

RICHARD E. FOGLESONG

Planning the Capitalist City

The Colonial Era to the 1920s



PRINCETON LEGACY LIBRARY

PLANNING THE CAPITALIST CITY

PLANNING THE CAPITALIST CITY

The Colonial Era to the 1920s

— BY —

RICHARD E. FOGLESONG

PRINCETON UNIVERSITY PRESS
PRINCETON, NEW JERSEY

Copyright © 1986 by Princeton University Press

Published by Princeton University Press, 41 William Street,
Princeton, New Jersey 08540

In the United Kingdom: Princeton University Press, Guildford, Surrey

All Rights Reserved

Library of Congress Cataloging in Publication Data will be
found on the last printed page of this book

ISBN 0-691-07705-3

This book has been composed in Linotron Trump

Clothbound editions of Princeton University Press books
are printed on acid-free paper, and binding materials are
chosen for strength and durability

Printed in the United States of America by Princeton University Press
Princeton, New Jersey

For Carol, Eric, and Christopher

CONTENTS

PREFACE	ix
ONE The Problem of Planning	3
TWO Colonial Town Planting	28
THREE Early Housing Reform	56
FOUR Parks and Park Planning	89
FIVE Planning the City Beautiful	124
SIX Roads Not Taken	167
SEVEN Planning the City Practical	199
EIGHT Planning and Contradiction	233
BIBLIOGRAPHY	258
INDEX	281

PREFACE

THIS IS A WORK of political science, urban history, political economy, and planning theory. Although I hope its contribution will be recognized in each of these areas, it will no doubt disappoint some for failing to take account of all the analytical concerns and relevant literature in each of these fields; that is perhaps the risk of attempting to write a multidisciplinary work. More than that, I have attempted to write a theoretically informed history, one that goes beyond the marshaling of facts around narrow historical questions or theorizing without historical reference. The danger of course is that neither side will appreciate my attempt to synthesize theory and history. I ask only to be judged in terms of my own project, and in comparison with what others have written about urban planning.

Inasmuch as this book originated as a dissertation, my debts of gratitude are numerous. Among my professors in political science at the University of Chicago, I wish to thank Paul Peterson for stimulating my interest in urban planning at an early stage; Adam Przeworski for nurturing my interest in marxist structuralism; David Greenstone and Lloyd Rudolph for their thoughtful commentary on my dissertation; and especially Ira Katznelson, who helped me explore the connection between theory and history, and who has continued to provide support and good example.

Various friends and colleagues read and commented on my manuscript along the way, some with more involvement than others, but all with insight. Jan Dizard, at Amherst College, was especially helpful. I also wish to thank, from the same institution, Barry O'Connell, Hugh Hawkins, and Robert Gross. I also benefited from the comments of John Brigham, of the University of Massachusetts, and from those of my colleagues in history at Rollins College, Jack Lane and Gary Williams.

In a special category, I must express my debt to Amy Bridges, who made many thoughtful contributions and helped me to understand my own argument in the course of her several readings of the manuscript. I am also grateful to my reviewer, Thomas Bender, for his insightful comments on the manuscript; to my Princeton University Press editor, Gail Ullman, for her unfailing support and wisdom; and to my copyeditor, Janet Stern, for her thoroughness

PREFACE

and skill in uncovering inconsistencies and improving my prose. There are also those former colleagues who might have sought to assist me and did not do so; this book is probably better because they did not try.

I owe thanks as well to a number of institutions. The University of Chicago introduced me to the world of ideas and gave me a sense of intellectual purpose. Amherst College provided partial support for a sabbatical leave and excellent library resources, including the invaluable reference assistance of Floyd Merritt, Margaret Groesbeck, and Michael Kasper. Rollins College has provided supportive colleagues, as well as assistance in preparing my manuscript. I also benefited from access to the Harvard Graduate School of Design Library. And in the present political climate, it is appropriate to mention that, were it not for the Ford Foundation and the federal student loan program, I might not have advanced to the stage of writing this book.

In addition to those named above, a number of friends and professional colleagues provided moral support and good cheer during the course of this long project. I wish to thank in particular David Abraham, Amrita Basu, Midge Bowser, Deborah Gewertz, Jim Greer, Richard Kronick, Carol Nackenoff, Mark Petracca, Judson Starr, Mike Underhill, Joel Wolfe, and, in her own category, B. L. Retriever. Expert typing (or, more accurately, word processing) was provided by Dianne Kaplan, Lurline Dowell, and Sandra Davis, who showed more dedication to this project than I had a right to expect in the course of my almost endless revision and editing of the text. If word processing saved my time, it did not so clearly save theirs. In addition, Jim Warden of the Rollins College Computer Center assisted me numerous times in gaining computer access to my files, for which I am thankful.

Finally, I wish to express my gratitude to my parents; to my wife, Carol, for her love and understanding; and to my sons, Eric and Christopher, who had less quality time with their father because of this project, but who nevertheless made it possible for me to escape from time to time and be a child with them. Yet this is very much my book, and I alone am responsible for any errors or shortcomings.

