

An aerial, black and white photograph of a city grid. A prominent road construction site is visible in the upper right quadrant, showing a grid of streets and a large, dark, rectangular area that appears to be a construction site or a large building under construction. The rest of the city shows a regular grid pattern of streets and buildings.

THE PROFESSION OF CITY PLANNING

**Changes,
Images and
Challenges:
1950-2000**

edited by

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Planning's Three Challenges

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When Lloyd Rodwin and I decided to hold a faculty colloquium on the planning profession, one of our objectives was to determine whether planning curricula need alteration in order to respond to new challenges facing the profession. As Rodwin describes in chapter 1, we began by looking externally at four other disciplines—economics, political science, philosophy, and literature—to better understand the extent to which the field of city and regional planning (CRP) was experiencing similar or different problems. We thought this comparison would be useful for at least two reasons. First, in learning about the mistakes of these relatively older disciplines, CRP could avoid repeating them. Second, CRP, which has been marked by self-flagellation since the mid-1960s, could perhaps become less self-critical and somewhat more confident intellectually, if one could demonstrate that the problems it has faced as an intellectual discipline are not unique.

In making comparisons with other disciplines, Rodwin identifies three criteria, based on the discussion of transformation in American academic culture in the winter 1997 issue of *Daedalus*. Without repeating Rodwin's analysis, I want simply to remind the reader that the three criteria are (1) methodological rigor or social relevance, which seems to be the central concern of economists; (2) the service function of a discipline, which seems to be somewhat deficient for economics as well as philosophy, notwithstanding John Rawls's (1971) heroic effort in writing *A Theory of Justice*; and, finally, (3) the struggle over values, which seems to mark literature. A fourth criterion, which signifies the strength of any discipline, is its intellectual capital formation, or lack thereof. Rodwin quotes Charles Lindblom (1959) to demonstrate that none of the social science disciplines—and that includes economics—can demonstrate that the new knowledges created “have been either unarguably or demonstrably necessary.”

How does CRP score on an assessment of these four criteria? And what are the implications of such an assessment for restructuring planning education? I want to focus on these questions in this concluding chapter. I begin by arguing that CRP as a discipline fares quite well in meeting the four general criteria. Perhaps that is why there were no loud cries for major restructuring of planning education by participants at the 1997 MIT Faculty Seminar, barring those of Witold Rybczynski and Alex Krieger, who argue for the forceful return of CRP to physical planning. I then argue against complacency by laying out what I consider three specific challenges facing CRP: (1) the need for a new synthesis of physical and social planning; (2) the need for new procedural theories about how to be effective in planning practice; and (3) the need for new normative theories to justify government involvement in shaping the destinies of cities and regions. In focusing on these three challenges, I do not contest Rodwin's assessment that CRP has grown out of the adolescent stage and is now poised to approach adult life, cognizant of all its limitations and complexities. My intention is to caution planners against complacency by reminding them that CRP faces three specific challenges which, if not addressed, eventually will fracture the fragile intellectual coherence of the profession.

“SATISFICING” THE FOUR CRITERIA

CRP seems to have performed reasonably well when judged according to the four general criteria of analytical rigor and social relevance, service function, consensus on core professional values, and intellectual capital formation. In Herbert Simon's (1965) words, the field may not have achieved the “optimum” level of performance, but it has met the requirements for “satisficing” performance.¹

First, CRP transcended the dichotomy between analytical rigor and social relevance nearly 30 years ago. True, there was a time in the early 1950s when CRP was mesmerized by the power of analytical techniques. As Melville C. Branch noted in his classic piece (1959), many had hoped that major advances in analytical techniques, such as operations research and game theory, would contribute to more precise ways of constructing comprehensive master plans for American cities. The planners who focused not on cities but on larger spatial entities like regions also had much faith in the power of analytical techniques. Armed with a variety of techniques and formal models, regional scientists had thought that they could lead CRP from its preoccupation with intuitively analyzed and hand-drawn master plans to rigorously examined and scientifically derived solutions to the problems of cities and regions (for a good review of this effort, see Isserman 1995). As Rodwin points

out, however, this claim faltered within a few years, as many American cities erupted in violence in the mid-1960s and civil rights movements politicized the interpretation of urban problems. The positive result of this outcome was that CRP matured intellectually, outgrowing what some have lightheartedly called “physics envy.” The negative result was that, in incorporating politics into planning, some lost the ability to differentiate between the two. On the whole, the issue of whether to choose rigor over relevance was put to rest. There was a general understanding that CRP faces, in Rittel and Webber’s (1973) words, “wicked problems” that do not lend themselves to formal modeling of the kind embraced by economists. In other words, unlike economics and philosophy, which chose rigor over relevance, CRP opted for the latter at least 30 years ago. The choice was not free of problems, however. In stressing relevance, CRP sometimes overemphasized political understanding over technical knowledge. John Dyckman (1978) had foreseen this danger when he noted that just because all planning has political consequences does not mean planning and politics are the same. Fortunately, as the political passion of the 1960s began to subside, CRP came to recognize that good practice requires both rigor of technical knowledge and political astuteness to understand social relevance.² In this regard, CRP seems to have reached maturity ahead of some other disciplines.

