

Listening to Early and Mid-Career Planners: Some Initial Thoughts on How Planning Educators Might Respond: a Working Paper.

John Jackson
School of Global, Urban and Social Studies
RMIT, Victoria

Abstract: Ongoing conversations with senior practising planners in Glasgow, Melbourne and Toronto indicate how, in different ways, they have adapted their practices over the years from essentially Keynesian to neo-liberal economic and political settings (Thomas and Healey 1991, Inch 2013, Horak 2013). But what of younger planners or, as one said: “the children of Thatcher”? What of their formative years, education, personal and professional values and of their experiences and views on current planning practices? Thus five such Torontonians (November 2014) and six Glaswegian planners (July 2015) were interviewed. This paper is a first cut of what they said and some reflections on what this might mean for planning education.

Drawing on recent conversations with eleven early to mid-career planners working in Glasgow and Toronto, it is speculated that their formative experiences, professional values and practices might be significantly different from those planners known as ‘baby boomers’, those born between 1945 and 1960, planners now 55 to 70 years old. If this is so, this may have ramifications for planning education. As a planning educator of baby boomer vintage it is perhaps time to take stock, hence this working paper to set the stock take in motion.

Growing up in an industrial West Riding town not unlike Glasgow in terms of deindustrialisation and slum clearance and having lived in Canada, I am conscious of having similar formative experiences and values as older planners in Glasgow and Toronto, planners I continue to meet and talk with. But how relevant are their experiences and mine as a teacher in designing planning programmes for the next generation of planning students? What do younger practising planners say about their planning education and related personal and professional experiences? Do they raise issues for academics rewriting planning programmes to consider? Maybe the constants in the experiences of both generations are more important than the differences.

For Australian planners, the majority working or teaching in the various state capital cities, the thoughts of young planners working in greater Glasgow and Toronto may be of value. These cities were all port cities in the British Empire, their governance and planning arrangements being similar. Now Glasgow and Toronto have very different growth projections, the former being below all Australian state capitals, the latter above both Melbourne and Sydney. Glasgow is a city trying to re-invent itself: as a European rather than provincial British city, as a green city, as a city that welcomes asylum seekers and refugees, but above all, as a city desperate for investment. It is a city where many of the older planners are now retiring or have been made redundant opening careers for younger planners. Toronto, in contrast, has had largely uninterrupted massive growth since the beginning of this century, the Global Financial Crisis being little more than a momentary blip. In 2014 it had more cranes on the sky line than the largest four US cities combined. Torontonians, always doubtful of US-style open market systems and frustrated by freeway gridlock that this rapid growth has brought, and as recent elections show, have welcomed metropolitan plans based on firm growth boundaries and are now backing major re-investment in public transit.

Young planners in both cities have exciting though different careers to look forward to.

Proceedings of ANZAPS 2015, RMIT University Melbourne

Historical Context

Baby boomers in western countries like Australia, Canada and Great Britain grew up in a post-war period when elected national politicians were not only concerned with post-war reconstruction but with avoiding a repeat of the 1930s Great Depression, a time of mass unemployment and political instability. Post-war national economic policies thus were underpinned by Keynesian public policy ideas, based in part on counter-cyclical government interventions in otherwise boom-and-bust capitalist economies. The aim was not only to limit economic excesses but to stay consequential employment uncertainties and related social deprivations and to avoid a return to the political unrest of the 1930s. The Keynesian-based Welfare State put in place health and education benefits that baby boomers' parents had not had, and enabled working people to secure long-term work that led, in the 1950s through to the 1970s, to widespread home and car ownership. Working people's urge for self-improvement, with their children to the fore, could now being realised. Many could aspire to become professionals, the case of myself and my siblings, and many of my older interviewees.

Keynesian economic policy also meant government controls over the land market and the provision of funding for public housing, considered then to be an alternative to private renting and home ownership, rather than residual housing as now.

Planners in the 1950s and 1960s not only had political legitimacy but, in North America in particular, they increasingly drew on the applied sciences. For example, the influential Chicago School of Planning adapted ecological concepts to city planning, an approach furthered by applying cybernetics - a cross-disciplinary approach for exploring regulatory systems pioneered in World War II to better strategise and then enact military operations - to planning processes. McLoughlin's *Urban and Regional Planning: a Systems Approach* (1969) and Chadwick's *A Systems View of Planning* (1971) became required reading for British planners. Thus post-war planners also gained in professional status, better able to distinguish themselves from engineers and architects, till then the dominant professions shaping the built environment.

By the 1970s and 1980s many Australian, British and Canadian planners saw themselves as social reformers in the manner of Keynesian thinking, while others regarding themselves more as policy analysts, avowedly apolitical in their advice to governments. Urban and regional planning was a major part of public life, many English and Scottish planners heading up new Australian and Canadian planning agencies.

While doubts about the efficacy of a systems approach were surfacing in academia (Lindblom 1959, Wildavsky 1973), it was the first major post-WWII crisis in the global economic system, brought on by the first Middle Eastern War and the subsequent shortage of oil, that broke the Keynesian foundations to various nations' public policies.

