Works Planners Read: Findings from a Canadian Survey

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Résumé
Cet article présente les résultats d’une enquête sur les lectures qui ont le plus influencé le développement professionnel des urbanistes canadiens. La recherche identifie des lectures provenant de plusieurs sources, aussi bien à l’intérieur qu’à l’extérieur de la discipline. L’article révèle aussi un rapport entre l’âge des répondants et celui des ouvrages cités, ce qui confirme le fort impact des ouvrages lus lors des années de formation. Les lectures publiées au cours des années soixante et qui sont critiques des perspectives antérieures, représentent une forte proportion des ouvrages cités. Le fréquent choix d’ouvrages subséquents, mais restés fidèles à l’esprit critique des années soixante, confirme l’influence durable de cet esprit. Par conséquent, les ouvrages antérieurs aux années soixante sont peu cités dans l’enquête.

Mots clés : lectures, éducation, écrits en urbanisme
Abstract

This article reports on a survey of the readings that have most influenced the professional development of Canadian planning practitioners. Results indicate that influential writings originate from a wide diversity of sources, both inside and outside the discipline. We also detect a relationship between the age of respondents and that of the works mentioned, pointing to the determining effect of influences encountered during formative years. Works published in the 1960s, which are critical of previous approaches, are widely cited in the survey. A large selection of subsequent works proposing alternatives to mainstream planning suggests a lasting adherence to critical perspectives launched in the 1960s. Consequently, few foundational texts, and more generally works predating the 1960s, figure in the survey.

Key words: writings, education, planning literature

Introduction

What are the readings that are perceived as most influential by practicing planners? What does this choice tell us about the themes and periods within planning literature they value most? To address these questions we surveyed members of the Canadian Institute of Planners, asking them to identify the three readings that have most influenced their professional development. The main finding of the survey concerns the strong presence of readings from the 1960s and, more generally, of works that are critical of early post-world-war-two planning models and of enduring forms of urban development.

We consider our survey results from four angles. First, we concentrate on the writings that were mentioned most often. This information is of obvious pedagogical relevance for it can provide aspiring planners with a core body of works considered by many practicing planners to be highly influential. Because the survey replicates to some extent a 1987 enquiry, it is possible to compare the present and past lists of frequently cited readings. This will allow us to identify the true classics—most often mentioned works in both surveys—and explore differences between the two listings.

Second, we categorize the readings mentioned in our survey in order to gauge the proportion of writings that belong to planning proper, and thus the reliance of planners on knowledge originating from within the discipline. This exercise will further allow us to discover which domains of the planning literature are most strongly represented in the survey.

Third, we explore the relationship between the age of the readings and that of respondents. And last, since the survey was targeted at Canadian planners, we found it worthwhile to examine the proportion of readings originating from Canada relative to those published elsewhere—essentially the U.S., U.K., and France. We also compared the types of writings from Canada to those from elsewhere.
The Evolution of Planning Knowledge

By questioning planners about the readings that most influenced them, we indirectly asked them to identify salient points in the evolution of planning knowledge. Given the wide age range of our respondents, we can expect a picture to emerge that will mark out high points in the progression of this knowledge over the last decades. In this fashion, our survey parallels compilations of readings found in outlines of planning theory courses, which too related their findings to the history of planning thought (Hightower, 1969; Klosterman, 1981; 1992). The present study departs, however, from the supply-side approach of course outline reviews by concentrating on the reaction of respondents to readings (encountered within or outside of the educational process).

We first engage in a brief discussion of the evolution of planning theory, for among all forms of knowledge associated with planning, theory perhaps best defines the field. As Friedmann expresses it, “theorizing means to think systematically about what planners do” (1995, p. 157). More than any other forms of planning knowledge, theory is actively debated within the discipline and is given an integrative role, evident in its prominence within the curriculum of planning programs (e.g., Friedmann, 1995; 1996; JPER 1995). Other areas of planning knowledge, of a more specific or technical nature, are often imports or adaptations from other disciplines such as architecture and geography.

