# INTRODUCTION

## PC and CP

The year 1991 certainly has been fertile in extraordinary events. The war in the Persian Gulf and the failed *coup d'état* in the Soviet Union will receive ample space in history textbooks. The same probably holds for the confirmation of Clarence Thomas to the Supreme Court of the United States and the after-shocks of his confirmation hearings. Yet in the short term, perhaps another development is of greater significance to planners and planning academics. This year has also been the year of "political correctness." With the "PC" debate, what came to the fore are not only academic problems but also, and more importantly, problems of collective identity and of the distribution of power in a multicultural society.

All of these events, international and national, are linked by more than a common position in the calendar. In each of them—the breakdown of the Soviet empire, the Gulf War, and the debate over "political correctness"—one specific issue deserves further attention here. That issue is: critique vs. orthodoxy.

### Orthodoxy East and West, Orthodoxy Left and Right

One of the problems to which planners have been most sensitive in the last decades is the problem of democracy, of procedural fairness in decision-making. That planning is politics is not really a matter of discussion any more. What is being discussed, however, at least among planning theorists, is the extent to which rhetoric rather than fact determines the making of a plan and its acceptance by the public. In this respect, the dramatic events that took place this year in Eastern Europe and in the Persian Gulf offer ample food for thought. In particular, they show how strong the appeal of orthodoxy still is in the modern era. But, then, are we not past that era, are we not in a "post-modern" age?

Having returned to his native Czechoslovakia after forty-two years of exile in the U.S, a professor of philosophy recently noted that over four decades of communist rule had so impoverished political thinking in the general population that tolerance for dissent and openness to alternatives were virtually nil.[1] This attitude expresses itself both in an uncritical embrace of *laissez-faire* capitalism and in nationalistic and ethnic militancy of the worst kind. (As Theodore Draper remarked recently, if the New World Order is going to be truly new, then the world is certainly not going to be orderly for a while.[2] The war in Yugoslavia may be just a sign of things to come.) There is no doubt that the work of planners is not going to be easy in this kind of political and cultural environment. Their attempts to speak for the common good and to let reason guide

decision-making are likely to be unsuccessful in the face of extremism and radicalism. The Czech professor of philosophy formulated the hope that the environmental crisis in his country might provide a ground on which to build a modicum of consensus on the need for careful policy-making and planning. In the meantime, the rise of primitive forms of *laissez-faire* theory, ethnic chauvinism, and religiosity does not make for a healthy intellectual and political environment.

In this country too, the appeal to single-minded patriotism during the Gulf War has revived an orthodox belief in the greatness of America, precisely at a time when the country is facing the prospects of economic decline and a corresponding loss of international power. The corruption of political discourse by politicians of all stripes—the extent to which they have traded the art of persuasion for strategies of seduction and tactics of defamation—seems to have turned debates over complex issues into exchanges of simplistic formulas. More importantly perhaps, the political climate of the nation seems to resemble the meteorological climate of the Bay Area: small variations only, no strong currents of change. In such a climate, it takes dramatic events such as the near-victory of a David Duke or the strong increase in middle-class unemployment (or the great fire of Oakland and Berkeley) to wake people up to the fragility of their situation.

We are facing growing problems of degradation in social and physical infrastructure, growing problems of urban segregation and of environmental damage, and we are asked to solve them within an intellectual framework that is less and less amenable to the consideration of true alternatives. The revolutions in Central Europe and in the Soviet Union have sent shock-waves beyond the former Iron Curtain, one such wave carrying doubt and confusion into the mind of the western Left. This has had the positive effect of forcing social-democrats and socialists to critically examine their ideas and policies. But it has had the unfortunate effect of fueling the efforts of conservatives to render marginal or even illegitimate not only communist and socialist ideas but also the principles of social-democracy. Ironically, a growing awareness that *laissez-faire* capitalism is unable to solve essential problems of production and social order is now weakening that orthodoxy, both in the West and in the East.

Yet over a decade of faith in the virtues of the market does not get reversed in a moment, much like generations of discrimination do not vanish from the hearts and minds when anti-discrimination laws are passed. Nor, to make matters worse, do hard times necessarily help broaden people's ideas of the collective good. Economic insecurity creates both a need for collective action and a search for self-protection, both a need for unity and a search for enemies. It is in this light, I

believe, in the light of changing political and economic certainties, that the recent attacks on so-called "political correctness" must be understood.

## America, Its Minorities and Its Campuses

The expression "political correctness," as used by its critics, refers to a new sort of left-wing orthodoxy. It signifies the uncritical adherence to a set of more or less radical ideas, the tendency to subject all thoughts and actions to the discipline of a specific world-view. In its superficial use, the epithet "PC" denounces the alleged hypocrisy of liberals who display sensitivity toward minorities and women and toward the natural environment, without really doing anything about social or environmental problems. Thus people are "PC" in that they use the right words, buy the right brands, and openly support the right causes. But "political correctness" concerns much more than sincerity or the lack thereof. The "PC" debate is about the social order of the nation; it is about "statecraft as soulcraft" (to use George Will's expression), about collective identity and the distribution of opportunities.

