Alexandrescu
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Lintz & Bulka
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The University of Texas at Austin
School of Architecture

Dear Readers,

It is with great excitement that we introduce Volume 16 of *Planning Forum* after a six-year hiatus. Our Editorial Board formed in September 2014 to articulate a mission statement for the publication: To serve as a platform for emerging voices and new perspectives on the most pressing issues in the field. As we considered what this meant, it became apparent that some of the voices and perspectives we sought may not fit the constraints of traditional peer-reviewed scholarly publication. We knew it was imperative for the vitality of *Planning Forum* that contributors have the opportunity to develop creative approaches, present untested ideas, and, crucially, advocate for social and environmental justice through planning. With this in mind, *Planning Forum* is now a dual-format journal featuring both traditional peer-reviewed scholarly Inquiries and the more open-format Explorations.

Patricia Wilson opens the Inquiries with lessons learned on participatory planning practice in peri-urban Mexico. Next, Cynthia Lintz and Lauren Bulka trace a history of post-disaster planning and identify challenges to its implementation in Skopje, Macedonia. Maxwell Hartt finds that very few planning programs include coursework on aging or shrinking communities, and discusses the significance of this gap. Sara McTarnaghan examines how gentrification is manifested through redevelopment in East Austin. Finally, Adam Ogusky assesses how the Austin comprehensive plan fails to realize the city's aspirations of housing affordability and economic justice.

The Explorations section begins with Elizabeth Walsh's challenge to planners to engage in difficult conversations on race and love. Next, Aditi Ohri chronicles her efforts to understand a Montreal neighborhood from the perspective of a resident. Maria Alexandrescu continues the theme of first-person urban experience in their photo-essay documenting semi-public spaces in a neighborhood in Bucharest. Vivek Shastry argues that the success of energy policy in rural India suffers from a failure to incorporate valuable local knowledge. Gibrán Lule-Hurtado assesses the consequences of competing goals of tourism and historic preservation in Mexico. Finally, Kurt Kraler considers the portrayed image and lived reality of the built environment in Las Vegas.

It is our hope that this collection inspires critical dialogue throughout our field.

Thomas Rowlinson and Martin Sinel
Managing Editors

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Review Process

In November 2014, the *Planning Forum* Editorial Board issued a call for submissions for its 16th volume; the call was submitted to both academic and professional institutions, domestic and international. Authors at any stage of their academic training or career were invited to submit papers on the broad and inclusive field of urban planning. Beginning in February 2015 the Editorial Board completed a first double-blind review of the submissions; each paper was originally reviewed by at least two Masters- and/or PhD-level reviewers knowledgeable in the appropriate fields. The reviewers rated each submission on three factors:

- Compelling, original and interesting research, with respect to the subject, content, discussions, and conclusions;
- writing quality with respect to legibility, style, tone, and structure;
- academic rigor, with respect to reviews of previous work in the subject, methodology, and appropriate conclusions given the research.

The entire Editorial Board discussed each paper, with the specific reviewers assigned to recommend its acceptance or rejection, as well as classification in Inquiries or Explorations. Papers accepted for Inquiries were sent to University of Texas professors with expertise in the subjects for a second double-blind peer review. Authors were then asked to re-submit based on the initial reviewers' comments and those made by professors in the second round. The Editorial Board accepted revised papers in both categories that had successfully responded to the concerns and comments.

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The Naked Practitioner: *Participatory Community Development in Peri-Urban Mexico*

by Dr. Patricia A. Wilson

Abstract

Participatory practice in community development is process- and relationship-oriented. Yet many community development practitioners focus on technical problem solving, service delivery, or information provision. How might these practitioners respond to participatory practice? Using narrative analysis, this case study examines the response of 24 community development practitioners from government and education to a two week field workshop in participatory practice in two peri-urban communities outside Mexico City. Accustomed to technical or procedural practice and unfamiliar with participatory approaches, the 24 practitioners from government and education quickly faced the vulnerability and uncertainty of participatory practice. By the end of the workshop, however, most of the practitioners had changed their attitudes and assumptions about themselves, their work, and the community. Six month follow-up interviews evidence the continued integration of some of these changes into their own practice. The results indicate the importance of the engaged practitioner's attitudes and assumptions in mediating state/civil society relationships.

Keywords: Participatory community development; practitioner experience; participatory action research; peri-urban Mexico

Participatory community development practice is built upon the relational and process capabilities of the practitioner. The practitioner becomes a facilitator and catalyst, holding in abeyance his or her potential roles as expert, planner, problem solver, and implementer until such time as those roles can be skillfully utilized by the community. Rather than privileging expert diagnosis and prescription or following a managerial approach that objectifies the client or community, the participatory practitioner opens spaces for generative dialogue, collective action, and mutual learning through a relational, organic, and contextualized practice. The objective is to build community, create solidarity and promote agency (Bhattacharyya, 2004, pp. 10-11). The participatory practitioner introduces the kind of horizontal relationships and collaborative inquiry that are the building blocks of participatory democracy (Wilson & Lowery, 2003).

The participatory practitioner facilitates the community's discovery of its own path forward (Botes & van Rensburg, 2000):

> Being a facilitator that promotes participatory development implies first understanding a community's questions, assisting them to articulate them better and then helping the community to search for solutions. Facilitators should never come with ready-made solutions or tell the people what to do. They must rather encourage and assist people to think about their problems in their own way. (pp. 54-55)

The following case study examines an attempt to introduce participatory practices to community development practitioners who were accustomed to technical, managerial, and procedural practices. A two-week field-based workshop in participatory community development was conducted in an ecologically fragile river basin northwest of Mexico City. Hosted by the Guadalupe Dam River Basin Commission (CCPG) and the Universidad Albert Einstein (UAE), the workshop involved 24 Mexican community development practitioners, 19 from local, state, and federal agencies working in the river basin, and 5 from local universities involved in sustainable development. Eight graduate students from a University of Texas practicum course in participatory action research (offered by the Graduate Program in Community and Regional Planning) also participated in the workshop alongside the Mexican professionals. The two-week field-based workshop itself was designed and facilitated by the author.

The unfolding response of the practitioners to the participatory practices used in the workshop and in the field became as fascinating as the fieldwork itself. Those responses were documented in narrative interviews facilitated by UAE on the closing day, a written survey using open-ended questions conducted by the CCPG, and follow-up interviews six months later conducted by a UT graduate research assistant.

The results illustrate how community development professionals accustomed to technical, managerial, or procedural practice respond to the uncertainty and vulnerability of the unscripted and unpredictable situations that characterize participatory practice. The narrative analysis indicates a closer and more respectful relationship with community members, an enhanced experience of teamwork, personal change in attitudes and assumptions, and an increased ability to be confident outside of more customary professional roles. The findings contribute to the limited empirical literature on the felt experience of the community development practitioner engaged in participatory practice.

Few articles or books with empirical referents investigate the community development practitioner's subjective or felt experience of practice. Ingamells, Lathouras, Wiseman, Westoby, and Caniglia (2010) offer a collection of reflective essays by volunteers who took part in a participatory action research (PAR) project. Vidyarthi and Wilson (2008) relate practitioner experiences following a values-oriented training in participatory development in rural India, highlighting the importance of love and self-discipline. See also Westoby and van Blerk (2012); Fenge, Fannin, Armstrong, Hicks, and Taylor (2009); Green (2012); and Brookfield and Holst (2011).

Case Study

Context

As in many parts of the urbanizing world, water and waste have become critical issues in Mexico, especially in the Valley of Mexico where Mexico City's metropolitan population approaches 25 million inhabitants. Its footprint spreads across the valley floor into the surrounding mountains where once rural river basins are now contaminated by urbanization. The main source of contamination is the growth of informal peri-urban communities that lack adequate access to water and waste services (Arreguin, Martinez & Trueba, 2004).

In the case of the Guadalupe Dam river basin on the northwestern edge of the metropolitan area, the peri-urban challenge had become clear to Ing. Blanca Cinthya Garfias Galván, the operations director of the Gua-

dalupe Dam River Basin Commission (Comisión de la Cuenca Presa de Guadalupe, CCPG). The commission's outreach and public awareness campaigns had not succeeded in reducing the yearly flow of fifteen million cubic meters of black and gray water into the now unusable Guadalupe Dam Lake (CCPG, 2014).

After conversations with two local universities and the University of Texas, Ing. Garfias decided to host a field workshop that would use a participatory approach to engage two peri-urban communities on issues of water and waste. She saw the workshop as an opportunity to introduce the local, state, and government professionals who worked in the communities of her river basin to participatory community development, while at the same time form working relationships among them for future collaborations.

Through municipal government officials in Nicolás Romero, the most rapidly urbanizing of the five municipalities in the river basin, Ing. Garfias met the local leaders of two informal communities. Each leader was the president of the Citizen Participation Committee (COPACI), the sanctioned body for interfacing with the community. The more consolidated of the two communities selected, El Tráfico, had grown from a series of informal settlements on rural ejido land starting 25 years ago. Now with nearly 15 thousand residents, it is integrated into the urbanized area of Nicolás Romero. About 80 percent of the residents are served by a municipal water system that distributes piped water twice a month. Wastewater goes directly into the ravines as does much solid waste.

Higher up the slope from El Tráfico is Llano Grande, a less densely settled community of five hundred to seven hundred people on the outskirts of Nicolás Romero. Formed by periodic arrivals of settlers through questionable land sales over the last ten to fifteen years, Llano Grande lacks basic water and sanitation infrastructure altogether. The community is served sporadically by private and public water trucks and private garbage haulers.

With her project partners at the Universidad Albert Einstein (UAE) and the sustainability program at the Universidad Tecnológica Fidel Velázquez (UTFV), Ing. Garfias organized the two week field workshop. Working through agency directors, she invited mid-level professional community development personnel, the operational staff that actually manage projects and conduct programs for sustainable development in the local communities that make up the Guadalupe Dam river basin. She asked the University of Texas group, headed by the author, to design and conduct the workshop.

The workshop

Held in August, 2013, the resulting workshop had 24 Mexican professionals, 19 from government agencies and five from local universities, all involved in community water and waste issues in the Guadalupe Dam river basin. The public sector professionals came from the National Water Commission (CONAGUA), the State of Mexico Department of the Environment (Office of Prevention and Control of Soil and Water Contamination), and four of the five municipalities that comprise the Guadalupe Dam river basin, including Nicolás Romero, site of the two peri-urban communities where the field work would take place. The participants' functions included resource conservation outreach and training, community relations and conflict management, cultural affairs and youth programming, extension services, and the planning, construction, and management of community parks and infrastructure projects. In terms of professional backgrounds, the participants represented engineering, architecture, planning, social work, law, agronomy, communications, and media.

The author, who facilitated the workshop, chose a participatory action research (PAR) method of action learning (Reason & Bradbury, 2008), based on rapid cycles of action and reflection, which were applied in the field work with the communities as well as with the practitioners in the workshop. After an overview of participatory community development and team building exercises with the practitioners on the first day, daily rounds of fieldwork in the two communities in the mornings were followed in the afternoons by lunch, reflection, planning and preparation for the next day's field work at the nearby campus of the UTFV.

The two teams, one working in El Tráfico, the other in Llano Grande, met separately most afternoons, each working through the challenges of a situation to which the team members were not accustomed—not knowing each other, having no one officially in charge, having no predefined objective nor strict protocol, and learning as they went. As one participant said in the final debriefing, "we were as naked and vulnerable as the residents themselves… ." "I was actually afraid at the beginning, it was very difficult," said another. "I really doubted that we would accomplish anything," said a third. But each morning they stepped foot back into the community not knowing what was awaiting them. All they could do was be present and alert to what was unfolding in the moment—exactly what the participatory practitioner is called upon to do.

As insecurity and frustration rose during the first week due to the uncertainty of how to proceed in the field, a few plenary sessions were con-

vened in the afternoons to address the discomfort. The UT facilitator led the professionals in dialogic inquiry, using the two teams' unfolding experiences to reflect on collectively and "become uncertain together" (Philippson, 2009, p. 29). At one point, when morale was lowest, when their best laid plans seemed not to pan out in the field, the UT facilitator introduced participatory theater for each of the two teams to act out their experience, thereby gaining perspective, insight, and levity. The UT facilitator refrained from using her authority to fix or solve the problems they raised, instead engaging them in mutual inquiry, reflection, and learning.

The field experience

Compared to the first day when Señora E, the longtime community leader and party representative in El Tráfico, lined up rows of chairs for the community and introduced the workshop team at the head table as the experts, much had changed by the end of the two weeks. The community members had identified their own priorities, and the women had decided to turn discarded plastic bags into a resource. These 16 women from different parts of the community now knew each other. They had learned to make thread from recycled plastic bags and use it to knit and crochet. On the last day they sat in a circle talking while they made purses, shawls, and earrings from the plastic thread. They were joined by several new women and teenaged girls from the community who wanted to learn from them.

As the women sewed, the facilitators asked them to recap all they had accomplished in the past two weeks and what it meant to them and to their community. Not only had they removed hundreds of plastic bags from the waste stream and turned them into beautiful and useful creations, they had involved the men in re-using discarded tires for building retention walls. Used tires had disappeared from the waste stream (and soon would have a market value). Most important of all, the women had decided to continue to meet every week to sew, talk, and take action together.

There were smiles on the women's faces and warmth in their voices as they asked the team to be sure to come again. One year later the women's group was still gathering every Friday. They had taught many women in El Tráfico and some in other communities how to make thread from plastic bags, and were selling their wares commercially.

In Llano Grande, where workshop participants had discovered a tense

division in the community upon their arrival and had been met with hostility by one faction, the situation was also very different by the last day. When workshop participants and residents met for a final encuentro to recap and celebrate the work from the two weeks, members of both factions were present. For the first time they had worked together: they had created a plan for a community park in the empty field in front of the church. Residents and team members alike expressed their delight with the strides made in just two weeks toward a more unified community and a greater sense of possibility. Eight months later the park was a reality, a colorful source of community pride and cohesion.

The following day the closing session for the practitioners was a chance to come back together and share their responses to the experience. A faculty member from UAE moderated the session, arranging the chairs in a large circle for more than two dozen people and introducing a pinecone from Llano Grande as a talking stick. He asked them to share aha moments and describe what had been most important to them, professionally or personally. The results follow.

Analysis and Findings

The 13 oral responses that were recorded at the final session with the participating practitioners, along with the 13 written evaluations of the workshop completed the day before, provided rich narrative from 19 of the professional participants. Six months after the workshop semi-structured follow-up interviews were conducted with 15 of the professional participants, 12 in person and three in writing, bringing the total narrative responses to 41, which covered all 24 professional participants. The narrative data from the responses to the workshop were coded, clustered, and themed.

Three of the 24 participating community development practitioners indicated the workshop had had little or no impact on them. The majority, 19, of the practitioners responded by describing a felt experience that had changed them. These changes clustered into three themes: relationship with the team, relationship with the community, and personal change.

Relationship with the team

The relationship with fellow practitioners was one of the three main themes to emerge: navigating together the chaos and uncertainty of not knowing each other, nor having a clear idea of expectations, nor having someone in charge to tell them what to do; figuring out how best to

contribute to the team effort; realizing one's own capacity to contribute and be respected; learning from each other and respecting each other; being lifted up by the strength of the team to keep coming back each day; learning from experience and moving forward; enjoying the satisfaction of teamwork; and making new colleagues and friends. Five of the respondents cited teamwork as the most important impact on them. The following quotes from the practitioners illustrate the impact of the team experience:

- "I learned that it's possible to build good teamwork with other professionals without someone in charge."
- "I experienced the power of uniting as a team and collaborating."
- "The most important thing was learning how a team can pull through, be successful, and have a real impact."
- "I learned I could be a real contributor to the team effort."
- "For me, it was making new friends and colleagues across different agencies."

Relationship with the community

A more frequently mentioned theme was the experience of a deeper connection with the community—valuing the opportunity to listen to community members, learn from them, work shoulder to shoulder with them, respect and appreciate them, earn their respect, and connect with them in a heartfelt way. As one participant expressed, amid his tears, "I could see my own niece and nephew in the eyes of the children." Their take-aways included the following:

- "I realize the importance of listening to the people in the community and learning from them."
- "I learned to respect them and not look down on them."
- "As a public servant, I now know my responsibility to listen up close to the needs of the community and to each person in it."
- "I realized my own capacity to connect personally with people I thought were very different from me."

Seven of the respondents considered their relationship with the community to be the most important impact on them and highlighted the following:

- "…the experience of working with the community and

learning along with them,"
- "…being accepted and respected by them,"
- "…feeling their warmth toward us,"
- "... being honest with them from the beginning, earning their trust,"

Personal change

The most frequently mentioned theme was personal change: learning to see their own assumptions about, and prejudices towards, the community residents; learning to trust process, to be open to what is unfolding in the present moment; and becoming comfortable with not knowing, not being in control, not having a clear game plan or procedures to follow; and not needing to play the role of the expert or technician. Seven of the respondents considered their personal change to be the most important impact of the workshop for them.

- "[The workshop] helped me recognize my patterned responses and agendas,"
- "Really the main thing was learning about my own attitude of superiority and disdain toward community people."
- "I learned to shut up and listen."
- "I had to trust and try not to control, and it worked out."
- "I learned to be more spacious and in the moment, to allow things to unfold."
- "[The big change for me was] letting go of my need to solve, fix, or teach,"
- "Being more flexible in the way I think and to set aside pre-conceived ideas [were huge]"

A felt experience

In sum, the experience of the government and university practitioners indicates that the practice of participatory community development goes far beyond the use of tools, techniques, and procedures. It is a felt experience involving both heart and head that generates awareness of group process and relationship. Most of the practitioners had experienced the undefended openness to possibility in the moment that characterizes participatory practice. The two week experience in participatory community development had touched them at the level of values, attitudes, and feelings.

At the end of the workshop in the closing ceremony Ing. Garfias, the operations director for the river basin commission and the force behind the workshop, struggled to find the words to describe the vulnerability, depth, and meaning of what the professionals had learned through the two week experience. She could not hide her tears as she said,

> My aha moment is right now here with you, my colleagues in different governmental agencies and universities, hearing that you each took in deeply the importance of working with people in this collaborative horizontal way, alongside and for the people. This work is so difficult to understand and explain. It's not an imposition of authority by government agencies. It's a response to the social and environmental context of each community. The work of river basin planning must be this way. It's not just about planting trees and water quality. I ask you all to transmit the special nature of this work and what we've learned here, including the emotions and feelings, to your agencies. This is so important!

Follow-up

Six months after the workshop, follow-up interviews were conducted with 15 of the participating practitioners. Eleven reported a change in how they related to the communities where they did their work, as the following quotes illustrate:

- "[I know now] we don't have to tell the community what they need!… . We have redefined ourselves as supporting them and their projects, the projects that they define. …I am doing my work with love, like in Llano Grande."
- "We did the same as in the workshop: we listened to people, showed respect for their values, their family life… It was great to see their smiles…!"
- "Perhaps it's a water filtration plant we want to do; perhaps they want it located further up the stream. …I get them to come up with a plan they can all agree upon, just as we did in Llano Grande."

Seven of those interviewed also described relating to their co-workers and employees with more acceptance, respect, conviviality, openness, and/or caring, resulting in better teamwork and morale.

None of the public sector practitioners noted any change beyond their immediate circles of influence. Referring to co-workers outside his own team, one manager said, "there are so many demands on their time and they are wedded to their patterns—just doing what is required and nothing extra." However, the educators reported that both of the universities involved and the one high school had made significant institutional changes to strengthen student involvement in local communities.

A surprising dividend was the impact of the workshop on the educators' pedagogy. Three of the five educators reported significant changes in their teaching towards more empowering relationships with students.

- "The workshop definitely changed my way of teaching—transformed it literally. I now do inquiry, action, and reflection with my students to rediscover the environment in which they live. What I experienced in the workshop I'm doing with them, inside and outside the classroom. ...The head of the school is amazed!"
- "The university where I studied is very traditional—all about imparting information and not letting go of control or authority. Now I know I don't have to tell my students exactly what to do and how. I can give them options and encourage their own research."
- "I used to give talks in the communities about environmental awareness and what people could do, but they didn't have much impact. What I discovered [from the workshop] is … you don't have to convince them. You work with them. … I have used this experience with my students."

Summary and Conclusions

By the end of the field-based workshop almost all of the participating professionals had experienced a felt sense of participatory practice: They had learned to seek and value what was emergent in the moment, rather than follow a scripted procedure or pre-defined technical solution. They had let go of the safety of their professional identities and the need to demonstrate their technical expertise. They had engaged in a horizontal relationship with each other and with the community that made them "as naked and vulnerable as the community members themselves."

Most of the participating professionals had learned to listen to the community residents; to respect their knowledge, experience, and aspira-

tions; to work beside them, and discover along with them. As a result of the workshop, professional participants could experience a new kind of relationship with the community members, one based on respect, acceptance, and trust.

