The New Regionalism

Key Characteristics of an Emerging Movement

Stephen M. Wheeler

This article analyzes the emergence of a "new regionalism" and situates this movement within the historical evolution of regional planning. Key characteristics include (1) a focus on specific territories and spatial planning; (2) a response to the particular problems of the postmodern metropolitan region; (3) a holistic perspective that integrates planning specialties as well as environmental, equity, and economic goals; (4) a renewed emphasis on physical planning, urban design, and sense of place; and (5) a more activist or normative stance on the part of planners. The implementation of new regionalist concepts is likely to come about not through top-down regional government, but through incremental development of social capital, institutions, ad hoc partnerships, and frameworks of incentives and mandates between existing levels of government.

Wheeler, AICP, is a lecturer in the Department of City and Regional Planning at the University of California at Berkeley and a consultant in the areas of smart growth, urban design, and sustainable development. He received Ph.D. and M.C.P. degrees from U.C. Berkeley and a B.A. from Dartmouth College.

Since the early 1990s, there has been a dramatic resurgence of interest in regional planning in North America, particularly at the metropolitan level. Many planning practitioners, academics, and members of the general public have come to see regional strategies as essential in dealing with current problems related to growth management, environmental protection, equity,[1] and quality of life. Recent movements for New Urbanism, smart growth, livable communities, sustainable development, and improved equity within metropolitan areas all have strong implications for regional planning and design. Politicians, planners, or activists have launched regional initiatives in areas such as Minneapolis–St. Paul, Portland (OR), Seattle, the San Francisco Bay Area, New York, Salt Lake City, Atlanta, Toronto, and Vancouver (BC) as well as the State of California. A tide of new literature has appeared on the subject.[2]

Observers in both North America and the United Kingdom have noted the emergence of a "new regionalism," and sessions at Association of Collegiate Schools of Planning conferences have sought to explore this subject. However, this new movement has yet to be defined or systematically analyzed. Accordingly, this article seeks to outline key characteristics of a new regionalism and discuss its implications for planning practice and pedagogy. The analysis presented here is based on a review of recent literature, contemporary regional planning initiatives, and historical writings on regionalism.

The term *new regionalism* is not itself new. For many decades historians, scholars of literature, political scientists, sociologists, and planners have used it occasionally in different contexts. For example, University of North Carolina sociologists Howard W. Odum and Harry Estill Moore used the label as long ago as 1938 to refer to the then-current synthesis of cultural and political regionalism (Odum & Moore, 1938, p. 3). However, this term has come to the fore increasingly since the mid 1990s. Todd Swanstrom (1995) and Manuel Pastor (Pastor et al., 2000) used it to refer to a new focus on coordinated central-city and suburban economic development that is geared to

reducing disparities in income and tax bases. H. V. Savitch and Ronald K. Vogel (2000b, p. 198) likewise emphasize reducing gaps in economic welfare between central cities and suburbs and enhancing the ability of metropolitan regions to compete in the global economy. Ann Markusen (1995) has applied the term more generally to "new lines of inquiry" (p. 323) established since the 1960s that explore uneven regional development, deindustrialization, and other economic dynamics. The newly formed California Center for Regional Leadership (2001) touts new regionalism as a holistic planning approach "based on the interconnectedness of economic, environmental, and social systems" (p. 1) to be applied at various geographic scales. Similarly, in their essay, "Why Now Is the Time to Rethink Regionalism," Alvin Rosenbaum and Marcy Mermel (1995) focus on new recognitions of interdependency within decentralizing urban landscapes, arguing that "the new regionalism is the recognition that the people of the world have been pulling apart but also are pulling together in new combinations" (p. 31). In their recent book *The Regional City*, Peter Calthorpe and William Fulton (2001) argue for a new synthesis of physical, social, and economic planning focusing on the metropolitan region. Meanwhile, British scholars have employed the same term quite differently to refer to the establishment of new political bodies such as the Scottish Parliament and the Welsh and Northern Ireland Assemblies (Thomas & Kimberley, 1995; Tomaney & Ward, 2000) and to the establishment of Regional Development Agencies by the Blair government in the late 1990s (Nathan, 2000). These British agencies have been directed to develop a regional sustainability agenda that mirrors the broad concerns of many current North American regionalists.

Clearly there is much interest these days in redefining regional planning in ways that broaden its thematic focus and concentrate on specific geographical regions. I argue here that these recent perspectives on regionalism are related and that their commonalities shed light on current regional challenges—in particular the need to integrate physical planning, urban design, and equity planning with the focus on regional economic geography that characterized regional planning during the second half of the 20th century.

Historical Background

To understand the current wave of interest in regional strategies, it is useful to look at past eras of regionalism and how the philosophies and agendas of regional planners evolved during the 20th century. The following section and Table 1 summarize some of the main eras and perspectives.

