

The “Progressive City” Over Time

by

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The idea of the “progressive city” has fascinated for over a century. In contrast to a dreary parade of urban problems, some cities provided high drama that portended serious change. In the 1970s and 1980s we saw notable examples: Santa Monica passed the strongest rent control law in the nation by referendum in 1979. Berkeley radicals published *The Cities Wealth* in 1975 – harking back to Ebenezer Howard’s garden city idea of 1898, they proposed a city takeover of the public utility and a coalition later won control of city hall with rent control and other measures. Cleveland fought off a proposal to privatize their popular public power company before succumbing to bank pressure and going into default. Boston passed a “linkage” rule that extracted funds from developers for an affordable housing trust fund and subsequently pressured banks to release millions in mortgage assistance to middle income homeowners. Chicago, after failing to prevent the closure of major steel mills, enacted industrial retention measures that saved good factory jobs.

Dramatic public actions characterized “progressive city” initiatives a century earlier, and showed signs of revival in the present. Parisians had claimed self-governing authority establishing the ill-fated Commune during the German Siege that ended the Franco Prussian war in 1871. Detroit, Toledo and Cleveland fought streetcar monopolies and protected workers from strikebreakers at the turn of the 20th century (1890-1908); and there were socialist mayors in dozens of cities in those decades. In the post-millennial decades of the current century inequality has become a theme – first when the Occupy movement announced the increasing income and wealth shares of the “one percent,” and in the 2013 elections mayors, led by Bill de Blasio in New York City won election promising to do something about it.

The question that is raised by these dramatic events is whether they portend fundamental change, as opposed to superficial and isolated, temporary gains for long-oppressed workers and a frustrated middle class. For, in contrast to the post-WW2 decades, the period from the 1970s to the present has been marked not only by increased inequalities, but also by a concerted press of neo-liberal ideology. The “progressive city cases have demonstrated the possibility of exceptions, but not much more than that. The aim of this

paper is to review the evidence and the emerging logic from the words of and actions of activists and politicians, to see whether they offer further hope of substantial change.^{1 2}

I. Early 20th Century Urban Progressives

We think of the three decades from 1890 to 1920 as “progressive” in the United States. The beginning of the 1890s was when Jane Addams established Hull House and spoke on “The Subjective Necessity for Social Settlements,” and when Hazen Pingree began his run as mayor of Detroit by advocating lower streetcar fares.³ In 1911 the Socialist Party won dozens of mayoralties.

Progressivism – a middle ground -- was a major theme in the cities. Many cities had what we can call progressive mayors, and initiatives in social work, city planning and other professions provided important beginnings. There are debates about its legacy. A view that gained currency after the 1950s was that “it was essentially a negative movement designed to stamp out a system which was a disgrace to republican institutions – to eradicate evil” and David Lowery noted that there was “not much in the way of ideas about what should replace low politics beyond vague ‘beliefs in progress, science, reason and technological advancement for all.’”⁴ Still, this was enough to spawn experiments leading eventually to the city manager movement, metropolitan government, budget and civil service reform, and other elements of what would become the progressive reform prescription for urban services.”

This may be too narrow a critique to begin with. Ernest S. Griffith, whose four volumes on U.S. municipal government give a claim to mainstream authenticity, presents urban reformers as lead elements in a national progressive movement.⁵ As much as anyone he acknowledges the several strands and movements that came to be accepted as “progressivism” – not only the civil service rules, citizen initiatives, budgeting and other accountability measures designed to defeat the bosses and machines, but such positive steps a municipal ownership of utilities, improvements in urban parks and schools, and public health measures.⁶ Perhaps most notable is Griffith’s elaboration of mayoral concerns with social justice derived in part from Henry George, the late nineteenth century author and activist who wrote *Progress and Poverty*, giving voice to a sense of inequality as wealthy and corporate interests benefitted unequally from socially created increases in property values. As Griffith noted:

Between 1896 and 1910, the income of the richest 1 percent of the population grew from 8 percent to 15 percent of the total. By 1920 almost 25 percent of the entire income tax of the nation was paid by residents and corporations of New York City, 22.7 percent in the Second New York District Alone. . . .

. . . Concentration of capital and mergers were such that ownership and control were already largely passing from residents in the many individual cities into the hands of a few holding or parent companies in the larger, metropolitan centers. This was most noticeable with telephone, street railway, and electrical companies

. . .
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Griffith was one of those who celebrated a set of progressive mayors who echoed George's "burning resentment" at these inequalities. Pragmatically, they responded to popular anger at the utilities, and their central efforts were to combat street railway monopolies: Hazen Pingree in Detroit, Sam M. "Golden Rule" Jones in Toledo and Tom L. Johnson in Cleveland. They sought, and sometimes won battles to force reductions in fares. One device was to threaten municipal ownership, and some of this developed, with mixed results.⁸ Johnson, to Griffith and many others, was the epitome or high point of municipal progressivism..

And it would be difficult to dismiss the sense of the particulars in Cleveland under Tom Johnson, perhaps the most accomplished of progressive mayors in this period:

Johnson made his administration a combination of fighting the extortions of the utilities, taking his program to the voters, expanding humanitarian functions, and adopting a businesslike approach to the other functions.

. . . Johnson extended the merit system to the waterworks and health services . . . A substitution of municipal garbage disposal for disposal by contract saved the city \$10,000, raised the wages of the collectors, reduced their hours, and burned more garbage . . . he brought in a bacteriological laboratory, a free tuberculosis sanitarium, and a farm colony, as well as instituting municipal inspection of school buildings, meat and milk. . . a juvenile court, a boarding home and boy's farm, and a detention home. . . honest weights and measures, elimination of grade crossings, public bathhouses, a forestry department, concerts and skating carnivals, antibillboard ordinances, and clean streets. . . Annexations took place, including one whereby the city acquired its own electric light plant. He exposed bribery.⁹

Griffith also credits the settlement house movement as a critical component of municipal progressivism:

To . . . [the young men and women of the settlement houses] the Progressive movement represented the flowering of their hopes and dreams of a neighborhood, a community and a nation. . . In such a social order, there would be wiped out the poverty and the other factors that dragged or kept people down -- especially the children. In their semi-utopia the separate classes would become part of one human family in the building of a constructive society. . . The two great figures . . . were Jane Addams and Raymond Robins, but Graham Taylor . . . Henry Bruere. Mary McDowell, Hamilton Holt, Raymond Fosdick, Joseph Eastman, Henry Morgenthau and Harry Hopkins . . . later became national figures.¹⁰

And he notes that "By 1900 there were over 100 such settlement houses; by 1905, over 200,. And by 1910. Over 400."¹¹

Closely associated with the settlements, Griffith cited the "social gospel":

There was a glorious irrational belief in these years that the function of Christianity was to build the Kingdom of God on earth in the here and now; that the notion of progress needed the fusion of perfectability added to it for its goal.

‘We stand at Armageddon and we battle for the Lord’ was a rallying cry for the Progressive Party in 1912. ¹²

Socialism and Other “Radical” Tendencies. Griffith, who gave additional credit to the labor movement, populism, and civic organizations of business and professional men, notes “.a minor expression of the Progressive mood channeled into and influenced by the Socialist Party. ¹³ But it is tempting to give a different kind of consideration to what might otherwise be seen as “fringe” elements on the left.. James Weinstein gives a balanced picture of municipal socialism during its heyday – about 1900-1920. ¹⁴ He recounts: “In the electoral arena, 1911 was an especially good year. In seventy-four cities and towns Socialists elected mayors . . .” ¹⁵ Weinstein gives prominence to George Lunn, elected mayor of Schenectady:

In February 1912 Lunn hired boilermakers from the American Locomotive Company – on strike and out of work – to cut and store 2000 tons of ice from the Mohawk River for distribution to the city’s poor.

Similarly, the city bought coal wholesale and distributed it through grocery stores for fifty cents a ton below the retail price. ¹⁶

He then went on to recount the policies of Victor Berger, initially on the city council, then mayor in Milwaukee:

“All of Lunn’s actions were in keeping, not only with socialist principles, but also with the actions of other Socialist-run municipalities. In Milwaukee . . . Victor Berger, when he was an alderman at large, fought to increase the minimum wage for city workers . . . to build hospitals for low-income workers, and to create new parks and city-sponsored concerts. He also fought for and got home rule, so that the city might operate utilities and the transit system. . . . The basic idea, he said, was to change the way the public thought about the purpose of government . . .

