

## The Development of Planning Ideas

### U.K Planning: National Parks

National Parks (NP's) are according to (David et al, 2005), “a large tract of undeveloped land retaining its primeval and influence without permanent improvement or human habitation which is protected and managed so as to preserve its natural conditions”. This definition excludes human activities but focuses on preserving or maintaining the old natural environment, however (Karl et al 2003), defines NP's as, “ ... a tract of land declared public property by a national government with a view to its preservation and development for purposes of recreation and culture.” (Karl et al, 2003)

In support of the (Karl et al, 2003) definition of parks as social spaces of interaction, (Francis, 1998) adds that National Parks are, “an expressive space of interaction for community members....binding community members together”. In this case National Parks provide a social environment for people to meet leisurely, chat, visit, stroll or play, by so doing they develop bonds and a sense of community and togetherness. By contrast, when people meet in malls, courtrooms or at work, their relations are more formal and therefore are more likely not to contribute to community building. Although some National

Parks such as Fundy National park in Canada have similar ideas of social interaction but have however taken the idea of National Parks even more further. (Andrew 2001) wrote about Fundy National, "Park has not been removed from economic development, but has been the focus of that development". This view summarises the economic functions of NP's.

(Francis, 1998), outlines National Park's purposes, "to conserve the scenery and the natural and historic objects and the wild life therein and to provide for the enjoyment of the same in such a manner and by such means as will leave them unimpaired for the enjoyment of future generations". National Parks have a responsibility to provide people with easy access and to enjoy scenery or historic objects in a way that will not damage or compromise their safety for the future generations. On the other hand, it is perhaps the use of Np's for recreation and social purposes which compromise preservation of fragile natural environments, through human activities such as road and building constructions which can destroy nature (David et al, 2005).

NP's also have economic value and are self sustaining. "People are eager to spend money on trips to see outstanding natural beauty. Therefore National Parks may be said to be in the business of selling scenery" (Andrew, 2001, p.31). The greatest

advantage of NP's was summed up in the commissioner's annual report quoted in (Andrew, p, 31). "When we sell scenery, no matter how large our sales, our capital stock remains undiminished. We have the same scenery to sell over and over again." From this perspective NP's are a money making business that is not only very profitable but is self sufficient.

The national Park is an American invention, for the Americans and by the Americans. (David 2005). Such sentiments allowed national solidarity, boosted American's citizen pride and this also "prescribed the American values to the people" (David, 2005). (Francis, 1998) agrees "National parks play a role to actually transmitting and buttressing those values to the members of the national community" this can be done in a variety of ways such as guided tours, slide shows or lectures provided by the National Parks and other forms of advertising. For example this is a slogan which was adopted by Yellowstone National Park. "We are an expression of the American soul; the parks are our treasures, our history, our pride and our solace. In the immensity of their diversity, they provide us the fullest sense of who we are. By setting aside pieces of America's wild land, we have protected our birthright for ourselves and given an enormous gift to the world. Our National Parks (NP) represents us to the world with honour."

(David, 2005). NP's embraced and exploited the Native American's culture (Red Indians) and their heritage. There was also a declaration of park's mystical properties to attract visitors. (Andrew, 2001). People would find, it was said, "mystical agencies of healing and rejuvenescence for body, mind and soul, peculiar agencies that can be found nowhere else; in these silent wildernesses, there are holy places". (Andrew, 2001, p33).

To early supporters of National Park idea, the parks were seen as a way for young United States to compete with European culture through scenic nationalism, which (Francis, 1998) describes as that essential purpose of the national Parks to help us to bind together as Americas. Examples include the Civic War battle grounds, Washington Monument and Lincoln memorials which are an integral part of the American cultural landscape. (Francis, 1998) argued that, "scenic nationalism's description of America's wonders and landscape were often chauvinistic...directed to tourists often amounted to boosterism on a national scale." On the other hand this can also be seen as a way of globalising the American heritage and core ideas of National Parks. Quoted in (David, 2005) National Park Services (NPS) director expresses his joy describing USA National Parks, "Our National parks contain the sacred possibilities for life, health and faith offered us by aboriginal America, they are

perhaps our greatest educational tool, offering us myriad opportunities for study, wonder, solitude and recreation, they extend to us...”

