

TOWARD AN UNDERSTANDING OF THE URBAN CRISIS

The Unheavenly City. By Edward C. Banfield (Boston: Little, Brown & Co., 1970). Pp. viii, 308. \$7.50 cloth, \$3.95 paper.

Utilizing a wide range of academic resources, Edward Banfield has spelled out in *The Unheavenly City* a truly radical critique of our understanding of the urban condition and our efforts to improve it. The book challenges so many orthodoxies that a great many people will be tempted to dismiss it. This is unfortunate because there has been very little scholarly discussion of the foundation of our understanding of urban politics; only two books have been published primarily treating theories of local politics and government in the United States.¹ *The Unheavenly City* could well provide the focal point for the hitherto absent debate. As of this writing, those few reviews that have appeared support the prediction that reactions to the book will be passionate.²

Before examining this work, we should first note that a number of Banfield's earlier studies can now be seen in perspective as having prepared the way for *The Unheavenly City*. *Politics, Planning,*

¹Anwar Syed, *The Political Theory of American Local Government* (New York: Random House, 1967), and W. Hardy Wickwar, *The Political Theory of Local Government* (Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 1970).

²Jules Cohn's brief review [*Urban Affairs Quarterly*, VI (September, 1970) p. 127] was laudatory—"a painstaking, courageous confrontation with current faddist ideas about urban problems"—and contrasted sharply with John A. Williams' splenetic double review of Banfield's *The Unheavenly City* and Daniel P. Moynihan's *Maximum Feasible Misunderstanding* (New York: Free Press, 1969): "The Politics of Urban Decay," *Review of Politics*, XXXII (October, 1970) pp. 536-542. According to Williams: "Intellectual historians will recognize in the Moynihan-Banfield analysis a strong resemblance to the Social Darwinism of late Victorian times. All the essential features are here: the pious but operationally meaningless distinction between the deserving and the undeserving poor; the insistence upon the latter group as irremediably deviant underclass whose threatening behavior is best dealt with by stern application of measured force; the strictures against misguided altruism and reform; a faith in technology and in openended economic expansion as solutions for social problems; and not least in importance, a 'scientific' argument that provides intellectually respectable cover for race and class discrimination." p. 539. For a very favorable review see Robert Nisbet, "The Urban Crisis Revisited," *Intercollegiate Review*, VII (Fall, 1970) pp. 3-10

and the *Political Interest*" was a case study of the struggle over the location of public housing in Chicago in 1949-50. *The Moral Basis of a Backward Society*' can best be described as a study in comparative local politics, focussing on the values of residents of a South Italian farming village. *Political Influence*' described political conflict in Chicago during the years 1957-58, developing a theory of political influence from the study of six major public issues. A more general work was his *City Politics*, which discussed the major actors in American urban politics and their relation to different arrangements of city governmental institutions (more books, and a number of articles as well, could be mentioned, but the above selection amply demonstrates Banfield's continuing interest in urban politics)."

These works were favorably received. Though the reviewing done in the established journals provides at best a fragmentary picture of the discipline's reception of a scholar or his works, Banfield was clearly considered one of the "behavioralists,"⁷ as opposed

³Martin Meyerson and Edward Banfield, *Politics, Planning, and the Public Interest: The Case of Public Housing in Chicago* (Glencoe, Ill.: Free Press, 1955).

⁴Edward Banfield, *The Moral Basis of a Backward Society* (New York: Free Press, 1958) with the assistance of Laura Fasano Banfield.

⁵Edward Banfield, *Political Influence: A New Theory of Urban Politics* (New York: Free Press, 1961).

⁶Edward Banfield and James Q. Wilson, *City Politics* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press and M.I.T. Press, 1963). Edward C. Banfield is presently Henry Lee Shattuck Professor of Urban Government at Harvard University and a Vice-President of the American Political Science Association. In contrast to what seems to be the current ideal, Banfield first worked for the United States government (for nearly ten years in the Forest Service and the Farm Security Administration), then received his Ph.D. from the University of Chicago and served on the faculty there. He joined the faculty of Harvard University in 1958. In 1969 Banfield served as Chairman of the President's task Force on Model Cities; he is presently a member of the National Advisory Council on Economic Opportunity.

⁷The critique of the "institutional" study of urban politics began in the latter 1950's with charges that, hitherto, only the formal governmental structure of municipalities had been studied and then only from a rather narrow administration point of view; that available research techniques were not used to explore other aspects of urban government and politics; that the literature displayed a clear bias in favor of the "traditional reform movement," and that the literature was not in touch with the rest of the discipline-not to mention other disciplines. The pioneering critiques were: Robert T. Daland, "Political Science and the Study of Urbanism, a Bibliography," *American Political Science Review*, LI (June, 1957) pp. 491-509; Lawrence J. R.

to the older "institutional" school.' In this "post-behavioral" period in political science" it would be perilous indeed to assume that the judgments of the first reviewers of a work will reflect the discipline's final appreciation; yet Banfield's work has continued to receive attention.

His emphasis on the roles of ethnic groups in urban politics has attracted comment, stimulated research, and generated debate. In *City Politics* Banfield and Wilson argued that urban political cleavages "tended to coalesce into two opposed patterns:

Herson, "The Lost World of Municipal Government," *American Political Science Review*, LI (June, 1957) pp. 330-345; Norton E. Long, "Aristotle and the Study of Local Government," *Social Research*, XXIV, (Fall, 1957) pp. 287-310. That the study of state and local government had fallen to a low estate was evident from the findings of Albert Somit and Joseph Tanenhaus in *American Political Science: A Profile of a Discipline* (New York: Atherton Press, 1964), Chapter 6, particularly pp. 56-57. For an excellent summary account of the rise of "behavioralism" in the study of urban politics, see Wallace Sayre and Nelson Polsby, "American Political Science and the Study of Urbanization," in Phillip Hauser and Leo Schmore (eds.), *The Study of Urbanization* (New York: John Wiley and Sons, 1965) pp. 115-156. For a more recent summary and a classification of the many behavioralist contributions to the literature on sub-national politics generally, see Herbert Jacob and Michael Lipsky, "Outputs, Structure, and Power: An Assessment of Changes in the Study of State and Local Politics," *Journal of Politics*, XXX (May, 1968) pp. 510-538.

⁸Norton Long, one of the early critics of the institutional school (see footnote 7), praised Meyerson and Banfield's "*Politics Planning and the Public Interest* as incorporating sane realism" and being a wholesome antidote to narrow and self-righteous dogmatism"; see also Long's "Discovering the Politically Feasible," *Public Administration Review*, XVII (Summer, 1957) pp. 194-195. Reviews of Banfield's *Political Influence* generally approved of the book but raised questions about the problems of method within the behavioral movement; see Harry Scoble's review in *American Political Science Review*, LVI (March, 1962) pp. 151-152, and Robert E. Lane's review in *American Political Science Review*, LVI (March, 1962) pp. 93-94. *City Politics* was reviewed widely and was generally favorably received. Some reviewers strongly praised the book as a definitive break with the old "Lost World" of state and local government; see: Thomas J. Anton, review in *Midwest Journal of Political Science*, VIII (May, 1964) pp. 214-215; William Gamson, review in *American Journal of Sociology*, LXIX (May, 1964) p. 683; and Scott Greer, review in *American Sociological Review*, XXIX (October, 1964) p. 766. For a less sanguine treatment, see Herbert Kaufman's review in *American Political Science Review*, LVIII (June, 1964) pp. 422-423.

⁹A definition of the "post-behavioral" period in the development of political science is found in David Easton, "The New Revolution in Political Science," *American Political Science Review*, LXIII (December, 1969) pp. 1051-1061.

