

# A HISTORY OF THE CORE CURRICULUM OF PLANNING EDUCATION IN CANADA

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## *Résumé*

Au Canada au cours des soixante dernières années, le programme de planification communautaire au niveau post- secondaire a toujours été l'objet de débats, en particulier dans des revues professionnelles. Car le débat a été généralement articulé sur des preuves anecdotiques, liées à l'expérience individuelle de chaque débatteur , il est difficile de discerner les connaissances de base qui ont été enseigné au Canada . Une étude complète de tous les programmes de maîtrise de deux ans de la planification communautaire, en particulier leurs programmes de base, entre le début des années 1950 et 2010 nous présente deux conclusions principales. Le premier, malgré que l'intention du programme de base dans chacun des programmes individuels varie considérablement à travers le pays, il s'est stabilisé près de 50% pour le programme de maîtrise au niveau nationale. Le deuxième, l'équilibre des sujets théoriques et pratiques dans le cadre des programmes a varié au cours des soixante ans, mais il s'est stabilisée au niveau national pendant les années 1990, à environ 55 % en théorie et 45% en pratique.

*Mots clés:* programme de base, l'éducation de la planification urbaine, Canada

***Canadian Journal of Urban Research***, Volume 23, Issue 1, Supplement pages 98-115.

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ISSN: 1188-3774

*Abstract*

In Canada over the last sixty years, the curriculum of community planning at a post-secondary level has been consistently under debate, particularly in professional journals. Since the debate has generally hinged on anecdotal evidence, related to each debater's individual experience, it is difficult to discern what core knowledge has been taught within Canada. A comprehensive survey of all of the two-year Master's programs in Planning, specifically their core curricula, between the early 1950s and 2010 illustrated two key findings. One, that while the emphasis of the core curriculum within individual programs varies widely across the country, it has stabilized nationally around 50% for the Master's program. Two, the balance of theoretical and practical subjects within the core has varied over the sixty years, but has stabilized nationally in the 1990s, to be approximately 55% Theory and 45% Practical.

*Keywords:* core curriculum, planning education, Canada

**Introduction**

Community planning is defined by the Canadian Institute of Planners (CIP) as “the scientific, aesthetic, and orderly disposition of land, resources, facilities and services with a view to securing the physical, economic and social efficiency, health and well-being of urban and rural communities” (Canadian Institute of Planners 2013c, para. 1). This comprehensive definition implies that the education of such a profession would also be extensive, covering physical, economic and social topics.

In other professions, such as engineering or medicine, the foundation knowledge has been established for decades (or longer) to the extent the general public has an inkling of this knowledge (i.e., math and physics for engineering, anatomy for medicine). However, within planning, the newness of the profession is illustrated by the ongoing scrutiny of the foundational or core knowledge both by those teaching the subject and those being educated. In some cases, planning education has been compared to a liberal arts degree (Qadeer 1991), which appears odd for a profession heavily involved in land-use regulation.

This vagueness of the core knowledge has led to an ongoing debate between proponents of theory (typically academics) and practical (typically professionals), yet it is unclear as to how (or if) Canadian institutions have altered their core knowledge or curricula in response to this ongoing conversation. While periodic reviews of the current state of planning education have been conducted over the years (see Willis 1964; Robinson 1975; Grant 1989; Martin 1991; Friedmann 1996; Curry 1999; Edwards and Bates 2011), a historical review of all Canadian planning education has never been performed. Now that some institutions have been teaching planning for upwards of fifty years, it could be assumed that the core curriculum has been resolved to incorporate the core knowledge of the profession.

To confirm this assumption, we conducted a review of the core curriculum of the Master's programs in Planning in Canada (past and present) for the last sixty years. The first half of the article provides a description of the history of planning education in Canada, with particular attention to the debate between the academy

and the profession regarding the core knowledge. The second half reviews the core knowledge of fifteen programs taught at Canadian institutions over the last sixty years in an attempt to prove and/or refute the claims of skewed curricula posited by both the academy and the profession.

### *History of Planning Education in Canada*

#### **Foundation**

While the profession of community planning has existed in Canada since the early twentieth century, as the founding of the Town Planning Institute of Canada (TPIC) in 1919 illustrates (Canadian Institute of Planners 2013a), a formal education system did not exist until the late 1940s and/or early 1950s. However, this does not mean the merits of a Canadian education were not discussed earlier. For instance, in 1921 the *Journal of the Town Planning Institute of Canada* (Nobbs 1921) called for Canadian universities to establish town planning programs, even though there was concern for creating a supply before the demand existed (Ewing 1921).

During World War II, the federal government commissioned the Advisory Committee on Reconstruction to look at Canadian society and provided recommendations regarding the rebuilding and alteration of various institutions once the war was over. One section of the report (called the Curtis Report after the chairperson of the subcommittee) looked specifically at housing and community planning. As Canada had a population of approximately 12 million in 1944, with approximately 4000 organized municipal units, the committee recommended reform within community planning (Advisory Committee on Reconstruction Subcommittee 1944). For reform to occur, which required municipalities to create long-range, comprehensive master plans, large numbers of community planners would be necessary. As noted by Curtis et al., the “most serious practical considerations for the future of town planning is the dire shortage of adequately trained and experienced persons” (Advisory Committee on Reconstruction Subcommittee 1944, 181).

