THE PROPER ROLE OF THE PLANNER IN A DEMOCRATIC SOCIETY

The major purpose of planning in a democratic society is to maximize the opportunity for (1) each individual participating in the social, economic, political and cultural activities of the society; (2) for each individual to chose which activities to engage in, and (3) for each individual to determine his environment. By determine I mean to have the knowledge upon which to make reasonable choices and to have sufficient power to influence the course of his own life, the life of others, and the nature of the surrounding environment.

But what if costs of maximizing the potential of individuals is the reduction of the level of growth in society? Thus the second major purpose of planning is maximize the development of resources, the development of vocational and avocational opportunities and the development of goods and services. Clearly, the right to engage in activities, to make choices, and to determine ones environment can be of less significance in a society of greatly limited resources. I recognize that

in developing areas a very strong case can be made of placing primary emphasis on developing resources and secondary emphasis upon allocation of them. But for the purposes of tonight's discussion, I wish to confine my remarks to the role of the planner in the United States, a nation of relative affluence. In this society, at this time, I would say that our primary problem is the allocation of resources.

These conclusions, as well as others that I will draw, rest upon a number of postulates. First, we engage in planning because we assume that the human condition in general and in specific situations could be improved. Second, resources, natural and human, are scarce, as a result decisions concerning allocation of resources must taken account of what is distributed, to whom and in what amount resources are distributed, and when they are to be distributed. Three, that because of the extreme difficulty, if not impossibility, of verifying the truth of value assertions regarding social act, the determination of public values should rest with the

people and with the representatives that they select.

The proper role of a planner in a democratic society. I hope you will excuse me if I limit my discussion to city planning. At some other occasion I would like to consider the relation of city planning to other types of planning, but I think we will find sufficient problems in city planning to concern us for one evening. There are many roles that a planner may playin a democratic society - but if they are to be played properly they must work toward the achievement of the basic conditions of a democratic society, liberty, equality, and fraternity. A brief word about fraternity - Glaswell and MacDougal have said that a democracy is a community of mutual deference. I like this definition. It suggests the contractural nature of our society. This is clearly an element of description, but one I find useful in considering the relation between men and between men and their institutions. We are bound - but by agreement. We are free to break our agreements - but we must be willing to pay the cost of unilateral

destruction of the contract. This theory assumes that men are brothers by agreement - not by prior arrangement. I am not yet prepared to develop further this meaning of fraternity, but I do believe that the concept of mutuality - such an important conception of contract law - will be useful for purposes of evaluating the nature of social controls planners develop and proscribe.

City planning is today under attack from a great number of critics. It is accused of leading to less equality and less liberty. While I agree with many of the critics with regard to specific planning programs, I do not believe the fault lies entirely in the instrument, nor with those directly responsible for manipulating the instrument. The problem is much greater than the tiny disruptions caused by the city planners. The problem is that our society does not seek to maximize liberty and equality. I do not mean to suggest that we, our society, seek to minimize these concepts, but that we tend to be almost neutral about them. It might be said that

our rate of progress toward complete liberty and equality is about as slow as our rate of economic development toward complete and permanent productivity.

At the present time I find the lack of equality in our society to be the greatest problem. I needn't dwell on the race issue. It is now a decade since the Supreme Court declared school segregation unconstitutional and only slight progress has taken place. I would only add that the city planners in the North don't seem to find the rapid equalization of opportunity for Negroes to be a major source for concern. One is hard put to find a comprehensive plan that gives great weight to the development of a solution to this problem.

In the last few years a small but growing number of planners have come to realize that the social revolution of the New Deal had only some slight effect upon income distribution. But since the end of the War there has been little redistribution. The tremendous difference between what the upper classes receive and what the lower classes receive has changed only

slightly. In 1927 the upper 20% of total income seekers received 18 times what the lower 20% received. In 1947 that upper 20% received 9 times as much, but in 1960 the upper 20% received 10 times the amount that the lower 20% received. The changes that have taken place are accounted for primarily from the fact that the top 20% income has been reduced from 55% in 1927 to 46% in 1947, and 46% in 1960. Thus the top 20% receives only slightly more than twice what they would receive if there were perfect equality. However, the bottom 20% now receives only between one-fifth and one-quarter of what they should receive under perfect equality. In 1927 the bottom 20% received 3% of total income, in 1947, 5% (a 2% increase as a result of the New Deal), in 1960 this figure was reduced to 4.5%. The major effect of the almost 10% ~~xxxxx~~ reduction of total income received by the top 20% was an increase in the amount received by the second and third highest fifths. This is the extent of our social revolution in income distribution. The situation in Philadelphia is about the same

as in the whole nation.

