

...WHAT IS PLANNING...

Does Culture have a Place?

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WHAT IS PLANNING?

According to John Friedmann, author of *Planning in the Public Domain*, planning is a process reliant on technical knowledge processes where first planners define the problem, then model or analyze the situation, designing one or more potential solutions, and finally carry out a detailed evaluation (Friedmann 1987). This definition is inherently rational, where planners and the city council work cyclically to vision and implement the best interests of the community (Flyvbjerg 1998). The rational model is based on the economic theory of maximizing utility and efficiency, where, in the case of communities, is ideally manifest in a balance between personal rights and collective rights (Platt 1996).

However, planning as a profession is largely ambiguous to the public, where only a minority of the population actively participate in the so-called citizen participation process. To be up front, this paper is not intending to understand the overriding reasons why most of the public does not partake in the dialogic process of urban planning; instead it seeks to understand the languages of the two halves of the process: people and places. Using two seminal works in their own rights, Emily Talen's "The Problem with Community in Planning" and John Friedmann's "Planning in the Public Domain: From Knowledge to Action", this piece instead focuses on the relationship between the social and physical components (or lack thereof) of planning as a profession. Culture (the people's collective social identities and presence), and the built environment are also the two main elements of cities (Lukes 1995). Traditionally planning and the democratic process has shied away, nonetheless, from being affiliated with cultural processes (with the exception of its inclusion in the initial participation processes)(Gutmann 1994). As such, it clearly seems crucial to understand the fissure and disconnect between the two, in hopes of comprehensively addressing our cities' evolution and growth. Yet, as outlined below this is not apparently the case.

Centuries ago, most notably in London, when Europe was emerging from the middle ages, sweeping reform began to appear in cities to eliminate plague, crime, and health hazards. Manifesting as the early forms of contemporary American planning, these codes were the direct response to social upheaval, not property rights. (Platt 1996) Historically there have been countless attempts (i.e. Ebenezer Howard and Le Corbusier) to intentionally create physical spaces and places that are deterministic of resultant behavior (Kostof 1985; Kostof 1991; Kostof 1992), and countless more that unintentionally re-shaped the social landscape and patterns of Americans (Starr 1956; Whyte 1956; Gans 1967; Palen 1995; Cohen 2003; Hayden 2003). Charged with the duty of securing the health, safety, and welfare (a creed) of our environments for the people of America, planning has been around for over a century. (Platt 1996) These tenets have resounded since the creation of height limits in Washington D.C. in 1899. (Platt 1996) From this point the meaning of community planning in the United States has evolved to mean many different things to many different groups of people. (Talen 2000) The field of planning does not appear to adhere to this "creed" as it did when it originated in the early Twentieth Century.

According to John Friedmann (Friedmann 1987) areas of planning are...

- national security planning,
- economic planning,
- social planning, (meaning welfare programs, health, and social services)
- environmental planning,
- city planning,
- regional development planning

Friedmann's areas are largely physically, not socially, based planning concentrations. While Friedmann lists social planning as an area of expertise, planners do not normally in public planning departments touch directly upon these issues. And, since this is the case in the majority of communities, planning is in fact limited to areas of the physical environment (essentially limited to the protection of property rights). Our

federal government legitimized the community planning mechanism¹, and today its offspring (local zoning codes) attempt to preserve the equilibrium of the private realm, the public realm of community, and the governmental realm. Property rights is the main form of planning practice as both judiciary decisions and planning methodology both almost solely remain with the physical, not social domain. In other words, it is not addressing social elements of cities.

When the question is posed as to why this is the case, it is no wonder people have been directly eliminated from the process as social engineering is a taboo topic, and cultural and community development are difficult to forecast or plan for, implement ideas for, and evaluate or reflect upon. However, we cannot ignore the human social element as physical cities do not grow on their own. Countless authors have published ideas to refer to the notion of this action in some manner; some of the most notable are Leonie Sandercock' *Cosmopolis* (Sandercock 1999), Christianson and Robinson's *Community Development* (Christenson and Jerry W. Robinson 1989), J.B. Jackson's *Everyday America* (Jackson 2003), Chase's *Everyday Urbanism* (Chase, Crawford et al. 1999), Seymore Mandlebaum's *Open Moral Communities* (2000), and Adams and Goldbards' *Community Cultural Development* (Adams and Goldbard 2001; Adams and Goldbard 2002).

While all of these topics, ironically, are requisite of the efficacy of the communicative process, no area on Friedmann's list touches upon the root social component of how the public, organizations, and individuals communicate. Yet why do we need to plan for social interaction? While each of Friedmann's points relate to each other and are fundamentally core areas of growing and sustaining our communities, the development of social communication

- allows for the need for people to affirm their democratic role within society (action on citizenship) (Boyte and Hollander 1999; Sirianni and Friedland 2001; Boyte 2004),
- allows for direct economic development (Caro 1975),
- recognizes community is not just virtual idea as density of cities occur for a reason—transactions occur in person (Crumlish 2004),
- and recognizes people need access to alternatives both within their own growth and within their growth within society (social capital) (Weiss 1988; Cohen 2003).

