PLANNING THE FUTURE OF RURAL TORONTO: STRUCTURE PLANNING IN THE GREATER TORONTO AREA

Since 1988 the Province of Ontario has sought to coordinate the planning process to allow a renewal of the structure planning that had been abandoned in the mid-1970s. The Office for the Greater Toronto Area has produced a series of documents in which the framework for development and the process of planning consultation were set out. This paper will concentrate on the document 'A Vision for the Countryside' prepared by one of the six working groups involved in developing the overall schema for the region. Guideline principles included a recognition of the value of the countryside as an entity, focus on combined greenlands and agricultural lands, and the relationship of settlements to those 'rural' aspects of the countryside. The aim of the report was to preserve both the agricultural industry in the GTA and the amenity and environmental values of the countryside. However, the vision put forward is almost entirely conventional and strongly urban in ideological bias. While the effort of the report is admirable and the concept reasonable, the result is a bland pastiche of nice suggestions for the kind of countryside in which city people would feel comfortable. Finally, and perhaps most significant the report was entirely done within the context of municipal, regional and Provincial officialdom. There was no input from the resident population. Admirable, but entirely bureaucratic planning, is not likely to set the tone for either rural renewal or for the long term protection of a rural segment of the Greater Toronto Area.

THE CONTEXT FOR A CRITIQUE OF PLANNING RURAL TORONTO

The discussion to follow came about as a pragmatic attempt to respond to the question of rural survival and sustainability in its relation to planning in Toronto’s countryside. Rural life exists out there. Rural Canada, and the tiny piece of rural Toronto, is a compound of people, with their divisions and interests; institutions of state, municipalities and the provincial government; and economic institutions, most markedly the institutionalization of landed property as a marketable commodity. The rural life world is enmeshed in the urban life world, in local states, and in the open, world economy. These life worlds are highly volatile. The volatility of contemporary life stems in no small part from the character of the overarching cultural system of modernity and the economic system of capitalism. To deal with even the little piece of rurality in Toronto’s countryside it is necessary to contextualize it into this larger world of relations.

Conceptualized this way, as a multivariate, open system, survival and sustainability, rural or urban, becomes highly problematic. My vision of this problematic is place oriented. When conceived as a series of places, occupied by diverse groups of people, related to the twin engines of polity and economy, guided by culture, survivability can scarcely be expected except for a short time. The attempt of various authorities in the Greater Toronto Area (GTA) to plan in this volatile environment raises a very large number of problems. Two of them are central to the critique to follow. First, how do the planners see the environment for which
they are planning? Second, how is that environment put together as a system of living people? Out of the intersection of these questions it may be possible to see what is going to happen, or at least to see who are the participants.

What is going on in rural Toronto is intrinsically interesting to some, but is also an exemplar of some central and salient processes of hyper-modernity and late capitalism. The world seems to be moving faster than in the recent past. Capital circulation is faster. Labour processes are speeded up. This situation is the active causal matrix in the development of rural Toronto. The rapidity of processes is encapsulated in the intersection of global economic restructuring and counterurbanization, socially recreating both urban and rural. This, of course, is a shorthand reference to a complex of causes that exist well beyond the bounds of Toronto and its rural hinterland. Hyper-modernity identifies the cultural system, with its accelerating changes. Late capitalism characterizes the global system within which restructuring is an imperative.

The division between rural and urban identifies important notions. The geographic divisions of rural and urban reappear even when it seems objective reality will obliterate them. Fundamentally, rural and urban are social constructions which link objective conditions with subjective perceptions and appraisals. Academics, and planners have difficulties in identifying rural and urban, particularly when they restrict themselves to entirely objective considerations. Those living in the world do not have the same difficulties, because recognition is in part subjective and in part because those participants are engaged in the social creation of rural and urban. Yet, the reappearance and shifts in what is seen as rural or urban also have a base in the objective world because the dynamics of capitalism and modernity, intertwined as they are, make them necessary.