For example, in Britain, stagflation - the unanticipated coincidence of high rates of inflation and high rates of unemployment - undid the dominant Keynesian view of how to achieve the good life, to be discarded in favour of neo-liberal thinking. A rival belief system to Keynesian thinking from the

1930s, it too sought to counter the rise of fascism and communism in Europe at that time. Frederick von Hayek, a contemporary of John Keynes at Cambridge University, argued state interventions in the market curtailed individuals' freedoms, such interference being "the road to serfdom" (2001 republication). Governments' small but vital role in people's lives, according to von Hayek, was to protect their freedoms to live and invest as they wanted to, thus securing nations' political stability, and so their economic progress and in turn, everyone's social wellbeing.

Literature Review

Ongoing conversations with senior practising planners in Glasgow, Melbourne and Toronto indicate how, in different ways, they have adapted their practices over the years from essentially Keynesian to neo-liberal economic and political settings (Thomas and Healey 1991, Jackson 2009, Inch 2013, Horak 2013). But what of younger planners or, as one said: "the children of Thatcher"? What of their formative years, education, personal and professional values and of their experiences and views on current planning practices?

There has been a recent resurgence in interest in learning from young planning practitioners' reflections on their work (Tasan-Kok and Oranje, forthcoming). Such work has roots at least going back to the 1970s and 1980s, the formative years of late-born baby boomers. In Britain there was the pioneering work of Healey and Underwood (1978) followed by Thomas and Healey (1991) who, based on various 'baby boomer' planners' reflections on their professional journeys, considered the question: "what kind of planner to be?" concluding:

The practitioners whose accounts are presented in this book have all moved from the simple idealism not merely of youth, but of a euphoric period in planning history. They have learned ways of adjusting to the world of practice without becoming drained of principles and values. They have moved from the safety of formal bureaucracy to more fluid institutional contexts which expose them to much more difficult moral dilemmas. p.175

Campbell and Marshall (2000) after the demise of the Thatcher government in Britain explored such dilemmas against a backdrop of now discredited Keynesian thought: planners of as the custodians of public over private interests. They concluded that UK-based planners at the turn of the new century had fallen back and adapted to the 'bureaucratic proceduralism of the managerialist concept of local government" (p.308) and like other British commentators (Lovering 2010) they believe" planners must return to their social reformist roots." (p.231)

More recently Healey (2009) has explored the pragmatic tradition in planning thought and practice, one with American roots (Dewey 1927.) Friedmann (1987) refers to this tradition as 'planning as social learning'. Healey notes that while the pragmatists eschew abstract theory, they are prepared to draw on scientific, aesthetic and moral understandings of the world. Forester in the USA (1999), Healey notes, gave particular weight to the political dimension of this tradition, one in which he reaffirms planners should work towards public over private interests and as such, should constantly probe and question; be willing to step back so as to move forward; be working to open up new possibilities. Accepting major power imbalances in capitalist society cannot be denied and like Sager (2009) accepting planners are now caught between their idealism and neo-liberal realities, Healey goes on to argue planners can act in 'little ways' to change perceptions, understandings and so, modes of professional practice (p.284). Campbell (2012) more darkly says, when quoting Samuel

Beckett, planners at least should try to 'fail better'. More recently Campbell and colleagues (2014) have argued that rather than accepting the neo-liberal dictum, 'there is no alternative', 'better' planning involves planners being willing to ask questions to open out otherwise overlooked alternative strategies that might yield better planning outcomes. Silence should not be an option.

In Australia, Hillier in her study of Western Australian planners (2002) spoke of 'missionaries' and 'chameleons', the former taking up Forester's and Healey's stance of working to open up new possibilities, the latter happy to just adapt to whatever are the prevailing political and policy settings.¹

The dualities used here of old and young, public and private, missionaries and chameleons are useful devices to begin to interpret planning histories and practices but they continue the dualisms that pragmatists sought to avoid. They do not encourage exploration of new possibilities.

Here Steele's notion of hybrid planning practice might be useful in describing emergent planning practices (2009). Drawing on Al Sayyad (2001) she writes of the new possibility for connecting "originally incommensurate terms and irreconcilable realities" (p.3). But she is mindful that, after Mitchell (1997), hybrid practices can reinforce rather than resist dominant norms and power structure, a common critique of third-way planning (Gough et al. 2006). She sought to give substance to the notion of hybrid planning by interviewing Queensland planners.

Here the concern is the views and practices of young planners: what are their purposes and what do they see as the limitations and opportunities of their practices? And given the focus of this conference is on planning education, how well educated and trained are they to cope?

Methodology

The interviews were exploratory but guided by some base questions that were as much prompts or conversation starters as questions requiring specific answers. The methodology adopted draws from grounded theory methodology:

The emphasis in this methodology is on the generation of theory which is grounded in data – this means that it has emerged from the data... focus groups and interviews tend to be the preferred data collection methods, along with a comprehensive literature review which takes place throughout the data collection process: the literature review helps to explain emerging results. (Dawson 2007, pp.21-2)

Ten of the eleven planners interviewed work in the public sector thus no claim is made about being representative of the young planners in the wider profession. Indeed as 'snowballing' was the chosen method of recruitment - existing older interviewees connecting me to younger colleagues – it is highly likely the eleven interviewees are better performing planners, planners more likely, in Healey's words, to change perceptions, understandings and so, modes of professional practice.²

¹ In private communication Hillier mentioned the 'missionaries' she interviewed could be countered on one hand and she took the liberty to introduce each one to the others.

