Planning Traditions

11.201 GATEWAY: Planning Action

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Lecture 2
Today’s agenda

- Revisiting Rebuild L.A. (RLA) and Katrina aftermath
- Major planning traditions: Assumptions and links
- Action requires actors: Who plans, planner’s roles, role confusions, definitions of success.
- Preview next session
Rebuilding L.A.: Revisited

- Crisis context: High visibility, varied expectations, fragmented communication, limited trust.
- Many inter-connected problems, with technical and political dimensions, to be defined.
- Resources: Extraordinary interest, relationships, money, and more—available to be mobilized.
- Spotlight: An entrepreneurial institution with a well-defined (narrow?) focus.

“Planning” in action in the public domain addresses all of these—or relegates itself to technical support.
Some strategic options (year 2 on)

- Redefined role and relationship to government, business, nonprofit and “community” groups?
- Focus of activities: Adjust, reinvent, clarify?
- Constituents and coalitions: Who, for what?
- Operational partners: Who, for what?
The first “school” of 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.”
### Planning traditions

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Social reform tradition

- Applying technical knowledge to public affairs, mainly via the state (government)
- **Focus**: Role of government vis-à-vis the market
- Relevance in RLA/Katrina …?
Policy analysis tradition

Focus: Decision analysis, optimal choice

1-Define goals and objectives
2-Identify options
3-Predict consequences
4-Evaluate by objectives
5-Decide
6-Implement
7-Generate feedback
Social learning tradition

- **Learning by doing**, knowledge grounded in experience **and** reflection
- **Focus**: Democracy as constant experimentation; dialogue can challenge and overcome habits, prejudices, ignorance
Social mobilization tradition

- Collective action “from below,” with specific targets—abuses of government, the market, etc.—and constituents.
- **Focus**: Planning as a *form* of politics, whether in *confrontation* or disengagement/isolation, generating learning and transformation.
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*?
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)
Planners’ 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)
Role conflicts and confusion

- Defend technical standards vs. popular ones? *Not all popular ideas are wise, not all wise ones are popular or legitimate.*
- Be objective as well as committed and ethical?
- Educate and advocate?
- Answer to the client/employer vs. constituents, the marginalized?
- Equipped to play multiple roles? (skills and personal resources)
What’s success?

- The **outcome** is sustainable (growth, equity, environment, engagement) and enhances freedoms.
- 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
Next session …

- Core dilemmas that define planning in practice vs. in theory
- Dilemmas that define our three cases