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TRANSCRIÇÃO

Interviewer (Rodrigo)

- So, Patricia, the first thing is to thank you very much for being here today. I already did that off recording but, you know, like I'm really glad to be here and can talk to you. I did my first interview for this research yesterday, so this is the second one.

V2

- So did you do it with V6?

Interviewer

- No, with V1.

V2

- Okay, with Katie.

Interviewer

- Yeah I started with her. It was a place much more noisy than here [laughs], so we're going to be good. This place is perfect. First of all, I have to introduce you to the research I'm doing. The name of my research is "the territorial impacts of participatory budgeting in mid-sized cities". So, I'm a geographer. My main focus is to understand where PB projects are and why they are where they are, you know, like these territorial relations with PB, with public policy and their impacts on cities. My focus is in mid-sized cities like Vallejo, that's a city with a little bit more than 100,000 people because my main idea, my main research question is to see if there are any differences in between mid-sized cities, smaller towns and like metropolis, metropolitan areas. And Vallejo is one of my case studies, the other two are two cities in Brazil, Maringá and Araraquara and another city in Poland, lots. All of them are mid-sized cities.

V2

- Okay and you're from Brazil?

Interviewer

- I'm Brazilian, yeah. I'm doing my PhD in geography at São Paulo State University and here in the United States I am a visiting scholar at Boise State University. And my research is part of a bigger project that is especially from Brazilian universities that the name is the socia..., how can I... in English it's always a little bit hard to say that, but it's "social spatial fragmentation and the Brazilian urbanization". This is the name of the main project. So, our idea is to identify and analyze if you can see the processes of social spatial fragmentation. This is the idea that like cities with the new changes in urbanization since the

1980s, cities became more fragmented not just like in space with the buildings, but also in social relations. There's less integration than before. We already have very good evidence of that in metropolitan areas, especially in Latin America, but our focus of our research is to if we can see that also in mid-sized cities. So, there is a broader connection between my research and the broader research. And well that's it, I had this small introduction for you to understand what I'm doing. I think that's important. And again, thanks for availability, for being here today. - **Sure.** - And for just the bureaucracy I need you, if you can, say that you authorize the recording.

V2

- I authorize the recording, this is V2.

Interviewer

- Great, thank you. So, can we start the interview? - **Yes.** - Great. First of all, I would like to know if you can talk briefly about your career until you work with PB, like your professional career and your personal history and where are you from, who you are, your age.

V2

- Okay just who I am and yeah, not just PB my background.

Interviewer

- Exactly your background. And also your experience with PB.

V2

- Okay. I guess I'm a talker, I can, I can really talk. My background is in banking. I am retired. I spent 38 years 38 years in banking. Primarily with international banking, I would focus on international operations and or technology. So, basically that is my background. I like to say I grew up, became an adult in banking. I've been with PB since PB first was initiated back in 2012. I came on board with other people in the very beginning. Let's see, I came on board as I was in 2012 from the beginning... I came on board as a delegate, as a delegate. I was a delegate for only maybe two to three years before I became a steering committee member. So, I have been a steering committee member for a number of years, maybe 10 or 11, maybe eight or nine years I've been a steering committee member. I've been chair of the steering committee on three separate occasions within those years. Now I am a co-chair on the executive committee for PB. The executive committee consists of three members of the entire steering committee and the executive committee, we basically oversee what the steering committee is obligated to do. You know we make agendas, we go out and speak to people and speak to different organizations, talk to council, work with staff, work very closely with the staff of the city and do things of that caliber. So, I have been with PB for a very long time and have had the opportunity to see PB grow. See the transition of PB from where it started to what it is now. As you know the goals of PB is to improve our city, to

engage in our community, to transform our democracy and to open up government to the city citizens of our city. To be totally transparent in our government and we have the opportunity to work with all the citizens of the community. So, basically that's what PB does. It has been very instrental for myself as well as the city to see the many projects that have been implemented in PB. The main stages I guess for a project of PB... with you talking to V1, she has worked with PB also a lot over the many years. The stages of PB start with an idea collection. We collect ideas from the citizens within the city. We do this by going out to different events, going into different organizations, even going into the schools, on high school campuses. Get the students participating because PB is... the student citizens are eligible to vote in the process as young as 14 years of age. 14 years of age. So, we begin with idea collection and that transpires into proposal development and that's where we have the delegates, the volunteers from within the city work together with the steering committee and with other people within the community to develop, take an idea, just a basic idea and develop it into a project. After this project is developed then it's presented to be voted on by all the citizens within the city. This includes 14 years old and up. After the projects have been voted on, the top projects are obtained and presented to council, city council for the final approval. Once they have been approved we evaluate them and monitor these projects through implementation in which our city staff does. So, in that aspect we follow the project from the very beginning of the idea conception all the way through to implementation. Okay? And that's the responsibility of the steering committee along with other responsibilities. I wanted to say something, just went through my brain [laughs].

Interviewer

- Yeah, it happens, I know how it is. Just a small question...

V2

- Sure, that's what I like, you ask me questions, I try to answer.

Interviewer

- No, that's perfect, it's working very well. You were born here or are you from another place of the United States? Yeah, basically that, where are you from?

V2

- Okay, more in my personal background, no problem. No, I was born in Oklahoma City, Oklahoma, and my family, my mother and father along with my siblings relocated here to California right before I entered into school. So, I was like maybe four or five years old. Okay, so I was raised here in California, in Vallejo. In Vallejo, so I was basically a local. Basically local. Spent all my formative years and everything here.

Interviewer

- And where did you do college?

