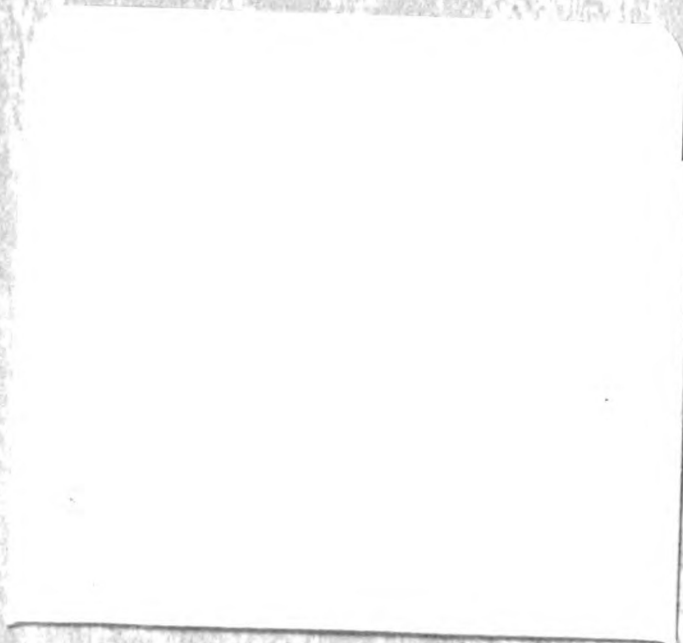


Thesis for the Degree of M. U. P.  
MICHIGAN STATE UNIVERSITY  
JAMES RICHARD MALONE  
1965

THESIS

*LIBRARY*  
Michigan State  
University





~~MAY 27 1970~~ 102R

~~MAY 1 1970~~ R

~~MAY 14 1978~~ K

~~MAY 26 1978~~ R

~~MAY 30 1978~~ R

~~MAY 31 1978~~ R

~~MAY 31 1978~~ R

~~JUN 21 1978~~ R

~~JUN 5 1978~~ 188





## ABSTRACT

### PLANNING AND MEANING: SOME CONSIDERATIONS OF VALUE THEORY AS RELATED TO THE URBAN PLANNING PROCESS

by James Richard Malone

The rapid rate of urban development in the United States and the relative long life of urban structures have led to major urban problems. Traditional planning concepts have held that the solution of these problems would be achieved by controlling the development of urban areas, through limitations on the amounts and types of structures, and by removing "blighted" structures and replacing them with improved structures. Thus, by improving the physical urban environment, it was felt that the entire urban milieu would be uplifted, and urban problems would be solved.

Thus, urban planning placed the emphasis of its attention upon the development of methodology for "solving" urban problems; but it did so without first developing a sound basis in the theory of urbanization. Since the city is a human artifact, we must, first of all, understand humans -- how and why they act -- then we may attempt to analyze the products of their action. Since human beings are the only animals capable of planned, rational action, the study of this rationality is a logical point of beginning for this understanding of human activity.

The primary purpose of national human behavior is to fulfill human needs and desires, referred to as values. Thus the significance of value and value assignment in individual humans is necessary to understanding human action. The relationships of "value" and "reality"

must be understood as well as gaining a clear conception of the total range of human values. Through this discussion of value and value assignment it can be seen that human artifacts are instilled with individual and social meanings by the people who create them.

Human beings, their meanings, and their artifacts are the components of our sociocultural systems. All social activity and organization is structured by these three components. As social organization becomes formalized, institutions develop as the manifestations of the meanings involved. Social groups and institutions may be in harmony or they may be in conflict; it is through this dialogue that we develop a culture. Culture is the product of all realms of social meaning; thus, a "high" culture is one that has all meaning in balance -- each one operating within its socially assigned parameters. When individuals, groups, or institutions mix meanings of one system with the artifacts of another the culture is disorganized; or when one of a few realms of meaning dominate social considerations the culture is disbalanced.

The physical pattern of the city, because it is a human artifact, will reflect the culture of its builders. If the physical pattern is inadequate or malformed it is because its culture is inadequate or malformed. Currently, our culture is disbalanced toward the realms of economic and scientific meanings. We tend to place these above all other social considerations (ethical, philosophical, aesthetic, community, etc.) leading to a "short-term" mentality which is mainly, if not solely concerned with economy and efficiency to the near complete disregard of beauty, livability, social welfare, peace of mind, and other considerations. The results of this disbalance of concern is reflected in the vast, bland sprawl of homogeneous urban forms over the countryside.

The urban planner occupies a unique role in the urban social structure, he acts as the link between the branches of government at the given level, the levels of government in the hierarchy, the governmental and the private aspects of the society, and the myriad interest groups of the city. If we are to operate effectively within this unique role, we must fully comprehend that with which we are concerned. We must understand the varied social interests and meanings manifested in the many social institutions. We must be able to identify and interpret trends in these meanings as they develop not after they are institutionalized. We must act as the catalyst of these many and varied interests and meanings bringing them to effective action.

In order to fulfill these functions we, urban planners, must develop new concepts and new methods of urban studies that reflect the full range of social meanings. We must recognize the city as more than the physical pattern of artifacts. We must recognize the many meanings and interests embodied in the physical form of the city. Before we attempt to alter or modify any artifact, we must be fully aware of its values to the individuals and groups who created it, use it, or even view it. Once we have gained some understanding of these concepts, we must use our social role to develop more understanding of the entire range of meanings within the society. The orderly growth and development of new urban areas, and the successful redevelopment of older, inadequate ones will only be accomplished through the action of individuals, groups, and institutions operating within a complete and balanced system of social meanings and values. If the planner is to be advisor and coordinator of these groups and individuals, he, above all, must possess a sound understanding of their values and meanings.

PLANNING AND MEANING: SOME CONSIDERATIONS OF VALUE THEORY  
AS RELATED TO THE URBAN PLANNING PROCESS

by

James Richard Malone

A THESIS

Submitted to

Michigan State University

in partial fulfillment of the requirements

for the degree of

MASTER OF URBAN PLANNING

School of Urban Planning and Landscape Architecture

1965



## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The author is deeply grateful for the thoughtful criticisms and suggestions received from Professor Sanford S. Farness of the School of Urban Planning and Landscape Architecture, Michigan State University.

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS	ii
INTRODUCTION	1
Chapter	
I. The Need for More Meaningful Planning Studies	3
II. The Concepts of Value Theory	13
Defining Value	13
Value and Reality	14
Realms of Value	17
Value Assignment	21
III. The Meaning Component in Social Systems	27
Value as a Component of Social Systems	27
Social Order and Social Change	30
Institutions	34
The Role of Meaning	38
IV. Meaning in the Urban Form	42
The Man-Community Relationship	42
Values Reflected in Urban Forms	45
The Development of Sociocultural Meanings in the West	47
Economic Meaning	48
Scientific Meaning	52
The Cultural Development of the United States	54
The City as a System of Cultural Symbols	59
Winds of Change	65
V. Urban Planning and Social Responsibility	71
Toward More Meaningful Planning Studies	71
The Planner's Role	75
Research and Analysis	75
Goal Formation	76
Plan-Making	77
Assistance and Coordination	78
Information and Interpretation	79
Toward the "Good City"	82
SELECTED BIBLIOGRAPHY	89

## INTRODUCTION

The traditional emphasis in urban planning, upon the physical elements of the urban form, has resulted in too many gaps in the planner's fund of knowledge about the city. The city is much more than the sum of its physical parts; the streets, buildings, and utilities merely comprise the surface of the city -- the visible city. Underlying the surface are the myriad interests, ideas, desires, and values of the people who constructed it -- the "invisible city."

This thesis submits that this "invisible city" is the essence of the city as a whole, and, that in order to comprehend the total city, we must first understand these underlying aspects of it. The first and foremost function of the city as an arena for social activity. The city is the place where men fulfill their interests and desires beyond mere subsistence. Thus, in order to understand the city, we must understand the interests and desires of men.

This thesis, then, is an effort to expand the planner's knowledge of the city. Its ideas are not revolutionary; in fact, many may appear quite commonplace. The author feels, however, that through this discussion of the "invisible city" urban planners may develop a much broader conception of just what the city is. The primary purpose of this thesis is to probe into the vast area of human activity as meaningful activity, and to relate this meaningful activity to the development of urban forms. Through such a discussion it is felt that our knowledge of the city will be expanded beyond its present perimeters and thus allow us to develop more significant urban planning studies.

This thesis should not be construed as an attack on urban planning education and methods; rather it is an effort to view some urban planning concepts critically and an attempt to develop some new perspectives of urbanism, both as a physical pattern and as a social activity. This thesis submits that only through such new perspectives can a truly comprehensive knowledge of the city be attained. Without the cognizance of the meanings attached to urban forms, the urban planner stands little chance of achieving any effective success toward his goal of making the city a better place for people to live.

This thesis is by no means a complete discussion of the concepts of meaning and evaluation, it is rather an initial probe by the author into this vast area of knowledge. It is the author's firm hope that a complete discussion of the subject may be structured upon this thesis at a later time.



## CHAPTER 1

### THE NEED FOR MORE MEANINGFUL PLANNING STUDIES

The field of urban planning has, for sometime, been operating under the concept of environmental determinism as expressed in the adage, "man is a product of his environment." From this adage, a planning philosophy was developed which was primarily concerned with altering the urban environment as a means of improving the "quality" of man. While such a goal is ethically and morally sound, the methods chosen to attain it were woefully inadequate: first, environment was narrowly defined as the physical urban form -- the streets, buildings, utilities, and such; second, the correlary of the adage was never consciously considered, that is, the urban environment is a product of man. Taken together, these major shortcomings of urban planning philosophy amount to a tremendous gap in the planner's knowledge of the city.

Recently, there has been considerable criticism of urban planning both from within and without the "profession" itself. The failures of urban planning methods have been widely discussed, but few solutions have been tendered. In an effort to assign blame for these failures, urban planners have accused politicians and businessmen of shortsightedness; architects, site planners, and land developers of economic determinism; schools, churches, and other social institutions of failure to educate; and even the urban citizenry in general of hedonism. The time has long since passed when we, as urban planners, should hesitate in our thrust to alter the city and take stock of ourselves and our methods.

City planning, as we know it today, was recognized as a possible means of solving urban problems during the last decade of the nineteenth century. The World's Columbian Exhibition of 1893, at Chicago, presented the "city beautiful" to the American public -- and they liked it. This was a perspective of the city as seen by the architects and landscape architects of that period, strongly influenced by the neoclassicism of the Beaux Arts School of Design. The emphasis was placed entirely upon visual design as a means of "raising men's thoughts" to higher ideals. Essentially, today's philosophy of urban planning is still strongly based upon the sensual characteristics of the city. To be sure, more emphasis is being placed upon the non-sensual aspects of the city, such as natural resource capabilities, so called social and economic factors, and others; but, in general, today's urban planners are almost entirely concerned with the physical elements of the city alone. During the past decade there has been a substantial amount of research and testing of new methods and new applications of older methods of meeting urban needs, but still the emphasis is almost entirely upon the physical urban form. The failures of this purely "physical" approach to urban planning were passionately and emphatically presented by Jane Jacobs in The Death and Life of Great American Cities. (1)

When we examine our urban studies, it is not immediately apparent where they are deficient. Certainly there are ample statistical data; numbers of persons, miles of streets, acres of land, dollars of sales, amounts of housing, birth rates, death rates, crime rates, utility rates, etc. Neither can it be said that our studies are lacking in the number of different items they include; streets, parks, schools,

houses, garages, office buildings, stores, warehouses, men, women, the old, the young, playgrounds, slums, country clubs, buses, automobiles, trains, etc. One may find anything and everything in these urban studies except the one most important thing -- the essence of the city itself. "One is reminded of Pirandello's Six Characters in Search of an Author, everything is present except the one precise essential that gives life to the whole." (2)

The concentration upon merely the physical aspects of the urban environment has resulted in urban planning practices that range from inadequate to complete failure. The methods of master planning seldom, if ever, result in the orderly growth pattern that is predicted during their preparation. Our zoning and land developing concepts have resulted in vast areas of homogeneous land uses and building types that are more often bland and uninspiring than they are exciting and interesting to live in, pass through, and use. The attempts at urban renewal have strayed far from the original concepts of improving the living conditions of the lower income segments of the city.

We seem to be trapped in our present pattern of action with no alternative but to further complicate present failures by duplicating them. There has been a dearth of invention and new solutions in urban planning. The typical approach has been to "solve" traffic congestion by creating a parallel system that actually increases congestion; but no forceful efforts are made to analyze the people's desires for work so as to reduce commutation. With generous intent, we clear a slum area and erect large projects that merely recreate the slum more densely; or we institute a "rehabilitation" program that results in

increased rents and drives out the original tenants -- rarely is any effort made to understand the people living there and attempt to improve what they have. <sup>(3)</sup> We have been overly concerned with methodology while not fully developing a sound theory of urbanization and of urban planning. We are attempting to offer "solutions" without fully comprehending the city and its problems. It would seem that some planners have become so preoccupied with questions of methodology that they appear to have ceased to be at all interested in the city itself. As a result, while there is a constant outpouring of new methods of urban planning -- such as simulation techniques, statistical methods, policies plans -- there have been no significant discoveries with regard to the underlying socio-cultural causality of urban problems.

