

THE UNCERTAIN CITY: MAKING SPACE(S) FOR DIFFERENCE

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Résumé

Les villes canadiennes se diversifient de plus en plus. Les urbanistes doivent donc prendre en considération les questions de différences culturelles et sociales mais leurs connaissances en la matière étant limitées, ils ne peuvent adéquatement répondre aux problèmes posés. Nous observons que les urbanistes du mouvement moderne ont tenté de rendre l'espace urbain homogène et, simultanément, de réduire au silence les usagers de ces espaces. Nous démontrons que la théorie communicative a permis l'expression de différentes voix sans toutefois répondre correctement aux questions d'inter-culturalité. Nous suggérons d'aller au-delà des notions courantes occidentales de rationalité et de justice afin d'explorer les notions de rationalités conflictuelles et de justice redistributive. Des exemples de planification urbaine à Toronto illustrent les déficiences dans les pratiques professionnelles à l'égard de la question de la diversité. Enfin nous proposons des suggestions préliminaires pour une éducation en planification urbaine qui aborderait les questions de différence et offrirait des directions pour la prochaine génération de praticiens engagée dans les transformations futures de la « ville incertaine ».

Mots clés: Diversité, équité, justice, théorie communicative, pratique professionnelle, éducation populaire

Abstract

As Canadian cities become increasingly diverse planners must address social and cultural differences in their practice, but with little knowledge of how to do so fairly. We note the way modernist planning has tended to homogenize urban

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space and, at the same time, silence many of the users of that space. We argue that communicative planning theory has opened up the issue of voice, but inadequately addressed issues of inter-cultural relations. We suggest going beyond current liberal Western notions of rationality and justice to explore notions of conflicting rationalities and redistributive justice. Examples of planning in Toronto highlight some of the shortcomings in professional practices with respect to diversity. Finally, we make some preliminary suggestions about how planning education might address these issues both to make space(s) for difference and to provide direction for the next generation of practitioners shaping the uncertain city.

Key words: Diversity, equity, justice, communicative theory, professional practice, popular education

Introduction

Globalization contains both universalizing and diversifying tendencies. While our globalized economy appears to deliver ever more homogeneous looking cities—with McDonald's, the Gap, and Starbucks becoming ever more ubiquitous worldwide—the global mobility of world populations is making our cities, suburbs, and exurbs, more socially and culturally diverse than ever before. This process of change has no end in sight. We cannot anticipate a point in the future at which we will stop growing, or stop changing. The process is ongoing and will lead we know not where. Welcome to the uncertain city.

The universalizing tendencies of capitalist globalization are not new, however. These tendencies have been evident within the Canadian planning profession's relationship both to its public(s) and to urban space since its inception. Planning, like virtually all professions, has a history of emphasizing the expertise of the individual professional rather than the nature of the relationship between professional practice and community needs (Sanford 1989) or professional practice and the "production of space" (Lefebvre 1991).

It is the increase in demands for the recognition of diversity within planning that is new. The public interest, long seen as planners' area of professional expertise, is something planners can no longer know in advance, if indeed they ever could. The homogenized story of modernist planning has tended to cover over the diversity of human experience, and the paradoxes and contradictions present. Like Holston (1998), we have no objection to the modernist project of imagining a more egalitarian society, but as he notes:

Modernist planning does not admit or develop productively the paradoxes of its imagined future. Instead, it attempts to be a plan without contradictions, without conflict.... It fails to include as *constituent* elements of planning the conflict, ambiguity, and indeterminacy characteristic of actual social life (46).

As Canadian cities become increasingly diverse, the nature of the public(s) interest becomes increasingly uncertain. While there is a growing literature calling on planners to respond to diversity (Sandercock 1998, 2000, 2003; Milroy & Wallace 2001; Wallace & Milroy 1999; Qadeer 1997, 2000; and others), there is little agreement about what is involved. Canada's official policy of multiculturalism has led some to believe that the most important new role for planners is "managing" diversity to minimize conflicts over land use (Pestieu & Wallace 2003). But we argue that planners need to see social, cultural, and ethnic differences from the perspective of the various communities involved and, consequently, need to develop new skills, not for managing diverse communities, but for learning and working with these communities to achieve a diversity of human possibilities—making space for difference. The key question is how.

