

UPwords

An Urban and Regional Planning Publication

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Editors

Ryan Jensen
Ladd Schiess

DURP Experiences around the World

Joy Ready

My overall experience within the DUP has been beyond words. As a final semester graduate student (May 2007), I am thankful that I have been given several opportunities, each I feel are once in a lifetime opportunities.

The first was a trip to Bandung, Indonesia to work with the Department of Tourism for Indonesia in Bandung. We were not sure of our assignment until we got there, which made us a bit nervous. Once we arrived it was good news we were to travel around this beautiful city and evaluate sites based on our experiences as foreign tourists. Many of the places were beautiful beyond words, but other places were filthy beyond measure (the toilets for one). You can see this not only throughout the countryside but even within the urban landscapes as well. The squatter settlements are right behind the high rise condos. For the city of Bandung this works well because, those that live in the squatter settlements many times work for those in the condos. This is something we would never allow in the United States. Our final foreign tourist analysis was presented to the Dept of Tourism and will be utilized for future tourism plans for Indonesia. What a great opportunity! The down side of the trip was...we were supposed to be in Jogjakarta when the earthquake hit killing thousands, a volcano blew while we were there, 9 people died from the bird flu in the city we were staying in, and two of us ended up having to visit the local hospital, but we survived. We were all very glad to return home, but

thankful for the opportunity.

The second trip/opportunity that I was given was to participate in a Charette in Mexico City with other planning students from the University of AZ. Several DURP students traveled to Mexico to study the various planning aspects of this beautiful city. I found it interesting how people across the world deal with their housing situations. Many times the poor are treated badly in regards to housing and their rights. The most intriguing this about this trip/assignment for me was to come up with an innovative way to deal with the squatter settlements within the



Squatter settlements in front of high rise in Indonesia

(cont'd on pg 2)

DURP Experiences around the World

(Continued from page 1)

“While standard planning takes months and years, New Orleans presents an opportunity for ‘anything is possible’ right now because of mass devastation.”



House in New Orleans destroyed by Hurricane Katrina.

city proper. Squatters have lived in these buildings for years; therefore the landlords cannot evict them. So the landlords do not pay the taxes and the squatters have squatter rights but don't have enough money to pay the taxes. This causes many of these properties to be in a deadlock. This problem becomes more complicated because these properties are steadily declining and an increase in families adds to the densities of already overcrowded buildings add to the situation. Our proposal suggested for the transfer deed of the properties to the tenants without them having to pay the back taxes, so the process of home improvements could continue citywide, hence increasing the well being and quality of life for many.

The third lifetime experience has been working in New Orleans in the Upper and Lower Ninth Ward for my capstone project. Because New Orleans is a disaster area, it stays in a constant state of change. This has made working there

extremely challenging but also exciting. For me the most intriguing part of this process has been the opportunity to come up with innovative and creative ideas that can be implemented. While standard planning takes months and years, New Orleans presents an opportunity for “anything is possible” right now because of the mass devastation. Because of this, I have had local planners ask me what it is like to work there. They have commented that it would be a dream for them to work under such challenges and possibilities rather than such structure and certainty. I would encourage you to consider getting involved in New Orleans at some level. Through this tragic devastation, we have an opportunity to help others in our nation who are in need. I have met so many wonderful people during my trips to this great city. My experience in New Orleans truly is an opportunity of a lifetime because we will be reading about it in the history books in the years to come, and I can now say I have been a part of it.

Skeptical look at New Urbanism

Terry Scudieri

Throughout history, it is habit that traditions last for a stretch of time before another intellectual movement comes along and displaces the old tradition. With regard to planning, New Urbanism is the current trend that is shaping and reshaping the American landscape. New Urbanists propose developing satellite towns that are independent from the main city yet still complement the downtown area of the main city (Katz xiv). The movement seeks to create neighborhoods that emulate the ideal American neighborhood, where neighborhoods are geared toward social interaction via mixed-use zoning and walkable streets (Fulton 5). In theory, the movement is an answer to the uncontrollable urban sprawl that has polluted our surroundings with gargantuan, overcrowded highway systems and a sea of parking lots (Hylton 14). New Urbanists address very timely and important issues, as well as provide suggestions regarding the manner in which these issues can be resolved. However, their solutions do not provide an adequate antidote that is applicable to the many diverse populations in the United States, let alone the world. Particularly, New Urbanists do not understand that history will repeat itself: their movement is one that blends two historical planning movements that have failed in the past. In addition, New Urbanists fail to acknowledge the varying economic resources of the population at large as well as the real estate market of the United States. The effort to bring back the “sense of community” concept that was commonplace in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries is a futile one; people are so introverted and mobile, with thanks to the automobile, that the home has become a mere meeting place for the family, with little time spent nurturing close family or neighborhood ties. It is for these reasons that a more skeptical approach to New Urbanism should be considered.

One of the major flaws of New Urbanism is its brevity of existence. We have seen throughout the history of planning four major movements, each of which has rejected the method it follows, thus creating a new, seemingly revolutionary trend. Arguably the most fascinating element behind the entire history of urbanism is that each of these reform movements claims to have an element

of utopianism that somehow makes it better than its precedent (Fulton 7). New Urbanism is a reaction to the modernist urbanism that appeared in the 1960s. It attempts to blend Jane Jacobs’ complex urbanism, the city beautiful movement, and the garden city movement into one perfect solution (Talen, 2006). While this ideology is a good one, as it seeks to bring together the best of everything, it leaves out one very important component of the modern urbanism: the automobile. Because modern urbanism disagrees on a multitude of levels with regionalism, the City Beautiful movement, and the Garden City movement (Talen, 2006), it seems impossible to shift an entire society from one reliant upon the automobile to one that views the vehicle as a hindrance to the enjoyment of life.

Surely, it should not be construed that simply because the New Urbanism fails to consider history in conjunction with one of America’s favorite pastimes that it should be disregarded. “For every car registered in Pennsylvania there are five or six unused parking spaces” (Hylton 26). After all, at present, crude oil prices are at astronomical levels and, as such, many of America’s low- and middle-class residents would likely welcome any sort of reform movement that would provide for the elimination of a substantial expense in the household budget. New Urbanists appeal to the ethos of gullible citizens whose thoughts often do not reach beyond those of finances. With crude oil prices at an all-time high, the neighborhood concept that New Urbanism provides, in which an environment is suitable for pedestrians and bicycles (Steuteville 1-3), is one that appeals to most everyone.

It is a peculiar trend among Americans that if a particular issue does not directly impact a particular person for a particular reason, the person cares nothing about the issue and does nothing to research it to see if he or she should, in fact, become involved. It is these people to whom New Urbanists care to appeal. To the contrary, there are many people whose thoughts extend beyond those of simply themselves. As such, in dealing with a community and its betterment,

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“New Urbanism is a reaction to the modernist urbanism that appeared in the 1960s. It attempts to blend Jane Jacobs’ complex urbanism, the city beautiful movement, and the garden city movement into one perfect solution.”

one must first know more about the different approaches urbanism has encountered since its beginnings. The New Urbanism movement has been around since cities have been forming. In the United States, with increased demand for housing after the Second World War, the promise of Suburbia was to provide every family with its American dream. Levittown, New York promised to be what New Urbanists would call a satellite city, a city that is self-reliant in terms of commerce, culture, and governance (Katz xiv). The difference that Levittown provided to New Yorkers each family could have a quarter-acre lot to call its own.

Following the mass-produced housing that dotted Levittown were businesses and other industries to support a local economy. This system, which New Urbanists call inefficient and nightmarish, is the very basis upon which their idea of a utopia is founded. The notion of mixed-use planning stems from Ebenezer Howard's Garden City movement, in which it was believed that people should "not shuttle from one pod to another for work, relaxation, or family activities" (Schmitz 13). New Urbanism is merely a regurgitation of this dysfunctional ideal.

While possible in the earlier nineteenth century to have separate pods that acted individually, without necessarily relying upon the "central city," the present-day twenty-first century does not permit obliviousness to the world around us.

In addition to the Garden City movement, New Urbanism clearly has roots in Daniel Burnham's City Beautiful movement. This movement proposed that parks and public spaces, along with the overall design of streets should be very manicured and, to a point, gaudy (Fulton 8).

