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Political Economies of Landscape Change
Places of Integrative Power

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Preface

This volume contributes to the Landscape Futures Initiative conceived by the Landscape Architecture Foundation at the start of the 21st century. In this period of millennial exploration the Landscape Futures Initiative seeks a long-term perspective on driving forces of landscape change – forces that will determine the survival of many and the experience of all – in this case the forces of political economy.

We invited a diverse group of designers and scholars to think broadly about how political and economic processes shape the landscapes in which they occur, and on which they operate. We also charged this group to consider how processes of landscape change affect politics and economics from the local to global scales. The contributors responded with approaches that involved a dialectical examination of political economy and landscape change. They raised major pragmatic questions: What difference can design make, if any, in a globalizing world? Partially in response to that question, some asked what a socially just landscape could “look like”. Others presented partial answers to both questions, which stimulated further questioning.

The broader Landscape Futures Initiative selected a mix of familiar and imaginative topics for investigation. An initial gathering at the University of Pennsylvania focused on processes of global urbanization that encompass half of the world’s population and may add a billion more people in the coming decades. A symposium at the University of Virginia then explored linkages between technology and culture, from the microbiology of brownfield remediation to satellite-guided precision excavation. The symposium series proceeded to examine “connectivity,” “global urban and environmental change,” “demographic change,” and “leadership” at the University of Texas, Arizona State University, the University of California–Davis, and Clemson University, respectively.

This volume focuses on political and economic driving forces of landscape change and associated “places of power.” Before launching into the topic, we want to make a few points about the spirit that has guided this project and those who have supported it. From its beginning, the Places of Integrative Power project sought a dialogue among social scientists, environmental planners, and designers. We embraced a broad spectrum of topics – from real estate development to environmental economics, institutional analysis, and radical politics. We drew inspiration
from international as well as US experience. We convened the “high theory” of landscape scholars with the “high practice” of landscape architects. The spirited dialogue among these contributors constitutes one of the most gratifying aspects of the project.

The overarching theme of places of integrative power comes from Kenneth Boulding’s *Three Faces of Power*, which linked political power, economic power, and what he called integrative power – the power of love – of people, place, and planet. When we write about places of power, we draw inspiration from Boulding’s hopeful spirit alongside those who courageously expose political and economic disasters. We acknowledge the debt to Kenneth and his wife Elise Boulding who wrote persuasively about integrative power as the hidden side of history that has enormous transformative potential. Geographer Gilbert F. White showed how integrative inquiry broadens the range of choice for harmonizing human–environment relations and coping with hazards. Landscape architecture professor Robert “Doc” Reich exemplifies these ideals in a life devoted to cultivating the progressive power of design in thousands of students, treating each one as a creative individual. We dedicate this volume to these four visionaries.

Each chapter involves authors who share their visionary perspectives on landscape change. Before introducing them, we want to thank those who brought this project to fruition. The Landscape Architecture Foundation provided substantial funding, and its executive director Susan Everett gave sustained encouragement. Support for the entire conference series came from the National Endowment for the Arts, the Hideo Sasaki Foundation, and EDAW, Inc. The Brenton and Jean Wadsworth Endowment in the Department of Landscape Architecture co-funded the *Places of Integrative Power* conference. Brent Wadsworth’s commitment to landscape architectural research that makes a difference for social well-being has enhanced the landscape architecture program at Illinois. Kathleen Conlin, former dean of the College of Fine and Applied Arts at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, supported us in launching the project. The Graham Foundation for Advanced Study in the Arts in Chicago personally supported this publication, and we pay tribute to its late director Richard Jay Solomon who encouraged this work. The Illinois Chapter of the American Society of Landscape Architects and its former officers Jay Womack and Brian Hopkins gave institutional, financial, and personal support. We are grateful to leaders in the landscape architecture profession in Illinois such as Debra Mitchell of JJR, Inc.; William Quinlan of Landscape Forms, Inc.; and Richard Hitchcock of Hitchcock Design Group – all from metropolitan Chicago – for their personal and financial support.

