QUIET REVOLUTION FOR WHOM??

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ABSTRACT. Land use control reform has been a staple of liberal thought in the U.S. over the last two decades. The need to accommodate larger developments and to secure state or regional review of local government decisions is now widely accepted as inevitable, rational, and in the public interest. This opinion did not gain its popularity by chance, however; it has been promoted vigorously by a small group of people closely associated with large developers and the business-backed regional planning movement. The reforms they advocate are best understood in terms of the obstacles presented to capital accumulation by three historical changes: First, increases in the scale and changes in the design of residential projects after World War II made prewar zoning practices obsolete. Second, popular movements began to oppose unrestricted urban growth in the 1960s. Third, the postwar property boom of 1968-1973 gave way to recession. Moreover, contrary to the reformers’ claims, large-scale residential developments are not demonstrably more efficient, equitable, or environmentally sound than small ones. Similarly, state or regional intervention is, depending on political forces, as likely to suppress popular democracy and valid public goals as to serve them.

TEN years ago Fred Bosselman and David Callies proclaimed a “quiet revolution in land use control.” As described by these authors, the quiet revolution is a unified movement with two goals: adaptation of land use regulations to accommodate large-scale developments, and preemption of local control by state or regional authorities in cases of regional concern. These reforms are portrayed as historically in evitable, rational, and in the public interest because local politics are feudal, inefficient, and antithetical to such public goals as environmental quality and fair housing. This can be considered the basic “liberal” position on land use control reform. Thanks to the efforts of Bosselman, Callies, and their associates, that position has become the conventional wisdom, widely accepted among geographers and planners. A critique of the “quiet revolution” ideology is therefore well overdue. We propose to fill the gap with a brief history of the liberal reform movement led by men such as Bosselman, an alternative explanation of the quiet revolution, and a rebuttal of the public interest claims made by proponents of the liberal reforms.

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* To avoid confusion, the term “reform” will refer to the liberal mainstream position, not to all ideas about, or changes in, land use controls; the “liberal” position may be distinguished from a “conservative” one that echoes all reform and a “populist” one that favors whatever regulations currently and popular social movements succeed in imposing.


Genesis of the Reform Movement

Since the 1920s land use control in the United States has consisted largely of local zoning. Zoning typically separates uses, limits densities, and demands case-by-case review. Under grants of power by the states, municipal and county governments have passed zoning ordinances and made the day-to-day regulatory decisions. These governments, along with numerous special districts and public authorities, also have influenced land use through the provision of basic public services and property taxation. Overall, local zoning has been favorable to rapid land development.

The call for zoning reform to permit higher-density, mixed uses, larger size, and preplanned communities arose during World War II in relation to government-sponsored, wartime housing projects. In the late 1940s, innovations such as the floating zone and contract zone began to increase the flexibility of zoning in dealing with larger and less traditional developments. The most important new device was the Planned Unit Development (PUD) introduced by a number of cities in the late 1950s. In 1965, after a decade of research, the Urban Land Institute (ULI), with assistance from the National Association of Home Builders, issued a Model State Enabling Act for PUDs that was widely copied by state legislators. By 1976 over two thousand local PUDs ordinances were in existence. Some developments were too large for PUDs, and required "new community" ordinances. By the mid-1960s, zoning reform to ease the way for large-scale developments was already widespread.

Regional preemption of local government powers has a history reaching back past the turn of the century and has by no means always been associated with land use questions. 


4 Nearly all developments that have grown out of the zoning process have involved the delivery of housing at reasonable prices.

movement dovetailed with the concerns of regionalists who were interested in the role of the zoning system in urban growth and land use patterns. A key step in this merger was a study undertaken in 1961 by Richard Babcock for the American Society of Planning Officials, later published as *The Zoning Game*. Calling zoning "archaic, inflexible, and chaotic," Babcock surveyed the trend toward greater flexibility and praised accommodation of larger, planned developments. He declared that "urban municipalities were too parochial and that the general welfare could better be served by selective delegation of regulatory power to higher levels of government, with state legislative standards and agency review.

On the strength of Babcock's report, the American Law Institute (ALI) began in 1964 to prepare a new Model Land Development Code to guide state action toward a more active role in local land use controls, especially in cases of large developments.

