

**The Phenomenon of Educative Conduits in the English Planning Sector, and  
their Potential Meaning in Governance Relations.**

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## **Abstract**

In the midst of devolution, public sector modernisation and the reform of the planning sector in the UK, central government has introduced a number of new conduits to convey key transformative messages to a planning sector required to understand the significance of the changes set out by government, and to act accordingly. This paper presents and explains this recent phenomenon of new educative conduits (new organisations, official educative guidance on new methods of working etc.) currently occurring and becoming embedded in the English planning system. In so doing, it shines a light on a new constellation of actor and actant networks seeking to change practice in a particular field of professional and public sector practice; and it explains why this is viewed as a new 'technology of governance' and a departure from previous governance practices.

Having established the phenomenon of educative conduits as a new governance technology, and using Healey's (2006) analytical schema of levels and dimensions of governance and structure and agency depicted in her '*transformation initiatives in governance dynamics*' diagram (2006, p.306), this paper traces the historic development of particular accepted educative practices to explore how these practices gained traction and acceptability within a profession. It proposes that these educative conduits, initiated to facilitate reform, are proving so useful that they are becoming established as part of the newly reformed planning sector context as places planners can go to seek advice, effectively institutionalising these conduits as the recognised and 'routinized' modes of transformation delivery in this particular sector. This paper then questions the roles and relationships this casts between educators and professional practitioners.

In presenting this case it is hoped this paper will facilitate the workshop by providing a window into a professional sector currently in turmoil as it tries to accommodate new institutional geographies, culture change, and new professional practices. It also offers a particular approach to analyse transformation initiatives in governance – Healey's (2006); and it seeks to present a case of a new technology of governance designed to facilitate change (innovate) which itself is becoming institutionalised into new modes of operation and which needs further theorising and analysis.

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