V2

- I did college... I'm a college dropout [laughs] I went to college. went to college at Solano Community College and I dropped out of college and decided to go to work. Okay, I got offered a job opportunity, so I dropped out of college and went to work. That's why I have so many years of working and I also am a big volunteer. A big volunteer in the community as well as in the faith-based community. I have many years as you can see on my card... that's one of my cards from one of the organizations that I do belong to African American Alliance. I'm on their board; on their executive board and I'm also their finance director. I belong to the NAACP [National Association for the Advancement of Colored People] and I work on their in their finance committee. I belong to North Bay Community Choir, which is a local choir, and I am their finance director [laughs]. I deal a lot in finance, people always want me to and not that I prefer to. I can but I like to do... I like to talk a lot, do presentations and that type of thing but I'm always asked to do finance so I do what I can to help our folks. Within the faith-based community I am a servant leader in my church, a large church. I'm a servant leader for the American Baptist Women's Ministry. Also, I served as a trustee for the same church, a trustee for 13 years also. So, you can see I have many community affiliates. I have worked a lot in different community organizations. I'm always asked a lot, to speak a lot in different areas and to be on different boards and different panels. That's why we had to schedule, it was very... so very much important and I thank you for scheduling with me. I'm just going to open my calendar and show you kind of what my months look like. - **Yeah, it's very full.** - This is what I look like on a monthly basis. So, I thank you for being lenient and scheduling the time with me because I do want to allow you time. That's very important to me and everything I do is very... I take very seriously and very personal. - **I can see that.** - I guess that's why people always want me [laughs]. I'm very committed to what I do. My family, I come from a large family. My mom and dad had nine children, very large family and I married and had three children and I have 13 grandchildren and I have seven great grandchildren. - **Yeah it's a lot.** - Yeah, so I come from a large family. I come from a large family which is very prominent in the community. Our family name, the Lewis family, is very much known in the community in the city of Vallejo. My mom worked in the school district. I had a brother work for the police department. I had a sister worked across the street over at housing and, you know, just we're very prominent in the community. So, my background comes from my mom doing a lot of work in the community also. I think that might be me. So that's pretty much my personal background. So, I went directly into international banking like I said. In international banking I went all the way up to a department head. I was a department head of a very large department of over 55 people within my department that I managed, in operations. Then I switched over to international technology and I was instrental in working on a large implementation of projects for implementing multi-currency. I was in charge of implementing multi-currency accounting systems and so that's what I worked with. So, you see, my background was very much into finance and accounting. I guess that's why people always want me. But within PB I do a lot of work with speaking and representing PB and the city in different events and so forth.

Interviewer

- Great. You already told me about like how the steering committee works and institutional design of PB and your work as a delegate and also in the steering committee as a chair. I would like to know what are the biggest challenges and difficulties you can see in PB?

V2

- Okay, right now?

Interviewer

- Right now. Or in your history with PB in general.

V2

- It has changed. That's why I say, it has changed. Since the pandemic. The pandemic had a big impact on everything within our life as well as any organization or anything. The pandemic was... and I was chair when the pandemic hit. The change that took place is to get people engaged again. Get them excited about PB. Of course, it's understandable that people are very concerned or more engaged or interested in, you know, their personal lives, their families and their children and not so much of the city or how they can help or how they can work with the city to make the city and their lives and their way of life and their neighborhoods and everything better. That's understandable. So, we don't have the participation, the engagement, the excitement that we had before the pandemic. So, that's one of our major concerns now. We're working very hard on trying to get that going again, but it's going... We're in cycle nine. And which is probably, probably... I want to think it's probably the lowest cycle that we've had as far as participation. - **The lowest?** - Probably the lowest cycle we've had. I'm not sure of, we don't have all the numbers right now, but I would think that it's probably the lowest. Just because of the pandemic we're still out there talking to folks, getting ideas and so forth. But we just don't have that fire, that excitement that we had before.

Interviewer

- And the design of the meetings [has] changed also, don't [they]? Like before was in person and now it's online right now or not?

V2

- The meetings for the steering committee?

Interviewer

- No, the steering committee I know they're in person right? - **They're in person.** - Yeah, I'm going tomorrow to watch the meeting.

V2

- We have a meeting tomorrow probably. I haven't looked at my calendar for tomorrow yet [laughs]. I take it day by day. - **Yeah, I can see that.** - Yeah, I take it day by day.

Interviewer

- Yeah, I'm doing my field work this week because of the steering committee.

V2

- Okay, okay, because of the steering committee.

Interviewer

- Yeah, but also the delegates meetings, they are online. Don't you think, in your opinion, if that like has an influence in the participation, the quality of the participation and how much people are participating?

V2

- Personally with me working from the very beginning to now, I think it does. I think it does. It has its pros and cons. Let's put it like that. The pros, I would say, one of the biggest pros is you get volunteers to volunteer more readily. "Yeah, I'll do that if I can work from online, to zoom meetings and so forth. Yeah, I guess I could spend some time doing that, you know." Now the con to that is before, when we were in, let's say, one large room and we had all the delegates in the same room and we had different groups of delegates working on different projects and the steering committee support these different groups of people, the projects that they're working on. For one thing, we could bounce from group to group and give them support. Also just being in the same room the energy, the energy is different and I find it to be more exciting, more exciting, but that's a big commitment also. That's a very big commitment for you to commit to come to a meeting of this type, this caliber on a regular, let's say, weekly basis, you know, that's a big commitment. Back in the day we would have our room full of people, you know.

Interviewer

- Normally the facilitators in these meetings before the pandemic... - **The facilitators, yes, was in this meeting.** - Yeah and they were volunteers or paid staff?

V2

- The facilitator that was over the whole meeting structure, she was a paid staff, but she had to support us, staff was there, city staff person and also the steering committee, we were there also. So there was lots of support and lots of energy. - **Interesting.** - Yes, interesting, so that's, you know, that's pros and cons. Don't get me wrong, I love Zoom meetings, with my calendar the way it is, when I look and see that my meeting is a zoom meeting... [laughs].

