

Planning for Sustainability: Cultivating Wisdom and Creativity in Practice and Theory

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Abstract: In this paper, I examine planning theory and practice as it enters a new paradigm of sustainability. Currently, few standards exist regarding the definition, range, or scope of sustainability planning, making it difficult to carry out and evaluate. Nevertheless, planners wield a great deal of influence in shaping the meaning of sustainability and in developing and executing sustainable plans and strategies for cities and their inhabitants. Although planning has advanced through application of Habermasian communicative action in research and practice in recent decades, this focus on public participation, discourse, and consensus leaves little room for examinations of the power relations underlying attempts to plan for a sustainable future in a pluralist society.

This discussion explores an alternate theory of practice for planners and planning scholars alike who share the ideal of sustainability. In it I argue that sustainable planning requires an amended set of theoretical and practical tools and explore the idea that practical wisdom and creativity are among the skills that planners interested in sustainability will need to cultivate, supported by wise and creative planning theory. After a brief examination of the ways that planning can effect sustainability, I'll propose why cultivation of both wisdom and creativity in planning theory and practice may be essential in a sustainable future--planned or not--and offer for illustration an alternate model of sustainable planning research, practice, and theory development. Ultimately, this paper calls for expansion of planning's current conceptions of and approaches to sustainability and provides preliminary tools for readers interested in cultivating more sustainable planning methods.

Introduction: Planning Four Generations

As a newcomer to recent debates in planning theory, I was impressed by the vigor with which planning theorists spent the last decade discussing planning's so-called "communicative turn" (Fainstein, 2005; Forester, 2000; Healey, 2000, 2003; Hoch, 2007; Huxley & Yiftachel, 2000). On the surface, this discourse appears fueled by two central debates, the first over communicative action's dominance of the field and the second, altogether more persistent, about the relationship between theory and practice in planning. Echoing others ongoing throughout social science in the latter half of the Twentieth Century, this debate represents a theoretical attempt to reconcile the perceived weaknesses of Modernism's objective rationality within the altogether modern profession of planning.

In planning, this modern orientation is exemplified in the rational/comprehensive model of the post-war era, planning's "Golden Age," which marked the shift from the town-planning era's macro-architect approach toward the scientific analysis of cities and regions as organic systems. To optimize the necessary feedback processes, planning moved beyond the boundaries of

sociology to incorporate geographic, economic, and management theories. As planning professionals implemented sophisticated tools to exact "greatest good" for the greatest number, the gap between social science theory and an increasingly technical planning practice intensified (Taylor, 1998). Banfield demonstrates this, defining a plan as:

A course of action which can be carried into effect, which can be expected to lead to the attainment of the ends sought, and which someone...intends to carry into effect.... As distinct from planned ones, opportunistic decisions are made as the event unfolds as they are, therefore, not mutually related as a unit having a single design. The execution of any planned course of action involves the making of opportunistic decisions as well as planned ones (Meyerson & Banfield, 1995 in Faludi, 1996 p. 66).

It is this objective, means-ends rationality to which proponents of planning's subsequent "communicative turn" were most opposed. They aimed to elide what they perceived as the false divisions in planning between public policy and politics, between theory and practice, and between the professional, disinterested planner and the debating public for whom he was planning--to make planning relevant in people's lives, especially those of society's most disadvantaged (see also Davidoff; Forester, Healey, Hoch, Innes, Mandelbaum). With its origins in Habermasian communicative action, ethnography, and critical pragmatism, this generation of planning theory focused on planning as discursive practice in a pluralist society. Like the model preceding it, the advent of collaborative planning echoed wider trends in social science including the rise of post-structuralism and the increasing appreciation of a subjective reality and its incumbent mandates (Healy 2003).