By allowing the action to unfold at the initiative of the community members, the practitioners were able to experience the satisfaction of seeing results much greater than they had expected and more useful than they could have planned. One community was breaking the tradition of paternalism while turning plastic bags and discarded tires into valuable resources. The other community was healing a long-standing division in the community while creating a community park and learning to compost and germinate seeds. In both cases, new patterns of democratic engagement were introduced, among the community development practitioners, among the community members, and between them. In the process, the Guadalupe Dam river basin became a little healthier--not because these peri-urban communities were finally doing what they were told, but because they were doing what they themselves had decided to do.
Six months later the majority of the workshop participants interviewed had begun to relate with more respect and sensitivity to the communities where their agencies worked. Some had changed their way of relating to their employees and their colleagues, in and across agencies. The majority of the educators had incorporated participatory inquiry and action into their teaching, and at both local universities institutional changes had been made to relate more actively to local communities.

New patterns of emergent change are visible: a division between two community factions that begins to heal, a calcifying relationship of clientelism that begins to crumble, a new awareness of refuse as resource, a dent in authoritarian pedagogy, a glimpse of the humanity and heart of the other, a practice of listening. These are the patterns of an emergent post-modern world of participatory engagement that is calling for the naked practitioner—the one who is strong enough to be vulnerable and wise enough to listen, learn, and love.

This case study illustrates how the engaged practitioner has an opportunity to choose the kind of relationship he or she builds with the community: one of superiority, condescension, control, expediency, and objectification, or one or respect, openness, caring, and collaboration. While structural and systemic relations of power between the state and civil society are ever present, the participatory practitioner finds a space of choice. It is this space, and these choices, which make the participatory practitioner an agent of emergent change in the relationship between state and civil society.

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Skopje, Macedonia 1965 to 2014: *In Search of a Modern European Capital*

by Dr. Cynthia A. Lintz and Lauren Bulka

Abstract

In 1963, Skopje, the capital city of the Republic of Macedonia, suffered an earthquake that destroyed 80% of the building stock. Since then, the national government has worked to (re)develop and promote its national identity through the built environment of its capital city. This paper explores the effectiveness of the Republic of Macedonia in these efforts. The authors examine shifts in planning and development practices in the capital city and the subsequent impacts on governmental effectiveness organized around three time periods: post-earthquake, post-Iron Curtain, and present day, beginning with the development of the city's latest master plan, *Skopje 2014*.

Keywords: Skopje, Macedonia; master planning; disaster resilience; European history

Skopje, Macedonia: One City, Three Planning Approaches to Rebuild National Identity

On July 26, 1963, Skopje, the capital of the Republic of Macedonia in Yugoslavia was struck by an earthquake. Registering at 6.9 on the Richter scale, the quake destroyed 80 percent of the building stock, killed approximately 2,000 people and injured another 3,300, left 100,000 homeless, and, eventually, led to a near complete reconstruction of the flattened city (Home, 2007; Ladinski, n.d.). The United Nations General Assembly took the lead in efforts to rebuild the city and illustrate international solidarity, one of the first efforts of its kind (Mills, 1967). In total, over 80 countries helped with the reconstruction by providing temporary shelters, rebuilding public buildings, schools, and permanent housing (Bouzarovski, 2011). Both the United States and Russia sent aid, despite the ongoing Cold War.

After the initial recovery, the Yugoslav government had three options: Move the city; rebuild the city and keep it small; or rebuild the city and plan for growth (Fisher 1964, Ladinski, n.d.). In the 1960s, the government chose to remain small in the city scale, become earthquake resilient, and develop a unique, modern international capital based on brutalist architecture of the time.

In the early 1990s, at the same time as the world witnessed the dismantling of the Iron Curtain, Macedonia also broke away from the Yugoslav Federation to become an independent Republic. This event set Skopje on a different trajectory than post-earthquake recovery, which permitted the free market and capitalism to play a major unforeseen role in the city's urban planning. Throughout the 1990s, Macedonia, as well as most other post-Socialist countries, experienced a backlash against the old Socialist planning system. Sonia Hirt describes these transformative years to Western democracy as a period of privatism: "the widespread disbelief in a benevolent public realm and the widespread sense that to appropriate the public may be the best way to thrive in private" (2012). Public rules and regulations were discarded in favor of individual capitalistic opportunities. Individuals used the opportunity to build private homes and businesses on the once public land. Coinciding with these shifts, Skopje became home to refugees fleeing the Bosnian War, the Kosovo War, and its own insurgency between the Macedonian Slavic and Albanian populations during the 1990s to 2000s. This increased the density of Skopje while leading to a rapid expansion of the urban landscape into newly formed suburbs.

Now in 2015, Skopje's skyline is filled with cranes, new buildings, and public spaces. Western-style capitalism has firmly taken root, the political and economic changes have largely stabilized, and development is more controlled. In power since 2007, the current government recently established a new course for the capital city's development under the *Skopje 2014* comprehensive plan. The plan aims to strengthen the county's international recognition from its neighbors in hopes that this will lead to its acceptance into the European Union (EU) and North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO). The new comprehensive plan, however, "glorif[ies] a single, straightforward, and unapologetically nationalist narrative in marble and bronze, at a scale meant to eliminate any and all doubt" about the nation's history and identity (Rosen, 2013). This has led to outcries from Macedonia's minority population and neighboring countries who want recognition of a shared regional past (ibid.).

Over the past fifty years, Skopje's (re)construction has traveled three courses. The first began in the immediate aftermath of the earthquake; the second was the post-Socialist era during the nation's transition from socialism to democracy; and its third path launched when planning efforts began on *Skopje 2014* in 2010. Given the three approaches to reconstruction since the earthquake in 1963, how effective has Macedonia been in developing a national identity through the capital city's built environment?

This paper reviews historical documents and recent literature to discuss Skopje's primary development periods as a way to understand whether the city can practically withstand another major change, such as an earthquake; its own ability to develop an internally cohesive identity to maintain political stability; and the ability to obtain international recognition. The article is divided into three parts. The first examines the theory behind developing a national identity through the built environment. The second section is a historical review of Skopje after the earthquake, post-Socialism, and in the present day. The third section draws some general conclusions from the strengths and weaknesses of each of the approach taken to developing Macedonia's current national identity.

Building National Identity Brick by Brick

Modern nation-building started approximately two hundred years ago. From the earliest days of nationalism, a country's capital has been considered not only the seat of government, but also the symbolic focus of the country (Vale, 2008). This means that the built environment should reflect the values, culture, and history not only of the city, but the entire nation. For ancient cities like London, Paris, or Athens, this built

environment has been in place for many centuries and reflects the period(s) of great grandeur (ibid.). While capitals were usually sited due to "the presence of a shrine, a defensible fortress, or a trade route; in the modern age, new capitals are most often sited to favor political factions" (ibid, p. 17). "In states emerging from control by an external power, [the capital] is also required to serve as the focus of efforts to promote a sense of national identity" (ibid, p. 16).

National identity can be developed or strengthened by the built environment. People tend to anchor their personality in objects and places (Tuan, 1977). The height and space between buildings, the architecture, and general overall formation within a city contributes to memories one has about living in the place (Houshangi, 2013). Within the city, "various places from urban landscapes extricate memories from a mutual past" that can unify a population and become their collective identity (ibid, p. 19). Rebuilding or replacing the buildings may, therefore, create, alter or destroy forms of national identity.

Since many large cities, including national capitals, attract diverse populations this can sometimes pose problems in unifying multicultural centers. However, in other instances, "architecture and urban planning can play a pivotal role in a city's symbolic renewal, sometimes by the consolidation of an image, sometimes by the polarization of debate. [Cities'] symbolic recall of earlier golden ages, whether through works of architecture that make use of highly charged precedents or through the reclaiming of hallowed or strategic sites as capitals, has occurred through history and remains powerful" (ibid., p. 31). This can unify a diverse city.

Skopje 1963 to 2014
Resilience immediately following the earthquake

So great was the reconstruction momentum that in the late 1960s, when "Skopje school children were asked to write an essay on 'A major event in the life of my town,' 80% chose to write about the master plan (for reconstruction) rather than the earthquake" itself (Home, 2007, p 4). The successful reconstruction efforts could partly be due to the five clear post-earthquake phases, and documentation showing this effort as the largest international relief operation to date in 1963 (Ladinski, n.d.).

The first phase included the immediate international and national reception and dispersal of aid from more than 82 countries. "The international help given to Skopje during the first stage of reconstruction was very valuable, not only from the material point of view, but espe-

Figure 1: Map of Former Yugoslavia. Courtesy of the University of Texas at Austin.

cially because of its social and morale-boosting consequences," reported UNESCO (Mills, 1967, p. 20). The second phase evacuated women and children to the countryside to prevent the spread of disease, and to allow for the reconstruction process to begin. Evacuation culminated in the shrinkage of the city's population from 180,000 to 60,000 inhabitants (Music, n.d.; Ladinski, n.d.). The third phase examined the remaining structures to determine those that needed to be completely demolished. During this time, everything that could be recovered and reused was removed by low impact machinery or by hand (Ladinski, n.d.). The fourth phase included drafting a new master plan, while the fifth phase was the physical construction of the new city. We will detail the last two phases, the master plan, and the physical construction below.

The United Nations (U.N.) was one of the main catalysts in drafting a new master plan. The U.N. provided technical assistance by initiating the Skopje Urban Plan Project, a collaborative effort by Professor Adolf Ciborowski (known for rebuilding Warsaw after the Second World War), Skopje's Institute for Town Planning and Architecture (ITPA), and the City's Planning Department (CPD)

Photo 1: Downtown Skopje in 2002. The closest buildings with geometric patterns on the other side of the Vardar river are remnants of the late 1960s. These buildings include Tange's metaphoric wall, the lower, white, high-rise buildings shown on the right hand side of the photo. The taller high-rise buildings in the background were built in the late Socialist period (1970 to 1980). All photos by Dr. Cynthia Lintz.

Photo 2: Skenderbeg, located in the Albanian quarter. 2014.

Photo 3: Warrior on a Horse depicts Alexander the Great. 2013.

(Ladinski, n.d.). The team examined documents related to impacts from previous seismic activities on the city in years 518, 1555, and 1921 C.E. and ran initial soils tests. The resulting 1965 Skopje Master Plan presented three options for the future of Skopje: (1) Move the city (which was not possible due to seismic conditions throughout the country); (2) rebuild the city, but keep the population under 150,000 people (in this plan the Roma, Turkish and Albanian ethnic minority populations would be transferred to other areas within Macedonia); or (3) rebuild the city and plan for growth (Fisher, 1964; Ladinski, n.d.). The government chose to remain small, strengthen earthquake policies, and plan for future disasters.

In 1965, the United Nations and Yugoslavia invited four foreign firms and four Yugoslav firms to participate in a master plan competition (Ladinski, n.d.; Lovanovska, 2012). While the jury announced no clear winner, they divided the responsibility between two firms. Kenzo Tange, known for the development of the reconstruction plan for Hiroshima, Japan, produced a plan that focused on the city center. Tange's plan had two components: the City Gate (also known as the transportation center) and the City Wall, an imposing belt of apart-

ment complexes, to metaphorically "protect' Skopje from future disasters and to provide it with a new internationally recognizable symbol" (Tolic, 2010, p. 30). Tange's plan was regarded as utopic and too idealistic.

The second winners were architects and planners from the Croatian Town Planning Institute, lead by Radovan Miščević and Fedor Wenzler, in Zagreb, who developed a more modest plan (ibid.). By July 1966, the two winners had produced a combined plan, the 1965 Master Plan, largely based on Tange's ideas. The final plan set the stage for bold expressions of artistic creativity, using the built urban landscape and brutalist architecture as ways to bring about modernity and enforce the image of an internationally rebuilt city (ibid.).

The central government played a major role in orchestrating the redevelopment. University students conducted a social survey of 4,000 families, though in reality prompted the people to accept a more international or Western image (Home, 2007). The focus was on shifting people's attitudes to accept high-rise and medium-rise housing, in an attempt to clear the 13,000 single-story slum dwellings (ibid.). The pre-earthquake single-story homes often had garden plots, where the occupants raised their own food. Planners felt that this continued a more rural mentality, and they attempted to apply a more urban social attitude (ibid.). "The new housing was also designed to accommodate nuclear rather than extended families, and the 'doubling-up' of families with in-laws was actively discouraged, even though this might override 'cultural practices'" (ibid., p. 18). The end result was a population reluctantly forced to move into the new houses provided to them, destroying their old community fabric. "The social survey team, however, recommended against interfering with minority cultures until they could be re-educated (or relocated)... The Roma, for example, rather than being forced straight into high-rise apartments, were relocated to the edge of town in an 'unplanned, do-it-yourself community' in Suto Orisari" (ibid., p. 19).

The ultimate 1965 Master Plan aimed to implement neat, well laid-out blocks of housing with standard utilities by moving industry to the urban fringe, creating new traffic corridors, and moving estates outside the urban core (Bouzarovski, 2011; Fisher, 1964). "Planning orthodoxy followed prevailing international principles of the day: dispersed settlement in neighborhood units; separation of land uses; priority to industry and the motor vehicle; preservation limited to some public buildings rather than area conservation; large-scale slum clearance for high density housing; and hierarchies of service centers" (Home, 2007, p. 20).

The plan demarcated three hundred acres to the new city center (ibid.). The Vardar River, which ran through the city and frequently flooded, was channeled and reserved for recreational uses including paths, parks, and a sports stadium (ibid.). With the Vardar River as a point of reference, the left bank was reserved for cultural institutions such as the national theater, a television building, courts and part of the university (ibid.). The right bank was designated for administration, commerce, shopping, and entertainment. A third of the total area was zoned as housing for 30,000 people; however, the Tange's proposed City Wall plan was scaled back due to seismic precautions (ibid.).

Outside the city center, the 1965 Master Plan proposed expanding the eastern industrial zone to include industrial operations previously located in the city center (ibid.). Planned residential neighborhood units called for a standard population of 6,000 residents, based upon the optimal size of primary schools, and 400 meters as the maximum walking distance to the nearest bus stop (ibid.). The intention of the plan was to create a modern, almost futuristic, international city. For example, the facades of many public buildings used brutalist geometrical shapes (Photo 1, see page 23). As noted previously, community fabrics were torn apart and families were placed in blocks rather than in single-family houses as a way to build up an urban density. All this is to say that the aim was to build an internationally recognized city, keeping the city small (300 acres), and erecting modern buildings within a landscape of broad, densely inhabited streets.

After the fall of Socialism

The planners of the 1965 Master Plan could not have foreseen the collapse of the Iron Curtain, the breakup of Yugoslavia, and the end of central planning. The transition period from Socialism to free-market radically changed Macedonian cities with "the return of market mechanisms and the re-commoditization of space, change of ownership patterns, a shift of control from state to local levels, a sharp increase in the number of actors participating in city-building, and a fundamentally changed role for planning" (Hirt, 2012, p. 43). The changes were seen in not only building renovations and additions, but in the development of whole neighborhoods.

This new market capitalism, coupled with the Kosovo and Bosnian wars and a brief internal conflict, brought masses of refugees to Skopje. The refugees from these wars were predominately Albanian and Bosniaks (Muslim minorities) who settled in the urban fringe of Skopje within previously abandoned villages. Many Slav Macedonians (Orthodox ma-

jority) felt threatened by the change of the religious makeup of the city, marked by the new construction of minarets on the outskirts of town. In 2003, a huge cross was constructed on the mountain peak above the city to celebrate 2,000 years of Christianity, symbolically conveying the dominant religion of the country (Dragićević Šešić, 2011).

The flood of refugees, when taken with the unfettered development, radically transformed the city into a larger-than-envisioned national capital losing all sense of its previously focused post-earthquake identity. Hirt points out that the effects of the post-socialist urban change included:

> "(1) The end of compact spatial form; (2) a decrease in the scale of civic and residential spaces (including a shift toward individual dwellings); (3) a tilting of the land-use balance away from public (and industrial) and toward commercial uses; (4) an emergence of stark social contrasts, informality and marginality; and (5) the end of visual uniformity and the advent of a free mixing of styles" (ibid., p. 47).

The bureaucratic chaos led to an estimated 32,000 illegal housing units as of 2004 (Sudiorum, 2004). Most of the houses were built on municipally owned land, thereby complicating the process for land tenure status (ibid., p. 14). This rule-breaking also had an effect on the standards of building. An analysis in 1991 showed that only 20% of the homes complied with the 1981 anti-seismic code (the most updated code at the time), 41% complied with an earlier outdated version, 10% did not incorporate any earthquake protection measures, and others built before 1963 were excluded entirely from these requirements (Home, 2007).

The 2002 Master Plan seemingly legitimized the trend towards concentrated development, specifically mandating a "densification of all inner city quarters" (ibid., p. 271). It was thought that the consolidation of residential development would allow for a more concerted effort on the restructuring of the transportation infrastructure by infilling vacant land untouched by post-earthquake reconstruction. Despite the plan's foresight, the development pace in some areas of the city far exceeded the municipality's capacity to enforce urban development policies. This resulted in a host of newly constructed buildings that met few standards and were arranged with little coherence. "The streets in these areas often end in unplanned dead-ends, with some of the developments' windows and balconies facing dark and narrow chasms created by the chaotic nature of the construction" (ibid., p. 272). Moreover, the city not only lacked the ability to regulate private development, they lagged behind in

providing necessary services and basic infrastructural maintenance. The end result of the densification and development encouraged by the 2002 Master Plan was a reversion back to the predominant strategy guiding development prior to the 1963 earthquake.

Skopje 2014

"As Macedonia scrambled for its identity in the wake of Yugoslavia's disintegrations, a group of historians, architects and politicians decided that the country should remind itself—and the world—of a proud past" (De Laurney, 2014). These efforts came together in 2007 when the right-wing political party VMRO took office after winning the election. VMRO brought the renewed promise of transforming Macedonia into a modern, cosmopolitan, Western nation as a means of improving the country's international image from its war-torn and socialist past (Graan, 2010). This political strategy of modernization was effectively a call for Macedonians to redevelop their public image to be more accepted by the international community, and in particular Europe. The ultimate intention of this promise was to gain acceptance into the European Union.

As a means of creating and promoting Macedonian pride and asserting its new identity as a European capital, the government prioritized the construction of a number of large public buildings and monuments in a plan called *Skopje 2014*. The plan is not actually a plan, but rather a YouTube video called *Macedonia Timeless Capital Skopje 2014*, or *Skopje 2014* for short. It has been the main guidelines for future development (YouTube, n.d.). *Skopje 2014* provides the justification for constructing new public buildings, such as the Museum of the Macedonian Struggle, Constitutional Court, State Achieves, and the national theater. The buildings themselves have been deliberately placed in the city center and built at a grandiose scale, with historic-style domes and large pedestals to resemble many other European capitals. Many of these monumental buildings are recreations of pre-earthquake and even pre-World War II buildings (Bouzarovski, 2011). The Ministry of Culture also commissioned 30 large pieces of public art in public spaces, which incorporate a wide range of styles and sizes (ibid.).

This large earmarking of public funds and the prioritization of rebuilding the capital has come with considerable controversy, both within and among the neighboring nations. Internally, Macedonia has seen much debate over the large expenditure of public funds dedicated to the construction of imposing public buildings, as well as with the contained focus of those funds on the capital. Both conditions do little to address the issues plaguing the rest of the nation, which include high unem-

ployment and failing infrastructure. The other controversy stems from the singular promotion of the Macedonian Slav ethnicity, while the nation maintains a large constituency of minorities, primarily Albanians. It appears that the ethnic struggles from the violent 2001 conflict between Macedonians and Albanians continue to play out in provocation in the built arena. One primary example is the plan to build a church in the main city square in which the bell tower will be 50 meters larger than any surrounding buildings (Bouzarovski, 2011). In response the Albanians erected a monument to Skenderbeg, a 15th century Albanian hero, depicted on horseback in the Albanian quarter (Photo 2, see page 24). This monument is modest in size compared to many of the newer Slav-featured statues. However, Skopje's mayor, when asked about the Skenderbeg monument, said that to him "this object is just illegitimate construction" (ibid., p. 40).

Externally, Macedonia must overcome an even larger obstacle. It has yet to be fully and equally recognized by the neighboring nations: Serbians do not accept the autonomy of the Macedonian Church; Bulgarians dispute the language; and the Greeks have blocked European Union accession due to its name. Additionally, all three nations dispute claims to its exclusive history. In addition, to qualms over Macedonia's name, contention with Greece has escalated as numerous monuments to Philip and Alexander the Great have been constructed throughout the nation (Dragićević Šešić, 2011, p. 40) (Photo 3, see page 24). Bulgaria often disputes the display of Bulgarian historic figuress, such as Tsar Samuil,[1] in today's Macedonia (Novinvite, 2011). With such deep-rooted and pervasive controversies it has been difficult for the nation to build its individual identity as a new Republic.

Despite this, not all recent disputes over Macedonia's national identity originate from neighboring nations. In 2009, the city erupted in dissent over the ill-designed memorial home dedicated to Mother Teresa (Bouzarovski, 2011). The Ministry of Culture opened an international competition, won by Portuguese architect Jorgan Marum, but the government overruled the decision; the project went to Macedonian architect Vangel Bozinovski instead (ibid.). Despite the abrupt change in architects, the final materialization of the project failed to adequately memorialize the modest lifestyle of the woman receiving tribute. As a project contained within *Skopje 2014* this memorial also signifies the decision of local authorities to use architecture as the vehicle for generating their vision of national identity.

