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Problem, research strategy, and findings:

Ethical considerations are integral to most aspects of planning, but the bases of planners' ethical decisions are not well understood. In fact, there has been no follow-up to Elizabeth Howe and Jerome Kaufman's original 1979 survey of the ethics of American planners in this journal (45(3), 243–255). Our research evaluates the differences in planning roles and planners' ethical perspectives since then. In their study, Howe and Kaufman use hypothetical scenarios to determine which of three roles planners play: technician, politician, or a hybrid. They also evaluate how the role that planners assume affects their ethical views. Our research uses similar scenarios to evaluate these relationships in contemporary planning practice while simultaneously evaluating the influence of professional experience on the ethical bases of those choices. We confirm many of Howe and Kaufman's findings, but first we find that today's planners assume different roles than they did in the mid-1970s, conforming more often to a technical role and less to a political or hybrid role. Second, today's planners tend to make virtue-based choices when concerned with ideological and legal issues, but revert to rule-based or utilitarian choices when faced with the dissemination and quality of information and segments of the population receiving special advantages. Finally, we find that planners, at all stages in their careers, maintain a mixture of virtue- and rule-based ethical choices while affirming the profession's core values (as represented in the 2009 AICP Code).

Takeaway for practice: The vast majority of practicing planners in our sample (80%) use the AICP Code of Ethics in response to our hypothetical scenarios. At the same time, self-interested responses were rarely made. These findings reaffirm the code's value to the profession.

Ethical considerations are integral to most aspects of planning, from the smaller decisions such as determining the location of a public meeting to the larger decisions involved in planning for affordable housing or a new industrial site. Planners should use a good evaluation strategy that incorporates ethical considerations, not their personal preferences, to make policy recommendations (Anderson, 1985). As Elizabeth Howe and Jerome Kaufman observe in their seminal 1979 *JAPA* article:

For planners, ethics set the boundaries of acceptable behavior. In theory, a set of commonly held behavioral norms make up the body of professional ethics. ...[W]hether codified or not, these norms represent guidelines for planners to adhere to in conducting themselves as professionals. More importantly, they represent the basis for assuring the public who uses planning services that planners will act responsibly in exercising their professional judgment and in applying it. (pp. 243–244)

In the complex world of plural politics, planners charged with serving the public interest are often challenged by the frequently competing demands of various stakeholders: their employers, clients, public officials, developers, community activists, neighborhood associations, and many more public and private constituencies. Planning activities are intended to serve an entire community, but in reality can and do affect various constituencies differently, which poses multiple ethical challenges.

We revisit the seminal 1979 Howe and Kaufman study. Howe and Kaufman asked planners to explain what they would do in a variety of challenging situations; based on those responses, these researchers categorized the ethical frameworks that planners use to undertake their professional duties. Howe and Kaufman find that planners fall into three roles: *politicians*, *technicians*, or *hybrids*, although most fall into the last category.

Keywords: planners' ethics, planner's roles, ethical frameworks

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In this context our broad question is: If ethics forms a commonly held body of behavioral norms that sets the boundaries of prescribed acceptable action (Howe & Kaufman, 1979), what frameworks are practicing planners using today? More specifically, using similar methods, we ask:

- What roles do planners assume today?
- How well do today's practicing planners conform to their prescribed code of ethics, the AICP Code of Ethics and Professional Conduct (American Planning Association [APA], 2009)?
- How does a planner's role influence their ethical choices?
- How does experience influence the ethical choice and/or roles of planners?

To do so, we conducted a survey of a large number of 2015 members of the APA, building on Howe and Kaufman's work but making important changes to represent contemporary planning practice.

We organize this article into four sections, beginning with a discussion of planners' roles and ethical frameworks. First, we explain Howe and Kaufman's (1979) research and the necessity of reevaluating that work. Second, we explain our perspective on the ethical dilemmas in contemporary planning practice and the ethical frameworks that practicing planners might use to resolve them. Third, we explain our research questions, research design, and survey methods. Fourth, we describe our findings and conclude from our survey.

Many of our findings confirm Howe and Kaufman's (1979) work, but there are important differences between our work and theirs. Our first major finding is that there are meaningful differences in the roles planners assume today and those they assumed in the mid-1970s. Planners today conform more often to a *technical* role, in which planners see themselves as value neutral, relying on objective information, and less to a *political* role, where planners see themselves as advocates for specific values or policies. Planners today are also less likely to conform to a *hybrid* role, where they pragmatically use the tools most appropriate for the situation, either political or technical. We also find that today's planners tend to make virtuous choices, aspirational decisions based on their own moral codes, when concerned with ideological and legal issues. Planners revert, however, to deontic ethics—that is, rule-based decisions—or utilitarian ethics, those concerned only with the impact or outcomes of those decisions, when faced with the dissemination and quality of information and segments of the population receiving special advantages. Finally, we find that planners at all stages of their careers today maintain a mixture of virtuous or aspirational choices and deontic- or rule-based ethical choices while affirming the profession's core values.

Planners' Roles and Ethical Frameworks

Revisiting the Howe and Kaufman (1979) work is necessary for two major reasons. First, planning and planners have changed in the last 37 years. While there has been some writing on the subject of planners' roles and their ethics since Howe and Kaufman's original survey, there has been no follow-up to that seminal work. One significant change since 1979 is the demographic makeup of planners. Today planners are younger, more educated, and less likely to be male and White. Each of these demographic changes has the potential to affect how and why planners make role choices and ethical decisions (Howe, 1980). Second, since Howe and Kaufman's original survey of APA members was conducted, the planning accreditation process has required a curriculum component to cover ethics. Thus, we expect that recent professionally trained planners will have received this ethical training and be more familiar with ethical dilemmas.

Howe and Kaufman (1979) surveyed respondents on what planners think is ethical and what factors influence their views. They find that the role assumed by planners greatly influences their ethical views and that these role choices are related to planners' political views. Howe and Kaufman do not, however, explore the ethical bases of these planners' views. Ethical theory (as we discuss below) in fact has provided a basis for very different ethical perspectives. Thus, our question is not whether a particular action is ethical, but rather the bases on which planners consider that action to be ethical or not. Our work is designed to simultaneously evaluate the ethical bases of planners' views and the influence of practical experience on those role and ethical choices.

Howe and Kaufman's 1979 survey provides 15 ethics scenarios. They use a 5-point Likert scale to develop their classification of planner roles, asking the respondent if the situation was *ethical* (5) or *not ethical* (1). They provide a second set of 15 planning scenarios, asking their respondent whether they would make the same choices as did the planner described in the scenario, also using a 5-point Likert scale. These scenarios are not comprehensive and, more important, they did not provide a political or social setting, thus creating potential measurement error (i.e., it is difficult to know if all the respondents were answering the same question). To correct these potential deficiencies, we use focus groups to modernize the scenarios in our survey.

Howe and Kaufman classify their respondents into three roles (Howe, 1980) based on their attitudes¹ toward technical analysis and political behavior in planning

following the debate at the time reflected in the prior literature by Walker (1950), Meyerson (1956), and Beckman (1964) versus Banfield (1961), Rabinovitz (1969), Benveniste (1972), Needleman and Needleman (1974), Cantanese (1974), and Meltzner (1976). The technical role, according to Howe and Kaufman (1979), is that of a value-neutral advisor. This planner is an advisor to both the decision makers and the public. As a trained and educated professional with expertise and experience, a planner assuming the technical role provides information (often the pros and cons of specific alternatives) and knowledge of the legal rules and procedures without displaying a personally preferred policy position. They classify 26% of their respondents as *technicians*.

The political role is different from the technical role in that it is value committed (Howe & Kaufman, 1979). Planners may be activists or advocates for particular policies using their expertise and position to ensure that their preferred policies and programs are implemented. Much of the literature on this subject, from, for example, Davidoff (1965), Benevise (1972), Cantanese (1974), and later Forester (1989, 1999) and Flyvberg (1998), has suggested that the *political* role is much more effective than the traditional technical role. Political planners use their professional, personal, and community's values to determine their planning objectives (see also Harper & Stein, 2006; Innes, 1995, 1996). Howe and Kaufman classify 18.2% of their respondents as *politicians*.

Howe and Kaufman (1979) suggest that the roles that planners adopt fall on a continuum and cannot always be categorized as solely traditional and technical or political. Their research suggests that there is a *hybrid* role, a mixture of both the technical and the political roles. Such planners are pragmatic, using whatever approach they deem most appropriate for a particular situation (Howe & Kaufman, 1979). Howe and Kaufman classify more than half the planners (50.8%) in their sample as taking a hybrid role based on their responses to the survey.

Howe and Kaufman (1979) do not include responses that scored low on both the political and technical scales due to a low response rate. Only 4.5% of their respondents would have been classified in this category. Following Meltzner's (1976) ideas, we suggest that discarding these respondents may have been in error because the planner who scores low on both the political and technical scales chooses neither a political nor technical role. Instead, this type of planner may be considered bureaucratically pragmatic, not solely technically pragmatic and politically pragmatic as implied in the hybrid role.

