



Planning History and Traditions: Overview

11.201 GATEWAY: Planning Action

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Today's learning objectives

- 1. Synthesize *lessons of the RLA case*:
Move from theory to practice and back again.**
- 2. Understand major chapters of modern planning *history* and risks of the “life-cycle” interpretation of same, place historical developments in global perspective.**
- 3. Create conceptual transition to team assignment (New Orleans recovery case) with preview of *traditions*.**

The Rebuild L.A. context revisited

- ***Crisis moment:*** high visibility and expectations, myriad problems, many views of them by diverse stakeholders, substantial opportunity to mobilize resources.
- ***Spotlight:*** A highly entrepreneurial “partnership” initiative with a focused (narrow) strategy.
- ***Diagnosis:*** Exclusive approach (to defining problem and strategy) + muddled public expectations + weak public accountability > project focus > political attack > loss of legitimacy and support > restructuring ... *in spite of investment success.*

Some strategic options for RLA

- **RE-POSITION:** Redefine RLA role and its relationships to public, private, and nongovernmental sectors.
- **RE-ORIENT STRATEGY:** Target major activities to businesses affected by riots; focus on recovery and growth; work closely with established organizations.
- **BUILD SUPPORT:** Actively develop constituencies (take none for granted) that understand and support role.

The value of theory

- **Highlights the issue of what justifies planning's *ends* and *means* (revealing cases as analogies, points of reference for planners everywhere).**
- **Reminds us of the folly of a pure division of labor envisioned by “modernist” rational planning: The apolitical technocrats (smart analysts-designers), the politicians and publics.**
- **Raises questions about whose values and norms are (actually) being served.**
- **Provides multiple ways to assess the rightful role of the *market vis-à-vis* the *state* and *civil society*.**

Part 2

Planning history in global perspective

Planning history: Simple version

- ***Cleaning up and ordering things:*** “Planning emerges as the 20th century response to the 19th century industrial city” (Campbell and Fainstein, p.5).
- ***One-way global:*** Planning invented in the West and transferred to (forced on?) “the Rest.”
- ***Life cycle:*** Modernist technical capability celebrated, then reviled, then overthrown in favor of “bottom-up planning” and planning-as-process-management (not expert design and choice).

Problems with the simple version

- The “industrial city” story covers the development of *city planning* better than planning generally. *Much planning is non-local, non-physical.*
- Different societies = different trajectories and “cultures” (norms + institutions) that define planning’s legitimate role, scope, practices.
- A given approach, such as “modernist rational planning” by trained planners, can be employed long after it comes under attack. *It may be well institutionalized + preferred to alternatives.*
- Multiple approaches to planning (and its justification) can co-exist in practice—even in a single field in a single city.
- The academy is not the world of practice: Intellectual debate vs. planning practice and practice of politics.

More on global influence

- **Promotion and institutionalization across borders: Colonialism, post-war “development” ideology, models tied to money (aid agencies).**
- **“Marketization” and neo-liberalism trends in affluent nations: Reagan-Thatcher “government is problem” vs. Blair-Clinton “third way.”**
- **But if planning is more than technical, modernist science applied to human affairs and the physical environment, then practices can (a) evolve locally regardless of outside influence (“indigenous”); and (b) be transferred in multiple directions, across borders.**

Considering alternative definitions

- ***Friedmann: Planning as “The effort to guide history with reason”***
 - Distinctively post European Enlightenment, not orthogonal design, emphasis on the rationally trained.
- ***Baum: Planning as “Organizing hope about the future”***
 - More timeless, universal, and open-ended as to what constitutes “organizing” and “hope”—not to mention who can organize and define hope and alternative futures legitimately.

Part 3

Planning traditions + preview of New Orleans recovery planning

The DESIGN tradition

- Outgrowth of *architecture* and *engineering* mainly.
- Debates over forms of “urbanism” (how people experience cities, beauty, culture).
- Plus physical requirements of structuring the environment to make it healthy, sustainable, cost effective.

The EMPOWERMENT tradition

- Rooted in *political economy* (assessing who gets and who loses, how power is amassed and exercised, how role and use of capital shapes society).
- Debates over role of historical inequalities today, hopes for transformation (not just “order”).
- Planning as a fundamentally *political practice* with technical tools.
- Multiple philosophies and modes of practice, limited consensus.

The POLICY ANALYSIS tradition

- Outgrowth of *economics, operations research, organizational science*.
- Concern for optimal decision, “maximizing welfare” under constraints, value-neutral mechanics of choice.
- **Specific steps (decision cycle):**
 1. Define goals and objectives (values supplied to analyst)
 2. Identify options (alternative courses of action)
 3. Predict consequences (deal with risk and uncertainty)
 4. Evaluate options according to objectives and criteria
 5. Decide
 6. Implement
 7. Generate feedback > Redefine goals and objectives

New Orleans case preview

- **Who is authorized—formally or informally—to plan? For whom?**
- **What defines the good city? For whom?**
- **How should plans address political, as opposed to technical, problems?**
- **What defines success: Political viability, technical defensibility, other?**