The values of the planner

Are the professions accomplishing the opposite of their central goals? Contemporary criticism often says yes. In the view of some people, doctors cause illness; teachers keep children from learning; lawyers break laws; ministers lead people to Hell; and planners produce unexpected disasters.

Professional people often fuel criticism by conferring a remote and elevated status on the professions. The aura of knowingness, the command of mysterious forces, the privilege of the expert, the hard and narrow path of access to professional standing—these have built illusions of professional infallibility. of problems invariably solved if professional advice is sought and followed.

Once the consumers of professional advice discover its limitations, they discover also the need to be active participants in how the advice is developed and used. The aloof professional is replaced by the accountable professional. The passive consumer is replaced by the consumer who affects professional decisions. The professional gives less case-by-case advice and more instruction on how to be your own professional.

As a new profession, not quite a hundred years old in its modern American form, planning scarcely had time to build the walls of illusion around its exclusive professional competence before the siege came. Now the beleaguerment of the professions is leveling those walls. The expansion of malpractice responsibility, commercial advertising of professional services, pressure toward competitive bidding for services, and citizen review of professional standards are leading us to the unwalled profession.

As long as the professions stick to their central aim, society will continue to want and need them. That central aim is to muster the best knowledge, skill, and imagination in solving complex problems and in making the solutions work. The active client sets the priorities among problems. judges whether the best method has been used, and in addition judges whether the solution is effective, whether its cost is too high, and whether the solution gets in the way of other good things.

Clemenceau's saying that war is too important to be entrusted to generals was revised by Charles de Gaulle when he said that politics is too serious a matter to be left to the politicians. The saying can be applied to any profession. To get effective results, however, it is important not to leave the professionals out. The aim of planners is like the aim of other professionals: to translate our experience into ideas and to test our ideas in experience, solving problems as we go.

This chapter examines the values of a planning profession that some say does not exist. Samuel Johnson once replied to an elaborate argument that proved that matter did not exist. He kicked a large stone with great might and said, "I refute it thus." The planning profession is often kicked with great might.

Planning values

Many debates in planning, as in other fields, pose choices as either-or. Is planning scientific or is it not scientific? Can we forecast the future or is it unknowable?
The place of values in the work of planners is itself debated in these terms. On the one hand, do, or should, planners work objectively, keeping their own preferences out of their advice, serving their employers as neutral technicians? Yes, of course. Who selected them to work for their own program? On the other hand, do, or should, planners express their own vision in their work? Give priority to matters that they think are important? Fight for whatever they think best? Yes, of course. Why hire an independent-minded professional if what you want is someone to take orders?

Planners in practice strike a balance between these conflicting views, a balance that differs with the personality, temperament, and convictions of the planner. Although the balance will vary with the client’s or community’s rapport with the planner, it is hazardous to let the balance tip to one extreme or the other.

If the balance tips toward neutrality, it is deceptive. As a whole person, the technician cannot be empty of views, values, and biases. Even the collection of facts requires choosing questions to ask, choosing methods of getting answers, and making judgments about their validity. Different values will yield different choices. The technician’s biases may be subtle, quiet, and hidden, but they are there. An attempt to be neutral merely produces passivity.

Tipping the balance toward active promotion of the planner’s values risks creating an idiosyncratic program that is not responsive to the community. That responsiveness, coupled with an explicit acknowledgment of the planner’s values, leadership, and fairness in presenting contrary evidence, contributes to making opposing tendencies complementary rather than conflicting.

How do the values of planners sort out? Which are deemed by planners to be more important than others? The following discussion shows that many planning values are in competition with each other and with values of the broader community as well. This is not a report of a consensus among planners. It expresses views based not on a scientific poll but on years of knowing many planners and many plans and listening to many planning debates.

The techniques planners use to balance competing values are not special to the planner, be they old-fashioned horse-trading or new fashioned cost-benefit analysis. Planning brings to these techniques a concern for long-term consequences and an interest in devising solutions that consider the costs and benefits to people outside the immediate circle of decision making.

The planner’s values are not specific to the planner. They are widely held and generally shared. Everyone favors health, happiness, prosperity, and justice. Planners used to advertise the objective of a city plan as that of making the

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The politics of city planning
Certainly I was involved in the politics of city planning. Every city planner is. Overall, however, the best “politics” is top professional work, forcefully presented and defended.

City planners should not be neutral, and I do not believe their clients, at the level of local government, expect them to be without values or opinions. After they have arrived at some position, some point of view, some desired direction, one would hope to see it reflected in both public plans and day-to-day recommendations. Why hide it?

Further, city planners should be willing to stand up for their points of view if they want to be effective. They should be prepared to “mix it up.” They must do more than recommend. Within a democratic process they should advocate and search for ways to carry out their plans. I believe, too, that they should value and nurture their utopian predilections. They are nothing to be ashamed of.


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community a better place to work, live, and play. What is now specific to the planner is an inclination to stand up for those public values that are fragile and hard to maintain in competition with values that more predictably command acceptance.

Health

Health, strongly and universally valued, is a composite of subsidiary values. Planners worry about the more fragile of these values. Although planners do not lack interest in the needs of people who are physically ill, they are more likely to emphasize environmental health, preventive programs, clean air and clean water, surroundings and services that nurture self-development, and the integration of handicapped people into the larger society. Even with respect to individual physical illness, planners turn to the more fragile values: ensuring that poor people have access to services and controlling priorities and costs.

Conservation of resources

The numbers and influence of people who support the conservation of resources have markedly increased. Understanding of the problems is widespread. But the understanding and commitment that are required to produce policies for sustainable development have still reached only a small segment of society. Conservation remains a fragile value.

Norbert Weiner, the mathematician who introduced cybernetics, told a planning conference some years ago that “no firm can underwrite the growth of a redwood forest. [If it is] to be grown—by anybody, it can scarcely be by an organization of less respected prominence than the State or perhaps the Church.” Planners must have that concern for the more remote future that leads them to address issues such as soil erosion, deforestation, energy use, materials recycling, water allocation, and the rural-urban balance. It is hard to save a swamp from development, but planners try.

Efficiency

Efficiency is a popular value. All of us want to see it, especially in those who serve us. Although the work of planners probably is done as efficiently as the work of other professionals, the special significance of efficiency for planners is not in the efficiency with which plans are produced but in the efficiencies that
plans can produce. The solutions that appeal to planners, for example, are those that produce multiple services from one investment: using school facilities after hours for recreational and community activities, or buying more land than is needed for a highway right-of-way to use for other public purposes. Such solutions are often resisted by administrators of specific functions, who may value the competing efficiency of concentrating every resource on one function.

Efficiency leads planners to oppose urban sprawl, which results in overbuilt sewer, water, and transportation facilities that provide too much, too soon to patchy development. Efficiency is the value that evokes an intelligent stinginess in capital improvements programming.

**Beauty**

Beauty is a value that shares eternal life with its companion, truth. The life they share, however, is often poverty-stricken. Planners, who deal with public expressions of beauty, cope with two responsibilities in trying to alleviate that poverty.

One is that public beauty must satisfy public taste: Common denominators need not be low, and a high common denominator is a reasonable aspiration. However, some lasting delights in our environment require hospitality toward, or at least tolerance of, heretical and prickly designs that have only a small audience at first but earn more general appreciation in time. We can choose individual delights in music or poetry, but the environment is shared. The wide diversity among high cultures and pop cultures and their basis in emotional rather than physical needs make it difficult to strike this communal balance.

The second responsibility is using the power of urban design to affect our lives. Urban design is long lasting, highly visible, and capable of causing psychological uplift or oppression. Although a community obviously can put up with sterile and ugly environments, it will cherish developments, large and small, that fulfill with zest and delight the complex demands of our public living space.