Since there was no inclination on the part of universities to provide resources, the Committee recommended that such research, as well as educational funding, be provided through the newly conceptualized Central (Canada) Mortgage and Housing Corporation (CMHC), which was established in 1946 (CMHC, 2013). The Committee also recommended that a town planning agency draw up a curriculum to act as a standard by which to distribute grants (Advisory Committee on Reconstruction Subcommittee 1944).

In 1949, a committee chaired by Humphrey Carver of CMHC met in Ottawa to discuss the current state of affairs in planning education. Recent events, such as the establishment of a Master’s interdisciplinary program at McGill University in 1947 and the upcoming program at the University of Manitoba warranted discussion, as did the proposed program at the University of Toronto, and the interest of the Université Laval and the University of British Columbia (Carver 1949). These discussions led to a consensus that “the primary purpose of planning education should be to produce people, with or without design competency, capable of taking places in planning teams or agencies” (Carver 1949, 3).

This education would be delivered at the graduate level, and there would be no national standard or minimum requirements (Carver 1949). The Committee then requested John Parker (a Canadian who was head of the Department of City and Regional Planning at the University of North Carolina-Chapel Hill) to conduct a survey of current Canadian planning education. A report issued in early 1950 provided recommendations for both universities and the profession. With the post-war revival of the TPIC in 1952 (it had been suspended in 1931), the foundation for planning education in Canada had begun, as most of the initial schools were accredited by the organization in 1953 (Canadian Institute of Planners 2013a).

### Evolution of the Core

What constituted core knowledge in planning was first documented by Carver (1949) at meetings in the summer of 1949, wherein the University of Manitoba's proposal for a one-year Master's degree required courses on government and planning; social concepts and community organizations; municipal engineering; planning principles; and, planning procedures and design. This was very similar to the core prescribed by the American Institute of Planners in 1947 (Carver 1949).

Parker's report the following year recommended a two-year graduate program, covering basic surveying, design, transportation and circulation, planning methods and techniques, municipal engineering, economics, political science, sociology, and law, with the expectation of a summer internship for practical applications (Parker 1950, 33). Howell (1950), writing in *Town Planning Review* in the United Kingdom, summarized the Parker report as representing a trend similar to that of the United States, whereby planners would have a broad general training with an emphasis on design.

Perloff (1956) provided a more detailed discussion of the American approach to the core curriculum. He explained that the core represented not only the evolution of the profession since the early twentieth century, but also the administrative expansion of municipal governments during the Depression years, summarizing that essentially "the planning field has been broadened continuously as the scope for municipal government activities has grown" (190).

In order to accommodate this expansion of responsibilities, Perloff advocated a liberal arts undergraduate degree, followed by a two-year graduate program in planning. Within this two-year program, one year would be spent on the core subjects of: the planning process; urbanism and urbanization process; the physical elements of planning; the socio-economic elements of planning; statistics; and, design methods, with the use of case studies and workshops (Perloff 1956, 207). This selection of topics became the basis for the rational comprehensive model approach (Hemmens 1988).

Perloff's influence is noted in the Université Laval's discussion of a program proposed by LaHaye (1961) a few years later. For the Master's program, a background in physical sciences, social sciences or design was sufficient; the core would cover the theory of planning; planning techniques and standards; site planning; legislative and administrative elements; and, ethics, with the inclusion of two project courses to incorporate current practices (LaHaye 1961).

The growth in the number of planning graduates in the early 1960s convinced the TPIC and CMHC to review university Planning program curricula; John Willis, on the Faculty of Law at the University of Toronto, completed the task. Although unfamiliar with planning (which he explicitly stated throughout his report), Willis provided a basic summary of the subjects with which a planner should be familiar. This included such topics as sociology, geography, economics, geology, municipal engineering, urban economics, planning law, municipal finance, architecture and landscape architecture, drawing of plans, report making and government (Willis 1964, 9). However, with regard to the core, he stated that “the profession and the schools should together agree upon a common core curriculum that covers the agreed irreducible minimum of the bodies of knowledge and collection of skills that every planning student ought to cover *in school* [his emphasis], that irreducible minimum being conceived of as being quite small” (Willis 1964, 36). In summary, Willis believed it was not his place to make recommendations on the curriculum.