The failure of urban planning to understand the essence of the city is readily apparent in the almost complete lack of dialogue between the planners and the public. A chronic plea of urban planners is for greater public understanding of the concepts of planning; apparently, urban planners and the urban public do not speak the same language. There has been no lack of social movements for improvements of various kinds brought on by the urgency of social problems, such as unsanitary housing, deplorable working conditions, poor schools, hospitals, etc. but all these movements have lacked the basic understanding of the concept of community. Therefore, the major urban planning methods had to be structured upon administrative devices such as codes, ordinances, and regulations -- today, planning still must rely upon these devices. An awareness of this major shortcoming in planning theory is not a new event. The following excerpts,



although written a quarter of a century apart, reflect an awareness of these failures and also a lack of improvements in planning methods:

"Most of our housing and city planning has been handicapped because those who have undertaken the work have had no clear notion of the social functions of the city. They sought to derive these functions from a cursory survey of the activities and interests of the contemporary urban scene. And they did not, apparently, suspect that there might be gross deficiencies, misdirected efforts, mistaken expenditures here that would not be set straight by merely building sanitary tenements or straightening out and widening irregular streets." (4)

"... Planners, architects of city design, and those they have led along with them in their beliefs are not consciously disdainful of the importance of knowing how things work. On the contrary, they have gone to great pains to learn what the saints and sages of modern orthodox planning have said about how cities ought to work and what ought to be good for people and business in them. They take this with such devotion that when contradictory reality intrudes, threatening to shatter their dearly won learning, they must shrug reality aside." (5)

The late Catherine Bauer Wurster, in her contribution to Goals for Americans titled "Framework for an Urban Society," states that the roles of natural resources, the rural environment, and mass production techniques have long received serious attention in the United States, and their places in the economy are fairly well understood. The metropolitan community, however -- a far more complex set of institutions -- is still only superficially explored even though it dominates our social, economic, and political life. "We have no clear image of its purpose and requirements, and how best to guide its destiny." (6)

This thesis submits that as long as urban planning methods continue to be merely superficial quantitative studies of the physical urban form, as the result of a few specific urban functions, then: urban planning, as a system of knowledge, will not comprehend its

object of study; urban planning, as a source of information and interpretation of events to the urban decision-making apparatus, will not fulfill its social role; urban planners will not gain the respect and the faith of the urban public. In order to fulfill its social role, urban planning must develop new methods and new techniques for determining the many functions and purposes of the city -- especially the more intangible functions and purposes. As urban planners, we must broaden our basis of theory so as to gain as complete an understanding of the city as possible.

The traditional planning concepts based upon environmental determinism have failed primarily because they were not based upon a sound knowledge of the city. The city is much more than the sum of its physical parts. The people and their artifacts are only the surface of the city, the visible city. The heart and the essence of the city is invisible and intangible, and yet it is the primary causal factor of the visible pattern. Our traditional concepts and methods of urban planning have given us some insight to the habits of the city's people; but this understanding is unbalanced between detailed knowledge of personal habits and their effects on economic markets and almost total ignorance of the attitudes and values which develop these personal habits and their cultural implications. (7)

For many years, the science of archeology has been studying and describing ancient civilizations, human life, and human activities through the analysis of their cultural remains, their artifacts. During the last few decades there has been a new approach to the entire study of human nature based upon the concepts of archeology.

It aims to know man by shifting the focus, but not the whole, of study away from the "self" to the objective cultural artifacts, which are the creation of the "self." (8) Since we, urban planners, are concerned with the most complex system of cultural artifacts yet produced by man, it is logical that we must understand the nature of man and his artifacts before we can presume to improve upon the system.

Man creates his artifacts to help fulfill his needs and desires: the house to provide shelter, roads and streets to provide access and communication, markets and stores to provide foods and other goods. Thus if we are to fully comprehend what a house is, what a street is, what a market is, we must comprehend their underlying meanings as aids in the fulfillment of man's needs and desires. For example, the idea of the railroad and the automobile as the reasons for suburbanization overlooks the fact that the people wanted to leave the city, the auto and the railroad were only the means of fulfilling this desire. The methodology of "policies planning" must recognize that policies are structured on a framework of cultural interests. If we are to fully understand human activity we must trace back the meanings installed in the activity from the overt expression, in action or artifact, to the root need or desire. Such an understanding would encompass the studies of value theory, social systems analysis, institutional organization, history, and symbols and symbolization. This then is no small task; but the comprehension of the city demands its undertaking.

The entire range of values held by individuals and manifested in their institutions is important. We, in the United States, are operating under a disbalanced value system. We tend to overemphasize economic and technological considerations to the near disregard of social, aesthetic, religious, ethical, moral, and philosophical realms of consideration. We are overly concerned with the "concrete" and the tangible aspects of life, that we like to call "practical"; and tend to overlook the intangible, but none the less real aspects of life, that we like to call "theoretical" or "impractical."

Urban planning, in the United States, has been overly concerned with the sensual aspects of the city. For too long, we have been relatively content to accept a master plan and a zoning ordinance as the products of planning. If urban planning is going to produce some measure of success, we must elevate our goals for making the city a better place in which to live from mere statement of intent to positive methods of action. As planners, we have been concerned with the values of beauty, practicality, and welfare; and they have not been enough. We need to concern ourselves with the entire range of human values if we are to make the city a successful environment for human experience.

Through an understanding of value theory, we can gain an insight to the organization of urban society as a system of groups and institutions constituted as means of fulfilling human purposes. The urban pattern, it may be seen, is the manifest expression of those values. Urban history has only dealt with the very surface of the city; we need much more study in order to understand the underlying meanings in the urban form.



In the final analysis, successful urban planning is not a question of what the "planner" thinks the city should be, rather it is a question of what the urban population needs and demands in order to fulfill its interests. The genius of urban planning is not to employ planners who can create grand schemes, but rather to employ planners who can discover the most fundamental desires and hopes of the many urban publics and translate them into plans and programs. "We should not allow the egomania of the planner to be imposed on the city, but rather the planner should give form and design to the needs and aspirations of a varied public." (9)

"If we wish to make fundamental changes in institutions, we may well concern ourselves, first of all, with the hierarchy of feelings. The world of values is, as it were, the invisible workshop wherein are prepared the changes of scene for the visible world." (10)

The urban form, the pattern of artifacts and activities on the Earth, is no more than the visible aspects of a whole range of human interests, values, and meanings. If we urban planners are to understand the functions of the city, we must first concern ourselves with the "invisible world" that shapes the urban form.

# FOOTNOTES

- (1) (New York: Random House, Inc., 1961)
- (2) Don Martindale, "Prefatory Remarks: The Theory of the City," Max Weber, The City (New York: Crowell-Collier Publishing Co., 1962), pp. 10-11.
- (3) Percival Goodman and Paul Goodman, Communities (New York: Random House, Inc., 1960), p.6.
- (4) Lewis Mumford, "What is a City," Architectural Record, LXXII, (November, 1937).
- (5) Jacobs, p.8
- (6) President's Commission on National Goals (New York: Prentice Hall, Inc., 1960), p. 227.
- (7) Anthony N.B. Garvan, "Cultural Change and the Planner," The Angels of the American Academy of Political and Social Science, CCCLII, (March, 1964), p. 35.
- (8) F.S.C. Northrop, Man, Nature and God (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1962), p.30.
- (9) Webb S. Fiser, Mastery of the Metropolis (Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice Hall, Inc., 1962), p. 161.
- (10) C.C.S. Bogle, Evolution of Values, H.S. Sellars, Trans. (New York: Henry Holt & Co., 1926), p. 10.

## Chapter II. The Concepts of Value Theory

### Defining "Value"

The problem with attempting to define "value" is that there seems to be no established, universal meaning. The term "value" is historically associated with economics. One of the favorite problems of the economist is explaining how price is established on the market. In order to do this, he must define the value of things, that is, assign them a worth. "He estimates what, in the constitution of value, is due to raw material, to human labor, to the relation between supply and demand." 1/ In economics, value is most often stated in monetary terms. The term value goes far beyond this economic meaning however. We speak of value in art, in religion, in science, in morality; these are hardly economic, and certainly not monetary realms, rather they are realms of thought and social action -- cultural realms. Value is not confined to any one of these realms. "It is, in truth, a universal category, capable of the most varied applications. We can pass judgments of value on a chair as well as on an act, on a rite as well as on a poem." 2/ Webster's defines value as "the quality or fact of being excellent, useful, or desirable." 3/ Philip Wiener states, "... values are felt desires or needs -- good if satisfied, bad if not..." 4/ Bougle sees value as the attitude of the subject toward an object. 5/

The problems of defining "value" is not solved, however, by merely reiterating these many meanings. It is better served by attempting to develop a preferred meaning, either by selecting from its existing meanings, or by creating a new meaning. For the purposes

of this thesis then, "value" will carry the meaning assigned to it by Ralph Barton Perry: "a thing--any thing--has value, or is valuable, in the original and generic sense when it is the object of an interest--any interest." Perry goes on to define "interest" as, "a train of events determined by expectation of its outcome. Or, a thing is an object of interest when its being expected induces actions looking to its realization or non-realization." 6/

This definition seems most acceptable since it allows the term value to be used in its broadest sense. Such terms as "end," "goal", "purpose," "motive" have been avoided because in usage they tend to connote causation -- "the view that factors in the future, not yet actualized, in some manner pull events toward them." 7/ One failure of many definitions of value is that they are sometimes taken to refer only to "good" or "right," and to exclude the opposites "bad" or "wrong", 8/ defined in terms of "interest--any interest" this tendency is avoided. Finally, it is felt that Perry's definition tends to simplify the discussion of value by avoiding the esoteric pitfalls of most other definitions.

### Value and Reality

The use of the word "value" as representing something that demands the attention of social scientists, urban planners, and others has been objected to on the grounds that it has no conceptual meaning, but only a so-called "emotive" meaning. In other words, statements that use the word "value" are not statements at all; they have no objectivity, but merely express an attitude. In fact, many of those

who actually study the theory of value conclude that it is some "non-natural" characteristic that cannot be empirically observed, but can be "seen by the eye of the mind, and, when so seen, it is seen to be unique and unanalyzable." <sup>9/</sup> Such mysticism does little to further knowledge however.

It may be helpful to first differentiate between judgments of reality and judgments of value, and then analyze them in terms of each other. Judgments of reality "assign certain properties to persons or things, taking no account of our desires, our dislikes, or our sympathies. They aim at objectivity." <sup>7/</sup> "This street is fifty feet in width," or "Seven families live in that house," are judgments of reality. Judgments of value take into account "the desire or aversion, the sympathy or repugnance which such an (object) arouses in men. They do not express purely and simply the properties of an object, but set over against these properties the attitude of the subject." <sup>11/</sup> "This street is a pleasant one on which to live." "I would not like living in that house." Objects are assigned value when a subject develops interest in those objects. This is not to imply that the interest from which the value is derived is only the interest of the subject or judge. Value has been here defined in terms of any interest, thus if the subject observes anyone else expressing interest in the object then he must judge it as valuable. "The evidence of its (value) is the observable fact of interest, which is just as objective, and just as open to agreement, as any other fact of life or history." <sup>12/</sup>

Values are more than attitudes or preferences of an individual which would vary according to his needs and his mood. Values rest upon "habits", "rules", "ideal forms" which are not an individual achievement, but those of the society in which he lives". "They are facts. Values present themselves...as given realities, as things." <sup>13/</sup> Moral values make themselves real through many means -- the police, a father's frown, etc.; the value of the economic "market" is a very "resistant reality." <sup>14/</sup> Nietzsche has said that "to break the table of values and reverse the scale of preference is no easy assignment. These are realities which resist manipulation." <sup>15/</sup> Traditionally, our technically dominated culture has propagated the concept of reality as meaning tangible, physical objects. Certainly, values do not fulfill such a concept. When values are discussed as realities a different kind of reality is being considered. The sociologist, Emile Durkheim, handles this discussion most ably by stressing the collective aspect of values. "Neither the properties of things nor the capacities of individuals would suffice to account for them. In short, values are objective because imperative, and imperative because collective." <sup>16/</sup> This collective view of value is shared by Wiener; he states, "historical elements enter into both our value-judgments and their objects, the felt needs and aspirations motivating ideas and actions, individual and collective, in the history of civilization. Our value-judgments are conditioned by our life history or habits and associations with other human beings, over a period of time," <sup>17</sup>

Values, as kinds of reality, represent a collective attribute and appreciation at the same time. They express an interest independent of individual momentary impressions, in fact, dominating individual preferences. If values, as reality, supercede the individual they must then be shared, and this implies communication. But sharing or communicating first of all requires perceiving or consciousness. Consciousness is most personal, "Sensations and ideas, desires and volitions are related to a 'me'." <sup>18/</sup> But individuals do not exist in isolation. Because men live in social groups--perceive the same surroundings, share the same hopes and fears--they tend to develop common ideas. When men come together not only do they recognize common conscious elements, but also develop new social products, a "collective consciousness." <sup>19/</sup> This "collective consciousness", however, is more than the sum of the individual consciousnesses, it is a new force capable of exercising pressure as well as attracting. "To speak of society is to speak not only of exchange of services or collaboration of forces, but also a communication of sentiments. Men are intimately associated only when they have a number of things to respect in common." <sup>20/</sup> Values, then, are real in that they are part of the "collective consciousness" of societies. In this sense, they extend beyond the individual, they are a component of his society and its systems.

### Realms of Value

Although value "exists" only in the individual, the human ability to communicate allows individuals to "share" values. Through communication individuals may express interests, in objects,

with which other individuals may or may not agree. When agreement of such interest forms a consensus in a society, the shared interest may be termed a societal value. When societies share similar interests, they may be termed universal values. Universal values are the ordered preferences, assigned to objects of interest, that are shared, in common, by all men. Such universal values are, most often, assigned to objects fundamental to human existence, e.g. food, shelter, survival, perpetuation, etc. Societal values are the prevailing consensus of preferences assigned to objects of interest in a society by its members, e.g. democracy, success, status, etc. The rules by which we live under universal and societal values are called norms, mores, laws, etc., these rules are applied to all social activity. Personal values are the ordered preferences assigned, by the individual, to objects of interest which are most directly relevant to his own behavior, e.g. occupation, style of dress, particular foods, etc. These personal values are often referred to as tastes, they are of little significance to this discussion; but, it is important to remember that the individual's value hierarchy includes societal and universal values as well as personal values. All three categories of value are interdeterminant; thus personal values are, to a great extent, determined by universal and societal values, and societal and universal values are determined by a consensus of personal values.

Research into values soon leads to the conclusion that the "boundaries" between the various kinds are, more or less, clearly defined. With value defined as synonymous with interest, it is apparent that economic interest is distinct from religious interest,



artistic interest is distinct from political interest. Thomas Cowan, in his lecture "Social Interests and Value," sees value as a word of many meanings.

