RETHINKING PARTICIPATION, RETHINKING PLANNING

AMELIA THORPE

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UNSW Law
UNSW Sydney NSW 2052 Australia

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Rethinking participation, rethinking planning

Amelia Thorpe[*]

Abstract If planning is more than 'what planners do', what does this mean for efforts to make planning more inclusive and representative? This article examines the connection between efforts to democratise the practice of planning and efforts to democratise its definition. Drawing on insurgent historiography, I argue that public participation was not introduced in the twentieth century, it was reimagined. Just as mainstream planning histories have been challenged as efforts to claim and legitimate certain roles for the professional planner, celebratory narratives of participation as a post-1960s phenomenon can similarly be understood as an effort to contain and control the work of planning. Instead of a bounded, professional and state-led process to which participatory practices can (and should) be added, this article puts forth an account of planning as a contingent and continuing process extending well beyond the profession.

Keywords: urban planning, public participation, critical theory, planning history, actor network theory

Planning is more than 'what planners do'. While this is increasingly acknowledged (Healey, 2010; Roy, 2009), there is a need for greater engagement with this idea in planning theory and, particularly, in planning practice. This need is especially acute in debates about public participation in planning.

A major concern within planning scholarship and policy remains how to make the practice of planning more inclusive and representative. Much work has been devoted to developing, testing and critiquing various tools to make participation more open, more meaningful and

[*] Senior Lecturer, Faculty of Law, UNSW Australia, a.thorpe@unsw.edu.au. Thanks to Timothy Bonyhady, Kurt Iveson, Desmond Manderson, the four peer reviewers and the editors for insightful comments on earlier versions of this article.

more productive. While there are examples of positive developments flowing from this, concerns have also been raised, ranging from personal impacts on participants (Inch, 2015) to political impacts affecting the wider public (Swyngedouw, 2005, 2010). In this article, I argue that an emphasis on inclusion can itself have an exclusionary effect.

Despite a significant body of critical literature highlighting the degree to which planners' actions are constrained and controlled by others, and particularly by powerful others (Flyvbjerg, 2004; Flyvbjerg & Richardson, 2002; Forester, 1989, 1999), planning policy remains rooted in a utopian vision of planners as professionals who can steer the development of urban environments. Treating public participation as a desirable but neglected step in the planning process has the effect of entrenching the dominance of professionals and of formal planning processes, suggesting a level of agency that is at odds with the way in which cities actually develop. Instead of efforts to bring the public into the planning process, there is a need to think about ways to bring planners out into the world.

The reflections on planning policy and planning debates that gave rise to this article began with a focus on Sydney, New South Wales, where planning has been unusually prominent in popular discourse in recent years. Many of the reform proposals and debates surrounding them draw directly on international precedents, as well as indirectly on the wider body of (primarily Anglo American) planning scholarship. While beginning with planning as a grounded practice, and while recognising the dangers of examining planning outside of its specific culture, this article thus moves to consider planning in more general terms. In doing so, I build on a range of more situated contributions, both scholarly publications as well as more active engagement in the reform process through policy submissions and stakeholder workshops (Thorpe, 2013, 2017; Thorpe & Hart, 2013). A preliminary investigation of comparable jurisdictions suggests the insights are of wider relevance.[1]

This article begins by discussing the literature on public participation in planning. Even within more critical contributions, I argue that there is a pervasive presentation of public participation as a set of 'add-on' practices, and of these as determined and delimited by actors with authority. I then consider the role of history in framing participation in this way, arguing that those well-rehearsed histories of participation as a response to protests of the 1960s can be understood as part of an exclusionary, profession-building project. Following this, the article turns to alternative histories. Building on the work of Leonie Sandercock and others who have emphasised the multiplicity of practices and perspectives involved in planning, I argue that both participation and planning have histories that extend well beyond traditional accounts. The final section uses actor network theory to put forward an account of planning as an inherently participatory process. If, following Bruno Latour's

[1] This included parts of Canada, the US, the UK and New Zealand, and did not extend to the same fine-grained detail as my research in Australia. Examination of international planning frameworks was based largely on secondary sources, supplemented by selective reviews of local legislation.

celebrated claim, we have never really been modern (Latour, 1993), then modern planning is less able to achieve its promised goals of efficiency, equality and sustainability. It is also less able to operate as an instrument of neoliberal governance. Understanding planning as a process centred on negotiation points toward approaches that take planners out as well as bringing others in.

Defining planning and participation are key concerns in this article, yet some definitional clarification is required to begin. There have been many efforts to define planning over many years, and there is still no clear consensus (Hillier, 2010). This article follows Patsy Healey in approaching planning as a discursive formation, a field defined by a "community of inquirers" concerned with planning as a project for shaping urban futures (Healey, 2011, p. 194). Planning thus extends beyond the work of professional planners, and beyond the contributions they solicit from outsiders through various consultation and engagement processes.