The discussion that follows touches on contemporary planning theory before focusing on planning practice and planning education. We begin by briefly examining the way in which planning has tended to homogenize urban space and, at the same time silence many of the users of that space. We argue that communicative planning theory has opened up the issue of voice, but inadequately addressed issues of inter-cultural relations. We suggest going beyond current liberal Western notions of rationality and justice to explore conflicting rationalities (à la Watson 2003) and redistributive justice. Some examples of planning in Toronto, then, highlight current shortcomings of professional practices with respect to issues of diversity. And finally, we examine planning education and the types of attitudes and skills planners will need to adequately plan for the uncertain city.

We draw on examples of planning practices in Toronto for three reasons. First, we both currently live and work in Toronto and, so, are most familiar with it. Second, Toronto is one of the most multicultural cities in the world (Anderssen 2003), and has the highest proportion of immigrants of any city in the world (Carey 2003). Third, with the recent election of David Miller as mayor, there is renewed hope that Toronto City Council will put the interests of residents' quality of life before the economic interests of land developers, creating an opportunity to plan with people rather than for profit.

Diversity and Planning Theory

Lefebvre's (1991) concepts of abstract and differential space address the often unacknowledged tension between universalizing and diversifying trends. It is Lefebvre's contention that there has been an emphasis on the production of "objects in space" (i.e. commodities) rather than on the "production of space"—a process that simultaneously takes into account the physical and social elements of space. This has resulted in abstract space where considerations of meaning are limited by the abstract monetary values placed on the commodities. Abstract space tends towards homogeneity:

Formal and qualitative, it erases distinctions, as much those which derive from nature and (historical) time as those which originate in the body (age, sex, ethnicity)... The dominant form of space, that of the centre of wealth and power, endeavours to mould spaces it dominates, ... and it seeks, often by violent means, to reduce the obstacles and resistance it encounters there (49).

This description is easily applied to many of the universalizing design templates that emerged during modernism's reign and that are perpetuated by the globalizing development industries. A professional culture of predominantly white middle class "experts" has, with consideration for processes of mass production and the accumulation of capital, decided how urban populations should best be living.

While abstract space dominates capitalist societies, Lefebvre stresses that other perceptions of space exist. In fact, he claims that it is these contradictions in space that are the seeds of an emerging differential space. Contrary to abstract space, differential space will "accentuate difference. It will also restore unity to what abstract space breaks up—to the functions, elements and moments of social practice" (52).

Similarly, Harvey (1996) suggests:

The problem of urbanization then becomes one of accommodating a variety of spatio-temporalities, varying from that of financial markets to those of immigrant populations whose lives internalize heterogeneous spatio-temporalities depending on how they orient themselves between place of origin and place of settlement (52).

One of the most significant problems for Lefebvre (1991) in identifying these important contradictions in space is the “silence of the users” (365). He asks “who can speak in their name or in their place?” (364) and answers his own question by asserting that there is no specialization (nor should there be) for the communication of spatial experience. Lacking a profession to speak for them, users must find their own voices and expressions in the production of space.

Communicative planning, arguably the most popular planning theory at the moment, attempts to bring some of these other voices into the planning process. Healey and Forester are clearly among its most sophisticated advocates, and both draw heavily on Habermasian concepts. Healey (1992), for example, takes Habermas’ notion of “making sense together” (151) and adds to it the suggestion that in a multicultural society this means “making sense together while living differently” (160). Forester’s (1999) work similarly attempts to encourage diverse citizens’ voices in planning practice. He argues that Habermas’ notion of “critical pragmatism” is key, that communicative planning is critical because it is concerned with ethics and justification, and pragmatic because it deals with practical action, history, and change (207). Communicative rationality, according to Forester, is “an interactive and argumentative process of marshalling evidence and giving reasons” (6).

Watson (2003) correctly sees attempts to address diversity in planning theory as a step forward from universalizing planning theories of the past, but she notes that:

...current planning theories which attempt to respond to diversity, difference or multiculturalism are still unable to comprehend the very real clash of rationalities which so frequently occurs when plan or development project touches the lives and livelihoods of households and communities (396).