At the moment, the minor flurry associated with efforts to redo the Ontario planning system, to hyper-modernize planning, may also be seen in the context of a larger reorganization of the provincial state. The activist state of the last generation has been transformed. Planning is now carried out in the context of declining state intervention, rising and crippling debts, and declining state revenues. The changing character of state institutions, particularly those related to the regional and provincial levels of governance profoundly affects what planners can accomplish.

These structural considerations, stemming from the view I have of the organization of reality, lead to an essay in interpretation. I will provide an evidential base for my interpretations of what the rural planning system of Toronto's countryside is encountering and accomplishing, but I will put forward an argument that begins with assumptions derived from the concepts I have just outlined. I assume that the life world, by which I mean the people, the divisions and the interests therefore created, operates as a socially constructed but quasi-natural system. The life world seems chaotic. However, there are attractors which give the turbulent chaos of people form. I hypothesize there is a dominant culture which has some influence on the strategies of the resident population and determines, to a considerable degree, the residents and others apprehension of the situation. The culture also informs institutional participants, like planners, of what is possible, feasible and even thinkable. One central element of this essay is to identify significant aspects of that culture as they bear on the planning for a rural segment of an urban field.

A series of interests in the countryside, with different resources to bring to bear,
contend for survival, making Toronto's countryside an arena for struggle. Planning is not carried out in a vacuum, it is part of the contestation of interests, informed by cultural values, rendering scientific prediction of who will win and what will they do in policy terms, very doubtful. Therefore, this essay must be in the form of an interpretation. Although the future can not be predicted, and planning must be oriented to the future, what can be done is to attempt to identify the fields of contestation within which planning for rural survival occurs. At least we might know the protagonists and what they seem to be about.

**SETTING FOR RURAL STRUCTURE PLANNING IN THE TORONTO COUNTRYSIDE**
The question posed by the President of the Canadian Association of Geographers, Michael Troughton, at the association's annual meeting in 1993, was, is rural planning adequate to preserve rural life as a Canadian future? The simple answer to the question in Toronto's countryside is NO! Most of this discussion will deal with the reasons and logic of such an answer, in the context of the evolving planning environment in central southern Ontario. It should be noted at the outset that the situation is replete with ironies. One of those ironies is that the government of Ontario, over the last two administrations, has renewed its interest in the planning and protection of the countryside of Toronto.

In the late 1960s and early 1970s, the then Conservative government of Ontario made serious efforts through planning mechanisms, governmental reorganization and government policies, to address the problems of the development of the Toronto urban region. Those efforts ended in failure around 1975. From 1975 to 1988 the government made no serious efforts to deal with the urban field of Toronto. I have considered this evolution in papers at earlier CAG meetings (Walker: CAG Vancouver 1992 and CAGONT Scarborough 1992). Here I want to discuss the most recent attempts to deal with the future of rural Toronto, through an examination of a couple of documents, one prepared by the Office of the Greater Toronto Area, and the other the report of the Sewell Commission on the reform of the planning and development system in Ontario.

Between 1988 and the present, the government of Ontario has taken several steps to renew its oversight of the development of the Toronto region. The steps taken have included the development and deployment of the Office of the Greater Toronto Area (OGTA), including oversight for the five regional municipalities of Toronto, Halton, Peel, York and Durham. This office, a sub-ministerial organization, was first assigned to the Ministry of Municipal Affairs by the Liberal government in 1988, and to the Ministry for the Environment by the New Democratic government in 1991, and since has been returned to the Ministry of Municipal Affairs. In addition, the government has declared a provincial interest in the Oak Ridges Moraine, the spine of the region, has renewed its interest in the waterfront of the entire region, and has initiated a policy to site new waste dumps in the region. These several initiatives each of which has its own developmental logic, all indicate that the provincial government is actively interested in the way in which the Toronto region develops and is willing to become at least partially responsible for that development (see Figure 1).

