

INTRODUCTION

Yet many of my professional associates, kind and intelligent people, devoted years of their lives to advancing these wasteful and regressive programs. I have often asked myself—and many of them—how this could be. I have come to the conclusion that it resulted on the one hand from the temptations of power and decisive action it offered a group which had been frustratingly ineffective, and on the other hand from the *intellectual shallowness* of the planner's training [emphasis added].

William Alonso

With this issue, the *Berkeley Planning Journal* officially enters its third year of publication. Established as a vehicle of communication between the Berkeley planning community and the profession-at-large, this journal—and those existing now or in the future at other schools of planning—can be of increasing value to the academic planning field over the coming years. The field, itself, to use a term popular in economic development these days, is in a period of “restructuring.” Restructuring implies more than simple evolution or gradual change; it implies crisis and adjustment to forces of decline. Planning schools have experienced steady declines in enrollments over the last decade. The public sector to which the planning discipline has traditionally been oriented has been steadily shrinking under the forces of Reaganism. Whether, and how, the planning field will survive is not clear. Perhaps it even depends (dare we say it?) on how well we plan. The by-now old cliché of “muddling through” more than aptly describes the developmental history of the planning field and its schools. Further, this unplanned path (to use Alonso's phrase) may just lead to extinction.

In his recent article, “The Unplanned Paths of Planning Schools,” Alonso provides a controversial account of the history of planning schools. He observes that the traditional focus of planning schools—physical planning—was broadened over the 1960s and 1970s with the growth in the role and the programs of the federal government: “many of the planning schools expanded their subject areas beyond such traditional ones as housing and land use to include the War on Poverty, PPBS (Planning, Programming, and Budgeting Systems), environmental impact analysis, project evaluation, educational planning and so on.” He goes on to observe that planners found their skills could be used throughout the public sector, not just in the planning office or for the planning commission, and that the private sector, particularly

real estate developers and financial institutions, increasingly sought to employ them.

But it is clear in the 1980s that the planning boom is over. Two significant trends have precipitated the field's decline and subsequent need for restructuring. First, planning schools have been faced with increased competition for teaching their subjects. Other professional degree programs have designed curriculum to train students for the provision of services and skills to the public sector that is very similar to what students are taught in planning programs. Schools of public health, public policy, education, and social welfare are among those providing such courses. Second, students have increasingly found the planning school curriculum lacking. Growing numbers of planning students have thought it necessary to acquire skills required to work in, or, with the private sector. Thus, they have enrolled in courses in the schools of business, real estate, economics, and law. Concurrent with both of these trends has been the shrinkage in the size of the public sector brought on by Reaganism and privatization. Thus, combined with increased competition for their students, planning schools have been faced with declining demand for their graduates during the 1980s.

Competition to teach planning's traditional curriculum, gaps in the curriculum, and a shrinking of the traditional source of jobs for planning graduates have led Alonso to suggest the following prescription for restructuring the planning field. With regards to the curriculum of planning schools, he essentially advocates that we retreat to the past and concentrate again on physical planning. This retreat to the past appears to be based on the philosophy of "do only what you do best". Alonso believes, for example, that other disciplines have done a better job of teaching policy planning. Alonso further says that the products of our schools should be "generic urban professionals." In producing these generics, schools of planning need to extend their collaboration with business and other professional schools. Finally, due to the trend towards privatization, planning schools should rethink their traditional (e.g., public) orientation.

Alonso seems to view planning academia like a corporation that has diversified too much. Hence, the solution is to undiversify, to draw in our flanks. But is it really that simple?

This prescription requires careful thought. Down what planned path would it lead us? The quote of Gertrude Stein comes to mind: "There isn't any there there." In the end, if we take Alonso's prescription, what would be the justification for the existence of a planning school within a university? Indeed, the underlying implication of his historical account of planning schools, as well as his prescription for them, seems to be that there

is nothing unique about a planning education. If this is really the case, why shouldn't a university faced with tight budgets and declining enrollments simply carve up what is left of its planning department and give it away to related academic areas?

I would argue, however, that there is something unique about the field that continues to attract students. True, they may be coming in smaller numbers. But their commitment could be considered stronger because they do make greater sacrifices to obtain their degrees. Compared to their predecessors, today's students of planning face bleaker employment pictures upon graduation and many experience real financial stress for the privilege of being a student. There are no free rides—fat grants from the government—paying them to learn and experiment on the public sector.

The period of restructuring the field is experiencing affords us the opportunity to uncover (or recover), as well as strengthen, exactly what it is that is planning's unique contribution to the social sciences and environmental design fields. Examining the motives of the students still attracted to the field may provide part of the answer. Further, while many of the faculty currently teaching in planning departments do not hold doctorates of planning, there is a growing pool of planning Ph.D.s upon which to draw to fill what has been projected to be a high number of vacant positions in planning schools over the next decade. (See the *Chronicle of Higher Education*, 9/3/86.) Herein lies, perhaps, the potential to strengthen the uniqueness of the education offered by planning schools.