The shift to incorporate environmentalism and social concerns in planning education in the early 1970s involved a dramatic shift within the curriculum. Perks summarized the situation by stating “most of the programmes [have] moved away from traditional architectonic curricula to programmes oriented variously towards social analysis, social design, public administration, quantitative and management techniques, and/or environmental systems” (1979, 8). Robinson (1975), while understanding the need for expansion or even removal of the core due to shifting demands from professional practice, still advocated a core curriculum including urbanism and urbanization; planning process; physical, spatial and environmental elements; socio-economic elements; analytical methods; design methods and techniques; and, legal and administrative tools (16). His survey of planning programs highlighted the ten available Master’s programs in Canada in 1974-75, and showed that half the programs had no core requirements while the rest had a core curriculum composing less than half of the program requirements.

Practitioners became critical of this change in emphasis, or lack thereof (Robinson, 1975; Perks, 1979; Richardson, 1979; Page, 1979). Indeed, the *Journal of Urban and Environmental Affairs*, i.e., *Contact* (from the University of Waterloo), had an entire issue on planning education in 1979. A survey of students (Page 1979) around this same time showed that 80% of students agreed with the need for a core curriculum, with the top five components including planning theory; workshop/studio; statistics and research methods; and, design and planning techniques.

More than a decade later, Martin (at the University of Waterloo) revisited the issue of a core curriculum. He considered the recent debate regarding education (as *Plan Canada* had dedicated a whole issue to it in 1991) to be superfluous, as physical planning could only be taught by planning departments and it was still the main component of professional practice (Martin 1991). In addition, he advocated teaching the history of planning, particularly within the Master’s program, as an understanding of the past was necessary for the future. Wolfe, in the same period, would summarize the current core curriculum as encompassing: history and theory; methods; urban and regional morphology; law; and, environmental considerations, most of which were taught using problem-solving workshops (1991, 9).

In the mid-1990s, Friedmann's (1996) survey of twenty programs in the United States (which included the University of British Columbia) determined that the core curriculum comprised (on average) 25% of the degree requirements, with the most common components of the core including quantitative methods, theory and practice, legal aspects, economics and design studio (93). Friedmann's ideal would be broader, encompassing "substantive knowledge about concerns of planning and a set of skills or methods for professional practice" (Edwards and Bates 2011, 173). Curry (1999), having surveyed Canadian schools at the end of the decade, described the main education themes: planning process; politics of planning; ethics; written and oral communication; other interpersonal skills; and entrepreneurship. However, he made no mention of what should constitute the core curriculum in a Canadian setting.

More recently, a survey of thirty programs in the United States (again, including the University of British Columbia) noted changes in the core curriculum when compared with the earlier Friedmann survey (Edwards and Bates 2011). For instance, the core curriculum now encompassed 46% (on average) of the degree requirements, with the following topics increasing in popularity: methods and new technology; planning practice and profession; planning history, theory and practice; and design studios or workshops (Edwards and Bates 2011). Edwards and Bates also emphasized the complications associated with altering the core curriculum as institutions must consider multiple constituents, limited resources, external frameworks (such as Canada's new Professional Standards Board), as well as the current and future skills needed in professional practice. Succinctly, the core curriculum of "planning thought and thus planning education [has] tended to reflect the major social and technological changes affecting society as a whole" (Wolfe 1991, 10).

### **The Balance of Theory and Practical**

One of the objectives of planning education, as per Carver (1949), was to train people for employment in planning by exposing them to planning principles. This is one of the requirements of a professional program, wherein the education system is answerable to the profession. Interestingly, for the last sixty years, the profession and academia have debated the balance of theory and practical with the core curriculum. On this note, Qadeer (1987) suggests that all professions (i.e., law, engineering, medicine) experience this tension between practice and education.

After just ten years of planning education in Canada, Oberlander (1960) was already concerned about the growing gap between practice and education. In his opinion, it was not the responsibility of the universities to train graduates; rather the schools should instill curiosity, as well as provide a broad comprehensive learning environment (Oberlander 1960). To teach practice, he suggested the use of case studies within the curriculum, as a way to engage professionals (Oberlander 1960). Carver (1965), building on Oberlander's suggestion, offered the idea of the TPIC creating reference materials on techniques and current practices for the schools. Around the same time, Willis (1964) suggested the debate between practice and theory was due to the perception that planning was not accepted within academic circles, thus planning academia focused on theory to create legitimacy. This imbalance, as well as the short period of planning education in Canada, had created insecurity within the profession

(Willis 1964). This uncertainty could also have been due to the fact most of the people (men) in power had been trained in the United Kingdom (i.e., Humphrey Carver of CMHC, Harold Spence-Sales of McGill, Gordon Stephenson at the University of Toronto), where the Royal Town Planning Institute (RTPI) had considerable power over the curriculum, a system very different from Canada. Willis was unconcerned about the debate between practical and theory, stating the curriculum “will naturally continue to follow the well-established Canadian tradition of being more “university-minded” than ‘profession-minded” (1964, 36).

The debate continued through the 1970s as Perks expressed concern about “de-emphasizing of the classical technical skills” (1979, 12) of planning. Richardson (1979), in the same periodical, reiterates the responsibility of the professional school to the broader community and the profession, as students must have adequate knowledge upon graduation to become practitioners themselves; thus, academics and practitioners must communicate. Page (1979), suggested incorporating practice into the core curriculum not through direct topics, but rather through teaching methods such as fieldwork, studio and workshops. Wolfe would later characterize this era as a time when “the perceived gap between academics and practitioners always called for comment” (1991, 8).

