

ASSESSING THE ETHICAL ISSUES SURROUNDING  
MULTI-DISCIPLINARY PRACTICES

The impact of MDPs on the profession of urban planning in Canada

by

ROBERT WANDELL

Submitted to the School of Urban and Regional Planning in conforming  
with the requirements for the degree of Master of Urban Planning

Queen's University  
Kingston, Ontario, Canada

September 2007

Copyright © Robert Wandell, 2007

## Abstract

Urban and Regional Planning, from a professional standpoint, is built on a history of preservation, with the backdrop of a perennial quest to define itself for the benefit of both laypeople and its own members. Consequently, different stages of planning throughout the twentieth century relate to simultaneous cultural changes that have caused the re-definition and re-focusing of professional efforts. From the original concentration on rational thought that coincided with the planner as objective expert with the ability to identify and promote the public interest, to the civil rights movement of the late twentieth century that embodied postmodern ideas such as advocacy, collaboration, and communication, the concept of who the planner is and what role he or she plays has developed over time. In parallel, the structures planners use to deliver their services have altered. While the shift from the traditional concept of the public sector to quasi-public and private applications has been well documented, the structures of the twenty-first century such as multinationals, public-private partnerships, and multi-disciplinary arrangements are less studied and understood. Multi-disciplinary practices (MDPs), in particular, garner little attention from the academic or professional planning spheres. While the legal and accounting professions are scrambling for a clear policy direction on cross-discipline collaboration, planners do not seem to have diverted much attention to whether or not multi-disciplinary arrangements are a positive or negative development, and whether or not they have a future. Indeed, the existence of MDPs provokes the return of the question of what role planners should play, and whether they should be a distinct specialized profession, or an entity with a mandate to coordinate other professions with an eye to long-term planning for the public good. This analysis attempts to qualitatively

assess whether MDPs should be supported or rejected by the planning discipline, and how the profession should be addressing the answer.

## Acknowledgments

This thesis was completed under the constant and diligent supervision of Dr. Sue Hendler, Associate Professor in the School of Urban and Regional Planning. Her guidance and insight are evident throughout.

Acknowledgement is due to Andrew Sacret, Melissa Dionne, and Pascal Pitre, all former planning students at Queen's University, who greatly assisted in making connections with practicing planners in Ottawa for interview purposes. Thanks are also due to those interviewees who referred friends and colleagues for the same purposes.

Obviously the participation of the twelve interviewees was invaluable, and the ability of all of them to provide candid and insightful thoughts was appreciated. Their willingness to give time out of busy schedules is a testament to the desire all planners have towards learning and improvement.

Thanks to Erin, my parents, and all those who showed patience and support, both emotional and practical. Finally, thanks to the presenting city planner from first year, who catalyzed the questioning of ethical dilemmas, without which I would have never diverged to this thoughtful pursuit.

## Executive Summary

Liked or hated, multi-disciplinary firms abound in the practice of professional planning in Canada. The ethical issues surrounding MDPs, however, are unexplored, at least in the academic literature, while comparable professions such as law and accounting divert much attention to the debate. To understand the ethical issues surrounding MDPs and the inherent conflicts of interest that they may well harbour requires increased academic scrutiny in the field of planning.

To be able to make normative statements concerning the ethical implications of MDPs, a description of the historical influences that have led up to their creation is useful. Planning as a profession in Canada was imported as an amalgam of the British and American systems, and as such was initiated as a similar modernist exercise based on rational thought and delivery through a centralized public sector. The movement towards postmodernism had repercussions for the way planning services were delivered, in that the role of the private sector increased in both significance and scope. As the privatization trend as a function of neoliberal influence continued to develop, new corporate structures such as multi-national firms, public-private partnerships, and multi-disciplinary practices emerged. Simultaneously, changing corporate structures combined with shifting societal influences provoked the scrutiny of a planner's roles. With a core mission of protecting the public interest, the expanding complexity of this very public interest created a similar expansion in planning functions.

With a historical context in place, normative statements concerning MDPs need to be situated within a theoretical framework. While no one theory will guide a normative assessment over all others, a descriptive summary will help in framing future discussion.

Since the public interest can be interpreted by concepts of both consequentialism and social justice, an understanding of how decision making can be regulated by assessing their consequences versus their impact on the notion of justice allows for a more robust analysis. These ethical theories help in guiding the normative assessment of MDPs by defining the concepts of good and bad. As a result, MDPs have the potential to be good (or right) by creating more complex solutions, responding to consumer sovereignty, and promoting economic freedom. Simultaneously, multi-disciplinary arrangements have the potential for bad (or wrong) aspects including a focus on consumerism, the potential for conflicts of interest, and a breaking down of professional boundaries. Undoubtedly, the existence of good and bad points concerning the existence of MDPs leads to an updated question: do the good characteristics of MDPs outweigh the bad, or vice versa?

In order to explore this question further, qualitative research methods were employed in the form of semi-structured interviews. Twelve practicing professional planners in a variety of planning roles were questioned about their experiences relating to MDPs. While the breadth and variety of opinions enhanced an understanding of the overall debate, a number of basic themes emerged from the data. The source of where planners derive their sense of ethics relates to how they approach ethical questions such as the appropriateness of MDPs. A focus on an individual's inherent ability to understand ethical questions detracts responsibility from other structural sources of ethics such as professional codes or policy frameworks. The public perception that a planner is simply inherently ethical, it is argued, should not compensate for systemic failures in other sources. Moreover, as supported by other research on ethical behaviour in planning, the role planners identify with relates to their stance on ethics, meaning the shift from

specialist to generalist likely coincides with popular support for MDPs since they promote integration with other professions.

Prevalent through all of these ideas, the notion of conflict of interest in many ways typifies the opposition to MDPs. The inherent conflicts between the professional institution and the corporate hierarchy, the interest of the public versus the motivations of the individual, competing perceptions of how the public interest should be defined, and the most fundamental conflict between competing professions' core missions all cast tall shadows in the debate. As a result, it is impossible to discount one side of the argument simply because the other side has validity. Multi-disciplinary practices should not be banned based simply on the possibility of conflict, as it would delete the positive attributes of integration and a healthy competition of ideas. Conversely, the potential for conflict should not be ignored based on its lack of practical examples. Planners should not discount the possibility of improvement simply because a scandal at the scale of Enron has not yet transpired in the planning sphere. Even if theoretical in nature, the opportunity to discuss and debate multi-disciplinary practices should be used, and any attempts to continue to build both sides of the debate should be encouraged.

## Table of Contents

Abstract	i
Acknowledgements	iii
Executive Summary	iv
<b>Chapter 1: Introduction</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>Chapter 2: Private Planning in the Canadian Historical Context</b>	<b>6</b>
<i>Planning as an Institution in Canada</i>	
<i>Development of the Planning Idea (1900-1945)</i>	
<i>Development of the Planning Mechanism (1945-1960)</i>	
<i>Inclusion and Collaboration (1960-1980)</i>	
<i>The Changing Role of the Private Sector</i>	
<i>Post-modernism in Planning</i>	
<i>Neo-liberalism and the Privatization Trend</i>	
<i>Contemporary Trends in Corporate Structure</i>	
<i>Multinational Corporations and Globalization</i>	
<i>The (In)efficiency of the Multi-Disciplinary Firm</i>	
<i>P3s and other Contemporary Partnership Models</i>	
<i>Chapter Summary</i>	
<b>Chapter 3: Ethics and the Delivery of Planning Services</b>	<b>48</b>
<i>Setting the Foundation: Relevant Ethical Philosophies</i>	
<i>The Problem Defined</i>	
<i>Maybe Multi-Disciplinary Arrangements are a ‘Good’ Thing</i>	
<i>Maybe Multi-Disciplinary Arrangements are a ‘Bad’ Thing</i>	
<i>Understanding Reality: The Middle Ground</i>	
<i>Chapter Summary</i>	
<b>Chapter 4: Research Methods</b>	<b>70</b>
<i>Research Methods</i>	
<i>Data Collection Strategy</i>	
<i>Conceptual Framework</i>	
<i>Structure</i>	
<i>Receiving and Cataloguing Data</i>	
<i>Structuring of Analysis and Presentation System</i>	
<i>Limitations</i>	
<i>Chapter Summary</i>	



<b>Chapter 5: Testing and Observations</b>	84
<i>An Introduction to the Study</i>	
<i>The Structuring of Questions</i>	
<i>Observing Planners' Responses</i>	
<i>Chapter Summary</i>	
<b>Chapter 6: A Qualitative Analysis of Private Sector Structural Ethics</b>	102
<i>Conflict as an Extension of Diversity</i>	
<i>Conflict Related to the Source of Ethical Guidance</i>	
<i>Conflict as a Parallel of Similar Professions</i>	
<i>Synthesis and Future Directions</i>	
<b>Chapter 7: General Conclusions</b>	115
Works Cited	119
Appendix A: Interview Guide	128
Appendix B: Frequency Report	133

*People of the same trade seldom meet together, even for merriment and diversion, but the conversation ends in a conspiracy against the public, or in some contrivance to raise prices... Though the law cannot hinder people of the same trade from sometimes assembling together, it ought to do nothing to facilitate such assemblies; much less to render them necessary.*

- Adam Smith, *The Wealth of Nations* (1880, 135-136)

## **Chapter 1: Introduction**

In approaching the concept of conflict of interest and attempting to give it practical meaning for planning and its related professions, lessons can be borrowed from Plato's famous allegory of the cave. In it, Plato describes a collection of prisoners condemned to spending the rest of their lives chained and immobilized in a cave, completely dark at one end and shielded by the blazing sun at the other. The only diversion offered to the prisoners is from the casting of shadows from statues located on a platform behind them, where the actual statues are imperceptible due to the contrasting darkness and light. As unseen agents move the statues and throw their voices down into the cave, the prisoners' perception leads them to believe that the shadows are in fact real objects moving and speaking. On its most basic level, the allegory hints at the concept of perception as reality, and relates the experience of the prisoners as the only reality that matters since the statues themselves are not able to be perceived. Interpretation of the truth, then, is as essential a concept as the truth itself. For planners, the difference between a practical occurrence of conflict of interest and a theoretical possibility relates quite closely with the difference between universal truth and a particular entity's perception of truth, or alternatively, as will be discussed within the following chapters, the difference between the public good and a good for a particular individual.

Furthermore, a deeper intensity of thinking reveals some additional lessons learned from Plato's cave allegory. Although straining one's eyes to see past the sun's rays and decipher the hidden truths disguised under the veiled surface is both difficult and painful, it is possible for the most rare and diligent individuals. Put another way, only

select individuals escape that which is easiest to perceive (in this case that shadows move and talk), and in doing so break down barriers to heightened understanding. Ironically, the biggest difficulty for these select individuals is in overcoming the resistance from the majority of individuals left behind who are grounded in their own common perceptions. Related to planning, the tendency of any profession or institution to rely on closely guarded perceptions of the truth can be both a blessing and a poison. The incremental construction of knowledge allows planners to learn from the lessons of ancestors, but it can also drain enthusiasm for searching out new thinking and revolutionary methods of planning spaces. With these philosophical structures in mind, the concept of conflict of interest as it applies to the delivery of planning services, specifically through the mechanism of multi-disciplinary practices (MDPs), acts as a microcosm for the struggles the planning profession as a whole is incurring in its short history. As a result, an analysis of MDPs and their place in the historical context of planning as a profession in Canada is a relevant exercise for planners to undertake. Consequently, the purpose of this research is to construct an enhanced understanding of whether the theoretical conflict of interest that multi-disciplinary firms employing multiple professions with competing core missions inherently endure outweighs the positive aspects of the corporate structure. Specifically, what are the ethical issues, both positive and negative, surrounding multi-disciplinary practices in the Canadian planning profession, and with this analysis in hand, should planners and the planning community be paying more attention to MDPs and their potential effects on the planning environment?

Before discussing the breakdown of how this particular research is structured in an attempt to both analyze and synthesize these concepts, it is perhaps useful to outline

the motivation for approaching the subject. The following anecdote serves in providing context for the root of the query. During a presentation given to a small class of graduate students learning the development process in creating and updating a municipality's official plan, a particular city planner provided an hour or so long session on their municipality's recently updated plan. During this presentation, the planner went over the numerous steps in collaborating with a variety of consultant teams and working diligently to create a document that would truly serve the public interest. Nearing completion of the speech, the presenter turned to an organization chart showing the various consultants involved in preparing the updated plan. The main consulting planner involved was a well-known and well-respected planning outfit, and also happened to be a multi-disciplinary firm. It was this moment of doubt that served as a catalyst to all future academic inquiry. Was it possible for this firm to provide unbiased and objective advice in preparing an official plan when the other disciplines within the same corporate structure stood to benefit from the work its planners were potentially suggesting? Was the role of the planner even to protect the public interest in the first place? Were there enough checks and balances in the system to ensure that the potential for conflict of interest never came to fruition? The range and breadth of related questions was significant indeed.

Armed with a gnawing desire for an expanded understanding, this fundamental questioning led to the following research structure. First, addressing both the idealistic and practical role(s) of the planner requires a baseline understanding of a history of the profession in Canada to make future linkages between contemporary trends and their historical beginnings. Undoubtedly, the role of the planner in the twenty-first century is not mutually exclusive from the way that role has developed over time in response to a

variety of social, economic, and political forces. Chapter 2 strives to outline a history of the Canadian planning profession, at least in as cursory a way as the scope of a master's thesis allows. Given the impossibility of providing all details, the intent was to uncover information specifically related to the change in the delivery method of planning services over time, with particular emphasis on the shift from public sector dominance to emerging neoliberal private sector influence. Accounting for a history of planning as a profession allows for a more complete understanding of the origins of MDPs, and subsequently why the planning community might tend towards support or disapproval of the format. Chapter 3 extends this contextual analysis by providing a normative basis for analysis. Serving as a link, the chapter connects the descriptive information provided in the second chapter with the argumentative chapters that follow. The review of a range of ethical theories and discussion on how and where this particular normative argument might coincide sets up the notion of qualitative research as a method to provide answers to the research question. Specific research methods are discussed in Chapter 4 with particular emphasis on the interview process as the chosen format. The chapter begins by providing justification for the unstructured interview as a preferred selection, and continues by detailing exact choices made throughout the research period and their potential impacts. Before moving to the richness and depth of the qualitative responses, it was felt that an effective transition in Chapter 5 would help introduce the respondents, elaborate on the thinking behind the interview guide structure, and provide some working theories in lead up to final analysis and conclusions. This chapter uses a particular data collection method to expose some of the qualitative results, framed by the exploration of three basic theories, or stylized facts, that direct the discussion towards the final chapter.

Both Chapter 6 and the Conclusion sections attempt to collect the qualitative data obtained from the interview process, and use the range of opinions to help broaden the understanding of how MDPs affect the environment in which planners work. These last sections attempt to use the experience of twelve practicing planners as a proxy for the perception of MDPs, with careful attention paid to the delicate balance between perception and reality. Is our understanding of MDPs a result of observing the shadows on the wall, or of careful attention to the actual objects?

*Professions (like nations) keep their shape by molding their members' (citizens') understanding of the past, causing them to forget those events that do not accord with a righteous image, while keeping alive those memories that do.*

*- Sandercock, Making the Invisible Visible: A Multicultural Planning History (1998, 1)*

## **Chapter 2: Private Planning in the Canadian Historical Context**

### ***Planning as an Institution in Canada***

The majority of texts describing the development of planning as an institution in Canada use Great Britain and the United States as bookends, and nebulously place the Canadian experience somewhere in between. Canadian planning is neither “egalitarian and populist” as the United States, nor “deferential and elitist” (Lipset in Cullingworth 1987, 454) like Great Britain, but is undoubtedly influenced and fashioned by the economic and political forces of each country. The impact on Canadians of both Britain as a colonial master and the United States as a political and cultural big brother is well documented (Wolfe 1994; Hodge 1998), and it is therefore easy to conceive how the origins of Canadian planning would take influence from abroad. This is especially relevant when considering that early Canadian planners were almost exclusively imported from one or the other region. The unique development of planning as an institution in Canada throughout the twentieth century, however, has a more defined relationship with the distinctive features of our own history. Specifically, once Canadian planning had created an institutional foundation based largely on foreign models, the variables unique to its own history developed a system separate from any other. Most notably, the influence of a vast and varied geography coupled with a three-tiered and interdependent system of government are perhaps the greatest contributors to the ongoing definition of the planning institution in Canada. In outlining a history of planning in Canada, it is therefore more revealing to discuss how ideas transplanted from other systems morphed in response to unique conditions versus simply stating that these systems were in fact originally seen elsewhere. Understanding the historical progression of planning as an

institution in Canada is essential in our future understanding of the role of the private sector in the delivery of planning services.

*Development of the Planning Idea (1900-1945)*

Although there were fewer than 50 professional planners in Canada up to the 1940s (Wolfe 1994, 20), and examples of tangible plans and programs were limited and scarce, the future growth of planning as a comprehensive process is inherently linked to the development of planning as an *idea* throughout the first half of the century. Indeed, the relatively rapid growth of the institution with associated mechanisms for implementation post-World War II would perhaps have stalled without early philosophical development. The public demanded an outlet for change, as the problems associated with an increase in urban population existed as early as the late nineteenth century, and could not be ignored. As Canada was growing as a new federation, the migration of population to urban centres and the subsequent milieu of industrialism-induced urban problems influenced the initial incentive to search out appropriate solutions. Although many of the ideas and concepts put forward lacked the structures required to effectuate any change, the desire to re-shape urban life was seen early in the century.

Specifically, the public reaction to the inability of newly created municipal governments to respond to and deal with issues of public health, conservation of resources, and inadequate housing for the poor catalyzed a search outside of the political sphere for answers. In other words, “the development of ideas about the aims of planning and about its practice coincided with turn-of-the-century efforts to restructure local government” (Hodge 1998, 130); hence, the ongoing and uneasy relationship of planning



and politics was derived from the inability of politics as a single entity to respond to increasingly complex urban problems. Similar to the experience in the United States, an early distrust of politics as effective urban problem solvers led to the creation of a network of ad hoc planning boards at an arm's length from municipal government. Although it was generally understood that inefficiency and corruption within the lines of municipal affairs existed, the state of chaos within quickly developing cities created a demand for regulated planning to be businesslike and apolitical (Wolfe 1994, 17). Separation from the process rife with inefficiencies was thought to allow cogency to the new pursuit of health and happiness in urban centres. As early as the concept of planning existed, a strain was evident between the public sector attempting to maintain the public interest, and the private sector endeavouring to deliver that public interest in a meaningful way (or quite possibly to further their own private interests).

Within an environment conducive to commissions or boards came the Commission of Conservation in 1909, which brought together many of the previously created reform groups to identify the supposed evils of urbanization. The commission's original mandate was to examine the "squandering of the Dominion's natural resources" (Wolfe 1994, 17), but with a selection of planning-conscious members such as Dr. Charles Hodgetts, the motivation to hire a planner to address these concerns was present. In 1914 the commission hired Thomas Adams, a recent British émigré, as a planning consultant to the federal government (Wolfe 1994, 17). Adams, who had been involved in the British Planning Act of 1909, was deeply motivated to create a similar set of structures in Canada, and by 1916 would leave only British Columbia, Prince Edward Island, and Québec without a planning act based on the British Act. Thus, the early

Canadian planning environment was built by importing concepts, largely from Britain, and adapting them to existing Canadian structures. The power of the provinces in dealing with urban issues and their reluctance to divert any influence to municipalities meant that early Canadian planning legislation was controlled by a series of provincial planning acts without a serious central voice from the federal government, and then distributed as prescribed to individual municipalities. The fact that each provincial act was both structured and administered differently created a complexity in the Canadian experience that is addressed again below.

With a backdrop in place and momentum from public demand, the Town Planning Institute of Canada was founded in 1919 by eighteen professionals, including Thomas Adams (Wolfe 1994, 18). Again, its structure followed that of the British model, and similarly promoted utilitarianism and rationalism in the quest for efficiency. Much of the institute's early work was in promoting the concept of planning as a separate entity from other professions, and beginning to create a platform on which to build solutions catered to urban problems (Wolfe 1994, 18). Its coincidence with the end of the First World War and the subsequent boom in housing gave the institute an eclectic start, by juxtaposing the need for technical guidance and physical planning with a renewed sense of social justice and moral behaviour in response to wartime recovery. With an unwavering demand for these services throughout the growth periods of the 1920s, the institute was able to begin the discourse concerning the relationship between private and public spheres in relation to planning. As the provinces began to download power to municipalities in the form of the ability to create plans and the emergence of the first

mechanisms to implement these plans (such as zoning by-laws), the public sector was set to reclaim a position of relevance.

The Great Depression of the 1930s ‘left no facet of life in Canada untouched’ (Wolfe 1994, 19), and in many ways quelled whatever progress had been made in the planning sphere. Indeed, by the beginning of the Second World War, many considered the concept of planning to be bankrupt without hope of return (Wolfe 1994, 22). The TPIC, as the emerging professional institution, went on hiatus due to a lack of membership and the removal of its main funding source from the federal government (Hendler forthcoming). Although it maintained its charter throughout its dormant period, its temporary failure set a general precedent for inactivity throughout this period. Just as simple reactive strategies were slowly being replaced with forward planning concepts such as integrated resource planning and regional planning, the baseline utilitarian philosophy of the greatest good for the greatest number no longer had salience in the face of difficulties for all numbers. Although this clearly had negative impacts on planning as an institution, some important developments were occurring that would have lasting effects. The renewal of a social agenda in response to the failures of the Depression created a return to the reliance on government and trust of the public sector to prescribe a remedy. Unemployment relief programs quickly developed into full-scale social welfare programs, including a concentration on the improvement of housing conditions. The housing sector became laden with significance, and operated as a litmus test of social responsibility. The Dominion Housing Act in 1935 and the first National Housing Act in 1938 signified a response by the federal government to the lobbying of private groups throughout the decade (Wolfe 1994, 23). Interestingly, the efforts of private lobby groups

were now to promote the public sector into direct action versus the previous slant of lobbyists to take the politics out of planning (Cullingworth 1987, 427).

The wartime years of 1940 to 1945 in many ways represent a clear transition of planning as a background activity to planning as necessary – both as an idea and as a process. As military production swung the nation back into economic mobilization and full employment, thoughts began to turn to using this solid economic foundation to revitalize the city after decades of neglect. Consequently, the 1943 report written in large part by C.A. Curtis that would eventually carry his name, developed into the “single most important impetus given to urban planning” (Perks and Robinson 1979, 4). Urging all levels of government to participate in a national program for social improvement, housing, planning, and public education, the essence of the report lay in its focus on a three-level top-down approach starting with the federal government and working in conjunction with the efforts of the provinces and municipalities.

Up until the 1940s then, the desire for a response to urban problems was constant, but several deficiencies existed. While a latent appetite for planning may have existed, the institutions and processes were either being created on the spot, or transplanted directly from other nations (Perks and Robinson 1979, 6). This combustible environment of new ideas being fit into a system facing a complex political relationship and vast geography created tension between the public sector and the very public it attempted to serve. The private sector response to create arms-length bodies to ensure the separation of planning and politics served in creating long-term confusion as to whose mandate it was to define the public interest and respond to inefficiencies in its delivery. The creation of these bodies and the political institutions they helped create, however, are inextricably

linked to the progress in the second half of the twentieth century of planning as an institution.

