

Peter Marcuse at 80: *His Extraordinary Contributions to Progressive Planning*

by Clara Irazábal and Susan Fainstein

Peter Marcuse is known throughout the world as a leading scholar and practitioner of progressive planning, but he has also been an outstanding member of Planners Network since it was founded in 1975.

Peter is an attorney, a practicing planner and a teacher of planning. He is truly one of the most multifaceted, committed and productive planners anywhere. As a devoted planner and educator, he has worked extensively inside and outside academia and government to promote the highest ethical standards for the profession. He has also been a consistent advocate for social justice.

The following review of Peter's scholarship, teaching excellence and service in the field of planning shows how significant his contributions have been.

Marcuse the Scholar

Peter's contribution to human settlements research, thinking and practice is internationally recognized. He has written on a broad variety of topics and his work has been widely cited across

the world. His writings are in German as well as English. He has written or edited eight books and over 200 papers in over thirty professional and scholarly journals and he is on the editorial board of several journals, including the *Journal of Planning Education and Research*. His contribution, however, is not simply a matter of quantity. Rather, he has had a major effect on the field in a number of areas, including racial discrimination, housing policy, comparative planning and globalization.

Peter's first major published piece, in the *Journal of the American Institute of Planners* (predecessor to the *Journal of the American Planning Association*) dealt with professional ethics, and his interest in the subject has been ongoing. Peter's writings on the ethics of the planning profession have been widely assigned in urban planning programs and have helped to shape the profession. He has pressed the American Institute of Certified Planners (AICP) to improve and implement its professional code of ethics.

Peter has consistently critiqued U.S. housing programs and developed

ideas for alternative approaches, offering fruitful comparisons with European programs. The range of his work on housing extends from compiling the New York City Housing and Vacancy Survey—a critically important empirical tool—to conceptual pieces, including his very influential essay “Housing Policy and the Myth of the Benevolent State.” He has also made important contributions to scholarship on housing in Eastern Europe.

Peter's recent works focus on spatial divisions within cities. Also important and widely cited is his theoretical approach to the differing meanings of neighborhood homogeneity in neighborhoods with different social composition. This work reveals the connections between urban development and globalization. His two edited books in this area have been seminal in developing this relationship.

Frankly, the variety of subjects that Marcuse has studied and written about makes any summary difficult. Despite this substantial scholarly output and range of interests, Peter has been consistently guided in his scholarship by a commitment to

Peter Marcuse and Critical Planning

Also in this section:

What We Can Learn from Peter Marcuse: “Think Critically, Act Critically!”
by Jacqueline Leavitt (p. 9)

Changing Times, Changing Planning: Critical Planning Today
by Peter Marcuse (p. 13)

social justice. And his progressive voice has been consistent, original and productive.

Teaching Excellence

Peter taught at the University of California, Los Angeles after receiving his PhD, and since 1975 he has been teaching at Columbia University, where for many years he was chair of the planning program. Although now officially retired, Peter continues to teach courses and is highly respected by his students. He has taught a great variety of subjects at the master's and PhD levels, reflecting the broad range of his scholarship. Subjects include planning theory and ethics, housing and housing policy, comparative housing and planning issues, social policy planning, globalization issues and community participation in planning, as well as planning studios.

Most recently he collaborated with a group of Columbia doctoral students to edit the book *Searching for the Just City* (Routledge, 2009). In addition to his teaching at

Columbia and UCLA, Peter has been a visiting professor at universities around the world, including in South Africa, East and West Germany, Canada, Australia, Hungary, Austria, Venezuela and Brazil. He has also given guest lectures at many more universities, including in China, New Zealand, Portugal, France, Argentina, Israel, England, Scotland, Wales, Croatia, Vietnam, Singapore, Belgium, the Netherlands, Sweden, Norway, Greece, Russia, Japan and Finland. His teaching has won widespread praise from students and colleagues for his conscientiousness in course preparation, openness to the input of others and the thoughtfulness in which he presents his subject matter.

Community Engagement

Peter's service to communities and the planning profession has been extraordinary and exemplary for a scholar. He has acted as *amicus curiae* (friend of the court) in housing cases, advisor to state and local governments and framer of innovative policy approaches in places as disparate as New York, Israel and South Africa.