One need only glimpse at Seaside, New Urbanism's best-known product, to see that New Urbanists emphasize perfection. Should that not oblige, perhaps the argument Katz, a renown New Urbanist, makes that "Public spaces and buildings represent community identity and foster civic pride. The neighborhood plan structures its streets and blocks to create a hierarchy of public spaces and locations for public buildings" (Katz xix), will lead one to realize "New" Urbanism's return to City Beautiful.

New Urbanism even takes this movement a step further. Not only are the civic buildings manicured and stately but so are the private residences that individual residents occupy. City Beauticians believed that having a well-developed downtown area, as well as perfectly geo-

metrical streetscapes (so designed for mass-transit and the streetcar), were imperative to an individual's sense of pride. The interesting aspect is that the automobile is what began this movement; while people drove down the boulevards in their respective towns, they would notice a stunning monument or a stately US flag accentuating the town center.

This is one example of how New Urbanists blend the two movements. Civic buildings, they believe, should be placed in the town square so as to reinforce their symbolic and cultural significance (Steuterville 1-3). This blends the ideals of the Garden City movement with walkability and the City Beautiful concept of grandiose, stately design.

New Urbanists desire to make each neighborhood convenient enough so that a vehicle is not required yet stately enough so that when pedestrians walk down the main boulevard in the town's center they feel a sense of pride in their town. In effect, then, "New" Urbanists really have brought nothing new to the table. They have merely fused two old ideals together and deemed the product "new."

Another key issue that New Urbanists fail to consider when discussing their grandiose plans is that of the socioeconomic inequality that has ensued in New Urbanist communities. In almost all scholarly writings, New Urbanists have suggested that their movement is full of promises of fulfilling the "American dream." It is quite ironic, then, how it is the common theme among these theorists that "community planning and design must assert the importance of public over private values" (Katz xxx).

The question then becomes, is New Urbanism a proponent of social Darwinism, meritocracy, or elitism? With the American political spectrum haphazardly swinging to the right, leaving an average of three million people homeless each year (Bates), it is imperative that we take a critical look at how the private market intends to react to a new capitalist market.

While New Urbanism claims to provide equality of result in its housing affordability, Millennial conservative and neo-liberal economic policy has left those who cannot afford livable housing standards at present with absolutely no hope to gain from New Urbanism. The Kentlands, considered

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the first authentic New Urbanist community (Katz 31), was built in the affluent village of Gaithersburg, Maryland. Duany and Plater-Zyberk, who could be named the “parents of New Urbanism,” take great pride in their project primarily because The Kentlands consists of six diverse neighborhoods so as to create socioeconomic diversity within the entire community. While quite a utopian model, the least expensive apartment in this community leases for \$3,000 per month, while the least expensive single-family residence is listed at \$1,399,000 (www.realtor.com). The median gross income per household in the United States calculated between 2001 and 2005 was \$46,098 (U.S. Census Bureau). This leaves the average household with \$3,841 before taxes. The issue is clear that New Urbanist neighborhoods are not providing housing to those who are most in need, as they exclude more than fifty percent of the population.

On the other coast, where “affordable housing is a major issue” (Kratz 47), South Brentwood Village in Brentwood, California promised to bring affordable housing to the San Francisco area in the early 1990s. Unfortunately the least expensive single-family residence is listed at \$2,453,990 (www.realtor.com).

The average price of a home in the United States in 2005 was \$250,000 (Bates), a price that is unobtainable by the 4.9 million families who need affordable units. New Urbanism also offers no solution for the three million homeless Americans (Bates). There are also approximately two million Americans who rely on housing choice vouchers (Grigsby 807-808). The Department of Housing and Urban Development has set a maximum 110 percent ceiling as the difference the government will pay for an individual to live in rental housing, such that the lessee’s rent does not exceed thirty percent of his or her income. (Solomon 68 and Bates). This means that, assuming the least-expensive apartment available in a certain area leases for \$2,000 per month and an individual’s gross monthly income is \$3,000, the government would pay \$1,100 and the individual would be expected to pay \$900. Because of price inflation in New Urbanist areas as discussed previously, these facts alone suggest that New Urbanism may add to the ever-more-dire housing crisis facing the United States.

Of course, New Urbanists will be quick to inform the public that the economy

will correct itself, as the government has imposed a price ceiling on the cost of housing in many New Urbanist neighborhoods. While perhaps not explicitly, because developers are receiving tax credits if they produce housing that benefits those with an income that cannot feasibly pay market prices, newly-constructed New Urbanist developments that set aside areas for “low-income” people are actually hurting the economy. A price ceiling occurs when the government tells a developer that he cannot sell certain homes for the market-determined price, but must sell for less. While this system is functional, as the government then pledges to make up the difference (Gottheil 130), the owner of the home may eventually to decide to sell her home for the then-current market price. It would be unjust for the government to tell that owner that she cannot sell her home for the amount she desires, that since she paid less for her property that it did not appreciate as much. Most would call such a thing discrimination. On the other hand, an owner who paid market price for his home would be disgruntled because his home did not earn as much equity as his “poor” neighbor’s. This then leads us down the sociological road where tensions between people in a community arise.

The biggest problem with this concept, aside from its injustice to primary owners, is that the savings the government provided to the first owner are not passed along to other lower-income people who are in need of quality housing upon resale. To this end, New Urbanists are correct: the economy will fix itself: it will balance back to equilibrium price. This should not be any news to scholars, as this is exactly what has happened in almost every New Urbanist project and it is for this reason that one cannot touch property in any “New Urbanist” neighborhood. Living in The Kentlands, Celebration, or Seaside has become a status symbol, not a standard of communal living. Observing the history of “New” Urbanism and the economic catastrophe that the movement has been creating provides insight. Taking a look at the real goings on in New Urbanist community tell us much more about the direction in which this movement is bringing our housing market and, ultimately, our standard of living.

New Urbanists attribute much success to one of their premier communities: Celebration, adjacent to the Walt Disney World campus in Lake Buena Vista, Florida. Celebration is,

“...South Brentwood Village in Brentwood, California promised to bring affordable housing to the San Francisco area in the early 1990s. Unfortunately, the least expensive single-family residence is listed at \$2,453,990.”

without doubt, a very desirable community in which to live. It is within commuting distance of Orlando and many attractions are at hand, as Disney World draws a rather diverse crowd to the area every season.

For this reason, the Disney-operated retail stores that line Celebration's main boulevard provide a shopping haven for the affluent Celebration resident as well as the curious tourist (Marshall 8). Of course, if one cannot afford "a bowl of chili at Max's [that costs] \$5.95... a piece of pie that costs \$4.95... or a cheeseburger that costs \$7.50" (Marshall 10) at the local diner on this corporate-run main street, it appears that, since Celebration proudly claims to be the home of people of diverse socioeconomic statuses, many residents will be climbing into their cars and heading to the next town, where a cheeseburger costs \$2.00.

Eventually, even the wealthiest Celebration resident will find that a family dinner that costs more than \$50 per night is quite taxing. It is for this reason that the main highway off of which Celebration is built, which is also the "main street" of the neighboring town of Kissimmee, still faces traffic congestion. The residents of Celebration, when in need of a bite to eat or an essential item, venture out of their utopia and into the world suburbanites know all too well: main thoroughfares laden with big-box superstores and seas of endless parking lots (Marshall 14).

Many find this fact to be quite fascinating, as the Celebration local economy seems to be booming. If the locals are not supporting their downtown, who is? The answer lies with the developer: Disney. Because of Celebration's proximity to Walt Disney World, many tourists flock to see this "new concept," and they are inspired. Then, believing they have experienced something revolutionary, even though the same atmosphere that Celebration tries to emulate was that found in Kissimmee in the 1920s (Marshall 1-4), the tourists have lunch at a quaint café and shop at delightful, corporate-owned boutiques.

Celebration, without the Disney nametag, would be facing the same plight as that of most other New Urbanist developments. That plight is the lack of a genuine small-town feeling and the inability to lease space to retailers. Such plight faces Georgetown of Schaumburg, a New Urbanist infill development in suburban Schaumburg, Illinois, approximately 20 miles from Chicago.

Located adjacent to the very affluent

DuPage County and the lower-middle-class suburb of Hanover Park, Georgetown is a community of ninety-one, upscale town homes, priced from \$500,000. The notion behind this infill project was to attract younger, more educated clientele. The community boasts a park-like setting that is two blocks from the commuter rail that runs to Chicago.

The front of the community, adjacent to a major state thoroughfare, was to be lined with upscale shops, so that one who lived in Georgetown would not need his car to purchase essentials. This was to provide a more accessible and community-based aura.

