theory with its success at capturing practice effectively through empirical inquiry.

Any debate on the teaching of a subject will necessarily concern the categorization of the subject. Friedmann, by coming first, anchors this aspect of the debate with the presentation of five modes of theorizing. Sager then searches for a metatheoretic context within which the five modes can be understood, or at least a contingency framework that permits choice among the modes based on circumstance. Verma, in turn, suggests that structural categories, like Friedmann’s modes, are less useful than categories such as “whom does the plan serve,” that strive for unity of purpose.

The authors have very different perspectives on the health of the planning theory enterprise, as well as quite different prescriptions for the directions for promising growth. Unmistakable, however, is the shared sense of the potential for the planning theory enterprise to prime the thinking of practitioners and to advance pedagogical debate in our schools.

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- REFERENCES


Teaching Planning Theory

- A PERSONAL PREFACE

For nearly half a century, I have been fascinated by and engaged in the exploration of planning theory. My teachers at the University of Chicago were Ed Banfield—then much intrigued by the writings of Herbert Simon—and Rex Tugwell. When, as a student, I mentioned my preoccupation with planning theory to Tugwell, he warned me—despite his many published essays on the subject—that I would find little receptivity on the part of American academic journals. Finding an audience for planning theory, he thought, would be very tough going. Harvey Perloff also warned me off. He didn’t think that a young whippersnapper like me should be wasting his time on such an abstruse subject. Write about something small and empirical, he advised. But I was obstinate and lucky. My first planning theory article (Friedmann 1957), written while I was still at Chicago, was published in Diogenes, an international journal, in no less than four languages: English, Spanish, French, and Arabic! Naturally, I was jubilant.

Shortly after receiving my Ph.D. in 1955, I was called to Brazil to teach regional planning to a group of public officials in the Amazon, a “region” covering no less than two-thirds of the national territory. This four-month course concluded with an expedition up the Amazon from the delta to Manaus. During this incredibly exciting excursion by boat to the various development projects and settlements along what Brazilians call their rio-mar or oceanic river, I ventured a series of lectures on planning theory which were subsequently published in a revised format in a Portuguese version (Friedmann 1959). In my lectures I tried to distill all I had learned about planning at the University of Chicago, but I doubt that what I had to say made much sense to my students. Nothing was grounded in Brazilian experience, and the literature on which I drew was virtually unknown to them. All in all my lectures were still very much a student effort.

After a stint with the US aid program in South Korea, I joined MIT’s planning faculty in 1961. My mandate was to teach regional planning. Lloyd Rodwin, who was the senior professor in the department at the time, dismissed my suggestion for a course on planning theory (which I very much wanted to teach), asserting that planning theory was a non-subject. I remained unconvinced, however, and soon met up with Bertram Gross who was spending a year at the Harvard Business School and had started to put together an international group of scholars to do empirical work on national development planning. Among them were the French sociologist, Michel Crozier; the British economist and Soviet specialist, Peter Wiles; Eric Trist from the Tavistock Institute of Human Relations in London; and Zygmund Bauman, a Polish sociologist visiting Syracuse University. Together we formed INTERPLAN, the International Group for Studies of National Planning. From this effort emerged a number of case study volumes edited by Gross (National Planning Series, published by Syracuse University Press), of which mine on Venezuela was the first (Friedmann 1965), as well as a collective conference volume (Gross 1967) with a great deal of reflection on the actual practice of planning.

It was only in Chile, however, where I moved in 1965, that I found my own approach to planning theory. Serendipitously, I discovered what I was sure would be an appropriate theoretical object for work in planning theory. I called it the linkage between knowledge and action. I still remember my eureka at what I then saw as a major breakthrough. For two decades, writings on planning theory had been stuck in the rational decision-making paradigm, and the knowledge/action connection promised a way into new intellectual currents. But to my great disappointment, my excitement wasn’t shared by even my closest colleagues at the Center for Interdisciplinary Studies (CIDU) at the
Catholic University in Santiago. It would take two major articles (Friedmann 1969, 1971) and *Retracking America* (Friedmann 1973) to persuade a larger audience of the potential richness of the new paradigm.

