Latino Urbanism

The Politics of Planning, Policy, and Redevelopment

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Barrios and Planning Ideology

The Failure of Suburbia and the Dialectics of New Urbanism

David R. Diaz

There is no "New" in "New" Urbanism. Given the everyday life of the culture of *el barrio* and the legacy of compact, mixed uses that is characteristic of barrio urbanism, any claim to these design features as new in planning discourse is unjustified. A Eurocentric and market-driven profession has appropriated them as its own in a blatant attempt to evade accountability for the systemic failures arising from its long-term adherence to the suburban model of planning. Though that model has proved to be a burden on cities, causing environmental pollution, traffic congestion, and social alienation, planners are still refusing to admit or analyze their role in producing critical irrationalities in land use policy and practice.

Barrio urbanism predates the entire construct of what planners are claiming to be new. But in defense of a racist ideology of Euro-American control over both the apparatus of planning and land use policies, the profession continues to reify the belief that Latina/os have no important contributions to make to planning thought (Hoch 1994; Diaz 2005). At the same time, the profession's adoption, starting in the 1980s, of a "new" approach to planning is implicitly a recognition that quite possibly the entire guiding rationale of the planning function in relation to post-World War II suburban expansion may have been a colossal blunder with drastic social and environmental consequences (Bullard, Johnson, and Torres 2000a; Booth 2004; Deleage 1994; Paehlke 1989). Blind allegiance to the demands of capital (Checkoway 1984; Cox 1978) has led to sprawl and thus to wasteful use of land, excessive use of nonrenewable resources, pollution, overconsumption, lengthy commutes, a weakening of bonds of citizenship, and psychological stress (Aronowitz et al. 1998; Jackson 1985). Sprawl has been further encouraged by the zone separation that has functioned as one of the guiding principles of the planning profession since the initial phase of the suburban evolution in spatial policy (Lewis 1997). Hence the recent trendy discourse of "Smart Growth" is really an acknowledgment that this history has led to what Bullard, Johnson, and Torres (2000b) have called "Dumb Growth." Suburbia today constitutes a failure of planning and of the modern U.S. environmental movement (Diaz n.d.).

Planning's Eurocentrism has led to another fundamental failure, the inability to recognize and adapt to existing forms of urban social and spatial relations. Barrio urbanism has been practiced since the late 1800s (Peña 2005; Diaz 2005). Because barrios have been segregated, by Euro-American discriminatory practices, from ethnically cleansed zones of the city (Massey and Denton 1993), space there has been culturally conceptualized in eclectic patterns rarely emulated elsewhere (Rojas 1999; Gámez 2002). These patterns have supported extensive social interaction among neighbors and have given residents a role to play in their communities as *ciudadanos*, urban citizens.

A central premise of planning approaches that seek to reshape suburbia is that suburbanites need to be retrained as *ciudadanos*. There is a recognition that at the apex of modernism in planning, the role of the urban citizen almost completely disappeared in the suburban ideology that placed a high value on distance from both the city and one's neighbors (Boyer 1983). When people are isolated in dormitory zones, lack communal spaces, are dependent on cars for all mobility, are satiated with consumption emporiums, are locked into a highway logic, and rely on electronic imagery as a substitute for real-world experience, the 'social realm becomes less and less real' (Touraine 1995). But the suburban project has proven so unworkable that planners are desperately chasing a different course of action and attempting to replace an entrenched belief system that has persisted for almost fifty years. Such an ideological shift requires fundamental reconceptualization.

Barrio urbanism, in its modern formulation, is the vanguard for reforming planning practice, if this change in paradigm has a valid premise. But those who proclaim their own visions of the city and its future, whether theorists of a new school of planning identified with a particular city such as the "L.A. school," architects and designers enamored with their own writing, the heads of graduate planning programs, or the last adherents to the old model of planning still employed in city government, have largely failed to recognize the workable model of urbanism that is right in front of them, in cities across the United States. This failure is especially egregious among planning experts in California, where the largest Latina/o community in the history of the United States, East Los Angeles, has been constantly expanding for over seventy years, and where the country's most significant system of urban barrios has, in the past three decades, created a virtual spatial *reconquista*. Perhaps because the profession is too threatened by ethnic others to truly engage with the differences that ethnic communities exemplify (Young 2000; Darder 1995), let alone learn directly from *ciudadanos* the richness of urban culture within a barrio spatial logic, the connection between barrio urbanism and the project of constructing and assessing alternatives to the suburban model is not being made.

With respect to the goal of retraining people in urban citizenship, *el barrio* offers innumerable lessons for the reform of planning practice, internal and external, to guide urban reconstruction and transformation, not only in housing, commercial, and transit policies, but in broader realms spatially, culturally, and artistically. The real challenge to planning is, Will there be a new beginning, or will an ideology of hierarchy, exclusion, and Eurocentric intellectual isolation persist in the modern period of multiethnicity?

Everyday Life and Barrio Culture

El barrio is the foundational logic of Chicana/o urbanism in the Southwest: its space is central to cultural expression, as well as to conflict with and resistance to the dominant culture. Historically the barrio is the result of uneven development, segregation, repression, and discriminatory urban policies. It is characterized by the exorbitant extraction of ground rents, a population that is an urban repository for low-wage labor, and intense demands on a socially constricted housing supply. Yet with regard to everyday life it is a reaffirmation of culture, an ethnically bounded sanctuary, and the spiritual zone of Chicana/o Mexicana/o identity (Ponce [1993] 1995; Acosta and Winegarten 2003). It is also an intense space defining the independence and resistance of a culture that predates Euro-American influences on city life and urban form (Peña 2005, 1998). It is a location bound up with an economic rationale and racial injustice in civil society and the state, but also with cultural solidarity, political mobilization, and empowerment.