While this renewed interest harks back to the ways in which the region was conceptualized in the early 1970s, a number of very significant differences have emerged. In the earlier period the government accepted, largely implicitly, the notion that control of Toronto growth was one of its several spatial priorities, and was a major thrust of policy. At the same time, the planning aspects of control were minimal. Regional governmental reorganization combined with elements of direct provincial intervention, bundled into a regional planning guideline (the COLUC Report 1974), were seen as sufficient to handle the problems as defined at that time. The general approach was in the context of an activist and interventionist provincial government which expected that the judicious application of provincial policies could control developments defined as problematic.

The entire context of governmental participation has changed and that change is reflected in the current character of efforts of plan the region surrounding Toronto. The activist and interventionist orientation has all
but disappeared. Replacing that orientation has been one of guidance through bureaucratic oversight, strategic planning, but with the formal institutionalization of power favouring the established municipalities of the region. Direct provincial intervention has been limited to the waterfront, the Moraine, and the siting of waste dumps. Thus, the changes in the character of the provincial government affects what can be done in the region. Bureaucratic guidance of the OGTA has led to the production of a number of documents that are hoped to provide guidelines for future development in the region.

While current efforts to reform the planning system and siting of waste dumps are separate, they directly impinge on the situation and should be considered in the same context. The Sewell Commission has formulated a series of planning and development policies that would substantially overhaul the Planning Act and more closely integrate it with the Environmental Protection Act. These policies are designed to provide more coherence and to streamline the development and planning processes. If these reforms are successful, the planning context will be altered and the mode of contest and accommodation in the region, as in the rest of the province, will be reset. We will return to these considerations shortly.

The contentious issue of the siting of waste dumps, while in principle separate from the other concerns raised, is strongly implicated in the manner in which the region evolves. The province has made several fundamental decisions about the ways in which waste will be handled. Burning will not be permitted. Regional municipalities will be required to dispose of their own waste within their own boundaries, except for Metro Toronto which will be able to ship its waste to a new site in the GTA, which will be outside of Metro. These several decisions and the creation of an Interim Waste Management Authority to locate a new dump has precipitated a major struggle in the region. That struggle is by no means resolved. It has led to a polarization of opinion and a mobilization of the population. The broadly rural segment of the region is resisting the location of the waste dump, wherever the province decides to locate it. Again, more about the character of that struggle later.

An important question must be touched upon at this point, and that is what are rural interests anyway? It is commonplace, particularly within geographic research, to assume that there are authentic and unauthentic rural interests. Most commonly agriculture is considered as an authentic rural interest, but hobby farming, and often part-time farming are considered unauthentic. Relatively recent arrivals in the countryside, particularly if they retain their urban occupations, friends, relatives and culture, are usually seen as unauthentic. I wish to challenge this conceptualization. Within farming both full-time and part-time farmers are authentic. Both types have been integral to agriculture for many generations and individuals and families pass between these two types of farming quite frequently. The new urbanite residents are not just city people living in the countryside. Most frequently they see themselves as new ruralities. This is the view put forward normatively by Sim (1988). I believe that his is a correct view, particularly if it is accepted that identities are socially constructed. When I refer to the broadly rural segment of the GTA I am referring to all of its inhabitants. I do not consider some to be authentic and others unauthentic. All the residents are working out what the rural region in which they live will become.

The context of planning for the countryside is thus set by the OGTA, but is in the larger ambience of contest over landscape features, the waterfront and the Moraine, and over the very definition of rural life implicit in
siting a new waste dump. The OGTA has produced a number of documents in which a variety of municipal and provincial officials have combined to give representation to the concept of the Greater Toronto Area. It is to one of those documents that I will now turn.