1 Ruler of the First Bulgarian Empire as the Tsar of the Bulgarians in 997 to 1014 CE from his capital in Ohrid.

Conclusion

The questions set in this article are: How likely can modern Skopje withstand another disaster; develop internal cohesiveness; and obtain international recognition to develop a national identity in the built environment?

In viewing the post-earthquake reconstruction of Skopje, the series of plans that guided this process give incredible insight into the outcome and current state of the city. In both the 1965 Master Plan and *Skopje 2014* the primary mission and policies focused on modernizing the city for an international audience. Through this international-style development and modernization the city believed that it would form a new national identity. The 1965 plan sought to achieve modernity through innovative architectural design and spatial layouts from leading international planners, but kept its small footprint as a way to contain disaster from future earthquakes. Within *Skopje 2014* are policies departing significantly from the 1965 plan. *Skopje 2014* promotes and prioritizes the re-creation of previously grandiose public buildings (pre-1963 earthquake) intended to transform the city into a historic European capital. While Skopje solicited international competitions and advice, in the end they were largely ignored in order to emphasize an ethnic Macedonian Slav identity.

The piecemeal and often contradictory reconstruction plans have led to an urban development pattern that is different from what it was prior to the 1963 earthquake. "With over 80% of the building stock in non-compliance with seismic regulations, the city is just as unprepared for another major earthquake as in pre-1963 times" (Ladenski, n.d.). Additionally, continued ethnic and national struggles, both internally and externally, will unfavorably impact the built environment, detracting from the creation a unified internationally-recognized identity.

The nation tends to be in a constant reactionary role in terms of long-term planning, desperately looking for an external international identity instead of truly cultivating a multicultural Macedonian identity from within. Considering the blank slate provided by the earthquake with the international energy in supporting reconstruction, it is discouraging to realize that the government is not taking the precautions necessary to prevent another disaster nor capitalize on a truly innovative and modern Macedonian image.

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Preparing Planners for Economic Decline and Population Loss: *An Assessment of North American Planning Curricula*

by Maxwell Hartt

Abstract

Population shrinkage, demographic aging, and economic restructuring are leaving many cities in a state of decline. This paper examines the curricula of 94 accredited North American academic planning programs to gauge whether courses specific to these processes are being offered. Findings reveal that only 1% of institutions offer a course in aging communities, and only 2% offered courses in decline and urban shrinkage. Trends in economic decline, aging, and population loss do not guarantee a permanent shift from abundance to scarcity; however, accessible tools and guidance regarding these challenges are increasingly important to the education of future planners.

Keywords: Planning education; shrinking cities; economic transformation; aging

Like many professions, planning has dedicated, accredited university and college programs. Planning certification can be achieved through a combination of experience and non-planning education. However, "the preferred, normal route to membership is through successful completion of a university degree in planning from a program formally accredited by the planning profession" (Professional Standards Board, 2014). A Masters-level graduate degree is now considered to be the standard for planning practitioners and a requirement for many planning positions (American Planning Association, 2015). Although there are over 130 universities and colleges that offer planning programs in North America, only 94 of these are recognized by regional and national certification and accreditation boards. Many of these institutions offer programs at the Undergraduate-, Masters- and Doctoral- level. However, Masters programs are the most common.

National and regional accreditation bodies preserve and enhance the consistency, transparency, and modernity of professional planning programs (Planning Accreditation Board, 2014). Accreditation bodies, such as the Planning Accreditation Board (PAB) in the United States and the Professional Standards Board (PSB) in Canada, dictate program and curriculum guidelines to best prepare students for public and private planning professions. By setting pedagogical standards across the profession, consistent baseline knowledge and training are assured, preparing planners for successful careers and mobilizing knowledge across the public and private realms (Association of Collegiate Schools of Planning, 2009; Planning Accreditation Board, 2014; Professional Standards Board, 2014).

Accredited planning programs are regularly reviewed to ensure high quality education for future planners (Planning Accreditation Board, 2014). Early career planners graduating from accredited programs have been found to be proficient with growth-related planning functions. However, they struggle to deal with decline-related challenges (Greenlee, Edwards, & Anthony, 2015). Issues related to decline and its symptoms were found to be further afield from the formal training and education received by early career planners (ibid.). With that said, are planning schools adjusting and adapting curricula and courses to best prepare students for emergent, unprecedented challenges facing the modern planner? This paper explores the role of post-secondary education in preparing planners for urban shrinkage, economic decline, and aging populations through a review of accredited planning curricula across North America.

Population shrinkage is becoming progressively more commonplace as low birth rates and the continued selective migration to growing large urban areas drain the populations of smaller, mid-sized, and post-industrial cities (Beauregard, 2014). The demographic aging of populations is significantly changing the makeup of the labor force and the demand for social services (Jessen, 2012). Although immigration can offset the aging of population to some extent, the proportion of the population over age 65 is still expected to pass 20% in the United States (Wiener & Tilly, 2002) and 25% in Canada (Statistics Canada, 2009) by 2050. Global economic restructuring has led to the uneven distribution of financial, knowledge and human capital, with the majority of resources congregating in a small number of large cities—leaving many other cities and towns in a state of perpetual economic decline (Martinez-Fernandez, Audirac, Fol, & Cunningham-Sabot, 2012). Population loss and economic transformations are not new processes. However, research has demonstrated that the multidimensional phenomenon of recent urban shrinkage is distinctive from historical population decline; it is a socio-spatial manifestation of globalization as seen through the advancement of international production systems and global networks (Martinez-Fernandez, Audirac, et al., 2012; Pallagst, Wiechmann, & Martinez-Fernandez, 2013).

Many cities and their planning departments will be challenged by long-term demographic and economic trajectories leading to decline and shrinkage—processes often characterized by housing vacancies, underused infrastructure, and many other physical and social impacts (Wiechmann & Pallagst, 2012). In recent years the academic discourse surrounding shrinking cities has grown considerably; however, there remains a significant lag in North American planning practice as discussions, publications, and tools remain largely focused on growth-related planning functions (Pallagst, 2010).

Traditionally, local policy and planning officials' only response to depopulation has been public redevelopment (Hollander, 2010a). Although these attempts to improve overall economic conditions can work, exogenous factors often limit public redevelopment impact on macro demographic and economic forces.

The hesitance for education, discussion, and action by politicians and planners may very well be that such acknowledgment would necessitate a fundamental review of the underlying core urban policy principles of the planning profession (Wiechmann & Pallagst, 2012). There is a deeply rooted growth paradigm in North American politics and development

(Wolfe, 1981), wherein population growth is often viewed as a measure of success. It can be argued that the growth bias is politically-driven, yet Hummel (2014) views the growth paradigm as being so ingrained in planning practice that growth-focused strategies are solely relied upon until it becomes unequivocally clear that they will not work. This is despite evidence that population growth has not been shown to be an indicator of economic prosperity (Gottlieb, 2002). Researchers are beginning to question whether growth-oriented policies are useful, sustainable, or even achievable in all cities (Audirac, Fol, & Martinez-Fernandez, 2010). Perhaps planning, as an overarching discipline, cannot presuppose urban growth. Pallagst (2010) advocates that a paradigm shift towards other metrics and tools is overdue, as it has been shown that planners, generally, do not recognize the prevalence and significant challenges of population loss. This presents a unique chance for planners to reframe decline as opportunity, to re-assess planning processes, and re-imagine the future of shrinking cities.

Trends in Urban Demographics and Economics

Nearly half of America's largest cities (27 of 64) have lost population, on average, every decade since 1950 (Hollander, 2011). Buffalo, Cleveland, Detroit, Pittsburgh and St. Louis have lost half of their respective populations, and Baltimore and Philadelphia have lost nearly a third (Hollander et al., 2009). The shift to a service economy following the collapse of the manufacturing industry in the Rustbelt region has seen a steady decline in jobs and population for decades (Beauregard, 2014). Many of these cities are shrinking within a growing wider metropolitan region, causing a doughnut effect, or hollowing out, around the city center (Hall, 2006). The redistribution of populations, and their tax dollars, to surrounding suburban communities leaves a myriad of challenges for the local government in their wake. These trends of persistent population loss are well known; the phenomenon has been studied at length, and yet these same cities continue to project population growth and promote growth-oriented policy.

Less widely recognized is that severe population loss is not limited to the Northeast and Midwest regions—Birmingham, Memphis, Norfolk, Richmond and New Orleans have also lost large proportions of their populations. Recent trends in the Sunbelt states, from California to Florida have shown housing abandonment and population loss (Hollander, 2011). This is in large part due to the real estate market crash, where subprime mortgage lending, rapidly rising home prices, and a relentless building boom forced many families out of their homes and, in many instances, out of their cities (ibid.).

In Canada, population loss in major cities has not been as severe. The majority of large Canadian cities have seen consistent growth over the last three census periods (Statistics Canada, 2013). However, smaller and mid-sized cities, especially in more remote locations, continue to witness an exodus of young, educated citizens (Schatz, Leadbeater, Martinez-Fernandez, & Weyman, 2013). Coupled with an aging workforce and low birth rates, substantial demographic change is occurring in Canadian cities across the nation as tax revenues shrink and demand for social services rise. Aging populations make for a smaller and less adaptable workforce, and in turn intensify the structural rigidity of the economic production process (Tabah, 1988). Furthermore, demographic aging places additional strain and limits to the future financial feasibility of pension systems.

The economic struggles of Western cities since the Great Recession and real estate market collapse in 2006 have been widely documented and studied through lenses varying from labor to climate change (Elsby, Hobijn, & Sahin, 2010; Scruggs & Benegal, 2012). Similarly, the aging population and increasing dependency ratio of almost all Canadian cities and many American regions has been the focal point of many research programs across North America. Yet the North American academic discussion on urban shrinkage lags behind its European counterparts as it continues to concentrate almost exclusively on either managing urban growth or fragmented redevelopment (Wiechmann & Pallagst, 2012).

Although progress bridging the academic literature and professional practice gap has advanced in recent years as the topic has reached a wider audience, planners remain unprepared and ill equipped to deal with the challenges being presented (Martinez-Fernandez, Pallagst, & Wiechmann, 2014; Rieniets, 2006). Professional practice workshops and consultants can offer assistance, but more must be done to effect change at a fundamental level. Cities need planners to grasp the unique opportunity to explore non-traditional approaches to redevelopment and revitalization that do not presuppose growth (Hollander et al., 2009). This begs the question of whether accredited North American university and college planning programs are in tune with either the widely recognized (economic decline, aging) or emerging (urban shrinkage) changes that are reshaping the urban system.

Methodology

In order to determine whether planning programs address economic decline, urban shrinkage or aging populations, the author examined the

2013-2014 course offerings of every accredited North American program. Curricula from all 94 accredited North American planning programs, accessed via their websites, were included in the analysis. The author examined the course offerings using content analysis in order to assess their integration of coursework pertaining to the three major trends highlighted above (decline, population loss and aging). All course titles and descriptions were fully read, rather than performing a key word search, so as to be certain to capture both apparent and embedded mentions of urban shrinkage, economic decline or aging populations. If a course title or description included any explicit or implicit reference to shrinkage, decline, population loss, or aging it was highlighted in the analysis. The search criteria also included courses pertaining to redevelopment and revitalization. This method proved to be time-intensive, but ensured comprehensiveness and consistency. Although it is possible that course offerings may have touched on decline, population loss, or aging without explicit or implicit mention in the course title or description, the author felt that emergent trends of this magnitude should be notable enough to warrant being a central theme in a course. The goal of this paper is not to devalue planning education, but rather to start an important discussion about emerging challenges facing future planners. It must be noted that most programs offer Special Topics and Reading courses, for which the details usually were not available, so this analysis contains only clearly stated offerings.

Results

Of the 94 accredited North American planning programs, only Wayne State University offers a course (*UP6680 Neighborhood Decline and Revitalization*) specifically focused on decline. At the University of Buffalo, SUNY, graduate students can choose to specialize in *Declining Cities and Distressed Urban Communities*, however no specific coursework is offered. In the description for *PLAN8002 Regional Theory* at the University of Cincinnati both growth and decline are explicitly emphasized, but no course solely focused on decline is available. The University of Toronto did offer *Planning in the Face of Economic Decline* as a Special Topics course in 2012, but it has not been offered again since.

The University of Maryland at College Park was the sole institution to offer a course, *URSP289A Livable Communities: Planning for an Aging Society*, explicitly focused on planning for aging communities.

Only the Pratt Institute's *Shrinking Cities (Plan 764)* and the Spring 2013 Massachusetts Institute of Technology's offering of *Urban Design Studio: Shrinking Cities (11.338)* focused specifically on the phenomenon

of urban shrinkage. Although not necessarily focused on shrinking cities, it is interesting to note that the Massachusetts Institute of Technology is currently offering *un(Dead) Geographies: The Afterlife of Failed Urban Plans (11.S944)*—the sole course to focus explicitly on the management and planning response to failed policy.

Although focused on regrowth rather than managing and optimizing population loss, it is noteworthy that there were 19 separate courses (at 18 institutions, since Jackson State University offers revitalization courses at both the Masters and PhD level) focused on redevelopment and/or revitalization. Additionally, redevelopment and revitalization were recognized as key words in the descriptions of several other courses.

Discussion

Many cities across North America are losing population (Beauregard, 2014). Selective migration, due in large part to economic decline from smaller and mid-sized cities to their larger counterparts is reinforcing economic downturns as shrinking and poorly educated workforces impede municipalities' ability to attract new businesses and industries. Concurrently, employment opportunities in manufacturing and resource-based industries have continued to shift overseas or disappear completely as cheap labor, increasingly stringent environmental policies, and the exhaustion of finite resources encourage transnational corporations to relocate employment bases (Leadbeater, 2009). These processes are leaving many communities in economic despair, and the selective out-migration of younger, educated citizens is leaving behind an aging population. Planners and other decision makers have to manage growing social, infrastructural, and economic challenges—all with a dwindling tax base. Although daunting and seemingly pessimistic, the depth of such challenges in fact offers possibilities for innovative strategies, such as urban farming, that use existing infrastructure and ample inexpensive land. Additionally, entrepreneurs can implement novel ideas with significantly less risk than in other growing cities. These shrinking cities offer an opportunity to navigate away from traditional approaches to purposefully imagine a new, different kind of city with less density, but also less blight. Such challenges may prove to be an opportunity to imagine a city where people would want to live, a city with safe neighborhoods, ample green space, and innovative design and community development.

This set of challenges and opportunities, faced by communities such as Camden, NJ, differs greatly from those of large growing cities, such as Toronto, ON, where the management of urban growth is the primary concern. Furthermore, an entirely declining region differs significantly

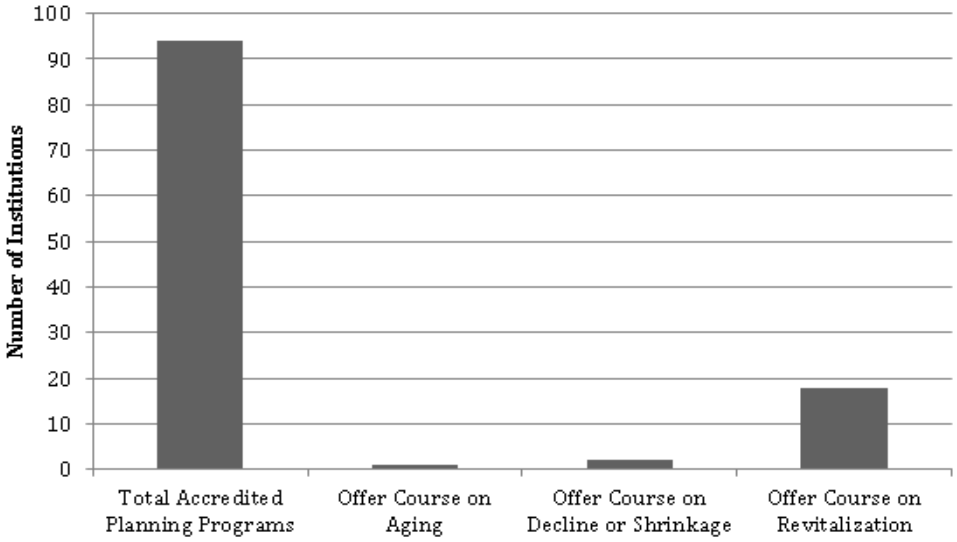

Figure 1: Number of academic institutions with accredited planning programs offering courses on aging, decline or shrinkage, or revitalization.

from a declining city within a growing metropolitan area. A range of tools and adaptable approaches are needed to approach the many contextual realities of shrinking cities. As planning schools across North America continue to graduate increasing numbers of students, it is clear that not all of the graduates will find employment in large, growing metropolitan areas.

The analysis of the 94 accredited North American planning programs found that only 1% of institutions offered a course in aging communities. Only 2% offered a course in either decline or urban shrinkage. Not surprisingly, the decline and urban shrinkage courses were offered at universities located in Northeast and Midwestern United States (University of Cincinnati; Pratt Institute, Brooklyn; SUNY, Buffalo; Wayne State University, Detroit). However, as the discussion above detailed, economic and population decline are not limited to only one region or belt of the continent. Most regions in Northern and Eastern Canada have decades-long histories of population loss and economic decline, yet the planning programs at their local universities do not reflect those trends in their coursework.

19% of institutions offered a course explicitly focused on redevelopment or revitalization. This echoes the current accepted understanding in the shrinking cities literature, which indicates that North American planners have a pessimistic, unhealthy acceptance of decline stemming from the wider growth-oriented culture (Hollander et al., 2009). An inability to accept or proactively approach population loss or economic decline,

without relying on growth-oriented strategies, can be attributed to the dearth of strategies and best practices in the planning toolbox (Hollander & Németh, 2011). Based on the analysis above, planners working in shrinking, aging or declining urban areas have had little to no opportunity for formal university training on how to manage the symptoms of population shrinkage and economic decline.

Conclusion

As cities continue to be affected by economic decline, population loss, and demographic aging, a new planning paradigm needs to be recognized. The use of traditional growth strategies in shrinking cities has been socially counterproductive and economically ineffective (Audirac et al., 2010). According to Bernt et al. (2014) there is a broad consensus among researchers and practitioners that planning, as it currently exists, is ill-prepared to manage urban shrinkage. Though the provision of tools, best practices, and guidelines is important, we must also look to the next generation of planners to reconsider how to manage urban shrinkage. Guidance outside of formal university education may be available, but considering the degree of the aforementioned demographic and economic trends, post-secondary planning education needs to play a stronger role. Newly graduated planners entering the workforce must be exposed to, familiar with, and have a clear understanding of the challenges and opportunities present in these communities, as well as the different approaches and techniques that are implementable. Familiarity with successful practices in European shrinking cities, along with the potential transferability of policy and recommendations from North American researchers such as Margaret Dewar (with Thomas, 2013) and Sujata Shetty (2013, 2014), need to be taken into account.

Increasing numbers of cities are projected to shrink in population; municipal dependency ratios will continue to rise as demographic aging becomes more widespread (Martinez-Fernandez, Kubo, Noya, & Weyman, 2012); and the economic decline in older industrial cities and resourced-based towns is expected to continue (Schatz et al., 2013). Will some cities manage to reverse these processes through the attraction of industry or talent? Certainly. But many others will waste already limited resources on tax breaks, incentives, and inflated consultant fees without altering the trajectory of their municipality.

Planning schools need to educate their students more on these topics or, at the very least, make the option available as an elective. The national accreditation boards exist to “ensure high quality education for future urban planners” (Planning Accreditation Board, 2014) and to provide

the planning profession with well-versed, resourceful, and equipped early-career planners. These accreditation boards have a unique opportunity to impact hundreds of shrinking, aging, and declining cities across North America. Although this study cannot conclusively state that urban shrinkage, economic decline, and aging populations are not covered in the examined curricula, it is clear that they are not priorities or central themes in almost any course.

Afflicted communities are not necessarily following an inevitable arc from abundance to scarcity. The future of the many cities experiencing severe and persistent decline is uncertain. Planners have the opportunity to impact change through the exploration of alternatives to help stabilize these cities and neighborhoods. With the proper education and preparation, decline, shrinkage and aging do not have to be negative processes; they can be seen as opportunities to reframe and re-envision cities and their evolution.

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Development and Displacement: *Single Family Home Demolitions in Central East Austin, 2007 to 2014*

by Sara McTarnaghan

Abstract

This paper analyzes the scale and character of home demolitions in East Austin since 2007 from a built environment approach. A documentation and analysis of home demolitions, construction, and resale in East Austin contextualizes the narrative of gentrification and reveals how that process is complicated through the mechanics of speculative development, real estate messaging and aesthetics. In this moment of sociocultural displacement and loss, new norms are inscribed in the built environment. This new landscape is strongly embedded in the discourse and aesthetic of environmental sustainability, which threatens to overpower conversations about equity and urban development in a highly contested space of the city.

