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People and Planning at Fifty: An Introduction

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Fifty-years ago in 1969 *People and Planning*, the Report of the Committee on Public Participation in Planning, was published in the United Kingdom (Great Britain, 1969). Often referred to by the name of the Labour Member of Parliament who chaired it, the *Skeffington Report* is widely considered a key part of post-war planning history; marking one of the first official attempts to think through how publics could be meaningfully engaged in the production of plans[1].

The same year, of course, also saw the publication of Sherry Arnstein's seminal article on the Ladder of Citizen Participation in the Journal of the American Planning Association (JAPA) (Arnstein, 1969). Fifty years on, 2019 has therefore seen a series of publications and events marking these key moments in the development of contemporary planning theory and practice (see e.g. recent journal special issues: JAPA, 2019; Built Environment 2019a, 2019b).

As Alex Frediani and Camila Cociña argue, in their contribution to this Interface, what we choose to commemorate is always a political act, freighted with cultural significance and weighted by power-relations that determine what is, and is not, worth remembering. In this way, anniversaries matter, as acts of commemoration through which shared understandings and

[1] For further information on the report see Shapely, 2014

identities are forged. However, there is always a danger that the passage of time leads to the simplification of historical complexity, lending itself to a glib celebration of such milestones as so much evidence of the planning profession's commitment to progressive reformism, rather than prompting a deeper, more critical reflection on their significance.

This risk is perhaps particularly marked with regard to public participation, an idea that has become firmly established as a 'good thing' within the ideology of contemporary planning and yet, whose realization fifty-years on arguably remains as elusive and problematic as ever.

It was with this in mind that an event was held at the Town and Country Planning Association's offices in London on the 5th of June, 2019 to:

> 'explore the lessons which can be learnt from the experiences of a range of actors and organisations over the decades and set out what will be the likely issues and the changes needed as we move forward into the next 50 years.'

Attended by around thirty people, most of the contributions to this Interface draw directly on the presentations and discussions that took place on the day.[2]

Francesca Sartorio's opening piece explores the context in which Arthur Skeffington and his committee of twenty-six worked, using this to ask some probing questions about the political problems that motivate governmental interest in participation and how that shapes the often underwhelming forms it takes. Jeff Bishop then offers a perspective from a career in participatory practice that began when People and Planning was published. His reflections on the

[2] The event was supported financially by Oxford Brookes University. Thanks to Sue Brownill, Geraint Ellis and Francesca Sartorio for organising, the TCPA for hosting and all of those who attended and participated in the discussion.

relationship between the recommendations in the Skeffington Report and contemporary forms of community-led, neighbourhood planning in England, highlight that the promises of participation remain real and within grasp, if only the political and professional will can be found to take them seriously.

Yasminah Beebeejaun then challenges the spatial and social imaginary underpinning the. Skeffington Report's conception of British society, highlighting its failure to acknowledge contemporary racism and planning's continuing struggles since to understand what participation and inclusion mean in a deeply divided and unequal society. Katie McClymont then offers a summary of the discussions that took place on the 5th of June, drawing out a range of enduring challenges and tensions that remain central to participation. She too concludes that participation might be made to work but suggests this requires a reassertion of collective control over development in an increasingly market-dominated planning regime where people often seem to be offered more and more opportunity to participate in less and less meaningful decisions.

Conscious of the dangers of these debates remaining too parochially focused on the institutional particularities of participation in the United Kingdom, the final two pieces offer perspectives from other contexts. First of all Alex Frediani and Camila Cociña explore what alternative milestones might be marked in order to unsettle dominant, global northern planning histories and uncover alternative ways of understanding the promise and practice of participatory planning.

Finally, Kathy Quick reviews the report from the perspective of the United States, where the Report's reach is far less than that of Arnstein's ladder, a staple of American planning education.

She finds the report's address of race and power lacking, even as it introduces the idea of co-production throughout all stages of planning as a powerful call to re-center our work in the community.

Taken together, these contributions show the value of critical reflection on key moments in the formation of planning ideas and practices – not as an academic exercise in historical debate but as an active part of ongoing political struggles over the roles people can play in shaping their collective futures.

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‘People and Planning’ 50 Years On: the Never-Ending Struggle for Planning to Engage with People

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‘People and Planning,’ the Report of the Committee on Public Participation in Planning to the Minister of Housing and Local Government, to the Secretary of State for Scotland and to the Secretary of State for Wales was printed in the Autumn of 1969. The Committee, comprising 26 members and Chaired by Mr. Arthur Skeffington, MP for Hayes and Harlington, had been appointed in March 1968, following the passing of a new Town and Country Planning Act just two months earlier, ‘to consider and report on the best methods …of securing the participation of the public at the formative stage in the making of development plans for their area’ (Great Britain, 1969: 1). To use the words of the Minister for Housing and Local Government, Anthony Greenwood there was a feeling that, “… attitudes have got to change: we have got to get rid of

the idea that the planners and the planned are on different sides of the fence, and we must study ways of getting them talking together" (Hansard, 1968).

My gaze on 'People and Planning' is that of the external observer, not being British myself and not having lived in the UK over the past fifty years. I discovered a dusty copy of the so-called 'Skeffington Report' in the Cardiff University library by chance, at some point in 2014. I became fascinated by it, with its evocative drawings and a language that we rarely see in government reports anymore. Both the graphics and the narrative talk of a changing society and government, of the good life, of planning as a practice to underpin ways of living and using space together. The report sees participation as a positive feature; good for government, good for the people and good for policies. The relative freshness of the report might have something to do with the fact that it was the first of its kind, the UK system having been one of the first to introduce statutory public participation, and planning having been among the first public services in the UK to do so (Damer and Hague, 1971). Coming 'first' on so many fronts made it a pivotal document, able to lead debates in the UK and abroad, contributing to the definition of what public participation is (and, more importantly, what it could be) within planning, and producing exemplary suggestions shaping how engagement has been devised in other countries. To sum things up, this is a document of which to be rightfully proud.

Since I came to Skeffington 'from the outside', I had to spend some time trying to understand what was 'around it' at the time, and this is what I would like to briefly highlight, to complement the thoughts of the other contributors to this *Interface*.

The document was produced by a Committee chaired by Arthur Skeffington, a barrister by profession and Labour Party Member of Parliament for Hayes and Harlington. He was born in 1909 and died just two years after the publication of the report, whilst still in office. The Committee was made up of 26 members; most – with the exception of Mrs J.E. Baty, Miss A.M. Lees, Mrs V.D. Neate and Mrs M.J. Watson - middle aged men, well-educated and comparatively well off: a table of wise men which, though I have not been able to access further detail, I would assume were also mostly white.

