both social behavior and the story the eating places tell about the evolving views and interpretations of the Mexican-American community.

Dining Out is Big Business, and a Major Pastime

Statistics regarding the economic magnitude of the restaurant industry further illustrate just how much of people's time and resources are spent on dining out, especially in a huge market like Southern California. Overall, more than half of Americans' meals are eaten away from home. Here are a few particulars:

Southern California Eating Places

Population (L.A./Long Beach SMSA): 8.97 million
Percentage of U.S. Population: 3.58%
Eating Place Sales: \$7.65 billion
Percentage sold as fast food: 36%
Number of Eating Places: 11,139
Persons per unit: 805/1
Number of Mexican units: 3,046
Number of Mexican units (U.S.): 17,238
L.A./Long Beach as % of U.S. total: 18%
% of Mexican units-top 100 chains: 6%

Gastronomy and Regional Identities

The Cajun foods of southern Louisiana, the *moles* that are a specialty of Oaxaca, Mexico, freshly steamed clams pulled from the Chesapeake Bay, or the heaping plates of pasta brought to the table from the thicket of Italian restaurants in Brooklyn are all examples of regional cuisines. Incorporating the local bounties of land and water, ethnic origins, and regional tastes, foods often make up part of an area's identity. Indeed, what trip to Kansas City would be complete without a barbecue meal? Would anyone deny that Chicago is the home of pizza, Hong Kong the mecca for dim sum, or that America is the world's hamburger capital? With much of Southern California, and Los Angeles in particular, it's Mexican food that many people think of first.

Given L.A.'s proximity to the Mexican border, the fact that nearly 40 percent of the city's population is Hispanic, and that the largest concentration of people of Mexican heritage outside of Mexico City is found in Southern California, the omnipresence of Mexican foods and restaurants isn't surprising. Fully 36 percent of the nation's Mexican restaurants are found on the West Coast (Restaurant Business, 1991), and half of these are located in the Los Angeles area alone (Restaurant Consulting, 1992).

Food and Restaurants in the Early Days

Southern California's reputation as the expatriate home of Mexican food has been building since the early days of the pueblo of Los Angeles. To put the Mexican presence in California in historical perspective, a very condensed account of the settling of "Alta California" is in order. Once central and southern Mexico had been conquered by the Spaniards (by the early 1520s), they began to turn their energies northward. Explorers, including Cabrillo and Ulloa, traveling in the region reported their findings to the rulers of the

Spanish empire. Colonization of Alta California became a serious objective of the Spaniards in the 1760s as a way to secure their dominance in western North America and to establish a new missionary province. A group of settlers was recruited, and by the end of August 1781 the entire group was living and working at the site of the new pueblo, whose center was the plaza that still exists in downtown Los Angeles today. Most of the first 44 inhabitants of Los Angeles were from Sonora and Sinaloa states, just south of Alta California. Ethnic backgrounds included Indian, negro, or mulatto, typical of later settlers in the area and of the provinces from which they came. Only one person was of pure Spanish descent, and a number of the settlers were of racially mixed descent, either mestizo (Spanish-Indian), coyota (mestizo-Indian), or chino (negro-Indian) (Rios-Bustamante, 1986).

Albeit slowly at first, Los Angeles grew as it attracted more people in search of a better life. By 1820, the city's population had reached 650 Mexicans, making it the largest town in Alta California and an important agricultural center. Land grants served to spread small nodes of the population throughout the surrounding region. Ranchos extended about 70 miles along the east-west axis from the center of the pueblo, and about 40 miles in the north-south direction (Ibid: 18). Mexico declared independence from Spain in 1821, and in 1836 Los Angeles became the capital of Mexico's northern border. In 1845, the historian Bancroft estimated that 2,000 Mexicans lived in the Los Angeles area; 1,100 Indians were estimated to live in the area. A year later, Texas was annexed by the United States, beginning the Mexican-American War. Alta California steeled itself for battle and proclaimed its loyalty to Mexico and opposition to U.S. invasion. Los Angeles was taken on January 10, 1847. The Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo was signed the following year, ceding much of the Southwest to the United States, and creating justifiably hard feelings on the part of Mexicans.

From Los Angeles' early history arise two points about the city's days as a part of

Mexico. One, that the city was already a well-populated settlement and economic center at the onset of settlement by Anglos. Second, that Los Angeles' original inhabitants were thoroughly Mexican (though of varying racial backgrounds). The presence of Spaniards was very minor at most.

Therefore, Los Angeles' image, its Mexican-ness, was something well-entrenched upon arrival of the Americans. This image was interpreted and re-interpreted both by the Anglo population that came to dominate the area, and by Mexicanos to the extent that they became removed from the culture of the mother country. Examples of different takes on Mexican culture and tradition can be found in writings on early Mexican foods and restaurants.

The memoirs (1853-1913) of Harris Newmark, a merchant who immigrated to Los Angeles in 1853, are sprinkled with Spanish words and phrases, giving some indication of the influence of the local Mexican population. He often refers to food in his writings, and drops some hints about Mexican foods. Although he never describes the appearance of any of the city's Mexican eating places, he does acknowledge their presence:

"In 1853, a number of Spanish-American restaurant keepers plied their vocation, so that Mexican and Spanish cooking were always obtainable. All the Mexican dishes that are common now, such as *tamales*, *enchiladas* and *frijoles*, were favorite dishes then. *Tamales* in particular were very popular with the Californians but it took some time for the incoming epicure to appreciate all that was claimed for them and other masterpieces of Mexican cooking."

The *tortilla* was another favorite. *Pan de huevos* was peddled around town on little trays by

Mexican women, and when well prepared was very palatable."

Descriptions of period Mexican eateries have proved nearly impossible to unearth. Just to give the reader a general conception of an L.A. restaurant in 1850's, I present the following description. Again, Harris Newmark, speaking of La Rue's, a restaurant on Los Angeles Street where he took his meals for nine dollars a week:

"...steaks and mutton and pork chops were the popular choice, and potatoes and vegetables a customary accompaniment. Nothing in Los Angeles perhaps has ever been cruder than this popular eating-place. The room which faced the street, had a mud floor and led to the kitchen through a narrow opening. Half a dozen cheap wooden tables, each provided with two chairs, stood against the walls. The tablecloths were generally dirty, and the knives and forks, as well as the furniture, were of the homeliest kind. The food made up in portions what it lacked in quality, and the diner rarely had occasion to leave the place hungry. What went most against my grain was the slovenliness of the proprietor himself. Flies were very thick in the summer months, and one day I found a big fellow splurging in my bowl of soup. This did not, however, faze John La Rue. Seeing the struggling insect, he calmly dipped his coffee-colored fingers into the hot liquid and, quite as serenely, drew out the fly..."

One should keep in mind that restaurants in California at this time had not yet

Mexican Restaurants

developed into the widely attended places that they have been since the Second World War. Because of industrialization, urbanization, and the accompanying divisions of labor, older and larger cities in Europe and the U.S. already had substantial numbers of taverns, coffee houses, and an assortment of restaurants by the 1860s (Thorne, 1980). Their interiors ranged from the grand to the utilitarian, their customers were divided along class lines, and very definite rules of etiquette existed. In these rapidly modernizing cities dining out became a necessity as the home and the workplace became separated by greater distances. Public eating places were built in response.

In contrast, Los Angeles before 1900 was more of a town than a city, and served as the economic center of the surrounding agricultural region. As such, the establishments there met the need for food, drink, and shelter called for by travelers, so the overall need for restaurants was less than if the city's own population were being served as well.

Economic activities shifted from

agriculture and livestock to industry and commerce between 1890 and 1910 (Rios-Bustamante, 1986). In an ever more urban Los Angeles, legions of businesses - banks, printing shops, and restaurants included - were started that served the emerging manufacturing economy of the city.

Descriptions or pictures of early Mexican restaurants are scarce. Those that do exist show that most of them were very simple places, and early photos suggest that some may have actually been operated out of people's homes, with just a sign outside advertising dinner. Circa-1920's El Cholo (Salisbury, 1992) and the El Camino Cafe in 1940 (Aguilar, 1992) are remembered as unassuming places with plain wooden booths and small counters, and it is probably safe to extrapolate this description back to earlier years.

The classified section of the Los Angeles Directory lists most restaurants by what have been assumed to be proprietors' names rather than names of the establishments. A summary of periodically taken counts is shown in Table 1.

TABLE 1

Year	Spanish-Name Restaurants/ Total Restaurants	Percentage of Restaurants with Spanish names
1874	0/25	none
1900	3/70	4%
1910	7/250	3%
1920	21/500	4%
1930	108/1850	6%
1941	140/3048	5%

Source: Los Angeles City Directories, Classified Section
Counts made of Spanish surnames or place names listed under the restaurant heading.

Given the great social rift that existed between the English- and Spanish-speaking populations of Los Angeles (Rios-Bustamante, 1986; Romo, 1983), it is highly likely that some Mexican establishments were missed by those who compiled the City Directory. It is interesting to note that there were many female names listed, both Hispanic and Anglo. In the year 1900, the three hispanic names listed were all women's, and Señora E.S. de Gutierrez of Pasadena had placed a one inch ad for her Spanish dinners. Some proper names can be found, such as that of Estrada's Spanish Kitchen, Cafe Caliente, or the famed Cafe La Golondrina on Olvera Street, but the vast majority of listings are otherwise. It is probable that, at least through the 1920s, L.A. was still compact enough and the business districts concentrated enough that restaurateurs could rely solely on business generated by neighborhood denizens and passers-by, and therefore did not need to make such an effort to identify themselves (beyond "restaurant") or to advertise as heavily as other types of businesses. Briefly scanning the pages of local English and Spanish-speaking newspapers (the *Los Angeles Times*, *La Opinión*, *El Heraldo de México*) up until the 1940s supports this suggestion further. Almost no ads for restaurants of any type can be found in the midst of numerous promotions for dress shops, feed stores, hair pomades, virility tonics, and other necessities of urban life. Printshops did list restaurant ticket and menu typesetting among their services however, and in 1945 *La Opinión's* want ads offered dishwashing positions at the Brown Derby and Fred Harvey's, two of L.A.'s early "in" restaurants.

The sole restaurant advertiser in *El Heraldo* during 1916 was José SanRoman, owner of El Progreso at 414 North Main Street, in the heart of downtown's Mexican business district. Three years later, and still alone and ahead of his time in advertising sophistication, Señor SanRoman took out an ad for the Gran Restaurant SanRoman, serving "tipico" Mexican dishes such as *cabeza* (roasted lamb's head), *pipián*, and *sopa de fideos*, all prepared to the

highest standards of cleanliness and authenticity. It seems that the business was prospering, as the restaurant now occupied larger quarters on North Spring Street, numbers 107-109.

Image Cultivation

The idea of dining out for entertainment was a trend that did not take hold in the Los Angeles area until the 1920s and 1930s. When it did, it seems that Mexican restaurants were some of the first dining adventures that people took. A sort of idealized Mexican restaurant emerged, part myth and fantasy, and partially rooted in Mexican tradition, to serve the mostly middle and upper-class Anglo-Americans patrons in search of an experience.

The mythical element can be seen in the references to Spanish foods being served in the restaurants that catered to Anglos, when actually few purely Spanish people ever made their homes in California. The *tacos*, *enchiladas*, and *tamales* that diners have enjoyed for decades are foods of Mexico, not Spain, and were prepared and served by Mexican restaurateurs. According to Rios-Bustamante, the Spanish myth stemmed from an Anglo-American assumption of racial purity and polarization: since people could be classified in only one of a given number of mutually exclusive racial groups, they were unprepared to accept the ethnic reality of Mexican-Americans as normal. As a result, Anglo-Americans considered it charitable to use the term "Spanish" instead of "Mexican". In favor of mainstream social acceptance and commercial success (and who can blame them?), the restaurants perpetuated the fantasy of a California founding Spanish elite. There were much bigger forces at work preserving the romantic myth and image of European trailblazers whose hard work put Los Angeles on the map. The romantic picture of the hacienda, noble *dons* on horseback, and *señoritas* waving fans was a convenient image used by real estate developers and city boosters during the first decades of the 20th century to attract new arrivals to California. Thus, "Spanish Fiesta

Days" were organized by local chambers of commerce, and Spanish-costumed performers sang and danced in the refurbished and reinterpreted (under Anglo-American direction) Olvera Street. Perhaps unintentionally, the writer of a Southern California guidebook acknowledges the wily promoters' ploys:

"Los Angeles: whose prototype is invariably the charming *señorita*, with the flirtatious fan, her eyes provocatively luring and her manner intriguing...It was exceedingly clever publicity thus to typify the spirit of the city, and it is thus she will ever prove a lure to the traveler from afar. It is quite fitting that she should exert this influence, and eminently proper that our visitors should find within our gates the same *dolce far niente* spirit and colorful atmosphere which had its origin in the old Spanish customs" (Herrick, 1935).

There is a bit of truth in the sentences above, although it is being attributed to the wrong group. The "*dolce far niente* spirit", the innate sense of fun, and generous hospitality characteristically found in Mexican homes was observable early in the life of the first popular Mexican restaurants, and carries on to this day. Some of the roots of this tradition can be seen in Harris Newmark's remembrances, where he speaks of good times at the adobe homes of Mexican landowners near Los Angeles

"Among the old California families dwelling within these houses, there was much visiting and entertainment, and I often partook of the proverbial and princely hospitality. There was also much merrymaking, the firing of crackers, bell ringing and dancing the *fandango*, *jota*

and *cachucha* marking their jolly and whole-souled fiestas. ...there was no end of good things to eat and drink."

This fiesta atmosphere is something frequently found in the Mexican restaurants catering to non-Mexican diners since the 1920s until now. A 1938 review of Cafe Caliente called the restaurant "an ideal place to entertain eastern friends to whom Spanish music and dancing are novel" (Westways, 1938). At El Cholo, serving "Spanish dinners" on Western Avenue since 1931, the clientele has always been of diverse backgrounds, and includes a some of the rich and famous. From its humble beginnings as a two-bedroom California bungalow, the place has expanded numerous times to accommodate the crowds, who are drawn there as much by the atmosphere as by the food (Salisbury and Rosanna, 1992). This "fun" reputation is capitalized on by such multi-million dollar chains as El Torito, who calls itself "The Fiesta Restaurant", and sees a sizable amount of business in the form of groups who come to the restaurants for parties and functions.

Under the Sign of the Sombrero: Bright Spots in the Urban Fabric

Aside from the social implications and significance of Mexican restaurants in Los Angeles, we should note their architectural contribution to the city's landscape and built image. Buildings the restaurants are housed in are often very distinctive, though they may not be architectural masterpieces. Styles range from simple, low-profile concrete or brick boxes to elaborately ornamented, stuccoed, plastered, and tile-roofed structures of several stories. The form they take relates to the age and location of the restaurant and the type of Mexican food being served. On the following page, Table 2 offers a typography of the varying styles of Mexican eateries found around Los Angeles and the features that differentiate them from each other.

Mexican Restaurants

TABLE 2
A TYPOLOGY OF THE MEXICAN RESTAURANTS OF SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA

Restaurant Type	Appearance	L.A. Examples	Icons/Signage	Foods & Ambience	Audience	Typical Location
Hacienda	Spanish-style; multi-storied; white stucco exteriors, tile roofs; large; set back from street; windows for light rather than view; often extensive landscaping	Acapulco Rests.; El Torito; Tamayo; El Cholo; El Coyote	Tiles; arched door & window openings; patios; mariachis; servers in pseudo-Spanish/festive garb; most signs reveal corporate ownership	Standardized fare: tacos, enchiladas, burritos; concern for delicate palates; festive atmosphere; ceremonial dining	Corporate strategies target cross-sections; non-Hispanics most prevalent; large groups, families w/children, birthday parties	Boulevards; shopping malls; business parks; suburbia; less frequent in dense areas
Cantina	Various styles; stucco/brick exterior; wrought iron/tile-work ornamentation; built close to setback; street level windows; smaller than haciendas; most built in 50s, 60s, 70s	Numerous: Don Antonio; Gilbert's; El Tepeyac; Baja Cantina	Cacti, sombreros, Aztec calendars, bull-fighters; dim lighting; baskets; icons used in signage & int/ext decoration; signs often prominent	Standardized; some specialties- menudo, birria, etc.; generally bland for Anglo palates; friendly, informal atmosphere; "neighborhood" feel	Customer mix; depends on the neighborhood; small groups/single s most prevalent; local businesspeople & residents	Everywhere; In all types of neighborhoods except for up-scale; mainly in boulevard commercial strips; uniqueness lost when they're forced to locate in mini-malls
Recuerdo	Some overlap with cantinas; often non-descript, simple; usually hold 30 tables or less; ornament through bright color or murals; large windows	La Playita; Chabelita; La Parilla; names less important than being in the right place; try Brooklyn Avenue	Plain, simple decor; foods or menus on exterior walls in Spanish; signs often painted-on rather than manufactured; often high proportion of female workers	Unadulterated; can reflect regional origin of owner; many specialties-seafood, antojitos, etc.	Predominantly Hispanic; recent immigrants, the working class; all-male groups & singles common; some adventurous gringos	Hispanic neighborhood commercial districts; lower rent areas; popping up in unexpected places as Hispanic population permeates the city

The haciendas' exteriors put forth the previously discussed romanticized image of the "old Spanish" days of Southern California, although their overall appearance and detailing deviates substantially from what the California adobes of period photographs look like. While their aesthetic value is arguable, they are usually quite imposing buildings whose use is immediately obvious. In that sense they are somewhat uncommon landmarks and do their part in contributing to the overall image of the Southland. Regarding their interiors, it is interesting how even in these most corporate of Mexican restaurants, a feeling of being welcomed as an honored guest is evoked. Though everyone I spoke with knew what I was talking about, no one could put a finger on exactly why this is so. One of Harris Newmark's observations provides a clue and suggests that the concept has been handed down from long ago. He is referring to the adobe homes of the better-off citizens of Los Angeles, where he was shown such gracious hospitality,

"The general character of the homes was somewhat aristocratic; they were usually rectangular in shape, and were invariably provided with patios and verandas. Everything about an adobe was emblematic of hospitality: the doors, heavy and often apparently home made, were wide, and the windows were deep."

This style of restaurant is the most expensive to build, and in today's highly competitive food service arena many restaurateurs are instead building the less costly cantina style of eating place (Restaurant Business, 1991). Since they are relatively large, newer haciendas are built more frequently in suburbia, where land pressure is less.

Cantinas include a wide cross-section of restaurants. Compared to haciendas, they are usually smaller, occupy smaller sites, and are

somewhat less elaborately detailed and furnished. Not that they are without atmosphere - they are often festooned with more iconographic decorations than their larger relatives. These places fill the role of a neighborhood ethnic restaurant, with regular customers who have been coming for a long time. They're usually very flexible, comfortable places with few strictures, low prices, and undemanding protocols - while one table might be unwinding over a pitcher of margaritas, there is no embarrassment for the lone diner across the aisle. The cantinas are abundant throughout Los Angeles and its environs, and no two look exactly alike. Yes, they are guilty of creating stereotypes and embodying cliches, but nonetheless, the sheer number and personalized style of these family-run restaurants make a unique contribution to Los Angeles' streetscapes and social spaces.

The recuerdos look different, are usually found in different places, and fill a different need than the cantinas. A recuerdo is a souvenir, a memento, or a reminder. The name was chosen to identify this type of eatery because both the food and the architecture are more typical of the everyday restaurants found in large and small Mexican cities. These places are comfort zones where the food and the language is familiar to recently arrived immigrants, and along with the family-owned cantinas can provide points of induction into the workforce through friendship and kinship ties (Aguilar, 1992). The emphasis here is on food rather than atmosphere or entertainment, and for the most part the quality seems to be high, since the experienced palates of the average customer would never settle for the blander and more standardized fare served in the former restaurant styles. Like their turn-of-the-century precursors that we know so little about, the recuerdos are geographically concentrated in the barrios of Southern California.

A Two-Tiered System

Can there be any metaphor found in the widespread acceptance of Mexican foods for the assimilation and breaking down of racial boundaries between Anglo-Americans and Mexican-Americans? Is there any significance in the two groups dining at the same table together? The answer has to be no. Consider the atmosphere of 1920s and 1930s Los Angeles, when Mexican dining first became popularized among the non-Mexicans of Los Angeles. Though the diners enjoyed the food and the rather synthetic setting it was being served in, the general public's opinion of Mexican-Americans was not a positive one. There surely were many enlightened exceptions to this rule, but a majority of persons held a condescending or even derisive attitude toward the Mexicans, believing them lazy and of limited intelligence (Rios-Bustamante, 1986; Romo, 1983). It was probably easy for patrons to suspend their misconceptions, since as a rule the popular Mexican eating places marketed the Spanish romantic myth, elevating themselves above the category of Mexican.

Today's diners encounter Mexican foods frequently, both in Mexican restaurants and even on the menus of many non-Mexican places, and Mexican food is a fast-growing segment of the nation-wide marketplace (Restaurant Business, 1991). Most of these encounters are tinged with commercialism, however, and little can be learned about ethnicity (Brown and Mussell, 1984). The depressing monotony of tacos, tamales, and enchiladas laden with cheese give little clue to the highly varied and regionally distinct cuisines of Mexico. One hopes that those who venture into the recuerdos may actually be curious about the people whose food they're eating. Abrahams (in Brown and Mussell, 1984) points out, however, that the romance with things ethnic currently seen in American popular culture, stems from the ever-growing number of alternative cultural practices and consumer products our society has to choose from. Faced with all these choices, everyone in

the consumer class "is potentially a connoisseur, an aficionado, a gourmand or a gourmet (1984: 26). In this way, seeking out places where the ethnics eat could be seen as similar to collecting cars, antiques, or wines, and knowing the right nomenclature merely enables the collector to talk with other enthusiasts about the object of their interest.

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JEAN GILBERT is a second year M.A. student in the Urban Planning Program at UCLA. This paper was written for the class "History of the Built Environment" taught by Anastasia Loukaitou-Sideris in Winter 1992.

Get The Point: Mutual Learning and the Clean Needles Now Project

by Stephanie Klasky Gamer

The dominant street culture at 6th and Burlington in Los Angeles includes small interchanges between the homeless sleeping in an encampment in an empty lot, the intravenous drug users who come to buy and sell and shoot up drugs in this neighborhood, and the sex workers who fade in and out of these two worlds on the street. Together, the culture has a sound, a smell, a look, and an understanding very much its own. It is a culture based on shared life experiences and an intuitive knowledge that comes from these experiences.

