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CITIZEN PARTICIPATION

AND THE

PLANNING PROCESS

By

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INTRODUCTION

Citizen participation in the planning process is important, not because it will automatically result in the amelioration of problems with which planners are typically confronted, but rather because it will have the tendency to free the community from an increasing sense of alienation and helplessness which has developed through the years largely as a result of the growing technological scale and complexity of society. The development of citizen participation strategies will result in the examination of institutional realtionships and the built-in inequities in the distribution of resources which often characterize these relationships. Awareness by both the planner and the community of serious shortcomings in the democratic processes which this country ascribes to will hopefully result in a reassertion of power by the community over the increasingly powerful technologically oriented institutions which have largely determined the framework of contemporary society through the distribution of resources based upon criteria that do not necessarily represent the broad concerns of the total human community. Opportunities for meaningful participation in the decision-making process will ideally arouse citizens from attitudes of indifference and despair.

The urban planner must realize that the well-being of all people in a community should be the underlying goal of all planning. The justification for changes in the urban environment "...is not the repairing of obsolescent buildings or modification of traffic patterns, but the creation of a

more liveable environment for human beings."[1] Citizen partic-
ipation offers the planner the potential to develop plans and
programs which reflect the needs, desires and priorities of
the community as well as increase the acceptability of plans
to the power structure.   Generally, the planning process
should encourage democratic urban government and this can be
accomplished by including rather than excluding citizens from
participating in the process.

Opportunities to institutionalize citizen participation
into the planning process and society in general exist partly
as a result of increasingly strong federal requirements for
citizen involvement in planning. As citizens become accustomed
or reaccustomed to participating in developing community plans,
hopefully autocratic power systems and relationships will
decline and community life will truly become more free and
democratic.

This paper will examine the role of citizen participation
in the planning process to determine whether democratically
planned change is viable within the existing socio-economic-
political framework of the United States. The relationship
between citizen participation and local community will be
investigated to discover the ramifications of our increasingly
complex, technological society upon the ability of the local
community to actively participate in important policy decisions

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[1]William C. Loring, Community Organization for Citizen
Participation in Urban Renewal (Cambridge: Cambridge Press,
1957), p. 175.

which will affect its future. Governmental efforts at
institutionalizing participation into the planning process
will be examined in terms of the highway program and urban
renewal in order to see the evolution and effectiveness of
citizen participation. Finally, the relationships among
citizen participation, community power systems and planning
will be considered with an emphasis upon the role of the
planner as an advocate of democratically planned change as
well as the limitations imposed upon the development of such
a role in terms of the inequitable distribution of resources
as reflected in undemocratic community power systems.

Participation and the nature of community

In order to fully understand the nature of citizen
participation in the planning process, it is first necessary
to examine the concept of local community. There are as
many different definitions of the term "community" as there
are different disciplines concerned with the study of community.
Generally, there is a consensus that the concept of community
has been a dynamic one that has evolved through time. In the
United States there has been a tendency to equate the term
community with an idealized image of a New England town with
a small, stable, highly cohesive population participating, in
a democratic manner, in the decisions effecting the communal
body.[2] In the past, when the country was primarily agricul-
tural, most of the urbanized population lived in relatively

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[2]Scott Greer, The Emerging City (New York: The Free
Press, 1962), p. 98.

small settlements where the majority of the their daily
social and economic interaction took place. Consequently,
strong primary ties to distinctly defined local communities
developed. During this period before large scale urbanization,
life was truly less complex and organizationally developed.
Most of the institutions which had a major impact upon communal
life were both physically situated and controlled within the
spatially defined community, consequently, the physical and
psychological distance or access between an individual and
the forces which affected his life was relatively short.
Also, visibility of controllers of major community systems
was high. As a result of these relatively intimate relation-
ships among individuals and institutions community participation
was generally not an issue.

Traditionally, the planning profession, which has been
primarily physically oriented, has conceived of planning and
participation in the planning process in terms of small
physical geographical units which would correspond to the small
town or neighborhood. Clarence Perry has had a tremendous
influence upon the planning profession with his concepts of
neighborhood and community planning.[3] However, as the scale
of urban areas has increased, the importance of the local
physical area of an individuals residence has correspondingly
decreased. Urbanization, which can be defined as a process
developing an increasingly large and complex human settlement

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[3]William I. Goodman and Eric Freund, Principles and
Practice of Urban Planning (Washington: International City
Managers Association, 1968) p. 568.

requiring agricultural surplus, favorable ecological environ-
ment, technological advances and organizational structure,
has resulted in an increase in societal scale which is
characterized by increased national economic and social
interdependence and coordination. The growth of large-
scale management systems in the economic sphere are partic-
ularly evident but similar developments have also occurred
in government, education, health and other social services.[4]
These developments have had a significant impact upon local
community involvement and participation.

Increase of Societal Scale

The most significant change in the local community as
a result of widespread urbanization and the corresponding
increase in societal scale has been the loss or reduction in
autonomy and independence at the local level. As local
institutions have been integrated into the larger social
order there has been a reduction in economic and governmental
self-sufficiency at the community level. Also, there has
been increased exposure to conflicting norms from outside
the local community which have been a direct threat to the
unique norms and values evolved in local communities. As a
result, the local normative order has been fragmented which
means that individuals are no longer dependent upon the
locality and as a consequence the local community has lost

[4]Edmond A. Alchin, "Change and the Nature of Contempor-
ary Community" (E. Lansing: Institute for Community Develop-
ment and Services, M.S.U., 1970), p. 9 (Mimeographed)

integrity.[5] Thus, the local community of the 1920's and
before, which contained within an easily identifiable set
of boundaries the "institutions and public organization which
filled social, economic, educational, religious and govern-
mental needs for a population within and outside their bound-
aries",[6] has been radically altered. These changes in the
nature of the local community have reduced the importance of
the relationships between important institutions and geograph-
ically defined local communities.

