

# Lisa Redfield Peattie

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Peattie at an [Occupy Boston](#) march in 2011.

**Lisa Redfield Peattie** is an Emeritus Professor of Urban Anthropology at [Massachusetts Institute of Technology](#) with a PHD from [University of Chicago](#) in 1968.<sup>[1]</sup> She is best known for her place in advocacy planning, a type of urban planning which seeks social change by including all interests and groups in the planning process.<sup>[2]</sup> Peattie has published extensively on [slums](#) and [squatter settlements](#).<sup>[3][4][5]</sup> She has also engaged in numerous peace actions, and has a long, although minor and [nonviolent](#), arrest record.<sup>[6][7]</sup>

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## [\[edit\]](#) Biography

Her grandfather, [Robert E. Park](#), was an American urban sociologist who worked with [Booker T Washington](#) (with whom he shared a fascination with cities and the theory of cities) at the [Tuskegee Institute](#). Together they searched for "The Man Farthest Down".<sup>[8]</sup> He later taught at the [University of Chicago](#)<sup>[9]</sup> on the theory of [urban ecology](#). Her father, [Robert Redfield](#), an [anthropologist](#) also at the [University of Chicago](#), had an interest in tracing connections – between archeology, anthropological linguistics, physical anthropology, cultural anthropology, and ethnology in a synthesis of disciplines<sup>[10]</sup> and between village cultures in his fieldwork.<sup>[11]</sup>

She was brought up partly in [Mexico](#), in [Morelos](#) and [Yucatán](#), where her parents were conducting fieldwork.

She began her anthropological life in 1948 with the Fox Project, which began as a summer of fieldwork for six Chicago graduate students, at Meskwaki Settlement in Iowa, and which, with the encouragement of [Sol Tax](#), became a decade-long effort to redefine anthropology not as pure science, but as part of the human and moral landscape, in what he called "action anthropology", and which was later to reappear in her urban planning work as "advocacy planning".<sup>[12][13][14]</sup>

In 1943 she married Roderick Elia Peattie. She published two children's books with him: "The Law"<sup>[15]</sup> and "The City",<sup>[16]</sup> which began her lifelong study of cities.

In 1962 Lisa and Roderick Peattie were hired by the [Harvard–MIT Joint Center for Urban Studies](#), under a contract with the Venezuelan government, as project anthropologist and architect respectively, to help plan the city of [Guayana](#), near the junction of the Orinoco and the Caroni rivers in the interior of Venezuela. They were the only members of the team to live on the site; the rest of the design team worked on the project from the capitol, Caracas, 660 km away. She observed directly the effects of the then-new profession of [Urban Planning](#) as it was experienced by the planned-upon population; she reported this radicalizing experience in her first popular book: "The View from the Barrio".<sup>[4]</sup>



Peattie at her home in Venezuela with her family.

Roderick Peattie died in Venezuela, in a car accident in 1963. Lisa Peattie returned to the United States, where she taught [urban planning](#) at MIT until her retirement.

In 1966 she, with other faculty and students of M.I.T. and Harvard, organized Urban Planning Aid. This organization was to offer assistance to local residents against highway construction, and housing problems. It took an active part in the [urban renewal](#) fights and the [Freeway and expressway revolts](#) of the 1960s and 1970s.<sup>[17]</sup> In the course of these anti-development struggles, she began a study and critique of conventional economic theory, which was strongly pro-development.<sup>[5][18][19][20]</sup>

She has inspired activists in such widely varied subjects as poverty and conviviality.<sup>[21][22]</sup> She also was involved in the Homeless Empowerment Project, and in the creation of "[Spare Change News](#)", a [street newspaper](#) whose mission is "to present, by our own example, that homeless and economically disadvantaged people, with the proper resources, empowerment, opportunity, and encouragement are capable of creating change for ourselves in society."<sup>[23]</sup> She also became involved in the fight against nuclear arms.<sup>[7][24]</sup>

## [\[edit\]](#)Awards

- ACSP Distinguished Educator Award (1999)<sup>[25]</sup>

## [\[edit\]](#)Books and articles

- "The View From The Barrio", [University of Michigan](#) 1968, isbn=paper 0-472-06169 cloth 472-72280-8
- "The informal sector: A few facts from Bogota, some comments and a list of issues", Publisher: s.n, 1974, ASIN: B0007BZ8UO
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- "Thinking about Development (Recent Advances in Phytochemistry)", Springer, 1982, [ISBN 0-306-40761-2](#) [ISBN 978-0306407611](#)
- "Women's Claims: A Study in Political Economy (The Library of Political Economy)", with Martin Rein, [Oxford University Press](#), 1983 ISBN 0-19-877180-0 [ISBN 978-0198771807](#)
- "Planning: Rethinking Ciudad Guayana", University of Michigan Press, 1987, [ISBN 0-472-08069-5](#) [ISBN 978-0472080694](#)
- "New politics, the state, and planning", UCLA, Graduate School of Architecture and Urban Planning, 1987, ASIN: B00071ZE12
- "Planners and protesters: Airport opposition as social movement" (Institute for Urban Studies monograph series), University of Maryland at College Park, Institute for Urban Studies, 1991, [ISBN 0-913749-19-2](#) [ISBN 978-0913749197](#)

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