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PLANNING AS ANTICIPATION OF RESISTANCE

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Abstract This article argues that an inadvertent side effect of the current preoccupation with planning from below has been a lack of attention to public sector planning at the top, which remains a critical institutional mechanism for development. To be effective, however, public sector planners must anticipate institutional resistance to their efforts, particularly from within the state structure, and incorporate this understanding into the formulation and sequencing of planning tasks in unorthodox and counterintuitive ways. Drawing on examples of planning for the provision of housing and employment for the urban poor in newly industrializing nations, the article demonstrates that in effective practice, substantive and procedural theories of planning are not separated, because planning procedures are largely influenced by the particular substantive nature of problems to be addressed. Hence, planning theorists need to better understand the substantive nature of problems in order to provide practicing planners with institutional insights about the type of resistance they are likely to encounter when a problem is formulated in a particular way. This awareness of resistance to planning was absent in development planning's formative years; but the last 50 years of planning experience have generated rich tacit knowledge which, if formalized, can contribute to more effective public sector planning.

Keywords counterintuitive sequencing of planning tasks, development planning, institutional resistance, substantive and procedural planning theories, unorthodox problem formulation

Introduction

Even after more than 50 years of planning efforts, there is little consensus about how public sector planners can best facilitate the transformation of old institutions into new ones for the economic, political, and social modernization of developing nations. In the 1950s, there was much optimism that public sector planning could initiate and nurture modernization efforts in nations that were newly independent and free of colonial rule (Meier, 1984). Public sector planning had proved to be a useful tool in counteracting economic depression during the 1930s; it had helped the ex-Soviet Union transform itself into a major industrial nation; and it had been effective in channeling resource allocations during the First and Second World Wars (Sanyal, 1994). These successful efforts in the past had helped create the consensus that planning was essential for the rapid modernization of poor, agrarian nations into economically vibrant, socially modern nation states.

To be sure, the beginning of the Cold War in the late 1940s had significantly influenced expectations regarding planning's role in the modernization process (Haberler, 1987). In contrast to the violent revolutions that ushered in the transformative process in communist countries, planning for peaceful reforms was to facilitate economic and social transformations in western-friendly nations. (President John F. Kennedy created the Alliance for Progress, with renowned planner Harvey Perloff as a member of the team, for this specific purpose; see Prebisch, 1970.) To achieve this goal, planning activities had to be embedded within a western-style, politically democratic governance structure. This meant clear separation of power between the executive, legislative, and judicial branches of government; universal franchise and free elections for the articulation of group preferences to guide planning activities; and a relatively peaceful, transparent and accountable governance structure to accommodate dissenting views without the use of the state's coercive power.

This model viewed planning as a predominantly technical exercise backed by clearly articulated support of democratically elected political leaders (Rosenstern-Rodan, 1944). That a well-established bureaucracy, with strong administrative and technical capacities, under democratic leaders could deliver the promises of planning was not questioned. The optimism regarding the power of planning was so high during this period that Peter Hall (1988) termed it 'The Golden Age of Planning'. There was

a consensus about both the goals and the mechanisms of planning, and underlying that consensus was the key assumption that capitalist economic development and western-style political democracy would flourish hand-in-hand, aided by public sector planning, which would rely on peaceful institutional reforms to modernize predominantly agrarian and largely subsistence economies into industrialized nations (Hirschman, 1981).

That the optimism of the formative years of planning did not last long is well known. There is a large body of literature on why state-centric and technocratic planning failed to deliver its promises (for a good summary of these criticisms, see Little, 1982). In conjunction with the criticism of traditional 'planning from the top', there is a growing body of literature on 'planning from below', inspired by social movements, non-governmental organizations (NGOs), and other non-bureaucratic, non-statist social forces, which many consider to be more effective than public sector planning in initiating institutional reforms that enhance the quality of life of disadvantaged groups (for a good review of this point of view, see Korten and Klauss, 1984).