**Equity**

Social equity is profoundly influenced by public plans and the way they are carried out. Can people who earn low wages live near where they work? Are
they cut out of jobs by business location decisions? Is police protection as good in a poor neighborhood as in a better-off one? Do schools give poor children enough chance to become not-so-poor adults? Are homes available on a fair basis?

Recent progress toward greater equity has been particularly remarkable in the realm of principle. Legislation, judicial findings, and public attitudes now buttress the general value of equity. Many policy questions involving equity concern the implementation of principles: How can resources be allocated to obtain more equitable results? Although such allocations are political decisions made case by case, they are strongly influenced by planning analysis and recommendations.

A neutral planning stance on equity issues ignores the windfall and wipeout effects not only of land use decisions but also of capital expenditures and service programs. It is a paradox that those who hold most strongly to the value of individualism are often the most skilled in exploiting the organized structure and resources of government, law, and finance. Those who must make it on their own—owing to poverty, physical handicap, geographic location, lack of education, lack of employment opportunities, or discrimination—often are the least skilled in exploiting government, law, and finance. Fairness in the planning process requires that steps be built in to redress the imbalance.

**Pluralism and individuality**

To assert that planners value pluralism and individuality seems to run counter to much evidence. Haven't planners produced the American suburb of dreary sameness? The urban renewal project that replaces small-scale diversity with super-block rigidly? The expressway that slices up an old neighborhood? The zoning ordinance that isolates every land use in its own unmixed district?

Planners have indeed contributed to each of these visions of what development should be like. To a large extent they have done so in response to the values and dictates of the majority. And to some extent they have done so because, as citizens, many planners share these values. For example, majority views of the need to protect and separate residential areas from business and industry were the foundation of zoning regulations. The design of subdivisions was based on a widely held view that an urban neighborhood should almost be self-contained—like a village transplanted into the city.

Yet planners have also concerned themselves with satisfying a plurality of tastes and with meeting minority needs. Planners worked to get public support for mass transit during its long decline; adopted the planned unit development to counteract the imposed uniformities of a zoning ordinance; promoted rehabilitation and conservation instead of wholesale clearance; favored scattering public housing in existing neighborhoods; and did much to give environmental concerns the status of a majority value.

Like other values, individuality cannot be asserted absolutely. Its importance—as well as the need to balance pluralistic values against values held in common—is expressed in a comment by Jean Renoir, the film director: "You see, in this world there is one awful thing, and that is that everyone has his reasons." Our plans should accommodate more of those reasons. But if we cannot arrange for the city of all virtues, we can arrange for each city to be true to its own individuality: "It's the best place in the world to live in if that's the kind of place you like."

**Democratic participation and democratic responsibility**

Democratic participation means not only electing officials but also participating in public decisions. No other local government activity generates more citizen
participation than does planning. The planning agency holds public hearings, conducts attitude and opinion surveys, arranges neighborhood meetings, and appoints citizen advisory committees. Unpaid citizens serve on planning commissions and publicize alternative decisions to test public reaction. Planners are concerned with the quality of participation and the substantive understanding on which it is based. Genuine participation has to begin before ideas are crystalized—long before a hearing is held on unchangeable proposals with contracts about to be let. It must proceed without the condescension of technician-knows-best, the selective packaging of facts that will sell best, or glib replies to questions that may trip up the project.

The most effective participation will not produce automatic decisions. Elected officials have the democratic responsibility of resolving the tough situations in which some participants gain and some lose, of balancing a neighborhood interest against a communitywide interest or a communitywide interest against a regional interest. Public-policy disputes often reveal heavier support for a facility in someone else's backyard: a nuclear plant but not in my town, an expressway but not in my neighborhood, a halfway house but not on my street. Resolving these conflicts is a political responsibility. Genuine and widespread participation should yield better decisions—although they may not please all participants.

**Rational management**

Planning is integral to good management. Management needs to anticipate events; it is weak if it merely responds to them. The tempo and complexity of change have rapidly established administrative and management planning as distinct executive responsibilities. A central goal of both the administrative planner and the public planner is the gradual replacement of seat-of-the-pants judgments with reasoned judgments. The evolution of planning method has stressed the validity and pertinence of information, the logic of analysis, the worth of evaluating the consequences of alternative decisions, and the effectiveness of standards and policies in achieving goals.

Figure 16-3 "The planner is a leader urging progress with quiet but unremitting persistence."
This evolution has been greatly assisted by computer technology—a situation that gives the impression at times that decisionmakers also will be replaced by machines. Although the models and the computer games should help us understand what happens and why, should help us deal with complex relationships, and should improve our guesses about the limits of action and the opportunities for solution, it is not rational for us to hope for or to fear a conspiracy that will completely replace wisdom with knowledge. Planning solutions, like scientific hypotheses, can be methodically tested, but it takes a certain amount of inspiration—not just a formula—to come up with either one.

A rational balance does not require a choice between inordinate faith in computer products and strictly intuitive decision making. An appreciation of the limitations of computers and mathematical models can make these models more, rather than less, helpful. If we know the assumptions and guesses and “fudge factors” that helped put the model together, we also know the points at which professional and political judgments must enter if we are to make use of what the model tells us. A brief story may illustrate this point. President Franklin D. Roosevelt is said to have mixed his martinis by pouring gin into a graduated beaker and holding the beaker up to eye level to see that the prescribed amount came exactly to the line. Then he would pour the right proportion of vermouth into the beaker and hold it up again to see that it came exactly to the line. He would then stir. But before serving he pepped the gin bottle over the beaker and vigorously sloshed in a lot more. The most rational rationality is leavened with emotion.

**Planning issues**

A few general planning issues that are discussed perennially are reviewed here. The intent is not to settle them once and for all but to illustrate how opposing tendencies can be balanced so that a conclusion can be reached.

**The far-off goal and the immediate decision**

Plans are made to reach a goal that is generally years away. The usefulness of a plan, however, is in helping to make decisions today. The burden of problems that need answers now will not be lightened by the posting of a sign that says “Plans being prepared.” Neither will our decisions improve much if the emphasis is reversed: “We don’t know where we’re going, but we’ve got to move fast.”

Two steps that are important in themselves will also reduce the conflict between making plans and making decisions. One is to ensure against stop-and-go planning. When an intensive general planning effort is funded, reports are produced, and some recommendations are carried out. Then the job is considered done. The planning budget is cut, and the staff assigned to general planning is reduced. However, as the general plan that the staff must consult becomes obsolete, day-to-day decisions require more and more of the staff’s time, and the quality of staff advice on day-to-day issues declines. When the advice becomes poor enough, there may be a decision to fund another general planning effort. How much more effective it would be to strive for a successful balance between long-range planning and daily decision making—to eliminate the peaks and valleys in favor of ongoing, serious general planning.

The second step is to develop all the connections that Martin Meyerson referred to as the middle-range bridge: the activities that connect long-range plans with short-range implementation. Planning is part of management, and management is part of planning. Plans must be translated into programs and budgets, and the effects of carrying out plans must be checked to measure success and find the surprises.

If such measures succeed, there will still be a balancing problem: keeping the
planners from skimping on help with immediate decisions and keeping the decisionmakers from skimping on support for long-range planning.

**Incrementalism, ad hocism, and comprehensive planning**

Incrementalism has been proposed as one solution to the difficulties of comprehensive planning. Incrementalism is based on the following ideas: Long-range, comprehensive planning is not only too difficult but is also inherently bad: problems are harder to solve when you group them together and are easier to solve when you take them one at a time; solutions are best negotiated with the few people who have a direct interest, not with the many whose interests have a remote connection to the problem at hand; genuine reform is accomplished in small bites, not in whole swallows; and small increments of change can be better fitted to people's needs than can the tyranny of a grand design.

