**SEMESTER IN PLANNING THEORY**

Wednesday, 5:00-8:00 pm  
CRP 391D | WMB 3.116  
Instructor: Bjørn Sletto  
Office: SUT 3.124B  
Phone: 512-853-0770  
Office hours: Mon & Tue 4:00-5:30

-Reading schedule subject to change-

**Introduction to the course:**
This course is an introduction to the principal intellectual traditions and debates in what is loosely termed ‘planning theory.’ We will review the paradigmatic schools of thought that have informed planning scholarship and practice, and attempt to draw connections between currents in social science theory and planning theory. We will consider key questions in planning, such as, Should planning theory primarily be ‘practical’ or should it be ‘critical’? Should planning theorists focus their attention on improving the planning ‘process?’ Or should they instead develop normative visions for the ‘good city?’ But beyond this review of planning theory, we will consider how planning theory informs, and is shaped by, broader intellectual concerns and phenomena associated with the contemporary urban. After all, planning can’t be separated from social context. Theory and practice both informs and is shaped by shifting political economies of the past and present, by a variety of cultural and intellectual traditions, and by multiple imaginaries of the City.

In the course we will examine how old and new imaginaries and conceptualizations of the urban articulate with planning theory, and how planning theory in turn informs and is shaped by planning and development practice. We will also read samples of original social theory in order to examine the epistemological foundations of some of these urban and planning theories. The goal is for students to become familiar with the principal debates and intellectual traditions of planning theory, become conversant with principal concerns associated with the relationships between theory and practice, and develop the necessary theoretical skills to rigorously apply theory in their own research and pedagogy. Most importantly, the class will test the proposition that theory can be useful, interesting, and fun!

In addition to a significant amount of readings and active participation in class discussions, deliverables include five short reflection papers where students synthesize debates, schools of thoughts, and the like. There is also a final paper where students develop a theoretical framework for a major research project; ideally the student’s dissertation. This paper can be thought of as the beginning of a ‘theory chapter’ in a dissertation or a theory section for a major research proposal. Students will develop an outline for this paper and give a presentation in class. Students will also be expected to work in pairs to lead the discussion on two occasions during the semester. This will include giving a presentation to class and developing discussion questions and a summary of the readings for that week.
Readings:
The remaining readings can be downloaded from the class Canvas site.

Course requirements:

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>Grade weight:</th>
<th>Due date/time:</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Participation</td>
<td>10% (100 points)</td>
<td>N/A</td>
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<tr>
<td>Reflection papers (5)</td>
<td>25% (50 points each)</td>
<td>Tuesday Noon day before the relevant class</td>
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<tr>
<td>Summaries and facilitation (2)</td>
<td>10% (50 points each)</td>
<td>Tuesday Noon day before the relevant class</td>
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<tr>
<td>Framing paper outline</td>
<td>5% (50 points)</td>
<td>Friday, October 24 by 6pm</td>
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<tr>
<td>Revised outline</td>
<td>5% (50 points)</td>
<td>Friday, November 7 by 6pm</td>
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<td>Presentation</td>
<td>5% (50 points)</td>
<td>TBD; starting October 1</td>
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<tr>
<td>Theoretical framing paper</td>
<td>40% (400 points)</td>
<td>Wednesday, December 3, beginning of class</td>
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Reflection paper instructions:
Reflection papers should be about 2 pages single-spaced. Use only a few sentences to summarize the main argument, and then devote the rest of the paper to your own analysis. Did you see any flaws in the argument, especially in light of the other readings? Do you feel the argument contradicts that of another article, and if so, why? Has the author made effective use of a certain theoretical framework, or not? Has the author presented sufficient data or examples, or drawn effectively on the work of other scholars, to support her or his argument? Also consider the “positionality” of the writer.