The project began in October 2004. Sixty total units have sold and currently have residents residing within them. The "main street" that was to be lined with quaint stores has not even broken ground, and no projections have been made as to which businesses (if any) have leased the space. Due to a lack of consumer interest, production has come to a halt and prices, which began at \$500,000 have now been reduced (with seller incentives) to \$450,000. This may prompt the question of why price reductions are occurring. The answer, from speaking with neighbors and prospective buyers: there is no place to park the car and transportation in and out of the neighborhood is inefficient, as the community's streets are completely derived from a nineteenth-century alley system.

As Marshall mentions of Celebration, "in a completely car-dependent environment, alleys simply become tiny, narrow streets that are handling all the traffic of a neighborhood. The ceremonial front door and the street it is on become a vestige, there only for appearance" (Marshall 30).

This is one example that I, having lived in this infill subdivision, have experienced. The home has a delightful Victorian wrap-around porch, but everyone lives in the rear of their homes, where their cars are. While New Urbanism has tried to move people away from their garages, into their homes, and onto the main streets of their communities, people have gravitated toward the alleys, where their automobiles are housed.

Intellectually, New Urbanists have a very valid and correct assessment of the American population: we are lonely and isolated. An attempt to bring back the "sense of community" (Hylton 2) is an admirable

one. However, planners cannot merely re-design individual sections of suburbs, create a New Urbanist infill project, or completely extend to the fringe to begin a New Urbanist project and expect the problem to be magically fixed. Americans' sentiments of loneliness and isolation stem not from the way in which our communities are designed but rather by our overall lifestyle. People in American suburbs today depend on their automobiles to function. In order to support the costs-of-living a home elicits, many suburban homeowners commute to city centers or affluent suburbs to go to work. Children are often involved in activities that involved travel to different towns (soccer is the stereotypical example). New Urbanism will not provide an effective solution to these cultural patterns Americans have established. A business executive who can afford a million-dollar home in a New Urbanist neighborhood will still likely need to commute to the city on a daily basis.

The New Urbanism movement is one that offers a very well thought solution to urban sprawl. Having live/work units, granny flats, and artists' cooperatives (Duany 51, 169), as well as pedestrian-friendly neighborhoods with accessible shopping, education, and recreation (Duany 30) are all concepts that everyone would desire. While New Urbanists bring many desirable concepts to the table, their ideas lack the awareness of reality. The movement proposed is a conglomeration of prior approaches that led to the modern urbanism that New Urbanists challenge today. In addition, while New Urbanists advocate equality in housing, "Andres Duany, the most prominent New Urbanist, says that wherever you find great urbanism you find soaring real-estate values" (Marshall 5). The ultimate goal of New Urbanism is to end the sense of isolation that Americans feel. Unfortunately, American culture has become so fast-paced and mobile that a home, no matter its location, is a place to rest one's head. In order for residents of New Urbanist communities to support their homes, it is often necessary to commute to the central city. While public transportation improvements accompany many New Urbanist neighborhoods, the fact remains that middle-to-upper-class suburbanites are rarely home during the day. Nonetheless, New Urbanism is a step in the right direction; at the least, it gives planners a starting block that will lead to the eventual betterment of and

solution to America's sprawling landscape.

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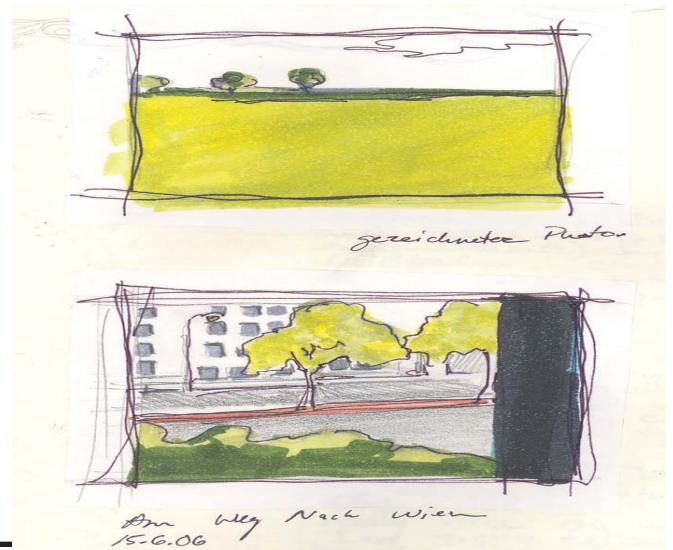
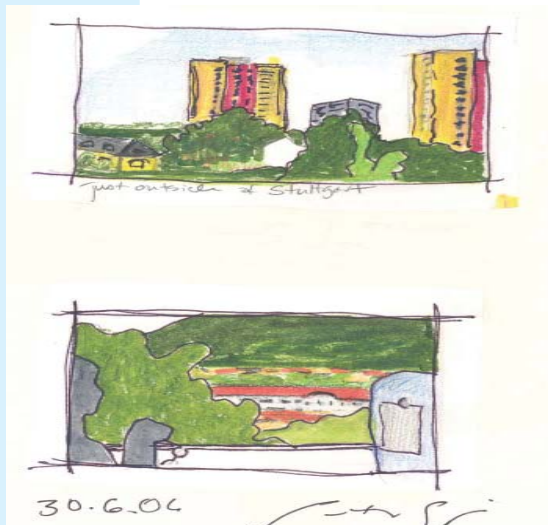
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Sketches from Summer Travels

Samantha Singer

“These sketches are from my travels around Germany this past summer, when I was interning in Frankfurt. I only have sketches from the times I traveled, that is when I had time to think. Some were drawn in the train on my way to somewhere, the others are views of the neighborhood where I lived in Berlin three years ago. That neighborhood, has since continued its process of gentrifying, it was originally a tenement working class district before WWI. During Germany’s separation, was part of East Germany and was practically abandoned. Today, it’s becoming a very trendy place to be.”



Book Review

Tulia: Race, Cocaine, and Corruption in a Small Texas Town by Nate Blakeslee

Marisa Zapata

Investigating reporting at its best, *Tulia* tells the harrowing story of a small town's collision with racism and the misapplied policies of the nation's war on drugs. As a result of one person sting operation, where almost no corroborating evidence was included, the town charges forty seven people with dealing cocaine. Almost all of the defendants were convicted; almost all were African American and represented roughly 10% of the town's Black population. Many received long prison sentences as long 99 years.

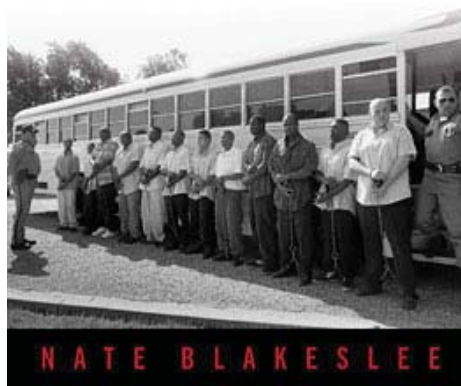
As details of the investigation came under increased scrutiny, the reputation and reliability of the undercover agent involved in the operation became increasingly disputed. Eventually, after years of reporting and researching by individual townspeople, lawyers, and advocacy groups such as the ACLU, the abuse of power and falsification of evidence by the agent comes to light. As more truth about the agent is revealed, Blakeslee highlights the efforts many townspeople in Tulia went to in order to protect the agent, even when faced with overwhelming questions about the veracity and plausibility of the cases.

Tulia details more than the legal aspects of the case. Covering the social complexities of the town's history and linking their story to the nation's policies on drugs, Blakeslee demonstrates how this gross miscarriage of justice occurred and how it was almost im-

possible to undo. Blakeslee describes town planning and zoning decisions, contextualizing them within the racial tensions in the community and offering grounded opinions of their outcomes on the town's Black community. The story of *Tulia* includes a realistic portrait of today's heroes and villains of all walks of life, where lines between right and wrong are presented complexly.