In the early 1980s, the CIP acknowledged its role in this ongoing debate by stating “[CIP] procedure has, however, been criticized as perfunctory and without benefit of adequate consultation between practitioners and the planning schools” (1982, 15), as both students and practitioners believed the curriculum focused on theory to the detriment of practice. Countering this criticism, the CIP stated, “there seems to be little recognition that the appropriate time to learn the skills and techniques of practice is *after* graduation” (1982, 15), suggesting that perhaps everyone should accept the inevitable gap between theory and practice. The CIP also suggested that planning education move beyond its traditional emphasis on the rational comprehensive model (see Perloff), to a model more grounded in professional practice (1982). At the same time, Hightower, then head of the School of Community and Regional Planning at the University of British Columbia, suggested the whole gap was blown out of proportion and academics and practitioners (who numbered approximately 100 and 3000, respectively) should sort it out themselves (Hightower 1983).

Gradually, a new generation gave voice to the issue. Qadeer (1987), speaking as an academic, advocated the inclusion of theories, concepts and methods (i.e., ideas) in education that must be relevant to practice. He also advocated communication between practitioners and academics. Grant (1989) observed an improved connection in her survey of Canadian planning schools, as most schools used guest lecturers, inviting practitioners to review projects, teach part-time or be involved with joint research projects. In addition, students were discussing practice within the programs, as there was now a large contingent of mid-career professionals returning for skills upgrades, as well as a growing group with internship experience (Grant 1989).

Even this evidence could not convince everyone that balance was achievable, as Qadeer (1991) still insisted “the mission of the profession has been subordinated to academic expectations” (15), suggesting that “a problem-centered approach to teaching is necessary to integrate theory and practice” (20). Curry (1999) would later suggest

this integration occurred with the use of alternative methods (i.e., field trips, studio, guest lecturers). Witty (1999) argued that academia's ongoing bemoaning of balance was actually due to CIP's requirements of the core curriculum, noting that even practitioners were unhappy with the requirements of CIP. In 2010, the CIP began to revamp the accreditation requirements, to support "the development of a formal planning education" (2010, 6), although the approach is tempered with the belief that planning education in Canada cannot teach everything, with work experience being a fundamental factor in achieving a professional designation (CIP, 2010).

### *Trends within the Core Curriculum*

#### **Methodology**

This analysis examined the thematic trends within the core planning curricula in Canada over the last sixty years, as well as the importance of core knowledge within the overall program requirements. Since community planning was originally viewed as a professional degree (Parker 1950), analysis was originally limited to two-year Master's programs. However, as most programs initiated in the 1940s and 1950s began as one year in length, these were included for completeness of the record. The Canadian Institute of Planners (CIP), which accredited university programs within Canada up until 2013, has maintained a list of all current and past programs; this list was consulted to determine which faculties to contact (Canadian Institute of Planners 2013b, Canadian Institute of Planners 2013d).

Of the twenty institutions that have offered planning in Canada, fifteen have offered a Master's program. The program directors and/or university archives were contacted at each institution, with a request for program requirements and course descriptions for specific years within the history of their program (these data were typically three to five pages taken from the Graduate Calendar). In some cases (as summarized in Table 1), the data were incomplete, as total program credits were not provided and/or course themes could not be discerned from the course title. This issue arose for two programs. In other cases, the complete record of the program was not available for analysis. For instance, McGill University began its program in 1947 (McGill University 2013); however, current accreditation began in 1974. In this case, the program could not provide information prior to 1975. Similar issues were encountered with the Université de Montreal and the University of Toronto.

These data were collected every five years (where possible) as this interval would provide a substantial amount of data while illustrating when shifts occurred within the curricula. The information included overall program requirements, core curriculum requirements, and course descriptions. Note that this review of the core curriculum excludes thesis and/or research report requirements. Each program was evaluated for total credits required, number of core credits, and the themes of the core courses. Some programs, (e.g., the University of Manitoba in the 1950s, McGill University, the University of Toronto) used courses, rather than credits, to summarize program requirements. In order to weight themes appropriately and to allow comparison between programs and/or within the history of a program, courses were given a weighting of three (3.0) credits each.