Class facilitation guidelines:
You and your partner will facilitate up to one hour of class discussion on two different occasions on selected readings/topics you signed up for in class. You are required to give a short presentation and provide discussion questions to the class, and you are also encouraged to suggest optional readings for your session. In addition, you will develop short summaries of the readings (about 1/3 page single-spaced for each reading). While you may select a more traditional seminar format, avoid simply summarizing the readings. This is your opportunity to practice your teaching skills, to experiment with different approaches to group facilitation, and to try out an in-class activity/exercise to engage the class in meaningful and lively interaction.

Presentation guidelines:
Think of your presentation as a “job talk” where you lay out 1) your research agenda, 2) your specific research project, methods, and (anticipated) findings, 3) your theoretical position, and 4) your theoretical framework. Your presentation should be 30 minutes and you should use power point. Define who your audience will be and format your presentation accordingly.

Notice regarding Policy on Academic Dishonesty and Accommodations for Religious Holidays:
Students who violate University rules on scholastic dishonesty are subject to disciplinary penalties, including the possibility of failure in the course and/or dismissal from the University. Since such dishonesty harms the individual, all students, and the integrity of the University, policies on scholastic dishonesty will be strictly enforced. See the University Honor Code at http://registrar.utexas.edu/catalogs/gi09-10/ch01/index.html and the Student Judicial Services website at http://deanofstudents.utexas.edu/sjs. By UT Austin policy, you must notify me of your pending absence at least fourteen days prior to the date of observance of a religious holy day. If you must miss a class, an examination, a work assignment, or a project in order to observe a religious holy day, you will be given an opportunity to complete the missed work within a reasonable time after the absence.
August 27: Course introduction; discussion of research and theoretical interests.

September 3: What is ‘theory’...and why do we need ‘planning theory’?

I. What is ‘theory’ and how is it relevant in/for planning?

II. ‘Old schools’ and debates in planning theory.

OTHER RECOMMENDED READINGS:

PRINCIPAL THEMES AND QUESTIONS:
What is ‘theory?’ What relevance does ‘theory’ have for planning practice?
What are the principal intellectual debates in planning theory?

September 10: Who are the ‘theorists?’ Knowledge, positionality, and the makings of theory

I. Knowledge production in planning

II. Theory of knowledge production

III. Positionality and reflexivity.

OTHER RECOMMENDED READINGS:

PRINCIPAL THEMES AND QUESTIONS:
How is knowledge conceptualized, produced and deployed in planning theory and practice? What is the meaning, role, and significance of positionality and reflexivity?

DISCUSSION FACILITATION:
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**September 17: The City: Imaginaries, theories and representations**

I. Urban theory and planning theory
“Cities of imagination,” Chapter 1 in Hall, Peter, *Cities of Tomorrow.*

II. Representation in/of planning

OTHER RECOMMENDED READINGS:

PRINCIPAL THEMES AND QUESTIONS:
How does planning theory relate to urban theory and critical development theory? What is the role of ‘representation’ in planning practice? How has hermeneutics challenged notions of objectivity in representation, and what are the implications for planning?

DISCUSSION FACILITATION:

September 24: The City/Body as Object of Reform...and the Prescriptive Planner

I. Imaginaries
“The city of dreadful night” and “The City of the Permanent Underclass,” Chapter 2 and 13 in Hall, Peter, Cities of Tomorrow.

II. Theoretical background

III. Planning responses...in theory and practice

OPTIONAL:

PRINCIPAL THEMES AND QUESTIONS:
What are the intellectual and social origins of advocacy planning? How does advocacy planning relate to ‘disciplining’ and ‘normalization?’ How has imaginaries of urban problems continued to influence planning to this day?

DISCUSSION FACILITATION:
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October 1: The City as System...and Planning as the Rational Instrument

I. Imaginaries
“The City of Bypass Variegated” and “The City on the Highway;” Chapter 3 and 9 in Hall, Peter, *Cities of Tomorrow*.

II. Theoretical background

III. Planning responses...in theory and practice


**OTHER RECOMMENDED READINGS:**


**PRINCIPAL THEMES AND QUESTIONS:**

How has positivist science (empiricism) shaped planning theory and practice?
Does it continue to shape planning, and if so, how? How should we approach systems and rational theories in the planning process?

