Resistance and Response in Planning

Contributors: Edited by Susan S. Fainstein and John Forester

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Introduction: Resistance and Response in Planning

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The thoughtful contributions that follow are instructive in their similarities. They suggest that "resistance" is often just a simple synonym for "opposition." In this broad "pluralist" sense of resistance, environmentalists resist highway advocates in California (Norgaard); preservation advocates resist affordable housing proponents in lower Manhattan (Zukin); supporters of sustainable design battle preservationists in Queensland (Dedekorkut and Burton) and Stuttgart (Novy). In New York (Lubinsky) and Rhode Island (Agyeman and Stewart) local leaders organize to resist legacies of racism, while in London (Keith) planners and politicians counter the power of capital. Planners find themselves on all sides of these disputes, and activists, seeking to avoid appearing parochial, appeal to costs and benefits, public welfare and interests, standing rights and regulations. In liberal democratic contexts, this is business as usual, but in two of our cases mobilized citizen resistance has faced largely unresponsive state power. In Guam (Guåhan) we see resistance to an imperial military presence (Lee and Na'puti); in Singapore resistance to unchallengeable state authority (Smith). Lubinsky's case of New York City schools and Norgaard's case of high-speed rail in California suggest that, in the U.S., plans without strong public support will flounder. In all the cases, we can wonder whether resistance to change is driven by racism or conspiracy theories, threatens a greater good, or reflects justifiable distrust of oversold initiatives or governmental overreach.

Generally the conflicts discussed here involve what Aysin Dedekorkut Howes and Paul Burton describe as planners' "perennial attempts to reconcile the possibility of localised harms (real or perceived) with benefits to a wider group resulting from proposed development." Frank Popper (1985) has famously called these "locally unwanted land uses" (LULUs), and they continue to vex any planning projects promising to change neighborhoods, landscapes, or municipalities for some alleged greater good. Although some may dismiss resistance as purely selfish NIMBYism aimed at retaining privilege or racial exclusion, often the driving motivations are more complex. For example, in the school redistricting case in Queens described by Adam Lubinsky, changes in school feeder areas may cause families that paid a premium for their homes – to allow their children to attend particular schools – suddenly to find their expectations upended; their preferences for school reputation, proximity, and predictability can be traced back to histories of racial privilege, but they can involve more than racism alone.

Defenders of the status quo generally invoke higher goals like protecting the environment, preventing boondoggles, or preserving cultural identity. Those goals can still matter, even if some hide racial fear and antagonism behind them. In any case planners committed to democratic participation in planning decisions cannot just brush aside local concerns in the name of a greater good (for a sustained discussion of these issues, see Inch et al., 2017). Moreover, planners now confront juggernauts of opposition mobilized through social media, and they need to find effective ways of insuring that a wide public is consulted.

One particularly difficult issue involves timing. For example, the transportation cases in California, Australia's Gold Coast, and Stuttgart and the cemetery demolition in Singapore all involve plans that were initiated decades earlier to improve transport, develop more concentrated urban form, and promote economic growth. Although affected communities could negotiate changes in routes, or

perhaps whether trains should go above or underground, they could not reformulate the original goals that constrained negotiations. Yet, when officials enacted the original plans, objectors did not foresee the impacts on their communities and often did not participate in their creation. Thus, Singapore authorities are proceeding to destroy a cemetery that a general plan had earlier specified as a site for a highway and housing. Opponents of the demolition had not noticed this provision when it was first formulated and only later mounted vehement resistance. As Nick Smith explains, the government could impose its will regardless of opposition, although its aims of building a high-way and housing in Singapore do at least seem consonant with the general values that underlie the government's claims to legitimacy. In contrast, the aim of creating a free-fire zone in Guam represents a simple imposition of colonial power.

In the present epoch, differing from the days of wholesale urban renewal and highway construction, planners call for transit-oriented development, mixed uses, architectural diversity, inclusionary zoning, and greater equity. Sharon Zukin comments that the imposition of mandatory inclusionary housing within the context of the rezoning of New York's SoHo district echoes the high-handedness of the Robert Moses epoch. Even if New York's planners have different aims from Robert Moses, like him they require neighborhood residents to conform to their overall goal – in his case efficient automobile traffic flow and modernist high-rise structures; in the more recent instance, greater densities, varied architecture, and affordable housing. In SoHo, as in the transit examples, residents did not oppose the overall planning goals – affordable housing and mixed-income, racially diverse neighborhoods – that gave rise to the rezoning but mounted resistance when they discovered the potential impacts on their part of the city.

In several of our cases, we see not only negotiations between planning bodies and resisters but also struggles in the courts, along with pulse-taking public surveys and a referendum. In both California and Guam, opponents invoked environmental legislation and took to the courts to block construction. Even when courts allow projects to continue, these legal strategies can delay construction for many years, greatly increase costs, and empower those with access to financial resources. Within the United States legal strategies have been deeply politicized: objectors to mass transit extensions have often received economic and legal support from right-wing organizations like the Pacific Legal Foundation (PCF), a self-proclaimed "nonprofit legal organization that defends Americans' liberties when threatened by government overreach and abuse" (PCF, 2022a). The PCF has fought redistricting aimed at making schools more racially and income diverse, declaring: "Racial balance is not a worthwhile goal for public schools" (PCF, 2022b).

Novy relates how a referendum supporting a rail line in Stuttgart ended the battle over its construction. One might interpret this result either as showing the triumph of citywide over parochial interests or as indicating that developer money can overcome justifiable resistance to harmful actions. Referenda can empower those who may benefit from a project but who are not in the directly affected neighborhood, but they may also greatly oversimplify the issues involved, while amplifying the voice of those financially able to promote their views. Referenda raise the question of who should participate in decisions with neighborhood and citywide or regional effects; a related question asks about the representativeness of community activists. Planners invoking Sherry Arnstein's (1969) well-known article demanding citizen power might wish to give an affected neighborhood's spokespersons the final say if they represent the interest of previously powerless people; others would argue that planners as mediators should bring contesting parties to an agreement on the best course; yet others would contend that deep differences are unlikely to be reconciled and that elected officials representing broad interests should determine the final outcome.

We live now in an era of intense polarization. Local planning issues frequently mirror national and international ideological divisions. Issues of social inclusion have become especially heated and controversial. In Germany, for instance, the right-wing party Alternative für Deutschland (AfD) has inflamed opposition to immigration and the construction of mosques. Questions of who should have housing, where affordable housing should be located, who benefits from climate mitigation measures, and whether to compensate for past racial discrimination through reparations – all these have attracted the attention of supra-local groups. In the United States, national right-wing groups have promoted state-level legislative actions that would stop localities from enacting measures directed toward sustainable development (Trapenberg Frick et al., 2015). Groups like the Proud Boys, the Oath Keepers, and the Three Percenters have also shifted attention from national to local issues, generally opposing measures aimed at greater equity (Frenkel, 2021).

Progressives have typically resisted initiatives threatening to strengthen social exclusion or increase automobile dependence, while libertarians have opposed measures limiting the prerogatives of private property owners. The contributions collected here describe diverse instances of resistance to planning in several countries, their causes, their impacts, and the responses of planners to them. Most of these essays show that planners have to manage multiple and sometimes conflicting multiscalar commitments – to progressive causes like social diversity, equity, inclusion, and climate mitigation as well as to political values of accountability and citizen participation. Many of the pieces that follow show how backing from elected officials is key if planners hope to achieve progressive goals in the face of mobilized opposition.

These essays raise significant problems of political and ethical theory. Debunking a unitary public interest is the easy part; much more difficult but no less pressing is giving an account of how plural, differing, conflicting interests can live together. Lubinsky's case of deliberate citizen disruption is less an argument against participation than one for the rights of citizens to be heard when bullies would otherwise shut them down. The other NYC case, the rezoning of SoHo, highlights an issue where there are passionate advocates among the public on both sides and contradictory principles at stake. It points to the dilemma of "tragic choice": how do we make decisions and live with them when both opponents (identity, history, and preservation matter! – as in Smith, Zukin, Lee and Na'puti) and proponents (well-functioning transport and sustainable urban form matter! – as in Dedekorkut Howes and Burton, Norgaard, and Novy) have "good arguments," have important concerns, and care for human welfare (Davy, 1997)? Coase-ian principled possibilities of compensation might do more to give "principles" a bad name than to help rivals live together with differences.

Keith's London case suggests that when planners and politicians work together and retain a commitment to progressive goals, pragmatic, if imperfect approaches to solutions are achievable. What Rittel and Webber (1973) once labeled "wicked problems" might not be solvable, but they might nevertheless be practically accommodated. Resistance to planning initiatives may simultaneously complicate planners' lives and awaken them to unforeseen potentialities. These papers show that resistance to planning measures raises issues that planners cannot simply dismiss, but neither are they necessarily meritorious.

Disclosure Statement

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Indigenous Resistance as Multiscalar, Insurgent Planning under Empire

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Guåhan (Guam) is the southernmost island in Låguas yan Gåni – the ancestral oceanic home of the Indigenous Chamoru peoples. After Guåhan's 1898 annexation by the United States, the U.S. Supreme Court declared Guåhan an unincorporated territory. Today, the United Nations recognizes Guåhan among 17 non-self-governing territories – indicating the island's compromised sovereignty.

This colonial situation has created multiple injustices for Chamorus, most pertinent among them being the ongoing issue of U.S. militarization – a key process through which the U.S. empire perpetuates global Indigenous dispossession from Turtle Island to Oceania and beyond. As of 2023, the U.S. military occupies nearly 30 percent of Guåhan's tåno' (land). U.S.-imposed legal mechanisms enable this dispossession of Chamoru land, through labyrinthine land registration procedures (e.g. General Order No. 15) and eminent domain. Further, the U.S. wields the formal authority to negotiate and enter international military agreements without the free, prior and informed consultation of Guåhan's local authorities (Kuper & Bradley, 2021). The U.S. now plans to relocate 5,000 U.S. Marines from Okinawa to Guåhan – despite fierce, decades-long resistance from Chamoru sovereignty activists.

As two Chamoru scholars with ancestral roots in Guåhan, we theorize ongoing Indigenous resistance to militarization of our homeland by the U.S. as *multiscalar, insurgent planning*. Analyzing Indigenous resistance against 21st-century imperialism matters for two crucial reasons. First, it moves beyond the persistent localism haunting Indigenous planning scholarship. This subfield helpfully assesses how multiscalar legal and policy mechanisms constrain Indigenous planning practice, but often neglects how Indigenous peoples *also* leverage these mechanisms in mounting resistance. We need to understand how multiscalar law and policy simultaneously serve both as sites of constraint, and as sites of resistance and transformation. Second, it builds on Indigenous planning scholarship "taking Indigenous political authority seriously" (Dorries, 2012, p. iii) by centering already-existing Indigenous practices of resistance. Such practices can extend beyond state and/or professional planning, and may maintain an agonistic relationship with them, but are critical as they strengthen Indigenous sovereignty over our own tåno' (land) and tåsi (ocean).

