

Shaming the Inside Game

A Critique of the Liberal Expansionist Approach to Addressing Urban Problems

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Liberal expansionism is the dominant approach to addressing the problems of American cities. This approach combines liberal political philosophy with the idea that these problems can be solved only by creating linkages between cities and resources beyond their boundaries. The case for liberal expansionism derives from the *shaming of the inside game*—a critique of community development and the progressive capacities of cities themselves. I develop a counter-critique of this notion. I find that much of it is unjustified by empirical evidence, and instead, results from ideological bias. This conclusion suggests that the dominance of liberal expansionism be questioned.

Keywords: *urban policy; liberalism; regionalism; community development urban politics*

During the past half-century, American urbanists have struggled with the Herculean task of ameliorating the multiple problems of central cities. Through the years, various policy approaches have become in vogue, capturing the attention (and imagination) of hopeful scholars desperately seeking solutions to these multiple problems. The expansion of social services via the war on poverty/great society (see Haveman 1977), the reorientation of

Author's Note: An earlier version of this article was presented at the 2005 meeting of the Urban Affairs Association. I thank Ron Vogel, Preston Quesenberry, Jeff Spinner-Halev, and with my deepest gratitude, Amanda LeDuke for their helpful feedback on earlier drafts. I also thank a number of friends and colleagues who offered much-appreciated support for and encouragement of this project, including James DeFilippis, Dennis Judd, Loren King, Hank Savitch, Mara Sidney, and Janet Smith. Many thanks also are in order for the editors of *Urban Affairs Review* for supporting this project and the Urban Colloquy. Similar appreciation goes to my colleagues Tyler Pearce, Todd Swanstrom, and Elvin Wyly for participating in the Urban Colloquy and thoughtfully engaging my arguments in ways facilitating a productive and fruitful exchange of ideas.

city-development policy in progressive directions (see Clavel 1986; Clavel and Kleniewski 1990), the rapid proliferation and growth of community-development corporations (see Vidal 1992; Peirce and Steinbach 1987), and the enhancement of human-capital investment, especially urban school reform (Stone et al. 1999; Clarke and Gaile 1998), all have had their urban moment.

More recently, the dominant—perhaps even hegemonic—approach among urbanists to solving the problems of American cities has been what I will term *liberal expansionism* (and those scholars using this approach *liberal expansionists*).¹ This approach combines a liberal political philosophy with the idea that the social and economic problems of America's central cities can be solved only by—to use the metaphors of two prominent works by liberal expansionists—"crossing the city line" (Dreier, Mollenkopf, and Swanstrom 2001, 230) or "playing the outside game" (Rusk 1999, 11). Central cities are failing, according to this perspective, because they (and their poorer residents) are too isolated—governmentally, politically, socially, fiscally, and economically—especially from their wider metropolitan regions (i.e., from the suburbs that surround them) as well as from other extracity institutions such as higher-level governments and large charitable foundations. The antidote to this multifaceted isolation is expansion—that is, creating governmental, political, social, fiscal, and economic linkages between the central city (and its population) and institutions and resources existing beyond the central city's boundaries. In the archetypical modern liberal vein, the vehicle for fostering these expansionist linkages is usually the activist state (especially operating on the national level). This activist state promotes the classic liberal goals of enhancing educational and economic opportunity for individuals, class and racial residential integration, and the modest reduction of economic inequality via government-directed redistribution.

By highlighting the "outpouring of 'new metropolitan thinking' over the last decade," Dreier, Mollenkopf, and Swanstrom (2001, 256), in their well-received book *Place Matters*, nicely capture the pervasiveness of liberal-expansionist ideas. This outpouring includes the "acclaimed books" by Myron Orfield and David Rusk, the "lucid syndicated columns" of journalist Neil Peirce, the "prescient arguments" adduced by the National League of Cities under William Barnes, the "careful policy assessments" made by the National Academy of Science, the "provocative ideas" of University of Minnesota's John Powell, and the "compelling studies" by the Bruce Katz-led Brookings Institution Center for Urban and Metropolitan Policy (which recently changed its name to the Metropolitan Policy Program, dropping the *Urban* tag altogether). The Brookings Institution has been particularly important in promoting expansionist ideas, publishing many of the books by Orfield and Rusk (see Orfield 1998, 2002; Rusk 1999) as well as producing scores of the

above-mentioned studies (see, for example, Center on Urban and Metropolitan Policy 2002).² Expansionist thinking also has been promulgated aggressively by scholars affiliated with another Washington, D.C.–based liberal think tank, the Urban Institute, especially in the area of housing policy (see Turner 1998; Goering and Feins 2003).³ Major foundations also have gotten into the act, supporting expansionist-policy initiatives with generous funding. Last but certainly not least was the Clinton administration, in which U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) Secretary Henry Cisneros “promoted and funded regional initiatives, conferences, and reports” (Dreier et al. 2004, 305), and then–vice president Al Gore penned the foreword to a major Brookings book on expansionism (see Katz 2000).

The upshot of this outpouring of thinking is that “new metropolitan approaches” (most of which are thoroughly in the liberal vein) have been placed “squarely on the agenda” of America’s “policy intellectuals” (Dreier, Mollenkopf, and Swanstrom 2001, 256; also see Dreier et al. 2004, 305). While much of liberal expansionism’s approach to addressing urban problems involves efforts to promote greater metropolitan regionalism in urban governance (i.e., the so-called new regionalism), the expansionist impulse currently in vogue runs deeper to include the need for cities to create linkages with the global economy, tap extra-regional labor pools, and draw down additional federal aid (see Florida 2002; Kanter 1995; Kantor 1995; Leitner and Garner 1993; Dreier, Mollenkopf, and Swanstrom 2001). In general, then, to summarize, it is clear that the locally based, the internally focused, and the place-oriented are all largely (although admittedly, not completely) out of fashion, while the broadly based, the externally focused, and the people-oriented are now all the rage.

Rather than presenting a full-blown evaluation of the whole of liberal expansionism, in this short article I limit my analysis to one key facet of this perspective—namely, the spirited case made by liberal expansionists against what Rusk (1999) calls the inside game. Basing his conclusions on “hard, cold facts on income and population,” Rusk (1999, 13) argues that

playing only the “inside side” is a losing strategy for even the most exemplary players. For both poverty-impacted cities and poverty-impacted neighborhoods, even the strongest inside game must be matched by a strong ‘outside game’ [that is, expansionist strategies of various stripes].

It is this critique of the inside game as a losing strategy for cities and urban neighborhoods—what I refer to as the shaming of the inside game—that provides the empirical basis for the clarion call for expansionist urban policies.

Below, I develop a countercritique of the liberal-expansionist project to shame the inside game. This shaming of the inside game is, I most centrally argue, based more on the value commitments of liberal expansionists themselves rather than careful empirical analysis. While no social science can be truly value-neutral (see, for example, Bernstein 1976), below, I show how the shaming of the inside game is ideologically biased in nature. This bias is reflective of a subtle rather than blatant ideology, to use Heilbroner's (1988) useful distinction; it involves such subtleties as the way issues are framed and conceptualized, the choices regarding the research questions chosen for study, and especially, how available evidence is interpreted. Moreover, not only is such ideological bias subtle in these ways, it also is largely unintentional (as researchers often fail to recognize how their own value commitments shape their research in ideological ways). It also often lacks a full coherence. Yet, while subtle, largely unintended, and not always fully coherent, such ideological bias is unmistakably clear. And, I conclude, its exposure as the true basis upon which liberal expansionists shame the inside game should give urbanists good cause to question the current hegemony of liberal expansionism.

To specify more fully the argument regarding ideological bias presented below, let me attempt to clarify matters here. In essence, I will be arguing the following: The basis upon which liberal expansionists shame the inside game is not empirical evidence, because such evidence is nonexistent and/or inconclusive or incomplete. In particular, the claimed causal connections have not been established, and many plausible alternative hypotheses have gone unexplored. Because liberal expansionists reach conclusions absent empirical evidence, something else serves as the basis for these conclusions, and this something else is, perforce, their value commitments—which are rooted in (and derived from) liberal ideology.

But what is this liberal ideology, and why does it lead expansionists to shame the inside game, and by extension, favor the outside game? Let me further specify.

While liberal ideology and its broader manifestation in the form of liberal expansionism are complex, a brief sketch of some of liberal ideology's key elements that are particularly salient for my analysis would include the following. At the most basic level, ontologically, liberalism privileges the individual in comparison with any collectivity. The maximization of individual-level utility (and individual achievement) is, thus, the central normative goal, whereas the utility of broader collectivities, such as cultural groups or place-based communities, is valued only as the aggregation of individual utilities.

Operationally, liberalism measures this individual utility (and achievement) primarily in a material sense (with income's being especially important), while utility derived from nonmaterial sources, such as the psychological benefits of group solidarity, cultural expression, or community control, is less important (see Lasch 1991). Instrumentally, liberalism gives a special priority to mobility: It is the preferred vehicle for enhancing individual utility, representing, as Michael Walzer (1990, 12) points out, "the enactment of liberty, and the pursuit of . . . happiness." Institutionally, liberalism embraces a clear distinction between matters deemed private and public, the so-called public-private distinction (see Frug 1980). And finally, politically, liberalism most highly values supposed universal principles over partial (group-oriented) claims (see Thompson 1998) while holding a heightened concern for potential negative consequences of political action (especially the violation of individual rights) vis-à-vis potential positive consequences (see Cohen and Rogers 1995).

Each of these elements of liberal ideology—the ontological, the operational, the instrumental, the institutional, and the political—negatively predisposes liberal expansionists against the inside game (with its emphasis on preserving or enhancing place-based communities, cultural commitments, group-oriented political claims, local control, and populist politics) while positively predisposing them to favor expansionist solutions (that emphasize individual material achievement, social and geographic mobility, traditional roles for the private and public sectors, and universal principles and rights). And it needs to be noted, these predispositions—as well as liberal ideology more generally—very well might be normatively attractive. Certainly, each of liberal ideology's key elements could, in principle, be justified as constitutive of a desirable (or appealing) way of life or, otherwise put, as the public philosophy of the good society (see Elkin 1987). That task, however, rightly belongs in the realm of normative political theory rather than empirical social science.