**DISCUSSION FACILITATION:**

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**PRESENTATION:**

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**October 8: The Green City…and the Planner as Sustainable Designer**

I. Imaginaries
   “The City in the Garden” and “The City in the Region,” Chapter 4 and 5 in Hall, Peter, *Cities of Tomorrow*.

II. Theoretical background

III. Planning responses…in theory and practice
Steiner, Frederick. 2011. “Commentary: Planning and Design—Oil and Water or Bacon and Eggs?” *Journal of Planning Education and Research* 31(2) 213–216.


**OTHER RECOMMENDED READINGS:**


**PRINCIPAL THEMES AND QUESTIONS:**

What is...or what should be...the relationship between planning and design? i.e. how should we balance concerns for material form and social process? Does the paradigm of “sustainability” adequately address social concerns?

**DISCUSSION FACILITATION:**

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**PRESENTATION:**

_________________________________________________________________
October 15: The City of Rational Discourse...and the Pragmatic Planner

I. Theoretical background
James, William. 1904. “What is Pragmatism?” From a series of eight lectures dedicated to the memory of John Stuart Mill, A New Name for Some Old Ways of Thinking, in December 1904.

II. Planning responses...in theory and practice

OTHER RECOMMENDED READINGS:

PRINCIPAL THEMES AND QUESTIONS:
Can the insights of Habermas be useful for planning theory and practice, and if so, how? What is ‘pragmatism’ and what has been the role of this concept in planning theory and practice? What are some of the assumptions behind communicative planning theory? What are some of the critiques of the ‘communicative turn’ in planning theory?

DISCUSSION FACILITATION:
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PRESENTATION:
__________________________________________________________
I. Imaginaries

II. Theoretical background

III. Planning responses...in theory and practice

OTHER RECOMMENDED READINGS:

PRINCIPAL THEMES AND QUESTIONS:
Can Foucault’s insights be useful for planning theory and practice, and if so, how? How useful are the concepts ‘multiculturalism’ and ‘multiple publics,’ and what are their significance for planning and planners? What is the relationship between knowledge, rationality and power, and how does this relate to planning?

DISCUSSION FACILITATION:

PRESENTATION:

October 24: Framing paper outline due by 6pm.

October 29: The Just City...and the Normative Planner

I. Theoretical background

II. Planning responses...in theory and practice

OTHER RECOMMENDED READINGS:

PRINCIPAL THEMES AND QUESTIONS:
What does ‘normative’ mean? Should planning theory be normative? Why or why not? What does ‘just’ mean and how can/should justice be conceptualized and operationalized in planning? Is the concept of a ‘just city’ useful; why or why not?
**November 5: The Insurgent City...and the Radical/Insurgent Planner**

I. **Imaginaries**
   “The City of Sweat Equity,” Chapter 8 in Hall, Peter, Cities of Tomorrow.

II. **Theoretical background**

III. **Planning responses...in theory and practice**

OTHER RECOMMENDED READINGS:

PRINCIPAL THEMES AND QUESTIONS:
Can Gramsci’s insights be useful for planning theory and practice, and if so, how? Is ‘insurgency’ restricted to cities in the ‘Global South?’ What should be
the planner’s role in insurgent spaces? What is ‘radical planning?’ What can planning theorists and practitioners learn from the Global South?

DISCUSSION FACILITATION:


PRESENTATION:


November 7:  Revised outline of framing paper due by 6pm.

November 12:  The Divided City...and Planning in Defense of Public Space

I.  Imaginaries
“The City of Monuments” and “The City of Towers,” Chapter 6 and 7 in Hall, Peter, Cities of Tomorrow.

II.  Theoretical background

III.  Planning responses...in theory and practice

OTHER RECOMMENDED READINGS:

PRINCIPAL THEMES AND QUESTIONS:
Can Lefebvre’s insights on the production of space be useful in planning, and if so, how? What has been the role of planning in producing ‘divided cities’? What should be the role of public space in social and political life? What is the future of public space and how should planning conceptualize this?

