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DEMOCRATIC PLANNING¹

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There is an observable tendency of centralized planning in the public and private non-profit sectors to *produce* policy but *reproduce* existing institutional arrangements and power distributions. One aim of this paper is to refine the hypothesis that the institutional *sponsorship* for such planning pervasively affects its value commitments, priorities, stakes, action styles, and outcomes. This hypothesis, which ties together the character of planning and vested political-economic interests, suggests a simple typology of forms based on financial sponsorship: top-down and bottom-up—the first focused on technique and the second on polity.

A second aim of this paper is to help the development of a democratic form of planning. The effort begins with a cursory review of the professionally adopted approaches to planning. This brief summary is followed by a description of the different facets of institutional "planning prejudice"—organizational, ideological, and professional bias—endemic to the overall U.S. planning enterprise. The main features of the bottom-up/top-down typology are then described in detail. The next step, examining the planning legacy of the 1960s—plural, advocacy, and radical planning—leads to the synthesis of a democratic form.

The choice of "form" to describe approaches to planning is calculated to convey normative as well as descriptive qualities, and to encompass ideological, structural, and systemic attributes. Reference to form, then, is not limited to professional planners' self-conceptions—say, considering the most "efficient" alternatives or facilitating consensus among pluralistic community interests; nor is it limited to their self-conceptions of technical craft—for example, cost-benefit analyses or group interaction skills. The notion of planning form looks beyond these self-conscious characterizations, first to institutional sponsorship, then to ideology, and finally to particular structural and systemic arrangements. The concept of form, broader than strategy or theory, works to shift the central issue in planning from how to plan to who should plan.

The democratic form proposed here is fundamentally characterized by decentralized financial sponsorship. Democratic planning, however, is not entirely a visionary idea. It is a little known variation of practice, one that has been growing in the 1970s with the efforts of "deprofessionalized professionals," but without recognition or positive sanction by mainstream professional organizations. Decentralized sponsorship of planning, nonetheless, currently offers alternatives for planners who find bureaucracies unproductive or uncongenial.

Rational, Incremental, and Mixed-Scanning

The desired outcomes of contemporary social planning are new policies, coordination, service integration, priority selection and resource allocation, and administrative decisions.² Three main approaches have been identified as means for achieving these objectives: rational, incremental, and mixed-scanning.

The rational approach to planning primarily involves consideration and evaluation of optional means. The strategy assumes the existence of a consensus on values and goals, and thus focuses on selecting the best alternative means. Rationality is considered to be multi-dimensional, not just a matter of economic efficiency. The technical forte here is linking cause and effect and thereby optimizing scarce resources. A second characteristic of the rational approach is comprehensiveness, the desire to analyze *all* rational alternatives.³

Criticism of rational-comprehensive planning is extensive. Most often repeated is the charge that it is politically naive to assume "... stable and widely accepted values" to structure goal-setting.⁴ Wildavsky argues that this is one of the most problematic issues in rational-comprehensive planning. His point is that there are no workable rules for creating new objectives, only government determinations.⁵ For Wenocur, all activity directed to reallocate scarce resources is essentially political, and "rational decision-making models tend to ignore this dimension of social planning and thereby

frequently serve the latent function of system maintenance, even as they seem to propose change."6 Claims to rational efficiency and consistency are attacked as meaningless if not misleading, assuming as they do, agreed-upon objectives and an absence of conflict.⁷ The general perspective is that so-called rational planners are not neutral but constrained by ". . . the preference of the 'prince'."8 Other writers join this refrain by declaring the model inherently elitist and change-resistant.9

Another charge leveled against the rationalcomprehensive approach is that it doesn't work. Wenocur describes it as ". . . a costly and protracted exercise in futility."10 The argument is that while social and economic costs are well considered by rational planners, they ignore the paucity of impact their planning has on budget appropriations. Wenocur's observations of rational planning in local United Way organizations tend to confirm that the approach "provides decision-makers with technical devices for ordering value preferences, but apart from the allocations process. It does not include mechanisms for resolving the clash of values in the more politicized allocations arena."11 [Emphasis added.] The model is said to focus attention on "... the internal qualities of the [planning] decisions and not to their external effects."12

The incremental approach claims to describe planning as it actually occurs. The built-in assumptions are that human capacities for rational problem-solving are limited because of economic and technical constraints, and possibly organizational and social ones too. Given pluralistic interests, conflict and error are said to be reduced by planning for change in small increments, a process of sub-optimization according to critics.¹³ Reaching for consensus as it does, incremental planning is viewed as especially appropriate when values and goals are not clear or agreed upon. The central theme of the incremental approach, then, is not rational means-ends analysis but consensus-building, integrating "selection of value goals and empirical analysis of needed action."14

Proponents of incremental planning rely on a pluralist political perspective. For Rondinelli, planning is "... a process of facilitating adjustment among competing interests within a multinucleated governmental structure. . . "15 The incremental approach is problematic on two counts: It promotes an unrealistic view of government and bureaucratic functionaries as neutral arbiters of conflicting interests. It also implicitly denies the existence of any differential in access to public officials enjoyed or suffered by different interest groups.