Following Howe and Kaufman (1979), we posit that ethical dilemmas today can be attributed to a central

conflict in planning practice: the role of expertise in planning recommendations (legitimacy) and the role of plural politics in decision making (democratic legitimacy) and in the implementation of those decisions. Out of this dilemma we pose a new delineation of strategic planning roles.² Planners as technicians in our approach lean heavily on their expertise (and therefore legitimacy) using science and objective analysis to steer clear of the supposed quagmire of plural politics and leaving democratic legitimacy to actors in the political sphere. The planner as politician is more overtly "value committed" and leans more heavily on discovering, or helping to construct, the political requirements for a recommendation's approval and the potential collaborative relationships necessary for its implementation. The political planner leans more heavily on interpersonal skills of communication and collaborative relationship building than on technical expertise to achieve strategic agreement. As with Howe and Kaufman (1979), we define a hybrid planner as placing a high value on expertise, but recognizing that planning recommendations that are technically and scientifically accurate but politically unsupported are unlikely to be implemented. These planners ascribe to a role that combines aspects of both technical and political strategies to achieve viable or implementable recommendations.

Finally, we find that for some planners a planning position is merely a vocation, perhaps to support some other avocation. The strategic decisions and role assumption of these practicing planners are designed first and foremost to maintain that vocation; we create a new role and style these planners as *careerist*. Careerists are not concerned with the integrity of their expertise or the legitimacy of a democratically constructed government apparatus and its collective decision making. Their strategic decisions are based only on the technical requirements of their functions within the bureaucracy. Meltzner (1976) labels these planners "pretenders" (p. 15).

Ethical Frameworks and the AICP Code

Most professional occupations have a code of ethics, something they need to engender trust between their professionals and the public.³ Martin Wachs (1985) notes, "The historical role of professionalism is to seal a social bargain between the members of a profession and the society in which its members work" (p. 20). This promise is significant, since the majority of a planner's work is either for or with the public. The professional code of ethics for planners is the AICP Code of Ethics and Professional Conduct, revised in 2009 (see <https://www.planning.org/ethics/ethicscode.htm>).⁴

The AICP Code of Ethics and Professional Conduct reflects a combination of three theories of ethics about how planning decisions should be made:

- virtue ethics, which are aspirational and based on the moral character of the decision maker and not on the outcome of the decision;
- deontic ethics, which stress following accepted rules of behavior and are not based on the outcome of the decision; and
- utilitarian ethics, which depend solely on the outcomes or consequences of the decision (Long, 2017, ch. 2).

Daniel Wueste (2005) argues that a convergence of ethical theories creates confidence in the ethical basis of a decision. In the planning profession, if these three theories confirm the same decision, planners can know that the decision is ethical. We use these ethical theories to examine the particular ethical frameworks professional planners may use in their decision making. Note that these three theories depend on different perspectives: on either the personal or organizational rules that the decision maker follows or the outcomes, as we explain in greater detail below.

Virtue ethics is aspirational, and does not rely on a set of rules; rather, this concept focuses on what people should do to be the best people they can be, “striving for excellence in life” and doing what someone they respect would do (Wueste, 2005, p. 20). We use the term *virtue ethics* to refer to decisions that make decision makers appear to have the best character because we cannot infer their true character by the decisions they make. Planners making decisions using a virtuous framework will do as they perceive someone who they respect would do. This would include the principles outlined in the aspirational section (Section A: “Principles to Which We Aspire”) of the AICP Code of Ethics.⁵ In the section on planners’ “overall responsibility to the public,” for example, the AICP Code tells planners that “we aspire to the following principles: e) we shall give people the opportunity to have a meaningful impact on the development of plans and programs that may effect them. Participation should be broad enough to include those who lack formal organization or influence.”

Virtue ethics suggests that the planner does the ethical thing because it is moral, not because of the impact on others. “The rightness of an action in a given set of circumstances is to be derived from its being one that a fully informed and virtuous agent would perform in those circumstances (if acting in character)” (Cullity, 1999, p. 283). But the impact on others also has moral ramifications. The rightness of an action is dependent on who is judging and under what circumstance. What might be

virtuous to a 60-year-old woman in the United States and a 20-year-old man in Malaysia is different. This leaves virtue ethics open to interpretation. Thus, in our analysis and interpretation, we focus on responses that demonstrate that planners are “striving for excellence” as an indicator that they are trying to act virtuously.

A deontic theory of ethics, the second framework on which the AICP Code is built, is based on an accepted set of rules. For AICP-certified planners, these rules are provided by Section B: “Our Rules of Conduct” of the AICP Code of Ethics. Not all planners are members of AICP and cannot be held accountable by its adjudication and disciplinary process, but non-AICP professional planners work hand in hand with and often are supervised by AICP planners. Thus, non-AICP planners often adopt the AICP Code as their accepted rules of conduct.

Le Bar (2009) uses a second-person account to explain a deontological standpoint, the gist of which is “our recognition of others as having the status to make claims upon us and hold us accountable for our treatment of them” (p. 648). The rule created by the second-person argument is summed up with the golden rule: Treat others as you would want to be treated. But more clearly it is: Do not treat anyone in a way you would not want to be treated.

Deontic ethics are easy to understand, but also easy to criticize. Using a clear set of rules helps planners decide on the best course of action but does not address situations in which that decision leads to a negative outcome. Strict code enforcement of minor violations in low-income neighborhoods, for example, can lead to household displacement, more abandoned structures, dangerous and illicit land uses, increasing housing-cost burdens, more neighborhood decline, and associated reductions in tax revenue. Thus, while situations can be examined for their morality by using a deontological approach, making deontic decisions does not ensure a collective benefit (outcome).

Utilitarian ethics, on the other hand, are all about outcome. This ethical theory holds that the proper course of action is the one that maximizes utility, usually defined as maximizing happiness and reducing suffering. The ethical thing to do is the thing that results in, unit for unit, more good than harm. Utilitarianism focuses on maximizing utility and reducing suffering for the entire community, but community may be defined in the particular context. The preamble to the AICP Ethical Principles in Planning (as adopted May 1992) provides an example of this paradigm:

The planning process exists to serve the public interest. While the public interest is a question of continuous debate, both in its general principles and in its case-by-case applications, it requires a conscientiously held

view of the policies and actions that best serve the entire community.

This is consistent with how Rachels and Rachels (2012) define a conscientious moral agent:

...someone who is concerned impartially with the interests of everyone affected by what he or she does; who carefully sifts facts and examines their implications; who accepts principles of conduct only after scrutinizing them to make sure they are justified; who is willing to “listen to reason” even when it means revising prior convictions; and who, finally is willing to act on the results of this deliberation. (p. 13)

Hedonism, or ethical egoism, is a fourth philosophy of some interest in our research, although not contained in the AICP Code of Ethics. As Becker and Becker (2001) note, hedonism finds it ethical to act in one’s self-interest, ignoring the interests of others unless they happen to merge or conflict with the interests of the self. Hedonism does not measure either the impact on others or the pain to others as long as the decision maker has pleasure (see also Rachels, 2008). This ethical theory is clearly focused on the individual and not the community. We doubt most planners think that they use self-serving ethics to make decisions, but we examine the possibility that hedonism, or a focus on self-interest, does motivate some planners.

We conclude that the AICP Code of Ethics strives for the convergence of virtue ethics, deontic ethics, and utilitarian ethics in many of its rules of conduct. We use these three ethical theories and a fourth, hedonism, to examine the particular ethical frameworks professional planners may use in their decision making. The scenario in Question 31 of our survey provides an example of how we accomplish this, allowing respondents to provide only one response:

Policy says “advertise in a newspaper of general circulation.” You know the residents in the rezoning area generally don’t read the newspaper and the newspaper has a low circulation rate in the area. You:

- Just follow policy.
- Find additional ways to advertise.
- Don’t bother advertising at all.
- Follow policy as written, but use this as an example to public officials to recommend a change to the policy.
- Follow the policy and note in staff report that it was only advertised in the newspaper and therefore notice may not have reached all concerned.

We classify the first response option, “Just follow policy,” as based in deontological ethics because planners selecting this option are just following policy. The second possible option, “Find additional ways to advertise,” is based in utilitarian ethics because it demonstrates an effort to increase the effectiveness of the outcome. We classify the third response option, “Don’t bother advertising at all,” as based in hedonistic ethics because it expresses an unwillingness to follow the rules because of the “bother” or work it imposes on the planner. We classify the fourth response option, “Follow policy as written, but use this as an example to public officials to recommend a change to the policy,” as based in virtue ethics because the planner decides to follow specific rules but goes further with the intent to change that policy and improve the rules. Finally, we classify the fifth response option, “Follow the policy and note in staff report that it was only advertised in the newspaper and therefore notice may not have reached all concerned,” as based in both deontological ethics because planners choosing this response indicate that they would follow the rules, and in utilitarian ethics because their concern for the outcome requires they note that deficiency of the decision.

The AICP Code of Ethics may be interpreted to prescribe decisions that conflict with those that political and/or community interests expect planners to recommend, and our survey focuses on this issue as well. Such political pressures are often a reason planners use to explain ethical inconsistencies (see Long, 2017). This is consistent with Vasu’s (1979) work, which finds that planners recognize that the social and political realities of practice often conflict with their technical role. The perceived conflict between political pressures and ethical choices is also consistent with Hoch’s (1988) survey of American planners that finds that many planners think politics are often pitted against planning and, moreover, that politics are dangerous.

Our research also seeks to characterize differences in ethics that are associated with differences in professional experience. We specifically question how experience, the context in which planners work, and their assumed role influence their ethical principles. As planners acquire experience, their decision-making process may change. No one has evaluated whether planners will learn to make better decisions over time, although it is often assumed so. In fact, one can imagine that the quality or ethical basis of a planner’s decision making may decline if poor or unethical decisions are rewarded. We hypothesize that the longer a planner is on the job, and the more challenges faced, the more a planner learns, and there is a greater chance of differences in the ethical choices planners make at different career stages.

