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TOWARDS A POST-POSITIVIST TYPOLOGY OF PLANNING THEORY

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Abstract The post-positivist domination of planning theory in recent years has rightly highlighted the social and political context of theories. Its impact through various guises including collaborative, postmodern and neo-pragmatic approaches has been significant. However, one area that has been immune to these broad changes and interpretations is typologies of planning. Typologies provide heuristics for academics and practitioners that help map the landscape of ideas that influence a particular field. As such they are crucial to any understanding of a diverse theoretical area such as planning. This article seeks to develop a post-positivist typology for planning theory. My typology is based upon the broad themes of post-positivism including the belief that all theory is to greater or lesser degrees normative, a non-linear conception of time and progress and the introduction of spatial and temporal variance in any understanding of the formulation, interpretation and application of theory. The result is an approach that does away with two traditional planning theory dualisms – the procedural–substantive distinction and the theory–practice gap. It also provides a locally diverse and unique interpretation of planning theory at the national and sub-national scale that rejects the idea that local interpretation of theories and their application can be assumed to be consistent with ideas operating at a higher (often supra-national) scale.

Keywords collaborative, postmodern, post-positivism, procedural planning theory, typology

Introduction

In any subject there are usually diverse, evolving and competing ideas or theories that provide a foundation for that area. Typically, the mapping of such a landscape is provided by a typology. Yiftachel (1989: 24) following Tiryakian (1968) defines a typology as a useful analytical tool with three basic functions. It

- corrects misconceptions and confusion by systematically classifying related concepts,
- effectively organizes knowledge by clearly defining the parameters of a given subject, and
- facilitates theorizing by delineating major subparts of distinct properties and foci for further research.

Typologies provide a 'frame' for understanding much in the same way as a discourse – they convey a common understanding of subject area, methodologies, language and history of the development of ideas and practice. Typologies are therefore useful if not essential to anyone involved in a subject area. Planning is no different in this respect. It is now a truism to claim that planning is comprised of an eclectic collection of theories. Unlike other areas of the social sciences such as economics or other professions including medicine planning has no endogenous body of theory (Sorensen, 1982). Instead, it draws upon a wide range of theories and practices from different disciplines. Consequently, planning typologies have had an important role in helping to understand often diverse influences, ideas and theories.

Planning theory has been in a hyperactive state since the early 1980s with developments in a number of fields including neo-liberal and public choice perspectives (e.g. Ehrman, 1990; Evans, 1988, 1991; Lewis, 1992; Pennington, 1996, 2000), postmodern planning (e.g. Allmendinger, 2001; Beauregard, 1989; Sandercock, 1998), neo-pragmatism (e.g. Hoch, 1984, 1995, 1996, 1997), political economy approaches (e.g. Ambrose, 1994; Feldman, 1995, 1997) and collaborative planning (e.g. Forester, 1999; Healey, 1997). This is to say nothing of the plethora of new theoretical perspectives or frames that have been and are being employed to analyse and understand planning.

Over 20 years ago Hemmens and Stiftel (1980) tried to map the routes that different planning theorists were following. They found that increasing

attention was being paid by theorists to social practices, norms, behaviour and language. This contrasted sharply with positivist and procedural bases to theoretical thinking in the 1960s and 1970s. The fragmentation of theory has been labelled the 'paradigm breakdown' (Hudson, 1979) or 'theoretical pluralism' (Healey et al., 1979: 5) and has been characterized in subsequent years by the exploration and development of new avenues of theoretical thinking and reflection. However, another response that has been less popular has been a reassessment of the 'framework' or typology of planning theory itself. Yiftachel (1989), for example, argued that the fragmentation of theory required a new typology as it had complicated rather than clarified previous problems and contradictions:

Consequently, the theoretical foundations of land-use planning are still excessively eclectic, deeply divided, confused, and of little help to students and practitioners. (p. 23)

Up until the early 1980s, the dominant typology of planning theory derived from Faludi (1973) who based his approach on the distinction between substantive and procedural theory. In Faludi's (1973) typology procedures, or means, were to be the business of planning and planners. Consequently, planning theory was dominated by the systems and rational approaches both of which emphasized process above substance. Criticisms of this were led by, *inter alia*, Thomas (1982), Paris (1982) and Reade (1987) who argued that Faludi's approach assumed planning to be apolitical and technical. Subsequent developments by Faludi (1987) to account for these criticisms merely accepted that different kinds of substantive theory existed but the proper concern of planning was procedural theory. Notwithstanding these criticisms, the substantive-procedural distinction remained a popular typology with which to approach and understand planning theory (Alexander, 1997). This was in part due to the symbiotic relationship between rational and systems planning theory and its dominance of academic literature and planning practice (Sandercock, 1998).

The dominance of the substantive-procedural foundation to planning theory and practice was at its height until the late 1970s when,

... the post-war consensus on planning thought, as in many other fields, had blown apart into a diversity of positions. (Healey, 1991: 12)

The different positions were outlined by a number of studies (e.g. Friedmann, 1987; Healey et al., 1979; Underwood, 1980) and seen either as a development of or an opposition to Faludi's substantive-procedural typology. Healey et al.'s (1979) map of the theoretical positions in planning theory in the 1970s, for example, defined the new and emerging positions by reference to procedural planning theory (Figure 1). Thus, social planning and advocacy planning are portrayed as a development of procedural

