CHAPTER 2

Why Planners Need Anthropologists

Margaret Crawford

On the final day of class, the earnest young planning student leaned across the seminar table to me. His face expressed a discomfort that had grown throughout the semester. My planning history course, unlike much planning education, emphasized the misunderstandings, failures, and unanticipated outcomes of a century of urban planning practice. Finally, he blurted out his frustration: "You keep talking about paradox. Paradox is not in the planner's toolkit!"

Yet to attentive observers, such as the authors in this book, the complex realities of planning practices are often paradoxical. They describe situations and outcomes that, although situated in very different urban and political contexts, practicing planners know all too well, but that rarely make their way into the professional literature of planning or the consciousness of many planners. Planners are actors whose practices are filled with gaps: between normative goals and limited agency; between the different layers of national and local governments, the political concerns of elected officials, bureaucratic controls, and the pressures of market forces such as real estate development. The gap between planners and the urban residents for whom they plan is increasingly visible, as the desires and pressures of citizens, voters, organized groups with specific demands, or consumers of both public and private services make more demands. Yet, like Tolstoy's unhappy families, each of these planning situations is unsuccessful in its own way, with these forces articulated in highly specific ways.

For an urban and planning historian like myself, who studied in and has taught in urban planning programs, these are familiar stories, revealing the multiple contradictions embedded in the planning profession. Having

conducted research on past and present planning practices in the United States, South China, and Italy, I would argue that their repetition in such different temporal, political, and social contexts is the outcome, not so much of the contemporary situations in which planners find themselves, but of the practice of planning itself. As experts who claim the expertise to organize the modern city, planners are structured by the limits of professionalism and the assumptions embedded in their own professional history as much as by their specific circumstances.

Invested in a profession that depends more on rhetoric and representation than on actual achievements, planners themselves are often unaware of this history or these dynamics. Planning school trains aspiring planners to create plans, which are a fundamentally a form of representation. Their teachers, however, neglect to mention that few of these plans are ever fully realized and that most plans are never implemented. But as soon as planners start to work in municipal offices or firms, they quickly realize the boundaries of their practice. At this point, most planners I know have found ways to accept and smooth over the contradictions that shape their profession. Those who cannot usually either turn right, to real estate development or left, to community organizing.

Histories and Theories of Planning

As a modern profession urban planning is a recent arrival. Although planning cities is an ancient activity—often traced back to the fifth-century Greek, Hippodamus of Miletus, the father of the urban grid—it emerged as a modern profession during the first several decades of the twentieth century (Morris 1994). Different specialists concerned with the city first joined together in the United States and Great Britain, then in Western Europe, fashioning a model later followed in the rest of the world. Initially taught through the construction of colonial capitals such as New Delhi or Manila, the process of transmission continues today through continuous educational and professional exchanges. For example, I was surprised to discover that contemporary planning education in China still largely depends on Western texts and models, setting normative goals out of sync with very different urban realities and planning processes. Many Chinese planners and professors, have told me that spending time in US planning programs was become an important professional asset for them, although it is difficult to see how such concepts

as community participation or New Urbanist design can be easily transferred to the Chinese context.

At the beginning of the twentieth century, American planners had a difficult time establishing their professional identities as "experts" in this burgeoning field. Unlike more successful professions, such as engineering and medicine, whose technical expertise was based on the positivist assertions of the natural sciences, or lawyers, whose authority originated in the state, planners had only a tenuous hold on their professional territory. This continues today with planners as the only design profession that does not require licensure. Planning began with a composite identity, drawing on adjacent professions with clearer skills: architects and landscape architects who structured the physical environment, engineers responsible for infrastructure, and lawyers skilled in writing regulation. The single element that held the professional endeavor together was not expertise but its ambitious task: comprehensively organizing the city (Kreuckenberg 1994; Scott 1969).[1]

To back up their claims to a professional domain, early planners produced comprehensive plans. Aimed at restructuring entire urban regions, these were encyclopedic in nature and based on exhaustive data collection. The Plan of Chicago (1909), still the most famous American urban plan, established this model. Unlike most plans, it is credited to a single author, the architect Daniel Burnham. If Burnham's vision was central, such a large endeavor was necessarily a collective enterprise. For two years, Burnham's team collected massive quantities of data, testimony to the emerging profession's technical expertise.[2] However, without the political power or public support to implement them, these plans largely remained aspirational documents (Smith 2006). This established a professional pattern that defined planning through representation rather than through individual planners' ability to affect reality. Their plans remained pure documents, unsullied by political struggles, the power of urban elites, the interests of the banks and real estate developers responsible for building the city, or the desires of urban residents.