As Watson argues, conflicts cannot be resolved through rational communication, no matter how seemingly democratic the debate, when the participants’ rationalities are themselves in conflict (402). While Watson’s example is drawn from a highly contentious case involving South Africa’s Western Cape Provincial authority and a group known as the Women’s Power Group, she cautions us against dismissing such conflict as a “Third World” problem (403). Her point is that communicative planning theory contains “universal assumptions” (405) about the nature of reason and rationality that do not hold in settings where there are fundamental differences among the participants. Western notions of Habermasian rationality are just that—Western.

While cultural differences highlight one of the weaknesses of such universal assumptions about reason and rationality, Fishler (2000) adds another. He describes Foucault's most important contribution to this debate as noting the historical specificity of systems of thought and forms of rationality. In other words, Fishler argues that it is the discursive systems and intellectual structures that shape our "practices of analysis and action" that are key, rather than communication *per se*.

The point is that communication takes place within a framework of culturally-defined sets of social and power relations—it is not just a matter of collecting data or discussing differences, but of developing a collective understanding of what is possible and just, and having the political will and power to act accordingly. Communicative theory neglects to account not only for conflicting rationalities, but for differences in institutionalized power as well (Fishler 2000, Campbell & Marshall 2002). Even Forester (1999) notes that, "Readers of Habermas have assumed too easily that analyzing the conditions of justification tells us how to achieve justice. But it does not..." (206). Consequently, communicative planning cannot guarantee outcomes that are socially just (Campbell and Marshall 1999, Fainstein 2000, Harvey 2000). Fishler (2000) adds that communicative planning's focus on cultural injustices risks undermining issues of economic exploitation and further weakening the state's redistributive functions. Clearly, this is where differentiating between notions of justice becomes essential, both to avoid descent into relativism, and to discover more practical and equitable means through the morass of competing claims and rationalities.

Planners' tendencies to rely on Rawlsian concepts of liberal justice (Watson 2003), again, fail to address the issues raised in the current context. In planning terms, liberal justice defines "fairness" as improving the living or working conditions of those worst off, only if it does not impinge on the individual rights and freedoms of those better off. Rawls accepts the economic system as a given, thus obscuring the context of class and other structural inequalities (Young 1990, 20-21). In planning terms, Rawls' theory of justice privileges individual rights, e.g. property rights, when these can be and are used to perpetuate inequalities and to "buttress self-interest against the claims of collective values and the needs of others" (Campbell & Marshall 2002, 179). In other words, the usual beneficiaries of planning—the propertied classes—need never worry about any redistribution of social wealth and power within this framework. The changing ethno-cultural makeup of Canadian cities appears acceptable, then, only so long as it does not impose any real change on those most privileged by the current system. Newcomers are welcome to seek market-based privileges within this system, as long as they do not expect to change the

rules of the game in any way. However, if we accept that different ethno-cultural groups have different values, needs, interests, and rationalities, then maintaining notions of justice designed to preserve the privileges of Western culture will be increasingly problematic.

To overcome the systemic bias embedded within Canadian planning, concepts of liberal justice should be replaced with redistributive justice. The city is not simply a collection of individual rights, added up to equal the public good. Not only should planners have the knowledge and skill to create planning processes that are socially just, but they must also be able to promote outcomes that are socially just. To examine how this might be done, we turn our focus to planning practice.

Diversity and Planning Practice

While modernist notions of the public good once gave planners a firm sense of their own professional responsibilities, it was often a skewed one, biased towards the white upper and middle classes, and towards business and propertied interests, rather than the public (even an imagined homogeneous public). And while the profession acknowledges that the increasing diversity of human populations is a challenge for urban planning, it has yet to come to terms with what this implies in terms of attitudes, values, knowledge, and the skills needed by planners.

As planners, we have always served “others.” Acknowledgement that there is a difference in the knowledge of planners and the people that they serve is hardly new. Building on the concerns raised by advocacy planners in the 1960s, Schön (1983), for example, suggested that the “systematic knowledge [of professions has] four essential properties. It is specialized, firmly bounded, scientific and standardized” (23). He was particularly concerned with how these characteristics can narrow the vision of the practitioner and bureaucratise professional practice. The rigidity of professionally defined boundaries often excludes some of the broad range of perspectives present in urban environments.

