From "Human Values" to "Human Resources": Planners' Perceptions of Public Role and Public Interest

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ABSTRACT

The paper explores planners' attitudes towards the public by examining the way that planning publications describe the nature and the role of community members. It suggests that as planning's function in society changes, planners' ideas of the roles of players in the planning process alter too. While reform-minded planners argue that community planning can promote "human values" (of equity, health, shelter), planning has instead gravitated toward business-oriented values of efficiency and development. The CIP Conference sub-themes of "Strategic Planning" and "Human Resources" imply that people are raw materials which planners allocate for "public purposes."

RÉSUMÉ

Pour connaître les attitudes des planificateurs face à la population, l'auteur scrute les études de planification qui définissent ce que sont les membres de la communauté et leur rôle. Il conclut que, si les fonctions des planificateurs changent, l'idée qu'on se fait du rôle de ceux et celles qui participent au processus de planification se transforme également. Alors que les nouveaux planificateurs affirment que la planification communautaire peut faire place aux «valeurs humaines» (égalité des chances, santé, logement), la planification s'est plutôt intéressée aux valeurs liées aux affaires (efficience, développement). Les sous-thèmes du congrès de l'ICU («Planification stratégique» et «Ressources humaines») laissent entendre que la population, pour les planificateurs, est un objet d'utilité publique.

That the Canadian Institute of Planners 1989 conference has the two sub-themes of "Strategic Planning" and "Human Resources" indicates the extent to which the interests of business influence the agenda of community planning in Canada. These terms, which slip from the lips of high-powered corporate executives, now affect the way that planners think about the problems of Canadian communities. Moreover, they reflect the perceptions planners have of the public. That planners can talk of "human resources" implies that they conceive of people as raw materials or inputs allocated for some amorphous public purpose determined for the community through a "rational" strategic planning process.

The terms that planners use mirror their attitudes towards the public. This paper explores planners' attitudes toward the public by examining the way planners discuss the nature and role of community members in the planning process. It argues that certain aspects of planners' views of the public change

over time as social values and political imperatives change. As planning became institutionalized in Canada, its function in society altered, and the roles of planners changed. In large part, the role planners attribute to the public complements the roles carved out for the planner in society.

How can we determine planners' attitudes toward citizens? Since planners do not speak with one voice, any effort to determine the profession's "opinion" must make some compromises. Over the years planners founded a number of organizations to represent their interests; the publications of organizations such as the Town Planning Institute of Canada (TPIC), Community Planning Association of Canada (CPAC), and the Canadian Institute of Planners (CIP) present "the planner's view." Officials of the organizations and editors of their publications in

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some sense speak *for* planners, and present the "public face" of professional opionion. In an effort to increase our understanding of the development of planners' attitudes towards the public, this paper examines the comments that editors and organization officials made about the role of the public through organization documents and publications from the early 1920s until the late 1980s.[1]

Over the years planners have moved from a strong concern for what we might call "human values" (of equity, health, shelter, etc.) to a greater concern for the "business values" of efficiency, development, and economic rationality. In the process, they came to see members of the community as not simply the beneficiaries of the planner's expertise, but also as "inputs" or "human resources" utilized for "public" purposes.

Greater insight into planners' attitudes may begin to clarify some of the apparent contradictions in planning practice. For example, sometimes it seems that planners have a "love-hate" relationship with

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"the public." On the one hand, most municipal planning documents and planning theories assert the fundamental importance of public involvements in the planning process. On the other hand, however, many planners criticize the "apathy" of the public, and find it difficult to develop "successful" participation programs. Perhaps if we understand planners' feelings about the public we will begin to comprehend some of the gaps between theory and practice in community planning.

The Early Years: "Human Values"

Community planning owes its conception to the "Progressive Era," and to countless reformers who pushed governments to improve living conditions in urban neighbourhoods. During the late 19th century, a coalition of social workers, health advocates, and others pushed for sanitation, decent housing, better working conditions and education for the masses. They fought for "town planning" and other means to realize these human (humane) values.