DISCUSSION FACILITATION:

PRESENTATION:

November 19: The Global City...and the Planner as Regulator

I. Imaginaries
“The City of Enterprise” and “The City of the Tarnished Belle Époque,” Chapter 11 and 12 in Hall, Peter, Cities of Tomorrow.

II. Theoretical background

III. Planning responses...in theory and practice

OTHER RECOMMENDED READINGS:
PRINCIPAL THEMES AND QUESTIONS:
How should planners engage with capital? What are ‘global cities?’ To what extent does culture and geography limit the ‘globalness’ of cities?

DISCUSSION FACILITATION:

PRESENTATION:

November 26: TBD

December 3: The (Post)-Postmodern City...and the Future of Planning. Final paper due.

I. Imaginaries

II. Theoretical background
“The City of Theory,” Chapter 10 in Hall, Peter, Cities of Tomorrow.

III. Planning responses...in theory and practice

OTHER RECOMMENDED READINGS:


**PRINCIPAL THEMES AND QUESTIONS:**
How should planners and planning theory conceptualize knowledge production in the future? How will the virtual shape planning practice and theory? What will be the role of representation in future planning practice and theory? How should planners and planning theory approach pragmatism and normativity in the future?

**DISCUSSION FACILITATION:**
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**PRESENTATION:**
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EXAMPLES OF REFLECTION PAPERS:

Example 1:
In his article, “The Role of the State in Sheltering the Urban Poor,” Handelman describes the challenges of providing adequate housing to increasing numbers of poor, rural migrants moving to large, overcrowded urban areas in Latin America. He uses examples from several countries to illustrate the failures of the state (and the private market) to provide sufficient housing to poor urban residents. Handelman explains how due to a lack of housing supply in cities, poor migrants often must construct their own housing on “occupied” or “invaded” land – creating slums or shantytowns. He does not critique the wording of “invaded land” (nor does Gilbert in his assessment of “self-help” housing), which implies a level of violence and force on the part of poor migrants as they move into new spaces surrounding major urban areas. Are most slums the result of organized, forceful “invasions” of unoccupied land by political parties as Gilbert describes? Or do these informal communities result from individual families slowly creating housing for themselves as the need arises, through what Bayat called “quiet encroachment”? In Gilbert’s explanation of land invasions, political leaders are the ones controlling the development process from “behind the scenes” by “aiding” settlers grab new land tracts, so that the “take-over” seems to be a violent grab for material space, rather than an act of survival (when both may be true) – there are likely multiple dimensions and actors in this “encroachment” that should be considered.

Handelman posits state-supplied housing as the principal alternative to this precarious housing, and critiques how few poor actually benefit from public housing initiatives in Latin America. Handelman barely discusses other alternatives, however, aside from mentioning the possibility of the state providing utility services to improve quality of life in “slums” or loans to residents to improve building structures on their own. Each of these options, along with others, (such as state-subsidy programs that might spur housing development by the private sector or state contributions to non-profit NGO’s that could take charge of housing construction/development) have advantages/disadvantages and might offer different results in different communities. Handelman’s ultimate conclusion to the options he identified is that “government programs must supplement spontaneous efforts by the urban poor with state planning that is closely coordinated with the desires of the people it purports to serve.” Handelman therefore claims that the voices of the people matter in designing urban housing development plans, yet assumes that these residents want the state involved in these efforts, and that the residents are looking to collaborate in government planning efforts, which may not be the case in some communities. He also warns that “caution must be taken not to impose the planners’ values on the recipients” – is this even possible? Perhaps through participatory methods? How can planners avoid imposing certain values on the communities they are working with, when dealing with state agencies opposed to or unaware of the intricacies and importance of participatory processes? Also, neither Handelman nor Gilbert addresses the role of family and friend networks in the development of informal communities – what role do these social networks play in encouraging migrants to settle in particular areas? How can planners work within established social networks and also negotiate with state agents who may be blind to key social patterns and interactions?
Example 2:
When I first read Susan Fainstein’s Just City argument last spring, I was excited. I had spent the first six months of the PhD program feeling the futility of my four years as a bureaucrat after graduate school reading theory that alternately suggested that bureaucrat was a synonym for emasculated company man or evil, plotting and intension oppressor. As a bureaucrat, I felt I was neither. I tried to push boundaries in policy development, rethink complex issues to come up with just solutions, and listen to the various interests, regardless of which of the definitions of bureaucrat to which they subscribed. Fainstein offers an alternative, in many ways. She suggests that, yes bad policies have come out of bureaucrats and policy makers, but that a refocusing by those policy makers to the needs of the most disadvantaged is the answer to the complex policy issues.

