

Progressive Planning

The Magazine of Planners Network

Immigrants, Ethnicity, Diversity, and Space



Photo by Donovan Finn

37th Avenue in Jackson Heights, Queens (NYC) one of the most diverse neighborhoods in the world. See related story, page 24.

Also In This Issue:

- Dubai
- Binghamton
- Havana

The Seventh Generation

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

-From the Great Law of the Iroquois Confederacy

The Apartheid Bubble in the Desert

by Tom Angotti

Dubai, United Arab Emirates

Part Two in a series on urban apartheid.

Las Vegas, Disney World and Miami rolled into one and then jacked up on steroids. That's Dubai, the maximum enclave and theme park of global capitalism. Its monumental malls, skyscrapers and millionaire condos loudly announce this brash newcomer to the global competition for the most ostentatious city in the world. It proves that with enough money it is possible to build and commodify anything and everything, even in a desert. After the global financial bubble burst, the Dubai miracle is slowly deflating, but the city still survives, for now, on the enormous stash of wealthy oil barons and the compulsive extravagance of the superrich around the world.

While Dubai was built as urban spectacle, the majority of the city's population work long hours and live in cramped quarters, invisible to the millions of well-heeled visitors. Invisible are the workers who built the city. Invisible are the stifling, overcrowded barracks and trailers where the taxi drivers, waiters and hotel staff that run the city live. Ninety percent of Dubai's population are immigrant workers with temporary visas and limited rights. They come from India, Pakistan, Iraq, Egypt, the Philippines, China, Eastern Europe, Africa and beyond. Their stories make this giant bubble filled with real estate also one of the most unique and dreadful apartheid cities of the twenty-first century.

The Invisible Majority

Muhammad, a taxi driver from Pakistan, says he's been working in Dubai for five years but still lives in a room with ten men. He says he is fortunate to live in the old center of

the city in a small enclave of immigrant workers. He sends most of his earnings to his family in Pakistan because as low as his pay is, it's more than he can make at home.

Most Dubai workers, unlike Muhammad, live Spartan lives in isolated company-owned barracks, trailer camps and exurban satellites far from services. They often work fourteen-hour days without benefits. The United Arab Emirates (UAE), a collection of seven feudal enclaves including Dubai, is run by privileged clans and has actively blocked union organizing and deported protesting strikers. Among the most exploited are immigrant minors, women and sex workers, the least visible of the victims in a society that has a veneer of austere behavior but a hidden culture of vice.

A 2006 Human Rights Watch study found that some 500,000 construction workers in the UAE were earning wages about one-tenth of the average wage. The workers, mostly South Asian men, usually have to pay exorbitant fees to recruiters, which is contrary to law but rarely prosecuted. The employers keep workers' passports for months to ensure they will not quit. The study also reported widespread anecdotal evidence of high rates of injury and death in the construction sector, where most builders are private companies whose practices are not well regulated. Even the official lowball fatality figures are troubling, with dozens of construction-related deaths recorded every year.

Thus, there is an abundance of human misery in Dubai though it is one of the most opulent urban enclaves in the world and an extraordinary example of urban apartheid. ⇨

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From Oases to Megamalls

Until a couple of decades ago, Dubai was a desert town occupied by Bedouin traders. Over the last two decades it has grown into a metropolitan area with 1.2 million people from over 100 nations. While Dubai has little oil, its next-door UAE neighbor Abu Dhabi has graciously supplied the capital from its oil profits to build Dubai's new cathedral in the desert. The city is also one of the largest shipping and air hubs in the Middle East.

The Wafi Center mall, one of the largest in the city, is a Middle Eastern theme park and luxury *casbah*. Its extra-strength modern and post-modern designs include eclectic elements resembling parts of pyramids, giant temple pillars and a classical Greek façade. One section of the mall is supposed to look like a traditional *souk*, or Arab marketplace. But unlike the average *souk*, it is strictly for European travelers and the elite, a giant boutique with soaps, spices, carpets and clothes from just about every country in the Middle East (except Israel). Absent are the gritty hallways, dirt floors, busy

vendors and open bins of spices and foods—the soul of the *souk*. The sterile *souk* at the Wafi Center has polished interiors, perfect order and shrink-wrapped incense at premium prices.

The Mall of the Emirates literally tops all the malls in Dubai. Its indoor ski slope reaches far above the shopping floors. The fully-enclosed winter land is the whitest bubble within the giant Dubai bubble. It is the clearest response to the question, "If you had billions of dollars, what is the most unlikely and costly environment you could create in the middle of the desert?"

Then there is the row of skyscrapers by starchitects from all over the world, lined up in a row to produce a skyline profile with little behind or around it. It includes a twin replica of New York City's Chrysler Building and the tallest tower in the world. It is an alley to awe, but there's no city there, no street life, no public spaces, no people in sight.

How Unsustainable Can a City Get?

Dubai's ski slope, skyscrapers, golf courses and swanky resorts add up to

an energy-intensive city with probably one of the largest carbon footprints in the world. This is perhaps fitting since the sponsor is one of the biggest purveyors of non-renewable energy in the world. The typical building turns sand into concrete and uses air-conditioning and elevators. The huge energy demand of the malls and skyscrapers means bigger heat islands in an already overheated environment. Though oil prices are presently low, they are not likely to remain that way forever and maintenance costs may soon make building maintenance difficult.

Dubai is also profligate when it comes to water use. You would think that the high cost of desalinizing and recycling the water in this desert outpost would have caused some restraint among the city's planners. Not so. There are enough golf courses to host the top international tournaments. The major hotels have luxurious swimming pools. The swank Atlantis hotel has indoor fishbowls with whale sharks and other deep sea creatures. And the water requirements for maintaining the richly landscaped patios of the rich and famous are huge.

Photo by Tom Angotti



LEFT: The Indoor Ski Slope at the Mall of the Emirates

RIGHT: Dubai's Emulation of Manhattan's Skyline

Not to worry, though. Dubai's sponsors are also deep believers in sustainability! The Dubai Municipality is a co-sponsor with the United Nations Center for Human Settlements (Habitat) of the Dubai International Award for Best Practices to Improve the Living Environment. While propaganda for the award claims that "The smallest practices can make a difference," the city's rulers appear to have set out to prove just the opposite.

The Planning Disasters

Dubai's claims to sustainability and planning are blatantly mocked by its practice. The meticulous and monumental planning that went into building the city's monumental core lacked one important ingredient—a sustainable transportation system. Each mall and megastructure is served by a minimal road network. A giant expressway cuts through the center of the linear city but is fed by narrow local roads. Traffic jams are common throughout the day even though most residents—the immigrant workers—do not own cars. The most predictable yet unforeseen tie-up occurs on the single narrow road leading to the Palm Island, built in the shape of a palm on landfill in the ocean. The island was built to create new waterfront real estate opportunities. Palm Island's condos sell for millions and the luxurious Atlantis hotel there charges up to \$15,000 a night for a room. Like so many planning disasters before it, Palm Island looks neat from a helicopter but down on the ground people are sitting in traffic. To remedy this situation, Dubai is now building a monorail onto the island.

There are also very few sidewalks in the city. Pedestrians face death

when they dash across the highways and hug slim shoulders. Bicycling is also a risky undertaking in this environment and, though the land is flat, there are no protected bikeways.

To partially correct the transportation situation, Dubai is now building an urban rail system. Since it doesn't have to deal with the messy business of unions, oversight or participatory processes, it is set to be done in a span of just four years. The government has also announced intentions to build a 348-mile bikeway and pedestrian network. But there are still no public spaces or green oases for the majority of Dubai's population, who cannot afford a membership in a golf club and have little time for the beach. If the new transportation infrastructure is completed—in the current financial climate and given the low price of crude oil, the pedestrian and bicycle networks are by no means a certainty—it will mainly serve the needs of Dubai's visitors and major employers, not the majority of its residents.

And after the Crash?

According to a recent report in the *Guardian* of London, half of all

construction projects in the UAE are on hold. With declining employment and wages in the wealthier nations, tourism is down. Workers are returning to their home countries where they face shrinking opportunities, compounded by the loss to the local economies of their remitted wages from the UAE. The professional and elite workers are also on their way home. The *Guardian* reports that the relatively privileged among the foreign workers are leaving their Mercedes-Benzes parked on residential streets and at the airport with the keys inside because there are not enough people in their income bracket left to buy them. The gilded condos bought on speculation can't be sold and lots of new ones sit half completed. Office and hotel vacancies are increasing. The question now is how long the bubble built by cheap petroleum, concentrated wealth and global capitalist profligacy can last and whether Dubai's ruling clan can some day be recognized for the best practice of deconstructing apartheid and building a sustainable and just city.

Tom Angotti teaches at Hunter College, City University of New York, and during his sabbatical year is doing research and writing about urban enclaves and urban agriculture.



Photo by Tom Angotti

Integration Exhaustion, Race Fatigue and the American Dream

by CHESTER HARTMAN and GREGORY D. SQUIRES

When the federal Fair Housing Act of 1968 was being debated, Senator Walter Mondale famously stated that “the reach of the proposed law was to replace the ghettos with truly integrated and balanced living patterns.” But the nation has had a long, uneasy relationship with the concept of integration. Several legal mandates, social science research reports and advocacy positions have endorsed the pursuit of integration, but segregation remains a dominant reality in virtually all U.S. cities and their surrounding areas. In recent years, the value of integration appears to be losing its hold. “Integration exhaustion” on the part of non-whites and “race fatigue” on the part of whites have deflated some of the pressure for integration. Many suggest that today we live in a “post-civil rights world,” and so perhaps the need for integration, like the civil rights movement itself, has faded.

This would be an unfortunate vision on which to base public policy or private practice when it comes to issues of race, and particularly racial inequality, in the United States today. Certainly there has been substantial progress in recent years. Racial minorities now occupy positions in business,

entertainment, politics and virtually all fields in larger numbers than ever before, with the election of Barack Obama being the most significant, but hardly the only, breakthrough of recent years. At the same time, racial inequality and racial segregation stubbornly persist, and at great cost to both the victims and society as a whole. If many barriers have been broken, significant gaps remain. If recent efforts to desegregate the nation’s neighborhoods have disappointed, new and better approaches are required. If integration does not “work,” as some critics claim, it may well be because it has never really been tried, as most fair housing advocates assert. Separate-but-equal has been tried and clearly found wanting to all but the most diehard racists. The challenge, for all, remains the dismantling of remaining vestiges of discrimination and the realization of “truly integrated and balanced living patterns.”

Integration Exhaustion? Race Fatigue?

As Sheryll Cashin and many other scholars observe, for many non-whites, particularly African-American families, integration is not the goal that it was a generation ago. In her 2004 book *The Failures of Integration*,

Cashin quotes one black resident of a middle-class Atlanta neighborhood: “When I have to work around them all day, by the time I come home I don’t want to have to deal with white people anymore.” A young African-American journalist wrote on the editorial page of the June 17, 2001 *Washington Post*:

In the small act of choosing to buy our home where we did, I believe that we became part of a growing group of African Americans who are picking up where the civil rights movement left off. From our perspective, integration is overrated. It’s time to reverse an earlier generation’s hopeful migration into white communities and attend to some unfinished business in the hood.

And as Cashin herself recounted:

But in conversation after conversation with black friends, acquaintances and strangers, integration is simply not a priority in the way that getting ahead is. What black people now seem most ardent about is equality of opportunity. As one black acquaintance once put it, rather than wanting to integrate with whites,

black people now seem more interested in having what whites have.

Joe R. Feagin and Melvin P. Sikes, in their 1994 book *Living With Racism: The Black Middle-Class Experience*, interviewed middle-class blacks who expressed similar attitudes, many of whom report experiences of being a “pioneer” and question if it has been worth it all, clearly expressing integration exhaustion. One corporate executive described the maltreatment he received because of his race and concluded: “The only place it probably doesn’t affect me, I guess, is in my home...but outside one’s home it always affects me.” The recently published memoir *The Black Girl Next Door*, by Yale historian Jennifer Baszile, describes the emotional struggle of being the “pioneering” black family in suburban Palos Verdes Estates in California.

If many blacks are tired of the struggle for racial integration, many whites believe American society has done enough. Race fatigue has set in for many, according to Thomas and Mary Edsall in their 1991 book *Chain Reaction: The Impact of Race, Rights and Taxes on American Politics*, which describes the antipathy many whites have to paying taxes they believe go to support programs that are no longer needed. A 2008 *New York Times* poll found that 48 percent of whites oppose programs to help minorities get ahead, with 26 percent believing that they

themselves are now victims of racial discrimination. Cashin reported that approximately half of all whites believe blacks and whites have equal access to jobs, education and health care, even though black family income persists at about two-thirds the white median, with similar gaps in health, education and other areas of life.

In a more fundamental redefinition of the situation, some scholars, white and non-white (e.g. Abigail and Stephan Thernstrom, Thomas Sowell, Shelby Steele, John McWhorter), believe the key battles of the civil rights movement were fought and won in the 1960s, and that any remaining racial gaps can be explained largely by cultural failures on the part of non-whites, particularly blacks, themselves. Pointing to the “cult of victimology” (how many blacks see themselves only as victims), “separatism” (the belief that they do not have to play by conventional rules because of their victimization) and “anti-intellectualism” (going to school means acting white and identifying with the oppressor), McWhorter, in his 2000 book *Losing the Race: Self-Sabotage in Black America*, concludes: “The black community today is the main obstacle to achieving the full integration our civil rights leaders sought.”