The editor of the *Town Planning Institute of Canada Journal* exemplified the reformers' concern for improvement. Arthur Buckley advocated town planning to obviate public discontent.

The town planner believes that decent living conditions for the workers are not only possible but absolutely imperative if revolution and disaster are to be avoided (1921, p. 1).

His editorials reflect a certain commitment to socialism (cautiously promulgated after the Russian Revolution), and the belief that planning should benefit those in greatest need. The remaining pages of the *Journal*, however, show that Buckley fought a losing cause, as through the 1920s Thomas Adams' attitudes toward the public grew in popularity among planners.

On the urging of pragmatic businessmen, the government of Prime Minister Robert Borden recruited Adams, a renowned British planner, to the Commission of Conservation in 1914 (Armstrong, 1959; Simpson, 1985.) Adams set to work to convert the nation to his utilitarian vision of planning, proudly proclaimed

on the masthead of the *Town Planning Institute of Canada Journal:*

Town planning may be defined as the scientific and orderly disposition of land and buildings in use and development with a view to obviating congestion and securing economic and social efficiency, health and well-being in urban and rural communities.

References to equity virtually disappeared as planners sought to assure governments and business that "planning pays."

Convinced of the need for popular support of town planning efforts, Adams crossed the country giving public lectures, designing demonstration projects, and writing books and pamphlets on the importance of town planning for orderly development and growth. He organized the Civic Improvement League in 1915 to mobilize public interest in town planning. In 1919, he formed the Town Planning Institute of Canada (TPIC) to promote the professionalization of planning.

Editorials and articles in the *Town Planning Institute of Canada Journal* show that planners in the 1920s thought that the public did not understand the benefits of town planning, but that once shown they would immediately come onside and demand it.

One chief difficulty is in getting the public mind attuned to the forward move. No civilized person can be indifferent to the welfare of posterity. (Buckley, 1921, p. 3)

By 1927, the TPIC believed that the years of "popular education" had convinced the public. In a journal issue on the "Arrival of Public Opinion" editor Buckely insisted, despite newspaper editorials to the contrary,

that mystic entity called Public Opinion is on the side of town planning in Canada (1929, p.189).

Buckley went on to assure his fellow planners that "distinguished public opinion" (1927, p. 191), in the form of government leaders and some prominent businessmen, promised support. Yet only four years later, in 1931, the TPIC *Journal* ceased publication as the profession and its organization floundered in the

wake of the Depression.

Planners of the Progressive Era had mixed feelings about the role of the public in town planning. While they recognized their need for public support, they also blamed influential public leaders for giving rise to the problems which planning sought to remedy. They wanted cheerleading from the public, not interference. As "experts" and "professional" planners saw themselves as able to determine the needs and interest of the community. Public input in some ways impugned or challenged the planner's role.

Although the TPIC survived until 1931, by the mid-1920s town planning had entered a period of eclipse in Canada (Bloomfield, 1985). The economic prosperity of the 1920s turned government attention away from resource conservation and town planning toward industrial expansion (Brown and Cook, 1974). Local governments, evidently reluctant to employ civic bureaucrats to make development decisions on purely "rational" grounds, discovered that when necessary they could control land values without town planning (Bloomfield, 1985).

Despite Buckley's optimism, the Canadian public never truly understood or appreciated town planning. Real estate interests supported the zoning that planners increasingly promoted during the 1920s, but they thought town planning unnecessary and expensive. American-style zoning fit well with the populist nature of local politics, as it allowed politicians to respond to entreaties from constituents while establishing some authority over the use of land (Moore, 1979). Knowing little about comprehensive town planning, and undoubtedly seeing little reason to advocate it, the general public bought only the planners' pitch that zoning could protect their property values. Accordingly, Canadians came to equate planning with the flexible zoning practices widely employed during and after the 1920s and 1930s (Van Nus, 1979).