This is an expanded and necessarily woolly definition. One could argue that such a definition is too broad, yet planning could be defined even more expansively. Liquor licensing, immigration policy and environmental regulations are among many other areas with clear implications for the way in which cities are shaped and reshaped. However, they do so in a somewhat accidental way. Planning, in contrast, is defined by activities that set out deliberately to think about what the city is, what it should be, and how to steer its development in that direction. As Jean Hillier notes in her collation of various definitions given to planning since the 1980s, "definitions range from those which regard planning practice as having power to achieve futures to those which are more uncertain, but all embrace an orientation toward the future" (Hillier, 2010, p. 12). The crucial issue is not *who* is involved, but *why*. Planning is best understood as a matter of intent, as negotiated efforts to determine how best to shape and reshape the city, to develop and implement a vision for the future of the urban environment.

Like planning, participation is a term that has been the subject of definitional debate. Sherry Arnstein's ladder (Arnstein, 1969) remains a key reference in ongoing efforts to determine what does and does not constitute participation by the public. Just as planning is not defined by reference to the people or institutions leading the process, this article treats participation as similarly open. Public participation extends beyond contributions to processes led by the state and by professionals to encompass a wider range of activities by citizens, groups and institutions intended to influence decision-making about current and future urban development. This definition does not exclude activities by powerful groups, and it does not exclude activities that are ineffective: just as a planner's recommendation might not be implemented but is still understood as planning, activities by individuals and organisations intended to influence urban development are understood here as participation in planning even if they do not have that effect. Similarly, less 'participatory'

forms of participation – consultation or other practices associated with the lower rungs of Arnstein's ladder – are also included. Accordingly, and while recognising that an emphasis on this issue means that "participatory planning" can be understood as a more radical concept than participation in planning, this article uses the two terms interchangeably.

Framing participation

Participatory planning has generated a very large literature. Frequently drawing on deliberative or agonistic theories of democracy as well as concerns about 'undesirable' forms of participation (particularly the NIMBY objector), much effort has been devoted to the development of methods for participatory planning. Typically framing current disputes about development as attributable to flaws in existing participatory frameworks (Inch, 2012), there is now a voluminous body of scholarship proposing, testing and evaluating various modifications to progress efforts towards a more perfect participatory process (Forester, 1999; Healy, 2009; Innes, 2010; Legacy, Curtis, & Neuman, 2014).

This focus on tools and techniques for participation highlights the way in which participation is generally understood. The idea that processes for engaging the public can be designed and redesigned is based on an assumption that participation, and planning more broadly, is a process controlled by professionals.

That assumption is apparent also in critiques of participatory planning. Highlighting the disconnect between participatory mechanisms and planning outcomes, a key critique is that governments pay little attention to the preferences expressed by citizens in participatory processes (Brownill & Carpenter, 2007; Fainstein, 2010; Huxley & Yiftachel, 2000; Rydin, 2007; Taylor, 2007; Teernstra & Pinkster, 2016). Planners exercise power in what they choose to include as matters for debate, which stakeholders they engage with, which participatory tools and techniques they use, which background materials they research and which they provide to participants, in how they use knowledge, and in how they advise the government of the outcomes and range of options produced through participatory processes. Despite the collaborative rhetoric, such critics argue, planning remains a closed process.

A related critique suggests an even tighter degree of state control, arguing that participatory planning may not even elicit community preferences. Moving from critiques of planning as a process dominated by experts to planning as a tool of the neoliberal state, scholars such as Erik Swyngedouw draw on understandings of the 'post-political' to critique participatory planning (Allmendinger & Haughton, 2012; Inch, 2012; Swyngedouw, 2005, 2010). Participatory processes are carefully managed to provide the appearance of engagement and legitimacy, such critics argue, while minimising the potential for those with conflicting views to be heard. Again, participation and planning itself are presented as bounded,

professional and state-led. Whether deliberative or more conventional, genuine or stage-managed, participation continues to be understood as something that can be added, at discrete points, to inform the work done by professional planners in producing and implementing plans and policies.

Much of the literature on participation begins with a brief history, locating the origins of participatory planning within broader protest movements of the 1960s and 1970s. Prior to those movements, the story goes, planners took a technocratic approach, developing comprehensive plans with no thought for public involvement beyond the electoral process (Ward, 1994, p. 111). Planning itself is traced to the late nineteenth century, triggered by social and public health concerns regarding the changes wrought by the industrial revolution (Booth, 1996; Cullingworth, 1993; Hall, 2011; Hirt, 2014; Platt, 2004). To alleviate and ward against the squalor (both moral and physical) of industrial cities, the idea was that plans would be prepared and proposals for development assessed by professional planners, synthesising vast and varied information to produce the solution that would best further the common good. Planning was conceived as a utopian, progressive project, improving the health, amenity and efficiency of modern cities, and promoting social justice by enhancing access to quality housing, transport and other services.

