PLANNER ROLES IN THEORY AND PRACTICE: A LITERATURE SYNTHESIS

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ABSTRACT

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Planners often lack knowledge about the ways their formal roles restrict the range of problems they identify and the type of recommendations they may offer. They are unable to objectively evaluate themselves as practitioners because they do not have a theory of practice to guide them. Planners suffer from role conflict without this guide.

In this study, the literature on planner roles is reviewed and synthesized according to its usefullness in creating a theory of practice. The research on key variables that determine planner role enactment are reviewed and discussed. The changing orientation of planning practice in local government is examined. The roles and corresponding skills these changes require are highlighted.

Using **professional role** is recommended as the best method of connecting planning theory to practice. A framework of required knowledge for planners to successfully enact particular planner roles is created.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

1. Study Overview

Based upon professional observation and literature study, this author perceives an inadequate linkage of planning theory to practice. Using professional role as an access point for studying this problem, the purpose of this paper is to describe planner role selection and enactment.

The first section of this chapter states the problem as a set of assumptions about planner roles based on a literature review. While not proved by exhaustive empirical evidence, the concept of professional role is examined to provide an entry to studying the gap between planning theory and practice.

This author perceives that the goals of urban planning that planners profess are reasonable yet planners

often choose inappropriate roles to meet these goals. In addition, planners have not developed the skills necessary to enact appropriate roles successfully. When inappropriate roles are selected in professional action, failure is imminent and frustration ensues - regardless of what particular goal is desired.

Planners often only define themselves and the work they do in terms of their formal or official bureaucratic roles. Often, planners have little understanding of the ways in which their own official roles in government service restrict the range of problems they may acceptably identify or the types of recommendations they may offer. As this literature review indicates, there are a larger variety of roles planners may enact to enhance their effectiveness. When perceived effectiveness is enhanced, professional and personal frustration is reduced.

A review of the literature on planner roles from 1975 to 1985 indicates a wealth of materials attempting to close the gap between undergirding planning theory and the practice of the profession. Some of these attempts fail. This failure means some planning practitioners still "plan" with no coherent guidelines by which to objectively evaluate their work and claim success when successful or admit failure when not. In short, many planners lack a

coherent theory of practice.

Operationally, this gap between planning theory and practice is most evident when the degree of influence planners expect to have to affect the course of urban development and the degree of power they actually have are quite far apart. This author believes this gap leads to personal and professional frustration about the profession and leads many planners to become prematurely bitter and cynical about the work they do.

Often, the planning literature only recommends "end-states" but does not provide realistic means to reach those ends. Therefore, in this study, the literature on professional roles in planning will be synthesized. The utility of using professional roles to better link planning theory with practice will be proposed. It is an attempt to extract a variable (role enactment) and place it within the context of professional action. Although roles of planners are intimately connected to existing social and political movements of any given period, there are variables (such as role conflict) that cut across and consistently assist or hinder planner role enactment. This study attempts to assess those variables and recommend methods of reducing their impacts on professional action. In the final analysis, it attempts

to assist in the creation of a theory of practice that transcends social and political changes.

In this paper, the concept of role is chosen as the most appropriate method of integrating planning theory and practice as opposed to planning skills, functions or goals. Indeed, the time-honored theory that planners are purely value-free technicians and must define their effectiveness purely on the degree of technical capability they have to recommend a particular development alternative should be reevaluated from a new perspective. It is suggested here that planning practitioners should begin reflecting on how the professional roles they may enact interact with other roles in the political decision-making process. Planners should be encouraged to enact new roles and create "theories in action" that are more fluid, flexible and adaptable to a wider variety of situational variables.

In fact, what differs most between what urban planners are taught in planning school and what they do in actual practice concerns their role when dealing with social and political change. While the gap between planning theory and practice has consistently been a heated issue among planning academicians and practitioners, it was not until 1975 that the concept of professional "role" was

explicitly mentioned in the planning literature as a likely focal point by which to link the goals of the profession with any coherent theory of professional practice.

Therefore, if it is going to continue to thrive, one of the greatest tasks for the planning profession is to begin to look at the concept of role as an integrating focus by which it can objectively assess its place in the social and political structure. Once this theoretical base has been established, the profession should create new and more appropriate roles that are better matched to changing public expectations for what planners should do. It is a normative prescription. In this way, planning's influence in the political process will be increased and personal and professional frustrations of individual planners within the profession will be reduced. In addition, the gap between theory and practice should be narrowed. This will lead to a consistent set of criteria by which planners and others can evaluate the planning process and the environments that process creates.

2. Scope of Review and Analysis

It should be noted that the scope of this literature review and analysis will extend only to that literature

that explicitly mentions the "roles" of planners. It categorizes that literature taken from the period of 1975 to 1985. This has never been done in any complete way. It is not an attempt to synthesize every piece of literature on planning theory in the past ten years.

The context within which this literature will be evaluated will be those planners in local government who work with all interest groups who influence the political decision-making process of development. It is useful only to those planners who are generalists not specialists. It is these planners who are most compelled, by their planning functions and activities, to deal with a variety of planning constituencies. It will not, for example, deal with those planners who are explicitly hired to do data analysis but will instead deal with those planners who must make sense of the analysis and present it to various affected interests in easily understandable terms.

3. Study Method

A literature synthesis was selected as the method most appropriate for discussion of these issues because it provides a telling indication of the state of the planning profession from an historical perspective. In addition, it provided an opportunity for in-depth analysis of an area

not completely covered in this writer's program of coursework.

In this analysis, I intend to prove that the state of the literature reflects the state of the profession in two key ways:

1) There is disagreement among planning academicians and practitioners as to the "meanings" associated with planning. This has led to the gap between theory and action.

2) Most literature in the planning field either consists of purely technical materials on particular analytical skills or theoretical statements not grounded in any systematic way to existing social and political realities of planning practice.

4. Study Objectives

The objectives of this particular study are to analyze the disparate elements of the planning literature in light of their impacts on role enactment and combine them to:

1) Create a theory of planning practice that defends extracting the concept of professional roles as the most appropriate method of closing the gap between theory and action

2) Link the technical functions a planner performs to the exisiting political environment in local government to create a planning theory that encourages planners to work within the social and political system, not against it.

3) Delineate potential roles planners may enact to enhance their effectiveness, given particular key variables.

4) Create a framework of required knowledge for each planner to make the choice of an appropriate professional role to enact a conscious and rational decision.

5. Study Design

To set the context for the analysis, the second chapter reviews the literature on the gap between planning practice and implementation in general terms and its impacts on role enactment. The first section consists of a discussion of the functional and interpretative characteristics that determine professional planning roles. It outlines the existing planning literature that uses the concept of professional role as the best way to link the means to the ends of planning practice.

This discussion lays the groundwork for delineating alternative roles that planners may enact to improve professional performance given existing social and political constraints in the external environment planning finds itself in. From this basic definitional framework, the second section of Chapter II presents an argument for using "professional role" as the most appropriate method of integrating theory and practice into a consistent whole

as opposed to "modes of action", planning theory, and/or planning functions and techniques. It consist of arguments for and against this method of integration.

Chapter III explores the historical dichotomy in the planning literature between the planner as technician and the planner as politician in light of the notions of expertise and advice. The limiting effect of this analytical framework for practicing professionals who attempt to change their roles is discussed. Next, the changing paradigm of planner roles is explained and highlighted. The third section summarizes the relevant literature on the "new" roles that planners may enact in light of this changed paradigm. It is shown how these roles are more action-oriented and geared towards plan implementation instead of only technical analysis of a planning problem.

Chapter IV focuses on the literature that highlights those variables that cause planners to enact a particular professional planning role. It reviews the literature on role dissonance, ambiguity, and conflict and discusses the variables internal to the planner that most often explain it. In addition, the alternative behaviors that planners exhibit when faced with role dissonance will be examined in light of the planning

process in contemporary local government.

Chapter V provides a framework that combines all internal and external variables that are most likely to determine a planner's selection of a professional role to enact. By carefully considering what this model implies for professional practice, planning practitioners can evaluate their behavior more objectively and select a more appropriate professional role. Enacting a role more successfully will assist them in their day to day planning functions and activities. The chapter concludes with a review of what the literature suggests are the appropriate skills necessary for planners to develop in order to successfully enact the role they have selected.

Chapter VI will provide a problem summary, the conclusions reached from the literature review, the implications of the review and its limitiations. In addition, some recommendations for future research will be outlined based upon the literature review and the framework created.

CHAPTER II

THE PLANNING PROCESS AND ROLE ENACTMENT

1. Defining Professional Role as it Relates to Planning Practice

When planners focus on their role in the political process of local government and how a particular role they may enact interacts with other roles, planners become less self-centered and more socially and politically astute. They are able to recognize that the roles they play are not acted out in isolation from other roles in the planning process.

The planning literature from 1975 to 1985 reflects that it is difficult to reach agreement on the exact definition of the term role and how the concept is or should be applied to the practice of planning. Indeed, there are many definitions of the term role depending upon the context within which it is evaluated. Therefore, an accepted

dictionary definition is a good starting point. Webster's Third New International Dictionary defines role in one of three ways:

"a) a character assigned to or assumed by someone, b) a socially prescribed pattern of behavior corresponding to an individual's status in a particular society and c) a function performed by someone or something in a particular situation, process or operation".

In this analysis, "role" will be used to signify differing strategies of intervention associated with a planning function that will make the work planners do more effective. It will be "a character assigned to or assumed by someone". This character will be the "role". It is an objective phenomenon associated with particular behaviors and dictated by the necessities of a particular planning situation. It will not be used as relating to planner behavior that is based upon social norms that dictate what action is most appropriate when "performing" as a planner.

Viewed in this way, a planner in a local community has two elements of "role" he or she must be concerned with. First, a functional role - an "official" role and a job description from an employing government or private organization. Second, a socially prescribed role in dealing with other role players independent of a

functional role.

Here, a distinction between "role" and "position" must be clarified. For the purposes of this analysis, "position" is the formal designation of what particular functional activities a person occupying such a "place" in the structure is expected to perform. "Role" is determined by both internal and external expectations of the persons assuming the positions in addition to the functional activities the position implies. A "role" is much more fluid and ambiguous but therefore more complete as it more closely reflects reality than a job title or position description. It is not static in nature and is "defined and shaped in the process of interacting with others in designing and achieving common objectives" (Burke, 268).

In very rare cases in planning does the position itself define the role. "Planning roles are rarely acted out in isolation from others or without a context in relation to others" (Burke, 274). They are shaped by both internal expectations of the person occupying the position and the external expectations that others have about what is appropriate behavior.

When an individual assumes an official position in a planning organization, there is usually agreement as to

the generally accepted behavioral requirements that the position implies. However in planning, it is rare to find a position description defined in concrete terms. Planning is a professional practice requiring a great amount of individual judgement and it would be irresponsible to define a planner's role only in terms of the functional characteristics the position may imply. As a consequence, usually the individual planner is a "significant determinant of the planning role" (Burke, 274).

Historically, planners have officially been advisors to elected officials or clients. This was their function. Most planning education and in-service training in planning has centered on the planner's functional role and the functional activities associated with these roles that they must carry out. Rarely, before 1960 did planners adequately comprehend the socially prescribed role they play in larger society or in their employing organization when interacting with other role players. By 1975, the literature in planning began to focus more clearly on the variety of roles planners enact in the planning process and variables that most often explain and predict their selection of a role to enact.

2. The External and Internal Determinants of Planner Roles

One author, Burke (1977), believes that concentrating on the roles planners play is of crucial importance in comprehending planning's importance as a legitimate governmental activity. He believes that scholars and practitioners studying planning need be concerned with two factors about a planner's role. First, a thorough delineation of all potential professional roles a planner may conceivably play; second, the influences that shape these roles (Burke, 1979: 269). Burke sees the former as the "functional" activity planners perform and the latter as the "interpretive characteristic" or "analytical facet" of a role they enact (Burke, 270). The first factor relates more directly to the official position and job description while the second factor consists of the influences that require the planner to analyze who is defining the role and why.

Historically, the literature on planner's roles most often reflects only the functional aspects of the work that planners do. Burke (1977) provides the most representative typology of the functional roles of planners. He distinguishes seven broad categories of functional roles:

1) Analyst-Technician
2) Community Organizer
3) Broker
4) Advocate
5) Enabler
6) Educator
7) Publicist (Burke, 1977: 269-274).