The Continuing Costs of Segregation

But racial segregation persists, and the social costs are compounded by increasing

economic segregation. If nationwide statistical measures of segregation have declined somewhat for African Americans, segregation from whites of Hispanics and Asians has increased slightly. And in those major metropolitan areas where the black population is concentrated—cities like Chicago, Detroit and Milwaukee—black/white segregation persists at traditionally hypersegregated levels. And racial isolation has been exacerbated by the dramatically increasing concentration of poverty.

If some middle-class professional minorities are residing in neighborhoods previously closed to them, poor people—particularly poor people of color—are increasingly falling down and dropping out. The number of high-poverty census tracts (those where 40 percent or more of residents live on incomes below the official poverty line) surged from 1,177 in 1970 to 2,510 in 2000, with the number of residents in those neighborhoods growing from 4.1 million to 7.9 million. Preliminary research by urbanist Paul Jargowsky reveals that these numbers have continued shooting upwards since 2000. These patterns are not race-neutral. Whereas just 5 percent of poor whites lived in high-poverty areas in 1990, 30 percent of poor blacks did. In perhaps a more revealing sign of the times, the share of middle-income census tracts declined from 58 percent to 41 percent between 1970 and 2000 while the share ⇨

of poor people living in middle-income areas also declined from just over half to 37 percent, and the share of poor people living in low-income areas grew from 36 percent to 48 percent.

The combination of persistent racial segregation and rising concentration of poverty has had serious, often deadly, consequences for many who are in fact victims. A wealth of social science research has documented that residents of predominantly non-white, segregated neighborhoods experience a wide range of disamenities. Such families are far more likely to:

- be victims of crime, while being underserved and overpoliced by a criminal justice system in which incarceration rates have skyrocketed in recent years;
- attend inferior schools, which leads to inferior job opportunities and less opportunity to move into more stable (and more integrated) communities;
- receive fewer and inferior public services and private amenities (e.g. access to retail stores, entertainment, convenient transportation);
- be exposed to polluted air and water, toxic waste facilities and other environmental hazards;
- have less access to health care;
- be exposed to predatory lenders and other fringe bankers (e.g., payday lenders, check-cashers, pawn shops) and have less access to conventional banking services; and

- have difficulty learning about job opportunities and getting to those jobs that are available.

In sum, as sociologist Douglas Massey concludes: “Any process that concentrates poverty within racially isolated neighborhoods will simultaneously increase the odds of socio-economic failure within the segregated group.”

Integration Initiatives and Emerging Controversies

Several public policy initiatives have been launched in recent years in an effort to replace at least some ghettos with more balanced living patterns. Gautreaux, Moving to Opportunity (MTO) and HOPE VI are the better-known buzzwords in housing circles that have generated some new housing opportunities, a growing body of social science research and intensive controversy.

Many families who participated in these programs were able to move to safer, healthier communities where their children are more likely to graduate from high school and go on to college and less likely to have encounters with the police. The benefits are clearest in the Gautreaux program, where many more poor black families made long-distance moves from predominantly poor black to predominantly white suburbs than in the MTO program, where most moves were from poor to non-poor neighborhoods, but often in nearby communities, frequently

within the same school district. And the HOPE VI findings are even more ambiguous and problematic because, unlike Gautreaux and MTO participants, who volunteered to move, HOPE VI families were involuntarily relocated.

But these initiatives have not been universally hailed. Even among some long-standing civil rights advocates, they have come under harsh scrutiny. Some claim these mobility initiatives have met with less success than their proponents and some researchers suggest; that the primary objective and outcome is to displace poor people and provide unjustifiable subsidies to well-connected developers who profit by the gentrification that ensues; that they constitute another version of urban renewal that undervalues the social capital that exists even in poor communities, destroying the lives of many vulnerable families in the process; and that the entire discussion of concentrated poverty unfairly stigmatizes poor people and particularly poor people of color.

These critiques also invoke related long-standing debates over strategies for replacing ghettos with balanced living patterns. For example: Is there a right to stay put with the expectation that adequate public services and private amenities will be available? To what extent should public policy and private practice emphasize gilding the ghetto (community reinvestment and development) versus

deconcentration (helping people move out)? Should we eliminate, expand or modify current mobility programs? Clearly there is a role for fair housing law enforcement, but should that authority remain at HUD or be moved to an independent agency, and to what extent can law enforcement lead to more integrated neighborhoods? These are some of the emerging controversies explored in our 2009 edited book, *The Integration Debate: Competing Futures for American Cities*.

This book provides a harsh reminder of the grave costs of segregation. But it also identifies some of the perhaps unintended consequences that have been encountered in at least preliminary efforts to realize more integrated living patterns. It offers all of us an opportunity to revisit and perhaps challenge long-standing assumptions and beliefs. Hopefully, that exploration will lead to more

effective policies to realize truly integrated living.

Despite the controversies that prevail, even among long-standing proponents of equality, few would dispute that racial segregation and concentrated poverty are ongoing challenges, if not life-and-death struggles, for a great many in the nation's metropolitan regions. Most observers would concur that more balanced, equitable development to replace the ghettos and patterns of uneven development is a desirable, if not essential, objective. *The Integration Debate* explores many of the pitfalls of prior efforts and provides guidance on how public policy and private action can move in the direction Walter Mondale pointed to in 1968.

Historian Stephen Grant Meyer's 2000 book *As Long As They Don't Move Next Door* (mimicking the words from Phil Ochs' 1965 song

"Love Me, I'm a Liberal") serves as a reminder that discrimination and segregation remain severe nationwide problems. If the nation should choose to respond, *The Integration Debate*, with its compendium of thoughtful input by committed activists and thinkers, can provide valuable guidance.

Chester Hartman is director of research for the Washington, DC-based Poverty & Race Research Action Council. Gregory D. Squires is a professor of sociology and public policy and public administration at George Washington University. This is a shortened and edited version of the editors' introduction to The Integration Debate: Competing Futures for American Cities, a collection of the papers presented at a conference of the same title in September 2008 at the John Marshall Law School in Chicago, IL. (To order, call 800.634.7064 or visit www.routledge.com. A full table of contents is available at www.routledge.com/9780415994606.) Reprinted by permission.

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Participatory Planning in Binghamton, New York

by SEAN BENNETT

In existence for only three years, Binghamton, New York's neighborhood assemblies have quickly become an important component of the upstate city's revitalization efforts. Like so many other older cities in the Northeast and Midwest, Binghamton's story is a familiar one. The past several decades of economic decline have wrought dramatic losses in industry and population, heavily damaged communities and a frustrated and disheartened citizenry. Through the newly created neighborhood assemblies, however, which have brought citizens together to create community gardens, revitalize the city's riverfront trail system and secure a farmer's market for a neighborhood described as a "food desert," Binghamton's citizens are working to change that storyline.

There is little question that those working through the assemblies have accomplished a great deal, however, they continue to confront the challenges that consistently plague grassroots activism and participatory planning. Drawing on interviews with those on the front lines—city officials (including Mayor Ryan), community organizers and neighborhood assembly volunteers—as well as research into assembly meeting minutes and accounts in the local press, this piece follows the assemblies from

their inception to their current activities, highlighting both the accomplishments and challenges.

Early Strategies

Since around the 1960s, numerous cities have established neighborhood-based participatory forums, typically as part of a wider progressive political agenda. This is what happened in Binghamton, after a coalition of grassroots activists and community organizers, led by groups like Citizen Action of New York and the Working Families Party, coalesced behind the 2005 mayoral campaign of progressive Democrat Matthew Ryan.

In the beginning, a lack of name recognition forced the Ryan campaign to rely on a strategy of directly reaching out to neighborhoods and taking up community concerns. In order to both get its message out and interact with large groups of people, Ryan's campaign hosted a series of neighborhood picnics. The positive response to these picnics demonstrated to Ryan and his campaign how much interest there was in community-wide discussions and increased civic engagement.

After winning the election, Ryan and his supporters almost

immediately began looking for ways to make the idea of citizen participation in Binghamton a reality. Ryan sent a delegation of city officials and community activists to Burlington, Vermont, a community that set up neighborhood planning assemblies almost thirty years ago under then-Mayor Bernie Sanders. Binghamton was quick to embrace many of the insights and innovations that have helped make Burlington's approach to citizen participation and community development so successful. This approach has evolved over the years into a broad network of partnerships between local government, non-profits, community organizations, universities and citizens, revolving around neighborhood planning assemblies. Burlington has also relied heavily on the use of Americorps volunteers, known as VISTAs (Volunteers in Service to America), who have played an important role in the process of running these organizations and making them work for people.

In early 2006, Ryan established eight neighborhood-based assemblies as *ad hoc* citizen's committees. Shortly thereafter, the city successfully applied for an Americorps grant to hire VISTA volunteers. During an interview, Mayor Ryan stressed the importance of reaching out to groups

with community organizing experience, namely Citizen Action and the Binghamton University's Women's Studies Department, to help train those VISTA volunteers.

This effort included making sure that assembly meetings were held in transit-accessible locations, arranging for childcare during the meetings and providing transportation for residents who would otherwise be unable to attend. VISTA volunteers also went door-to-door in certain communities to inform residents of meeting times and locations. They also steered the meetings using a consensus-based model to help ensure that all voices were respected and to maximize the number of people participating constructively.

After getting the assemblies off the ground, Mayor Ryan pledged a portion of the city's Community Development Block Grant to a newly-created Neighborhood Development Project Fund, which would help fund small projects chosen by, and in many cases initiated by, the assemblies. With that initial commitment of \$70,000 on the table, the assemblies eagerly began identifying problems in their communities and ways to address them. Below are a few of the projects that have come out of the assemblies.

River Crawls

One of the first success stories to come out of the

neighborhood assemblies involved Binghamton's riverfront and a neglected trail system. Under the previous administration, the city established a riverfront trail network connecting city parks and cultural resources along the Susquehanna and Chenango Rivers to the downtown area. Some participants in the neighborhood assemblies noticed that these trails were underutilized and filling up with litter and graffiti.

In an effort to raise awareness about the trails and encourage people to help maintain them, the assemblies organized a series of guided tours along the trails. Working with a wide variety of volunteers and local organizations, the assemblies have since held several river crawls, usually alongside other community-oriented events like art walks and historical tours. They also initiated an "adopt-a-spot" program that encourages volunteers to take responsibility for maintaining a small piece of the trails.

In a short time, the assemblies' river crawls helped bring together diverse segments of the community to promote stewardship of natural resources and help showcase an important asset critical to Binghamton's future revival. This is an important part of letting people know that upstate New York cities like Binghamton have more to offer than burned-out main streets and crumbling factories. ⇨

Community Gardens

Center City Binghamton has been particularly hard hit by vacant and abandoned housing, resulting in numerous unmaintained vacant lots piling up with debris. In the spring of 2007, a class at Columbus Learning Center, a Center City-based BOCES (Board of Cooperative Educational Services) school, took the initiative of transforming one of these vacant lots into a community garden. The class did most of the legwork for the garden, including getting permission from the owner to use the site as well as winning a grant from the non-profit Southern Tier Community Labor Aid Inc.

After the Columbus Park community garden proved successful, interest in starting community gardens spread throughout the city. Many in the neighborhood assemblies saw community gardens as a good opportunity to help build community while turning blighted lots into community assets. The assemblies, which were able to allocate small amounts of CDBG grant funds as well as mobilize volunteers, became key players in enabling residents to start community gardens.

Another effort to build a community garden in Center City, this time on Pine Street, resulted in the formation of Partners for the Pine Street Neighborhood Garden, which was comprised of a wide variety of city agencies and community groups. Coordinated by ⇨

the Center City neighborhood assembly, the Pine Street community garden was initiated largely by neighborhood volunteers. The lot is owned by Opportunities for Broome, Inc., a local non-profit housing developer, and maintained by Earth Day Southern Tier, another local non-profit.

The Columbus Park and Pine Street community gardens were only the beginning. As of May 2008, similar projects were underway throughout the city. By bringing residents into contact with the resources of non-profits capable of mobilizing volunteer workers to build and maintain the gardens, the neighborhood assemblies have served as a key player in developing community gardens.

The North Side's Farmer's Market

For well over ten years, Binghamton's North Side was regarded by residents and community activists as a "food desert." For residents of the North Side who did not have access to a car, buying groceries was an ordeal, requiring a taxi ride or a long bus ride to another part of the city.

Given the long-standing nature of this problem, it is not surprising that when the neighborhood assemblies got started in early 2006, North Side residents would try to use the forums to bring attention to it. In April of 2006, the North Side neighborhood assembly became a brainstorming session for residents interested

in helping to bring a grocery store to the neighborhood. Residents began to discuss ways to approach different stores and how to involve city officials and potentially leverage the investments needed for these stores to open up in the neighborhood. On several occasions the mayor himself was present at the assembly meetings and participated in discussions about potential funding sources for attracting grocers.

Despite the responsiveness of city officials, residents became frustrated by the fact that, given the need for large investments to attract established chain grocers, this issue was largely beyond the residents' control. Taking matters into their own hands, North Side neighborhood assembly members therefore decided to start a farmer's market as a temporary solution to the food desert problem, bringing fresh food to the neighborhood. In the summer of 2007, the North Side assembly teamed up with the Cornell Cooperative Extension and sponsored a weekly farmer's market in the parking lot of a Big Lots store.