In fact the Chicago plan owes much of its fame not to its success in transforming the city but to its widely publicized visionary images of a totally idealized Beaux-Arts Chicago. Burnham clearly understood this, commissioning the well-known architectural renderers Jules Guerin and Fernand Janin to visualize the plans alongside his text. If many of Burnham's written proposals address practical concerns such as rationalizing streets and rail traffic, their drawings, if lacking in concrete detail, conveyed a seductive and compelling vision of what the city could become. Pastel birds-eye and perspective views

depicted a beautiful and coherent cityscape, dominated by a Beaux-Arts civic center and connected by grand Parisian boulevards that extended outward to disappear in the distant prairie. Burnham and his sponsors gave the plan, published as an impressive folio, to the city as a gift. Burnham charged no fees for his years of labor on the plan, a practice he followed in all of his planning work. His successful architectural firm, Burnham and Company, specializing in high-rise office buildings, provided him with a substantial income, allowing him to prepare plans pro bono.

His motives were not totally altruistic, for he also believed that if his plans were in essence a gift, his clients would have to give him a freer hand. He was also well aware of the fact that implementing any of the plans would be enormously expensive (Hines 1974, 158). Historian Tom Hines has observed that Burnham's planning was often ambiguous and contradictory, sometimes progressive and at other times highly conservative, a mixture of idealistic motives and pragmatic adjustments. The plan itself highlights another paradox; realizing the uniform Beaux-Arts buildings depicted in the renderings would entail eliminating Burnham's own numerous high-rise contributions to the city's irregular skyline. Burnham himself appears to have been conflicted: In 1896, he claimed "we have skyscrapers enough . . . forgive me my part in this ugliness! Now we want beauty and we want great beauty" (Schaffer 2003, 97). Yet his office continued to design larger and larger skyscrapers until his death in 1912.

Burnham understood that popularizing plans to gain public support was necessary to complete the planning process. He turned the completed plan over to the Chicago Plan Commission, a private group, to execute. They hired Walter Moody, a public relations pioneer, to orchestrate a campaign publicizing its benefits. Moody produced a promotional film, sponsored hundreds of talks and lantern slide presentations in multiple languages, mailed a short version of the plan to all Chicago residents who paid more than $25 a month in rents or mortgages, placed articles praising the plan in local and national publications, and ensured that *Wacker's Manual*, a summary of the plan, became the assigned textbook for eighth grade civics classes in the city's public schools (Hines 1974, 108).

Its graphics and publicity ensured the plan's position in planning history up to the present day. The plan, if not its results, continues to exist as a monument of professional achievements, still part of the curriculum in planning schools. In contrast, a far more comprehensive endeavor, the Regional Plan of New York (1929) did not achieve a similarly iconic status. Today known largely for its exhaustive data gathering—eight of its ten volumes are devoted

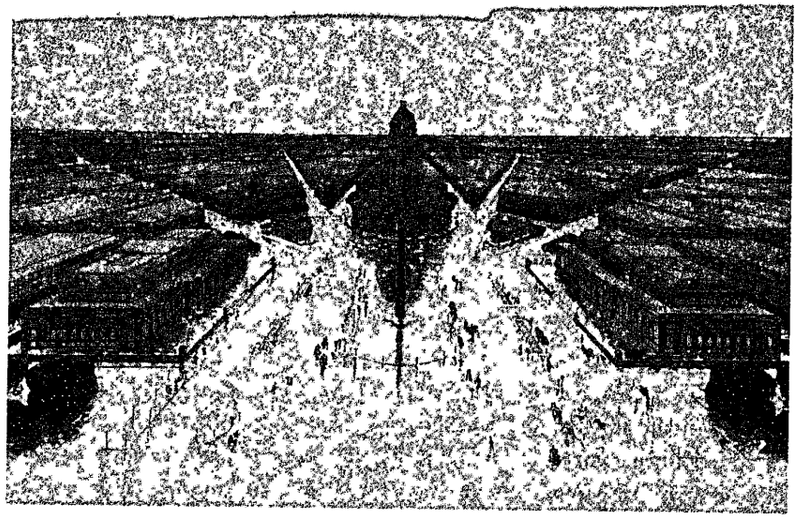

Figure 2.1. View, looking west of the proposed Civic Center Plaza and Building, showing it as the center of the system of arteries of circulation and of the surrounding country. Painted for the Commercial Club of Chicago by Jules Guerin, 1908, Commercial Club of Chicago.

to survey results—the plan was partly inspired by and directed by veterans of Chicago's earlier effort.[3] Many well-known planners contributed to the plan, but it lacked a single visionary such as Burnham. Even the sponsor, the Regional Plan Association (RPA), seemed generic.[4] The plan also lacked a compelling visual identity. Although the RPA hired noted skyscraper delineator Hugh Ferriss to depict some elements of the plan with his evocative, atmospheric style, his renderings failed to conjure up a convincing picture of a desirable future (Johnson 1995, 180–85).

Other planners, however, went even further than Burnham in defining planning as a primarily representational activity. John Nolen, one of the earliest professional planners, declared that he regarded his plans primarily as publicity to advertise planning itself (Crawford 1990, 152–56). As he wrote, "I look upon such plans as largely propaganda and publicity and do not share the opinions of others that because they did not get carried out or even followed up at the time, they are necessarily an indication of failure. To my mind they are stages in the development of public opinion" (Hancock 1964, 162).