He admits there are other roles that planners enact, such as administrator, researcher, grantsperson, financial analyst, consultant, etc. but suggests these are not roles, per se - these are instead "specialized functions for particular planning activities" (Burke, 274). He contends that the planner role typically includes both procedural skills and interactional skills. While procedural skills imply technical knowledge of the subject matter, interactional skills include all the elements that allow the planner to "engage with others in carrying out a collaborative process of planning" (Burke, 268).

In general, Burke believes what roles planners enact are determined by three main factors. The first two relate to the components that determine the informal role and the third is the formal role itself. These factors are:

1) The expectations of the planners themselves.
2) The expectations of others.
3) The position itself (the formal role) (Burke, 274).

Each of these parameters demands attention individually.

a. internal determinants

The expectations that planners have for themselves affect how or if they enact a particular role. These expectations are based on the following variables: 1) personality variables, 2) values, 3) beliefs and attitudes, 4) personal background, 5) professional experience and 6) academic training. The literature indicates there has been little research on the degree to which each factor directly affects the enactment of a particular role. However, a few researchers (Vasu, 1977; Bolan, 1980; Kaufman and Howe, 1984 and Mayo, 1982) have attempted to study the degree to which personality variables determine how or if a particular role is enacted. And, as Burke suggests, these internal variables, to a large degree, influence the expectations a planner brings with them to the job. These internal determinants will be covered in depth in Chapter IV because they explain, to a great degree, role conflict in the profession.

b. external determinants

The external determinants of role enactment or the environmental variables that influence how a planner

performs in their job are more important and less easy to manipulate. According to Burke, they include:

1) The public perception of the individual planner and the perception of "planning" as a legitimate governmental activity.

2) The official bureaucracy (placement, structure, power, influence etc.).

3) The interaction that any particular planning role has with other planning roles in the planning process. This includes the context of both the formal and informal roles.

4) The type of planning organization (local, state, federal, neighborhood, voluntary agency, metropolitan etc.).

5) The client system.

6) The cooperative system.

While all of the above factors are important determinants if or how a planner enacts a particular role at any given time, the type of planning organization, the client system and the cooperative system are the easiest variables for planners to manipulate (even though they are external to planners themselves). In addition, these variables are more likely to be directly involved when enacting more implementation-oriented roles.

Type of Planning Organization

Obviously, the scope and type of planning organization in which the planner works is a determinant of how or if a role is enacted. For example, a neighborhood planning organization may require a planner to enact an activist-leadership role; a voluntary agency may require a planner to enact an enabler role whereby the planner's specialized activities consist of institution-building and self-help development; a metropolitan or regional planning agency (MPO) may require a planner to be more of a technician. In this case, the work may be structured and organized due to the huge volume of planning data that must be processed.

However, in the typical local planning agency, Burke suggests that, given the high degree of flexibility of individual planners to enact many different roles, planners must generally exhibit more directive and proactive types of behavior. He suggests that this is a historical expectation and "is partly a reflection of organizational influence within the bureaucracy of city government" (Burke, 278). In most cases, the specialized activities of many planners at this level include development and administration of local zoning ordinances which has traditionally been the technical backbone of the

profession. Because, this is an administrative activity based upon local ordinances, Burke labels these functional activities as corresponding to directive roles.

The Client System

The type of client system also influences the roles professional planners enact regardless of the type of planning organization. The effect of the client system on the role of the planner depends on the degree of "group maturity" of the constituencies that compose the system. If a planning constituency has a low degree of maturity, experience and background, the planner cannot dominate the planning process but can be an activist or an advocate for the group in the larger political context. If the planning constituency possesses a high degree of maturity and sophistication they exert demands on the planner to enact the role of "technical assistant". In this case, the planner then enacts the roles of mediator, and enabler to assist the group in influencing the normal political decision-making process. In addition, the formal policy constituency (the individual, group or organization) is the entity that employs the planner and thus provides directions about the activities planners are involved in and the roles they enact (Burke, 274).

The Cooperative System

Contained within the client system is the "cooperative system" that is naturally developed in any local planning activity (Burke, 186). This system is composed of selected community influentials and other interested citizens that are most interested in working with the planner on plan implementation.

These individuals may be members of the cooperative system because they will be negatively impacted by a particular development proposal that the planner may decide to recommend. In this case, the planner may wish to co-opt these critics in order to influence their followers. In another case, this cooperative system is the team the planner works with everyday and may even include other planners. This group is an advocacy group and exists to gather support for a particular planning proposal. It functions as a political support group and the planner's role is that of "facilitator" to attain "unity of purpose" within this support group (Burke, 187).

Within the cooperative system, planners perform the task of "inducing motivation" by proving that members will, in exchange for their support, receive either material benefits (e.g. property tax benefits from a particular

land-use decision) and/or psychic benefits (e.g. feelings of self-worth from simple participation in solving a community problem), (Burke, 187). In any case, "the ultimate choice of a role should be worked out in advance in cooperation with the groups making up the cooperative system" (Burke, 280).

3. Using Role as a Method of Connecting Planning Theory to Practice

Earlier, an attempt was made to delineate the internal and external determinants that impinge upon a planner's professional role enactment. While it is generally agreed that these factors are important determinants of how a planner functions in day-to-day planning activities, it is not generally agreed that using the concept of professional role is the best way of connecting planning theory to planning practice. In other words, it is agreed that planning theory must guide practice but disagreement on how best to accomplish this integration.

The planning literature on the subject provides a commentary on the state of the profession: the goals it espouses and the means it has selected to achieve these goals are not consistent with each other. The discussions reveal much about how professional planning roles have

been evolved. For example, Jerome Kaufman at the University of Wisconsin contends that the contemporary failure of professional planning is its failure at linking practice with a coherent theoretical base (Kaufman, 1985: 17). He believes the concept of professional planning roles is the best way of integrating theory and practice by providing beginning urban planners with the tools to be more effective practitioners.

Other authors also recognize that failure in urban planning practice begins when the planner's roles are not adequately grounded in any "theory of practice". Like Kaufman, Susskind asserts that it makes more sense for planners to "describe ourselves in terms of the roles we are needed to play instead of the goals we have" (Susskind,1983: 89). Argyris and Schon (1974) distinguish between "espoused theory" and "theory in use". While the former is the theory a planner may pledge allegiance to the latter theory is what "actually guides the actor's behavior in concrete situations" (Bolan, 1980: 263).

All these writers believe the gap between espoused theory and theory in use has led the planning profession to the necessity of redefining itself and that the most effective

way of doing so is by centering on the concept of professional planning roles. They believe that traditional planning roles must be discarded in favor of new ones grounded in a coherent theory of professional practice that is normative and prescriptive. This normative prescription is that planners out to act "in pursuit of planned change" (Kaufman, 1985: 2).

However, other authors suggest that the concept of professional "roles" are not appropriate when understanding the work that planners do. They believe that focusing onhow a planner performs is what is more instrumental to construct a more appropriate theory of planning practice. For example, Bolan suggests that planning will be accepted as a legitimate profession only to the extent that it concerns itself with "methods of practice or intervention" (Bolan, 1980:263).

Like Kaufman, Bolan argues that unfortunately, planning schools teach students a normative prescription of planning theory that stresses "end-states" of planning activities and presupposes a "unitary public interest". In this way, the goals of urban planning theoretically represent the "public interest" and are therefore "good". Also, like Kaufman, Bolan agrees that planning schools need to be more concerned with teaching planning "theory

in use" (Bolan,1980:263).

However, while Bolan acknowledges the necessity to rethink the traditional ways of practicing planning he cautions that in real-life "professional episodes" the use of the term "role" may be too confining (Bolan, 1980: 265). Bolan cautions contemporary proponents of more action- and implementation-oriented planner roles that "role prescriptions, in effect, express only minimal or typical categorizations of expected performance, as so are only partially useful in predicting actual human behavior" (Bolan, 1980: 265). He believes that, in most planning situations, planners encounter others "not as objects only identifiable through some role designation but as full human beings" (Bolan, 1980:265).

Bolan asserts that the contexts within which the planner operates in many planning situations do not lend themselves to a study of "role behaviors". He believes a city planner is involved in such a wide diversity of planning "scenes" that there is little control or management of the scene and the process is open to subjective interpretation. While Bolan admits that when planners attend planning commission or neighborhood meetings that there are "hierarchical arrangements,

formal roles and the norms of conduct within each of these are easily envisioned", he stresses that the vast majority of a planner's activities (research and analysis with colleagues) cannot be broken down into a laundry list of formal or informal roles (Bolan, 270).

Bolan suggests that instead of focusing on role as a way of integrating theory and practice that planning practitioners should focus on "modes of action" (Bolan, 1985: 2). He defines modes of action as consisting of those behaviors that make up effective or appropriate professional performance in highly complex situations. He contends that planning students only learn technical planning skills and not how to behave in highly ambiguous planning situations. Like Faludi, he believes that planning theoriticians need to develop "a theory <u>of</u> planning instead of theories <u>in</u> planning (Faludi, 1973). "Rather than training planners to be consumers of other's theories, we really need to train them to be producers of theories -- constructors of theories in action -- including especially their own action" (Bolan, 1985: 2). In this regard, Bolan calls for a new theory of planning. He suggests that this new theory become more "action-oriented" and requires major changes in the way planners think about themselves and think about their practice.

First, planners must comprehend the settings of planning in terms of "grasping structures of meaning rather than structures of form"; This "new planning theory" must entail addressing the issues surrounding the "effectiveness" of action (Bolan, 1985: 5). This new theory is grounded in the assumption that what planners do is beyond reproach. What is needed is for planners to develop the personal skills and management styles that will enable them to do planning more effectively.

To operationalize this theory, Bolan calls for teaching planners ways of developing self-awareness, style patterns of interaction, communication skills, the development and use of power and influence, the capacity to motivate others, tolerance for and management of ambiguity and conflict, and effectiveness in complex group settings (Bolan, 1985: 5). He suggests that this type of analysis of planning action has no direct relation to formal or informal roles. He believes that when planning students and practitioners develop these skills and techniques, they are provided the tools by which to "read" a planning situation and only then can they make conscious role-choice decision appropriate to the requirements of the situation. According to Bolan, the four most fundamental skills to be developed are:

1) the ability to perceive a situation accurately.

2) the capacity for skillful communication.

3) the understanding of one's professional "self" in relation to others.

4) the ability to construct contextually appropriate and effective theories of action (Bolan, 1985: 6).

This latter ability to "construct contextually appropriate and effective theories of action" relates most directly to the analysis at hand and is what distinguishes Bolan from other planning theoriticians. While Susskind (1983) and Kaufman (1986) believe planners must change their role in their professional practice, Bolan believes that there is an intervening step between recognizing a new role and successfully enacting it. He believes planners must first develop particular sensitivities with which to read a professional planning episode and then select the appropriate role that will maximize their return. In essence, planner must:

> "...be able to learn how to 'see` a social situation at all three levels of perception. He or she needs to be able to 'read` the context of the planning enterprise and make sense of it from their own <u>personal</u> perspective..... development of this skill requires a sensitivity and sophistication of capacity to devise frameworks for 'seeing` which aid the [planner] in sharpening perceptual skills" (Bolan, 1985: 9).

Therefore, Bolan believes that the gap between theory and

practice can be reduced when planning theory is more closely aligned with social realities by allowing for "greater ambiguity in the professional episode". By stressing the importance of language, communication and perception within these episodes, planners will become more effective no matter what role they enact (Bolan, 1980: 272).

While Bolan's positions are intriguing and have great significance for improving practice, in this analysis, I suggest that using the concept of professional role is still the most effective way of opening up planning practice to more closely reflect the social political realities inherent in the urban environment. Role analysis is systemic in nature. It more closely reflects interactions that take place within and between social and political systems. Indeed, a role must be selected first. It is the first step to be taken before an appropriate "mode of action" is selected. Modes of action are associated with the role but do not define it.

Planning practitioners must first concentrate on their "roles" in the planning process and how theseroles interact with other roles. When they only concentrate on their forms of practice, planning activities and modes of action when investigating new ways to achieve planning

objectives, they do nothing to enlighten themselves about how planning functions within existing social and political structures.