Neighborhood Inventory Tool

How best to deal with the problem of vacant and abandoned housing has been a persistent challenge for Binghamton's planners and community activists. During the winter of 2006, the neighborhood assemblies began working with the city to develop

what it called a neighborhood inventory tool (NIT). The purpose of this initiative was to allow residents to take stock of their neighborhoods by collecting data on the condition of both public areas and private homes, specifically vacant properties. Information was collected by teams of residents, including young people, simply by walking down a block and visually assessing the conditions. By the spring of 2007, the project had begun using the neighborhood assemblies to solicit and organize volunteers, and by July of the same year, nearly 500 properties and fifty streets had been assessed.

Not only did the NIT get residents to start thinking more formally about the things that needed to change in their neighborhoods and to actually take action on those issues, but it was used as the basis for the mayor's effort to identify blighted properties in need of demolition in anticipation of state funding under the Restore NY program.

By early 2008, the city had demolished or renovated a dozen of these properties. But after Governor Eliot Spitzer announced a dramatic boost in state aid to distressed upstate cities, Binghamton ramped up its plans to address these vacant properties, dealing with forty-two more properties, nineteen of which were to be demolished and the remaining twenty-three rehabilitated.

The Neighborhood Development Project Fund

From the beginning, Mayor Ryan promised to dedicate a certain amount of federal CDBG funding to projects supported by the neighborhood assemblies. In 2007, Mayor Ryan made good on his promise with the creation of the Neighborhood Development Project Fund (NDPF).

In the first year, Mayor Ryan dedicated \$70,000 of CDBG money for projects supported by the assemblies. Any individual or group could apply for a project grant of up to \$2,000, while non-profit groups could apply for grants of up to \$5,000. If the neighborhood assembly signed off on the project, it would then go to the city planning department and city councilman from that ward for approval.

In April of 2008, the city announced the first round of NDPF awards. The award recipients spanned a variety of neighborhood improvement and beautification projects, including new store signs for the city's antiques district, graffiti removal and a public art project involving public trash cans designed and painted by local artists. Several non-profit organizations received grants as well, including the Legal Aid Society and a local after-school program, which used a \$5,000 grant to hire staff.

Conclusion

In its efforts to bring back Binghamton's declining neighborhoods and work towards meaningful community development, Mayor Ryan's administration has tried the radical, yet commonsense, approach of actually working with the people who live in those communities. In large part, this has been a successful strategy, with Binghamton's neighborhood assemblies emerging as the locus of an impressive array of citizen-driven initiatives.

The assemblies have proven in a short time that participatory planning and development can have a significant impact. That doesn't mean, however, that the assemblies haven't had to confront some of the same challenges that have dogged previous attempts at participatory planning. Perhaps one of the biggest challenges faced by the assemblies was in reaching out to lower-income individuals who often found themselves "logistically marginalized" due to a lack of transportation, childcare and time to devote to volunteering. While the organizers of the assemblies tried to address these issues through an aggressive outreach and organizing effort, as well as by directly providing transportation and childcare in some instances, this remains a challenge.

Furthermore, while the assemblies have been a great way for residents to identify and address the needs of their communities, residents are addressing the consequences of deep shifts that have taken place in the global economy. While community-based organizations that are capable of significantly challenging these profound political and economic changes are a long way off, any effort to create community institutions that resist the social and economic deterioration that comes with these changes is a necessary and important first step.

Sean Bennett recently received his master's degree in city and regional planning from Cornell University. He is currently planning to volunteer with the Americorps VISTA program. For further information on Binghamton's neighborhood assemblies, visit <http://www.binghamtonneighbors.org/>.

Master Plan for Havana: *An Encounter with Julio César Pérez Hernández*

by REGULA MODLICH

“Havana Cuba: A New Master Plan” reads the flier for Julio César Pérez Hernández’ lecture in Toronto, Canada. What progressive planner wouldn’t do a double take? Havana, capital city of the “David” nation that fought, won and still struggles to build an alternative way of life at the doorstep of its “Goliath” neighbor! How does this alternative reflect itself in urban planning?

Surprisingly, in spite of socialist ideology being so closely associated with planning, and two agencies responsible for planning, Cuba’s capital of approximately 2.2 million residents has never had an officially adopted comprehensive plan to guide its development! These questions brought me face-to-face with Julio César Pérez in his simple, yet stunningly elegant, two-story studio and residence in a traditional street of San Antonio de los Baños, a small community southwest of Havana. There, Julio, in his early fifties, passionately describes his “labor of love” for which neither he nor his team have so far received a single penny. Pérez realized the value and urgency of creating a master plan for this amazing city with its 450 year history while a Loeb Fellow at Harvard Graduate School of Design in 2002. With the assistance of R.A. Venancio, M.D. Hernández, J.C.T. Martinez, G.F. Santos, A. de la Cruz Alvarez, J.E. Gonzalez and V.F. Rodriquez, Pérez produced the plan as a collective effort.

Credit: N. Evdemon



Context for the Master Plan

UNESCO declared Old Havana a World Heritage site in 1982. Today’s city features substantial sections dating from between the sixteenth and nineteenth centuries: wonderful Art Deco buildings from the early twentieth century; post-revolutionary Cuban masterpieces; adaptations of the Soviet “self-build” prefabricated mass housing; a handful of American modernist skyscrapers; the recent Miramar Trade and Office Center; and even a few car-based suburbs such as Tarara. Yet there is no dwarfing jungle of high-rise office and condo towers, no mega shopping centers in a sea of parking, no bumper-to-bumper polluting traffic. There is also no belt of ramshackle slums, the typical welcome mat of cities in the South, but I still felt the urge to pick up a paintbrush, trowel and mortar to tackle the overwhelming deterioration.

Quite apart from its acknowledged beauty, Havana’s traditional built environment is based on mixed-use, compact blocks and a grid street pattern. Challenged by climate change as well as energy, water and food shortages, today’s planners increasingly recognize that this development concept can greatly enhance urban social, economic and environmental sustainability. Stores, trades and services at the street level become economically viable when there are four to eight stories of residences above. Such commercial activities offer highly accessible employment, goods and services to the neighborhood. The elderly, children, caregiving adults and those with limited means benefit particularly from not needing private cars. Street-oriented compact blocks allow dwellings to have dual orientation with interior courtyards and balconies that allow for eyes on the street, air circulation, socializing and plants. The loss of precisely this urban concept, which prevailed in nineteenth and much of twentieth century New York, formed the main impetus for Jane Jacobs’ critique of modernist planning in her *Death and Life of American Cities*. Large sections of pre-twentieth centu-

ry—and therefore pedestrian-oriented—European cities such as Paris, London and Berlin are also still based on the compact block and grid and have retained their vitality. Pérez adds, “The grid is a very powerful tool to order territory; it’s a very rational one.”

The *Master Plan for Havana* includes an extensive history of Havana’s architectural evolution, which forms the basis of the plan’s overall urban design concepts, and detailed design guidelines for several new and existing neighborhoods, parks and public spaces. The detailed design proposals stem from charrettes Pérez has been conducting in recent years in cooperation with the Council for European Urbanism. The master plan stands in contrast to Canadian official plans, which are almost devoid of urban design, a component still largely considered the prerogative of developers. Official plans in Canada are legal policy documents which, together with maps and supplemented by zoning by-laws, establish quite rigidly what uses and densities can be placed on any given piece of land within a municipality.

Master Plan and Its Ten “Elements”

The master plan lists ten key “elements,” described below. The elements cannot be tidily compartmentalized because, as Pérez notes, “If we don’t approach this thing in a holistic way, we are lost.”

1. *Waterfront revitalization: A waterfront really defines a city* - The plan pays homage to the famous Malecón Drive along Havana’s seashore. Uninterrupted public open spaces are extended along the entire waterfront of Havana. Taking advantage of the slope of the existing reef, the plan proposes an ambitious two-level tunnel under the whole length of the Malecón. Multiple potential benefits would derive from this: adding open space for public and social interaction at grade; increas-

ing the buffer to protect the heritage structures along the Malecón against the eroding saltwater mist from the sea; protecting against future rising sea levels; channeling public and private vehicular traffic and its pollution away from pedestrian areas; and incorporating new water, sewer and hydro infrastructure.

2. *Reinforcement of polycentric structure* - The plan represents an “ecological alternative to suburbanization” by including major open spaces within the urban structure. Pérez adds: “Yes, this is one of the good news in Cuba, there is no land speculation.”

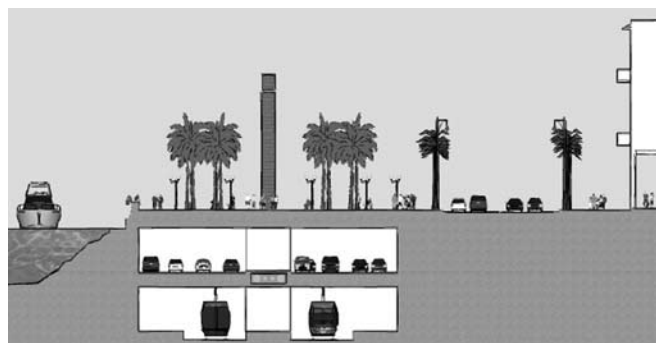
“Havana has a polycentric tradition,” explains Pérez. To minimize massive highway construction and maximize pedestrian accessibility, the plan proposes to reverse ⇨



Credit: Julio César Pérez Hernández
(Source: back page of Master Plan Doc)



Credit: Julio César Pérez Hernández
(Source: p. 43 of Master Plan Doc)



Credit: Alexis de la Cruz (Source: p. 69 of Master Plan Doc)

LEFT: Julio Pérez in his studio

RIGHT, TOP: Three layers of time: colonial, republican and modern architecture, timeless urbanism

RIGHT, MIDDLE: National Art Schools built after the revolution

RIGHT, BOTTOM: Proposed tunnel under the Malecón

the 1975 amalgamation and reestablish the autonomy and identity of the historical municipalities. In many major cities in Canada, amalgamation of the 1980s and 1990s removed civic administration from the people, discouraged locally appropriate solutions and increased the size and cost of bureaucracy.

3. *New public transport system* - "We plan for both vehicles and pedestrians, but we don't plan for highways or very wide streets that conflict with pedestrians," comments Pérez, who also envisages bicycle lanes, battery-powered trolleys and an ambitious subway system.

4. *Infrastructure upgrading: Infrastructure needs to be upgraded according to modern technology*

5. *New urban image: The city needs a new image that speaks for its regeneration and vitality* - The detailed urban design concepts that are offered for eight different neighborhoods would certainly revitalize the city if the mixed-use, compact block concept is applied to future development.

6. *Increase of public space: Life is vibrant on streets, squares and parks and allows for human exchange* - The detailed urban design plans for neighborhoods, squares and parks, including the Plaza de la Revolución, civic center and the Paseo del Prado around the Capitol, all increase and enhance public spaces.

7. *Mixed use: Different neighborhoods share different uses, as the model provided by the traditional city* - This "element" is critical for the revitalization of neighborhoods, yet its realization is probably the most challenging for Cuba, which currently allows only very limited outlets for private enterprise.

8. *Social and cultural integration: People should be able to freely work, relax, enjoy and interact* - "Cuba is very diversified, yet integrated, there are no gender problems, no racial problems," stresses Pérez. He underlines that the new neighborhoods are to include a full range of housing.

9. *Revitalization of calzadas and thoroughfares: Commercial axes attract people* - The porticos, or covered walkways, along mixed-use streets are a trademark of Havana's built heritage and provide natural cooling. The plan provides several street sections and landscaping proposals which include porticos for pedestrian comfort and renewed life along the *calzadas*.

10. *Increase of green areas: It is an environmental must* - The waterfront, the landscaping of *calzadas*, plazas and squares and new green areas within the polycentric structure all show a commitment to increasing the current ratio of ten square meters of open space per citizen. All neighborhood plans, included in the master plan, feature extensive proposals for green spaces. An interesting modification of the compact grid to allow for more open space is shown for the Casablanca neighborhood. Where neighborhoods connect to the waterfront, their road grids orient to the sea to "air condition" the entire neighborhood.

Next Steps?

The master plan provides for holistic high-, medium- and low-density designations to guide all urban functions and thus allows for their full integration and continuing evolution. The plan also gives a strong and relevant urban design framework for the city. For a comprehensive master plan, however, some elements need to be further elaborated, and

Credit: K. Gunning.



Credit: Julio César Pérez Hernández and his team of planners (Source: p. 53 of Master Plan Doc)

some additional elements may be worth considering. Pérez points to two major problems in Havana—housing and transportation. He envisages approximately one million new dwellings in two of the proposed neighborhoods, Vistamar and Habanamar. Yet, we do not know how many dwellings the remaining six redesigned neighborhoods will yield and how they will relate to the three broad density categories proposed in the plan. Similarly, the transportation text does not sufficiently explain the maps or relationship between various transportation modes. In a society with such exemplary health care and child care, one might expect that plans for renewed neighborhoods would include location criteria for a comprehensive range of social services. A section spelling out environmental and sustainability criteria is also absent, although the proposed urban design meets significant sustainability criteria. Lastly, Cuban urban agriculture has acquired international recognition, yet Pérez admits: “You see how much land is wasted and how much land is abandoned and uncultivated, I don’t find an explanation for that; I am ashamed of seeing that.” Perhaps one of Pérez’ future charrettes could address this issue and develop policies and community design guidelines that will attract Cuba’s educated youth to agriculture, both urban and rural, at least part-time.

