

ABSTRACT

ONE OF THE CHARACTERISTICS OF BEING HUMAN," wrote Arnold Toynbee, "is that one makes plans." One plans what to eat, how to dress, when to sleep, where to work, and whether to procreate. One makes such plans whether woman or man, young or old, poor or rich, yellow, black, brown, or white. Another characteristic of being human is that one becomes part of "we" or "they." One becomes a member of a family, an informal group, an association, a formal organization, or a territorial entity. Each of these human groups may also make plans- open or covert, short- or long-range, utopian or realistic, rigid or flexible, narrow or broad, detailed or general. In all cases planning tends to be both "directed by habit, tradition, previous decision, or external pressure" and at the same time "spontaneous, inadvertent and random." 1 Invariably, some people plan for or against others. Most efforts to implement plans are impeded not only by scarcities in resources or planning skills but also by apathy, competition, or organized resistance. Hence, to paraphrase the famous lines of Robert Burns, the best-laid plans of families, organizations, cities, and nations-as of mice and men-"aft gang a-gley." When this happens-as also with successes-there is both mourning in some quarters and rejoicing in others ... The power of these simple axioms is that they can be used in looking at villagization planning in Tanzania; physical, fiscal, social, and "model cities" planning in New York City; the planning of military operations by a general staff; highway subsidy planning by the automobile-highway-petroleum complex; sugar production planning by the Castro Gov- A brief summary of this paper was presented as the author's presidential address before the Society for General Systems Research at the 137th Annual Meeting of the American Association for the Advancement of Science in Chicago on December 27, 1970. ernment; and the Nixon-Agnew plans for the 1972 election. By themselves, however, they provide merely a background for trying to understand the changing styles of planning in America of the 1970's. Until recently, after organizing several empirical studies of planning in other countries,2 I looked at planning in the United States in terms of certain important changes in my own lifetime (with many of which I had been personally associated): 1. The steady growth of long-range, corporate planning over the entire period from the 1920's to the present, 2. The fumbling efforts of the New Deal to develop a planned escape from the Great Depression, 3. Large-scale World War II planning of economic production and military operations, 4. The sequence of Fair Deal, New Frontier, and Great Society plans for full employment and social welfare, each indirectly associated with cold war "growthmanship," 5. The developer-speculator planning of the "march to the suburbs" and of inner-city "urban renewal," both serving the interests of business and upper-income groups. 6. The growth of so-called "systems planning" in the industrial-military complex and its attempted extensions to welfare programs, and, 7. The fascinating sequence of calculational techniques designed to assist in various tactical aspects of planning and control, particularly those associated with emerging computer technology