Keywords: Gentrification; real estate development; exclusion; Austin

After years of neglect, with little to no public or private investment or development activity, Central East Austin is in the midst of a real estate boom, characterized by a surge in single-family home demolitions and redevelopment. The neighborhoods near downtown Austin, directly to the east of Interstate 35 (see Figure 1), have a storied history of planning action and inaction that has caused concentrations of low-income minority groups—both African American and Latino—to establish communities there over time. The co-location of industrial or commercial land uses and segregated facilities for African Americans per Austin's 1928 comprehensive plan, paired with exclusionary lending practices, created difficult living conditions for East Austin residents. Today, processes of gentrification have reversed historical demographic trends; East Austin has experienced a sharp increase in higher-income white residents. Once again, this demographic shift is tied to planning action, with a renewed focus on the areas near downtown through Smart Growth and environmental sustainability measures, and inaction, based on a market-driven model with few provisions for affordable housing. In this changing landscape, one-story bungalows from the early-mid 20th century are torn down and replaced by super-modern condos and new single-family homes.

Figure 1: Map of East Austin within the metropolitan context. All maps by author.

Gentrification is often studied from an equity perspective in terms of the political economy of real estate without examining the changing form of the built environment and what it reveals about the gentrification process for individuals, families, and communities. Ruth Glass coined the term gentrification in 1964 to refer to the class dimensions of neighborhood change, specifically the influx of middle-class people and displacement of working class residents in London. Since then, scholars from the fields of urban studies, geography and sociology have wrestled to understand and define the phenomenon, often placing the consumption preferences of arriving middle

class residents at the center of narratives and analysis. Ley, for example, who defines gentrification as "the transition of inner-city neighbourhoods from a status of relative poverty and limited property investment to a state of commodification and reinvestment" (2002, p. 2527), was interested in the role of artists in processes of neighborhood change in Toronto. More recently, however, some urban scholars have argued that gentrification scholarship must be re-connected to urban policy and critical perspectives on the displacement of the working classes. In the introduction to a special issue on gentrification in *Urban Studies*, Slater, Curran and Lees challenge the trajectory of gentrification studies:

> Academic inquiry into neighbourhood change has looked at the role of urban policy in harnessing the aspirations of middle-class professionals at the expense of looking at the role of urban policy in causing immense hardship for people with nowhere else to go in booming property markets reshaped by neoliberal regulatory regimes (2004, p. 1142).

Similar to major urban centers such as New York or London, which have been at the center of gentrification scholarship to date, Austin's rapid growth and population change fuel contentious debates about neighborhood change in a city that still grapples with its history of racial segregation.

From a built environment approach based in Geographic Information Systems (GIS) analysis, photography and historical property data, this article explores the scale and character of home demolitions in the 78702 ZIP code from 2007 to 2014. A documentation and analysis of home demolitions, construction, and resale in East Austin contextualizes the narrative of gentrification and reveals how that process is complicated through the mechanics of speculative development, real estate messaging and aesthetics. In this moment of sociocultural displacement and loss, new social and cultural norms are inscribed in the built environment through building façades, fences, and streetscapes. This new landscape is strongly embedded in the discourse and aesthetic of environmental sustainability, which threatens to overpower conversations about equity and urban development in a highly contested space of the city. This article is organized in three sections: (1) an overview of the structural forces which created East Austin's socio-spatial landscape; (2) spatial and visual analysis of home demolitions in 78702; and (3) discussion of the trends and implications of this pattern of redevelopment and displacement.

City planners and private developers drove the consolidation of low-income African American and Latino residents into a segregated East Austin enclave through systemic mechanisms of exclusion. One of the earliest mechanisms for exclusion in Austin was the use of racially restrictive covenants on private property, severely limiting mobility and household choice for people of color. Covenants are restrictions on land or property that are written into property deeds and applicable in perpetuity. Racially based use of covenants started in the late 19th century and was common in Southern cities in order to "exclude and subjugate less powerful social groups deemed to be dangerous to property values" (Tretter, 2012, p. 24). In Austin, the use and spatial distribution of racially restrictive covenants effectively drafted the patterns of housing discrimination observed throughout the 20th century and, to a slightly lesser degree, today.

Developed in 1928 by Koch and Fowlers Engineers, Austin's first comprehensive plan institutionalized many mechanisms of segregation already operating in the city. Although the US Supreme Court declared race-based zoning unconstitutional in the 1917 Buchanan v. Warley decision, the 1928 plan offered a method for segregating races that could be upheld under law. In the plan, the City created a "Negro district," concentrating all facilities and services for black families in the area east of I-35, to incentivize African American families (who were residing all over the city at the time) to move there. Tretter argues that the 1928 plan and associated municipal zoning "largely locked in the exclusions that had already been laid down by private racial covenants beginning in 1893" (ibid., p. 30). In addition to consolidating residential segregation, the 1928 plan placed most of the city's industrial and heavy commercial zones adjacent to residential areas reserved for people of color, making these neighborhoods inhospitable places to raise families and accumulate wealth through property ownership.

The legacy of institutionalized segregation from the 1928 plan continued to shape land-use planning and financing in Austin into the 1930s and 1940s. The postwar period was characterized by the increased participation of the federal government in housing and neighborhood affairs. The Housing and Loan Corporation (HOLC) set federal guidelines for lending and underwriting for home finance. Through the HOLC guidelines and Federal Housing Administration (FHA) lending, the federal government furthered the racial segregation in housing where "areas with African Americans, as well as those with older housing and poorer households, were consistently given a fourth grade, or 'hazardous,' rating and col-

ored red" (ibid., p. 13). These limitations on federal home lending led to further disinvestment in areas deemed hazardous, all while loans for home purchasing or repair were made unavailable. Federal public housing policy was also influential in furthering segregation in the coming decades. In Austin, one-third of the city's entire stock of public housing would be located in Central East Austin, specifically in the 78702 ZIP code. The construction of I-35 in the 1960s reinforced the pre-existing racial boundary, creating a physical barrier between East Austin and the rest of the city.

Each of these mechanisms of segregation and exclusion inform Austin's landscape today; as community organizer Susana Almanza states, the "image of Austin as a progressive city is challenged by historical race relations and land use planning issues" (2007, p. 62). Tretter's demographic analysis from the 2000 census clearly illustrates the results of a century of private and public actions that produced residential segregation; African American and Latino families split the East Side, while the rest of the city is predominantly Anglo. However, just ten years later, the 2010 census results clearly reflect the rapid change of the neighborhood as processes of gentrification have accelerated in Austin. The data show the major flight of African American households out of East Austin (Tretter, 2012). While some of this migration may reflect greater economic mobility and housing choice for these families, it has also been connected to rising property values, rents, cost of living and a higher incidence of foreclosure more suggestive of economic coercion than choice.

Growing development pressure in the creative city

Just as residential segregation and the formation of East Austin were historically tied to both planning and private development, today's sustainability planning, population growth and economic boom are reshaping the historic residential and demographic patterns across the city. For the last two decades, Austin has experienced rapid population and economic growth. During this period, Austin emerged as part of a nationwide imaginary of successful cities, frequently ranking high on lists of green cities, as well as serving as a model of the much lauded creative city. Within this paradigm there is a tendency to "connect specific ideals of urban 'livability' with urban economic development policies that cater to the whims of Richard Florida's 'Creative Class'" (McCann, 2008, p. 2). As creativity is coupled with livability, the narrative goes that the city must be "reshaped and repackaged as a consumption and lifestyle space that attracts the creative class" to be economically competitive (ibid., p. 4).

This period of boom was accompanied by the adoption of a new planning paradigm, Smart Growth, which sought to connect land use issues to the environment and transportation. The main impetus for this change was the Save our Springs (SOS) Alliance, and the movement to reduce development on the sensitive Edwards Aquifer in West Austin. Spatially, the ordinance pushed development activity to areas outside of the aquifer such as East Austin. As Tretter notes, this moment in planning represents an odd point of collaboration between pro-growth and environmental (often characterized as being anti-growth) groups about the future planning trajectory of the city (2012). Despite this unusual consensus, some groups immediately questioned this new sustainable path forward. The proposed plans were particularly alarming for traditionally marginalized communities on the East Side whose relatively central land became ripe for redevelopment. On this contradiction, Almanza asserts:

> In Texas, when they talked about 'smart growth' they said it would limit suburban sprawl but it was just gentrification. Sprawl hasn't stopped. As they began to develop downtown, they pretended there were no people of color downtown. Those people who were supposed to be our allies are running us out of our communities (2007, p. 62).

Zoning and land use designations, the same planning instruments which limited residential opportunity for Blacks and Latinos to the east side in the 20th century, now threaten to displace them in the 21st. While some counter this argument by eagerly citing new affordable housing built in East Austin, even in cases where supposed affordable housing becomes part of the Smart Growth equation, this is part and parcel of the displacement process due to the relatively modest affordability targets (reaching households earning 60 to 80 percent of median family income) that would exclude many current residents living at 30 to 50 percent MFI (ibid., p. 64). Under these conditions, the ability for a long-standing East Austin family to stay in place becomes increasingly difficult and unlikely.

The new desirability or livability of East Austin is in part due to overall development pressure in Austin, further intensified spatially by Smart Growth in tandem with a focus on the urban core. That said, such desirability cannot be separated from the successes of the grassroots environmental justice movement led by PODER and other organizations in the 1990s to shut down industries that were polluting their neighborhoods. The environmental justice movement in Austin was primarily led by people of color who began to challenge the siting of hazardous industries in their neighborhoods—dating back to Austin's 1928 plan. In her account

of the movement, Almanza notes the conflict between the environmental justice movement and larger planning trends in Austin:

> As we rid our communities of industrial and certain types of commercial zoning, which had allowed hazardous facilities, pawn shops and liquor stores in our neighborhoods, the Smart Growth movement was inventing new zoning categories. Just to name a few, the new zoning included Commercial Mixed-use, Mixed-Use Urban Center, Vertical Mixed-Use, and Neighborhood Mixed- Use. None of these zonings secured housing for the poor or working poor (2007, p. 62).

With increasing development attention in East Austin it became more and more likely that the same communities that were striving to create healthier neighborhoods for their families would soon be pushed out. In the absence of inclusionary zoning and other, more progressive planning instruments, it is difficult for the City of Austin to secure affordable housing needs while encouraging growth and development. Though this tension exists across the entire city, it is most acute in East Austin due to the legacy of exclusion and segregation that shapes both the real estate dynamics and the cultural history of the neighborhood.

Such tensions exist across the country and world as urban development focuses once again on the center city—the response to both environmental concerns associated with sprawl and shifting consumption preferences of middle-to-high income individuals. Through her research on homelessness in Seattle and transportation planning in Austin, Sarah Dooling provides a useful theoretical frame: ecological gentrification. By acknowledging and understanding the visible tensions in urban development today, ecological gentrification delineates the "uneven distribution of benefits associated with a planning effort driven by ecological agendas or environmental ethics" (Dooling, 2012, p. 104). The term, she claims, is intentionally provocative:

> It seeks to associate the displacement of people (a process typically associated with economic development and neighborhood change) with environmental changes stemming from formalized planning efforts, where the changes are assumed to be and referred to as universally beneficial (ibid.).

Dooling further establishes how urban vulnerabilities are produced (and reproduced in this case) through the "collisions of environmental and

economic agendas that fail to address existing conditions of vulnerable people who are stigmatized and vilified in the popular media" (ibid., p. 103). The frame of ecological gentrification begs a more nuanced understanding of the impacts of environmental agendas—relevant to Austin's redevelopment under Smart Growth.

Gentrification and the Built Environment: Single Family Home Demolitions

In this context, questions of displacement, neighborhood change, and speculative development are important, as current economic growth and planning trajectories cannot be divorced from the local context and history of urban development. Focusing on Central East Austin, this article explores how the history of residential segregation in the 20th century and the experience of rapid economic growth and demographic change in the first years of the 21st century express themselves in the local built environment. Specifically, the analysis that follows will consider how the remaking of neighborhoods through demolition and redevelopment influences displacement.

This project takes a mixed methods approach grounded in study of the built environment, including: mapping, site visits and photography, historical data, press coverage in the Austin American-Statesman, and online real estate resources such as Zillow. The City of Austin Growth-Watch dataset aggregates building permits, which facilitated analysis of single-family home demolition permitting between 2007 and 2014, both spatially and temporally. Google Maps Street View includes recent historical data that provides a rich documentation of neighborhood change. Within 78702, the majority of streets have high quality parcel-by-parcel imagery from at least five occasions during the study period, providing snapshots of properties at telling stages, including: pre-demolition, vacancy, construction, finished homes, and early occupation. Mobilizing these unique data sources, the findings presented provide fine-grain evidence of the material changes occurring in East Austin today, but further qualitative research is required to better understand the explicit role of different private and public actors involved in these processes, as well as the lived experience of residents (old and new) in this changing landscape.

The historic socio-spatial construction of East Austin through planning and private development makes it particularly important to study today. As such, the 78702 ZIP code is perhaps most representative of both the historic neighborhood fabric and contemporary development pressures.

The 78702 ZIP code is immediately adjacent to downtown Austin, delineated by Martin Luther King Boulevard to the north, I-35 to the west, Lady Bird Lake to the south, and Airport Boulevard to the east. It contains important civic, religious, and cultural sites, representative of the large African American and Hispanic populations, as well as two of the East Side's historic core business districts—East 12th Street and East Cesar Chavez Boulevard.

Demographic data from 2009 to 2013 American Community Survey (ACS) five-year estimates provide an important and up-to-date depiction of the area. In regards to income, 78702 remains majority low-income; the income per capita is $19,715, roughly 60 percent of the city-wide average. Nearly one-third (31.2 percent) of individuals are living below the poverty line, significantly higher than the city-wide poverty rate of 19.1 percent. While poverty rates have not changed drastically from 2000 to 2013 in the 78702 ZIP code, the per capita income nearly doubled since the 2000 Census. The persistence of higher-than-average poverty amidst rapid redevelopment and neighborhood change may be partially attributed to the large stock of public housing units within the ZIP code. In regards to the housing stock, there are 8,895 units, a slight majority of which are renter occupied (54%). Data on the occupancy of homes within the district reveal intense neighborhood change and redevelopment: an estimated 70.9% of households had moved in between 2000 and 2013. Despite significantly below-average incomes, the median value of owner-occupied housing units is $188,00, about $40,000 less than the City's average (US Census Bureau, 2013).

Development trends in East Austin have not gone unnoticed by the larger Austin community or media. There have been numerous articles in the Austin American-Statesman about growth, demographic change, and real estate in Central East Austin over the past decade. For example, in February 2012 the Statesman published an article entitled "Rosewood area a hidden gem near downtown," in which the authors quote Lonny Stern, a newcomer to the neighborhood: "the influx of new restaurants and shops is improving quality of life here, he [Stern] said: 'every time something new comes around, it keeps getting better and better. This area is ripe for dense development. We feel like it's an undiscovered gem" (Austin American-Statesman, 2/26/2012). While terms like "untapped potential" or "hidden gem" are still the rhetoric driving real estate investment and gentrification in East Austin today, property speculation within the district began appearing in local press as early as the 1990s. In a 1998 Statesman article, Darrell Piece, president of Snap Management Group, called East Austin the "key gateway to Austin", claiming, "the people who take advantage of that now will truly be the pioneers and the settlers, and they will be pleased by their choice"

(Austin American-Statesman, 6/2/1998). Sixteen years later, it appears Piece's estimate of the return on investment was as accurate as the development booms.

While most media attention has celebrated the potential of real estate development in 78702, recent coverage has begun to address the gentrification and displacement that is occurring across East Austin. In November 2014, the Statesman published an article entitled "Houses go, and so does city past," addressing noticeable patterns of neighborhood change through home demolition and redevelopment. In the article, Thomas Brown, owner of Paradisa Homes, challenged accusations of speculative development levied at his and other firms: "a lot of people think we are coming in trying to make a quick dollar, but some of these houses are in severe disrepair, with deferred maintenance. We feel we are improving the neighborhood" (Austin American-Statesman, 11/2/2014). The claims of Brown and other developers about improving the neighborhood are, understandably, not always well received by long-standing residents. Of the teardowns and neighborhood redevelopment, 30-year East Austin resident Mark Rogers claimed, "it's kind of like losing memory through the loss of structures" (ibid.). For other residents it's the demographic change that is most alarming: "there is a sense that people are gutting the neighborhood, not blending with it or becoming part of it. You want people to move here because they want to join in your neighborhood, not because they want to reinvent it" (ibid.). This article and similar media coverage only begin to address the tensions of neighborhood change occurring in 78702.

Turning the analysis to evidence of change and displacement in the built environment, Figure 2 (see opposing page) illustrates the scale and distribution of home demolitions in 78702 over the past seven years. Trends for Austin show a decrease in demolition permits during the recession in 2008 as well as a steady annual rise from 2009 to today. While 78702 has only 2.55 percent of Austin's roughly 350,000 housing units, the area has received 16.1 percent of all single-family home demolition permits since 2007. Home demolitions were up 25 percent for the city in the first three quarters of 2014 compared to the whole year of 2007—even more acute in 78702, where permits are up 36 percent. During the seven-year period of analysis there was a total of 408 home demolition permits issued in 78702, excluding demolition permits for garages, decks and other smaller projects.

To further explore the mechanics of demolition and redevelopment at the block scale, I conducted two case studies of sub-districts within the 78702 ZIP code, focusing on the areas with the highest concentration of

development activity: the Holly Street and East 13th Street Corridors. Using Google imagery and site visits, I conducted a housing inventory for all homes that received a demolition permit between 2007 and 2014 in the case study areas. The results of this inventory reveal interesting trends in redevelopment, specifically the unique aesthetics, scale of community change, and the integral role of private development actors. Additionally, the photography survey suggests a growing tension between old and new residents, expressed through built environment features such as fortified fences and "No trespassing" or private security signage.

The Holly Street Corridor is in the southernmost edge of the 78702 ZIP code, located between East Cesar Chavez Boulevard and the Colorado River. It is a predominantly single-family residential area with a few schools, churches, and other civic facilities. Throughout the second half of the 20th century this area was consolidated as a predominately Mexican-American district, and remains majority Latino today. Holly Street has a particularly strong sense of place given that the Holly Power Plant was the center of PODER's battle for environmental justice. The closure of the Holly Power Plant in 2007 represented a major victory for the local community, which had long suffered health complications due to toxic

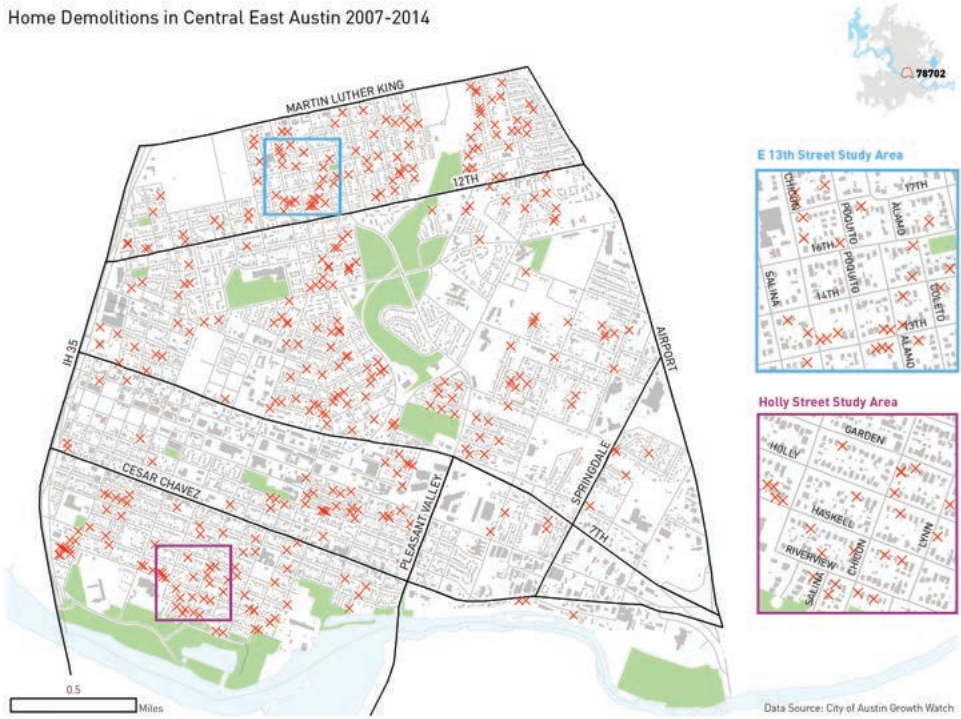

Figure 2: Map of Single-family home demolition permits in 78702 from 2007-2014.

emissions from the plant. Today, Holly Street and the surrounding blocks are one of the most visible areas of neighborhood change within 78702. There is a high density of demolition permits and a striking difference between the one-story bungalows from the 1940s and the multi-story new condos and single-family homes built today. Development pressure could be greater in this area due to the amenities of the neighborhood, such as proximity to Lady Bird Lake and downtown. The City approved twenty-five demolition permits in the roughly four-by-four block area since 2007. To date, roughly half of the properties (12) have been fully redeveloped, an additional three units are currently under construction, seven are currently vacant lots, and three have not been demolished, though they appear to have been remodeled.