Let me close this prelude by offering a final word on the notion of ideological bias in social research. As alluded to above, some level of bias is clearly inescapable as the dichotomy between facts and values is never pure (Bernstein 1976). The real problem arises when such ideological biases are not recognized as such. Embedded within my argument below, therefore, is a plea that we begin to recognize this bias, understand it, and use this insight to structure less biased research agendas to guide our search for solutions to our deepest urban problems. If the inside game truly deserves to be shamed, for example, then let us see the evidence as generated by careful and balanced empirical studies. It is my argument, fully explicated below, that such evidence is, at the present time, almost wholly lacking.

The Seven Deadly Sins of Liberal Expansionism's Case Against Community Development and Central Cities

The Community Development Corporations: Greatest American Heroes?

Rusk (1999, 18), perhaps the quintessential liberal expansionist, makes much of his case against the inside game by poignantly showing that—despite being engaged in a “truly heroic struggle”—the thousands of urban-based Community Development Corporations (CDCs) in America, with their internally-oriented, in-place development strategies, “are producing discouraging results,” and even more decisively, “losing the war against poverty itself.” Dreier, Mollenkopf, and Swanstrom also approvingly reference this claim (see Dreier, Mollenkopf, and Swanstrom 2001, 6; Dreier et al. 2004, 9). They write:

Rusk found that between 1970 and 1990, the CDCs [in the South Bronx] were able to reverse population losses in their neighborhoods, but poverty rates continued to rise and buying power in the neighborhoods fell. Rusk concluded that if the outward movement to the suburbs continues in the New York region, the neighborhoods of the South Bronx will not be able to stem decay, *no matter how hard they work*. (emphasis added)

Another prominent liberal expansionist, Myron Orfield (1998, 77), echoes this sentiment: “in a regional context,” he writes, CDC-type development

moves against the grain of a long-term strategy to establish access to opportunity for people and stability for core communities. After twenty years, even the largest and most successful . . . [CDC] initiatives in the country *have not changed the basic downward spiral* of poor, segregated neighborhoods. In the areas where the country's leading CDCs were operating, despite large CDC investment, family and individual poverty rates and median household income have moved further from metropolitan norms. (emphasis added)

There is, of course, little doubt that these conclusions are empirically correct. CDCs clearly have failed to win “the war against poverty itself” (Rusk 1999, 18), “stem decay” (Dreier, Mollenkopf, and Swanstrom 2001, 6), or “change . . . the basic downward spiral of poor, segregated neighborhoods” (Orfield 1998, 77). The basic evidence is overwhelming (viz., Rusk's [1999, 13] “hard, cold facts on income and population”). The proexpansionist ideological bias rears, however, in the analysis of the cause of these failures. Namely, rather than engaging in careful empirical analysis, it is simply assumed that CDCs' failure to fight poverty effectively is largely because of one overriding factor: their isolation from external economic and social

processes. That is, they fail because they play “the inside game” (Rusk), because of the “outward movement to the suburbs” (Dreier et al.), and because their work “moves against the grain” of broader regional dynamics (Orfield). Yet, nowhere is this causal relationship confirmed with empirical data. It is, instead, merely (and speculatively) asserted as a product of the proexpansionist ideological biases of the researchers themselves.

This bias becomes more fully revealed when one considers that there exist other plausible reasons for CDC failure. Viewing the empirical evidence from a progressive place-oriented perspective rather than a liberal-expansionist one leads James DeFilippis, for example, to a different causal explanation. In *Unmaking Goliath*, recent winner of the best-book award given by the urban-politics section of the American Political Science Association, DeFilippis (2004, 56) concurs with the liberal-expansionist account of the empirical results of CDCs, noting that “all too often the reality has been that community-development efforts have failed to visibly or measurably improve the larger communities in which they are located.” However, in opposition to liberal expansionists, he argues that a major cause of such failure has been (what he calls) the neoliberal communitarian framework driving CDC theory and practice (that is, a framework marked by a commitment to free-market capitalism as the vehicle for urban development, coupled with the belief that inner-city communities operate as unified wholes largely absent of internal conflict). This neoliberal communitarianism, DeFilippis (p. 55) points out, “represents the fruition of the *depoliticization* of community development that came from its split from community organizing in the late 1960s” (emphasis added), concluding that “the current problems of CDCs stem from the flaws of . . . [this] framework” (p. 58). This conclusion, it should be added, has been reached by several other keen observers of community-development efforts, as these observers have developed causal explanations of the CDC failure that are broadly consistent with DeFilippis’ assessment (see, for example, Stoecker 1997; Marquez 1993; Shipp 1996; Swinney 1998).

It is, of course, impossible to evaluate the veracity of these (as well as other) competing causal explanations without careful empirical study. The point, however, is simply that liberal expansionists—while making claims supposedly based on an appeal to, in Rusk’s words, hard, cold facts—are, in reality, simply relying on their proexpansionist and liberal values to develop their analyses of the contemporary urban condition.

The Feds: Did You Ever Really Care?

A related claim is that past federal efforts to redevelop poor areas in central cities have been an abysmal failure. This claim, often asserted in

liberal-expansionist circles, stands as yet another way the inside game is shamed. While liberal expansionists—given both their liberal and expansionist proclivities—advocate deep federal-government involvement in urban policy, many past antipoverty community-development initiatives of the federal government now are seen as discredited because they were insufficiently expansionist. Again, Rusk's work (1999, 13) nicely illustrates this sentiment. He writes:

For three decades the federal government has *targeted poor areas* with a succession of antipoverty initiatives—community action programs, model cities programs, community development block grants [CDBGs], urban development actions grants [UDAGs], empowerment community and enterprise zone funds and tax credits—all variations on . . . the “inside game.” (emphasis added).

From this perspective, then, federal urban policy has failed because it has targeted poor places—that is, because of the pure folly of the inside game it has played.

Perhaps the most well-known statement in this vein has been offered by the journalist Nicholas Lemann. In the conclusion to his widely read book on the great migration as well as in a follow-up piece in *The New York Times* magazine, Lemann reviews the decades-long history of past federal efforts to redevelop poorer areas of central cities—areas Lemann disparagingly calls ghettos and slums—and writes: “The clear lesson of experience . . . is that ghetto development hasn't worked” (1991, 347) (citing the failure of federal programs such as urban renewal, the war on poverty, model cities, CDBGs, UDAGs, and enterprise zones). The reason for this abysmal failure has to do with the nature of the inside game and its isolation from “the social and economic mainstream of American society” (Lemann 1991, 348). Being isolated from the mainstream, such ghettos or slums provide an extremely inhospitable environment both for businesses and for residences. “Ghettos aren't very attractive locations for businesses,” he asserts (1994, 31). “Urban slums,” he adds, “have never been home to many businesses except for sweatshops and minor neighborhood provisioners” (1994, 28). Likewise, on the residential side, Lemann notes that “poor neighborhoods are usually transitional” (1994, 28) or merely “temporary communities” (1991, 347). “The standard model of progress for people living in urban slums,” as seen from Lemann's liberal-expansionist perspective, “is to get a good job outside the neighborhood and then decamp for a nicer part of town” (1994, 28).

Once again, we see the liberal-expansionist value bias as ideology is substituted for analysis. Liberal expansionists explain the failure of federal

community-development efforts by focusing almost solely on a single causal factor, isolation, sans much empirical evidence. Yet, once again, other plausible explanations for this failure are well-documented by decades of urban scholarship. For example, some federal programs were based on a flawed development model (urban renewal, enterprise zones), were woefully underfunded (model cities), were directed toward downtown rather than neighborhood development (UDAGs), were not properly targeted to poorer areas (CDBGs), or more commonly, had some substantial elements of all of the above. And more generally, all of these place-oriented federal efforts have been, in O'Connor's apropos metaphor (1999, 79–80), “swimming against the tide” of an array of federal policies that have “encouraged the trends that impoverish communities in the first place,” stepping in subsequently with only “modest and inadequate interventions” and then wondering “why community development so often ‘fails.’”

While liberal expansionists such as Rusk and Lemann use this oft-failure to shame the inside game and call for expansionism, the actual picture of the history of federal urban policy is more complicated. In the end, as Swanstrom (1993, 74) points out in his earlier work critical of liberal expansionism⁴: “It is impossible to disprove Lemann’s . . . assertion that ‘ghetto development hasn’t worked.’” Yet, Swanstrom notes (1993, 75), there are both empirical and normative reasons to be incredulous: “Lemann’s idea that there is nothing to build on in poor black neighborhoods flies in the face of anthropological research on social order in the ghetto and smacks of the culture of poverty thesis.”

Urban Governance: Why *Not* Blame the Victim?

Turning from community-development efforts to the evaluation of central cities themselves reveals a third way the inside game is shamed. Once again, we began with a clear empirical fact: Central cities have failed to address adequately an array of social and economic problems they have experienced, especially concentrated poverty. But to shame the inside game, liberal expansionists blame this failure almost exclusively on the isolation of central cities from their surrounding metropolitan regions. No approach to urban governance, write Dreier, Mollenkopf, and Swanstrom (2001, 171), “has made much progress on growing inequality, persistent poverty, and racial and economic segregation.” Different types of “urban regimes [have] developed symbolic responses to these problems, but none can claim significant success.” The reason for this failure, they conclude, is that “it is difficult for central cities by themselves to solve the problems generated by economic segregation and urban sprawl.” Hence, such isolation leads, naturally, to a policy of

expansionism: “It is only *natural*, therefore, for cities to reach out to suburban municipalities and attempt to forge regional solutions to their problems” (p. 173, emphasis added).