Insurgency

In 2017, the U.S. Department of Defense (DoD) announced plans to build a live-fire training range complex on 1,200-acres of Litekyan (Ritidian Point). As of 2023, implementation of these plans is ferocious, ongoing, and egregious. First, Litekyan is a sacred place – home to medicinal plants for our suruhånu (traditional Chamoru healers), ancient Chamoru relics (e.g. latte stones, pottery), and ancestral burial sites. Second, Litekyan bears deep cultural and environmental importance as home to precious other-than-human relatives, including Guåhan's largest and oldest limestone forests and hundreds of endangered species central to our island's rich biodiversity. Third, the anticipated 6.7 million lead bullets to be fired annually pose a contamination threat to our tåsi –specifically the Northern Guam Lens Aquifer, which provides the island with 85 percent of its drinking water.

The grassroots group Prutehi Litekyan: Save Ritidian (PLSR), along with a constellation of Chamoru-led community organizations (e.g. Blue Ocean Law, Guam Community College EcoWarriors, Independent Guåhan, Duk Duk Goose Inc./Nihi, Protect Guam Water, Micronesian Climate Change Alliance) have pursued diverse strategies in their resistance to ongoing militarization. Community organizations like PLSR center Chamoru relationalities to our tåno' and tåsi. The rhetoric of their public education and advocacy efforts identifies the losses accompanying the militarization of Litekyanand recognizes Chamorus, whose ancestral lands in Litekyan were expropriated via U.S. eminent domain, and and whose traditional livelihoods are dependent on Litekyan's abundance.

Drawing from our archipelago's five-century-long experiences with imperialism and from Guåhan's century-plus experiences under U.S. empire, these organizations articulate parallels between ongoing and historical military occupation to reinforce the arguments against unequal and unjust character of Guåhan-U.S. relations. Beyond standard legal issues concerning the impact of militarization on our drinking water, soil and several endangered species, Chamoru community organizations call for the continuous preservation of Chamoru ways of living and being.

Core to the *insurgent* character of Chamoru-led community organizations are the culturally-specific ways that they discursively and materially position their advocacy efforts as acts of Indigenous sovereignty. They seek not only to disrupt colonial governmentalities that manufacture Indigenous consent to land dispossession and cultural erasure but also to reaffirm the sacredness of Indigenous values and worldviews. These practices of Chamoru values thus provide crucial resources for challenging the looming, corrupted shadows of 21st-century U.S. empire.

Multiscalar

Locally, PLSR highlights the social, cultural, and environmental impacts of the live-fire training range complex through public service announcements, press conferences, informational booklets, social media engagement, podcasts, guided site tours, and op-eds in local news outlets (Na'puti, 2019). To place pressure on Guåhan's Maga'håga (highest ranking daughter, or Governor in this context), Lourdes "Lou" Aflague Leon Guerrero, and on national authorities to halt the construction, they organize protests and rallies. They are building long-term community organizing infrastructure through annual Young Protectors scholarships that support youth environmental advocacy to protect and defend our sacred tåno' and tåsi. In addition, they advocate and lobby within the Guam Legislature to strengthen territory-level laws and policies to protect Litekyan. In 2021, for instance, they successfully mobilized community residents to provide public testimonies and to contact legislators in support of Resolution 210-36, affirming Guåhan's right to protect its oceanic ecosystems from environmental harm, and Resolution 55-36, affirming the importance of the Northern Guam Lens Aquifer for local public health.

Given the limited powers of the territory-level government of Guam (GovGuam), and absent robust formal regulatory and bargaining mechanisms between GovGuam and the U.S. DoD, PLSR has frequently turned to U.S. national environmental law to rein in U.S. military expansion. In 2022 alone, they served as plaintiffs in two federal lawsuits. The first, filed alongside the public interest law firm Earthjustice in the District Court of Guam against the U.S. Air Force and the DoD, argues that the defendants are out of compliance with the National Environmental Policy Act by failing to prepare an adequate environmental impact assessment of anticipated open burning and detonation procedures (Delgado, 2022). The second, to be jointly filed with the Center for Biological Diversity and Blue Ocean Law against the U.S. Navy and U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, argues that the relocation of Marines from Okinawa would adversely impact 15 endangered species in Litekyan and would therefore violate the Endangered Species Act. Historically, such lawsuits have been an integral part of the Chamoru sovereignty movement repertoire, with previous efforts successfully halting the construction of a similar firing range in the sacred village of Pågat (Na'puti, 2019) and enshrining habitat protections for 23 endangered

species across Låguas yan Gåni as part of the legal case against Marine Corps base relocation (Phillips & Aguon, 2022). As Chamorus are currently unrecognized as Indigenous peoples under U.S. federal Indian law, federal environmental law often serves as our de facto bulwark against the continued desecration of our Indigenous nation.

Aligned with the many Indigenous peoples unrecognized and/or underserved by their respective nation-states, Chamorus have also turned to international law and global governance institutions (e.g. the United Nations) to affirm our status and rights as Indigenous peoples. For example, in March 2021, Blue Ocean Law and the Unrepresented Nations and Peoples Organization successfully advocated for three United Nations Special Rapporteurs (on the Rights of Indigenous People, on Cultural Rights and on Human Rights and the Environment) to issue a joint allegation letter criticizing the U.S. for its inadequate support of Chamoru self-determination, as well as the lack of free, prior and informed consent of the Chamoru peoples in ongoing U.S. military expansion in Guåhan (Unrepresented Nations & Peoples Organization, 2021). While this joint allegation letter lacks formal regulatory power or enforcement mechanisms, this unprecedented condemnation draws crucial attention to ongoing U.S. imperialism in Guåhan, and it places additional international pressure on the U.S. to reconsider its status quo relationship with our homeland and our people.

To strengthen legal constraints and political pressure on U.S. military expansion in Guåhan, these examples reflect a multiscalar advocacy strategy that combines local community organizing, federal environmental legal action and appeals to international Indigenous rights through global governance institutions. Ultimately, Indigenous resistance happens through many channels. When planning scholars and practitioners dare to venture beyond the standard contexts of the professional planning field, and when we permit ourselves to empirically discover what channels matter, for whom, why, and how, we may find ourselves invigorated by the expansive possibilities for solidarity and justice – in Låguas yan Gåni, Oceania, Turtle Island and beyond.

Disclosure Statement

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Moving from Advocacy Planning towards Reparative Planning

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Embedded in the history and practice of US racial segregation, mainstream urban planning has been intentionally used as the "spatial toolkit of White Supremacy" (Agyeman, 2020). Planning practice has directly affected the lives of Blacks and African Americans through both historical and contemporary planning processes such as racial covenants, racial then single family/exclusionary zoning, redlining, and freeway construction. Although calls for resistance and change are getting louder, much urban planning perpetuates colonialism in practice through the ongoing effects of historical processes: marginalized neighborhoods disproportionately experience the impacts of climate change, environmentally caused disease, dilapidated housing, and lack of available outlets for nutritious food. Planning theorists and the academy have also done their part in enabling White Supremacy: "For too long, the ire of planning theorists has been the rational model and the industrial/capitalist city, not the corresponding racial model and racial city" (Williams, 2020, p. 7). In addition, universities have knowingly changed black neighborhoods for their own benefit (Wolf-Powers, 2022).

We argue both that resistance must address these specific injuries – requiring reparative justice to create just spaces with black people in mind – and that planners can be instrumental in producing such change.

Even though the dominant mode of planning has reinforced racial injustice, members of the profession have since the 1960s resisted planning approaches that discriminated against African Americans. Advocacy and equity planners have tried to block displacement and encourage housing and economic development in low-income neighborhoods. Recently, calls for reparative

planning have arisen as a form of resistance within the profession. It differs from the earlier demands for racial equity that arose from 1960s racial unrest and the Civil Rights movement by calling for targeted investment to redress previous racial injustices (Williams, 2020). The federal government has responded with the Reconnecting Communities initiative, aimed at removing racist infrastructures such as freeways. Planning directors of over 30 U.S. cities have mobilized and launched a manifesto, *Commitment to Change* (Planning Directors, 2022), aimed at healing the wounds of history. Mayors have formed an organization, MORE (Mayors Organize for Reparations and Equity), which is encouraging reparative practices within their constituencies. The MORE (2022) coalition is committed to supporting Congressional action proposed in a bill (US Congress, 2023) that would establish a *Commission to Study and Develop Reparation Proposals for African Americans*. The commission would identify (1) the role of the federal and state governments in supporting the institution of slavery; (2) the forms of discrimination in the public and private sectors against freed slaves and their descendants; and (3) the lingering negative effects of slavery on living African Americans and society. The formation of a Commission with these goals represents a reparative approach to confronting and dismantling institutional and structural racism. Undergirding and buoying this collective shift in planning *intent* has been the profound impact of the #BlackLivesMatter movement.

Fed by decolonial, postcolonial and abolitionist planning theory (Dorries et al., 2019; Porter et al., 2021), the current discourse around reparative justice focuses specifically and unambiguously on "*justice*" for people of the African diaspora, whereas earlier planning discourses focused on more diffuse concepts such as *diversity, equality*, and *equity* (Metzger, 1996). There are two big differences here between reparative and equity-based planning: first, the focus of reparations is race, not class; and second, the redistributive principle in equity planning, in and of itself, is not considered sufficient to fulfill the criterion of reparations.

Nevertheless the earlier *diversity/equality/advocacy* discourse and equity planning paved the way for today's more justice-focused approaches, alongside the important concept of recognition (Young, 1990). Like Young, we see recognition of difference as critical to reparative planning, leading not to *equality* of treatment but to *different* treatment of groups or individuals based on the extent of their marginalization and lack of privilege and power. Recognition in this sense is a necessary precursor to reparative planning.

Here we highlight Providence, Rhode Island as a case study to illustrate how communities and city governments are advocating for "moving beyond" equity/advocacy planning towards reparative justice through reparative planning.

Providence, Rhode Island

In 1968, some Providence residents responded to existing disparities and weak government efforts to remedy them by forming Citizens United Renewal Enterprises (CURE), which was intended to engage directly with Providence's affordable housing and community development challenges. Organized as a non-profit corporation, CURE built strong neighborhood alliances, giving community members an active stake in their neighborhoods' futures. Today, organizations like the Rhode Island Black Heritage Society and 1696 Heritage Group have used the momentum from the race-based disparities illuminated by the COVID-19 pandemic along with the energy of the #BlackLivesMatter protests of 2020 to confront and resist racist practices in urban planning. They have researched and dissected the history of discriminatory policies that over the past have affected BIPOC (Black, Indigenous, and other People of Color) communities

in the city, providing not only stories of cause and effect but ones of resilience, advocacy, and resistance to a colonized status.