PLANNING THE CAPITALIST CITY

Things economic and social move by their own momentum and the ensuing situations compel individuals and groups to behave in certain ways whatever they may wish to do—not indeed by destroying their freedom of choice but by shaping the choosing mentalities and by narrowing the list of possibilities from which to choose.

JOSEPH A. SCHUMPETER

Capitalism, Socialism and Democracy

It may be ruled out that immediate economic crises of themselves produce fundamental historical events; they can simply create a terrain more favourable to the dissemination of certain modes of thought, and certain ways of posing and resolving questions involving the entire subsequent development of national life.

ANTONIO GRAMSCI

Selections from the Prison Notebooks

The Problem of Planning

IN 1909, the first national conference on city planning was held in Washington, D.C., bringing together the disparate groups and individuals working in this embryonic field of urban reform. At this gathering and at the conferences that followed, these early planners complained that the process of city building was being determined by real estate speculation rather than by public policies based on the long-term interests of the community. They objected to this excessive reliance on the market system on the grounds that it stymied the development of collective facilities of general benefit to the community, and that it allowed private developers to ride roughshod over the interests of the public, as reflected in the sordid housing, chaotic street systems, and drab urban environments of the day. Although there was general agreement that some form of government intervention was necessary to correct these abuses, there was a lack of consensus on what form that intervention should take.

These concerns were best expressed by Frederick Law Olmsted, Jr. As the son of the famous co-designer of New York City's Central Park, Olmsted was a successor to the tradition of park planning and civic adornment, a tradition whose financial and political support had come from downtown merchants and the well-to-do. Yet Olmsted was no apologist for the market system. In his opening speech at the 1910 planning conference, he pinned the blame for the city's problems—poor housing, inadequate sanitation, narrow and crowded streets, and the dearth of parks and open space—on the policy of *laissez-faire* in matters of land use and housing. The task of city planning was encumbered, he said, by a "pious, stand-pat attitude" that population congestion was "self-limiting": it was assumed that a "natural equilibrium" would be achieved in which the advantages of urban living would be offset by the misery of town life and the increasing death rate in the city. Yet, echoing the view of early socialists, Olmsted proclaimed that "mankind will not be content with such an attitude after the imagination has grasped the larger possibility of control."¹

¹ Olmsted, Jr., "Introductory Address on City Planning," pp. 16-17.

CHAPTER ONE

Nor did Olmsted believe that the evils of urban life should be attacked separately. In order to control the destiny of cities, it would be necessary to untangle the "complex interwoven web of cause and effect" producing those evils. "As intelligent human beings," he said, "we cannot fail to pluck at the web and try as best we can to untangle it, and begin to ask, each one of us in his own corner, 'Will my cutting away of old threads and my building up of new, burden or help my brother who is working at some other tangle in his part of the field?' "²

With these words, Frederick Olmsted, Jr., set forth the agenda of this first generation of American city planners. That there was fairly wide agreement on this agenda is significant in light of the many differences among these early planners. Representing professions as diverse as architecture, engineering, and social work, they were motivated by different substantive concerns, ranging from housing and tenement reform, to park planning and civic adornment, to rationalizing the system of land use and transportation. And these concerns corresponded with the interests of different social groups: housing reform benefited workers and their employers, park planning and civic adornment were a boon to downtown property holders, and a more efficient system of land use and transportation was a concern principally of commercial and manufacturing groups. However, in spite of these differences, there was a generally shared view that the practice of *laissez-faire* in matters of housing and land use was not only a cause of the burgeoning problems of the city, but also a hindrance to their solution. Furthermore, there was general agreement that the control of urban development could not be left solely to the market system. Part of the agenda, therefore, was to promote restrictions on the market and thus widen the scope of government action. Yet these early planners also recognized that some new form of coordination, operating under the aegis of the state, was necessary to guide urban development toward the achievement of conscious objectives that would be of general benefit to the community. Thus, the problem was not just the market; some new form of government decision making was also necessary. These planners were searching for a directive system, a method of decision making—a system they called "planning" without knowing precisely what they meant by the term—that was different from the existing method of government policy formulation.

² Ibid., p. 18.

THE PROBLEM OF PLANNING

Planning the Capitalist City shows how this loose assemblage of groups and individuals sought to define this directive system, give it a substantive purpose, and move toward its creation. Starting with the colonial era of planning, and focusing particularly on the period from 1860 to the 1920s, this study will illustrate that American urban planning developed in two senses: as a form of state intervention and as a particular method of policy formulation. It will examine the origins of urban planning, how it came to be organized as it did, and how its development has been shaped by and reflects features of American capitalist democracy. Attention also will be given to the role of planners and planning advocates in the development of planning, as we examine who these people were, whose interests they represented, and how their efforts contributed to the maintenance of the existing political economy.

The objective of this analysis is not only to explain and understand but also to criticize. While seeking to explain and understand the development of urban planning and the role of planners and planning advocates in that historical process, this book also maintains a critical outlook on the course of development of planning and the aims and activities of planners. The framework for understanding and criticism is adopted from marxist theories of state and society. I refer in particular to recent marxist analyses of the "state," especially the work of Nicos Poulantzas and Claus Offe, and to the developing marxist urban literature, notably the work of Manuel Castells and David Harvey.³ This book is therefore written from a specific point of view, which will be described more fully in due course. The task is both to use this Marxian point of view to try to elucidate the meaning and importance of the role of planning and planners and, conversely, to discover what the early planning experience in the United States teaches about the adequacy of this theoretical approach.