By the 1960s, the relationship between planners and the public was increasingly subject to challenge. The proposals after WWII for the large scale clearance of 'slums' and their replacement with high-rise, functionally segregated developments were hugely unpopular. The value of professional expertise was less and less accepted, and the ability of professionals to plan in the interests of local communities increasingly challenged (Jacobs, 1972; Sandercock, 1975; Stretton, 1989; Ward, 1994). Coming amid waves of dissent and a questioning of establishment values, calls for participation in planning tend to be linked with movements for civil rights, racial equality, feminism, peace and environmental protection (Boyer, 1983; Freestone, 2000b; Shapely, 2011). Rejecting not only the ability of experts to plan for, but the very existence of, a unified public interest, advocates of participatory planning highlighted the subjectivity of supposedly objective, rational, expert-led planning (Davidoff, 1965; Lindblom, 1959).

The result, as numerous histories recount, was a series of reforms to planning law to provide for public participation (Cullingworth, 1985; Gerckens, 1979; Hall, 2011; Huxley, 2013; Shapely, 2011, 2014; Thorpe, 2013; Ward, 1994). Today, provision for participation can be found in almost any planning framework, typically with legislative requirements for notification and exhibition of planning proposals, and opportunities for the public to provide their views on proposals through the making of submissions and/or participating in public hearings. Yet participation remains a discrete part of the process. Local and central government planning departments are invariably required to consider the results of public consultation processes when determining planning matters, and may even be required to

explain how public feedback was used in the determination process, but there is no legislative requirement that participatory processes actually influence decision-making. Participation provides a box to be checked, rather than a driver of planning outcomes. The work of planners continues to focus on processes led and concluded by the state.

Framing planning: the use of history

History plays an important role in maintaining the separation between planning and participatory processes, between planners and the public. Just as narratives of participation typically begin with a brief history, history appears frequently as an introduction to texts on planning more broadly. While early twentieth century narratives describe planning as new and revolutionary, they also display an "immanent historicity" (Freestone, 2000a, p. 1).

History was part of the work necessary to produce the field of town planning and to legitimate the new profession of town planners; its selective and ideological use is well-established (Freestone, 2000a; Huxley, 2010; Sandercock, 1998a; Ward, 2013). History provided a way to link new planning techniques with the achievements of great civilizations in ancient cities such as Athens, Rome and Florence. Narratives of the past enabled the gathering of disparate practices into a coherent field and, importantly, the demonstration of its importance to society.

In tracing planning back to ancient civilizations, mainstream planning histories locate the profession within a narrative of big projects and big ideas. Planning practices are linked with a glorious past of grand plans and great works: splendid plazas, majestic boulevards, impressive infrastructure. Importantly, planning practices are traced to works that were controlled and constructed by powerful figures. Planners find their precursors in the efforts of "kings, princes, prelates, aristocrats or oligarchs, each powerful enough to define the urban order" (Ward, 2013, p. 38). This link to powerful actors is significant. Such histories emphasise the idea that the city is something that can be built by particular actors and according to prescribed processes. In doing so, planning is established as a technique of power, a set of practices undertaken by experts backed by authority. Planning is also depicted as a practice with agency, a set of practices that achieve concrete results.

History has been important also in distinguishing modern planning from its precursors. Many of the activities involved in modern planning were by no means new: the laying out of towns in formal plans, the passage of laws regulating certain building types, and the prohibition of certain activities in certain areas were all well-established before the nineteenth century. Yet early proponents of the field of planning presented their work as new and even revolutionary, and histories – from the celebratory volumes of Peter Hall (Hall, 2011) to the more critical accounts of James Scott (Scott, 1998) – continue to distinguish modern planning from its premodern precursors in the clearest of terms. Richard LeGates and Frederic Stout, for example, find ancient precedents for efforts to structure the

built environment in the pursuit of health, safety and amenity, of political goals, and of spiritual expression, but distinguish modern planning from these as "a way of organizing and stabilizing society through the rational design of space and systematic ordering of human activity" (LeGates & Stout, 1998, p. 299). Steven Ward describes a similar shift from a preoccupation with urban symbolism and the laying out of fortifications and grand spaces, to new "distinctively modern" functional priorities, focused on efficiency and welfare (Ward, 2002, p. 39).