CONCEPTUAL AND IDEOLOGICAL FORMULATION OF THE GTA

The OGTA developed a series of working groups between 1990 and 1991 to prepare documents that could serve as the base for new planning structures and guidelines in the region. The particular document I want to discuss in some detail is entitled: *A Vision for the Countryside: Report of the Provincial-Municipal Countryside Working Group* (no date 1992). First, it is important to consider the membership of the working group and the way in which its report was prepared. The working group consisted of sixteen members, all of them municipal or provincial officials or staff. There was no public input and there were no public meetings. This document is entirely in-house. While it represents a larger constituency than the combined provincial-municipal establishment, it is in no way a document that represents a coherent public opinion. The *Vision*... document represents almost pure bureaucratic invention, and is, as such, much more an ideological statement from the inside, than a set of proposals which includes input from the citizen body.

However, this does not invalidate, nor necessarily undermine the importance of the document. It is an effort by bureaucrats to predetermine the course of public debate and development before the more disorderly participation of interest groups and citizens are engaged. This gives the report its ideological coherence. Yet, it should be noted, the bureaucratic process has already internalized a number of interests and given several interests a privileged position. At the same time, there is reason to believe that the document very probably does represent the region in a way that would be recognized by its inhabitants, and possibly would be acceptable to them. This situation may seem contradictory, but the social realities of this countryside are contradictory. Contradictions and their resolution or transformation are central to both modernity and capitalism. Nevertheless, this document is just one more in a long series of paternalistic, top-down approaches to the problems of the region. Whether it ever directly engages the public will depend upon a variety of considerations of power relations beyond the document.

There are several aspects of the report that I want to highlight here: the conceptualization of rural and urban, the constituents of the countryside, the Natural Heritage System Model, and the relations of the document to the proposals of the Sewell Commission on Planning and Development Reform. Since the report deals with the countryside, the rural segment of the region, it makes very serious efforts to approach that segment from a reasonable conceptual stance. At the beginning, the report acknowledges that the most common way to consider the countryside (rural) is as what is left over after urban is removed. The report attempts, largely unsatisfactorily in my opinion, to give a coherence to the term rural. What emerges is a countryside defined in terms of several elements that only contingently come together: green spaces, agriculture, tourism and recreation, aggregate resources, and settlements. In essence, this means that the conceptualization of the rural segment is weak and is from the perspective of urban interests.

Urban interests are strongly conceptualized. What defines the region is the urban core, centred on Toronto, but extending in an arc from Burlington to Newcastle. The GTA is arbitrary, in that is defined entirely in terms of regional municipalities surrounding the core.
region of Metro Toronto. This definition loses the focus of the commuting field which is the core of the census metropolitan area (CMA) concept used by Statistics Canada, but still contains most of the same region. Also, the arbitrary use of regional municipalities rather than the commuter field hides the basis of delimitation and creates some chaos on the edges. Commuter shed areas of Toronto in southern Simcoe County are not included, rural areas in Durham Region, near Lindsay, without significant commuter ties to Toronto, are included.

The result is that the strong focus of the Visions... report is the urban settlements of the lakeshore and the weak focus is the rural hinterland and urban shadow around that core. Nevertheless, the elements of that countryside periphery are specified as countryside constituents. The result is the specification of several established interests. These are the implicit basis of class struggle hidden in the report.