The publication of *A Matter of Truth* (Rhode Island Black Heritage Society & 1696 Heritage Group, 2021) resulted in a formal acknowledgement from the mayor's office regarding the injustices Native American and Black Americans continue to endure. It argues that racial equity begins through the admission and repair of injustices. This report informed recommendations of the Municipal Reparations Commission, which described how race-based discrimination changed neighborhoods largely composed of people of African heritage and limited-income. Ultimately, the report calls for "measurable outcomes for reparations to *close the present-day racial wealth and equity gap* that has left too many BIPOC residents of Providence much poorer than their white counterparts" (Providence Municipal Reparations Commission, 2022).

A partnership through the office of Mayor Jorge Elorza, a member of MORE, formed the African American Ambassadors Group which "uplifts, celebrates, and empowers the African American community in Providence by developing and advancing City of Providence policies that dismantle oppressive systems and extinguish racial, social, and economic equity gaps for African Americans" (African American Ambassadors Group, 2022, 6 February). The Ambassadors Group initiated a process of Truth, Reconciliation, and Municipal Reparations for Black, Indigenous, and other People of Color in the city, which resists more limited considerations of reparations through maximizing a broader series of community conversations to complement and inform a focused, evidence-based approach to reparations.

Mayor Elorza has proposed that $15 million in the city's American Rescue Plan Act funding be used for racial equity purposes (City of Providence, 2022a). Within that sum, $500,000 is being proposed for direct relief to Providence residents, $4.5 million is being proposed for infrastructure, and the remaining $10 million for a yet-to-be-defined pandemic inequities program. Unlike in other cities, the reparations program does not include cash payments to the descendants of enslaved people; rather, the city's plan is to fund an array of initiatives aimed at closing the racial wealth and equity gap. Mayor Elorza signed the Reparations budget into law in 2022, joined by Reparations Commissioners and community members (City of Providence, 2022b). It is envisaged that parts of the budget will be implemented through an 11-Point Investment Plan.

Reparative Justice through Urban Planning

From our perspective, the Providence, RI case of resistance resulting in reparative planning is welcome and goes well beyond advocacy/equity planning in both its *focus* (race not class) and its *means* (justice, not equity). It should be seen as a well thought out and organized local/ized experiment. At present, it represents an understandably broad-brush approach to establish the *principles* of reparations, rather than a strict focus on *what a reparative urban planning might look like in practice*. Based in discrete policy areas such as housing or land use, it therefore still falls far short of the call from Williams (2020), MORE and *Commitment to Change* for a paradigm shift affecting not only *how* we plan, but *what* we plan and *who* benefits.

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No potential conflict of interest was reported by the author(s).

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In Defence of the "Wutbürger": On Rage and Reason in the Revolt against Stuttgart 21

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In Stuttgart, the 600,000-inhabitant capital of Baden-Wurttemberg, a railway and urban development project of superlatives is currently in the making. Once completed, Stuttgart 21

(S21) – the most ambitious and expensive project of its kind in Germany – will not transform rail transport in the city and region. Funded by the German government, the EU, the state of Baden-Württemberg and the city of Stuttgart, it will add almost 100 hectares to Stuttgart's urban core, made possible by a new underground railway station and some 60 kilometres of tunnels replacing the city's old central terminus and above-ground tracks. But S21, which also connects Stuttgart's centre with its airport and nearby Ulm, is also exceptional because of its history as one of Germany's most contentious megaprojects.

Protests failed to stop S21 but nevertheless proved momentous. Many perceived the resistance to S21 as marking a watershed moment, dividing German history into a time "before" and a time "after" it (Korte, 2011). Although for some it signaled a new era of civic engagement, others saw the protests in a more negative light. These critics described them as constituting a maelstrom of naysaying and populism, making reasonable debate impossible and threatening to turn the country into a *Dagegen-Republik* ("opposition republic"). Such portrayals place the conflict around S21 squarely in the context of discussions in the planning literature about the "corrosive effects" of the "current populist moment" (Rivero et al., 2022, p. 1) and the challenges that NIMBY resistance poses for planning (Schively, 2007).

The Bone of Contention: S21

The conflicts over S21 began with interrogating the project's real purpose. For supporters, it is an integrated transport and urban development project boosting sustainability through improved rail transport and compact urban development, while paving the way for economic growth. They present it as a unique opportunity to expand the city centre, eliminate the bottleneck caused by its terminus station and better connect it to long-distance rail transport. For opponents, on the other hand, S21 conforms to Flyvbjerg's "iron law" regarding mega-projects: they are "over budget, over time, under benefits, over and over again" (Flyvbjerg, 2017, p. 11). They claim that S21 originated as a real estate project around which transport policy goals were only later conceived and that the pursuit of growth and profit is the driving force (Novy & Peters, 2012).

Making Sense of the Protests

Resistance to S21 proved so momentous that a new word entered the German language: "Wutbürger." First used in the magazine *Der Spiegel* in 2010, the neologism was declared word of the year 2010 by the *Gesellschaft für deutsche Sprache* ("German Language Society") and subsequently added to the Duden dictionary. The latter defines it in a neutral tone as "citizens protesting and demonstrating very forcefully in public out of disappointment with certain political decisions." The journalist that introduced it portrayed it as an expression of a growing populism gripping German society, likening it to right-wing, anti-migration movements and citizens' initiatives opposing wind farms. He identified distrust of the state, naysaying and NIMBYism as its cause and attacked participants for thinking "only of themselves and not of the future of their city," for claiming to be able to "judge things better than the politicians," for "shouting and hating," and for disregarding the rules of democracy (Kurbjuweit, 2010).

Some protesters played right into the Wutbürger stereotype with abrasive verbal attacks against project protagonists and copious conspiracy rhetoric alleging a mafia-like plot behind the project. Others, however, showed restraint, and the Wutbürger portrait ignored the reasons

for the protests. When stakeholders started construction in 2010, financing matters were still unresolved, and planning approvals on individual project components had not yet been reached. Against this background, the partial demolition of Stuttgart's historic and listed main railway station was perceived as a provocation, and the conflict escalated in full when the construction work extended to the historic Schlossgarten, Stuttgart's most central park. At least 160 people were injured during a police crackdown on peaceful demonstrators defending several hundred trees from being felled. The event became known as Stuttgart's "Black Thursday" and precipitated one of the largest protests in the city's history, with up to 100,000 people taking part.

The rage that gripped the city at that time and later was not the "blind rage" the Wutbürger portrayal implied. Rather, it was provoked, perhaps intentionally, so as to delegitimate the opposition. Protestors were not NIMBYists primarily concerned about the project's impacts on themselves. Rather, they concluded that the project's costs exceeded its benefits, it incurred serious geological and ecological risks, it would negatively affect Stuttgart's cultural and natural heritage, and it would produce undesirable development. Objections to the purpose of the project combined with a rebellion against the process by which it was developed, which Habermas (2010) characterized as based on a "formalistic understanding of democracy" that failed to provide citizens with opportunities to "develop an informed opinion on which they could have based their vote" and precluded a "democratic process of opinion- and will-formation."

The mobilisations raise many questions about the nature and manifestations of populism and their implications for planning. As is characteristic of populist movements, some protest leaders invoked an antagonistic demarcation between "the people" and "the elites," portraying the former as morally good and the latter as aloof, corrupt, and self-serving. However, the movement was neither exclusionary nor authoritarian, and its anti-establishment rhetoric was paralleled by equally provocative invective from its opponents. Moreover, the protest did not involve a rejection of expertise. It counted prominent academics and established civil society organisations in its ranks, and numerous informal professional associations such as "Engineers against S21," "Architects against S21" and so on emerged as part of the movement. The "Aktionsbündnis" (Action Alliance), which served as the resistance"s umbrella organisation, meanwhile accumulated considerable expertise themselves, while the involvement of the Green Party meant that the objectors did not shun normal politics. Furthermore, the opposition developed its own railroad plan – Kopfbahnhof 21 – showing that it was not just saying no to something without offering anything in its stead.

The protest undoubtedly had a conservative impetus. Habermas (2010) described it as an attempt to preserve "a familiar world in which politics intervenes [destructively] as the executive arm of supposed economic progress." This leads us back to the question of whether the mobilisations against S21 were progressive or regressive. The best answer is that they were both. The defence of "traditional" Stuttgart against a perceived threat played a significant role, but the publication of an alternative plan allowed the opposition to refute the accusation that they rejected all change. Exposing the fact that issues presented as technical were, in fact, deeply political helped to repoliticise the discussion about the future of Stuttgart's rail hub. Many activists and civic groups contended that the struggle was about more than "a dubious train station project." It was also about issues such as the quasi-privatisation of Deutsche Bahn; the entanglement of politics and business; and, as the title of a book by protest protagonists (Lösch et al., 2010) put it, the question of "Who owns the city?"

Legacy and Lessons

As with other mass movements, the opposition to S21 encompassed competing factions and internal contradictions, which contributed to tactical missteps, leading ultimately to the movement's defeat. One of these missteps by the Aktionsbündnis was agreeing to "mediation talks" after the events of "Black Thursday." In the end, the idea of being able to stop S21 by better arguments turned out to be naïve. Although the negotiation produced recommendations to make S21 "more efficient, attractive, environmentally friendly, disabled-friendly and safe" and prevent freed-up land being used for speculative urban development, they were non-binding. The main outcomes of the talks were that the protests lost momentum, the project could claim new legitimacy, and the opposition became increasingly divided.

New hopes were raised after state elections in March 2011. The Greens, together with the centre-left Social Democratic Party (SPD), ousted the conservative Christian Democratic Union (CDU), which had ruled the state uninterruptedly since the 1950s. In their coalition agreement, they decided to settle the question of whether the state should continue to finance S21 through a referendum. It came out in favour of the project supporters – who had outspent the opposition many times over for their campaign – prompting the Greens to abandon their opposition. Soon after, it became clear that rumours of massive cost increases, denied by the project proponents before the referendum, were true, causing many to cry foul. The Greens, however, stood by their position despite a steady stream of further cost increases and other problems. Some former allies meanwhile remained steadfast in their opposition and continued weekly protests, refusing to consider the project a *fait accompli.*

Given the advanced stage of construction, *this* position indeed appears irrational; however, a strong case can be made that protests *in toto* were not. The struggle against S21 was a popular revolt with a populist bent rather than simply a populist revolt. Coinciding with a rise of urban social movements elsewhere (Swyngedouw, 2014), it echoed long-standing diagnoses and demands of progressive urban struggles but also showed that the boundaries between progressive and regressive/defensive movements are fuzzy and that NIMBYism as an explanation (and condemnation) of resistance rings hollow in the absence of further analysis.

Disclosure Statement

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Resistance to Light Rail: Public Good or Trojan Horse?

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The City of Gold Coast is the sixth largest city in Australia and has been one of the fastest growing over the last three decades. Interstate migration triggered by the recent pandemic and the award of the 2032 Olympics and Paralympics to Brisbane have further fueled growth, with the population expected to double to over one million by 2050. Geographical limitations mean that there is little land within the city capable of major development. The city could, therefore, be said to have reached its natural limits without a significant transformation of its urban form and density. The current statutory plan for the greater South-East Queensland region and the local City Plan both propose urban densification and infill to accommodate this anticipated population growth. These planning objectives have been challenged by some residents opposing its local impacts and more broadly by advocates of restrictions on growth (Lowe, 2012).