Interviewer

- Yeah I can see, no, but because this is a debate, that especially after the pandemic it's normally in the congresses or in like the papers about PB how... it's like, what's the better option? In person or zoom meetings?

V2

- Right, right, right. Even when during the pandemic the city ordinance changed, council changed, but we had, we still had our commission meetings, our PB meetings, but we had via Zoom, we had via Zoom, but once we came out of the... we're going to be a while before we're out of the pandemic, but before we got to this point, council has adjusted until we had to go back to in person, all boards and commissions have to be in in person meetings.

Interviewer

- Okay. The design changed a few times, right? The PB design, like the structure and for example now we have these meetings online and in the beginning was with the support of Participatory Budget Project, right? And then the city staff took... I had the meeting also with Marti Brown...

V2

- Okay, Marti Brown is the one that brought PB to Vallejo.

Interviewer

- Yeah and she told me about this early history of PB, that they started with PBP and then they changed it. - **Started with what?** - With Participatory Budgeting Project, that is this NGO that they have... I think they have also an office in Oakland. And, well, when I was watching the last steering committee meeting, I wasn't here but I watched it through Zoom, I was in New York at the time, I watched it and I saw that was a discussion about changing PB to a biannual process, like the cycle taking two years.

V2

- That was just the timing, yeah. Adjusting the time, exactly, that might have an impact that would be better right now, engage more and get the more support and everything, oh yeah, okay, you were there.

Interviewer

- Yeah I was watching.

V2

- Yeah you were watching. Yeah, that's just what the timing is, more or less stretching out the timing, because before a PB cycle, we call them cycles, a cycle would only last about a year, a year would be a cycle and what we discussed and agreed upon, we probably would be best to maybe stretch it out and have a cycle last for a couple of years, that it might be better right now for PB because get, you know,

have more time for people to be engaged and get more excitement up and have more time to get more ideas and this sort of thing, yeah. Because back in the day I remember when it was nothing for us to collect just ideas, over 400, 450 ideas, just ideas, you know, that could be a one sentence, could we have a skating rink? How can we put in a basketball court in this part of the city? Can we do this for the seniors? You know, just an idea. Had nothing to do with how we would do it or if we could even do that, just an idea and that's where the delegates come in and they take... we, the steering committee, what we do, we look at every single idea, every idea, no matter how many we get and we group them together. If you can imagine, a lot of ideas are the same or they could be pretty much the same or in the same area, so we could group some of the ideas together, so we put them in groups and so forth. And now the amount of ideas coming in is not that many, like I said, I'm not familiar right now with the numbers, I don't know, the exact numbers, because we just... we we're just getting towards the end of the ideas but I know, I work events all the time, I love working events in talking to people and being out among people and finding out what people think, you know, and I like to, you know, go up to people and ask them "how would you make your neighborhood better?", "what would you like to see in your neighborhood that's not there now?", "what changes would you like to see? It could be anything, you could think of anything, a community garden or just anything", you know, and a lot of times people don't think like that. First when you ask them, a lot of people will say "I don't know", "I don't know", "it's okay, you know, I don't know" did I say "no, there's something, what it's... just think about, is there something, what would you like to see change, is something with your kids or with the neighborhood or changing the streets or something?". Then this light goes off. I did... the last event I worked was the "art walk", where they have all kind of artists and dinners and things out on the streets, downtown, in the evening on the... I think it's the third Friday of the month and I had asked this one person, I had stopped this one person on the sidewalk, and I said... he says "everything's okay, there's nothing I would like to see change, I like Vallejo the way it is, it's fine with me", then I started talking to him and when I finished talking to this person, this person came up with four ideas! Just by me encouraging him, just encourage him, to just think about it, you know, think along those lines, we all have ideas, but like I said, we more or less right now, we're focusing more on other things since the pandemic, and rightfully so, rightfully so, we're thinking about how can we pay for a gallon of gas, you know, how can we put food on the table and things like that, so a big part of our job is to encourage people to think about this process and so that we can continue on.

Interviewer

- Okay, interesting. And we're talking about the participation and the energy and that the steering committee sees some challenges and difficulties with that recently especially after the pandemic, I want your opinion on that, don't you think that maybe the investment range it's... - **I'm sorry?** - The investment, like the budget available for PB, that's a million dollars, and I know that before, a few cycles, especially in the beginning, it was a little more than that, like US\$ 2,5 million, US\$ 3 million. What do you think about this budget available for PB and do you think that it has any impact on participation?

- I don't think it really has an impact on participation because I don't think that the citizens even think about the amount of money. A lot of the citizens doesn't even know the amount of money that we're working with, the people that think about the amount of money are the delegates, the delegates, not your average citizens that's voting for different projects. The delegates are the ones that think about the amount of money because once they're working the project up and doing their research and analysis and they find out how much a project will cost to implement from beginning to end, that's when the money come into play. So, they don't think about the money, in fact a lot of our citizens, they don't even ever mention money. When you get ideas and talking to citizens, they never ever mention money, so we work with what we get.

Interviewer

- Okay and... but with the delegates, that they have, like, more contact with the budgeting and the amounts, is there any criticism or proposals like "we should have more money", or don't you think that's happening?

V2

- Not that I have heard, not that I have heard, you know, I think that if you're going to get any criticism or any group or anybody that's interested in the money-wise it will come from the steering committee. It will come from the steering committee, who is more in tune with the amount of money that we're working with. And me as a steering committee member I don't dwell on the amount of money, you know, I know that our city have been strapped for money, to speak lightly, at different times, so I would like to think, let's work with what we have, you know, let's work with what we have.