Seeing expansionism as the natural reaction of cities attempting to address urban problems stands as a clear manifestation of the ideological biases exhibited by liberal expansionists. Faced with the “limits of localism” (Dreier, Mollenkopf, and Swanstrom 2001, 171), the only way out conceivable to liberals is to expand—tapping extracity resources from surrounding regions as well as higher-level governments. Yet, this viewpoint once again assumes—without empirical evidence—that the cause of central cities’ failure to solve their problems lies almost wholly in their isolation rather than in other competing factors.

An alternative plausible explanation for this central-city failure is rooted in the internal governance of cities themselves. Cities may fail to solve problems not because they are isolated but because they are governed poorly. For example, governing regime after governing regime has pursued a corporate-centered urban-development strategy zealously, which many scholars suggest has been a grave mistake both on economic efficiency (costs vs. benefits) and on equity (distributive) grounds (Squires 1989; Barnekov and Rich 1989; Elkin 1987; Riposa and Andranovich 1988; Hill 1983; Mier and Fitzgerald 1991; Fainstein and Fainstein 1983; Reed 1988). If the massive amount of economic, political, and social resources dedicated to these flawed initiatives were redirected by urban regimes toward more productive development strategies, the exigency to capture the resources held by affluent but tight-fisted suburbanites might be abated considerably. Lessening this exigency, in turn, might have the salutary effect of allowing cities to focus on their own indigenous strengths rather than exerting substantial political energy coveting their neighbors’ wealth—neighbors that, it should be added, generally are not keen on sharing it. In addition, because corporate-centered strategies themselves exacerbate urban social problems (Elkin 1987; Krumholz 1991; Clavel and Wiewel 1991; Weiher 1989; Ganz 1986; Barnekov and Rich 1989; Fainstein and Fainstein 1983), the pursuit of alternative strategies likely might lessen the acuteness of such problems, and once again, lessen the need to attract external resources via expansionism.

Once again, absent careful and rigorous empirical study, it is impossible to determine the causal weight that each of these competing factors—isolation versus flawed development strategies—has played in the failure of central cities to address their problems. Rather than provide such an analysis, liberal expansionists simply assume that the preponderance of causality can be attributed to isolation. In fact, liberal ideology blinds expansionists from even

considering the plausibility of any competing explanation. This affliction results because many of the alternative (or progressive) development strategies that might replace the corporate-centered approach question the efficiency of and seek to restructure the current division of labor between the market and the state in American corporate capitalism (see Alperovitz 2005; Clavel 1986; Rast 1999; Gunn and Gunn 1991; Garber 1990; Imbroscio 1997).⁵ Yet, this division—the public-private distinction—is, from the liberal perspective, assumed to be largely immutable and fixed (i.e., structurally determined), and therefore, beyond possible reform (Imbroscio 1998; also see Davies 2002; Frug 1980).

Progressive Regimes: Any There There?

Broad-minded liberal expansionists such as Dreier, Mollenkopf, and Swanstrom understand the potential for progressive urban regimes, as such regimes “seek to challenge business domination of the urban development agenda,” with alternative development strategies “emphasizing ‘economic democracy’ and ‘equity planning’” (Dreier, Mollenkopf, and Swanstrom 2001, 157). Illustratively, the authors highlight the mayoral experiences of Chicago under Harold Washington, Boston under Ray Flynn, and Cleveland under Dennis Kucinich, among others. However, their ultimate conclusion regarding this potential is, in a word, glum: “These experiences,” Dreier, Mollenkopf, and Swanstrom (2001, 164) write, “show that even those cities with the most progressive local administrations cannot do much to correct economic segregation, concentrated poverty, and suburban sprawl.”

Dreier, Mollenkopf, and Swanstrom (2001, 171) attribute the cause of this failure to the so-called “limits of localism” (also see Leitner and Garner 1993)—an attribution that once again is made without much empirical evidence but that nonetheless fits nicely with the call for expansionism. Once again, a more rigorous analysis would consider the plausibility of other competing factors to explain this failure. For example, the progressive measures examined by Dreier, Mollenkopf, and Swanstrom were almost always short-lived (think, most notably, of Washington’s premature death in Chicago or Kucinich’s early electoral defeat at the hands of corporate interests). Moreover, the resources devoted to progressive measures almost always were dwarfed by those devoted to corporate-centered development strategies (such as in Boston under Flynn). So since a regime, by definition, is somewhat enduring and since even in many so-called progressive regimes, most of the urban-development agenda was mainstream and corporate-centered, the very idea of the existence of progressive regimes (in big cities, at least) easily can

be called into question. It is—to say the least—problematic to assess that something failed to solve urban problems that never really existed empirically in the first place. Once again, liberal and expansionist ideological biases against progressivism and localism explain this assessment more than do careful and rigorous analysis.

Peterson's *City Limits*: Is the Enemy of My Enemy Truly My Friend?

Ironically, this limits-of-localism perspective causes liberal expansionists to embrace Paul Peterson's (1981) economically determinist city-limits argument. Peterson's well-known argument roots an account of urban politics and policy in a market-based model of cities derived from neoclassical economics. Embracing the Petersonian model, Dreier, Mollenkopf, and Swanstrom (2001, 134–35), for example, assert that “local officials must make their cities attractive places to do business and retain middle-class residents.” And progressive policies to help the poor and near poor, such as “living wage ordinances, housing ‘linkage’ policies, business taxes, clean air laws, plant closing laws, rent control, and lower utility rates,” all present a Petersonian-type dilemma because such policies often spark capital flight: While suggesting that it “may be a bluff when corporations threaten to leave,” Dreier, Mollenkopf, and Swanstrom (2001, 135) nonetheless firmly and resolutely caution that “business warnings are not always empty threats” (also see 2001, 207; 2004, 253).

Coming from sophisticated urban political economists, this statement is nothing less than jarring. Perhaps, to paraphrase the famous line about Keynes, “we are all Petersonians now.” But perhaps not. Clearly, embracing the Petersonian perspective in this way flies in the face of decades of urban research finding this economically determinist market model of city politics to be deeply flawed (see Swanstrom 1988, 1993; Henig 1992; Stone 1987, 1989; Goetz 1990; Elkin 1987; Logan and Molotch 1987). Careful empirical study might, for example, show that progressive policies, such as—to repeat the Dreier, Mollenkopf, and Swanstrom (2001, 134) litany—“living wage ordinances, housing ‘linkage’ policies, business taxes, clean air laws, plant closing laws, rent control, and lower utility rates,” actually enhance local business climates because they lessen uneven development (and concomitant social problems), stabilize neighborhoods and local economies, and improve the quality of urban life more generally. Yet, being driven by the ideology of expansionism with its need to shame the inside game's localism, such empirical study is eschewed, while decades of high-quality urban research debunking the Petersonian perspective go blithely ignored.

Outside-Game Scrutiny: Depends on the Ox Gored?

What is perhaps most remarkable about the ideological bias in the analyses of liberal expansionists is that, while they are thorough in their tallying of the failures of the inside game, the evidence presented that compellingly demonstrates the efficacy of the outside game is remarkably scarce. The inside game is most derided because of its failure to address concentrated poverty and economic (and, to a lesser extent, racial) segregation. But the outside game has not addressed those problems particularly well either, and as a result, liberal expansionists have yet to adduce any solid evidence in support of their claims. Instead, it simply is assumed, based on value commitments (and/or faith), that outside-game policies will work—that is, significantly reduce the deep-rooted problems of concentrated poverty and segregation.

When evidence is presented in favor of expansionism, it is usually speculative and/or shows improvement on the margins. Take the case of Minneapolis, a darling of liberal expansionists. Even under the most auspicious of conditions, little has been accomplished via outside-game policies to address the city's problems with concentrated poverty and segregation (Goetz 2003). The other darling, Portland, does have less concentrated poverty in its central city compared to most regions (Dreier, Mollenkopf, and Swanstrom 2004), but the region is also overwhelmingly White, and the White poor tend, in general, to be less spatially concentrated (Wilson 1996). Or, consider liberal expansionists' favorite program, the Gautreaux mobility program in Chicago (which helps public-housing residents relocate away from the inner city). While often hyped by liberal expansionists, Gautreaux's results have been marginal at best when considered *vis-à-vis* the massive scope of Chicago's poverty problem. After almost 30 years of operation, Gautreaux has aided only a few thousand poor families, and while the improvements in their lives often have been real, these improvements are overall rather modest, even after the target population for the program was heavily creamed (see Goetz 2003). Yet, when the inside game shows similar modest results—say, in the work accomplished by CDCs during the same period—such achievements are characterized as inadequate (Rusk 1999; Dreier, Mollenkopf, and Swanstrom 2001). In fact, the achievements of both games have been woefully inadequate given the massive scope of the problem, although liberal expansionists lionize the former while dismissing the latter.

The City: On a Highway (or Mass Transit Line) to Hell?

A seventh way the inside game is shamed is by portraying central cities as social and economic basket cases. To justify expansionism, it is necessary

to show that, in Dennis Judd's useful phrase capturing this sentiment, "the city is always going to hell" (Judd 2005), especially when compared to cities' more affluent suburbs (see Rusk 1993; Orfield 2002; Dreier et al. 2004). There is no doubt that, as stated above, many central cities (and inner-ring suburbs) are experiencing multiple social and economic problems. Yet, as also pointed out above, it is far from clear that isolation is the key cause of such problems or that the outside game would address them adequately. More to the point here, however, is that liberal expansionists tend to exaggerate city-central problems to justify their agenda.

Take the well-known case of Louisville—where, after almost three decades, the first city-county consolidation in a major metropolitan area was completed recently. To justify this radical expansionist measure, advocates of merger (as it was known locally) portrayed the central city as "dying" from a "terminal illness," and hence, needing to be saved by a merger with the suburban county (Savitch and Vogel 2000, 204–208). Upon examination, however, researchers Savitch and Vogel found this bleak picture of Louisville to be a gross distortion. Looking empirically at a number of economic and fiscal indicators, they reported in 2000 (pp. 205–7) that the central city was "sound," with a level of urban distress that, since 1970, "continued to improve." In fact, they noted, "over the years, the city's fiscal picture had actually grown brighter than that of the county" (Savitch and Vogel 2004, 766).