Some of the weaknesses documented in examples of comprehensive planning seem to bear out the promises of incrementalism. Many long-range proposals have been put forward in the form of an "end state," a condition to be reached in, perhaps, thirty years, in which all the problems are solved, all the resources are allocated, and all the books are balanced. Cheerful people will encounter no lot that is vacant, no building that is crumbling, no stream that is dirty. No doubt the planners responsible for these misleading visions did not intend to mislead; they understood the projected plans as generalized forecasts of the consequences of alternative policies. But because forecasts oversimplify the future, as myth oversimplifies the past, forecasts can mislead. Planners can mislead somewhat more intentionally by fearing to forecast the persistence of problems; promises are easy when the delivery date is so far off.

Long-range plans also tend to design solutions that are too uniform for the diversity of cases that will come up. The attraction of ad hoc solutions is in tailoring each one to fit the problem, in making each solution a spontaneous invention that is uninhibited in its improvised answers. Unlike long-range plan-

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**Alternative futures for decision making** We are not going to find technological fixes to any of the problems in our culture that matter. . . . These are social problems, but we keep on looking for technological fixes. . . .

If you look at the evidence from the last ten years there has not been a significant increase in standards of living in the United States. What has been happening . . . is a transfer towards those families that now have two wage earners instead of one.

We are not going to get a major rise again in the standard of living. We are going to have to learn to manage stability, not growth . . .

Rapid growth [is] no longer necessarily in the interest of those who are getting it any more than decline was in the interest of those experiencing that. With rapid increases in marginal costs, rapid growth may be the best way to wreck your city . . .

Management means the dealing with incomplete, uncertain information and making the best decision that one can. It means that one of the key priorities is preserving enough social cohesion that people will go along with decisions that are not ideal, but merely optimal. It means that one works with imperfect people. And one recognizes that decision making is not a tidy, decent, clean-cut process, but a messy, untidy, unsatisfactory, and gutsy process.

ning, ad hocism gets rid of the burden of worrying about tomorrow. The difficulty is that today’s solutions can become tomorrow’s problems; another layer of ad hoc solutions can multiply the problems further for the day after.

Incrementalism embodies a truth about how things get done but not necessarily a truth about how the right things get done. When we deal with complex events, the “right things” will always be elusive, but they are more approachable comprehensively. The environmental-impact approach to evaluating proposals took hold because incremental solutions satisfied a narrow interest in the short run but not the broader environmental interests in the long run. The extension of impact analysis to social and economic issues returns us to one of the original central concepts of comprehensive planning: the plan was intended as the basic reference in evaluating all of the impacts of a particular proposal. In the 1920s this sort of impact analysis was called mandatory referral. Although that phrase is now little used, it conveys the relationship between a specific incremental step and the general comprehensive plan. Don’t be put off by the word comprehensive. It doesn’t mean implementing all proposals at once. It doesn’t mean being paralyzed by John Muir’s realization that “when we try to pick out anything by itself, we find it hitched to everything else in the universe.” Refer to the plan to see how the specific step fits related objectives. Refer to it to see how it fits the objectives of the entire community and the wider region. To be a good incrementalist, you should know what, in the long run, is to be accomplished bit by bit.

Public decisions and private decisions

Our communities operate in a mixed political economy. Public dollars and private dollars mix in the development of a project. Public policies and private policies mix in determining that project’s design and operation. Public policies help determine private profits. Private policies help determine the success of public programs.

The mix of dollars and policies is often settled by negotiation. A suburb and a developer will hammer out agreement on the size of a development; its density, housing types, and kind of shopping area; funding for the sewer; dedication of land for a school; and length of time for the completion of the development. An older community wants to create jobs and will offer incentives for business development such as special zoning permissions, tax allowances, new services at city expense, or public acquisition of land with a writedown of costs.

Benefits do flow both ways—to the public and to the developer: but with so much money at stake, clear precautions must be established to lessen the opportunities for corruption and to keep public and private interests from blurring to the public detriment.

Precautions include the adoption of guidelines to limit the negotiator’s discretion and to set standards for acceptable development agreements. Approvals should not be recorded as bare conclusions but should be accompanied in the public record by statements of the findings that justify the approvals. The proceedings and record of negotiations should be public, although the early and tentative stages may involve business confidence that must be protected. Development opportunities that are created by public action should be open to competitive offers, including competition based on design quality or on meeting special housing needs.

At times, extravagant gifts of publicly created value have been granted private entrepreneurs in the name of entrepreneurial rights. But a heavy burden of requirements, imposed on the developer in the name of public-interest regulation, has also accumulated. Developers add up the demands for installed utilities, land for schools and recreation, fair housing, low-income housing, design standards, art, performance bonds, and assurances of holding to a fixed schedule.
and then protest that, translated into costs, the requirements will stop the development. These debates are not effectively resolved by an exchange of slogans between free enterprise on the one hand and the public interest on the other. Active community development does need the partnership of both public and private sectors; some public investments and incentives to private development are justified, and a public concern for the marketability of that development is needed. The balance between public and private rights and responsibilities will be better struck if all the costs and benefits and markets are explicitly and publicly examined, case by case.

Who is the client?

The quick answer to the question of who is the client is that the planner's client is whoever pays the planner's salary. The professional does owe diligent service to the client-employer. Ethical performance requires that a planner not serve at the same time two employers who may have conflicting interests.

One difficulty in identifying the planner's client is that the planner may often have one employer with conflicting interests. For example, in one community a planner may be recruited, interviewed, and recommended for appointment by a committee of a planning commission. The planner is appointed by the mayor or city manager and then confirmed by the council. Once on the job, the planner reports, let us say, to the city manager, providing studies and advice on many aspects of the manager's business. The planner also advises the planning commission on its decisions and the council on its legislation.

Where interests or views differ, whom does the planner serve? One refuge is in the standards of the profession. The same thorough and dispassionate analysis will be presented to all participants; the same careful analysis of alternative decisions will be made for all. Hazards, opportunities, and possible compromises in resolving issues are conscientiously disclosed.

This model of the conscientious professional answers the problem only partially. The decisionmakers want more than the facts and analysis; they want a recommendation. Given that it is impossible for a planner to be completely neutral, even the analysis steers gently toward a particular recommendation. Make it explicit, the decisionmaker asks, and give your justifications.

Ethical codes say that planners serve the public interest primarily and must fit the client-employer's interest to the public interest or else not serve that client. This guideline is needed most when the public interest is hardest to identify. It is needed most, then, when the guidance it offers is least clear.

The public interest is an amalgam of many interests. These include the interests of democratic majorities; improving the conditions of poor or handicapped people; protecting resources: economizing in the use of public funds; living up to our laws; protecting health and safety; preserving human rights—in short, doing all the things that affirm our abiding values. Even the ability to pursue private interests is part of the public interest, given our view of government as the servant of the individual.

We cannot codify a consensus on a permanent balance among these competing elements of the public interest nor a permanent balance between the public interest and the right to pursue private interests. It is a planner's professional responsibility to achieve such a balance and use it as a personal guide.

