

# “The City of Tomorrow Must Reckon with the Lives and Living Habits of Human Beings”: The Joint Center for Urban Studies Goes to Venezuela, 1957-1969

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## Abstract

This essay explores the forgotten history of the founding of the Joint Center for Urban Studies of MIT (Massachusetts Institute of Technology) and Harvard University and the challenges it faced in putting its multidisciplinary urban studies method to work, in Venezuela, in the early 1960s. The first part “Cambridge, Massachusetts” details the Center’s creation and the mix of personal and professional relationships that shaped its structure and mission. The second part “Ciudad Guayana, Venezuela” retraces the Center’s role in building Ciudad Guayana. While the existing scholarship has portrayed the Center’s expedition to Venezuela as a botched experiment in midcentury utopian modernism, there’s more to the story. Building on recent work that has uncovered a converging transatlantic critique of the “urban renewal order,” this essay sheds light on why the Center went to rural Venezuela, where there weren’t supposed to be many people, to hone a new planning technique that purported to “reckon with the lives and living habits of human beings.”

## Keywords

Ford Foundation, Joint Center for Urban Studies of MIT and Harvard University, research universities, urban renewal, urban studies

In the midst of the busy 1964 commencement season, the *Boston Globe* ran an article tritely titled “The Changing University.”<sup>1</sup> That the American university had been changing rapidly since World War II was hardly news: enrollments were at an all-time high, government support for students and research was ascendant, and so too the general public’s faith in the ability of the sector, and the experts who ran it, to produce cutting-edge research and democratic citizens.<sup>2</sup> Yet the *Globe*’s article went beyond mere “pomp and circumstance,” providing insights on a critical but little known transformation of the ivory tower that was quietly extending American academic authority to a global scale: “the birth and evolving and multiplying of the ‘center.’” What was an academic research center? It was “something new, a device to reach across all the old lines, departments, academic disciplines . . . and across national boundaries to bring scholars from everywhere. Why? To attack problems so large that they had never been properly assaulted before. . . .”<sup>3</sup>

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At the time, no domestic problem was as big as the city and no center as adventuresome as the Joint Center for Urban Studies of MIT (Massachusetts Institute of Technology) and Harvard University.<sup>4</sup> Formed in 1959 with a major grant from the Ford Foundation, the Joint Center was the brainchild of two ambitious, self-styled “urbanists” and friends—Harvard city planner Martin Meyerson (age thirty-seven), and MIT land economist and regional development specialist Lloyd Rodwin (age forty-one)—who wanted a space to explore “the problems and potentialities of urban areas and regions” from a multiplicity of disciplines and methodologies. Located in the heart of Cambridge Square, away from both campuses so its multidisciplinary work could flourish, the Joint Center was envisioned as a “bridge between fundamental research and policy application at national and international as well as local levels.”<sup>5</sup> Similar to the other centers at Harvard and MIT, the Joint Center ran on soft money and contract work, but neither Meyerson, the Joint Center’s founding director, nor Rodwin, his reliable number two, was interested in running a consulting firm by another name. Their vision for the Joint Center and its research on the problems of the city was in service to a grander calling: namely, to inject the field of city planning with a new multidisciplinary method known as urban studies.<sup>6</sup>

The Joint Center’s theoretical map for urban studies drew ideas from across the disciplines, especially the social and behavioral sciences. After World War II, as Ellen Herman and others have shown, experts from an array of professional communities mined the human sciences in search of fresh insights and ostensibly value-neutral empirical methods.<sup>7</sup> Meyerson and Rodwin, together with their collaborators, were part of this budding midcentury multidisciplinary “romance.” Indeed, the cross-fertilization of the “social sciences in urban and regional studies,” Rodwin recalled, “was the main reason for the organization . . . of the Joint Center.”<sup>8</sup>

On a practical level, the Joint Center’s nascent urban studies method relied on multidisciplinary social-science team research to examine the interaction of individuals and institutions in a thick context. The organization of research teams to conduct comprehensive analyses of the physical environment and its inhabitants—to close the gap between the planners and the population—represented the Joint Center’s core aspiration. Unlike old-school master planners who thought only about the built environment, or latter-day advocacy planners who worried only about the people, urban studies offered a third way that claimed to treat people *and* the physical environment as constitutive parts of the planning process.<sup>9</sup> The memorandum of agreement between MIT and Harvard, delineating the Joint Center’s charge, underscored the point: “The purpose of the new Joint Center for Urban Studies will be to focus research on the physical environment of cities and regions, the social, economic, governmental, legal technical and aesthetic forces that shape them, and the interrelations between urbanization and society.”<sup>10</sup>

Meyerson and Rodwin’s concern for everyday people living and working in the city had not been learned at Harvard, where both men earned advanced credentials in the late 1940s, but “on the job,” in planning and public housing offices in the United States and around the world. Charter members of the postwar planning generation, they came of age following the unfulfilled promise of the New Deal, during the heady days of urban renewal when the federal government vested city authorities with eminent domain powers and funding to extinguish the smoldering “urban crisis.”<sup>11</sup> Confronted by a host of challenges—crumbling infrastructure, old housing stock, high taxes, chronic privation, and population decline—city leaders and chambers of commerce turned to “renewal” to rebuild the downtown business district from the ground up.<sup>12</sup>

The “culture of clearance” that cut through the postwar period was fraught with social, political, and economic consequences.<sup>13</sup> Redevelopment delivered gleaming new structures and super-highways but also obliterated entire city neighborhoods and displaced an estimated 3.8 million people, a disproportionate number of whom were racial and ethnic minorities. New public housing complexes that soon enough became the “second ghetto” absorbed some of the exiled, though not all.<sup>14</sup> Then again, sheltering dislocated residents, despite an expectation of “just compensation,” was never the point of urban renewal. Its primary goal was to build interstates and athletic

stadiums, high-rise apartments and mixed-use properties to help attract wealthy, upwardly mobile suburban consumers and business firms back to the city center.<sup>15</sup> While analyses found that the economic impact of urban renewal varied widely from one city to another, by the early 1960s, mounting concerns over the human toll of the “federal bulldozer” compelled Meyerson and Rodwin to chart a different course. The Joint Center was at the center of the effort to create a more humane urban studies method, couched in the social sciences, to train better planners and build better cities.<sup>16</sup>

While much is known about the Joint Center’s contribution to the training of urban studies researchers and the development of the field of urban studies, this essay excavates the forgotten history of the Joint Center’s founding and the difficulties it faced in putting its multidisciplinary urban studies method to work.<sup>17</sup> The first part “Cambridge, Massachusetts” details the establishment of the Joint Center and the mix of personal and professional relationships that shaped its organizational structure and intellectual mission. Negotiations occurred over several years and involved parties from MIT and Harvard as well as the Ford Foundation, the Center’s primary funder, whose incorrigible program officer, Paul Ylvisaker, encouraged the partnership between the two universities along with the Center’s multidisciplinary bearing. Although scholars have long observed the influence of funding agents on the university’s research function, the granular personal correspondence included here offers a rare glimpse into the choices, challenges, and compromises that clients and patrons confront when working together on large-scale organizational and intellectual projects, like center building and the development of new multidisciplinary fields of inquiry.<sup>18</sup>

Unearthing the origins of the Joint Center is necessary to make sense of the events in the second part of this essay “Ciudad Guayana, Venezuela.” In 1961, the Venezuelan government offered the Joint Center the chance to put its urban studies method to the test, promising something no U.S. mayor could: the opportunity to “build a city from scratch.”<sup>19</sup> Ciudad Guayana, located “on the empty, grassy plains of southern Venezuela,” in Bolivar State, was that city, and Rodwin, who’d done extensive overseas work, seized the chance to help design a “dream city” in the hopes of ending the nightmare of urban-decline-and-renewal that haunted the postwar metropolis.<sup>20</sup> The small existing scholarship has portrayed the Joint Center’s expedition to Ciudad Guayana as a botched experiment in midcentury utopian design, but there’s more to the story.<sup>21</sup> Building on recent work that has uncovered a converging transatlantic critique of the “urban renewal order” that hastened its “collapse,”<sup>22</sup> this essay sheds light on why the Joint Center went all the way to rural Venezuela, where there were not supposed to be many people, to test Rodwin’s claim that “the city of tomorrow must reckon with the lives and living habits of human beings.”<sup>23</sup> This was the Joint Center’s plan, at any rate—that is, until the plan went awry deep in the Venezuelan countryside.

## Cambridge, Massachusetts

None of the official publications of the Joint Center for Urban Studies of MIT and Harvard University tells the true story of its founding. All they reveal is this: The Ford Foundation made public its grant “to help establish a Joint Center for Urban Studies” in an October 21, 1958, press release that was totally ignored by national media outlets.<sup>24</sup> Months passed without a word before details of the inter-university center and its “revolutionary” agenda finally surfaced in late February 1959, in the pages of the Harvard *Crimson* and the MIT *Tech*, a few days before presidents Nathan M. Pusey of Harvard and Julius Stratton of MIT finally announced the establishment of the Joint Center on March 4, by way of, what else, a joint press release from the Harvard News Office.<sup>25</sup> That same day, the *New York Times* ran a brief story on page 7 that filled in the gaps, explaining, “The center will be international in scope, intended to provide a stimulating environment for scholars engaged in urban research in the United States and abroad.”<sup>26</sup>

In fact, the origins of the Joint Center had been unwittingly hatched two years earlier, in 1957, as two separate plans for two different and already existing centers, one at Harvard and the other at MIT. This reflected each school's strategy to upgrade the old field of city planning with the new profession of urban studies by deploying sophisticated social science methods to study and understand the complex behavioral, psychological, and economic interaction of individuals and their physical environment.<sup>27</sup> Harvard's Graduate School of Design (GSD) moved first, hiring Martin Meyerson as the inaugural Frank Backus Williams Professor of City Planning and Urban Research and director of the fledgling Urban Studies Center.<sup>28</sup> Meyerson possessed an unusually accomplished résumé, even by Harvard's standards. A graduate of Columbia University and Harvard's GSD master's program in city planning, Meyerson had bobbed and weaved in and out of academia throughout his career. Following a short turn in the Philadelphia city planning office, he headed to Chicago in 1945 to work as a planner at Michael Reese Hospital, the city's biggest private medical care provider, located on the hardscrabble, racially stratified South Side. Unlikely as it might have seemed then, the relationships that Meyerson formed in Chicago would shape the rest of his professional life. At Michael Reese, he worked for architect Reginald Isaacs, who, in 1953, would move on to the Department of City and Regional Planning at Harvard, and, as chair, help to recruit Meyerson four years later. Meyerson also crossed paths with the president of the Illinois Institute of Technology (IIT), Henry T. Heald, the future president of the Ford Foundation, the main financial backer of the Joint Center in 1959. Isaacs, Heald, and Meyerson got an up-close look at the costs of urban decentralization and the price city planners and business leaders were willing to pay to fight it: IIT and Michael Reese formed the nucleus of the South Side Planning Board, headed by Heald, which helped insulate the hospital and IIT from racial succession through the acquisition and clearance of more than a hundred adjacent acres and the dispersal of the thousands of mostly African American residents who once called it home. According to historian Arnold Hirsch, the board's handy work, which it managed in close concert with the Chicago Housing Authority, previewed the Illinois Redevelopment Act of 1947, the country's first state-level clearance and redevelopment legislation, and a model for federally sponsored urban renewal action under the Housing Act of 1949.<sup>29</sup>

Meyerson left Michael Reese in 1948 to become an assistant professor of city planning at nearby University of Chicago, where Rexford Tugwell, the former New Dealer and doyen of the failed Greenbelt City resettlement program, had just been appointed director of the Program in Education and Research in Planning.<sup>30</sup> If Meyerson was looking to get out of the urban renewal business—and the unpleasantness that accompanied it—he went to the wrong place. Just as he arrived, the university was embarking on its own redevelopment strategy to create a land buffer around its Hyde Park campus, following the South Side Planning Board's lead, convinced that it was “not possible to operate and maintain a great university in a deteriorating or slum neighborhood,” as University of Chicago president Lawrence Kimpton bluntly put it.<sup>31</sup>

Whether it was possible to operate a great university in a slum neighborhood would remain an open question for decades; whether it was possible to run a city planning program in a slum neighborhood was answered much sooner. Chicago's program hit the skids in the early 1950s before closing in 1953, just after Meyerson had preemptively decamped for the University of Pennsylvania, where he found the right circumstances for his scholarship to flourish. In 1955, Meyerson published *Politics, Planning and the Public Interest*, coauthored with University of Chicago political scientist Edward Banfield, later Meyerson's Harvard colleague. A critical examination of the Chicago Housing Authority, the book explored the role of racial politics and vested interests in the fraught debates over where to build public housing in the Windy City.<sup>32</sup> Meyerson's subtle reconsideration of the planning profession (if not his own career) evinced by the book came into even sharper focus when, later that year, he agreed to serve as research vice president of the New York-based American Council to Improve Our

