

The Practice of Placemaking

Lynda H. Schneekloth and Robert G. Shibley
School of Architecture and Planning
State University of New York at Buffalo
Buffalo, N.Y. 14214-3087
and
The Caucus Partnership
Buffalo, N.Y. 14214
U.S.A.

Summary

The professional and academic practice of architects, landscape architects, planners, and facility managers is presented as sharing the fundamental aim of placemaking. This article presents two stories of placemaking, one in community development and another about an intervention into an office environment. Both stories demonstrate that our collective practice can be inclusive, creating places that are sustained over time with the cooperation of occupants and managers, and neighbourhoods and communities. A primary task of the placemaking practitioner, as we have come to understand it through practice, is the creation of a special space for dialogue about the purposes of places and the implications for actions. Within the dialogic space, professionals and inhabitants collectively confirm, interrogate, and frame action through including and excluding people, outlining the boundaries of action, and selecting methods which privilege various forms of knowledge. Through this process, the abstractions of general knowledge from building research and other sources becomes situated in specific places. These tasks in the practice of placemaking structure relationships between people and their world, and must therefore be considered inherently political and moral acts which have the possibility of creating beloved places.

Résumé

La pratique professionnelle et académique des architectes, des paysagistes, des planificateurs et des gestionnaires est considérée comme partageant un but commun: l'aménagement spatial. Cette article présente deux histoires dans lesquelles un espace a été aménagé, l'une narrant le développement d'une communauté, l'autre une intervention dans le contexte d'un bureau. Ces deux histoires démontrent que notre pratique collective peut être inclusive, créant des espaces qui sont maintenus dans le temps avec la collaboration des occupants, des responsables, de voisinages et de communautés. Notre expérience pratique nous a montré que l'une des tâches fondamentales du praticien est de créer un espace réservé à un dialogue concernant la fonction des espaces et leurs implications pour l'action. Cet espace de dialogue permet aux professionnels et aux habitants de travailler en commun pour renforcer, questionner et encadrer l'action en incluant ou excluant des utilisateurs, en définissant des limites à

l'action et en choisissant des méthodes privilégiant diverses formes de connaissance. Ce processus permet de situer dans des espaces spécifiques les données abstraites acquises par la recherche dans le domaine de la construction et par d'autres sources. Ce genre de tâches structure les relations entre les utilisateurs et leur monde et doit donc être considéré comme un acte éminemment politique et moral, capable de créer des espaces aimés.

1. Introduction

Those of us engaged in researching, planning, designing, constructing, and managing places can be said to share a practice of *placemaking*, that is, the continual process of making, transforming, and owning the world. Placemaking, like any practice, is distinguished by its collective aim and ways of working to achieve that aim (Ruddick, 1989, 13-14). This practice is inclusive of a wide range of activities for which we assume responsibility including design, construction, research, management, etc. Further, it includes those of us who call ourselves architects, engineers, planners, researchers, professors, facility managers, or product designers, wherever we may be located — in public service, the university, industry or professional practice.

In most industrialized countries, placemaking has been assigned to, or perhaps even been appropriated by, professionals and academics. Professional placemakers are given expert status regarding various knowledge and practice domains, and offer their services according to the dictates of "professionalism" — attempting to meet the needs of those who have requested our services. In another value framework, however, and the one we are exploring here, the work of professional placemakers might be understood as enabling and facilitating others in the various acts of placemaking. This enabling and facilitation is performed as part of the process of offering expertise in discreet acts of planning, design, scientific inquiry, representation, construction, destruction and maintenance.

In this article we tell two placemaking stories in which we worked as professional placemakers¹ with the constituencies of the places. Placemaking in our stories is understood as a form of inclusive and enabling practice which can establish a way to sustain a place over time with the full cooperation of occupants, facility managers, institutional leadership, community groups, and others affected by place according to their aspirations and requirements. In addition, it allows us to use buildings and their landscape settings as opportunities for organizational development, thus adding value to institutional investments in places. An element of the contribution of placemaking as a form of practice is the way it reveals how building research knowledge becomes situated in a place, thus helping to both sustain a place over time and facilitate occu-

¹ The authors practice both in the academy, holding positions at the School of Architecture and Planning, State University of New York at Buffalo, and as partners in The Caucus Partnership, Consultants on Environmental and Organizational Change. The firm was founded in 1973 and is used as a vehicle for inquiry on the idea of placemaking. Caucus has been awarded over 200 commissions for public and private clients in four countries and 12 states.

The firm name, The Caucus Partnership, comes from Lewis Carroll's *Alice in Wonderland* and the story of the caucus race in which the Dodo Bird facilitates the drying of all the creatures wet from Alice's tears. There is an aim to the caucus race - getting dry - but there are no rules, no official beginning and no official end. In response to Alice's question about who won, the Dodo Bird says, "Everybody has won, and all must have prizes" (Carroll, 1972, 31). We have found this to be an apt metaphor for our own practice in which we share the aim of placemaking and everybody winning, but all else is open to the work of all.

pant organizational and institutional development. Finally the practice of placemaking reveals how the subjugated knowledges² which are embedded in places can become powerful tools in sustaining place, developing organizations, and situating building research knowledge in both place and institution. In short, our stories start with place as a basic unit of inquiry in addition to conventional professional or disciplinary start points. The stories demonstrate efforts to fully understand the whole of a place and its constituencies, enabling such places to serve a broad range of human technical and social intentions.

In the stories we tell, we worked within and across many domains — as interventionists, researchers, educators and designers. One story describes how a neighbourhood planning process, The Roanoke Neighbourhood Partnership, enabled groups of people to take control of their own communities and how the city both supported and institutionalized these efforts. The story of Roanoke's neighbourhoods reveals how a place-making process served the needs of straightforward capital improvement decision-making while it redefined the fundamental relationship between government and neighbourhood community groups. The other story describes how the facility managers of a large banking institution work diligently with the people of their institute to maintain and support the work environment. The dynamics in the banking institution reveal how the presumably technical decision-making process of furniture upgrade to service new office automation demands became a platform to explore how different elements of the institution might more fruitfully collaborate in the conduct of their missions. Both stories celebrate the common and not-so-common sense of the everyday practices of making, claiming or reclaiming place, and conducting research about place.

The approach to placemaking assumes the legitimacy of every person's experience of living. It further assumes the potential competence and compassion of human action, and the fundamental importance of place as an actor in living well. The approach emerges as an artifact of the ethical insertion of an explicitly conceived *dialogic space* into existing settings, creating a space for conversation about place among the various constituents and professional placemakers. In both stories we tell, the creation of a space for dialogue about place and a structure to facilitate the inclusive exchange of knowledge and experience improved both the sustainability of the place and the institution.

We offer the stories as a demonstration of an approach to professional placemaking grounded in the appreciation of the context in which we found ourselves. We layer this appreciation with both a *confirmation* of the everyday experience and knowledge of the world by all participants, and an *interrogation* of such experiences through a critical perspective (Freire, 1988). In each situation, we illustrate the imperative to *frame ac-*

² Foucault's (1970) archeology of knowledge demonstrates the process by which one form of knowing becomes subjugated or marginalized in favour of others. "By subjugated knowledges I mean two things: on one hand, I am referring to the historical contents that have been buried and disguised...blocks of historical knowledge which were present but disguised within the body of functionalist and systematizing theory and which criticisms draws upon and reveals...On the other hand, I believe that by subjugated knowledges one should understand something else, something which in a sense is altogether different, namely a whole set of knowledges that have been disqualified as inadequate to their task or insufficiently elaborated: naive knowledges...(popular knowledge)...a particular, local regional knowledge...which is opposed by everything around it - that through the re-appearance of this knowledge, of these local popular knowledges, these disqualified knowledges, that criticism performs its work" (Foucault quoted in Giroux 1988, 99-100).

tion through decisions about who should be included and what boundaries should be applied to any given problem or opportunity. After telling the stories, we will offer some comments on the tasks we have come to see as fundamental to professional placemaking in support of the goal of making places for and with people.

