

Ethical flaws and Practical short-comings of Planning

A full treatment of this issue could fill a book, so the following is only a brief summary and listing of a few of the more prominent issues raised by coercive planning and enforced social engineering.

Planning is a basically anti-human activity that assumes that adults are incapable of running their lives or knowing how best to manage their financial and family affairs. Official intervention is seen as the only possible alternative; the idea that civil society can regulate itself through markets and rule of law has basically been set aside in favor of "experts" who are far better qualified to judge how resources are to be priced and allocated. This is in spite of the spectacular failure of virtually every socialist/centrally-planned economy yet attempted.

Planners also conveniently ignore the phenomenon of the "captured regulator" in which the public interest takes a backseat to the agendas and needs of special interests or clients. University-trained planners are basically trained in a monoculture that worships state interventions as the ultimate solution to any and all problems. In fact, manufacturing problems is part of what any good regulator needs to do in order to insure a steady supply of work and funding. This is usually quite simple, since interventions breed the need for further intervention. Occasionally one hears of a bureaucratic organ that actually withers away, but generally expansion and growth are the watchwords.

Market intelligence: there are simply too many factors and variables for any central planning agency to rationally and efficiently develop, allocate and distribute resources. Without the benefit of market prices and voluntary exchange, it is also impossible to rationally or effectively plan for future economic actions as Mises' work on the "calculation problem" proved. This has been known since the '20's.

The fact that human action cannot be quantified is conveniently ignored.

The fact that the future cannot be predicted is ignored

What is offered in its' place, no matter how well meaning, is simply layers of arbitrary judgment that are invariably politically charged and motivated.

The "sustainable" future that planners envision is a rather grim one. Unlike free markets, which have consistently produced rising abundance, planners view life as a zero-sum game: There's only so much to go around and one persons' gain must represent another's loss. Not only is this Malthusian/lifeboat view morally repugnant, but history has so far proven it false.

Planning is generally a top down imposed agenda as the overwhelming "yes" vote on guest houses recently showed. People love their cars; planners want them to walk, or use "light rail". For most folks the American dream includes a house with a yard, but planners would rather stick you in a high-rise with a bus stop on the corner.

Individual rights and destiny are seen as counter-productive to social well being, despite that fact that the collective called "society" is mainly a fiction. Communities are formed by the voluntary association of individuals, not by planner's fiat.

Distorted or manipulated information and statistics are used to promote and support agendas. When FSJ went shopping for statistics on growth they took their data from the height of the Clinton-Greenspan boom years, a period of (then) unprecedented money creation and price inflation. The economic picture has changed radically since then- if current trends continue, the loss of the dollar's value coupled with rising commodity costs will put a much more effective stop to growth than the Friends wildest dreams could possibly imagine.