As for the document itself, its language and hope for the development of successful participation remain extraordinarily contemporary. Even the choice of language is similar to what we would use today, see for example the framing given for undertaking the report:

> *'It may be that the evolution of the structures of representative government which has concerned western nations for the last century and a half is now entering a new phase. There is a growing demand by many groups for more opportunity to contribute and for more say in the working out of policies which affect people not merely at election time, but continuously as proposals are being hammered out and, certainly, as they are being implemented. Life, so the argument runs, is becoming more and more complex, and one cannot leave all the problems to one's representatives. They need some help in reaching the right decision, and opportunity should be provided for discussions with all those involved.'* (Great Britain, 1969:3).

It is perhaps the drawings that most set it apart as a product of its time; hand sketched ink images that evoke English village life, heritage (the high street, the market, the theatre, the woodlands and its birds, farmland) and the threats to it (the motorway, bingo halls, supermarket developments). Looking at the drawings makes it easier to understand where the Committee members were coming from, what they were thinking of, and possibly hoping to recreate or preserve. To me they talk eloquently of white, British, middle aged, middle class, gendered (male) experiences of village life, framed within very particular social and spatial formations that might have then been under threat, or may have been generally fantasized about, since they no longer existed, or had already changed considerably by this time.

ADD IMAGE 1 HERE

Image credit: (from Great Britain 1969, 11[3])

As for political context, the 1968 Planning Act had already introduced the statutory requirements for publicity and participation in the development plan system, following work by the Planning Advisory Group in 1964 on how to avoid dissatisfaction with planning decisions. Arthur Skeffington and his Committee were tasked with providing examples and guidance as to how publicity and participation could be developed locally in practice. There is little background beyond this to such a ground-breaking change to how people are seen within the system, and the tone and values advocated by Skeffington also seem to have had shallow, if any, roots in legislative terms. In societal terms though, the narrative in 'People and Planning' absorbs, digests

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and reflects a lot of the changes that had been developing in the 60s for a planning audience, including academic and popular debates on this and the other side of the Atlantic. Those debates seem to have been crystallised into a document which advises on good practice, provides a set of clear paths for engagement in the new development plan system, invokes mindsets and tools, principles and technology, recruiting mechanisms and schedules. Despite going straight into looking for best practice examples, there was nothing within the system itself to have anticipated this development. Following the 1947 Planning Act, publicity was not seen as something particularly worthwhile or important in planning. And so it seems legitimate to ask what might have prompted such a flurry of activity around the definition and practice of a wholly new concept, participation.

Social scientists and policy analysts would say that anything that gets suddenly and strongly institutionalised will take off with difficulty unless there is strong societal support for it. And so maybe it is not a surprise that, after some delay, participatory practices in planning – with some notable and rare exceptions - adopted the routine, formulaic, tick-box-exercise shape that mostly took over across the country. According to the work of fellow academics, nobody much likes participation. Criticisms abound from all sides: the citizens, planning officers and elected members – and yet, we keep going. It seems bizarre, on the basis of such widespread dissatisfaction, that the next big thing in participation in English Planning would be the Localism Act of 2011.

At the time of the Skeffington Report, the UK had a Labour government, but there was also considerable pressure for development in many areas, particularly in the South East and other

Conservative strongholds. Concerns about the impacts of post-war planning had led to the emergence of growing movements for the preservation of heritage. Nationally, tensions arising from the plight of more disadvantaged groups were rising – in the late 60s British industry was in decline and the pressure to increase competitiveness in production was having real effects on workers lives – whilst the shockwaves of the uprisings of 1968 were still fresh in many minds. In the 2010s, a Conservative-led coalition took power as the country tried to pick itself up from the recent global recession amidst continued concern about the impacts of new housebuilding in Conservative strongholds. On the surface, then, these two historical moments were quite different. However, in governmentality terms, these were both moments of crisis, when – unless challenged more profoundly - governments had to create new technologies for governing if they were to continue doing more or less the same things. Whenever we want to perpetuate the status quo, things need to change (Tomasi di Lampedusa, 1958). So although both 1969 and 2011 might be read as moments of apparent great opening, scraping beyond the surface, we see that they were perhaps not that open after all.

However, in as much as the Skeffington Report speaks of its time, its use so far speaks of ours. It might not come as a surprise that the implementation and adoption of the recommendations proposed by the Skeffington Report have never been reviewed, not even in the early 90s when New Labour came into power and introduced audits and appraisals across almost every imaginable area of public policy. To this day, the UK government has not looked at how we *do* participation at a local level as no systematic study has been officially commissioned. So there remain key questions for us, whether we are academics, scholars, researchers or practitioners; to try and understand, not just *why* this is the case, but also, in developing new frames, to be able to

interpret *what* spaces of engagement mean today, *what* they might mean within a more progressive environment for planning, and *how* we can contribute to enlarge these spaces and make them more meaningful for all.

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Skeffington: A View From The Coalface

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The title of this paper reflects the fact that it is based mainly on our[1] recent practical experiences with participation[2] in various areas of planning, as well as on my own long and wide experience, starting when People and Planning first came out and, over time, with both an academic and practical base. More specifically, the paper draws on recent experiences with Neighbourhood Plans, because that is where People and Planning resounds most strongly and informatively today in English planning.

Neighbourhood Plans are produced primarily by local communities, focusing on future land use and development issues in their specific area. Once some administrative hurdles have been cleared, a Neighbourhood Plan then has the same legal status as plans produced by local planning authorities (though they are subsidiary to them).

People and Planning (Great Britain, 1969) was published in the same year in which Sherry Arnstein published her totemic 'ladder of participation' (Arnstein, 1969). While we look back to Skeffington's report as a key marker on the slow road to more and better participation, few

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[1] Mine and that of my colleagues in Place Studio Limited.