**Table 1: Information Received from Master's Programs**

<b>Institution</b>	<b>Accreditation Period</b>	<b>Information Received</b>
University of British Columbia <sup>A</sup>	1952-2015	1955 <sup>1</sup> , 1960 <sup>1</sup> , 1965 <sup>1</sup> , 1970, 1975, 1980, 1985, 1990, 1995, 2000, 2005, 2010
University of Calgary	1976-2008, 2013-2018	1980, 1985, 1990, 1995, 2000 <sup>2</sup> , 2005 <sup>2</sup>
Dalhousie University (includes TUNS)	1978-2016	1980, 1985, 1990, 1995 <sup>2</sup> , 1999, 2005, 2010
University of Guelph	1983-2018	1985, 1990, 1995, 2000, 2005, 2010
Université Laval	1971-2015	1975, 1980, 1985, 1990, 1995, 2000, 2005, 2010
University of Manitoba <sup>B</sup>	1952-2015	1949 <sup>1</sup> , 1955 <sup>1</sup> , 1960 <sup>1</sup> , 1965, 1970, 1975, 1980, 1985, 1990, 1995, 2000, 2005, 2010
McGill University <sup>C</sup>	1974-2015	1975, 1980, 1985 <sup>2</sup> , 1990 <sup>2</sup> , 1995 <sup>2</sup> , 2000, 2005, 2010
Université de Montréal <sup>D</sup>	1968-2014	1990, 1995 <sup>2</sup> , 2000, 2005, 2010
University of Ottawa	1977-1983	1977, 1983
Queen's University	1973-2015	1975, 1980, 1985, 1990, 1995, 2000, 2005, 2010
Ryerson University	2009-2014	2010
Simon Fraser University	2004-2014	2005, 2010
University of Toronto <sup>A</sup>	1963-2014	1987, 1990, 1995, 2000, 2005, 2010
University of Waterloo	1968-2014	1970, 1975, 1980, 1985, 1990, 1995, 2000, 2005, 2010
York University	1970-2017	1975, 1979, 1985, 1989, 1999, 2005, 2010

A Program began in 1951.

B Program began in 1949.

C Program began in 1947.

D Program began in 1961.

1 One-year program. Included as most early programs were only one year in length.

2 Data incomplete. Not included in analysis.

To evaluate the course theme, previous studies of curricula were used (Friedmann, 1996; Edwards and Bates, 2011). The established themes allowed for the categorization of the broad aspects of planning, with the intention that every course would adhere to one of the eight themes provided: Planning History, Theory & Practice; Urban History & Theory; Public or Urban Economics; Legal Aspects of Planning; Workshop or Studio; Methods of Statistics; Methods of GIS/Spatial; and Methods of Policy, Planning & Analysis (Edwards and Bates 2011). While the courses titles typically aided in determining theme, the course description (where available) was used for confirmation.

These eight themes were also categorized between theory and practical. While an argument could be made that aspects of each theme could encompass theory and practical, for this analysis the first four categories were considered Theory, wherein they encompass foundation and/or background information for the student. The last four categories were considered Practical, as they provide methods of analysis, skills that would typically be used by a practitioner.

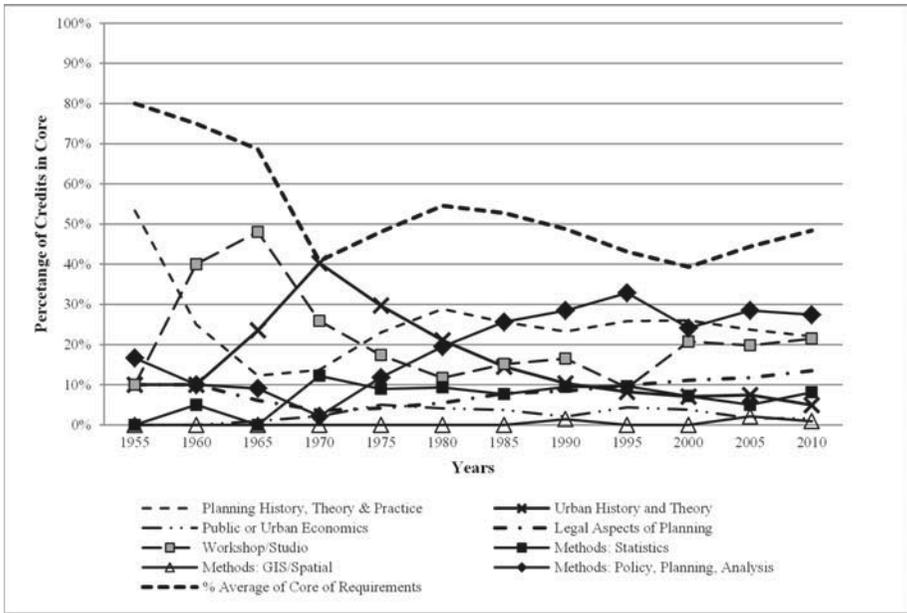
Thus, for each year of each program the analysis could determine the percentage of program requirements encompassed within the core curricula, the portion of the core curricula allotted to each theme, and the weight of Theory and Practical within the core curricula. Note, when a year is provided it is the beginning of the academic year. Thus, 1955 represents 1955/56.