Second, CRP also seems to have performed its service function reasonably well, if the employment of graduates is considered an indicator of success. As Susskind, Frenchman, Frieden, and Baxter argue in this volume, CRP graduates are working at the community, national, and even international levels, and in various domains ranging from private, nonprofit activities to quasi-public and public-sector institutions. In other words, a broad-based professional education has served the profession well by enabling it to adapt to changing circumstances in which planning activities are no longer confined to traditional city planning offices but have become decentralized over a varied set of organizations ranging from community development corporations to regional planning councils. To my knowledge, no one in the colloquium systematically probed the cause of this success. Some, like Susskind and Frenchman, merely pointed out that the evidence indicates that the CRP graduates are gainfully employed and engaged in various socially important activities ranging from negotiations to reconstruction of declining cities and regions. Why the profession was able to respond to these varied demands and how well the graduates performed their tasks are issues that did not receive much attention, partly because there seemed to be a consensus among the participants that the profession has performed reasonably well. This consensus would have pleased Harvey Perloff, who voiced concern about these issues in the 1970s (Perloff and Klett 1974). Perloff argued then that the profession had

responded well when planning jobs increased exponentially during the 1960s, primarily due to sharp increases in federal spending on urban problems. But he was concerned as well whether, in the process of producing more and more planners, the profession had compromised on the quality of training. Yet, as we gathered for the colloquium in 1997, no one raised the concern that planning graduates have not been rigorously trained. On the contrary, there was a general feeling that planners have performed reasonably well, despite the reversal of trend in federal spending for cities as compared with the 1960s.

The third criterion is a consensus on core professional values, the kind the field of literature seems to lack at the moment. It seems to me that, notwithstanding the protests from Chester Hartman, CRP has unambiguously accepted that social, economic, and racial equalities are central to good planning practices. This is evident in the charters of both the American Planning Association (APA) and the Association of Collegiate Schools of Planning (ACSP). (See the mission statement of APA on the web page for the American Institute of Certified Planners {at www.planning.org. For ACSP, see www.uwm.edu/~frankn/acsp/mission-html}).) It is also evident in Israel Stollman's chapter in this volume (chapter 11), where he forcefully argues that there is no such thing as "equity planning" as a subfield within CRP, because the concern for equity is at the heart of the profession. As past president of the APA, Stollman presents a view widely shared by planning professionals across the country. Similarly, issues of ethics and social representation are prominent on the agendas of CRP annual conferences. In fact, these concerns are so strong and pervasive that they sometimes impede analytical rigor and deeper understanding of these issues.

Some may disagree with this congratulatory tone about CRP's stance on equality. These critics point out that CRP retreated on its principles in the face of an ideological attack against planning in the 1980s (for example, Marcuse 1984). This is probably true, but any assessment of this kind needs to take into account a longer time period covering not only the 1980s but, say, the past 50 years. Such an assessment would demonstrate, unquestionably, that at the core of CRP's values is a belief that inequality is detrimental to social cohesion, and that equality of opportunities enhances the quality of life. In this regard, CRP is much ahead of both economics and literature: unlike economics, CRP is deeply engaged with issues of social values; unlike literature, within CRP there seems to be a consensus—perhaps not absolute, but predominant, on the appropriate professional values to pursue (Hoffman 1989).

Finally, if the increase in the number of doctoral programs is an indicator of effort at intellectual capital formation, Rodwin's fourth criterion, then

CRP stands out for its achievement over the past 40 years. The first doctoral program in CRP was launched by Harvard University in 1942; since then, the number of schools offering doctoral degrees in planning steadily increased—to 30 by 1998 (ACSP 1993, 4). One could, of course, argue (as Lindblom does) that doctoral programs alone do not guarantee that new and useful knowledge is being produced.³ The most one can say by looking at the growing number of doctoral programs is that increasingly an effort is being made to produce new knowledge. To counteract this argument, one needs to provide examples of new knowledge that has influenced professional practice. CRP is not devoid of such examples. As early as 1974, Perloff and Klett noted that CRP had contributed significantly in demonstrating the importance that urban problems should be treated in a broad regional context, rather than in the narrowly defined jurisdictional framework that characterized federal programs up to that time (Perloff and Klett 1974, 169). During the 1970s, this understanding of urban problems was broadened further through excellent research on globalization, industrial restructuring, and deindustrialization. Among the faculty from planning programs who led this research are Bennett Harrison, Manuel Castells, Ann Markusen, Saskia Sassen, and Michael Storper. *The Deindustrialization of America*, by Barry Bluestone and Bennett Harrison (1982), was one of the first pieces of research in this topic area. These issues are now central to the effort of many cities and regions struggling to attract industries and investment. True, our understanding of the causal relationships between the global and urban economies are still far from precise (a point raised by William Alonso, in responding to Bennett Harrison's chapter in this volume). Nevertheless, one cannot deny that the sensitivity of policymakers to the issue of deindustrialization was heightened as a result of research performed primarily by CRP academics.

Similarly, CRP has contributed much to the better understanding of environmental issues, at both the urban and the regional levels. Michael Teitz mentions numerous examples in chapter 32 in this volume. CRP cannot take sole credit for generating these insights, but it deserves some credit for perfecting the art of environmental impact assessment, environmental dispute resolution, and so on (for a good review, see Susskind and Cruikshank 1987). Yet another example of CRP's contribution to intellectual capital formation is found in the domain of real estate planning. Prior to 1980, real estate issues were addressed only tangentially by a handful of faculty in business schools who focused on financial issues. Now, thanks to a growing body of research on real estate markets and finance within planning programs, planners are less likely to be caught off guard in the face of adverse market outcomes.⁴ This new knowledge has also helped planners devise various innovative partnerships involving private, public, and nongovernmental institutions

in delivering housing and facilitating economic development (for good examples, see Frieden and Sagalyn 1989). These are no small achievements. They confirm that intellectual capital formation within CRP has been relevant for practice, which is more than political scientists or philosophers can claim.

AGAINST PROFESSIONAL COMPLACENCY

I have argued so far that, as assessed by Rodwin's four general criteria, CRP has performed reasonably well. In his analogy, CRP, as a field, seems to have outgrown the adolescent stage: its earlier grandiose expectations and equally large frustrations have given way to a sense of limits and maturity that one associates with experience in life. Does that imply that CRP now needs simply to stay on course, go into more depth in a few areas it has carved out for itself, and begin to enjoy the benefits of the intellectual harvest reaped from hard work in earlier years? Rodwin does not answer this question directly, although he mentions in passing a few issues CRP needs to address in the near future as it consolidates its position as a distinctive profession.