Behind the label "PC," then, lies much more than a personal critique of naive individuals. At the risk of over-simplifying the picture, one can say that the "politically correct" are people who challenge accepted distributions of power, prevalent images of social identity, and classical conceptions of truth, while their critics are those who feel threatened by this vocal opposition and the changes it advocates.[3] The fact that the "politically correct" are sometimes too loud to be intelligent or too angry to be tolerant has certainly given their critics plenty of arguments with which to ridicule them. But stupidity and extremism are everywhere, on the Left and on the Right, among the young and among the old. What deserves our attention is not the slogan but the well-articulated idea that challenges.

Interestingly, the expression "political correctness" was first used by those who are now being attacked with it, by Left-liberals. According to writer and educator Herbert Kohl, the expression was already part of the political vocabulary back in the early 1940s. Socialists used it to criticize members of the U.S. Communist Party who favored Stalin's pact with Hitler simply because the Secretary General was necessarily right. Kohl writes:

> I remember the term 'politically correct' being used disparagingly to refer to someone whose loyalty to the [Communist Party] line overrode compassion and led to bad politics. It was used by the socialists against the communists, and was meant to separate out their own beliefs in egalitarian moral ideas from those of the dogmatic communists who would

> advocate and defend party positions regardless of their moral substance.

This quotation describes two essential facets of the "PC" debate. As said earlier, one facet is dogmatism; the other is the relationship between politics and ethics.

The first facet pertains to the uncritical acceptance of a party line and to the belief that people who belong to a certain group must necessarily agree on everything and reach the same conclusion. One sometime hears, for instance, that all white males are equally racist and sexist (dead ones are even worse) or that all African-American have one specific opinion on affirmative action. That, of course, is nonsense. For all its cynicism and nastiness on all sides, the nomination and confirmation of Clarence Thomas to the Supreme Court has added further evidence that old notions of social and intellectual homogeneity within racial and ethnic groups cannot be taken for granted.[4] This is a welcome development. The rejection of group homogeneity is also, I believe, one of two arguments brought forward by the "PC-bashers" which are worth serious consideration. The other argument that needs to be taken seriously concerns the ideas of truth and of shared values.

In his speech at the plenary session of the joint ACSP/AESOP conference in Oxford this year, David Harvey argued that planners should abandon their pretense to speak for the public interest and to pursue values shared by all. Rejecting the ideas of universal rationality and universal justice, and embracing the "relative universality" of all those who are marginal, oppressed, and exploited, Harvey called for planners to align themselves with opposition politics, to tap into the energy of feminism, environmentalism, and social critique. His answer to the question "Whose rationality? Whose justice?" and his call for unity among the victims of society are troubling, for they defy cherished notions of a common understanding and a common sense of equity. It is not surprising that pronouncements such as Harvey's have become the objects of strong reactions in the U.S., in particular on the country's campuses.

The challenge to accepted notions of truth, justice, and rationality has been informed by social and literary theories, mostly French-inspired, as well as by more classic Marxist views on the determination of beliefs. The challenge is in itself healthy and productive, insofar as it shows how the things we experience as natural and rock-solid are, as social products, necessarily artificial and flexible. So it goes with the stability of a text's meaning or the permanence of our scientific categories. But, argue some people, this kind of attack on our ability to know the world for what it is presents a real threat to science and society. Thus, by casting doubt on Truth (with capital "T"), post-modern theorists and their followers are allegedly giving up on the necessity to try and speak the

truth (with small "t") and opening the door to... well, absolute relativism. The question we have to ask is whether the recognition of the instability of meaning and of the relativity of truth necessarily leads to nihilism and the breakdown of communication. That is in part what the debate on "political correctness" is about: whether or not what distinguishes people from one another overrides what they have in common. If different life-experiences mean different ways of understanding and valuing the world, do we still have enough in common to feel that we share the same world and that we can truly understand one another when talking about it?

By pressing so hard on the specificity of sub-cultures and on problems of communication between them, members of marginal groups tend to reject the need for communication itself, the very idea of common understanding across social divisions. By emphasizing their specific historical experience, they neglect collective history and collective destiny. Or so claim the "PC-bashers." It is important, however, to keep this claim in perspective. First, the people who play the game of "identity politics" are rather few and far between. This does not mean that we should not worry about the more extreme forms of "political correctness." It means that we should not indulge in wholesale condemnation of a complex movement because of a few of its manifestations. Second, their doing so is in a way a back-fire kick: after having been told for so many decades or centuries that they were different and could not possibly become the same as others, they now claim their difference with defiance, with a vengeance. The argument that the "politically correct" are threatening to "balkanize" the country and send us back to the days of segregation,[5] that argument misses its target: what is at stake is not as much the erection of walls—that may be so in a minority of cases—as it is the re-positioning of fences, those fences that make good neighbors.