Shaming the Inside Game: Political Dimensions

An Overview

The Louisville case also begins to reveal the political dimensions of the shaming of the inside game. When conceiving strategies to build a prourban political movement, liberal expansionists tend to eschew the politics of the inside game—with its grassroots, populist, protest, and working-class/minority-empowerment orientations—in favor of an outside-game politics that often tends to be corporate driven, elite oriented, middle-class and White dominated, and more civil and consensus oriented.⁶ Merger in Louisville brought such a change as inside-game politics was sacrificed for outside-game politics.⁷

As Savitch and Vogel (2004) point out, the augmented scale of the polity wrought by merger led to several key political changes. It made grassroots, populist challenges to the mayoral candidates of the corporate-liberal elite financially infeasible, it diluted the political influence of progressive and minority inner-city interests vis-à-vis suburban voting power, and it centralized

governing power in a strong executive. Yet this political restructuring (and its concomitant death knell for the politics of inside game) never much troubled liberal expansionists. Instead, liberal expansionists universally heralded the Louisville merger as enlightened, forward-thinking political reform (see, for example, Center on Urban and Metropolitan Policy 2002; Dreier, Mollenkopf, and Swanstrom 2001; Katz and Muro 2005; Peirce 2004; Greenblatt 2002, 2003).

Responding to Savitch and Vogel's critique in the second edition of *Place Matters*, Dreier, Mollenkopf, and Swanstrom (2004, 245) revise their take on the Louisville merger, offering a more nuanced assessment of it. "Clearly," they admit, "urban [e.g., progressive, working class, and minority] interests that had a strong position in city government under the old system now have to share that power with suburbanites and Republicans." Savitch and Vogel (2004, 782) view this political realignment as worthy of stern condemnation. In Louisville, they conclude,

city-county consolidation has enhanced the ability of affluent suburbanites while reducing the political influence of blue-collar inner-city residents, particularly African-American residents. . . . [The realignment from merger] has diluted the city's core constituency and weakened its ability to defend itself. . . . Consolidation was used to lodge a great deal of power in a "strong mayor," making it more difficult for poorly financed candidates to run for that office. . . . The major consequence of city-county consolidation in Louisville is likely to be a more internally cohesive [corporate] regime, coupled to weakened city neighborhoods that are less able to influence the development agenda and more rather than less urban sprawl.

In contrast, rather than condemn this new balance of political power—pace Savitch and Vogel—Dreier, Mollenkopf, and Swanstrom (2004, 245) reveal their continued lack of enthusiasm for inside-game politics by reaching a more neutral assessment of it: "Exactly how the Louisville case will play out in the coming years," they dispassionately conclude, "will be an interesting case study in the politics of regionalism."

We also see this spurning of inside-game politics when examining Dreier, Mollenkopf, and Swanstrom's (2001, 2004) prescriptions for national-level political reform. For example, to facilitate city-suburban political coalitions and help build a Democratic Party majority in the United States House of Representatives, they argue that congressional districts should be redrawn "by shifting population from overwhelming Democratic, often uncontested, central-city House seats toward suburban House districts" (2001, 245). While there is no doubt such a shift might elect more Democratic representatives,

those elected are more likely to have suburban and White middle-class—that is, outside-game—political orientations vis-à-vis the representatives they replaced.

The politics of the inside game is further shamed by liberal expansionists when they portray inner-city (often minority) leaders protecting their political power base as selfish, self-serving, or parochial. The liberal expansionist Rusk (1999, 313–14), former mayor of Albuquerque, claims he “know[s] the . . . feeling” when Black mayors see regionalism as diluting mayoral political influence, adding that “it is easy for me to understand why many mayors approach regionalism skeptically and reluctantly.” He nevertheless castigates Black big-city mayors for being “missing in (in)action” regarding their leadership role in building regional governing institutions (Rusk 1999, 312). Likewise, Dreier, Mollenkopf, and Swanstrom (2001, 240) criticize many Democrats in Congress (presumably including many African-American and Latino minorities representing poor central-city constituencies) for being “so heavily invested in existing place based programs that they are reluctant to consider metropolitan alternatives.”

Often, this criticism slips into condescension. For example, according to Orfield (1998, 2002), a key lesson for regional coalition building is the need to reach into the central cities to make sure the proexpansionist message is understood. Such didacticism is necessary because “central cities have a *volatile* political landscape,” and “without *person-to-person contact* in the inner-city, the [regionalist] message *will be misunderstood*. If regionalism is *‘misperceived’* in this way, it threatens the power base of officials elected by poor, segregated [i.e., African-American and Latino] constituencies,” presumably causing them, however misguidedly, to resist expansionism (Orfield 2002, 183, emphases added). A similar attitude regarding inner-city elected officials is exhibited by Dreier, Mollenkopf, and Swanstrom. Using the example of the Latino South Bronx congressman Jose Serrano, they illustrate their point that somewhat counterintuitively, expansionist policies encouraging the mobility of an inner-city congressperson’s constituents to the suburbs do not militate against the political interests of poor districts. “In the long run,” they explain, “Congressman Serrano *might realize*” this fact, that is, “that increased residential choices would benefit not just those who move but also those who remain in the area” (Dreier, Mollenkopf, and Swanstrom 2001, 249, emphasis added).⁸

Assessing the Political Dimensions

The question remains, however, does the politics of the inside game deserve to be shamed? That is, is the shaming grounded in an empirically-based and

careful analysis of American urban politics in the twenty-first century, or is it rather a product of the ideological biases of the liberal expansionists themselves? Keeping with the theme of this article, I want to suggest that it is more the latter than the former.

To begin, consider Thompson's (2002) trenchant critique of the politics of liberal expansionism. Many expansionist proposals, he writes, are quite troubling because

they have uniformly minimized the danger of political marginalization of minorities in broader political collectives. How is it possible to begin a multiracial coalition-building process when, from the outset, the terms of the discussion exclude issues of urgent concern to racial minorities. . . . If democratic, broad, and participatory coalitions are the goal, what gives policy intellectuals or, for that matter, the white middle class the democratic right to decide what issues should be left off the table?⁹ (p. 447)

It is a good question. "If the answer," he concludes, "is that 'the white middle class is, after all, the majority,' then perhaps there is some wisdom in blacks wanting to hold onto their limited political autonomy in black-run cities, even if they are being financially starved" (p. 447-8).

At a minimum, Thompson's critique points to the existence of an alternative view of inside-game politics, one rooted in a place-oriented African-American perspective. This view, however, largely is rejected (or at least, passively ignored) by liberal expansionists. But there is a deeper problem with the liberal expansionists' shaming of inside-game politics: It is built upon a biased analysis of political feasibility. Ultimately, what liberal expansionists want most is equity-oriented regional policies (Bollens 2003, 1997), or in a word, redistribution (broadly understood to be inclusive of improved access to educational, employment, housing, and quality-of-life opportunities for the urban poor). From the liberal-expansionist perspective, inside-game politics as a means to achieve this redistribution is hopelessly infeasible—a certain dead end. Cities simply lack access to the necessary resources to advance the equity agenda very far.

Yet, redistribution obviously requires two conditions—both the necessary resources and the political will to redistribute those resources. Cities clearly have limited access to resources (what might be called Type I constraints on redistribution), and expansionism potentially links cities to greater resource pools upon which they can draw (i.e., at the regional, state, and national levels). But such enhanced access to resources is useless unless a second constraint can be overcome. This second (Type II) constraint is the need to

generate the necessary political will to engage in redistribution. It is not simply a question of having resources available to fund the equity agenda; the politics also must be supportive of redistributing these available funds.

Liberal expansionists shame inside-game politics by treating Type I constraints as insurmountable while characterizing Type II constraints as much less so. In reality, both types of constraints are quite formidable, and liberal expansionists have not provided any empirical basis to privilege Type II constraints over Type I constraints. Instead, such privileging results chiefly from an ideological bias in favor of outside-game politics over the politics of the inside game.

The constraints of the Type I variety are readily obvious: Central cities are often home to a disproportionately poor population facing serious social problems, and central cities generally have weaker fiscal and economic bases compared to many suburban jurisdictions and the national (or state) government as a whole. Moreover, whatever the problems with the city-limits argument's definition of a good business climate (see Peterson 1981 and above), it is certainly true that in this era of heightened capital mobility, the larger the geographical scale, the easier it is to access resources given the decreased ability of the resource-rich to flee taxation (and regulation).

But Type II constraints are also formidable. With expansionism comes a polity (or some governance or representative structure) that is, most saliently, more conservative politically and less likely to benefit (directly, at least) from redistribution. The solution that liberal expansionists have developed to lessen these constraints is to link certain suburban interests (those from the less affluent, inner-ring areas) together with central cities in political coalitions that fight for equity-oriented policies at the regional, state, and national levels (see Orfield 2002, 1998; Dreier, Mollenkopf, and Swanstrom 2001, 2004). Yet, like the lessening of Type I constraints, this, too, is problematic, and empirically, there is not much evidence the suburban dog can hunt.