Early perspectives proposed forms of urban environments intended to address the ills that were plaguing cities undergoing accelerated industrialization (Ward, 2002). The Garden City, the Towers in the Park, and the Neighbourhood Unit were among the most eminent visions of the period (e.g., Fishman, 1977; 1991). At this early stage, planning theory was mostly design oriented. From the early 1950s, however, the emphasis shifted from a primary concern over physical outcomes to a preoccupation with process. This transition coincided with a growing contribution of social sciences to the planning field. Planning theory has since become a prolific arena of reflection, generating multiple perspectives. Foremost among these are the rational (e.g., Altshuler, 1965a; 1965b; Faludi, 1973; Robinson, 1972), transactive (Friedmann, 1973), incremental (Lindblom, 1959), equity-advocacy (Davidoff, 1965; Krumholz & Forester, 1990), Marxist (Castells, 1977; Harvey, 1973; Kirk, 1980), communicative (Forester, 1989; Healey, 1992; 1997; 1999; Sager, 1994), post-modern and multi-cultural (Beauregard, 1989; Sandercock, 1998) models. Planning theorists have charted this conceptual evolution (Alexander 1986; Faludi, 1998; Hague, 1991) and related it to different schools of philosophical and social scientific thought (Campbell & Fainstein, 2003; Friedmann, 1987).

There are different ways of interpreting the evolution of planning theory. One is to see it as a linear progression, whereby early perspectives are discredited and replaced by newer ones, seen as more conceptually sound and demonstrating su-
prior adaptation to emerging circumstances. Such an interpretation draws on the natural science model, which attributes sharp theoretical transitions and a sense of progress to paradigm shifts (Kuhn, 1970; Taylor, 1999).

Over the last decades, the leading transformation within social sciences has resulted from devastating assaults on the tenets of modernism. Prime targets were the template nature of grand narratives, inadequacies in the treatment of power and a naïve understanding of concepts such as democracy and progress. Consequences of the passage from modernism to post-modernism within planning have been explored by, among others, Beauregard (1989; 1991) and Harper and Stein (1995). These researchers see the transition as a mixed blessing. While they perceive it as a welcome departure from the authoritarian and one-size-fits-all aspects of modernist approaches, they express reservations about post-modern alternatives. For Beauregard post-modernism is marked by a fragmentation of views, which carries the risk of depriving planning of points of reference necessary to the formulation and legitimating of its interventions. Harper and Stein take a similar stand in lamenting the withering of the humanist and egalitarian values that were hailed by modernist thinkers.

The observation of a coexistence of several planning theories at any given time casts doubts on the pertinence of the natural science model for planning (and indeed other non-natural science fields). Whereas the paradigm shift interpretation portrays the evolution of planning knowledge as linear, whereby one approach replaces another, the coexistence of perspectives translates rather into an ever broadening of the field by virtue of the accretion of approaches that can cohabit within the discipline. Coexistence is fostered by a tolerant attitude towards each other on the part of different perspectives, which contrasts starkly with the rejection of rival approaches that drives paradigm shifts.

For example, the participatory reaction against rational planning involved the emergence of viewpoints that cohabited peacefully while emphasizing different dimensions of participation. One such viewpoint, the transactive model, was founded on the mutual benefits accruing from information exchanges between planners and the public (Friedmann, 1973). Consistent with this perspective was the advocacy model which insisted on the need to make room within planning processes for the disadvantaged, who face severe obstacles to participation. It is perhaps Hudson (1979) who has pushed furthest the collaborative perspective. He perceived the Synoptic (rational-comprehensive), Incremental, Transactive, Advocacy and Radical schools as primarily complementary, and grouped them under the heuristic rubric of SITAR, an acronym composed of the first letters of the names of these schools.

In a similar vein, Healey (1996) observes how different strands of thought, which have emerged over the last decades, draw inspiration from each other. She cites, for example, the transposition to planning of Habermas’s vision of untram-
melled communication processes (Flyvbjerg, 1996; Forester, 1989, 1993; Sager, 1994), reflections on collaborative strategic planning carried out by Bryson and Crosby (1992), and the exploration of conditions conducive to consensus building (Innes, 1996). There is no difficulty in understanding how Forester’s advocacy for easily accessible and equitable channels of communication, the exploration by Innes (1998) of conditions for consensus building and the call for a respect of differences among social groups (Amin, 2002; Qadeer, 1997; Sandercock, 1998) can build upon each other. This is not to suggest an absence of debate within planning, but that when one perspective criticizes another, the purpose is rarely to cause its demise, as is the case in circumstances leading to paradigm shifts. Rather, it is habitually to suggest new avenues of exploration. For example, the communicative strand is presently pressed to give more attention to power relations, interpreted either in traditional political economy terms or in the more diffused and pervasive fashion advanced by Foucault (Fischler, 2000; Huxley, 2000; Huxley & Yiftachel, 2000; McGuirk, 2001; Richardson, 1996).