One issue CRP needs to address is how to integrate spatial with socioeconomic planning approaches in the search for solutions to urban and regional problems. Vale articulates this challenge but does not specify what it will take to achieve such an intellectual synthesis between two planning approaches that differ considerably in their epistemological orientation. A second issue is that CRP still lacks theories of planning practice, both descriptive and normative, that practicing planners can rely on, a sentiment voiced by Stollman at this colloquium and shared by European planners (Albrechts 1998). A third issue is that CRP, as a primarily government-centered activity,⁵ must acknowledge and help counteract the growing distrust and dislike of government among ordinary citizens. These three issues pose significant challenges for CRP; if unaddressed, they may gradually undermine the importance of the profession. On hindsight, it is surprising that only the first of these three issues received attention at the colloquium. The second and third issues were largely ignored. I raise them in this concluding chapter in the hope that whoever may be planning the next colloquium on CRP will consider probing these challenges in greater depth.

CHALLENGE ONE:

INTEGRATE SPATIAL AND SOCIOECONOMIC PLANNING

The 1997 MIT Faculty Seminar generated one conclusion: architect-planners, whose ideas were somewhat overshadowed by those of the social scientists who entered the field of CRP in the 1960s, are regaining their

voice. Among the contributors to this volume, Alex Krieger, chair of the Department of Urban Planning and Design at Harvard's Graduate School of Design, articulated this new voice most persuasively. His argument goes as follows: CRP, in its quest for better understanding of social, economic, and political aspects of cities and regions, has moved too far away from its original concern and area of expertise—namely, how to design livable and enjoyable communities and cities. However, this conscious move away from traditional urban design and land-use planning has not generated innovative solutions to urban problems. On the contrary, planning has been reduced to mere “process management” to arrive at decisions that, in the name of consensus building, generate suboptimal solutions. Others who supported Krieger's (1997) call for the primacy of spatial planning were Allan Jacobs and Witold Rybczynski. Dennis Frenchman, Terry Szold, and Lawrence Vale were sympathetic to Krieger's appeal but are less critical of socioeconomic planning. Rybczynski argues that consensus building has stripped planners of their authoritative role to propose solutions to urban problems. Now, planners are more eager to forge consensus than to present solutions, which leads to outcomes that are not opposed by anyone but that lack professional distinction.

It is important to recognize that physical planners are returning with new confidence in their ability because they have generated the most compelling new idea in CRP: new urbanism. Krieger argued that HUD's allocation of considerable federal resources to propagate new urbanism in central cities is a significant step in a new direction, away from the last 30 years of socioeconomic policies geared to low-income, inner-city neighborhoods. HUD's embrace of new urbanism is clear recognition that socioeconomic planning has failed to deliver on its promise, that the only hope for the future is to return to “spatial determinism,” which has been berated by the social scientists since the 1960s (Broady 1968).

Can the physical planners resurrect urban design by ignoring the critiques of policy planners over the past 40 years? Have their theories and techniques evolved to a new height that justifies the kind of intellectual assertiveness Krieger represented? As an architect-planner myself, I wish I could answer this question affirmatively. Unfortunately, the colloquium did not demonstrate a new and heightened level of competence on the part of physical planners. It did demonstrate that medium and small-sized cities still use master plans, despite all their shortcomings (see chapter 5 by Philip Herr in this volume). New information technologies such as GIS and Orthobrowser now allow planners to store varied land-use data more precisely in digital maps. And, physical planners did invent new urbanism, the only new “big idea” in the field. (Alan Altshuler argued at the 1997 Faculty Seminar that one reason for the relatively poor image of the profession is its lack of ideas.)

Though significant, whether these achievements add up to a new conceptual approach for enhancing the quality of life of urban areas is questionable.

Colloquium participants did not directly address this issue, in part because they were generally skeptical that physical planning alone can adequately address America's deepening urban problems. This is not to say that they dismissed physical planning as a sort of cosmetic device superficially applied to a decaying and disintegrating social fabric. Clearly, the level of antidesign sentiment that marked the profession for a time in the 1960s has subsided. Now, even the staunchest advocate of socioeconomic planning grudgingly admits that physical planning, if done with adequate appreciation of socioeconomic factors, provides a useful approach to addressing urban problems. But new urbanism, which Krieger holds up as a model of new thinking, does not integrate physical and socioeconomic planning well (see Landecker 1996). Krieger himself agrees to this criticism of new urbanism but argues that it is the only proposal that embodies a concrete vision. According to him, although one can find numerous faults with this vision, that does not diminish its importance as the only tangible solution to urban problems to emerge since the invention of suburbia after World War II.

Although Krieger is correct in proposing new urbanism as the only new model available to planners, it is not an example of how physical planners can address urban problems on their own, free of socioeconomic criticism. If good quality of life is to remain the key objective of CRP, physical planners simply cannot ignore social scientists—in particular, economists, psychologists, sociologists, and historians, who have contributed immensely over the past 40 years in understanding quality of life. The physical planner's intuitive understanding of the economy, society, and polity is not an adequate substitute for specialized knowledge in these areas.

When subjected to close scrutiny, new urbanism, which claims to have a social understanding of contemporary America, falls apart as a new type of utopia, marked not by futuristic hopes but, rather, by nostalgic memories of a homogeneous, urban America that no longer exists (Kelbauch 1997). Also, new urbanism does not take into account such crucial social trends as growing income inequality, growing opposition to taxes of every kind, and growing job insecurity in a volatile and globalized economy. I recognize that no model could address all these issues at once; however, that does not mean these issues can simply be ignored by designing friendly neighborhoods of houses with front porches, broad sidewalks, and set-back garages. Thanks to research over the past 40 years, we know the limits of spatial determinism well enough to be skeptical of proposals such as new urbanism. I, for one, am unable to disregard that informed skepticism and return to the drawing board, animated by the prospects of a new era in urban design.