"To the scientist is connotes primarily truth. His values range along a true-false continuum. The artist's values are different. In some mysterious manner, they are measured in terms of aesthetic response. Value, for the moralist, is a third kind of thing. Whatever it may be, it is evidently not mainly truth value nor aesthetic value although it is certainly connected to these two." 21/

These various kinds of value are the underlying interests of our social institutions. If these institutions are thought of as the manifestations of social interests, then the primary concerns of the respective institutions may be thought of as objects of value, in the broadest sense:

<u>INSTITUTIONS</u> (Social Interests)	<u>OBJECT</u> (Social Concerns)
Religion	man-God, morality
Aesthetics	form, design, art
Philosophy	man-nature-reality
Society	family, kinship, community
Law	justice, equality
Politics	government, nationalization
Economics	utility, property, exchange
Science	physical, truth, fact

"That is why we say that there exists a world of values. Aesthetic, or moral, religious or economic, each and everyone of them solicits our attention, seeks our sympathy, draws out our efforts. Between their various claims there may be harmony. There may also be competition." 22/

Each individual orders these values into a hierarchy of relative importance to himself. This ordering is influenced by the individual himself, his temperament and character; by his society, its problems and traditions; and by the individual's roles, within that society, which may vary with time.

While the field of events, personal and social, is infinite, certain events or certain human pursuits claim special attention because of their universality or importance. The theory of value may be tested against these events or pursuits by its providing a systematic description of morality, conscience, politics, law, economy, art, science, education and religion. When the master concept of such a description is given the name of "value", then these major realms of human life are specifically describable as realms of value. In their aggregate these realms constitute what may properly be given the name of "civilization."<sup>23/</sup>

The relationship of value to institutions will be discussed in detail in Chapter III, suffice it to say that value is the underlying meaning of all social institutions. In other words, our social institutions are the embodiments of our values.

"If we wish to make fundamental changes in institutions, we may well concern ourselves, first of all, with the hierarchy of feelings. The world of values is, as it were, the invisible workshop wherein are prepared the changes of scene for the visible world."<sup>24/</sup>

Realms of value and institutions would then be synonymous. While these realms of value are, more or less, clearly defined, they are not autonomous; rather they may actually support one another, with the forces of their different meanings, even of contradictory meanings, working together toward some common interest.<sup>25/</sup> The major objective of economically based institutions is to maximize

utility with the least possible expenditure. Thus the economic act par excellence would be theft. Economic values do not operate "in vacuo" however, rather they are but one segment of social action. Ethical, religious, legal values enter into economic value by constraining the participants to means within the accepted range of social interaction.<sup>26/</sup> Surely, many such examples come to mind. The importance of identifying realms of values lies not in their differences but rather in their similarities. Economic value is of little use without reference to legal value which, in turn, is dependent upon religious value, etc. The entire structure of social activity is the important study. Value realms is merely one member of that structure, an important member no doubt, but only one.

### Value Assignment

When any object attracts the interest of a human being we say that that object has value to the individual. Thus when an individual tastes sugar he develops an interest in sugar, sugar becomes valuable to him. This is an attainment or a positive value. When an individual is stung by a hornet he, likewise, develops an interest in hornets, hornets become valuable. This is an avoidance or a negative value. At the societal level, when a society discovers that the concept of family is beneficial to procreation and child rearing, it has developed an interest in family, family becomes positively valuable. When, on the other hand, a society finds that murder is detrimental to procreation and social order, it has developed an interest in murder, murder becomes negatively valuable.

Thus, interest may be toward attaining an objective or toward avoiding an objective such interests may be termed positive or negative values respectively.

It should be noted here that the entire discussion of value has been kept in terms of the subject. One of the most common misunderstandings of value theory is that many people tend to instill value in the object. Value is strictly a human concept; nothing has interior or intrinsic value. The value of gold lies in the human beings that have an interest in gold and not in gold itself.

When an object has retained human interest over a long period of time, as has gold for example, individuals sharing this interest may tend to reify the object with value. Thus the possession of the object becomes an end in itself, to these individuals. This reification is especially true of objects of economic interest; and, leads to a mixing of the concepts, "value" and "utility." Under this misconception, valuable is conceived as synonymous with useful. Thus an object is considered valuable only when it appears to be useful in realizing some "end." However, defined as interest, value becomes, basically an affectivity "occurring in a relational contexture determined by the relation of (a human being) to a stimulus object. But utility, though ultimately dependent on some affectivities, is not itself an affectivity. It follows that utility is not value." <sup>27/</sup>

Value is assigned to objects of interest by an individual or society from many different points of view. These points of view are the various institutions which form a society, and the roles within those institutions which the individual plays. Because an individual plays many social roles his "view" or perspective of his

objects of interest vary with respective roles. At times, the interests of particular social roles held by an individual may actually be in conflict. Thus the individual who is father in the institutions of family may place high value on excellence in education regardless of cost; while the same individual as taxpayer in the institution of government may be very much against raising teachers' salaries. Such a conflict is resolved only when the individual examines the object of interest from his respective points of view and makes a judgment as to which he deems more important. The difficulty of value or role conflict is that the individual fills many roles in his culture, not merely two or even a few. He may be father in the institution of family, voter in the institution of government, consumer in the institution of economy, laborer in the institution of industry, parishioner in the institution of church, commuter in the institution of transportation, each role has many different objects of interests, and each role demands a different point of view from which to make judgments.

"Not to mix things, to be able to place oneself at different points of view, to respect, without confusing them, the various rules of the different orders of activity in which one participates is, infallibly a sign of high culture. To prevent our feelings from overflowing from one line to another requires a certain capacity of inhibition and of specification which implies a pretty complex mental life." 28/

This discussion of value assignment, in fact most of the discussion in this chapter, has been held to the level of the individual. This is not to imply that all value assignment and value conflict takes place at this level. Quite to the contrary, the greatest amount

of value assignment takes place at the societal level; and, as urban planners, we are much more concerned with value conflict among individual social roles. The discussion in this chapter has been kept at the lower level in order to develop a theory of value that is relative simple and easily understood. The following chapter will attempt to escalate this theory to the societal plane, and relate value theory to the workings of our social systems.

FOOTNOTES

- 1/ C.C.S. Bougle, Evolution of Value, H.M. Sellars, trans.,  
(New York: Henry Holt & Co., 1926), pp. 3-4.
- 2/ Ibid., p. 7.
- 3/ Webster's Collegiate Dictionary (Springfield, Mass., G.& C.  
Merriam Co., 1947), p. 1105.
- 4/ Philip P. Wiener, "Values in the History of Ideas," Aspects  
of Value, Frederick C. Gruber, ed. (Phila., Univ. of  
Penna. Press, 1959), p. 40.
- 5/ Bougle, p. 11.
- 6/ Ralph Barton Perry, Realms of Value: A Critique of Human  
Civilization (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard Univ. Press,  
1954) pp. 2-3.
- 7/ A.L. Hilliard, The Forms of Value, (New York City: Columbia  
Univ. Press, 1950), p. 30.
- 8/ Perry, p. 5.
- 9/ Ibid., p. 9.
- 10/ Bougle, p. 10.
- 11/ Ibid., p. 11.
- 12/ Perry, p. 13.
- 13/ Bougle, p. 15.
- 14/ Ibid.
- 15/ Ibid, pp. 16.
- 16/ Ibid., pp. 16-17
- 17/ Wiener, p. 50.
- 18/ Bougle, p. 28.
- 19/ Emile Durkheim, theory of "collective consciousness," discussed  
by Bougle, pp. 27-37.
- 20/ Ibid., p. 38.

- 21/ Thomas A. Cowan, "Social Interest and Value," Gruber, (see no. 4), pp. 59-60.
- 22/ Bougle, p. 7.
- 23/ Perry, p. 14.
- 24/ Bougle, p. 10.
- 25/ Ibid., p. 57.
- 26/ Benjamin M. Anderson, Jr., Social Values, (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Co., 1911), pp. 146-7.
- 27/ Hilliard, p. 305.
- 28/ Bougle, p. 57.



## Chapter III, The Meaning Component in Social Systems

### Value as a Component of Social Systems

The term "society" denotes the social order, or the set of social relationships -- a system of social interaction. <sup>(1)</sup> Professor Pitirim A. Sorokin sees society as being constituted by a set of sociocultural systems. <sup>(2)</sup> He defines a sociocultural system as "any process of meaningful human interaction." Sociocultural systems, in Sorokin's terms, are composed of three components: (1) human component, human beings as subjects of interaction; (2) meaning component, the meanings, values or interests for the sake of which the individuals interact, realizing and exchanging them in the process; (3) vehicle component, the overt actions and material phenomena through which the meanings, values or interests are objectified.

A relatively simple sociocultural system would be greeting -- the components -- two individuals; the meaning component -- their shared interest in one another; the vehicle components -- the nod, the bow, the handshake, the exchange of formalities. A more complex sociocultural system is any given religion. Here all the components are complicated in terms of numbers and in terms of their inter-relatedness. The human components are greatly multiplied as compared to the system of greeting. The meaning components are greatly complicated, including such values and interests as "the good and the evil," social order, continuity of the family, man-God relationships to mention merely a few. The vehicle components are also greatly multiplied; they include not only the structures of the church or temple, but also the books, the

vestments, the rituals, the symbols, and the actions of the human components e.g. kneeling, the sign of the cross, and so forth. One of the most complex sociocultural systems is the city. The city, as a sociocultural system, has a great many other sociocultural systems subordinate to it. This in itself shows the immense complexity of the city. Its components are greatly complicated, but still reducible to the three as established by Professor Sorokin.

Society is constituted by individuals. What brings individual human beings to constitute a set of meanings, values, norms, rules which thus tend to restrict or limit their actions? Professor Perry sees two principle factors underlying social organization (1) "community of objects," and (2) "interaction." (3) In Perry's thesis, all human beings occupy the same planet and therefore perceive, think, imagine, fear, desire, dread and long for, the same objects or classes of objects, e.g. sun, moon, stars, food and drink, birth and death, "the elements" etc. The community of objects will multiply in proportion to the proximity of individuals in space and time. Professor Perry states, "these non-interactive relationships derive their full social significance from the fact that they condition interaction. They are the static relationships which underlie social dynamics on the level of interest. Thus similarity of interests, when combined with proximity, conditions the sense of fellowship among persons engaged in the same occupations ... Community of objects conditions communication and united action in a common cause." (4)

These relations only become social relations when they condition and are accompanied by "interaction" in Professor Perry's terms. The simplest form of interaction is two persons perceiving one another. In a society of any size, however, interaction goes beyond this narrowest of limits to

include perception about one another. Thus community of objects plus interaction yields communication -- where two or more individuals, through some form of language including signs, know one another's objects or interests and understand them as such. Language serves as a record of these shared meanings; and, through oral traditions or written records, it tends to establish a set of permanent social objects as vehicles for the shared meanings. Perry terms this sharing of meanings "intercognition."

The importance of intercognition lies in its conditioning "interinterest." (5) "Persons not only know one another, but are interested in one another's interests." This "interinterest" goes beyond the cognizance of another's interest. Being aware of a second person's interests tends to reinforce that interest in the first person, and so an interest tends to be reinforced proportionally to the number of persons involved. When all of the interests within a person's range of observation are similar and involved with the same objects, then their influence on any one person is nearly compulsory.

This discussion has, then, come very close to Durkheim's concept of the "collective consciousness" as discussed in Chapter I. With value defined as synonymous with interest, the shared societal values place an almost compulsory control upon the values of the individuals within that society. This is not to be construed as social determinism however. While it is true that these societal values tend to be constrictive, they are not irrisistable. Perry calls the high state of shared values within

a society "interdependence," and cautions that this is not an ideal state, nor necessarily a good state, it is rather a critical state from which a society may proceed in either of two directions -- harmony or conflict. Interdependence alone does not guarantee harmony, and may well lead to conflict. In order to assure harmony in a society, two other principles are needed, agreement -- where shared interests become our values rather than their values, and cooperation -- where the individuals become united in a common end.

The many interests or values of an individual person, like those of a society, may be conflicting; and by organization they may be brought into harmony. In order to achieve a harmonious value system in a society, it is important that the individuals who constitute that society are in possession of a well-ordered value system. As Professor Perry states, "... insofar as a society derives its unity from thought, from the control of action by ideas, from the relations of means to ends, and from the control of higher interests, it borrows these unifying principles from its members." (6) Thus society is constituted by its members; and, therefore, it may be altered or reformed by its members.

### Social Order and Social Change

The customary antagonism between "the individual" and "society" is actually one of the roots of sociocultural change and evolution. Since society, by definition, is constituted by individuals, the customs, norms, laws, and rules that compose it reflect the interests,

meanings and values of the individuals, and their groups, which constitute it. The formalized customs, norms, rules, and laws of the society represent a basic consensus among individuals; but they do not represent the unanimous agreement of all individuals or all groups constituting the society. Individuals and groups that do not agree with the consensus work to change it through many methods ranging from information and education to violent coercion. The current campaign to alter the concept of mental illness and the mentally ill is an example of group action through information and education. The rise of the Fascist powers in Europe during the 1920's and 1930's is an example of social change through violent coercion.

Another root of sociocultural change is the obsolescence of ideas. Since social concepts are developed at relatively given points in time, it follows that they may very well become outmoded as new developments occur over time. Thus the set of customs, laws, rules, etc. that composed the society of the paleolithic food-gatherers became outmoded as food surplus freed some members for other social roles. Likewise, the society of medieval Europe became outmoded with the occurrence of the Crusades, the discovery of the "New World," and other developments which broadened man's perspective of his world. More recently, the tremendous increase in interaction, at all levels, among the societies on Earth has brought the interdependence of all societies to the conscious attention of men. Thus the society of the nineteenth century, with its political isolationism, laissez-faire economics, and rigid class distinctions, has become outmoded.

The obsolescence of these societies is not the important consideration of this discussion. Rather, the fact that these societies have been altered or reformed so as to "fall in line" with the new social developments reflects the non-rigidity of society. Referring back to the definitions established at the beginning of this chapter, society is constituted by the set of socio-cultural systems, and these, in turn, are composed of three components, all either human or humanly conceived. Thus, although it does possess capabilities beyond those of the individual -- such as collective action, social structure, and historic life -- society is conceived by individuals; and, therefore, it may be changed by individuals. True, its collectiveness tends to make it conservative, thus resistant to change; but it is also true that societies are changed, and the change originates in the individual.