In June 1992 another group entered this street scene. Clean Needles Now (CNN), an AIDS-intervention activists group, came out to the streets to provide free needles, safer shooting kits, and resource materials to a marginalized drug-using community. While there was initial networking on the streets before the CNN team showed up, CNN volunteers spent their first six months establishing relationships with the existing life and culture of the exchangers they served. Those first months were a time of breaking down barriers -- of learning new names, a new language, a new look, and new strategic positions from which to operate the exchange. This was a learning process on the part of both the CNN volunteers and the clients of the needle exchange. The last year and a half

has been an ongoing process of mutual learning for clients and volunteers in an effort to provide the most appropriate AIDS intervention for the streets. The successful street exchange of "points" or "works" relies on the critical exchange of formal and informal knowledge between CNN activists and clients.

The Beginnings

Clean Needles Now, Los Angeles was established with two primary goals: 1) to help drug users minimize the risk of HIV infection by providing a consistent and accessible source of clean needles, safer shooting kits, and medical and drug treatment referrals; and 2) to advocate the change of current California laws prohibiting the possession and distribution of needles/syringes.¹ In order to achieve these goals, CNN started a street-based needle exchange program which operates three days a week in different areas of Los Angeles. (There are also two home-based exchanges operating each week.) The CNN outreach team serves about 250 clients and exchanges approximately 2,700 needles each week. In addition to the outreach teams, CNN has a legal team and an advocacy team who meet continually with other community-based organizations, elected officials,

research teams, and private foundations to educate and lobby for support of CNN and other needle exchange programs.

The Outreach Team

CNN volunteers represent a broad range of our city: we are recovering drug users, HIV positive, HIV negative, Latino/a, Asian, African American, white, gay, lesbian, bisexual, and heterosexual men and women. Professionally, we are health care providers, professors, artists, lawyers, and students. The one thing we have in common is that we are AIDS activists concerned with our society's inability to deal with those marginalized populations most in need. When the exchange began, the volunteers came to it with different levels of knowledge and experience with drugs and needle exchange programs.

The Clients

Statistics on the City of Los Angeles predict that there are about 200,000 injection drug users, of whom at least 7 percent are thought to be infected with HIV. Injection drug users make up the largest group of new HIV cases in Los Angeles and sharing contaminated needles is the primary means of transmission. Just as the CNN volunteers represent a wide spectrum of Los Angeles, so too do the clients of the needle exchange. The clients range in age from 20 to 50 years old, and represent all ethnicities, gender, and sexual orientation. Some are white collar recreational users while others are hardcore addicts who are homeless or who may steal or sell sex for drugs. Needle exchange provides a bridge to treatment for people who rarely have contacts outside their world of addiction. Despite their differences in lifestyle, there is a community of users on the streets who look out for one another and often for us as volunteers.

Developing the Program

The early conceptions for a needle exchange program in Los Angeles came from team members' knowledge of other successful needle exchanges around the country.² In the process of developing a program for Los Angeles, members armed themselves with statistics of intravenous drug users and HIV infection rates in Los Angeles. Research was done and conferences were attended to gain enough background information to know what was needed to start a needle exchange program in a city the size of Los Angeles. Data from agencies such as the Center for Disease Control also provided us with information to share with the users (clients) themselves regarding safe practices when shooting up. Through funding by ACT UP Los Angeles (AIDS Coalition to Unleash Power, Los Angeles), five individuals of CNN made all of the contacts to purchase (or get donated) enough supplies to start an underground exchange. The CNN volunteers talked to friends in the arts community, the club "scene," or former drug users to learn what parts of the city, and which streets were the center of drug activity. Finally, volunteers went out on the streets to meet some of the users and to let them know that they would be starting a needle exchange program shortly. These months of preparation prior to the first exchange revolved around a formal gathering of technical information about drug use in general and drug activity in Los Angeles. In essence, we gathered information from the outside to 1) teach us how to operate a successful exchange; and 2) transfer information about safer practices to CNN clients. Thus, formal and technical knowledge from the *outside* made it possible to develop a program which itself brings this knowledge *inside* to the active community.

Within one month of operation, it became clear that the most valuable information for a successful exchange in Los Angeles needed to come from within the community the exchange served. Clients were able to teach us about new locations and times to set up the

exchange to make it more accessible for them. We learned about types of condoms or syringes or "cookers" that were preferred in this community of users. Most importantly, however, we learned a certain language and style based on the clients' own experiences which volunteers used in order to communicate better with the clients. Our clients brought to the exchange an informal type of knowledge: one based on practical and concrete experience.

CNN's program has grown and changed in function based on the exchange of these two types of knowledge: the theoretical, formal knowledge from the professional and academic world of the CNN outreach team, and the practical, experiential knowledge of the drug-using community.

Relationships With the Clients: "An Exchange On the Street"

The scene is a Tuesday night around 5:30 p.m. at the corner of 6th and Burlington Streets. An old, faded white mail truck pulls up and parks under the one street lamp on the east side of the Burlington. The tires run over some trash and a blanket left at the curbside. Across the street in an empty parking lot where three more cars pull up and park. Six people climb out of the cars and walk to the jeep to help the redhead unload her colorful plastic trash cans. Each trash can is filled with something different: sterile cotton balls, alcohol wipes, little bottles of bleach, little bottles of water, condoms, cookers, and folded green papers with lists of names and phone numbers. These seven individuals prepare themselves: three people stand around these full bins set at the sidewalk, two people are in position at the jeep next to a large red sharpie container and boxes of new syringes and needles, and one more person floats in and out among the other volunteers with a clipboard and pen in hand.

As the CNN team sets up for an exchange, clients start lining up on the street. They come from around the corner on 6th Street, or out from the apartments on Burlington, or from the tents set up just in front of the mail

truck. The clients have learned over the last few months that the exchange operates more quickly when they all wait in line and have their old needles accessible and ready to count out. One guy reaches into his socks in his boots and pulls out a bag with 23 "points"; another woman goes through all of her purses until she finds a little blue cosmetic bag which keeps her "works" safe. "Wild child" comes up and greets all of her friends in the line. She compares a new tattoo on her neck with "Tanto." Juan Carlos strolls to the exchange site and looks for Kristen immediately so he can speak to her in Spanish and explain why he doesn't have all of his "outfits" on him today -- there was a raid in the neighborhood this week and the cops took everything. Can he still get his regular 12 points? Bobbie pulls up quickly in his new Honda Accord and waits impatiently in the line. He needs to exchange quickly because he's on his way to his art final. Renee quizzes him about names and dates of modern artists.

Every person comes up to the line and has a story to tell us about why they have few or no needles to exchange -- sometimes there's a raid, sometimes they were just released from the hospital (they usually still have their plastic identity bracelet on), sometimes they just left jail and still have to report to their parole officer so they cannot get caught with any points on them or they will be busted. Other times new people in the encampment steal their things during the day when they sleep. The decision about the number of clean needles to give them is always a give and take depending on the volunteer in charge of intake that evening: is this a story I heard already? Was it from Tanto last week too? Are they asking for more points than they regularly use? In these instances other clients help us keep track of how frequently different clients shoot up or if one client gets high with a group of friends and therefore exchanges more points to provide for his friends.

When it gets darker out more of the women come to exchange. Debbie has her non-nonsense style -- this is not a socializing time for her but a time to get her points and get back to work. She's in and out within five minutes after exchanging her regular 30 points and picking up

about 50 condoms. Her fishnet stockings run back to the bus stop and she is back at work. Most of the other women come to hang out. They want to visit with some of the women volunteers, and joke around with some of the other clients. Anna asks to speak with Susan privately. Susan is one of the CNN volunteers who works professionally in health care for women and often talks with some of the clients about infections they have found or concerns they have about their bodies. Anna now has a "John" who won't wear a condom but she does not want AIDS or a baby so what should she do? Behind the tree I see Susan talking with her and then unwrapping a condom and putting it in her mouth. She explains to Anna that sometimes if you make the experience of wearing a condom sensual for a man, then he will be more willing to use it. She shows Anna how to use her lips and tongue to unroll the condom on her finger. Anna's laughing and looking around but tries this technique herself too. When Anna leaves with a purse full of condoms, I ask Susan where she learned how to use a condom that way. She said that some of the teenagers in the school where she teaches sex education showed it to her and it has been a successful technique for most of the sex workers.

Don comes to the exchange and brings a little show and tell for all of the volunteers. He is concerned that we do not know how the cookers work and wants to show us why the cookers we provide are bad. He explains that when he cooks his drugs in the metal bottle caps and then draws the liquid form into the syringe, remains of the drugs sit in the cooker. If they sit too long, these metal caps rust and sometimes he draws the rust up into his veins. We explain that we knew these cookers rusted, but that they were donated to us and our only other option, the plastic caps, are too expensive for us to purchase in mass quantity. We tell Don that just like the rest of the supplies, take as many cookers as he needs to get through the week, and that he should only be using a cooker once and then throwing it away. As we've learned from the CDC (Center for Disease Control and

Prevention), when people share their cookers they are also at risk of spreading HIV infection because of the remains of blood that linger in the cookers. So, today's lesson: one cooker per person, per injection.

As we close up the mail truck around 7:30 p.m., LaMonte finally shows up. He needs to exchange a whole box (100 needles/syringes) and stock up on some supplies. LaMonte operates a smaller exchange out of his home and keeps track of his own clients for our records. He also helps CNN in preparation of materials -- he takes a package of empty bleach and water bottles and promises to have them all filled for us by next week. As we get the supplies all packaged for him, LaMonte's asking about the newest milestone with the Board of Supervisors. We tell him yes, they did vote in favor of allowing their lobbyist in Sacramento to push for the pilot needle exchange bill on Wilson's desk. This was a big victory given that the same body of supervisors took two years to approve a distribution of bleach kits on the streets. LaMonte asked if he should organize a petition of clients stating their need for a legal and safe needle exchange in this neighborhood. We invite him to our meeting next week to help us plan CNN's upcoming political strategies.

Mutual Learning: How Have Activities Changed?

After a typical exchange night, all of the volunteers drive back to the Park Plaza Hotel and digest the events of that night. We take a more accurate count of our inventory, tell each other if there were any major concerns about procedures or any one individual client, and talk about our sense of the police activity on the street. This "down time" may be informal, but it is when policy is often set in terms of operating the exchange more efficiently. We spent many nights in the hotel parking lot either deciding how to intake and chart new clients or deciding which procedures for cleaning works with bleach we should teach the clients.

The process of developing the exchange

over the last year and a half has been based on new information we learn from different research centers and also information we learn from the clients. While we initially tried to teach each client about the CDC's recommendation to wash their works with bleach and water, we finally learned that this was too long an explanation and many of the clients did not have the attention span for it. In addition, we understood that the interaction among the clients themselves was much more informative than any of our "lessons" to them. Therefore, we found one or two clients and channeled any new information through them to the rest of the clients. The environment of the street was not always conducive to private one-on-one interactions so we relied on these clients to disseminate information through the informal gatherings and networking in their own community.

After the first few months of operation, it was also clear that connections between some of the clients were formed with certain volunteers. The different communication capacities of the wide spectrum of volunteers may be based on the volunteers' appearance, ability to speak Spanish, knowledge of an addicts lifestyle or lingo, or appreciation of the problems of a sex worker. Through these communications, volunteers are able to bridge the two communities of CNN and the clients. Once trust was established with the regular clients, they understood in essence that there was no difference between their community and ours given that we all share a fear of AIDS and therefore are all living with HIV/AIDS in some way. In addition, once the clients realized that our activities were just as illegal as theirs', they were more cooperative and trusting of our actions.

In a similar way that, as service providers, we reevaluated our strategies and activities based on what we learned from the clients, the clients themselves have also changed their behavior in the past year and a half. Consistent with our goals, clients have stopped sharing needles and have also convinced their

peers to stop sharing. The regular clients act as advocates of the exchange out on the streets; whenever we ask a new client how they learned about the exchange, it is always from word of mouth on the street. According to some of the clients, it has become a stigma if you are shooting up in this neighborhood and you do not use clean points from the needle exchange. The regular clients will not get high with anyone who is not using the exchange because they want their friends to be responsible about their behavior and to decrease their risk of spreading HIV infection. The most noticeable change in the clients is their increased political awareness about needle exchange laws and about bills pending in Sacramento to establish a pilot needle exchange program in California. In this last year with political activity framing the discussions about needle exchange, clients have come each week asking about decisions made or volunteering to start a petition calling for the decriminalization of needle possession.

The clients' broader understanding of needle exchange programs is a necessary direction for the future of needle exchange in Los Angeles. When the exchange finally becomes legal in Los Angeles, it will be publicly funded and administered by the County's health department. At such a time, the "professionals" from the department will not have any background as to how to go about establishing an exchange and will therefore (in an ideal world) turn to the drug users themselves and ask how to best serve their needs. When such a day comes, the clients of CNN will be armed not only with their own knowledge of their activities on the streets, but also with how a street-based exchange works best given their experiences with CNN. The clients of CNN eventually will serve as consultants to the "outside" agencies serving their own communities.

The future success of needle exchange in Los Angeles is based on an ongoing exchange of knowledge between the volunteers and the professional world, the clients and the volunteers, and then between the volunteers back to the clients. While there is structure at

"registering" a client for the exchange, the boundaries between clients and volunteers are essentially blurred when we're all out on the streets. This blurring is essential to the learning process and functions well to support the ongoing interchange between clients and volunteers.

Endnotes

1. California is among 11 states which still restrict legal access to hypodermic needles/syringes through drug paraphernalia laws and prescription requirements for the purchase and possession of needles/syringes.

2. There are approximately 35 exchanges of varied size and legality around the country. Prevention Point in San Francisco is the only "sanctioned" exchange in California -- this exchange is publicly funded based on the mayor's call for a public health state of emergency in the city.

STEPHANIE KLASKY GAMER is a second year M.A. student in the Urban Planning Program. This paper was written for the class "The History of Planning Thought" taught by Leonie Sandercock in Fall 1993.

The Problem of Self-Reliance: International Development and Democratic Theory

by Rebecca Abers

Since the 1970s, most major international development organizations have called for some form of community participation in projects aimed at alleviating poverty or fostering economic growth. What "participation" means, however, has been interpreted widely by those engaged in the "international development debate" (mostly European and North American scholars informing the work of international and non-governmental aid organizations). Some emphasize the role of "participation" in improving the efficiency of projects aimed at generating economic growth; others argue that when poor people gain more control over decisions about the way resources are allocated, they take a first step to changing the unequal power relations that produce extreme poverty. Despite these ideological differences over the causes of and solutions for poverty, there is an uncanny similarity in their perspectives. In the 1970s and early 1980s, most discussions of "participation" focussed on beneficiary participation in development projects financed by large institutions such as national states and international organizations. Since the mid-1980s, however, the debate from all ideological perspectives has increasingly (albeit not exclusively) revolved around the importance of encouraging "self-help" and of diminishing the dependence of poor communities on state

resources.

The word "participation" and the idea of "self-reliance" have also been central themes of another much larger and more ancient group of writings: democratic theories since Athenian times have been concerned with the extent to which citizens should and can have direct control over decisions that publicly affect their lives. In the modern era--with the appearance of extremely heterogenous political communities and politics the size of nation-states--mainstream democratic theory in the West has largely shown skepticism of the possibilities for "direct democracy". Yet in the last two decades, a new school of "radical" democratic theorists has once again argued for the importance of direct citizen participation in public decision making through open, face-to-face assemblies. Out of this school has emerged a rich debate about the possibilities for, and the contradictions of, the idea of the "self-reliant community".

The following pages explore how debates in radical democratic theory can help to de-mystify the ideal of the self-reliant community that has increasingly dominated the development planning literature from both conservative and progressive perspectives. This critique is important, I believe, if we are to imagine an "alternative development" which genuinely promotes the empowerment of the

poor and which, in fostering self-reliance, does not ignore social justice questions of inequality that are larger than any assembly of participants. The first section outlines the evolution of the idea of "participatory" development, the growing critique of state-initiated participatory programs and the rising call for community self-reliance. The second section explores how ideas of participation and community autonomy have been treated in democratic theory, and explores why many contemporary radical democratic theorists have sought a middle road between pure "direct democracy" and governance by elite representatives. The final section outlines how these ideas might be useful to theorists and practitioners of development planning.

Participation and International Development

"... 'participation' should be used only to signify that, at the minimum, intended beneficiaries are consulted during the project design so as to take into account their felt needs, aspirations, and capabilities" (Spitz, 1992: 36).

"...when the poorest groups have an effective role in choosing social development programmes, contribute together with the rest of the community in the implementation of decisions and derive equitable benefits from the programmes" (Midgley, 1986: 26).

"...a voluntary and autonomous action on the part of the people to organize and deal with their problems unaided by government or other external agents" (United Nations, 1981, cited in Midgley, 1986: 27).

The call for greater participation of the poor in development programs entered into

mainstream development policy at the urging of the United Nations, which published two major documents in the early seventies (United Nations, 1971; 1975), and which, in the latter part of that decade, initiated the "Popular Participation Programme" (Cohen, 1980). The International Women's Year Conference held in Mexico City in 1975 and the activities of UNICEF and the World Health Organization in promoting participation in health policy during the 1970s also contributed to a rising interest in the idea of participation in development policy (Midgley, 1986: 21).

Since those beginnings, international development agencies have largely promoted a vision of participation that emphasizes its potential for increasing project effectiveness. "Beneficiary participation", it is argued, can allow projects to reach more people at lower cost, encourage residents to take more responsibility for projects affecting them, improve the identification of "felt needs", make use of indigenous knowledge, and diminish reliance on expensive professional service providers (White, 1982). "Instrumentalists", as Goulet (1989) calls this group of participation advocates, argue that participation is worthwhile as long as it produces more efficient results "in a purely technical sense" (p.166) than bureaucratic professionals would produce on their own. Montgomery (1988), for example, argues that participation serves "as a valuable source of information to governments and as an opportunity for citizens to improve their own welfare" (p.xvi), but also notes that for many types of decisions, "the technical requirements of such decisions do not show that much advantage would be derived from devolution or other participatory forms of decentralization" (p.52). This perspective continues to be the guiding conception of such international development institutions as the World Bank, which in its own discussion of the purpose of participatory policies notes that "the Bank does not pursue empowerment as an end in itself" (World Bank, 1991: 177-178).

In contrast, since the late seventies, a

significant minority of development theorists and practitioners have given power and empowerment priority in their arguments for participation in the development process. While these authors do not ignore the importance of economic growth for eliminating poverty, they give greater emphasis to the power relations that determine how economic resources are distributed. Many point to extremely unequal distributive patterns in poor countries which virtually negate the effects of economic growth for the poor (except at very high levels). Eliminating poverty, they suggest, involves transforming such distributive patterns, a largely political task.

In this light, many have argued that participation in state initiated projects is only justified if it genuinely transfers decision-making power about public resources to the "hitherto excluded" (Stiefel & Pearse, 1982: 146). According to some authors, direct beneficiary participation in development projects can promote empowerment by mobilizing people, raising their consciousness of the social inequalities that surround them, and building a sense of community (Goulet, 1989; Midgley, 1986; White, 1982). Beyond improving the effectiveness of those projects, participation in such projects helps participants become aware of power relations and gives them experience in organizing and community building. It can thus potentially plant the seeds of popular movements which challenge power inequalities "from below".

But during the 1980s, a growing frustration emerged among those concerned with "empowerment" about the possibilities for genuine popular participation in state sponsored programs. Rather than allowing the poor to gain greater control over government programs, many authors argued that state-sponsored participatory programs only gave government greater ability to control poor communities.

"By and large, community participation has been used by government as a means of

legitimizing the political system, either as a structure for garnering votes, or as a means of ensuring compliance with urban political decision-making. Governments have not permitted any extension of power and decision-making to local groups... Formal channels of community participation have not generated major benefits for local communities" (Gilbert and Ward, 1984: 780).

Others have noted that most participatory policies have purely instrumental purposes; participants are expected to cooperate with professionals and not only are given little input into program design, but also are discouraged from criticizing program content (Oakley & Marsden, 1984: 19).

Many authors have suggested that these problems have less to do with the particular ideology of those in government, and more to do with the inherent problems of state power. Hall (1988) lists state participatory programs from both right wing and left wing governments throughout the third world, all of which have failed to significantly devolve decision-making power to poor people: "the record of community development shows clearly how limited is the concept of participation employed by the state, of whatever political ideology" (p.98). For Hall, the consistent subversion of state initiated participation stems from the nature of power itself: "... the failure of the State to promote authentic participation lies in the fact that to do so is to forfeit control of national destiny" (p.97).

Others blame the "occupational hazards of bureaucracies" (Goulet, 1989: 176): even "well-intentioned" agencies must face the bureaucratic necessities of reaching goals rapidly and measuring success in terms of time and money efficiency. Such constraints rarely fit with the lengthy time periods needed to mobilize participants (Ibid, 176; Hall, 1988: 99). Likewise, the "uniform norms and standards" required for

bureaucratic operations do not match well with the flexibility necessary for participatory programs (Wolfe, 1982: 102). As a whole, the critique of state-sponsored participatory programs by authors claiming that people's involvement in decision-making should be a means for empowering the poor has been quite sweeping.

Over the last decade, as "top-down" development policies of all kinds have been condemned, "self-reliance" and "autonomy" have increasingly become the key words in the "empowerment" debate. The growing frustration with the state as a potential forum for empowerment has been matched by a rising admiration of the great possibilities of the poor to empower themselves by tapping into their own resources. Friedmann (1984: 218) refers to the massive investments in self-built housing by poor people throughout the world as an example of such tremendous capacities. Likewise, de Soto (1989) has pointed to the enormous economic energy embodied in the informal commercial, transportation and housing activities of the urban poor.

In the 1980s, growing numbers of researchers focussed on the "self-help" community organizations of the poor, most notably in Latin America (Campero, 1987; Friedmann & Salguero, 1988; Max-Neef et al., 1986; Razetto, et al., 1983). Largely in response to debt-driven fiscal crisis in that region, poor communities have organized to provide themselves with a wide range of services. Most impressive, perhaps, are the "communal kitchens" of Lima, Peru, which-- amidst a dramatic contraction of state welfare spending-- have become the principle source of social service provision in the city (Barrig, 1992). Poor communities have also created self-help organizations to generate income. "Popular economic organizations" in Chile, for example, have been formed largely by women, who "knit together, make tapestries,... collect and sell old clothing, tend collective gardens" (Chuchryck, 1989: 154). Friedmann and Salguero argue that

"Beyond question is the surge of new activities in the barrios of large Latin American cities: a growing capacity for self-organization, self-reliance, and self-governance in a process of collective self-empowerment... some barrios, such as in Chile, have even become a kind of 'liberated' zone where nonconventional resources based on mutual aid, dialogue, and donation of labor time are mobilized" (1988: 115).