Similar to Holly Street, the neighborhood around East 13th Street has experienced intense redevelopment pressure over the last several years. Located just a mile and a half north of Holly Street, this area was historically the core of the African American community in East Austin. Recognizing the trends of displacement of African-American households, businesses, and cultural spaces from Central East Austin, the African American Cultural Heritage District was created by activists and com-

Figure 3: Properties redeveloped by Austin Newcastle Homes in 78702.

munity members in 2009 to "formally preserve areas where there is a concentration of existing African American landmarks" (aachd.org). The Protect our Assets Program is working towards preservation of the area's cultural assets in the built environment. The work of the AACHD is happening simultaneously with the City of Austin's renewed interest in E 11th Street and E 12th Street and the City's strategic planning efforts to redevelop these blighted areas since 2011 (Economic & Planning Systems, Inc., et al, 2012). Here, trends of demolition and redevelopment are quite similar to Holly Street, though the clustering of redevelopment is even more pronounced. For example, on East 13th Street, between Poquito and Alamo, five out of ten properties on the block were demolished during this short seven-year period. The City issued 27 single-family home demolition permits in between 2007 and 2014, with a huge peak in 2011. Of these 27 properties, fourteen have been fully rebuilt, three are currently under construction, eight are vacant (many of them for three or more years) and two have not yet been demolished.

Discussion

The spatial analysis and housing inventory reveal several interesting details about the scope and nature of residential redevelopment and gentrification in 78702. Block-by-block across Central East Austin home demolitions and new construction are drastically changing the aesthetics and scale of the residential neighborhood. Material evidence of the changing residential landscape reveals the character of this displacement, and provides important context for any attempts to preserve affordability for long-term residents as the neighborhoods that constitue 78702 continue to experience redevelopment pressure.

The role of private developers in driving these processes of neighborhood change cannot be underestimated. Locally, a few niche firms appear to hold a large share of the residential redevelopment market. Unlike some of the coordinated City-led commercial revitalization efforts, the changing residential landscape in 78702 is unplanned, uncoordinated, and led by private developers. One company active in residential real estate in 78702 describes their process as bridging "the gap between high design and affordability, to marry style conscious and budget conscious, to make modern accessible. The goal is simple: attainable modern living" (habitatmodern.com). In this process, modest homes are torn down in favor of super-sized houses with promises of so-called modern living. These changes do not reflect a planned effort or community vision, but rather an opportunity to cash in on the rising property values and greater desirability (i.e. marketability) of the areas near downtown.

In this process, developers buy cheap properties, foreclosed homes, or even approach existing residents with offers, then demolish properties to rebuild. New construction varies from a highly customized design-build approach to quite similar cookie-cutter modern designs.

The sight of old, vacant, and new properties with developer signage out front is a common feature of the East Austin landscape today, reflecting the pervasive scale of development. Further research is required to fully detail the mechanics of flipping[1] to understand the interactions between the range of actors involved in this process, including: real estate agents, demolition companies, design firms, private homeowners, and city government.

One developer, Austin Newcastle Homes, appeared frequently in both the Holly Street and 13th Street areas. Figure 3 (see page 58) maps all properties that have been redeveloped by Newcastle Homes in 78702, based on their online portfolio. Austin Newcastle's property holdings, from the data available from the Travis County Appraisal District (TCAD), show an increase in the annual holdings since 2009, with a current portfolio of about 10 properties. Their descriptions of the redeveloped properties often highlight sustainable construction techniques, proximity to downtown, and the investment potential to lure new buyers. For example, one Newcastle property was listed as:

> Coveted GREEN, MODERN, URBAN LIFESTYLE from NEWCASTLE HOMES, East Austin's premier design-build team. Often copied, never equaled: superior design from top local architectural talent, unparalleled quality from truly local family biz, EnergyStar-certified sustainable green performance, unmatched investment value, & the unique ATX urban lifestyle, all moments to downtown, UT, Manor Rd, East 11th, East 6th & 7th (Zillow.com).

Housing construction in East Austin today is targeting an entirely new market and income bracket than those who have historically resided there, and this new housing stock is facilitating dramatic demographic changes. The first round of flipped properties from the early 2000s are slightly more modest and simpler in design than the luxurious remodels

1 Flipping is a real estate practice defined as: "buying a home and then turning around and reselling it for a profit" (Redfin). Property flipping emerged as a common practice during the real estate boom of the early 2000s, often involving only small cosmetic changes to a property to prime it for immediate resale. The practice of demolition and rebuilding by private developers in East Austin documented in this paper fits within the definition of flipping, although the scope of the work represents a larger investment and profit potential.

happening today, likely reflecting the degree to which property values have continued to rise. New homes, such as the one featured in Photo 1, are modern luxury properties that stand out from the existing housing stock.

Photo 1: Ultra-modern architecture pops up on the East Side.

The language used to describe these new properties is deeply connected to discourses of sustainability and green building that (when linking back to the Smart Growth movement) were some of the initial drivers of development in East Austin. However, the degree to which this new housing stock is truly representative of a sustainable path forward is worth questioning. One of the key tools for sustainability planning in Austin was to increase density in centrally located areas and thus reduce trip lengths and emissions. However, analysis of the redeveloped properties reveals more square footage per housing unit rather than a drastic increase in number of housing units, suggesting a material rather than demographic densification. On some redeveloped lots, two units replaced one home, but the majority of cases are simply bigger single-family homes, undermining the rhetoric of Smart Growth, densification, and environmentally sustainable development.

Photos 2 & 3: Top: Screenshot of residence prior to demolition (Source: Google Maps 2009). Bottom: The scale of a new single family home dwarfs the older bungalow next door.

Photo 4 (top): Security measures such as high fences and CCTV security cameras are visible at a redeveloped property on E 12th Street. Photo 5 (bottom): Spray paint on the banner announcing the redevelopment project.

The absence of a demographic densification through this process of redevelopment is supported by decennial census data. Between 2000 and 2010, the population of 78702 dropped slightly from 22,534 to 21,334 people, despite an increase in housing units from 7,725 to 9,032 units (US Census Bureau 2000 & 2010). More recent estimates from the American Community Survey support this trend; the 2013 population of 78702 calculated 21,655 residents (US Census Bureau, 2013). The degree to which green infrastructure and building techniques used in these new units can mitigate the impacts of larger homes with greater impervious cover requires further research.

Another interesting phenomenon that is occurring in the residential redevelopment of Central East Austin is the clustering of flipped households. Analysis of permitting dates and the imagery available from Google reveals multiple cases in which a neighboring home (or two or three) redevelop within a year or two of the first demolition on any given block (Photos 2 & 3, see previous page). It is perhaps relevant to think of this process as a form of reverse blockbusting, where as one property flips the vulnerability of displacement for neighboring families' increases. Historically, blockbusting was a real-estate practice that supported white flight to racially homogenous suburbs as urban areas such as New York and Chicago became more racially mixed during the Great Migration, purportedly jeopardizing high home values. Ironically, 60 years later, the reverse can be observed, where the arrival of one or two wealthier, often Anglo, homeowners can trigger an increase in property values while reversing historical demographics, reverberates across blocks and neighborhoods.

Signs of the clash between long-standing residents and new arrivals are quite visible in the built environment, as predominantly one-story bungalows are being doubled or tripled in both square footage and property value. Despite the often open, airy architectural designs and large street-facing windows featured in new homes, physical markers of separation have fortified over time. Photographs of redeveloped properties reveal an increased use in fences and of other demarcations, such as "no trespassing" signs, to separate the private and neighborhood spheres in the years following initial occupation of the home (Photo 4, see opposing page).

This process of gentrification and redevelopment, of course, has not gone uncontested by long-standing residents. PODER and other groups who were active in the environmental and urban justice movements have begun to organize their communities, collecting information and making proposals such as a community land trusts to City Council on the crisis facing affordable housing in their neighborhoods. Evidence in the built environment of this resistance is less obvious, although graffiti such as "Coming Never" spray-painted on the banner for a new development on Chicon is indicative of this tension (Photo 5, see opposing page). This housing development is one of very few affordable housing projects slated for the area, and yet construction has been stalled for several years.

Despite increasing awareness of the housing affordability crisis there is no consensus on how to improve the neighborhood and preserve its residents. In other words, the question of how to pursue sustainability planning, remove industrial hazards, or increase densities without triggering displacements remains unanswered. This tension is especially acute in a restricted planning environment such as Austin, where tools such as inclusionary zoning are illegal. The material changes documented in East Austin today reveal that the sustainability rhetoric has masked standard exclusionary real estate development projects under the marketable guise of ecological sustainability.

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Imagining Austin: *Political Economy and the Austin Comprehensive Plan*

by Adam Ogusky

Abstract

Using the lens of political economy, this textual analysis of Austin's comprehensive plan reveals it to be a deeply postmodern document, focusing on diversity and inclusivity of points of view to the detriment of normative vision. The plan consists primarily of discussions related to identity, culture, and other non-material attributes of the city, paying scant attention to material concerns such as conditions of life and labor, distribution and accumulation of capital, and labor as the source of economic value. The marginalization of such political economic concerns prevents the plan from addressing its professed ambitions for community progress and justice.

Keywords: Planning; political economy; postmodernism; Austin; comprehensive plan

On June 15, 2012, the Austin City Council adopted the city's first new comprehensive plan in over 30 years. The preceding plan, *Austin Tomorrow*, was first adopted in 1977. To say that Austin in 1977 was very different than the Austin of today is understatement in the extreme. In the intervening decades, Austin grew from a sleepy regional city of 322,000 whose economy depended largely on the university and state government into a global city of 824,000 (City of Austin, TX, 2014) with a reputation for fantastic growth and a strong technology-based economy, and as a progressive and vibrant raft in a sea of conservative Texas. The city had long outgrown its comprehensive plan; the last effort at an updated one ran aground of divisive and changing politics in the mid-eighties and after several years of work it failed to be passed by City Council (Gregor, 2010). And now that the excitement has somewhat abated—almost three years after the *ImagineAustin* comprehensive plan's adoption—it seems the time to return to the document with a critical eye. What has the modern, much-admired city of Austin written in its new plan?

A little comprehensive plan exegesis is not merely a literary frivolous pursuit. A plan conceals within it not only what its authors—and, by extension, city's residents—think about their city but how they think about cities more generally. A plan contains buried modes of urban thought, inchoate urban theories. Throgmorton (1996, 2003) has argued for a conception of planning as future-oriented storytelling and plans themselves as persuasive stories. If *ImagineAustin* is a persuasive story, what are its arguments? What does a close reading of the plan reveal about how its authors think about Austin and its future? About cities and urban processes? If a plan is a story then such questions can be answered through a textual analysis of the plan itself, which is the aim of this paper.

This paper will argue that *ImagineAustin* is a predominantly postmodern plan written for a postmodern era both in planning and in society more broadly. The bedrock of postmodern theory is the rejection of universal metanarratives in favor of a proliferation of fragmented discourses. Such fragmentation leads to a persistent focus on the value of diversity and an allergy to normative judgment. Instead, the postmodern plan favors multiple discourses, narratives, and points of view, all equally valid. These multiple discourses tend to be divided along cultural lines following the construction of meaning derived from cultural understandings of diversity. Groups and individuals in the plan are considered primarily in cultural terms rather than in economic or class terms. Difference and diversity as ideals are celebrated, always highlighting identity and values. In the postmodern plan, identity and spirit stand before consideration of the metanarrative of structural economic drivers, crowding out consideration of material conditions in the city.

Such postmodern preoccupations of identity, cultural difference, and the concern for a multiplicity of points of view are not unimportant, but they are also not the whole story. As Harvey (1992) points out, "If we accept that fragmented discourses are the only authentic discourses and that no unified discourse is possible, then there is no way to challenge the overall qualities of a system" (p. 594). Likewise, if the *ImagineAustin* plan is to make positive progressive change in its community it must do more than celebrate diversity and multiplicity.

A Marxist political economic framework can illuminate both the shortcomings in *ImagineAustin* and suggest how it might have done better. In constructing such a framework I identify three crucial Marxian lessons against which I read the plan: (1) sites of production and material conditions of life and labor are crucial determinants of the shape and functioning of society; (2) close attention must be paid to the distribution and accumulation of capital in communities; and (3) labor is the source of value. Crucially, all three points deal explicitly with material conditions in the city, a mode of inquiry that stands in stark contrast to the postmodern organization of *ImagineAustin.* Using this political economic framework will reveal the plan's avoidance of material considerations, as well as its failure to take strong normative positions which would further the progressive goals it espouses. Reading *ImagineAustin* through the lens of political economy reveals the weaknesses and contradictions in the plan while at the same time suggesting an outline for a better plan, one that considers the material conditions of Austinites, speaks with a strong normative voice, and one that, ultimately, might bend the arc of planning in Austin more steeply towards progress and justice.

The Postmodern Plan

ImagineAustin is aptly named: it spends a great deal of its time daydreaming, describing the city in non-material terms. It often seems that the plan is more about the Platonic ideal of Austin rather than the actual concrete, steel and limestone city. This is, of course, one of the important functions of any plan. They are aspirational documents, after all, but they must also be material documents which deal in material causes, means, and ends. The question here is to what extent the plan concerns itself with the immaterial world of values and identity to the exclusion of material questions of political economy.

Reading through the plan immediately reveals the pronounced importance of values and identity, while a Marxist critique will reveal the insufficiency of many of the plan's material concerns. But first, what

precisely is wrong with a postmodern concern with values and identity? The problem is two-fold. First, such concerns do not get at the structural drivers of material conditions and inequality in the city. It is not merely values and beliefs which shape the city; material conditions of production must be taken into account. Second, the postmodern rejection of metanarratives leads to a persistent focus on the value of diversity. There develops a certain equalization of different points of view and narratives, which begins to preclude the making of strong normative claims. Diversity, however, is not an end in itself, just as merely hearing points of view different from one's own is not an end in itself. It is, rather, the beginning of discussion, debate and adjudication which may lead, ultimately, to positive change.

As a first effort to tease out the mix of the postmodern and the material in *ImagineAustin* we can begin, as the plan does, with the vision statement:

> As it approaches its 200th anniversary, Austin is a beacon of sustainability, social equity, and economic opportunity; where diversity and creativity are celebrated; where community needs and values are recognized; where leadership comes from its citizens and where the necessities of life are affordable and accessible to all. Austin's greatest asset is its people: passionate about our city, committed to its improvement, and determined to see this vision become a reality (City of Austin, TX, 2012, p. 2).

It appears to be a promising start. The statement leads with sustainability, equity and economic opportunity—all potentially within the material political economic camp—before moving into the postmodern with diversity, creativity, and community values. The pendulum swings back with affordability and comes to rest on a somewhat curious note about the city as its people, though with the people not as workers, homeowners or renters, but as a repository of passion and commitment, a theme that continues throughout the plan. This short version of the vision statement is, then, a mix of economy and values. Thus, the plan begins on strong footing, though as it progresses the stress on values will continue while the economic factors listed above, when viewed through a critical political economic lens, prove to be significantly less material and progressive than they seem.

In an early indication of what is to come, the plan expounds on its purpose: "Only a comprehensive plan fully considers how the whole community's values, needs, people, and places are interrelated and interdepen-

dent" (City of Austin, TX, 2012, p. 4). It is no coincidence that values is listed first in this list of comprehensive plan considerations. And though needs, people, and places can certainly be viewed through a materialist, political economic lens, the plan will often view them in terms of values. Such talk of the city's values is foregrounded, particularly in the early pages of the plan, where it is mentioned explicitly six times in the first 12 pages. "By being unified in vision" through the plan, we Austinites can "carry forward our values" (City of Austin, TX, 2012, p. 6) or, a few pages later, the plan will positively shape Austin by being "grounded in community values" (p. 12). And if not values, then it is identity which precedes material or economic planning concerns: "Considering Austin as a whole means seeing all of its different pieces and identities and how they all fit together" (p. 13). Austin as a whole is given a fuller explanation further down the page:

> This comprehensive plan is holistic in its consideration of big themes like livability, sustainability, and complete communities. In addition to planning for land use, transportation, and other physical issues, it considers the provision of services, economic development, cultural needs, public health, resource efficiency, and equity. It provides a framework for how the physical, economic, and social pieces of the city and the region interconnect (p. 13).

Though perhaps didactic and certainly passé, it remains useful to point out that an orthodox Marxist interpretation would view this explanation of holistic planning as almost wholly tinkering with the superstructure while the base of economic production remains unmentioned. This is not to argue for a strict Marxist base-superstructure framework where relations of production determine all other social and political relations; rigid economic deterministic interpretations of Marx are long out of fashion. But the basic idea that economic conditions have enormous influence on society, creating divisions along economic and social lines, remains an insight too powerful to be discarded. In short: class still matters, and though class may not be structured quite as Marx described in the industrializing world of early capitalism, it remains a pervasive social fact—one which, moreover, remains shaped largely by conditions of economic production. This is all to say that it is not completely anachronistic to point out that the *ImagineAustin*'s vision of holistic planning deals almost exclusively with superstructural aspects of society, because such a fact leads us to question the lack of consideration of material conditions of labor. The above references to economic development and equity might in theory deal with such conditions, but they are not made explicit.

That said, the plan does express its ambition to speak of its residents, declaring "Austin is its people" (City of Austin, TX, 2012, p. 87). And what are Austinites? They are "engaged, compassionate, creative, and independent thinking people, where diversity is a source of strength, and where we have the opportunity to fully participate and fulfill our potential" (p. 87). In other words, Austinites are defined primarily through their character and identity, not by what they do in any sort of economic sense. And if Austin is its people, then Austin appears to be driven primarily by a sense of character and identity.

Language of this sort is found all throughout the plan, including the "We are a Unique Community" section: "Our progressive spirit, environmental ideals, and innovative character distinguish us from other metropolitan areas in Texas" (City of Austin, TX, 2012, p. 19). The plan could not be clearer: What sets Austin apart is its spirit, ideals and character, all decidedly abstract and immaterial qualities. A sidebar on that same page expounds on "The Austin Spirit" which "animates Austin's people and special places" and concludes, somewhat disturbingly, that "while no City program is ever going to be responsible for this spirit, nurturing it in whatever forms it takes in the future is as important to Austin's success as anything else in this plan" (p. 19). A political economic view must rebut: nurturing the spirit of Austin is not a particularly worthy goal of a planning exercise, let alone one as important as anything else a plan might attempt. Political economy maintains, rather, that a plan should focus on material economic conditions which, in turn, powerfully structure society. But the plan makes completely clear here that this is not its prime concern. I would argue further that by claiming the goal of nurturing the spirit of Austin to be equal in importance to any other planning concerns, *ImagineAustin* strikes a rather defeatist tone, absolving itself of both the responsibility and hope for effecting broader structural change for its city.

Besides the focus on values and spirit, the other prime weakness of this postmodern plan is its near constant blandishment of diversity, the obsessive inclusion of all points of view. Throughout the plan, all groups, all opinions and points of view, all forms of the good are equally valid, equally valuable, and given seemingly equal weight in the plan. No single group is singled out for particular privation or unjust abundance.

This equalization of narratives, needs, and goals leads to a lack of normative direction, dulling the progressive agenda the plan claims for itself. Paradigmatic of this approach is the plan's selection of sustainability as its central policy direction and organizing principle. Probably the most familiar definition of sustainability to the planner comes from Camp-

bell's (1996) sustainability triangle, where the three competing goals of economy, environment, and equity must be continually balanced against one another. *ImagineAustin* transforms this coherent idea of sustainability into a conceptual grab-bag by arbitrarily expanding the category of equity. Thus, for the plan, "sustainability means finding a balance among three sets of goals: (1) prosperity and jobs, (2) conservation and the environment, and (3) community health, equity, and cultural vitality" (City of Austin, TX, 2012, p. 7). So equity becomes, rather than one of three cogent points in the triangle, a confused mix with health and cultural vitality. There is no explanation for this move and no hint at what these concepts have to do with one another, if anything.

It is no surprise, then, that the concept of equity not only fails to organize the plan, but fails also to have a strong rhetorical or normative thrust. The goal is always to benefit all Austinites, as if all Austinites require the special beneficence of the city. This begins with the vision statement—"where the necessities of life are affordable and accessible to all" (City of Austin, TX, 2012, p. 2)—and continues throughout the plan. Such relentless focus on diversity and the benefit of all serves to deflect the deep inequalities that exist in the real Austin. It obscures the systematic accumulation by the few that proceeds on the backs of the many. In the end, the goal of providing benefit for all acts as a powerful distraction from what would be a normatively stronger focus on the pervasive unequal distribution of social goods and capital in society. Perhaps this argument is naïve, however. A plan is, after all, a politically contingent document, one which must serve many masters and offend none. But a plan that speaks of such lofty ideals in a city where the "progressive spirit" permeates the populace ought to do better.