A sense of solidarity and of shared values is indeed very important for the well-being of a polity. But there is some irony, to say the least, in the conservative ire about some citizens' lack of commitment to the national community and its ideals. This anger comes from people who tend to remain silent in the face of economic inequality and unfair fiscal policies, the off-shoring of production and the flight to the suburbs. If the unity of the American people matters so much, why is it that it matters when it comes to professed values and ideals but not when it comes to economic opportunities and rewards? Why is "balkanization" so problematic in terms of national culture but not in terms of metropolitan structures and residential patterns?

Planners have been dealing with the problems of social unity and disunity for a long time, as have all other citizens of this country. Residential segregation, busing, and other related issues have been at

the heart of urban politics and planning for the last four decades, if not longer. Though the official goal has been to foster integration, the maintenance of (voluntary) segregation has also had its advocates.[6] Planners who deal with the fragmentation of the urban community are facing problems much more pressing than those which conservative columnists and professors are facing when they castigate the "politically correct." If the latter are concerned with the survival of a certain idea of America, the former are concerned with the lack of funding in central cities, the spatial and functional segregation of minority populations from employment centers, the loss of jobs to other states or to foreign countries, among other dramas. If the emphasis on shouting matches in colleges and universities is not explicitly meant to move our attention away from poverty-stricken urban and rural areas, it nevertheless has that effect.

On the other hand, as said, national solidarity is important—even more for the least well-off than for others. One should not dismiss the "anti-PC" arguments of serious thinkers who worry about threats to free speech and other constitutional ideals. No, but one must put their concerns in perspective. First, the danger of censorship in this country is still far greater from the Right.[7] Second, for every left-wing extremist who awaits the revolution, there are dozens of moderates who believe in the need for minimal social change; for every narrow-minded militant who disrupts a meeting, there are tens of people pushing for a broadening of public debate. The law of inertia seems to hold in human matters too: people do not move unless they are being pushed. Like it or not, society is changing; women and members of minority groups are redefining it, if only through their growing presence in the work-force and in the student population. Demographic and economic changes will necessarily have political and cultural repercussions. And when questions of power and of culture are involved, the law of inertia seems to be particularly relevant. Calls for change in what is accepted as the country's history, appeals for shifts in social identities and demarcations, demands for the recognition of new rights—all are likely to be met by resistance, especially at times of greater uncertainty and insecurity, when the nation has lost both its principal enemy and some of the economic means needed to fight new ones.

The other important element of the debate on "political correctness" which the quotation of Herbert Kohl suggested is the idea that politics and ethics, though not one and the same thing, are closely related. The same holds for politics and economics: though much political debate is about the distribution of economic resources, the question "Who gets what?" concerns much more than material assets. At the risk of sounding trite, one can say that economic, political, and ethical issues need to be seen in conjunction to one another. More to the point, one can say

that the true object of "political correctness" is not the dogmatic behavior of the members of this party or of that minority group; it is the redistribution of power and opportunities in American society and the redefinition of American politics. Many "PC" claims and demands constitute threats to established economic positions (think of the new patterns of distribution of academic jobs) and to established identities (think of the re-writing of social science textbooks for America's schools).[8]

Behind the "PC" debate is the process of change toward a truly multicultural society and the resurgence of the ethical dimension of politics. The important questions in that debate are, first, whether people can be different yet equal and, second, whether political ideas mean anything if they do not translate into daily action. In other words, can a society that is truly diverse afford to maintain patterns of thought and of distribution which are a legacy from a time when difference was only a source of stigma? And secondly, can we claim to be committed to ideals without expressing them through our daily conduct?

What many "PC-bashers" miss is that the primary political goal of the "politically correct" is to create equal opportunity and that their primary personal ambition is to be ethical. Thus, "PC" anger at discrimination in hiring and admission fits squarely within American constitutional theory. Likewise, "PC" dislike of sexist jokes or "PC" refusal to buy certain brands of coffee or of tuna are first and foremost guided by the belief that the people who are telling these jokes or producing these food items are misbehaving, that they are being disrespectful to women, exploitative of poor populations, or damaging to the environment. To the critics of "political correctness" who complain about the loss of traditions and the abandonment of the classics, the "politically correct" can answer that their behavior conforms to the fundamental tenets of Judeo-Christian thought.[9] According to this cornerstone of western culture, the good person is one for whom the minute acts of daily existence are inspired by higher ideals and the good society is one in which social and political interaction are also ethical matters.