In line with Michel Foucault's examination of the epistemological shift that took place from the eighteenth century (Foucault, 1992), modern planning emerged as a field through which the city could be understood and improved. The urban environment moved from one that could be understood in visual terms, to one that required functional analysis. Echoing Foucault's understanding of power/knowledge, Sonia Hirt argues that the commencement of surveys documenting the state of English cities in the mid-1800s constituted a ground-breaking shift. This is because the surveys "establish the principles that cities were subject to comprehensive analysis, that cities could be improved through systematic intervention, and that such intervention was, in fact, the task of national government" (Hirt, 2014, p. 106). In England and in cities across Europe, Hirt explains, this was followed by much more intense government scrutiny, categorization, standardisation and control, and the replacement of "rudimentary" planning rules with "more sophisticated" modern planning from the end of the nineteenth century (Hirt, 2014, p. 107). In such a context planning could be presented as heroic and visionary, rational and progressive, an "unambiguously beneficent statist activity" (Freestone, 2000a, p. 2).

More critical histories argue that modern planning did not simply identify urban problems (Boyer, 1983; Hooper, 1998; Osborne & Rose, 1999; Rabinow, 1989). Rather, planning discourse and planning studies contributed directly to the production of the city as dirty, dangerous and inefficient, in need of reforms – planning interventions – that would in turn influence better behaviour. Paul Rabinow, for example, presents genealogies of the complex interconnections between knowledge, space and urban governance. He describes how the rise of knowledge (statistics, medicine, biology, architecture, building and geography) and of new practices (intellectuals writing on government, architecture, colonial rule, working class reform and sanitary infrastructure) came together in nineteenth century French colonialism. Disciplinary techniques of urbanism (enclosure, surveillance, separation and prohibition) were used to create *milieux* with the aim of inducing and maintaining particular norms (Rabinow, 1989).

These disciplinary techniques were central, providing for the combination and generalisation of older techniques to produce knowledge and power in mutually reinforcing ways (Foucault, 1995). No longer simply a site for the representation of state power (through, for example, grand palaces, plazas and monuments), planning provided tools to

manage city dwellers though their environments (in Paris, for example, the replacement of narrow laneways with wide boulevards, subjecting the city to new forms of surveillance). Planning, such histories argue, offered powerful techniques for social control, a set of professional knowledges and practices to be deployed in the service of the state.

In much the same way that mainstream planning histories can be read as an effort to claim and legitimate certain roles for the planner, the characterisation of participation as a post 1960s phenomenon can similarly be understood as part of a professional project. Framing histories of participation in this way can be viewed as a strategy to reinforce the role of professional planners in the practice of city-making, and to erase and preclude contributions by those outside the profession.

With the rise of neoliberalism, globalisation and new notions of society in the latter part of the twentieth century, the context for planning moved from reform to management. Foucault argues that the techniques of discipline that characterised the early modern state came to be supplemented increasingly with techniques of security (Foucault, 2009). Whereas discipline seeks comprehensiveness, encompassing and regulating every activity as permitted or forbidden, security constantly integrates new elements. Security responds to reality so as to cancel out that reality: to nullify, constrain or regulate it (Foucault, 2009, pp. 45–6). For Foucault, the emphasis in planning thus shifts from a focus on physical techniques – expertise in architecture, engineering or public health – toward managerial techniques.

Participatory planning can be understood as one of those managerial techniques. In line with the critiques of planning in the "post-political" context outlined above, participatory planning can be understood as a process for managing or suppressing opposition. Drawing on analysis of an anti-eviction campaign in South Africa, Faranak Miraftab argues that the incorporation of community participation works to depoliticize community struggles and to extend state control within society (Miraftab, 2009). Just as Foucault argues that techniques of security work to cancel out undesirable aspects of reality, participatory planning provides a way to neutralize opponents. As participants in processes led by professionals, opponents become one of many stakeholders with interests to be weighed against those of others. Structured spaces for participation reduce the potential for disruptive critiques, and the idea that the various interests have somehow been balanced enhances the legitimacy of ensuing decisions. Accordingly, "inclusive planning, with its emphasis on citizen participation and civil society partnership, has often become the accomplice of neoliberal governance" (Miraftab, 2009, p. 43).

Alternative histories

The idea that planning is defined by professional activities is increasingly contested. Since at least the 1990s, scholars have been arguing that histories of planning must also include

other practices. Leonie Sandercock has been particularly influential in her call for an 'insurgent' approach to planning history (Sandercock, 1998b, 1998a, 2003). In their efforts to forge a professional identity and a role for the profession, Sandercock argues, mainstream planning histories render minority interests invisible (Sandercock, 1998b). The idea of a professional planner working to further the public interest (and the idea that there is such a thing as a unified public interest) is possible only because other interests are erased and excluded. To counter this exclusionary profession-building, Sandercock argues for an understanding of planning that reaches well beyond the practice of professional planners, and for an understanding of history that encompasses more than one narrative, seeking out divergent class, race, gender and ethnic perspectives to challenge mainstream definitions of planning and the role of planners (Sandercock, 1998a).