In spite of this, quite a bit of literature alludes to how public and semi-public places even serve as nodes of community communication and the thus further planning as a field (Jacobs 1961; Rudofsky 1969; Kunstler 1993; Ehrenhalt 1995; Sirianni and Friedland 2001; Dolan 2002; Jackson 2003; Putnam and Feldstein 2003). To explain, the people within first places (the home) and second places (work) are first-order and second order connections, respectively, within social networks (Oldenburg 1999; Oldenburg 2001). And, according to major social capital theorists, it is the third-order (friend of a friend or new acquaintance) people that can provide the most valuable information (Kunstler 1993; Putnam 1993; Lennard 1997; Putnam 2000; Putnam and Feldstein 2003). Folks a person already knows more than likely already have the same inside track and conversations as one's self. Therefore, these third places serve as locations for potentially vital information transmittal, even about planning issues as cited in Friedmann's above. The identification, however, of how this communication at third places translates into planning action (either formally or informally) still largely consists of published work based on assumptions, not empirical research.

SOCIAL CAPITAL: A MISSING, MISINTERPRETED LINK

The social dynamics are not commonly understood by physical planners, and social scientists rarely understand how professionals deal with place and space. As a bit of background on the first, Professor Robert Putnam, professor of political science at Harvard and president of the American Political Science Association, has written numerous books concerning civic culture and social capital. Two of the books, *Making Democracy Work: Civic Traditions in Modern Italy* (hereafter known as MDW), and *Bowling Alone:*

¹ Legitimized through the State Enabling Act of 1924 Platt, R. H. (1996). *Land Use and Society: Geography, Law, and Public Policy*.

The Collapse and Revival of American Community (hereafter known as *Bowling*), have a high level of relevance to the subject matter of social interaction in public spaces.

MDW is a twenty-year effort by Putnam to study and explain the disparity behind the success of the governments of Northern Italy and the ineffectiveness and failure of those in Southern Italy. After measuring numerous factors including, but not limited to, perception of government efficacy, voter participation, institutional performance, and civic participation Putnam concluded that the regions of Italy with higher levels of civic participation in civic institutions (i.e. clubs, church groups, etc.) had the highest levels of social capital. Social capital, he surmised, begets an effective and well-liked government and a successful economy. (Putnam 1993)

Defined, social capital,

"refers to features of social organization, such as trust, norms, and networks, that can improve the efficiency of society by facilitating coordinated actions: 'Like other forms of capital, social capital is productive, making possible the achievement of certain ends that would not be attainable in its absence...For example, a group whose members manifest trustworthiness and place extensive trust in one another will be able to accomplish much more than a comparable group lacking that trustworthiness and trust...In a farming community...where one farmer got his hay baled by another and where farm tools are extensively borrowed and lent, the social capital allows each farmer to get his work done with less physical capital in the form of tools and equipment.'" (Putnam 1993)

In laymen's terms, Putnam demonstrated higher levels of participation in civic groups creates a higher general level of trust within a community, and consequently, a higher level of governmental and economic efficacy are generated. (Putnam 1993) In a continuation of the conversation from MDW, in *Bowling* documents the steadily decrease of participation in civic groups across the United States over the last century. Coinciding with the work he completed in his last book, he found states with the highest levels of civic participation also shared the highest levels of social capital. He stated, "Over the last three decades a variety of social, economic and technological changes have rendered obsolete a significant stock of social capital. Television, two-career families, suburban sprawl, generational changes in values—these and other changes in American society have meant that fewer and fewer of us find that the League of Women Voters, or the United Way, or the Shriners, or the monthly bridge club, or even a Sunday picnic with friends fits the way we have come to live. Our growing social capital deficit threatens educational performance, safe neighborhoods, equitable tax collection, democratic responsiveness, everyday honesty, and even our health and happiness." (Putnam 2000)

According to Putnam's definition of social capital, "features of social organization, such as trust, norms, and network, can improve the efficiency of society by facilitating coordinated actions", (Putnam 2000) peoples' trust and connections help promote higher levels of government and economic efficacy. His main paper lies with the assumption all social networks are formed in social groups. However, in public spaces (i.e. the street, squares, plazas, and parks) an entirely different network operates to create social capital. Public interaction via neighborhood contacts through the medium of the streetscape plays a large factor in the perpetuation of social capital. Countless pop-culture books tout this relationship (Kunstler 1993; Kunstler 1996; Koolhaas 2001; Kunstler 2001; Florida 2002; Koolhaas 2002; Florida 2005), but little empirically denotes the exact relationship between the two.

Social capital, when utilized from the streetscape, represents just one of the boons created by interaction in public spaces. It is common knowledge people communicate about both B.S. and actual problem-solving issues while in public or in semi-public. Not all communication about economic development, city planning, or social planning issues occurs behind closed doors in office buildings. In other words, environment and people are inseparable in Friedmann's list, and it appears the lack of addressing social needs in communities is a fundamental component of sustaining and planning for cities. Currently planning does not serve the necessary balance between people and the built environment. Perhaps a more macrocosmic approach needs to be taken into account when asking what planning is intended to be.

AREAS OF COMMUNITY

Community culture, community development, and community planning are all elements having different philosophies and programmatic styles; yet they all intend to build community as a goal. Emily Talen, Associate Professor of Urban and Regional Planning at the University of Illinois at Urbana Champaign wrote an article entitled, "The Problem with Community in Planning". She identifies three areas using the idea(s) of community within neighborhood planning—*community through design, descriptive use, and community building*. Essentially the same concepts as community planning, community development, and community culture, her definitions encompass the physical design being the first category (traditional planning goals), the second encompassing process-oriented development (community development), and the third being essentially the amorphous concept of the sense of community (community culture). (Talen 2000)

However, while examining the nebulous these areas of "community" she inadvertently included areas non-planners see as a broader agenda of community building as well, with planning being a subcategory.² (Karp, Kremer et al. 1992; Zukin 1995) It is appropriate for all definitions of community to exist if their relationships and convergences are itemized within a broader definition of community. Instead of eliminating the different concepts of community as having faulty terminology, the word community becomes a word defining all these areas together. From here, more succinct verbage would result in better defining social community, community design, etc. Much research is needed concerning the accountability of the microcosmic interrelationships between fields within the broader sense of community. These interrelationships of community building should not remain hidden, merely better defined and named.