Far more than Burnham, Nolan's particular talents were for organizing and management. Although he designed few plans himself, he established one of the largest planning practices in the country and a national reputation by using public relations as an essential professional tool. Unlike Burnham, Nolen was not wealthy. Leaving the actual plan making to his office staff, he constantly traveled across the country, covering more than thirty thousand miles and spending at least six months every year away from his office. He was so busy that he interviewed job applicants on the train, meeting them at the station and conducting the interview while traveling. He gave talks to civic groups and met with prominent citizens and city officials in places like Reading, Pennsylvania; Madison, Wisconsin; and Montclair, New Jersey, selling them the idea that their city or town needed planning. He also wrote dozens of articles in professional journals, regularly compiled his own articles and reports into books, and produced a town-planning textbook for the National Municipal League (Crawford 1990, 154).

All of these planning efforts were privately supported. It was not until the 1930s that newly interventionist national governments in both the US and Europe included planning as a necessary attribute of a modern state and a tool of public policy making. Planners responded by outlining national housing policies, proposing large-scale regional restructuring, and designing new infrastructural systems. Depression and war prevented them from implementing these plans until postwar housing shortages, wartime devastation, and recovering economies produced a genuine need for planners to guide reconstruction and new urban growth in the mid-twentieth century.

Modernist concepts of physical planning further emboldened a confident ideology of planning, allowing planners to assert themselves and finally gain control over the built environment. Like Burnham, they thought big, and like him, their plans for the total transformation of the built environment were realized primarily in fragments. However, over the next three decades, they succeeded in eliminating what they saw as substandard and obsolete urban areas, replacing them with large amounts of state-supported housing. They constructed entire new towns, along with a broad range of new civic structures, connected by highways. Their efforts produced urban renewal; public housing and the interstate highway system in the US; new towns and large public housing estates in Great Britain, France, and Sweden; along with much privately generated urban development, often constructed along the same principles. In many ways, the Swedish "Million Homes Program" represents the apogee of this approach. Planners devised a comprehensive national

housing program that constructed a million dwelling units, two-thirds in multifamily housing blocks, using government-approved, standardized templates, between 1965 and 1974 (Mack 2017 and this volume).

The scale and complexity and scale of these efforts required the profession to split itself into separate areas of expertise, including transportation, land use, housing and community development, and urban design, each with its own ideals, technical tools, and rationale. The physical result is what James Holston (1989) has called "modernist planning," exemplified in Brasília. Planning the capital city on a tabula rasa in Brazil's interior provided planner Lúcio Costa with a rare opportunity to lay out a complete city. Costa's apparently artistic form, often likened to an airplane or bird in flight, masked its rigorously rationalized organization and separation of urban functions (Holston 1989). Planning theorists—more concerned with process and anxious to align themselves with what they saw as the rigor of the social and physical sciences—described this approach to planning as the rational comprehensive model (Faludi 1973; Taylor 1998). This method, intended to be normative, efficient, and generalizable, lays out a series of systematic steps in which expert planners identify clear goals, assemble relevant data, identify all possible options, and then propose ideal outcomes. Typically applied to large-scale projects, the rational comprehensive ideal elevated planners to a new level of expertise and legitimacy. Specifically intended to separate planning from politics through its supposedly objective and rational techniques, the method elevated the planner's expertise to new heights.

At the same time, however, other observers noted that this method was highly idealized and that planning in the real world rarely worked in this fashion. In 1956, the political scientist Charles Lindblom identified what he saw as a far more common method of planning, "disjointed incrementalism" or, as he called it "the science of muddling through" (Lindblom 1956, 79). He argued that instead of an overall strategy, planners typically responded to immediate problems as they presented themselves. Planning thus proceeded by the accumulation of many small (and usually unplanned) incremental changes over time rather than through "grand plans."

Each of these models contains temporal implications. As Holston points out, rational comprehensive planning contains a blueprint for the future—a normative, predictive, and prescriptive projection. Disjointed incrementalism, on the other hand, while focusing on the present, in many respects requires planners to look to the past to improve the present—correcting past mistakes, updating existing regulations, responding to recent problems with

short-term solutions, situations produced by recent circumstances. Without thinking far into the future, planners can work in a mode that is highly contingent and easily adaptable to changing circumstances.

Although it is tempting to imagine rational comprehensive planning and disjointed incrementalism as polarities, planners rarely view them as such. Even for modernist planners of the mid-twentieth century, the 1:1 translation of a plan to reality was a rare occurrence, only employed in projects with a high symbolic value, as in capital cities such as Brasília where the absence of previous settlements eliminated resistance to Lucio Costa's totalizing plan.

Often plans looked so far into the future that, by the time the money or political will to implement them materialized, they were out of date or irrelevant. As a result, planning became increasingly embedded in the everyday mechanics of local governments, with planners mandated to produce plans at regular intervals. These plans, rather than outlining visionary futures, were hybrid documents, maintaining much of the existing city, adjusting and correcting for current problems, and adding a few proposals for the near future. To encourage implementation, planners often veer between the two models or, over time, allow one to dissolve into the other.