The mixed-scanning approach to planning, more recently evolved, presumably combines the best of both incremental and rational worlds. The

aim in practice is to combine fundamental rational choices and incremental decisions.¹⁶

Organizational, Ideological, and Professional Biases

The foregoing is a bare and selective review of description and commentary on the three planning approaches in general use. Although a great deal more can and has been said,¹⁷ the particular focus here is on the whole centralized, institutional planning enterprise. Much of this criticism centers on the ideological and professional biases of bureaucratic planners, and the organizational context for their activities.

Ecklein and Lauffer state that ". . . American planners have neither the mandate nor the tools to influence or direct basic changes in the fabric of society." They see the U.S. planning enterprise as limited to studying and improving system linkages, and creating or expanding services, a circumstance they attribute to a "lack of comprehensiveness." 18 Friedmann's analysis of the structural characteristics of the planning environment suggests another explanation. His experience is that it is not unexpected ". . . to find a distinctive style of national planning in every society . . . associated with different combinations of system variables, including the level of economic development attained, the form of political organization, and historical tradition."19 Similarly, Perlman and Gurin state that most of the differences in social planning practice are accounted for by ". . . the organizational context in which the activity is conducted." They cite Mayer Zald's observation that the practitioner ". . . is guided by the structure, aims, and operating procedures of the organization that pays the bill."20

Organizational Context

We may usefully inquire, then, into the kind of organizational context government provides for planning. In describing the competition for health care resources, a major activity area for counties, Alford's perspective is that government is not a neutral arbiter of competing interests but ". . . represents changing coalitions of elements drawn from various structural interests."21 [Emphasis added.] Structural interests are classified as "dominant," "challenging," or "repressed." Dominant interests need not continuously organize to protect themselves, because their institutional agents do that for them.²² On the other hand, ". . . enormous political and organizational energies must be summoned by repressed structural interests to offset the intrinsic disadvantage of their situation."23

Using Alford's framework to create an overview, a secondary hypothesis here is that a structural analysis of county government would reveal real estate and construction and industrial interests as dominant, equipment and furnishing supply interests and possibly organized labor as challenging,

and taxpayers and service recipients as repressed. Agencies within the system—departments, commissions, ad hoc advisory groups, and outside consultants—would be expected to be in the service of dominant structural interests.

The environment of planning promotes a process in which planners, rational or otherwise, are guided by preset objectives.²⁴ This point suggests an important difference between planners' "input and output constituencies." Input constituents are members of superordinate groups, community influentials, political decision-makers, etc. The input constituency is the resource base "... . to which the organization acknowledges a responsibility in determining its policy and program." Output constituents, targets for the organization's services, are subordinate groups, ordinary householders, unemployed workers, the medically indigent, and welfare recipients. In studying the effects of these constituencies as variables in organizational innovation, Warren concludes that ". . . organizational policy and program are more sensitive to the interests of the input constituency than to those of the output constituency."25 Ecklein and Lauffer's interpretation of these dynamics is that ". . . planning efforts may be biased towards the provision of services and the establishment of programs aimed at changing individuals rather than changing the basic structural arrangements of society."26

Kramer's studies of community development in Israel and the Netherlands are related in that they examine the effect of organizational context on the practice of a social work change-oriented sub-specialty. He outlines some of the formal functions of government sponsorship and subsidization, including legitimization of the change agent and the accompanying role, objectives, and scope of available resources.²⁷ Kramer observes ". . . a remarkable similarity in the manner in which the goals of community development in the two countries were shaped largely by the governmental sponsor and subsidizer."28 He downgrades the potential of community development as a force for change in Israel and the Netherlands, presumably because government sponsorship and professional cadres reduce it to a mechanism for ". . . social stability and control-for system maintenance, not institutional change."29 Kramer's observations confirm that community development practitioners—presumably social planners too-are limited in the issues they promote and action styles they adopt by the organizational context in which they operate: the professional is permitted by the government to use only methods and techniques that are "ameliorative and nonpolitical, do not lead to conflict, and do not require the use of pressure tactics."30 Geoffrey Vickers is cited by Kramer elsewhere to enunciate the principle: ". . . the source of resources

determines the type and standards of success and failure, character of decision-making, accountability, and the external relations of an organization."31

Ideological Bias

There is little uncertainty that centralized, institutional planning is pervasively influenced and biased by the organizational context in which it occurs. The ideological character of this organizational bias is equally of concern. Bolan states that planners "... have taken for granted the stability and desirability of the existing social order, as well as the institutions which achieve and shape it. They have tended to overlook the ideological and psychological dimensions influencing the planning process..."