Thus the two pillars of reform—promotion of large-scale development and state or regional intervention in local decisions—were firmly established in the 1960s and 1970s, years before the land use control issue caught the public eye. These principles were incorporated into the documents of the 1968-1974 period that marks the pinnacle of the liberal reform movement: the ALI model code (1968-76); the Douglas Commission report (1968); and Rosellman and Calhoun's report on the quiet revolution (1971); the Rockefeller Task Force Report on Land Use and Ur-

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9. ALI, op. cit., footnote 7, p. 5. Drafts of the code first appeared in 1968. Among the major concepts of the code are three in accordance with the liberal reform movement: (1) a consolidated hearing procedure when developers must secure a permit from two or more agencies (Article 2, para. 2); (2) a procedure to supersede local policy in development of regional or state significance, such as the siting of power plants, transmission lines, and large-scale housing projects (Article 7, para. 1); and (3) designation of "areas of critical state concern" requiring state intervention, including areas around major public facilities, areas of historical, natural, and environmental importance; the site of a new community; and any land not covered by a local development ordinance (Article 7, para. 2).
urban Growth (1973)\textsuperscript{10} and policy papers of such groups as the Advisory Commission on Intergovernmental Relations (ACIR) and the American Institute of Planners.\textsuperscript{11} The Florida Environmental Land and Water Management Act of 1972 and the narrowly defeated National Land Use Policy and Planning Act (1974) are other examples.\textsuperscript{12} A score of other acts at the state level incorporated these ideas in specific legislation.\textsuperscript{13}

\textbf{The Quiet Revolution in Residential Development}

Why was local zoning regarded as obsolete by the early 1960s? The answer lies in altered economic circumstances and class interests. Housing has remained on a small-scale, handcraft production basis much longer than most industries. After the Second World War, however, a "quiet revolution" took place in residential development.

The first new breed of developer to emerge was the "merchant builder." Merchant builders brought land purchase, site improvement, construction, and merchandising together in a single firm. They also operated in volume (over 100 units per year) and achieved a measure of standardization and mass production.\textsuperscript{14} Merchant builders, such as Levitt in the East and Eichler in the West, were leaders in postwar suburbanization. In Northern California, for example, they accounted for less than one-third of all homes built in 1950, but over three-fourths by 1960.\textsuperscript{15}


construction. New community projects proliferated after 1960. Along with the revolution of scale of organization and of projects, developers introduced new forms of development that featured mixed housing types, clustering, and other design innovations that combined residential, commercial, and recreational activities.

Most of the expansion in scale until the late 1960s occurred within existing home building firms. Then large industrial corporations from outside the industry began acquiring established firms, as typified by International Telephone and Telegraph's purchase of Levitt and Sons, the second largest home builder. By 1972, subsidiaries of giants such as Boise Cascade, Alcoa, Westinghouse, and Penn Central were among the largest volume housing producers, other corporations, such as Standard Oil of California, Ford, and Connecticut General, became major lenders to property investors or developed their own properties. At the peak of corporate involvement in 1972, five of the twenty largest U.S. corporations were building and marketing homes and another five were engaged in land development. At the same time, several of the most successful independent construction and development firms, including Kaufman and Broad, Courtex, and National Homes, increased their scale of operation by going public and by backward integration to building supply companies.

By jumping on the property boom bandwagon corporations anticipated economies of mass production and hoped that managerial expertise would open new vistas for cost savings and sales expansion. "Push" factors also were operating, such as the search for profitable outlets for surplus capital, product diversification, tax benefits, and the need of surplus land. Large-scale development, in particular, absorbed large blocks of capital, allowed internalization of profitable neighborhood effects, and promised monopoly control over local housing markets. Thus new communities attracted Kaiser Aluminum (Rancho California), Goodyear (Litchfield, Arizona), Gulf Oil (Reston, Virginia), and Humble Oil (Clear Lake City, Texas).

These economic changes gave rise to the political demand for zoning reform. "The greatest single impetus of the 'quiet revolution' generation of land use controls was embodied in the sheer size of the development projects that were being proposed." Traditional zoning and subdivision regulations with their piecemeal approval, density limits, and fixed-use districts were not in accordance with the new scale and design of major projects. The Urban Land Institute (ULI) is the research and policy-generating arm of the big developers. It took the lead in pressing for zoning reform. An early ULI publication acknowledges which groups

10 Feichter and Kaplan, op. cit., footnote 22. See also Robert Sidgwick, Cooperative Real Estate Development (Lexington, Massachusetts: Lexington Books, 1976); and William Keating, Emerging Patterns of Corporate Entry into Housing, Special Report No. 8, Center for Real Estate and Urban Economics, Institute of Urban and Regional Development (Berkeley: University of California, 1974).

11 The following discussion relies on Keating, op. cit., footnote 24; Sidgwick, op. cit., footnote 24; Hounse, op. cit., footnote 5; and Leo Keesinger, Large-Scale Housing and Real Estate Firms (New York: Praeger, 1971).
were behind planned unit development and new community zoning ordinances.25

Broadening the concept of zoning to meet the needs of large new communities and redevelopment projects is an exercise in a high level. Its participants are found in planning bodies, redevelopment authorities, large city planning projects, and foundations and those qualified to engage in large-scale developments. Although representing an increasing volume of new housing and community construction, the field in which they operate is different. "Legacies" from the small builders or even the tract developer.

