

successes and limitations of this multimedia approach to engage and represent diverse populations.

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Planning Theory

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PROJECT AND THE CITY:HOW PLANNING THEORY INFORMS AND EVOLVES FROM THE PROJECT

Banai, Reza [University of Memphis] rbanai@memphis.edu

Through a critical, historical, and integrative review of the literature of project and the city, from the classic to the contemporary, this paper aims to show how city planning theory informs as well as evolves from projects, big or small, as if the theory of the city is (in)formed one project at a time. The theories of the city not unlike the movements that preceded them with the ideals of efficiency, equity, and civic beauty historically associated with the profession of city planning are linked to the project in the city. The water supply, the drain and sewer system, the house and the street, the park, the plaza and the like are among the projects in the city. The theories—like the movements -- shape as well as are influenced by the project in the city. The project and the city hypothesis fills a void in the literature created on the one side by standard reviews of the progress in planning thought that rarely bring the planning project into view, if at all. On the other side, there are studies with “thick” descriptions of projects albeit with implications for planning theory (in procedure and substance). However, a project is rarely considered as a unifying conceptual framework or a common thread of the evolving city planning theory in a chronological or systematic inquiry. In contrast, this paper documents how the project in the city is a key anchor in the evolution and metamorphosis of city planning theory—whether the theory is about the form or function of cities or about procedures of decision-, policy- or plan-making. A “mapping” of the evolving theories of planning that are project-centered is provided, beginning with the classic Chicago plan, where the project is the city itself. Finally, the project-centered view exposes the strengths and weaknesses of planning paradigms, and suggests alternatives commensurate with the scale of the project in the city.

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LIBERALISM AND IGNORANCE ABOUT RACE

Baum, Howell S. [University of Maryland College Park] hbaum@umd.edu

CENTRAL THEME

Race relations are central to American society and planning. Yet Americans refrain from discussing race publicly out of fear of external social conflict and internal emotional conflict. Some, particularly African-Americans, hold back from talking about what they know. Others, particularly whites, willfully remain ignorant about other races and race generally. The result is that civic leaders and public officials make policy and planning decisions that affect racial groups and race relations without explicitly analyzing or considering racial interests or relationships. Generally, decisions made in this way reinforce historic inequities.

This paper examines how the American public philosophy of liberalism (shared by many “liberals” and “conservatives”) facilitates silence about race in public deliberation by enabling participants to remain ignorant about race.

Race has two significant characteristics. First, simply, it is a group identity, influencing individual identities. Second, in America it is a relational identity. White and black identities depend on one another; neither stands alone. In this context, race is dualistic: positive white identities depend on perceived negative black identities. These characteristics of race elude the comprehension of liberalism in two ways. First, liberalism portrays society as composed of autonomous individuals and values individual choice as the primary means of making decisions. This individualism makes it hard to see racial or other groups generally. Second, in conceiving groups and social institutions as the creation of independent individuals, liberalism cannot recognize the dualistic relationship that is fundamental to race and that influences individual identities and choices.

Liberalism is central to how Americans think about the nation’s origins and how they think it is reasonable to act in society. Liberalism makes it possible for policy makers and planners acting in good faith to deliberate on issues with racial implications and make decisions with inequitable racial consequences without taking race into account.

APPROACH, METHODOLOGY, AND DATA

The paper presents a case study of Baltimore school desegregation to illustrate deliberate and tacit efforts of liberal public officials to ignore race in making policy about an intrinsically racial issue. The case study draws on archival material and interviews to present public actions and statements about them and to draw inferences regarding civic leaders’ and public officials’ thinking. Explicitly, white and black actors endorsed a liberalism that emphasized individual choice and downplayed racial history, claims, and interests. The paper links local policy makers’ statements and actions to literatures on liberalism and race.

RELEVANCE TO PLANNING

Many planning issues involve various, often conflicting interests of different racial groups. Planning principles of equity call for recognizing these distinct interests, considering their implications, and making decisions that redress inequalities. Education is an area in which some planners practice. More than that, because it is a field in which most members of society participate and because race is exceptionally close to the surface in public discussion of education, analysis of planning and policy making in education helps understand how race affects decision making generally. Because liberalism is the dominant philosophy in American planning, this case study sheds considerable light on the ways mainstream planning thinking hinders knowledge about and recognition of racial issues.

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