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## Book Review of Charles E. Connerly's "The Most Segregated City in America: City Planning and Civil Rights in Birmingham"

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welfare-to-work policies and the termination of Aid to Families with Dependent Children. But the book also shows what is possible when cross-racial, cross-class coalitions effectively braid together economic, gender, and racial justice as the focus of concerted and intertwined political, legal, and social action.

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Charles E. Connerly, *"The Most Segregated City in America": City Planning and Civil Rights in Birmingham, 1920–1980*, Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 2005. Pp. 340. \$45 (ISBN 0-8139-2334-4).

If anyone still believes that the history of urban planning in the United States can be written without taking race into account, Charles Connerly's *"The Most Segregated City in America"* will change his mind. Connerly's work is part of a growing body of scholarship that debunks the arrival of zoning and other planning techniques in the early twentieth century, as well as urban renewal and other planning efforts in the following decades, as progressive efforts to control the cacophony and disorder of urban America. Since the release of Kenneth T. Jackson's now classic *The Crabgrass Frontier: The Suburbanization of the United States* in 1985, historians have taken a much more skeptical view of urban planning, carefully noting the tendency of those in positions of power to protect entrenched business, class, and racial interests. Connerly deftly steps into this body of work. Delving deeply into the fabric of race and politics in Birmingham for most of the twentieth century, he explores both standard topics like the development of zoning, changes in the racial composition of neighborhoods, urban renewal, and the impact of highway construction and less frequently discussed areas such as the impact of the civil rights movement on planning policy, the effect of black neighborhood organizations on city planning, and the consequences of turning over political power to black residents.

Some might be concerned that Birmingham is a less than ideal subject for exploring urban planning and race. It was, after all, the site of numerous bombings—some directed at those seeking to break through neighborhood racial boundaries—and infamous efforts to suppress civil rights demonstrations. It is hardly surprising that race played a part in planning the city where Eugene "Bull" Connor, Public Safety Commissioner, used fire hoses and dogs to disperse children marching against segregation. But that actually turns out to make Connerly's case much stronger. Though the level of violence and vitriol was higher in Birmingham than in many other areas of the country, its exceptionalism was only a matter of degree. As Connerly notes in his introduction, Birmingham shared "many characteristics with the rest of the United States" (5). Cities routinely "used planning to limit the rights of blacks to live where they wish." Bombs, violence, arson, and mobs greeted blacks moving into white neighborhoods in urban areas all across the land. The most remarkable feature of the book is its revelation that the planning tools used to implement racial policies in Birmingham were the same ones used everywhere else. Simply put, Birmingham's

planning regimes were not at all exceptional. Racial servitudes, overt racial zoning, class-based zoning, and use of urban renewal, infrastructure projects, and highway planning to reconstruct racial residential boundary lines were part of the texture of our national life through much of the twentieth century.

The last three chapters of the book open a somewhat different realm of inquiry. By taking us through the civil rights era to the election of the first black mayor of Birmingham in 1979, Connerly chronicles the changing fabric of race and planning after the mid-twentieth century. Under pressure from the civil rights movement, the white business establishment in Birmingham was the first significant group to understand that settling some race issues was crucial to the city's growth. As black voting power grew during the 1960s and 1970s, long-established black neighborhood civic and church groups gained room to push for changes in planning policy. And when black politicians took over the city, neighborhood groups had to alter their tactics. Considerations of class rather than race, Connerly opines near the end of his book (283), came to dominate planning discourse as national grant programs paid more attention to the impact of poverty on neighborhood development. These are issues of race and planning that will need a great deal more exploration in the coming years.

This well-written history is an important addition to the history of law, race, and urban America in the twentieth century. It should be widely read.

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Charles L. Zelden, *Bush v. Gore: Exposing the Hidden Crisis in American Democracy*, Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 2008. Pp. xvi + 390. \$ 34.95 (ISBN 978-0-7006-1593-3).

Charles Zelden prefaces *Bush v. Gore: Exposing the Hidden Crisis in American Democracy* with a disclaimer: "this is not an attempt to write the definitive history of *Bush v. Gore* and the 2000 election. Not until all the participants die and their papers become available to historians can such a history even be contemplated" (x). Perhaps, but until that distant day arrives, this book will do. It is less successful in tying this history to what Zelden calls "the hidden crisis in American democracy."

The strengths of this book are manifest. Zelden's description of the events of November and December of 2000, including the voting and recounting process in Florida, and especially the ensuing litigation, is clear, extremely detailed, and quite engaging. He provides analysis of the various parties' overarching strategies, the legal arguments they made to the courts, and the judicial decisions that ensued. Zelden's accomplishments in this part of the book should not be underestimated. The number of lawsuits filed and legal issues raised in Florida subsequent to the 2000 election was enormous. Explicating the details of those legal battles and of Florida election law in a way that is comprehensible even to nonlegal readers is an impressive feat, as is Zelden's ability to maintain a relatively balanced tone and perspective (albeit, at times a slight bias towards Al Gore's legal positions does peak through). Zelden