



ACSP-AESOP SPECIAL SESSION

Learning from Arnstein's ladder: from citizen participation to public engagement

Co-chairs

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Arnstein's "A Ladder of Citizen Participation" was first published in JAPA in 1969.

It remains one of the most influential publications in both planning practice and research. In it Arnstein depicted the failings of typical participation processes at the time and characterized aspirations toward engagement that have now been elevated over time to core values in planning practice.

But since that time, the political, economic, and social context has evolved greatly and planners, organizers, and residents have been involved in planning and community development practice in a manner previously unforeseen.

This session will draw on contemporary expertise, empirical analysis, and application in what is now more commonly termed public engagement in planning to examine the enduring impacts of Arnstein's work and the pervasive challenges that planners face in advancing meaningful public engagement.

The session presents research from throughout the North America and Europe that utilizes, critiques, and/or revises and expands upon Arnstein's aspirational vision. We consider an historical analysis that presents the generative experiences driving her vision; continue with analysis from around the world of engagement/power with/for whom (in terms of minorities, women, and children), with what kinds of processes (technologically as well as different CP approaches/techniques), and in various contexts (hazards, growth/decline, culture, geography, etc.), evaluating the barriers to public engagement in planning and critiques of engagement processes. Contributing nations: US, Canada, England, Scotland, Ireland, Netherlands, Portugal, Poland, Serbia, and Turkey.