The ambitious Plan of Chicago, for example, was never implemented as envisioned. However, for twenty years after its publication, various bits and pieces of the plan found their way onto the ballot, were funded, and were built. These were either amenities such as lakeside parks or practical infrastructural improvements, while few of the monumental physical features of the plan survived.[5] Such methods have a surprising historical precedent: ironically, the massive alteration and restructuring of Paris wrought by Baron Haussmann between 1853 and 1870 (the urban model for Chicago and many subsequent large-scale planning efforts) were not guided by one master plan. Instead, Haussmann implemented successive projects for individual elements and systems, but never assembled them into a comprehensive document (Jordan 1995, 47–49).

Even famously discredited policies such as those of urban renewal in the United States and the *grands projets* on the peripheries of French cities changed over time from the normative to the contingent (Cupers 2014). US planners used urban renewal legislation, first introduced by the federal government in 1949, to carry out comprehensive redevelopment, razing large areas of many cities and then rebuilding with modernist urban design. A notorious example was the West End of Boston, where the city, using federal guidelines and

funding, condemned an entire neighborhood of narrow streets and tenement houses as "blight." After bulldozing the site, planners laid out a new neighborhood, made up of superblocks with "tower in the park" apartments (Gans 1962).[6] Nearby a new modernist city hall arose, designed in the cast concrete "Brutalist" style, surrounded by a vast, empty plaza. Yet, by the mid-1960s, in another Boston neighborhood, the South End, the same policies enabled planners in the city's redevelopment agency to conserve the existing physical fabric of the city by rehabilitating existing structures and, through selective removal of others, building new housing at the same scale while maintaining the traditional urban grid.

Planners and Their Publics

This apparent about-face reflects the questioning of planning that began during the 1960s. Visionaries such as Le Corbusier offered compelling images of a new modernist city as early as the 1920s. After World War II, cities began to actually construct these visions, although typically in versions that no longer conveyed the pleasure or beauty that their plans had forecast. By the 1960s, for many observers, their optimism had expired. Books such as Jane Jacobs's *The Death and Life of Great American Cities* attacked the entire premises of twentieth-century planning, which Jacobs called "the radiant garden city," cleverly collapsing the apparent polarities of Le Corbusier's high modernist Radiant City and Ebenezer Howard's nostalgic Garden City. She inverted these earlier urban values, championing exactly those parts of existing cities that planners had labeled as "blight."

In France, even stronger urban critiques were a key part of the May 1968 revolt, questioning not only the assumptions but also the outcomes of modernist planning. Citizens in many other cities rose up to challenge specific projects with great success, leading to the freeway revolts in San Francisco, fights against the redevelopment of central Stockholm, the paralysis of Les Halles redevelopment in Paris, and numerous if more modest campaigns resisting highly localized urban or highway plans that occurred almost everywhere. The widespread rejection of modernist planning severely undermined the confidence of modernist planners and ultimately made the entire profession question its values and legitimacy. Forced to acknowledge the social and physical failures of their profession, planners recalibrated their practices without examining their roots.

This produced an ongoing crisis in the planning profession. Since the citizen revolts of the 1960s, planners have struggled to reacquire legitimacy, particularly against charges of insensitive and authoritarian actions through comprehensive planning. While developing his plan, Daniel Burnham polled social worker Jane Addams, architect Frank Lloyd Wright, and other well-known Chicagoans along with visiting notables such as the Polish statesman and musician Ignacy Jan Paderewski for their opinions, but he had little interest in input from the general public (Hines 1974). Similarly confident, modernist designers assumed that users would conform to their plans. But, as various publics became more vocal, critical, and demanding, planners had to engage with them to ensure that their profession would endure.

Planner and theorist Paul Davidoff proposed one of the most radical solutions, urging planners to democratize the planning process. Davidoff (1965) argued that planning activities should occur in public arenas where citizens could examine and debate them. Instead of operating from the top down as agents of municipalities or firms, planners would become advocates for community groups and activist organizations, an approach Davidoff called "advocacy planning." This model recognized that planners were not neutral experts, furthering the common interests by rational means, as they had previously claimed. But taking on the role of advocate in supporting local communities did not necessarily empower the planners. Instead, they became ventriloquists, simply conveying the message of other social groups who remained passive. In actual practice, however, many community members quickly acquired skills to advocate for their own interests, making the planners redundant.

Davidoff's ideas, widespread in the 1960s and 1970s, inspired Chester Hartman, a professor of urban planning at Harvard, to create the Urban Field Service (UFS). The UFS sent out teams of students and faculty to provide assistance to low-income communities. Even though the Graduate School of Design chose not to renew Hartman's contract, considering him too controversial, his advocacy model lived on in other university planning schools (Hartman 2002). Planners Network, an organization of advocacy planners founded by Hartman, consists largely of planning academics.[7] Even its supporters soon realized that advocacy was challenging to practice: the gap in culture and values between the planners and those they served was too large; the work was extremely demanding but offered few rewards. Community groups and nonprofit organizations rarely could afford professional wages (Cenzatti 2000). Davidoff's article is still taught in planning schools, but few practicing planners follow the advocacy model. However, its continued presence in

academia allows planners to claim rhetorically what they failed to achieve in practice, compensating for their lack of efficacy. Such representational successes perpetuate the continuing gap between aspiration and actuality.