Thus, any definition which considers local community
as identifiable by a contiguous geographic area in which an
individual's most important daily social and economic inter-
actions occur would focus solely upon the horizontal relation-
ships among community institutions and organizations or systems.
While these relationships are certainly important to under-
stand the nature of community and participation, equally
important and sometimes more important are the vertical
relationships which are now common between the local commun-
ity and the outside society. For instance, many communities
within their boundaries important employment facilities
which are vital to the community's well-being, yet often
times, company policy is determined at headquarters in
distant cities. Consequently, rather than considering a
community as the interactions and interrelationships within
a given geographical space, it is necessary to consider the

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[5]Greer, op. cit., p.

[6]Ibid., p. 3.

systems which influence community participation in a particular area regardless of the geographic space that systems networks may cover.

Many of the concepts which are still espoused by the general population, such as the principles of democratic political structures, are based on assumptions about the local community which no longer exist in reality. Since the functional interdependence of the local community has vanished, "the individual investment is relatively small (in the local community) in the interactional network that constitutes the locality group, and if his losses are too great he can cut them by getting out - the community can not hold him".[7] In other words, interdependence implies commitment to the ongoing social system which in turn produces intensive participation and the development of common values and norms; however, with the tremendous increase in societal scale the existence of autonomous, independent, stable communities has declined and ended. Therefore, the interest and commitment of the individual to his local geographic setting has also declined.

Urban-Suburban Differences

Certainly, there are relationships between different types of life styles, economic status and residential location within a metropolitan area and the degree of individual commitment, interest and participation in a particular local community. In central city neighborhoods, which tend to be more highly

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[7]Greer, op. cit., p. 99.

urbanized in terms of density than outlying areas, with
fewer families and more apartment dwellers, the local area
as a "social fact" is generally less important to the individ-
ual than in the more familistic neighborhoods of the suburbs.[8]
In addition, many of the traditional linkages between the
people in these central city neighborhoods and the controllers
of community resources or systems have disappeared, resulting
in reduced opportunities for participation in community
decision-making.

During the period of rapid industrialization and social
change in the United States in the last half of the 19th
century and the early 20th century, the political machine
fulfilled important social needs in urban areas. One of the
most important functions of the machines was their role as
social welfare organizations in which they provided needed
services such as employment and financial security for im-
migrants and other newcomers to the cities. Perhaps the most
important aspect of machine or ward politics was "its close
contacts with neighborhood folk, (which) provided a sometimes
sound, sometimes corrupt, means for the participation, or at
least communication, of the area resident and his neighbors
in municipal affairs that concerned their area."[9] There are
many reasons why the machine declined, including the efforts
of the "good government" movement, however, no really adequate
institution has developed to replace its important functions,

[8]Ibid. p. 96.

[9]Loring, op. cit., p. 3.

particularly that of providing a link to community controllers
or decision-makers. Consequently, today in many large cities
a sense of alienation and disillusionment has developed among
the populace towards the political process, and a sense of
powerlessness resulting from the increased distance between
citizens and leaders as well as the lack of meaningful rela-
tionships.[10]

In suburban areas, where familistic life styles gener-
ally predominate, interaction among households increases and
the neighborhood becomes a much more "healthy" social system
in terms of democratic processes.[11] Generally, increased par-
ticipation in the affairs of the neighborhood is the result
of increased commitment in such areas as home ownership and
family structure. In addition, although the suburban area is
usually highly dependent upon the metropolitan area for a
number of vital services, suburban municipalities are often
incorporated and thus there is the potential for a much great-
er degree of general citizen participation and political con-
trol than within neighborhoods of the central city. Conse-
quently, access to a number of very important powers concerning
the character of the community such as zoning and the school
system is much easier for the suburban resident. However,
perhaps because of the homogenous socio-economic nature
which suburban populations usually exhibit, the portion of
residents involved in the active political community is often

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[10]See Murray Levin, The Alienated Voter (New York: Holt,
Rinehart and Wilson, 1960).

[11]Greer, op. cit., p. 124

very small because community controllers or leaders usually
adequately represent the interests of the total community.[12]

Inequitable Resource Allocation

As the societal scale of the United States has increased
large numbers of diverse individuals and groups have been
either concentrated in relatively small geographic areas of
the country (metropolitan areas) or have been brought together
through increased capabilities of communications and trans-
portation, thus facilitating a highly interdependent national
society. With this rise of organizational scale in urban areas
has been a corresponding rise in the visibility of inequalities
in the allocation and distribution of resources. As the
national government has assumed more and more responsibility
for the regulation and distribution of resources, at the ex-
pense of local communities, the conflict level in urban areas
had also risen because control has been removed from small
dispersed and often private constituencies to a large public
constituency. While the government is supposed to represent
the "public interest" or all the diverse interests of various
groups and individuals within the country, this has certainly
not happened and it is questionable whether indeed it is in-
deed possible. Consequently, many groups within local commun-
ity or neighborhood areas, particularly those groups in the
lower socio-economic classes, feel that their interests have
been consistently ignored by the national government in favor

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[12]Warner Bloomberg, Jr., "Community Organization", in
Readings in Community Organization Practice, Ralph M. Kramer
(ed.), (Englewood Cliff, N.J.: Prentice-Hall, 1969), p. 114.

of other interests. Thus, conflicts within urban areas today
can be seen as a struggle between groups to gain access or
control over community systems which directly affect their
lives. This situation would suggest that within our large
interdependent social system that our traditional concepts of
democracy and community participation at the local level do
not exist or are not functioning properly or perhaps are not
compatible with the social-economic realities of 1972.

The Concept of Citizen Participation

In recent years, as the scale of our society has grown,
the representative democracies governing our urban areas have
proved to be increasingly unacceptable as spokesmen for their
communities, and the concept of citizen participation has
become regarded by many as a normative principle inseparable
from the idea of democracy itself.[13] The demand for increased
participation by members of local communities in local affairs
has occurred at a time when opportunities for participation
have declined for reasons already cited such as the decline
of traditional linkages to controllers of community systems
and the increase in organizational scale and interdependence.
At the same time several national organizations such as the
National Municipal League and the American Council to Improve
Our Cities have encouraged citizen participation. The federal
government, of course, has also encouraged participation at
the local level in recent years through various stipulations

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[13]Edward C. Banfield and James Q. Wilson, City Politics,
(New York: Vintage Books, 1963), p. 258.

in legislation, however, it is debatable whether the actions
by the federal government were instrumental in developing an
interest in participation or rather were merely a reaction
to the demands of local groups for increased participation in
the community planning process.