There is a third possible view, which is, not surprisingly, a hybrid of the two previous ones. This interpretation acknowledges both the replacement of certain perspectives and the juxtaposition of others. It refers to the possible presence at different times of two sets of circumstances. One encourages the expansion of knowledge founded on a shared base of agreement and the other provokes occasional interruptions of this expansion by triggering episodes of knowledge “destruction” leading to realignments. Within planning, these interruptions are provoked by rising tensions between a changing social and political environment including of course societal values, on the one hand, and prevailing planning thinking and processes, on the other. Deep conceptual incompatibilities between new and old approaches are also sources of transition in the evolution of knowledge. The hybrid interpretation accounts for both the present cohabitation of numerous theoretical perspectives within the planning theory house and the virtual disappearance of expert-based rational planning thinking from recent theoretical currents (if not from planning practice).1

The evolution patterns described above are largely the outcome of an academically-driven system of knowledge production. Universities are the foremost locales of debates around planning theory and a primary source of new perspectives. Since planning educators draw heavily from university-generated planning knowledge when determining what planners ought to know, it is legitimate to query its relevance for practicing planners (e.g., Alexander, 2001). This is particularly the case given the self-directed generation of this knowledge, whereby advancements are made relative to existing works—by breaking away from them or by adding to their contribution.

Our analysis of survey results will highlight the importance given to planning-related readings among those cited by respondents and the types of planning-re-
lated works they mentioned: for example, writings that are critical of present practices or that belong to the different planning subfields. The study is also suited to an exploration of whether the nomination of planning readings by respondents conforms more to the linear or accretive interpretation. If the first possibility is verified, survey findings will show concentrations of citations around a limited number of major works marking pivotal realignments in planning thought. The effect of successive paradigms may also manifest itself as clusters of readings nominated by different generations of respondents and reflecting planners’ loyalty to the perspectives that took over the planning scene during their formative years. In contrast, an accretive pattern would involve a larger number of cited writings and a much wider spread of their dates of publication. There is also, naturally, the possibility of a hybrid distribution pattern, which would entail both a scattering of years of publication and a measure of prominence enjoyed by certain works. Such a citation pattern would suggest a persistent impact of paradigmatic works, but equally the presence of many readings belonging to perspectives that cohabit within the discipline.

Method

Our survey of Canadian planners was conducted online using a specially designed Web site. Respondents were invited to answer six questions. Questions one to three asked participants to identify three readings that most influenced their professional development. There was also room for respondents to comment on their selections. The last three questions provided a brief socioeconomic profile (age, education and occupational characteristics). The survey was kept as short as possible to reduce time spent answering it. The Web survey was returned directly, not via e-mail, which assured anonymity. The project was partly modeled on a previous one carried out in 1987 (Martin, Higgs & Filion, 1988). (For information on other surveys of planners’ readings see Hall, 1973; Martin, 1989). We can thus compare readings most often nominated in 1987 and in the present survey, which took place in the spring of 2003.

Thanks to negligible delivery cost, Web-based surveys can target large populations. In the absence of incentives, and due to excessive e-mail solicitation and a frequent lack of knowledge or interest for the issues raised by surveys on the part of the targeted population, response rates are, however, typically low. They are frequently under ten percent (Jones & Pitt, 1999; Schleyer & Forrest, 2000; Schonlau, Fricker & Elliott, 2001). Web-based surveys are thus suited to situations where, despite a modest response rate, an important target population will yield sufficient responses to pursue analyses and draw conclusions. It is, however, important in such circumstances to be aware of the risk of distortions in the distribution of respondents, a consequence of the large number of people who opt not to participate in these surveys.
E-mails with a link to the Web survey were sent to the 3,858 members of the Canadian Institute of Planners (CIP) for whom an e-mail address was available on the CIP roster. The survey was thus not directed at a sample, but rather at a large proportion of the universe of Canadian planning practitioners. The number of returned filled questionnaires was 321, for a response rate of 8.3 percent. The 1987 survey, which relied on postal delivery, yielded about the same number of questionnaires (338). But this earlier survey targeted only a sample of the CIP roster and achieved a far superior response rate (38 per cent).