A number of writers identify ideological underpinnings of contemporary centralized planning. Cloward and Piven propose that "... planners are committed to the bureaucracies and . . . they are committed to the functions the bureaucracies perform in a capitalist society for a capitalist class."³³ They reject the idea of planners as politically neutral, rational professionals acting in some broadly defined unitary public interest. Krause, with a similar perspective, sees health planning per se as a kind of "technocratic ideology . . . to justify the status quo in health services. . . ."³⁴ And Friedmann includes among "environmental" influences on planning, ". . . dependency of the economic system on private enterprise [and] characteristics of enterprise and entrepreneurial behavior."³⁵

The relationship between organizational context and ideology seems to be an international phenomenon. Musil describes a needs assessment study that surveyed householders, industrial and economic organizations, administrators, and politicians in Czechoslovakia. While the resulting plan was of little value in allocating resources, survey findings did provide insights about relationships between opinions on urban problems, priorities for action, social roles, and ideology. One finding was that opinions about service deficiencies ". . . depended on social positions and roles, on professional ideologies, and also on demographic variables."36 Musil notes, ". . . planners themselves are no exception in this respect and that their professional views, upon which they base their decisions, include elements of individual and group biases."37

Alford's study of planning in New York for health care reform characterizes bureaucrats and planners as "... class-based and class-oriented... within the severe limits imposed by the political and economic privileges held by a relatively small part of the population." Alford's observations support the general theme presented here: no small part of governmental planners' ideological loyalty is to the idea that freedom is to be understood as

free enterprise, the market system under the domination of transnational corporations.³⁹

Sardei-Biermann's exploration of the relationship of city planning and urban development in capitalist countries lends some perspective on links between more general forms of planning and capitalist ideology. The basic thesis explicates contradictions between ". . . the conscious intentions and functions of control of capital and the activities and functions of city planning."40 Three stages of city planning are posited for an evolving capitalist state: traffic planning, the threshold prerequisite to largescale urban capital utilization; zoning and traffic planning, the anticipatory arrangement of real estate uses to enhance capital employment and production; and comprehensive city and regional planning.41 Sardei-Biermann argues that "the crucial problems of city planning lie within the fact that it is both determined and at the same limited by capital utilization." The point seems to be that public sector planning objectives are ". . . reactive to the constraint of preserving capital utilization and surplus value creation."42 Castells has a complementary hypothesis that planners have no stake in opposing urban decay which benefits capitalist interests.43 His survey of current urban deterioration, highlighting forces of metropolitanization, suburbanization, and socio-political fragmentation, illustrates the capitalist interest in sustaining unchecked, destructive urban growth;44 and that "the implacable logic of urban decay is reversed not by the urban planners but by the urban movements."45

Accessibility & Advocacy

The capitalist/free enterprise ideology that underpins institutional planning explains to a large extent the differential accessibility of planners and decision-makers to market (producing) and non-market (consuming) groups. The picture is one of service consumers who do not have a *market* stake in government output, and private corporate producers with large stakes in the expansion of government spending and debt. This would seem to be the heart of institutionalized "planning prejudice." The issue for students of planning is how planners in the future will define their professional roles, whether they will interfere with or ignore market interests and free enterprise ideologies.

Addressing the 1966 conference of Planners for Equal Opportunity (PEO), Frances Fox Piven asked, ". . . what are you [planners] going to do in your offices?" ⁴⁶ Earlier in the conference the keynote speaker had charged that the mainstream of professional planners have ". . . forgotten [their] commitment to the welfare of all citizens and to cities. . . ." ⁴⁷ In a spirit of reform, the conferees drafted and forwarded their recommendations for amendments to the code of ethics of the American

Institute of Planners (AIP). The suggestions made by the author of the conference position paper keyed in on planners' ethical responsibilities to minority populations and the need to support the participation of those people affected by the planning process. Another theme in the proposed changes was protection of planners from employment termination without due process for conduct that adheres to professionally sanctioned standards.48 At one point, PEO looked to AIP for funding to support advocacy planning. The response to these reform proposals indicated that the majority of AIP members articulated a "strong feeling of concern whether [a] professional body can support program involving criticism of other members of the profession."49 The put-down of advocacy by the American Society of Planning Officials was even more pronounced.50

Returning to Piven's question of what planners can do to bring about social change—probably without the support of professional associations options and prospects appear to be few and dim. Kaplan proposes that reform minded planners become "inside advocates." He acknowledges the serious if not impossible difficulties in assuming such a role, but promotes it nonetheless as a kind of morally benighted mission.51 Davidoff plays the same theme with a minor variation: he suggests that white planners have an obligation to work within government agencies and if hemmed in too tightly ". . . should work quietly or get out."52 Part of my hypothesis is that another form of planning, relying on bottom-up sponsorship, can provide genuine alternatives for professional planners. The foundation and practice implications of this option are discussed in the next two sections.

A SIMPLE PLANNING TYPOLOGY

The professionally sanctioned and adopted approaches to planning are sponsored from the top down. They have been created, refined, and practiced—in modified and hybrid forms—in large measure by bureaucratic functionaries financially sustained through mid-sized to large, centralized, hierarchical public and non-profit institutions. The mutually shared theme of their overall enterprise, one they fraternally dispute, is *technique*, not simply formal analytical or quantitative methods, but a professional technology that encompasses the gamut of organizational and group processes inherent in policy development. Kahn's characterization seems a good one: "... planning is policy choice and programming in the light of facts, projections, and application of values."⁵³