Today, the receptivity of planning educators to theory is far greater than was Lloyd Rodwin’s in 1961 and greater than Tugwell thought possible in the early 1950s. Luigi Mazza, a professor at the Milan Polytechnic, is the founder-editor of an international journal, *Planning Theory*. And a lot of significant work is going forward. My own summa, *Planning in the Public Domain* (Friedmann 1987), has been translated into Spanish and Italian; a planning theory symposium was held in Palermo, Sicily in 1992; and Norwegian planners recently conducted a summer workshop on planning theory, with Patsy Healey, Leonie Sandercoc, and myself. New contributions appear every year.

But for all the fervor generated by planning theory, there is surprisingly little agreement on what the term should mean, or how the subject should be taught. In two decadal surveys of planning theory courses in the North American academy, Richard E. Klosterman (1981, 1992) found virtually no overlap in bibliographies that altogether contained respectively 1,500 and 1,300 individual entries! It is in part to remedy this chaotic situation that I decided to write this short article addressed to planning educators. My hope is that we can begin to systematize our work and give our students a basic language, a core of literature to be mastered, and a conceptual framework that will enable them to become better planning practitioners.

### Basic Assumptions

Like Klosterman, I will deal here with a basic course in planning theory intended primarily for master’s students. Unlike Klosterman, I want to eliminate certain subjects from this course that in my view are best dealt with in other contexts—specifically, the history of the profession and professional ethics. I think that both these topics are important in a master’s curriculum and deserve separate attention. But I do not see them as lying at the core of planning theory (see Harper and Stein [1992] for a different perspective on ethics in relation to planning theory). Here, I shall deal with only an introductory semester course that is best taken at the beginning of the second year, when students have already gained some familiarity with planning and planning literature.

Planning theory raises two fundamental questions which must be answered before we can proceed. What sort of theory is it? And what is the theory about? Unlike most theories in the social/human sciences, planning theory is neither explanatory nor predictive, but a theory about good practice. It is therefore a normative theory, or, better yet, a normative mode of theorizing, whose primary object is to improve the practice of planning. In other words, theorizing means to think systematically about what planners do. And the ultimate purpose of such thinking is to help young planners to become, as Donald Schön has taught us, reflective practitioners (Schön 1983).1

But what should we think about? There are two problems here: what do we mean by planning practice, and how shall we categorize planning theories? As regards the first question, the answer will depend on the starting position of a particular theoretical discourse. Planning as a form of practice is not self-revelatory, and who the planners are is not given in their official titles if, indeed, they have titles. Housing, transportation, the environment, economic development, land use, and community organization are all subjects taught in planning schools, but are not unified by any single principle or planning process. The knowledge/action paradigm may be of some use in sorting out the complexities of planning, but this is not enough. In the end, the definition of planning-as-process will depend on how each theorist delineates it for his or her specific purposes. This will render universalizing planning knowledge impossible, but will greatly enrich our discourse.

The second question can be handled in a convenient way by grouping writings on planning theory into five convenient clusters or modes of theorizing about planning. I shall call them applied rationality, societal guidance, behavioral approaches and communicative practice, the linking of knowledge to action or social learning, and radical, emancipatory practice.

While not an especially elegant formulation, these terms do help us to distinguish between five groups of theorists. These groups should not be taken as alternative to each other or be seen as standing in competition for the one “true” theory, but rather as highlighting different facets of planning in western democratic societies. Historically, of course, some modes of theorizing have dominated the field more than others. As Klosterman points out, models of applied rationality were especially popular in the 60s and 70s, communicative practice has been more talked about in the 80s and 90s. But there are persuasive spokespersons for all of them, and our five modes may be seen as roughly contemporaneous.

As I describe them in what will certainly be a sketchy and incomplete picture, I will try to cover, though by no means systematically or exhaustively, the four things master’s students should learn about theory: the major current authors and their formulation of what the issues are for each mode; the basic concepts and methods of investigation; the antecedent “classical” writings; and, most important of all, the normative inferences for planning practice that grow out of the ongoing work.

Because an introductory course is also typically a survey course, my proposal is that we use it primarily to introduce students to each of the five modes of theorizing, in the hope that we can awaken them to the complexities of their chosen
profession and provide them with a framework useful for their own thinking about planning.