Planners claim to "build community" and to sustain human settlements; nonetheless, the profession at large has become a highly physically-based field within the larger notion of community building. Shown here in FIGURE ONE are three major components of community building: community planning, community development, and community culture. Their combined overlap is the potential of enacting community building. Whatever the reason (a lack of resources, an outdated vision, or a general unwillingness of decision-makers in our country to change the planning paradigm in place) it is important to recognize there are "blinders" within America's current system preventing the triptych from sustaining a strong sense of community and planning. Planning is largely urban, and community development is largely rural (Borich 1990; Force 1996; Reaves 1999; Fehlis 2001). Americans, historically encouraged by actions of the federal government³, are overwhelmingly protective of their private rights in comparison with other cultures. (Platt 1996) Moreover, they have a general lack of trust for existing institutions⁴ designed to educate, aid, or direct on issues (Bonnen 1998). Even so, municipal planners fail to pull together the social dimensions of community culture and community development into their professional repertoire⁵. Their job responsibilities are largely limited to recommendations they make to local elected body. The question of what or whom is at fault is an entirely other area needing to be researched. Essentially these are parallel efforts below.

² See definition section below.

³ Citing the precedence of the protection of the Constitutional Amendments.

⁴ http://www.voice-of-the-people.net/ContentFiles/docs/VoP_Trust_Survey.pdf

One-third of people in the world distrust the education system, and over half distrust governmental institutions. More people in North America feel government does not act on the will of the people.

⁵ From examining the functions of professional planners through departments websites within the paper audit.



COMMUNITY BUILDING TRIPTYCH

Figure One

Considered polar in many aspects, these institutions (areas of community building) have developed very different philosophies and processes; as a result disconnect has ensued making them appear “intangible” and unconnected⁶. Upon research, community building in the United States does not appear to have a model encompassing the key elements of community culture, community development, and community planning. With all three elements needed to build community, why can’t the efforts and missions be amalgamated to bring forth a more comprehensive approach to improve community sustainability? Such a simple concept, Talen cites the idea of “community” is overlooked as a single, defined priority for our society and country, as it is muddled within various definitions of community. (Talen 2000) Perhaps it can be as simple as understanding the role of each definition within a larger mission of keeping communities within a healthy (self-defined by locals) existence.

Culture

What does it mean to be “American”? To understand the sociability as it relates to people within the physical context of cities this concept must be explored. The answer to this question is American culture IS community⁷. Community manifests as cultural identifiers. You can have culture without community (mass culture), but you cannot have community without culture. It is the communication, and the media of communication, that is the creation of the idea of a greater sense of something than one’s self.

Interestingly enough, culture as a concept is a new term developed by anthropologists in the 1970s; equally ambiguous and misused as the word community, today it has over sixty uses according to Oxford English Dictionary⁸. Susan Haack, in her piece “Manifesto of a Passionate Moderate”, lists seven different iterations of the most commonly understood notion of culture. (Haack 1998) Even so, Americanism (our collective

⁶ Of all the major works cited within this piece no reference referred to all three areas as community building tools.

⁷ Taking a look at Amazon.com’s top sellers in sociology, the majority of them are about different philosophies and definitions of American community elements.

⁸ <http://www.oed.com>

social culture) can be simply defined as being a member of a specific community⁹, or multiple communities for that matter. To be American, simply, is to identify with something, someone, or somewhere within the United States. However, as Robert Putnam poignantly indicates in *Bowling Alone*, **Americans don't get community**. (Putnam 2000) Perhaps this is because culture, as an institution and idea, is quite an irrational and indeterminate notion. Or it is perhaps because the public sphere is ethically held to neutrality, the collective social identity and the individual identities of culture have not yet been ascertained in our rather young democracy (Gutmann 1994). Charles Taylor, author of "The Politics of Recognition", states, "This crucial feature of human life is its fundamentally dialogical character. We become full human agents, capable of understanding ourselves, and hence of defining our identity, through our acquisition of rich human languages of expression...But we learn these modes of expression through exchanges through others." (Taylor 1994) Yet, he continues and also points out, "Consequently, the supposedly fair and difference-blind society is not only inhuman (because of suppressing identities) but also, in a subtle and unconscious way, itself highly discriminatory..." and "A society with strong collective goals can be liberal, on this view, provided it is also capable of respecting diversity, especially when dealing with those who do not share its common goals..." (Taylor 1994) In short, Taylor is pointing out there is potential benefit to wading the waters of culture, thereby bettering the PROCESS of democracy and sustaining our communities.

Jurgen Habermas furthers this argument by noting, "When a culture has become reflexive, the only traditions and forms of life that can sustain themselves are those that bind their members while at the same time subjecting themselves to critical examination and leaving later generations the option of learning from other traditions or converting and setting out for other shores." (Habermas 1994) This binding, according to Habermas, is the opportunity to partake in the democratic process of shaping the ethics and futures of their community. (Habermas 1994) Or, in not so many words, the process of planning.