Planning's rational/comprehensive model is consistent with, as Flyvbjerg points out, modern social science's general preoccupation with emulating the natural-science model, methodologically, epistemologically, and philosophically (2001). Thus, it would seem that the shift from rational/comprehensive planning to communicative action represents a significant paradigm shift in planning theory. However, Flyvbjerg (drawing on the work of Hubert Dreyfus) observes that Kuhn's well-known conception of scientific "paradigms" does not hold in the realm of social science. Unlike in natural science, which evolves according to scientific revolutions, the social sciences:

"go through periods where various constellations of power and waves of

intellectual fashion dominate, and where a change from one period to another which on the surface may resemble a paradigm shift, actually consists of the researchers within a given area abandoning a 'dying' wave for a growing one, *without there having occurred a collective accumulation of knowledge*. Not paradigm shifts but rather style changes are what characterize social science: it is not a case of evolution but more of fashion" (Flyvbjerg, 2001, p. 30, emphasis mine).

If we agree with Flyvbjerg that these shifts in social science represent not cumulative, theoretical evolution but rather non-accumulative stylistic changes, then it becomes apparent that the argument between theorists of the communicative and rational/comprehensive models is irreconcilable--based not on the legitimacy of premises, claims, or evidence in competing bodies of knowledge but rather on the dominance of two competing ontological emphases--those of objective and subjective rationalities, what Hillier describes as the ontologies of "being" and "becoming" (2005). I must caution that I am not attempting to establish a binary opposition between the two latest schools of planning theory; there are many paths of thought diverging from these, including materialist critiques, regime theory, regulation theory, community power theory, actor-network theory and more. However, I am suggesting that, in large part, the dominant debates in planning today reflect a disciplinary divide across divergent ontologies--those of rational positivism and postmodern/post-positivist theories. Evaluating planning theory historically as periods of stylistic change rather than in the more dramatic Kuhnian sense highlights the false dualisms of both the procedural/substantive debate and the theory/practice gap (see Allmendinger, 2002 for a comprehensive typology of "post-positivist" planning theory).

Lest I come across as overly conciliatory or theoretically naive, remember this paper is intended as an exploration of planning for sustainability, not a treatise on planning theory. If we regard the town planning movement as the premier planning style or generation, the rational comprehensive model as the second; and the "communicative turn" as the third wave, for example, that leaves the matter of distinguishing the current mode of planning thought. We can argue that sustainability is currently the "new planning agenda," and might easily be considered planning's Fourth Generation (Beatley & Manning 1998). However, I am not concerned here with delineating further stylistic developments in planning theory; my proposition is that humanity cannot withstand the impact of yet another stylist shift or "generation" in planning theory (or social science theory, for that matter). The current era presents the opportunity for a

true shift in the radical paradigmatic sense in which social science breaks free from its existing patterns of behavior and approaches to problem solving. Thus, contemporary theorists need concern themselves less with defending the positive distinctions between styles than with seeking continuity across them as the orienting point for future planning theory and practice. This does not suggest that planning must reconcile the discrepancies between various modes of thought into a unified theory of planning. Rather, planners and planning theorists must recognize the inevitability and perpetuity of irreconcilability and develop the skills to operate effectively in the midst of uncertainty. Contemporary social science theorists, including those working in planning, must direct their efforts toward surfacing the contradictions and inadequacies of existing theory and begin developing a holistic paradigm built upon humanity's existing knowledge if they intent to move toward sustainability in the 21st Century--reduce, reuse, recycle!

This discussion is neither critical, analytical, nor normative in nature, but rather intended to explore an alternate theory of practice for planners and planning scholars alike who share the ideal of sustainability. After a brief examination of the ways that planning can effect sustainability, I'll propose why cultivation of both wisdom and creativity in planning theory and practice may be essential in a sustainable future--planned or not. I offer for illustration an alternate model of sustainable planning research, practice, and theory development. That this thinking is incomplete and represents only a limited perusal of existing literature is obvious. Nevertheless, I hope it will serve as a jumping off point for a broader discussion about planning's current conceptions of and approaches to sustainability and provide preliminary tools for readers interested in cultivating more sustainable practices.

Planning for Sustainability

Sustainability is a term frequently employed by planners yet rarely clarified or circumscribed in their plans. Meaning literally the power to keep some thing or state in existence, sustainability first appeared in an ecological context in the 1970s alongside the emerging environmental movement (Litke, 2006). In subsequent decades, it evolved to widely connote the recognition that we must "strive to achieve a decent standard of living for all people and live within the limits of natural systems" (Berke & Conroy, 2000). Based on this definition, sustainable development may be considered the professional strategies for achieving this goal

(Jepson, 2001; Campbell, 1996). If sustainability is truly a "chaotic, bewildering social experiment" then planners face a recondite task in translating this concept into effective practice (Litke, 2006). The lack of clarity regarding definitions of sustainability with regard to scale, range, and scope, significantly limits development of clear mandates in planning, making it difficult to carry out and nearly impossible to evaluate.