Some planners have found a persistent imbalance in the so-called public interest, especially as public decisions affect poor and minority groups. Some have become advocate planners, supporting the interests of those groups that do not normally command articulate, knowledgeable, skillful, and aggressive representation. Advocate planners have cited precedents for such advocacy by pointing to planners who have "advocated" for builders and developers, for example, or for transportation interests.
Localism and interdependence

The problems of metropolitan areas are not fragmented, but the governments are. The neatness of creating a metropolitan government was once looked to as a solution and has been adopted in a few places, but most people are looking to solutions that leave local government a little more complex. Metropolitan councils of governments (COGs) have been set up as a modest layer to work for the coordination of plans and programs. States have been setting up regions within the state and taking a more active role in some local decisions that have effects beyond local boundaries. Highly urbanized counties have sought a new identity as local urban governments.

Councils of governments have tried to achieve coordination primarily through elected officials representing autonomous units. The states have acted, especially on environmental issues, when state governments have found that localities have not acted to set environmental goals or work toward them. Counties have acted to serve the clusters of cities within their boundaries by initiating or stepping up urban services.

These efforts all seek more centralization or coordination on a metropolitan basis. At the same time, there has been greater interest in decentralizing some of the decisions within large central cities—giving neighborhood councils at least the power to review and advise.

This interplay of governments often illustrates the point that administrators wish to coordinate all of the units that are below theirs in size or authority but do not wish to be coordinated by units that are above theirs.

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**Ethical Principles for Planning,**
adopted by the Board of the American Planning Association, 26 April 1987

This Statement of Ethical Principles for Planning was prepared by the American Planning Association (APA), whose purpose is to advance the art and science of planning—physical, economic, and social—at the local, regional, state, and national levels. By distributing this Statement, APA seeks to promote ethical principles in planning and public discussion of ethical practice. APA members who are also members of its professional affiliate, the American Institute of Certified Planners (AICP), are subject to a separate AICP Code of Ethics and Professional Conduct, which provides for an enforcement procedure. This Statement is intended to complement the AICP Code.

APA encourages the adoption of the principles in this Statement by legislatures through ordinances or statutes, by public planning bodies through incorporation into bylaws, and by employers of planners, who may include them in personnel manuals and other employment policy documents.

1. Serve the public interest.
2. Support citizen participation in planning.
3. Recognize the comprehensive and long-range nature of planning decisions.
4. Expand choice and opportunity for all persons.
5. Facilitate coordination through the planning process.
6. Avoid conflict of interest.
7. Render thorough and diligent planning service.
8. Do not seek or offer favors.
9. Do not disclose or improperly use confidential information for financial gain.
10. Ensure access on an equal basis to public planning reports and studies.
11. Ensure full disclosure at public hearings.
12. Maintain public confidence.
13. Respect professional codes of ethics and conduct.

Note: The full text explains each principle in detail.
Planners work at each of these levels, balancing a loyalty to localism and to decisions that originate among those who are closest to the problem with a loyalty to coordination and to decisions that span all parts of the problem. The advocate planner is redefined for this purpose as the advocate for a particular level of governmental decision.

**Coordinative and functional planning**

Comprehensive planning does not comprehend all the planning that must be done. Each function of government carries out its own specialized and detailed planning: health planning, transportation planning, school planning. These types of planning will be studied by the general planning agency in their interrelationships, for their secondary effects, and for their relative priorities. The specialized departments study and plan for their functions—as they should—as though nothing else mattered.

Better planning is done when there is sound, mutual respect between the people responsible for these two kinds of planning. The general planner, as the one working with all the departments, has the burden of making the relationships go well by seeking to understand the needs and reasoning of the various departments and by providing useful services to them.

**Planning objectives and constitutional ends**

Planners are often painted in the colors of frustration—as having marvelous plans but facing insuperable obstacles. The search for more effective tools to implement the plans, therefore, continues.

Implementation, however, must fit the framework of values that is embedded in the Constitution. Justice William Brennan said that if a "policeman must know the Constitution, then why not a planner?" Chief Justice Rehnquist added, in a 1987 case, that some lessening of "the freedom and flexibility of land-use planners" is a necessary consequence of a decision that upholds a constitutional right.
Professional Ethics and Beyond: Values in Planning

Peter Marcuse

Professionalization of planning and the credentialing processes that will accompany it add importance to a review of the role of professional ethics in planning. Existing ethical standards are often inherently contradictory, guild oriented, and inconsistent with the public image the profession attempts to maintain. The more publicly oriented prescriptions are not designed to be enforced. Generally they are a weak guide to ethical conduct for practicing planners.

Planning theories suggest ethical standards going beyond professional prescriptions. A historical or structural approach would further suggest that professionally derived standards will be inherently system maintaining and that efforts to inject more progressive and enforceable guidelines into professional codes are likely to meet major resistance within the profession.

Whether planning is a profession is a matter of some dispute: a recent outside opinion suggests it isn’t yet but may make it very soon (Goode). For planners, such a development would not only mean higher social status and better remuneration but also problems of licensing, registration, educational credentialing, and all the paraphernalia of a true profession. The meaning of professional ethics in that context is likely to become of much greater moment for planners than it has been in the past.

At the same time, the apparent end of the social unrest of the ’60s, the escalating fiscal crisis of government, and the advent to power of conservative political leadership have resulted in increased soul-searching for many planners. Funded advocacy planning, the solution of the ’60s, no longer seems a viable alternative to bureaucratic service in the ’70s. New questioning of the role of the profession and its ethical implications is thus understandable.

This article looks at professional ethics in planning from two perspectives. The first is internal. It assumes the social value of the occupation of planning and its professionalization and explores what professional ethics now imply for the conduct of the practicing planner. The second perspective questions the social value of planning and looks at professional ethics in that broader context.

The article begins with several cases suggesting the concrete types of problems with which ethics in planning must deal. It then describes the obligations of existing professional ethics and their application to these issues. It concludes by looking beyond professional ethics to see how broader decision rules might be framed to guide planners’ activities.

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Cases in planning ethics

Five brief examples will set our stage.¹

California's environmental scorecards

Many professional planners have gone into the business of preparing environmental impact reports (EIR), now required for many private as well as public projects in California. EIRs are supposed to provide comprehensive information on the environmental consequences of a project so that public decision makers may determine whether to approve that project.

Under the headline, "Ecologists Offer Builder a Deal He Can't Refuse," one newspaper reported on interviews with a firm of planners active in the field in which they "claimed a 7-1 scoreboard: seven building permits issued on projects covered by their environmental studies since the court ruling [requiring such reports], and one project turned down because it was ruled to be inconsistent with official plans for neighborhood land use."²

There was no suggestion that this favorable scoreboard arose out of selectivity in the choice of projects, those presenting environmental problems being rejected at the outset. Quite the contrary, the implication was that the professional preparation of an EIR by professionals was a virtual assurance of the approval of the project on which it reported.

Most local governments do not have the staff capability to do much independent review of privately prepared EIRs. Two alternatives were seen as available to local government: to prepare a list of qualified planners from which a private developer would have to choose or to muddle through with the situation as it is.³

The first alternative was rejected as putting local government in the position of judging the professional competence and integrity of planners. Developers argued it would be a violation of the client-professional relationship; state licensing, a possible answer, was not on the horizon. The second alternative was thus selected with a real feeling of bitterness on the part of many government officials as to the uselessness of professional ethical standards in guaranteeing the integrity of EIRs prepared by professional planners for private clients.

Oldport: the hazards of population projections

In Oldport the mayor retained a planning firm as consultant to develop a comprehensive twenty-year plan for urban renewal, housing, schools, and social service facilities. The planners' preliminary report projected moderate population growth but a dramatic and continuing shift in racial composition, with minority groups reaching a majority in twelve years. A black majority was predicted within five years in the public schools.