It is equally true, however, that we cannot throw out the drawing boards and concentrate our intellectual energy only on socioeconomic analysis. As Rodwin rightly points out in this volume, CRP cannot ignore spatiality and the three-dimensional understanding of cities and regions if it is to retain a sense of professional identity. As a field, CRP is more than the sum of urban economics, urban sociology, and urban anthropology; without an explicit recognition that space and place are central elements of CRP, it is difficult to argue that CRP has a unique, specialized knowledge that no one else can offer. This has been recognized by both the APA and the ACSP in their professional statements. It is a lesson CRP, as a field, has learned at considerable cost.

Starting with the collapse of the University of Chicago's planning program in 1957, up to the incorporation of UCLA's planning program in a school of public policy in 1996, there have been clear indications that CRP cannot justify itself as a distinctly defined professional activity if it deviates too far from its early concern with the urban built form and physical planning. Both the University of Chicago and UCLA's programs were designed on the explicit assumption that good planning requires a general multidisciplinary education, one that can help students transcend the naive idea that spatial planning is the answer to America's urban problems. Although both programs had a significant impact on the field by producing outstanding scholars, these scholars could find institutional homes only in traditionally structured CRP programs. In other words, both programs helped broaden the definition of planning to the point where it became "application of knowledge to action" (Friedmann 1987), but this very broad definition did not serve them well. Lacking its original connection to both the built and the unbuilt environments, the term *planning* lost its power to convey a sense of special expertise. This, in turn, reduced the power of claims these planning programs could make to university administrators of providing specialized knowledge that no other department could provide.

The benefit of incorporating a spatial sensibility within CRP is that it not only helps institutionally, it also increases the intellectual power of the discipline's conceptual framework. This was implicitly acknowledged by most of the Seminar's participants, barring one or two who argue for more specialized knowledge of design skills. This is a sign of intellectual maturity, by demonstrating an understanding that it is necessary for good planning to comprise both spatial and socioeconomic components. Neither alone can address urban problems adequately. Having acknowledged that, we must ask ourselves what it will take to synthesize the two. Who could do it? What will it take to educate such versatile individuals? These are difficult questions that need further discussion.

As a planning educator, my immediate concern is the duration of professional educational programs in CRP. As it is, a master's degree in CRP

requires two years of coursework, which many students find difficult to pay for. In a survey of 99 master's degree students in the Department of Urban Studies and Planning at MIT, the average debt at graduation was \$37,000 (Seidman 1999). What would happen if the coursework were extended to cultivate both spatial and socioeconomic sensibilities among the graduates? Also, since the planning educators themselves are specialized into one or the other form of planning, how can they be expected to assist students in intellectually bridging the two approaches? The colloquium generated no response to these questions. The closest it came to articulating a solution was to propose that studio exercises, of the kind central to planning education in the 1950s, return to the curriculum. To borrow a statement from Webber and Collignon (1998), the drawing boards replaced by cubicles in planning schools in the 1960s must return. The new studios, however, will be different from those of the 1950s; there is even some hope that new information technology and new multimedia facilities can provide the students and faculty a new range of possibilities for analysis, representation, and communication (see Shiffer 1999). Aided by these new techniques, could planning students and educators become more skilled at seeking holistic solutions, blending physical and social planning?

Needless to say, technique is no substitute for a conceptual framework, although technique does help in the conceptualization and analysis of problems. The challenge facing CRP is to devise a new conceptual framework (and an accompanying methodology) that would blend spatial and socioeconomic analyses. The search for solutions in a studio setting is only a beginning toward that ultimate end; it is a step forward from strictly socioeconomic problem analyses that reveal "contradictions" and result in "deconstructing interpretations" but that, in themselves, do not generate a new conceptual framework.

The key is to focus on a set of problems that require the blending of spatial and other sensibilities. In this regard, the relatively new category of problems considered by environmental designers seems promising. These problems require expertise in physical design and site planning, along with a deep appreciation of environmental issues. Also, they are amenable to visual analysis, which can now be done fairly elegantly, using advanced information technology. This kind of problem, addressed in a studio setting by a group of faculty with different specializations, may begin to produce the conceptual building blocks for a new, synthetic approach in CRP, a possibility Perloff pointed out as early as 1974, when he described environmental design as combining traditional design approaches with social science and systems analysis (Perloff and Kreff 1974, 170).

A second type of problem that requires a synthesis of knowledge of the built environment with socioeconomic understanding is that of declining cities.

Efforts by declining cities to reverse the trend by investing in large-scale physical projects to alter the popular perception of their future potential have been documented (see Farbstein and Wener 1996). These efforts—some successful, others less so—range from the construction of new baseball stadiums to riverfront developments to cultural and historic preservation of old industries as museums for tourists. Such efforts must be physical in nature, in part because they are intended to alter the physical appearance of decline, and in part because cities have no control over national or global economic trends that adversely affect them. Physical projects provide declining cities with the only mechanism by which they can attempt to influence their own destiny; as the evidence suggests, some have been successful in doing so. These successful efforts can become conceptual building blocks for a new synthetic approach in CRP if they are studied, in studio settings, by faculty members who can converse intellectually across their respective areas of expertise.

CHALLENGE TWO:

CONSTRUCT PLANNING THEORIES TO MEET THE NEEDS OF PLANNING PRACTITIONERS

There is a consensus among planning academics and practicing planners that one of the core competencies necessary to obtain the professional degree is an understanding of how to be an effective practitioner. The Planning Accreditation Board (1998) requires all accredited planning schools to offer at least one course for master's-level students on this topic. Usually titled "Planning Theory," this course, a second course on statistics, and a third on microeconomics constitute the core curriculum for master's students in most planning programs. Also, almost all planning schools require doctoral students to take one or two courses on planning theory, as well as a qualifying examination on this topic area, as part of the requirement for doctoral candidacy.⁶ At ACSP's annual conference, there is a special track of paper presentations and roundtable discussions on planning theory. Also, an official conference is held every two years or so on planning theory. There is now a special journal, *Planning Theory*, devoted entirely to this topic area, published by the Dipartimento Scienze del Territorio in Milan. Its editorial board is headed by Luigi Mazza from Italy, but the majority of the board members are U.S. planning academics. And there are at least five textbooks on planning theory, some edited and others written by sole authors: Faludi 1973; Burchell and Sternlieb 1978; Healey et al. 1982; Campbell and Fainstein 1996; Mandelbaum et al. 1996.