*Development of the Planning Mechanism (1945-1960)*

If the previous period was marked by the development of the idea of planning in the face of increased sophistication of urban places, the post-World War II period was perhaps the time when public planning “finally arrived” (Perks and Robinson 1979, 6). Aided by an immense boom in post-war housing and general economic upturn, the refinement of planning tools finally had an opportunity to catch up with support for the idea in principle. Moreover, the relationship between the private and public sector in relation to planning fundamentally changed. In the previous period, the private sector lobbied a reluctant public sector in response to perceived problems as brought forth by unchecked urbanization. As the public sector gathered more tools for implementation, its role developed into that of a steward of the public interest by not only controlling its definition, but also by providing guidelines and standards for the private sector to operate within.

Without a doubt, the tide of social reform started in 1943 by the Curtis Report gathered momentum in 1944 with the creation of the Central (later Canada) Mortgage and Housing Corporation (CMHC), symbolizing the transition from a renewed social agenda to the cornerstone belief that government’s role was to provide adequate housing for all (Hodge 1998, 145). With a re-established federal perspective led by the CMHC, the concept of urban renewal gathered significant support, resulting in widespread programs for slum clearance and urban re-building. Most importantly, the urban renewal programs were examples of planning with expert professionals back at the helm. Power

afforded to planners was taken back into the public sector by promoting the idea that technical abilities and rational decision-making was paramount in re-building Canadian cities, and could only be wielded by those within the profession.

Interestingly, at the same time as the CMHC was helping to create a national perspective, it was also funding other institutions that would in some ways promote an anti-professionalism sentiment. For example, the CMHC was almost the entire funding source for the Community Planning Association of Canada (CPAC), which from its incorporation in 1946 was essentially set up to promote the linkage of planning activities to the public that these activities were supposed to be serving. In other words, the CPAC's mandate was to "funnel Joe Public's views on urban development to the government" (Regina Leader Post 1972, 6), meaning that even though the public was not participating directly in planning activities, they could at least be voicing their opinions to those who were. In some ways, the CPAC was an institution representing a response by the public to the professionalization that was occurring throughout the 1950s, and was foreshadowing the future reform counter-movements that are addressed in more detail below.

On the surface, the general consensus as to the need for professional planning brought advances across the board. Federally, the CMHC strong-armed municipalities into creating community plans and zoning by-laws under the threat of restricting mortgage approvals. Provincially, a new series of provincial acts including the Ontario Act of 1946 revised the scope of planning from within city boundaries to regions, townships, and outlying areas. Simultaneously, the 1946 Conservation Authorities Act "catalyzed an ecosystem approach to planning which only just begun the diversification

and complication of the planning process” (Hodge 1998, 317). In other words, the growth of planning as an institution was not restricted simply to its size, but also to the breadth and complexity of analysis it performed. Within this timeframe, the concept of a plan grew to include qualifiers such as regional and metropolitan, as well as setting the initial boundaries for later versions of participatory and sustainable plans. Although still centrally controlled by the professional planning agency, which was generally administered by the public sector, the making of plans began to be seen as essential to the development process. The progression was fairly severe: “Thus it was that in 1940 the planner was a mere oddity; by 1950 he or she was a suspected socialist, perhaps an enemy of property or simply an idealist; by 1960, however, he or she had become the indispensable technocrat” (Perks and Robinson 1979, 6). Indeed, while the mechanism of planning developed into a requisite tool for the growth of urban areas, with rare exceptions planning organizations at the municipal level still lacked sufficient resources to perform effectively. In short, while it took the first half of the century to develop a clear understanding of the need for planning as a baseline philosophy, it then took a number of additional decades to develop and fill out the ranks of the newly created institution.

Bolstered by the quantitative revolution in the social sciences throughout the late 1950s, the planning institution responded in kind by placing increased focus on technical design and a pre-occupation with the physical aspects of land use. Interestingly, this movement towards the rational was disassociated from the value-laden influence of politics as it once was in the early part of the century, since the process was itself seen to be inherently value-free in its technical practice. A planner creating a community plan

was no longer making judgments on the suitability of land for one group over another; he or she was simply designing according to agreed upon standards. For this reason, planning as a process could be practiced by professionals within the public sphere without scrutiny of political association or even personal bias. This conviction was based on a belief that anything scientific was impenetrable to outside manipulation. Due to this perceived invulnerability, planning and the public sector were unified in this period more than any other (Hall 2000, 26).

The urban renewal movement resulted in major public housing projects including Regent Park in Toronto and Jeanne Mance in Montréal (Wolfe 1994, 25). Large-scale and well-intentioned, these programs demonstrated that the public sector attached importance to the concept of city rebuilding, but more importantly that all levels of government were poised to participate (Hall 2000, 26). Attempts to explain the programs' subsequent failure(s) are subject to many theories, but undoubtedly the clash between an altruistic government and a private sector no longer in complete control contributed to the unforeseen demise. Although it is impossible to isolate one single concept from the range of factors that led to the problems associated with slum clearing and the public housing projects of the 1950s, it is clear that the implementation of programs drafted at a high level is important. If the people and mechanisms on the ground had fundamental problems communicating with those who were drafting the plans, problems were sure to permeate. Furthermore, since the new wave of experts was "paternalistic and authoritarian in their approach" (Hodge 1998, 124), the prevailing assumption that the public interest was being upheld began to deteriorate. No longer was it sufficient to understand that reforms were being made in the name of efficient planning; the



underlying question of “In whose interest should reforms be made?” (Hodge 1998, 123) crept into the psyche of the public. Urban renewal programs, initially thought to serve in increasing control by the public sector, were in fact leaking in concepts of shared cost approaches and government-as-approval-authority, which would foreshadow the movement towards collaborative planning in the decades to come.

In summary, the institution of planning in Canada in the middle of the twentieth century saw its closest relationship with a centralized public sector, bolstered by the desire to rebuild after the Second World War and an unquestioned reliance on scientific analysis as objectively neutral. Planning could be left without safeguards in the knowledge that “through the application of objective judgment, planning problems could be solved” (Wolfe 1994, 26), and marginalization of any group was done in the name of objective decisions. Although planning developed as a centralized and government-led activity in the early stages of this period, the shift towards government as a hands-on reviewer of proposals from the private sector began to emerge in the latter stages. The desire of the private sector to resume a role of importance within the development process, as well as a general uneasiness in the unchecked reliance on government began to permeate in the public. The era of the expert planner making decisions on behalf of the rest of the public was coming to a close.

#### *Inclusion and Collaboration (1960-1980)*

The social activism of the 1960s, the prevailing trend of the time, affected planning in much the same way rationalism in its own right had through the 1950s. As the institution of planning was first developing, the main thrust was to separate planning completely from the grips of politics; as scientific rationalism grew in influence, planning

could exist within politics under the guise that the process was in fact completely objective. With the anti-establishment movement of the 1960s, “the fact was driven home to planners that planning is a political process” (Wolfe 1994, 28), and planners making decisions regarding the public good were doing so subjectively regardless of association with either public or private interests. With this in mind, it was argued that planners were better off determining the public interest by collaborating directly with the public, even as a very member of the public, to then formulate recommendations customized to the variety of identified needs.

The process of collaborative planning, as this new format was sometimes called (and which currently commands a dominant place in planning theory), coincided with a number of other social and economic forces over the same period of time. The general uneasiness with taking direction from authority translated into “a widespread distrust of politics and a hankering after the old business tradition” (Cullingworth 1987, 459).

Consequently, the requirement of transparency in public affairs often resulted in conflict in light of the government’s desire to keep to itself. Furthermore, the rise in influence of federal politics peaked with the stabilization of the CMHC, and the federal interest looked increasingly to download responsibility to the provinces (Cullingworth 1987).

Finally, Britain’s longstanding influence of neutrality and conservatism began to subside as their colonial authority gave way to the unavoidable pull of U.S.-style individualism.

The increasing American influence imported notions of “transportation-land use modeling, pluralism, public interest, and advocacy” (Perks and Robinson 1979, 6), superseding rationalism and top-down planning. This conversion was apparent within planning theory as well, as various formats of comprehensive planning emerged from the

academic literature. While authors writing early within this movement were calling for the inclusion of a wide variety of perspectives within the planning process (Altshuler 1965), others extended the idea by arguing that the specific duty of a planner is to act as an advocate for those underrepresented or uninformed (Davidoff 1965). These baseline ideas would lead to a reactionary movement revolving around the concept of the planner as an active and biased agent working to ensure the greatest level of participation from the public and hence the most comprehensive and inclusive format of planning possible (Friedmann 1987; Forester 1987). Indeed, the prospect of having as many voices as possible, even if they were contradictory and possibly incompatible, was the updated goal of the comprehensive and postmodern planner, and is explored in more detail below.

This change in topography, however, did not prevent the growth and persistence of planning activities. In 1964, the National Housing Act was revised to include non-residential development, as well as the promotion of rehabilitation over rebuilding of substandard housing. The resulting “frenzy of planning activities” (Wolfe 1994, 27) in reaction to the opportunity for economic revitalization saw an abundance of renewal programs and a heightened awareness of planning as an educational pursuit. A proliferation of studies and reports returned in large part to the underlying philosophy of planning versus method and implementation. That is, professionals from the era of rationality and modernism who concentrated efforts to determining *how* to plan were now spending time in questioning *why* and *for whom* planning existed. This period of reflection culminated in the establishment (although short-lived) of the federal Ministry of State for Urban Affairs (MSUA) in 1970 (Wolfe 1994, 28). The ministry immediately commissioned the Lithwick report to organize a federal stance to operate in a new

environment of transparency, collaboration, and public input. Motivated by the findings of the Lithwick report, and supported in kind by the newly formed Ministry with a focus on integrating federal and regional processes, the Canadian urban system “emerges as a collection of highly regionalized ...federated jurisdictions” (Perks and Robinson 1979, 9). Unwilling to pass over entire responsibility, the federal government attempted joint ventures such as tri-level urban councils in order to maximize on the reach of federal power as well as the relevance of the local forces. Institutionally, Canada was forming its own identity: “richly diverse approaches, flexible institutional arrangements, and considerable social pluralism” (Perks and Robinson 1979, 10) that may have been influenced by the United States, but was most definitely not a copy imported from Britain.

By the 1970s, the raw activism from a decade previous had been refined and institutionalized, and “physical protests had given way to public hearings” (Cullingworth 1987, 419). Planners were forced to adapt from their previous position of authority and power in the face of a general distrust of expertise and professionalism. As supposed stewards of the public interest, planners in particular had to adapt to this change: “Though this affected many other professions as well, it hit planners especially hard, partly because they were relative newcomers to the professional lists, and partly because the matters on which they were supposedly the experts were uniquely transparent” (Cullingworth 1987, 425). By many accounts, the need for Canadian planners to change and adapt provided the first opportunity for the institution to diverge from the borrowed formats of both Britain and the United States. Previously, imported professionals were propounding planning ideas copied from foreign systems and pasted into a Canadian

context. As planners were forced to pay increasing attention to the actual needs of Canadians, “a distinctly Canadian view of planning, urbanism, and environmental management as thought and practice derived expressly from Canadian conditions” (Perks and Robinson 1979, 6) both emerged and flourished. It is within this context that the contemporary notion of the competing interests of public and private sectors truly begins to form.

### ***The Changing Role of the Private Sector***

The previous section served in establishing the complexity and diversity of planning pursuits in the post-modern era beginning after 1960, a pivotal development in charting the role of the private sector in relation to planning. As discussed, the drive to move beyond planning as a single-faceted mechanism for efficient and rational solutions to urban problems was provoked by a parallel increase in complexity of urban life. In other words, while simple solutions were adequate for relatively simple problems, the exponential growth of urban centres in the late twentieth century necessitated a new planning format. Up until that point, the private sector had acted in a strictly supportive role, namely with self-interest as a priority but subject to the will of the public sector in guiding it within the confines of the public good. On the other side of the spectrum, the post-Fordist years of material accumulation and a new and growing generation of baby-boomers afforded the public sector the opportunity to centralize and oversee many of these processes directly. Specifically concerning planning, many of the new mechanisms created in response to the developing urban landscape were handled by planners hired directly by the public sector. With the appearance of post-modernity and a non-linear

model as discussed below, public planners were less eager to present ready-made solutions.

### *Post-modernism in Planning*

Before moving to a more comprehensive analysis of the private sector and its role in contemporary planning, it is perhaps useful to provide a more complete description of the effects of post-modernist thought in Canadian planning. By definition, the counter-movement towards neo-liberalism and post-modernism involved the blurring of lines between previously straightforward concepts, and the layering of issues with a healthy amount of overlap and interconnection. Susan Thompson (2000) describes this concept as the multi-layered city, referring to the post-modernist influence of questioning issues beyond their inherent value and stacking concepts on top of each other to understand them as they truly exist. It is frequently observed that the multi-layered city was a reactionary concept to the over-simplification of modernist planners probing for clean and rational answers to city problems (Allmendinger 2001; Beauregard 1996). Consequently, it is difficult to discuss post-modernism without first understanding the influence of modernism as we began to define it in the previous section.

To summarize, the accelerated rate of change brought forth by the Industrial Revolution at the turn of the twentieth century created an environment conducive to planning. As the populace became more weary and distrustful of cities and urban growth, trust was deferred into the hands of an expert few, namely technocratic planners, to reinvent cities in an efficient way and thus combat disorder. Modernism, then, was the result of this centralization in the form of “large-scale, metropolitan-wide, technologically rational and efficient urban plans, back by absolutely no-frills

architecture” (Harvey 1992, 66). Influential and centralized planning agencies in large part controlled the platform for discussion, and this centralized structure promoted simple and categorical responses, such as the now infamous Congrès International d’Architecture Moderne’s (CIAM) definition of the four functions of the city: dwellings, working, leisure, and circulation (Sert 1942). The solutions offered by modernists were designed to break down complexity by offering mutually exclusive categories with the ability to neglect or even hide any processes that did not fit the solution. In other words, rationality and efficiency acted as a rather large rug, covering most of the room and allowing much of the dirt to be swept underneath.

While rationalism inherently pre-supposed a solution and crafted it into linear and understandable moulds, post-modernist planners were interested in the very ideas that fell outside of and in between the moulds. A renewed interest in a more complex and vibrant model that moved beyond limited categories prompted the public to realize that “what goes into the making of life falls through the mesh of the [original CIAM] four functions” (Jencks 1973, 304), and that rationality was not impenetrable to fault. Quite suddenly, planning theorists began to take active interest in the intangibles of city life, those at times indescribable concepts that both bridged and fell in between the four CIAM categories. Moreover, the new tenets of postmodernism stood in direct opposition to, and were in fact defined in relation to, rationality: “consciously fragmented and contingent, nonlinear, without aspiration to comprehensiveness, singularity or compelling authority” (Beauregard 1996, 192). The concept of having a single authority or even a single profession as authority was questioned. Most importantly, all that was previously undefined by arbitrary categories and intentionally ignored were now central agents in the

process. This baseline philosophy was thrust into the planning world through intense analyses of these new exposed layers (Jacobs 1961; Lynch 1960).

More specifically, post-modernism had a diversity of effects on planners and planning. As large-scale authoritarian plans began to break down in favour of collaborative and locally relevant solutions, the role of the planner shifted to adapt to this change. Judith Innes captures this idea well, and is worth quoting at length:

*Post-modern planning – planning designed to deal with the fragmentation, uncertainty, and rapid change of the early 21<sup>st</sup> century – merges the steps and mixes the roles. Participants do not accept the neutrality of any expertise, but accept as relevant, if not neutral, knowledge grounded in experience, intuition and stories... This planning is driven not by a search for the best way to achieve a goal, but by a package of actions that participants agree will improve on the situation. In these collaborative processes, decisions are only one product (Innes 2000, 3).*

To extend this idea further, if an increase in complexity in urban life and its associated problems provisionally results in a corresponding increase in sophisticated solutions to address these problems, then the agents who deliver these very solutions need by design to be fragmented and specialized in order to effectively respond. In other words, the fragmentation of planning into “epithetical ventures around specialist concerns” (Freestone 2000, 3) was necessarily reactionary to the needs of the post-modern society, and may not have been an intentional change on the part of the profession after nearly fifty years of trying to establish professional credibility. The institutions, not surprisingly, were making complimentary changes in the pursuit of local and regional relevance. While the TPIC emerged from dormancy in the early 1950s, its focus throughout the 1960s turned from its original mandate of promoting planning as a profession, to a new pursuit of organizational efficiency and customized services. Specifically, the institution which had previously been working as one nebulous entity re-organized to a national



office as a supportive mechanism to a series of regional offices to respond to local situations and deal more directly with individual members (Hendler forthcoming). Just as large-scale national entities in the planning world were downloading responsibilities to local groups and morphing into regulatory roles, the professional institute was doing the same.

In terms of the physical environment, the reliance on entirely new and broad ideas based on science and the rejection of past failures as valid learning experiences were replaced with “a conception of the urban fabric as necessarily fragmented; a palimpsest of past forms superimposed upon each other” (Harvey 1992, 66). Publicly sponsored urban renewal programs broke down, according to the post-modernists, because planners had neglected to recognize the intrinsic value of our past failures and follow the trend throughout human history of re-building in reverence of that which came before. Not only was the existing urban form worth keeping intact, it was essential in defining the future uses of the very same land. A new paradigm emerged, one that saw local communities engaged in preserving those attributes that gave them identity. As Hall explains, “local communities should have greater say in the shaping – and especially the reshaping – of their own neighbourhoods” (2002, 283). The private sector, not coincidentally, harmonized with this philosophy immediately. By definition, the private sector as an amalgam of interests is heterogeneous, and therefore responds to problems with a wider range of perspectives than a public bureaucracy, suitable for an environment requiring flexibility and malleability. In short, the symbiosis between the public sector as a central and strong institution and the modernist era searching for large and simple

answers paralleled in exact opposite the relationship experienced by the private sector and post-modernism.

Furthermore, with the strength of the professional as omniscient planner declining and the resulting rise in popularity of the planner as a catalyst for laypeople to create their own customized solutions, came the coinciding need for a new planning language to be created. That is, the essence of the profession as seen in the mandate of the TPIC throughout the first half of the century was to promote the need for the profession, and simultaneously protect it by developing standards and barriers to ensure its survival. As a result, the institute created an entry system to ensure that it could regulate who became a planner, and more importantly organized events and publications so that professionals could communicate between and among themselves to plan effectively. Through institutions and self-organization, professional planners had a mechanism promoting interaction. With the breakdown of trust in professionalism as a characteristic of post-modernism, and a renewal in letting the public establish their own priorities, an entirely new, and immensely larger, set of agents needed to be hooked into the system of communication. In addition, the natural shift to liberal capitalism, as we see again in the following section, was yet another result of a change in environment. Planning, as well as planners now intrinsically linked to the public they served, turned to the market as the most obvious mechanism of communication available; consequently, post-modern planning “tends to be shamelessly market-oriented because that is the primary language of communication in our society” (Harvey 1992, 77).

With this in mind, the definitive movement beginning in the 1960s away from rationalist towards incrementalist, away from modernist towards post-modernist, away

from socialist towards capitalist, away from comprehensive towards collaborative, also involved the initiation of a complimentary shift away from public delivery towards an increased role for the private sector. The fact that all these forces were shifting at relatively the same time may have served in hiding the significance of the private sector's emergence, but the revival was a central component of the overall movement. As Raphael Fischler declared, "The role of the state as provider has been undermined" (2000, 150), and the connection of planning and the public sector began to detach.

### *Neo-liberalism and the Privatization Trend*

Explaining the increase in private sector interaction with the planning process as a result of the shift from conservatism to neo-liberalism has been well documented (Innes 2000; Pennington 2002; Hall 2002). In fact, extensions of this theory include the notion that civilizations are bound by cyclical periods of growth and recession as a result of major events, and that wartime expansion post-World War Two was bound to cause a counter-initiative once conservatism had overextended its reach (Hamer 2000). In this line of thinking, the rise in private planning services was a reactionary move in response to the failures of the public sector to accommodate a change in environment.

The nimble and flexible private sector as champion for the new age of complex problems within a multi-layered environment penetrated planning on a number of levels. The general trend towards liberalism also coincided with an emotional attachment to the freedom of capitalism that has only wavered during recessive periods of renewed conservatism in the early 1980s and 1990s (Pennington 2002; Guzzetta and Bollens 2003). The private entrepreneur as kingpin of capitalism was therefore in a strong position to reclaim a position of relevance within the planning sphere. Alas, none of

bottom-up planning, adaptive urban change, advocacy, or designed flexibility was a solution that the public sector could provide under their program of systematic urban renewal and hierarchical format. As a result, the public sector receded into a role of regulator and policy-maker of the planning process within which private planning firms could be contracted to perform traditional planning activities such as drafting community plans and urban design. From the time neo-liberalism took root in the postwar era, “the typical large-city planning department would have been more aptly titled a zoning or permitting department” (Howe 2000, 55), with private firms performing the vast majority of standard planning services.

This general trend towards the privatization of planning services created several related ramifications. First, the overall labour market for planners previously monopolized by municipalities and other public institutions, was now swinging decidedly towards private practices. This concept extrapolated over time, it has been argued, has created a brain drain from the public sector, further limiting public planners’ functional abilities (Howe 2000). Furthermore, the tangible task of the public planner was limited almost solely to the enforcement of zoning and permits, which modified the planner’s relationship with elected city officials. Whereas throughout the 1950s the public-sector planner and politician were working hand in hand promoting slower, manageable growth in the name of the public interest, the politician’s new allegiance to the private sector and capitalist growth changed this dynamic. Politicians were now on the other side of the line leaning on public planners for “permit streamlining and economic development” (Howe 2000, 55) to drive the capitalist machine. What used to be a partnership linked by the ultimate client, the public, was now an uneasy working relationship to appease the

corporation. Finally, the shift away from in-house planning staff to the use of consultants undoubtedly further detached the planning process from the centralized state, and as some argue, has resulted in “the loss of a centralized vision of planning” (Frenchman 2000, 28). Although the profession of planning gains the ability to adapt and change to local forces, the lack of a high-level perspective provided by public bodies could lead to a “general level of mediocrity and a vulnerability to the latest fad” (Frenchman 2000, 28).

Without a doubt, the struggle between the public and private sector in defining which entity was best suited to provide what services was front and centre throughout the late twentieth century, resulting in a significant changeover from public to private influence. A partial consensus, however, seemed to be reached in admitting that the public sector was ill-equipped to be the sole source of planning services, but still needed to play a role of significance. Within the context of neo-liberalism, the compromise meant that planning should be “public action that generates desirable, widespread, and sustained private market reaction” (Garvin in Howe 2000, 56). A central voice was still needed to represent the public interest, but the actual on-the-ground creation of solutions was perhaps best handled by the private sector. That being said, the very concept of the public interest, which used to be considered as straightforward, was also scrutinized in the new era of fragmentation. While the public planning agency’s power had traditionally been bolstered by the belief that it was the only entity capable of understanding and representing the public interest, the same proponents promoting collaborative planning and the planner/planning as value-laden were arguing that the public interest was relative to who or what was defining it. Indeed, *the* public interest might in fact be a number of

public interests co-existing at one time, a concept well documented and extrapolated by Sandercock (1998a, 1998b).

