

BOOK ANNOTATIONS

CAPITAL AND COMMUNITIES IN BLACK AND WHITE. By Gregory D. Squires. Albany: State University of New York Press, 1994. Pp. 185.

In *Capital and Communities in Black and White*, Gregory D. Squires explores the reasons behind the uneven development of inner cities. Squires, who is a professor of Sociology at the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee, a former research analyst with the United States Commission on Civil Rights, and the author of several books on redeveloping urban communities, argues that federal policies have encouraged and in some cases subsidized the growth of suburban areas at the expense of inner cities and the racial minorities who predominantly reside in them.

According to Squires, the root cause of racial inequality in development has been the American tradition of privatism. This tradition endorses the views that individual actors are the proper vehicle for productivity and innovation, that the free market is the best determinant of allocating resources, and that the role of government should be to facilitate the private interests that drive economic growth. Adherents of this tradition believe that greater economic growth will lead to higher incomes, and higher incomes will provide a stronger economic base from which communities can be regenerated. Challenging the assumptions of privatism, Squires points out that in reality, private interests have argued that while equality of opportunity theoretically should lead to equal development, the reality of the great inequality of circumstances between social and racial classes has led to disparities in social and economic conditions. Specifically, Squires closely examines the problems of unemployment and housing while offering suggestions for community redevelopment.

Despite the Civil Rights movement of the 1960's and positive changes in race relations since that time, unemployment rates continue to be much higher for minorities than for whites. Squires notes that many of the disparities created by racial discrimination have been maintained by changes in the American economy and in particular the globalization of the economy. Technological advances in transportation and communication led many corporations to shift production overseas to low wage countries. The shift was especially devastating for racial minorities living in urban communities, many of whom were employed in manufacturing jobs and lost their jobs as their plants moved. Many minorities found it difficult to work in suburban areas where the jobs were concentrated, primarily because of the difficulty in getting transportation to or housing in the suburban locations.

According to Squires, one of the biggest barriers to achieving equality of development between the races has been the institutional racism in housing policy. Perhaps no other agency has done more to subsidize suburban development and racial segregation of cities than the Federal Housing Administration (FHA). From the 1930's until the 1960's, the FHA adhered to the belief that racial integration would cause severe declines in property values. In its 1938 housing manual, the FHA noted, "If a neighborhood is to retain stability, it is necessary that properties shall continued to be occupied by the same social and racial classes." Pursuant to such views, the agency also advocated racially restrictive covenants. At the same time, private actors also encouraged the expansion of suburban growth while discouraging such growth in central cities. Appraisers upon whom lenders relied in making determinations for loan eligibility undervalued central property and inflated values for homes in more suburban areas based on the racial composition of the area; real estate agents routinely engaged in racial steering encouraging potential (generally white) buyers into the suburban areas while racial minorities were shown homes in primarily non-white or integrated neighborhoods.

Squires maintains that unequal access to housing has contributed greatly to the downward cycle of prosperity for racial minorities. The type and location of housing a family obtains determines the quality of schools its children attend and by consequence the long term prospects for their advancement in education. In cities throughout the country, per capita spending for students in public schools varies dramatically according to the suburb in which they reside. As noted above, access to jobs is strongly related to access to housing; minorities have found it difficult to follow jobs into the suburbs because they have historically faced financial and racial barriers to getting housing in these locations. Living outside the suburbs in turn has meant that are cut off from information regarding job opportunities. More generally, because of the devaluation of homes in urban areas, minority home-owners have had less of an ability to use their homes as collateral for other loans for education or starting a business.

Although federal policies sharply changed in the 1960's with the enactment of the Federal Fair Housing Act of 1968, and the Community Reinvestment Act of 1977, de facto discrimination continues to exist in the home mortgage business. Blacks continue to be rejected for mortgage loans at a rate twice that of whites (see page 71), and generally face greater credit scrutiny when they apply for loans. More generally, lenders are reluctant to provide loans for the low end housing market because the profit to be made off of these homes is small by comparison to that which can be made in the high end market.

Despite past and present institutional barriers to change, Squires points to community based efforts underway as offering some hope for reversing the imbalances of economic development. In cities such as Boston

and Milwaukee private and public groups have entered into partnerships to improve the urban areas. In Boston, local businesses and schools have entered into an agreement by which schools promise to improve performance in exchange for businesses's promises to give hiring preferences to their graduates. In Milwaukee, under the federal Community Reinvestment Act, banks working with community organizations have been willing to offer low interest loans to finance reinvestment projects.