Interviewer

- Interesting, okay, and I'll continue talking about the participation in PB and do you think that PB is promoting integration between the different social and racial classes here in Vallejo? Because as far as I know Vallejo is probably the most diverse city in the country with as we have 25% of black population 25% of whites and 25% of latino, 25% of Asian, like you have a very diverse city, so do you see the there is an integration happening to PB between this different...

V2

- What do you mean?

Interviewer

- I mean, like, there's no social or racial class dominating the process, like you can see everybody participating or not?

V2

- I'm thinking across the board, I'm thinking about the different projects and the different areas... I don't think so. I don't think there's... I think it's pretty much integrated. I see projects in all areas of Vallejo, I've seen projects implemented in all areas of Vallejo I've seen projects for all different, all different types of projects and I think that's where we see the integration the most, because we have projects very much so for the youth, as well as for the senior citizens, you know, for all different aspects of people and that's a good thing the integration with Vallejo. I think that's one of the things that make Vallejo unique and easy for PB to work with. I remember a few years ago, this was before the pandemic, I had the opportunity to go into one of the high schools and I taught a class on PB for a day, a whole day, I did take my hat off to teachers, I was so tired [laughs]. I taught I think was five or six classes in one day, each period I would get a new group of kids... - **Yeah it's a lot of classes** – Yeah, a lot of classes, just like a real teacher, and I noticed that I would go... we would talk about PB, the whole concept and everything of PB and when I would, when I got to the part where I would get ideas, we talked about idea collecting, ideas, you know, from them, what ideas did they have, what would they like to see change, what would they like to see implemented the type of projects that they would like to see... you would think that they would say “ha, we need basketball courts”, “we need skating rinks”, “we need to do this”, you know, what the most all the majority of the ideas came? Was for senior citizens and that just surprised me so much... - **Me too.** - That surprised me so much, so that told me, put a little light on in my head, that these young people are looking more into the future and these young people are very much concerned about the senior citizens around them, around them. I was simply amazed, amazed, they were asking all types of questions about senior citizens “well, Mrs. Mason what is this the senior citizens group club doing?”, “are they planning on expanding?”, “what they do?” and everything with... most of the stuff was geared towards senior citizens and I was I was simply amazed.

Interviewer

- Okay, yeah, interesting. and you told that most of the projects are everywhere in the city, you can see in different parts of the city, so the projects they are not most common in poorer neighborhoods, like for the low income?

V2

- Well, our community has... Vallejo is a low income city, so we don't have any neighborhood that's all low income, they're all intermingled throughout Vallejo.

Interviewer

- But you can see the projects happening in these areas that are more low income or not?

V2

- We don't have them. I don't see low-income neighborhoods, the low income is intermingled within the neighborhoods. - **Okay, I got you.** - You know, we don't have like a low income neighborhood like a ghetto here and then we have the most the people with all the money here and... they are intermingled.

Interviewer

- Okay I got you. So, it's not like... there's not a periphery in Vallejo? – **Right.** - But it's like more in as far as I read about it's more like a peripheric city within the Bay Area.

V2

- Uhum, Uhum.

Interviewer

- Okay, just to understand that. And do you think that how the design of Vallejo PB is now, right now, like the institutional design, it has any influence on how these projects are distributed in the city? For example if you change the design, if you change the rules it might change the results?

V2

- Change the rules in what respect?

Interviewer

- For example, I know that today the PB is totally city-wide. – **Right!** – So, the projects can be, for example, the potholes for in a lot of parts of town or maybe a project with schools, I was like putting a spreadsheet for the projects so I could understand like what's happening here with the PB, but if you, for example, there are cities that make like territorial rules that you need to have at least three projects in this area or at least three projects in this area, do you think that these wouldn't change the results here?

V2

- None. I don't think it at all, at all. – Why? - Because the projects already are city-wide, already city city-wide and I think that's the best way to be, is city-wide, because the different needs are different in different places, different types of need, like, I know one... for instance, one project that we had in the last cycle that is... I think they just finished implementing it, was the skateboard park, that's way out in foresight of Vallejo, that's where the only skateboard, big skateboard park is and that was very important for them and everybody in the city, all the youth I understand in the city, love that skateboard [park] and they all gather there, they have a certain times, the different groups gather there and meet the different friends and so forth, I just think that it would be best the way that it is, you know, I don't think that the for instance, let's say, that a my area, let's say, that they said they wanted a skateboard park. My area don't need a skateboard park, even though, let's say, some of the people came up with that idea and they voted for it and that got the biggest votes for that area, let's say it was implemented, it would go to waste, you know, because of the age group, you know. And the use that it would get, so I think it's good the way that it is, city wide, city wide.

Interviewer

- And what type of projects receive more investment or the projects that are more common, that appear every year, which types?

V2

- Okay, your number one project always, always, it's going to be potholes, potholes, which we can only do so much about. Potholes, in fact the city does, the city has a line item in the general ledger for potholes, the city, that's their responsibility, to fix potholes, and they do, they have a schedule. Potholes is a big problem in Vallejo.

Interviewer

- I saw that walking around.

V2

- And you probably heard we talked about, I don't remember if it was last meeting or that meeting before, we had a presentation from one of the gentlemen that's over there, I guess the scheduling and everything for potholes and we really asked him a lot of questions, you know, in reference to that. The citizens are always concerned about these potholes so they always... that's the number one project, but other than that I think it's pretty much spread out between the seniors, the youth, and bicycle lanes, that came up a lot last cycle and they want a... they want a project for bicycling, yeah.

Interviewer

- Interesting and... yeah, because I didn't see any cycle ways here until...

V2

- You didn't? We have them, you know, we have them.

Interviewer

- Maybe because of where I walked.

