

UC Berkeley

Berkeley Planning Journal

Title

Editor's Introduction

Permalink

<https://escholarship.org/uc/item/6fv565p5>

Journal

Berkeley Planning Journal, 24(1)

Author

Sosa, Oscar

Publication Date

2011

DOI

10.5070/BP324111860

Copyright Information

Copyright 2011 by the author(s). All rights reserved unless otherwise indicated. Contact the author(s) for any necessary permissions. Learn more at <https://escholarship.org/terms>

Editor's Note

The current issue of the Berkeley Planning Journal demonstrates the continued interest of board members in the last few years in promoting a critical and meaningful discussion among academics, students, and practitioners of planning across the globe. This is reflected, without a doubt, in the lineup of authors featured here, which includes DCRP students as well as students from other Berkeley departments and other schools, junior faculty in the U.S. and Europe, and practitioners. As a board we are especially satisfied with this diversity of authors, as well as with the fact that our volumes continue to represent DCRP's interest and approach to planning. Evidence of this is the fact that all the works presented in volume 24 touch on at least one of the following issues: critical approaches to the field that invite the reader to reconsider the planning praxis; progressive alternative approaches to current challenges in economic development and environmental issues; and a critical analysis of current urban policies in light of increasing inequality and segregation.

Volume 24 opens with "The Emergence of Gated Communities in the Poor Periphery: Reflections on the New Urban Segregation and Social Integration in Santiago, Chile," an essay by anthropology student Miguel Perez that focuses on social segregation in this Andean city. Perez begins by analyzing the current debate around the merits and problems associated with neoliberal reforms that have shaped housing policy and urban growth in Chile. As the author argues, market liberalization has changed the traditional patterns of segregation in Chilean cities. In this new context, high-income households are now settling in peripheral areas that traditionally were the site of informal settlements of working class and low-income households. The main question for the author is: Is spatial proximity of different classes equal to social integration? To answer this Perez utilizes ethnographic fieldwork and shows that despite material benefits for lower income inhabitants, this new residential pattern brings very little social integration. The author concludes by reflecting on the limitations of policies that advocate for geographical proximity as a solution for social and economic segregation.

The second article, written by Jake Schabas and titled "The Impact of Legislative Reforms to Canadian Federalism on Toronto's Ability to Reduce Poverty," analyzes the effects of Toronto's Stronger City of Toronto for a Stronger Ontario Act (COTA). Schabas discusses the emergence of COTA at a time when Toronto has consolidated as a global city while simultaneously experiencing growth in urban poverty. The author analyzes the effects COTA has had on the ability of Toronto's municipal government to deploy two anti-poverty policies, the Tower Renewal Project and the Transit City Plan. His analysis points out that

COTA has not provided the municipal authority with the necessary funds nor the power to engage in effective metropolitan efforts required by current economic and social challenges in Toronto. The author concludes that the figure of a strong municipal government still requires the means to exhort authority to effectively function within the Canadian federal system.

The next essay is written by DCRP student Sophie Gonick, who looks at the relationship between planning, immigration, and social integration in France. In "Disciplining the Metropolis: Grand Paris, Immigration, and the Banlieue," Gonick analyzes the proposed Parisian urban development schemes and current policing policies, putting them in context with long-existing ideals of universalism and equality in France. Gonick plays close attention to the role of discourse, bringing to the surface the discrepancy between the French republican liberal and universal ideals that shape immigration and citizenship and the actual differentiated and racialized implementation of social and urban policy. By looking at how economic restructuring, urban policy, and racism have created a landscape of inequality in the French Banlieue, the author gives us a well considered point of comparison with the U.S. ghetto. Gonick's essay provides an interesting complement to Perez's article on Santiago: both authors grapple with the question of differentiating social, economic, and spatial integration in a context of liberalized urban policy.