"...All social relations and activities are presented for man not as natural happenings that obey causal laws but as problems of how to seek values, how to choose when values compete or conflict with one another in a given social situation, how to choose means of value fulfillment evaluated by society as desirable or undesirable, whether to conform to or deviate from social norms, how to augment, discard or modify some values according to the demands of the situation...If men and their behavior are regarded as a part of the system of nature with its laws and conform, the system of values represents such conformities that have their antecedent causes, and that in their turn serve as causes moulding and guiding human behavior." (7)

Community of objects plus interaction develops shared interests, which, in turn, are dependent upon communication, which leads to language. From these common bases spring interdependence, agreement and cooperation, and conflict and opposition, and thus the development of a system of values representing the goals of

the individuals constituting a society. This set of values has the needs, desires, and anxieties of their constituents as their antecedent causes, and it, in turn, is the cause of the establishment of the norms, rules, laws of the society. Thus the set of values held by a social group is the basis of its social organization.

According to Bougle, the history of society is the history of the differentiation of values contributing to the differentiation of "human souls." The human mind has gradually developed flexibility and the capacity for abstraction that has enabled it to distinguish between various experiences, and their meaning or values. (8) Mukerjee sees man developing this mental flexibility through the aid of "group orientation;" that is, he develops various "social selves" from a particular group or association. (9) In our complex societies, an individual may develop countless group loyalties, each one providing its own set of meanings and values. The history of social development is the history of the differentiation of interests and values in groups and institutions that have embodied them. Mukerjee also recognizes an antithesis in the process of valuation. (10) Each sociocultural group or institution asserts its own values within the culture of which it is a part; however, social progress toward harmony or solidarity of groups means that each group must not deny the values of other groups but rather must recognize all values as far as possible. Thus social progress, when defined in terms of solidarity, brings about both defusion and interpenetration of all essential values, and a reorientation of the groups and institutions composing

the culture, so as to reorder the new values that are not part of the existing institutions. This is what is referred to as the "melting pot" aspect of the culture of the United States.

Thus, social organization can be viewed as the resulting set of laws, rules, norms, and so forth which are constituted by individuals in "consensus" so as to efficiently realize the values that have been "agreed" upon as important to the social group. This "consensus and "agreement" are, however, a result of the dialogue among the members of the group and they are constantly being challenged by segments of the group who do not fully agree with them. The complexity of social organization is directly proportional to the complexity of the social group, in terms of both the number of members and the number of social roles which comprise the group. Values, then, are the foundations of social organization.

### Institutions

The term institution has already been used in this discussion. Professor Perry describes an institution as "a psychological, not a merely physical, entity...An institution, in short, is a relation of meanings, ideas, and interests residing in men's minds. It is an organization of persons...culminating in agreement or cooperation." (11) This definition is very similar to the earlier discussion of society; and, in fact, institution is a kind of society. An institution is a sociocultural system, in Sorokin's terms, wherein a group of individuals, sharing a common interest, come together, in agreement and cooperation, in order to promote that interest. Institutions, then,



are the embodiments of the values held by man and society.

They give social definition to those values and serve as the mirror within which those values are reflected. Thus individuals, sharing common values, band together to promote those values. As these group values are tested, reordered, and consolidated through experience they develop into institutions.<sup>(12)</sup> Mukerjee sees institutions as the "pillars, the strong and rigid framework without which neither society can function, nor values can be operative." <sup>(13)</sup>

Professor Perry suggests three characteristics that distinguish institutions with society.<sup>(14)</sup> The first is purpose; institutions are organized by men in order to serve some purpose. The institution begins when its control is recognized, accepted, and perpetuated as a social utility, and its purpose is endorsed by the members as being within their interests. The second characteristic is that an institution is a sub-society; that is, it is a part of a larger society. The third characteristic suggested by Professor Perry is that an institution is a system which can be abstracted from its members. Thus the meaning and the vehicle components of an institution may be separated from the human components for analysis. This enables a given institution to occur in several societies, and a given individual to be a member of several institutions.

Although we have spent much time and intellectual effort to separate and identify the many sets of values and their institutions, we must ever remember that no single set of values or

institutions exists in isolation. The evolution of institutions parallels the evolution of human life on Earth. As man has satisfied more basic needs, he has been freed to pursue and develop new meanings, interests, values and eventually institutions. New meanings and institutions are, therefore, dependent upon the development and fulfillment of previous ones. An increase in personal wealth, economic security and freedom leads to a search for more knowledge, more leisure-time activity. This pursuit of intellectual interests, in turn, leads to greater awareness of politics, religion, social order and so forth. Mukerjee very aptly states this interdependence of meanings and institutions: "A society that is adequately integrated nurtures a set of common values that all involve one another and in some respects belong to each single group or institution that is inextricably interlocked with other groups and institutions...The member of a particular group or institution cannot accordingly deny the values that any other group or institution represents, but only gives it a more adequate definition from its own view point. A human community rests in fact on the conjunction and interpenetration of values." (15)

Secondly, since the same persons are members of all of the major institutions, it follows that the meanings represented are reflected within each personality. Thus, although the social institutions must be distinguished for academic purposes, they are not separate in actual life.

### The "Institutional Fallacy"

Man forms his groups and institutions so as to collectively seek his meanings or values. Groups are "episodes" in man's adaptation which develop out of the shared interests of individuals. As this system of interests become stable and continuous it may develop into an institution. Institutions represent the meanings attached to social relationships that are, more or less, enduring and have obtained social approval. Institutions thus represent the more formal social relationships, and contain the standardized techniques and controls for the fulfillment and/or promotion of their attached meanings.<sup>(16)</sup> Thus every institution tends to stabilize meanings and values and standardize the forms of social relationships and activities with which it is concerned.

"Thus arises what is called the 'institutional fallacy' according to which man hides his conscience behind the institutional feeling, belief and habit. The chief reasons why the institutional fallacy persists in all societies are the institutional determination of his attitudes and social actions and relations, and his rationalization in respect to his own behavior and institutional standards that saves him from psychic conflicts." (17)

Arnold Gehlen, a contemporary German sociologist, views institutions as regulatory agencies which channel human actions by providing standardized procedures that are deemed desirable by society. These procedures may be thought of as grooves within which social action is compelled to take place, the institutional framework attempts to make these grooves appear to the individual as the only possible ones.<sup>(18)</sup> Thus a role of institutions in society, for Gehlen and Mukerjee, is to limit the alternative

methods of conducting social interaction for the individuals. Institutions, through their societal consensus, establish "accepted" methods of action. By following these established methods, the individual becomes socially acceptable.

A problem arises when institutional fallacy develops wherein man loses his perspective of the meaning of institutions. Social institutions are constituted by men as mechanisms that embody values which they share with one another. Because institutions most often represent the more definite, formal social relationships, and because the social procedures established by institutions serve as the foundations of interaction, it is not surprising that man tends to reify institutions with powers which they simply do not possess. While institutions do establish the guiding "grooves" for social control, those "grooves" are relatively broad and shallow; thus there is choice of action available in nearly every social situation. Also, it must be remembered that because men constitute institutions, men can change institutions.

#### The Role of Meaning

The importance of understanding value and the valuing process in order to better understand man and his sociocultural systems has been the point of this chapter. The city is a system of sociocultural systems, each one developed by man in order to fulfill an interest which he has found to be common with his fellow men. "We 'constitute' our culture and our world through choosing our main interests and formulating our ways of thinking in accordance with them...Our interests and our thoughts shape and select the characteristics of the things we confront and apprehend." (19)

It is thus, through our interests, that we assign value and meaning to the objects which we apprehend and which we construct. To understand culture, we first must understand its components. As Professor Sorokin has stated, the meaning component is the only significant component in the study of sociocultural phenomena. "Stripped of their meaningful aspects, all the phenomena of human interaction becomes merely biophysical phenomena and, as such, properly form the subject matter of the biophysical sciences." (20)

Sociocultural characteristics are not inherent in the biophysical properties of interaction, rather they are inherent to the meaningful component superimposed upon them, e.g. purposeful or nonpurposeful, cooperative or noncooperative, loving or hating, moral or immoral, etc. The same is true of all the social systems of interaction, such as the state, the family, the church, universities, political parties, etc. For purposes of social study and knowledge, the component of meaning may affect the human and vehicle components of a social system so much as to render their biophysical properties completely irrelevant, for example, a piece of wood from the cross of Jesus becomes a precious, miracle-working relic, a piece of cloth on a stick becomes a national flag for which lives are gladly sacrificed. The meaning component creates a tangible causal interdependence between vehicles and human beings. (21)

"The application of the principles of identity and difference on the basis of the meaning manifested by material objects, overt actions, and persons often leads to results radically different from those arrived at on the basis of their biophysical properties." (22)

The urban planner attempts to direct the physical manifestation of sociocultural meanings by exercising controls over their location, their relation to other expressed forms, and sometimes even their form itself. Assuming his privilege to do this is granted by the people, the planner's relative success will be dependent upon his understanding of the social systems, especially their meaning components.

FOOTNOTES

- (1) Peter Berger, Invitation to Sociology: A Humanistic Perspective, Garden City, N.Y., Doubleday & Co., Inc. 1963, p.26.
- (2) Society, Culture, and Personality: Their Structure and Dynamics, New York City, Harper & Bros. 1947, Chapter 3  
"Generic Structure of Sociocultural Phenomena," pp. 39-66
- (3) Ralph Burton Perry, Realms of Value: A Critique of Human Civilization (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard Univ. Press, 1954) pp. 138-47
- (4) Ibid. p. 138-139.
- (5) Ibid. p. 140.
- (6) Ibid. p. 147.
- (7) Radhakamal Mukerjee, The Social Structure of Values, (London: Macmillan & Co. Ltd., N.D.), pp 31-32.
- (8) C.C.S. Bogle, Evolution of Value, H.M. Sellars, trans., (New York: Henry Holt & Co., 1926), pp. 55-57.
- (9) Mukerjee, pp. 72-80.
- (10) Ibid., 77-78.
- (11) Perry, p. 153.
- (12) Mukerjee, pp. 296-297.
- (13) Ibid. p. 298.
- (14) Perry, pp. 153-154.
- (15) Mukerjee, pp. 73-75.
- (16) Ibid., pp. 298-299.
- (17) Ibid., p. 301.
- See # 1) (18) Peter L. Berger, Invitation to Sociology: A Humanistic Perspective, New York City: Doubleday & Co. Inc. 1963, p. 87.
- (19) Sanford S. Farness, "The Planning Process and Environmental Health," unpublished paper delivered at Conference on Environmental Health Planning for Metropolitan Areas, Univ. of Michigan, Ann Arbor, March 23, 1964.
- (20) Sorokin, p. 47.
- (21) Ibid., pp. 47-51.
- (22) Ibid., p. 50.

## Chapter IV. Meaning in the Urban Form

The city may be thought of as a collection of sociocultural systems, a collection which itself is a sociocultural system. Each of the many sub-systems operating within the city is composed of the three components discussed in the previous chapter. Many of these individual components assume multiple roles, that is, they are a component of more than one system. This multipliety of roles has already been discussed as it relates to human components; in this chapter its relationships to vehicle components will be discussed. The urban form is here considered to be the arrangement of artifacts upon the landscape, the disposition of the houses, stores, factories, schools, streets, railroads, utilities, etc. upon and within the earth.

Man's artifacts are the material vehicles which he has created or manufactured as means of realizing the meanings or values that he has assessed as important. Thus the shelter was fashioned in order to realize the value of protection from the "elements," weapons were manufactured also to serve the meaning of protection as well as that of sustenance. Of course, the development of urban forms was a slow process extending over many millenia. In order to gain some insight into urban form as the embodiment of meaning, a historical overview is most useful.

### The Man-Community Relationship

Primitive, non-technical man viewed his environment as merely sensory phenomena, "a vast, spread-out, going-on-ness, vague and indeterminate at its outer fringes, ablaze with diverse colors and issuing forth manifold sounds, fragrances and flavors." (1)



Such entities are primarily aesthetic--such cultures closely identify man with nature, man the natural being. To take from nature while giving nothing back in return is immoral. In this primitive state, man has no self awareness.<sup>(2)</sup> He does not relate to anything or anybody outside of him. There is no social organization since each individual's experience is only relative to him. Ethical and legal codes, defined in terms of sensed objects, cannot give a common law since the sensed objects are one thing to one perceiver and another thing to another. The only thing common to all primitive men is the "all-inbracing formlessness" of their environment. Therefore disputes can be settled only through this formlessness, that is pragmatically, in the "middle-ground" between claims.

The agricultural revolution, when man was able to produce his food in a surplus, ultimately allowed men to congregate in communities and take up specialized tasks.<sup>(3)</sup> Food surplus allowed some individuals to turn their energies to tasks other than food producing or gathering. A developing social organization allowed certain social strata to appropriate part of the produce for themselves -- probably religious officials initially, followed by government officials, traders and artisans. The rise of environmental investigation by these new social types led to certain inventions such as the plow, the wheeled cart, the boat, irrigation, and the domestication of some plants and animals. When taken together, these inventions allowed a much more productive technology.

"When this enriched technology was utilized in certain unusual regions where climate, soil, water, and topography were most favorable, the result was a sufficiently productive economy to make possible the sine qua non of urban existence, the concentration in one place of people who do not grow their own food." (4)

The rise of communities "was pre-eminently a social process, an expression more of changes in man's interaction with his fellows than in his interaction with his environment...But its essential element was a whole series of new institutions and the vastly greater size and complexity of the social unit, rather than basic innovations in subsistence." (5) In the classic work in urban sociology, "Urbanism as a Way of Life," Louis Wirth<sup>(6)</sup> also underscores the importance of the social structure in the development of community. Community freed man from his subsistence environment and allowed him the time for reflection and contemplation. Through these thought processes he was able to transform his life from one of mere existence to one of effectiveness.

A basis of urban settlement, it is generally agreed, is the market, "...the existence in the place of settlement of a regular rather than an occasional exchange of goods." (7) A second, and possibly equally important, basis of early settlements was protection. The early "city" was a fortress established by men as a protection against predatory beasts and men. These early urban settlements were relatively small in size, both geographic and population; therefore, each individual was familiar with the physical structure of the settlement, each had very probably taken an active, personal part in the building of the settlement. This personal involvement together with the relative immobility of these early urban settlers created

a close bond between the community and the individual; each were easily identified, and each, in turn, became a part of the other.