² A CEO of a fringe municipality in Toronto where he had worked as a planner considered that of his 35 planners only two had the imagination and drive to prepare and implement planning policies he wanted.

'Young' here is taken to be between 25 and 40 years of age. Seven men and four women in this age group were interviewed. The five 'young' Toronto planners, interviewed in November 2014, were not consciously differentiated at the time, other than being noted as first-time interviewees. It was only on reflecting on what they had chosen to speak of that there was a growing sense of difference from 'older' planners. Of the Glasgow planners interviewed in November 2014 nearly all were over 40 years. It was the youngest of those, not included in analysis here, who spoke of being a child of Thatcher, the origin spark of this paper. Six 'young' Glasgow planners were subsequently interviewed in July 2015.

Prior to meeting, each interviewee in November 2014 and July 2015 was sent a common email outlining the nature and the history of this ongoing research, and setting out the main topics for possible discussion, starting with their formative years, their university education then their transition to work, followed by their description of their current work, then specific examples of 'successful' planning exercises they considered they had contributed to and similarly, for planning 'failures'; finally their ambitions for their future were discussed. In most cases once the first topics had been spoken about, less structured 'conversations' followed centred more what the interviewee wanted to talk about. As suggested later topics were often covered, this was allowed. Occasional clarifications were sought and sometimes challenges made, to draw out more clearly the planner's point. Past experience though taught me to minimise such possible distractions to remain focussed on what the interviewee wanted to talk about. This can mean longer, even more digressive interviews but this open approach sometimes raises issues not previously considered by the interviewer, both germane and insightful.

Initial speed reading of the taped interviews prior to systematic transcription (still to be done) suggests this to be the case. It was surprisingly to hear, for example, how few had studied planning as their undergraduate degree and how many had arrived at planning careers by circuitous routes. It was on this basis brief notes were taken from the first part of the interviews where the interviewees talked about their formative years and early career experiences. These notes form the basis of the following initial analysis, one that is a work in progress.

Selected Quotes

Before focussing down on the rather unexpected realisation that most of the planners interviewed had not studied planning at an undergraduate level and appeared not to have lost anything by so doing, it is useful to demonstrate how adopting this more conversational, open-ended style of interviewing raises a myriad of matters for both the planning theorist and teacher to reflect on. This is done by selecting one quote for each planner in order of Interview (Table 1), all from the first 20 minutes or so of a usually 70 to 80 minute interview. Toronto quotes are given first.

The actual choice of quotes was to try to gain what might be a possible key explanatory driver behind each individual's overall line of reasoning. Approximate ages are given in brackets.

Table 1: Selected Quotes

<p><i>Through the Clinton Foundation I worked with various city mayors (across the world) on climate change... developing new business models involving cars, taxis and transit, centred on on-demand services ... utilising cars left at stations and on driveways (late 30s)</i></p> <p><i>From five years old I knew I wanted to be a planner... I learnt to read, write and count through a</i></p>

combination of Sesame Street and the Edmonton transit map. I would read the frequency table to my kindergarten class. (mid-30s)

Interviewer: Are a new type of planner then? Planner: I guess so. I used to joke I was an anti-planner and that's not a bad thing because as an environmentalist I think holistically. Privately I want to be a perma-culturalist. They talk about living in the woods and I say I do the same thing in the city, trying to understand all the interconnecting functions, trying to get people to work together with very limited resources - in my case around public space ... (late 20s)

I came to planning from the wider perspective of global studies... (working for the Province) at the mezzo scale is right for me – at the bottom you get stuck in doing technical, routine work. I would worry about losing focus on why I was doing that over time. (mid-20s)

There is now a push in the UK to be more entrepreneurial... taking more business-like decisions but I do not think it is the case (here). It is more about planners taking the initiative... more (about planners) negotiating to align City and proponents' objectives... planners now have the opportunity to influence development more ... especially downtown.(mid-30s)

(In a tight job market) I just wanted to get my foot in the door, that's the main thing. (mid-20s)

Moving to the Development Plan Team was a breath of fresh air: strategic big picture things: about enabling rather than processing. (mid-20s)

(In Glasgow) I found a world where people do not always talk about property prices... I feel an affinity with its collective culture. (late-20s)

I was young then and I did not want to work with a private planning consultancy that did not follow the letter of the law. Now nine years on I realise the Council is just as bad. (mid-30s)

I was doing full time bar work but managed to get a three months internship at a council to prepare Supplementary Planning Guidance on developer contributions ... my advice to include local employment clauses met resistance from senior planners ... in some senses I had more responsibility then than since. (mid-30s)

I grew up in a tenement in Hags Hill ... young people there had low expectations but my parents were keen for me and my brother to have more than that ... you look after your own but we put our heads down and worked hard to make the best of ourselves (mid 30s)

Reference here is made to just the last Toronto and Glasgow quotes. One suspects they point to a common difference in planning values and practices amongst young planners in the two metropolises.