A central social practice in the barrio is walking, which involves communal learning and engaging with others in a communally oriented cultural arena. This learning and relearning occurs in countless, often benign, interactions, face to face and personal, that energize and celebrate cultural solidarity. Given the concern, in the larger Eurocentric culture, to reconstruct the social realm and bring about what Alain Touraine has called "the return of the social actor" (1988), barrio culture presents a salutary challenge to modernist trends in urban planning that have alienated people from their own humanity.

Further, barrio urbanism is far more environmentally sustainable than other patterns of urbanism in the United States (Peña 2005; Davis 2000; Diaz 2005). Barrio communities historically utilize public transit, feature mixed-density zoning, and consume fewer resources, all of which, as Robert Paehlke has noted, can serve, in the larger society, as pragmatic responses to limit the environmentally damaging impacts of industrialization and overconsumption (1989, 247-51). Thus while the planning profession attempts to respond to the environmental crisis, *el gente del barrio*, outside the planning hierarchy and its "privileged, technical knowledge," have practiced environmental sustainability for decades. A walk through any barrio will amply demonstrate "chaotic urban environmentalism" in its most organic presentation (Peña 2005).

The mixed density that is characteristic of barrio spatial relations has established vibrant, functioning neighborhoods that are the "life blood of cities" (Jacobs 1961). In contrast to traditional planning's rigid separation of commercial establishments from residences, and of single-family from multifamily dwellings, barrio spatial relations are characterized by a mix of single-family homes, bungalow flats, single-story apartments, multistory apartments, an occasional condominium, and *tiendas* in the internal streets of the city. Whereas mixed use has been militantly rejected throughout the modern history of planning, the strictures against it have been quaintly ignored in barrios.

The logic of mixed density is intertwined with the history of how space is produced and reproduced (Gottdiener 1985). A history of vicious racism, segregation, and exclusion initially produced barrios' tight integration of commercial and residential development. When racism precluded trips to Eurocentrically cleansed zones of the city, when businesses refused bilingual service, when ethnic products were limited in their location, and when the combination of low wages and high commodity pricing severely limited what minorities could buy, barrio commercial establishments were relied upon for their provision of daily household goods, and residents' commercial transactions inside the barrio were closely intertwined with their social life. But even after access to the totality of the city increased for Latina/os, mixed use persisted because of its vitality and importance to internal barrio social relations.

For most barrio residents, direct access to commercial establishments is one of their neighborhood's most important spatial amenities. Whereas in many places across the United States poor urban planning makes a car trip necessary to supply every household need, in the barrio *la gente* ordinarily walk or send their children for quick purchases. Such trips, whether spanning one or two blocks or over a mile, are means of socializing and socialization: residents come to know the community, build relations of loyalty and reliance with business owners, and establish a humane way of conducting the tasks of everyday life that builds on the legacy of culture. They establish patterns of consumption, purchase small carts to facilitate purchasing, link trips to social interaction with neighbors, and establish long-term social relations with individuals who own or work in commercial spaces. Mixed use thus makes possible a way of life that limits car use (along with its related problems of pollution, congestion, and reliance on nonrenewable resources) and promotes improved health.

Barrio residents have historically constituted an important segment of public transit users in metropolitan areas. Public transit has been an essential resource for Latino Americans since the earliest urban omnibuses and streetcars were introduced in the early 1900s in the Southwest. Several factors, mainly income status and structural underemployment, have resulted in a high demand for public transit service. Users include young adults entering the labor market and/or students, who often lack the resources to purchase and maintain a car. Seniors on fixed incomes also depend on bus systems for a range of daily trips. Renters, an important component of the local housing market, may be unable to afford more than one car per family, if that, and may be limited as to the parking space allotted per unit. Because so many jobs pay less than a living wage, significant sectors of the labor market—particularly janitors, hotel staff, service workers in others' homes, fast-food workers, and clerical workers—rely solely on public transit for daily work-related commutes. Some workers buy a used car, carpool, or rely on family members, but when these informal systems break down they must often turn to public transit as well.

In response to this level of demand, virtually all urban transit systems have structured route corridors to address the shifting needs of barrio users. Working-class users make up a major proportion of farebox revenue for public transit (Cervero 1998). This has resulted in an interdependence between barrio users and transit agencies in cities throughout the country. In fact, most public transit agencies would experience severe financial crisis if minority users fundamentally shifted their mobility option to cars. A phalanx of buses traversing the barrio is a common sight in cities across the nation.

Another underappreciated aspect of barrio culture is the tradition of recycling. The concept of adaptive reuse was essentially pioneered in bar-

rios in relation to the composting of *jardines*, water resource management, and a thriving trade in *segundas*, including building materials and all kinds of household items. Such practices continue to this day. In Mexico, home construction firms along the *frontera* are active in the home demolition sector of the building industry, but instead of merely bulldozing structures and dumping the debris, as is the norm for U.S. firms, they "manage" the dismantling of homes by preserving, inventorying, and reselling or reusing lumber, especially large beams; windows and doors; wrought iron; cabinets; mirrors; pipes; electric lights and switches; and copper. These practices reduce consumption, encourage reuse of materials, maximize existing resources, provide entry-level local employment, and reduce demands on forests. Imagine the benefits, ecological and economic, if barrio urban practices were emulated throughout this society, just within the housing market.

Historically, barrio residents have been at the vanguard of urban recycling, though more spontaneously, for economic reasons, than for reasons of compliance with a socially produced environmental mandate. A wide range of used products have been consistently recycled. The most readily accessible materials have been glass, paper, cans, and pipes. These types of materials have had a local resale or reuse value from which their gatherers have supplemented their incomes. Recycling practice consists of collecting resources from streets, alleys, parks, parking lots, and highway verges, and at the sites of trash bins, lumber yards, industrial zones, department stores, and other spaces of opportunity where this "throwaway society" blithely litters the planet with resources that are still functional.

