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Contents

List of Tables xiv
List of Figures xvi
Acknowledgements xvii
Abbreviations and Acronyms xviii

Introduction **1**
Challenges and rewards of planning 2
Becoming an effective planner 3
The book's approach 4
The structure of the book and what to expect 5
My story 6

1 Planning, Is It For You? **10**
What is planning? 10
How did planning develop? 12
Planning 14
What is a planner? 18
What is distinctive about planners and planning? 20
Where are the opportunities? 21
Sectors 22
Working in the private sector 23
The not-for-profit sector 24
Sole practitioners 24
Academic sector 25
What planners do 26
Planning roles 27
The political aspects of planning 29
The institutional aspects of planning 30
Conclusion 32

2 Measuring Effectiveness – Competencies and Capabilities **34**
Career paths 34
Competency and capability 35
Competencies 36
Capability 39

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When capability and competence are tested 40
Urgent vs. important 41
Competency, capability and flow 42
Previous research 44
Researching planners 50
Conclusion 53

3 Interpersonal Capability 55
Ability to interact positively with members of the public, citizens and communities 56
Ability to develop and use networks of colleagues to help solve key workplace problems 66
Ability to develop and contribute positively to team-based projects 68
Shows an understanding of how the different groups that make up an organization operate and how much influence they have in different situations 72
Ability to listen to different points of view before coming to a decision 74
Ability to empathize and work productively with a range of people from different disciplines, social and cultural backgrounds 75
Ability to work with senior staff and decision makers without being intimidated 78
Ability to give constructive feedback to work colleagues and others without engaging in personal blame 81
Ability to motivate others to do great things 82
Early-career planners and managers compared 83
Conclusions and developing interpersonal capabilities 85
Final take-away 87

4 Generic Capability 88
Ability to organize work and manage time effectively 88
Ability to adapt one's approach and style of communication to the audience 96
Ability to use information and communication technology (ICT) effectively 100
Ability to make effective presentations to clients 102
Ability to manage own professional and personal development 104
Ability to help others in the workplace 105
Ability to participate constructively in meetings 106

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Project management 108
Early-career planners and managers compared 110
Conclusions and developing generic attributes 111
Final take-away 114

5 Personal Capability 115
Willingness to face and learn from my errors and listen openly to feedback 115
Reflective practice using critical incident analysis 120
Desire to produce as good a job as possible 121
Willingness to pitch in and undertake menial tasks when needed 121
Willingness to take responsibility for projects 122
Ability to admit not knowing something 123
Courage and persistence to follow a course of action to its conclusion 125
A sense of humour and ability to keep work in perspective 126
Ability to remain calm under pressure or when things go wrong 127
Willingness to persevere when things are not working out as anticipated 129
Ability to maintain a work–life balance and maintain personal health and wellbeing 130
Understanding of personal strengths and limitations 131
Ability to make a hard decision 133
Confidence taking calculated risks and taking on new projects 133
Ability to defer judgement and not to jump in too quickly to resolve a problem 134
Early-career planners and managers compared 135
Conclusions and developing personal capabilities 137
Final take-away 139

6 Intellectual Capability 140
Ability to set and justify priorities 142
Ability to understand and respond to clients' requirements in a timely manner 143
Knowledge of where to look for relevant information 144
Ability to use previous experience to figure out what is going on when a current situation takes an unexpected turn 150

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Ability to keep an eye on the big picture 150
Open minded to different ways of achieving a goal 152
Ability to readjust a plan of action in the light of what happens as it is implemented 153
Ability to see how apparently unconnected activities are linked and make up an overall picture 154
Knowledge that there is never a fixed set of steps for solving workplace problems 156
Ability to identify from a mass of detail the core issues 157
Ability to use creative problem solving 158
Ability to trace out and assess the consequences of alternative courses of action and, from this, select the one most suitable 159
Ability to identify what is really causing a problem and then to test this out in action 159
Ability to recognize patterns in a complex situation 160
Early-career planners and managers compared 161
Conclusions and developing intellectual capability 163
Final take-away 165

7 Profession-specific Capability 166
Understanding of how the organization works 166
Understanding of the current issues in the professional field 173
Ability to undertake a wide range of services and tasks offered by the organization, according to the needs of the clients 175
High level of current technical expertise relevant to the appropriate work level 176
Ability to think and act on behalf of the whole organization 177
Ability to work with politicians to find what is a technically right and politically acceptable solution 178
Understanding of the role of risk management and litigation in current professional work 182
Understanding of and ability to address gender inequality and women's empowerment 187
Early-career planners and managers compared 188
Conclusions and developing profession capabilities 189
Final take-away 191

Copyrighted material – 9781137276995

Copyrighted material – 9781137276995

8 Meeting Employer and Manager Expectations **192**
Conclusion 206
Final take-away 207

9 Lifewide Learning, Mentoring, Networking, Creativity, Imagination **208**
Lifewide learning 208
Further lifewide learning opportunities 215
Work experience and volunteering 217
Mentoring 218
Mentoring and developing a career strategy 221
Finding a mentor 222
Networking 223
Using social media to build networks – some good practice 226
Specific networks 227
Creativity and imagination 228
Final take-away 232

10 Conclusion **233**
Messages 235

References **237**
Index 254

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Chapter 1

Planning, Is It For You?

What is planning?

As it is a relatively young, and a numerically minor, profession, it is not surprising that many people know little about planning. Some would even go so far as to say that it is one of the most misunderstood professions. 'It isn't just rocket science, it is a lot more complex than that' (Farmer 2012: xix). Although the places around us have been shaped by planning, or lack of it, as individuals we may not come into contact with a planner or the planning system in our day-to-day lives unless we make an effort to engage. Planning has not had the popular television exposure of the medical or legal professions –or for that matter the law enforcement agencies. Many will have consulted a medical practitioner or dentist from an early age and understand that they look after people's health and teeth. Many will regularly read newspapers and magazines, online or in hard copy, and have an understanding that people called journalists write copy for these media. The environment contains structures and buildings which are automatically associated with architects and engineers. Little thought is given to the role planners will have played in allocating land for the activity and establishing the basic spatial planning principles and helping to create overall designs which are sensitive to local needs.

The following definition is from a landmark Global Report by UN-Habitat entitled Planning for Sustainable Urbanisation in which urban planning, town planning, and spatial planning is described as:

> A self-conscious collective (societal) effort to imagine or re-imagine a town, city, urban region or wider territory and to translate the result into priorities for area investment, conservation measures, new and upgraded areas of settlement, strategic infrastructure investments and principles of land-use regulation
>
> (UN-Habitat 2009: 19)

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This provides a generic and globally relevant definition of planning. It focuses on the concepts of the collective vision and the integration of investment decisions.

Other types of planning exist, amongst them economic and health planning. However, urban planning is distinct in having the following points of difference: spatial, strategic, developmental and involving governance.

Planning is about space and place, where things are located and how they are designed; it is about protecting special places, the interrelation of different activities and the linkages between them. Planning by its nature has an important temporal dimension, involving imagining and visioning futures by making use of forecasting, back-casting and scenario building. The notion of the collective vision speaks to the future which has resulted from the input of many. The reference to investment decisions is a practical reminder of the financial economy and the reality that development costs money. The activity of planning involves decisions about the resources needed for the visions to become a reality, which makes it an intensely political activity.

The Global Planners Network (GPN), made up of the major professional institutes, recognizes the following ten planning principles:

1 Promoting sustainable development as defined at the Johannesburg World Summit on Sustainable Development through human settlement planning and the implementation plan following the declaration (United Nations 2002)
2 Achieving integrated planning of economic, environmental and physical planning
3 Integrating budgets with linkages between the public and private sectors
4 Planning with partners through voluntary collaboration between all actors including governments, private sector, non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and civil society
5 Meeting the subsidiary principle in deciding where roles and responsibilities should lie
6 Promoting market responsiveness through increased understanding of land and property markets
7 Ensuring access to land in safe and accessible locations to meet the needs of all sectors of society and recognize the reality of slums and informal settlements
8 Developing appropriate planning tools depending on the nature of the economics and the pace and scale of urbanization

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9 Pro-poor and inclusive through the recognition of diversity and the promotion of equality
10 Recognizing cultural variation and the priorities and preferences associated with this

(Global Planners Network 2006: 3–6)

These principles foreground the notion of sustainability as a principle which underpins planning and which should provide a driving force and direction for imagining and reimagining futures.

How did planning develop?