As the urban settlement has grown into the towns and eventually the cities that we know today, the entire plexus of institutions of which the city is composed has become more and more complex. The role of child rearing, for example, once entirely the responsibility of the family, has been, gradually delegated away until today it is the responsibility of many institutions, i.e. family, school, church, entertainment, government. As a man's role in community has become more specialized and segmented, it is more difficult to identify the significance of the individual in the milieu. The man-community relationship, once an "I-Thou" relation of deep involvement, and unity, an extension of the self, has been undergoing a shift to an "I-It" relation of disassociation, separatedness, and even disinterest. This separation is, of course, only a "surface" separation since man and community are inter-determinant. Nevertheless, such a "surface" separation is serious.

#### Values Reflected in Urban Forms

The reflection of prevailing social interests in the form of the urban settlements of respective historical eras is fairly easy to detect. The early urban settlements were primarily the dwelling places of the food producers clustered together for protection. The social interest of protection was, in fact, reflected in the form of city-fortresses until fairly recent times, when technological advancements in weapons made walls of little or no protective value. The social interests in civics and democratic processes was visibly

expressed in the form of the Greek and Roman cities of antiquity with their primary, visual focus upon the agora and the forum respectively. With the rise of Christianity, religion replaced politics as the primary social interest, and the city became church oriented. The increase in egocentrism during the Baroque period was likewise reflected in the civic monuments to the patricians in France, Italy, Spain and England.

The developments of mercantilism and, later, capitalism created a reordering of social values that was also reflected in the urban form. As economic consideration and meaning became dominant in western culture, "temples of commerce" replaced the "temples of God" as the major civic focal points. Here, however, we are confronted by a profound alteration in value concept. Throughout the periods of the fortress city, the democratic city, the church city and even the patrician city of the Baroque, the prevailing value structure was an extremely humanistic one in the sense that individual man could easily identify himself with the prevailing values of the society. He was involved, and his involvement was readily abstracted in the simplicity of the society.

Economic interest, however, demands that the objects of interest be thought of as commodities or resources, that the socio-cultural meanings that have been instilled in them as sociocultural vehicles be overlooked or dismissed, in order to reach an economic "objectivity" with regard to allocating these objects an instrumental means. Carried over to the urban milieu, this economic "objectivity" tended to cloud the sociocultural meanings instilled

in the urban form. The individual became merely a part, relatively insignificant, in the total machinery of economic reasoning.

### The Development of Sociocultural Meanings in the West

The development of technology has tended to create an altered perspective of the man-nature relationships:

"Technical man knows himself and nature in terms of the unsensed, indirectly verified, axiomatically constructed entities and relations of mathematical physics. This frees scientific objects and their relations from sensed properties, thereby giving determinable public meanings the same for all men." (8)

Shared public meanings have allowed laws of contract to replace laws of status, disputes to be arbitrated through predetermined methods, the same for all men.

Professor Northrop cites a traditional tendency of technological society as the "tendency to take the emotively moving, immediately sensed, radically empirical man and world to be dismissed as mere appearance when the axiomatically constructed, scientific objects and their relations are obtained and the ethics of its democratic laws of contract is constitutionally formulated." (9)

In other words, as scientific knowledge is obtained and technological ability is acquired, man develops a new self-confidence which leads to his placing the newly acquired values above his traditional values of nature in his hierarchy of values. "This has created a modern man who has become so absorbed by the intellectual imagination, its technological tools, and its abstract legal codes that he is starved emotionally and with respect to aesthetic immediacy." (10)

### Economic Meaning

The urban sociologist, Max Weber, saw the market as the basis of urban settlement.<sup>(11)</sup> Thus the rise of urbanism and the rise of economics are relatively coincidental. In the realm of economics, value is often thought of as representing two diverse ideas: first, the meaning attached to objects by individuals or societies; second, the price of objects on "the market." Some feel that because of this second concept economic value is something apart from the values of other realms, i.e. aesthetic, moral, legal, etc. If, however, Perry's concept of value as the expression of interest in objects is recalled, this second idea of economic value becomes merely an extension of the first. Professor Bougle paraphrased the thoughts of the philosopher Immanuel Kant regarding economic value as follows:

"...Kant refuses to admit that the expression, value, can properly be applied to economic things as well as to moral acts. He holds that, while economic things can have a price, they cannot have a value in themselves, an interior value, an intrinsic value." (12)

While this paraphrase of Kant is in general agreement with contemporary value theory, it is over simplified. Contemporary value theory holds that value exists only in the minds of men. Objects of actions have no intrinsic value; this is true of "economic things" and "moral acts," as well as any other thing or act within the range of human interaction.

With regard to the discussion of economic meaning, Benjamin M. Anderson comes closer to stating the coequality of the two concepts of economic meaning:

"Whether or not economic values in particular cases correspond with ethical values, whether or not goods are ranked on the basis of their import for the ultimate welfare of society, and the extent to which this is the case, will depend on the extent to which the ethical forces in society prevail over the anti-ethical forces...The values of goods depend on the more fundamental values of men, even though the values of men, under abstract economic laws, depend upon the value productivity of their labor or their possessions." (13)

The price assigned to an object or an action within the realm of economic activity will ultimately bear out the value assigned to that object or action by the individuals constituting society.

Economic history also represents the perennial urban-rural conflict. Bertrand Russell states, "Culture has at all times been mainly urban, and piety mainly rural." (14) Although many people feel that urbanism, as an important force in social organization, is a relatively recent institution, history shows that we are actually in the second era of urbanization. (15) While there is a great difference in the scale of urbanization between these two eras, their relative effect upon the prevailing society are nearly equal. Throughout the period from 600 B.C. to 200 A.D. the city dominated the country. This was not the case before and after these dates. "The changes are reflected in the religious concepts: Paradise, in Genesis, is rural, and so is Dante's Earthly "Paradise," in the intervening period, men's aspirations are embodied in Plato's Republic, the New Jerusalem, and the City of God, all of which are urban." (16)

The invasions by the barbarian hordes destroyed the road system of the Romans making travel dangerous and, therefore, putting

an almost complete end to commerce. The "civilized" world was, thereby forced to return to a rural orientation as each area was compelled to grow its own food. The ruling social strata became the rural aristocracy who gradually developed the feudal system. Except in Italy, the culture of the Middle Ages was rural and aristocratic rather than urban and commercial. This rural character was prevailing in most of Europe until "quite recent times." (17)

Because economics and urbanism are closely associated, there has arisen, among urban people, a tendency to assign powers to the economic institution which it simply does not hold. This is institutional fallacy, as discussed in the previous chapter, where men lose sight of the fact that economics, like all other social activities, is constituted by men. It is through institutional fallacy that the theories of economics become "laws" demanding certain relationships to exist between man, his fellows, and his artifacts. Locational theory, price theory, supply and demand theory become instilled with the powers of absolutism by people who do not understand the role of institutions in society. Economy is not an autonomous institution; no more than any other social institution. The "law" of supply and demand, for example, presupposes, in order to produce its effects, the existence of certain other social institutions. Economic matters are always built upon juridical form. "The economic act must come, first and foremost, under the category of lawful acts, (since) the economic act par excellence is theft." (18) In his excellent work on political economy, Benjamin Anderson states, "The 'economic motive', ... if





left free to work 'in vacuo,' would lead to anarchy. But it doesn't work 'in vacuo.'" (19) Economic activity is but one of many areas of social activity, much of social activity is non-economic in character. Ethical, religious, legal, or aesthetic values may motivate economic activity by entering into economic value, or they may be in conflict with economic value by constraining the participants to "lines" that are not conducive to maximizing gains at minimum expense. (20)

"Modern views as to the relation of economic facts to general culture have been profoundly affected by the theory, first explicitly stated by Marx, that the mode of production of an age (and to a lesser degree the mode of exchange) is the ultimate cause of the character of its politics, laws, literature, philosophy, and religion." (21)

There are many persons today who, while denouncing Marx's theories, are preaching economic determinism. This is not to say that economic reasoning has no place in our society. On the contrary, it has a very definite and important place here. However, it must be maintained in "balance" with the other realms of social meanings, that is we must not mix meanings from one sociocultural system with the vehicles from another.

The basic economic conception of maximum utility, motivated by personal interest, is far too narrow. Safe-guarding the material interests of a complex urban society calls for special measures. A forest is not exploited in the same fashion for private interests as it is for public interests. The necessity of pure water in the city demands operations of far greater consequence than those which personal interest would demand. (22) The sociocultural system of

economics is composed of human components and meaning and vehicle components which are humanly constituted. The "laws" of economics, like the laws, norms, or rules of all other institutions, may be relatively compulsive but they are not absolute. Economics is a part of the plexus of social institutions, it is not outside of that plexus. Neither is it in control of the plexus, unless the people constituting the society will it so.

### Scientific Meaning

The institutionalizing of science, including technology, has probably been the most impressive social event in the history of man. If we assume 3000 years as the span of historic time, we see that for nearly 2900 of those years man was rather contentedly established on Earth, life was relatively simple with God the "master" of it. Growth and change were slow processes allowing man to observe and adapt to alterations in his social interaction. In the last century, however, profound changes have taken place -- Darwin's evolution, Einstein's relativism, quantum theory, artificial insemination, the isolation of the amino-acid molecule, to name merely a few of the scientific break-throughs -- industrialization, railroads, automobiles, electricity, radio, television to name merely a few of the technological inventions. The social problems that these advancements have created are manifold. These problems are not due so much to the events themselves as to the short period of time in which all of this has taken place. The social structure has not been able to keep pace with these improvements because institutional change requires time in order to develop a consensus for change among



its individual constituents. The lag between the first manifestations of an alteration of sociocultural meaning among individuals and its reflection in the social institutions has been longer than the time between these profound events of the last century. Adding to this problem is the fact that many of these events have had a perceptible effect upon the human environment. In order to provide a meaning for these new events, individuals have tended to install the institution of science and technology with independent powers.

This reification of powers to science and technology is, of course, another example of institutional fallacy. The great wave of scientific disclosures coming one after another, with no time for the social assimilation of their concepts, has tended to create an image of superhuman forces in operation. Science and technology are also social processes and parts of the institutional plexus. These institutions, like all others, are interdependent. The focus of their efforts are upon those areas which their human components have determined as important and worthy of human interest. Thus scientific meaning belongs within the realms of human interest occupying a balanced, cooperative role with the many other realms of meaning.

No individual person serves a single value to the exclusion of all others, even if desirable, it would be difficult to practice. Culture is a product of all of the realms of meaning, constituted by men in order to pursue their chosen interests. If we are to retain a balanced culture, we must retain a balanced hierarchy of sociocultural meaning and value for these are the roots of our

social structure and our culture. As our culture becomes more complex, as new meanings are discovered for traditional objects, it becomes more difficult to maintain a "balance" of values.

"Not to mix things, to be able to place oneself at different points of view, to respect, without confusing them, the various rules of the different orders of activity in which one participates is, infallibly, a sign of high culture." (23)

### The Cultural Development of the United States

A historical review of the underlying philosophies of the culture of the United States of America is necessary in order to understand its urban development according to this thesis. The historical review undertaken here is, predominately, based upon the work The Meeting of East and West, by F.S.C. Northrop, especially the chapter "The Free Culture of the United States." (24)

The culture of the United States is an admixture of many cultures with those of Western Europe predominating. However, our basic sociocultural framework is founded mainly in three philosophical concepts that have been joined here and no where else in the world, these are: (1) the political philosophy of John Locke, (2) the economic philosophy of Adam Smith, and (3) the theology of John Calvin.

The United States of America, at its inception, was an agrarian society. There was little industrialization with most urban settlements serving as centers for the exchange of goods and services. The framers of the Declaration of Independence, especially Thomas Jefferson, gave expression to John Locke's philosophy

of the absolutely free and independent individual as the basis of moral, religious and political "good." Furthermore, according to Lockean politics, there is no principle or relation in the "natural mental substances" to give anything more than conventional status to the state. These, then, became the two basic premises of the Declaration of Independence: all men are born free and equal, and the origin of government is in "the consent of the governed." (25)

"Thus it came about in the modern world that the sole justification for the existence of government became the preservation of private property, where property means not merely external, material things but also one's material body." (26)

The emphasis of Calvin's theology upon the "individual conscience" as the source of all good and evil in the individual assigns the cause of any social evils which arise to the individual rather than to the social, economic or political circumstances of his birth. When this concept is joined with the Lockean thesis of politics it becomes "Self-contradictory and hence unconstitutional for even a vote of the majority to place human rights above property rights in any issue between the two." (27)

The agrarian Whigs, notably Jefferson, saw that unless the majority of the people constituting a democratic government were property owners, democratic government would fall; in fact, the preconditions for democratic government under these two philosophies, would not exist.

"...Since the preservation of private property is the sole justification for free individuals, consent to create or remain in any government, it follows that unless a majority of them possess private property they will not be justified in giving their consent to government, even democratic government." (28)

Joining these two philosophies in the United States, and creating the unique basis for American "democracy," was the economic philosophy of Adam Smith. Mercantilism developed, with the decay of the feudal system, as a result of social needs and changing times. In the 18th Century, the French physiocrats developed an economic philosophy, based upon Locke's doctrine of the "State of Nature," which rejected all national controls of early mercantilism in favor of a basis in "natural supremacy." This economic system regarded government control of business practices and economic transactions as philosophically and scientifically unsound. Following this line, Smith published Wealth of Nations, in 1776, based upon the same Lockean assumptions. Wealth of Nations developed in detail a complete economic science treating labor, capital, production, and exchange upon the basis of Lockean laissez faire.

Thus the underlying philosophical assumptions of the culture of the United States are joined. They are: (1) the egocentric religious doctrine of Calvin, (2) the individualistic political doctrine of Locke, (3) the laissez faire economic theory formulated by the physiocrats and Adam Smith.

"The Protestant factor (Calvinism) tended to make the individual the sole cause of any unfortunate economic or social circumstances in which he found himself. Locke's political philosophy made the preservation of private property the sole justification for the existence of government, thereby rendering unconstitutional any majority legislation which curbed working conditions or business practices in the interest of human rights or social needs. Similarly, the laissez faire economic theory prescribed it to be unsound to prevent in any way the free play of individualistic action regardless of the social consequences, and required that laborers be treated, not from the standpoint of their value as human beings, but from the standpoint of the exchange value of their labor in a competitive free market." (29)



It is important to note that the underlying individualism of these three philosophies, while continually alluded to, even today, is not now and never was practiced in their pure form in the United States. Even during the period 1870-1900, often considered to be the height of laissez faire, there was tremendous governmental involvement in business practices and economic transactions, witness the railroad land-grants and tariff policy.