Corresponding with these objectives, the argument of the book proceeds on two levels, one macro-theoretical, the other more concrete and historical. The first seeks to show that the development of urban planning cannot be understood either in its own

³ On the subject of the "state," see, e.g., Poulantzas, *Political Power and Social Classes*; Offe, "The Theory of the Capitalist State and the Problem of Policy Formation," pp. 125-44; and also Offe's "Structural Problems of the Capitalist State," pp. 31-57. On the subject of urban conflict and urban planning, the most important book-length works in the marxist literature are Harvey, *Social Justice and the City*, and Castells, *The Urban Question*.

CHAPTER ONE

terms, that is, in terms of the progressive development of the "planning idea," or in terms of the pluralist-liberal paradigm used by most political scientists who have written about planning. Rather, urban planning and urban planners are best understood in terms of the structures and contradictions of American capitalist democracy; or to say much the same, they are best seen through the lens of marxist theories of state and society. At a second level, the argument of the book concerns the relationship between planners, class interests, and the state.⁴ The key questions here are how and whether the interests of capital are incorporated into planning policy and what role planners play in that process. It will be argued that although urban planning has indeed had a pro-capitalist bias, the planning idea came from neither businessmen themselves nor from members of the apparatus of the state, but from new actors on the political scene—from persons who came to be called "planners"—and that these planners served to identify, organize, and legitimate the interests of capital in the sphere of urban development. To complicate but also enrich the analysis, it will be argued that these planners possessed a significant degree of autonomy from capital.

ENGAGEMENTS

This study relates to a number of currents of analysis and debate. One of the most important is the ongoing debate in policy and academic circles in the United States over what role the state should play in a capitalist economy and society, and what role it does play currently and why. These questions have become more timely in light of recent efforts to formulate an "industrial policy" for the United States; legislative proposals in this area raise the issue of national economic planning in a serious way for the first time since the 1930s. More analytically, these proposals raise the issue of the relationship of planning to both capitalism and democracy. On the relationship between capitalism and state intervention (which for many is synonymous with planning), there is in the United States a widely held view, reflected in and galvanized by the election of Ronald Reagan, that the growth of the modern state is the work of anti-capitalist or otherwise misguided politicians, aided by labor unionists, civil rights organizations, and other rep-

⁴ The term *state* will be used throughout to refer to the total orbit of government at all levels, except when the meaning "state government" (referring to one of the fifty states) is clearly indicated by the context.

THE PROBLEM OF PLANNING

representatives of the disadvantaged.⁵ Indeed, the history of urban planning reveals that urban planning did develop, at least initially, in response to criticism of the market system as a method for guiding urban development. It should not be inferred from this, however, that urban planning was anti-capitalist in either its origins or its effects. While the demand for urban planning arose in response to forces that were endogenous to capitalism, planning interventions served to shape the process of urban development and to mitigate the effects of the market system in ways that contributed to the maintenance of the capitalist system. Moreover, the early city planning movement—actually a confluence of the housing reform, park planning, and City Beautiful movements—was hardly a lower-class movement. As will be shown, members of the business community were in the forefront in demanding a larger government role in guiding urban development.

This analysis is also relevant to understanding the relationship between planning and democracy, the subject of much debate and misunderstanding. Complicating the debate over this relationship has been the failure to distinguish adequately between planning as state intervention and planning as a method of policy formulation. Consequently, the participants in this debate have often spoken past one another. The idea of decision making by intellectual problem solving (or what Charles Lindblom calls “synoptic planning”), which involves identifying overarching goals and selecting the policy means that most efficiently correspond with those goals, has been criticized for being inconsistent with the notion of democracy, since it substitutes expertise for participation.⁶ Friedrich Hayek, writing in 1944, argued that the urge to plan carried with

⁵ Indicative of this viewpoint is the statement of Ronald Reagan’s Secretary of Interior, James Watt: “[For government] to tell people how to manage their own land—that’s despicable in America.” To lionize capitalism as Watt does, while attributing government intervention to forces external to capitalism, is to fail to understand the capitalist system. The quotation is from “James Watt’s Land Rush,” p. 30.

⁶ The classic critique of the “tyranny” of government planning is, of course, Hayek, *The Road to Serfdom*, especially chaps. 5-6. A less bombastic statement of the anti-planning position can be found in the early work of Charles Lindblom; see “The Science of Muddling Through,” pp. 79-88; *The Intelligence of Democracy*; and Lindblom and Braybrooke, *A Strategy of Decision*. In *Politics and Markets*, Lindblom modifies his view of planning, accepting the need for some form of national economic planning as a condition for securing democracy (see p. 168 and chaps. 12-14 and 23-25). The term “synoptic planning” is developed by Lindblom in the same volume (chap. 23).