The mayor reacted strongly to the preliminary report. If these findings were released, they would become a self-fulfilling prophecy. All hope of preserving an integrated school system and maintaining stable mixed neighborhoods or developing an ethnically heterogeneous city with a strong residential base would disappear.³

The planners were asked to review their figures. They agreed to use the lower range of their projections—minority dominance in the public schools after eight years and a majority in the city in sixteen. The mayor was not satisfied. He told the planners either to change the figures or to cut them out of the report. They refused, feeling they had bent their interpretation of fact as far as they could. Without a discussion of these facts, the balance of the report could not be professionally justified.

The mayor lashed out at them privately for professional arrogance, asked a professional on his own staff to rewrite the report without the projections, and ordered the consultants not to release or disclose their findings on race under any circumstances. The professional on the mayor's staff initially demurred from rewriting the report but ultimately complied. The consultants remained silent, completed the formal requirements of their contract, and left. The mayor never used professional planning consultants again.

Award-winning congestion: the Pan Am Building

In 1968 the architect for the Pan Am Building in New York, which added two million square feet of office space to one of the most congested business areas of the world, received an award for structure from the American Institute of Architects. Architectural Forum condemned the land speculation which made the Pan Am Building possible at the same time it praised the architect who built it. Robert Goodman (After the Planners, pp. 93–6) commented

The magazine ends with the moral "as professionals, it seems that architects should try to make the best of the world as it is—before somebody else fouls it up even further." With this dreary and negative conclusion, the magazine sums up the profession, unself-consciously and without irony. But is the professional really a tool of whatever system he operates in? Does he have a responsibility for his acts other than to do his job better than someone else? Is the engineer who designed a more painless gas chamber to be lauded as a "realist," or the scientist who designs a cleaner nuclear bomb as a more responsible professional?

Let us assume that a group of Young Turks in the New York AIP chapter, moved by Goodman's eloquence, bring a formal complaint against the planners.
involved in the project before the executive committee of AIP under AIP's "Code of Professional Responsibility," alleging a violation of its first canon:

A planner serves the public interest primarily. He shall accept or continue employment only when he can insure accommodation of the client's or employer's interest with the public interest (AIP 1971).

The Young Turks further point to number 4 of the "Guidelines for the Social Responsibility of Planners" adopted by AIP in 1972 (AIP 1973):

The professional planner should explain clearly to local, state, and national political leaders the seriousness of existing, emerging and anticipated social problems.

The Young Turks argued that the planners should not only have refused to work on the Pan Am project but should also have appeared before the city planning commission to point out its dangers. Expulsion from AIP was asked as the very least penalty for failure to do so.

Evidence presented included a statement from the director of the city planning commission. He himself had recommended approval of the project because he knew that at least four of the five members of the commission favored it. However, citing reasons of congestion, pollution, and inefficiencies of scale, as well as unfair competition to other developments elsewhere in the city, he felt it was against the public interest.

Amid substantial newspaper publicity, the executive committee ruled against the complainants. It found that neither the canons nor the "Guidelines on Social Responsibility" were part of the "Rules of Discipline" of the profession or intended to be enforced by it. For AIP to attempt to arrogate to itself the decision as to whether a given building should be built would be a usurpation of the democratic decision-making process which the committee could not condone.

An editorial in the leading New York newspaper the following day commented on the hypocrisy of the planning profession's claim to serve the public interest and suggested that honesty might dictate repeal by AIP of all references to the public interest anywhere in its canons.

Mass transit: planning for whom?

Central business district revitalization requires the services of a variety of planning professionals. In one large city, a transportation planning firm was engaged by a group of downtown merchants to advise it on the transit aspects of a proposed urban renewal plan for the CBD. The planners recommended a fixed-rail system with lines radiating out from the CBD.

The regional transit agency shortly thereafter (while the planners were still under retainer to the merchants to explain their CBD report on request) also sought a consultant to advise it on the advisability of constructing a fixed-rail system in the region and, if it proved advisable, to suggest routes. The same planning firm was selected; after extensive study it recommended a fixed-rail system with a radial configuration centered on the CBD. A referendum was scheduled on a sales tax to finance construction of the proposed system.

Concern for conflicts of interest on the part of the transportation planners did not surface until the referendum campaign was well under way. Questions were asked about the consultant's recommendations for a radial pattern, which would benefit the CBD, over a grid pattern. How objectively had the arguments for alternatives to fixed-rail been considered? How fairly were they presented? Why was a sales tax recommended as the measure of financing, rather than a special assessment district downtown? How neutral were the technical assumptions used in making the ridership projections on the basis of which the fixed-rail system was recommended in the first place?

The defense contended that the recommendations were strongly supported by the data and the planners' expert professional judgment. Further, the regional transit agency was fully aware of the planners' work for the CBD merchants. It had in fact considered their familiarity with the CBD situation an asset when the firm was selected. Finally, the planners argued that their recommendations to their two different clients were the same because in both cases they were following AIP's exhortation to "serve the public interest primarily."

The sales tax proposition was decisively defeated at the polls. In subsequent interviews, the man in the street told reporters that the only beneficiaries of all the years of studying transit needs in the city seemed to be the planning consultants, who couldn't be trusted further than they could be thrown.

Vietnam: planners and foreign policy

President Nixon resumed the bombing of North Vietnam in the fall of 1971. In the September 1972 Journal of the American Institute of Planners, an article appeared entitled "Ecological Effects of the Vietnam War" (Concerned Planners 1972). Its opening paragraph read as follows:

Planners have no special claim to omniscience or moral virtue. Yet we feel that we must speak out against the escalation of the war in Vietnam, as professionals as well as citizens, for three reasons: because the tools of planning can help to highlight the disastrous consequences of that escalation; because the values which planning should serve in a democracy are violated by that escalation; and because that escalation is being justified by arguments...
which are a travesty of the approaches of rational long-term planning.

It then continued:

Our analysis is not value free, nor does it pretend to be. The values that run through it are dictated by the function of the planning profession in our country. Certainly not all individual planners have all the same values, nor ought they to. But the proper role of professional planners on issues of public policy does, we believe, require a commitment to certain basic common values, and we would hope, that our profession would be united in its commitment to those values: humaneness, democracy, rationality.

In the following issue of the journal a member of the American Institute of Planners wrote in reply:

The article also frustrated me because it failed to mention any of the contributions of city planners to South Vietnam. . . . Daniel, Mann, Mendenhall, and Johnson, for example, have developed plans for the port of Saigon; a master plan for the growth of Saigon has been prepared by Doxiadis Associates and has been adopted as national policy; Wurster, Bernardi, and Emmons have prepared a set of plans dealing with a land assembly and development process for a sector of Saigon, part of which has already been implemented . . . (Loewenstein 1973, p. 138).

The Concerned Planners responded in the same issue:

In our article we expressed ourselves as citizens, not merely as planners . . . We . . . wrote to raise questions about the planning mentality that knows how to rebuild cities, but can’t think about how to prevent us from knocking them down; that recognizes the moral corruption of the South Vietnam regime, yet is willing to do its street cleaning for it; that says, in effect—well, yes, we do know about the furnaces and concentration camps, but we have our job to get on with (p. 138).

The debate was not pursued thereafter, and the organized profession never expressed itself on the issues.

Obligations of professional ethics

Each of the cases posed above is troublesome. Planning does not emerge from them as the highly ethical occupation planners visualize. In most cases, even the rules for telling right from wrong are not clear. Obligations to clients conflict with obligations to the public; following professionally accepted standards of conduct produces results repugnant to most laymen; professional integrity and democratic decision making seem to conflict; the bounds of professional concern are hazy.

While it is accepted that planners should act professionally, how far do the prescriptions of professional ethics bring us in resolving the issues posed by these cases?