Toronto is growing much more rapidly than Sydney and Melbourne and the negative impacts of sprawl and freeway gridlock are seen by most Torontonians and all of Ontario's political parties as too high. The need for more effective planning, in particular public transit funding for new lines and upgrades, a major part of Toronto's post-WW11 story, is now accepted in the central City of Toronto and the surrounding suburban cities such as Mississauga and Markham.³

Toronto planners, young and old, have never fully embraced British and American-style free-market-led planning and the current development and political situation gives them hope they will have more influence over future major infrastructure investment decisions and higher-density development. The quote in Table 1 gives support to this contention.

³ Planners at both were interviewed but both councils were over 40 years old and so are not quoted here.

While many of Glasgow's young planners, like those in Toronto, were raised and educated elsewhere, there is a still strong affinity to what some older, usually Glasgow-raised planners called "my people". This quote is from a young planner raised in one of Glasgow's most deprived areas in the East End, one in which most of his extended family live. His sense of professional failure, he said later in the interview, was when he found himself in conflict with people over redevelopments of near-derelict sites close to where they lived and for which he was charged with planning of.

This was a theme taken up directly by another relatively young planner raised in an overspill estate, not quoted here, whose focus was in empowering local people in such redevelopments. Several older planners alluded to this too.

As a broader generalisation, young planners in Toronto were planning for rapid growth and had grand plans in mind, while those in Glasgow had smaller remits, focused more on the renewal of a once grand city, on 'place making' as some named it.

Such themes, like many others hinted at in Table 1, are worthy of further investigation both in terms of careful reading of the transcripts for supporting or contradictory evidence and parallel reading of the literature, in the manner suggested by grounded theory methodology.

Commonalities

Table 2 begins this by trying to decipher common themes from the early parts of the interviews. It should be recognised that not only do the two cities have very different planning problems, the concerns of 25 year olds are likely different from those in their late 30s.

At the foot of Tables 2, 3 and 4 are summary paragraphs with links back to the Literature Review, following grounded theory methodology.

Table 2: Common Themes

- All interviewees are high achievers and unlikely to be representative of the generation of younger planners in their respective cities.
- All are career orientated with changes of jobs or promotions anticipated⁴
- For some, their father's jobs or mother's advice was influential in shaping their tertiary education choices and early career directions.
- Most did not do planning at under-graduate level, doing instead degrees that they said had widened their horizons and/or had sharpened their intellectual curiosity, the implication being more than an accredited planning degree would have done.
- What stood out for some from their university days were the field trips, the projects and their thesis, in effect out-of-classroom activities or learning centred on their own efforts.
- Overseas travel, planning-related work when an undergraduate and/or post-graduate study proved to be major moulders of their sense of career direction.
- Because of uncertain job markets many came to planning by circuitous routes, their non-planning experiences being of great value to their current planning practices.
- Several had moved from the country or regional towns, being drawn to the attractions of the big city, particularly the experience of living and working downtown.
- There was an acceptance of having to serve one's time doing basic process or administrative work –

⁴ Other than speaking of their childhood and young adulthood, few chose to talk about how their domestic arrangements might have affected their careers.

serving one's apprenticeship – before advancing to work one wanted to do.

- Most wished to be facilitators not processors; to be in policy development (strategic planning), not in development control (statutory planning).
- While a sense of neo-liberal times was pervasive, it was not often commented on directly as earlier in this paper. Deregulated economies and corporate management were, it seems, givens for them. "I am a child of Thatcher" comes from a Glasgow planner not included in this analysis.
- Perhaps because of the more volatile labour market and their own career experiences to date, there was less a sense of being loyal to an employer, the case of older planners at both the Cities of Glasgow and Toronto.
- Several were working at or beyond the boundary of what they considered 'conventional' planning. Conventional planning, however defined, for some of them, to use a Scottish planning expression was ironically no longer "fit for purpose".
- While all but one of the interviewees were currently working in the public sector, some consciously choosing so, the division from private planning work was not something others held close. A few worked across this old duality.
- For two – one in Toronto, one in Glasgow - professional accreditation was out of step with their planning practices and a hindrance to their professional progress.
- Many imagined they would move on from their current role though most expressed satisfaction with their current place of work.
- Many expressed the value of being able to talk about and reflect on their career to date – it encouraged them to think about what they had or had not achieved to date and to think of their futures.

The distinction between Keynesian and neo-liberal times made several times by older planners interviewed, a main theme of the planning literature -something the interviewer is very aware of and a matter without prompting some of the older planners raised - was not made by most of the younger interviewees. They graduated in the 1990s and 2000s and, depending on the state of the economy, first professional jobs were either harder to find or next to impossible, so often involving moving city.

The importance of planning for the 'public interest' in this more open economy, common amongst older planners (Jackson 2009) was not lost but certainly was more muted.

They spoke more of uncertainty of their professional direction, not necessarily as a bad thing but just how things were: you had to adapt, to be opportunistic, and be willing to move for education and career opportunities, and have a willingness to make further moves. This was normal, something beyond the ken of older Toronto and Glaswegian planners who had had uninterrupted employment in the one city for decades. Now in work with some degree of security, the younger planners saw the benefits of having travelled, of having worked as non-planners, of having a wider world view in which to place their current practice.