State and regional intervention also suit the new generation of developers, for three reasons. First, big business is better able to influence decisions at higher levels of government than either the general public or small competitors. Second, large businesses operate on a geographic scale that makes standardization of regulations (if there must be regulations) more attractive than a scatter of local standards. Third, intervention can steer development away from obstreperous municipalities and those critical environmental areas that cause the greatest public outcry, giving developers some certainty that a project can go forward.26

Reformers, such as the zoning lawyers Babcock and Bosselman, were well aware that local regulations could jeopardize large developments. Babcock acknowledged the forces at work:27


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Actually I am struck by the similarity between the position of the development industry today and the position of the public utilities at the beginning of this century. The utilities were beginning to feel the wrath of a public annoyed at the various abuses that had taken place. This wrath was expressed in the form of a wide variety of controls which made operation difficult. The utilities responded by seeking a single statewide system of regulation which would protect the regulatory powers of local government. Bosselman, op. cit. (1976), footnote 1, p. 277.


28 Small developers, on the other hand, have been conscious of their lack of enthusiasm for liberal reform goals, since they have little need for innovative zoning and assistance for large-scale development and, second, they have had experience and considerable success in influencing local politics (see footnote 5). This divergence between developer interests can easily be seen by comparing statements by Roy Drach man to former president of the ULI, and Doane Searles (appointed to the National Association of Home Builder's), which represents the small and medium size builders in Scott, op. cit., footnote 18. Small developers and local bankers also did not support the federal new programs and attempts to encourage major corporate investment in industrialized housing production, Kasting, op. cit., footnote 24; Siedloch, op. cit., footnote 24; William Hengst, "The Federally Assisted New Communities Program: 1964-1976," in J. Keene, ed., The Role of the Federal Government in Land Development: Paper Presented at Urban Problems, Department of City and Regional Planning (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania, 1977), pp. 95-124; and First National City of the United States (Washington, D.C.: National Association of Home Builders, memoir, 1965).
as the Regional Plan Association of New York (RPA), the Bay Area Council in San Francisco, the Metropolitan Fund, Inc., in Detroit, and the national Committee for Economic Development. Many businessmen, as they observed the growth and restaucuring of the cities after World War II, believed that reform of government instruments for urban management was needed. The present regional movement's biggest effort was the RPA's study of New York, launched in 1956. While research was chiefly concerned with the economic basis of the city and its land use patterns, the project included Robert Wood's analysis of government fragmentation and spurred widespread interest in zoning reform and land use patterns. In 1957, for example, a blue-ribbon roundtable called by Fortune and Architectural Forum to consider the problem of urban sprawl produced the first critical scrutiny of the land use control system by representatives of big business other than developers. 13

More studies and more criticism of local zoning soon followed. 14 Most notably, the Ford Foundation funded the RPA project, Babcock's zoning critique, and the American Law Institute (ALI) Model Code, with Babcock in charge. 15 Meanwhile, Babcock was coauthoring a Model Code for Planned Unit Developments for the Urban Land Institute. Babcock thus personifies the intersection of the regional planning and land use control reform movements. It is not surprising, therefore, that he was also the first to join the ranks of the new urban scholars and architects, with their bias for small, tightly knit communities. 16


14 The group included Henry Fagre, Director of the RPA, the cream of the planning profession, and representatives from The Brookings Institution, The Rockefeller Foundation, the Institute of Public Administration, and the Institute of Public Administration. All Ford Foundation funded; Editors of Fortune in The Expanding Metropolis (Garden City, New York: Doubleday, 1958), William Whyte, editor of Fortune and author of the conference, made the initial criticism of sprawl and land use controls and then went on to write on the virtues of clustering (William Whyte, "Suburban Sprawl," in The Expanding Metropolis, and idem, Cities, Clusters, and Development (Washington, D.C.: Conservation Foundation, 1964).


16 Ford Foundation grants were also important in creating regional reform groups in cities other than New York. Metropolitan (New York: Ford Foundation, 1960) and Mathews, The Regional Planning Papers, pp. 75-76.

17 While regulations affect all prices, the big ones suffer most because of their impact on up-front catal-
yzing costs, and need to comply with regulations not affecting their smaller brethren, e.g., zoning environmental impact statements and meeting air quality new-

18 The call for alliance between developers and pro-
gressives of environmental quality, social equity, and growth control surfaced repeatedly in the reform in-
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19 In the last analysis, however, the real estate indus-
tory is ahead of the curve in its efforts to control

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until economic crisis and political intragrace forced a tactical retreat.

**The Social Justice Movement**

A major response of Great Society liberals to the black and poor people's movements of the 1960s was to attack suburban exclusion as the cause of lack of access to jobs and housing. The social and land use control reforms movement that concluded in a program to "open up the suburbs." All of the major government reports tackled urban problems directly to land use controls. The Kerner Commission attacked exclusionary zoning as the cause of inner-city ghettos; the Kaiser Committee recommended relaxing land use regulation to increase housing construction; and the Douglas Committee called for the reform package of large-scale zoning and regional intervention. The same sentiments influenced the 1968 and 1970 housing acts. Titles IV (1968) and VII (1970) granted federal assistance to new community developers who promised racial and income integration. Sections 235/256 (1968) provided subsidized low-income housing that was used as a tool for opening the suburbs. Legal remedies were also pursued, and hopes were raised when the New Jersey Supreme Court ruled in Mount Laurel that municipalities had to provide their fair share of regional low-income housing. Another promising innovation was Urban Development Corporations (UDC), which was designed to construct industrial, commercial, and residential projects, including new communities and low-income housing. It had authority to issue bonds, override local zoning, and seek federal new communities aid.