Julio Pérez has been traveling extensively to explain the content, value and urgency of the plan both in Cuba and abroad. Everywhere he receives strong support. Yet it is the Cuban government, that needs to take an official stand and commit at least to the fundamental elements of the plan, its finalization and implementation. This would mean:

- determining what elements should be expanded or even added to ensure the plan is truly holistic, as Pérez envisions;
- establishing a policy framework for mixed uses to

FAR LEFT: Today’s calzadas
LEFT: Master plan of Havana (transfer for b/w reproduction makes areas approximate only)

RIGHT: Model of Vistamar neighborhood plan

flourish and which supports and guides individual initiatives, ideas and innovation for the benefit of the community without unleashing unbridled market forces, speculation, corruption and exploitation;

- evaluating international research and experience with alternative construction materials, energy generation, waste management and water supply and treatment, specifically in the context of their suitability for Havana and Cuba; and
- involving grassroots organizations such the Committees for the Defense of the Revolution, the Federation of Cuban Women and trade unions to refine the plan and take ownership of its visions.

Places around the world face challenges similar to Cuba in terms of how to balance market forces with state regulations to bring about socially and environmentally sustainable economies while nurturing both cooperation and individual initiatives for the common good. Clearly the master plan’s mixed-use, compact block concept along a grid street pattern answers some urgent challenges before an increasingly urbanizing humanity. Pérez sums it up best: “We have conquered very important goals in education, in public health, biotechnology... We understand that, but we have to move on. Changes are needed. My guess is that the government is doing this right now; they are aware of the need for changes, but they cannot do all the changes at the same time, they are doing things gradually.” Just as ninety miles from Havana there are great expectations for President Obama to bring about change, Cubans similarly trust and expect that Raul Castro, too, will do just that.

Regula Modlich (rmodlich@evdemon.ca), a retired urban planner and activist, helped develop a gender analysis of planning. For more information on the charrettes of the Council for European Urbanism, visit www.cuba.moderno.no.



Credit : Julio César Pérez Hernández et al. (Source : p. 71 of Master Plan Doc)

A Racist Rezoning? *Gentrification and New York City's Historic Immigrant Neighborhoods*

by TARRY HUM

The highly contested East Village-Lower East Side rezoning was overwhelmingly approved by the New York City Council in a 42-0 vote on November 19, 2008. Despite vigorous protest by a galvanized Protect Chinatown-Lower East Side Coalition, no city council member expressed opposition to the rezoning. The new zoning calls for a contextual zone for much of the East Village, ensuring that future development will cohere with the existing built environment while up-zoning key corridors such as Delancey and Chrystie Streets and Avenue D, which border Chinatown and the Lower East Side's extensive public housing stock. The rationale for the rezoning was to protect the historic neighborhood quality of the East Village and a portion of the Lower East Side from rampant out-of-scale development and create opportunities for affordable housing production through a voluntary inclusionary zoning incentive for developers.

This paper examines the Protect Chinatown-Lower East Side Coalition's claim that the East Village-Lower East Side rezoning is racist because it excludes Chinatown and parts of the Lower East Side—namely its public housing developments—thereby excluding the concentrated Chinese, Latino and black low-income areas. Community dissension about the rezoning exposes historic and deep divisions regarding the definition and future development of Chinatown and the Lower East Side. It has brought to the forefront competing stakeholder visions of post-9/11 Chinatown-Lower East Side rebuilding goals and strategies to sustain working-class immigrant neighborhoods in a post-industrial New York. It also has larger implications for struggles over exclusionary zoning in multiracial cities.

Exclusionary Zoning in a Multiracial City

The Bloomberg administration has reinvigorated city planning tools and practices to pursue a real estate-driven economic development strategy that advances New York City's transition to a post-industrial world city. On an unprecedented scale, the Bloomberg administration is engaged in a piecemeal, neighborhood-by-neighborhood approach to rewriting the 1961 New York City zoning code that regulates new development and the built environment. Cumulatively, the eighty-five rezonings approved to date advance a pro-development agenda for “underutilized” and “blighted” areas in largely immigrant communities and communities of color while preserving the neighborhood quality of suburban-like and/or affluent white neighborhoods.

According to the Protect Chinatown-Lower East Side Coalition, the East Village-Lower East Side rezoning represents a form of exclusionary zoning. While the area encompassing the gentrified and largely white population of Community Board 3 will be protected by contextual zoning that prevents out-of-scale developments, the boundaries of the zone that border the concentrated residential areas of working-class Chinese, Latinos and blacks will be up-zoned to accommodate new development. The coalition further claims the New York City Department of City Planning's (DCP) environmental impact analysis failed to consider the disparate racial impacts of the rezoning and subsequently, escalates gentrification pressures and upscale development trajectories well underway in the Lower East Side and Chinatown.

Immigrants, Ethnicity,



Diversity, and Space

Jarring juxtapositions of affluence and working poverty increasingly dominate neighborhood landscapes as luxury high-rise condominiums locate near small vegetable and fish markets, escalating commercial rents force garment factories to permanently shut their operations and fashion boutiques and hotels dot local ethnic streetscapes. Despite these transformative pressures, Community Board 3 and the DCP prepared an East Village-Lower East Side rezoning plan to “protect historic neighborhoods”—narrowly defined. According to the coalition, the rezoning plan “foreshadows a possible glass and steel wall of buildings separating neighborhoods.” To appease concerns about residential displacement, up-zoned avenues include a voluntary inclusionary zoning provision that allows for a density bonus as an incentive for affordable housing development.

A 2008 study by the New York University Furman Center documented the modest production of affordable housing in three metro regions that adopted inclusionary zoning, cautioning that inclusionary zoning is not a “panacea” to the myriad challenges of affordable housing development. An outstanding community concern is that affordability measures based on median household income for the New York City metropolitan area, which includes several affluent suburban counties, will generate “affordable” housing well beyond the means of working-poor Chinatown and Lower East Side residents. In lieu of new production, New York City’s inclusionary zoning policy can be applied to preserve existing affordable housing increasingly at risk as a direct result of rezonings that increase the “as of right” development parameters. Based on these limitations, community activists have little faith that inclusionary zoning will produce or protect a much needed affordable housing stock.

To prepare an analysis of DCP’s Draft Environmental Impact Statement for the East Village-Lower East Side rezoning, the Asian American Legal Defense and Education Fund (AALDEF) contracted Hunter College’s Center for Community Planning and Development. Hunter College’s study provided much detailed evidence to substantiate the coalition’s claim that the rezoning posed disproportionate and negative impacts for low-income Chinese, Latinos and blacks. These concerns were integral to a legal

challenge filed by AALDEF on behalf of the coalition in February 2009 to annul DCP’s environmental assessment. AALDEF’s lawsuit demands a new study that will conduct an accurate and comprehensive evaluation of the consequential impacts of massive new developments on the viability of surrounding working-class neighborhoods.

While the East Village-Lower East Side boundaries effectively marginalized Chinatown and parts of the Lower East Side, exclusionary planning practices included the lack of language access. Much media coverage of the heated exchanges at community board meetings and public hearings centered on the absence of translation services. In this quintessential immigrant city, language access is especially significant for building an inclusive civil society and promoting democratic participation in neighborhood planning and decision-making. The fact that such a basic service was lacking in public hearings and meetings about the East Village-Lower East Side rezoning is meaningful for the symbolic and effective exclusion of the majority working-class Chinese and Latino immigrants.

Defining Community and Community Development

The institutional leadership of Chinatown and the Lower East Side is comprised of numerous community-based non-profit organizations, advocacy groups, worker centers and social service providers. The Protect Chinatown-Lower East Side Coalition represents a long-standing collaboration between the Chinese Staff and Workers Association

RIGHT: Exemplifying an immigrant growth coalition, Cathay Bank is financing the construction of a luxury condominium building with prime retail space on the corner of Delancey and Forsyth Streets.

FAR RIGHT: Map shows the boundaries of the East Village/Lower East Side rezoning, and the remaining neighborhood sections of Community Board.3.

(CSWA) and the Asian American Legal Defense and Education Fund (AALDEF). As one of the oldest worker centers in the United States, CSWA organizes immigrant workers in key low-wage, unregulated labor market sectors such as restaurants, construction and garment production. AALDEF is a national civil rights organization and engages in litigation, organizing, advocacy and education to promote racial and economic justice. The involvement of other stakeholders such as the National Mobilization Against Sweatshops clearly positions the coalition as a voice for the most marginalized populations of Chinatown-Lower East Side. Unprecedented, however, is the involvement of numerous small business owners, including the Chinese Restaurant Alliance, the members of which face escalating commercial rents and the prospect of displacement.

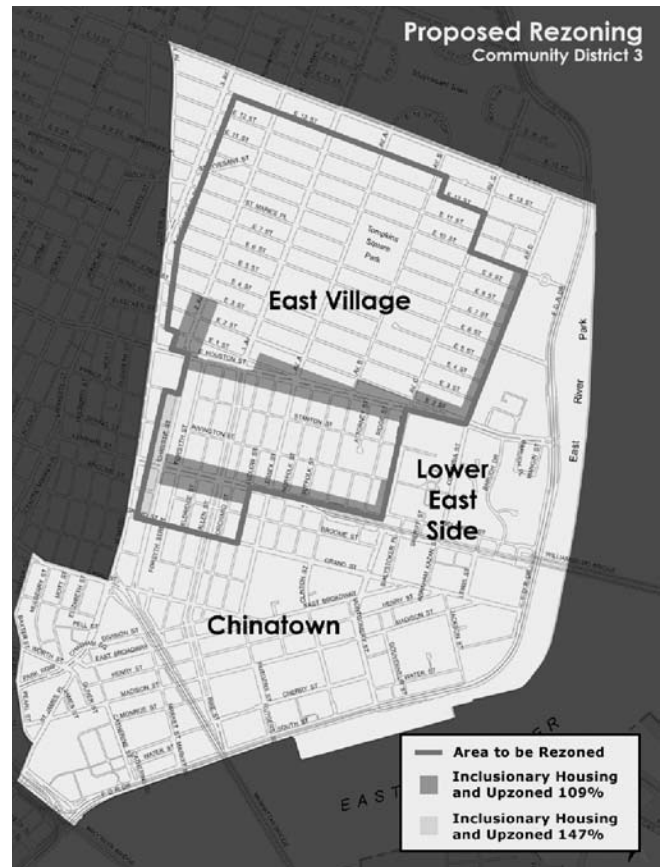
Some Support

Not all Chinatown and Lower East Side stakeholders opposed the East Village-Lower East Side rezoning. Elected officials, including the city council members

that represent the area, established housing advocacy groups and community development corporations such as Asian Americans for Equality (AAFE) countered the coalition’s claim of a racist rezoning with a five-page document titled “East Village/LES Rezoning: Responding to Myths” to refute that the rezoning was “a racist, secretive effort biased against minorities.” Building the case for a separate Chinatown planning study, AAFE argued “...the Lower East Side and East Village have every right as a community to create a plan that protects their neighborhood, just as Chinatown has a right to create a plan based on consensus for itself.”

While political divisions in Chinatown were historically defined by traditional family associations such as the Chinese Consolidated Benevolent Association and an emergent non-profit organizational sector informed by a new pan-Asian American political consciousness and civil rights agenda, contemporary political tensions also define this matured non-profit sector. AAFE and AALDEF represent fundamentally distinct and different approaches to Chinatown community definition and development. These differences were debated in the early 1990s when the New York

Tarry Hum



Map prepared by Kate Ervin (Hunter College’s Center for Community Planning and Development) for the Asian American Legal Defense and Education Fund. Used by permission.

Tarry Hum



Tarry Hum



Tarry Hum



City Council expanded from thirty-five to fifty-one members and new city council district boundaries were drawn—and the city’s population reapportioned. It was debated how best to optimize the possibility of electing a representative to advocate for Chinatown. Based on shared socio-economic characteristics and concerns, AALDEF proposed that Chinatown and the Lower East Side be included in one council district while AAFE viewed descriptive representation defined as electing a candidate of Asian descent achievable by including Chinatown with affluent Tribeca and SoHo. Rather than an Asian-Latino “community of interest,” AAFE was banking on the willingness of affluent whites to vote for a Chinese candidate. Although AAFE ultimately prevailed in the drawing of district boundaries, New York City Council District 1, which includes Chinatown along with SoHo, NoHo, Tribeca and Battery Park City, has yet to elect a Chinese council member.

In the aftermath of the 9/11 tragedies, AAFE founded the Rebuild Chinatown Initiative and contracted a private planning firm to research and develop a comprehensive development plan. The resulting ten-year, \$500 million plan seeks to propel an economically devastated Chinatown into the ranks of world premier destinations by building an arts and cultural center, establishing linkages to a revitalized East River waterfront, constructing a Pacific Rim office complex with Class A office space and producing new affordable housing. Centered on establishing Manhattan’s Chinatown as “America’s Chinatown,” AAFE proposes a new development approach since “(t)he paradigm would no longer be Manhattan’s Chinatown in relation to Flushing and Sunset Park but New York City’s Chinatown in relation to those of San Francisco, Toronto and Vancouver.” In rebuilding and improving

TOP: One way working poor Chinatown interfaces with a gentrified and hip Lower East Side.
MIDDLE: New luxury housing construction is encroaching on a whimsical mural noting a gateway to the Lower East Side.
BOTTOM: Out of scale development is visible all across the area, contrasting sharply with existing uses.

Chinatown's tourism-based economy and its linkages to Lower Manhattan and the East River waterfront, AAFE's community development plan seeks to remake historic working-class and mixed-use Chinatown into a Pacific Rim office and finance center for transnational capital. This vision of a gentrified and upscale Chinatown has since been echoed by the Asian American Federation of New York, an umbrella organization of social service agencies, in its 2008 Chinatown business study, which calls for upgrading Chinatown's image and advises small business owners that "greater use of English and being polite and helpful make a business more inviting."