An effective community planning process cannot occur without the basic understanding of local community culture. Additionally, community development cannot examine future goals without the inclusion of culture. Community culture, intrinsically affiliated with American capitalism and economic growth, must be considered when examining community building programs and their organizations. Just as certain groups consider culture TO BE community (Zukin 1995), others do so in community development (Warren 1978) and community planning (the community is the built environment) (Sorkin 1992).

Given a "bad wrap" by many disengaged Americans (Suarez 1999), community culture is struggling to remain central as a counter-culture of mass-consumerism is replacing the intricacies of U.S. individualism and freedom. (Sorkin 1992) While the perceived utility of consumerism has made the coffers of Americans spread further, choices and habits are becoming more monotonous. (Garreau 1991; Kunstler 1993; Oldenburg 1999; Schlosser 2002; Postrel 2003) Mass-consumerism mocks the plasticity and ennui arousing from suburbanization, the unwitting choice of residence of the majority of Americans. (Kunstler 1993; Kunstler 1996; Kunstler 2001) There appears to be definite room for improvement for the community building institution of culture.

Conversely, David Brain argues the opposite. By citing Gans' studies in 1962 (in Boston) and 1982 (in suburban areas) as evidence towards suburban lifestyle creating community he attempts to debunk this assertion. However, these studies merely examine distant relationships and community ties not related to local proximity and the neighborhood physical environment. Brain, along with Putnam (Putnam 1999; Putnam 2000) fails to see the connection mere physical design such as a tavern bar or local Laundromat can have on the social well-being of residents. (Oldenburg 1999) This is an important fallacy to recognize as while distant relationships through volunteer-oriented activity supports American lifestyles and thus a sense of community (Brain 2004), they can fail when the means to participate in them become unavailable. (Brain 2004)

⁹ www.dictionary.com Defines American as: "Of or relating to the United States of America or its people, language, or culture." These are essentially the elements of community.

In short, it appears an effective community planning process cannot occur without the basic understanding of local community culture. Additionally, community development cannot examine future goals without the inclusion of culture. Community culture, intrinsically affiliated with American capitalism and economic growth, must be considered when examining community building programs and their organizations. Just as certain groups consider culture TO BE community (Zukin 1995), others do so in community development (Warren 1978) and community planning (the community is the built environment) (Sorkin 1992).

Culture was included in the community-building triptych as American culture (both explicitly and implicitly) encourages a burgeoning American economy¹⁰. Community culture and the economy appear to be directly related. It supports effective community development¹¹ and enriches the community planning process¹². A number of programs included in the audit function independently to promote culture and community; yet rarely¹³, if ever, do community development or community planning programs have the resources to effectively relate their conventional issues with the culture at hand. Instead their resources function entirely on sustaining their own work.

Community Development

Community development is known by many as the practice of sustaining rural, ex-urban, suburban, and urban communities and neighborhoods. (Christenson and Jerry W. Robinson 1989) While this sounds a lot like planning, it remains a non-government field that actually encompasses social components (everyday culture) as the medium to resolve and plan for the future of communities. With the onslaught of the technology boom, however, Americans are losing touch with valuable traditional forms of culture while struggling to balance and even sometimes replace them with new forms of community. (Mitchell 1995) The practices of community development are needed perhaps more than ever before, as entire communities must reinvent, redirect, and sustain themselves to remain viable in the future.

Programmatically, the existing community development organizations in the United States are based on antiquated models of community. (Christenson and Jerry W. Robinson 1989; Borich 1990; Dogan and Pahre 1990; Oliver 1993; Kingsley 1997; Richardson 1997; Bonnen 1998; Yankelovich 1998; Axel-Lute 1999; Boyte and Hollander 1999; Overton 1999; Warner, Christenson et al. 1999; Council 2000; Talen 2000; Carr 2001; Culture 2001; Fehlis 2001; Holland 2001; NASULGC 2001; Morris, Pomery et al. 2002; Policy 2002; Quraeshi 2002; Rosen 2002; Dugery 2003; Eger 2003; Health and Partnerships 2003; Holland 2003) They are slow to adjust to the exodus out of and re-entry into central cities. Only in the last decade have signs¹⁴ appeared of shifting priority from rural-based community development to a balance of rural-urban within United States Department of Agriculture's (USDA) Extension Services, perhaps the most established community-development model in the country. This conventional community-development model does not appear to not have the where-withal required to react to community cultural needs. It took a full half-century to react

¹³ Lynch, R. (2002). Arts and Economic Prosperity: The Economic Impact of Nonprofit Arts Organizations and Their Audiences, Americans for the Arts.

¹¹ Kretzmann, J. P. and J. L. McKnight (1993). Building Communities from the Inside Out: A Path Toward Finding and Mobilizing A Community's Assets. Chicago, ACTA Publications.

¹² Public participation is a key tool in sustainable planning.

¹³ From the examination of the programs of all the references of the audit of this paper

¹⁴ Force, N. E. U. T. (1996). Urban Extension: A National Agenda, USDA.

, Reaves, J. (1999). Cooperative Extension: Making a Difference Through Urban Programs, USDA: Cooperative State Research, Education, and Extension Service.

, Fehlis, C. P. (2001). Urban Extension Programs, Texas Agricultural Extension Service.

, Policy, E. C. o. O. a. (2002). The Extension System: A Vision for the 21st Century, National Association of State Universities and Land-Grant Colleges.

to the need for urban programming¹⁵. This is yet another example of redefining community, and how different community needs affect different elements of the most appropriate community-building process.