Current research asserts that despite the importance of developing sustainability strategies at the state and federal levels, planning for sustainability is most effectively undertaken at the local or regional scale (Berke & Conroy, 2000; Beatley, 1995; Campbell, 1996). Thus, planners influence both the meaning of sustainability and the development and execution of sustainable plans and strategies for cities and their inhabitants. Planning theorists, however, take care to point out the importance of relating local planning activities to global concerns without explicitly characterizing the nature of this relationship or offering concrete solutions for planners trying to navigate across these realms. Given the lack of empirical evidence supporting conclusions about the appropriate scale of sustainability planning, this consensus on the superiority of the local scale may be based in an understanding of the relationship historically between the planning and development control functions of local plans in support of implementation of larger strategic plans (Bracken, 1981; Beatley, 1994).

More contentious than scale are debates over the range of planning for sustainability. While most planners and planning scholars would agree that "planning is present action toward the making of a better future," and as such, inherently backward looking and future-oriented simultaneously, the matter of in what ways and how far forward to plan for sustainability varies greatly (Spatt, 1971). In the literature on planning for sustainability, "long-term" stretches from the present generation to the next, from "seven generations" down the road to as far as five-hundred years from now (Wheeler, 2000; Berke & Conroy, 2000; Beatley, 1994). Traversing otherwise divergent planning traditions, the modern ideology of progress is woven firmly within the fabric of planning, with the conservation of resources its universal goal. With resource scarcity a constant, variations in perceptions of the range of planning emerge according to differences in cultural understandings of time. In the past fifty years the linearity of Modern time embedded in the ideology of planning's systematic "progress thinking" has given rise to a range of spatial-temporal conceptions evident in the literature (M. Thomas, 1994). Planning's effectiveness in promoting sustainability is therefore inevitably determined in some part by

understandings of time, heritage, conservation, progress, and the future.

Finally, and the least agreed upon, is the scope of sustainability planning, at both the procedural and substantive levels. Influential is the "Three Es" model of sustainable development which outlines the substantive areas of sustainability across which planners attempt to strike a balance: environmental protection, economic development, and social equity (Jepson, 2001; Berke & Conroy, 2000; Beatley, 1995;). Planners may need to consider expanding the "Three Es" model to better address the complex conflicts facing industrial society. Campbell (1996) suggests that adding the letter "P" for politics and governance is essential to complete the model of sustainable planning practice. Beyond these concepts, however, lies the problem for planners of identifying which procedures will best address these problem areas.

Paradoxically, the more we learn, the more difficult bringing about sustainability becomes. Addressing one issue in a "sustainable" fashion may negate sustainability in another realm. Certain practices, however, are now widely recognized as more sustainable than others: consumption of fewer resources, more efficiently, while avoiding externalities that adversely affect the social and economic systems humans depend upon. Therefore, sustainable planning considers the implications of decision-making on human systems and strengthens partnerships between organizations and community leaders who are working for a more sustainable future. This type of cross-disciplinary endeavor requiring collaboration between many stakeholders may entail development of a multi-level "policy matrix" that promotes rather than undermines local sustainability efforts (Beatley & Manning, 1997).

Given the centrality of planning in achieving sustainability, creative development and prudent application of local planning tools is called for. Jepson (2004) notes: "Planning--perhaps more than any other profession--is closely associated with sustainable development in terms of principles and the requirements of professional intervention" and is closely associated with processes crucial in resolving conflicts encountered in implementing sustainability. "For these reasons, the extent and nature of local planning office involvement in the enactment of sustainable development policies are of essential concern" (230). Planners must explore and exploit the power of planning in bringing about meaningful change toward regional sustainability (Berke & Conroy, 2000). To face these daunting tasks, planners will need to move beyond the traditional planning realms of land-use planning and development control toward a holistic, community-focused practice. It's clear that planners must re-examine their approaches to

sustainability at the institutional level, examining the cultural along with political barriers to implementing sustainable plans and practices. It is to these possible alternate approaches that we shift, below.