Despite the growing infatuation with the idea of self-reliance--direct participation by the poor in projects they design and implement themselves-- a number of authors have warned against relying too much on the capacity of the poor to help themselves. Progressive proponents of self-reliance--those concerned with changing larger social inequalities-- see self-help as a means not only to promote development, but also to raise consciousness (Gilbert & Ward, 1984: 769). That is, reducing dependence on the state is part of a larger project of mobilizing communities, which if organized by the state are likely to be co-opted and manipulated by it. Yet the same visions of independence from the state can have extremely conservative implications. In more conservative documents on participation, self-reliance is virtually equated with "cost recovery" (World Bank, 1991: 177-78). That is, self-help becomes a way to subvert concerns for income distribution among communities.

In this light, many progressive authors realize that totally abandoning the state as a potential source of empowerment and relying on the autonomous action of isolated, small-scale communities may raise serious problems. Leaving economic development and basic needs provision up to communities themselves clearly favors those communities with more resources. Most poor communities simply do not have the internal resources to finance self-help programs of any significance.

For many authors, the solution to this problem is in Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs), which can "give money to the organizations that [poor people] themselves create and control" (Annis & Hakim, 1988: 1). Many writers argue that investment by NGOs is likely to promote "empowerment" because, unlike state institutions, NGOs are generally motivated by "ideologies of self reliance" (Goulet, 1989: 166) and "have a genuine commitment to participatory development" (Hall, 1988: 104). Yet even when NGOs demonstrate such commitments, it is important not to underestimate the likelihood that they too will manipulate "from above" the community projects they fund. NGOs may only consider community action as "valid" if it conforms to a particular definition of participation (Midgley, 1986: 32). And they may selectively promote certain types of community activities at the expense of others.

Some who call for self-reliance and for the active involvement of NGOs in making self-reliance possible therefore argue that there are important roles that the state can play in the process. After all, the state--the principal mechanism of income distribution--remains in most developing countries the main source of financial and technical resources for social development (Midgley, 1986: 10). In this context, some have argued that NGOs, social movements and other sources of influence should pressure third world governments to ensure legally direct central government financing of local institutions (Ibid: 33). Others argue for transformation of state policies in more general terms. Friedmann (1992) for example, has noted that "inclusive democracy", in which there is "political space for civic encounter and mobilization" (p.78) is a necessary context for the formation self-reliant communities. Annis (1988) also notes that community organizations have been much stronger in countries where the state is more democratic (p. 213).

This suggests that, while promoting self-reliant forms of participation should be a major effort of development policy, struggling to transform state institutions so that they are more

conducive to such forms is critical to the success of the self-reliance project. Although governments have to-date been largely antagonistic to genuinely participatory forms of development, abandoning the struggle to improve state policy altogether does not resolve the problem. Leaving the state behind as a potential, even if not exclusive, forum for participatory development not only implies forswearing a significant source of financial and human resources, but also ignores the importance of making state institutions more democratic as a setting in which self-reliant development might take place.

Participation, Self-Reliance and Inequality in Democratic Theory

"...a model of the good society as composed of decentralized, economically self-sufficient face-to-face communities functioning as autonomous political entities does not purify politics, as its proponents think, but rather avoids politics" (Young, 1990: 233).

Those theorists of "international development" who have questioned the idea of self-reliance have thus focussed their critique on the concern that too much emphasis on self-help can lead to ignoring the state as a potential source of political, financial and technical support for communities seeking empowerment. This idea also appears in the democratic theory literature on participation. However, the latter group of authors emphasize another problem that development theorists seem to have largely overlooked. While the exaltation of "community self-reliance" has come out of a critique of the co-optive tendencies of community participation in state-initiated projects, many recent democratic theorists have noted that power and power inequalities are far from absent within communities themselves.

Rousseau's Paradox

For Jean-Jacques Rousseau, the ideal democracy was indeed a self-sufficient, relatively small community much to the likings of the images invoked by some "alternative" development theorists. Arguing that individuals should not give up their political right to participate in public decisions, in the ideal democracy Rousseau thought that all decisions would be made through the direct participation of all citizens and would grow out of consensus. This consensus would emerge as what Rousseau imagined as a relatively homogenous citizenry obtained an awareness of its common interests through face-to-face discussion.

For this to function properly, inequalities should be kept at a minimum: each citizen should have enough land for subsistence and no more. The polity must be dominated by "common interests" and never by the "particular" interests of any minority group. This means that the polity must be quite small, since interests are only likely to be common among people who know each other and are "bound by some unity" (Rousseau, 1950: 49). "The same laws cannot suit so many diverse provinces with different customs." (Ibid:45). Furthermore, the polity must be economically self-sufficient--so that its laws are not dependent on the pressures of outsiders--yet not so rich that it potentially attracts invaders. All this sounds quite difficult to achieve, and, indeed in the face of an increasingly modernizing Europe in which nation-states had consolidated, Rousseau was very much aware that his image of the ideal democracy was unlikely to be fulfilled. He noted that only one place in Europe seemed to be a potential setting for such a self-reliant, participatory democracy: the island of Corsica (Ibid:49).

Over the course of the last two centuries since Rousseau wrote *The Social Contract*, democratic theorists have debated the implications of this paradox: in the context of the complexities of modern societies, with extremely heterogeneous and highly interdependent

populations living in polities that stretch over huge territories, the ideal of the face-to-face assembly no longer seems possible. Yet many theorists still argue that it is only through "direct democracy" that citizens can claim their inherent right to control the public decisions that affect their lives. This paradox is, in many ways the same problem that faces theorists of self-reliance in development who recognize the communities they study are necessarily ridden with inequalities and dependencies of all kinds.

Participation in Contemporary "Radical" Democratic Theory

Over the course of the 20th Century, mainstream defenders of liberal democracy--ranging from the "competitive elitist" perspective of Schumpeter (1942) to the "pluralism" of authors such as Dahl (1956) and Truman (1951) - showed a marked distrust of popular participation and emphasized the importance of maintaining vertical structures of authority, often suggesting that popular participation has totalitarian tendencies. "Empirical" fact, they contended, proved that citizen apathy was "realistic", politically beneficial, and generally a sign of popular satisfaction with government (Held, 1987: 144-220). The result was a view which essentially presented the status quo as the best of all possible worlds.

The New Left critics of mainstream democratic theory that gained voice in the late 1960s and 1970s, centered their attack on this glorification of "actually-existing democracies" in North America and Europe. Contemporary "radical" democratic theorists argue that, for a variety of reasons, existing democratic institutions, which may formally give individuals equal political rights, do not actually realize those rights in practice. Economic, social and cultural inequalities -- including income, class, race, and gender differences -- limit the capacity for citizens to realize equally their formal rights. Elites control public debate and the vast majority of voters are atomized and isolated from political life. In this context, ordinary citizens have

virtually no control over the decisions made by their so-called "representatives".

If ordinary citizens are to regain control over the political system, they must have direct access to public decision-making, through face-to-face assemblies which make decisions about public life unmediated by elite representatives. Three reasons have been proposed for why direct citizen participation is necessary.

First, direct participation gives individuals direct control over public life.

"Instrumentally, participatory processes are the best way for citizens to ensure that their own needs and interests will be voiced and will not be dominated by other interests" (Young, 1990: 92).

Some authors that might be associated with this perspective are Barber (1984), Cohen and Rogers (1983), Held (1987) and Young (1990).

Second, authors such as Pateman (1970) and MacPherson (1977) have argued that the participation of ordinary citizens in decisions affecting their lives is critical to individual self-development.

"The major function of participation in the theory of participatory democracy is ... educative in the very widest sense, including both the psychological aspect and the gaining of practice in democratic skills and procedures" (Pateman, 1970:42).

This dimension has also been important in feminist perspectives, such as Phillips (1991), who argues that through small meetings women traditionally alienated from political issues can gain confidence and begin to develop their own opinions (p.145).

Third, participation has been linked to the development of social consciousness and

political community: direct citizen involvement in decision making, each individual discussing her position with others who have other perspectives, is a way to bring people out of the narrow understanding of their own self-interests, into a perspective of community needs and community interests.

"...it mandates a permanent confrontation between the me as citizen and the 'Other' as citizen, forcing us to think in common and act in common." (Barber, 1984:153).

While there is much contention over what the common bond discovered through participation would be--common interests, common identities, common values, common enemies...--nearly every radical democratic theorist that I have encountered has argued in favor of struggles to create such a bond.¹

Although many critics of "actually existing democracy" have called for direct participation in public decision making, most are fully aware of the dilemmas raised by Rousseau centuries ago: in modern society the ideal of the small, self-sufficient, homogeneous polity is no longer feasible. Face-to-face assemblies cannot (directly) make decisions affecting large numbers. The complexities of modern life and the heterogeneity of the modern citizenry places the possibility of decision making by consensus on very shaky ground.

The Problem of Size and Distribution

Radical democratic theorists cite two sets of problems with respect to direct democracy. The first refers to the size of the territory in question: only in very small communities can assemblies be held in which all citizens can meet face-to-face. The only political communities where this seems possible today are very small rural towns, some of which, indeed, continue to be governed by open town-meetings. Even such small communities are deeply integrated into the

larger nation-states. Town meetings can be used to decide only a fraction of the issues that affect people's lives, since most policies affect much larger territorial levels (Mansbridge, 1980: 278-89). This implies that some kind of non-direct decision-making will always be necessary about those larger issues--such as economic development or military defense -- which require strategies at territorial levels above the neighborhood or small-town level.

The problem of size also appears in discussions of how isolated, small-scale participatory communities might relate to one another. Recognizing that participatory mechanisms must be restricted to small scales, some authors, especially those tied to the anarchist tradition, have idealized highly decentralized systems in which small territorial communities are largely responsible for decisions affecting their own lives and their own development (Bookchin, 1987). Iris Young (1990) is one of the few radical democratic theorists to have criticized this image in a way that goes beyond pointing out the "technical" problems of coping with issues affecting large numbers. She notes that serious distributional problems would arise among communities if each one were responsible for its economic and political development. Young touches upon a question critical to those who promote the "self-reliance" models of development: the idealization of the autonomous community can easily turn into a vision in which each community is forced to survive on its own resources. Resources must be fairly distributed among unequally endowed communities just as among unequally privileged individuals. This means that some large-scale decision-making mechanism must exist which can insure inter-community distributive justice.

The Problem of Representation

A second set of problems refer to the tension between participation and representation within participatory communities. "Communities", however small, are rarely, if ever, made up of homogeneous populations. To

the contrary, they are ridden with inequalities, oppressions and differences of all kinds.

The most discussed inequalities are related to the economy. Indeed, virtually all critics of liberalism argue that direct participation must be accompanied by a significant redistribution of wealth (Dahl, 1985; Young, 1990: 94), if not a revolutionary transformation of the capitalist system (Cohen and Rogers, 1983). Participatory governance itself is a first step towards counter-acting some of the greatest abuses of economic inequality, since otherwise isolated individuals dependent on the media for political information have an opportunity to come together and talk about the problems they face. However, assembly decision-making requires large investments of time, and as Mansbridge puts it, the poor face significantly greater "immediate costs" in participating in assemblies (Mansbridge, 1980: 233-51). At the simplest level, participation takes time away from work which those dependent on hourly wages may not be able to afford. Those with more time and resources are thus likely to dominate discussions in ways that manipulate decisions to benefit their own interests.

The effects of inequality on participation go beyond the economic realm. Feminist political theorists have been particularly cautious about idealizing the participatory meeting, in which women may not have the same conditions to participate as men.

"...the more participatory a democracy sets out to be, the more it discriminates between women and men. The more emphasis it places on activity and involvement, the more it tends to exaggerate the influence of those who have greater resources of education, charm or time." (Phillips, 1991: 162).

Women, burdened in most societies with the role of care-takers, rarely have the time to attend assemblies. And even when they do, women are

not socialized to speak in public and often believe that "politics" is simply not the business of "home-makers" (Mansbridge, 1980: 105-107). Similar problems burden other oppressed groups, such as ethnic and racial minorities, which in addition to being poor, often lack the self-esteem and social skills needed to participate on par with their more privileged fellow-citizens.

Even if structural oppressions such as capitalism, patriarchy and racism did not exist, many authors have argued that inequalities are likely to emerge within a participatory system. In her study of a New England town-meeting, for example, Mansbridge notes that not only did poorer residents and women face greater "immediate costs and lower immediate benefits" to participation, but also the younger residents, newcomers to the town and those who lived far away from the town center were disadvantaged in the participatory process (Mansbridge, 1980: 97-114). Even if all citizens were somehow able to start on equal ground, new powerful groups can easily come to dominate participatory assemblies as people make friends, acquire organizing skills and form factions (Phillips, 1991: 134). And certainly, there will always be people who do not participate simply because they do not enjoy political discussions:

"While the necessary meetings go on and on, they will take long walks, play with their children, paint pictures, make love and watch television."
(Walzer, 1970: 234).

The fact that only certain types of people--those with resources, time, the politically organized, the talkative and socially secure-- are likely to participate means that the face-to-face assembly will not represent the population as a whole. Some authors--such as Sartori (1987)--have gone so far as to suggest that such problems make participatory decisions less "democratic" than those made by representatives voted in general elections.

Heterodox Alternatives

All of these problems suggest that some indirect forms of decision-making are necessary if the potential injustices of assembly decision-making are to be minimized. How are issues requiring large scale concerted action decided-upon (indeed, who decides which issues are "large-scale"?)? How are resources to be distributed among assembly-sized units? How is the representation of less powerful voices and of those who do not wish to participate to be secured? These are all questions that should preoccupy theorists of participatory development as much as they do democratic theorists.

Historically, these questions have been answered in an either/or fashion: either direct democracy or representative democracy; either top-down or bottom up planning. And practicality seems to favor the latter, since the small-size and citizen homogeneity requirements of direct democracy and community self-reliance do not exist in the modern world. ~~But many~~ New Left radical democratic theorists have argued that a combination of the two is possible. These authors suggests that the potential of creating successful participatory decision-making mechanisms relies on improving not only the representativeness of direct participation but also the representativeness and accountability of indirect, "top-down" forms of decision-making.

Numerous specific suggestions for improving the fairness of direct participation in assembly decisions have been made, especially by Mansbridge (1980). Her central argument is that consensus based assembly democracy-- what she labels as "unitary" democracy-- is only possible where interests do not conflict. Where interests diverge, she argues that the only way to come to just decisions is to take general vote by all members of the polity--what she labels as "adversary" decision-making.

"The failures of unitary democracies often derive from their refusal either to recognize when interests conflict or to deal

with those conflicts by adversary procedures" (Mansbridge, 1984: 4).

Mansbridge also suggests that assemblies should try to ensure "that all major conflicting groups are equally represented at meetings"; that there should be "occasional referenda... holding those who attend a meeting accountable to the entire group on certain major issues"; and that proponents of assembly democracy "abandon rhetorical exhortations to attend meetings as a civic obligation [which] legitimate the idea that those who do not attend...deserve what ever befalls them" (Ibid: 250-1). Other authors argue that efforts should be made to remove the barriers to free participation, for example, by making education and child-care available to all (Cohen and Rogers, 1983: 156). But none of these mechanisms will be fully effective if small-scale direct democracy occurs in the context of an elitist and corporatist representative system.

For many, increasing the representativeness of representation will grow out of the very existence of direct democratic structures within a larger representative system. For example, those authors most preoccupied with "size" problems argue that direct democracy should be limited to local, small-scale issues, while representative government concerns those aspects of life that interest large numbers. Many suggest that limited direct participation will have effects beyond local decision-making processes. If "all of the people govern themselves in at least some public matters at least some of the time" (Barber, 1984: xv), the educative power of participation will give citizens greater insight into both their own interests and the interests of society as a whole (Bachrach, 1967). This learning experience will allow them to make more informed decisions about the election of their representatives (Pateman, 1970). Thus small-scale participation will make the large-scale representative system more accountable as well.

Another way that participatory structures might improve representation has

been articulated by Macpherson. He argues that the representative system would be much more open to the voices of all if political parties were structured in decentralized, "pyramidal" participatory systems. This is because he sees the party systems of most advanced democracies, as corporatist mechanisms allowing elites professing only slightly different political ideologies to totally control the nomination of electoral candidates. Participatory parties in Macpherson's description would operate much like the Green Party in Europe or the Partido dos Trabalhadores in Brazil: small scale cells of party militants would meet regularly in face-to-face assemblies, elect immediately revokable delegates with very specific mandates to municipal or regional party councils, which in turn would elect delegates to state, regional and national assemblies. These democratic parties would provide the general public with a much wider range of candidates for representative positions.²

Other authors have made recommendations to transform representation more directly. Some argue for setting time limits on office holdings, making mandates revokable at any time, and having rotation in office. Barber has even suggested that representatives of local offices might be chosen by lot rather than elected (1984: 278). Others suggest that the notion of "representation" be transformed into one of delegation, where delegates must defend specific positions or platforms rather than being free to make any decision after elected (Green, 1985: 177; Macpherson, 1977). Along these lines, Cole has argued for "functional representation", in which representatives are elected to make decisions on a certain issue, rather than representing individuals in all their dimensions (Pateman, 1970: 37). Others argue that representative systems should have reserved representation for minority groups and for women (Kymlicka, 1989; Phillips, 1991; Young, 1990).

What ties these disparate suggestions together is not a specific strategy for action, but a general agreement that the struggle for greater

control over public decision-making must not be restricted to local movements and projects. That struggle must attempt not only to transform small communities into working -- and socially just-- direct democracies, but also to seek the general transformation of the larger state. Representative institutions must be transformed so that they genuinely promote tolerance, diversity, and individual freedom. This freedom is not the freedom of the neo-liberal war of all against all, but must grow out of the "claim to free all individuals equally, and to free them to use and develop their human capacities fully" (Macpherson, 1977: 21).

Conclusion: What Does This Mean for Planning?

While some progressive planning and development theorists have (sympathetically) criticized the increasingly popular idea of community self-reliance, that debate has largely been limited to a concern that we not abandon the state as a potential source of resources and political support for community empowerment. Political theorists have gone much further in this sympathetic critique by deconstructing the idea of community altogether. While noting that oppressed groups should be wary of participating in the policies and programs of state institutions, many of these authors have also noted that power inequalities are not eliminated when communities break from dependence upon the state. Since differences abound both within and between communities, some institutions are necessary that ensure that all voices are heard in participatory assemblies, and that provide for the fair distribution of resources both within and between small communities. What lessons can these ideas provide for community movements and those activists, planners and funding agencies seeking to help them empower themselves?

In the first place, these actors can begin to qualify, although by no means abandon, their vision of "community autonomy". While communities and movements should certainly

attempt to avoid being co-opted by big institutions, they should not abandon them as an arena of struggle. More specifically, the concern for autonomy and the recognition of the empowering nature of "self-reliance" should not prevent social movements and other actors from joining together to pressure the state to distribute financial, technical and information resources more equally. Otherwise, the potential for communities to "help themselves" will remain extremely unbalanced.

As the discussion of the "size problem" above suggested, many causes of poverty are manifested at much larger territorial scales than the small community. Only larger institutions can effectively deal with such problems. It is in this realm that political theory discussions about how to make indirect decision-making more accountable become relevant to planning and development. If the poor are to empower themselves, they must also gain greater control over decision-making within larger institutions. This scale of social action is obviously more daunting than implementing change at the local level, but even so, it cannot be ignored. Pressuring state institutions to be open to the influence of diverse social groups, especially "oppressed" groups, must be one central goal of progressive movements. Calling for the establishment of alternative representative institutions such as those mentioned above should be an important part of this struggle.

At the same time, the very idea of community needs to be dissected so that mechanisms can be put in place that make direct participation in community development projects more equitable and representative. Some of the methods mentioned above to ensure that all voices are heard in participatory assemblies can be incorporated into the design of community "self-help" projects. While the tension between participation and representation at the local level cannot necessarily be overcome in theory, awareness of the problem is a first step towards implementing incremental and partial solutions in practice. Progressive planners, activists, and international aid agencies should look with a

critical eye at decisions and plans presented by local groups as the result of "community consensus" and should attempt to help them design participatory mechanisms that will be as representative as possible.

Endnotes

1. Note that even "anti-essentialist", anti-communitarian authors such as Laclau and Mouffe (1985) give a great deal of attention to building ties among fragmented groups: "the construction of a new 'common sense' which changes the identity of the different groups in such a way that the demands of each group are articulated equivalentially with those of the others" (p.183).

2. Other visions of mixed representative/participatory systems include Poulantzas (1978), Held (1987), and Young (1990).

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REBECCA ABERS is a second year Ph.D student studying urban politics in Brazil. An earlier version of this article was submitted to Michael Storper's seminar, *Intellectual Traditions in Regional and International Development*, Fall 1993.

A Quarter Century of Progressive Planning Education: A Retrospective Look at UCLA's Urban Planning Program

by John Friedmann

The School of Architecture and Urban Planning has been organized on the UCLA campus at a propitious and exciting time, when the old field of architecture and the younger field of urban planning are both going through a period of profound change. Almost all the old premises and approaches are being challenged, new methods are being tried (including a new world of computer and behavioral science methods), and professional practice is changing rapidly and often in unexpected ways. Fortunately, a new school carries less of a burden of educational tradition. There are fewer old positions to be defended, old defeats to be overcome, old victories to be kept fresh.

Against this background, the educational task, in at least one sense, is clarified: it is quite obvious that all of us must prepare ourselves for a lifetime of learning.

If we are to lay a foundation for lifetime learning, we do know this: we, as a faculty, must learn how to keep ourselves open as human beings and challenge our students to do the same; we must find ways to enlarge the scope and import of student participation; we must find ways to teach problem-solving as well as research methods; and we must find a useful combination of permanence and change, of experimentation and imitation, of reaching out for the latest technologies and methods on one side and humanistic yearnings on the other.

Harvey S. Perloff (1970)

What makes UCLA's Urban Planning Program the special place that it is? I have been asked to reflect on our experience over a quarter of a century as a way, perhaps, to shape a new vision for the future. As I am writing this essay, we are in the midst of a struggle to redefine our collective identity as a program. Perhaps what follows will remind us of what we have made of

ourselves and what in this continuing process of change may be worthwhile to hold onto. For changes of one sort or another are inevitable, but we don't always have to start anew. Some things have stood the test of time, and these we cherish.

Harvey Perloff's words were written in 1970 when the Urban Planning Program was

barely a year old and we had yet to graduate our first class. They ring as true today as they did then and have become part of our legacy. Perloff admonished us to prepare students and faculty alike for a lifetime of learning. But what does it take to build a learning society at a university with its mandarin, its obsession with examinations and grades, and its bureaucracy governed by a chancellor who, after 25 years in office, has lost touch with his constituency? To what degree is it possible to set hierarchies aside so that genuine learning can take place? How can we make students as well as faculty and staff feel that they are part of a common endeavor?