Early 20th-Century Ecological Regionalism

Regional planning was first conceptualized as a field in the early 20th century by thinkers such as Patrick Geddes and Lewis Mumford (e.g., Geddes, 1915/1949; Luccarelli, 1995; Mumford, 1925, 1938; Sussman, 1976), who took a holistic and normative approach to the study of large geographical areas (principally cities and their hinterlands). At about the same time, other groups such as the New York Regional Planning Association took a more pragmatic look at the physical planning of metropolitan areas. Robert Fishman (2000) labels these two viewpoints the regionalist and metropolitanist traditions. Both reached their heights in the 1920s. The latter was the dominant establishment view focused on pragmatic metropolitan improvements, and the former was a more idealistic perspective calling for urban decentralization. In Fishman's view, both forms of early regionalism failed to achieve their objectives. Metropolitanist planning supported disastrous urban renewal and public housing programs, while regionalist efforts to promote urban decentralization helped to create unforeseen problems with suburban sprawl.

Regional Science and Economic Geography

As social scientists and economists increasingly influenced planning after World War II, the regional planning agenda shifted away from questions of urban form and physical planning toward concerns with regional economic geography. Walter Isard (1975) and others founded the discipline of *regional science* in the late 1940s and used quantitative tools to explore economic aspects of regional development. In their classic volume *Regional Development and Planning*, John Friedmann and William Alonso (1964) referred to the region as an "economic landscape" (p. 1). Friedmann wrote that regional planning was concerned mainly with "problems of resources and economic development" (p. 497).

Marxist regionalism emerged in the 1970s with the writings of David Harvey, Manuel Castells, and others, adding a critique of power and social dynamics to analyses of regional economic development (e.g., Castells, 1977, 1983; Harvey, 1973). Regional environmental agencies and initiatives also came on the scene in the 1960s and 1970s, and in the United States, metropolitan councils of government were set up to provide at least a minimum of regional coordination. Political scientists continued a long debate on the best institutional arrangements for metropolitan governance (e.g., Barlow, 1991; Coulter, 1967; Danielson & Doig, 1982; Jones, 1942; Savitch & Vogel, 1996; Self, 1982; Wood, 1961). In the more conservative 1980s, regional planning in North America and Europe suffered from official disinterest. An

TABLE 1. Historical eras of regional planning.

Era	Key figures	Characteristics
Ecological regionalism (early 20th century)	Geddes, Howard, Mumford, MacKaye	Concerned with problems of the overcrowded 19th-century industrial city. Tried to balance city and countryside. Relatively holistic, normative, and place-oriented approach.
Regional science (late 1940s to present)	Isard, Alonzo, Friedmann	Emphasized regional economic development, quantitative analysis, and social science methods.
Neo-Marxist regional economic geography (late 1960s to present)	Harvey, Castells, Massey, Sassen	Developed analysis of power and social movements within the region.
Public choice regionalism (1960s to present; most dominant in the 1980s)	Tiebout, Ostrom, Gordon, Richardson	Analyzed region in terms of a free-market version of neo-classical economics.
New regionalism	Calthorpe, Rusk, Downs, Yaro, Hiss, Orfield, Katz, Pastor	Concerned with environment and equity as well as economic development. Focused on specific regions and the problems of postmodern metropolitan landscapes. Often relatively place-oriented; often action-oriented and normative.

ideology of public choice predominated, rationalizing the fragmentation of political authority within metropolitan regions on grounds of providing individuals with a choice of tax and service levels in different jurisdictions.

Recent Regionally Oriented Movements

In the early 1990s, concern about suburban sprawl, traffic congestion, central city/suburban inequities, environmental degradation, and the sterility and homogeneity of the built landscape blossomed into a range of new planning movements, all of which had profound regional planning implications.[3] A new consensus around a revised set of physical planning principles at regional, neighborhood, and site scales emerged at this time. Most strongly expressed by the Congress for the New Urbanism (CNU), which convened for the first time in October 1993, this new physical planning agenda influenced movements for livable communities, smart growth, and sustainable development. In 1996, CNU members produced the Charter of the New Urbanism, which emphasized the need to coordinate urban design changes at different scales, beginning with that of the metropolitan region (Congress for the New Urbanism, 2000). Beginning in the early 1990s, the most regionally oriented of the CNU's founders, Peter Calthorpe, consulted extensively within metropolitan regions such as Portland, San Diego, Salt Lake City, and the San Francisco Bay Area, and published two major works on regional physical

planning (Calthorpe, 1993; Calthorpe & Fulton, 2001).