Big city mayors of the liberal-progressive variety,
such as Lindsay, White and Alioto, have also in recent years
promoted the issues of neighborhood representation, community
control and governmental decentralization[14] partly as a result
of the shifted emphasis of federal programs from a physical
to social orientation but also because of the decline of
traditional sources of municipal executive power. As a result
of the decline of internal political organization in large
cities caused partially by the decline of ward politics and
the political machines, mayors have had to appeal to resource
and power systems outside of the city to gain a commitment of
resources necessary to initiate and sustain a dynamic urban
program. Whereas after World War II issues dealing with phys-
ical renewal were popular with the federal government, national
foundations and other resource systems, currently citizen
involvement and social renewal are in vogue. Consequently,
urban leaders have pursued programs in these areas as a means
of gaining both publicity, resources, and power.[15]

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[14]James Q. Wilson, "Planning and Politics," in Cities
and Suburbs, Bryan T. Downes, ed., (Belmont, California:
Wadsworth Publishing Co., 1971), p. 185.

[15]James Q. Wilson, "The Mayors vs. the Cities," The
Public Interest, Number 16, Summer 1969, p. 28-30.

Divergent Views of Citizen Participation

The phrase "citizen participation in the planning process"
has a number of different connotations to different groups
and individuals, usually depending upon their goals and status
within the social hierarchy. What has been termed the
"emotional" definition of citizen participation states that
citizen participation is the ability or power of people within
a community to decide or control their own destinies.[16] This
definition could also be termed the purely democratic inter-
pretation of citizen participation and in terms of the planning
process means that local communities should have full control
of all policy decisions affecting their neighborhoods. In
effect, this would mean complete community control of the
allocation and distribution of all resources within the
community. Obviously, no individual or community has ever had
complete power over their own destinies and it is apparent
that local communities have been losing whatever controls
they did possess as the societal scale has increased. Conse-
quently, citizen participation must be viewed in a more
realistic manner.

The Economic Opportunity Act of 1964, which is commonly
referred to as the War on Poverty, introduced the phrase "max-
imum feasible participation". There have been varied definitions
of this phrase as well as arguments as to what the framers of

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[16]Fred Powledge, Model City (New York: Simon and
Schuster, 1970), p. 144.

the legislation meant by the term.[17] Definitions of maximum

feasible participation have ranged from an emphasis on the

poor helping to plan, to the poor having total control of

planning or the poor acting as advisors in the planning process.

Generally, the War on Poverty and the Model Cities Program have

led to experimentation with different forms and degrees of

participation as well as stimulation of discussion and concern

with the place of citizen participation in the planning

process.

Another general attitutde or definition of citizen par-

ticipation is the paternalistic orientation. This interpreta-

tion takes the position that citizen participation is fine in

general but that there are definite limits to its realistic

application, primarily because citizens lack the technical

competance to deal with complicated problems.[18] Generally,

this has been the position or attitude of urban planners who

have traditionally conceived of themselves as experts who

know what is best for urban areas and the local communities

within them. However, this position is no longer viable today

because increasingly the constitutency of planners do not

agree that planning is an issue for experts to resolve.

An increasingly popular position regarding citizen

participation in the planning process is that of advocacy

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[17]See Daniel Moynihan, Maximum Feasible Misunderstanding, (New York: The Free Press, 1969).

[18]Powledge, op. cit., p. 145.

planning or plural planning which essentially maintains that
since any plan is the embodiment of a particular groups inter-
ests, any group which has interests at stake in the planning
process should have those interests articulated in the form
of a plan.[19] Essentially, all individuals or groups with a
particular concern would have the opportunity to be represented
by a plan which would compete with other plans and planning
groups, including the local public planning agency, to win
political support. In its ideal form this process would give
all groups, including low-income groups, a meaningful voice
in their planning their future and would also force local
public planning agencies to be more responsive to all the
"public interests." As a result, local public planning agencies
would be encouraged to produce plans within a multi-value
framework. Basically, plural planning is seen as a means of
combating the negative effects that increasing societal scale
have had on local opportunities for participation in policy
formation and also of reducing the omnisicient status of the
"expert". Advocates of plural planning assume that planners
in local agencies are incapable of broadening their generally
middle-class orientation and consequent alliance with those
interests at the top of the social structure to include the
interests of the lower classes unless all interests have an
institutionalized access to policy makers.

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[19]Lisa Peattie, "Reflections of an Advocate Planner"
in Urban Government, Edward C. Banfield, ed., (New York: The
Free Press, 1969) p. 557.

Nature of Citizen Participation

Participation in the planning process should be institutionalized in a country such as the United States which prides itself upon its democratic institutions, with participation beginning with the planning process itself. However, in reality citizen participation is not common in most important institutions in the country. Although there are examples of apathy or indifference of citizens when they are given the opportunity to participate in policy making, many times apparent apathy can be attributed to failure of communications.[20] Arthur Hillman, upon examing large organizations in reference to internal democracy or participation of its members, noted that an organization passes through an evolutionary process, beginning with vital memberships ready and eager to assert their viewpoints, soon developing "leadership" after which meetings no longer encourage expression by members since almost everything is referred to committees and as a consequence general member interest declines and attendance drops.[21] Hillman characterizes participation as partly a habit and also a matter of skill as well as an avenue of self expression. He lists a number of reasons or motives for participation:

1. civic pride
2. "social consciousness"
3. power in getting along and manipulating people
4. resentments and grievances
5. outlet for energy
6. desire for prestige

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[20]Loring, op. cit., p. 2.

[21]Arthur Hillman, Community Organization and Planning (New York: MacMillan, 1950), p. 193.