The first, which derives from the middle-class ethos, favors what the municipal reform movement has always defined as "good government"-namely efficiency, impartiality, honesty, planning, strong executives, no favoritism, model legal codes, and strict enforcement of laws against gambling and vice. The other conception derives from the "immigrant ethos." This is the conception of those people who identify with the ward or neighborhood rather than the "city as a whole," who look to politicians for "help" and favors, who regard gambling and vice, at worst, as necessary evils, and who are far less interested in the efficiency, impartiality, and honesty of local government than in its readiness to confer material benefits of one sort or another upon them."

Raymond Wolfinger and John O. Field" interpreted this as a hypothesis that ethnicity bears a direct causal relationship to the institutional form of a city's government. Examining the available data on most American cities, they found no statistically significant correlation between ethnicity and the type of institutional structure a city had, and concluded that the "ethos theory" had been disproven. Additionally, the normative implications of associating specific ethnic groups with specific styles of political behavior troubled Wolfinger and Field." Their critique occasioned a sharp

"Bonfield and Wilson, *City Politics*, p. 46.

¹¹Raymond E. Wolfinger and John O. Field, "Political Ethos and the Structure of City Government," *American Political Science Review*, LX (June, 1966) pp. 306-326.

¹²For their normative concerns, see p. 307. Wolfinger and Field (echoing Kaufman, cited above in footnote 8) seemed particularly worried that the ethos theory might support claims to superior political virtue by the "Anglo-Saxons." Bonfield and Wilson should be read as defending the "immigrant ethos" as a series of behaviors developed to solve certain problems; see: Robert K. Merton, "The Latent Functions of the Machine," in *Social Theory and Social Structure* (rev. ed.; New York: Free Press, 1957) pp. 71-82, cited in *City Politics*, p. 126. Treating the competing ethics as responses by individuals feeling a common identity to a changing environment would avoid the difficulties posed by identifying and testing race as a causal factor in politics. As an indication of the pitfalls that underlie the use of race as an analytical concept, one might point out that the reputedly Anglo-Saxon element in the American population may be more Celtic than anything else; for a provocative suggestion, see H. L. Mencken's essay "The Anglo-Saxon" reprinted in Alastair Cooke (ed.), *The Vintage Mencken* (New York: Vintage Books, 1958) particularly pp. 127-128.

exchange in the *American Political Science Review*." Other scholars have supported the ethos theory.⁷⁴

Banfield's *Unheavenly City* is not, then, a *piece d'occasion*, written to get out a book on a "hot" topic. It is the latest in a series of heretofore widely-noted works on the urban political process. For some years Banfield has given particular attention to ethnic and class cleavage among city populations, political conflict, and the policy-making process. The sum of his work has supported the position that these cleavages take on political significance because they mirror different goals sought in politics, the differing goals in turn providing the basis for conflict. The policy-making process is, therefore, characterized by conflict resolution and compromise. Banfield's recommendations on policy matters have been guarded, but his findings and assessments of city political systems have provided conspicuously little support for orthodox reformers.¹⁶

"See Banfield and Wilson's critique of the article and Wolfinger and Field's reply: *American Political Science Review*, XL (September, 1966) pp. 998-1000.

See Lewis A. Froman, "An Analysis of Public Policies in Cities," *Journal of Politics*, XXIX (February, 1967) pp. 94-108, and Robert L. Lineberry and Edmund P. Fowler, "Reformism and Public Policies in American Cities," *American Political Science Review*, LXI (September, 1967) pp. 701-716.

"Note that the problem of black participation in politics was one of the central issues treated in Banfield and Morton Grodzins, *Government and Housing in Metropolitan Areas* (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1958).

"Interestingly enough, no comprehensive, critical account of the municipal reform movement has been written. Frank Mann Stewart's *A Half-Century of Municipal Reform* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1950) is a descriptive history of the National Municipal League, based on the records and publications of the NML, Lorin Peterson's *The Day of the Mugwump* (New York: Random House, 1961) is a frankly journalistic treatment of the "established reformers." No study of the municipal reform movement in general or of the NML in particular could be made without reference to the redoubtable Richard S. Childs; see his *Civic Victories* (New York: Harper Bros., 1952) and *The First Fifty Years of the Council Manager Plan of Municipal Government* (New York: National Municipal League, 1965). John Porter East's *Council-Manager Government: The Political Thought of Richard S. Childs* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1965) is a critique of reform thought from the perspective of methodology; East rightly maintains that rigorous analysis of political behavior is not one of the reformers' strong suits. In this context see also Scott Greer's *Metropolitica: A Study in Political Culture* (New York: John

The following passage from *Political Influence* amply illustrates his denial of the possibility of setting up a central agency that could give rational direction to the city as a whole:

No matter how competent and well-intentioned, a decision-maker can never make an important decision on grounds that are not in some degree arbitrary or non-logical. He must select from among incompatible alternatives each of which is preferable in terms of a different but defensible view of the public interest. If there is a single "ultimate" value premise to which all of the lesser ones are instrumental, if its meaning is unambiguous in concrete circumstances, and if he can know for sure which lesser premise is most instrumental to the attainment of the ultimate one, he can, indeed, make his decision in an entirely technical and non-arbitrary way. But these conditions can seldom be met, and when they can be, the matter is not "important" and usually does not require "decision."¹⁷

Predictably, Banfield has been criticized for not deploring political systems which, in determining the content of the public interest through bargaining and negotiation, fail to undertake projects which are "obviously" in accord with a more authoritative (though undefined) public interest, or, in another formulation, does not "solve" pressing urban "problems."¹⁸

The Unheavenly City is a departure from Banfield's past work in that it deals primarily with policy recommendations, eschewing his previous commitment to the stance of the detached, objective observer. And involvement should certainly be welcomed in any intellectual enterprise. The scholar who is deeply interested in the subject of his investigation, who has a warm attachment to the idea of truth, is the one who will lead us to greater knowledge; the scientist at work is not the bloodless, analytical mechanism of popular lore.¹⁹ But the admission that science engages the emotions

Wiley and Sons, 1963) ; contrast Greer's description of the 1957 drive for metropolitan reform in St. Louis to John C. Bollens (ed.), *Exploring the Metropolitan Community* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1961), particularly Part II.

¹⁷Banfield, *Political Influence*, p. 329.

¹⁸Henry Kariel, *The Promise of Politics* (Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice-Hall, 1966) pp. 109-110; see also Lane's review of *Political Influence*, cited in footnote 8.

¹⁹One of the most widely read hooks reflecting this "new view" of science is James Watson's *The Double Helix* (New York: Atheneum, 1968), a

ought not provide anyone an excuse for abandoning restraint and control in the statement of views and the conduct of argument. Indeed, if political scientists are to debate matters about which there is a sharp difference of opinion, they would be well-advised to cultivate a custom of civility that will keep forthright discussion from being marred by rancor or hysteria. Matters of style must, of course, remain secondary to matters of substance, but whatever its relationship to his basic argument, Banfield's style is a model blend of candor and courtesy. He makes no *ad hominem* arguments; the reader is happily spared conspiracy theories. He touches that perennially sensitive nerve; the relation of the policies he questions to totalitarianism, without accusing anyone of being a member of this or that unquestionably evil group. Nor are there any arguments from authority; Banfield would not have us accept his point of view because every right-thinking American should, or because it would be the democratic/liberal/enlightened thing to do, or because the teachings of history/science demand it. He has spelled out his assumptions, has made clear reference to the evidence used to support his reasoning, and has drawn his conclusions vividly. In short, he has invited his potential critics to a debate strictly on the merits of the case. If his challenge is answered in like terms, our understanding of our cities will be incomparably better.

