

RUTGERS, THE STATE UNIVERSITY OF NEW JERSEY

**970:575 LOCATIONAL CONFLICT**  
**450:519 PROBLEMS IN POLITICAL GEOGRAPHY**  
Monday, 9:50 - 12:30 Civic Square, Room 168

Robert W. Lake  
Spring Semester 2003

**OFFICE HOURS:** Monday, 2-4 p.m., or by appointment.  
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**SEMINAR GOALS:**

This seminar examines locational conflict: the politics of community conflict over the siting of controversial facilities. Locational conflict is a *geographic* issue because it involves political conflict over geographic (siting) outcomes. It is a *planning* issue because it presents a dilemma for policy implementation and the siting of important public facilities. We will examine locational conflict as the intersection of these two complementary perspectives.

A basic premise of the course is that a solid theoretical and conceptual understanding of the *causes* of locational conflict is a necessary prerequisite to any attempt at *eliminating or resolving* such conflict. To this end, the seminar uses critical theory to answer questions such as: What is locational conflict? Why does it arise? Who are the key actors? What is the role of the state, the local community, industry, the public, the courts? Only when these questions are answered do we address the dilemma of how locational conflict may be avoided, eliminated, or resolved.

The course is divided into four segments. In part one, we review alternative conceptual frameworks in order to develop an approach for thinking about locational conflict. This approach examines locational conflict as the endpoint of an interesting, if somewhat puzzling, series of transformations. To understand these transformations, we consider the following questions: Why does the state transform *economic problems* rooted in production -- industrial production, waste disposal, urban land development, homelessness, poverty -- into *political problems* requiring public policy solutions? Why does the state then choose the *geographic solution* of facility siting as the policy response to those economic and political problems? Whose interests are represented in this series of transformations? How does the state balance its goal of siting facilities in support of production with the competing goal of maintaining its legitimacy in the community? What are the consequences if the state fails to maintain this balance? What are the policy alternatives? What are the implications for planners and planning? The second segment of the course illustrates this conceptual framework in three case studies of locational conflict: siting environmental facilities, locating shelters for the homeless, and urban redevelopment conflicts.

The third part of the course examines issues and techniques for avoiding or resolving locational conflict. Our discussion in this segment focuses on questions of organizing public debate; the role of ethics in the design and implementation of public policy; the meaning, methods, and consequences of democratic decision-making; the problem of institutional designs for public participation and community empowerment; the meaning of environmental racism and environmental justice; and problems of determining what constitutes an ethical solution to political controversies.

The fourth and final part of the course is devoted to oral reports by seminar members analyzing case studies of locational conflict.

## REQUIREMENTS:

- (1) Reading and active participation in seminar discussions are essential. Seminar members take turns serving as discussion leaders, critiquing selected readings and moderating group discussion.
- (2) Completion of two short essays (approximately five typed pages each) critically discussing and evaluating selected readings:
  - Essay #1 will be distributed on **March 3** and will be due on **March 10**.
  - Essay #2 will be distributed on **March 10** and will be due on **March 24**.
- (3) Researching, writing, and oral presentation of a seminar paper. The paper should provide a theoretical and empirical analysis of a specific case study of locational conflict. More information on this will be provided in class. For your guidance in planning your work, the following due dates will apply:
  - On **February 17**, submit a one-page statement describing your selected research topic and the sources you expect to use in conducting your research.
  - Oral seminar presentations are scheduled for **April 14, 21, and 28**.
  - Written papers (approximately 20-25 pages) are due in class **one week** following your oral presentation.

## TOPICS AND READINGS

I will distribute photocopies of readings in class periodically throughout the semester. To facilitate discussion, you should complete assigned readings **before** each seminar meeting. Try to do the readings in the order they are listed. Readings marked (#) will be introduced by discussion moderators.

### JAN. 27 INTRODUCTION: WHAT IS LOCATIONAL CONFLICT?

#### FEB. 3 APPROACHES TO ANALYSIS OF LOCATIONAL CONFLICT - 1

Donald Janelle. 1977. "Structural dimensions in the geography of locational conflicts," *Canadian Geographer* 21: 311-328.

William Meyer and Michael Brown. 1989. "Locational conflict in a nineteenth-century city," *Political Geography Quarterly* 8: 107-122.

# Kevin Cox and Jeffery McCarthy. 1980. "Neighborhood activism in the American city: behavioral relationships and evaluation," *Urban Geography* 1: 22-38.

Kevin Cox and R.J. Johnston. 1982. "Conflict, politics and the urban scene: a conceptual framework," in K. Cox and R. Johnston, eds., *Conflict, Politics and the Urban Scene*. NY: Saint Martin's Press, pp. 1-19.

**FEB. 10 APPROACHES TO ANALYSIS OF LOCATIONAL CONFLICT – 2**

# Kevin Cox. 1981. "Capitalism and conflict around the communal living space," in M. Dear and A. Scott, eds., *Urbanization and Urban Planning in Capitalist Society*. NY: Methuen, pp. 431-456.

# Sidney Plotkin. 1984. "Property, policy and politics: towards a theory of urban land-use conflict," *International Journal of Urban and Regional Research* 11: 382-403.

David Wilson. 1993. "Everyday life, spatiality and inner city disinvestment in a U.S. city," *International Journal of Urban and Regional Research* 578-594.

Robert Lake. 1993. "Rethinking NIMBY," *Journal of the American Planning Association* 59: 87-93.