Indeed, the problem at hand in professional planning is a tendency for planners to always blame "the system" when something goes wrong. However, by focusing on their "role" and how a role they may enact interacts with other roles, planners become less self-centered and more politically astute. They may recognize that the roles they play are not acted out in isolation from other roles in the process. But they must first be made aware of the potential planning roles that they may enact. Role analysis can be used as an intitial focal point by which to expand thinking about professional planning practice. The change in thinking and the skills that must be developed to enact a role successfully must come later.

4. Summary

The term "role" is applied to the practice of planning as a character assumed by someone. Each role signifies differing strategies of intervention associated with a planning function. It is an objective phenomenon associated with particular behaviors as dictated by the

necessities of the situation.

A planner assumes (or enacts) an official and an unofficial role. The official role is the position. The unofficial role is more fluid and ambiguous. There are many potential unofficial roles. How or if one is enacted depends upon the expectations of the planner, the expectations of others and the official position.

The planning literature from 1975 to 1985 reflects the gap between planning theory and practice. It indicates the degree to which planning theory relates only to the ends of practice but not to the means selected to reach these ends. By using the concept of role as a method of integrating the two, professional practice will be better grounded to reflect exisiting social and political structures. By altering professional roles planners enact instead of only modes of action, planners will be more effective in the work they do. They will construct their own theories of action that tell them how to behave in ambiguous planning episodes.

CHAPTER III

LITERATURE REVIEW ON PLANNER ROLES

1. Introduction

The purpose of this chapter is to review the literature on professional planning roles in order to better understand the myriad of role possibilities authors and practitioners in planning have developed and discussed. This discussion sheds light on what planning is and what planning means. It amplifies the profession's attempt to come to grips with the failure it has in closing the gap between theory and practice. Indeed, it indicates the extent to which the profession needs a rallying point around which it can carve out a separate niche for itself in the collaborative process of creating more livable human environments.

In this chapter, the literature on planner roles is reviewed and categorized under two key themes: 1) The

notion of expertise and advice in planning practice and 2) planning as a form of social action. Within these themes, the dichotomy between the technical and political roles of planners will be highlighted, discussed and used as a conceptual framework by which to understand where planning practice has been and where it is going. The first section of the chapter reviews the literature on the planner roles of technician and advisor to elected decision-makers. The second section reviews when, why and how planner roles became more political. The third section reviews the most recent literature on planner roles. It reflects the wide variety of acceptable professional roles planners may enact.

2. Debating Planner-Technician vs. Planner-Politician: The Notion of Expertise and Advice

Not until the mid 1960's did the literature in the field of urban planning begin to reflect the concept of professional planning roles within the context of a social action model. Given the extreme social and political upheaval in urban America at the time, planners were forced into enacting more highly politicized roles. Often they were unprepared to enact them successfully.

Before this social and political upheaval, the practice

of urban planning was considered a purely technical field consisting of specialized analytical techniques employed by technicians to aid politicians and bureaucrats in reducing uncertainty when making land-use decisions. By 1965, the vast majority of planning-related literature had become critical of the concept that the technical role-model for planning professionals was the only appropriate one. At this time, many authors began to suggest that "planners-as-technicians" were no longer as effective when state and local governments had to fight for a dwindling supply of federal funds earmarked for urban development. Academicians and practitioners began to discuss other, more appropriate roles. These new roles were typically more "action-oriented" and proactive instead of reactive in nature.

However, In the past twenty years the planning literature that explicitly focuses on professional roles indicates a clear dichotomy between those authors believing planners are purely technicians and those believing planners are purely politicians. That such a dichotomy exists reflects the difficulty academicians and practitioners have on agreeing about what planning means or what planning is.

Nevertheless, in the past decade this dichotomy has become

less pronounced and includes a much larger variety of potential role choices for the planning professional. Congruent to this refinement has been the effort of the profession to more clearly relate the means of planning to the ends of planning. The literature suggests there is no one ideal role for every planner and there is disagreement in the field about which role or groups of roles planners should play in the existing political decision-making environment. While the dominant "technical" model of planning has fallen into disfavor, some have argued it still is the cornerstone of planning theory and practice - the cornerstone that distinguishes it from other professions.

At the core of this "technical" model of planning is the notion of expertise. The technician-planner was conceived as an apolitical designer of plans within a framework established by elected decision-makers (Susskind and Ozawa, 1983: 8). In Benveniste's The Politics of Expertise (1977), the sociologist argues that planners should maintain the tradition of playing the expert role because this role is the ultimate source of their power. He suggests that "the expert's apolitical stance serves to distinguish policy experts and planners from other political actors" (Benveniste, 1977: 65). Without this distinction, planners have no legitimate access to any

social or political power since they are appointed, not elected. Benveniste regards the contemporary planner's source of power as the degree to which he or she can reduce the level of uncertainty that exists in any decision-making situation. This is the planner's special expertise. By using particular analytical skills they assist decision-makers in doing "the right thing". Therefore, the expert or "technician" role should be maintained if plans developed by planners are to be implemented.

Baum (1983) takes this notion of expertise and analytically breaks it down to three variables external to the planner that affect his or her use of their particular brand of expertise. The first variable is legitimacy, or the extent to which a planner has the political authority to utilize his or her expertise. The second variable is autonomy, or the degree to which a planner has the independence to utilize his or her expertise. The third is accountability, or the degree to which a planner's expertise is perceived as responsible to the broader public interest (Baum, 17). In a pluralistic society, Baum believes that the planner's brand of expertise lacks political authority, autonomy and accountability (Baum, 4). He argues that planning is often unsuccessful because planners cannot rely alone on

technical apparatus to "sell" their expertise. He suggests that expertise is only valuable to the extent it is acceptable to politicians and the constituencies they serve:

> "Professional practice assumes a distancing (autonomy) of one's clients and constituents. But autonomy is inimical to the work that planners do (social decision-making) in which the planner's accountability to public groups is necessary for planning activity legitimacy...planner's expertise is not matched to public expectations" (Baum, 2).

Baum implies that the successful enactment of the role of technician-planner presupposes a stable political environment and assumes the planner has a publicly legitimate agenda already established whereby he or she is free to influence the political and social decision-making environment. Because this is rarely the case, Baum calls for new and expanded professional roles whereby planners are more socially and organizationally astute. In this way, they may utilize their technical expertise where appropriate and their influence in the political process will be increased.

Other authors have suggested that while expertise may be the source of a planner's power, this expertise does not exist in a political vacuum and have suggested ways for planners to use their expertise in a more effective way.

Benveniste believes planners or experts have a very concrete effect on public and private decision-makers when the statements they make about the future have a high probability of proving true. Therefore, Benveniste suggests that the most important component of the expert's role is to couch proposals in appropriate language: "the way the experts present their plans or recommendations provides a new source of social power" (Benvenite, 36).

Other authors see the notion of expertise in the planning process as an out-growth of the specific role requirements of an "advisor". For example, Kreiger believes a planner functions best in an advisor role. And, he sees an effective advisor-advisee relationship as having three requirements:

1) A relationship of persons in trust and truth.
2) A context for advice-giving (personal knowledge and experience).
3) A public understanding of who we are as a community (Krieger, 5).

Kreiger believes that leaving out any one of these requirements makes for inadequate advice-giving and admits that since human beings are limited, very rarely are all three requirements met. In order to span these limitations, people adapt by taking on "official" roles of

professional planners and experts. "The breakdown of each of the three requirements for the giving and receiving of advice produces specific social roles. Advice becomes technical" (Kreiger, 16). Kreiger continues: "When the relationship of persons in advice becomes problemmatic, so that trust has no foundation in ordinary experience, professionalism develops" (Kreiger, 17). However, professional planners, as advisors, help stabilize the circle of mutual dependency between advisor and advisee. Advice bridges the gap between planning and implementation. "Politicians seek advice when knowledge is not available as when they are making big decisions with unpredictable consequences....they must supplement it with technical assistance"(Kreiger, 18).

Other authors agree that when planners maintain their "expert" status that their political and social power is maintained. Indeed, most planners still see themselves as technical/staff advisors rather than policy advocates or politicians. Many contemporary planners see this anti-political bias of the planning profession as in keeping with the traditional values of municipal reform (cleaning up city hall) and suggest much of the capacity of the planner to exercise power is because of his or her expert status. Vasu (1977) adds: "There is evidence that a political role may be regarded not only as unnecessary to

truly professional planning but as inherently unprofessional because of its propensity to not focus on 'comprehensive' and 'rational' solutions but political ones" (Vasu, 1977: 83).

However, Vasu admits that planners' expertise is often utilized by local decision-makers to provide a non-political or technical "motif" for what is really a political policy e.g. locating parks in such a way as to separate different socio-economic groups. In this way, these technical or rational planners are adding a "rational veneer to what is simply a set of opinions" (Vasu, 14). Indeed, Vasu calls the "political neutrality" of the master planning process a "fiction" (Vasu, 83).

Vasu contends the politically neutral planning process is a mechanism by which to avoid confrontation between planners and politicians over questions related to legitimacy. "To define a process as inherently political and then claim expertise is a poor strategy on which to build support" (Vasu, 71). He goes on to suggest that if planners do not accept the rational/technical role of expert that they are simply reduced to the status of just another interest group within the bureaucracy who have specific policy preferences.

Baer (1977) also recognizes that professional planning practice emphasizes rational decisions "while decision-makers frequently use the act of planning as a cover to disguise choices made on quite a different basis" (Baer, 671). Catanese (1974) believes most planners classify themselves as "technicians" but suggests that when planners try to overcome political considerations on technical grounds that they are bound to fail (Catanese, 1974: 18).

Like Baum, Benveniste and Vasu, Howe (1980) has suggested that the choice of an appropriate, compatible role is a fundamental decision for any planner yet views the technical-political dichotomy as a continuum (Howe, 398). She contends on most ocassions in most situations planners adopt both technical and political role elements creating a "hybrid role".

This direct naming of hybridization was the first indication that choosing a professional planning role to enact could be and, in fact, should be a rational and conscious decision.

3. Planner Roles and the Changing Paradigm of Professional Practice

Howe (1980) has developed a model to predict how or if planners will enact particular professional planning roles. The model uses "the technical and political aspects of role as two separate dimensions, resulting in three role choices - the technician, the politician and the hybrid" (Howe, 399). In her study, those planners seeing themselves as politicians believe planners should be open participants in the planning process, allowing their values to influence their work and openly advocating particular policy alternatives that they may have developed. These "politician-planners" feel planners should "organize and use support groups, should try to neutralize opposition to their plans and should lobby to defeat proposals they thought were bad" (Howe, 400). However, Howe's technicians disagreed.

The technician planner contends the planner's source of power lies in their ability to be objective "both in the sense of keeping their policy views to themselves, and in the sense that their primary source of effectiveness is based on their reputation for doing objective and accurate analysis" Howe, 1980: 400).

In Vasu's landmark study of planner attitudes about themselves and the profession, he discovered the "planner as expert-technician" philosophy is still the dominant mode of professional planning practice. Well over 50% of Vasu's sample of practicing professional planners indicated that they perceived their professional role as that of a technician. This finding lead Vasu to comment, "according to this data there is not much support for those who would imply that the planning profession is undergoing a significant transition with respect to its preferred role definition" (Vasu, 77).

Nevertheless, because by and large, all planning includes elements of both roles Howe suggests most planners are really "hybrids" and don't acknowledge it. Hybrids "see advantages to both orientations and engage in either a constant process of choice or in an attempt to balance the inconsistencies" (Howe, 401). As discussed in Chapter V, these inconsistencies contibute significantly to the role frustration planners experience in professional practice. Indeed, the literature indicates a dissatisfaction with the limiting technician roles of the past and support the notion of a changing paradigm of professional practice.

In the 1960's, increasing federal involvement in planning

at the local level led planners to become involved in a wider variety of "official" functions. With these expanding number of positions (e.g. War on Poverty, Community Action Programs, Model Cities, Urban Renewal) the flexibility of individual planners to become something more than technicians was in evidence. As the planning field expanded so did the number of role choices. This increased flexibility led to a great amount of literature on the wide variety of roles that planners may play in the planning process. The literature reflects the paradigmatic shift in planning practice from those planning roles that are entirely rational-technical to those requiring political acumen and socially sensitive analytical techniques.