Neighborhoods (ACTION), a Ford-funded nonprofit advocacy group “organized . . . for slum clearance and community betterment” that recruited neighborhood members into the renewal process. Always on the lookout for new opportunities, Meyerson, who had already turned down Harvard once before, accepted an offer in 1957, taking the ACTION research office and staff from Philadelphia to Cambridge when he did.<sup>33</sup> Meyerson was comfortable moving between academic and planning circles, and he joined Harvard because the appointment also included the chance to run the Center for Urban Studies, conceived as the “research arm of the school” and “advised by Faculty members drawn from disciplines throughout the University.”<sup>34</sup>

At nearly the same time, Meyerson’s friend and fellow New Yorker Lloyd Rodwin, associate professor of land economics at MIT, was appointed the director of the new Center for Urban and Regional Studies. In the works for a number of years, MIT’s center, like Harvard’s, was created to strengthen the department’s research program by bringing attention to “the physical environment of cities and regions, the forces that shape them, and the interrelations between urbanization and society.”<sup>35</sup> Rodwin’s career traced Meyerson’s, if at a slightly less torrid pace. After graduating from City College, he enrolled in a \$10 course on city planning at the New School for Social Research. He was hooked, working in various planning positions, first as a researcher for his New School instructor and New York City public housing maven and advocate for the world’s poor Charles Abrams, next in the U.S. Defense Housing Program in Washington, D.C. during the war.<sup>36</sup> After Rodwin was drafted by the army but failed his physical, he decided to head back to school, earning a master’s degree in economics from the University of Wisconsin and, in 1949, a PhD in regional planning from Harvard University.<sup>37</sup>

A specialist in urban and regional housing problems of the developing world, Rodwin made his name with the publication of *The British New Towns Policy* (1956), a vivid policy history of British urban planning from Ebenezer Howard’s utopian Garden Cities movement at the dawn of the twentieth century to the post–World War II New Towns program. Rodwin, who spent a year in England on a Fulbright doing research, was clearly impressed by Britain’s two-prong planning model, comprising urban decentralization and peripheral resettlement, and thought it offered great insight for similar programs elsewhere, especially in the developing world.<sup>38</sup> The study revealed Rodwin’s strong sympathies for city dwellers, typical of his humanistic conception of urban studies, and also evidenced his commitment, shared by Meyerson, to using research to inform current policymaking.<sup>39</sup> Because the center model was the best way to link the academic to the practical, Rodwin welcomed the opportunity to serve as the director of the new Center for Urban and Regional Studies—a role that came with a two-thirds-reduction in teaching responsibilities and the prospect of a speedy promotion.<sup>40</sup>

From the beginning, Meyerson and Rodwin discussed whether and how their dual centers, separated by less than two miles, in the same city, at work on similar problems, might forge a mutually beneficial partnership. Although the details of the conversations of the fall semester of 1957 are faintly revealed by the archival record, it is clear that neither man was initially interested in a single center of the sort that in the end emerged. Rather, they thought that some “collaboration” was wise and that an informal “non-aggression pact,” as Rodwin put it, in a memo to Julius Stratton, newly appointed as MIT’s acting president, would suffice. Under these terms, Rodwin’s and Meyerson’s centers would share a name—“The Center for Urban-Regional Studies at Harvard University and the Massachusetts Institute of Technology”—but each center would “have its own Director and will be administratively independent of the other,” joining forces on an as-needed basis.<sup>41</sup> With such a plan in mind, both men prepared and submitted separate funding requests to the Ford Foundation. The program officer who received those requests, Paul Ylvisaker, head of the new Public Affairs Program, was not impressed with what he read (Figure 1).<sup>42</sup>

A native Minnesotan of Norwegian descent, Ylvisaker’s climb up the professional ladder started at the bottom; he attended junior college and matriculated from there to the University



**Figure 1.** Paul Ylvisaker, 1960.

Source: Image B78-F1272, Ford Foundation Photographs, courtesy Rockefeller Archive Center.

of Minnesota and, eventually, to Harvard University. There, Ylvisaker was a Littauer Fellow and earned a master's degree in public administration and then a doctorate in political economics and government in 1948, meeting Rodwin and Meyerson while doing so. His dissertation was a case study of local government in Blue Earth County, Minnesota, where he had worked before moving to Cambridge. The study foreshadowed his own future in city government and crystallized his belief in compromise and social deliberation as the keys to efficient and effective government operations.<sup>43</sup> The next seven years were spent in Philadelphia, where the busy Ylvisaker split his time between teaching at Swarthmore College and working as the executive secretary to Democratic Mayor Joseph Clark. When Clark announced that he was running for the U.S. Senate (a seat he won in 1956), the exhausted Ylvisaker, a lifelong diabetic of frail health and deteriorating eyesight, decided it was time for a change. In 1955, he accepted a program officer position at the Ford Foundation, where he worked for the next twelve years.<sup>44</sup>

Ylvisaker arrived to the Ford Foundation's new Madison Avenue offices in New York just as the foundation was revising its mission.<sup>45</sup> Founded in 1936 as a family charity and tax shelter, after the death of Henry Ford in 1947, his massive bequest turned the foundation into the richest in the world, provoking Ford's grandson, Henry Ford II, to convene a study committee to set a new course for the organization. Rowan Gaither, a San Francisco-based attorney with ties to MIT, was hired to lead the effort. The study that his team produced, *Report of the Study for the Ford Foundation on Policy and Programs* (1949), widely known as the Gaither Report, set the foundation on a course for global engagement that just so happened to align with the problems of the unfolding cold war standoff.<sup>46</sup> Although the Ford Foundation would forever be linked to global philanthropic pursuits, by the time that Ylvisaker was hired, the Ford was shifting direction toward a fresh set of issues that hit much closer to home. As chief officer of the new Public

Affairs Program, Ylvisaker, like all officers at the foundation, enjoyed broad discretion over his program, and he placed urban affairs and the problems of the city—what he called “gray areas”—at the very top of his list.<sup>47</sup>

Ylvisaker wrote and published his own work on the current challenges and future prospects of city life, stumping across the country promoting the Ford Foundation’s goal to advance human welfare. He believed in planning—and considered himself a planner—but disavowed top-down planning of the sort that was still being pursued in most metropolitan areas. He was critical of dreamy city planners and their penchant for “escapist” fantasies of urban mastery. He likewise doubted the veracity of “regionalism” as an organizing frame—“an area,” he quipped, “safely larger than the last one [i.e., the city] to whose problems we found no solution”—because it obscured city life, which he considered the only unit of analysis worth studying.<sup>48</sup> The future of the city, he insisted, would depend on “more research, more action, and a better balance between them.”<sup>49</sup> And the future of urban studies, he thought, would require spending less time focusing on “real estate” assessments and “physical plant” expansion and more time worrying about the “humane purpose of the city”—“the People.”<sup>50</sup>

In other words, Ylvisaker’s vision for urban studies shared much in common with Rodwin and Meyerson, with whom he twice met in December 1957 to discuss how the three of them might join forces. The direction of the talks caught Rodwin and Meyerson off guard because what Ylvisaker proposed—a true joint center with one director, address, research staff, and set of problems—was not what either man wanted. This was the pretext for the December 5, 1957, memo that Rodwin dashed off to his boss, Julius Stratton, alerting him to Ylvisaker’s funding conditions. In the memo, Rodwin agreed with Ylvisaker that “the problems of urbanism need to be attacked on an interdisciplinary basis” but was suspicious of his other ideas. Ylvisaker wanted a comprehensive agreement that articulated expectations and responsibilities; Rodwin and Meyerson, a looser structure and opportunities for voluntary participation. Rodwin wrote,

In our judgment it is better for both Universities to set up Centers in this field, as they have done, and to bring men representing different disciplines into the research program. We don’t believe urban and regional problems will ever be of more than marginal interest [to most faculty]. It is far better, we think to strengthen the programs with a major interest in these problems and develop an interdisciplinary focus.

In sum, Rodwin thought that Ylvisaker’s plan was too heavy-handed and would likely “arouse resentment and also stifle independent efforts which may also be desirable.”<sup>51</sup>

Rodwin and Meyerson met again with Ylvisaker, in New York, on December 20, to try and iron out their differences, but to no avail. After the “expected banter,” Rodwin recalled, things turned sour, both sides at loggerheads, Ylvisaker visibly “put out” by Harvard and MIT’s continued resistance. Frustrated, Ylvisaker wondered whether he might not get different answers from MIT president Julius Stratton, whom he planned to meet in Cambridge, after the winter holidays.<sup>52</sup> That meeting occurred in late January 1958, the thrust of which was neatly summarized in a follow-up “aide-memoire” sent to Stratton, laying out Ylvisaker’s position on what needed to occur for the desired funding to materialize. Ylvisaker began by telling Stratton that the “demand for our money appears to be infinite” and that there was no shortage of proposals out there “attempting a sortie on our treasury.” After culling the application pile, there remained roughly \$20 million of eminently fundable research proposals left to fight it out for the “\$3 millions remaining of our \$4 million 1957-58 program budget,” he continued. The “competitive environment” was doubly so because “the field is in flux, and the men available and qualified to do the work are few,” and many of the proposals “build on hopes of obtaining the same key people, or express overlapping ambitions to fulfill the same purpose.” After taking into

consideration all these factors, he had decided that the best way to proceed was “through a list of priorities as to what most needs doing, and how best to use available resources.” This brought him to the main subjects—the future of urban studies at Harvard and MIT and his wish for a “combined approach to urban problems” that would result in the “full exchange among all the diverse elements that comprise the Harvard-MIT complex.” Ylvisaker still wanted what he had wanted all along: a joint center.<sup>53</sup>

Ylvisaker insisted he was not demanding “that Harvard and MIT fit their applications to a prescribed form,” or trying to “suggest or impose a pattern” on their plans for urban affairs, but that is how Stratton interpreted it. He wrote Ylvisaker to tell him that he had arranged a “joint discussion” between Harvard and MIT now that “all parties involved . . . have a clearer understanding of the aims of the Foundation in this wide urban field, of the multiplicity of demands and possibilities from which you must make your choice, and of the limitations within which you must work.” He thanked Ylvisaker for the “extremely healthy interchange”—a bit ironically since Ylvisaker had fallen victim to the “family’s bug” in his turn back to New York—telling him that he would be “disappointed if Harvard and MIT together fail to produce a positive, imaginative proposal.”<sup>54</sup>

Stratton convened the meeting three weeks later. Meyerson and Rodwin attended with their respective deans, Jose Sert of Harvard and Pietro Belluschi of MIT. They were joined by McGeorge Bundy, dean of Harvard’s Faculty of Arts and Sciences and President Pusey’s point man on urban studies.<sup>55</sup> Over the next several months, Bundy—who would leave Harvard in 1961 to serve in the Kennedy and Johnson administrations, moving from there to the presidency of the Ford Foundation in 1966—assumed responsibility as the chief negotiator with his future employer, as the plans for the center began to take concrete form. It was at the March 5 meeting in Stratton’s office that the two sides decided to explore the possibility of creating “one genuinely unified Urban Research Center.” Bundy and Stratton viewed it as “the ideal course” but left it to Rodwin and Meyerson, and their colleagues, to make the final decision as to whether “a really unified undertaking is something they can and will support.” In a letter to Ylvisaker on behalf of his MIT and Harvard colleagues, Bundy’s description of the joint center must have warmed Ylvisaker’s heart. Wrote Bundy, “The individuals who might participate in such a Center would of course have in most cases a separate connection with some department in one or another of the two sponsoring institutions, but research projects, special meetings, and other work proper to a research center rather than to a department of instruction would be carried on under the auspices, and to a degree, at the offices of a single enterprise.” Bundy closed by thanking Ylvisaker for being such a “powerful stimulant” and for encouraging Harvard and MIT to consider this “more adventurous option.”<sup>56</sup>

On April 10, Bundy again wrote Ylvisaker, this time with even better news. MIT and Harvard had decided they would withdraw their individual grant proposals and unite “the activities of the separate urban studies Centers at the two institutions into a Joint Center for Urban Studies.” Bundy waxed on about the possibilities of the undertaking, comparing it favorably with the Russian Research Center at Harvard and to the Center for International Studies at MIT, already mapping out plans for a bold agenda and a new building from which to operate. “MIT and Harvard will evolve a common research effort in urban research,” Bundy promised. “Major research efforts by the two institutions in this subject area will be conducted through the Joint Center.” Experts from all fields would be welcome, but especially experts “from fields not previously involved in urban studies”—education, philosophy, business, and, in particular, the social sciences. They would gather and work together in a conveniently located building with accommodations for offices, a library, secretaries, food service, meetings, and research activities, perhaps something modeled on the Center for Advanced Study in the Behavioral Sciences in Palo Alto, Bundy mused, paid for with “funds from industry and other sources.” The letter included a draft memorandum of agreement, a budget request for