Friedmann (1973, 1987) suggested roles for planners in the processes of social change, calling for mutual learning and the recognition of the difference between the knowledges of planners and the communities that they serve. Despite these concerns, many planners and design professionals have continued to emphasize expertise over mutual or social learning. Susan Wright (1989) states that design (and we add planning) involves “searching for ways to improve things, to make them more effective, to give them a better ‘fit’ with their environment; it has to do with changing, learning, adapting, innovating” (211). Unfortunately, in increasingly complex societies, the

capacity of most citizens to participate in the design process has been “given up to a professional few” (211). This elite is now responsible for the majority of decisions, but more importantly, these decisions do not reflect the values of the people they most affect.

There is also an element of self-interest on the part of professionals in the perpetuation of this division between experts and users, but both Wright and Schön are concerned with the alienation that has resulted between producers and users of the built environment. Wright (1989) notes that:

...professionals have devalued that part of design in which we are all able to participate and also mystified it as something only achievable through long professional apprenticeship. We have, as a result, largely become passive consumers in a designed society, rather than active producers of our own constructions (216).

She goes on to propose the elimination of even minimally hierarchical distinctions between professionals and users. She suggests that this process, if it is to be a vehicle for social change, should be viewed as situated in a “‘learning society’ where each member participated actively and directly in design. Professionals would have a part to play, as would bureaucracies, but they would be viewed as co-learners rather than experts” (219).

Despite these concerns for social change and acknowledgement of the difference between planners and the urban populations they serve, little seems to have changed in practice. Although public participation is now required in planning processes, it is often little more than tokenism and certainly far removed from any notion of deliberative democracy. As practiced, participatory processes rarely come close to addressing the issues highlighted in communicative theory, nor do they engage with the additional complexities that we have raised here. While populations have become more diverse, planning departments, now situated in, or closely tied to “development” departments in municipal bureaucracies, do little to facilitate social learning.

Kipfer and Keil (2000) note that planning in Toronto is focused on the creation of a competitive city, one that will attract attention and garner investment as inter-city competition increases on the global stage. They also argue that these efforts of urban regeneration and image production are often carried out with little regard for the social costs incurred by local populations. While the global economy is addressed, the increasingly diverse population, produced by the accompanying global mobility is seen as little more than a marketing advantage used to attract tourists and attention to development

proposals. For example, the 2008 Olympic Bid slogan “Expect the World” reflected this, suggesting that the world may visit Toronto for the games, but visitors could expect to find the world already here, represented by the city’s many cultural communities.

Two current projects illustrate these planning priorities. The first is the creation of Yonge-Dundas Square adjacent to the Eaton Centre (see Figure 1), where the design attempts to emulate the vibrancy of New York’s Times Square. It has been promoted as a place of quiet respite in the centre of the urban bustle, a venue for community celebrations and as a space where the city’s many communities can come together. Despite its designation as a public space, the square is heavily regulated, and permits are required for anything but the most passive activities.

Figure 1: Yonge-Dundas Square, Toronto



Although the square’s management speaks of the need to create a “renewed sense of place” (Yonge-Dundas Square n.d.) on Yonge Street, this does not

appear to be generated by understandings of local communities and their spatial practices, but by images that the Business Association would like to project to potential investors. Ruppert (2003) observes that:

the City heralds community building and engaging a diversity of input and vision in the work of city making. On the other hand, the city's biggest civic investment since Nathan Phillips Square, and the one project deemed to be the public space of Toronto was made by a small group of professionals, businessmen and residents and in relation to a particular definition of who are the public.

She goes on to note that, in the process of creating the square and assembling land for the anticipated large-scale development in the surrounding blocks, local landowners (including immigrant families) lost their properties through expropriation. These businesses generally addressed the needs of less affluent local communities. This land is now in the control of a large developer, capable of undertaking the sort of urban entertainment complexes that are intended to attract tourists to the area. It should be noted that these are the same sort of complexes that are being built in most major cities to attract tourists – a “renewed sense of place” that corresponds to expectations of global markets rather than the particularities of the urban environment and the diversity of its resident populations.