In an attempt to better ground the practice of planning in role theory, more contemporary authors have outlined alternative roles for planners to enact that are more independent from the social and political context within which planning operates. For example, Baer sees planners as being most effective when they play a <u>mid-wife</u> role (Baer, 1977: 675). Baer believes that the "new" planning literature suggests that planners are "movers and shakers" whereas in reality they are still more often <u>facilitators</u> or <u>middlemen</u> so others can move and shake. Baer believes planners rarely make things happen; they usually only facilitate. (Baer, 676). Yet, in this

middleman role or facilitator role Baer believes planners perform a valuable service to society - a role nobody else officially plays. This role "helps structure societal inquiry by posing sophisticated questions and cautioning against simplistic answers" (Baer, 676). If planners have any real power in the midwife role, it is that of an agenda setter.

Forester sees the planners role as "manager of information", believing the planner's power derives from the various uses of information in a politically pluralistic society (Forester, 1982). He sees planners in a "communicator role" whereby they have the ability to selectively withhold key pieces of information and set agendas. Forester suggests that playing such a role can in fact lead planners to become manipulators: "if information and communication in the planning process are not (1) clear and comprehensible, (2) sincere and trustworthy, (3) appropriate and legitimate, and (4) accurate and true, then to that extent may the participants in the planning process be misinformed, or, possibly manipulated" (Forester, 71).

Forester contends that to adequately understand and conceptualize what planners do, planning theoriticians and

practitioners must place an emphasis on communication and sources of misinformation. In this way planning practice will be based upon the "practical-bureaucratic recognition and anticipation of structural sources of misinformation" (Forester, 73).

Susskind and Ozawa (1983) conceive of the planners role as one of mediator among conflicting interests. They see mediators as "identifying shared concerns and and common interests of those parties involved in negotiations" as the primary activity in this role. By emphasizing the possibility of "joint gains" and mutually satisfying arrangements the mediator-planner enhances the chances of implementing a particular course of action. Mediator-planners assume very active roles and "control communication of the parties, coordinating the exchange of concessions and, at times mask the bargaining strengths and weaknesses of one side from the other" (Susskind and Ozawa, 10). They add that most planners are already trained in such "process management skills" and can easily transfer these skills into mediation (Susskind and Ozawa, 6).

Susskind and Ozawa suggest that among the most important and crucial process-management skills associated with the mediator-planner are listening to each party involved in

the negotiation process and then assisting in formulating the final agreement to which both sides have contributed. However, they admit that the mediator role for a professional planner is most appropriate in the context of environmental and community disputes between parties reflecting conflicting interests (Susskind and Ozawa, 13). Indeed, the authors suggest that the planning profession can claim a "specialized competence to overcoming obstacles in achieving a community-wide concensus on divisive issues" (Susskind and Ozawa, 14). If, in fact, there is no unitary public interest then planners can assist elected decision-makers in achieving, if not outright agreeing, on a particular policy, program or planning issue.

This mediator role for planners has begun to be the most popular "new" planning role as it most closely identifies the paradigmatic shift in the planning profession. Its cornerstone is that there is no such thing as a unitary public interest but that by the same token, this does not imply that planner's can infuse the plans they develop with their own values either. It assumes that when no interested party is absolutely "right" then only by bargaining can a mutually acceptable political decision be reached. Often this means a planner must develop informed consent among those parties most likely to be

negatively affected by a planning decision.

An additional planner role that has been infused with the more politically and socially sensitive theory of planning practice is the traditional role of planner as advisor. Although, traditionally, the planner was seen as an advisor to elected decision-makers, recent authors have suggested that this role can be fundamentally redirected in content without changing its form. In this way, the politically acceptable role of planner as "official advisor" can be maintained but the content of the advice can be manipulated to fit political realities.

Although planners may provide expert advice to decision makers, this advice might not always be accepted freely. Kreiger has written extensively on the planning process and what this process encourages planners to do in order to be effective. He perceives the planning process as one of "advice-giving" (Kreiger, 1981: 5). Kreiger contends the advisor role is the most appropriate role for planners to assume and believes the most crucial aspect of the advisor-advisee relationship is developing trust. He suggests that when the planner learns how to confront themselves honestly, they can become more effective in establishing the relationship and building an environment

of trust.

Kreiger asserts that persons in such a relationship have feelings and that these feelings should be expressed. If planners let how they feel and not just what they know play an actual role in their professional capacities, they will be able to receive and to give sensible advice. "Advice needs trust and truth....treating each other like persons and trusting each other, advisor and advisee express the needs associated with their roles" (Kreiger, 10). However, he asserts the role of "advisor" has built-in "contadictory impulses" that are likely to make for difficulties for planners in fulfilling the official requirements that constitute the role of advisor and will prevent them from enacting it properly. (Kreiger, 18). Kreiger suggests that these contradictions may destroy the potential for effective planning action in the formal advisor-advisee relationship if they are not acknowledged:

> "When trust becomes a product of a formalized relationship of persons in professionalism, then the caring nature of the relationship may be lost...the formal character of technical thinking may prevent us from talking about non-technical but important issues. A sanitized version of reasonableness, as rationality, removes from our consideration significant but perhaps non-rational forces in advice" (Kreiger, 18).

Therefore, Kreiger sees a dilemma professional advisors like planners face:

> "...city planners, for example, have been predominantly universalistic, affectively neutral, collectively oriented and functionally specific as well as achievment oriented. It is almost as if planners want to forget they are persons....all the sterility and impotence frequently associated with planning may serve the planners deepest need and fears. Yet rejecting themselves as persons, planners are ineffective....plans are cookbooks. Cookbooks are filled with projects and searches. But if you do not know how to be a person, they cannot help you cook" (Kreiger, 196).

Heikoff views the planner's role as a <u>policy analyst</u> instead of a technician <u>or</u> politician. He believes the planning process is such that various interest groups in a pluralistic community interact to achieve concensus. In this sense, the "planner as policy analyst" should understand that elected officials may be confronted with the demand to make a program or design decision <u>before</u> they have had an opportunity to formulate a policy about it. Therefore, it is the planner's responsibility to assist the official in understanding and analyzing the roles of all relevant actors in a political decision "if he is to have a reasonably correct appreciation of how policy choices are made" (Heikoff, 86).

In general, Susskind (1983), Kaufman (1984) and Catanese (1974, 1984) believe an **activist** role is the most appropriate planner role to enact in contemporary local government. They believe it is more in line with the realities of power sharing in a community. As opposed to functioning purely as an advisor or technician to the chief executive, these authors and others suggest that planners must become "managers of change" (Susskind, 1983), or take a managerial stance when interacting with the executive and the legislative branches of government (Catanese, 1974) or directly enact roles that will lead the planner "in pursuit of planned change" (Kaufman, 1985).

It is important to distinguish here between planners enacting roles of "change agents" within the system or without it. Needleman and Needlemans' "guerillas in the bureaucracy" typify the difficulties inherent in enacting action-oriented roles that attempt to influence the political process outside of formal decision-making structures (Needleman and Needleman, 1974). Indeed, Kaufman, Bolan, Catanese and others do not recommend that planners enact roles associated with "advocacy planning" but enact roles that are legitimate within the political system.

For example, Catanese believes that planners are most effective when their activities and functions are directly linked with elected officials. Only in this way will their influence in the decision-making structure be maintained. In fact, acting as a "manager of change" does not specifically include citizen participation. He believes the essence of the citizen participation features associated with the new activist form of practice is "the implicit assumption that politicians can do a better job of influencing citizens to become involved in the decision-making process than can planners" (Catanese, 98).

A planner as activist identifies opinion leaders and community influentials in order to influence elected decision-makers. By harnessing these influentials, planners link politicians with those individuals most representative of special interests in a pluralistic society. When planners structure the form of public input into usable bits of information for decision-makers to react to, then they will become more indispensible to politicians and their influence will be enhanced. On its face, this planning strategy is participatory because it was generated from the bottom up. But on a more realistic political-action, it does not require a planning initiative to have broad, grass-roots support from every

actor affected by the plan or proposal.

Others see the planner's role of managing change as entailing developing consent for planning proposals among those most affected by them. The Institute of Participatory Management and Planning has recently developed specific techniques for managing change that will lead to planners becoming more effective implementors.

They suggest that planners enact roles that will lead them to developing more effective implementation strategies. "There are a great many urban planners who can come up with solutions to urban problems, but only a fraction of them are equally good at getting all of the potentially affected interest groups to go along with the implementation of those solutions" (IPMP, 1985). In this way, reaching agreement on solutions to problems is the cornerstone of the role planners should play. For too long have planners assumed that agreement "is the technical side-effect of analysis" and that planners must now recognize that agreement must be "developed, created, nurtured and grown... it doesn't just happen" (IPMP, 1983: 6).

4. The Expanding Number of Professional Roles for Planners

A great variety of professional planning roles have been developed in response to the increasing difficulty of distributing dwindling resources in a pluralistic society. Many of these roles have been borrowed form other professions, such as social work. It is an attempt by the profession to better account for all potential roles that planners may enact given particular situational variables.

For example, Baum (1983) argues that planning and therefore planners are inextricably linked to organizing (Baum, 27). He sees planners organizing agreements about solutions and problems, as well as agreement about the allocation of resources to solve these problems (Baum, 27). Baum suggests planners lack cognitive maps (or have inaccurate cognitive maps).

He defines cognitive maps as "abstractions which are intended to assist action by focusing the individual's attention on details most likely to be important in choosing effective actions" (Baum, 185). He suggests there are two types of cognitive maps or cognitive styles an individual may possess. They are the divergent and the convergent:

A) Divergent/Political

characterized by:

1) a complex cognitive structure with many differentiated categories.

2) an ability to be flexible in solving changing problems.

3) tolerance for ambiguity and consistency.

4) a sensitivity to subtle cues.

5) a capacity to role play and think in hypothetical terms.

B) Convergent/Intellectual

characterized by:

1) independence of social cues related to one's role.

2) flexibility with regard to prevailing opinions.

3) and ability to differentiate potential means and ends in problem solving.

4) a tendency to reflect before making a judgment and to withhold judgement where information is scarce.

Baum contends that most often planners have convergent cognitive maps that are a disservice to them as they perform an organizing role. He conceives of planners as social actors in the political process and believes that

one of the reasons planners hold the cognitive maps that they do is because of their university training in planning and the professional socialization the profession endorses:

> "The university training of planners covers the technical subject of planning projects but rarely "planners as social actors". There is little in the formal education of planners that teaches them how to express a consciousness of self...planners have been taught to make recommendations free of personal judgement and emotion. As a result of this socialization, planners talk about their products of work as opposed to themselves as workers" (Baum, 89).

Because most planners have incorrect cognitive maps, the goals and expectations of many planners are out of place in the official positions they find themselves filling in bureaucratic organizations. Their work is most often purely intellectual problem-solving and they act in a world of ideas "not located in any <u>place</u>" (Baum, 180). Baum suggests that planners are often unable to settle - intellectually, emotionally or politically - on where to locate in the process of making decisions about problems. If planners assumed the role of organizer in conjunction with a better organizational sense, intellectual decision-making could be extended to politically astute decision-making. As Baum asserts, what, in fact, planners are best able to do once they are organizationally literate is to

organize new decision-making procedures which could gain public legitimacy for social decisions" (Baum, 27).

In the past, planners have enacted their official role believing they were to be concerned only with the technical aspects of the planning process (e.g. relating project evaluation to goals and objectives) and that they "owned the problem" (Baum, 205). He suggests that contemporary planners have changed in that they are taking on more active roles. However, in doing so, they have reduced their public accountability for the alternatives they recommend. In fact, Baum believes that planners are now functioning as "entrepreneurs" in the sense that they are functioning without a "place" - they are working without a place in an organizational context (Baum, 205).

Baum suggests that the real source of "expertise" of planners is their ability to help "define and regulate relationships" and to "refine procedural knowledge about how to solve problems in the political arena" (Baum, 224). In order to do this, planners must define their roles as a place in the social and political structure of a local community. To successfully enact these roles means a planner must become a more active participant as a trouble-shooter: "There is often little differentiation in the public mind between planners who may be concerned with

finding solutions to broad social programs and bureaucrats who are responsible for designing and administering specific programs" (Baum, 241). Thus, Baum believes a planner should enact a role that maximizes their public accountability and legitimacy. Such a role would include such activities as facilitating communication between competing public interests and taking leadership roles in "group processes" (Baum, 257).