The governance of the Clinton administration (1993 to 2001) is the best case in point. Dreier, Mollenkopf, and Swanstrom (2001, 233), for example, see Clinton's electoral victories as cases in which "the Democrats, in defiance of the conventional wisdom, successfully united central-city and suburban voters in two presidential elections." While admitting that "this coalition did not push the kinds of metropolitan reforms . . . [they] advocate," the authors nonetheless argue that "its existence demonstrates that central-city and suburban electorates are not irrevocably divided." Yet, the reason *why* the kinds of metropolitan reforms they seek were not pushed for by Clinton goes to the heart of the intense nature of the Type II constraints. This reason is, ironically, nicely revealed earlier in their book. Discussing why Clinton's urban policy

was, as they characterize it, “too little, too late,” Dreier, Mollenkopf, and Swanstrom (2001, 130) point out that “in particular,” Clinton did not push for their liberal-expansionist agenda because he “did not want his urban policies to threaten suburban interests that were central to his electoral victories.” Thus, while central-city and suburban electorates may not be irrevocably divided, such a coalition appears—given its inherent nature—unable to deliver much. A less ideological, more empirically driven analysis of political feasibility than that offered by liberal expansionists might conclude, therefore, that the real dead end politically for cities is the moderate, suburban-oriented liberalism that dominates the mainstream of the Democratic Party.¹⁰

Much the same point can be made of Dreier, Mollenkopf, and Swanstrom’s (2001) proposal to redraw congressional districts so that the overwhelming Democratic populations of central-city districts are intermingled with suburban constituencies. Once again, as noted above, this political strategy might elect more Democratic congresspersons, but most would likely be of the Clintonian variety, intensely concerned—as was Clinton—with not threatening the suburban interests central to their electoral victories (that is, this strategy faces strong Type II constraints). It is, therefore, an open question as to which political strategy is better to promote the feasibility of a pro-central-city urban policy—a Congress with a larger number of moderate Democrats who might favor cities modestly (an outside-game politics) or one with a fewer number of progressives who intensely advocate for cities (an inside-game politics). Both choices, frankly, offer only bleak prospects for a strong federal urban policy. But the choice of one strategy over the other as more feasible reveals more about the ideological bias of liberal expansionists against inside-game politics than it does about the empirical realities of political feasibility.

Examining politics on the regional level also reveals the intensity of Type II constraints. Goetz’s (2003) excellent work on Minneapolis, for example, shows that even under the most auspicious of circumstances, outside-game politics has produced only limited results addressing equity concerns. Likewise, Bollens’ (2003) broader survey of regional equity policies shows that when such policies do exist, they by and large do not result from the success of outside-game politics on the regional level (also see Kantor 2000). Instead, Bollens (2003, 647) demonstrates that such policies “commonly come in through the back door, as a result of federal and state programs that may or may not be concerned primarily with social equity.”

Most interestingly, when liberal expansionists study this question empirically, they themselves also confirm the intensity of the Type-II constraints. For example, in a recently published study, Weir, Wolman, and Swanstrom (2005, 757) examine the political feasibility of expansionism at the state level and find

that “cities have less power within the Democratic Party caucuses in the state legislature, historically the main protector of city interest . . . [as] . . . the Democratic Party aims to please the swing districts in the suburbs.” In addition, the authors claim, big-city mayors—being too “preoccupied with [local] autonomy,” as well as “the immediate fiscal condition of the city government”—remain “unlikely to lead the way” on the expansionist agenda in state politics. “Moreover,” add Weir, Wolman, and Swanstrom (2005, 757), “when mayors did reach out politically to suburbs, the suburbs were often reluctant to join for fear of being dominated by city interests.” Concluding, they admit that their “research shows only inklings of city-suburban legislative coalitions based on objective common interests.” As a result, while such coalitions are not “impossible,” they are clearly “difficult” (Weir, Wolman, and Swanstrom 2005, 757; an empirical finding also confirmed by Gainsborough 2001—see especially pp. 137–40).

The other side of the liberal-expansionist shaming of inside-game politics is to assume that the Type-I constraints afflicting it are incurable. But are they?

While it is impossible to know given the current state of urban research, some extant evidence is suggestive of the possibility that the lessening of Type-I constraints is at least no more difficult than lessening of Type-II constraints. For example, as has been well documented (Alperovitz 2005; Shuman 1998; Williamson et al. 2002; Gunn and Gunn 1991; Bruyn and Meehan 1987), there currently exist literally thousands of alternative local economic institutions capable of anchoring capital (such as worker-owned firms), of generating alternative revenue streams for cities (such as municipal ownership), and of augmenting the degree to which local economies benefit from local economic activity (via enhancing local multipliers). Such activity is, in its current state of development, small-scale and largely marginal to local economies. Yet, if built upon and nurtured with effective leadership and a redirection of resources away from mainstream corporate-centered urban-development schemes, it is plausible to hypothesize that these institutions potentially could alter the structural context of city politics (i.e., reduce the intensity of the Type-I constraints) by slowing capital mobility and stabilizing the local fiscal and economic bases of cities (see Imbroscio 1999; Elkin 1987).

Of course, absent rigorous empirical study, it remains impossible to assess with any degree of certainty the validity of this hypothesis. But the key point that needs to be made here is simply that because of liberal ideological biases, such questions do not even get asked (let alone studied). Instead, there is a near exclusive focus on expansionism as the key to solving urban problems, even in the face of the evidence that its political feasibility is quite the hard swath to mow.¹¹

Question Hegemony, Respect Democracy

To recapitulate, the case for expansionism finds its justification in the shaming of the inside game. Much of this shaming is, in fact, unjustified by the available empirical evidence; it is instead more a product of the ideological biases of the liberal expansionists themselves.

This conclusion strongly suggests that when considering the problems of American cities, the hegemony currently enjoyed by liberal expansionism needs to be questioned vigorously. Since expansionist institutional designs tend to cause the dilution of minority and working-class political power, the attenuation of localism (and local control), and the concomitant centralization of power, such a questioning seems especially warranted to prevent the further injury (and insult) to the practice of American democracy.

Notes

1. In developing the term *liberal expansionism*, I am influenced by J. Phillip Thompson's penetrating critique of liberal universalism (see Thompson 1998).

2. Such studies are too numerous to list individually; for a full listing, see <http://www.brookings.edu/metro/publications.htm>.

3. The ideological affinity of Brookings and the Urban Institute also has spawned some high-profile collaborations to advocate liberal-expansionist ideas (see, for example, Katz and Turner 2001).

4. Swanstrom's earlier work (1993, 74) assesses liberal expansionism's compulsion to move urban residents out to the suburbs in this way:

The economistic concept . . . implies that the best way to move people out of poverty is to encourage them to give up their particular cultural values, be willing to move out of the ghetto, and become Benthamite utility maximizers. . . . A community development approach to urban poverty makes more sense. I am not suggesting that the racism that penetrates urban economic relations in the United States today is good or should be nurtured. I am suggesting, however, that the conventional approach of requiring African-Americans to give up their cultural commitments and ties to the black community in order to assimilate into white middle class society is both unrealistic, given the continued strength of racism in this country, and probably racist (suggesting that poor black communities have no social ties on which to build).

5. Cohen and Rogers (1995, 4), in their perceptive and illuminating article, "After Liberalism," explain that, "without any organization outside the state . . . [liberals] can barely contemplate what a more popular administration of the economy might look like."

6. Along these lines, as Cohen and Rogers (1995, 4) explain:

While liberals often have reasonable views about political outcomes (some equality, some decent living standards, some personal freedom), they are elitists as to means. They don't believe that people of ordinary ability and intelligence are capable of running

the society themselves. And so to achieve their ends they typically favor the kinder and gentler administration of people—usually through the state—to popular organization. Liberals are also deeply accommodating of corporate power—preferring to mop up after its damage is done to controlling it in the first place.

7. Also see Weir (2000, 133–34) on the elite-oriented nature of the development of expansionist institutions in the Minneapolis case.

8. Continuing, Dreier, Mollenkopf, and Swanstrom (2001, 249; 2004, 299) approvingly add that “further investment in the housing, economic development, and infrastructure of the South Bronx would encourage middle-class people to move in.” This migration is exactly what is happening as I write in the summer of 2005, as a front-page *New York Times* headline screams of classic gentrification and its concomitant displacement: “Goodbye South Bronx Blight, Hello Trendy SoBro” (Berger 2005).

9. Along these lines, in another excellent article, Thompson (1998, 204) explains how “liberalism privileges ‘experts,’ including judges and college professors who are distinguished by their supposed ability to separate higher objective and ‘universal’ rights and principles from particular group demands.”

10. This conclusion is a key reason why many progressive urbanists have called for the development of a third political party in America, however difficult such an enterprise might be (see, for example, Cohen and Rogers 1995).

11. The last metaphor, fully expressed as “we all know what we know, it’s a hard swath to mow,” was taken from “New Partner,” written by Will Oldham and published by Palace Records/Drag City, Chicago, Illinois, copyright 1995.

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Regionalism, Equality, and Democracy

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Imagine my excitement upon reading in David Imbroscio's essay that the ideas I wrote about with my coauthors in *Place Matters* were "dominant—perhaps even hegemonic" (p. 225).¹ The reader can also well imagine the sting I felt upon reading later in the essay that these very same ideas had caused "injury (and insult) to the practice of American democracy" (p. 244). Upon sober reflection, however, I have concluded that Imbroscio's assertion of the hegemony of new regionalist ideas is wildly overstated, at the same time that his critique of their antidemocratic character completely misconstrues the argument.²

Imbroscio's central claim is that new regionalist³ thinkers "shame the inside game," heaping scorn on those who labor to uplift central cities or inner-city neighborhoods. We do this, Imbroscio argues, principally by arguing that the only important politics and policies occur at regional, or higher, scales and by stressing individual mobility to the detriment of place-based development. Any fair reading of *Place Matters* shows, however, that we do nothing of the sort. Referring to the choice between individual mobility and community development, we state clearly: "In practice, we must do both, because the two strategies work best together. The 'people versus place' debate is a false dichotomy" (Dreier, Mollenkopf, and Swanstrom 2004, 269). Far from shaming the inside game of central city and neighborhood revitalization, we argue that progressive regional policies can help to empower central cities and disadvantaged neighborhoods.⁴

Despite Imbroscio's misinterpretation of the new regionalist argument, he does the field a service by questioning the political values and theories that lie behind new regionalism. The political theory of new regionalism is woefully underdeveloped. I view this rejoinder as a modest effort to begin debate on these issues.

The Role of Extralocal Factors in Urban Decline

Before addressing the more difficult political issues, however, it is necessary to set aside a striking empirical claim that Imbroscio makes in his

essay. Blinded by a “subtle ideology” (p. 227), Imbroscio argues, new regionalists assume, “without much empirical evidence,” (p. 234) that the causes of urban decline are rooted in regional dynamics and the policies of higher levels of government. Imbroscio asserts that the evidence is “almost wholly lacking” (p. 228) for the claim that forces beyond the control of neighborhoods and central cities cause many of their problems. Imbroscio’s assertion is puzzling. Over half a century of urban scholarship has documented the broader forces behind urban decline. Chapter 4 of *Place Matters* reviews the evidence, supported by 185 endnotes, on how federal, state, and suburban policies have promoted suburban sprawl, central city decline, and concentrated urban poverty.