A Survey of the Ethics of Professional Planners

To answer our general question (What ethical frameworks are practicing planners using today?), we surveyed professional planners in the United States to determine which ethical frameworks practicing planners use today to structure their work. More specifically, we asked: How well do today's practicing planners conform to the AICP Code of Ethics? How do the roles planners feel comfortable performing influence their ethical choices? How does professional experience (in years) influence the ethical choice and/or roles of planners?

In the spring of 2015, we conducted focus groups and a pilot survey to replicate but also modernize the Howe and Kaufman (1979) scenarios to reflect current planning practice. We held two focus groups with participants of various ages, experience levels, and job experience. The focus group members were given each scenario in the survey and asked to evaluate it for accuracy and relevance to planning practice today. They were also asked to volunteer any scenarios they might have encountered and to explain the importance of ethics to their decision making. We then revised the scenarios in our survey instrument in response to the comments of the focus group participants. We shared the revised survey instrument with the pilot survey respondents to allow us to more carefully scrutinize the survey instrument and make corrections before the official survey was sent to a larger sample of members of the APA.

We surveyed the members of the APA, an organization of professional planners. In 2014, there were 37,750 members of the APA. Although most planners belong to the APA, not all planners do. Thus, our population comprises those who consider themselves professional planners and have joined this professional organization. We could not conduct a stratified random sample because the APA would not share their membership list. The APA, however, did email all members and requested that they participate in the survey and followed up with two reminder emails. The survey was also advertised in the APA Interact (the Association's member email blast) twice. The APA emails directed willing participants to participate in an online survey. The advantage of using email is that the vast majority of APA members (more than 98%) have an email address.

We may have introduced a small coverage error because a small number of APA members do not have email. This raises the possibility of self-selection bias as well as potential nonresponse error because some people might not respond to an email request. The APA made five email contacts to limit nonresponse (following Dillman, Smyth, & Christian, 2014). We needed 1,038 responses to achieve

a confidence interval of 5% for a total population of 37,750 members. We received 1,334 complete responses.

Our Sample Respondents

Table 1 presents the demographic characteristics of our sample compared with sample data from the APA 2014 Salary Survey.⁶ Our respondents ($n = 1,334$)⁷ were 57% male and 88% White. Sixty percent held planning degrees, 72% held masters degrees (48% of those in planning). Sixty-seven percent worked in the public sector, while 22% worked in the private sector; 71% were AICP certified. Respondents averaged 20 year of work experience evenly distributed with a large (21-year) standard deviation. More respondents worked in the west (29%) than in the south (24%), Midwest (20%), mid-Atlantic and New England (17%), or southwest (8%), while 1.5% worked outside the United States. Roughly 2% were younger than 25, 31% were between 25 and 40, 46% were between 41 and 60, and 20% were older than 60. Forty-nine percent of the respondents were working at the executive level. Howe and Kaufman (1979) do not include demographic data about

Table 1. Sample demographic comparison.

| | | 2015 ethics survey sample, % | 2014 APA salary survey, % |
|-------------------|-------------|------------------------------------|---------------------------------|
| Gender | Male | 57 | 61 |
| | Female | | 38 |
| Race | White | 88 | 86 |
| | Non-White | 12 | 14 |
| Age, years | <25 | 2 | 0 |
| | 25-40 | 31 | 40 |
| | 41-60 | 48 | 49 |
| | >60 | 20 | 11 |
| Experience, years | <20 | 50 | 60 |
| | 20-30 | 22 | 22 |
| | >30 | 28 | 13 |
| | Median | 19 | 15 |
| Education | <BS | 5 | 2 |
| | BS/other | 12 | 17 |
| | BS/Planning | 9 | 10 |
| | MS/other | 24 | 21 |
| | MS/Planning | 48 | 47 |
| Employment sector | PhD/JD | 2 | 4 |
| | Public | 67 | 71 |
| | Private | 22 | 23 |
| | Non-profit | 3 | 3 |
| | Other | 8 | 0 |
| AICP | Yes | 71 | 58 |

their sample; we do know, however, that that 53% of their sample worked in the public sector. Our sample's demographic characteristics are similar to the APA's 2014 Salary Survey data in terms of race, education, and employment. Our sample contains slightly more responses from female, older, more experienced planners, and more AICP respondents than those represented by the APA sample.⁸

Surveying APA Members

Our survey consists of three sections. The first section includes nine questions to collect background and demographic information to determine which attributes, such as education or years of service, have an impact on ethical decision-making. The second section is modeled directly on Howe and Kaufman's (1979) survey to determine respondent role choices. The third section consists of ethical scenarios used to evaluate respondent ethical frameworks.

We asked six questions to determine how respondents saw their role. Table 2 is a synopsis of the scenarios presented in the role choice portion of the survey. We use a 5-point Likert scale to determine degree of disagreement or agreement, as do Howe and Kaufman (1979). The scenarios include the tactic (the planner's ethical choice) and who or what benefits from the issues being considered.

Table 3 contains the 18 ethical scenarios for which we provided a choice of responses that represent the AICP

Code, but also vary according to an ethical framework: virtue, deontological, utilitarian, or hedonist. We provided these varied choices because we were interested in the ethical frameworks that might underpin a planner's ethical perspective. We delve deeper into the ethical bases of respondent choices than do Howe and Kaufman (1979); we asked respondents to choose a response that was formulated within the particular ethical frameworks discussed above, rather than just asking them to determine if a scenario was ethical or not. Respondents were given 18 scenarios and asked how they would handle the situation. Table 3 provides a synopsis of the 18 scenarios presented to determine ethical framework. The figure includes the scenario, the central tactic, and which interests or stakeholders were addressed or benefited.

We gave respondents five choices corresponding to a combination of the different ethical frameworks discussed earlier: virtue, deontological, utilitarian, and hedonistic. Individuals (practicing planners included) do not consistently use a single ethical framework: What matters is context, tactical strategy, and to whom the ethical responsibility refers (consistent with Howe and Kaufman's 1979 findings).

We developed a coding scheme to classify individual planner's ethical frameworks (tendencies) to evaluate respondent choices. In developing this coding scheme, our logic is that if the choices of framework made by

Table 2. Description of planner role scenarios, tactic, and beneficiary.

| Scenario | Tactic | Issue benefiting |
|---|---|-------------------|
| Q10: An economic planner initially criticized, on technical grounds, a proposal by a community development corporation to develop a small industrial park in a low-income area presented before the planning commission. Later, that same planner recommends the project to the commission after being told of the director's support for the project. | Change technical judgment due to pressure | Low income |
| Q11: A city planner who is a member of the Chamber of Commerce gives information, without authorization, to the head of the Chamber on an agency study being prepared that will recommend reducing number of on-street parking meters in the central business district (CBD) to lessen traffic congestion. | Leak information | Development |
| Q12: A planning director undertakes a campaign to create a crisis atmosphere about the pollution and health hazards of the city's waterways by holding press conferences next to the city's most polluted waterways to get media coverage. | Dramatize problem to overcome apathy | Environment |
| Q13: A city planner gives draft recommendations on a scattered-site public housing plan to the representative of an affluent homeowners' group who requests them; no agency policy exists about releasing such information. | Release draft recommendations upon request | Low income (anti) |
| Q14: A county planner, without authorization, gives information and advice on her own time to a citizen's group trying to overturn in court a county rezoning decision. The county planning staff had opposed this rezoning, but it was approved by the County Council. The rezoning allows an oil company to build a refinery on a large, tree-covered waterfront property. | Assist group in overturning an official planning action | Environment |
| Q15: A planning director is preparing to interview prospective planners for her department. She has narrowed the applicants down to the five most qualified. She googles each of the top five applicants and finds that one of the applicants is in a different political party than she and another has inappropriate posts on his Facebook page. She decides not to interview either of them and only interviews the remaining three. | Discriminate based on partisan politics and use of personal information | Organization |

Table 3. Description of ethics scenarios, tactic, and beneficiary.