This mind-set is a healthy one, at least within limits. That one can be disturbed by it is understandable—and not only because too many "believers" go beyond the limits or because they have adopted a preaching or aggressive attitude. Having been told by "politically correct" people that some of the views one holds or some of the jokes one likes are disrespectful or outright insulting to them, it takes some effort to keep these views and jokes to oneself and it takes some courage to accept that one may have been biased or insensitive. Likewise, having been told by "PC" people that they will no longer accept being marginal elements in the work-place, it takes some maturity to accept that one's familiar world will change and become less familiar, less homey. For

those of us who, like me, have been born and raised in a very homogeneous community, the transition to heterogeneity, the encounter with different people, is not an easy thing. Yet as one is convinced that the change is for the better, one has to resist the impulse to fight back because one feels uncomfortable or threatened.

The issue of affirmative action is a case in point. What motivates the often-heard critiques of affirmative action policies? Whether or not specific points of criticism are valid, are the motivations to criticize beyond reproach? Thus, when we blame affirmative action in the university for its allegedly detrimental effect on the self-esteem of its beneficiaries, we need to ask ourselves why we are concerned with the issue of self-esteem: is it because we care for the members of minority groups, or because we need to find excuses to resist a program that puts us ill at ease? The same holds when we hold affirmative action programs responsible for the unsatisfactory record of some students admitted through them: is the problem, as noted "PC-basher" Dinesh D'Souza argues, simply that these students are "misplaced" and should be in lower-level universities,[10] or is it that we are not ready to really help these students? Or is it even, given our silence on affirmative action for the children of alumni, that we are still holding different people to different standards?

It is worth putting this issue into historical context. Pressure for the inclusion of minority populations into majority institutions and resistance from the majority are as old as the American experience. The following thoughts of a former dean of the Faculty of Arts and Sciences at Harvard University are telling. Discussing the debate on admission quotas for Jews at Harvard in the early 1920s, Henry Rosovsky not only shows that our present problems are not new; he also suggests what their true nature is:

> That was the real issue: the ancient character of the College versus the claims of newcomers; the rights and privileges of Old Boston—founders and supporters of Harvard—versus new ethnic groups; the continuance of a school in which gentlemen from New England had a reserved seat versus the goal of a national university.[11]

## PC, as in "Planning Community"

Planning educators, students, and practitioners cannot brush aside the questions raised by the "PC" debate. The answers that they give to these questions, the answers that *we* give to these questions, will affect the nature of planning education and planning practice, the composition and commitments of the planning profession. The central issue is not, as some would have it, what is happening to standards of scholarship and education. Sloppy research is bad—whether it concerns infrastruc-

ture engineering, post-modern planning theory, enterprise zones, or minority communities—and so is bad teaching. What practitioners, educators, and researchers need to decide for themselves is how they will deal with social, economic, and cultural heterogeneity in the urban population, in the planning profession, and in planning schools. As members of the national community, they need to decide how they will deal with the attempts, on the part of the Right, to discredit much of progressive thinking, attempts which are fueled in part by resistance to cultural and political change. As members of the planning community, finally, they need to decide how they will respond to the narrowing of choice in urban policy-making and the avoidance of ethical questions in urban planning.

These trends in policy-making and planning seem to have led to the creation of a new planning orthodoxy: the belief in the planner as deal-maker. Granted, there is some truth and validity to this belief, as there is in most beliefs. Yet if ignorance of deal-making comes at a price, a focus on this aspect of planning at the expense of others has its costs too. More importantly, the threat to good education that may come from "PC" students and their favorite theorists is certainly less serious than the threat posed by the shunting aside of ethical questions that lie at the historical heart of planning and which "PC" students are asking. This "marginalization" of ethics is not a fiction. For instance, much has been made of the ten years of "equity planning" of Cleveland planners under the leadership of Norman Krumholz.[12] Yet what does it mean, that we hail as a courageous political act the mere statement by planners that they will do their job not only on the basis of technical know-how but also according to ethical principles?[13]

The book that Norman Krumholz wrote (together with John Forester) on his experience in Cleveland has a subtitle that carries a lot of weight: "Leadership in the Public Domain."[14] This phrase, under the title "Making Equity Planning Work" reminds us that neither planning nor equity come about if things are left alone, if there is no mover or shaker. Leadership is and ought to be a key concern of planners, especially when it is so much lacking in Washington. Political leaders set the tone for debates on urban development and on government intervention. Leaders in the urban administration, among whom are planning directors, can also help shape public discourse and public action with respect to urban problems. They can do so not only by introducing ethical considerations into their department's decision-making, but also by framing ill-defined problems and organizing staff-work accordingly. In addition, they can directly participate in the public debates raging in the media; in so doing they can help broaden the scope of that debate and increase the variety of alternatives to be considered.