More than one writer has commented on the transfer of public policy formulation from politics to bureaucratic expertise.⁵⁴ The implicit assumption of top-down-sponsored bureaucratic planning is

that "efficiency," "coordination," etc., are technical rather than political problems, in the main to be solved by refining and re-deploying expertise instead of rearranging institutions and relations of power. In this vein are proposals to further decentralize (read enlarge) bureaucracies in response to criticisms of inefficiency and unresponsiveness. Banfield's vision of a decentralizing trend, with lower-level units becoming problem specialists under high-level control, aims in this direction.55 The rhetoric of these schemes is "decentralization," "participation," and "devolved power," with bureaucratic, institutional planning cast as the instrument for protecting democratic values, ". . . enhancing capacity and opportunity for participation in community decision-making."56

Citizen Action/Participation Ideology

Technical approaches to planning spin off a similar ideology on citizen activity. While ". . . there is no agreement on just how and when citizens . . . ought to be brought into the process,"57 there is consensus that the process-whatever it may be-should be established and defined from the top down. So we find top-down-sponsored strategies for initiating, directing, molding, manipulating, and sometimes undermining citizen activity directed to policymaking. Rein, for example, sees citizen participation as one of three possible strategies of planning legitimization.58 The assumption, giving the benefit of the doubt, is that the interests of the sponsoring institution and those of the citizens, particularly their stakes in outcomes, are similar if not identical. Or that the sponsoring institution is a neutral arbiter of competing values and interests. Or that it represents in its officeholders a coalition that reflects all competing interests.59

The contrary ideology rejects the idea that planners' institutions have benign motives, that they are neutral or representative, or that the stakes of governments and citizens or agencies and clients typically coincide. This latter view is a class-based perspective on citizen activity: top-down definitions of "citizen participation" are discarded in favor of bottom-up "citizen action," a marked shift of emphasis in the process by which the public good is defined and decisions are made about resource allocation. It distinguishes decentralized units that are genuine instruments of polity and "... the meaning of the currently popular ideology of participation ..., in someone else's plans." 61

The difference in top-down and bottom-up sponsorship can also be characterized in terms of the tension between speed of action and scope of involvement.⁶² The top-down ideology is that expanded participation, a valued objective, occurs at the expense of decision-making speed, which is valued even more.⁶³ The bottom-up ideology rejects commercially based definitions of efficiency

that are tied to speed and accuracy of decisionmaking needed to compete successfully in the marketplace. This market-oriented definition, incidentally, is generally associated with ". . . organizational structure . . . in essence authoritarian; it stresses such key corporate values as authority, hierarchy, and centralized power."64 The bottom-up definition of efficiency replaces decision-making speed and accuracy with increased scope of direct but autonomous citizen engagement in the exercise of public power. In this model, "the time required to reach a decision should not be the shortest time required for a small, select group to make the decision, but the amount of time it takes to educate all the members in the meaning of the decision and to involve them with understanding in the decisionmaking process."65 [Emphasis added.]

Bottom-up sponsorship may also create a bias against decision-making per se, an ideological prejudice rooted in the desire to generally restrain government action, particularly spending and indebtedness. There is an economic rationale for this point of view. Buchanan argues that at the local government level, where the bulk of social services are delivered, there is an increasing need for public jurisdictions to eliminate public bads rather than provide more public goods.⁶⁶ His point is that "... the current yield [of public goods] at the margin is surely greater from enforcing more effective usage of [existing] facilities than in enlarging the quantities of the facilities...."⁶⁷

Paradox of Devolved Power

The sponsorship typology identifies different ideologies of power transfer. Arnstein's "ladder of citizen participation" delineates taxonomy useful for purposes of illustration.68 In what she designates as "partnership" activity—the lowest ladder rung involving a change in power relations-she observes that, "in most cases where power has come to be shared it was taken by the citizens, not given by the city."69 One problem in ascribing to planners and their government sponsors the task of structuring organizational entities for citizen activity is the institutional prohibition against devolutionary power transfers. Riedel states that "... no one gives up power . . . ," that so-called shared power is administrative decentralization, ". . . a franchise to perform a limited function in a limited area subject to conditions and terms set by the larger public [jurisdiction]."70 Findings of studies by Alford and Friedmann provide additional insight into prohibitions against devolutionary power transfers. They indicate that "government agencies serve to insulate dominant interests from political challenge," and that the absence of citizen control over public expenditures is due to the role of private power that wields influence without visible participation.⁷¹

The bottom-up/top-down sponsorship typology points to a paradox of devolved power for institutional officeholders and a participation-bind for citizens. On the one hand, urban disintegration and continuing citizen pressure push public officials to create more decentralized mechanisms of participation and service delivery. At the same time, selfinterest and institutional prohibitions constrain them from any substantive devolution of power, such as neighborhood-based taxation, bond issuance, or eminent domain authority. And without direct exercise of public power by the decentralized entities, hoped-for citizen participation to gain "input" or to communicate "output" remains an elusive goal for planners, realized mainly in statements of objectives for public consumption. The participation bind for citizens is that those in the low- to middle-income brackets cannot achieve power without some kind of participation, yet participation is uninviting in the absence of power.