The focus of many regionalist efforts at this time turned to managing metropolitan growth. The "quiet revolution" of growth management initiatives, which had begun in the 1970s, produced second- and third-generation policy frameworks in states such as Oregon, New Jersey, Florida, and Vermont (Porter, 1992). By the mid 1990s, concern about growth management had grown into a national movement, often using the banner of "smart growth." Such growth management efforts inevitably raised questions of regional planning, since in the absence of regional coordination, initiatives by local jurisdictions could easily be undercut by neighboring communities (Daniels, 1999; Downs, 1994). The 1991 federal Intermodal Surface Transportation Efficiency Act (ISTEA; 1991) and its 1998 successor, the Transportation Equity Act for the 21st Century (TEA-21; 1998), also helped catalyze more coordinated regional planning by giving metropolitan planning organizations increased flexibility in funding transit-supportive urban design and land use planning.

"Livable communities" became another planning buzz word throughout North America in the 1990s. Although often focused on small-scale urban design improvements, livability initiatives depend on regional action to strengthen urban centers and change transportation priorities (Lennard et al., 1997). "Sustainable development" also became a popular planning goal at

this time, and was widely considered to include regional efforts to limit sprawl, create compact communities, revitalize existing urban centers, produce more equitable distribution of resources, preserve natural ecosystems, and reduce resource use, pollution, and automobile use (Beatley & Manning, 1997; Wheeler, 2000).

A parallel movement that gathered steam in the 1990s called for improved equity within metropolitan regions. Authors such as Rusk (1993), Orfield (1997), and powell (2000) advocated new policies to reduce income and resource disparities between suburbs and central cities. This concern was shared by scholars such as Altshuler et al. (1999), Greenstein and Wiewel (2000), Pastor et al. (2000), and Savitch and Vogel (2000a). Regional tax sharing, as practiced to a partial extent in the Minneapolis–St. Paul region since 1975, was one commonly suggested remedy for such disparities; another was Rusk's proposal that municipal boundaries be extended to include suburbs, which would equalize tax resources across large geographical areas. Meanwhile, environmental justice advocates such as Bullard (1990, 2000) documented the inequitable distribution of locally unwanted land uses within metropolitan regions.

Many researchers at this time stressed the economic interdependence of suburbs and central cities (e.g., Ledebur & Barnes, 1993; Savitch, 1993), as well as the importance of "citistates" in the new global economy (Peirce, 1993). Following decades of disappointing attempts to develop comprehensive regional institutions, political scientists catalogued a range of flexible regional governance strategies that could take the place of large, top-down regional institutions, which were not seen as politically feasible in most places (Altshuler et al., 1999; Barlow, 1991; Dodge, 1996; Savitch & Vogel, 2000b; Sharpe, 1995; Wannop, 1995; Warren et al., 1990).

These new contributions to regionalism, often coming from outside academia, caused much soul searching among regional scientists and others grounded in previous versions of regionalism. A debate arose within regional science about the extent to which its methods and orientation were still relevant (e.g., Dear, 1995; Isserman, 1993; Markusen, 1995). The general conclusion was that much remains to be done to respond "to the demand for political relevance and contributions to the quality of regional life that have continually been pressed since the 1960s" (Markusen, 1995, p. 320).

Characteristics of the New Regionalism

Clearly, the regionally oriented planning movements of the past decade represent a variety of viewpoints, and they face formidable institutional and polit-

ical obstacles if they are to have practical effect. However, many recent regional initiatives share common characteristics that are likely to constitute the outlines of a new conception of regional planning. In contrast to much regionalism during the second half of the 20th century, the new approach

- focuses on specific territories and spatial planning;
- tries to address problems created by the growth and fragmentation of postmodern metropolitan regions;
- takes a more holistic approach to planning that often integrates planning specialties such as transportation and land use as well as environmental, economic, and equity goals;
- emphasizes physical planning, urban design, and sense of place as well as social and economic planning; and
- often adopts a normative or activist stance.

These key elements of the new regionalism are described in more detail below.

Key Elements

A Focus on Specific Territories and Spatial Planning. For Patrick Geddes and most other regionalists in the 19th and early 20th centuries, the "region" was the city and its surrounding terrain, and urbanized areas within this region were relatively compact, monocentric, and clearly defined. For postwar regional theorists such as William Isard, William Alonso, and John Friedmann, the region often became a much larger, less clearly defined economic territory. Some geographers have argued that the dimension of "space" itself disappeared from mid-20th-century regional debates, and authors such as Lefebvre (1974) and Soja (1989) have argued for its reinclusion. In 1979, Friedmann and Clyde Weaver stated their belief that the next wave of regional planning would have to emphasize "territory" as opposed to "function" (Friedmann & Weaver, 1979). This revival of spatial focus and attention to place within the region does seem to be happening. Metropolitan areas and other specific geographical regions such as the Sierra Nevada mountain range, the Lake Tahoe Basin, the Chesapeake Bay, the Connecticut River Valley, the New Jersey Pinelands, and the Columbia River Gorge National Scenic Area have received renewed attention in regionalist literature, professional planning, and advocacy movements (Richmond, 2000). Regional growth management planning in the Portland metropolitan region is particularly well known; parallel efforts (often aided by state government) have been undertaken with varying degrees of success in other metropolitan regions such as Salt Lake City, Seattle, Vancouver, Minneapolis,