Catanese also acknowledges the volatile social and political environment in which planning takes places. However, in the past, Catanese contends that planners have assumed one of three roles without taking into consideration this volatile environment. Catanese's typology of roles is:

1) Apolitical-technical
2) Covert-activist
3) Overt-activist

He believes that the more traditional apolitical-technical planners have not been cognizant of the function politics plays in decisions about planning issues and that for too long these planners have relied upon their technical expertise as a way of influencing the political process (Catanese, 1974). On the other hand, Catanese contends that those overt-activist planners may have a misplaced

conception of their role as public servants. He suggests that some overt-activist planners believe they are "charged with the responsibility of societal change" (Catanese, 39). While he agrees with this contention he goes on to argue that when this change is "an attempt to reorder values then there is wrong in the concept of public service" (Catanese, 39).

Catanese believes a more appropriate role for planners to enact is one of a covert-activist which he defines as "outwardly technical but political behind the scenes" (Catanese, 1974: 57). In a pluralistic society, the covert-activist planner is a translator and educator. In defense, Catanese asserts:

> "Different groups have different lifestyles and preferences for environmental quality. These differences must be understood and communicated before planning is undertaken. If this kind of meaning for the built environment is not communicated well, then there is a false sense of belief that plans will work well" (Catanese, 99).

Additional authors agree that planners must enact more action-oriented roles when practicing their profession. Kaufman argues that planners should enact the role of interventionist in public policy (Kaufman, 1981). Kaufman argues that planners must become initiators of policy

instead of only reacting and putting out brush fires for politicians who have made bad decisions. Indeed, often, it is the planners who take the heat for these decisions. Kaufman sees a policy initiator as one who "nurtures support for an issue that may be latent somewhere in the community, or winning the opposition over to its side or neutralizing it and developing informed consent" (Kaufman, 184).

Slater also believes planners should redefine and expand their roles and provides a typology of planner styles corresponding with the appropriate planner roles. In essence, Slater believes planners should become less technology-centered and more "people-centered": "Planners are more likely to lose their jobs for failing to work well with people issues than for failing to work out the technical aspects of their job" (Slater, 1984: 143). Slater recognizes that even though organizational interrelations are built around people rather than abstract and generalized titles and descriptions, the roles that planners usually play "will vary with the boss's definition" (Slater, 51).

However, Slater distinguishes community planning "styles" with actual roles that planners assume. He asserts that

most individuals tend to lean towards a particular style of local management and that, once this personally accepted style is perceived and utilized through a process of self-assessment, then an expanded version of potential roles for planners to assume can be made a more conscious and rational decision. The actual role selected will relate the functional aspects of the planning activity to what a planner feels most comfortable with.

Slater's styles of local management are:

1) Community Leaders - these are community change agents and the "idea" men and women.

2) Chief Executives - these are the politicians who ask the cautious questions from within the system.

3) Administrative Planner - these are the planners (or others) who work to initiate change from within the system.

4) Caretaker Planners - these are the planners who are most interested in order and routine and not in change from within or from without.

Slater interprets the forms of practice and leadership styles most often exhibited by each type of planner:

> "The community leader exhibits high people skills and low technical competency. The chief executive has low people orientation and just wants to deliver services to prove competency. The administrative planner has high technical capabilities and low people orientation. The caretaker planner is only involved in

bureaucracy" (Slater, 149).

Using these four basic planning styles, Slater develops six planning roles that directly or indirectly, depending on the individual, correlate with planner style. These roles are:

1) Policy analyst/technician
2) Organizer
3) Broker
4) Advocate
5) Enabler
6) Publicist

Given the contemporary social and political environment in which the practice of planning finds itself in, Slater argues that, regardless of preferred style planners must assume the role of community leader more often. He sees planners as appropriately filling community leadership roles in four functional areas:

1) conceptual leadership - centered on priorities, interrelatedness of issues and long-term consequences of short-term actions.

2) public policy leadership.

3) situational leadership.

4) agency and staff leadership (Slater, 168).

Like Slater, Levin believes that planners must change

their roles in contemporary planning practice and discover and enact new ones because "people are tired of being pushed around by government agencies" (Levin, 1977: 7). Levin sees planning as a way of "accomodating widely divergent lifestyles within communities" and developing ways, through policy, of "serving public purposes without requiring public money" (Levin, 7). Levin sees the most appropriate role for planners to enact is "advocate-technician" (Levin, 250). He believes planners are responsible for assigning priorities for public policy and then formulating criteria by which development projects can be evaluated. Like Kreiger's advisor, Levin sees the cornerstone of a planner's power as his or her objective analysis of planning issues. Yet he sees planners as enacting the role of advocate for this analysis. In this way the traditional role of technician has not changed on its face but is used as a facade to push through plans and proposals a planner may feel is "the best one".

Levin includes, within this more general role of advocate-technician, two more specialized roles of public educator and coalition builder. Levin sees planners as educators in that they are "continually engaged in a process of oral and written persuasion, in conjunction with colleagues, planning boards, civic associations, the media, interest groups, engineers, lawyers and the general public. They

spend much of their day holding adult education classes" (Levin, 10).

Levin asserts that planners are coalition-builders and that most acknowledge this. However, he admits that "fashioning effective coalitions is a task calling for considerable energy, shrewdness, tolerance, patience and a willingness to compromise" and that many planners feel compromise is "selling out" (Levin, 15). Indeed, he believes this feeling is directly due to the university training of planners who are led to believe that there is one best "rational" solution for every planning problem. "The practice of conferring in private to make plans is anathema to planners...but that is what is dictated by administrative and political realities" (Levin,12). Levin seems to imply that planners must be comfortable in being used by politicians as "endorsers and validators" of a particular policy that the planner has worked to get accepted within the community.

Like Susskind and Ozawa, David Eversley suggests that the most appropriate role for a planner to play is one of mediator between conflicting political interests and warns that if every conflicting group in society were left to fight it out that anarchy would prevail. He asserts that "the planner's task is to arbitrate; to adjudge the claims

of the various factions, to settle priorities. The planner guides the natural forces of protest into a coherent whole" (Eversley, 1973: 215).

Like Howe, Eversley sees the planner's role as a series of points along a spectrum from technician to politician. He sees four responsibilities of the planner - each of which corresponds with a different professional role. As a technician, Eversley sees planners as trying to avoid some of the undesireable side-effects of certain kinds of development as they prepare plans. As a mediator, he sees planners as speeding up the process in accordance with the declared political objectives of his or her political master; as an advocate, the planner is to identify those areas of need which have not found an articulate and well-connected spokesperson; and as a policy-analyst, should decide on policy priorities after all of the above have been completed (Eversley, 220).

In a landmark study of community planners, the sociologists Needleman and Needleman made an attempt to delve into the professional role identifications of city planners in ten major urban areas in the early 1970's. By conducting descriptive in-depth interviews with hundreds of planners, a clear idea of the role constraints planners

face in contemporary community planning is revealed. Needleman and Needleman focused their efforts on "advocate" planners but labeled them "community planners". Using Paul Davidoff's seminal piece on advocacy planning as a starting point, they analyzed the role perceptions of those planners who found themselves doing advocacy planning whether they wanted to or not because of internal and external organizational sanctions.

Needleman and Needleman suggest that given a planner's official, bureaucratic role that rarely are planners "advocates". Because the city government that employs them usually define the city's planning goals, community planners who work at the neighborhood level, while they may be playing a role somewhat close to Davidoff's "advocate", are more likely to be playing the role in a covert way. Therefore, they coined the term "administrative guerilla" as more adequately representing the "political pressure system" of contemporary community planning (Needleman and Needleman, 1974: 120).

Needleman and Needleman's administrative guerillas come in two varieties. The distinction between these two varieties centers on their conception of who is most appropriate to define the planning problem and set the planning agenda. A <u>delivery agent</u> is more likely to

accept the community's definition of a planning issue and therefore functions more as an advocate in the Davidoff sense. The change agent, on the other hand, presupposes some distorted communication between the haves and the have-nots and sees his or her role as a community planner of "uncovering and bringing to the attention of the community the community needs and problems they might otherwise misunderstand or fail to perceive" (Needleman and Needleman, 146). In Needleman and Needleman's opinion, an additional manifestation of this latter "change agent" role is "educating" the community into agreement with the planner's perception of the area's needs.

5. Summary

Historically, planning-related literature reflects the debate between two widely divergent schools of thought. This debate centers around the notion of expertise and planning practice as a method of social action. One school of thought contends that when planners maintain their "expert" status, their influence is enhanced. The other school of thought contends that planner "expertise" is useful only to the extent it results in tangible changes.

Contemporary planning literature indicates that planning

practice is undergoing a shift with respect to the potential roles planners can and do enact. As planning has become institutionalized as a legitimate local governmental activity, the flexiblity of planners to adopt non-technical roles has increased. These roles have evolved in consort with changes in social and political structure and the interrelationships between these structures. They include:

1. Midwife
2. Facilitator
3. Middleman
4. Agenda-settor
5. Communicator
6. Manager of information
7. Manipulator
8. Mediator
9. Delivery agent
10. Community organizer
11. Entrepreneur
12. Trouble-shooter
13. Interventionist
14. Broker
15. Advocate
16. Enabler
17. Publicist
18. Educator
19. Coalition-builder
20. Change agent

The planning literature suggests these new roles have evolved because planners' expertise lacks political authority and public accountability. Planners realize they can no longer rely purely on objective and unbiased judgement alone when recommending future development.

CHAPTER IV

JOB DISSATISFACTION: ROLE DISSONANCE, CONFLICT AND AMBIGUITY IN PROFESSIONAL PLANNING PRACTICE

1. Introduction

Planning-related literature has begun to reveal that, as planning roles began to change from those roles more technical to those more political, the degree of job dissatisfaction among practicing planners increased (Baum, 1983); (Mayo, 1982); (Howe, 1984); (Kaufman, 1985). The increasing number of potential planning roles and the number of roles planners are expected to enact has created a confusing professional environment. These role changes have increased the unpredictability of the work that planners do. It leads to conflict over the internal and external expectations that define the role. It has also leads to a gap between role enactment and skills development.

By concentrating on the actual and potential roles

planners may enact in the planning process, professional practice will begin to be more closely alined with social and political realities. When this realignment does not take place, planners become frustrated in the work that they do and exhibit signs of professional burn-out.

This chapter outlines the literature that has attempted to analyze those variables that most closely predict and explain planner behavior when they enact a planner role. It examines those variables internal and external to the planner that affect how or if a planner enacts a particular planner role. Role dissonance, conflict and ambiguity will be discussed with respect to planners enacting political roles. In addition, alternative behaviors a planner exhibits when suffering from role dissonance are examined.

2. Understanding Role Dissonance

The planning process is an attempt to make rational what is inherently irrational. The results of such an irony are unpredictable. For example, based on a comprehesive survey of practicing planners in the early 1980's, Baum (1983) suggests this unpredictability is most evident as planners attempt to make sense out of the <u>roles</u> they are

expected to play and the roles that they themselves believe they should play: "Planners reveal the confusion of the organizational process of planning in references to difficulties in controlling their roles in the process" (Baum, 92). Baum also believes that planners have difficulty in evaluating their work because "it is difficult to evaluate yourself as a role player within a context of many role players" (Baum, 90). In addition, Baer (1977) has noted: "the planning profession has the unenviable task of crystallizing political conflicts in the context of planning and society, in the course of articulating its own role" (Baer, 1977: 671).

The issue of role dissonance conflict has not been dealt with in any coherent way. In fact, most authors cannot even agree on definitions of role dissonance and/or conflict, besides agreeing on the variables that are most likely to explain it. The literature in the field from the past ten years reflects this confusion. When determining the variables that most strongly affect professional role performance, most authors generally support the contention that there are both internal and external variables that impinge on the proper execution of any planning role. However, they differ on the degree to which variables are most important.

For example, **Baum** contends role dissonance or conflict is "an isolation of their professional identity from what they do in their actual roles" (Baum, 95). Baum believes that, inwardly, planners <u>feel</u> that they are usually doing the <u>right</u> thing but outwardly, they are not provided the measures by which to objectively evaluate their work. Thus, there are systemic indications that planners are prone to role dissonance and conflict given the nature of planning tasks assigned to them in their formal roles or tasks they choose for themselves in their informal roles.