To look at the growth in the volume of literature and the extent of academic discourse on planning theory, one would think there must be increasing

demand from the professional community of practicing planners for better education on this topic area. Yet, none of the practicing planners who participated in the colloquium considered it important enough for serious deliberations. On the contrary, Israel Stollman, APA's ex-president, remarks in this volume that planning theory in its current form is not at all useful for practicing planners. In arriving at this pessimistic conclusion, Stollman reviewed what some consider the cutting edge in contemporary planning theory—namely, “communicative planning theory.” In this volume, Judith Innes summarizes the essence of “communicative planning theory,” and John Forester elaborates on the theory. Note that both Innes and Forester are academic planners, although both have studied empirically the nature of planning practice. None of the practicing planners who contributed to this volume—Cortés, Frenchman, Herr, Howe, Stollman, and Szold—refer to communicative planning theory or any other planning theory in discussing how to be effective in practice!

What explains this mismatch between the growing interest in planning theory among academic planners and the dramatically opposite lack of interest among practicing planners? And what kind of challenge does this pose for the profession and planning academia? To answer these questions, one has to look back to the early 1960s, when planning theory was emerging as an intellectual area of concern. Until then, there had been no need for a discussion of how planners could be effective in practice. The rational comprehensive model of planning practice, which guided the preparation of master plans, reigned as the sole paradigm of practice.

In the late 1950s, the rational comprehensive model first came under attack from political scientists and organizational theorists such as Charles Lindblom, Herbert Simon, and others (Dahl and Lindblom 1953; March and Simon 1958; Lindblom 1959). Rodwin refers to Lindblom's critique—that planners do not seek “optimum solutions,” as claimed in the rational comprehensive paradigm, but rather adopt “satisficing solutions” that planning institutions can derive under severe constraints of time, knowledge, and other resources. Unfortunately, in the mid-1960s, this kind of institutional criticism of planning practice was submerged in more political and ideological criticism by the planners themselves (Dahl 1961; Davidoff 1965; Rabinowitz 1969). For example, Lindblom was criticized for proposing only incremental changes when, according to the critics, what was required to solve the 1960s crisis was a major structural transformation (Friedmann 1973). Similarly, Simon was criticized for arguing that there are institutional limits to whether problems can be understood comprehensively, taking into account all aspects. The critics dismissed Simon as a conservative unwilling to explore radical solutions to social problems (Crozier 1964; Michael 1968).

For the sake of brevity, I will not recapitulate the various strands of the criticism of the rational comprehensive model except to point out one of its

consequences: institutional criticisms of planning set aside and argued against in the search for a planning theory that was explicitly political and normative. The overall impact of this trend was that it discredited rational planning style as futile, technocratic exercise and dismissed institutional analysis as being driven by the interests protecting the status quo; but it could not create an alternative theory of problem solving that practicing planners could utilize (Innes 1983). True, advocacy planning provided an alternative model of practice, but only for certain types of problems; and it was not a theory of practice for traditional land-use planners within established institutions. These traditional planners searched for a theory of action that was sensitive to politics but also acknowledged institutional constraints and contingencies (see Vasu 1979). Unfortunately, by the late 1960s, there was no such theory of action, although planning theory as a topic area for teaching and research had grown significantly by then (for a survey of the key articles on planning theory up to that time, see Faludi 1973).

Some may argue that the criticism of rational comprehensive planning was beneficial in that it helped the profession outgrow its naive technocratic self-image. The loss of hegemony of the rational model also led to the sprouting of many alternative models, ranging from Amitai Etzioni's "mixed scanning" (1967) to Paul Davidoff's "advocacy planning" (1965) to John Friedmann's "transactive planning models" (1973). But none of these models, including those that appeared fairly recently under the banner of "communicative planning theory," could re-create a new, broad-based professional consensus about what planning is, why it is needed, how it is performed, and how it ought to be performed amid constraints and contingencies in advanced capitalist democracies (Hall 1989). Consequently, nearly 30 years after the collapse of the rational planning model, we are left with the "regime theory of planning" on the far left (Lauria 1997), equity planning somewhat closer to the center (Krumholz and Forester 1990), and consensus planning even closer to the middle of the ideological spectrum (Ozawa 1991).

Some planning theorists claim that they have a new insight about what "post-modern planning" should be (Harper and Stein 1996). Judith Innes, for example, argues in this volume that "post-modern planning is about making connections among ideas and among people and that this connection process sets in motion a whole series of changes." In describing planning that way, she draws on the research of John Forester, who, in turn, was influenced by Jürgen Habermas's theory of communicative action (1984). For those planning theorists who consider Habermas somewhat insensitive to issues of power inequalities, Michel Foucault has been a source of inspiration. These theorists have focused on "the dark side of planning," hoping such focus would inject a sense of realism into an otherwise utopian planning discourse (Yiftachel 1998).

It is startling that practicing planners such as Szold, Frenchman, Stollman, and Herr, who contributed to this volume, retain a sense of purpose and optimism about planning despite the chaos among planning theorists. One reason practitioners can carry on with their day-to-day tasks is that they never relied on any “planning theory.” This, however, is no indication that planning, as a profession, can perform and prosper without a theory. Neither does it mean that practicing planners perform their tasks with *no* theory. As Donald Schön notes in his seminal work (1983), effective practitioners rely on implicit theories of action, learning from past actions about why certain types of interventions work, while others do not. Schön called these planners “the reflective practitioners,” a term that has gained popularity among academic planners, in part because it lends itself to multiple interpretations. If one were to ask a practicing planner, however, if he or she is a reflective practitioner, or what it would take to become one, one would be likely to evoke an ambiguous response (Baum 1983).