All this, of course, is much easier said than done, and such ideas are perhaps not very welcome when they come from a planning academic with very little first-hand experience of the field. The fact remains that the recent developments in American politics and culture force us to approach issues of leadership and public debate with a closer look and a more critical eye. These developments also carry lessons for planning education and research.

## Ideas for Planning Education and Research

Many lessons can be drawn from events and arguments related to the "PC" debate. I propose to focus on five of them. They concern the responsibility of planning academics in fostering open debate, the promotion of research on the daily activities of planners, the development of critical thinking on ethical and political matters on the part of students, and the reformation of planning curricula.

The first idea suggested by the "PC" debate is a general one: if disregard for the negative aspects of "political correctness" is unjustified, blindness to the underlying problems which find expression in this phenomenon is plainly irresponsible. So is the use of selected cases of extreme language or behavior to dismiss a complex set of arguments and claims. Silencing critique because of the actions of a small group of extremists may help quiet dissent on campuses for a while, but it will not help universities or society at large in the long run. Planning academics in particular need to tackle the problems linked to "political correctness" up front, as many are already doing, and continue to foster open debate about them. This requires not only the commitment of all faculty-members and students, but also leadership from department chairs and officials of national organizations such as ACSP and APA. Commitment and leadership can be applied to questions of research, education, and curriculum-development.

With respect to research, the preceding considerations on political culture suggest that theorists should apply currently fashionable theories of society and of knowledge with the greatest circumspection. So-called "post-modern" theories are often read and used as wholesale indictments of modern institutions and ideas; they all too often provide excuses for the uncritical rejection of classical theories of rationality and objectivity. Yet, leaving aside the occasional and seemingly unavoidable excesses of theorists and interpreters, post-modern works, such as those of Foucault and Derrida, present a challenge much more than a threat. They show us the arbitrary nature of our conventions and understandings, not the impossibility to agree or understand; they highlight the relativity of knowledge and meaning, not their absence. It is crucial to not throw out the baby with the bath-water, not to reject

the ideal of objectivity with the idea of its possibility, the ideal of rationality with the idea of its universality, or the ideal of democracy with the idea of its perfection. Let us not forget that modernism, as product of the Enlightenment, rhymes with anti-dogmatism and that the end of modernity may also signify a return of the repressed, a revival of dogma. Post-modernist theory as another form of critical theory, yes; post-modernism as nihilism, no.

That "post-modern" theories are valuable can be seen, for instance, in the case of Foucault. His work suggests a second lesson that planning practitioners, educators, and researchers can learn from the debate on "political correctness." That lesson is that one needs to be attentive to the smallest details of planning practice, to the ethics and politics of daily action—not only to "institutional frameworks" or to overarching "planning discourses," however important these may be. I argued earlier that the orthodox character of "PC" behavior comes, at least in part, from the desire for political consistency, from the subordination of prosaic facts of life to higher political motivations. This alignment of the "micro" with the "macro" can be, and indeed has been, an inspiration for planning research. It is not original any more, but still necessary, to argue that researchers cannot satisfy themselves with a systemic view of planning, nor with a psychological one. We need to know how social processes work out at the level of the individual, how structure translates into minute action, and vice versa.

Some recent work has begun to shed light on the role of communication and representation in planning processes.[15] Other research, some of it less recent, has started to reveal how the specifics of public regulation contribute to the perpetuation of inequalities, for instance gender inequality.[16] This kind of research can generate a greater consciousness of the political dimension of planning techniques.[17] It can thereby help planners make more informed decisions, both in the application of these techniques and in their efforts to reform them. The result is a possible reduction of the perverse effects of planning (whether intentional or unintentional) and a possible improvement of its record in solving urban problems.

Developments in planning theory affect planning education. One way in which they do so is by focussing the attention of teachers and students on the political and ethical dilemmas which planners face in their daily practice. In that respect, the "PC" debate adds weight to the idea that planning educators must "empower" their students politically and ethically. By this I do not mean that professors should try to brainwash their students into narrow-minded activism. Rather, as John Forester has argued, planning educators should foster critical thinking among their students, endow them with the ability to formulate clear and convincing political arguments, and inspire them to confront ethical

issues head-on.[18] Whatever the political beliefs of the person, the ability to take a stand and be persuasive about it is a *conditio sine qua non* for effective practice and, especially, for leadership in the field.