All of these liberal initiatives, strongly opposed by suburban residents, came to an untimely end: President Nixon cut the housing programs in 1973, subsequent court decisions, such as the Supreme Court ruling in Bell v. Sto Fer, left local zoning powers largely intact; and the UDC collapsed in the New York fiscal crisis of 1974.

**The Environmental Movement**

The environmental movement won the National Environmental Policy Act (1969), Clean Air Act Amendments (1970), and Federal Water
Therefore, the initial love affair with the environmental movement had soured, leading developers and their liberal allies to critique "uncoordinated proliferation" of regulations and to deprecate environmental "elitism."

The No-Growth Movement

The no-growth movement arose after 1978 as a set of local initiatives against suburban expansion. It addressed concerns about the physical environment, racial and class segregation, fiscal pressures, and political structures dominated by developers. In California, Florida, Washington, D.C., and New York citizens demonstrated their discontent by electing no-growth advocates to local government, by taking legal action, and by directly confronting large developments. Responsive municipalities have tried to manage growth by means of large-lot zoning, phased provision of services, "cap" rates on housing permits, downzoning, and moratoria on sewer and water hookups. The no-growth movement is now giving way to the "Great Property Tax Rebellion," but the sources of anger are largely the same.

No-growth has only worsened the situation of local obstructionism that the land-use reformers have been trying to ameliorate. Although no-
growthism provides the fewest opportunities for the three popular movements for ideological cooperation and political alliance; the liberal impulse has since again been to harness discontent to the cart of mainstream reform. A more conservative tactic is to argue that growth management is an excuse for the exclusion of the masses from the benefits enjoyed by an elite. Legal assault on the new regulations offers one means of reducing local power over growth, regionalism another. The former failed when the courts upheld stringent growth controls in Ramadan, N.Y., Petahuma, Calif., and Boulder, Colo. 10


11. Braly, op. cit., footnote 18, pp. 17-18. "[T]he new mood is the most hopeful trend we see. Al- though it expresses a range of anxieties and discontent, it can be used as a lever to achieve the changes in land-use planning and control that will make pos- sible a qualitatively different future for us and for American generations to follow."


13. Regarding regionalism, William Sprague, econo- mist for the Real Estate Research Corporation, states: "A fundamental change in strategy seems called for to replace the lost political base at the local level with a broader constituency having a favorable attitude toward real estate development... It would seem, then, that the regulation of land-use planning would not (or at least in the general interest, and would provide the real estate industry with a political context within which these would be a potential for far more effective support for reasonable development." William Spra- gue, "The Case for Regional Land Use Planning," The Real Estate Review, Vol. 5, No. 2 (1973), pp. 40-43.

14. Scott, op. cit., footnote 18; and ULI, op. cit., footnote 27.


17. While opinion differs widely on the optimum scale of operation, a key factor is the scale of planned unit de- velopments appear to be viable again. McMahan, op. cit., footnote 24; Halley, op. cit., footnote 20, p. 134; Tod Zimmertman, "PDUs Become Viable Again," Multi-Housing News, September 1978, pp. 1, 11-12; and Richard Waterman, "Structuring for Change," Urban Land, March 1979. Nonetheless, the Urban Land Institute still despair of continuing political ob- stacles: the "private sector simply will not initiate many large-scale projects in the absence of public policies that are essential components of economic development." Current constraints on development due to economic uncertainties will be overcome and development will resume. The uncertainties and political instability of new public policies, how- ever, are problems of entirely different magnitude, and the industry has no apparent way to adjust except to echo other real estate industry undertakings of very short duration. ULI, op. cit. 1975b, footnote 7, p. 3.
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sition. In addition, defeat of comprehensive state and federal land-use proposals and adverse court decisions blunted the political momentum of the reform movement. Many state laws were already in place; however, especially the large-scale eminent-domain law. A period of reassessment and repositioning was thus called for.

New conditions demanded new strategies. First, reform energies turned to more pragmatic efforts to modify existing law and practice. Comprehensive regionalization has been downgraded as a goal, while selective intervention has been favored. Second, developers attempted to influence policy through participation in and modification of regional bodies. Third, catching the winds of the deregulation movement sweeping American business, reformers argued for "streamlining" the regulatory system in response to an alleged "permit explosion." Finally, political discourse has been shifting to the right. In place of the liberal impulse to offer something for everyone, exemplified by the Rockefeller Task Force Report, has come direct assault on those who oppose development, ex-

27 Healy comments: "The sharp downturn in building removed much of the immediate pressure for state legislation—many of the existing state land laws should recede, were enacted at the height of a growth boom." Healy, op. cit., footnote 20, p. 237.