Planners from the Province of Quebec were sent a message written in French with a link to a French version of the questionnaire. The response rate from Francophone, Quebec based, planners was especially low, possibly a reflection of a stronger allegiance on their part to the Quebec rather than the Canadian community of planners. Another factor may have been that the University of Waterloo School of Planning, from which the survey originated, is not as well known among Francophone as it is among Anglophone planners.

Because of the limited range of Canadian Institute of Planners statistics available on Canadian planners, we cannot compare the age and education distribution of our respondents to that of Canadian planners as a whole. Still, as can be seen from Figure 1, respondents to the survey are well distributed among different age categories and their educational achievements conform to what one would expect to find within the profession. And in the case of employment, where we can make comparisons with national distributions, we note among our respondents somewhat of an over-representation of planners employed in the public sector and a near absence of academics (see CIP, n.d.). With only two full-time academics among our respondents, we are entitled to refer to our respondents as practicing planners.

One possible bias we cannot ignore, however, is a higher interest in planning-related readings on the part of the respondents than among planners in general. This possibility is supported by comments voiced by the senders of the 45 unfilled questionnaires we have received. Many mentioned that writings did not have much influence on them because they give more value to practical experience and interactions with colleagues. Accordingly, given the low response rate we cannot generalize our results to the population of Canadian planners. The best we can do is to assume that they are representative of the reading preferences of those planners who value highly readings as a source of influence on their development. Still, there is value in these results in as much as they represent the choice of 321 planners—perhaps those most influenced by writings—belonging to different age groups and engaged in different types of planning-related occupations.
Highest Scoring Writings

Our study yielded 712 citations of readings (see Appendix A for a list of the writings for which we were able to provide a reference). In this section we will concentrate on the nineteen writings that were mentioned at least five times in the 2003 survey. Together, these works account for almost forty percent of all citations (see Table 1). The clear champion is *The Death and Life of Great American Cities*, which was mentioned 76 times (over ten percent of all citations). Of the six most cited readings, each of which was selected at least seventeen times, one (*Planning Canadian Communities*) is a widely used textbook in Canadian planning programs, originally published in the mid-1980s and re-edited regularly since. The other five are classics from the 1960s: *The Death and Life of Great American Cities*,...
Design with Nature, Site Planning, The Image of the City and The City in History. These writings along with others found in Table 1—Silent Spring, A Pattern Language, The Power Broker, and The Social Life of Small Urban Spaces—critique modernist, expert-based approaches of the 1950s and 1960s, which were notoriously dismissive of social and environmental issues as well as of neighbourhoods and historical settings. It is remarkable that five of the six most often mentioned works (all but the textbook) were also among the highest rated writings in the 1987 survey. Their presence in both lists of highly cited writings singles them out as true classics.

Table 1: Most Frequently Cited Writings (5 mentions or more)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Writings</th>
<th>Number of Citations</th>
<th>Percent of all Citations</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>J. Jacobs, The Death and Life of Great American Cities, 1961</td>
<td>76</td>
<td>10.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I. McHarg, Design with Nature, 1969</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>4.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>G. Hodge, Planning Canadian Communities, 1986 (1st ed.)*</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>3.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>K. Lynch, Site Planning, 1962</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>2.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>K. Lynch, The Image of the City, 1962</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>2.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>L. Mumford, The City in History, 1961</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>2.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>OPPI (Ontario Professional Planners Institute) Journal</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>1.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Plan Canada</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>1.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>R. Arendt, Rural by Design, 1994</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>1.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C. Alexander, A Pattern Language, 1977</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>1.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>R. Carson, Silent Spring, 1962</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>1.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>J. Friedmann, Planning in the Public Domain, 1987</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>1.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>R. Caro, The Power Broker, 1974</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>R. Fisher and W. Ury, Getting to Yes, 1981</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hok-Lin Leung, Land Use Planning Made Plain, 1989 (1st ed.)*</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>L. Sandercock, Towards Cosmopolis, 1998</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F.S. Chapin and E. Kaiser, Urban Land Use Planning, 1979 (3rd ed.)*</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>0.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Government of Ontario, The Ontario Planning Act, (different dates)</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>0.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>W. Whyte, The Social Life of Small Urban Spaces, 1980</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>0.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>284</td>
<td>39.9</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* Edition most often cited by respondents.

Seven of the writings listed in Table 1 are sources of general information on planning: textbooks, journals, legal documents and a comprehensive review of planning theory. The near absence of recent works is noteworthy; only two were pub-
lished after 1990. We can attribute this situation in part to the time needed for a writing to gain a high level of notoriety among planners, the result of its sharing by more than one generation of planners, and of its living up to comparisons with other influential works.