Much has been written about planning from below since its emergence as an alternative planning mechanism and style in the 1970s (Brown, 2003). This analysis has contributed over time to more nuanced understanding of the possibilities as well as limitations of such planning. One inadvertent side effect of the preoccupation with planning from below, however, has been a lack of attention to planning at the top, which remains a critical institutional mechanism for initiating social change. As recent studies have indicated, the state and other institutions commonly associated with planning from the top, such as political parties, labor unions, and big businesses, are critical players that can facilitate or hinder the development trajectories of newly industrializing countries (Houtzager, 2001). In other words, it is important to deliberate how to improve planning at the top without dismantling old mechanisms of planning (as was attempted in many developing nations as well as transitional nations in eastern Europe). There is some evidence of the impact of efforts to either totally dismantle old planning structures, or curb the planning capacity of state planners, often referred to as corrupt and rent-seeking bureaucrats who obstruct, rather than facilitate, institutional reforms. It is noteworthy that studies of such reform efforts do not confirm the good guy-bad guy descriptions common in public discourse (Tendler, 1997; Chang, 2002). What such studies do illustrate, however, is that the planning capacity at the top needs to be employed in a fresh way, with an awareness of institutional constraints that impede planning efforts.

This article is an attempt to contribute to such an understanding through a two-part analysis. In the first part, I provide a brief historical overview of how public sector planning became discredited as a key mechanism for initiating institutional transformation, and how at present its usefulness is being re-established, without the unrealistic and politically naïve expectations of the past. In the second part, I draw on the early writing of Albert

O. Hirschman and a small group of institutional economists, organizational theorists, and political sociologists to propose how the effectiveness of public sector planning can be enhanced. I propose that public sector planners must anticipate institutional resistance to their reform efforts and incorporate this critical awareness in strategizing how to best formulate and sequence planning tasks. In developing this argument, I refer to a particular set of problems with which I am most familiar – namely, the lack of adequate housing and employment for the growing number of urban poor in most developing countries. Through this focus, I want to emphasize that effective planning practice begins with an awareness of the particular characteristics of each problem to be addressed. Planning for housing, for example, would require awareness of different political and institutional issues than planning for employment generation. Substantive and procedural theories of planning cannot be separated, because the procedure planners need to follow is largely influenced by the substantive nature of the problem they want to address. Planning theorists need to focus on how to better understand the substantive nature of problems in order to provide practicing planners with insights about the type of resistance they are likely to encounter when they define a problem in a particular way. This awareness of resistance to planning was absent in development planning's formative years, but that age of innocence is over. Now development planners can draw on the experience of the last 50 years to sharpen planning strategies.

The decline and rise of public sector planning

Why and how did public sector planning lose its legitimacy and authority over the last 50 years? Some well-publicized answers to this question have led to equally well-publicized recommendations by international development agencies, disillusioned academics, and expatriate planners who had been among the staunch supporters of public sector planning in the 1950s (Faber and Seers, 1972; Bauer, 1981).

The criticisms that planning had become too centralized, bureaucratic, elitist, and non-participatory and the prescriptions calling for a totally new approach to planning have become standard. Much of this analysis, however, does not address the question why in the 1950s no one foresaw these adverse outcomes. It is important to probe this question to understand the key assumptions underlying the naïve optimism of that period.

The most important goal of public sector planning in the 1950s was nation building through political, economic, and social modernization (Apter, 1959). Neither market forces nor what is now called civil society was then considered appropriate for that task. The colonial powers had left behind well-established bureaucracies that were stronger than the newly formed political parties (Jain, 1992). It was logical to rely on the

bureaucracy to facilitate social transformations. True, Schumpeter (1984) had argued then that the market also could facilitate social transformation through 'the creative destruction' of old institutions, but first the market itself needed to be transformed and expanded to facilitate rapid industrialization. This required multi-sectoral, comprehensive planning led by the democratic state, which represented public interest. The democratically constituted state, unlike the colonialist state, was assumed to be autonomous; and state autonomy was a necessary precondition for rational planning (Evans, 1995).

Democratic capitalism and nation building were expected to flourish without the resistance and violence that marked nation building in communist countries. Concerns about tribal and ethnic conflicts in some areas only strengthened the argument for a strong central state backed up by a hierarchically organized, 'impersonal bureaucracy' beholden to no particular tribal influence (Nelson, 1987). The possibilities that democracy could create conflicts, and that a hierarchically organized bureaucracy could create institutional inertia, rigidities and inter-agency struggles were rarely discussed. In the increasingly intense atmosphere of the Cold War, no aspect of democratic capitalism was to be questioned in the West; and the centralizing tendencies of bureaucratic structures, including planning functions, were rarely questioned as long as such structures were not controlled by communist parties. The political ambiance of the time fostered little skepticism about efforts to modernize through public sector planning.