Kate Lowe's "Neighborhood, City, or Region: Deconstructing Scale in Planning Frames" is a piece that brings the concept of *scale*, as used by critical geographers, to the realm of planning theory and practice. Against a tendency in community development to immediately privilege the neighborhood level as the scale at which to act, Lowe argues that planning needs to pay attention to the actors and issues that create the socially constructed dimensions that frame problems and solutions. Using the San Francisco Bay Area Metropolitan Transportation Planning agency as a case study, Lowe conducts interpretive analysis to identify the issues that shape the framing of problems and solutions at different scales in the region. The author suggests that planners need to deconstruct the process by which problems are defined to understand the connection between local and regional problems and responses as a first step to finding more effective solutions.

The next section of the BPJ is composed of papers that were presented at the *Just Metropolis* conference, hosted by DCRP in June 2010. This conference brought together representatives of Planners Network, Architects / Designers / Planners for Social Responsibility (ADPSR), Association for Community Design, and The Center for the Living City. As Andrea Broaddus, the editor of the section, explains in more detail in her introduction, it is the result of an interesting editorial experiment

of international collaboration between *Progressive Planning Magazine*, *Justice Spatiale / Spatial Justice*, and *Places: Design Observer*. The essays, by Sonia Lehman-Frisch, Eirini Kasioumi, van Casper-Futterman and Julie Behrens, and Kaja Kühn, approach the question of planning and social justice from different angles and by looking at diverse geographies.

This volume's essay, written by Chris Schildt and titled "The Struggle of Memory against Forgetting: Insurgent Histories and the Development of a New Suburban Praxis," could not be more timely. Schildt revisits the history of the suburbs with a look at eastern Contra Costa County in the San Francisco Bay area, showing the need for planning to reconsider assumptions about suburban social and economic dynamics and challenges. Schildt combines her experience as community advocate with her theoretical insight as a planning student. By pointing out the changing geographies of poverty that shape suburban towns such as Antioch today, Schildt defamiliarizes suburbia and invites the reader to consider the need to develop a "new praxis" that is based on actual reality in these areas, rather than on an obsolete understanding of poverty and inequality in the U.S.

In addition to our book review section, this volume concludes with two interesting photo essays that reflect on the use of public space in Europe and Latin America. The first one, titled "Favela Chic," is a critical analysis of current urban upgrading schemes in Latin American informal settlements. By analyzing several "urban acupuncture" projects that seek to improve the quality of life in peripheral urban areas by bringing elements usually only found in the "formal city," Navarro touches on two important issues: the obsolescence of formal (*asfalto*) vs. informal (*favela*) dichotomies in Latin-American urbanism, and the opportunities and limitations of these forms of social policy.

Our issue closes with "OPEN/CLOSED: Public Spaces in Modern Cities", written by Lilia Voronkova and Oleg Pachenkov. This photoessay reflects on the changing use of public plazas in Eastern Europe since the post-soviet economic and social transformation. The authors use images that illustrate the dramatic transformation that many of these spaces have experienced as they become centers of formal economic activity and informal cultural exchanges. The authors conclude by reflecting on the need to reconsider the meaning of "public space" in a postmodern planning context, where plazas are used increasingly for individual consumption and less for communal political engagement.

The final stages of the editorial work and production of this volume have coincided with big and important changes at the BPJ that have affected the immediate future of the journal in exciting ways. While this will be matter for our next volume, we would like to acknowledge a couple of

important changes. The first is that this current volume will be the last one of Professor Michael Teitz's tenure as faculty advisor. Professor Teitz's experience and expertise has been instrumental in the development of this journal; he has been involved in some capacity during the history of this publication, and many of the current members have been lucky to work with him in for the last five years. During these times Professor Teitz has always been available to help the board solve editorial crisis and conundrums, acting as a reviewer, advisor, and mentor. His contribution has always been meaningful to us and for that we are extremely thankful.

A second important change has to do with the transition to a web-based open content model starting with Volume 25. The implications of this transition are immense and that will be the topic of at least one piece in our next volume. In the meantime, we would like to mention that in the close future, readers and contributors to the BPJ will be able to take advantage of the increased reach and functionality that our new platform will provide.

Oscar Sosa, Editor