Peter has held a variety of public offices, including membership on the City Planning Commission of Waterbury, Connecticut; president of the City Planning Commission of Los Angeles, California; and chair of the Housing Committee of Manhattan Community Board 9 in New York City. In Waterbury, he helped spearhead a referendum establishing the procedure for the use of governmental powers to improve blighted areas and served as founding chair of the city's anti-poverty agency (in the days of the federal War on Poverty). In his work with local government he always insisted that social factors be considered in planning and zoning decisions. In Los Angeles, he served on the Planning Commission in the early stages of development of the city's poly-nucleated long-range plan. In New York City, he focused on the issue of the disposition of city-owned property and was successful in achieving the adoption of a statement of principles committing the city to the redevelopment of city-owned property to meet the needs of existing residents. He has also been a consultant to the U.S.

Marcuse on Olympic Cities....

"Cities have pursued hosting the Olympic Games out of a variety of motivations, often more than one. Absent from these motivations in recent years has been the original purpose of the Games: to promote peace....When an Iraqi soccer team took the field in the Athens Olympics, there was no reference to the fact that their country had been invaded by a foreign power, the war was in fact being waged by participants in the Games against the peoples of other participants. But then the Games have become spectacle, entertainment, rather than a component of an international relationship among states and peoples based on universal moral principles."

"In the end, New York City's Olympics bid seems to be more about a huge real estate development on the far west side of Manhattan, anchored by a football stadium (and about the fixations of important people in government), than about Olympic sports competitions or, certainly, than about peace, even at a city level."

From "New York City's Olympic Bid—Why?" *Progressive Planning* 161, Fall 2004.

Department of Housing and Urban Development, the New York State Division of Housing and Community Development and the City of New York's Department of Housing Preservation and Development.

As an expert witness on planning issues, Peter has testified or given affidavits in a number of important lawsuits, including the Yonkers (NY) school desegregation case, the Department of Justice's lawsuit against Island Park (NY) for discrimination in the use of federal housing subsidies and for a number of low-income housing projects. He produced an important affidavit and wrote a key article arguing for the inclusion of social impacts in environmental impact statements under New York State law. He is currently active on a number of housing and planning issues in New York City, including the planning for Lower Manhattan after 9/11, housing policy and subsidies for low-rent housing.

Peter has served on a staggering number of boards and advisory committees. He is a charter member and elected fellow of the AICP and serves on its Committee on Global Planning. He has been active in the American Planning Association (APA), including as a member of the executive committee of the New York

chapter. He is one of the founders of the Global Planning Educators Interest Group (GPEIG). A few years ago, he founded a group for New York City urban scholars around the theme of the right to the city. The group meets regularly and is linked with the Right to the City Alliance, in which Planners Network serves as a resource group.

The Legacy and Recognition of Peter Marcuse

Peter Marcuse is known for his extensive expertise in many areas of planning and his broad experience in analyzing the multifaceted challenges to sustainable and equitable urbanization in many regions of the world. He has been exceptional in his ability to be both realistic and inspirational in his multiple writings, talks and service engagements. As a planner that has exemplified a lifelong balance between thinking and acting, Peter has stimulated global dialogue that bridges new thinking and new approaches intended to address the challenges of our urban world. He has affected generations of practitioners and scholars who take with them a strong commitment to planning ethics and social equity. He stays in touch with scholars in a multitude of planning programs in the U.S. and abroad. Within the practice of planning

his voice has persuaded many who have served along with him or subsequent to him on the innumerable planning bodies and commissions for which he has found the time.

Peter's work was recognized by two conferences in 2008 held in his honor. "The Right to the City: Radical Urbanism" was held in New York City and Berlin. Two issues of the journal *City: Analysis of Urban Trends, Culture, Theory, Policy, Action* (v.13, no. 2-3 & 4, 2009) discussed his work and legacy. The *City* editorial in issue number 2-3 states, "The inspiration for much of the work presented here is the continuing, theoretical and practical journey from Europe to North America (and back) provided by the lawyer, planner and urban scholar Peter Marcuse—drawing on, developing and applying the critical theory and witness of his father Herbert Marcuse."

Progressive Planning echoes these words to honor our mentor and friend, Peter Marcuse.

Clara Irazábal is an assistant professor of international urban planning at the Graduate School of Architecture, Planning and Preservation, Columbia University.

Susan Fainstein is a professor at Harvard University's Graduate School of Design.

Marcuse on Rebuilding New York...

"Public space and public use must be major goals; security concerns should not be allowed to interfere with accessibility and the free use of such spaces."

"The frequent repetition of the undoubted importance of global competitiveness for the city must not be allowed to obscure the fact that serving the interests of those benefiting from global competitiveness, including real estate developers and financial interests in the financial district, may or may not be of benefit to the majority who are involved in the more local aspects of the economy."

From "Planning after September 11: The Issues in New York" *Planners Network Magazine* 150, Winter 2002