By the end of the 'First Decade of Development' (Turner, 1965), the paradigm of modernization through accelerated industrialization and urbanization had started to lose its initial appeal. With steadily growing urban unemployment and squatter housing, city planners began to question the efficacy of the economic modernization model and its static Master Plans. Soon after, the mood of naïve optimism changed to deep pessimism as an increasing number of authoritarian military regimes took over newly formed democratic nations (Pockenham, 1973). By then, the economic growth rates of these nations had also slowed significantly, creating much anguish among the proponents of democratic capitalism.

Who was to blame for this surprising turn of events? And, what was to be done differently to reinvigorate democratic capitalism? Although the answer to these questions varied widely from one end of the ideological spectrum, marked by neo-classical economists, to the other, marked by neo-Marxists, there was a surprising convergence of views on the conclusion that public sector planning had failed to fulfill its promises. The neo-Marxists blamed the control of the state apparatus, including its planning functions, by exploitative capitalists, underscoring the complete loss of state autonomy (Burgess, 1978). The neo-classical economists blamed the state's rent-seeking bureaucrats and planners, whose interventions, they argued, had stifled the natural growth of markets (Myint, 1987).

This strange alliance of accusations against public sector planning led to

the populist notion that social reforms – in particular reforms to benefit disadvantaged groups – would not emerge from within the state planning apparatus. The focus of hope became NGOs, community-based groups, and 'new social movements', which were not linked to dominant institutions at the top such as the military, established political parties, labor unions, or big business (Fowler, 1991). This shift in preference to institutions at the bottom as the new source of reformist energy also drew attention away from public sector planners working within the state. Barring a handful of studies, among which the research of Robert Bates (1981) on Africa stands out, there was little intellectual interest in understanding the mechanisms of public sector planning and how its role was being transformed under authoritarianism. In one study, Peter Evans (1979) demonstrated some positive effects of state-led industrialization in Brazil. On the whole, however, the criticism of planning was sharp, widespread, and dismissive of any contribution it might have made. As Albert Hirschman (1963) rightly noted, development scholars and practitioners who had been oblivious to the uneven distribution of political power in the 1950s later became obsessed by it, ignoring how institutional mechanisms such as planning, cope with political changes. In short, by the end of the 1970s, there was a consensus of views among development planners totally opposite in tone to that of the 1950s. The control of states by dominant social groups working hand-in-glove with the military had resulted in socially regressive policies, such as large-scale demolition of squatter housing, eviction of petty traders from city streets, and implementation of large infrastructure projects that ignored social and environmental costs, and reversed progressive taxation policies (Eckstein, 1989). Instead of being a facilitator of social reforms, public sector planning had become its greatest hindrance.

In the 1980s, discussions of public sector planning took yet another turn as authoritarian regimes began to give way to democratically elected governments; but this was during a period of severe economic crisis when even relatively wealthy developing countries could not repay external debts. What happened to public sector planning under these circumstances is well known (Rodrick et al., 1997; Stiglitz, 2003) and does not require reiteration except to remind the reader that the troika of structural adjustment, market liberalization and privatization efforts which collectively constituted the paradigm of neo-liberalism shifted the focus of attention to markets as the key force for economic transformation. The goals of public sector planning were redefined drastically, reducing the regulatory, developmental and distributive functions of planning agencies, and simultaneously assigning new responsibilities to ministries of finance and other institutions responsible for macro-economic policies.

At the city level, too, there was an institutional shift in the 1980s away from traditional city planning offices to newly created developmental corporations that were intended to be more entrepreneurial and less constrained by the usually slow and contentious political process. The

neo-liberal approach, which was initially formulated for the management of macro-economic problems such as default on debt payment, was quickly applied to the management of cities as well. Much is known about this shift (Marcuse and Van Kempen, 2000), elaboration is not required for the purpose of this article, except to remind the reader how traditional public sector planning which influenced urban infrastructure investments, taxation policies and land-use regulations was discouraged in favor of private provision of public services, withdrawal of subsidies for public goods, and various private-public cooperative ventures which offered many incentives to attract private investments. These new policies were to be implemented not by the old city planning agencies, but by newly created institutions which were to be more efficient and flexible, but not necessarily more democratic. This shift away from the formal political process was justified by an increasing involvement of 'non-political formations', such as community groups, in the deliberative process (Kothari, 1984). The rapid growth in the number of groups of this type was celebrated as a sign of vibrant civil societies which seemed to be flourishing against oppressive states around the world, from developing nations to the 'transitional' nations of eastern Europe. Thus emerged a peculiar alliance of advocates for the market and advocates for civil society, who differed on many issues, but agreed on one: that public sector planning should only function as a service to enable the market and civil society to flourish. This is the sentiment underlying the vision of 'the minimalist state'.

