

PLANNING and POLITICS

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Why is Planning Political?

- Planning often involves matters in which people have large emotional stakes.
- Once a writer called this movement as a 'Federal Bulldozer' where people have to leave their places to accommodate urbanization.
- Planning decisions are visible and therefore gets political.

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Why is Planning Political? conti...

- It is easier for a citizen to affect the actions of a town board or a city council and hence makes a strong impact on the political scenario.
- The owners of the land may feel that they have a substantial stake in planning.
- There is also a strong link between planning issues and property taxes which brings it close to the political world.

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Planners and Power

- Planners basically act as advisors to city's development.
- A plan which is a vision gets a certain shape with the help of a planner but he/she doesn't have much powers to make major changes.

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Planners and Power conti...

- A more modern view is that good plans are generated from the communities itself.
- Planners get involved with politics since decisions are made in the political sphere.
- Previously in 1920's and 1930's planning was kept away from politics but now the planners are somehow related to politics.

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The Fragmentation of Power

- Power in United States is fragmented into political, economical, and legal circumstances.
- State and Local governments are much stronger in America compared to other democracies in Europe.

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The Fragmentation of Power conti..

- Political power also gets fragmented into executive, legislative, and judicial branches.
- United States has a strong tradition for property rights.
- Citizens as voters form the ultimate power.

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The Fragmentation of Power conti..

- There is a strong relationship between land-use planning, capital investment and construction activities.
- Citizen participation is encouraged by planners to increase benefits from planning.
- Citizen participation can be frustrating for planners as citizens are mostly interested in planning in their near vicinities.

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The Fragmentation of Power conti..

- The New York Metropolitan was mainly developed under Robert Moses.
- Robert Moses was behind building highways and roads in the early 20th century in and around New York.
- Similar case was in Paris where Baron Hausmann planned the Central Paris in a very elegant manner.

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Styles of Planning

1. The planner as neutral public servant.
2. The planner as builder of community consensus.
3. The planner as entrepreneur.
4. The planner as advocate
5. The planner as agent of radical change

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Styles of Planning conti...

- 1. **The planner as neutral public servant:** In this case the planner tries to use his expertise neutrally.
- The planners can guide a particular community on how to establish a new zone of low rent subsidized housing and so on.
- 2. **The planner as builder of community consensus:** In this scenario, politics cannot be separated from planning since no plans can vary from politics.

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Styles of Planning conti...

- The planners who do not entertain the main values and desires of the community often remain unemployed.
- 3. **The planner as entrepreneur:** The planners through the 'Urban Renewal' program looked like entrepreneurs.
- This happened because the planners marketed sites, searched for developers & signed contracts.

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Styles of Planning conti...

- 4. **The planner as advocate:** Planners acted like representatives for certain groups or certain positions making them advocates.
- Instead of advocating a certain group they should advocate specific programs.
- 5. **The planner as agent of radical change:** The radical changes in economic policies are expected to be followed by planners to progress well in their fields.

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How Planning Agencies are Organized

- The head of the organization is the 'Commissioner' appointed by the chief elected official.
- Below him are the other staff like the Associate or Assistant planner, planner and so forth.
- The planning agency can report to the community's legislative body which is formed by the citizens' and the planning board.

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How Planning Agencies are Organized conti..

- If the agency is very large or of moderate size ,then there could be different sections handling various planning tasks.
- Some sections will be dedicated to population forecasts while some may view matters related to public services like sewer, roads etc.

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How Planning Agencies are Organized conti..

- Some departments would be merged with community development departments.
- Small municipalities may have one or two planners who are jack-of-all trades.
- Planning organizations are therefore expected to work efficiently under the discussed categories above.

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Planning Consultants

- A number of planning consultant firms exist in America.
- Large municipalities use consultants for cases like environmental studies, traffic studies etc.
- Most of the master plans and zoning ordinances are done by planning consultants.

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Reaching Out to the Public

- The planners have to reach to the public and they do this by having advisory groups or lay groups.
- There can be various groups concerned with urban design, public works and so on.
- The public support is crucial for planning to take place effectively and hence public meetings of the advisory board and planners shall happen on a continual basis.

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Reaching Out to the Public conti..

- Sometimes press releases and communications with clubs like the Rotary club keeps the momentum between public and planners moving.
- Thus outreach is very essential part of planning and an agency without much public base can't survive for a long time.

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Thanks A Lot

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