The effect of the age of a writing on the number of times it is mentioned is confirmed by the presence among highly cited works in 2003 of writings that were published within the fifteen years before the 1987 study, but failed to achieve a single mention in that earlier survey. This is the case of *The Social Life of Small Urban Spaces*, *The Power Broker*, and *Getting to Yes*. Over the years between the two surveys these works have attained the status of influential writings.

Categories of Writing

In order to classify the writings, we have created six categories (see Table 2). The first category, “Historical and Core Planning Knowledge” consists of foundation texts, histories of planning, and autobiographies or biographies of planners or other people who have had much influence on planning. The second category comprises sources of general knowledge related to planning: periodicals, Web sites, textbooks. The next grouping embraces different sub-fields of the discipline such as planning processes, legal aspects and design. The fourth category includes approaches that are critical of planning concepts and practice. With the fifth category, we depart from the planning discipline as such. This category includes knowledge originating from non-planning sources, but which is of clear relevance to planning. It can thus be seen as constituting the outer envelope of the planning discipline. For example, we find in this category works that discuss the evolution of society and cities, and address environmental issues. Writings that bear no obvious relation to planning are included in the last category. They comprise philosophical and fictional writings, as well as periodicals.

Perhaps the most important finding is the overwhelming proportion of writings mentioned (75 percent) that are directly related to planning (belonging to Categories One to Four). In itself this result confirms the relevance of planning knowledge for members of the profession. Of the six categories we have defined, it is Category Four “Critical Approaches” that accumulates the highest number of mentions, almost a third. This category comprises works that criticized earlier planning concepts, the way planning was practiced at the time of their writing, or proposed alternatives to prevailing practices. The range of writings exploring such alternatives runs the gamut from the identification of theoretical foundations for participatory forms of planning to development models inspired by new urbanism principles. The importance given to works belonging to the Critical Approaches category echoes findings arising from the nineteen highest rated writings.
Table 2: Categories of Cited Writings

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category and Sub-category</th>
<th>Number of Citations and Percent of Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Historical and Core Planning Knowledge</td>
<td>22 (3.1%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E.g., foundation texts, histories of planning, biographies: E. Howard, Garden Cities of Tomorrow; P. Hall, Cities of Tomorrow; R. Caro, The Power Broker</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. General Planning Knowledge</td>
<td>93 (13.1%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E.g., journals, Web sites, textbooks: OPPI Journal; Cyberbia; G. Hodge, Planning Canadian Communities</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Specialized Fields of Planning</td>
<td>195 (27.4%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E.g., planning processes, legal aspects, design: R. Fisher and W. Ury, Getting to Yes; The Ontario Planning Act; K. Lynch, Site Planning</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Critical Approaches</td>
<td>224 (31.5%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E.g., urban planning, pluralism, strategic planning: J. Jacobs, The Death and Life of Great American Cities; L. Sandercock, Towards Cosmopolis; H. Mintzberg, The Rise and Fall of Strategic Planning</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Non-planning Knowledge Relevant to Planning</td>
<td>142 (19.9%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E.g., demography, political decision-making, environmental issues: D. Foote, Boom Bust and Echo; G. Allison, Essence of Decision; E.F. Schumacher, Small is Beautiful</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Writings Not Directly Related to Planning</td>
<td>36 (5.1%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The second most cited category of readings, with over a quarter of mentions, is Category Three, “Specialized Fields of Planning”. The third and fourth categories in importance are Categories Five and Two, with respectively twenty and thirteen percent of citations.

The two other categories represent much lower proportions than the previous ones—respectively three and five percent for works related to historical and core planning knowledge and those that are not directly related to planning. It is worth noting the vast range of works present in this latter category. Periodicals mentioned include *The Harvard Business Review* and *The Economist* and works of fiction comprise, among others, *Naked Lunch* by W. S. Bourroughs, *Metamorphosis* by Franz Kafka, and *Lord of the Rings* by J. R.R. Tolkien. Reasons given for the selection of these fictional writings include a depiction of modern urban wastelands, the social isolation of outsiders, and the tension between civilization and nature.
If the highest rated writings discussed in the previous section concentrated on a few themes, the full roster of cited works paints a picture that is far more diversified. These writings originate from all conceivable aspects of the planning literature as well as from other areas related or not to planning. Overall, our categorization of citations appears to lend support to the view that practicing planners do find planning knowledge to be relevant, including works with a heavy theoretical content which are prevalent in Category Four.

