

URBPLAN 711 · PLANNING DEBATE

Planners on Trial

The planner's contested role in a changing city

Mina

TRANSACTIONAL

Ty

ADVOCACY

Christian

INCREMENTAL

Arson

RADICAL / INSURGENT

THE SCENARIO

Tāmaki Redevelopment Company: Intensification, social-mixing, and state-led gentrification.

THE FACTS

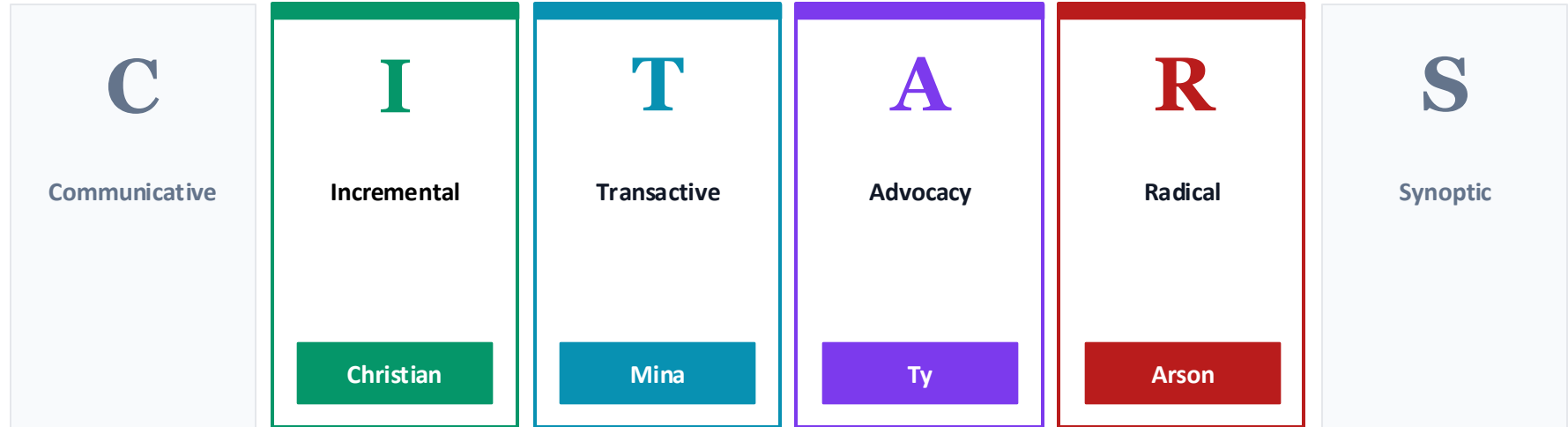
- A partnership between Auckland Council and Housing New Zealand proposes redevelopment of state housing in Tāmaki Auckland.
- The project claims that medium-density housing leads to more efficient use of space, and better-quality housing for occupants.
- “Unlocking under-utilised land using a mixed-tenure model for redevelopment.”
- Auckland Council justifies involvement through the frame of Auckland as the “most liveable city”.
- However, existing tenants of social housing face displacement.

“

"What kind of planner does this moment demand?"

CITARS

One scenario. Four planners.



T

Mina

The Transactive Planner

“*I link knowledge to action through dialogue, not decree.*”

My Beliefs & Contradiction

- I plan with the people, not for them.
- I use dialogue, and co-design to ground planning in community experience.
- Even in co-design, the knowledge asymmetry never disappears; but it's better than top-down planning.

The Scenario

- Co-design with existing tenants can ensure they're not displaced or relegated to the backlots with the justification of “social-mixing”.

A

Ty

The Advocacy Planner

“*Neutrality is a fiction that serves whoever already has the microphone.*”

My Beliefs & Contradiction

- I acknowledge my biases upfront, instead of acting like they don't exist.
- I use my technical expertise to advocate for the exact type of people planning has disenfranchised.
- I acknowledge that which groups have their voices amplified is itself political, but it's better than all disenfranchised groups going unheard.

The Scenario

- I work with the existing tenants of Tamaki. Listening to their concerns, and bringing their concerns to the meetings that they were structurally excluded from.