| Scenario | Tactic | Issue benefiting |
|---|---|----------------------------|
| Q16: You are a planner for a city and are invited to lunch by a developer who has an application before the City Council. | Accept bribe | Developer/personal benefit |
| Q17: A community group asks to see a development application, submitted but still under staff review; the city you work for has no policy. | Leak information | Community group |
| Q18: Your county is planning to vote on new transit fares. Regional planners have developed estimates that would recommend raising the fares. Each time in the past that the fares have been increased, ridership has decreased more than the revenue produced by the increased fares. | Distort information | Mass transit, low income |
| Q19: A project under review by your office will improve a neighborhood you own property in and will likely lead to a positive impact on property values. | Misuse professional position | Personal benefit |
| Q20: As the planning director for a city planning agency, you want to develop support for a new park & ride facility. So far, less than half of the neighborhood groups you have consulted are in favor of this. | Distort information | Mass transit |
| Q21: Another department within the city recommends clearance of a substantial amount of land in a low-income neighborhood. You are the city planner for that neighborhood. | Leak information | Low income |
| Q22: The suburb you work for has exclusionary zoning. | Protect underrepresented groups | Low income |
| Q23: Your agency's director purposely left out certain documented findings because they do not support agency policy. An environmental group requests the findings. | Leak information | Environment |
| Q25: You know during the budget process you will have to negotiate all items in the new fair share housing plan. | Use expendables as tradeoff | Low income |
| Q26: A land developer requests the "draft" recommendation for a development plan for a largely underdeveloped part of city. This draft has been vetted by city departments; it has not been reviewed by the Planning Commission. The city has no policy on providing drafts to public. | Release draft recommendation on request | Land developer/development |
| Q27: Your brother-in-law brings in an application for development review. | Misuse professional position | Personal benefit |
| Q28: The IT director for the city you work for can get iPhones at the municipal rate (which is much less than the retail rate) and offers to get you one or more if you prepay in cash. This is not a city employee incentive; the IT director has just made this offer to you and the other directors. | Misuse professional position | Personal benefit |
| Q29: Every area in your city that has an adopted neighborhood plan has improved and the property values have increased. The neighborhood you live in is tenth on the list of area plans to be performed. | Misuse professional position | Personal benefit |
| Q30: Your supervisor asks you to approve a project regardless of its status. | Change technical judgment due to pressure | Politician |
| Q31: Policy says "advertise in a newspaper of general circulation." You know the residents in the area for the rezoning have a low circulation rate and don't generally read the newspaper. | Provide adequate information | Residents |
| Q32: You are the note taker at a neighborhood meeting, and those who attend the meeting are expressing views different than you think many in the community believe. | Provide adequate information | Residents |
| Q33: You are a city planner and one of your responsibilities is to maintain the planning department content on the City's Facebook page. The City has just recently obtained a Facebook presence and currently has very few policies on its use. A citizen requests a copy of an application in for development approval. | Provide adequate information | Residents |

respondents were random, their choices would not be significantly different than 25% in each category, or 4, 4, 4, 4. We feel it is clearly not a random choice when planners choose one of these four more than 50% of the time; we can then infer that the category chosen more often is their primary preference framework (our dominant categories). If planners, after choosing that primary preference framework, were to choose randomly among the remaining

categories, then those choices would not be significantly different than 33.3%, or 10, 3, 3, 3. So, if after choosing the primary preference framework, respondents choose one of the remaining three more than 50% of the time, five or greater (10, 5, 2, 1), that is clearly not a random choice and we can infer it is their secondary preference framework (our combined dominant categories). The remaining categories are mixed (no clear dominant preference choice).

But not all mixed frameworks are the same. There are mixed frameworks with a subdominant preference: those clearly significantly different than random, but with no one dominant framework (between 50% and 33%, still clearly greater than 25%), whose most frequently chosen framework is chosen seven to nine times, and if the second choice is less than five, it would be a mixed but with a subdominant category. Another differentiated mixed category would be one where there is no dominant choice, but two tied for subdominance, but not three tied (so 9, 9, 0, 0 or 8, 8, 2, 0, or 7, 7, 3, 0). This is a mixed but with dual subdominants category. Finally, if there is no clear preference of framework, no framework chosen more than six times (6, 6, 6, 0 or 6, 6, 5, 1, etc.), we can label them chaotic. Table 4 summarizes the categorization of ethical frameworks chosen in our sample.

Finally, we should note that our survey, as do all surveys, suffers from the potential biases of all self-reported data. First, respondents may answer questions in a fashion that they perceive professional planners should answer them, overemphasizing their use of the frameworks the AICP Code

represents. Second, the use of hypothetical situations simplifies the difficulties and actual constraints involved in real planning situations. This could further exacerbate a planner's tendency to overemphasize the use of the frameworks consistent with the AICP Code because it is much easier to overcome or simplify these difficulties and constraints in hypothetical situations. We try to ameliorate these biases by providing only ethical choices plus one self-interested hedonistic response. Thus, respondents could indicate they would "do the right thing" but with different justifications based on the various ethical frameworks we are researching.

Planners' Role and Ethical Frameworks in the New Millennial

Different Planner Roles Over Time

Table 5 depicts our modification of Howe and Kaufman's (1979) planner roles based on our research. We find significant differences between the role orientation of planners in our sample and in Howe and Kaufman's mid-1970s sample. First, we find slightly more than four times the proportion (4.5% to 20.7%) of careerists (those 26 scoring low on both their political and technical scales who were disregarded in Howe and Kaufman's original survey), a slightly smaller proportion of politicians (18.2% to 15.3%), but twice the proportion of technicians (26.5% to 53.7%) and almost one-fifth the proportion of hybrids (50.8% to 10.3%). If both our findings and Howe and Kaufman's are comparable and accurate, Table 5 clearly shows that the political role of planners has diminished significantly: overtly in a drop in the politician role, but mostly by the decrease in the hybrid role offset by the corresponding increase in technicians.

Table 4. Categorization of ethical frameworks chosen in the sample.

| Dominant categories | Solo dominant (4 possible, 2 in the sample) | |
|---------------------|--|--|
| | Virtue | 10 virtue choices, other choices each <5 |
| | Deontological | 10 deontological choices, other choices each <5 |
| | Utilitarian | 10 utilitarian choices, other choices each <5 |
| | Hedonistic | 10 hedonistic choices, other choices each <5 |
| | Combined dominant (12 possible, 1 in the sample) | |
| | Deontological/virtue | 10 deontological choices, 5> virtue |
| Mixed categories | Mixed subdominant (12 possible, 4 in sample) | |
| | Mix/vir | 7-9 virtue choices, second most frequent less than first, 5> |
| | Mix/deo | 7-9 deontological, second most frequent less than first, 5> |
| | Mix/util | 7-9 util choices, second most frequent less than first, 5> |
| | Mix/hed | 7-9 hedo choices, second most frequent less than first, 5> |
| | Dual subdominant (4 possible, 1 in the sample) | |
| | Dual sub | Less than 10, but first two tied, but >6 |
| Chaotic | no framework choice >6 | |

Note: The frameworks in bold appeared in the sample.

Table 5. Planner's role choice (n = 1,334).

| Technical scale | Political scale | |
|-----------------|-----------------|-------------|
| | Low | High |
| Low | Careerists | Politicians |
| | 20.70% | 15.30% |
| | n = 276 | n = 204 |
| High | Technicians | Hybrids |
| | 53.70% | 10.30% |
| | n = 716 | n = 138 |

Note: Respondents are categorized by role choice based on their response to five questions (Q10-Q14 on our survey) asked by Howe and Kaufman (1979). They are categorized if they answered these questions as follows in this order (strongly agree or agree, neither, disagree or strongly disagree): Political: if 5,0,0; 4,1,0; 4,0,1; 3,2,0; or 3,1,1; Technician: if 1,2,2; 1,1,3; 1,0,4; or 0,0,5; Hybrid: if 3,0,2; 2,1,2; or 2,0,3; and Careerist: if 2,3,0; 2,2,1; 1,4,0; or 1,3,1.

The low number of politically oriented planners in our sample runs counter to the large percentage of executive-level planners in our sample who are subject to higher levels of political influences. This unexpected finding suggests that our respondents may have been hesitant to admit to political influences on their professional ethics or that these professional planners were not planning educated. To evaluate this unexpected finding with the data we have, we cross-tabulate the roles that planners chose with their educational background; we find that 62% of the hybrid, and 63% of the political planners, were planning educated, while only 54% of the technicians were educated in planning programs (a statistically significant difference at the .05 level). Thus, the differences between the number of *technical* planners in our two samples may in fact be due partially to the increase in number of non-planning-educated practicing planners (e.g., civil engineers, economists, geospatial sciences, environmental engineers, etc.). Unfortunately, we do not ask in which non-planning fields they were educated.

We evaluate whether the roles chosen by planners are affected by personal attributes by cross-tabulating the role choices and the personal attributes of each respondent. If sociodemographic characteristics do not affect role choices, these characteristics would be proportionately distributed across the role choices. A comparison indicates where particular demographic characteristics are disproportionately represented in different planning role choices and suggests that those characteristics affected the respondents' choices. Table 6 demonstrates that race and region of employment are not strong factors in role choice in our sample. Planners who indicate that they have chosen a technical role tend to be middle-aged (41–60 years old), executive-level planners, with fewer planning degrees. Interestingly, a higher proportion of non-AICP-certified and non-planning-educated practitioners assume a political role. Those who choose a political role tend to be young (less than 25 and 25–40 years old) and have less than 10 years of work experience; they are less likely to be executive-level or public sector planners. Political planners are also more likely to have planning degrees. Hybrid planners are less likely to be from the Midwest, and are more likely to be from the west, in entry-level positions, and with planning degrees (66.4%). Finally, careerists are more likely to be in entry- or mid-level positions with fewer years of experience.

We also conduct a factor analysis of the data, similar to the analysis undertaken by Howe and Kaufman (1979). Our analysis allows for significant factor categorization, as does Howe and Kaufman's (see the Technical Appendix for the details of this analysis, including sampling adequacy

tests, significance tests, factor loadings, and correlation coefficients).⁹ Figure 1 provides a visualization of our factor analyses of planners' role choices. Our analyses show that role choice is solidified for older, more experienced, AICP-certified, and middle- and executive-level planners; note that age, experience, and position level correlate highly on the first component, labeled "experience," for all four planning roles). This is not an earth-shattering finding: We are well aware that as we age and gain experience, our identity and sense of self solidifies. What is interesting about these results is their differences. The second, third, and fourth components of the roles vary greatly. Those choosing a technical role are more likely to be a well-educated, White, female, private sector planner with AICP certification. The political planner is more likely to be an experienced, White, not well-educated, AICP-certified planner in the public sector, whereas the hybrid planner is an experienced, well-educated, White, female planner in the private sector. Careerists are more likely to be experienced, well-educated, private sector planners, or experienced, well-educated, non-White, male AICP-certified planners. The hybrid planner is similar to the technician, but more highly concentrated in the private sector. And the careerist is similar to the politician but more highly concentrated in the private sector.