[2] This paper uses the term 'participation'; one no longer in common use in the UK but still used regularly in most other countries.

people today refer to its details. Yet Arnstein's ladder continues to be used as a litmus test for any and every participation process. Applying that test to what is in People and Planning suggests that its approach would, at best, only reach the 'consultation' step on Arnstein's ladder, in her territory of 'tokenism.' It is also important to note that People and Planning was solely about "*the participation of the public*[3] *at the formative stage in the making of development plans for their area.*"

So, how is the experience of Neighbourhood Plans informative about what was in People and Planning? This is addressed through six key points but, before that, some important comments on the roots of Neighbourhood Development Plans (NDPs). NDPs did not emerge de novo, as many think, from the Conservative Party's Open Source Planning Green Paper (Conservative Party, 2009). They drew mainly from two things. First, from Village/Town Design Statements, which a colleague and I invented in the early 1990s; probably the first time in the world that local communities could produce statutory planning documents. Secondly, from Parish and Town Plans that followed, if less successfully, a few years later. Put those together and you almost have today's Neighbourhood Plans which, at their best would qualify as 'delegation,' part of Arnstein's cluster of 'citizen power,' towards the top of her ladder.

Delegation

When discussing delegation and NDPs, some people change Arnstein's term to '*bounded*

[3] Note here another shift in terminology from 'the public' to today's 'the community.'

delegation,' because only certain aspects of planning are delegated and, of course, it is those in power who define what is and is not to be delegated. In the NDP context this is defined by requiring anything in a NDP to be in 'general conformity' with higher level plans, though that word 'general' remains largely undefined.

Interesting things are, however, getting through. Although parking standards are on the edge of what is possible in a NDP, a few communities have succeeded in introducing local standards that vary from those of their highways authority. We ourselves helped a community to introduce design standards at odds with those of their local authority, and others have also successfully introduced different housing density and open space standards.

People and Planning stresses the value of what local communities bring to the plan-making process and it is, today, that specific local information and robust evidence, not just opinions and aspirations, that has enabled NDP communities to veer away from Local Plan policies.

Forums

People and Planning suggests the establishment of a Community Forum during plan-making. A Forum was to be ongoing, regular and formal; a base through which to mediate collaboratively the results from otherwise ad hoc participation events. This remains rare in Local Plan work today, enabling the officers on their own to pick and choose which consultation results they do or do not accept.

Some version of a Forum is legally required for NDP preparation work, through a Parish/Town Council Steering Group or an urban Forum[4] and, while currently lacking more than anecdotal evidence, success in NDP work appears more likely where the Steering Group acts primarily as a mediating body, not the core plan-writers, working very much with others in the local community. By contrast, a few examples of NDP failure at the examination stage, appear to be because the Steering Group has seen themselves as planning officers, built a plan from the results of ad hoc activities and then just consulted on it (as generally still happens with Local Plans, see next point).

Front-Loading

One of the illustrations in People and Planning outlines a plan-making process starting in the genuinely 'formative' stage with collecting data and it is only about halfway through the process that 'Alternative Plans' should emerge.

INSERT IMAGE 2 HERE

Image credit: (from Great Britain 1969, 33)

Based in part on government research (Department of the Environment, 1994) that I led in the

[4] Because urban areas lack the formal democratic structure of Parish and Town Councils as in rural areas, an urban Forum has to be developed, within specific criteria, for the purposes of guiding the Neighbourhood Plan.

early 1990s (though the government then 'forgot' to tell anybody they had published it!), the guidance linked to the 2004 Planning Act (Office of the Deputy Prime Minister, 2004) introduced what later became called 'front-loading.' This was about avoiding the typical approach, derided by a colleague of mine as 'Decide-Announce-Defend,' whereby officers sat on their own in locked rooms writing an 'Issues and Options' paper before launching it on an unsuspecting world and taking cover from the inevitable flak. Front-loading was about what Skeffington had suggested; going out on day one to the community to seek information, ideas and aspirations. Sadly, research following the Act showed that officer-generated Issues and Options papers remained – and remain - the standard first stage in plan-making (Department of Communities and Local Government, 2007).

By contrast, most NDP Steering Groups or Forums understand the need to front-load and go out to their community from day one. And, unsurprisingly, it is that commitment to front-loading that engages more people, which in turn produces the detailed local evidence to draft and justify specifically local policies.

Varied Methods

People and Planning is reasonably good on this, including an emphasis on the proactive use of local media, but we would now see its list of methods – notably public meetings - as limited and in some cases outdated. And, of course, social media in particular has provided a quantum leap in terms of what is possible (if not always useful).

From looking at national NDP practice, exciting, innovative and varied methods are clearly being developed and used by some NDP groups, and no successful group relies on a single method. What is particularly interesting is that some of those exciting methods come from work with children (see final point).

Most importantly, in our own NDP work with communities, we always try to use methods that are not just about consultation on something already drafted, but which are more about engaging people directly, and often in reasonable numbers, in core evidence collection; once again moving beyond determination by Steering Group alone.

Validation

This is barely addressed by Skeffington but it is critical and cannot be left out. The only link back is a mention that "*the public should be told what their representations have achieved or why they have not been accepted*". Reporting back on the use made of community input is a core principle of any participation, and that was another outcome of our research that morphed into policy, with the requirement for Local Plans to be accompanied by a Consultation Statement, setting out how people were engaged. However, most Statements we have seen are so short as to be useless and some are totally gratuitous.

Rather differently, there is a legal requirement for a NDP to be a "*shared vision*" from the community, also demonstrated through a Consultation Statement. But it is clear that some

examiners[5] attribute no weight to such statements while others regard them as crucial; practice is very inconsistent.

This is hardly surprising because it was certainly the case around 2004 (and is probably still the case) that examiners were not trained in how to evaluate participation. Yet doing such evaluation is not difficult; there are well established and legally grounded standards and criteria (Bishop, 2015) and none of that is any less objective than evaluating plan policies on housing or employment.

Every NDP, after examination, does have to go to a local referendum. But, in principle, if a plan is demonstrably a 'shared vision', why is a referendum needed? Removing the referendum requirement, placing the legal emphasis on demonstrating good participation in plan preparation, and ensuring that examiners attribute real weight to that, would almost certainly encourage more people to contribute when it matters, in the all-important formative stages.

Education for Participation

Skeffington is often criticised for placing too much emphasis on education; on preparing the public to play their part. Yet People and Planning was one of the essential triggers to the whole environmental education and Urban Studies movement of the 1970s and 1980s; a movement with which I was centrally involved, as was the Royal Town Planning Institute. And some of us

[5] As with local authority plans, any Neighbourhood Plan has to go through a process of formal examination, led by an independent and external Examiner.

even used the phrase ‘Education for Participation’.