In anticipation of further growth, the Gold Coast light rail project (Figure 1) emerged as a serious policy proposition almost twenty years ago, with the first and second stages constructed in time for the city to host the Commonwealth Games in 2018. Construction of Stage Three, which extends the network south along the city's coastal strip, is about to commence, and detailed planning and design is underway for Stage Four, which extends even further south, providing a better connection from the airport to the rest of the city.

The early stages attracted some localised opposition, especially from business owners along the route who feared the adverse effects of prolonged construction work and loss of on-street parking near their premises. Some more generalised opposition also arose then and grew rapidly among those committed to the relatively unfettered use of private motor vehicles.

Planning for Stage Four has seen opposition that is significantly different from earlier phases in two main respects. First, oppositional groups have become much more organised, especially in their skillful use of social media to attract support and communicate effectively. Second, opposition has moved to the development effects of this infrastructure, which will likely bring more height and density to a relatively low-rise, low-density city. In other words, resisters see Stage Four as a catalyst for undesired urban change.

Figure 1 The route and stages of Gold Coast Light Rail (https://www.goldcoastinfo.net/goldcoastmap/).

Stakeholders: Motives and Alignments

Residents who live along the route are the most directly affected and have been very vocal in resisting the proposal. Some local and national politicians have backed these local constituents without considering the needs of the city as a whole or indeed of others of their own constituents. The relatively recent dissent from some Indigenous people represents a new element in the broader campaign of opposition. The most deep-seated objections are typically couched, implicitly or explicitly, in terms of the effect this infrastructure will have on the character of the affected suburbs. This is the "Trojan Horse" argument alluded to in the title of this essay. Fears of increased congestion during and after construction because of reductions in the number of lanes of the highway and of parking spaces are other major points of objection. Some argue that this route is not the most efficient or effective way to extend the light rail network south, while others use the familiar trope of labelling it a "white elephant" that will not achieve its required patronage in an area already sufficiently served by underused buses. Concerns have also been raised about the possible nuisance impacts of the light rail such as increased crime, noise, and anti-social behaviour, although there is little or no evidence that these risks are associated with light rail projects anywhere.

Even though the transformation of the area will happen regardless of the light rail extension – indeed it is already happening – the project will undoubtedly hasten it. Typical of similar locational conflicts, the opponents rationalize their local objections and parochial concerns with higher-order planning issues and moral interests such as disturbance to national parks and Indigenous sites as well as impacts of climate change. In general, there are diverse positions, and any claims to speak on behalf of the whole community should be treated cautiously.

State and local government surveys show that over 60% of the Gold Coast residents support the light rail (Cansdale, 2022; Queensland Government, 2021). Supporters of the project argue that similar objections were raised about the now completed first two stages and have turned out to be unfounded. They also contend that the light rail will make areas livelier by bringing in foot traffic, and they accuse the opposition of NIMBYism (Figure 2).

Role of Politicians and Governments

The Gold Coast City Council and especially its Mayor and the Queensland government have mainly supported the project, presenting a united front to the Federal government in seeking its financial support. Before the last federal election, however, the member of the House of Representatives for the area publicly called for the withdrawal of federal funding from the project, igniting a conflict with state and local governments. The Gold Coast mayor accused her of an arrogant backflip and argued that "It's ludicrous to have stage 1, 2 and 3 fully funded by all three tiers of government and go," "Well, now it's in my backyard. I don't want stage 4" (quoted in Cansdale & Sheehan, 2022).

Figure 2 Federal representative calling for withdrawal of funding (https://www.karenandrewsmp.com.au/community-news/my-open-letter-to-the-residents-of-palm-beach/).

Implications

In the long run, the opposition will probably not change the proposed route of Stage Four, which is economically and technically the most feasible, is consistent with local and regional statutory plans, and serves the city's broader agenda and ambition for a built form able to accommodate a growing population. The case has implications for planning practice and approaches to communicating with different publics, political authorities, and other levels of government. Public engagement needs to widen its scope to more than the project under discussion if it is to effectively communicate the bigger picture and how a particular project fits into it.

Attacks on NIMBYism from academics and civic groups have not especially assisted planners in their perennial attempts to reconcile the possibility of localised harms (real or perceived) with benefits to a wider group resulting from proposed development. The case of the Gold Coast Light Rail exemplifies these challenges for planners and politicians. The potential of the project to add to the transport choices of residents of and visitors to the city as a whole, but also to transform neighbourhoods along its route, has stimulated concerted and increasingly influential opposition. In turn, this challenges politicians at all levels of government to determine how much weight to attach to the strongly held and stridently expressed views of some constituents in comparison to what they think are the views of the silent (or simply less strident) majority in both their locality and the city at large. While this challenge for politicians is not new, we suggest that the digital social media channels now available to local activists make this assessment even more difficult. The new medium enables the loud minorities to organise better, gain more support, and entrench their views.

More broadly this case also exemplifies some other challenges for effective participation and consultation in planning: who decides who should be invited to participate (and be listened to), on which terms and at what spatial scale? As noted above, the broader plans and strategies that support investment in light rail on the Gold Coast are themselves the product of consultation and participation, but from an earlier period and with a broader public. In this respect those resisting the light rail once it is planned for their neighbourhood have probably waited too long – they should have been arguing against it in principle years ago when city and regional planning priorities were being debated and determined. The resistance has been reactive.

Transport policy making and local transport planning are unavoidably complex exercises that invariably generate conflict and contestation. Early public engagement, involving as many different people and interests as possible and clearly showing options and impacts, can help resolve some of this conflict. Nonetheless, new social media channels are entrenching disagreements and making compromise more difficult. Resistance to the extension of the existing, already successful Light Rail in the Gold Coast illustrates vividly how honest discussion of the changes it will cause in neighbourhood character exacerbates opposition. The challenge for local planners is to create effective arenas for the public to debate these more widespread and long-term processes of change before they become parochial conflicts around public transport infrastructure in particular neighbourhoods.

Disclosure Statement

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A Narrow View of Planning, with Enduring Consequences: The Case of California High-Speed Rail

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California's attempt to build high-speed rail offers insights for planners facing varied forms of resistance and shows how planners' actions can make negotiations solutions-oriented or contentious. When planners are able to build trust and find mutually beneficial "wins" for affected parties, they can foster pragmatism over contestation. This case also indicates how the social composition of a community resisting a planning initiative affects the character of resistance and response. Specifically, planners appear less able to overcome resistance from well-resourced communities firmly set on opposing a project. Even when resistance does not halt planning projects, it still significantly shapes planning outcomes.

Case Description

The state of California has long envisioned high-speed rail linking the San Francisco Bay Area with Sacramento and the greater Los Angeles and San Diego metropolitan regions. In 2008,

California voters approved Proposition 1 A, giving nearly $10 billion to the California High-Speed Rail Authority (CA HSRA). Since Proposition 1A's approval, the CA HSRA and its planners have faced roadblocks but remain optimistic that high-speed rail will be "up and running by the end of the decade" and claim they are "implementing the project as voters intended." The HSRA has "environmentally cleared 422 miles of the 500-mile route" (Interview, CA HSRA, 2022), construction is underway in Madera and Fresno Counties, and trains will likely be running from Merced to Bakersfield by the end of the decade (Figure 1). This rail section represents around 33% of the mileage for the intended Phase I route and does not include either anchor city of San Francisco or Los Angeles, raising questions about its usefulness. Further implementation remains unclear and would require additional legislative backing and financial support. Planning scholar Bent Flyvbjerg recently said, "this project is going to the graveyard of famous boondoggles" (quoted in Vartabedian, 2022).
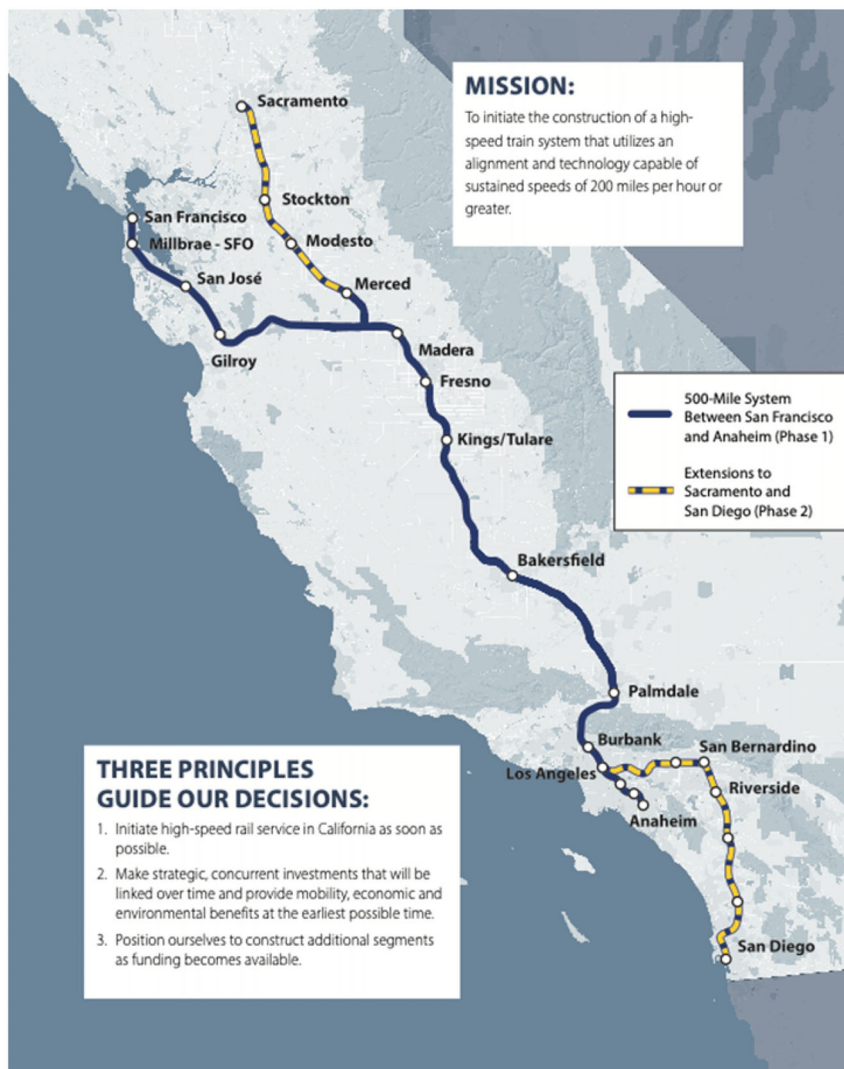

Figure 1 California's proposed high-speed rail route (CA HSRA, 2022).