2. The Stories

2.1. *The Roanoke Neighbourhood Partnership*

The Setting: This is a story about a small city of 100,000 in the Shenandoah Valley in southwestern Virginia which has struggled to create a structure of governance in which neighbourhoods are major participants. Our work as consultants started in 1979 and has continued intermittently until the present. The Roanoke Neighbourhood Partnership was conceived, historically, at the beginning of an extended period of federal fiscal austerity which included a major restructuring of the federal programs and support for community efforts. Financial assistance to local governments was greatly reduced and many communities were faced with doing more with less. It was assumed that the citizens would have to become more responsible for their own well-being or be satisfied with fewer services — a normal response to tight budgets.

In Roanoke at the beginning of the 1980s, there was a general feeling by many citizens that the city government was not spending the tax-payers' dollars efficiently. Parts of the city were beginning to feel "seedy;" there was a significant level of housing deterioration and abandonment. On the other hand, those in city administration were frustrated by what they felt was apathy on the part of the citizens, or worse, the beginning of an adversarial relationship in which they were being cast unjustly as "the bad guy." This story could have been the beginning of a long and frustrating battle between the city government and city residents with attributions being made on both sides, and the most creative energies being spent on the conflict.

Instead, there were some insightful people in Roanoke who recognized that residents and officials shared the same goal of a liveable city made up of neighbourhoods that people cared about and in which they chose to live. The leaders of Roanoke did not assume it was the responsibility of City Hall to fix everything (an impossibility), but they did assume the responsibility to provide a structure wherein all who wanted to could participate in the nurturing and care of the city. This was a government that recognized that leaders do have responsibility — it is the responsibility to frame a space for dialogue so that all people may understand that they create their own history, and further, that they are free to take action on behalf of themselves and their community (Freire, 1988).

The Roanoke Neighbourhood Partnership began in early 1980, not with a clear understanding of what it was, but rather with a "utopian" vision of what it might become. The vision was a call to the people of the city: *we*, a partnership of neighbourhood people, backed by the resources of the public sector, volunteer organizations and businesses, can identify and resolve many of the problems affecting the quality of life in our city. With the spiritual leadership of Mayor Noel Taylor, the insightful, delegatory style of City Manager Bern Ewert, and the energy and love of Roanoke found in Earl Reynolds, Chief of Community Development, the city found time in its ongoing work to make a space for collaborative neighbourhood planning.

The Planning Process: Although the vision was clear, the course of action to inform, involve, organize and mediate all the subjects of this project was not. At the same time as the City Manager was working administratively to facilitate the initiation of a new planning process and the mayor was creating a vision of what might happen, Earl Reynolds, as Chief of Community Development, began meeting with local leaders to discuss what this partnership might be, gaining insights and suggestions from which he framed a skeleton scope of work for the consultants. This scope was fleshed out through an on-going dialogue among what we are referring to as The Collaborative Group — city officials, the consultants, and representatives from various organizations and neighbourhoods across the city. Because of our proximity with Roanoke and previous work with the city, we were involved in the earliest stages of Reynold's investigations, thinking through with him how general ideas of neighbourhood planning might be specifically suited to the context of Roanoke, Virginia.

The consultant team was headed by Buckhurst Fish Hutton & Katz and included Thomas Means Associates, Margaret Grieve, and The Caucus Partnership. We were brought into the city to design and facilitate a planning process, and to assist the city in structuring a neighbourhood process through confirming and interrogating their work and our intervention. Our tasks included how to locate this project in relation to the city's on-going responsibilities, and to design an intervention strategy which decides who plays, when, and how. Because a dialogue about neighbourhoods depends on engaging the residents of the city in a critical reflection on their own communities, a significant effort was spent to develop methods of communication to inform and engage the people of Roanoke.

As a beginning, a major public issue forum, *The Partnership Forum* (November, 1980) was designed to introduce the idea of the Partnership to the over 700 people who came to hear each other talk about what they loved about their neighbourhoods, and what they were afraid of. This was the first time many public officials and business leaders heard neighbourhood people talk about their communities — why they lived there and what they hoped for their children. An especially poignant moment occurred when Ms. Florence Thornhill of the Gilmer Avenue neighbourhood spoke. She had never spoken to such a large group, but was determined to tell other people in the city, business and civic leaders, and City Hall about her area of the city. She took the stage and although her voice shook, she calmly told the group:

"I love my neighbourhood, but it isn't a good place for children to live. I want to talk to you about rats. I want to tell you about houses that burn down, killing young people, because the house is so drafty and the wood stove faulty."

Stories were told about many places in the small city, about their parent's commitment to the neighbourhoods in which they now lived, about the beautiful views of the valley, about special friends. This was a beginning of a new relationship between the people of City Hall and the people of the neighbourhoods, a space of dialogue to displace assumptions, misunderstandings, and silence.

The consultants and city official decided to begin the city-wide intervention by designing and implementing a neighbourhood planning process in four racially and socio-economically diverse neighbourhoods as a way to test the robustness of the intervention strategy. It was assumed that this partnership process must be able to work for the whole city, not just some sectors. A generalized profile of the four

neighbourhoods reflects the diversity: Raleigh Court is an upper-middle class, fairly well organized white neighbourhood in a gentrifying area; Belmont, a poorly organized neighbourhood of older, white people with few resources; Preston Park/Williamson Road, a middle class linear neighbourhood which was organized along the major urban business road; and Northwest/Gilmer, a very poor black neighbourhood bordering the major urban renewal area of the city on the other side of the tracks from downtown.

Like most planning processes, we wanted to find out what the problem was, what resources were available, and how to solve the problem. Using this very generic set of questions, we designed a sequence of three workshops, anticipating that they would be refined and modified in each neighbourhood and subject to revisions as the process evolved. The three meetings, Issues, Resources, and Action Planning, were designed to facilitate the neighbourhood's identification of their own issues, providing the opportunity for neighbours to confirm and interrogate each other's experiences and perceptions of their community, and to design ways that the issues could be resolved.

Many different "methods" were used in these workshops — group process methods developed in the applied behavioural sciences and graphic presentations and mapping — methods readily available in a placemaker's "toolbox." The meetings were carefully formatted using small groups so that all people had the opportunity to be heard. An on-going public record of large format newsprint taped to the wall was used to be sure that all comments and concerns were duly recorded by trained volunteer facilitators. In this way, each person had the opportunity to see what they had said being recorded, usually abbreviated and translated; any misunderstandings could be corrected on the spot. Each of the workshops was introduced by the City Manager, the Mayor or the Chief of Community Development, bringing the "highest level" of city management to church basements and school auditoria.

The first meeting in each neighbourhood was introduced by their own leaders who introduced the city officials and consultants. People were sitting around tables in groups of 6-8 with a very large map of their neighbourhood before them. The first question asked was "What is special about our neighbourhood?" The facilitators recorded responses, and marked special places on the maps. Soon everyone had markers in their hands, talking to each other about the qualities of their neighbourhood that they especially liked, and wanted to preserve. The second question, "What needs to be changed?" built on the first and continued the mapping exercise and comments on newsprint. This intense form of interaction and the openness of conversation set the tone for all of the meetings and the homework assignments conducted between the large meetings. At the end of the first meeting, the group had not only identified and confirmed its experience of why this was a special neighbourhood, but it had identified and rank ordered a set of problems that they wanted to work. "Homework" groups were organized to work on priority problems such as trash in the alleys, or abandoned houses, or junk cars, or flooding. These small groups came to the next meeting with as much information as they could gather on the nature and scope of these problems, what had already been done to resolve them, and what resources they could find that might help them now. In addition, one group did some research on the history of the neighbourhood and they made a presentation at the second meeting.