And that movement was not just about working with children; it also involved work with adults and community groups, preparing them to have their voice heard, more and better, in their Local Plan or whatever. And this remains just as important today, because throwing people into participation on anything to do with planning without some sort of ‘training’, often only produces what we have heard many times from planners and councillors: “nothing much came from that event; just shows why we shouldn’t consult people”.

And this should be taken further. Our own approach is not to *do* NDPs *for* communities. Our approach is, wherever possible, one of capacity building; raising awareness and knowledge and developing shared social skills, so that people ‘own’ their plan and are hence better able to use it when finally made, and engage better on development proposals and on their next Local Plan, than if someone else writes their plan for them.

And we now have some evidence for this from a small research project (Place Studio, 2015) through which we found that, where consultants had done NDPs *for* the community, those Parish Councils were not actually using their own made NDP at all – no learning, no sense of ownership, no idea of how to use their plan …. no capacity built.

In addition, there is a need to challenge the general assumption that capacity building is something for communities, because it is our experience that planners need it just as much. Learning to listen is just one key skill, central to good participation practice; but do planners ever

learn it?

Final Comments

This paper has shown the continued relevance of much of what was in People and Planning to today, with two key provisos.

First, perhaps reflecting an assumption that much development would be public-sector led, People and Planning focused solely on the public and the planners, when there was a powerful third party; the private developers. Most of us would agree that this third party is unavoidable and over-powerful today. Different ways of working are urgently needed today to assert approaches that respect the role, but not the dominance, of the development industry.

Secondly, People and Planning makes no mention of what is often called pre-application community involvement[6] in England. That too shifted up a level through the 2004 Planning Act and then again through the Localism Act (Department of Communities and Local Government, 2011). However, like front-loading, it never lodged itself into mainstream practice but, in our view, it should and we have strong anecdotal evidence to prove its value.

In summary, the Skeffington Report was clearly of its time but there is still much to draw on and,

[6] 'Pre-application involvement' refers to work that planning applicants can do, or are occasionally required to do, in advance of submission of an application to consult with local communities affected by their development.

rather bluntly, we haven't! So perhaps the positive experiences of neighbourhood planning can – as many in local communities are now arguing – send messages up the system to strategic planners and planning and make those long overdue changes.

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From participation to inclusion

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The Skeffington Report continues the trajectory of the UK's post-war planning system's interest in efforts to involve people in planning. The post-war planning system argued for the necessity of people to be involved in planning schemes that would affect them, although the weight of decision-making remained firmly with the local state. However, the spatial imaginary invoked by planning during this period paid little attention to the increasing hostility towards Black and Minority Ethnic British citizens who had settled in urban areas.[10]

Against the backdrop of increasing hostility towards British citizens with family ties to the New Commonwealth, what form might participation take in an increasingly diverse society? Participation and inclusion, in a wider political sense, are often considered to be mutually supporting concepts. Public participation can be seen as a mechanism to include under-represented voices and viewpoints within planning decision-making. Participation sometimes emerges as a proxy for equality and inclusion yet there are critical flaws within British

[10] Within the UK the proportion of people from ethnic minority groups varies considerably with London being composed of around 41% BME people (Trust for London) but a national average of around 19.5%. Data for the UK as a whole remains based on the 2011 Census and the list of ethnic and racial categories is problematic. See Race Disparity Unity (Cabinet Office). UK Population by Ethnicity. Available at https://www.ethnicity-facts-figures.service.gov.uk/uk-population-by-ethnicity [date accessed 2 September 2019]

planning's approaches to ethnic and racial minorities. The most vociferous and well-organised participants often object to planning decisions and the majority fail to make their viewpoints known. The public find themselves divided into two broad groups: the 'usual suspects' who participate but find their contributions unwelcome or questioned as partisan; and the 'hard to reach' that seems to include the vast majority of the population but with particular attention given to a range of groups who are under-represented in all areas of policy-making and politics.

This characterization of participation is not new. The Skeffington Report holds such perceptions. Whilst the committee who produced the report was highly supportive of public participation, it considered that only certain viewpoints and organisations were reflected within it, and fretted about those who had little interest in engaging with planning. On the question of inclusivity, the committee notes that: "[I]t is possible for people's views to be narrow, bigoted and ill-informed as it is for local planning authorities to be autocratic, insensitive and stubborn." This acknowledgement of the problem of reactionary views is notable but there are limited insights into how this might be tackled. Within the report is a sense, one that persists, that planning and planning authorities ultimately move towards fairness. Understanding of racial and ethnic difference as socially and politically contested categorisations does not deny that there are material and life inequalities for different groups. Planning has a part to play in these everyday experiences. Yet research continues to find that the spatial needs of ethnic and racial groups are considered to be 'special requests' that are difficult to accommodate within planning frameworks. Here without a clear sense of what inclusion means, objections to mosques have led to Far Right mobilisation or, in the case of eruvs and other religious signifiers, racist objections that draw on a white British Christian imaginary (see for example Gale, 2005).

Planners are reticent to engage with these issues for numerous reasons. For a start there is limited guidance available as to how to deal with racially charged participation. Unfortunately, British planning's engagement with ethnic and racial diversity has been brief and arguably largely uninspiring. Although the RTPI considers equality to be one of our core values, its guidance on equality and dealing with racist viewpoints is problematic and naïve. In their general guidance published in 2017 they state that they consider equality to be a matter of treating "people equally". This is surprising to read considering that such definitions were criticised during the 1980s in a report commissioned by the RTPI and the Commission for Racial Equality. That report was highly critical of the "colour-blind" approach taken within the planning system and suggested that much racial discrimination persisted. Continuing research demonstrates the unequal spatial experience of ethno-religious groups within the planning system (see Gale, 2005; Watson, 2005).

Perceptions in the UK are of a fair minded and tolerant island nation, wrapped around a collective imaginary that is intolerant and resistant to our long multi-ethnic history. It is sustained through a continuing collective disassociation with Empire which sidelines decolonialisation debates. Scholars and activists have increasingly drawn attention to planning's role in the violent dispossession of territory through settler colonialism and the insidious practices that supported European notions of property and ownership whilst dismissing other systems and viewpoints (Barry and Porter, 2012; Bhandar, 2016). Far less work has engaged with the specific racial dynamics of British planning and its part within a colonial project - surprising given our long and far-reaching imperial history.