II.

Unfortunately, there are certain barriers to broad-ranging discussion of the cities. The following digression treats this matter at some length. Through no one's fault or intention the study of politics and government on the local level has had a problem-solving orientation. I certainly deserve praise if I am interested in my city and work for its betterment, but there are certain perils to my position as a scholar when I conceive my civic responsibility as a matter of "solving problems."

For one thing, the ability to see certain concatenations of

fascinating personal account of the discovering of the structure of deoxyribonucleic acid. For a more general approach, see Michael Polanyi, *Personal Knowledge* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1958) particularly chapter 1.

events as "problems" can be a great consolation, The use of the term "problem" adds an objectivity, a weight of authority, a call for concerted action, that my own unadorned expression of preference can never have. Suppose I abandon the use of the term in discourse about society-I might well feel more anxiety than I had before. Whatever matters come to my attention can no longer be problems; they become situations, ethically neutral in themselves. The meaning a particular situation has, and the propriety of the chain of events that I generate from it, grow out of a choice that I make and for which I am responsible. I may turn my back, I may act in one way or another, but no matter what, I must choose and so cannot escape confronting myself with having made a decision. Consequently, I run the risk of seeing the situation wrongly; and I may be accused of simply foisting my personal preferences on others from a position of superior power. Most profoundly, I must face my conscience with the knowledge that I may have done wrongly, that I may have made irretrievable errors.

But if I retain the consolation of seeing things as problems-how liberated I must feel! Problems, as I know from my earliest experience in school, are things to be solved, things that have final answers. Any meaning that a problem has can be found in itself. If a problem is presented, I know that it contains a solution. All I have to do is apply the right technique, and the problem will be solved. The teacher even has a book with the right answers in the back, though, of course, I do not resort to such devices unless I am particularly pressed. What is important is that I learn the techniques. Sometimes getting a wrong answer will actually help me perfect my grasp of the technique more than a right answer, for the answer revealed as wrong forces me to pay greater heed to elements of technique that I had been wont to take for granted. Additionally, I am relieved of anxiety about how to use what I am learning, about its relation to whatever I choose as a vocation, about its effect on the structure of the choices I make, that is to say, about its effect on my moral life. If I solve the problems, I win approval from parents and teachers. If I have not fared well in the free-form competition of the playground my success at solving the problems may be a great compensation to me.

Obviously, this is a child's view. The exercises I was taught to

see as "problems" were not problems in any objective sense.²⁰ If the school board chooses to use a different book next year or decides to abandon this way of teaching mathematics, there is nothing in the abandoned workbook that requires the "problem" be "solved." A matter becomes a problem only when someone defines it as such, and, setting aside the questions of purpose and responsibility, agrees to be concerned only with the proper application of a technique. Nonetheless, if I want to avoid troublous reappraisals of the goals I seek, if I would like to keep from feeling I must question my own motives and those of others, the problem-solving frame of mind can be quite helpful. I am freed from deep doubt, from the tensions that may come from sensing that I am constantly making choices. Therefore, I have an incentive to label matters as problems. It may not be unreasonable to suggest that others might feel a similar incentive. I may not agree with these other people on what the problems are and what techniques should be applied for their solution. But however sharply we can disagree on these questions, we still support each other on the theoretical level, mutually reconfirming the "problem-solving" view of things.

Done on a societal scale, the adoption of the problem-solving frame of mind may turn our political consciousness to wholly external matters. If this should happen, the external matters will be defined in terms of their amenability to manipulation by techniques. Therefore, if the government applies the accepted technique, then the problem is, by definition, solved or at least on the way to - solution.

The trouble with this is that first, the application of the technique may have all sorts of unpredictable and unintended consequences for matters outside those defined as constituting the problem. For example, if we solve the traffic problem by building more expressways, we may destroy a great deal of housing, commercial property, - and parkland while encouraging air pollution

²⁰The definition of the word 'in the *New English Dictionary* offers some insight into its uses. The fourth listed definition is the one that has been used here: "a proposition in which something is required to, be done." The first definition, now obsolete, is striking indeed: "an enigmatic statement." *New English Dictionary* (Sir James A. H. Murray, ed.) vol. VII, part II (Oxford : Clarendon Press, 1909) p. 1403.

from automobile exhaust and heart disease from insufficient exercise. Secondly, without a "book" to guide us, it is unclear exactly what constitutes a solution of a social problem. In 1933, the reduction of the unemployment rate to 6% would have been regarded as the "solution" of the unemployment "problem," but in 1971 a rate of 6% may be thought of as constituting the problem. It is probably not unfair to suggest that the Supreme Court thought it was solving the "problem" of race relations in 1954. The list could be increased, but there is no need. The startling and unaccustomed conclusion to which we are led is this: those things are problems which we choose to see as problems. "Problems" do not have that certainty with which we have often vested them. Problems are not Platonic paradigms which exist beyond human consciousness; they are subject to the vagaries of taste and fancy.

To be sure, there are undoubted advantages in defining matters as problems, at least in a provisional way. If we are to get anything at all done, we must at some point leave off pondering alternatives and act, taking the risk that we may err. And once we decide that a given situation is a "problem" and undertake to "solve" it, we will be most reluctant to quit our activity in order to reconsider our initial decision, for we tend to regard "problem-solving" as a practical and common-sensical matter, far removed from emotion and preference. But it is quite possible for our "problems" and their "solutions" to appear idiosyncratic or even absurd from other points of view. Further, these other points of view may not be ignorant, unreasonable, or self-seeking. For example, reformers around the turn of the century were greatly concerned with what they called the "Liquor Problem." Now the "Liquor Problem" had many ramifications. The bathos of "Ten Nights in a Barroom" aside, the "Problem" was held to affect family life, the nation's economy, and the general state of morals. Further, efforts to solve it met with many obstacles, not the least of which was the opposition of large portions of the public and many public officials. Prohibition measures were frequently defeated; in the eyes of Josiah Strong, these defeats were evidence that "there are few cities in the United States in which the Liquor power is not able to dominate."²¹

²¹ *The Twentieth Century City* (New York: Baker & Taylor, 1898) p. 94.

The solution to the problem was clearly national Prohibition.²² Through the fourteen years of Prohibition the original proponents seem never to have lost the belief that they had found the "solution" to the "problem." After some time a great number of people decided that the "problem" was preferable to the "solution," and Prohibition was repealed. The continued existence of temperance organizations (evidently dwindling in numbers and influence) suggests that those who carry on the tradition of the "Liquor Problem" won't abandon their position but will, if their movement is to disappear, simply die off. Commitment to action can be an impermeable barrier to any effort at re-examining one's goals.

My resilient power to make a mental construct seem like something external and concrete can be exercised in more ways than by simply finding "problems." The existence of a "crisis," though the notion contains certain objective overtones, can be as dependent on my personal outlook as a problem. As with "problem," this understanding of "crisis" is not the usual one. Presumably, the identification of a matter as a crisis is subject to test. In illness, the "crisis" is the point at which either the fever subsides or the patient dies; there can be no temporizing about events subsequent to a crisis—the patient starts to recover or ceases to live. But even in this relatively unambiguous medical context it is uncertain what constitutes a successful resolution of the crisis. Witness Matthew Prior's wry reflection :

On his death-bed poor Lubin lies
 His Spouse is in despair
 With frequent cries and mutual sighs
 They both express their care
 "A different cause," says Parson Sly
 "The same effect may give:
 Poor Lubin fears that he may die
 His wife, that he may live."²³

I frequently talk about crises with reference to non-medical matters. A parliamentary regime may be subject to cabinet crises

²² For example, see Guy Hayler, *Prohibition Advance in All Lands* (Wester-ville, Ohio: American Issue Publishing Co., 1914).