Democratic Governance

It was Perloff's great achievement to allow an open, participatory style of governance to settle in early in the history of the school and, more particularly, in our Program. Students and staff would be involved in all aspects of governance from the beginning and, in principle, at least, on equal terms with faculty. Once a quarter, we would call an Assembly, open to everyone, which we regarded then, as we do now, as the ultimate rule-making body of our Program. Accountable to the Assembly are a number of permanent Working Groups charged with admissions, curriculum changes, financial aid, staffing matters, and outside speakers. From time to time, special Work Groups are appointed. I remember one which was asked to integrate gender issues into the curriculum. And there were others.

The extent of student participation in decision-making, including in staffing matters, was unique at UCLA, but the university tolerated it, because it was working. Participation meant a free flow of information, meant less explicit coordination, and encouraged accountability up and down the line. Of course, there were problems, such as activist students trying to "capture" this or that Working Group, and the Assemblies rarely brought more than 20 percent of our student body together. But that

one-fifth could usually speak with authority, because the students who came were also members of Working Groups and student organizations.

Student Organizations, Composition of Student Body

Student organizations have always been encouraged in our Program and in GSAUP more generally. The most active have been MAPA (Minority Association of Planners and Architects) BSC (Black Student Committee), and FPDG (Feminist Planners and Design Group). Occasionally other groups emerged. In some years, we have had an active group of international students. Even doctoral students have on occasion acted collectively. But it is really the first three committees that have had the most lasting impact on our school: MAPA and BSC in student and faculty recruitment and FPDG in pushing curricular reforms, as well as recruitment. All three groups have collaborated on many occasions to mount major conferences. For many years, these were annual gala events that gathered audiences of several hundred people over one or two days.

I would say that we have been reasonably successful in responding to student pressure on the question of representation. In Fall of 1993, 59 percent of our students were women, 48 percent were from underrepresented groups. Of the faculty, more than one-fifth came from these same groups. No doubt, we could have done better, and we will have to do better in the future to make both our faculty and students reflective of California's multicultural population.

Courses, too, started to appear that reflected the new concerns. For years, Eugene Grigsby taught a seminar on "multiple publics," long before postmodern discourse made "difference" a fashionable password. And it was one of our feminist students (Gail Dubrow, now at the University of Washington) who initiated the first "Great Planning Debates: Gender" course, which was meant to introduce a

discussion of feminist theories to planners. The course is now a regular feature of the curriculum that at various times has been taught by Jackie Leavitt and Karen Sacks, and Leonie Sandercock. Race and ethnicity have also made their way into the curriculum in courses taught by Shirley Hune, Paul Ong, Raul Hinojosa-Ojeda, Leo Estrada, Leonie Sandercock, and Ed Soja. Indeed, in a city like Los Angeles, issues of race and ethnicity, along with gender and social class, have become unavoidable topics.

Nearly every year, a group of students comes up with a proposal for a new course, seminar, or project for which they seek faculty sponsorship. I have already mentioned the first such course on gender and planning; more recently we have authorized a course that dealt with gay and lesbian issues in the city (led by Moira Kenney), a project course on poverty in Los Angeles (Paul Ong), a seminar that explored international development theories (Roberto Monte Mor) and a class on community organizing (Irma Rodriguez and Graciela Vasquez). Under consideration at present is a project course that would help draft "for profit" business plans for two non-profit groups in the inner city of Los Angeles, and there is talk of a forthcoming request from students for a seminar on Pacific Rim planning issues. These student-initiated (and often student-run) courses have between six and ten students registered (community organizing started out with thirty-five students); they are conducted rigorously under the supervision of a regular faculty member; and they respond directly to current student interests. Usually, they are only one-time affairs. But every once in a while they provide an impetus for curriculum revision.

Areas of Concentration

Over the years, the professional curriculum in urban planning has been a central and much contested terrain. From early on, we were agreed that while a common "core" of subjects was needed, it was the planning specializations that were seen as the sites where

exciting things happened. The original idea was a simple one: to allow students an opportunity to study with a small number of faculty whom they would get to know on a first-name basis over their two year stay in the program and who would initiate them into the mysteries of so-called areas of concentration (or areas of policy concentration as they were first called). The present breakdown into **social policy and analysis, the built environment, regional and international development, and environmental analysis and policy** did not emerge until after a good deal of experimentation. As such, however, the areas of concentration were a clear choice over sectoral approaches such as transportation, housing, and land use planning, sectors that in our system were subsumed under the areas of concentration, in some cases under more than one. The Built Environment concentration was hammered into shape by Dolores Hayden and Jackie Leavitt, and recently has acquired a community development dimension, largely by having Allan Heskin join the core faculty in the area. In some ways the most difficult area to define turned out to be what we now call Environmental Analysis and Policy (EAP). This area went through many permutations until Margaret FitzSimmons and Bob Gottlieb gave it the political economy profile that it now has.

Just as our democratic form of governance was occasionally criticized because the decision process was necessarily slow and required "too many meetings," so the areas-of-concentration structure of our program has come under critical review. We have been accused of trying to do too much with too little, creating a "mini-university." Some areas, such as the Built Environment, occasionally saw themselves as carriers of the "true mantle" of planning, and tended to close themselves off. Transportation planning, which has become an increasingly important and well-funded area of teaching and research occasionally aspired to become an "area of concentration" in its own right, and now can be taken in conjunction with any of the four existing areas. But on the whole, relations have

been amicable. Faculty are specifically recruited for areas of concentration. And most students identify with one or the other area as early as the Winter Quarter of their first year.

Theory, History, Critical Studies

UCLA's Urban Planning Program has a reputation of being "theoretical." If by this is meant a turning away from practical issues and policy concerns, the reputation is undeserved. Nevertheless, there is a grain of truth in this tag. From the beginning, we have had a seminar on planning theory for second-year and doctoral students and, as time passed, this has solidified into a three-course sequence for Ph.D. students. The emphasis in this sequence is on history: the history of theoretical traditions in the first quarter and the history of planning practice in the second, followed by a theory colloquium in the third. At the same time, we have nurtured a "critical" tradition which has led the majority of our faculty in the direction of political-economy approaches to their subject matter. In the seventies, the Urban Planning Program became a campus node for critical studies, as we explored the relevance of marxist thinking in its various forms in its relevance for planning. We conducted faculty seminars on the Frankfurt School of critical sociology (Adorno, Habermas et al.) and in recent years, Edward Soja has led popular seminars for planners and architects on postmodern critical thinking. We also work on feminist theories in relation to planning, and each of our four areas of concentration conduct seminars on the relevant histories of planning doctrines and frequently related social movements, as in the environmental movement with its critical challenge to the free market economy. Robert Gottlieb's recent book, *Forcing the Spring* (1993), is an example of critical history; my own work on *Empowerment* (1992) enlarges the scope of our (non-doctrinal) critical work to include the problematic of poor and backward economies in the global system.

International Development and Planning

From the beginning, the Urban Planning Program has maintained a high international profile. We saw tremendous opportunities for grappling with urban, regional, and environmental problems in the developing world, and in the 1970s, we applied for, and received, a large grant from the U.S. Office of Education to build up the curriculum. By the mid-seventies perhaps a third of our student body was oriented towards what was then still called the Third World. Culminating this build-up was a national conference on "Urban Poverty: A Comparison of Latin American and United States Experience." Among the participants in that conference were Alejandro Portes, Robert Conot, Thomas Vietorisz, William Goldsmith, and Lisa Peattie, as well as UCLA participants. Seventeen years later, we organized another conference through the good offices of the UCLA Center for the Study of Women. We called it "Learning from Latin America: Women's Struggles for Livelihood." This time around, many of the participants were women scholars from Latin America; we also conducted a workshop with women from the Latina communities of Los Angeles at Dolores Mission in East L.A. While the problems of poverty were still with us, as undoubtedly they will be in another seventeen years, the emphasis had changed from one of redistribution to a new politics of justice. But by 1992, the steam had gone from development studies and the number of students interested in this phase of our work has declined to less than twenty. The number of overseas students in the program has also declined dramatically, and many of our faculty, initially interested in the topic, have abandoned the field for greener academic pastures.

Still, there is interesting work to be done. Susanna Hecht's researches on sustainable development in tropical forest regions, especially the Brazilian Amazon, continue to attract large numbers of enthusiastic students from across the campus, and our linkages to both the Latin American and African Studies Centers have brought us each year significant numbers of students wishing to study development planning

at urban and regional levels. Increasingly, however, our focus has shifted from mainstream to alternative and political approaches to the problems we dealt with, reflected for example, in the book edited by John Friedmann and Haripriya Rangan, *In Defense of Livelihood: Comparative Studies on Environmental Action* (1993) whose seven essays were written by former and current urban planning students at GSAUP.

As interest in developing countries waned, renewed interest surged in western European planning studies. Michael Storper was dividing his time between Paris and Los Angeles, and visiting professors Klaus Kunzmann (University of Dortmund) and Nigel Thrift (University of Bristol) taught courses on redevelopment in the Ruhr Valley and the City of London, respectively. We have also entered into exchange agreements with the Universities of Aix-en-Provence and Sao Paulo. Increasingly, then, we are stressing comparative perspectives on problems that used to be seen exclusively in an American perspective (such as industrial restructuring and responses to it). In a recent issue of the research annual, *Comparative Urban and Community Research*, four of the seven essays were authored by GSAUP-linked people, a reflection of what has come to be known as the Los Angeles School of critical urban studies.

Academic Linkages

As must be clear by now, Urban Planning has actively reached out to embrace many fields of study in an effort to make our work more policy-relevant and, at the same time, offer an enriched curriculum to our students. We have three joint degree programs, with Management, Law, and Latin American Studies (15 to 20 students each year), and a combined degree program with Architecture/Urban Design has been submitted to Graduate Council for early implementation. We have been particularly close to the ethnic studies centers on campus, with joint appointments in African-American, Asian-American, and Chicano Studies. We maintain close liaison with the Department of Geography, and offer a joint seminar with Public Health and Chemical Engineering on toxic waste. We are discussing joint offerings with the

School of Social Welfare on social policy and community development. And we have had a close relationship with both the African and Latin American Studies Centers. Some of our faculty have collaborated with the important Center for Social Theory and History. In all these ways, we have sought to achieve multiplier effects for our work outside the confines of our school. Students from all parts of the campus elect planning courses, while our own students, especially at the more advanced levels, are encouraged to take courses in Sociology, Management, Geography, Law, Political Science, and Public Health.

A question of perennial concern is our connection to Architecture/Urban Design, our sister program in GSAUP. It is fair to say that we have had our ups and downs in this. An early split on the question of power over academic appointments led to years of non-communication. But over the past decade, there have been significant changes as a result of new appointments and a fading institutional memory. Dean Perloff's early hope for a linkage-effect via behavioral science passed quickly from sight when it turned out that behaviorism was not going to become a foundation discipline for architecture. During the eighties, Architecture veered to the right with a reassertion of its claims to its status as an art form, while planning went down the social policy road in what was clearly a turn to the political left. Even so, year after year, joint studios were offered by Dolores Hayden and later by Jackie Leavitt and Anastasia Loukaitou-Sideris, with counterpart instructors from Architecture. Similarly, we have collaborated on highly popular housing, real estate, and site planning courses, with Peter Kamnitzer playing an important role here, followed more recently by Neal Richman. Over the past two years, we have also worked collaboratively on Urban Policy and Design (UPAD), a new program, with several of our faculty teaching primarily architecture students (Friedmann, Soja, Loukaitou-Sideris). Those of us who have been close to the currents sweeping through Architecture have become aware of the recent swing towards a greater concern with socially relevant design and a greater receptivity on the

part of students to thinking in terms of social and political processes. This, I believe, augurs well for a renewed receptivity on the part of both our faculties to develop relations in academia between two fields which, as is generally known, are closely intertwined in practice.

Community Outreach

Traditionally, urban planning has been viewed as a bureaucratic activity of local government. But this image, which is still widespread, is rapidly becoming obsolete. Only a little more than a third of our own graduates currently work in the public sector, while 43 percent work in the private sector, with another nine percent in the private, non-profit sector. City building has become a complex process in which "stakeholders" represent local community-based organizations, corporate sector interests, as well as government. Given our overall "social" orientation, it is therefore not surprising that, over the years, we have had close linkages to African-American and ethnic immigrant communities in the Los Angeles region, and these have been our most faithful supporters. We have done projects in and for local communities on a *pro bono* basis; they, in turn, have sent us students; and many of our graduates end up working for these same organizations. As we say in our planning theory classes, civil society has emerged as a major collective actor, a "stakeholder" with substantial clout in Los Angeles.

Community-centered projects have included a policy study of Asian-American poverty (Paul Ong), and environmental impact report on solid waste incineration (Bob Gottlieb), a study for the Mothers of East Los Angeles on negative environmental impacts on their community from a variety of sources (Gottlieb, Friedmann), a series of studies for Nickerson Gardens, the largest public housing project west of the Mississippi (Jackie Leavitt), a study of transportation needs of inner-city poverty populations (Martin Wachs), and many more, some of them national prize winners. The projects are among our most valuable teaching tools and are so evaluated by the many students

who enroll in them each year. The output is invariably a high-quality, professional-looking report drafted by students under the general supervision of the faculty member(s) in charge.

As all this suggests, the organization of our city's "civil society" is enormously complex. There are literally thousands of civic organizations working on the grave problems besetting this dynamic metropolis. One of our most gratifying experiments has been in developing an educational program for selected leaders from this maze of organizations. Called the Community Scholars Program, it is now in its third year under the guidance of Allan Heskin and Gilda Haas, two nationally acknowledged figures in the community development movement. The Scholars Program brings eight individuals to campus for the period of a year. A year-long seminar is conducted specifically for them, but they may choose to audit additional courses. There is also a two-quarter project that joins Scholars with graduate students in a combined exercise of practical significance.

The Community Scholars Program is important not only for the individuals who are enrolled in it. It brings experienced community people into the classroom and encourages networking among groups whose paths would never cross in normal times. And it establishes long-term relationships between our School and the greater Los Angeles community. As is so often the case with socially useful undertakings, this Program has been minimally funded, if at all, and is mostly surviving on air!

Internships, Job Networking, Alumni Association

After 25 years, the Urban Planning Program now has over 1,000 alumni scattered throughout the world. Of this number, a majority reside in southern California. Many of them got their start by working as interns in one of the agencies/organizations brought together at our annual job fair which facilitates new students' search for internships. Job fairs have been successfully held for many years and typically distribute between 30 and 40 students among available internships in the region. Some

internships are paid; others are not; some change from unpaid to paid status after a period of time. However, nearly all our master's students find that they have to work half-time throughout the year. Some city/county agencies are staffed largely by former planning students at GSAUP, such as the City of Los Angeles housing department, or the Southern California Association of Governments (SCAG) to cite only two. There is a large, informal network of GSAUPers in the region which provides solid moral and financial support to their alma mater, and facilitates student entry into the world of work upon graduation. Even in times of major economic cutbacks in California, very few of our alumni are unable to find suitable employment after the usual short waiting period following graduation. The GSAUP development office has been instrumental in strengthening our alumni association which between 1988 and 1993 raised a total of \$305,000 in student support.

The Ph.D. Program

In the absence of our doctoral students, Urban Planning would be a very different Program. On average about 30 Ph.D. students are registered in any one quarter, a little short of twenty percent of the entire student body. As a group, they are older and more experienced than our Master's students, and the great majority, but not all, have advanced degrees in planning. Only a small number have come up through the ranks with a degree from GSAUP.

There are only a few courses which are specifically reserved for our Ph.D.s, such as the theory colloquium and the dissertation research seminar, and after the first year, each incoming group of six to ten students breaks off into their respective research areas. Contrary to other Ph.D. programs in the country, we require our students to define and delineate their own major field in which they wish to be examined. Many find this a daunting task, because bounding an area of study is an indubitably challenging assignment, especially in an interdisciplinary, policy-oriented program such as ours. On the

other hand, it makes students responsible for their own education under the guidance of their mentors, and the exercise of defining a body of knowledge alerts students to the fact that "knowledge" is always constructed and is not a body of literature that breaks off into neat, bite-sized clusters for graduate-student consumption.

Urban planning does not propose to be the exclusive owner of relevant kinds of knowledge either, and our students are urged to explore other fields and disciplines both theoretically and methodologically. Sometimes it has proved difficult to get students to leave the safe haven of Perloff Hall for multidisciplinary adventures outside, but on the whole our experience has been very positive, and our students are able to more than hold their own in competition with disciplinary "majors."

Planning research is richly diverse in content. This is both intellectually challenging and deeply frustrating for many of our students. Because even in a program with 30 enrolled doctoral students, most of them soon discover that they are quite on their own, without much intellectual companionship. One student might be working on company towns in 19th-century America, another will be studying housing coops in California, while a third will be looking at the factors that keep women from participating in community-based organizations among the poor residents of "marginal" urban settlements in Santiago, Chile. Field work is often conducted overseas, in Hong Kong, Haiti, Chile, Brazil, India, Kenya, Japan, Indonesia, Senegal, or Thailand where the supervising professor has at best only a rudimentary familiarity with the contextualizing conditions, and where one's peer group among students is unlikely to have any knowledge whatever. Doing a dissertation under these conditions can thus be seen as both a truly heroic achievement and a deeply alienating experience. Still, with all these strikes against Ph.D. study in urban planning, it is heartening to see so many truly first-rate dissertations emerge.

The intellectual diversity of research

pursuits also makes for a very exciting intellectual milieu within the confines of Perloff Hall where an "expert" can be found on nearly any relevant topic, and dissertation seminars sparkle, as different theoretical traditions bounce off each other, creating a ferment of ideas. Most of our doctoral students are also given a chance to teach at the Master's level, and this brings fresh points of view into the classroom.

About 60 percent of our Ph.D.s become productive academic scholars. They are teaching at MIT, Berkeley, Ann Arbor, Texas/Dallas, Chapel Hill, Albuquerque, Honolulu, Seattle, and elsewhere, nearly always in planning programs. Most of the remainder enter research/managerial positions outside the university. A few have become academics overseas, usually in combination with consulting work, in cities such as Kuala Lumpur, Nairobi, Johannesburg, Hong Kong, Santiago (Chile), Belo Horizonte and Brisbane.

The Faculty

This retrospective, reflective account of Urban Planning would be incomplete without at least mentioning our faculty. Of the founding faculty in 1969, only Lee Burns, Gene Grigsby, and myself remain on active status, Peter Kamnitzer having retired two years ago. But the faculty we now have is a truly remarkable and diverse group of people. Two--Robin Liggett and Dana Cuff--have been jointly appointed with Architecture/Urban Design. Others hold joint appointments in ethnic studies centers. Of our ladder faculty, eight out of nineteen are women (of whom six have tenure and three have full professorial status). As befits the kind of interdisciplinary, policy-oriented work we are engaged in, the disciplinary backgrounds of our faculty are diverse: five planners, four geographers, three economists, two sociologists, and five with backgrounds as different as operations research and architecture. It takes time to "socialize" faculty to the culture of planning--and I do believe in the existence of such a culture--as well as forbearance, respect for

difference, and acknowledgement of diverse paths to excellence. Our permanent faculty is largely a research faculty, but given the wide disciplinary backgrounds, even what constitutes excellence in research is often an issue that is far from easy to resolve. Applied research vies with theoretical contributions within the confines of a discipline. Advanced professional practice, such as might be involved in the redistricting of electoral districts in Los Angeles contrasts with econometric modelling of the regional effects of the North American Free Trade Agreement. On occasion, strange hybrids are produced that don't seem to fit anybody's categories: I am thinking especially of my own book, *The Good Society* or Leland Burns' *Busy Bodies*. Assessing these works fairly sometimes tests the limits of what is viewed as academically respectable.

And yet, our faculty is much honored, both nationally and internationally, and several of our books have found their ways into foreign languages. Our faculty have captured some of the most sought-after academic honors, such as Guggenheim fellowships; our work is frequently cited; we are invited to be keynoters and distinguished lecturers; our international connections are extensive.

The story of our faculty would be incomplete without mentioning the outstanding members of our part-time, **adjunct** faculty, most of whom stand with one leg in practice. Karen Hill-Scott (founder of the child care research Center, Crystal Stairs), Carol Goldstein (former chief planner for the Community Redevelopment Agency of Los Angeles), Gilda Haas (nationally recognized community developer), Robert Gottlieb (environmental activist and writer), Leonie Sandercock (screenwriter), Ned Levine (researcher extraordinaire), Neal Richman (housing consultant), and Abel Valenzuela (recently completing his post-doc at Berkeley) are our colleagues currently. They expose our students to the famous "real world" in which professional practice takes place and help us ensure that we remain "grounded."

What We Have Learned: The Road Ahead

It's time now for a reflective look at our history and who we have become. I suppose the central question is, how, given the enormous diversity and wide range of the Urban Planning Program, we manage to stay together. Why don't we just fly apart into a hundred fragments? The question poses itself, because what we can observe is precisely the opposite: a tremendous effort, in this period of the Professional Schools Restructuring Initiative, to cling to our collective (if always provisional) identity. There must be something that is holding us together despite the centrifugal tendencies inherent in our diversity and difference.

Part of the answer, of course, is our institutional history. To be ranked among the top three planning schools in the country, as countless letters from our academic peers have said, is no small achievement. We must be doing something right. But what is it?

In part, I think, the answer is found in Harvey Perloff's call for a radical openness and a willingness to engage in institutional learning. Our Program today is not what it was in the early seventies. Our ideas about planning itself have undergone a sea change. In his exemplary study of planning education, Raul Bruno Garcia speaks about the current "crisis" of planning--a crisis of paradigms--which, at the intellectual level, he sees as a result of the infinite regress of postmodern deconstructivism. His answer to this crisis is borrowed from the philosopher Richard Rorty's pragmatic turn, where "questions of language, epistemology and metaphysics are transformed into questions of practical judgment, politics, and institutional reconstruction. From an obsession with words and texts from which there seems to be no escape, we are redirected towards a concern with actions and their consequences in the real world, and with the details of the social institutions which mediate their consideration, selection and implementation" (Garcia, 1993:33). Put in these

terms, we have of course always been there with "a concern with actions and their consequences in the real world" and with "the details of social institutions." We have skirted the postmodern abyss by engaging in a progressive practice of planning.