    7.   keeping pace with family or peers
    8.   need or contacts

Some of the reasons why people do not participate according to Hillman include:

    1.   lack of time, energy, money
    2.   fear of losing job
    3.   sense of futility or alienation
    4.   reluctance to "stick neck out"
    5.   lack of knowledge[22]

As governmental responsibility, especially at the federal level, for the control, coordination and functioning of various aspects of society has increased, many instances can be found of various individuals or interest groups whose goals and desires have conflicted with the programs and proposals of the government. Although increased conflict is natural when one increases the size of the constituency involved in various issues to include the whole nation, processes have not been evolved to include various heterogeneous interests into policy making. As a result, increasingly vocal opposition has been voiced from the local level concerning many projects planned from the top, ranging from highways to urban renewal. Protest has been particularly pronounced concerning decisions made by highway planners in reference to locating urban freeways. Although many highway critics are now advocating the total exclusion of freeways from large cities, highway planners have generally continued to be insensitive to the values and interests of many groups. Considerable debate has occurred concerning what the role and impact of the citizen should be upon route locations in urban

[22]Ibid., p. 199.

areas. Many professionals contend that it is impossible to
please everyone, especially with an issue as controversial as
urban freeways and that citizens are not able to understand
the sophisticated techniques and processes which are used to
determine locations. While generally it is true that citizen
protest is aimed at the specific destruction of their homes,
businesses and community by proposed highway plans rather than
generalities and philosophies concerning urban transportation,
the position of many top officials who view protestors as
"well-meaning people but in the nature of things, untrained
in these problems, concerned with parochial interests, unable
to see the big picture",[23] is not totally justified because
it is doubtful whether highway planners themselves see the
"big picture" of inter-relating community systems.

Citizen Participation and Urban Renewal

  The paternalistic attitude of highway planners toward
those groups and individuals most directly affected by their
plans has also been quite pervasive in the Urban Renewal
Program. Citizen participation in renewal has often been
viewed as a product rather than a process as evidenced by the
"rubber stamp" function of many citizen advisory committees.[24]
An examination of the renewal process, especially in its
earlier stages, reveals quite clearly that major segments of
the community were being ignored in the planning process and

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[23]Jane Jacobs, The Death and Life of Great American
Cities, (New York: Vintage Books, 1961), p. 338.

[24]Shirley Chisholm, "Planning With and Not For People",
Planning 1970, American Society of Planning Officials, p. 2.

that renewal plans were visible evidence that the government was representing only certain powerful interest groups.

The concept of citizen participation in connection with urban renewal has undergone a steady change since the incept of the program in 1949. In 1954, the Housing and Renewal Act of 1949 was amended to require a Workable Program in order for a community to be eligible for renewal funds. The program included as one of its components a stipulation for citizen participation. However, the nature of early renewal programs, which tended to emphasize clearance, was not really compatible with citizen participation, at least not at the neighborhood level. Consequently, citizen participation took the form of broad, city-wide citizen advisory groups which were usually not necessarily representative and usually composed of major community leaders. These advisory groups generally did not take an active part in the decision-making related to the renewal process but rather were usually used to legitimize decisions already determined by the municipal administration. Of course, there were limits to the extent of which the advisory committees would act as rubber stamps for the city administration. For instance, in New Haven the citizens advisory council would not accept any proposal and as a result people influential in urban renewal were constantly trying to shape their proposals to be compatible with the attitudes and interests of the power sources of the community. [25]

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[25]Thomas A. Flinn, Local Government and Politics, (Glenview, Illinois: Scott, Foresman and Co., 1970), p. 130.

However, many times citizen participation in the renewal process was completely ignored. Various studies have shown that residents in proposed renewal areas often times do not understand the program or its ramifications.[26] This situation is natural in the early stages of any new program, particularly when many of those affected are lower income groups who usually have less access to information and other resources. But in many instances, there was a conscious effort by municipal officials to withold information about renewal projects and ignore requirements of citizen participation.

There are several reasons why municipal officials were able to disregard, to a large degree, federal requirements for participation. Many mayors who were committed to renewal programs found it expedient to plan renewal projects from the top without input from the grass roots. The coalition which usually developed among pro-renewal forces, consisting of planners, mayors, businessmen, and real estate interests, was often a very pragmatic relationship. With the decline of machine politics, generally weak party organizations and other parts of city government usually unreliable, municipal executives often used urban renewal to gain support of city-wide resources and thus obtain the power necessary to govern. This situation required that the local government produce tangible results from the renewal programs which could usually

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[26]Scott Greer, Urban Renewal and American Cities, (New York: Bobbs-Merrill Co., Inc., 1965), p. 38-40.

be accomplished by limiting potential conflicts and delays
in implementing the program.[27] Thus, by attempting to limit
the constitutency involved in renewal decisions by planning
secretly, for instance, demolition plans could be kept from
the public until ready for implementation, thus eliminating
the formation of an organized opposition by those citizens
affected by the plans. Community participation at the local
level was usually seen by local municipal officials as pro-
viding local residents the opportunity to organize in opposi-
tion of officially sanctioned plans. Since renewal plans
often were prepared from the perspective of influential
community leaders or systems, and often involved clearance,
it was reasonable to expect those local residents affected
by the plans to protest. Although municipal officials could
attempt to plan with neighborhood residents, this unfortunately
is a lengthy, expensive process, the outcome of which is
often unacceptable to local government and those community
systems which influence it.

Another reason why municipal officials were able to
plan without substantially involving local citizens was that
in the early history of the Urban Renewal Program, particularly
the Federal Urban Renewal Administration was equally anxious
to see the renewal program a success for reasons of organiza-
tional self-maintenance.[28] Therefore, both the Urban

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[27]Langley Carleton Keyes, The Rehabilitation Planning
Game, Cambridge: MIT Press, 1969), p. 5.

[28]Greer, Urban Renewal and American Cities, op. cit. p. 97.

