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Planning with Futuring

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Introduction

In every aspects of our entire life, we try to live in an organized way. Either spelled out or not we have many projects for the following hour, tomorrow, next week, next month or a coming year. Either known or unknown, there are ways to proceed towards those goals through some means. In this either intuitive or scientifically driven process we confront many outside factors (environmental forces) that make us revise and redesign our scheme and achieve predetermined goals. Our individual daily life is nothing other than a micro scale of planning practice, whereas our entire life span is a cumulation of successful and unsuccessful planning practices governed under unwritten assumptions about things.

On the other hand, the goals that we wish to reach through planning are the verbal definitions of a tacit future state of affairs that we covertly pursue. We plan for a desired future, by doing this we intend to avoid some undesired ones. What this means is even at the very individual level, we have more than one alternative futures designed under some principles and conditional variables. Also, we prefer one or more than one concurrently at a certain time.

One of the means that is able to take us to those preferred futures is the planning. Planning and "futuring" are inseparable from each other. Unfortunately, future orientation and concern is the mostly ignored variable in the contemporary planning theory. What is apparent in this current shape of the planning theory and practice is that planning tries to catch the events behind and attempts to solve the problems emerged. This phenomenon very much discredits the planning field and profession as making it a follower rather than a guiding set of organized principles.

This paper deals with this dichotomy in planning. In the first part, I will attempt to give a brief idea about where the contemporary planning theory and practice stand. In the second part, I will try to briefly present what the future means with its relation to the planning theory. The third part will be one in which we will be looking for a way or ways to develop a richer and a promising planning concept by bridging the gap with the concept of futures.

The Planning Concept

What Is Planning?

Definitions make terms friendlier. They facilitate tools to move ahead in a technical jargon as well as they give important clues about the ideological, technical, theoretical inclinations and preferences of the definer. The advancement level of the definitions is a direct indicator of the advancement level of the related field. Definitions are time related, very much situational and value laden. Definitions in planning are no exceptions to those.

Henry Fagin defines "planning" as "deciding what to do in advance." By this way, "(1) it is inseparable from deciding; (2) a precondition to rational action; (3) an action-focused activity" (Fagin, 1959, p. 109). Critical elements of Fagin's definition become "deciding", "rational action", and "action-focused activity". This definition is very consistent with an era of thinking which presumebly under the influences of "the rational planning theory." Melville Branch defines planning by combining the basic steps taken place in the planning process:

"Planning is the deliberate, organized, continuous process of identifying different elements and aspects of an organism, determining their present state and interaction, projecting them in concert throughout a period of future time, and formulating and programming a set of actions and plans to attain desired results" (Branch, 1975, p. 272).

On the other hand, in the search of the philosophical roots of the contemporary planning, Friedman and Hudson defines it as "an activity centrally concerned with the linkage between knowledge and organized action" [emphasis original] (Friedman and Hudson, 1975, p. 8). This broad definition is mainly concerned about "the ways of linkages" between knowledge and action. Any possible combinations of linkages can be assumed under this definition.

On the other hand, Benveniste defines planning as follows:

"Planning includes the research and other actions needed for the elaboration of a complex set of decisions designed to achieve the goals of an organization, of a set of organizations, or of all citizens and organizations in a region, nation, or the world" (Benveniste, 1989, p. 19).

Three strategic elements shape Benveniste's definition: goal achievement, elaboration of decisions, and research and other actions for those purposes. But planning mainly deals with research and other actions required for elaboration of decisions since goals are given, rather than set by planners.

History of Planning

The history of planning is the history of the city planning in the United States. This fact is very much due to the traditional and deeply rooted idea of federalism (strong localism), and the idea of seeing federal government as a facilitator rather than a guiding force in the economic sphere of the country. Private sector dependency of the national economy has forced the federal government out of the game of the central economic planning as was the case in many European capitalist systems. In European tradition, the principle historical rationale behind the concept of planning particularly occurred in the efforts of equally distributing the welfare resulted from industrialization and technical advancement after the Second World War, and social planning before the war. However, it was mainly the city planning in the U.S. case owing to the mass immigration from Europe and the East Asia in the 19th century and settlement problems of these immigrants along with fast deterioration of the shape and general outlook of the major American cities as a result. Hall puts it more precisely:

"...planning in the United States has evolved differently from planning in Great Britain, France, Germany, and Scandinavia. The reason for these differences, both over time and across place, are a mixture of economic forces, political traditions, and cultural ideologies. Issues recycle and come uppermost again, but the responses are subtly different in every era and every country" (Hall, 1989, p. 275).