\$600,000 a year over eight years, and a cheery “expectation of success for this collaboration, unique in this field.”<sup>57</sup>

Having met Ylvisaker’s demand for a joint enterprise, Bundy assumed that the remaining details would fall into place. That confidence was tested during the summer, as discussions broke down over budget and organizational matters. In each case, Cambridge would succumb to New York. The first issue was money. Ylvisaker rebuffed Harvard and MIT’s original eight-year, \$4.8 million proposal, ultimately chiseling Bundy and company down to \$675,000 over half as many years.<sup>58</sup> The second issue was the leadership structure of the Joint Center. Ylvisaker wanted a single director while Rodwin and Meyerson preferred joint administration, “pointing out that if they jointly set policy and recruit researchers . . . there wouldn’t be much left for the new man to do.”<sup>59</sup> Once again, Ylvisaker got his way. Meyerson was appointed the first director of the Joint Center, while Rodwin was named chairman of the Faculty Committee and charged with overseeing academic policies and programs. Two additional layers were added to the organizational chart: the Administrative Committee, comprising presidentially appointed representatives and chaired by Carl Floe, vice president for research at MIT, whose office, then and later, assumed responsibility for the Joint Center’s “business affairs”; and the Visiting Committee, led by Boston Brahmin Thomas Cabot of the Cabot Corporation and staffed by “national leaders in business, professional, and civic affairs” whose purpose was to advise the Joint Center on its direction and activities.<sup>60</sup>

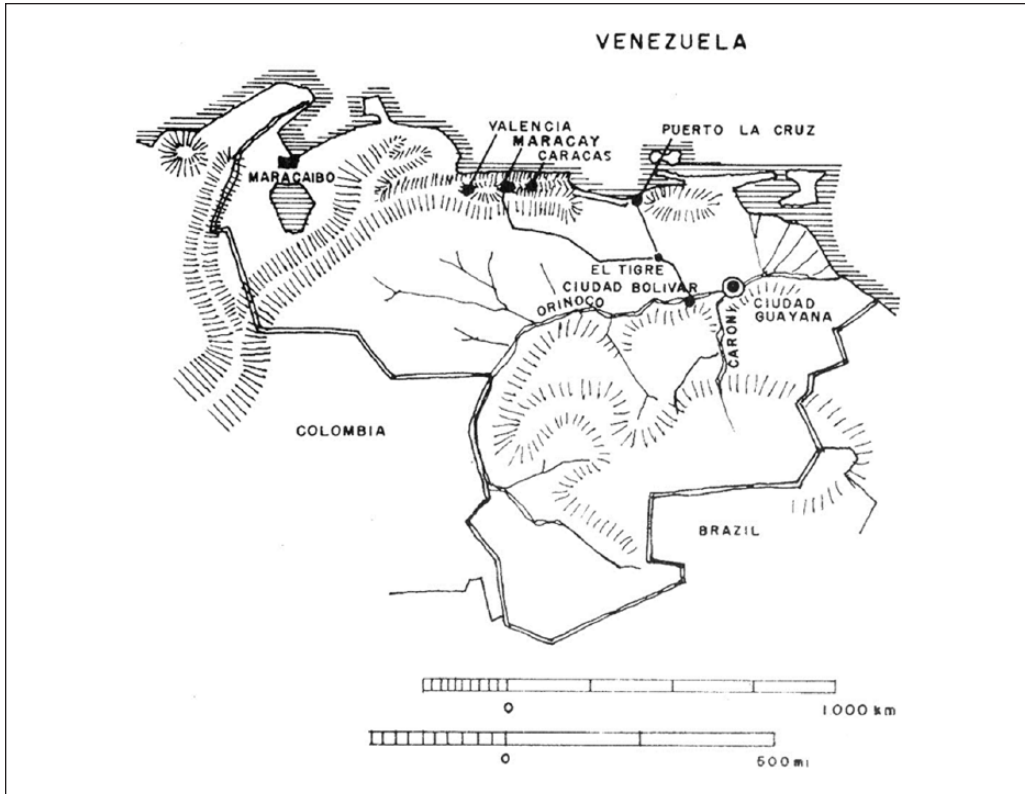
These were the basic terms of the memorandum of agreement that Presidents Stratton and Pusey signed on January 11, 1959. It was a “simple and hopeful” document that “avoided detailed discussions of . . . procedures because,” Bundy wrote Stratton, “I think no paper can help us in a matter that depends basically on trust.”<sup>61</sup> Ten months later, the Joint Center hosted an open house at its Cambridge headquarters, just off Harvard Square at 66 Church Street, above Sage Market, next to Rizzo Custom Tailors. Not exactly the facility that Bundy had dreamed about, but it would have to do. It was time for Meyerson and Rodwin to roll up their sleeves and get to work.<sup>62</sup>

## **Ciudad Guayana, Venezuela**

Meyerson and Rodwin spent year 1 on core intellectual and organization building activities. They recruited leading scholars and graduate students from Cambridge and beyond, convened talks and conferences, and established a publishing arm to disseminate the Joint Center’s most important findings. Rodwin’s Faculty Committee, meanwhile, spent its time sharpening the Joint Center’s research agenda, which, by year 2, had coalesced around four areas: urban growth, transportation and technology, urban design, and urban problems in developing countries.<sup>63</sup>

The final research strand on developing countries turned out to be the most consequential to the new center as Meyerson and Rodwin worked with all three of their governing bodies to identify “a theater for their activities,” in a real city, where they might apply their multidisciplinary urban studies method. Following lengthy, occasionally difficult closed-door discussions about what city to study and under what conditions, Meyerson and Rodwin were given the go ahead, in early 1961, to pursue a research and development project in a remote part of Venezuela, three hundred miles from the capital of Caracas, at the confluence of the Orinoco and Caroni Rivers, in the sparsely inhabited Guayana Region. That the Joint Center’s first, perhaps defining urban study was to take place in Venezuela rather than the United States was not the only surprising thing about this decision. Even more remarkable was the fact that the city at the center of the project—Ciudad Guayana—was not yet built (Figure 2).<sup>64</sup>

Founded on July 2, 1961, by decree of President Romulo Betancourt, Ciudad Santo Tomás de Guayana, colloquially known as Ciudad Guayana, was a planned industrial city built to exploit the natural resources of the region.<sup>65</sup> Betancourt, the “Father of Venezuelan Democracy” and



**Figure 2.** Venezuela, 1961.

Source: Illustration from Lloyd Rodwin, ed., *Planning Urban Growth and Regional Development: The Experience of the Guayana Program of Venezuela* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1969), inside front cover, courtesy MIT Press.

leader of the reform party *Acción Democrática*, set his sights on the development of Guayana shortly after his election in 1959. The upstart Betancourt had previously been head of state from 1945 to 1948—just long enough to cutoff handouts to foreign firms and to mandate the even split of all oil proceeds between the government and the privately owned petroleum companies before being ousted by strongman Perez Jimenez. Having survived a coup and a lengthy exile, Betancourt's second-term agenda focused on taking care of unfinished business. At the top of his to-do list was the reformation of Venezuela's booming but unbalanced economy, which, since the 1920s, had been fueled by oil and iron mining but polluted by the crony capitalism of the military-backed "Caracas Oligarchy."<sup>66</sup>

The social and economic fallout of the Venezuelan power structure was as paradoxical as it was predictable. Despite decades of near-double-digit annual economic growth, Venezuela's overall fiscal health remained weak due to chronic structural infirmities: high unemployment (20 to 40 percent), widespread illiteracy (35 percent), and an enfranchised, restless squatter community that totaled half of Venezuela's population of eight million.<sup>67</sup> As was the case, almost everywhere in Latin America (but in stark contrast to the United States where suburbanization was starving downtowns), relentless urban in-migration coupled with a lack of jobs and widespread corruption represented the biggest barrier between poverty and plenty. The population of Caracas nearly doubled during the 1950s to 1.3 million, and with a massive campesino (poor peasant) population, the government could not keep pace with the *barrio* (slum) expansion that followed. So many squatters lived on the hillsides around Caracas in *ranchos* (shacks) of "earth, cardboard,

old boxes, tin, scrap, stucco, and brick tile” that, during the summer rainy season, “a lava of human excrement . . . washed down on the roads below,” spreading disease and contaminating food and water supplies.<sup>68</sup>

Betancourt introduced a series of reforms targeted at diversifying the economy, checking urban expansion in the capital city, and shoring up the political support of the burgeoning “barrio bloc” that he had energized.<sup>69</sup> He helped to resettle nearly fifty thousand landless peasants to government-owned parcels.<sup>70</sup> He introduced education reforms that increased elementary-school enrollments by 75 percent and dramatically raised functional literacy rates among the poor to 40 percent.<sup>71</sup> He also successfully lobbied the Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC) to protect oil prices abroad. Closer to home, Betancourt promised \$4 billion to a new government authority, *Corporación Venezolana de Guayana* (CVG), a spinoff of the *Oficina Central de Coordinación y Planificación* (Cordiplan), which he charged with the economic development of the Guayana Region. Cast as a latter-day El Dorado, the lost city of gold, the Guayana contained an abundance of natural resources—water, minerals, forests, and access to the Atlantic—that Betancourt hoped would propel Venezuela’s social and economic modernization.<sup>72</sup>

The head of the CVG was an enigmatic MIT graduate named Colonel (later General) Rafael Alfonso Ravard. It was a meeting between Ravard and Rodwin, while Rodwin was on a consulting assignment in Caracas, in 1959, that led to the Joint Center’s involvement in the preparation of “a comprehensive development plan” for Ciudad Guayana two years later.<sup>73</sup> The CVG’s five-year contract with the Joint Center exceeded \$1.2 million (dwarfing the Ford’s original grant) and required a joint team of Venezuelan and American planners spread across offices in Cambridge, Caracas, and Ciudad Guayana. It was precisely the sort of project—“unusual and exciting” in Pusey’s words—that Rodwin and Meyerson thought would lead to other big-ticket development opportunities elsewhere around the world.<sup>74</sup>

Meyerson, who soon enough would leave Harvard for the University of California and a career in academic administration, appointed Rodwin, the regional planning expert, to manage the Ciudad Guayana contract.<sup>75</sup> Rodwin wasted no time in hiring two staff members to lead the Joint Center’s planning and design committees, later adding an economic committee and social policy committee. Norman Williams Jr., the chief of the master planning office in New York and the country’s leading zoning expert, was named team director.<sup>76</sup> The German émigré architect Wilhelm (a.k.a. Willo) von Moltke, whose portfolio included stints in both Europe and the United States, was appointed the head of urban design. Von Moltke had been lead designer on projects at Brandeis University and the University of Michigan, and most recently served as the chief designer of the city planning commission of Philadelphia, where he worked with planner Edmund Bacon on the layout of Philadelphia’s Center City renewal project, then in advanced stages of development.<sup>77</sup> With Rodwin’s help, von Moltke and Williams assembled a rotating staff of between thirty and forty social scientists, planners, and designers to work with their CVG counterparts, with whom they shared common training but little else. Rodwin was aware of the cultural and political differences between his and Ravard’s staff. Ravard and his team were political conservatives and students of the slash and burn school of planning—the bigger the project the better. People were a bother, thought Ravard, whose idea of planning was building dams, bridges, and roads. Rodwin and his team, on the other hand, were politically liberal and proponents of “comprehensive planning”—that is, planning grounded in the applied social sciences that sought to harmonize the relationship between the physical environment and the human beings who inhabited it.<sup>78</sup>

At the outset, it appeared that these different approaches to planning might not matter because of the auspicious circumstances surrounding the Guayana program. To begin with, virtually the whole region, and nearly half of the metropolitan “development zone,” was publicly owned by the CVG. Government ownership alone convinced the American team that the building process would run smoothly—at least smoother than the politically messy and time-consuming renewal