Renewal Administration and the local municipalities became
interdependent and were under pressure to produce results.
Consequently, the URA had a tendency to overlook the Workable
Program requirements dealing with citizen participation, since
they also perceived participation as a barrier to the imple-
mentation of renewal programs. As a result, municipal officials
often developed the strategy of co-opting major power sources
in the community by enlisting them to join citizen advisory
committees and then merely accepted other support wherever
it was offered.

Although many mayors undoubtedly benefited from early
renewal programs, the alliance that was necessary and the
procedures that were employed to implement urban renewal
clearance programs eventually led to a very untenable position
for many municipal executives. As the ramifications of many
of the urban renewal programs became evident, such as the
large scale destruction of low-income housing, the massive
displacement of many urban residents, the destruction of
viable neighborhoods and perhaps most important the increasing
hostility and bitterness of many urban residents, much of the
initial support for renewal began to be reassessed.[29] Conse-
quently, as urban renewal became increasingly involved in
controversy it became clear that both the emphasis of the program
would have to change to include more community input into the

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[29]Wilson, "Planning and Politics", op. cit., p. 179.

planning process at the community level.

As the use of urban renewal became more and more wide-spread, community resistance groups became more sophisticated and talented. Although resistence has been gradual and cumula-tive, local community residents have generally learned from the experience of others. Some early renewal projects have been practically immortalized for their shortcomings, such as the West End project in Boston, for instance.

As a result of increasing disenchantment, the emphasis of the urban renewal program changed during the early 1960's from wholesale clearance to a primary emphasis upon conser-vation and rehabilitation of whole neighborhoods.[30] In addition, priorities at the federal level were shifted from downtown renewal to neighborhood renewal. The very nature of rehabil-itation makes local participation mandatory in the renewal process. Since successful rehabilitation requires investment by neighborhood residents and a trust in the future of the area, it is not possible for the municipality to implement a plan without neighborhood approval or support. However, the general view of municipal officials toward involving citizens in the planning process in a meaningful way has remained highly paternalistic, usually not approaching shared decision making.

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[30]Keyes, op. cit., p. 5.

Renewal in New Haven

The relationship of citizen participation and urban renewal and their evolution can clearly be seen in the experience of New Haven, which under the leadership of Richard Lee developed what was generally regarded as one of the most successful renewal programs in the country. Many studies have been done on New Haven and much has been written about the renewal program. However, after a riot or racial disturbance in New Haven in the summer of 1967, the city which was often proclaimed a "model city" and which one critic proclaimed would be America's first slumless city, was again the subject of inquiry but of a different nature.[31] Studies were now trying to determine what had gone wrong in New Haven, a city which had a renewal program since the early 1950's and had received more federal funds per capita than any city in the country.

Criticism of New Haven's program came from several sources, one of which, The National Advisory Commission on Civil Disorders, stressed the fact that "...well intentioned programs designed to respond to the needs of ghetto residents were not worked out and implemented sufficiently in cooperation with intended beneficiaries." The Ford Foundation reported that "it was assumed that power-plus planning, without the ingredient of citizen participation, would lead to success - an assumption more valid five years ago than today".[32]

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[31] Jeanne R. Lowe, Cities in a Race with Time, (New York: Vintage Books, 1967), p. 409.

[32] Powledge, op. cit., p. 138.

Generally, Mayor Lee and his planners had developed the standard forms of citizen participation involving a coalition of business and community leaders representing those community systems which controlled the most important resources in the city. This group acted as supporters of the mayor rather than social action organizations representing the varied interests of the general population. Neither the city-wide community advisory council nor the more locally oriented resident advisory councils and neighborhood councils were delegated any formal powers and they gained none through their own efforts.[33] Thus, while a facade of citizens organizations had been developed, in reality the renewal process was quite authoritarian in nature. Lee was able to use renewal to build a substantial power base in New Haven that enabled him to become the dominant leader and there is every indication that he was not willing to share his power through democratic decision-making processes.

Renewal in Boston

The urban renewal program in the city of Boston, on the other hand, stressed "planning with people" since its inception in the early 1960's under the administration of John Collins. Since Boston's program got off to a late start in the 1960's, discounting the West End project which was essentially a one shot affair by a previous administration, it had the opportunity to learn from the mistake of others. Like Lee in New Haven, John Collins staked his political future

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[33]Ibid., p. 139

on urban renewal and used the program to build a power base

within the city by uniting the business community and govern-

ment interests.[34] The Boston program emphasized conservation

and rehabilitation of urban neighborhoods and planning was

considered "the art of the politically feasible". Neighbor-

hood plans were developed in conjunction with local interests

and until a plan was agreed upon by the neighborhood it was

not adopted. Neighborhood plans were adopted even if the

planners felt that they were not necessarily the best plans

for the future of that particular area or the city as a whole.[35]

   This approach was possible because the mayor had acquired

enough power to delegate some to local neighborhood organiz-

ations or councils. By giving extra-legal local governments

power over decision-making in matters of renewal, the mayor

was actually reducing the size of the constituency involved

in solving urban problems by giving a more homogeneous local-

ized unit control. Of course, this can only be done by sacri-

ficing both the power of the municipal government and coord-

ination of city-wide programs. Certainly, neighborhood con-

trol was not complete in Boston but this was the direction

of the renewal program. Real community power or control would

require community access and control of resources rather

than access through the central government.

Ramifications of Citizen Participation in Urban Renewal

   One of the important conclusions which can be drawn

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[34]Greer, _Urban Renewal and American Cities_, _op_. _cit_.,
p. 37.