Planners' Ethical Choices

Overall, a slight majority of our respondents use a mixed deontological framework (50.5%) to make planning decisions. The next most common framework used by planners is a dominant deontological framework (17.5%). The third and fourth most common frameworks are a combined deontological and virtue (12.7%) and a mixed and virtue (7.6%). Finally, few of our respondents (0.1%) use primarily an individually self-interested (hedonistic) framework.

Table 7 provides a cross-tabulation of planners' role and ethical framework choices, while Figure 2 is a visualization of the ethical frameworks used by particular planner roles. If planners' ethical frameworks are not affected by their role choice, then respondents would be proportionately distributed across those frameworks. However, we find that the ethical framework used by those who adopt a political or hybrid role are affected by their role choice. Planners following a political role clearly use more mixed frameworks (particularly mixed/virtue, mixed/utilitarian, and mixed/mixed), choosing a much lower percentage of deontological responses than the other planners. Planners following a hybrid role make a higher proportion of deontological choices, with a lower proportion of deontological or virtue and mixed or virtue choices than would be

Table 6. Planner attributes and role choice (in percentages).

| Characteristic | | Technician | Politician | Hybrid | Careerist | All planners |
|---------------------------|-----------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|--------------|
| Gender | Male | 57.2 | 51.0 | 56.9 | 60.5 | 56.9 |
| | Female | 42.8 | 49.0 | 43.1 | 39.5 | 43.1 |
| Race | Non-White | 11.8 | 11.3 | 12.3 | 12.4 | 11.9 |
| | White | 88.2 | 88.7 | 87.7 | 87.6 | 88.1 |
| AICP certification status | Non-AICP | 27.8 | 33.8 | 27.5 | 30.8 | 29.3 |
| | AICP | 72.2 | 66.2 | 72.5 | 69.2 | 70.7 |
| Education | BS-planning | 9.4 | 11.3 | 5.1 | 10.1 | 9.4 |
| | BS-other | 14.3 | 7.8 | 8.8 | 9.8 | 11.8 |
| | MS-planning | 43.6 | 52.0 | 57.0 | 50.0 | 47.6 |
| | MS-other | 24.9 | 22.5 | 20.4 | 22.8 | 23.6 |
| | PhD-planning | 0.6 | 0.0 | 0.7 | 1.1 | 0.6 |
| | PhD-other | 1.4 | 2.9 | 2.2 | 1.4 | 1.7 |
| | Planning | 56.6 | 64.7 | 66.4 | 63.4 | 60.3 |
| | Non-planning | 43.4 | 35.3 | 33.6 | 36.6 | 39.7 |
| Age, years | <25 | 1.3 | 4.4 | 0.7 | 2.5 | 2.0 |
| | 25–40 | 26.5 | 41.7 | 34.1 | 34.1 | 31.2 |
| | 41–60 | 52.0 | 36.8 | 42.0 | 41.3 | 46.4 |
| | >60 | 20.2 | 17.2 | 23.2 | 22.1 | 20.4 |
| Experience, years | <10 | 18.9 | 30.8 | 25.4 | 28.0 | 23.3 |
| | 10–19 | 28.8 | 29.2 | 23.9 | 28.4 | 28.3 |
| | 20–29 | 24.8 | 18.1 | 26.1 | 16.0 | 22.1 |
| | 30–39 | 19.1 | 17.7 | 14.9 | 18.3 | 18.3 |
| | 40+ | 8.4 | 4.0 | 9.7 | 9.3 | 8.1 |
| Employment sector | Private | 22.2 | 27.5 | 25.6 | 24.9 | 23.9 |
| | Public | 75.2 | 68.7 | 70.5 | 70.4 | 72.8 |
| | Nonprofit | 2.6 | 3.8 | 3.9 | 4.7 | 3.3 |
| Position | Entry level | 6.4 | 12.6 | 11.9 | 11.4 | 9.0 |
| | Mid-level | 36.2 | 49.4 | 40.5 | 47.2 | 40.9 |
| | Executive | 56.6 | 35.6 | 46.8 | 39.8 | 49.0 |
| | Public official | 0.8 | 2.3 | 0.8 | 1.6 | 1.2 |
| Region | West | 26.5 | 29.2 | 37.0 | 31.2 | 29.0 |
| | Southwest | 9.0 | 8.4 | 7.2 | 7.1 | 8.3 |
| | South | 24.1 | 23.3 | 26.1 | 23.0 | 24.0 |
| | Midwest | 21.5 | 20.3 | 13.0 | 19.7 | 20.1 |
| | Mid-Atlantic | 13.5 | 11.9 | 11.6 | 14.1 | 13.2 |
| | New England | 4.2 | 4.5 | 3.6 | 4.1 | 4.1 |
| | Outside U.S. | 1.1 | 2.5 | 1.4 | 0.7 | 1.3 |

Note: The proportions bolded are significantly different than those for all planners at the .05 level.

expected if distributed proportionally in our sample. Thus, planners assuming a hybrid role are more rule based and less aspirationally motivated, while political planners make a lower proportion of deontological choices than would be expected if those choices were random.

Finally, planning experience and ethical choice are significantly correlated, but the correlation coefficient is so small ($r = .076$, $p = .001$) that our hypothesized relationship is not theoretically significant. We suspect this is a result of the sample size. Thus, we cannot verify, as we

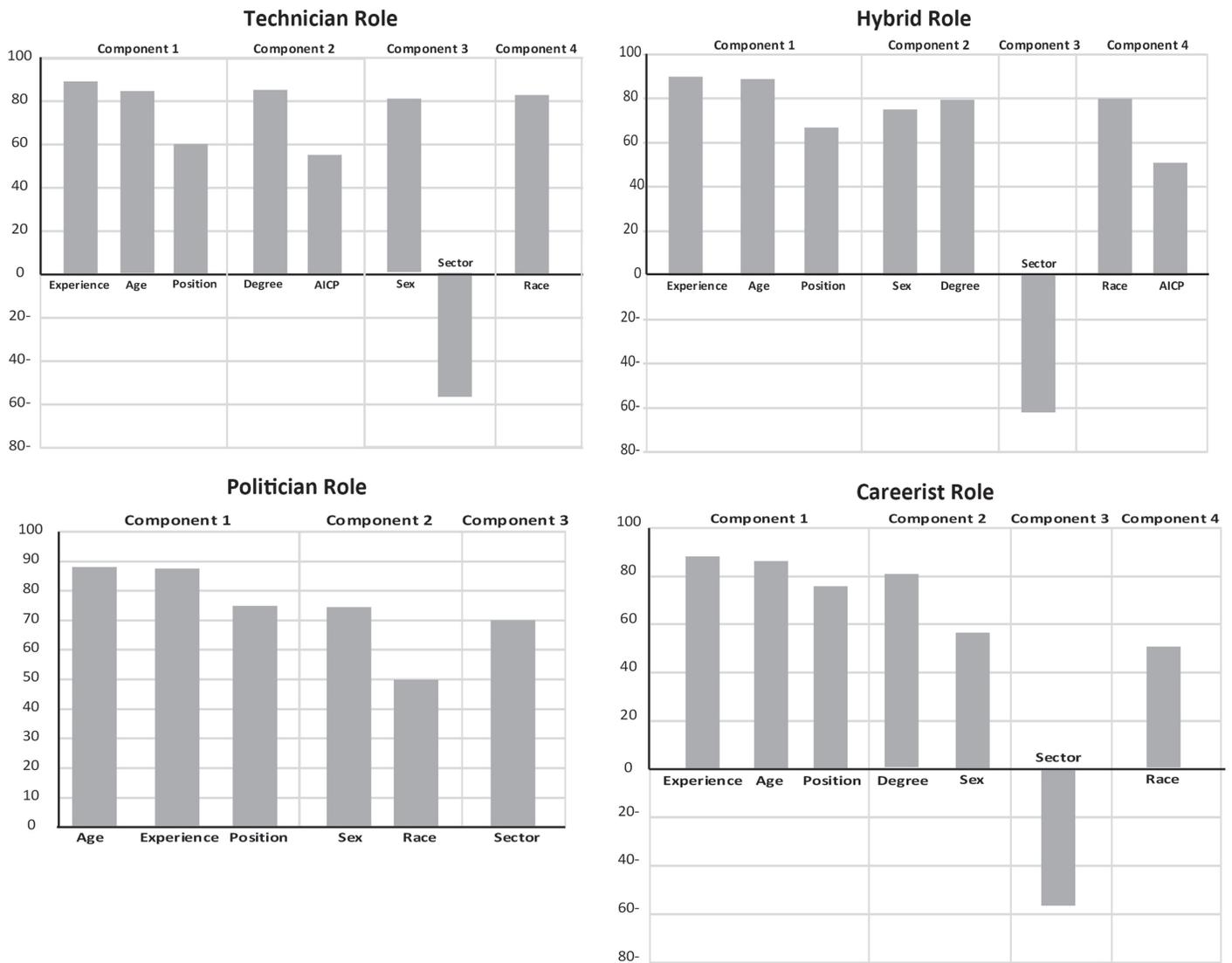


Figure 1. Planner attribute factor loadings by planner role.

hypothesized, that planners are likely to use a deontological ethical framework early after receiving their certification, but as time goes by will begin to rely more on their experience to make decisions. In fact, it appears that planners

maintain a mix of virtuous and rule-based ethical choices after they have gained experience.