By the end of the Depression, planners' attitudes toward the public had changed markedly. Increasingly they thought of the public not in terms of people in need, but rather of individuals with particular property interests. They directed their

appeals where they saw hope of support; hence, initial concerns for equity and amenity gave way to the demands of efficiency and rationality. While the early planners saw themselves as working toward a "good society," post-depression planners thought less about new social orders than about helping communities function more effectively within the existing political economy.

Post-War Resurrection

The Canadian government ignored the American lead in economic and new-town planning during the "New-Deal." By the end of the Second World War, however, influential elements in the government saw the wisdom in planning and decided to use it for economic reconstruction efforts (Gunton, 1981). With Keynesian economics in the ascendancy, business leaders became more receptive to government regulation and no longer opposed such actions as vigourously.

Town planning enjoyed the patronage of government agencies set up to develop housing in the reconstruction efforts since

> the financial program of the National Housing Act provided loans at reduced interest for those municipalities which have official plans and zoning regulations (Faludi, 1948, p. 29).

Post-war planners, employed by municipalities (either as consultants or increasingly as staff) recognized that they needed public support for their proposals, but still they sought little direct public involvement in planning efforts. Indeed, as Faludi's remarks indicate, they began to characterize those who participated actively in debates as "special interest groups:" over the years that term has come to carry strong negative connotations.

In many provinces, planning legislation called for planning boards (with elected municipal councillors and appointed community representatives) to develop and implement town plans (see, e.g., Grant, 1988, pp. 261-262); however, even CPAC (whose subsidiary task was to encourage public involvement in planning) stressed the importance of trained expert planning staff to the success of planning efforts. As a Vice President of CPAC wrote in 1965,

> What the professional planner does is "take the responsibility for interpreting the public's wishes and needs in the physical form of the plan" (Murray, 1965, pp. 4-5).

As the expert, then, the planner determined public "needs" and fomulated a plan to serve the "public interest." A brief presented by the Town Planning Institute of Canada (resurrected in 1949) sets out its

> belief that a desirable residential environment can only be created as part of a well planned whole community, and ... the town planning profession is the only profession that concerns itself with this kind of design problem (TPIC, 1962, p. 91).

We do, however, find references to the desirability of active citizen involvement, tempered by regret that the public is not yet sufficiently informed about the utility of planning. As the editor of Plan Canada, the new journal set up by the TPIC in 1959, states (quoting Thomas Adams)

> Future greatness — particularly in quality — will depend on the wisdom of ... citizens, applied to the making of ... social structure, supplemented by the skill of town planning (Gertler, 1960, p. 131).

Planners wanted public co-operation — fewer protests, fewer appeals by special interests of the sort that Moore (1979) describes in Toronto. Most importantly, though, they needed the support of the influential decision-makers. As CPAC advised planning boards:

> Planning can never be really effective in a democracy without the full support of both the leaders of the public and the private developers upon whom we depend so much for the future shape and appearance of our cities ... (Murray, 1965, p. 9).

During the 1950s and 1960s planning became institutionalized as a form of political control over land and the way that people use it (Gerecke, 1976). Increasingly, as planners became the employees of municipalities they had to come to grips with their new status as civil service bureaucrats hired to manage development (Hodge, 1985; 1986). Editorials in Plan Canada reflect their fears that

> the planner is pictured as the dull-witted fellow, with the book of rules — the myopic bureaucrat ... In fact, the more the gap between proposal and practice narrows, the more do planners become identified with an apparatus of government, that is made complex by modern technology; fastidious, by the Rule of Law; and irrational, by power politics (Gertler, 1961, p. 95).

Incorporation of planning into the matrix of Canadian culture and society during this period did not mean an embracing acceptance of the wisdom and vision of the expert planner, as planners might have hoped. Instead, governments accepted planning inasmuch as it met their need to control the value of property and the character of neighbourhoods. As a result, planners became servants, but they could not entirely reconcile their professional ideology with the realities of practice. To some extent their ambivalent attitudes toward the public, their "employer" in the grand scheme of things, reflect some of the contradictions between the role of the planner in theory and in practice. Ultimately the profession's relatively uncritical acceptance of the planner's expert status made planners generally unsympathetic to input, whether from politicians or from the general public. Rational comprehensive planning made little room for "self-interested" and "irrational" members of the public.