■ Five Modes of Theorizing about Planning

Applied Rationality

The discourse in this mode of theorizing turns on the possibilities of reason in public life. Underlying it is a tripartite division into forms of decision making: markets, politics, and hierarchy. For the most part, planners’ central concern has been with hierarchy and the laying out of alternative courses of action for those in power at the top. Wildavsky’s celebrated phrase, “speaking truth to power,” captures the essence of this approach.

Among the best-known current theorists committed to the problematic of applied rationality are Andreas Faludi (1973), whose reader in planning theory is still widely in use; Ernest Alexander (1992, 1993); and Franco Archibugi (1992a, 1992b), Director of the Planning Studies Center in Rome. Their primary focus is on intervention in markets and in “spontaneous” social processes by the state and relates closely to the question of the appropriate form of societal guidance (see below). Belief in the possibility of greater rationality in public decision-making has informed this mode of theorizing ever since Herbert Simon ([1945] 1976) first proposed his synoptic model of decision making, arguing, on practical grounds and in contrast to formal optimization procedures, in favor of a constrained or bounded rationality of satisficing. The contentious debates which followed, juxtaposing synoptic with incremental decision-making, “mutual partisan adjustment” (Lindblom 1965), and “mixed scanning” (Etzioni 1968) are among the best known in the planning literature and do not require further elaboration.

In two recent articles, Ernest R. Alexander (1992, 1993) has given an interesting turn to these debates by forcefully defending his position that central coordination through hierarchy is essential for any nonmarket form of organization. Planning is then attached to this central coordinating entity as something like a comprehensive intelligence. Alexander (1992, 195) writes, “...planning is associated with hierarchy, which appears in various forms ranging from single unitary organizations to complex mandated frameworks and interorganizational systems.”

Because of continuing controversies, theorizing in the mode of applied rationality can be pronounced alive and well. It has linkages to organization theory, decision theory, public choice theory, and epistemology. And it continues to be one of the major sources of justification for planning as a profession, where planners are seen primarily as handmaiden to power and as part of a comprehensive process attempting to coordinate more specialized and narrowly defined activities.

Societal Guidance

This phrase came into general use during the late sixties with Amitai Etzioni’s (1968) The Active Society where he proposed an elaborate theory of societal guidance. But Etzioni was merely the latest in a series of distinguished social scientists who had argued for what Tugwell, imagining planning as a fourth branch of government, called “a directive in history” (Padilla 1975, 149–186). One of them, Karl Mannheim ([1935] 1948), had spent a lifetime wrestling with this same intricate issue. Would a democratic form of planning, he asked, be able to contain the “anarchy of the market” while avoiding the hateful tyranny of totalitarian systems? The postwar success of Keynesian policies appeared to make Mannheim’s option of a “third way” plausible. Etzioni (1968, 10) put it well when he wrote that, “Western nations have gained confidence in their capacity to control societal processes with the wide use of Keynesian and other controls for preventing wild inflations and deep depressions and for spurring economic growth.”

Sociologists and political economists have been among the most active in exploring the possibilities of societal guidance, with an emphasis on institutional reform. In a masterful and even-handed analysis, Charles Lindblom (1977) contrasted planning and market institutions as alternative and competing systems of societal guidance. History resolved the intellectual niceties of this comparison when the Soviet empire collapsed a little more than a decade later, and pundits rushed to declare the “victory” of capitalism over communism.

Meanwhile, city and regional planners were addressing a new phenomenon in our own society that would have far-reaching consequences for societal guidance. Since the 1960s, new social movements had staked out claims for participation and voice in societal guidance. Taking their cue from those movements, planners came increasingly to talk about advocacy (Davidoff), community participation (Paez, Haskin), planning from below (Stöhr), and equity planning (Krumholz and Forester). The prevailing view, of course, was still “from above,” and more radical approaches downplayed or altogether abandoned state planning in a quasi-anarchist revival of community power (Heskin 1991). In a more dialectical mode, Friedmann (1992, 165–166), while arguing for the social and political empowerment of the poor and excluded sectors of the population, nevertheless acknowledged the necessity of the central state and the need to engage it: “A successful alternative politics would rest on a philosophy that accepts the dialectical character of human existence as a unity of opposites that advances only through conflict and political struggle.”