TULIA

RACE, COCAINE, AND CORRUPTION
IN A SMALL TEXAS TOWN



Study Abroad Experiences

Jonathan Raiche

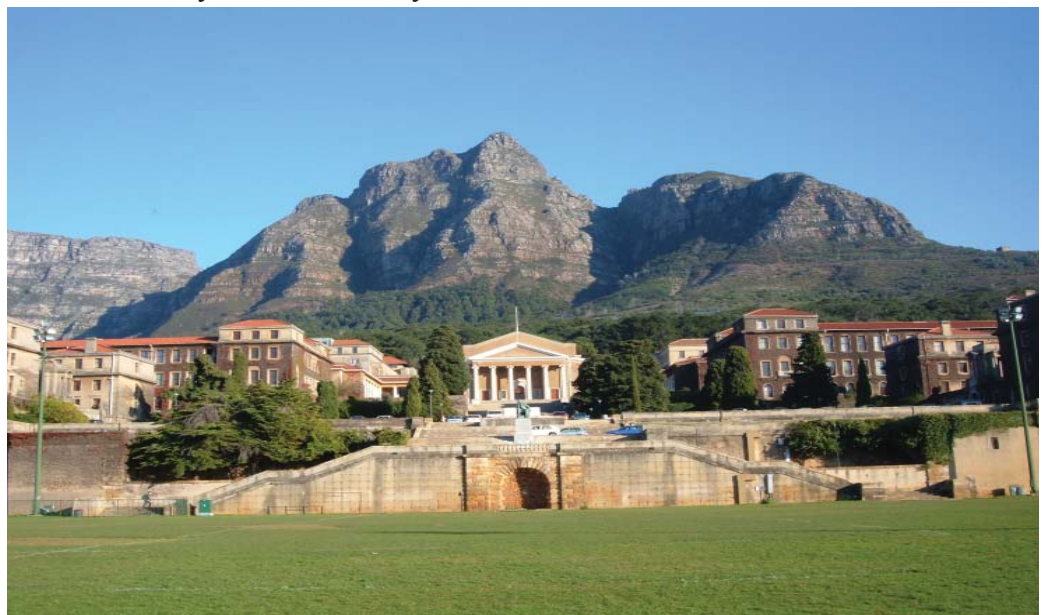
This submission is a small reflection of one aspect of my study abroad experience. For anyone reading who still has an opportunity to study outside of the U.S., you'd be foolish not to take advantage. I spent nearly 5 months studying in Cape Town, South Africa. For a majority of this time, I was able to participate in an environmental education outreach program to one of the largest townships in South Africa. I was told that Khayalitsha is home for nearly 1 million South Africans whom all have limited access to water and electricity. One of the students I worked with a Grade 11 student named Lutsha. The students were given a task to answer two questions after our lesson on the first week: "What are ecological footprints?" and "What do they tell us about the use and abuse of human resources?"

I have decided not to edit Lutsha's answers in an attempt to provide you with the true perspective of this South African Grade 11 male. Also, it is not necessarily about his ability to

answer the question, but rather about his determination and desire to learn about and improve the quality of life in his home. Maybe your eyes will be opened to something new. Maybe you'll gain a new respect for people. Maybe you'll not understand what this is about. If you all had the chance to meet this young man, you would find inspiration.

What are ecological footprints?

According to my understanding through out this entire session about ecological foot-prints is that, ecological foot print are use and abuse either natural or man-made resource that people use in an unmannerly way which that leads on either they damage what have already been build or broken. For instance (Global-warming) it is caused by the usage of different gases in the atmosphere through cars, factories and mines, which leads to global warming. Secondly it is also not having basic plans to reduce the



Picture of the University of Cape Town campus.

(Continued on page 11)

usage of natural resources in a mannerly way. Thirdly because of not limit on using natural resource correctly it is estimated that in 2020 Cape Town will run-out of water, which that takes me back the ecological foot-print that people or even animals for that matter contribute on damage of ecological foot-print.

What do they tell us about the use and abuse of human resources?

Basically what they actually tell us is that, people they abuse the usage of everyday life resources i.e. water, different food and transport which that can harm people. People intend to

ignore sign and prescription in either in the food or in the natural resource, the amount of usage they must use in order for tomorrow they can have it again, they also not thinking of tomorrow but on the other-hand some people do or abuse the human resource not knowing that they abuse the human resources in a mannerly way or accordingly.

To conclude, the ecological foot print need to be extremely and surely to be looked at accordingly so that we won't be worried of what might happened tomorrow or any other day for that matter. Finally people need to conserve what they have so far whether you are rich or poor.

Green Street Sketch Up Image

Chris Savanelli



This image was created to show the spatial definition provided along Green Street between Sixth and Wright. The image was used for an assignment in UP 426, Urban Design and Planning.

DISTORTION OF INFORMATION BY HUMAN NATURE

José Jaimes

“When working together in a project, most students freely voiced their dissent with other group members when the task appeared easy and straightforward; however, when the task was more uncertain, most groups experienced higher hesitation, and the barrage of ideas that classified the easier task disappeared to be replaced by fewer ideas that emerged from fewer group members.”

Planning practitioners come from diverse backgrounds, a valuable aspect given that they perform a diversity of jobs. Nevertheless, one common thread that is constant in the practice of planning is its collaborative nature in the group processes of decision making and problem solving. It is through the use of information that these processes play out, and therefore the quality and quantity of information becomes essential; it is a common sentiment that good decisions are well-informed decisions. Many methods and precautions are followed in order to obtain information; however, there are some elements rooted in human nature that will tend to conceal it. Cass Sunstein’s “Why Societies Need Dissent” explains that two human traits (the tendency to follow the opinion of others, especially when we know less; and the natural desire to obtain the good opinion of others) lead to three phenomena that may hinder the quantity and quality of information that we seek in group processes. The three phenomena derived from these two human traits are conformity, social cascades, and group polarization.

Given the importance of information in planning, it would therefore become important to address Sunstein’s three phenomena in educational planning programs. This does not necessarily have to be taught explicitly, after all, it is the sort of information that is best learned practically, and the venues may already exist in the higher education environment. In this paper, we will take a glance at how the 2007 urban planning students in the masters program at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign (UIUC) have been exposed to and have formed part of the three phenomena described by Sunstein. Whether or not the students have been aware, many of these subtleties have been part of their education; it is a hope that they will be recognized by them in the future in order to help make well-informed decisions when they are working with groups or when they themselves form part of a group.

On Conformity

Simply put, conformity is following the crowd, especially when individuals actually lack or feel that they lack enough information. Sunstein

writes about three variables that may either increase or decrease the occurrence of conformity: money, size, and group identification. Whether these are present or not, the central idea is to see how it affects the quality or completeness of information.

For the UIUC students, Sunstein’s three variables to either increase or decrease conformity have played a role in their educational experience. For example, although money is seldom involved in the interactions of students, there is in its place the presence of a reward such as a letter grade or the recognition of a good project or presentation. When working together in a project, most students freely voiced their dissent with other group members when the task appeared easy and straightforward; however, when the task was more uncertain, most groups experienced higher hesitation, and the barrage of ideas that classified the easier task disappeared to be replaced by fewer ideas that emerged from fewer group members. Many, being not entirely sure of what to do, conformed to the ideas of others; the result was a mixed bag of those who were glad to have conformed to a good idea, and those who felt some regret in having given in to an idea that did not work to their liking. Even when there was hesitation, the student groups are still more communicative than when the professor requests a response from the entire class, which clearly shows the effect of group size in voicing one’s information. The all too common silence tends to be broken by a few, often predictable, students while the rest conform to silence. Although there are many reasons for this, one that I have observed first hand is that many students may not feel like they know enough, and, as Sunstein writes, it is common to follow the herd when one lacks enough information. Although group identification does not seem to be an apparent factor in many of the interactions amongst students, there are individuals who have come to be representative of certain subjects due to their interests or specializations; and, as a result, their opinion in those subjects tends to be taken with more credibility when compared with others who are also presenting informa-

tion about the same subject.

An area where students have been able to observe group interactions has been at local planning commission meetings, which must be attended as part of the requirements of one of the program's core courses. A good example in regards to conformity arose from the statement of a City of Champaign councilman who asked from a group of protesters to not try to create wedges amongst the council members. He further stated that the council worked well together, even to the point of singing Kumbaya as a group. The statement was certainly not literal and was meant to appeal to the audience's humor; however, it does raise the point, do we want our city council to sing Kumbaya? It is curious to think what the answer from the public would be on first impulse; however, if we think about our own interactions with those whom we really like we would realize that a council tied by bonding social capital would not be effective. Sunstein writes that the corporations with contentious boards do better than those with harmonious relationships, and a city council group is just another decision-making group, so they are no different.

The importance of collaborative and participatory processes is central in many planning efforts. It is crucial to protect the opinion of dissenters in order to help these processes stay true to their name. Incentives to promote dissent should be encouraged, and precautions in preventing conformity should be used in order to increase the completeness and accuracy of information.