Benveniste suggests planners feel role dissonance and conflict because they must use the traditional roles of technician and policy analyst "to attempt to fulfill needs they consciously or unconsciously recognize" (Benveniste, 10). He believes that planners, as they emerge from planning school, are ignorant of the "sociology" of their role. Therefore, they most often play the role of "expert" (as a more conventional role definition) without considering the wide variety of potential roles they may, in fact, be able to enact. Planners are led to believe that they enact their technical roles in isolation from other roles in the planning process and suffer from role conflict when they are not successful.

Faludi disagrees somewhat. She believes planners

experience role dissonance because they hold a generalist concept of themselves but upon entering the workplace, the governmental bureaucracy and their clients do not expect them to be generalists but to perform and enact the roles of a specialist:

> "The `generalist' concept is not generalist at all. It can be interpreted as part and parcel of the on-going process of specialization and differentiation of public bureaucracies..... Planners tend to emphasize the role of statutory procedures of planning as constituting the base of their specialism" (Faludi, 109).

Faludi implies that planners experience role dissonance when attempting to enact informal roles in the planning process. She asserts that in planning school and in-service training, planners are led to believe that the strength of their discipline lies in its comprehensive approach to development. However, in reality, planners are expected to enact roles of specialist, experts or technicians.

Faludi contends generalists view planning as broad and comprehensive and specialists purely in terms of development control alone (Faludi, 117). Within this framework, the general public and the governmental bureaucracy places on the planner the expectations that

they will fill a "specialist" function and will enact all of the corresponding roles associated with an "expert". Planners, on the other hand, perceive themselves differently and carry to the workplace an expectation that they will be allowed the lee-way to enact those professional roles most closely associated with a "generalist". In this way, a planner suffers role dissonance.

Michael (1973) emphasizes that the external expectations of any role are the chief determinants of whether or not a professional planner experiences role dissonance or conflict. He asserts that "role conflict is greatest when the prevailing expectations [external] emphasize low rules orientation and low closeness of supervision" (Michael: 1977, 167). This situation is best described as the working environment most closely associated with informal professional planning roles.

Still others see planner role conflict as developing more directly because of internal expectations and determinants of how a role is enacted. In this case, role conflict develops in those individuals who do not have the skills necessary to perform in the job they are assigned to do or in the formal roles they enact.

For example, Mayo defines role dissonance in two ways. He indicates that planners may feel role dissonance when they perceive (an internal expectation of role) that a particular role is important to their work but feel the inability to perform that role "satisfactorily in terms of the importance they assign to it" (Mayo, 482). An additional definition of role dissonance is when a planner may feel a particular role is important in his or her work but feel constrained by their organization in using that role. Thus, Mayo argues "planners can experience role dissonance through both personal inability and organizational constraint" (Mayo, 482).

While surveying 535 public planners in the spring of 1977, Mayo attempted to measure the extent to which socioeconomic, organizational, professional, role dissonance and value incongruence indicators can predict job dissatisfaction among planners (Mayo, 1982). According to Mayo, the planner utilizes nine roles that most closely approximate the skills and abilities needed to be effective planners. They are: community knowledgeable, initiator, technical expert, expert on process, public leader, mediator, judge, veto power and coalition-builder (Mayo, 482). The planners interviewed were then asked to assess both their personal abilities in enacting these

roles and "the amount of constraint their organizations used in permitting or preventing them from exercising these roles" (Mayo, 482).

If role dissonance is defined as the gap between the role requirement and the constraint a planner has when enacting a role, then, in Mayo's factor analysis, the cluster of roles he defined as political (public leader, mediator, judge, veto power, and coalition-builder) "explained about two to three times as much role dissonance as technical ones" (Mayo, 483). Thus, it remains to be examined to what extent planners felt they were unable to enact the roles successfully because of personal inabilities or organizational constraints (internal expectations vs. external expectations).

Mayo's conclusions indicate the extent to which planners may be unprepared to enact the roles that are expected of them in the political arena. His study has indicated that to adequately meet the planner's need of job satisfaction "political success in performing roles in their agencies is more important than success in technical roles" (Mayo, 489). The planners in Mayo's study felt that overcoming political and/or organizational constraints was more critical than overcoming their personal inabilities to perform the cluster of more technical roles:

> "Organizational constraint in political roles is a strong influence. Self-development is often viewed as a way of improving technical skills for gaining legitimacy as a professional. Planners...perceive that constraint in political roles is more critical for being satisfied at work than inabilities in technical roles. Planners want to improve their technical abilities, but this does not appear to be enough. They may want to use what they know in political situations to accomplish something worthwhile and feel good about it. From their perspective, their organizations may not let them do so, and as a result, they are more frustrated with their agencies than with their technical abilities to perform" (Mayo, 490).

Mayo's work indicates that external determinants of role enactment play a more crucial factor in explaining job dissatisfaction in practicing planners than do internal determinants. Nevertheless, this does not address those **skills** internal to the planner, that assist them in **effectively** enacting their roles once they have chosen a particular one to enact.

Like Mayo, Baum (1983) believes that most planners pay little attention to the nature of organizational roles and that this might be a contributing factor when they experience role dissonance in enacting political roles. He believes that planners experience role dissonance and conflict because they do not see the gap between "realistic professional goals" that are defined by, 1) the type of planning organization, 2) the ways in which formal

and informal work roles are structured in a planning organization and 3) the planning techniques that planners have been taught in school to believe would effectively lead them to these goals. In essence, "they have not been socialized to see the variety of roles they would be expected to play" and the variety of roles they could play (Baum, 205).

3. Role Resistance and Professional Burnout

Even though Needleman and Needleman describe role dissonance of "advocate planner", they highlight a crucial concept of planner role dissonance that can be applied to planners today. This concept centers around the notion that any planner who is forced to define his or her role may experience role dissonance, regardless of the larger questions of social and political context. There are certain key pressure points in doing planning work that forces planners into behavioral patterns of role resistance because of role restrictions. These behaviors are reactions to role dissonance or role conflict borne out of enacting political roles without proper knowledge or training.

> "...to gain community trust, planners try to convince the community that their role in city

> government is both limited and powerless. Yet, by doing so, they raise skepticism about their potential usefulness...a planner can be seen as influential and untrustworthy or as trustworthy but useless" (Needleman and Needleman, 92).

Thus, as Needleman and Needleman's study indicates, even those planners that feel restricted from exercising the professional roles they may feel are most appropriate, "they are constantly trying to convince the community that the planner's influence on city government is minimal" (Needleman and Needleman, 90). This reflects the extent to which planners have little knowledge and experience in enacting and roles other than "policy analyst" or "technician". If they did, the role dissonance they experience would be based soley on external determinants alone.

Needleman and Needleman interviewed planners who have spent their professional careers attempting to convey to the wider community that the planning role (or the professional roles that they themselves assume) have nothing to do with implementation in order to protect themselves. In fact, one planner suggested that: "Any complaints about implementation or adequacy of actual programs should go through political channels. We are planners and architects, not politicians" (Needleman and Needleman, 91). This planner's statement reflects the

ambivalence, dissonance and conflict experienced by many contemporary planners. They are trained as technicians and policy analysts but find themselves having to "sell" their policies and programs. This brings in the element of "persuasion" and, in effect, sums up politics.

The Needlemans suggest that there are psychological stresses built in to any profession that chooses to define itself in terms of action-oriented roles and they outline these psychological stresses inherent in these roles as "complaint clusters". These complaints include:

1) The naturally escalating demands of an action-oriented role.

2) The imbalance between effort and achievement.

3) The high risk of disillusionment about the meaning of "success" (Needleman and Needleman, 295).

Needleman and Needleman suggest that most action-oriented roles are characterized by "vagueness or ambiguity of goals and loose organizational structures that allow for positions of opportunity in which individuals doing community contact work structure their own roles" (Needleman and Needleman, 316). It is ironic to note that the the vagueness and ambiguity associated with actual

professional roles for planners is precisely the criticism most often leveled at the profession as a whole. This vagueness led one planner to announce:

"This isn't a profession. It's a racket" (Needleman and Needleman, 303).

Given this vagueness and ambiguity of the framework guiding professional planning practice, planners are forced into self-defined tasks. Indeed, this is as true today as it was in the late 1960's. They experience job dissatisfaction when the tasks they have defined for themselves require such a degree of personal committment that their work becomes intolerable. And, given what they expected to accomplish as idealists in graduate school, the disparity between effort and achievement become wider and wider. Thus, instead of scaling their expectations downward, they become convinced they have failed.

Needleman and Needleman liken planners to Peace Corps Volunteers in that Peace Corps Volunteers most usually create their own roles as they go along. Needleman and Needleman see these professional roles as "volatile roles". They contend that once a person chooses to accept such a role they immediately, "self-destruct, quickly driving the role occupant to the breaking point of

psychological strain and thereby forcing him out of his role" (Needleman and Needleman, 316).

Like Mayo's planners, those planners who experience role dissonance develop alternative patterns of behavior to deal with the negative feelings they have about themselves and their jobs. When planners experience role dissonance, they develop patterns of role resistance and role incapacity (Needleman and Needleman, 120). Role resistance is typically shown by, inwardly, believing that adopting more action-oriented roles is desirable, but refusing in principle from departing from technical and comprehensive planning. Others, try to enact the role but simply fail:

> "The role requires skills the planner receives no training in. The planner has to be able to think on his feet. He [or she] has to present his arguments to skeptical, often hostile community leaders to inspire their confidence. He is forced to function, not only as a planner but also as an actor, a politician, a salesman, a con-man and perhaps even a charismatic leader" (Needleman and Needleman, 153).

Needleman and Needleman's planners have found themselves caught between two opposing forces: doing the "right thing" and doing the possible. This situation led the Needlemans to suggest that in planning schools, planning students are given very little guidance as to how to deal

with these dilemmas or even that these dilemmas -may arise. Thus, they suggest that planners have found themselves with a scenario in which they must construct their own roles to effectuate the social and environmental changes that they deem appropriate. Because creating new and unique professional roles leaves a lack of objective criteria by which to evaluate themselves as professionals and the quality of the work they do, this has created a great deal of job stress and premature burn-out, particularly for those planners in highly charged and dynamic political environments.

An additional issue partially explaining job dissatisfaction is the extent to which internal expectations of planners are far out of line with respect to what it is reasonable for <u>any</u> public servant to accomplish. Planners can be "malcontent utopian dreamers and develop unrealistic expectations in their education and work" (Mayo, 491). But when planners develop expectations in line with what their agencies can realistically deliver then consensus through participation can determine what their role is to be and the internal and external expectations which are the parameters that determine how their role will be enacted will be in agreement. Thus, planners, in consort with others, <u>can</u> develop criteria by which they can objectively and

subjectively evaluate their work.

4. Summary

As planners enact professional roles of a highly sensitive political nature, job dissatisfaction is increased. This dissatisfaction is defined as role dissonance. When a planner is experiencing role dissonance, they wish to successfully enact a role but are prevented from doing so. These constraints include determinants both internal and external to the planner.

In most cases, the literature suggests that as planners begin to adopt more activist or "action-oriented" roles they will feel most constrained by the organizational variables that influence their latitude in successfully enacting their roles. They feel more constrained and experience more role dissonance in enacting the newly required political roles. In addition, this dissonance is most explained, not by the planner lacking the necessary technical skills but by being politically constrained in enacting the roles successfully from within and without their planning organization.

Internal variables predict most role dissonance experienced by planners generally. But when enacting planning roles of a more fluid and political nature, external variables are most likely to constrain the planner and affect dissonance levels. Indeed, the profession finds itself in a Catch-22 position. As planners realize they must enact more political roles to maintain their visibility and therefore their effectiveness, they find themselves constrained from enacting these roles by the very system that requires them to enact these roles.

In order to reduce role dissonance, conflict and ambiguity, planners must first recognize the potentially useful role they may play in the planning process and more accurately match the internal and external expectations that naturally function as the limiting factors in successful role enactment.

CHAPTER V

A FRAMEWORK FOR PLANNER ROLE SELECTION

1. Introduction

Planners must link their technical expertise to solving problems. They must concentrate on their role in facilitating these linkages. Previous chapters have reviewed the planning literature that suggests using the concept of professional role is the most appropriate method of closing the gap between planning and implementation. This literature indicated that, by better delineating all the social and political variables that affect planning practice, alternative roles are created for planners to enact. Based upon the previous analysis, it is suggested here that planners must make the selection of an appropriate role to enact one of the most important considerations in their day to day activities. Choosing an appropriate role will reduce job dissatisfaction and enhance effectiveness.