San Diego, Atlanta, and South Florida. Although they are certainly not found in all metropolitan regions, the rise of such initiatives—allied with movements such as smart growth—helps bring regional planning back to the spatial focus common to both metropolitanists and regionalists 80 years ago.

A Response to the Problems of Postmodern Metropolitan Regions. The postmodern metropolitan region is a vastly larger, more complex, and differently structured place than urban areas of the early 1900s (Dear, 2000; Ellin, 1996; Kling et al., 1991). It is enormous in physical extent, increasingly polycentric, fragmented politically, and often highly diverse demographically—a veritable mosaic in terms of both physical form and social structure. Terms such as "edge city," "suburban clusters," "exurban sprawl," and "collage city" have come into existence to explain the new landscape patterns (Garreau, 1991; Moudon & Hess, 2000; Rowe & Coetter, 1978).

To take one example, Figure 1 shows that the Toronto metropolitan region—referred to in recent years as the "Greater Toronto Area"—has expanded about three times as much in the past 50 years as in its first 160. As in many metropolitan regions, the strongly monocentric, early-20th-century urban landscape at the core has been transformed into a much larger, polynucleated metropolitan region with edge cities containing large concentrations of offices and retail stores. One suburb alone (Mississauga) contains more than 600,000 residents. On a neighborhood scale, the looping streets and large-scale, homogenous land uses of the newer suburbs represent a different urban pattern than can be found in the older, gridded central area. The politics of the outer belt is different, too, forming the main base of support in the mid-to-late 1990s for conservative Ontario premier Mike Harris (one of whose first acts in office was to dissolve the old City of Toronto, with its progressive electoral base, and amalgamate it with close-in suburbs). Now the region's urban growth is spreading south toward neighboring cities and threatens to form a continuous sprawl of development around the southwestern end of Lake Ontario. One local commentator has described the current metropolitan region as "Vienna surrounded by Phoenix" (Juri Pill, quoted in Cervero, 1998, p. 89).

Jurisdictional fragmentation has made the postmodern metropolis far less governable than metropolitan regions 50 years ago, so that simple regional government models are less feasible. Consequently, the new regionalism requires a more sophisticated understanding of a range of governance options, as well as careful analysis of social movements and the development of social capital within the region (e.g., see Foster, 2000). A new understanding of differences between older, inner-ring suburbs and newer, outer-ring suburbs has also emerged, leading to the possibility of political coalitions between center cities and older suburbs facing similar problems of maintaining tax base and services (Orfield, 1997).

Because of the dispersed nature of the postmodern regional landscape, the current metropolitan physical planning agenda is 180 degrees from the agenda of regionalists a century ago. Reurbanization, not deconcentration, is a main goal. If, as Sir Peter Hall (1998) maintains, 20th-century planning "essentially represents a reaction to the evils of the nineteenth-century city" (p. 7), then 21st-century planning may be organized around attempts to deal with the sprawl, traffic, environmental damage, inequities, and placelessness of 20th-century modern and postmodern regional landscapes.

A Holistic Approach that Integrates Planning Specialties as well as Environmental, Equity, and Economic Goals. The focus on economic development that dominated regionalism for most of the post–World War II period has shifted fundamentally, even within regional science, as planners seek to balance environmental, equity, and livability concerns with economic objectives. Economic growth per se has in fact become suspect in some regions, since it can bring on a population boom, drive up housing prices, generate excessive automobile traffic, exacerbate jobs/housing imbalances, and lead to many other quality-of-life problems. California's Silicon Valley is one of the most extreme recent examples of this situation—a worldwide model of regional economic development that nevertheless suffers from poverty, a skewed distribution of wealth, unaffordable housing, excessive traffic, dilapidated public spaces, and environmental degradation.

Environmental and equity goals have come to the fore. The "3 Es" of sustainable development (environment, equity, and economy) are the classic expression of this new balance (Campbell, 1996). They have been explicitly endorsed by citizen-led regional planning efforts such as the Bay Area Alliance for Sustainable Development and the Regional Plan Association of New York and New Jersey, whose 1996 *Region at Risk* is probably the most fully developed example of 1990s citizen-led metropolitan regional planning (Bay Area Alliance, 2000; Yaro & Hiss, 1996). This new integration of environmental, equity, and economic themes in such planning efforts revives to some extent the holistic perspective of early-20th-century regionalists such as Geddes, Mumford, and Ebenezer Howard.