28 Healy and Rosenberg, op. cit., footnote 21; ULI, op. cit., footnote 27; and Nelson Rosenberg, Land Use and the Legislature: The Politics of State Intervention (Washington, D.C.: The Urban Institute, 1976). Healy also noted: "[T]he Land use controls have shown little erosion. There has been almost no weakening or repeal of such programs: as states that had enacted them ... ." Healy, op. cit., footnote 20, p. 218.

29 See ULI, op. cit., footnote 27; Healy, op. cit., footnote 20; and Rosenberg, op. cit., footnote 63.

30 For example, the Bay Area Council had a major influence on the recent Environmental Management plan of the Association of Bay Area Governments and funded a joint economic study of the Bay Area (Walkir and Sturpe, op. cit., footnote 50; Association of Bay Area Governments and the Bay Area Council, San Francisco Bay Area Economic Profile (Berkeley: California Association of Bay Area Governments, 1979).


pionary Zoning for HUD, and The Permit Ex-
ploration for UIL. Bosselman assisted the Rock-
efeiler Task Force and he testified before the California Land Use Task Force.18 He also served as a member of the UIL Advisory Com-
mmittee on Land Use Development.19

William Reilly served on the staff of the Coun-

dill on Environmental Quality, where he assisted the Bosselman and Collins studies and helped prepare the national land use policy legislation. He next served as executive director of the Rockefeller Task Force and currently, he is President of the Rockefeller-supported Conser-
vation Foundation. Reilly has also been a mem-

ber of the Hudson River Project and its land use eval-

uation research effort sponsored by the Rockefeller Foundation, a consultant to the California Land Use Task Force, and an adviser to the UIL.20

The Urban Land Institute (UIL) was founded in 1931 to promote an urban renewal program favorable to developers — on effort that was suc-

cessful in 1949.21 The Institute apparently took no interest in land use control reform as a part of urban renewal, later broadening its horizons to encompass all large developments. Big capital with property interests dominates the Board of Directors, e.g. Southern Pacific Land Company,

18 The California Land Use Task Force brought together developers, industrialists, and environmentalists. It called for more centralized decision-making and firmer commitments to development. California Land Use Task Force, op. cit., footnote 18.

19 Bosselman, op. cit. (1960), footnote 1; idem, op. cit. (1975a), footnote 1; idem, op. cit. (1975b), footnote 1; Bosselman and Collins, op. cit., footnote 1; Bosselman and Collins, op. cit., footnote 1; Bosselman and Collins, op. cit., footnote 1; Reilly, op. cit., footnote 18. See also Beebeck, op. cit., footnote 18.


21 Marc Weiss, The Origins and Legacy of Urban Renewal, Department of City and Regional Planning (Berkeley: University of California, 1979).

Westinghouse Electric Corporation, and Prudential Life Insurance. The membership in-
cludes large developers and a variety of profes-
sionals tied to the former by research contracts, grants, and employment. The UIL advises large developers through its technical publications and journal, Urban Land, and openly advocates public policy on their behalf. It has sponsored Babcock’s Model Code for Planned Unit De-
velopments and such studies of land use controls as Scott’s Management and Control of Growth and Bosselman’s, The Permit Explosion.22

The Rockefeller Family has also played a piv-

otal role in the movement. The Rockefeller Brothers Fund backed the New York Regional Plan Association (RPA) study. When Nelson Rockefeller became Governor of New York in 1959, he tried to follow RPA guidelines in transit and housing policy.23 Earlier, under his chair-

manship and sponsorship, the Government Af-

airs Foundation funded the Conference on Met-

ropolitan Area Problems, which was influential in promoting regionalism from 1957 to 1962.24 As governor, he established the Urban Devel-

opment Corporation Brother Lawrence chaired and funded through the Rockefeller Brothers Fund the Rockefeller Task Force on Land Use and Urban Development.25 He also founded the Conservation Foundation, which has sponsored several land use control studies.

This finding that a select group has directed the mainstream reform movement is consistent with other research on power structures and pol-

icies.26

22 UIL, op. cit. footnote 8; idem, op. cit. (1976), footnote 1; Babcock, op. cit. (1974), footnote 1; idem, op. cit. (1977a), footnote 7; idem, op. cit. (1977b), footnote 1; idem, op. cit. (1978), footnote 1; Babcock and Bosselman, op. cit., footnote 1; Babcock and Bosselman, op. cit., footnote 1.