Wrapped in her plea for a multicultural and inclusionary version of the city, Sandercock argues that a false “faith in the possibility of [knowledge without a knowing subject] enabled planners to claim that their expertise transcended specific interests and gave them the privileged ability to determine what was, or was not, in the ‘public interest’” (1998b, 26). Bolstered by the socio-cultural model of the rational, orderly, and homogenous city, the concept of one public interest was at least digestible if not controversial; however, the influence of neo-liberalism replacing conventional Keynesianism broke the claim of a simple and uniform public voice. Specifically, multiculturalism and pluralism in general have led to an “increasing polarization, [where] it has become well nigh impossible for planners to identify, let alone fight for, a so-called ‘public interest’” (Sandercock 1998b, 28). Therefore, the shift from professionalism to inclusion and from a homogeneous to heterogeneous society was concurrent with the shift from “this particular historic notion of ‘the public interest’” (Sandercock 1998b, 197) to a new concept of multiple publics.

Important to Sandercock’s definition of multiple publics is the clarification that it is not a reinvention of the old concept of the public interest taken to include a multiple number of interests, rather it is an entire redefinition of the underlying philosophy of economic rationality as the paramount cultural hegemony. In more detail:

*In the old model, at least until the late 1960s, planning was held to operate in ‘the public interest’, and it was assumed that planners’ educations entitled them to identify that public interest. In the wake of Marxist, feminist, and poststructuralist dismantlings of this concept, it seems more useful to talk about planning for multiple publics, or for a heterogeneous public. Planning has never been value-neutral. It ought now to be explicitly value-sensitive, working on*

*behalf of the most vulnerable groups in multicultural cities and regions, accommodating rather than eradicating difference. This, in turn, means deconstructing a myth of 'community' often held as the radical Other to the public interest, acknowledging that the dominant notion has typically been an ideal of homogeneous and exclusionary groups, and replacing it with a concept of communities of resistance, inclusionary and democratic, struggling for livelihood and lifespace. In the new arena of planning for multiple publics in multicultural societies, new kinds of multi- or cross-cultural literacies are essential (Sandercock 1998b, 206).*

While homogeneous societies were held together by a sense of sameness and shared beliefs, these new heterogeneous publics are connected by members of individual groups calling on one another to account to overarching principles of justice. In other words, the rise of a civic culture embracing a sense of shared or common destiny is both a pre-condition and a result of the shift from conservative professionalism to neo-liberal privatization.

Another important distinction put forth by Sandercock to take into consideration in the shift towards neo-liberalism is the notion of the rise of civil society as the driving force towards change instead of the planning profession. Up to this point, we have identified a causal relationship between a change in the political and cultural climate and the resulting changes seen in the planning profession. Which of the variables has led the other, however, has not received much attention. Sandercock postulates that the popularity of inclusion and the increased focus on civil society has in turn pushed planners to act accordingly versus planners suddenly understanding and changing on their own accord. In other words, the demand for participatory planning drove planners to act, versus planners simply supplying these types of services in turn creating demand. While in appearance only a semantic difference, the relationship will serve in the future argument for or against multi-disciplinary firms. Obviously, if the overarching cultural

and societal changes are in turn forcing planners to collude with other professions as a response to the increased demand by consumers, any assessment of these collaborations might be swayed.

With Sandercock's theories in mind, the idea that the public interest is a nebulous term that is difficult to pinpoint begins the transition from a history of planning as a developing profession with an eye to gaining legitimacy in the Canadian context (the mandate of the modernist era), to a new history of planning that accepts its role as legitimate and necessary but now struggles increasingly with how to operate ethically (the post-modernist era). As planning becomes more and more intertwined with private enterprise, the ethical standards that used to apply to a centralized public sector apparently responding to the public interest are now stretched and adjusted based on a new set of parameters. For instance, the notion of the agentic shift whereby "the professional or administrator acts responsibly toward the hierarchy of authority...but abdicates any personal, much less social, responsibility" (Milgram in Adams and Balfour 2000, 123) can no longer be contained to an individual hiding behind a single and identifiable authority. In this case, if the delivery of planning services is becoming more and more fragmented through the downloading of responsibility to the private sector, another layer of protection is available to those who would abdicate any personal responsibility, appearing in the form of an increase in distance to the hierarchy itself. Put simply, the private planner now had his or her firm's professional protection, above and beyond that of the institution. Moreover, as pursued in the following section, in the case of multi-disciplinary firms, by integrating and expanding the definition of the firm, are



we simply increasing the number of hierarchies that we can safely hide behind, therefore decreasing our personal obligations to morality and the pursuit of ethical behaviour?

On the side of the public sector, some theorists argue that the so-called decline in public sector influence is in fact simply the re-shuffling of power into a “hidden bureaucracy”, which gives political leaders increasing power by decreasing public scrutiny (Frederickson 2005, 175). That is, while the public sector was once transparent and accountable, the sudden acceptance of the private sector may in fact have been an intentional move by political leaders looking to devolve responsibility to private contractors. If the public sector is no longer actually performing the work, so the argument goes, then it cannot be held accountable as a simple regulator when results go awry. However plausible in theory, the idea that the shift from public to private sectors was in fact even moderately intentional on the part of politicians is unlikely. Indeed, the essence of Frederickson’s argument is in declaring that the function of the traditional federal bureaucracy lives on, while its relevance has in fact receded. In relation to planning, however, the privatization trend as a result of neo-liberalism created a need for a new level of communication between public and private entities in order for planning to remain relevant throughout the change in environment.

It has been said that planning “has had to continually reinvent itself” (Freestone 2000, 9), and the re-invention has almost always had to do with the nebulous relationship of public and private sectors. When the public sector was in firm control of the planning process throughout the middle of the century, planning was thought of as overarching public schemes such as the equitable supply of housing or the high-level design of the city to combat the undesirable effect of urbanization. The private sector’s innate ties to

capitalism broke these high-level pursuits into individual targets of employment creation, profitability, and real estate value through the marketing of place, each one dedicated to decidedly private interests. Without a clear and logical understanding of the goals associated with the stewardship of the public interest, Peter Hall argues, the role of planning has been weakened by cause of its selling out to the private sector (2000).

### *Contemporary Trends in Corporate Structure*

Up until this point, we have been accounting for how planning as a profession and as an institution has been developing in Canada in relation to the underlying environment that has provided influence. With an eye towards the next chapter serving as a normative analysis on whether these trends are inherently good or bad, this section aims to outline how current trends of growth and conglomeration are creating new questions of ethical behaviour. Since our overarching pursuit in eventually analyzing the presence of a conflict of interest in private multi-disciplinary firms requires a firm understanding of ethics and their role in planning, it is beneficial to begin to introduce some benchmark concepts of ethical behaviour as they appear in contemporary situations. For that reason, while multinational corporations and multi-disciplinary firms are important trends in their own right, they also serve in providing context to the question of ethics.

### *Multinational Corporations and Globalization*

As the planning profession was coming to terms with the breaking up of public pursuits into compartments of private activity, a new trend in corporate structure further re-shuffled our ability to understand the planning profession's role. As private sector ideals were entrenched into the planning ideal, global capital-friendliness as coined by Freestone (2000) encouraged the breakdown of geographical boundaries. A city was no

longer restricted to its own financial budget; by creating mechanisms to lure capital from elsewhere, it could effectively increase its capacity for further growth. Consequently, place-marketing, also Freestone's term, meant that private planning interests had to consider the marketability of the plans they created to attract outside capital (2000). Global capital-friendliness, a concept known well to private enterprise, also helped spur the growth of the Multi-National Corporation (MNC), representing the next stage in the privatization of planning.

Without a doubt, the influence of the MNC in contemporary times is hugely significant (Aaronson 2005; Jackson 1998; Palmer 2001). Since the 1990s, "international production has surpassed export as the principal means of delivering goods and services to foreign markets" (Calzolari 2004, 257), meaning that while planning was experiencing a shift towards the private sector, the private sector was undergoing change of its own. While the love and hate of the MNC has been well documented in both academic and popular literature, an overview unearths various and sometimes contradictory opinions on the history, significance, cultural impacts, needed regulations, (dis)advantages, structure, future directions, and overall ethical implications of MNCs and their growing list of subsidiaries. One of the most contested issues, however, remains the ethical implications of a corporation with a set of ethical standards (presumably influenced by the social norms of its home country) operating in one or several host countries with an entirely different set of standards. This is important for the current analysis, as expanded in later sections, by putting ethical behaviour in a societal context. In other words, as planning through its various institutions attempts to regulate its own behaviour by establishing a code of conduct and ethical guidelines, the legitimacy of those codes is compromised

when the parameters on which they were built alter. In the case of the privatization of the industry, as discussed in the last section, the institution responded to the new environment by creating codes under which all planners, including private consultants, would follow. In the case of multinational mobility, the reach of these codes may in fact be overextended if corporations grow beyond the code's original intent.

Furthermore, the rise of the MNC enhanced society's scrutiny of capitalism and neo-liberalism by pushing the boundaries of the ethical behaviour of the firm, as well as the ability to monitor and control private enterprise once it reached a certain size. If a private enterprise developed to the point of no longer qualifying for the implicit ethical checks individual cities or even nations employed, who would then enforce regulation or provide guidance? The public sector, tied to a particular geopolitical region and unable to grow to the same level of the MNC, no longer acts as an equal partner in its post-modern relationship with the private firm. This happens on a few different levels. Most notably, the inherent inequity between the public sector and the modern private multinational, where "communities are locked into geographical locations, [and] corporations are not" (Donaldson 1982, 8) means that the old relationship of regulator and regulated is skewed. The tension is similar to a parent who faces the prospect that their child has in fact grown up into a life that they no longer have the capacity to control.

Perhaps unintentionally, the increased popularity of the MNC began to tease out ethical questions of the private firm as a moral entity that it had largely avoided to this point. Previously, the corporation by definition was created as "a legal fiction and not an agent" with responsibilities only to "its stockholders, employees, and others to whom it has direct obligations" (Beauchamps 1993, 122), meaning a legal entity could not (or

more appropriately should not) attempt to enter the realm of the ethical, assuming that ethical behaviour and self-interested behaviour are defined as separate and distinct entities. While contained to a determined scale and scope, the private firm seemingly escaped major ethical scrutiny by defending itself through the profit motive. Once national borders were transcended, however, increased criticism of acceptable procedures and corporate social responsibility appeared. If nothing else, the focus on setting reasonable standards for private enterprises to uphold rejuvenated the search for widely agreed upon principles of social justice that could be applied in a universal setting. The resultant complexity of determining any universal principles in an international and multi-ethnic environment, and equivalent failure of any truly global legal organization with traction to provide ethical leadership foreshadows the problems in addressing multidisciplinary firms of the twenty-first century. In simple terms, the more complex our problems become, the more complex the structures we create to solve them, and hence the more difficult it becomes to regulate these structures to ensure that they are indeed solving problems in an ethical way.

Interestingly, much of the analysis done by researchers examining the role of MNCs in relation to corporate social responsibility shows that firms, no matter how large or small, in fact have sufficient incentive to act appropriately. For example, even if corporations are provisionally only responsive to increasing profit margins, research uncovered by Wrage and Wrage (2005) shows that firms in general have a disincentive towards corruption and unethical behaviour. Since mobile capital will follow those firms, thus making it easy to conduct business, “high levels of corruption in certain countries correlate with low levels of incoming foreign direct investment” (Wrage and Wrage

2005, 317). Put another way, competitive firms are in fact highly motivated towards transparency and honesty to be able to avoid “the stifling effect corruption has on investment” (Wrage and Wrage 2005, 323), and the resulting business disruption and long-term damage to reputation. Several extensions to this thought are offered here. First, in a purely economic model, a competitive market in the long run would mean that firms have perfect information, and would choose to locate in areas where corruption is low or non-existent; consequently, an entity looking to increase foreign investment would be best to mitigate corruption and unethical behaviour to attract global firms. Second, this model points to the importance of external regulation in the form of enhancing a transparent and ethical environment versus preventative justice catered to curbing bad behaviour. In other words, societies looking for ethical firms need only give incentive through the provision of a free operating market, and the process of competition will, again in the long run, force uncompetitive and unethical firms to leave.

Even if the aforementioned notion of self-regulation could not be taken as entirely applicable, without a doubt the guidance and supervision of nation-states, professional bodies, and international regulators is an essential component in ensuring that ethical behaviour is understood and propagated. The current structure of regulation, however, provides inadequate guidance. It has been shown that an average Canadian corporation might be affected by “a total of twelve codes of ethics, all of which exist within the legal environment” (Payne, Dinch *et al.* 1997, 1732), creating an obvious situation of confusion and overlap. Indeed, in 2001 the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) found 246 codes of conduct designed to regulate and promote global corporate responsibility in an age of multinational mobility (Aaronson 2005, 177),

and yet no one agency or group is entirely responsible for coordinating the effort. The need for one clear set of rules governed by an identifiable body is an issue which needs resolution not just for multinationals, but for all of the changing forms of private enterprise that result from the quest for multifarious solutions to modern problems. Presumably, it is an issue that also relates to multi-disciplinary arrangements (see below).

In summary, multinational firms in a way represent yet another extension to the problems featured in the movement towards private delivery of planning services, and not an entirely new set of problems. That is, the shift towards the private sector revealed a need for global direction with the ability to make effective decisions on a local and short-term scale; the development of globally operating firms simply re-stated the need for “management standards throughout its worldwide operations, [while] their subsidiaries ought to have enough flexibility to adapt these standards to their local environment” (Veser 2004, 427). Inaction from regulatory bodies to reach beyond set political boundaries and create a functional ethical backdrop for MNCs to operate within may be just as much a cause of the liberties taken by so-called unethical firms than can be attributed to the unwillingness of firms to act appropriately. While accountability cannot be absolved from any party, it is essential to understand the exogenous forces that may be causing inefficiencies or inequality by any one agent.

### *P3s and other Contemporary Partnership Models*

Although partnership models have a history dating back to the 1970s (Sagalyn 2007; Fischbacher and Beaumont 2003) their exponentially increasing popularity throughout the 1990s and in to the current decade creates a need for an enhanced understanding of their impact on planning. Collecting all the various partnership methods

under the moniker of Public-Private Partnerships (P3s) is problematic in itself, as the number of alternative arrangements is varied in both process and function. While the traditional notion of P3 suggests “leveraging the economic power of strategically located parcels of publically owned land and crafting financial risk-sharing arrangements with private developers to further their redevelopment agendas” (Sagalyn 2007, 9), the way that the public sector and private developers are introduced, coordinated, and operated all influence a working process that could initiate varied structures. For instance, a project spearheaded and funded by the private sector looking for concessions from the public sector in terms of regulation and governance has been labeled a Private Financing Initiative (PFI), whereas the same type of arrangement with partial funding from the public sector has simply been referred to as a Private-Public Partnership. While the semantics may be minor, the resulting structures and processes have proven to lead to quite significantly different outcomes (Pichierri 2002; Kiljn and Teisman 2003). For the purposes of setting context and creating comparisons to multi-disciplinary firms however, simplifying the concept into the notion of the public and private sectors collaborating for mutual gain is sufficient.

The concept of public-private partnership is imbedded in the same long-term process of privatization and the advance of neoliberal principles as previously outlined. The public sector, most often represented by local municipalities as the likely P3 initiator (Sagalyn 2007), were acting in a modified role of regulator in increasingly strenuous financial situations. As a result, city officials were lured to the “hard-to-beat blend of flexibility and efficiency in the use of resources...thereby allowing governments to limit their financial exposure” (Sagalyn 2007, 7). The byproduct of the public sector turning to



private entrepreneurs to mitigate financial risk and “infusing competitive forces into the delivery of public service” (Siemiatycki 2006, 137), however, was undoubtedly the weakening of the traditional hierarchy that placed the public sector as regulator and private sector as regulated. Subsequently, not only were private firms outgrowing the geopolitical boundaries as set by the public sector as seen with MNCs, but also the structural boundaries that had assisted in keeping the sectors separate were now breaking down as a result of contemporary partnership models. Not surprisingly, the blurring of lines and decreasing clarity in function makes the protection of a variety of interests difficult, since “once the process is in motion the interests of the community are often overwhelmed by those of the most powerful member of the partnership – the private sector firms” (Miraftab 2004, 89).

The P3 model, then, is a microcosm of the larger conflict between private and public interests. If the traditional role of the state, or city official, was to protect the public interest by providing an unbiased and uninfluenced opinion, “the inherent conflict between profit-driven interest of the private sector and welfare-driven interests of the communities” (Miraftab 2004, 89) makes the partnership an unstable one. Conversely, the counter-arguments to this last point offer many important parallels to the discussion of multi-disciplinary firms upcoming. Pichierri, for instance, argues that successful partnerships are ones that de-institutionalize the process and rely on non-traditional forms of governance for actors to bypass the “values/beliefs/myths from outside the local system” (2002, 690). By creating strong endogenous forms of regulation, he argues, we avoid the need for the public sector to fixate on their role as regulator, and therefore allow partnerships to flourish. Miraftab expands on this point by arguing the need to

“disentangle the three notions of efficiency, effectiveness, and equity, which often blur into one in accounts of PPPs” (2004, 91). While the partnership model has both advantages and disadvantages inherent to itself, it is foolish to believe a structure without suitable conditions will regulate ethical behaviour independently. Therefore,

*PPP understood in all its aspects cannot be either categorically accepted or rejected. Rather, one must ask, Under what political, social, and economic conditions and institutional environments, and with what processes, can PPPs succeed or fail as synergistic relationships that benefit all partners? (Miraftab 2004, 91)*

The separation of P3 as a mechanism for effective delivery of services versus equitable provider of services is an important nuance for future discussion regarding multi-disciplinary practices. It frames the debate for both P3s and MDPs as either an example “of the right proposal at the wrong time” (Klijn and Teisman 2003, 145), quite possibly the right proposal with the wrong approach, and maybe even the wrong proposal altogether.

#### *The (In)efficiency of the ‘Multi-Disciplinary’ Firm*

While firms in general were tending towards multi-nationalism throughout the late twentieth century, the tendency of organizations to reach beyond their own pre-defined (or in some case self-defined) notions of discipline is a relatively new phenomenon. As explained previously, planning not unlike most professions struggled to contain itself within stringent parameters in order to protect its professional ideals. The interesting opposing force has manifested itself within the context of neo-liberalism, privatization, and the general footloose behaviour of firms in the twenty-first century. Specifically, while many professions spent a significant amount of time and energy to exclude others and guard their own internal interests in the name of protectionism, many

of the same professions are now struggling with the desire of their member firms to strike alliances with both related professions and non-professionals alike.

Multi-disciplinary practices are perhaps best recognized after the now famous Enron/WorldCom scandal that resulted in the legal and accounting professions scrambling for a clear policy on how to deal with this stage of alliance and joint venture. In simple terms, an MDP is a strategic alliance or “any business arrangement in which individuals with different professional qualifications practice together” (McVea 2002, 814). The argument for such an alliance is rooted in the same philosophy that saw the professions cling to private sector implementation; that is, the ability of a group of professionals to answer to their clients in whatever way they demand is best for all involved. The growth and popularity of MDPs in the legal field, it has been argued, is caused by the same changing consumer demands as with planning. Since consumers are “increasingly seeking comprehensive, multi-professional advice” (McVea 2002, 816), lawyers and accountants are by necessity joining forces in order to create more comprehensive and complex answers to analogous complex questions. This argument, familiar to planners who believed that the private sector was necessary to create flexibility in meeting consumer demand, advances along the slippery slope in relation to MDPs. If privately delivered planning services were inherently adept at responding to complex problems, then multi-disciplinary services are by definition even more equipped to deal with increased complexity. The creation of a one-stop shop for clients looking for a complete solution to designing, building, and servicing their cities and towns is a natural extension of responding to consumer demand. Whether consumer demand

necessarily equates to public demand and which should take precedence are examined in more detail in the following chapter.

While some argue that the move towards MDPs is mainly altruistic and based on creating more corporate flexibility in responding to the demands of their clients, there is also a supply-side argument that relates to benefits accrued to the firms themselves. In the legal-accounting example, the elite accountancy firms that have been credited with the drive towards a multi-disciplinary approach are also those who stand to benefit by “break[ing] free of the low margin audit work and establish[ing] themselves as the providers of an increasingly wide range of professional services” (McVea 2002, 812). Consequently, firms that have hit a growth plateau within their own discipline may stand to profit from associating with a larger base of clients. If indeed the increased popularity of MDPs in the accounting world is in large part due to individual firms looking for larger exposure by treating the multi-disciplinary approach as a growth strategy, is there a similar parallel for architectural design firms looking for a wider client base by offering urban design or planning services? In all likelihood, the increased popularity of MDPs is due to a combination of both consumer demand and producer benefit forces.

Above and beyond the fairly straightforward demand and supply side arguments put forth are a collection of more subtle arguments that are worthwhile exploring. To begin, the inability of the profession to create a distinct brand for itself may be an indirect motivator for multi-disciplinary alliances. In his 2003 assessment of the American Planning Association (APA), Bruce W. McClendon argues as a marketing analyst for a distinct brand identity for planners. Since the profession has never taken care to position itself and the services it offers, “the public doesn’t really know what planning is as a

profession and doesn't know how to differentiate between the various occupational specialists who provide a wide array of planning products and services" (McClendon 2003, 221). As a result, the lack of a profile within the professional community may indirectly provoke planners to examine the merits of associating with other established professionals, and by proxy create a higher profile. Although McClendon argues for the APA to provide leadership in formulating a core mission that would allow planning to position itself as a leading profession, the current reality of fragmentation and dilution of the services offered by planners reveals a profession that may be reliant on a multi-disciplinary approach for legitimacy. In other words, the public perception of a profession as a go-to authority is contingent on an omnipotent core mission. Since planning services are at best ill-defined, and at worse completely misunderstood, planners may feel compelled to associate with other professions.

Taking this argument one step further, if the planner lacks the specific skills to be a specialist at one particular pursuit, are MDPs a natural coalition of a range of specialists under the coordination of a planner? If Altshuler's statement in 1965 that "the job of the city planner is to propose courses of action, not to execute them" (1965b, 1) still holds true today, then perhaps our answer to the previous question is positive. Indeed, if the planner is truly a coordinator of a team of specialists and not a specialist him/herself, then the MDP is a perfect environment for the assimilation and coordination of other services under the long-term guidance of the planning influence. McClendon argues that a return to the comprehensive master plan as a core mission for planners allows for this relationship to flourish, as "each specialty occupation focus[es] on its core responsibility, [while] planners fully integrate and unify the interrelated and interdependent

components” (2003, 228). In this case, planners would succeed in finding relevance, understand their position in relation to other surrounding professions, and retain the ability to implement a comprehensive plan responding to a long-term view of the public interest.

McCoy’s response to the McClendon argument outlines the current era’s crossroads for planning (2003). Throughout their own respective histories, all professions have been able to respond to adversity in its many forms by remaining both resolute and comfortable within the confines of their own core mission. In other words, lawyers survive jokes at their expense, doctors have overcome the rise in demand for holistic and naturopathic medicine, and psychiatrists accept alternative chemical solutions, all due to a firm understanding of what lies both within and without each profession’s expertise (McCoy in McClendon 2003, 231). Consequently, planners must determine whether their own core mission places them alongside other professions, and thus able to combat criticism, or alternatively as a team coordinator in a modified role.

Regardless of motivation, the baseline philosophy behind the formation of MDPs is undoubtedly driven by an overall societal shift towards deregulation and neo-liberalism that also served in shepherding the planning profession from public to private sector delivery. In other words, the creation of MDPs, whether as part of the legal or planning professions, is “part of a global trend towards deregulation, embodying the idea that the public interest is best served by the dismantling of barriers which stifle competition, impede efficiency and restrict consumer choice” (McVea 2002, 833). Interestingly, this trend is a logical and natural extension of the overall unraveling of “the traditional concept of professionalism, rooted in public service and collegiality” (McVea 2002, 833)

that was initiated by the collaborative planning movement beginning in the 1960s, and the privatization movement that followed.