Successions of Generations and Selections of Readings

Three reasons lead us to expect that writings read in early, formative years will have a disproportionate influence on planners. First, at this stage one possesses less information and opinions apt to place the content of readings into perspective than later in life. Second, we can assume that some works read early may have had an influence on the choice of planning as a career. And third, these writings are likely to provide the lenses through which later writings are interpreted.

The hypothesized importance of formative years is supported by statements respondents made to justify their choice of readings. Here is a small representative sample of these comments. About *The Death and Life of Great American Cities* by Jane Jacobs:

“It was the first book on planning I have read and has been part of the reason I do what I do.”

“This book actually prompted me to consider urban planning as a career.”

About *The Shape of the City*, by John Sewell (cited twice by respondents):

“My first textbook on planning. It stays with you.”

If indeed material read over formative years enjoys disproportionate influence, we can expect the thinking of planners to mirror the lasting impact of the perspectives that prevailed over these years. Accordingly, at any time we would be in the presence of multiple approaches surviving by virtue of the imprint they left on the generations that were in ascendance when they reached their apex.

As expected, we identify a robust relationship between the age of cited works and that of respondents (see Table 3). The mean age of publications rises as the age of respondents increases. ANOVA statistics indicate clearly that inter-group exceeds intra-group variance. These results thus confirm our hypothesis regarding the impact of formative years on the choice of readings and the resulting coexistence of perspectives originating from different periods in the evolution of planning knowledge.
Table 3: Relationship between Age of Respondents and Age of Cited Writings

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age of Respondents</th>
<th>Number of Cited Writings</th>
<th>Mean Age of Publications</th>
<th>Std. Deviation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>18-33*</td>
<td>147</td>
<td>21.63</td>
<td>16.089</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>34-41</td>
<td>138</td>
<td>27.14</td>
<td>15.061</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>42-49</td>
<td>136</td>
<td>29.52</td>
<td>15.725</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>50-57</td>
<td>123</td>
<td>32.71</td>
<td>16.112</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>58+</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>41.34</td>
<td>59.892</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>576</td>
<td>28.27</td>
<td>21.260</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

ANOVA

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Sum of Squares</th>
<th>Degrees of Freedom</th>
<th>Mean Square</th>
<th>F</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Between Groups</td>
<td>9117.57</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>2279.392</td>
<td>9.365</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Within Groups</td>
<td>137761</td>
<td>566</td>
<td>243.394</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Because of the limited number of entries from the 18-25 age group (only two) this group was joined with the 26-33 category.

Yet the difference in years between mean age of publications is less important than the one separating age groups of respondents. For example, the mean age of readings cited by the 18-33 and 50-57 age groups varies by eleven years only. A reason for this discrepancy between age of respondents and of publications is the frequent nomination of classic works from the 1960s by all age groups. The proportion of citations going to the five works from that decade that were most often cited in the survey (The Death and Life of Great American Cities, Design with Nature, Site Planning, The Image of the City, The City in History, see Table 4) is remarkably constant across age groups. The only exception to this rule is an over-representation of these writings within the 50-57 age group. Accordingly, the tendency for younger age groups to choose works originating from their formative years is moderated by the lasting popularity of classics from the 1960s.

The National Origin of Selected Writings

We all know that Canada is profoundly influenced by foreign culture, particularly that of the U.S. We can then expect planning to follow this trend. Yet Canadian planning operates in a distinct legal and political context (in fact, many contexts since planning is under provincial jurisdiction). In these circumstances, it is of interest to examine the balance between Canadian and foreign works cited in the survey. Works from Canada amount to 24 per cent of all readings mentioned.
Writings are deemed to be Canadian when authored by someone residing in Canada, or in the case of periodicals, when published in this country. According to our criteria, two widely cited works (The Death and Life of Great American Cities and Towards Cosmopolis) are not considered to be Canadian despite their authors’ (Jane Jacobs and Leonie Sandercock) years of Canadian residency, because neither resided in this country when the books were written and published. Still, the frequent citation of these two books may partly be a function of the fact that their authors were Canadian residents at the time of the survey. The majority of non-Canadian works are from the U.S., with an important subset from the U.K. and a number of readings from France, selected for the most part by French-speaking planners.