These were classic examples of vested interests manipulating the prevailing system of values to their own advantage. The business institutions used the Hamiltonian Principle of federal manipulation to secure tariffs, and thus a governmentally controlled and protected market for their products, as well as to receive free lands and funds to build the railroads. At the same time, the only economic theory operating in the culture was that derived from the laissez faire philosophies of Locke and Smith which were used by the business institutions to prevent the farmer and the laborer, from also enjoying the aid and protection of the federal principle. Thus the rules of the economic game were rigged so that business had the advantage of government interference with the economic system, and also the protection and aid, while all of the other participants were denied these advantages. The sociocultural values of the people--religious, political, moral, and even economic--were so constituted that regardless of the resultant unfairness and abuses from these advantages enjoyed by the business institutions, any effort to gain similar government protection in their own behalf was repugnant as economically unsound, politically unconstitutional, and morally evil.(30)

The manifestations of these concepts in the culture of 19th Century America, including the type and pattern of urban development, resulted in the oppressive social conditions that were the object of the reform movements at the turn of this century.<sup>(31)</sup> These movements led to the Sherman Anti-trust Act and the beginnings of the Federal Control Agencies in the years prior to World War I. The economic "crash" of 1929 was an object lesson for many Americans who, finding themselves out of work and economically broken, came to realize that social and economic circumstances were not entirely within the control of the individual. Thus many of our early American sociocultural meanings and values became the objects of serious public consideration and eventual reordering.

During the 20th Century, there have been some great shifts in sociocultural meanings in the American culture. Thomas Cowan sums up these shifts with the following sentence:

"Whereas, during the 19th Century, law was engaged in converting the political ideals of individuality into rules of law, in the 20th Century law undertook the formidable task of creating social interests to balance off the claims that were made in the name of 'free individual self-assertion.'" (32)

Although there have been changes taking place within the realms of our sociocultural meanings, we are yet operating under an overemphasis of economic "reasoning". The reification of economics, nearly to the level of absolute determinism, has probably been the major cause of many of our urban problems -- land and water exploitation, insufficient public services, poor housing and health conditions, to name merely a few.

### The City as a System of Cultural Symbols

The discussion of the origins and foundations of American culture is essential to the analysis and understanding of the physical form of American cities, for the city is the manifestation of sociocultural meanings and values. Professor Sorokin's concept of the composition of sociocultural phenomena places heavy emphasis upon the meaning component as paramount to understanding the structural and dynamic properties as well as the casual relationships of these phenomena. The concept of sociocultural phenomena as merely consisting of human beings is inaccurate to Sorokin. The immaterial meanings within the minds of men as well as their material vehicles are "equally essential and universal components" of these phenomena. (33)

The city, then, may be thought of as system of sociocultural phenomena. The physical form of the city, it follows, may be thought of as a system of vehicle components of sociocultural phenomena. Man forms and constructs his artifacts as the embodiments of his sociocultural meanings and values.

These vehicle components may be physical or symbolic conductors of meaning. Physical conductors have meaning embodied in their physical qualities, such as a stone held menacingly by an enemy, or a soft bed to a weary traveler. Symbolic conductors have meaning instilled in them by man, and their use demands mutual understanding of their symbolism. Some conductors may be both physical and symbolic, such as a fence or a wall, usually the symbolic qualities play the major role in influencing sociocultural

action. Those who created such objects, often past generations, influence both our state of mind and our actions through the physical and especially the symbolic qualities of the objects as conductors of meaning. Thus, we have to follow the course of the existing pattern of streets and roads even though it may be crooked, round-about, and inefficient. <sup>(34)</sup> Therefore, if we are truly to understand the city, we must recognize that the city is a system of three-componential sociocultural phenomena.

"As long as we identify urbanism with the physical entity of the city...we are not likely to arrive at an adequate conception of urbanism as a mode of life." <sup>(35)</sup>

The large number of persons, as human components of sociocultural systems, in interaction is the contemporary city makes the full contact of personalities impossible. Urban citizens meet in highly segmented roles. The tendency for individual persons to specialize in those functions for which he receives the greatest advantages further separates individuals. It thus becomes necessary to communicate through indirect media and articulate individual interests through delegation. That is, institutions grow as methods of formulating our interaction and we come to depend upon the total scope of action as the expression of our individual interests. The large number of persons making use of urban facilities and institutions leads to a "leveling" of service to an "average" person rather than to particular individuals. A premium is placed upon "utility and efficiency" as the primary values of public activity, and leads automatically to the use of corporative devices for the organization of enterprises. Thus, interests are effectuated by means of representation; the voice of the representative is weighed in proportion to the number of persons for whom he speaks. <sup>(36)</sup>

At the same time, the increased complexity of social interaction demands the development of controls to reduce disorder and create predictable routines. Hence, the urban environment places a premium on visual recognition of cultural symbols.

Webster's Dictionary defines "symbol" as: "that which suggests something else by reason of relationship, association, convention, etc.; especially, a visible sign of something invisible, as an idea or quality." As the shared interests of individuals constituting society develop into social groups and eventually institutions, they lead to the creation and development of a set of vehicle components which represent the sociocultural meanings implicit in the institution. Professor Mukerjee sees the function of the symbol as a representation of the abstract principles, values, and social relationships or ways of living that groups and institutions embody.

"A symbol is an object, person, activity or situation or its representation by any sign (such as gesture, sound, colour or writing) that through mental imagery by a kind of abbreviated reasoning monopolises attention and emotions and points easily, quickly and unerringly to a conclusion." (37)

As stated earlier, the use of symbols requires the mutual understanding of their symbolic meaning. Once a symbol has been established, it takes on an aura of power that goes beyond the individual.

"...not only are our feelings conditioned through the use of symbols but our processes of thinking and imagining as well. There is, furthermore, a deep-seated tendency to rationalize a symbol, that is to discover some logical reason for feeling toward it as we do." (38)

Thus, we love our home, not merely as a place offering protection and warmth, but because it represents our family -- our home, in essence, becomes part of our family. Through our symbols, we tend to create a belief in the reality of the things that our symbols represent. Allport calls this belief "projected reality," and states that this is not regarded as the product of our emotions, but as something that exists quite apart from us.

"They (the projected realities) are not created by faith, but they themselves create faith in that they are regarded as its justification. Without belief in them all rational support for our attachment to their symbols would be lost." (39)

Our sociocultural meanings, then, while abstract and intangible, are made "real" through their expression in symbolic form. As the symbol gains mutual understanding by the individuals in society, its meaning becomes Allport's "projected reality." Thus, the meaning of law and order becomes reality in the uniform of the policeman, the courts, traffic signals, etc. The vehicle components of sociocultural systems are their symbols. Our social symbols are used to extend our knowledge.

"Whatever resists projection into the discursive form of language is, indeed, hard to hold in conception, and perhaps impossible to communicate, in the proper and strict sense of the word 'communicate.'...Fortunately our logical intuition is much more powerful than we believe...our knowledge (understanding) is considerably wider than our discourse (language). (40)

The visible pattern of the city, the lay-out of the streets, the buildings, the open spaces, etc., is the collection of the sociocultural vehicles -- the symbols representing the ideas and meanings of the citizens of the city, past and present.

These symbols and their pattern tend to channel the citizens into "grooves" of action that are, to some extent, predictable. At the same time, they give reference to the individual so that he can order his existence among the confusion and struggle of the material city.

"The Acropolis was not a political document or a decoration or an abstraction of art -- still less a 'cultural center,' pale refuge such as we build for our besieged citizens -- but a spiritual reality which kindled the collective life and yet was intimate also to the life of every Athenian." (41)

The Acropolis symbolized the meanings held highest by Athenians. The forums and thermae served the same purpose for the Romans, as did the cathedral in Western Europe, and the Piazza in Italy. In the United States, our early symbols of civic meaning were the church-meeting house, the village square, the farmstead. The people living in these early cities also lived within the pattern of ideas which were expressed in the city. Men built their cities in the image which they believed of themselves.

The rise of industrialization and capitalism upset this man-city relationship. The factory, the railroad, the bank became the symbols of the dominant "economic rationale." The factory was built not as architecture, expressing the inner framework of a social concern, but as machine, a mechanical contrivance to produce nonhuman output.

"Unlike the temple and the theater, the house and the market place, the factory was built, not out of love and the commerce of society but out of calculation and economic necessities." (42)

The dominance of "economic rationale" in the complex system of sociocultural interaction in the United States is plainly evident in the vast formlessness and spreading blandness of our modern cities. "Economic rationale" stresses the least monetary expenditure for the maximum monetary gain. This precludes considerations of beauty, ethics, and the many other social meanings traditionally expressed in our artifacts. The rise of "technical reasoning," which was nearly coincident with the rise of economic rationale in the United States, tended to further the reduction of our sociocultural symbols by emphasizing the most efficient use of material and energy in a mechanistic sense.

As economic and technical reasoning has grown to become the dominant interests of our society, their expression in the urban form has also become more dominant. Production and consumption have become the goals for much of contemporary American society. As this has permeated the entire culture it has tended to produce more and more institutions, each one serving a most narrow meaning. More institutions, in turn, tend to further segment the role of the individual. Thus, he loses a specific role from within which he can identify his function within the total culture as he gains many new but partial roles which are merely parts of a large social "machinery." As the total society becomes more complex, its totality becomes more difficult to conceptualize.

The city itself, under these conditions, becomes more machine-like as the total efficiency of its many components, human and vehicle, takes precedence over its service to any individual or group.



Neighborhoods are wiped out in the name of more efficient traffic flow with little or no regard for adjusting to the sociocultural meanings of the displaced individuals. Many such programs are well intentioned in concept, but falter because they are applied as universal "cures" for specific and unique "ills."

The philosopher-critic, Lewis Mumford, has stated, "...The city in its complete sense, then, is a geographic plexus, an economic organization, an institutional process, a theater of social action, and a aesthetic symbol of collective unity." (43) And goes on to state that the purpose of the city is, first of all, to serve as the framework for the pursuit of social opportunities. Thus, the "social facts" of the city are primary, with the physical organization subservient to them.

"One further conclusion follows from this concept of the city: social facts are primary, and the physical organization of a city, its industries and its markets, its lives of communication and traffic, must be subservient to its social needs. Whereas in the development of the city during the last century we expressed the physical plant recklessly and treated the essential social nucleus, the organs of government and education and social service, as mere afterthought, today we must treat the social nucleus as the essential element in every valid city plan..." (44)

### Winds of Change

Although institutions do have implicit super-human capabilities, i.e. historical continuity, collective action, etc., they are constituted by individuals and, therefore can be altered or modified by individuals.. History is a continual sequence of institutional change. The first half of this century has been the scene of some tremendous alterations of institutional meaning.

As the growth of American cities accompanied the growth of American industrialization, the tremendous numbers of people, attracted to the cities by the availability of work, created tremendous urban problems, physical and social problems. The conditions in the cities at this period are well documented and do not need reiteration here, suffice it to say that they were deplorable. <sup>(45)</sup> There were during the entire development of these conditions, constant demands for reform from some individuals; however, the vast majority of people in the society were able to pacify their consciences within the collectivity of the institutions. That is to say that the conditions were accepted as a "way of life" by the majority of people in the society.

Not all of the people in society reasoned in this manner however; a few, at first, the reformers, the "do-gooders," etc. refused to allow these conditions to continue. They kept them visible by constant propaganda about them and against them. Eventually, other individuals, groups, and institutions became involved and new institutions were formed with the expressed purposes of reform. As popular concern developed into "political pressure" the policy making bodies of government took action through reform legislation, the tenements laws, labor controls, antitrust legislation, etc. More important than the legislation, from a sociocultural point of view, was the development and acceptance of new sociocultural meanings and their embodiment in new institutions. Through the incessant efforts of individuals who felt conflict between their ideals and those expressed by

the society, the concepts of Lockean politics and laissez faire economics became suspect. It was the economic disaster of 1929, however, that brought many people to realize that the individual was not wholly responsible for his social and economic circumstances.

This realization led to the rejection, by many, of the doctrines of Locke, Smith and Calvin which had formed the nucleus of American social values and led to a much greater federalization of many social and economic concerns. The Lockean principle of extremely limited government was replaced by a new principle of government responsibility for the areas of social concern that private institutions either could not or would not provide, i.e., housing and health protection for lower income segments of the population, control of resource allocation, including land, etc. The laissez faire economic of Smith was replaced by the Keynesian economic of government stimulus to the general economy. And, the Calvinist concept of egocentric individualism was replaced by a much more humanitarian concern for the victims of economic circumstances. Of course, there remains a healthy conservatism that tends to check the pace of this reordering of values and institutions; but the general direction has been toward more liberal social policies as reflected in the voting pattern of the last thirty years.

People, then, are aware of the wide range of meanings within which they structure their values and institutions. The problem is one of understanding. Since technological and economic concerns



tend to manifest tangible results, they are easily perceived and accepted. The other realms of sociocultural meaning manifest much more intangible results, less easily perceived and, therefore, more difficult to conceptualize. These more intangible realms are, nevertheless, equally important in the development of a complete and balanced culture.

The social failures of a disbalance of interest toward the "tangible" values of economics and techniques are readily apparent in our contemporary society. Needed is a restoration of balance among the realms of social interest with the more intangible values becoming the object of greater concern. The study of values, interests and meanings then is the basis for understanding their role in culture and cultural expression. Since the urban planner deals with probably the most comprehensive system of cultural expression, the city, he, above all, should have a thorough understanding of sociocultural phenomena, and its components. Any attempts to alter the pattern and form of these vehicle components without understanding their relations to the human and meaning components is destined to be less than successful.