[35]Keyes, _op_. _cit_., p. 28.

from the urban renewal program is that no policy or program
lacking popular agreement, support or participation can sur-
vive indefinitely. Generally, the planner should not have to
construct an artificial organization such as a citizens advis-
ory council to represent community interests, if democratically
planned change is his goal. Rather, the planner must be
able to identify bona fide organization of citizens who
genuinely represent a substantial part of the community or
neighborhood.[36] In addition, the attitude of planners is
very important. The planner must sincerely believe that various
community interests should participate, in a meaningful way,
in developing planning policies which affect the local com-
munity. Certainly, this position is not compatible with the
arrogant view of many planners who feel that they know what
is best for the community and who consider popular participation
a time-consuming waste of money which can be circumvented
by public relations gimmicks.[37]

Alan Altshuler has commented that the "most serious
threat to planning success has been the fear of governmental
power that pervades American society."[38] Although this fear
of government may have its roots in colonial America, and the
relationship between Great Britain and the colonists, the
increased governmental activity in American life since the

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[36]Saul Alinsky, "Citizen Participation and Community
Organization", in Strategies of Community Organization, Fred
M. Cox, ed., (Itasca, Ill.: FE Peacock Publisher, 1970), p. 216.

[37]Ibid., p. 216

[38]Alan Altshuler, The City Planning Process (Ithaca, N.Y.:
Cornell University Press, 1965), p. 360.

1930's in such areas as planning has resulted in some glaring

misuses of power, particularly in terms of special benefits

to privileged groups. The more apparent misuses of government

power or unequal allocation of resources may be exceptions

to the rule but in any case, they have tended to reinforce,

with concrete examples the general feelings of distrust toward

governmental power. Planners, especially, have been accused

of catering to special upper-class interests at the expense

of lower classes, particularly in early renewal projects.

However, planners can not be held totally responsible since

they are merely one component in the community power structure -

and usually not a very influential one. However, planners

must determine whether their primary responsibility is to

the public interest, composed of the totality of different

and inter-relating community systems and/or to the well-

organized constituency which is usually both the most coher-

ent, visible and powerful in the community.[39] Only when the

planner determines that his role should be that of an advocate

of democratically planned change will there be a possibility

of integrating planning, citizen participation and the

community power structure in a way that guarantees or

institutionalizes meaningful community input into the planning

process. In addition, the relationship of the planning process

and citizen participation to the community decision making

process and community power structure is very important to

determine the possibilities and ramifications of shared

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[39]Altshuler, op. cit., p. 360

decision-making which is implied by meaningful citizen participation.

Planning, Participation and Community Power

Meaningful citizen participation in the planning process would seem to depend heavily upon the political effectiveness of the urban planner as a participant in community decision making. Although the planners' importance may be accepted in urban politics, this does not necessarily mean that he is actually influencing policy making.[40] Consequently, while a planner may be dedicated to developing a democratic community planning process, he must be able to work within the established political framework of the geographical community, otherwise participation in the planning process will likely be an empty exercise. If the planner is not able or willing to work within the existing political framework, the only alternative if the planner desires to be effective, is to attempt to alter or change that framework.

Citizen participation in the planning process is an issue today, not because of the lack of rational planning or weakness of central leadership, but because of inequitable distribution of power among the community systems supporting certain values.[41] Generally, planners have had a rather limited influence upon community decision-making partly because of a negative attitude of planners toward political

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[40]Francine F. Rabinovitz, City Politics and Planning, (New York: Atherton Press, 1969), p. 6.

[41]David M. Austin, "Influence of Community Setting on Neighborhood Action," in Neighborhood Organization for Community Action, (New York: National Association of Social Workers, 1968), p. 78.

involvement but also because of the structure of the politico-economic system in America.   Therefore, in a heterogeneous society with varying values, goals, and objectives, such as the United States, different segments of society have differing degrees of access to power and ability to apply power in situations of negotiation and conflict.   Lower socio-economic community systems usually have the least power and consequently their values and goals are often neglected and ignored.   Although a planner may plan comprehensively within a multi-value framework, his access or relationship to community power will largely determine the success of implementing plans, particularly those parts of a plan which are not of either direct or indirect benefit to the community power systems.

Nature of Community Power Structure.

There has been for the last twenty years considerable controversy over the concepts, methodology and findings related to community power structures or systems.   The basic issue has been whether or not the urban community is characterized by a unified and enduring heirarchy of power or by a more fluid, constantly changing system which can differ substantially from issue to issue.   It is important for a planner to understand the nature of community power since this will influence strategies for participation.

Floyd Hunter, in his book Community Power Structure, was perhaps one of the most influential advocates of the first position which has been referred to as the elite model.[42]

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[42]Floyd Hunter, Community Power Structure (Chapel Hill, N. C.: University of N.C. Press, 1953).

Hunter based his conclusions on a study he conducted in Atlanta during the early 1950's. He developed the "Reputational Method" of determining community power which is done basically by securing lists of potential power sources such as leading civic, professional and fraternal organizations and business leaders who are then rated by "judges" as to their influence in local decision-making. Hunter found that there was a high consensus regarding the top leaders of the community which in effect formed a nucleus of economic and political power. The people from this nucleus formed pyramids of power, the personnel of which changed depending upon what needed to be done at a particular time and who had the necessary resources. Admission to the circle of decision-makers depended primarily upon a man's position in the business community rather than social prestige or wealth.

In a community with an "elite" power structure, the ability of the ordinary citizen to significantly influence or control his environment or community especially in a large diverse urban area would be negligible. Generally, by its very nature, a ruling elite constitutes a very small proportion of the community which is not representative in social terms of the larger community. In addition, an elite is usually largely made up of middle and upper class people who possess the skills and qualities required for leadership and are subject to relatively little influence from the rest of the community because of a decisive control of resources.[43]

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[43]Robert Presthus, "Community Power Structure" in Strategies of Community Organization, op. cit., p. 110.

However, in a community with a largely homogeneous population the ruling elite may adequately reflect the values and goals of the general population.

Critics of the supposition that public policy making in urban areas is either directly or indirectly dominated by an elite, have questioned Hunter's methodology in particular and his concept of a single power center in general. His reputational technique has been criticized for predetermining the study results.

Those who believe there are multiple centers of power contend that community power centers are issue oriented and consequently are constantly changing. Robert A. Dahl in his book Who Governs?, based on studies conducted in New Haven, outlined several methods of assessing relative influence within a community such as studying changes in socio-economic characteristics of incumbents in city offices to determine if any large historical changes have occurred in sources of leadership; examining sets of "decisions" in different "issue areas" to determine patterns of influence; isolating a particular socio-economic category and determining the nature and extent of participation of this group in local affairs; as well as other methods dealing with random samples, and studies of voting patterns. [44]

Dahl points out that few people have direct influence on choices made within the community including most citizens.