Planning histories have also been challenged in less 'insurgent' ways. David Hammack argues that planning was well-established in the US in the nineteenth century, well before the introduction of practices termed planning (Hammack, 1988). Earlier still, Laurence Gerckens argues that North American cities had powers for planning in eighteenth century (Gerckens, 1979). Others suggest that histories of planning may in some instances start too early. Philip Booth and Margo Huxley argue that understandings of the *Town and Country Planning Act 1909 (UK)* have been distorted by the taking of a presentist or teleological approach, and that the passing of that legislation was driven primarily by concerns about housing conditions rather than town planning (Booth & Huxley, 2012).

Just as Sandercock and others challenge established histories of planning, understandings of participation as relatively recent openings into state-led processes are also attracting critiques. In the UK Lucy Hewitt and John Pendlebury argue that the reforms to provision for participation in the 1960s merely recognised the roles already being performed in planning by a range of civic groups (Hewitt & Pendlebury, 2014). In the US, Sebastian Haumann challenges dominant understandings of planning as a closed, state-led process by highlighting the degree to which the public was engaged in two urban renewal processes in Philadelphia from the 1950s and 1960s (Haumann, 2011). More generally, many other scholars have highlighted the role performed by community groups in the civic improvement and beautification movements of the late 19th and early 20th century. Several have emphasised in particular the significant – and largely overlooked – contributions made by women to the process of city-making before the professionalisation of planning (Birch, 1994; Deutsch, 1994; Isenberg, 2004; Spain, 2001; Szczygiel, 2003; Wirka, 1996). In her history of commercial districts, Alison Isenberg describes the important work of women's groups in shaping the built environment. This includes activities such as repairing street paving, lobbying for restrictions on billboards and business signs, persuading business owners to convert rear alleys into landscaped gardens, and sponsoring comprehensive city plans (Isenberg, 2004).

In an Australian context, Robert Freestone and various collaborators have highlighted a range of participatory initiatives that were well underway by the 1940s, from community town planning movements to planning exhibitions (Freestone, 2009; Freestone & Amati, 2011; Freestone & James, 2015). Andrea Gaynor's work on the regulation of urban livestock at the start of the twentieth century paints another picture of planning as a highly negotiated process. Gaynor describes how the middle class exercised their influence at local and higher levels of government to achieve regulation (and, often, exclusion) of undesirable activities in suburban gardens (Gaynor, 2007).

Other examples abound. Nihal Perera's history of space-making in late nineteenth-century Colombo contests conventional understandings of a structured, systematic colonial city and society (Perera, 2009). While the colonial authorities controlled the public stage, Perera shows that other actors transformed the city from the inside. Importantly, in exposing failures in colonial planning Perera reveals a paradox: the unsanctioned transformations were critical to the functioning of the city. Successful planning *required* the contribution of those outside the state. Again and again, the production of the built environment involves much more than those processes conducted or controlled by professionals.

Significantly, many examples of participatory planning may be found well before the emergence of the profession. In London from the sixteenth century, a series of royal proclamations regulated matters including building materials, wall thicknesses, the division of dwellings, numbers of families who could reside in each house, and requirements for the licensing of new buildings. These proclamations and the laws that followed them are recognised as precursors of planning laws (Booth, 2003). While planning histories focus largely on their role as precedents in their content, the processes by which they were made and implemented are significant, shedding light on ways in which negotiation and participation helped to shape the development of cities many centuries ago.

Far removed from the idea of planning as a state-led process or a matter of experts developing and imposing their vision of a better city, an examination of these laws reveals a process that is participatory in crucial respects. Typically, proclamations were made and legislation passed in response to lobbying from landowners; it was members of the public who pursued and promoted regulation (Baer, 2007; Bell & Bell, 1969; Edie, 1967; Smuts, 1991). Many elements characteristic of contemporary planning debates can be seen: efforts to protect property interests and to keep out others (particularly foreigners and the poor). As William Baer argues, "Current growth control disputes often merely re-enact and rehearse (with greater sophistication) the kinds of arguments about private property and appropriate development … uttered over 400 years ago" (Baer, 2007, pp. 257–9).