To summarize, lack of equality prohibits the full realization of a democratic society.

Income poverty is not the only type of poverty. In our social planning seminar we started to define poverty in terms of income, but found that not wholly satisfactory. I have suggested that poverty might be defined as an inability to participate, to choose and to determine. The class is now examining the degree to which individuals who do not share in such basic values as health, wealth, skill and power, are thereby limited in their ability to participate, to choose and to determine. I bring these considerations of poverty to your attention because I believe strongly that our society deprives

a great number of citizens the rights and privileges of a so-called affluent democratic society.

Many of the attacks made against city planning should, then, be directed against the politicians and the citizens they represent. Where the values of city planning are anti-social in the sense that we have discussed, they are, I believe, only a reflection of the larger social values.

This has been a long introduction into the question of the proper role of the planner - but I hope it has made explicit the basis of my approach to answering this question. The planner's primary purpose, as I have said, is to aid in the task of achieving the basic conditions of a democratic society. I must now specify how this is to be accomplished.

To understand the roles that the planner may play, we have to examine the nature of the work he performs. The planner plans. Planning is policy-making with regard to the future, it may involve developing future policies or present policies in

regard to future conditions. The plan is a proposal of the force of action to be followed to achieve ends. A planning process is a temporal succession of actions definitely leading to the development of a plan or plans. The actions dealt with in the plan each eventuate in a choice. The sequence of these choices eventuate in a determination of appropriate future actions - future action related to the achievment of preferred goals. The choices comprising this sequence may be divided into the following classes:

(a) Those concerned with the selection of ends.

(b) Those concerned with the identification of a set of alternative means consistent with the selected ends.

(c) Those concerned with the selection of a desired means or course of action.

(d) Those concerned with the means of guiding the selected course of action toward the selected ends.

These choices which were presented in the <u>choice theory of planning</u>, related to what is to be achieved and how it is to

be achieved. We now should make explicit ~~within~~ the need within the planning process of the choices to be made concerning when selected ends and means are to be achieved and when they are to be identified as having to be selected. We must, for example, plan when certain policy choices are to be made - they cannot all be made at the same time and at all times.

While I will have more to say about the subject matter of city planning later, I want to make one point now. In general we are not planning for a single moment in time, when what has been planned will come into being, the plan goals will be achieved, and the end state having been achieved will continue uninterrupted by any problem. One of Professor Mitchell's great contributions has been to show us that in working with the city you are dealing with a dynamic process comprised of many parts which are themselves influxed. We are confronted with this fluxing situation and we must evolve a process capable of handling it. We must be aware of the error of investing a part of the whole process with a life of its own.

Every time the planner takes one element of the process of city development and treats it as a separate entity, he commits this error. And every time a plan does this it quickly gathers dust on library shelves because it does not deal with reality.

But how can we work with reality - how can we deal with processes of growth and change without falsifying them, by disaggregating them, and dealing with their components as separate subjects? I don't know the answer, but I know attempts are being made through the development of growth models to understand the complex entity ~~xxx~~ with which we deal. A problem of these models is, of course, their limited scope. To deal with reality they must not only deal with physical form and arrangements, but also with social fabrics and individual reactions and evaluations. In the long interim before we have such models of reality,protesting hypotheses and consequences of various proposals, we are forced to use the methods at hand. And these I suggest we can use quite

ably to permit the planning process to be an effective aid to social development, if certain changes are made in the manner of applying the planning process and in the scope of the subject matter it encompasses. Let me suggest what some of these changes might be:

1. Using Mitchell's words, to plan for the development processes and not for static end states. To plan for the nature, rate, quantity and quality of change. But I must add a caveat here that will take me to my second point. Change, or change in rates of change, or means employed to achieve desired ends. If we should focus exclusively upon processes and change without considering the qualitative states desired, we shall have failed to account for the function of planning - to improve the human condition.