Noticeable too, and taken up as the main point in the Discussion, most had not taken undergraduate planning degrees and had become planners as much by happenstance as long-term intention but now as planners, they could see their future there. Some railed at what they considered the narrowness of accepted professionally-accredited practice and while some purposefully were committed to being public sector planners, it was not a distinction they dwelt upon.

Several commented on the therapeutic nature of this interview process, a chance to reflect on their careers to date and to take stock.

These provisional practice-based findings are rich in possibilities for more theoretically-informed interpretation. One is the value of experiential-based learning or learning by doing. When thinking back to their undergraduate education, and the years either side in high school or in their first jobs, no one spoke of what they had learnt doing planning theory or social planning classes, many because they had not studied them. They spoke instead of school field trips – one Glaswegian planner, someone raised in rural East Anglia, spoke of walking down as a 15 year old into the centre of Bradford and the lasting shock this had had on him⁵ – of summer internships that were not formal requirements of their university studies, of subsequent travel and overseas work and study.

This suggests the need for more project-based and work integrated learning in planning degrees, relative to lecture-reading-tutorial style delivery; and in turn, a full review of relevant education literature, not attempted here.

Toronto

Table 3: Themes Particular to Toronto

- The Toronto planners interviewed tended to be older, more experienced and more set/advanced in their views than the Glasgow planners.
- Four of the five were well travelled, either through student exchanges, through post-graduate studies overseas and/or through studying and working in other North American cities. These experiences gave them some critical perspective on Canadian society and its planning practices, and so, their own practice.
- At least three took summer internships as planners when undergraduates, two also combining part-time study with part-time planning work. Arguably it was what they learnt there rather than in the classroom that kick-started their planning careers and experiences they still draw on.
- Three chose to not go the nearest suitable university for undergraduate study but chose to live away. Two transferred universities when undergraduates.
- Four of the five are currently working towards the metropolis' and City of Toronto's better integration transit-land use planning within firm growth boundaries, drawing on financial and negotiation skills learnt in the work place, as much as on traditional physical planning skills taught at university. One argued that land use-transport integrative planning was now not enough, the understanding of behavioural change and new technologies, and the prosecution of business cases being as central to contemporary practice.
- 'Conventional planning', as two called it, was thus no longer sufficient for them. The 'anti-planner' who works for a small business coalition in lobbying the City to re-imagine and reshape public spaces on the downtown's main street, arguably, points to emergent practice.⁶
- While entrepreneurial, it was either explicitly or implicitly stated by four that it was in the sense of

⁵ The nearest equivalent for undergraduate planners at RMIT is to go on a 10 day walk at the back of Broome with local Aboriginals as part of a 12 credit point elective. Students return saying they thought of themselves as Australian but now they have to rethink what this means and who they are.

⁶ Her work both compares and contrasts with the 1970s old City of Toronto neighbourhood planners working from of shop fronts, not City Hall. Being a neighbourhood planner was the first job for several of the older planners interviewed. Once innovative, neighbourhood planning, for a time, became synonymous with old City of Toronto planning practices: emergent then 'conventional planning', now superseded. Maybe the 'anti-planner' funded by private interests will become the conventional planner soon.

planners setting rather than following others' agendas, not working to directly seek financial profit. On this point there was the only one direct reference to neoliberalism, specifically the push back in Toronto against it – “even developers say we have to do better”. As in the immediate post-WWII period, Torontonians, he implied, look again to government and their planners to come up with solutions – this time not ones caused by scarcity but ones in response to the negative impacts of putting self-interest over collective interest.

- The one completely unexpected response was what two had learnt dealing with emergencies - the Calgary floods of 2013, and the terrorist bombings in London in 2005 - how under extreme pressure they, fellow planners and other professionals had been able to respond quickly and effectively, a long way away from the public's perception of 'conventional planning'.

In the planning literature, Canada and Australia are often compared (Legacy 2012). As regards planning education going to a planning school outside a student's home province appears not to be uncommon in Canada, unlike Australia. Studying part-time too is seemingly more common in Canada than here and taking summer internships is valued.⁷ This group may be unusual but overseas living, study and professional work proved vital in shaping their career directions and skill sets.

For them living and working downtown is important, in part because of the relative ease to get to work and in part, this is where they can be more likely part of emergent practices.

Unlike much of the Glasgow interview material and the planning theory literature of British origin – Healey's “little ways”, Campbell's dark comments of planners at least trying to fail better – the young Toronto planners are ambitious, self-confident and, from their experience to date, believe 'better' planning is possible. Reading of the full transcripts hopefully will give examples to substantiate this belief. As one termed it, 'post-neoliberal times' give them a better chance to shape Toronto.

Glasgow

Table 4: Themes Particular to Glasgow

- Glasgow planners were generally younger with three still in formation mode. They were less travelled than those in Toronto but certainly more than their seniors. That said, their self-awareness was strong and each was knowingly treading a different professional path.

- Planning education in the west of Scotland when most of these planners were undergraduates had been in a state of turmoil. The main undergraduate programme at Strathclyde University was either in the process of running down or closed and for those non-planners seeking accreditation, the only post-graduate programme for a time was offered in Edinburgh, The University of Glasgow's Masters came too late for some. This complicates making useful commentary of the design of university planning programmes other than tongue-in-cheek to suggest they are not needed.