Barrio recycling includes autos, plumbing and electrical supplies, light fixtures, household amenities, clothing, tires, metals, plastics, and reusable furniture. While relatively unorganized and unregulated, this sustainable practice is an important aspect of these communities. In fact, the United States could quite possibly resolve its trash generation crisis by allowing either domestic or Third World trash *collectivas* to bid on managing our landfills. They would probably view the inventory, the gross overabundance of reusable items, as a guaranteed avenue to personal wealth. Paying a fee for the franchise seems minimal in relation to the tremendous level of value to be re-extracted and resold on international markets. Just a thought.

Still another historic environmental practice among barrio residents has been the maintenance of urban gardens, both for decorative purposes and to supplement food resources. The resulting green and colorful landscape—a kaleidoscope of flowerbeds, trees, vines, cactuses, roses, and fruit trees—is characteristic of an interactive land use ethic (Pinderhughes 2004; Peña 1998). Although garden spaces may be small and the plants mainly non-native, they show families' connection to and appreciation for nature, and the actively cultivated flowerbeds and trees are celebrations of local space.

These *jardines de la familia* create a sense of accomplishment and entitlement to the earth. They offer a respite from the hurried pace of urban life, a connection to the eternal cycles of nature as opposed to the forward-driving changes of modernity. And they contribute to the barrio's social life, in that passersby and visitors linger to appreciate their beauty and to talk with the gardeners.

The important urban farm movement, which has adapted the principles of *collectiva* relations to U.S. cities, has transformed many desolate, underutilized tracts of land and has evolved into a sophisticated approach to urban food production that has introduced unique herbs, vegetables, fruits, and medicinal plants into urban zones (Pinderhughes 2004). Some gardens are relatively large plots on the periphery of barrios or in abandoned industrial areas. These *jardines* are established by Latina/os interested in gardening or newer immigrants attempting to replicate the cultural practices of their homelands. They have normally functioned on the basis of a *collectiva* structure. Collective decision making establishes guidelines, defines growing spaces, ensures egalitarian sharing of costs, addresses conflicts, and generates trust. This system fosters stability and equity within the *jardines*, thus minimizing friction and dominance by one sector of a particular *collectiva*. This approach to governance is the oldest type of administrative relationship in North America (Peña 2005).

Initially, the vast majority of *jardines* operate without interference of either city officials or property owners. The plots are small and the use is benign and unobtrusive. Innumerable collective gardens have functioned undisturbed for over a decade in cities around the country. However, once they become seemingly permanent features of the barrio urban landscape, these *collectivas* have been forced to engage in defensive political tactics to fight for their preservation.

While cities countenance the open spaces and plazas designated by redevelopment plans, open space in barrios that is actively used by residents is viewed as having limited value for urban life. The irony is that *jardines* provide significant social and cultural benefits to lower-income areas. They are an arena for socializing, generational bonding, and learning;

they represent an advanced ecological practice aspect in mass consumer culture; their small-scale food production is an important economic supplement to the income of working-class households; their green spaces reduce the harmful impacts of air pollution; and they introduce area consumers to new food products that enhance diets. The fact that urban officials and planners demean these benefits and uses is a prime example of the lingering racism in public policy. *Jardines* counteract some of the negative features of impoverished urban zones: youth alienation, underemployment, racism, lack of appreciation of the local environment, and high levels of conflict. The serenity alone constitutes a legitimate defense of barrio *jardines.*

Thus all these features of barrio spatial relations—mixed use, multidensity housing, public transit, *familia, collectivas, jardines,* adaptive reuse of materials, and, above all, the centrality of walking—are components of the reformulation of urban ideology in the current period. Planning discourse need only visit what exists, *el barrio,* to learn the future.

The Failure of Suburbia and the New Urbanist Response

In this era the social, environmental, and economic repercussions of the planning of suburbia are reaching such a point of crisis that planners will soon be forced to openly admit their historic failure (Bullard, Johnson, and Torres 2000a; Barry 2005; Booth 2004). But already, approaches by such names as Smart Growth, New Urbanism, mixed use, and/or a return to the city are implicitly recognizing some part of that failure in that they are predicated on fundamentally challenging conventional planning and suburban sprawl. The most influential component of this ideology is mixed density (Fung 2001; Calthorpe 1993; Katz 1994; Bailly et al. 2000). This is a retrograde strategy attempting to rectify the consequences of sprawl. The main themes are high-density housing developments, with commercial establishments on their ground floors, in close proximity to major transit corridors. The densification of both residential and commercial uses constitutes a reintroduction of the historic city into current planning discourse. The major objectives are to maximize land use, substantially influence the mode of mobility, re-create the synergy of neighborhoods, and reduce excessive use of nonrenewable resources.

Crucially, this ideology attempts to reduce the absolute dependency on cars for virtually every activity. It optimistically predicts that the linkage of mixed-density developments with transit corridors will significantly increase public transit utilization for work commutes and other mobility necessities (Cervero 1998; Walter, Arkin, and Crenshaw 1992). The effects of such usership—substantial reductions in congestion, air pollution, fossil fuel demands, the costs of transportation infrastructure, and the psychological stress and lost work and leisure time associated with long commutes—could in turn lead to a transformation in federal and state transportation policy that would support public transit more and car use less (Cervero 1998).

Advocates of a transition to mixed density postulate that the close proximity of commercial and residential spaces will encourage walking. Densification is automatically assumed to foster intense, street-level socializing and a communal sense of place. Architectural design will re-create a community atmosphere in which civic society will directly engage itself on the street, enriching and enhancing everyday life in the city (Katz 1994). "In . . . cities, spaces and places are designed and built: walking, witnessing, being in public, are as much a part of the design and purpose as is being inside to eat, sleep, make shoes or love or music. The word *citizen* has to do with cities, and the ideal city is organized around citizenship—around participation in public life" (Solnit 2000, 176). The assumption is that, at the most basic human scale, suburbanites can be retrained in the responsibilities of the *ciudadano.*

In an effort to enhance this opportunity, planners are now advocating zero-lot-line plottage, establishing miniparks in new subdivisions, and changing the relationship between cars, streets, and parking in an effort to facilitate pedestrian activity (Calthorpe 1993). Further, architects have reconceptualized past practice by "introducing" a front porch into housing design (Katz 1994), with the goal of increasing social interaction between residents and pedestrian passersby.