Another way to examine the relationship between planners' role choice and ethical frameworks is to evaluate

Table 7. Planners' ethical framework and role choice.

| | Technician, % | Political, % | Hybrid, % | Careerist, % | All Planners, % |
|----------------------|---------------|--------------|-------------|--------------|-----------------|
| Deontological/virtue | 15.6 | 12.7 | 6.5 | 10.1 | 13.1 |
| Deontological | 19.1 | 10.3 | 27.5 | 15.6 | 17.9 |
| Mixed/deontological | 47.5 | 52.9 | 52.9 | 51.8 | 49.8 |
| Mixed/virtue | 7.1 | 9.8 | 1.4 | 11.6 | 7.9 |
| Mixed/utilitarian | 0.4 | 2.9 | 1.4 | 1.4 | 1.1 |
| Mixed/hedonistic | 0.1 | 0.5 | 0.0 | 0.0 | 0.1 |
| Hedonistic | 0.0 | 0.0 | 0.7 | 0.0 | 0.1 |
| Mixed/mixed | 10.1 | 10.8 | 9.4 | 9.4 | 10.0 |

Note: The proportions bolded are significantly different than those for all planners at the .05 level.

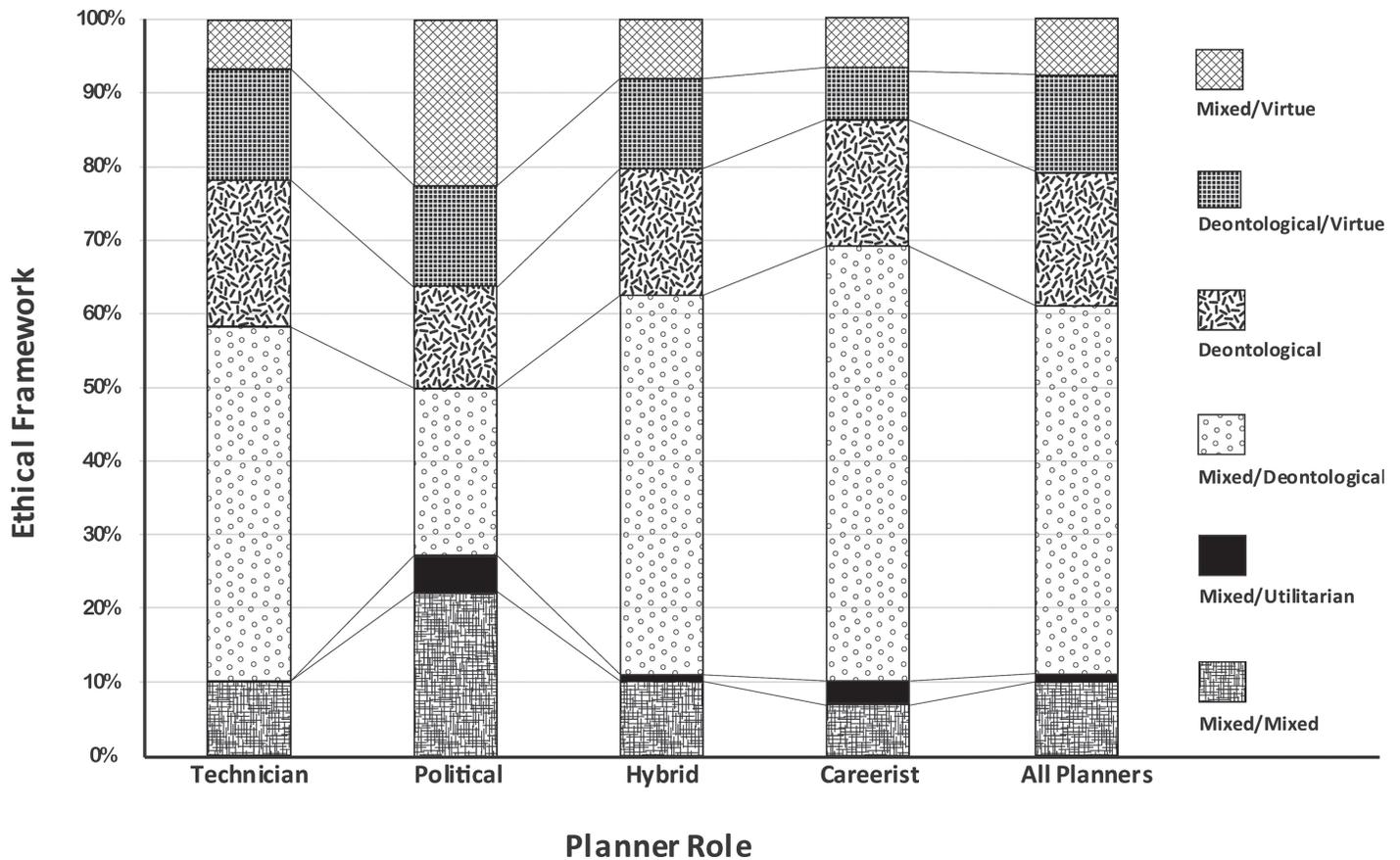


Figure 2. Planner's ethical framework by role choice.

the demographic characteristics of the planners that make choices within the various ethical frameworks. Here again factor analysis allows us to see these relationships in their complexity. Figure 3 is a visualization of the results of our factor analyses of the chosen ethical frameworks. The standalone frameworks of virtue, utilitarian, and hedonistic and the mixed frameworks of mixed virtue, mixed utilitarian, mixed hedonistic, and dual subdominant had too few responses for factor analysis to evaluate. Those that scored the highest on deontological choices are again White, male, well-educated public sector planners; older, experienced, AICP certified and promoted tend to choose the deontological framework. The factors scoring the highest with the combined dominants deontological and virtue indicate that White, educated, experienced, mature, promoted planners and private sector planners with AICP certification tend to choose the deontological/virtue framework. Experienced, mature, educated, promoted, White, female, public sector planners with AICP certification are more likely to give mixed deontological responses. Finally, White, educated, mature, experienced, promoted, AICP-certified, male public sector planners are most likely to give chaotic responses. The differences here are mostly in regard to sector. The private sector planners

tend to choose deontological or virtue, while public sector planners purport to apply a more rule-based approach.

How Planners View Tactical Ethics

Howe and Kaufman (1979) find that the tactics, or how planners accomplished their goals, have an important effect on ethical choices. Table 8 lists the five tactical situations used in the scenarios, ranked by how respondents indicated the acceptability of the proposed actions. Fewer planners in our sample than in Howe and Kaufman's (67% vs. 75%) find "leaking information to the Chamber of Commerce" unethical. In contrast, more of our respondents than Howe and Kaufman's feel that "assisting a group to overturn official action" (65% vs. 24%), "changing a technical judgment due to pressure" (52% vs. 39%), and "dramatizing a problem to overcome apathy" (47% vs. 13%) are unethical. Planners in our sample are roughly as likely as those in the Howe and Kaufman sample (36% vs. 34%) to think that "releasing draft information on request to homeowners groups" was unethical. These responses are consistent with the larger number of planners in our survey who assume a technical role, perhaps indicative of our more conservative political climate.