Hall distinguishes ten periods in the history of planning, "both here in the United States and elsewhere in the world" (Hall, 1989, p. 277). While I agree on the first part of the statement, I strongly feel disagreement in the second part, because Hall's city planning periods, which will be issued soon, can hardly explain the planning practices in Europe, and in the rest of the world, especially in developing and socialist countries. For these reasons, I will prefer to adapt two fundamentally different perspectives to explain the history of planning: (1) Planning in terms of city planning as in the U.S., (2) planning in terms of social welfare, economic development and ideological/social reformation tool as Europe, developing and socialist countries, respectively.

Evolution of the Planning Idea and Practice

(1). City planning as the origin of planning

Hall explains the history of planning within ten consecutive periods fundamentally in the United States. According to his approach, the City Pathological Movement covers the period between 1890 and 1901. In this period, "the respectable bourgeois urban world discovered the slum city that festered underneath it". This urban underclass was including, for example, three of five of the New York population in 1894. Despite the European's decisive state initiated attempt for social housing programs to solve the problem, the American response was of decisively rejecting public intervention, and leaving "the infant art of planning to an alliance of real estate interests and middle class home-buyers."

Second is the City Beautiful Movement (1901-1915). This period describes "a deliberate and conscious attempt to impose on America's greatest cities the kind of heavily formalistic urban reconstruction." The leading force was not, with Hall's description, "autocratic regal or imperial regimes" of the early twentieth century Europe, but "the alliance of downtown merchants" in Cleveland, San Francisco, and Chicago.

Third is the period of the City Functional Movement between 1916 and 1939. This exemplifies the first introduction of the zoning of land uses in the American cities as first started in the New York City with the historic Zoning Ordinance of 1916. Many scholars in the planning field accept this as the beginning of the planning as a field and the planning profession in the United States (for example, Slater, 1984, p. 14-15). The basic drive that initiated this act, according to Hall, was that "it was good for business."

The fourth period covers the City Visionary of 1923-1936. In this period, a unique vision was developed to overcome the congested character of the American metropolises through facilitating the liberating effect of the automobile and the electric power plant. It was a small, self-sufficient rural community combined with its rich natural resources and ecological balance. Visionaries were such founding fathers of the American planning profession as Lewis Mumford, Henry Wright, Clarence Stein, Stuart Chase, Benton MacKaye, and Catherine Bauer. Hall further explains that:

"After World War II, the irony was that they all lived to see their vision, but as a shell without the substance: bedroom suburbs instead of garden cities, white-collar commuters instead of farmer-artisans" (Hall, 1989, p. 279).

The fifth period is the City Renewable Movement of 1937-64. Three important turning points define this period: The first one was the affordable housing project for poor (the Wagner Act of 1937) especially as a result of Catherine Bauer's effective political advocacy. The end result was not a success at all. The second turning point was a continuation of the first one, but in a different shape. "It was the real estate lobby that emerged right in the center. They wanted, not public housing, but federally aided commercial development at the edge of downtown." The third turning point corresponds to 1950s and 60s with such key concept as comprehensive renewal, systems analysis in planning and integrated land use-transportation planning. Efficiency in terms of time and money rather than equity and

intangibles were the focal points. This last period also coincides the first public movements and active oppositions against some large projects.

The City Grassrooted period covers the years between 1965 and 1980. End of the sixties were the years of the civil rights movements and democratization of the world's capitalist systems. The top-down planning and the planners as the value-free experts were replaced with advocacy planning based on grassroot involvement. This was the rise of the social learning or new humanist school along with neo-anarchist and Marxist arguments in the planning theory.

The seventh period is the City Theoretical Movement (1975-1989). This period indicates a strong turning point in the history of the planning. "By the end of the 1970s, planning theory had become divorced from planning practice. And the top products of the nation's top planning schools were becoming increasingly uninterested in the day-to-day activity of planning" (Hall, 1989, p. 280).