V2

- Yeah, it could be where you walked, we have them and then it's pros and cons, you know, we have a big group of people that do a lot of bicycling and of course they come "oh, we need more bicycle lanes, we need bicycling in this area, that area", then you have the people here "we don't want bicycling, do more other things are more important", but it's just sharing and their concept of what's important to you.

Interviewer

- Yeah this debate is important. – **Yeah, yeah, yeah.** - And I see especially in the United States that the NGOs have a strong role... the nonprofits, they have a strong role in PBs – **Yes!** - In general, especially when I was in New York City, they have a strong role there, I would like to know if do you see any of this role here and if there are conflicts with these non-profits or conflicts in PB with like city council or with city staff, you know, if you can see conflicts or tensions.

V2

- I don't think so, I haven't seen that, I haven't noticed any conflicts with them, we encourage the non-profits to be involved, we would like to have more non-profits involved than we do, but they have to... each non-profit that want to be involved in PB have to go through a pre-qualifying phase before they can be involved in PB, because we just can't let any non-profit be involved in PB, they get money, you know, and it just go for it you, they take the money and pay the staff or whatever or they take the money and close it down and they no longer exist and no, they have to go through a pre-qualifying to even participate in PB, so we encourage non-profits.

Interviewer

- Okay and with steering committee, PB steering committee and other parts of the city, like other institutions, like the city council or the mayor's staff or mayor office, do you see any conflicts or tensions?

V2

- Between council, mayor and PB? I don't see any conflicts with them with PB, they have their own conflicts with each other [laughs]. They have their own conflicts with each other. But not, we're not... I don't see with PB, they pretty much... they've always pretty much accept the steering committee, what we recommend, you know, and what we suggest more so, they more or less depend on us as to the experts, as experts, which is good. That's our job, really, and they... I think because we are appointed, the steering committee is appointed and each every two years if you want to be on the steering committee you have to apply, you know, fill out the form to apply if they accept your application, which they probably are, because we are in commission you go before the mayor and the council you sit before them and they ask you all these questions and then they either accept you or say "no you're not a good fit", but so they appoint you to this commission.

Interviewer

- I understand, and the steering committee has like a limited number of members or you can...?

V2

- Yes, yes, we have 11, you should have 11 members and three alternates in case someone drops out to fill that vacancy. Yeah that's the way it works exactly, I guess I just went before them again a couple of months ago, I was up again and I walked in when I had my appointment, I walked in the mayor and I

said "am I here again?", then he started laughing [laughs], yeah, yeah, but they had to go through the same process with me. It's like they do any new people, you know, and there's... - **Every two years?** - Every two years, and there's two of us on the steering committee that have been on working with PB since its conception and that's V6.

Interviewer

- Yeah I have her... - **Scheduled?** - Not yet because she didn't answer my last mail so...

V2

- Yeah, okay, she's busy, she's a busy lady too.

Interviewer

- I imagine, I don't have her number so... but I talked a little bit with her, but not enough, not enough.

V2

- Okay, yeah, but she and I, yeah, we're the ones that are for the... - **Longest running time.** - Always, yeah, since the very beginning, when other people are newer.

Interviewer

- Interesting, and in Vallejo, PB has any connection with other planning institutions like urban planning or department of urban works or this kind of stuff or it's like independent?

V2

- Yeah, yeah, we're independent, we're a commission just like any other commission, just like any other commission, we're totally independent. So, we have to follow all the rules and regulations of a commission, you know, of a commission.

Interviewer

- Okay, so, there when, for example, the projects are discussed at the steering committee and everything there is no integration with like urban planning in the city?

V2

- Not unless during the development phase, when they're developing the project, they may need to meet with different city agencies to get information from them in that respect, they may need their support.

Interviewer

- Okay, makes sense. The last question I have about PB. This is more like a broad question, do you believe that Vallejo PB looks for social or territorial justice and if it does, if it's achieving it?

V2

- What do you mean justice?

Interviewer

- Like social justice.

V2

- Would you mean look for justice?

Interviewer

- That, like, it's part of the PB idea, the PB conception in Vallejo, looking up for social justice.

V2

- Okay. I see PB working accordingly to the way the citizens of Vallejo shape PB to work. Because it's the citizens that control PB, that control the direction it goes in, because all of the ideas come from the citizens, come from the citizens themselves and then the development of the ideas come from the citizens, the volunteers themselves, then the voting for the projects, which projects that will be implemented, is determined by the citizens. So, I think it's the citizens that control how PB goes forth.

Interviewer

- Okay, that's good. [small talk about bathroom break] As I told you, our project is also related to urban transformations, like, transformation in cities that happened especially in the last 50 years, so I'm going to ask you a few questions about... especially, that you are local, so you live here for a long time... - **Long time! [laughs]** – Yeah, if some urban aspects about Vallejo, not about PB anymore, like of course we can talk about PB... especially... - **Not about PB, just urban aspects, okay, the city itself.** – Yeah, so, what do you think about the changes that happened here in the last 10 years and in how does these changes relate to the whole Bay Area?

V2

- The changes are very slow to me, they're very slow, as far as I could see. I guess I'm not a good person to observe this because I continue to work in all different areas of the city, in all different phases of the city, so I don't have much of an impact, negative impact especially, I guess I don't... I don't really see it, because I'm so busy, I'm just going about my life, my business, trying to work and do what I can in all the different areas in different places that I work that I just don't... I don't see it.

Interviewer

- No problem, actually like this day-to-day routine you have... like, it's also... every answer you have for me is important, so no worry with that. But one of the many changes that we see normally in cities in

last decades, especially in the last 20 years, is that new kinds of housing are appearing, like gated communities, more buildings, gated communities for low-income people and this kind of things.

V2

- Yeah, we don't have been a lot of changes like that here.