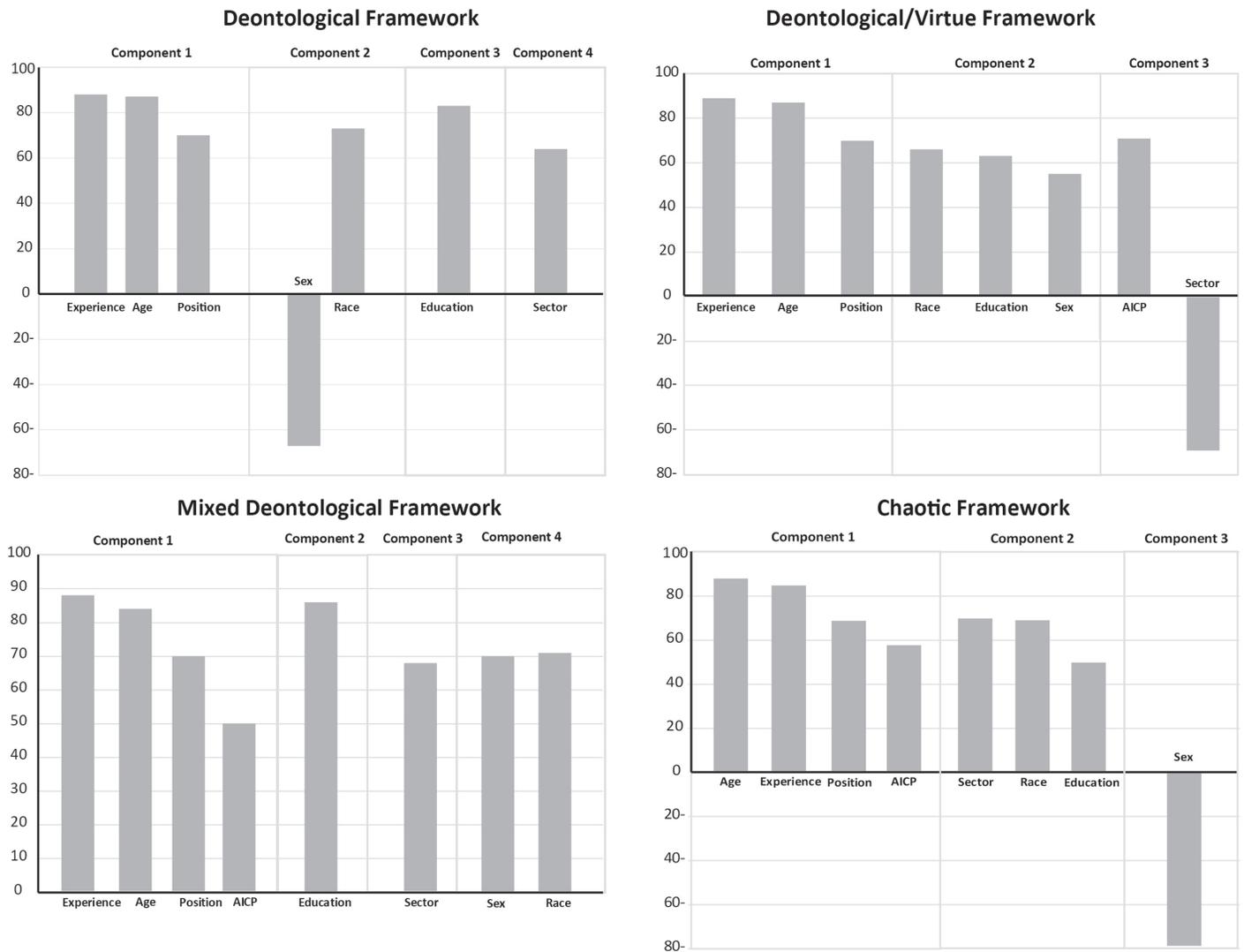


Figure 3. Planners' attribute factor loadings by ethical framework.

Table 8. Rank order of tactics by ethical acceptability.

| Rank ^a | Tactic | Scenario | Percentage total response ethical ^b | Percentage total response unethical ^c | Percentage total response not sure | Mean ^d |
|-------------------|--|----------|--|--|------------------------------------|-------------------|
| 1/3 | Release draft information on request to homeowners group | 13/14 | 38.4 | 36.0/34 | 25.5 | 3.03 |
| 2/1 | Dramatize problem to overcome apathy | 12/13 | 27.5 | 47.2/13 | 25.2 | 3.38 |
| 3/2 | Assist group overturn official action | 14/15 | 21.2 | 64.9/24 | 13.6 | 3.71 |
| 4/4 | Change technical judgment due to pressure | 10/11 | 11.3 | 51.5/39 | 27.6 | 3.65 |
| 5/5 | Leak information to Chamber of Commerce | 11/12 | 11.8 | 67.4/75 | 20.8 | 3.83 |

Notes: The proportions bolded are significantly different at the .05 level.

^aOur ranking is listed first, followed by Howe and Kaufman's 1979 ranking.

^bPercentages for some scenarios are less than 100% due to rounding.

^cPercentages in our sample is listed first; Howe and Kaufman's (1979) is listed second.

^dThe lower the mean score, the higher the number of ethical responses; the higher the mean score, the higher the number of unethical responses. The scale was (1) *clearly ethical*, (2) *probably ethical*, (3) *not sure*, (4) *probably unethical*, and (5) *clearly unethical*.

Table 9 demonstrates the proportion of survey responses by ethical framework for each of the 18 scenarios. Each scenario has five choices, each choice representing an ethical framework or a combination of frameworks. We discern the differences between the choices of ethical frameworks by sorting the table data by each ethical framework (largest to smallest) separately. Planners choose the virtue framework—basing a decision on a personal moral code or what a respected professional would do—most often in scenarios that concern protecting the unrepresented, responding (or not) to threats, accepting bribery, releasing draft recommendations on request, using expendables as tradeoffs, and changing technical judgment due to pressure. Planners make deontological choices, those based on formal rules, most often in scenarios that address distorting information, misuse of professional position, and giving special advantages to certain stakeholders. Planners make utilitarian choices, those based on the value of the outcome, less frequently than either virtue or deontological choices in general, but were chosen most often in scenarios involving leaking information, adequate information, release of draft recommendations, and changing technical judgment due to pressure. Finally, planners rarely make hedonistic, or self-interested, choices, but when they do, the tactics concerned are using expendables as tradeoffs and changing technical judgments due to pressure. Thus, it appears these planners are virtuous when dealing with ideological issues (protecting the unrepresented, releasing draft recommendations on request, and changing technical judgments due to pressure) and legal issues like bribery and threats. They are more likely to be rule based (make deontological choices) or make utilitarian tradeoffs when concerned with the distribution of information and conferring special advantage, to themselves and on certain stakeholders.

Howe and Kaufman (1979) find that “planners react more to tactic than to the beneficiary in making their ethical choice” (p. 247). However, as shown in Table 10, in 2015 our sample suggests that the beneficiary also affects the ethical choices that planners make. Resorting the data in Table 9 to create Table 10, we see that planners choose the virtue framework, making their choices based on what they think is moral or admirable, most often in scenarios where the issue benefits the environment and low-income communities or stakeholders, but also developers and land development issues and politicians. Planners make deontological or rule-based choices most often in scenarios where the issue being addressed is mass transit, personal benefits, or residents. Planners make utilitarian choices, those focused on the outcome, less frequently than either virtue or deontological choices in general; planners do choose the

utilitarian framework most often in scenarios where the scenario concerns benefits for a community group. Finally, hedonistic choices are very rare in general but planners make such choices when the scenario indicates that politicians would benefit.

The Contemporary Ethics of Professional Planners

We conclude by highlighting our major findings in terms of their significance for the planning profession and planning education. Our first research question concerns the roles that planners assume today in comparison with Howe and Kaufman’s 1979 findings. We find a significantly larger proportion (4.5% to 20.7%) of careerists and technicians (26.5% to 53.7%) than do Howe and Kaufman, but a smaller proportion of politicians (18.2% to 15.3%) and hybrids (50.8% to 10.3%). Thus, a major difference between our findings and those of Howe and Kaufman is that most of our respondents choose a technician role, not Howe and Kaufman’s hybrid role. Baum (1996), following Schön (1983) and Dalton (1986), suggests that planners affirm the technical role not only because it supports claims of their professional status but because experience has taught them it is effective. We feel that Howe and Kaufman’s findings are contextually related to the political climate of the 1960s and 1970s, while our findings are just as contextually related to our recent and current political culture. Thus, as with the general population, professional planners have become more conservative.

Technical justifications and viewpoints might function, however, as a safe refuge for politically liberal planning policy perspectives. In fact, this interpretation is consistent with Howe and Kaufman’s (1979) prescient prescription:

Our data indicate that the most effective way to ensure that planners have such a restrictive view of planning and of ethical behavior would be to train people as technicians, since, of our three roles, they have not only the narrowest view of the planners’ range of discretion, but are even more restrictive in what they are actually willing to do in practice. (p. 253)

Taking a technical role over a political role is not, however, consistent with how ethics and planning roles have been taught in planning schools since Howe and Kaufman’s prescription (Klosterman, 1981, 1992, 2000, 2011). Planning educators, in fact, have been professing to the contrary: that the traditional technical role is theoretically impossible and potentially distorting and that a political or hybrid role

Table 9. Tactics by ethical acceptability sorted by proportion of survey responses.

| Tactic | % Virtue | Tactic | % Deontological | Tactic | % Utilitarian | Tactic | % Hedonistic |
|---|---------------------|---|----------------------------|---|--------------------------|---|-------------------------|
| Protect underrepresented | 86.1 | Distort information | 92.1 | Leak information | 28.5 | Use expendables as tradeoff | 12.7 |
| Threaten legal action | 85.6 | Misuse professional position | 83.6 | Provide adequate information | 19.0 | Change technical judgment due to pressure | 12.4 |
| Accept bribe | 84.4 | Provide adequate information | 65.8 | Release draft recommendation on request | 17.0 | Leak information | 7.1 |
| Release draft recommendation on request | 76.5 | Leak information | 30.0 | Change technical judgment due to pressure | 15.2 | Misuse professional position | 5.4 |
| Use expendables as tradeoff | 66.0 | Accept bribe | 15.2 | Use expendables as tradeoff | 11.8 | Provide adequate information | 3.5 |
| Change technical judgment due to pressure | 57.0 | Change technical judgment due to pressure | 14.2 | Misuse professional position | 9.8 | Distort information | 1.8 |
| Leak information | 33.3 | Threaten legal action | 12.1 | Distort information | 6.0 | Threaten legal action | 1.4 |
| Provide adequate information | 10.3 | Protect underrepresented | 10.3 | Protect underrepresented | 2.5 | Release draft recommendation on request | 0.4 |
| Misuse professional position | 0.4 | Use expendables as tradeoff | 7.6 | Accept bribe | 0.0 | Accept bribe | 0.4 |
| Distort information | 0.0 | Release draft recommendation on request | 4.9 | Threaten legal action | 0.0 | Protect underrepresented | 0.1 |

Table 10. Issue benefiting by ethical acceptability sorted by proportion of survey responses.