Practical Wisdom in Planning

As I demonstrated above, planning is in its roots a modern endeavor—built upon modernity’s attendant faith in objectivity, technology, and reason—intended to establish a clear boundary between Man and nature, with Man and his cities emerging superior in the conflict (Thomas, 1994). In the last half-century, philosophical turns including the rise of identity politics, feminism, and cultural pluralism, have challenged planning’s rational model, raising questions whose answers led to developments such as advocacy planning, communicative action planning, and New Urbanism (Fainstein, 2005). Despite the progress made by planners (some would call it a return) in the practice of social reform in the last fifty years, debate continues about both the substantive and procedural aspects of planning practice. Despite these controversies, sustainability remains firmly situated at the top of planning’s agenda (Jepson, 2001). Unfortunately, there continues to be very little engagement, in social science broadly and in planning research specifically, with the core concept in these debates: the relationship between rational knowledge and context, experience, and intuition, or what proponents of deep ecology would call “ecological wisdom” (Wight, 2005).

As I alluded to above, Flyvbjerg (2001), questions the value of aspiring to rationality in studies of society and suggests that rather than emulating natural science, social scientists should begin tackling social problems in ways that matter to and in cooperation with communities. Drawing on the work of Weber, Habermas, and Foucault, Flyvbjerg contends that despite Sisyphean efforts to the contrary, social science cannot contribute to “normal science and predictive theories of scientific development” any more than natural science can contribute to the “reflexive analysis of goals, values and interests that [are] a precondition for enlightened development in any society” (167). Rather than attempting to fit social science into the instrumental reality of positivist natural science, it should focus on the values-rationality that preceded it. He asserts that we must look for guidance beyond the boundaries of our current ways of thinking, “so dominated by universals and means-end rationality” to the values-rationality that preceded it when conceptualizing alternative approaches to relevant

contemporary social science (53).

Given this understanding, he conceives of a practice-research based social science rooted in a contemporary interpretation of the Aristotelian concept of phronesis, translated roughly as "prudence" or "practical wisdom." Phronesis goes beyond analytical, scientific knowledge (episteme) and technical knowledge (techne) to include judgments and decisions made in the manner of an adept social and political agent. Flyvbjerg argues that phronesis is an essential component in social action, and that any attempts to understand society epistemologically or technologically in the absence of phronesis are inevitably hollow.

Let us consider the quote below, culled from a scholarly report of empirical research done on the role of politics in professional planning, as an example of the type of social science research Flyvbjerg argues we leave behind:

"The element that best distinguishes a profession from an occupation is that of expertise...based on a body of specialized theoretical knowledge.... His approach is both intellectual and technical and it is the combination of these attributes which contributes to the professionals' favorable status in society" (J. Vincent Buck, *Politics and Professionalism in Municipal Planning*, 1976)

Here Buck characterizes the combination of intellectual [episteme] and technical [techne] knowledge as the core of planning's professional success. Whether or not this is accurate is irrelevant. Within the phronetic framework, it is inherently false because it overlooks the facet of planning practice in which planners exercise their expertise in context based upon the values they hold.

Mandelbaum (1996) echoes Flyvbjerg's proposition, inasmuch as he sees "Prudence" (the proper noun) as central to planning practice: "...Prudence dictates that we attend to the future, acting now to avoid prospective dangers and to reap the benefits of foresight" (p. 430). However, I am not certain that this is the type of phronesis that Flyvbjerg intends. Unlike the modern conception of prudence as the cautious exercise of judgment, Flyvbjerg's phronesis is much more in line semantically with "practical wisdom" than with "prudence." As Flyvbjerg interprets Aristotle, technological capacity and scientific knowledge without phronesis are fruitless: it provides the balance between the two that allows us to leverage them both. Thus, phronesis is less about the restraint connoted by the virtues of "prudence" than a "wisdom" that illuminates the intellect (Etymology: Oxford English Dictionary).

