The Master's Tools? Communities retaking local government and repurposing official planning rhetoric
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This first part of this panel explores the theory and tactics used to navigate the contradictory logic of `revitalization without displacement' and divert a conventional economic planning project toward anti-gentrification ends. The presentation will exhibit the strategy, process, and results of a `revitalization plan' prepared for two Business Improvement Areas (BIAs) in one of downtown Toronto's last non-gentrified neighbourhoods. In preparing this plan, we were asked to work within the structure of revitalization planning for business-oriented clients: a limit placed on our potential actions that is representative of the barriers progressive planners face. However, within the contradictions inherent in promoting economic upgrading while encouraging inclusivity, we found that ambiguities in the language used by all local groups (`diversity', `inclusivity', etc.) provided room to reclaim that language for progressive ends.

This work is relevant to both activists and planners who work at the urban level because of its focus on reclaiming language that is often used as empty promises by agents of gentrification. By giving these words meaning and using them to make space for those who might otherwise be left out of the decision-making process, barriers to progressive action can be circumvented.

The second part of this panel looks at the ways in which the indigenous community in Ecuador has organized to "re-take" several cities in the northern part of the country. The presentation would consider how activists have organized around class and ethnic lines to win elections and then to transform their municipal governments into entities that actually work to address the problems caused by centuries of marginalization and oppression.

Taxonomy upgrade extras:
displacement [1]
genrification [2]
language [3]