- The pull of Glasgow – a big city known for its collective culture - was strong in drawing and keeping them there wherever they grew up – whether in the East End, on the South Side, in Edinburgh, in Inverness, in rural Norfolk or from across the Atlantic.

- But the pull of working as a public servant in the interests of fellow Glaswegians was less than that of older interviewees. Only one spoke strongly in support of this when discussing his occasional sense of failure as a planner: having to sometimes endure the criticisms of local people he worked

⁷ One of the older planners interviewed spoke of the City of Toronto offering up to 50 summer internships each year. He organised and helped conduct the interviews.

for when drawing up planning proposals that would affect them.

- To paraphrase, “you have to serve your time in householder applications (basic planning applications) but you can end up being captured”. One interviewee reluctantly admitted to being so captured. For her, in early 30s, it was decision time: to stay on as a development controller in the council she had worked at since graduating or to find a new career.

- There was less sense in Glasgow of challenging conventional planning practices, partly because some interviewees were still trying to secure their planning careers, partly because of the conurbation’s straitened circumstances.

- Also the work they did was different from the Toronto planners reflecting in part Glasgow being a city that is consolidating rather than growing and partly because some were younger, two still ‘serving their time doing householder applications’. The three coming into their mid-careers, at different councils, are all currently involved in neighbourhood-scale regeneration or place making exercises that draw on their community engagement and urban design skills. Two were working in a conventional manner as council planners. The third, while working for a council, spends private time working with like-minded individuals, NGOs and consultants organising, for example, charettes for such sites. With an undergraduate degree in philosophy and politics, he is thinking of forming or joining an urban design partnership in the future to further his interests. The conventional division between public, private and NGO practices means little to him, this blurring though is problematic to his managers.⁸

Generally younger than their Toronto counterparts, they spoke more of their tertiary education and for those studying planning, how unsatisfactory it had been because of the closure of Glasgow’s main planning school and, for a time, the lack of post-graduate programmes in the City. Whether this lack had been a hindrance or boon to their professional development is a moot point. Certainly they had learnt to be persistent and resilient, even more so with the collapse of the planning job market post-2008. The ones who spoke positively of their university experience spoke of the non-planning programmes they had taken (three had taken undergraduate human geography) and how these had both confirmed and stretched their sense of self and their intellectual curiosity rather than providing them with planners’ technical skills. These they indicated were learnt on the job, sometimes aided, sometimes not, by their work supervisors.

There was a sense that their first years of planning practice, usually as a development controller, was a form of apprenticeship, a necessary base for whatever branch of planning they might later specialise in. As with the Toronto young planners, they were drawn from all over the country, and beyond, and appreciated the opportunities to work in a big city. Their scale and scope of operation maybe be smaller but the challenges of urban regeneration, despite past failures across Glasgow, were being taken on with enthusiasm.

Like the Toronto planners, these themes point more to planning education literature than the planning theory literature outlined above. This is briefly introduced later.

⁸ Two older City of Glasgow Council planners worked in this manner: sometimes away from the office all day meeting with community groups and businesses, assisting local people with grant applications, doing things that were not easy to quantify and justify to their (now) corporate managers. In 2013 one was made redundant, the other redeployed. As with the neighbourhood planners in the old City of Toronto through to the ‘anti-planner’ working in a Business Initiative Area, there is significant continuity of practice here but under different political and governance arrangements.

Past and Emergent Practices

There has been some focus on emergent practice in this paper, more likely to be more fully revealed when the transcripts are fully written up and analysed⁹.

Rather than an expected feeling of despondence of investigating young planners' practices at a time of neoliberal ascendancy, there are signs of hope. Indeed one should caution against celebrating times past by someone who greatly benefitted from being born and raised under Keynesian public policies. For example, the term 'public interest' as used here assumes not only that it is a good thing, and so be defended, but it assumes there is only one public interest.¹⁰ Indeed little is said here about how effective planners working in 'public interest' were in realising the aims of their grand plans. Planners of the post WWII era who began work with such a belief often, eventually, lost faith (Underwood 1980).

Healey (2009), as quoted above, argues for a more appropriate blend of idealism with realism for current times. While faced with neo-liberal realities, she encourages planners to 'act in little ways' to change dominant mindsets. The responses of some of the Toronto planners, however and surprisingly, give one pause from too easily accepting such small ambitions, at least amongst younger planners.

The ambition of several of the Toronto planners was to try to do more than act in small ways in light of the metropolis's runaway growth and the realisation that different levels of governments in Ontario, even national developers - what Healey terms 'dominant mindsets' - accept that plans and planners have a vital role to play in redirecting the metropolis on a more sustainable path as they had had done in the post-WWII period. There is a tradition and an old political culture to build on. While still cautious, some said the time to act big is now. City of Toronto planners were pleased with the leadership shown by the new Chief Planner and encouraged by the election of a new City mayor with a detailed transit plan that fitted well with Provincial ambitions. All were hopeful there might be a change in the Federal Government in October 2015, one more in tune with what the City, the Province and they were attempting. The phrase that the stars could well be lining up was used more than once.