Unlike planning, the legal profession has longstanding rules in place to govern fee sharing and partnerships between lawyers and non-lawyers. The Canons of Professional Ethics of 1908 first outlined the restrictions of fee sharing between professional lawyers and non-members, further updated in 1928 by the American Bar Association to prohibit partnerships of any kind. Now referred to as the Legal Profession Act, the ethical guidelines have required adaptation to “ensure that lawyers’ traditional duties to clients – confidentiality, disclosure, and avoidance of conflict of interest” (Koppel 2001, 694) are upheld in the face of a changing environment. Planning, on the other hand, has no such clear definition of rules in regards to practice. In Canada, planners are guided by the CIP’s Statement of Values and Code of Professional Practice (2004), which fails to provide any direct statement on whether multi-disciplinary practice should or should not occur. The only indirect statement suggests that members “acknowledge the inter-related nature of planning decisions” (Canadian Institute of Planners 2004, 1.3), but is without specific guidance on how planning professionals should interact with other professions. Similarly, the American model is based on the American Institute of Certified Planner’s Code of Ethics and Professional Conduct (2005), suggesting that planners “pay special attention to the interrelatedness of decisions” (American Institute of Certified Planners 2005, A1c). This provides an important baseline for future analysis in the following chapters: if the planning institutions have nothing to say concerning the implications of MDPs, is the planning profession doomed to repeat the mistakes of at least some

members of the legal and accounting world by misjudging the impact of a multi-disciplinary approach?

### *Chapter Summary*

Canadian planning has a history that reaches back to the beginning of the twentieth century, even though planning on a serious scale did not truly take form until closer to the middle of the century. The drive towards a unique professional discipline was paramount throughout the early stages of development, and was therefore also the main concern of the institutions that were created to support the pursuit. The intrinsic relationship between planning and the public sector was therefore a direct result of the overall societal belief in professionalism and rationalism that had specifically trained experts delivering services in the name of the public good. The development of planning over the second half of the century, and the subsequent changes in landscape, were significantly if not entirely driven by the sweeping change in philosophy that saw scientific rationalism replaced with collaborative thinking and a neo-liberal mindset. Tracing the resulting changes is consequently an exercise in extrapolating the effects of a change in philosophy. If consumer demand theory and deregulation are king, then the delivery of planning services over time will move towards the private firm deciding how best to serve its clients versus a strong central authority. Subsequently, the private firm under the auspices of deregulation has guided the planning profession through privatization to multi-national corporations, and most recently to multi-disciplinary firms. Whether these creations of the free market or a centralized force are more representative of the public good is yet undetermined.



### **Chapter 3: Ethics and the Delivery of Planning Services**

The second chapter attempted to provide an understanding of how the planning institution in Canada developed over time in an effort to maintain a baseline function of representing and enhancing the public good. Now, attention is diverted to an assessment of whether the way the institution and its member firms have developed in this aim continues to allow planners to actually perform this function. Specifically, after outlining different methods which attempt to assess good from bad in a moral sense, consideration can be given to whether or not the blurring of professional lines as a function of privatization and multi-disciplinary approaches is in fact good (or bad) for the public. The approach taken here is to first outline the overarching moral philosophies that would guide such an analysis, then define the alleged problem of multi-disciplinary firms and their inherent conflict of interest in the protection of the public interest, and finally present the arguments confirming or denying the problem followed by the consequent normative position. This general structure is an adaptation of the method used in one of Tom Regan's collection of ethics essays (1984).

#### ***Setting the Foundation: Relevant Ethical Philosophies***

Up to this point, the concept of the public good has been discussed as the main reason for the planner's existence, and the guiding principle of the planning institution which in turn provides guidance to its member firms. Sandercock's version of multiple publics has also allowed us to look beyond the traditional notion of a single and homogeneous concept of the public interest, and understand that planners can adhere to a concept of long-term public good in a heterogeneous setting. While it has been argued that the planner should strive to maintain the public good, insufficient theoretical tools

have been provided to be able to assess whether the public good as an ethical pursuit is being upheld or not. Consequently, an overview of some of the main moral theories and their potential application to this assessment assists in making this link. As with all overviews of this type, the breadth and attention given to each category is insufficient to serve as any kind of authority, yet the purpose here to provide an outline as well as the beginning of a philosophical background is fulfilled. The purpose of this overview is not to rank and prioritize a number of theories, but to provide a framework of concepts, of which each individual theory may overlap and co-exist with another. With a basic framework in place, the move to a normative assessment of multi-disciplinary firms will at least be grounded in theory, even though a complete and detailed understanding of all applicable theories is not possible.

The concept of the public good as a desirable pursuit is in many ways a byproduct of neo-liberalism and its juxtaposition of private and public sectors to enhance and understand their particular differences. In the early stages of planning, the rationalist movement supported the clear division of private and public life to make obvious the specific role of the professional. In this unambiguous approach, individuals could not be expected to understand any notion of public welfare as “individuals have no capacity to judge outside of their subjective desires” (Campbell 2006, 95). Each private individual has a mandate to protect their own happiness, and the professional acts as an unbiased expert in making sure all individual levels of this happiness come together into some sort of aggregate state. Early ideas of social welfare expounded this theory considerably by further promoting the importance of the public sector in managing individual behaviour that would otherwise never coalesce. The moral theory of utilitarianism is often

associated with these ideas, supporting the quest for utility maximization over the questioning of the means to achieve it. In the simple and relatively homogeneous (even if artificially so) environment of the rationalist era, equally simple and clear divisions between the individual and the public were deemed both possible and desirable.

Neo-liberalism, as mentioned, created a new environment of contention and fragmentation that challenged traditional notions of private and public responsibilities. While rationalists concentrated solely on outcomes and consequences, at times without real consideration for how those outcomes were arrived at, underlying notions of ethics were potentially ignored. The realization that “the problems confronting planners are not amenable to technocratic solutions” re-focused attention to the “political and hence essentially ethical nature of the process” (Campbell and Marshall 1999, 464).

The idea of the public good as universal and omnipresent is captured in the Rawlsian concept of a society “regulated by a public conception of justice” (Rawls 2001, 8) where individuals might put aside their personal motivations to truly understand a broader purpose. Rawls’ idea of a veil of ignorance encapsulates the notion that individuals may choose to ignore larger goals when making personal economic decisions, but nonetheless an inherent understanding of what is good for the whole is both possible and comprehensible. Building on Rawls’ ideas, some authors would add that the planner’s role within this moral basis is to represent and reflect “her liberal democratic society’s overlapping consensus, and to put aside her private moral values” (Stein and Harper 2005, 151). The planner, therefore, is a catalyst for all other individual agents to channel their individual needs and formulate a public agenda. Individual pursuits, in this line of thinking, are inherently neither good nor bad based on being independently true or

false; conversely, they are judged by “whether the idea can command consensual support” (Stein and Harper 2005, 150) by representing good that is as widely accepted as possible. Indeed, this good (or bad) concept by definition accommodates many different and conflicting private views.

Other moral theories include the concept of egalitarianism, whereby all ethical rules should equally respect each moral agent regardless of their degree of divergence from the majority. While theoretically interesting, this premise is difficult to translate into practice based on the fact that real decisions need to happen within a limited time frame. For example, “to protect lives, cars can be made so safe that no one would be able to afford one” (Barrett 2001, 4), but at some point society would value the creation of cars over the potential hazards it would cause to certain random individuals. Otherwise the fear of potential harm to any one ethical agent would halt progress of any kind. Kantian thought, on the other hand, promotes the creation of universal principles of action that guide any and all individual decisions (Barrett 2001, 4). In other words, any action must be inherently good or bad not because of its consequences, but because of its universal application. For example, “it is right for me to toss my biodegradable lunch leftovers out of the car window only if I believe it would be correct for everyone driving on this road every single day to do the same” (Barrett 2001, 4); obviously, the difficulty in identifying any number of completely universal principles of action makes this theory equally difficult to translate into practice.

From an enforcement perspective, ethics are sometimes viewed as non-legally mandated codes of conduct that fill the gap between laws, and although they often do not carry enforceable penalties, they are “enforced in part by social pressures among people

who share the same organizational, professional, or cultural systems” (Howe 1994, 3). Where laws and their associated penalties, in the absence of a truly international justice system, fail to reach beyond a certain geopolitical level, the enforcement of ethics reaches as far as a reasonably homogeneous group of ethical agents will allow. In practice, however, most professions represent a distinct subgroup of the overall public, and do not necessarily share the same ideals and ethical backdrop as the majority. Justification for a particular professional ethical code, therefore, is given in large part because it is intended as a representation of the public and supposed to serve the public (Howe 1994, 3). The planner’s dilemma is now clear. With a conflicting obligation to their own profession’s ideas of the public interest and to the ideas held by those they are supposed to be serving, the planner faces a constant and uncertain questioning of ethics that can never truly be answered. Does the planner believe the profession’s version of the public good is a better representation than a version given by another source? While justice as an ethical pursuit allows planners at least the opportunity to make just decisions without dominance from professional or personal leanings, the inherent conflict is evident.

While opponents look to its inability to relate a universal concept to specific contextual situations, the separation of the overall concept of justice and the emerging concept of collaboration and consensus is essential. Justice, Fainstein argues, is equivalent to the concept of inclusion applied to as much of the public as possible (2005). Inclusion, however, differs from the traditional notion of collaboration and public input (Innes 1996; Davidoff 1965) whereby the public is invited to participate in the process of decision making. In order to distance counter-arguments of realism and practicality, justice equates to inclusion “not necessarily in the discussion of what to do but inclusion

in having access to the benefits of the city” (Fainstein 2005, 124). In other words, a commitment to justice may at times necessitate the circumvention of an inclusionary process if the end product results in a better city for all its citizens. The co-existence of the two seemingly contradictory concepts is made possible by understanding that planning theory and practice occur simultaneously, or more appropriately do not occur within the constraints of time, meaning “conceptualizations of justice underlying planning need to navigate between the universal and the particular” (Campbell and Marshall 2004, 250). Therefore, when faced with individual ethical choices in a certain context, planners will never truly be in a position of veiled ignorance, but the concept still bears universal application abstracted from the myriad choices of everyday life. Indeed, justice can be taken to mean different things when applied to various situations, but “the ideal of justice or fairness transcends particularity” (Fainstein 2005, 126).

Rawls’ concept of justice as fairness is perhaps best linked to practice by the additions of Habermas in defining discourse ethics as an abstract concept with real implications (Habermas 1984). Instead of searching for exogenous methods, discourse ethics promotes a procedure for arriving at ethical conclusions based on reasoned agreement between actual participants. Since “justice is not something material, not a determinate ‘value’, but a dimension of validity” (Habermas 1993, 152), justice cannot be established without practical discourse. Habermas’ conclusion might be seen as Rawls’ original point flipped on itself: justice is both a universal and particular concept, neither of which can be understood without relating to the other. The universality of justice requires application to be understood, but the specific relation of justice cannot operate without a generalized position.

Most importantly for the present analysis, this navigation between universal and particular is essential in understanding the ethical implications of MDPs. Since the concept of justice as fairness implies that “planners are concerned with both a just distribution and one that is justly arrived at” (Campbell and Marshall 2004, 250), MDPs need to provide justice in both process and practice to constitute a good mechanism in the just city. In short, justice alone should not guide an analysis of multi-disciplinary practice, but it is an essential theory in order to understand the ethical issues surrounding MDPs as posed in the original research question. Most importantly, the concept of justice is best suited to address the notion of the public interest since it relates to equity as well as efficiency:

*Ethics are concerned with questions of what is right and wrong and what is good and bad. These are not by any means the same thing. The answer to the question of whether an action is good or bad depends on the consequences of the action...An analysis framed in terms of right and wrong, however, would focus on the rights of the various parties and on the process used to arrive at a decision (Howe 1994, 22-23).*

Since planning is about practice and process, the ethical pursuit of justice is a relevant theory, and as a result is frequently referred to in the planning literature (Howe 1994; Stein and Harper 2005; Fainstein 2005; Campbell 2006); however, an understanding of other theories is critical in referring to concepts of ethics in multi-disciplinary practices. While the specifics of all theories are not discussed here, the underlying ideas from all are carried forward in future normative positions.

### ***The Problem Defined***

Before diverging into two opposite normative positions, it is first helpful to outline the hypothetical basis of the proposed problem. In other words, without passing judgment on the impact of MDPs on the environment of planning, a simple baseline

understanding of the theoretical conflict between public and private interests would help at least set parameters to the debate. The development of planning in the latter stages of the twentieth century supported the move of the public sector away from traditional responsibilities of conducting actual planning work to a more regulatory and supervisory role (Howe 2000; Hall 2002). While this had real implications on the way that planning work was delivered, an often overlooked byproduct of this shift was the creation of a strong system of checks and balances promoted by systematic regulation. Although “almost all sectoral planning...is done by expert consultant firms or by planners as in-house staff of sectoral firms and corporations” (Alexander 2004, 103), the government departments and agencies no longer responsible for producing this type of work were now poised to draft policy, create guidelines, and generally develop a system for private consultants to work within. In support of the various professions’ Codes of Practice and Ethics, including the CIP’s directive to “define and serve the interests of the public” (Canadian Institute of Planners 2004, 1.0), public sector planners, at all three levels of government, were able to craft policies that would help in defining the public interest private planners were told to protect. Specifically, continuous amendments to Provincial Planning Acts and Provincial Policy Statements, as well as developments in appeal processes such as the creation of the Ontario Municipal Board all served in helping those on-the-ground planners understand and work within as articulated a definition of the public interest as possible.

The creation and general popularity of MDPs, then, is problematic simply because the new dynamic created between public and private sectors may no longer operate as designed. The problem is manifest in two main ways. First, the potential exists



for the scale and scope of private firms to outgrow the checks and balances set forth in the name of the public interest by the public sector. If, provisionally, the policy structure and professional boundaries set under the guidance of the public sector are rigid in keeping planning professionals bound to the mantra of protecting the public interest, growth of individual companies beyond the limits of any one institution could potentially surpass the built-in safeguards. Arguably, this situation was realized for accountants when their allegiance to their profession wilted in favour of the corporate sway of their consultancy leading up to Enron (McVea 2002; Keatinge 2002; Koppel 2001). This manifestation relates to the changing relationship of working planners and those institutions which are designed to regulate the profession. Second, the potential exists for the other related professions involved in MDPs to compromise the planner's duties to the protection of the public interest. The parallel to this potential problem has come to fruition in the legal and accounting professions, as the result of "the two professions hav[ing] conflicting duties to the client and the public" (Koppel 2001, 703) has caused an equivalent concern for auditing accountants with a responsibility to public disclosure. If indeed "attorneys are advocates for their client whereas accountants are auditors for the public" (Messina 2000/2001, 380), the partnering of the two professions into one corporate entity works against the ideals set forth in their own individual professional structures. On one hand, the "close symbiotic relationships... would leave the impression that [any one profession] lack[s] an independent mind and integrity" (Koppel 2001, 702); on the other hand, and more importantly, the erosion of distinctiveness between professions with conflicting mission statements could lead to the subordination of one profession in the wake of another. The way conflict of interest is defined for this analysis,

then, is based on these two notions of conflict. While the term conflict of interest can evoke a wide array of meanings including very specific instances of private interest versus professional ethics such as cases of bribery, its interaction here is mainly through the conflict between firms and their profession, and between different professions, as explained above.

Since the comparison is made throughout this analysis, it is perhaps useful to clarify the proposed relationship between the professions of planning and accounting. The juxtaposition is obviously done on a theoretical level, since accountants and planners are subject to divergent and sometimes unique influences. The aforementioned independence of opinion and integrity in the pursuit of the public interest, however, is shared between the professions, and therefore allows for the possibility of comparison. If both are devoted to the interest of the public, and both are thrust into practical situations of co-existence with other professional interests, the same kinds of conflict can occur. In summary, the 'problem' of MDPs is no doubt theoretical since the planning profession has yet to deal with any type of large scale scandal that would put this type of practice into question. Nonetheless, the examples set in related professions highlight the need to examine the hypothetical problem in more detail, and attempt to assess whether MDPs are good or bad for the delivery of planning services.

### ***Maybe Multi-Disciplinary Arrangements are a 'Good' Thing***

Using the guidance of existing ethical theories and an understanding of the theoretical problem of the private control exerted by MDPs against a goal of serving the public interest, a statement concerning multi-disciplinary arrangements can be made. With utility-maximization and equal distribution as just two of many goals, a planner is

faced with the onerous task of identifying solutions to complex problems that will create an overall net public benefit. As argued up to this point, the history of planning as an institution is built on the adaptation of the profession to be able to respond to these complex problems in an efficient and effective way. The related shifts in structure, consequently, are functions of the profession searching for a better way to respond to the needs of the public. The move towards the private delivery of services in the 1970s and 80s, it was argued, would allow more nimble and flexible firms to search for more complex and appropriate solutions. Furthermore, the expansion of firms to a multi-national scale was seen as yet another step in providing a heightened level of service. It would follow logically then that current problems are only getting more difficult to solve, and that the “complex social problems may lie in the interstices of the disciplines” and that as such there may require “collaborative and multidisciplinary, if not transdisciplinary and intersectoral approaches to problem solving” (Myers and Banerjee 2005, 124). If indeed these solutions provided net utilitarian benefit, then it would follow that multi-disciplinary practices are good for society.

In searching for potential solutions, Myers and Banerjee argue for the internal division of the overall concept of planning to be able to accommodate this partnership model (2005). Specifically, planning has long been attempting to operate on a single manifestation of existence; consequently, the internal confusion is self-created. Dividing planning into its three related concepts of field, practice, and profession, would make ‘the practice and pedagogy of planning more resilient to the rapid and far-reaching changes of 21<sup>st</sup> century globalization” (Myers and Banerjee 2005, 126). The three manifestations of planning would relate the field back to academic and university researchers, practice to

the functioning planners in various stages of practice, and profession to those voicing a guiding direction from the assorted planning institutions. This division would allow the profession to continue to pursue its objective of autonomy and independence from the encroachment and co-option of other professions, while the academic side of planning could play an increased role in facilitating “the new academic trend toward trans- and multidisciplinary problem solving” (Myers and Banerjee 2005, 128).

In another line of thinking, planning as a concept is simply driven by the same forces that have been dictating the overall actions of private enterprise. That is, since planning is “increasingly privatized and decentralized” (McCann 2001, 207), and cities themselves are seen as increasingly entrepreneurial, planning firms are following the same trends as any other firm, professional or otherwise. As “the network of organizations (instead of the single organization) has become the characteristic instrument of structured collective action” (Pichierri 2002, 689), the planning firm as a representative private enterprise searches out its own network of firms to represent the collective. Similarly, McCann introduces the idea of “visioning” by explaining the natural development of a multi-disciplinary approach from the earlier concept of collaboration and inclusion (2001). In other words, the notion of opening up the decision-making processes to the greatest number of people by means of consensus-based meetings has organically matured into planning firms themselves searching out collaboration from related disciplines and securing them under one corporate entity. This collaboration, theoretically, only enhances planners’ ability to represent the broadest range of perspectives, and is therefore a positive development.

Furthermore, multi-disciplinary practices may simply be good because they represent a response to the theory of consumer sovereignty, namely that consumers “are able to require companies to produce goods or services of a requisite level of quality and at a competitive price” (McVea 2002, 816). As discussed in the previous section, MDPs as a response to consumer demand for more choice in turn equates to greater utility for the range of consumers demanding planning services. Consumers turning to MDPs can get quick responsive action on questions that may overlap in expertise, and the concept of economies of scope would dictate that the overlap of various inputs such as information and expertise would lead to cost savings that could be passed on to the consumer. In short, collaboration could reduce transaction costs by pooling resources. Furthermore, the consumer choosing an MDP will be able to reduce the contracting costs involved with entering into contracts with all the relevant experts in each of the required disciplines.

Another method of approach in promoting MDPs as a good business evolution is in breaking down the false connection between size and ethical performance. Popularly, big business is blamed for many problems, and is an obvious target for attack. Likely, since the size and pervasiveness of many contemporary firms has reached beyond our previous comprehension, the lack of control of any one organization or body instills a sense of fear and loathing that unethical behaviour is occurring unchecked. Unless removed from a competitive market, however, firms regardless of size will always have the same long-term incentive to make ethical decisions, therefore assisting in the maintenance of a positive public image. While undoubtedly some firms will make unscrupulous decisions, “there is no logical connection between size and ethical or unethical behaviour” (Freeman and Gilbert 1988, 9), meaning the growth across

disciplines will not make a firm any more or less likely to act unethically. In short, ethical businesses, whether multi-disciplinary or not, “will not risk the long term profits which are bound up in honest work and good reputation” (McVea 2002, 829) to pursue the short terms gains of abuse of power.

Proponents of economic freedom and the will of the market would argue that allowing MDPs in fact assists in promoting an open and competitive marketplace for the delivery of planning services. Since the purpose of the profession is to clearly define what types of firms qualify to operate within the boundaries of the profession, and subsequently which firms are excluded, the creation of large consultancy firms with access to customers demanding planning services breaks down the monopoly previously held by member firms within the planning profession. In reality, since planning differs from other professions by not requiring a license to practice, this argument loses some of its merit; however, planning does operate in the same way as other professions by relying on its “ability to gain the symbolic value of legitimacy” (Dezalay and Garth 2004, 617). In order to give legitimacy to its member firms, by definition the leaders of the profession “must find a way to disqualify poachers by defining them as outside the boundaries of professional norms” (Dezalay and Garth 2004, 617). With an endogenous incentive to sustain a monopoly, a profession in any market creates artificial barriers for all consumers to achieve equal access. Consequently, any attempt to increase access and provide healthy competition can only help consumers.

Finally, and perhaps most frequently cited, is the argument that the synergy between and among related professions who would work closely together regardless of corporate affiliation allows MDPs to offer a package of solutions unattainable to any

single planning outfit. Building on the previous argument of complex solutions for complex problems, this view purports that today's "challenges are multi-disciplinary" and therefore "firms must draw on the talented resources of [a range of] professions in order...to be able to respond effectively" (Stein in McVea 2002, 817). Moreover, firms can only grow and develop by ensuring involvement in complex and compelling projects; therefore, the ability to compete on large and complex jobs is the quintessential characteristic of a dynamic company. Access to other disciplines acts essentially as a competitive advantage separating MDPs from other standard planning firms not simply by easing the partnership process with other related solution-finders, but by giving the company access to the types of projects that will help it grow and develop in a positive way.

### ***Maybe Multi-Disciplinary Arrangements are a 'Bad' Thing***

Although several seemingly steadfast arguments exist to support the notion of the multi-disciplinary firm, an equal number of opposing arguments exist which place it as an unethical concept working against the protection of the public interest. First and foremost, the previous arguments for consumer sovereignty imply a false equivalency between the consumer and the public. While increased consumer choice is likely positive for the consumers in question, it is not necessarily positive for the general public. This simple discrepancy for many embodies the mission statement for planners, and is well summed up by McVea: "Our consumer preferences do not exhaust the range of interests we have: we act as consumers in order to secure what we desire for ourselves, whereas we act as citizens when we seek to transcend our own narrow preoccupations with consumption to consider the common good" (2004, 569). While McVea places the action

in the hands of the individual as the active agent responsible for understanding a larger purpose, planners look to the profession as the mechanism that will allow this understanding to occur in practice. In some ways, planners are actually themselves responsible for limiting individual pursuits in the name of aggregate gains. Therefore, expansion in consumer choice must be seen as a benefit limited to consumers, and not a complete justification for the ethical nature of MDPs.