Definition of Need vs. Articulation of Demand

The bottom-up/top-down typology also distinguishes between different *process* definitions for ascertaining the public good, the route by which public officials determine that a particular expenditure pattern best serves the citizenry. Cartwright's proposal that problem definitions are only "images" of the real world, and that such definitions determine solution strategies,⁷² is relevant for examining public good process constructs. My view is that problem-meanings are socially constructed by various *structural* interests, so that superordinate and subordinate groups tend to produce different sets of social meanings for the same situations and circumstances.⁷³

Top-down-sponsored planning defines public good in terms of need. Bradshaw outlines four approaches to determining social needs: normative an expert definition based on a professional standard designed to enhance the quality of life; felt need—the thing to be satisfied is translated into want through survey measurement; comparative need-differentials in service determine need, with those exhibiting pathology and receiving less service defined as needy; and expressed need-waiting lists are the accepted manifestation.74 Thayer contends that all four of these approaches contain normative elements. He notes the effect of service availability in structuring expectations and thus expressions of need. He denies that waiting lists are reliable indicators. And he describes the problematic quality of expressed need, given its reliance on the existence of public knowledge about services and on consumer confidence in making requests for service.⁷⁵ A more economically oriented critique is that relying on "instances of use" also ignores

spillovers⁷⁶ that are endemic to public sector activities.⁷⁷

Characteristic	Top-Down	Bottom-Up
Funding Sources	Public sector, taxes; private sector, corpo- rate income	Mass-based canvass- ing, membership dues, special events, gov- ernment and founda- tion grants
Organizational Context	Established, centralized, bureaucratic institution	"Grassroots," decentralized, nonhierarchical association
Ideological Origins	Planning profession, politicians, and vested interests	Social community
Public Good Definition	Definition of needs	Articulation of de- mands
Ongoing Priority	Generating rational policy choices, incremental decisions	Maximizing citizen engagement in political decision-making
Action Style	Analytical, consensus- building	Competition, conflict, negotiation, coopera- tion
Efficiency Definition	Decision-making speed and accuracy	Scope of citizen engagement in exer- cise of public power
Planner's Relation to Citizens	Citizens provide advisory input to planners	Planners provide advisory input to citizens
Planner's Relation to Politicians	Planners are on the output side of political decision-making	Planners are on the input side of political decision-making
Outcome Orientation	Policy change without affecting relations of power	Institutional change in relations of power and reallocation of resources

My view is that a definitional problem exists here. All four approaches to need are necessarily normative in that they represent variations in a topdown-sponsored planning process. The first problem is that all four approaches preclude decisionmaking by consumers on priorities for large expenditure categories or the overall pattern of budget appropriations. In effect, while a citizen may be surveyed for preferences on a group of services, one particular service, or a sub-category of service—for example, social services in general, mental health services, and marriage counseling—there is no prospect for determining whether the citizen would prefer greater spending (or less) on parks and recreation at the expense of mental health programs, and no prospect of binding political decision-makers to the survey results. My conclusion is that all top-down schemes utilizing technical means to assess citizen preferences about resource allocation priorities are normative by virtue of limiting the range of choice and the commitment to application of results.

The implicitly normative character of need-based definitions of public good is confirmed insofar as they preclude withdrawal or diversion of financial resources from the planning-administrative bureaucracy itself, despite its consumption of 25 to 40 percent of the total pool of resources. And they are normative, too, insofar as they preclude initiatives for institutional change rather than policy generation. Goodman observes that "if those who already control the economy and the government were willing to share power, then of course the problem would be one of . . . arguing the needs of different interest groups."⁷⁸

The bottom-up counterpart to definition of need is articulation of demand. Rooted in economics, demand is ". . . all instances in which households act, voluntarily or under constraint, to cause a local public service to be performed.⁷⁹ [My emphasis.] There is a shift to the issue of ". . . under what conditions it will be possible for the membership of a community to articulate its true needs and freely form a collective idea of its preferences. . . . "80 The current economic view is that demand for public goods is mediated through the political system, notwithstanding that ". . . an optimal political decision-making process has not yet been devised."81 The demand dilemma is that while public good is defined as commonality of individual preferences, there is no mechanism in a non-market (government) system to assess the aggregated preferences except through the political process.82

The classical political model in analysis of economic demand for public goods and services pictures government as a "quasi-market," with electoral activity assumed to be the connection between individual preferences and the provision of services.⁸³ The assumption is that

politicians present tax and expenditures options to voters so as to maximize the vote they receive. In this search for political support they will discover the preferences of consumers, innovations in service, and tax alternatives, and they will be motivated to maximize the sum of fiscal surpluses (benefits minus costs) going to the citizenry.⁸⁴

Another political model for economic demand casts the public jurisdiction as ". . . a coalition of blocs that cooperate in order to provide public goods." The coalition may or may not represent all interest groups.