Squires concludes by offering suggestions for the future of public policy in the are of community development. He argues that the goal of public policy in the future should be to focus on increasing expenditures for infrastructure such as roads, school buildings and mass transit. Greater attention to infrastructure will help attract business to more urban areas for, as Squires notes, business will only come to those areas where the streets are safe for customers. Improvements in education, likewise are needed since the global economy has a higher demand for highly skilled professionals. More effective civil rights enforcement will be crucial to assuring that minorities can fully participate in the benefits of economic development. Finally, based on the success of public-private partnerships in Milwaukee, Squires envisions a world where private investment can be used to meet both public and private needs, a world, in short, that overcomes the limitations of privatism.

Capital and Communities in Black and White is both an insightful and inspirational exploration of the institutional barriers to economic reform in the inner cities. Squires effectively explores the decline of the urban areas by tracing changes in federal policies over time, using both historical accounts and statistics. More importantly, by highlighting the efforts of local governments, businesses and community leaders to promote economic growth and urban renewal, Squires has offered his readers hope for a workable model of urban economic reform.

Shoba Kammula

REINVENTING CITIES: EQUITY PLANNERS TELL THEIR STORIES. By Norman Krumholz and Pierre Clavel. Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1994. Pp. 253.

Through the voices of city planners whose work has been driven by a commitment to creating greater equity among the business elites and the low-income people of their cities, *Reinventing Cities* portrays a dimension of urban politics that has gone largely unreported. A celebration of the professional accomplishments of eleven progressive planners, *Reinventing Cities* is at the same time an engaging exploration of these planners' personal approaches to developing, implementing, and institutionalizing equity-oriented policy. Norman Krumholz, former planning director of Cleveland, and Professor of Urban Planning at Cleveland State University,

and Pierre Clavel, city planner and Professor of City and Regional Planning at Cornell University, elicited the lengthy reflections and candid responses from planners that comprise the body of this work. Krumholz and Clavel, who believe that the primary obstacles to the achievement of equity-oriented planning are internal to the profession of city planning and to the planner's personal approach, seek to strengthen both the professional commitment and personal resolve of practicing planners by introducing them to similar professionals who approach their work from an equity perspective. Krumholz and Clavel critique the role of the professional city planner and propose alternative approaches to traditional planning at a time when strategizing about revitalizing American cities is particularly important. During the last four decades, almost all older industrial cities have lost economic investment, and have become locations of concentrated poverty and unemployment. Recognizing this crisis, traditional city planning officials typically have attempted to stimulate new investment, to encourage the return of the white middle class to the city, and to develop heavily subsidized real estate ventures in downtown areas. While successful in some respects, these efforts have not reduced the widening economic gap between central cities and suburbs, nor have they improved the neighborhoods of low-income and working-class city residents, or reduced unemployment.

In the introduction to *Reinventing Cities* Krumholz and Clavel explain why "equity planning" is a viable alternative to traditional city planning for renewing American cities and providing their low-income and working-class residents with more meaningful choices. "Equity planning," an approach first defined, pioneered, and publicized by the authors in the 1970s, describes a conscious effort to create redistributive policies whereby resources, power, and participation are moved away from those who frequently benefit from public policy toward the least powerful.

Whereas traditional city planning is satisfied with trickle-down effects, equity planning aims benefits directly at those city residents in the greatest need. Equity planners, who work in official capacities for city governments, view themselves as representatives of the poor, minority, and elderly residents of their cities, and therefore do not feel constrained by the wishes of elected politicians. Pressing for fair housing, rent control, linkage arrangements, and other redistributive programs, equity planners express localized urban interests that would otherwise go unnoticed.

Reinventing Cities recounts fascinating conversations with eleven such equity planners. Interviews are preceded by a short profile of the city in which the planner worked that describes the city's demographics, politics, and economic conditions at the time the planner began work. At the end of each chapter, the authors suggest additional reading that complements the chapter's central issue. Through the interviews with equity planners

that make up the body of the book, Krumholz and Clavel report stories of success, disappointment, courage, and renewal.

Although the planners interviewed by Krumholz and Clavel came to their professions from different backgrounds — education, labor organizing, policy making, architecture — each brought energy and determination to city planning, as well as ideas about creating a more equitable society that were largely shaped by the events of the 1960s. Enjoying support from local officials or enduring an unfavorable political climate, each took on with remarkable courage the risks of implementing programs that were unpopular, that had been shelved for years, that had never been tried. These women and men, White, Black, and Latino, raised in small towns and large cities, discuss in their interviews the value of organizing diverse groups of supporters, of drawing attention to innovative plans, and of attempting to institutionalize their efforts. Many comment on the importance of developing community goals and objectives, as well as the importance of developing working relationships with the mayor, city council, business communities, neighborhoods, and the media. Significantly, each planner shares moments that inspired new ideas for her work, and events that stimulated personal growth.