This was the point, Weinstein thought, and perhaps it differentiated the socialists from the larger movement of “progressives,” who often adopted specific reforms the socialists had first tried. And, he argued, “Without Socialists either opposing or joining their ranks in the electoral arena, it is doubtful that Progressives would as readily have adopted many of the Progressive Era reforms. ¹⁷

Middle Class Origins? Most of these reformers and planners were “middle class,” but of a certain type. At least early in the period the progressive movement was dominated by a pre-corporate middle class, characteristic of the phase of “merchant capitalism,” or “industrial capitalism” as distinct from “corporate capitalism.” This is David M. Gordon’s formulation deducing the roots of the late 19th century city: from predominantly middle sized cities, close to sites of production, neighbors of those in rungs below them on the social scale who were not yet ready to adopt the knee jerk hostility that developed later. He cites Herbert Gutman: The power of the industrialist “was not yet legitimized and taken for granted.” He (Gordon) goes on:

Many middle-class residents, used to earlier, preindustrial relationships, resented the imposition of the relentless, uncompromising, impersonal discipline of

Factory life. When workers struck,, newspapers, politicians, and the middle classes often supported them.

Again quoting Gutman, Gordon writes: “these non-industrial classes “saw no necessary contradiction between private enterprise and gain on the one hand, and decent, humane social relations between worker and employer on the other.”¹⁸

A parallel “municipalism” began in Europe – Hazareesingh notes an earlier emergence in France, a “municipalist republican” middle road backed by the growing capacities of urban entrepreneurs in the 1860s and out of dissatisfaction with the overcentralised corruption and mismanagement of Napoleon III. They were the dominant element – as distinct from the “Jacobins” who sought a cent-ralized and strong state, and radical decentralists who favored a federal system.¹⁹

Even the Paris Commune, independent for two months in 1871 following the Prussian siege, then violently put down by the infant Third Republic, makes the case for a pre-corporate context. Manuel Castells insists it was not a proletarian revolt as alleged, but rather a formation of small tradesmen and workers reacting against landlords and financiers, and even supported by some large businesses.²⁰

Dualism. In the United States varied, even discordant elements of a progressive program had wide appeal. Pragmatic reformers co-existed with more radical elements. At times they could, together, seem to offer alternatives both to reactionary repression of worker interests and to occasional socialist political advance. The IWW and Mother Jones, Eugene Debs and the Socialist Party, and even some of the settlement house work that was prominent in “city” and “Planning” conferences during 1900-1920 were examples. Politicians like Pingree and Tom Johnson may have tried to co-opt more radical labor elements, but generally did not repress them (with exceptions, as when Johnson effectively ended his career in Cleveland in conflict with transit workers).

Perhaps this follows from the particular type of middle class then possible. One thinks of Jane Addams making the connection between young middle class women seeking a role in society in the 1890s, and the needs of immigrant families facing grinding poverty in Chicago.

Planning. Planning in the progressive period began with “city beautiful” themes, leavened with a dose of pragmatism. But many early planners were open to broader perceptions of urban problems.

Some of these came from Europe. By the end of the 1890s Patrick Geddes was beginning to make trans-Atlantic connections, having laid a base in Edinburgh by establishing the Outlook Tower summer programs and articulating a theory of the city; while Ebenezer Howard was publishing “Tomorrow: A Path to Real Reform” and establishing the first Garden City in Letchworth.²¹ The Regional Planning Association of America did not flourish until the 1920s, but its organizer Clarence Stein was finding his feet as a “social architect” in Paris before that, and housers and planners were working together with schemes for city development. Dolores Hayden has added a powerful account of “material feminists” to the planning record, all from the American side.²²

Thus by the middle and end of the progressive period planners were walking a fine line. There were redistributive and inclusionary ideas in the air, but one constant was the determination to link these ideas to a mainstream constituency – usually a necessity when people with radical backgrounds sought public office.

The End of Progressivism, 1917-1920. 1920 marks at least a temporary halt, as the Wilson administration ended on the heels of the repressive “Red Scare” and twelve years of “normalcy” began. Urban progressives faded from the scene, but the legacy remained – some joined the Al Smith administration in New York, and others joined the New Deal after 1932.²³ Paradoxically, urban progressivism was then overshadowed by national politics, not to re-emerge until the 1970s.

The ramifications extended into the particular strands of the larger progressive movement, as when the early city planning movement, a coalition of city beautiful and “city practical” pragmatists split with more socially minded housing activists, “housing” becoming “slum clearance” to the former.

But summary statements like those Lowery quoted, dismissing the progressives as mainly focused on doing away with urban machines – lots of heat and light, but no positive legacy -- seem unwarranted in the face of the sheer numbers of cities that were affected and the wide range of innovations the progressive activists – socialist or not -- attempted. It was an avalanche, cutting across functions, and it was not possible to conceive of one particular innovation without reference to the whole. Griffith gives a sense of the ebb and flow of these over the main cities of the nation:

If soundings were taken in 1900, 1910 and again in 1920, the improvement in cities as a group by the criteria set by the Progressives was apparently continuous. Of the twenty largest cities, nine improved during the first decade, three stayed well governed, three deteriorated, and five remained mixed or badly governed. . . . in the second decade . . . six improved, five stayed well governed, four deteriorated, and four remained mixed or badly governed. . . .²⁴

Overall, the sheer mass of new measures – however effective – suggest a gigantic urban experiment. The critique of the postwar period that progressivism was mainly negative and had outran its usefulness once institutional changes like the city manager movement happened, perhaps take the wrong lesson.

Still, in some ways the early 20th century urban progressives had little to instruct the later ones that emerged in the 1970s. At bottom, their urban economies were different: Manufacturing was the lead element in these early twentieth century economies, but they became more organized and – as David Gordon argued, more remote and difficult to regulate. He then made the connections: The underlying motivation of middle class local elites changed. Strikes increased markedly after 1900. Nativism and racism would be prominent factors with a combination of spatial factors complicating the mix. Increasingly, the middle class became distant – including physically, as the drift to the suburbs gained momentum – and hostile.²⁵ Any new progressivism would require something comparable to what motivated the earlier middle class Gordon had identified. The economic rationale would be different. Instead of a working class, late 20th century progressives would encounter an “underclass,” increasingly spread through smaller cities

as well as urban concentrations. They would need the social justice motivations that Tom Johnson and Jane Addams had, but the analysis would be different.

II. Late Twentieth Century Progressive City Cases.

The social movements of the 1960s and 1970s seemed to break the dam of public innovation that had persisted at municipal levels since the 1920s – first by the repressions under Wilson, then “normalcy” -- the minimal government by Harding, Coolidge and Hoover, then the focus on the federal levels innovation under Roosevelt, Truman and Eisenhower – a 28 year period of great change but also restraint on municipal effort.²⁶

It was the civil rights movement that gave everything else momentum in the 1960s.²⁷ Students in black colleges did lunch counter sit-ins that led to the formation of SNCC in 1960. SNCC’s nonviolent tactics attracted support from Southern and Northern whites; Southern resistance and violence got national attention -- and one decisive event was the 1964 Mississippi Summer Project, when nearly 1000 white students volunteered for voter education and registration projects in scores of Mississippi locations. That project failed in its political objectives when the Democratic Party, at its presidential nominating convention, refused to seat delegates from the new Mississippi Freedom Democratic Party. But the experience was transformative for the white students, who returned to campuses as heroes. Doug McAdam recounts the effect on Mario Savio, a Berkeley member of SDS who became a pivotal figure in the nation-wide student movement:

No way he ever would have . . . stepped forward [during the Free Speech Movement] if it hadn’t been for Mississippi. Part of it was confidence. He was really a pretty shy guy [but] . . . Freedom Summer tended to boost you; you felt like you had been there and you knew what you were talking about . . . that seemed to happen to him [Savio] . . . But more than that it was moral outrage . . . I think. Off of what he saw in McComb [Mississippi], there was just this . . . total commitment to the [civil rights] movement . . . and no stupid bureaucratic rules were going to get in the way. There was this single-mindedness of purpose and moral certainty that just pushed him . . . and it came from Mississippi, I think.²⁸

Much more broadly, the spirit of the white SNCC volunteers infected a broader student movement that took form as an anti-war movement, and several other concerns, including work in the cities. SDS had begun a set of urban projects as early as 1963, and as the 1960s became the 1970s there were many variations.²⁹

Progressive Cities. The most general indication that the movement would explore cities as a base came when Lee Webb and Derek Shearer, seeing scattered pieces of legislation and ideas for public initiatives at the state and local levels, joined forces with recently elected mayor Paul Soglin to host a conference in Madison, Wisconsin in 1975. Webb and Shearer, after corresponding and travelling through the nation for a year, found 150 activists (now including a few officials and staffers) able to pay their own expenses. Once in Madison and, after seeing what they had already accomplished, they committed to an organization and future conferences, soon emerging as the Conference on Alternative State and Local Policies.³⁰ They had come from the student, anti-war, civil rights and neighborhood movements, and now began to seek office in state and local governments. Webb and Shearer put together a Reader consisting of some 44 bills, ordinances,

unpublished reports, memos and papers; and articles that had appeared in publications like The New Republic, The Nation, the New York Times along with newer sources like Working Papers for a New Society, The Elements, and Just Economics. The substance of the new organization's concerns is indicated by the topics in the Reader:³¹