However much one may disagree with the intentions of neo-liberal policies, one must acknowledge that such policies were formulated with more political astuteness than the developmental policies of the 1950s. The advocates of neo-liberalism did not take for granted that democracy and capitalism would flourish automatically hand-in-hand. They were concerned whether democratic governments could implement the kind of institutional reforms of state and market necessary for neo-liberalism (Prezerworski, 1991; Nelson, 1994). Out of this concern emerged a range of planning strategies. First, some economic reforms, such as devaluation of currencies, needed to be implemented quickly and without much public deliberation to maximize their positive impact (Haggard and Kaufman, 1995). Second, dismantling of the old state structure required dismantling of public sector unions that were likely to oppose state reform (Nelson, 1990). Third, since neo-liberal economic policies were likely to increase income inequality, the ability of minimalist governments to manage the adverse social impact of this inequality had to be questioned (Prezerworski, 1991). Many such questions of political economy were raised by scholars and practitioners who were not as politically naïve as their counterparts of the 1950s.

Even though these questions of political economy raised concerns about social conflicts, the rhetoric of planning at the time emphasized cooperation between private and public sectors, state and civil society, and so on.

Planners rarely addressed the issue of how such cooperation was to be cultivated during major political and economic reforms. Although there was a growing body of literature by then on negotiation and dispute resolution (for a good summary, see Susskind, 1999), it drew mostly on examples from developed nations with well-defined interest groups, well-established legislative bodies that based resource allocation on interest group politics, and importantly, relationships between public sector planners and politicians that were more transparent than those in most developing nations (Jain, 1992). Ignoring such differences in institutional settings, many planners signed-off on neo-liberal policies with the hope that an unregulated market and a vibrant civil society would usher in a new era of economic growth and political democracy. Among those planners who did not join the neo-liberal bandwagon, some recommended local resistance to global extraction of surpluses (Smith and Feagin, 1987); others applauded when urban riots erupted in resistance to increased food prices (Remmer, 1986); and still others who lost government jobs as a result of state restructuring created their own NGOs that helped western donor institutions distribute micro-credit to urban and rural poor (Odada and Ayako, 1989).

That the political and economic reforms of the 1980s did not create the necessary conditions for the reinvigoration of democratic capitalism in developing nations is well known (Bardhan, 2000). On the contrary, economic trends in many nations, particularly in Latin America and Africa, had worsened; growth rates had declined; income inequality had increased; and in many nations civil society had become rather uncivil with the eruption of ethnic and religious conflicts (Pieper and Taylor, 1998). As expected, some blamed the outcome on a lack of 'political will' that resulted in poor implementation of good policies (World Bank, 1997). Others blamed large-scale corruption within the governance structure (Gray and Kaufman, 1998). A few resurrected the 1950s idea that some cultures are not conducive to economic growth (Harrison and Huntington, 2000). Some argued that neo-liberalism as a model had at least worked in China and India, but they rarely acknowledged that extensive public planning still existed in both nations, and that China was not a democratic nation. A few argued that the 'clash of civilizations' was causing the global economy to slow down, and urged western nations to prepare for a long war (Huntington, 1993).

By the early 1990s, the World Bank (1997), which had led the neo-liberal movement, grudgingly admitted that there is a role for public sector planning, and that wholesale dismantling of the public sector was counterproductive for democratic capitalism. This acknowledgement by the World Bank signaled a new turn in discussions about the appropriate role of the state in development planning; it coincided with a new turn in discussions about the state's role in developed nations, particularly the US and UK. This convergence of views generated new terms, such as 'reinvention of government', 'new public management', and 'the third way'. These new terms

suggested different types of state reform, but none addressed directly how to plan for resistance to such reforms. By the mid-1990s, as the global economic growth rate increased with the rapid expansion of new information technology, a new optimism, as politically naïve as that of the 1950s, marked planning conversations in both developed and developing nations (Segal, 1995). Such discussions usually focused on the power of new information and communication technologies, and how the use of such new technologies could enhance planning's effectiveness.