Christian

The Incrementalist Planner

“It is better to take many small steps in the right direction than one big leap in the wrong direction.”

My Beliefs & Contradiction

- I acknowledge time, funding, and resources are not infinite. I work with what I have
- Do not let perfect be the enemy of good. What is the cost of doing nothing?
- In times requiring radical change, can incrementalism keep up?

The Scenario

- I aim to provide brand new quality homes and minimize displacement. I aim to do this through a focus on concrete improvements to housing outcomes

R

Arson

The Radical (& Insurgent) Planner

“Pushing the cracks of the system to their breaking point.”

My Beliefs & Contradiction

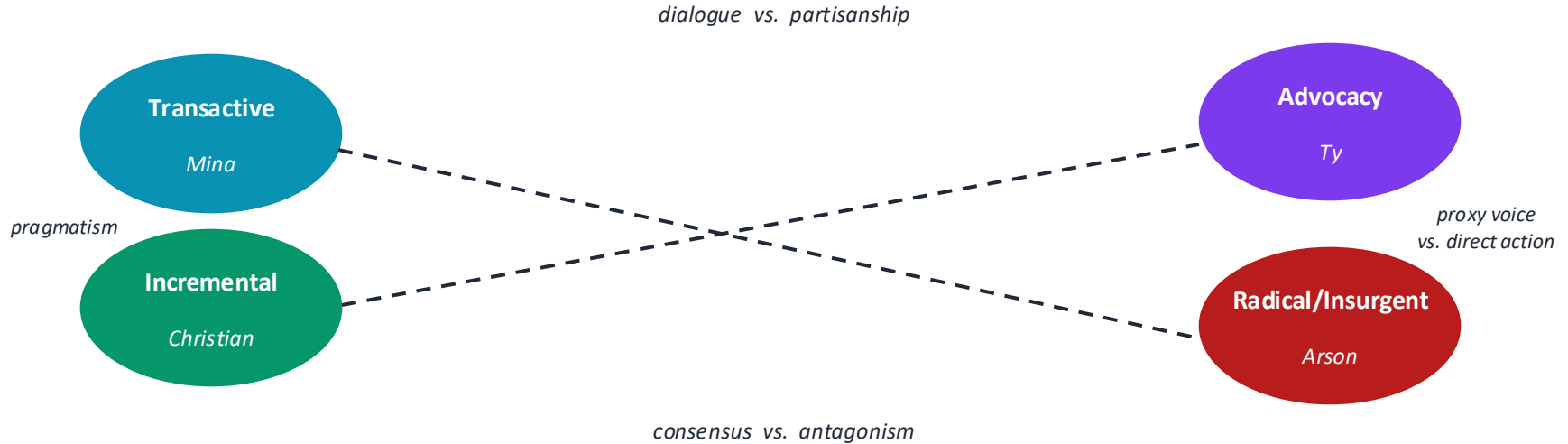
- I don't facilitate action; I act directly to claim our right to the city.
- I encourage the exploitation constitutional cracks the system didn't intend as levers for the powerless.
- I acknowledge the real risk of grass movements going the wrong way. But action outside of the institutions are the only ways we can address institutional failures.

The Scenario

- I take direct action, organizing protests, and occupations. Defending the tenants right to the city directly. Throwing wrenches into the planning institutions plan that they didn't expect.

THE DEBATE

Where our positions clash — and what the clash reveals



REFLECTION

Why we chose these roles

MINA

I watched consultations treat communities as data collection. I refuse to. Dialogue is slower. But when it works, it works.

TY

I grew up watching which voices counted and which didn't. Planning will stay that way until more planners pick a side.

CHRISTIAN

I have seen the repeated failures of megaprojects claiming to solve all. What use is the perfect planning process if you have nothing to show for it?

ARSON

I have the training to find the cracks. The ethical question is what I do with that knowledge, and I am not going to use it to launder the status quo.

CLOSING

The question is not which planner is right.

Which planner this person, city and moment need is ever changing.

Thank you.

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