The second project is the proposal for the redevelopment of Regent Park, Canada's oldest and largest public housing project. The aging structures have been the source of concern for residents and neighbours alike for more than a decade, and there have been several failed attempts to initiate rejuvenation schemes for the area. However, the neighbourhood's proximity to the city central business district and mounting development pressures (increased by the development of Yonge-Dundas Square) have made the land desirable for private developers. The most recent redevelopment proposal appears to have political favour; it envisions the demolition of all 2087 existing apartments and townhouses, replacing them with new rent-geared-to-income (RGI) dwellings and an additional 2000 market units to be provided by the private sector. Funding needed for the public investment in the project will be obtained through the sale of land for the private units.

One of the most notable characteristics of the Regent Park neighbourhood is its ethnic and cultural diversity (Milgrom 1999). Although it was originally inhabited by a predominately English speaking population of European decent (reflecting the general cultural demographics of the city in the 1950s), the

neighbourhood now accommodates a broad range of cultural groups speaking more than 80 languages.

Rather than seeking to accommodate the range of values and aesthetics present in these communities, however, the redevelopment plans closely follow the tenets of “new urbanism.” New Urbanists advocate for urban forms reminiscent of the pre-1940s (Krieger 1991), a period when few of the cultures currently accommodated in Regent Park were present in any number in Toronto. Some have dubbed new urbanism as the “architecture of community” (Katz 1994) because the common aesthetic of buildings within the neighbourhoods suggests that the residents share common values. However, in diverse neighbourhoods assumptions about common values must be questioned. Planners should be asking how cultural diversity can generate new urban forms and new systems of neighbourhood governance, rather than attempting to recapture an imaginary past.

While there has been an effort to consult the existing communities about the future of the neighbourhood, one of the overarching considerations in the redevelopment has been to provide potential developers with some assurance about the safety of their investments in the neighbourhood and the marketability of units that they build. Since the regeneration relies on private investment, these assurances of development certainty appear to have become more important than satisfying the complex and shifting needs of the existing local residents. Critics have also raised concerns that new homeowners in the neighbourhood might form politically powerful rate-payers associations that could lobby against the residents of the RGI units. At the very least the concerns of the homeowners are likely to be placed ahead of those who require some sort of social assistance, as the former are seen to have more of a “stake” in the neighbourhood (Douglas et al. 2004).

In both of these cases, the “market” appears to take precedence over the needs of existing urban communities. In the case of Yonge-Dundas Square, uses of a “public” space are suppressed and managed to project a safe image of harmonious diversity to potential urban investors and tourists. In Regent Park, plans are manipulated to accommodate developers’ understandings of market demand. If it is convenient within the boundaries of this model of urban development, the needs of local residents will also be addressed. But we would like to reassert the idea that planning is about the art of the possible, about imagining a better future. It is an attitude that reflects the visionary tradition within planning, which has often been at odds with the more technocratic, rationalist and mainstream tradition of the profession—new ways of creating sustainable community versus the usual market limits. The challenge to practicing planners is to maintain an attitude of hope that urban environments

can be made more liveable for everyone, and a willingness to be open to working with and learning from diverse communities in order to discover what a sustainable community might mean for them.

Simon (1992) argues that “moral practice” should include the “securing of human diversity” as a “fundamental condition of human dignity” (23). Although he is mostly concerned with questions of pedagogy, he calls on all “cultural workers” – those involved in the production of meaning and envisioning different futures – to take part in this project. He suggests that cultural workers can help to “contest dominant forms of cultural production across a spectrum of sites where people shape their identity and their relations to the world” (23). For planners and urban activists, this suggests the need to assist in the documentation and inclusion of the histories and cultures present in a specific place.