2. All choices require value determinations. Values are inescapable elements of the planning process. Value determination in a democracy should be made by the people, or

their representatives, and I include within the concept of representatives those to whom power has been delegated by elected officials. The choices to be made in the planning process should be made by those authorized to make them. I do not mean to suggest that planning technicians should not make choices, but only those choices that they have been authorized to make. I would add that I don't believe that a technician should make the choice concerning a matter having social consequences without having been told by way of administrative approval, or without informing more politically responsible officials of the nature and the reason for his choices.

Clearly the problem of how the professional technician is to act as a responsible agent within a policy making process is an extremely complex one. A part of the solution rests, I would infer, in the explication of the values employed by the technician in making choices and in examining and evaluating alternative solutions and doing this in terms of

predictive ranges of consequences, and whenever possible permitting policy-makers to evaluate the implications of predictive consequences.

In suggesting that a necessary change in the practice of the planning process requires additional attention to the treatment and development of values, I give great emphasis to alternative solutions. I mm have said that this is one means of making the technician act more responsible, but there are other reasons as well. A plan presented to the public without having involved the public in its development is much like a communist ballot - you take it or you have nothing. There is no single right plan for any community. There are many possible plans, and the best plan for a community is the one that is accepted by the public or its political representatives. A planner can aid the public by spelling out the consequences of each alternative.

The technician cannot possibly develop a plan unless he knows

what goals are to be pursued. It is clear, at least to me, that the planning technician does not know a priori what those goals should be. He can be told by policy-makers, or he can aid the policy-makers in finding out what is wanted. He can provide this aid by asking and observing what is wanted, and by indicating possible repercussions of achievement of different goals. But I do not see how goals or means can be determined by planning technicians without considering with the public and their representatives possible alternatives.

3. The third change I would propose is very much linked to the previous one. It is the necessity for making quite clear and specific the goals that are to be achieved. Additionally there is need to predict the probable consequences of the achievment of goals. I do not mean consequences of means, I mean consequences of ends. When A community chooses to favor a particular class of industry, what are the consequences to different sectors of the population? When a goal is established to bring a particular class back to a particular part of the city,

what are the consequences to that class and to other citizens? Goals can only be appraised by their consequences and in terms of the higher level of values which they tend to promote or achieve. A plan that merely asserts a set of goals, or a planning process that merely poses alternative sets is incomplete, the goals themselves must be defended and appraised. I realize that this argument leads to an infinite regress of reasons in support of reasons in support of reasons. But I am not too concerned about this, few plans have yet taken the first step of suggesting why alternatives were rejected and why the selected goals were adopted.

The other side of the question of goal formulation in planning relates to the fallacy in seeking to derive goals from facts or from projections of facts. No fact or projection of a fact can establish a value. For example, my description of income distribution can lead to no value conclusion. The conclusion I draw, that there is need for income redistribution, is derived from my values in regard to the necessity of equality.

4. The next change that I believe is required in the present practice of the planning process relates to the scope of the subject-matter encompassed by the city planner. The city planner, in order to understand the elements he deals with, and in order to establish a more rational basis for his control, has constantly broadened the scope of his work. He could not deal with land use adequately unless he viewed it in relation to transportation. He did not believe he could establish rational land use control until he related such controls to a comprehensive land use plan. The logic that has led planners to develop plans which sought to take account of and control the variables affecting the physical environment, now forces the planner to deal with more than the physical environment. The logic that has led many planners to assert the necessity for comprehensive planning now forces the planner to broaden the scope of his vision and of his work to the total city -- the city of people, institutions, and structures.

In recent years as the city planners have gained increased power to control the physical environment, the merit of their work, as I pointed out earlier, has been cast in doubt by a growing number of social scientists and critics. The planners have been accused of creating in both the suburbs and within the center city, a bland middle-class or upper-class community in which physical and land-use diversity is excluded along with members of racial and economic minorities.

The attacks made upon the planning movement have not been made only by outsiders. Many within the profession question seriously whether or not planners, with their present methods and approaches, could continue to responsibly serve society. I should like to quote at this time at length from a paper Mel Webber has just prepared for an A.I.P. meeting. Webber states: "The planner used the physical environment as an instrument to improve the total city because he believed it to be a useful instrument; the therapy prescribed by planners for countering various social pathologies was the improvement of the physical

setting. If only well designed and well sited houses, playgrounds and community facilities could be substituted for the crowded and ~~dilapidated~~ dilapidated housing and neighborhoods of the cities' slums, the incidence of crime, delinquency, narcotics addition, alcoholism, broken homes, and mental illness would tumble. The culturation of ethnic, racial, and other minority groups to the American, middle-class, urban ways of life could have awaited their introduction to the American, middle-class, physical environment.