By contrast, Glasgow, once the home of municipal socialism, is desperate for investment particularly after the GFC of 2008 and the subsequent near collapse of local building industry. Planners there have been made redundant and young planners are on short term contracts. They have had to tread carefully but in 2015 advertisements for planners are beginning to re-appear. The young-older ones involved in regeneration projects maybe acting in little ways but they gave no indication of expecting to fail better, as feared by Campbell.

⁹ It is suspected when the transcripts of the younger and older planners are compared there will be a sense of underlying constants in planning practices: what in deference to Raymond Williams might be referred to as emergent to conventional to superceded, then back as re-emergent practices, albeit in somewhat different guise (Williams 1977). These suspected threads of practice which seem to appear then disappear, to reappear in different colours are worthy of further exploration.

¹⁰ See Campbell and Marshall (2000).

Lessons for Planning Educators

One topic interviewees were asked to comment on was their formative years including their tertiary education. Some spoke at length about this, others just in passing.

More generally though from what has been listened to and noted so far, it is thought these interviews essentially reveal personal journeys towards self-knowledge, to growth in self-confidence and motivation and so, to a heightened sense of professional direction. In one sense this takes us beyond the design of professional tertiary courses *per se* but in another, perhaps deeper sense such personal journeys are at their heart: the linking of personal to professional experiences.¹¹

Most of the young planners interviewed here, when choosing a university undergraduate programme, were uncertain of their direction in life and settled for broad social science or business degrees, keeping their options open. A straight urban and regional planning programme was the choice of only two, the most self-knowing. The rest came to planning through what might be called 'trial and error'. At school or university what started to direct some towards possible careers in planning were field trips, projects with a planning dimension, overseas study tours, summer internships. When asked to reflect on these experiences as regards their subsequent planning practices, they say "invaluable".

Where could this mean for planning education?

The evidence presented above is not substantial enough to be more than speculative but what these young planners said is in line with the author's experience as a teacher of planning at tertiary level.

The question will be revisited once a review of Australian literature on planning education¹² has been conducted and transcription is completed. Furthermore in regard to what follows, a reality check on how Australian universities are now managed is also dispensed with.¹³ With these caveats, here are some suggestions for the future design of planning programmes in Australia:

In-House Adjustments:

- University selection to include interviews – to test applicants' maturity and sense of direction
- Favour more mature age entries
- Interstate applications to be encouraged
- Courses offered draw more on students' own life and work experiences
- Facilitate part-time study

¹¹ Williams (1977) speaks of the need to explore "structures of feeling" when trying to understand cultural changes, in this case possibly emergent changes in professional practice as spoken of by young planners.

¹² This includes Eccles et al. (1990), Sandercock (1997, 1999), Huxley (1999), Minnery (2000), Coiacetto (2004) and Freestone et al. (2006).

¹³ Programmes at Australian universities only flourish if they have strong student demand and have high completion rates. Business cases have to be made for any substantial programme changes. International students have to be accommodated. Courses have to be offered online. Academic staff do not want their career prospects affected if substantial programme changes are planned. Professional accreditation standards have to be met.

- Run more projects/studios
- Bring together practice and theory-based teaching
- Interstate or overseas study tours to be encouraged
- Interstate or overseas student exchanges to be encouraged
- Encourage (voluntary) summer internships
- Consider formal work placements as part of degree requirements
- Design programmes that do not solely centre on planning careers, for example, offer a good grounding in research methods that can be applied in business

With wider agreement:

- Offer double degrees - planning with urban studies, environment policy, urban design, landscape architecture or geography, with options of rematching or dropping one component after one year. A variation is to complete a single degree and then gained advanced standing in a companion degree
- Offer a sandwich year – a work experience year - as at UNSW but as Freestone et al. (2006) argue, ensure students are better prepared and their work experiences are drawn on in later courses.
- Consider the adoption the Melbourne University model based on many young people's uncertainty over career direction by offering a three-year generalist built environment or social science programme, then two years that lead to specialist professional accreditation. In large cities that can accommodate more than one undergraduate planning programme, one programme can be designed for students who primarily want to study planning.
- Amend accreditation procedures to better accommodate emerging planning practices and those who have sufficient other professional experiences to be warranted partial exemption.

More radically

There is some evidence here to support Margo Huxley's (1999) argument that planning is better taught at post-graduate level and that undergraduate students should be encouraged to take geography or other social science-based programmes, programmes that widen rather than narrow students' world views, as most of the interviewees here did, all progressing well in their planning careers subsequently.

This would mean doing away with undergraduate planning degrees and instead offer 1) two-year Certificates or Diplomas in planning administration and techniques through TAFE or equivalent colleges for those either without the ambition, resources or interest to do more at this stage in their lives, and 2) companion Post-graduate Certificate, Post-graduate Diploma and Master programmes at universities that accept TAFE and degree-qualified applicants at different levels of entry. Besides opening up opportunities for those with just the two-year qualification who are now are in position to go further in their planning career such post-graduate programmes would provide social science graduates embarking on careers in planning with the necessary planning theory and practice knowledge and skills at a time when they most crave them. Such post-graduate programmes would ideally be face-to-face in easily accessible locations and be also offered online for the convenience of both part-time and international students. They could be run in partnership with either or both private (for example planning consultancies that offer training packages as part of their business) or other (overseas?) university partners.