The first of the countryside constituents considered is greenspaces, representing an amalgam of environmental categories drawn from a variety of provincial sources, but all centring on environmental features to be preserved and protected. Thus, the first constituent of the countryside is the focus of the conservationist/environmentalist interest. The greenlands are defined in terms of water and air quality, of natural habitats and communities to be preserved and protected, defined bureaucratically, even scientifically. Altogether, greenspaces comprise about 1,300 square kilometres, or about 20% of the surface area of the GTA. At least 75% of those spaces are located in the broad zone defined as countryside. The report presents homogeneous greenspaces. However, land-use information, based on my field work in the region, shows the greenspaces to be very heterogeneous. There is a very significant portion of the surface area of the countryside that is identified for protection, but the basis of its identification is mysterious, if scientific. The actual areas are very difficult to identify. My own analyses suffer from the difficulties of linking the greenspaces mapped in the Kantor Report (1990, the first of the reports of the GTA orientation), and the land-use areas for which I and my students have collected data. The results do suggest that there is something mysterious, even if scientific, about the concept of greenspace. Mystery in a central concept, particularly when hidden in the commonplace of the concept, suggests hidden interests. The lack of specificity of the ways in which greenspaces are identified, while associating them with scientific agencies implies, to me, an ideological intent. Greenspaces become a quasi-sacred aspect of the environment, validated ironically by association with science.

Yet, a strategy of protection is put forward based on a conceptual Natural Heritage System Model. The model has four elements: core areas (lands providing significant natural heritage benefits), corridors (linear biophysical features), and connecting links (natural areas connecting core areas and corridors with one another), and the remaining human dominated areas. The model is presented in schematic form and the content of the human dominated areas are left blank. Implicit in the spatial representation of the Natural Heritage System is the idea that there is really plenty of room to accommodate nature within a humanly dominated area. A series of natural cores are linked by natural corridors, which are in their turn, created around streams. Connecting links finish the web structure that links the natural heritage areas into a whole. The leaving blank of human dominated areas is a nice, architectural rendering. However, it hides the complexity and expansiveness of the human dominated areas. Again this leaves implicit the notion that there is really room to accommodate both nature and human
dominance. This model exemplifies, to me, what is meant by the notion "the death of bits of nature, linked by streams, is the condition throughout the world for the mass disappearance of species we have grown accustomed to. I doubt very much that environmentalists and conservationists of any serious sort would be taken in by the model. Particularly, this becomes obvious when one puts on the map a roughly representative collection of roads, fields, dispersed and nucleated settlements. Then the conflicts and inadequacies of the model become very evident. If a serious effort is to be made to stay the death of nature in Toronto's countryside, and it may be too late, it must involve more than saving a few pieces and attempting to link them together. Thus, while the report recognizes an environmental interest, and defines it as intrinsic to the countryside, it is scarcely likely to provide a serious base for natural survival, let alone rural survival.

The second interest represented in the report is agriculture. The report presents a spotty but reasonable characterization of the industrial agricultural presence in the region. Close to half of the surface area of the GTA, and most of the surface area in the countryside is in agricul-

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Figure 2: A Conceptual Model to Incorporate Nature Within the Urban Field.
tural holdings. The report documents the continuing decline of agricultural units of production and the increasing productivity of the survivors. The tone of the report is protectionist, but protectionist of the agricultural industry, not of the rural community maintained so precariously around agriculture. There is no analysis, or even hint, that the productivist and protectionist position masks class interests. For instance, there is no recognition that most of the farm families in the region are pluriactivists; maintaining an agricultural property, with some production, but earning most income from off-farm work. The proportion of full-time farmers is relatively small, though their production is very considerable. The implicit model of agriculture, an ideologically, not a factually based model, is that the farmers are full-time family farmers. The reality is far different. Again, what is recognized is a particularly narrow part of the larger community which includes farmers.

A third interest in the region is the aggregate industry. This is treated as a necessary nuisance. Proposals are put forward for the esthetic handling of gravel pits after exploitation. While the report is not openly hostile to the aggregate industry, it is clearly cautious and inclined to limit this form of industrial exploitation. Still again, economic interests are recognized but the social matrix is ignored. The very vision of the aggregate industry is from the perspective of urbanites whose esthetic sensibilities are offended by the disturbance of nature inherent in aggregate exploitation.