However, as I have engaged more deeply with theory, my position as a researcher and my past position as a bureaucrat, I found her theories to try and fail at bridging the gap between theory and praxis. On its face, the fact that she limits her analysis to a 21st Century “wealthy, western world where neoliberal formulations have become powerful influences on urban policy,” seems to create a level of legitimacy because these have an assumed sense of rights and freedoms. However, it may be those very rights and freedoms – and more importantly democratic processes – that sink her argument from a practical perspective. In short, her normative argument falters in the face of the theoretical engagement with power and structure, translating to a practical face of reelection and continuity; a false dichotomy between local and expert knowledge; and assumption of monolithic, knowable needs and marginalized people on the part of policy-makers.

Fainstein’s argument feels vaguely reminiscent (though perhaps more well-intentioned) of Talen and Ellis’ pronouncement that we should stop romanticizing bad design and accept that there, in fact, are good designs and bad designs for cities that can be determined by building in principles. Moreover, she seems to call on Kant by believing in a very logical beauty, based on a moral right that, while particularistic on one level, is acknowledged across the board as just. For Fainstein the accusation of romanticization would be on the idea that if the participatory process is good, there will be good results. She identifies the issue that exclusionary ideals can come from inclusionary processes. Wealthy neighborhoods can all work together over months and create a plan that systematically excludes low income households from the community through zoning or outright discrimination. In this way, she takes on the privileging of local, but, instead of supporting of a co-production of knowledge development, she reverts back to an assumption of the supremacy of expert knowledge. It is an acknowledgement that people do not always know their own interests and that experts (in this case policy-makers) can know what is best if they just take a moment to think about how their policies will impact the most marginalized of the community. This seems to put Fainstein in a well-intentioned place between rational and advocacy planning.

Tied to this, the second issue with Fainstein is an assumption of the omniscient magnanimity of policy-makers. To effectively act on the principles of the Just City, Fainstein would require that
the know first who the most marginalized are (which, of course, first requires a judgment of worst off – or a choosing between worst-case scenarios) and second what the needs of those worst-off are. While it is likely that policy-makers and bureaucrats are more in tune with the needs of citizens of the city than they are often credited with, this much awareness of this many needs would be challenging for some deities, much less a bureaucrat beset with a multitude of voices clamoring for attention. Fainstein’s view suggests that cities function as pluralistic entities where all groups have equal voice, an idea refuted by the ideas of regime theory and urban growth machines (Dahl, 2007) (Molotch, 1976) (Stone, 1989). Fainstein’s Just City would need a layer of Davidoff’s advocacy planners that would tell policy-makers what marginalized people need before they could act.

Perhaps the base problem with The Just City is that it fails to take into account the power involved in taking the existing structures, players, and stakes, and changing focus away from those who currently benefit most from decisions by policy makers. From a practical point of view, it is unclear that Fainstein’s policy-makers would remain in office long enough to make lasting change and good decisions for the benefit of marginalized citizens. More theoretically, Harvey acknowledges a fundamental need to reconfigure the structures of power away from capital in order that all people might have a right to the city. Otherwise, the very fundamental way in which power functions in cities – where those with power and influence have a louder voice – will preclude the knowledge, much less action on the behalf of marginalized groups in a community.