Madison Reader	<u>Bills etc.</u>	<u>Unpub- lished</u>	<u>Article</u>	<u>Total</u>
Economy of Cities	4	4	2	10
Energy	2*	1	6	9
Taxes	1	1	0	2
Economic Development	2	2	4	8
Jobs	3	2	1	6
Land and Housing	2	3	0	5
Health	2	0	0	2
Long Range Policy	0	0	2	<u>2</u>
				44

Closer examination of the Reader contents reflects populist economic themes that might have arisen decades earlier: economy, tax policy and an emphasis on issues of underlying structure. A second conference the following year in Austin, TX featured a larger Reader of double the size (90 items) and a greater variety of topics:

Austin Reader	<u>Bills etc.</u>	<u>Unpub</u>	<u>Articles</u>	<u>Total</u>
Neighborhood government	2	2	0	4
Criminal Justice	0	2	2	4
Government Reform	2	2	3	7
Arts	0	1	1	2
Education	0	0	2	2
Womens Legislation	1	0	0	1
Food, Land, Growth	3	1	6	10
Health	2	3	1	6
Controlling Corporations	3	0	2	5
Energy	3	3	1	7
Economic Development	2	6	5	13
Tax Reform	1	8	2	11
Public Enterprise	1	3	2	6
Pol Org/Long Range Program	0	4	5	<u>9</u>
				82

The Austin conference drew over 300. In 1977 the Conference moved out of the Institute for Policy Studies (IPS), which had hosted it for three years. They published a newly named newsletter, Ways and Means, which appeared into the 1980s. The Conference sponsored national meetings in Denver (1977), St. Paul (1978), Bryn Mawr (1979) and Pittsburgh (1980). There were a number of meetings on special topics: Tax Reform, Food, Plant Closings, Women in the Economy; and publications on these and other

topics. Regional conferences convened in Madison (1975), Amherst (1975), San Antonio (1975), Hartford (1976), Sacramento (1976), Santa Barbara (1977), and Lincoln (1977).

Prominent organizers in addition to Webb and Shearer included Barbara Bick, Ann Beaudry; Conference hosts were Paul Soglin and Jim Rowen (Madison); Jeff Friedman (Austin), and Sam Brown (Denver). Prominent speakers and members of the organization who went on to public roles include Senators Kent Conrad and Byron Dorgan (N. Dakota) and Congressmen Barney Frank (MA) and Bennie Thompson (MS). Many others took on important offices at state and local levels, or made other contributions as staff members, writers and academics.

I have spent time in and reported on several of these cities elsewhere: Hartford, Cleveland, Berkeley, Santa Monica, Burlington. The redistributive achievements in these cities are a great story, and they continue – more in some places, less in others though usually with important survivals.³² Here is some evidence:

Early Cities. Berkeley and Madison were the most notable cities first represented in the Conference on Alternative State and Local Policies. Berkeley was important intellectually and because of the strong organizing presence of Berkeley Citizens Action (BCA): The intellectual leadership came in part from volunteers and staffers associated with then-council member Loni Hancock who formed the Cooperative Ownership Organizing Project and in 1975 published, under IPS auspices, The Cities Wealth – showing potential new directions for the city.³³ Their statement was a holistic vision for the city: encompassing land reform, preference for local over outside ownership of business and cooperative housing. It was done under minority council presence, but this did not stop BCA leaders from proclaiming it an “economic plan for the city. BCA slates did achieve a “working majority” in 1979, when Gus Newport was elected mayor (1979 – 1986), but lost it in 1981, leaving Newport a minority mayor for three years until BCA regained the majority in 1984. Its majority survived the shift to district representation in 1986, but without the need for coordinated citywide campaigns BCA candidates gradually lost out to independent progressives. Hancock held the mayoralty from 1986-1994, and later Tom Bates offered some continuity after 2002.

Madison was important because of Soglin, who had been on the city council since being elected with the student vote, but soon became prominent for his speaking and leadership abilities, winning the mayoralty in 1973. In Madison, Soglin accomplished such policy moves as modernization of the city bus system and support for affordable housing, but the most dramatic move was reforming the police department, which had been a flash point of conflict under the preceding, conservative mayor. Soglin was to serve for six years, then withdrew to practice law; but he was elected again (1989-1997); and a third time in 2011, so that by 2013 he had been a fixture in the mayoralty spanning four decades.

Big Cities and the 1980s

The 1970s cases could be categorized as relatively smaller cities and college towns; Cleveland and Hartford were problematic and in any case Kucinich and Carbone went down to defeat in 1979. Boston and Chicago were much more significant in size and

demography, while Santa Monica and Burlington developed stable progressive majorities.

Chicago. Harold Washington was known as Chicago's first African American mayor (1983-87) and as a reform mayor who presided over a drastic reduction in patronage jobs, the death of "the machine as we knew it" in the face of massive city council resistance – a period called "council wars" that occupied the first two years of his mayoralty.³⁴

But Washington combined reform with a "neighborhood-centric" approach to city administration and combined this with an overtly redistributive approach to economic policy, focusing on industrial retention in response to the epidemic of plant closures and job losses that had affected Chicago and the Midwest in the period before and after his 1983 election. Larry Bennett described the rich mix of initiatives: while outcomes were mixed, he found a new level of interventions in development projects; extraction of minority and female hiring commitments; new levels of neighborhood outreach and support from Housing, Planning and Economic Development agencies.³⁵

Neighborhood-based activism was basic to these administrative initiatives. It had been particularly strong in any case. It mobilized in support of Jane Byrne's mayoral campaign in 1979 and -- when she quickly reverted to working with the old machine -- built stronger coalitions of neighborhood community development organizations like the Rehab Network, founded in 1977, the Chicago Association of Community Development Organizations (CANDO) in 1979, and the Chicago Workshop on Economic Development (CWED) in 1982. To greater or lesser extents, these were multi-racial, but by the time of Washington's candidacy CWED in particular was moving toward incorporation in his administration and Kari Moe, briefly its executive director, carried its message into the Washington mayoralty as a key campaign operative and later staff member and department head in city hall. CWED, in an initial founding meeting in August 1982 began formulating a "platform" that was incorporated in Washington's campaign to include principles like "jobs not real estate" as economic development policy, and that city neighborhood development programs should be delegated to neighborhood organizations, rather than administered from city hall.

In the campaign and then in city hall, Washington incorporated "movement" energies and ideas. He demonstrated great capacity to connect decentralized policies to neighborhood and voter concerns. Moe and Robert Mier – later Commissioner of Economic Development -- noted that

...his performance on the campaign trail was extraordinary. ...we fed him some raw material, and he took it to a level that was beyond my imagination... we had a plank that we thought really touched the soul of the people the mayor was speaking to . . . But his contact with that soul was much deeper. ..The guy could take a current issue, and he could put it into a thirty year historical perspective that saw that issue in the context of the struggle for black political empowerment, the struggle for community empowerment, for civil rights, human rights, fairness, labor, good government. And . . . in relating it to that he was understanding the very fine grained nature of what people were responding to, what they were looking for, who the key actors were, the bases that had to be touched . . .³⁶

Once in city hall – unevenly and slowly – city policy and action began to combine “participation” with redistribution in black and Latino neighborhoods, and with other policies that were not specifically neighborhood oriented, like a policy of favoring minority and female contractors. This extended to day to day city hall routines -- Elizabeth Hollander, Washington’s Commissioner of Planning, remarked what might be called the “inclusionary meeting rule”: never again would she be comfortable in a meeting that did not include female faces, or persons of color.

Joel Rast, in *Remaking Chicago* (1999) described Washington’s “Local Producer Strategy” for industrial retention. It had neighborhood roots, created through several years of organizing, notably by Donna Ducharme, a social worker and planner hired by the New City YMCA in whose neighborhood unemployed minority males sought a job ladder that could be found in nearby small factories. But they – the factories -- were threatened by real estate developers acquiring and converting factory buildings to upscale apartments and commercial uses.³⁷ Ducharme conceived a zoning device, the Planned Manufacturing District, and lobbied factory owners, neighborhood groups, aldermen and city hall agencies – Mier’s DED and the separate Department of Planning. This took years, with the first PMD established after Washington’s death.

Richard M. Daley, who won the 1989 mayoral election, had campaigned against the PMD concept (with developer support). But what Daley encountered upon taking office in 1989 was an already organized constituency of neighborhood groups and small factory operators who had been mobilizing for several years advocating the PMDs. Part of that advocacy involved several dozen local development organizations supported under Washington through a Local Industrial Retention Initiative (LIRI) that sought to keep and strengthen these establishments as part of a jobs policy.

Within a year, Daley reversed his position and, with the support of the planning department, hired Ducharme as Deputy Commissioner for Industrial Development in the Department of Planning and Development. She initiated an industrial corridors planning process. It relied on the LIRI organizations which did infrastructure plans and then followed through on implementation with city seed money to stimulate further investment; later this was supplemented through support from a Neighborhood Capital Budgeting Group that helped free up further investments.³⁸

Daley’s support for the industrial corridors initiative – and Ducharme – lasted until 1996, after which his emphasis moved toward residential and commercial projects financed by Tax Increment Financing (TIF). This happened as the city developed the techniques of “financialization”, turning the TIF financial instruments into commodities that could be sold and leveraged, consistent with other developments in the finance world.³⁹ Industrial development did not seem so important in the investment environment prior to the 2008 meltdown. The fate and future of Chicago’s “local producer strategy” remains unclear at this point – that it had a 10 to 12 year run is the remarkable thing.