Behavioral Approaches and Communicative Practice

I identify behavioral approaches to planning theory with reflections on planning practice that are grounded in close
empirical observation. In an earlier phase, studies in this mode centered on a macroperspective of wartime, national, economic, and city planning (Franks 1947; Devons 1950; Meyerson and Banfield 1955; Brown and Gilbert 1961; Hirschman 1963; Friedmann 1965; Althulier 1965; Rabinovitz 1969; Cohen 1969; Fried 1971; Matris 1982). With rare exceptions, these studies attempted to show why planning-in-practice seldom meets expectations; why it is indeed a process of "muddling through" more than a neat exercise in applied rationality; how planning comes to be allied to power or, alternatively, peripheralized from it; and how practicing planners tend to justify their practice despite their frequent and perhaps inevitable disenchantment with their craft. In recent years no such studies have appeared in English and, for the moment, macroresearch into planning practice appears to have reached a dead end. Mention might be made, however, of Bent Flyvbjerg's (1991) two-volume case study of environmental politics in Aalborg, Denmark, currently in translation. This study uses what the author calls a phenomenological approach which, although it can scarcely be called behavioral because of its commitment to theory, nevertheless bears some resemblance to the Anglo-American tradition of empirical case studies. Flyvbjerg calls his method the "science of the concrete."

More recently, a very different approach to behavioral planning studies has made headway, inspired principally by John Forester's work. Forester calls his theory critical planning and bases it on the Habermasian concept of communicative action (Forester 1985, 1989, 1991, 1993). He attends to the microinteractions in planning offices, listening to the actual words of office conversation, to what is said (or not said) by whom, to whom, why, and in what circumstances. For Forester, planning is primarily a form of critical listening to the words of others and a mode of intervention—he calls it questioning and shaping attention—that is based on speech. The important thing, he says, is to find out what the story is that's being told. "If we sit in, for example, on planning staff meetings, we see not only that planners are telling one another practical and practically significant, stories all the time, but also that they are creating what we could call 'common and deliberative' stories together—stories about what's relevant to their purposes, about their shared responsibilities, about what they will and won't, can and can't do, about what they have and haven't done" (Forester 1991, 9). And these stories, Forester tells us, are supremely important. What a planner says in the office, "embodies and enacts the play of power, the selective focusing of attention, the expression of self, the presumption of 'us and them' and the creation of reputations, the shaping of expectations of what is and is not possible, the production of (more or less) politically rational strategies of action, the shaping of others' participation, and much more. What [the planner or architect] says involves power and strategy as much as it involves 'words'" (Forester 1991, 23).

Forester's work has inspired others to undertake similar research, based on detailed protocols of conversations (Hoch 1992; Throgmorton 1991, 1992, 1993). James Throgmorton's discovery of the uses of persuasive discourse in planning is especially significant from both practical and epistemological perspectives. In his own words, "policy analysis is inherently rhetorical [and] cannot be fully understood apart from the audiences to which it is directed and the styles in which it is communicated" (Throgmorton 1991, 153). Policy analysis or, by implication, planning is thus far from being an objective, scientific undertaking.

The Linking of Knowledge to Action, or Social Learning

Where theorists of applied rationality focus primarily on decisions, the social learning mode of theorizing draws attention to ongoing actions and practices that subsume decisions. It thus moves away from formal mental to interactive social processes. This, of course, is also true for the behavioral or critical theorist, but important differences remain. Whereas Forester centers his analysis on communicative practices, Friedmann argues that action, which involves mobilizing scarce resources, is always primary. And action implies not only the presence of one or more actors but, on each actor's part, four interrelated dimensions: basic norms or values; a picture, image, or theory of existing reality; strategy and tactics; and implementing practices. In short, although communication is central to every form of action except for physical violence (which Hannah Arendt says is always mute), action cannot simply be dissolved into forms of communicative practice.