Garcia's road map, citing Rorty's "practical judgment, politics, and institutional reconstruction," leaves us with the question of whether and to what extent these can be taught as a common foundation for planning. In a recent article, I highlight five principles of what I call "non-Euclidean" planning. They are really not very different from Rorty's and Garcia's three points. Planning, I say, should be: **normative, innovative, political, transactive, and based on social learning** (Friedmann, 1993:482-85). Normative planning is politically engaged planning on behalf of positive, socially constructive values. Innovative planning has to do with ways that existing institutions can be reshaped to allow the social values for which we stand--such as social justice, such as affirmative action on behalf of disempowered groups in the society--to be realized in practice. Political planning concerns the questions of power and strategies of implementation that should become part of planners' everyday vocabulary. Transactive planning is a planning based on what John Forester calls (following Habermas) communicative action and which I call dialogue, and which is always a face-to-face process in which planners engage others in processes that are ultimately grounded in personal relations of trust. Finally, planning as social learning takes place in situations that are structured to minimize hierarchy, and encourage radical openness to other perspectives, other possibilities of being in the world.

I have come to believe that these five modes of planning are what we try seriously to practice at GSAUP. We are currently battling to save this way of being in the world as a program dedicated to the education of young planners and to research in our field. Note, if you will, that I have not tried to provide yet another definition of "what is planning," as though we

could somehow succeed in bounding our field. The field described by the five terms of "non-Euclidean" planning is a dynamic, perpetually evolving field that is defined by its progressive practice. There can be no better guide to the future that lies ahead.

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JOHN FRIEDMANN is a professor at the Urban Planning Program at UCLA. This article was specially commissioned for this issue of *Critical Planning*.

VISIONS OF PLANNING

Private Memories and Public Spaces: Remembering Rexall Drugstore

by Ethusian Cynthia Exum

"The visionary is the only true realist"
Federico Fellini

According to Stephen Carr (1992), co-author of *Public Space*, the creation of meaning attached to an open space is defined as an interactive process between space and person that evolves over time, a transaction process in which user and setting are both impacted. In many ways it is a kind of "accrued space" which provides one set of stimulations while the users bring their own histories and associations. This definition is especially relevant for me as I reflect upon Rexall Drugstore, a favorite childhood space.¹

Not many people remember Rexall, but I do. It's memorable for many reasons. Located on the corner of Adams and Redondo Boulevards in Los Angeles, Rexall Drugstore was the neighborhood gathering spot. Similar to a community center, the corner store evoked much

activity. Everyone visited the store for one reason or another. Inside, the small store catered to many community needs. For instance, elderly people visited the store to fill prescriptions and to buy groceries. Young adults enjoyed dropping by the store to read the latest magazine or newspaper. And small kids, like myself, enjoyed buying bubblegum, candies, and ice cream. Outside, it was a place to bump into friends and acquaintances, and share the latest news or gossip. In fact, people were more likely to see neighbors here than to meet them on their own block. In short, it was a communal gathering place. Though owned and operated by someone who lived outside the neighborhood, the store was a stable fixture in the community² for over twenty years.

But all this changed for me, on April 29, 1992 when Los Angeles erupted into violence and fire. Like street scenes from a movie, chaos and disorder filled the streets and continued day and night for 72 hours. News of Los Angeles burning spread as fast as the flames which engulfed the city. Governor Wilson declared a State of Emergency. And after all was said and done, rioters and looters had damaged or destroyed 1,053 structures worth \$427 million in the city of Los Angeles and a total of 5,200 structures, valued at \$75 million, throughout Los Angeles County (County of Los Angeles, Chief Administrative Officer).

One of the casualties, unfortunately, was Rexall Drugstore. This important childhood space of mine was physically altered. Now, two years later, all that remains in its place is a

vacant lot void of activity and purpose. Will Rexall be rebuilt? Sadly, it appears not. Our favorite little store has joined the more than 40 percent of destroyed businesses that have closed their doors for good. But from last year's ashes one important question arises: can special meaning emerge from the conversion of this site to some other use? I believe so.

Vacant Lot = Pocket Park/ Community Garden

At this site, I envision a pocket park and community garden. Why? Because although the area has a variety of service oriented businesses and shops, the neighborhood lacks landscape and open space. There are no central parks in the immediate area. In fact, the nearest recreational park, Exposition Park, is located some 20 miles away. And though Dorsey High School, seven miles closer, does have a simulated park setting, its grounds cater more to the needs and interests of younger users, mostly teens. Ideally, a pocket park/community garden would complement this location creating an alternative public space for both young and older users.

Development and Design

"In designing and modifying urban parks, there is a need to provide space and facilities for such gathering to help preserve a sense of community." (Sommer, Herrick, and Sommer, quoted in Carr et al., 1992)

Traditionally, city park officials and the "powers that be" have designed urban parks. However, I agree with Stephen Carr who believes that "community-oriented parks and gardens should be designed and managed by the users" (Carr, et al., 1992). This kind of participatory design and management could promote a sense of community and neighborhood pride for members of my

community. Park Department officials, architects, and developers would also be encouraged to assist with the project while the community's youth would be encouraged to help build the park and garden.

Although the cost of developing this pocket park or community garden would be low, some funding would still be needed for design, landscaping, and development. Perhaps funding could be solicited from the United States Department of Agriculture which recently announced the availability of \$275 million in grants for urban projects. Rebuild Los Angeles (RLA) might also be a potential funding source.

In terms of its location, this pocket park/community garden could begin at the vacant lot located at the intersection of Adams and Redondo Streets and extend westward to Adams and Bangor. Several dilapidated and boarded-up businesses are adjacent to the lot and they make the area appear blighted. Ideally, this park/garden conversion would not only aesthetically resuscitate the lot, but also the overall community appearance.

Potential Uses and Constraints

Neighboring businesses would ensure a diverse mix of users. Lack of adequate public transportation is a prevalent problem in the neighborhood. The accessibility of the park to local residents would encourage active and passive recreation. Senior citizens who frequent the health center across the street could stroll the community park and relax in the garden. Just imagine parents walking their children through the park before and after school. And young adults could use the park for active recreational purposes such as jogging and bicycling.

Demographically, the area has changed since my childhood days. Today, the ethnic composition is 40 percent African-American, 37 percent Latino, and 3 percent Asian immigrants. This diverse blend of people could find many uses for the park. First, I believe that the park could increase community pride and sense of place. Second, it could provide recreational

opportunities and a more aesthetically pleasing open space. Third, the community garden project could provide the area residents with a place to grow their own plants, flowers, and vegetables. Therefore, it could become a positive and central focus for collective community involvement.

Related Community Activities

Centrally located between residential tracks, this site could be used for a weekly farmers' market. Held on weekends, the farmers' market could bring in fresh produce from the surrounding areas at lower cost than the supermarkets, and provide a low cost venue for the locally grown produce from the community's garden. It could also be used as a place to sell handicrafts. Imagine a Sunday afternoon bustling with the activity of vendors selling fresh produce, meat, poultry, fish, flowers, and bargain merchandise. If successful the market could possibly evolve into a discount food buyers co-op, with bulk food bought atwholesale by members of the co-op. Other activities could include community festivals.

Needless to say, the redevelopment of this vacant lot will not replace the meaning and purpose that the Rexall Drugstore had for so many people, including myself. However, I now realize that the meanings of space do not remain constant over time. They change as the spaces and their functions change, as the context changes, and as the neighborhood changes. A truly meaningful public and open space is that space which is flexible and responsive to the changing users and uses over time. These spaces can become a home away from home, a safe, secure spot that is a sanctuary from the outside world (Carr et al., 1992). For some of us, many kinds of places - the schoolyard, the neighborhood park, the local street corner, the front or backyard of a house and even the storefront of a shop - can fulfill this function. Indeed as we grow these special personal places also develop and sometimes transform themselves entirely. So, while I will always

remember the special meaning Rexall Drugstore had for me as a child, I will also develop new meaning and attachment to this new pocket/community garden if it is built.

Endnotes

1. Childhood spaces, especially found spaces, are a part of daily life for many children whether they live in rural, suburban, or urban settings (Carr et al., 1992: 198). Such spaces will come to have special meaning and may help support a sense of continuity between different stages of a person's life (Carr et al., 1992: 193). Loved childhood spaces remain meaningful to people in later life and provide prototypes of good spaces (Carr et al., 1992: 194).
2. Regular use of a public space by a group of loosely or strongly affiliated persons can create connections to a site

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ETHUSIAN CYNTHIA EXUM is a first year M.A. student in the Urban Planning Program. She originally wrote this paper for Anastasia Loukaitou-Sideris' Public Space Seminar in Fall 1993.

A Personal Manifesto

by Jim Gilbert

In my capacity as a professional urban planner, I expect to be confronted with difficult problems that will require me to make value-laden decisions. Inevitably, these decisions will arise out of the code of ethics that guide my life, my understanding of justice, and ultimately, my conception of the world as it ought to be. In order to justify these decisions and defend them in an articulate and thoughtful manner, I must be able to answer several fundamental questions that underlie the planning process. They are as follows: Why do I plan? For whom do I plan? and Upon what values do I base my planning decisions?

Since this essay delves into my belief system, it is appropriate to contextualize the material that follows by explaining a little about my personal history. This exercise will shed light upon those influences that have shaped my belief structure and provide a rationale for my mode of professional conduct.

At the most basic level, my ethical, moral, and political orientation is profoundly Jewish. I have claimed as my own the radical underpinnings of a cultural and religious tradition embodied in the concept of "Tikkun Olam," and have therefore committed myself to "...the transformation and healing of the world, the belief that peace and justice are not meant for heaven but are this-worldly necessities that must be fought for" today (Lerner, 1986: 3). In this way, I have accepted my tradition's call to action - a call that grounds my values in historical precedent and informs many of my daily decisions.

This belief has so shaped my life that it is directly responsible for my decision to enter the

planning profession. More significantly, the concept of "Tikkun Olam" gives meaning to my life and is inextricably linked to the way in which I understand my place in the world. Thus, while I am not observant in the traditional sense of the word, I do take many of the values that are inherent in the Jewish tradition very seriously, and as such, see the world through Jewish eyes.

With this background information in mind, I can now turn my attention to the three questions posed at the beginning of the essay, and clarify the ways in which I understand my role as a planner.

Why Do I Plan?

The answer to the first question has already been explained. I plan in order to do my part to help heal our imperfect world; because the process of city building provides me with a way to translate my beliefs into action; and because taking action to correct the injustices in the world gives my life meaning. Additionally, I plan because "it is precisely in the process of acting to transform the world that the world reveals its deeper structures and meanings," and this understanding makes my life richer and more fulfilling (Ibid: 4).

For Whom Do I Plan?

To answer this question, I find Norman Krumholz's definition of "equity planning's" constituency particularly useful. In his view, "equity planning" is activist planning, and as such, it pays "...particular attention to the needs of poor and vulnerable populations, populations also likely to suffer the burdens of racial and sexual discrimination, both institutional and personal" (Krumholz and Forester, 1990: 210).

While I endorse this viewpoint and therefore regard it as my fundamental responsibility to give voice to the disempowered, I do not believe that this precludes me from working with other, more powerful and well

connected, constituencies. Rather, it means that if I find myself employed by just such a client, I will attempt to influence and reshape their development plans from the inside, in ways consistent with my values and planning goals. In other words, I will strive to make my client's interests mesh with at least some of the needs of the disempowered.

Upon What Values Do I Base My Planning Decisions?

Although I have already explored some of the values that inform my work, it is possible to answer this final question more fully. To this end, I find it useful to divide up human discourse into three distinct, yet interrelated and interdependent domains: the social, the political and the economic. In this way, I can address each domain separately and explain my values as they relate to them.

The Social

In spite of the deeply rooted American reverence for individualism, I embrace the interrelationships between people - the dependencies that hold communities together. In other words, my value system is grounded in the belief that "human beings are fundamentally *in relationship*. They are part of a family and part of a people, and it is this rootedness in community that is ontologically prior and ethically fundamental" (Lerner, 1986: 7).

Out of this belief arise several principles that shape the way in which I do my planning work. First, I recognize "that the healthy human being is not the one who has learned to stand alone, but the one who can acknowledge his/her need to be in deep relationship with other human beings and with the community" (Ibid: 7). Second, as a result of this understanding, I perceive individual and familial isolation as a social failing, and as such, work to rectify the situation by finding ways to build and/or strengthen community. Finally, I expand my understanding of human connectedness to

include cross-generational linkages, and therefore see the health of the small scale family unit dependent upon its connection to generations that have preceded it and those that will follow.

As a result of this last principle, my role as a planner includes maintaining continuity as well as facilitating change. It also translates into a concern for the environment, because planning the physical and social realms of human existence means nothing if the natural world in which these two spheres exist is uninhabitable.

The Political

When considering the political domain of human interaction, it is clear that my major concern is giving voice to the disempowered people who live in our communities. In working towards this goal, I strive to make the ideal of inclusive democracy a reality - a task not unrelated to my community building efforts. Additionally, I attempt to broaden the political dialogue and empower the poor and marginalized by engaging in coalition building, the process of bringing different interest groups together, finding common ground and supporting an issue or objective in a way that has been defined as beneficial to all of the concerned parties.

Since this endeavor is time intensive and highly participatory, transactive planning, which, as John Friedmann notes, links "...expert... [and] experiential knowledge in a process... calls] mutual learning" (1992: 9) is another approach I find appealing. I am particularly drawn to the transactive planning model because it emphasizes face-to-face interaction between planners and the public, thereby contributing to the creation of community solidarity. In addition, it allows professional planners and lay people to interact on an equal footing, since it values the unique and experiential knowledge of the public as much as the specialized knowledge held by the planner.

The Economic

My two main concerns related to the economic domain of human existence are the equitable allocation of resources and the need for sustainable development. These concerns arise out of my belief that too few resources are allocated for the provision of health care, education, and affordable housing, that the public and private sectors spend too much money on development that solely benefits the wealthier segments of society, and that too much of existing development is both harmful to the environment and wasteful of natural resources.

As a result of this perspective, it follows that innovative ways of mobilizing capital must be found to serve the needs of those segments of the population and sectors of the economy traditionally ignored by politicians and private industry. I therefore advocate "an entrepreneurial form of planning... that involves a concerting of the powers of many different actors and... great skill in negotiation, [risk taking,] mediation, and the art of compromise" (Ibid: 8).

Related to this reorientation of capital investment is sustainable development, a whole systems approach to design that integrates the physical, economic, and social systems of a community. In my planning work, I embrace this approach to development because it reduces the consumption of natural resources while optimizing the way in which people use their time and their natural and financial resources. Sustainable development therefore "...allows us to meet our own needs without diminishing the ability of future generations to meet their needs" (Arkin, 1992: 1).

Conclusion

The common thread that ties all of my work together is the belief that the world can be a radically different place than it is today. While this could be construed as a revolutionary perspective, I prefer to think of it as evolutionary

in nature. As such, I perceive a definite connection between the present and the more perfect future that I believe is both possible and probable, and therefore frame the process of change that I advocate in terms of transformation and continuity, rather than revolution and fragmentation.

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JIM GILBERT is a graduate of the Master's Program in Urban Planning at UCLA. An earlier version of this paper was submitted to John Friedmann's course on City Building Processes in Fall 1992.

A First Year Student's Vignette on the Future of Los Angeles' African American Community

by Lezlee J. Hinesmon

I contribute this vignette in the spirit of diversifying the contents of the *Critical Planning Journal*. In it, I offer my personal reflections about the relationship between the planning profession and residents of greater Los Angeles. The opinions I express were influenced by experiences as a student in rural Missouri, and by my experience in Los Angeles during the city's civil unrest two years ago. I wrote the article during my first year as a student in the Graduate School of Architecture and Urban Planning; since that time some of my views have changed. Nevertheless, I believe that it will challenge readers to critically examine the issues it raises.

In light of the changes precipitated by the Spring of 1992's uprising, I consider my decision to enter the planning field, one year prior to that event, a timely one. The physical and psychological impact of the uprising on the African American, Chicano/Latino, Asian-Pacific, and Anglo communities of Los Angeles mandates urban planners to incorporate the perspectives of these communities in rebuilding efforts. My aim is to facilitate that process.

For starters, I believe the widespread discontent and ensuing rebellion in Los Angeles can be attributed to the rapid changes occurring in the city long before the Civil Unrest. I first noticed them as a distinct contrast to the environment I lived in as an undergraduate student in Tarkio, Missouri (yes, in a variety of ways GSAUP is committed to diversity). Four

years of watching the corn grow, acknowledging waves from friendly passers by and, yes, recognizing the clearly drawn lines of racial separation, presented a stark contrast to the changes I witnessed upon my return to Los Angeles.

My re-acclimation to the city two years ago is, undoubtedly, akin to the adjustment visitors from rural communities make when they arrive in Los Angeles. One of the first things I noticed was the traffic. The energy, the speed, the congestion -- all a way of life for Angelenos? Next, I noticed the startling variety of ethnic groups. In the airport, at the market, on the street corners, in the grocery store -- yes, even my next door neighbors, were people of different ethnic groups than myself. Based on these observations, I concluded that Los Angeles would need people who could effect positive change in the multi-cultural city that Los Angeles had become.

My first inclination was to work for positive change in the African American community. I wanted to do this primarily because I thought my intimate knowledge of that community would be key to any well-conceived plans. A second reason is that although we have made great strides as a people, we continue to be a community beset with problems. Consider, for example, the incredible gains made by African Americans in education, politics, and athletics. These strides have expanded our power base and contributed to an intelligent, politically astute community. On the other hand, growth in these areas are coupled with the atrophy of a much larger segment of the community. Until we insure provisions are made for the entree into the mainstream of those trapped in cycles of poverty, then the gap that separates our "successful" people from our "unsuccessful" ones will deteriorate the strength gained by collective action and eventually lead to a loss of power.

There are a variety of lessons I have learned during my first year in planning school, and as an African American female planning student, that I know apply directly to the

successful up-building of my community. For instance, I feel a particular responsibility to plan for adequate, available and affordable housing. I know that I must carefully review statistical means and regression models to hypothesize about the causes of the prevalence of these issues in my community and construct allocation formulas that will deflate the issues and inflate our potential to overcome them. I must learn to adequately describe the impact of urban and regional development on Southern California's African American community and insure the equitable distribution of resources for such communities as mine. Finally, I must cultivate an understanding of such analysis as life cycle analysis in order to uncover the havoc that toxic waste and smog wreak on inner-city residents, and restore the environmentally safe communities that we all yearn for.

In closing, I can admit that coming to GSAUP was one of the best decisions that I have made in my professional life. When I arrived at GSAUP, like most students I was mostly nervous about facing two quarters of statistics. Now that I have successfully completed statistics, I can more readily focus my attention on the issues facing planners -- the critical ones that breath life into some communities, and blow others away.

LEZLEE HINESMON is a second year M.A. student in the Urban Planning Program. Next year she will begin the Ph.D. program here.

What Should Urban Planning Theory Do?

by Lewison Lem

The theoretical frameworks within which planning faculty conduct research and teach usually reflect the various fields of their training, and as a result the faculty offer a variety of theoretical frameworks to students of urban planning. While the variety of theoretical frameworks used provides fruitful results for academic studies in urban planning, it is an open question whether or not urban planners find these divergent frameworks to be useful in their professional life. This may be particularly true for master's degree graduates of urban planning programs who are often not aware of the different approaches that are available when taking (or choosing) their few theory courses. An important question for the field of urban planning, then, is, "What theoretical frameworks are planning practitioners likely to find most useful in their professional life?"

Theories and Methodologies in Urban Planning

In order for theory to be useful to professional urban planners, theoretical frameworks must provide some accurate representation and explanation of concrete reality. The question of theory in urban planning brings to mind the story of a group of blind people attempting to describe an elephant. Although each person, upon touching a different part of the elephant, thinks that he has found a tree, a snake, a wall, or a fan, the concrete reality is the whole of the elephant. Each person's theory reflects some approximation of the whole

elephant, based upon her own experience with an area of expertise. It is possible for all of the theorists' experiences to be representative while all of their explanations are wrong. However, instead of focusing upon the differences between their theories, it may be useful to consider what their theories have in common. Each person is trying to describe the concrete reality of the elephant, and all use the same research methodology of using their hands (as opposed to their noses or ears) to gain empirical information. The blind people share a common research methodology --touch by hand--and to some extent agree on the question they are asking, "What is the larger object of which I touch a part?"

A useful theory for urban planners should fulfill the two criteria of applicability and informability. These two criteria are based upon the premise that a theory should link the research that urban planning faculty conduct with some aspect of planners' experiences in the field. The ongoing dialogue between teachers and practitioners should include theories of the relationships between specific cases and general principles. For an urban planning theory to be applicable, the practitioner must be able to apply it to everyday professional situations. If the object of study is truly a wall, then the practitioner can climb it, or knock it down. For practitioners to be able to inform a theory, they must be able use their empirical experiences to help build the theory. If several attempts to climb the elephant fail, then the theory should be revised.

There is a wide range of research methodologies in the constituent fields of urban planning; one way to organize them is to distinguish between deductive methods and inductive methods. The blind people conducted inductive research, touching the elephant in one place and generalizing on the basis of their specific experiences. A deductive description of the elephant, on the other hand, might arise out of a general theory of the nature of land animals.

Most theories are originally formulated through a combination of inductive and

deductive reasoning. Deduction from constituent fields' theories often provide a fertile source for urban planning theories. However, for urban planning theories to be applicable and informable, professional urban planners should be able to deduce the application of the theories in their specific experiences, and then use their experiences as empirical data to inform the theories. If most professional planners are unable to deduce applications of theory to their everyday experiences or if the experience of planners in the field cannot contribute to the growth of a body of theory, then professional planners and planning faculty have less reason to communicate with one another.

Questions are Just as Important as Answers

Researchers within a given field generally agree to ask a common set of questions. For example, economists usually ask variations of the question, "What is the most efficient way to allocate scarce resources?" While the participants in the field find and put forward different answers to the questions, the fact that there is a common set of questions gives them some common ground to engage in debate.

For planners to find theories useful, they should find useful both the questions that the theories ask and the answers that each researcher identifies, since the questions at one level of research often assume or take for granted certain answers to another level of inquiry. For example, planners may ask, "What is the impact of land use planning upon the home construction market?" When asking this question, planners usually assume a certain political economic structure--for example, federalist representative democracy and corporate capitalism--and a specific time and place--for example, Santa Monica in the 1970s.

For urban planning theory to be useful to professionals who are likely to pursue a wide variety of work in many different locations, often the questions posed are just as important as the answers. Since there are many countries without

representative democracy and some with limited corporate capitalism, some planners would not find the specifics of American housing markets applicable in their professional life outside the United States. Since relatively few professional planners are likely to live or work in Santa Monica, California in the 1970s, the specific answers to the question posed may be directly applicable for only a handful of students.