On Social Cascades

Social cascades occur over time when people follow the information provided by one or a few trend setters, creating a cascade of followers. The information may not be complete or even accurate, but it is followed in the same manner teenagers follow fads. Sunstein also points out that cascades happen in professional and expert circles where it may be erroneously assumed that knowledge from another colleague or reputable group was acquired through careful consideration and scrutiny.

Social cascades have also formed part of the educational experience for planning students,

whether by personal experience or observation. A common cascade occurs prior to registration, when opinions about professors and courses are flying high. Although it is known that the information is simply opinion, for many it actually seems to act like a fact when the time for registration arrives. Another example of a cascade formation was alluded to earlier with the presence of certain students who seem to have a high credibility about a certain subject or process. When these individuals are placed in groups, their information and/or approach is adopted not only by the rest of the group, but by other groups as well.

Already developed cascades have also been observed in the local planning commission meetings. For example, in one City of Champaign council study session the issue at hand was the consideration of extending an enterprise zone and annexing a potential ethanol plant that was to be built by a private developer. Many citizens expressed their concern; however, their protest was not directed at the issue at hand, but at the negative environmental effects the plant would have. Their complaints included similar arguments, and, although I don't know whether some of the citizens planned to talk when they came to the meeting, it seemed that once a few spoke, more and more wanted to voice their opinion. The successive complaints raised the same points as their predecessors plus a few of their own, indicating that they had adopted information and were beginning to amplify it. The first private citizen who voiced his opinion may have played the role of trend setter, especially since he made it well known that he held a doctorate degree and that he was familiar with the technicalities of the issue; although perhaps not consciously aware, the citizen was using group identification to increase his credibility.

Thorough evaluation of new information should be practiced, whether it comes from an expert or common source. The comment of one allegedly 'smart' person makes many feel nervous, amplifying to a level that does not warrant it anymore.

On Group Polarization

Group polarization occurs when deliberating group members end up taking positions that are more extreme than their predeliberation

“...do we want our city council to sing Kumbaya?”

tendencies. Sunstein believes that polarization can help in the understanding of street gangs, interest groups, legislatures, and other deliberating groups.

Deliberation seldom occurs directly for the students in the masters program. However, the case studies observed in certain courses give a good insight into deliberating groups that experience polarization. This is seen often with special interest groups such as environmental ones, or it is expressed by many citizens with the varied NIMBY (not in my backyard) issues. Class discussions and group work also have the opportunity to provide venues for the group polarization phenomenon to occur; for example, students may not agree with all the tenets a definition of New Urbanism may provide, yet they may be willing to accept these if they perceive that part of the tenets they believe in are being challenged. Another place where students have been exposed to group polarization are in the charettes and public workshops that students are given the opportunity and are encouraged to attend. In some of these events, once the chance for dialogue is open to the participants, opposing views seem to amplify and move towards more extreme positions when both sides have a fair number of supporters. It sounds very positive that both sides are openly expressing their dissent; however, one must consider the possibility that there may still

be another issue that has not been brought up due to the lower number of advocates for that position. Also, their newfound extremism as a result of group support may not really reflect their actual stance.

Special interest groups, developers, private citizens and other players will be prone to taking more extreme positions than their original intent in order to advance their agenda. As potential key players and observers in group deliberation as future planners, it is important for students to recognize the existence and operation of the group polarization phenomenon.

Conclusion

The acquisition of information in group processes of decision making and problem solving will never be complete or entirely accurate. Even when the best precautions are taken, our human nature will present an obstacle through the three phenomena described by Sunstein, conformity, social cascades, and group polarization. Students aspiring to become planning practitioners in the future should become aware of these subtleties in order to help make well-informed decisions when they are working with groups or when they themselves form part of a group.

APA 2007 CONFERENCE



History in the Making

A Review of Watershed Planning

Sangjun Kang

A watershed represents a physical unit within which water moves and is influenced by natural processes and the impacts of human activities. As an ecological boundary, watersheds have a long history as a medium of environmental policy in the US. Watershed planning is planning for the good management of watersheds. It provides a means by which decisions are coordinated among responsible governments and private agencies and by which land use and resource management conflicts and issues are resolved.

This article briefly describes the background of watershed planning, its paradigms, and the process of watershed plan. First, the ecological thinking based on uncertainty and approximate knowledge is sketched for the theoretical background. Second, the paradigm of watershed planning is discussed by addressing that watershed planning has been evolving along with continuously interacting social and scientific paradigms. Lastly, this article reviews the process for the development of watershed plan by describing that both rational comprehensive and incremental approaches have been applied with different scopes and influence watershed planning. The analytical scope is focused on the community level of urban watershed planning not agricultural, regional, or international watershed planning and stormwater is understood a main causal in this context.

Ecological boundaries are increasingly used as practical boundaries for land use planning. US General Accounting Office (GAO) states that “delineating the boundaries of the geographic areas to be managed as ecosystems is a prerequisite to planning for, budgeting, authorizing, and appropriating funds for, and ultimately managing activities on the basis of, ecological units (GAO)” (USGAO, 1994). As an ecological boundary, a watershed based ecosystem delineation standard is most politically suitable because it is easily understood by the public.

Watershed planning requires detailed information about the particular watershed components and processes along with other planning information. In definition, watershed planning is planning for the good management of watersheds. It provides the good opportunity to avoid flooding, drought, and water pollution problems with the protection and promotion of the public property, moral, and safety in the future by making decisions in the present. However, it is not a simple set of linear process. Watershed planning has, inherently, a dynamic process incorporating its changing paradigms and it is not an end product as what Friedman (1987) noted to describe the nature of planning. Watershed planning, indeed, provides a means by which decisions are coordinated among responsible government and private agencies and by which land use and resource management conflicts and issues are resolved. It is a combination of scientific and technical information with cultural and societal values and it becomes the state of art in the US.

Modern watershed planning was initiated in the 17th Century when a French scientist found that the volume of precipitation over small catchments was more than discharge from the catchment, and that land use in the catchment affected the timing and volume of that discharge. Since that time, there have been many efforts to integrate the control of water bodies and land uses (Wescoat and White, 2003).

Although engineers, environmentalists have long studied the water and its related issues, only recently has watershed planning become widely recognized as one of import planning fields. In the US, the 1987 amendments to the federal Clean Water Act laid the groundwork for modifying water regulatory programs to encourage the practice of watershed planning (Richard and Lynch, 2004). However, interestingly, a significant amount of recent watershed planning in the US arise from grassroots concerns about flooding, water quality, and related issues (Wescoat and White, 2003). To be sure, some of the planning activities stemmed from crises, such as pollutant spills, flooding, or problems of complying with federal environmental regulations, but many of them had local origins. These activities grew so rapidly that some local river protection groups, riparian habitat restoration groups, and urban environmental groups became members of the new watershed coalitions. As the number of coalitions increased, consortia were formed at the state level. Numerous practical guides have been published to help groups benefit from experience and avoid pitfalls (Western Governors’ Association, 1997).

Background of Watershed Planning

Watershed planning has an integrated ecological approach towards managing human and environmental interactions within a watershed. The premise that “everything is connected to everything else” places at the heart of watershed planning. The approach of watershed planning implies that any single solution should be approached from contextual thinking because the properties of the parts are not intrinsic properties but can be understood only within the context of the larger whole. The ecological thinking emerged out of the organismic school of biology during the 19th Century, when biologists began to study communities of organisms (Odum, 1997). In ecological worldview, the network concept was introduced along with living systems. There are three kinds of living systems. These are organisms, parts of organism, and communities of organisms and all of which are integrated wholes whose essential properties arise from the interactions and interdependence of their parts without hierarchies among organisms. Four principles are announced in ecology. These are interdependence, the cyclical flow of resources, cooperation, and partnership. Under these behaviors, ecosystems organize themselves to maximize sustainability (Capra, 1996). The network concept and the four principles have been the key to the recent advances in the scientific understanding not only of ecosystems but also of the field of planning. Interestingly, this network concept is found in a planning literature, proposing a web of plan (Donaghy and Hopkins, 2004). In the emergent web view, a plan is framed as ecosystem emphasizing a web of plan rather than a hierarchical plan appreciating the importance of different level of plans without a specific anchor point. Not only the web view and watershed planning, many other everyday planning activities resemble the ecological system, in parts, via the adoption of feedback loop.