Another positive justification involves the notion of overlap and economies of scale, which properly applied would allow MDPs to obtain a certain level of efficiency, and hence pass on any benefits to the consumer in the form of lower fees. While lower fees are undoubtedly equated with greater access to a larger segment of the public, a number of researchers looking into the real implications of MDPs have found no conclusive evidence to support that more diversified firms are able to either secure efficiencies in the first place, or pass them along to consumers on any appreciable level (McVea 2002, 819). While certainly overlaps must exist, it is widely held to be true in all service-based professions that a firm's fee earning potential is a function of the number of professionals it has on staff and therefore is unrelated to diversity, meaning the economies of scale promised hold to be largely non-existent (Gormley in McVea 2002, 818).

Perhaps the most persuasive argument put forward in the legal/accounting sphere is the baseline conflict of interest that has come to fruition in the recent high-profile public fall-outs. Namely, the fact that lawyers and accountants have "conflicting duties to the client and the public" (Koppel 2001, 703) has the former protecting the interests of its client over and above any other influence, while the latter's sole duty is to protect the



public by providing full disclosure. The conflict of interest argument can be presented from a number of perspectives. First, any of the related professions have core missions which at times cannot coexist within the same corporate structure. In practice, this could translate into pressure applied to a profession to “direct clients towards choices which reflect the firm’s interests rather than those of the client” (McVea 2002, 828).

Alternatively, this could result quite simply in different professions, proposing different courses of action according to their own internal ethical compass, forced into making a single decision within the parameters of the corporate entity. Second, a conflict of interest could occur by means of one single profession performing new duties outside of their original aegis that either contradicts or compromises its original function. As has been well documented, “the Enron scandal exposed the inevitable conflict of interest inherent in an accounting firm that performs the attest function in auditing financial statements and provides consulting services to the same client” (Zimmerman and Kelly 2004, 642). No doubt, many of these conflicts of interest may be possible even without the development of full-scale MDPs, however, the corporate structure both highlights and promotes the possibility.

To provide an opposite to the previous argument for MDPs as a good development by means of breaking down the professional monopoly, an equivalent argument exists which promotes the very benefit of professional boundaries. Indeed, any profession exists in large part due to their “symbolic value of legitimacy” (Dezalay and Garth 2004, 617) by convincing the general public of their validity and worthiness. Since the *professional* competes by means of his or her *professionalism* and not on the basis of superior commodities or goods, then perhaps professions should be considered above the

simple economic model of competition and efficiency. Put another way, the belief in MDPs making better business sense may not apply to professions that are “not a business [but] a profession, a noble one, with standards in certain respects different from those applicable to business” (Koppel 2001, 701). The breakdown of professional specialization resulting from the unmitigated proliferation of MDPs would in fact over time lead to the commodification of the services provided, and the reduction of “the professional ‘culture’ needed to nourish respect” (Cone 2004, 604) into the cheapest supply and demand of related services. This theory extrapolated over time suggests that eliminating or reducing the public’s conception of legitimacy by morphing professional services into commodities would in turn erode public faith in the purpose of the profession, and subsequently cause all professions to lose their distinctiveness. In short, permitting the unregulated existence of MDPs, in this line of thinking, would make professional services “more bottom-line oriented, not better” (Messina 2000/2001, 384).

A subsequent negative impact of MDPs can be understood by using the ethical backdrop of justice as fairness as described in the previous section. If a planner has an obligation to uphold justice in both a universal and particular context, then direct access to an understanding of justice is essential in planning. By increasing the number of intermediary structures between a planner and the public he or she serves, the more chance for convoluted results and a skewed sense of justice to prevail. For example, one of the fundamental differences between a small, family-run business and an international conglomerate is the unfiltered sense of duty shown by someone with direct responsibility to their name. Since “there is no better guarantee of good justice than a good family name” (Dezalay and Garth 2004, 619), small business is often defined by an individual’s

interest in protecting the integrity of their family or company name. By increasing the weight of bureaucracy or the amount of intermediary interference between client and company, the concept of justice is more easily misinterpreted.

Finally, and perhaps most controversially, the unchecked growth of MDPs in the planning profession has the potential to compromise independent judgment by convoluting one's sense of obligation to the public interest. As observed from the accounting profession, the potential undoubtedly exists for professional advice to "become polluted by a lack of objectivity because of commercial obligations owed to other arms of the MDP" (McVea 2002, 827). Since the professionalism of planners is built on the premise of serving the public by providing unbiased advice, the integrity of the profession is jeopardized if truly independent action is compromised. Although the checks and balances as provided by the profession and the policy framework developed by higher authority exists in order to promote proper conduct, the splitting of allegiance between professional conduct and loyalty to the corporate brand opens up the possibility of unethical behaviour. Indeed, much of the debate carried on by lawyers in reaction to the MDP debate throughout the 1990s relates to the influence from non-lawyers on decisions made by lawyers "within the rules of legal ethics" (Cone 2004, 599).

A subset of this argument relates to the simple notion of using professional synergy as a business strategy in acquiring new clients. Again looking to the debate apparent in the legal and accounting industries where "audit work is used as an entrée for selling other consultancy services" (McVea 2002, 817), a conflict of interest exists whenever the same firm stands to benefit from the results of the advice it offers in earlier stages of decision-making. As a result, accountancy firms are consistently testing the

tension created by the conflicting role of independent auditor and multi-disciplinary service provider (Dzienkowski and Peroni in Zimmerman and Kelly 2004, 642). This is not to say that planners or other professionals are completely devoid of professional constraints when making decisions within a multi-disciplinary arrangement, but simply that by combining two professions with complimentary services offered to the same client, the potential for the influence of one over the complete objectivity of the other exists. The resultant arrangement places professions “too close to business and perhaps too easily tempted by the potential profits of MDPs” (Dezalay and Garth 2004, 635), when the separation of professionals from business is designed to protect certain ideals that rise above a simple profit motive.

### ***Understanding Reality: The Middle Ground***

As with the majority of debates involving ethical behaviour, a compromise often lies somewhere between the two extremes. As is obvious from the previous section, many arguments exist that both support and refute the validity of MDPs; moreover, each side is armed with pragmatic evidence. The Enron scandal, in the context of the legal and accounting professions, provides ample ammunition for both sides to build concrete arguments. Indeed, the reality of the downfall being attributed to “the handiwork of a band of rogue individuals” (Zimmerman and Kelly 2004, 640) indicates that the simple systematic failure of a regulatory structure is insufficient in itself to create unethical behaviour. The actions and competence of the people who comprise the profession have ultimate sway over whether a scandal occurs or is averted. As a result, the strength of arguments showing both good and bad attributes of MDPs serve only to temper the severity of both sides, and suggests that the analysis should revolve around an altered

question: If there are good *and* bad points concerning the existence of MDPs, can we generally conclude that the good outweighs the bad, or vice versa?

### *Chapter Summary*

The second chapter outlined the role the historical development of the institution of planning had on the current environment of planning in Canada. Specifically, it argued that the dynamic relationship between the private and public sector over time has significantly influenced the way planning services are delivered today. The current chapter provides a further level of context, by first defining an ethical backdrop in which to contextualize an assessment of MDPs, and subsequently by examining the main arguments both supporting and refuting MDPs within this ethical context. Several important considerations were highlighted. First, the legal and accounting professions, armed with an immense practical case study in the Enron scandal, show potential similarities to the profession of planning and its movement towards multi-disciplinary arrangements with other related professions. Second, the breadth and depth of arguments on each side of the debate are, if not equivalent, at least comparable, meaning that the possibility of both good and bad characteristics of MDPs is probable. Finally, the abstract nature of some arguments suggests that the theoretical nature of a position should not have bearing in its relevance for discussion. In other words, the fact that a scandal equivalent to Enron has not happened in the market for planning services should not detract from the relevance of the debate.

With both a historical and normative context in place, an examination into some practical applications can now be made. Indeed, the focus of the research now enlarges to include both whether MDPs exhibit good or bad effects on the delivery of planning

services, as well as how the planning profession should be dealing with the debate given both good and bad characteristics. By turning to some qualitative analysis methods in the next chapter, this context is provided, which ultimately leads to a series of observations and conclusions in the final chapters.

*Be careful to resist claims that they have discovered the truth about a series of events, or that they have distilled the public opinion.*

*- Dunn, Qualitative Research Methods  
In Human Geography (2000, 52)*

## **Chapter 4: Research Methods**

The remaining chapters serve in expanding and colouring the discussions from the previous two chapters: namely, the influence of the histories of planning as a profession on its current state, and the ethical implications of delivering planning services by means of multi-disciplinary arrangements. While it is useful to postulate on these themes by examining the current academic literature and making some preliminary linkages between past events and current trends, a more robust analysis requires some form of data. A qualitative analysis is used to cultivate depth and meaning in the search for an ethical assessment of multi-disciplinary practices and their effect on the delivery of planning services in Canada.

### ***Research Methods***

In choosing a qualitative approach to data collection, several considerations were made to assess its validity in obtaining relevant and useable data. Following the structure put forward by Holliday (2002), an appropriate method of data collection was ascertained after examining the i) motivation ii) issues, and iii) related research associated with this type of analysis. First, questioning whether inherent and potentially unexpressed forms of conflict of interest exist in a particular corporate structure may, in fact, lead to a new understanding of how planning services could be delivered efficiently; consequently, the motivation is to both present a normative position, as well as to support that position by placing it within the context of real experience. As a result, the personal interview method was selected as the most appropriate since, on one hand, “opinions and tentative conclusions can be checked, verified, and scrutinized” (Dunn 2000, 53) and, on the other hand, interviews give the closest representation of people’s direct practical experiences

(Silverman 2006, 117). Second, after a topical assessment of the issues involved with this type of research, the relevance of uncovering information from personal experience was confirmed. Clearly, with the myriad of influences that might affect any one planning decision, there is no failsafe way to determine whether or not conflicts of interest are indeed happening and whether they can be attributed solely to one parameter over another. As a result, mining for factual evidence to support one unwavering answer is neither possible nor desirable. While the main issue involved, the inherent presence or absence of conflict of interest in multi-disciplinary planning firms, is not one that can be proven quantifiably, many of the related issues would benefit from extracting qualitative information in support of either side of the debate. In short, this method enables the development of ideas, both in support and in opposition to a particular stance, that lend credence to the overall discussion.

In regards to related research, examples had to be drawn mainly from outside of the planning field. Indeed, as confirmed from both a lack of coverage in scholarly debate from a search of the existing planning literature, as well as from negative responses given by interviewees, planners in general seem to have a lack of concern for the topic of MDPs and the potential for any conflict of interest. Conversely, due to the popularity and exposure of public scandal within the legal and accounting industries, a wealth of academic debate exists within this field. While many of the sources from this field limit their analysis to discussion and opinion, the variety of articles and publications that include some form of data analysis often use interviews as a selected method (Dezalay and Garth 2004; Shapiro 2003). Presumably, the use of the interviewing technique as a main tool in comparable research efforts confirms similar goals which include “fill[ing] a



gap in knowledge, investigat[ing] complex behaviours and motivations, collect[ing] a diversity of opinions and experiences, and reveal[ing] consensus on some issues” (Dunn 2000, 52). Moreover, the planning literature, although devoid of material related to MDPs, does include several qualitative studies on the general theme of ethics. Elizabeth Howe’s study of planning ethics provides important guidance in both form and content (1994). Hoch’s survey analysis also represents a qualitative approach to issues of conflict in the planning field (1987). In summary, an analysis of the motivation, main issues, and related research associated with the questioning of conflict of interest in multi-disciplinary planning practice supports the notion of using a qualitative interview-based approach to data collection.

### ***Data Collection Strategy***

Data collection was predicated by the use of semi-structured interviews conducted with practicing professional planners located in the Ottawa area. As many interviewees as possible were selected based on established contacts made between the interviewer and the planners in question, and any additional candidates were given by referral. This method allowed for the careful selection of type of planners, as it was not felt that randomness was desired over relevance of experience. Participants were grouped into one of four categories to ensure an adequate cross-section of planners from a variety of practice formats. An equal number of interviewees were chosen from the following groups: 1) single-service private sector planners, 2) multi-disciplinary private sector planners, 3) public sector planners, and 4) non-traditional planners. This selection process was used in the hopes of reducing over-representation from one type of planner with a particular background or professional experience within one type of format; however,

following this process can only mitigate this possibility. Since the purpose of the research is to build on existing theories and not necessarily uncover stand-alone factual evidence, it is assumed that some level of purposive selection of participants is acceptable and desired. Participants were placed into groups based on information given in the initial screening call concerning their current position. Single-service planners worked in a firm where planners were the only professional designation represented, while multi-disciplinary planners were employed by firms who also employed another, or several other, professional(s). Public sector planners in this case all worked for the City of Ottawa in a variety of roles, and non-traditional planners had an educational background in planning, but were not currently working in a traditional planning capacity. Two of the three members of this last group were once members of the Canadian Institute of Planners, but no longer renew membership, while the third member of this group and all members of the remaining groups had professional planning affiliation. One public sector planner and one non-traditional planner had additional affiliations with other professions. In terms of current roles, the non-traditional group included planners who had incorporated their own development firms, planners working for related associations, and non-practicing planners in an associated role such as architecture. Three interviewees were selected in each of the four groups for a total of twelve. The total sample size was not pre-determined; rather, interviews were conducted until enough data existed within each group to provide a range and quality of support to existing theories. Supported by the belief that “there are no rules for sample size in qualitative inquiry...sample size depends on what you want to know” (Patton in Bradshaw and Stratford 2000, 46), it was deemed more important to “purposely seek out diversity of opinion” (Dunn 2000, 79) by

balancing each of the four categories with an equal number of subjects, than to simply strive for a certain number of candidates.

### ***Conceptual Framework***

While research was conducted in the latter stages of writing, the intent was to integrate research and writing as much as possible to allow for the interplay of ideas from both processes. Since “writing and research are iterative processes, and writing helps shape the research as much as it reflects it” (Berg and Mansvelt 2000, 171), acknowledging and addressing the influences from each stage was intentional. Consequently, the development of the interview guide and associated questions used in the interviews were used with a clear understanding of the normative position developed in Chapter 3, as well as the historical background discussed in Chapter 2. Moreover, a conceptual framework of ideas formed a pivotal part of the selection of the research methods. In other words, the iterative method of searching for generalized and unsupported theories from public discourse and formulating methods to address these theories in turn modifies these original theories in new directions. These untested or popular ideas, referred to here as stylized facts, serve as the underlying motivation for applying structured research methods.

In approaching this particular research area, a number of stylized facts were used as starting points. Quite obviously, this selection of these stylized facts is not conclusive and is subject to the bias of the researcher. The purpose of selecting these over any other points of interest, however, does not detract from the end result. Rather, the use of these stylized facts simply initiates a particular line of questioning and serves as a framework in which data can be understood. The first concept questions whether the diversity of

planning services that any given planner might be called upon to perform opens planners up to the possibility of conflicts of interest based on the fact that these services could be intended to simultaneously serve both the public interest and the interest of their clients. In other words, the fact that a planner could be retained as a consultant or advisor in the earlier stages of a project, as well as a contributor in the latter part of the project, creates the possibility of conflict. Second, and potentially as a result of this previous point, is the general public perception that planners either are inherently, or are so because of their relationship to their profession, ethical beings. That is, planners more so than other professionals or industries have a built-in sense of correct ethical behaviour and the difference between right and wrong. Equipped with this ability, the public perception of ethical strength given to planners is perhaps a contributing factor to the lack of belief, from both those within the profession and those without, that planners have the capacity to manipulate the system and be involved in structural conflicts of interest. Finally, the popularity of debate regarding MDPs in the legal and accounting professions provides an interesting stylized fact for planners. Multi-disciplinary firms in both law and planning have endogenous conflicts based on the fact that multiple professions with at times opposing core missions operate under the same corporate entity. Theoretically, then, one might be able to draw a parallel linking MDPs as experienced in law and accounting to MDPs in planning. With these three main points contributing to a conceptual framework, an interview guide and style of questioning was developed to integrate these concepts within the research and develop these stylized facts into grounded research concepts.

## *Structure*

As mentioned, the decision to use the semi-structured interview method was made to integrate a “degree of predetermined order but still ensur[ing] flexibility in the ways issues are addressed by the informant” (Dunn 2000, 52). Consequently, a series of questions was scripted, but the way the questions were asked was not always equivalent, and if the respondent answered in an unanticipated way, divergence was allowed to follow relevant ideas through to completion. A sample list of interview questions was submitted to the General Research Ethics Board at Queen’s University in an effort to present an accurate portrayal of the range of questions that would be asked. The Board used the sample questions in conjunction with the fundamental research direction to approve the format as suitable for eliciting useful responses without creating hardship or conflict for those answering. While the first version of the interview guide was used for the first three interviews, it was later adapted to incorporate an expansion of the same types of questions into customized sections based on each respondent’s identified group. While care was taken to ensure the integrity of the initial questions was not altered significantly, it was felt that “interview design should be dynamic throughout the research” (Dunn 2000, 55) and that moving to customized sections would greatly assist in categorizing information for later use. As a result, the final nine interviews used the adapted version of the interview guide, which classifies respondents into one of the four identified sub-groups, and asks questions relevant to that group’s anticipated experience. The final version of the guide included a total of thirty-three questions, of which any one respondent depending on their identified group would answer between eighteen and twenty-five questions (Appendix A: Interview Guide).

A standard preamble was used in each interview to develop rapport and to allow each respondent to understand the overall purpose of the research. During this time, the various sections of the interview were shared. The decision to use the strategy referred to as funneling (Dunn 2000) resulted in a gradual movement from general questions to more specific issues as sections progressed. Specifically, the first section was identified as an introductory discussion focused on background information and designed to initiate ease in conversation. The second section was used predominantly to allow each respondent to provide individual definitions to key terms used in later sections. Moreover, the general questions used in this section allowed for a subsequent comparison when the same ideas were juxtaposed with specific experience. For example, by asking first what a respondent's thoughts were on the general function of a professional planner, a later question asking what that respondent's specific duties were allowed for a comparative analysis on how closely those two ideas matched. The third section marked a transition into more specific questions concerning the respondent's particular professional experience, and signaled a shift towards more targeted queries related to MDPs in planning. Next, respondents were identified as part of one of the four subgroups, and were matched with a specific line of questioning. If identified as either single-service or multi-disciplinary planners working in a consultancy, respondents were asked questions related to their particular work experience, and their perceptions of the other group in relation to their own work. City planners by-passed this line of questioning and were asked instead about their indirect dealings with private sector firms, and their opinions regarding the benefits of one corporate structure versus the other. Since it was impossible to foretell if the final non-traditional group had any connection with multi-disciplinary

practices, they too by-passed this section of questions. Finally, a wrap-up section was used in an attempt to link the various themes of the interview and ask pointed questions with an attempt to address the particular research question, as well as to provide an opportunity for final comments.

The use of funneling as a strategy in the structuring of the interview was felt to minimize the possibility of losing data due to failure in providing a comfortable medium of communication. Since some of the questions might be interpreted as putting the respondent in a position of speaking against their own firm or employer, consideration as to whether answers were altered or softened was needed. While “the more problematic the experience for the individual, the more incentive they have to create problems for you in getting the truth” (Douglas 1985, 25), the combination of a neutral setting, the careful development of rapport, and strategically built questions was deemed to have effectively eliminated, or at least minimized, any concern for inaccurate answers due to an uncomfortable setting.

### ***Receiving and Cataloguing Data***

Interviews were recorded by means of an audio tape, and notes were also taken during the questioning to allow main ideas to be identified as quickly as possible. Since respondents were told at the outset of the purpose for these methods, as well as being given the option of using a pseudonym for any direct quotes, it was not felt that using the recording device impeded or discouraged honesty in any answers. The interview guide was designed to stream notes into one of three sections. First, a column was designated on the left hand side to highlight any specific ideas of importance, or direct quotes from the respondent. A column on the right hand side was used to keep a list of structural

changes that needed to be made to the guide itself. For example, if a particular question was better suited in another section, or in an alternative order, future drafts of the interview guide could incorporate these ideas. Finally, a section was left open at the end of the structured questions to keep notes on general observations, as well as any informal information that was translated during wrap-up.

After the interview session, audio recordings were catalogued on individual tapes and stored in one location. As soon as possible after the interview, written transcripts were created from the recordings. Digital voice recognition software was not used in this case to allow the interviewer an opportunity to review and translate each session individually. While as much care as possible was taken to create the best possible record of the interview, some gestures and descriptions were obviously omitted. Where possible, symbols were used to denote abrupt stoppages, stresses, and non-vocal or partially-vocal actions. Both the interview guide and each individual transcript were combined, and represent essential supporting documents to the conclusions drawn in the following two chapters.

### ***Structuring of Analysis and Presentation System***

In order to translate the data into useable information, two main methods were used. It was felt that by first examining some of the related issues identified previously, the subsequent exploration of the main research question would gain context within the overall debate. Consequently, the observations presented in Chapter 5 link the collection of stylized facts as previously discussed to a practical setting. Those observations, then coupled with some of the direct quotes taken from the interviews, assist in giving context to the conclusions developed in Chapter 6. In other words, the interviews were used to



test some of the underlying ideas that were previously simple conjectures. In Chapter 5, observations are noted regarding the backgrounds of the planners in question, the various influences they might have in formulating opinion, and the way the interview guide was set up to examine these opinions further. With this introductory material in place, further content analysis was given context. The conceptual framework as developed - planners engage in a diversity of planning services, there is a public perception of planners as inherently ethical, and the parallel to accountants or auditors as similar protectors of the public interest is relevant – could be enhanced by using the data. The following four concepts were subsequently developed in an attempt to link information from the interviews with the stylized facts:

*Concept 1: The professional functions identified by all respondents are similar across cases.*

*Concept 2: A respondent's concept of what a planner should be doing, and what he or she is actually doing are similar.*

*Concept 3: Respondents believe that an individual sense of ethics is more important than ethics defined by an outside source.*

*Concept 4: Respondents agree that a parallel between accountants and planners as having the same potential conflict of interest exists.*

To examine these concepts, codes were assigned to various types of responses in order to group and subsequently count them. Since the limited version of HyperRESEARCH allowed for a maximum of seven cases, the twelve cases were split into two studies, called *multisingle* and *cityother* respectively. The first category included all respondents from the first two identified groups, and the latter contained respondents from the last two groups. Final observations were made on aggregate, therefore the splitting into two groups was done only for functional purposes of conforming with the

HyperRESEARCH platform. Although splitting responses into each individual group and assessing differences cannot be represented as a general trend, some attention was given to how each of the four groups answered. This additional analysis served in understanding what the influences of each planner's environment might have on his or her responses. For the first concept, responses that related to expressed views outlining the various functions of a planner were coded as various versions of *planning function* (Appendix B: Frequency Reports). It was assumed that counting the total number of different codes as compared to the number of respondents would indicate the range in variety of the perceived function of a planner. Put another way, if the functions identified by planners were similar, then it would follow that a planner's role is well-defined. For the second concept, the code *job description* related to how respondents answered as to whether their general definition of a planner's function coincided with their actual job description. A simple tally might reveal whether the diversity expressed in the roles planners thought they should be performing actually related to each respondent's own real experience in planning. The third concept addressed whether respondents saw a personal sense of ethics as the main source of ethical grounding, and coded appropriate responses under *source of ethics*. Comparing the code *source of ethics – personal sense of ethics* to all other codes would indicate how much importance respondents placed on internal guidance versus external sources. Finally, to discuss the fourth concept, answers coded under *parallel fair* indicated the number and strength of yes answers versus no answers. The observations might suggest whether the parallel between planning and accounting is indeed fair and applicable in the eyes of planners. With an enhanced

understanding in place having examined these basic concepts, an easier transition to more pointed conclusions is possible.