While current planning approaches to sustainability inherently entail "prudence" to some

extent, through conservation and allocation of resources, it's the practical wisdom component of phronesis that concerns us here. Flyvbjerg posits that phronetic planning is "done in the public for the public, sometimes to clarify, sometimes to intervene, sometimes to generate new perspectives, and always to serve as eyes, and ears in the ongoing efforts at understanding the present and deliberating about the future" (2001, p. 166). With this aim, planner's will need to exercise not only caution, but will need to learn how to become situational, reflective practitioners of the type proponents of liberal pedagogy have been advocating for decades (Freire in Blackburn, 2000). Following a brief discussion on the role of and need for creativity in planning, I offer strategies for developing practical wisdom in planning theory and practice.

Creativity in Planning

Defined as "individual--or preferably social--process that stimulates the ability to view problems, situations, and challenges in new and different ways and to invent and develop original, imaginative futures in response to these problems, situations, and challenges. 'Ability' focuses more on 'how' one thinks than rather on 'what' one thinks" (Michalko, 2001 in Albrechts, 2005).

From Schumpeter's "Creative Destruction" (1942) to Florida's "Creative Class" (2002), the power of creativity has been a central concern of Modern social theory. Changing historical, political, and social relationships greatly affect relations of power and result in dynamic forms of expression and organization among individuals and groups in hyperindustrial society (Sussman, 1997). Given the dynamic uncertainty of this era, creativity is increasingly essential for the survival of individuals, cultures, and even nature, as complex conflicts arise about distribution of power and resources across groups, communities, and societies. Recent shifts in the economic organization of industrialized nations from industrial manufacture to post-industrial service sectors have transformed the global division of labor.

Whether you subscribe to the rational comprehensive model, communicative action or any other style of planning thought, the fact remains that planners spend a great deal of time, among other things, creatively mitigating irreconcilable tensions. Lacking any rational means of resolving these contradictions, planning may be seen as inherently irrational practice. Despite the best "planning," outcomes remain uncertain (Ferraro, 1996).

According Richard Florida, planners are not the only workers addressing problems in this manner. They represent a segment of the labor force required to deploy their knowledge and

skills in increasingly creative ways, a new class of worker, the “Creative Class,” which consists of an estimated 38 million people (30% of the U.S. workforce) who make their living engaged in “creative work” (Montague, 2001; Florida, 2002, 2006). Despite accumulating charges of neoliberal bias on top of categorical and methodological inadequacies, Florida’s definition of the creative class has been widely adopted as a planning tool by municipal governments and planning agencies worldwide and remains the focus of much urban planning discourse (Peck, 2005; Stearns, 2005; Fainstein, 2005). Drawing on regional economic development, social capital, and human capital theories, Florida asserts that the determining factor of contemporary urban development is the location of concentrated populations of talented, creative laborers.

When "Creativity" is Not So Creative

In 2004, Harvard Business Review applauded Florida’s notion that human creativity is the ultimate source of regional economic growth as one of the year’s “Breakthrough Ideas.” Based on the thesis that urban economic development hinges on a region’s ability to attract, retain and satisfy the peculiar needs of the “Creative Class,” Florida’s book *The Rise of the Creative Class* (2002) was an international bestseller popular with a range of academic audiences (Peck, 2005). Characterized by a generally optimistic rhetoric and followed by an undeniably optimistic buzz, Florida’s talking points included the ideas that regional economic growth policies should focus increasing “quality” (per capita income) rather than “quantity” (net populations gains, job growth) and that “real” economic growth “takes form around real concentrations of people in real places” (Florida, 2005; 22, 4).

Despite the apparent shortcomings of Florida's creative capital theory, which include methodological weaknesses and hidden oppressive discourses on race, gender, and age, his ideas have been widely embraced by non-academic regional planners, policy-makers, and developers who, finding his categories and definitions more prescriptive than descriptive, launch myopic economic policies in an effort to replicate the "creative" places he describes. This “cargo cult” mentality is anything but creative; "fast development" strategies like Florida’s have quickly become the status quo in development policy due to their distinctive and “ostensibly deliverable development agenda” (Peck 2005). Providing Baltimore as a case-in-point, Peck describes its recently unveiled (and not-so-creatively named) Creative Baltimore initiative that seeks regional regeneration through funding for programs like creation of bike paths and extension of bar-closing times in an effort to lure young, creative types. Peck sees strategies like this, however,

resulting in the opposite of their intended effects. Rather than “bringing in culture,” he sees creative-centric approaches commodifying the sum of a region’s artistic and cultural resources, subjecting them to the “evolving regimes of urban competition” (763).