More mainstream planners addressed the distance between themselves and urban residents through participatory techniques that consulted and sought the approval of those affected by their plans. First mandated by the 1949 Housing Act in the US and then in Western Europe, participation has become a required stage in the planning process. In theory this opens the planning process to citizens' interests through input and suggestions, but in reality, its narrow focus on already-framed proposals often make it an empty exercise in persuasion. In spite of this, residents have continued to demand a larger voice in decision making.

Although many participatory policies were aimed at allowing poor and minorities to have a voice, middle-class residents, who possess the political knowledge and skills to make their opinions count, can easily hijack the process. The case of the Jardins d'Éole in Paris discussed by Newman (this volume) demonstrates both the power and the limitations of "bottom up" action. Residents mobilized to demand a new type of public park instead of the industrial use planned for the site. After considerable struggle, their insistence on a park open twenty-four hours a day under neighborhood control was ultimately successful. Yet the activists, middle-class native French residents, do not necessarily represent the neighborhood, which is largely made up of immigrants from West Africa and the Maghreb. Increasingly the balance of power between planning expertise and users' demands is shifting.

But, as this example demonstrates, even defining the different "publics" or citizens involved is far more complicated than this single polarity suggests. Planners have adopted the word *stakeholder* to distinguish a legitimately involved member of the public, entitled to an opinion, from the self-selected citizens who often dominate community meetings with unwelcome comments. I have observed numerous planning students who were initially committed to listening to local residents turn increasingly cynical after their first few community meetings. Acknowledging that participation is an empty exercise, they are happy to turn this part of the process over to specialist planners who claim expertise in managing the complicated guidelines that govern citizen participation, even though they might have nothing to do with preparing the plan or policy under discussion. Other planners are equally frustrated that the profession's mandated emphasis on responsiveness has virtually eliminated their ability to produce grand urban visions. I have heard planners

lament the disappearance of master planners such as Robert Moses, who used his power to make over the New York metropolitan area in his image.[8] Once reviled, Moses has now become an aspirational symbol of the planner's lost ability to think big and shape the city (Ballon and Jackson 2008).

Much of Moses's success can be attributed to his ability to control an entire region. Since the 1930s, dismayed by their inability to successfully implement plans at the urban scale, planners have argued for regional planning as the means to actually achieve control over the environment. Since then, planners have promoted innumerable regional concepts and solutions, though rarely with any political basis to support them. Although regional transportation planning has had some success, overall, regional planning has not been politically popular. In spite of this, the planners' deeply embedded belief in the regional scale, regional consciousness, and even regional responsibility, all staples of their planning educations, does not allow them to understand why residents continue to vote against it.[9] Rather than critically analyzing both their own assumptions and the political contexts in which regional planning operates, they continue to regard regionalism as an unquestionably positive goal. Failure is then explained as the result of citizens' inability to understand what is good for them. The frequent use of terms such as NIMBY (not in my back yard) or BANANA (build absolutely nothing anywhere near anything) to characterize opposition to their plans by local residents illustrates the distance between the planner's ideals and citizen's concerns. However, planning historians have argued that regional planning, when achieved, has typically been technocratic and nondemocratic. In a nation with strong tradition of local political control answerable to elected representatives, questioning large-scale decision making without democratic accountability should not be surprising, even if it undermines planners' goals.[10]

In the case described by Bruce and Kevin O'Neill (this volume), many transportation planners would disagree with the St. Louis planners' solutions. They insisted on the technical superiority of Metrolink's fixed rail transit, although bus systems are often cheaper, more flexible, and better suited to the needs of poor residents. Their actions highlight planners' often-contradictory impulses in dealing with the people for whom they are planning. Although many planners (like those in St. Louis) see themselves as the champion of low-income households, the elderly, and students, along with a generalized "collective good," low-income groups rarely appear as active participants in public debates over transit. In St. Louis, the planners acted in their interest without consulting them. When middle-class interests conflict with the

planners' own beliefs, they often dismiss their objections as the product of fear, a desire for social isolation, and racism. St. Louis transit officials even created their own advocacy group, "Citizens for Modern Transport," although few citizens appeared to be involved.