As well as lobbying for the introduction or tightening of regulations, planning in Tudor and Stuart London may be understood as participatory also in shaping the implementation of

those laws and the urban forms that they produced. Historians have noted various ways in which laws were adapted in their implementation, with very concrete consequences in the development of the city. Planning outcomes include the emergence of a fashionable upper-class society in the western suburbs of London, despite the crown's attempts to prevent this (Fisher, 1962; Stone, 1979), as well as ongoing conversion of sheds and haylofts, construction of illegal tenements, alleys and urban environments quite different to those officially provided for (Smuts, 1991).

Current narratives of participation within the history of planning sit uncomfortably with these examples. Rather than a concession made by governments and professionals in control of the process to create a space for public involvement, an understanding of participation as predating those processes suggests a much more tenuous state hold on the processes through which cities are shaped. Planners, it turns out, have less agency than mainstream histories suggest. The role of those histories as an effort to support the profession and a vision of what planning *should* be become more apparent, as do the limitations of focusing on state-led participation.

Understanding participation as something that emerged after the 1960s misses not only prior participation in practice, but also formal provision for participation in earlier laws. While implementation may have been far from ideal, provision for some form of public participation – exhibition, notification, submissions, even third party appeal rights – was common in many jurisdictions well before 1960.

In the UK, the *Town and Country Planning Act 1925* included several requirements for public exhibition and the notification of owners and interested parties, for the making of objections and other representations, and for public inquiries (Adams, 1932, pp. 172–4). Regulations made by the Ministry of Health also required notification and consideration of objections (Adams, 1932, p. 172). Additionally, provision for participation was developed through the courts at least as early as the nineteenth century. As landowners challenged various regulations, British courts responded by developing rules that required officials to give landowners an opportunity to put their case before action was taken (McAuslan, 1980, p. 3).

In Australia, provision for public participation was typical in the early planning legislation passed in many states, including public exhibitions, public inquiries and the making of objections (Wilcox, 1967, p. 182). In the state of New South Wales, a basic form of zoning was possible under the *Local Government Act 1919* whereby residential areas could be proclaimed and from these certain uses could be excluded. From 1928, public notice was required before such areas could be proclaimed, objections could be made by any person interested and public inquiries could be held. More extensive planning and participation provisions were added in 1945, including public exhibition of planning schemes and

provision for the making of “representations” regarding such schemes (this was required when a resolution was made to prepare a planning scheme, and again if a scheme was prepared). Significantly, the 1945 amendments also provided for the making of planning schemes by landowners themselves.

These examples of participatory planning in practice and in legislation suggest a very different genealogy for participatory planning. Rather than democratising the process of planning, the creation of formal channels for participation from the 1960s can be interpreted instead as a technique to contain and constrain contributions by those outside the planning profession. In Sydney, for example, the introduction of provisions for participation in the *Environmental Planning and Assessment Act* in 1979 is widely traced to the green ban movement of the early 1970s. While that movement and its popular support undoubtedly played a role in those planning reforms, the real estate industry was also influential (Thorpe, 2013). Concern that public opposition was slowing down the pace of development was significant within the recently-established Institute for Real Estate Development, and lobbying for reforms that would manage public contributions was a key focus of their early activities.

Histories that celebrate the introduction of formal channels for participation as opening up the planning process can be understood as part of that exclusionary project. As Sanderock and others argue, a more accurate and inclusive narrative must recognise that there are multiple histories and multiple readings. Planning is more than what planners do.

Reframing planning

Like its precursors, contemporary planning practice is much more a matter of politics than science, reliant more on opportunities than expertise, often directed (and frequently redirected) by private interests. Central to the successes of modern planning – and to those of earlier forms of planning – is the response of the particular communities being planned for.

Efforts to direct the development of the built environment succeed when they coincide with popular sentiment. As noted above, the impact of NIMBY objectors on planning policy has attracted considerable attention. From public housing to power plants, mosques to McDonalds, the ability of neighbouring residents to derail planning processes is well established (Davison et al., 2013; Dear, 1987; Sandercock, 2000). Often on a much larger scale, planning principles and proposals are disrupted also by participants looking well beyond their backyards. There is a vast literature documenting the ways in which property and business interests influence the planning process, influencing decisions on zoning, budgeting and the use of state eviction and land acquisition powers (Fainstein, 2001; Harvey, 2012; Kayden, 2000; Marcuse et al., 2011; Sandercock, 1975).

A broader understanding of planning, and of participation in it, is more able to comprehend these trajectories. The transformation of plans prepared by experts into quite different built environments negotiated among various publics should be understood not as failure, but as an inevitable part of the process by which cities grow and change. Gaps between planners' visions and the way in which cities actually develop reveal the centrality of negotiation to the practice of planning. Plans and projects will always be resisted, reinterpreted and reshaped (Certeau, 2013; Scott, 1998). Conflict, contingency and ambiguity are inescapable elements of planning, and engagement by a diverse range of participants should be understood as a core and continuing part of the planning process. All planning is – at least potentially – a participatory process.