In his follow-up book, *Cities and the Creative Class* (2005), Florida addresses his critics and provides ample evidence to reinforce his assertion that in the past 20 years, “creativity has become driving force” of the global economy, including addition of 20 million jobs to creative sector, that 1/3 of the world’s workers are employed in “creative sector,” and that creative work now accounts for half of all U.S. wage and salary income (4). At the core of the "Creative Class" are scientists, artists, engineers, professors, writers, designers and other workers “fortunate enough to be paid to use their creativity regularly in their work” who function "to create meaningful new forms (34-5). These highly educated people, employed in knowledge-intensive industries, are engaged in "creative problem-solving, drawing on complex bodies of knowledge in seeking innovative solutions" (2002, p.5). Whether you agree with Florida's creative class theory in its entirety, given its weight in current planning discussions, it raises some very interesting considerations for regional economists and planners.

The Wisdom of Creativity

MIT Sloan Management Review (Winter 2008), recently ran an article called "Institutionalizing Innovation" outlining how businesses could best create and grow innovative business models. By "training employees to recognize disruptive ideas" and establishing "the right systems and mind-sets" these companies create the "favorable conditions" necessary for companies to compete in the global marketplace (45). They suggest that in addition to the processes of "generating, validating, and scaling" ideas, companies trying to increase their innovative capacity need to leave room for the growth of new ideas and conceptualizations. Incubation of this creative organism depends on management recognizing that different situations will require different approaches to innovation--some of which disavow the "wrong kind of 'DNA,'" or existing core practices and assets. Additionally, these businesses will need to develop structures supporting this innovation--invested leadership, communication channels and methods, supportive policies, and advisory boards (49).

The metaphor of the organism ecologically adapting recalls the cybernetic thinking of planning's rational comprehensive era; I'm certainly not suggesting that planning adopt a market-driven model of innovation. Rather, I present this material to amplify the idea that creativity does

not simply happen: it must be a conscious goal of planning and the requisite conditions must be maintained for it to occur. Louis Albrechts recognizes this in his article "Creativity as a Drive for Change" in calling for a systematic method by which planners can more creatively respond to problems and imagine futures. His "preconditions" for a creative planning practice entail changes in both the structure and practice of planning. These conditions echo those of the business model outlined above, and include more pluralistic and communicative political processes, a balance between short and long-term actions, and development of trusting relationships. The resulting changing thought patterns and novel application of planning tools will enable planners to arrive at new solutions for existing problems. Ferraro calls planners to develop "special...intellectually suspect but practically necessary thinking techniques" to help them in their irresolvable tasks (p. 317). My task here is to suggest how we move these tools from the corporate model or the intellectually suspect realm of voodoo and shamans by situating them firmly and rationally under the umbrella of sustainability.

Fourth Generation: Holistic, Sustainable Planning

These understandings of prudence and creativity lead us to the conclusion that effective, sustainable planning will require a re-envisioning of planning practice and theory, and the relationship between them. How will we bring about the "simultaneous transcendence and inclusion" of existing theory (Wilber in Wight, 2005)? In this section, I will outline a few suggestions for sustainable planning methods, strategies for planning research, and potential directions for theory development.

Even if planners begin to understand phronesis, perhaps through reflection on their decision-making process in their planning practice, Flyvbjerg contends there is more to consider. Where the Aristotelian model falls short is where the power of Flyvbjerg's phronetic strategy lies. While the relationship between phronesis and social science is strong, and where phronesis clearly provides the link between technology and scientific knowledge, these connections remains tenuous in the absence of a "well-developed conception of power" (110). To reconcile this inadequacy, Flyvbjerg argues that the goals of planning research look beyond the episteme of Habermas's communicative rationality and, building on Foucault's ideas on power and rationality, toward a phronetic methodology of case research that examines values and relations of power in a concrete, socio-historic context (107).