Self-help, technical assistance, conflict assistance, and collaborative planning are four community development models recognized today in academic circles. James A. Christenson and Jerry W. Robinson, Jr., editors of *Community Development in Perspective*, cite most of these areas as different approaches to build community. While each appropriately applies to certain situations, they differ in the level of involvement of participatory input in comparison to the level of efficacy in the results.

The **Self-help Approach**, *the one that is least integrated at present within rational comprehensive planning but has the most potential to make a positive difference*, attempts to empower local residents to remedy their own issues. Akin to laissez-faire economics, this community development model assumes that people can problem-solve and resolve issues on their own accord when given the right organizational tools. According to Donald W. Littrell, author of the "Self-Help Approach", "Self-help is based on the premise that people can, will, and should collaborate to solve community problems. In addition to the practical problem-solving utility of this perspective, self-help builds a stronger sense of community and a foundation for future collaboration. It embodies the notion that a community can achieve greater self-determination within constraints imposed by the larger political economy in which it is embedded...In brief, self-help is a community building strategy." (Christenson and Jerry W. Robinson 1989)

He continued by positing empowering communities to achieve a capacity for self-help is fundamental to both the theory and practice of community development. More important is his distinction between the development *IN* a community and the development *OF* a community. Development *IN* represents the end result of community development while the development *OF* represents how these improvements are achieved (Christenson and Jerry W. Robinson 1989).

As further evidence of the potential need for self-help as a way to connect formal planning to informal planning, he cites how community issues are becoming increasingly technical with a growing dependence on state and federal agencies. "Because community problems often become technical problems, community leaders and officials find it easier and more "efficient" to make decisions and take actions without much community input, unless there is organized opposition. This pattern of official decision making is frequently vindicated by an apparent lack of public interest, but such a lack of public involvement is often attributable to a self-fulfilling prophecy...People will need to perceive that options are within their grasp, and that self-help efforts are feasible and appropriate for the task...Self-help efforts may therefore be directed more toward grant writing and/or exercising external political influence than toward finding the resources within the community." (Christenson and Jerry W. Robinson 1989)

The **Technical Assistance Approach**, conversely, can be considered polar to self-help; instead of operating under the assumption people can help themselves, this assumes a group or an individual knows best for a community thereby making the decisions without much input. Analogous to the idea of the City Beautiful movement, contemporary rational comprehensive planning, or even new urbanism, this model is typical of most community planning departments. It emphasizes the product instead of the process (as self-help does) and caters to the expectations of the elite of the community, effectively circumventing the largely open process of self-help. For example, the process of architecture or engineering projects mirrors this in they construct and execute a concept without employing a great deal of involvement in the decision-making process. (Christenson and Jerry W. Robinson 1989)

¹⁵ From the beginning of the suburban migration of the 1950's until the first decade of the Twenty-first Century and the formation of Urban Extension programs. "As the United States has grown, the metropolitan areas have become the home for the majority of the population." –Force, N. E. U. T. (1996). *Urban Extension: A National Agenda*, USDA.

While losing attention among academic circles, the **conflict approach** is largely based on the work of Alinsky (1969). Christenson explained the theory by stating, "The procedure is to get people together to articulate their needs and problems, to develop indigenous leadership, and to help organize viable action groups. While the self-help theme emphasizes people working together to achieve their goal, the conflict theme emphasizes polarization of groups based on salient issues and stimulates confrontation between opposing sides." (Christenson and Jerry W. Robinson 1989)

Collaborative planning, on the other hand, attempts to combine self-help and technical assistance, and asserts each alone does not constitute a solution to contemporary planning in America. To illustrate, The Center for Collaborative Planning website (Planning 2004), states it promotes "health and social justice by providing training and technical assistance and by connecting people and resources. CCP supports diverse communities in key areas, such as asset-based community development (ABCD), leadership development, working collaboratively, and community assessment and strategic planning." This is precisely where groundbreaking programs and organizations are headed (Healey 2003).

Planning, of course, was explained at the beginning of this paper.

INVESTIGATIVE LEVELS TO APPROACH COMMUNITY

While building community can be an individual, group, or programmatic process, the end goal remains the same. Individual and group processes fall into microcosmic areas; these dynamics are exceedingly specialized according to each set of contexts. This position is less than ideal as it can turn into a "he said, she said" argument about sound community building. Of course, these personal opinions are not as reliable as those of institutions as numerous contradictory or overlapping definitions of elements of community (i.e. community is this versus community is that) ignore the possibility of *including* all within a broader concept of community. In an effort to remain uncomplicated, the highest macrocosmic inspection "process relationships of programs building community" reveals the three main aforementioned types within the United States.

Keeping solidarity among these elements buys insurance, assuring the perpetuation of each institution (culture, planning, and community development). By accepting community as broader institution people assume it will always retain the ability to endure. How would we recognize if they were stagnating without looking at them through a single, focused lens? What if the "eye piece" was refocused from a fragmented, fuzzy picture of community towards a more lucid vision of community building? By training the proverbial "eye piece" on known community building institutions (planning, culture, and development) perhaps a clearer insight can explain the state of our communities.

