

Key Dilemmas in Planning Practice

- Government Regulation v. Reliance on Markets
- Equity v. Efficiency
- Comprehensiveness v. Incrementalism
- Bottom up v. Top down
- Utopian v. Pragmatic
- Public interest v. Pluralism
- Economic Development v. Environmental Protection

Government Regulation v. Reliance on Markets

- When to rely on markets and market mechanisms?
- When and how to respond to market failure?
- Command-and-control v. other models of government regulation
- Using and shaping market mechanisms for public purposes

Equity v. Efficiency

- What principles of equity or fairness ought to apply in public planning?
- When might “more equality” be an inappropriate goal for public planning?
- Under what circumstances might efficiency trump equity as a goal?
- How should efficiency be measured?

Comprehensiveness v. Incremental

- What does it mean to take a comprehensive or systemic approach to a problem?
- Under what circumstances is comprehensiveness a useful ideal for planners?
- Under what circumstances is incremental a problematic objective?
- How should the tension between comprehensiveness and incremental be managed?

Bottom Up v. Top Down

- Under what circumstances would a bottom-up approach to planning be inappropriate?
- Under what circumstances might a top down approach to planning be necessary?
- Can a bottom up approach to planning work at a regional or national scale?
- Can a bottom up approach work if there is insufficient grassroots capacity?
- Does a top down approach to planning increase the reliance on expertise?

Public Interest v. Pluralism

- Is there such a thing as the public interest? How should it be defined in any specific situation?
- Is the public interest something more than the sum of individual or group interests?
- Under what circumstances will a confrontation among interest groups produce the public interest?
- Do we expect planners to be “engaged advocates” or “objective technicians”? Should they seek to represent specific interests or the public interest?

Economic Development v. Environmental Protection

- Are economic development and environmental protection always at odds?
- Under what circumstances might they be mutually reinforcing as planning objectives?
- Does sustainability offer a means of reconciling these objectives?
- How should progress toward economic development and environmental protection be measured?

Other Dilemmas

- Globalization v. community preservation
- Physical determinism v. social welfare
- Expertise v. indigenous knowledge
- Others?