



# Course Review

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11.201 GATEWAY: Planning Action

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# Today's learning objectives

1. Review *main ideas*: Planning's origins and dilemmas + what is “the field”?
2. Compare *contexts* for planning, using the cases.
3. Identify some *resources* for learning more—especially about *tactics* for creative work.



# Main ideas: Fundamental questions

- ***Ends*: What defines the good society? Economic gain, human “freedom” defined by capabilities (Sen), something else?**
- **What are the most effective *means* of intervention? Does “effective” include legitimate?**
- ***Who* decides and *how*?**



# Key Dilemmas in “planning action”

- **Place and society: The power and limits of physical design**
- **Unleashing vs. taming the market (e.g. equitable development)**
- **Planning from “above” vs. “below” (democracy, advocacy, participation)**
- **Planning knowledge: Trained professional vs. “indigenous” experts.**
- **Comprehensiveness vs. incrementalism**
- **The role of identity (human diversity)**



# Dilemmas are tricky things

- **Defined: “A situation in which somebody must choose one of two or more unsatisfactory alternatives”**
- **“Solutions” versus “resolutions.”**
- **Resolutions versus denial (even questions are guides to action).**
- **Need to identify some *approaches* to resolutions, even partial ones.**



# Action requires *actors*: Who plans?

- **Trained professional planners with job titles that say “Planner”**
- **Professionals who plan but without the title**
- **Others who plan, especially civil society advocates (nongovernmental, private)**
  - **Grassroots vs. “grasstops”**
- **Others who shape what is planned (stop or change what professionals propose)**



# The first “school” of modern planning

## Saint-Simon/Comte, according to Friedmann:

- Rigid, functional division of labor: “Theoretician-planners” and administrators vs. everyone else.
- Politics as “inconsequential,” not a “guiding force”—trumped by immutable scientific laws, including “social physics.”
- Addressed to “the rulers of society.”
- This is the origin and orientation of *modernist* planning: technocratic, self-assured.



## But in reality ...

- **Huge erosion of faith in government (in North and South).**
- **Fuzzy division of labor, overlapping expertise, uncertainty common, science an incomplete guide (values debates often unavoidable), communication failures, unrecognized problems appear.**
- **Planners must build support for their ideas, participate in the political process to identify target problems, generate options and criteria, implement.**
  - Many official planners merely “permit”
  - Many plans sit on shelves: Ideas without constituents.
- **Planning not always attached to the state, let alone the elite (“rulers”). Not always “guidance” from above.**



# And ...

**“Postmodern” planning is clear about what it seeks to replace (technocratic modernism), not always clear on *how*:**

- **How to ensure accountability if traditional government recipes are inadequate?**
- **How to reconcile conflicting values?**
- **How to ‘manage co-existence’ in the context of social diversity?**



## Two approaches

**Resolve dilemmas in *context*: Boston public housing: Physical planning as cause and effect of community engagement, “community building” (new capacity to problem-solve), *not a grand political reform.***



## Approaches continued

- **Resolve in context (second example): Narmada dam: New institutions and standards to guide many projects and enhance accountability, *not a project fix.***
- **Or: Partially resolve the dilemmas, as best you can, within particular planning *roles.***



# Planning traditions: Point to roles

<b>KNOWLEDGE TO ACTION</b>	<b>Conservative</b>	<b>Radical</b>
<b>In SOCIETAL GUIDANCE</b>	<i>Policy analysis</i>	<i>Social reform</i>
<b>In SOCIAL TRANSFORMATION</b>	<i>Social learning</i>	<i>Social mobilization</i>



# Some (sort of) specific roles

- **DESIGNER** (“form giver”)
- **ANALYST** (using data to judge ideas by standards)
- **ADVOCATE** (building support for ideas)
- **MEDIATOR** (helping stakeholders find agreement)
- **MANAGER** (creating and deploying capacity to produce)
- **FUTURIST** (visionary)



## And more roles ...

### In the context of recognizing diversity:

- **Cultural *historian*:** Relating group histories, journeys.
- **Informal *anthropologist*:** Understanding deeper values and meanings, based on what's on the surface.
- ***Communication specialist*:** Interpreting talk, negotiating norms of dialogue.