Though the incorporation of these features into new approaches to planning shows a recognition of some of the problems generated by planning over the past several decades, other problems remain unacknowledged or addressed, such as planners' involvement in exclusionary practices based on race and class hierarchies. For example, most New Urbanist developments are devoid of working-class housing. City officials and real estate developers have adopted a range of strategies to ensure the exclusion of lower-class residents from their projects. Many cities now require developers of elite projects to pay into a housing fund for construction of more affordable housing elsewhere, but such agreements continue class and ethnic segregation and often only minimally address the critical shortage of lower-income housing. For although developers are the ben-

eficiaries of significant state concessions, zoning bonuses, infrastructure improvements, urban rail systems, local transit improvements, and redevelopment funding, they remain adamant that neither New Urbanism nor Smart Growth mandates the inclusion in their projects of working families seeking affordable home ownership opportunities. Redevelopment subsidies have been funneled to favored economic zones (Feagin 1984; Weiss 1985; Beauregard 1993), while the impoverished communities for which the policy was created have been ignored. The abandonment of any meaningful policies to house truly needy families, as opposed to middle-class professionals with direct access to credit and capital (Squires 1994), is a major failure of this "new" ideology in planning. What have been developed are expensive, elite zones of the city characterized by blatant class and ethnic exclusion (Massey and Denton 1993). Thus New Urbanism and Smart Growth are emerging as contributors to a new system of residential apartheid in the city.

Planning and SUV Culture

One problem confronting New Urbanism is whether the paradigm shift it envisions can have any salience with a mass consumer society wedded to the suburban model and "SUVism," a fast-paced way of life that is predicated on a great deal of driving, with its attendant lifestyle of social isolation and overconsumption (Goldman 1992; Booth 2004; Levenstein 2003; Fine and Leopold 1993). The dominant reliance on one form of mobility, automobiles, has significant residual environmental impacts such as air pollution, stress, and a permanently unbalanced demand for oil and gas reserves.

SUVism has produced and reproduced social alienation (Fishman 1987; Boyer 1983), structuring social relations on an atomized, alienating logic in which daily activity is reduced to working for and then purchasing consumption amenities. A daily routine centered on overconsumption of almost every product available—clothing, gas, food, illegal substances, household accessories, and electronic equipment—has been reinforced by media and advertising (Levenstein 2003; Booth 2004). A sedentary lifestyle and the abuse of the capacity of the human body to absorb consumption items have led to a public health crisis, particularly among children (CSPI 2003). The explosion of diabetes is correlated with overeating and leisure activity based on a screen and a couch (McCann and Ewing 2003). Other health problems result as well: heart disease, high blood pressure, diabetes, psychological stress, joint stress. Vast sectors of society refuse to meet one of our most basic evolutionary needs, one that in prior generations was a fundamental aspect of life, the need to *walk*. The longest trip of the day is often from the living room to the refrigerator and back.

The crisis of urban mobility, worsening seemingly by the moment, is a result of an irrational and insensitive assault on the land (Beatley 2000; Bullard, Johnson, and Torres 2000b; Barry 2005). Since the post-World War II era the planning profession has facilitated capital's voracious requirement to expand development through constant sprawl envisioned as a panacea to the evils of the city. The proliferation of modern subdivisions mimicking the estates of the initial elite suburbs has created a crisis in that these far-flung neighborhoods are predicated on highways for access (Walter, Arkin, and Crenshaw 1992). Inherent in this everyday reality is the utter failure to implement any semblance of an environmentally rational land use strategy in the past five-plus decades (Beatley 2000; Barry 2005; Peña 1998). In particular, the disconnect between transportation planning and land use policy during this period has been a glaring omission in the profession.

In the late 1980s planners belatedly and perplexedly recognized this disconnect. Their response was to produce a "new" paradigm in response to it, transit-oriented planning (Cervero 1998) and then traffic calming (Hoyle 1995; Burden 2000). Planners raced to incorporate transportation engineers into planning and land use policy and to reestablish planning policies that would substantially improve mobility in cities and regions. Portland, Oregon, became the poster city for these developments. For the next decade, the literature was flooded with books and articles on the topic. But then as now, the "new" served to cover over past failure. How could planners have completely ignored the transportation function of the city when developing public policy since the 1950s? Quite an embarrassing "mistake," one that has had profound, negative consequences to the social production of urban form. Meanwhile, minority planners have remained puzzled as to why planning took so long to recognize the centrality of public transit to rational planning practice. Barrio residents would be amused to learn that highly educated planners considered as "new" one of the most essential aspects of their everyday lives.

This leads us back to this chapter's initial contention: there is no "New in New Urbanism." The recent paradigm shift is a response to the irrationalities, failures, crises, and costs related to the failure of suburbia (Bullard, Johnson, and Torres 2000a, 2000b; Barry 2005; Beatley 2000). Planning, in distancing itself from its past, inherently signals the structural failure of planning for almost fifty years.

The ideological transition within the planning profession has resulted in new models, typically featuring a combination of mixed-use development, increased residential density, community building to address the social alienation of civic society, sustainable urban planning practices, substantial expansion of public transit systems and usership, and environmentally oriented land use relationships. Yet these models only weakly mimic what has existed in barrios for over a century. Meanwhile, a Eurocentric approach to planning, which persists even at this critical juncture, neglects Latina/o urbanism as if it had no value to the discourse in the field.

Such professional arrogance is typical of American racism. A future of mistaken policy seems to be better than listening to ethnic others and possibly comprehending that different visions have more inherent value than those embedded in a rational-functional ideology.