## Analysis

Figure 1 illustrates the history of the eight academic themes, as well as the importance of the core curricula within the program requirements. Data from the University of Manitoba's program from 1949 were not included, as accreditation did not begin until 1952. The bold dashed line (top line) illustrates the percentage the core curricula encompass of the overall program requirements. In 1955 (which included only the University of Manitoba and the University of British Columbia one-year programs), the core is 80% of the program requirements. The importance of the core decreases gradually until 1965, then drops precipitously to 41% in 1970, when the University of Waterloo is included: at that time, the University of Waterloo did not have core curriculum requirements in its two-year program. For the next forty years, the importance of the core curricula in Canadian programs fluctuates between 39% and 55%.

Initially, Planning History, Theory & Practice (light dash line in Figure 1) encompasses more than 50% of the core curricula. However, by 1965 it had declined significantly in importance, as Workshop/Studio weighs heavily within the core (approximately 48%). By 1970, the balance of the eight themes within the core curricula is less skewed (Figure 1) with each theme generally encompassed less than 30% between 1970 and 2010. The exception was Methods of Policy, Planning & Analysis in 1995, which was a third of the core, on average.

FIGURE 1 COMPONENTS OF CORE CURRICULA IN CANADA



**IMPORTANCE OF THE CORE**

Rather than examining the sixty years of history all at once, the data were divided into five periods. These periods reflect changes to the importance of the core, as well as the evolution of the academic discipline and other critical commentary. Davoudi and Pendlebery, while considering planning education in the United Kingdom, suggest that pedagogy should be fluid, requiring “periodic restructuring... in response to demands from professional practice” (2010, 615). They describe five stages of this pedagogical evolution as formation (pre-1940s), consolidation (1950-1960s), fragmentation (1980s), reconstitution (1990s), and maturing (2000s) (Davoudi and Pendlebery 2010, 617). A similar evolution is observable within the Canadian data. For our purposes, the five periods are Comprehensive (pre-1957), Rational Comprehensive (1958-1967), Social (1968-1977), Fundamentals (1978-1992), and Balanced (1993-2010).

*Comprehensive Period*

In 1950, John Parker of the University of North Carolina recommended that the core curriculum emphasize design and economics, with additional courses in law, municipal engineering, planning techniques and methods, political science, sociology, surveying, and transportation (1950). However, at the University of Manitoba and the University of British Columbia in 1955, the emphasis was predominantly on the history, theory and practice of planning, with secondary considerations for methods of policy, planning & analysis (see Figure 1). Neither program provided a core course in economics. We

consider this period *comprehensive* as the core is 80% of the program requirements, although the programs were only one year in length.

### *Rational Comprehensive Period*

In 1956, at the University of Chicago, Perloff (1956) proposed his Rational Comprehensive model for urban planning education in the United States. This approach broadened the acceptable pre-requisites by including the liberal arts as an entry degree. In addition, the program emphasized workshop/studio (aka design), statistics and spatial methods. Perloff's emphasis on design is reflected by the importance of workshop/studio at both the University of Manitoba and the University of British Columbia in 1960 and 1965 (see Figure 1). The importance of the core within the requirements also diminished slightly, to 72% of the total program curriculum, illustrating an increasing leniency and allowances for electives.

### *Social Period*

During the Social Period (1968-1977), the data suggest a de-emphasis of the core curriculum. For instance, in 1970, one of the three institutions had no core requirements (i.e., the University of Waterloo), while in 1975 two of the eight institutions did not require a core curriculum (i.e., the University of Waterloo and York University). Therefore, the core accounted for only 46% of the program requirements during this period. While the schools presented a variety of pedagogical approaches to community planning, the period was predominantly concerned with urban history & theory, as well as the history & theory of planning and workshop/studio (Figure 1).

### *Fundamentals Period*

During the Fundamentals Period (1978-1992), courses in planning history & theory were given almost equal weight to methodology courses for policy, planning & analysis (see Figure 1). It was during this period that the core curricula increased slightly in importance, representing 53% of the program requirements. In addition, all institutions, except York University, required a version of a core curriculum. Of note, this is the first period when all eight themes were taught by Canadian institutions.

### *Balanced Period*

With the Balanced Period (1993-2010), the core curriculum emphasized methods in policy, planning & analysis, as well as planning history, theory & practice. However, the importance of the core was slightly reduced, to an average of 44% of program requirements. This is due to the removal of core curricula by the University of British Columbia in 1995, 2000 and 2005, while the Université of Laval did not require a core curriculum in 2005 and 2010. In contrast, York University began requiring a core curriculum by 2005.

### *Institutional Trends*

Table 2 provides a summary of the importance of the core curriculum by institution, providing both the historical average as well as the maximum and minimum, and the

relevant years. This highlights the fact that five institutions have agreed upon core requirements within their histories, while two have insisted on only the core as the program requirements.