Planning is one facet of this wider malaise, but has an important and significant spatial dimension that directly impacts upon people's everyday quality of life. Continuing to be concerned about racism in society is a starting point and challenging racist viewpoints within the system is a public duty. But assuming that participation will overturn deeply embedded societal prejudice when we are reticent to even mention racism, anti-Semitism, or white privilege in British planning debates, is misguided. Here, one of the critical issues has been the inability to engage the racialised nature of British society, including white privilege and racism. Inclusion also implies that there is a pre-existing polity to join. In the British context, ethnic and racial minorities often find themselves urged to assimilate, but it is neither clear that this is possible or desirable given that British history and belonging remains strongly centred around whiteness.

The Skeffington Report remains a key reference point for debates about public participation in the UK. The report is more than an historical artefact, and emphasises the continuing problems for public participation in planning. However, it is important to consider Skeffington within the politics of the time. The Report was written during a time of rising social unrest in urban areas and increasing racial tensions, but has nothing to say about these urban conflicts. Instead it situates itself within a continuing narrative of what we could term 'civic rights,' confined to public comment on people's immediate quality of life as defined by planning schemes.

The Report is a reflection of a distinctive British path that envisages ethnic and racial division as forms of cultural and malleable difference. The pressing racial concerns of the time

are not explored even though it was published just one year after Enoch Powell's infamous and racist "Rivers of Blood" speech. Powell's political rhetoric cast ethnic and racial minorities as an unwanted facet of British society and called for these groups to be repatriated. These British citizens faced racism and discrimination, creating an interlocking, degraded and degrading urban experience for many racial and ethnic minorities.

The Skeffington Report's concerns about matters of inclusion are slight, but not out of step with planning practice. Institutional and historic structures, contemporary societal debates and tensions are subsumed through aspirations that participation is a force for positive change that brings out the best within people. The language of inclusion masks continuing deep divisions within society. Planning does not hold sole responsibility for these issues, but we must reject naïve constructions of racism and equality that consider these individual actions to be countered or placed as outside of planning. We need to develop a more nuanced and reflective understanding of the contribution planning can make to address racial and ethnic inequalities. Such efforts include participation, but inequalities cannot be addressed solely through invitations to inclusion distanced from the racial narratives that underpin British ways of belonging

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Marking the 50th Anniversary of Skeffington: Reflections From a Day of Discussion

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> 'Participation involves doing as well as talking and there will be full participation only where the public are able to take an active part throughout the plan-making process' (Skeffington, 1969, p1)

An overcast and muggy June day provided a slightly muted backdrop to the event marking the 50th anniversary of the Skeffington Report, but did not dampen the energy of the debate on the legacy of the report itself, and that of the role and meaning of widening public participation in planning. It marked both the ongoing importance of this landmark report, but less optimistically, the fact that the questions it sought to answer have not yet been adequately resolved. George Santayana's now near-aphorism comes to mind: *'Those who forget history are doomed to repeat it'*. Participants at the event were well aware of the lessons of the past, but were less convinced that current- and recent- governments are as well versed in both the rationale for and responses to this landmark publication. It is this ongoing agenda to which the day's debate contributes.

An opening panel, with presentations by Francesca Sartorio, Jeff Bishop, Katy Lock[11] and Yasminah Beebeejaun covered- as planning as a discipline always does when at its best- questions of everyday practicalities and theoretical and normative assumptions which underpin these. From these opening gambits, I felt four themes emerged which linked points made by all speakers.

The first is, fairly unsurprisingly for this event, the ongoing legacy and importance of the Skeffington Report to planning practice in the UK today. So many of the suggestions within the report, in terms of tools and techniques have come into practice, albeit in different and uneven ways. Its status as 'landmark' remains undisputed, but not without flaws. This leads to the second theme: questions of who 'the public' are in the eyes of policy-makers. The racialized and gendered imaginations of the policy makers in 1969 are evident; pubs but no Women's Institute victoria sponges in the illustrations - as Francesca Sartorio noted; and a naked female (albeit largely covered by a large sign) on page 46. Ethnic diversity is not readily visible in line drawings, and there is no indication that the participating public in these pages is anything other than white. This is still a pertinent issue today. Critiques of the neighbourhood planning agenda in England outlined how it was constructed around an imagined 'idyll' of English village life (Tait and Inch, 2016) and that gendered norms still shape the roles assigned to men and women in community activities (Beebeejaun and Grimshaw, 2011).

[11] Three of the four talks have been written up as part of this Interface, unfortunately Katy Lock from the Town and Country Planning Association was unable to contribute.

INSERT IMAGE 3 HERE

Image credit: (from Great Britain 1969, 46)

Those two issues underpin the third and fourth points: the need for clarity in terminology and the ongoing need for education. The importance of the words used in defining and discussing the role of the public was picked up by several speakers in the ensuing discussions - *involvement* being different from *consultation* and both of which are also different from *participation*. Moreover, these terms do not translate readily into different languages - revealing the problems with poor definitions. These are not merely academic or semantic points; it is 'vital to explore the messiness of actually existing forms of participation as they emerge' (Brownill and Inch, 2018, p23) rather than making assumptions about either the emancipatory potential or manipulative intentions of any activity, without assessing its initial aims.

These questions of definition resonate with the debate about the importance of education. On a basic level there is a need for people to know what is happening in their area, and to be able to understand the systems and structure in which decisions which will affect their lives are being taken. But beyond this are wider questions about what education is for (Colebrook, 2017). Educating people about the planning system may produce practical outcomes in terms of their ability to engage with it, but it presupposes a value to the planning system *as it is* rather than

allowing new ways of thinking about how the built and natural environment should or could be both managed and imagined.

Questions from the audience ranged from the specific (does the government actually read the reports the Town and Country Planning Association writes?) to the fundamental (what else do we need to do to ensure meaningful participation?). The importance of developing a *culture of participation*, rather than the episodic way it is generally done now, was brought out: active citizenship offering a new remedy to several of the issues of engagement, definitions and terminology. However, it was also voiced that this was something that both politicians and professional planners are terrified of, and that it is not something that is nurtured at the local level.

The event was next split into small group discussions - well facilitated with a deliberately selected range of participants in each, and the opportunity for more people to speak than in the larger arena: this in itself providing grounds for reflection on methods of participation. More speaking and listening by more people happened in the group I was part of, but not that much of it was directed at the questions set by facilitators!