The Planning Literature's Neglect of Chicana/o Urbanism

One of the planning literature's most egregious failures is its silence with regard to the Chicana/o urban experience. This ignorance is especially reprehensible in New Urbanists from either California or the Southwest. This region has experienced a historic spatial *reconquista.* The largest Latina/o community, East Los Angeles, is a powerful cultural and social space influencing public policy in Southern California. Major barrios in San Antonio, El Paso, Denver, San Francisco, San Jose, San Diego, Phoenix, and el Valle del Rio Bravo are among the most significant features of the regional built environment (Arreola 2002; Diaz 2005; Peña 2005; Rodriguez 1993; Mendez 2003). Latina/os have had a major impact in this region spatially, politically, and economically for over a century. Since the mid-1900s, barrios have emerged in New York's Spanish Harlem, Chicago's Pilsen, Miami's Calle Ocho, Kansas City, and the Pacific Northwest. In the current era, Latina/o urbanism is one of the most controversial issues in the United States.

The defense of spatial relations *en el barrio* has been central to conflict and controversy between Latina/os and planning (Marquez 1998; Peña 1998; Pulido 1996; Diaz 1989). However, a review of conventional planning literature would lead to the assumption that the second-largest ethnic group in the United States was virtually nonexistent. Part of the failure of the literature has stemmed from a decidedly eastern bias with regard to the minority populations that have received the most attention. But another factor is racism in planning (Hoch 1994). The profession, having encountered conflict with African Americans over planning issues, has been extremely reluctant to address difference, racism, and class bias with another major minority community as well. The extremely limited attention in the city planning literature to barrio urbanism, especially in relation to California and the Southwest, is an embarrassment to the entire planning field.

Yet the history of the conflictive relationship between Latina/os and planners mirrors the entire modern history of planning. From the struggles over illegal and racist theft of land grants in New Mexico and Colorado to Puerto Rican-led rent strikes in Spanish Harlem, spirited opposition against eminent domain in Segundo Barrio in El Paso and Viejo Varrio in Tucson, massive protests against displacement in Chavez Ravine in Los Angeles, fights in East L.A. over racism in public housing and unprecedented destruction of communities from freeways in the 1950 and 1960s, and the establishment of the Crusade for Justice in Denver at the beginning of the Chicano Power era, Latina/os, contrary to exclusionary planning literature, have been engaged in land use, planning, redevelopment, affordable housing, social justice and environmental *luchas* for over a century.

Chicana/o social movements and critiques of planning have been a permanent feature of urban policy controversy since the era of Model Cities and the creation of the Office of Economic Opportunity in the 1960s. Confronting racism, classism, and an elitist hierarchy, barrio leaders, intrinsically comprehending inequity in redistribution policy, the manipulation of eminent domain, and the legacy of underdevelopment, have confronted planning in the cities of virtually every state in the Southwest and Midwest as well as those of other regions throughout the country. Similar confrontations have occurred in rural zones as well (Peña 2005, 1998; Marquez 1998).

One of the most fundamental realities in urban policy is planning's failure to address the crises in barrios. From the first Chicana/o political majority in the small South Valle jurisdiction of Crystal City (Garcia 1989), the failure of urban policy has been a central issue of political opposition. The legacy of acute neglect of infrastructure throughout the Southwest is legendary. Through the 1980s, innumerable barrios lacked a range of basic urban amenities such as storm drain systems, sewer mains, water systems, paved streets, and gas lines.

Affordable housing, parks and youth recreational facilities, revitalization, economic development, historic preservation, environmental pro-

tection, and community empowerment have all been issues around which barrio social movements have continually mobilized against a racist planning cartel. The rampant use of eminent domain to confiscate barrio space and/or destroy entire *colonias* is a component of this legacy. Reaction to proposed or actual destruction of barrios during the modern, post-World War II history of planning has led to a vibrant social justice movement throughout the Southwest. Whether planning will ever acknowledge this history remains an open question.

The memory of these contested spaces is a permanent legacy of barrio cultural history. In fact, the attacks against the integrity of barrio spatial relations, a continuation of a history of conflict from the 1940s and 1950s, fueled the youth revolt in barrios during the 1960s and 1970s Chicana/o Power era. Challenges to racism in political institutions were soon followed by *luchas* against reactionary city planning practice and urban policy. Yet planning literature remains devoid of specific analysis of the destructive impact of redevelopment, freeway construction, and eminent domain on barrios, and only limited attention has been given to the structural underdevelopment of the barrio economy. The profession also appears reluctant to document and assess the influence of barrio social movements against the urban cartel, with which planning has been directly aligned.

When will planning place the *barrio* and Chicana/o urbanism in the center of urban policy? Latina/os' transformation into the second-largest ethnic population indicates the importance of addressing their influence within urban spatial relations. The social construction of the rich cultural zone of the barrio offers significant lessons to the future of planning. The spatial *reconquista* occurring in the Southwest will only accelerate in the next quarter century and is already socially and culturally transforming the urban environment.

The L.A. Perspective and Chicana/o Urbanism

Up through the early 1990s, the topic of urbanization and its coinciding socio-demographic influences in the Los Angeles region was, at best, incidentally treated in the planning literature. The key texts addressed two major factors leading to irrational land use patterns: fragmented governmental jurisdictions (Fogelson's *Fragmented Metropolis,* 1967) and polynucleated development (Gottdiener's *The Social Production of Urban Space,* 1985). One book, *Thinking Big* (Gottlieb and Wolt 1977), documented the evolution of the *L.A. Times* and the Chandler family's deployment of print media, land use investments, a staunch right-wing political philosophy, and membership in the Group of 25 into a direct role in land development policy for over eighty years. These three books, along with a few tomes on architecture and car culture, served to document the evolution of urbanization and sprawl endemic to Southern California. But in the early 1990s an event and a book combined to ignite renewed interest in L.A. urban issues: the Rodney King insurrection and Mike Davis's *City of Quartz.*

Discourse on L.A. is important in relation to the magnitude of the sprawl in the region. While sprawl is not at all unique to L.A. or even historically new (it occurred in Rome and other historic city-states in other eras), it was substantially more significant in L.A. than in any other comparable region through the 1980s. The so-called "L.A. school" has attempted to ascribe to L.A. a uniqueness with regard to planning issues that the urban history of this region fails to justify. The forces that the school addresses—globalization, immigration linked to demands for low-wage labor, economic restructuring, the establishment of ethnic marketplaces, information technology manufacturing centers, and other economic factors (Dear 2001)—are part of the evolution of cities and have already occurred in other regions of the country. Discussions related to the influence of these urban, economic, demographic, and social impacts are valuable, but claims to a "new" discourse in relation to planning stretch the legitimacy of this perspective.