The Participation Era

For approximately a decade, beginning in the mid-1960s and diminishing in intensity by the mid-1970s, a "participation era" encapsulated planning in the Western world. The amount and kind of public involvement in planning exercises changed dramatically.

The participation era coincided with the coming of age of the "baby-boom generation" raised in the prosperity of suburban North America. Following protests for civil rights and against the war in

Vietnam, virtually all "Establishment" activities, including the development and redevelopment of cities, became targets of attack by the mid-1960s.

A *Plan Canada* editorial acknowledged that, firmly ensconced in municipal offices,

> the planner ... is working his way into the Establishment and is beginning to assume Establishment attitudes (Richardson, 1966a, p. 98).

Protests spilled into planning as residents fought "Establishment" plans for urban renewal and urban freeways. Increasingly the public began to challenge the planner's expertise.

> Neither the other professions nor the public at large are sure of just what special expertise the community planner claims to command, nor are they convinced that (whatever it may be) it is really needed (Richardson, 1966b, p. 3).

With a trace of understatement, the same editorial finds the public "rather hesitant" (Richardson, 1966b, p. 4) to recognize the importance of the planner. Indeed, the nature of planning practice began to change in the face of a transformation of dominant cultural values and rhetoric.

As politicians spoke of a "War on Poverty" and a "Just Society" so did the public pay new attention to "democracy," "participation," and "freedom" (see, e.g., Pateman, 1970). Planning theory and practice responded with new interest in "the planning process" (rarely mentioned in planning literature before the 1960s) and in "citizen participation" (see, e.g. Lash, 1977).

The first *Plan Canada* editorial reference to a new perception of the public in planning appeared shortly after the publication of Paul Davidoff's (1965) work on advocacy planning.

> Wars on poverty, urban renewal and housing schemes, and other attempts to improve the lot of the less fortunate among us are unquestionably going to lead to the appearance of yet another kind of "planner," skilled in devising policies and programmes to assist — among others — the people who are affected by slum clearance,

demolition, relocation and, in general, the social disruption which physical changes in the environment continually create (Richardson, 1966b, p. 5).

The editor raises the issue because of its implications for the definition and identity of the profession. Evidently, public attacks on some of the values held dear by the profession (such as growth, technological progress, efficiency) caused consternation and reassessment for many planners. Ideas about the "good society" and the roles of planners in promoting it gained in popularity (e.g., Friedmann, 1979).

As communities came to grips with new times, politicians and planners began to open up planning to greater public involvement. A November 1966 editorial on urban renewal acknowledged the new role for the public.

> It is encouraging to note that in at least some Canadian cities attempts are being made to encourage the prospective "victims" to participate in the preparation of urban renewal schemes, and efforts are also being made to assess the social impact of renewal (Richardson, 1966c, p. 113).

Yet planners found it difficult to abandon totally the role of expert promoting the public interest. Just a few months later the subsequent editorial noted,

> It is easy to be cynical, but the fact remains that in the coming years the environment of the Canadian people, and its fitness for their use, will depend increasingly on **our** leadership, **our** ability, and **our** imagination (Richardson, 1967, p. 3 — emphasis added).

Decades of planning theory and practice led planners to see themselves as experts, and to see other community members as irrational, parochial and motivated by their own interests. In fact, reported an 1968 editorial, planners

> bemoan the mediocrity, the irresponsibility, the short-sightedness and small-mindedness of our city fathers ... (Richardson, 1968, p. 51).

Planners did not necessarily respect their immediate employers. Some argued for regional planning as the only rational

and comprehensive way to deal with urban problems (Cullingworth, 1987).