²³ Matthew Prior, "A Reasonable Affliction," (Louis Untermeyer, ed.) *A Concise Treasury of Great Poems, English and American* (New York: Pocket Books, 1942) p. 162.

in which either a new compromise is reached or else the incumbent cabinet ceases to exist. And of course, it is possible for me simply to project onto a situation that is not observably a crisis my feeling that it is nonetheless "The point of time at which [the] affair [has come] to the height." ²⁴

Viewing situations as problems requiring solutions (or as crises requiring some sort of drastic action) has more than personal significance. It affects not just my own outlook but the views of anyone who takes my communications seriously. Now the literature dealing with questions of outlook and value rarely has been juxtaposed with the literature on local government and politics. Possibly there has been some feeling that the treatment of local politics involves very particular concerns and, as such, is far removed from work treating general, "philosophical" issues. But this view, so easy to slip into, is difficult to defend. ²⁵ These "broad, abstract" questions are the ones that are the most immediate and the most penetrating, asking discomfiting questions about what I am doing and what justifies it. It is indeed quite appropriate that such questions be raised in the context of the urban crisis. Further, the literature on the history of normative political thought is capable of generating very interesting suggestions about contemporary thought.

For example, seeing various events as "crises" is particularly easy for those who adopt what Karl Mannheim called a "chiliastic" outlook. ²⁸ For the chiliast, everything is in a state of crisis; Creation has reached a decision-point where it will cease to exist as it has. Either things will take an entirely different direction of development, or all we know will come to an end (or, perhaps, both will happen with some elements of the universe taking one alternative, others the other alternative). In our daily experience, most of us are familiar with the chiliastic outlook in an explicitly religious context. Fundamentalist Christian sects which hold that

²⁴This is Dr. Johnson's attractively phrased definition: *A Dictionary of the English Language* (Originally published in London in 1754; reprinted New York: AMS Press, 1967).

²⁵See Polanyi, *Personal Knowledge, passim*.

²⁶Karl Mannheim, *Ideology and Utopia* (Harvard ed., New York: Harcourt, Brace, and World, 1936) pp. 216-221.

the Second Coming of Christ is imminent evangelize widely, and most of us have had the opportunity to read their literature. Indeed, the eccentric figure carrying a sign reading "The End of the World is Near" has become a stock cartoon character. And though not chiliasts ourselves, we may be drawn into the mood as we witness dramatic events:

The city burning is Los Angeles's deepest image of itself . . . ; and at the time of the 1965 Watts riots what struck the imagination most indelibly were the fires. For days one could drive the Harbor Freeway and see the city on fire, just as we had always known it would be in the end.⁴⁷

This sense of cosmic crisis can be so overwhelming that our ordinary activities are meaningless; we focus all our attention on the seemingly momentous events at hand. Recognizably chiliastic habits of thought are less frequently encountered outside a religious context, but without reference to an "end of the world," I might have a deep sense that the mundane events of my daily life are about to be swept away in a cataclysm that will give my life a new urgency and importance. I might project these expectations onto political events, anticipating that a war or a new regime may establish a new mode of existence. If encouraged, I might develop a detailed vision of this new life and devote my energies to bringing it about. Once I commit myself to activity, the belief quite literally becomes the purpose of my life, the meaning of my existence. And all of this has very little to do with the correspondence or lack of correspondence of my belief with the observable world.

Norman Cohn has shown that chiliasts of the middle ages and renaissance worked out political programs from their still largely religious expectations of a new life, and J. L. Talmon's account of thought associated with the French Revolution has shown a continuation of the chiliastic mood in a completely secular context:

[F]or the last century and a half, there have always been men and movements animated by . . . faith in an ultimate, logical, ex-

⁴⁷ Joan Didion, *Slouching Toward Bethlehem* (New York: Farrar, Straus, and Giroux, 1968) p. 220.

elusively valid social order"], preparing for the Day, referring all their ideas and acts to some all-embracing system, sure of some pre-ordained and final denouement of the historical drama with all its conflicts into an absolute harmony.²⁸

A fully developed belief of this kind can be apparently unshakable, even in the face of vivid and unmistakable demonstrations of the belief's incongruence with the tangible world.²⁹

There are few examples of chiliastic political movements in the United States; some commentators have praised the American political tradition for this lack of parties devoted to the achievement of some "new order."³⁰ But the evident absence of ideological politics in most national campaigns should not keep us from recognizing a strong chain of chiliastism in American life. For example, historians have noted the period after 1802, the date of the "Second Great Awakening," as one time of repeated outbreaks of millennial expectations on a mass scale.³¹ One of the best known of these occurrences was the Millerite movement, headed by a rural New Yorker, William Miller, who calculated a precise date for the end of the world in 1844. After they had given up their property and made ready for the End, Miller's thousands of followers were quite embarrassed when the End did not come.³² Bizarre as the Millerite movement was in particulars its fundamental ideas were widely held. According to Ralph Gabriel:

²⁸J. L. Talmon, *The Origins of Totalitarian Democracy* (London: Mercury Books, 1961) p. 12.

²⁹Norman Cohn, *The Pursuit of the Millennium* (New York: Harper and Co., 1961) : Eudes' principal disciples, who had been captured along with their master, steadfastly refused to deny him and bore proudly the titles he had given them. They were accordingly condemned to be burnt as impenitent heretics. They remained unshaken to the last. One of them threatened destruction to their executioners and as he was led to the stake cried out continuously, "Earth, divide thyself!" pp. 39-40.

³⁰For example, see Daniel J. Boorstin, *The Genius of American Politics* (Chicago: University of Chicago, Press, 1953) particularly chapter VI.

³¹For example, see Perry Miller, *The Life of the Mind in America* (New York: Harcourt, Brace, and World, 1965) pp. 3-95 and Ralph H. Gabriel, *The Course of American Democratic Thought* (2nd ed.; New York: Ronald Press, 1956) pp. 26-39.

³²See Harold A. Larrabee, "The Trumpeter of Doomsday," *American Heritage*, XV (April, 1964) pp. 35-37, 95-100.

Nor was this vision limited to the ignorant or the illiterate. "Sooner or later, in one way or another," said Mark Hopkins, president of Williams College, "the time must come when the evils which now provoke the vengeance of heaven and curse humanity shall come to an end. . . . [T]here shall be a society as perfect as we can conceive of . . ." ³³

Nor were these millennial expectations confined to the churches and schools. We need go no further than the *Federalist*, reputedly so hard-headed and realistic, to find the expression of millennial expectations in an entirely political context:

It has been frequently remarked that it seems to have been reserved to the people of this country, by their conduct and example, to decide . . . whether societies of men are really capable . . . of establishing good government from reflection and choice, or whether they are forever destined to depend for their political constitutions on accident or force. [f there be any truth in the remark, the crisis at which we are arrived may with propriety be regarded as the era in which the decision is to be made; and a wrong election of the part we shall act may, in this view, deserve to be considered as the general misfortune of mankind.] ³⁴

We are, perhaps, used to extravagant claims made under the influence of nationalism, but some American local communities were founded on an explicitly chiliastic basis, to prepare for the end of the world and the coming of the Kingdom of God. Others with a more secular outlook (but usually classified with the foregoing as "utopias") held their notions of a sudden transformation of existence in terms of "history," "progress," and technical or moral advance. ³⁶ Nor were the sects the only ones to entertain extrava-

³³ Gabriel, pp. 36-37.