Importantly, the participatory negotiations that constitute planning are not between professionals with agency and citizens without. The diffuse nature of power emphasised by Foucault and Certeau is important. Power is not simply 'held' by individuals or institutions, and cannot be fixed or located in any lasting sense. Power relations are dynamic and contingent, full of potential for resistance and subversion. More recent work in actor network theory (ANT) develops this further: power and agency come from successfully connecting other actors together (Latour, 2005). The fluidity of power means that any mode of ordering is inherently unstable, and in turn that constant work is required to maintain connections between elements in a network (stressing this point, Latour suggests networks might be better labelled "worknets" (Latour, 2004, p. 63)).

The longevity and popularity of many citizen-led interventions highlight the degree to which planning cannot be contained in professional and state-led activities. In her discussion of development in the Gourmet Ghetto area in Berkeley, California, Tanu Sankalia documents a series of unsuccessful planning efforts over a period of 12 years (Sankalia, 2014). In contrast, she notes the success of citizen interventions in shaping the development of the area. In a further blurring of the professional/non-professional divide, the most recent government-approved plan for the area involves a parklet – a planning model developed from the success of *PARK(ing) Day*, the annual citizen-led transformation of parking spaces into temporary urban parks. Far beyond the formal channels established to structure dialogue between developers, the state and its citizens, planning should be understood as a process in which various actors seek to mobilise other actors to secure particular outcomes.

The boundaries between insiders and outsiders in planning activities are blurry, since "people occupy multiple roles, moving between identities as citizen, bureaucrat, professional or advocate" (Crawford, 2008, p. 15). Many citizen-led activities engage directly with planning regulations, seeking and at times succeeding in producing reforms to planning frameworks (eg the communities who participate in the Better Block movement temporarily transform their streets in an effort to highlight laws in need of reform (Lydon & Garcia,

2015)), or simply getting things done faster than bureaucracies allow (eg small-scale DIY infrastructure or makeshift signage) (Douglas, 2014).

More broadly, power – and planning – is not limited to the social. Latour argues that the separation between humans (politics, power, society: entities with agency) and nonhumans (science, technology, nature: entities without) cannot be maintained (Latour, 1993). While modernity is premised on this separation, and the exclusion of anything in between, hybrids, networks and intermediaries are increasingly apparent. For Latour, examples such as global warming, the ozone hole and deforestation escape categorisation as either nature or society, and in doing so reveal the way in which modernity is losing its conceptual hold. Instead, we see a "nonmodern" world "that we are entering… without ever having really left it" (Latour, 1993, p. 130).

The negotiation over urban visions that constitutes planning is always mediated by various technologies that are deployed by both experts and lay people to produce, harness and convey information (Barry, 2013; Laurent, 2011; Law, 2002). From maps to megaphones, survey data to post-its, 'things' play a crucial role in the meetings, hearings and formal negotiations of planning. Things are important also across the wider range of planning activities. Citizens and communities adopting the Better Block approach, for example, rely heavily on the use of material objects to engage in planning. Small scale, physical interventions are key tools to highlight problems with current planning regulations, and to catalyse moves toward more desirable alternatives. Instead of text or verbal discussion, objects - painted cycle lanes, lights and seating, potted plants and pop-ups shops - are deployed to engage neighbours and wider audiences in the development of new visions for the future of the street.

Such understandings are increasingly influential in planning theory. While discursive or collaborative planning remains central in planning policy and practice, among academics, planning is entering a "post-collaborative phase" (Brownill & Parker, 2010, p. 275) and appears to be embarking on a 'material' turn (Amin & Thrift, 2002; Beauregard, 2015; Farias & Bender, 2010; Rydin & Tate, 2016). Insights from ANT are increasingly being applied to include considerations of material objects, places and texts and the way that these are engaged in developing and implementing plans and policies.

Scholars have also used ANT to rethink participatory planning, questioning the limits of participation and of planning itself (Marres, 2007, 2013; Tait, 2002; Tait & Jensen, 2007; Tironi, 2015). Noortje Marres uses ANT to argue that the creation of publics is inseparable from the definition of issues: without the issue there is no public, without the public there is no issue (Marres, 2007). Echoing and extending the critiques of Sandercock and others of the idea of a universal public in whose interest planning could be undertaken, Marres emphasises not only the diversity of citizens, but their fluidity. The idea that the publics that

planners should consult with are pre-existing is thus rejected. What is needed is not to seek out more publics, but to acknowledge that publics are *formed* through processes of planning and participation (Hajer, 2003; Iveson, 2007; Marres, 2007). Accordingly, pre-existing norms for participation in planning (whether deliberative or otherwise) are problematic because values need to be articulated in context.