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[44] Robert A. Dahl, Who Governs? (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1961), p. 330-331.

However, he feels that indirect influence through the election
process is a very important determinant in decision-making.
Real or imagined preferences of the citizens are kept in mind
by leaders through sub-leaders who represent various con-
stituencies, according to Dahl. Dahl found that there was
a specialization of influence with persons influential in
one area but not in others.

Dahl perceived five possible patterns of leadership.
The first was the covert integration by economic notables or
the elite model which he rejected for New Haven. The execu-
tive centered "grand coalition of coalitions", the coalition
of chieftains, independent sovereignities, spheres of influ-
ence and rival sovereignties were the other four.[45] He found
that different patterns formed for different issues. Dahl noted
a great gap between the acutal and potential influence of
citizens because for various reasons they do not fully use
their political resources. On the other hand, the politician
generally has the ability to gain more influence than others
largely because he has the motivation to learn and generally
spends more time acquiring the necessary skill.

In a community characterized by a pluralistic decision-
making process, there is the opportunity for individual as
well as organizational access into the political system and
individuals can actively participate through numerous differ-
ent organizations. In addition, a pluralistic community

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[45]Ibid., p. 184.

there is generally an understanding concerning the "democratic creed".[46] Consequently, in a decision-making process such as the one described by Dahl, community participation in general or organized in response to a particular issue would seem to have the potential to effect the decision-making process, perhaps by merely indicating individual or group preferences to community leaders. However, the lack of access to resources, apathy or inadequate knowledge of the decision-making process would generally limit the direct influence of many potentially effective individuals or groups.

Currently, what has been termed the "diffused influence model" of community influence is currently in vogue. This model concludes that the city's systems of influence of power are composed of numerous groupings or elites of power and influence based upon economic, business, political or civic interests. Each unit is a small network of power and influence tied together by common interest which is usually limited in terms of the total range of interests of the local community.[47]

While a particular community power system may seem to be the most consistent with reality, it is more logical to consider the elite and pluralistic models as opposite end points of a continuum. "The continuum might range from a very tight power elite to a community so loosely integrated as

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[46]Presthus, op. cit., p. 109.

[47]Lawrence D. Mann, "Studies in Community Decision-Making" in Readings in Community Organ. Practice, op. cit., p. 69.

to be characterized by disarray and violence in its decision-making."[48] This framework allows for numerous types and varieties of community decision-making systems but is not really very helpful in determining or predicting and categorizing community decision making. However, it is questionable whether research to date on community decision-making is adequate to determine a typical pattern for American communities, if indeed such a pattern exists.

Participation and the Decision-Making Process

Generally, in order to determine how much various community systems affect the decision-making process in a local community, it is necessary to study the variables that enter into a particular decision relating to a particular issue. The decision-making process is usually quite complex and multi-stage in character. Consequently, the action of an individual or group at a particular stage does not necessarily mean that he has influence. It is possible that those which legitimize a particular decision may have less influence on that decision than other less visible forces. For instance, one thing that is common to all power structures is that persons not elected to office play very considerable parts in the making of many important decisions.[49] Decision-making is often unsystematic, therefore, it is necessary to consider carefully the roles played by potential or presumed decision makers or community systems.

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[48]Rabinovitz, op. cit., p. 18.

[49]Banfield and Wilson, op. cit., p. 244.

The importance of a decision is related to the degree that it represents a challenge to the dominant community systems who determine the "rules of the game". There are several criteria for assessing the importance of a particular decision, such as the number of people affected by the outcomes, how many different kinds and how many community resources are distributed by the outcomes, and how drastically present community resource distributions are altered.[50]

Influence in the process of decision-making is largely determined by a person's access to resources and the belief of relevant others that such access exists. Among the most important social resources are those which result from an institutionalized status or office.[51] Besides the authority which such a position delegates, other resources accrue to such a position such as information, growth of a network of friendship and mutual cooperation with others. These resources can be directly used to sanction either positively or negatively and thus directly control the outcome of a decision.

Community decision-making is characterized by varying degrees of community participation in major decisions and competition among the elites who play a direct, initiating role in them.[52] Consequently, the planner should be aware

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[50]Willis D. Hawley, The Search for Community Power, Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice-Hall, 1968), p. 212.

[51]Ronald Nuttall, "On the Structure of Influence", in Community Structure and Decision-Making, Terry Clark, ed., (San Francisco: Chandler Publishing Co., 1968), p. 353.

[52]Presthus, op. cit., p. 110.

of the limitations imposed upon democratically planned change
as well as the most appropriate role the planner should pursue
in order to implement community plans and the possibilities
for changing the social system within a given community in
order to redistribute power or resources more equitably
among various community systems. If a planner opts for work-
ing within the existing community social structure, it is
essential that the planner recognizes the consequences of his
actions for the total community. In some instances, such as
in a cohesive community where the planner shares the values
and goals of the leadership group the role of technician
might be most appropriate for plan implementation. However,
this approach leaves the possibility that large groups in
the community will not be represented in determining community
plans. In a more fragmented community power system the planner
would probably assume the role of broker or mobilizer to be
most effective. It is interesting to note that the more
fragmented a community decision-making system is, which
indicates that resources are more widely distributed with
perhaps no community system in firm control, the lower the
potential for program output from the planner and the more
skillful the planner must be in maintaining a complex set of
alliances.[53] Consequently, consensus planning is most
difficult in a politically fragmented, heterogeneous community
and perhaps the easiest in a homegeneous or cohesive community.

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[53]Rabinovitz, op. cit., p. 79.