As issues to be addressed emerged in the first meeting, we facilitated the process by identifying resources within their own community, the city, non-profit sector and private businesses that could be brought to the discussion table. A critical aspect of these 12 meetings (3 in 4 different neighbourhoods) was the intensity of work by the

consultants in preparation, in debriefing after each meeting, and on-going meetings in-between with neighbourhoods to assist them in doing their "homework." Our work was particular and targeted to the different groups as each neighbourhood framed their own concerns and ways of working, some emphasizing visual presentation of material, others using more aural forms of interaction. Some groups needed much more assistance than others to learn how to access City Hall, how to frame questions so that city staff could respond, how to prepare a plan, etc. The action plans which emerged from the on-going homework assignments and presented and confirmed at the last workshop truly belonged to the people of the neighbourhoods, enabled and facilitated by members of The Collaborative Group.

The structure and intervention of this professional consulting was not unlike community development work characteristic of the late 1960s and the 1970s in which local governments, mandated through community development legislation, were required to hold a meeting to ask residents what they wanted. What was uncharacteristic, however, was the openness of the space within which we, the city, neighbourhood and community leaders, worked together in creating the planning process and in learning from each other. Within this space, the process was generated, experimented with, critiqued, and learned intimately by all participants. A planning process was situated in the city of Roanoke and specifically tailored for each neighbourhood. What finally emerged was a homegrown version of neighbourhood participatory action planning that has been sustained for over 12 years.

It was evident from the level of excitement and the number of people who committed their time and energy, that the Roanoke Neighbourhood Partnership had succeeded in capturing the imagination of the people of the city — people in individual neighbourhoods, people who worked in City Hall, people active in the non-profit sector, and people in business who wanted to be contributing members of the community. The placemaking practice had created an energetic conversation among the many sectors of the city who had come together to think about and envision their neighbourhood and their city.

However, the maintenance of that dialogic space would have to be transferred when the work of the consultants was completed. The experience, energy and compassion that the consultants had brought to the emergence of the Roanoke Neighbourhood Partnership had been indispensable, especially in the creation of the space for critical discourse about our collective work. Yet, professional placemakers leave when their contracts are finished — they are often "out-of-town consultants" and almost always "out-of-place." This is always a period of critical transition and the place where many projects become simply a "feel-good" experience for participants. How could Roanoke maintain the energy and structure of dialogue? How could the city government institutionalize the activities sufficiently to make it possible to continue, but loosely enough that the fragile process might grow and change?

Part of our intervention as professionals was addressed specifically to the issue of institutionalizing the Partnership. We helped the City develop a strategy that would serve to maintain the special space for the conversation about placemaking in the neighbourhoods. The City Council created a position of Neighbourhood Coordinator as part of the Office of Community Development. The Council also named a Steering Committee made up of diverse community representation to guide the Roanoke Neighbourhood Partnership. Programs were instituted, such as the "Mini-Grant" program which gave small grants to neighbourhoods for projects; Eyesore Alert gave

residents direct access to the building inspectors office; Operation Paintbrush found volunteers to assist in rehabilitation work. And the office of the Roanoke Neighbourhood Partnership, situated inside City Hall, gave the community access to the City that they had not had. These initiatives were created to facilitate and enable the continued work of placemaking in Roanoke.

Removing Demotivators as Critical Practice: Neighbourhood planning processes are usually begun with great excitement, but often fail to sustain themselves because they are added to already existing city programs and to the workload of city staff who feel that they are already fully employed. If we wanted this placemaking effort to continue to make a difference in people's lives, we realized that we would have to understand how the Roanoke Neighbourhood Partnership fit into and/or could transform the current organizational structure and standard operating procedures of City Hall, and how it could belong to many people, not just the Office of Community Development.

This critical practice involved the confirmation and interrogation of the work of the city in neighbourhood issues. We identified and suggested ways to reinforce the rewards city staff currently got from meeting the needs of neighbourhoods groups, and identified and attempted to remove the *demotivators*, — those structural and institutional impediments to creative placemaking in the city and neighbourhoods. The Partnership, although couched in the language of utopian possibilities, was nevertheless realistic and critical. The work around the idea of demotivators to neighbourhood work was one of the most important tasks of the project and many hours were spent uncovering and reframing the work of City Hall in relationship to the neighbourhoods and conversely, the relationship of the neighbourhoods to City Hall.

It was often repeated at neighbourhood meetings that one of the major obstacles to getting things done in the neighbourhoods was "City Hall." Like all institutions, the local government had, over time, organized itself to be accountable and efficient. As with many bureaucratic structures, people were rewarded for getting their routine work done efficiently — not by complicating their work and creating new problems. In this context, the idiosyncratic demands of neighbourhoods are often interpreted as interruptions and complications that keep one from doing a good job. It is easier to develop structures and a manner of work that "demotivate" community people from making demands.

It would have been a convenient organizing device to declare that City Hall was truly the "bad guy" and that the reason that your neighbourhood wasn't everything you wanted it to be was because of "those people" who work there. This scapegoat strategy is often used as a community organizing mechanism in advocacy planning and is very effective as a short-term strategy. But we had started with the assumption that people are competent placemakers — people in neighbourhoods and people in City Hall. The Collaborative Group involved in the intervention refused to use this process as the way to unify neighbourhoods, recognizing the liabilities of such a method. If the Roanoke Neighbourhood Partnership were going to work, it needed the people in the neighbourhoods and all of City Hall. We had to find the demotivators which prevented engineers, social workers, administrators, secretaries — everybody — from engaging community people, and to create rewards for working with the neighbourhoods.

We engaged in careful and specific work in deconstructing current processes and procedures to understand the existing reward system which inadvertently resulted in demotivators to working with neighbourhoods. This work was not always easy; it demanded an honesty and openness on the part of all participants. But framing it within a

discourse that affirmed people's good intentions made difficult conversations easier and facilitated a willingness to explore other forms of working. Further, through the various planning projects representing the Action Plans of the four beginning neighbourhoods, we were able to demonstrate to city staff that neighbourhood people could be allies to getting things done that they knew had to be done, and in even gathering data for certain efforts such as was done in the Williamsom Road area on the unremitting flooding problem.

The removal of demotivators started at the top. When the Mayor, City Manager, and Chief of Community Development focused their attention on neighbourhoods and were willing to spend their own evenings at community meetings, this signaled a change in business as usual. City staff were publically recognized and rewarded for their efforts on behalf of individual neighbourhoods, encouraged to engage neighbourhood folks and spend time helping them resolve identified problems. This changed reward system enabled employees to conceive of their work differently: many began to see themselves as educators and communicators, not just hassled employees. And through the newly created space for dialogue in which conversations between city officials and neighbourhood folks occurred, the workings of City Hall became more transparent to the citizens, removing a major demotivator to calling on the city as new understanding and competence developed.

"The real story of the Partnership centres around the new spirit of hope and optimism in Roanoke's neighbourhoods. We think that people have begun to believe that they *can* shape their neighbourhood's destiny if they are willing to invest their time and energy. Every newly mowed vacant lot in the Northwest, every recently painted house in Southeast, every monthly edition of the *Forum* in Northeast, and every tree planted in Southwest is a testimony to people's faith in themselves, their neighbourhood, their city. This faith is what makes complex projects possible and helps people find the courage to form new groups." (Lewis W. Peery, Chair, RNP Steering Committee, 1984)

The creation of the Roanoke Neighbourhood Partnership is a testimony to the placemaking activity of people — their concern for their places and their willingness to work hard together to make it better. The knowledge of how to access City Hall has been translated into many different situations, as has the knowledge of how to structure planning processes and write grants. In each specific place, the situated knowledge is extremely useful not only to the neighbourhoods who now own it, but to the local officials who have the knowledge that the people of the city are appreciative of their work and recognize what they can and cannot do.

The story of the Roanoke Neighbourhood Partnership is also a demonstration of the power of professionals to enable people to make their places through the structuring of special dialogic space in which such work can be discussed, planned and done. The critical practice demands attention to small details such as how meetings happen and where, and to much more complex issues such as neighbourhood organizing and governmental bureaucratic reward systems.