"To Hell with Your Agenda": Community Planning and the Future of Chinatown and the Lower East Side

In early November 2008, Mayor Bloomberg successfully orchestrated a change in the term limits law, thereby allowing him to seek a third term in the upcoming 2009 election. Obligated by custom to hear public commentary before the bill signing, Mayor Bloomberg endured four hours of public feedback, including the rebuke voiced by CSWA organizer David Tieu: "To hell with your agenda." Community concerns persuaded the Bloomberg administration to conduct a separate zoning study for Chinatown. A Chinatown Working Group comprised of members of Community Boards 1, 2 and 3 (Chinatown is split among three community boards, but most of it is in Community Board 3) and key neighborhood organizations, including AAFE and the Chinese American Planning Council, has been convened and charged with the task of conducting an inclusive participatory process for a comprehensive planning and zoning study of Chinatown.

Despite deep reservations about the East Village-Lower East Side rezoning plan, some advocacy groups supported the rezoning and are participating in the Chinatown Working Group to promote a special district designation for Chinatown. Planning, however, must now occur in the context of an approved rezoning that has racialized and unequal impacts for Chinatown and the Lower East Side. Over the past years, several community plans have been prepared for Chinatown, including one by Columbia University's Urban Planning Studio in 2003. Failing to recognize the common interests among working-class

Asians and Latinos and their shared neighborhood spaces, there is no comprehensive plan that focuses on the conditions and challenges that shape Chinatown *and* the Lower East Side with the goals of sustaining the local industrial economy and preserving the mixed housing stock and community institutions that support working-class immigrant life.

Land Use Struggles in Chinatown

Land use struggles have long defined Chinatown community formation and development. Seattle's International District and Boston's Chinatown were sliced by highway construction while Los Angeles' Chinatown was relocated to accommodate a regional rail station. Other examples of environmental racism include a proposed 500-bed prison in Manhattan's Chinatown and an "adult entertainment district" in Boston Chinatown—forcing all who wanted to access the nearest public transit stop to walk by peep shows and sex shops. The current challenges facing immigrant neighborhoods, however, require environmental justice and sustainable development discourses to shift from noxious uses to countering pro-development agendas that advocate for tourism and recreation, luxury housing and upscale retail and commercial spaces.

The struggle to preserve and sustain vibrant working-class neighborhoods is heightened by an immigrant growth coalition comprised of ethnic banks, developers, contractors and increasingly, community-based organizations, including non-profit development corporations that support the class transformation and remaking of a sanitized, tourist-friendly Chinatown oriented towards Pacific Rim financial and office development. An advocacy planning agenda requires the continued active engagement of organizations such as CSWA, AALDEF and the Protect Chinatown-Lower East Side Coalition rooted in mobilizing working-class immigrants and promoting cross-racial alliances among New York City's racially diverse working poor to assert their right to protect and grow a vibrant neighborhood and local economy.

Tarry Hum is an associate professor in the Department of Urban Studies, Queens College, City University of New York. For more information, see the Protect Chinatown-Lower East Side Coalition website at www.protectchinatownandles.org.

New Faces in Public Spaces: *Immigrant Integration and City Parks*

by NEERJA VASISHTA and HILLARY ANGELO

Urban parks can be vibrant mixing grounds and places for expression, but they can also be isolating spaces of oppression. The success or failure of an urban park depends on both the physical design and the networks of community members who use and support it. Park planning processes often depend on neighborhood organizations for input, but the processes risk leaving out important park users, particularly immigrants, if they do not look beyond traditional civic organizations.

The large body of scholarship addressing space, place and methods for public engagement offers few examples of practitioners and community leaders who have specifically targeted and successfully engaged immigrant and other marginalized communities in public processes surrounding the design and use of urban public spaces. This article presents two case studies from a project that aims to strengthen the connection between immigrants and parks in New York City by supporting immigrant integration through park planning and local civic organizations. It shows that through collaboration it is possible to have parks serve a wider audience.

New York's Immigrants & Parks Collaborative

Immigrants, who make up 36 percent of New York City's population, disproportionately experience high levels of housing overcrowding. For them, and for many New Yorkers, parks can serve the purpose of a living room or backyard. The city's uniquely busy streets, sidewalks, subways and parks bring together immigrants and non-immigrants on a daily basis into shared public spaces, making broad, inclusive involvement in those places all the more crucial. Immigrants use and enjoy parks, but encounter language, knowledge and social barriers to involvement in civic organizations and park decision-making.

The New York City Department of Parks & Recreation manages over 29,000 acres of parkland—14 percent of the city's total landmass. The agency depends on hundreds of local civic organizations and volunteer-run "friends

of" park groups to help maintain, program and advocate for its 1,700 parks, from urban playgrounds to old-growth forest. The Parks Department struggles to meet the needs of changing park users in a dense, dynamic city. Physical design needs change as populations shift and park activities change, along with languages spoken, programming interests and foods served. Many members of the Parks Department staff are often seasonal hires with no special language or outreach skills. Without adequate resources or knowledge to do effective immigrant outreach, the Parks Department depends on community-based organizations to help engage immigrant communities.

The Immigrants & Parks Collaborative allows its members to experiment with methods of immigrant engagement, allowing for more focused staff time, resources and support than is usually available. Funded by The JM Kaplan Fund, it is a joint project of an advocacy organization, a non-profit and a city agency: the New York Immigration Coalition (NYIC), City Parks Foundation (CPF) and the Parks Department. The collaborative's ten community-based organizations are working to increase immigrant engagement in eight parks in New York City. Most of the parks have a dedicated staff person, funded by the grant, who carries out the day-to-day work in each park, such as planning programs and conducting neighborhood outreach. The collaborative works to understand issues unique to local context, while identifying systemic barriers to immigrant access and participation. The collaborative's leadership—and the authors'—aim is to use lessons from this privately funded project to inform the Parks Department's efforts, as well as the efforts of other organizations, to grow spaces for more inclusive park engagement.

Making Space for Immigrant Involvement

Case 1: Creating Participatory Processes - Capital renovation of Parks Department properties is a complicated, multi-

year process. Early on, an on-site, daytime scoping meeting with the park designer offers an opportunity to get public input, and park designs are ultimately affected by who attends and what information they share. It's a struggle for the Parks Department to get broad community input, especially from immigrant communities, which may be less connected to civic organizations that receive word of upcoming scoping meetings, or may not have the language skills to participate fully.

In Lower Manhattan's Chinatown, two organizations teamed up to create and employ a more accessible public input process for the redesign of a city-owned playground. Asian Americans for Equality (AAFE) has worked for community development and immigrant empowerment in New York City for thirty years on issues including affordable housing, economic development and civic participation. The Hester Street Collaborative (HSC) is a non-profit that grew out of an architecture firm in 2001 and works with residents to understand their neighborhood through visible, lasting, hands-on projects in schoolyards and public spaces. HSC and AAFE are partnering to re-envision a well-used playground in Sara D. Roosevelt Park.

Combining HSC's design education expertise with AAFE's outreach and advocacy networks, the organizations collected information about the playground from over 2,000 residents. They conducted surveys in English, Chinese and Spanish; hosted in-park events to gather information from children and adults through simple, creative activities; and held a series of meetings to review the results and give further input. HSC's hands-on activities are designed to help residents engage with and re-envision familiar places in their neighborhoods through games and activities such as *Bad Design Darts* and making paper lanterns of wishes. The activities require limited verbal interaction and instead use images to help people reflect on what's important to them about a given space.

RIGHT: New QCH volunteers offer story time in Bengali and Spanish in Travers Park

HSC presented the results of its findings about Sara D. Roosevelt Park to the Parks Department and worked with the designer to reach a compromise on the playground design, which includes many elements that residents wanted. Now HSC and AAFE are responding to community dissatisfaction with preliminary design ideas for the Allen and Pike Street pedestrian malls—where they earlier created a temporary art installation about local immigrant history—that run through Chinatown and the Lower East Side to the East River waterfront. Leading a similar visioning process, HSC and AAFE added multilingual booklets that residents use to jot down ideas as they follow a guide down the malls and record oral histories about what these places mean to community members.

HSC's dedication to the park and willingness to work as allies with the Parks Department enabled these processes, and HSC and AAFE's role as liaisons has been critical to the success of the projects. Aided by CPF, the groups worked closely with the Parks Department to learn what kind of information was useful for designers; collect that information from a hard-to-reach population using their community relationships; and present a succinct interpretation of findings to the agency. They now have monthly "operations meetings" with the Parks Department about the projects and are expanding to multi-agency work through a new Department of Transportation plaza program. They are also working with CPF to develop a "capital toolkit" that will provide information and activities for community groups to lead similar input processes in other neighborhoods.

Case 2: Diversifying Civic Structures – Jackson Heights is one of the most diverse neighborhoods in the



Photo by Javier Ramirez-Baron

world. Of the city's nearly 200 ethnic groups, 147 live in Queens and over 100 of the 160 languages spoken in the city are spoken in this borough. A major transportation, commercial and residential center, this neighborhood ranks second to last in open space among the city's fifty-one community districts. The Friends of Travers Park (FOTP) is part of a larger, well-established civic structure that has not always enjoyed a friendly relationship with new immigrant communities. FOTP is the civic steward of overused and tiny Travers Park in Jackson Heights. Though it had organized park programming with the hope of attracting diverse neighbors, it did not have new immigrant representation in the organization, and like many friends of park groups across the city, members wanted to include new arrivals but were uncertain as to how, or felt their attempts were unsuccessful.

When it learned about the Immigrants & Parks Collaborative, FOTP approached the Queens Community House (QCH) to partner to get new residents involved in Travers Park activities. QCH's English school, where immigrants representing over seventy languages go to learn English, is a main point of contact for new immigrants in Jackson Heights. Drawing on these students, QCH created an Action Committee three years ago to build immigrant leadership through

work on advocacy issues ranging from affordable housing to immigration reform, recently adding parks.

The partnership required a shift in organizational culture to make space for meaningful immigrant engagement. Drawing on its existing Action Committee, QCH was able to bring new immigrant leaders to meetings of FOTP. Accustomed to holding small meetings in English, the first time FOTP held a joint meeting with new attendees presented communication challenges, with the parks fellow, hired by QCH to conduct its parks work, sitting with the immigrant leaders while translating English to Spanish and vice versa. Later, at a collaborative meeting, the fellow reflected that the new process changed the meeting's pace: people had to slow down conversation for translation to capture content and receive information, and the meeting went longer than usual. This experience is common for QCH when holding bilingual or multilingual meetings, but for those new to such a process, results ranged from frustration to new clarity and understanding. Meeting attendees were forced to think about how to ensure genuine inclusion, maintain participation and be sensitive to how ideas were capitalized on. This personal level of interaction and communication adjustment is easily overlooked in discussions of immigrant engagement, yet is key to local participation and integration.

Through their partnership this year, these two groups have organized park events that reach new immigrants as well as long-time residents, successfully advocated for a side street to be closed to traffic every Sunday and are currently working to create a bilingual park brochure for Travers Park. The two groups are also considering a broader campaign to green Jackson Heights.

Lessons Learned: Involving Immigrants in Parks Processes and Civic Organizations

The collaborative has provided a unique opportunity: resources and dedicated staff time to allow small

LEFT: HSC activities encourage Chinatown residents to reimagine pedestrian malls

Photo by Neerja Vasishtha



organizations to approach challenges of immigrant engagement with creativity, focus and support. Its activities offer practitioners in local government and civic organizations lessons on rethinking parks as opportunities for integration, regardless of resources:

Parks are tools for immigrant communities: It is a myth that worries about housing, employment and financial security prevent immigrant involvement in parks and community life; inadequate outreach and improper public processes do. Immigrants come to a new country with a wide range of experiences, skills and aspirations, and many care about parks. In Jackson Heights, immigrant leaders from QCH who went on to conduct park surveys and storytelling in Bengali and Spanish in Travers Park talked about the spirit of coming together that they experienced in public spaces, from closing streets in Colombia to cross-generational park activities in Singapore. Another volunteer always involved in politics and local initiatives in her home country didn't want to be "locked up and frustrated," in the United States and found the local park a good place to continue her engagement.

For these volunteers, FOTP's shifts in outreach strategy, meeting pace and organizational culture enabled their initial involvement. Many found that working with local elected officials and institutions on small park events could also be instructive for helping immigrants learn how to navigate a variety of civic structures, a skill that could be useful to further other policy and advocacy issues.

Immigrant social networks are tools for government and service organizations: Government agencies want to allocate resources effectively and provide relevant public services but they need help from local leaders and service organizations to access immigrant communities. Outreach and policy implementation that connects to existing social networks is more effective than independent outreach through traditional methods and secures broader input on park programming, services and improvements. This leads to better targeted and well-used investments, and builds trust.

In Chinatown, AAFE provides outdoor housing workshops that bring new arrivals to their offices. Similarly, immigrant-serving organizations distribute information in parks about enrolling in ESL classes,

accessing benefits and learning about labor rights. New communication between city and community can happen as civic and governmental bodies better reach newer arrivals and immigrants learn how to navigate and expand their world.