Anticipating institutional resistance

The World Bank report that grudgingly acknowledged the ability of public sector planning to encourage economic growth and distribute the benefits of such growth referred to two studies, by Amsden (1989) and Wade (1990), which had demonstrated, convincingly, the influence of public sector planning on the economic development of the so-called Asian tigers. The battle of ideas about whether public sector planning is necessary for economic growth had been started earlier, however, in the edited volume *Bringing the State Back In* (Evans et al., 1985), which was compiled as a criticism of the then dominant ideology of neo-liberalism. This volume includes case studies of industrialized and newly industrializing nations that demonstrate the role states had played as relatively autonomous actors to shape the trajectories of industrialization. The authors who contributed to this volume subsequently published other works on the same theme, but with new insights about how relative autonomy of states was created at specific historical moments, and how states used such autonomy to discipline both labor and capital. Since this research is well known among development planners, it is not necessary to reiterate the arguments in detail. It is useful to note, however, that this research emphasized the role of the state and that of public sector planning but did not focus on the actual planning process in the way Graham Allison (1971) did in his study of planning in the Kennedy Administration during the Cuban Missile Crisis. In other words, the research helped counteract the neo-liberal argument for the minimalist state, but did not generate insights about why and how public sector planners formulated public policies, or strategized to implement their policies with minimal resistance.

Almost a decade later, another body of literature appeared that probed deeper into the internal structure of the state, in search of specific institutional conditions under which public planning was successful. The research of Fox (1992) on food policies in Mexico, Tendler and Freedheim (1994) on health policies in northeast Brazil, and Joshi (2000) on forestry policies in India, for example, generated a more nuanced sense of the political economy of the policy-making process and highlighted institutional issues that influenced public planning outcomes. Studies by Abers (1998)

and Heller (2001) clearly demonstrated the institutional connection between formal political processes and public sector planning, highlighting the important role of institutions at the top in the formulation and implementation of redistributive policies. A volume edited by Houtzager and Moore (2001) provided a few additional studies that also demonstrate conclusively why pressure from below by civil society actors is not sufficient to influence the nature of redistributive policies. All these studies demonstrate that progressive, pro-poor reforms have emerged from interactions among institutions at the top as well as those at the bottom. To influence the outcome of such reforms, one has to transcend populist dichotomous conceptual categories, such as top-down/bottom-up planning, centralization/decentralization, procedural/substantive democracies, and polycentric associative/monocentric statist approaches. These studies demonstrate how a certain level of centralization of planning functions is necessary for effective implementation of decentralized service deliveries, and how substantive democratic processes need the agents of procedural democracy to formulate public policies. In fact, state-centric mechanisms are sometimes necessary to resolve conflicts generated by polycentric institutional arrangements (Sanyal and Mukhija, 2001).

Such insights, however useful in halting the ideological juggernaut of neo-liberalism and religitimizing the role of public sector planning, are necessary, but not sufficient, for reinvigorating planning practice. Once the legitimacy of planning's role has been established, practicing planners still need to strategize how to initiate and implement institutional reforms for growth and redistribution. One could argue that planning theorists in industrialized nations have already provided some answers to this question: that is, planners need to build coalitions with like-minded individuals and groups inside and outside the bureaucracy (Krumholz and Forester, 1990); they need to facilitate negotiation and bargaining among contending groups (Healey, 1997); progressive planners, in particular, need to advocate the cause of the disadvantaged to the politicians in power (Davidoff, 1965); and planners need to conceptualize planning and implementation as interconnected and overlapping activities (Cleavers, 1980). These are all useful insights which should be built upon so as not to repeat the mistakes of the 1950s.