The feedback from the groups resonated with the mood of the earlier discussion. Key themes which emerged from several of the workshop groups included the broader idea of active citizenship, questions about the restrictive nature of what counts as planning, and the damage this can do to engaging people. There remains a mismatch between ideas of engaging people *in the planning system* and *people engaging* in creating and debating their shared futures. Underlying these issues remained a sense of sedimented anger at the level of cuts (in funding and hence in

staffing) to the public sector and projects supported by public grant funding over recent years. Public sector support in terms of officer time or in terms of money to groups is still necessary, in the experience of many participants, to open the means of active citizenship to those who do not feel readily entitled to such status. This issue was clearly identified with Skeffington: recommendation six is that "Community development officers should be appointed *to secure the involvement of those people who do not join organisations"* (Skeffington, 1969, p47, emphasis added). This is of particular importance if the neighbourhood planning agenda continues. Neil Homer noted from his experience of acting as a consultant for neighbourhood planning groups, that people actually did take control, and found the process positive and engaging. However, there seems to be a long way still to go to make this a universally accessible activity (Gunn et al 2015, Parker and Salter, 2017)

This inequity, around how the benefits of participation are distributed, is compounded by the increasing role of the private sector in planning: part of the "shift from planning decisions being dominated by experts to being dominated by the market" (Brownhill and Inch, 2018, p13). Here, the contemporary issues divert most markedly from the context in which Skeffington was written. In 1969, planning and development were still seen as state-led activities, part of the post-war consensus which envisaged a central co-ordinating and delivery management role for the latter at both a local and national level. Moreover, this was matched by the levels of regulation and spaces for decision-making. As Lucy Natarajan from University College London pithily commented, less and less planning means fewer and fewer opportunities for participation or public control over development.

Overall, my lasting impressions of the day were that the public can be actively involved in planning where this is resourced, and a clear level of meaningful control over decisions and outcomes is within the gift of community groups. Skeffington marked a watershed; a step-change in the relationship between local authorities and 'the people'- even if these 'people' were narrowly conceived on the grounds of race and gender - the '(white) man on the Clapham omnibus' – archetypes of the everyday person. It is not something which any government has been able to revoke - but maybe this is because it is also something that no government has actually been able (or willing) to fully enact. But, as was widely voiced in the discussion, the problem may no longer lie directly with what government does or does not do. Governments and political parties of all persuasions support the idea of participation - as Sherry Arnstein said - 'it is a little like eating spinach: no-one is against it in principle because it is good for you' (1969, p216). But when so much has been done to put all development into the private sector, and to remove planning controls from so many things which used to be defined as development, what people can actually participate in making decisions about, becomes much more narrow. Regulation is too readily seen as just restrictive, instead of enabling and creating spaces of decision-making. Without rules to frame and define what counts as meaningful change, it is hard to clearly delineate space for debate in which people can meaningfully participate.

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What to Commemorate? 'Other' International Milestones of Democratising City-Making

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A commemoration is an act of remembering: 50 years ago, the Skeffington Report was published, and its celebration has been an opportunity to reflect on its implications, legacy, and lessons for participation in planning in the years to come. While a necessary and important exercise in the context of UK planning, we decided to approach this commemoration asking a somewhat different set of questions: What '*other*' reports, moments, events, policy or concrete achievement around democratising city-making should be celebrated internationally? What '*other*' milestones should be considered and commemorated, in a context in which participation and planning have diverse forms across the world?

The reasons behind asking these questions go beyond the geographical limitations of this particular document. As we will discuss in this brief text, the ways in which cities are produced go way beyond the formal channels of planning. Restricting the analysis of people and participation to official forms of planning can reinforce blind-spots regarding how cities are produced. In a recent reflection, we have argued for an understanding of participation *as*

planning by looking at collective forms of spatial production emerging from southern contexts, which respond to the inadequacy of formal planning to engage with diverse processes of city-making situated beyond dominant or traditional practices (Frediani & Cociña, 2019). This reflection builds upon at least two traditions that we are trying to bring into conversation with each other. On the one hand, there is the central place that collaborative notions have gained within the planning literature, following the seminal work of authors such as Patsy Healey (1997) that have generated a rich debate about the places where planning and participation take place, both in and beyond collaborative spaces (see Brownill & Parker, 2010; Cornwall, 2002; Legacy, 2017; Miraftab, 2009; Natarajan, 2017; Thorpe, 2017; Watson, 2014). On the other hand, we refer to the tradition of southern urban critique, that has pushed the urban field not only towards a set of 'southern' locations, but more importantly to questions about where and how knowledge is produced and circulated, looking to decentre urban theory and practice (see Bhan, 2019; Harrison, 2006; Lawhon & Truelove, 2019; Robinson, 2006; Robinson & Parnell, 2011; Roy, 2009; Watson, 2002).

With these two traditions in mind, we have approached this '*Interface*' as an excuse to ask colleagues, academics, professionals and activists working in different geographies, the following question: if there was one moment, event, achievement, report, policy or other milestone that we should be celebrating in relation to this topic, what would it be and why? In what follows, we discuss some of the diverse responses we received. The list does not seek to be exhaustive or to capture the hugely diverse set of planning practices taking place globally: the very selection of who we asked has shaped the answers we received. Rather, we present their reactions not only to account for the different trajectories of participation in planning in other

regions but, perhaps more importantly, to provide insights into how participation and the course of democratisation of planning take place through instruments and processes that often occur beyond formal planning systems, reports and regulations.

The first kind of milestone we received as a response refers to the ***social mobilisation and articulation of demands*** by urban dwellers, as discussed, for example, by the Indian urban practitioner and activist Celine d'Cruz. For her, the most significant transformation processes have started with the construction of alliances within groups of the urban poor. Reflecting on the case of The Alliance between the Mumbai-based NGO 'Society for the Promotion of Area Resource Centers' (SPARC), the National Slum Dwellers Federation (NSDF) and the creation of a female pavement dwellers organisation, Mahila Milan, d'Cruz suggests that the key strategic choice of the NSDF lay in working together with the pavement dwellers. NSDF was a federation of slum dwellers and their decision to include other categories of the urban poor in their movement was significant: "the emphasis was on bringing the urban poor together no matter what their habitat status was." She suggests that, on the one hand, the inclusion of the poorest groups within this alliance allowed pavement dwellers to get a voice and political leverage, and on the other, as they had the most urgent need for change, "compared to the slum dwellers they were much more motivated and ready to act. That was the magic, working with the very poor, because working with them strengthened this process with other slum dwellers." As d'Cruz reflects, the importance of this social organisation for Indian planning relates to the fact that policy alone does not make a difference: "We have no lack of good policy, it is more about how you convert it into a practice: how do you change behaviour, how do you change practice, how do you change the relationship between government and poor people." The work of SPARC and

the Alliance was able to directly influence projects such as the community involvement in the Mumbai Urban Transport Project, creating a precedent for other resettlement projects in the city. The process led by the Alliance was also key for the consolidation of the dwellers' movement throughout the world, through processes led by people such as Jockin Arputham, president of the NSDF in India, and a wide network of people who took part in the creation of Slum Dwellers International (SDI), which today is a global network of federations of informal settlement in over 30 countries.