The Political Economy Plan

How, then, might *ImagineAustin* have done better? One way would have been to organize the plan around the concerns of political economy, which makes three primary arguments. The first is that we must pay attention to sites of production and the material conditions of life and labor. If economic production is the engine driving society then conditions of production must be made central to the plan. And if the reproduction of the worker is crucial to economic production, as it most certainly is, then the material conditions of the worker are key. Second, Marxist political economy is concerned with the accumulation of capital to the capitalist and away from the worker. Though class today is not a simple labor-capitalist binary, the relative distribution of social goods and its structural causes remain crucial to any political economy. Third, political economy beginning with Adam Smith (1776/2003), and progressing through Ri-

cardo (1817/2004), Marx (1867/1990), and onward holds as its central tenet that labor is the source of value. If we take this claim as truth, we must consider its implications in a reading of *ImagineAustin* as well as in planning more broadly.

Sites of production and material conditions of life and labor

The plan starts off strong on material conditions of life and labor with an early focus on affordability in the vision statement. Just two pages later the issue is highlighted as a central challenge for the city with the plan remarking that housing in central Austin "is increasingly unaffordable for low-wage jobs that lag behind Austin's cost of living" (City of Austin, TX, 2012, p. 4). The problem is given deeper treatment later on when the increasing gap between median income and median housing price is noted (p. 28) along with the displacement by affluent newcomers of long-time residents in eastern and southern neighborhoods (p. 30). In the "Housing and Neighborhoods" section one of the key goals is unambiguously stated as "encouraging the preservation of affordable housing in neighborhoods across the city and in activity centers and corridors" (p. 136). The plan even specifically notes the need to preserve existing affordable housing "for very low-income persons" (p. 137), a victory from a progressive standpoint.

The lack of specific and measurable goals and policy recommendations dampens optimism regarding affordable housing, however. The need for "new and innovative funding mechanisms, such as public/private partnerships" (City of Austin, TX, 2012, p. 137) is both uninspiring and vague. Community land trusts are noted in a sidebar as a best practice (p. 137), but it is unclear whether this is an official recommendation or how, when, or by whom a land trust might be accomplished. The recommendations also continue the theme of promoting a variety of diverse housing for Austin's diverse population—notwithstanding the one recommendation already noted which targets low-income persons—as if the city need be concerned with providing more high end housing. Again, a focus on access for all is chosen over a focus on housing access for low- and middle-income residents. And just in case the lack of specificity on recommended housing market interventions left any doubt as to the appropriate responsible parties, the plan states:

> demand for market-rate housing can and should be met by the private sector. The City of Austin can work with private developers, non-profits, the state and federal governments, Travis County, and other local governments to help those individuals and families not able to afford

> market-rate housing, including seniors on a fixed income, people with disabilities, and low-wage workers (p. 201).

What is left out here is the answer to what happens when the market-rate housing leaves increasing numbers of residents on the outside of the housing market looking in. As the market fails an increasing portion of the populace, the problem becomes much larger than seniors, disabled people, and low-wage workers. Will the Austin housing market serve low- and middle- income residents? And, if it does not, who will address such market failure?

Finally, even here in housing affordability—that most economic of issues—strange mentions of character crop up in the plan. The plan calls for "Maintaining the unique and diverse character of Austin's neighborhoods, while meeting the market demands for close-in housing" and "maintaining the essential character" of low income neighborhoods undergoing redevelopment (City of Austin, TX, 2012, p. 126). The reader is left to guess at what is meant here by essential character. Perhaps it is a coded reference to existing single-family density? Architectural character maybe? The plan makes this reference clear with the following policy recommendation: "Protect neighborhood character by providing opportunities for existing residents who are struggling with rising housing costs to continue living in their existing neighborhoods" (p. 138). Essential character, then, refers to low-income residents. Thus we see the postmodern identity-obsessed plan transform a straightforward economic-justice issue into a mash-up of economy and identity. In reality, however, people are not neighborhood character; they are residents with essential needs, including affordable housing.

The replacement of economics or sites of production by a concern with character and identity continues in the plan's land use and transportation recommendations, most of which focus on urban design aesthetics, compactness for quality of life improvements, and creating people-friendly places. This latter section imagines the city primarily as a site of consumption: whether it is sidewalk cafes or the city experience being consumed, the goal is to create people-friendly places that are "active, inviting places with unique Austin flavor and character—fun to visit and welcoming for all" (p. 133). The essential point is that discussions of compact, people-friendly places—which become "more desirable, with enhanced value" (p. 133)—have largely replaced discussions of the city as a site of production. Labor, laborers, and the city as a site of economic production are given scant attention in the land use and transportation section.

What about the plan's sections on the economy? This ought to be where we find the most discussion of sites of production and material conditions of labor and this turns out to be the case. But these same sections also follow the pattern of the rest of the plan, returning repeatedly to issues of municipal spirit and identity. The section begins, typically, in mixed fashion: "We have a thriving economy, resilient due to its diversity and entrepreneurial spirit; however, we need to prepare our workforce to adapt to emerging employment sectors and technological changes" (City of Austin, TX, 2012, p. 45). The concrete need for workforce development here shares the sentence with an underspecified reference to diversity (industry mix? social?) and a claim of entrepreneurial spirit rather than any more concrete explanation for the actual process of entrepreneurship. The section continues to see-saw in like fashion, with the important recognition of a correlation between low education attainment and unemployment followed by praise for Austin's creative sector as a "driver of innovation and a significant consumer of urban amenities" (p. 45) rather than as a site of production and economic activity in and of itself. Just as low-income residents are not neighborhood character, artists are not urban amenities. They are, rather, laborers engaged in relations of economic production.

The plan does note the limited access to professional and skilled service jobs for those with low educational attainment and many minorities (City of Austin, TX, 2012, p. 48). Such consideration of what sorts of jobs are being created and for whom ought to be one of the pillars of the plan's economy section, and, perhaps of the plan more broadly. In what may be the biggest victory from a political economic standpoint, the plan notes that most regional job growth is in lower-wage positions resulting directly from population growth, such as service industry and hospitality services jobs (p. 75). It is curious, however, that these remarks are found in the "Developing a Regional Perspective" section rather than in the above discussion on the economy.

As for economic history, the plan does a good job of recounting the birth and growth of the high-tech industry cluster in Austin and its important early links to higher education (City of Austin, TX, 2012, pp. 20-21). Such economic histories help to describe both how industrial development drives urban development and how existing material assets—such as a well-supported research university and an educated workforce—can attract and support industry. As elsewhere, however, this economic history is followed immediately by the claim that it is not such material resources and sites of production that propel the city forward. Rather, it is that "the spirit of creativity and acceptance has created a place where people want to be and has set the stage for our current and fu-

ture economic success" (p. 22). Again, it is Austin's spirit, personality, and identity that matter and that cause material success and growth. In the expanded vision statement the plan uses even stronger language, claiming: "Creativity is the engine of Austin's prosperity" (p. 85). Here, as elsewhere, the plan compulsively cites creativity as the explanation for Austin's strong economy, ignoring sites and conditions of production while at the same time failing to give any substantive explanation for what, precisely, is meant by creativity, how it functions, or how it supports economic prosperity.

The plan's economic recommendations, however, are a marked improvement. Several of the key challenges listed deal with concrete issues of production and labor, including calls for expanded job training in areas linked to local industry and community needs, the creation of well-paid jobs in the burgeoning green energy and building sectors and increasing well-paying jobs more generally, encouraging and sustaining homegrown businesses, and expanding the economic base through the development of a medical center (City of Austin, TX, 2012, p. 141).

A close look at the related section of the Action Matrix reveals a more mixed picture, however. A Priority Action to help support the creative industries calls for a series of programs including incubators, business accelerators, financial assistance, and technical assistance, though nothing is said about what transpires in such creative industries and what sorts of jobs they provide (City of Austin, TX, 2012, p. 241). This recommendation, however, stands out among others in the Action Matrix by listing specific programs and who will be responsible. Another promising recommendation calls for promoting the formation of worker- and community-owned businesses (p. 243), making a clear statement about worker conditions, though offering no specifics on how and by whom this will be accomplished. Similarly, recommendations for workforce training make no mention of who will be responsible, nor of targeting specific jobs, employers, or industries for desirable labor conditions. Equally bereft of detail is the recommendation to promote the employment of historically underemployed populations. Drifting away from the realm of material labor conditions now, the Action Matrix recommends strategic incentives and investments for particular industries and business districts while omitting any mention of targeting for desirable employment characteristics (p. 240) and elsewhere calls for an increase in marketing for and investment in Austin as a tourist destination (p. 241)—contributing to the vision of the city as a site of consumption rather than production. By and large, the economic planning recommendations are vague on who does what, when, and how. They are not focused on what transpires at sites of production or conditions of labor in Austin. Much like the section

on housing noted above, the plan leaves such issues in the hands of the market.

Over all, then, *ImagineAustin*'s treatment of sites of production and the material conditions of life and labor is inconsistent at best. The plan does a reasonable job of recognizing the challenges facing the city, including serious threats to affordability for increasing numbers of residents and disparate access to work which pays decent wages. But the plan, after recognizing these problems, fails to substantively deal with them. Potential solutions are obscured by talk of values and identity on the one hand and, on the other, are given in such broad terms that they fail to be solutions in any specific sense.

Distribution of social goods and structural causes

To the extent that the *ImagineAustin* plan speaks about the distribution of social goods, it tends to call for benefits for everybody. From the beginning of the Economy section: "Austin must harness its strong economy to expand opportunity and social equity to all residents" (City of Austin, TX, 2012, p. 141). Language like this pervades the plan, leaving the Marxist reader feeling uneasy as the cumulative effect of the many calls for (insert your preferred social good here) for all Austinites serves to obscure the needs of those who are left out of Austin's strong economy. It is, in fact, the very opposite of focusing on the distribution of social goods, one of the most important Marxist imperatives. This is because a focus on distribution leads to the recognition of structural inequality and, ultimately, to such inequality's social drivers, whereas calls for improvement for all do the opposite, diverting attention from inequality and even, implicitly, endorsing a sort of trickle-down model of economic growth: improvement for all makes all better. Such a belief dismisses that other crucial Marxist point that the accumulation of social goods occurs all too often at the expense of others, and these very same losers in the game of capital tend to lose repeatedly. Real equity and justice demands that we answer to those people, not to all people.

Avoidance of issues of distribution continues throughout the plan, in discussions of city parks and facilities, schools, healthcare and elsewhere. For instance, while the plan notes the large number of parks and the high proportion of park acreage per 1,000 residents in comparison to peer cities (City of Austin, TX, 2012, p. 57), there is no discussion of where parks are and where they are not. Though the plan does acknowledge in rather anodyne fashion that "many areas of the city are not adequately served by the park system" (p. 61), it fails to question where these facilities are, who lives in places that have relatively greater or lesser access, or

whether these are linked to historical conditions of deprivation for particular groups or areas of the city. Moreover, no remedy to unequal park access is offered.

Rather than question such issues of distribution, the plan chooses to speak about accessibility, though almost always in a general sense. Hence, from the extended vision statement: "Austin is accessible" regarding transportation (City of Austin, TX, 2012, p. 86); "Equitable opportunities are accessible to all" (p. 87); "We enjoy an accessible, well-maintained network of parks" (p. 85), and so on. Such language elides questions of access for whom and why particular groups or areas continue to have less access than others. At the outset *ImagineAustin* argues that this comprehensive plan challenges us "to remember and protect those who lack a voice, money, and power" (p. 13). Again, the plan aims high in aspirational, value-laden language, though it falls short in its specific choice of focus and language.
The exception is in the "Society" section where a number of the key challenges focus on those most in need. The plan recognizes that "there are populations and parts of the city that lag behind in education" and that educational opportunities, including job training, must be provided to them (City of Austin, TX, 2012, p. 170). On that same page the plan argues for the need to provide health care "for all residents, including the economically disadvantaged, uninsured, and underinsured" (p. 170). Such specific targeting of the neediest Austinites is a welcome change from the otherwise relentless calls for improved accessibility and benefits for all. Several recommendations in the "Society" section follow suit, including one to "Improve educational opportunities for marginalized populations and provide better services for at-risk segments of our community" (p. 172). However, as elsewhere, the plan remains vague on the specifics of these recommendations, who will be responsible, and how they will be accomplished.

Overall, then, the plan largely avoids discussing issues of distribution, preferring instead a vocabulary of inclusiveness an accessibility. Where the plan does deal with distribution, it fails to provide detail and specific solutions, particularly in economic terms, to deal with the problem.

If labor is the source of value, then…

The final lesson from political economy is that labor is the source of value. What does it mean to consider this insight with regard to planning? How do we evaluate *ImagineAustin* on the basis of such a claim? The plan obviously does not discuss economic theory or give its opinion on the somewhat arcane question of the source of economic value. It does,

however, imply agreement with the neoclassical argument that economic value derives from the process of exchange. As such, value is immaterial and mutable; it is merely what one will pay for something at a point in time. *ImagineAustin* sees the value of the city as deriving from the immaterial as well—from its values, its identity, its creativity. In either case value seems to precipitate out of the ether through processes of exchange, either in a market sense or through the exchange ideas, spirit, or words and creativity.

A labor theory of value, on the other hand, reminds us that value comes from material sources, from toil by human beings. Going back to the very beginning of the plan, *ImagineAustin* claims that the city's greatest asset is its people, but what kind of people are these and what are they doing? Are Austinites valued and creating value through their character, spirit, and creativity or through their labor? By now the answer to this question ought to be obvious. Moreover, this is not an esoteric distinction. Rather, these two ways of viewing value creation have different planning and policy implications. What would a plan look like that took as its guiding principle the labor theory of value?

It would have to begin with the basic tenet that because labor creates value, labor must reap value. This is both just and reasonable. In practice, it would mean that good housing be available to all, particularly those who work at the bottom of the wage scale. The value workers bring into being through their labor must be returned to them in material form, enabling them to, at a bare minimum, reproduce their own labor and support a family in good health and comfort. In order to accomplish this, jobs which provide a good wage must be available to all workers, allowing labor to remain in the same community for which it produces value.

If we keep in mind, as a rhetorical device, the axiom that labor is the source of value then we will be mindful of targeting social goods to those who labor but do not benefit from the social values subsequently produced. And for those who remain outside of the workforce and without access to good jobs, the labor theory of value instructs us to do whatever is necessary to bring them into the workforce in a meaningful fashion. Finally, the labor theory of value reminds us constantly to focus on the concrete and material conditions of life and labor. It reminds us that value—all sorts of value, beyond the mere economic—are created through what people do. When a laborer tightens a bolt on an assembly line, they create economic value. When a musician plays a set in a club on Red River, they create social and aesthetic value. Such value does not come into being merely through our character, spirit or identity, but through our

actions, through our labor. And if we recognize this, we also recognize the necessity of supporting the material conditions that make such labor possible in our city.

Conclusion

The *ImagineAustin* plan is an aspirational document. It envisions a better Austin—one which is affordable, more just, and retains much of what makes the city special to its residents. If we consider *ImagineAustin* in Throgmorton's terms as a persuasive story, this is the future Austin for which the plan argues. However, the plan argues that the way to get there is through a celebration of and focus on the city's identity, culture, and diversity. It reveals a mode of urban thinking that sees the drivers of the city as largely immaterial. Its deeply postmodern character—revealed through its recurrent considerations of diversity and inclusivity, character and identity—diverts attention from the material considerations of political economy. This postmodern story will not realize *ImagineAustin*'s vision for the city's future.

On planning as storytelling, Throgmorton (2003) wrote, "I believe that contemporary planning stories must be inspired by a normative vision" (p. 136). This is precisely what is left out of the story that *ImagineAustin* weaves. The postmodern imperative to diversity and inclusion rather than normative claims dilutes its progressive aims, diverting attention from the acute material needs of Austinites who are left out of its remarkable growth and progress. Taking a political economic viewpoint, in this and other plans, might help retain our focus on such material needs and outcomes, setting us on the path to real progress and equity in the city.

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Photo 1: Jumpolin demolition. 2015. Photo by author.

Piñata Power: *Reflections on Race, Love, and Planning*

by Elizabeth Walsh

Dear fellow planners,

I write to you today as a white woman completing her doctorate in Community and Regional Planning at the University of Texas at Austin this spring, 2015. I am also a gentrifier and a neighborhood activist who moved from Boston to the Holly Neighborhood of East Austin[1] in 2006. Like many other planners committed to sustainability, I strive keep the oft-forgotten E of Equity at the table, along with Economy and En-

1 This historically working class Hispanic neighborhood just north of Lady Bird Lake has experienced a disproportionate share of environmental burdens in the past and is currently experiencing rapid investment, expansion of amenities, and demographic change. To be more specific, from 2000 to 2010, my ZIP code experienced the second highest increase in the white share of population out of all others in the United States (Petrilli, 2012).

Photo 2: Jumpolin Press Conference. 2015. Courtesy of Rene Renteria Photography.

vironment (Oden, 2010). Yet I confess that when I talk about equity, I am tempted to talk about it exclusively from an analytical and economic perspective. That is to say, I am tempted to leave two dreaded four letter words out of the conversation: race and love. I am writing to you in the hopes that you might join me as I strive to bring them to personal and professional conversations about the future of our communities. To open the conversation, I offer my reflections on this challenge, from my particular position at this particular point in time.

Spring in Austin: new life is emerging everywhere. Each day new leaves unfurl along tree-lined streets. New development is just as abundant—each day new building permits appear along thoroughfares and neighborhoods with fertile ground for redevelopment. An estimated 110 new people move to Austin every day, and many are flocking to centrally located neighborhoods such as mine in the 78702 ZIP Code, just east

Photo 3: Piñata power. 2015. Photo by author.

of downtown (Hawkins & Novak, 2014).
The bees and the press are buzzing over the flowering opportunities. Earlier this spring, for instance, the AAA magazine *Texas Journey* featured a cover story on Reinventing East Austin that celebrated how "the once derelict neighborhood is evolving into an epicenter of creativity and panache." The story showcases East Austin as a great example of "urban renewal on a human scale." (Oko, 2015).

Creativity, renewal, growth—they are the hallmarks of spring and the grand prize for economic development planners whose growth strategy rests on attracting urbanites belonging to the creative class (Florida, 2014). With bright ideas, outside capital, and disposable incomes, these new residents are often credited with the revitalization of previously neglected neighborhoods.

While there are undeniable advantages of this rebirth and renewal, this year it is much more difficult to ignore the darker underbelly of this pattern of growth. The crises of Ferguson, MO, in the preceding summer and fall have drawn our attention to how many people are excluded from the promise of urban regeneration. These crises and the emergent Black Lives Matter movement have interrupted our national consciousness and directed it to the brutality of collectively-perpetuated racism and unexamined white privilege throughout the U.S. Personally, while I might have been content to talk about equity without talking about race in the past, this year I cannot help but see the unconsciously reproduced patterns of racism in my neighborhood, city, and nation.

As one prime example of the clear presence of racism operating in my neighborhood, a few days before Valentine, just blocks from my house, I witnessed the demolition of the Jumpolin piñata store by two young, white, male entrepreneurs who acquired the property in fall 2014. They were in such a hurry to level the building to put up a parking lot in time for South by Southwest that they sent the bulldozers in before the Mexican-American business owners could clear out their merchandise and personal belongings. As the developers attempted to justify their act, they compared their displaced tenants to roaches, using explicitly racist language to suggest that forcible eviction and demolition was a necessary act (Seale, 2015). As one social critic astutely noted, "the Latino community was left violated through their symbol of festivity trampled by that of their colonizers" (Ward, 2015).

The story that gentrification is a function of market forces independent of racism is untenable. As long as we can use race or ethnicity to deem some people more or less entitled to respect, dignity, and opportunity

than others, racism will continue to shape our economic interactions and mask our own complicity in injustice. Ironically, the traditional seven-pointed piñata is itself a symbol of the seven deadly sins of envy, sloth, gluttony, greed, lust, wrath, and pride. The piñata stick, a symbol of love, is used to break through the sins and release the abundance contained within (San Benito Historical Society, n.d.). If there is a lesson here, perhaps it is that we have a responsibility to notice our greed, gluttony, pride, and complicity in systems of oppression, and use the force of our love to break through them. When our economic interactions become free of racism and guided instead by an invisible hand of love, we may very well discover regenerative forms of development.

Should this happen, it will start with the conversations we hold today. For me, it begins with a pledge to bring love and race to the table, both personally and professionally. In my neighborhood, that means standing in solidarity with my neighbors to hold new development accountable to community values. In my field, it means standing up and inviting uncomfortable conversations. Thankfully, I am learning more by stepping into the discomfort. I am sharing my experiences in the hopes that you might share your experiences as well.