Boston. South Boston populist Raymond Flynn and African American "rainbow coalition" advocate Mel King reached a dead heat in the preliminary mayoral election in 1983. Flynn prevailed in the general election, then pursued a neighborhood oriented strategy through nine and one-half years. He emphasized the common interests of working class and middle class neighborhoods in redistributive issues, particularly

housing costs, that were escalating, by taxing and otherwise extracting surplus from the city's booming office and upscale housing development.

One of Flynn's first policy efforts was to protect or extend rent control; and when he was unable to get this through the city council, he implemented "linkage," which would attach fees to large office buildings in the downtown and provide an affordable housing trust fund. He succeeded in this, and in a series of related moves to increase the stock of affordable housing. In order to build the new units, his administration urged neighborhood organizations to become property developers. With the linkage funds and other help, the capacities of a number of these groups developed dramatically, some at the cost of their earlier protest functions. In a sense it was "participation." But Flynn did not want to make too much of that, and preferred to emphasize how the city had included them as an "alternative growth coalition."

Meanwhile in the neighborhoods there was interest in power sharing. There had been an advisory referendum recommending neighborhood councils, but the sticking point for Flynn was the demand for neighborhood council veto powers over development projects. He vacillated and ultimately withdrew support for the veto in one case; and later did not support a Coalition for Community Control of Development (CCCD) representing a wide and multiracial swath of the city, that sought at least a degree of control.

There was plenty of participatory energy in several Boston neighborhoods. Mel King had fed off it in his mayoral campaign, advocating a "transformative" approach to neighborhood organizations, seeing participation as the key to their authority, and stood as an icon when some contested Flynn administration policies.⁴⁰ The Dudley Street Neighborhood Initiative in Roxbury managed a multi-ethnic coalition of blacks, Cape Verdeans, Latinos and Whites put together initially by organizer Peter Medoff, later led by former Berkeley mayor Gus Newport – both of whom had a leadership style that deferred to and put neighborhood residents to the fore. Similarly, grassroots energy came forth in the Chinese Progressive Association and City Life, a Jamaica Plain neighborhood group, among others.⁴¹ But they were not to find support for power sharing in City Hall: not under Flynn, who resigned the mayoralty in 1993 to become Ambassador to the Vatican, and soon faded from public life. Some had more hope for his successor was city council member Tom Menino who had a perhaps less intrusive style. But Menino, after twenty years, found himself celebrated in Time Magazine as "The Last Of The Big-City Bosses," for holding power close to his vest.⁴²

Santa Monica. Santa Monica's progressive government followed the passage of a strong rent control law in 1979 – a redistributive initiative – with the election of a progressive city council majority led by mayor Ruth Goldway in 1981. But rent control also meant new levels of participation and democracy: the rent control administration was an elected board, support had to be mobilized regularly. This happened because the population was largely renters, and they mobilized when landlords failed to follow through on predicted rent reductions following on the tax caps passed as state "Proposition 13." The city council passed a number of other participatory and redistributive measures – development agreements that extracted day care and other subsidies from developers, and opening up city council meetings to radio listeners. By 2009, despite setbacks over the years, Santa Monicans for Renters Rights (SMRR) had so established itself as supportive of the majority renter population that, despite the evisceration of rent control by the state

legislature, it was winning elections based on renter trust – so redistribution and participatory reforms remained intertwined.

Burlington, VT. Burlington VT is the most successful of the smaller progressive cities. Bernie Sanders, who surprised establishment democrats with his victory in 1981, combined a commitment to equality with support for small businesses. He made a key move establishing a Community Economic Development Office (CEDO) with business support. CEDO was able to establish funding for the Burlington Community Land Trust, that grew internally and through mergers to the point where by 2010 the city estimated that 17 percent of its housing stock was permanently price protected and affordable.⁴³ Sanders resigned to run for Congress in 1989, replaced by his CEDO director Peter Clavelle (1989-1993, 1995-2006), and progressive Robert Kiss (2006-2012). When Kiss resigned Democrat Miro Weinberger (2012-) seemed more determined to serve developer interests in the downtown, though progressives were mounting determined opposition in an evenly divided city council in 2014.⁴⁴

III. Post Millenium Progressive Cities

The results are still unevenly explored for the current period – say, 2000-2014. Not only must “results” be seen in a longer time frame, our own perceptions are least reliable, the closer we are to events. We are left to attempt a tabulation, and speculate.

But in some cities, progressive initiatives that began in the 1970s and 1980s survived into the 2000s. There was still experimentation with elements of industrial policy in Chicago, support for affordable housing in Boston and Chicago; and Community Land Trusts in Burlington VT. Even where their main initiatives were sometimes diluted, “progressives” remained politically viable – that has been the case in Berkeley, Santa Monica, Santa Cruz and perhaps elsewhere. There were new developments, including a few new progressive mayoralities and notable council seats – mostly difficult to evaluate because as recent as the 2013 elections. Networks of progressive mayors and program initiatives also appeared, also difficult to interpret.⁴⁵

Beneath it all, there were changes in political context: the definitive “end of the new deal order” was common parlance by 1990. Externally imposed crises – the 9-11 attacks and the “great recession” began and ended the conservative G.W. Bush presidency, and conservative forces put the political system itself under attack – though unevenly across localities.

Political Context. It would not do justice to the scale of events to think of the post-millennium period as a simple case of the nation “moving to the right.” State level moves like the evisceration of rent control and periodic budget cutting occurred as usual, but the level of organization and focused attack by identifiable conservative forces was a new thing. The best characterization is that of an upset in the balance of classes and interest groups, creating uncertainties all around. The polarization and stasis in Washington had been one manifestation, the rise of Tea Party conservatives in the Republican Party another; the decades long infiltration of state legislatures and finally the rise and diffusion of “neoliberal” policy initiatives may underlie it all. But as in the 1970s, and perhaps even the earlier progressive period, islands of activism and instances of electoral success

and administrative accomplishment appeared. The first step is to catalogue them. Analysis will be preliminary at best.

Madison, Burlington, Berkeley, Santa Monica Adapt. Post-millennium, survivals in the smaller cities are worth attention. Small city progressives had been able to “take over” city halls in several places, one precondition being the existence of demographic or social groups that could form political blocs commitments large enough to transform into candidacies and election victories. The student vote could be decisive in places with significant university presence: a major factor in Berkeley and Madison. Renter constituencies in Berkeley and Santa Monica played a similar role. In all cases there had to be a significant activist presence, perhaps organized as a neighborhood movement; and a forceful – and perhaps lucky – central personality to lead the ticket.

Other cities elected progressive mayors or councils in the 1970s and 1980s, but these cities are remarkable in that they still had them in 2013 -- Burlington’s Progressive Coalition had the mayoralty for all but two years from 1981 through 2013, a span of over three decades. Santa Monicans for Renters Rights had majorities most of the time from 1981 on, as did Berkeley Citizens Action after 1979. Paul Soglin, after an initial mayoral victory in Madison in 1973, held the mayoralty on three separate occasions: 1973-79, 1989-97, and 2011-. But as the initial conditions and issues changed over these three decades we should now ask: what changed, and how did these mayoralties and coalitions adapt?

Berkeley and Santa Monica gentrified so that poor and working class elements in both cities, as well as middle class renters in Santa Monica, became less prominent. The Berkeley case is perhaps typical of many places. Stephen Barton writes:

. . . there has been substantial gentrification, but . . . it’s not clear that the higher income people attracted to Berkeley are actually less progressive than those they replace. Certain the African-American population is down to less than half of what it used to be, and the Asian population is much larger, but perhaps mostly student at this point. I’m not sure it’s fair to say that social justice is less prominent, but it is certainly the case that tax limitation measures mean the City Council is constantly looking for private investment and ways to get community benefits from more intense development.⁴⁶

In Madison, a much larger poor and minority population added to the mix. In all three places mayors paid much more attention to the possibilities offered by developers – to raise the tax base or simply to clean up the environment by modernizing the physical plant. Social justice became a little less prominent, private investment more. Burlington may have experienced some of this change, but overall had a smoother ride and seemed to suffer less change in priorities – at least until 2013, with the new Democrat in the mayoralty, but facing progressive opposition in an evenly divided city council.

Chicago and Boston. The post-millennial fortunes are quite different in Chicago and Boston, most obviously because they are larger cities. The resistance to Flynn and Washington was stronger, perhaps more resilient; and perhaps most able to tolerate the survivals of policies that had been initiated under highly charged conditions, only to become more routine with time, less threatening if only because less prominent.