A recent discussion in a class for entering M.C.P. students here at U.C. Berkeley illustrates the need to develop that kind of thinking and arguing. After a lecture on urban geography, students were asked whether they believed that the spatial segregation of groups was necessarily a bad thing. It appeared quickly that people were ill-prepared to deal with the issue as such; they tended to speak of what would work and what wouldn't, of concrete examples. As a perceptive student remarked in the closing seconds of the discussion, nobody seemed able or willing to argue the pros and cons of spatial segregation itself. Discussion in a later session on ethical issues in planning also showed that many students have to learn to formulate theoretical justifications for their actions and decisions, justifications pertaining to fundamental values in American law and culture. All this does not bode well for future professionals who will have a say, however limited, over the distribution of scarce resources. The students in this particular class were in the first semester of their Master's program; they have about a year-and-a-half left to further develop the skills required to fully participate in public debates on sensitive social and political issues. Here lies one more challenge to their professors.

A fourth idea for planning academics follows from the last one. Because planning problems are so permeated with political issues and because so many planners work in a complex and turbulent environment, it is important to develop in students both a certain sensitivity to social and political issues and a willingness to go beyond political cliches. Sociological sensitivity implies the recognition that social realities are not so much imposed "from above" as they are constructed through interaction; democratic sensitivity supposes a willingness to ask questions and listen to people's own answers; above all, political sensitivity involves the understanding that there is no single correct answer to a set of questions, no single correct attitude on the part of a group of people, no single correct solution to an array of problems. To their credit, some critics of "political correctness" call our attention to the fact that political and ethical zeal too easily translates into stereotypical answers, forced attitudes, and easy solutions. (To their discredit, their reaction also proves that a critical mind is often a source of excuses for inaction.) Planning education must be such that practitioners are able to see through slogans and ready-made solutions and that they be willing to use their authority as professionals to keep public debate and decision-making open and reasonable.

Finally, the "PC" debate should inspire those who shape planning curricula. This year's fights over the writing and use of history and social science textbooks in California show that demographic changes bring about changes in how the events of the past and the needs of the present are being defined. Battles within academia, for instance over the inclusion of works by minority authors and of courses on minority groups, likewise indicate that multiculturalism in society calls for some kind and degree of multiculturalism in the curriculum. Yet it is important not to dismiss arguments against multiculturalism in the classroom as mere reactionary talk. It does make sense to ask what constitutes "core knowledge" for planning, or what the "classics" of planning literature are which all planners should have read. Perhaps this is not the right way to ask "What should planners know?", but that question needs to be answered, in one form or another.

As students of urban communities and as members of a profession, planners and planning academics cannot run away from problems of social identity and collective understanding. When dealing with these problems, though, planning educators are often faced with some kind of "post-modernist syndrome": the multiplication of seemingly incompatible voices and perspectives. This phenomenon is not only a consequence of social heterogeneity or even of a healthier respect for difference. It is also an outcome of developments in social science itself, in particular the growing use of interpretive and phenomenological research methods. Yet it is one thing to recognize the "constructed" nature of phenomena, the specificity of situations or the multiplicity of voices; it is another to make the principles of social construction, specificity, and multiplicity so dominating as to freeze reasoned discussion among different people and to alienate them from one another.

Thus, planning educators have to decide how to teach about gender, race, and ethnicity without turning urban studies into gender studies or studies of race and ethnicity for a self-selected group of students. The inclusion of factors of social differentiation in planning curricula should be such that *all* students, regardless of their own background and interests, are exposed to them, asked to think about them, and encouraged to debate them. The creation of classes that deal specifically with issues of gender, race, and ethnicity is less valuable to planning education, I believe, than is the inclusion of these issues in classes on planning history, zoning, economic development, environmental policy, and so forth.

Opponents of "political correctness" on campuses argue that it fosters the self-segregation of students of different backgrounds. Defenders of "political correctness" respond that this not the case and that their adversaries should pay greater attention to forced segregation and to "academic balkanization" brought about by hyper-specialization. All of

them, whether pro- or anti-"PC," would do well to focus on the overall quality of education and, in particular, on the ability of educators to foster critical thinking on the part of their students. In a way, the question of what to include and what to exclude in a course or in a curriculum is secondary to the question of teaching quality. Classical texts can be taught in an exciting and enlightening way, marginal texts in a way that bores and dulls the critical mind. Introducing ethics, or race and gender, into a course does not do much good if it simply means teaching students another set of cliches. When it comes to critical thought, "how" often matters more than "what."

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## In this issue of the *Berkeley Planning Journal*

Heterogeneity has been a matter of discussion in the planning field for many years, first and foremost in terms of professional identity or lack thereof. As did preceding volumes of the Journal, Volume 6 reflects that heterogeneity. Yet despite the different subject-matters of the articles, several themes can be discerned.