The City Enterpricing is the eight one which also exemplifies the 1980-1989 period. The city enterpricing is a perspective to the city planning in terms of what the practitioners do outside the academic arena. Such concepts as "planning-as-project," or "planning-as-real-estate-development" shape the main feature of this period. These projects can be counted as models of those concepts: Baltimore-Inner Harbor, Boston-Quincy Market and Waterfront, San Diego-Horton Plaza, London-Dockland, and, Paris-Eurodisneyland.

Hall attempts to describe the 1980-89 period with another approach, what he calls "the City of Ecologically Conscious NIMBYism." This simply describes the relationship between growth and the planning. Many American's life is affected by rapid growth of the cities and decreasing quality of services and natural resources. Meanwhile, planning has not yet developed clear and consistent answers to these problems.

As the tenth and last approach, Hall extends the City Pathological perspective to the period between 1890-1989. This perspective does simply try to consider the "never-went-away" reality of the American metropolises since the 1890s: The urban underclass. Planning professionals and planning schools in the country are required to produce feasible solutions to this problem.

(2) Planning as the tool of social welfare, economic development and ideological/social reformation

Outside the United States, planning has taken a rather different root along with the city planning practices. In many industrialized nations of the world, planning has been a tool to create a welfare state (for example, the European capitalist nations, especially Sweden). It has been the tool of economic development as seen by many developing countries. On the other hand, it has been, until recently, a tool of ideological and social reformation of societies under certain ideological and political principles in the socialist nations of the world. Each three statement will be shortly examined in the following paragraphs.

- 2.1. "In a unitary centralized state with a long tradition or ideology of government intervention, planning may act as a medium-term instrument of the government's reforming intentions." (Malan, 1987, p. 64). Such European countries as France and Sweden have a long tradition of a strong centralized governments along with the state level long and short term planning practices. Without any exception, recovering from the effects of the Second World War and the 1960s' social movements made almost all European governments to use planning as a tool of "redistributing income to achieve a more equitable and just social order" (Friedman, 1987, p. 28).
- 2.2. In a very different fashion, planning has been extensively used by developing countries. The number of these countries has been fundamentally increased by independence of the colonized nations all over the world. Planning has been seen as application of the scientific rules and principles to the national economic and social development of these newly independent nations. The uses of planning in general has been outlined by Friedman under ten subtitles. Two of them are particularly important as describing the uses of planning in the developing countries: (1)" Guiding overall economic stability and growth in national societies (monetary policy, full employment planning, international trade policy, etc.)," and, (2) "investing in areas that are of little interest to private capital because of low rates of return, diffused benefits, and the large size of the investment required (basic physical infrastructure, such as highways, mass transit, major hydroelectric facilities, land acquisition in urban redevelopment, etc)" (Friedman, 1987, p. 28). The relative weakness of private sector in those newly independent and developing countries necessitates the state use of the planning, as well.
- 2.3. Planning as guiding large scale social actions has historically become a socialist practice. Especially the Soviet planning practices received much attention by creating world's first industrialized/developed socialist system until the mid 1980s. As a matter of fact, planning is an inseparable part of the socialist ideology as designed by Marx and practiced by Lenin to successively reach to a communist society. The Communist Party of the Soviet Union used to be described, prior to February 1990, as "the leading force in Soviet society" with the following explanations:

"[The Communist Party of the Soviet Union] is the inspirer and organizer of the historical creative activity of the people, our society's leading and guiding force. Equipped with Marxist-Leninist theory, the Party is

determining the general prospects for the country's development..." (The Programme of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union, 1986, p. 81).

However, planning has lost much of its popularity since the mid seventees and early eighties in all kinds of world systems including capitalist and socialist ones. The last dramatic changes in the socialist block of Europe has proven that planning is not a panacea to all kinds of social and political problems as it has been used and understood until this date.

THE FUTURING CONCEPT

What is Futuring?

As soon as human beings began to recognize time, they probably began to think about the future. Throughout history they tried various methods from crystal balls to tea leaves in an effort to forecast things to come and to prepare themselves for change (Brodzinski, 1979, p. 18). Similarly, according to Toffler; "any conscious or deliberate social act necessitates a future orientation..." [emphasis original] (Toffler, 1974, p. 86).