In Chapter 6, the extraction of direct quotes is used to support or disprove existing theories presented in previous chapters. By satisfying the identified goals of filling gaps in knowledge, investigating complex motivations, and collecting a diversity of opinion (Dunn 2000), this method was determined as most effective. In order to satisfy the final goal of revealing any potential consensus on some issues, the combination of observations of structure and method and extraction of actual interview material led to some proposed conclusions as outlined in the final chapter.

### *Limitations*

While this research structure was essential in creating a richness of data, some limitations existed which are important to note. Prevalent throughout the entire analysis was the uncertainty in deciphering truth from perception, as allegorized in the introduction. Indeed, the difficulty in using opinion in colouring debate is always in the uncertainty of whether what respondents say is what they actually would act upon, or simply a perception of what they feel should be said given their position and circumstances. This limitation highlights the importance of using the data as support to concepts already grounded in theory and historical context, as any opinion put forward as unwavering truth is done on shaky grounds. Furthermore, since the selection process sought out registered and practicing professional planners, an over-representation of senior planners is likely. Since it takes a number of years of practice before being eligible for professional status, the majority of registered planners are in senior positions, which means opinions from recent graduates and younger planners was perhaps neglected.

Furthermore, since the sample size was neither scientifically random nor overly large, the tendency to make generalizations from it had to be avoided. As mentioned, the purpose of the method was to encourage the collection of a range of supporting truths, and not to succumb to the temptation of proving one particular version of the truth.

### **Chapter Summary**

In summary, the use of qualitative interviews assisted in adding depth to the primary research as conducted throughout the first two chapters, and helped in arriving at some partial conclusions regarding the question of whether inherent conflicts of interest exist by delivering planning services by means of multi-disciplinary practices. Most importantly, the qualitative method served in adding useful information on both sides of the debate in order to gain a full understanding of the research question.

*Despite an ideological mystique which stresses a liberal point of view and selfless service to a broad public interest, planning practice actually is cautious and conservative.*  
- Krumholz, *Introduction to Planning History in the United States* (1983, 274)

## **Chapter 5: Testing and Observations**

With a final aim of using research material to compliment and expand on the theoretical and historical arguments set out so far, interview transcripts were first analyzed using a more structured method to provide some initial observations. Specifically, after introducing the respondents and their environments, a software platform was used to code and compile groups of responses in order to make some linkages between stylized facts concerning planners and their actual experiences. The main purpose of this analysis, beyond the connection of theory to lived experience, is to provide a transition to the final chapter of more pointed conclusions.

### ***An Introduction to the Study***

The advantage of a small sample size parallels the benefits of dealing with a family-oriented business versus a large corporation. The small group environment promotes an enhanced understanding of each member, with increased exposure to the particular influences that may steer individual responses. While the structure of the interview groups was detailed in Chapter 4, it is perhaps useful to describe each participant in more detail before introducing their positions and opinions. By detailing their work environments and the general social norms that may be influencing each individual and each group, the transition from data to conclusive statements will be more textured.

The first group incorporated private sector planners working in a single-service firm, which signifies either a multi-employee corporation only delivering planning services, or a single-individual operation. All members were accredited professional planners. The first two were senior level planners in a multi-employee corporation, one

acting in a management capacity and the other as a senior project manager. The project manager was involved in a heavier than usual percentage of work with private sector clients, owing mostly to a recent decrease in spending from the federal government, previously their major client:

*More lately, and since I've been with the company, it's been that the heavier end of it has been private and the public sector has been, um- and I think it's a bit of a function, I mean some of it's federal work, most of it is, a bit of it's provincial work with the public side. But I think the reduction has been a bit a function of the fact that you've seen federal governments with minority governments, so the budgetary strings are a little bit tighter, and more hesitation and scrutiny in terms of how they spend. And that's kind of reflected in how much they spend with the consultants. So that's the reality. (Planner 3, 2007, 2)*

The second senior planner in a multi-employee setting acted in a management role, and primarily coordinated the planning activities of various project managers. This planner was an honorary fellow with a history in the upper management of the Canadian Institute of Planners, and therefore had particular insight into the structures and efforts of the institution. The final member of this group provided an interesting balance in relation to the individual's status as the owner of a single-employee planning firm. This person's answers tended to be grounded in the operational focus of daily business, which was a stark contrast to the theoretical musings of some of the other high-level planners. When asked to identify the one area they would change within their firm, this planner's answer was indicative of this practical approach:

*It would be, um, getting a better handle on the paperwork, because whenever you work in, in the government, or whether you're working, um, in a business, there tends to be support staff [laughs]. So that's what I find would be nice, that um, so if I could, is getting a better handle on something as mundane as filing. (Planner 10, 2007, 12)*

The second group of private sector planners was represented by three senior members of multi-disciplinary firms of various size and structure, and again all were

accredited professional planners. The first planner was a long-standing member of a significantly large MDP keying on the synergies between the planning division and the many other related disciplines within the firm:

*From a business point of view we always seek opportunities where, where many of the required disciplines are in house. So, a very common, um, arrangement would be a file where I'm managing the project, but um, managing the input of our municipal civil engineers, who would be working on matters related to grading, drainage, site servicing, uh, in house. And also our, um, transportation engineers who would do typically, uh, traffic impact studies. Um, and then thirdly our roadway design civil engineers who would do physical designs for roadway improvements...on projects. (Planner 2, 2007, 3)*

The second group member was also involved in a large-scale MDP, but was a recent hire after a long career in public-sector planning. Consequently, where the motivations for corporate success and ease of communication across the disciplines might have been similar to the previous planner, this member's multi-decade background with municipalities introduced a different influence:

*To be able to provide the whole basket of whatever it is, you know. The City of Ottawa needs a subdivision laid out by a surveyor, uh, we can do that. If they need a planning rationale report, we can write that. If they need a stormwater management report, we can do that. If they need a, you know, geotechnical report, we can do that. So, you know, you sort of go down the list of what a client might need and then say "yes, yes, yes, we can do all that" and so, you know, it's not unusual to be writing a proposal that's got three or four components to it, and put it together and say "there it is, and there's the cost" and away you go. (Planner 7, 2007, 8)*

Responses from this interviewee tended to centre around a MDP's abilities to solve problems, likely as a result of a long period of time spent on the client side looking for easily-implemented solutions. The last respondent was also a long-standing member of the planning community, but worked in a MDP with only engineers as supplementary professionals, and as such spoke less of the need for planners to accommodate the biggest

number of related disciplines and more of their need to understand only those professions closely associated to them.

The third group of public sector planners were all employees of the City of Ottawa, but worked in very different capacities. The new City mandate to promote accreditation meant that all respondents had professional designation. The first was an urban designer with a background and professional affiliation in landscape architecture, and as a result was the only member of the group with the ability to speak first hand of a related profession. This person's influences in choosing planning as a profession were similarly unique:

*Well, um, I think working as a landscape architect, probably far down the pecking order of, um, I guess sub-consultants, I realized there was a lot of issues that would arrive at the end of the project, that didn't seem to be addressed early in the project. A lot of issues with form, construction, with design. And so I realized early that, um, to make a difference one had to be at more the leading edge. (Planner 6, 2007, 2)*

The second respondent was also an urban designer with particular skills in sketching and modeling. Interestingly, the interview transcript required frequent references to the pencil sketches and diagrams that the respondent was making in order to help describe certain answers. Providing yet another perspective, the third planner worked as a program manager, and oversaw the particular planning processes within a geographic area. This higher-level perspective translated into some very candid opinions regarding the way the City contracts private sector consultants.

The final group was by definition the most eclectic and interesting combination, and included three individuals who considered themselves as planners, but who no longer worked in a traditional planning capacity. The first respondent owned and operated a retail development firm, and relied on past planning competencies in development work:



*And, uh, so we look really good, and our rents are about ten percent higher, because we just pick good sites, because we're...I'm a good planner, I can pick really good sites. You know, three years after I bought it, everybody says why did you buy that site? You're crazy. I had people tell me often, that's ridiculous, you're going to lose your shirt on that. But, you know, it's so basic, where the...planning is forecasting growth and the capital budget is showing that sewers and roads will be in two years, you go buy a piece of country that's, you know, cost half of what it'll be worth in three years. You buy it for half, and just wait for it to appreciate, and all of a sudden with all those people living there, all of a sudden the car count is up, you know, the merchants just call up and say do you have a spot for me [laughs]. It's so simple. It's not a vision, it's just you've got planning in practice you know. (Planner 1, 2007, 6)*

The second was involved in an executive director capacity with an established local association, and of all respondents had the least amount of direct influence from the associated planning institutions and underlying politics. Conversely, this person's politically-charged role resulted in some candid and fiery opinions regarding the change of planning as a profession over the last thirty years. Having left planning-related roles for a position of increased political power authority, the respondent saw contemporary planning as "a great socialist horde. Um, they don't represent planners. Planners don't plan anymore, planners follow their political masters. There's no such thing as planning in this province or this country, it's all politically driven. And that's simply reinforced by the Canadian Planners, and the Ontario Planners" (Planner 8, 2007, 3). The last interviewee also carried interesting credentials, in that the person owned a practice that "used to say architects and planners, [but] I don't, uh, other than on the front door, advertise the planning aspect, because it produces some conflict with other firms I want to work with" (Planner 12, 2007, 2), referring to other private planning firms. This respondent's particular background in architecture and urban design provided a unique account of how the connection between planning and related disciplines is experienced in practice.

### *The Structuring of Questions*

With an idea of what underlying influences were affecting each of the individual respondents in formulating responses, a comprehensive perspective would be incomplete if the influences infused by the creation and ordering of questions were omitted. As described in Chapter 4, the basic format of the interview separated questions into four main sections moving from more general questions concerning planning to a specific level of query that focused on MDPs and their influence. The first section probed respondents to discuss their background and motivations for choosing planning to be able to understand each individual's underlying influences as summarized in the previous section. Since assumptions concerning the respondents' ability to understand the concept of ethics and topic-specific definitions such as conflict of interest could not be made, the second section was used largely to allow individual definitions to emerge. For instance, answers to what respondents felt conflict of interest signified to planning varied from "Well, where one's decisions, decision-making process could be affected, positively or negatively, by their association with organizations outside their own" (Planner 8, 2007, 6) to "It has different elements. Uh, first of all, in a business, the straightforward one is when you're representing one client and they have a certain professional or a business goal, you can't represent another client that may be looking to have the same goal" (Planner 9, 2007, 6). While both answers seem similar, the nuance picked up for future analysis is that the first planner sees conflict manifesting through association with someone else but the ethical implications come back to the original agent, whereas the second planner sees the same association resulting in conflict for the client and not the planner.

The third section involved profiling to lead specific respondents to relevant questions. Questions were formulated to explore specific corporate structures and assess how those particular structures might influence future answers concerning multi-disciplinary practice. While the variety of answers was significant, the observed link between the nature of the planner's role to their subsequent views paralleled Howe's interview results (1994). Specifically, Howe observed that planners' actions towards ethical decisions were related to their roles, as well as their approach to the source of ethics (1994, 254). Similarly, within this study, groups of planners answered some questions in very comparable ways. For example, when asked about the presence of intermediaries in dealing with the public, all single-service planners answered in some variation of a compromise, or that "the public can be expressed in several ways" (Planner 9, 2007, personal notes), whereas all multi-disciplinary planners believed their relationship was direct, and that "in the vast majority of cases the, the connection or the communication with the public is, or should be, handled by the planner" (Planner 4, 2007, 8). When asked the same question, two out of the three public sector planners answered that their relationship was primarily indirect, and typified by contact with "those who are self-selected or specialized members of the public, who are seeking, or have issue with planning, uh, situations" (Planner 6, 2007, 9). Non-traditional planners were in varying roles and therefore had different degrees of contact. In summary, the structure of questioning reveals information relevant to the research question, as well as an understanding of how planners match their underlying influences with their respective moral positions.

### *Observing Planners' Responses*

As described in the previous chapter, four concepts were put forth in an attempt to explore and help explain three main ideas: the diversity of planning services, the perception of planners as inherently ethical, and a parallel between accountants and planners. Importantly, these three ideas are not the only ones of importance for this analysis, but serve in providing a framework and direction for future discussion in Chapter 6. Codes were assigned to separate ideas within the body of the interviews, with the overall purpose of counting the number of occurrences of certain responses as a proxy for the relative importance given to that particular idea. Since the intention of observing these patterns is to provide transition to the next chapter, the method was chosen as appropriate not because the observations reveal unwavering truth, but because they set the ongoing discussion into a practical context. In a way, these observations simply set the stage for future discussion concerning the role of multi-disciplinary practice within planning.

The first two concepts relate to the main idea of planners engaging in a diversity of services. This argument suggests that the profession of planning suffers from a perception, both from inside and out, that the services planners offer are at best extremely varied, and at worst undefined and unknown. Consequently, a wide variety of professional services may lead to an increased potential of conflict of interest based on the fact that a varying degree of services may in fact represent conflicting interests. Put another way, if a planner offers both consulting services giving clients advice on a particular project, as well as the actual planning and site development of the same project, the resulting conflict of interest may put planners at a disadvantage. Exploring the first

concept, then, revealed what respondents felt was the role of the planner, both from a general perspective and related to their own work as a professional. By hypothesizing that the professional functions identified by all respondents were similar across cases, the resulting count in the variety of responses would reveal whether a multiplicity of services was experienced in actual practice.

In order to structure observations, answers to two main questions were coded: what respondents felt best represented their own professional functions, and how respondents described the function of a planner in a general societal context. Answers were assigned a code and, while similar answers were grouped under the same code, the number of total codes was not pre-determined. By examining the Frequency Report (Appendix B), two main observations were noted. First, the large number of total codes identified by all respondents suggests that the variety of planning services with which these planners identified is quite varied. In total, seventeen different code groups were identified from only twelve respondents. The five most cited examples included *update and change existing policy*, *provide advice*, *produce plans*, *process development applications*, and *site development*. Second, the maximum frequency of any one code as given by all respondents was seven, meaning that no one group was identified by even close to all respondents. Indeed, respondents simultaneously provided a broad range of answers, and none of these answers commanded real consensus amongst all cases. The roles identified by different groups, not surprisingly, coincided with the type of work expected within that category. For instance, only private sector planners identified *expert witnesses at OMB*, while only public sector planners identified *steward of the environment* or *equal access to housing*. In summary, the observations in relation to the

first concept suggest that this group of planners believe the professional functions of a planner are in fact dissimilar, and that the range of services a planner could be responsible for are varied.

The second concept attempted to assess whether a respondent's view of their actual functions as a planner coincided with the functions they felt a planner should be providing. The purpose of this discussion was two-fold: to provide clarity to the previous notion of similarity in identified functions by confirming that the range of services as indicated was in fact confirmed in practice, as well as providing insight into any variance between a planner's perception and reality. The previous observations related to the range of services by coding answers from two different questions: first, what the respondent felt their immediate functions were, and then what they felt a planner's functions were in a general societal context. If this new set of observations showed that respondents felt these two concepts were the same, then their perceptions would mirror the reality of their practice. To understand this concept, answers to whether the respondents felt their job description matched the general function of a planner were coded in one of three ways, *exactly the same*, *very close to definition*, and *some differences*. Referring to the Frequency Report, six out of twelve respondents felt that their job descriptions were either exactly the same, or very close to the definition of what they felt a planner should be doing; however, three of the respondents did not provide an answer. While it is safe to say that at least half of the respondents feel that what a planner should be doing, and what he or she is actually doing are similar, there is some divergence in opinion. One public planner felt the similarity was based on their position at the City:

*I think probably very closely. Uh, it's very close, and I think it's probably the reason for my job. Because I work in a policy group, uh, because I'm providing*

*urban design advice, because I'm trying to, uh, make documents like the official plan implementable and real, I would expect that it pretty much defines my scope of work. (Planner 6, 2007, 9).*

On the other side of the spectrum, one single-service private sector planner believed that the differences could be attributed to the planner's separation from decision making:

“Um...I guess in the sense that you don't get the final say. You don't have the final say, you're only providing advice. [laughs] So, so that, uh, so that ya. In the final product, there could be differences.” (Planner 10, 2007, 9). The tendency to give a particular answer, however, was not based solely on membership within a particular group, as each group provided answers in all categories.

In summary, using the first two concepts as guidance, the answers given by the respondents indicate that the perception of planners having a varied and potentially inconsistent number of professional functions is in fact supported by at least this range of practicing planners. To make further conjectures concerning the role of the definition of a planner's functions in relation to possible conflicts of interest, then, is at least grounded in the practical experience of these particular planners.

Turning to the possible sources of ethical behaviour, the third concept embodies the general belief that as inherently ethical beings, planners are self-equipped to deal with ethical issues such as conflicts of interest. Although the planning profession has established codes of conduct and codes of ethics, as well as a number of legislative tools that serve in guiding behaviour, these ethical authorities can only serve as checks and balances, and require individuals who both understand and appreciate ethical behaviour to actually carry out their professional functions within this system. This concept is supported by Howe's findings on the nature of ethical behaviour for planners (1994). Her

data suggested that “even though planners had some difficulty articulating their ideas about ethics, most did seem to have a solid internal core of ideas that they drew on...ethical values were in many cases acquired in childhood and adolescence and were brought with them into the field” (Howe 1994, 149). Provisionally, if the vast majority of planners are simply inherently ethical, then perhaps the profession has less to worry about in terms of regulatory structures.

To explore this further, the third concept weighs the importance of an individual sense of ethics as compared to any other source of ethical guidance. Specifically, if respondents believe that an individual sense of ethics is more important than ethics defined by an outside source, then Howe’s findings would be supported here. The observations are derived from answers to the two related questions of what respondents thought a planner’s responsibility to be ethical was, as well as what sorts of mechanisms exist to ensure that ethics are upheld. The combination of these two questions ensures that both concepts of general ethics and specific mechanisms that provide guidance for ethical behaviour are included in the code category. As with previous concepts, the number of codes within this test was not pre-determined, and all individual answers were placed into particular code groupings based on their similarities. By identifying *personal sense of ethics* and comparing it to all of the other possible sources of ethical guidance, the quantity would indicate by proxy the importance the respondents placed on their own individual sense of ethics while making ethical decisions. That is, the main source of guidance for respondents might relate to the number of times it was mentioned in each case.



As indicated in the Frequency Report, *personal sense of ethics* was cited eleven times out of a total of fifty-three code instances. The combination of other outside influences, which included a sound educational background, policy framework as laid out by municipalities and provinces, professional codes, general societal or market forces, and structural hierarchical sources including notions of corporate responsibility, accounted for the remaining forty-two instances. Not only was *personal sense of ethics* not mentioned as often as the combination of outside influences, it did not even represent the highest cited code, attributed to *professional codes* with fifteen instances. These results suggest that while the respondents did count a personal sense of right and wrong as a reasonably important factor in providing ethical guidance, a combination of other structural sources was equally or more important. By extension, it would reasonably follow that outside influences such as professional codes and policy frameworks are important in the structuring of these planners' ethical behaviours. The division of opinion across groups did not point conclusively to one group favouring particular sources, as all groups counted at least once in each code. *Policy framework*, however, was more often cited by private planners, suggesting the private sector may have a closer connection to regulatory policy for guidance since they must be in compliance with policy in all their decisions. Private sector planners did look to other sources as well. A single-service planner, for example, looked to ethical teaching within the planning education system as a back-up to professional codes before relying on personal ethics:

*I mean, CIP has rules and codes of conduct that sometimes are not all that clear, so a good grounding, I think, from an educational point of view, you know, a philosophical basis of why one has ethics in professions and what that means. To how you might deal with examples and um, you know, and understanding your own value system I guess, as well. (Planner 9, 2007, 6)*

Thus, the discounting of structural problems in ethical behaviour for planners as unimportant due to a planner's inherent ethical nature has little support from the evidence given by this group of planners.

The last concept deals with the potential parallel between the ethical dilemma faced by planners in protecting the public interest while competing with other professional interests and the same dilemma faced by accountants and auditors when placed in similar multi-disciplinary positions. In this scenario, it would follow that if the parallel is reasonable, and in theory at least planners face the same sorts of ethical conflicts as compared to accountants and lawyers when dealing with multi-disciplinary practices, then the resulting academic debates should at least be comparable. That is, if the parameters are similar and great care is taken in one profession to debate and argue the merits of regulation or freedom of choice, then the lack of debate in the other profession might be seen as deficient.

The observations relating to this collection of interviews involved the assessment of whether respondents believed the alleged parallel between accountants and planners had similar potential for conflict of interest. This was relatively easy to gauge based on the fact that a direct question posing this very concept existed in the interview guide. Examining the relevant answers and coding them as one of either *absolutely yes*, *yes with qualifications*, *absolutely no*, or *no with qualifications* indicated the respondents' feelings as to whether the parallel was fair, as well as suggested the degree of certainty in a yes or no answer based on the number of qualifications given. In short, an absolutely yes answer might be seen as stronger than a yes with qualifications.

The Frequency Report shows a very even split of answers, with a total of five showing some degree of yes, a total of six indicating some degree of no, and one respondent not answering. At first glance, this would indicate a mix of feelings towards the applicability of the proposed parallel; however, the one dividing observation is in the distribution of *absolutely no* and *absolutely yes* codes. If one distinguishing factor might be found, it is the fact that more respondents felt that a parallel was absolutely not fair, meaning these particular planners seemed to have strong feelings about the impossibility of an Enron-type event occurring for planners. The strength of conviction here is obvious from a non-traditional planner who argued,

*No, I don't think it's possible, and I don't think that it's a fair parallel to make. First of all, these guys were dealing with money, pure and simple. So, a very different commodity than planning. Um, and secondly they did have authority to do, to make decisions and to take actions. And very few of them did. And so, those are the two main differences that I see. That they were dealing purely with money, that they did have the authority to make the decisions necessary to deceive the world. Um, planners, unfortunately, I would say, don't have that authority [laughs]. (Planner 8, 2007, 9)*

Interestingly, participation in a particular group did seem to have some influence on how respondents answered. Specifically, all public sector planners argued for some degree of parallel, all non-traditional planners argued for some degree of yes. Similarly, all multi-disciplinary planners answered in some degree of no, while two out of three single-service planners indicated a degree of yes. In summary, the mix in responses related to this concept do not conclusively point to these respondents having an overall consensual feeling of support or opposition to the parallel as proposed. Therefore, it is impossible to make a broad statement as to how these particular planners felt regarding the similarities in experience between planners and accountants involved in conflicts of interest.

Notwithstanding, the answers to this question relate closely to the overall feeling of

respondents to the applicability of planning as a profession, as will be described further in the next chapter.

### *Chapter Summary*

The purpose of this chapter was to begin to formulate some conclusions that are developed further in the following chapter. Indeed, the observations presented here serve both to connect previous theories with actual opinion, as well as to create transition from discussions revolving around the context of the argument to actual positions of either support or opposition. This was achieved by first introducing the format of the study, providing an understanding of the reasoning behind the interview guide, and then discussing the stylized facts presented in the previous chapter in relation to the observed data. The purpose of using observations from the qualitative research was not to either prove or disprove the theories as absolute truth, but to place them within the context of planning-related experience through the opinions of a set of planners. With this information in hand, an easier progression can be made to the creation of some more precise conclusions by coupling other supportive material from the interviews with the context as provided in the first three chapters.