A vast array of extralocal policies—ranging from the FHA and VA loan guarantees to the deductibility of home mortgage interest to the federal interstate highway program to suburban exclusionary zoning—have tilted the playing field of metropolitan development away from central cities and inner suburbs toward outlying suburbs. Consider the case of St. Louis, Missouri, admittedly an extreme case of urban decline. In the 1990s, local governments in the St. Louis region issued 109,944 building permits for housing at the same time that the number of households grew by only 64,650 (Bier and Post 2006, 185). The inescapable conclusion from these facts is that housing units must be abandoned at the end of the filtering chain, invariably in the decaying inner city. (The City of St. Louis lost more than half a million people in the second half of the 20th century, falling from 856,796 in 1950 to 348,189 in 2000.) Despite Imbroscio’s assertion that the case for the importance of extralocal forces in central city decline is “unjustified by empirical evidence” (p. 244), regional dynamics in the St. Louis area are clear. Faced with a development field tilted toward suburban sprawl, the city of St. Louis and its neighborhoods are put in the position of trying to run up a steep hill carrying a load of bricks.

The idea of “socialism in one country” was always questionable. Imbroscio appears to subscribe to an even more questionable strategy of “socialism in one city” or even one neighborhood. Driven to its logical conclusion, Imbroscio’s position implies a kind of bootstrappism that comes dangerously close to blaming the victim: If central cities and neighborhoods simply pursued the right kinds of alternative economic development policies, they could free themselves from the imperatives of the global economy.

Imbroscio accuses us of dismissing the possibilities for progressive city governments. Of course, there is a great deal cities can do on their own to address urban problems.⁵ The ability of cities to redistribute income and engage in alternative forms of economic development varies greatly.

A huge central city like New York has much more autonomy than a small, inner-ring bedroom suburb. By 2002, almost as many poor people lived in suburbs (13.3 million) as in central cities (13.8 million) (Proctor and Dalaker 2003). Even large central cities have severe limits on what they can do alone, but these limits are much greater in fragmented suburbs—something that Imbroscio never acknowledges.

Oddly, later in the essay, Imbroscio contradicts his earlier critique of the power of extralocal forces and acknowledges what he calls the “readily obvious” (p. 241) external constraints on redistributive urban policy. Inner-city poverty, fiscal stress, and heightened capital mobility limit what any single city or neighborhood can do (p. 241). Imbroscio even acknowledges that his program of alternative economic development would be easier to implement across larger (perhaps regional?) geographical scales. Many new regionalists, myself included, endorse Imbroscio’s call for experimenting with alternative forms of rooted economic development. Where we differ is that we view regionalism not as an alternative to community development; properly understood, regionalism can buttress community development.⁶

Is New Regionalism a Political Nonstarter?

After acknowledging the power of extralocal forces by new regionalists, Imbroscio goes on to argue that regionalism has two fatal flaws. One is that it simply cannot garner the necessary political support. The second, more troubling, charge is that even if regional policies could gather the necessary political support, they would be undesirable because the resulting centralization of political power would erode democracy.

First, it is crucial to understand that there is *nothing inherently progressive (egalitarian) or democratic about action at the regional scale*. Regionalism is a misnomer; we do not subscribe to an ideology that favors regional action over action at other scales. Nobody supports regional action for its own sake. Regional policies are just as capable of supporting a regional growth machine as a regional opportunity regime. Imbroscio argues, without empirical evidence, that regional initiatives always kill off the inside game of local democracy. We adopt a wait-and-see attitude. Like nationalism, regionalism can empower or disempower ordinary citizens. It is politically contingent. Whether regionalism will lead to greater equality and democracy or the opposite will depend on political struggles in the years ahead.

Citing the dilution of minority political power in the Louisville-Jefferson County merger, Imbroscio concludes that regionalism is inherently hostile to

minority political interests. But there are also examples of minorities using regionalism to advance their interests.⁷

One of the best examples of a regional approach to empowering urban poor and minorities is the Gamaliel network of faith-based community organizations. Gamaliel is a network of more than 40 regional community-organizing affiliates. With encouragement from Myron Orfield in 1996, Gamaliel adopted a “regional equity organizing” agenda linking the problems of central city and inner suburban communities to regional dynamics. Gamaliel’s 2001 “Statement on Regional Organizing” aptly expresses their perspective on the limits of localism and the need for a regional approach:

When [community organizing] was first developed, many political and economic decisions were made in or near the community in which people lived and worked. . . . Now, most important decisions are being made at a regional, national, and global level. The power and significance of a neighborhood group has diminished. The Gamaliel Foundation encourages and assists in the creation of large metropolitan organizations that bridge divisions of race, class and political boundaries. (quoted in Kleidman 2004, 409)

Recent political organizing around federal transportation policy demonstrates the potential to link grassroots activism with regional policymaking. In 2005, Gamaliel joined a coalition of approximately 300 grassroots organizations, the Transportation Equity Network, which succeeded in adding a number of amendments to the five-year reauthorization of federal transportation policy (SAFETEA-LU). One provision (Section 1920) enables local communities to negotiate local hiring agreements in which a portion of the jobs on federal transportation projects would be set aside for low-income individuals, including women and minorities.⁸ At approximately \$286 billion, the 2005 SAFETEA-LU five-year reauthorization marks one of the largest pieces of domestic legislation in history. With an estimated 47,500 jobs created for every billion dollars spent, this is no hollow prize but a policy window that opens up substantial new opportunities for grassroots organizing.

Gamaliel and other grassroots organizations are now working to exploit this opening. In December 2005 Gamaliel affiliate Metropolitan Congregations United, an interfaith coalition of about 70 churches in St. Louis, organized a meeting with about 2,000 people that obtained key political endorsement, including St. Louis Mayor Francis Slay. They demanded that 30% of the jobs on the upcoming \$535 million expansion of I-64/40 in St. Louis go to women, minorities, and low-income persons and that .5% of

the money (\$2.5 million) be used to fund job-training programs to help disadvantaged people acquire skills in construction. In January 2006, Metropolitan Congregations United helped bring 250 supporters to the normally sparsely attended monthly meeting of the Missouri Department of Transportation's (MoDOT's) Commission to make their case, and in March 2006 MoDOT agreed, for the first time in its history, to a local hiring agreement that includes both the 30% job guarantee and the use of \$2.5 million in federal highways funds for targeted job training. The agreement has the potential to pump desperately needed jobs and dollars into the most disadvantaged neighborhoods.

Combining regional and local community organizing is very difficult but potentially very rewarding. Regional organizing of the type done by Gamaliel offers the possibility of joining citizens across the racial and economic divides exacerbated by population sorting in our metropolitan areas. Metropolitan Congregations United is one of the most racially integrated organizations in the St. Louis area. Regionalism also offers the promise of transcending the policy silos that, like Lowi's interest-group liberalism, reinforce the status quo (Lowi 1979).⁹ Historically, engineers and highway construction firms have dominated decisions about federal highway funds, largely ignoring the interests of inner-city poor and minorities. Gamaliel has forced the highway policy monopoly to take into account the needs of disadvantaged communities and coordinate their spending with job training networks. Regional community organizing requires activists to jump political scales, going from federal to state to local action.¹⁰ This is not easy, but the reward is more effective policies with more resources for local communities.¹¹

Conclusion: The Dilemma of Scale

Democratic theory has long grappled with the problem of scale: Local decision making offers more opportunities for meaningful civic engagement, but it is unable to address issues that transcend local boundaries. Regional decision making, on the other hand, can address important issues, such as pollution, traffic congestion, and job-housing mismatches, but it is often dominated by remote bureaucracies offering few opportunities for citizen input. Faced with this dilemma, Imbroscio clearly grasps one horn, the localist alternative, arguing that the best prospects for democracy rest with locally inspired community economic development. Imbroscio and I are probably in agreement in endorsing the principle of subsidiarity: As

many decisions as possible should be left to the local level where citizens can participate more effectively in deliberations. Where we disagree, however, is that I think the only way to build healthy local democracies is to have supportive regional, state, and federal policies. Regionalism and localism are not inherently contradictory; they can be complementary.

Having said this, I acknowledge that historically, regionalism has had a spotty record in promoting equality and democracy.¹² Indeed, research shows that, other things being equal, citizens do participate more in smaller municipalities (Oliver 2001). Although I freely admit the democratic deficit that has historically existed in regionalism, Imbroscio blithely ignores debilitating weaknesses in the present localist version of democracy. The main problem is that the sorting of population into local governments along lines of race and class has created extraordinary levels of homogeneity that are strongly associated with reduced levels of citizen engagement.¹³ Like many liberals, Imbroscio seems unwilling to open his eyes to the pathologies of the present system of local politics. Just because African-Americans have gained many local political offices does not mean that the politics of central cities are healthy. Most central cities have little meaningful party competition, often putting power in the hands of entrenched party machines and depressing turnout for low-income and minority voters. As V. O. Key (1949) warned, one-party rule always harms the poor because it minimizes the incentives for political elites to mobilize the disadvantaged. (See also Keiser 1997.)

Imbroscio implies that regionalism is just another version of the business reform agenda that will create overly powerful central executives and dilute minority political power in regional governments and “at-large” voting districts. If regionalism just meant remote representatives and governments, then Imbroscio would be right—we should leave local governments alone, free from regional interference. What Imbroscio ignores, however, is what David Barron (2001) calls the “background conditions” of local government in the United States. The present state of local government is far from a natural state of home rule. Rather, federal and state laws have constructed an artificial system in which resources are systematically segregated from needs, fiscally hamstrung local governments engage in a “beggar-thy-neighbor” competition for tax ratables, and citizens construct their interests around parochial political boundaries.