Most of the traditionally professional obligations of planners have their sources in characteristics of the client-professional relationship. Others arise out of guild characteristics of the occupation. A few are the result of the employer-employee relationships in which many planners find themselves. One arises from planners’ frequent role as social scientists. Some may be specifically imposed on planners by statute.

Each of these sources gives rise to ethical prescriptions. Some of these prescriptions are enforced by intraprofessional discipline; others may be publicly enforced; still others are hortatory, enforced only by peer group pressures and judgments about the standing in the profession.

Figure 1 shows these various prescriptive rules, the sources from which they come, and their modes of enforcement; they accept the value of the occupation
of planning and are concerned with how that occupation should be carried out. Let us take up each prescription in turn.

Allegiance

Law provides the best-known model for that allegiance which is the heart of the client-professional relationship. The relation imposes certain absolute obligations on the professional: confidentiality within the client-professional relationship, avoidance of representation of conflicting interests, prohibition against personal involvement in affairs undertaken for the client to avoid personal conflict of interest, uniform espousal of the client’s interests in dealing with others.

If planners adhered to the rigid standards of allegiance laid out in the canons of ethics for lawyers, the transportation consultants in the mass transit case would be read out of the profession. On the other hand, environmental scorecard keeping would be entirely proper, service to the developer of the Pan Am Building would be all in a day’s ethical work, and the decision as to what to do with the consultant’s population projections would be entirely up to the mayor of Oldport.

Autonomy

To the extent they are professionals, planners cannot use a common defense that engineers, for instance, have used (Collins) against their assumption of ethical responsibility for the uses of the end product of their labors:

The typical engineer is an employee of a medium to large company. He usually works with other engineers as part of a hierarchical structure, that also may involve technicians, programmers, draftsmen, etc. His assignments are generally tasks being carried out by other people. He is not usually consulted about the definitions of his task or the criteria to be used in evaluating its successful completion. Nor does he generally have the authority to change these criteria as a result of observations made while carrying out the assignment. He is frequently briefed inadequately or not at all with respect to the overall objectives and strategy for attaining them (Unger).

Planners, to the extent—often limited in fact—that they function as professionals, cannot undertake work on such terms (Hughes). The planner is expected to give a client sound and independent advice, whether the client will be offended, whether the advice is likely to be followed, whether it answers directly only the question the client put, or whether it goes beyond it to answer the questions the planner feels the client should have asked.

The professional takes responsibility for the formulation of the problem as well as of the answer and must be willing to challenge the client’s preconceptions and refuse too limited instructions in order to be able to do so. Planners are given problems to solve or objectives to achieve. Everything that may impact on these problems must professionally be considered by them. If congestion renders the Pan Am Building useless, its planners cannot say they were never asked to consider the question.

But this responsibility runs to the client, not to the public. Professional autonomy does not require the same advice be given to New York City.

Knowledge and competence

New Jersey’s pioneering statute for the licensing of planners begins “planning is a profession which requires specialized training” (N.J.). It then sets forth detailed educational and experience requirements for a professional planning license. Even where technical competence is not demanded by law, it is an essential obligation of a professional. Indeed, in the sense of command of a specialized body of knowledge, it is an essential ingredient of every definition of a profession from Flexner to Carr-Saunders to Hughes to Metzger.

The definition of the specialized knowledge which is within the unique sphere of planning has provoked seemingly endless discussions about core curricula in planning schools and about qualifications for membership and areas of exclusive jurisdiction in professional organizations. The specialized knowledge of planning probably includes such things as the understanding of the processes required for the making of public decisions; the weighing of cost against benefit; the discounting of long-term against short-term results; the comprehensive handling of physical, social, economic, environmental, and other related aspects of a single proposal; the separation of public from private interests and the differentiation of private interests; the analysis of efficiency; and the understanding of distributional consequences. Exclusive jurisdiction would hardly be claimed by any profession over these broad areas. Yet whatever the boundaries may be of the specialized knowledge of planners, there is agreement that some territory is within it; mastery of its terrain is an essential obligation of the professional planner.

Guild loyalty

Guild loyalty includes two types of ethical obligations assumed by professionals: one to fellow professionals, the other to the profession as a corporate body. The obligation to fellow professionals produces the bulk of the rules of discipline of AIP: “thou shalt not advertise,” “thou shalt not steal thy fellow’s client,” “thou shalt not cut thy fees,” and so on.
To a minor extent these may be justified as contributing to a strong profession better able to fulfill its social role, but primarily they are traditional guild-type rules primarily benefiting members of the profession. Although treated summarily here, historically they stem from that guild membership which lies at the root of what constitutes a profession (Carr-Saunders). They have been the most carefully explicated and vigorously enforced of all the canons of ethics. Only the Department of Justice seems to have occasional qualms about them.

The obligations to the corporate profession include assisting those entering the profession, supporting education and research in the field, and promoting the good name of planning. Obligations to fellow professionals are only tangentially involved in one of our cases. Ironically, they would preclude not the preparation of EIRs so as to achieve a favorable scorecard but the advertising of success in that endeavor.

**Loyalty**

Like the independent professional’s obligation of allegiance to a client, the ethical obligation undertaken by an employee to an employer is loyalty: obedience to instructions within the scope of the employment, service of the employer’s interests, and confidentiality. Democracy reinforces the obligation when the employer is a public agency. Matters of policy conflict should be decided by democratically elected governmental bodies. When such a body entrusts decisions to staff in a planning agency, the delegation of power should be respected, even where its substantive wisdom is questioned.

**Dissent**

From Nader’s whistle blowing to Nixon’s Watergate, the conflicts between the obligations of loyalty and of moral integrity requiring dissent have recently been much in the news. The conflict becomes an issue in planning when a planner employed by a public agency believes that his agency is not acting in the best interest of the public and yet feels constrained from dissenting by virtue of employment by the city and the obligation of loyalty that arises from it.9

The ethical obligation to dissent in such circumstances rests on three grounds: (1) the public as employer argument, that the public employee’s responsibility runs directly to the public, not to formal superiors; (2) the whistle-blowing argument, that any employee has an obligation to report and/or make public disclosure of any facts that come to that employee’s attention that may be violations of criminal law or injurious to the public; and (3) the organizational flexibility argument, that internal dissent and the right to protest over one’s immediate superior’s head is an essential ingredient in a responsive and creative organizational structure.

A distinction can be drawn between the impact of these conflicting obligations of loyalty and dissent on a director of planning and on a subordinate employee-planner. At the interface between professional and nonprofessional in the public service, where a director of planning would generally serve, dissent becomes particularly critical, for it is here that the democratic process relies on the integrity of the professional to present a considered independent judgment.

The subordinate professional’s advice, on the other hand, is expected to be filtered through his superior to the public. The more responsible the employee’s position, the more professional the role; the more egregious the action at issue, the more likely are ethics to demand the expression of dissent. The member of the mayor’s staff asked to rewrite the consultant’s report in Oldport might thus be justified in doing so, but not the city planning director recommending approval of Pan Am’s plans because of the commission’s wishes.

**Advancement of knowledge**

Of all the client-serving professions, planning is among those which call on the greatest depth and diversity of social science disciplines in much of its day-to-day work. The planner is a social scientist turned practitioner in the arena of public policy.11

The social scientist’s role creates ethical obligations for the planner—and ethical ambiguities—very much as the economist’s role does for the fiscal advisor, or the chemist’s for the weapons expert. In each case, the scientific role calls for dedication to the pursuit of knowledge for its own sake, without regard to where it may lead; caution and complete exploration of all facets before arriving at conclusions; full disclosure of methods and results; in other words, the discovery and dissemination of the truth. The planner acting as planner, however, may have quite different, and often conflicting, ethical obligations: to act decisively in accordance with a client’s timetable, subject to the client’s priorities; to consider the practical impact of disclosures and findings; to economize in the pursuit of alternatives; to be responsible for ultimate products.