To explain any one of the larger whole, we need to understand all the others, which is obviously impossible. However, what makes it possible is the discovery that there is approximate knowledge. This insight becomes crucial to not only all of modern science but also planning. The old paradigm is based on the Cartesian belief in the certainty

“The premise that ‘everything is connected to everything else’ places at the heart of watershed planning.”

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of scientific knowledge. In the new paradigm of ecology, it is recognized that all scientific concepts and theories are limited and approximate (Capra, 1996). Science can never provide any complete and definitive understanding. Rather than certainty, contemporary science looks for approximate and tentative answers. Louis Pasteur noted that “science advances through tentative answers to a series of more and more subtle questions, which reach deeper and deeper into the essence of natural phenomena”.

Paradigms of Watershed Planning

Along with the stormwater problems from growing community development, the interactions of the problems and solving efforts form a set of paradigms in watershed planning.

Ditches. In the beginning, the farmers moved to town around 18th Century. At this time, they came to experience frequent flooding events in their community and a solution was emerged, which led to the first paradigm: water should run in ditches. This worked for a while because open ditches were better than no drainage system at all. However, the drawbacks of this grand solution were soon apparent (Reese, 2004). The water in ditches became the source of foul and danger because of running stormwater and sanitary sewer. Therefore, engineers came up with a solution to this dilemma, and the second paradigm was started.

In the problem solving approach at this time, there was not a causal investigation for the problem solving. There were no efforts to understand and to respond what makes this problem, how treat the cause of this eminent problem, and how one affects others. There was only dichotomy approach in valuating water – one for use and one for discharge. These approaches had been lasted for a long time.

Pipes. A pipe system integrating stormwater and sewage was introduced. By adopting the pipe system, downtown areas became clean and dry around 19th Century. All liquid waste went straight from the amazing flush toilets and sinks to the nearest river or stream. However, people soon realized that the steams were being ingested by downstream dwellers. So it was determined that people needed treatment plants for sewage and that all stormwater needed to be cleaned. However, the treatment of all stormwater did not work as intended properly (Reese, 2004). Therefore, engineers came up to a new paradigm and a solution was suggested to this dilemma.

Stormwater Pipe Separated from Sewage. Stormwater and sewage came to be run in a separated pipe system. This urban stormwater design came into vogue in the late 1940's in most parts of the US and reigned until the 1970's or so. This trend was stemmed from the advanced scientific knowledge. Rational Method came into prominence. It was easy to do on a slide rule, and made sense as a mass transfer equation. In addition, Intensity Duration Frequency (IDF) relationships became available in many places of the US in the late 1950's and everywhere in the early 1960's.

The modern urban drainage infrastructure was born consisting of an efficient drainage system and that solved the existing problem. However, scientists began to questioning this paradigm and it soon became apparent that the fruit of an efficient stormwater system is downstream flooding and channel erosion (Reese, 2004). In this era, the solution for the stormwater problem had been evolved along with the increasing scientific knowledge. The belief that science and its method is the most reliable source of problem solving was widely accepted. The belief was based on an absolute foundation stemming from scientism. Within this

trend, the stormwater solution evolved while looking for more rigorous rules of thumb. This modernist scientific approach had been sustained until the emergence of the ecological concept.

Stormwater Pipe and Detention Ponds. In response to the negative consequences of a pipe system, a new idea was introduced to solve flooding problem. That was a detention pond (Reese, 2004). The first stormwater detention ordinances appeared in the early 1970's and quickly spread across the country. Detention ponds were a promise with conditions. However, the detention pond revealed its sizing problem – most are undersized, and it led the doubt of its performance. People along streams were still getting flooded and they said that it was not like this in the 1960's. Detention pond was not the best solution and there was a need for another new solution.

In this shifting from detention pond to another new solution, in-depth evidences were presented by investigating the scientific method, Modified Rational Method, used for estimating its size and by proving empirical evidences, such as downstream flooding. The depth of argumentation was also evolved stronger than before as the solution was evolved.

Stormwater Master Plan. The hydraulics and hydrology models were converted for PC use in the 1970's and became commonly available in the mid 1980's. With all this new computing power, hydrology model (how much water), hydraulics model (how fast and high water) and “what if” analysis became available. These scientific advances allowed the emergence of comprehensive master plan because these models can perform the comprehensive analysis for the behaviors of water and some premature scenario building was available in watershed. By 1985 hundreds of master plans had been developed (Reese, 2004). A modernist planning became even stronger than before due to the much advanced scientific knowledge. At the same time, this environment came to open the opportunity for the public participation. However, it didn't mean the past paradigm, modernist planning, became disappeared. They were alive and some parts in plan making process were about to be transformed and absorbed to another paradigm.

Green. Growing out of the 1987 Clean Water Act, water quality emerged as a problem with the existing stormwater problem. People seriously realized that stormwater is a source of instream water quality reduction. The stormwater quality regulations hit some local governments and Best Management Practices (BMP) emerged (Coffman, 2000, USEPA, 2000). The proposed BMPs are grass swales, vegetated roof cover, permeable pavements, bioretention, wetlands, and so on. In the nature of BMPs, most of them inherently resemble grassy swales, wettest swamps, and green lands found in predeveloped areas. BMPs are intended to mimic the predevelopment site hydrology by their capabilities that store, infiltrate, evaporate, and detain runoff.

However, unlike a detention pond, which has a centralized approach by placing it in a single location in town to control stormwater from the region, BMPs have a decentralized approach in controlling stormwater. It is encouraged to implement the BMPs in all over the places not as a single facility. The emerged BMPs approach has much more parts and more interactions that cannot be easily predicted, implemented, and monitored. Thus, the control mechanism of BMPs became much more complex

than before. This paradigm requires more flexibility in their applications because of the increased uncertainty asking the understanding of ecological thinking.

Interactions in Watershed. Now, two issues came to be raised in this paradigm. One is public participation by appreciating the notion that when we enter into watershed, we enter into a competition for the attentions and resources, and we enter into a world where our priorities may never float to the top. In addition, it was noted that science is not only a valid source of knowledge we rely on. Democratic values emerged as another valid source of knowledge, which has an equal weight to science without rejecting the scientific aspects in local watershed planning. The other is an endeavor to reach closer to the main causal of stormwater and water quality problems. People realized the cause of local flooding and instream water quality problems. They came to understand that the importance of interaction between human settlement and natural process, especially, that urbanization tends to increase surface pavement and it generates more surface runoff and it carries more nonpoint pollutants and eventually it results in local flooding and instream water quality degradation. People recognized that through a combination of structural and institutional practices, environmentally friendly, sustainable and beautiful living environments can be created. There have been many approaches that address some or all of this including low impact development, green infrastructure, smart growth, conservation development, sustainable development, and so on.

Eventually, watershed planning emerging from stormwater in ditches becomes to have broader goals as follows; mimicking acceptable hydrology, enhancing natural diversity and beauty, balancing ecological preservation/conservation with, economic growth & development, building systems that are sustainable & maintainable, working at a small, integrated scale with accumulated results. Although the US currently stays in the last paradigm, as long as there are watershed planning and affected citizens, there will be new paradigms. Next paradigm may be urban stream corridor restoration or the development of communication system or the handling stormwater as a commodity (Brail and Klosterman, 2001, Shortle and Horan, 2001).

Development of Watershed Plan

There is no one fixed way to prepare a watershed plan. However, the steps are suggested based on guidance from Illinois Environmental Protection Agency (IEPA) (IEPA, 1998). The elements of successful watershed plan are as follows; identify stakeholders, establish goals and objectives, inventory watershed resources and conditions, assess water body and watershed problems, recommend objectives and management practices for prevention and remediation, and develop effective action plan. In forming watershed plan, an approach of rational comprehensive planning is adopted to provide a logical way to accomplish planning goals by incorporating empirical-general and nomological pattern.

Identify Stakeholders. As other plans do, watershed plan will not work if key organizations are not involved. In a watershed context, each community member becomes a potential polluter and any one could be a victim depending on circumstance. Thus, it is especially important to include local stakeholders such as municipal and county officials, property owners, developers, citizens and environmental groups. In addition, involving other organizations, which

have specific expertise in a watershed plan, would increase the possibility of successful planning process.

Since the planning should forecast and predict future events based on the application of scientific knowledge and rational choices, the involvement of expertise is recommended in data collection and management, plan making, and scientific analysis. For example, in the region of Illinois, IEPA has extensive experience in watershed planning. Illinois Department of Natural Resource (IDNR) has a great amount of environmental data, and Northern Illinois Planning Commission (NIPC) can provide various scientific analyses.