However, the questions that instructors of theory ask in the course of answering the specific question posed illuminate a path that professional planners may travel down numerous times in their future career. If the process of answering the question regarding Santa Monica's housing markets is to be useful to students of planning with a wide variety of interests who are likely to work in many different environments, then the students should gain some benefit from applying the same kinds of questions to different contexts and situations.

The process of reaching a satisfactory theoretical answer to the question, "What is the impact of land use planning upon the home construction market?" could include the asking of such questions as: What kinds of persons and institutions influence and control land use planning? What resources are needed to successfully build houses? What is the process by which the city government and private developers mutually agree to use a piece of land for housing?

For any planning student who is interested in the social uses of urban space and the impacts of such uses, these questions are useful questions for any time and place, and for any type of political economic structure. In general, then, a theory of urban planning that will be useful to a wide diversity of future professionals should have applicable questions and answers.

The Applicability of Theoretical Answers

While the questions asked in a class on urban planning theory should be of general use,

the substance of the answers should be applicable to as many students as is reasonably possible. To reach this goal, the faculty of particular planning programs could attempt to agree upon a body of applicable knowledge and a range of contemporary issues that planning students at a specific point in time should have common exposure to.

While the substantive bodies of knowledge and the sets of issues taught in a theory class may differ from program to program and in different periods of time within the same program, the negotiated or agreed upon topics to be required of students would reflect the faculty's consensus view of what theoretical knowledge they would consider to be an essential experience for all graduates of their program.

Clearly, the choices that the faculty make would be influenced by a wide range of variables. Some of the factors that faculty might consider would be the constituent fields of training of the faculty; current research interests of the faculty; professional aspirations of enrolled students; distribution of student employment between the public sector, the private sector, and non-profit organizations; and the likely countries and world regions of employment of graduates of the program.

Descriptive and Prescriptive Applications of Theory

The test of whether a theory is applicable may be considered along two dimensions. For urban planning to train successful professionals who will devote their life's work to action in the field, an applicable theory must be able to provide an accurate description of the reality that practitioners will face as well as an effective prescription for the professional to meet goals in numerous, ever-changing situations.

While many types of theories provide plausible descriptions of reality, there are fewer that would prescribe a course of action for planners. Professional planners want to believe in effective human agency. If students choose to

work as urban planners and invest several years of their life to education, the theories they gain should be empowering, providing an accurate description of the world and an effective prescription for changing society for the better.

Can Urban Planning Practice Inform Planning Theory?

The information exchange between planning school faculty and planning professionals should be bi-directional. While a theory of may be applicable to the practice of urban planning, the theory cannot truly be part of the urban planning field unless the professional experiences of planners can inform the theory.

For a theory to be interwoven into the profession, a dynamic process of formulation, empirical testing, and reformulation should provide a means for the theory to be regularly updated and improved upon. If planning practitioners are to participate in the process of theory building, then their direct professional experiences should provide empirical data to incorporate into theory. One means by which planning practice can inform theory is by examination of the effects of the actions of planning professionals. This process provides a means to collect data to support or undermine the prescriptive aspect of a theory.

In addition to testing the prescriptive side of a theory, planning practice should also improve the descriptive aspect of the theory. Here the analysis is not limited to the actions of planners, but also includes examination of the larger environment within which planners attempt to act. Planners may not be conscious of the constraints that they work within or the forces that shape their choices, and often it is the task of theoretically oriented planning faculty to listen to the experiences of planners to discern what avenues of action are not open to them and why.

To return to the story of the elephant, examination of each part of the elephant is essential to a full understanding of the animal.

For example, study of the experiences of planners in the Community Redevelopment Agency may provide insight into the resources available t the state, while planners' experiences working with land developers can help highlight the constraints within which private capital operates. In addition, the experiences of community organizers and non-profit planners can help answer essential questions about how less affluent groups of citizens can gain access to resources and influence an urban regime.

For a theory to continue to be useful to professionals, it must stay current with changing circumstances and professional roles. To do this, a theory should continue to meet both criteria of applicability and informability. Put simply, theory should apply to practice and practice should inform theory. While this may seem obvious to some, the two criteria form a basis for an ongoing process of dialogue between planning school faculty and planning professionals.

The dynamic of theory building outlined here shows that applicability is a means to provide for informability, and informability is a means to increase applicability. If a theory ceases to be informed by practice, then applicability suffers. If a theory becomes less applicable as time goes on, then it will lose its usefulness to the profession. On the other hand, if a theory proves to be applicable to professionals, then its very application provide a means for improvement. Continual information of a theory by practice increases the likelihood that a theory will thrive.

LEWISON LEM is a first year Ph.D. student in the Urban Planning Program of UCLA, studying Social Policy and Analysis. An earlier version of this essay was submitted to Leonie Sandercock's course on the History of Planning Thought in Fall 1993.

Another Dreamer of the Golden Dream

by Jan Mazurek

"Oh mercy, mercy me, things ain't what they used to be"

Marvin Gaye

You could say that Marvin brought me to planning. I played his verse, over and over in my car stereo as I toured the freeways of this fragmented landscape called Southern California. A place that in little over a decade, I fail to recognize. I started my pavement pilgrimage shortly after I hung up my reporter's hat at a local newspaper. Somehow my entire vocabulary, built up since childhood, no longer served to describe the experiences I was sent to chronicle. The headlines I grew up reading mostly held highlights from Kiwanis club meetings and frost warnings to Sunkist growers.

Somewhere along the last two decades, the story started to change. The hometown paper where I worked no longer matched its mission. Gobbled up in the late 1970's by the nation's biggest media conglomerate, reporters were under orders to no longer cover hometown beats, but instead depict the news from a fictitious "Regional" angle. I did my part for boosterism by "doing lunch" with slick, Orange County office developers. I'd file stories on how corporate builders were increasing the sophistication of the "region" by installing public "art." One such work comprised nothing more than a 30-foot siding of red plexiglass. "Vintner's Progress," sniffed its creator, "was intended as a tribute to the former mode of production that characterized the land." Today "Vintner's Progress" memorializes nothing more than 20,000 square feet of vacant office space.

My booster news pieces helped conceal the underdevelopment of development that was simultaneously happening in the Los Angeles urban core and periphery cities such as San Bernardino, over 60 miles away. During the last two years of my career, I was switched from the business beat to what they refer to as the "cop desk." The switch was made when I refused to write an "upbeat" business story on how enterprising Korean merchants were buying up Black-owned liquor stores on San Bernardino's depressed and predominantly Black Westside. That portion of the city was effectively choked off and killed when Caltrans bifurcated the valley with Interstate 215. City fathers slammed the final nail in the coffin by lobbying transportation officials to run the off-ramps in the direction of downtown. San Bernardino sports three of the nation's few fast-lane on-ramps. As a result, the Westside supports no shopping centers and few businesses. Even then, in 1983, some 60 miles from South Central, community members were vexed by the foreign colonization of their few viable liquor stores. The Korean merchants, on the other hand, were nervous, and tight-lipped. The melting pot had begun to boil.

I knew it was boiling in the African American community because most nights I would come off my beat sick and crying. A single mother, who had staked her entire life savings in order to move her sons to Fontana from Inglewood learned that she didn't move far enough. Her eldest son was shot in the head and killed on Sierra Boulevard. While "master planned" communities were springing up in the shadow of city's former citrus and abandoned steel mills, apartment complexes were being seized by gangs and converted to scenes I thought only existed in the South Bronx. Skid Row is not Southern California's only site of misery. The periphery, my periphery, is dotted with block after block of burned-out, windowless, roofless, apartment stucco shells that house contemporary untouchables, the "crack-heads." Today these neighborhoods, buildings where my friends just a decade ago

grew up and lived, can only be approached from the safety of a squad car. As you roll slowly down these streets, the only visible occupants are children. Bare-bottomed toddlers and their elder siblings sit on the sidewalks. They wait, hollow-eyed for a buyer to roll up. These young sentries then take the cash and maneuver stealthily to the structures where their parents lie, often too stupefied to move. The presumption, I think, is that these kids are somehow bulletproof. Nonetheless, sometimes these young entrepreneurs get caught in the crossfire. Other times, they just get addicted to the product.

There are no villains in my story -- just people trying to make sense of their changing landscape. As Davis points out: "Social anxiety, as urban sociology likes to remind us, is just maladjustment to change. But who has anticipated, or adjusted to, the scale of change in Southern California over the last 15 years?" (Davis, 1990: 6) It is not change itself which causes this malaise, but the *scale* of change. Change that previously took a lifetime to occur, now happens in a decade.

Do I suffer from nostalgia? Yes, if I say my "social space" -- Southern California -- is different in ways that I fail to understand. I accept the Lefebvrian notion that abstract space obliterates codes and difference: "History is experienced as nostalgia, nature as regret." In some ways, the space is changed for the better. Southern California invented and perfected restrictive covenants and right-to-work laws that perpetuated places like South Central and San Bernardino's Westside. Places like Fontana also invented West Coast chapters of the Ku Klux Klan. But go ask the residents. Somehow, in Southern California the barriers did not seem as bad as those in the places they came from.

Just a generation ago, as today, Southern California represented a space of opportunity. For people like my German war-bride mother, it represented a way to escape 1000 years of accumulated class detritus. For post Civil War African-Americans, it offered a chance to escape the caste systems of places like Alabama. The

dreamscape worked as long as business was booming. Today, the region's economic climate breeds mistrust and fear. Industrial policy and housing programs may eventually jumpstart California's sagging growth engine, but the tools for change are much more rudimentary than those offered up by dismal scientists.

When I get too depressed listening to Marvin, I pop in a tape by rappers De La Soul. In the song, "Tread Water," there's an exchange between the urbanite and a squirrel. The squirrel asks the city dweller to help save his dying population. At which point, the human says he can't do much, "if there's no one here to help, and no one to get involved." Instead, the human simply holds out the most he has to Mr. Squirrel, and that is hope:

*Always look to the positive/ and do
not drop your head
for the water will engulf us if we do
not dare to tread.*

So let's tread water. This bit of New Testament spiritualism is the most apt starting point for rethinking our approach to the urban environment. It does not imply that we should all cast in our lot with Christianity, nor does it tell us simply to live well. The message is much more subtle: It re-situates the divine.

City building, from the ancient Aztecs and Egyptians to the medieval Gothic cathedral, mirrors our conceptions of the divine. For the ancients, the celestial realm organized the social order. In the West, among some, it became corporeal, moving down from a capricious, angry desert Yahweh to an incarnate god. While conceptions of celestial order were brought closer to earth, spatial perceptions of the cosmos were captured, encoded and preserved throughout the Middle Ages as *verboten* geometries. These geometries reasserted themselves during the Renaissance, building a positivism that destroyed any absolute spiritual mandate. Humans no longer looked to the stars or to high priests for absolutes. They increasingly turned to themselves.

My argument, however, is that this transformation in the West was incomplete. Instead of taking full responsibility for our behavior and our social spaces, we transferred authority to the religion of science. Newtonian motion informed not only mechanics but how we thought about ourselves and our ways of doing things. Adam Smith in the *Wealth of Nations* asserts that human behavior is a process most clearly enunciated by an incipient social "science." We act, says Smith, not out of goodness, nor evil, but simple self interest -- a self-interest which, although guided by the laws of motion, will nonetheless create optimum outcomes. Capital solves the problem of our conscience. We have not brought our conception of the divine home, but relocated it instead in the modern citadel downtown redevelopment. The urban philosophers of De La Soul suggest we take responsibility for ourselves and "tread (in this case, to walk) water." We will keep our heads above water if we dare to tread.

Of course, "dare" is the keyword. I'm not sure why planners make promises to people at hearings and then renege. Much has to do with those to whom planners ultimately answer. Planners may promise low-income units, or green belts or child care centers, but making good on these promises proves much more difficult in practice. I know why reporters fail to help: We refuse to listen. We refuse to listen because we fail to understand ourselves as repositories of the divine, which is nothing more than human needs. As a reporter, I refused to do this by retreating to the narrow parameters of my job description: ask who, what, where, when and why. File the story. Get out. I hid behind my job description as a defense from "otherness." I wrongly assumed that the parents of a murdered child or the scions of the Black community simply tolerated my presence, while deeply wishing for me, the "other," to stop mining their personal narratives. My assumptions were incorrect. Instead, people almost always welcomed a real listener. Conveying their stories was a way of grounding the raw strands of their pain in common

experience. And stories, when conveyed honestly, almost always generated responses. People in that mean, middle-class, white suburbs were moved and thanked me, the listener, for simply chronicling the experience of an exemplary two-parent family, or the equally outstanding achievements of a single mother and her four sons. The stories of these disparate lives revealed to others how and where to get involved. Someone sent my single mother a job offer and several hundred dollars worth of gift certificates. People are neither inherently good nor evil, but moveable. They are responsive. They are gregarious. They want their stories told.

I believe this insight is transferable to planning. Summarizing his experience in self-built housing experiments in Latin America, Turner offers the following advice: "The principal effect of these and other experiences ... was to change my attitude toward the people I set out to work for. I stopped trying to work *for* and started trying to work *with* people" (Turner 1989: 132). The best way to begin is to shed the trappings of one's narrowly defined profession and simply listen. By approaching questions of human needs as a person, instead of as suit-and-stock-clad "professionals," we bring our task down from the citadel of corporatism and science and resituate the divine right here, where we live.

How might Southern California translate the human as divine? Planners as social mobilizers will practice not *ex post*, but *ex ante*. Reporters are trained to sniff out and anticipate trends. Planning must be restored to its active tense as a verb, rather than simply a job description. Planners must anticipate the needs of their constituencies. In order to achieve this planners must learn to ask questions, rather than assume their professional training provides all the answers. For example, backyard gardens are still a vital family and commercial food source in predominantly black neighborhoods of Riverside and Fontana. However, as land values there have risen over the last decade, the City of Riverside has increasingly been pressured to

modify zoning in order to force these families off their land. Author Susan Straight chronicles their struggles to keep their heads above water in her award-winning novel, *Aquaboogie*. Instead of defending these gardens, well-meaning community advocates urged these families to take the money and run. A similar process occurred in a city demolition of a long-standing African American rib restaurant. Curiously, after the crisis in South Central LA, planners are seeking ways to establish business and community gardens. A few successful models exist in their own (regional) backyards. Riverside and Fontana community gardens are disappearing, because "there's no one there to help and no one to get involved." Tread water.

The forgoing example illustrates how planning, restored to its anticipatory role, can help meet human needs. I can't speak for Southern Californians, but I have spoken to them. Most tell me they like some form of autonomy and free enterprise, and some form of private property rights. In assessing prospects for their future, I have attempted to faithfully recount what they have told me. Their economic views are fairly consistent with their political convictions. As Murray Bookchin points out, "Most movements that derive from the liberal center or the left are notable for their lack of any roots in traditions that are dear to Americans or articulate the best in their history" (Bookchin, 1989: 279). I have therefore avoided most "isms" of the European variety, opting instead for homegrown solutions that might spring from Southern California's still-fertile soil. Seven years of reporting acquainted me with a fairly robust sample of people who favor a kinder, gentler market. My politics and economics tend to be biased in the opposite direction. New planning requires that we remain true to our beliefs. I think I have been fairly clear about where I stand. However, socially mobilized planners, above all, must seek out and listen to the wants and needs of their constituencies.

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JAN MUZUREK is a 2nd year M.A. student. An earlier version of this essay was a submission for John Friedmann's course on *The City Building Process*, Fall 1992.

The Historical Foundations of American City Planning: A Literature Review

by Mark Garrett, J.D.

Stanley K. Schultz. 1989. *Constructing Urban Culture: American Cities and City Planning, 1800-1920*. Philadelphia: Temple University Press.

Eric H. Monkkonen. 1988. *America Becomes Urban: The Development of U.S. Cities and Towns, 1780-1980*. Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press.

Richard E. Foglesong. 1986. *Planning the Capitalist City: The Colonial Era to the 1920s*. Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press.

M. Christine Boyer. 1983. *Dreaming the Rational City: The Myth of American City Planning*. Cambridge, Mass.: The MIT Press.

Since the 1969 publication of Mel Scott's paean to the planning profession, *American City Planning*, there has been little to challenge the proposition that city planning in the United States originated in the 1890s, born complete and triumphant in the heralded Columbian Exposition of 1893 in Chicago, known colloquially as the "White City" for its celebration of neoclassical architecture. But, the process of city building had actually been under way in this country since the first settlers came ashore on the continent. Throughout the colonial

period to the first national conference on city planning held in 1909, men and women worked to improve the conditions of urban America and to alter its form. These efforts took many different paths and served differing interests but all in one way or another influenced the course of urban development and collectively provided the foundation for the idea of city planning which took expression in the Chicago Fair.

Some of these rivulets of thought and practice became rushing currents in the formal institution of city planning while others dried up or meandered off to feed other social movements; a few have even returned years later to influence and reinvigorate (or at least challenge) contemporary planning. Understanding the historical evolution of city building in America prior to 1920 is vital to explaining how and why formal city planning developed as it did in the past seventy years.

This task is greatly aided by the publication of several new books which discuss, with varying emphases, the historical process of U.S. urban development. The most recent of these and perhaps the least satisfactory is Stanley Schultz's *Constructing Urban Culture: American Cities and City Planning 1800-1920*. As the title suggests, Schultz is concerned primarily with the ideological sphere of planning. His main thesis is that during the nineteenth century a number

of intellectual transformations occurred which provided the basis for the public acceptance of formal city planning. Specifically, changes in public attitudes towards what constituted the "good life" resulted in a broader acceptance of government intervention in public affairs and support for technological solutions to urban problems. For Schultz, the Chicago Fair marked not the beginning of modern American city planning thought but rather a "culmination and crystallization of ideas and activities over the previous seventy-five years" (1989: 213) blending the 'city planning ethos' of the nineteenth century with the reform-mindedness of the Progressive era.

The first part of the book, titled "Imagining the City," looks at the emergence of the utopian urban novel and its influence on public culture. Though the imaginative models of urban life that these mid 19th century writers put forth ranged widely in style and content, Schultz argues that they shared a vision that the cure to contemporary ills lay not in abandoning the city for the countryside, but in perfecting an *urban* way of life, one which equated technological progress with "the progress of the human spirit." This popularization of a new urbanity, based on technology, apparently contributed to public acceptance of technocratic solutions to the actual urban problems which Schultz details in the next three sections of the book.

In the section "Regulating the City" Schultz examines the transformations in the nineteenth century legal system. Responding to the growing middle-class demands for public works to improve the physical quality of the urban environment, the courts began to expand the ability of government to "take" private property for public projects by narrowing the range of situations in which money compensation would be required. Concurrently, the courts also expanded the regulatory power of municipal corporations over private businesses, culminating in the U.S. Supreme Court's 1926 decision legitimizing municipal zoning. The details of this evolution are less significant for

Schultz than the fact that they represent a transition from the "era of government that taxed little and performed few services" to one in which government controlled, regulated and actively remade the urban landscape (p. 37).

With this increase in municipal control over the urban environment also came the responsibility for addressing the problems of the urban environment. In the next section, "Sanitizing the City," Schultz catalogues the strategies for improving public health by cleaning up the urban environment, particularly those areas housing the poor. Important to this effort was the notion of "moral environmentalism" -- the idea that improving physical conditions would positively affect morality. It also provided another basis for city planning since it led to careful documentation of the conditions believed relevant to disease formation and transmission, and to direct advocacy of public planning to remove those conditions thought to provoke ill health.

Rounding out the antecedents to modern city planning were the contributions of the landscape architects and civil engineers, who together with the sanitarians, promoted public works projects to improve the urban environment and in so doing established a "structure of planning thought and practice" which later came to dominate the planning movement. In addition to raising public morality by attacking urban decay and the spread of disease, these public projects (city parks, water and sewer systems and paved streets) served to reinforce the need for increasingly centralized public control over the urban environment made possible by the changing legal framework.

Beyond merely encouraging efficiency and cost-effectiveness through long-range planning, these engineers, according to Schultz, also created a model for later professional city planning by proving indispensable to politicians and city-booster, by establishing themselves as neutral experts above party politics, and by creating an efficient professional bureaucracy. The sanitarians and the engineers shared a

common metaphor of the city as an organic being, "a vast integrated unit within which the efficient functioning of one part depended upon the efficient functioning of all the parts" (p. 191), subject to treatment and cure through the application of technology. For Schultz, their collective efforts in the nineteenth century led to popular acceptance of comprehensive planning in the twentieth century.

Although *Constructing Urban Culture* does bring into focus the contributions of particular professional groups, important actors are missing from the story, such as the settlement house workers and housing reformers. While it is true that sometime after 1920 the city planning and housing reform movements went separate ways (with the former becoming dominated by lawyers, architects and engineers) it is nonetheless misleading to ignore the contributions of the latter to planning thought and practice, while overemphasizing notions of technology and central control. Recently, planning has begun to rediscover its humanist side through interdisciplinary studies and a renewed interest in "grass roots" planning. A full account of planning's intellectual foundations, even from the nineteenth century, should include more of these elements.

On a more substantive level, Schultz's work suffers from a failure to specify what he means by an "urban culture," beyond some near-universal belief in urbanity and technology. Thus, his notion that "Americans...consciously set out to construct an urban culture" (Lotchin, 1990: 384) clearly obscures more than it reveals. First, there is no explanation why urbanization occurred at all in the late eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, nor why Americans opted for solutions that supported and encouraged it rather than choosing possible alternatives. Second, the approach avoids questions of why technological changes were adopted and how the effects were distributed across class, racial and ethnic lines. Finally, it ignores groups which may have resisted the changes taking place.

America Becomes Urban by Eric Monkkonen provides a somewhat fuller account

of the history of American urbanization. Although it does not deal directly with formal city planning *per se* it does trace the transformation of the American city from a "passive regulator" to an "active service provider" over a two hundred year period. Organized topically, rather than strictly chronologically, it examines the establishment of municipal police and fire departments, municipal debt financing, public transportation improvements and government public housing efforts. The central argument of the book is that an understanding of the growth of American cities must consider "the history of their own self-determination" (1988: 166).

Monkkonen's approach to urban historical analysis attempts a critical reformulation of several conflicting traditions in the literature -- the humanist critique, the statistical approach, and the "New Urban History." Unlike *Constructing Urban Culture* which stresses ideological transformations, the result here is "more sensitive to *formal organizations* as expressions of local social relations and political choices" (Clarke, 1990: 290).