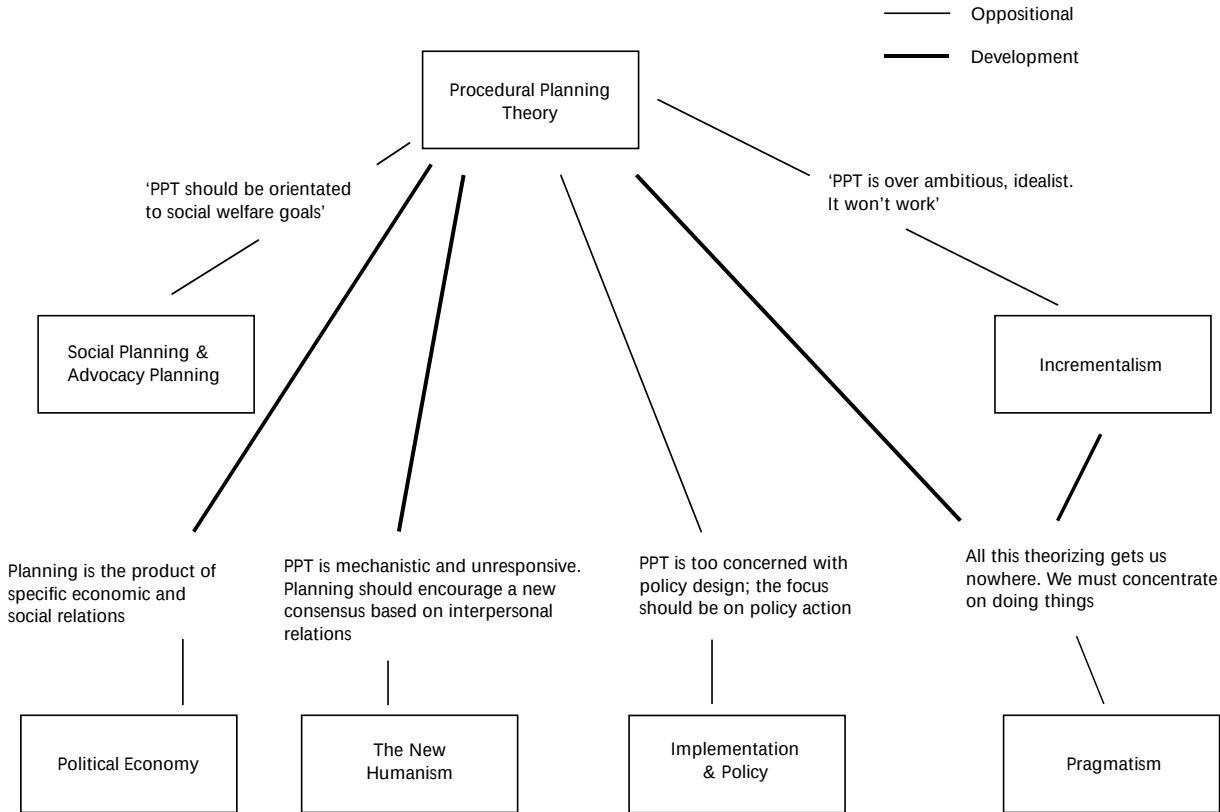


FIGURE 1

Healey et al.'s map of theoretical positions in planning theory in the 1970s Source: Healey et al., 1979: 7.

planning theory through the view that 'Procedural Planning Theory should be orientated to social welfare goals' (Healey et al., 1979: 7). This incremental perspective on the development of theory vis-a-vis the substantive-procedural typology missed the depth of the rupture that had occurred. In many fundamental ways, new or rediscovered fields of theory had irrevocably broken with the positivist past and the substantive-procedural distinction that framed it. In the absence of an alternative typology with which to analyse these changes theorists generally retained the substantive-procedural distinction. Consequently, analyses of the changing nature of planning theory could not account for why such a fragmentation of planning was occurring nor fully appreciate the changes or their implications.

Nevertheless, some theorists did attempt to develop new typologies or perspectives. One of the first attempts to account for the increasing pluralization of theory and relate it to a framework for understanding was advanced by Hudson (1979). Hudson (1979) identified five approaches – synoptic, incremental, transactive, advocacy and radical planning – that built upon the idea of planners as master craftsmen picking the appropriate theory to suit the circumstances: '[each approach can] render a reasonable solo performance in good hands but further possibilities can be created by the use of each theory in conjunction with others' (p. 30). In another approach around the same time, Nigel Taylor (1980) proposed an alternative conception in an attempt to shift away from both Faludi's substantive-procedural distinction and his normative preference for process as the subject of planning. In rejecting Faludi's dualism Taylor replaced it with another that highlighted the difference between sociological theories (empirically based) and philosophical questions (ideological and normative). Taylor's approach was developed by Cooke (1983) who also argued that the substantive-procedural distinction was false. In place of a dualism, Cooke posited three types of planning theory and spatial relations: theories of the development process, theories of the planning process and theories of the state.

One of the most detailed typologies of planning theory came with John Friedmann's (1987) *Planning in the Public Domain* that identified four traditions of planning thought – planning as policy analysis, social learning, social reform and social mobilization. Friedmann's approach broke new ground – his four 'traditions' were departures from previous conceptions and the degree of detail and understanding pointed to a much more disparate basis to planning knowledge than had thus far been acknowledged. However, while such an approach allowed for a more sophisticated understanding of planning theory it sidestepped the substantive-procedural distinction by focusing more on the antecedents of theory. Thus, Friedmann engaged with the pluralization of planning theory by adding to it rather than addressing why it was occurring. In some ways, Friedmann actually fuelled and formalized the 'theory as progress' or teleological understanding by his (natural) use of a timescale to locate different traditions of theory and their relationship to each other.

The above-mentioned approaches acknowledged a fragmentation of planning theory and attempted to represent rather than fully understand what had happened. The first real typology that sought to provide a deeper understanding was developed by Oren Yiftachel (1989). While accepting that there had been some significant developments of Faludi's approach Yiftachel criticized previous typologies for (1) failing to deal with the procedural-substantive and explanatory-prescriptive axes, (2) inaccurately treating most theories as if they were competing explanations for a common phenomenon, and (3) not setting clear boundaries for the field of planning inquiry. From a post-positivist perspective, we could also add that the overall approach between the different typologies was broadly similar – each was based on an implicit or explicit teleological and progressive view of planning theory that identified the major similarities and differences between different intellectual traditions.