CHAPTER ONE

it a logic favoring reliance on expertise and technically correct decision making, which he believed was subversive of both liberty and democracy.⁷ Yet in the early planning movement, urban planning was seen as an expansion of the scope of local democracy inasmuch as it opened urban development to public control. Typifying this view, planning historians Theodora and Henry Hubbard referred in a 1929 text to the "great democratic experiment in city planning."⁸ Here, they presented planning as a form of state intervention, since city planning entailed an expansion of the government role in urban development—as reflected in the establishment of housing standards, coherent street systems, land use zoning, and attempts to promote "civic beauty." Yet, if this expansion of the scope of government limited or otherwise mitigated the effects of the market system, it seldom provided for greater popular control of urban development. In Roy Lubove's apt phrase, it was more often a case of the "discipline of the expert" replacing the discipline of the market.⁹ Thus, whether planning is or can be made democratic depends on the method of decision making involved, as well as on the type and extent of state intervention. While this important conceptual distinction and the tension between these two essences of planning are discussed later in this chapter, it is important to note at this point that the separation of American urban planning from institutions of popular control is not an inevitable concomitant of planning, but rather the result of efforts by economically dominant groups to institutionalize their control of planning.

As we consider these issues, we should recognize that the history of urban planning is not separate from that of other forms of state planning. In the United States, as in most other advanced industrialized societies, urban planning was the first form of state planning. As such, it served as the foundation, the source of training and experience, and the model of the planning process for broader planning efforts, including the movement for national economic and social planning. The interest in national planning grew out of the experience in urban planning, when, during the depression of the 1930s, a group of urban and regional planners and reform-minded social scientists, led by Charles Merriam, became aware that the problems of cities were national in origin and scope

⁷ Hayek, chaps. 4-5.

⁸ Hubbard and Hubbard, *Our Cities To-Day and To-Morrow*, p. 5.

⁹ "The Roots of Urban Planning," p. 327.

THE PROBLEM OF PLANNING

and required nationally administered solutions. This recognition led to the formation of Franklin Roosevelt's National Resources Planning Board (NRPB).¹⁰ In the history of urban planning, therefore, we have an opportunity to examine the development of the planning apparatus of the modern state.

The present study is relatively unique because it focuses on the early history of urban planning. This early period was "formative" in the sense that the ideas, practices, and routines worked out then have had a lasting effect upon the development of planning. Thus, an analysis of this period will enable us to understand the origins of urban planning and how it came to be organized as it did. By contrast, most contemporary analyses of planning have centered on the post-World War II era, a period in which the basic form and procedures of planning already were established.¹¹

This study is also unique in its theoretical point of departure. Planning histories written by persons within the field of planning have typically adopted a historical idealist point of view, presenting the history of planning as the progressive development of the "planning idea."¹² Such histories have made little allowance for the ways in which material forces and even social history have

¹⁰ For the contribution of the NRPB to the creation of a national planning apparatus, as well as the role of municipal reformers and reform-minded social scientists in that process, see Karl, *Charles E. Merriam and the Study of Politics*; Merriam, "The National Resources Planning Board; A Chapter in the American Planning Experience," pp. 1075-88; and Fox, *Better City Government*.

¹¹ Noteworthy examples are Meyerson and Banfield, *Politics, Planning and the Public Interest*, which examines the conflict surrounding public housing in Chicago between 1949 and 1951; Altshuler, *The City Planning Process*, which focuses on four planning controversies in Minneapolis and St. Paul between 1959 and 1960; and Rabinovitz, *City Politics and Planning*, which is based upon case studies of planning decisions in six New Jersey cities in the 1950s and 1960s.

¹² This is true of the two basic histories of American urban planning, Reps, *The Making of Urban America*, and Scott, *American City Planning Since 1890*. The latter is a semiofficial history, written in commemoration of the fiftieth anniversary of the American Institute of Planners. These two texts are rich in detail and prodigiously researched, but they fail to relate the history of planning to the organizing structure of American society and, consequently, do not provide an adequate explanation for the development of planning.

More recent contributions to this historical literature include the two collections of essays edited by Krueckeberg, *Introduction to Planning History in the United States* and *The American Planner*, and, on the comparison between planning in Europe and North America, Sutcliffe, *Toward the Planned City: Germany, Britain, the United States and France, 1780-1914*, and Sutcliffe, ed., *The Rise of Modern Urban Planning, 1800-1914*.

CHAPTER ONE

shaped the development of planning.¹³ Most political scientists who have written about planning have viewed the subject from the perspective of the pluralist-liberal paradigm. While their analyses have demonstrated accurately how the local planning process is insulated from popular participation, they have failed to explain the patterned bias that produces this result.¹⁴ Moreover, in viewing planners as a discrete set of actors motivated by their own professional and occupational interests, pluralists have failed to observe how planners serve to organize and legitimate the interests of other groups in society.¹⁵ In contrast to the pluralist analysis of planning is the recent marxist literature on urban conflict and urban planning.¹⁶ Focusing on the development of planning in Europe, particularly in France, where planning is far more extensive than in the United States, this literature has been strongly influenced by developments in European marxism, especially marxist structuralism. Indicative of this literature's perspective is the characterization of planning offered by Manuel Castells and François Godard, based on their study of urban planning in France's Dunkirk region. They write that urban planning serves two very important purposes in a class society: on the political plane, it

¹³ A variation on this theme is Boyer, *Dreaming the Rational City: The Myth of American City Planning*, which uses the ideas of Michel Foucault to examine the "genealogy" of efforts to control urban population and urban development. In self-consciously excluding the issues of who planners were, what their relationship was to those who hired them, and what she terms "functional causal explanation," Boyer ends up making a fetish of the study of "planning discourse," implicitly attributing to discourse the same self-actualizing properties that more mainstream historians have imputed to the planning idea. What is frustratingly unclear in her impressively researched history is who is "doing" the discourse, what their aims are, and how their efforts correspond with the organizing structure of society.