To make clear that this is not just an issue for newly arrived immigrants, the history of aboriginal people is a case in point. Aboriginal people have lived in the Toronto area for thousands of years prior to its occupation by Europeans, yet their history is practically invisible. The late Native historian, Rodney Bobiwash, used to offer a tour called “The Great Indian Bus Tour of Toronto.” The bus stopped at familiar sites, like Casa Loma and High Park, but the stories Bobiwash told about the historical significance of these sites is not visible, not even noted on a plaque. The history of the First Nations has been all but obliterated. In the east end of the city, the bus stopped in what appeared to be a typical Scarborough suburb: single-family ranch-style homes spread far and wide. In the midst of this otherwise flat landscape was what appeared to be a small park composed of an unusually high grass-covered hill. A common reaction on the bus was that it looked like it would be great for sledding. No doubt many of the children in the area think the same thing. But this is also a sacred burial mound that pre-dates the arrival of Europeans. Before leaving the bus, Bobiwash would give each tour participant a small packet of loose tobacco to scatter to the four directions to honour the dead as they climbed up the long, steep sides of the collective grave. At the top, there is a small plaque on a boulder. How many of those living nearby have hiked to the top and read the plaque? How many are oblivious? Whose history we preserve, and how, is critical to our collective understanding of who we are and what makes a good city. Native artists are just beginning to mark the urban landscape with other reminders of their long, yet largely ignored history, like the local Na Me Res (Native Men’s Residence) mural that reads “Celebrating 20,000 years of being in the neighbourhood.” (See Figure 2.)

Figure 2: Na Me Res Mural, Toronto



While Bobiwash told the stories of Toronto's past to those who wanted to listen, Dolores Hayden (1995) documented other attempts to recover histories in the "Power of Place" project. The public art interventions that they produced mark and celebrate histories of people who contributed to the development of Los Angeles, but because of gender, race or culture, have typically been excluded from historic references in the urban fabric (e.g. street names, preserved buildings, historical plaques).

The power of place – the power of ordinary urban landscapes to nurture citizens' public memory, to encompass shared time in the form of shared territory – remains untapped for most working people's neighborhoods in most American cities, and for most ethnic history and most women's history. The sense of civic identity that shared history can convey is missing. And even bitter experiences and fights communities have lost need to be remembered – so as not to diminish their importance (9, 10).

Hayden and her collaborators recognized that the images of the past that are preserved are also political and attempted to make some amends.

While planners are working to provide opportunities for the private sector to develop housing in the Regent Park area, some of the residents are concerned that their histories, like those of Los Angeles ethnic minorities and Canadian First Nations people will be lost from the landscapes that framed their lives. Memories of their lives will be obliterated by redevelopment that eradicates their neighbourhood and replaces it with a new vision (Milgrom 2003).

We are arguing not simply for justice, but for redistributive justice within planning. This would require planning to address the diversity of needs expressed by different communities, within a framework aimed at closing the growing gap between those who live in extremes of wealth and poverty. When marginalized groups begin to see their contributions to the city represented in the city's form, they may be more willing to participate in planning processes. Perhaps interventions, like the Power of Place projects and the stories of Rodney Bobiwash, illustrate how histories of urban areas might be redistributed, opening the door for planning processes that actively invite more diverse participation when envisioning shared futures.

Diversity and Planning Education

Research on politics and planning of recent times seems to focus on questions of governance...Building trust, negotiation, facilitation, consensus building and collaboration are widely espoused as ways to achieve good planning decisions. Are these really new and better techniques, or are they a wonderful disguise for neo-liberal political manipulation? (Wolfe 2003, 16)

Wolfe suggests that, in recent years, critical planning issues have been de-politicized in planning schools. She urges educators to bring challenging issues back into the political arena. The challenge, according to Wolfe, is to replace "the ideology of yesteryear" with "an environmental ethic" that includes "social sustainability, the eradication of poverty and the provision of affordable housing" (17).

While planning education cannot hope to transform all of the myriad practices, institutions and social relations that must change in order to create more equitable and just planning processes, it is one arena in which we can begin to initiate meaningful change nonetheless. Some of the knowledge and skills needed by planners of the uncertain city have been suggested in the literature on multicultural planning. Burayidi (2003, 271) argues that planning

schools should be required to introduce cultural sensitivity training for students—in the form of participant observation within unfamiliar cultural groups—in order to produce planners able to work more effectively within multicultural communities. Sandercock (2003) notes that, while this is clearly an important step, it is not enough. In addition to recommendations for planners, politicians, and local citizens, she calls for training in cross-cultural communication, and suggests that “an understanding and preparedness to work with the emotions that drive these [cross-cultural] conflicts” is also essential (322).

