

11.201, Gateway: Planning Action  
Prof. Xavier de Souza Briggs  
**Lecture 11**

## **I. Two Humble Requests**

Reading is more challenging, can seem inconsistent. We are trying to see essentials of planning and be persistent in face of jargon. Inclusive planning writers have jargon but not inclusive language – please be patient.

## **II. Review**

To understand how we got to communicative planning as dialogue, we'll trace how we got here. First, in response to Altshuler, he says we need interest group give and take because he is in response to modernist rational model. The modernist rational model was a reaction of (or response to) physical problems (slums, etc) but more so a response to capitalist decision making which Xav calls 'Parochial decision making.' Parochial because it was political decision making.

Arnstein critiques differently, she says that politics isn't really giving people a voice. She was in NYC, while Altshuler was in MN and didn't see participation. Altshuler says the pluralist discover by talking to people while Arnstein looks at how things are working. Arnstein believes 1) participation does not equal citizen power because she cares for the disadvantaged and marginalized and 2) it is an empty ritual.

Susskind argues that interest group (pluralist) politics is a competition to have voices heard and he wants joint problem solving. He believes that Altshuler's interest groups lead to continuous impasse. Therefore, we need to supplement electoral politics (mandated theory) and administrative state to not replace or supplant but to use ad hoc process to get stakeholder work to generate better options (e.g. win-win, joint-game, less win-lose). He also believes that special interests are not accountable to public interests. He believes in the 'machinery of power' where we're not trying to supplant that but take ideas back to the political realm.

Healy argues for dialogue and hearing both sides of the issue. We need to get beyond give and take of interest group by creating shared meaning and language and a sense of public with a new interest that we didn't know we had. Then, maybe interests will shift. Bargaining is still important, we can't accomplish everything in dialogue

The modern rational model is the comprehensive model in class context. Altshuler critiqued comprehensive planning – the 1950's model of blueprinting, etc.

## **III. Forrester**

The class asked what the Forrester article was about, and formulated the following answer: Forrester says it is the job of facilitator to do everything. There's something beyond the facilitator because everyone at the table must understand what's going on in order to enable dialogue.

Xav read a few passages from Healy (page 239) about new wave ideas where we get to discuss new ideas. This passage is about arenas of discourse and modes

of discourse (now modes of discourse are managed). She calls for planners to create inclusionary dialogue by asking if there are solutions or process ideas.

The modernist planner thinks of the situation by having an expert designer get input or search an idea and then the solutions come. The pluralist has broad interests and looks at the interests of groups. Arnstein said there is an opportunity here to share power by asking many questions. Forester asks what factions are missing. The answer is user feedback because he just observed meetings. Healy (page 241) says "If we aim for inclusionary language, we have differ in our intentions and cites several examples." Xav says she may seem idealistic and could have spent too much time on process. Susskind says look at alternative outcomes instead of compromise. Finally, are we expecting too much of planners here?

Back in the rational planning days, planners had the answers and were process experts. There is a middle-ground/third way/different hats where there are all the same terms for planners using different processes in different situations. One must be aware in these kinds of situations.

Forrester says we do core work: political argumentation. He wraps all duties into one planner and says we must be communicators and shape attention in framing (who needs to be there shaping the talk).

At this point in the lecture, there is a very long class discussion about what kind of planners we'll be and there is a discussion about Architectural theory and practice (they do use the rational method).

Xav now continues with the explanation of Forrester. Forrester later gives into planners imbedded in their organizations (shaping colleagues) because it captures organizational and public scenarios. He asks how would modern or pluralist handle the park scenarios and how dialogue would be thought of by different people. He's concerned with all lenses. Sense-making versus searching process are two different ways of conceiving what design is all about.

Forrester convened the community to discuss parks to learn what is at stake and how people use the park. He is not focused on technical planning of parks to be successful, but on the wider view of boundaries and who should use it and how will it makes sense. Xav asks how do questions and materials at meetings shape what people think about the parks?

Forrester says critical listening is important because it distinguishes between talking and being heard. Listen for meaning. Be attentive to intent in yourself. Personal effectiveness is an industry today that teaches businesspeople to run more effectual meetings.

#### **IV. Question for Reflection**

Xav asks each student to take out a piece of paper and on one side answer the following questions:

- 1) What strengths/weaknesses do you bring as practitioner?
- 2) What professional skills do you have to work on?

Xav ends the class with a story about the Aspen Round Table. They taught the theory of change using models and mapping cause and effect. Later, a leader in the roundtable would tell Xav that they could not get people to think that way, it was very challenging to get people who are attached to ideas to change.