The agenda of many regional agencies has also changed in recent years. In the 1950s and 1960s, the premier example of regional government in North America
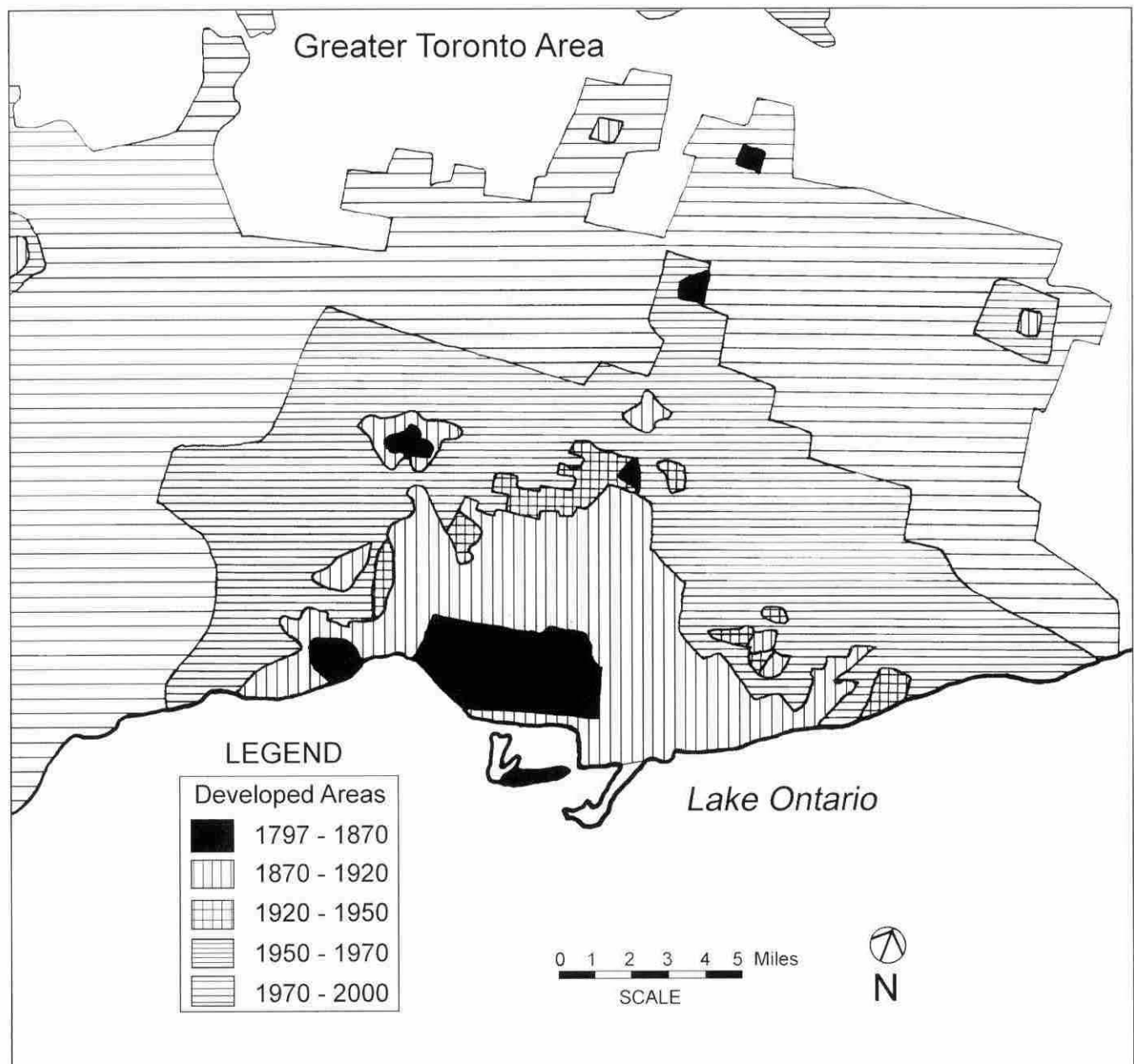
FIGURE 1. Toronto: A rapidly changing metropolitan region.

was Metro Toronto, which, under long-time chair Frederick Gardiner, was referred to by Toronto wags as more a construction agency than a regional government. Efficient provision of infrastructure and services, as well as coordination of regional economic development, was a prime motivation behind regional governance in locations such as Indianapolis, Nashville, Louisville, Jacksonville, and Minneapolis. Efficiency is still a key concern in many places. However, it is no longer quite so central a planning value as before, since many basic service and infrastructure needs have been met within postindustrial society, and key functions such as transportation planning are now handled relatively effectively by metropolitan planning organizations. In contrast, the North American exemplar of 1990s regional planning was Portland's Metro Council, best known for its growth management agenda. Even in Toronto times had changed. Metro Toronto produced a 1994 regional plan entitled "The Liveable Metropolis" (Metro Toronto, 1994) that emphasizes planning for greenways and revitalization of traditional mainstreet corridors. Another Toronto agency led by former mayor David Crombie produced an even more visionary plan for bioregionally oriented watershed restoration (Crombie, 1992).