Economists commonly reject as inadequate all political models for articulating demand.⁸⁶ Bish and Warren claim that "at-large elections, the absence of mass-controlled urban political parties and the failure to develop a social infrastructure usable for public action have greatly reduced the ability of residents to communicate more than the grossest

preferences to elected officials."87 Reiss proposes that civic accountability rests on questionable assumptions about American political institutions: that representatives can be called to account via the electoral process for the conduct of public employees, that every jurisdiction has accessible mechanisms that equitably resolve citizen complaints, and that public employees are generally responsive to the public.88 Reiss registers disbelief about claims of political equity; he also states that the issue is ". . . not only of responsiveness to *complaints about* service but to *demands for* service. . ."89

At least one proposal has been made to alleviate the political obstacles that undermine articulation of demand for public goods and services. Bish and Warren state that such demands are "likely to be efficiently articulated only by political units of different sizes." They argue that a major defect in the urban political process is "combining the demand and supply functions into one small group—the mayor and council." The remedy is ". . . separating demand-articulating units from producing units so that . . . the legal monopoly position of producers can be eliminated."90 Bish and Warren, then, would create an authentic governmental "quasi-market" with publicly empowered organizations of various sizes buying and selling goods and services. Competition would be introduced to the public sector: ". . . the producer must measure and cost out . . . production and provide a price to the consumer, produce an amount and quality of goods determined by an independently organized consumer, and keep . . . costs and prices below that of potential competitors. . . . "91

To review briefly, three principal features of a bottom-up/top-down sponsorship typology have been identified: citizen action/participation, decision-making efficiency criteria, and process definitions of the public good. Several other characteristics of the typology are treated elsewhere in this paper.

PLANNING LEGACY OF THE 1960s

It may not be possible to unravel the question of which came first, advocacy planners or the idea of plural planning. Either way, these two complementary ideas emerged through the unrest of the 1960s and were the antecedents for the subsequent radical approach to planning. The three nontraditional streams are the elements for synthesis of a democratic form of planning.

The necessity for advocates in planning is founded on the view that planning cannot occur without value commitments, 92 and low-income, minority, and neighborhood groups cannot expect their interests to be adequately represented by bureaucratic planners. A function of advocacy beyond creating plural plans is to enhance communication

between lay and expert worlds.⁹³ Planning advocates have been analogized to their legal counterparts. The role is to "defend or prosecute the interests of his clients when he and they together think they need prosecution and/or defense."⁹⁴ A distinction is made between "direct advocacy," with a client, and "non-directed advocacy," with a constituency (without a contractual relationship).⁹⁵

Another perspective on advocacy was proposed at the 1968 PEO conference. Davidoff defined the main issue as "... who is to control—the blacks in the community or the white professional..." His opinion was that planners should not advocate but instead act as resources. 96 The majority of participants rejected advocacy "for" or even "on behalf of" minorities that were not represented. 97 The non-advocating advocate in one conception provides a "... technical framework ... defining the terms in which the problems will be thought about.... "98

Planning advocates have a broad practice. Their services include legal assistance, help in negotiating regulations, and appearing before public officials on behalf of client groups. 99 Advocates typically contribute their skills to help community groups prepare alternative plans. Several participants at the 1968 PEO conference suggested that planners should place more emphasis on legislative advocacy, lobbying on behalf of client groups. 100 Advocacy planning also incorporates an organizing component. PEO president Thabit repeated the call for planners to "... create coalitions with tenants' organizations, civil rights and black power groups, and other professionals..." 101

Advocacy planning is inherently plural. The work of planning advocates is nearly always directed to the creation of alternative, community-based plans. 102 The commitment to plural planning stems in part from an ideological conviction that the "unitary plan" of the centralized agency is destructive to democratic values. 103 Plural planning is value-laden, never ideologically neutral. 104 As Kaplan puts it, "one set of facts can suggest different conclusions to different planners, while decisions as to amend or exclude facts often stem from one's value perspectives and lead to less than a complete exploration of alternatives." 105

Agency-based proponents of plural planning have set out several objectives of this approach. Some of the more important ones include relating demands on resources in a way that is responsive to changing needs, initiating discovery of new and "potentially controversial" services and organizations, adopting and implementing new priorities, and establishing constructive models for resolving conflict. 106 Apart from broad social and political goals, the benefits of the plural approach are said to include removing the burden of providing alternatives from public agencies, forcing public planning

entities to compete with other groups for political support, and creating opportunities for critics of the establishment to present constructive initiatives instead of negative reactions.¹⁰⁷

Two types of criticism are leveled at advocacyplural planning. From one quarter, the charge is that it will bring about unnecessary and unseemly professional conflict by transforming planning into an adversary proceeding. 108 Criticism from the opposite direction is that "while it is helpful [for powerless citizens] to have a voice, its existence doesn't in any way imply it will be heard. . . . " The theme is that dissent without power is "unheard and unheeded," and may in fact be destructive by draining off energy that could be used to build power-directed community organizations. 109 A related criticism of advocacy planning and citizen participation is that they represent a further refinement of social control mechanisms, ". . . allowing the poor to administer their own state of dependency"-without any change in the distribution of resources or arrangements of power.110 Goodman calls advocacy planning a "dead-end." He cites as a typical experience, three years of stalling and delaying tactics by city officials after they had made a written agreement to build relocation housing.111 His analysis is that "pluralist mechanisms" cannot cure the problem of undemocratic capitalism because they have no leverage against the powerful alliance of politicians, planners, and industry. 112