The Roanoke Neighbourhood Partnership has changed greatly since the early 1980's, reflecting new times and new people. The important aspect of a utopian project such as that initiated in Roanoke is not the achievement of an end state, but the struggle to engage in history making and placemaking. The City of Roanoke, VA and all the people, including professionals such as ourselves, participated in the exciting inception, growth and transformation of the Roanoke Neighbourhood Partnership.

Such activity reveals the power of placemaking as a democratic project when the commitment to an on-going dialogue about the never-ending creation of place is made and continually remade by people in places.

2.2. *A large international banking institution*

The Setting: This story describes how the facility managers of a large banking institution work diligently with the people of their Institute to nurture, maintain and support the people and offices under their care. This is a crucial activity since many people today spend more of their waking time in offices than in their homes. How do people and facility managers continually transform and change their places as technology and organizations shift? How do professionals facilitate this placemaking? How does this process of change contribute to the organizational development of the institution?

We had an opportunity to explore these questions when we received the call from the Facilities Management Section of a large international banking institution (The Institute) in 1982. The call was from a former student who asked, "Do you remember when you used to talk about the relationship between organizational development and design interventions?" to which the reply was, "Of course. What's up?"

What followed was a description of how the caller's facility management section had recently completed a lengthy and very professional study on the telecommunication needs of the Institute, submitted their findings to the head of the Administration Department and were given the clearance for the wholesale conversion of the phone system in the 10 story headquarters building. They had completed the procurement action and were installing the systems when the proverbial "shit hit the fan." Angry questions, memos, snide references to the phone system change requiring a PhD in phones to operate all indicated that the users of this new phone system were furious. The system was complex; they did not know how to use it; they were not consulted in its procurement; and in general, they felt the change was an outrageous imposition on their daily lives. The relationship between the facilities organization and a large portion of all of the Institute staff including leadership, professional and clerical personnel was severely strained.

Well, the caller explained, the problem would settle down after a while. Efforts to provide instruction on the system were already in place and over time the employees would see the wisdom and usefulness of the procurement decision (which all turned out to be true). But, in the meantime, the work of the Facilities Section was continuing in a low trust environment, and the management team in charge of the Facilities Management Section were having to operate with the legend of the phone system decision hanging over their head. The lack of trust generalized to an attribution of "thoughtless management," straining staff relations in often completely unrelated areas. The correct technical decision, poorly implemented, helped to create a serious atmosphere of distrust and several organizational development problems.

All of this was occurring, the caller explained, when even more complex and significant facilities decisions were on the horizon. Wasn't there some way to proceed with the work in a way that avoided confrontations and angry constituents in the future?

The Institute was preparing to automate the offices of the entire staff (over 2,000 employees) beginning with virtually no pc-based computer equipment in place and

anticipating full PC automation and networking five years hence. The Facilities Management Section had to establish the infrastructure for the systems including everything from office automation furniture, telephone/data communications, and local area network system support. The caller was clear that the staff in the department was very competent and capable of making the correct technical decisions. But they needed to develop a way to do it so the relationship with the rest of the Institute staff was actually better after they finished rather than repeat the phone "fiasco." In short, the caller requested help in using the technical decision process they were about to undertake to address the organizational development goal of restoring trust between her section, her superiors, and the large majority of Institute personnel who were to be affected by the automation project.

The User Perspective on Office Automation: A variety of circumstances in the modern office work environment argue for working in a way that facilitates trust between organizational elements. Without such trust there is no clear communication and decision-making is based on damage control thinking rather than the creative advance of the organization (Gibb, 1963). A process of working through "so-called" technical decisions which have broad impact is an excellent opportunity to establish both competent technical decisions and organizational development as management goals for a project.

One central strategy we employ in pursuing the dual goals is to include users of all ranks affected by decisions in a process which facilitates repair and change rather than working toward fixed, unbreakable or more "permanent" solutions. Rapidly changing computing and communications technology and the continuing rise in personnel costs make for constantly changing equipment, new organizational designs, and changes in personnel assignments. Such dynamics inevitably mean new people on the job, new insights on how the job might be done, and even why it might be done. It can also mean increased error rates and a loss of learning curve efficiencies. All of these circumstances suggest a process of engaging people in decisions affecting how they do their work so that both new and existing staff "own" their work tasks. Involving them in decisions about the on-going repair of their work place is a form of on-the-job training as well as on-the-job work designing.

An approach which consciously focuses on the facilitation of repair creates the conditions for continued reflection on the appropriateness of work place design, new hardware requirements, and current work procedures. If the ability to repair or improve all of these and other dynamics of the work place is perceived as accessible to all, if the process of repair is comprehensible and encouraged, then physical solutions to management and job design problems are considered in tandem with the organizational solutions, resulting in more integrated and informed organizational renewal. For example, new office automation furniture means new inventory designations and procedures, more complex processes of furniture delivery to the office work place, more complex assembly and computer hook-up dynamics involving more than one facility or computing specialization, a change in requisition procedures that more closely relates furniture requirements to specific hardware requirements, etc. Further reflection on all of this leads to a reconsideration of who should get which types of hardware and why. All of which leads to repaired procedures to procure and deliver furniture systems and repaired work procedure in the office receiving the computing and furniture systems.

We introduced the "facilitation of repair" theme to the Facilities Management Section but did not impose it, encouraging them to open the dialogue with eventual

users of the new computing systems and see if such a concept might emerge through the collaboration. In the process of collaboration through workshops, surveys, and test furniture/ computer hardware installations, there was a clear resistance from the users to any wholesale change without several tests of appropriateness. They wanted to see several options, test some of them in scattered sites throughout the building, and then test a preferred set of options in whole departments of the Institute. There was a general request for ways to adjust what was eventually to be acquired to meet new demands as they occurred. In short, there was a very sophisticated call for the facilitation of repair that recognized that, for example, "printers might not always be this big and noisy and someday they may require a lot more power to operate," "computers seem to be getting smaller," and ". . . space for computer manuals is needed at first but after a while I never refer to them any more." There was no assumption by the Institute staff collaborating with the Facilities Management Section that things should be maintained "like new." They wanted the ability to adjust to new organizational, interpersonal, individual, and technological demands as they occurred.

The sequence of events after the initial telephone call involved first a small meeting with the staff of the Facilities Management Section which was designed to list all their aspirations for the office automation project and for the process it would employ. Given that list and a beginning understanding of the organizational structure of the Institute, we (the Facilities Management Section and Caucus) collaboratively developed a preliminary "proposed approach" to the project which would be an invitation for comment. The first step was to prepare and conduct a series of briefings on the approach for a group of Administrative Officers who represent administrative support functions for all of the operating divisions. These 22 Administrative Officers service operating departments in the Institute by handling their procurement requests, facilities and computing needs, routine personnel paperwork processing, training requests, etc. They had the ear of both the boss and the rest of the unit. These were also the people who complained the most vigorously about the telephone decisions. They were an important group with which to start in the establishment of a new relationship between the Facilities Management Section and the rest of the Institute personnel.

The Administrative Officer briefing began with the honest expression of a desire to avoid the dynamics of the telephone system procurement as the Institute moved forward with its office automation project. In essence, the Facilities Management Section and Caucus began by confirming what they perceived to be the experience of the Administrative Officers in past work. The briefing was presented as an invitation to the Administrative Officers to interrogate that experience and influence how best to proceed with staff and management consultations. We indicated that we were less interested in consensus than on commitment to the actions necessary to make the office automation project successful in the eyes of those who would be affected by it. The briefing was approximately fifteen minutes long and left a full 45 minutes for questions, discussion, and summation. The questions and issues they raised were all recorded on newsprint and all accounted for in a summation at the conclusion of the session which involved suggested changes to the proposed approach.