As the findings of systematic research into the relation between social and physical aspects of the environments and social behavior have been accumulating, however, what were once stable pillars of understanding are melting down to folklore, heartfelt wishes, and more typically, partial truths embedded within complex systems of causes. The simple one-two, two-one-cause-effects links that once tied houses and neighborhoods to behavior and welfare, are coming to be seen as but strands of highly complex webs that, in turn, are

mediated by the intricate and supple relations that mark social, psychic, economic, and political systems and their associated behavior. We can no longer speak of the physical city vs. the social city or the economic city or the political city or the intellectual city. We can no longer disassociate a physical building, for example, from the social meanings that it carried for its users and viewers/or from the economic functions that it conducted within it. We must learn to comprehend the city as an extremely complex social system, only some aspects of which are expressed as physical buildings or locational arrangements. As a parallel, we must learn to understand that each aspect lies in a reciprocal causal relation to all others, such that each is defined,by, and has meaning only with respect to, its relation to all others."

We have witnessed during the past two years an increasing recognition on the part of planners, local government, and the U.R.A., of the need to broaden the scope of renewal planning. An ever growing number of/community renewal programs are

focussing their attention upon both decaying areas and disadvantaged people. These programs are now looking for means to take the slums out of people. This new direction of planning thought has led to more enlightened programs of community development, to indivadualized approaches to human development, and to humane procedures for family relocation.

It is time, at school and in practice, to affirm strongly the need to enlarge the scope of city planning. This affirmation should be directly additional toward redefining the nature of the planning of concern to the A.I.P. and for proposing new rules to guide the U.R.A. in their appraisal of local requirements. In regard to this latter point, I suggest that in those instances where by law or by administrative rule the U.R.A. requires the preparation of a comprehensive plan as a condition precedent to the grant of Federal assistance, that such comprehensive plans be required to take account of social and economic development as well as physical development. Perhaps it is too early to demand social or economic plans for local planning

agencies. But it is indeed time to require that such local agencies explicitly recognize, describe and evaluate the social and economic consequences of their proposals. Required explanation of the consequences of proposed action would tend to further educate the planner in regard to the social and economic aspects of the community, for the planner could not satisfactorily describe the consequences of action unless he had some understanding of both the conditions and the values of different social and economic classes. Thus we see a requirement of identification of the social and economic as well as physical consequences of the comprehensive plan as being useful both to the public and to the planner.

In failing frequently to make specific the goals and values to be achieved in their plans, planners have tended to hide themselves and those who rely upon their expertise in the so-called world of the physical environment. As I have pointed out, there is no such simple reality as a physical environment; what exists is a component of reality, a component that cannot

be understood as an exclusive entity, but only as an interacting part of a complex whole. It is foolishness to speak of the intrinsic worth of specific physical environment values or goals. Open space, low density, harmonious land use relations, elimination of blight, etc.,are concepts which worth, when made operational, as instruments for the achievement of other ends. These other ends relate to men, their relationships, and their relations with their institutions and surroundings. Of course there is considerable disagreement within our pluralist society concerning these ends and the proper distribution of values they embody, the planner and the politician often seek to avoid treating them as political issues, but I would say the planner must make them and their consequences explicit.

My discussion is premised upon the belief that our system of government seeks to maximize individual liberty and equal opportunity. City planning must broaden its scope, if it is to be an effective aid in this task. We have said that the goal of improving the city for its users could not be achieved

so long as only one component of the city is examined. Now I add to this point the suggestion that unless the planner becomes aware of how the part is dealt with, that is, the physical environment and land uses, relates to the other parts, he may continue to knowingly or unknowingly limit choice and opportunity. Thus, to make the profession both more effective and more responsible, action is required to broaden the scope of city planning and to hold the planner accountable for describing and evaluating the effects of his proposal upon the people, institutions and forms encompassed by that scope.