Harvey states, “we live, after all , in a world in which the rights of private property and the profit rate trump all other notions of rights” before suggesting that we first acknowledge the right to the city, which suggests a dialectical opportunity for empowerment through the opportunity to change the city, which then empowers those groups. Fainstein and Harvey see the same results as cities eschew the rights of some to the benefit of others in urbanization. Harvey, however, sees the need for capital to constantly expand or order to remain viable, thus making a solution based in the current functioning of the system impossible. Fainstein does not reject the current system of capital, and works within existing systems, relying on a change of thinking and focus.

From the perspective of a practical bureaucrat of policy maker, trying to do good work in a system where capital is privileged, Fainstein offers a way of reconfiguring the way one thinks to improve outcomes. However, even the most well-intentioned bureaucrat or policy maker likes to remain employed and therefore knows how far they can push justice and the support of the marginalized (assuming he or she is even aware of the unintended consequences on unknown groups). In her effort to bridge that gap, she misses an opportunity to truly reimagine the process and context, rather than merely the outcomes in cities.

**Example 3:**
Space is both a concept and a material element; it includes organization of things (the material) as well as social relations (abstract). Space is an essential concept for planning, since the practice of the discipline is directed to, first, the visualization (imaginary) and understanding of
spaces – representation of space – and second, to their material construction and placement. These top-down imaginaries of space – abstract space – follow the prescriptions and visions of the dominant classes, where a particular ordering, conduct, and assimilation is expected. In contrast, and in ongoing contestation with abstract space and representation of space, Lefebvre posits representational space and spatial practices. The first includes the imaginaries of lived life, the “space experienced through the complex symbols and images of its ‘inhabitants’ and ‘users’ ” (Lefebvre, 33). The second corresponds to lived experiences, practices, everyday activities and routines.

With these complex and interrelated analysis of ‘space’, Lefebvre opens new opportunities to think about the implications of the material (buildings, infrastructure, etc) and the imaginaries (be it for representation of space or representational spaces), which are not accidental representations and/or organizations of space, but follow complex social processes that give spaces particular social meanings. Holston’s, Caldeira’s and McCann’s articles illuminate in particular ways Lefebvre’s theoretical conception of space. These three texts, in my perspective, represent different scales of space-creation: bottom up (McCann’s), intermediate (Caldeira’s) and top-down (Holston’s).

Caldeira’s article discusses the ways in which imaginations and understandings of safety in Sao Paolo have created a new organization of space based on exclusion, individualism, and homogenization. Here, difference is avoided because it portrays insecurity. Imaginations of safety have been inscribed with the help of advertisements: images and texts that depict a particular arrangement and ‘adequate’ livability of spaces. These advertisements – what I refer to as the intermediate agents of space-creation – follow a particular abstract space conception that annihilates public spaces for a new constitution and re-arrangement of the city. Spatial practices are unavoidably affected, since physical arrangements impede a ‘natural flow’ between the private and the public. It is interesting to ‘read’ Lefebvre’s contradiction inherent in abstract spaces versus spatial practices in Caldeira’s article. Even though there is an increasing tension between the ‘lived-imagined’ (representational space)’ and the lived (spatial practice), which can also be understood as an anxiety to transform the ‘informal’ into the ‘formal’, the text shows how a new type of contradictory ‘space’ is created, a space that satisfies the imagined, but which boundaries are blurred in the lived space. I am referring here to the example of the maid and the guard in Caldeira’s enclaves. The physical separation of services (elevators for maids, different entrances, and the sort) satisfies the imagined anxiety of safety and ‘formalizes’ a distinction and differentiation with ‘the other’. Nonetheless, this separation line is continuously re-shaped in the everyday dependence of the maid’s services and her presence in the ‘intimate’ (internal) house-space. Hence, in this case, the representational space and the spatial practice is in a constant process of construction and deconstruction, where the ‘formal’ and the ‘informal’ are increasingly dependent on one another.