# Role conflicts and confusion

- Defend technical standards vs. popular ones? *Not all popular ideas are wise, not all wise ones are popular or legitimate.*
- Educate but also advocate?
- Answer to the client or employer vs. constituents, the marginalized?
- Equipped to play multiple roles? (skills and personal resources)



# Interpreting a job description

- What's the *unofficial* (de facto) role(s)?
- *Who* will I deal with over what issues?
- What *conflicts* define this role(s)?
- What are this *organization's strategic challenges*? What is hardest about advancing its mission?



# Planners in the cases

- **Boston public housing redevelopment:**
  - Physical and social planners at Housing Authority
  - Physical planners at City planning agency
  - Planners working for private developers and nonprofit organizations
- **Narmada dam project:**
  - National and state agency planners, int'l agency planners
  - Planner-activists, advocate-planners
- **Anacostia Waterfront Initiative:**
  - Physical planners at the corporation
  - Physical planners at public agencies
  - Social planners at other agencies
  - Planners working for private and nonprofit organizations or informal civic groups.



## Or: Resolve via a *particular* definition of success (partial definitions)

- The **outcome** is sustainable (growth, equity, environment, engagement) and enhances “freedoms” (Sen).
- The **process** was effective (produced the desired output or outcome)
- The **process** built trust and capacity for more collective action
- The **stakeholders**—All? Some? A majority? A targeted subgroup?—are satisfied



# Resources for more learning

## Some worthwhile reads ...

Forester, John. *Planning in the Face of Power*. Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1989. ISBN: 0520064135.

Power, expertise, planners' interactions with bosses, constituents, values, puzzles.

*Comparative Planning Cultures*. Edited by Bishwapriya Sanyal. New York, NY: Routledge, 2005. ISBN: 0415951356.

Government, market, and civil society roles in different nations, historical moments, influences across borders.



# Resources for more learning

## Some worthwhile reads continued...

*The Consensus Building Handbook*. Edited by Lawrence Susskind, et. al. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications, 1999. ISBN: 0761908447.

“Mapping” stakeholder interests, dealing with value conflicts, “deciding how to decide” (Consensus? Majority rule?” Super-majority?), case examples of negotiation and mediation at work, roles of facilitators.

Kaner, Sam, et. al. *Facilitator’s Guide to Participatory Decision-Making*. Philadelphia, PA: New Society Publishers, 1996. ISBN: 086571309X.

Tactics for small group process, divergent versus convergent thinking, rethinking barrier to participation.



# Resources for more learning

## Some worthwhile reads continued...

Adams, James L. *Conceptual Blockbusting: A Guide to Better Ideas*. Reading, MA: Addison-Wesley, 1986. ISBN: 0201100894.

Having better ideas, having them in *groups* and *organizations*, identifying one's own mental blocks.

Senge, Peter M. *The Fifth Discipline*. New York, NY: Currency Doubleday, 1994. ISBN: 0385260954.

Tackling barriers to learning in organizations (“defensive routines”), promoting adaptive capacity, redesigning institutions and their routines.



# Resources for more learning

## Some worthwhile reads continued...

Heifetz, Ronald. *Leadership Without Easy Answers*. Cambridge, MA: Belknap Press, 1994. ISBN: 0674518586.

How *leadership* differs from *authority*, why so many authority figures do *not* lead, how to exercise leadership, how to be more personally effective, how to mobilize groups.

Kotter, John P. *Leading Change*. Boston, MA: Harvard Business School Press, 1996. ISBN: 0875847471.

Building coalitions for change, creating room for risk taking, the perils of “under-selling” ideas, why so many change efforts *fail*.



# Resources for more learning

## Some worthwhile reads continued...

Schön, Donald A. *The Reflective Practitioner*. New York, NY: Basic Books, 1983. ISBN: 046506874X.

Learning from practice, how professions handle dilemmas, the nature of practitioner knowledge (experiential knowledge).



**“We make the road  
by walking it.”**