The rail project has many opponents. Central Valley farmers have long decried the eminent-domain implications of the proposed rail corridor, and environmental groups like Save Angeles Forest for Everyone have expressed concern over the route planned through national-forest lands. Rural California communities are particularly affected by the project and initially resisted it entirely, although former HSRA Chair Dan Richard told me that Kings County residents were ultimately pragmatic. Other communities in the San Fernando Valley, however, were far from pragmatic when calling for a prohibitively expensive, fully underground route through their community, calling surface rail an "environmental injustice" (Vartabedian & Karlamangla, 2015). Creative solutions to address their objections were eventually devised, but they substantially increased project costs.

HSRA planners thought that the most threatening resistance came from the wealthy communities of Atherton, Menlo Park, and Palo Alto. These cities sued the HSRA, claiming errors in its environmental impact report. Their lawsuits were extremely effective in delaying the project and had the further effect of limiting what the planners could say in public, thereby eroding trust in affected communities.

Planning and the California High-Speed Rail Authority

At the onset of the planning process, the HSRA conceptualized its task as a narrow technical challenge, and the staff, preoccupied with the difficulties created by topography, did not focus on its broader social, economic, and political implications. The regional director of the HSRA Lipkin likened the role of planners to "drawing lines on a map like spaghetti" to find viable routes through California's mountainous and densely populated terrain (Interview, 2022). While the planners were highly attentive to requirements of the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA), they ignored the opportunities it created for environmental lawsuits. Accordingly, HSRA staff were blindsided by the lawsuit from Atherton, Palo Alto, and Menlo Park.

Moreover, despite being beholden to other actors – elected officials, private firms, civil-society nonprofits, and economic-development associations – the Authority did not present a broad programmatic vision. Thus, at first, the Authority did not recognize the importance of working with other regional and metropolitan transit systems like Bart, CalTrain, Amtrak, or LA MetroRail. HSRA planners could have partnered with cities, transit agencies, and private-sector firms. For instance, they could have worked with San Jose, which has plans for an integrated mega-station connected to a new Google campus. In addition, they failed to consider potential real-estate development gains adjacent to rail stations as part of their mandate, even though many public development agencies use land-value capture, which is the basis for tax increment financing (TIF), to finance projects in the United States and abroad.

When HSRA planners did meet with residents, they were told not to comment on their concerns due to the active lawsuits. Ashley Swearengin, who was Fresno's Mayor during the high-speed rail planning process, explained:

> [HSRA planners] would be asked all these pointed and direct questions about alignment or process, and they were handcuffed … if you are a normal, rational, concerned member of the public who has property that's impacted, and the bureaucrats in front of you are falling asleep, or they're literally saying "no comment, no comment, no comment," you're going to be kind of upset.

According to Swearengin, experiences were more positive in Fresno, where elected officials built and maintained a coalition of supporters so that planners could focus on technical and environmental goals:

We had the Economic Development Corporation, building trades, civil engineers, local service providers, who stand to benefit from billions of dollars of construction, my administration, and then young, creative class people. We all hung together on it. And we kept support right at about 50%. But it was always a 50/50 issue.

Swearengin thought it best that local elected officials lead political and communicative processes, so that agency staff and planners could focus on technical goals.

Forms of Resistance and Planners' Strategies in Response

There were multiple forms of resistance to the railroad: (1) direct advocacy by resident groups and nonprofits within public forums and media outlets; (2) political opposition by State and local officials in the legislature and the U.S. Congress (President Obama's endorsement of high-speed rail electrified Republican opposition at state and local levels, even though high-speed rail was previously a bipartisan issue); and (3) juridical opposition by municipalities and nonprofits with lawsuits filed in state and federal courts.

Legal resistance was most effective. The cities of Atherton and Palo Alto partnered with civil-society organizations like the Planning and Conservation League, Community Coalition on High-Speed Rail, and Mid-Peninsula Residents for Civic Sanity. Their lawsuits delayed the project, eroded trust, and severely threatened its viability. Privileged jurisdictions with connections to judges, knowledge of litigation processes, and resources to bring and sustain complaints played an outsized role in resisting the planning project, even when the project's effects did not most centrally lie in these communities. Because of various delays associated with the litigation, planners lost access to key matching funds and bond money.

Each kind of resistance required a distinct response from CA HSRA planners. The Authority responded to advocacy through media campaigns of their own, with varying effectiveness. In Fresno, a politically embedded Republican mayor assisted by working with affected residents and businesses in off-hour strategic negotiations, while planners played a key role in providing guidance on route feasibility and parcel relocations on a parcel-by-parcel basis. They successfully defended their plans in court, and in 2014, after four years of litigation, the California Court of Appeals found no reversable CEQA error and sided with the Authority.

The Normative Meaning of the Planning Goal and Resistance

The benefits of high-speed rail are abstract, will only accrue in the long term, require significant expense and coordination, and are afforded to many Californians equally. Meanwhile, costs are borne by specific communities and individual landowners. Some communities chose a path of *pragmatic negotiation*, scraping concessions from HSRA planners, while others chose a more adversarial approach: outright opposition to high-speed rail *on its face*, refusing to negotiate with planners. A normative lesson emerges: *tactics* for resistance are as important as opponents' overall normative *position* on a given planning project. In California, groups that contested the project on its face ultimately lost out. Pragmatic communities, by contrast, experienced local wins alongside high-speed rail – e.g. an improved irrigation canal, a newly rebuilt fire station, and underground rail tunnels.

The overall consequences of the high-speed rail project remain uncertain. Will it be a $113-billion boondoggle, or America's largest infrastructural advancement in the 21st century? Politicians' future priorities and state referenda will determine the answer. As of now, HSRA

planners have largely cleared their route legally and environmentally. What remains is shoring up public support for costly and technically sophisticated implementation.

The case reveals that communities' social dynamics shape the potency of project resistance, and local contexts must guide planners' responses. It likewise shows the importance of project leaders determining planners' roles in large public projects from the outset. Project leaders must allow residents to feel heard throughout the planning processes, even when legal roadblocks restrict planners' ability to explain their actions. Additionally, effective project planning requires agencies to partner with other entities, in this case with other transit departments, local and regional jurisdictions, and private-sector anchor institutions. Planners can take a proactive, progressive stance on revenue by thinking creatively about capturing land-value increases due to the public projects' construction. Lastly, and perhaps most importantly, planners and the public at large must find ways to identify, proactively counter, and speedily address oppositional litigation to a project that can stall its implementation and handcuff planners in public settings.

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Bukit Brown and the Illiberal Ghosts of the Singapore Model

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In 2011, a public controversy erupted over the demolition of Bukit Brown cemetery in Singapore. Amidst an unusually passionate critique of government planning, Bukit Brown became a national touchstone, suggesting the emergence of a more civically engaged polity. A

decade later, Bukit Brown's development shows that planning participation in Singapore is still highly orchestrated by the state, which readily sacrifices democratic pluralism to maintain its authoritative control over urban development and guarantee its core values of equity, diversity, and efficiency. While Bukit Brown thus confirms Singapore's illiberalism, it also exposes how much the widely imitated Singapore model of urban planning is based on the outdated assumption of a unitary public interest and a shared system of values. Whereas relative national unity once made a technocratic, apolitical approach to planning a key part of Singapore's development, the contemporary pluralization of values exhibited by the Bukit Brown controversy means that illiberalism may be a liability for the Singapore model's continued success.

The dominant values of the Singapore model, which offers citizens robust social welfare, durable social peace, and rising living standards, are encapsulated by the planned transformation of Bukit Brown into housing and infrastructure for 50,000 people. Singapore is lauded for its public housing system, in which 85 percent of citizens participate. Housing is also the cornerstone of Singapore's commitment to ethnic diversity, through residential quotas proportional to the overall population. Finally, as an island city-state with limited land, Singapore's development relies on efficient land use, for instance by designating cemeteries for uses the government deems more economically productive. As government officials frequently noted, "the dead must give way to space for the living" (quoted in Huang, 2014, p. 25).

While the cemetery was slated for redevelopment in the 1991 concept plan, the 2011 announcement of impending road construction came as a surprise to many and catalyzed an intense public reaction. Criticism focused on Bukit Brown's heritage value and the sense that the nation's development had sacrificed many of the cultural and historical resources that might anchor Singaporean identity. The British colonial government opened Bukit Brown as Singapore's first Chinese municipal cemetery in 1922, though its use as a burial site dates to the 1870s. With more than 100,000 individual tombs, the cemetery reached capacity in 1944 and was officially closed in 1973 but is still actively used for ancestor worship. After independence in 1965, most cemeteries were demolished and replaced with columbaria, making Bukit Brown one of Singapore's oldest extant cemeteries. Singapore's most prominent civil society groups highlighted this distinctive history, including the Nature Society and the Singapore Heritage Society, which hosted a well-attended public forum. Several grassroots campaigns emerged advocating Bukit Brown's preservation, including All Things Bukit Brown and SOS Bukit Brown, which organized an online petition with more than 100,000 signatures. But the government ultimately rebuffed this broad-based public outcry, making only minor adjustments to the planned road alignment.

When the government invited representatives from relevant community groups to meet, activists expected a substantive discussion of potential alternatives to the plan, but the government never intended to solicit meaningful feedback. Instead, the government announced the final alignment for the roadway and provided briefings from relevant agencies, with no time allotted for presentations from community groups. A number of participants publicly criticized the process, with the coalition of community groups calling for a moratorium on development and effectively accusing the government of tokenism. Meanwhile, the government acknowledged a "mismatch in expectations" but insisted that the meeting was never intended to be consultative: "when the time for decision comes, we will decide" (quoted in Huang, 2014, p. 31).

The resulting controversy is often viewed through the lens of Singapore's fitful engagement with participatory governance. Though Singapore is formally democratic, the People's Action Party (PAP) has governed the city-state since independence, and its distinctive mix of

meritocratic efficiency and authoritarian paternalism leaves little room for popular dissent. The government has softened its views on civic engagement since the 1990s, integrating a variety of participatory mechanisms into its planning processes. But participatory planning, historically rooted in the democratic traditions and robust civil societies of Europe and North America, fits uneasily in Singapore, where public participation follows elite values of polite consensus and avoids overt signs of conflict. Bukit Brown broke this pattern, and the very public resistance was viewed as a "barometer of" and a "turning point in" the nation's state–society relations (Chong, 2014, p. 162; Huang, 2014, p. 24), seeming to signal the limits of the PAP's political hegemony and the possibility of a more openly contentious public sphere.

Instead of a civic awakening, however, Bukit Brown's legacy underlines the continued hegemonic role of the Singaporean state in defining the conditions of possibility for planning participation. The PAP regards itself as the ultimate arbiter of public opinion, mediating across what it sees as the often conflicting, incomplete, and incoherent views of different groups in order to arrive at the right decision for all Singaporeans. In the immediate aftermath of the Bukit Brown controversy, the PAP thus took steps to strengthen its state-led participatory mechanisms and set up new institutions to address the state's blind spots in heritage preservation. Meanwhile, the Bukit Brown community groups backed down, emphasizing their collegial relationship with the state and the value of participation to the achievement of state goals (Lim & Leow, 2017, p. 116), even as many of their own goals went unrealized. The momentary gap between state and society that Bukit Brown's contestation exposed has evidently been closed.