Holston’s article I place at the top-down space-creation process, where new architecture understandings of space give meanings to codes, illustrations, and creation of cities (again Brazil as the example) with a particular order and vision, that ends up defining and altering
social relations. In this particular case the focus is on streets, an essential element in the spatial practice space of the city’s residents. Nonetheless, and similar to Caldeira’s fusion of imagined and lived spaces, people are trying to take back public space and “resuscitate its semantic code” (Holston, 271). The tension results in the creation and contestation over uses and meanings, where abstract space is challenged (Lefebvre) and linked again with the informal realm of public relations, heterogeneous contact, and mixture.

Lastly, I place McCann’s article at the bottom-up space-creation scale. In relating race and space-creation, this text accentuates the relevance of public participation in the contestation and challenge of abstract spaces and the ‘formality’ they excerpt. Race is, inevitably in most societies, part of the imagined, part of the ordered, and part of the organizational – for the most part in exclusionary terms. Nonetheless, opportunities arise for redefinitions and visibility, like the article presents, but how long-lived are these instances lived? What impacts can they produce in the imagination and materialization of abstract spaces? Can these moments affect representations of space in a way that inclusion is considered fundamental or do they have greater impact, and stay, at the representational space level?

These readings have also made me think about the relations between creation of space and insurgency, and the role of planning within these. If planning is part of the creation of abstract space and representations of space, where does the insurgent planner fall? Is the insurgent planner an agent in altering conceptions and imaginaries of the lived (representations of space) that can then re-shape abstract space in a way that spatial practices are more readily incorporated in the planning process? How is the creation of ‘new spaces’ (enclaves, annihilation of streets and public spaces) a form of destruction of the city and city life?

Example 4:
Bayat makes the plausible argument that global restructuring in the third world contributes to a “double process” whereby the urban subaltern (his chosen term) integrate into some formal socio-economic conventions and contracts of modernity while simultaneously remaining excluded, or autonomous, from other formal conventions. In leading up to this argument, Bayat surveys the different theoretical paradigms that, over the years, scholars have employed to examine the issue of urban marginality. Across these different paradigms the dialectics of power/resistance and structure/agency are both the focal points as well as the issues of contention between different paradigms. Bayat’s own argument seems to surface with a critique of the resistance paradigm, which he suggests tends to see political acts of resistance in actions which otherwise may simply be coping or survival strategies. Instead Bayat offers the notion of the “quiet encroachment,” which seems to blend elements of the survival and resistance paradigms. A good example to illustrate “quiet encroachment” would be an act of illegally constructing a domicile on public land in the urban periphery. This quiet act of encroachment would be undertaken out of necessity (survival paradigm); however once the state intervenes to rectify the illegal action, the situation may then evolve into one of a power/resistance struggle between the state and the individual – or social group, should the entire neighborhood of illegal squatters decide to collectivize due to the sudden commonalities of their claims against the state or power elites.
Bayat’s notion of “quiet encroachment” is provocative and, in my opinion, substantive in many regards. First, this notion avoids the essentialist trap of constructing artificial and uniform social groups, such as the “urban poor”, where none really exist. Reminiscent of actor-network-theory, Bayat does not see grand acts of social resistance or collective action where none may exist. It acknowledges that individuals often act in their own best interest, which may or may not be in conflict with their neighbors. Secondly, I find Bayat’s focus on the dialectic tension between integration and exclusion, and how this tension is part-imposed, part-selected, to be fascinating. It reveals a socio-psychological schism, or schizophrenia, between individuals’ desire to modernize and formalize their lives, on the one hand, yet resist and remain autonomous, on the other. This final point brings me back to ideas of actor-network-theory and how “non-social” entities such as the street, electricity, water, land and public space often serve a critical social role in that they link together individuals into new social networks or political relationships. For instance, the act of illegally tapping into the city’s water supply suddenly creates a new social relationship between the individual and the city. Similarly, the act of taking up an unoccupied plot in a favela links one into a social network with those around him or her. As Bayat remarks, this social network may never be acknowledged, activated, or ‘collectivized’; however by virtue of the land they share (illegally), they share a social relationship vis-à-vis the power elite who owns the land.