¹⁴ See, e.g., Banfield and Wilson, *City Politics*, p. 192; Allensworth, *The Political Realities of Urban Planning*, pp. 58-59, 119; and Altshuler, p. 323 and chap. 7.

¹⁵ The pluralist literature recognizes that planners play a coordinative role in the process of coalition building, but it fails to take account of which groups benefit from this role, even though pluralist case studies suggest that businessmen have been the principal beneficiaries. See, e.g., Altshuler, *City Planning Process*, p. 310 n.6 and chap. 4; Meyerson and Banfield, *Politics*, p. 191; and Rabinovitz, *City Politics and Planning*, p. 149.

¹⁶ In addition to the texts by Harvey and Castells, there are three important collections of essays in this literature: Pickvance, ed., *Urban Sociology: Critical Essays*; Harloe, ed., *Captive Cities: Studies of the Political Economy of Cities and Regions*; and Dear and Scott, eds., *Urbanization and Urban Planning in Capitalist Society*. In addition, the *International Journal of Urban and Regional Research* was founded in 1977 to bring together contributors to this literature from Europe and the United States.

THE PROBLEM OF PLANNING

serves as an instrument for mediating and organizing dominant class interests in relation to the pressures and claims of dominated classes; on the ideological plane, it rationalizes and legitimates this ensemble of dominant class interests in terms of an ideological conception of the common good.¹⁷ Without embracing this characterization as a description of urban planning in the United States, the present study adopts the broad perspective, problem-focus, and much of the conceptual apparatus of the marxist urban literature. This book is therefore relatively unusual in its application of a Marxian analysis, moreover an analysis derived largely from the European intellectual and historical experience, to the study of urban planning in the United States. As persons familiar with this literature will recognize, the present study is also somewhat unusual because it relies upon concrete historical research, whereas the marxist urban literature (like much of the marxist literature on the state) suffers from an abstract formalism that has deterred empirical research.

PLANNING AND THE STATE

Our questions are never innocent, as Louis Althusser reminds us.¹⁸ Our theoretical presuppositions influence not only the questions we ask, but also the way we define our subject of investigation. Therefore, it is appropriate to begin this study by briefly indicating the view of the state and of state-society relations that underlies my analytical approach.

My inquiry begins with the concept of the state provided by the late Nicos Poulantzas, a leading contributor to the French school of marxist structuralism. I begin with Poulantzas's view of the state not because it is accepted as an adequate theorization of the state—indeed, the opposite evaluation is made—but because, in my own view, our understanding of the liberal-capitalist state cannot proceed until it resolves questions left unanswered by Poulantzas, and because the questions raised by Poulantzas are particularly relevant to planning and planners.

In his book *Political Power and Social Classes*, Poulantzas conceptualizes the state as the "factor of cohesion" of the social formulation.¹⁹ In essence, he conceives of the state as a "giant planner" (my term): it soothes, or represses, outbreaks of social

¹⁷ *Monopoville*, pp. 451-52.

¹⁸ "From 'Capital' to Marx's Philosophy," pp. 11-69.

¹⁹ P. 44.

CHAPTER ONE

discontent and synchronizes the various elements of society so as to ensure the continued functioning of the underlying capitalist structure. This view of the state contrasts with the pluralist-liberal view, in which the state is seen as a more or less neutral umpire that protects the rules of the game and ratifies the outcome of a group bargaining process that is regarded as basically fair.²⁰ It also contrasts with the "instrumentalist" view of the state that is associated with the work of Ralph Miliband.²¹ In the instrumentalist view, the state is regarded as an instrument of the capitalist class: it is held that the state is directly dominated by capitalists or their agents, and that this domination is the source of the state's capitalist bias.

The value of Poulantzas's concept of the state is that it recognizes, as the instrumentalist concept does not, that capitalists more often act as individuals than as members of a class. Poulantzas argues that capitalists are prevented by their practice as capitalists, that is, by their market-imposed competition with other capitalists, from comprehending and acting on their collective class interests.²² It should be noted that this view of capital as an internally divided class is a central element of the pluralist-liberal view of the state; as the statement goes, it is something pluralists have "always known." Yet the pluralist-liberal school fails to recognize the systematic way in which state actions serve to maintain and reproduce a distinctly *capitalist* society, despite capitalists' inability to act on their collective interests. This is the problem that Poulantzas poses, and it is because we are unable to satisfactorily resolve this problem that we are prevented from going beyond his analysis of the state.