Davidoff is one of a few planners who ask, "who will pay for plural planning?" He offers the hope that if the idea "makes sense," foundations or government may provide funding. He was aware at the time, however, that such support was likely only ". . . if plural planning were seen, not as a means of combating renewal plans, but as an incentive to local renewal agencies to prepare better plans."113 Looking back to this period of the 1960s, there appears to be a consistent lack of concentration on paying the advocate's bill. Throughout 68 pages of conference proceedings for the 1968 PEO annual meeting, mention of financial support is limited to one three-line entry: "[Local PEO groups may] get operating funds by showing foundations the potentials of PEO action, it was urged; use foundation directories to uncover sources. Disseminate results to other chapters."114

The arguments and demands of Black caucus members at the 1968 PEO conference were precursors to the radical planning approach. Their claim was that ". . . PEO cannot define its role vis-à-vis the Black community, only the community can tell PEO its role." The radical model, then, took the leading edge of planning beyond advocacy to the issue of bottom-up initiated citizen planning action. The background of this change for some practitioners doubtlessly grew out of their advocacy experi-

ence. In part, it reflected a conviction that American political activity is not democratic, 116 and a widely accepted conclusion that "... militant social action directed toward changing the political power structure requires organizational independence and autonomy on the part of the action group."117

The radical approach impacted substantially on the role definition for planners. The main thrust involved a shift in loyalty from the needs of professional community to those of social community. Planners were to dispense with their outside expert roles and participate instead in their own communities,118 becoming ". . . nonprofessional professionals . . . [not] one who owes as much or more to the profession as to the people."119 Radical planners took up "guerrilla architecture," a direct action style common to protest organizations, with bureaucratic obstruction as the main target. Strategies included expropriating public or private property for alternative uses and designing and building new community facilities to circumvent institutional delaying tactics. 120

Radical planners go beyond technical definitions to a broader conception of planning ". . . as a generic human process in which all should actively participate . . . [with] equal opportunity by virtue of equal authority." The strategy is a remedy for politically grounded defects in planning, 122 with planners responsible for organizing participatory mechanisms as well as lending technical support. 123

PLANNING IN THE DEMOCRATIC FORM

The planning legacy of the 1960s—the efforts of advocacy, plural, and radical planners—laid the cornerstones for democratic planning. The accumulated and continuing experiences of these professionals who depart from traditional planning practice are translated here into a conceptual abstraction, the democratic *form*. In effect, the legacy has two facets: one reflects the ongoing practical experiences of planners; the other conveys an abstract formulation of those experiences.

The democratic form for planning is an ideologically self-conscious strategy to rectify three short-comings of the existing planning enterprise: the failure of political representation for citizens in the low- to middle-income brackets, the absence of other politically viable mechanisms for articulation of their demands, and the organizational and ideological biases of planners in centralized public and non-profit institutions. The centerpiece of this bottom-up conception is decentralized sponsorship. As one citizen told the head of Boston's redevelopment agency, "... neighborhoods should be able to choose their own planners and . . . that . . . would make planning more democratic." 124

To plan in the democratic form is to establish functions of the activity by sinking roots among the clientele; in effect, linking the characteristics of planning functionaries, their roles and statuses, to user demand rather than super-agency mandates. ¹²⁵ Lay people rather than bureaucratic institutions should also establish definitions of social problems. It may, however, be expected—as Hawkins warns as he cites Ostrom—that "a democratic theory of administration will not be preoccupied with simplicity, neatness, and symmetry, but with diversity, variety, and responsiveness to the preferences of constituents." ¹²⁶

Kotler sheds some light on the appropriate organizational context for planners working with a democratic form of practice. He maintains that professionals can be helpful in enabling a community to articulate its demands, providing that the planners "... work under contract from the neighborhood authority. They must be legally responsible to the community," he argues, "if they are ever to be professionally responsible." 127

Resources for Democratic Planning

A major roadblock to expanding practice opportunities for bottom-up-sponsored planning in the democratic form has been the unmet need ". . . to provide resources for local communities to hire professional planning help." Several developments in the past five years may indicate, however, that the tide has begun to turn and that job opportunities are growing steadily if not quickly for democratically oriented planners.

The 1970s were characterized by bottom-upsponsored citizen activity. Perlman's 1976 in-person nationwide survey of grassroots organizations indicates that "the seventies are spawning a plethora of grassroots associations involving local people mobilized on their own behalf around concrete issues of importance in their communities."129 Some of the more salient activities she recounts include: National Peoples' Action, a network of neighborhood groups from more than 100 urban areas; ACORN, a multi-state Arkansas-based organization with a membership in the thousands; 45,000 low-income Blacks in Virginia who have formed 50-member "conferences," which in turn elect representatives to countywide assemblies; Citizens Action League in California, Fair Share in Massachusetts, Carolina Action, and several other statewide organizations; and a list much too long to include here.

The commonality of the seventies groups surveyed by Perlman is that "they are independent community-based membership organizations (or coalitions of such organizations)..., not nationally based organizations with community chapters such as NAACP or League of Women Voters; nor ... advocacy organizations such as Nader groups, legal aid, or advocacy planners which act on the behalf of others." 130

A major innovation in funding grassroots organizations accounts for much of this growth.¹³¹ Mass-based canvassing, developed in the early 1970s on the pattern of commercial door-to-door sales and solicitation, has produced mainstay financial resources for controversial citizen action associations.¹³² Canvassing, however, may be having impact greater than might be apparent by weighing only the income it produces directly. By providing a permanent, dependable income *base*, it potentiates the value of other fundraising strategies—membership dues, special events, and grants from small foundation, which in the past have by themselves been inadequate to ensure organizational survival.