The eventual approach resulting from the two rounds of collaboration, first with the Facilities Management Section and then with the Administrative Officers, called for a brief review of the literature on office automation and a tentative listing of furniture performance criteria. The review process employed the resident expertise of the in-house design staff at the Institute, a literature review, and experience of personnel at

Caucus. From these sources, a list of criteria were drafted to serve as the starting point for a series of workshops drawing on a wide cross-section of the Institute staff that would be the eventual end users of the furniture to be procured. Administrative Officers decided to seek volunteers from among groups of representative user types for one-half day workshop sessions that they also attended. In this fashion they were affirming the value of the briefing-turned-workshop approach employed with them. They liked the aspiration expressed by the Facilities Management Section for a fresh start and liked the apparent openness of the discussion. They also felt that face-to-face discussions like they had with the Facilities Management Section should also occur with users, furthering the development of trust and ownership in the process. All of this was seen as partially restoring some of the trust lost by the Facilities Management Section, helping to fulfil the organizational development goal of the project.

The workshops were conducted in a way that allowed small groups to review the tentative list of performance criteria, discuss their relative merits, and to add or subtract criteria. The work sessions concluded with participants rank ordering the revised performance criteria according to "importance," discussing proposed next steps, and expressing concerns on the further direction of the project.

One of the results of the workshops was the well received suggestion that the project proceed slowly from performance specification to procurement so that some small number of new office set-ups might be tested in-use prior to the large volume buying that was anticipated. This suggestion, *the test site program*, became one of the cornerstones of the office automation project, playing a major role in workspace standards development, installation and inventory procedures development, a custom furniture design modification project, and wire management studies.

Another return from the workshop was clarity on the furniture users' desires for more horizontal work surface than they currently enjoyed and for more storage space to accommodate computer manuals as well as other references related to the demands of their newly emerging job descriptions. As already indicated, participants in the workshop also requested workstation flexibility so they could adjust to changing job designs and computing equipment as it became available.

The clearly stated priorities combined with a number of other factors led the Facilities Management Section to propose experimenting with renovations of the existing line of furniture at the Institute in addition to possible new vendor and furniture line options. This "repair" of the existing furniture line appeared to accommodate the user's perspective on the automation of their work environment while allowing the Institute to maintain a 40 year relationship with a furniture manufacturer they had come to know well and trust. The manufacturer was willing to re-tool to help with the office automation modifications. Office automation and conventional furniture would be "compatible," and there were real cost savings in that the existing inventory could largely be reused.

In order to acquire feedback on this proposal to retool existing furniture, an open house was scheduled for the entire Institute which attracted over 400 people. On display at the open house were some examples of the modified furniture as well as off-the-shelf office automation furniture for staff to see and compare. The open house was followed by another workshop with Administrative Officers and those designated to receive test furniture installations. This workshop was designed to review the proposed "test-site" program. The users or "co-researchers" (Hirschorn, 1988) were invited to review the entire test site protocol, challenging and in some cases modifying the

approach in a way that would assure their creative contributions to what became a month of on-site testing. For example, the participants in the test site wanted to add an open log of their experiences to a structured set of essay type questions they were to respond to at the end of each day. The log became a valuable tool recording observations as they occurred for later reflection.

The process of inquiry, and the results of the inquiry, were always designed to receive different insights and to take advantage of them. It was never too late to influence. Even in the closing days of the automation project at the Institute, the office standards, furniture inventory, and procedures for installation were still under revision. The process and the product both facilitated repair and facilitated commitment to the repair process.

Other Work at the Institute: Virtually every major commission we have since received from the Institute involved the concept of facilitating repair . . . learning from the act of implementing so future implementations could be still further improved or reconfirmed. Often the work we would negotiate called for the delivery of a product and an investigation into the way in which the product should be implemented. Workspace Standards, Automated Procurement Systems Development, Local Area Network Planning and other contracts all had a similar set of concerns for both the quality of the new product and the modification of the product overtime to meet changing or newly revealed needs. The experience of the office automation project helped to establish an approach to contracting that was open ended, allowing the initial framing of the problem to emerge through interviews and workshops intended to confirm and interrogate the experience of those related to whatever problem was up for consideration.

A clear intent of the Facility Management Section and Caucus in the facilitation of repair was to involve enough members of the Institute in their facilities that they might understand place as a strategic tool in the conduct of several aspects of their work. The resulting, "aware client" makes better workstation requisitions and work orders because they understand the rationale for why things are the way they are. The procedures for improvement are accessible and not viewed as threatening to facilities management staff when invoked. On the contrary, each request is analyzed for its implications to the ongoing management of the rest of the facility. The facilities management staff and Institute personnel have, in effect, redefined error. Error is now seen as both inevitable, given changing dynamics, and as part of the appropriate process of repair. The Institute staff are co-researchers in the ongoing experimentation with facilities management. This dynamic of enabling Institute personnel to help situate as well as construct knowledge relevant to their workplace keeps them informed and committed to the important tasks of sustaining the workplace.

One organizational development return to the Institute involved the evolution of a very general approach to problem-solving which has been applicable well beyond the scope of the facilities management mission. For example, even while the office automation project was in process, Caucus was requested to conduct a conflict resolution process between two different organizational units with apparently conflicting agenda. The request came to us when the units in conflict asked if it could be resolved "the way we worked on the furniture project."

A potential conflict in the furniture project may serve to illustrate how tension turns into creative solutions rather than a fight. Most of the staff of the Facilities Management Section began the project with an assumption that new office automation

furniture would be required to address the demands of the new technology. Renovating the existing line thus saving hundreds of thousands of dollars, maintaining a compatible system with the old line, and continuing a satisfying vendor relationship with the old furniture manufacturer was not seen as a viable option because the users would expect "what they see in the magazines." It became easy to suggest this renovation approach, however, as the users described their performance criteria, including compatibility with existing furniture, including an ability to adjust such things as storage shelves and work surface areas as hardware changes occurred, and as they expressed their general satisfaction with the existing line for conventional office functions. It is possible that the Administrative Officers would have interpreted the modification of the existing line as an attempt to cheat their people out of new office furniture if they had not participated fully in that decision. The process of collaboration confirmed a set of shared aspirations even while, through interrogation, some wholly new open office automation stations were also procured based on special performance needs. The potential conflict never emerged.

The processes of placemaking in large institutions are special opportunities for collaboration between professional placemakers and professional place users. These are special spaces for conversations about how to renovate, manage, and maintain places, and for an increased understanding of the power of employing environmental interventions as an vehicle for organizational critique and change.

3. The Tasks of a Placemaking Practitioner

The practice of placemaking as revealed in these stories embodies a set of tasks which are performed in support of the aims of practice. Its primary activity is the opening of a public space for dialogue about place and placemaking by creating a relationship with the place constituencies. This act, the *spacemaking*, is probably the most important activity of professional placemakers, because it is within the set-aside time and space that the dialogue of placemaking occurs.

"By public space, I mean...a concrete set of learning conditions where people come together to speak, to dialogue, to share their stories, and to struggle together within social relationships that strengthen rather than weaken the possibility for active citizenship" (Giroux, 1988, 100).

Within the dialogic space, we have found three activities, central to our work and the work of others — a project of *confirmation*, *interrogation*³ and *framing action* through processes of inclusion/ exclusion.

Confirmation is the act which looks at the context of work with an appreciative attitude in order to understand what is and what has been historically taking place. It involves focusing on the concrete experience of place as it has been made and taken (experienced) over time by the various inhabitants. It is equally important to *interrogate* that context by asking questions, by problematizing the place through a disciplined and critical perspective. The on-going, iterative and dialectic actions of confirmation and interrogation sets the *frame for the action*. Framing action involves the

³ Freire (1988) has developed the language of confirmation and interrogation in his work. He outlines his practice of educating *campesinos* in Latin America as a process of liberation in which he both confirms and interrogates their lives to facilitate their own questioning of their existence.

processes of shaping attention, of deciding what and who to include and exclude in placemaking.