Human beings have always planned in the sense of purposefully choosing a site to live or develop a settlement. These 'choices' may still result from an element of randomness and accidents of history as well as more deterministic environmental and economic factors, all of which makes planning such an intriguing discipline. During the mid-1800s onwards, planning systems, as we know them, started to emerge in order to address the negative externalities of the Industrial Revolution. This book is primarily targeted at those engaged in planning work in countries with well-developed planning systems and these tend to be countries with more mature economies. Relatively mature economies have tended to follow a similar pattern of population increase with cyclic patterns of economic growth and decline and they exhibit some similarities when it comes to their planning systems. Within the United Kingdom and the USA, planning emerged out of the urban crises of the nineteenth century. Cities were growing rapidly, although not as rapidly as today; they were overcrowded, dirty and polluted (Cullingworth and Nadin 2006; UN-Habitat 2009; Bayer, Frank, and Valerius 2010; Greed 2014). Planning developed as legislatures granted powers to local authorities to draw up plans to tackle the problems associated with industrial growth. The advocates for planning were primarily self-trained, mainly male, visionaries and social reformers. Ebenezer Howard and Patrick Geddes were the godfathers of planning in the United Kingdom, with Daniel Burnham and Frederick Olmsted taking on key roles in the USA, whilst Charles Hodgetts and Thomas Adams were active on the Canadian planning scene.

Planning was characterized as a top-down technical activity involving the production of master plans and blueprints for the

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future. In the early days there was little room for consultation, negotiation or community engagement although these have become important cornerstones underpinning the principles espoused by the GPN. It was 'built on a foundation of altruism and a public service ethic' (Campbell and Marshall 2005: 204) which these researchers then went on to question in terms of whether planners actually respond to the greater good or whether they simply respond according to their own interests and prejudices.

While the 1850–1900 period was formative in terms of the development of contemporary planning, the early part of the twentieth century saw the development of the legislative frameworks more familiar today. The year 1909 was auspicious in that it saw the first wave of planning legislation. In the USA, while the State of Wisconsin enacted the first state-wide enabling act for planning, the city of Los Angeles enacted the first zoning ordinance (Meck and Retzlaff 2009). In the UK the 1909 Planning legislation set out to: 'provide a domestic condition for the people in which their physical health, their morals, their character and their whole social condition can be improved by what we hope to secure in this bill […] the home healthy, the house beautiful, the town pleasant, the city dignified and the suburb salubrious' (Cullingworth and Nadin 2006: 16) quoting from the UK Housing and Town Planning Act of 1909. In Canada, by 1914, three provinces had passed planning statutes and an international city planning conference was held in Toronto in 1914, although it was not until 1924 that the city of Kitchener adopted Canada's first zoning bylaw. Australia and New Zealand are not as significant economically as their larger counterparts. They have nonetheless developed distinct planning systems, originally based on the UK planning system. In the case of Australia, the predominantly state-based system dates back to 1928 when the state of Western Australia's town planning development legislation was enacted (Goodman and March 2008). The original planning legislation in New Zealand dates from 1926, and since 1991 planning has become part of a broader resource management approach. The Resource Management Act was set up to identify issues concerning land, water, air and the coast with a view to avoiding, remedy or mitigate effects of development on the environment (Fookes and Crawford 2008).

From its inception until the golden age of the 1950s and 1960s, planning, as with other professions, was given considerable authority by the public; the scientific knowledge of planners went largely unquestioned and the division between experts and lay persons

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became more and more marked (Bogner 2012). As knowledge increased, lay people and communities started to challenge the expertise of professionals. During the 1970s this became more evident, sparking what is now termed, at least normatively, the realist period when the scientific community and the public both acknowledged and supported genuine expertise wherever it lay.

The approaches to planning adopted have also been influenced by wider economic, physical and political forces. Places grappling with major economic restructuring, such as the older industrial areas, provide enormously challenging contexts within which to work. In Detroit, in the USA, the number of working residents dropped by 77 percent over past decades as manufacturing industries relocated or closed. This kind of restructuring has been occurring in the larger global cities of the world and in older industrial regions. 'It is equally true in smaller urban centres and in those parts of the world, largely in developing countries, which have not been subject to significant foreign direct investment. Phnom Penh, in Cambodia, for example, has undergone dramatic social and spatial restructuring in recent years despite low levels of foreign direct investment and little industrial growth.' (UN-Habitat 2009: 6).

The occurrence of national disasters has increased in frequency during the past 50 years and whether working in areas subject to flooding, bush fires, water shortages, earthquakes or volcanic activity, considerations need to be made about where development should take place and the types of measures needed to adapt to or mitigate the risks. Climate change is exacerbating the situation and it is expected that the severity, frequency and pattern of flooding and extreme events will increase in the coming decades (World Bank 2009). Not only this but there are rising concentrations of people living in areas more exposed to natural disasters and large scale informality in land markets. Post conflict contexts also create particular challenges for planners whether they work in Sierra Leone, the Middle East or Northern Ireland.

Planning

Planning is not only undertaken by practitioners called urban and regional planners but also by architects; landscape architects; engineers and urban professionals, such as surveyors. Planning is unique in that it involves thinking in time and thinking in space;

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this helps make it appear broader in scope compared with other professional disciplines (Levy, Wakely, and Mattingly. 2011). Planning education and the educational requirements set down by the professional bodies reflect this. The story of the well-known Eden Project in England, illustrates the contributions different professions bring to the project (Smit 2001).The role of the planners working with the local planning authorities was to create a policy context for the project, as conceived. They helped identify possible sites, given the existing and emerging planning policies for the regeneration of the area. Contrast this with the role of other professionals such as architects, civil and structural engineers, surveyors, project managers, environmental engineers.

> Architects conceptualize a scheme to the point where the imagination has been captured and the client says I like it. The engineer points out whether the concept can be built and the best technical way of doing so, tempered of course with considerations of cost. The quantity surveyor prices the concept to find out whether it is vaguely affordable. The project manager lists all the processes that need to take place to construct the concept and sets out the order of events; this is called the programme and gives a view of the likely timescale to take the building to completion. There are environmental engineers whose speciality is the living conditions – the heating, lights, mechanical, airflows and so on. They have sub departments charged with making environmental impact assessments, studying the impact of the project on the general surroundings and local communities, and traffic boffins and landscape architects
>
> (Smit 2001: 81)

Today planners work with a range of professionals who are also concerned with the built and natural environment. 'In contrast to many other disciplines for which the problems of cities and their hinterlands are an object of study, the principle purpose of planning is to do something about them' (Crane and Weber 2012: 1) 'Practicing planners try to guess directions, anticipate the future, and create physical plans, processes, and institutions that can induce, respond to, and manage change' (Crane and Weber 2012: 2).

Whereas engineers apply mathematics and science to create physical solutions to practical problems, planners solve spatial problems or problems with a primarily spatial dimension. Increasingly planners work with health specialists and disaster specialists.

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They also work with property professionals such as surveyors and collaborate and negotiate with economic and business professionals. The work may need to take account of design, engineering, architecture, landscape architecture and environmental management. The group of professions concerned with human wellbeing which planners need to work with include psychologists, sociologists and social epidemiologists.

'Planners distinguish themselves from economists and policy analysts by devoting their attention not just to the creation of public benefits but also to the allocation of those benefits' (Crane and Weber 2012: 6). Architects design buildings whilst planners and urban designers focus on the space between buildings. An architect is a person trained and licensed to plan, design, and oversee the construction of buildings. As professionals, planners have traditionally seen their roles as technocratic, neutral advisers acting in the 'public interest'. As an activity planning has traditionally been undertaken by levels of government under the auspices of legislation conferring certain responsibilities and powers. However, planning does not have to rely on legislation and any community can produce its own spatial plan outlining what it would like its community to look like in the coming years, or what it would like to see happen to a specific site or building, or how it would like to see particular issues like safety or cycle ways dealt with. This can then provide a tool for discussing, lobbying or negotiating with the authorities responsible for producing and implementing the plans specified by statute. The UK coalition government's support for community-led neighbourhood planning has accelerated the implementation of this approach (Vigar 2012: 372). Often professional planners, working as volunteers for organizations such as the UK's Planning Aid or Community Places in Northern Ireland or the Planning Advisory Service in the USA, support communities in the production of their plans.

One of the fascinating things about planning as a profession is that planners can take on a wide range of roles. Whether a person's interests and aptitudes lie in ICT, face-to-face community-based work, imagining, strategizing or project implementation, there will be a role. Back in the 1980s, Schön made the distinction between planners who work as regulators and those who work for the regulated. This distinction still holds good and has become even more pronounced in the last three decades, as the scope of planning has widened.

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> They may function as spokespersons, strategists or technical staff for parties to the regulatory process. They may perform watchdog functions, reviewing for example the environmental impact statements of developers or the affirmative action plans of government agencies. They may place themselves in the neutral space between regulators and regulated, functioning as mediators who convene interested parties, helping them to understand one another's position, to identify common interests, or to fashion an acceptable compromise.
>
> (Schön 1983: 209)

Today the term 'compliance' more closely reflects the nature of the task which Schön describes as a 'watchdog function'. The mediating role is often best undertaken by a third party, independent of the local government planner, the developer and the community.

In line with many professional disciplines, planning has become increasingly specialized, as detailed in Table 1.1, knowledge has increased and the scope has widened from the first examples of planning legislation.

