

# Critics of Rational Comprehensive Planning

11.201 Gateway

19 October 2010

# Comprehensive Rational Model

- Setting goals and objectives (long-range)
  - Comprehensive list of strategies
  - Data and analysis to evaluate all strategies
  - Implement optimum strategy
  - Evaluate outcomes
  - Return to goals as needed
- 
- Inspired by modernism and a belief in rationality
  - Basic assumption: identifiable public interest

# Characteristics

- Comprehensive
- Integrated
- Long-range
- Optimal solutions

## Sources of Criticism

- Limits to individual rationality
- Organizational
- Political
- Too complex to model & predict
  - Economic systems
  - Urban dynamics

# Altschuler

- Impossible to get political or popular support to define the public interest
- Planners fall back to “middle-range planning” on operational goals
- Without comprehensiveness, what is the role of planning?
- If Coordination, on what basis can they trump specialists’ judgments?

# Characteristics

- Comprehensive
- Integrated
- Long-range
- Optimal solutions
- Incremental
- Strategic
- Middle-range
- Satisficing

# Competing Models

## “Comprehensive Rational”

- Setting goals and objectives (long-range)
  - Comprehensive list of strategies
  - Data and analysis to evaluate all strategies
  - Implement optimum strategy
  - Evaluate outcomes
  - Return to goals as needed
- 
- Inspired by modernism and a belief in rationality
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## “Disjointed-incrementalist”

- Only select achievable goals, always changing
  - Consider only incrementally different policies
  - Small number of options considered, various possible goals considered
  - Policies never complete
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- Assumes fragmented decision-making process
  - Basic assumptions: Limits on options and information

# Critiques of Disjointed Incrementalism

- Politically conservative (status quo oriented)
- Systemic understanding more important
- Tinkering at the margins (doesn't challenge structural problems)
- New types of institutions are needed (decentralization)

Where does your planning style come from?

# Friday

- Emma Rothschild: 12:00-2:00



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11.201 Gateway to the Profession of Planning  
Fall 2010

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