In attempting to address these points Yiftachel's typology sought to frame planning theory around the three questions – the analytical debate (what is urban planning?); the urban form debate (what is a good urban plan?); and the procedural debate (what is a good planning process?) (Figure 2). Yiftachel (1989) claimed that these three forms of theory had developed more or less alongside each other and were often complementary as they operated 'on different levels of social processes' (p. 28). Notwithstanding Yiftachel's criticism that previous typologies failed to address the substantive-procedural distinction he set his own interpretation firmly within the substantive-procedural framework: '... it is still useful to separate between the two types, mainly because (a) procedural theories are mostly prescriptive whereas analytical theories are explanatory, and (b) the two types do not, in the main, relate to the same phenomenon' (Yiftachel, 1989: 29). The distinction between substantive and procedural theories is reinforced by Faludi (1987) and Yiftachel's acceptance that both procedural and substantive theories are required for planning and that neither has any dominance over the other.

At this point, debate and development in the assessment of the growing theoretical pluralism and its implications for understanding and classifying planning theory came to a halt. This is surprising given the explosion in theoretical thinking that has occurred in the past 20 years or so. One could conclude that attention has focused upon theoretical development rather than broader understandings per se. However, in part, the lack of broad reflection is also a function of the source and motor of developments in social theory generally – developments that could broadly be termed post-positivist.

The overall shift in the social sciences towards a post-positivist perspective (Baert, 1998) has, in part, led to the plethora of theoretical positions that we now face. *Practically*, post-positivism was a response to the growing awareness that the instrumental rationality of modernism embedded in procedural planning theory and the dominance of the substantive-procedural

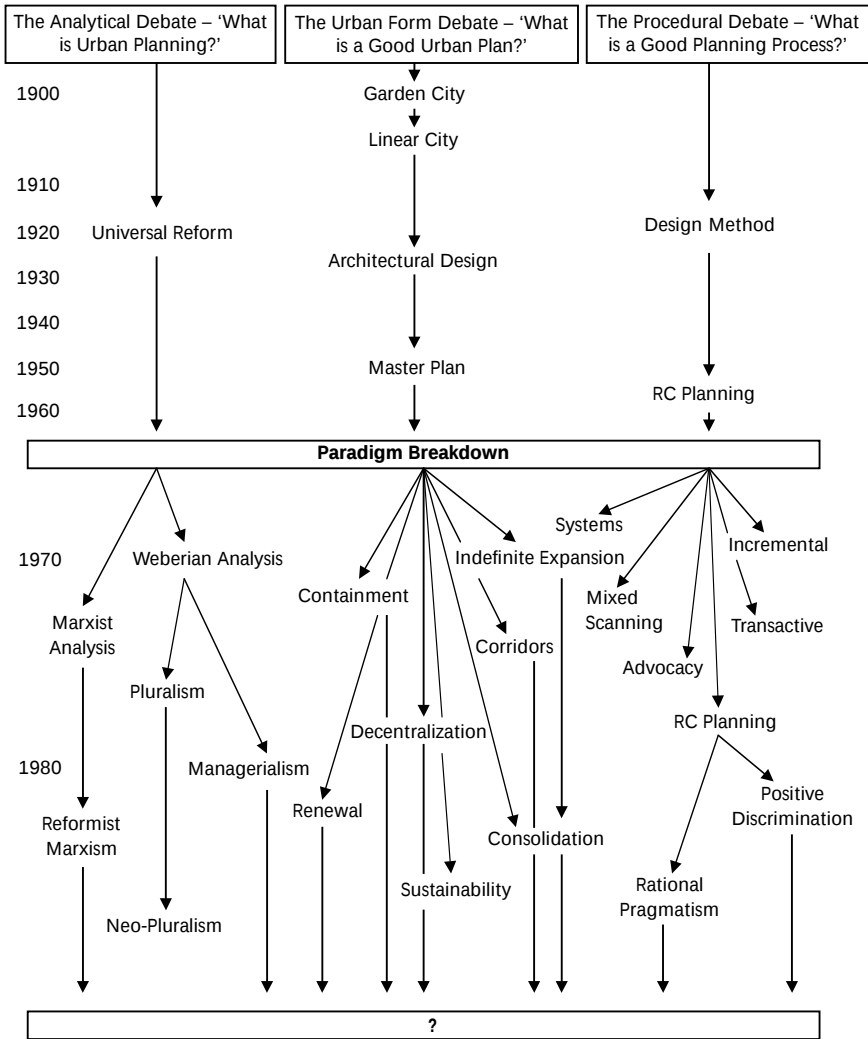


FIGURE 2

Yiftachel's typology of planning theory Source: Yiftachel, 1989: 27.

distinction did not help planners make better predictions or better plans (Healey, 1997; Sandercock, 1998). *Theoretically*, it derived from the work of Kuhn, Hesse and others who sought to explore the positivist foundations to scientific thought and method and emphasize instead the social and historical context of reality and thinking generally. Rather than the bifurcation of procedural and substantive theory post-positivism emphasizes a more normative dimension that diffuses such a duality. Substantive and

procedural theories blur into one as they both exhibit prescriptive and analytical elements – there is no theory neutral way of understanding theory. The ability to separate facts and values is rejected as is the positivist basis to the distinction between substance (analysis) and procedure (process).