Like Bayat, we often use the dialectical terms “integration” / “exclusion” and “formal” / “informal” without giving much thought to their meaning. In Bayat’s article, for example, what exactly is the urban subaltern “integrating into” or “being excluded from”? Can we identify this beyond abstract notions of some “social order”? Similarly, what exactly is "formal" versus "informal"?

Example 5:
John Friedmann traces the historical roots of planning in Latin America in his article Planning in Latin America: From Technocratic Illusion to Open Democracy, beginning with the role of Rexford Tugwell serving as governor of Puerto Rico. Tugwell established planning as an agent of “rationality” that should be implemented by experts for the benefit of the general public. In many ways, this paradigm of rationality exists to this day, both in Latin America and the United States. For example, in the U.S., policy is frequently enacted with extensive data and statistical analysis so that policy makers (“experts”) are thereby making decisions that will influence people who have little or no say in the crafting and implementation of those policies.

Friedmann briefly mentions the role of women in leading and sustaining civil society in his article The Right to the City, but does not mention the homogeneity by gender of the traditional planning profession. The “rationality” of early planning strategies and paradigms was embodied in the forms of male planners seeking to control and “develop” both men and women of “third world” or marginalized sectors. He critically analyzes the underlying beliefs of the “traditional” planning profession, but fails to analyze how the gender identity of early planners may have contributed to these assumptions about knowledge and expertise. For Friedmann, the end product of planning/development is an open and participatory democracy that “consists of
strong representative institutions and the collective empowerment of ordinary citizens in their own communities (267).” Friedmann thus fails to recognize that he is imposing his own view of an idealized political system in Latin America, and excludes other visions for participation and social justice in Latin American countries – such as indigenous communities seeking autonomy from the state in order to create their own governing system (or to re-create systems of governance lost during centuries of conquest and colonialism).

Friedmann also addresses civil society as a collective force organizing to “speak and act for itself” and discusses how the emergence of this community organizing necessarily calls for new mechanisms of planning in Latin America which take into account changing power dynamics and an inclusion of traditionally marginalized voices. However, in both of his articles, Friedmann’s discussions conceive “civil society” as a homogenous, collective group of “ordinary people” who have shared common struggles and who should the same ultimate goals. He does not address the divisions and inner struggles that may arise in civil society. For example, what happens when certain groups (women, indigenous groups etc.) are excluded from civil society, or are not invited to participate?

Raúl Zibechi outlines many of the challenges related to the formation and sustainability of civil society, and emphasizes the paradox that often, civil societies emerge in opposition to traditional governments – and then dissolve once they have gained visibility in the political system. How might civil society groups overcome these obstacles described by Zibechi? How can the success of civil society be incorporated into structures of government over the long-term? Is it even possible for governments to work with, rather than against, the interests of civil society? Despite numerous challenges to civil society’s sustainability, this type of citizen organization is undeniably altering the political landscape and power structures throughout Latin America in both subtle and more overt ways – as highlighted in all of this week’s readings.
EXAMPLE OF READING SUMMARY:

Student 1 and Student 2
Planning Theory
April 17, 2013

READING SUMMARIES AND DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

I. Imaginaries


In this chapter, Rutheiser examines the revitalization of Atlanta’s urban core, and how the power elite of the city aimed to transform this space into something that resembles their ideas of what “traditional urbanity” should be. He traces the changing images the city has aspired to be, from the “Gate City,” to what it has endured in its indisputable harsh and complicated past, especially Urban Renewal and it’s effect on the built environment in Atlanta. The most recent major period through which the urban core was changed was the competing for, winning of, building for, and hosting of the Olympics in 1996. With many of the temporary structures removed after the Olympics, many permanent brick and mortar structures, such as Centennial Park in downtown, remained vacant as of the writing of this text. Since then, the incongruous state of the urban core, with the vision of the elite as the traditional urban space emphasizes, as Rutheiser argues, is not uncommon to other medium and large sized cities. However, this “in-betweeness” of (p.340) the changing built environment, both as a result of major planning interventions and as a result of its social history, and it’s envisioned state, is the most stable part of its identity.