What made compromise on Bukit Brown so difficult for the government to entertain and for community groups to achieve? After all, Singapore has accommodated wide-ranging citizen input on other major planning projects, including a contemporaneous national conversation over the conservation of the KTM Railway Corridor. Unlike the railway corridor, Bukit Brown risked traversing the "out-of-bounds markers" for legitimate political discourse in Singapore, which proscribe discussion of race and religion. As a space devoted to Chinese ancestor worship, Bukit Brown touched sensitive political territory for Singapore, and its preservation risked charges of racial favoritism toward the politically and economically dominant Chinese population, especially following demolition of nearby Muslim and Christian cemeteries. Moreover, arguments for Bukit Brown's preservation threatened the Singapore model by implying that its core values were outdated. Increasingly, activists argued, urban development has come at the cost of Singaporeans' sense of identity and belonging. Preservationists asked whether the Singapore model's benefits were worth these costs, and in doing so they also tacitly questioned the PAP's claim to represent the interests and values of all Singaporeans.

Acknowledging the PAP's political hegemony and its commitment to values challenged by overt resistance to Bukit Brown's development, preservationists tried to reframe their project within the terms of PAP ideology. Some activists redefined Bukit Brown as a multi-ethnic space. Others tried to connect Bukit Brown to a broader national identity, for instance by emphasizing the cemetery's role as a World War II battlefield. Activists also appealed to the state's own planning principles, arguing for Bukit Brown's importance in addressing flooding and climate change. These strategies point to both the necessity and the difficulty of relying on hegemonic values as the basis for resistance in a state-dominated system. For planning contestations like this to succeed requires space to articulate alternative value systems that might support different kinds of planning decisions, such as prioritizing identity over diversity or democracy over efficiency.

The PAP's approach to civic engagement precludes this kind of genuine pluralism, and the failure to preserve Bukit Brown confirms the fundamentally illiberal nature of the Singapore model

(Chua, 2017). As Susan Fainstein (2017, pp. 139–140) argues, Singapore succeeds in delivering key aspects of social justice, such as equity and diversity, not in spite but because of its lack of substantive democracy. Indeed, a government-sponsored report on civic engagement cites this analysis in its evaluation of Bukit Brown (Khoo & Boh, 2018, p. 90). Both Gavin Shatkin (2014, pp. 118, 135) and Chua Beng Huat (2011, pp. 50) highlight how the Singapore model's success in delivering both economic growth and social welfare depends on the one-party state's hegemonic control. C.P. Pow (2014, p. 300) similarly suggests that it is precisely the absence of "Western-style democracy" that makes the Singapore model so appealing to cities elsewhere in Asia.

Less often acknowledged is the Singapore model's reliance on the premise of a unitary public interest and a shared system of values. This premise may have been broadly accepted for much of Singapore's independent history, when the imperative of development and the perceived menace of larger neighbors made unity a matter of national survival. But the controversy surrounding Bukit Brown demonstrates that this is no longer the case: a significant portion of Singapore's population now questions the dominant values that shape planning decisions, as they do in other domains of public policy, such as LGBTQIA + rights. Without a more substantive embrace of democratic pluralism, it will be difficult to engage in the kind of national conversation that could resolve these differences and update Singapore's core values. As a result, more controversies like Bukit Brown are likely to arise in the future. Haunted by the ghosts of illiberalism, Singapore may soon find itself struggling to implement the Singapore model.

Disclosure Statement

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When NIMBYism is Also "Resistance"

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In December 2021, the New York city council and outgoing mayor Bill de Blasio approved a set of zoning changes that centered on a small but significant swath of Lower Manhattan: SoHo, the area south of Houston Street, where live-work studios in old industrial lofts had formed a globally recognized artists' district in the 1970s; NoHo, the adjacent area to the north, with a similar architectural legacy and origin; and rental apartments in a small sliver of the city's historic Chinatown, on SoHo's eastern border. The rezoning was presented by the city planning department as a major coup for social equity, racial diversity, and race and class inclusion. Using a de Blasio zoning tool called Mandatory Inclusionary Housing (MIH), the changes would allow real estate developers to build taller residential and mixed-use buildings if they earmarked up to one-third of the apartments for permanently "affordable" rents (or sale prices, if they offered condos). These affordable apartments would be distributed by lotteries to New Yorkers with low to middle incomes.

The city planning department had long eyed the area's low residential density and rich public transit network as a soft target for new housing construction. But zoning laws still designated SoHo as a manufacturing zone. The only lawful residential use of manufacturing lofts in this area was Joint Live-Work Quarters for Artists (JLWQA) within existing buildings, a zoning designation dating to artists' protests in the 1960s and 1970s (Zukin, 1982). Working in tandem with New York State's multiple dwelling law, the city's zoning code still prohibited residential use by non-artists. Although these regulations were not enforced, new residential construction remained prohibited.

Despite the urgent need to increase the city's housing supply, most SoHo residents adamantly opposed the zoning changes. For this they were excoriated in mainstream and social media as NIMBYists, elitists, and even racists, a view that was shared by many housing activists, the city planners who led the rezoning process, and most political progressives. I want to set out the main conflicts and explore complexities, contexts, and subjectivities on the "losing" side, the side that has been seen as obstructionist on social justice.

From their point of view, the rezoning had three major flaws: it threatened historic district designations that protect many of the area's 19th-century loft buildings from demolition; it contained significant loopholes that exempted developers from building affordable housing; and it violated longtime residents' sense of moral ownership of their neighborhood. Beginning in 2019, these residents voiced their criticisms of rezoning during a months-long series of "envisioning" meetings with staff members of the city planning department, local business owners, and real estate developers, culminating in a report that summarized residents' concerns (NYC Planning, 2019, pp. 11, 15).They wanted less crowded streets, fewer big box stores, and better trash collection, reflecting SoHo's evolution, mainly since the 1980s, from a quiet,

low-rent district of art galleries, studio spaces, and artisanal design boutiques into an area with multi-million dollar residences, busy, transnational fast-fashion stores, and expensive designer shops.

Residents did not oppose affordable housing. But their opposition to rezoning represented the fear of losing "their" neighborhood to an even greater influx of tourists, shoppers, rich people, and homeless men, for the city government had also announced a plan to build a congregate men's shelter in the southern part of SoHo on the site of one of the area's few, rapidly disappearing, indoor parking garages. Artists who owned their lofts felt threatened by the new zoning law's challenge to their legal residential status. Artists who still rented their lofts, many of whom benefited from rent stabilization, opposed measures that would offer landlords an incentive to harass or evict them so they could be replaced by new tenants at unregulated, higher rents. Moreover, since the 1970s, longtime residents had participated in the movement for historic preservation of SoHo's and NoHo's architectural heritage, which gradually blanketed the two neighborhoods with landmarked buildings and districts. If rezoning were to "break" these legal protections by allowing overscale new construction, a potential outcome that was foreseen in an extensive report issued by the nonprofit Municipal Art Society (MASNYC, 2021), the unusual aesthetic coherence of the area would be lost. Resistance to rezoning thus showed a combination of social liberalism and cultural elitism, and both economic anxiety and economic self-interest.

These mixed motivations erupted in 2020, when Black Lives Matter protests, the Covid-19 pandemic, and the city's chronically severe housing crisis pushed the de Blasio administration to make SoHo's rezoning a test case for social justice. Once the zoning changes were reconceived as a push for affordable housing, the city government put MIH into play. Hundreds of neighborhoods had been rezoned since the Bloomberg administration in the early 2000s, but SoHo/NoHo would be the first upscale neighborhood to be up-zoned for social and racial equity. This shone a much harsher spotlight on residents' opposition to rezoning.

Through a yearlong series of public informational meetings and hearings in 2021, held mostly on Zoom because of the pandemic, staff members of the city planning department and other city government agencies argued for the need to build up the city's housing supply and bring affordable apartments to a transit-rich neighborhood "where the jobs are." They pointed out that SoHo and NoHo were predominantly white neighborhoods with no public housing projects or income-tested, subsidized housing. They were vociferously supported at meetings by young people mobilized by YIMBY advocates in the activist group Open New York. This organization argued that rezoning with MIH, or "up-zoning for equity," would encourage developers to build housing rather than offices, prevent relatively affluent people from gentrifying low-income neighborhoods, and open SoHo and NoHo to social and racial diversity without displacing anyone (Open New York, 2019). Activists in this group lobbied local elected officials to ease restrictions on new housing construction, spoke up in the public meetings for greater residential FAR (floor-area ratio), and used social media to attack SoHo, NoHo, and Chinatown residents who opposed the rezoning as NIMBY stalwarts, Baby Boomers, and "racists" who only wanted to defend their privilege.

The situation is more complex. SoHo's rezoning allows more commercial as well as residential development. Every rezoning proposed in New York City during the past twenty years has been opposed by community residents regardless of their race and household income. No community-generated plan has been adopted by any mayoral administration. Every up-zoning that brings market-rent residential construction has been feared as a Trojan horse of gentrification, whether or not gentrifiers have already made significant inroads into the area. City planners,

mayors, and real estate developers are seen as imposing their will; communities' resistance, no matter how vibrant, well educated, or well-connected residents may be, seems futile.

It is reasonable to invoke Jane Jacobs in this context. Community Board 2 was set up in the 1970s on Jacobs's old turf, the area where she and other activists fought against Robert Moses's plans to demolish a large part of the area that later became "SoHo," put a roadway through Washington Square Park, and create an urban renewal area in the West Village where Jacobs lived. In today's terms, Jacobs and her fellow activists were NIMBYists. The projects she opposed were presented as responding to social needs; for that reason, they were initially supported by housing advocates (Kent, 1997). From the 1970s to the 2000s, CB2 was led by Jane Jacobs's old neighbors and fellow activists. Even now, newer board members share those activists' deep local knowledge and passionate civic commitment, qualities that are tested by the city planning department's tactics and neglected promises.

Resistance to the city's plans by residents of the affected area raises important issues of both process and outcome in urban planning. One key reform enacted in New York City since Jane Jacobs's time is the ULURP (Uniform Land Use Review Procedure) process, a required, months-long series of public hearings and consultations on all major development projects and zoning changes. These consultations climb a governance hierarchy from local community boards to district officials and mayors themselves. At the lowest levels, community boards and borough presidents have only an advisory voice. Even if a community board votes unanimously, or nearly unanimously, against a rezoning proposal – as CB2 voted against the rezoning of SoHo/NoHo/Chinatown in 2021 by 36 to 1 (Manhattan Community Board, 2019–22) – their collective opinion is easily ignored. At the middle level, that of the city planning commission, most of its members tend to endorse the proposals presented by the city planning department's professional staff. The next level, that of the city council, is more complex. Traditionally, council members defer to the local member who represents the affected district. In SoHo's case, representation is divided between two city council members, and both supported Mayor de Blasio's and incoming Mayor Eric Adams's desire to target SoHo for new housing construction, with Adams publicly calling the neighborhood a "sacred cow" (Ezra Klein Show, 2021). Most New Yorkers who heard about SoHo's rezoning during the ULURP process said: Isn't it worth constructing market-rate apartments if you get even a tiny number of "affordable" units – especially if some new residents are people of color?

