Episode 28:
In the Future, the System Must Be First

And welcome to the twenty-eighth episode of the VERY UNofficial AICP Study Guide Podcast. I'm Jonathan Miller, and thank you so much for joining.

So, we're back, finally!

Yes, the break was a little longer than I had expected - so apologies for that - but you know, life is what happens when you're busy making plans. So, yeah. Anyways, let's get all caught up with the deadlines before we jump into the main content.

Remember, with the last round of the exam, the APA bifurcated the process. That means you have different deadlines depending on if you plan on submitting the experience essays or not. So, first things first. The application window, in general, opened up on June 1st, but don't worry, you still have plenty of time. The window will stay open until October 4th, but that's just for the exam.

If you plan on submitting experience essays as well, you'll have to have your application submitted by July 5th. So, you still have about 2 weeks or so, but trust me, the time goes quick. So, you might as well start the process now.

Now, on to the main topic of today: the City Efficient Movement.

Way back when we last left off, we talked about City Beautiful; and how does that tie in? Well, if you remember, City Beautiful definitely had some critics. And mostly this revolved around criticisms that it didn't actually address any social issues directly, that it was too expensive and only focused on aesthetics - basically - that it was inefficient.

At this same time, there was a general push towards being more efficient with materials; things like sustainable tree-farming, for example.

And it was these two thoughts that ended up combining to give us the City Efficient movement.

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So, the first thing to know and remember is that the City Efficient movement did not start with planning, or even by a planner. It started with a principle called Scientific Management. Now, this was outlined by a guy named Frederick Winslow Taylor - In fact, it is sometimes called 'Taylorism' - in his 1911 book - aptly named - "The Principles of Scientific Management."

It really all began when - according to Taylor – "While there was this movement to conserve materials, it was wasted human effort that wasn't really being considered at all. Now keep in mind, this is after Roosevelt started with all his conservation efforts in the Progressive Era between 1901 and 1909.

The ultimate theme of the book was that emphasis should be placed on training and the system of management, as opposed to finding the right person, and that the main goal of each system, i.e. management system in each organization, should be to develop first-class people.

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Now remember, Taylor wasn't a planner. In fact, he was a mechanical engineer who got his start working as an apprentice machinist. He worked up through the ranks at a place called Midvale Steel Works in Philadelphia: laborer, journeyman, foreman, all the way to research director and chief engineer. You know, the kind of work progressions that you would never see today.

It was this progression really that formed the foundation of his scientific management principles. You see, Taylor noticed that a lot of the workmen in the factories were deliberately working a little slow. There's actually a term for this too. It was called 'soldiering,' for some reason that I don't know.

Anyways, he kept tabs on those kinds of inefficiencies throughout his career. He ended up working a little longer as an engineering consultant, and after getting a boatload of money for some machining patent and butting heads with some managers, he called it quits to consulting and started devoting his time and energy to developing his ideas on this scientific management thing. And in 1911, the book, "The Principles of scientific management," was complete.

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But what exactly is scientific management? Well, Taylor summed it up in four principles,

One, the development of a specific set of logical rules and procedures for working. Instead of using the rule-of-thumb method which was common at the time, the idea here is that there is one true, best way to complete any given job or task; and that should be discovered and done the same way every time.

Two, employees were assigned work roles and duties based on their skill sets and what they were well-suited for, not what they chose. The concept here is that big old burly guy should do the heavy lifting, manual labor, smart guys shouldn't do mundane work, etc. etc. etc. Not that the two can't coexist; just you end up doing what you're naturally better at.

Three, full cooperation between management and staff to make sure that the first principle was actually being followed, of course. And four, an equal division of work and responsibility between management and the workers. I guess that one apparently never caught on because you don't really see it that much. What's the saying again? Work will gravitate towards where it gets done; i.e. shit rolls downhill.

Anyways, this scientific management system was developed with engineers and factories in mind, but he also noted that the principles would translate to just about anything. Even government.

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That all began when in 1911, a friend of Taylor's, Morris Llewellyn Cooke, took the job as the City of Philadelphia's Director of Public Works. Right out the gate, Cooke said, "That these principles enunciated by Taylor can be applied to city work as they have been applied to scores of different kinds of industrial work, is to me only too obvious."

In 1913 though - over in New York City - an engineer who was a big advocate of Taylor's scientific management scheme - for lack of a better work - by the name of Ernest P. Goodrich, joined forces with a planner named George Burdett Ford, and together, they started the first private planning firm in the U.S.: the Technical Advisory Corporation.