I believe that planning has an inherent public interest as well as public sector orientation and I would find a trend towards the privatization of planning worrisome. First of all, we need to remember that the public interest is different from a collection of private interests. (See *The Logic of Collective Action*, Mancur Olson, 1965.) Secondly, the privatization trend could contribute to an ominous vacuum, that is, lack of representation of groups who—not by choice—are more dependent than others upon the public sector. Thus, I would take issue with Alonso's prescription for narrowing our focus. I further believe that it is out of a desire to serve a public purpose that students today continue to choose planning as their official discipline while they enroll in courses in schools of business, real estate, economics, law...in order to acquire the skills they believe will make their work more effective. (And while I haven't taken a survey of planning students to see if my beliefs are confirmed, I have found through discussions with other planning students in my department that they hold similar views.)

In fact, Alonso's prescription strikes me as having the very same characteristics of opportunism and intellectual shallowness that he says were the cause of the past misguided actions of his planning colleagues.

I concur with Blanco who suggested in the Winter 1985 issue of this journal that the planning profession should not be faulted or accused of faddism for seeking out new fields instead of honing in on its traditional area of expertise. Instead, the field's teachers should be faulted for their lack of efforts to integrate new fields into planning. As Blanco writes: "If there was more communication between the fields in planning, it would...be evident that the shift in interest from physical to social to economic planning is not per se evidence of the rise and fall of social commitment among students in the profession. For...the commitment to people, especially to those in need, is as large as ever."

We hope that this and other planning journals will foster the much needed communication between the fields within planning, and among its professionals, so that the restructuring of the discipline results in an integrative, comprehensive approach to planning for people. It is in this spirit that I introduce the articles in this issue.

The opening article by Weiss is a case study of one of the earliest communities to adopt zoning legislation and form a planning commission; Berkeley, California. As his study makes clear, these early planning efforts were very much privatized, and the commitment to people, especially those in need, was in no way the motivation for their use. Benet's article focuses on two land-use conflicts between subsistence and industrial economies in North America. An economic solution that had its roots in the social planning of the Great Society was adopted in the case of Alaskan natives' aboriginal claims to land sought by the U.S. for the development of the Alaskan pipeline. In the case of the Nishga Native Americans' claim in British Columbia, no solution has been forthcoming because the provincial government refuses to recognize aboriginal title to land within its boundaries.

Heskin and Bandy analyze the impact of class differences between middle class professionals and working class community members on the community planning process, using the Route 2 project in Los Angeles as an illustrative case study. The paper by Hall—which grew out of a class he taught at the Department of City and Regional Planning—takes issue with analyses of urban planning conflicts in which the actions of the actors are viewed as predestined by their class affiliation. He presents four students' case studies of, as he puts it, discrete planning decisions involving a measure of local controversy, to illustrate his point that we delve

into the range of metaphysics if we attempt to analyze urban planning conflicts without concentrating closely on the details of the actual case at hand.

The Hernandez paper offers an historical analysis of Puerto Rican industrial policy. Under the governorship of one of our "Planning Fathers," Rexford Tugwell, Puerto Rico became one of the first in the Third World to experiment in land reform, publicly owned industries, centralized economic planning, manufacturing and agricultural cooperative enterprises, and self-help housing programs. Hernandez describes the development of these programs beginning in 1940 and analyzes the reasons for their abandonment after 1947.

Lastly, the papers by Campbell and the editor represent forays into newer subject areas of concern for planning. Campbell examines the conceptual issues that regional planners face in carrying out geographic and spatial analyses of defense spending and military production. Awaiting regional planners, Campbell says, is the task of tracing the impact of defense spending on their discipline and demonstrating in what ways their discipline can contribute to the defense spending debate at large. My paper is a detailed examination of the debate over whether the middle segments of the earnings and income distributions in the United States are disappearing. While this topic could be considered to belong to the domain of macroeconomics, it is my contention that an understanding of the changing trends in the income and earnings distributions, and their underlying causes, is necessary for effective economic development planning.

The subjects of the papers in this issue of the journal are a reflection of the planning field's evolution. They focus on the three major areas of planning: physical, social, and economic development. The topic of physical planning has not been abandoned by today's scholars, but, at the same time, there does not seem to be any trend to concentrate on physical planning and move away from social and economic development planning research. This is as it should be.

Nancey Leigh-Preston, Editor

NOTES

Alonso, William. "The Unplanned Paths of Planning Schools." *The Public Interest*, Number 82, Winter 86, pp. 58-71.

Blanco, Hilda. "Introduction." *Berkeley Planning Journal*, 1:2, Winter 1985, pp. 2-4.