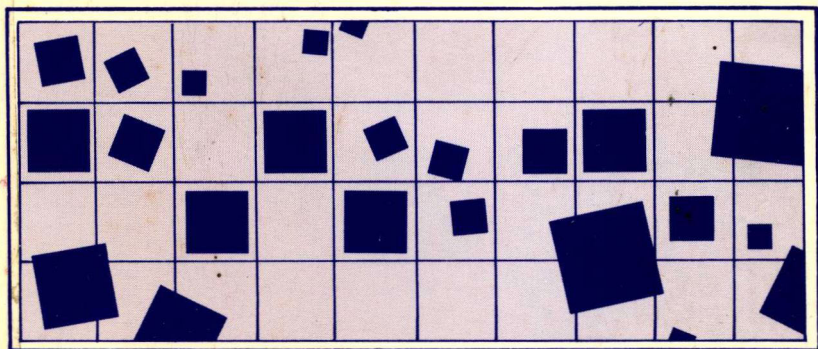


THE POLITICS OF PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT

ANTHONY JAMES CATANESE



Sage Library of Social Research 156

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ANTHONY JAMES CATANESE

**Volume 156
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To Michael Scott Inglis, Mark Alexander Inglis,
and Mark Anthony Catanese

PREFACE

More than a decade ago, I wrote a book entitled *Impossible Dreams: Planners and Local Politics*. That book dealt with the need for planners to become aware of their roles and functions within a political process. To a lesser degree, it also dealt with the problems of politicians who were unwilling to delegate or even appreciate the skills of professional planners. On the one hand, I argued that planners had to recast their theories and methods dealing with long-range, comprehensive, and coordinated planning efforts. On the other hand, while fully cognizant that the most important thing to a politician is to be elected and reelected, I argued that politicians could learn much from the work of planners that transcends terms of office, political ideology, and special interests in order to serve that elusive public interest. This book is both a sequel to and an extension of that effort.

I used an unusual approach then which I will continue now in this effort: the anonymous case study—usually from a participant-observer basis. The approach, admittedly controversial, allows for a wider range of analysis than the traditional academic case study. It enables generalization in order to avoid the need for dreadfully boring background and statistical details. As the participant-observer, I can abstract the crux of the matter in order to illustrate points and exemplify assertions. Certainly there is room for controversy, since this approach relies much upon my vantage point. I sincerely doubt, however, that pure objectivity can exist in any experientially based discussion of politics and planning.

The major reason for this book is that I have experienced a great deal during the last decade which provides me with more details and, frankly, a higher-level viewpoint. For example, in addition to my earlier experiences in Georgia and Florida, I served for several years as the Chairman of the Milwaukee City Plan Commission. That post

provided me with a wide range of activities and involvements at the highest levels of urban political power. Similarly, my involvement with the campaign and administration of President Jimmy Carter allowed me to meet national leaders and understand how they view planning. Professionally, my consulting work took me to Hawaii and Alaska during this period, and it showed also a marked increase in the number of clients from the private sector. My academic roles at the University of Wisconsin, Pratt Institute and Georgia Tech also have been invaluable, since these places encouraged a parade of politicians and planners to pass in review before faculty and students. Needless to say, I have taken copious notes and have an excellent memory.

In this book, I want to deal more thoroughly with the gut issue of planning in a political process: *implementation*. I have now come to believe firmly that there are many ways to do planning, and a plethora of techniques and methods, all with varying degrees of relevance and feasibility, but entirely dependent upon a political context and environment. My earlier book was very concerned with the planning process and, perhaps, did not spend enough time on what happens beyond the plan. This book will take up from precisely where the last chapter, which was entitled "On Reaching Possible Dreams," left off.

That is a very important starting point. We are clearly in a long-term era of political change that will focus upon new ways to bring about a public and private sector cathexis for urban and regional development. The future will be neither a Big Brother welfare state nor a laissez-faire public-be-damned oligopoly. It will be an earnest search for a process by which acceptable private sector goals can converge with widely held public goals. It will be a public-private joint venture. I happen to believe that planners can play a major role in creating and implementing such a process. I also believe that politicians are willing to listen to professional planners present rational and feasible solutions to our urban and regional problems. In fact, I believe that neither planners nor politicians will tolerate the malaise and status quo that has plagued American development for so many years. I believe that business leaders, after decades of fearing and loathing planners, are now willing to listen to planners, especially those who view the private sector as the basis of the entrepreneurial genius that made America great, as I do.