In other words, based on the evidence presented here, we should encourage more people with non-planning degrees and/or significant non-planning work experiences to become planners.

REFERENCES

AL Sayyad, N. (Ed) (2001) *Hybrid Urbanisation*, Westport CT: Praeger.

Campbell, H. (2012). Planning Ethics and Rediscovering the Ideals of Planning, *Planning Theory* (11) 379-99

Campbell, H. and Marshall, R. (2000) Moral Obligations, Planning and the Public Interest: a Commentary on Current British Practice, *Environment and Planning B* (27) 297-312.

Campbell, H., Tait, M. and Watkins, C. (2014) Is There Space for *Better* Planning in a Neoliberal World? Implications for Planning Practice and Theory *Journal of Planning Education and Research* 34(1), 45-69.

Chadwick, G. (1971) *A Systems View of Planning* Oxford: Pergamon.

Coiacetto, E. (2004) The Value of a Structured Planning Practicum Program, *Australian Planner* 41(2), 74-82.

Eccles, D. Hamnett, S. Huxley, M. and McLoughlin, J. B. (1990) Professionalism and academia: the 'recognition' of town planning courses. *Australian Planner*, 28(4), 37-43.

Forester, J. (1999) Reflections on the Future Understanding of Planning Practice, *International Planning Studies*, 4 (2), 175-93.

Freestone, R., Thompson, S and Williams, P. (2006) Student Experiences of Work-based Learning in Planning Education, *Journal of Planning Education and Research*, 26, 237-49

Friedmann, J. (1987) *Planning in the Public Domain: from Knowledge to Action*, Princeton: Princeton University Press.

Gough, J., Eisenschitz, A. with McCulloch, A. (2006) *Spaces of Social Exclusion*, Routledge, London.

Healey, P. and Underwood, J. (1978) Professional Ideal and Planning Practice: a report on research into planners' ideas in practice in London Borough Planning Departments, *Progress in Planning*, 9, 73-127.

Healey, P. (2009) The Pragmatic Tradition in Planning Thought, *Journal of Planning Education and Research*, (28) 277-99.

Hillier J. (2002) *Shadows of Power. An Allegory of Prudence in Land Use Planning* London: Routledge.

Horak, M. 2013 State Rescaling in Practice: Urban Governance Reform in Toronto, *Urban Research and Practice*, 6.3, 311-28.

Proceedings of ANZAPS 2015, RMIT University Melbourne

Huxley, M. (1999) If Planning's Anything, maybe it's Geography. *Australian Planner*, 36(3), 128-133.

Inch, A. 2013 *Changing the Culture of Scottish Planning*, Report for the Royal Institute of Chartered Surveyors, Edinburgh.

Jackson, J. (2009) Neo-liberal or Third Way? What Planners from Glasgow, Melbourne and Toronto Say, *Urban Policy and Research* 27(4) 397-417.

Legacy, C. 2012 Achieving Legitimacy through Deliberative Plan-making Processes: Lessons for Metropolitan Strategic Planning, *Planning Theory and Practice*, 13(1) 71-87.

Lindblom C. (1959) The Science of Muddling Through, *Public Administration Review*, 19(2) 79-88.

Lovering, J. (2010) Will the Recession Prove to be a Turning Point in Planning and Urban Development Thinking? *International Planning Studies*, 15(3), 227-43.

McLoughlin, J. B. (1969) *Urban and Regional Planning: a Systems Approach* (1969) London: Faber.

Minnery, J. (2000) Go and do thou likewise: planning practice in planning education, *Australian Planning* 37(1), 39-46.

Mitchell, K. (1997) Different Diasporas and the Hype of Hybridity, *Environment and Planning D: Society and Space* 15(5), 533-53.

Sager T. (2009) Planners' Role: Torn between Dialogical Ideals and Neo-liberal Realities, *European Planning Studies*, 17(1), 65-84.

Sandercock, L. (1999) Boys in the Market Place, Girl from Outer Space: a rejoinder to Sorensen and Auster, *Australian Planner* 36(4), 223-5.

Sandercock, L. (1997) The Planner Tamed, *Australian Planner* 34(2), 90-5.

Steele, W. (2009) Australian Urban Planners: Hybrid Roles and Professional Dilemmas? *Urban Policy and Research*, 27 (2) 189-203.

Thomas, H. and Healey, P. (Eds.) (1991) *Dilemmas of Planning Practice: Ethics, Legitimacy and the Validation of Knowledge*, Avebury, Aldershot.

Tasan-Kok, T, and Oranje, M. (forthcoming) *From Planning Student to Urban Planner: young practitioners' reflections on contemporary ethical challenges*, London: Routledge.

Underwood J 1980 *Town Planners in Search of a Role: a Participant Observation Study of Local Planners in a London Borough*, School of Advanced Urban Studies Occasional Paper No. 6, University of Bristol.

Von Hayek, F. (republished 2001) *Road to Serfdom* London: Routledge.

Wildavsky, A. (1973) If Planning is Everything, Maybe It is Nothing, *Policy Sciences*, 4, 127-53.

Williams, R. (1977). *Marxism and Literature* Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Proceedings of ANZAPS 2015, RMIT University Melbourne