Roget's Thesaurus defines "futuring" as "looking forward, anticipating, and foreseeing" (1972, [121]). The goals of futures research are not much different from the major aims of science as description, explanation, and prediction. However, "futures research" also stresses on forecasting, design of alternative futures, and control or management of these alternatives (Harkins, 1990). On the other hand, futuring are largely depend upon those principles as forecastability of the future, shapability of the future, basic alternative paths to the future, dimensions and goals of the future, and prime shifting trends concerning the future.

Kurtzman uses the term "futurcasting" for what I mean by "futuring." She attempts to highlight fundamental differences between forecasting, the term which is widely used by many futurists and planners as the pivot of the futures research and futurecasting as follows:

"Although forecasting is primarily concerned with studying trends to determine their probable and logical outcome, futurcasting is concerned with ways to arrive at desired outcomes and goals. With forecasting, we study the way events unfold through time, but with futurcasting we actively engineer the future we want.

Both forecasting and futureasting techniques rely upon many of the same assumptions. For example, both are based on the idea that the past behavior of individuals, organizations and events often can be analyzed correctly, systematically and creatively, while keeping in mind the context within the events take place.

In addition, futureasting also asserts that once trends are known, such as the population growth trend or the trend in building nuclear reactors, it is then possible to create strategies that will steer those trends in a desired direction. "Like the navigator on a great ocean-going ship, the futureaster tells the helmsman what course to hold so the ship and its precious cargo will reach the desired port" [emphases original] (Kurtzman, 1984, Intro.).

Further, she maintains that "sometimes the best forecasts and futurcasts are the ones that prove to be wrong" (Kurtzman, 1984, Intro.). This same technique is extensively used in statistics as known the null-hypothesis.

History of Futuring

The emergence of the concepts of futuring, futurology or futures research does not date far back. Much of the body of the field was significantly formed after the Second World War with the only exception of Aldus Huxley's book "Brave New World" published in 1932 (Huxley, 1932). Right after the war, two important things contributed to the formation of the modern futurology; new scientific and technological developments as radar, the atomic bomb, and intercontinental ballistic missiles, and the cold war emerged between socialist block of the world under the Soviet Union's leadership and the capitalist block under the leadership of the United States. Many contemporary techniques of the futures research were initially developed as the tools of the hypothetical war games. According to Ferkiss, "the military became pioneers in futurology because they were in a position to plan weapons systems years in the future and had to try to understand the strategic and technological context in which such systems would be deployed (a context that they would, indeed, largely condition)" (Ferkiss, 1977, p. 10). The RAND Corporation which was initially thought to be a source of future oriented "think-tanks" to the U.S. military was established in 1948. This institution, later, has been the primary source of many leading American futurologists such as Olaf Helmer, the inventor of the "Delhi Technique", Joseph Martino, and Erich Jantsch (Ferkiss, 1977, p. 10).

In the history of the futures research, a French economist and political scientist, Bertrand deJouvenel has a distinguished place. His work titled The Art of Conjecture published in 1967 has been a corner stone in the field. His leadership was the prime mover of one of the first journals of the field called Futuribles published in the 1960s. The journal primarily was the publication of an informal group of mostly French scholars. Another important name in the sixties and early seventies was Dennis Gabor, a Nobel winner for his invention of holography. He first examined the subject of the future in his book, Inventing the Future, published in 1963. He produced another important book for the field in 1972 titled The Mature Society (Helmer, 1983, p. 19).

According to Ferkiss, on the other hand, "two currents-essentially independently although virtually simultaneously- have tended to merge over time" (Ferkiss, 1977, p. 10):