The main urban patterns described by the L.A. school, fragmented jurisdictions and autonomous, decentralized citylike agglomerations, were first theorized in Fogelson's *Fragmented Metropolis* and Gottdiener's *The Social Production of Urban Space.* Ironically, few advocates of the L.A. perspective properly situate in its time this initial literature and its precise analysis of urbanization patterns and impacts. New York, Chicago, San Francisco, and for that matter the global cities of Europe all have similar urban dynamics. Thus the patterns of urbanization that are termed new actually replicate the transitions and transformations of other cities in U.S. urban history. L.A. is not unique with regard to global capital's influence on spatial relations, a structural reliance on immigrant labor in a wide range of economic sectors, the series of economic transformations beginning in the 1970s, the reproduction of new ethnic-based regional markets (which started a century ago), or a vibrant informal economy. Los Angeles mimics other major cities; it has not led urban policy in relation to these or other urban policy transformations.

Two important aspects of the urban history of this region potentially are significant to future planning discourses: the magnitude of the pending social, tax, environmental, and economic costs of unfettered sprawl, and the spread of barrio urbanism, to an extent that is unprecedented in this society. However, both themes have been virtually ignored by advocates of the LA perspective.

Limitless sprawl, manipulation of land use policy, and the impacts of irrational planning are all important topics for planning policy. Los Angeles is significant, if not solely for the substantial environmental destruction that has been wrought throughout the region. Public health costs, lost wages, lowered work productivity, taxation to maintain and expand infrastructure, transportation crises, a weak public transit system that most commuters view as worthless, industrial pollution, economic stagnation, and abandonment of some suburban zones are and will continue to be significant, harmful impacts on government revenues and expenditures. Yet the L.A. school has not seriously critiqued the ravages of constant and total sprawl in this region or the hegemony of the growth machine (Molotch and Logan 1984)—perhaps because real estate and development interests are the main funders of the research institutes that support advocates of the L.A. perspective.

The other issue that these advocates have not sufficiently addressed is barrio urbanism. Though they consider the Latina/o population in relation to a range of issues including economic restructuring, immigrant labor, capital mobility, and ethnic demographic trends, insufficient assessment of their impact on the culture and on urban spatial relations is a major failure. Given the explosion of Chicana/o urbanism in East Los Angeles since the mid-1970s and the unprecedented suburban expansion of minorities (a majority of whom are middle-class Chicana/os), the L.A. perspective has bypassed a major opportunity to inform planning about its own future.

There is no region in the United States where one ethnic group has so reconstituted space in its own cultural vision as Southern California, which Latina/os are spatially and culturally continuing to transform (on such reconstitution of space, see Lefebvre [1974] 1991). Gottdiener's prediction in 1985 that development would produce systemic, decentralized subregional zones remains the most relevant observation to the explosion of new barrios in this region in the past quarter century. His analysis of the "polynucleated pattern of administrative decentralization" (1985, 61) articulated a logic of deconcentration, arguing that "the production of space has occurred in the main not because of economic processes alone but, more specifically, because of a joint state-real estate sector articulation which forms the leading edge of spatial transformations" (241). This assessment of urban restructuring offers a rationale for the underdevelopment and dispersal of barrios.

Southern California's trajectory toward becoming 50 percent Latina/o is having a dramatic impact on the culture of communities, transforming it into barrio-oriented everyday life. The creation of the Chicana/o City (Valle and Torres 2000) and the dynamic expansion of the region related to demographic changes seem to have been a key rationale for analysis of Los Angeles. The evolution of the spatial logic of barrios reflects Gottdiener's concept of polynucleated development: "Consequently, the present form of metropolitan expansion represents less the desires of its . . . residents . . . than the uncoordinated activities of . . . capital disguised by the ideology of growth. The outcomes of this development process are renegotiated by those who bear its costs. Thus the socio-spatial environment represents both the interests involved in the property sector and the materialized scars of the political renegotiation between the initial profit takers and the eventual users of settlement space, as the latter vainly battle to recreate some form of consociation within the hostile environment of unrelenting secondary circuit activity and its constant turnover of land" (Gottdiener 1985, 249-50). Thus the proliferation of barrios is re-creating sociocultural enclaves within a hostile capital-state relationship structured to extract labor and rent.

The L.A. perspective has yet to make a credible contribution to the future of planning. It is anchored in the dated contention that sprawl in L.A. is supposedly "unique" and the weak argument that the influences of globalization in L.A. are somehow different from those of other powerful cities (Chicago, New York, Toronto, Paris, Vancouver, London, Rome, Shanghai, etc.). At the same time, this perspective ignores the barrio urbanism that aspect of the region that are unique and inform planning. Barrio urbanism, in particular, will necessarily emerge from other schools and from other regions.

Racism, Gentrification, and "New" Urbanism

What are actually being developed under the new regime in planning are gentrified spaces that exclude both class and ethnic others. Cities that facilitate densification are establishing zoning and land use concessions allowing capital to dictate policies oriented toward professional middle-

class housing markets. In numerous jurisdictions developers have the option of paying into funds for affordable housing elsewhere, in lieu of being tainted by the inclusion of affordable units for working-class families in their own projects. This capability to transfer the location of affordable ownership opportunities blatantly contradicts any claim of a "smart" or "new" urban logic. It is simply an updated version of residential apartheid (Massey and Denton 1993).