In academia, a more holistic range of research methods is being applied to the study of regions. The shortcomings of quantitative methods have become apparent to many scholars in recent years. These deficiencies include their inability to take into account phenomena such as quality of life, the weakness of many of their data sources, their tendency to rely on camouflaged assumptions, and their impenetrability to the average citizen. Much recent regional research has made more use of qualitative methods, such as the comparative case study, which allows exploration of the often unquantifiable variables affecting the evolution of urban regions (e.g., Rothblatt & Sancton, 1998; Savitch & Vogel, 1996; Wannop, 1995). Other qualitative methods shed light on how people perceive regions and places within them; these include the cognitive mapping, visual preference, behavior observation, and survey tools pioneered by Kevin Lynch, Donald Appleyard, and others in the environmental design field (e.g., Lynch, 1976; Nasar, 1998).

Phenomenology, rooted in simple observation, is perhaps the most extreme qualitative method and has gained adherents in the past decade (e.g., Seamon, 1993). University of Toronto Professor Edward Relph, for example, follows an approach that he calls simply "watching," and says "I prefer to start with the totality of what I see, and to try to puzzle out its appearance by following several directions more or less at once" (Relph, 1987, p. 5). Although this strategy may be scorned by social scientists, it closely matches Geddes' method of climbing the stairs to the top of the Outlook Tower in Edinburgh to gaze upon the region. (Geddes' methods in fact represented an interesting blend of the qualitative and quantitative, combining first-hand, engaged observation with systematic compilation of data about the region.)

A New Emphasis on Physical Planning, Urban Design, and Sense of Place. As Neuman (2000) observes, "We are witnessing a rebirth of physical design, both in practice and the academy" (p. 115). Regional-scale design in particular, largely dormant in the United States since the early decades of the 20th century, has been resurrected. New Urbanism, smart growth, and other physical planning movements are arising out of a new understanding on the part of planners and citizens that "design matters," and that good urban design must be integrated across regional, subregional, neighborhood, and site scales. In particular, many growth management advocates have realized that it is not enough simply to establish urban growth boundaries or other growth controls, but that policies and designs must be adopted to bring about desired forms of development inside these boundaries. Many New Urbanist sympathizers have also realized that isolated New Urbanist projects are not enough. What is required are strategies to produce a more coherent overall regional fabric for both metropolitan regions and exurban areas. Meanwhile, academic researchers such as Southworth and Owens (1993) and Moudon and Hess (2000) have charted the physical patterns of metropolitan growth in more detailed ways than previous research.

A More Activist or Normative Stance. While the detached stance of regional science limited any normative statements or actions on the part of planners, current regionalist rhetoric often resembles the passionate tone employed by early-20th-century pioneers such as Geddes and Mumford. The detachment of regional science is epitomized by Isard's 1975 comment:

> A regional scientist is not an *activist* planner.... The typical regional scientist wants to surround himself with research assistants and a computer for a long time in order to collect all the relevant information about the problem, analyze it carefully, try out some hypotheses, and finally reach some conclusions and perhaps recommendations. His findings are then passed on to key decisionmakers. (Isard, 1975, p. 2)

In contrast, movements such as New Urbanism are primarily normative and have produced a number of manifestos containing principles of good urban and regional development. Writers such as Kunstler (1993, 1996), Calthorpe (1993), Duany et al. (2000), and Cal-

thorpe and Fulton (2001) strongly critique the landscape of sprawl. Authors such as Orfield (1997), Rusk (1993, 1999), and Kemmis (1995) also employ strongly goal-oriented language in pursuit of equity and civic engagement and actively promote regional agendas while serving as public officials and consultants. Although academic regionalists remain reluctant to engage in normative discourse, more activist platforms can frequently be found in the works of those coming from landscape architecture or urban design backgrounds, who must look most closely at the physical patterns of urbanization (e.g., Hough, 1990; Kelbaugh, 1997; Lynch, 1981).