- (1). In 1965, the American Academy of Arts and Sciences set up a commission called The Commission on the Year 2000 which was composed of many intellectuals and was headed by Daniel Bell, a Harvard sociologist. "The Commission held conferences, authorized studies, and, for the first time, made inquiry into the future academically respectable -by definition-because such respectable figures were involved, e.g., the...head of the National Security Council, Zbigniew Brzezinski" (Ferkiss, 1977, pp. 10-1). Later, such books as The Year 2000 by a respected physicist/futurist Kahn and co-authored by Weiner (1967), and Toward the Year 2000 produced by the Commission and written by Graubard (1967) constituted the founding documents of academic futurology in America (Ferkiss, 1977, p. 11).
- (2). On the other hand, a Washington journalist, Edward Cornish, formed a membership organization primarily directed towards the people who were

interested in scientific and technological development, planning, and the future. Organization started to publish a bulletin which later turned into a bi-monthly magazine called The Futurist. Ferkiss reported that "Starting with a membership numbered in hundreds, the society today [1977] has over 24,000 members throughout the world, with the greatest concentration being in the northeastern United States" (Ferkiss, 1977, p. 11).

A TECHNICAL DISCUSSION ON PLANNING AND FUTURING

1. Crisis in Planning

Knowledge-Action Problem in Planning: As I earlier quoted from Hall, planning theory has divorced from the practice by the end of the seventies. Maybe, this was the first clear indication of the emerging crisis in the planning. "There is increasing evidence that planning theory has been inadequate in recent years" says de Neufville by adding that; "planning is like a paradigm 'in crisis,' in that theory does not mesh with experience" (de Neufville, 1983, p. 35). On the one hand, an attractive, internally consistent body of scientific knowledge, on the other, a rather distinct patterns of action in real life situations. Bolan argues that scientific knowledge is not a guarantee or precondition of a successful action, because "there is an incredible gap between formal knowledge and a decision to act" (Bolan, 1985, p. 31). Contemporary planning lacks a satisfactory link between these two. It needs new perspective, techniques, and methods to adequately combine these two ingredients into a new planning concept.

The Planner: A Technician or What? What is and should be the role of planner? A technician, a political actor, a public advocate, a value-free expert? In recent years, many scholars in planning field especially oppose to the notion of seeing planner as a technician, a manager's aide to deal with the problems. According to Toffler, contemporary planning is technocratic, and so is the planner a technocrat (Toffler, 1972, p.98-9). My point is rather different. In a highly complex society along with highly complex organizations and social situations, prestige of a profession is extensively determined by the viability of it for the organization. This requires a relative distinctiveness, and uniqueness of the area of knowledge and specificity of the actions taken. The point is that planning has not been capable of creating such a distinct and unique job title owing to the badly and vaguely defined activity areas and action sets for the planners. Since planners do not act in a clearly and narrowly defined domain, as it will be proposed at the end of the paper, planning profession and planners have been severely discredited. The solution is not to grant some degree of power to the planners (planners as managers), as Benveniste proposes (Benveniste, 1989), rather planners should create such a respected position with their own efforts.

"'Was' Equals 'is' equals 'will be" (Dror, 1971a, p. 4): Yehezkel Dror has asserted that there are certain fallacies in the American policy studies. The first fallacy, what I have quoted above, is particularly true for planning, as well. "Understanding the present in terms of the past and predicting the future in terms of the present and the past constitutes a main fallacy of strategic studies," writes Dror (p. 4). Particularly the future dimension of the contemporary planning has been the mostly poorly developed one among the others in the planning literature in the United States and elsewhere in the world.

Contemporary planning theory lacks futuring: "Nearly all definitions recognize that planning is directed toward the future" (Dror, 1971b, p. 107).

But, when it comes to draw a clear picture of achieving this, "nearly all" becomes defective and inadequate. The reason is that they either conceive "future" in rather a different manner which we are not able to know, or they do not know how to combine those two in a practical and a workable way. Better to say, the former statement does represent "a tacit knowledge² and a tacit theory" in today's planning literature. That is, "everyone accepts, but no one knows." Since the planning theory has not been unable to develop appropriate techniques and methods to deal with the future, such planning paradigms as long-range and comprehensive planning have significantly been dried out, for example. They are not attractive anymore.

2. Futuring: A Potential Tool For Planning

According to Harlan Cleveland, "the study of the future, at its best, has likewise developed as a fresh angle of vision on the whole range of human knowledge," and has a capability of threading the compartmentalized disciplines together (Cleveland, 1989). Owing to the fact that futures study is a relatively new concept of having not more than thirty years of history, it seems that it has many promising exit points for many fields, especially the ones in crisis like planning. This relationship is described by Ferkiss as follows:

"Futurology and planning are often closely related activities since all planning presumes a set of probable future conditions that are assumed or sought-for. Planning simply adds an implicit or explicit value dimension to prediction. Most planners have necessarily had to be futurists --even though the time spans planned for may have been quite limited as compared with those most futurists attempt to deal with..." (Ferkiss, 1977, p. 10).