Together, they utilized this efficiency-model approach in urban planning. They used the efficiency approach when George Ford provided technical guidance on the first Zoning Ordinance for example - that would be New York's in 1916. They used the approach in the first Comprehensive Plan which was in Cincinnati in 1925.

Their biggest contribution to the City Efficient movement though, was employing Harland Bartholomew.

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Now we will get to Harland's contributions here in a second, but who is Harland?

Harland actually started as an engineer, and began working with Goodrich a year before Goodrich started the Technical Advisory Corporation in 1913; so Bartholomew got a heavy dose of efficiency principles before he left in 1914.

Why did he leave? Well, the Newark, New Jersey Planning Commission retained Mr. Bartholomew here as a full-time city planner. In fact, he was the first full-time, public-sector city planner in the U.S. A year later, he moved on again to become the first City Planner in St. Louis. Today, we call that job hopping, and it's frowned upon.

That said though, that was his last stop. He stayed there until 1950, although he had a little side planning private gig on the side too, and he was one of the founding members of the APA in 1917 as well.

It wasn't all roses for Bartholomew though. His city efficient tendencies has come under a lot of fire.

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You see, the city efficient movement – well - sought to revitalize cities and neighborhoods efficiently, and unfortunately, efficiently didn't mean fairly or humanely.

So, in St. Louis for example, Bartholomew sort of created urban renewal and slum clearance before urban renewal and slum clearance were even a thing. He used a method called 'cost accounting' to identify neighborhoods that cost more in terms of city services, compared to the taxes they generated.

These "obsolete neighborhoods," as Bartholomew called them, (way to go) would be cleared through eminent domain – a process that actually created the space for the Gateway Arch National Park. He was even more brash though, stating that a goal was to keep blacks out of "fine residential districts." So yes, he was an asshole.

He was also a huge advocate for single-use/Euclidean zoning, and planning around the automobile. So yeah, there's that too. Not exactly a ringing endorsement for the City Efficient movement.

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Well, that was interesting. City Efficient ladies and gentlemen, yay.

To recap, City Efficient started back in the Progressive Era in the early 1900's when a guy named Frederick Winslow Taylor - an engineer - noticed that there a big emphasis on becoming more efficient, but that it wasn't translating to labor.

He wrote a book in 1911 called, "The Principles of Scientific Management," and spent a ton of time promoting this idea, which would eventually become the backbone of the City Efficient movement.

A big proponent of his - an engineer (notice a theme?) named Ernest Goodrich, teamed up with a planner named George Ford. And together, they started up a private planning firm: the first private planning firm, The Technical Advisory Corporation, which ended up utilizing City Efficient principles in their work.

That trickled down to an early employee of theirs - Harland Bartholomew - who left in 1914 to become the first full-time, public-sector planner in Newark, New Jersey. He job-hopped after a year there to St. Louis to become their first planner, and he used City Efficient principles to essentially justify urban renewal, slum clearance, and the general displacement of about 70,000 residents of black neighborhoods.

(12:15)

Well, thanks again for joining me. If you have any questions, feel free to reach out to me at theveryunofficialaicpguide@gmail.com, and I'll do my best to help out if I can.

I have to admit, it's good to be back at it. I'm super crunched for time, but I do love putting these things together, so hopefully you find them at least somewhat useful or interesting.

Congratulations to anyone who passed the last round and decided to stick around for some fun little anecdotal stories, and for those of you who are just joining for this new round; enjoy the ride.

If you want to play along this week for our weekly question, our question is: "Who were the two founders of the first private urban planning consulting firm?"

Anyways, don't forget to subscribe to this podcast on whatever platform you use for podcasts, and feel free to sign up on the show's website so you can follow along with future episodes, help prepare for the exam, and supplement all of your other study regimens. And share this out with any planners you know, and don't forget to leave a review either.

Tune in again next week. We'll hit a few random tidbits that mostly revolve around states, and how they started to take planning more seriously by making various things mandatory.

Thanks again everyone. 'till next time.

Links:

"The Principles of Scientific Management":
https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_Principles_of_Scientific_Management
https://philadelphiaencyclopedia.org/archive/scientific-management/

Technical Advisory Corporation:
http://www-personal.umich.edu/~sdbest/up594/people/Gbford.htm

Harland Bartholomew:
https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Harland_Bartholomew
https://tclf.org/pioneer/harland-bartholomew
https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/abs/10.1080/10999922.2017.1306902?journalCode=mpin20