For many of those on the left, Poulantzas's concept of the state is a fairly accurate assessment of the way things *appear* in a capitalist-democracy such as the United States. That is, everything happens *as if* the state were the "factor of cohesion" or "giant planner" for the social formation, a unitary actor bent on the reproduction of the capitalist system.²³ However, Poulantzas solves

²⁰ The best statement of the pluralist-liberal view is found in the two works by Dahl, *Who Governs?* and *Preface to Democratic Theory*.

²¹ See Miliband, *The State in Capitalist Society*.

²² Poulantzas, *Political Power*, pp. 275-89.

²³ This concept corresponds with E. P. Thompson's characterization of marxist structuralism as the "illusion of this epoch," in his remarkable essay "The Poverty of Theory"; see his *The Poverty of Theory and Other Essays*, p. 71. To say, as I have done, that Poulantzas's concept of the state is based on the way things appear, is to

the problem of how-the-state-serves-capital-despite-capital's-ignorance-of-its-own-needs by merely transposing the problem to another level. He denies capital the capacity to organize its own rule but presumes the state can somehow, as if by magic, do that which capital cannot. The result is an anthropomorphic view of the state in which the state is accorded a consciousness and will all its own.²⁴ As Fred Block has pointed out, Poulantzas's formulation is inadequate for understanding the source of either the bias of the state or the state's capitalist rationality.²⁵

Two questions raised by Poulantzas's globalist concept of the state are pertinent to this inquiry. The first concerns capital's interpersonal linkage with the state; that is, we need to know how the state comes to represent the interests of capital if the capitalist class is ignorant of its own needs. The answer presented here—overstated—is that “planners do it”: if capitalists are prevented by their practice as capitalists from being cognizant of and articulating their collective class interests, there are others whose practice as “planners,” “intellectuals,” and the like enables them to perform this function for capital.²⁶ To use the scientific language of positivist political science, this study will hypothesize that urban planners have served to identify, organize, and legitimate the interests of capital in the field of urban development, providing a critical mediating link between capital and the state. It is not argued, however, that planners have served as the agents or self-conscious representatives of capital. Typically, they have acted for what could be called “their own reasons.” Moreover, in the period we are examining, planners were generally semi-independent of direct capitalist control, and this independence was a condition of their ability to serve the broader class interests of capital.

The second question raised by Poulantzas's view of the state as a “giant planner” concerns the state's internal processes or methods of policy formulation. As Claus Offe, a German sociologist

turn his analysis on its head. In his view, everything happens “as if” the state were the “representative of the people nation” (*Political Power*, p. 135), whereas, in fact (he writes), the state is the “factor of cohesion” of a society predicated upon the existence of classes (p. 44).

²⁴ On this point, see the excellent critique of Poulantzas by Amy Bridges, “Nicos Poulantzas and the Marxist Theory of the State,” pp. 161-90.

²⁵ “The Ruling Class Does Not Rule: Notes on the Marxist Theory of the State,” pp. 6-28.

²⁶ This analysis derives in part from Antonio Gramsci's thoughts on the role of “intellectuals” in raising class interests to the “political level”; see Gramsci, *Selections from the Prison Notebooks*, pp. 3-24, 175-84.

CHAPTER ONE

and leading contributor to marxist state theory, has asked: "What structural features put the state in a position to formulate and express class-interests more appropriately and circumspectly than can be done by the members of the [capitalist] class, namely the isolated and competing individual accumulating units?"²⁷ If it is acknowledged, as it has been by Poulantzas and others, that the capitalist class is incapable of organizing its own rule, why assume that the state *can* perform this function for capital, let alone that it *would* do so? What structural features of the state put it in touch with the reproductive requirements of the capitalist system? The same questions can be raised with respect to the problem of "market breakdown" and the asserted ability of the state to take over from the market system the steering and control functions of society.²⁸ Following Offe, then, we are led to ask: What are the internal processes of the state, the methods of policy production, that enable the state to produce decisions corresponding with the requirements for maintaining the capitalist system? Among state theorists, Offe has done the most to illuminate the internal structure of the state. A brief excursion into his analysis is therefore appropriate.

Offe argues that there is a disjunction between the demands placed upon the state and what the internal structure of the state will permit it to do.²⁹ Assuming a formally democratic state, he argues that the state in capitalist society is confronted with two potentially contradictory objectives: facilitating capital accumulation, the sine qua non of the capitalist system, and maintaining democratic legitimacy, necessitated by the formally democratic character of the state. In Offe's view, however, there exists no method of policy formulation that would enable the state to satisfactorily carry out these objectives in the long term. In developing this argument, he distinguishes three methods of policy formulation: (1) policy making by bureaucracy (corresponding with the structures and processes in Weber's ideal-type), (2) policy making by interest group conflict or political bargaining, and (3) policy making by purposive rationality or planning. Of these, planning, in his view, is best able to produce decisions facilitating capital ac-

²⁷ "Structural Problems of the Capitalist State," p. 37.

²⁸ Scholars as diverse as Theodore Lowi and Jurgen Habermas have related the growth of the capitalist state to the problem of "market breakdown" and the take-over by the state of the directive functions of society. See Lowi, *The End of Liberalism*, chaps. 1-3, and Habermas, *Legitimation Crisis*, chap. 4.