One way to build on existing planning theories may be to probe if planning problems can be conceptualized to take into account institutional obstacles and resistances which are likely to emerge from within the state structure as well as outside it to obstruct planning efforts. In other words, can planners anticipate implementation problems and take these into account when formulating problems? This is not a new question, but one that requires a fresh look. In the 1950s problem formulation was a technical exercise that was separated from implementation; current public sector planning must incorporate an understanding of implementation problems in framing problems. This emphasis on the art of problem formulation is not

new either. More than 30 years ago, Rittel and Webber (1974) wrote about 'tame' and 'wicked' problems that may require different types of planning strategies. These terms do not describe conceptual categories that lead to distinctively different planning strategies, however; they simply warn planners that not all problems are clear-cut and, hence, cannot be addressed in conventional ways. Nevertheless, this was an important insight, and one that was further developed by Christensen (1985), who offered a conceptual framework to differentiate the characteristics of wicked problems. According to Christensen, wicked problems are those that lend themselves to multiple interpretations; consequently, there is no clear social understanding about how to address such problems. Though Christensen offered one way in which planners may conceptualize problems, her framework was based on the particularities of the US context at a specific historical moment marked by uncertainty and a lack of social consensus about both problem definition and policy prescriptions.

In the field of development planning, A.O. Hirschman (1963) had raised the issue of problem formulation decades earlier when many had begun to question the effectiveness of public sector planning. Initially, Hirschman had proposed that planning styles and strategies vary widely between *pressing problems* that are thrust upon planners to solve, such as during natural calamities, and *chosen problems*, which planners opt to address on the basis of their own analysis. Hirschman went beyond this simple dichotomy by providing other similar ways to characterize problems that are useful for effective planning practice. For example, he proposed that the formulation of certain types of problems, like the unequal distribution of land ownership, evokes the impression that their solutions will benefit one group at the expense of another, while solutions to other problems, such as the lack of access to potable water or sewerage, do not appear to dictate a zero-sum outcome, and thus may be less contentious. Hirschman also characterized problems by the level of technical expertise necessary for formulating their solutions, arguing that more technically demanding problems are likely to attract more intervention by international donor institutions, and so on.

By providing ways to categorize planning problems, Hirschman did not intend to construct a general theory of planning; he was merely suggesting that public sector planning could be more effective if planners anticipated how their formulation of problems was likely to affect the types of tasks which they would have to perform for policy interventions. This sensible advice, however, was largely ignored by development planners, who chose instead to focus on macro-political-economic issues and debated the very goals of development. Their ineffectiveness, in the face of both mounting problems and criticism, contributed to the loss of legitimacy of public sector planning and justified the dismantling of the planning apparatus (Sanyal, 2000). Now that such dismantling efforts have proved counterproductive, as growth has stalled and distribution of both income and assets has become

more skewed, public sector planners are likely to be asked again to address old problems, such as how to house the urban poor, and how to create income-earning opportunities for them.

Problem formulation

In planning to address basic problems, public sector planners must learn from the past, formulating problems in a new way, explicitly acknowledging the types of resistance their policies are likely to face, and charting a sequence of tasks to overcome such resistance.

Drawing on Hirschman's pioneering work of the 1960s, development planners could better understand why certain kinds of problem formulation lead to effective policy intervention. In addressing the persistent issue of urban poverty, for example, development planners continue to define the problem as the effect of a set of interconnected and mutually reinforcing causes, such as lack of income-earning opportunities, adequate housing, health care, education, and political participation. These interconnections have been well established through rigorous empirical research conducted since the early 1970s when urban poverty emerged as an area of social inquiry and planning intervention (Chenery et al., 1974). These studies led to many efforts by public sector planners to address the problem of urban poverty in an integrated way, because of the logical argument that an integrated problem requires an integrated solution (Robertson, 1984). The overall experience of such integrated projects that tried to address, simultaneously, the multiple problems of the poor has been disappointing (Agarwala, 1982). If public sector planners are to learn from that experience, they need to acknowledge not only the limitations institutions face in accomplishing such complex tasks, but also the many forces of resistance created precisely because of planners' efforts to address multiple problems. Problems must be formulated not on the basis of what planners know about their complexity, but on the simplest ways that something can be done about them. This would make problem formulation an exercise in which planners anticipate the types of resistance their policies are likely to evoke from both inside and outside the state, and strategize how such resistance can be minimized, bypassed, or best turned into supporting forces.