Interviewer

- Yeah? Okay, when I was talking to V1 she told me there are a few of these gated communities appearing then in... - **The outskirts?** - Yeah, and do you think that this has an impact here in the city? Like, probably more cars or more high-income people moving to these areas or not?

V2

- You know, I don't think so, I don't think so, because I don't know, I really don't know because the people that I know that have moved into those different areas, some of the people are from out of town or from other areas, other cities, and some people are from within Vallejo that have moved from where they are into those places. So, I don't know. I have lived in my home where I live, I bought my home in 1973, so I own my home, I've been in my home since then. - **50 years!** - Yeah, yeah. I've been in this one home.

Interviewer

- But, for example, your kids, where they are? They moved around town or they moved to these new areas?

V2

- I only have one that still lives here in Vallejo. And she has lived in different areas of Vallejo.

Interviewer

- And do you think that because we're talking about like... Vallejo is like a peripheric city in the Bay Area, like low income in comparison to the whole Bay Area and this has impact in the property taxes, property values, do you think that this has an influence in the city itself?

V2

- I would think it would have to impact, you know, it would have to have an impact in different areas, taxes it will impact government assistance, this type of thing. I have to say when I was... all the years, the 38 years that I worked, I did not work in Vallejo. So, I didn't, you know, I [didn't] spent a lot of daytime in Vallejo although I was still real active and everything, but it was mostly in the evenings and at night and that type of thing. I worked in San Francisco, which is very high, very high [laughs], that's why my job moved from San Francisco to Concord, I don't know if you know the Concord area, Walnut Creek, you heard of that area?

Interviewer

- I already heard about it, yeah, but I don't know where it is.

V2

- Yeah, a lot of the large corporations moved out to that area because rental was cheaper on that area.

Interviewer

- Is it south of San Francisco?

V2

- No, I worked in the financial district in San Francisco. They moved out to Concord. - **But it's the south of San Francisco?** - No, it's not south. It's... see I'm not good on that, but it's not south. It's like across the peninsula bridge. I worked for Bank of America, you know, a very large corporation, very large.

Interviewer

- So, you commuted every day.

V2

- Commuted every day. I commuted over 17 years to San Francisco. - **By the ferry or...?** - There was no ferry service then. I commuted by bus or by vanpool or by car, different times, different ways, depending the year.

Interviewer

- Interesting. Do you think that the ferry... how much time the ferry is ready? Since when?

V2

- I don't know! I took my first ferry ride my very first ferry ride this past September [laughs].

Interviewer

- Yeah? I got here by the ferry, the landscapes are amazing, the views... and it's kind of efficient.

V2

- Yeah, I understand, you know, some people really like it. I have a friend, he works in San Francisco, and he does the ferry, in fact his office over there is not too far from the ferry over there, is very convenient for him, but the only thing that I understand with the ferry is that it's expensive, you know, it's an expensive commute.

Interviewer

- Yeah, it's nine dollars per ride. I imagine that probably who takes it frequently... I don't know, probably there's any type of discount, but for me that was just one way to get here and when I have... like Saturday I'm going back to Boise, I have to go to the airport, so it's going to be another nine dollars, so you should think that...

V2

- So, it's more economical for people to drive to a BART station, train station, BART and... [brief interruption].

Interviewer

- Yeah, but the trains, I also got one from coming from the airport to downtown San Francisco.

V2

- You did? How you like the trains? Very good? - **Very good, very good.** - Yeah, I had a brother that worked in, worked for BART for many years, he just retired a couple years ago, he worked... he was over the safety department for the trains, so he had to go out to the different stations and...

Interviewer

- Yeah, it was just... as I told you I did also fieldwork in New York City two weeks ago and the trains here are in much better shape. - **Really?** - Yeah, New York is cheaper.

V2

- Yeah, yeah tho, they depend on their transit system. I had the opportunity to... I was sent to New York, I want to say in 1993, 1992 something like that I guess to... I was sent there by my job to do a major implementation and I was there for three months, for three months so I learned a lot about the east coast, and they really depend on their transit systems. That's found out about all the people that do not find that amazing, you know, how you just don't think about certain things, people don't own cars! People don't even know how to drive and we take it for granted, here, everybody own a car, at least one, most of us have two.

Interviewer

- Yeah, I know [laughs]. In the east coast is more like South America. - Is **South America like that?** - Yeah, especially in the big cities people depend on transit. I never owned a car for example. I know how to drive but I never owned one.

V2

- Oh really? I'm by myself in my home, by myself, and I have two cars, I have two cars.

Interviewer

- I can see that. It's changing over time especially since the... this century, like, income is getting higher in South America, so people are buying more cars, but it's kind of common, like, especially for young people do not have a car. – **Really?** - Yeah, and because they're much more expensive there than here and also in in metropolitan areas, like the big cities, they all have like transit systems that work. Not necessarily they're good, but they work. For example, in São Paulo that you have like the subway and the buses and a lot of systems that are integrated together, and the culture is a bit different. - **I could imagine, I could imagine.** - Yeah and you can see, like, other cities in South America, like in cities in Colombia they have very good transit systems there and especially cities like Medellín for example that you have the hills and everything, they have this... I don't know how to say that in English, but the systems, they're like in the air with cables, not cable cars, but they are like... I don't know, but like it's a different system too, like not bus, not trains and it's kind of interesting.

V2

- Yeah, it's interesting, interesting.

Interviewer

- Yeah, yeah, and what we normally see with the also the gated communities are appearing like that people own more cars because normally these communities are very far away, so you need cars, you can't depend on transit, right? – **Right, right, right.** - But here it's like, normally people have cars here. Don't you think that the ferry maybe change that a little bit or not?