National Parks have their own disadvantages such as displacing established communities from their land and disturbing “untamed lands” can lead destruction of ecology of wild areas. For example, there were firestorms of opposition unleashed by the expropriation of land for New Brunswick’s Kouchibouguac National Park in the 1970s. Rioting and unlawful occupation of the park and decade-long threat of violence convinced Parks Canada to change the way it acquired land for parks. (Andrew, 2001). This coincided with a radical critique of industrial life: If modernisation was so toxic, should it not be cleaned up? (Andrew, 2001). But parks allowed civilisation to continue as is, with the worker escaping periodically to nature to be recharged. (Andrew, 2001). Some Governments also used the idea of establishing National Parks for political reasons and also for generating money. For example in Canada the government in establishing NP’s rather than pay market value for properties of displaced people, the government of Canada offered the potentially much lower value to the owner, they also tended to inform landowners inadequately, set compensation as they saw fit and even set up their own boards to arbitrate dissent. (Andrew, 2001).

Fundy National Park in Canada is a good example of the National Parks idea not only being about preservation of nature and primeval influence but rather it was reclaimed from existing communities and then was designed to be multifunctional. (Andrew, 2001). The swimming pool and golf course would fulfil sporting needs, an amphitheatre and handicraft school would fulfil cultural needs; cottages, hotels and compounds would fulfil accommodation needs; and a “town site” or gift shops and restaurants would fulfil consumer needs.” Developments were to be the focus of visitor’s experience.

Creation of all these public amenities not only attracted lots of people it compromised local environment (David, 2005). This will be like literally bringing the city into the countryside. The city comes with all its problems of congestion, air, noise and water pollution and a general deteriorating environment which will lead to disruption of biodiversity life. (Andrew, 2001) sums the environmental damage of surrounding areas, “Roads needed to be straightened, hillocks fattened, ugly and misshapen trees cut down, stones removed, grass planted. It was a big project that involved use of over fifteen thousand cubic metres of topsoil”. The idea of National Parks is not so universal; it’s broader and much more wide ranging depending as to varying reasons and intentions, some political,

economical, social or based on preconceived prejudices and ideologies.

In the United Kingdom, proposals for National Parks were first heard in the 19th century, following the first National Park in the world, Yellowstone (USA), which was established in 1872. (Andrew, 2001). Since then, it was until 77 years later that in the first national park was established (Sheryl, 1997). Prior to this, in the UK, proposal for the National Park were first heard of in the 19th century, inspired by the public demands to access the country and legal actions from people. Furthermore romantic poets such as Coleridge and Wordsworth who wrote about the inspirational beauty of the untamed countryside and James Bryce MP campaign for public access to the countryside through his failed first freedom to roam bill which was submitted to parliament 1884, (Sheryl, 1997). Furthermore there was added pressure to the government as industrial towns grew bigger and suburbs swelled for the public to access the countryside. The National trust was eventually found in 1895, followed by the Protection of Rural England in 1926. The United Kingdom announced the official 1949 landmark National Parks Commission was established, with power to designate national parks, and to identify areas of outstanding natural beauty, outside the parks, but in need of protection. National Parks

original idea was to preserve areas of natural beauty and to provide recreational opportunities for the public. (Sheryl 1997).