Wise and Creative Planning Theory

It sounds strange to apply the "green" mantra, "Reduce, Reuse, Recycle," to theory development, but it logically follows from our discussion here that such strategies are not only possible but essential. In "Planning the Just City," Fainstein (2005) calls for an end to the division between theory and practice in planning--professionally and academically. In her schema, planning scholars would focus less on distinguishing the procedural from the substantive and more on the interaction between the two. Faludi presents a strategy that may prove helpful: if we conceive of communicative planning as the logical extension of rational comprehensive planning rather than its contradiction, we can begin to adapt both existing models using each as the "yardstick" to evaluate the other (1996). Theorists' task would be to construct and critique planning's vision simultaneously; their explanations of current phenomena would be normative in their critique of both processes and outcomes. Fainstein suggests an approach akin to a "grounded Utopianism" in which social critics establish criteria whereby planning outcomes may be evaluated while allowing for situational differences. Furthermore, this type of theory will balance a discursive sensitivity with examination of spatial variation and political-economic power structures.

Hillier (2005) suggests that truly creative thinking may necessitate that planning theorists adopt an altogether different ontology in which the opposing frames of transcendence (objective reality) and immanence (fluid reality) are creatively commingled. Thus, "planning may involve a transcendental structure immanent in its practical local expressions" supported by a planning theory that has shifted its focus from end states and outcomes (the ontology of "being") to the "movement, process, and emergence," of planning (the ontology of "becoming"). In this model planning is creative social experiment between individuals and structures and the role of planners is the "make the virtual intelligible" (p. 273, 281).

In addition to the creative reorientation of planning philosophy theorists will need to undertake if they are to contribute to our shared, sustainable future, practical wisdom must accompany this innovation. Flyvbjerg calls this *realrationalität*, or 'real-life' rationality (1996), in which the focus shifts from what should be done to examining what is actually done. This analysis embraces the idea that 'rationality is penetrated by power', and the dynamic between the two is critical in understanding what policy is about. It therefore becomes meaningless, or misleading - for politicians, administrators and researchers alike - to operate with a concept of

rationality in which power is absent:

Instead of sidestepping or seeking to remove the traces of power from planning, an alternative approach accepts power as unavoidable, recognizing its all-pervasive nature, and emphasizing its productive as well as destructive potential. Here, theory engages squarely with policy made on a field of power struggles between different interests, where knowledge and truth are contested, and the rationality of planning is exposed as a focus of conflict (Flyvbjerg 1998, 164-65).

If the above propositions can be considered the reuse and reduction of planning theory, Sandercock's recent work (2007) represents the final point on the triangle; she suggests--demonstrating a great deal of practical wisdom--that we recycle the simple idea that there is a possibility for triumph in the human spirit. There is hope in humanity itself. Here she demonstrates that creativity balanced by wisdom entails more than reworking existing techniques and structures or brainstorming to arrive at the latest novel idea; creativity may simply mean having the courage to speak about those ideas in those ways that may not be popular or central in our "discourses." I quote at length here because both the language and the message are telling: Sandercock (2007) writes:

Planning deals with people's visions for the future of their cities. What could be more precious, in terms of giving meaning to life beyond the here and now? Planning deals with land, what it means to people in the present and what they want it to mean in the future. What could be more precious, in terms of our attachments to home and place making? Planning deals with how people relate to each other within and between groups and communities. What could be more precious, in terms of our deep need for connection with others? And planning deals with how we as a community take care of one another (or don't, but should). What could be more precious, in terms of our universal human fears of sickness, old age, poverty, and death? So why do we have all these sterile terms for describing what it is that we do? We talk about the rational comprehensive approach, the communicative approach, the political economy approach, the institutional approach, the modernist, the postmodern, making ourselves as a profession incomprehensible to those who live, love, and struggle in cities. Perhaps we need a different way of talking about planning, at the heart of which is the human spirit in its everyday struggle to make meaning and create a better world (2007, p. 13).