V2

- No, no, no [laughs]. Even though we have a good bus system in Vallejo. - **Oh yeah? I didn't take any...**
- We have a good bus system here in Vallejo, but everybody still have cars, you know? You won't see people riding the bus. The people that ride the bus I think are maybe younger people, younger than 16, and senior citizens. But no, everybody, everybody has cars.

Interviewer

- Okay, that's interesting. In San Francisco do you think that's different?

V2

- That's different! – **Okay, because San Francisco has a very good transit system.** – Yes, very good, very good! When I was working in San Francisco I had to go to meetings in different areas of the city and it was so easy to walk outside you know my office and get a bus that connect to a cable car or connect to the BART system or whatever. – **I felt that too.** - It was very easy to get around, very easy to get around. You know, I think it's the larger cities are like that, you know, and when you get out to the...

Interviewer

- I don't know if you know Los Angeles, but everybody tells me that Los Angeles is much worse than San Francisco [laughs].

V2

- Yeah, that's what I heard. I don't know that much about Los Angeles and all I know is that they're freeways, I hear, much more congested, much more congested.

Interviewer

- Also Houston is also like that, Phoenix. Especially like... I'm living in Boise, so Idaho, the public transit system is terrible. - **Is it?** - Yeah, it's not that big, the city is like 500.000, so there's no comparison to the Bay Area but the... especially, there's no buses on Sunday [laughs]. - **There's no buses on Sunday?** - Yeah. It's very cheap, you pay like just US\$ 1,50 for a ride so it's cheap...

V2

- That's like it is here for the bus service. - **Okay, it's 1,50 here too?** - I think so.

Interviewer

- Okay, but you don't have buses on Sunday, they stop after 7 PM.

V2

- I think it's until 9 PM, I think it's 9 PM.

Interviewer

- So, it's very limited. Normally cities in the... at least for as far as I know, like I read about cities in the... especially in the Midwest, even the big cities this transit's kind of bad, but it relies most on the cultural... it's hard to change that. Like here in San Francisco it has a tradition of the cable car and the buses, like a long tradition, it's a bit different. Well about the buildings here and the construction, do you think the public power has a lot of influence on that or not? Like in public housing or most the real estate market that runs the process here?

V2

- I don't think so, I think it's political. I think it's really... it is, it's political, they want to keep Vallejo as a bedroom type low-key city, no high rises, anytime there's any type of new building, you know, of any type is major, it's major. Unless it's a housing development or apartment development, it's major. To keep low bedroom type community they want, that's the way they advertise Vallejo.

Interviewer

- So you think that the political part of it has a strong influence?

V2

- Oh yeah, oh yeah.

Interviewer

- And do you see here like any concern from the public or for people in general about public security?

V2

- Public security like safety?

Interviewer

- Yeah, like safety.

V2

- Yeah, yeah, yeah, yeah, especially, especially now senior citizens, especially, you know, they feel very uncomfortable going out after dark and that type of thing. And, you know, people it's not two or three days that go by that people don't question me "how can you go out alone all the time? You go out alone at night!", I have friends that say "oh I could do such and such but I have to be home before dark", you know? And I don't think that way, I do what I have to do go where I have to go. Of course I am aware of my surroundings, aware of who's around me, but I wouldn't say... and then I might be wrong, I wouldn't say I'm overly concerned. I do what i have to do, but I find that people are concerned. I hear about it all the time, you know, all the time.

Interviewer

- And do you feel that there is an emptiness of the public spaces in the city, in downtown and city center here? - **Feel that there is?** - Like people are... there's a devaluation of the public space. - **Devaluation?**
- Yeah, yeah, like less people using the public space or walking around and being like in the open.

V2

- Yeah, yeah, yes, of course, of course. Especially like the downtown area, here, yeah, at night time, after dark, because I have to come down here to city hall, you know, for meetings and so forth and the streets are pretty much empty, they're pretty much empty.

Interviewer

- We're finishing, okay? Sorry for taking that long. I have just three more questions. Do you see any recent development of public housing here in Vallejo? - **Public housing?** - Yeah, and if there are any advantages or problems related to it, if you think...

V2

- I don't see any development for public housing, but I know there's a pretty big project that's ongoing with the city of Vallejo and other cities within our county, Solano County, in reference to the homeless. In reference to the homeless, yeah, I know you have seen we have a real homeless problem, so the cities within our county are working on a huge project in reference to that. Where they are I don't know, but it is what's going on. The main problem for that and it's been going on for some time, the main problem with the slow process, I guess you say slow process, with it, it's very, very expensive, very expensive and that's what drew them together the different cities, because Vallejo tried to do something on its own when this problem was getting bigger and bigger, and just did not have the funds to address it properly but neither did the other cities around the county.

Interviewer

- And do you see that appearing in PB like projects for the homeless or people debating the homelessness problem in PB? Like in PB meetings?

V2

- Some... not so, not so much, the homeless problem, you know, in half because I was... I'm thinking about a month ago, I guess, a gentleman had an extensive conversation with me on one of the events in fact, the art walk that I was working in, he was very concerned about it and he wanted PB to become more involved and he had a very good idea if I recall correctly and I said "put in your idea, make PB look into it, to analyze it, to research it, see what PB can do", you know, but PB no, it's more geared towards low income projects and not so much though the homeless project. More projects are low income projects. Other phases of my life that I worked in is geared more towards homelessness.

Interviewer

- That's interesting to know. And do you see any influence of the redlining here in Vallejo?