³⁴ Alexander Hamilton, "Federalist # 1," *The Federalist* (Modern Library edition; New York: Random House, n.d.) p. 3.

³⁶ One town, New Harmony, Indiana, was the scene of two successive experimental communities. The first was a group of German Pietists, and second was Robert Owen's famed socialistic community. The leader of the first group, Father Rapp, died still expecting to witness personally the Second Coming. Owen, thoroughly secular in his outlook, entertained great expectations nonetheless, thinking that he had given: "the death blow to the tyranny and despotism which, for unnumbered ages past, have held the human mind spell-bound . . ." Further, Owen believed: "nor has the fullness of time for the accomplishment of this great event been completed until within this hour." Owen is quoted in William E. Wilson, *The Angel and the Serpent* (Bloomington, Ind.: Indiana University, 1964) p. 141. See also. Arthur Bestor, *Backwoods Utopias* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1950).

gent expectations about the future; as a matter of course, the developers of towns in the early nineteenth century trumpeted the potential of their town sites in colorful hyperbole." And the optimistic exaggeration among the public of the future of the cities was balanced by an equally exaggerated pessimistic view.³⁴ In short, the chiliastic outlook seems to have had an effect on how people saw things.

The contemporary perception of an urban crisis may or may not, in whole or in part, be the manifestation of the chiliastic outlook. But whatever the case may be, some recognition of the possibility is bound to be a help in separating fact from rhetoric. All of which brings us back to the starting point of this digression—our inevitable tendency to see in the world about us what we choose (by habit or by training) to see. Our "problems" and our "crises" are embarrassingly subjective; the frame of mind we bring to a situation is uncomfortably crucial. Because of this, Banfield's opening argument in *The Unheavenly City* is one that a great many people will be unable to grasp. It is, very simply, that the set of circumstances we are wont to call the "urban crisis" may be a crisis primarily because some people choose to call it that. To repeat, this point is so fundamental that it will be lost on most readers. If they want to challenge the work, they will search assiduously for incorrect details; they will wrestle with small points and agonize over the portrayal of programs and policies.³⁸ But they will be quite incapable of coming to grips with the central issue; the effect of their own values and the values of the rest of us on what is seen and what action is promoted. That certain

³⁴Richard C. Wade, *The Urban Frontier* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1959) pp. 31-33. Wade also cites a witty satire of the time, mocking the exaggerations of the developers.

One of the best-known remarks is Thomas Jefferson's: "I view great cities as pestilential to the morals, the health, and the liberties of man." Letter to Benjamin Rush, quoted in Charles Glaab (ed.) *The American City: A Documentary History* (Homewood, Ill.: Dorsey Press, 1963) p. 52. But see also Anselm Strauss (ed.), *The American City: A Sourcebook of Urban Imagery* (Chicago: Aldene Publishing Co., 1968) pp. 127-158.

³⁸See, for example, the review of *The Unheavenly City* by Jeff Greenfield in the *New York Times Book Review*, September 27, 1970, p. 14 and an exchange based on that review in *New York Times Book Review*, November 1, 1970, p. 44. The writers were concerned with a parenthetical remark of Banfield's about air pollution. Worried that he did not take pollution seriously enough, they failed to notice the context in which it was mentioned—Banfield used it as an example of a potentially serious problem.

situations constitute the "problems of the cities" and that the compound of these problems constitutes the "urban crisis" has long since been settled as fact. To most of those engaged in reforming and publicizing cities, the "crisis" and the "problems" are as physically real as an expressway.

III

In questioning the extent to which we really do have an urban crisis, Banfield, of course, runs counter to the spirit of the times. For a great many people, it seems beyond questioning that we really do have an urban crisis and we really must take quick and extensive action. The platforms of the national political parties, newspaper and magazine articles, and books all agree that there is a crisis, even if its exact nature is undetermined.³⁹ Banfield opens the battle early: in his initial passages he outlines the arguments of those he conceives as promoters of spurious crises. He then offers brief, differing interpretations of situations commonly described as elements of the crisis, followed by his own definition of a genuine crisis. Banfield argues that some elements of the "crisis"-traffic congestion, unattractive architecture, declining central business districts, and others-are merely matters of the "comfort, convenience, amenity, and business advantage of the middle class." Uncomfortable, inconvenient, ingracious, or inopportune conditions do not a "crisis" make, at least not in any large-scale, objective sense."

One example of an amenity problem will serve to illustrate

"The Republican Party Platform of 1968 acknowledged the existence of an "urban crisis," while the Democratic Party Platform of the same year called for efforts to solve our "urban problems." Among the vivid portrayls of the urban crisis are: Mitchell Gordon, *Sick Cities* (New York: Macmillan, 1963), Lewis Herber, *Crisis in Our Cities* (Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice-Hall, 1965), and Jeffrey K. Hadden, Louis H. Masotti, and Calvin J. Larson (eds.) *Metropolis in Crisis* (Itasca, Ill.: B. F. E. Peacock, 1967). Yet among those who perceive a crisis there is some uncertainty about its exact nature; for example, see Alan K. Campbell and Dona E. Shalala, "Problems Unsolved, Solutions Untried: The Urban Crisis," in Alan K. Campbell (ed.) *The States and the Urban Crisis* (Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice-Hall, 1970) p. 5: "The urban crisis is all these things and many more. For the average citizen the crisis is defined by how it affects him personally. It is the direct personal impact which he feels and understands."

³⁹Banfield, *Unheavenly City*, pp. 3-13,

Banfield's approach—the problem of architecture. There can be little doubt that American cities are not particularly attractive; the tourist returned from Europe cannot help but notice how our urban areas lack the amenities of many European cities and towns—sidewalk cafes, lovely parks, impressive and instructive monuments and buildings. Some writers with particularly strong aesthetic sensibilities have argued that the very architecture of American cities should be the subject of deep concern; frequently these writers unfavorably compare American cities to selected European cities and towns. One of the most widely influential of these aesthetic critics, Lewis Mumford, has gone so far as to give apocalyptic content to his critique. Referring to the scale and style of contemporary urban architecture, Mumford has said:

These are the symptoms of the end: magnifications of demoralized power, minifications of life. When these signs multiply, Necropolis is near, though not a stone has crumbled. For the barbarian has captured the city from within. Come hangman! Come culture! ⁴¹

Banfield's rejoinder is blunt and to the point:

One has only to read Machiavelli's history of Florence to see that living in a beautiful city is not enough to bring out the best in one. So far as their humanity is concerned, the people of, say, Jersey City compare very favorably to the Florentines of the era of that city's greatest glory. ⁴²

The comment seems at once both crass and true. Perhaps this reaction springs from the realization that cities may be called upon to serve quite different and possibly antagonistic functions. The tourist's city above all must be *interesting*; if it does not readily supply diversions for its visitors it is a failure. But the inhabitant's city may be quite a different thing; most of the people in the

⁴¹ Lewis Mumford, *The City in History* (New York: Harcourt, Brace, and World, 1961) p. 242. Mumford's enthusiasm can, perhaps, be questioned but not the range of his scholarship. See also, Lewis Mumford, *The Culture of Cities* (New York: Harcourt, Brace, and Co., 1938). For other critiques of current urban architecture, see Percival and Paul Goodman, *Communitas* (Vintage ed.; New York: Random House, 1960), particularly pp. 162-166; Christopher Tunnard, *et al. Man-Made America: Chaos or Control* (New Haven: Yale Press, 1963); and Victor Gruen, *The Heart of Our Cities* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1964).