The Chicago case was poignant, if only for the dramatic changes Washington and Mier nearly accomplished. They bet the house not only on neighborhood constituencies, but also on the survival of significant parts of the manufacturing sector. They failed to save any of the largest steel mills, but they established a neighborhood constituency: many organizations were able to adapt a housing strategy, while others, with significant capacities, supported the retention of smallish manufacturing concerns. Dan Swinney, who had participated in an “Early Warning Project” with the Washington administration in the early 1980s, emerged again in the 1990s, established the Chicago Manufacturing Renaissance Council and was successful with the Austin Polytechnic High School, DuCharme with a city policy establishing PMDs and infrastructure in industrial corridors. The manufacturing part of workforce development finally came together effectively in 2005.⁴⁷ At least some sectors of manufacturing employment began to come back nationally and in Chicago, and by 2010 there were claims that Chicago had evolved “arguably the most ambitious city-based industrial program in the United States.”⁴⁸

But the Daley administration had also begun to see alternative payoffs in a high end real estate strategy and his financial advisors found a way to finance it by securitizing TIFs to sell them on the exploding financial markets of 1995-2005. In 2008 recession struck, in 2010 Daley withdrew from the mayoralty, and in the 2011 election there was practically no mention of Washington’s industrial retention policies; the ideas seemed to be lost to history.

In Boston Flynn, with a city on the verge of a commercial real estate boom as he took office in 1984, took a different course, though equally focused on redistributive justice. With his redevelopment director Stephen Coyle and other officials, Flynn held off on development permissions for eleven major downtown projects until the developers, desperate to begin construction, agreed to support a “linkage” program involving a square foot assessment to a “Neighborhood Housing Trust Fund” and to a worker training program. The support of these real estate interests broke the ideological resistance to other programs. Most importantly the city was able to get the local banks to support mortgage programs in poor neighborhoods, and the city established a panoply of supports for the stressed middle class and working class residents.

Menino, like Daley, ensconced in the successor mayoralty for two decades and distancing himself from Flynn, nevertheless sought to establish, if not improve on some of the housing initiatives he inherited. His less intense but sustained support over a long period allowed neighborhood and other activists to make headway with a stable city hall. The linkage provisions continued to divert investment funds into the affordable housing trust fund, a recent report documents the establishment of inclusionary zoning by executive order in 2000 (it had been an informal policy under Flynn); and more generally an “Inclusionary Development Policy (IDP)” approach to neighborhood projects.⁴⁹ In 2006 the program got mild approval from the Massachusetts Association of Community Development Corporations, finding the city’s production of affordable units relatively modest compared to other cities (121 per year) and falling behind rising costs, while the city lost 18 percent of its population in the 18-34 age cohort in 2000-2004.⁵⁰ By 2013, as Menino was leaving office, the city was growing again; over the longer term it was both diversifying and gentrifying. Waves of immigration had made Boston a “majority-minority city” after 2000, but prices continued to escalate.

In both cities, key elements of programs begun under an overtly progressive mayoralty survived and in some cases matured under successor mayors who had distanced themselves from their predecessors in principle, but who also launched policies that extended initiatives from their predecessors.

New Progressive Cases after 2000. Aside from these continuations in smaller cities, there was little notice of new progressive municipalism after Flynn's departure from Boston in 1993. Then in 2003-05 a small number of activists appeared. In 2003 Dave Cieslewicz won over by then legendary Paul Soglin in a close contest for the mayoralty of Madison, and in two terms he signed a mandatory inclusionary zoning ordinance and a municipal minimum wage that led to a statewide minimum wage in 2005. In 2005 journalist John Nichols saw an "urban archipelago of major metropolitan centers, aging industrial cities and college towns that represent progressive blue islands in what appears on electoral maps to be a red sea of conservatism."⁵¹ Antonio Villagairosa won the mayoralty of Los Angeles in 2005, and Nichols listed a set of other mayors of smaller cities: Dennis Highberger (Lawrence Kansas, 2005-06); Jerry Brown (Oakland, 1999-2007), Tom Barrett (Milwaukee, 2004- . . .); Lois Frankel (West Palm Beach 2003-2011); and Larry Agran (Irvine, CA 2000-04); Pegeen Hanrahan (Gainesville FL 2004-2010) and Native American environmental justice advocate mayor of Cass Lake, MN (2003-2007).

Nichols also noted networks, perhaps the beginnings of serious organization. Some were focused on specific issues, like living-wage laws, ("more than 120 communities nationwide, from Ashland OR to Camden, NJ;" while 134 cities had "...agreed to meet the Kyoto protocol's target of reducing greenhouse emissions." Cities for Progress had emerged from the Institute for Policy Studies' Cities for Peace network with the aim of mobilizing local support on international issues – e.g. the "municipal foreign policy movement."⁵² And Progressive Majority, with funding from labor and progressive donors, was hoping to finance progressive state and local electoral campaigns.⁵³

Most impressive for substantive content – and longevity -- was the New Cities Project, later renamed the Mayors Innovation Project (MIP). It had begun when Cielewicz, frustrated at the apparent triviality of the U.S. Conference of Mayors, joined with University of Wisconsin law professor Joel Rogers, who had been promoting and researching "high road" economic development strategies as director of the Center on Wisconsin Strategies." Cielewicz brought together 12 other mayors in January 2005 at a conference center in Racine, WI, arranged presentations by the likes of former HUD Secretary Henry Cisneros, got the support of the small group and attracted another nine mayors and perhaps 20 key staff and other activists to a June meeting in Chicago. They met twice a year thereafter, averaging 20-30 mayors each time – in 2014 there were 33 in Washington,, DC. With an agenda that included substantive meetings on such topics as

- Education: How can mayors help reduce the achievement gap and get every child a great education?
- Working with Allies: How can you work successfully with groups outside of city hall to advance your agenda?
- Reducing Poverty: Taking a comprehensive approach to fighting poverty
- Energy Efficiency: What does it take to truly be an energy efficient city?

The meeting was dominated by presentations by the mayors themselves, a departure from the earlier approach by experts like Rogers, Bruce Katz of Brookings, others picked from the best policy thinking available. That may have been the mayors' preference in 2005, but now the impression was they had come some distance, or at least had enough going on in their own cities that it was time to exchange ideas, and MIP really was "bottom-up."⁵⁴

The ALICE Project. While a "progressive archipelago" was developing in an limited number – if impressively high achieving -- set of cities, conservative money had been funding the American Legislative Exchange Council (ALEC), initiated in the 1970s by right wing activist funders that provided model laws to a membership of state legislators that it gathered in conferences devoted to enacting state legislation. ALEC's aim – and effect -- was to control of the political process through election "reforms" i.e. gerrymandering districts, enacting strict voter qualifications.

In 2011 Cieslewicz had been defeated for re-election (by Soglin) but Rogers – while MIP continued – launched a separate effort, the American Legislative & Issue Campaign Exchange (ALICE), conceived as "the one-stop web-based public library of progressive state and local laws." By 2013 ALICE volunteers and researchers had included over 1684 model laws, "exemplary" laws that had been "introduced or enacted somewhere" and various types of "support" documents "that help to make the argument for particular laws."⁵⁵ Rogers characterized ALICE as a response to the American Legislative Exchange Council (ALEC) By 2013 the programs ALEC sponsored occasioned alarm among Democrats and political analysts.⁵⁶ Throughout 2012 and 2013 Rogers and others travelled the nation to get interest in ALICE and its database.

Like the Conference on Alternative State and Local Policies in the 1970s, the ALICE project had a strong focus on economic issues in its policy priorities. If ALEC promoted the interests of the "one percent," ALICE hoped to attack inequality at least at the legislative levels. But its "Policy Areas" were quite diverse. Fourteen are listed in the website www.alicelaw.org, which provides policy area cites (often multiple areas) for each example of exemplary or model laws and "supports." In 2013 there were 374 "municipal" of 1684 total such examples in the ALICE database.