In order to select the most appropriate role, planners must create a logical and consistent framework by which they evaluate themselves, the situation and the desired end. This chapter recommends such a framework and is based upon careful analysis of the variables that most closely impact planning practice on a day-to-day basis. It attempts to provide a prescriptive theory of practice. This theory is based upon this writer's personal and professional observation and the literature on the subject presented above. Therefore, it has not been tested empirically. While not completely foolproof, this framework is designed as an additional tool to be used by planners as they grapple with how to be more effective at what they do.

2. The Framework

Because most planners in local government are so busy putting out political fires, many do not understand themselves or the work they do in terms of the professional roles they enact or how those roles (official or unofficial) coincide and/or interact. Those that do understand often make the wrong role decision because they either do not have sufficient information to make a responsible choice or because the information they do have may be inaccurate.

The literature from the period of 1975 to 1985 reflects this central concern of planner roles and how these roles are created, developed and enacted. For example, Baum believes the roles of the planner are of central concern when identifying the usefulness of "planning" to the larger society. While he agrees that there is no ideal role for every planner he believes the selection of any particular role must be a conscious and rational decision based upon three variables: 1) the situation, 2) the planner's attributes and 3) the planner's resources (Baum, 76).

The following framework will substantially expand Baum's ideas. It will include important additional variables to be considered that can assist a planner when choosing the most appropriate role or combinations of roles for optimum results. While the variables selected are by no means inclusive of all variables to be analyzed in every situation or for every individual, this framework can be a useful tool for the majority of planners attempting to reduce their personal and professional frustration on the job.

In this writer's opinion, there are two main requirements that must be fulfilled before the process of selecting an appropriate professional planning role can begin. These

requirements are:

1) PROBLEM RECOGNITION - The first step in the process of making a role decision is the recognition that such a possibility exists. Indeed, it is ironic to note how planners are technically skilled identifiers of problems yet are often unable to distinguish the forest from the trees in their own professional lives. Until planners recognize that it is their roles in the planning process that are the most easily manipulated variables they control personally, they will continue to flounder around blaming "the system" or their personal inablities and insecurities.

2) KNOWLEDGE OF ALTERNATIVE ROLES - Planners must become aware of the myriad of roles open for them to enact. While many planners already enact many political roles without realizing it, this does not advance the profession in any coherent way toward creating a place for itself in the local political process. For example, while a planner may, on occasion, recognize the need to negotiate, they do not become negotiators nor do they recognize that this must become the explicit role they enact and announce it to others. They are seen as "planners who know how to negotiate" not just "planners".

Once these two requirements are met, the planner should begin to closely analyze those variables that are most likely to affect their choice of a role to enact in a particular planning situation. To make this process of selecting an appropriate role as rational as possible, planners must first acknowledge all potential planning roles open to them and then consider each one in light of three main categories of knowledge:

1) KNOWLEDGE OF SELF - Self-knowledge is often taken for granted. It should not be. It requires alot of effort. For the planner, self-knowledge should include such concrete things as personality orientation (such as whether a person is inner or outer directed) to less direct personal feelings about religion and philosophy. Planners should confront their personal strengths and weaknesses, biases, fears, and prejudices they may possess.

For example, if a planner feels uncomfortable in large groups of people, he or she should not agree to be the broker between a citizen group and the planning commission in a public forum. The planner could be just as effective behind the scenes. If a planner believes all developers are greedy, then he or she should not agree to be an arbitrator between an environmental group and a developer.

The planner's bias will preclude any objectivity. He or she will not be effective and everybody will recognize it.

2) DEGREE OF INSTITUTIONAL FLEXIBILITY - This type of knowledge refers to the degree to which a planner is provided the flexibility by their own organization or the organizations he or she deals with most to create, develop and enact new roles in the planning process. Often, this degree of flexibility is a direct function of the size of a planning organization and the degree to which activities are specialized. Nevertheless, many planners assume too quickly that their functional activities dictate their role instead of the role dictating the activity.

The newer planner roles are not based on functional specialization but on types of interactions and interventions with others. Most planning organizations may limit a planner's flexibility in terms of activity but not in terms of role. For example, if a planner's functional responsibility is to provide government with an environmental impact statment on a particular development, their flexibility is limited with respect to the type of document required. However, the role they play in securing such a document is usually left up to the planner.

3) SITUATIONAL VARIABLES - These variables are many and varied. Often planners are more likely to see each planning situation as entirely different from the one before it instead of seeing the similarities and acting on that common ground. Specifically, the situational variables that are most important relate directly to the particular objectives the planner is trying to achieve. They are:

1) personal commitment level at the time.
2) the degree of support from those most affected by the proposal or recommendation.
3) the commitment levels of coworkers.
4) the planner's perceptions of liklihood of success.
5) the planning activity itself.

This fifth situational variable is often the most difficult to diagnose but is also the most important. For example, is the planning activity intended to:

1) Enhance the planner's credibility?
2) Create consensus?
3) Identify problems?
4) Mediate between polarized interests?
5) Establish the legitimacy of the planner's agency?
6) Accept and understand communication?
7) Establish the legitimacy of the planning process the planner has recommended?

8) Generate solutions?

It should be noted that the "planning activity" as it is used here can refer to a piece of research, a meeting, a proposal, a recommendation or any other form of communication. It is used generically to signify any planning effort in written or oral form.

Once planners realize the wide variety of roles they may enact within the planning process and consider each role in terms of the three categories of knowledge, they must work to develop the skills necessary to enact the roles properly. Indeed, often the key to awareness about potential roles planners can play is the development of the skills necessary to enact these roles properly.

The skills the literature suggests are most important when enacting new planning roles are outlined in the next section. In addition, how these skills can be applied to create a prescriptive theory of practice is highlighted.

3) The New Planner Skills

An additional theme running throughout contemporary planning literature on professional roles are new skills that planners should develop in order to become more

effective in the work they do. Many authors (Baum, 1983; Kaufman, 1985; Kreiger, 1983; Bolan, 1985) have discussed the lack of inter-personal skills development within the planning profession. They contend that there are inevitable forces at work that are forcing planners to become more adept at using their perceptual and communication skills. For example, the increasing sophistication of community organizations, neighborhood groups and private voluntary organizations require the planner to develop plans that are acceptable to a greater range of subjective criteria. This has created, particularly in light of shrinking resources in urban areas, a greater need for concensus than ever before.

Michael (1973) contends it is generally accepted that planning can no longer be divorced from politics. He suggests that effectively integrating both politics and planning requires combining both within the same structure of thought and action. He contends this requires the development of new skills for planners and believes that enhanced inter-personal skills are required to supply the emotional support the a planner needs when confronting role conflict and ambiguity. "Honesty and perception require both self-understanding and understanding of others as well as the skill to combine these into relevant and supportive inter-personal transactions" (Michael,

1973: 192).

Catanese (1974) believes such skills are actually "political" rather than professional and that these skills must be developed within the context of the political process lest many planning problems "could be mistaken as technical and methodological rather than political, and inter-personal" (Catanese, 1974: 163).

The skills associated with the new politically and organizationally sensitive planning roles center on the ability of planners to 1) become risk takers 2) develop normative theories of action and 3) respect the autonomy and power of special interest groups. These abilities require honesty and perception, skills which are developed through self-understanding and the understanding of others combined in such a way to foster "relevant and supportive inter-personal transactions" (Michael, 1977: 192).

Faludi contends planners are ineffective participants in the political process because they have not raised issues in the application of their "technical" knowledge to "an often diverse clientele" (Faludi, 1973: 143). Like Bolan (1980, 1985) and Michael (1973) Faludi agrees that the formulation of action programs is of central concern for planning and planners but she differs with them on the

root cause of this failure.

While Faludi agrees that planners have not developed the professional skills which, once alternative roles are identified, assist them in choosing the most appropriate one for any given situation, he sees this failure as originating in planning schools. He labels this problem as not adequately integrating disciplines for the planning student. Faludi believes that planning education is at fault by not properly linking substantive knowledge with social scientific aspects of planning theory. Faludi sees sociology as "an attempt to fit all human knowledge into one large, ordered perspective for the sake of understanding , in and of itself, and to provide a basis for sane and well balanced social reform" (Faludi, 143). Therefore Faludi sees that planners develop physical planning programs (housing, transportation and industrial location) that fail to view the underlying issues of social structure thereby doing nothing to immediately affect social ills.

Faludi believes that the skills and techniques of interpersonal communication and perception will never be stressed in the profession until planning "incorporates an image of society" (Faludi, 143). She believes that physical planning techniques have not been adequately linked with the ends of social justice in planning

education:

> "Planning students are being taught various disciplines, not merely because of the educational value of being exposed to them but because of their alleged contribution to the student's effectiveness in practice. Responsibility for understanding how this occurs, however, is all too often shifted to the students who are expected to integrate subjects in their own minds. Instead of being told explicitly to what end each discipline should be used for developing a consistent theory of practice, they are not. Planning education should consist soley of integrating disciplines" (Faludi, 137).

Like Kaufman (1985), Baum (1983), and Bolan (1985), Kreiger (1983) contends that planners, in an attempt to become more effective practitioners, are recognizing that planning must begin to articulate the skills and techniques that are necessary to close the gap between planning and implementation. However, he believes that "advice" is what really bridges this gap. In order to know when the giving of advice is appropriate, a "planner must be able to recognize when someone is lost" (Kreiger, 8).

While obtuse, this statement really reflects the necessity for planners to become more sensitive as they attempt to "read" situation in order to respond in the most appropriate way. It also brings up the necessity for

planners to become more aware of others. Kreiger advises: "If we forget that advice involves persons 'like me' in a community then advice easily becomes directive or orders, or conversely, pleas in the dark of confusion and lostness" (Kreiger, 9).

Kreiger sees the value in Baum's "cognitive mapping" (Baum, 1983), Bolan's "sensory perceptions" (Bolan, 1985) amd Kaufman's "boundary-spanning" (Kaufman, 1985). Kreiger sees planners as being effective when "they make sense out of a situation and reformulate it in such a way that we understand it better: we recognize it as one we have seen before and we see our dilemmas more sharply and with less confusion" (Kreiger, 12).

Kaufman (1985) suggests that for planners to successfully enact the "new" planning roles that planners must develop skills as "boundary-spanners" and "strategists" (Kaufman, 1985: 8). He suggests that planning students become familiar with the literature on the community development process and strategies for bringing about planned change. As a first step, he suggests that planning students and practitioners must become boundary-spanners; Kaufman's boundary-spanners develop interpersonal communication skills to "reduce the distance between themselves and others" (Kaufman, 1985: 11). Kaufman believes these

skills are necessary when planners enact professional planning roles that require them to:

> "...communicate with others through speech, writing and graphics; by attempts at persuasion; by facilitating group meetings; by trying to resolve conflicts; by negotiating and bargaining; by mediating; by mobilizing support groups; and by other behaviors in interaction settings" (Kaufman, 1985: 11).

It is this author's contention that these skills have become so indespensible for planning effectiveness that they should be learned in planning school (or at least, that students must become aware of them). Therefore, this writer recommends implementing, in graduate coursework and professional in-service training, sessions on interpersonal communication skills development. Indeed, a review of the planning literature from the past ten years reflects the profession's attempt to articulate these skills. In general, these planner skills encompass techniques that enable planners to become more sensitive with respect to interpersonal transactions. Planners must be able to "read" a planning situation more accurately in order to select the appropriate role to enact.

It is this author's contention that all of these skills fundamentally indicate how planners should become more

sensitive to inter-personal transactions that intimately affect the planning process. In fact, what is most germane to all of the skills outlined above are their effects on the planner as practitioner. They all indicate the need for planners to become more effective communicators.

"Boundary spanning", "strategizing", "cognitive mapping" and enhancing interpersonal communicationshould be required training for all practicing planners and those receiving graduate education in planning. While many planners may be unable to acquire all of these skills quickly, they must, at least, be made aware of the issues these skills address. These skills can be developed in a varriety of methods:

1. Planners must act on an individual basis to recognize the necessity of acquiring these skills.

2. Graduate schools must begin including coursework on improving interpersonal communication. This could involve requiring communication and development coursework from outside the planning department.

3. Organizations such as the American Planning Association should continue their efforts at including more sessions on inter-personal communication at their

conferences and workshops throughout the year.