⁴² Banfield, *The Unheavenly City*, p. 8.

world seem to judge cities by the opportunities they offer for improved material well-being. Living in surroundings that hold opportunities for material advancements, more space and privacy, and so on. The demand that cities be immediately appealing to the eye of the casual observer is at bottom a snobbish one; it is a demand that patterns of living and of getting an income be subordinated to desires that are not, in the eyes of most people, very important ones. The root of the matter is that different people hold different values, and the struggle over whose values shall prevail is a political one.

Banfield deals similarly with such matters as, the perception of traffic congestion⁴³ and the decline of center city areas.⁴⁴ In each of these areas of concern Banfield contends that amelioration is not blocked by apathy, ignorance, or lack of technical skill, but rather by other people (specifically, the less prosperous and less educated) whose values are different from and compete with those of the reformer.⁴⁵ Now Banfield is not merely debunking. He acknowledges the existence of problems in the cities, and he clearly and fully defines them in terms of the "essential welfare" of individuals and the "good health of society." Moreover:

It is clear that poverty; ignorance, and racial (and other) injustices are among the most important of the general conditions affecting the essential welfare of individuals. It is possible, too, to suppose that these conditions have a very direct bearing on the good health of society ...⁴⁶

The irony to be savored, the conclusion which may come as a shock, is that solution of these problems of amenity can be incompatible with the solution of the serious problems. As evidence of this conflict, Banfield argues that the major federal efforts to improve cities—funding expressway construction and urban re-

⁴³For contrasting views, see Wilfred Owen, *The Metropolitan Transportation Problem* (Washington: Brookings Institution, 1956) and Claiborne Pell, *Megalopolis Unbound* (New York: Praeger, 1966).

⁴⁴For a contrasting view, see: Gruen, *The Heart of Our Cities*.

⁴⁵For an example of the tendency to deny the relevance of politics, see "The Declaration of Delos" associated with the well-known Greek student of "ekistis," Constantine Doxiadis [reprinted in H. Wentworth Eldredge (ed.) *Taming Megalopolis* (vol. I; Anchor edition; New York: Doubleday and Co.,⁴⁶1967) pp. 224-228].

Banfield, *The Unheavenly City*, p. 11.

newal-have solved amenity problems and exacerbated serious problems.⁴⁷

To promote a clearer understanding of the cities, Banfield offers a model of urban development. This model posits three major causal factors in city growth: population growth, changes in technology (particularly transportation technology), and unequal income distribution.⁴⁸ Setting aside other factors frequently thought to be important, Banfield asserts that these three "imperatives" set the limits within which any policy may have an effort. The first assumption, that the urban population will continue to grow in absolute numbers, is in accord with the experience of this century in all parts of the world and, barring the unlikely attainment of "zero population growth," seems likely to continue." The second assumption, that transportation technology is likely to continue to improve, is likewise in keeping with experience. The effect of this technological advance in transportation is to move more people farther at a faster rate of speed. This, in turn, allows those who are able to take advantage of the new modes of transportation to choose from a much wider range of locations for their various activities. In terms of urban land use, the more transport improves, the farther away from work it is possible to live.⁴⁹ The last as-

⁴⁷ Peter Rossi and Robert Dentler in *The Politics of Urban Renewal* (Glencoe, Ill.: Free Press, 1961) first pointed out the possibility of this conflict in urban renewal programs. Martin Anderson's *The Federal Bulldozer* (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1964) is a controversial critique of urban renewal. Strong arguments in favor of urban renewal can be found in Jeanne Lowe, *Cities in a Race with Time* (New York: Random House, 1967). See also Charles Abrams, *The City is the Frontier* (New York: Harper and Row, 1965); Jewel Bellush and Murray Hausknecht (eds.) *Urban Renewal: People, Politics, and Planning* (New York: Doubleday, 1967); Scott Greer, *Urban Renewal and America's Cities* (Indianapolis: Bobbs-Merrill, 1965); and James Q. Wilson (ed.) *Urban Renewal: The Record and the Controversy* (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1966). In this context Jane Jacobs' *The Death and Life of Great American Cities* (New York: Random House, 1961) and Lewis Mumford's *The Highway and the City* (New York: Harcourt, Brace, and World, 1963) should be noted as influential and critical works.

⁴⁸ Banfield, *The Unheavenly City*, p. 11.

⁴⁹ For a similar assumption, see F. Stuart Chapman and Shirley Weiss (eds.), *Urban Growth Dynamics* (New York: John Wiley and Sons, 1962) p. 446.

"The resultant form is, of course, "urban sprawl." Carried far enough the process results in the development of new equivalents of the old central business district throughout the metropolitan area; see Kevin Lynch, "The Pattern

sumption, that of unequal income distribution, is noteworthy because it is seldom treated dispassionately, as a fact of life. Despite the widespread expression of equalitarian sentiment, income continues to be distributed unequally. For Banfield's model of urban development, this means that some people will be able to take advantage of transportation improvement before others. Hence, as immigrants and rural folk move to the cities in search of better opportunities, they move into housing that is cheap and close to places of work. New housing is built on the edge of town by the better-off as they seek more space and privacy (and prestige?) in the suburban area of cheaper land prices. These new neighborhoods can be farther from the city because of the availability of the newer, faster means of transportation. As the migrants' incomes increase, they, in turn, move to better neighborhoods, leaving the older housing to a yet-later wave of migrants. Of course, if migrants did not come to the city the pattern would be broken, and the older neighborhoods might become stable. Eventually land prices might fall enough to attract large-scale movement back to the center of town.

It should be noted that this process is the result of an aggregate of decisions made by individuals for reasons that appear almost economic in their character. The migrant seeking jobs in the city, the aspiring former migrant, the ex-urbanite with money to invest in privacy where space costs the least—all seem to be acting quite reasonably, within the limits of their knowledge and resources. None seems driven by unobservable "forces"; if there is an urban crisis it must lie in this aggregate of decisions. Much of what passes for signs of a crisis—the move to the suburbs, the decline of the center city—are the predictable by-products of these decisions. A neighborhood whose houses seem in a physical state of

of the Metropolis," in Lloyd Rodwin (ed.) *The Future Metropolis* (New York: George Brazillier, 1961). That this process spells the eventual demise of the city as it has been acknowledged for some time; see Max Weber [Don Martindale and Gertrud Neuwirth (eds.)], *The City* (New York: Free Press, 1958), p. 62. See also York Willbern, *The Withering Away of the City* (Tuscaloosa: University of Alabama Press, 1964). For a favorable assessment of the "spread city" and other arguments that support many of Banfield's positions, see Raymond Vernon, *The Myth and Reality of Our Urban Problems* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard-MIT Joint Center for Urban Studies, 1962).

⁶¹Banfield, *The Unheavenly City*, p. 38.

decline may represent genuine advancement for the new residents. The lower density slums of today may indeed spread offenses to the eye farther, but they represent a relative improvement over the more tightly packed "rabbit warrens" of the nineteenth century.⁶² This approach is a great corrective for the tendency to speak of "the urban crisis" as if it had an existence of its own, apart from the lives of the citizens, as if it were a "brooding omnipresence in the sky."⁵³

Having set out his basic model of urban growth, Banfield goes on to put limits on it. The operation of the model and its ability to predict the behavior of large numbers of city dwellers is limited by an independent variable-class.⁵⁴ Banfield's description of class is a departure from the familiar practice of describing class in terms of status or economic position.⁶⁵ He defines class in terms of value systems, in particular the relative willingness to undertake activity whose benefits will not be realized until some future time. The "upper class" individual is the most "future-oriented" and is characterized by a willingness to abstain from "gratification of his impulses" if it would "interfere with his provision for the future." The middle-class individual is likely to place less confidence in his ability to influence the distant future. He is more likely to think about success in material terms than share the upper

⁵² The effect of crowding is the topic of one of the earliest little studies in the urban literature—John B. Calhoun's discovery of the "behavioral sink"; see his "Population Density and Social Pathology" in Leonard J. Dahl (ed.) *The Urban Condition* (New York: Basic Books, 1963).