Regardless, there ARE chords of discontent. Trancik (1986), Jackson (1996), Crawford (2000), and Talen (2000) all extol upon the fractures within the design techniques of community. Christenson and Jerry W. Robinson (1989), Borich (1990), Larson and Barnes-Moorhead (2001), Mirochnik (2002), Holland (2003), Walker et al (2004), and Planning (2004) all describe the challenges within the imperfect community development circles. Peterson (1996), Richardson (1997), Yankelovich (1998), Axel-Lute (1999), Boyte and Hollander (1999), Warner et al (1999), Council (2000), Carr (2001), Fehlis (2001), Friedmann (2001), Holland (2001), Spanier et al (2001), Learning (2002), Lynch (2002), Morris et al (2002), Policy (2002), Rosen (2002), Dugery (2003), Eger (2003), Richardson (2003), and Walker (2003) all explore the area of improvement needed within university community outreach. Hummon (1990), Ehrenhalt (1995), Oldenburg (1999), Talen (2000), Culture (2001), Higgenbotham et al (2001), Stone (2001), Jackson (2002), Schlosser (2002), and Larson (2003) all identify the social issues pertaining to community. With naysayers abounding at every level, local residents are disengaged from the community engagement process. (Etzioni 1993; Putnam 1993; Etzioni 1998; Oldenburg 1999; Putnam 2000; Putnam 2000; Oldenburg 2001; Putnam and Feldstein 2003)

It is time to re-examine the institutions of community building, specifically the relationship between the physical and social elements of the tenets of the goals of planning (health, safety, and welfare).

DEFINITIONS

Community Building:

...for the purposes of this paper "community building" refers to...

programming and actions empowering people to sustain living within a place with higher level of social interaction and a greater sense of personal or social identification with a community. This definition is derived from Talen, 2000.

Community:

Is inclusionary of all defined areas of expertise claiming to study an element of this concept. Together these insights become "community."

As defined on www.dictionary.com, is...

- ...a **group of people** living in the same locality and under the same government.
- ...the **district or locality** in which such a group lives.
- ...a group of people having **common interests**.
- ...a group viewed as **forming a distinct segment of society**.

Which coincides with the definition in *Community Development in Perspective (CdiP)* (Christenson and Jerry W. Robinson 1989)

[according to Hillery (1955) and Willis (1977)]

IS...

1. People
2. Place or territory
3. Social interaction
4. Identification

Which coincides with the definition in "The Problem with Community in Planning" (Talen 2000)

IS...

1. Membership
2. Influence
3. Integration and fulfillment of needs
4. Shared emotional connection

Chavis and Wandersman (1990) define community as symbolic interaction with the physical environment.

Development:

As outlined in *CdiP* (Christenson and Jerry W. Robinson 1989), is...

..."as social change is putting a particular ideological orientation into action to restructure the social normative and economic order for desired ends."

Community Development:

As outlined in *CdiP* (Christenson and Jerry W. Robinson 1989) is...

..."an educational approach which would raise levels of local awareness and increase the confidence and ability of community groups to identify and tackle their own problems." *CdiP* [Darby and Morris (1975, p.43)]

..."the process of local decision-making and the development of programs designed to make their community a better place to live and work." *CdiP* [Huie (1976, pp. 14-15)]

Community Culture:

For the purposes of this paper "community culture" refers to...

"The totality of socially transmitted behavior patterns, arts, beliefs, institutions, and all other products of human work and thought."..."These patterns, traits, and products considered as the expression of a particular community or population"¹⁶

Community Planning:

Refers to the conventional municipal (both community and county) staff and departments specializing in planning issues. **This area includes attempts to physically determine the public realm.** (Brain 2004)

¹⁶ According to www.dictionary.com

IMPORTANT CONCEPTS TO NOTE

Community development, community planning, and community culture are all parts of community building.

For the purposes of this paper community development focuses on the social and economic aspects of community building. In addition, community building includes design, culture, and place.

For the purposes of this paper the design of the places within community is the collaboration of planning and culture as successful architecture derives spatial physical context and the social context to make the most effective structure.

Perhaps the three main traditional institutions serving community building—community culture, community development, and community planning—can perhaps be amalgamated to develop a more effective model to sustain American communities into the next century. All previous areas claiming to examine community somehow fall within one of these three main areas. And, through this insight a more efficient, an effective existence of healthy communities (again, determined by local residents) will result. Community development can draw from culture in giving a more sound foundation to the decisions made for future community goals. It can draw from community planning as it is virtually impossible to direct the future needs of local residents without effecting the built environment they dwell within. Community culture needs to grow to understand the effects the built environment has on the social constructions and vice versa.

STRENGTHS AND WEAKNESSES OF COMMUNITY BUILDING INSTITUTIONS

The following is a list of strengths and weaknesses¹⁷ of the aforementioned three institutions most established in community building. As indicated there is great potential for collaborative work.

Community Culture

Weaknesses

1. *Limited long-term problem solving impact or visioning*
2. *Non-inclusionary of planning and government issues*

Strengths

1. *Is the essence of community identity and providing a sense of place*
2. *Capable of bringing people together in a comfortable medium*
3. *Common thread for everyone to participate in*

Community Development

Weaknesses

1. *Often is focused on policy-oriented visioning instead of cultural visioning*
2. *Rarely offers programming in community planning issues or about the physical community realm*
3. *Difficult model to change*
4. *Has a negative stigma as it is considered by some to be too "rural-based"—also because of this is losing funding sources*

¹⁷ All strengths and weaknesses are derived from attributes of audit. The non-profit and governmental programs were used for the cultural category, Extension Service programs were used for the community development category, and the governmental planning programs were used for the community planning program

Strengths

1. Visioning is a main component
2. Has an existing model where the input of current situation is evaluated to draw up tangible, implementable solutions