**FEB. 17 THE STATE IN LOCATIONAL CONFLICT***[paper topics due]*

Gordon Clark and Michael Dear. 1981. "The state in capitalism and the capitalist state," in Dear and Scott, eds., *Urbanization and Urban Planning in Capitalist Society*, pp. 45-61.

# Joachim Hirsch. 1981. "The apparatus of the State, the reproduction of capital and urban conflicts," in *Urbanization and Urban Planning in Capitalist Society*, pp. 593-607.

**FEB. 24 THE LOCAL STATE IN LOCATIONAL CONFLICT**

#Gordon MacLeod and Mark Goodwin. 1999. "Space, scale and state strategy: rethinking urban and regional governance," *Progress in Human Geography* 23: 503-527.

James DeFilippis. 1999. "Alternatives to the 'New Urban Politics': finding locality and autonomy in local economic development," *Political Geography* 18: 973-990.

Mark Pendras. 2002. "From local consciousness to global change: asserting power at the local scale," *International Journal of Urban and Regional Research* 26: 823-833.

Melissa Gilbert. 1999. "Place, politics, and the production of urban space: a feminist critique of the growth machine thesis," in Andrew Jonas and David Wilson, eds., *The Urban Growth Machine*. Albany: SUNY Press, pp. 95-108.

**MARCH 3 CASE STUDY: ENVIRONMENTAL FACILITY SITING** *[distribute essay #1]*

# Mary R. English. 1992. "Justice," in *Siting Low-Level Radioactive Waste Disposal Facilities: The Public Policy Dilemma*. NY: Quorum Books, pp. 117-143.

Robert Lake and Lisa Disch. 1992. "Structural constraints and pluralist contradictions in hazardous waste regulation," *Environment and Planning-A*, 24: 663-681.

Douglas Maclean. 1987. "Risk and consent: philosophical issues for centralized decisions," in

R. Lake, ed., *Resolving Locational Conflict*, New Brunswick, NJ: CUPR Press, pp. 45-59.

**MARCH 10 CASE STUDY: SITING SOCIAL SERVICE FACILITIES** [essay #1 due;  
distribute essay #2]

# Robin Law and Jennifer Wolch. 1991. "Homelessness and economic restructuring," *Urban Geography*, 12: 105-136.

Michael Dear. 1992. "Understanding and overcoming the NIMBY syndrome," *Journal of the American Planning Association*, 58: 288-300.

Lois Takahashi and Michael Dear. 1997. "The changing dynamics of community opposition to human service facilities," *Journal of the American Planning Association*, 63: 79-93.

Lois Takahashi. 1998. "Problematizing fairness," chapter 10 in L. Takahashi, *Homelessness, AIDS, and Stigmatization: The NIMBY Syndrome in the United States at the End of the Twentieth Century*. NY: Oxford University Press, pp. 195-215.

**MARCH 17 NO CLASS -- SPRING BREAK**

**MARCH 24 CASE STUDY: URBAN DEVELOPMENT CONTROVERSIES** [essay #2 due]

#Don Mitchell. 1995. "The end of public space? People's Park, definitions of the public, and democracy," *Annals of the Association of American Geographers*, 85: 108-133.

Don Mitchell. 1992. "Iconography and locational conflict from the underside: free speech, People's Park, and the politics of homelessness in Berkeley, California." *Political Geography* 11: 152-169.

Stephanie Pincetl. 1999. "The politics of influence: democracy and the growth machine in Orange County," in Andrew Jonas and David Wilson, eds., *The Urban Growth Machine*. Albany: SUNY Press, pp. 195-212.

Richard Simonson. 1992. "Managing community opposition to subdivision development," *Real Estate Review*, 22: 82-86.

**MARCH 31 ENVIRONMENTAL RACISM AND ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE**

# Laura Pulido. 2000. "Rethinking environmental racism: white privilege and urban development in Southern California," *Annals of the Association of American Geographers* 90: 12-40.

Robert W. Lake. 1996. "Volunteers, NIMBYs, and environmental justice: dilemmas of democratic practice," *Antipode*, 28: 160-174.

Giovanna Di Chiro. 1998. "Environmental justice from the grassroots: reflections on history, gender, and expertise," in Daniel Faber, ed., *The Struggle for Ecological Democracy*. NY: Guilford Press, pp. 104-136.

**APRIL 7 ORGANIZING PUBLIC DEBATE FOR POLICY MAKING AND CONFLICT RESOLUTION**

# John Dryzek. 1990. *Discursive Democracy: Politics, Policy, and Political Science*, New York: Cambridge University Press, chapter 1, "Democratizing rationality," pp. 3-25.

Thomas Webler and Ortwin Renn. 1995. "A brief primer on participation: philosophy and practice," ch. 2 in Ortwin Renn, Thomas Webler and Peter Wiedemann, eds., *Fairness and Competence in Citizen Participation*. Dordrecht: Kluwer Academic Publishers, pp. 17-33.

Jean Hillier. 1998. "Beyond confused noise: ideas toward communicative procedural justice," *Journal of Planning Education and Research*, 18 (Fall 1998) 14-24.

Rebecca Abers. 1998. "Learning democratic practice: distributing government resources through popular participation in Porto Alegre, Brazil," in Mike Douglass and John Friedmann, eds., *Cities for Citizens*, NY: Wiley, pp. 39-65.

**APRIL 14** Seminar presentations

**APRIL 21** Seminar presentations

**APRIL 28** Seminar presentations

**MAY 5 SUMMARY AND REVIEW (last seminar meeting)**

Robert Lake. 2001. "Locational conflict (NIMBY)," *International Encyclopedia of the Social and Behavioral Sciences*, vol. 13: 9019-9024.