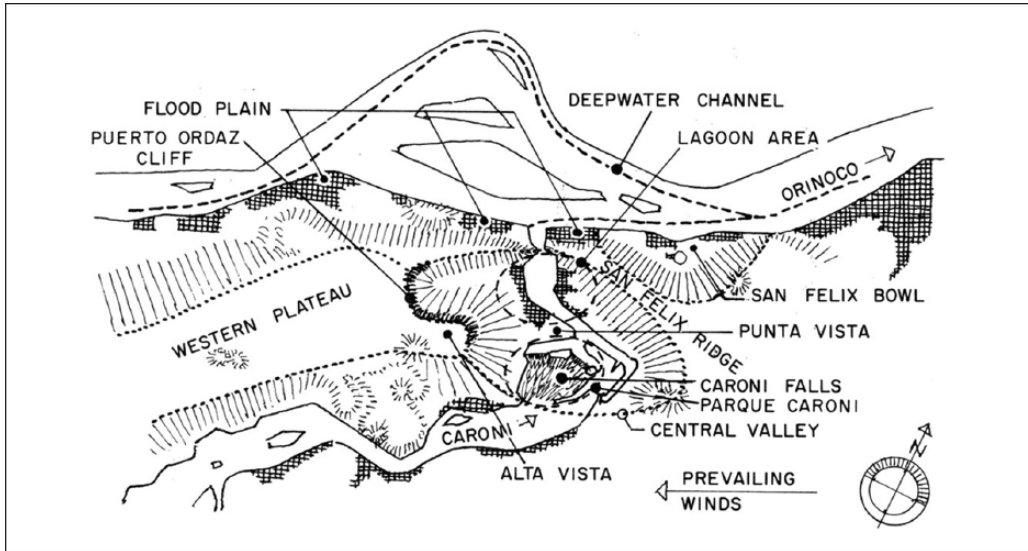


**Figure 3.** West end project, ca. 1959.

Source: Image WE\_0021, “West end project looking northeasterly,” Boston Redevelopment Authority, courtesy Boston City Archives.

programs that many of them had participated in back home. There, where cities were thickly settled and most property privately held, public redevelopment authorities had to contend with land acquisition, resident relocation, and demolition before construction could even start. A bureaucratic tangle under optimal circumstances, the renewal process turned even more challenging following the mobilization of antirenewal community groups in the early 1960s. For example, the shift in public opinion that followed the “slum clearance” of Boston’s West End immigrant neighborhood presaged the national trend. Among Boston’s first major renewal ventures, the West End Project garnered overwhelming support from the mayor, city planners, developers, the newspapers, and the archdiocese—everyone but the locals who lived and worked there. Although several hundred residents belatedly formed the Save the West End Committee, in 1957, a year later, the fifty-two-acre neighborhood and its 2,400 families were gone.<sup>79</sup> Only after the demolition was complete and the land sold at “write down” to private developers did average Bostonians finally take stock of what renewal really meant and organize against it (Figure 3).<sup>80</sup>

No one at the Joint Center wanted the same thing to happen in Venezuela—and no one thought it would. For not only was the CVG clothed in absolute power and authorized to build the city as it saw fit, the entire Guayana Region was thinly settled with fewer than forty thousand inhabitants.<sup>81</sup> Though hardly the Land of Eden often invoked in news reports or by the planners themselves, Ciudad Guayana’s empty core, and low-density peripheral settlements at the extreme east and west ends of the city plot, seemed, at first blush, “a planner’s dream,” particularly compared with the tens of thousands or more inhabitants in most U.S. cities. Such favorable circumstances had “the planners figuratively rubb[ing] their hands with the pleasure at the advantages this offered,” remarked Rodwin.<sup>82</sup>



**Figure 4.** Ciudad Guayana, 1961.

Source: Illustration from Lloyd Rodwin, ed., *Planning Urban Growth and Regional Development: The Experience of the Guayana Program of Venezuela* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1969), 127, courtesy MIT Press.

Hand-rubbing begat hand-wringing shortly after the Joint Center's advance team touched down in Venezuela on June 21, 1961. Planners Frank Martocci and Donald Appleyard had been prepped on the existing elements of the site area. They knew there were two settlements located twenty miles apart, separated by the powerful and, from what they had been told, still unbridged Caroni River. On the west side of the river was the Orinoco Mining Company (a U.S. Steel subsidiary) and its nearby "middle-class" company town, Puerto Ordaz (est. 1952), designed by Dean Jose Sert of the Harvard GSD. On the east side of the Caroni, nestled on the banks of the larger Orinoco, was the old port town of San Felix (ca. 1550) and its abutting rancho villages, or shantytowns, of El Roble, La Laja, and Dalla Costa. Martocci and Appleyard knew about the Macauga hydroelectric dam and the even bigger Guri dam, Ravard's pet project, then in the works. They also knew about the Guayana's geological riches: the high grade iron ore (65 percent pure) at Cerro Bolivar, the salt works at Araya, the coal mines at Naricual, and the rest of the region's untapped mineral deposits (Figure 4).<sup>83</sup>

There was also plenty that Martocci and Appleyard did not know, however, as the preliminary information they had been provided, Appleyard recollected, turned out to be "scant and poorly understood."<sup>84</sup> They had expected to find "virgin territory," but instead found thousands of migrants living in "shacks scattered everywhere,"<sup>85</sup> lured south from Caracas to Ciudad Guayana by the CVG as part of its strategy to depopulate the capital city and the adjacent central highlands.<sup>86</sup> These migrants arrived landless and penniless and in search of a city and jobs that did not yet exist. The Americans planners were chastened by their "ignorance of the landscape" and their lack of knowledge of the site area. "Usually there is a time gap between the planners, who are there before the city is built, and the inhabitants, who arrive after it is finished," remarked Appleyard, wistfully. Not so in Ciudad Guayana.<sup>87</sup>

Moreover, Martocci and Appleyard were shocked to learn that their CVG counterparts in Caracas had surreptitiously agreed to a design plan and even begun work on several major projects. Rumored to have been prepared by a British planner "on the back of an envelope after a flying one-day visit," the plan included a bypass around San Felix, then underway, along with a

new all-purpose port east of town. The CVG had also broken ground on the Caroni Bridge, the main link between the west and east sides of the river. Planning had progressed so far, in fact, festivities were set to lay the cornerstone at the proposed city center on Venezuela's Independence Day on July 5, less than two weeks away. Alarmed by these events, Appleyard and Martocci contacted Cambridge and implored von Moltke and Williams, who were busy trying to help Rodwin hire staff for the inchoate economic and social planning teams, to come to Venezuela immediately.<sup>88</sup>

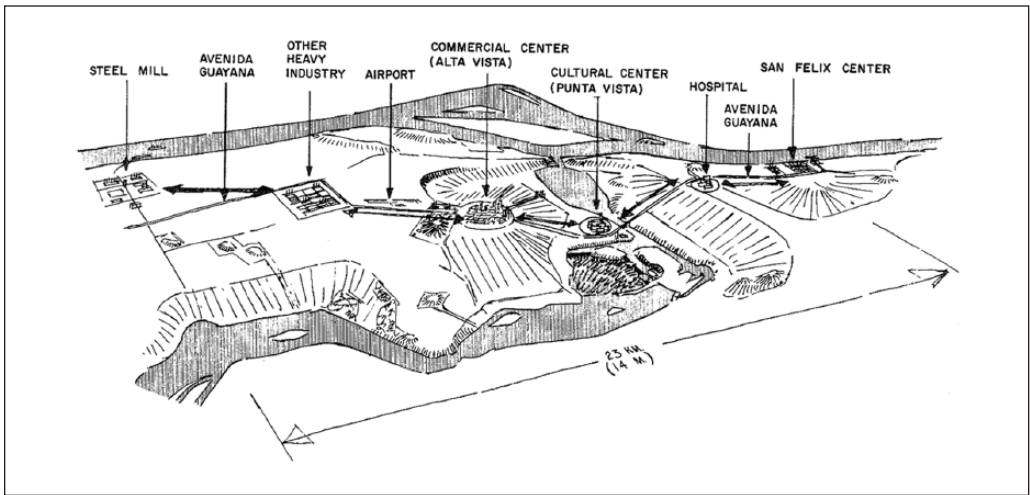
Von Moltke and Williams arrived just in time to embark on a "crash program" to salvage the planning process. Without a complete professional staff, however, sophisticated land-use and cost-benefit analyses would have to wait until later, as von Moltke and Williams relied on old-fashioned politicking and moral suasion to press their case. After quickly surveying the existing work and development area, they met with Ravard and convinced him to abort the bypass and to rethink the city center location because, as von Moltke recalled, it "was neither in a visually prominent site, nor in the line of the dominant channel of movement of the present or any conceivable future city."<sup>89</sup> In an effort to appease their client, the pair of planners approved the bridge location across the Caroni, near the falls and the rapids, judging its location a natural spectacle and "an everpresent source of pleasure."<sup>90</sup>

Next, von Moltke and Williams turned their attention to city design. A number of different possible configurations were considered and scrapped in the fall after updated economic and site assessment information became available. MIT's Alexander Ganz, the newly appointed chief economist of the Guayana program, punched out data suggesting that a future city of 250,000 was too small, and that one capable of accommodating three times that number would be closer to the mark. Global housing expert, MIT instructor, and Joint Center consultant Charles Abrams, Lloyd Rodwin's close friend, former boss, and mentor, provided a "rather general, exploratory" assessment of the site area in January 1962. Abrams, whose previous trip to the CVG's Caracas headquarters, in June 1960, had been interrupted by bursts of political violence and an (unsuccessful) assassination attempt on President Betancourt, found his first visit to Ciudad Guayana proper just as discomfiting, if for different reasons.<sup>91</sup> In the absence of "an authentic set of data from which to draw inferences," Abrams improvised his way through the region "trying to locate informants and piece together the jig-saw of facts through dozens of interviews and the involutions of language translations." Twelve days on the ground was plenty long enough to convince Abrams to revise his original assumptions about the project, much as Appleyard and Martocci had done several months earlier. "The general impression I got before leaving for Venezuela," Abrams wrote his Cambridge sponsors, somewhat bewildered, "was that the project involved building a new city from the ground up. Actually, it is a hybrid of already existing formations which will be administratively consolidated into a kind of regional city with a number of new and challenging additions." In reality, this was a more demanding assignment, Abrams concluded, because "it calls for instant judgments and adjustments to unforeseen changes." It was also an assignment that would not yield readily to a fixed master plan: "the planning team's initial blueprint will be doomed to disappointment."<sup>92</sup>

In the spirit of Ganz's and Abrams's call for tactical flexibility, Frank Martocci outlined five alternative city designs in a May 15, 1962, memo to Williams. Three of them were barely considered before being dismissed: one called for "far western development," or building beyond all existing settlements and industries in the vain hope of securing wholly uninhabited terrain; another called for "western development," or building out from the existing Puerto Ordaz community and essentially abandoning the poorer east side of San Felix and its rancho colonies; and still another called for minimal to no planning, or a *laissez-faire* approach that Martocci awkwardly labeled "scatteration." The remaining two designs had von Moltke's fingerprints all over them. They called for a "balanced city" that clearly privileged the less populated, industrialized western half but imagined residents equally disbursed along both sides of the Caroni River with

a “City Center” smack in the middle.<sup>93</sup> Von Moltke was most enthusiastic about this approach. He wrote Williams two days later on a related personnel matter in which he discussed at length the importance of “THE CENTER, the heart of the city.”<sup>94</sup> This was the design finally approved.

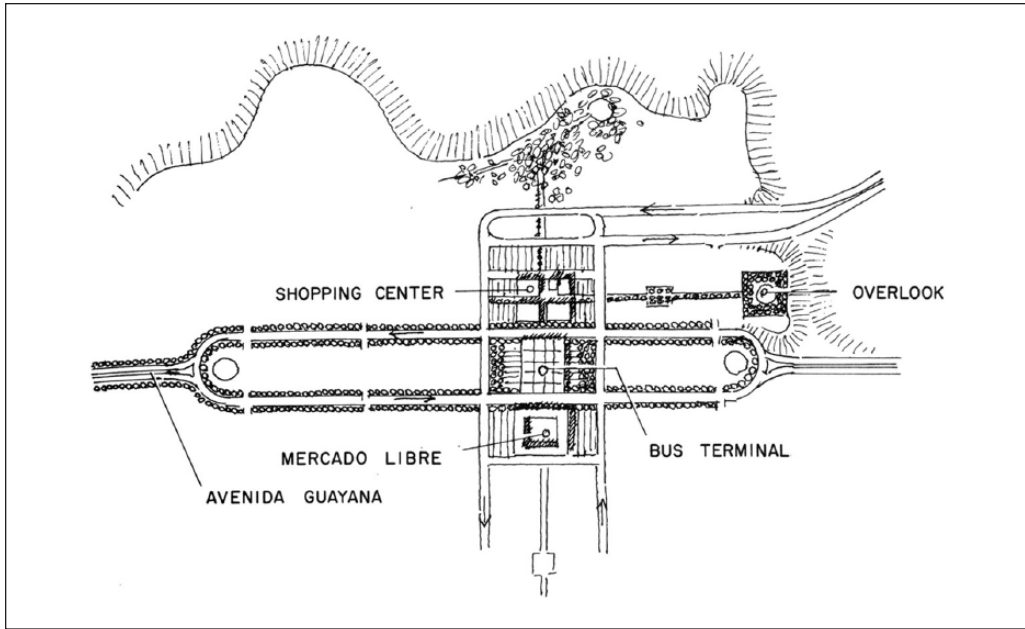
Von Moltke’s preference for the “linear form” and a central hub mirrored the prevailing American city image ideal (Figure 5).<sup>95</sup> It was one that he had helped create. In U.S. cities where von Moltke and the other members of the Joint Center had plied their trade, the city center had become a de rigeur design element of midcentury urbanity—a core piece of the city’s “legibility”—that, von Moltke declared, brought “[o]rder . . . freedom and enjoyment” to a city by making it instantly accessible to inhabitants.<sup>96</sup> There were the early trailblazers of the linear style like the Golden Triangle in Pittsburgh and the Downtown Loop in Chicago, followed closely by Constitution Plaza in Hartford, Charles Center in Baltimore, Gateway Center in Minneapolis, and, most importantly, Center City in Philadelphia, which von Moltke designed.<sup>97</sup> In each case, planners relied on more or less the same plan to rejuvenate the downtown center: clearing slums and rooting out undesirables, then building massive, centrally located mixed-use spaces to attract businesses and shoppers from the suburbs, linking the periphery to the core with highways running in all directions.<sup>98</sup>



**Figure 5.** The “linear form,” 1964.

Source: Illustration from Lloyd Rodwin, ed., *Planning Urban Growth and Regional Development: The Experience of the Guayana Program of Venezuela* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1969), 139, courtesy MIT Press.