Monkkonen periodizes his study of American urban development into 1) the pre-modern era (1790-1830), 2) the period of expansive growth (1830-1930), and 3) the recent relatively stable period (1930-1970). His major concern, though, and the one most relevant to this discussion, is with the period of rapid city growth after 1830. He asserts that during this time local elites actively strove to create a "safe" environment for business, by subsidizing economic and technological change. Key to this effort was the legal transformation of the city into a limited liability corporation, capable of issuing bonds backed by tax revenues, in order to finance public improvements. In this expansive period, increasing city size allowed property taxes to remain low, even while municipal services were being extended. Monkkonen argues that the opportunities this afforded for individual home ownership created a coalition of support for growth and

development, one which apparently transcended issues of class and ethnicity.

Over this period, previously volunteer services such as police and fire fighting developed formal organizational structures. These organizations grew in size and complexity as government acquired more and more obligations to provide public services. Monkkonen views this process not as inevitable, but as the historical product of individual human efforts aimed at improving conditions in cities. As long as cities continued to grow, they could expand these new activities on the expectation of increasing future income. Monkkonen suggests that those towns where civic leaders were unwilling (or unable) to invest in public services simply failed to develop into major centers.

In contrast to Schultz's view of urbanization as a cultural phenomenon, Monkkonen attributes it more to political responses to immigration. By the 1820s, the franchise had been extended to most white males, increasing the political influence of the burgeoning immigrant classes. This shift was not resisted by urban elites because, until around 1890, the role of city government was limited and therefore lacked the ability to contravene established property rights. As their economic interests become more regional and less tied to the central cities, he argues, elites willingly transferred political power to ethnic bosses in exchange for broadening the economic base of the city.

Under ethnic political control, local city governments actively pursued shameless "boosterism" to encourage growth and development and worked to improve the public infrastructure. Elites, their interests split between the city and their own businesses, were politically fractured. They neither remained unified nor sure of how the city should best serve the needs of Capital. By the 1870s, the foundations of the service-oriented city were firmly established. The Progressive era served to legitimize and rationalize government's service functions and to establish them as part of the

"dull routine" of city business. Government came to be viewed as "positive, humane and supportive."

This process also had a positive influence on social stability. Since government activities depended less on volunteers, there was less need for any shared system of values. Government developed as a tolerant system without requiring individual or group tolerance. Civil conflict was muted through the invention of stable bureaucracies which supplied reliable services.

Monkkonen's historical description of the increasing importance of city government in maintaining social relations and assuring the conditions for continued urban growth provides a more satisfactory framework for thinking about the origins of city planning than the cultural transformation thesis in Schultz's *Constructing Urban Culture*. Instead of viewing the city as a mere container for action, Monkkonen emphasizes the active role of cities, through their local government, in shaping their own growth. He stresses urban innovation rather than urban problems, rejecting as ahistorical the 'urban crisis' models in which urban problems are seen as the social consequences of urbanization. In the opinion of one reviewer, "he refutes well the pathological model of city life. America's urban history is not one of breakdown but rather one of creative adaptation to massive structural change" (Corfield, 1989: 49-50). As another reviewer puts it, "he is more concerned [with] cities as entities with an array of powers guided by human action rather than as parts of a 'process' of change stimulated primarily by external forces" (Melosi, 1989: 502-3).

Nevertheless, in taking a "benign view of development" emphasizing the booster activities of local political elites, Monkkonen not only downplays the wider economic conditions and constraints underlying urban growth (which can better help explain the "success" or "failure" of certain places than the relative effectiveness of local growth promotion) but he also ignores the very real social and environmental problems created by urbanization to which city government had to respond. As with

Constructing Urban Culture, this book also suffers from a lack of critical inquiry into the distributional effects of growth across race and class lines and a failure to question by and for whom political choices are made (McDonald, 1990: 304-311).

Both Schultz and Monkkonen take an optimistic view of urbanization, as the progressive expansion of government to meet the citizenry's needs and to solve urban problems which might limit further growth. Neither, however, deals in any depth with the social and political consequences of technological change. Both instead imply that the public found cities desirable and wanted to encourage urbanization, when in fact, many Americans were becoming dissatisfied with the urban ills and wanted to recover "rural" ideals.

Two other authors take a more critical stance. While cities functioned to improve business prosperity, urban growth created not merely technical problems to be solved, but deep social conflicts which had to be addressed. Clearly informed by Marxist theory, they both maintain that government, and planning in particular, sought to improve the conditions in cities to maintain the conditions for capitalist production.

Like Schultz, Richard Foglesong in his book *Planning the Capitalist City* also concentrates on the 'early history' of city planning. In contrast to Schultz, though, he sees it less as the culmination of previous efforts to control the environment, than an attempt to devise new solutions to increasing problems generated by laissez-faire economic policies regarding housing and land use. These early city planners sought to restrict the role of the market and thus widen the scope of government influence and control.

Foglesong asserts that planning developed far back in the colonial era, both as a form of state intervention and as a particular method of policy formation. Adopting as his framework recent Marxist analyses of the 'state' by Poulantzas and Offe, and drawing on the urban literature of Castells and Harvey, his argument proceeds on both macro-theoretical

and concrete historical levels. First, that the development of urban planning cannot be understood as the progressive development of the planning idea or in terms of a pluralist-liberal paradigm but should be viewed through the Marxist lens of structural contradictions in American capitalism. Second, that planning has a pro-capitalist bias which serves to identify, organize and legitimize the interests of Capital in the sphere of urban development, even though the planning idea originated neither with the business community nor members of the state and even though planners possessed relative autonomy from capital. In his view, urban planning developed initially in response to criticism of the market system but was not anti-urban in origin or effect. Rather, it served to shape urban development and to mitigate market effects in ways which contributed to the maintenance of the capitalist system.

Central to his thesis is the notion, derived from Poulantzas, that capitalists often act more as individuals than as a class, and are therefore prevented from acting in their own collective interests. The state, through its planners, performs this function for Capital. But, he argues, the liberal state faces a contradiction between facilitating capital accumulation and maintaining democratic legitimacy. Planning, as opposed to other models of policy-making such as bureaucracy, or interest group conflict, is seen as best able to fulfill the role of accumulation. However, due to its technocratic nature it is inherently undemocratic. Thus, Foglesong concludes that there is no internal structure in the state which can carry out these contradictory objectives in the long run. This leads him to assert that in a democratic-capitalist society, planning is "necessary but impossible."

Capitalism, in this view, demands the intervention of the state to solve the problems arising from the operation of the market system. The state must manipulate the built environment to reproduce labor power by meeting the consumption needs of workers, and to maintain and reproduce fixed capital investments needed to facilitate production. At the same time,

however, there is a contradiction between the need for the state to socialize the control of land and the danger that in a formally democratic state non-owners will gain too much control over private property. The key question then, for Foglesong, is how urban planning as an institutionalized form of policy making serves to mediate these contradictions in a manner conducive to the reproduction of Capitalism.

Despite his complex statement of the 'problem of planning' the ensuing discussion fails to prove Foglesong's central thesis, although it does provide some interesting historical material. Its structuralist orientation notwithstanding, for the most part the book details the ideas of the so-called great men of planning. Each chapter ends with an attempt to reinterpret the facts in light of the author's theory. As one reviewer complained, "he seeks not to discover new history but to rewrite what is already known" (Elazar, 1988: 162). Still, the effort deserves attention.

Foglesong reviews a number of early reform efforts, including housing and park planning. He argues that housing reformers, seeking to mediate the relationship between Capital and the state, sought to educate capitalists to the need for reform while at the same time defending the system of private production of housing, and in so doing served to reproduce that system and its attendant problems. By recommending committees of experts to enforce housing codes, these reformers also provided a model for dealing with the Capitalism-Democracy contradiction. Foglesong argues that this faith in expertise, which provided public legitimization without democratic control, was to become characteristic of city planning, particularly in the park planning movement.

Foglesong contends that the early park commissions were essentially undemocratic institutions. The parks they created, while intended for the rich and poor alike, were more often than not located where they would improve property values of the wealthy rather than where they would most benefit the working

classes. In short, the capitalists needed the park planners to promote government intervention to deliver what the market could not supply, in a way that avoided political control by the immigrant-based political machines.

In a similar way the City Beautiful movement, according to Foglesong, continued the role of planners to educate business on the need for planning without straying too far from the economic needs of business. The provision of grand public places through largely private efforts was, he argues, "intended to divert attention from more threatening reform agendas and instill the citizenry with respect for country, American culture, and capitalism" (1986: 125). Thus the City Beautiful movement provided a model of expertise and central administration, but could not in the end succeed in transforming society since it could not enforce voluntary compliance outside of government.

If the City Beautiful movement could not solve the Capitalism-Democracy contradiction, it did, however, provide evidence that planning would have to be institutionalized in order to take advantage of governmental power while still maintaining private control over it. This occurred in the City Practical movement (born in response to dissatisfaction with the aesthetic approach), with its endorsement of independent planning commissions and preparation of comprehensive plans. The solution posed here to the Capitalism-Democracy contradiction -- to partially governmentalize the planning function without democratizing it -- proved less than satisfactory though, as it merely replaced one contradiction with another. Still, the idea that improving the economy and efficiency of the physical city served business and met the collective needs of urban residents, seemed to offer the best possible approach.

Although Foglesong makes a case for how planning in a democratic capitalist society addresses the conflicts between private ownership and public responsibility, the limitations of his structuralist analysis precludes a clear exposition on the historical evolution of U.S. planning. By choosing to emphasize only

those features of the nineteenth century reform movements which eventually came to characterize formal city planning, his approach suggests an overt determinism indicative of much Marxist literature. The important questions of why government took the paths it did to resolve the differences between public and private interests, how these individual reform movements affected relationships between government and private enterprise and how other institutions responded to the challenges, are left largely unaddressed¹.

M. Christine Boyer's *Dreaming the Rational City: the Myth of American Planning*, takes a similar view of planning but from a slightly different theoretical and methodological position. The earliest of the books reviewed here (being published in 1983), it represented the clearest challenge at the time to the semi-official view of planning offered by *American City Planning since 1890*, mentioned above. In contrast to Foglesong's book, which despite its dogmatism ends up being largely a straight-forward historical narrative, Boyer's book is distinctly polemic.

Like Foglesong she too argues that "planning is a mechanism by which to remove the barriers to capital accumulation and to discipline the economic, social, and physical order of cities to new demands and new conditions of capital accumulation (Boyer, 1983: 129)." However, her focus is on the historical development of what she terms the "planning mentality" while eschewing any "functional causal argument" of the evolution of city planning. Drawing on the work of Michel Foucault, she tries to explore the 'genealogy' of the structure of planning thought as a dialogue among various actors and to uncover the relationships between planning knowledge and the "power it programs." She explains:

"The discourse on planning should not search for cause and effect. Instead what holds our attention is the apparatus of planning: what Foucault has

defined as the relationships among a set of distinct elements such as professional discourses, governmental institutions, administrative procedures, regulatory laws, legal concepts, architectural forms and plans, scientific statements, and moral proclamations" (p. xi).

In a sense her focus on tactics and strategies is similar to Schultz's concern with culture, and indeed Foglesong criticizes her for making a fetish of the study of the "planning discourse" in the way mainstream historians attribute "self-actualizing" properties to the planning idea (Foglesong, 1986: 10). What her approach does do, though, is to open up the nature of the debate about planning rather than force it into structural-functional categories. Although the book covers a somewhat later period than those of Foglesong or Schultz, its discussion of the period 1890-1916 provides another interpretation of the emergence of formal city planning. In examining the activities of professional city "improvers" during this period she traces out a radical realignment of the discourse of planning in the transition from a rural to an urban society.

In the post-Civil War period, she argues, people came to believe that urban society was becoming cut off from the harmony of the natural order. The city itself was seen as evil and pathological and a link was drawn between physical and moral contagion. The solution was to re-insert the values of the rural past into cities. The restoration of this damaged harmony became the basis for the new planning mentality.

Thus, environmental reform sought to remake the public order through a series of discontinuous discourses. The park movement sought to restore a moral and ethical life through the provision of open spaces. The discourse centered on the ability to provide physical relief from contagion, enhance property values, provide recreation for workers, and generally impose a set of civilized values and order on

society. Settlement houses and charity organizations sought a political consensus around disciplining public welfare as a tool for social control and to avoid waste and duplication among service providers. Some sought stronger tenement regulations to eradicate slum conditions. Others sought to improve the built environment (utilities, transportation systems, and public buildings) to stimulate the economy. Classical architecture, with its public buildings all grouped around a central plaza was another ideal paradigm for order overcoming the chaos of urban life -- it conveyed an ideological message of national grandeur, economic imperialism and political triumph. In this search for a new spatial order, these various tactics were all designed to create a disciplined urban society.

In the end, these movements failed because they could not rationalize and reorder a restless population. The failure, argues Boyer, led to new pressure to restructure the tactics and programs of the improvers. While the environmental reform movements produced the essential ideas of planning -- improving poverty, congestion, public health, and recreation -- none offered a total perspective on the city. A new specialization, that of the 'city planner' was required.

Whereas environmental reformers believed that social ills could be cured by reestablishing the relationship between city and country, around the turn of the century many people came to see the problems of the city as the result of uncontrolled competition. By offering "a conceptual scheme for rational development and regulated growth (1983: 62)," city planning, Boyer maintains, could help resolve conflicts over infrastructure and service needs, but in ways which did not compete directly with private capital.

Boyer agrees with Foglesong that planning functioned to remove spatial barriers to growth. However, unlike Foglesong who sees planning as a bureaucratic specialization which engineers eventually dominated because their skills best served capital, Boyer views it more as

an evolving social consciousness:

"This discourse thus continually reproduces an ideological screen positing an imaginary urban order, whether nostalgic or progressive, an emotive discourse that embodies a will for utopian reform, and an exaltation of bourgeois progress within the American city" (p. 132).

Boyer sees planning as a many-faceted process, which spoke to the contradictory interests of different forms of Capital and to the various social and economic needs. Her view though, like Foglesong's, is that planners failed to create a viable discipline or resolve the problems of urbanization, in the end giving in to the dominant political and economic interests (Hoy, 1984: 280).

Each of these books makes for interesting reading and provides important insights into the foundations of American city planning. Schultz establishes the important contributions of civil engineers, landscape architects and sanitarians although his claims of a distinctly urban culture are unconvincing. Monkkonen stresses the role of creative problem-solving and boosterism, but avoids questions of racial, ethnic and class conflict. Foglesong describes the role of planning in resolving public-private conflicts but his approach suffers from an overly structuralist orientation. Finally, Boyer's very dense argument shows how planning reflects a number of different discourses. While no one effort gives a complete picture, together they do create a useful mosaic of the pre-history of planning.

Endnote

1. Perhaps in implicit recognition of this fact, Foglesong includes a chapter on "Roads Not Taken" which examines the more radical attacks on the congestion problem, Garden Cities and company town planning. Unfortunately, his conclusion, that those responses

" . . . that 'work' and are incorporated into town building and city planning are those that are either compatible with the interests of property capital or, if not, correspond with the interest of a broad section of the business community" (p.198),

simply begs the question of the nature of historical change.

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MARK GARRETT, J.D. is a fourth year Ph.D. student studying growth management and land use planning in the Urban Planning Program. The original version of this article was submitted to Dolores Hayden's course on the History of Planning Practice in Winter 1991.

Making a Killing in the Southland: A Planning Mystery in Seven Innings

by Dora Epstein

Author's Note

The following story is fiction and should be treated as such. However, much of the events and dialogue are based in fact. With the exception of conversations with the "Mayor's Secretary", the "Bartender", the "Police Officers", and the "Planner", all dialogue is directly quoted from the Los Angeles Times, Newsweek, The Nation, and other media sources. The character of the Baseball Commissioner is completely fictionalized. It was a ludicrous choice in reality. It's a ludicrous choice here.



The Warm-Up



The city was all wrong again tonight - a little too warm, a little too claustrophobic. I hurried home to get away from it all, but I found myself an hour later, staring out the window, remembering.

That was an unseasonably hot springtime in the Southland. I was shackled up in a Spanish-style on Fairfax when the story broke. It was nothing new - at least to me - another black man beaten senselessly by the LAPD - kind of thing you see everyday around here. Only this time. . . they got caught. I remember the grainy videotape, and I remember

shaking my head in disgust, and I remember saying, "They blew it this time." Yeah - they really blew it.

Then there was the trial. Four white police officers and a strange move to Simi Valley for a "fair venue" and all of the sudden, it was the victim on trial, the victim who provoked his own beating, the victim who was the uncontrollable animal. The whole world was watching when the verdicts came in . . .

I remember the fires.



First Inning: The Set-Up



It was late September when the Baseball Commissioner came to me. I had been working on another Happy Fun Park on the Westside, and I was itching to get some real planning under my belt. Planners like me were a dime a dozen in this town, and it seemed like nobody wanted to give a kid a break. Nobody, that is, except the Baseball Commissioner.

She was an awful looking dame, bright red lipstick and old as dirt. She had once managed a club in Cincinnati, got suspended for

some outrageous remarks, and they rewarded her by giving her the Commission. I'd seen her on the news plenty of times, but she was far more daunting in person. She leaned over my desk, and scrutinized me through her bifocals.

"I'm rebuilding LA," she rasped.

"So?" I wondered where this broad was getting at, and I hoped that it didn't include me.

"I need you to help me."

"I was afraid of that."

"Listen kid," I could see I was getting on her nerves. "You don't have a future and I don't have a planner. You work for me and I'll pay you double what that Happy thing pays you."

She was starting to speak my language.

"What do you need?"

"I need to know what happened to LA.

I'm not saying that LA's dead or anything, but I have my suspicions that this was a race ri - ," she trailed off, looking away and then bounced back suddenly, "Listen, cub, if I'm going to rebuild, then I have to know what happened here. That's it. End of story."

"And, you want me to find that out?"

This dame was out of her mind, but it was starting to dawn on me that she needed me, that she was choosing me on purpose, like a babe in the woods. Piece of cake, I thought. I just get the answers she's looking for, make a few legislative proposals, and get out with the green stuff. She had a lot of green stuff.

"I'll do it."

"That's a sweetie," she said with a grotesque smile, "I knew you would. Just get me my report by November 1. No excuses." She started to lumber out the door when I called her back.

"Hey, Commish, how'd you get to be the one to rebuild LA? I mean, what's race relations have to do with baseball?"

She just laughed and turned away.

The sun was shining when I left my office. I had a game plan, and if all went well, I could be done by the following week. I knew the routine well. After all, this is what we

specialized in the School of Public Policy at the UC. Just interview the Mayor, maybe talk to the Police Chief and a community leader, hunt up some think-tank policy analysis, and voila - instant data. Easy money for a kid like me . . . or so I thought.



Second Inning: The Professionals



I waited two hours to see the Mayor. There was a lot of hustle and bustle. Boxes were being packed, and files were being moved.

"Getting ready for the election of a new mayor," a secretary told me sunnily, and she smiled at me in that way that secretaries do when you're not going to see who you came for no way, no how.

"Um, listen," I said, "I'm here to see the Mayor. Is there any way...."

"And, what does this concern?" she asked for the third time.

"The riots."

She smiled preciously again, and took me aside.

"The Mayor has nothing new to say on the issue. He asked for peace you know, but well. . . Anyway, why don't you just take a look at our Economic Policy Report? It's top drawer, really it is. And the Mayor likes it." She brightened. "It's multicultural!"

I knew that report, and I knew what she was driving at. It was a good story, a city torn apart by hatred and mob rule. There had been anger on behalf of the African-American community at the brutality of the police force, the injustice of both the King verdict and the verdict of the shooting of a young Black girl by a Korean shopkeeper, and the poverty on the streets of South Central. The mayhem after the verdict was just an explosion waiting to happen,

and the Mayor had appealed for calm. He imposed all the right curfews, and told people to go home and watch *The Cosby Show*. But, it had happened anyway. And, all that could be done was to accuse the Police Chief of short-sightedness, and well, he was retired now. Game over. Let's rebuild.

"Ma'am," I said to the secretary, "what's with the Mayor? I mean, everyone knows that he tried to restore calm, and then again, everyone knows that he called in 10,000 National Guard troops. He made a speech at the Church on the eve of the verdict, but since that time, it's been just platitudes and promises. What's with the media silence now?"

She looked me over with a new intensity.

"Who are you working for?" she asked from a now tight little mouth.

"The Baseball Commissioner," I admitted blankly.

"Well, I suggest that you ask her," she said curtly. "He appointed her. That was his action - a partnership, I think, between the community and local business. She's running the show now. She's the one you want to talk to." And with that, the secretary went back to her computer. The phone was ringing off the hook.

So that was it from the Mayor. I could have read *Newsweek* and spared myself the trip. But with the firm resolve of a paid professional, I set off for the office of the new Police Chief. This time I had an appointment.

The police were an odd lot in this game. On the one hand, the reaction to the brutality of a few officers who "went too far" was seen as the spark to the riots. On the other hand, they provided the "thin blue line" between order and destruction. Twenty years ago, when the riots were isolated to only one section of LA, the police were the clear enemy of "the people". In 1992, they became part of the solution - reform the cops, the Angelenos said, but give us more security. The bare facts were these - the old Police Chief supported the actions of his

officers, and he moved a little too slowly for the public's liking when the riots broke out. The Mayor asked him to resign immediately, and the ex-Chief wrote a book, sold millions of copies, no lessons learned. In stepped a new Police Chief, the ex-Commissioner from Philly. It was an appeasement move from the start. The new Chief was Black.

I sat across from him in his office. He looked bigger in person. I cut to the quick.

"What do you think went on here, I mean, in the African-American community? What's their view on the role of the police?"

"Well," he sighed, "The African-American community wants strong, tough, honest, fair policing. Crime has a long-term effect on the community because it drives out the mom-and-pop businesses, the corner stores, where a lot of shopping is done. There were people robbing and stealing and looting. They're not our community. They're gang members, or hoodlums, and they're bums, and they belong in jail."

"So, do you think the police can be part of the community?"

"In terms of planning, and I assume that's why you're here, the contacts with community people are your best front lines of communication. That's a relationship that gets built up over time. You can't wait until the fires are burning to decide."

We talked for awhile about his solutions. He had decided coming in to this position that it wouldn't take more cops. He was into tackling issues of deployment, of morale, and of promotion. More to the point, he was into building day-to-day contact with the police and the local residents. He had good ideas. I pressed him on implementation, and that's when he hedged.

"We also have got to examine the resources available to the department," he said starting to sweat, "The city is facing a \$150 million deficit. There was an initial budget request that would have reduced the department by 700 people by this time next year. If you'll excuse me.." He stood up and motioned me to

leave. Time's up, I thought, wrong question.

"Thanks for your time sir," I said politely, "but I have one more question. Your plans for the LAPD sound well and fine, but my inquiry is for all of LA. What do you have to say about that?"

