

**APPRECIATION:  
TO HARVEY S. PERLOFF**

Ira M. Robinson  
Faculty of Environmental Design  
The University of Calgary  
Calgary, Alberta  
T2N 1N4

If the readers will please bear with me, I feel moved to begin this Appreciation to Harvey Perloff on a personal note. To a large extent, Harvey was responsible for launching me on my career in planning and, for this reason alone, I feel a deep personal loss at his untimely death. It was the summer of 1947 in Washington, D.C., where I had been working following my release from World War II service in the U.S. Navy. For some months previously I had been discussing with a close friend career possibilities including possible graduate schools. One day I came across the University of North Carolina's Bulletin describing its Planning Department and went to see my friend to get his reactions to city and regional planning as a possible career.

He thought it was a great idea and remembered having heard that Rexford Guy Tugwell, the former New Deal economist and original member of Franklin Delano Roosevelt's "Brain Trust," and more recently Governor of Puerto Rico, was going to the University of Chicago to head up a new Planning School. As an ardent admirer of FDR and Tugwell, I was immediately impressed. More important, my friend said that an old friend of his, who turned out to be Harvey Perloff, had been working in Puerto Rico for Tugwell and would be joining Tugwell in the new Planning School, and coincidentally he (Perloff) happened to be in Washington at the time, temporarily spending the summer writing prior to leaving for Chicago.

I met with Harvey and we talked for several hours, about his experiences in Puerto Rico, my background and interests, his perception of the role of planning in society, and how he, Tugwell

and the other newly hired faculty (Branch, Meyerson, Margolis, etc.) envisioned a new type of Planning School to be grounded in the social sciences. I was especially impressed by his willingness to listen to my "story" and his sympathetic understanding of where my head was at the time; i.e., full of idealism and determined to contribute in some way to a new post-war America. His patience and at the same time probing questioning with people was an unusual characteristic that I was to experience as his student, and throughout our various get-togethers in later years. Above all, I was so infected by his optimism about the potential role that planning could play in helping to realize these ideals and, more specifically, his enthusiasm about the innovative plans for the new Chicago Planning School, that I left the next day by train for Chicago to make the necessary arrangements for admission to the first class in the fall.

The Chicago Program proved to be for me everything Harvey said it would be. Its accomplishments have been well described by others,<sup>1</sup> and so I will not recount them here. Suffice it to say, I am indebted to Harvey for having started me on my planning career, for which I will be eternally grateful, and for having brought me to the Chicago Program, which instilled in me a special philosophy of planning that has essentially remained with me throughout my career.

Following completion of my studies at Chicago, and after three years working in local planning agencies, I left for Canada. For the subsequent 30 years, except for the period 1968-1974 when our paths crossed again in Los Angeles (he as Dean of the School of Architecture and Planning at UCLA, and I as Director of the Graduate Program in City and Regional Planning at USC), we were widely separated geographically, though not, I would like to think, philosophically. Despite this physical separation, however, we remained close friends, seeing each other occasionally at seminars or conferences. On these occasions, he would always take the time to find out what I had been doing and thinking, having the uncanny human ability to make me (and others) feel that at least for that moment you were the most important person in the world.

Throughout all these years I also kept up with his activities, research and scholarship from afar, and was constantly struck by his productivity, even when he was in administrative positions. In all, he wrote 17 books, 15 monographs and reports, and 78 pub-

<sup>1</sup>See, for example: Jean-Louis Sarbib, "The University of Chicago Program in Planning: A Retrospective Look," *Journal of Planning Education and Research*, 2:2 (Winter 1983), 77-81.

lished papers. In all of these works, I was also continually impressed by his ability to detect emerging trends, to understand them, and to channel them into constructive directions for the future - be they in planning education, research, or social action.

Harvey's contributions to education in city planning and research and scholarly accomplishments in the fields of city planning, urban renewal, urban economics, and urban government are well-known; they have been adequately described by others,<sup>2</sup> and will undoubtedly be the subject of further accounts in the coming years. In keeping with the interests of this Journal's readership, I should like in the remainder of this Appreciation to focus on Harvey's contributions, as educator, researcher, and scholar, to regional planning, regional development, and regional analysis, both for developed and developing areas.

Harvey's interest in regional planning and regional development probably started during the late 1940s when he served as economic consultant to the Government of Puerto Rico, helping to set up that government's famed economic development program known as Operation Bootstrap. As a result of this experience, he published in 1950 *Puerto Rico's Economic Future: A Study of Planned Development*, which appraises the nature, accomplishments, limitations, failings, and possibilities of the island's "bootstrap" measures and programs.

Later, in the Chicago Planning Program, he had his first opportunity to realize his interest in the training of regional planners when he was influential, first as a faculty member, and then as Director of the Program (he succeeded Tugwell in 1951) in establishing "Regional and Undeveloped-Areas Planning" as a major field of concentration and developing the curriculum for it (more on the curriculum below).