Community Planning

Weaknesses

1. Does not have the resources or the need within conventional departments to embrace community culture
2. Does not work in conjunction with community development efforts
3. Public engagement is minimal as it is largely technical assistance
4. Has a negative stigma as it is considered by some to be too "urban-based"
5. Difficult to change from conventional zoning and regulation standards established
6. Not directly able to directly influence community change as role of the planner is to advise elected officials in decisions

Strengths

1. Has the potential to be involved with all key decision makers and players within the community building process
2. By writ of the federal Standard Zoning Enabling Act the departments are the tool which municipal governments create the policies by which the physical community realms are created (Platt 1996)

PREVIOUS FAILURES IN COMMUNITY BUILDING THEORY

Chaotic in façade, community building is sinking further into the world of the intangibles or the ill-defined. Talen, again, cites the numerous irresponsible uses of the term "community." (Talen 2000) Numerous different extensive studies have explored the impact of various approaches to traditional community-building institutions. However, they often examine them as separate, non-mergeable institutions. Obviously their replacement is not idea. Instead these areas must balance to ensure the systems remain viable. In short, community can be best sustained if the greatest strengths and weaknesses within each triptych third are resolved into a cohesive model.

The following are a few citations of the more "famous" studies concerning community...note how rarely do they attempt to combine the physical and social/cultural elements of community building.

Following each piece in parentheses are the elements largely missing from the triptych community building elements.

- Robert Putnam, *Bowling Alone and Making Democracy Work: Civic Institutions in Italy* (**Community planning**) (Putnam 1993; Putnam 2000)
- Richard Florida, *The Rise of the Creative Class* (**Community planning**) (Florida 2002)
- Congress for New Urbanism, *The Charter of New Urbanism*, (**Addresses all three in some aspect, but is more philosophy than implementation**) (Urbanism 1998)
- Emily Talen and Gerrit Knapp, "Legalizing Smart Growth: An Empirical Study of Land Use Regulation in Illinois." *Journal of Planning Education and Research* 22, 3: 345-359 (**Culture, Community Development**) (Talen and Knapp 2003)
- DPZ, *The SmartCode* (**Culture**) (DPZ 2001)
- US Congress, *The Standard Zoning Enabling Act* (**Culture, Community Development**) (Platt 1996)
- Ray Suarez, *The Old Neighborhood: What We Lost in the Great Suburban Migration: 1966-1999* (**Community planning, Community Development**) (Suarez 1999)
- Ethan Watters, *The Urban Tribes: A Generation Redefines Friendships, Family, and Commitment* (**Community planning, Community Development**) (Watters 2003)
- James E. Reaves, "Cooperative Extension: Making A Difference Through Urban Programs" (**Community planning, Culture**) (Reaves 1999)
- Chester P. Fehlis, "Urban Extension Programs" (**Community planning, Culture**) (Fehlis 2001)

- USDA Urban Task Force, "Urban Extension: A National Agenda" (**Community planning, Culture**) (Force 1996)
- NASULGC, "The Extension System: A Vision for the 21st Century" (**Community planning, Culture**) (Policy 2002)
- Pew Partnership for Civic Change, *University and Community Research Partnerships: A New Approach* (**Community planning, Culture**) (Dugery 2003)
- Kellogg Commission on the Future of Land-Grant Universities, "Returning to Our Roots: The Engaged Institution" (**Community planning, Culture**) (Spanier, Byrne et al. 2001)
- The Rockefeller Foundation, *Creative Community: The Art of Cultural Development* (**Community planning**) (Adams and Goldbard 2001)
- John M. Eger, *The Creative Community: Forging the Links Between Art Culture Commerce and Community* (**Community planning**) (Eger 2003)
- Gary O. Larson, *American Canvas* (**Community planning**) (Wirth 1938; Chavis and Wandersman 1990; Larson 2003)
- Americans for the Arts, *Arts and Economic Prosperity: The Economic Impact of Nonprofit Arts Organizations and Their Audiences* (**Community planning**) (Wirth 1938; Chavis and Wandersman 1990; Lynch 2002)
- Urbanism as a Way of Life (**Community culture, Development**) (Wirth 1938; Chavis and Wandersman 1990; Lynch 2002)
- Sense of Community in the Urban Environment (**Community culture, development**) (Wirth 1938; Chavis and Wandersman 1990; Lynch 2002)

The problem is larger, however, than the above list; the concept of analyzing "community" is also being lost. (Talen 2000) For two hundred years we have been pondering the seemingly diminishing social and physical traits recognizable (or imagined) of the ideal community. (Brain 2004) In the Nineteenth Century people felt the identity of community was amiss as industrialization ensued (Brain 2004), and in the Twentieth Century sprawl began to restructure the urban condition even further. (Checkoway 1977) And, according to the Oxford English Dictionary, nearly fifty different interpretations of the word community exist today¹⁸.