My first real experiment in bringing love and race to a professional setting was at the national South By Southwest Eco conference (SXSW Eco) in October 2014. SXSW Eco is an annual conference for innovative environmental leadership held in Austin. I attended with other colleagues who had recently participated in Huston-Tillotson University's First Annual Building Green Justice Forum, held in late September. Dr. Robert Bullard, the father of environmental justice scholarship, gave the opening keynote address titled "Climate Change and Vulnerability." He argued that climate change is the number one environmental justice issue, and that when we talk about building resilience, we must consider the most vulnerable first, and we must consider how race shapes vulnerability. Dr. Bullard made a powerful call for a Southern Region Climate and Community Resilience Initiative led by a research network of Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs) like Huston-Tillotson. In previous years I attended, social justice concerns were generally missing at SXSW Eco. Dr. Bullard's presence seemed to suggest that mainstream environmentalists were more willing to engage questions of race, class, gender, and power in conversations about environmental sustainability.

Given this powerful kickoff, I was excited about the workshop to be held on the last day: *urban renewal* and *resilient design*. *Urban renewal* and *resilient design* sound similar, but I imagined this panel would juxtapose the two. On the one hand, we have the top-down *urban renewal* pro-

grams that devastated minority communities during the era of highway construction and white flight to suburbs from the 1950s through 1970s (Hays, 2012). On the other hand, there has been growing interest in bottom-up approaches to resilient design and development to advance climate justice for the most vulnerable, as called for by Dr. Bullard.[2]

To my surprise, the panel did not develop this contrast. The all-white panel used urban renewal interchangeably with resilient design before the almost exclusively white audience. One of the panelists shared a historic narrative about how we built Atlanta's highway system and suburbs in the 1950s. Without defining who was included in *we*, he noted that eventually *we* realized single family suburban development was a recipe for social isolation, and that car-dependency eroded our health and quality of life. Now, he explained, we are beginning to return to the city, transforming abandoned urban land into vibrant, healthy community spaces.

I was stunned. This story and others presented by the panelists were inspiring and innovative in many ways. Yet at no point did any panelist mention race, racism, poverty, or social inequality. The historical critique of suburbanization neglected to mention white flight or urban disinvestment. The discussion of current revitalization neglected to name gentrification or the suburbanization of poverty. As I sat there, a keen awareness settled in: if we do not talk about racism when we talk about resilience, then we are likely perpetuating it. Resilience is essentially a property of a system that can recover in the face of disruption or shock. I realized that racism and capitalism are two exceptionally resilient systems, and they have been mutually reinforcing each other for at least 400 years. As much as I loved the ideas presented by the panelists, suddenly they appeared to amount to little more than the greenwashing of an economic machine that damages people and the environment.

I was speechless. But, having recently resolved to muster the courage to speak up about racism from a place of love, I stood up and found myself at the microphone, asking the first question. I thanked them each for their efforts to advance environmental resilience, and thanked the panelist from Atlanta for giving us some historical context. I expressed my surprise that, though the panel included *urban renewal* in its title, there was no mention of the historic federal housing policies, let alone a discussion of their impact on low-income communities and people of color. I noted my concern about the characterization of urban land as

2 The growing literature on resilience emphasizes the importance of strong social networks and social capital in the adaptive capacity of coupled social and ecological systems (Folke et al., 2002; Folke, Hahn, Olsson, & Norberg, 2005).

abandoned when there were still people, usually people of color, living there. I asked them what they have done to prevent environmental gentrification, the process by which environmental improvements lead to increased costs of living and replacement of low-income communities (usually of color) with wealthier (and more white) residents (Banzhaf & McCormick, 2006).
Having spoken, I breathed in relief. I honored my word to include racism in conversations when it was missing, despite the discomfort. I spoke from my love, for the panelists and for the possibility of just, flourishing communities. I brought race and love to the table. I sat down and listened for the responses.

Interestingly, the panelist from Atlanta indicated that the Atlanta Land Trust Collaborative (ALTC) was created to maintain affordability in neighborhoods at risk of gentrification as a result of the developments discussed. He was well aware of the histories of racial segregation and Urban Renewal. It was not that he was ignorant of these issues; he chose not to bring them up. Just like I nearly did, and have done before. Later he explained to me that one can only fit so much into a talk, and one must tailor it to the audience. We were at SXSW Eco, and his audience was (mostly white) environmentalists. Does this mean that mainstream (white) environmentalists generally find discussion of vulnerable people, structural racism, and equitable development to be either off-limits or not germane to conversations about resilience and sustainability?

In truth, that is a weak question. A more powerful one going forward is: Are we, as professionals committed to the design and planning of just and resilient cities, willing to lovingly and courageously open conversations that address and dismantle racism with our colleagues and in the public?

My personal answer is yes.

What is yours? What small beginnings or bold actions are you taking to bring your love and willingness to engage the challenges of racism in the planning of our communities? What practices enable you to listen more compassionately, love more boldly, and look more critically at the systems of which we are part? Where do you find yourself stopped? How can we more powerfully challenge and support each other as we engage in these difficult dialogues? Going forward, we must work together to create thriving, resilient communities where all might flourish.

Respectfully,
Elizabeth Walsh

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Photo 1: Why this Fence? 2014. Pointe-Saint-Charles, Montreal. All photos by author.

A Reflection on Exploratory Research in Pointe-Saint-Charles

by Aditi Ohri

This paper describes the research process leading up to an intervention orchestrated in a historically working-class neighborhood in Montreal, Quebec. Pointe-Saint-Charles, also known as the Point, has been experiencing rapid gentrification following condominium developments along the nearby Lachine Canal in the early 2000s. My intervention took place within the context of a graduate course in the Art History department at Concordia University, titled "Industrialization and the Build Environment," led by Dr. Cynthia Hammond. As a class, we immersed ourselves in the neighborhood through an anti-poverty not-for-profit organization, Share the Warmth, which has been working in the Point since 1989. We sought to examine and understand various components of the built environment in the region through oral history, film, and architectural

Photo 2: What do you have to hide? 2014.

and spatial theory. I was interested in Megan Boler's feminist *pedagogy of discomfort* (1999) and work by the Centre for Oral History and Digital Storytelling (COHDS) at Concordia as well. Intending to highlight the invisible aspects of lived experience that produce the built environment of a given place, I conducted interviews with long-term residents of the region with the intention to collaborate and produce an artwork that would enable an audience to empathize with the embodied experiences of my interviewee. The outcome was a walking tour of the Point through the experiences of Steven Wells, a resident of the area since 1999. I led my peers through the neighborhood, stopping at places Steven described in our interview, and prompting participants to read excerpts from his transcript out loud. My initial goal was to attempt what Erica Lehrer (2011) calls an "imperfect attempt to bear witness." My process was grounded in observations about the built environment of Pointe-Saint-Charles at the intersections of spatial theory and social justice.

The Point

Montreal was founded as a colonial hub of the French and, later, British empires. By 1830, Montreal's Lachine Canal, directly north of Pointe-Saint-Charles, was bringing tons of goods in and out of the city to and from distant metropoles and colonies. Throughout the 19th century, Montreal was a very im-


Photo 3: Steven Wells in his apartment. November 12, 2014.

portant trading port, generating the majority of Canadian wealth. The canal's factories employed thousands of workers who settled in Montreal's southwest neighborhoods. The population in the Point was predominantly Irish, French-Canadian, English, and Scottish. In the 20th century, Portuguese and Italian immigrants settled in the neighborhood, and today, immigrants from South and East Asia also live in the Point. Following the opening of the St. Lawrence Seaway in 1959 and the subsequent closure of the Lachine Canal in 1970, factories shut down in large numbers, leaving many residents of the Point in search of work elsewhere. Between 1961 and 1991, almost half of the district's population left the Point. Those who remained forged grassroots alliances to fight the city's sudden unwillingness to maintain the district in the wake of deindustrialization. The city began to shut down parks, neglected to maintain infrastructure such as streetlights, and even planned to construct a major thoroughfare in the area that would displace hundreds of households in the 1960s. Community organizers fought against this proposed development, and worked to create amenities such as community gardens, a health clinic, women's shelters, and food banks.

In the past two years, Pointe-Saint-Charles has become home to 2,000 new households, the majority of which are middle to upper class. The tensions of economic inequality are palpable in present day Pointe-Saint-Charles. Walking along Rue de Coleraine in September 2014, I stopped at an alleyway to read an aggressive question spray-painted onto a fence. "Pourquoi cette palissade?" the black letters glared at an adjacent condo, clearly indicating the direction of the question's gaze (Photo 1, see page 89). This intervention in the landscape of an otherwise peaceful alleyway ties social tensions to physical space. My perspective suddenly became informed by an awareness of the abruptness of gentrification in the Point, and the subsequent vulnerability and anger it provokes in those whom it threatens to displace. Walking further south down the alleyway, I saw a second intervention in black spray paint, likely done by the same hand: "t'as quoi à cacher?" marked on a fence (Photo 2, see opposing page). This act reveals the fence as a signifier of separation, built to resist interaction with a surrounding community. The alleyway seemed generally well maintained compared to most residential streets in the southern part of the Point. The question "what do you have to hide?" addresses the privilege inherent in the construction and renovation of private spaces. The question connotes a tone of exasperated dispossession, accusing those living inside the fence of hoarding wealth.

Inspired by these emotional responses, I wanted to explore the intersecting boundary between the identity of an individual and the identity of a

place (Davidson, 2007). As former factory buildings along the canal are redeveloped as condominiums, the Point is branded as an up-and-coming neighborhood. In formulating my project, I wondered whose interests are validated and whose lives are erased in this real estate narrative? I wanted to bring attention to the stories of people whom gentrification renders invisible and threatens to displace. Although the highest concentration of Montreal's subsidized housing can currently be found in Pointe-Saint-Charles, many co-operatives will lose their government funding in the next five years due to austerity measures, forcing rents to increase exponentially. Meanwhile, not a single condo development in the Point integrates middle and low-income units into its building designs. My intention was to destabilize a viewer's dominant narrative about the Point by having them step beyond their comfort zone and experience the neighborhood from an underrepresented perspective.

Steven Wells

I first met Steven Wells at Share the Warmth on October 6, 2014. We met for two interviews in November (Photo 3, see page 90). We talked at length about a variety of topics that ranged in emotional intensity. He spoke of voter registration, racist vandalism in the Point, police harassment in Little Burgundy (an adjacent Montreal neighborhood), the potential closure of his co-op in five years, and feeling uncomfortable walking hand-in-hand with his partner in public. We also discussed the history of Montreal's gay village, a largely unknown legacy that we both agreed would be beneficial for gay youth to learn about. Steven illuminated a perspective that I did not often see reflected in discussions of gentrification in Montreal, and felt it important to me that a larger audience witness his story.

In *Pedagogy of Discomfort*, Megan Boler (1999) describes the process of witnessing as a mode of receptivity to knowledge that engenders empathy and a sense of responsibility to reflect on one's actions and privileges. Boler constructs the act of *witnessing* in contrast to *spectating*, wherein the viewer is not obligated to critically reflect on their value systems. Augusto Boal's *Theatre of the Oppressed* (1979, 1993) and audio-walks such as Walking the Post-Industrial Canal, produced by the COHDS, inspired me to use the format of the walking tour. In *theatre of the oppressed*, one person recounts an experience of marginalization and fellow participants re-enact the situation with an alternative conclusion that empowers the storyteller. Although I did not alter Steven's words for the walking tour, it was my intention to empower his perspective and validate the political importance of his experiences of

race, sexuality, and class in the built environment of the Point. Our conversations reminded me that people who are different from what society deems normal often move through public spaces in a way that is guided by feelings of exclusion and avoidance. This reality is not usually perceptible to those who move through the same spaces with the privilege of feeling safe from physical danger, and it is exactly this privilege that I sought to illuminate.

Conclusion

On November 13, 2014, readers were performing Steven's words in public spaces throughout the Point (Photo 4). My aim was to facilitate the dissolution of distance between the reader's and Steven's experiences (Boler, 1999). In recounting stories on harassment and uncomfortable realizations about his sexual orientation, I saw my peers experiencing Steven's perspective of the Point. They were not mere spectators to his narrative. In conversations following the walk, one participant reported that they felt as if they had an "out-of-body experience" and another stated that they came away from the intervention with a deepened understanding of their white privilege. It is impossible to state that all participants reflected on privilege in the same way, but it is encouraging to know that this strategy has the potential to succeed.

Although Steven did not attend the walking tour, he met my colleagues at Share the Warmth shortly afterwards. He reported feeling shy but very curious. He told me that he knows people who would be willing to share their stories if I were interested in doing this again. We met again in January 2015 and he let me know that this project pushed him to consider more of his life's events, to think critically about what it means to be a Black person in Canada, and to have more difficult conversations with family

Photo 4: Documentation of Walking Tour. November 13, 2014. Photo courtesy of David Ward.

members. He mentioned that he now aspires to write an autobiography that connects his life story with the history of gay culture and racism in Canada.

Steven was initially surprised by my idea but approved and encouraged me to execute the intervention in this way. I feel this was an effective way to invite participants to meditate on lived experiences of racism and homophobia, and negotiate their personal relationships to these issues. These marginalized narratives have only recently begun to be discussed in public fora, but they are at present underrepresented in the media and largely absent in discussions about Canadian social policy. This absence points to the urgency for stories such as Steven's to be told in a context that allows listeners to become witnesses and agents for positive social change.

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Photo 1: The ambiguity of fencing. On the right, a park, on the left, a former collective space—both are delimited by fences. All photos by author.

The Neighborhood and the Park: *Drumul Taberei, Bucharest*

by Maria Alexandrescu

Drumul Taberei is a neighborhood in Bucharest, Romania, constructed from 1966 through 1974. With 60,000 dwelling units, it currently stands as one of the city's densest areas. Drumul Taberei was planned to include many green spaces between buildings, integral transportation networks, and a large park. From a satellite image, one can pick out right away the u-curve of the street after which it is named, as well as the dark green color among its building slabs. It is one of Bucharest's greenest neighborhoods.


Photos 2 & 3: Informal gardens, Drumul Taberei.


Photos 4 & 5: Informal gathering places, Drumul Taberei.

Around the collective housing blocks are collective yards, though it is unclear how these semi-public, in-between spaces are managed; indeed, many of the trees and plants were brought there by the residents—a number of whom had been displaced from villages following forced collectivization and urbanization of rural areas.

Prior to the fall of the Communist regime in 1989, these green spaces belonged to the people, in accordance with party ideology. But to whom do they belong now? Many of the areas were claimed by residents of the ground floors who saw it as an opportunity to reconnect with pre-socialist relations to the land. And so the fences went up, and behind them lawns, rose gardens, small vegetable plots. The fences are perhaps only a small part of the spontaneous interventions that dot the former collective space, though they are also the most visible. But apart from the fences, there are benches in front of buildings, shaded tables used for drinking and board games—areas for gathering and spending time.

Photos 6 through 9: Scenes from historical parks in Bucharest (top row) compared with scenes from within Drumul Taberei (bottom row)—is there really that much of a difference in spatial quality?

Apart my grandparents moved to Drumul Taberei in 1970, I would spend my summers playing and exploring its park. In 2013, the park was closed for renovation. Among the trees there appeared large, heavy steel frames, and artificial hills. Until then, I had to find another place to walk. Rather than walk through the neighborhood only to get to the park, I made the neighborhood itself the destination of my walks. Between the buildings, the yards had about as many trees, as many areas of vegetation, as many benches as the park. Of course, since the neighborhood was large, there were also a number of smaller parks within, as well as church yards, school yards, and barren lots. But, when considered with the interventions in the former collective in-between spaces, was the difference between the neighborhood and the park really that great?

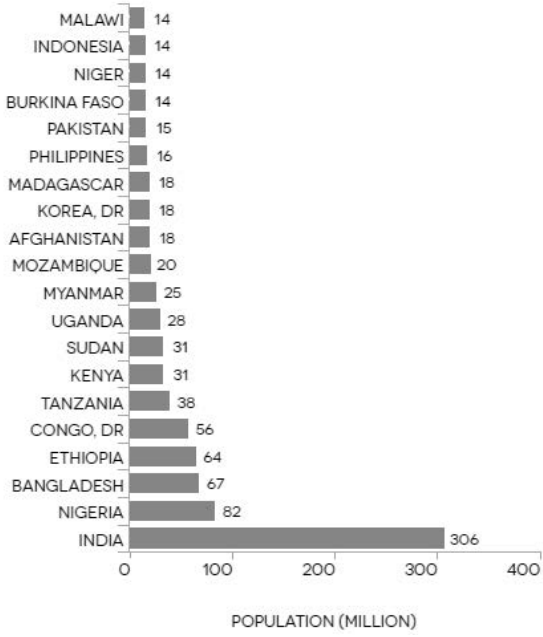

Figure 1: Nations with largest access deficits. Source: Global Tracking Framework, World Bank's Global Electrification Database. 2012.

A Case for Regional Planning in Energy Access Delivery

by Vivek Shastry

The importance of energy access, or the provision of clean, reliable sources of cooking fuels and electricity for rural development, cannot be overstated; it can be a livelihood enabler, unlocking opportunities for better health, education, economic development, and so forth. Despite advances, we still live in a world where one in six people lack access to energy. An overwhelming 85 percent of that population live in rural areas, and 87 percent of them in sub-Saharan Africa and South Asia. This includes over 300 million people in India alone (Figure 1). Why has progress been so slow?

Researchers worldwide have focused on two important dimensions of energy access: measurement and delivery mechanism. The former deals

with how to quantify the nature and level of access in a region, while the latter addresses the different institutional processes that facilitate the delivery of energy services. In the summer of 2014, I set out to find the relevant indicators used to understand energy access in India. Specifically, I wanted to learn how such indicators could help understand regional disparities in energy access, and further help prioritize the implementation of various schemes designed to address this. Before long, I learned not only was there no understanding of regional disparities and opportunities, but there was no institutional process to recognize and make use of this information.

My focus then shifted to understanding the nature of energy policy-making in India—a distinctly state-driven top-down approach. In the past decade or so, a number of entrepreneurs have successfully pioneered energy delivery processes to facilitate access to the rural poor. The knowledge that they accrue from working on the ground, what I will henceforth refer to as local knowledge, plays an important role in complex processes like energy access delivery. Drawing from theoretical precedents, historical context, and empirical evidence, I argue that such useful local knowledge does not find a place in the current top-down decision-making environment. Instead, I propose a regional energy planning process to bring this knowledge to the forefront, and identify the key elements of that framework. But first, why have the top-down approaches seen limited success?

Limited Success of Top-Down Approaches

The history of electrification in India has been shaped by the social and political context. Political scientist Sunila Kale (2014) explores the reasons behind India's limited success in the electrification project, despite it being central to the conceptualization of Indian modernity by early nationalists and planners. The initial conduit for electricity into rural India was for its productive impact in agro-industries and for irrigation; household access only followed. The expansion of the national electric grid, deciding which customers should be served, which sectors should be subsidized, and so forth were all decisions that rested with the state. Following this history it is apparent how energy access delivery has been a top-down process in India—an approach that has had only limited success

A number of policies have been enacted in the last decade to achieve goals of universal access. For example, the National Electricity Policy (2005), National Rural Electrification Policy (2006), Rajiv Gandhi Grameen

Vidyutikaran Yojaja (2005), and Remote Village Electrification Program (2006) have all envisioned complete energy access but have missed several deadlines (Nathan, 2014). As of 2011, over 45% of rural households still did not have access to electricity in India (Planning Commission, 2013). Even among those that have connections, the supply is usually inadequate and unreliable.

The reasons often cited for these failures include the disconnect between public and private agencies in policy discourse, untested and sometimes unnecessary subsidy schemes, and a general lack of institutional framework for strategizing policy implementation (Balachandra, 2011). The only avenue for stakeholders to be involved in policy-making is a consultation process at the top, which has a tendency to only focus on the big picture, while missing the regional differences. As Indian economist Prabhat Patnaik observes, "the proliferation of 'centrally sponsored schemes' handed down to the states where they have to contribute a certain share, which is itself arbitrarily fixed by the center, has further taken away the freedom of state governments to make their own state plans" (2014). State governments tend to take a similar catch-all approach, often blinded to local knowledge and regional opportunities. The next question is: what is local knowledge, and why is it important?

Complexity and the Role of Local Knowledge

Several different actors and actions are involved in the delivery of energy access, as summarized by Bellanca, Bloomfield, and Rai (2013). They can be broadly categorized under *energy market chain*, *enabling environments*, and *supporting services.* Figure 2 (see page 102) shows an example of the different activities involved in the process. Additionally, a number of small energy providers, micro-financers and village level entrepreneurs play a vital role in the delivery of energy access in rural areas. These entrepreneurs possess a certain kind of local knowledge that is context-dependent and evolves over years of groundwork and learning by doing.

Consider, for example, actors' understanding of how the potential spending on energy needs would fit into a rural household's monthly budget, as compared to spending on other needs like food, water, and education. Many households are not able to afford the upfront cost of energy services that is required under some of the current policies. Understanding the local expenditure patterns can result in structuring payment mechanisms that reduce the financial burden on rural households. For almost every reason cited for the slow progress of electrification, one can find examples of such local knowledge that is useful, but not recognized.