The second category of response is closely linked to the first one and refers to ***precedent setting,*** led by NGOs and local authorities, working in collaboration with local actors and able to develop strategies that become model experiences for planning practices. The idea of 'precedent setting' was identified as a key tool by the Alliance, recognising "that setting a precedent was important to prove that communities had the capacity to actually 'do it'. Proof of this capacity was needed to create the legitimacy and trust required to get government support" (D'Cruz & Satterthwaite, 2005, p.48). This second type of landmark is also illustrated by the response we received from the South African Professor Vanessa Watson, based at the School of Architecture, Planning and Geomatics at the University of Cape Town. When asked about her impressions regarding meaningful 'milestones' for 'participation' in her work, she referred to a series of cases in the city of Durban that have been able to set precedents regarding the participation of people in city-making processes. One of the cases is the Warwick Junction Urban Renewal Project, a project located in a street trading area where a group of street traders worked for more than a decade in coordination with authorities to tackle urban challenges in the area. This experience was extensively documented in the book *Working in Warwick* by Richard Dobson and Caroline

Skinner with Jillian Nicholson (2009) and has become an important case to discuss the inclusion of street traders and communities in urban plans. A second case Watson mentioned is the Cato Manor Development Project, also in Durban. This project was led by an NGO called Cato Manor Development Association (CMDA), which emerged as a response to the lack of planning authority in Cato Manor during the 80s and early 90s, and focused on urban development in partnership with community-based organisations. The project was recognised as 'best practice' by UN Habitat in 2002, and has been documented by various research initiatives (see Beall & Todes, 2004; Odendaal, 2007). Both of these cases, Watson argues, illustrate the ways in which municipal government and NGOs can set precedents through concrete experiences of including communities in development processes. Based on these cases, she also invited us to reflect on why these types of initiatives often struggle to sustain themselves in the face of political shifts, and how institutions might give them greater continuity.

Finally, the third category of responses we received identified the setting of ***national and international legal and rights-based frameworks*** as the main milestones to commemorate. This is the case of the examples provided by Eva Garcia-Chueca from CIDOB, the Barcelona Centre for International Affairs, and former executive coordinator of the United Cities and Local Government (UCLG) Committee on Social Inclusion, Participatory Democracy and Human Rights. Some of the milestones she identified include the establishment of the City Statute in Brazil in 2001, which established a legal and policy framework to move forward the 'right to the city' through participatory urban policy-making. This is also closely related to the "social mobilisations that have taken place in several Latin American countries since the '80s", in countries such as Brazil, Colombia and Ecuador, "as they pushed the political agenda towards

urban reform." Garcia-Chueca also points to the adoption of several international human rights and 'right to the city' charters, which have contributed to advance a bottom-up perspective, in which local governments work closely with citizens and communities in the field of human rights and the right to the city (i.e. European Charter for the Safeguarding of Human Rights in the City, in 2001; World Charter for the Right to the City, in 2005; Global Charter-Agenda for Human Rights in the City, in 2011). Finally, García-Chueca points to milestones such us the creation of the 'Global Platform for the Right to the City' in 2014, and its advocacy role in the Habitat Conference in 2016 (see Cociña et al, 2019) and the publication of the 4th UCLG GOLD Report on 'Co-creating the Urban Future' in 2017.

The three categories of responses we have shared in this reflection do not pretend to be exhaustive of the different events that should be celebrated globally as achievements in participation and planning. However, they illustrate a variety of milestones and the diverse ways in which cities are made and participation is taking place, inside and outside planning systems. To conclude, we propose that it is pertinent to look back at Skeffington to interrogate it from this international perspective. The experiences and understandings of what 'planning' and 'participation' mean within the UK have repercussions beyond its territorial boundaries. This is not only because of the importance of a critical review of its colonial history and its impact on urban planning in cities globally. As an extension of this critique, it is also important to recognise the current political economy that shapes the global infrastructure of planning research and practice, as well as patterns of centrality in academia and knowledge production (see Connell, 2014).

Therefore, in this act of commemoration, we think it is important to problematise how, by 'celebrating' Skeffington, we might contribute to the ways planning is understood beyond the UK. There are, on the one hand, global trends that tend to see participation in a limited procedural sense, either contained within technocratic planning systems or appropriated by consultancy firms. This context reproduces a depoliticised and consultative approach to participation in planning, while overlooking the various mechanisms through which people are engaging in processes of democratising city-making. Considering this trend, there is a threat in looking at Skeffington without exploring what Brownill and Inch (2018, p.8) identify as the "areas of tension" in participation, in relation to four fields: the question of power, the clashes between different forms of governance, the role of planners, and "the relationship between citizen action within and outside the formal participation apparatus of the state." As they reflect, alongside the formal processes on which Skeffington focuses, there "is a more 'hidden history' of citizen-led action beyond the state that has often creatively challenged plans and proposals" (Brownill and Inch, 2019, p. 20).

By looking at these alternative or 'other' milestones, we hope to problematise and recognise the different trajectories through which participation and planning have encountered each other internationally. We propose that celebrating them can become a mechanism to challenge a limited understanding of the relation between planning and participatory city-making practices.

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An American's Reflections on Skeffington's Relevance at 50

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When the editors first invited me to share an American perspective on the significance of the Skeffington Report, I frankly could not recall ever having heard of the report. While I do not pretend to be a proxy for American planning scholars and practitioners, I have learned from subsequent conversations with peers that others share my ignorance. Now that I have studied the Report and come to see its value, I offer four reflections with a dual purpose of engaging both UK and US audiences in considering how the Skeffington Commission's work might have sat relative to – and might still usefully inform – norms and practices for public participation in planning in the US.