Chicago constitutes one of the great laboratories of political economy and landscape change from its initial settlement by the Creole trader Jean-Baptiste Point du Sable in the 1770s at the outlet of the Chicago River into Lake Michigan, to the current renewed investment in public parks, urban landscape design, and ecosystem restoration. The chapters of this volume were delivered in conjunction with a series of walks and talks across downtown Chicago – our transect began at the University of Illinois at Chicago, a modern campus designed by Walter Knetsch and backed by former Mayor Richard J. Daley in the 1960s, which displaced part of
an Italian–American neighborhood in the near west side. This neighborhood walk took the group through a rapidly gentrifying neighborhood, across the once-notoriously polluted south branch of the Chicago River through the downtown Loop with its architectural masterpieces and expanding complement of urban landscape design projects. On the second day of the conference the group reconvened in the Art Institute of Chicago, in Adler and Sullivan’s reconstructed Stock Exchange Room, before concluding with a walk through the newly opened Millennium Park with its extraordinary combination of public and privately commissioned sculpture and environmental design.

We especially thank our authors who joined in spirited debate, striving to communicate across political as well as professional boundaries. Although not printed here, comments on chapters by discussants thoughtfully stimulated those debates. We take this opportunity to thank discussants Robert Bruegmann of the University of Illinois at Chicago, Frederick Steiner of the University of Texas at Austin, George Ranney of Metropolis 2020, Debra Mitchell of JIR, Inc., Paul Gobster of the US Forest Service, and Dianne Harris and Chris Silver of the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign.

Political economies of landscape change enabled this group of scholars and friends to gather in Chicago in the early 21st century, and inspired us to collaborate on this study across continents and oceans. We look forward toward future places of integrative power that will expand this friendly dialogue among people, places, and ecosystems of the world.

Champaign, IL, 2007

Jim Wescoat and Doug Johnston
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**John B. Braden** is Professor of Environmental Economics at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, where he has been on the faculty for 25 years. His work emphasizes policy and management issues surrounding the protection and remediation of water quality, most recently studies of the downstream economic consequences of conservation design practices and of remediating contamination in the Great Lakes. He was educated at Miami University of Ohio and the University of Wisconsin.
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**Kurt Culbertson** is Chairman and CEO of the landscape architecture/land planning firm Design Workshop. Kurt Culbertson has been instrumental in the company’s success, nationally and internationally. His leadership role in the Master Planning process for Missoula Riverfront Triangle in Missoula, Montana, and the planning and design efforts for the Gates Redevelopment in Denver, Colorado, is redefining land use trends in the West. Culbertson has initiated the creation of a model “sustainable development”, a community that promotes stability between both the physical and social systems. A strong proponent of the profession, Kurt has been published numerous times, spoken to organizations throughout the country, and participated in community activities.

**Tom Evans** codirects the Center for the Study of Institutions, Population and Environmental Change (CIPEC) and is an Associate Professor in the Department of Geography at Indiana University. His research focuses on household land-use decision-making and land cover change utilizing GIS, remote sensing and modeling methods. Previous project research (NSF SES008351) has employed agent-based
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Don Mitchell is Distinguished Professor and Chair of the Geography Department in the Maxwell School at Syracuse University. After receiving his Ph.D. in Geography from Rutgers University in 1992, he taught at the University of Colorado before moving to Syracuse. He is the author of The Lie of the Land: Migrant Workers and the California Landscape (1996); Cultural Geography: A Critical Introduction (2000); and The Right to the City: Social Justice and the Fight for Public Space (2003) as well as numerous articles on the geography of homelessness, labor, urban public space, and contemporary theories of culture. With Lynn Staeheli he is the author of the forthcoming book, The People’s Property? Power, Politics and the Public. Mitchell is a recipient of a MacArthur Fellowship and recently held a Fulbright Fellowship in the Institutt for Sociologi and Samfunnsgeografi at the Universitetet i Oslo. He is the founder and director of the People’s Geography Project (www.peoplesgeography.org).

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