ALICE – Municipal	Total	Pct.	ALICE Totals	Total	Pct.
Civil Rights	31	0.05	Civil Rights	156	0.06
Economic Security	37	0.06	Economic Security	217	0.09
Economic and Workforce Development	86	0.15	Economic and Workforce Development	321	0.13
Education	14	0.02	Education	199	0.08
Energy and Environment	87	0.15	Energy and Environment	246	0.10
Government Performance	42	0.07	Government Performance	145	0.06
Health	20	0.03	Health	160	0.06
Immigrant Rights	37	0.06	Immigrant Rights	87	0.03
Infrastructure and Smart Growth	71	0.12	Infrastructure and Smart Growth	161	0.06
Labor Rights and Protections	93	0.16	Labor Rights and Protections	326	0.13
Public Safety	39	0.07	Public Safety	186	0.07
Reproductive Rights	6	0.01	Reproductive Rights	40	0.02
Revenue and Budget	14	0.02	Revenue and Budget	168	0.07
Voting and Elections	13	0.02	Voting and Elections	128	0.05
Totals (Many entries list multiple policy areas)	590	1.00	Totals (Many entries list multiple policy areas)	2540	1.00

The ALICE examples provide some startling similarities to what the Conference on Alternative State and Local Policies did in the 1970s, though at a much larger scale, differently produced and with somewhat different content. The two Readers that Webb and Shearer produced in 1975 and 1976 had a total of 142 entries, of which 42 (30 percent) were listed under “economics” categories: Economy of Cities, Economic Development, Jobs, Controlling Corporations. A more expansive categorization might add the topics: Energy, Taxes, and Public Enterprise: the figures increase to 88 (62 percent) of the total 142 entries in the two volumes.⁵⁷

The ALICE database provides similar “policy area” categories: These are not strictly comparable but roughly seem to be less tilted toward the economies of the states and municipalities surveyed: categories that seem somewhat comparable to the Conference’s interests in “economy” are “Economic and Workforce Development” and “Labor Rights and Protections,” which account for twenty-six percent of the entries. If we add “Energy and Environment” and “Revenue and Budget” the totals for four categories stretch to 43 percent of the 2540 total “policy areas” cited (note that many entries cite more than one

policy area, so there is an assumption here that the over-counts even out proportionally.)
58

Do these numbers indicate a relative dispersal of interest, or at least attention, from the relatively small effort in 1975-76 to the larger one by ALICE in 2012-2013? The main way to corroborate such a suggestion would be to go a bit deeper: read the actual bills and legislation, research the sense of frustration or accomplishment in the cities and states represented. Only the barest suggestions are available at this point. Some observations include:

- ALICE found many “partner organizations” which supplied model laws and “support” documents. They list these in the website. In part these represent, along with the documents supplied to ALICE, the effusion of interests on the “left” political spectrum: perhaps much of it represents “social” policy: poverty, but also frustrated or elevated demands for rights and services such as civil rights, education, health, immigrant rights, infrastructure and smart growth, public safety, reproductive rights, voting and elections. But it also reflects a difference in the way information aggregates and flows throughout the society. I am put in mind of the contrast made by Michael Tomasky in a recent article:
- . . . in the golden era of the establishment, only a few outlets and individuals participated in forming the conventional wisdom. Now, hundreds of websites scream for attention. . . .
- The past generation has also seen. . . the ascendance of a new generation of policy journalists who are less interested in news per se than in information, and who promote experts’ work far more widely than it was promoted a generation ago.⁵⁹
- It was much easier in 2013 for ALICE volunteers to find websites and similarly dispersed sources of information than it was for Webb and Shearer, corresponding by postal mail and travelling from place to place, often in touch by phone but also face to face with a relatively more limited group of informants, themselves tied together by a common movement experience. That they also found a focus testified to some further abilities, perhaps not that much different from what Webb and Shearer – and their correspondents – had.

2013 Elections Won on the Inequality Issue. Several mayoral elections were won in 2013 by candidates who appealed to majorities responsive to the gap between rich and poor, a topic dramatized two years before by the Occupy movement encamped near Wall Street and spread over parks and city squares across the nation. What captured the most attention was the election of Bill de Blasio in New York. Most dramatically, de Blasio had proposed to tax the city’s highest income earners, those making over \$500,000, and use it to establish universal pre-Kindergarten for the city population, thus tying two popular issues.

De Blasio’s election was seen as a harbinger connected to other elections across the nation. The president invited de Blasio and 15 other new mayors to the White House and promised them support in reducing inequality in their cities. De Blasio

said it was clear to him that the fight against inequality—which formed the centerpiece of his campaign—was gaining steam far beyond the five boroughs.

“You can’t have a room full of mayors—literally every corner of the country—all spontaneously saying to the president of the United States the same exact things from their own experience: Something’s going on here ...”⁶⁰

Apart from what de Blasio could hope to accomplish and whether a city as diverse and conflicted as New York could be “progressive” in more than selected topics, was de Blasio’s effect on the previous mayor’s reputation. Michael Bloomberg, who had been mayor for 12 years, even managing to get a third term by getting the city council to abrogate the city’s term limits rules, had previously been seen as “progressive” in that he had adopted and gotten passed legislation limiting smoking, encouraging good food, and improving the environment in some respects. That his administration had also seen a rampant increase in the gap between rich and poor, had been largely ignored until de Blasio made it the center of his campaign. This was important, not simply because it reached New York voters, but because inequality and redistribution had been ritually ignored in policy discussions nationally since at least the 1940s. Politicians who raised questions of redistribution could be effectively silenced by accusations of “class warfare” and references to communism – a tactic by conservatives in both major parties with roots as far back as the 19th century.

IV. Reflections

What continuities, differences exist in the three main periods I have defined for “progressive cities”?⁶¹ One of the better questions that bears upon this one was suggested by Peter Marcuse in a recent blog post:

There’s an elephant clumping about in the discussion of inequality and upward mobility in recent discussions on PLANET, started with comments on the research of Gregory Clark on the upward mobility of the poor. The substantive discussion argely ignores a key point. Inequality and poverty are linked. If you’ll pardon the metaphor, the 1% is the elephant that squashes those underneath it down, flattening those at the bottom into poverty.. But the discussion generally deals only with the condition of the poor, the range of anti- poverty programs designed to help them, and what data shows about their upward mobility

But we need to pay attention to the elephant, not just the blood under its foot, even if we may disagree as to the elephant’s exact shape or weight, or as to the propriety of its actions, and the appropriate policy responses. Every now and then in our discussion the point can be seen in some formulation or analogy: inequality is like a sport, there are winners and losers, the more the one gets, the less the other gets. But just who the winners are, or how they came to win, is not pursued.

That it is a critical matter for planners or anyone concerned with public policy to be concerned with seems to me clear. Everything we do has an equity impact, and if we deal only with the resilience of those under the elephant’s foot, we are contributing to the continuation of inequities we professionally are ethically committed to address; in transportation planning (see the recent Sclar book),

housing policy, mega projects, food quality, environmental controls, health care, design, impact analyses, etc., etc. [Marcuse cites his full blog: “Blog #47, at pmarcuse.wordpress.com, spells out the argument.”]

How would the progressive cities described above, at three different periods over the past century or more, stack up against Marcuse’s question? I think there are two or three answers based on what I have put together in this paper, not always consistent with one another.

On the one hand some progressive mayors and activists did have an analysis of what inequality was and what was causing it. Tom Johnson and the most illustrious others of his time saw the problem in corporate price fixing, particularly on the part of privately owned utilities; and while they tended toward a moralistic answer – just make less profit, and reduce streetcar fares – they also sought remedies like municipal ownership and regulatory control, and were able at least to bargain down fares in some instances. And their legacies included publicly owned utilities of various kinds, not to mention improvements in a large variety of services: food inspection, health services, parks, schools and so on.

The late 20th century progressives were similarly attuned to inequalities and sought redistributive solutions with varying degrees of insight into the underlying systemic issues. Chicago’s efforts at industrial retention, rent control initiatives in Berkeley and Santa Monica were effective until struck down judicially. Boston’s linkage rules were direct levies on real estate profits, and at least broke down the real estate arguments for non-interference; Burlington’s land trust measures – effectively separating the tax on land from that on property improvements went as deep as Henry George’s single tax proposals.

It remains to be seen what analytical force exists in the current wave of redistributive initiatives. New York’s proposals for universal Pre-K, along with such other redistributive proposals as limiting one-sided subsidies to charter schools (at the expense of the traditional public schools), the extension of sick leave rules seem likely to at least extend the debate from simply decrying inequality to the details of acting on it.

Another response to Marcuse would decry his implicit demands as utopian. What we have traditionally sought from politicians is compromise resulting in a minimum of disorder. That is why Marcuse’s elephant is in the room. Politicians who strive for the answers explaining the existence of the poor – even those who simply fight the battle more intensely than most – tend to be forgotten: thus Ray Flynn in Boston, or Harold Washington in Chicago, who fought inequality in different ways, but very hard. The lesson of those campaigns is not that strivers for redistribution are punished, but that in addition they are forgotten. Thus many “progressives” once elected, will not repeat what Washington and Flynn attempted and achieved.

But there is a further twist. If bringing out the elephant is too much to expect of most politicians, even progressive ones, how do we keep the idea of redistribution – or reductions of inequality – alive? Can we at least expect discussion, investigation from academics? Progressive politicians had many supporters and staff members who found niches in universities, many now with tenure, and this part of Nichols’ “blue archipelago”

remains a resource. But it has been a fragile resource, facing barriers and their own inhibitions about connecting with those politicians who could use their help. But Marcuse's question was well aimed – to Planet, a list serve of academics largely servicing professional planning students. Politicians may need to compromise or find politically fruitful paths that are in reality dead ends for progressive values. But what excuse is there for professors with tenure, or workers in parts of academia that are under the sway of academic values?