The more knowledge and skills an early-career planner develops during their first five years, the greater the opportunity to specialize and build on a solid foundation. There are those who contend that

Table 1.1 *Specialisms in planning*

• Community planning	• Place making
• Economic development	• Real estate or property planning
• Environmental planning	• Regeneration planning
• Gender planning	• Regional planning
• Geographic information systems	• Retail planning
• Heritage planning	• Rural planning
• Infrastructure planning	• Social planning
• International planning	• Statutory planning
• Marine planning	• Strategic planning
• Metropolitan planning	• Tourism planning
• Neighbourhood planning	• Transportation planning
• Open space planning	• Urban Design
• Park planning	• Urban Planning

Source: Adapted from Bayer, Frank, and Valerius (2010)

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specialization will lead to fragmentation and a slow disintegration of a profession, weakening its ability to function (March 2007). Given the increasing knowledge base of the various components of planning, increasing specialization seems inevitable.

What is a planner?

A planner is a person who practices planning or undertakes planning activities. In many countries there is no such term as a planner and the planning activity is undertaken by engineers, architects or surveyors. This book is designed for all those undertaking planning activities whether or not they are actually called planners.

In most countries, no licence is required to practice and the profession is not registered in the sense of being under the direct responsibility of a government ministry or delegated body. Planning is not professionalized in the same way as the teaching, legal or medical professions although this may change over the coming decades. Those campaigning vigorously for such a change argue that 'the performance of the profession as a whole continues to be judged on the performance of all who call themselves planners, not just those who have qualified themselves for their work and, with that, committed themselves to ethical and professional practice' (Miller 2013: 17).

It only takes a few bad apples in any professional sector to bring the profession generally into disrepute, as evidenced in the past with the financial and legal sectors, the property sector, medicine and social work. The arguments for professionalization have centred round the need to establish minimum standards of entry to a specified area of activity and to ensure practitioners keep up to date with best practice. The arguments against professionalization centre more round how the profession should be organized, and criticisms of professional institutes as elitist, out of date institutions dominated by a particular sector, or business orientated entities, with an eye on membership revenue.

In this book a professional planner is defined as someone qualified to practice as a planner having completed either an accredited planning programme or a reputable programme. As professionals, planners use the body of knowledge and skills gained through their education and training to undertake specific tasks, and membership of an institute makes more explicit the obligation to adhere to ethical standards laid down by that professional body.

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The skills and knowledge needed to undertake the activity of planning can be gained in a comprehensive way through a programme of study. The professional planner is likely to have studied planning at an undergraduate or postgraduate level and most employers seek out graduates from these programmes. It is also acknowledged that many practising planners will have gained their basic skills and knowledge through programmes of study allied to, or even different from, planning before deciding to take a formal planning qualification. The advantage of a planning qualification is that it provides the relevant context. As one graduate said:

> I came from a very different career area so really needed all the theoretical background.

Not all institutions delivering planning qualifications are accredited by professional bodies, with some preferring to maintain their independence. There are examples of highly reputable non-accredited programmes and many would argue in their favour, believing they are better able to adapt quickly to the needs of an international body of students. Whilst not eligible to become a member of a professional institute, a graduate from such an institution can call themselves a planner but cannot put letters after their name.

In the early days planning was incorporated into the training of architects and engineers. Planning as a discipline developed over a period of 50 years from 1907 with the first planning school in Liverpool, UK being established in 1909. 2014 saw the 100th anniversary of University College London's programme at the Bartlett School (Gallent 2013). This development of planning as a discipline has helped create a distinct career track for academic planners.

Drawing on the work of colleagues in the GPN, Bruce Stiftel has pieced together one of the most comprehensive pictures of the development on planning education in the academy. The design tradition influenced early developments, and by the 1930s schools had been established in Poland, Germany, USA and the Soviet Union. The growing influence of scientific ideas could also be seen in the first half of the twentieth century. Subsequently the planning discipline developed a social science orientation particularly in the UK, whereas Eastern Europe saw the growth of economic planning and some Western countries held to the design focus. We see the design, social, economic and environmental traditions in planning today.

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It is useful to distinguish between the planning practitioner who may be a professional, and an amateur planner who is someone with a keen interest in the subject of planning who has accumulated considerable knowledge and expertise through self-guided learning and activism. Some of the most effective and committed amateur planners are community activists in the vein of Jane Jacobs (1916–2006), writer and self-confessed urban theorist. She is most well-known for *Death and Life of Great American Cities*, published in 1961, which provided a strong critique of urban renewal programmes of the day although she did not study planning, developing her ideas by observation and experience (Jacobs 1961). It took decades for her ideas on the economy of cities and the perils of regeneration to be widely acknowledged.

Many other amateur planners write planning blogs and in all parts of the world individuals or groups of people are working hard, often on a voluntary basis, to lobby for the improvement of their neighbourhoods and towns.

What is distinctive about planners and planning?

Metaphors are one way of depicting the many different roles planners take on, and some are more positive than others, (Table 1.2). The metaphors surgeon and midwife acknowledge the role planners play in both operating on, and delivering projects. The city here is seen as a body. Semi-religious metaphors such as prophet and missionary reflect the role planners play in looking into the future and advocating for new approaches. Social reformer, place changer, place shaper and creative thinker all reflect the constructive and positive aspects of planning as do the terms mediator, advocate, facilitator and negotiator which relate more to the strategies and processes of achieving the vision. Some of the less positive perceptions of planning can be seen in the terms troublemaker and chameleon, which tend to imply uncertainty and distrust, while box ticker invokes the notion of the mindless bureaucrat (Vigar 2012).

What is distinctive about planning is the multitude of roles the planner may be required to take on, even in one organization, depending on the project, the client, the context and the available resources.

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Table 1.2 *Metaphors for planners' roles*

Ringmaster/mistress	Superhero/heroine	Box ticker	Clock watcher
Prophet	Expert advisor	Mediator	Advocate
Place changer	Place shaper	Midwife/person	Surgeon
Creative thinker	Chameleon	Missionary	Social reformer
Facilitator	Judge	Troublemaker	Public intellectual

Source: Adapted from: Vigar (2012: 372)

Where are the opportunities?

The opportunities open to new entrants relate to the size and diversity of the profession. Accurately calculating the size of the planning profession is however fraught with difficulties. As planners do not have to be licenced to practice, figures drawn from the membership records of the professional institutes tend to under represent the total, perhaps by as much as 40 percent (Reeves 2005; Stiftel 2013; Eversley 2014). At a very rough estimate there could be in the region of 250,000 planners worldwide or roughly one per every 30,000 of the world's population.

The majority of planners are in the USA. With a population of 313.9 million the USA recorded 38,320 jobs held by urban and regional planners or one planner for every 8260 people. (Bureau of Labor Statistics 2011). This is 4000 more than in 2006 and the employment of urban and regional planners is expected to grow 16 percent by 2020, the average for all occupations. According to the Occupational Outlook Handbook, population growth and environmental concerns will continue to drive employment growth for planners (Bureau of Labor Statistics 2012). Compare this with the UK, where in April–June 2012 there were 14,000 employed as town planning officers, 11,000 of whom are male. This works out at one planner for 4500 people. According to the statistics, 11,000 are working full time as employees and 1000 working part time with the balance likely to be those who are self-employed (Office of National Statistics 2012). To put this figure in perspective, during the same period there were 75,000 civil engineers and 56,000 architects. From 2013, the employment opportunities in the USA and Europe have been improving and the trends positive, although there is a continuing deficit in the numbers of people with planning skills in developing countries.

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Sectors

The first job for a new entrant is likely to be in the public sector and this is the case in all countries with a formal planning system. This sector is where the majority of planners work and, within it, most will operate at the sub-regional level. This reflects the historical development of planning and the responsibilities laid out in legislation in most countries. For example, according to the Bureau of Labor Statistics in the USA, two thirds of planners work for government at the city, county or metropolitan levels. Some are paid from the public purse working for agencies such as the Environmental Protection Agency.

Within the USA, metropolitan areas have the highest concentrations of planners and the area with the highest employment level in the occupation is Los Angeles, Long Beach-Glendale, California Metropolitan Division with 1910 planners. This is followed by Seattle, Bellevue, Everett, Washington Metropolitan Area with 1540 planners (Table 1.3).

Table 1.3 *Metropolitan areas with the highest employment level in this occupation*

Metropolitan Area	*Number of planners*	*Employment per thousand jobs*
Los Angeles-Long Beach-Glendale, CA Metropolitan Division	1910	0.50
Seattle-Bellevue-Everett, WA Metropolitan Division	1540	1.12
San Francisco-San Mateo-Redwood City, CA Metropolitan Division	1220	1.26
Oakland-Fremont-Hayward, CA Metropolitan Division	1020	1.07
Washington-Arlington-Alexandria, DC-VA-MD-WV Metropolitan Division	870	0.38
Sacramento-Arden-Arcade-Roseville, CA	750	0.93
Boston-Cambridge-Quincy, MA NECTA Division	730	0.43
Baltimore-Towson	700	0.56
New York-White Plains-Wayne, NY-NJ Metropolitan Division	690	0.14
Minneapolis-St. Paul-Bloomington, MN-WI	660	0.39

Source: Bureau of Labor Statistics (2012)

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Working in the private sector

Some writers question whether it makes sense to distinguish between the public and private sectors. For the time being this is the way statistics are collected and it is clear that the organizations which make up these sectors see themselves as quite distinct. The notion of a sectoral space, simultaneously public and private, has been emerging and in this space the planner works as a professional strategist, manager or process planner. For the purposes of this book, the conventional classification of sectors into public and private and not-for-profit is used since it does reflect the makeup of the industry and the profession.