A key challenge for the profession, I propose, is to refine Schön’s somewhat normative description of planning practice and ground it in concrete institutional analysis of the kind Lindblom, Simon, March, and (my favorite) Albert Hirschman have cultivated over the past 30 years (for a good review of Hirschman’s work, see Rodwin and Schön 1996). There is already a move in that direction in the research by the “new planning theorists” who focus on the day-to-day practice of professional planners to understand how planners respond to different interest groups, negotiate consensual solutions, and inject their own preferences and values in the process (for example, Schön 1986; Forester 1993; and Hoch 1994). This research, however, is focused more on individuals—or *agency*, as sociologists would say—than on institutional structures. There is also excessive concern about political power and how its unequal distribution affects policy outcomes. This normative concern is important for the field of CRP. As I mentioned, there seems to be a professional consensus that issues of equity, social justice, and so on lie at the heart of the profession; but, this normative concern needs to be pursued with explicit recognition of institutional constraints and opportunities. This is not a new insight (see Wildavsky 1964; Benevise 1970; and Mandelbaum 1986), but one that deserves more attention than it currently draws in research on planning theory.

There are numerous institutional questions that planning theorists need to address if their theories are to be of any use to practicing planners. Foremost among these are questions about the institutional autonomy necessary for planning. The word *planning* assumes that planners have relative autonomy from market as well as social forces to plan.⁷ How is this autonomy created? What are the limits of this autonomy? Is there a relationship between the

extent of planners' autonomy and the style of planning they pursue? In other words, do planners choose a particular planning style—be it rational, comprehensive, incremental, advocacy, or social learning—or is the style planners adopt an outcome of the nature and extent of their autonomy to plan at a particular moment? These are important questions because the current literature on planning theory, best exemplified by John Friedmann's book *Planning in the Public Domain* (1987), assumes that individual planners choose their styles according to ideological preferences. Thus, one may decide to be a radical planner because one believes in radical planning; others may choose advocacy planning, a social learning approach, and so on. To what extent does this analysis accurately reflect why planners prefer one style over another, and why do the same planners choose different styles for different problems? These are questions regarding descriptive, not normative, planning theory. We first need to better understand why planners act as they do. Only then can we prescribe how they should plan. This has been the preoccupation of planning theorists.

Again, I do not underestimate the need for normative theories; but they must be grounded in a deep understanding of institutional reality, provided by scholars like Lindblom, March, and Hirschman (see March and Simon 1958; Hirschman 1967; March and Olsen 1989). In this effort, the relatively recent research by new institutional economists is useful because it focuses on the transaction cost, which is a major factor for all institutions. Planning theorists should build on such explanations of institutional behavior rather than allow themselves to become bogged down in their deep concern for structural imbalances in power relationships or other, equally difficult systemic causes. This is not to say that good planning theory can ignore the shortcomings of capitalist, democratic societies. It should address these issues only as they reveal themselves to the practicing planners in their institutional setting as they struggle to gain the autonomy to plan.

To summarize, then, current planning theory falls far short of what is useful for practicing planners. Much effort is needed to bridge this gulf. Failure to do so would further reduce communication between academic and practicing planners. The former would continue to consider the latter as conservative and beholden to powerful interests, while the latter would continue to ignore the former as liberal utopians whose theories are irrelevant to planning practice.

CHALLENGE THREE:

REJUSTIFY GOVERNMENT INTERVENTION

In his 1996 *Urban Studies* article, and in his chapter in this volume, "Reflections and Research on the U.S. Experience" (Teitz 2000), Michael

Teitz argues that planning, defined broadly as government intervention, has been under attack since the 1970s, although, despite this attack, environmental planning flourished during the same period. He provides some examples of the intellectual attack on planning, arguing that the recent attack on “taking” as an illegal activity can hurt the rationale for land-use planning in a fundamental way. He also argues that the attack on the welfare state and redistributive social policies since the 1980s does not speak well for planning, which seems to be in retreat, except in the domain of environmental concerns. Teitz, however, does not suggest how these intellectual attacks on planning are to be counteracted.

Lloyd Rodwin and I circulated a version of Teitz’s 1996 paper to the 1997 Seminar participants at the beginning of our deliberations. Our purpose was to utilize the paper as a springboard to generate debate. Surprisingly, no one responded to Teitz’s warning in a systematic way. Some participants, such as Nathan Glazer and Bill Wheaton, argued, indirectly, that the attack on planning was legitimate. Glazer, for example, argued that planning has lost the reputation it once had as a force for progressive reform, and is now preoccupied with creating various types of restrictions, which are at best a nuisance for citizens (see chapter 26 of this volume). Wheaton, a faculty member in the Department of Urban Studies and Planning and head of the Real Estate Center at MIT, raised the issue that urban planning is ineffective because small political jurisdictions do not permit planners to act on problems that usually cut across several jurisdictions.

On the positive side, Susskind and Frenchman argued that planning cannot be considered in retreat because planning graduates are gainfully employed in various types of jobs at various institutional levels. They argued that the old version of planning, institutionally located in city planning offices, has been successfully decentralized and transformed, and that the new version is effective in responding to the concerns of our times. Neither Susskind nor Frenchman, however, provided a reason why the profession has been able to transform itself. Sam Bass Warner also brushed off the criticism of planning, arguing that such criticism was generated by “libertarian ideologues, business interest groups and their advisors, public relations houses and lobbyists, media moguls, and politicians who have been bought” (chapter 27 of this volume). Warner called this group “obscurantists” and predicted that ultimately the obscurantists will be swept away on the tide of popular support for planning at the local level.

