URPL-GP 2665: Decentralized Development Planning in Developing Countries

Spring 2024

Instructor Information

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  ○ Office Hours Tuesday, 3:00-5:00 pm or by appointment (in-person or virtual)

Course Information

● Class Time: Mondays, January 22 –March 11, 4:55-6:35 p.m.
● Class Location: 12 Waverly Place, Room L114

Course Description

The last several decades have witnessed a global proliferation of public sector restructuring, decentralization, and democratization in developing countries. Traditional development planning has adapted (unevenly) as these trends have unfolded. This course presents an overview of the evolution of planning theory and practice in developing countries with a focus on subnational governments. Although there is some consensus on universal planning norms and processes, the structure and performance of a viable planning system depend heavily on the economic, political, institutional, and cultural context of a country. The course outlines and assesses planning approaches and systems, and reviews how developing countries and international development partners have tried to build decentralized planning. The overall focus is on how local planning systems and processes can be strategically designed and implemented to work effectively in different contexts. Case studies and exercises based on them are an integral part of the course.

The course has three sections. The first two focus on how planning evolved with global economic and political dynamics, development theory, and public sector norms. The third considers how the field has attempted to take a more integrated and strategic approach to supporting the development of planning systems. Collectively they consider the policy, institutional and technical opportunities and challenges that subnational development planners encounter in decentralizing country contexts.

● **Section 1** reviews the evolution of development planning in response to changes in global conditions and development thinking.
● **Section 2** explores how public sector reform, democratization and decentralization reshaped systems for the planning and financing of subnational development.
● **Section 3** considers the strategic turn taken by integrated development and spatial planning in which subnational governments play a broader developmental role and adopt related reforms of traditional planning processes.
Course Objectives

By the end of the course participants will:

1. **Understand the evolution of the theory and practice of development planning** and related public sector systems and procedures in developing countries.
2. **Be familiar with common types of development planning systems** and efforts to decentralize planning processes and improve governance and civic engagement.
3. **Have a basic understanding of efforts to pursue a more strategic integrated approach to local planning** in developing countries.
4. **Be aware of the approaches of international development partners** to supporting more effective local development planning.

Course Format

This 1.5 credit course will meet weekly except for February 19th (Presidents Day holiday) up until and including March 11th. The format will blend lectures, in-class exercises, and discussion. Class participation is encouraged. One assignment will require group work, but most are individual.

Course Readings

There are **no required textbooks**. In part this is because the literature is fragmented--some readings are more conceptual, while others are more technical; some are general and others are specific to industrialized or developing countries; some focus planning institutions, while others center on planning processes; certain concepts, approaches and techniques are relatively new, while others have been around for a long time (although they may have evolved considerably).

The syllabus includes **selected readings that cover basic elements of planning**. They are a mix of older classics and more recent work by academics and practitioners in planning, social science, and public management. **Given the overview nature of the course and the field’s breadth, the readings are not comprehensive**—they are only intended to illustrate the literature. **They are grouped as primary (required primary readings are marked with *) and secondary. Most are posted on Brightspace** (except full books that could not be uploaded).

**You should be aware that the readings vary in quality and complexity, and connections among some of them may not always seem obvious.** We try to synthesize the key material during class and often cover issues not directly covered in readings, and we **provide a PowerPoint after each class summarizing the most important material**. Given the lack of a textbook, it is important for you to check in with me or a classmate on what was covered if you are unable to attend class.