When low-income citizens do take matters into their own hands, their demands may challenge the planners' conclusions. Los Angeles activists successfully sued the Metropolitan Transit Authority for racial discrimination after the MTA invested heavily in light rail and commuter rail projects that favored middle-class commuters while shrinking bus service vital to poor and minority riders.[11] In this case, equity-minded transportation planners served as expert witnesses supporting the bus riders, pitting planners against planners. In St. Louis, however, the planners' solution was to "educate" voters using a clever but slightly manipulative public relations campaign to convince them to "think like planners" and recognize their regional responsibilities. Beginning in the 1990s, as national governments lessened their involvement in urban affairs, mayors often replaced planners as the leading figures in the politics of urban change. Instead of being a problem and a hindrance to planning, in some places politics have become the medium through which urban transformation occurs. For example, though the Bogotá plan described by Federico Pérez (this volume) failed, observers of urban planning from around the world regard the city itself as a leader in urban innovation. A succession of charismatic and dynamic mayors—Jaime Castro, Antanus Mockus, and Enrique Penalosa—transformed Bogotá and its civic culture, winning political support for megaprojects such as modern transit systems, as well as introducing new kinds of civic engagement and "quality of life" projects such as Ciclovia, a weekly event that closes city streets to cars for pedestrian and bicycle use, that has spread around the world. Unlike the bureaucratic and necessarily technical operations undertaken by the Grupo POT, these efforts explicitly operated through the political process, guided by elected officials responsive to urban constituencies. This leaves the planners unmoored, left out of the loop of urban change.

But participating in politics can pose other difficulties for planners. In New York, Mayor Michael Bloomberg has also been widely hailed for his expansive urban vision and numerous innovations. An activist mayor, Bloomberg reshaped the city, supporting large-scale redevelopment and sponsoring megaprojects. He encouraged his planning director, Amanda Burden, to rezone 40 percent of the city, fast-tracking luxury housing and office projects along with new parks and public spaces. In the middle of

battles to implement the mayor's ambitious agenda, Burden rejected the usual polarities that had structured the city's debates over urban planning for decades. This pitted Robert Moses (big projects, little participation) against Jane Jacobs (human scale, citizen input). Instead, she attempted to combine their competing approaches, claiming that the mayor would "build like Moses with Jacobs in mind" (Larson 2013, 2–3).

This highly contradictory statement encapsulated the conflicts Burden faced as a planner. As the mayor's friend and close associate, she had to support his vision, which largely consisted of large-scale projects and expensive amenities to assure Manhattan's top position in the hierarchy of global cities. Yet her background was solidly in the Jacobs camp, as a public space and small-scale design advocate. Her attempt to reconcile these disparate aims convinced few of her critics. As Rohit Aggarwala, another top Bloomberg planner, responded when asked about another of the mayor's plans, "The city is full of contradictions, so the plan is too" (Larson 2013, 151). In New York, unlike Bogotá, Bloomberg's urban politics produced a significant backlash. In spite of an unprecedented twelve-year term, as the mayor left office (taking Burden and other planners with him, many heading for jobs in the private sector), incoming mayor Bill de Blasio vowed to reverse many of his predecessor's policies. Instead, he vowed to focus on affordable housing and the middle-class, poor, and homeless citizens that Bloomberg had ignored.[12]

Planners and Anthropologists

As all of these examples demonstrate, planners regularly engage in intensely contradictory situations, making it clear that the ability to recognize and work with paradox should be part of both planning education and practice. How can anthropologists help them in this task? Unlike anthropology, planning, as an academic discipline and profession, has not been self-critical. Since the 1960s, anthropology as a discipline has engaged in continual self-examination, questioning its positivist roots and asking difficult questions about power and knowledge. This led ethnographers to reevaluate their relationships with their interlocutors, to understand better how their assumptions and values shaped and distorted their interactions (Unnithan-Kumar and De Neve 2016). In contrast, during the same period, while there have been many critiques of planning, most have come from adjacent, more disinterested disciplines, such as urban sociology, geography, political science,

and history rather than from inside the field of planning itself. Part of this is the necessity of action that is built into planning. Since efficacy, not understanding, is the goal, planners rarely examine the assumptions that shape their practices. Yet it turns out that planners, in order to continue as a profession, will have to understand themselves better. This could begin in planning school, by adding critical self-awareness as a key element of the curriculum.

But this is only the first step. As James Holston points out, anthropology is a discipline that problematizes present circumstances by focusing on their assumptions and contradictions. These foci then become the starting points, as problems, puzzles, gaps, or even "crimes" for an investigation of the historical forces and factors that structure the current conditions of life. Given the multiplicity of gaps that constitute planning, this approach would inevitably unsettle its normativity, forcing planners to acknowledge the contradictions embedded in their practices.

Finally, planners' lack of self-awareness and inability to confront contradictions need to be seen as symptoms rather than the cause of their problems. The fundamental, deeply embedded weakness of planners is their persistent and insistent adherence to rationality. In the 1920s Karl Mannheim described the planning enterprise as "rational mastery of the irrational." And today, planning paradigms ranging from mainstream rational comprehensive approaches to the models that challenge them such as advocacy and equity planning, the Habermasian model of communicative action, and even radical planning are still profoundly rooted in rationalist epistemology. The rationality of mainstream planning is obvious, explicitly anchored in the descriptive and predictive power of technical methodologies. Planners rely on abstract representations, usually based on census data or other quantitative measurements, to describe and analyze urban issues. Set in a problem-solving context, such abstracted knowledge limits the planners' knowledge and interest in the interests, desires, and lives of the urban residents for whom they plan.