Most of the current developments in planning theory (e.g. collaborative, neo-pragmatism, postmodern) as well as new perspectives upon planning such as feminism are derived from a post-positivist perspective. Post-positivism, as a gross generalization, has a suspicion of ‘closure’ or definition particularly through postmodern social theory. One can therefore see why there has been a reluctance to reflect on the landscape of planning theory generally. But this does not or should not be used as a reason for rejecting classifications as a basis for understanding per se. The problem is not one of a principled rejection but the difficulty of seeing a way through myriad positions. The indeterminate characteristic of many aspects of post-positivist social and planning theory does not undermine Yiftachel’s argument that typologies correct misconceptions and confusion by systematically classifying related concepts and effectively organize knowledge that helps facilitate theoretical development. I believe, however, that it does undermine Yiftachel’s approach. There are broadly two reasons for this. First, Yiftachel’s typology is based on a linear and progressive view of developments in planning theory. With a time scale running from 1900 to 1980 along a vertical axis he traces the evolution of different schools of theory in relation to each other (Figure 2). Thus, Weberian analysis evolves into pluralism and finally neo-pluralism. A post-positivist perspective would problematize such a teleological view. While there is a lineage at a crude and abstract level it could be argued that this no longer captures the essence of what is a much more fluid and (at times) non-linear development of theory. There is now a much more eclectic ‘pick and mix’ basis to theory development and planning practice that is better seen as relating to issues, time and space in a *linear* and *non-linear* manner.

One example of this is the way which current theories can be distinguished in terms of the above three criteria. Collaborative planning, pragmatism and postmodern planning theory all owe something to the development and evolution of different theories and ideas which could be traced on a linear model. But what does this tell us exactly? Let us take the issue of relativism on which all three schools of theory have something important to say. While post-positivism hints at a form of relativism (a tolerance and acceptance of different values and opinions to the point of being unwilling to judge others) all three schools have different positions on this issue *within* and *between* them. Now relativism has been a theme of philosophers from Plato onwards. At different periods there have been equally valid and competing ideas on it.

Plato advanced the idea that concepts such as beauty were highly relative in his ‘argument of opposites’ – objects or ideas never possess their properties in an absolute or unqualified way. For Plato absolute knowledge did

exist but only in theory or the abstract both of which were accessible through intellect. Aristotle fundamentally disagreed and instead argued that an empirical or experiential perspective would reveal the true nature of something. This debate between relativists and absolutists has involved philosophers such as Descartes, Spinoza, Leibniz, Kant, Locke, Hume, Hegel, Russell and Wittgenstein to name a few. What is important to note is not that there has been linear progress or evolution but that at different times and in different places over the past 2500 years or so the basic positions have been held simultaneously as they still are now. Therefore, Yiftachel's typology tells us little beyond the existence of various schools of theory over a (relatively) short period of time. Further, whilst time is important in terms of identifying a dominant school of thought it is not necessarily or even ordinarily related to progress in the social sciences (i.e. theories evolve into 'better fits' to reality). Some extreme forms of post-modernism, for example, take an Aristotelian perspective celebrating and working towards difference while collaborative theorists accept ontological difference while seeking to reach consensus based upon inter-subjective discourse.

A related criticism of Yiftachel's typology from a post-positivism perspective concerns the issue of space. Different theories and ideas can be located in time (linear and non-linear). However, there is also a spatial dimension that helps explain *why* these ideas were emphasized or de-emphasized at different periods and in different places. For example, political-economy perspectives originated with Adam Smith and Karl Marx in rapidly industrializing England. Such perspectives re-emerged in Paris in the late 1960s and early 1970s in modified forms in response to the social upheavals. Advocacy planning developed in a USA that was beginning to question the wisdom of government policies including the Vietnam War. The underpinning philosophy of pragmatism with advocacy was itself a uniquely North American concept based upon the twin tenets of economic and individual liberalism. The point is that a two-dimensional perspective that emphasizes time in a linear sense tells us little about the origin, development or application of theory in differing social, economic and political contexts – does advocacy planning mean the same in Scotland as it does in San Francisco? The missing key is space and its relation to varying social, economic and political contexts.

The second reason why Yiftachel's approach is no longer useful as a typology relates to his categories of planning theory. Yiftachel's three categories outlined earlier are in turn based upon Faludi's distinction between procedure and substance in planning theory. Such a distinction has been widely criticized as I outlined earlier. In relation to planning typologies, I believe that there is another important problem: to what extent can we now (if ever) distinguish between theories 'of' and 'in' planning? This fixation with prepositions has diverted attention away from the question of to what extent is all theory to greater or lesser degrees normative (i.e.

suffused with values and embedded within a social and historical context)? A post-positivist perspective would argue that the procedural–substantive distinction is a false dichotomy. Taking any one of the current schools of theory it is impossible to separate substance and procedure. Postmodern planning theory, for example, starts from the premise of incommensurability between private languages as well as the notion of consensus as ‘terror’. Both are normative positions but both could clearly influence any procedures or approaches to planning (though it could be argued that postmodernism precludes planning at all – see Allmendinger, 2001).

Does such a view on the redundancy of the substantive–procedural distinction make typologies themselves redundant? In such a contextualized understanding of planning theory is it possible to map a spatially sensitive, temporally linear and non-linear landscape? I believe that a post-positivist perspective not only provides a powerful critique of current planning typologies but can also provide the basis for an alternative. In the remainder of this article I attempt to account for why there has been an explosion in theoretical thinking and provide a new understanding or typology of planning theory with which to understand it. Such an understanding rejects the distinction between substantive and procedural planning theory and instead posits a much more socially embedded and historically contingent understanding. Before offering an alternative planning typology it is first necessary to explore the thinking behind post-positivism in more detail and its manifestations in planning as well as previous attempts and critiques of planning typologies.

Post-positivism and planning

Over the past two decades or so planning theory has been dominated by the *post*; postmodern, post-structuralist and post-positivist. In this respect, it has been part of a wider shift in understanding and sensibilities in social theory and the philosophy of science that emanated from a number of different directions. Most notable were challenges from philosophers of natural science such as Kuhn, Hesse, Feyerabend, postmodernists and post-structuralists such as Lyotard, Foucault and Baudrillard and critical theorists including Habermas, Adorno and Horkheimer. These changes involved a rejection of the logic of positivism and the basis to scientific knowledge generally which sought ‘the discovery of a set of general methodological rules or forms of inference which would be the same in all sciences, natural and social’ (Bohman, 1991: 16–17).