The only one who elaborates Teitz’s warning is Ann Markusen (chapter 31). Although she did not present the paper in the colloquium, we decided to include it in this volume precisely because of the important issues it raises. Markusen proposes an explanation as to why planning, which has been relatively successful at the micro level, is under severe attack at the macro level.

She argues that planners' most formidable enemies are neoclassical economists, who have delegitimized four concepts central to planning—namely, the exercise of foresight, the notion of the commons, equity as a normative criterion, and quality of life. On the basis of this analysis, she proposes that the resurrection of planning's popularity requires a three-pronged approach: planners must engage in public discourse to influence public opinion; they must showcase planning's "best practices"; and they must diversify into new fields.

Although I agree with the thrust of Markusen's argument, I do not think we should simply blame the neoclassical economists for planning's loss of popularity. We need to ask: Why did neoclassical economists succeed in influencing public opinion when the planners did not? Markusen's plausible answer to this question is reflected in her prescriptions: planners did not engage in public discourse to influence public opinion, and they did not showcase sufficiently planning's best practices. I am not convinced, however, that these are the reasons why neoclassical economists have been successful in diminishing the role of planning.

First, the neoclassical economists did not showcase their best practices either. On the contrary, there seems to be a growing skepticism about their interpretation of how markets work (see Thurow 1998; Stiglitz 1998). Second, there is evidence that planners at the local level are more engaged now than ever before in influencing public opinion about the benefits of public participation in planning (McClendon and Catanese 1996). And, finally, Markusen does not explain why the anti-planning attitude seems especially pronounced in the United States compared to Western European countries, although neoclassical economists are actively propagating their ideas all over the world.

To fully appreciate Markusen's concern, one needs to take a historical approach. Sam Warner asserts, in chapter 27, that, historically, Americans like planning but resist regulations. If regulatory activities are a key part of planning, how can one reconcile the fact that Americans like planning but not regulations? Warner does not see this contradiction because he does not consider planning a primarily governmental activity. He sees planning as a collective process of local-level decision making about local resources. To quote: "[Americans] like thinking about the lands, houses, stores, parks, and roads of their communities; they like imagining the future, thinking about proposals for betterment. And when there is conflict about such matters, as there often is, people turn out night after night to air their opinions and context others."

Is Markusen wrong, then? Do Americans like planning despite the propaganda against it by the neoclassical economists? The answer depends on how one defines *planning*. What Warner describes as a fondness for planning,

some would say, is an example of how Americans deeply distrust planning when it is initiated by government. In other words, popular participation in planning activities is not an affirmation of government-initiated planning. Quite the opposite; it is an indication that Americans are willing to challenge planning as a professional activity requiring specialized technical knowledge, which Americans see as a top-down idea that hurts local autonomy. It is also an indication that, although Americans care deeply about their communities, they are deeply skeptical about government-initiated planning, which they consider bureaucratic, coercive, and controlled by the dictates of individuals and institutions far removed from themselves. Perloff (1974) has noted this popular anti-planning attitude: "We are dealing with a field where our own uncertainties and weaknesses reflect the reluctant, almost schizophrenic, view of planning held by society at large" (p. 128). John Dyckman (1983) raised the same concern when he noted that Americans are, at best, ambivalent about public planning itself. He argues that, "unlike planners in some countries, where planning is honored ideologically, if not in execution, American planners are unsure of the degree of national commitment to their work" (p. 279). More recently, President Clinton confirmed this view in his public interviews while visiting China, commenting that, "In America, we tend to view freedom as the freedom from government abuse or from government control. This is our heritage" (1998, A8).

This distrust of planning and government was somewhat subdued and neutralized in the first half of this century, primarily because of successful government intervention during the Great Depression and during World War II (Bordo et al. 1998). Even after World War II, planning was accepted as a technical, rational exercise necessary for rapid urbanization and economic growth. True, there were some dissenters, such as Fredrick Hayek (1944) and Karl Popper (1945), who warned that state-initiated planning was contrary to personal freedom. As a result, some planning initiatives were withdrawn. For example, the National Resources Planning Board, in which Rexford Tugwell played a key role as a planner, was abolished near the end of World War II. Nevertheless, there was hardly any popular reaction at the time against CRP. Drawing professional legitimacy from close association with civil and sanitary engineering and architecture, CRP was successful in presenting itself as a technical and rational exercise necessary for the protection of public interest and enhancement of the overall quality of urban life (Branch 1966).

The 1960s ushered in a new phase in planning history marked by popular protest against not only planning efforts such as urban renewal, but also government activities in general. Much has been written about this historical period (Farber 1994; Surge 1998), so I do not want to repeat the old arguments except to point out that planning came under attack by planners themselves and also by urban sociologists, urban political scientists, and anthropologists who,

collectively, dismissed the efficacy of rational, comprehensive planning as political manipulation by dominant social groups controlling the government apparatus (two books that spearheaded the critique were Gans {1962} and Glazer {1988}). The arguments against planning cover a wide ideological spectrum. On the left are the neo-Marxists who argue that planning by the capitalist state was intended not to serve the people but to save capitalism from the crisis it had created (Harvey 1985). On the right is the argument that planning is, at best, ineffective and, at worst, counterproductive (for a review, see Hirschman 1991). In the center are the post-modernists who argue that planning is part and parcel of the modernization project and, hence, should be rejected as yet another form of social control to implement a hegemonic vision of progress (for a review, see Dear 1986).