It is really as a social scientist that the Oldport consultants object to the suppression of research findings. No secret information, after all, is being withheld from the public; no vested interest is being given a monopoly of key knowledge. Nothing in conventional planning practice requires planners to publicize all the shortcomings as well as all the advantages of their plans after they have been presented to the client. Yet some planners are more social scientists than planners. For them, the answer is an appeal to contract rights, which should be carefully drawn to cover rights to publication, rather than to professional ethics.

Where the role of planner and that of social scientist conflict—and they may—the individual must choose and must tell the client in advance. Planners
cannot sell themselves as such and then insist on being treated retroactively as scientists. At the opposite extreme, if local government wants the maximum information with the minimum of bias as to environmental consequences, it must be made clear that planners are relied on in their scientific, rather than their conventional professional client-serving capacity.

Statutory responsibilities

A profession may be a useful vehicle by which to enforce public policies. If architects are held legally responsible for knowledge of building code provisions, for instance, the enforcement of codes will be simplified. Making attorneys adhere to rigid standards of truthfulness in representations to a court speeds the handling of cases on a docket. Denying the right to practice medicine to doctors who improperly prescribe drugs enforces public policy on drug use. The professional is asked to serve the interests of the public, even where it conflicts with the interest of the client.

The dilemma faced by local governments in the California environmental case suggests two approaches to imposing such responsibilities on planners. One model for planners preparing EIRs is based on the lawyer’s role, in which planners see themselves as advocates for their client’s projects. The alternate model is that of a certified public accountant, whose balance sheet and profit-and-loss statement, when certified, are intended to be relied upon as accurate and objective by outsiders. The accountant preparing the client’s balance sheet has limited discretion to help the client.

In the accounting model, the public looks to the certified statement for objective and fair disclosure of the situation described. The lawyer, on the other hand, prepares a client’s case as a partisan advocate. In that model, the public does not expect the lawyer to be evenhanded or objective; that is not the lawyer’s role.

Whether planners will be given responsibilities similar to those of the accounting model remains to be seen. Perhaps licensing will bring them. Such responsibilities do not exist now. Until they do, planners cannot be faulted for faithfully acting in their client’s interests, unless (and here we come to the last of the professional obligations of planners) there is in fact a duty to the general public that is not subsumed within, and may even run counter to the time-honored professional obligation of allegiance to a client.

Concern for the public interest

Some form of concern for the public has been an essential ingredient of every definition of a profession at least since Abraham Flexner first laid down his famous check list (Metzger, p. 3). The first words of the AIP’s first canon are “a planner serves the public interest primarily.” Some discussions of planning raise this obligation almost to a religious level (Hoover 1961).

But concern for the public interest may be shown merely by planners acting competently and ethically in performing their everyday professional obligations as planners. They may have a more systematic approach to the “public interest” than the average citizen, but this gives them no right actually to make decisions in public matters, nor any concomitant public responsibility.

The profession formally takes this view. The first canon is specifically intended not to be enforced under the “Rules of Discipline” (Sangster, pp. 5–6), as are the “Guidelines on Social Responsibility.” The Young Turks in New York were clearly wrong. No one in California authorized the planning profession there to make public decisions on projects affecting the environment. As individuals, or perhaps even as an organization speaking for the majority of individuals in the profession, a statement might well be made by planners on behalf of strict environmental legislation. As professionals, however, planners could best show their concern for the public interest by representing their clients fairly, honestly, and competently. If, in doing so, they are successful in getting their clients’ projects approved, they might well be proud.

These then are the results produced by following the current dictates of professional ethics. They are founded on the theory that, in Charles Frankel’s words, “the creation of a planning profession with a
reputation for integrity and political/moral independence is (itself) a matter of great social value. 13

But what is that value?

Professional ethics do not provide that answer. As yet, they do not even provide satisfactory solutions to day-to-day problems of practice. At least in the five cases described earlier, the prescriptions of professional ethics are sometimes contradictory and hardly lead to greater respect for the profession. How then can issues in cases like these be better resolved?

We must look beyond professional ethics for the answer. Indeed, we must look beyond occupationally based ethics. Occupational ethics begin by accepting the social utility of the occupation, and ask how that utility can best be enhanced. The assumption that a reputable planning profession is itself a matter of social value is unquestioned. But perhaps it is precisely in the values the occupation serves that the ethical difficulty lies. What the occupation does, should perhaps not be assumed automatically to be ethically of value. Perhaps it is the effort ethically to fulfill unethical tasks that creates the real dilemmas.

Beyond professional ethics

Planning theory has long had much to say of the values inherent in planning and its tasks. Faludi's Reader in Planning Theory, Friedmann and Hudson's recent survey of planning theory (1974), and the AIP-sponsored Planning in America: Learning from Turbulence each indicate the range of thought that has been devoted to the values of planning. Strictly ethical categories have, however, rarely been explicit in these discussions, and references to professional ethics are even rarer.

Six different approaches to ethics might be deduced from the literature: 14

1. Subjective approaches, which make ethical action a matter for individual decision
2. Pluralist approaches, which hold that professional services should be made available to all potential clients
3. Objective approaches, which attempt to establish formal objective standards for ethical judgment, sometimes using procedural formulations, as in definitions of justice, or quantitative ones, as in concepts relying on welfare economics
4. Egalitarian approaches, which likewise postulate objective standards, such as expansion of choice, but are generally framed in broad social terms
5. Process approaches, which see the objective of planning as contributing to a particular process, such as mutual learning
6. Structural approaches, which view ethics in terms of historically defined structural conditions, evaluating actions in terms such as system maintaining or system challenging

An important dividing line between the first five and the last formulation is that the structural view is fundamentally historical and the others are not. Professional ethics play a different role in each of the six.

Subjective approaches deal with individual motivation. Self-awareness might be their watchword. Personal integrity, internal consistency, honesty with oneself, clarity of purpose are their guiding values. No attempt is made to define as right any particular course of conduct for all individuals; different individuals in the same situation might ethically act very differently, depending on their own values and beliefs.

Each planner may choose among a number of roles he could play. One of those roles is that of the "professional" planner. If chosen, it carries with it the full range of professional ethical obligations. For other roles professional planning ethics would be less important; political leader, private entrepreneur, teacher, advocate—each would have its own set of ethical obligations.

A pluralist approach would place a more uniform emphasis on professional conduct. Since the planner as client-server is modeled on the lawyer, the legal rather than the accounting view of professional obligations would be anticipated. An obligation of the organized profession, to serve those otherwise without adequate planning advice would be seen as a part of professional ethics.

The objective approach focuses on results, not the process by which results are achieved. Professional ethics play a secondary role through promoting efficiency in achieving ends defined through nonprofessional objective standards.

Egalitarian approaches often seek to include within professional ethics statements of ultimate values. The extension of choice to those without adequate choices (the new Cleveland plan's formulation), for instance, might be put forward as component of professional ethics. But, given the inclusion of such an objective as a requirement for professional conduct, the expectation as to the behavior of planners can be consistent with conventional professional standards.