Planning has been defined as the art of the politically
feasible. In most instances the best way for a planner to ✓
secure support at the solution level is to secure full parti-
cipation at the problem-defining and decision-making level.
The planner must determine what community resources are
necessary to implement a program with a given political frame-
work. Usually the support of residents affected by a partic-
ular plan is an essential resource and a prerequisite for obtain-
ing official acceptance. However, it is questionable whether
or not the conditions necessary for successful community engage-
ment in planning are really tolerable to the administrative,
political and professional establishment who must initiate
democratic planning processes - which imply shared decision-
making. The actual decision-makers in any local community,
although varied in social background, comprise a very small,
highly selected proportion of the adult population. "These
groups whom the city at present serves the best- the well-to-
do, the professionals, the highly educated, the suburbanites -
predominate (in decision-makers)," and most local resources
allocated by community decision-makers without intervention
by the state or federal governments are used to reinforce and
further entrench the priviledged position of decision-makers.[54]
Consequently, it is doubtful if the decision-makers of a
particular community, especially one with serious inequities
in the allocation and distribution of resources, would will-

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[54]Bloomberg, op. cit., p. 114.

ingly give up or share their control of community resources.

The Urban Planner as a Community Organizer

Successful community change or reform by a planner require strategies that are largely determined by the nature of the community power system. The most difficult community situation in which to initiate democratically planned change is when there is a government controlled by an economic elite.[55] Peaceful reform via politics may not be possible because often times, elected politicians are committed to the wishes of the upper class controllers. Two possible avenues for change are gradual action of outside forces or revolutionary seizure and transformation.[56] It is essential for a planner to identify who the community decision makers are and to determine how they can be influenced. By concentrating on vulnerable points of the decision-makers, pressure can be applied in the most strategic areas. The organization of the disenfranchised in the community with united action toward specific objectives could have the effect of unstructuring the decision-making elite. However, since a planner is usually one of the resources controlled by the elite, even if indirectly, it is likely that any overt action by a planner which could be construed as harmful to the privileged position of community leaders would result in termination of the planner's employment.

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[55]Dawn Day Wachtel, "Structures of Community and Strategies for Organization", in Strategies of Community Organization, op. cit., p. 179.

[56]Ibid.

On the other hand, in a community with a pluralistic power system, it is much easier for the planner to organize for change and reform because leadership can easily be located. One method for the planner to pursue is the enlightenment of potential power groups of new ideas and possibilities and the development of a greater awareness of their strategic position within the power system. In a pluralistic system, it is relatively easy to form powerful coalitions with little effort.[57] However, alienation of certain power groups could prove disastrous for the planner depending upon his position within or in relation to the government structure.

Generally, the planner's role in community planning should include both the initiation of plans at the local level with community support as well as the articulation and implementation of community oriented desires. Initially, the planner must develop an awareness on the part of the community of the opportunities for meaningful input into planning for the neighborhood. This should be accomplished by seeking out representative organizations within the community. Hopefully every person should have the opportunity to be represented either as a member of a group or individually.

Saul Alinsky has developed the following "tests" to apply to determine the real character of organizations professing to represent the community:

> 1. Is the program of the organization broad
>   enough so that it attracts and involves

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[57]Ibid., p. 181.

most of the groups in the community?

2. Is the program specific, immediate and feasible?

3. Do they understand the nature of power and their reasons for being?

4. What kinds of words are used by the leadership?

5. What is the attitude of the prevailing dominant institutions of the status quo to this community organization?

6. What is their record on controversy?

7. Search its statistics.

8. Who are its leaders? Do they have a following?

9. Is the membership actual, or make-believe?

10. Does the organization operate on a realistic basis, recognizing the prime significance of self-interest as a motivating force? [58]

In the process of determining representative groups, the planner must familiarize himself with the nature of the community in terms of its perceptions of the outside world and itself. Such variables as community habits, attitudes, interests of people, situations of interaction, and "rules of the game" which regulate behavior are all important because they underlie the formal structure of the community.[59] It is essential to know who are the controllers of various community systems since these people will control the resources necessary to implement community plans. Consequently, knowledge of means of access to resources and the potential of changing or altering the management of these systems will determine if the planner will be able to initiate democratically

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[58]Alinsky, op. cit., p. 218-219.

[59]Hillman, op. cit., XVI.

planned change.

Community plans that are democratically planned will
not necessarily be successful. The cooperation of community
systems with the needed resources is critical and usually
requires that these groups will be in a position to gain from
proposed plans. If the systems that will benefit from community
plans do not have the necessary resources, then chances are
that the plans will not succeed. Although in a democratic
framework the systems affected by a proposed plan have a right
to be involved, a planner must determine whether it is possible
to gain a commitment from dominant elements of the community
whose resources are needed. Obviously, depending upon the
distribution of power, some community plans may involve
an unacceptable redistribution of resources regardless of
how democratically a particular plan might have been determined.
Consequently, a planner must develop strategies which will
chart paths of least resistance toward the objectives which
are determined or agreed upon democratically by representative
community bodies. It must be realized that citizen partici-
pation in the planning process will not necessarily result
in plans suitable to the power structure, particularly if
the power system is undemocratic in nature. The planner must,
therefore, have a thorough knowledge of the systems' inter-
relationship and resource distribution of a community to
determine what changes are possible within a given framework
as well as how to manipulate power relationships to implement
community plans.

Conclusion

Although the United States society is characterized
by a democratic political structure and ideology, it is clear
that democratic social processes are relatively rare. "Shared
decision-making, control through consent, is probably most
common in the kinship and friendship groups but it is hardly
transmitted through them to larger entities." [60] Most
institutions which have the greatest influence upon the lives
of members of the community are highly bureaucratized and
offer very little opportunity for individual participation.
Within this general framework the planner must attempt to
coordinate and help develop plans for the future structure
of human settlements. The planner must continually attempt
to develop plans and processes which have as their underlying
goal the equitable redistribution of community resources.
Shared decision-making in planning and more importantly in
government will insure that various interests are represented
when resources allocation is determined. The planner must
strive to represent change in communities where resources are
unequally distributed and only support the status quo when
it represents the democratically determined plans of the
community.

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[60]Greer, The Emerging City, op. cit., p. 102

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