The neoclassical economists' attack on planning, which Markusen describes so well, emerged from the right of the ideological spectrum simultaneously with the attacks from these other quarters. What instigated the neoclassical economists, however, was not their dislike of modernization. On the contrary, they argued that the pace of economic modernization had slowed because of inefficient and excessive government intervention in capital, commodities, and labor markets. In justifying this attack, neoclassical economists pointed out the sharp decline in the economic growth rate, which was accompanied at the time by a surprisingly high rate of inflation (the term *stagflation* was created to describe this paradox; see Killick 1989). Neoclassical economists blamed this outcome on Keynesian economic management, which had guided government policies, both economic and social, since the 1930s. They pointed out, time and again, how such policies led to the steadily increasing federal budget deficits (Friedman et al. 1970). Social programs, supported by federal and state governments, also came under attack as critics demonstrated that these programs were not self-sustaining and, worse, had been counterproductive in increasing demands on the welfare state (for a review, see Katz 1989).

The convergence of attacks by the neoclassical economists, neo-Marxists, post-modernists, and disillusioned planners themselves led to the outcome Markusen outlines in her chapter 31 in this volume. These attacks severely damaged the conceptual foundation of one idea at the heart of the planning profession, the notion of public interest.⁸ The neo-Marxists argued that the term *public interest* hides the reality that the interests of dominant classes drive planning efforts. The post-modernists argue that there is no such thing as public interest, because there is no such thing as the public. They argue that, in the name of public interest, the government and dominant social groups in control of government coerce other social groups with different identities and allegiances into following the modernization paradigm. They also argue

that there is no such thing as the truth, least of all, a truth propagated by the government, and urge a deconstruction of social reality to uncover the motives of dominant groups who provide a falsely coherent social logic to support their self-serving arguments. Hence, the planners had no special claim to the understanding of urban reality; if anything, their interpretation was tainted by the government's need for social control and economic coercion (see Friedmann 1992).

The neoclassical economists' argument against the notion of public interest was couched in the form of rational choice theory, which gained immense popularity in the mid-1970s. According to this theory, no one cares about the public interest. Ultimately, all individuals and groups are interested in pursuing their own interests. This is true for market agents, as well as such state actors as planners. This kind of argument discredits well-intentioned social policies geared toward reducing inequality of access to social resources. Such policies are dismissed as ultimately benefiting policymakers and planners by either increasing their budgets or providing new opportunities for "rent extraction" from prospective beneficiaries (Buchanan et al. 1980). In other words, issues such as equity, which are central to planning, are not under attack directly, because no one can argue against equity; rather, the attack is indirect but more convincing—that government programs which claim to reduce inequities are meant to benefit primarily the bureaucrats. The logical conclusion of this argument is to reduce government intervention and planning and rely on either the market or nongovernmental sector to respond to social problems.

The neoclassical economists' attack on planning was, of course, not limited to the attack on the notion of public interest. As Markusen rightly points out, the attack on planning took a variety of forms. One such attack, which she does not highlight but I consider central to planning ideas, is the accusation that planning, which in the past was considered necessary to rectify market failure, is actually contributing to "state failure." Some argue that state failure is ultimately more harmful than failed market outcomes because it benefits state actors and thwarts state reforms (Sklar 1979; Weiner and Huntington 1987). This argument gained credence with the collapse of the former Soviet Union and East European countries, even though the evidence indicates that state reforms in these countries were, at times, initiated by state actors themselves (Cohen and Hammel 1980). The discredited state argument is also used to explain the slow pace of economic development in Africa, although the African examples demonstrate that state intervention can both fail and succeed, depending on many other factors that are usually not taken into account by neoclassical economists (Nelson 1990; Przeworski 1991).

Responding effectively to these attacks on planning is a major challenge for both planning academia and the profession. It is a battle for the hearts and minds of ordinary citizens who must be convinced that government can and should play a key role in enhancing the quality of life of all citizens. Some would rely on the pendulum theory, which assumes that public opinion constantly fluctuates between two poles, one signifying affinity for the market and the other for government; and that the pendulum swings every 10 years or so, as it becomes apparent to citizens that neither the government nor the market can consistently satisfy them (Hirschman 1992). According to this line of thinking, planners need not worry too much about the current tide against government and planning. The available evidence, however, does not support this argument. As Michael Sandel (1996) has documented well, people's distrust of government has increased steadily since the mid-1960s; and, in many cases, social policies, once dismantled, fail to be reinstated, as the pendulum theory would predict.

Markusen proposes another approach—namely, that planners concentrate on publicizing their best practices rather than obsessively discussing their failures. This argument has some merit. It is true that much more has been written about great planning disasters than great planning successes. We know that there have been some significant planning achievements in the face of adversity (Osborne and Gaebler 1992; Tandler 1998). But success stories are not sufficient to reconstruct a public philosophy that justifies planning. Hence, some have called for a new, reinvigorated liberalism (Brinkley 1998; Matusow 1998).

The main argument for a reinvigorated liberalism is that the persuasive power of old liberalism, which justified government intervention in economy and society, has declined because of the crisis of the welfare state, which compromised liberal principles on many fronts (for a good review, see Sandel 1984 and Fraser and Gerstle 1989). Hence, what is required is the reconstruction of a normative argument for government intervention in the economy and society. Such a philosophical reconstruction should take into account past mistakes made by government and planning and should deliberately avoid an uncritical statism of the kind that would make planners cheerleaders for government. However, a reinvigorated liberalism would also require strong commitment to social progress and a worldview that government, market, and civil society must complement each other in moving forward toward that goal. How to create such a mind-set, not only among planners but among all citizens, remains the single most important challenge for the planning profession.

CONCLUSION

I began this analysis by discussing how the profession of city and regional planning has performed according to four criteria: methodological rigor, service function to society, consensus on core professional values, and intellectual capital formation. I argued that, according to these four *general* criteria, CRP has performed reasonably well. I also argued that this modest success should not tempt us to underestimate the gravity of three *specific* challenges facing the profession:

1. Physical and social planning still need to be integrated rigorously into a truly holistic analytical approach.
2. CRP still lacks theories of planning processes that practicing planners can rely upon.
3. There is need for a new, reinvigorated liberalism that would reconstruct ordinary citizens' respect for government and planning.