In many ways I admire the expansiveness of the Commission's vision of the purpose and possibilities of public participation. The report espouses a notion of 'publicity' that extends beyond keeping the public informed and taking in feedback on the content plans or policies that experts have already scoped and framed. It also recommends involving stakeholders even 'at the formative stage' of development planning, avoiding expert-only spaces, and assigning dedicated staff to make connections with and enable the involvement of disenfranchised groups. When realized, these are inclusive practices that build a civic community involved in framing and prioritizing public issues and co-producing decision-making processes as well as outcomes (Quick & Feldman, 2011). Since I began reframing my approach to citizen

participation away from 'participation as input' towards the co-production of plans and programs by governments with their constituents, I have noticed that the go-to sources on co-production are based in the UK (e.g., Bovaird, 2007) and that European scholars seem more likely than Americans to frame ideal forms of engagement as 'co-production.'[12] Now that I understand the significance of the Report, I wonder whether it set the stage for UK planners to be more inclined to a co-production orientation.

Yet, amidst the attention the report gives to expanding *inclusion* in politics, it ignores what American planners would consider its twin: the active *exclusion* of many. For example, the Commission makes a point of expanding decision-making circles to include "two main sectors… to be engaged: those who are actively interested and organised and the non-joiners and in-articulate from whom a response has to be drawn (p. 11)," failing to name and analyse the power relations that lead some groups to be not 'non-joiners' or 'in-articulate,' but rather to be afforded no voice. To my astonishment, the Report is silent on racism, sexism, and xenophobia, though written at the same time that the American civil rights movement was explicitly and very visibly drawing attention to racial discrimination, notably including active, anti-black political disenfranchisement.

The Commissioners and the stakeholders participating in their consultations in 1968 and 1969 had to have been aware of successful civil rights advocacy to expand and protect equal rights to education, housing, employment, and political participation

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12. Study Group on Coproduction of Public Services. International Institute of Administrative Sciences. https://iias-iisa.org

through voting and 'maximum feasible participation'[13] in policymaking. Yet, while highlighting what it viewed as positive experiments in public participation from two major American cities, Los Angeles and Chicago, the Skeffington Commission did not acknowledge that they were occurring against the backdrop of Los Angeles' Watts Riots and the Chicago Freedom Movement and their respective contributions to the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and Housing Rights Act of 1968. The racialization of political disenfranchisement was not unique to America; the Commission was founded amidst urban racial and ethnic conflicts in the UK. This begs the question of why these issues are not addressed outright in the Report, which through its language, guidance, and drawings of people in their communities constitute a world in which both planners and the public are all adult, overwhelmingly white, and disproportionately male. Erasure of differences and denial of racism, sexism, and xenophobia do not make them go away. Nor do I want to overstate the impact of recognition; doing so in the US in the 1960s did not propel US planners to fully realize equity planning practices (Zapata & Bates, 2015).

The most influential *American* writing on citizen participation in planning of the last 50 years directly reflects these civil rights sensibilities. Arnstein's (1969) 'ladder of citizen participation' has always brought to my mind a 'storm the Bastille' image of excluded groups trying to force their way into halls of power from which they had been excluded. The ladder is not about 'unorganized' people being 'drawn in,' but rather people fed up with what Arnstein critiques as 'manipulation' to 'placation' forms of 'nonparticipation' and 'tokenism' (on the lower rungs of the ladder), striving to rise to

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[13]. The Economic Opportunity Act of 1964, a keystone of President Johnson's War on Poverty, called "maximum feasible participation" of the poor in the design and evaluation of community action programs.

what she idealizes as a 'citizen control' level of 'citizen power.' It remains powerful as an iconic framework for recognizing variation in practices and for calling out the misuse of 'participation' to exclude. However, as a government-centric scale, it provides an incomplete picture of planning, which involves multiple public and private institutions in polycentric networks, and which exercises colonizing forms of power through amorphous societal norms, including the valorisation of expertise, efficiency, and order. And, the ladder is narrowly oriented to public influence as of the moment of decision-making – also a shortcoming of the Spectrum of Public Participation,[14] another highly influential schema (Nabatchi, 2012) – to the neglect of the consequential early stages of planning.

Another prominent American planning influence of this period, Jane Jacobs' (1961) the *Death and Life of Great American Cities*, aligns well with the Report in several ways. In her fierce advocacy to re-centre a city's residents in planning, Jacobs was making arguments both about the planning process (with her opposition to expert-centric, rational planning) and about planning outcomes (with her compelling defence of street life and neighbourhoods). The Report is consistent with this. While it eschews laying out aesthetic guidelines and recommends against giving any special privileges to environmentally minded interest groups, its multiple 'before' and 'after' pen and ink drawings send a different message. The undesirable, pre-planning images prominently feature congested streets, pedestrians navigating streets at their peril, walled off parks, demolition of small businesses, and oversized street signs and billboards. I imagine that Jacobs would have liked the 'after' images for their intimate scale and emphasis on pedestrian safety, park benches, preservation of local businesses and structures, and

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[14]. IAP2 Spectrum of Public Participation.™ https://www.IAP2.org/page/pillars.

neighbourhood squares, while criticizing the message they convey that those spaces are primarily for white men's enjoyment.

The Report's recommendation against giving particular groups special access to participation is emblematic of its whole orientation to design, which is my favourite aspect of the report. At first glance, it may seem banal to draw attention to design as an outstanding feature of the Commission's approach. Shouldn't any report about 'methods' and 'techniques' of participation essentially be about design? Yes, I believe it should, but in fact a great deal of guidance on public participation consists of one or more maxims about or instruments for participation, without a more holistic view of the process, context, and dynamics (Sandfort & Quick, 2017). In contrast, the Report sets its stage quite differently, stating at the outset that the report concerns the *combination* of the unfolding nature of planning, the procedures of planning, and the relationship between planners and the public. The "Structure Plan" figure – a process diagram running across the bottom halves of six pages – indicates that public participation should happen frequently, and from the beginning, distinguishes different constituents and purposes along the way, carefully sequences steps, and demonstrates the merging and splitting of parallel streams of activities at key juncture points. Yet, while it serves as a visual reminder that public participation should be sustained over a long period, the accompanying text emphasizes the need to balance sufficient time for consideration with reaching closure. Similarly, the Report embraces an adaptive rather than rigid design sensibility by emphasizing that different plans require different approaches, for example by pointing out that in some cases participation should be spatially oriented to including localized groups, and in other cases thematically oriented to including interest-based groups. Thus, it delivers on its concluding request, "We should like our recommendations to be used as guidelines for constructive action, rather than as a

deadening book of rules (p. 48).” I believe it still serves this purpose today, as a resource for our ongoing efforts to re-centre planning processes as a coproduction of planners and their publics.

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