23 Reilly, op. cit., footnote 18. The charter of the Task Force to be a citizens committee is rather weak. It was created in 1972 by the federal government’s Cit-

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25 Reilly, op. cit., footnote 18. The chart of the Task Force to be a citizens’ committee is rather weak. It was created in 1972 by the federal government’s Cit-

26 Richard A. Walker and Michael K. Heiman, March
icy formation. Given this small network, with its links to large developers and other big capitalists, it would be naive to suppose that the liberal reform package represents "the public interest." We do not claim, however, that within the reform movement either businessmen and intellectuals, or ideas and interests, are identical. For example, because those who write about reform suggest policies that chiefly serve the interests of business (or a branch of business) as if in the general interest, they tend to transform pragmatic, short-run goals of capitalists into universal principles. This may be intentional or the inadvertent result of searching for reasonable justifications for actions they approve of. But principles take on a life of their own. This happened in the case of land use control reform, once promotion of the quiet revolution begun in earnest. "Regionalism" became a universal panacea and the social benefits of large-scale development were greatly exaggerated.

Critique of Large-scale Development

Intriguing arguments have been offered for the ability of large-scale development to further the social goals of racial integration (equity), lower cost housing (efficiency), and environmental quality. Although an unfavorable comparison is made with the fragmented, disorderly, and socially irresponsible growth practiced by small developers, evidence does not bear out these claims.11


As in many liberal reform movements, land use control reform has been espoused by organizations created and/or directed by prominent businessmen. The process is quite institutionalized today, involving many distortions, research institutes, trade associations, and government advisory committees. But committee members and boards of directors, as well as funding, still come from the business class. Professional staffs are drawn from a limited circle, frequently from major universities. For instructive comparisons, see Fitch, op. cit., footnote 3, Weiss, op. cit., footnote 7, Will Donhoff, "Miss. Really Rally?" (Santa Monica, California: Goodyear Publishing Co., 1978). Javier Alpert and Ann Markson, "The Professional Production of Policy Ideology and Plans: An Examination of Brookings and Resources for the Future," in W. Domhoff, ed., Power Structure Research (Berkeley: Hilgard-Hoff Books, 1980), and sources cited in footnote 10.

Similar arguments made for rational intervention and permit facilitation cannot be reverified here.


Efficiency

Large-scale development is supposed to deliver more housing at lower cost. Cost savings come from economies of scale in production, including service provision, and from avoiding the inefficiency of sprawl. Commuting costs are thought to be lowered by mixing residential and non-residential activities.12

12. For planned new communities and towns, median trip time, distance traveled, and mode (automobiles) are virtually identical to nearby conventional suburbs.13 Internal employment is usually minor or non exists on outside commuters because of the poor match of workers to housing.

Cost data for housing and services are not available. Nonetheless, overall neighborhood densities are comparable to conventional sub-


14. Rosenthal, op. cit., (1969), footnote 1, Reilly, op. cit., footnote 18, pp. 259-51. These views get a big boost from the Rural Estate Research Corporation, (The Costs of Spread, two volumes plus summary, Prepared for the Council on Environmental Quality, Department of Housing and Urban Development and the Environmental Protection Agency (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1974)). Although based on hypothetical prototypes rather than actual community research, the Rural Land Institute called it "the most effective analysis of suburban development forms available," and found "no reason to dispute the findings." Yet the same publication notes that there have been very few empirical studies comparing the cost efficiency of alternative forms of suburban development (U.S. op. cit., 1974), footnote 7, pp. 38, 45, 78.


16. Houses and rentals are typically beyond the means of most employees in the industrial parks and commercial establishments associated with large developments. Furthermore, because the search for large tracts of land appropriate to new communities and PDUs typically forces these developments to locate at a considerable distance from urban centers, it appears that problems associated with the search—rather than solve, the overall problem of urban hypertension.

urban developments so that economies of clustering are unlikely to be attained. Even if cost savings are granted, they do not show up in lower housing prices. New communities have tended to price housing within the means of middle- and upper-middle-income consumers, and to ignore the low- and moderate-income segments of the housing market.\(^{16}\)

Equity

Large-scale planned developments are believed to offer ‘a better means of achieving voluntary racial and economic integration in suburban areas’ because only they can provide a mixture of low and high price housing, nearly job-creating activities to support the poor in the suburbs, and a preintegrated housing scheme from which local authorities cannot exclude undesirables.\(^{17}\) In other words, they circumvent restrictive zoning practices that raise the cost of housing, keep out industry, and exclude minorities.\(^{18}\) In addition, the greater efficiency of large developments is a boon to the poor and to minorities who could not otherwise afford suburban homes.

In fact, large projects are not providing any more low-priced housing or racial integration than conventional developments.\(^{19}\) Market forces determine that middle- and upper-income whites simply end up with superior enclaves. To the buyer, class image and investment potential are enhanced by well-planned communities.\(^{20}\) To the developer whose front-end costs are large, critical mass of middle-income consumers, and to ignore the low- and moderate-income segments of the housing market.\(^{21}\)

Environmental Quality

Reformers hold that large-scale projects have the most potential for environmentally superior development. Big developers have an incentive to maintain environmental quality because they can capture neighborhood effects. The high visibility of their projects also forces them to maintain high standards and their planning capability allows big developers to offer better environments.