The social learning mode of theorizing thus raises not only cognitive and epistemological issues, but also questions about action itself, and thus about power, resources, resistance, and strategy. Epistemological questions about planning were raised early on by Karl Mannheim (1929) (1949) in his masterly study in the sociology of knowledge and then again in a key article by Rittel and Webber (1973) on the distinction between what they called benign and wicked problems. But the all-important linkage question wasn't addressed until the early 70s, when Donald Schön (1971) published Beyond the Stable State followed shortly by Friedmann's (1973) theory of transactive planning. Both authors decided to move away from a static conception of knowledge (as in a body of knowledge) to a more dynamic concept (and metaphor) of learning. Schön's subsequent work led to his long-term collaboration with the social psychologist Chris Argyris in which a carefully elaborated theory of organizational learning took shape (Argyris and Schön 1978), while Friedmann evolved from the relatively simple concept of mutual learning to a more complex model of social learning (Friedmann 1981, 1987; Friedmann and Abonyi 1976). This stressed the importance of experiential knowledge acquired in the course of the action itself and
thus moved from a document-oriented and anticipatory mode of planning to a transactive style between planner and actor. The close articulation between the two makes planners behave more like actors, turning planning itself into a form of strategic action that increasingly takes place in real time (see also Krumholz and Forrester 1990).

Both Schöns’s and Friedmann’s models incorporate what the former calls double-loop learning, which allows organizations to correct any mismatch that may occur when their environment changes (which it does frequently and often dramatically) by probing their current understandings of reality, values, and beliefs with a view to their eventual reformulation and new strategies of action.

Radical Planning or Emancipatory Practice

Radical planning theory embraces a wide spectrum of reflections on practices that appear to have only one thing in common. Because collective actors engaged in radical practice are invariably organized as groups of citizens arrayed in opposition to the state, theorists of radical planning are principally concerned with community organization, urban social movements, and issues of empowerment. Most of them argue for a redistribution of power to (or sharing in power by) the marginalized and excluded sectors of society.

The origins of radical planning are diverse and difficult to unravel. They include marxist and anarchist sources, to which in recent years have been added feminist, post-colonial, and postmodern voices together with their respective genealogies. More than any other mode of theorizing, radical planning has been linked into the multiple critical discourses about societal change. At the same time, we have to acknowledge that, as a mode of theorizing in planning, emancipatory approaches are for the most part of very recent vintage. In their paper, “Gender: A New Agenda for Planning Theory,” for example, Sandercock and Forsyth (1990) engage in a hard-hitting feminist critique of mainstream theorizing. But their analysis concludes with a research agenda that has barely begun to be implemented (see also Planning Theory Newsletter vol. 7/8 [1992, Milano, Italy]). Similarly, postmodern writings have made only a fleeting appearance in planning theory to date (Beauregard 1989, 1991; Milroy 1991), and there have been no practical spin-offs so far, other than the ritualistic incantation—still awaiting clarification and elaboration—of “planning for difference” and other multicultural perspectives on planning (but see Sandercock 1995).

Despite the relative newness of radical discourse in planning theory, a number of innovative approaches to practice can be culled from the literature. Even though I cannot here elaborate on them for reasons of space, a simple listing may nevertheless suggest their practical relevance. At least two of them—Freire and Alinsky—have been around for quite a long time and will be familiar to most readers.

Education for critical consciousness: Paulo Freire (1970); Myles Horton and Paulo Freire (1990)

Community organization for social change: Saul Alinsky (1946) (1969)

Value-relevant action-research: Orlando Fals Borda (1988); Orlando Fals Borda and Mohammed Rahman (1991); Judith Cook and Mary Fonow (1986)

Social and political empowerment: Allan David Heskin (1991); John Friedmann (1992)

Indigenous, culturally specific planning for communities of color: Amory Starr and Chris Lee (1992)


This repertoire of radical planning practices constitutes but a beginning. Young planners are drawn in increasing numbers into community-based, activist planning, and if they are to work effectively in this context, they should be exposed not only to critical thinking about social and political relations, but also to the specific techniques available to radical planners in their day-to-day work (see also Friedmann 1987, ch. 10) and on the more common pitfalls of radical planning practice (Hoffman 1989).

Teaching Planning Theory

I have been encouraged to say a few words about how planning theory might be taught to second-year students, most of whom will have very little tolerance for abstract discourse. My thoughts on the substance and mechanics of an introductory course of this sort can be summarized under the following three points.