The nature of the private sectors in the USA, Canada, UK, Australia and New Zealand are broadly similar and firms fall into one of three categories: first, large-scale mainstream practices with a nationwide coverage and offering core planning skills as well as in-house expertise in related areas; secondly, smaller firms operating at a regional or local scale; and thirdly the specialist services made up of a mixture of multidisciplinary companies and small practices providing advice on technical matters such as ecology, archaeology, air quality, flood risk, land remediation and noise assessment (Johnston 2012).

In the USA, of those working in the private sector, one third of planners are with three firms: Parsons Brinckerhoff, Michael Baker Engineering Inc., and Otak Inc. who between them employ over 9000 planners. In the UK over 500 firms are listed in the planning consultancy guide, with the top five companies in 2012–2013 employing around ninety students or licentiate planners (Camarge Group 2012. See Table 1.4).

Table 1.4 *Consultancy firms in the UK*

Firms	*Total number of planners*	*Number of early-career planners*
Nathaniel Lichfield and Partners	125	30
Savills	130	21
Turley Associates	112	15
Indigo Planning	54	11
Drivers Jonas Deloitte	71	10

Source: Johnston (2012)

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The not-for-profit sector

The not-for-profit sector includes NGOs, community-based groups, advocacy groups, community development trusts and professional institutes, and during their education and training a number of early-career planners may have taken the opportunity to work with neighbourhood groups, single-issue groups or charities. In the USA, national employment statistics do not generally provide a breakdown of the numbers of planners employed in the not-for-profit sector. Estimates here are based on the residual figure taking into account the total number of planners documented in the labour statistics and deducting the number of planners working in the largest consultancies. This gives a figure in the USA of approximately 3500, or ten percent, working in the not-for-profit sector, a proportion which would be similar in Europe and Australasia. The not-for-profit sector can identify unmet needs which may be addressed through advocacy planning, community development companies or charitable trusts.

A positive example of how the not-for-profit sector operates can be seen in the Transition Towns' grassroots network of communities, working to build resilience in response to oil reserves running out (peak oil), climate destruction, and economic instability. Founded on the principles of permaculture, Transition Towns began in Kildare, Ireland and now there are initiatives worldwide (Mollinson 1998). Transition towns are a natural focus for planners who want to make a difference to their local communities and are interested in what can be achieved by grassroots communities. A key concept of the 2030 Energy Descent Action Plan produced by Totnes Transition Town is the idea of a community-envisioned, community-designed and community-implemented plan to proactively transition the community away from fossil fuels. The term community in this context includes all the key players – local people, local institutions, local agencies and the local council (Hodgson and Hopkins 2010). Planners, in both the public and private sectors, need to appreciate the role networks like the Transition Towns play.

Sole practitioners

It is very unusual for a newly qualified graduate planner to begin their professional working life as an independent practitioner, although the employment statistics in the USA and UK do not publish this information. However for a mature graduate with experience in a

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related field such as architecture, landscape architecture, engineering or surveying, the planning qualification may provide a unique selling point which the community may need and want. Equally a person from a minority ethnic background, with specific cultural and language attributes, may find they are highly sought after and may be able to set up as a sole practitioner and work on a consultancy basis.

Academic sector

The most comprehensive source of information on the number of planners working in the academy is the Global Planning Education Association Network (GPEAN) who estimate that there are 13,000 academic planners (UN-Habitat 2009; Stiftel 2009).

According to these sources one third of all planning schools, most of which are in the USA, require teaching staff to have a doctorate. However in Europe early-career academic planners may be registered doctoral students whereas in the USA doctoral students are likely to be employed as teaching assistants with part-time contracts (Stiftel 2013).

> With 550 universities worldwide offering urban planning degrees, planning schools now exist in over 82 developed countries, in at least 45 developing countries with 155 in the 54 Commonwealth Countries. More than half of these (320 schools) are located in ten countries, all of which have more than 15 planning schools each. The remaining 230 schools are located in 72 different countries. More than half of the world's countries have no planning schools at all and more than half of the world's planning schools (53 percent) are located in developed countries. Strong accreditation systems exist in major Anglophone countries such as Australia, Canada, New Zealand, the UK and the USA, and in countries such as China, Ghana, Hong Kong, Indonesia, Kenya, Malaysia, Nigeria, Pakistan, Rwanda, South Africa, Tanzania and Zimbabwe. In other countries many planning schools do not participate in national planning school accreditation systems.
>
> (UN-Habitat 2009: 189)

The number of academic-based planners is likely to increase as more planning programmes are created and more planning graduates decide to take up the opportunities afforded by the academy. As more planners gain postgraduate qualifications and as the

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discipline matures, the academy is becoming a genuine career option for many graduates and it is possible to become a highly qualified academic planner without having worked in the public or private sectors. Despite the majority of planning schools not yet requiring faculty members to have a doctorate, it will become increasingly difficult to move into the academy in mid-career without a PhD and a publication record.

Not all professional bodies recognize the experience gained by scholars in academic practice as legitimate experience for full corporate membership. The evident scholar-practitioner divide in planning is perhaps not surprising with the research undertaken in universities not always seen by practitioners as relevant. The conference scene where research and good practice is disseminated is still highly sectoral. There are conferences designed solely for practitioners and others run solely for academics and very few journals have a mission to bridge the practitioner academic gap, perhaps the exceptions being: Planning Practice and Research, and Planning Theory and Practice both of which have practice sections. Planners working in academia who are aware of the competencies required by those in planning practice will help bring both sectors together.

What planners do

Professional planners advise on how to manage the competing uses of land and increasingly marine environments, taking into consideration a wide range of social, cultural, economic and environmental factors, with the aim of achieving sustainable development. They create plans and policies, implement projects and enforce planning rules and regulations. In addition they research and develop our knowledge base and understanding of planning. At times this will result in a best-fit solution rather than a preferred outcome. The exact role played by a planner will depend on the context, their capability and the resources available, often reflecting the size of organization and the political and economic characteristics of the country in which they work.

A lone planner working in the planning department in Fiji will be expected to undertake a wide range of work activities whereas a planner in the city of Los Angeles, London, Auckland or Amsterdam may be one of a much larger team and asked to concentrate on one specific project.

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A planner works in collaboration with other planners and allied professionals, as well as communities and their representatives, to address particular issues relating to physical and natural environment of settlements. Issues can range from where best to locate housing needed for a growing population to what to do with a vacant school site in a declining town. Alternatively issues can be seen in terms of how to address climate change or deal with waste, as landfill sites near capacity. Tasks early-career planners are likely to get involved with include:

- researching and analysing how regulations effect proposals or projects to determine their feasibility
- meeting with officials, developers, solicitors and lawyers, education officers, interest groups, objectors and the general public
- making decisions to approve, deny or modify proposals taking account of the legal, financial and political context
- designing, promoting and managing plans relating to use of land, public utilities, community projects, housing, transport and play areas

To be effective in the above areas, early-career planners need proficiency in interpersonal relationship building, adaptability and flexibility. Planning is a social process and benefits from positive and trustworthy relationships which need to be initiated, developed and nurtured. Communication skills, flexibility and a spatial awareness are essential skills for the planner, leading eventually to more independent judgement. Planners should aim to be future role models for those who follow them into the profession.

Planning roles

The kinds of roles planners are initially asked to take on will vary over the first five years and reflect context and experience gained. At the new-entrant stage, a planner is likely to take on the role of supporting colleagues, dealing with basic queries, perhaps covering reception and so it will be important to feel comfortable dealing with a wide range of stakeholders. In a case-processing or development management position, the planner will have a relatively small work portfolio of straightforward planning consents/applications. The job is likely to involve assessing whether the application is

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consistent with the policies set down in the development plan for the area. Site visits require an ability to read and interpret plans, whilst ensuring the concerns of neighbours are detailed and recorded accurately. Land may have been allocated for housing in the development plan for the area and it is often the task of the new entrant to visit sites to check whether development has actually taken place and then provide regular updated inventories.

Initially, the focus is more likely to be on process, fulfilling the requirements laid down in legislation and guidance and ensuring that the reporting is accurate, clearly written and without any ambiguities. The work may involve supporting senior planners by attending meetings with clients, taking notes at the meetings and writing them up as a formal minute or action list. Attendance at and participation in these early working meetings is a critical part of learning and getting to know the work of an organization, the clients, the work portfolio, the ways of doing things – everything from dress code to protocols.