Precedent setting affects policy: The types of partnerships the collaborative supports illustrate ways to use local knowledge and existing social networks to promote inclusivity and integration, rather than creating new programs that may not be as effective at supporting more organic immigrant integration. In the case of HSC's and AAFE's work, immigrants in Chinatown provided input about the playground and pedestrian malls because the process was made accessible, engaging and relevant. These methods, in striking contrast to traditional presentations followed by a feedback session, are affecting the Parks Department's general approach to public input. It is now incorporating more "listening sessions" and opportunities for input into appropriate park projects. Practitioners can learn from experiences like these to improve existing processes, or learn where obstacles to engagement lie and provide more guidance, transparency and clarity around them.

In recent months, to comply with a mayoral executive order mandating that all city agencies implement a language access policy, the Parks Department is beginning to work with the collaborative for advice and input, hopefully resulting in more effective policy down the road.

Integrating new arrivals into existing neighborhoods is crucial to maintaining cities' vibrant, diverse community life. Linking immigrants to civic life has real effects in public space; when people see each other face-to-face in parks, distant "immigrants" become the neighbor planting next to you, and threatening "government," your park's gardener. By making public processes accessible and integrating new arrivals into established civic structures, practitioners encourage immigrant participation that in turn helps create publics and public spaces that reflect the unique character of their neighborhoods.

Neerja Vasishta is the former coordinator of the Immigrants & Parks Collaborative and parks advocacy coordinator at the New York Immigration Coalition. Hillary Angelo is the former director of the technical assistance program at the Partnerships for Parks and currently a Ph.D. candidate in sociology at New York University.

Working on the Edge: *Day Labor, Migration and Neighborhoods in the Phoenix Metropolitan Area*

by FRANCISCO LARA and JACOB FISHER

U.S. metropolitan areas in the Southwest are becoming increasingly connected to the global economy, and their social and economic structures mirror such transformation. As a result of a growing external orientation and a geographic location close to the southern U.S. border, metropolitan areas in this region have experienced explosive growth in recent years. In response to the undeniable opportunities created by this growth, thousands of immigrants have come seeking, and often finding, jobs, but they have also often been faced with exclusion and inequality that defy traditional planning thinking. Few places in the Southwest better illustrate this change than the Phoenix metropolitan area (Greater Phoenix) in the State of Arizona.

Comprising twenty-five cities and towns, Greater Phoenix was the thirteenth largest metropolitan area in the U.S. in 2003 in terms of gross production, and the third largest in the Southwest after Los Angeles-Long Beach and Orange County. Between 1993 and 2003, Greater Phoenix's

economy grew on average 8.2 percent annually, a rate that made it one of the ten most rapidly expanding metropolitan economies in the U.S. High-wage occupations led this growth, followed by medium-wage jobs in the high-tech, aerospace/aviation, biotechnology and software industries. Due to its location within one of the major transportation corridors in North America, Greater Phoenix is also a hub for trade flows resulting from the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA). Overall, Arizona exported \$14.9 billion worth of goods in 2005, with Mexico and Canada its two largest trade partners.

Parallel to this economic transformation, Greater Phoenix has been undergoing a rapid demographic transition. In 2005, Phoenix's population reached 3.8 million after growing an average of 3.4 percent annually during the five previous years. The most important component of this growth has been the expansion of the Hispanic population, which accounts for more than 50 percent of recent demographic changes. Over the last five years,

the Hispanic population grew an average of 7.2 percent annually, increasing its share of the total population from 25.1 percent in 2000 to 29.2 percent in 2005. According to the 2005 American Community Survey, 612,850 of Phoenix's residents were born outside the U.S. and of these, 181,853 entered the country in 2000 or later. The share of the foreign-born population in 2005 (16.1 percent) was more than twice that in 1990 (7.3 percent), with the bulk of the new immigrants coming from Latin America (72.8 percent), principally from Mexico, followed by Asia (12.9 percent) and Europe (11.1 percent).

Working on the Edge

Economic growth and social change in Greater Phoenix is not devoid of contradictions, which include labor market segmentation, economic exclusion and an increase in social disparities. An example of such contradictions is day labor work, which in the past two decades has become an important component of the personal and household care and hospitality industries, as well as a major

mechanism for immigrants and other marginal workers to enter the local economy. Day labor is also the most visible manifestation of the economic informalization that has accompanied the regional change in Greater Phoenix. Day labor is a precarious form of employment characterized by the practice of workers congregating on street corners, in front of stores or in parking lots and churches where they are hired by homeowners, contractors and other employers to perform temporary jobs based on daily and hourly agreements.

A rapid assessment of day labor activity conducted in 2006 discovered at least sixteen hiring sites in seven cities around the Phoenix metropolitan area. A rough estimate of the day labor population in these sites suggests that 950 to 1,500 workers gather at these sites on a daily basis. The vast majority (81 percent) of hiring sites are informal and include "connected" sites, which are located in front of home improvement stores, garden stores, recycling centers and other business, as well as "unconnected" like those located next to gas stations and on busy streets. The inventory identified two regulated sites linked to local churches and another managed by a group of community-based organizations. The latter, known as the Macehualli Work Center, was created in 2003 with support from the City of Phoenix. It is currently managed

as a citizen-based effort concerned with the safety of workers and employers as well as supporting business owners and residents affected by the activity of day laborers on the street. An important aspect of regulated sites is that they are more likely to attract female workers and recent immigrants. They are also more likely to protect workers from abuses that include abandonment in remote locations, physical attacks and non-payment for completed work.

Day labor in Phoenix is dominated by young males, usually undocumented immigrants from Mexico and Central America. A survey we conducted in 2007 of day laborers found that 89.5 percent were born in Mexico, 9.5 percent in Central America and the rest in the U.S. The average age of laborers was thirty-one, and one-third of them were employed in agriculture before migrating from their country of origin. Uncertainty is a major aspect of day labor life. Workers are able to obtain a job for only three out of the five days they wait at one of the sites seeking employment. Uncertainty is also reflected in the payment rate, which needs to be negotiated with potential employers each time, as well as in the nature of the job to be performed, which can range from landscaping to moving, digging, roofing, painting or dishwashing. Employers come from all over the metropolitan area and are by and large private homeowners, followed by

contractors and local businesses attracted by the low wages and the flexibility of this labor force.

A key characteristic of day labor is its connection with immigrants' neighborhoods. Hiring sites, even those connected to particular businesses, tend to be located in proximity to residential areas that can be characterized as ethnic enclaves. The primary explanation for this is the need to reduce the costs of travel for the day laborers given the uncertainty of obtaining work on any specific day. The average worker travels 0.8 miles from home to the regular hiring site. Another explanation is the role played by communities as mediator between workers and day labor markets in Greater Phoenix. By forming support networks, communities are able to communicate the existence of job opportunities and match a particular demand for workers with the appropriate set of skills. In the case of immigrant communities, these networks frequently teach basic communication skills, educate laborers about basic work etiquette and provide a minimum level of security.

In some cases, the role of immigrant and ethnic communities' amount to creating a parallel regime that complements labor markets in recruiting, screening and training workers. This translates to a spatial dependency between these communities and day labor activity, creating ⇒

a particular geography of day labor in Phoenix.

Day Labor and Neighborhoods

Day labor activity is a conspicuous component of the urban landscape in Greater Phoenix. Many informal workers congregate daily in open spaces

to offer their labor to a variety of employers. Seven jurisdictions in the Greater Phoenix area contain informal day labor hiring sites, including Phoenix proper, Mesa, Chandler, Cave Creek, Queen Creek, Surprise and Guadalupe. Among these, only Phoenix, Chandler and Cave Creek have some type of regulated day

labor sites. Phoenix also contains seven unregulated hiring sites and Mesa, which is the second largest city in the area, contains three unregulated sites. Due to their proximity, some of the sites form day labor corridors that extend for several miles, making it possible for laborers to change locations based on demand and other conditions.

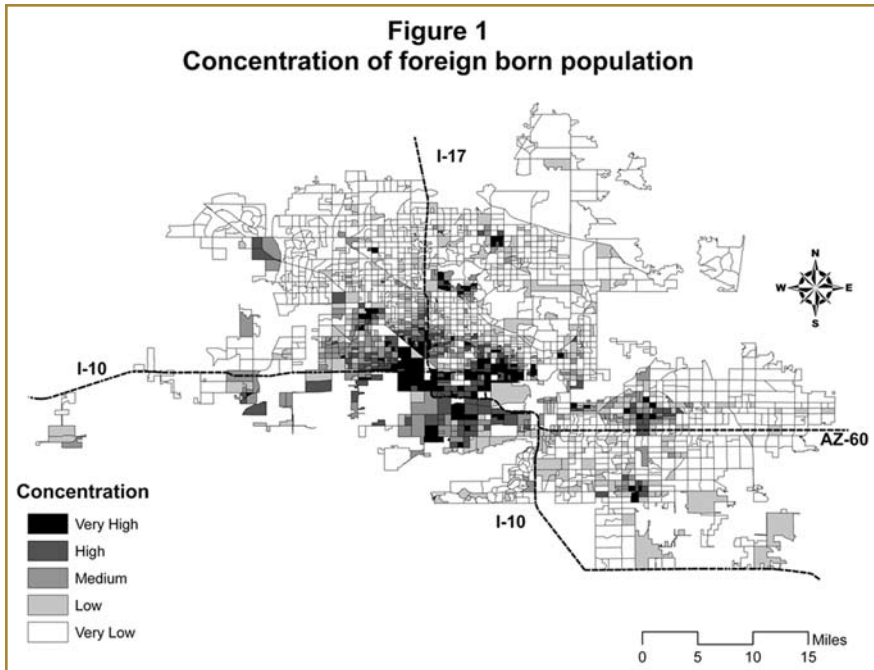


Figure 1 shows the distribution of residential areas in Greater Phoenix with above- or below-average levels of foreign-born residents. The map shows a metro area with clear boundaries in terms of the concentration of the immigrant population. Cities in the north and east are predominantly non-immigrant, while cities in the south and west have a significant number of residential areas with a high concentration of immigrants. The largest grouping of darker blocks is mostly in the south

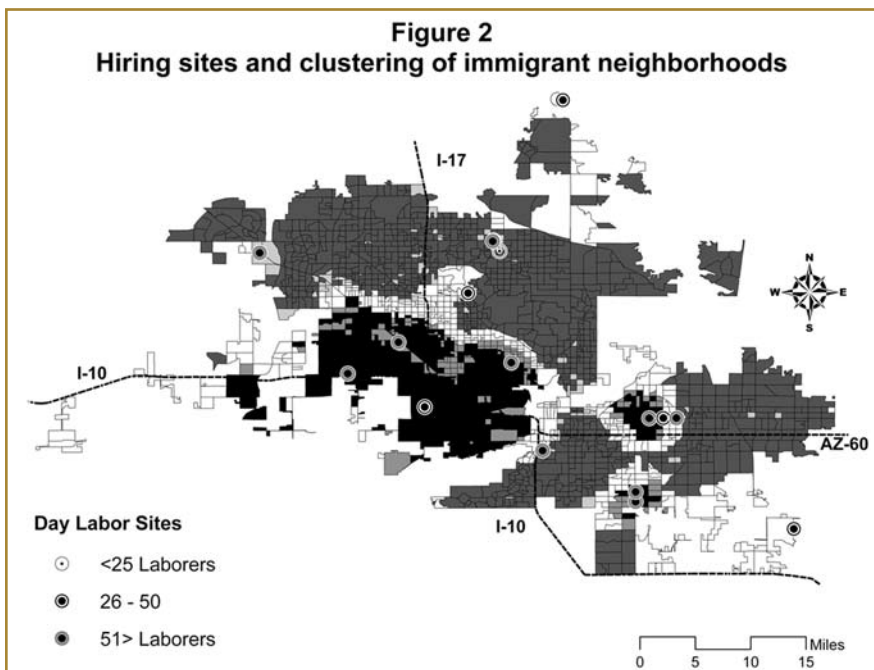


Figure 1 shows the distribution of residential areas in Greater Phoenix with above- or below-average levels of foreign-born residents. Figure 2 shows the location of hiring sites in relation to the clustering of the immigrant population. Calculated by the authors based on U.S. Census data and fieldwork

and west sections of Phoenix, but spill over to south Glendale and Tolleson. Smaller groupings of immigrant populations are found in Mesa and Chandler in the southeast and Avondale in the southwest. With the exception of scattered pockets of immigrants in northern Phoenix, the rest of the metropolitan area has relatively few immigrants. In cities like Scottsdale, Paradise Valley, Fountain Hills, Gilbert and Surprise, immigrants are clearly underrepresented.

Figure 2 shows the location of hiring sites in relation to the clustering of the immigrant population. The first and most salient characteristic of day labor hiring sites in Greater Phoenix is their location within or near neighborhoods with a high concentration of new immigrants. Four hiring sites are located within the limits of the large immigrant cluster in south Phoenix, three in the cluster formed in Mesa and two more in the smallest cluster formed in Chandler. Six other sites are located within or near neighborhoods dominated by immigrant populations, but surrounded by neighborhoods forming non-immigrant clusters. The only exceptions to this rule are the sites located in Cave Creek and Queen Creek, two cities expanding mainly as a result of the construction of high-scale residential areas in northern Phoenix. In general, hiring sites located within neighborhoods with a large concentration of immigrants tend to be larger.

Closing Comments

Cities in the Phoenix metropolitan area have attempted to enact policies and regulations that outlaw the formation of day labor hiring sites and disperse the existing ones. It can be argued that the basis for these actions is to improve road safety, reduce crime and control nuisances associated with loitering along city roads and sidewalks and in other public spaces. An example of such an attempt can be seen in Cave Creek in northern Phoenix, which in September of 2007 voted 7-0 to pass a new ordinance to ban day labor activity by making it a civil offense to stand on or near a street and ask for a job. The argument of the proponents is that work solicitation on the street creates a traffic hazard, yet the most fervent supporters of the ordinance were anti-immigrant groups that see these measures as an effective way to curb undocumented immigration.