The first parks, established in 1951, were Dartmoor, Snowdonia, the Peak District, and the Lake District, followed by the Pembrokeshire coast (1952), the North Yorkshire Moors (1952), Exmoor (1954), the Yorkshire Dales (1954), Northumberland (1956), and the Brecon Beacons (1957). The Environment Act of 1995 which basically revised the purpose of National Park and introduced a duty on public bodies to have regard to these purposes when carrying out their function (Sheryl, 1997). In 2000, the National Park Scotland Act was passed by the Scottish Parliament. Two years later the first National parks of Scotland were established, Loch Lomond and the Trossachs. In 2003 Scotland's largest National Park, the Cairngorms were designated. Furthermore, more recently, in 2005, the New Forest National Park became the first English new National Park to be established in the 21st century. (David, 2005)

The influence of the Environment Act of 1995 which basically making changes to the system of care and control of National Parks is up to today influencing changes within the NP's system. (David, 2005) for example new goal were set for U.K NP's. According to the Office of Public Sector Information, new



goals are to, “conserve and enhance the natural beauty, wildlife and cultural heritage of National Parks; to promote opportunities for the understanding and enjoyment of the special qualities of National Parks by the public. It also has a duty in pursuing those purposes: To seek to foster the economic and social well being of local communities within National Parks by working closely with the agencies and local authorities responsible for these matters, but without incurring significant expenditure. (David, 2005)

Elsewhere in Africa, “National Parks were at once symbolic representations of the European vision of Africa and a demonstration of the colonial state’s power to control access to land and natural resources”. (Karl, 2003). In agrarian societies, control over nature equates to control over people, national parks were about controlling nature, one for aesthetic purposes and the other for intensive agricultural production, (Karl p.252). During the colonial period in Africa, European settler governments used the ideas of NP’s to acquire land and to control people. In some cases NP’s were used for political reasons for dividing and ruling the native communities.

These social divisions disrupted local cultures and traditions and also the human activities such as building roads and buildings unsettled local wildlife. (Karl, 2003) agrees

commenting on Serengeti National park's establishment in Tanzania. "The park's headquarters were developed at the expense of both its cultural past and its environmental present.....Once residents had been moved and their properties bulldozed, a preliminary landscaping was needed." Many people lost their land and ways of life and income, for example, the Masai pastoralists had the most to lose in terms of the total land that had passed to National park control (Karl, p. 247).

The establishment of national parks in colonial Tanganyika was as much a process of nature production as of nature preservation. (Karl, 2003). Furthermore he added that the incorporation of Tanganyika into the economy meant a pattern of landscape partitioning for intensive agriculture production and ranching and nature preserved from the forces of capitalist production (Karl, 2003). NP's provided governments the platform to grab land from the native communities.

Nature was produced in national parks based on preconceived, cultural constituted visions of Africa as a primitive wilderness. Initially the vision included native people to continue living in their "primitive" within the park boundaries" (Karl, 2003) For example, in 1980, the government of Namibia planned to allow the Ju/wasi people to remain in inside a proposed game park if

they hunted only on bow and arrows; economic development such as ranching was prohibited because it violated the imposed definition of “traditional” culture. The Ju/wasi people would become in essence, another tourist attraction. (Karl, 2003). The proposal of the Ju/wasi game park makes clear that Western preservationists are still captivated by a way of seeing traditional African society as living in aesthetic harmony with the landscapes of nature. (Karl, 2003) adds, “The British romanticised pre-contact African society through such ideas as the moral innocence of Africans, a respect for African bush skills and a generalised notion of a noble savage”.

National Parks are vital to human and the natural world. They not only provide people with beauty and scenery to marvel on, they have evolved over time in purpose and aims since the establishment of the idea by Americans to being multifunctional. The idea of NP’s has also been adopted worldwide and has been used in different parts of the world for so many purposes. Today National Parks are important public spaces for reminding us of the past and for escaping the modern society.

## **REFERENCES**

**Andrew, A (2001)** - Natural selections: Natural Parks in Atlantic Canada, 1935-1970. McGill-Queen Press. Canada

**David. M (2005)** Our National Parks. Graphic Arts Centre Publishing Co. ISBN 1558689184, 9781558689183

**Francis. N (1998)** National Parks: Rights and the common good. Rowan & Littlefield. London

**Karl. S (2003) et al** – Political Ecology: An Integrative approach to geography and environment-development studies. Guilford Press. ISBN 1572309164, 9781572309166

**Sheryl. O (1997)** – National Parks in the UK. Nelson Thornes. London