**Although there is no textbook, I posted on Brightspace a useful volume prepared for Habitat III** by the Inter-American Development Bank, UN-Habitat and the Development Bank of Latin America: D. Gomez-Alvarez, R. Rajack, E. Lopez-Moreno and G. Lanfranchi, eds. *Steering the Metropolis: Metropolitan Governance for Sustainable Development*. (Washington, DC: Inter-American Development Bank, 2017). It contains chapters on topics relevant for the course and a range of case studies of particular cities around the world that may be of interest to some of you.
Course Requirements

The grade will be based on the following requirements:

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Requirement</th>
<th>Distributed</th>
<th>Due</th>
<th>Weight</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Exercise 1 (Team)</td>
<td>January 29</td>
<td>February 9</td>
<td>20%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Midterm Exam (Individual)</td>
<td>February 12</td>
<td>March 1</td>
<td>30%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Final Paper (Individual)</td>
<td>February 26</td>
<td>March 29</td>
<td>40%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Class Attendance and Participation</td>
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The exercises variously involve a mixture of questions to be answered and analysis of policy situations. Details on each requirement will be provided in class.

Active class participation means attending class prepared to ask questions and to engage in thoughtful and reflective discussion. The attendance requirement is subject to the NYU Policy on Religious Holidays, which allows members of any religious group to absent themselves from classes without penalty to comply with religious obligations. Please let me know in advance of religious or other absences so that I can help you deal with any material you might miss.

Please note that extensions on assignment due dates will be granted only if requested in advance for well justified reasons. This policy is done out of respect to those who abide by deadlines, despite having complex schedules. Assignments handed in late without notice may be subject to penalty.

Academic Integrity and Grading Policy

The course will abide by the NYU Wagner School policy guidelines on academic integrity and grading. It is each student’s responsibility to become familiar with these policies. All Wagner students have already read and signed the Wagner Academic Oath and are expected to pursue and meet the highest standards of academic excellence and integrity. Plagiarism will not be tolerated and students are expected to report violations to me. If any student in this class is unsure about what is expected of you and how to abide by the academic code, you should consult with me. Please see the NYU Wagner Student Portal for detailed information on the academic code and grading policy.

- Academic Code (https://wagner.nyu.edu/portal/students/policies/code)
- Grading (https://wagner.nyu.edu/portal/students/policies/grading)

Henry and Lucy Moses Center for Students with Disabilities at NYU

Academic accommodations are available for students with disabilities. Please visit the Moses Center for Students with Disabilities (CSD) website and click on the Reasonable Accommodations and How to Register tab or call or email CSD at (212-998-4980 or mosescsd@nyu.edu) for information. Students who wish to request academic accommodations are strongly advised to reach out to the Moses Center as early as possible in the semester for assistance.
I. OVERVIEW OF DEVELOPMENT PLANNING AND KEY PLANNING ISSUES IN DEVELOPING COUNTRIES (1/22-1/29)

1. The Evolution of Development Planning Paradigms and Cultures (1/22)
2. The Rural-Urban Debate in Development Planning (1/29)

Exercise 1 (Team) distributed January 29: Due February 9

II. DECENTRALIZATION AND THE TRANSFORMATION OF MULTI-LEVEL PLANNING AND FINANCING SYSTEMS (2/5-2/26)

(No Class on 2/19--Presidents Day Holiday)

1. Decentralization and Local Government (2/5)
3. Urban and Metropolitan Governance and Finance (2/26)

Midterm Exam (Individual) distributed February 12: Due March 1

III. STRATEGIC INTEGRATED DEVELOPMENT PLANNING AND BUILDING DEVELOPMENT PLANNING SYSTEMS (3/4-3/11)

1. An Integrated Territorial Approach to Local Development Planning (3/4)

FINAL ASSIGNMENT (Individual): Due March 29
I. OVERVIEW AND KEY DEVELOPMENT PLANNING ISSUES IN DEVELOPING COUNTRIES (January 22-29)

Prior to doing the other required readings, please have a quick look at the following two (very different) cases written by applied planning researchers from Zimbabwe and Bangladesh. You do not need to focus on details (we will look at detailed cases later), but please think about the main messages and questions that you believe are raised by the experiences of two Global South planners.