In a policy section a new entrant may be asked to support a more senior planner in researching, developing and monitoring policy and may well be working in an area which they know very little about. Proof-checking and editing provide opportunities to see how issues are investigated and reported. Background research may be needed for a new policy area or new initiative being investigated by the organization. Reading extensively about the topic(s) develops an understanding of the policies whilst talking to people in the organization who are using the policy can confirm whether or not it is working. There are always presentations to be prepared for clients, committees or working groups and having well-developed presentation skills and ability to prepare the visual materials will be valued.

In a specialist urban design team, the early-career planner may be charged with supporting the experienced urban designer and contributing to neighbourhood centre proposals by collecting the ideas of the local stakeholders.

A new entrant to a research and monitoring section could be asked to take on one of a number of tasks. Examples could include; desk research of good practice to support the work of policy planners working on anything from active transport to green networks. They could be asked to analyse and summarize the responses from extensive public engagement on a city-wide or neighbourhood plan. Alternatively they may be commissioning survey research on the planning service such as customer or user satisfaction surveys

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or undertaking secondary analysis of the decennial censuses or other government sponsored surveys. By year five, planners will be expected to run their own projects and take responsibility for developing the brief for a piece of work directly with the client, creating the work programme, costing the project for approval and then organizing the various components, including the reporting back to both manager and client.

The political aspects of planning

Planning is a political process, as well as a technical process. New entrants may have studied the politics of planning but need to quickly grasp how this translates into practice. At the local level, elected politicians often retain power to make decisions on planning proposals which are important locally. Where authority has been delegated by politicians, planners will make decisions on their behalf. Increasingly governments, nationally or at state level, are taking control of decision making on issues of strategic importance. Where proposals are of national significance the government may set up national bodies to make these decisions.

The ability to display political astuteness will enhance the deployment of all five capabilities discussed in this book. References to the importance of knowing and respecting the political environment are made throughout and a specific political attribute is listed under the profession-specific capability.

The political context influences many facets of planning. Most planning processes have a statutory basis, with laws conferring powers and responsibilities to various levels of government; from ministers, to planning authorities at the national, regional or local levels. Whether, left, right or centrist, the political hue of a government is likely to determine the overall approach taken, the way legislation is framed, the priorities for resource allocations and which legislation actually gets implemented and enforced. The time frames within which policies and plans need to be developed may be largely determined by the electoral cycle. The resources available to implement policies will involve political decisions. At a macro level, the overall stability of the governance structure will establish some of the parameters within which planners operate since the development and implementation of planning policies relies on political input. As individuals, planners will have their own personal political views on issues, and some may be active

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members of political parties, in which case where conflicts of interest arise, these need to be acknowledged. Only a minority of local and national politicians tend to be qualified planners and so the knowledge of the planning systems and processes is often limited. Having a well-developed political antennae as well as a knowledge and understanding of the positions held by the key political stakeholders on the major planning issues helps make the planner effective. The nature of governance in a jurisdiction impacts on the decision-making processes which in turn affects the nature and scope of citizen engagement. In a representative form of democracy, formally elected members are deemed to have the mandate through the ballot box to make decisions on behalf of the community. In a more deliberative space, elected members are obliged to work with their electorate to work out what is best for everyone. Related to this, the level of trust in governance structures is crucial to the way participation becomes institutionalized. The European and World Values Surveys provide a regular snapshot of levels of trust. They highlight the contrast between Norway and Sweden where trust in democracy is considered strong, and Italy and Portugal, where it is considered comparatively weak (Wilkinson and Pickett 2010). Whether a system of democracy is transformative or transmissive impacts on the nature of participation which takes place. A highly representative form of democracy is likely to engender participation in which electorates are in effect told what has been decided on their behalf. More modern forms of democracy encourage a transformative form of engagement, where citizens engage fully in problem definition, solution finding and implementation. During periods of resource constraints, services such as planning tend to default to what is required to meet the statutory minimum in terms of service delivery. Most planning systems are based on some form of public engagement ranging from fairly minimal information exchange or consultation, often termed tokenistic participation, to full involvement in decision making involving devolved budgeting.

The institutional aspects of planning

New entrants to the planning profession will inevitably work in an organization with its own institutional values, practices and ways of doing things, and these are likely to have common ground with other organizations in the same sector. Whether working in the

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public, private, university or not-for-profit sectors, understanding these institutional practices, and what this means for the day-to-day work of a planner, will help determine effectiveness. It is important that a person new to an organization understands why they are being asked to follow certain processes. They need to feel comfortable asking why tasks are carried out in a particular way and offer suggestions if it is felt they could be done better. Effectiveness does not simply equate to complying with a manager's expectations. An unthinking and unquestioning mode of working might appear efficient but in practice may be ineffective. Early-career planners need to know how work is organized and prioritized, monitored and rewarded and how communication takes place. Managing planning work requires an ability to perform the core management functions of managing self and time, organizing, coordinating, controlling and leading.

The managerial structures and institutional practices of organizations will impact on the way early-career planners work and the attributes which they need to develop. The vestiges of an approach named New Public Management (NPM) promoted in the 1990s still remains today. It originally involved the adoption, by the public sector, of practices and techniques inherent in the private sector, to make public agencies literally more business-like (Savoie 1995; Manning 2000). Within the UK, a specific process of planning reform, known as 'culture change', was happening in parallel to the institutional developments associated with new public management. The aim was to make planning 'more proactive, less regulatory and more enabling, more socially and economically responsive and more inclusive' (Clifford 2012 554). The UK was the recognized pacesetter in the adoption, implementation and promotion of NPM, first in the Griffiths report on the National Health Service and then the Jarrod Report on Universities in 1985 (Hood 1995; Lapsley 2009). In the United States, it took hold in government under the auspices of the National Performance Review initiated by the Clinton-Gore Administration and it was also introduced to China as part of the 1998 administrative reforms. Some argue that the NPM paradigm is well and truly dead (Dunleavy, Margetts and Bastow 2005, 2006). Others contend that, far from being dead, it has simply evolved in the context of ICT and that the Digital Era Governance promoted by Dunleavy, Margetts, Bastow and Tinkler (2006) represents merely an extension of the paradigm (de Vries 2010).

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The UK has continued at the forefront of developments to address the criticisms and with the influence of information technology, the discourse has widened to include stakeholders and notions of partnership (Greener 2013). There are indications in primary health care in the UK that open, real time, 24/7 access by citizens to their health records will be a means of facilitating a different relationship between doctors and individuals. In this, the health professional helps each person manage their health in a more preventative way. Instead of the discourse of customer, we are seeing a discourse of partner. Given the importance of the health sector in the UK and beyond, this will be the sector to track in the future, as developments are likely to impact on all the other professions including planning.

Combined, public management developments and change reforms have tended to underpin the working methods and management culture of public sector planning and influenced those working in the, private and the not-for-profit sectors. According to the research by Clifford (2012), planners in the UK, whilst accepting the notion of customer, have exercised a degree of agency or control in interpreting customer in terms of the public good and in this way reflecting a key part of their professional identity. In today's environment of resource constraints, there is a greater need for entrepreneurial thinking and creative thinking and professionals need to be able to map out how policies and plans can be effectively realized.

Conclusion

Governance, politics and management systems play a significant role in shaping the working environment of a planner. In addition to the institutional factors, the proneness of an area to the risk of natural and human disasters impacts on the working environment and the nature of the management capabilities and attributes which will be most useful for early-career planners to develop.

Planning is a relatively small and growing profession with planners very unevenly distributed worldwide and working predominantly in the public sector. Given the general recognition that the problems with which planning is dealing are complex in nature, the coming decades will require planners who are adept at, and comfortable, working with other professionals and the wider community.

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There are various associations and networks which provide platforms for sharing best current practice. Check these out.

Guardian Local Government Leaders Network Planning Hub http://www.theguardian.com/local-government-network/planning

Local Authorities Research Consortium https://www.nfer.ac.uk/research/projects/larc/

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Index

Note: Page numbers with *f* indicate figures; those with *t* indicate tables.