He paused, and sat down again. He looked troubled.

"I hope the African-American community realizes what has occurred, and we have learned a lesson from that, and we never have to look back and mention Watts, and then mention Rodney King and the riots after Rodney King, and worry about what will spark the next one."

"So you're saying that it's the African-American community that has the lesson to learn?" I asked incredulously.

"Good day miss," he proffered a hand, "and may I suggest that you talk to the Baseball Commissioner?"

The next stop on my beat was the Reverend's office. He had an open-door policy, so I knew there'd be no problem getting in. His office was the busiest one of all.

The Reverend ministered to a flock of African-Americans in South Central. He was a community leader more than he was a clergyman, though, and he had gotten a lot of air time when the riots broke out. He had run for public office a number of times in the past, but the conservatives criticized him for every word he uttered. I knew he would give me some answers.

He ushered me into his office.

"And what can I do for you?" he asked in a patronizing tone.

"I'm here about the riots," I said. My eyes were locked into his. He looked tired.

"Ah yes, the riots," he said sitting back in his chair, "Desperation that is invisible when suffered in silence gains attention when it explodes. Those who have so long averted their eyes now murmur expressions of surprised concern."

He was talking like a fortune cookie. I

wanted to add "in bed".

"You know," I followed up, "a lot of people think this was a race riot."

"This was not simply a race riot," he said shaking his head, "Blacks, browns, and whites erupted in a terrible rainbow of protest. When people are discarded, stockpiled in ghettos and barrios of desperation, they are combustible material. In our horror at the crime, the verdict and the upheavals, we should not fool ourselves. We knew this was coming."

He spoke so softly I couldn't help but feel he was hiding something.

"Was this about poverty then?" I asked. "The Mayor's office seems to think so."

"For years," he answered, "racism has helped to camouflage the growing desperation in our society. Most poor people work every day they can. They need more opportunity, not more indignity."

"So, do you support the rebuilding efforts?"

"Of course I do," he grumbled, "We're part of it this time. Poverty is neither inevitable or irremediable. We need a plan to rebuild our communities, to invest in people, to provide opportunity. It will be costly and it will take years, but we can either provide Head Start, health care, day care on the front side of life or spend far more on welfare and jail-care on the backside. The riots only serve to remind us of the costs of neglect. We're working with the Baseball Commissioner on rebuilding. Have you...?"

But before he could continue, I thanked him for his time. Strike three? I didn't know yet. He let me know that this thing was more than just a matter of black and white, but his statement about "We're part of it this time" was far more provocative. I needed more.

The sun was setting behind the haze as I headed back to my office. All roads lead to Rome, I thought dryly. I collected some newspaper clippings I had saved from that fateful week, and walked down to the corner bar. I ordered some vodka, Absolut. Their ad

campaign to "Heal LA" convinced me that there may be some answers in the bottle.

I sat down at an isolated table and pulled out a story on the Governor. The fires weren't even out when he proposed that the riots were proof that the welfare system needed to be reformed. It seems that he thought there was a connection between "government dependency, absence of personal responsibility, lack of values, and brutal disorder". He was asking voters to support cutting monthly benefits for most recipients in order to cut, of all things, poverty. Law-and-order and welfare - the Governor came out swinging alright, and he was in fine form. It was a hell of a stance from California's highest office, and he had the support of the banks and the defense contractors. Normally I would have embraced the policy stance, and called it a day, but this time. . . it was just too complex. Was it a rich-poor thing, or was it a race thing, or was it a police thing? Every character I talked to today had an opinion. I drank a toast to the Governor. It was another opinion, only this time it was a party line.

The President must have been on the same line that week. He was quick to blame the Great Society programs of the '60s and '70s which "redistributed the wealth or dealt with direct handouts". He had a lot of proposals - create enterprise zones, sell public housing to tenants, make something called a Weed and Seed to get rid of gangs and make way for job creation in the inner city. All this from a man who only a few months earlier created legislation that forced businesses to lay-off hundreds of LA workers. Make more cuts and stop hand-outs - some solution to poverty and violence. The President didn't come to LA that week, though he toured the war zone later. He sent a White House representative, cash in hand, to meet with . . . the Baseball Commissioner. I drank another toast. I made this one to myself.

As I drank, I read a million little proposals for urban policy reform - getting gang members to learn construction, getting local banks to fund redevelopment efforts, getting tax incentives for new investments, community

policing, workfare programs, decreasing drugs, increasing family values. There was even a proposal set forth by the unity of the two most notorious gangs. It was a hodge-podge of ideas all with the initial funding of a flea. I was getting nowhere fast. The Commissioner was running the rehabilitation show, and I was a pawn working for her. What did she want from me anyway? I could give her what I was trained to give her - a policy analysis for reform. But she had plenty of that. She wanted justification for her reform. She wanted someone to blame. There was a lot of finger-pointing in this two-bit burg. She just wanted me to sort it out. Was it a matter of black and white? Was it a matter of poverty and neglect? Was it the Mayor or the Police Chief? The videotape? Or, was it bigger than that? Was it the liberal programs of the '60s and '70s? Or, was it 12 years under Reagan and Bush?

I had to know what happened here, and now, I had to know for me.

"You had enough?" a deep voice said above me. I looked up from the drink to see a bartender swimming in front of me.

"Huh?"

"I said, have you had enough?" he enunciated slowly.

"Oh brother, you don't know the half of it." I pushed the now empty bottle towards him.

"What're you working on anyway?" he asked half-heartedly.

"The riots, if you really need to know. What do you think? Seems like everyone's got an opinion. You try. Who do you think killed LA?"

"I think that you need to talk to somebody else," he said shaking his head in a way that was making me feel sick.

"Who?" I answered as coyly as I could, "the Baseball Commissioner?"

"No," he said flipping me a card, "The Professor. He's got a lot of answers."



Third Inning: The Academic



I woke up the next day with my head pounding like it had been in a vice. The answering machine was running. It was someone from the Mayor's office returning my call. They were saying something about an Economic Policy Report and the Baseball Commissioner and I had to laugh. Policy reform, it felt like this hangover - a painful reminder that I had questions about what happened in the past. Christ, I thought I had all the right training, all the right answers. I could sit in my air-conditioned office and make decisions all day if I had the numbers to back me up. But, this was bigger than numbers. And right now, I couldn't even get to the toilet, let alone my office.

I stumbled out of bed and put on my pants from the night before. I reached into my pockets and found the card the bartender gave me. "The Professor" it read, "California Institute of Architecture". Well, that seemed fitting. I did a lot of talking to professors when I had hangovers in college - why not today? I brushed my teeth and made a few phone calls. I got lucky. He was in.

The Professor's office was jammed with books and papers. From the floor around his desk up to the ceiling, it was a decorating job by Harper & Row. He was on the phone when I came in, but he gestured for me to sit down anyway. He was smoking.

"What can I do for you?" he asked hanging up the receiver.

"I'm here about the riots. I need some info." I said as toughly as possible considering I had a headache the size of Forest Lawn.

"Uh-huh . . ." he said thoughtfully,

"what riots?"

"LA?," I answered hesitantly, "you know, May 1992, Southern California." Great, I thought, this is the Professor? Some higher education.

"I see. . ." he said thoughtfully again, and then he paused for what seemed like a millennium. I heard a clock ticking.

"First of all," he began, "it wasn't a riot. It was a rebellion. It wasn't just blind nihilistic destruction. It was ruthlessly systematic. Ninety percent of the Korean-owned businesses in South Central were wiped out, not the skyscraper corporate fortress downtown. Why do you think that happened?"

I thought I was the one asking questions here.

"Um, well," I ventured, "I think the Black community was justifiably angry over the verdict, and I think poverty has only gotten worse there. There's a lot of tough characters in South Central. They took their rage out on the closest source of frustration."

"Oh God," he muttered, "you've been watching the news." He said "news" like it was a dirty word. "Those image looters can only give you a single categorical scenario. They don't even want to understand the lives that were affected here. Rodney King may be a watershed in the rest of America, but in LA, the gang youth is beaten like dogs everyday. Did you know that the Bloods and the Crips are organized, that they have a goal of black economic self-determination? They've been peacefully and entrepreneurially transformed, and there's not a news reporter in the nation that's willing to imagine their power. Think big. . . they are. . . think new world order. Think Pacific Rim."

"Listen," I said after some silence, "I'm getting a lot of conflicting reports. The Mayor and the Police Chief are pointing fingers at each other. The Republicans are blaming the Democrats, and the Demos are blaming the GOP. There's a lot of ideas out there on how to rebuild LA, but nobody seems real willing to lay it on the line and talk about what happened. Of

course I watch the news, buddy. That's all I've got."

"The tendency is to focus the problem on the community that erupted," the Professor sighed, "but it's much broader than that. Yes, frustration builds up, but it does so because they are isolated, economically and geographically, from the mainstream of LA. South Central has been redlined. Manufacturing has declined due to capital flight. The demography has changed - more Latinos, more Korean shop-owners. And, the security zones have enforced a 24-hour dragnet over the area from the air. Isolation, surveillance and control, it's a Foucauldian nightmare." He smirked.

"What do you mean by 'security zones'?" I asked thinking that he had just made up his own version of urban planning.

"I mean police blockades, restricted entry to public housing neighborhoods, fortress cities like in *Escape from New York* and *Bladerunner*. Here!" He tossed me one of the many books in his office. "Read this. I wrote it 2 years before the riots, I mean, rebellion."

I tucked the volume into my bag and started to leave.

"Oh yeah," he said, "I almost forgot. Don't listen to the Baseball Commissioner or anyone else you need an appointment to see. They don't have any answers you haven't already heard. Policy is a tool, not a means of communicating. Get out there. Talk to the people this happened to. It's a post-liberal LA, baby, welcome to the real world." He lit another cigarette and waved me out.

I heard him wish me luck as I walked out in the hall. A chill ran down my spine.

I went home and hit the books.



Fourth Inning: The Amateurs



Fully recovered from the hangover, I hit the pavement the following day. Tape recorder in hand, I ventured to a part of town I'd never been in before. South Central, Crenshaw, Compton - it was worse than I had imagined. There were liquor stores everywhere. Chain link for miles. The sound of helicopters overhead was deafening. Maybe there was something in those books after all. According to them, suburbanization had taken its toll on the inner city. Jobs and taxpayers had long left to join the American Dream in a tract house and a megamall. And, the power went with them. They, with the help of the S&Ls built research parks, corporate headquarters, and industrial firms away from the urban core. They built shopping malls, entertainment lands, hotels, and parks, all meant to isolate the suburbs into attractive little, controllable, edge cities. I was a product of one of those edge cities. We never had any reason at all to go into the old town. My parents painted it as dangerous, hard, while all the while they sucked the income sources from the core. Extending the city's borders to include the edges wasn't going to change what had happened here and in every other city in America. It was a diabolical scheme of white flight, and there was way too much green stuff at stake to change all that just because some inner-city types got a little crazy. Even if the craziness extended beyond the borders, one of those books had said, it wouldn't change the face of investment. More walls would be built. Better security would be enforced. Insulation was the blue plate special these days, and privatization was on the grill.

My footsteps echoed hollowly as I crossed Crenshaw, and I entered the urban prison known as South Central.

A Planning Mystery

I must have interviewed a hundred people that day. I stopped and chatted with whoever would talk. Nobody threatened me. Nobody treated me like some crazy white bitch. These people had a lot to say. And, I was there to listen.

An elderly African-American woman: "Rebuild? That's it? I don't want it the way it was. I want safety now. I want some place to walk my dog and feel safe."

A Latino parishioner: "No studies or special commissions are needed. . . action now - words of praise later."

A young mother of two: "We do not need or want any more liquor stores. Educate our kids. Less funding for children creates more anger. I need day-care if I'm gonna work. These kids are our future."

A churchgoer: "I want clean stores with fair prices and courteous workers."

A community leader: "If black people can't work, nobody can. We are no longer going to allow people to do business in this community if they don't include us."

A bus driver: "In the '60s, we were worried about getting on the bus, now we're worried about owning the bus lines."

A man with a newspaper under each arm: "Enterprise zone, shit, our wages are low, our profits fly out of our community. We're like Mexico. We are a f---g enterprise zone."

A gang member: "We need community centers, someplace to go. We should own all this land."

A filmmaker: "We need somebody who can relate to us on a street level, someone who can go to the high-up leaders and say 'if you don't pay attention, your streets are going to be burned, not our streets but your streets.'"

A Korean market-owner: "Everybody was rioting. It wasn't just black people. They're hurting themselves. Who's going to cash their checks now? They need us as much as we need them. We just lost the American Dream."

A gang leader: "We're not anti-Korean, we're anti-exploitation."

A few things were becoming crystal clear. The people in this community wanted self-determination, and they wanted it now. They didn't need more isolation. They wanted inclusion, and they wanted to make the decisions in this wicked game. "Give us the hammer and the nails, we will rebuild the city" That was the battle cry I heard that day, not "Give us a commission for reinvestment headed by a white millionaire". These people weren't naive. And, unlike the pictures on the evening news, they had the education to back up their ideas.

I played the tape to a co-worker when I got back to the office that day. He looked furtive and nervous. A pencil snapped in his hand when he listened to a Crip demand new tree plantings and well-lit alleys.

"You've got to get rid of this," he said sweating, "If City Planning gets a hold of this, there'll be hell to pay. They don't like people telling them what to do."

"What are you scared of?" I taunted him, "Scared that your job will become obsolete? Scared of a little social learning?"

"Look," he said as he backed out of the door, "let's just say that I warned you. City Planning doesn't want to think of their problems as being any different from any other city. They'll listen when the time comes for new investments. They've got good intentions. They just don't like experimentation, that's all. City Planning has got a reputation to protect. There's a lot more than South Central at stake down there. Christ, we're replacing the old library. We just revitalized downtown. Let it be. The Baseball Commissioner will do a fine job if . . ."

"WE?" I strained to keep from losing my temper, "You're not one of them are you? Say it ain't so."

But, he was already out the door. Good riddance, I thought. But, that familiar chill was back.



Fifth Inning: The Plan



I walked the streets alone that night, and I searched for a soul in this hardened city. I used to think of LA as the movie capitol of the world - where it was sunny and warm and you could see the Hollywood sign from downtown. You could go to Disneyland for fun, or buy a map to the star's homes, and cruise palm-lined streets in your convertible with your best girl. I laughed to myself about the last time I bought a star map - it was from a recently-arrived immigrant. Were my dreams of LA as hollow as the celluloid that manufactured the myth? Was I the only one who believed that LA could be a filmic themepark? Who knew? The people of Watts did. They didn't even have a movie theater until 1966. The tourists didn't even want to know.

I used to think of LA as a Southland, a spread of independent cities, all basking in the glory of industry, suburbia, and defense contracts. I didn't know LA had a downtown until I moved here. But, how was my story any different from anyone else - seems like everyone came here from somewhere else.

I walked through the deserted Bunker Hill corporate center. There were so many places like this in LA. Glass and concrete structures, planned vegetation, here, the Miracle Mile, the Wilshire Corridor. I tried to walk closer to one of the buildings but a metal fence blocked my path. I wanted to sit on one of the benches but the sprinklers were turned on to ward off the homeless. Everything was closed, locked up for the night. I felt like I was trespassing. I longed for a pleasant park.

I could read the writing on the wall.

This place was designed to ward off the encroachment of the ethnic Other, to insulate itself from the indigents it was systematically creating and excluding. I felt the watchful eyes of security cameras as I passed on, and I knew that pedestrians weren't welcome here. This was where the sidewalk ended. I gazed at Broadway longingly, but I couldn't get there on foot if I tried.

So this was the story that wasn't on the news. Years of Reagan-style frontier development had attempted to make the corporate zones artificially livable, while they continually underdeveloped the inner-city neighborhoods. They didn't just gentrify like in New York. They located a zone, wiped out its history, invented a theme, and protected what they had wrought with the ferocity of a rabid bulldog. Christ, they even sold security. In the meantime, they poured money into the freeways, making it easier for the income concentration to exist in the suburbs. The insulated fortress, that's what it was, a paradise in a world that made its money in celluloid images and defense contracts.

They tried to reinvent urban life for the affluent. Were they really so shocked when the urban poor tried to reinvent life for themselves? Maybe that's what the riots were about. . . a desire towards self-planning and a Malcolm X means of wresting the controls from the seat of power. Or, what may be a worse prospect to the developers, the riots could have been a simple matter of defense. The LAPD has always been known for its ruthless treatment of blacks, but I began to think that the security of re-zoning required a front line, a "thin blue line". Maybe, the King verdict was the straw that broke the camel's back in a tense world of claim-jumping. Maybe this time, the residents weren't going to take being pushed out anymore.

I was in the middle of my thoughts when the squad car pulled up.

"Hey lady," the officer called from the passenger seat, "You got somewhere you need to be?"

It was a ludicrous question.

"I'm just hanging out, officer Krupke, I'm OK."

They shined a bright light in my eyes. I heard the babble over the car radio.

"I think you better move along lady," the cop said in a patronizing tone.

"Why?" I smarted off, "I'm not hurting anyone. Am I?"

I heard a car door slam as the cop in the driver's seat got out. He walked over to me, one hand on the holster of his gun.

"My buddy said move along. I think you should." He made a motion with his hand. "This is a limited access area. There's nothing here you're interested in. Now get going."

I turned around and started to walk away. He was wrong, dead wrong. There was a lot here I was interested in. The squad car rolled slowly away, and I started to cry. I was mourning. I was mourning for the mythic town I once believed in. I was mourning for the death of public space.



Sixth Inning: The Show-Down



It was 2 am by the time I reached my office. A light was on in the cubicle next to mine and I heard the sound of computer keys. Not unusual in this line of work, only this time it was my friend from earlier that day. He looked up as I came in, and then looked down quickly.

"I need to talk to you," I said slowly.

"I don't need to talk to you," he said with his head down, "Scat."

"I know your game, planner," I decided to lay my cards on the table. "You did this. You're responsible."

"I don't know what you're talking

about." He said it like he had rehearsed it.

"Sure you do, Joe. You know exactly what I'm talking about." I edged in a little closer. This time he put his head up and looked at me. He had a worried look on his face.

"You thought you could get away with it," I continued, "You thought you could just go on making LA safe for corporate enterprise, safe for the middle and upper classes, safe for greed. You and your policy cohorts sat in this office and created new corporate centers. You and your coppers pushed the boundaries of artificial affluence. And then you reinforced those borders with your zoning ordinances while the developers built more private spaces of concrete and glass. You didn't just gentrify. You destroyed whole neighborhoods. No wonder each new development divorced itself further and further away from the urban history. You couldn't bear to acknowledge that anyone lived there, raised children there, before you moved in."

"So what of it?" he responded angrily. "Everyone was doing it. It was the '80s. We were growing. We were prosperous. Were we supposed to forsake all that just because of a few little communities?"

"Damn right!" I was getting angrier. "All the time you were giving lip service to the thousand points of light, these communities had little or no say about your plans for economic development. Why? Because you convinced them that it would be good for them! Economic prosperity benefits us all, wasn't that the battle cry of the '80s? Did you know how unethical you were, or did you plan that also?"

"We didn't hurt anyone," that sweat on his brow was back, "We cleaned up those neighborhoods. Hey, Bunker Hill isn't that far from Skid Row."

"Yeah," I cut him off, "what exactly do you mean by 'clean up'? Is that where you create workfare programs, plant trees, repave streets, and build community centers? Or, is it where you imitate the US military in El Salvador, and inflict low-intensity warfare on suspected drug users? You say that the danger

is in these neighborhoods, but you guys created the violence!"

"You better watch yourself," he said in a whisper.

"Why?" I said turning his chair around. "Do you have something to hide? I bet you do, you and your precious banking schemes. Tell me something Joe, were you part of the S&L scandal too? Did you help rape those communities of their income sources, and then make them pay you back out of their tax dollars? This isn't a game, Joe. This isn't just about a friendly competition with Japan. This is discrimination in its lowest form. This is annihilation."

He got up from his chair and went over to the drafting table. He sighed heavily.

"So," he said under his breath, "what are we supposed to do about it now?"

"Oh come on," I said in an exasperated tone, "do you really think a new world order is irreversible? What are you so afraid of, that maybe Dewey and Keynes won't cut it anymore, that maybe the riots were a form of social mobilization planning, that maybe they turned to Marx instead? These communities want to plan for themselves, that's all. Just let them."

"I can't allow that to happen," he said, and he turned to face me. He held something shiny in his right hand. An X-Acto knife.

"Don't do this," I warned him.

"We've come too far to go back to square one. We've invested too much." He came towards me. "Why couldn't you leave well enough alone? Why couldn't you just crunch the numbers and make policy proposals like the rest of us? That's all the Baseball Commissioner wanted from you. Why couldn't you just do that?"

I started to back away. This had gotten way out of hand.

"You're over-reacting, Joe," I stammered, "just go home. It's late. We'll go to South Central tomorrow, you and I. We'll work up a new plan for the Commissioner. Would you like that Joe?"

He lunged.



Seventh Inning: Do Over!



"You can see her now," a secretary waved me into the inner office. The Baseball Commissioner was sitting at her enormous wood desk. She smiled. There was lipstick on her teeth.

"Well, well, well," she said in her rasping voice, "you're here early! What happened? Did you have a little accident?"

She motioned at my bandaged arm.

"I'll be OK." I glared at her.

"What do you have for me? Have you finished my report? Let's see."

This dame talked whether or not anyone was talking back.

"I don't have your report. I don't think you even want the report I could give you."

Her mouth shut for the first time.

"Look," I continued, "everyone thinks you're running the show, and maybe they're right. You've got enough clout to do whatever you want, and I believe that with the help of the affected communities you may end up doing the right thing in your revitalization efforts. I just wanted you to know that I've joined a grass-roots planning group located in Watts, not Downtown, Watts. And, we're going to watch your every move. You talk to local business, we'll be there. You talk to community redevelopment agencies, we'll be there. You won't escape us, and you won't integrate us in the name of some perverse unity. You play your cards right, and we'll be your best friend. But if you let the big money interests make the decisions, we'll be your worst enemy. We aren't going to let this happen again. You can have my guarantee on that one."

She frowned while I rattled her cage.

"So," she said straight into my eyes,

A Planning Mystery

"you want to play hard ball do you?"

"Why not?" I said flipping her our flyer,

"That's what we're good at, isn't it?"

I turned around and walked out.

The city was fine that night, a little chilly, a little liberating. I took the long way home.

DORA EPSTEIN is a first year M.A. student in the Urban Planning Program. This paper was written for the class "The History of Planning Thought" taught by Leonie Sandercock in Fall 1993.

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