These solutions not only cause the social fabric of local communities to fray, they are also impractical from a planning perspective. Day labor is structurally and deeply part of the economy of the Phoenix area and the Southwest border region in general. Day laborers contribute to the construction, hospitality and household care industries that are central to the regional economy. Their work is essential to the quality-of-life of many households,

especially those entering into homeownership or trying to stay afloat in a shaky economy. The integration of these laborers is vital for family and community consolidation in Phoenix. Therefore, day labor cannot be eliminated through policing because it is already inside the fabric of society in the region, not just that of the immigrant communities. Ultimately, it is necessary to look at this issue from a moral and practical perspective.

In the short run, there needs to be political and financial support for community initiatives to help the operation of day labor sites. An example is the Mamaroneck's experience in New York, where a combination of police patrols and grassroots organizing cracked down on nuisances (littering and public urination) and abuse against day laborers. In the longer term, communities in Greater Phoenix should support the creation and operation of regulated sites like the Macehualli Work Center formed as a public-private partnership to eliminate the negative effects of unregulated day labor activity in Central Phoenix and, simultaneously, empower day laborers.

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Integration of International Immigrants in Tijuana: *Why So Easy?*

by TITO ALEGRÍA

International migration to Tijuana has become a high-profile phenomenon since the 1980s. Migrants traditionally come from China and, more recently, from Latin American countries. Many Latin Americans use Tijuana as a crossing platform toward California, transforming the city into a stop along one of the most important terrestrial migratory routes that Latin Americans and Asians have. What's striking, however, is that in spite of the large flow of non-Mexican immigrants, there is little negative reaction to these migrants, and on the whole they are easily incorporated into Tijuana society. The particular social structure of Tijuana helps explain this easy integration of new arrivals from abroad.

Who Are They?

Tijuana is a city located on the Mexican border with California. At the beginning of the twentieth century, it was a village with 250 inhabitants, but in 2004, its population was nearly 1.5 million, primarily migrants from other Mexican regions. Just over 4 percent of Tijuana's inhabitants were born in another country, of which 3 percent were born in the U.S. United States-born Tijuana residents fall into two groups. The smaller group consists of Anglos

who hardly speak Spanish and live a self-imposed exclusionary life in coastal neighborhoods. The larger group is comprised of people who never actually resided in the United States. Their parents, most of them Mexican citizens living in Tijuana, deliberately gave birth to them in the United States as a strategy to improve their future opportunities for study and work. According to work I published in a 2002 issue of the *Journal of Borderlands Studies*, 56 percent of the working population of this group is employed in San Diego; the rest works in Tijuana.

In addition to looking at census data, I conducted interviews with consular and governmental officials, and with those in NGOs and the Chinese Association. Among local residents born outside Mexico and the U.S., they have a variety of origins, but most were born in China and Latin America. Chinese immigration is as old as the foundation of Tijuana itself. In 2004, there were around 3,000 Chinese citizens residing in Tijuana, and also 6,000 Chinese who had already become Mexican citizens. Paradoxically, the 2000 census did not register a single person born in China among the residents of Tijuana.

Apart from U.S. and Chinese nationals, close to 8,000 natives of thirty-five additional countries from all regions in the world

reside in Tijuana. About one-third represent Latin American countries, primarily El Salvador, Argentina, Colombia and Guatemala (see Table 1). The great majority of Latin American immigrants ended up in the city after trying and failing to immigrate to the United States without documentation, after being deported from the U.S. because they were erroneously considered Mexican by U.S. immigration officers or because they decided to return to Mexico after getting a U.S. green card or citizenship. Most undocumented immigrants are from Latin America.

Foreign Social Construction

Though many foreign migrants reside in the city, there is little perception of them on the part of local residents. In interviews with public officials and leaders of NGOs, when asked what foreign groups resided in the city, only Americans appeared among the responses. This slanted perception may be due to Tijuana's social structure, made up of small social groups cohabiting despite diversity of origin, with no clear hierarchy among groups. Each group has only a vague awareness of other groups, and all groups are broadly seen as legitimate residents. This social structure is a product of the combination of the city's

national function as a bi-national migratory bridge and its almost uninterrupted economic growth. Rapid spatial mobility has slowed down the construction of social roles and their corresponding images as some individuals leave and recent arrivals take time to grasp the preexisting local social order. Migration within Mexico also has brought great diversity to the city in terms of race, regional cultural heritage, necessities and interests. Economic growth, on the other hand, has allowed a great upward social mobility that also blurs social roles and weakens the construction of fixed images of the social groups, giving room to foreigners as groups add to the existing diversity.

Foreigners' discreet behavior in the city also helps to blur social construction of foreigners as a social agent. Foreigners usually do not observe their national or religious celebrations in public spaces or announce them in the mass media. Moreover, foreigners rarely appear in the press releases of felony acts or public order disturbances.

In contrast, the strong image of Americans in Tijuana is mixed, complex and generally ambivalent. On an abstract level, Mexican identity has largely been built in opposition to that of the U.S., a result of the negative experiences Mexicans had with the northern neighbor from almost the beginning of the Mexican republic. However, on this abstract level, Americans also have a positive image as being people who bring money or investment into Mexican territory as tourists or capitalists.

Mexicans also admire the material accomplishments of Americans in their country.

This abstract image that Mexicans have of Americans is mixed with a concrete vision Mexican border residents have of them, thanks to their recurrent interactions with their neighbors, through Americans visiting Tijuana as tourists and Mexicans going to California as consumers or visitors. Knowledge emerging from ongoing interaction produces tolerance towards the stranger and a defined but nuanced image of Americans among Tijuana's Mexicans.

Immigrant Local Integration

Foreigners' integration into Tijuana is due to some characteristics related to both the immigrants and the city itself. First of all, foreign immigrants in Tijuana are still only a small proportion of the city population. They may not have reached a size sufficient to exist as distinct communities with a social life apart from that of the rest of the city.

Integration also has been facilitated by the local racial and ethnic mix. Latin American immigrants in the

city have a similar racial and ethnic mix as Tijuana's inhabitants and share the Spanish language. Immigrants coming from the rest of the world have integrated with relative ease into the city because they find people similar to them, either racially or culturally. Tijuana's Mexican residents are accustomed to their own *mestizo* country's diversity. This creates a propitious local milieu for immigrants to opt for the integration strategy, instead of strengthening their own national identity.

Economic marginalization among local Mexicans has also allowed foreign immigrants to insert themselves into city society. Wages of the majority of the population are low and 20 percent of workers earn less than double the minimum wage. Many also live in squatter settlements—nearly 50 percent of the urban land was incorporated into the city illegally. Some foreign immigrants occupy outlying plots of land in order to get housing, just like local residents. The exclusion of poor people in Tijuana from urban resources does not discriminate by place of origin.

Another city characteristic that allows integration of foreign ⇒

Immigrants' Region of Origin (*)	Absolute	Percentage
Latin America	5,443	32.4
Europe, Russia, Canada	1,022	6.1
Asia East (China mainly)	10,100	60.2
Asia Near East	178	1.1
Africa (Egypt)	40	0.2
Total	16,784	100.0

(*) Immigrants from the U.S. are not included.
Source: Author's estimate based on the 2000 population census.

immigrants is the local labor absorption capacity. Tijuana's economy has been growing quickly over the last two decades, keeping unemployment around 1 percent on average. Foreign direct investment in Tijuana has grown at an average annual rate of growth of 7 percent over the last fourteen years. In periods of rapid growth, as in early 2004, the assembly plant industry needed many workers in a very short time, making the industry willing to hire any kind of laborer, even an undocumented one. This is the formal space where, with some frequency, foreign immigrants can begin to be integrated into the city. The informal space is always present, mainly in the construction and service sectors.

Urban Policies for International Migration

Integration of immigrants has been allowed by local government and society, despite there being no direct official government policy toward immigrant communities. In contrast, government and NGOs are active *indirect* agents in the process of foreign immigrant

integration through social welfare activities aimed at Mexicans – which also benefit foreign immigrants.

All three levels of government – federal, state and local – help the local integration of international immigrants in two ways. First, government directly assists needy people through social programs. Second, government helps indirectly by giving resources (mainly money) to many NGOs in the city.

The public sector's direct intervention with foreigners is small, happening mainly through the municipal health system and state and municipal DIF (Integral Development of Family) activities. DIF offers food, basic medical attention and information on social services to the needy, and, for humanitarian reasons, does not deny services to any person based on origin.

As for the second channel, NGOs that assist migrants directly provide three types of services: addict rehabilitation, shelter and migrant assistance. NGOs providing migrant assistance and shelter

play the biggest role in integrating foreigners. Frequently they deal with Latin Americans (mainly Central Americans) whose objective is to cross the border to the United States. Immigrants who decide to stay in Tijuana receive NGO support to apply for regularization.

In short, Tijuana society easily absorbs foreigners because it is fluid, diverse and rapidly growing in economic and demographic terms. In this environment, government and NGOs have developed few immigrant-specific programs, but they do not hesitate to serve foreigners through existing social programs. Though Tijuana is a special case, it may hold useful lessons for larger debates over international immigration.

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Upcoming Progressive Planning Themes:

- **Racial integration**
- **Peter Marcuse and Progressive Planning**

If you are interested in submitting articles, please email editor@plannersnetwork.org

Adding Gender and Immigration to the Planning Cake

by DENIZE LEDEATTE

The Women's Design Service (WDS), established in the late 1980s, is a national organization based in Islington in London's inner city. We believe that the diverse communities of women who live in towns and cities should enjoy a quality environment that is well-designed, accessible, environmentally sustainable, affordable and safe, and to that end we seek to work with women to improve the urban environment. As a unique resource for consultancy, training, information, advice and research on issues related to women and the design of urban environments, we work with women and with governmental, voluntary and academic organizations to incorporate women's needs into the design of buildings, transport systems and open spaces. A current project in Islington, funded by the recently established Equalities and Human Rights Commission, highlights some of the tensions between old and new populations and the continuing need for women's voices to be heard.

The Promoting Good Relations Project

In the Middle Ages, most of the land in Islington belonged to religious institutions. In 1801, the civil parishes that form the modern borough had a total population of 65,721. This rose steadily throughout the nineteenth century,

as the district became built up. When the railways arrived, the rate of population growth increased—reaching nearly 400,000 by the turn of the century.

The population of Islington peaked before World War I, falling slowly in its aftermath and until World War II, which marked the beginning of an exodus from London towards the new towns created under the Abercrombie Plan for London (1944). The decline in population reversed in the 1980s, but the overall population today remains below its 1971 level. Post-war rebuilding and later gentrification improved both housing standards and the appearance of local streets. According to the 2001 census, Islington has a population of 175,797. It is 75 percent white, 6 percent black African, 5 percent black Caribbean and 2 percent Bangladeshi. Thirty-two percent of the borough's residents own their own home.

WDS has developed a toolkit called Making Safer Places (MSP) that helps to examine the use of public space. This toolkit is a community safety audit that allows participants to assess the level of safety where they live, work or play—helping them to identify factors that make a place feel safe or unsafe and to decide what should be changed.

Many changes can be small and immediate, such as the installation of lighting and mirrors.

Our work has often shown that people's use of spaces differs significantly from the perceived use and original design purpose of that space. For example, one of our MSP projects highlighted an unofficial shortcut between two train stations that took a route through a local housing estate. This shortcut reduced the walking time by up to ten minutes and was considered safer by many women than the longer route. As a result, the housing landlord was approached with a view to discussing the possibilities for the space along the route, and there was considerable public support and press coverage of the issue.

The MSP toolkit empowers local women by engaging them in analyzing and assessing their own local built environment and in taking an active role in designing danger out of their environment. After all, who better to do so than the women who actually live there? Fears for personal safety can seriously affect the quality of people's lives, either by deterring them from going out at certain hours, or by causing them to avoid certain routes, buildings or places.

Promoting Good Relations, which targeted refugee and migrant women in Islington who spoke ⇒

Arabic, Spanish, Turkish and Somalian, sought to identify both safety and planning issues from the women's perspectives. It also aimed to get participants to engage with more established groups, in this case the Islington Women's Design Group and Islington council. Both the Islington Women's Design Group and Promoting Good Relations group came together to participate in a session and it became clear that none of the women we had been working with on this project had been previously engaged in this process.

Immigration and Signage: Language Is Still a Problem!

While Islington has a high proportion of people of color compared with London as a whole, it also has the eighth highest proportion of residents in the "other white" group. In Islington's case, this group almost certainly includes Turkish residents.

For migrants and refugees, the women we spoke to told us,

language barriers continue to present the biggest problem and often deny them an individual voice. They remain very isolated and dependant on others, often children. In planning terms, this relates to signage and the use—or lack thereof—of signs that use images over text. Where signage exists in areas like the transport infrastructure, it is often only in the more common European languages. Women complained about access to council information on topics from recycling to taxes

Immigration and Public Spaces: More Space, More People...Please!

Many of the women we spoke to had separately raised the issue of "numbers of people." It was one thing that they had in common, which made them all feel safer. The cross-section of women we spoke to included women from Turkey, Algeria, Italy, Saudi Arabia and Spain, and there was strong feeling from almost all of the women about the need for communal spaces. Some of the women identified that

they had formerly been involved in communal intermediary organizations that played a pivotal role in their former communities, for example organizing weddings, children's events or cultural and religious events on a large scale, and even feeding the homeless.