Experience increasingly drew planners' attention to the fact that cities faced complex problems. Conflicting interests complicated the planner's task. Public involvement in planning matters highlighted the diversity of values operating in communities, and simultaneously defied planners who hoped to determine a single "public interest" (Gerecke, 1973; Lash, 1977).

> At the very least, we should be prepared to admit not only that two equally legitimate kinds of consideration often conflict in the planning process, but also that we are not blessed with divine inspiration to aid us in resolving such problems (Richardson, 1969a, p. 6).

Public participation in planning forced planners to acknowledge their inadequacies even as it generated new public awareness of (and support for) the mission of their profession. Hence, the ambivalence of practitioners towards the public does not suprise us.

Planners who had to cope with residents blocking bulldozers, and who had to explain council decisions to people who lacked sympathy with their accounts of the "public interest," eventually revised their assumptions that the public did not care about community planning. They came to see the public as concerned about planning (especially in their own neighbourhoods), as having divergent (and often conflicting) interests, and as potenially disruptive of the development process (Bousfield, 1977; Rosenbaum, 1978).

> We are going to have to accept citizen participation, not just as a public relations gesture, but as an essential and integral part of the planning process, recognizing that Joe Blow whose neighbourhood is being planned deserves to have a substantial say in the planning (Richardson, 1969b, p. 3).

Responding to a political climate in which people demanded a role in decision-making, planners began to clarify ways in which people could participate

in planning: providing information, helping to draw up plans, facilitating implementation. Public involvement in planning provided a new ideological justification for planning "incorporating participatory democracy in local goverance."[2] Communities across the nation held countless public meetings and began exercises in "neighbourhood" or "joint" planning (see, e.g., Burton, 1979; Sadler, 1979).

By the early 1970s the profession seemed to have achieved a new consensus that public participation, regardless of the many difficulties it generated, formed an integral and vital component of community planning (Fagence, 1977; Sewell and Coppock, 1977). Despite a supportive ideological climate and the efforts of hundreds of well-meaning planners and politicians, however, the process of municipal decision-making on development matters did not change significantly. Politicians, planners and the public ultimately could not redefine local government to accommodate meaningful participatory democracy. Politicians had trouble relating to the concerns of an amorphous "general public" (Moore, 1979), or to protestors whom they called "anti-development" (Bousfield, 1977, p. 45). Planners lacked the skills to facilitate public involvement, and to evaluate the results (Bousfield, 1977; Burton, 1979; Cullingworth, 1987). Community residents often held unrealistic expectations about the extent to which participation in planning could mean control over development decisions. Unfortunately for those committed to citizen involvement, Canada has had limited success with participatory democracy. Perhaps, a cultural commitment to peace, order and good government has left Canadians cautious and subject to the authoritarianism of government, in planning as in other arenas of life (Cullingworth, 1987; Hodge, 1985; Stewart, 1976).

After a decade or more of "public participation," planning entered the 1980s changed but not significantly improved (Higgins, 1986). The planning agenda shifted. Control, however, remained with the experts, the developers and the politicians, not with the people (Axworthy, 1979; Gunton, 1983). Rather than turning planning over to members of the community, local governments expanded the

planning bureaucracy throughout the 1960s and 1970s (Bousfield, 1977). Participation exercises seldom progressed beyond what Arnstein (1969) would characterize as various levels of tokenism or co-optation. Critics argue that governments made no real commitment to public participation, but instead used it as a screen to mask the lack of democracy in decision-making (Scott and Roweis, 1977). As the 1970s ended, planners and politicians increasingly cited various "counter-ideologies" to justify their worries about participation (Christiansen-Ruffman, 1981; Rosenbaum, 1978): for example, they said, "Participation is inefficient (or irrational); it makes poor use of staff expertise; it is unrepresentative; it lacks the legitimacy of elected governments."[3]

Participation in the 1980s

The energy crisis of the 1970s and international economic restructuring left North American societies suffering from recession and fiscal restraint in the 1980s. With conservatism in the ascendancy, "big government" and "unnecessary regulation" came under attack. As a 1985 editorial put it,

In a world of neo-conservatism, planners will be hard pressed to demonstrate their relevance. Planners are regulators and regulation is now a bad thing. Planners are also bureaucrats and bureaucrats, always a bad thing, are coming to be viewed as expendable (Cleland and Curry, 1985, p. 6).