A fourth aspect of the countryside, and one of considerable importance in the report, is the tourist and recreation component of this version of rurality. Here the report is overtly sympathetic with the tourism and recreational potential of the region, but cautious about unrestricted development. The focus becomes the development of trails. This focus allows the interests of a relatively small segment of the larger urban population to gain rural access. A complex set of strategies are suggested to insure such access. Further, the strategies are linked, though tenuously, to the natural heritage protection model. Many of the trails would be associated with such areas, but would be decorously placed for compatibility.

The fifth, and final, component identified is countryside communities. Those communities are disaggregated into settlement areas (basically nuclear settlements), scattered rural residential spaces, commercial-industrial spaces, other uses (which focuses the NIMBY tendencies of the incoming urbanites on waste dumps and car wrecking yards), and transport and utility corridors. Concentrated settlement, particularly with full municipal services, is seen as a positive aspect of the larger system. Commercial-industrial spaces are dealt with very quietly, but are presented as necessary for "economic vitality". The need for other uses must be determined and then pass Environmental Assessment criteria before entry. Transport and utility corridors should meet the same kinds of criteria for environmental protection. Scattered residential residences are the bête noir of the planners. They develop a variety of arguments which show that such development is very deleterious to the larger integrity of the countryside.

The strongly preferred style of countryside settlement is the nucleated residential pattern. It is also clear that the affluent classes who have moved to the Toronto countryside have a strong preference for scattered, usually ribbon, settlement. The basic thrust of recommendations is that such scattered settlement be forbidden until studies can establish the harm this sort of settlement causes. The notion of cumulative impact studies is strongly supported here, though the notion runs through much of the report. At the same time further study of the
effects of scattered residence is stressed as is the associated development of data bases. It is pretty clear that the scattered residents are considered an enemy and their settlement pattern is anathema to the mode of life favoured by the creators of the report.

I want to return to this point shortly, but it is important to emphasize that the direction of the report is for the open countryside to be partitioned between agriculture and greenlands, with a scatter of industrial-commercial and aggregate uses in the interstices. The large majority of the population would be contained in nucleated settlements, while the scattering of residents would be gotten under control. What is not overt is that there is a set of class interests associated with these preferences, and that the interests of the provincial and municipal bureaucracies are represented without explicit statement. In effect, implicitly, the countryside is seen as a zone of contestation, but the ideology of social harmony makes it impossible to overtly recognize such struggle. The struggle over location of waste dumps is gingerly acknowledged, but is then quickly left behind. These struggles, and the background of encroaching and expanding capitalist relations including commodification, in the context of the transformation of a productive region into one of social reproduction, are ignored for symptomatic analysis.

Shortly after the publication of the Vision... report the work of the Sewell Commission to reform the planning and development process drew to a conclusion with the publication of a draft, then a final report. The Sewell Commission held public meetings which nicely overlapped the deliberations of the Vision... report. While the OGTA report was meant to focus on the overall development of the region, the Sewell Commission was to deal abstractly with planning throughout Ontario. However, Toronto’s countryside is a very important part of Ontario.

The Sewell Report never mentions the GTA. There is no hint in it that there can be any institutions, excepting school boards, between the provincial government and counties, districts and regional municipalities. There are a few stray comments on the Toronto waterfront, on the Moraine and Escarpment, and on the lack of regional plans for Peel and York Regions. Otherwise, the GTA and its constituents are not acknowledged. Nevertheless, the overall approach taken by the GTA Vision... report and that of Sewell is similar. The Sewell Report accepts a version of the natural heritage model as the base for much of countryside planning. Sewell supports the notion of watershed planning in the countryside as a basis of developing the natural heritage system. Agricultural protection, in the context of a productionist ideology, but associated with land stewardship, is argued. The argument stresses that farmers are intent on land stewardship, though it is clear they are also mining the soil. A conflict is inherent in the Sewell formulation but not, again, made overt. Sewell supports the rehabilitation of aggregate sites and the protection of aggregate resources. A particular focus of attention in the Sewell Report is restriction of scattered residential spread. It stresses the importance of provincial oversight and responsibility. It is argued that the responsibilities of planning should largely be at the regional-county-district level, and that planning at the area level (lower tier) should be coordinated by upper tier (regional-county-district) municipalities.