⁵³ In this, Banfield shows a similarity to the emerging "public choice" literature. One of the seminal works is James M. Buchanan and Gordon Tullock, *The Calculus of Consent* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1962); see chapters 1 and 2. An early application of the public choice methodological individualism to urban affairs is Vincent Ostrom, *et al.*, "The Organization of Government in Metropolitan Areas: A Theoretical Inquiry," *American Political Science Review*, LV (December, 1961), pp. 831-854. See also Robert O. Warren, *Government in Metropolitan Regions: A Reappraisal of Fractionated Political Organization* (Davis, Calif.: Institute of Governmental Affairs, University of California, 1966). More recent works in this vein include: Robert L. Bish, *The Public Economy of Metropolitan Areas* (Chicago: Markham, 1971); Anthony Downs, *Urban Problems and Prospects* (Chicago: Markham, 1970); and Gordon Tullock, *Private Wants, Public Means* (New York: Basic Books, 1970).

⁶⁴Banfield, *The Unheavenly City*, pp. 45-66.

⁶⁵ See Robert A. Nisbet, *The Sociological Tradition* (New York: Basic Books, 1966) pp. 174-220 for a broad review of the concept of class.

class individual's regard for altruistic public service. The working class individual is still less future-oriented. He is "self-respecting and self-confident," but he is more likely to set great store by "neatness and cleanliness, honesty, obedience, and respect for external authority." By contrast, "the lower-class individual lives from moment to moment." Being completely present-oriented, he is "radically improvident: whatever he cannot consume immediately he considers valueless." Physical and social circumstances, of course, place limits on the ability of even the most firmly future-oriented individuals to achieve their aims.

This class typology is unusual, but in terms of the contemporary literature the most striking aspect of Banfield's model is the omission of race as an independent variable. Racial minorities in urban politics, particularly blacks, have received much attention lately, but Banfield denies that blacks are a special case of urban immigrant whose condition cannot be explained in terms of the basic model, limited by the effect of class variables discussed above.⁶⁶ To make this point Banfield relies on statistical interpretation (unfortunately not reproduced in the text), distinguishing between the "Census Negro," the blacks compared to the rest of the population, and the "Statistical Negro," the black compared to others of a similar background. By controlling certain variables such as regional origin and parental occupation, the perceptible "racial" differences

⁶⁶ Banfield explicitly rejects the findings of Karl and Alma Taeuber in "The Negro as an Immigrant Group," *American Journal of Sociology*, LXIX (January, 1964) pp. 374-382; see also The *Report of the National Advisory Commission on Civil Disorders* (Kerner Commission) (New York: Bantam, 1968) particularly chapter 9, "Comparing the Immigrant and Negro Experience." For general support of Banfield's position see Nathan Glazer and Daniel P. Moynihan, *Beyond the Melting Pot* (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1963). Martin T. Katzman in "Discrimination, Subculture, and Economic Performance of Negroes, Puerto Ricans, and Mexican Americans," *American Journal of Economics and Sociology*, XXVII (October, 1968) pp. 371-375 reports varying degrees of economic success among blacks of different origins working in the United States; the higher performance of West Indian blacks suggests that lack of success by American blacks might be cultural and not directly caused by discrimination; also, see Katzman's "Urban Racial Minorities and Immigrant Groups: Some Economic Comparisons," *American Journal of Economics and Sociology*, XXX (January, 1971) pp. 15-25. Joseph Kahl and John Goering have shown that stable and successful black workers share the same values toward work as their white counterparts; see their "Stable Workers, Black and White," *Social Problems*, XVIII (Winter, 1971) pp. 306-318.

in, for example, birthrate and school dropout rate shrink dramatically; according to Banfield, "much of what looks like 'racial' poverty is really rural Southern' poverty." ⁵⁷ Racial prejudice does exist and should be condemned, but the elimination of racial prejudice against blacks would not end the prejudice against those who would still be part of the lower class.

Banfield's exposition of his model takes relatively few pages; the bulk of *The Unheavenly City* treats the implications of the model. The specific concerns subjected to reinterpretation are: unemployment, poverty, schooling, crime, and civil disorder. Drawing from the scholarly literature on each of the concerns, Banfield produces parallel critiques of those who would deal with these concerns as racial matters. By applying the relevant elements of his model of urban development and by continually making use of his value-defined class system Banfield presents alternate understandings of the concerns. Rather than review each of these, only one chapter from among these will be discussed in detail, the one on civil disorder entitled: "Rioting Mainly for Fun and Profit."

There has been a strong tendency to think of the riots, from Watts on, as specifically black matters, purposive events aimed at awakening other Americans to the black frustration at the denial of the enjoyment of certain shared values because of racial prejudice.⁶⁸ As appealing as this understanding is, there are certain questions raised to it. If race is the major cause, why has the United States so many non-racial riots? If the riots are a reaction to racial prejudice, why have blacks suffered the most material damage? If the riots have an essentially political thrust, why have none been aimed at symbolic targets? Looting a liquor store is, after all, a far cry from razing the Bastille. Banfield offers an explanation of the riots, citing three background causes and four

⁶⁷Banfield, *The Unheavenly City*, pp. 70-71.

⁵⁸The literature generated by the riots of the 1960's is enormous and no effort will be made here to summarize it. Peter A. Lupsha has made a noteworthy effort in this direction; see his "On Theories of Urban Violence," *Urban Affairs Quarterly*, V (March, 1969) pp. 273-296. Arthur Waskow's *From Race Riot to Sit-In* (Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday, 1966) develops the idea of "creative disorder." The *Report* of the National Advisory Commission on Civil Disorders has been very widely read; see particularly pp. 203-206. See also: Gary T. Marx, *Protest and Prejudice* (New York: Harper and Row, 1967) and Jerome Skolnick (ed.) *The Politics of Protest* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1969).

"accelerating" causes.⁶⁹ The three background causes are: a supply of lower class boys and young men, a general inability among these to participate in the life of the community sufficiently to feel a loss at the mere outbreak of disorder, and a supply of non-lower class leaders to provide a rationale for the riots. Banfield's accelerating causes for the disorders of the late 1960's were: television coverage, the consequent dissemination of information techniques of rioting, police ineffectiveness, and a certain legitimacy given any black protest activity by the civil rights movement. But the indispensable ingredient for any riot is a large body of young men and boys who have the excitement-directed "presentness" of Banfield's lower class. Reckless of anything but the thrill of the moment, these are the ones who riot with few pangs of conscience or serious political motives.⁶⁰

This is not to say that riots cannot have social importance; in certain situations they may be catalytic events of awesome influence. But their effect need not have any relation to the intrinsic nature of the riot. The Boston Massacre have little intrinsic importance, yet it signalled momentous events. On the other hand, the Nike riots against Emperor Justinian, which were quite serious and destructive, marked the beginning of the thousand year life of the Byzantine imperial government. Suffice it to say that for any place or time the essential ingredient for riot is the "social dynamite" that may run wild until satiated, exhausted, or physically restrained. Ineffective authority and inflammatory propaganda may contribute, but this raw material, void of institutional ties and allegiances that would weaken the perception of rioting solely in terms of immediate personal gain, is the necessary con-

⁶⁵ Banfield, *The Unheavenly City*, pp. 198-204.