But there are surely better, more democratic mechanisms to build for social equity. The city government adopted MIH because it has neither the money nor the will – nor the city-owned land – to build housing on its own. Real estate developers accepted it because the high proportion of market-rate apartments "cross-subsidizes" the affordable, lower-rent apartments. Yet, instead of focusing on individual neighborhoods, it should be possible to require developers to produce greater amounts of affordable housing all over the city.

Comprehensive planning promises to do this, but New York City politicians have been slow to adopt it, perhaps because they fear losing influence over land-use decisions. For their part, community board members fear comprehensive planning will only raise conflicts to another geographical scale on which they will have even less say. Residents believe that the structural imbalance in favor of mayors and real estate developers – the growth coalition – condemns them to accept whatever concessions are offered. They have little faith in community benefit agreements or community plans; these have too often evaporated or morphed into less desirable projects.

Despite MIH, it is too soon to know if rezoning will increase the housing supply in SoHo and NoHo. The new zoning does not require developers to build housing. If developers invest in commercial structures, including offices, stores, and hotels, they need not include affordable apartments at all. The same if the lot size is less than 2500 square feet, the common size of a building's footprint in SoHo.

The YIMBY movement certainly responds to a need for affordable housing. But all their opponents should not be tarred by the same brush. Most poignantly, perhaps, the YIMBY movement expresses a generational conflict between Baby Boomers' often favorable position in the housing market and young people's inability to find an affordable home. In the rezoning of SoHo I see the passing of Jane Jacobs's generation, as their achievements – historic preservation laws, community empowerment, zoning for artists' space – cede to a different understanding of urban social justice. Yet resistance to the managerial authoritarianism of city planners is not all about privilege. It is also about the diverse, organic, bottom-up urbanism that Jane Jacobs prescribed.

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Resistance to the District 28 School Diversity Plan Process and the Emergence of Adaptive Engagement Practices

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Overview

The NYC Department of Education (DOE) launched the District 28 Diversity Plan (D28 Plan) process in 2019. It aimed at creating more integrated and inclusive middle schools in a racially and economically diverse Queens school district that stretched from wealthy Forest Hills to the low-income, predominantly black neighborhood of Jamaica. Although the process called for public participation in creating the plan, organized community resistance disrupted the process, which was ultimately terminated during the COVID-19 pandemic. This article describes the community-based planning processes' deficiencies, but it also highlights adaptive practices planners developed during the pandemic that might overcome obstacles to reasoned debate.

At the outset DOE staff and planning consultants presented data revealing racially and economically skewed school composition, resource inequities, and disparate travel distances to schools in the district. They anticipated that community participants, within workshops and a representative Working Group, would respond by considering options for improving equity and diversity. They modeled the planning process on the creation of the District 15 Diversity Plan, completed in 2018 in a part of Brooklyn where liberal activism around school integration underpinned the final plan.

In contrast, resistance to the D28 Plan process overwhelmed it before a single workshop was held. When the D28 Community Education Council (CEC) met to announce the process in December 2019, so many concerned residents arrived that building capacity issues kept dozens outside. The CEC held a tumultuous second "introductory" meeting in January 2020 at a larger venue, but while the project team was re-grouping after it, the COVID-19 pandemic emerged, and the D28 Plan process effectively ended.

Key Actors and Their Intentions

The D28 Plan process involved staff from the central DOE's Offices of Enrollment and of Family and Community Engagement, the local Community District 28 office, and WXY Studio, consultant planners who had led the community-based process in Brooklyn's District 15. The D28 CEC acted as a convening body. Consisting of a mix of appointees and locally elected members, CECs have limited powers beyond approving new school zones.

The DOE, aware of local distrust, had commissioned WXY Studio as independent facilitators. WXY was to: (1) describe and analyze the student bodies of D28 middle schools; (2) create and lead a locally representative "Working Group" to shape recommendations; and (3) facilitate public workshops about school admissions policies that would feed into the Working Group's recommendations. The Working Group, consisting of parents, students, teachers, principals, and local organization leaders, was selected primarily through recommendations by district administrators. Basic criteria included geographic and racial representation and a commitment to diversity, equity, and inclusion.

Two main groups opposed the D28 Plan process: Queens Parents United, made up mostly of Forest Hills residents, sprung up in reaction to the plan; and the New York Residents Alliance (NYRA), an existing citywide group that represented Chinese-Americans defending the New York City selective high school entrance exam. These opponents primarily feared two potential outcomes: that children in the wealthier, whiter part of the district would lose access to nearby middle schools and that "merit-based screens" such as test scores, auditions, and grades to determine school admission would be jettisoned. Rather than directly raising these concerns,

however, the resistance focused on two other claims: that the D28 Plan process was not transparently and democratically organized and that the process had predetermined recommendations, including radical moves such as abolishing neighborhood boundaries, establishing "quotas," and instituting school busing. The protestors contacted members of the press, used social media to publicize these fears, and organized attendance at the CEC meetings. The coalition of Queens Parents United and the NYRA also flooded the DOE and WXY with information requests.

Although the initial CEC meeting was intended simply to start a process, resistance had already mounted. Attendees included residents from the district's northern part and from Jamaica, white recent immigrants (e.g. Russians and Uzbeki), and members of NYRA. The WXY planners presented the schedule, emphasized that feedback from public workshops would determine recommendations, and explained how Working Group members had been selected. Nevertheless, attendees objected to a lack of democracy: they accused the planners of simply expecting that D28 would replicate the District 15 Plan and complained that the names of Working Group members were not made public.

Following this meeting, the organizers' email inbox quickly began to fill with questions, including demands to see the original grant proposal, the WXY contract with the Department of Education, and previous studies analyzing socioeconomic and racial dissimilarities among D28 schools. Responding to these dozens of email requests consumed huge amounts of WXY's time and personnel.

At the second CEC meeting (January 2020), resistance to the planning process was in full gear. Protesters interrupted the presentation, attacking WXY as a biased facilitator, and they displayed banners targeting the DOE. They demanded that the Working Group include more representation of parents, Asian-Americans, and Jews. Conservative press (like the Fox-owned *NY Post*) provided critical commentary, and social media activity grew, even connecting those resisting the D28 Plan process with opponents to a WXY school boundary study in Montgomery County, Maryland (Chalkbeat, 13 January 2020). The planners feared that any future in-person events might quickly disintegrate.

Democracy and Equity: Navigating Organized Resistance in Community Engagement

The D28 Plan process had explicitly aimed *"to increase middle school diversity and academic outcomes,"* and Working Group members were selected accordingly. The protestors believed that this choice of objective shaped the process, causing them to argue that the process was not *really* open to all possible recommendations, even if the planners had promised public input into any recommendations.

Although development of the D15 Plan had proceeded smoothly, planning there operated under different circumstances than in D28. In District 15, admission to middle schools did not depend on location; instead, the schools, under policy set by the previous mayoral (Bloomberg) administration, were selecting students by considering test scores, grades, and attendance records. Imposition of these new screening methods caused three D15 middle schools to experience a rapid displacement of Black and Brown students. Widespread parent advocacy then emerged to end selective admissions, resisting both the intensifying segregation and the increasing pressure on 10-year-olds to have high scores for "top schools." In contrast to D15's

progressive activists who responded to the new school admissions policy, parents in D28 saw no reason for overturning a longstanding status quo.

Implications for Practice and Revised Strategies

The collapse of the D28 Plan process dampened prospects for other school diversity community planning efforts. The success of the D15 Plan had spawned a City Council resolution that *all* community school districts should undertake a diversity planning process. But after the D28 tumult and the COVID-19 pandemic, this resolution has not been pursued.

Political tensions in New York City and nationally around school-based issues have combined with the use of virtual public meetings during the COVID-19 pandemic to lead to new public engagement practices for planners. Zoom-based meetings have allowed for greater participation – in terms of numbers, the diversity of participants, and the amount of feedback generated – than previous in-person meetings. Polling, surveying, and breakout rooms can be conducted more readily. People whose other responsibilities keep them from going to meetings can more easily attend virtual gatherings. Although an emerging literature reveals the limitations of virtual meetings (Einstein et al., 2022), they still offer important advantages. Virtual town halls prevent the disruption of meetings by protestors because the technology prohibits interruptions during presentations. People, however, can still ask questions either through a "chat" or through live questions that can be answered throughout the meeting. Random assignment to breakout rooms can help to ensure more interchange among strangers. In Maryland's Prince George's County, where WXY conducted Zoom meetings in Spanish about new school zone boundaries, much larger turnouts of Spanish speakers resulted than were present in pre-pandemic, face-to-face meetings using interpreters in neighboring Montgomery County.

Municipal agencies now hold both virtual and in-person events with diverse formats. For example, "science fair-style" exhibits are day-long efforts providing information and allowing one-on-one discussions. If the D28 Plan had been managed virtually, the process might have proceeded without derailment. While the outcome might not have fulfilled the progressive ambitions of the D15 Plan, the Working Group could have made recommendations generated by Zoom-based discussion groups and survey results, perhaps creating an accommodation to the resisters and improving school diversity as well.

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Planning Logics in East London

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In East London and along the Thames corridor, a post-industrial landscape has long combined a downgraded present with a vision of a more promising future. This area was once an engine at the heart of the colonial economy. In the mid 19th century Alexander Parkes sparked industrialization of the area when he built a major plastics factory in East London. By the 1950s Ford employed 40,000 further east in Dagenham, anchoring a sprawling estate of 55 acres with its own railway station, port, and a multiplicity of linked enterprises. Later in the 20th century, however, manufacturers abandoned the area, and the port moved eastwards, leaving behind vast empty tracts of land zoned for industry. In the 1990s East London went through yet another transformation. In the vanguard of what became a global story, riverfront regeneration programmes reconfigured the land along the Thames, with the development of the new financial district of Canary Wharf ("Manhattan on Thames") and construction of the Millennium Dome; most recently the 2012 Olympics, which substituted a new park for the remaining industrial district, boosted a hungry residential property market catering to buyers greedy for upmarket apartments with views of the Thames.

From 1994 to 2006 I served seven years as the elected lead on regeneration and planning and five years as leader (equivalent to US mayor) of the London Borough of Tower Hamlets. The planning remit for Tower Hamlets covered Canary Wharf, as well as the aggressively expanding borderlands of the old City financial district and the periphery of the Olympic site, a triangular map enclosing one of the most unequal demographies in the UK. High Gini coefficients defined a population that in the mid-1990s paradoxically contained the highest reported average incomes in the country, with the lowest median incomes. Small numbers earned a lot; large swathes were without employment; waves of migration had produced racialized wards where large families of British-born Bangladeshis occupied much of the area, commonly living in poor quality social housing.