Planners today must again convince their employers and the public that "planning pays;" in the process, they are redefining their roles and their understanding of the role of the public in community planning.

Guest editor W.T. Perks asked a key question in 1980:

One might wonder what happens to planners; what could planning be about in conditions of no-growth, stabilized development, or even decline? (1980, p. 69).

It seems that planners keep their ears to the ground and move to the tunes of the times. By the 1980s we find planners interested in preparing strategies for economic development and in applying new technology and business rhetoric to urban planning.

Occasional editorials deal with the role of the public tangentially. The introduction to an issue on neighbourhood planning chronicles a shift in perspective from the 1960s to the 1980s.

In the 1960s . . . planning had to address the people and their needs, perceptions and growing political activism. . . . [Since the late 1970s, the] confrontational attitudes of the previous decade have been replaced by a new political attitude based less on conflict and more on proactive strategies of cooperative local community development involving public, private and third sector actors. The formal inclusion of citizen participation in the planning process also may be a fac-

tor in this change in political attitude. However, it may also reflect an appreciation of the fact that the future holds a multitude of changes — social, economic and technological — that must be accommodated in new strategies for planning at the neighbourhood level (Keeble, 1986, p. 32).

Many community residents continue to engage in public discussions in the 1980s, although they often seem more interested in global issues (such as nuclear disarmament, or the debate over abortion) than in the review of municipal plans. Particular local issues (such as granting permits for a sanitary landfill site) can generate considerable debate or opposition, but planners trying to get citizens involved in a lengthy neighbourhood planning process often find themselves frustrated by renewed apathy about community planning.

Although daily protests against development projects have disappeared, planning ideology and legislation retain much of the rhetoric of the participation era. Planning theories of all varieties continue to advocate public participation in planning, seeing it as a means for providing essential information and facilitating plan implementation. Planning acts have entrenched the right of the public to be informed and consulted on planning matters. While we may agree that the legislation does not go far enough to ensure participatory democracy in community planning (Grant, 1988), we must also acknowledge that governments and planners have come a long way toward recognizing that community members have the right to participate in decision-making.

The dominant concern for communities in the 1980s, however, is not how to get citizens involved in community planning but how to keep citizens employed and the tax base growing. Like the rest of Canadian society, planning shows a strong corporate orientation (Gerecke, 1987; Hodge, 1985). Borrowing the terminology of corporate executives, some planners now promote "strategic planning" for municipalities. Planners see theirs as a vital role in stimulating local economic development. In major cities across the nation, planners have become

back-room strategists negotiating with major developers to secure development projects for their communities.

Journal articles and books discuss the need for planners to stimulate local initiative and community economic development (e.g., Perry, 1987; Ross and Usher, 1986; Stankovic, 1987). As a 1987 *Plan Canada* editorial noted,

the shape, nature and success of cities can have a great influence on the economic future, and in the long list of possible actions, many involve the things that planners should be strongly influencing (Cleland, 1987, p. 5).

Planners, like their employers, have moved back from advocating active public involvement in community planning today. They provide opportunities for residents to participate in the preparation of area and municipal plans while recognizing that the most important development decisions often take place in contexts where the public has little input (such as in the negotiation of development agreements). While they prove generally favourable to citizen participation in attitudinal surveys, they cannot be said to strongly advocate participation.[4]

As Wirt and Christovich (1984) argue, planners still see themselves as the dominant players in community planning, making decisions on behalf of, not with, the public. They cannot abandon their "expert" status, but instead must attempt to redefine it (for contemporary relevance) as the cultural context shifts.