**Table 2: Historical Core Requirements for Each Institution**

Institution	Historical Average Core Curricula Requirement	Minimum Core Requirement (Year)	Maximum Core Requirement (Year)
University of British Columbia	56%	0% (1995, 2000, 2005)	75% (1975)
University of Calgary	72%	0% (2000, 2005)	100% (1980)
Dalhousie University	55%	38% (1990)	70% (2005, 2010)
University of Guelph	64%	60% (1990, 1995, 2000, 2005, 2010)	82% (1985)
Université Laval	31%	0% (2005, 2010)	57% (1975)
University of Manitoba	86%	73% (1990, 1995)	100% (1949, 1955, 1960, 1975, 1980, 1985)
McGill University	54%	41% (2010)	65% (2000, 2005)
Université de Montreal	53%	47% (2005)	55% (1990, 2000)
University of Ottawa	58%	50% (1982)	67% (1977)
Queen's University	40%	38% (2005)	44% (1995, 2010)
Ryerson University	71%	----	----
Simon Fraser University	76%	75% (2010)	78% (2005)
University of Toronto	45%	44% (1990, 1995, 1999, 2005, 2010)	50% (1987)
University of Waterloo	20%	0% (1970, 1975)	40% (1985)
York University	10%	0% (1975, 1979, 1985, 1989, 1999)	38% (2011)

## EVOLUTION OF THEMES

The data were also examined by considering the eight themes (as shown in Figure 1), to illustrate how themes have shifted in importance over the historical record. In 1955, the emphasis was on the history of planning, to provide a foundation for the profession. However, this subject fell out of favour during the 1960s and 1970s, where in 1970 it accounted for only 14% of the core curriculum. Since then, it has generally encompassed 20% of the core, with a historical average of 25%. The history of urban planning, which evolved from the emphasis on urbanism in the 1960s, peaked in 1970 to include 40% of the core curriculum. However, since the 1980s it has fallen

from favour, typically including less than 10% of the core since that period. Overall, the historical average across Canada was 16%. Urban history & theory tended to be strongly emphasized at schools located in urban centres (i.e., Montreal, Vancouver, Toronto and Winnipeg).

While both Parker (1950) and Perloff (1956) noted the importance of public or urban economics, even suggesting it should comprise 10% to 25% of the curricula, Canadian institutions have never viewed this knowledge as critical. Only eight of the fifteen institutions have required courses in economics, with these types of courses comprising only 2% of the core curricula. Typically, these courses become a requirement after economic downturns, such as those experienced in the early 1980s and early 1990s, as shown with the peaks in 1990 and 2005 (see Figure 1).

Both the University of Guelph and Simon Fraser University emphasize the legal (and administrative) aspects of planning, with this theme comprising more than 20% of their cores, historically. However, this theme represents only 8% of the overall core curricula nationally, with the peak occurring in 2010 at 13%. At its peak in 1965, workshop/studio courses accounted for 48% of the core curriculum (see Figure 1). Since then, such design courses seem to have fallen out of favour, averaging around 20% of the core for the last forty years. The historical average for workshop/studio courses is 21% of the core, the second most important of the eight themes. Statistical methods have only been required at eleven of the fourteen institutions, with a historical average of 7% of the core curricula nationally. The least popular theme is methods of spatial analysis, including just 0.4% of the core curricula as only two institutions have had required courses in such methods (i.e., the University of Calgary in 1990 and McGill University in 2005).

Methods of policy, planning & analysis initially included 17% of the core in 1955. However, by 1970 such methods courses represented only 2% of the core curricula. Since then, their significance has increased, peaking at 33% in 1995 (see Figure 1). The historical average for these types of methods is 20%. These types of courses have represented a significant portion of the core planning curriculum at the University of Waterloo since 1980 and at the University of Toronto since 1987.

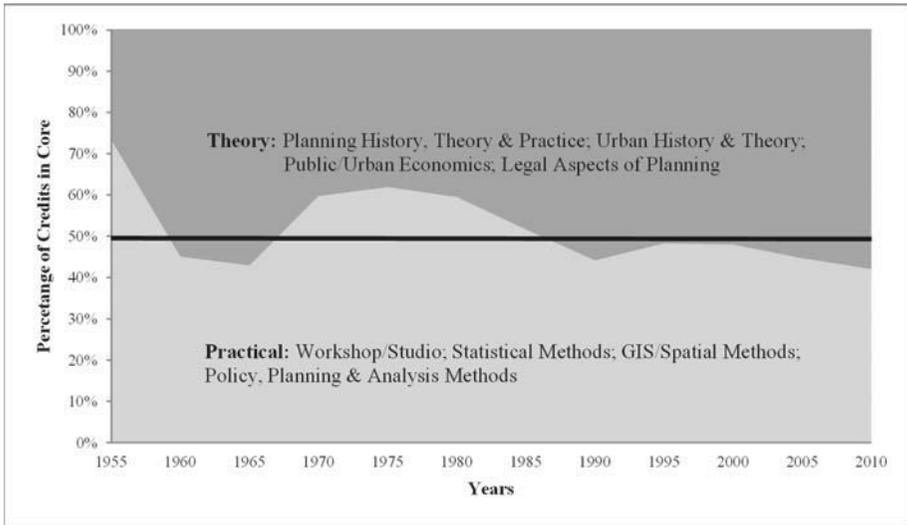
### **BALANCE OF THEORY AND PRACTICAL**

The eight themes suggested by Friedmann (1996) were divided into two categories of Theory and Practical. Theory included courses on Planning History, Theory & Practice; Urban History & Theory; Public or Urban Economics; and the Legal Aspects of Planning. Practical included courses on Workshop and/or Studio; Methods of Statistics; Methods of GIS/Spatial; and Methods of Policy, Planning & Analysis. Each theme does include components of both theoretical and practical knowledge; the assumption was made that the majority of each theme would fall under either Theory (i.e., background or foundational knowledge) or Practical (i.e., applicable, job related methodologies).