More important, however, as the balance of power continues to shift between planners and the urban residents they serve, belief in rationality continues to dominate even the most progressive and inclusive forms of planning.[13] For example, in communicative approaches such as those advocated by John Forester, the planners themselves, rather than their methods, become the embodiment of rationality. By listening, clarifying, and mediating, they attempt to eliminate communicative distortions that prevent consensus. They act as translators, framing situations and transforming partial and incoherent

utterances into rational discourse.[14] The difference is that planners are willing to transfer their rationality to disenfranchised groups. Thus, rationality is equated with empowerment.

To move beyond this and develop better tools of human and cultural understanding, planners can pay attention to the work of urban anthropologists, whose ethnographic methods accept and analyze what appear to be "irrational" beliefs and practices. One example is the fear of crime. This has multiple effects, such as gated communities, surveillance, calls for more policing, and a long list of other urban responses. Planners typically depict the underlying fear of crime in one of two ways. First they understand it literally and empirically, as a problem of a hostile urban environment, to be solved in multiple ways, ranging from redesigning aspects of the city to make it safer, such as the "broken windows" policing of New York Mayor Giuliani to feminist marches to "take back the night."[15] Other planners interpret it as a product of irrational and unworthy sentiments, such as racism, class hatred, or excessive anxiety about property and property values. This reading renders these fears unjustifiable, invalid, and therefore dismissible.

Anthropologist Teresa Caldeira examines the fear of crime in a far more persuasive way. Based on her fieldwork in Sao Paolo, Brazil, she identifies the fear of crime not as a fact but as a discourse, constructed and circulated in the form of everyday crime stories. These popular narratives transform the "facts" of crime, reorganizing and resignifying them as a way of simplifying and making sense out of changes in the neighborhood, the city, and Brazilian society. Thus the fear of crime and its associated narratives are ways of expressing and explaining other social experiences not necessarily related to crime. Crime supplies a generative symbolism that people use to talk about other things that lack a vocabulary or that are not easy to interpret. These narratives then produce changes in the built environment that symbolically and materially exaggerate enclosures, boundaries, and control. Planners can learn much from ethnographic accounts such as Caldeira's that reveal the complex symbolic and rhetorical processes that underlie apparently straightforward actions and behavior in cities (2000, 53–89).

Such ethnographic methods offer planners powerful tools designed to listen critically and interrogate everyday urban lives through the people who actually live them. Incorporating ethnographic fieldwork into planning practice would allow them to understand, for the first time, the human implications of their spatial practices. Interpretive methods that move beyond literal

understanding to include broader cultural processes would broaden the scope of their inquiries beyond the rational to include the more complex and profound beliefs and practices that shaping urban life. This could transform the ways that planners themselves understand the city. As Holston suggests, instead of simply imposing normative concepts, they could begin to identify emergent conditions that are rooted in the way people actually live.

If planning, as the planner and theorist John Friedmann famously said, is putting knowledge into action, ethnographic knowledge would certainly produce new and more successful actions in the urban realm.

Notes

1. For a more critical approach, see Fogelsong 1986.

2. Numerous editions of the plan have been published, with the most recent in Moore 2009. For a visual evaluation of the plan, see Ross 2013.

3. Edward Bennett and Charles Norton, both of whom became well-known planners (Johnson 1995). The plan's most enduring contribution was Clarence Perry's Neighborhood Unit, a very small part of the plans' overall recommendations.

4. The RPA is often confused with another contemporary planning advocacy group, the Regional Planning Association of America, led by Lewis Mumford, Clarence Stein, and others. The RPAA championed regional decentralization, the exact opposite of the RPA's plan.

5. Carl Smith estimates that 50 percent of the plan's proposals had been realized twenty years later.

6. For a more positive assessment, see O'Connor 1995.

7. http://www.plannersnetwork.org, accessed May 25, 2015.

8. Caro (1974) emphasizes Moses's personal power, but other scholars have challenged this interpretation, suggesting that Moses's initiatives were in line with the dominant banking and financial interests in the city. See, for example, Fitch 1995.

9. Many planning schools, including my own, maintain this claim by including "Regional" in their names.

10. For critiques of regional planning see Gore 1984; Weaver 1984; and Harvey 1973. For a history of the movement see Teitz 2012.

11. http://www.kcet.org/socal/departures/columns/intersections/from-1990s-bus-protests-to-21st-century-bus-rapid-transit-race-class-and-transit-infrastructure-in-t.h, accessed May 15, 2015.

12. See Larson 2013 and Brash 2011 for critical assessments of the Bloomberg administrations. http://www.nyc.gov/html/housing/assets/downloads/pdf/housing_plan.pdf.

13. A recent survey of "emergent" urban planning concepts indicates that this approach has not changed. Discussing issues as disparate as climate change, and bottom-up planning, authors continued to emphasize rationality as the planner's main contribution. Tigran Hass and Krister Olsson, eds, *Emergent Urbanism: Urban Planning and Design in Times of Structural and Systemic Change* (Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2015).

