

Reading Tips and Study Questions: For Session 17 Planning and Social Diversity (A)—November 14th

Required reading:

1. **Leonie Sandercock**, "When strangers become neighbors: Managing cities of difference," *Planning Theory & Practice* 1(1):13-30 (2000).
2. **Susan S. Fainstein**, "Cities and diversity: Should we want it? Can we plan for it?" *Urban Affairs Review* 41(1):3-19 (2005).
3. SKIM pp. 362-370 in *RPT* (Chapter 19) **June Manning Thomas**, "Educating planners."

Further reading:

4. Pp. 343-344, 346-348 in *RPT* (Chapter 18) **Iris Marion Young**, "City life and difference."
5. **Xavier de Souza Briggs**, "Civilization in color: The multicultural city in three millennia," *City & Community* 3(4):311-342 (2004).
6. *RPT* (Chapter 21), **Leonie Sandercock-2**, "Towards cosmopolis."

Tips and questions

Debates about planning and social diversity are many, varied, and increasingly important as migration and other forces produce (a) unprecedented social diversity in city-regions around the world and (b) changes in public expectations as to how to define and handle that diversity.

This is the first of two sessions we'll focus specifically on this important issue for planning, which is often treated simplistically as an issue of tolerance or of paying lip service to valuing difference. A major aim of the first session is to address the linked questions, "What is this issue all about, and why is it urgent now?" The next session aims to focus more concretely on competencies, including planners' approaches to communication.

We have seen a few of the classic dilemmas that diversity creates for planning this semester. First, we looked at crisis response and the risks in top-down planning led by a group that assumed, rather than developed, a legitimate mandate for action (Rebuild Los Angeles or "RLA"). Race and class differences reflected deeper divides and mistrust between "communities" of stakeholders and the public and private actors leading planning—as they did

in the New Orleans case assignment. Next, we considered the power and limits of physical design as an instrument of social reform, including efforts to “reclaim” public housing in America since the 1980s, not only to meet shelter needs but to address race and class segregation in Boston and other cities. We later analyzed a controversial case of modernist planning as a trigger for the massive displacement of historically marginalized and poor caste groups in India, while considering that nation’s need for energy and economic growth. In different ways, all of these cases posed “diversity” questions.

1. Planning as problem or solution: **Sandercock** draws a distinction between the planning system *itself* being grounded in, or biased to suit, a dominant culture and the planning system being *used* by one group to control the behavior of another group. What’s the difference between those two? And what seem to be the strengths and weaknesses of the “therapeutic” approach to planning that she recommends and develops in the case examples?
2. Is the issue diversity or justice: **Fainstein** argues for an approach to the city that “does not privilege difference over other goods,” plus a focus on capacities and the creation of *collective* identity (through “the just city”). She further worries that a focus on diversity, far from making democracy more vibrant, can undermine it. What, in your view, are the most compelling and constructive elements of her argument? And what are the riskiest?
3. What’s your assessment of the recommendations that **Thomas** makes for planning education to become more “global” and inclusive in gender, ethnicity, and other dimensions?

Questions about the Further Reading (optional):

4. What should we strive for, and is there a broad constituency for it: Why is the “ideal of community” a diversity issue, according to **Young** (pp. 343-344), and do you think one could build broad support for the four virtues of “city life” that she outlines (pp.346 from “A normative ideal of city life ...” to the end of the section on p.348), for example even where people fear or reject “variety” or what she calls “eroticism”? Or are we stuck in a world where some celebrate these virtues and others just don’t?
5. **Briggs** argues, in effect, that tolerance is over-sold as a tool for making diverse cities and their societies work. Why? And what “advantage” did civilizations at earlier periods in history have vis-à-vis making diversity work, i.e. as compared to contemporary democratic societies?
6. In what ways, according to **Sandercock-2**, were modernist planners “thieves of memory”? And how persuasive is her argument about the need for places in the city “uncontaminated by commerce”?