Figure 2 illustrates how the core curricula fluctuate between the two over the historical period. Initially in 1955, Theory far outweighed Practical (73% to 27%). However, by 1960 this had shifted to a more equitable split of 45% Theory and 55% Practical. Between 1970 and 1980, the emphasis returned to Theory, encompassing

approximately 60% of the core curricula. Since 1990, the emphasis has been on the Practical (see Figure 2), at approximately 55% of the core curriculum.

FIGURE 2 BALANCE OF THEORY AND PRACTICE WITHIN CORE CURRICULA



### Summary

The first twenty years of planning education in Canadian university planning programs illustrates significant shifts in thematic importance, as well as the overall importance of the core curricula. In 1955, core knowledge encompassed more than three-quarters of program requirements, by 1970, this had been reduced to less than half. The commentary of the 1970s is reflective of this generational shift in the importance of the core knowledge, which concerned some academics (Robinson 1975; Perks 1979). The balance between Theory and Practical themes also shifted significantly within this fifteen year period, with Theory being of greater importance at both the beginning and end (1955, 1970), while Practical was the emphasis in 1960 and 1965. With the eight themes, there was a significant reduction in emphasis on history and theory, as the importance of workshop studio increased during the 1960s. This reflects Perloff's (1956) emphasis on design; alternatively, this trend could be due to the larger group of incoming students with limited design background due to an "overwhelming number of social science students" (Oberlander 1960). Urban theory and history also increased in importance during this early period, as most programs were in urban areas.

After 1970, the importance of the core, the balance of Theory and Practical, as well as the constituents of the core knowledge all seem to find equilibrium. While the core curriculum increases from 41% in 1970 to 55% in 1980, its fraction of the program requirements was maintained between these two extremes until 2010 (see Figure 1). No longer does one theme dominate the core, as each theme accounts for less than 30% of the core knowledge. The rise in the predominance of planning history, theory

and practice in 1980, to approximately 30%, is again reflective of the comments during the 1970s of the need for foundational knowledge (Robinson 1975). Conversely, the continued importance of methods of policy, planning and analysis supports Grant's findings that professionals were becoming more involved with the institutional programs (1989), and is also a response to comments during the 1980s (Qadeer 1987) that graduates were ill-prepared for profession responsibilities. As these two themes, planning history, theory and practice, as well as methods in policy, planning and analysis have dominated the core since 1985, Witty's (1999) insistence on increased collaboration between professionals and academics seems to have been answered.

### Limitations of Analysis

While data for all existing and previous Master's Programs in Planning in Canada were received, the record of historical information was not always complete. The changing of program names, and/or the relocation of the Planning program between faculties and/or departments made the collection of older information difficult. For instance, while McGill University had an interdisciplinary program in 1947 (McGill University 2013), data were only available since CIP accreditation in 1974. Another issue in data gathering was ease of access to graduate calendars. Previously, this document was in paper format, with older editions available in archives or in program offices. As such information is now only available on the internet, it was more difficult to locate within the last ten years (i.e., the University of Waterloo). In other cases, data retrieval was difficult due to the wariness of program directors to allow for such a review of their curriculum. Of note, the University of British Columbia makes available all Graduate Calendars since 1909 on their website in PDF form (University of British Columbia 2008).

### Conclusions

This survey and analysis of the core curricula of planning education in Canada traces the evolution of the core curricula of planning education, at a Master's level, over the last sixty years. While there is no unitary model of planning education in this country, the various institutions have found common ground with regard to the importance of the core, as well as the themes encompassed within this knowledge. While the profession and academics have been concerned about imbalance between theory and practical content within the core curricula, our study findings suggest that this skewing is more an issue of perception than fact.

### Further Analysis

This analysis of Canadian planning education has created more questions than could be answered in our study. For instance, should institutions consider placing more emphasis on public or urban economics, particularly within this age of neo-liberalism and austerity? With more than 50% of jobs in the public sphere (Government of Canada 2013), should administrative and communication skills (i.e., law) be emphasized within the core curriculum? Should workshop/studio play a greater role within the core, considering land development is a key professional skill? Various administrative

bodies should consider these concerns as curriculum requirements are reviewed in the coming years.

## Acknowledgements

The authors would like to acknowledge the help and direction of Joe Qian at the University of Waterloo and David Gordon at Queen's University. In addition, we would like to thank the numerous archivists and program directors who searched for the data.

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