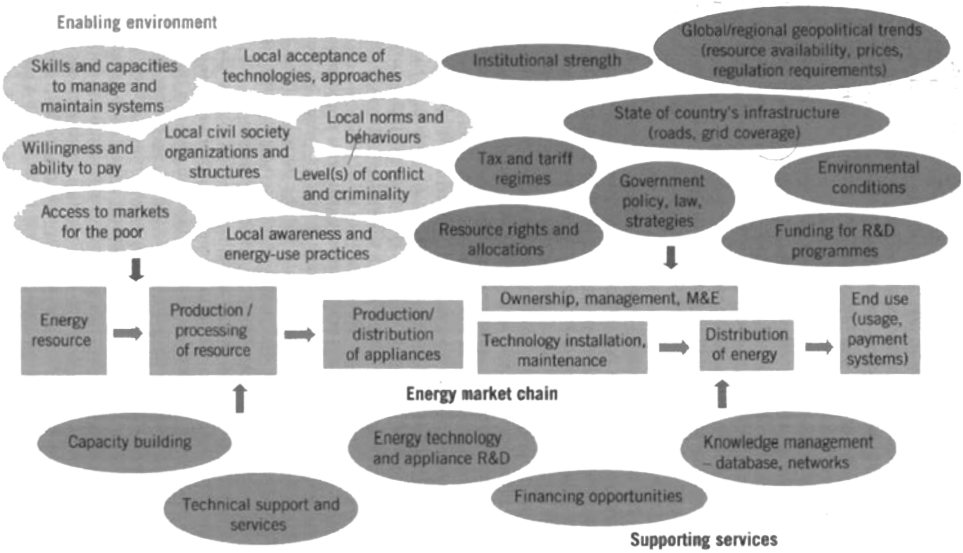

Figure 2: Generalized energy market map showing key agents and segments. Source: Bellanca et al., 2013.

Theoretically, these actors, their location, context, and local knowledge are characteristic of complex systems (Antonelli, 2009). Two key characteristics of the system that are of most interest in this context are the notions of local knowledge and feedbacks. The translation of local knowledge into replicable, codified knowledge (i.e. policies) occurs through systematic local interactions (Polyani, 1969), resulting in feedback loops that reinforce the system's performance (Odum and Odum, 2001). When there is no institutional capacity to facilitate these interactions, local knowledge would rarely get incorporated into policies.

This leads to my central argument that the challenge of delivering complete energy access in India does not lie in a silver bullet policy or grand institutional framework. Rather, it lies in a regional energy planning process that values the local knowledge and synthesizes the regional data and local institutional practices to advocate for locally relevant policies. Now, what would that planning entail?

Toward Regional Energy Planning

A quick theoretical and historical example demonstrates why a top-down approach to energy access delivery does not and cannot incorporate useful local knowledge. On the other hand, several policy research institutions have begun looking at ways to involve local stakeholders, though there is no clear consensus on how these agencies can take the leadership

in regional energy planning. At least two important questions arise from this discussion. First, what would be the key components and functions of a regional energy planning framework? Second, what regional data and indicators can aid strategic policy formulation and implementation?

A stakeholder focus group organized in Bangalore, India, recognized these challenges and offered several suggestions. Participants included state regulators, government officials, policy researchers, entrepreneurs, and training institutions. Based on this theoretical, historical, and empirical discussion, three key components emerged to be important in a regional energy planning framework (Table 1). It is important to note that policy research agencies already work on bits and pieces of this planning process. Conceptualizing these activities under an energy planning framework can help agencies to codify this approach. This in turn would make it possible to repeat the process in other regions and states, and thereby co-construct context-based policies that give importance to local knowledge

Table 1: Key components and functions of a regional energy planning framework. Source: Author

Data Management	Establish and coordinate a state level energy-related database that would act as a node for various stakeholders to pool in and update data. Even prior to this, it is to establish what data is important, who possesses this data, and what gaps need to be filled.
Stakeholder Coordination	Create a forum for all relevant stakeholders to have regular deliberations on current issues. Reach out to groups that are not present at the table. Facilitating this dialogue can resolve miscommunication between stakeholders, help the state understand how it needs to structure its policies, and bring locally relevant knowledge to the forefront.
Policy Research and Advocacy	Synthesize the data to determine which business models are most suitable for which regions within the state and issue policy guidance to scale up existing models effectively. Actively advocate on behalf of the regions still lacking access to reliable energy access in order to maintain the government's focus on this issue.

In conclusion, priorities, capabilities, and resources to achieve energy access goals will vary between states and regions within nations. An overarching directive imposed from the top will no longer be enough to attain complete energy access and sustain the growing demand. A participatory approach that involves local stakeholders and incorporates local knowledge is necessary to co-construct policies relevant to local contexts. The hope, then, is to move from a top-down, subsidy-based, supply-driven approach towards a more bottom-up, capacity-based, demand-driven approach to realize the goals of universal access to energy.

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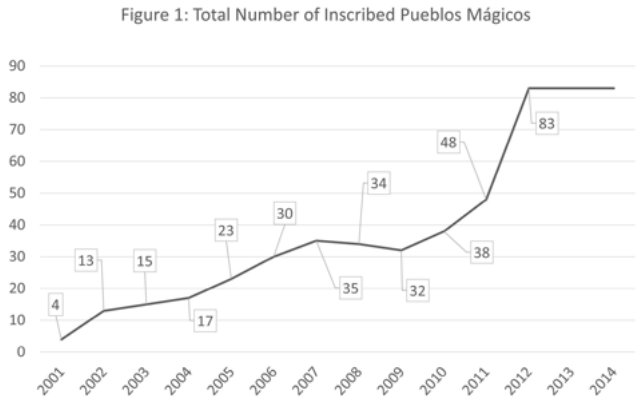
Photo 1: Cuetzalan, one of the pueblos mágicos inscribed in 2002. Photo by author.

Marketing Magic:
The Tourism Ministry's Pueblos Mágicos Program and Historic Preservation in Mexico
by Gibrán Lule-Hurtado

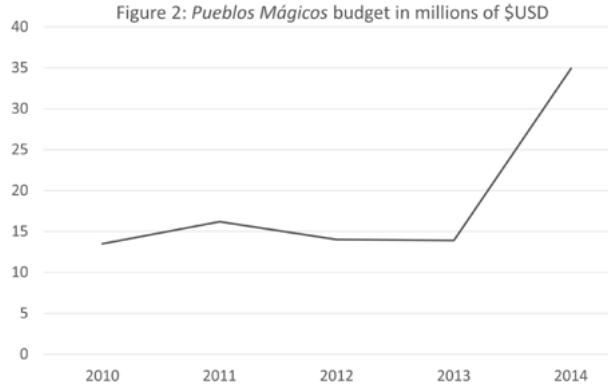
Mexico's Pueblos Mágicos (Magical Villages) Program was launched by the nation's Secretariat of Tourism (SECTUR) in 2001. It continues to operate under this agency, primarily as a program to promote tourism through the preservation and promotion of noteworthy natural and built environments in towns and small cities identified as having valuable cultural resources and an intangible unique element, or magic. The guidelines of the Program describe its intention to promote sustainable economic development and tourism through the protection and economic activation of historic, environmental, and cultural resources for the benefit of the residents of the magical villages. Mixed results have led to the



restructuring of the program, and further analysis of these effects can inform this and other programs on effective planning for preservation.

Criteria and Goals

Mexico's most comprehensive preservation legislation at the national level is the 1972 Federal Monuments and Archaeological Sites Law, which is executed and administered through the National Institute of Anthropology and History (INAH). SECTUR consulted with this and other federal agencies in determining their guidelines for inclusion for Pueblos Mágicos (Pueblos Mágicos de México, 2005). The Program allows localities not recognized under the 1972 law to apply for inscription and access preservation funds, provided they adopt measures for preserving the cataloged character of the locality, promote tourism, and create an administrative committee formed by elected officials and community representatives. These measures must be in place at the site by the time of the application for inscription is submitted—a great achievement of the Program, as it leads to documentation and regulatory protection of the towns' built heritage. By calling for the formation of a government-resident committee to consider, apply, and administer the town's participation in the Program, SECTUR further promotes public awareness of preservation government (Pueblos Mágicos, 2014).



The Program—identified by the Tourism Secretariat as one of its most successful—provides funds for preservation, infrastructure investments, aesthetic improvements, and publicity. Inscription in the Program also spurs public investment in the form of infrastructure im-

provements and state fund allocations to participating municipalities (Destinan 221 mdp, 2011; La ambición por los Pueblos Mágicos, 2014; Martínez Rascón, 2013).

While the funds allocated to each village and to each component of the program are not publicly available, news articles confirm that funding for the Program has increased over the last five years, and a congressional bulletin states that, as of 2014, the Program will receive special funding separate from the Tourism Secretariat. In this same year, federal funding for Pueblos Mágicos more than doubled from $13.9 million USD to $34.9 million USD, as shown in Figure 1 (on opposing page) (Destinan 221 mdp, 2011; Presupuesto para Pueblos Mágicos, 2014; Programa Pueblos Mágicos, 2014; Boletín N° 4583, 2014).

Results and Criticism

While no comprehensive analysis of the Program's effects has been conducted, the *Financiero* and Valdez Muñoz have found that the economies of smaller, more isolated towns have not greatly benefited from inscription, while larger towns near source markets have. The most widespread benefit of the Program is the funding that it directly provides and attracts to "restoring historic centers, monuments, and churches" (SECTUR someterá a revisión a los Pueblos Mágicos, 2014; Valdez Muñoz, 2014). This makes the program an important instrument in historic preservation in Mexico. Its success and visibility have called attention to the importance and potential benefits of historic preservation, including in small towns which might remain unreached by federal protection and funds under the 1972 Monuments and Archaeological Sites Law. Funds provided by the program have been used for the preservation of significant structures including churches, bridges, and marketplaces. In addition to this awareness and funding, the Program has incited rewriting of local preservation codes and state laws, as well as the cataloging of historic sites (Martínez Rascón, 2013; Sólo tres de 83 Pueblos Mágicos, 2014).

Despite some preservation success stories, the program has been criticized for lacking stringent standards with respect to the rehabilitation of historic structures. While the guidelines stress the importance of preserving character through preservation of significant buildings, the lack of rehabilitation standards has led some recipients to invest preservation funds in projects that focus on appealing to tourists by *earlying up* structures—modifying them to make them appear older—or making them more grandiose than they were originally. While this might further the Program's mission to increase tourism, it goes against its stated pur-

pose to do so through preserving a town's built environment and overall character (Rojo Quintero, 2009; Rodríguez Chumillas, 2013).

Another criticism arising from this is that the Program shifts the narrative and focus of historic preservation from measures taken as a result of civic pride to calculated actions undertaken with the end goal of reaping financial rewards. This is of concern as it transforms the goal of conservation into maximization of the profitability of these spaces, possibly forsaking sound preservation practices by emphasizing appearance rather than adhering to authenticity (Pueblos Mágicos de México, 2005; Valdez Muñoz, 2014). Inadequate monitoring of inscribed villages' participation in the Program and adherence to its guidelines is a major concern. However, according to a 2014 report, only three of the eighty-three villages continue to meet ninety percent or more of guidelines for inscription; only three have lost Pueblo Mágico status: Mexcaltitlán, Papantla, and Tepoztlán, all in 2009. Of these three, only one—Mexcaltitlán—has failed to regain recognition (Pueblos Mágicos, 2014).

As the end goal is to spur economic development through initial investments in places that will appeal to tourists, funds tend to be spent in central areas of the towns, meaning historic structures that are not located in the heart of town and are not tourist attractions in their own right are unlikely to be allocated funds for preservation. Churches, especially, are said to absorb a large amount of rehabilitation funds which could otherwise be distributed to rehabilitate various smaller structures (Sólo tres de 83 Pueblos Mágicos, 2014; SECTUR someterá, 2014).

Although the program sets clear criteria for inscription, mismanagement—and possibly politically motivated inscriptions—by the Secretary of Tourism who served from 2011 to 2012 caused the number of participating villages to more than double from 38 to 83 in those two years (Figure 2, see page 106), while funding for the program decreased (Figure 1, see page 106).

Restructuring

Following the increased rate of inscriptions in 2011 and 2012, SECTUR paused inscriptions and reviewed the program guidelines. As of 2013, the program has been capped at one hundred magical villages, with seventy towns vying for the coveted seventeen remaining spots.

In September of 2014, SECTUR conducted an investigation reassessing the eligibility of the eighty-three towns currently inscribed as Pueblos Mágicos. It found that an alarming seventy percent of the villages do

not meet inscription criteria and acknowledged that mis-administration of the program in 2011 and 2012 led to the addition of towns that may not have been ready for the Program. Inadequate monitoring of these villages and those previously inscribed also contributed to this poor rate of compliance. As a result, SECTUR created new policies for inscription and criteria to be met in order to remain in the Program. Participating villages will be reevaluated to ensure they meet inscription criteria and be subject to yearly reviews to ensure continued adherence to guidelines (Sólo tres de 83 Pueblos Mágicos, 2014).

Recommendations

What SECTUR has accomplished through the Pueblos Mágicos Program is in some respects laudable: awareness of historic buildings as cultural riches and of the power of preservation to generate economic development has increased. Furthermore, funds have been provided to towns with significant historic buildings that might have been unable to otherwise secure funding for historic preservation.

With no clear standards for preservation, however, there is a risk—one which has already manifested in some of these localities—of funds intended for preservation being spent on renovation that is unfaithful to the original character or even era of a building. The Program's vision acknowledges the value of not only colonial or independence-era buildings but also twentieth century constructions. As such, it should discourage the addition of inauthentic elements and adopt rehabilitation standards to protect the character of all older buildings, colonial or post-Porfirian, grandiose or modest.

In order to ensure that funds for preservation are in fact used for preservation, SECTUR can strengthen the power of the government-resident committees as oversight and steering bodies. This would also result in greater supervision of funds by community members and property owners, potentially reducing the incidence of corrupt practices.

To prevent the Program from becoming a promoter of the commodification of heritage, preservation training and certification should be offered for committee members and required for those administering the funds allocated to a town. The Program should once again collaborate with the INAH or another preservation organization to establish and impart this training. Public meetings, already a requirement, should emphasize the importance of a town's unique character and authenticity.

The Pueblos Mágicos Program presents a powerful instrument to express the importance and value of preserving built heritage. Program funds have been used to rehabilitate aging structures in areas where other private or public funding is unavailable due to stagnant economies and lack of access to state and federal preservation monies. Other Latin American countries, including Chile, Peru, El Salvador, Colombia, and Ecuador, have replicated or expressed interest in replicating the program. Should the program steadfastly incorporate the preservation of character it touts as its mainstay into its conditions for continued inscription, it could have a much greater, perhaps nearly magical effect on preservation in the country.

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Photo 1: Sunset in Paradise. All photos by author.

The Spectacularization of Urban Development on the Las Vegas Strip

by Kurt Kraler

The Las Vegas Valley, a region where the population has doubled every decade since its settlement in 1911, continues to experience tremendous urban transformation and growth while political and financial forces sustain its economic center, the infamous Las Vegas Strip. As its population balloons beyond 2 million inhabitants, tourism remains the area's dominant industry, employing nearly half of its residents while boasting the nation's highest proportion of undocumented labor (Pew Research Center, 2012). This explosive growth has thrust the Las Vegas metropolitan area into a process of rapid urbanization, most of which occurs outside of the city limits in unincorporated townships with minimal master planning and zoning restrictions—appealing to powerful developers and private interests. The Las Vegas region as an urban and economic model

Photo 2: In the Valley of Las Vegas.

emerged following the widespread loss of manufacturing jobs beginning in the 1980s; such losses introduced a service economy largely dependent on gaming venues as seen in Detroit, Atlantic City, and Joliet, Illinois.

The development of the Las Vegas Strip and its recognition as an urban and economic business model can be understood as a product of capital culture as detailed by Guy Debord in *The Society of the Spectacle* (1967, 1994). Debord warns of the influence of commodities increasing to the point at which the image prevails through the subsequent downgrading of *having* into merely *appearing,* where social relationships between people are mediated by images. In Las Vegas, the dominance of the image grew as roadside signs surpassed the significance of the building itself in attracting potential customers arriving by car. The roadside sign came to form entire atmospheres and buildings under the guise of themed spaces; the spectacle enfolded the physical realm of architecture, as documented by Robert Venturi, Denise Scott-Brown, and Steven Izenour in *Learning from Las Vegas* (1972).

The historical development of Las Vegas can be shown to satisfy the two foundational conditions of Debord's concept of the spectacle, as identified by Anselm Jappe: "incessant technological renewal and the integration of the State and economy" (1999). The rapid pace of development and renovation has become a symbol of progress for the Strip, establishing a constant renewal and continuing to attract the attention of tourists from around the world. Images and signs can be easily replaced in the

rebranding of entire buildings, further increasing revenue and discarding the old in favor of the new.

More intriguing, however, is the integration of State and economy in the development of the region through the prevalence of unincorporated townships. Such integration privileged greater private control over the provision of non-essential services, in addition to more relaxed land-use and zoning regulations. Unincorporated townships are a designation "originally authorized to assist in the conveyance of land and are commonly thought of as a rural form of government with limited power" (Clark & Sharp, 2008), a clause that the Las Vegas region has come to define.

It is no coincidence that the vast majority of what has become the Las Vegas Strip sits outside of Las Vegas city limits in an unincorporated community known as Paradise. Paradise was established in 1951 in response to several annexation efforts by the City of Las Vegas. The City claimed that the growing popularity of the Strip directly benefited from the tourist draw of the city's downtown Fremont Street, the key tourist destination at the time, and should be expected to support the street's maintenance and expansion. Strip casino owners convinced local residents, many of whom were also casino employees, that higher taxes would be imposed upon annexation, cementing support for the area's unincorporated status.

Paradise has since grown to become the most populated unincorporated township in the United States, maintaining its continued status as an informal city (US Census, 2010). As documented by Jill Clark and Jeff Sharp in *City & Community,* "unincorporated townships have grown so large that they are functional equivalents of cities, providing a broad range of services beyond their original 'rural' responsibilities" (2008). The unincorporated township, once a state of economic and political exception, has since become an acceptable form of city-building with essential services offloaded to the county. Several adjacent communities in Nevada have been formed under a similar guise to that of Paradise in an effort to maintain unincorporated status. The trend further restricts the expansion of the City of Las Vegas given residents' preference for reduced property taxes in exchange for the absence of a municipal government.

These seemingly contradictory political interests bore the liberalization of the leisure economy in Nevada. By the 1950s and 1960s the state's history of legalized gambling and prostitution in rural areas had fostered a reputation of hedonism, a reputation that proved increasingly attractive

to tourists of the time. Economic and social liberalization flourished from the strategic un-incorporation of Paradise and the de-regulation of the labor force.

Though the city had been unionized labor stronghold harkening back to its roots in the railroad industry, the liberalization of labor laws in the 1950s, specifically with the introduction of right-to-work state legislation, threatened the union grasp on the region. After the passing of the federal Taft-Hartley Act of 1949[1] came the unpopular dispute by the Culinary Union, fueling anti-labor sentiment. The impact of this legislation would be later exploited in the 1990s with the opening of the MGM Grand, Aladdin, the Venetian resorts, and others that employed entirely non-unionized labor forces.

The de-regulation of labor and the dependence on a tourist-based service economy engenders the increased exploitation of migrant workers who may accept labor-intensive work in exchange for low pay. Alarmingly, 10.2% of the working population in Nevada is classified as unauthorized immigrants, forming the highest proportion in the United States (Pew Research Center, 2012). This leisure illusion proliferated by the manufactured fantasy of the spectacle society forces labor to the sidelines and minimizes its presence in a city focused solely on the provision of leisure.

Debord states that "everything life lacks is to be found within the spectacle," allowing it to thrive despite the degradation of life and the continued separation of the laborer from the product of their labor (Jappe, 1999). One only need consider the inability of the low paid service worker to access the activities they provide to tourists to understand that such separation exists in Las Vegas. The Las Vegas Strip operates as the spectacularization of the city, possessing what all others lack: on a superficial level, it is a city seemingly free of labor in its strict devotion to the provision of leisure. Critical to its success is maintaining a certain leisure illusion, one that requires service staff to don ridiculous costumes, casting them as actors against an all-encompassing thematized backdrop. The intensification of this system of leisure demands and supports a labor class through increasingly exploitative means.

The combination of economic integration and the production of a spectacularized urban form have profoundly shaped the Las Vegas region. The influence of the labor force on the urban development of the region was particularly felt during in the sub-prime mortgage crisis of the late 2000s. Las Vegas was routinely ranked as having some of the highest

1 The authority of individual states to restrict the ability of unions to impose membership on employers and all of their employees.

rates of homeowner vacancies in the United States during that time, as reported by the US Census Bureau (2005-present). Additionally, the relative absence of municipal planning bodies for the region's unincorporated townships has resulted in urban sprawl largely dispersing the population beyond ever-expanding clusters of abandoned homes. This has meant further separation of laborers from each other, a key urban development Debord highlights as critical to the production of the spectacle society. Perhaps we have identified the great paradox of the spectacularized city: the production of a region that only appears to prosper while withering in the desert.

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