The course should be designed as a critical survey of planning theories. Although the instructor’s approach can be flexible, the literatures that constitute the domain of planning theory as outlined in this paper should be at the core of the survey. This does not mean rigid adherence to the five groups I have set out for the convenience of presentation, but the subjects planning theorists have engaged in the past and continue to engage should be central to the course. Different instructors will have different emphases and will want to develop their own critiques of planning. What should be avoided, however, is the free-for-all that in the past led to 1,500 nonoverlapping references.
The course should enlist the experiences of students. Planning theory is not an esoteric subject, and most second-year students will have some experiences that can be worked into class discussions. To draw out these experiences, a small discussion-group format may be adopted for the course. Students who are otherwise tongue tied or intimidated are likely to open up in discussion groups of three to five. In weekly three-hour sessions, a lecture by the instructor can be followed by small-group discussion around key study questions prepared beforehand, with the instructor and/or teaching assistant moving from group to group to keep the discussion in bounds and to respond to students' doubts.

A research paper should be required that, using concepts such as communicative action, social learning, or equity planning, develops a case study of planning-in-practice. Historical, participant observer, and interview methods may be applied as the student prefers. The objective should be to demonstrate the relevance of theoretical concepts for planning practice.

CONCLUSION

It should be obvious from my account of the five modes of theorizing that, understood as theorizing about good practice, planning theory is a most valuable subject for students of planning. Although no one can lay down universal principles for practice, planning theory does involve us in a critical discourse about planning, and this is important if we don't want to fall back into simplistic formulas.

In addition, planning theory leads us to explore the connections between planning practice and social theory more generally, thereby ensuring that planners do not look only inward to their own practices. Planning theorists must remain ever alert to discoveries in social and political philosophy, as well as to feminist writings, theories of social justice, methodological controversies in the sciences, multiculturalism, epistemological debates, the new social movements, and so forth. It is clear, therefore, that planning theory occupies a position of central importance in the education of professional planners. It is intended to stimulate a continuing concern with good practice while helping to renew planning practice by engaging in social theoretical discourse more generally, drawing from it what may be useful and applicable to the practice of planning but also reminding theorists outside of our field of the importance of social practice and action for their own discourses.

The relation of knowledge to action has been a central issue in the human sciences for at least two centuries. Questions of rationality in human affairs have been the concern of philosophers since ancient times. Critical theory and theories of societal guidance have a long and honorable tradition. Planning theory is thus integrally a part of our collective thinking about how to conduct our public affairs.

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NOTES

1. I would have thought that the assertion of planning theory's normative character is self-evident. However, I have been asked by the editors to provide a "brief defense against the most likely criticism that without empirically testable propositions such theory (i.e., normative theories) are ultimately of little value."

To say that a theory is normative in the sense of providing a guide to good practice does not mean that it is either 1) arbitrary or more ideology or 2) disconnected from experience and/or close empirical observation. Theorizing that ignores logical construction and axiological argument would be poor theory, and theories that address planning practice would be empty if they ignored the empirical realities of practice. But paying critical attention to observed reality does not turn theories of planning practice into positivist science. There is indeed a behaviorist tradition that has enriched our discourse of planning theory (e.g., Altshuler 1965), but predictive models—whatever their validity—do not automatically prescribe good practice. For this to happen, explicitly normative arguments must be brought into play.

To provide an example. Sociologists may propose that local planning efforts are likely to fail unless they are developed with substantial inputs from affected communities. This hypothesis does not prescribe a particular form of community participation, however, which, as we know, was originally promoted for very different reasons from "successful planning." A solution that will be acceptable to a particular community may not be the preferred solution of city authorities or, indeed, other stakeholders, whether consulted or not. Moreover, there are various kinds and degrees of participation. So the matter of community participation is not straightforwardly based on a predictive model, but requires extensive normative argument, which, likely as not, would be based on democratic theory (Pateman 1970).

2. See also his more recent Critical Rationalism and Planning Methodology (Faludi 1986).

3. For a first attempt to trace radical planning to its origins, see Friedmann (1987, ch. 6). Unfortunately, this chapter has virtually nothing to say about feminist, post-colonial, and postmodern critical theories.

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