First, the issue of urban growth is very much on the planning agenda in the early 1990s. Thus, **Peter Hall** considers the challenges that growth poses to "world cities" and proposes ways to efficiently and equitably manage metropolitan development and decentralization, in particular through regional agencies. **Gary Pivo**, on the other hand, focuses on the reformation of existing planning practices. He calls for a new approach to growth management which uses city-wide limits on the cumulative impacts of development rather than limits on the magnitude of projects. **James Bergdoll** explores the issue of local resistance to development, in particular high-density development in low-density areas. His article follows up on a piece he and Rick Williams published in the Journal last year, on the perception of density by residents. Bergdoll's article makes clear that neighborhood resistance is in part motivated by a dislike for certain building types and physical forms of development. **Susan Handy**, finally, provides a critical overview of arguments in favor of new forms of urban growth: "neo-traditional developments," such as pedestrian pockets, urban villages, etc. She discusses both the potential benefits to be derived from such developments and the problems that they may pose, in particular with respect to regional integration.

A second theme in this year's Journal is the issue of regional economic development. **AnnaLee Saxenian** studies the history and present

state of formal and informal organizations in Silicon Valley. She concludes that the continued health of the region's industry requires the creation of new institutions, institutions through which business leaders and innovators will be able to solve problems of international competition, work-force education, and regional planning. **Abel Valenzuela** directs his attention to another industrial region, the Los Angeles metropolitan area, and examines changes in its labor force. His extensive data-analysis shows that existing theories used to explain the occupational position of women and minority workers are not confirmed in the case of Los Angeles. He draws a picture of the regional division of labor with continued polarization along racial and gender lines. **Lee Axelrad** examines the California policies meant to promote the location of businesses in the state. He argues that the political and symbolic goals of state policy-makers are much more important than their economic development goals in explaining international promotion efforts.

A third and final theme of Volume 6, a theme that is dear to us here at U.C. Berkeley, is that of planning theory. Three articles address questions of planning theory, broadly defined, but each does so in a different substantive field. **Marcelo Cruz** examines practices of community development planning in South America. Building on the theory that community is a product of interpretation as much as of interaction, he criticizes planners for misunderstanding or even disregarding the specific meanings of economic and other activities to members of marginal groups. To be successful, local development policies should rest on community studies that reveal this symbolic world and at the same time enable the local population to participate in the planning process. **Pnina Plaut** tackles a problem of political and economic theory, namely of privatization of public goods and services, in the realm of transportation planning. She argues that debates on whether or not to privatize a service and on how precisely to do so cannot be settled by reference to competition. Rather, privatization decisions must be made on the basis of the specific policy goals being pursued, goals such as public control or increased efficiency. Finally, **You-tien Hsing** studies the role of forecasting in planning. She discusses the difference between projection and forecast, the technical, epistemological, and political limitations of forecasting, and the ways in which these limitations can be overcome.

After these ten articles, the reader will find another episode of "The Urban Fringe." The piece by **Richard Lee** on American autocracy fits within both the "Fringe" section of the Journal and the review section found in earlier volumes. His review of a book on the consequences of present federal (non-)policies combines a deep understanding of history, politics, and technological development, together with a strong dose of humor.

This year, we are inaugurating a new section of the Journal called "Current Debates." The four articles grouped under this title—the articles by Susan Handy, Pnina Plaut, Lee Axelrad, and You-tien Hsing—show what the purpose of the new section is: to offer space for a more theoretical treatment of key planning issues. Articles in this section present an analysis of important topics and a critical commentary on the various arguments being advanced about them. Some authors take a specific point of view; others present a more neutral picture from different perspectives. All of them contribute to ongoing discussions by reframing issues, establishing new links, and otherwise creating order in the rather confused universe of planning.

I would like to conclude this editorial with a more personal note, to express my gratitude to all those who participated in the production of this volume: Ruth Steiner, David Simpson, and David Van Arnam, as well as the members of the Editorial Committee and the staff of the Institute of Urban and Regional Development and of the Department of City and Regional Planning. All these people together have made it possible to continue the publication of a student-run journal of quality; all have helped perpetuate the tradition of debate and inquiry that is a the heart of academic writing and publishing.

Raphaël Fischler, Editor

## NOTES

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[1]Erazim Kohák, "Prague: A Mix of Hope and Trouble," *Dissent* (Fall 1991): 455-459.

[2]Theodore Draper, "Presidential Wars," *The New York Review of Books* (September 26, 1991): 64-74.

[3]As this volume of the Journal goes to press, the December 9, 1991, issue of *The Nation* comes to complicate the picture. Though the "anti-PC" charge of orthodoxy is being levelled at that part of the Left most closely identified with minority groups, a new charge of orthodoxy is being directed at a more conservative part of the Left which is taking its distance from minority groups. Thus, in their special issue entitled "The Assault on Equality: Race, Rights and the New Orthodoxy," guest-editors Adolph Reed and Julian Bond write:

> A specter is haunting liberal-left intellectual life—the specter of racist opportunism. [In various places,] its victim-blaming message echoes: Liberal and progressive forces have fallen onto hard times in American politics because they have become too closely identified with the excessive

> demands of blacks, feminists, etc. and have failed to give proper weight to the concerns of beleaguered white working and middle classes. This story is rapidly congealing into an unexamined orthodoxy, a ritual lament that seeks to justify what is at best a failure of nerve (p. 733).