Other women felt that the presence of a pedestrianized town square contributed to creating a much safer environment, particularly for children and women. They also felt that small markets could then be encouraged within such a space, which would provide additional opportunities for women to trade and socialize. One woman referred to the Duke of York square in the Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea in London as something the Borough of Islington could both aspire to and benefit from. The Duke of York project was a major redevelopment program developed by the Commission for Architecture and the Built Environment (CABE), another organization WDS has worked in partnership with.

Photo by Hannah Berry/WDS



LEFT: Promoting Good Relations project meeting.

In response to concerns about the levels of interaction between the different cultures, Fin Futures, one of our regeneration partners, developed and ran a series of festivals, succeeding in closing off one of the main shopping streets. There was a great deal of comment on the impact this had within the community, and it was felt that the pedestrianized space provided an immediate feeling of greater safety, supporting the views of the women we spoke to.

Immigration: The Gender Impact of Space

In Islington, as in many places, there are slightly more women than men in the overall population. There appears to be a large population of both males and females in their twenties and thirties in the area, as well as a substantial number of young families. According to national statistics, the average age of the population in Islington is just under thirty-five, the eighth

lowest average in the country. Islington stands out for having the second highest proportion of residents between the age of 30 and 44 in the country.

Our target area in Finsbury Park includes Blackstock Road, about which many women, especially young women, told us they feel intimidated by the dominance of men who use the street to socialize. While the women felt that people in the streets was positive and to be encouraged because of the increased activity, they felt that the gender bias required redress. Women recounted being unable to pass with prams and feeling discouraged from shopping on the street, let alone setting up business in this area. They felt the streets were simply not designed to accommodate this way of socializing—a perspective which supports the development of town squares or pedestrianized spaces, which women consider to be safer.

During our interviews with women on the street, it appeared

that many were afraid. This was confirmed when the women were able to speak to others in their mother tongue. Many had been direct victims of a crime—which had gone unreported—however many of the women also acknowledged that they felt more confident in reporting something in the future if they needed to as a consequence of their involvement in the program. The British Crime Survey of 2002-2003 identified that 29 percent of women were very concerned about violent crime in their everyday lives, compared to 10 percent of men. Engaging women so that they can appreciate how fear of crime can be alleviated in practical and design terms is a significant step.

Our work with the women on the Promoting Good Relations project concludes in May 2009. The participants are keen to build on the work they have undertaken, and there are plans for a small ceremony to thank the women for their contributions and to acknowledge their input. WDS has also set up and supports a fully constituted group in Manchester, and has recently secured funding from London Councils to roll out the Women's Design Group concept to twelve additional London boroughs. Overall, the Promoting Good Relations program demonstrates how diverse groups of women can take an active role in recreating public space.

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Quotes Related to Space

- No physical barriers must be put in the roads—these do not give security, they make you feel you are living in a war zone.
- No more libraries closing.
- The consensus was that people weren't in favor of high-rise buildings for families. Should be one and two floors—duplex.
- Biggest problem is noise.
- Quality, not just quantity.
- No cemetery in the borough (not much can be done about this).
- Overcrowding already massive issue.
- As well as building new buildings, existing ones need to be modernized.
- Reduction of green space.
- Lack of facilities for young people.
- Lack of community facilities such as estate halls.
- Football pitches taken away.

Immigrants Benefit from Advocacy Planning Before It Was Called That

by MAUREEN HELLWIG and RHEA YAP

Planning can be immigrant-friendly when it is locally-based and advocacy-oriented, in the tradition of Paul Davidoff and the Cleveland planners and their disciples. The potential of effective planning for immigrants is further enriched when this tradition is linked with the social settlement model of service to immigrants pioneered by Jane Addams in Chicago and Saul Alinsky-style community organizing. Planners of this tradition are attuned to acting in the best interest of immigrants as a marginalized constituency and to facilitating their pursuit of life, liberty and happiness—or in other words, their reason for being immigrants. The Erie Neighborhood House in Chicago demonstrates the powerful effect such advocacy can have over decades.

Advocacy Planning

So, what is *advocacy* planning and *equity* planning? Equity planning has its origin in the work of Paul Davidoff's 1965 article "Advocacy and Pluralism in Planning." Davidoff and others called for planners to address important social and economic issues rather than the traditional land use and physical planning concerns. A summary of the characteristics of advocacy planning put forth

by Stacy Harwood in her 2003 article "Environmental Justice on the Streets" would indicate that advocacy planners would certainly embrace immigrants as a constituent group.

Advocacy planning, as articulated by Davidoff (1965), is a rationale for planners to become advocates for client groups, particularly neighborhood organizations, in the planning process. Advocacy planning stresses that planning does not occur from a position of value neutrality; rather, the advocacy planner openly advocates for those values on the margin, those often of low-income groups.

According to Metzger, in "Theory and Practice of Equity Planning: An Annotated Bibliography," some planners, for whom Davidoff's arguments for social equity and redistribution of wealth resonated, "sought to implement this new vision *within* government. This became known as equity planning." By far, the most frequently cited example of this approach to city planning is the work of the Cleveland planners, hired by Carl Stokes, the first African-American mayor of a major city, upon his election in 1967. At

the head of the Cleveland City Planning Commission stood Norman Krumholz. The central goal statement of the commission appears in the *Cleveland Policy Planning Report* (1975): "Equity requires that locally responsible government institutions give priority attention to the goal of promoting a wider range of choices for those Cleveland residents who have few, if any, choices."

A second example, closer to the Chicago case study in this article, is the work of Robert Mier, who led Chicago's Department of Economic Development for another African-American mayor, Harold Washington, in the 1980s. The version of equity planning held by Mier and Washington is reflected in the Chicago Development Plan of 1984, with its heavy focus on the city's responsibility to create and retain jobs and train citizens for those jobs.

While the City of Chicago's official planners in the current Daley administration tend to reflect the growth-regime, business-oriented planning practice of the pre-1960s, other Chicago urban professionals trained as planners who work outside city government have

tapped into a different planning tradition to respond to the issue of immigration. This tradition weaves together multiple practices and disciplines.

Erie Neighborhood House

One place where such immigrant-friendly planning is evident is Erie Neighborhood House, located in the West Town area of Chicago, just northwest of the downtown. While the exact wording of Erie's mission statement has changed over the years, the current version captures the essence of its ongoing mission—"to promote a just and inclusive society by strengthening low-income, primarily Latino, families through skill-building, access to critical resources, advocacy and collaborative action." As advocacy or equity planners, Davidoff, Krumholz and Mier could find their work reflected in this mission.

Erie Neighborhood House was founded in 1870 in the neighborhood that came to be known as West Town, which has functioned as an immigrant port-of-entry and working-class community for 150 years. Although Erie House was initially an initiative of the Presbyterian Church, by 1915, recognizing itself in the work of Jane Addams and Hull House, Erie incorporated as a non-sectarian social settlement.

Erie House's participant base has always been comprised of newly-arrived immigrants,

with the countries of origin changing over the decades to reflect the changing face of the neighborhood. In the late nineteenth century, mainly German and Scandinavian immigrants resided in West Town. Around 1915, Italians and Polish immigrants started to arrive. By the 1950s, this had transitioned to Puerto Ricans, and then Mexican immigrants followed in the 1960s. Today, over 80 percent of Erie's participants are Latino, primarily of Mexican and Puerto Rican descent, but with others hailing from El Salvador, Guatemala and Ecuador.

Through the decades, Erie has developed innovative programming that has been both responsive to community needs and culturally competent. Erie's services help immigrants to function effectively in their new homeland by teaching English and other skills needed to attain better jobs; providing all-day child care so parents can pursue those jobs; and encouraging participants to become civically engaged—all in the context of celebrating the immigrant's cultural heritage. Through a combination of facilitating economic success through education and serving as a meeting place where immigrants are not demeaned, but welcomed and acknowledged for their contribution to America, Erie House has served its participants and its city over its very long life.

Erie not only affected change on an individual level, it promoted

change at the neighborhood level. In 1939, as garbage on the streets of West Town threatened residents' health and safety, Erie House responded with its Keep Our Neighborhood Clean (KONC) campaign. KONC encouraged children to help clean play areas and emphasized civic responsibility.

With many men fighting abroad and mothers entering the workforce, Erie started a child care program for preschool and school-age children in 1942. What began as an economic necessity sixty-six years ago, while continuing to address that need, has evolved into a nationally accredited, early childhood education and after-school care service that is securing the educational foundation of the next generation of America's workforce. Erie was providing a "head start" long before it was named as such.

With limited access to affordable medical services, Erie founded a clinic in 1957 with volunteer doctors from Northwestern Hospital. By the 1980s it was successful enough to incorporate on its own as the Erie Family Health Center and continues to serve the needs of uninsured and under-insured Chicago immigrants.

By 1962, having witnessed the impact of the construction of the Kennedy Expressway, and anticipating the projected devastation that urban renewal plans would bring to older inner city neighborhoods, ⇒

Erie House joined with other Protestant-based settlement houses and partnered with local Catholic churches to challenge these plans. They founded the Northwest Community Organization (NCO), an Alinsky-style, citizen-led effort to regain control of the neighborhood to fend off “slum clearance” as an urban planning strategy. During this period, Erie House and three other local settlement houses all employed community organizers and raised money to support the work of NCO. As advocacy planners emerged, they employed them as well, to develop the Community 21 Plan in the 1970s.

While Erie House did not hesitate to engage in oppositional activity, as Davidoff encouraged advocacy planners to do, it also recognized the admonition of Daniel Burnham—to make no small plans for its constituents. Thus, in 1967, Erie House, NCO and Holy Innocents Church did what every advocacy or equity planner would

recommend: increase capacity to secure their own agenda. They launched a housing development organization that would be accountable to the neighborhood and build the affordable housing that neither the marketplace nor the government sector was providing. The Bickerdike Redevelopment Corporation was born. Bickerdike, which had its first office at Erie House, has become the premiere non-profit developer of affordable housing in Chicago, serving both homeowners and renters, immigrants and African Americans.

Current Issues

Ironically, throughout the 1990s, West Town was experiencing what planners often call an “unintended outcome.” What the 2000 Census revealed was that while the community’s valiant effort to save itself from the urban renewal wrecking ball was a success, its victory laid the groundwork for new investment that represented the return to market business as usual. Gentrification took off with

a vengeance, and West Town saw its role as a port-of-entry community for immigrants end after 150 years.

So, what does an immigrant-serving institution do in light of such a sea-change? It makes new plans. In 2004, Erie House expanded its adult education services to Little Village, a community with the largest Mexican population in Chicago located just five miles southwest of West Town. In 2006, in partnership with the Little Village Community Development Corporation (recently re-named Enlace Chicago), Erie House purchased an abandoned cookie factory and began planning for the Little Village Immigrant Resource Center.

As Erie House entered the third century in which it would provide support to Chicago’s immigrants, attention needed to be given to an emerging anti-immigrant policy environment represented most acutely by

Used by permission from Erie Neighborhood House



LEFT: Today’s immigrants studying English at Erie Neighborhood House.

RIGHT: Immigrants in the middle of the twentieth century seeking affordable health care at Erie’s free clinic, now independently operated as the Erie Family Health Center.

the Sensenbrenner Bill, HR 4437. In Chicago, numerous immigrant-led organizations met to discuss a strategic response. In March, 2006, one of the largest public demonstrations on an issue of public policy since the 1960s took place as these groups took to the streets. By May 1 of that year, many more organizations joined the effort and swelled the number of marchers in Chicago to over 300,000. In the courtyard of Erie House, staff and participants gathered to walk over to nearby Union Park where the march was scheduled to kick off. The advocacy tradition of Jane Addams and Paul Davidoff was alive and well.

And that tradition continues as Erie Neighborhood House became a leader in the Midwest region for the Equal Voice Campaign of the Marguerite Casey Foundation, engaging low-wealth families to help craft a policy agenda for working families to present to the 2008 presidential campaigns. The foundation recognizes Erie House as a “cornerstone organization” that has earned the trust of its participants for more than 100 years. Building on that trust, immigrants have been able to find their voice and advocate and plan for themselves, knowing that the expertise they need for back-up is standing right next to them on Erie Street, or on whatever street they find themselves.

In 2008, Erie House employs a number of excellent teachers, a handful of social workers (of whom Jane Addams would be proud) and one professionally trained urban planner (of whom Jane Jacobs would be proud). That one planner was trained at the University of Illinois-Chicago where her advisor was Rob Mier. As a former teacher and community organizer, she embraced the planning profession, espousing an interdisciplinary approach most suited to her

goal of community impact work. Whether we call them advocacy planners, social workers or community organizers, never doubt that a handful of community-oriented experts can help change the world. They have, they do and they will – something we just proved again on November 4, 2008.

Maureen Hellwig, Ph.D., is senior director of programs and Rhea Yap is development manager, both at Erie Neighborhood House in Chicago.



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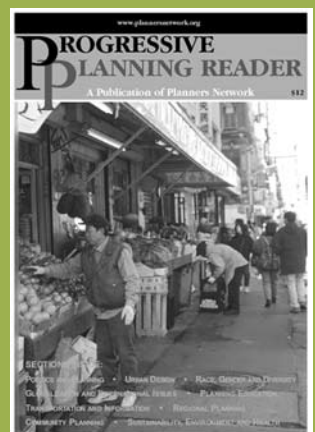
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