From 2000 to 2007 I also chaired the Thames Gateway London Partnership, bringing together public, private and third sector organisations with a purview that extended from London east of Tower Bridge along both sides of the river to the English Channel. At both the London borough scale and more strategically across the Gateway, the challenge was invariably one of balance between expanding London eastwards and attracting investment into the area's superannuated infrastructure. With projected population growth of well over a million across the Gateway, we were building a new city, not on a *tabula* rasa but instead retrofitting an industrial heritage site,

much of which was polluted, and though well connected to the world by water, poorly connected to the rest of London by mass transit.

Approximate Google Map of the Thames Gateway
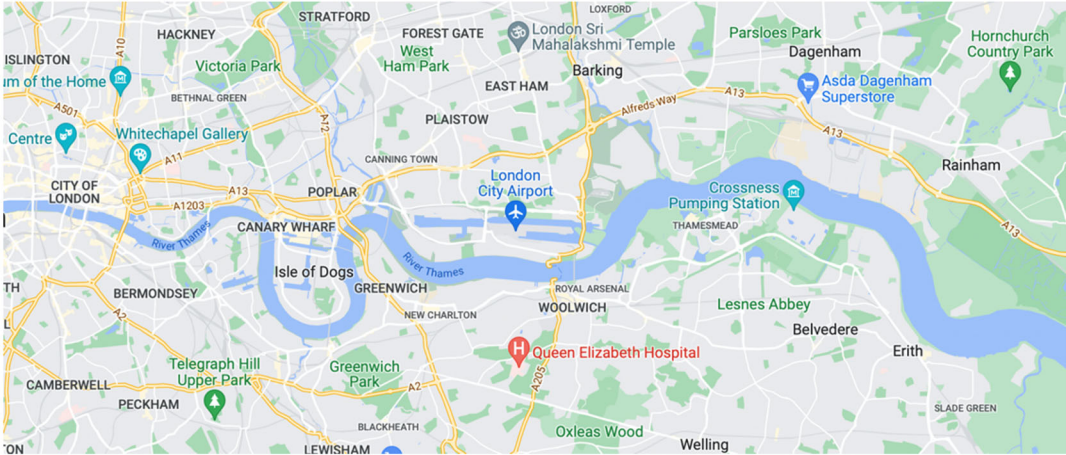
Conceptual map of London's Thames Gateway
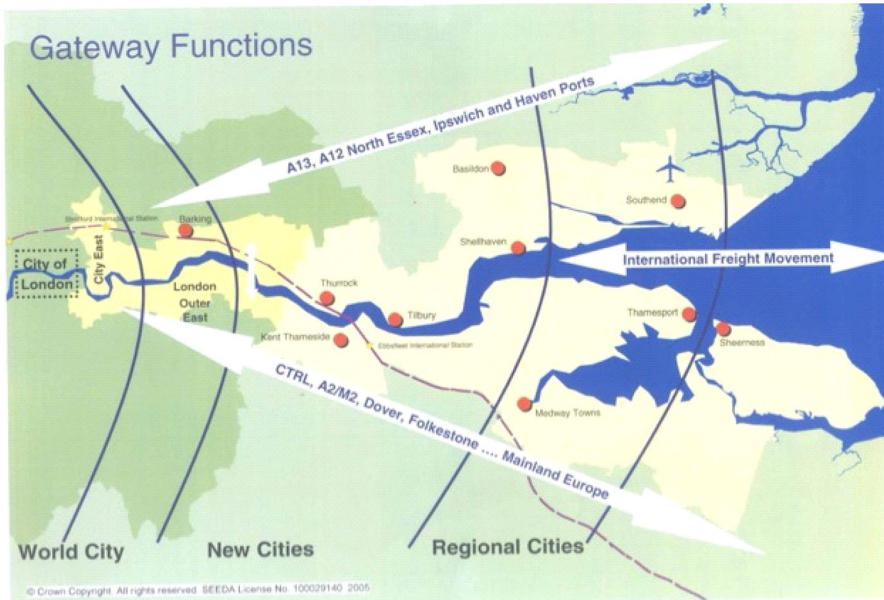
My aspiration during my time as chair was to prove the great urbanist David Harvey wrong. Harvey (1973) had memorably claimed that emergent cities were shaped in the image of capital. We hoped to resist this fate and make the urban fabric look significantly more just. In practice, however, groups taking positions on development projects rarely conform to Schmitt's Manichean binary of friend and foe (Schmitt, 1927/1996). Opponents of our plans sometimes came from the same groups as offered support. For example, one of the more enlightened property interests championed our call for infrastructure investment, assisting us by lobbying insiders in the Treasury where they had better access than we did. But when a planning dispute

on their developer contributions turned unfriendly, a phone call from the ostensibly sympathetic Prime Minister's Office conveyed rage at me about our inordinate demands on a major stake-holder and party funder. Conversely, left-wing friends, who had welcomed the data I leaked to them when we stood together against the destruction of the heart of the Bangladeshi settlement in Spitalfields, still found time to publicly disparage us.

A strong sense of the social-democratic ideal to which we aspired went hand in hand with the performative politics of all players in a drama where positions were relational, alliances provisional, outcomes pragmatic. Clintonian politics of triangulation were favoured globally at the time, but their local configuration was uneven. Some community alliances understood our constraints; others, while privately recognising that we made our planning policies in circumstances not of our own choosing, would nonetheless claim much stronger moral standards on the high ground of public rhetoric.

Ours was an example of resistance by state-sector planners to push against sponsors of development, limited by what was plausible, legal and redistributive. To that end, the planning team generated the *evidence base* and drafts of the planning framework for the borough. Along with a bevy of top-flight, expensive consultants, we produced an evidence base that fit within the geographical hierarchy of plans nationally, forecast the likely outcomes of new development, and successfully contested zoning challenges.

The knock-on consequences of urban transformation include demands on public space, facilities for health, schooling, social services, and public goods such as the arts. Calculating such externalities has troubled the academic discipline of economics from Pigou's first invocation of a land tax through Meade's valorisation of state powers and Ronald Coase's law and economics movement, which gave the doctrines of the neoliberals their intellectual scaffolding theoretically (Coase, 1960; Pigou, 1909). Specific development control decisions and highly contested developer contributions were calculated to mitigate the impacts – the negative externalities – of development, based on Section 106 of the 1990 Town and Country Planning Act. The Act allowed local government to demand commensurable recompense for the negative impacts of any major development.

In City Hall abstractions do not play. Calculation of the impacts of development and thus of developer obligations under Section 106 became a contest among the forces of capital, state planners, and members of the public. Anticipating and hopefully resisting domination by capital, we tried to assess the needs of the future population of Tower Hamlets. In this small part of London from 1800 to 1900, population reached approximately 600,000 before the forces of slum clearance, suburbanisation, and deindustrialisation cut numbers to about 180,000. By the 1990s, however, a long decade of expansion was driving up residential property prices, and financial services were booming. A market had developed for big blocks of upmarket apartments and bigger towers of commercial space; HSBC established its global headquarters and Citibank its European capital at Canary Wharf. A long list of signature architects, leaders of multinationals, and developers ranging from the more enlightened to the nakedly avaricious all foresaw a profitable future in the borough.

Strategically, we worked through the late 1990s and early 2000s to calculate what an appropriate welfare infrastructure would look like for a more inclusive, sustainable future locally. This meant resisting not just pressures from property interests but also countering forecasts from other state agencies. Would the Bangladeshi population continue to average 5+ children, would numbers diminish over generations, or the next wave of migration increase populations and demand exponentially? So, would we need more schools for the booming youth population

locally or more social welfare services for an aging demography yet to come? Should we invest in existing high-quality parks in neighbourhoods already gentrifying or follow Barcelona in making small pocket parks in major developments for old and new residents alike? Education, aging, and parks all had their own bureaucracies making their own estimates of future needs.

Politicians and professional staff of the centre-left faced the perennial risk of being perceived as failing their constituents. When was a negotiated deal with the representatives of global capital a good deal for the voters and more broadly the people of the east end, and when would it be a betrayal of local needs? If the interpretations of the deals might represent differing imaginations of city futures, legal deliberations on their consequences depended on our evidence base. They were obliged to be rationalised, in court if necessary, through the protocols of Section 106 developer contributions. Authority rests on an expertise that is empirically rooted. Planning sustains a sense of aspiration of what we wish for, but in court must be justified by plausibility. The evidence base must demonstrate the connection between the empirically proven present and the statistically calculated future, in line with central government protocols, democratically, both with and against the forces of capital. Most controversially, the needs of future populations include social housing, but the absolute number and the impact of any single development left major room for discretion. Famously at the time, the London Borough of Tower Hamlets pioneered a demand that 25% of all private-sector residential developments be built using an unsubsidized developer contribution as "social [public] housing," at the time a much higher proportion than anywhere else.

This social housing requirement for private developments generated good and bad outcomes. Some designs of new neighbourhoods architecturally reproduced divisions between old poor and new affluent. Others integrated social and private housing, making it impossible to tell which was which. Since within the British legal system the force of precedent meant that a "victory" for City Hall in London's east end was a victory for public housing interests nationally, developers fearful of the geographical contagion of legal precedent challenged us regularly in court. At least one developer, in particular, opposed council rulings through the legal system while simultaneously trying privately to cajole, convince and corrupt council staff and elected representatives to support their cause.

Mundane calculations of development mitigation can rapidly become technical, obscure, and often alienating to both private and community interests. In truth, one might upset all parties. Like a poker player working out when to cash in a winning run, we often opted for what the South African artist William Kentridge describes as "the less good idea," a deal that was progressive, that contained much of what we wanted but not everything, that could stand up in court to challenge. In a sense, I am defending the ethics of the "less good idea."

Politicians famously campaign in poetry, govern in prose. Less elegantly, planners legislate in arithmetic progressions but live with geometric complexities of urban change. Between 2001 and 2021 the Tower Hamlets population grew by over 50 percent, faster than any projection and greater proportionately than any other local government area in the United Kingdom. The arithmetic of our evidence base may have sat uneasily with competing theorisations of the externalities of development economics. Ronald Coase, Nobel laureate, godfather of the neo-liberal age and a child of suburban London, might have blanched at the thought, but our evidence base served to justify state action rather than to simply measure externality values (Stark, 2011). Frantz Fanon once invoked the paradoxical "true lies" of ethical politics, the need to use tools at hand. The east end today still struggles on many fronts. But in hindsight, while I would never say our evidence base was rooted in true lies, it was as much a defence of social

democratic state action in the face of market forces as a scientific tool of city design. Not utopian and perhaps closer to William Kentridge's less good idea than a full-fledged commitment to serve only the interests of low-income constituents, it nevertheless provided the basis for resistance to the power of capital.

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