This interest continued throughout his tenure at Resources for the Future (RFF), a non-profit "think tank" and research organization based in Washington, D.C., where he served for almost ten years as its Director of Regional Studies. During this period, he organized or authored many major studies relative to regional planning and development, among which I would like to comment on four in particular, because they not only represent good examples of his life-long ability to spearhead new areas of research and innovative approaches to planning education, but also because several of them, I suspect, are little-known.

<sup>2</sup>See, for example, the two articles by Chuck Halloran and Lowdon Wingo, in *Architecture and Planning* (Winter 1983), a publication on the UCLA Graduate School of Architecture and Urban Planning prepared by the UCLA Office of Public Communications.

The first was a survey and compendium of regional-oriented research and graduate education activities, undertaken in 1957,<sup>3</sup> at a time when the fields of regional studies, regional planning and regional development were relatively new in colleges and universities. The survey was undertaken with two purposes in mind: to assist in the development of the program of regional studies at RFF, and to make available information that might be of value to scholars working in various academic fields which are concerned in one way or another with regions or techniques of regional analysis.

In the same year, under the auspices of RFF, Perloff published what has since become a classic treatise on planning education, and is still probably the best text on the subject.<sup>4</sup> The book was published at a time when there was a substantial increase in the demand for persons with knowledge and skills in city and regional planning and when concurrently questions were being raised about the adequacy of existing planning education. Comprising three essays, one on the education of city planners, the second on education for regional planning and development, and the third on the experience of the Chicago Planning Program (written in collaboration with John Friedmann) - the book was intended as a contribution to the discussion of planning education then under way. In essence, the essays address the question of what is an appropriate intellectual, practical and "philosophical" basis for the education of regional (and city) planners, and offer some tentative answers.

Harvey's prescription for training regional planners called for a program that would include: a broad-gauged, solid general education; grounding mainly in the social sciences; integration with training for city planners (because of his belief that certain types of planning activities, planning problems and planning procedures are common in both city and regional planning); a focus on basic theory, principles and methodology, incorporated in a planning core; and, training in a number of specializations that are important in the regional field (e.g., natural resource development, management and conservation, transportation, area development). In short, the program would produce a "regional planning generalist with a specialty"; with practical training in problem-solving situations; and with a strong emphasis on research.

<sup>3</sup>*Regional Studies at U.S. Universities: A Survey of Regionally Oriented Research and Graduate Education Activities* (Washington, D.C.: Resources for the Future, May 1957).

<sup>4</sup>*Education for Planning: City, State, and Regional* (Published for Resources for the Future, Inc. by the The Johns Hopkins Press, Baltimore, 1957).

In developing this prescription for regional planning training, Perloff drew, in part, on the results of his earlier study of the then current graduate research and educational activities, and undoubtedly was also strongly influenced by his experience in the Chicago Planning Program, as the description of it in the third essay clearly demonstrates. There is no question that the legacy of his book, like the Chicago Program itself, shaped planning education long after the book was published in 1957. Since then all of us in planning education have tried to emulate Perloff's basic ideas in one way or another in our regional as well as city planning curricula.

In 1966, Perloff returned to his earlier interest in research and training for regional planning/development, and in the problems and potentials of planning for developing areas, with the publication by RFF of his report *Design for a World-Wide Study of Regional Development*. The purpose of the report was to assist the United Nations Secretariat prepare a draft program of research and training in connection with regional development efforts then under way in countries in various parts of the world (e.g., Northeast Brazil, Southern Italy, the Aswan region of Egypt, and East Pakistan).

An examination of these current regional development efforts, Perloff hoped, would provide valuable lessons for the benefit of the whole world, help to improve the performance of the regional projects themselves, and provide an excellent framework for establishing a foundation for continuing research and training in regional problems and development policies. In line with his underlying philosophy, Perloff recommended that the study of these regional development efforts should be *comprehensive*, covering in depth social, economic, behavioral, political, physical and related elements, and that the study teams must be *interdisciplinary*. Thus, his suggested study design recommended that a set of common objectives which normally dominate regional development efforts (economic progress, patterns of settlement, population and migration, social development, and organizational and administrative advance) serve as the core themes around which basic information should be collected and analyzed. The materials in the chapters of his report, largely prepared by his colleagues and visiting scholars at RFF, suggest how this might be done. I do not know whether the United Nations ever implemented in full or in part Perloff's proposed study. Be that as it may, it could serve as a "model" of what needs to be done in the area of economic and social development on a regional basis in developing areas.