Within the frame of "planning with futuring," planners are expected to deal with extremely complex situations taking place in the external environment and to propose alternative solutions to the problems before they emerge by utilizing the tools of "futuring." However, planners today are not equipped with appropriate knowledge, techniques and methods to effectively act in those situations as part of the reasons explained earlier. Benveniste, by considering the inadequacy of planners to deal with the future, asks that "...what could motivate planners to do a more thorough job of forecasting the future?" The answer, according to Benveniste, is "to give planners more responsibility and to hold them accountable for results, for outcomes" (Benveniste, 1989, p. 240). However, this will not help other than unnecessarily increasing their work load and pushing them into inactivity because of relative safeness of "not making mistakes." The real solution is to utilize a perspective through which planners can develop a sense of security and can increase their problem solving skills.

In the proposed scheme, the planners equipped with appropriate futuring³ techniques develop and work on alternative futures, try to understand what is happening outside world concerning past, present and future. Jones's explanations are valuable at this point:

"Ideally, futurists analyze policy issues in terms of alternative futures, describing each future and specifying the kinds of policy decisions, decision points, and events appropriate to attain or avoiding it. Moreover, they suggest ways of coping with undesirable futures that may prove to be unavoidable...Accordingly, a central goal of policy-relevant futurism is to project systematically a representative range of "alternative future histories" of varying degrees of probability and desirability and to suggest events and policy decisions by which each could be achieved or avoided, thereby providing policy makers and other citizens with insights that could enhance the quality of societal policy choices" (Jones, 1989, p. 14).

In a sense, the futurist converts information about raw data on real variables into task-related ones in connection with the problem or project the planner has faced, with or without adding his/her own values and visions. This creates a narrowed, definite, limited, workable and much more

descriptive environment for the planner called crafted/filtered environment. They interactively work together until a point, then real planning process is initiated by the planner having a clear picture of surrounding facts. Planning process is followed by implementation process including some kind of actions and action strategies. Thus, three separate processes actually take place in this proposed model: "Futuring-planning-implementation."

Summary and Conclusions

In the historical development of its theory and practice, planning has followed different paths by having different meanings, context and mission in relation to cultural, economical, political, technological and social variables. Four types of relatively distinct planning practices have detected: Planning primarily in terms of city planning practices as in the United States, planning as social welfare tool as in the many European developed countries, planning as an economic development tool as mostly practiced by developing and newly independent nations, and planning as a tool of ideological/social reformation as in the socialist countries.

Despite the differences among all those inclinations in planning, one similarity particularly becomes clear that, owing to some factors, planning is a field in crisis today. One promising exit from this crisis situation is to dynamically combine two interrelated concepts into one that might be named in a couple ways: Futuristic planning, planning with futuring or planning preceded by futuring. The model principaly divides the traditionally so called "planning process" into three distinct processes; futuring, planning, and implementation.

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Notes

- 1 Bu makale 1990 ilk baharında Minnesota Üniversitesi'nde aldığım Hed: 5290-Education in Future Social Systems dersi için hazırlanmıştır. Planlama ve "futuring" kavramlarına ilgi duyanlara yararlı olacağı düşünülmektedir.
- 2 "Tacit knowledge: Knowledge which is not explicated and often cannot be explicated. Tacit theory: Unexplicated believed-in explanations of behavior and other phenomena" (Dror, 1971b, p. 5)"
- 3 "Policy oriented futures studies should adjust their methodologies to the needs of policymaking. This includes, in particular: (a) an "alternative futures" approach; (b) attention to cross-impact and interdependencies between the alternative futures of different social institutions; (c) emphasis on identification of future-shaping variables; (d) examination of future developments influencing identity of variables which can serve as future policy instruments; and (e) strict explication of assumptions and rigorous value sensitivity testing" (Dror, 1971b, p. 54-55).