²⁹ The following discussion is drawn from Offe's "The Theory of the Capitalist State and the Problem of Policy Formation."

THE PROBLEM OF PLANNING

cumulation. This is because the criterion for decision making in planning is the production of a designated end result, such as a particular pattern of land use or a specified level of economic growth. This focus of planning on the achievement of end states in the external environment is what distinguishes planning from decision making by bureaucracy (the application of fixed rules to cases) or by interest group competition, neither of which are as adaptable to the purposes of capital. Bureaucracy in the classic sense is described by Offe as too procedure-bound, whereas decision making by interest group competition invites the representation of too many points of view, producing chaos and disorder and impeding rational decision making. In addition, planning is better able to anticipate threats to the system.

On the negative side, the planning method of decision making, because of its technocratic nature, does not correspond with beliefs about how "democratic" decisions should be made; thus, it has a low capacity for maintaining the state's democratic legitimacy. Nevertheless, Offe sees a gravitation toward planning as the preferred method of policy formulation, based on the theory that facilitating capital accumulation takes priority over maintaining democratic legitimacy in the definition of "good" public policy. Yet Offe argues that planning can never be successful in simultaneously facilitating capital accumulation and maintaining democratic legitimacy. In part, this is because effective planning requires effective control over individual accumulating units—something that is denied capitalist state planners. But more fundamentally it is because the requirements for maintaining capital accumulation are objectively in conflict with the requirements for maintaining democratic legitimacy. In Offe's view (and my own), there exists no internal structure of the state, no set of policy formulation processes, that would enable the state to smoothly carry out these contradictory objectives in the long term. Thus, planning in a democratic-capitalist society is seen as both necessary and impossible.

Offe's analysis makes possible a twofold conception of planning, one that helps to bridge the gap between pluralist and marxist analyses of planning. In the pluralist literature, planning is seen as a particular *method of policy formulation* characterized by the attempt to coordinate means-ends relations toward the achievement of some core objective(s).³⁰ Planning, then, is conceived of as

³⁰ The most precise statement of this view can be found in Meyerson and Ban-

instrumental rationality institutionalized. This concept is the product of the pluralist focus on the democratic character of "polyarchy," that is, the "pluralist bargaining order"—terms that refer to an idealized system of political decision making, based upon plural sources of power, plural points of access to government, and plural, competing interests.³¹ Given this problem-focus, pluralists have defined planning in opposition to decision making by pluralist bargaining and have sought to show how "politics" (meaning the pluralist bargaining process) triumphs over attempts to impose "planning" decision making; they interpret this triumph as evidence of the superiority of "politics"/pluralist bargaining as a method of social choice.³²

In contrast to the pluralist view, the marxist literature typically has conceptualized planning as a *form of state intervention* in the market. While pluralist writers have contrasted planning with decision making by pluralist bargaining, the marxist approach has related planning to the workings of the market. Like the pluralist concept, the marxist view of planning as state intervention grows out of a particular theoretical problem-focus. In marxist analyses of planning, the growth of planning (meaning the growth of state intervention) typically is taken to indicate the shortcomings of the market as a means of organizing the reproduction of capitalism. As we shall see shortly, the position is not simply that the market fails to meet the needs of workers or particular sectors of capital, but that it fails to meet the needs of the capitalist system as a whole, and that capitalists therefore turn to the state to regulate, replace, or mitigate the effects of the market system. This analysis is part of contemporary marxism's larger effort to understand how the state forestalls, without (it is presumed) eradicating, the inter-

field, *Politics, Planning and the Public Interest*; see Banfield's "Supplement: Note on Conceptual Scheme," pp. 303-30.

³¹ "Polyarchy" is the term used by Robert Dahl, and later by other pluralist writers, to refer to a quasi-democratic political system characterized by multiple, competing sources of political influence; see, *Preface to Democratic Theory*, p. 84. "Pluralist bargaining order" is used, e.g., by Greenstone and Peterson, *Race and Authority in Urban Politics*, pp. 102-4.

³² For example, Meyerson and Banfield sympathetically observe in their study of public housing controversies in Chicago that "the principle of decision by political power [takes] precedence over decision by planning" (Meyerson and Banfield, *Politics*, p. 239). A complementary analysis that nicely demonstrates the association between the greater "success" of urban planning in contemporary London and the more centralized, unfragmented, and less pluralistic politics of that city is Elkin, *Politics and Land Use Planning: The London Experience*.

THE PROBLEM OF PLANNING

nal contradictions that Marx thought would lead to the self-destruction of capitalism.

As already noted, Offe's analysis provides a bridge between pluralist and marxist analyses of planning. He makes it possible to relate questions concerning the choice and "adequacy" of a method of policy formulation (questions that pluralists have addressed) to the question of the capacity of the democratic-capitalist state to cope with the contradictory demands placed upon it (a question raised by marxists). He offers an explanation for why no method of policy formulation can be entirely successful in meeting these demands over the long run, while recognizing that some methods of policy formulation are able to meet these demands better than others. His analysis thus helps to explain the conflict surrounding the choice or establishment of a particular method of policy formulation, as well as why there might be a gravitation from one method to another. Accordingly, both concepts of planning will be applied here. We will examine how urban planning has developed both as a form of state intervention, in response to dissatisfaction with the system of *laissez-faire* in land use and housing, *and* as a particular method of policy formulation, in response to efforts to determine the use and control of state interventions in this field.