While it is clear that the two reports were prepared independently, they seem to represent a common ideological stance taken by the bureaucrats who were responsible for representations to both groups. That common ideology is oriented by private interests. The idea of the activist or interventionist state is gone. Instead, there is a strong private sector. It is strong in that it
must be allowed to develop under its own logic. The public interest is defined almost exclusively in the establishment of guidelines by public authorities, particularly upper tier municipalities and provincial ministries. Public participation is encouraged, particularly by the Sewell Report. Yet, essentially, the public is to react to proposals put forward by authorities. The system is top-down. When in doubt, do reports, but recognize, quietly, that there is really no money to pay for their recommendations or to do anything more expansive with state resources.

INTERPRETING PLANNING FOR RURAL TORONTO

My initial comments were to the effect that the planning environment of the Greater Toronto Area does not encourage rural survival or define a satisfactory future for the area. There are several aspects which need development in the final part of this paper. They concern the kind of planning likely for the rural area of Toronto.

The strong and pervasive urban interest represented in the Vision... report creates a representation which, if sustained, in due course would lead to the dissipation of the rural region. The intellectual context of the report is similar to the Durham Report of the last century. If benign neglect is allowed to operate, rural will disappear without active policies. There is no central concept of rural in the report. Yet, though the same thing is true of the urban segment, there is a continuous reference to urban values and esthetics as the basis for change in the countryside.

The countryside is reduced to a disaggregated collection of bits and pieces. Preservation of some of those pieces is oriented toward minimizing bureaucratic inconvenience in coping with problems created by the transformation of the countryside. The "real" interests are economic in character and have to do with enhancing "economic viability" and are secondarily esthetic and have to do with the maintenance and enhancement of amenity values for the urbanites in the countryside. Much of the countryside would become a protected museum, a museum available to urban gaze.

The lack of a focused rural interest in the report of the OGTA makes it highly unlikely that a coherent rurally based strategy could emerge. Further, the congruence between the proposals of the OGTA working groups and the Sewell Commission suggest that established political authorities will, as usual, support already vested interests; will attempt to contain opposition; and will blithely ignore as much of the evolving reality as possible. The two reports, but particularly the OGTA report, are suggestive of an establishment agenda, accepted without reflection, and a centralist, paternalistic political vision which renders struggle illegitimate. Yet, the struggle for the countryside continues, and is heating up.

The virtual dismissal of the struggle over waste dump siting is indicative of the mentality and ideology of those who prepared the OGTA report. The fact that the report was done in house, even if the house was enlarged to let the municipal bureaucrats and a few elected officials have a voice, leaves the resident population out in the cold. Implicit in the reports, and this includes the Sewell Report as well, is a set of alliances and oppositions in the countryside. Farmers as a productivist element, and because of their property position, also a stewardship interest, are favoured. Residents of nucleated settlements are also favoured as economically viable in terms of bureaucratic service delivery. The diffuse urban residents of the region, who have an environmental interest, particularly combined with recreational interests, are also positively
cast in both reports. The only real enemies seem to be the scattered rural residents who are not agriculturally based. Of course, poor working people are ignored because they are not a coherent interest in the region's countryside. Nowhere in the report are interests cast in class terms, except implicitly. The implicit assumptions are that those with propertied interests are legitimate, others are simply ignored, and working poor are thus ignored. This does not mean such people do not exist in Toronto's countryside, but it does mean that planning is not for them. Questions of affordable housing, or even worse social housing are carefully avoided.

Given the mobilization that has already occurred around the issue of waste dump siting, it would seem that the alliance structure implicit in the OGTA Visions... report is more wishful fantasy than reality. It is inappropriate here to attempt to develop a full critique and commentary of the resistance to the siting of a waste dump in this larger region, but a few summary comments are in order to contextualize the struggle.