"One of Banfield's undeveloped suggestions is that the old-style political machines provided earlier lower classes with meaningful ways to participate in politics. See *The Unheavenly City*, p. 203. See also Robert K. Merton's "Manifest and Latent Functions" in his *Social Theory and Social Structure* (rev. ed.; New York: Free Press, 1957) particularly pp. 71-82 on the latent functions of the machine. Merton's argument has been widely noted but evidently not followed by much research. In this context, note the conclusion of John D. McCarty and William L. Yancey, "Uncle Tom and Mister Charlie: Metaphysical Pathos in the Study of Racism and Personal Disorganization," *American Journal of Sociology*, LXXVI (January, 1971) pp. 648-672: "If empirical evidence supports an alternative description and explanation of racial differences in self-esteem, then institutional change rather than individual psychiatric or welfare services should be the primary focus of public policy aimed at the amelioration of the consequences of racism."

dition. "Compensatory" programs are not likely to have much effect on them, but we will never know for sure. The enactment of compensatory programs coupled with more effective police measures will make it very difficult to measure the effect of either.

For Banfield, the central issue in the riot problem is the value system of the lower class. He presents it as the central issue for the other problems as well—unemployment, poverty, schooling, and crime. The role of race is minimized, interpretations and policies premised on the power of racial prejudice are criticized, and an explanation is offered in terms of the model: Additionally, Banfield's grasp of historical materials as well as the contemporary literature gives the treatment of each problem rare depth. But Banfield is concerned about more than inaccurate appraisals of the effects of racial prejudice. He acknowledges prejudice as real and as evil, yet goes on to make a distinction between praiseworthy activity to eliminate prejudice and harmful statements inaccurately attributing this or that difficulty to prejudice. The harm of such statements is that when repeated in public they may become self-fulfilling prophecy"—expression that has the power to bring about its own realization. Hypothetically, if blacks were to act on the premise that most of their difficulties stem from racial prejudice, then whites—bigoted, neutral, or equalitarian—would eventually treat blacks as a special group. How far the process would go is anybody's guess, but the results of a genuine race war can be foreseen.

Still another danger lies in the current attitude toward the urban crisis. The general ambition to "solve" the "problem" if sufficiently strong, could make it impossible to achieve other, possibly more desirable goals. The heart of the problem is the value system of the lower class, but changing someone's value system is a drastic matter, requiring a great deal of influence over not only his physical circumstances but over his mind as well. Police-state measures would be required for a thorough, effective program." "Certainly one could question whether the future-oriented values of the upper and middle classes require such

⁶¹For the development of this idea, see Merton, *Social Theory and Social Structure*, pp. 421-436.

⁶²Banfield, *The Unheavenly City*, pp. 230-231.

vigorous propagation. And what should be done with the individual who, apart from social conditioning, simply prefers to have a present-oriented style of life?

Even if the power were available to use, it is by no means certain that it could 'be used effectively. There is a growing appreciation that great government programs are more difficult to administer than was once thought, and there is no guarantee that the social scientist can participate in the formulation and execution of policy and maintain his claim to scholarly objectivity." But efforts at dealing with the urban crisis are not generally aimed at changing the values of the lower class whose behavior is so distressing. To the present, the rule has been to establish public works and custodial programs of various kinds to create a more suitable environment (or at least certain elements of one) for the deprived.

Banfield suggests a cause for this emphasis on programs—the upper-class ideal of "service":

The American is confident that with a sufficient effort all difficulties can be overcome and all problems solved, and he feels a strong obligation to try to improve not only himself but everything else . . . His principles can be summarized in two very simple rules: first, DON'T JUST SIT THERE, DO SOMETHING! and second, DO GOOD!⁵⁴

And at this point we reach *terra incognita*; Banfield has led us off the map. The problems of the underclass, blacks, slums, crime,

⁶³ See as an example of the older optimism on both these counts: John K. Galbraith, *The Affluent Society* (Boston: Houghton-Mifflin, 1958). Lack of faith in the ability of government to perform has been voiced in some quarters; note the following passage from Peter Drucker, *The Age of Discontinuity* (New York: Harper and Row, 1969) p. 219:

During the past three decades, federal payments to the big cities have increased almost a hundredfold for all kinds of programs. But results from the incredible dollar flood into the cities are singularly unimpressive. What is impressive is the administrative incompetence. We now have ten times as many government agencies concerned with city problems as we had in 1939.

See also: Louis Horowitz (ed.), *The Rise and Fall of Project Camelot* (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1967); Peter Marris and Martin Rein, *Dilemmas of Social Reform* (New York: Atherton Press, 1967); Moynihan, *Maximum Feasible Misunderstanding*.

⁶⁴ Banfield, *The Unheavenly City*, p. 249.

schools-all have been studied extensively. Any college library will have hundreds of titles on these topics; the journals in political science and sociology abound with articles on them. But there are no comparable studies of the reformers, of the upperclass idealists who demand the government programs that fulfill their ideal of "service." Does anyone other than the ostensible beneficiaries gain from such programs? Can selfish groups manipulate the ideal in their own behalf? Once established, how often are the programs changed so that the ostensible beneficiaries receive a greater proportion of the total outlay? Why has political science been so unanimously reform-oriented? And what is reform? No one has asked.

Banfield stops at this point. *The Unheavenly City* is limited in some ways; the title suggests a more general book than it really is. The emphasis on minority groups precluded treatment of the more strictly material topics such as roads, housing, parks, and so on. Students of urban politics will doubtless find themselves wishing for a discussion of governmental form and political process, some exploration of the linkages between the two. And the current problems of finance are not treated at any length at all. But these are not objections so much as compliments on Banfield's treatment of what is covered.

Banfield's great and unique achievement in *The Unheavenly City* is the presentation of an impressive, clear model of urban life that offers an explanation for a number of hotly discussed matters. In a clear, sympathetic, and courteous style, Banfield has spelled out the dimensions of the model, its limits, and its implications for policy-making. Again, the model depends on three basic assumptions: that the urban population will continue to grow, that transportation technology will continue to develop, and that income will continue to be distributed unequally. Within limits imposed by their value systems (which are called "classes"), the people who live in cities seem to make decisions that can be explained in terms of the model. Seeking better opportunities, migrants move to the city and occupy inexpensive housing in the central city close to places of work. Former migrants, having achieved some measure of prosperity and consequent ability to take advantage of transportation, move away from the central city to more desirable neighborhoods. The owners, managers, and professional people are able to move farthest, having the resources

to use yet more highly developed modes of transport and to buy land in still more desirable neighborhoods. The model shows that some elements of the "urban crisis" are not critical, but rather inconveniences to business and professional people- "amenity problems." There are very serious problems, but they get little attention. Worry about racial discrimination has made it difficult to deal with problems many blacks have because they are "lower class" in addition to those they have because they are black. Instead of dealing with these problems, reformers, because of their "service" ideology, have concentrated on other matters.

A curious observation intrudes. Those questions about the upper class ideal of service seemed somehow familiar. Are they perhaps perilously close to the question "What is justice?" that we associate with Plato and his *Republic*? If there is to be a revival of political theory in the classical mode, it will not come from an antiquarian urge. The "classics" are not classical because they are quaint, or recondite, or mentioned in the frieze around the top of the old library building. They are classical because if we ask, they tell us something about understanding ourselves, here and now. Bringing us to the point where we can ask these questions in relation to our cities may be Banfield's greatest contribution.

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