Minus the slum clearance, which they intended to avoid, this was the essence of the design that von Moltke and Williams applied to Ciudad Guayana.<sup>99</sup> The Avenida Guayana would be the “central spine” that connected east to west and from which the rest of the city would flow. Extending from San Felix, across the Caroni, and beyond Puerto Ordaz to the heavy-industry base on the Western Plateau (home to the steel plant and the iron mines), the Avenida Guayana, von Moltke explained, “will not only provide order and a sense of unity, but will promote the image of Guayana as well-ordered and vital. It makes possible the growth of Guayana, and shapes the direction and form of this growth.”<sup>100</sup> At the midpoint of the Avenida Guayana, but on the wealthier west side of the Caroni, would be the new Alta Vista city center (Figure 6). He selected this site for its desirable location as well as its arresting visual imagery. “[T]he centro . . . on the promontory of Alta Vista,” von Moltke explained, “form[s] a link to the Central Valley which embraces the rapids and falls of the Caroni, the unique and most significant natural event in the entire area.”<sup>101</sup>



**Figure 6.** Alta vista center, Ciudad Guayana, 1965.

Source: Illustration from Lloyd Rodwin, ed., *Planning Urban Growth and Regional Development: The Experience of the Guayana Program of Venezuela* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1969), 143, courtesy MIT Press.

For von Moltke, the center was the most important feature of the city—indeed, there could be no city without it, or, as he put it, “no ‘there’” there. He believed in the optical allure and aesthetic power of the city to attract “enterprises, professional and managerial skills, without which the *raison d’être* of the city will fail, without which the industries cannot remain competitive on world markets.” The Alta Vista was where “significant and symbolic elements of the city must be concentrated—the seal of government, the first civic group, the unique cultural institutions, the best hotel and a center for communication. Thus it can become the agora, the meeting place for the leading professionals and technicians.” Above all, the “centro,” like Philadelphia’s Center City along Market St., next to the Delaware River, was to be the commercial center of the city—the economic engine to make the whole thing go.<sup>102</sup>

All of these plans were highly speculative given that Ciudad Guayana was a paper city subject to on-the-fly alterations resulting from the unstable design environment, just as Abrams had warned. Over time, several design changes emerged that pushed the Joint Center’s team closer to what Donald Appleyard later called “pluralist city” planning, which sought to accommodate the presence of extant people and settlements.<sup>103</sup> The biggest challenge that the Joint Center-CVG team faced was the inability to guarantee “inside-out” growth, or the gradual concentric or radial movement of people and businesses from the city center to outlying areas, widely regarded as the optimal arrangement for long-term, slum-free urban development. The problem stemmed from the fact that the “inside-out” method depended on the immediate relocation of businesses, shopping centers, and highly trained, well-paid professionals to the city center. This method required a critical mass of pricey infrastructure and human capital to inflate property values, to secure the tax base, and to make the “centro” the place where everyone wanted to be, or so the theory went. Yet the CVG struggled to attract either the businesses or the urbane consumers required for this to happen, forcing the planning team to consider other options. American and Venezuelan businesses such as Sears Roebuck and Compañía Anónima Distribuidora de Alimentos (CADA),

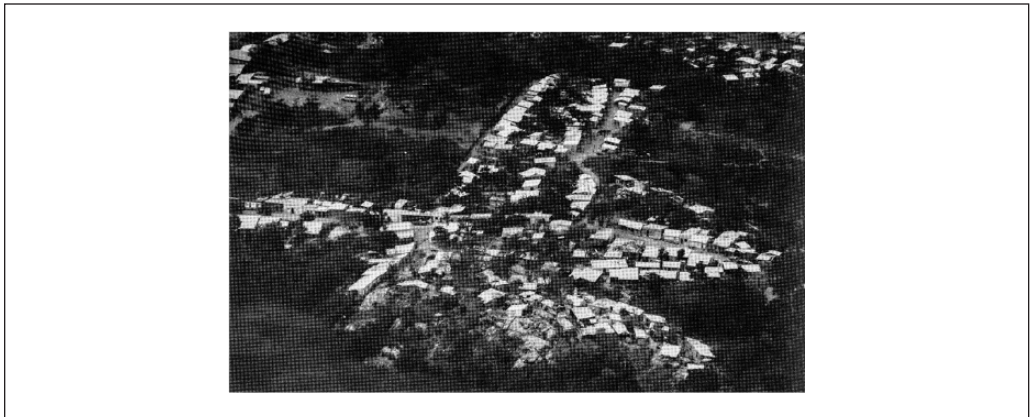


which the CVG had hoped would anchor the Alta Vista development, played hard to get. They held out for prime financial terms, biding their time renting cheaper space in the existing commercial center of Puerto Ordaz and discovering that the longer they waited, the more leverage they had.<sup>104</sup> Once retailers balked at the Alta Vista location, housing developers followed suit along with would-be residents, and as late as 1964 the Alta Vista was “vacant”—except for squatters, whose presence raised the specter that the city center, like so many others before it, would end up rotten at the core. As one Joint Center analyst put it, this type of “inside-out” growth “creates undesirable residential settlement patterns that generate a need for urban renewal.”<sup>105</sup>

But the whole point of Ciudad Guayana was to avoid the need for urban renewal in the future. To head off this dreaded possibility, the Guayana program’s economic team adopted a land development strategy known as “outside-in with corridors,” forcing a reconsideration of von Moltke’s “balanced city” design. Economist Anthony Downs, a senior vice president and treasurer of the Real Estate Research Corporation and a Joint Center consultant, outlined the finer points of the approach. “The basic concept,” he wrote,

is to anticipate future growth by building each type of residential settlement in the location that will prove “ultimately” desirable after the city has become very much larger than it is now. . . . Hence low-density and low-quality housing would be located relatively far from downtown, in a ring of settlements encircling it. Higher-density settlements—such as moderate-rise and high-rise apartments—would be placed closer to downtown, with the highest density ones closest.<sup>106</sup>

In other words, the Joint Center-CVG team decided to forego center city development until a later date, working around what was already there, and in particular focusing on building out Ciudad Guayana by using San Felix and Puerto Ordaz as subcenters. While the Caroni Bridge and the Avenida Guayana projected the semblance of a fluid metropolitan space, in the long run, the “corridors” approach actually cemented inherited socioeconomic divisions and housing patterns to protect the wealthier west side, and the struggling Alta Vista business district, which, in time, did attract private developers, from squatter colonies (Figure 7). This was MIT anthropologist Lisa Peattie’s conclusion. Peattie, a young Joint Center researcher who embedded herself and her family in the La Laja barrio from 1962 to 1964, reported twenty years later that east side of Ciudad Guayana remained the poor side of town—“a vast proliferation of shantytown settlements spreading” in every direction.<sup>107</sup>

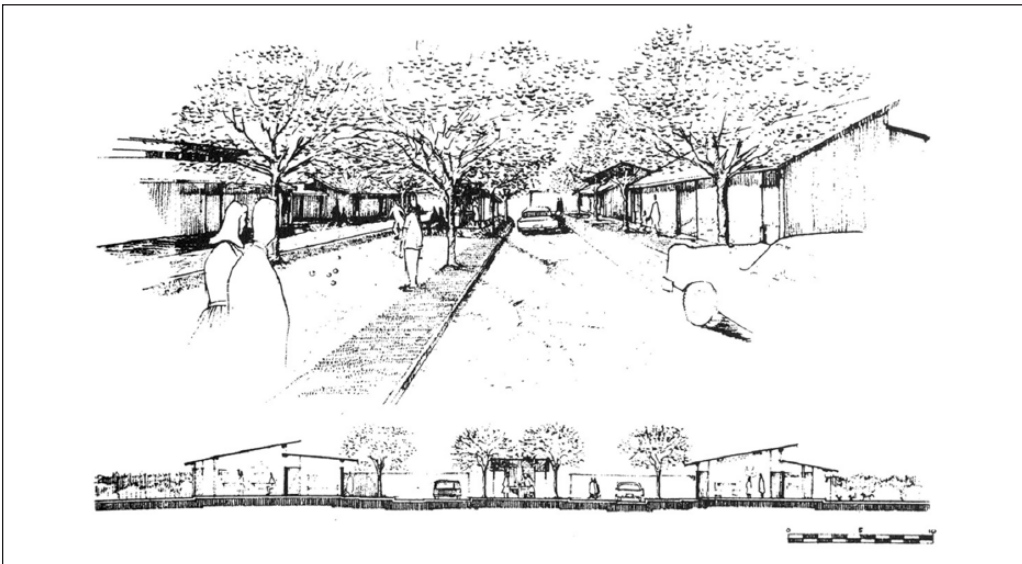


**Figure 7.** Dalla Costa rancho colony, ca. 1964.

Source: Photograph from Lloyd Rodwin, ed., *Planning Urban Growth and Regional Development: The Experience of the Guayana Program of Venezuela* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1969), 30, courtesy MIT Press.

Initially justified on economic development grounds, the corridors model entrenched housing segregation in the metropolitan space. Although some amount of squatting was deemed unavoidable, the corridor approach, by designating official squatter areas, attempted to thwart random rancho colonies, especially in areas intended for commercial or industrial development, such as Alta Vista. For its part, the CVG approved of the experimental housing program and to enclosing squatters in zoned corridors since enfranchised squatters could not by law be dislodged without compensation from land, public or private, occupied for a year or more.<sup>108</sup> Predictably, the approved squatter sites were placed in the existing slums east of the Caroni, near San Felix—Dalla Costa, Las Laja, and El Roble, site of a pilot public housing project known as *Mejoramiento Urbano Progresivo*. This was all according to plan. By setting aside semi-improved land on which squatters could build homes, then providing them with long-term mortgage financing, materials, and access to contractors, “Venezuela’s new city should be able to avoid the customary belt of peripheral slum developments without resorting to extensive acquisitions of adjoining lands and reliance on police controls to discourage unauthorized building on the city’s fringes.”<sup>109</sup> At least this was the CVG’s hope for its “shack replacement program.”<sup>110</sup>

With city center development temporarily on hold, Von Moltke and his assistant designer, William Porter of the Philadelphia planning office, tackled the design of the El Roble squatter corridor, known as neighborhood unit 2 (*unidad vecinal*). Their plan for unit 2 reflected the American suburban ideal. It included curvilinear roads and cul-de-sacs and the deliberate separation of vehicular and pedestrian traffic; low-density, four-bedroom units with a patio, garden, and street parking; ample public space with abundant plantings to facilitate social contact and recreation; and an elementary school in close proximity (Figure 8). And all of it was organized around von Moltke’s favorite design element in miniature form: the center. “The community center,” he wrote in a file memorandum of ideas for El Roble, “is served by a ring road with adjacent parking areas and services areas where needed. Completely separate will be the pedestrian circulation system, which is centered on a series of open spaces, designed as a focus for community activities. The area includes a shopping center and service industries, a lyceum and adjacent recreation areas, a small inn and community hall, a church and school and offices for municipal and state administration.” This layout, von Moltke matter-of-factly surmised, “will assist in fostering social structure and community spirit.”<sup>111</sup>



**Figure 8.** El Roble housing project design, 1961.

Source: Illustration from Lloyd Rodwin, ed., *Planning Urban Growth and Regional Development: The Experience of the Guayana Program of Venezuela* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1969), 257, courtesy MIT Press.