Rural opposition seems widespread. The resistors have even been able to mobilize their own area and regional municipalities, receiving funds and public support for the struggle. While the course of the resistance is still in mid-play, it certainly seems that agricultural interests have coalesced with dispersed rural residential interests. Who are these scattered, dispersed rural residential people? While they are quite heterogeneous, a core constituency of the group is what the British identify as the Service Class. This class, or class fraction, is based on high status, well paid professional and managerial occupations. In addition, the service class, closer to what I would call the upper middle class, are romantic and pro-rural in their perceptions and dispositions. They are the primary social focal point for the commoditization of amenity values into the property market. As such, they are necessarily pro-environmentalist, but also pro-privatization of rural amenity. In interviews conducted in Fall, 1992, in a district centred on King City, but including rural areas throughout King, Newmarket and Aurora, the support for the New Democratic Party had fallen to about 2%. This area usually shows an NDP support of from 10% to 15%. Respondents were very candid in their opposition to the NDP over the waste dump siting issue. The Liberal Party had a clear dominance in this survey, but the Conservative and Reform Parties were robust presences.

These structural and action considerations suggest that the dynamics of political alliance building in the GTA are such as to obviate the proposals of the Visions... report. The report takes a general position that is petty bourgeois in character. It is anchored on the preservation and enhancement of property rights. Those property rights might have to be mildly modified to accommodate some protectionist and environmentalist interests, but are fundamentally oriented to the maintenance of the commodification of property. This is couched in terms of economic viability, but pervades the report as a background position that is unassailable.

Yet, struggle also pervades the region. The present anti-dump alliance is one anchored on the farmers and service class property owners, both dispersed in the countryside. In addition, the anti-dump coalition has the support of very substantial numbers of pro-environmentalists in countryside nucleations and even beyond. All of these interests are propertied. All of them favour the enhanced amenity value, enhanced in terms of current life quality and of future sale value of properties. All oppose the location of dumps, near themselves, or anywhere. All are also in general agreement that urban political parties, and this particularly means the NDP, are not to be trusted. It is a widespread
belief that there is a fundamental injustice in allowing Metro Toronto to send its waste to be dumped in others' back yards.

Most of the coalition I have sketched out is the same as has provided political leadership in the GTA municipalities for a very long time. The difference is that now the primacy of economic development is downplayed to the primacy of preservation of a realm of social reproduction, with strong environmentalist overtones. In general, this current struggle is one over the redefinition of the region and its inhabitants and transcends the waste dump controversy. As Sim (1988) has pointed out, the urbanites living in the countryside are also new ruralites. This conflict provides an opportunity for new alliances that break down class lines in the open countryside and allow a redefinition of the in-group and the out-group.

The planning statements, both the OGTA reports and the Sewell Commission, because they are dominated by the ideology of property and social harmony do not deal with the volatile and contestation based divisions in the countryside. Most of the work of the planners is simultaneously irrelevant to the emerging realities of the countryside and is set so as to benefit those most well placed in the social hierarchy.

Given these interpretations I do not think the future of rural Toronto is well served by present planning orientations. It does not appear that anything approaching coherent rural interests are recognized. What are recognized are economic interests, but only implicitly the class interests that derive from economy. The current complexity of class structure evolves from social divisions, with cultural as well as economic relations. This is not recognized in these reports. The coherence of rural must also entail the legitimacy of all of the interests resident in the countryside. What the planning statements of the OGTA, and the Sewell Commission report accept implicitly is that rural is only a residuum and urban is the active force in the countryside. In reality there is a very large population permanently domiciled in this countryside. Some of their interests are recognized, but others are precisely misrecognized. The struggle over waste dumps indicates some of the active processes as countryside residents recognize themselves and begin a process of transformation that can recreate a rural world adjacent to a great city.

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