Canvassing and its effect on other sources of income for grassroots organizations have expanded opportunities for planning under decentralized sponsorship. Although Perlman's survey is selective and not a complete inventory of organizations that are planning in the democratic form, her count reveals a total of more than 250 employees on their rosters alone.

The success of mass-based-by-mail canvassing has created additional opportunities in the broader arena of nonpartisan politics, headed up by organizations such as Common Cause, the Sierra Club, and Public Citizen. These national lobbies with grassroots constituencies—bottom-up sponsored but top-down directed—are raising an estimated \$10 million annually. These organizations are far from perfect representations of planning in the democratic form. Yet, their bottom-up sponsorship ensures the presence of some desirable features associated with the type.

Finally, community development corporations (CDCs) may be less than ideal but still acceptable settings for democratic planning. CDCs are locally initiated and controlled private cooperatives, often in low-income urban areas, for locality-based socioeconomic development. By 1975 about 100 CDCs were in operation throughout the country. Seed funding is via federal grants and as of June 30, 1973, more than \$130 million had been awarded through the Special Impact Program under Title

I-D of the 1967 Economic Opportunity Act. ¹³⁵ CDCs are stretched into the democratic form despite their reliance on federal support because many are operating successful, income-producing enterprises that are headed toward independence. It is not possible to determine the extent of job opportunities created for planners by CDCs, but information presented by Yin and Yates on eight of these organizations showed that approximately one thousand jobs of all types were generated directly. ¹³⁶

Democratic planning is hardly to be denied: professional planners are *doing it*. Decentralized sponsorship has produced professional quality plans and sustained citizens in the low- to middle-income brackets in direct engagement with the exercise of public power.¹³⁷ The question, then, is whether a fragment of the planning profession in a relatively small number of nontraditional settings can continue and expand their experience so as to refine and consolidate a workable *form* and attract newly trained professional colleagues to it. This prospect hinges on the potential for growth of mass-based fundraising.

Beyond door-to-door and by-mail canvassing, there are a number of promising yet untried or unproven incipient fundraising technologies. The "intra-bank transfer" awaits serious grassroots developmental efforts. The idea is a check-off type of dues plan centered on the organization member's bank rather than workplace. A member with a checking or savings account would instruct the bank to regularly transfer funds to the organization's account. Creation of small-scale public jurisdictions with taxing authority is another option for decentralized sponsorship. Small communities near Fresno and Isla Vista, California are attempting this strategy.¹³⁸ Enterprise based on middle-level technology may be the most futuristic of all strategies for decentralized sponsorship of planning. Community organizers and democratic social planners in coming years will test and then adopt or reject these strategies—and no doubt dream up new ones for their successors.

¹ Originally written and submitted for SW 253A at the UC Berkeley School of Social Welfare, Winter 1977.

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- ⁴³ Manuel Castells, *The Wild City: An Interpretative Summary of Research and Analyses of the U.S. Urban Crisis* (Santa Cruz, CA: Council for European Studies, September 1975), p 3. Ditto.
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- ⁴⁵ Ibid., p. 61.
- ⁴⁶ Conference proceedings, *Planning Action for Equal Opportunity* (New York: Planners for Equal Opportunity, 1966), p. 11.
- ⁴⁷ Ibid. p. 6.
- 48 Ibid., pp. 29, 30
- ⁴⁹ Conference proceedings, *Urban Crisis = Planning Opportunity* (New York: Planners for Equal Opportunity, 1968), p. 5.
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- ⁵⁷ Ralph M. Kramer and Harry Specht (eds.), *Readings in Community Organization Practice* (Englewood Cliffs, NJ: PrenticeHall, 1969), p. 389.
- ⁵⁸ Martin Rein, "Social planning: the search for legitimacy," in (Ralph M. Kramer.and Harry Specht, eds.) *Readings in Community Organization Practice*, pp. 228-33. Rein argues that directly-democratic forms—the whole range from "input" to "control" types—are but intermediate steps to more representative political structures.
- ⁵⁹ Peter O. Steiner, "The public sector and the public interest," in (Robert H. Haveman and Julius Margolis, eds.) *Public Expenditures and Policy Analysis* (Chicago: Markham, 1970), pp. 46-8.
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- 61 John Friedmann, *Retracking America, A Theory of Transactive Planning* (Garden City, NY: Anchor Books, 1973), p. xvii. Notwithstanding that he calls attention to the distinction, Friedmann's conception for implementing "transactive" planning seems to consist of a hierarchy of voluntary, advisory associations—in a huge "cellular structure"—mandated by nominal devolved power (p. 196). As if to ensure participation "in someone else's plans," he notes that "the participant style of planning obviously cannot exist without its complement of corporate, policy, and command styles. These will become increasingly important at higher assembly levels, where . . . commands must be used to deal with hypercritical issues of societal guidance that cannot be left to the looser, more permissive framework of field controls and voluntary compliance" (p. 210).
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