4. The planning profession should begin to establish more direct linkage with those professionals involved in organizational development and personnel management. A large number of leadership development workshops are currently offered in many public and private sector management companies.

In this writer's opinion, effective communication is the cornerstone of good planning practice, regardless of normative theories about what constitutes "good" planning. If planners were to develop better communication skills, and adopt the specific behaviors developing these skills include, practitioners will become more effective at what they do and personal and professional frustration will be reduced, regardless of the planning agenda.

In conclusion, there is very little political expediency in viewing development in a comprehensive way. Planners and the profession they represent are the only professionals who attempt to view local development in a comprehensive fashion. Cities need planners. Therefore, planners must develop the skills to enhance their effectiveness.

4) Summary

The planning literature indicates the need for planners to enact planner roles that are more socially, politically and organizationally sensitive. In order to become more effective, planners must extract the concept of "planner role" from the planning process and make the selection of an appropriate role a conscious and rational decision. This decision must be based on three main categories of knowledge:

1) Knowledge of Self
2) Degree of Institutional Flexibility
3) Situational Variables

Once these new roles are selected, planners must take steps to develop the skills necessary to enact them successfully. All of these skills center on the notion that planners must become more effective communicators regardless of the particular planning agenda.

These skills can be developed by a combination of self-improvement, improved graduate education in planning and in-service training by private leadership developers.

CHAPTER VI

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

1. Introduction

The first section of this chapter presents a brief overview of this study. The purpose and objectives will be outlined with respect to the problems being investigated. The second section presents a summary of the conclusions reached from the literature synthesis. Next, the implications of the results of this synthesis for improving planning practice are considered. The final two sections of the chapter present the limitations of the study in conjunction with recommendations for future research in this particular area of planning study and practice.

2. Problem Summary

This study explored three interdependent problems in the study and practice of planning:

1) Planners often choose inappropriate professional roles to enact when engaging in the planning process. This has led to the perception that planners lack political influence to shape the course of urban development. This perceived lack of influence creates personal and professional frustration in planning practice.

2) When planners are confronted with the necessity of changing their professional roles in the planning process, they often suffer role dissonance, conflict and ambiguity. They have either inadequate or incorrect information about how their roles relate to and interact with other roles in the process.

3) Historically, much of the theoretical planning-related literature has focused exclusively on recommending particular "end-states" of planning presuming a "unitary public interest". This has left planners without a guide by which to objectively evaluate themselves as practitioners. They have no theory of practice.

The overall purpose of the study was to discover and analyze how these three problems are interrelated in the planning literature. A literature synthesis of the planning-related literature explicitly about planner roles was the method selected by which to more clearly show how these problems affect planner performance. The more specific objectives were to:

1) Examine the extent to which much of the literature on planner roles contains theoretical concepts not grounded in any systematic way to the existing social, organizational and political realities of practice.

2) Examine the disagreement among planning academicians as to the root cause of the gap between planning theory and practice using the concept of professional <u>role</u> as the focus of analysis.

3) Delineate potential roles most recently developed that planners may enact to enhance their effectiveness when enacting political roles.

4) Create a framework of required knowledge for each planner to make the choice of a professional role to enact a conscious and rational decision.

5) Justify recommending a theory of practice that uses the concept of professional role as the most appropriate method of connecting planning theory to action.

3. Summary of Study Results

This literature review and synthesis yielded the following observations:

1) A planner must enact an official role. This official role is the position they occupy. A position is associated with particular behaviors found legitimate by society. It provides parameters for accepted and required behaviors but is not inclusive of all possible behaviors.

This official role is grounded in tested social and political theory. However, the official roles planners enact often do not lead them to success in their profession. Therefore, they enact unofficial roles that more closely reflect how the social and political environment within which planning operates has changed

over time.

2) Planning literature on planner roles from the period of 1975 to 1985 reflects the historical debate of "planner as technician and advisor" to "planner as politician". This debate centers around the notion that "expertise" is the source of a planner`s power. The key aspects of this debate effectively define what planning is in relation to other legitimate governmental functions.

3) Planning literature indicates that planning practice and the roles planners can and do enact are undergoing a shift towards more political roles. This shift is occurring because the profession is recognizing the planner's "expertise" lacks political authority and public accountability. These new roles have evolved with the increasing need for planners to create consensus among sophisticated sets of political demands (i.e. interest groups).

4) As planners begin to enact roles of a more sensitive political nature, studies suggest job dissatisfaction is increased. Research indicates this is primarily due to:

a. inadequate skills development.
b. organizational constraints.
c. perceptions of barriers by planners.
d. unwillingness to take risks.

5) In the literature, role dissonance is defined as the frustration experienced by a planner when confronted with the necessity of successfully enacting a new role they may not be familiar with. This frustration emanates from both internal and external constraints. Research indicates that most dissonance is explained by variables internal to planners themselves (i.e. they have some degree of control). However, when enacting roles of a sensitive political nature, most dissonance is explained by external variables.

5) Research shows the flexibility of planners to adopt new non-technical planner roles has increased. It does not indicate the extent to which the profession has adopted these new roles as legitimate forms of practice.

6) Contemporary planning literature asserts planning theory relates best to the "ends" of practice. However, planning practice involves developing adequate means to reach those ends successfully. This gap has left planners without the tools to adequately respond to problemmatic planning situations. In addition, it has not provided planners with the means to evaluate themselves as practitioners. Authors have suggested planners must develop theories of action that tell them how or how not to behave in ambiguous planning situations where a unitary

public interest cannot be assumed.

7) The literature contends planners must become more sensitive to the interpersonal transactions that intimately affect the planning process. Planners must be able to better "read" a situation in order to respond with the appropriate professional role.

4. Study Conclusions

By focusing on professional roles as the method of accessing the planning related literature, a number of issues were raised in this study about the practice of planning. It is clear that planning academicians and practitioners possess extensive knowledge about the problems that planners face, the activities that occupy their time and the organizations that planners work for. Indeed, we can describe planning practice but we don't know how planning is different from any other legitimate governmental activity. This is because it is not adequately grounded in any coherent theoretical base. Causal relationships between the means and ends of planning have not been successfully established.

The literature (and the limited research in this area that it describes) indicates that when planners think about what they do, they often feel frustration. The root of this frustration is the difficulty they have "in getting things done". It is my contention that this frustration is primarily due to the fact that they only enact their official roles as technical experts and advisors to elected decision-makers.

This role of technical advisor is now recognized as too constricting. As much of the most recent planning literature indicates, "advisor" is not a very fulfilling role to enact unless those being advised already favor what the advisor recommends. To be technical experts and advisors is entirely compatible with a planner's training and is congruent with the expectations of their employers and the general public. However, planners perceive (and rightfully so) that they have little influence to shape the course of development within urban areas when this development occurs in a volatile political climate rife with competing interest groups. In short, technical roles do not provide the means to balance conflicting interests.

Ironically, research indicates (e.g., Vasu, 1977) that planners are reluctant to abandon these traditional roles because they are more comfortable. They allow the planner

to hide behind a smokescreen of technical superiority. And these roles are grounded to the social and political realities they find around themselves. To be sure, their claimed "expertise" allows them access to elected officials but does this "access" really amount to any substantive influence?

It is now being recognized by many academicians and practitioners that the planning profession cannot continue to only look outward at society. The profession (and planners) must begin to look inward at the mechanics of their practice and ground the elements that describe this practice into concrete behaviors.

In spite of the fact that the "new" planner roles that are grounded in normative theories of action are not seen as legitimate by the general public, employing organizations or legislation, planners must not abandon hope. It is my contention here that, because planners perceive they have little influence to substantively affect change that they often overlook the potential in their official and unofficial roles.

The functions most associated with activist planner roles involve clarifying issues, mediating, bargaining, increasing communication within and between groups and

educating the public about problems from a "process" orientation. Indeed, this process orientation could be the single most valid contribution by the profession. Process could become both the content and consequence of planning and planners. When planners focus on process objectives instead of purely technical analysis, they may become less frustrated at what they do.

Planning acquires legitimacy because of its comprehensive approach to urban problems. However, political decision-making is an incremental activity. This contradiction leads to a situation where planners and the profession they represent must work towards developing a more effective process that better compromises between these competing philosophies. Historically, the planning literature has not been focused on a central theme for making sense about what planning means.

If the theme of **professional role** were used as this rallying theme, the gap between planning theory and practice would be narrowed. When narrowed, planners would able to invoke justifications for their actions that are based on a coherent theoretical basis. They would be better able to claim success when they succeed and admit

failure when they do not. By developing objective measures by which to evaluate themselves as practitioners, personal and professional frustrations will be reduced. This study indicated how developing theories of action would release planners from only looking outward and begin looking inward to themselves as role players within the context of other role players.

This study also indicates how the literature in planning is partially to blame for the gap between planning theory and action; role conflict; personal and professional frustration on the job. If, in fact, a central problem within the profession is to make sense out of what planners do, then the literature should make attempts to assist in this process. Heretofore (with the exception of a few key academicians in the last few years) very few works have highlighted and outlined alternative behaviors and skills that planners must develop to become more successful at what they do. Often, writers are so busy pointing out the forest they have difficulty in seeing the trees. In essence, planners know what the ends are. These ends are studied in school. What they need are to understand the skills and techniques to utilize to most effectively reach those ends.

5. Implications for Planning Practice

Ultimately, what these conclusions mean for planning practice and for the profession in its entirety is more status and direct influence in the political decision-making process that shapes urban areas. When planners make changes in their official roles or enact new informal roles, these adjustments lead to a change in the official functions of planning. These changes may lead to a change in the process of political decision-making. In turn, these adjustments will lead to more status and power for planners and the practice of planning.

Planning practitioners must possess a complete and thorough delineation of alternative but useful roles that they may assume in their professional practice. These roles must be formulated in consonance with internal expectations that are more appropriately matched with external organizational constraints. This will lead to improved planner performance and increase planning's "legitimacy" as a viable governmental activity. If this process were to begin to occur (and perhaps it already is) three scenarios could be realized:

1) Planners who find a particular alternative professional role attractive may organize to restructure traditional planning practice in some fashion which might

allow them to play these new roles effectively.

2) Planners who find these roles attractive may attempt to assume them in their present settings thereby effecting greater discretion in the latitude accorded to them in their current "official" role.

3) The planning profession as a whole can be strengthened by attracting a different population of planning students who are more attracted to these alternative roles as being consistent with their personality or social and political orientations and affiliations.

In addition, planners must begin to adopt the skills that will lead them to enacting more action-oriented roles more effectively. These skills center around the notion that planners must become more effective communicators. It is recommended that both graduate school of planning together with professional associations such as the American Planning Association take concrete steps to include sessions on interpersonal communication skills development in their coursework for both planning students and practitioners.

7. Study Limitations and Directions for Future Research

In any exploratory study, limitations are encountered. Many of these limitations indicate directions for future research in the area of planner roles. The limitations

and research recommendations generated from this study are listed below.

1) The number of planning-related pieces of literature that explicitly mention planner roles is limited. Indeed, this proves the lack of attention by academicians and practitioners alike to this area of planning study. This indicates a need for greater research into what constitutes a "role" in planning practice and how these roles relate to other roles in the planning process.

2) This analysis centered on planners at the local level who work in the public sector. The conclusions reached regarding professional role enactment cannot be generalized to <u>all</u> planners. The analysis centered only on those who attempt to adopt more political roles at the local government level because previous research indicated it is those planners who suffer most from role conflict. A more thorough analysis of potential roles for public and private planners at the state and federal level would be valuable in order to compare and contrast the internal and external constraints faced by other groups of planners who enact different roles.

3) The fact that this is a literature review and synthesis is a limitation in and of itself. Given limited time and

financial resources it was impossible to do an empirical study of practicing planners that would conclusively test many of the conclusions reached in this analysis. For example, Vasu's contention that although the flexibility for planners to shape their own professional roles is increasing, planners do not perceive this to be the case and therefore are not taking advantage of this new, more flexible environment should be reexamined in an empirical study.

4) Limited resources also prevented an empirical study of all internal and external variables that impact on planner role enactment. Additional research that extends Mayo's analysis of alternative planner behaviors as planners enact more political roles should be conducted. In order to reduce role conflict, planners must be able to better match internal and external expectations that impinge upon role enactment. The most important variables and their interrelationships have not yet been conclusively measured and analyzed. Establishing such quantitative relationships would vastly improve the framework created in Chapter V of this document.

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