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Inspired by our encounters with many different international planning scholars and their efforts to give voice to young practicing planners about their profession and its practice, *Interface* brings together a small number of planning professionals who project these ethical challenges from the point of view of practice. By giving voice to these planners, our intention is to highlight the personal and professional

coping mechanisms developed by planning professionals. This has seen very little coverage in planning literature, and it is our belief that these should be reflected also in planning education.

As planning scholars, most of us are aware of these challenges, but while some of us argue that we need to stick to the principles of the old-school tradition in planning and urban design, leaving no room for change; others highlight the achievement of planners in practice as "facilitating leaders", and look for them to develop self-produced mechanisms that bypass systematic challenges. A further school of thought argues that we need to change planning education by first hearing the voices of practicing planners, in that it is these people who face the challenges in their daily lives that we write about in our publications (Hoey, Rumbach, & Shake, 2016; Watson, 2002). The challenges faced in practice require creative and even revolutionary efforts, but how do we transfer these practices to planning education? Where do we start? One thing is obvious: we need to start listening to the voices coming from those in practice.

There are multiple, nonlinear trajectories by which people enter into planning, underlining the nature of a discipline and profession that is all about bridging different views and worlds to have impact on a complex reality. This is both why it can be difficult to profile planning among prospective students, and also what makes it so fascinating. The practitioners contributing to this *Interface* define the planning profession as a political tool in similar ways: planning fulfills the wishes and demands of different groups by negotiating among conflicting interests and trying to reach agreement between stakeholders. It is a tool for social transformation, social justice and reform, and is a means of political struggle that engages one both inside and outside the workplace. This is something emphasized numerous times in these contributions.

A number of different challenges are highlighted too: not only the classic issues of finding a way of dealing with diverse and overlapping interests and tiring bureaucracy, but also those resulting from the involvement of private sector interests in urban development, dominating property-led or market-driven planning dynamics, discontinuity of policies due to changing administrations, the limitations of token participatory efforts on communication and the lack of knowledge of planners in certain technical fields. The accounts presented here document an ambivalent combination of the awareness of the preponderance of technocratic and bureaucratic realities in day-to-day planning practice, and the strong social and political drive of planners (resulting in a tension that is perhaps best highlighted by the Swedish piece). Some of the most innovative practices (seen, for example, in the pieces from Sweden, Belgium, Turkey, Brazil and Israel) share the strategy of skillfully "playing out" these ambivalences, often by adopting "lateral" ways of dealing with them. These stand in interesting contrast to the more "midstream" and perhaps less radically innovative practices of the Dutch and South African cases.

This *Interface* can be considered a unanimous call to expose students more and directly to planning practice during their studies, if not to fully integrate practice and education in a continuous, open process (Porter et al., 2015). It is important here that practice be interpreted in its broadest sense, to include the realities of both day-to-day planning work and social or political activism. This involves building both awareness of the ambivalence of the profession, and the need for ways of skillfully "playing it out." It is a call to pay more attention in education to the "true" economic and political drivers of urban development, and of the powerful role of apparently neutral and technical property, and financial, legal, and procedural arrangements in shaping outcomes.

Moreover, these planners ask us to pass the message on to students to learn to be proactive. Perhaps we need to confront them with complex real problems, establish interactive teams to overcome these problems and motivate them to seek alternative solutions. The use of simulation programs, scenario playing, role playing, and technical and soft tools of negotiation, and planning real situations in the studio should perhaps be explored more systematically by planning schools. Some of this is already

practiced in many schools; however, we also need to teach students to deal "laterally" and transformatively with the everyday realities of planning. This can be achieved by stimulating them to take part in public debates, to make them meet and work with practitioners, to get local players and social movements involved in academic research, and by transferring this knowledge to the students to prepare them for fighting through planning. At present, this is far from central to planning school curricula, if it exists at all. Planning education should challenge students more explicitly to reflect critically on the variety of roles they may take up in society. Furthermore, we need to engage in more constructive research into planning practice in academia to establish transformative practices between academia and practice (Hurley et al., 2016).

The energy and passion held by the contributors to *Interface* for their profession has been very motivating to read. Looking at our collaboration with the authors of this *Interface*, and our own personal and professional encounters with practicing planners, we can see that the planning profession needs not only system-maintaining and system-transforming intellectuals, but also inspirational academicians who appreciate this motivation and maintain an open mind when looking for ways to accommodate new approaches that can bring practice closer to planning schools. We hope that this *Interface* inspires scholars to see the willingness of practitioners to contribute to academic debate, and motivates us to explore and co-create new approaches with their contribution in the near future. Only by learning from each other will we be able to raise practitioners who know how to "float like a butterfly, sting like a bee."

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