That similar issues surface in many interviews neither confuses nor simplifies the book, but underscores the necessity of approaching problems that arise in a number of cities in ways suited to the particular demographics, politics, and economic conditions of each city. *Reinventing Cities* explores equity planning in Jersey City, Dayton's Miami Valley, Chicago, Portland, Boston, Denver, Hartford, Santa Monica, and San Diego, where different quantities of resources are available, where a number of distinct environmental issues loom large, where planning is an accepted tradition to varying degrees. Two issues to which planners in most cities devote a significant amount of time in their interviews are the benefits of creating a development plan, and the value of building solid coalitions. A brief consideration of four interviews that address these issues illustrates Krumholz and Clavel's success in eliciting and capturing a number of progressive planners' ideas about creating and implementing equity-oriented policy.

Both Robert Mier, appointed by Mayor Harold Washington in 1983 to be Commissioner of Economic Development in Chicago, and Howard Stanback, who became City Manager of Hartford in 1992, encountered, upon taking their positions, the formidable task of developing a plan of action for cities in crisis. Mier was hired to translate Mayor Washington's concern for social justice and equitable development into a formal, detailed plan. Stanback, on the other hand, understood that any ideas about equity planning would be received coolly by the Hartford city government, which has never been in the forefront of comprehensive development planning, but has defined its goals largely by considering what funds are available.

Through intense work and ardent negotiating, Mier and his colleagues capitalized on the relatively favorable political climate in Chicago in 1984 to produce a plan, which described more than 45 specific development policies and proposed more than 200 specific projects. Quite different from Mier's approach to formulating a plan, Stanback's approach focuses on illuminating for Hartford officials the positive aspects of equity planning. Accordingly, Stanback has begun to develop a creative plan that identifies common interests between the city government and corporations, and that encourages participation where alienation and lack of engagement have become the norm. As both Mier and Stanback stress the importance of working with a game plan in hand, it becomes clear that the game plan must be one that is comprehensible to those individuals and groups to whom the plan must be explained and defended.

Both Margaret Strachan, who was appointed to the Planning Bureau of the city commission of Portland in 1984, and Kenneth Grimes, a senior planning analyst with the San Diego Housing Commission (SDHC), understood the necessity of building the widest possible support base if the progressive housing programs they envisioned were to take shape. With Portland's history of good development planning and neighborhood participation behind her, Strachan used her remarkable communication and organizing skills to involve tens of thousands of citizen volunteers in the discussions that led to a plan to convert hotels into badly needed single room occupancy housing for low-income individuals. Openly enlisting citizen support was not an option available to Grimes, who supported the creation of a Housing Trust Fund (HTF), to which the mayor, certain city council members, as well as much of the business community were initially opposed. Without sacrificing the equity-oriented features of the HTF, Grimes reframed his plan using terminology that business people find familiar and comforting. After careful strategizing and low-key organizing, Grimes introduced the plan to the labor unions, religious groups, environmental activists, and liberal elements in the business community who eventually would negotiate with, and win over, the city council.

Krumholz and Clavel succeed in their objectives of exposing the unreported work of equity planners in nine cities, and of inspiring those interested in developing and implementing equity-oriented policy to forge ahead with their work. Importantly, readers learn enough about the personal and professional background of each planner to understand why none is satisfied with second-best efforts, and to understand why each emerges from times of disappointment as a survivor who is prepared to set in motion new and better ideas.

The authors do not expect that *Reinventing Cities* will serve as a step-by-step manual for effective equity planning, but rather intend that the compilation of success stories and unsettling failures serve as a point of

reference for strategizing on professional and personal levels about renewing American cities. Indeed, Krumholz and Clavel believe that it is possible for the profession of city planning, the professional schools, and the larger community of city politics to embrace equity planning as a viable alternative to traditional city planning. The authors assert that enhanced interaction and collaboration between academics and practitioners would assist future planners in responding to the concerns of racial minorities, and would prepare planners for dealing more creatively with opposition from business communities. Further, the establishment of a formal organization devoted to the interchange of information about equity planners' work, as well increased use of the media to promulgate the work of equity planners, could introduce a wider audience to the goals of equity planning. Candid, instructive, and enlightening, *Reinventing Cities* stands as an important effort in the movement to propel the concerns of equity planners to the fore of the dialogue about the future of planning in American cities.

Jennie M. Pittman

ORGANIZING IN THE SOUTH BRONX. By Jim Rooney. New York: State University of New York Press, 1995. Pp. 283.