\(^{16}\) Burby and Weiss, op. cit., footnote 83, pp. 194-95.

\(^{17}\) Burby and Weiss, op. cit., footnote 83, pp. 192-95. Cost savings may show up as higher profits, but this, while explaining developers' enthusiasm for large-scale, would not satisfy the ideological claim of lower prices for consumers.

\(^{18}\) I.U.I., op. cit., 1977, footnote 7, p. 11; Reilly, op. cit., footnote 88; pp. 341-354, and Brodsky, op. cit., 1960, footnote 4, p. 13. Burby and Weiss comment: "One of the most persistent elements of the new community concept has been the belief that new communities, as microcosm of large cities, will promote social diversity, including class and racial integration." Burby and Weiss, op. cit., footnote 83, p. 99.

\(^{19}\) Rocks, op. cit., footnote 45; Effie, op. cit., footnote 56; and Fritzen, op. cit., footnote 65. See also sources cited in footnote 41. The premises of the liberal argument are extremely shaky. Historically, suburban dispersal of minority and working class people has not resulted either in better integration or improved employment percentages for the whole population; new minority and low-income concentrations have simply reapurred in the suburbs. Bement Harrell, Metropolitan Suburbanization and Minority Economic Opportunities (Washington, D.C.: The Urban Institute, 1974).


\(^{21}\) Carl Wertheim, Jerry Mendeloff, and Ted Densley, Planning and the Purchase Decision: Why People Buy in Planned Communities (Institute of Urban and Regional Development, Berkeley: University of California, 1965).

\(^{22}\) Burby and Weiss, op. cit., footnote 83, pp. 196-197.

\(^{23}\) Burby and Weiss, op. cit., footnote 83, pp. 196-197. Yet even there, subsidized housing was a means for newly formed households and the elderly to remain in the community and a "way station" toward more expensive homes, not a means of class and racial integration. Burby and Weiss, op. cit., footnote 83, pp. 199-200. In 1977, when Gulf Oil took over financially troubled Reston, affirmative-action housing programs were terminated in an attempt to attract higher-income buyers. Gans, op. cit., footnote 89, p. 118; and Downie, op. cit., footnote 5, p. 172.

\(^{24}\) Burby and Weiss, op. cit., footnote 83, p. 115.
mental design. The literature especially stresses higher internal environmental quality.

Many large-scale developments do have good designs and a park-like atmosphere. Nonetheless, these benefits accrue almost entirely to the residents and the developers. On the other hand, these projects are by no means exemplary in terms of overall impact. For example, the biggest projects in the San Francisco Bay area, such as Foster City, Bay Farm Island, and Redwood Shores, all involved substantial filling of tidelands and were thus major stimulants for creating the Bay Conservation and Development Commission. Furthermore, despite the emergence of open space, loss of agricultural land, and spread of air pollution in Orange County. Large developments destroyed more coastal wetlands in Florida and desert areas in the Southwest than small ones, prompting several state protective measures. The federally assisted new community of San Antonio Ranch was challenged in court because the project was located over San Antonio's aquifer recharge area.

The Need for Federal Support

Large-scale developments cannot live up to the claims made for them by advocates of liberal land-use control reform. This is revealed in another fashion by the reformers' contradictory demand for government assistance to face projects, which is justified by the extra cost of providing a quality product. Worse yet, when a federal new communities program was created to promote integration, low-cost housing, and environmental quality, few developers joined because the incentives were insufficient to offset the costs of meeting public review, affirmative action, and environmental standards.

Critique of State/Regional Intervention

The principal justification for state and regional intervention is that "the public interest" emerges at a regional level while local government represent parochial concerns. The argument goes as follows. Regional growth and the population of the good of all. Local governments stand in the way growth because they are slow, cumbersome, and notoriously exclusionary. In addition, they are bad protectors of environments of regional significance and not well suited to dealing with socially beneficial, large-scale developments. Hence they are to blame for social
problems such as segregation, housing shortages, and environmental degradation. 16

The geographical scale of regulation is thus presented as the essence of social conflict. Rebuttal of this position could proceed by arguing that the capitalist growth process is the real source of various social ills. But the reformers' position misrepresents the struggles over development and land use controls in a much simpler way. It assumes that opposition to growth has been uniquely associated with local government, when, in fact, popular movements have readily seized on all levels of government to further their ends. 17 Conversely, large developers often find local control quite conducive to their growth. 18

In other words, government jurisdiction is incidental to the real issue, which is not the form of regulation but its substance: the effects of growth, on one hand, and the accessibility and behavior of the regulators, on the other.