New regionalism should not be identified with tired old calls for top-down regional governments. Instead, new regionalists need to think creatively about new forms of regional governance that can empower local governments and communities. This should include rethinking home rule to include freeing up the taxing power of local governments along with their

ability to regulate private property and own profitable enterprises (Barron 2003b). Gerald Frug (2002) has called for new regional institutions that will enable local governments to take into account effects of their actions on neighboring municipalities and forge enforceable intermunicipal agreements. Such regional institutions may need supermajority requirements, perhaps modeled on the European Union, to protect against the problem of the tyranny of the majority.

In short, new regionalism is not inherently egalitarian or democratic, but it has the potential to promote both. Using regional action to promote greater equality and local democracy will require an act of political will and imagination that parts company with tired old ways of doing urban politics.

Notes

1. Imbroscio refers to the concept of hegemony three times (pp. 225, 227, and 244). As developed in the writings of Antonio Gramsci, the idea of *hegemony* refers to a set of ideas by which the ruling class secures the willing acquiescence of the subordinate classes to its rule. The application of this concept to new regionalist ideas is, in my view, absurd.

2. My arguments in this essay are mine alone and do not necessarily reflect the views of my coauthors, Peter Dreier and John Mollenkopf. Similarly, I do not speak for the other scholars whom Imbroscio attacks, such as Orfield and Rusk; I will let their works speak for themselves.

3. Throughout the essay, I will use the term *new regionalism* in place of Imbroscio's *liberal expansion* to avoid the latter's derogatory implications of neoliberal imperialism and devaluing of community.

4. Rusk (1999) does not title his book *Outside Game*, as Imbroscio's analysis would suggest, but rather *Inside Game Outside Game: Winning Strategies for Saving Urban America*.

5. There is a certain irony in Imbroscio's charge because two of the authors of *Place Matters* spent years of their lives working for progressive mayors: Dreier for Mayor Flynn in Boston and myself for Mayor Kucinich in Cleveland. We saw the "limits of localism" up close (Swanstrom 1985; Dreier and Keating 1990).

6. For reflections on the need to coordinate regional policies with community economic development, see Simon 2001 and Barron 2003a.

7. After acknowledging that "for the most part, inner-city minorities have not been provided with compelling reasons to engage in the new regionalist dialogue," Joel Rast (2006) goes on to show, using an example from northwest Indiana, how environmental justice can be linked to regional equity in a way that resonates with low-income minority and working-class city residents. Similarly, William Johnson, African American mayor of Rochester (1994-2006), argues that suburban sprawl, by distancing jobs and opportunities from inner-city minorities, should be viewed as a civil rights issue. It is worthwhile noting that Mayor Johnson, a strong supporter of regionalism, put in place probably the most effective system of neighborhood planning in the United States (Cresswell, Wishy, and Maxwell 2003).

8. There is still some question as to whether geographically targeted local hiring agreements violate the "privileges and immunities" clause of the U.S. Constitution (Article IV, Section 2). But clearly the intent of Congress is to encourage such agreements, and activists believe they can be structured in such a way as to avoid a legal challenge.

9. For an argument about the problems of “pillars” in urban policy and the need for a regional approach to community organizing, see Weir 2005.

10. Theda Skocpol has identified the decline of federated civic associations as a key flaw in our civil society. “Classic membership federations built two-way bridges between classes and places and between local and translocal affairs.” (Skocpol 1999, 500)

11. For an excellent example of how grassroots organizing can improve regional job training policies, see Mark Warren’s (2001) account of project QUEST in San Antonio.

12. Most regional governments today are special-purpose districts, invisible to the average citizen and dominated by technocrats, that bias spending toward economic development and private values (Foster 1997; Burns 1994). Consolidations of general-purpose governments, such as Miami-Dade County or Indianapolis’ Unigov, have had mixed effects, at best, on racial and economic inequalities. Imbroscio raises the valid concern that expansion to the regional scale will dilute the political power of geographically concentrated minorities. For summaries of scholarly research on the effects of regional reforms on equity, see Altschuler et al. 1999, chapter 3, and Hamilton 1999, pages 126-128.

13. I can only touch on the issues here due to space limitations. I invite the reader to consult a recent volume, which I helped write, titled *Democracy at Risk*, for a synthesis of the scholarly literature on how current urban form and metropolitan governance arrangements undermine civic engagement (Macedo et al. 2005, chap. 3).

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He Got Game

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Listening to the score heard in David L. Imbroscio's "Shaming the Inside Game," a composition that challenges us to reevaluate the questions we ask and the questions we ignore, our commentary suggests that urbanists tune in to the historical and contextual politics of today's urban axioms; to the localized histories, actors, and events that nurture ideas and catalyze policy development; and to the changing urban dynamics that are traducing the inside/outside binary that Imbroscio identifies in the work of the liberal expansionists. To this end, we suggest various lines of investigation that urbanists might undertake to engender a metropolitics that really makes some noise.

Keywords: *regionalism; urban politics; inner cities; liberalism; neoliberalism*

"The discourse offers explanations; it gives answers to the 'why' of urban decline by, for example, linking the various 'problems' of the cities to the 'opportunities' in the suburbs, seemingly within the same coherent story. . . . By isolating decay and decline in the cities, the discourse additionally subverts a society-wide sharing of responsibility for the dire city conditions faced by those too poor or too powerless to flee. Moral obligations vanish."

Beauregard 2003, 244-45

"The task is formidable. Are suburbanites ready to give up their single-family homes, lawns, and multiple cars? Do they really care about community? Are they willing to share tax bases or support other measures to reduce disparities in urban regions? Judging from past history, the answers to these questions are not likely to be positive."

Judd and Swanstrom 2002, 331

In "Shaming the Inside Game," David L. Imbroscio challenges what he sees as the latest conventional wisdom of urbanism: the "expansionist" notion that urban problems can only be solved by "crossing the city line" to build coalitions and appeal—in equal parts—to the self-interest and moral fortitude of suburbanites who control regional economic, institutional, and political resources (see Dreier, Mollenkopf, and Swanstrom 2001, 230, 233). Well intentioned as it might be, Imbroscio suggests, the expansionist turn relies on

implicit yet potent ideological commitments to a problematic philosophical liberalism. Imbroscio argues that despite a base of evidence that is inconclusive, incomplete, and contradictory, many urbanists now embrace expansionist solutions because of an ideological bias that favors policies emphasizing individual initiative and personal responsibility, social and spatial mobility, traditional public/private divisions, and universal rights claims. In the process, expansionists shame the “inside game” of community development and central-city urbanism, “with its emphasis on preserving or enhancing place-based communities, cultural commitments, group-oriented political claims, local control, and populist politics” (Imbroscio, p. 228).

Imbroscio’s challenge is jarring. It is troubling to see Peter Dreier, Todd Swanstrom, and John Mollenkopf lined up with David Rusk, Bruce Katz, and Richard Florida, and to see them portrayed as latecomer Petersonians blinded by an ideological enchantment with strategies that (despite the best of intentions) amount to a fundamentally antiurban urban agenda. It’s like going to a concert hall run jointly by Brookings and the Urban Institute to hear a new composition—a distinctively American performance with a sharp, hard-hitting urbanity, something like Spike Lee’s (1998) *He Got Game*, for which Public Enemy is credited for “Songs” while Aaron Copland (1900-1990) is listed for “Music” (Gabbard 2000). The harmonies, cadences, and modal inflections of Public Enemy and the composer once dubbed “Mr. Musical Americana” (Tommasini 1999, 1) mesh well together, linking “a composer widely associated, perhaps inaccurately, with the American heartland to an urban, highly political rap group” (Gabbard 2000, 370). A similar dissonance can be heard in the score for *Place Matters* and the movements of “Shaming the Inside Game.” Imbroscio’s performance, aggressive and political as it is, offers harmony and percussion that embroiders progressive hopes for a genuinely new metropolitics. Imbroscio got game. Some may hear his composition as a hostile attack on progressives who share goals but differ as to means. But we hope that urbanists can listen carefully and discern in the score a theme that cautions us against equating causes and consequences, explanations and strategies, policies and politics. Imbroscio challenges us to reevaluate the questions we ask, the questions we ignore, the urbanism that defines our work, and the politics of our division of labor among analysts, advocates, advisors, and activists.

The current hegemony of the “outside game” might remind us of the paradoxical and invisible influence of historical context (described below); yet, it is rare to see explicit consideration of the historical-political climates that nurture urban “truths”—and rarer still to encounter studies that examine the play of such truths as they become woven into the policy infrastructure (Hall

2002, chap. 13). And we suggest that such play is quite serious: The historical, contextual axioms seem remarkably durable. On one level, our point here is simply to emphasize that the analytical and methodological tendencies challenged by Imbroscio are nothing new. Indeed, it would be worth investigating the genealogies between today's liberal expansionism with earlier debates over people-based and place-based policies (Winnick 1966; Bolton 1992), with ideological constructions of urban decline and the natural inevitability of inner-city neighborhood life cycles (Beauregard 2004; Metzger 2000; N. Smith, Caris, and Wyly 2001), with supply/demand battles in assisted housing policy (especially at the moment when progressive "pro-production forces" were vanquished by conservative, free-market "voucherists" [Winnick 1995, 96]), or with aggressive moves by "dispersal" theorists to discredit inner-city redevelopment efforts as "gilding the ghetto" (Kain and Persky 1969; Kain 1992, 2004). Such genealogical work would not be mere genuflection to earlier scholarship but rather a necessary first step in moving beyond the simplistic and disempowering stereotypes that separate contemporary urban knowledge from historical insight. As Beauregard (2004) has suggested, in much current work on the city "we are offered a 'radical break' or a flight to the past that never touches down on the intervening terrain" (p. 633), such that "time is reduced to two values: past and present" (p. 634).