Finally, and perhaps of most interest and relevance to readers of this special issue of *The Canadian Journal of Regional Science*, is Per-

Perloff's and his RFF associates' earlier monumental empirical study of the subnational (i.e., regional) structure of the national economy, *Regions, Resources and Economic Growth*, published in 1960.<sup>5</sup> The study had two major objectives: first, to explain the differential growth patterns among regions in the U.S.; second, specifically, to identify the role of natural resources (or what they termed "resource endowments") in regional growth. Of particular relevance to Canadian researchers and analysts are the findings and conclusions of Perloff and his associates regarding the process of regional growth in general and specifically the heartland-hinterland concept of economic development, long used to explain regional development in Canada.

Perloff and his associates saw the process of *cumulative advantage* (which is similar to the concept of circular and cumulative causation originally postulated by Gunnar Myrdal in his *Rich Lands and Poor*) as being responsible for heartland-hinterland differences in spatial organization. Cumulative advantage combines both "export" and "internal" determinants of regional growth, including such factors as the region's natural resource endowment, its geographic position (especially in relation to major centres of population), external economies of scale and agglomeration economies, among others.

They argued that widening gaps between regions were the consequence of the clustering of activities in areas that promote increasing returns, a result of the internal and external economies that are present in nodal centres of agglomeration. In the development of the U.S. economy, the role of cumulative advantage is most clearly seen, they felt, in the growth of the northeastern and north-central urban-industrial complexes. Early on, in the 1950s, when minerals were dominant in the U.S. economy, the Middle Atlantic Region emerged as the core of an "industrial heartland" with southern New England as a smaller eastern partner and the Great Lakes region adjoining on the west. This gave these regions an initial head start, which, together with their unequalled access to national markets, unusually good resources, a well-developed transportation system, and a vigorous, risk-taking group of business persons, gave them a competitive advantage over other regions.

<sup>5</sup>Two condensed, more popular versions of the larger study were subsequently published as well, *How a Region Grows: Area Development in the U.S. Economy* (with Vera W. Dodds), published by the Committee for Economic Development in March 1963; and "Natural Resources Endowment and Regional Economic Growth" (with Lowdon Wingo, Jr.) in *Natural Resources and Economic Growth*, ed. by Joseph J. Spengler (Resources for the Future, Inc., 1961), 191-212.

A high per capita income fairly equally distributed, large population concentrations, and other favourable internal factors contributed to the development of large internal markets, so that export and region-serving activities built on each other stage by stage. All of these cumulative advantages not only combined to account for the substantial growth of these regions over the years (until the late 1950s) but also allowed them to enjoy a considerable degree of permanence in their growth pattern.

In the meantime, in the resource regions on the periphery (which did not enjoy "cumulative advantage"), the working out of comparative advantage often resulted in a narrow and intensive specialization in a single resource subsector, in effect tying the future of the region to the vicissitudes of national demand for the products of that subsector. This tended to set ultimate limits to the regions' growth rates: shifts in national demand patterns, the emergence of substitutes, depletion, technological advances, or the relative shifting of regional advantage periodically chokes off growth and leaves behind enclaves of unemployed persons and economic stagnation. The Western experience of "boom town to ghost town" is a dramatic example of this.

In essence, they argued, the agglomeration and other advantages of the urban-industrial "heartland" so swamped the cheaper factor prices of the periphery that they produced a continuous stream of disequilibrating flows of labour and capital from poor to rich regions, inhibiting the growth prospects of the poor regions, distorting their patterns of production and employment and, in general, aggravating the heartland-hinterland differences.

That analysis was undertaken in the late 1950s. However, since the early 1970s, as has been shown by a number of researchers, the U.S. has been experiencing changes in the spatial organization of people and jobs that appear to have reversed the earlier trends. In addition to slower growth of metropolitan areas and large urban regions; the rapid growth of small towns, rural centres, and non-metropolitan areas; and a large movement from central cities to suburbs, there has also been a marked migration of jobs and people from the older, established northeastern and north-central regions of the country to the former peripheral regions of the South and West, and more recently, the Mountain region (many of the latter being endowed with what Perloff and his associates first termed "amenity resources"). Similar changes have been noted for many countries in Western Europe as well as Japan. Likewise, several Canadian researchers, including this writer, have identified similar changes under way in Canada. If these changes were to continue they would certainly mark a shift in the classical heartland-hinterland dynamic. It remains to be seen, however, whether these recent changes do indeed signal a fun-

damental long-term trend or only represent mere short-term aberrations and that some time in the future we will witness a return to those earlier trends so carefully analyzed by Perloff and his associates. Several of the papers in this Special Issue address this theme.

Like the thousands of others who have been touched by him in one way or another, I will miss Harvey Perloff very much: his warmth, deep sense of humanity, respect for varied viewpoints and optimism about the future, even when things looked bleak. But his spirit will live on and will continue to inspire those planners of my generation, and especially the younger ones who will follow on, to emulate his impeccable scholarship, always tempered by a desire to put his work to a social action, and his keen awareness of underlying trends and enthusiasm about the role of planning to help shape these trends in an innovative way for the good of society.