Academic sector, 25–26
Ackoff, R., 160
Adams, Andrea, 174
Adams, Thomas, 12
Adaptive thinking, 48
Advocacy, 24, 55, 63*t,* 167
Agreeableness, 83
Agyeman, J., 64
Alberta Canada Public Service, 38
Alexander, Bryan, 215–216
Alexander, Ernest, 176
Alexandria, 22*t*
All Mod Cons, 155
Amateur planner, 20
American Planning Association (APA), 73, 126
  ethics and, 203*t*
Ames, D., 75
Apathetics, as stakeholder category, 182
Apprentice, 145–146
Arendt, Randall, 126–127
Arlington, 22*t*
Asia, internet users in, 102
Auckland Council, 38
Australia, 25
  ethics and Planning Institute of, 203*t*
  internet users in, 102
  planning systems in, 13
  private sectors in, 23

Bacci, I., 230
Balderrama, Anthony, 92–93
Baltimore, 22*t*
Beal, Richard, 201
Beginner, 145
Behavioural competencies, 38, 38*f,* 39*t*
Belbin, Meredith, 68, 166
Belbin team roles, 69–71
  contribution/allowable weaknesses, 70*t*
  grouped into action, 71*f*
Belbin Team Role Self-Perception Inventory (BTRSPI), 68–69
Belfast, Northern Ireland, 77–78
Belfast Interface Project, 77
Berners-Lee, Tim, 100
Big picture, keeping eye on, 150–152
Bipolar, 124
Black Swan events, 187
Blakely, Edward, 183
Blame, 81–82
Blechman, Frank, 107
Blenkinsop, John, 173
Bloomington, 22*t*
Boston, 22*t*
Boyatzis, R. E., 35, 36
Brainstorming, 230
Brilliant Time Management (Clayton), 95–96
British Standards, 155
British Toilet Association (BTA), 155
Britton, Kathryn, 44
Brockner, J., 75
Browne, Bliss, 228
Brown-nosing, 83
Buddy, 143
Bulger, Monica, 64–65
Bullying, 174
Bureau of Labor Statistics, 22

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Burnham, Daniel, 12
Buzan, T., 230

Canada, 25
  organisational competency framework, 38, 38*f*, 39*t*
  planning statutes, 13
  private sectors in, 23
Capability, 35–36, 39–42
  attributes of, 46–47*t*
  defined, 39
  described, 39
  flow and, 42, 42*f*
  research on, 44–50
  testing, 40–41
  types of, 45, 46*f*
  urgent *vs*. important situations and, 41–42
CAPS (Connectedness, Awareness, Positivity and Sensitivity), 85
CareerBuilder, 92
Career paths, 34–35
Carter, N., 223
Cartwright, R., 69
Centralised organisation, 168–169
Chait, Roslind, 131
Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development (CIPD), 36
Cheng Hsin, 62
China, 25, 201
Christchurch earthquake, 184
Chrysikou, E., 231
CIA (Critical Incident Analysis), 138
CIPD (Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development), 36
Citizens, 30, 51, 56–66
Civility check, 65
Clarke, M., 49
Clayton, Mike, 95–96
Cleal, Bryan, 43
Clifford, B. P., 32
Clos, Joan, 218
Closed-mindedness, 152
CMOOCs, 216
COCD, 229
Cognition, competency and, 35
Collaboration, 77
Commission for Architecture and the Built Environment (CABE), 49
Commonwealth Association of Planners (CAP), 52
Communication
  adaptability and, 97
  culture and, 97
  in post-disaster situation, 98
  style of, 96–100
  texting and, 100
  writing and, 99
Communication competence, 62
Communities of practice, 66–67
Community, 24
Competencies, 35–38
  behavioural, 38, 38*f*, 39*t*
  defined, 36, 37
  flow and, 42, 42*f*
  ISO definition of, 37
  knowledge headings of, 45
  levels of, 37
  notion of, 35
  sociocultural meaning of, 36–37
  technical, 38, 38*f*, 39*t*
  testing, 40–41
  types of, 35–36
  urgent *vs*. important situations and, 41–42
Competency frameworks, 38, 38*f*
Completer finisher team role, 70*t*, 71*f*
Complexity, 160–161
Compliance, 17
Concept map, 155–156, 156*f*
Conference sessions, 225–226
Conflict resolution, 71–72
  synergy mentality and, 79–80
Conflict Transformation Project, 77
Connectedness, Awareness, Positivity and Sensitivity (CAPS), 85

Copyrighted material – 9781137276995

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Constructive reflection, 117
Content, in CPR, 73
Contingent thinking, 48
Continuing Professional Development (CPD), 104
Cooperation in Science and Technology (COST), 188
Co-ordinator team role, 70*t,* 71*f*
Core issues, identifying, 157–158
Cormier, Dave, 215–216
'Count to six' rule, 128–129
Courage, 125–126
Covey, Stephen, 71–72, 79–80, 201
CPR (content process and relationship), 73–74
Creative problem solving (CPS), 158–160, 228
Creative solution finding (CSF), 228–231
Creativity, 158, 228–231
  defined, 228
Crenshaw, Williams, 64
Critical incident analysis (CIA), 120
Cropley, A., 230
Csikszentmihalyi, M., 43
Cultural competence, 64–65
  steps, 65*t*
Culture
  communication and, 97
  creativity and, 158
Culture change, 31

De Bono, Edward, 229
De Bono, Peter, 229
Debowski, Shelda, 219
Decentralised organisation, 168–169
Decisions, making hard, 133
Defenders, as stakeholder category, 182
Devolved budgeting, 30
Digital Era Governance, 31
Disability, 124–125
Disalvo, D., 152
Disney, 72
Diversity Research and Action Center, 107
Dorsey, Jack, 100
Dreyfus, S. E., 146
Drivers Jonas Deloitte, 23*t*
Dunleavy, P., 31
Durning, B., 145, 148–149
Duty of care, 174
Dyslexia, 124

Early-career planner, 37
  academic, 19, 25–27,61, 77, 172, 232
  age and, 35
  effectiveness and, 34–35
  four-way stakeholder model and, 57*f*
  interpersonal attributes, 56*t*
  and managers compared, 83–85, 84*t,* 110–111, 110*t,* 135–136*t,* 136–137, 161–162, 162–163*t,* 188–189, 189*t*
  progression of, 35*f*
Easy read, 99
Eberle, Rob, 230
Economics of Good and Evil (Sedlacek), 66
Eden Project, England, 15
Educational requirements, planning, 15
Education providers, messages for, 235
Effective management of performance, 40, 85
Effectiveness, measuring, 34–53
  capability and, 35–36, 39–42
  career paths and, 34–35, 35*f*
  competency and, 35–38, 38*f,* 39*t*
  flow and, 42–44
  research on, 44–50, 46–47*t,* 46*f*
Effective power, as stakeholder attribute, 181
Egan Committee Review, 49
80-20 rule, 93
Elected officials, 29–30
Emotional intelligence, 47

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Emotions, in GET, 80
Empathetic responses, listening and, 74–75
Empathy, 75–78, 197, 212–213
Employer expectations, 199–200
Employment Studies Institute, 37
Environmental Protection Agency, 22
Envisioning Better Communities (Arendt), 126
Eraut, Michael, 34, 45, 120, 145, 146
Erickson, J. S., 64
Ernst and Young, 92, 137
Ethics
  of care, 174
  of obedience, 173, 174
  of reason, 174
Ethics approval, 173–175
Eureka project, Xerox, 66
European and World Values Surveys, 30
European Union (EU) Working Time Directive, 91
Experience, competency and, 35
Experience of Place, The (Hiss), 216
Expert, 37, 145, 145*f*
Expert novice, 145, 145*f,* 146, 146*t*
Explanation, 63*t*
Extrinsic motivation, 82–83

Facebook, 93, 100, 121
Face-to-face communication, 65
  presentations and, 103
Facework, 57
Fairhurst, G., 229
Fast, Nathanael, 81
Feedback, 81–82, 117
Feiden, Wayne, 121
Final take-away
  generic capability, 114
  intellectual capability, 165
  interpersonal capability, 87
  mentors, 232
  networks, 232
  personal capability, 139
  professional institutes, 207
  profession-specific capability, 191
Flexibility, 176
Flow
  barriers to, 44
  effectiveness and, 42–44
  importance of, in workplace, 44
  model of, 42*f*
Focused listening, 78
Fog index, 99
Forester, John, 107, 150
Four Ps, 103
Four-way stakeholder model, 57*f*

Gantt charts, 109
Geddes, Patrick, 12
Gehl, Jan, 216
Gender, 84–85, 187–188
Gender sensitive planning, 188
GenderSTE network, 188, 227
General Medical Council (GMC), 175
Generic capability, 46*f,* 88–113
  assistance when needed, offering, 105–106
  attributes making up, 46*t,* 89*t*
  client presentations, making effective, 102–103
  communication, adapting style of, to audiences, 96–100
  constructive meeting participation, 106–108
  developing, 111–113
  early-career planners/manager comparison, 110–111, 110*t*
  information communication technology, effective use of, 100–102
  organise work/manage time, ability to, 88–96
  overview of, 88
  professional/personal development, manage own, 104–105
  project management, 108–110

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Geographic Information Systems (GIS), 101
GET, 80
Ghana, 25
Global Planners Network (GPN), 11–12, 13
Global Planning Education Association Network (GPEAN), 25
Goals, in GET, 80
Goleman, D., 47
Good Business, Flow Leadership and the Making of Meaning (Csikszentmihalyi), 44
GPEAN (Global Planning Education Association Network), 25
GPN (Global Planners Network), 11–12, 13
Greed, Clara, 155
Group, as stakeholder attribute, 181
Gunning, Robert, 99

Habitat for Humanity, 217
Hague, Cliff, 105
Hall, P., 158
Handy, Charles, 219
Hansen, C. J., 58, 64
Hard decisions, making, 133
Hay Group, 38
Heathrow Airport, 185
Helicopter view, 151
Higgins, Marilyn, 158, 228, 230
Higher Education Academy, 205, 220
Hiss, Tony, 216
Hodgetts, Charles, 12
Holland, Siobhan, 220
Hong Kong, 25
Housing and Town Planning Act, 1909, 13
Howard, Ebenezer, 12
How to Write a Lot (Silvia), 172
Hughes, Robert, 215
Humour, 126–127