We believe that more ideas about the new knowledge and skills needed by planners will emerge through praxis, and recommend adding popular education to the planning curriculum as a means of facilitating broader social change. According to Barndt (1989) popular education “serves the interests of oppressed groups, ... involves them in critically analyzing their situation so that they can organize to act collectively to change the structures that oppress them; [the] process is participatory, creative, empowering” (83). Its techniques are useful for beginning this process of involving diverse local communities, encouraging debate, and rethinking common futures. Simon (1992) argues that this form of praxis requires educators to understand not only their methods of teaching, but also the “social visions [their] practices support” (56). He argues that “educational practice is a power relation that participates in both enabling and constraining what is understood as knowledge and truth” (56). He suggests that a pedagogical stance “will simultaneously organize and disorganize a variety of understandings of our natural and social world” and that, therefore, “to propose a pedagogy is to propose a political vision” (56-7). Since Simon’s interest is in challenging the present social order through the development of critical pedagogies, this political vision involves transforming current power relationships. This, in turn, requires educators to understand the present situation but be able to instill in their students the ability to “envisage versions of a world that is ‘not yet’”(57).

Freire’s (1993) work forms the foundation for much of this understanding of the relationship between pedagogy and social change. Although his field was not planning, his comments on education and relations of power in general seem applicable. For instance, he observes that:

One of the basic relationships between oppressor and oppressed is prescription. Every prescription represents the imposition of one individual’s choice upon another, transforming the consciousness of the person prescribed into one that conforms with the prescriber’s consciousness (28-9).

The issues raised by planners' prescriptions in practice are also reflected in planning education. Teachers following conventional methods have typically ignored the everyday lives of their pupils and the differences among them, in the same way that planners have typically ignored the concrete situations of their clients' lives. Freire (1993) stresses the importance of "becoming:"

...people know themselves to be unfinished; they are aware of their incompleteness. In this incompleteness and this awareness lie the very roots of education as an exclusively human manifestation. The unfinished character of human beings and the transformational character of reality necessitate that education be an ongoing activity (65).

Planning educators and students, practicing planners and local communities—all are in a process of becoming. In order to develop institutional structures that will allow local communities to meaningfully participate in the decision-making that impacts their own lives and the lives of their children, we must begin by challenging planning educators and students to resist the logic of market relations as well as the temptation to assume expert knowledge about local multicultural communities. We need to come to terms with the fact that we cannot know or predict the outcome of a planning process in advance, because we cannot know what specific communities value or how they might be willing to compromise (or not) with others to meet shared needs. We should be teaching our students the critical skills necessary to promote redistributive justice, at the same time that we are encouraging a willingness and openness to not knowing, not controlling, not being the expert, but of discovering the path by walking it with others.

Conclusion

In the uncertain city, all solutions are partial, temporary, and the result of working with others. It is critical that planners accept the fact that they cannot know the answer to a planning problem in advance, if at the same time they are going to be open to new possibilities for each community and each site. Shibley (1999) describes this as being "incomplete, inefficient, and vulnerable" suggesting the need for a change in attitude that is quite contrary to what is currently the norm within the profession.

In a similar vein to Sandercock's (2003) call for planners to learn to acknowledge and work with emotions within the long-term project of intercultural co-existence, we argue that planners must learn to become comfortable with their own uncertainty. Rather than attempting to control and

contain controversy and conflict, we should welcome it. Only by making space for our differences will we be in a position to know precisely how we differ and why, and what our collective possibilities for the future are, as a result.

A critical point comes, moreover, when attempting to deal with competing or conflicting claims as part of this process. As Pestieau and Wallace (2003) suggest, we typically assume that the planner's task is to resolve these in a mutually satisfying way. But when there are no grounds for mutual satisfaction, what then?

Within a capitalist society, the rules of the planning game have allowed propertied interests to dominate. Land and homeowners are assumed to have more "stake" in planning issues than tenants, let alone squatters or the homeless. If we bring back in, once again, the notion of redistributive justice, however, we can see a direction, if not a clear path, through the tangle of competing needs and values. And while it is not up to the planner to decide, it is up to the planner to help clarify and acknowledge the implications for different groups of people, and to help politicize the process so that a more equitable and just society might result.

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