For those who need or would like to have a concise review/refresher of international development thinking (especially for those without an international development background), you may wish to read this book chapter:


1. The Evolution of Development Planning Paradigms and Cultures (January 22)

This session concisely reviews the evolution of development planning in developing countries, following the transformation from a focus on economic growth to a broader development perspective; from dominance by technical analysis to a greater incorporation of political process; and from centralized to more decentralized planning. We also briefly consider the role of planning culture and the transferability of planning approaches across different contexts.

Primary Readings


1Readings marked with an "*" are on NYU Classes (priority readings with a red “*”). Online links are marked with “**”.

**Note:** National Development Plans for selected countries we discuss to varying degrees during the semester--Cambodia, Indonesia, Kenya, Mexico, the Philippines, South Africa, and Uganda--are in a sub-folder on Brightspace. You should look at a few to get a sense of what national plans look like.

**Supplementary Readings**

- D. Conyers and P. Hills, An Introduction to Development Planning in the Third World (Chichester: John Wiley and Sons, 1984).
- P. Healey, Collaborative Planning (Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 1997).

2. **The Rural-Urban Debate in Development Planning (January 29)**

This session introduces a long-contested issue in development with considerable relevance for planning--the relative role of rural areas versus urban areas in promoting economic development and social. We take a brief look at some key issues and trends and note the growing re-emergence of interest in rural-urban linkages, secondary cities, and national urban strategies.
Primary Readings


Supplementary Readings

II. DECENTRALIZATION AND THE TRANSFORMATION OF MULTI-LEVEL PLANNING AND FINANCING SYSTEMS (February 5-26)

1. Decentralization and Local Governments (February 5)

This session provides an overview of the theory and practice of public sector decentralization and the roles of local governments in development planning in the context of diverse and often complex multi-actor environments. Selected country cases are introduced to illustrate the differences in the structure and significance of decentralization in the developing world.

Primary Readings


Supplementary Readings


This session examines the ways in which local and urban governments are embedded in larger national institutional and fiscal structures and considers how this affects their ability to create and implement development plans. Given the great institutional variation across counties, we briefly consider selected cases to illustrate a range of intergovernmental arrangements for development planning and delivering public functions.
Primary Readings


Supplementary Readings


3. **Urban and Metropolitan Governance and Finance** (February 26)

This session reviews the structure of governance in urban and metropolitan areas, which varies greatly across countries in ways that have major implications for the ability of local governments to plan. We also consider how urban and metropolitan governments are financed, which can support or constrain plan implementation and the management of resulting infrastructure.

Primary Readings

III. STRATEGIC INTEGRATED DEVELOPMENT PLANNING AND BUILDING PLANNING SYSTEMS (March 4-11)

1. Strategic Integrated Development Planning (March 4)

This session reviews the movement towards subnational planning that strategically integrate spatial, socioeconomic and environmental planning. We highlight needed policy decision about the territorial scale of planning, planning processes, multi-level coordination; and national oversight and support. We conclude with an overview of an emerging synthetic territorial approach to local development.

Primary Readings

- *UCLG. Policy Paper on Urban Strategic Planning, Barcelona: United Cities and Local Governments, 2019. (Focus on pp. 7-22 and skim regional chapters as desired)

**Supplementary Readings**


2. **Building Development Planning Systems** (March 11)

*This session reviews the evolution of approaches used by developing countries and international development partners to build local development planning systems, governance and capacity. We link these approaches to broader international donor agency support for decentralization. There is more reading than usual and all are marked as priorities, but you only need to skim the materials to get a sense of the approaches outlined in each of the readings.*

**Primary Readings**


• *T. Land and V. Hauck, Building Coherence between Sector Reforms and Decentralization: Do SWAPs provide the Missing Link?* Maastricht: European Center for Development Policy Management, 2003.


**Supplementary Readings**


• *Cities Alliance, *City Development Strategy Online Toolkit.* More CDS information and cases are available here: [http://www.citiesalliance.org/cds](http://www.citiesalliance.org/cds)