V2

- Redline as far as redline where they're... you speaking of keeping people out or... - **The segregation, the housing segregation.** - Yeah. No, I don't see. We don't even, you know, if you ask folks to speak on how they feel about redlining, they won't even know what you're talking about. Will not even know what you're talking about, that's why I wanted to be clear of what you're what you're speaking of. I'm trying to think about the different areas of Vallejo where redlining might occur and I can't even think of it, you know, we're pretty much, what I see we pretty much integrated. Whereas you have the means, you have the money, you know, you can live basically where you want to, it's pretty much integrated. In fact, out where I live is it's more integrated than it's ever been, you know, because I watched it change over the years where more Hispanics have moved into my area of town, where it wasn't that prominent. When I was raising my children, it wasn't that prominent with black seat over there. When I first moved there, you know, we bought our home there, but it's integrated. Vallejo has always been, you know, pretty much integrated, even in raising my children in the schools and everything, my children, all their

friends, were all nationalities, that's how integrated it was. You come to my home, you would see, all types of nationalities of children in my home, with my kids, you know, we just didn't segregate. You know, in Vallejo the families are more integrated here, the marriages and so forth, here it's more integrated.

Interviewer

- Interesting. And, okay, a more broad question. What's your opinion about gated communities in general?

V2

- My opinion about gated communities? A personal opinion... I've never lived in a gated community, so I don't know how you would really feel living in one. To me there are nuisance, there are hindrances, for me, you know, if I have to go to a gated community I have to contact a person and get buzzed in and that type of thing, I know. My youngest sister, who is a rarity, she does not drive! – **Okay [laughs]**. - And people always still question her, right now, today, “why don't you drive?”, you know, and at one point she had lived in a large apartment complex that was gated and she always had to... we had to give her rides to places and pick her up and everything and we couldn't get in and out and things like that, and just was a real headache and so, well...

Interviewer

- But sorry about the question, but this apartment complex was like high income or it was like a middle class?

V2

- It was middle class, yeah, it was middle class. And I understand they have middle class gated communities, then they have high income ones also because I understand... off Columbus Parkway, out that way, they have those high income complexes out there that are gated, that are gated, I'm trying to think have I ever been visited one, anyone... I don't think so. But to me, to me, they're nuisance, because I just like freedom, my lifestyle demands more freedom, the common goal when and where I want to, that's just my lifestyle. Now somebody else, they might feel safer, you know, living in a gated community, and I can appreciate that, you know, if they would feel like that, but me I've never cared for them.

Interviewer

- Okay and last question. What is your vision of future for Vallejo? For the city and for PB? For Vallejo and for PB?

V2

- For Vallejo and for PB... I see Vallejo pretty much stay in the same, because I told you, it is very political, I see it pretty much stay in the same, except for the homelessness. I think that they are going to conquer

that and solve that problem even if it's just less than what it is now, they're going to conquer that, but pretty much for Vallejo staying the same. PB... I see that PB will continue to be ongoing, I see that PB will pretty much get better and get back the way it used to be, because people are always out, people outside of Vallejo are always interested in PB, you know? You're not the first person that have interviewed me over the years in reference to PB and there are always people interested in PB, and whenever people are interested in PB, they look at the Vallejo model. They look at the Vallejo model. I know staff have had to do presentations to other cities on PB per their requests, you know, so I see that PB is going to be... it's going to be here, and I see that PB is a good thing. I look at the different project that have been so successful with the implementation of them, that PB is here to stay and PB it's welcome here, it's welcome here.

Interviewer

- Do you have any comment that you would like to know, that you think that something that we didn't discuss about PB or about Vallejo that is important, that you want to talk about?

V2

- I don't think so, I think that you were very, very broad. – **Yeah, that was an idea.** – Yeah, you were very broad and very inclusive, you're very inclusive in all areas.

Interviewer

- Yeah, I'm trying to get all the aspects of PB, because for me it's important how like the political relations and the institutions have any impact in the geographical aspects of Vallejo and then in PB itself. So, I'm happy that you like it.

V2

- I hope I have been helpful to you... - **Of course!** - And I hope that the information and my observation of PB and the city have been beneficial to what you're doing and what you wanted. I hope that you got the information that you need.

Interviewer

- Of course. And I would like you to thank again in my name, in the name of my institutions that I'm working, that are São Paulo State University and Boise State University, both are supporting my work here, so I'm thankful.

V2

- One question. Are we going to see what you put together afterwards, your report or your project or your...?

Interviewer

- Of course! Yeah. First of all I would like to reinforce how our conversation is just a scientific object, so it's going to be available for the project, the whole project that people can like... it's going to be very transparent and I'm going to like translate it to Portuguese too, but yeah, I'm going to write a dissertation, I'm writing already, actually, my dissertation, so...

V2

- We will be very interested in that!

Interviewer

- Yeah, the final version is going to be in Portuguese because I'm going to present it in Brazil, but I have plans to have it translated. And I can send it, like, I'm saying that to every person that I'm interviewing, that is helping me, if you have any interest I can send it out in Portuguese, you can, like, translate it also if you want, but in the long term I wanted to like have an official version. – **Okay, yeah, I can understand that.** - And you can have it, of course, I can send it to you when it's finished.

V2

- Yeah, yeah, we would be very interested, we being PB steering committee, would be very interested.

Interviewer

- Yeah, I'm going to make comparisons with Vallejo, with Brazilian cities and also so it's going to be like...

V2

- Okay, okay, okay, very good, very good. We would be very interested in it. Like I said, hope we've been helpful and I love to talk! - **It was a great talk!** - I am busy with folks, you know, I'm not a shy person.

Interviewer

- Yeah, I'm learning a lot, I learned a lot today. – **Great, great.** - And I'm just... the last thing is if everything okay with our talk and the recording. Was it everything?

V2

- Everything's fine, fine, fine, fine, I love being transparent, you know, I love being open and transparent.

Interviewer

- Perfect. If you have any questions in the future you can mail me, it's all right.

V2

- Yeah, okay, thank you.

Interviewer

- Thanks a lot V2, thank you.

Fim da transcrição