The fact that planning interventions that favor the poor will meet resistance is not a new insight; well-documented studies have demonstrated clearly how certain sections of the elite – particularly those owning urban land – have defeated many urban poverty alleviation policies (Fernandez and Varley, 1998). What requires more attention is resistance to such policies from within the state, particularly within the bureaucracy of which public sector planners are a part. How many urban poverty alleviation projects have stalled, for example, because the land registration department could not get a new law passed in time to provide land titles to squatters, or engineers in the water supply authority could not extend the city's water

lines into squatter areas? Even though it is common for such problems to stall well-intentioned planning efforts, planning theorists rarely ask themselves how to design policies to avoid them. Instead, they tend to focus on larger socio-political issues, while practical planning issues of this kind are dumped into the broad category of bureaucratic problems, which rarely attract serious academic inquiry.

The inclination to focus on institutional incrementalism as a planning style was dismissed in the 1960s. Even though Charles Linblom never proposed incrementalism as a normative strategy, his contribution was deliberately dismissed by many planning theorists who searched, at that time, for innovative macro political-economic, not incremental, planning styles (Friedmann, 1973). It is true that not all problems can be addressed incrementally as planners muddle through the bureaucratic maze, but even structural problems, such as unequal distribution of land or unequal access to urban labor markets, must be actualized through specific policies and projects which require institutional understanding of the kind that Linblom had written about. Hence, the professional challenge is not whether one accepts Linblom's incrementalism as the only course of action, but how to operate effectively within bureaucratic settings, acknowledging institutional constraints and strategizing how these constraints can be minimized through politically astute problem formulation and policy implementation. There are a few scattered examples of such astuteness. Skocpol (1992), for example, describes how political support for social policies was sustained in the US by portraying such policies as benefiting not only one target group but all social groups. In developing nations, this insight can be equally effective. For example, rather than seeking special allocations to provide potable water in squatter areas only, planners could formulate the problem as the need to upgrade and expand the water delivery infrastructure city-wide. Grindle and Thomas (1991) argued along this line by suggesting that planners formulate problems in such a way as to portray the solutions as requiring diffused costs while generating highly visible and widespread benefits.

Some may argue that this approach is appropriate for only certain types of planning functions, which Friedmann (1973) described as 'allocative planning'. According to Friedmann, there are at least two types of planning functions, one focused on allocations, the other on innovations. If institutional transformation is the goal, one must engage in innovative planning. Innovative planning is not constrained by the daily routine and established bureaucratic procedures with which it has to articulate its goals. A key objective of innovative planning is to create new and 'alternative' institutional mechanisms in contradistinction with mainstream bureaucratic institutions.

Experience from developing countries indicates that creation of new institutions requires as much, if not more, understanding of the bureaucratic planning process. Consider, for example, the case of new institutions created

for upgrading urban squatter areas in many developing countries during the 1970s and 1980s (Cohen, 1983). These new institutions were created to bypass old institutions, such as ministries of housing or national housing authorities, which had failed to address the housing needs of the urban poor. The new institutions were to work in a relatively decentralized way, with active participation by low-income communities, to demonstrate how the housing needs of the poor could be addressed more effectively and efficiently than before. The evaluation of such efforts, however, demonstrated that the new institutions could not operate autonomously (Mathy, 1992), and that relatively successful innovations resulted from approaches which drew on old, bureaucratic ways of addressing problems (Sanyal, 1996). For example, in providing sanitation facilities, the new institutions had to work closely with old sanitation departments whose engineers were knowledgeable about how to extend sewerage networks. In other words, planners cannot escape from the reaches of the bureaucratic structure, which is more important in developing than developed nations; and since they have to work either within or in association with the bureaucracy, they should strategize how to accomplish their goals in that context, particularly to help the urban poor.

As I proposed earlier, problem formulation is an important element of any such strategy. There is no general theory of good problem formulation, but there are insights based on experience that can be culled and built upon. For example, it is important to acknowledge what sociologists call 'path dependency' in problem analysis: it is easier to get things done within the bureaucracy if new policies are described as not strikingly different from previous policies (Berry, 1990). Also, it is not always beneficial to lay out, in detail, all planning objectives, as such transparency would only provide more information for prospective opponents to reformulate their strategies of resistance well in advance (Ascher, 1984). In addition, it is important to create alliances through problem formulation. By demonstrating connections between two problems previously addressed by different agencies, one can legitimize claims for resources by both agencies (Hirschman, 1963). One could identify other such insights, which Schon (1986) called the 'tacit knowledge' of planners. The importance of tacit knowledge in planning practice is now widely acknowledged, but rarely are such understandings probed seriously, or formalized as guides for practice.