FOOTNOTES

- (1) F.S.C. Northrop, "Man's Relation to the Earth in its Bearing on His Aesthetic, Ethical, and Legal Values," Man's Role in Changing the Face of the Earth, Wm. L. Thomas, ed. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1956), p. 1052.
- (2) *Ibid.*, pp. 1052-65.
- (3) Robt. M. Adams, "The Origin of Cities," Scientific American, Sept., 1960, pp. 3-10.
- (4) Kingsley Davis, "The Origin and Growth of Urbanization in the World," The American Journal of Sociology, LX, March, 1955, p. 430.
- (5) Adams, pp. 3-4.
- (6) The American Journal of Sociology, XLIV, July, 1938, pp. 1-24.
- (7) Max Weber, The City, Don Martindale & Gertrude Neuwirth, trans. & ed. (New York: Collier Books, 1962), p. 72.
- (8) Northrop. p. 1060.
- (9) *Ibid.*, p. 1061.
- (10) *Ibid.*, p. 1064.
- (11) Weber, Chapter 1 "The Nature of the City," especially pp. 71-76.
- (12) C.C.S. Bougle, Evolution of Value, H.M. Sellars, trans. (New York: Henry Holt and Co., 1926), p. 89.
- (13) Social Value (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Co., 1911), pp. 196-7
- (14) Bertrand Russell, "How to Read and Understand History," Understanding History and Other Essays (New York: The Philosophical Library, 1957), pp. 32-3
- (15) *Ibid.*
- (16) *Ibid.*
- (17) *Ibid.*
- (18) Bougle, p. 95.
- (19) Anderson, p. 146.
- (20) *Ibid.*, pp. 146-7.
- (21) Russell, pp. 33-4.
- (22) Bougle, p. 97.

- (23) Ibid., p. 57.
- (24) (New York: The Macmillan Co., 1946), pp. 66-164.
- (25) Ibid., p. 93.
- (26) Ibid., p. 95.
- (27) Ibid., p. 97.
- (28) Ibid., pp. 98-9.
- (29) Ibid., pp. 135-6.
- (30) Ibid., pp. 138-60.
- (31) For a well-rounded anthology of these reformers see:  
Years of Conscience: The Muckrakers, Harvey Swados, ed.  
 (Cleveland: Meridian Books, 1962).
- (32) "Social Interest and Value," Aspects of Value, Frederick C.  
 Gruber, ed. (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania  
 Press, 1959), p. 59-60.
- (33) Pitirim A. Sorokin, Society, Culture, and Personality: Their  
 Structure and Dynamics, (New York: Harper & Bros., 1947),  
 pp. 51-2.
- (34) Ibid., pp. 56-7.
- (35) Wirth, p. 4.
- (36) Ibid., pp. 12-13.
- (37) Radhakamal Mukerjee, The Social Structure of Values (London:  
 Macmillan and Co., Ltd., n.s.), p. 313.
- (38) F.H. Allport, quoted in Mukerjee, p. 315.
- (39) Ibid.
- (40) Susanne K. Langer, "Expressiveness and Symbolism," A Modern  
 Book of Aesthetics, (3rd ed.), Melvin Rader, ed., (New  
 York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, Inc., 1961), p. 253.
- (41) Joseph Hudnut, "The Invisible City," City and Country in  
 America, David R. Weimer, ed. (New York: Appleton-  
 Century-Crofts, 1962), p. 355.
- (42) Ibid., p. 357.
- (43) "What is a City," City and Country in America, David R. Weimer,  
 ed., (New York: Appleton-Century-Crofts, 1962), p. 355.
- (44) Ibid., p. 226
- (45) See note (31).

## Chapter V. Urban Planning and Social Responsibility

### Toward More Meaningful Planning Studies

The need for urban planning developed out of an awareness of failures in the total urban system: overcrowded housing, congested streets, poor health and safety conditions, inadequate public facilities, too little open space. These failures were viewed as failures of the physical form of the city, that is, the arrangement of the buildings and the streets on the land. Urban planning was, therefore, developed as land-use planning; and thus the inventory of planning "tools" has been primarily composed of ideas and programs for the control of the use of the land: zoning, sub-division regulations, capital improvement programs, urban redevelopment.

This thesis has attempted to show that the urban form -- the physical arrangement of the artifacts on the land -- is actually the tangible, manifest expression in symbols of the meanings and values held by the people of the society that constituted it. If this urban form is inadequate or malformed, it is probably because the hierarchy of societal values and meanings which constitute it is inadequate or malformed. Attempts to alter or reconstruct that manifest form while the value hierarchy is ignored will, most likely, fail.

The urban planner, then, should have, as a basis in theory, a thorough understanding of the components of sociocultural phenomena. Before we attempt to reorder or modify the urban form we must understand just what that form represents. The traditional concern with



quantitative analysis of urban functions, while important, is incomplete. Many urban functions, possibly the most important, are simply not measurable in numerical terms; for example the allocation of welfare services, the maintenance of community balance through the provision of choice of opportunity, the provision of the capability to identify one's role, the insurance of the ability to develop social interests. All of these community functions are necessary to an orderly community, and none of them can be numerically measured in any meaningful way. The emphasis upon the physical and the tangibly measurable aspects of the city has left too many gaps in our knowledge of the city.

In his excellent article on the social responsibility of the urban planner, Melvin Webber states:

"The simple one-to-one cause-and-effect links that once tied houses and neighborhoods to behavior and welfare are coming to be seen as but strands of highly complex webs that, in turn, are woven by the intricate and subtle relations that mark social, psychic, economic, and political systems." (1)

The traditional responsibilities of the planner to the physical and locational aspects of urban development stem from two roots, according to Webber: (1) the concepts of environmental determinism, and (2) the fact that the large capital expenditures by local government are an extremely important part of its function. Because of the political implications of such investments, they demand very deliberate rationality in order to insure a fairly equal distribution of costs and benefits, carefully studied staging in order to induce the most desirable reactions from private markets, and emphasis on projects

and programs that promise the highest "social payoff," that is, will gain the most votes. At the same time, Webber suggests that the spatial location of land-uses and public facilities also play an important role in shaping the social structure of the community through the accessibility of various uses to one another, the creation of housing stocks, the provision of transportation, recreation, and other services. Thus, the "physical" planner does play a significant part in the pursuit of the larger social purposes of the community; but, his greatest potential will not be realized until he can "accurately appraise the relative effectiveness of the various servicing and facilities-building programs in which he has a hand." (2) In order to realize this potential, planners must concern themselves with the whole range of meanings and values that underlie the form of the "physical" city.

"...we can no longer speak of the physical city versus the social city or the economic city or the political city. We can no longer dissociate a physical building, for example, from the social meanings that it carries for its users and viewers or from the social and economic functions of the activities that are conducted within it. If distinguishable at all, the distinction of that of constituent components, as with metals comprising an alloy." (3)

The first, and most important, step in developing a new approach to urban planning studies is to alter our perspective of the city. The new perspective would be the correlary of environmental determinism. While it is true that environment is a factor in shaping social situations, it should be remembered that the urban environment is a product of human action -- thus, it is determined to a great degree by man. Once we have accepted this new perspective

we can deal with the city as a much more meaningful collection of objects and ideas. Man lives in society in order to better accomplish his purposes. These purposes are his interests, his values, his reasons for his actions -- individual and shared with other members of his culture. Human artifacts are created by men to play a part in realizing these human purposes; therefore, the artifact holds a meaning, or several meanings, for the men sharing in its purpose. It is more than merely a physical or biological object, it is the object of a psychological interest for these men that has embodied symbolic meaning. This new perspective, then, would be to view the city as a system of sociocultural systems created by men and aimed at the realization of human purposes.

Urban studies done from this perspective of sociocultural meaning should be of much greater value, in terms of useful information upon which to develop new techniques for problem solving, than the traditional studies based almost entirely upon quantitative data. "The city is the people" may be a cliché, but it is also a truism. The people and their institutions give the city its meaning, its reason for being. Stripped of this meaning component, the city becomes nothing more than a conglomerate of biophysical materials having no value to the study of the city as a sociocultural artifact. The meaning components are the principle sources of understanding of the properties of these artifacts. Since the city is the most complex assemblage of sociocultural artifacts yet produced, it is essential to gain a complete comprehension of its meanings and the meanings of its parts before attempting to alter, modify, or reconstruct its form at any level.

### The Planner's Role

The urban planner occupies a rather unique role in a "democratic" society. This role may be defined in terms of its functions, which are: research and analysis, goal formation, plan-making, assistance and coordination and information and interpretation. Since we are called planners, the emphasis among us has been, quite naturally, on the plan-making function. Of course, the plan-making function does not operate without the other four functions since they constitute the basis for planning and the basis for plan implementation. The total scope of the urban planner's social role is the subject of this chapter, especially the improvement of this role through the study and application of value theory and social systems analysis.

### Research and Analysis

Within the function of research and analysis the application of the theories of value and meaning can result in much more meaningful data and data analysis. Traditionally, the data collected in urban planning research has been primarily quantitative data. Population, economic base, traffic flows, housing inventories, municipal services, and such have been studied as mere numbers of people, automobiles, houses, gallons of water, dollars of retail sales, and so forth. There has been, to be sure, some considerations of non-quantitative aspects of these research areas, but they have been mainly conjecture on the part of individual planners. Needed is more research into the sociocultural components of urban systems. The questions of "what,"

"where," and "how many" are important; but they are meaningless without the question "why."

The study of neighborhood conditions, for example, is very often merely a reiteration of data from the "United States Census of Housing." While this type of data is useful, it gives no information as to the actual state of life in the neighborhoods -- Is it a vital neighborhood? Are the citizens aspiring or apathetic? Are conditions worsening, improving, or being checked? Data on civic associations, betterment groups, street clubs, renters' associations, neighborhood activities are much more meaningful than merely citing the number of "deficient" or "substandard" structures in a given area. While, admittedly, the gathering of such data requires a greater investment in staff time, they produce a much greater return in information that can lead to the development of sound theory and programs for the understanding and solution of problems.

#### Goal Formation

The function of goal formation in the planning process has long been one of intuitive estimation of the needs and desires of the community by the planner. A greater knowledge and understanding of value assignment and the role of social values in the operation of social systems will allow goal formation to become a rational process rather than an instinctive one. Along with this expanded fund of knowledge, the urban planner can also make use of research tools such as the "attitude survey" and cost-benefit analysis to determine

the goals of the urban society.<sup>(4)</sup> By expanding the basis of knowledge of values and of social systems, the concept of "goal" is also expanded to include intangible goals as well as tangible ones. Thus goals of community image and livability become just as important as goals of accessibility and efficiency of land-use.

### Plan-Making

The plan-making function of urban planning has traditionally taken precedence over the other functions noted here. For the purposes of this thesis, plan-making includes not only the drafting of development plans, but also the drafting of the so-called tools of planning; i.e. zoning, ordinances, sub-division regulations, capital improvement programs, community renewal programs and such. All of these "tools" will be more meaningful and therefore more useful tools in the effectuation of the "good city" with a more thorough knowledge of the city as the expression and symbolization of human interests. Thus, with an improved understanding of economic systems as social systems, the concept of capital may be extended to include intangible human, intellectual and organizational resources as well as tangible monetary and energy resources.

"Planning for the locational and physical aspects of our cities must therefore be conducted in concert with planning for all other programs that governmental and non-governmental agencies conduct." (5)

Improved methods of cost-benefit analysis are leading toward the ability to compare a diverse set of proposals against a common set of criteria.<sup>(6)</sup> Thus, in the future it may be possible to establish a thorough cost-benefit analysis of many diverse urban

functions, including both "tangible" and "intangible" costs and benefits. Such a system would greatly improve the tools of planning by helping to eliminate much of the intuitiveness with which they are now consumed.

### Assistance and Coordination

The urban planner occupies a rather unique position within the total framework of urban society. Within the governmental system, he acts as the link between the administrative and the legislative branches as well as the connection between the line and staff agencies and departments. The planner is assigned the task of developing administrative programs, such as capital improvements and community renewal, and helping to steer these programs through the legislative process and into action. The planner's position may be the only one in local government structure that can command the attention of these commonly conflicting segments of government. Because of the great capital costs of providing the many public services necessary in a modern city, the planner, as the coordinator of these programs, is automatically assigned an extremely important political position. His ability to use this position wisely and with the proper consideration of the long-range effects of policy decisions will depend largely upon his knowledge and comprehension of the city as a complex social system fraught with varied social interests -- some in harmony, some in conflict.

Within the total system of urban institutions, the planner serves as the link between the evermore complex institution of government and the individual, the group, and the myriad other

institutions of the society. The planner's assistance function is especially important on the area of land development and land-use assignment. Such normal, every day problems as zone change petitions and sub-division platting can be viewed from a much broader perspective when the planner has an appreciation of the full range of social interests. With his constant emphasis on the general welfare, the planner may tend to forget that the general welfare is composed of many individuals' welfares. Thus, in some instances, allowing a specific land-use to be zoned in the "wrong" place may be a wise decision.

The success or failure of urban plans depends upon the success or failure of their implementation. Since the urban planner, in the United States, does not operate from a basis in power, his control over the plans is limited to his ability to apply his function as assistant and coordinator of the myriad interests at work in the urban system.

#### Information and Interpretation

Finally, the informative and interpretive function of the urban planner may be made immeasurably more meaningful with the broader theoretical base that a sound knowledge of value theory will supply. As stated earlier, the planner's "authority" lies in his ability to advise, coordinate, and assist the city's many publics in their land development decisions. In addition to the assistance and coordinating function, plan implementation can be formed and guided through sound information and interpretation of the events taking place in the urban milieu.



If the urban planner possesses any expertise, it is one of sound knowledge of the process of urbanization. Unfortunately, many other occupations and professions claim to comprehend urbanization also, for example, local politicians, realtors, retailers, industrialists, homeowners, and nearly everyone else who comprises the urban society. Each of these members of the urban society views that society from the perspective of his own interests or his group's or institution's interests. The role of mediating these varied, and often conflicting interests falls to the urban planner -- especially through his informative and interpretive role.

If the urban planner is to fulfill this function, he, above all others, must possess a "balanced" hierarchy of values. He, above all others, must be able to view the urban plexus from many different perspectives and retain a certain objectivity so as to insure a clear analysis of that plexus. Many students of urbanization and urban politics describe the city as "a jungle in which overlapping interest groups of all sorts compete avidly for favor and advantage in pursuing their separate ends."<sup>(7)</sup> The planner's role then may be described as that of attempting to bring order out of chaos by mediating these overlapping interests so as to achieve the most desirable outcome.