Similar barriers are being imposed in relation to access to capital in the real estate market (Squires 1994; Dymski, Veitch, and White 1991), thus excluding ethnic working-class constituencies from the benefits of virtually all New Urbanist developments in the past decade (Rast 2006). The cost of housing within dense mixed-use developments pragmatically ensures that truly needy working families will never qualify for a home loan in these developments. The mortgage banking industry is also reluctant to break up the class homogeneity of New Urbanist projects, thereby reifying the lingering racist stereotype that minority home ownership automatically translates into reduced valuation of an entire project—a logic that would irrationally imply that minorities want to purchase a home in order to destroy it!

In the abstract, New Urbanism and Smart Growth endorse the goals set forth by the American Planning Association, the American Collegiate Schools of Planning, and other leading organizations: equity, class integration, housing opportunity for all income groups, and the reproduction of a version of the historic city in which all ethnicities will be incorporated into new developments. This creation of myths harks to an earlier era in which rational-functional planners proclaimed themselves to be serving the common good (Taylor 1998).

The reality, however, is that planners and developers continue to control access to the city and to deny housing opportunity to working-class households in desperate need of the structural benefits of ownership. Despite New Urbanist writings that endorse a multiethnic, multiclass restructuring of urban social relations (Rast 2006; Fung 2001), what has occurred to date is business as usual: with the acquiescence of planning, the development industry is utilizing every tactic available to deny affordable ownership within their projects. This reflects what Rast terms 'a profound middle-class bias" in planning (2006, 249; I would argue it is upper-class) that clearly signals a new formulation of class gentrification and exclusion within this ideology.

The failure of planning to ensure equity, which is only the latest iteration of racism within the profession, is occurring despite a range of essential state concessions that capital has stipulated as preconditions for their support of Smart Growth or New Urbanist projects. The state basically finances a host of infrastructure requirements without which capital claims projects are not feasible. Developers demand substantial housing density bonuses to underwrite significant profitability. Local and regional governments finance expensive rail transit centers and enhance local transit systems to improve access for consumption, work, and leisure. They provide innumerable subsidies through redevelopment agencies, divert federal funds earmarked for affordable housing, and offer low-interest development loans. Without these massive state concessions developers often refuse to engage in developments (Checkoway 1984; Cox 1978), mixed-use or otherwise.

Despite their position of authority based on technical knowledge and expertise, planners continue to exhibit political capitulation and weakness. In lieu of demanding fair and equitable conditions, especially mandating a minimum 20 percent of truly affordable units for working-class families, they legitimate class exclusion. New labels cannot mask the continuing racism and classism of urban policy.

As city centers become increasingly gentrified, New Urbanism, without state-mandated policies that regulate real estate capital in relation to government tax costs and support, is contributing to the establishment of elite zones from which minorities and lower-income working people are excluded. The distribution of state resources is skewed in favor of capital, with planners serving as cheerleaders for elites aligned with powerful urban cartels. The new, expensive, subsidized residential projects that adhere to a New Urbanist philosophy are in fact perpetuating an old tradition by deepening the divide between privileged and minority communities.

New Urbanism and Smart Growth are contributing to geographies of exclusion (Peña 2005; Frazier, Margai, and Tettey-Fio 2003) in that developers of New Urbanist projects are manipulating urban form to reassert class and ethnic difference. This is most evident in the types of services and retail amenities that these communities contain. Restaurants, boutiques, recreational opportunities, and personal services are all predicated on a consumer pricing level designed to create distinct economic barricades that implicitly limit access to working-class families, even though the state offers significant subsidies to capital as a precondition to development (Checkoway 1984; Cox 1978). Multicultural, multilingual planning practices could give barrio residents opportunities to provide input

regarding development, but in the current era anti-immigrant sentiment tends to be translated into opposition toward urban policies that might benefit barrio residents.

One of the problems with the rush to densification is an acute lack of social space within New Urbanist design. Contrary to what is proclaimed in planning discourse, most developers tend to maximize the "profitability of space" (Harvey 1973). Residential areas thus have very little social space, and apartment balconies are too small. Architects have failed to tier units to offer outdoor spaces, either communal or personal. And the neighborhood community room, if it exists, is generally a sterile, functional space that normally requires reservations for social events. Commingling with residents or, heaven forbid, strangers is frowned upon. A majority of new urban developments function as glorified hotels! Thus the chaos of the city, implicit in mixed use, practiced in barrios, celebrated by the *ciudadano,* is regulated out of existence by both architectural design and formal contractual policy.

What good is New Urbanism or Smart Growth if the eclectic relations of the city are regulated out of existence prior to the sale of units? How does this race to a new planning ideology differ, if at all, from the legacy of exclusion and racism that haunts the profession? These gentrified spaces are rapidly assuming the characteristics of residential apartheid. Should working-class constituencies expect anything less from a profession wedded to advancing the interests of capital at the expense of the poor?

Latina/o Urbanism and the Future of Planning

The urban and cultural environment of barrios and *colonias* has been characterized by the interlacing of mixed-use relationships and vibrant communal activities since the 1800s. These zones, distinctive in their cultural patterning, initially evolved from segregated areas within the framework of racist urban practices dictated by Euro-American elites. The internal cultural resistance to racism in public policy was (and is) reflected in social practice, communal relationships, and ethnic solidarity that link commerce, housing, and labor in a relatively dense physical space. The built environment has reflected a range of land uses, varying structural heights, and maximal utilization of physical space.

The relationships in this dense land use matrix have resulted in culturally oriented social networking based on walking. The proximity of shops and public transit to housing has resulted in the evolution of an active street culture (Rojas 1999; Gámez 2002). Density, which is a fundamental characteristic of barrios, has also influenced active recycling of a wide range of materials, facilitated an underground economy that simultaneously relies on an informal barter system and a cash economy, maximized common social space in residential areas, and fostered a context of social sharing and mutual economic, social, and cultural support. The conceptual framework of the *ciudadano,* encompassing active citizenship in all its manifestations, is a product of barrio everyday life.