‘Post-positivism’ signifies a loss of faith in this essentialist epistemology as the proper guide in the philosophy of science, calls into question the very idea of such a ‘logic’, as well as all those distinctions – hermeneutic or positivist – which rested upon it. (Bohman, 1991: 17)

Instead we have the break-down of transcendental meaning (Lyotard), the discursively created subject (Foucault), the role of cultural influences in ordering society (Baudrillard) and a new appreciation of the pernicious role of power as a form of societal control (Foucault).

Post-positivism is characterized by and emphasizes:

- a rejection of positivist understandings and methodologies (including naturalism) and embraces instead approaches that contextualize theories and disciplines in larger social and historical contexts;
- normative criteria for deciding between competing theories;
- the ubiquity of variance in explanations and theories; and
- an understanding of individuals as self-interpreting, autonomous subjects. (Bohman et al., 1991; Hacking, 1983; Hesse, 1980)

Aspects of planning theory began to embrace these new understandings and develop them in a variety of different directions. Such a fragmentation of planning theory had a number of implications as planners and theorists tried to grapple with the idea of reality as a social construction. The most obvious outcome was the problematizing of the idea of theory itself. The traditional view of planning saw it based upon '... the neutrality of observation and the givenness of experience; the ideal of unequivocal language and the independence of data from theoretical interpretation; the belief in the universality of conditions of knowledge and criteria for theory choice' (Bohman, 1991: 2). In place of this we have a post-positivist recognition of indeterminacy, incommensurability, variance, diversity, complexity and intentionality in some routes of theoretical development – traits that question the very notion of 'planning'. A post-positivist approach requires 'shifting from causal reasoning as a basis for plan-making to discovering and confirming meaning' (Moore-Milroy, 1991: 182).

Many of these ideas were not new to practising planners who knew the difficulties in applying positivist or causal methodologies to practical 'real world' situations. However, for planning theorists these post-positivist times have been characterized by uncertainty and retrospection that have led to an eclectic emergence and re-emergence of a multitude of theoretical approaches including collaborative planning, neo-pragmatism and post-modernism as well as changed interpretations including hermeneutics and feminism. Associated with this has been a general rejection or reorientation of positivist-based theories such as systems and rational planning. The post-positivist perspective on planning questions positivist underpinnings and the ability to separate values and facts. What are regarded as values and facts are themselves indeterminate and dependent upon the interpretation of the person identifying them.

With the fragmentation of theory into a variety of forms that reflect positivist and post-empirical routes and numerous trajectories within those

schools 'theory' has become something of a pejorative term. Indeed, some contemporary works actually avoid the term 'theory' altogether:

Every field of endeavour has its history of ideas and practices and its traditions of debate. These act as a store of experience, of myths, metaphors and arguments, which those within the field can draw upon in developing their own contributions, either through what they do, or through reflecting on the field. This 'store' provides advice, proverbs, recipes and techniques for understanding and acting, and inspiration for ideas to play with and develop. (Healey, 1997: 7)

However, the differences between post and positivist ideas of planning do not simply come down to not using the word 'theory'. This 'open' and interpretative perspective contrasts sharply with the more 'mainstream' understandings in other approaches. The positivist conception of planners saw them as technical experts:

... one of the most forceful arguments for placing primary responsibility for goal formulation on the planner ... (is) ... the assumption, traditional to professionals, that, in some way, they 'know more' about the situations on which they advise than do their clients. (Chadwick, 1971: 121)

The post-positivist conception sees planners as fallible advisors who operate like everybody else, in a complex world where there are no 'answers' only diverse and indeterminate options. Rather than recourse to objective evidence or reality the emphasis in post-positivist planning is on language and 'making meaning' through language. Fischer and Forester (1993), for example, term this new understanding and its relation to planning the 'linguistic turn' in 20th-century philosophy.

In the post-positivist understanding planning is characterized by (among other factors) fragmentation, plurality, subjectivity and interpretation. Different theorists have attempted to address these questions in different ways drawing upon various other theoretical and philosophical positions. Critical theory, for example, has been a popular basis for post-positivist planning as it accepts many of the precepts but seeks to avoid the associated relativism of some postmodern approaches. What does post-positivism mean for our *understanding* of planning theory? Two routes are open to us. The first seems to have been implicitly taken and has involved concentrating on the development of theory per se rather than standing back and attempting to see a more holistic picture. The second is to attempt a post-positivist typology of planning theory and it is to this second route that I now turn.

Towards a post-positivist typology of planning theory

What does a post-positivist perspective mean for a typology of planning theory? There are a number of ways of interpreting such a broad approach but I would offer an interpretation of post-positivism that emphasizes a number of principles:

- All theory is to greater or lesser degrees normative, i.e. suffused with values and embedded within a social and historical context.
- Given such a social and historical context the application or use of theory cannot be 'read off' from the principles or tenets of that theory derived from a more abstract understanding. Thus,
- Theory is mediated through space and time allowing for the differential formulation, interpretation and application of theories.
- If theories are normative, variable through time and space and contextualized through social and historical mediations (of which planning is one) there is no distinction between substance and procedure but a complex iterative relationship between ideas and action.

One route for a post-positivist planning typology to take in the light of these principles is to emphasize influences upon theory rather than a substantive–procedural distinction. Identifying and tracing influences and how theories are transformed, mediated and used in a linear and non-linear way and different contexts including time and space provide both an explanation of why we have experienced such a fragmentation of theories in the past two decades and why some theories seem incommensurable. Implicit within the concept of influences is the idea of planning drawing upon debates and ideas from a variety of fields. Also implicit is the distinction between different kinds of theory and the uses to which they are put.