This section began with Nicos Poulantzas's globalist concept of the state ("the state as planner") and raised two questions. First, how does the state come to represent the interests of capital if capitalists are incapable of organizing their own rule and if the state is "relatively autonomous" from the capitalist class? This question led us to consider the role of planners in identifying, organizing, and legitimating the interests of capital. Second, what are the internal processes of the state that enable it to produce decisions corresponding with the collective interests of capital? It is this second question that prompts our interest in planning as a method of policy formulation. Yet state theory is applicable to only part of the problem of understanding the development of urban planning. It speaks to the questions of how and whether the interests of capital get translated into state policy, but it does not address the questions of where demands for urban planning come from, what their history is, and how and whether these demands correspond to the logic of development and structural contradictions of capitalism. The latter questions must also be addressed if we are to account for the development of planning and demonstrate the adequacy of the theoretical approach adopted here. To consider these questions, we will turn to the marxist urban literature, in which

CHAPTER ONE

we find an attempt to theorize about the connection between urban conflict, urban planning, and the reproduction processes of capitalist society.

CAPITALISM AND URBAN PLANNING

David Harvey, a marxist social geographer, has conceptualized urban conflict as a conflict over the "production, management and use of the urban built environment."³³ Harvey uses the term "built environment" to refer to physical entities such as roads, sewerage networks, parks, railroads, and even private housing—facilities that are collectively owned and consumed or, as in the case of private housing, whose character and location the state somehow regulates. These facilities have become politicized because of conflict arising out of their being collectively owned and controlled, or because of the "externality effects" of private decisions concerning their use. At issue is how these facilities should be produced—whether by the market or by the state; how they should be managed and by whom; and how they should be used—for what purposes and by what groups, races, classes, and neighborhoods. Following Harvey, the development of American urban planning is seen as the result of conflict over the production, management, and use of the urban built environment.

The development of this analysis depends on the recognition that capitalism both engenders and constrains demands for state intervention in the sphere of the built environment. First, let us consider some of the theories about how capitalism engenders demands for state intervention.

Sources of Urban Planning

Within the developing marxist urban literature, there has been a variety of attempts to link urban conflict and demands for state intervention to the reproduction processes of capitalist society. Manuel Castells, one of the leading contributors to this literature, emphasizes the connection between state intervention in the urban development process and the reproduction of *labor power*.³⁴

³³ "Labor, Capital, and Class Struggle around the Built Environment in Advanced Capitalist Societies," p. 265.

³⁴ *Urban Question*, pp. 460-61. Castells modifies his view in his most recent book, *The City and the Grass Roots*, which appeared after the manuscript of *Planning the Capitalist City* was essentially written. In this new book, Castells seeks

THE PROBLEM OF PLANNING

The market system cannot meet the consumption needs of the working class in a manner capable of maintaining capitalism; this, according to Castells, is the reason for the growth of urban planning/state intervention. To the extent that the state picks up the slack and assumes this responsibility, there occurs a transformation of the process of consumption, from individualized consumption through the market to collective consumption organized through the state. This transformation entails not only an expansion of the role of the state, which is seen in the growth of urban planning, but also a politicization of the process of consumption, which Castells sees as the underlying dynamic of urban political conflict.

By contrast, David Harvey and Edmond Preteceille, writing separately, have related state intervention in the urban development process to the inability of the market system to provide for the maintenance and reproduction of the immobilized fixed capital investments (for example, bridges, streets, sewerage networks) used by capital as *means of production*.³⁵ The task of the state is not only to maintain this system of what Preteceille calls "urban use values," but also to provide for the coordination of these use values in space (for example, the coordination of streets and sewer lines), creating what he terms "new, complex use values."³⁶ François Lamarche, on the other hand, relates the whole question of urban planning/state intervention to the *sphere of circulation* and the need to produce a "spatial organization which facilitates the

to avoid the "excesses of theoretical formalism" that marked some of his earlier work (p. xvii). He also asserts that "although class relationships and class struggle are fundamental in understanding the process of urban conflict, they are by no means the only or even the primary source of urban social change" (p. xviii). My critical evaluation of Castells's earlier work is still valid and useful, however, since it lends emphasis and historical reference to some of Castells's own criticisms. Furthermore, my criticisms apply to a literature and a theoretical orientation that encompasses, as I point out, more than Castells's work.

³⁵ Harvey, "The Political Economy of Urbanization in Advanced Capitalist Societies: The Case of the United States," p. 120; Preteceille, "Urban Planning: The Contradictions of Capitalist Urbanization," pp. 69-76. For Harvey, the need for a built environment usable as a collective means of production is only one of the connections between urban planning and capitalist development; he also recognizes the need for facilities for collective consumption to aid in reproducing labor power. See, e.g., his "Labor, Capital, and Class Struggle around the Built Environment."

³⁶ Preteceille, "Urban Planning," p. 70.