Sequencing of planning tasks

One way to draw on planners' tacit knowledge is to question the conventional understanding of how planning tasks are sequenced. This is not a new suggestion. Many planning theorists have questioned the logical sequence of tasks prescribed in the classical Rational Comprehensive model of planning (Mandelbaum, 1996). They have demonstrated that, in reality, planning functions do not follow the prescribed sequence. One could build

on that awareness by asking, further, whether planners can alter the conventional sequencing of tasks as a strategy for getting things done more effectively. This is an important question, particularly in the context of developing countries where the standard argument that certain tasks have to be performed in a certain sequence to be effective is often used to discourage pro-poor and redistributive policies (Marseille, 1994). Some may remember the old argument that the size of the pie of economic growth has to be increased before that pie can be divided into significant parts (Kuznets, 1955). In a similar mode, many have argued that a certain type of investment, or a certain level of skilled labor must be in place before development takes off (Rothchild, 1994). At the city level, there are many similar arguments. One I am most familiar with is that unauthorized, low-income housing settlements must be legalized before basic services can be provided (McAuslan, 2003). Although at one level this position is sensible and progressive in intent, it can also serve as an excuse for utility agencies to ignore these areas. Some public sector agencies have solved this dilemma by taking an unconventional approach to sequencing the tasks involved. For example, in India, the Bangalore Water Supply and Sewerage Board (BWSSB) has begun to provide water to a few areas that have not yet been formally authorized (Connors, 2004). Without worrying about the legal implications of this action, the BWSSB focused on recovering the cost of water supply, thereby generating new revenue, which has drawn praise from conservative politicians. The BWSSB engineers, without publicizing their efforts, simply extended the water lines in small stretches to areas that were easiest to reach because of topography. This unconventional act did not limit the claims of the area residents for eventual legalization: on the contrary, their willingness to pay for water enhanced the validity of their claims for legal titles to their plots.

The BWSSB example is neither unique, nor universally replicable. The lesson to draw from the Bangalore case is that there is no particular sequencing of tasks that fits all purposes at all times. Politically astute planners must look for ways to initiate reforms without creating a political uproar at the very beginning of the reform process. What is even more important is to envision how policies that appear rather timid at first sight can eventually create institutional pressures for other, more significant changes. For example, the delivery of children's vaccines in an unauthorized area created, over time, a vocal constituency of support for the construction of local health facilities (Tendler and Freedheim, 1994). Likewise, small monetary support for pregnant women who were unable to engage in petty trading eventually created pressure from below for social insurance schemes for poor women (Kelles-Vütanen, 1998). Public sector planners must better understand the evolutionary sequence of such processes. Then they can formulate problems in ways that point to small, non-antagonistic efforts, which do not evoke serious institutional resistance, but have the potential to usher in major institutional changes. As I mentioned earlier, it is not only

powerful elites who foment resistance to public sector development; it often emerges from within the bureaucracy itself. In fact, the lower ranks of the bureaucracy often resist new, time-consuming tasks and responsibilities, such as monitoring the water supply in unauthorized areas, or providing regular health services to those areas (Lorei et al., 1993). Planning for institutional reform needs to take into account such internal resistance, and problems need to be formulated in ways to minimize such resistance.

Conclusion

Development planning has come a long way from its politically naïve formative years. Initially strongly supported as a technocratic mechanism for initiating institutional transformation, development planning later drew severe criticism as the greatest hindrance to such transformation. The pendulum of expert opinions has begun to swing back, however, to the position that public sector planning is an important institutional mechanism for development. To be effective, however, public sector planning must be rooted in a politically astute awareness of resistance to planning, particularly from within the state structure. Planners must incorporate this awareness into the formulation and sequencing of planning tasks, challenging conventional planning styles with unorthodox and counterintuitive approaches that facilitate peaceful institutional reform without much fanfare. The main task is to understand the specific political, economic, technical and institutional challenges each problem poses for the planners, and how such challenges can be addressed through strategies that draw on institutional insights culled from the tacit knowledge of practitioners. This contextually rooted and institutionally astute approach would liberate planning from the conceptual grips of ideological purists at both ends of the political spectrum. As public sector planners strategize how to formulate and sequence specific tasks for specific problems, they cannot rely upon one particular planning style. The choice of planning style should be determined by the nature of anticipated resistance to planning efforts and institutional strategies for overcoming such resistance.

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