Wise and Creative Planning Practice and Research

These ideas sound promising, but lead us to ask: what does this mean for people trying to plan or to research planning? Albrechts (2005) suggests a systematic method for this kind of

wise and creative planning that includes reverse thinking and scenario building in which limits are redefined and questioned and narrative for possible outcomes are constructed as a "geography of the unknown" (p. 255). For planners to effectively conduct these processes they will need to appreciate diversity (in communication, in perspectives, in thought processes) and engage in new patterns of thought that include reconceptualizing, collaboration, and challenging of existing models. Ferraro (1996) characterizes strategies like these as interpretive planning of sorts, helping planners better understand different values and aspirations of people in ways that may be creative but are also logical despite the logical impossibility of planning a shared future.

Sandercock (1998) has written extensively on the role of diversity in a just, sustainable future, so I need not expand on that here. Note, though, that Fisher (a sociologist working in the tradition of Durkheim, Parks, and Wirth) makes clear that diversity leads to innovation not through tolerance, but through the clash of cultures and the creative resolution of those conflicts (1973). More interesting in her work, now, draws on the role of storytelling as a wise, creative, and effective planning tool (207).

As described above, Hillier sees this as "becoming planning," a set of processes that account for the uncertainty, instability and constant flux of the world around us. Without the security of stable theory, many practitioners feel uncomfortable moving forward. She sees this as the link between theory and planning, whereby theorists create for planners as safe space in the midst of uncertainty where they can work to transform human experience by exploring of possibility and making connections. Based in their "practical wisdom," planners could explore intersections, relations, and make sense of chaos as autonomous, reflective beings (2005, p. 287).

For Hillier this entails a methodology for planners and planning researchers that includes the following (p. 288):

- Exploring practices and reifying structures
- Mapping networks or meshworks between elements of the hybrid collective being/becoming (agents, spaces, networks)
- Unpacking the relationships between entities (the haves, have-nots, & power players)
- Identifying and anticipating possible outcomes of the intersections between them

Flyvbjerg proposes a similar approach based in the case methodology (for an extended discussion, see Flyvbjerg, 2004). Like Hillier, he advocates exploration of networks in any given case as essential, however it is the relations of power between entities that should provide the

basis for the research. Yiftachel (2001) characterizes it as a "weaving of local narrative with concepts, ideas, and theories from other discourses, times, and places" in a "constantly shifting dialogue between rich local details and profound intellectual, philosophical, and political contemplations about power, reason, ideology and interest" (p. 252). The grounding evaluation Fainstein (2005) proposes may entail simply asking in each case: who wins, who loses, and by what mechanisms of power? Thus the goal of this type of research is not theory development but rather "to contribute to society's practical rationality in elucidating where we are, where we want to go, and what is desirable according to diverse sets of values and interests...contributing to societies capacity for value-relational deliberation and action" and to alleviate "incursion of a narrow means-rationality into social and political life" (Flyvbjerg, 2001, p.167).

Future Considerations

It is apparent that if we are to plan for a sustainable--socially just, economically sound, ecologically safe--future, we need to embrace a holistic approach bolstered by creative thinking and action balanced by wisdom. This thinking is unfortunately largely incomplete, with many realms yet to be explored. One aspect of planning that merits further investigation is the contradiction between planning for sustainability and the ideology of progress embedded in planning thought and activity. Additionally, while approaches like those proposed by Hillier and Flyvbjerg make strides in more accurately representing social phenomena, there seems to be a spatial component lacking in their work. Some of this may be alleviated by creatively reconceptualizing spatially related planning instead as "placemaking" which would begin to incorporate both space and time in their deployment and evaluation. There is an emerging body of work on placemaking, but further exploration is needed to determine if converging the two into a single, unifying concept is warranted (see Wight, 2005).

If the project is to succeed, sustainability will require transformation of the planning field at the institutional level (Healey, 2005). Research into application of the concepts of holism, creativity, and practical wisdom in planning's institutional design is warranted. Research into reflexive and integrative pedagogies may shed light on how we begin integrating creativity and wisdom in planning practice. Furthermore, anthropological assessment of sustainability planning as a system within capitalist culture could also shed light on values shaping its approach to sustainability.

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