All the Canadian titles nominated more than twice are sources of general information on planning: textbooks, journals and legal documents (see Table 5). These are all writings that address the specific context of Canadian planning and are targeted at this country’s planning community. But it is noteworthy that, notwithstanding the occasional groundbreaking article in the cited journals, these writings do not attempt to push the boundaries of planning reflection and knowledge or advance new perspectives. The survey thus suggests that Canadian planners rely on U.S. and to a lesser extent U.K. and French writings for such material.

Table 4: Citations of the Five Most Cited Writings from the 1960s*, by Age Group

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age Group**</th>
<th>Number of Citations of the 5 Writings</th>
<th>Percent of Total Citations</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>26-33</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>27.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>34-41</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>30.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>42-49</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>28.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>50-57</td>
<td>54</td>
<td>44.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>58 +</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>22.6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**The 18-25 age group is excluded because its two respondents did not cite any of the five writings.

Table 5: Canadian Writings Cited More than Twice

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Number of Citations</th>
<th>Title</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>22</td>
<td>G. Hodge, Planning Canadian Communities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>OPPI (Ontario Professional Planners Institute) Journal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>Plan Canada</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Hok-Lin Leung, Land Use Planning Made Plain</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Government of Ontario, The Ontario Planning Act</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Ontario Municipal Board decisions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>F. Laux, Planning Law and Practice in Alberta</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Works Planners Read: Findings from a Canadian Survey

Reading Choices and the Evolution of Planning Knowledge

The previous sections have advanced various explanations for the survey’s findings. These are: the succession of generations, the lasting impact of early readings and of the educational process, the multifaceted nature of planning which accounts for the wide extent of the cited literature, the relevance of the planning literature to practicing planners (even academically oriented fields such as planning theory), and the disproportional influence of the non-Canadian literature on our respondents. In this closing section, however, in order to connect findings from the survey with interpretations given to the evolution of planning knowledge, we concentrate on cited readings with a critical and theoretical dimension. Most such interpretations are indeed concerned with successions of theoretical currents.

Two major observations arise from this body of readings. There is the trans-generational influence of books published in the 1960s and characterized by a theoretical orientation and/or a critical attitude towards then prevailing models. In the second case, subsequent works that share their critical stance have also been the object of frequent nominations. Among highly cited post-1960s readings (see Table 1) are books exploring alternatives to different aspects of the discipline: understandings of planning and decision-making processes (Planning in the Public Domain, Getting to Yes), urban design formulas (A Pattern Language, The Social Life of Small Urban Spaces), social approaches (Towards Cosmopolis), and ways of planning specific areas (Rural by Design).

A possible explanation for the first observation is the role the generation that was shaped by the 1960s transition played in educating subsequent cohorts of planners. In this view, educators would have transmitted an interpretation of the evolution of planning that stresses the pivotal role of this cluster of writings. Indeed, findings from the survey parallel closely those of enquiries directed at outlines of planning theory courses, which also reveal a prominence of works from the 1960s reacting to the rational model (Frank, 2002; Klosterman, 1981; 1992). The second observation—the adherence of subsequent works to the critical attitude of the 1960s—can be tied to a growing dissonance between planning practice and discourse (Filion, 2001). To a large extent, urban development still adheres to parameters set in the 1950s (automobile dependency, rigid land use specialization and super blocs bordered by arterials), which have provided a lasting target for a critical literature, particularly so in a climate of rising environmental awareness.

The distribution of citations of theoretical and critical works resonates with the view that the evolution of planning knowledge has been marked by a deep paradigm shift, which took place over the 1960s. Not only are works from the 1960s most often cited, and did they set the tone for subsequent readings, but they have also largely eclipsed foundation texts from earlier periods among our respondents. The paradigm shift is associated with a radical change in the purpose of the literature. Until then, planning writings tended to develop tenets for the nascent
profession while advocating for its existence and expansion (see for example, Robinson, 1972). The 1960s shift is characterized by planning theory turning against both planning practice involved in the creation of urban environments and the previous perspectives that promoted rational forms of decision-making and established planning as a discipline and profession.

Our interpretation identifies only one paradigm shift, not multiple transitions as occasionally implied in the literature (Alexander, 1986; Yiftachel, 1989). Frequently cited post-1960s readings have in many cases transmitted the heritage of the 1960s to different domains within the discipline as well as to new approaches to planning. A shared hostility towards the rational model and prevailing practices has made it possible for post-1960s perspectives to co-exist peacefully and indeed benefit from each other’s presence. The picture that emerges thus most conforms to a hybrid evolution of knowledge—one major paradigm shift succeeded by a long period of knowledge accretion.