Perhaps planners have good reasons for their attitudes. The citizen activism of the 1970s yielded to passivity at worst or to a focus on non-local issues at best. The intense interest in local politics which characterizes some societies and which resulted in progressive policies in some American communites (Clavel, 1986) finds no parallel in most Canadian towns and cities. Voting rates show that Canadians have less interest in local politics than in national politics; furthermore, they often know more about national affairs (covered on television) than they do about local issues (Higgins, 1986). Although some people lobby governments for more rights and opportunities to participate in local governance, politi-

cians and planners seem justified in their assumption that most community residents worry more about economic development or environmental problems than about participation opportunities in planning decisions. Canadians have largely accepted the economic ideology which pervades our public culture, and hence we hear little outcry when residents are called "human resources" that governments need to develop.

Conclusion

This brief review of planners' ideas about the role of the public in community planning indicated both continuity and change in attitudes. Since the early days of planning, planners have recognized the importance of public opinion and have sought public support. They believe that the public will reap the benefits of planning, but they wish people know more about what planning means. Planners accept that in a democratic society the wishes and needs of the people play a significant part in determining the public interest.

Planners have not, however, held consistent views on the role of the public in the process of community planning. Reformers have, from the early days of town planning, argued that planning should promote human values and result in progress towards the "good community." The profession, as an agent of local government, however, made economic concerns paramount, and promoted efficiency, development, and rationality above all else.

Until the mid-1960s most community planners saw the public as unknowledgeable and disinterested in planning. With the planner in the role of expert, the public had a passive role as recipient of the benefits of community planning.

During the late 1960s and early 1970s planners revised their conception of the role of the public, and saw citizens as active participants in a planning process wherein various players reached some consensus on the public interest.

In the 1980s members of the public have legally entrenched rights to participate in certain aspects of the planning process, but participation has ceased to be a political issue, and community planners increasingly focus their atten-

tion on the role of particular elements of the public, especially the "private sector." Planners' professional jargon suggests that the general public, the working people whose taxes pay planners, have become "human resources" which planners, acting as agents of the economy, allocate for "public purposes."

Some will argue that the dichotomy drawn between "human values" and "human resources" is a false one, that planners continue to seek equity and human values through promoting economic development. Certainly the rhetoric of "free enterprise" suggests that the benefits of a larger pie will trickle down to those in need. Yet the history of our efforts as a profession show that we have not significantly contributed to greater equity in society. Perhaps we delude ourselves to believe that we can create the "good society" through planning. Perhaps our profession must accept the role that our culture has fashioned for it.

Planners' attitudes towards the community they serve develop in the context of dominant cultural values and concerns. In this era when deficit-cutting and free trade dominate the public agenda, it is not surprising that planners act as if members of our communities might be tools of economic development. At the same time, however, theory reminds planners that they provide a "public" service in a democratic society. Planners' ambivalence, then, reflects broad contradictions between cultural values related to capitalism and to democracy.

This brief examination of planning history begins to show that practice and theory reflect the cultural context in which community planning occurs. When members of the community take and active interest in civic affairs, and demand opportunities for participatory democracy, then planners take note and facilitate public involvement. The role that planners ascribe for the public complements the role they carve out for themselves: the more planners promote their own expertise and importance, the less significant the role they see for the public in the decision process.

Notes

1. The quotes and comments used to illustrate the argument come from a content analysis of all editorials of *Plan Canada* and the *Town Planning Institute of Canada Journal.* A sample of briefs prepared by CIP/TPIC, and journals produced by CPAC supplement the editorial comments.
2. Hodge (1986) argued that planners have always been committed to democratic planning, but Gerecke (1973) said that planners were not ready for participatory democracy. Such debate, which often occurs within the profession, indicates a wider cultural dispute about the very meaning of the concept "democracy."
3. Such concerns persist within the profession, and often come up in discussions of the role of the public in planning (see, e.g., Hodge, 1986).
4. In 1986, I conducted an attitudinal survey of a sample of Nova Scotian planners. The results, while not statistically significant (because of the small size of the base population) generally confirm Howe and Kaufman's (1981) findings from American planners.

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