14. See, for example, Forester 1999. It should be noted that Forester argues for increased self-awareness for planners, but his entire approach continues to rely on their rational capabilities.

15. The "broken windows" theory of crime was first proposed by James Wilson and George Kelling (1982). It links visible disorder such as broken windows and turnstile jumping with subsequent increases in serious crimes.

Works Cited

Ballon, Hilary, and Kenneth H. Jackson, eds. 2008. *Robert Moses and the Modern City: The Transformation of New York*. New York: Norton.

Brash, Julian. 2011. *Bloomberg's New York: Class and Governance in the Luxury City*. Athens: University of Georgia Press.

Caldeira, Teresa. 2001. *City of Walls: Crime, Segregation, and Citizenship in São Paulo*. Berkeley: University of California Press.

Caro, Robert. 1974. *The Power Broker: Robert Moses and the Fall of New York*. New York: Vintage.

Cenzatti, Marco. 2000. "Leaping Into the Abyss: Planning and Postmodernism." *Critical Planning* 7 (Spring): 5–24.

Crawford, Margaret. 1990. *Building the Workingman's Paradise*. New York: Verso.

Cupers, Kenny. 2014. *The Social Project: Housing Postwar France*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.

Davidoff, Paul. 1965. "Advocacy and Pluralism in Planning." *Journal of the American Institute of Planners* 31: 331–38.

Faludi, Andreas. 1973. *Planning Theory*. New York: Pergamon.

Fitch, Robert. 1995. *The Assassination of New York*. New York: Routledge.

Fogelsong, Robert. 1986. *Planning the Capitalist City*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.

Forester, John. 1999. *The Deliberative Practitioner: Encouraging Participatory Planning Processes*. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press.

Gans, Herbert. 1962. *The Urban Villagers*. Glencoe, IL: Free Press.

Gore, Charles. 1984. *Regions in Question: Space, Development Theory and Regional Policy*. London: Methuen.

Hancock, John. 1964. *John Nolen and the American City Planning Movement: A History of Culture Change and Community Response, 1900–1940*. Ann Arbor, MI: University Microfilms.

Hartman, Chester. 2002. *Between Eminence and Notoriety: Four Decades of Radical Urban Planning*. New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press.

Harvey, David. 1973. *Social Justice and the City*. Athens: University of Georgia Press.

Hines, Tom. 1974. *Burnham of Chicago*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Holston, James. 1989. *The Modernist City: An Anthropological Critique of Brasília*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Johnson, David A. 1995. *Planning the Great Metropolis: The 1929 Regional Plan of New York and Its Environs*. New York: Routledge.

Jordan, David. 1995. *Transforming Paris: The Life and Labors of Baron Haussmann*. New York: Free Press.

Kreuckenberg, Donald A., ed. 1994. *The American Planner*. New York: Methuen.

Larson, Scott. 2013. *Building Like Moses with Jacobs in Mind.* Philadelphia: Temple University Press.

Lindblom, Charles. 1956. "The Science of Muddling Through." *Public Administration Review* 19: 79–88.

Mack, Jennifer. 2017. *The Construction of Equality: Syriac Immigration and the Swedish City.* Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.

Moore, Charles, ed. 2009. *Daniel H. Burnham, Edward Bennett, The Plan of Chicago.* Chicago: Great Books.

Morris, A. E. J. 1994. *History of Urban Form.* New York: Wiley.

O'Connor, Thomas. 1995. *Building a New Boston: Politics and Urban Renewal 1950–70.* Boston: Northeastern University Press.

Ross, Rebecca. 2013. "Picturing the Profession: The View from Above and the Civic Imaginary in Burnham's Plans." *Journal of Planning History* 12 (3): 269–81.

Schaffer, Kristen. 2003. *Daniel H. Burnham: Visionary Architect and Planner.* New York: Rizzoli.

Scott, Mel. 1969. *American City Planning Since 1890.* Berkeley: University of California Press.

Smith, Carl. 2006. *The Plan of Chicago: Daniel Burnham and the Remaking of the American City.* Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Taylor, Nigel. 1998. *Urban Planning Theory since 1945.* New York: Sage.

Teitz, Michael. 2012. "Regional Development Planning." In *Planning Ideas that Matter: Livability, Territory, Governance and Reflective Practice*, ed. Bishwapriya Sanyal, Lawrence Vale, and Christina Rosan, 127–52. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press.

Unnithan-Kuman, Maya, and Geert De Neve. 2016. "Introduction: Producing Fields, Selves, and Anthropology." In *Critical Journeys: The Making of Anthropologists*, ed. Maya Unnithan-Kuman and Geert De Neve, 1–16. New York: Routledge.

Weaver, Clyde. 1984. *Regional Development and the Local Community, Planning Process and the Social Context.* New York: Wiley.

Wilson, James Q., and George L. Kelling. 1982. "Broken Windows: The Police and Neighborhood Safety." *The Atlantic* (March).