Today's influential "truths" of urban theory and policy are made, not given; to evaluate the *retrospective* explanations offered by liberal expansionists and to assess the feasibility of their *prospective* outside-game strategies, we must investigate the localized histories, actors, and events that nurture ideas and catalyze policy development (McCann, forthcoming; Peck and Tickell 2002). We need to remain sensitive to the urban settings that nurture influential theories. Consider the historical-geographical specificity of just a few of the origins of today's consensus on inner-city "isolation": Kain's (1968) use of travel survey data from Detroit in 1952 and Chicago in 1956 to develop the spatial mismatch hypothesis, and Wilson's (1987) analysis of 1970 and 1980 census data and community surveys mostly on Chicago's South Side to "describe the problems of the ghetto underclass candidly and openly so that they can be fully explained and appropriate policy programs can be devised" (p. 149). And we also need to map the partial, selective, and strategic *co-optation* of urban theory—mindful of the precise meaning of the term (a "technique for maintaining organizational stability by absorbing new ideas and/or persons into the policymaking structure" [Lexicon Publications 1990, 215])—as people, ideas, and data travel to the policy-making "metropolitan talk machine" of Washington, D.C. (cf. Thrift 2004). Hence, simplified findings from mismatch

and underclass studies of particular times and places are used to frame research elsewhere, to shape the production of new databases documenting the contours of inner-city isolation (the “underclass databases,” Tatian 1993; Kasarda 1993) and eventually to provide the social-science rationale for the harshest policies affecting economically and racially marginalized urbanites.

When new data undermine the isolation axiom, such policies are automatically heralded for success (even when their implementation came far too late to have had any hypothesized causal effects), and policy attention turns to other themes (moving to opportunity, regional housing “choice,” school vouchers, etc.) that build on the sedimented, assumed truths of inner-city isolation. Imbroscio’s critique of these assumptions, and his careful consideration of redistricting proposals and the refusal of Clintonite electoral coalitions to undertake metropolitan reform, should remind us of the long history of compromises wrought between progressive urban theory and political coalitions held together by neoliberal (and neoconservative) material-ideological commitments.

Again, none of this is new. What is remarkable is the enduring faith of outside-game players in the face of a hostile political climate after so many years of failure. Some of those who were influential in laying the foundations of the inner-city isolation framework later regretted passing through the “decontamination chamber” of censored U.S. policy research (Wacquant 2004, 99). Many years after belittling inner-city redevelopment ghetto gilding, John Kain (1992, 445) lamented,

With the benefit of hindsight, our use of the term dispersal to describe our strategy was unfortunate, as many critics interpreted it as a call for the forced or involuntary dispersal of Afro-Americans from central-city ghettos. Nothing could have been further from our minds.

William Julius Wilson invested years of work to develop a comprehensive analysis of a social category defined by antiurban neoconservatives (see Gans’ 1993 political etymology of the “urban underclass”), only to see the work ripped out of context and chopped apart to fit the re-election triangulation pursuit of the Clinton electoral coalition so lauded by Dreier et al. (2001, 2004). Today, the theory returns home as policy from Washington to Chicago (and so many other cities), underwriting the implosion of public housing projects as new waves of speculative gentrification flood the empty towers of Cabrini-Green on the Near North Side and venture closer to the windswept empty South Side corridor where the Robert Taylor Homes once stood. There is no need to defend Cabrini-Green or Robert Taylor housing models; but we must challenge the affordability crisis worsened by a demolition-derby housing policy that

offers interminable waiting lists for vouchers that may (or may not) provide regional housing “choice” (Goetz 2003), and we must challenge the political perversion of theory in other realms of urban policy, from revanchist policing and antihomeless ordinances to punitive workfare regimes.

Yet, Imbroscio’s concerns about the wisdom of liberal expansionism raise an even more fundamental question: What are the risks of binary oppositions like inside/outside game? Imbroscio (p. 237) draws a sharp line between inside politics “with its grass roots, populist, protest, and working-class/minority-empowerment orientations” and outside-game movements that are often “corporate driven, elite oriented, middle-class and White dominated, and more civil and consensus oriented.” But he certainly recognizes that such political, demographic, and sociological binaries are not always aligned so neatly, nor are they always etched along tidy city-suburb lines. Inside-game defense, therefore, requires identifying the unique constellation of factors maintaining inequality and injustice in particular settings; metropolitan fragmentation and various forms of elite suburban exclusion are almost always involved, but we cannot ignore corporate-driven, elite-oriented inside-game city machines.

The political linkages of inside/outside, city-suburb divisions are geographically contingent, with the best fit in large cities with sharp, spatialized class divisions between native-born White Anglos and native-born, non-Latino African-Americans. Contingency should not distract us from the prevailing political cleavages Imbroscio identifies: It is better to be generally correct than to be precisely wrong. Nevertheless, we must recognize the distinctive contours of an urbanization that reflected, produced, and reinforced American political culture between the 1950s and the later years of the twentieth century. These contours are shifting in ways that urban theory and policy are just now beginning to acknowledge. Most prominent, we must redraw Imbroscio’s twin binaries of political geography woven into the inside/outside debate to address the rising political mobilization of immigrants—punctuated most recently by marches, demonstrations, and rallies in April 2006 with millions of Latinas and Latinos, many of them undocumented.

It is worth recalling that California, once a battleground state, became somewhat safer Democratic terrain after Pete Wilson’s ignition of anti-immigrant forces in his 1994 reelection. Now we see similar dilemmas between the Republicans’ frantic short-term need to energize red-meat, red-state Minuteman constituents and the GOP’s long-standing dream of attracting a rapidly growing Hispanic population with appeals to faith, family, and social conservatism. Republican pollsters are deeply troubled over the complexity of data showing that the immigration issue “does not cut the same way in all competitive districts” (Balz 2006), creating enormous political uncertainty that will be magnified by demography, varied configurations of ethnic identity and

class interest among different immigrant groups, and lagged increases in naturalization rates and voter participation.

Ultimately, the inside/outside binary at the heart of Imbroscio's analysis is changing, both at the federal level and in metropolitan mosaics of ethnoburbs (Li 1998), ethni-cities (Roseman, Laux, and Thieme 1996), and diverse suburban centers of "parachuted plurality" (Peach 2000). This transformation goes well beyond the large national gateways to include agricultural market centers, exurbs reliant on low-wage service workers, meatpacking towns and poultry processing outposts from Iowa to the Carolinas, and hundreds of other new threads in the settlement fabric that shapes metropolitics and regionalisms old and new. *This game*, at once inside *and* outside, will be hotly contested for at least a generation. And so we hope that Imbroscio's challenge to *Place Matters* (Dreier, Mollenkopf, and Swanstrom 2001, 2004) can find some common ground with the kind of multiethnic coalitions portrayed in Dreier's collaborative inside game, *The Next Los Angeles* (Gottlieb et al. 2005).

In the end, Imbroscio's game draws out the fundamental contradictions of liberalism: Although progressive expansionists favor the goals of redistribution and equity-oriented regionalism, they will only consider universalist, race-, and place-neutral means. So they shame the inside game and the many different people who play it, thereby undermining the political possibilities for a more just urbanism. Liberal expansionist discourse constitutes the actors of the inside game as illegitimate figures, reinforcing (1) political-economic processes at "higher" scales that reproduce urban inequality and marginalization, and (2) the hierarchy itself, culminating in a fatalist scalar race-to-the-bottom in which Petersonian city limits play out across a global space of flows. Imbroscio rightly calls for rigorous empirical scrutiny of the claims of liberal expansionism and defends central-city urbanism, populist politics, and minority/working-class power. Our challenge now is to play the inside game as it is being transformed in ways that subvert local-global hierarchies—through transnational grassroots politics and overlapping webs of political, economic, and social relations in emerging immigrant translocalities (M. Smith 2001, chap. 7; M. Smith 2005). Transnational urban research, with its bifocal view of localized relations from above and below (M. Smith 2001), certainly complicates the inside/outside political analysis and policy recommendations of *Place Matters* as well as Imbroscio's game. Yet, if we do not analyze, advocate, and mobilize for emancipatory rules in these new transnational inside games, we lose the chance to resist the revanchist principles that have become the ubiquitous truisms underwriting neoliberal urban policy.

Today, the alluvial deposition of the theoretical stream from inner-city isolation and underclass behavioral pathology to dispersal and expansionism

is spread thickly across the urban system of the entire Gulf Coast. Reconstruction is proceeding without any moral humility in policies from above that ignore social position while dismissing systematic marginalization as nothing more than the unfortunate cost of a broader benevolence (Young 1997, 49). The outlines of this new city-state, built stubbornly against nature on perennially naturalized urban discourses, began to come into view barely a week after the storm surge of Katrina, most vividly in David Brooks's (2005) "Silver Lining" essay. The storm "separated tens of thousands of poor people from the run-down, isolated neighborhoods in which they were trapped," giving us "as close to a blank slate as we get in human affairs" so that we can break up concentrated poverty, disperse the poor and minorities "into middle-class areas nationwide," and lure middle-class families "into the rebuilt city" (Brooks 2005, 29). Unfortunately, the neoliberal and neoconservative expansionism designed by think tanks and implemented from Washington (Peck 2006) received considerable legitimacy when William Julius Wilson led a petition signed by scores of prominent social scientists advocating "Moving to Opportunity in the Wake of Hurricane Katrina." Signatories with unimpeachable liberal credentials endorsed a dispersal-redevelopment model that briefly cautioned against forced removal before citing "a growing body of research" demonstrating the benefits of breaking up concentrated poverty. As Reed and Steinberg (2006) emphasize, the scholarly signatories

remain strangely oblivious of their potential for playing into the hands of the retrograde political forces that would use their call to justify displacement. . . . They provide liberal cover for those who have already put a resettlement policy into motion that is reactionary and racist at its core.

We must not lose this game. To advance alternatives to the neoliberal expansionism now being etched along the Coast—no doubt the template for future redevelopment in other cities—we need to heed Imbroscio's caution on the outside game. And we need to refine new games of progressive, multi-racial, and multiethnic working-class coalitions suited to the distinctive transnational urban circumstances of the next Los Angeles (Gottlieb et al. 2005), the next New Orleans, and other American cities of tomorrow.

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