Planning Dilemmas

11.201 GATEWAY: Planning Action

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Lecture 3
Today’s agenda

- Classics on the role and politics of planning
  - Core concepts
  - Comparative perspective
- Key dilemmas in practice
Classics

- Advocacy planning (Davidoff)
- Muddling through (Lindblom)
- Comprehensive rational planning vs. incrementalism and bargaining (Altshuler)
- The place of planning—everything vs. nothing (Wildavsky)
Comparative perspectives

Some organizing dimensions:

- “Cultures” of planning: Paths of history, deep assumptions, practice norms
- Government-market-civil society relations, institutional roles
- Centralized vs. decentralized authority
- Legitimacy—of knowledge and action in specific contexts (frames, narratives)
Key Dilemmas (Gateway focus)

- Place and society: The power and limits of physical design
- Unleashing vs. taming the market
- Planning from “above” vs. “below”
- Planning knowledge: Trained professional vs. “indigenous” experts
- Comprehensiveness vs. incrementalism
- The role of identity
Power and limits of physical design

- Physical design as a tool for enhancing well-being
- Can it also enhance *equity*, i.e. address inequities?
- What “social needs” are uniquely addressed by design interventions?
- How to address a diversity of users/publics?
- Culture and values: What’s culturally determined? How are meanings attached to space? What does design assume about “community”? 
Unleashing vs. taming the market

- Challenges in addressing market *failures*
- Styles of *regulation*: command-and-control vs. other
- Taming vs. “triggering” markets
- The market as a system of *accountability*—improving performance through consumer choices—not as “business” or profit motive
Planning from above vs. below

- Rights, accountability, and power
- The promise of citizen involvement vs. the risk of cronyism, parochialism, process paralysis (impasse)
- Civil society and government interaction: Competing, collaborating, contesting, other?
- Globalization: Transnational coalitions, media influence, information technology shifts in power and voice
Trained vs. indigenous experts

- What forms of knowledge are valid? Who sets the rules?
- What does public participation add to what technical experts provide?
- How can distinct types of expertise be *blended* to create better, not just more popular, solutions?
- Technocratic modernism vs. “deliberative democracy”
Comprehensiveness vs. Incrementalism

- Can “the public interest” be defined?
- What forces favor *incrementalism*? How should they be managed?
- Do contests among *interest groups* yield a public interest?
- Planners as advocates and decision-shapers vs. mediators, analysts, etc.
The role of identity

- As a factor in politics
- As a factor reshaping interventions (norms, arrangements)
- As a target for skill building (competence)
- As a proxy for mistrust, barrier to collective action
- As a resource for innovation
- Intersecting identities (race/ethnicity, gender, class, religion, sexual preference, etc.)