These, then, are some key characteristics of the new regionalism. To a large extent, this emerging movement can be seen as a reaction against the previous generation of regionalism, which emphasized abstract, aspatial analysis, the goal of regional economic development, quantitative social science methods, and a stance of scientific detachment. To some extent it is also a reaction against the ills of the postmodern landscape, with its amorphous, placeless sprawl of suburbs often produced by the culture and corporations of the global economy. In contrast, the new regionalism is more focused on specific geographical regions and place making, more holistic in its analysis, more inclusive in its methods, more willing to acknowledge the importance of regional design and physical planning, more overtly normative in its goals, and more interested in actively addressing current regional problems. In short, it represents a movement to develop a set of regional planning tools and strategies appropriate to 21st-century problems.

Implications for the Planning Profession

The new regionalism has arisen because of a number of very real environmental and social problems associated with past regional development. It is 10 years old at most and still in its early stages. The challenge for the planning profession, then, is to help this movement to develop and address regional issues most successfully. Meeting this challenge will require leadership and research in a number of areas—particularly regional transportation, land use, design, housing, environmental protection, and equity planning. It will also require work on regional planning processes and institutions, including flexible governance options, incentive structures to bring about better physical planning and improve equity, steps to nurture social capital within the region, and methods of supporting regional social movements around growth, environmental, or equity issues.

To look in more detail at implications for the planning profession, I return to the five key characteristics of

the new regionalism discussed in the previous section. *Reincorporating a focus on specific places and landscapes* will require, to some extent, a shift in the way planners think about cities and regions. Real space—seen through direct observation and understood through experience and contextual study—must take precedence over the abstraction of space contained within computer models, which are after all only tools to help planners understand the real world. Following Geddes' lead, practitioners, students, and planning faculty need to get away from the computer and out of the classroom to directly observe and experience the region. They must learn to evaluate development within a region according to a range of criteria. Doing so might help some academics understand the dismay that many citizens feel about suburban environments created during the past 50 years, and the motivations behind movements such as New Urbanism, smart growth, livable communities, and sustainable development.

At the same time, *understanding the postmodern regional landscape* will require systematic research into its physical patterns, its sociology, and its political and economic structure. This research will utilize all available methods, including case studies and direct observation. In particular, it will require understanding how global economic power structures shape the physical patterns, culture, and social and political structures of regions. As the dynamics of the postmodern region are better understood, regional planners will be better equipped to take action to reduce jurisdictional fragmentation, build social capital, combat placelessness, nurture social justice, enhance environmental quality, and improve quality of life.

Adopting a more holistic approach to regional planning means

- integrating traditional disciplines of planning within the region;
- integrating different scales of planning—national, state, regional, local, neighborhood, and site—in order to achieve regional goals; and
- putting current efforts within the context of regional history and evolution.

To take the first of these points, it is now widely agreed, for example, that regional agencies must integrate land use, air quality, and transportation planning, through coordinated action between agencies if not a single regional plan by one agency. Planning for housing, education, and social services is closely related to these concerns as well. In the past, the lack of such linkage has helped fuel suburban sprawl, leading to a host of interrelated problems such as traffic congestion, air pollution, jobs/housing imbalances, and central city/suburban disparities. Given the past tendency of planners to

focus narrowly on single issues, the goals and programs of current regional planning agencies should be reviewed to ensure that they are adequately responding to the whole range of interlinked regional needs. New inter-agency initiatives can perhaps help bring about a more holistic regional planning approach.

To think holistically, planners also need to integrate different scales of planning to meet regional needs. New Urbanists in particular have recognized that many regional problems can only be solved by coordinating planning and urban design at regional, municipal, neighborhood, and site scales. The Charter for the New Urbanism makes this linkage explicit (CNU, 2000; see also Calthorpe & Fulton, 2001; Urban Ecology, 1996). Political scientists have also frequently written about how the region exists in dynamic relationship with higher and lower levels of government and have pointed out how important it is for different levels of government to adopt mutually supportive policy frameworks.

Thinking holistically also means emphasizing the temporal evolution of regional development, to root current action in knowledge of how regions came to be the way they are today and how they can become better places in the long term. New Urbanists have done this extensively by studying past community design and urban form (not for nothing has New Urbanism been called "neo-traditionalism"). But detailed study of the evolution of regional institutions, politics, and society is important as well (e.g., see Barlow, 1991; Castells, 1996, 1997, 1998; Friedmann & Weaver, 1979; Hall, 1988; Sharpe, 1995; Wannop, 1995).

Incorporating a new emphasis on physical planning and urban design may require changes in the staffing of agencies and the training of planners, for example by emphasizing familiarity with urban design techniques. In the overall balance of planning specialties, this change requires a reintegration of regional physical planning and urban design with economic and social planning. Environmental design research methods must take their place alongside regressions and policy analyses. To a considerable extent, this reintegration is already happening within the smart growth and sustainable development movements.