5. The fifth change I would recommend in planning practice is that of greatly increased attention to the distributive aspects of planning proposals. I believe that a great deal of misunderstanding exists about the nature of our society ~~xx~~ precisely because their was no knowledge of the change or lack of change that took place in the distribution of income over the last 20 or 30 years. In calling for attention to be paid to the distributive aspects of planning actions, I am not

suggesting that the planner redistribute values or wealth in any particular manner. What I do suggest is that the planner make explicit the nature of the distributive effects of his proposals and that he then ~~xxx~~ permit his clients themselves to determine the value of the redistribution if any that has taken place.

I recognize that when I call for explication of the patterns of distribution established by planning proposals, that if practiced, it would tend to highlight economic and social class differences, at least to the ~~xxxxx~~ extent of pointing out which class has gained and which lost. The public action does tend to treat classes differently, and this difference in treatment is a significant consequence which should be considered in evaluating proposals.

It might be argued that planners have spelled out the economic costs of their plans. But such identification of costs have not been sufficient -- not sufficient for an understanding of

the results of a proposed course of action. The identification of costs as they are presently shown, do not reveal how costs and benefits are distributed, rather they are limited to summation of costs and benefits. To illustrate this point, a proposal for a new facility is described, its monetary costs are estimated, and its service benefits are predicted. What is usually left uncovered is a description of how the different social, and economic classes within the community will be affected by the new facility. Who, for example, are the users and the non-users of the facility?

The distributive aspects of planning proposals are at least as significant as their efficiency aspect, but the planner has characteristically been concerned primarily with the latter. Thus plans have been appraised in terms of their relative over-all cost and time requirements, or in terms of their relative ability to serve the greatest number of citizens. It is only in those cases where a particular group is clearly damaged by a proposed course of action that attention is paid

presently to the differential effect of such action. The clearest example of such cases is relocation. The clear case of the failure to account for differential treatment is found inthe manner in which the planner describes capital budgets in programs.

6. The sixth change I would propose is that of making the planning process more political. Planning is policy-making for the future. It is a part of politics, not separate from it. I would like to see the public and its candidates for office take stands on planning issues. I would like to see the candidates for Mayor of Philadelphia propose a comprehensive plan in the form of policy commitments. I would like to see these on the platform of the parties. I would like to see the private agencies in the City, that are concerned with city development, such as the Republican Alliance, the A.D.A., the Council of Seventy, the Chamber of Commerce, the Citizens Council on City Planning, or the Philadelphia Housing Association, prepare

long-range planning policies rather than just react to the Planning Commission's proposals.

City planning has not often been a major political issue because the citizens and politicians have been foolish enough to believe that the planning issues were of a technical nature rather than of a political nature.

I think it wrong to have an appointed planning commission somewhat removed from the political scene. I would much prefer to see the commission, or its chairman, or department head, as a staff agent of the mayor. Or, to have the chairman or the director an elected official. Think, if he were elected, how much freer he would be to make policy commitments.

But that is the difficulty, he wouldn't. He would avoid policy commitments like the plague in order to stay in office, and that would be deadly for planning. This takes me then to my final point in regard to the planning process.

The location of the planning activity in society. We have assumed historically that planning function should be tied closely to government, and I am not about to say that government doesn't need a planning arm. But we must question whether any municipal administration will allow a planning agency to raise questions that undermine its power. Why should be expect a political authority, such as a mayor, to be greatly concerned with commiting himself to a long-range policy unless it is a vote-getter. Well, perhaps, I am too cynical in regard to the desire of an incumbent elected official to sponsor open debate upon alternative directions.

The point I wish to make is that there may be a proper role, particularly in long-range planning, for private interest groups, groups who in effect have a keener interest in long-range development than the political administration.

I think it could be shown to a number of special interest groups that the long range effectiveness of their lobbying

operations might be well served through the development of their own long-range plans for all or a part of society. Here is a place for clear and loud advocacy of alternative policies for city development.

I would not say government should itself not make long-range plans, but I think it quite clear that an administration in office for only four years might begin to care more about the distant future if the electorate, or portions of it, revealed an educated concern.

To summarize these last points: Public planning is politics. The planning process should not be aloof from political activity. Democratic politics is our means of making public decisions, though its practice is at times grimy, it is still the best system I know of for making wise decisions. The problem is, I think, not to cut political power, but like income, distribute it more equally so that all people affected by government action, or interested in it, have an opportunity to be heard.