That the prospective inhabitants of the El Roble project shared few characteristics with typical American suburbanites was not entirely lost on the designers, who leavened their pie-in-the-sky plan with a dose of hard-earned reality. Von Moltke knew that the success of El Roble, if not the rest of Ciudad Guayana, hinged on the availability of broad-based social services and programming to help Venezuela's poor, uneducated labor force. New buildings and modern infrastructure alone would not suffice. Nor would industrialization effortlessly lead to urbanization and modernization, as Walt Rostow's then widely circulated modernization theory promised.<sup>112</sup> Rodwin and the rest of the Joint Center contingent, including von Moltke, believed that the new arrivals would founder, and Ciudad Guayana would too, in the absence of adequate health care, education institutions, and economic redistribution. While the Joint Center espoused value-free planning, the reality on the ground was something else entirely, casting doubt on the possibilities of designing, as Appelyard put it, an "objective city."<sup>113</sup> In a memo to Williams on April 26, 1962, the usually prolix von Moltke tersely spelled out the reasons for an "action program" in the El Roble corridor: "Unless physical planning is followed by an action program, it will fail. Unless guidance is given during construction, development will be disorganized; unless economic assistance and social guidance is provided, El Roble will not achieve its objectives."<sup>114</sup>

From the start, the El Roble pilot project was beset with problems because the CVG was primarily concerned with economic development, not social welfare, and it only invested in the latter if it impinged on the former.<sup>115</sup> Joint Center planners, then and later, detailed the troubles with the El Roble project.<sup>116</sup> So did sympathetic CVG planners. Julio Silva, a native Venezuelan, prepared one of the first studies of the El Roble program. He detailed the program's lack of coordination, absence of political backing, and morass of administrative inefficiency in the hope of creating better "policies for the future."<sup>117</sup> He sent his three-month intensive study, which included personal interviews, site visits, and photographs, to Cambridge in November 1964. The report enumerated the "aspects that should be changed or improved and some which should be eliminated."<sup>118</sup> A majority of the problems were bureaucratic in nature and, Silva thought, connected to the CVG's ham-handed management style. Initially reluctant to get involved in housing because it was a secondary concern to economic development, the CVG ceded control to the government housing agency (Banco Obrero) rather than create a local-level U.S.-style urban development authority, as was suggested by the American planners.<sup>119</sup> Although the CVG would eventually come around to the idea of local administration, the immediate decision to run the housing program out of Caracas meant reams of red tape for settlers. Proof of employment and a monthly income of 300 Bolívares (Bs.) (\$75 U.S. dollars) was the biggest hurdle for most squatters, since unemployment in El Roble and other rancho settlements ran as high as 50 percent, and over 70 percent of squatters reported incomes less than 200 Bs. These requirements placed an El Roble housing unit well out of reach of most squatters, who were too poor to even afford subsidized housing.<sup>120</sup>

Other delays awaited migrants lucky enough to find work and survive the screening process. The building phase dragged on over months rather than weeks, even though the simple brick-and-mortar, tin-roof dwellings were scarcely different from the shacks and lean-to structures they replaced. Meanwhile, confusion proliferated around the contractual terms of the program, especially the "self-help housing program" and the Materials Credit Plan that supported it. This program offered squatters the chance to use their own sweat equity and to access low-interest financing to purchase construction supplies.<sup>121</sup> Few squatters made use of this "very attractive opportunity," however, because they did not understand "the meaning of paying a fixed monthly payment from their income."<sup>122</sup> Consequently, after one year of operation, Silva found that "only one tenth of the planned lots with public services were realized, and the production of housing, either on the Materials Credit Plan or of the basic type, was very reduced."<sup>123</sup> And the housing that was constructed bore little resemblance to the suburban ideal that had captivated von Moltke and his fellow designers. After getting their hands on a lot, most squatters improved it in the least

expensive, quickest possible way, moving in before construction was finished, then living “under extremely precarious conditions” that never really changed.<sup>124</sup> In the end, all the soaring skyscrapers and dazzling industrial projects in the world could not hide the bedrock poverty on which Ciudad Guayana had been built.

## Conclusion

Bridging the separate worlds of the campus and the “real world” that lay beyond motivated multidisciplinary entrepreneurs to build centers at American universities after World War II. The Joint Center for Urban Studies of MIT and Harvard University stood at the forefront of this movement, uniting two powerful institutions and providing the nascent urban studies field with a space in which to examine the past and future of the modern metropolis. The chief architects of the Joint Center—Lloyd Rodwin, Martin Meyerson, and the Ford Foundation’s Paul Ylvisaker—wanted to develop an urban studies method that balanced the interests of urban planners with the felt needs of urban dwellers. As this essay has shown, however, the Joint Center’s one and only overseas project, in Ciudad Guayana, proved much more challenging than anticipated, not only revealing the limits of translational social research but also of the center model itself. From a long-range perspective, the Joint Center—which gradually narrowed its research focus to U.S. housing studies and abandoned its inter-university structure—turned out to be far more adept at building the field of urban studies than building cities in faraway regions of South America.<sup>125</sup>

Rodwin, for his part, was chastened by the experience of the Guayana program. Writing from his Cambridge perch, in 1969, several years after the Venezuelan contract expired, he could do no better than judge the project “somewhat successful.”<sup>126</sup> At root, he thought that the different planning styles of the Joint Center and CVG had prevented the achievement of more favorable results. The Venezuelan government’s quest for economic growth at any cost compromised the “welfare goals” central to the Joint Center’s humane urban studies method.<sup>127</sup> “Behind these disagreements,” Rodwin claimed, “lay a basic difference in attitudes toward the people of the region.”<sup>128</sup>

To be sure, the problem of “the people” had motivated Rodwin and Meyerson, with Ylvisaker’s prodding, to form the Joint Center to begin with. What Rodwin had forgotten, or ignored, was that the Joint Center signed on with the CVG and headed to rural Venezuela because they believed that very few inhabitants lived in the region. The supposedly exceptional circumstances of Ciudad Guayana—government ownership and low population density—offered the Joint Center a unique opportunity, unavailable in the United States, to construct a city without slums or the dilemma of urban renewal that slums portended. However, the Joint Center’s foray to South America did not unfold as planned, and before they got the chance to really use their multidisciplinary method, they had to modify it. Caught off guard by a lack of good information and blinded by their own design biases, once the squatters moved in, the planning team was forced to confront a painful truth: when it came to “the people,” the difference between the Joint Center and their Venezuelan counterparts was not so great after all.

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## Notes

1. "The Changing University," *Boston Globe*, May 31, 1964, C6, 34.
2. Christopher P. Loss, *Between Citizens and the State: The Politics of American Higher Education in the 20th Century* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2012).
3. "The Changing University," C6, 34. For an introduction to the history of inter- and multi-disciplinary research centers, see Harold Orlans, *The Nonprofit Research Institute: Its Origin, Operation, Problems, and Prospects* (New York: McGraw-Hill Book Company, 1972); and Roger L. Geiger, *Research and Relevant Knowledge: American Research Universities Since World War II* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1993), 49-52, 55-56. For a scathing critique of the center model, see Robert L. Nisbet, *The Degradation of the Academic Dogma* (1971; repr., New Brunswick, NJ: Transaction Publishers, 1997).
4. On the history of the Joint Center, see Eugenie L. Birch, "Making Urban Research Intellectually Respectable: Martin Meyerson and the Joint Center for Urban Studies of Massachusetts Institute of Technology and Harvard University, 1959-1964" *Journal of Planning History* 10 (August 2011): 219-38; and Christopher Klemek, *The Transatlantic Collapse of Urban Renewal: Postwar Urbanism from New York to Berlin* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2011), 102-107, 179-86.
5. *JCUS: The First Five Years, 1959-1964* (Cambridge, MA, April 1964), 53-54.
6. Peter Hall, *Cities of Tomorrow: An Intellectual History of Urban Planning and Design in the Twentieth Century* (1988; repr., Cambridge, MA: Blackwell Publishers, 1996), 322. On the history of city planning, see, for example, John W. Reps, *The Making of Urban America: A History of City Planning in the United States* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1965); Mel Scott, *American City Planning since 1890: A History Commemorating the Fiftieth Anniversary of the American Institute of Planners* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1969); Donald A. Krueckeberg, ed., *Introduction to Planning History in the United States* (New Brunswick, NJ: Center for Urban Policy Research, Rutgers University, 1983); Mary Corbin Sies and Christopher Silver, eds., *Planning the Twentieth-Century American City* (Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1996); and Jon A. Peterson, *The Birth of City Planning in the United States, 1840-1917* (Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2003).
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- the Planners* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1971); Robert A. Caro, *The Power Broker: Robert Moses and the Fall of New York* (1974; repr., New York: Vintage, 1975); and M. Christine Boyer, *Dreaming the Rational City: The Myth of American City Planning* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1983). For the original explication of advocacy planning, also called plural planning, see Paul Davidoff, "Advocacy and Pluralism in Planning," *Journal of the American Institute of Planners* 31, no. 4 (1965): 331-38.
10. *JCUS: The First Five Years*, 53.
  11. Alan Brinkley, *The End of Reform: New Deal Liberalism in Recession and War* (New York: Knopf, 1996); Gail Radford, *Modern Housing for America: Policy Struggles in the New Deal Era* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1996); Thomas J. Sugrue, *The Origins of the Urban Crisis: Race and Inequality in Postwar Detroit* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1996).
  12. Kenneth T. Jackson, *Crabgrass Frontier: The Suburbanization of the United States* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1985). Between 1950 and 1980, 83 percent of the nation's population growth occurred in the suburbs, and eighteen of the nation's largest cities experienced a net population loss (p. 283). Then and later, the role of state-sponsored suburbanization—fueled by highway construction, low-interest loans, and discriminatory covenants—was considered a key source of the urban crisis. See James Q. Wilson, "The War on Cities," in *A Nation of Cities*, ed. Robert A. Goldwin (Chicago: Rand McNally, 1966), 17-36.
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  14. Arnold R. Hirsch, *Making the Second Ghetto: Race and Housing in Chicago, 1940–1960* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1983).
  15. Michael B. Katz, *Why Don't American Cities Burn?* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2012), 38.
  16. For early critical accounts of urban renewal, see, for example, Jacobs, *Life and Death of the American City*; Davidoff, "Advocacy and Pluralism in Planning"; Martin Anderson, *The Federal Bulldozer: A Critical Analysis of Urban Renewal, 1949–1962* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1964); Charles Abrams, *The City is the Frontier* (New York: Harper & Row, 1965); and James Q. Wilson, ed., *Urban Renewal: The Record and the Controversy* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1966). For more recent work on the topic, see, for example, Hirsch, *Making the Second Ghetto*; Sugrue, *Origins of the Urban Crisis*; Guian A. McKee, *The Problem of Jobs: Liberalism, Race, and Deindustrialization in Philadelphia* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2008); Colin Gordon, *Mapping Urban Decline: St. Louis and the Fate of the American City* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2009); Samuel Zipp, *Manhattan Projects: The Rise and Fall of Urban Renewal in Cold War New York* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2010); Ammon, *Bulldozer*; and Klemek, *Transatlantic Collapse of Urban Renewal*.
  17. On the intellectual contributions of the Joint Center to the field of urban studies, see Michael B. Teitz, "Martin Meyerson: Builder of Institutions," *Journal of Planning History* 10 (August 2011): 181; and Birch, "Making Urban Research Intellectually Respectable," 219-38.
  18. The study of the center model remains relatively undeveloped except for area and international centers. See, for example, Robert A. McCaughey, *International Studies and Academic Enterprise: A Chapter in the Enclosure of American Learning* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1984); David C. Engerman, *Know Your Enemy: The Rise and Fall of America's Soviet Experts* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2010); and Mitchell L. Stevens, Cynthia Miller-Idriss, and Seteney Shami, *Seeing the World: How US Universities Make Knowledge in a Global Era* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2018), 39-60. On the importance of "cross-disciplinary ventures" in the social sciences after World War II, which has helped me contextualize the organization of the Joint Center, see Roger E. Backhouse and Philippe Fontaine, "Toward a History of the Social Sciences," in *The History of the Social Sciences since 1945*, ed. Roger E. Backhouse and Philippe Fontaine (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2010), 184-234.
  19. Robert E. Smith, "Venezuela Offers Harvard-MIT Center \$800,000 Contract," *Crimson*, March 9, 1961.
  20. "Dream City Rises on the Plains South of Caracas," *New York Times*, January 28, 1966, 74. For the one history of the Joint Center's involvement in Ciudad Guayana written by someone unaffiliated with the enterprise, see Robert H. Kargon and Arthur P. Molella, *Invented Edens: Techno-Cities of the Twentieth Century* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2008), 115-23.