The planner's informative and interpretive function can be the arena for this mediation to take place. This is not to imply that the planner sits, like Solomon, in judgment of the interests and actions of the city's many publics; rather, it is an attempt to show that the planner does have the opportunity to achieve results

even without explicit authority. By simply supplying better information, as a result of an improved fund of knowledge which, would include the knowledge of sociocultural meanings as components of social systems, the urban planner can actually reduce special advantage by opening up the political process to public view, by creating a discussion of the possible consequences of political action, by promoting debate between the many interests residing in the city -- public and private.

The urban planner is in a most significant position in society. He acts as a link, possibly the link, between the line and staff agencies of the political bureaucracy, between the branches of local government, between the levels of government, and between the myriad private interests at work in the urban environment. Through the adhibition of this position, the planner may promote the general welfare of the urban society toward a richer and more complete life, or he may, consciously or unconsciously, promote the special interests of some segments of urban society to the detriment of the remainder. This thesis submits that a clear understanding of the sociocultural systems operating in the urban environment and their components is a most important part of the planner's fund of knowledge. Such understanding and the resulting expansion of the planner's conception of the urban milieu will lead to much more complete use of the functions of the planner's social role and thus lead us closer to the "good city."

Toward the "Good City"

The final objective of urban planning may be stated as "the good city." Webb Fiser, in his book Mastery of the Metropolis, states:

"When asking what a mature, interesting, and decent city is, we really ask what the good life should be in the seventh decade of the twentieth century."

"The quality of our cities depends upon the architectural taste of merchants and bankers, the imagination of realtors and builders, the sensitivity of architects and engineers, the thoughtfulness of industrialists, the resources and good tastes of educational institutions, the richness of religious expression, the pride of homeowners, the habits of renters, the depth and breadth of our cultural strivings, and the countless other private manifestations of our values and desires." (9)

The achievement of the "good city" thus demands the reconciliation of these myriad interests and their manifestations in urban form. Melvin Webber has said that more integration of plan and action is needed among politicians and the professional staffs of the many urban agencies; and that urban planners are quite likely to assume a key role in this integration. (10)

One of the basic weaknesses of urban planning, as a social institution, is the fundamental argument between planning theorists and planning practitioners. (11) The practitioners, or "practical" planners, maintain that urban planning is a political process in which proposals for improving the urban structure are very often justified on a simple cost-benefit basis. When cost-benefits cannot be deduced in dollar terms, they may be attributed to health, safety, welfare, and so forth but they lose a certain amount of political appeal in the process. Planning then becomes part of politics with the art of compromise assuming a major role in the process.

Theorists, the practitioners maintain, operate within the freedom of ideal speculation; and therefore, their proposals are seldom, if ever, applicable in the "practical" situation.

The planning theorists, on the other hand, argue that they do not conceive of city plans as "ideal devices in a social vacuum," but rather as logical concepts based upon the existence of past and present cultural systems. The nature of the planning process is rooted in cultural history, <sup>(12)</sup> rising from inadequacies of the past and present and attempting to predict and mold the cultural pattern of the future. Practitioners, they maintain, do no planning but merely arbitrate the metastasis and the status quo.

Both arguments are, of course, perverted. The realm of urban planning includes both theory and practice, neither of which precludes the other. We Americans tend to pride ourselves on being practical people -- theoretical situations and arguments make us uneasy. We like things to be defined in "concrete" terms, we like proposals to be "practical" proposals. This usually means that we like to discuss ideas and proposals in tangible, quantifiable terms -- that is, biophysical or monetary. Thus the usual reaction to proposals or ideas is, "How big is it?" or "How much will it cost?" rather than "What are its cultural implications?" We could avoid such theoretical questions with regard to the city as long as we were satisfied, or at least as long as we accepted the haphazard results of the myriad decisions, public and private, that were manifested in the urban form. "The realization that our problems can only be solved by planning on an unprecedented scale

means that we must find ways of expressing the moral, aesthetic, educational, and political values of our citizens."<sup>(13)</sup> Thus, the theory and the practice of urban planning are correlative and reciprocal.

The history of urbanization is the history of man's continual search for the "good life." Community freed man from the earth and allowed him to pursue a life of effectiveness and fulfillment. Urban planning, in the United States, has been primarily concerned with the development of new cities and the expansion of old cities; there has been little emphasis upon the adaptation and modification of the established urban complex.<sup>(14)</sup> Today's urban problems cannot be traced, purely and simply, to any one cause; many are due to demographic or engineering miscalculations, some to cultural misjudgments, others to pure change. "A surprising number, however, find their fundamental explanation in the creative designer's impatience for the customs of alien groups and his ignorance of their historical origin and meaning."<sup>(15)</sup>

We urban planners have often assumed that our values are the best values, that our interests are the best interests. We have, therefore, often attempted to impose our will upon that of the urban society; and we are indignant when rejected. Planners occupy a rather unique position in contemporary society. In a time of high specialization, we are generalists. In a time of great emphasis upon the analytical viewpoint, we profess to take a holistic viewpoint. While most professions stress their scientific or pragmatic basis, ours stems from a utopian tradition. Modern urban

society needs this background and tradition. The urban planner is one who can act as a catalyst of the many concepts and programs of the specialists. With our concern for the whole city we can act to balance the interests of those concerned with the segments. With our utopian tradition we can interpret the desires of society in terms of the ideal, thus keeping our goals just out of our grasp, and thus aiding in the search for continual improvement.

There is an increasing appreciation in our society for cultural diversity, and we are beginning to accept this as a positive value to be pursued. One of the most important functions of urban planning in a democratic society is to provide, through the planning process, a community within which the individual's opportunities are maximized including the opportunity to be different. Lawrence Haworth, professor of philosophy at Purdue University, describes the "good city" as being constituted by an overt, institutional framework which provides opportunity, for people to act in ways that express their distinctive potentialities, and community, where individuals are related to one another through their interest in common goals. (16)

Professor Haworth then analyzes the characteristic of opportunity as being composed of six "traits:" richness, that is maximum opportunity for significant human activity; openness, such opportunities are accessible to everyone; person-centeredness, that the whole lifestyle is coherent; flexibility, contains loose, rather than strict framework of rules and norms being more conducive to spontaneous participation; voluntariness, these opportunities should not be

imposed upon anyone; controllability, the habitants of the city should have control over the form of their lives, and therefore, over the institutional structure.

"It is the fact that our cities fail to satisfy these requirements -- not that many of their buildings are old, not that they are congested, not that they have inadequate storm sewers -- that should be our cause for concern. Or, more temperately, the buildings, congestion, street pattern and storm sewers are all relevant just in so far as they bear on these requirements; and from this perspective they are of course in some degree relevant." (17)

The "good city," in Haworth's terms, is possible; and urban planning can play a key role in its coming to pass. By placing more emphasis, in urban history and in planning education, upon the process of urban development rather than the results of it we can increase our understanding of the values, the interests, the ideals of those who built the city and, thus, increase our understanding of just what the city represents. By building into our research and analysis methods more emphasis upon the non-material factors of the urban structure, such as the ideals and the hopes of the people, their likes and their dislikes, we can attempt to bring these non-material factors to bear in our cost-benefit analyses of various proposals and programs. By opening up the entire planning process to public debate, rather than merely the discussion of an already prepared plan, we can maintain a running dialogue between the planner and the many publics of the city, and thereby increase the voluntariness of the city plan as an expression of public goals. Through our function of assistance and coordination, we can create more integration of plan and action among the myriad public and private agencies which comprise the total decision-making

structure of the city. Finally, with a broader base in theory and knowledge of the city as a social system, and with increased dialogue among the city's many interests, the planner's function of informing and interpreting can become one of creating more understanding of the whole range of interests and meanings contained in our society and expressed in our artifacts.

"Planned changes of cities and rural areas are now Western civilization's most extensive cultural change, exceeding the impact of preatomic warfare, economic cycles, and political revolutions. The full recognition of these powers will surely bring with it, in the next few years, a far broader view of the cultural implications of urban and community planning." (18)

If, as urban planners, we want urban society to entrust us with a key role in the development of the "good city," we must show that we are truly public minded by continually broadening our theory and knowledge of the city, by humbly admitting our shortcomings and mistakes, by extending our methodology to include the total range of sociocultural interests and meaning, and by developing a richer dialogue between the many interests which function within the society. The urban planner's utopian tradition, his holistic perspective, and his concern for future conditions can place him in a position of intellectual leadership in urban society. If we are to accept such a position, we must be fully prepared for it.



## FOOTNOTES

- (1) Melvin Webber, "Comprehensive Planning and Social Responsibility," Journal of the American Institute of Planners, XXIX, Nov., 1963, p. 233.
- (2) Ibid., p. 235.
- (3) Ibid.
- (4) for a concise explanation of the use of the attitude survey in urban research see: Richard A. Lamanna, "Value Consensus Among Urban Residents," JAIIP, XXX, Nov., 1964, pp. 317-23.  
  
new uses of cost-benefit analysis are described in: Nathaniel Litchfield, "Cost-Benefit Analysis in City Planning," JAIIP, XXIV, Nov., 1960, pp. 273-79.
- (5) Webber, p. 236.
- (6) Litchfield.
- (7) Webber, p. 237.
- (8) (Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1962), p. 9.
- (9) Ibid., p. 5.
- (10) Webber, pp. 237-38.
- (11) Anthony N.B. Garvan, "Culture Change and the Planner," The Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science, CCCLII, March, 1964, pp. 33-38.  
  
Webb S. Fiser, Mastery of the Metropolis (Englewood Cliffs, N.J., 1962), especially Chapter I. "Introduction: Problems and Purposes," pp. 1-10.  
  
Richard L. Meier, "Measuring Social and Cultural Change in Urban Regions," JAIIP, XXV, Nov., 1959, p. 180.
- (12) Garvan, pp. 34-35.
- (13) Fiser, p. 9.
- (14) Garvan, p. 35.
- (15) Ibid.
- (16) "The Good City and Urban Design," paper presented at Ohio Valley Chapter of AIP meeting at Ohio State University, Columbus, Ohio, Feb. 26, 1965.
- (17) Ibid., p. 19.
- (18) Garvan, p. 38.

## SELECTED BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Adams, Robert M., "The Origin of Cities," Scientific American, (September, 1960), pp. 3-10.
- Anderson, Benjamin M., Jr., Social Values (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Co., 1911)
- Berger, Peter L., Invitation to Sociology: A Humanistic Perspective (New York: Doubleday and Co., Inc., 1963)
- Bougle, C.C.S., Evolution of Value, H.M. Sellars, trans., (New York: Henry Holt & Co., 1926)
- Buber, Martin, I and Thou (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1958)
- Cowan, Thomas A., "Social Interest and Value," Aspects of Value, F.C. Gruber ed., (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1959)
- Davis, Kingsley, "The Origin and Growth of Urbanization in the World," The American Journal of Sociology, LX (March, 1955) pp. 429-37.
- Farness, Sanford S., "The Planning Process and Environmental Health," Environmental Health Planning, The University of Michigan School of Public Health (Ann Arbor, Mich.: Continuing Education Service, 1965) pp. 8-16.
- Fiser, Webb S., Mastery of the Metropolis (Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1962)
- Garvan, Anthony N.B. "Cultural Change and the Planner," The Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science, CCCLII (March, 1964) pp. 33-38.
- Goodman, Percival and Paul Goodman, Communitas (New York: Random House, Inc., 1960)
- Haworth, Lawrence, "The Good City and Urban Design," Paper presented at Ohio Valley Chapter American Institute of Planners meeting, Ohio State University, Columbus, Ohio, February 26, 1965.
- Hilliard, A.L., The Forms of Value (New York: Columbia University Press, 1950)
- Hudnut, Joseph, "The Invisible City," City and Country in America D.R. Weimer, ed., (New York: Appleton-Century-Crofts, 1962), pp. 349-58.
- Jacobs, Jane, The Death and Life of Great American Cities (New York: Random House, Inc. 1961)

- Langer, Susanne K., "Expressiveness and Symbolism," A Modern Book of Esthetics, (3rd ed.) Melvin Rader, ed. (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, Inc., 1961), pp. 248-57.
- Litchfield, Nathaniel, "Cost-Benefit Analysis in City Planning," Journal of the American Institute of Planners, XXII (Nov., 1960) pp. 273-79.
- Meier, Richard L., "Measuring Social and Cultural Change in Urban Regions," Journal of the American Institute of Planners, XXV (November, 1959) pp. 180.
- Mukerjee, Radhakamal, The Social Structure of Values (London: Macmillan & Co., Ltd., n.d.)
- Mumford, Lewis, The Culture of Cities (New York: Harcourt Brace & Co., 1938)
- \_\_\_\_\_, "What is a City," City and Country in America D.R. Weimer, ed. (New York: Appleton-Century-Crofts, 1962), pp. 224-31.
- Northrop, F.S.C., Man, Nature and God (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1962)
- \_\_\_\_\_, "Man's Relation to the Earth in Its Bearing on His Aesthetic, Ethical, and Legal Values," Man's Role in Changing the Face of the Earth, Wm. L. Thomas, ed. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1956)
- \_\_\_\_\_, The Meeting of East and West (New York: The Macmillan Co., 1946)
- Perry, Ralph Barton, Realms of Value: A critique of Human Civilization (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1954)
- Russell, Bertrand, "How to Read and Understand History," Understanding History and Other Essays (New York: The Philosophical Library, 1957), pp. 9-56.
- Sorokin, Pitirim A., Society, Culture, and Personality: Their Structure and Dynamics (New York: Harper & Bros., 1947)
- \_\_\_\_\_, Sociocultural Causality, Space, Time
- Webber, Melvin M., "Comprehensive Planning and Social Responsibility," Journal of the American Institute of Planners, XXIX (November, 1963) pp. 232-41.
- Weber, Max, The City, Don Martindale and Gertrud Neuwirth, trans. & ed. (New York: Collier Books, 1962)
- Wiener, Philip P., "Values in the History of Ideas," Aspects of Value, F.C. Gruber, ed. (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1959)
- Wirth, Louis, "Urbanism as a Way of Life," The American Journal of Sociology XLIV (July, 1938) pp. 1-24.
- Wurster, Catherine Bauer, "Framework for an Urban Society," Goals for Americans, President's Commission on National Goals (New York: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1960)

MICHIGAN STATE UNIV. LIBRARIES



31293100203995