The observations as discussed shed a certain light on some important ideas. First, the perception that the planner is exposed to potential conflicts due to a misunderstanding or misrepresentation of the types of services he or she performs has some practical grounding. The experiences of these particular planners confirm that when probed for a definition of the function of a planner with either specific or general connotations, these planners identify a wide variety of functions with little consensus on any one single category. Thus, the potential that planners are more open to conflict based on an over-

representation of services does have some connection to real experience. Second, the popular belief of a planner as inherently ethical may in fact shield the existence of potential structural problems. Using our ongoing allegory, attention to the reality of failures within professional or societal structures that assist with ethical dilemmas may be diverted by the shadows cast by public perception. If held to be true, planners are possibly led to believe ethical failures in the checks and balances of the system are unimportant due to the ability of individual planners to see past pitfalls and make appropriate decisions. The observations relating to the third concept show that an individual sense of ethics not only fails to garner an overwhelming majority, but it is not even the most commonly cited example of ethical authority. This suggests that based on these planners' experiences, structural mechanisms such as codes of ethics and policy framework are important. Finally, accountants and lawyers are engaged in a significant debate regarding the regulation of MDPs in the legal and accounting professions, and a potential parallel exists between the function of accountants and planners as protectors of the public interest conflicting with their respective professional counterparts. A strong enough consensus did not exist among the various planners interviewed to suggest a tendency towards accepting or rejecting this parallel. While these observations cannot unequivocally support the parallel in the particular experience of this group of planners, it will nonetheless be carried forward for further debate in the final chapter.

In summary, some basic testing using coded interview material helped the overall argument by grounding some of the conjectured theories in at least some planners' experiences. More importantly, the observations and their resultant positions serve as a

transition from the contextual analysis done in the first three chapters, to the normative position taken in the final chapter.

*Any institution can fail regardless of size, its venerable past, the competence of the people who comprise it, or its apparent invulnerability.*  
- Keatinge, *Multi-dimensional Practice in a World of Invincible Ignorance* (2002)  
taken from (Zimmerman and Kelly 2004, 643)

## **Chapter 6: A Qualitative Analysis of Private Sector Structural Ethics**

As a final step, a qualitative analysis of the information gained through research interviews can be used for its stated purpose of investigating complex behaviours and motivations, and collecting a diversity of opinions and experiences. To date, the presentation of information that set the debate in context - historical, ethical, and practical - now serves in allowing for a more tactile normative argument. The debate does not, as previously mentioned, attempt to declare one side as the steadfast truth, rather, the purpose of applying qualitative research methods was to add colour to both sides of the argument in hopes of creating a heightened overall understanding. In order to structure information, it was felt that continuing the use of the conceptual framework from Chapter 4 as an organizational format would provide an interesting catalyst for supporting ideas. As such, the concepts from previous chapters are presented and relevant information is added by means of extracting direct quotes from the bodies of interviews to build a case for and against multi-disciplinary firms. The final step is to synthesize the information as provided and suggest future directions.

### ***Conflict as an Extension of Diversity***

The sense that the potential for conflicts of interest in planning relates to the diversity and inconsistency in the way we define planning as a profession reaches back to the historical context as provided in Chapter 2. As argued, planners are immersed in a survivalist professional history perennially fixed on the notion of self-definition and, consequently, the identification of planning functions and services. By defining the abilities of planners, and separating them from the abilities of both other professions and the common masses, planners survived the tumultuous ride through the twentieth century.

Specifically, the concept of the planner as a specialist of the overall physical environment helped create the personification of the planner as an unbiased expert (Hodge 1998; Hall 2000). As the scope of planning shifted in response to a widening focus, the “resulting breadth of the contemporary planning endeavour [led] to the concern that there may not be a base of common knowledge for the various strands of planning thought and activity” (Bickenbach and Hendler 1994, 165). The relatively new concept of the planner as a generalist serves in redefining the planner’s professional identity, and re-shaping how planning services should be delivered. Indeed, if planners are better suited as coordinators and managers of a diverse group of other expert professionals, then maybe multi-disciplinary arrangements are better suited for planners in this updated function. The direct contact and ease of coordination experienced by having these professionals under the same corporate umbrella is undeniable.

While the observations presented in the previous chapter revealed a rather wide range of proposed planning functions, a general consensus existed within the interview respondents that contemporary planners were no longer specialists, and that the management of other expert consultants was among their primary functions. One respondent argued that while a planner is “not a specialist”, they are better suited to an objective perspective than a specialist who is “somewhat dangerous because they are so focused on their own...particular responsibility” (Planner 1, 2007, 11). Moreover, the development of multi-disciplinary practices was an intentional result of the profession as a whole understanding this adapted role and no longer harbouring protectionist feelings:

*If you could be so specialized that no one else could do it, then maybe there is some comfort that you are a profession because nobody else knows how to run the equipment...but we are not like that – we’re trying to be comprehensive and*



*multi-disciplinary purposefully and bring the process together* (Planner 1, 2007, 23).

Put simply, planners are drawn towards the concept of multi-disciplinary behaviour as it coincides with their updated view of the function of planning. As such, the fact that “your expertise is...in knowing the system” (Planner 3, 2007, 4) and leading others through it is as important as and possibly more important than actually performing an expert function within the system.

To continue this idea, the view of some planners that “planning is a multi-disciplinary practice in and of itself” (Planner 6, 2007, 12) supports the notion that a multi-disciplinary *approach* is desirable, whether it is practiced in a multi-disciplinary *firm* or not. One multi-disciplinary planner indicated his firm’s ultimate preference for working with his own engineering division, or “the ideal scenario...where those other engineering disciplines are from within” (Planner 2, 2007, 3), but the suggestion by other planners that MDPs partner just as frequently with other competitive firms indicates that being multi-disciplinary may be helpful whether a firm’s planning division ends up partnering with other internal divisions or not. One respondent believed that “by being in an MDP you are actually better equipped to communicate with other professions whether they’re within your firm or without” (Planner 4, 2006, 11), suggesting the heightened tendency for planners to communicate with other professions is a universally positive development.

In order to understand this last concept, it is essential to separate the notion of multi-disciplinary behaviour or thought from multi-disciplinary practice. If MDPs are simply an embodiment of increased communication, and communication is seen by most planners as positive, then it would follow that MDPs are an important corporate structure

worth keeping. However, the fact that behaviour and practice *are* different concepts may be shielding the potential negative aspects. According to one planner, the people within the firms are the sole cause for success, and therefore the effectiveness of planning services has nothing to do with the structure of the firm (Planner 9, 2007). This planner attributes success and failure to the firm's ability to attract intelligent and motivated planners, and the presence of these individuals will overcome any shortcomings in corporate structure. Another planner claims "if I am looking for a planner, I am looking for a planner. I'm not looking for a firm that has planning, engineering, and architecture together" (Planner 1, 2007, 19), suggesting the perceived benefits to the consumer touted by MDPs as a primary benefit may not actually entice firms in their actual decision to hire one format over the other. Subsequently, if the structure of the firm holds only as much significance as the people within it, as postulated by the first planner, importance shifts from the corporate structure to the individual's ability to make ethical decisions within those structures, versus the ability of outside influences to shape ethical behaviour.

In summary, the long-standing struggle for planners to define their scope of services as proof of professional validity may have in fact delayed their ability to embrace a multi-disciplinary approach to city planning. The benefits of a multi-disciplinary approach, however, do not relinquish the potential conflicts inherent in a multi-disciplinary practice. Therefore, the fact that many planners, the majority of these respondents among them, believe in a multi-disciplinary approach to planning should not abdicate responsibility from the institution in avoiding conflict of interest.

### *Conflict Related to the Source of Ethical Guidance*

From another line of thinking, the belief that planners are inherently ethical beings serves in giving context to the most appropriate and functional authority mechanism for planners to draw guidance in order to make ethical decisions. That is, the identification of the strongest areas of ethical guidance, and a subsequent analysis of their practical ability to serve as systematic checks and balances, influences whether or not planners should be paying attention to further regulation or protection from pitfalls such as conflict of interest.

The respondents grouped ethical mechanisms in a wide variety of categories, meaning these planners thought influence came from a range of sources including professional ethics, policy structures, corporate structural forces, societal guidance, and a personal sense of wrong or right. In exploring the data further, it was apparent that the majority of respondents, regardless of the sources of ethics they identified, felt that this particular source made it either difficult beyond reason or even impossible for structural failures to occur. For example, one respondent was led to planning as a career away from previous employment as a landscape architect, based primarily on the strength of the Ontario Planning Act in giving clear definition to a planner's function and role (Planner 6, 2007). This respondent believed "a profession that has an act in place that defines a big portion or component of the profession, is a profession well placed" (Planner 6, 2007, 3), and that the combination of a strong policy framework, professional codes, and the responsibility planners owe to the public interest make it difficult for planners to stray towards unethical behaviour. Another private sector planner believed that even when all the checks and balances that are in place were exhausted, the planner still had a final

level of guidance by means of their public planner counterparts (Planner 2, 2007). Furthermore, many mechanisms exist which help form any individual's sense of ethics, and that even times when many of them break down, "we will put their interests forward to the public planner and leave it to them to make that decision, because they're supposed to be the final check" (Planner 2, 2007, 15). One respondent went as far as to argue for the irrelevancy of the strength of the checks and balances in place, since contemporary planners are stripped of the authority necessary to make controversial decisions in the first place (Planner 8, 2007). In short, many of these planners believed that while conflict of interest was possible, the range of mechanisms in place translated any theoretical possibility into a practical non-issue. Summed up neatly, "there's an awful lot of scrutiny on any planning application, that it would be hard to ...pull one over" (Planner 10, 2007, 14).

Taking this argument a step further, however, reveals some potential flaws in disregarding the possibility of failure. By arguing that any one individual has less potential for ethical misbehavior the further they are buried in structural and hierarchical mechanisms wrongly discounts the possibility of one of those checks or balances being problematic, even if a selection of others makes it extremely difficult for practical problems to arise. In other words, although "the best situation where you're least ethically challenged is when you're in a larger setting [and] you have the protection of your employer" (Planner 2, 2007, 13), the fact that a strong code of ethics or stringent provincial policy guidelines may cover over the practical occurrence of conflict of interest opportunities for planners in a particular corporate setting, does not discount the need to analyze that corporate setting. The strength of one ethical mechanism does not

make up for the weakness in another. As a result, the argument put forth by many planners that an individual with a strong sense of ethics “[has] that happen often enough then you leave” (Planner 1, 2007, 17) misses the point of learning from others’ mistakes. Indeed, any one planner given strength of convictions and a competent moral compass has the ability to walk away from corporate structures and hence remove themselves from potential positions of conflict of interest, but the corporate structure lives on and needs eventually to be addressed.

So then how does one assess the validity of multi-disciplinary practices? On one hand, respondents are quick to promote the ease of communication (Planner 4, 2007), the cogency with contemporary planning ideals (Planner 3, 2007), and the perceived synergies between planning and its related disciplines (Planner 10, 2007). On the other hand, the possibility of conflict represented by such examples as “team members in cases...afraid to take positions that were contrary to others within that team” (Planner 8, 2007, 9) means that regardless of the positive aspects, the theoretical possibility of failure deserves attention. Consequently, it is perhaps best to look at related examples from other professions to provide guidance in a controversial matter.

### ***Conflict as a Parallel of Similar Professions***

The final concept as previously discussed relates planning to a similar profession, and questions whether the experiences of the legal and accounting world during recent high-profile scandals has anything to add to the current debate concerning multi-disciplinary practices and the profession of planning. If the parallel is fair, then the debate may in fact benefit from turning away from the multi-disciplinary nature of planning and towards the inequality between the disciplines in question as the real cause for conflict.

Although nearly half of the respondents felt the parallel to the accounting profession was not equivalent in terms of how scandal could be manifested, most could admit to the parallel of basic ideas concerning potential conflict. The basis of the conflict revolves around the planner's and the auditor's equivalent function of protecting the public interest. If the core mission of these professions is truly to serve in this capacity, then surely any other competing core missions might sway the ability to think rationally and therefore assess the public interest in the first place. Consequently, the reporting of familiarity with "some MDPs that have planning with, it's almost an afterthought to be honest...it doesn't have the credibility of some of the other professionals working in the firm" (Planner 11, 2007, 12) suggests that this conflict does indeed occur in practice. Planners, it was argued in previous chapters, need separation and clarity to be able to make objective recommendations related to the public interest, and the "pressure to produce a certain amount of revenue, and to do it within a certain amount of time" (Planner 10, 2007, 15) creates a conflict between the public's interest and their business' interest.

If this conflict exists in practice, some respondents would argue that MDPs are simply a crafty business response to the potential benefits available. According to this theory, the reason MDPs are predominantly engineering firms with planning arms, and that not many other professions make the same sorts of connections, is that engineers stand to benefit from the conflicting position of planners more than other disciplines. Fundamentally, since "planners bring the business to the engineers, that's why the planners are in the engineering firms" (Planner 1, 2007, 19), architects more often than not choose the absence of conflict over the potential gains it offers. The strength of the

engineering profession, it would seem, may have a large impact on the performance of MDPs, since “as a planner working in that environment, it can be a little difficult to, you know, put planning first” (Planner 11, 2007, 9).

The main issue in assessing conflict of interest in multi-disciplinary practice, then, may not be contingent on the structure of the firm; rather, it may be dependent on the equality of the disciplines in question. This situation, neatly termed by one of the respondents as “a David and Goliath thing” (Planner 12, 2007, 16), admits to the possibility of any profession being influenced under the power and persuasion of another more powerful entity. In this line of thinking, any individual is prone to influence based on the human condition, or the fact that “in any hundred group of people, you’re going to be able to find some that are more influential and some that are more influenced” (Planner 12, 2007, 14). Therefore, the planner is only in a position of conflict if the engineering interests dominate instead of simply influence his or her recommendations, and that if “you’ve got an engineer and a planner who are more or less equal, or are close...they duke it out and really argue the public interest meaningfully” (Planner 12, 2007, 14) without compromising the planner’s core mission.

Picking up on this theme, most respondents in fact argue that influence from other professions is essential for a planner to be able to collect appropriate information and make recommendations. That “planners can’t work in a vacuum...they have to be aware of what else is out there” (Planner 7, 2007, 15/16) speaks to the need for planners to be involved in a multi-disciplinary environment. To this end, the risk associated with conflict is overshadowed by the fact that integration of the disciplines leads to a “healthy competition of ideas” (Planner 12, 2007, 7), and that the dynamic exchange of ideas is a

pre-requisite for human evolution. In fact, one respondent postulated that negative perceptions of MDPs are predicated on their ability to find success in a competitive environment. In a situation where “there are other professions saying you’re grabbing at our scope of work or our scope of services” (Planner 6, 2007, 13) one has to be equally aware of the presence of jealousy in colouring any discussion of ethics.

With an eye to summarizing the debate, the historical context, the ethical considerations, popular perceptions, and the qualitative evidence, all point to the fact that multi-disciplinary practices exhibit positive traits, mainly linked to their penchant for multi-disciplinary behaviour. Opening lines of communication, understanding the diversity of needs from as wide a range of interests as possible, and learning from the expertise of others, are all traits that planners see as important and even essential in performing the role of a professional planner. To neglect the possibility of conflict, however, is a dangerous precedent, with obvious examples from the legal and accounting world providing practical evidence. Using the conceptual framework as a guide, three concepts were used as a catalyst for discussion. First, the diversity of planning services associated with the profession opens planners to a potential conflict, solved by separating conflicting duties: “if you provide advice, you don’t make the decision” (Planner 6, 2007, 12). Second, achieving a strong balance of mechanisms in support of ethical behaviour does not replace the need to examine each mechanism separately. Finally, with guidance from other similar examples, we learned the importance of cautious diligence in the pursuit of progress and integration. In the end, the arguments both for and against multi-disciplinary practices perhaps do not lead us to conclusive evidence for either outright



support or opposition; however, the debate is a healthy one, and encapsulates many of the basic tenets of planning as a contemporary profession.

### *Synthesis and Future Directions*

In an attempt to collect and compare the variety of viewpoints given by the twelve respondents, it is perhaps most suitable to frame the debate from both sides. As seen by contrasting answers from different interviews, and indeed even from answers given within the same interview, both positive and negative opinions abound in relation to multi-disciplinary practice. On one side, proponents argue conflict of interest is impossible in practical terms since planners have no authority (Planner 8, 2007), cities have no money (Planner 5, 2007), money never actually exchanges hands in planning proposals (Planner 1, 2007), or the checks and balances in place are simply impenetrable (Planner 4, 2007). The persistent lingering of “but I think that the obvious possibility is there” (Planner 3, 2007, 18) -type comments, however, indicates that no amount of justification on one side should overrule the need to at least examine the other. Indeed, the lesson from accounting may not be learned by attempting to compare and contrast the professions directly, but more so by understanding that any institution can fail, regardless of size and might, by ignoring the need to address theoretical occurrences before they become practical. As a result, it is possible that the parallel between planners and accountants that so many of the respondents felt was unfair was only viewed in that respect due to accountants having lived through a public scandal in practice, and planners still having the ability and perhaps luxury to discuss it in theory.

One particular comment made during the interviews provides an interesting viewpoint conducive to searching out future research directions. While this planner

believed the parallel between planners and accountants was unfair, and that planners generally lacked the authority required to make unethical decisions, he or she did put the notion of multi-disciplinary practice into a larger context. By examining the overall historical and economic progression of firms in general, the respondent placed the concept of multi-disciplinary practice in the broader context of the business cycle and the structure of the firm as a response to economic viability. Specifically, the tendency of firms to embrace integration, an equivalent concept to a multi-disciplinary structure, is commensurate with their ability to fund this integration. Put another way, the structure of firms is cyclical in relation to the overall forces of the business cycle, and the popularity of multi-disciplinary practices in the current era is simply a response to the expansionary period currently experienced. So “as our society returns to a sense of financial health and stability, we’re starting to see now again the creation of some integrated, very well integrated, now called multi-disciplinary, organizations” (Planner 8, 2007, 11), based on these firms’ ability to provide funding to the various professional arms required in a multi-disciplinary setting. While this theory extends beyond the scope of this research, it is an interesting notion to consider, and might encourage a comparative analysis between the presence or absence of multi-disciplinary firms as a function of economic viability within the business cycle.

Another possible extension to this type of analysis is the inclusion of even newer corporate structures into the conflict of interest assessment. Since many development companies are by-passing private consultancies altogether and hiring a planner under their own corporate banner, the potential for conflict is heightened to an even greater level. As pointed out by one of the multi-disciplinary planners:

*I guess the planners who have the most challenge would be those working for development companies. Where it's a very confusing situation. Where you're trying to promote your views as a planner, what's good for the public interest, and the development company has business interests. And the challenge for those planners is always to, to walk that line appropriately. And state, "well these are my views, and these are my company's views". And there are those that do a better job of that than others. And forget that they are professional planners. I'm sure that that happens. (Planner 2, 2007, 14).*

The nature of this type of debate puts a strain on the existing professional codes of conduct that attempted to protect public sector planners from the potential evils of forces endogenous to their protected structure. Indeed, the AICP's Professional Practice Manual outlines this old assumption perfectly by noting "planning issues commonly involve a conflict of values and often there are large private interests at stake" (American Institute of Planners 1997, 3). The shift in the nature of the delivery of planning services, as embodied in the creation of MDPs and developer-hired planners alike, has caused an equal shift in where this conflict of values originates. The codes must evolve to accept that what used to be private interests endogenous to the system are now implanted within the increasingly complex systems themselves.

*The best safeguard for ethics in the public service is not heroic individuals, though they certainly should be valued. Instead, it is political and organizational settings that encourage and reward routinely ethical behaviour.*

*- Howe, Acting on Ethics in City Planning (1994, 226)*

## **Chapter 7: General Conclusions**

The complexity of discerning even where conflicts of interest occur within the delivery of planning services, much less choosing appropriate responsive action, is indicative of the challenges planners face when approaching ethical issues. Specific to this study, the complexity is unquestionable when attempting to understand the ethical issues surrounding multi-disciplinary practices in the Canadian planning profession, in large part due to the embodiment of conflict of interest that MDPs may represent. By integrating and overlapping notions of private and public, professional and corporate, and protectionist and collaborative, multi-disciplinary firms challenge and question a range of previously accepted ethical norms. In order to fully explore this question of ethics, an equally integrated research approach was necessary, combining an understanding of the influences of the historical development of the profession of planning in Canada with a framework of ethical theory, before applying qualitative research data in an effort to better understand both sides of the debate. Consequently, the second chapter provided a succinct account of the development of planning as a profession in Canada, with specific emphasis on the effects of institutional changes on the relationship between the public and private sectors. The chapter also provided an account of how contemporary corporate structures such as public-private partnerships and multi-disciplinary practices are further breaking down barriers that had traditionally served to maintain separation. The third chapter introduced ethical theories used for later analysis of the positive and negative aspects of MDPs in a normative sense. With this framework in place, establishing a normative position concerning the theoretical problems of MDPs and conflicts of interest was possible. The ability to make normative assessments allowed the following three

chapters to link back to the historical description in the second chapter. Chapter 4 presented the research methods associated with the chosen format of semi-structured interviews. Observations related to both the respondents' answers as well as their potential influences in providing these answers were noted in Chapter 5. The preceding chapter then attempted to synthesize all this information into some conclusions related to the original research question.

While the purpose of the qualitative research format was to build a descriptive picture concerning the ethical issues of MDPs, some key themes emerged that can be carried forward. To begin, much debate exists between the role of the individual as a moral agent responsible for making ethical decisions and the role of the environment individuals create to help guide decisions. While the debate is not dichotomous, a relationship seems to exist between the belief that individuals carry responsibility for their own actions and the view that MDPs are good for planning. Without a doubt, if individual planners over the long-run shape ethics by choosing where to work and how to conduct themselves, then the corporate structure or underlying framework for ethics is of lessened importance. While much qualitative support was shown in both support and opposition to this idea, the supporting view is aptly summarized by a public sector planner who believed "as a planner, whatever environment you're in, you just have to make sure that you're bringing your professional opinions, you're trying to represent the public good, public interest, and if you can find you can do that in either environment then you shouldn't lose" (Planner 11, 2007, 12). The basic theme here is the source of ethics. Those who believe ethical decisions are caused by individual choice are likely to outweigh the possibility of conflict of interest in MDPs with their positive attributes,

including but not limited to teamwork, communication, and economies of scale.

Conversely, those who look to the checks and balances of the system as the cause for ethical behaviour would argue that MDPs need to remain under the scrutiny of these systemic checks.

The story is not limited, however, to this account of individuals versus environment. The second theme of note involved the role of the planner as the ultimate indicator of how planners should approach ethical questions. As outlined by Bickenbach and Hendler (1994), planning is steeped in a history of preservation against the influence of other professions, and has responded by constantly scrutinizing the proposed functions of a planner. While early twentieth century planners were thought to be specialists of the physical environment, the repercussions of postmodernism included an expanded view of what types of roles planners should be performing. If planners are indeed better suited as generalists and team leaders of other expert consultants, then it may follow that MDPs are an effective structure for planners looking for closer connections to related professions. The data collected here certainly support the notion that planners believe their role to be adapting to one of coordination with a general and broad base of knowledge. Howe's work on ethics (1994) indicates that the roles planners identify with are directly linked to their stance on ethics, so this connection is undoubtedly important in relation to the ethical implications of MDPs.