Establish Goals and Objectives. In this stage, before any detailed plan undergoes, stakeholders should establish goals that reflect their concerns, particularly those of residents and workers within watershed. The initial involvement in planning process will reduce the possibility of ferment conflicts. In setting goals and objectives, there is a possibility of conflicts caused by the preferred intensity of changes. In general, individuals tend to have an approach of incremental planning in favor of a marginal change. Otherwise, institutions are apt to have a change that is more radical. To cope with this conflict, first, the notion that partnership is an essential characteristic of sustainable communities (Capra, 1996) should be shared among stakeholders in communication. Second, decisions should be made based on rational choices by planning agents.

Inventory Watershed Resources and Conditions. Existing condition and problem of a watershed should be documented in this stage. Especially, examining factors should be directly related with identified goals and objectives. It is an important step because well-documented database will ensure the ground for reliable analyses and strong argumentations.

Assess Waterbody and Watershed Problems. A watershed plan should systematically analyze the waterbody in a watershed. A logical four step process that IEPA uses in its Clean Water Act programs can be applied to watershed planning. These are 1) determine the waterbody, which stakeholders would like to use. 2) assess impairments, 3) list the causes of the impairments, and 4) determine the sources of the causes.

Recommend Objectives and Management Practices for Prevention and Remediation. Based on the collected assessment record, scientific knowledge is helpful to choose the appropriate recommendation. Geographical Information System (GIS), hydrology / hydraulic modeling, and other techniques will be helpful to find the approximate answers leading proper recommendations. Once proper set of recommendations are developed, Planning Support System (PSS) can be introduced in this stage. The PSS is intended to support both initial thinking and the persuasion required to achieve commitment on a specific recommendation (Brail and Klosterman, 2001). Originally, the PSS is developed to reflect the communicative rationality in planning by appreciating the notion that rationality is based not on pure logic and the abstract evaluation of evidence but rather on informed consensus formed by a community of individuals in a particular place and time. The choice among the given recommendations should be made based on coordination among stakeholders. Ideally, the choice should reflect future consequences of current actions and future preferences for those consequences.

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Develop Effective Action Plan. The action plan is needed to transform the recommendations into specific actions. Planners must consider what specifically needs to be done, who will do it, and when it should be accomplished. Again, broad stakeholder involvement is critical consideration in developing plan.

Implement Plan and Monitor Its Success. If the above steps have been properly preceded, there is a high possibility of successful implementation. However, there still be enormous likelihoods of conflicts to hinder the initiation of plan. To precede the plan, there should be a sharing idea that the crucial role of language in human evolution was not the ability to exchange ideas, but the increased ability to cooperate. In addition, it is desirable to place more flexibility to have a successful plan in this planning process with multiple feedback loops.

Ecosystem management has become an important unifying theme for environmental policy in the past decade in the US. Watershed planning is not just about water and waters use. It concerns an entire landscape and human activities. Because watersheds cover the entire landscape, a whole range of cultural, biological, geographical, and ecological factors affecting watershed ecosystem health should be taken into account in watershed planning. Starting from the theoretical background of watershed planning, the issues and arguments occurred in the realm of watershed planning were explained briefly. As discussed, watershed planning has been evolving along with continuously interacting social and scientific paradigms. It is believed that watershed planning is an effective approach for the sustainable land resource management.

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What Does ESLARP Really Mean?

Leah Ostenberg

The Technical Stuff

After 20 years, ESLARP (the East St. Louis Action Research Project) remains a cooperatively managed community assistance and development program here at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign. Faculty and students from many collaborating campus units work together with East St. Louis community groups on highly tangible and visible projects that address the immediate and long-term needs of some of the city's poorest neighborhoods.

The Need

East St. Louis, Illinois, has long been seen as a prime example of urban blight in America. With post-war industrial abandonment, most of the city's blue collar jobs disappeared. The population has decreased by more than half from 1960 to 1990, and the city has lost many of its employed residents to more prosperous suburban communities. In 2000, the population was 98% African-American, with over half the residents living below the poverty level. Unemployment is nearly 30%. Almost two-thirds of the children in school are eligible for a free or reduced-price lunch. Many have elevated lead levels in their blood stream that affects their ability to learn and develop.

While some of the housing stock is in good condition, much of it is derelict and creates deplorable living conditions for the poorest residents. Many residents are victims of predatory lending practices that keep them from home ownership and deeper in poverty. With shrinking tax rolls, the city was forced to eliminate many of its municipal agencies, beginning with its city planning office in the 1970s. Garbage was not collected by the city from 1987 to 1992. Many city employees were laid off, and police and fire departments did not have resources to replace defective equip-

ment.

In the face of this bleak picture, the residents of East St. Louis have shown tremendous will and resolve. Many local residents are actively involved in neighborhood revitalization. Local churches have maintained a strong presence in their neighborhoods and often lead these improvement efforts.

Since 1990, ESLARP activities and accomplishments have been an important part of the growing neighborhood revitalization movement in East St. Louis, Illinois. Aided by the University's instructional, research, and public service resources, ESLARP is showing results in communities where residents are mobilizing to address current social, economic, and environmental problems.



Welcoming ceremony in East St. Louis. Attended by residents and volunteers along with government officials and business owners.

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My Work

When I stumbled upon ESLARP in the fall of 2005, I didn't quite grasp the depth and breadth of the organization. I was immediately intrigued by the work done by ESLARP, but didn't know what I was really in for as an ESLARP Graduate Research Assistant.

Working for ESLARP has never been a typical job. Although the experiences you have with ESLARP can be applied to other jobs and related to other situations, nothing quite compares. I was assigned to work with a community organization called 'The Concerned Citizens of Precinct 12'. Upon my first meeting with the Executive Board for this group, I could tell that this was an active group that wanted to see results. In fact, one member explicitly told me he was sick of sitting in meetings and wanted to see action. I decided right then and there that this group would see a change in their neighborhood.

My first semester with the community organization, I concentrated on

discovering the issues of the area, making connections with the residents, attending neighborhood meetings, and reporting what actions I was taking and what progress we were making to the neighborhood residents at those meetings. This was the relationship building portion of community development, the specialization of urban planning in which I am concentrating.

Through much discussion, it was decided that a neighborhood wide cleanup was desperately needed and would boost morale. So, for five months community members and I planned and organized a clean-up that spanned the entire neighborhood. For two days, we had ESLARP volunteers from University of Illinois along with volunteers from Principia College working hard to remove debris from seven sites. Waste Management, the City, County, Park District, Housing Authority and local business owners were also involved in the cleanup and donated equipment and staff for the two days. Without



Some of the neighborhood kids helping with the cleanup.

all these entities, the cleanup would not have been as successful. Additionally, building relationships with these entities was also a great benefit to my work on future projects

Though the advantages of cleanups are widely seen, I feel that more needs to be done besides cleanup after cleanup. Community organizing has to move beyond picking up the trash every fall and spring. Yes, I feel that these cleanups are requisite for the appearance and morale of the neighborhoods, but more can be done to motivate people.

This fall instead of focusing on the relationship building side of community development, I have been concentrating on another aspect, technical assistance. I have a new project in the works to address the idea of moving past the biannual cleanup. I am in the process of creating a neighborhood strategic plan for the Concerned Citizens of Precinct 12. This document will outline an event-triggered plan of action for the neighborhood organization. When certain events occur in the life of the organization, a new action will, in turn, be taken. This plan will also have documentation of the organizations history, events organized and successes in the neighborhood, allowing the board to have easy access to information that is most often necessary when applying for grants. Ideally this action plan will enable the organization to progress at its own pace, instead of forcing it to develop on a fixed schedule.

This semester I have also been helping out in a new neighborhood, Po'Lock Town. During the Nov 10-11 outreach weekend, I assisted Pearson Bush with a cleanup in his old neighborhood. We successfully cleaned and made huge improvements to five sites.

These outreach weekends are so exciting to me, as a participant and as a site leader, for many reasons. One is that I love to see the improvement that a small group of people can make on a community in two short days. I also enjoy talking to

residents and hearing their history with the neighborhood. Another aspect I like is when residents thank you for the work we do. This past November weekend, we even had people driving by several times, stopping to talk and express their gratitude for our hard work. Finally my favorite thing about the weekends is when residents put on their gloves and work side by side with the volunteers. This personal connection is so rewarding for both the volunteers and the residents. During the November weekend, I saw three young men playing basketball. When I went up to them to chat and ask them to help us, they smiled and were happy to help us; they just needed to be asked. Nothing made me happier than seeing these young men from East St. Louis working to make their community better.