| Issue benefiting | % Virtue | Issue benefiting | % deontological | Issue benefiting | % Utilitarian | Issue benefiting | % Hedonistic |
|----------------------------|---------------------|----------------------------|----------------------------|----------------------------|--------------------------|----------------------------|-------------------------|
| Environment | 77.3 | Mass transit, low income | 92.1 | Community group | 51.6 | Politician | 12.4 |
| Land developer/development | 76.5 | Personal benefit | 70.0 | Residents | 19.0 | Environment | 8.8 |
| Politician | 57.0 | Residents | 65.8 | Land developer/development | 17.0 | Community group | 5.0 |
| Low income | 53.0 | Low income | 25.1 | Low income | 16.1 | Low income | 4.6 |
| Community group | 24.0 | Community group | 18.7 | Politician | 15.2 | Personal benefit | 4.4 |
| Personal benefit | 17.2 | Politician | 14.2 | Personal benefit | 7.8 | Residents | 3.5 |
| Residents | 10.3 | Environment | 13.1 | Mass transit, low income | 6.0 | Mass transit, low income | 1.8 |
| Mass transit, low income | 0 | Land developer/development | 4.9 | Environment | 0 | Land developer/development | 0.4 |

has proven to be more effective (Baum, 1996; Flyvbjerg, 1998; Forester, 1989, 1999; Innes, 1995, 1996). This may suggest that professional planners in recent and contemporary practical planning contexts have found, contrary to their education, that technical and hybrid roles have helped them achieve their planning goals. In addition, this might be an even more widespread tendency, since our data indicate that the practicing planners subscribing to a technician role were infrequently planning educated (28% compared with 60% in our sample as a whole). We doubt that planning educators can influence this tendency via our planning curriculum in part because so many practicing planners are not planning educated.

Those scholars and educators who continue to believe that planners will be more effective if they assume a political role may have to choose other ways to convince practitioners to consider doing so, in part because so many APA members are not planning educated. Those educators who wish to influence practitioners to consider becoming more political may have to make their case in professional planning outlets like *Planning* magazine and through the AICP certification maintenance program. Presenting positive case studies of projects or plans that were more effective and were implemented more quickly or fully may help sway those who continue to believe in the greater efficacy of the technical role.

Our second research question focuses on how well practicing planners conform to the ethical frameworks that drive the AICP Code. We reconfirm Howe and Kaufman's (1979) finding that the planning profession's core values (as represented in the 2009 AICP Code) are shared by a significant majority of practicing planners: 80% in our sample. We do admit that the share of planners who actually act according to the core values is probably smaller than either survey found because people are likely to give socially acceptable responses. Our hypothetical scenarios, moreover, present situations that are simpler and more straightforward than they would be in practice. Our findings are significant, however, even if the response bias leads us to overestimate conformity to the AICP Code by 10 to 20 percentage points.

The third research question motivating our work is how the role that planners assume affects what they see as ethical behavior. We find that the ethical frameworks of planners who choose either a technical or careerist role are not affected by those role choices. The ethical frameworks of those choosing hybrid and political roles, in contrast, are. Hybrid planners make a higher proportion of deontological, or rule-based, choices with a lower proportion of deontological/virtue and mixed/virtue choices than would be expected in our sample. Political planners make a lower

proportion of deontological choices than would be expected in our sample. Hybrid planners appear more pragmatic, making more rule-based choices and fewer virtuous or aspirational choices than expected, while political planners appear less willing to make rule-based choices.

Our fourth major research question is how job experience influences both the ethical frameworks that planners use and the roles they choose to play. We were limited in our ability to address that question; to begin, we conducted a cross-sectional study, so we cannot attribute differences in ethical choices or roles to changes over time in professional experience. Second, we expected to find that very experienced planners would be more likely to base their decisions on their personal experience, whereas younger, less-experienced planners would base their efforts on the AICP Code; that is, using a deontological, or rule-based, ethical framework. We find, in fact, that most planners, regardless of the stage of their career, use a mix of virtue and rule-based ethical frameworks. We suspect that experienced professional planners have found that using a mix of ethical frameworks, well represented in the AICP Code, is an effective approach in contemporary planning practice.

We conclude that our survey of APA members shows that the AICP Code of Ethics has value. Our conclusion contrasts with that of Howe and Kaufman (1979), who question the usefulness of the code. We attribute the greater importance of the code in the decisions made by the practicing planners in our survey to two factors: 1) important code revisions over time that respond to wider and more up-to-date ethical challenges and 2) improvements in planning curriculum due to changes in Planning Accreditation Board accreditation guidelines that have resulted in the revised AICP Code being used directly in the classroom with the kinds of ethical dilemmas posed in Howe and Kaufman's scenarios for at least three decades.

It is crucial to both practitioners and academics to understand what planners currently consider ethical behavior and the basis on which they make ethical decisions. We find, in updating the seminal 1979 Howe and Kaufman survey of practicing planners, that most planners today reject a political role as an advocate for specific policies or stakeholders, and are more likely to adopt a technician role as an unbiased professional simply reporting data and information to a variety of stakeholders. Their behavior is largely consistent with deontic or rule-based ethical frameworks, many of which are embedded in the AICP Code. We find it surprising that this is independent of how long someone has been a planner or their rank or position, although we do find some differences by sociodemographic factors and professional experience. We believe that our respondents may assume (or report) playing a technician

role largely because they have found that role to be more effective, and perhaps less personally threatening.

Academics, however, feel that planners are more effective when they advocate for certain positions or stakeholders and when they take a more active part in bringing multiple stakeholders to the table while addressing barriers to their active participation in planning processes (see Brooks, 2002). The above role choice combined with the normative structuring that deontological frameworks play in contemporary professional planners' espoused choices also suggests that the challenge posed by Campbell and Marshall (1999) that planning educators "need to find a way of giving prominence to universal values such as equity, environmental sensitivity and social justice without at the same time ignoring the situatedness of the socio-economic and institutional contexts with which planners are confronted" (p. 476) still stands.

We also accept that simply assessing answers to simple scenarios, and quantifying factors that may lose meaning when quantified, may have affected our results. We believe it is crucial to also interview a wide variety of planners, seeking deeper insights in what motivates their decisions, how they personally determine what is ethical behavior in the more contested and real-world situations that they face, and the skills needed to negotiate them successfully and ethically. Combining more qualitative work with our survey results will allow practitioners and academics to better understand how much more political planners can really be in today's political climate and the rewards as well as problems of assuming a political role.

Notes

1. It is important to remember that Howe and Kaufman's (1979) role scale, like ours, only measures a planner's attitudes, since respondents were not asked if they possessed the necessary skills for the role. Although planners may aspire to take a political, technical, or a hybrid role, without the necessary skills to perform their duties in a particular role, they will not be successful in assuming that role. This question of the skills necessary to be successful at a particular role is addressed in the interview portion of our research project.
2. Forester's (1989) construction of the five types of planners (technician, incrementalist, liberal-advocate, structuralist, and progressive) is meant to explain how various planners confront different situations. "Each of these planning perspective points to a different source of the need for information, and thus defines a different basis of power: technical problems, organizational needs, political inequality, system legitimization, or citizen action" (p. 31).
3. Johnson and Gore (2016) compare the historical changes in planning and architecture codes of ethics in terms of the values represented with an eye toward the potential for professional collaboration.
4. The development of many planning organizations gave planning a great sense of a legitimization. In 1959 the Association of Collegiate Schools of Planning (ACSP) was born when a few department heads of planning schools got together at the annual ASIP conference to confer

on common problems and interests regarding the education of planners (*Timeline of American Planning History*). In 1971, the American Institute of Planners (AIP) adopted a Code of Ethics for professional planners. The AIP and American Society of Planning Officials (ASPO) merged to become the APA in 1978. At this time, the APA established a professional institute, the AICP, to be responsible for the national certification of professional planners. The ACSP in its current incarnation was established to represent the academic branch of the planning profession in 1980 (Chatterjee, 1986). Prior to the creation of the Planning Accreditation Board (PAB) in 1984, the National Education Development Committee (NEDC) had a planning degree recognition program that began in 1960 to assess the qualifications of graduates to take the AIP exam. It was not until 1989 that the PAB was recognized by the Washington-based Council on Post-Secondary Education to be the sole accrediting agency in the field of professional planning education. Following that, PAB started a full-fledged accreditation, involving a much more detailed evaluation.

5. The AICP Code of Ethics is divided into four sections. The first two are of interest here. The first section (A) has the aspirational ethics. Planners are not held to these aspirations as they are to the Rules of Conduct, section (B). These rules are to be closely abided to and planners have the responsibility to follow them; if not, the planner can be charged with misconduct.
6. We also were able to compare our sample data with some incomplete data provided by the APA for 2015. This data is much less comprehensive, so we do not provide it here.
7. There are a varying number of respondents based on particular questions, but the number of missing responses is generally very low. It ranges from 39 for years of experience to 0 on sex. Thus, our sample sizes are still sufficient.
8. While we had expected to be able to test the representative nature of our respondents, to our surprise the APA does not collect demographic data on its members. Thus, we cannot assume our sample is representative of the membership of the APA, let alone professional planners more generally.
9. Our analysis used orthogonal (varimax) with Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy greater than .6 (varying from .616 to .689 for individual runs). All four planning role categories were significant at the .000 level using Bartlett's Test for Sphericity approximating Chi-Square.

Supplemental Material

Supplemental data for this article can be accessed on the publisher's website.

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