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- ¹ I propose to survey what these changes were and how they occurred. I refer to previous work and will begin an exploration of two heretofore unexploited data sources: a collection of Readers and reports from the Conference on Alternative State and Local Policies in the 1970s; and a compendium of 1684 items of state and local “progressive” legislation, model ordinances, and other resources collected in 2012 by the ALICE project of the Center on Wisconsin Strategies.
- ² The idea of balance, if not equality, may account for the progressive city’s fascination compared to the fragmenting differentiation of the developing industrial city. I am not here focusing on the city beautiful, although the industrial city did evidence a physical fragmentation and a kind of ugliness. I do not mean the efficient city, though that was certainly an important goal of those calling themselves “progressives” in the early 20th century. What I think attracted the gaze of important segments of the public and intelligentsia though out various periods was the promise that different classes might live in harmony and set common goals through a democratic process. Dealing with inequality was a pre-requisite for such a local democracy, which might also feature changes in government structure or procedures.
- They tended to middle class and sought a balance among classes. They tolerated and even respected “radicals,” but did not themselves adopt that label – rather seeking to bridge diverse constituencies. They saw “capitalism” as problematic – often motivated by particularly egregious attacks on the social fabric that they could exploit to bring opposition together.
- ³ Addams, Jane. "The Subjective Necessity for Social Settlements." Twenty Years at Hull House, (New York: Macmillan, 1954) pp. 67-76; Melvin G. Holli, Reform in Detroit: Hazen S. Pingree and Urban Politics(New York: Oxford University Press, 1969; Eugene C. Murdock, Tom Johnson of Cleveland. Dayton, OH: Wright State University Press, 1994.
- ⁴ David Lowery, “Answering the Public Choice Challenge: A Neoprogressive Research Agenda.” Governance: An International Journal of Policy and Administration, Vol. 12, [Mosher 1968, p. 65] [Stillman 1991, p. 48]

No 1, January 1999, pp. 29-55, pp. 31-32.

- ⁵ Ernest S. Griffith, A History of American City Government: The Progressive Years and their Aftermath, 1900-1920. (New York: Praeger “Publishers, 1974).
- ⁶ Griffith, p. 32; quoting Daniel Levine, lists a relatively broad scope in the following components of progressivism: “(a) social justice (especially from the settlements and exponents of the social gospel; (2) the labor movement; (3) urban reforming organizations of business and professional men; (4) advocates of the greater use of

governmental countervailing power; (5) rural America, with LaFollette its chief voice; and (6) social justice in the rural South.” Variety in Reform Thought (Madison, 1964), p. 61.

⁷ Griffith, p. 2.

⁸ In Cleveland, Johnson won praise when the city took over the privately owned transit system, creating the Municipal Traction Company—which came to a quick and disappointing end when its manager imposed strict labor rules and salary cuts, the backlash so intense that the operation was quickly terminated, and Johnson effectively lost power and the next election under fire from both labor and the business backed opposition. [Griffith; Foner]. Griffith’s final word on Johnson, who died a year later, was poignant: . . . Meanwhile, the state government was doing what it could to hamper and defeat him, and the city’s business establishment did what it could to break him. In 1909 they succeeded. He died in 1911, and was buried alongside Henry George. [Griffith, p. 148]

⁹ Griffith, pp. 147-148. Johnson also had some imagination and common sense: “In dealing with prostitution, he summoned the madams to his office and told them that, if they would rob no customers, pay off no policemen, and keep reasonably quiet hours, . . . he would let them do business. To irate clergymen, he said he did not know how to abolish prostitution, but he would not permit it to corrupt politics.” Ibid.

¹⁰ Griffith, p. 12.

¹¹ Griffith, History, 1870-1900, Chap. 12.

¹² Griffith, p. 13

¹³ Griffith, p. 14

¹⁴ James Weinstein, The Long Default (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 2003)

¹⁵ Weinstein, p. 53.

¹⁶ Weinstein, p. 59

¹⁷ Weinstein, p. 60

¹⁸ Gordon, David M. “Capitalist Development and the History of American Cities,” William H. Tabb and Larry Sawers, Marxism and the Metropolis (New York: Oxford University Press, 1978), p. 40. The Gutman citation is Herbert Gutman, “The Worker’s Search for Power: Labor in the Gilded Age,” in H. Wayne Morgan, ed., The Gilded Age: A Reappraisal (Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 1963), at pp. 11, 65, respectively..

¹⁹ Sudhir Hazareesingh. “Defining the Republican Good Life: Second Empire Municipalism and the Emergence of the Third Republic. French History, Vol 11, No. 3

(1997), pp. 310-337. Stephen Barton notes: Gilded Age and Progressive Era reformers in the U.S. looked particularly to the U.K. and Germany. J. Stitt Wilson visited U.K. several times. See chapters 4 & 5 in Daniel Rodgers, Atlantic Crossings: Social Politics in a Progressive Age, Harvard U.P. 1998. Personal communication, 20 September 2013.

- ²⁰ Manuel Castells, "Cities and Revolution: The Commune of Paris, 1871," in Castells, The City and the Grassroots: A Cross-Cultural theory of Urban Social Movements. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1983, pp. 15-26.
- ²¹ What may have emerged in post-1871 Paris was a creative tension as middle and working class consciousness seemed to merge together – at least that is what the young Patrick Geddes saw in 1879 and carried back to his Edinburgh city "development" work as a new theory of "cooperative evolution," later an activist city planning practice that was to inspire professionals and others for decades. On Geddes and Howard, I am relying in part on Pierre Clavel, "Ebenezer Howard and Patrick Geddes: Two Approaches to City Development." Kermit C. Parsons and David Schuyler, eds., From Garden City to Green City: The Legacy of Ebenezer Howard. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins, 2002, pp. 38-57.
- ²² Dolores Hayden, The Grand Domestic Revolution: A History of Feminist Designs for American Homes, Neighborhoods and Cities. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1981. On Stein, see Kermit C. Parsons, ed., The Writings of Clarence S. Stein : Architect of The Planned Community. Baltimore, Md. : Johns Hopkins University Press, 1998. A related comment on the manuscript comes from Stephen Barton, communicated by e-mail September 20, 2013: "Gilded Age and Progressive Era reformers in the U.S. looked particularly to the U.K. and Germany. J. Stitt Wilson visited U.K. several times. See chapters 4 & 5 in Daniel Rodgers, Atlantic Crossings: Social Politics in a Progressive Age, Harvard U.P. 1998."
- ²³ Otis L. Graham, Jr., An Encore for Reform: The Old Progressives and the New Deal (New York: Oxford University Press, 1967).
- ²⁴ Griffith, p. 135
- ²⁵ Gordon, op cit.
- ²⁶ Not that there were no survivors of the progressive campaigns, or precursors for what developed later. Otis Graham has catalogued the efforts of a segment of progressive activists who resurfaced under Roosevelt and New Deal programs. See Otis L. Graham, Jr., An Encore for Reform: The Old Progressives and the New Deal (New York: Oxford University Press, 1967). There were certainly notable efforts, but they were in spots: the RPAA when Clarence Stein assembled an intellectual coterie in New York that, later, made contributions under New York governor Al Smith in the 1920s and in federal programs in the 1930s.

Stephen Barton comments: Perhaps, but I would challenge this view of municipal stagnation. Cities had very limited capacity to act and very limited resources in 1920,

although the progressives had fought hard to build up more effective and active municipal administrations. NYC under LaGuardia, with the help of funding from the New Deal, became a new national model for what cities could do during the late 1930s and 1940s, with La Guardia serving as President of the League of Cities for quite a few years. Similarly, San Francisco began to municipalize its street railway systems prior to 1920, but most of the work was done in the 1920s. The conceptual change may date from the Progressives, but the actual institutionalization was done much later, so that by the 1950s and 1960s we could all just take for granted that local government had tremendous administrative capacity and could do a lot more than it was currently doing. [E-mail communication to the author, September 20, 2013.]

- ²⁷ In the United States in the 1950s and 1960s, the black middle class at least initially saw a future as a “beloved community” of blacks and whites living in harmony – and the decisive event of the civil rights movement was arguably the 1964 SNCC Mississippi project, which mobilized nearly 1000 white college students to participate in voting and education campaigns there. Much of the rest of the 1960s and a decade or so after included attempts at small and large scale bi-racial and multi-class organization – culminating in electoral campaigns that captured control of city governments in the name of “progressivism” -- black mayors in places like Gary, Cleveland, Atlanta and eventually Chicago and Los Angeles in the 1980s and 1990s.
- ²⁸ Doug McAdam, *Freedom Summer*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1988, p. 166. McAdam is quoting “at least one volunteer who knew Savio before and after the summer” –p. 165
- ²⁹ **ERAP ref.: Sale? Miller? Comment on white-black split after 1964.**
- ³⁰ Four boxes of reports and papers now constitute the Conference on Alternative State and Local Policies Collection at the Division of Rare and Manuscript Collections (RMC) of the Cornell University Library, while subsequent and related city and state experience are represented in the larger collection on “Progressive Cities and Neighborhood Planning” – cities like Berkeley, Burlington, Cleveland, Hartford, Santa Monica and others in the United States and abroad. The guide for the entire collection is at: <http://rmc.library.cornell.edu/EAD/htmldocs/RMA03414.html>.
- ³¹ The Cornell University Library (RMC) has now posted over 100 items from the Madison and Austin conference Readers at: <http://ecommons.cornell.edu/handle/1813/29731>
- ³² Unless otherwise specified, the following accounts are drawn from Pierre Clavel, *Activists in City Hall: the Progressive Response to the Reagan Era in Boston and Chicago* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2010); and *The Progressive City: Planning and Participation, 1969-1984* (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 1986). For details and updates on these and other cities, see the website: www.progressivecities.org; and related material in the Division of Rare and Manuscript Collections, Cornell University Library: [Progressive Cities and Neighborhood Planning Collection, #15-2-3414](#).