This is not an attempt to reintroduce a substantive–procedural distinction by the back door but to recognize that some theories contribute to planning in different ways. Neither does it run contrary to the post-positivist principle that all theory is to greater or lesser degrees normative. Conceptual frameworks or perspectives such as regulation theory may be normative but make a qualitatively different contribution to planning theory than, say, theories of policy networks. One may therefore see theories as being drawn upon and used in different ways – which is actually what happens in practice (Grant, 1994). Collaborative planning of the Healey (1997) variety draws upon critical theory, structuration theory as well as elements of cognitive psychology. Critical theory is itself built upon the foundations of hermeneutics and elements of political economy while structuration builds

upon a plethora of theories and ideas from a variety of sources. Healey’s interpretation differs from that of Forester (1989, 1999) and others who broadly subscribe to the collaborative or communicative position.

My approach, therefore, builds upon these principles and avoids the two drawbacks of Yiftachel’s typology identified earlier, i.e. it is not based upon a linear or teleological view of time and theoretical development and it also avoids the false substantive–procedural distinction. Listed beneath I identify five broad categories of theory that provide a typological framework to help identify and map theory in planning from a postmodern perspective (Figure 3).

- Framing Theory. Drawing upon a variety of different forms of theory and seeking to occupy ‘a similar semantic space as concepts such as paradigm, schema and conceptual complex’ (Alexander and Faludi, 1996: 13), framing theories are similar to epistemologies or discourses. They are world-views – much like Kuhn’s paradigms – that shape attention and bias towards issues and, crucially, other kinds of theories. Thus, modernism and postmodernism would both count as framing theories. While there is some overlap – particularly between what has been termed ‘reflexive modernism’ (Beck et al., 1994) and postmodernism – both are distinct worldviews that draw upon different theories or perspectives of the world. Framing theory thus has a central role in mediating or filtering exogenous theory, social theory and social scientific philosophical understandings (see following categories).

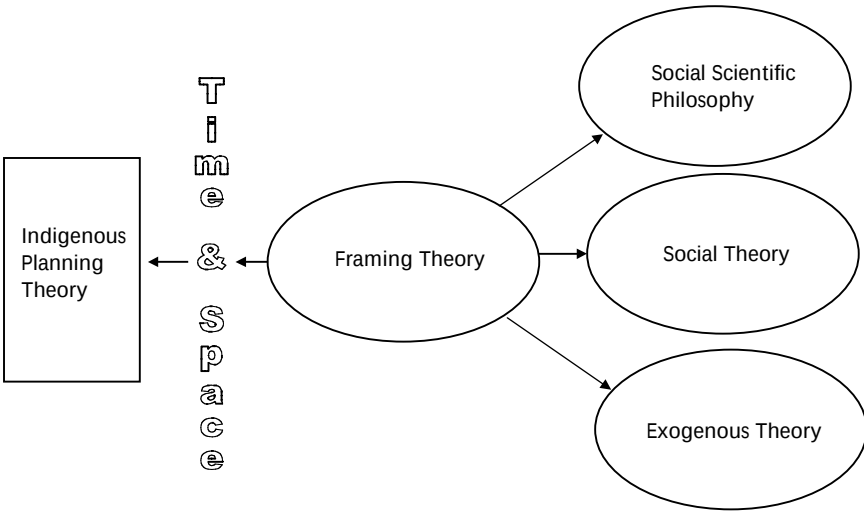


FIGURE 3
A post-positivist typology for planning theory

- **Exogenous Theory.** Planners have always drawn upon various theories that, while not being specifically concerned with planning per se, have a relevance for space, policy processes or governance. Such exogenous theories include, for example, theories of democracy, cognitive psychology, regime and regulation theory, implementation theory, central–local relations, nationalism and a host of other ‘meso-level’ theoretical constructs. Some of these theories, such as central place theory, have been developed into indigenous planning theory at certain times while others, such as regime theory and regulation theory, remain in the ‘background’ providing an understanding of planning and space. Exogenous theories differ from social theory (see following category) mainly in their level of abstraction. Exogenous theories do not provide a holistic or general theoretical understanding of society but focus instead on a particular element of society, e.g. the relationship between observed phenomena such as car-usage and the decline of town centres. Thus, they are *generally* more empirically based and testable than social theories.
- **Social Theory.** Social theory has developed from sociology generally to a related though discrete set of reflections upon and understandings of society. Two broad categories of social theory exist: the ‘top-down’ structuralist approaches (e.g. structuralism, functionalism, Marxism) which examine the structuring forces upon individuals and the more ‘bottom-up’ interpretative understandings (e.g. symbolic interactionism, ethnomethodology, phenomenology) that emphasize the reflective nature of individuals and their ability to choose. In recent years a third category has been added that seeks to overcome the duality of structural and intentional approaches including the structuration theory of Giddens and Habermas’s critical theory by theorizing a relationship between the two. Social theory has been highly influential in indigenous planning theory. Four areas have had particular influence recently: critical theory; rational choice theory; Foucault’s archaeology and genealogy; and structuration theory. Apart from rational choice theory the emphasis has been upon the more interpretative turn in social theory and indigenous planning theory, for example, postmodern planning theory (e.g. Sandercock, 1998), collaborative planning (e.g. Healey, 1997), neo-pragmatism (e.g. Hoch, 1995, 1996).
- **Social Scientific Philosophical Understandings.** These come under the broad categories of, for example, positivism, falsification, realism, idealism, etc. Social scientific philosophy is distinct in subtle ways from social theory and requires a separate understanding. All social theories make a number of assumptions regarding philosophical arguments. In some ways these understandings are linked to social assumptions regarding, for example, whether they are based upon a realist understanding of the primacy and open nature of reality (e.g.

structuration) or a more closed system of reality (e.g. public choice theory). Consequently, a philosophical understanding and perspective on social science can reveal the foundations of social theory. This has two benefits. The first is that, on surface appearances, some aspects of social theory appear very similar and proponents of each may appear to be arguing past each other or about aspects that have little relevance. One example of this is the understanding of the relationship between structure and agency within collaborative planning theory. The perspectives of Giddens and Bhaskar appear so similar as to essentially be the same. However, the different positions each take have significant though subtle implications for an understanding of the relationship between the planner and the structures within which she works.