In the Roanoke community development work and the facility management project, we continually engaged in these tasks in our professional role as placemakers. We structured a dialogic space within which groups of people joined us in these tasks. In doing so we did not talk about "confirmation, interrogation, and action framing." Rather we collectively confirmed, critically interrogated, and constantly framed action in the shifting world of placemaking. The tasks of placemaking are not discrete or sequential functions; they occur simultaneously and iteratively throughout any professional intervention, facilitating action and non-action, framing and working through conflicts, and incorporating new knowledges.

3.1. Confirmation: The Appreciation of Context

Each act of intervention in the world is unique even when framed by the same practice, based on similar theories, and using similar methodologies. Because practice in placemaking is about "everything", it is always about different things. Rittel and Webber (1973) call such unbounded interventions "wicked problems" because there is no easy way to bound the sphere of intervention or the starting or stopping of them. Each place occurs only once and to act responsibly in that historical moment requires knowledge of that time/place/cultural reality; wisdom to recognize that we never have sufficient information or insight on which to base a "rational" decision; and that we must proceed. It is an attitude that acknowledges that we learn by doing in many situations. As in the Roanoke context, we had to try a planning process in collaboration with the neighbourhoods in order to understand how the knowledge we had as professionals was best placed in their world. We could not "know" precisely how to proceed before engaging the dialogic space because of each place was particular and special.

Confirming a place requires knowing who the decision-makers are, what their rewards are, and how to achieve the goals set in the context in which they have to be implemented. Ethical action also requires knowing who has no access to power or influence but will be affected by any action. To act with and for others requires an understanding of the complex nature of social and environmental relationships, both formal and openly acknowledged relationships, and informal, tacit webs of communities and power.

Confirmation also requires experts who listen to and empower formerly subjugated knowledges in framing an intervention, recognizing the insights of others as a different particularistic interpretation of the world, just as our own is specific and limited. People living in places "know" many things about their places. This knowledge, although different from professional knowledge about science, design, planning, engineering, etc., nevertheless has the same legitimacy as the expert knowledges that we bring to our interventions. The knowledge that people have about places is usually unstructured, informal, and hesitant. It is not the kind of knowledge that is given voice in the normal professional arenas. The creation of a space for dialogue about placemaking activities often uncovers and confirms various forms of subjugated knowledges which enrich the context of placemaking, and move the discussion beyond the possibly patronizing and often coopting rhetoric of participation.

Social change, environmental change and management, and competent research in the practice of placemaking occurs when there is a congruence between the

various intentions and motivations of the place dwellers and people affected by this place, and our goals as interventionists. This confluence does not happen by chance; it must be nurtured in dialogue and exchange. Part of the professional's role is to couch their work — research and action — in the framework of the people who must live in, manage, and maintain the environment which will be impacted by the work. This complex task of situating knowledge from one discourse into another, places professional insights into the dialogic space where it can be transformed, appropriated as needed, and reconstructed by the people living in places. This work depends on our willingness to understand and fully "appreciate" the context of each professional intervention (Vickers, 1965).

In our practice, the confirmation of the everyday experience of people occurs through careful observation, and lots of talking and listening — in workshops, meetings and interviews with carefully recorded participant perceptions and values. These records are open, public, often displayed on newsprint, in newsletters, in the press, or through other media. Such records confirm interpretations of everyday experience and are part of the media with which we all work as we set about the placemaking tasks.

To appreciate people and their place confirms their experience of the world, and recognizes that their lives and their place have meaning to them. It acknowledges that the place in which they live has existed prior to a professional intervention, and will continue long after our presence. It accepts and understands their interpretation of their lives and place as their truth, and affirms that their knowledge and experience is critical to the processes of environmental change and management.

3.2. *Interrogation: The Conduct of Critical Theory*

To appreciate a place does not imply an uncritical stance toward it. The practice of placemaking is inherently about transformations, changes, modifications, and preservation — all are acts of intervention. In order to make judgments about any form of intervention one must both understand and confirm what it is, and simultaneously ask how it might be changed in accordance with negotiated goals. In this context, the interventionists present as clear an understanding of the context as is possible — to both confirm and interrogate it. As noted earlier, the work on uncovering demotivators to neighbourhood work in Roanoke started with an appreciation of the complex work of City Hall and a confirmation of the competence of city staff, and yet was very critical of their organizational structure which rewarded staff for not addressing requests from community groups.

The task of interrogation involves a process of inquiry designed to uncover the basic values and assumptions forming human institutions and actions referred to as "critical theory" (Habermas, 1979, 1984; Albrecht & Lim, 1986; Forester, 1985, 1989). *Critical theories*, unlike theories in science which are about the establishment of "objective" knowledge, are reflective and self-referential. In other words, "a critical theory is itself always a part of the object-domain which it describes; critical theories are always in part about themselves" (Geuss, 1981, 55). Critical theory is squarely located in the domain of human action; it is about our intentions for and activities in the world. It is concerned with empirically adequate descriptions of places, *and* about the values and interpretations of those constructed descriptions.

The stories reveal a process of recording several voices together with their subjugated or privileged knowledges. In arraying each voice in relation to others, the placemaking process employs state-of-the-art research, practitioner expertise, and the structure of everyday life, each as a foil for the other. The result opens a dialogue on the underlying agreements and perceptions of conflicts between participants in the process. The same public record that confirms the everyday experience of those who occupy our stories also establishes the basis for some of the interrogation. Initially, it is the interrogation of individual perception measured against the collective in both the Roanoke Neighbourhood Partnership and Institute story. This is not, however, a tyranny of community over the individual. It is more precisely to be understood as a dialogue between the individuals and the community they choose to make and remake as circumstances change and take place. As the process progresses to decisions about action, all voices can see themselves in the approach, have a higher level of commitment to the decisions, and often are more willing to live with the resultant conditions.

The context of every situation in which we take action, professionally and personally, is framed by legitimated and subjugated knowledges. In any location, we can critique and deconstruct the structure of institutions and organizations to test the adequacy of their aims and form to the project of both community and individual emancipation. This includes our own location as practitioners of placemaking, whether we are primarily professionals, researchers, or academics. These locations have historically privileged the domain of science as the legitimate form of knowledge, assuming that "objective" knowledge is more true than the subjective knowledges of lay people (Harding, 1991; Schneekloth forthcoming). This belief is the origin of the language of "application" in which it is assumed that knowledge generated through the dictates of science should replace other forms of knowledge. One can argue, however, that objective knowledge, that is knowledge from nowhere, is as limited as subjective knowledge, knowledge from everywhere. What we need to make places in the world is *situated knowledges* in which the knowledge of science is transformed by the particulars of each context, and in which the private, subjugated knowledges enter into the public discourse for confirmation or interrogation (Fraser, 1989; Haraway, 1988).

Critical theory offers insight into the socially constructed reality of a place, which has been reified through history and maintained by the social and physical structures of its institutions. The purpose of engaging in critical theory is to deconstruct, and thereby reveal socially constructed worldviews, including our own. By asking questions about the history and societal purposes of any place (institution, city, neighbourhood, office, research institute), the views of the multiple members, and power relationships, one gains insights into how the environment is used to support, maintain and/or subvert the agreed upon purposes of the social form. Because the practice of placemaking is contained in particular socially constructed realities, all actions either maintain existing worldviews or challenge them. An interrogative inquiry such as critical theory is required for competent and informed practice.

However, engaging in critical theory is not a "magic answer" that will tell us how to proceed in any placemaking activity. Neither confirmation nor interrogation alone is adequate grounding for action because human action is embedded in political and social contexts. Yet the process of confirmation and interrogation is the foundation of a collaborative dialogue which affirms meanings and activities, and at the same time, interrogates those activities and meanings from a perspective which reveals their

structure and inequalities. Decisions for action rely on these understandings, but must be recognized as political and ethical positions.