Organizing in the South Bronx tells the story of a coalition of congregations that organized to promote quality, affordable housing in the South Bronx. Jim Rooney uses the activities of the coalition, known as the South Bronx Churches (SBC), to illustrate the difficulties of organizing in troubled urban areas and to postulate strategies for overcoming challenges that arise while pursuing such endeavors. Beginning with a wide-ranging summary of the history of the Bronx that begins with the years before the Revolutionary War and ends with a description of current conditions in the Bronx, Rooney describes the early affluence of the region and its precipitous decline during the late 20th century. Rooney also writes of the fifty-year history of the Industrial Areas Foundation (IAF), the organizing network that facilitated many of the SBC's organizing efforts in the South Bronx. In his discussion of the organizing efforts of SBC, Rooney examines the efforts of SBC and its allies to construct Nehemiah rowhouses, an innovative, low-density, affordable style of urban housing, in the South Bronx.

In describing the deterioration of the South Bronx, Rooney cites several possible causes of the area's decline. These include the failure of federal development programs, the movement of middle-income earners from urban areas to suburban sites such as Levittown, and redlining practices by area banks.

Rooney also describes the history of the Industrial Areas Foundation (IAF), a national network of organizations that facilitate community activism. He explains the beginning of IAF mobilization in Queens and Brooklyn by examining in detail early confrontations between members of the political establishment such as Ed Koch and members of the IAF affiliated Queens Churches and East Brooklyn Churches organizations.

I.D. Robbins is the innovative housing developer who collaborated with the East Brooklyn Churches and South Bronx Churches organizations to construct the Nehemiah homes. Rooney describes the initial collaboration between Robbins and the East Brooklyn Churches that was born of SBC's desire to build affordable residences that would be individualized, discrete units that would foster family life as opposed to large, institutional multi-story apartment buildings.

Rooney then moves to a discussion of the leaders associated with the South Bronx Churches organization. He discusses SBC's unsuccessful attempts to reform the Morris High School, a Bronx institution in an extreme state of deterioration. Rooney attributes the SBC's failure to rehabilitate the high school to the organization's lack of vision for school reform. He further concludes that rehabilitation of public inner city schools is impossible, but suggests that SBC's efforts would have been successful had they been directed at smaller private Catholic schools with more resources. These two pronouncements are not well substantiated, and this is one of the weaknesses in Rooney's account.

Following his description of the SBC's failed attempt to reform Morris High School, Rooney describes the beginning of the SBC's efforts to generate support for the building of family housing. A large obstacle to the organization's accomplishment of this goal was the refusal of New York City to allow SBC organizers to develop the Nehemiah housing on a long-abandoned plot of land known as Site 404. The city planned to develop large condominium apartment buildings with units affordable for people with incomes of \$35,000 as opposed to the discrete family units that the SBC envisioned would be affordable to families with incomes as low as \$18,000. In response to the City's refusal to allow development of Site 404 in accord with the priorities of the SBC, SBC organized a demonstration in order to energize the community into supporting the development of Nehemiah housing on Site 404.

After the initial rally, SBC's primary dilemma was how to win the support of Bronx Borough President Fernando Ferrer. Rooney describes in detail how the organizers strategized to pressure the Borough President into supporting Nehemiah housing, but ultimately failed to win him over.

SBC then targeted the corporations — American Express and the New York City Partnership — that subsidized the City's plans for the development of Site 404. SBC organized a rally in front of American Express' offices to demonstrate SBC's opposition to the corporation's sponsorship of the City-planned housing.

Once Dinkins defeated Ed Koch for the office of New York City mayor, the SBC anticipated that it would win the city's support for its affordable, low density Nehemiah housing. To its surprise, the SBC found that the Dinkins administration was not supportive of the SBC's plan to develop Nehemiah housing on Site 404. Rooney suggests that Dinkins took the IAF for granted and therefore did not seriously consider the organization's wishes with regard to the development of the Site. Ultimately, the City developed the high-density condominium apartments (selling for \$75,000 a unit) on Site 404, while the SBC developed low-density, more affordable Nehemiah housing (selling for \$55,000 a unit) on Sites a short distance east of Site 404.

After discussing the end results of SBC's efforts to develop housing, Rooney describes lessons in organizing that could be derived from the Nehemiah housing experience. He suggests that organizers should 1) build on a broad base; 2) organize for power, not issues; 3) build on institutions with deep roots; 4) share power within alliances; 5) organize relationally; 6) be judicious in using confrontation as an organizing tool; 7) cultivate and train local leaders; 8) generate diverse sources of funding in order to guarantee independence; and 9) employ professional organizers.

Organizing in the South Bronx is a detailed look at the efforts of one specific local organization to fight for change in a highly charged political environment. Rooney's primary accomplishment is that it creates a collage of personalities, events, and conflict derived from numerous interviews with key participants in the organizing process. However, Rooney's project suffers from a lack of focus and the consistent insertion of the author's unsubstantiated hypotheses regarding the causes for the decline of the Bronx and the fate of attempts to reverse it. These problems notwithstanding, *Organizing in the South Bronx* will be helpful to any reader who wishes to understand more about the dynamics of progressive urban movements.

Julie Rea