Hurricane Katrina, 183
Hurricane Sandy, 183

IBI Group Inc., 107
Ickes, W., 76
ICT. *See* Information communication technology (ICT)
Imagine Chicago project, 228
Implementer team role, 70*t*, 71*f*
Independent practitioner, 24–25
Indigenous, 119, 153, 171
Indigo Planning, 23*t*
Indonesia, 25, 50, 94
Induction, 142
Industrial Society, 219
Influence, as stakeholder attribute, 181
Information, looking for, 144–149
Information communication technology (ICT), 6
  effective use of, 100–102
Information technology (IT), 100
Informed optimistic stage, 204
Institute for Conflict Analysis and Resolution (ICAR), 107
Institutional aspects of planning, 30–32
Intellectual capability, 46*f*, 140–164
  activities, linking unconnected, 154–156, 156*f*
  attributes making up, 47*t*, 141*t*, 162–163*t*
  big picture and, 150–152
  client's requirements, understanding and respond to, 143–144
  complex situations, recognise patterns in, 160–161
  core issue, identifying, 157–158
  course of action, assessment/selection of best, 159
  creative problem solving, 158–160

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developing, 163–164
drivers and barriers to, 149*f*
early-career planners/manager comparison, 161–162, 162–163*t*
information, finding relevant, 144–149
open mindedness, 152–153
overview of, 140–142
priorities, set and justify, 142–143
problem solving, 156–157
readjustment to plans, 153–154
unexpected turn of events and, 150
Intellectual rigour, 141–142
Interactions, impacts of differences and similarities on, 63*t*
International Organization for Standardization (ISO), 37
Interpersonal capability, 46*f*, 55–85
attributes making up, 46*t*, 56*t*
constructive feedback, giving, 81–82
developing, 85
early-career planners/manager comparison, 83–85, 84*t*
empathy and understanding, 75–78
interaction types, outcomes of, 63*t*
listening, 74–75
motivating others, 82–83
networks of colleagues, develop and use, 66–68
organisation's mission, understanding, 72–74
overview of, 55
positive interaction and, 56–66, 57*f*, 63*t*, 65*t*
senior professionals, working with, 78–80
team based projects, develop and contribute to, 68–72, 70*t*, 71*f*
Intimidation, 78–80
Intrinsic motivation, 82

Jackson, Norman, 208–209
Jacobs, Jane, 20, 216
Job shadowing, 217
Johari window technique, 219
Jones, Rory Cellan, 64
Judgement, deferring, 134–135

Kenya, 25, 50
Kilstoff, K., 45, 48
Kitchen, Ted, 49
Knowledge
competency and, 35, 38*f*
development, drivers and barriers to, 149*f*
headings, 45
lack of, admitting to, 123–125
Kolb, David, 117

Landry, C., 158
Langer, Ellen, 153
L'Aquila earthquake, 184
Latents, as stakeholder category, 182
Lave, J., 66
Learning cycle, 117–118, 118*f*
Learning development
sources of, 146*t*
stages of, 145*f*
Legislation, planning, 13
Lester, S., 39
Life and Death of American Cities (Jacobs), 20, 216
Lifewide learning, 208–217
defined, 208
empathy and, 212–213
generic capability and, 213–214
intellectual capabilities and, 214
opportunities, 215–217
professionalism and, 214–215
questions concerning, 211
reflections on, 210
sources of, 209*t*

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Limitations, understanding and acknowledging, 131–132
Linear thinking, 48
Linkedin, 226–227
Listening, interpersonal capability and, 74–75
Listserv, 52, 66, 223
London Heathrow Airport Terminal 5 project, 185
London School of Economics, 160
Los Angeles, 13, 22, 22*t,* 26

Maissen, L. B., 75
Malaysia, 25
Mana, 97
Management competencies, 36
Managers
  early-career planners comparison, 83–85, 84*t,* 110–111, 110*t,* 135–136*t,* 136–137, 161–162, 162–163*t,* 188–189, 189*t,* 193*f*
  five capabilities and, 192–193, 193*f*
  meeting expectations of, 192–206
  messages for, 235
  responsibilities of, 192
  as role models, 174
  top attributes identified by, 194–195*t,* 196–198
Managers' expectations, 192–206
Massive Online Open Courses (MOOCs), 215–216
Masters of Business Administration (MBA), 173
Mature economies, 12
McClelland, D., 35
McKee, A., 120
Measures of effectiveness. *See* Effectiveness, measuring
Mediation, 62, 63*t*
Meitheal, 76
Mentee, 219, 220–221
Mentor, 219, 220
  finding a, 222–223
  women and, 223
Mentoring, 218–223
  career strategy development and, 221–222
  defined, 219
  models of, 221
  women, 223
Messy, 185, 185*f*
Messy problems, 151, 160, 173, 184
Michael Baker Engineering Inc., 23
Mid-career planner, 35
Mind mapping, 230
Mind Tools website, 96, 159
Minneapolis-St. Paul, 22*t*
Mistakes, identifying and learning from, 115–120
Monitor evaluator team role, 70*t,* 71*f*
MOOCs (Massive Online Open Courses), 215–216
Moral compass, 174, 201
Motivation, 82–83
  competency and, 38*f*

Nathaniel Lichfield and Partners, 23*t*
National Commission for the Forecast and Prevention of Major Risks, 184
National Institute for Technology in Liberal Education, 216
National Performance Review, 31
National Science Foundation (NSF), 101
Negotiation, 63*t*
Neighborhood Nets, 101
Networking, 223–227
  approaches to useful, 224–225
  conference sessions and, 225–226
  examples of, 223–224
  importance of, 224

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professional institutes and, 224
social media and, 226–227
Networks
of colleagues, develop and use of, 66–68
defined, 66
social media to build, 226–227
types of, 227
Neuro-linguistic programming (NLP), 4
New Orleans, 183
New Public Management (NPM), 31, 196
New York, 22*t*
New Zealand, 25
Christchurch earthquake in, 184
communication and culture in, 97
organisational competency framework, 38, 38*f,* 39*t*
planning systems in, 13
private sectors in, 23
public sector planner example, 172
Resource Management Act, 13
New Zealand Planning Institute (NZPI), 124
Nielsen, Karina, 43
Nigeria, 25, 50, 149
NLP (neuro-linguistic programming), 4
Non-contiguous work week, 92
Non-planning issues, 178
Non-verbal communication, 75
Northern Ireland
Community Places, 16
contested spaces/places examples in, 77–78
planners working in, 60–61
Not-for-profit sector, 24
Not the Planning News (magazine), 8
Novice, 145–146, 145*f,* 146*t*
Novice expert, 145, 145*f*
NPM (New Public Management), 31, 196
NSF (National Science Foundation), 101
NZPI (New Zealand Planning Institute), 124

Oakland, 22*t*
OATS (outcomes, activities, timing and scheduling), 95–96
Occupational Outlook Handbook, 21
Off ramping, 131
Olmsted, Frederick, 12
Olsson, R., 184
Open Education Europa, 216
Open Education Resource (OER), 216
Open mindedness, 152–153
Optimism, 5, 184, 204
Organisational competency framework, 38, 38*f,* 39*t*
Organisation mission, understanding, 72–74
Osborn, Alex, 229, 230
Otak Inc., 23
Outcomes, activities, timing and scheduling (OATS), 95–96
Oxford Internet Institute, 64

Pakistan, 25
Pareto principle, 93
Parnes, Sidney, 228, 229
Parsons Brinckerhoff, 23
Passive bullying, 174
Perfectionist, 121
Perry, Susan, 153
Persistence, 125–126
Personal capability, 46*f,* 115–137
active involvement in all aspects of work, 121–122
attributes making up, 46–47*t,* 116*t*
course of action, follow, to conclusion, 125–126
critical incident analysis, using, 120

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Personal capability (*Continued*)
decisions, making hard, 133
determination and resilience, 129–130
developing, 137
early-career planners/manager comparison, 135–136*t,* 136–137
errors/feedback, learning from and listen openly, 115–120, 116*t,* 118*f*
humour, limitations of, 126–127
judgement, deferring, 134–135
knowledge, admitting to lack of, 123–125
limitations, understanding and acknowledging, 131–132
overview of, 115
pressure, handling, 127–129
producing as good job as possible, 121
projects, take responsibility for, 122–123
risk taking, 133
work-life balance, 130–131
Personal strengths and limitations, 131–132
PhD candidate, 26, 164, 172
Placements, 217
Plain English Campaign, 99
Plan, Prepare, Practice and Present (four Ps), 103
Planners
academic, 25–26
defined, 18
described, 18–20
early career, tasks, 27
effective, becoming, 3–4
graduate, 4
job description, 26–27
metaphors for, roles, 20, 21*t*
opportunities open to, 21, 22*t*
professionals working with, 15–16
programme of study for, 19
researching, 50–53
roles of, 27–29
types of, 14–15
Planning
challenges of, 2–3, 14
components of, 11
defined, 10
development of, 12–14
educational requirements for, 15
effective, 3–4
influences on, 14
institutional aspects of, 30–32
legislation, 13
mature economies and, 12
overview of, 14–18
political aspects of, 29–30
practitioners, 14
principles of, 11–12
public involvement in, 13–14
rewards of, 3
roles, 27–29
sectors, 22–26
specialisms in, 17*t*
as top-down technical activity, 12–13
types of, 10–11
Planning for Sustainable Urbanisation (UN-Habitat), 10
Planning Officers Society (POS), 105
Planning practitioner, 20
Plan readjustment, 153–154
Plant team role, 70*t,* 71*f*
Political environment, of planning, 29–30, 178–182
POS (Planning Officers Society), 105
Position, as stakeholder attribute, 181
Positive Psychology News Daily, 44
Positivity, 55, 85
POS NOVUS, 105, 224
PowerPoint, 103
Presentations
defined, 102–103
making effective, to client, 102–103