3.3. Framing Action: Processes of Inclusion and Exclusion

Every time we decide to do something, we simultaneously decide not to do something else, whether we are aware of this decision or not. Placemaking is no different. In each intervention, each research inquiry, each act of management, we decide what we are going to do by naming the players, the boundaries of action, and the rules for action. Placemaking includes people and excludes people in every intervention. Those involved select and exclude aims and boundaries for any project; privilege ways of working at the expense of alternative methods; and produce knowledge, products, and processes as a result of specific ways of working with particular people. Through the activity of inclusion and exclusion, those who engage in the tasks of placemaking determine who owns the work of practice: products, knowledge, and processes.

All placemaking activities are acts of intervention in already whole fabrics of life (Borgmann, 1992). When professionals such as architects, planners and/or researchers assist in this activity, they recognize this condition, especially when they step in for this activity and then leave again. This knowledge embodies the imperative to work collaboratively in any context (Shibley & Schneekloth, 1988). This is not to suggest, however, that the role of the professional in placemaking is only facilitator and never contributor. This attitude would deny the knowledges and experiences that the professional brings to each act of making. Such an attitude is insulting not only to professionals and our knowledges; it is also patronizing to the people with whom we work. Yet neither is the expert form of knowledge to be privileged above the knowledges of others. The professional can engage in a dialogue with others in which all knowledges are valued, shared, and used in the process of decision-making, and wherein our knowledges as professionals are situated and transformed.

As seen in the two stories, framing action continues to be a dynamic process. The office automation story created experience with a process initially devoted to furniture. Later, a similar process was developed to assist in a conflict resolution contract related to organizational turf, demonstrating that the clients understood the relationship between the environmental intervention and more general processes of organizational development. The experience of the initial neighbourhoods in the Roanoke Neighbourhood Partnership led to very different actions in each of the neighbourhoods, from neighbourhood clean-ups to building restoration to storm water management upgrades. The combination of all four test neighbourhoods created part of the story base useful in framing action for future neighbourhoods who participated in the Roanoke Neighbourhood Partnership. Stories, as they unfold, create familiar contexts for future stories which in turn, frame new action.

4. Who Can Play?

One of the most difficult technical and ethical decisions in any placemaking intervention is the decision concerning who will be involved. The inclusion and exclusion of peoples and knowledges frame all action by limiting what can be known and who is empowered to make decisions. Placemaking, whether it is design, construction or research, is best done collectively within its own social and political context (Lewin, 1951). To be effective, people involved in social and environmental change

must be involved in the process of generating knowledge about that change, in posing issues to be researched, in implementation, and in evaluation.

For example, in the Roanoke Neighbourhood Partnership story, the thorny question of "what is a neighbourhood?" was handled through a process of self-definition. When a group of people came forward for the initiating Partnership Forum and defined their neighbourhood, they were taken at their word. This resulted in planning with neighbourhood groups as small as five blocks, and with much larger allied groups of block clubs and business associations. The activity of their naming "who can play" to a large extent framed the kind of action agenda they set for themselves, with larger, more organized neighbourhoods taking on more complex projects initially, such as changes in the zoning ordinance to exclude "adult book stores," and the smaller groups working to take care of immediate problems such as clean-up, crimewatch, and lighting.

In this intervention, we framed participation not by defining what a neighbourhood was, and therefore determining who could play, but by giving the power of self-definition to the neighbourhood groups, facilitating and perhaps, forcing them to name the people with whom they would work. We both confirmed and interrogated their decisions: Why this boundary? Who lives over here and are they organized? Who are the leaders of groups contiguous to your neighbourhood? These kinds of questions sometimes led them to expand or constrict their original boundaries, enabling them to problematize their own definitions. We assumed that if later it were discovered that the area was not collectively self-defined, this would be addressed with the constituencies. However, in the years since the beginning of the Roanoke Neighbourhood Partnership, neighbourhoods continue to define themselves and their own boundaries appear to "work."

In a similar fashion, in the Institute story, the Facilities Management Section, our client, knew that the Administrative Officers were key to any environmental and organizational change, and they had to be included. In turn, it was the Administrative Officers who named the participants in the test site program. Collaboratively we discussed the kinds of people who might participate, but they, knowing their own unit intimately, invited the players.

Practically, all decisions cannot be made by everyone. But ethically, the process of exclusion serves specific interests, always at the expense of others. The task of selecting who can play frames the discourse and privileges perspectives and knowledges. In Roanoke, the self-selection process reified the racial separation of neighbourhoods and thereby limited the kinds of knowledge that could be exchanged in the neighbourhood conversation. But by creating many opportunities for self-defined neighbourhoods to share and work together, these very reified boundaries began to be problematized as residents from the Williamsom Road area visited the Gilmer Avenue area for Gospel sings and people from the Northeast were conspicuously present at the dedication of the new storm drainage system by another member of the neighbourhood partnership.

There are no rules or simple guides for selecting who plays, only values and beliefs. However, the tasks of confirmation through an appreciation of the context and interrogation by the conduct of critical theory offer insight into the implication of those selected to be included/excluded.

What are the Boundaries for Action? Another domain of inclusion and exclusion in the practice of placemaking is the selection of the boundaries of any action, focusing attention on what is part of the discourse and what stands outside this particular intervention. Each act of intervention may address many universal and theoretical issues, such as the legitimacy of knowledge or theories of territoriality. Yet when one is confronted with an actual act of placemaking in a specific place, the questions are always concrete. The work of planners and other professionals can be seen as "selective organizers of attention to real possibilities of action" (Forester, 1989, 14).

The decision of what to include and exclude in any discourse is part of the collaborative work done in the dialogic space. Depending on what knowledge we bring to conversation, the practice may at times be subversive relative to existing power structures; it may also be addressed to making the best of the situation within the current social structure. For example, when working in community development, the decision of what issues are permissible to discuss sets the context within which action can be taken. To present the neighbourhood with alternatives of rehabilitating the physical infrastructure of their community without confronting the segregation by race or class permits positive action in one aspect of community life. However, this boundary denies discourse on one of the basic structural conditions which permitted the infrastructure to deteriorate in the first place. It does not create the conditions of change which would eventually give a community the ability to manage and maintain its infrastructure so as to avoid serious deterioration in the future.

Practitioners working in the domains of the professions, government and/or the academia know that not every act of placemaking can address all issues of the human condition. Yet we recognize that each inclusion/exclusion is a non-innocent decision that has significant political and ethical ramifications. We must have the courage to know what we are *not* doing as well as what we are able to do.

What are the Rules for Action? The rules for action, discrete methods for intervention, embody the same dilemma as the setting of boundaries for action and including/excluding participants. How should we proceed? What are the implications for one way of working as opposed to another? What happens if we chose not to act? The selection of methods of work and approaches to framing and solving problems is not a technical activity.

Knowledge and methods from elsewhere are incredibly useful in placemaking — but only in a dynamic sense. They are part of the knowledge that we, as professional placemakers, bring to our practice. But this knowledge cannot be "applied" in any context, only appropriated and reconstructed by those engaged in the dialogic space of making this particular place.

Further, every one of our methods is rooted in beliefs and ideologies and these meanings are communicated in placemaking processes. The placemaker's toolbox of methods, strategies, and procedures can be used for many purposes. For example, the small group work we use frequently in Roanoke and the Institute, can empower many voices and insure that formerly subjugated knowledges are revealed. This same method has been successfully employed to diffuse and deny collective action.

"...methodological failings can always be traced to ideological errors . . . If, one is to adopt a method which fosters dialogue and reciprocity, one must first be ideologically committed to equality, to the abolition of privilege, and to non-elitist forms of leadership wherein special qualifications may be exercised, but are not perpetuated" (Freire, 1988, xi).

The selection of ways of working and the ways in which methods are employed are always rooted in basic assumptions about human beings and ultimate aims of practice.

5. The Place of Research in Placemaking

Professional placemakers are critical and reflective of their practice, engaging in research to better understand the dynamics of making places, and in working with people to design, build, renovate, manage, and demolish places. Those more closely aligned with the building research establishment, academics and other professional practitioners who do research using the methods of science, are all in a unique position to facilitate the tasks of placemaking. Specifically, the knowledge they develop can provide the "outside" catalyst often needed to help open the dialogic space within which the tasks of confirmation, interrogation, and action framing occur.