Last, *taking a more active role in addressing regional problems* challenges planners to connect knowledge about the region with mechanisms to change it. Movements such as smart growth and New Urbanism virtually demand regional advocacy planning in which planners think strategically about how to bring about the conditions for constructive regional change. Mechanisms to do this will include expanded public processes, more transparent regional institutions, greater consideration of alternative regional investments, adoption of clear re-

gional policy goals and performance indicators, and support of regional social movements. University planning departments can take steps to put students and faculty on the forefront of addressing regional problems. This involvement can occur through studio projects, university-sponsored charettes, conferences, directed research, or individual leadership (see, for example, Kelbaugh, 1997). Such engagement would have been applauded by many early regionalists and can best help to prepare students for constructive roles in the new regionalism.

Implementing the New Regionalism

The question of how to implement new regionalist ideas is a difficult one. Half a century ago, planners had greater hope for regional government than exists today. Clearly, new regional planning agencies with broad mandates are not likely to be created in most places, and those that are formed may not be effective in solving many regional problems (Savitch & Vogel, 2000b). Fundamental political difficulties work against the creation and success of new regional governments, including strong opposition from local, state, and provincial governments unwilling to give up power, the hostility of suburban voters unable to see how their interests are tied to the well-being of central cities, and the reluctance of central-city constituencies to see their progressive voting blocs diluted (Rothblatt, 1994; Self, 1982). In the U.S., the established political notions of decentralization and federalism also work against the creation of new regional institutions (Lim, 1983).

However, a number of other strategies are possible. As Savitch and Vogel (1996) point out, coordination of many regional or subregional goals can occur without a centralized regional government structure. Ad hoc working groups of local governments, operating agreements between municipalities or local agencies, joint powers authorities, and sophisticated sets of incentives and mandates between existing levels of government can help coordinate public-sector action on issues ranging from tax sharing to growth management to improvement of education and other services.

Local government action on items of regional concern can often be leveraged by state government or existing single-purpose regional agencies. States, for example, might provide incentive grants to localities that make progress toward increasing their housing production to meet regional goals for fair-share affordable housing, as is currently happening in California. Or they might provide planning grants and technical assistance for local growth management efforts, as is being done in Oregon. State or regional agencies might condition infrastructure funding on local adoption of smart growth

planning frameworks or other local actions. Or they might make urban territories designated within these plans "priority funding areas" as happens under Maryland's smart growth framework first implemented in 1998. In these ways, state or provincial governments and our existing weak regional institutions can stimulate local progress toward addressing regional problems.

Overall, a long-term, strategic approach is needed to create a climate in which 21st-century regional needs can be met. Regional institutions must be slowly and incrementally strengthened, as has happened in Portland (Abbott, 2001). Social capital must be built and social movements nurtured that can support regional policymaking. Regional power brokers and business leaders must come to see that they share common ground with the growing mass of nongovernmental organizations that make up much of civil society, particularly environmental groups concerned with growth management and nonprofit developers building affordable housing. Citizens and local governments must come to understand regional problems and see their interdependency with others throughout the region. Since local governments are so strong in the United States, financial incentives must be developed for them to think regionally, as a part of interlocking policy frameworks at different levels of government.

Obviously, new regionalists have many challenging tasks before them. But the vigor and excitement of efforts during the past 10 years are considerable. For the first time since the 1960s there is hope that significant progress in regional planning is possible.

NOTES

1. "Equity" in this context often concerns disparities in tax bases, services, and economic welfare between central cities and suburbs. Other regional equity issues include the distribution of affordable housing, public expenditures on transportation and other infrastructure (which may benefit some jurisdictions or groups of residents more than others), and the disproportionate exposure of lower-income groups and/or communities of color to pollution, toxic substances, and locally unwanted land uses.

2. See, for example, Altshuler (1999), Barlow (1991), Calthorpe (1993), Calthorpe and Fulton (2001), Cisneros (1995), Dodge (1996), Downs (1994), Duany et al. (2000), Greenstein and Wiewel (2000), Katz (2000), Kelbaugh (1997), Neuman (2000), Orfield (1997), Pastor et al. (2000), Peirce (1993), Rothblatt and Sancton (1998), Rusk (1993, 1999), Savitch and Vogel (1996, 2000a, 2000b), Sharpe (1995), Wannop (1995), and Yaro and Hiss (1996). Weitz and Seltzer (1998) provide a literature review as of 1996.

3. This new, often environmentally oriented agenda was anticipated to some extent by John Friedmann and Clyde Weaver in their 1979 book *Territory and Function: The Evolution of Regional Planning*, although their predictions would have to wait more than a decade to be at least somewhat fulfilled.

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