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Pressure, handling, 127–129
Prezi, 103
Priorities, set and justify, 142–143
Private sector, 23
  network building and, 67
  organisations, 167
Problem solving, 159–161
Process, in CPR, 73
Process issues, 173
Procrastination, as barrier, 96
Profession, 176–177
Professional field, issues in, 173–175
Professional institutes, 177, 179, 203, 203*t*
  messages for, 236
  networks and, 224
Professionalism, 179, 201–202, 202*f*
Professional/personal development, managing, 104–105
Professional planner, defined, 18. *See also* Planners
Profession-specific capability, 46*f,* 166–190
  attributes making up, 47*t,* 167*t,* 189*t*
  developing, 189–190
  early-career planners/manager comparison, 188–189, 189*t*
  gender equality/women's empowerment, understanding, 187–188
  organisational goals, think/act on behalf of, 177–178
  organisation works, understanding how, 166–172
  overview of, 166
  political dimensions of, 178–182
  professional field issues, understanding, 173–175
  risk management/litigation, role of, 182–187, 185*f,* 186*t*
  tasks and services, wide range of, 175–176
  technical expertise, appropriate level of, 176–177
Profession-specific skills, 176–177
Project management, 108–110
Promoters, as stakeholder category, 182
Public, 56
Public Concern at Work, 174
Public sector, 22, 166
Public toilets, lack of in UK, 155–156, 156*f*
Purposeful observation, 216

Radical Institute Group (RIG), 105
Ralston, Peter, 62
Realist period, 14
Reasonable behaviour, 174
Recovery in New Orleans, 183
Reeves, D., 230
Reflective practice, critical incident analysis and, 120
RefWorks, 148
Regional planners, 14
Relationships, in CPR, 73
Relationships management, competency and, 36
Relaxed attention, 231
Resource investigator team role, 70*t,* 71*f*
Resource Management Act, New Zealand, 13
RIG (Radical Institute Group), 105
Risk, 182–183
  assessment, 183–185, 187
  potential areas of, 186*t*
  taking, 133
Risk matrix, 185*f*
Rittel, Horst, 157, 160
Robertson, Rebecca, 72
Robinson, Mary, 76
Robotic technologies, 100–101
Rochester, S., 45, 48
Role supporting identity, 201–202
Rosenhead, Jonathan, 160

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Rothwell, J. D., 63
Royal Town Planning Institute (RTPI), 49, 105, 177
  ethics and, 203*t*
Rwanda, 25

Sacramento, 22*t*
Salience, as stakeholder attribute, 181
Sandberg, Sheryl, 93, 121, 131, 223
San Francisco, 22*t*
Sarr, R., 229
Savills, 23*t*
SCAMPER technique, 230
Schön, Donald, 16–17, 34, 44–45, 48, 120
Science, technology, engineering, mathematics and medicine (STEMM), 227
Scott, G., 45, 48
Seattle, 22, 22*t*
Sectors, 22–26
  academic, 25–26
  not-for-profit, 24
  overview of, 22, 22*t*
  private, working in, 23, 23*t*
  sole practitioner, 24–25
Sedlacek, T., 65–66
Seeing something through, 125–126
Self-assessment check list, 109–110
Self-management, competency and, 36
Senior professionals, working with, 78–80
Senior staff, 78–80
Shaper team role, 70*t*, 71*f*
Sheppard, Adam, 88–90
Sherman, Laurence (Larry), 107
Silo thinking, 72
Silva, C., 223
Silvia, Paul, 172
Sinkholes, Florida, 184
Situational perception, 146
Skellern, Matt, 124–125
Skills, competency and, 38*f*
SMART (specific, measurable, agreed, realistic and timely) goals, 4, 81, 129
Smedley, Ralph, 98–99
Smith, Nick, 88–90
Soft skills, 55
Sole practitioner, 24–25
South Africa, 25
Specialist team role, 70*t*, 71*f*
Specific, measurable, agreed, realistic and timely (SMART) goals, 4, 81, 129
Stakeholder
  analysis, 181–182
  attributes to classify, 181
  categories of, 181–182
  mapping, 181
State of Women in Cities report (UN-Habitat), 187–188
STEMM (science, technology, engineering, mathematics and medicine), 227
Stephenson, J., 39
Stewart, J., 49
Stiftel, Bruce, 19
Storm, The (Blakely), 183
Strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, threats (SWOT) analysis, 132, 198
Study Skills for Town and Country Planning (Sheppard and Smith), 88–89
Sturz, Herb, 72
Sustainability professional, effective, 36
Sweden, hours worked in, 91–92
Swedish National Institute for Education, 208
SWOT analysis, 132, 198
Synergy mentality, 79–80

Tacit knowledge, 40, 90, 150
Tait, M., 58, 64
Talent, attitude, skills and knowledge (TASK), 200

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Tame problem, 185*f*
Tanzania, 25
TASK (talent, attitude, skills and knowledge), 200
Team based work
  Belbin and, 68–69
  develop and contribute to, 68–72
  team roles and, 69–71, 70*t,* 71*f*
Team roles, 69–71, 70*t,* 71*f*
Team worker team role, 70*t,* 71*f*
Technology, entertainment and design (TED) talks, 215
TED talks, 215
Teleworking, 6
Texting, communication and, 100
Theory in use, 150
Thinking skills, competency and, 36
3rd Alternative thinker, 201
Third-sector organisations, 167
Threshold competencies, 35
Tiedens, Larissa, 81
Time, as inhibiting factor, 149
Time management, 88–96
Times Square regeneration story, 71–72
Toastmasters International (TI), 98–99, 103
Tokenistic participation, 30
Top-down technical activity, 12–13
Toronto Incineration Plant, 107
Torrance, Paul, 229
Totnes Transition Town, 24
Town Planning Network, 158
Town Planning Review, 228
Transition Towns, 24
'Triumph of the wage slave' (Economist), 200
Trust, levels of, in governance structures, 30, 58
Turf, in GET, 80
Turley Associates, 23*t*
Tutu, Desmond, 76
Twitter, 100
Ubuntu, 76
UbuWeb, 215
UK. *See* United Kingdom (UK)
Unexpected turn of events, 150
UN-Habitat, 52, 215
UNICEF (United Nations Convention on the Rights of People with Disabilities), 99
Uninformed optimism, 204
United Kingdom (UK), 25
  consultancy firms in, 23*t*
  hours worked in, 91
  Housing and Town Planning Act, 1909, 13
  ICT and, 31–32
  New Public Management and, 31
  opportunities for planners in, 21
  Planning Aid, 16
  planning in, 12
  private sectors in, 23
  public toilets in, lack of, 155–156, 156*f*
United Nations Convention on the Rights of People with Disabilities (UNICEF), 99
United States of America (USA), 25
  hours worked in, 92
  legislation for planning in, 13
  metropolitan areas with high planner numbers in, 22*t*
  National Performance Review and, 31
  opportunities for planners in, 21
  organisational competency framework, 38, 38*f,* 39*t*
  Planning Advisory Service, 16
  planning in, 12
  private sectors in, 23
Universities, 171–172
Urban planning, 11–12, 14
Urgent problems, 41–42, 91

VMOOC, 216
Volunteering, 121–122, 217–218

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Wallas, G., 231
Washington, 22*t*
Webber, M., 160
Wells, P., 48
Wenger, E., 66
What Makes Your Brain Happy and Why You Should Do the Opposite (DiSalvo), 152
Wicked, 185, 185*f*
Wicked problems, 151, 157, 160, 173, 184
Women, mentor, 223
Women in planning, 187–188
Women in property network, 8
Women's empowerment, 187–188
Work-life balance, 130–131
Workplace bullying, 174
World Toilet Organisation (WTO), 155
World Wide Web, 100, 101
Wozniak, Steve, 100
Writing, communication and, 99

Xerox, 66
XMOOCs, 216
XpertHR, 40

Yates, W., 45
Yorkshire Planning Aid, 7
Young planners, 197, 213
  POS NOVUS for, 224
YouTube, 215

Zimbabwe, 25
Zoning ordinance, 13
Zucker, Paul, 49
Zuckerberg, Mark, 100

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