

Theory of Planning: Comparison of Four Different Urban Development Approaches

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Abstract: - The paper is a comparative or a summary study on four different urban development models or approaches used in current planning practices. A brief introduction is given about the differences between theory in planning and theory of planning with examples. Theory in planning is based on the content of planning; whereas, theory of planning covers the form, styles or approaches which goes into the overall planning. The four urban development styles or approaches mentioned are comprehensive planning, disjointed incrementalism, mixed scanning and communicative/cooperative planning. For each of the models, comparison has been made on the following aspects: mode of thinking required, role of the planners, type of plans produced, necessary resources and means; and their practical impacts. To better understand the various types, examples have been mentioned for each of the types. By doing so, the general pros and cons associated with each of the processes and their end results are highlighted.

Key Words: - planning theory, comprehensive planning, disjointed incrementalism, mixed scanning, communicative planning,

Form or styles is about the role of planners in the process of political decision making. It formulates the functions, jobs and responsibilities of planners. Furthermore, it is a reflection of the processes (series of actions or steps) used in planning to achieve desired results (Faludi, 1973). Theory of planning addresses issues regarding to **structure, proceedings and institutional embedding**. Structure is the relation between various institutions, proceedings is the course of action by the institutions and embedding is the solid roles of the various institutions in the planning process. **Examples** are key approaches of planning theory such as comprehensive, incremental, mixed and communicative planning.

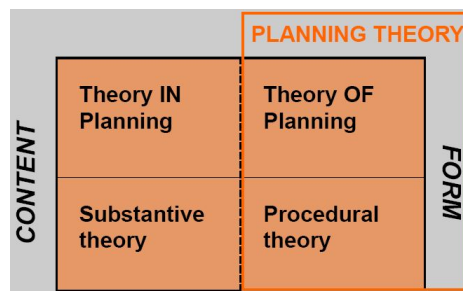


Figure 1: Difference between theory in planning and theory of planning (Faludi, 1973)

I. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Theory in Planning

Theory in Planning is substantive theory based on the “content” of planning (Faludi, 1973). Substantive theory has a firm basis in reality and considered meaningful or important. Contents are made up of scientific methods and concrete tools for designing policies. It is formulated based on systematic observation, experimentation and testing. Main objective is the improvement of political strategies validity in order to achieve long-term or overall aims. Since it is based on an interdisciplinary approach, a wide range expertise of specialists such as economists, sociologists, architects, planners etc are involved in the formulation process. The specialists are thus required to have expert knowledge in order to suggest or criticise strategies. Planners are thus involved with various aspects such as stakeholders and resources management influenced by political interests. **Examples** for substantive focus is an aggregative approach involving individual values or preferences. Application of such a utilitarianism theory could be for social welfare function and cost-benefit analysis (Alexander, 2002, p. 229).

1.2 Theory of Planning

Theory of Planning is procedural theory based on the “form/ styles/ approaches” of planning (Faludi, 1973). Procedural theory is the established or official ways of doing something.

II. FOUR URBAN DEVELOPMENT APPROACHES

2.1 Comprehensive Planning

Mode of thinking is based on scientific methods which is systematic observation and structured outcomes. It is more of a broad approach often requiring rational thinking processes. Comprehensive planning requires both general and specific modes of thinking. **Roles of the planner** includes preparation of technical studies and recommendations to the planning and zoning commission. In addition, the planner is responsible for recommending the adoption process of the same (Efrussy, 2008, p. 30). The planner needs to have an overall understanding of the complexities to make overall steering possible. The **type of plans** are master plans; which is a comprehensive action plan and general or sectoral plans for sector-based planning.

When it comes to the **necessary resources and means**, the preparation of a comprehensive plan requires strong political will and power as it is considered a highly ambitious approach requiring high funding amount. Since it is a long term and consolidated plan addressing various aspects of physical

development, it requires high level of coordination between various sectors (Efrussy, 2008, p. 2). **Practical impacts** of this type of planning are numerous. It is just one component of the overall planning process and to be effective, comprehensive planning needs to be an on-going process that requires constant evaluation and updating (Efrussy, 2008, p. 36). It is based on current knowledge and goals; and only a basis for making rational decisions but not leading to clear objectives as in the case of Southfield city in USA. The interdependencies and co-relations are difficult to estimate, and the planning process often lacks focus on political context (Altschuler, 1965).