Process approaches see planning as much more than a technical process. Certainly it is a process not the exclusive domain of professional planners. Ideas of a learning society and related ideas specifically see the need to broaden the activity of planning into a generalized social activity, to make it an instrument of democratic societal guidance. Professional issues thus are of minor importance. This is not to say that planners are freed from ethical obligations: it is only to say that there are other and higher obligations towards which planning activities should be oriented. And in some cases, as in guild obligations or prescriptions of allegiance, professional ethics may run counter to higher obligations.
The structural view, finally, a view underlying most radical perspectives, sees professional ethics as instrumental in relation to the particular historical system in which they function. Planning in most jobs today is in practice clearly a system-maintaining activity. Professional ethics facilitate that activity.

There are, however, ideological currents within planning, those linked to its utopian aspects, which tend to challenge the limits of the system by posing basic alternatives and unrealistic goals, unrealistic because they cannot be achieved within the limits of prevailing structures. There are also social forces challenging structural features of each social system. If structural change in a given system is seen as historically desirable, then service to such system-challenging forces, or pursuit of system-challenging goals, would be the ethical obligation of planners. Such a formulation might put professional ethics at odds with many aspects of professional practice, but it would be a set of professional ethics quite different from those in effect today.

The substantive formulations of such a different set of professional ethics are not necessarily unique to the structural approach. Formulations such as equity or democracy may be common to many approaches. Structural ethics differ in dealing with the question of power.

The distribution of power is historically the determinant of the degree of equity, of democracy, of the distribution of choices among individuals, in any social system. Redistribution of resources requires not only clarifying problems in welfare economics but also overcoming the understandable resistance of those whose resources are being redistributed. A shift in power from those with more to those with less is generally a prerequisite for major changes in the distribution of resources.

Greater democracy by the same token requires not only solving problems of communications, of scale, or of organization, but also broadening decision-making power beyond the presently powerful. The powerful may well be expected to resist the weakening of their status through the diffusion of their power.

These are problems of means, but they cannot be separated from a consideration of ends. A more historical formulation of ethics is required than most planning theories afford. A point of view is needed which will in fact look at how, in practice, greater equity or democracy can be achieved.

Historical analysis suggests that these problems of means, these issues of power, are inextricably linked to any examination of the ethical aspects of social system structures. Structural system maintenance or system challenge becomes a directly relevant consideration for ethical judgment. The impact of a given action on the power relationships within a system becomes a relevant issue for ethics.

Conclusions

Professional ethics could logically go beyond their present narrow attention to the client-serving, guild-related roles of planners to examine their real effect on the social, economic, and political system in which the planner's activities take place. Professional ethics could logically deal with issues of power and act directly to further values such as equity and democracy. Indeed professional ethics might even logically support movements towards structural change and new power relationships where planning's own tools and historical analysis show them to be needed. But what can be done in logic will not always be done in practice.

The historical role of professionalization is to seal a social bargain between the members of a profession and the society in which its members work. In return for special prerogatives and privileges, running from social status to restrictions on entry and competition, not to mention direct monetary returns, the profession agrees to a certain measure of self-policing. That is a bargain made entirely within the existing structures of society, supporting those structures and making them operate more effectively. To interpret such self-policing (of which professional ethics are a significant part) to permit or even to require challenge to those same structures could fly in the face of the professional bargain.

The statement on the "Social Responsibility of Planners," adopted by AIP in 1972, and the philosophy of the Cleveland Planning Commission featured in a recent issue of this journal, are the closest statements from the profession challenging the tasks which planners ought to undertake. However, both read as if planners following them may remain entirely within the established limits of professional conduct; the Cleveland plan even suggests that planners might prosper while following its philosophy. Perhaps such formulations are required to achieve at least a minimum level of acceptability for their approaches. But, in the long run, the issue of power will inevitably force itself to the surface and will have to be dealt with. Professional ethics, conventionally interpreted, tend to buttress established power. That certainly seemed to be the result in fact in these five cases. Different results will require different definitions of ethics.

In summary, professional ethics in planning merit a great deal more attention than they have thus far received. They are not as yet well thought through, their prescriptions are often conflicting, their results questionable. The trend towards professionalization of planning makes such attention a matter of high priority for planners.

A clear statement of how planners should conduct themselves requires looking beyond professional ethics to the functions the profession serves, the tasks it is assigned. If a given task is harmful, executing it.
professionally is not desirable. Planning theories shed some light on the problem, suggesting ethical criteria often differing from the professional criteria but rarely discussing the differences explicitly. The structural view of planning, for instance, requires a serious questioning of the entire movement towards the professionalization of planning. It would call for a historically based view of planning functions focusing on their relationship to the distribution of power in society. It would judge planning’s results by whether they contribute to maintaining or to challenging those features of the social system that are judged ethically undesirable.

Professional ethics, in that view, might indeed have the potential to emphasize the utopian, the historically progressive, elements in planning. Realistically, however, professional ethics are likely simply to render more efficient the services provided by planners to those presently with the power to use them. Professional ethics are likely to be system maintaining rather than system challenging. The movement to reshape them in a different direction is likely to be a long and an uphill one.

Author’s note
Those who contributed, very often through strenuous disagreement, to the still incomplete process of working through the ideas outlined in this article are literally too numerous to mention. Their help has been very much appreciated.

Notes
1. All are fictional but based on actual situations. Additional aspects of these cases are outlined in Marcuse 1974, pp. 33–71.
2. Expanding the permanent staff was generally not feasible, especially in smaller communities, because of the expense of very specialized personnel needed and the widely fluctuating work load they would face.
3. See Paul Davidoff’s reading of the new Cleveland plan: “Inequality in Cleveland, as elsewhere in the United States, is both economic and racial, yet the plan is surprisingly silent on the subject of race. The authors may have believed that they could gain wider public support by establishing a concept that could win adherents from many groups. Explicit recognition of racial problems, and the creation of standards for measuring the city’s movement toward closing the gap between the whites and the non-whites, may have been judged counterproductive” (1975, p. 318).
4. The author was a member of Concerned Architects and Planners at the University of California, Los Angeles.
5. On planners’ self-image as professionals, see Alonso, Lee, Mitnner, and the collection of materials in Hagman, chs. 2 and 9.
6. The identifying characteristic used by C. F. Tausch, among others, for the term professional (p. 472).
7. The chart is not intended to cover general moral rules, such as honesty, presumably equally applicable to all occupations. It does, however, cover the nonprofessional as well as the professional aspects of planning, viewing it broadly as an occupation rather than more narrowly as a profession.
8. Exoteric is the term sometimes used (Freidson, p. 228; Hughes, p. 1).
9. The controversial nature of the issues it presents can be seen from the fact that the leading discussion of the issue in the planning literature (Finkler 1971), which comes out in favor of the right to dissent, carries with it its own dissent by the executive director of the American Society of Planning Officials, which published it.
10. The social sciences, for instance, would be the planner’s “department of learning” in the Oxford English Dictionary’s definition of a professional: “A professional is one engaged in a vocation in which a professed knowledge of a department of learning is used in its application to the affairs of others or in the practice of an art founded upon it.”
11. More accurately, historically speaking, the practitioner turned social scientist. Planners in the United States originally were overwhelmingly landscape architects, architects, and lawyers; the need for social science knowledge did not become firmly recognized in the profession until the 1960s. Originally, also, ontogeny recapitulated phylogeny, but now most planners begin their professional studies with a background in the social sciences.
12. Standards are enforced by the accounting principles board of the American Institute of Certified Public Accountants. See a critical look at some of the consequences of this arrangement, see Britoff 1973.
14. Citations are deliberately not given for this or any of the following formulations, because they are not intended to be specific summaries of any individual positions or any specific body of theory; they often incorporate ideas or phrases from several sources. The formulations are only intended to suggest the implications for ethics that follow from aspects of current planning theories.

References
Friedmann, J. 1973. Retracking America: a theory of transactive plan-

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