In the Institute story, for example, state-of-the-art literature review and expert opinion based on a knowledge of current research in office automation gave participants in this project a place to start in their construction of furniture performance criteria. By offering the criteria from such sources as tentative, that is, as unsituated knowledge, the Facilities Management Section and Caucus improved the potential for Institute personnel to interrogate it, relating it to their specific situation. This process increased their ability to influence and be committed to decisions which build upon the research insights. In the test site program, as well, a traditional field test design was modified to engage end users of the workstations as co-researchers. Their empirical observations helped acquire knowledge useful as general insights in office environments while they specifically situated this knowledge in the Institute's offices. It gave both our firm and the Facility Management Section a new place to start in future office automation work.

Situating knowledge also facilitates an organizational development agenda by creating opportunities for collaboration grounded in research but not dictated by research. The work of placemaking within organizations and communities appropriates general knowledge in the collaborative space, transforming it to facilitate appropriate action in each complex set of place specific circumstances. It is this process of working within the dialogic space that acts to create situations of trust between different interest groups as they search for the ability to act cooperatively. Our experience suggests that success in cooperating on something as relatively unthreatening as cleaning alleys or modifying workstations establishes the experience and confidence needed to try such collaborative processes in more threatening circumstances encountered in work and living places (Schneekloth & Shibley, 1990; Shibley, 1985; Shibley & Schneekloth, 1988)

Part of developing trust in the process of situating place research knowledge is making it vulnerable to organizational development and/or community goals and to the often subjugated knowledges of such place constituents as secretaries, maintenance personnel, or "just folks." The process of confirmation and interrogation based on an assumption of human competence helps create a new social dynamic in groups of people who share work and communities. For example, the research by community groups in Roanoke became a valuable part of the city's capital improvement program as well as its operations and maintenance programs, changing the relationship between formerly demotivated neighbourhood organizations and City Hall. The collaboration work on

"demotivation" itself was a direct response to organizational development goals in both the Office of Community Development and in the neighbourhoods.

6. Conclusion

All of the tasks of placemaking as we have presented them occur within the specially created dialogic space. Each task is embedded in all of the others. Confirmation, for example, as it occurs through exposing different points of view on the newsprint notes in the public-record meetings is also a form of interrogation. Any process revealing difference invites questions as to the origins and motivations of the difference.

"Dialogue includes the possibility and indeed the likelihood of conflict. Outside the domain of dialogue, such conflict is destructive: we seek victory over the other. But within a relation of dialogue, conflict — insofar as it leads to discoveries and transformations of the self — will only strengthen the relation. In agreement, we confirm each other in our shared experiences; but in disagreement, we affirm each other in our difference" (Friedmann, 1979, 103).

Comparing subjugated knowledges with place research knowledge is a powerful form of interrogation that tests whether the unsituated knowledge of the research community can be situated in this place at this time. The comparison is also a powerful form of confirmation for those who hold the subjugated knowledges as they acquire a voice in the process of framing action about their place. Still more interrogation is derived from this comparison as closely held subjugated knowledges become revealed and challenged by other forms of knowledge. Action framing itself is a powerful form of confirmation as it respects the process of collaboration and a powerful form of critique as it presents actions not to be taken, or people not to include, or knowledges not to be considered.

Placemaking is about everything because the making and sustaining of place is about living — about places, meanings, knowledges, and actions. Those of us who engage "professionally" in the making of places with and by others are involved in a practice which aims at creating beloved places through the making and/or renewal of relationship among all participants and their places wherever we find ourselves — in the professions, government services and/or universities.

The tasks of practitioners of placemaking, confirming and interrogating contexts and framing action, are inherently political and moral acts. There is no formula or method which can simplify the tasks or free the practitioner from the ethical implications of taking action. We make mistakes, have errors in judgment. And we often find ourselves in situations where we know through critical interrogation, that our work will not be as liberating as we know it could be. But with an attitude that facilitates repair, and with the promise of forgiveness embedded in communities of people who have come to trust each other by working together in special spaces for dialogue about places, we proceed in our collective, very human work of placemaking.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

- ALBRECHT, J. & LIM, G. (1986), A Search for Alternative Planning Theory: Use of Critical Theory, *Journal of Architecture and Planning Research*, 3(1986), 2, 117-131.
- BORGMANN, A. (1992), "Crossing The Post Modern Divide" (The University of Chicago Press, Chicago).
- CARROLL, L. (1972), "Alice in Wonderland" (Scholastic Book Services, New York).
- FORESTER, J., Ed. (1985), "Critical Theory and Public Life" (MIT Press, Cambridge).
- FORESTER, J. (1989), "Planning in the Face of Power" (University of California Press, Berkeley).
- FOUCAULT, M. (1970), "The Order of Things" (Vintage Books, New York).
- FREIRE, P. (1988), "Pedagogy of the Oppressed" Trans. M. Ramos. (Continuum, New York).
- FRIEDMANN, J. (1979), "The Good Society" (The MIT Press, Cambridge).
- FRASER, N. (1989), "Unruly Practices: Power, Discourse and Gender in Contemporary Social Theory" (University of Minnesota Press, Minneapolis).
- GEUSS, R. (1981), "The Idea of Critical Theory: Habermas and the Frankfurt School" (Cambridge University Press, New York).
- GIBB, J. (1963), Climate for Trust Formation, *T-Group Theory and Laboratory Method* (Bradford, L. Gibb, J. & Benne, K., Eds.) (John Wiley, New York), 279-309.
- GIROUX, H.A. (1988), "Schooling and the Struggle for Public Life: Critical Pedagogy in the Modern Age" (University of Minnesota Press, Minneapolis).
- HABERMAS, J. (1979), "Communication and the Evolution of Society" (Beacon Press, Boston).
- HABERMAS, J. (1984), "The Theory of Communicative Action" Trans. T. McCarthy. (Beacon Press, Boston).
- HARAWAY, D. (1988), Situated Knowledges: The Science Question in Feminism, *Feminist Studies* 14, (1988)3, Fall, 575-600.
- HARDING, S. (1986), "The Science Question in Feminism" (Cornell University Press, Ithaca).
- HIRSCHHORN, L. (1988), "The Workplace Within: Psychodynamics of Organizational Life" (MIT Press, Cambridge).
- LEWIN, K. (1951), "Field Theory in Social Science" (Harper & Row, New York).
- RITTEL, H. & WEBBER, M. (1973), Dilemmas in a General Theory of Planning. *Policy Sciences*. 4 (1973) 2, 155-169.
- RUDDICK, S. (1989), "Maternal Thinking" (Beacon Press, Boston).
- SHIBLEY, R. (1985), Building Evaluation in the Main Stream, *Environment and Behavior*, 17 (1985) 1, 7-24.
- SCHNEEKLOTH, L. & SHIBLEY, R. (1987), Research/Practice: Thoughts on an Interactive Paradigm. *Proceedings of the American Institute of Architects/Association of Collegiate School of Architecture Annual Research Conference* (Shibley, R.) (AIA/ACSA, Washington).
- SHIBLEY, R. & SCHNEEKLOTH, L. (1988), Risking Collaboration: Professional Dilemmas in Evaluation and Design, *The Journal of Architectural and Planning Research*, 5 (1988) 4, 304-320.
- SCHNEEKLOTH, L. AND SHIBLEY R. (1990), Dialogic Practice, *Coming of Age*, (Selby, R., Anthony, K., Choi, J., Orland, B.) (Environmental Design Research Association, Oklahoma City).
- SCHNEEKLOTH, L. (forthcoming), Partial Utopian Visions: Feminist Reflections on the Field, *Women and Environments* (Altman, I. & Churchman, A., Eds.) (Plenum Press, New York).
- VICKERS, G. (1965), "The Art of Judgement" (Basic Books, New York).