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- ³³ Eve Bach, et al., The Cities Wealth : Programs for Community Economic Control in Berkeley, California / written by the Community Ownership Organizing Project, Eve Bach ... [et al.]. Washington, D.C. : National Conference on Alternative State and Local Public Policies, 2nd edition 1976
- ³⁴ On Chicago, see Activists in City Hall, Chapters 5-7.
- ³⁵ Larry Bennett, "Harold Washington's Chicago: Placing a Progressive Administration in Context." Social Policy, Fall 1988, pp. 22-28. An exhaustive review is in Kenneth Reardon, Local economic development in Chicago 1983-1987 : the reform efforts of Mayor Harold Washington. PhD Dissertation, Cornell University, 1990.
- ³⁶ Interview, Mier and Moe, May 9 and 10, 1989. This later was incorporated as part of Robert Mier and Kari Moe, "Decentralized Development: From Theory to Practice," in Pierre Clavel and Wim Wiewel, eds., Harold Washington and the Neighborhoods (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 1993), pp. 64-99.
- ³⁷ Ducharme's experience is described in "Planned Manufacturing Districts: How a Community Initiative Became City Policy" in Harold Washington and the Neighborhoods, pp. 221-237; and see also Joel Rast, Remaking Chicago: The Political Origins of Industrial Change (DeKalb, IL: Northern Illinois University Press, 1999).
- ³⁸ On Ducharme's work as industrial development officer under Daley, see Rast, pp. 147-149.
- ³⁹ Rachel Weber, "Selling City Futures: The Financialization of Urban Redevelopment Policy." Economic Geography.86 (3): 251-274 July 2010.
- ⁴⁰ Marie Kennedy and Chris Tilly, with Mauricio Gaston, "Transformative Populism and the Development of Community of Color," in Joseph Kling and Prudence Posner, eds., Dilemmas of Activism (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1990), pp. 302-324.
- ⁴¹ Peter Medoff and Holly Sklar, Streets of Hope: The Fall and Rise of an Urban Neighborhood (Boston: South End Press, 1994).
- ⁴² Time, September 24, 2013
- ⁴³ Personal communication from John Davis, who had gotten this from Brian Pine, a Burlington city official: "2,700, or 17%, of Burlington's 16,000 housing units are in the social sector." May 1, 2009.
- ⁴⁴ One prominent progressive said: "Burlington now has a pro-developer Dem as mayor, who seems intent on turning our downtown into a luxury enclave for affluent professionals." By March 2014 progressives had gotten an independent and a Republican to join their own five members of the City Council, for a total of seven of fourteen seats in resisting the mayor's agenda. Communication to the author from a third party informant, March 3, 2014.
- ⁴⁵ For lack of first hand information, I have not mentioned Richmond, CA, but have seen Alex Schafran and Lisa Feldstein. "Black, Brown, White and Green: Race, Land Use and Environmental Politics in a Changing Richmond," in Social Justice in the Suburbs (working title), ed. Christopher Neidt, Temple University Press, 2013; nor Binghamton,

NY though having the benefit of Sean Bennett's graduate student exit project paper, "Binghamton's neighborhood assemblies : creating opportunities for partnership and empowerment" (Cornell University, 2009). Both mayoralties began after 2000 and remain in office in 2013.

- ⁴⁶ Communication to the author, unattributed Berkeley informant, September 20, 2013.
- ⁴⁷ Gregory Schrock, *Taking Care of Business? Connecting Workforce and Economic Development in Chicago*. PhD Thesis, University of Illinois at Chicago, 2010, pp. 189-215; Schrock, "Reworking Workforce Development: Chicago's Sectoral Workforce Centers," *Economic Development Quarterly* 27 (3): 163-178.
- ⁴⁸ D. Bradford Hunt and Jon B. DeVries, *Planning Chicago*, (Chicago: American Planning Association, 2013), p. 171.
- ⁴⁹ Aspasia Xypolia, *Investing (in) Equity: How Can Urban Development Internalize Social Cost?* MCP Thesis, Department of Urban Studies and Planning, Massachusetts Institute of Technology, May 19, 2011, p. 64..
- ⁵⁰ Massachusetts Association of Community nDevelopment Corporations, *Building Better: Recommendations for Boston's Inclusionary Development Policy*, May 2006.
- ⁵¹ John Nichols, "Progressive Cities in a Conservative Sea." *The Nation*, June 20, 2005, pp.. 13-19.
- ⁵² The website, www.citiesforprogress.org/ ca. 2008 banner was "Cities for Progress is a growing network of locally-elected officials and community-based activists working together for social change. CFP is a network that incorporates local, national and global approaches to issues that affect us in our own communities."
- ⁵³ Nichols, p. 16. By 2005 Progressive Majority was turning its attention to state races and, with offices in six states it had grown in capacity to field 208 candidates and win 118 races in 2012. But they were not primarily active in municipal elections.
- ⁵⁴ The sessions were backed up by a 328 page briefing book, and there was evidence a larger group than the mayors actually attending -- by 2014, the Mayors Innovation Project counted over 150 cities that had at one time or another been involved in its meetings.
- ⁵⁵ References to ALICE come from www.alicelaw.org unless otherwise noted.
- ⁵⁶ Elizabeth Drew, "Stranglehold on Our Politics," *New York Review of Books*, September 26, 2013, pp. 61-64.
- ⁵⁷ "Differently produced" raises questions I can only partly answer. Shearer and Webb collected examples of laws, bills (proposed laws), press clips and staff memoranda through personal contacts and relying on perhaps a decade of circulation through cities and their own journalistic backgrounds. Rogers, over three decades later, found a different municipal and state politics. Despite ALEC's achievements, there were "progressives" in the legislatures and the cities, but also he was able to mobilize a network of colleagues in the law schools, who helped tap dozens or hundreds of volunteers, and (one can assume) these had access not only to whatever personal

networks there were, but also to the internet. Whether the process is further documented, I do not know.

⁵⁸ The comparison is compiled from the data cited earlier for the Conference Readers, and from www.alicelaw.org, in the following table. I have roughly categorized topics into “primary” and “secondary” economic development categories – I hope these are self evident:

CASLP Reader 1975 and 1976	Total	Bills, Ord.
E Economy of cities	10 0.07	4
E Economic Development	8 0.06	2
E Jobs	6 0.04	3
E Controlling Corporations	5 0.04	3
E Economic Development *	13 0.09	2
A Energy	20 0.14	13
A Taxes	2 0.01	1
A Energy	7 0.05	3
A Tax Reform	11 0.08	1
A Public Enterprise	6 0.04	1
Land and Housing	5 0.04	2
Health	2 0.01	2
Long Range Policy	2 0.01	0
Neighborhood government	4 0.03	2
Criminal Justice	4 0.03	0
Government Reform	7 0.05	2
Arts	2 0.01	0
Education	2 0.01	0
Womens Legislation	1 0.01	1
Food, Land and Growth	10 0.07	3
Health	6 0.04	2
Political/Long Range Program	9 0.06	0
	142 1.00	47

- One item in the Madison Reader contains 13 bills

ALICE Totals		Total	Pct.	Bills, Ord.
A	Energy and Environment (246)	246	0.10	246
A	Revenue and Budget (168)	168	0.07	168
E	Economic and Workforce Development (321)	321	0.13	321
E	Labor Rights and Protections (326)	326	0.13	326
	Civil Rights (156)	156	0.06	156
	Economic Security (217)	217	0.09	217
	Education (199)	199	0.08	199
	Government Performance (145)	145	0.06	145
	Health (160)	160	0.06	160
	Immigrant Rights (87)	87	0.03	87
	Infrastructure and Smart Growth (161)	161	0.06	161
	Public Safety (186)	186	0.07	186
	Reproductive Rights (40)	40	0.02	40
	Voting and Elections (128)	128	0.05	128
		2540	1.00	2540

e: central to economic policy

a: secondarily economic policy topics

⁵⁹ Michael Tomasky, "Our Town." New York Review of Books, September 26, 2013. P. 30.

⁶⁰ Jill Colvin, "Bill de Blasio Walks Away From White House Meeting With Sweeping National Hopes." December 13, 2013: <http://politicker.com/2013/12/bill-de-blasio-walks-away-from-white-house-meeting-with-sweeping-national-hopes/>