Figure 2: Southfield City (example for comprehensive planning)
(CSPD, 2019)

2.2 Disjointed incrementalism

Disjointed incrementalism planning requires pragmatic and unsystematic **modes of thinking**. Practical implications are given emphasis rather than theoretical considerations. **The way of planning** is by justifying the relevance and reality of incremental changes in the complex society. Goals and policies are considered simultaneously; and alternatives must be marginally different from the status quo (CRPLAN, 2017, p. 12). Potential conflicts among all interested stakeholders are resolved through bargaining and compromises. **Roles of the planner** include interaction with involved stakeholders and resolving competition of interests. Planners are required to restricting attention to relatively few alternative policies and societal values (CRPLAN, 2017, p. 12).

Type of plans from this planning process are small-scale plans and uncoordinated projects. Small scale plans are restricted to smaller areas or sectors of focus not considering cross-sectoral issues and collaboration. **Necessary resources and means** are constant communication and interaction to negotiate on the outputs. It requires knowledge about stakeholders involved and available resources which are often limited (Lindblom, 1959). It lacks adequate theory with limited time for study and has few relations to other policy issues (CRPLAN, 2017). **Practical impacts** of incrementalism are that the planning can be applied for a realistic short-term approach only. It is an unorganized

approach with numerous negotiations leading to compromises. An example is that of Shahjahanabad (Old Delhi) which due to incremental metamorphosis lost its traditional or indigenous city elements (Kingat, 2019).



Figure 3: Shahjahanabad (Old Delhi is an example for incremental planning)
(HT, 2019)

2.3 Mixed Scanning

Modes of thinking for mixed scanning which is termed as a “third” approach are pragmatic (like incrementalism), visionary (planning for the future) and strategic (with long-term or overall aims). It is neither too rationalistic nor too oriented towards incrementalism. **The way of planning** is a combination of detailed or rationalistic approach for some sectors and a shortened review of other sectors (Etzioni, 2005, p. 7). In some cases, more than two levels can be defined. **Roles of the planner** is to resolve the competition of interests by negotiated compromises and if necessary, make general compromises of objectives to produce a well-coordinated action plan.

Type of plans produced from mixed scanning approach are integrated and strategic development plans. The plans are based on flexible approaches and have convincing objectives or opinions. The flexibility component makes it possible to adapt to specific situations. Key concepts are based on strategic principles (Etzioni, 1967). **Necessary resources and means** are strategically using the available resources and; communication and negotiation skills. Furthermore, interactive approach is needed to convince the key stakeholders to formulate objectives. The actual amount of assets and time depends on the effort made in convincing various inter-level stakeholders. To study the **practical impacts**, an example from the city of Mysore is highlighted. The proposal for green corridors leads to retention of local habitats, addressing of urban heat island and enhanced social benefits (Atkins, 2013, pp. 43-49). This kind of an approach provides for (a) high-level fundamental policy making and (b) incremental processes leading to fundamental decisions. It combines various levels of scanning providing with criterias for various situations (Etzioni, 2005, pp. 6-7).



Figure 4: Proposal for green corridors at Ballahali (Mysore)

(Atkins, 2013, p. 43)

2.4 Communicative/Cooperative Planning

Mode of thinking for this planning is usually compromise oriented. It is inclusive and collective approach to figure out the demands and interests of the participants. Because of the wide spectrum of participants, the process is quite complex as the society in general is not very clear on the type of strategies and its consequences. **The way of planning** is a communicative act focussed on culture building and social-learning skills. It involves identifying priorities, justifying claims and suggest strategies. **Role of the planner** is to facilitate the processes in order to create a meaningful and shared outcome between planners and the public (Elliott, 2014, p. 37). This requires the planner to be optimistic, patient and understanding as he is playing the role of a mediator in addition to moderating the communication between involved stakeholders.

Type of plans from communicative planning are various such as inclusive development concepts, stakeholder management and participatory budgets/ plans (Healey, 1993). A high level of funding and time are the most **necessary resources**. In addition, it requires strong political will followed by; trust and active participations by both key and weak stakeholders. Participation in the process is by the government, civil society and private sectors. This type of planning requires interactive, communicative and convincing **means** to reach the desired objectives. **Practical impacts** of this planning are it is a tedious process and requires constant reviewing or revision of plans as highlighted in the example from a village level meeting held by the World Heritage Authority of Hampi in 2007. The initial masterplan was objected by 50% of the attendees and the objections were required to be rectified in the final masterplan in order to be implemented.



Figure 5: Photo from village level meeting held in Hampi

(Murali, 2011)

III. CONCLUSION AND ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

Understanding of the type of planning required for any city depends on various factors such as the resource availability, socio-technical competencies and financial capabilities. Most importantly, it is imperative to define the criteria or need for development helps in deciding on the suggested type of planning.

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