Good essay on participatory democracy

Technology, Development

David Woods in his book Democracy deferred: civic leadership after 9/11 (83) defines participatory democracy as a form of decision making that is nonhierarchical decentralized, and consensus oriented. The world is in the stage where the political groups make the decision on key roles that have to take place now and in the future. This has led to the introduction of performance appraisals that are carried out when restoring coalition leaders. They determine how effective the leaders have influenced the actions of public agencies in utilizing public input. The idea of appraisal is good but a lot of efforts are needed to make it effective. Developing a planning framework and principles can help assess the various efforts of various political alliances or leaders. Political leaders are responsible for developing agreements on the concept of participatory democracy. Their efforts are extremely important in providing citizens with one voice and opportunities of rebuilding their nation. The process of applying participatory democracy is complex because it involves a wide range of stakeholders, political cycles, and pressures and there are diverse participants making competing claims. However, participatory democracy is extremely effective in enhancing the mood of cooperation and community fellowship. It creates a foundation of reviving the performance of political leaders.

Participatory democracy requires a shared commitment and motivation of influential society groups, such as urban planners, middle class professionals, business leaders, architects, lawyers, and sociologists among others. This means involvement of institutions, coalitions, and community based organizations in decision making of any planning processes. The participants must also consider diversity of race, ethnic, and class (Woods

87). Naomi Carmon and Susan Fainstein in their book policy, planning, and people: promoting justice in urban development (5) identified the importance and significance and participatory democracy extensively. They recognize that urban renewal programs have in the years resulted to massive demolitions of residential buildings leading to displacement of many urban residents. Decision makers are advised to put into consideration the consequences of any actions that involve affecting the lives of other people. Some of the decisions have more consequences than positive outcomes (Carmon & Fainstein 6).

Urban areas require design and plans that promote human interaction, arrangement of buildings, creation of public space, and a mix of land use. Participatory democracy helps in alleviating poverty. It allows the planners to become sensitive to policies that challenge poverty and negative impacts of climate change and globalization. The local level residents are involved in making decisions to enhance collaboration and opportunities. This is essential for linking economic development with anti poverty goals. Societies acquire the chance to increase functions that promote networking of people. Planners are required to be aware of the evolving nature of network structures and community interests. The Transportation planners must focus on improving accessibility other than mobility of transportation systems to eliminate social exclusions. This means that they must have a wider perspective of equitable land use and social need (Carmon & Fainstein 7). According to Carmon & Fainstein (8) engaging residents to participate in community development should vary according to the level of economic resources, level of support for community development or participatory

planning, and the level of power concentration within the local community. In most cases, participatory democracy has led to protests and activism. This mostly occurs when the conditions are hostile for the residents or citizens. Participatory democracy also incorporates the needs of the older people in the society. The number of older people is increasing across the world. This means that efforts of planning, land use, development, and standard framework should be able to meet the needs of this age group at the local level. This also means that planners should be able to create supportive environments for people of all ages (Woods 89).

Works Cited

Carmon, Naomi & Fainstein, Susan. Policy, planning, and people: promoting justice in urban development. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press. 2013. Print.

Woods, David. Democracy deferred: civic leadership after 9/11. New York: Palgrave Macmillan. 2012. Print.