David Brain, author of *From Neighborhoods to the Sustainable City: Social Science and the Social Agenda of the New Urbanism*, posits there are four problems with the notion of the "loss of community". First, he asserts many of the ills encircling this perception are imagining an ideal nostalgia never existing. Second, he states communities are achievements, not outcomes. This is significant in that it supports the concept of Jacobs' intangibles applied to community building. Third, he says every study where the researcher would expect to find a loss of community the researcher found it, instead. The researcher of this paper has strong reservations about this statement, as numerous studies state otherwise. (Ellis 1956; Berkowitz 1984; Hattox 1985; Oldenburg 1999; Putnam 2000; Ehrenhalt 2000, March/April; Bell 2001; Oldenburg 2001; Golab 2003; Putnam and Feldstein 2003; Guardian 2004) A better rephrasing of this assumption would perhaps entail the rephrasing with, "the researcher found it, instead, in usual places." Finally, Brain asserts there is a lack of conclusive empirical research correctly connecting the social values of community with the physical infrastructure. (Brain 2004)

Instead, Brain argues *civility* is instead the missing piece community member's search for. (Brain 2004) The day to day relationships between personal communities among strangers is reality, instead of the imaginary nostalgia. (Ehrenhalt 1995; Brain 2004) However, assuming local residents rely solely upon personal relationships, regardless of proximity to home or work, allows for the negligence of this system to fail the individual or personal community. Brain concedes underprivileged community members are the ones forced to experience this balance (Brain 2004), but does not concede there is a place for both among the affluent car-obsessed majority.

Again, Emily Talen, author of *The Problem with Community in Planning*, explores the abuse of the phrase "community" among different genre and professions. With architects and designers, town planners, developers, bankers, sociologist, psychologists, environmentalists, artists, elected officials, and home owners (to start the list) (Talen 2000; Brain 2004) each defining this notion in a different manner, a crucial lack of

¹⁸ According to www.oed.com

connectivity and parallel ties their overall efforts together. Perhaps, however, the greatest fissure exists between the design fields and the sociologists as social community and physical community often attempt to enable "community" as an end product of the other, without having much research or proof to do so.

The main empirical concept of community is protecting their existence in the best form possible by striving to make the best decisions along the way. At this juncture it is important to note sustainable communities are made so only through actions and effort. The PROCESS of achieving this is building community. (Talen 2000) But what are, precisely, the intangibles of this process that are missing from Friedmann's list?

Intangibles are sometimes capable of creating new relationships and explanations not obvious in the absence of these ties. There are a plethora of intangibles within communities; the complexities apparent with the dynamics, institutions, people, and places blur the comprehension drawing new (or hidden) ties. (Brain 2004) Doing so would violate the interests of this equilibrium. For example, if one particular culture is emphasized with a local planning zoning code, the relationships of other cultures being celebrated would, by default, suffer.

To delve more deeply into the balance of physical environment and people (the social dynamics) Talen posits it is not possible to physically create environments that create a directed set of social behaviors (Talen 2000). An extreme example is prison systems' alteration of social behaviors. However, she confuses social behaviors as an attempt at community building when she points out the assumption "physical environments can engender social interaction and thereby build a sense of community" (Talen 2000) is, again according to her, fallible. If her conclusion, "The best we can confidently say is that certain types of physical designs promote certain types of social behaviors and responses for certain kinds of people" (Talen 2000) is true, it is the admission there are limitations to physical planning.

If this is the case, then two alternatives are...

- to deny that there are social elements to be planned for, or...
- to admit the presence of social elements.

To follow Talen's logical question, "Is it even desirable for planners to be involved in fashioning emotionally supportive relationships between neighbors via various development proposals?" the two histories of each of the aforementioned two alternatives must be acknowledged. The first, the denial there are social elements to be planned for resulted in crime/social upheaval/economic upheaval in the urban renewal projects of the last half of the Twentieth Century. While the attempt was to rebuild spaces to become more sociable, the overall effort failed miserably as they solely attempted to manufacture both place and people's behavior.

The second, the admission there are social components to planning is essentially what the field of community development is already. Of course, as such, it appears the more rational alternative would be to admit their presence. If this is the case, then an entirely new area of planning expertise must be developed. Community development, as explained above, attempts to define the problem, then model or analyze the situation, designing one or more potential solutions, and finally carry out a detailed evaluation (Friedmann 1987), but with communicative growth in mind instead of the physical realm of communities. It uses culture (socially transmitted behavior patterns, traits, and products that are an expression of a particular community) as a medium to understand the communicative patterns of a community. Culture is the conduit for the process of sustaining the community.

If planners do have the responsibility to ensure development growth about certain social behavior patterns in the physical realm, then the entire debacle of urban renewal of the Sixties and Seventies may be avoided in the future. Today, with the income gap between the rich, the middle class, and the poor growing exponentially, planners must begin to recognize there are cultural and social elements to the growth and sustainability of economic development, physical site development, environmental planning,

etc. In other words, they at least need to admit there are social components needing to be planned for within the health, safety, and welfare of their community.

With the image creation/identity branding and marketing industry for communities growing in priority, it is communication patterns and culture being examined. While some cities like Chicago have set up departments to address the planning and sustaining of culture, there are thousands more not understanding the integrative nature of the physical and social elements of planning. Community development exists in all fifty states through Extension Services, and some like Iowa State University and Wisconsin are beginning to incorporate planning and culture into their missions. Michigan has implemented a cool cities initiative where all cities work towards planning and cultivating their culture as the state recognizes the economic development potential in doing so. And, cultural planning is the norm in Canada and Great Britain. Further research must be conducted to understand the exact nature cultural communication translates both formally and informally into the resolution of planning issues in the United States.

If Talen's assertion that planners cannot THROUGH physical planning incorporate social elements while working towards sustaining the health, safety and welfare of our communities then it is time to recognize the alternatives. In short, there is much potential to further the field of planning if cultural components of community are included alongside the more traditional physical planning areas of expertise (Friedmann 1987). While this notion appears gargantuan and uncontrollable at first, it is important to recognize there are models in existence where the parameters have been developed. Hopefully sometime in the near future the inclusion of social and physical elements of our communities will occur to increase the efficacy and theory of planning even further.

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