- **Indigenous Planning Theory.** From all of the above comes a peculiar kind of theorizing that is planning specific. Most books on planning theory list various perspectives including the usual suspects of Marxism, neo-liberal, advocacy, systems, rational comprehensive, design, collaborative and neo-pragmatic theories among others. These are schools of planning theory that in a variety of ways draw upon the other four forms of theory outlined above. For example, neo-liberal planning theory is constructed from philosophical understandings of closed systems, positivist outlooks concerning naturalism, a Lockean conception of the human mind as a devoid of a priori structuring, rational choice theory concerning the maximization of individual utility and an understanding of humans as individuals who create society through aggregate actions. But indigenous planning theory cannot be simply 'read off' from a combination of other kinds of theoretical understanding in a post-empirical perspective. Space, time, the institutional and government context and other important influences also play an important role in the formulation of indigenous theory. This means, for example, that not only is neo-liberal planning theory an amalgam of different understandings it is also mediated through current institutional and spatial arrangements that meant it was modified to suit not only the UK but the planning arrangements in the UK.

Figure 3 sets out the five forms of theory and their relationship. This typology provides some key understandings to the current landscape of planning theory including the role of different kinds of theory in the construction, interpretation and use of indigenous planning theory. However, in a cluttered field of theory the typology is merely a framework for a greater understanding of individual positions vis-a-vis planning theory that will be revealed through a genealogy of theory. An example will hopefully help illustrate this.

Talk of postmodern planning theory or collaborative planning theory masks a variety of individual positions that vary in their selection and interpretation of theory and the mediation of these through time and space.

Thus, both Forester and Healey belong to a similar *Weltanschauung* (or framing theory) though both approach what the former would term communicative and the latter collaborative planning in significantly different ways. While both draw upon the communicative theories of Habermas, Forester complements this with pragmatism while Healey draws upon Giddens's structuration. Both approaches are also clearly mediated by time and space. Forester's communicative theory has been developed with an awareness of US planning (hence his emphasis on Rorty's pragmatism) which is more varied and fluid both institutionally and in terms of processes and ends. Healey's interpretation is far more UK orientated where more uniform and concrete processes and institutions help structure outcomes and ends – hence her concern with structuration.

The typology not only encourages and facilitates genealogies between similar theories, it also provides a framework for exploring differences and similarities between different indigenous planning theories. Figure 4 details the relationships between three forms of indigenous planning theory – communicative (Forester, 1989), collaborative (Healey, 1997) and postmodern (Allmendinger, 2001). The diagram seeks to represent the relationship between the three positions but also shows, through the overlaps between the different theories such as critical realism and relativism, the relationship and overlaps between the different theoretical positions. Following the typology outlined earlier, the framing theory of these three interpretations dictates what social theory, social scientific philosophy and exogenous theory are mediated through time and space to form indigenous planning theory. In the case of Forester and Healey, their reflexive modernist frame points towards a realist ontology. Mainstream postmodernism rejects realist ontologies, i.e. that that which we experience or observe is a representation of some ultimate reality. No such reality exists and what we are left with is a myriad of 'language games', personal opinion and ultimately incommensurable ideology. Allmendinger rejects this position and instead draws upon critical realism and its argument that postmodern theory has confused an epistemological issue with an ontological one.

In terms of social theory there are again three distinct though related positions – Healey's combination of structuration and Habermas's communicative rationality, Forester's combination of pragmatism and communicative rationality and Allmendinger's postmodernism and critical theory. Finally, there is a large degree of overlap between the exogenous theory of all three. I have already discussed earlier how the collaborative and communicative positions are mediated through time and space.

Two important questions arise in relation to this post-positivist typology. The first is how does this post-positivist typology overcome the difficulties with other typologies? I identified two broad problems with Yiftachel's typology from a post-positivist perspective – its basis in a linear and progressive view of theory and its use of the substantive–procedural distinction. I have already mentioned above how focusing upon influences rather than

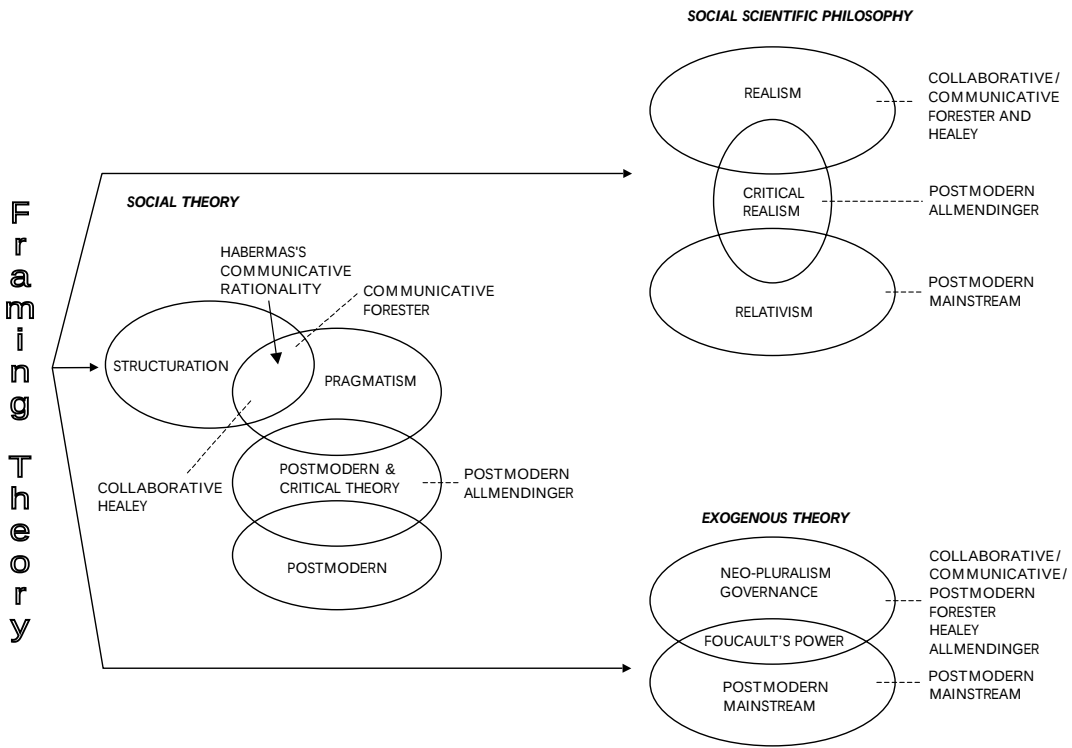


FIGURE 4

Collaborative, communicative and postmodern planning theory through a post-positivist typology