Conclusion

Findings from the survey indicate a heavy reliance on planning literature on the part of planners, but also show a not insignificant presence of writings from other fields. Writings originating from Canada represent a sizable minority, but are mostly of a general and descriptive nature, thus contributing little to the advancement of planning knowledge, especially theory. And we have identified a relationship between the age of planners and of nominated writings, which validates the hypothesis that formative years are important.

Among the three possibilities concerning the evolution of knowledge—linear progression, co-existence and a hybrid model—survey findings seem most consistent with the latter. The trans-generational popularity of readings from the 1960s, which broke from prior rational approaches and celebrations of actual and potential achievements of planning as a profession, and the selection of posterior works that have lived in relative harmony thanks to their shared opposition to prevailing practice, jive most with the hybrid model.

Notes

1 Susan Fainstein (2000) acknowledges the co-habitation of perspectives by singling out three currents that presently share the planning theory scene: the communicative, new urbanism and just city models.

2 It is impossible to know exactly what this proportion is because there are no statistics on planners who do not belong to the Canadian Institute of Planners. Still, we can safely assume that a majority of planners do belong to the institute.

3 The occupational categories used in the present survey and by the CIP are different. The CIP categories are government (55%), private sector (37%), academics (4%) and other (4%). The sectors of employment we used in the survey are municipal
(52%), federal/provincial (13%), consultant (19%) and other (17%). The main difference between the two distributions is the near absence of academics in our survey and an over-representation of planners working for government agencies – 64% versus 55% for all CIP members.

4 We readily acknowledge that our classification and the allocation of the different writings to categories are open to debate. For example, rather than creating a planning theory category, we have opted to classify theoretical works according to the themes they address. Moreover, many cited works have different facets and could be classified in more than one category. In these circumstances we attempted to identify their dominant dimension and classify them accordingly.

5 The amount of works with dates is lower than the total number of cited readings because we could not find a date for a number of them. Many of the citations left out were periodicals.

6 Given the low response rate to our survey on the part of francophone planners, none of the French language readings were selected by more than two respondents.

References


Institute of Planning, 31, 331-8.
____. (1996). The communicative turn in planning theory and its implications


McGuirk, P. M. (2001). Situating communicative theory: Context, power, and


Appendix A: List of the Writings Selected by Respondents

Notes: Unless otherwise indicated, the writings were selected once in the survey. Unless a specific edition of a book was mentioned by respondents, the first edition is listed first, and subsequent ones are mentioned afterwards. A number of writings listed in the questionnaires could not be identified. These are not included in the list.


Alberta Association Canadian Institute of Planners. (1978). *AICP code of ethics and professional conduct*. Chicago, IL: AICP.


Associated Environmental Site Assessors of Canada. (n.d.). *Conducting environmental assessment in Canada*. Fenelon Fall, Ont.: AESAC.


(2) *The Bible*


Works Planners Read: Findings from a Canadian Survey


_____. (1975). *Compassionate landscape.* Toronto, Ont.: University of Toronto Press.


Cyberbia Web site.


*The Economist* (periodical).


Works Planners Read: Findings from a Canadian Survey


(2) *The Globe and Mail* (daily newspaper based in Toronto).


Canadian Planning and Policy - Aménagement et politique au Canada

York: J. Wiley.
*International Journal of Urban and Regional Research* (periodical).
(4) *Journal of the American Planning Association* (periodical).


*Landscape* (periodical).


(2) _____. (1972) *What time is this place*. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press.


Works Planners Read: Findings from a Canadian Survey


Microsoft software documentation.


*New City Magazine* (periodical).


(4) Ontario Municipal Board decisions.

(13) Ontario Professional Planners Institute, *Journal* (periodical).


O’Toole, R. (2001). *The vanishing automobile and other urban myths: How smart growth*
Works Planners Read: Findings from a Canadian Survey

will harm American cities. Bandon, OR: Thoreau Institute.
(12) Plan Canada (periodical).
Planetizen.com (the planning and development network).
Planning Commissioners Journal (periodical).
Planning Institute of British Columbia. Newsletter (periodical).
Works Planners Read: Findings from a Canadian Survey

ville, Qué.: Gaëtan Morin.


Women and Environments (periodical).


Zoning News (periodical).