Participation is also intimately related to politics more broadly. Again, insights from ANT extend arguments noted earlier, in this case those by Fainstein and others about the connections between planning and political and economic power. Planning is shaped by and shapes politics at multiple scales. In his analysis of two local plan-making processes in the UK, Malcolm Tait argues that consultation processes construct as well as reflect relations between the local and the central (Tait, 2002). In Tait's example, planning officers drew on their positions and expertise as well as central government policies and recommended consultation methods to order other participants in the planning process, working to stabilize their positions in relation to other actors. Concepts of "central", "local" and "the public" were actively constructed during the two processes. On this understanding, the very nature of participation, and in turn planning itself, is opened to question. How planning goals are set, how stakeholders are identified, how options are evaluated and in turn implemented become much less questions of state planning frameworks, and more matters of the way in which networks are established, maintained or disrupted.

Who and what constitutes planning cannot be determined in advance. Such understandings of participation, and in turn planning itself, as contingent and assembled, shed light on the ongoing failure of efforts to perfect techniques for participatory planning discussed above. Participation is not something that can be added at discrete points; planning processes are not controlled or contained by the actions of professionals. Planning, as the processes through which visions for the future of cities are shaped and reshaped, is inherently a process of negotiation between a diverse range of participants.

Conclusion

The history of planning is often narrated by professionals, constituting themselves as insiders and others as external to the process of developing and implementing visions for the future of the city. As argued above, the dominant accounts of participatory planning derive not from citizens, community groups or even corporations, but from professionals and theorists within the field. In privileging the work of insiders, those accounts can suppress, diminish and exclude the many contributions made by participants outside the profession, at times distorting the role played by formal planning processes.

Yet planning is more than what planners do, and participation is more than what planners invite. The more inclusive histories outlined above suggest a more complex genealogy for

planning and for participatory practices; both can be identified well before the establishment of the profession or the passage of laws with the word planning in their title.

The definitional difficulties noted by Hillier and others reflect the fact that planning is not a singular, specific thing: it is a plurality of practices constructed and enacted by people in social and material contexts. When the subjects of planning advocate for changes to the form of the city, when they directly intervene in the built environment in ways that challenge, confirm or reinterpret official plans, and when they report, ignore or actively conceal violations to planning rules and policies, they participate directly and often materially in the practice of planning.

Reflecting on the histories of planning enables us to think differently about contemporary participatory processes. Understanding planning as inherently negotiated helps to explain why recent planning reforms – from the *Localism Act* in the UK to those currently underway in Sydney – have been so controversial. Efforts to 'enhance' participation at the strategic planning stage as a means to reduce participatory opportunities at the development assessment stage must be recognised as utopian (if not disingenuous).

If planning is continuing, contingent and essentially unbounded, one might conclude that inclusive participatory processes could be pursued with less urgency, as just one of many ways in which the public contributes to the shaping of the city. Yet thinking about planning as open in this way points also in the opposite conclusion. To recognise the limits of state agency is not to dismiss the state altogether. The goals of inclusion, equality, environmental and social justice motivating policy and, particularly, scholarly work on participation are increasingly urgent. The idea of planning as unbounded and planners as self-directed citizens, even entrepreneurs, fits neatly with the neoliberal agenda of market-based development and the withdrawal of the state. Further, as scholars such as Ananya Roy and Oren Yiftachel argue, planning activities conducted outside the state can fuel exclusion and dispossession (Roy, 2005, 2009; Yiftachel, 2009). There are important questions regarding agency and consequences. Who can push the boundaries of planning, and with what effects? As Roy explains, neither informal activities nor responses to them are clearly confined: rather, the ongoing work of policing borders is performed by both citizens and the state. Interventions by privileged white communities are frequently celebrated, yet those from more marginalised groups can attract condemnation and even prosecution. Questions of justice and sustainability cannot be left to ad hoc participatory initiatives. There is a need to think carefully about how various planning activities complement or compromise each other, and in that context how best to moderate the way in which the built environment does and does not develop.

Understanding participation not as a concession made by the state to create a discrete space for public involvement, but as an ongoing part of the process through which plans and

proposals for development, like their material subjects, are shaped and reshaped, suggests a more expansive role for planning professionals. Rather than focusing on those processes to which citizens are invited to participate, inclusion requires attention to the full range of activities intended to shape the city, from small scale contributions by citizens and community groups to much larger interventions by corporate developers. Plans for participation cannot be fixed in advance, but must be negotiated in context. In many cases, that context will require much greater recognition of informal contributions, of the complex interactions between them, and of their crucial significance in the pursuit of more just and sustainable cities. .

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