Every time I return from a trip to East St. Louis, I always have a great sense of inspiration and motivation. The people there are unlike any others I've ever met. In the face of utter distress and blight, residents simply will not and do not throw up their hands and walk away – an option that many do have. Seeing the sheer strength of will and prayerful work residents put into their homes is awe-inspiring. I am not an openly religious person, but when we pray before a meeting or meal, I close my eyes and pray right along side the residents. I have even caught myself saying an “Amen” loudly and proudly.

As I've said before, the communities of East St. Louis are like no other. The persistence, faith, resilience and strength they possess is awe-inspiring and, hopefully, contagious. I am so grateful to have had the opportunity to work with such an amazing community.

If you have any questions about ESLARP or would like to volunteer for a weekend during the spring semester, contact Vicki Eddings at veddings@ad.uiuc.edu. Also keep an eye out for posters with the spring outreach weekend dates!

Community Matters

Kalpa Baghasingh

It's for the third time in a row that I have been involved with Community Matters; and what an enriching experience it has been! We have been working with Dr. Patti Petrie, within the framework of a course called "Participatory Planning Process – UP494P". Community Matters is a three-year collaborative partnership between the University of Illinois Department of Urban & Regional Planning (DURP) and the University of Illinois Extension Community and Economic Development Team. Community Matters brings together faculty and student resources to work with selected communities and neighborhoods throughout Illinois to address local concerns.

A critical element in this collaboration is the opportunity for DURP students (as well as students from other units in the College of Fine and Applied Arts, such as Landscape Architecture and Architecture) to get hands on experience working in communities while working with various DURP faculty, University of Illinois Extension staff and community leaders. This relationship provides a unique opportunity for community leaders to gain access to faculty expertise and student resources in areas that are identified as critical to their evolving role in community planning.

The first project that we worked on was Macomb, Illinois during Fall 2005. The Macomb Charrette was undertaken to stimulate development and design ideas for the West Jackson Street corridor. Through this charrette process, Macomb residents were able to discuss with other citizens their visions for the corridor, to have their ideas recorded for further consideration, and to have these ideas translated into design schemes to see how they meshed with other suggested improvements. We, as Urban Planning students and charrette facilitators, got to interact with around 150 participants in this two-day event. The process was a tremendous success with the team making it to the front pages of the local newspaper.

The next two projects (during Spring 2006 and Fall 2006) involved two communities of different sizes and different set of issues and priorities, to which Scenario Planning was employed as the planning tool. The Carlyle and Fayetteville projects brought to the forefront

impending issues that are plaguing growth in many similar small towns all over mid-west America.

The entire experience was just a preview of what "real-world" planning is all about. Dealing with local government bodies, citizens, community leaders, participants (some of whom were irate by the way things were going in their community) teaches you a thing or two about how to keep your cool in a dire situation, about the importance of politically correct statements, about diplomacy, about the importance of communication skills, and of course about the significance of public participation in the planning process. Needless to say, this opens up a variety of internship opportunities to you, as it has for me!

The upcoming spring semester project will not only be a collaboration with University of Illinois extension educators, but also LEAM and the South Central Regional Planning and Development Commission, including Clay, Effingham, Fayette, Jasper, and Marion Counties. The first part of the semester will focus on developing a knowledge base about the five counties in preparation for the six charrettes. One charrette will include all five counties and be lead by LEAM. The remaining five will be individual charrettes for each participating county and lead by the Community Matters Consulting Team, UP 494P. This intense experience of public planning participation will give you tools of how to engage communities to discuss and plan for developing a livable community. You can sign up for the course for up to 6 credits.

You can get more information by visiting the course website at <http://www.urban.uiuc.edu/courses/up494p/> or by visiting Community Matters website at <http://www.urban.uiuc.edu/ce/cm/>

SPO Semester Recap

Stephanie Ashe

TBH saw a number of exciting events this past Fall. Many Undergraduates and Graduates presented their summer internship experiences during the Brown Bag Lunch Series while the PhD Students presented their exciting research projects. In addition to these informative and educational happenings, SPOers showed a bit of their wild sides at many a happy hour and get together function outside of the department for some unwinding. These events were hosted by students and faculty at some fine establishments in the CU-Area which included the Illini Inn, Fire Haus, Bar Louie, The Blind Pig, Esquire, The White Horse, The Office, and many others!

August

-Fall Orientation and Picnic at Rob Olshansky's House: The beginning of a new school year was officially started at the opening orientation and a Picnic at home of Rob Olshansky. Students, faculty, and staff gathered for a great time of meeting, greeting, and eating.

-FAA Fall Orientation at Krannert: This event gave all students in the College of Fine and Applied Arts a chance to see what the College has to offer and a sneak peak at the year's upcoming events.

-Quad Day: SPO held down fort all day long in the hot sun to promote SPO and invite all students to participate in our fabulous organization!

September

-International Student Get-together: To kick off the school year, SPO and the DURP International Student Group got together for an evening of Cranium, pizza, and laughs.

-SPOrty Ultimate Frisbee: Some SPOers gathered outside TBH for some noonday stress relief with a game of Ultimate Frisbee.

-SPO Bowling Night at the Illini Union Lanes: Students gathered to show off their skills in the lanes.

-Farewell Party for Chris Silver

-SPO Adopt-a-Pathway Clean-Up: SPO adopted a Campus Pathway to which we will keep clean and trash free. Twice a semester, students meet to pick up litter and debris from our beautiful pathway.

Look for our sign outside TBH!

-1986 Alumni Reunion: DURP Alumni from the class of 1986 were back on campus for their 20 year reunion. They were given a tour of the new facilities on campus and then met students and faculty for drinks and discussion afterward in Campus Town.

October

-APA Upper Midwest Four State Conference: October was a busy month and began with planners meeting for the American Planning Association's 4-State

(Minnesota, Wisconsin, Illinois, and Iowa) Conference where students and faculty attended sessions on current planning issues and tactics. This was also a great opportunity to networking with professionals and possibly find a job after graduation!

-SPO Picnic/Indoornic: Due to a rainy day in October, the annual SPO Fall Picnic was moved indoors. All of the DURP was invited to eat good food and play fun games like UNO, Twister, Old Maid, and Jenga! If you thought this picnic was fun, wait until you attend the Spring Picnic.

-SPOoky Happy Hour: SPO hosted a SPOoky Happy Hour at Esquire. Many students came to be social and show off their homemade costumes. Princess Leia Organa made the party, as well as Madeline, Where's Waldo's girlfriend known as Wenda, a girl in a Bathtub, a desperate housewife, Ben's GPA tombstone, a retro girl, and many, many more!

November:

-Professional Brown Bag Lunch: Rob Kowalski with the City of Champaign and Robert Meyers with the City of Urbana came and spoke with students about their experiences as planners. Students were able to ask questions and find out more about what lay ahead for us and our professional futures.

-Resume Workshop: The resume workshop was one of the most successful events hosted by SPO with a turnout of over 40 undergraduate and graduate students. Rob Kowalski with the City of Champaign and Robert Meyers with the City of Urbana again came to TBH to help students build the best resume they possibly can. The two gentlemen gave great tips on what professionals in the public sector want to see when they look through a stack of resumes.

December

-SPO Elections: December is a time of wrapping up the old year and starting a new. The current SPO Board would like to thank you all for making 2006 a wonderful year in the DURP. We have enjoyed serving you as student representatives, but are pleased to be handing the torch to a fabulous new board. We would like to welcome the new 2007 SPO Board and hope they have as much fun as we did.



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Web version available at
<http://www.urban.uiuc.edu/SPO/UPwords>



UPwords is the newsletter of the Student Planning Organization. It was born in the spirit of further opening the lines of communication between planning faculty and students, undergraduates, and graduates. Anyone is free to submit news, reviews, essays, opinions, images, or anything else of interest to students of urban and regional planning; however, preference is given, but not limited, to submissions from students, faculty, and staff of the Department of Urban and Regional Planning.



The opinions expressed in the articles of this newsletter are not necessarily the opinions of the University of Illinois, the Department of Urban and Regional Planning, Student Planning Organization, the editors, or the administration.

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