a linear and progressive view emphasizes the diverse influences upon planning theory, the uniqueness of the balance or interpretation placed upon different theories and their spatial and temporal variance. It also bypasses the debate on the distinction between substance and procedure by conflating them.

The second question is does the typology meet the functions set out by Tiryakian earlier? One problem with Tiryakian's (1968) understanding of typologies is that it was itself embedded in a positivist conception of theory. Claims that a typology can delineate 'distinct properties' may have been easier when comparing and contrasting, for example, systems and political economy schools of theory than it is when mapping theories that follow a broadly hermeneutic approach and differ in emphasis rather than substance. Further, there are often important but subtle differences within the schools of theory that a typology should identify but that would be difficult to highlight. Postmodern planning theory, for example, is a label that hides a number of positions. The question of difference is one that separates a number of interpretations. Lyotard (1984) rightly emphasized difference and diversity as a defining characteristic of postmodernism. He felt that both were so important he argued that they should be created even where they did not necessarily exist – consensus of any form was akin to terror. Postmodern planning theorists differ in their interpretation of this. Soja (1997) broadly follows Lyotard while Allmendinger (2001) argues that diversity may be a *leitmotif* of the postmodern but the postmodern must also include the right to homogeneity and modernity if it is to mean anything. The question is at what scale should the map of planning theories be drawn? At a more abstract level a typology identifies the existence of a postmodern planning theory but might miss the connections and relations it has in some guises to modernism particularly regarding issues such as consensus.

Difference in emphasis has become more not less important as planning theory has diversified. This is not necessarily a major issue as Tiryakian does not preclude a more detailed mapping but the spirit of his criteria, particularly the use of terms such as 'major subparts' and 'clearly defining parameters', may not be compatible with a post-positivist environment. Even if major subparts can be identified differing emphases – or 'minor subparts' in Tiryakian's terms – are as important. It is also not clear that concepts can be 'systematically classified' any more. If by 'systematic' Tiryakian means a set of connected parts related or interacting so as to form a unity then this would come up against one of the themes of post-positivism, namely, the emphasis on openness and lack of closure. The use of 'systematic' does not actually add anything to his function of correcting misconceptions and confusion by classifying related concepts and its omission overcomes this issue.

The typology I set out earlier also organizes knowledge in terms of broad schools and influences but does not (nor should it) 'clearly define the parameters of a given subject' as Tiryakian requires. No such clarity can be expected or enforced in a post-positivist environment. Again, this is a

matter of degree. Finally, while my typology may delineate subparts it does not necessarily identify distinct properties but provides a framework for such a search on a more individual basis by accepting that differences are now as much by degree.

While my typology fits the criteria set out by Tiryakian those same criteria may themselves be inappropriate for a post-positivist environment. The functions of a typology need to be more sensitive to the post-positive emphasis on normative dimensions to theory, the ubiquity of variance in explanations and theories and the overall more subjective understanding that accompanies it. Overall, this requires a shift in emphasis in the functions of typologies away from identifying schools of theory, as Yiftachel does, to a greater emphasis on context and influences at a broad level that leaves open the opportunity to interpret the extent of that influence.

Conclusions

Planning theory now has a diverse and fragmented landscape. The need for a typology to help organize and explain these positions in relation to different schools of theory, other disciplines and planning practice is as necessary as ever. However, the concept of a typology as well as actual typologies have themselves shifted under the gaze of post-positivism. What are the implications of a potential new typology for planning theory? For academics and practitioners debates and developments in planning theory can seem at best obscure and at worst irrelevant. Typologies can shine a strong light upon such apparently unintelligible debate thereby providing a greater understanding of that debate and its relevance to practice. It should also allow the debate to be engaged by those excluded by the obfuscating nature of much of the discussion particularly where there are differences in substance and emphasis within schools of thought. Often the differences within different schools of theory are both obscure and as important as the differences between schools. They can reveal crucial ruptures, e.g. the different emphasis placed upon difference and consensus in postmodern planning theory discussed earlier.

Where to go from here? It is not entirely true to claim that the typology outlined here provides a map of planning theory. It would be more accurate to say that it offers a framework or tool to provide such a map that, by necessity in a post-positivist perspective, will depend upon the interpretation of individuals particularly of those involved in developing theory. Such maps undoubtedly have a crucial role to play particularly as the trajectory of planning theory seems to be for a divergence rather than convergence of theory. A continuing divergence, like an ever-expanding universe, conjures up a postmodern nightmare of irreconcilable and incommensurable private languages where distances between individuals become too much to bridge. A post-positivist typology such as the one discussed in this article accepts

difference but seeks to provide understanding of such seemingly diverse positions so as to avoid the extremes of either homogeneity or heterogeneity. In this way it fits in with the spirit of the collaborative project that equally tries to tread the path between difference and sameness. This, above all else, is the challenge of planning theory in the 21st century.

Such a challenge will be aided by discussion of the 'big picture' including typologies as well as development of individual areas or schools of theory be they pragmatic, postmodern, collaborative or whatever. There is evidence that this balance between theory development and theoretical frameworks such as typologies is being taken up (see Fainstein, 2000). Such interest can only be helpful to planning theory and practice.

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