21. For this interpretation, see Kargon and Molella, *Invented Edens*. On the influence of modernization theory and its connection to planning during the cold war, see, for example, David C. Engerman, ed., *Staging Growth: Modernization, Development, and the Global Cold War* (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 2003); and Nils Gilman, *Mandarins of the Future: Modernization Theory in Cold War America* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2007).
22. Klemek, *Transatlantic Collapse of Urban Renewal*.
23. Lloyd Rodwin, "Garden Cities and the Metropolis," *Journal of Land & Public Utility Economics* 21 (August 1945): 268-81, quote on 281.
24. News from The Ford Foundation, October 21, 1958, p. 7, JCUS, 1957-1966 (folder 2/3), box 73, Administrative Collection 134 (Hereafter AC), Institute Archives and Special Collections.
25. Quote in Michael Churchill, "Harvard, MIT Establish Center To Conduct Broad Urban Studies," *Crimson*, February 27, 1959; "MIT and Harvard Get Together on Joint Center for Urban Studies," *Tech*, March 3, 1959, 1; University News Office, Joint Release by Massachusetts Institute of Technology and Harvard University, March 4, 1959, JCUS 1957-1966 (folder 2/3), box 73, AC 134.
26. "Urban Study Unit Set: Harvard and M.I.T. Create Center With Ford Grant," *New York Times*, March 4, 1959, 7.
27. On the elusive quest for objectivity, which really meant quantitative research, see Ross, *Origins of American Social Science*.
28. Williams drafted the first comprehensive zoning ordinance in New York City in 1916. See Stephen Sussna, "Bulk Control and Zoning: The New York City Experience," *Land Economics* 43, no. 2 (May 1967): 158-71.
29. Hirsch, *Making the Second Ghetto*, esp. 100-34. The companion legislation passed in Illinois in 1947 included the Blighted Areas Redevelopment Act and the Relocation Act: the first granted "eminent domain" to acquire and clear "blighted land"; the second relocated inhabitants to public housing. Illinois also passed the Urban Community Conservation Act a year before the Federal Housing Act of 1954, affirming Hirsch's claim that Illinois was in the "vanguard of the movement to rebuild American cities" (p. 268).
30. William H. Wilson, "Moles and Skylarks," in *Introduction to Planning History in the United States*, ed. Donald A. Krueckeberg (New Brunswick, NJ: Center for Urban Policy Research, Rutgers University, 1983), 117-21.
31. Hirsch, *Making the Second Ghetto*, 135-90, quote on 167. For a similar take on University of Chicago's use of renewal to create a racial buffer, see LaDale C. Winling, *Building the Ivory Tower: Universities and Metropolitan Development in the Twentieth Century* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2018), 79-118.
32. Martin Meyerson and Edward C. Banfield, *Politics, Planning and the Public Interest* (Glencoe, IL: Free Press, 1955).
33. "Heads Anti-Slum Group," *New York Times*, September 4, 1955, S9.
34. On ACTION and Meyerson's role, see Press Release, American Council to Improve Our Neighborhoods (ACTION), July 8, 1957, VF NAC 205M, GSD Library, Harvard University. For the ACTION research agenda, see *A Program of Research in Urban Renewal for the American Council to Improve our Neighborhoods* (New York: ACTION, 1954), 26-29. For the description of the Urban Studies Center, see *Report of the President of Harvard College and Reports of Departments, 1956-57* (December 30, 1957), 427.
35. *MIT Bulletin: President's Report Issue 1958* (November 1958), 55. The idea for the Center for Urban and Regional Studies was the chief recommendation of a special study committee chaired by Dr. Edwin S. Burdell of Cooper Union. The Burdell Committee suggested the creation of a new center as one of its proposals for the Department of City and Regional Planning. For more on the Burdell Committee, which existed from 1955 to 1956, see *MIT Bulletin: President's Report Issue 1956* (November 1956), 66; and Burdell to Stratton, November 18, 1957, JCUS 1957-1966 (folder 2/3), box 73, AC 134.
36. On Rodwin's relationship with Abrams, see A. Scott Henderson, *Housing & the Democratic Ideal: The Life and Thought of Charles Abrams* (New York: Columbia University Prss, 2000), 86-87.
37. On Rodwin's background, see "Lloyd Rodwin, 80, MIT Urban Studies Professor"; and "Lloyd Rodwin, 80, Authority on Urban Planning," *New York Times*, December 13, 1999, B15.

38. Lloyd Rodwin, *The British New Town Policy* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1955); Lloyd Rodwin, "Linking Economic Development and Urbanization," December 26, 1956, VF NAC 1225R, GSD Library, Harvard University.
39. On the link between research and policy, see chapters 9 and 10 in *British New Town Policy*, where Rodwin discusses the implications and prospects of the New Town model for developing countries, 131-86.
40. *MIT Bulletin: President's Report Issue 1958*, 55; *MIT Bulletin: President's Report Issue 1959* (November 1959), 55.
41. Rodwin to Stratton, December 5, 1957, p. 1, JCUS 1957-1964 (folder 3/3), box 73, AC 134. These general terms were spelled out in a draft, two-page "Agreement of Collaboration," undated, that Rodwin included with his memo to Stratton on December 5.
42. Grant proposal information in Ylvisaker to Stratton, February 11, 1958, and in Rodwin to Stratton, February 21, 1958, JCUS 1957-1964 (folder 3/3), box 73, AC 134.
43. Paul N. Ylvisaker, "Blue Earth County, Minnesota: A case study in the local workings of American government" (PhD diss., Harvard University, 1948). The study was later printed in a shorter form; see Paul N. Ylvisaker, *The Battle of Blue Earth County* (Syracuse, NY: Inter-University Case Program, 1955).
44. Virginia M. Esposito, "Paul Ylvisaker: A Biographical Sketch," in *Conscience & Community: The Legacy of Paul Ylvisaker*, ed. Virginia M. Esposito (New York: Peter Lang, 1999), xv-xxxvi; Papers of Paul N. Ylvisaker, 1939-1992, Descriptive Summary, Harvard University Archives, [http://oasis.lib.harvard.edu/oasis/deliver/deepLink?\\_collection=oasis&uniqueId=hua04998](http://oasis.lib.harvard.edu/oasis/deliver/deepLink?_collection=oasis&uniqueId=hua04998).
45. The foundation was originally located in Detroit. It later moved to Pasadena, California, to accommodate President Paul G. Hoffman (1950-53), before permanently relocating to New York City in 1954.
46. On the founding of the Ford, see Francis X. Sutton, "The Ford Foundation: The Early Years," *Daedalus* 116 (Winter 1987): 41-91. On the Ford's broad internationalism during the cold war, see McCaughey, *International Studies and Academic Enterprise*, 141-66; and Kathleen D. McCarthy, "From Cold War to Cultural Development: The International Cultural Activities of the Ford Foundation, 1950-1980," *Daedalus* 116 (Winter 1987): 93-117. For an overview of the power of foundation officers, and why they tend to support research and programs that reflect their own class interests, see Barry D. Karl and Stanley M. Katz, "Foundations and Ruling Class Elites," *Daedalus* 116 (Winter 1987): 1-40.
47. Esposito, "Paul Ylvisaker." On the power of individual program officers, a unique and important feature of the Ford Foundation's organizational structure, see Sutton, "Ford Foundation," 48. Don K. Price, a member of the Gaither Study Committee, promoted the idea for this model, and from 1958 to 1977, he served as dean of Harvard's School of Public Administration, renamed the John F. Kennedy School of Public Affairs in 1966.
48. Paul N. Ylvisaker, "The Deserted City," *Journal of the American Planning Association* 35 (February 1959): 1-6, reprinted in *Conscience & Community*, ed. Virginia M. Esposito (New York: Peter Lang, 1999), 94-106, quote on 106. See also Paul N. Ylvisaker, "A Picture of Regional Planning," Presented to the Annual State Planning Conference, Trenton, NJ, February 5, 1963, reprinted in *Conscience & Community*, ed. Virginia M. Esposito (New York: Peter Lang, 1999), 125-42.
49. Paul N. Ylvisaker, "The Brave New Urban World," Paper Presented to the World Traffic Engineering Conference, Washington, DC, August 21, 1961, reprinted in *Conscience & Community*, ed. Esposito (New York: Peter Lang, 1999), 107-24, quote on 120.
50. *Ibid.*, 111.
51. Rodwin to Stratton, December 5, 1957, p. 1, JCUS 1957-1964 (folder 3/3), box 73, AC 134.
52. Rodwin's recollections of the December 20, 1957 meeting in memo to Howard and Belluschi, January 6, 1957 [1958], JCUS 1957-1964 (folder 3/3), box 73, AC 134. Rodwin wrote the memo after the New Year and mistyped the date.
53. Ylvisaker to Stratton, February 11, 1958, p. 1-4, JCUS 1957-1964 (folder 3/3), box 73, AC 134.
54. Stratton to Ylvisaker, February 19, 1958, JCUS 1957-1964 (folder 3/3), box 73, AC 134.
55. Talking points for the meeting were prepared by Rodwin; see memo from Rodwin to Stratton, February 25, 1958, and Rodwin to Stratton, February 21, 1958, JCUS 1957-1964 (folder 3/3), box 73, AC 134. These were also provided to Bundy.
56. Bundy to Ylvisaker, March 5, 1958, JCUS 1957-1964 (folder 3/3), box 73, AC 134.
57. Bundy to Ylvisaker, April 10, 1958, JCUS 1957-1964 (folder 3/3), box 73, AC 134. The reference to a Center for Advanced Study was planted, obliquely, in Ylvisaker's February 11 letter to Stratton, where



- Ylvisaker mentioned “there may be something in the idea of an advanced institute for urban affairs . . . .” Apparently, this was interpreted by Rodwin as an “Institute of Advanced Studies” in the February 21 talking points distributed to Bundy and Stratton on February 25, which also noted the decision to delay the submission of individual grant proposals. The final decision to go with a joint center and to draft a new agreement was decided in late March, though not shared with Ylvisaker until April 5; see Draft letter from Bundy to Stratton [written by Meyerson and Rodwin], March 24, 1958, JCUS 1957-1964 (folder 3/3), box 73, AC 134.
58. Ylvisaker to Bundy, April 25, 1958, JCUS 1957-1964 (folder 3/3), box 73, AC 134; Bundy to Brown, August 20, 1958, JCUS 1957-1964 (folder 3/3), box 73, AC 134. Final grant information was conveyed on October 7, 1958; see Floe to McDaniel, October 16, 1958, JCUS 1957-1964 (folder 2/3), box 73, AC 134.
  59. Howard to Stratton, August 1, 1958, JCUS 1957-1964 (folder 3/3), box 73, AC 134.
  60. Harvard and MIT were still hammering out the specifics of the Joint Center’s organization and management right up until the memorandum of agreement was signed on January 11, 1959. See Floe to Bundy, January 5, 1959, JCUS 1957-1964 (folder 2/3), box 73, AC 134. For the final terms of the agreement, see *JCUS: The First Five Years*, 53-56.
  61. Bundy to Stratton, October 21, 1958, JCUS 1957-1964 (folder 2/3), box 73, AC 134.
  62. Announcement for the Joint Center Open House, October 30, 1959, JCUS 1957-1964 (folder 2/3), box 73, AC 134; Mary L. Wissler, “Building Cities, Bridging Gaps,” *Crimson*, May 12, 1965. Sage’s closed up shop in 2000; see Daniela J. Lamas, “Square’s Grocer: Sages Closes Shop,” *Crimson*, June 5, 2000.
  63. On the Joint Center’s earliest activities and projects, see *JCUS: The First Two Years, 1959-1961* (Cambridge, MA, April 1961), 5-13.
  64. On the committee discussions and ultimate decision to pursue the Ciudad Guayana program, see Birch, “Making Urban Studies Intellectually Respectable,” 231 and 238fn73. For Rodwin’s recollections of the decision to pursue the Venezuela project, see Lloyd Rodwin, “Introduction,” in *Planning Urban Growth and Regional Development: The Experience of the Guayana Program of Venezuela*, ed. Lloyd Rodwin (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1969), 1-5, quote on 3. The Visiting Committee discussed the Venezuela project for the first time at its second meeting, see Visiting Committee Report, May 11, 1961, JCUS 1957-1966, box 133, AC 134.
  65. John Friedmann, *Regional Development Policy: A Case Study of Venezuela* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1966), 157-62, 177-78.
  66. Romulo Betancourt, *Venezuela: Oil and Politics* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1979), vii-x; Jorge Salazar-Carrillo and Bernadette West, *Oil and Development in Venezuela during the 20th Century* (Westport, CT: Praeger, 2004), 170. On Betancourt’s reform efforts and the coup d’état carousel of the 1940s and 1950s, prior to his becoming the first democratically elected leader of Venezuela, see Fernand Coronil, *The Magical State: Nature, Money, and Modernity in Venezuela* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1997), 121-236.
  67. Unemployment and education data in Edward Moscovitch, “Employment Effects of the Urban-Rural Investment Choice,” in *Planning Urban Growth and Regional Development*, ed. Lloyd Rodwin (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1969), 378; and Noel F. McGinn and Russell G. Davis, *Build a Mill, Build a City, Build a School: Industrialization, Urbanization, and Education in Ciudad Guayana* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1969), 57. On Venezuela’s squatters, see Charles Abrams, *Man’s Struggle for Shelter in an Urbanizing World* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1964), 13. On the long-term consequences of Venezuela’s skewed economic development, stratification, and corruption, see Coronil, *Magical State*; and Miguel Tinker Salas, *The Enduring Legacy: Oil, Culture, and Society in Venezuela* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2009).
  68. Abrams, *Man’s Struggle for Shelter in an Urbanizing World*, 17-18; H. J. Maidenberg, “Season of Disease Nears in Caracas,” *New York Times*, May 29, 1966, 21.
  69. Talton F. Ray, *The Politics of the Barrios of Venezuela* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1969); Alejandra Velasco, *Barrio Rising: Urban Politics and the Making of Modern Venezuela* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2015).
  70. Abrams, *Man’s Struggle for Shelter in an Urbanizing World*, 18-19.
  71. George Edward Richard Burroughs, *Education in Venezuela* (Hamden, CT: Archon Books, 1974), 30-33; Russell G. Davis and Noel F. McGinn, “Education and Regional Development,” in *Planning*