Finally, the theme of conflict of interest is prevalent throughout all discussions relating to the ethics of MDPs. As mentioned in the introduction, MDPs as such embody many of the overall trends important for planning on a larger scale. In other words, by exposing the inherent conflicts between profession and corporation, public interest versus

private interest, an individual perception of the public interest versus the profession's definition, or planning's core mission versus a related profession's mission, MDPs simply bring to light many of the overall trends important to planning as a whole. The purpose of this research was to expose these aforementioned conflicts and question whether enough attention is given to an understanding of their impacts. With the lessons of the last century as an indication, the way planners deliver planning services will no doubt continue to change and adapt. Neglecting the impact of our current structures by ignoring this important debate, then, is a mistake planners should avoid.

## Works Cited

- Aaronson, S.A. “‘Minding Our Business’: What the United States Government has done and can do to Ensure that U.S. Multinationals Act Responsibly in Foreign Markets” in Journal of Business Ethics Vol. 59 (2005): pp. 175-178.
- Adams, Guy B. and Balfour, Danny L. “Public-Service Ethics and Administrative Evil: Prospects and Problems.” in Ethics in Public Management. Eds. H. George Frederickson and Richard K. Ghere. Ch. 6, pp. 114-134. New York: M.E. Sharpe Inc., 2005.
- Alexander, Ernest R. “Capturing the Public Interest: Promoting Planning in Conservative Times” in Journal of Planning Education and Research. Vol. 22 (2004): pp. 102-106.
- Allmendinger, Philip. Planning in Postmodern Times. London: Routledge, 2001.
- Altshuler, Alan. The City Planning Process: A Political Analysis. Ithica: Cornell University Press, 1965.
- American Institute of Certified Planners. AICP Code of Ethics and Professional Conduct. American Planning Association website, March 2005, <http://www.planning.org/ethics/conduct.html>.
- American Institute of Certified Planners. Professional Practice Manual. Washington D.C.: American Planning Association, 1997.
- Barrett, Carol D. Everyday Ethics for Practicing Planners. Chicago: The American Planning Association, 2001.
- Beauchamps, Tom L. Case Studies in Business, Society, and Ethics. 3<sup>rd</sup> ed. New Jersey: Prentice Hall, 1993.



- Beauregard, R. "Between modernity and postmodernity: The ambiguous position of US Planning" in Readings in Planning Theory. Eds. S. Campbell and S. Fainstein. Ch. 10, pp. 213-233. Oxford: Blackwell, 1996.
- Berg, Lawrence and Mansvelt, Juliana. "Writing In, Speaking Out: Communicating Qualitative Research Findings" in Qualitative Research Methods in Human Geography. Ed. Iain Hay. Ch 9. South Melbourne: Oxford University Press, 2000.
- Bickenbach, Jerome E. and Hendler, Sue. "The moral mandate of the 'profession' of Planning" in Values and Planning. Ed. Huw Thomas. Ch. 8, pp. 162-177. Hampshire: Avebury/Ashgate Publishing Group, 1994.
- Bradshaw, Matt and Stratford, Elaine. "Qualitative Research Design and Rigour" in Qualitative Research Methods in Human Geography. Ed. Hay, Iain. Ch 3. South Melbourne: Oxford University Press, 2000.
- Calzolari, Giacomo. "Incentive Regulation of Multinational Enterprises" in International Economic Review. Vol. 45:1 (2004): pp. 257-282.
- Campbell, Heather. "Just Planning: The Art of Situated Ethical Judgment" in Journal of Planning Education and Research. Vol. 26 (2006): pp. 92-106.
- Campbell, Heather and Marshall, Robert. "Towards Justice in Planning: A Reappraisal" in European Planning Studies. Vol. 14:2 (2004): pp. 239-252.
- Campbell, Heather and Marshall, Robert. "Ethical Frameworks and Planning Theory" in International Journal of Urban and Regional Research. Vol. 23:3 (1999): pp. 464-478.
- Canadian Institute of Planners. CIP Statement of Values and Code of Professional Practice. Canadian Institute of Planners website, June 2004, <http://www.cip->

- icu.ca/English/members/practice.htm.
- Cone, Sydney M. III. "Five Years Later: Reconsidering the Original ABA Report on MDP" in Law & Social Inquiry. Vol 29:3 (July 2004): pp. 597-614.
- Cullingworth, J. Barry. Urban and Regional Planning in Canada. New Jersey: Transaction Books, 1987.
- Davidoff, Paul. "Advocacy and Pluralism in Planning" in Journal of the American Institute of Planners. Vol. 31:4 (1965): pp. 331-338.
- Dezalay, Yves and Garth, Bryant G. "The Confrontation between the Big Five and Big Law: Turf Battles and Ethical Debates as Contests for Professional Credibility" in Law & Social Inquiry. Vol 29:3 (July 2004) pp.615-638.
- Donaldson, Thomas. Corporations and Morality. New Jersey: Prentice-Hall Inc., 1982.
- Douglas, Jack D. Creative Interviewing. Beverly Hills: Sage Publications Inc., 1985.
- Dunn, Kevin. "Interviewing" in Qualitative Research Methods in Human Geography. Ed. Hay, Iain. Ch 4. South Melbourne: Oxford University Press, 2000.
- Fainstein, Susan S. "Planning Theory and the City" in Journal of Planning Education and Research. Vol. 25 (2005): pp. 121-130.
- Fischbacher, Moira and Beaumont, P.B. "PFI, Public-Private Partnerships and the Neglected Importance of Process: Stakeholders and the Employment Dimension" In Public Money & Management. Vol. 3 (July 2003): pp. 171-176.
- Fischler, Raphael. "Planning for Social Betterment: From Standard of Living to Quality Of Life" in Urban Planning in a Changing World: The Twentieth Century Experience. Ed. Robert Freestone. pp.139-154. New York: Routledge, 2000.
- Forester, John. Planning in the Face of Power. Los Angeles: University of California

- Press, 1987.
- Frederickson, H. George. "Public Ethics and the New Managerialism: An Axiomatic Theory" in Ethics in Public Management. Eds. H. George Frederickson and Richard K. Ghere. Ch. 8, pp. 165-181. New York: M.E Sharpe Inc., 2005.
- Freeman, R. Edward and Gilbert, Jr., Daniel R. Corporate Strategy and the Search for Ethics. New Jersey: Prentice-Hall, 1988.
- Freestone, Robert. "Learning from Planning's Histories" in Urban Planning in a Changing World: The Twentieth Century Experience. Ed. Robert Freestone. pp. 1-19. New York: Routledge, 2000.
- Frenchman, Dennis. "Planning Shapes Urban Growth and Development" in The Profession of Urban Planning: Changes, Images, and Challenges 1950-2000. Eds. Lloyd Rodwin and Bishwapriya Sanyal. pp. 27-30. New Jersey: Center for Urban Policy Research, 2000.
- Friedmann, John. Planning in the Public Domain: From Knowledge to Action. New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1987.
- Guzzetta, Jacqueline D. and Bollens, Scott A. "Urban Planners' Skills and Competencies: Are we Different from other Professions? Does Context Matter? Do we Evolve?" in Journal of Planning Education and Research. Vol. 23 (2003): pp. 96-106.
- Habermas, Jurgen. Justification and Application: remarks on discourse ethics. Cambridge: MIT Press, 1993.
- Habermas, Jurgen. The Theory of Communicative Action, Volume 1: Reason and the Rationalisation of Society. London: Heinemann, 1984.

- Hall, Peter. Cities of Tomorrow. 3<sup>rd</sup> ed. Oxford: Blackwell Publishing, 2002.
- Hall, Peter. "The Centenary of Modern Planning" in Urban Planning in a Changing World: The Twentieth Century Experience. Ed. Robert Freestone. pp. 20-39. New York: Routledge, 2000.
- Hamer, David. "Planning and Heritage: Towards Integration" in Urban Planning in a Changing World: The Twentieth Century Experience. Ed. Robert Freestone. pp.230-248. New York: Routledge, 2000.
- Harvey, David. "Postmodernism in the city: architecture and urban design" in The Condition of Postmodernity. 3<sup>rd</sup> ed. Ch. 4, pp. 66-98. Cambridge: Blackwell Publishers, 1992.
- Hendler, S. 'I was the Only Woman': Women's Contributions to planning in Canada. Toronto: UBC Press, forthcoming.
- Hoch, C. and Cibulskis, A. "Planning threatened: a preliminary report of planners and political conflict" in Journal of Planning Education and Research. Vol. 6:2 (1987): pp. 99-107.
- Hodge, Gerald. Planning Canadian Communities 3<sup>rd</sup> ed. Toronto: ITP Nelson, 1998.
- Holliday, Adrian. Doing and Writing Qualitative Research. London: Sage Publications, 2002.
- Howe, Con. "Planning Practice in America's Largest Cities" in The Profession of Urban Planning: Changes, Images, and Challenges 1950-2000. Eds. Lloyd Rodwin and Bishwapriya Sanyal. pp. 54-61. New Jersey: Center for Urban Policy Research, 2000.
- Howe, Elizabeth. Acting on Ethics in City Planning. New Jersey: Center for Urban Policy

- Research, 1994.
- Innes, Judith. "Challenge and Creativity in Post-Modern Planning" in The Profession of City Planning: Changes, Images, and Challenges 1950-2000. Eds. Lloyd Rodwin and Bishwapriya Sanyal. pp. 31-35. New Jersey: Center for Urban Policy Research, 2000.
- Innes, Judith. "Planning Through Consensus-Building" in Journal of the American Planning Association. Vol 62:4 (1996): pp. 460-472.
- Jackson, Kevin. "A Cosmopolitan Court for Transnational Corporate Wrongdoing: Why Its Time Has Come" in Journal of Business Ethics. Vol. 17 (1998): pp. 757-783.
- Jacobs, Jane. The Death and Life of Great American Cities. New York: Random, 1961.
- Jencks, Charles. Modern Movements in Architecture. Oxford: Penguin Books, 1973.
- Keatinge, Robert R. "Multidimensional Practice in a World of Invincible Ignorance: MDP, MJP, and Ancillary Business after Enron" in Arizona Law Review. Vol. 44 (2002): pp. 717-773.
- Klijn, Erik and Teisman, Geert R. "Institutional and Strategic Barriers to Public-Private Partnership: An Analysis of Dutch Cases" in Public Money & Management. Vol. 3 (July 2003): pp. 137-146.
- Koppel, Paul R. "Under Siege From Within and Without: Why Model Rule 5.4 is Vital to the Continued Existence of the American Legal Profession" in Journal of Legal Ethics. Vol. 14 (2001): pp. 687-705.
- Krumholz, Norman. "A Retrospective View of Equity Planning: Cleveland, 1969-1979" In Introduction to Planning History in the United States. Ed. Donald A. Krueckeberg. New Jersey: The Center for Urban Policy Research, 1983.

- Lynch, Kevin. The Image of the City. Cambridge: Technology Press, 1960.
- McCann, Eugene J. “Collaborative Visioning or Urban Planning as Therapy? The Politics of Public-Private Policy Making” in Professional Geographer. Vol 53:2 (May 2001): pp. 207-218.
- McClendon, Bruce W. “A Bold Vision and a Brand Identity for the Planning Profession” in American Planning Association Journal. Vol. 69:3 (2003): pp. 221-232.
- McVea, Harry. “Predators and the Public Interest – the ‘Big Four’ and Multi-Disciplinary Practices” in The Modern Law Review. Vol 65:6 (November 2002): pp. 811-833.
- McVea, Harry. “Legal Disciplinary Practices – Who Needs Them?” in Journal of Law and Society. Vol. 31:4 (December 2004): pp. 563-577.
- Messina, John D. “Lawyer + Layman: A Recipe For Disaster! Why the Ban on MDP Should Remain” in University of Pittsburgh Legal Review. Vol. 62 (2000/2001): pp. 367-385.
- Miraftab, Faranak. “Public-Private Partnerships: The Trojan Horse of Neoliberal Development?” in Journal of Planning Education and Research. Vol. 24 (2004): pp. 89-101.
- Myers, Dowell and Banerjee, Tridib. “Toward Greater Heights for Planning: Reconciling the Differences between Profession, Practice, and Academic Field” in Journal of the American Planning Association. Vol 71:2 (Spring 2005): pp. 121-129.
- Palmer, E. “Multinational Corporations and the Social Contract” in Journal of Business Ethics. Vol. 31:3 (2001): pp. 245-258.
- Pennington, Mark. Liberating the Land: The Case for Private Land-Use Planning. London: The Institute of Economic Affairs, 2002.

- Perks, William T. and Robinson, Ira M. Urban and Regional Planning in a Federal State: The Canadian Experience. Pennsylvania: Dowden, Hutchinson & Ross, Inc., 1979.
- Pichierri, Angelo. "Concertation and Local Development" in International Journal of Urban and Regional Research. Vol 26:4 (December 2002): pp. 689-706.
- Rawls, John. Justice as Fairness: A Restatement. Ed. Erin Kelly. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2001.
- Regan, Tom. (ed.) Just Business: New Introductory Essays in Business Ethics. New York: Random House, 1984.
- Sagalyn, Lynne B. "Public/Private Development: Lessons from History, Research, and Practice" in Journal of the American Planning Association. Vol. 73:1 (Winter 2007): pp. 7:22.
- Sandercock, Leonie. "Framing Insurgent Historiographies for Planning" in Making the Invisible Visible: A Multicultural Planning History. Ed. Leonie Sandercock. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1998a.
- Sandercock, Leonie. Towards Cosmopolis: Planning for Multicultural Cities. West Sussex: John Wiley & Sons, 1998b.
- Sert, J.L. Can Our Cities Survive? Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1942.
- Shapiro, Susan P. "Bushwacking the Ethical High Road: Conflict of Interest in the Practice of Law and Real Life" in Law and Social Inquiry. Vol 28:1 (January 2003): pp. 87-268.
- Siemiatycki, Matti. "Implications of Private-Public Partnerships on the Development of Urban Public Transit Infrastructure: The Case of Vancouver, Canada" in Journal

- of Planning Education and Research. Vol. 26 (2006): pp. 137-151.
- Silverman, David. Interpreting Qualitative Data. 3<sup>rd</sup> ed. London: Sage Publications, 2006.
- Smith, Adam. The Wealth of Nations. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1880.
- Stein, Stanley M. and Harper, Thomas L. “Rawls’s ‘Justice as Fairness’: A Moral Basis For Contemporary Planning Theory” in Planning Theory. Vol. 4:2 (2005): pp. 147-172.
- Thompson, Susan. “Diversity, Difference, and the Multi-Layered City” in Urban Planning in a Changing World: The Twentieth Century Experience. Ed. Robert Freestone. pp.230-248. New York: Routledge, 2000.
- Veser, M. “The Influence of Culture on Stakeholder Management: Social Policy Implementation in MNCs” in Business and Society. Vol. 43:4 (2004): pp. 426-436.
- Wolfe, Jeanne M. “Our Common Past: An Interpretation of Canadian Planning History” in Plan Canada. Vol. Special Edition:4 (1994): pp. 12-34.
- Wrage S and Wrage A. “MNEs as ‘Moral Entrepreneurs’ in a Global Prohibition Regime against Corruption” in International Studies Perspectives. Vol. 6 (2005): pp. 316-324.
- Zimmerman, Jay S. and Kelly, Matthew J. “MDPs may be Dead after Enron/Andersen, but Subsidiary Businesses Thrive” in Law & Social Inquiry. Vol. 29:3 (July 2004): pp. 639-653.



**Appendix A: Interview Guide**  
**“The Impact of Multi-Disciplinary Practices on the Profession of Urban Planning”**

Interview #

Date:

Location:

Conditions:

Interviewee:

Firm:

Title:

Extenuating Circumstances:

Guiding Principles:

1. According to my objectives and variables, what do I want to know?
  - a. “real life” relationship between professions
  - b. Perception of the other
  - c. Perception of conflict of interest
2. Who should I ask, and using what techniques?
  - a. Cross-section of planning professionals, both in MDPs and not
  - b. Open-ended, but probing and direct questions

Interviewed by:

## **Interview Questions**

### **“The Impact of Multi-Disciplinary Practices on the Profession of Urban Planning”**

Preamble:

“As we have discussed in a little detail already, the purpose of this interview is to collect information and opinions regarding the relevance of multi-disciplinary practices (MDPs) as they relate to the practice of professional planning in Canada. For our purposes, we are defining MDPs simply as firms who employ professional planners as well as some other (or combination of other) professional services, such as architecture or engineering. I’ll be asking you a series of questions related to your specific role as a planner, and I would encourage you to answer questions as honestly and frankly as possible. If at any time you feel giving a specific answer is difficult or impossible, simply let me know and we can pass on to the next. My ultimate goal is to uncover some insight into whether the same sorts of conflicts of interests that were seen in the accounting/legal professions highlighted during the Enron/Worldcom scandal are applicable for planners, and regardless of the answer whether or not the planning community is paying enough attention to the issue and its potential impacts.

I will be asking a series of question that begin with some introductory queries into your current position, your background, and some of your influences in choosing the planning profession. We’ll follow this up with some general questions about planners and their role in a broad societal context. Finally, we’ll delve into your specific experiences with your current work, as well as some specific questions about your thought on multi-disciplinary practices and their impact on your environment. Do you have any questions so far?”

1. Could you start by explaining in general terms your professional and educational background in lead up to your current position? What is your current position? How long have you had this position?
2. Are you an accredited planner? That is, are you a member of the Canadian Institute of Planners? If so, when did you obtain this status? If not, why?
3. As a planner, whether accredited or not, could you please elaborate on your professional functions (in other words, what sorts of planning work do you do?). If you do not consider yourself a planner, could you please describe the kinds of planning activities you engage in?
4. Were there any specific motivating factors that led you towards and/or away from planning?

We’re going to turn now to more general, and maybe philosophical, questions about planning:

5. What is your understanding of the function of a planner (in a general societal context)? More specifically:

- i. What authority should a planner be guided by?
  - ii. What types of specific (day-to-day) skills are needed to perform these functions?
- 6. What is your understanding of a planner's responsibility to be ethical?
  - i. What kinds of mechanisms exist to ensure ethics are being upheld?
- 7. What is your understanding of a conflict of interest as it applies to a profession like planning?
- 8. Talk about what the term "the public interest" means to you.
- 9. Is the planner responsible for protecting the public interest?
  - i. Now that you are thinking about the public interest from the perspective of planning, is the definition the same as the general one you just gave?
  - ii. How might a planner demonstrate this responsibility in their work?

Now I'd like to ask you some questions about your firm and the specific connections you may have with the public interest:

- 10. Describe the structure of the firm you currently work for.
- 11. Does your firm engage in planning services only, or are there other related professions employed by the same company? If you are a public planner, what types of relationships do you have with the private sector?
- 12. In question 4, you provided your view on the general function of a planner. How closely does your definition as provided coincide with your actual job description?
  - i. Comment on the source of the differences (if any) between the two definitions.
- 13. Are there any impediments, perceived or real, that obstruct you from performing your job the way you think it should be performed? Please elaborate.
 

(Probe)-> does this come from leadership, the profession, its codes?
- 14. In terms of dealing with "the public", do you consider your role to be interacting directly with the public, or are there intermediaries that make your relationship more indirect?

If yes to #9 (single-service) go to #14, If no to #9 (mdp) go to #19, If neither, go to #27  
 You answered previously that you were part of a single-service firm that provided only planning services. With this in mind, I'd like to ask you some more questions about your work:

15. As an employee of \_\_\_\_\_, list some of the expertise you offer to your clients.
  - i. Describe the process you would generally take in coming to decisions about how to serve clients.
16. If you had the opportunity to change something about your firm, what would it be?

I'd like to ask some questions about the way you see you and your company operating in the industry:

17. Do you count MDPs as your direct competition?
18. In your experience, are the services your firm offers inferior or superior to the same type of services offered by an MDP?
19. Describe a conflict of interest that you have seen either in your own experience or from another source.  
(Probe)-> Since this is the key question, make sure to attempt to guide towards describing whether or not there is a conflict of interest in their own experiences

You answered previously that you were part of a multi-disciplinary firm that provided planning services as well as other services, or part of some other combination of services. With this in mind, I'd like to ask you some more questions about your work:

20. How many other professions work within your company?
21. Describe the working relationship you have with workers from other professions inside your firm.
22. List some of the expertise you offer to your clients.
  - i. Describe the process you would generally take in coming to decisions about how to serve clients.
23. If you had the opportunity to change something about your firm, what would it be?

I'd like to ask some questions about the way you see you and your company operating in the industry:

24. Do you count single-service planning firms as your direct competition?
25. In your experience, are the services your firm offers inferior or superior to the same type of services offered by a specialized planning firm?

26. Describe a conflict of interest that you have seen either in your own experience or from another source.

(Probe)-> Since this is the key question, make sure to attempt to guide towards describing whether or not there is a conflict of interest in their own experiences

You answered that you do not work directly for a planning consultancy, but may have a working relationship with private sector planners. As such, I'd like to ask a few more specific questions about your work experiences.

27. Do you have specific experience working with single-service or multi-disciplinary firms when contracting planning work?

28. In your opinion, are there differences when working with each type of firm?

29. If the decision was yours, are there reasons that would lead you to want to work with one type of firm over the other?

I'd like to finish with a few wrap up questions that may tie together some of the ideas we've been discussing so far:

30. Is it possible for planners to be influenced by other professions? Does this influence change if planners are employed by the same firm as other professions?

31. Is the parallel I tried to draw in the preamble to this interview with the legal/accounting world fair?

i. If yes, should planning as a profession and planners as individuals pay more attention to regulation of MDPs?

32. Do you view the presence of MDPs (planning) as good or bad for the profession?

33. If the debate between MDP and single-service planning cannot be exclusively good or bad, is the existence of MDPs more good than bad or vice versa?

**Post-Interview Comments:**

APPENDIX B: Frequency Report

Code	<i>multisingle</i>	<i>city</i>	<i>iother</i>	Total	Bar Graph
<b>Concept 1</b>	<b>41</b>	<b>40</b>	<b>81</b>		
planning function - anticipating future conditions	2	2	4		
planning function - environmental impact assessment	3	0	3		
planning function - equal access to housing	0	1	1		
planning function - expert witnesses at OMB	2	0	2		
planning function - guiding overall growth	3	0	3		
planning function - improving the physical environment	0	1	1		
planning function - infrastructure development	0	1	1		
planning function - manage other planners	2	1	3		
planning function - oversee other professionals	2	2	4		
planning function - process development applications	6	3	9		
planning function - produce plans	5	5	10		
planning function - protector of the public interest	3	3	6		
planning function - provide advice	5	7	12		
planning function - site development	2	5	7		
planning function - steward of the environment	0	1	1		
planning function - update and change existing policy	6	6	12		
planning function - urban design	0	2	2		
<b>Concept 2</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>9</b>		
job description - exactly same as definition	2	1	3		
job description - some differences	2	1	3		
job description - very close to definition	1	2	3		
<b>Concept 3</b>	<b>28</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>53</b>		
source of ethics - educational background	2	4	6		
source of ethics - personal sense of ethics	7	4	11		
source of ethics - policy framework	5	2	7		
source of ethics - professional codes	8	7	15		
source of ethics - society or the market	3	3	6		
source of ethics - structural hierarchical	3	5	8		

Concept 4	5	6	11
parallel fair - absolutely no	2	2	4
parallel fair - absolutely yes	1	0	1
parallel fair - no with qualifications	1	1	2
parallel fair - yes with qualifications	1	3	4

■ multisingle  
 ■ cityother