The level of government is chiefly a tactical and technical adjustment for a political movement, depending on the issue and the interests at stake. One favors the level of government through which one's interests have the best chance of prevailing. Regionalism is thus a pragmatic strategy in a situation of intense conflict, in which the class interest of large developers is opposed to that of large numbers of the citizenry. There is no self-evident "public interest": that is precisely the problem. Pretending that one exists only serves as an ideological screen for pursuit on one group's interest over another. 19

Conclusion

We are not advocating a conspiratorial view of history. Social change is not directed by a small portion of the ruling class and its henchmen. As evidence, many, if not most, of the innovations in land use regulation over the last decade have circumvented the mainline reformers and opposed developers' interests. This is a complex period of upheaval and transition in the institutions of property development, as in many other areas of American life. Nonetheless, there is order born of class structure and economic logic behind the apparent complexity. That order does not come from natural evolution, as the forces of progress shed the worthless cocoon of the past. A quiet revolution in land use control has been occurring because a small group of liberal reformers, closely associated with large development capital, have been systematically urging adoption of a land use control system suitable to the changing needs of capital. And they have found these political agents' stand economic forces unleashed by the logic of capital accumulation.

We are also not arguing for the status quo ante. The old system of local zoning and small-

great potential for improvement in this area of policy making." U.S. op. cit. (1973a), p. 4

16 Harmony of interests is a long-standing, if illusory, notion. Contradictions are due to nonsocial, not the logic of social organization; hence all social ill is not socially technical solutions that represent the public

17 See notes 141, 143, and 136 for references. The attack on local government can be quite straightforward: "Local government cannot be improved very much because it tends to use the most time-consuming procedures, such as employing a lay planning commission. These people generally resist change and react to new development concepts in very critical ways. When confronted with change, they take a long time to make up their minds because they are worried that they are weakening their positions. . . . Moreover, we are in an era when the citizenry and his or her advocates require time to be heard. If you want to simplify things, you are going to have to prevent these people from speaking or have them say what they want to say in a shorter time." Frank No, Deputy Director of the American Society of Planning Officials, quoted in O Marx, op. cit., footnote 66, p. 394.

18 As a paragon of Healy, op. cit., footnote 18, or Healy and Rosenberg, op. cit., footnote 21, or any environmentalist publications, such as the Sierra Club's Sierra or Friends of the Earth's Not Man Apart, will show. Indeed, with increasing frequency, local environmental, labor and business interests are joining forces to challenge national and multinational economic concerns that are roving upon the states and the federal government to undermine local opposition to their projects. See: Ann R. Mankin, "Class Rend and National Goals: Un-environmental Development in Western U.S. Towns" in The Review of Radical Political Economics, Vol. 16, No. 3 (1976), pp. 147-20, Richard W. Low, "People Power: It Can Make a Difference," Planning News, Vol. 42, No. 1 (1976), pp. 1-6, published for the New York State Planning Federation; and Richard Walker, Michael Stern, and Ellen Gerdy, "The Limits of Environmental Success: The Saga of Dow in the Delta," Antipode, Vol. 5, No. 3 (1975), pp. 41-41.

19 Walker, Stern, and Gerdy, op. cit., footnote 19. See also footnote 9. Indeed, developers may attempt to open up a dialogue with local government again. Observes the Urban Land Institute: "The absence of any potential for drastic solutions at the federal and state level necsecates a long overdue reconsideration of the role of local government in the development process in general, and in the development of large-scale projects in particular. There is
scale development has many pernicious features in terms of democratic control and urban outcomes. Large-scale development may well mean better planning, more efficiency, and better living environments under the right circumstances. Yet no progressive today believes that bigger is always better. Similarly, local governance is no answer to many of the problems facing city dwellers; the worst course often will be to seek higher-level decision-making. Yet political decentralization has value in terms of citizen access to and control over government under both capitalism and socialism. The implications of the mainstream reforms for democracy are not good. State and regional government can be less accessible to the average citizen than municipal government, while functional districts are highly insulated. The liberal program's bias toward big business and managerial professionals is reminiscent of Progressive-era municipal reforms. Large-scale developments also have a record of discouraging participation in community governance. We find it disturbing that citizen participation should be subverted precisely as it is beginning to be exercised after years of quiescence.

Furthermore, popular protest movements have raised important criticisms of capitalist society. Despite the obvious limitations of their analysis and the objectionable motives of many people, one cannot simply write them off as racists or elitists. The liberal critique falsely assumes that urban conflicts are simply between poor and rich or white and black, as if their relations to each other were not heavily mediated by capital, especially property capital. In fact, popular struggles are commonly directed against both the quality of life generated by capital accumulation and the power of capitalists to define the contours of urban life. Certain environmental regulations, for example, are of benefit to all people and even partial gain or growth ordinances can help insure that growth benefits those who experience it.

Ideology is never transparent, because it contains an element of truth. Therefore, many people whose interests diverge from those of big developers—including some of those most frustrated with capitalist growth—are taken in by the apparent logic of liberal arguments for large-scale development and centralized/streemlined government. We hope this paper will help such people penetrate the illusions of liberal ideology and move debate from the obsessions of zoning and small-scale development to the obsessions of organizing social life around class inequality and the accumulation of capital.


104. Finkler, Topor and Popper, op. cit., footnote 30.