- Urban Growth and Regional Development*, ed. Lloyd Rodwin (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1969), 279; John R. Mathiason, "The Venezuelan Campensino: Perspectives on Change," in *A Strategy for Research on Social Policy*, ed. Frank Bonilla and Jose A. Silva Michelena (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1967), 124.
72. John Friedmann, *Regional Development Policy*, 169-70; The Guayana Development Program: Staff Working Paper, March 1965, p. 1-2, 6, B77-B83, box 2, AC 292.
  73. Harvard University News Office, News Release—Harvard—March 15, 1961, box 1, AC 292. Rodwin's version of his first meeting with Ravard is in Rodwin, "Introduction," 1-2.
  74. Quote in Smith, "Venezuela Offers Harvard-MIT Center \$800,000 Contract." The CVG's first contract was for \$800,000 over three years, followed by a two-year contract for \$400,000; see Press Release, MIT Office of Public Relations, March 1, 1963, JCUS 1957-1964 (folder 1/3), box 73, AC 134. On the excitement of signing the contract with the CVG, and of the hope that it might lead to other projects, see Visiting Committee Report, May 11, 1961, p. 1, JCUS 1957-1966, box 133, AC 134.
  75. Rodwin's most important early work was *The British New Town Policy*, which explored Britain's postwar urban planning program. Rodwin thought it could be transplanted elsewhere, including to developing countries like Venezuela.
  76. "Norman Williams, 80, and Expert on Planning and Zoning, Dies," *New York Times*, March 28, 1996, B12; Norman Williams' *American Land Planning Law*, 5 vols. (Chicago, IL: Callaghan, 1974) is a classic in the legal field. On von Moltke, see "Notes on Contributors," in *Planning Urban Growth and Regional Development*, ed. Lloyd Rodwin (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1969), 513.
  77. The Harvard Foundation for Advanced Study and Research, Newsletter, May 15, 1964, p. 7, VF NA 45 Moltke, GSD Library, Harvard University.
  78. Lloyd Rodwin, "Reflections on Collaborative Planning," in *Planning Urban Growth and Regional Development*, ed. Lloyd Rodwin (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1969), 467-491. Personnel listed in *JCUS: The First Five Years*, 63-64. On Ravard, see Lisa Peattie, *Planning: Rethinking Ciudad Guayana* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1987), 27-28.
  79. John H. Mollenkopf, *The Contested City* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1983), 149-51; Thomas H. O'Connor, *Building a New Boston: Politics and Urban Renewal, 1950-1970* (Boston, MA: Northeastern University Press, 1993), 125-39. For the classic sociological study of the West End as it neared its demise, see Herbert J. Gans, *The Urban Villagers: Group and Class in the Life of Italian-Americans* (Glencoe, IL: Free Press, 1962). Gans questioned the accuracy of labeling the West End a "slum," though he admitted the ethnically marginal neighborhood was a "run-down area of people struggling with the problems of low income, poor education, and related difficulties. Even so . . . a good place to live" (p. 16). On the role of the private sector in revitalizing Boston, see Elihu Rubin, *Insuring the City: The Prudential Center and the Postwar Urban Landscape* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2012).
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  81. Guy Kelnhofer, Preliminary Identification of the Context for Planning of the City, March 5, 1963, p. 5, D1-D29, box 3, AC 292.
  82. Lloyd Rodwin, "Ciudad Guayana: A New City," *Scientific American*, September 1965, 122, 130.
  83. Thomas R. Herrick, History of the Project, April 13, 1962, p. 1-2, F3-F35, box 4, AC 292. Herrick was commissioned to write the official history of the project. He began working on it in early 1962, just months after the Joint Center sent its first personnel to Caracas. He never finished the history, and no history of the project was included in Rodwin's edited volume on Ciudad Guayana, *Planning Urban Growth and Regional Development*. Rodwin mentioned this absence: "The Guayana program had an official historian, but this was one of those deceptively attractive ideas that just did not work out" (p. 467).
  84. Donald Appleyard, "City Designers and the Pluralistic City," in *Planning Urban Growth and*

- Regional Development*, ed. Lloyd Rodwin (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1969), 422.
85. Herrick, History of the Project, April 13, 1962, p. 1-2, F3-F35, box 4, AC 292.
  86. John Stuart MacDonald, "Migration and the Population of Ciudad Guayana," in *Planning Urban Growth and Regional Development*, ed. Lloyd Rodwin (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1969), 109-25.
  87. Donald Appleyard, *Planning a Pluralist City* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1976), 28.
  88. Herrick, History of the Project, April 13, 1962, p. 1-3, F3-F35, box 4, AC 292. The first thing Appleyard did was survey the whole area; see Appleyard, Santo Tomé De Guayana—The Existing Environment, August 1961, E1-E31, box 3, AC 292.
  89. von Moltke, The Evolution of the Physical Plans of Ciudad Guayana, second draft, August 1966, p. 4, von Moltke, box 1, AC 292.
  90. von Moltke to Files, An Outline for a development strategy for Santo Tomé de Guayana, August 25, 1963, p. 1, E70-E85, box 3, AC 292.
  91. Charles Abrams, "Housing Finance in Venezuela," June 20, 1960, A-3, box 4, AC 292.
  92. Abrams to JCUS, Report on the Development of Ciudad Guayana in Venezuela, p. 1, 28, 26, January 25, 1962, A1-A6A, box 1, AC 292.
  93. Martocci to Williams, Jr., City Form Alternatives for Ciudad Guayana, May 15, 1962, p. 1-5, E32-E69, box 3, AC 292.
  94. von Moltke to Williams, Jr., Outline of functions of Urban Design Division and of the resulting needs for manpower and skills, May 17, 1962, E32-E69, box 3, AC 292. All capitals in original.
  95. Willo von Moltke, "The Evolution of the Linear Form," in *Planning Urban Growth and Regional Development*, ed. Lloyd Rodwin (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1969), 126-59.
  96. Willo von Moltke and Edmund N. Bacon, "In Pursuit of Urbanity," *Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science* 314 (November 1957): 101-11; Willo von Moltke, "Santo Tomé De Guayana," *Ekistics* 15 (February 1963), quote on 113.
  97. Doug Hassebroek, "Philadelphia's Postwar Moment," *Perspecta* 30 (1999): 84-91; Edmund N. Bacon, *Design of Cities* (New York: Viking Press, 1967), 243-71. The similarities between the Philadelphia and Ciudad Guayana designs were striking. Both turned on strong east-west axes—Market Street in Philadelphia and Avenida Guayana in Ciudad Guayana—and incorporated existing river systems—the Delaware and Caroní respectively—into the final design.
  98. See, for example, "Big Cities try for a Comeback," *U.S. News & World Report*, December 28, 1964, 34-36, 38.
  99. MIT planner Kevin Lynch, sent to assess von Moltke's plan, was not impressed: "The designers of this new city suffer from an acute case of standard planning anxiety: the maintenance of control, the preservation of form and quality, in the face of rapid growth and a continuously shifting situation." Kevin Lynch, Some Notes on the Design of Ciudad Guayana, July 22, 1964, p. 1, Lynch, Ciudad Guayana, box 1, AC 292.
  100. von Moltke, Avenida Guayana: The Central Spine of Ciudad Guayana and Key To Its Development Strategy, n.d., p. 1, Von Moltke, box 1, AC 292.
  101. *Ibid.*, 2.
  102. von Moltke to Files, An Outline for a development strategy for Santo Tomé de Guayana, August 25, 1963, p. 2, E70-E85, box 3, AC 292. Von Moltke's negative reference point was Brasilia, the planned capital city of Brazil, which he claimed had no identifiable center. Von Moltke's discussion of the "image of the city" was heavily influenced by the work of MIT planner and Guayana program consultant Kevin Lynch, whose study *The Image of the City* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1960) popularized the term and demarcated its basic features. For his part, Lynch did not think much of von Moltke's design; see fn99, earlier.
  103. Appleyard, *Planning a Pluralist City*.
  104. Philip E. Beach, Jr., "The Business Center," in *Planning Urban Growth and Regional Development*, ed. Lloyd Rodwin (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1969), 219-35.
  105. Anthony Downs, "Creating a Land Development Strategy for Ciudad Guayana," in *Planning Urban Growth and Regional Development*, ed. Lloyd Rodwin (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1969), 213-14.
  106. *Ibid.*, 216-17.
  107. For Peattie's original investigation, see Lisa Peattie, *The View from the Barrio* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1968); for her subsequent findings, see Peattie, *Planning*, quote on 10.

108. Guy Kelnhofer, Preliminary Identification of the Context for Planning of the City, March 5, 1963, p. 11, D1-D29, box 3, AC 292.
109. Guy Kelnhofer, Planning and Administration of New Towns, June 1963, p. 3, D1-D29, box 3, AC 292.
110. Raphael Corrada, "The Housing Program," in *Planning Urban Growth and Regional Development*, ed. Lloyd Rodwin (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1969), 246.
111. von Moltke to Files, Ideas underlying the design of El Roble, April 19, 1962, E1-E31, box 3, AC 292; William Porter, "Changing Perspectives on Residential Area Design," in *Planning Urban Growth and Regional Development*, ed. Lloyd Rodwin (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1969), 252-69.
112. Walt W. Rostow, *The Stages of Economic Growth: A Non-Communist Manifesto* (London: Cambridge University Press, 1960).
113. Appleyard, *Planning a Pluralist City*, 1-7.
114. von Moltke to Williams, Jr., Program for Implementing "Mejoramiento Urbano Progresivo," April 26, 1962, p. 1, E1-E31, box 3, AC 292. He borrowed much of the language for this memo from his colleague Hanno Weber, who sent a similar memo to Williams on March 28, 1962; see E1-E31, box 3, AC 292.
115. Rodwin, "Reflections on Collaborative Planning," 474-75.
116. See Corrada, "The Housing Program," 236-51; and Peattie, *View from the Barrio*; and Peattie, *Planning*.
117. Julio A. Silva, CVG: An Evaluation of El Roble Pilot Project, November 1964, p. 1, Silva, box 1, AC 292.
118. *Ibid.*, 2.
119. William A. Doebele, Jr., "Legal Issues of Regional Development," in *Planning Urban Growth and Regional Development*, ed. Lloyd Rodwin (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1969), 286-300.
120. Silva, CVG: An Evaluation of El Roble Pilot Project, November 1964, p. 8, 10, Silva, box 1, AC 292; Mathiason, "The Venezuelan Campesino," 129.
121. Silva, CVG: Evaluation of El Roble Pilot Project, 21.
122. *Ibid.*, 21, 13.
123. *Ibid.*, 6.
124. *Ibid.*, 15; Lewis H. Diuguid, "Venezuela: 'The Rain of the People,'" *Washington Post*, June 18, 1972, B5.
125. Since 1989, the Joint Center has existed in modified form as the Joint Center for Housing Studies of Harvard University; see <http://www.jchs.harvard.edu/history> for more information on the center's current mission and work.
126. Rodwin, "Reflections on Collaborative Planning," 468.
127. *Ibid.*, 488.
128. *Ibid.*, 489-90.

### Author Biography

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