[4]On disagreements over affirmative action within the black community, see Denise K. Magner, "Black Intellectuals Broaden Debate on Effects of Affirmative Action," *The Chronicle of Higher Education* (October 16, 1991): A17-A23.

[5]See George Will's syndicated column of July 14, 1991: "Prickly Groups Elbow Aside the Melting Pot" (printed in the *Oakland Tribune*).

[6]Back in the late 1960s, Frances Fox Piven and Richard A. Clowart were among those arguing that a certain degree of segregation was desirable. See "The Case Against Urban Desegregation," originally published in 1967 and reprinted in *Housing in Urban America*, Jon Pynoos, et al., eds. (Chicago: Aldine Publishing Co., 1973.)

[7]This is true, for instance, in White House policies on family planning and war reporting and in local policies on textbooks for children. On the latter issue, see Jim Abrams, "Worst Year Yet for School Censorship," Associated Press release of August 29, 1991 (printed in the *Oakland Tribune*).

[8]Problems of collective identity are not only present in the U.S.; other countries, such as France for example, are also undergoing an identity crisis because of increasing demographic heterogeneity. A French weekly magazine recently devoted its cover story to the question of "what it is to be French" (*L'Express*, October 25, 1991).

[9]One can object to the expression "Judeo-Christian," as it lumps together the world-views and sensitivities of two groups with a very troubled historical relationship, to say the least. I am using it despite these reservation in order to speak the language of those who are longing for "a return to our cultural roots."

[10]Dinesh D'Souza, "Sins of Admission," *The New Republic* (February 18, 1991): 30-33. This issue of *The New Republic* is devoted to a discussion of racial tension, multiculturalism, affirmative action, and other symptoms of "political correctness" on American campuses. For other articles on "PC" and related issues, see *The American Scholar* (Summer 1990 and Spring 1991); *The New York Review of Books* (December 6, 1990 and July 18, 1991); *Commentary* (April 1990, January 1991, and July 1991); *Tikkun* (July/August 1991 and November/December 1991); *Social Policy* (Summer 1991); *The National College Newspaper* (September 1991); and *Mother Jones* (September/October 1991). Weekly magazines such as *Time*, *Newsweek*, and especially *U.S. News and World Report* have carried short pieces on the subject, mostly between March and July of 1991.

[11]Quoted in Leonard Baker, *Brandeis and Frankfurter: A Dual Biography* (New York: New York University Press, 1984): 230.

[12]See Norman Krumholz' article on this experience and the reactions of planning academics: "A Retrospective view of Equity Planning: Cleveland,

1969-1979," *Journal of the American Planning Association* 48(2) (Spring 1982): 163-174, 181-183.

[13]Obviously, Krumholz and his staff did more than issue a statement of principles. They acted on those principles and did so with a certain degree of success. The point here is that the writing and publication of the "Cleveland Policy Planning Report" was seen as an achievement onto itself.

[14]Norman Krumholz and John Forester, *Making Equity Planning Work: Leadership in the Public Domain* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1990).

[15]See John Forester, op. cit.; Lisa Peattie, *Rethinking Ciudad Guayana* (Ann Arbor: The University of Michigan Press, 1987), Chapter 6; the symposium on discourse analysis, representation, and story-telling in the *Journal of Planning Education and Research* 10(3) (Summer 1991); and my paper on "Planning and Representation," presented at the 31st Meeting of the Association of Collegiate Schools of Planning (Portland, Oregon, 1989).

[16]On the specific topic of women and zoning, see Edith M. Netter and Ruth G. Price, "Zoning and the Nouveau Poor," *Journal of the American Planning Association* 49(2) (Spring 1983): 171-181; and Marsha Ritzdorf, "Women and the City: Land Use and Zoning Issues," *Urban Resources* 3(2) (Winter 1986): 23-27.

[17]Think also of the social and political meaning of professional standards in land-use planning and in the distribution of neighborhood facilities. About the latter topic, see Frank S. Levy, et al., *Urban Outcomes: Schools, Streets, and Libraries* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1974); Robert L. Lineberry, *Equality and Urban Policy: The Distribution of Municipal Public Services* (Beverly Hills: Sage Publications, 1977); and Steven Pinch, *Cities and Services: The Geography of Collective Consumption* (Boston: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1985).

[18]John Forester, *Planning in the Face of Power* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1989). See also Krumholz and Forester's *Making Equity Planning Work*, Chapter 14.