Because racism in public policy resulted in inequitable redistribution of public funds to barrio neighborhoods and thus inadequate recreational facilities for youth, barrios responded by maximizing the use of open spaces as recreational zones, whether front and side yards, streets, or vacant lots. Other cultural practices informally created and supported by locals include ballet folklorico, mariachi music, rock, hip-hop, *reggaeton,* and public art such as graffiti art (Viesca 2000). The modern public art movement evolved from the politically inspired Chicana/o mural movement of the 1960s and 1970s (Cockcroft and Barnet-Sanchez [1990] 1993), in which walls, private and public, became important urban canvases that both informed and beautified barrio space.

Thus barrio everyday life offers an array of lessons for current discourse on transforming the future of the city. A trip to the barrio provides direct evidence of how social networks have functioned and thrived for decades, and the close relationship between *viviendas y tiendas* effectively contradicts over half a century of Eurocentric planning ideology. The social, economic, and environmental benefits of this type of land use have only recently been proclaimed as the wave of the future of planning. When will planning admit that that observation is ahistorical and racist, since what is claimed as the future is a feature of long standing within the arena of barrio urban land use?

In relation to public policy, the mixed-use urban form has resulted in a number of important characteristics of Latina/o urban culture and everyday life. One critical aspect of the urban crisis today is congestion and the failure of public transportation systems to address mobility. The exception is in barrios and other historically segregated communities that were denied economic and political rights until the latter stages of last century. Residents there have actively used public transit and sought residential and workplace locations accessible to existing systems. This de facto public policy has resulted in relatively few single-vehicle commutes, relatively low consumption of nonrenewable energy, lowered air pollution, close proximity to barrio commercial zones, walking for both necessity and lei-

sure (and, as importantly, personal health), and the only social sector that has staunchly defended state support for public transit during the entire history of sprawl. Planning should be reminded of its own failure and negligence with regard to public transit up to the point when, in the 1990s, transit-oriented planning reemerged.

Terms such as *sustainable development* and *environmentally oriented planning* are associated with this recent shift in planning discourse. One of the main objectives of the U.S. environmental movement, though wholly undervalued in relation to actual effort, is to dramatically reduce the energy utilization footprint (Gottlieb 1993; Hays 1987; Peña 2005, 1998), which has been much enlarged by the constant sprawl associated with the hegemony of the real estate industry over planning (Checkoway 1984; Feagin 1984). But what is being situated as an essential reformulation of land use and planning logic is nothing new to the barrio experience. Barrio residents have actively recycled; they are an important segment of public transit users; barrio spaces are dense and mixed use; live-work arrangements are common; youth maximize existing open space; cultural workers have recaptured urban walls; vacant lots and other abandoned and marginal spaces are turned into small-scale gardens and farms for personal enjoyment and/or food production.

Barrio urbanism is the future of the city. Fundamentally, any strategy aimed at reacculturating suburbanites to socially function in a dense urban environment implies their learning to be *ciudadanos*. Lessening the use of cars and restoring social life in communities mandates a return to the human scale of the city through walking. Though barrio residents would find it comical that this societal return is the latest fad in planning, walking is central to the reformulation of planning and land use policy in the current era.

Why create gentrified, exclusionary spaces through a "new" planning paradigm? What value is derived from resegregating the city? Why should massive state subsidies demanded by capital to densify the city not be leveraged with mandates for ethnic and class inclusion in any new developments receiving this level of financial benefit?

When will the planning profession finally acknowledge successful sustainable urban practices, especially those in minority zones of the city? Finally, when will they set aside intellectual racism and technical hierarchy to admit failure and begin to relearn the culture of the city from existing examples?

Barrio urbanism is more than willing to assume the task, whatever the time frame, to initiate the transformation of disengaged Euro-American suburbanites into *ciudadanos*. Any rational approach to creating the sustainable city of the future depends on this social logic. Is a Eurocentric planning profession capable of engaging this challenge?

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Aesthetic Belonging

The Latinization and Renewal of Union City, New Jersey

Johana Londoño

"Entre gustos no hay disgustos." So goes a common adage in Spanish that roughly translates to "In matters of taste there is no debate." The common-sense logic espoused is alluring and meant to demonstrate acceptance and open-mindedness toward taste. This statement also dismisses power relations involved in the implementation of aesthetics. The ingenuousness of the expression is particularly revealed when this saying is applied to aesthetic negotiations regarding the urban built environment. Contrary to the complacency expressed in this saying, in this chapter I show that *el gusto's* visual manifestation in cities and the particular aesthetic experience it connotes, such as that of community belonging, are important and laden with discourses of power constituted by class and racial hierarchies. The visual aestheticization of cities, a process by which judgments about urban forms and places are established by specific groups with multiple interests in urban place, is especially politically and economically salient today for Latino-majority cities in the United States. Popular form-conscious urban planning models such as New Urbanism's traditional architecture and redevelopment, together with neoliberal models of urban growth, aim to cater to and foster contemporary interest in gentrified urban living and consequently press upon the future sustainability of the Latino landscapes of barrios.

This paper focuses on the politics of aestheticizing urban places as manifested in Union City, New Jersey, a working-class suburban barrio, located at the edge of the Hudson River facing New York City, that has over the past two decades been gradually revitalized with monies from New Jersey's Urban Enterprise Zone (UEZ). Operating with the purpose of economic development and community betterment, the UEZ has reserved multiple loans for the replacement, on Bergenline Avenue, Union City's main commercial boulevard, of a multitextured built environment and commercial awnings—features that exemplify the so-called Latinization of urban space—with a modern "Main Street" American composition of muted "classic" colors and clean-cut typography that recalls New Urbanist forms. In what follows, I will examine the interrelated ways the